

*“...she laid him in a manger,
.....there was no room for them in the inn” (Lk.2:7)*

NEWS

December 2013

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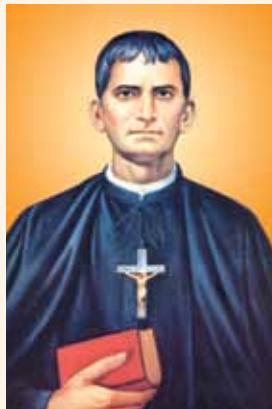
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**21st January
2014
VEN.FR.AGNEL
JAYANTI
at Fr.Agnel Ashram,
Bandra (W),
Mumbai – 400 050.**

**PROGRAMME
SPECIAL NOVENA SERVICE
From 12th to 20th January 2014**

Every Day

Morning : 7.00 a.m. & 7.30 a.m. : Holy Mass and Novena in English followed by blessing with the Relic.

Evening : 5.30 p.m. : Novena Service in Konkani, Marathi & Gujarati followed by blessing with the Relic. 6.00 p.m. : Holy Mass and Novena in English followed by blessing with the Relic.

N.B.

On Sunday 12th & 19th January all Masses and Novena Services will be held as on normal Sundays.

**21st January (Tuesday) : 145th Birth Anniversary
of Ven.Fr.Agnel**

Morning : Masses followed by Prayers for favours and blessings with the Relic at 6.30, 7.15, 8.00 in English.

Evening : Solemn Concelebrated Mass will be held at 6.00 p.m. in the Ashram Compound followed by prayers for intercession.



**Rt. Rev. Elias Gonsalves,
Bishop of Amravati will be the main
Celebrant.**

Thousands of devotees will participate in this Annual Novena and celebration. Over one lakh of favours, some of them truly miraculous such as cure of cancer, T.B., Paralysis etc. have been received through the powerful intercession of Ven.Fr.Agnel.

Favours obtained and petitions to be placed at the Shrine of Ven.Fr.Agnel may be sent to the following address :

Rev.Fr.Superior.

Fr.Agnel Ashram, Bandstand,

Bandra (West), Mumbai – 400 050.

Tel : 67114000

Bus No. : 211 : Special Bus Service to Ply From Bandra Railway Station to Fr.Agnel Ashram Gate.

The King Born to Serve

The Christmas story is one of the greatest events in the history of humankind. The Messiah is born to empty Himself. The humility of the birth of the Babe Jesus is not an accident. Rather, it is something that belongs to the very nature of how God wishes to reveal Himself in Jesus. He was not destined to be born in a palace. His Father had a plan for Him. Christ was born in utter poverty because He came to reveal something of God himself to us. The God of power and might appeared in our midst as a helpless child. He is Emmanuel, One who fixes His abode among us.

Luke tells us that when Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem there was no room for them in the inn. Mary gave birth to her Son who was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Jesus had no home (Lk.9:58). In the flesh He emptied Himself of his riches. He took upon Himself the form of a servant. (Phil.2:7) Indeed, He chose to endure such humble "poverty" to redeem us. The King of Kings came in simplicity and emptiness to identify with the poorest and weakest among us.

He is a King who took off His crown and gave up his throne. He is a King who never lived in a palace. The only crown He ever wore was a crown of thorns. He chose to spend entire life in the service of others, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, being a friend of the friendless. Jean Vanier expresses it so richly: "For me Jesus is the God who becomes little, who hides in the poor, the humble, the weak, the dying and the sick. All those who are particularly fragile long for love. This is the mystery of Jesus' birth. Yes, Jesus is compassionate love. He knelt down in front of His disciples and He washed their feet saying, "I must give



you an example so that you will do what I am doing".

Before Pilate Jesus answered, "**My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have defended me.....But my Kingdom is not of this world**"(John 18:36,37). Here is an

insight given by William Bausch, "Jesus did not have a scepter. He did not have people bowing in His presence, but He himself bowed and washed the feet of his disciples. He had no army but He did have disciples. He sat on no throne, but rather on

a donkey's back. He wore no crown of gold but one of thorns. He did not take life but gave it in abundance. He did not wield a sword but a healing "weapon" of mercy. Jesus promised a criminal a place of honour and privilege in heaven. Even at the height of humiliation Jesus understood His nature as Heaven's king and the Lord of Life. This is our King whom we worship and honour."

Jesus allowed Himself to be laid in a manger in order to identify Himself with those He came to serve and save. If we rightly understand the birth of Jesus, the best way to celebrate Christmas is by being simple and humble; through sharing the inner gifts, the gifts of giving ourselves, of being generous with our time, our kindness, our patience, our deep care and concern for others. These ordinary looking gifts can change our lives and relationships and touch people with spontaneous warmth. Let the quality of our Christmas gifts be measured not by the extravagance of external gifts, but rather in the way in which they involve our reaching out to our brethren from heart to heart.

Ubaldo Fernandes sfx

Christmas Gift

- Fr. F. Diniz

Christmas, the most popular religious festival of the world is close at hand. Our minds are already filled with sweet memories of the events connected with the birth of Christ which occurred centuries ago in the little town of Bethlehem. They are re-enacted today through lively rituals and symbols in our churches, homes, villages and towns: The Sacred Liturgy, the Crib, the Star, the Angels, the Shepherds, the Wise Men from the East. They are all very dear to our hearts. And the beautiful scenes of the Nativity of Our Lord go on unfolding before our eyes.

Our minds then travel to the Temple in Jerusalem where the child Jesus was taken for his presentation to God on the 40th day of his birth. We find there an elderly person: Simeon by name holding the child Jesus in his arms and delivering a message of great hope proclaiming that the child will be the Light to enlighten the nations of the world. So with our hearts filled with joy we proceed to share it with others in our gatherings around the Christmas trees, voicing our happiness with Christmas carols and exchanging Christmas gifts with our friends.

What makes Christmas so popular and lively? At the first sight the event of the birth of Jesus looks very shabby: A little child born to very poor parents in the little town of Bethlehem, far away from their native village, on the occasion of their casual visit to that town for the purpose of registering themselves at the census that was going on there.

There was no place for them in the Inn; so the child Jesus was born in a shed meant to shelter animals and he is laid in a manger. Is this not a case for pity rather than joy? But soon the scenario changes. The Angel of the Lord announces to the shepherds who were keeping vigil over their flocks on the nearby hill: "Listen I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you;

he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Lk.2, 10-12).

The real worth of Christmas is expressed by St. John the Evangelist in his Gospel when he says: "The Word was made flesh and lived among us, and we saw his glory that is his, as the only Son of the Father full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1,14). The little child lying in the manger in the midst of

the filth of an animal shelter is really the Eternal Word of God through whom the whole universe was created. He has now taken human nature in order to transform human beings into children of God. In the same narration quoted above the Evangelist says "To all who did accept him he

gave the power to become children of God" (Ib. 1, 12).

Explaining further the plan of God in the Incarnation of his Son, St. Paul tells us that, it is the great love of God for men that, has led him to send his Only Begotten Son to the earth so that, we may become his beloved children: "Before the world was made he chose us in Christ to be holy and spotless and to live through love in his presence determining that we become his adopted sons through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1, 4-5) And to enable us to be his adopted sons he has sent the Spirit of his Son in our hearts! The Spirit that cries Abba Father. (Cfr. Gal. 4, 5-6).

The divinization of mankind, to turn human beings into divine beings, is the sublime plan of God that starts unfolding itself with the birth of Jesus Christ. Christmas is therefore the great occasion for us to reflect on this divine Plan. Merry making on this great occasion should be a natural outflow of the true joy that should invade our hearts. Let not our joy be the worldly kind that perishes leaving bitterness in our hearts. Let Jesus be born in our hearts. Let him reign supreme in them, now and forever.



Love at Christmas

-Leon Bent

The festive season of Christmas is already upon us! The brilliantly decorated Tree, exotic sweets, melting moments, melodious carols and nostalgic jingles combine to celebrate "Christ's coming" delightfully. One invariably finds oneself in a mosaic of personal closeness, why even cosmic embrace and oneness, while love rents the crisp, cool air!

Why is Christmas powered by such high voltage electricity? Simply because God's unconditional, ever-faithful love for us was made flesh, so that, we may experience His love in tangible form. The Incarnation is the mystery of the incredible union of love, both, divine and human. God was made visible in Jesus that we may be caught up in His Love, whom we cannot see. The Messiah's coming was not about people decked-up extravagantly as Christmas trees, but that God is love, who loved us unto excruciating death on a Cross.

Love is expressed as an action and experienced as a feeling. It has a multi-faceted essence that resists definition. But, if you wish to learn the art or 'true loving' do so at the sublime remembrance of the Boy-Child's birth, which is the greatest promise of the Bible, and the crux of its entire message: "God so loved the world that, he gave us his only beloved Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

Christmas comes with extraordinary heavenly gifts of divine revelation, timelessness, and rich blessings of love,

joy, peace and hope. "The Virgin Mother bore Him in her womb, with love beyond all telling," exclaims the Advent Liturgy. The Saviour's coming as a 'bundle of love' is a time of inexpressible joy and breath-taking awe that Mary and Joseph treasured at the first Christmas.

Our Christmas cannot possibly be morose and sad, "You better watch out, better not cry." We must spontaneously delight in proclaiming joyously the Living Word, the direct and only lifeline between the God of Love and us; humans with feet of clay but hearts of gold with Christ's bursting on the earthly horizon. The gifts he brings cannot break, do not lose their sheen and their beauty never fades away.



In the truest and deepest meaning of Christmas, with the marvel of God-made-man, we have a magician inside us, who believes in offering us little miracles of love all the time, which we so badly need and most urgently desire. The Son of God and man touching our lives with bubbly tenderness, is far more exciting than a midnight visit of an imaginary Santa Claus. Truly Christmas is imbued and drenched with Christ-like love, giving and giving without a thought of receiving!

Indeed, the Babe of Bethlehem offers us not just greetings on a flimsy, friable paper card, or an SMS or Email which quickly evaporates into thin air, but the absolutely reliable promise of eternal life, a ceaseless Banquet of Love.

Please lodge this great and wonderful dream in your hearts forever!

"When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist."

— Hélder Câmara, Dom Helder Camara: Essential Writing

The Crib as Spiritual Exercise

-Ivan Arthur

Lots of newspaper. Covered with wet mud. Dried. Crumpled. Spread out. And there you have it: The cave that forms an important part of the Christmas crib. All you need now is plenty of dry grass that you go into the fields behind your house to collect. It is the straw on which you place the cows of the stable. And then of course, Joseph and Mary, if you happen to have those figurines. Last of all you place your precious Baby Jesus there. Now you are ready for Christmas and for the Crib Competition.

You stand back and admire your craft. It has recreated, with paper, straw and mud, the most shining moment in Bible History, nay, World History. You look in your mirror and see sculptor, artist and historian, all in one. Very good

And then, one Christmas, years later, you watch this priest with a scraggly beard directing the young men who have come together to make the parish crib. They have got ready a whole ream of crisp, muddied paper that should form the hills of Bethlehem and the cave for the Babe. He tells them to keep all of that aside. He has no need for them. He has other ideas. He has arranged to have a portion of a PWD water pipe brought into the Church compound. That, he tells the young men, this will be the crib for the year.

On Christmas Eve, you see it: The water pipe against a painted background of the city. Inside the pipe you see the Holy Family. Yes, you see it: God incarnated in the slums. Craft has made way for the Intellect. History has given way to humanity. The crib is no longer a re-creation. It is a creation, you say. The crib has a message.

And so, the next year your crib is a 3-D chalice with a 3-D host above it. Embedded in the host is the Babe. Don't you see? It is Christmas at every Eucharist. History gives way to Mystery. Tradition is replaced by your small personal theology. The message: He is born every day if you receive him.



Soon you grow out of all that. Out of History. Out of Intellect. Out of Theology. Out of Creativity. Out of Ideation. Out of delivering messages. You grow. Into your Self. Into your personal craving for His Coming. Christ is not born in Bethlehem. In one little piece of the universe. His geography is fuzzy. Infinite. Not pinned down to latitude and longitude. Bethlehem is not where Bethlehem is. Bethlehem is where you feel His coming. In your drawing room. In your laughter. In those embraces of loved ones. In your tears. In the bread you break together.

Your crib must express it all. It is no longer art or craft or philosophy or sermon. It is your prayer made tangible. And when your daughter in the USA tells you of her personal prayer, you say Amen. It is the year of the Presidential election around the time of Christmas. She prays for the first black President. It means something to her. She places the Babe inside a replica of the White House with Isaiah's prophecy: "And the government shall be upon his shoulders."

Closer home, your other daughter is moving house. She wants the Babe to know her new address. She wants Him to move with her from Amboli to Yari Road. Her crib this time is a mover's truck. Her own personal prayer.

And I? And you? And all of us who want to fabricate this personal prayer this Christmas. What are we going to do this year? Will the crib be our family album that includes in its pages Jesus, Mary and Joseph as our close relatives? Our very own prayer for harmony and understanding? Is there a wedding in your family? Will then your crib be an invitation card to the Holy Family? And today, amid the din of slander and mischief of the media and the splatter of blood on our television screens, what is our crib-prayer going to be? Can it be your very own newspaper, "Glad tidings" that looks for good news to give your friends? Your prayer for a better world.

Fr. Agnelo's Cardinal Virtue – Mortification & Penance

-P.A.D'Mello

In continuation of Fr. Agnelo's Cardinal Virtue of Mortification and Penance, we have an instance when one of his Seminary companions writes: "He talked only when necessary. He did not take evening walks and was always recollected. He left the room only to attend class or visit the chapel."

In spite of this continuous mortification of his interior and exterior senses, Fr. Agnelo thought that it was not enough, and added to it a "hair-shirt" and "discipline". Though he tried to keep this to himself the doctor who treated him came to know of it and forbade this stringent penance, as he was endangering his health which was already quite poor. The matter reached the ears of Patriarch Dom Matheus who also disapproved of it; and consequently, in the last years Fr. Agnelo gave up, it seems, this practice.

Fr. Agnelo used to say that God sends us afflictions for four reasons: 1) To exercise His dominion over us; 2) to execute His justice; 3) to preserve us from sin and hell; 4) to make us an image of His Son.

And he taught that we should accept all suffering with the following four dispositions: 1) If we receive from Him good things, why shall we not receive evil? 2) we deserve them because of our faults; 3) God sends them for our good; 4) Jesus suffered so much; why should we not suffer?



The Spiritual notes in his books show us the value he attached to suffering and penance. In one of them we read: "If God gave you the power to raise the dead to life, that would be a smaller favour than if

He gave you suffering. By miracles you would be His debtor whereas by suffering He can be your debtor."

In another note he quotes the reply which Blessed Angela de Foligno gave to those who asked her how she could suffer with such joy: "Believe me, we do not realize the greatness and worth of suffering, for if we knew how precious our trials are, they would be the object of our eagerness, and we would be in search for such opportunities".

These and similar thoughts fortified the desire and love of mortification, in the mind of Fr. Agnelo, and he threw himself into the struggle against his body and his passions with such ardour that it seems really miraculous how he could live so long, specially when he joined to his penances the labours of his preaching, hearing Confession and Spiritual Direction.

Yes, he died to himself and to the world so that, he might live for God and for heaven. On his tomb one can fittingly inscribe the epitaph, which is read on a sepulchre in the Church of St. Sabina in Rome: "Ut moriens viveret, vixit ut moriturus," that is "In order to live after death, he lived as one who was to die."



AGNEL ASHRAM COMMUNITY & Balbhavan Children

*Wish all our Friends, Benefactors and
Well-Wishers A Very Happy and
Holy Christmas and a Showers of God's
Blessings for the New Year!*

THE JOY IN GIVING



Letters from some
benefactors and friends
of our Balbhavan
children

Earl Ancel Remedios, Dubai

Enclosed is a D.D. for ₹.5077 to be used for your Balbhavan children. This is my thanks offering to Fr.Agnel for all the favours received. Please pray for us.

Leela Philip, Dubai

I am sending a cheque for ₹.10,000 and would request you to use this amount for my ward Omkar as well as the other orphans under your care. Our sincere gratitude to Fr.Agnel for all the blessings received in our life.

Mary Tom, Bangalore

I hope and pray that my sponsored children Abhishek, Irfan and Rajeev are doing well in their studies and keeping good health. I enclose a cheque for ₹.5000 towards their educational expenses. Kindly keep us in your prayers.

Anthony M. Chakkalayil, Kerala

I am forwarding a cheque for ₹.1500 as part payment of the full sponsorship of the orphans under your care. Kindly remember us in your prayers. Thank you.

Ajith James, Chennai

I am enclosing a cheque for ₹.6000 being my humble offering towards the charitable work that you do specially taking care of orphans. Please pray that I do well in my career and also for the good health of my parents and brother. Thanking you.

Joseph & Melini D'Souza, Dubai

We enclose a cheque for ₹.5500 for the maintenance and education of the orphans in your Balbhavan. We thank you for keeping us in your prayers.

Fr. Agnel Ashram - Bandra MASSES ON SUNDAYS

MORNING

7.00 English	8.00 Konkani
9.30 English	11.00 Tamil

EVENING

3.30 Marathi	4.30 Konkani
6.30 English	7.30 English

NOVENA SERVICES ON SUNDAYS

MORNING

7.45 English	8.45 Konkani
10.15 English	10.30 Tamil

EVENING

3.30 Marathi	4.15 Konkani
6.15 English	7.15 English

Weekdays Mass in English at 6.00 p.m.

Favours obtained, petitions and

offerings may kindly be sent to :

Rev.Fr.Superior

Fr.Agnel Ashram,

P.O.Box 6656,Bandstand, Bandra,
Mumbai – 400 050.

Tel : 67114000.

Fax : 67114100.

email: agnelashramnews@gmail.com

web: <http://ash.fragnel.edu.in>

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BRANCH NO.1 (BANDRA)

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BRANCH NO.3 (SANTACRUZ)

Nr. Railway Station, Jucu Club, Opp. Yatri Hotel, Santacruz (East), Mumbai-400 05 5.

BRANCH NO.2 (KHAR)

Near Railway Opp. Shankar Mandir, Jawahar Nagar, Khar (E), Mumbai -400051.

BRANCH NO. 4 (JOGESHWARI)

Opp. Railway Station, 4th Platform, Subhash Nagar, Behind, Satellite Park, Jogeshwari (East), Mumbai - 400 060.

BRANCH NO. 5 (MALAD)

Sainath Road, Behind Tel. Exchange Malad (W), Subway Road,Mumbai -400064

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Fr. Agnel's Death Anniversary at Bandra

The 86th death anniversary of Ven. Fr. Agnel was celebrated with singular fervor by thousands of devotees from all walks of life at the Shrine of Fr. Agnel Ashram at Bandra. Rt. Rev. Savio Fernandes, Auxiliary Bishop of Mumbai Archdiocese was the main Celebrant at the Eucharist. Many other priests from Mumbai Concelebrated at which a large number of devotees took part. Bishop Savio, in his homily, explained that Fr. Agnel was a man of deep faith who in his life had touched the lives of many peoples. Scholastics from Agnel Ashram, Pune, sang melodious hymns during the Eucharist.

Earlier Bishop Savio was warmly welcomed by the community of Fr. Agnel

Ashram along with the people gathered at the campus....a Balbhavan boy offered him a bouquet of flowers. Rev. Fr. Diniz, Superior of the Ashram delivered a Welcome Speech. The Scholastics Brothers played very beautiful instrumentals. The students of Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School, Ambernath trained by Ms. Antoinette Viegas and her team, performed enchanting prayer and classical dances to the delight of all present. The Death Anniversary was preceded by a Novena of Preparation from 11th to 19th November in which devotees from Mumbai and elsewhere took part, invoking Fr. Agnel's powerful intercession and praying for his early beatification. Fr. Victor Rebello compered the Ceremony.

Fr. Agnel's Day at Pilar

“Let's Build a Community of Faith”

Bp. Derek

From dawn to dusk devotees from different walks of life thronged the tiny hillock of Pilar, on 20th November, to commemorate the 86th Death Anniversary of Venerable Agnel.

During the Solemn Eucharistic Celebration, his Lordship Rt. Rev. Derek Fernandes, Bishop of Karwar, exhorted the faithful to inculcate the virtues of Ven Agnel de Souza and help build a staunch community of faith and love.

Reflecting on the pious life of this holy man, Rt. Rev. Fernandes said that Fr. Agnel lived a life based on the Beatitudes. “In Karwar where he served, the faithful revealed that he was a man

of poverty and simplicity. In Kansa, the transformation did not come about among the hard-hearted parishioners for almost 8 days. Fr Agnel was

discouraged, but he did not give up praying. On the ninth day, his prayers yielded fruit and people sought reconciliation,” he added.

With prime focus on the families, Bishop Fernandes mentioned that

several marriages are on the path of break-up. “Irrespective of the age, parents need to speak to and guide their children on the path of truth, and discipline them, in order to become responsible citizens,” he added.

Reflecting on the community prevailing



Commemoration of Death



emorating Fr. Agnelo's 86th Anniversary



in various parishes, the Bishop of Karwar urged the congregation to follow the first Christian community which was built on faith, unity and love. "I do not ask you to give away your belongings to others. But if you can afford, it is your moral duty to assist the needy, and thus help them grow into a holy community," he said.

"Devotion to Fr. Agnel should help people to grow in prayer. If we wish to follow in the footsteps of this saintly man, then we need to take some time

off from our busy schedule and spend time before the Blessed Sacrament," he appealed.

The Bishop of Satna Diocese, Madhya Pradesh, Rt. Rev. Mathew V, the Superior General of the Society of Pilar, Fr. Francis Carvalho, and the Vice-Postulator for the cause of the beatification of Ven Fr. Agnel De Souza, Fr. Hilario Fernandes Concelebrated. Fr. Max Gonsalves directed the Choir with soulful singing of hymns during the Celebration.

4 Medal Winners Selected for the National's



"State Inter-School Shooting Competition", Nashik 21 Nov. to 23 Nov.

6 shooters participated from Fr. Agnel School, Vashi.

4 of them won medals and were selected for the National's

1. Trisha Mukharge won gold in the U-19 Peep Sight Air Rifle for women
2. Sammah Bhattacharya won silver

in the U-17 Peep Sight Air Rifle for women

3. Quireniyas Mendonsa won bronze in the U-14 Peep Sight Air Rifle for men
4. Ipsita Jadhav won bronze in the U-17 Open Sight Air rifle for women

The National's in Pune is from 3rd December to 7th December

Agnelites from Ambarnath on a Trip to Manali

Exams done ! Holidays begin! What better way to spend the vacations than touring the beautiful North? Here comes the Annual National trip of Agnels Ambarnath.

Packed with loads of adventurous trails and beautiful sights, the journey began on 26th October'13 from Mumbai Central. Ferrying the entire group of

students and staff which totalled a whopping 87, the Golden Temple Mail reached Hazrat Nizamuddin on 27th October. Our destination was still a distance away. Best Western Maryland welcomed us in the wee hours of the morning in its full grandeur and glory. 28th October saw the first day of sightseeing starting with the enthralling Rock Gardens of Chandigarh. A true

masterpiece! A fine example of passion located with determination. Truly inspiring!

Moving further north we continued our journey to Manali. Welcoming us were the winding routes and breath-taking scenery. Inspite of being a busy tourist destination, the route was absolutely clean with minimal litter. Again Holiday Inn, Manali, welcomed us in the early hours of the morning on 28th October. Being tired after a long journey, the rest of the day was spent relaxing. Evening was spent in the company of the Almighty at Hadimba temple and the Buddhist monastery. Back at the shopping destination- Mall Road, all shopped their hearts out.

29th morning was the much-awaited

trip to Rohtang Pass. All geared up in rented outfits and gum boots, we enjoyed snow to the fullest. All returned to the hotel with fond memories. 30th October saw yet another exciting day as it was a time for adventure sports. Rappelling and river crossing saw the dare devils take their chance and enjoying to the brim. In the evening, it was time to pack our bags and depart.

On 1st November, the entire group reached Delhi and visited Fr. Agnel's in Gautam Nagar. After freshing up, and enjoying a sumptuous meal, we boarded our train. We returned on 2nd November with fond memories and great experiences!

See Photos on pg 19

Annual School Day at Gautam Nagar

The Annual Day celebration at Fr. Agnel School, Gautam Nagar on the 26th of October 2013 coincided with our Principal, Fr. Carvalho's birthday. The event began with a Prayer thanking the Lord for the successful completion of thirty four years of imparting education to children.

The Head Boy and Head Girl welcomed the Chief Guest, Shri Zuhair Bin Saghir, District Magistrate, Agra, with a bouquet of flowers. The Chief Guest, the Principal, Fr. Carvalho, Fr. Bento, Fr. Cidloy, Madam Swarna Goti and Madam Ritu Puri were invited to light the lamp as a symbolic gesture of aspiration for a nobler form of life. This was followed by the melodious rendition of the School dedication song composed by the Principal.

The gathering was taken by surprise when a choir of ex-students burst into exuberant music greeting Fr. Carvalho on his birthday against a backdrop of Mary holding baby Jesus in her arms. They also presented him a "bonsai" and expressed their gratitude to the Institution.

The Principal, in his address to the

audience, expressed his joy and pride at the presence of the Chief Guest, Shri Zuhair Bin Saghir, an alumnus. He also thanked Fr. Bento for his guidance and advice, and Fr. Cidloy for his youthful enthusiasm in achieving his dream. He expressed his thankfulness to the teachers, parents and students for their unstinted support. Outlining the pattern of education imparted at Agnel's, he emphasised the need to rise above the ordinary and seek "the higher, the deeper, the nobler and the more inclusive form of learning". He informed the gathering about the various ways by which the Agnel fraternity served the underprivileged.

The Chief Guest, Shri Zuhair Bin Saghir, cited instances from his life and urged the parents to let the children face the harsh realities of life instead of adopting any unfair means. He was presented a memento by the Principal as a token of appreciation and gratitude.

The students of classes VI-XI presented an Opera named 'The Me Inside', an authentic rendition of the Broadway musical, 'Jekyll and Hyde', interspersed with scenes from the life of the young

who are caught in the maelstrom of brands, infatuations, gen next, peer pressure and a million other things that shatter them. Spanning eleven scenes and twelve songs the Musical was a wake up call for the students and their parents to rethink their value system.

A Vote of Thanks was proposed by Father Bento followed by the "Curtain Call" by the Principal. The day's ceremony came to a close with the rendition of the School "Theme Song."

See Photos on Back Cover

Four New Deacons For Pilar Society

At a Solemn Liturgical Ceremony in the Chapel of the Mission Seminary on October 27, the Rector presented to Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrao four students of theology, Renato Andrade from Navelim, Michael Savio Fernandes from Sanguem, Milton Rodrigues from Vaddem-Sanguem and Stanley Cardozo from Curtorim, to be ordained deacons for the Society of Pilar. In his homily, the Archbishop explained to the faithful the meaning of the Diaconate Ministry in the context of the current Year of Faith and the forthcoming National Convention of Small Christian Communities which the Archdiocese is hosting. The Diaconate is a ministry of service par excellence in

the proclamation of the World, assisting at the Eucharist, and practising charity towards the faithful with a spirit of self-sacrifice and compassion as Jesus lived.

Fr. Francis Carvalho, Superior General of the Society of Pilar, spoke on the occasion, thanking the families of the Deacons for offering their sons to be members of the Society. He stressed on obedience to Superiors- that members should be ready and willing to go cheerfully to any place that the Superior sends them to on a mission. Speaking on behalf of the four deacons, Deacon Renato thanked the Society and the formators in particular.

"Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody. I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat."

— Mother Teresa

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The Joy of Christmas

-Savio Fernandes*



“Christus natus est nobis: venite, adoremus”. “Christ is born for us: Come, let us adore him”.

We live in a huge universe – there are more stars in the universe than there are grains of sand on all the beaches of our tiny Earth. That might make us feel pretty insignificant and pretty unimportant. However, with Christmas we celebrate with joy that, God who created our universe has come down to be born as Jesus Christ, to say that we really do matter. We are all of great worth, and come what may, God is with us to stay, and will stick with us as a companion, advocate, and friend.

As we joyfully celebrate, the coming among us of the Son of God, let us not forget the reason for His coming. He comes to each one as a personal Saviour, to save us by paying the price demanded of Him. Sin is responsible for the break down in our relations with God and with one another. We only have to look around us to be aware of the horrific things that are happening in our relations with one another. The violence, the wars and neglect, the corruption and wrongdoing are all indications of a broken humanity in which sin is endemic. And, if that is the way we treat one another, what about our relations with God who created us to love and adore Him? What hope is there for this broken humanity?

Yes, this Saviour, Jesus Christ, born in the humble surroundings of a stable in Bethlehem, is our hope, our “God with us”, our “Emmanuel”. He comes today to meet us as we are, not as we think we should be. And because there is neither “yesterday” nor “tomorrow” for Him, He is present to each one of us each day of our lives, making it a daily opportunity to welcome Him into our lives. Can we not make the Birth of this Child an everyday event in our lives, an occasion for opening our minds and hearts to Him as He stretches out His arms towards us in love; those very arms which He stretched out on a Cross to be our Saviour?

The joy of Christmas is a gift from the Child of Bethlehem. It is Jesus Himself who, when asking His followers to remain in His love, said: “ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy be complete” (John 15:11). May this “news of great joy that today a Saviour has been born to us” (Luke 2:11) touch our lives in such a way that all our “yesterdays” may be covered over by the mantel of His mercy, all our “tomorrows” may be illumined by the Light of His Spirit and all our “todays” may reflect the beauty of His presence in our lives.

My prayer is that each and every one of you experiences that inner joy which far surpasses anything that the world can offer.

* **“Savio Fernandes is an Information Security Professional who has the CISSP certification. He has also done his B.E. (Electronics) and has 18 years experience in the IT industry”**

“There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.”

— Mahatma Gandhi



FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

VARIOUS FAVOURS

Bangalore: By the blessing of Ven.Fr.Agnel I received many favours as stated below : 1) 32 years back I had many hurdles and problems regarding my marriage but after praying to Ven.Fr.Agnel every difficulty was solved. 2) My husband's company was closed down. He was worried about his dues, but he received all his dues and also got a new job. 3) We had a financial crisis as our bank was closed but we got all our savings safely from the bank. 4) My daughter succeeded in getting a good match. 5) My nephew had some legal problems which were properly sorted out through prayer to Ven.Fr.Agnel. For all these favours we thank Ven.Fr.Agnel. Our sincere thanks offering of ₹.2000 for orphan boys of the Ashram.

-Molly Varghese

CURE OF AILMENT

Ambernath: My three years old son was suffering from a stomach ailment. He was hospitalized at Lilavati. He could not pass stools. We prayed to Ven. Fr. Agnel and applied his mud relic on his stomach. Through his blessing he immediately passed a stool and all his reports were normal. In thanksgiving an offering of ₹.100.

-Yolande Dobson

STOMACH PAIN CURED

Virar: My son was suffering from continuous acidity problem and stomach pain. The doctor advised endoscopy test. I prayed to Ven.Fr.Agnel to cure him of this ailment. I am happy to say that through his blessing his ailment was cured and his endoscopy test report was normal. In thanksgiving an offering of ₹.500.

-M.D'Souza

PERMANENT JOB SECURED

Virar: During the last 8 years my son was working on a temporary basis. We were praying to Ven.Fr.Agnel that he may get a permanent job. Ven.Fr.Agnel heard our prayer. My son secured a permanent job. In thanksgiving an offering of ₹.7100.

-M.D'Souza

CURE OF MALIGNANT DISEASE

Anand (Gujarat): I was suffering from stomach ache. After some tests including sonography the doctor said there was a tumour effecting my kidney which had to be removed through surgery. After going through a post surgery test the doctor said I had to undergo chemotherapy. I was alarmed and approached Ven. Fr.Agnel to grant me healing. He heard my prayer and I am completely alright now. I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel and I am praying for his beatification.

-Delfina Vales

VARIOUS FAVOURS

Vasai (Merce): We are always praying to Ven.Fr.Agnel. Through his intercession we received many favours. All our wishes were fulfilled. In thanksgiving an offering of ₹.1000.

-Isabel Gonsalves

PRAYER ANSWERED

Virar: My gold neckless was robbed. I was very much upset. I started praying to Ven.Fr.Agnel for his help that I may get it back. I lodged a police complaint. Through the intercession of Ven. Fr.Agnel my gold neckless was found. In thanksgiving an offering of ₹.500.

-Joana Misquitta

PROMOTION SECURED

Vasai : For a long time I was trying to get promotion. All my efforts were in vain. As a last resort I had recourse to Ven.Fr.Agnel. I and my wife started attending Ven.Fr.Agnel's novena at Bandra. To my great surprise after completion of my novena my dream came true. I got a promotion as a chief officer in the Merchant Navy. In thanksgiving an offering of ₹.5000.

-Vianney Lemos

Life Was Cluttered then It's Best Now



I still remember the day I was newly admitted to this place which is better known as 'Fr. Agnel Balbhavan'. A new chapter in my life was yet to be started which I wasn't aware of.

At that time I was a shy kid with little confidence. I used to miss home and wanted to go back. But as time passed by I started loving this place more than anything, as I saw all the efforts that our Fathers, Brothers and Guardians put into our wellbeing. They do plenty of things for us because they love us and want to see us as better human beings, and successful professionals, who will contribute towards the betterment of our Nation.

Through this small expression of thankfulness I feel happy as I express a word of thanks to Fr. Almeida, Frs. Orlando, Dias, Russell who nurtured me as their own kid and gave me this invaluable privilege of receiving the gift of education.

A special word of gratitude goes to Sir Meneo Alfonso and Br. Raymond who work 24x7 for us. They shared valuable insights and taught us essential values. They always motivated us to do better and achieve the best. But not the least, our teachers put in all the efforts in cementing our skills to reach our goals.

-Sandeep Lohia (Vashi)

*Knowledge comes, but
wisdom lingers.*

-Alfred Lord Tennyson

Agnel has carved a career for me



I was admitted to the BalBhavan in the year 2003. I got an opportunity to start my career with Fr. Agnels. I was in Std II, when I joined the Institute. I am very grateful to all the Fathers, Brothers and Sir Meneo who taught me lessons on a life. I will never forget this Institute. This Balbhavan has given me lot of things in all aspects of my life. I secured 78% in the Std X. Currently I am doing an ITI course in Automobile Technology.

In the 1st year of ITI I secured 88% and I stood 1st among all the students. I got 3 awards for my performance. 1) The best student of the Institute. 2) 100% attendance 3) Academic Excellence. My aim is to be a good person & student.

-Amol Khade (Vashi)

God As Our Rock

*In King David's vein,
Let me entwine the skein,
In a colourful embroidery
That God makes of our lives;
Making us at all times
Proclaim with all who believe,
That God is our rock and redeemer
Our fortress and saviour;
Picking us up when we stumble,
And guiding us on the right path
Lest we take a tumble;
So that with St. Paul, we can say
"I can do all things
Through Christ who strengthens me,"
Because He is there in our griefs and sorrow,
And makes us want to follow
Where He leads us;
Knowing that He is merciful and kind
And has our good in mind,
Not letting us go through
More than we can bear;
So that when we come out unscathed
After all our ordeals, we can affirm
That God is and will be,
"The Rock of the Ages."
--Sandra Kay*

Out of Their Bounty

S. Bhatt	Navi Mumbai	100000	K.P. Joy	Kerala	5000	H. Karwatkar	Mumbai	1000
Ittoop M. Lonan	Kerala	50000	M. Cherian	Kerala	5000	M. D'Souza	Mumbai	1000
P. Srivastava	Mumbai	35000	M. Kurien	Mumbai	5000	V. Varghese	Delhi	1000
M. Rowlani	Australia	27177	F. Quadras	Mumbai	5000	H. Singh	Delhi	1000
Z. Joseph	Sharjah	25000	Y. Remedios	Dubai	4460	V. Pijwala	Gujarat	1000
H. Hembrom	Jharkhand	20210	J.D. Raphael	London	4020	M. Jaicob	Qatar	1000
M.I. Xavier	Thane	18000	J. D'Souza	Dubai	4000	P. Panchal	New Zealand	1000
A. Robinson	Australia	16740	L.J. Ferns	England	3882	J. D'Souza	Kuwait	1000
C. Ullattikullan	Canada	15689	T. Chellaya	Malaysia	3395	M. Xavier	Ahmedabad	1000
R.A. Koshy	U.S.A.	13523	P. Pujaj	U.S.A.	3333	K.H. Mistry	Mumbai	1000
M.A. Mazzuchi	U.S.A.	13362	M. Cabral	Australia	3260	S. Suresh	Kerala	1000
S. Saji	Al-Ain	13250	S. Bondal	Pune	3001	S. Hendricks	Pondicherry	1000
E.L. Monem	Dubai	13100	A. V. Dawat	Navi Mumbai	3001	C. Abraham	Kerala	1000
M.M. Nair	Mumbai	12000	A. Dias	Mumbai	3000	J. Bandekar	Solapur	1000
M.J. Pinto	Australia	10725	Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	3000	A. Joseph	Kerala	1000
H.Z. Bharucha	Secunderabad	10001	F.B. Bathena	Mumbai	3000	C.T. Chacko	Kerala	1000
A. Augustine	Kerala	10000	P. D'Souza	Canada	2968	P. Jose	Kerala	1000
S. Devanarayanan	Dubai	10000	J. Zacharias	U.S.A.	2519	Dr. James Paul	Kerala	1000
S. Castelino	Dubai	10000	M. Thomas	Kerala	2500	C. E. Dawson	Canada	879
J.M. Machado	Mumbai	10000	V. Shah	Oman	2500	R. Joseph	Kerala	800
K. Kapadia	Pune	10000	P.M. D'Abreo	Mumbai	2500	A. Joseph	Kerala	750
F.I. Creado	Mumbai	10000	L. D'Souza	Mira Road	2000	D. Louis	Bahrain	705
R. D. Britto	Nallasopara	10000	T. Ruskin D. Rose	Mumbai	2000	C.A. Gomes	U.K.	674
S. Menezes	Mumbai	10000	P. Govekar	Mumbai	2000	S.E. Napoleon	London	669
M.V. Martin	U.S.A.	10000	M. Manek	Mumbai	2000	M. Macaskill	Glasgow	657
S. Gandhi	U.K.	7988	M. T. Pinto	U.A.E.	2000	S.B. Mehta	Mumbai	555
S. Tom	U.K.	7907	E. Abraham	Kerala	2000	A.M. Jose	Kerala	501
C. Hendricks	Australia	6231	E.M. Longman	Delhi	2000	M.J. Jose	Aurangabad	501
P. Bajaj	U.S.A.	6200	K.a. David	Pune	2000	L. Shetty	London	501
G. Varghese	Kalyan	6000	Techno Products	Chennai	2000	M.J. Lam	Nashik	501
B.G. Fernandes	Delhi	6000	George K.V.	Delhi	2000	G. Veeramani	Chennai	500
F. Fernandes	Mumbai	6000	A.K. Vincent	Kerala	2000	M. James	Kerala	500
S.V. Rebello	U.S.A.	5360	A. Alangaram	T.N.	2000	K. Ingersoll	U.S.A.	500
M. D'Monte	Australia	5281	R. Varghese	U.A.E.	1955	S. Inigo	T.N.	500
D. Mathew	U.S.A.	5251	S. Pereira	Mumbai	1500	J. George	Oman	500
F. D'Silva	U.S.A.	5232	S. Barboza	Mumbai	1500	J. Jaipaul	Chennai	500
W. Draper	U.S.A.	5201	B. Mccarra	Mumbai	1500	E.V. Sebastian	Kerala	500
D. Kjeldgaard	U.S.A.	5189	J. Mathew	Kerala	1500	Paul D'Costa	Karnataka	500
D. Young	Canada	5121	A. Fernandes	London	1489	A. Joseph	Kerala	500
B. George	Dubai	5100	C. Hendricks	Australia	1458	F.G. Xavier	Kerala	500
R. Solanki	Ahmedabad	5000	E.A. Remedios	Dubai	1414	P. Joseph	Kerala	500
B. Sequeira	S. Arabia	5000	I.C. Correa	Mangalore	1250	P.J. Jose	Kerala	500
B.S. Mehta	Oman	5000	M. Peter	Thane	1200	T. Peter	Kerala	500
A. Cherian	Abu Dhabi	5000	P. Pais	Mumbai	1200	T. Phillip	Karnataka	500
S. D'Souza	Dubai	5000	J.L. Pathiyil	U.S.A.	1190	A. Paulose	Kerala	500
V. Pereira	Dubai	5000	C. Monteiro	Mumbai	1100	V. Pijwala	Anand	500
S. Omprakash	Singapore	5000	N. Bajaj	U.S.A.	1058	I. Stephen	Chennai	500
S.S. Gomes	Dubai	5000	M.R. De Souza	London	1050	G. Thomas	Kerala	500
T. George	Aubu Dhabi	5000	A. Vaghasiya	Vasai	1008	S. Chacko	Kerala	500
B. Chakraborthy	Mumbai	5000	J. Shah	Indore	1000	S. Fernandes	Kerala	500
J.A. Saldanha	Mumbai	5000	G. D'Souza	Mumbai	1000	E. David	Bangalore	500
G. T. Vaz	Pune	5000	S.S. Mingaonkar	Nashik	1000	S. Mistry	Pune	500
R. D'Souza	Udupi	5000	R. Martin	Vasai	1000	M. George	Kerala	500
S.D. D'Souza	Mumbai	5000	s. D'Mello	Nallasopara	1000	E. Varghese	Kerala	500
R.D. Muniz	Bhayandar	5000	L. Patel	Mumbai	1000	M. James	Kerala	500
A. Mehra	Mumbai	5000	S. Correa	Virar	1000	M. Menezes	Goa	500

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