

FR

December 2018



AGNEL

SHRAM NEWS

May Peace
Reign

FR. AGNEL
ASHRAM

NEWS

December 2018

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VEN. FR. AGNEL'S 150th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY ON MONDAY, 21st JANUARY 2019

Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandstand, Bandra
(W), Mumbai - 400 050.

Ven. Fr. Agnelo D'Souza

Programme

Special Novena Services

12th to 20th January 2019

Daily

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

Evening : 5.30 p.m. : Novena Service in, Marathi & Gujarati followed by blessing with the Relic.

Evening : 6.00 p.m. : Holy Mass and Novena Prayer in English followed by blessing with the Relic.

N.B. : On Sunday 13th & 20th January all Masses and Novena Services will be held as on normal Sundays.

21st January, 2019

150th Birth Anniversary of Venerable Fr. Agnelo

Morning : Masses followed by Prayers for favours in English and blessings with the Relic at 7.00 a.m.

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

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. Agnelo.

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

Rev. Fr. Superior

Fr. Agnel Ashram
Bandstand, Bandra (West),
Mumbai - 400 050.

*Bus No. : 211 : Special Bus Service to ply from
Bandra Railway Station to Fr. Agnel Ashram Gate.*

Love and Love alone is the Answer

One thing that you can predict with complete certainty, is uncertainty. The greatest thing that we know for sure at all times, is that we do not know what will happen next. Life is full of uncertainties and yet probably mankind's greatest and most intense activities are focused on the future, on things and events, yet to come which unfortunately are not under our control.

What we will do the next week, or the next day, nay for the next hour too is uncertain, and yet much of our life is engaged in planning and providing for tomorrow, for the future and when even as we make plans for tomorrow, and the days to come, we are very sure about the uncertainty, and that is why the Insurance guy next door, makes so much money out of you. Often our relationship with God and the unknown is based on the fear of what might come to us, and so by making offerings, promises and even keeping fasts we pretend that the uncertainty will be managed.

It would be interesting to know

how and why the Superpower that we want to keep in good spirits to keep away our uncertainty, can help us. It is common knowledge that some of great monuments created by people in memory of a great event, or simply to pay tribute and keep the Supreme Authority in good spirit are so done, hoping that he will prevent us from harm. But why should God or for that matter any Supreme authority be pleased with what we do and thus remove our uncertainties?

On the other hand most religious traditions are built around the belief that God or the supreme authority engages himself with mankind for different reasons, many times to punish and other times, to reward individuals or groups for what they have done.

Christmas or the birth of Jesus Christ in time, which the world celebrates primarily for its entertainment or commercial value, is entirely a different story. Jesus Christ is born in history

in an environment which is entirely contrary to how we would ever expect God to be born. In his birth he defeats radically our understanding of God as to be, powerful, rich and fully in control of everything.

Jesus is born in an environment where even the place and time of his birth is sorely uncertain. And yet, the story of Christmas is a story of complete certainty, the greatest certainty that man could never even imagine, the certainty of LOVE.

Christmas is the story of certainty, the greatest that could exist, a certainty that even in the midst of uncertainty we earnestly desire. Each time we carry out an activity that is meant to propitiate or make God happy, has deep within it, the strong hope that God will heed my prayer, will give me what I am pleading for, because HE LOVES ME.

Christmas is the story of certainty, the greatest that could exist, a certainty that even in the midst of uncertainty we earnestly desire.

The greatest attribute of God, that we ignore most of the time, is also the one that is deeply embedded in our belief system,

a belief system that is universal. The primitive man who worships the forces of nature and offers sacrifices to it, even as he does not know it explicitly, does so because he expects for some strange reason unknown to him, that God will grant him or her desire, because God is good, God is a God of Love.

The magnitude of differences, prejudice and hatred that govern most of the things we do, is indeed contrary to the very core of what we truly believe, i.e. that we as human beings believe in love, believe that God will protect us, keep us from harm and grant us our desires because God, by any name known is a God who loves.

The story of Jesus Christ, son of God, born of man in the most wretched of circumstances, in the midst of complete poverty and deprivation, is the complete opposite of the God of our worship, of our temples, churches and mosques, and yet the best description and revelation of a God who is what deep down, every man, woman

or child yearns for, the desire to be certain. And the greatest certainty is the certainty to feel loved and be loved.

CHRISTMAS is the story that God tells man, the story that demonstrates that there is complete certainty, that every man, woman and child, is born to be sure that he or she is called to love, and that he or she is loved by God at all times.

If all the religious leaders and their writings had only spread this narrative that God loves man and that the yearning inside us, even when unknown to us, is an yearning for love, this world would truly be a different world. The song of the angels who the shepherd heard singing “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will”. is the assurance of complete certainty to every man, woman and

child born on this planet, that there is nothing to fear, that there is nothing that we need to be anxious about, because we have been assured of God’s love. LOVE IS THE ONLY ANSWER.

To be able to love and spread love around, depends on how intensely we are able to assure ourselves of the awareness that God loves. Thank God for Christmas, because that poor, lonely infant who is born completely deprived of even basic comfort, is the assurance of the greatest certainty, that God loves, and when God loves, there is no uncertainty, or fear or sadness, because Love is the answer, the Love that God has demonstrated to man, and the love that man has to share with his fellows.

HAVE A BLESSED AND LOVING CHRISTMAS.

-Fr. J. A. Carvalho.



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

Reji Viji, Fujairah

We are sending you a cheque of ₹.5000 as our thanks giving offering for favours received through the intercession of Ven.Fr.Agnel. Kindly pray for us, especially for my son to get a good job. Thanking you.

Marceline D’Souza, Bangalore

Enclosed is a D.D. for ₹.10,000 for the benefit of the destitute children in your Balbhuvan. Please pray for us, especially for my sister, Philomena Sequeira, who has not been keeping good health.

Jessy Dionatius, Kerala

Enclosed is a cheque of ₹.6000 for your

charitable works. Kindly pray that we may get a good sale for our house, marriage of our 2 daughters and good health of our family. Thank you.

Salvadore R. Alphonso, Kuwait

Please accept my gift of ₹.5000 for the use of the destitute children under your care. Please remember us in your daily prayers.

Honeymol Wilson, Australia

I am sending my contribution of ₹.10,000 towards the sponsorship of my ward Savio Kerketa. Kindly request the children to pray for us. Thank you

It's Christmas, Rejoice And Be Glad

-Leon Bent

It's Christmas once again! Rejoice and be glad! May we catch and live some of this spirit as we commemorate the Christ-Child's birth with *joie de vivre*!

Joy is the true gift of Christmas, not expensive presents that demand time and money. We can transmit cheer simply through: a warm hug, a sweet smile, an appreciative word, a kind gesture, a gentle caress, a tender look, a life-giving greeting, healing forgiveness, an act of mercy. Let us seek, in particular, to communicate the deepest exhilaration, that of knowing God, in Christ. We pray that God's liberating mirth may shine out in our lives during this festive season.

Let us consider God's messenger's words at the Annunciation. He does not address Mary with the usual Hebrew salutation *shalom* – peace be with you – but with the Greek greeting formula *chaire*, which we might well translate with the word, “Hail,” (cf. Lk.1:28, 42). It is only right, then, to draw out the true meaning of the word *chaire*: rejoice! This exclamation from the heavenly attendant marks the true beginning of the New Testament.

“Rejoice,” pronounced by the angel immediately opens the door to the peoples of the world: the universality of the Christian message is evident. Archangel Gabriel's fervent and jubilant words to Mary take up and bring into the present, the prophecy of Zeph.3:14-17: “Rejoice, daughter of Zion: shout, Israel...the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst.”

“Rejoice, full of grace!” One additional aspect of the greeting *chaire* is worth noting. It connects joy and grace. In Greek, these two words, *chara* (calm delight, exceeding gaiety) and *charis* (grace/God's magnanimity) are derived from the same root. Hence, whoops of joy and divine embellishment and empowerment, belong together.

The word reappears during the Holy Night on the lips of the angel who says to the shepherds: “I bring you good tidings of great joy” (Lk. 2:10). Joy appears in these texts as the particular gift of the Holy Spirit (Gen.5:22), the true sending down to earth of the Redeemer; and the glory of the Lord shines upon them. “They were filled with fear” (Lk.22:9). But, the angel takes away their panic by announcing, “a great joy, will come to all people; for, to you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk.2:10f).

“When the angel went away from them...the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go over to Bethlehem, and witness this phenomenon.’ And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger” (Lk.2:15f). The shepherds hurried! How many Christians act with urgency, where God is concerned?

For the sheep-tenders, who had seen God's glory shining in the meadows, hills and dales, this is sign enough. They see inwardly. They realize that the angel's words are true and return home with elation. They eulogize God and praise him for what they had heard and seen (cf. Lk.2:20).

At this point our Bible text comes in, for it is a report on how those who witnessed the first Christmas expressed spontaneous exuberance, subtle silence, sublime simplicity, scintillating gladness: “When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told to them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. The herdsmen returned, acclaiming and rhapsodizing God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told” (cf. Lk. 2:17-20).

They became zealous, fiery, and the first evangelizers of the Jesus-event, with contagious

exhilaration. Can we doubt that the sheep-carers had something astonishingly exalted to narrate? Hardly! For, if their story was not worth talking about, then, no story that has ever been told is passionate, profound, engaging, animated and meaningful enough, as that of the ‘Boy-Child’s Incarnation.

“And, suddenly, there was with the angel, a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace among men with whom he is pleased’” (Lk.2:12-14). And, immediately psalms begin to inhabit the hills; the air is hallelujah! Hidden harps! Dormant songs! Cosmic mellifluousness!

Christianity has always understood that the speech of angels is delightful melody, in which all the glory and ebullience that they proclaim becomes tangibly present. And so, from that moment, the angels’ lyrical panegyric has never gone silent. It has continued down the centuries in consistently new forms, and it resounds ever new at the fiesta of Jesus’ birth. It is only natural that simple believers would then hear the shepherds’ soft refrain too; and to this day they join in their carolling on the Holy Night, broadcasting in magnificent song that, from then on, until the end of time, is bestowed to all people.

The “glory” of God is real. God is awesome, and this is truly a reason for intense bliss: it comprises truth, goodness and eternal beauty. Joy is always part of the Christmas message. But it’s an ecstasy

that comes from the heart, rather than from the external trappings that, we sometimes mistake for essentials. Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI highlighted how: “We realize that today’s world, where God is absent, is dominated by fear and uncertainty.” Nonetheless, may “the words ‘be joyful because God is with you and with us,’ truly open a new time” (cf. Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth, the Infancy Narratives*, Bloomsbury, pp.73-79).

It’s easy to associate transports of rapture with Christmas flavour. The end of the high-spirited preparation and waiting in joyful hope, during Advent, the scintillating music, the nostalgic carols, the sparkling, eye-catching decorations, impressively-contrived ‘fashion parades’ by pencil-thin damsels, even for Christmas Mass, the iconic and emblematic glowing star, the brilliantly-lit-decorated Christmas tree, and the reminiscing and festivities here, there, everywhere, of the sanctifying birth of the Boy-Child, make our “tidings of great joy,” as natural as freezing, glacial snow in Antarctica, especially during winter.

Now, this Gold Nugget: Let us pray that the incredibly liberating joy of the ‘Babe-in-the Manger’ radiates in our lives, forever!

And, this final flourish! “Christmas...is a Liturgy that sings [in mellow tone] of the new covenant between the God of eternity and the man of history!” (St. Pope Pius VI).

“Christmas waves a magic wand
over this world, and behold,
everything is softer and more
beautiful.”

-Norman Vincent Peale

Social Inclusion Through Spiritual Vision

- by CL Gulati

Most of us would agree that we face a crisis of character across the globe. Materialistic values and outlook have weakened the fabric of society to the point where selfishness has become endemic. Higher human values that spring from awareness of the spiritual basis of our being must be re-awakened if the crisis is to be resolved. To facilitate this reawakening, holistic education, encompassing spiritual, moral, cultural and intellectual development is required.

We find that health, wealth and happiness are inseparable; they all go together and cannot be enjoyed in the true sense if only some have them and others do not have them. We can progress only if divine virtues are ingrained in human character.

Religion is said to be the vehicle of spiritual awakening, moral consciousness and socio-cultural values that enliven a well-knit society. But polluted by brutal fanaticism, religion has lost its credibility as a peaceful path to harmonious progress. Instead of uniting people, religion has in itself become the major dividing force and impediment to social development.

Physical efficiency and intellectual alertness are dangerous, if spiritual illiteracy prevails. Feuds and agitations that are a common feature of modern society are the result of polluted minds untouched by spiritual lustre. Study of genesis and fall of different civilisations by historian Arnold Toynbee reveals that, "each time people lost faith in religion, its civilisation succumbed to social disintegration. The new civilisation that replaced such downfall was inspired by true religion through spiritual awakening." Physical poverty is a curse and spiritual deprivation is worse. The human mind, therefore, requires a spiritual universe for itself.

The fundamental outcome of the UN Rio Conference held on 12 February 2013 for Sustainable Development was that we are heading towards a set of economic, social and environmental crises and the only way for a dramatic change is to change attitude and awareness and recognise it as a spiritual issue, a challenge that goes to the core of who we are as human beings. Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty and advancing economic growth, these are one and the same fight where spirituality could come to our rescue.

The Sant Nirankari Mission is of the firm opinion that every kind of discrimination or inequality, including socio-economic and gender can better be sorted out through spirituality.

He who is not spiritually aware about himself cannot have any peace and he who does not have peace cannot foster peaceful co-existence. Self-awareness is the outcome of Self-realisation. The same divine spirit permeates all, whether man or woman, rich or poor. Hence, it is incumbent to treat and love all alike as human beings. In the absence of actual knowledge, God is different for different persons and for the same person on different occasions. The concept of one God for all foresees the idea of one religion for all.

Capturing the roots of all inequalities and discriminations through Vedic philosophy, 'vasudhaiva kutumbkam', Sant Nirankari Mission guides the world towards an enduring relationship with God, so that the concept of oneness becomes a peoples' mission and the feeling of 'wholeness' is inculcated along the feeling of 'Oneness', reaching the state where all feel, 'Finally we are one family'.

Courtesy - The Times of India

Christmas-

Solidarity of God with Man

-By Christine D'Sylva

I appeal to you brothers by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree that there be no divisions amongst you but you be united in the same mind and the same judgement.- Corinthians 1.10

For just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body though many are one body so it is with Christ. Corinthians 12:12

The Christmas story is a universal call to solidarity. 2000 years ago, the world was technologically inferior compared to today. Yet one factor remains constant- it was still a world of injustice, bigotry, prejudice and sin.

In that chaotic world when people awaited the Saviour long promised to lead them to Salvation, God finally sent his only begotten son, Jesus Christ.

Christmas is celebrated as a feast of joy, celebration and cheer. Yet, Christmas is one period in the year that reinforces that God indeed dwells in each one of us. We are fashioned in his image and he took a human form to express his solidarity for mankind.

Many people find it hard to believe that God can assume a human form, yet if we believe that God is capable of anything and everything then why not?

When Jesus came in a human form to Earth, suddenly man did not need to gaze at the Heavens to understand and see God. He was right in front of him, making him aware that God is forever seeking man, not just the other way around. Man has an eternal quest for God, for it is like a seed implanted in him for the moment of his conception. But what man forgets is that God too seeks solidarity with man. The two seem interconnected, each one joined together akin to the relationship Christ has with his church. But

with one difference. Man needs God but God does not need man for his happiness. Yet, God loves mankind so much that he seeks to become close to man and dwell in his heart.

What more can mankind ask from God when he sent his only son Jesus Christ into this world? Jesus Christ did not enter this world as a Prince or a wealthy man. He came as a poor carpenter's son, born in a lowly manger and his friends were fishermen who were his disciples. He did not crave wealth or great honour but humbled himself to walk with man sharing his joy, pain and sorrow.

This experience of Jesus on Earth should comfort us in our journey through life. For how then can Jesus fail to be sympathetic to man and understand his needs, pain and suffering on Earth.? He understands us so well that even before we pray he already knows what we need. It is this humanness adopted by Jesus that makes God more real. For the first time in history, man does not need to gaze upwards to find God but discovers that God is approachable for he walked amongst men. Nothing else can depict God's greater solidarity for mankind than this.

This Christmas as we enjoy the festivities, let us take time to reflect on God's greatest gift of solidarity for mankind which was sending his only son Jesus to walk amongst us, to heal, teach and ultimately suffer and die for our sins and transgressions. His Resurrection was the ultimate triumph that reminds us of our ultimate triumph that after death, we will gain Eternal Life. A life when we will be reunited with our Creator and enjoy an even greater solidarity that will last forever.

Christmas will always be as long as we stand heart to heart and hand in hand. Christmas is the best reminder to us of God's divine love and solidarity for mankind. Merry Christmas.

Fr. Agnelo's Death Anniversary at Bandra

November reigns in a shower of thunderous blessings at **Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra**, as footfalls multiply in the run-up to the celebration of Fr. Agnelo's Death Anniversary on 20th November. Proceeded by a well-attended nine day novena to satiate the spiritual hunger of the devotees of Fr. Agnelo coming from all walks of life and also to storm heavens with prayers for sainthood for the Venerable, set the perfect stage for Fr. Agnelo's Day.

The main celebration of the day began with a brass-band welcome by the Balbhawan boys to the archbishop of Mumbai, Oswald Cardinal Gracias. Stunning and graceful dance performances by the students of Agnel's, Ambarnath and CRCE, Bandra set a perfect tone to the evening's celebrations preparing the hearts of the audience for the celebratory Eucharist.

The Archbishop too at the Eucharist, especially in his soul stirring homily led the hearts of the faithful to ponder diligently on the Holy Life of Fr. Agnelo as a model of holiness through the simple yet holy and supremely committed living of his vocation and ministry.

The Eucharist concluded with the novena to Fr. Agnelo in Gujarati and Marathi, with many in the gathering shouting praises to Fr. Agnel – Agnel Baba ki Jai! As the stillness of the night was pierced by these chanting's, all were inspired to ceaselessly pray for the early canonization of Fr. Agnelo in gratitude for touching each of our lives with the Hand of God through the numerous miracles he works in our lives. Fr. Agnelo thus continuously prods us to live holy and worthy lives to be richly blessed by God in our day to day lives.

Agnelites at Ooty

Escaping Mumbai's heat, here they go enjoying Ooty's Treat! This Diwali was indeed a chilling experience for **Agnelites (Ambarnath)** as they enjoyed their national trip to Ooty. Starting off from Mumbai, a long yet fun filled train journey to Coimbatore was greatly enjoyed by students. Heading towards Ooty from Coimbatore was indeed a delight to the eyes, as the bus drove across the roads with tall sturdy trees on both sides. Their stay at the

Monarch Palace, Ooty was very comfortable and joyous as various fun filled activities like DJ session, bonfire, antakshri etc. were organized. Children's day was celebrated with a lot of fun game and entertaining programs for the students. The entire tour was well planned with visits to famous places like the Ooty lake , Botanical garden, Tea factory, Chocolate Factory etc. After enjoying the scenic beauty and an extremely pleasant weather of Ooty,



Agnelites enjoying the boat ride at Ooty lake.



All smiling faces at the Botanical Garden, Ooty.

Ven. Fr. Agnelo a



The entrance procession-Archbishop of Mumbai, Oswald Cardinal Gracias along with the Clergy



Archbishop of Mumbai, Oswald Cardinal Gracias along with Fr. Peter D'Souza, Fr.S.Almeida and other members of the Clergy

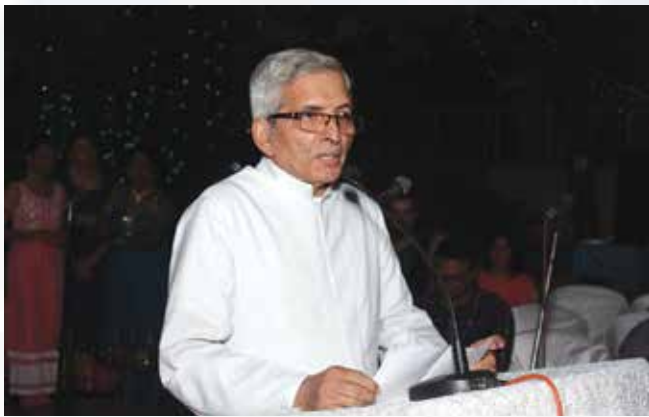


Archbishop of Mumbai, Oswald Cardinal Gracias celebrating the E



A prayer dance performed by

Model of Holiness



Rev. Fr. Peter D'Souza giving a welcome speech.



Crowd at Fr. Agnel's Death Anniversary



Eucharist



Celebrating 60 years of Ashram Foundation



Fr. Agnel School, Ambernath



Agnel Happenings

the clan headed to Mysore. On the way they experienced the Bandipur Jungle Safari which was an amazing experience for life. The next visit was the 'Chamarajendra Zoological Park' commonly known as the 'Mysore Zoo'. It is one of the most popular zoos in India and a home to a wide range of species. It is the most popular attraction of the city. The last and the

most prominent place of visit was the Mysore Palace which is the historical palace and a royal residence, which is indeed rich in culture and heritage and gives an absolute flash back of the kings that reigned in Mysore. The students were also taken to the well-known market places for shopping. Finally the Agnelites were back to Mumbai with lots of memories to cherish.

Inauguration of Agnel School of Law

The Program for the inauguration of the Agnel School of Law and the launch of the Agnel Badminton Academy was held on October 06, 2018.

The Chief Guest of the Day was Most Rev. Dr. Theodore Mascarenhas the Secretary General of CBCI. The Guest of Honour was



Education Complex gave the Welcome address.

Rev. Fr. S. Almeida spoke on the high standards set up at the Agnel Technical Education Complex in Navi Mumbai during its journey of 36 years.



Padmabhushan Pullela Gopichand, the Chief National Coach and the Founder of Pullela Gopichand Academy and Badminton Gurukul.

The other dignitaries present were Shri. Jayawant Sutar, Mayor of Navi Mumbai and Shri. Avinash Lad the Deputy Mayor of Navi Mumbai.

Fathers, Sisters and various Principals from Minority Catholic Institutions and representatives from the University of Mumbai and the Bar Council of India were present. There were law students and badminton trainees with parents and coaches of the Badminton Academy.

The Dignitaries and the august Audience were welcomed by a dance performance 'Ganesh vandana' a song cum dance of invocation performed by the students of Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School. Rev. Fr. Saturnino Almeida, the Managing Director of Agnel Technical

He mentioned that It was a moment of pride to launch Agnel School of Law, the first ever catholic minority law college in western India. Rev. Fr. Almeida introduced the new Principal of Agnel School of Law Dr. Daisy Alexander who comes with more than two decades of experience in legal education. It was also a special moment for Sports at Agnels as it inaugurated its state of the art Agnel Badminton Academy.

Most Rev. Dr. Theodore Mascarenhas electronically laid the foundation stone of the new building of the much awaited Agnel School of Law. and blessed the same as well as the Badminton Academy.

Padmabhushan Pullela Gopichand launched the Badminton Academy in true badminton style by way of a small match between him and Rev. Fr. Saturnino Almeida.

PadmabhushanPullela Gopichand spoke from his heart and stated “In this day and age, physical literacy is necessary to face challenges and competitions because today’s challenges are different. Every child, including the last one in the class, should have a positive experience and get the opportunity to take active part in sports and physical fitness”

Most Rev. Dr. Theodore Mascarenhas advised

the faculties and students of Agnel School of Law to produce good lawyers and stated that the world needs truthful and merciful lawyers. He further advised that we need to tread on the path of honesty, charity, compassion and care for the under privileged with truth and Justice.

The Vote of thanks was proposed by Alumn I Prasad Menon, CEO of Centre for incubation and Business Acceleration (CIBA).

An Evening to Remember

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth fruit in its season, whose leaf shall not wither; and in whatever he does he shall prosper.

Psalms 1:3

Father Agnel School, New Delhi celebrated its 40th anniversary on 2nd and 3rd November 2018. The evening was the culmination of years of hard work and dedication of many individuals. It was a moment to honor the enduring legacy of the school and salute its dynamic leaders. From the modest beginning at D-15, South Extension II in 1979 to FAS Gautam Nagar in 2018, the school has come a long way. The branches of this verdant tree stretches to Noida, Greater Noida and Vaishali touching and transforming thousands of lives. The Agnel Ashram Fathers gave of themselves in the service of educating the young of the land and the evening was an expression of gratitude to God for all the happy times and accomplishments; for the struggles and hardships that strengthened their spirit and deepened their faith in God.

The occasion was graced by the Honorable Chief Guest His Lordship Joseph Kurian, Justice of the Supreme Court of India, Very Reverend Dr. Sebastiao Mascarenhas, Superior General of Pilar Society and other distinguished guests, well wishers, benefactors, parents and students.

The School appreciated the commendable services of the 31 teaching faculty and 15 auxiliary staff who completed 20 years of service to the school. This spoke volumes of the loyalty

and dedication of the team of teachers and it also spoke highly of the school leadership who made this place so special that they did not want to leave.

The high point of the evening was the staging of the musical Jesus Christ Superstar, one of Andrew Lloyd Weber’s most acclaimed works. It is an attempt to tell the story of Christ in a manner that appeals to the young, highlighting only some salient parts of the life of Jesus. The musical was a in-house production that tested the capacity of the school leadership to stage one of the most challenging musicals ever. The cast and crew pulled off an astounding performance that received such rare approbation from the audience.

The grand finale was a jubilant close to 40 years of tireless striving towards perfection. Even as the school savoured this moment, they knew that their quest for excellence is an onward journey that will stretch into the horizon. Their faith in God is the wind beneath their wings and they pledged to soar higher and be the BIG HEARTS and BRAVE MINDS envisioned by the school.

The school is forever indebted its Principal Fr. J. A. Carvalho for steering this ship through fair and rough weather.

The Peace and Joy of Christmas

-P.A. D'Mello

Christmas is the time of Peace, Joy, Exchange of Gifts and goodwill. It is a divine gift offered to all people of goodwill. It was the goodwill that the angel choir called for two thousand years ago. "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace to people of goodwill". (Lk. 2:14) There cannot be rejoicing and charity without peace in society. Peace will remain a distant dream in a society driven by disparities, deprivation and destitution.

A country is at peace with itself and its neighbours only when the people are happy, free from hunger and want and have work to keep themselves busy and contented. Unfortunately the economic situation in the country is far from rosy. Almost half the population is hovering around the poverty line. If we have true peace in our country we will be able to overcome most of the problems confronting us.

The Christmas message is a message of universal love and peace. The world longs for peace. There cannot be peace without the Prince of Peace. One who asks for peace must accept the terms of peace. After all one of the foundations

of peace is brotherliness – and this can only become a reality only by bringing peoples of different races and creeds, classes and culture to realize that they are all members of the same great human family and therefore, the good of all is contained in the good of each other.

Today when we look around we find that violence, terrorism, war and religious fundamentalism are still prevalent in India and many parts of the world. Efforts are being made by Governments and interested parties to bring about peaceful settlements, but it is a fragile tenuous peace that does not hold. The peace the world gives is not the peace Jesus offers: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, I do not give peace to you as the world gives." (Jn.14:27).

Christmas is a festival of Peace and Joy which comes from encountering Him personally and the antidote for all the hurt and sadness in the world. Let us, therefore, during this Holy Season of Christmas pray fervently that love, peace and harmony prevail all over the world.

Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of Love.

-Hamilton Wright Mabie

Fr. Agnel Ashram - Bandra **MASSES and NOVENAS ON SUNDAYS**

MORNING			
TIME	MASS	TIME	NOVENA
07:00 a.m.	English	07:45 a.m.	English
08:00 a.m.	Konkani	08:45 a.m.	Konkani
09:30 a.m.	English	10:15 a.m.	English
TIME	NOVENA	TIME	MASS
10.30 a.m.	Tamil	11.00 a.m.	Tamil
EVENING			
TIME	NOVENA	TIME	MASS
03.00 p.m.	Gujarati & Marathi	03.30 p.m.	Marathi
06:15 p.m.	English	06:30 p.m.	English
07:15 p.m.	English	07:30 p.m.	English

Weekdays Mass in English at 6.00 p.m.

Novena Prayers and Kissing of Relic are held on every Saturday after 6.00 p.m.

Mass Favours obtained, petitions and offerings may kindly be sent to :

Rev. Fr. Superior

Fr. Agnel Ashram

P.O. Box – 6656, Bandstand,

Bandra (W), Mumbai – 400 050.

Tel : 67114000.

Fax : 67114100.

Email : agnelashramnews@gmail.com

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

Why We Need Secular Ethics Beyond Religion

-Dalai Lama

Clearly, something is seriously lacking in the way we humans are going about things. But what is it that we lack? The fundamental problem is that at every level, we are giving too much attention to the external, material aspects of life while neglecting moral ethics and inner values.

By inner values I mean the qualities that we all appreciate in others, and toward which we all have a natural instinct, bequeathed by our biological nature as animals that survive and thrive only in an environment of concern, affection, and warm-heartedness – or in a single word, compassion. The essence of compassion is a desire to alleviate the suffering of others and to promote their well-being. This is the spiritual principle from which all other positive inner values emerge. We all appreciate in others qualities of kindness, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and generosity, and in the same way, we are all averse to displays of greed, malice, hatred, and bigotry. So actively promoting the positive inner qualities of the human heart that arise from our core disposition toward compassion, and learning to combat our more destructive propensities, will be appreciated by all. And the first beneficiaries of such a strengthening of our inner values will, no doubt, be ourselves....

Certainly, religion has helped millions of people in the past, helps millions today, and will continue to help millions in the future. But for all its benefits in offering moral guidance and meaning in life, in today's secular world, religion alone is no longer adequate as a basis for ethics. One reason for this is that many people in the world no longer follow any particular religion. Another reason is that, as the peoples of the world become ever more closely interconnected in an age of globalisation and in multicultural societies, ethics based on any one religion would

only appeal to some of us.... In the past, when peoples lived in relative isolation from one another – as we Tibetans lived quite happily for many centuries behind our wall of mountains – the fact that groups pursued their own religiously based approaches to ethics posed no difficulties. Today, however, any religion-based answer to the problem of our neglect of inner values can never be universal, and so will be inadequate. What we need today is an approach to ethics that makes no recourse to religion and can be equally acceptable to those with faith and those without: a secular ethics.

This statement may seem strange coming from someone who from a very early age has lived as a monk in robes. Yet I see no contradiction here. My faith enjoins me to strive for the welfare and benefit of all sentient beings, and reaching out beyond my own tradition, to those of other religions and those of none, is entirely in keeping with this.

I am confident that it is both possible and worthwhile to attempt a new secular approach to universal ethics. My confidence comes from my conviction that all of us, all human beings, are basically inclined or disposed toward what we perceive to be good. Whatever we do, we do because we think it will be of some benefit. At the same time, we all appreciate the kindness of others. We are all, by nature, oriented toward the basic human values of love and compassion. We all prefer the love of others to their hatred. We all prefer others' generosity to their meanness. ...I believe the time has come to find a way of thinking about spirituality and ethics that is beyond religion.

-Courtesy - The Times of India



Fr. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

PRAYERS ANSWERED

Pondicherry: I was facing some difficulties to get my visa to Kuwait to join my husband. I wanted to stay with him and lead a family life. I have great faith in Ven.Fr.Agnel and prayed earnestly to him to help me through his heavenly intercession. I am now happy to say that all legal channels were overcome and I obtained my visa to join my husband in Kuwait. My thanks offering to Ven.Fr. Agnel follows.

-Janet Vincent

SUCCESSFUL MAJOR OPERATION

Dadar: I had to undergo a major operation and was under great tension. I fervently prayed to Ven.Fr.Agnel for the success of the operation and healing touch. I am now very happy to inform you that by the grace of Ven.Fr.Agnel the operation was successful and I have regained my normal health. As promised an offering of ₹.1000 to the Ashram.

-B.B. Amaria

CURED OF KIDNEY STONES

Curtorim-Goa: I had stones in the kidney and was finding it difficult to urinate. The doctors prescribed medicines but there was no respite. I placed my faith in Ven.Fr.Agnel and prayed fervently to him. I returned from Bahrain and came to Pilar and drank the water mixed with the relic of Ven.Fr.Agnel. Within eighteen days I felt very much relieved as the stones had come out. I thank Ven. Fr.Agnel for this great favour and pray for his early canonization.

-Floriano Albuquerque

RELIEVED FROM DIFFICULTIES

Goregaon: For a long time I was facing some serious problems in my life. I was under tension and anxiety. I prayed fervently to Ven.Fr. Agnel to help me get over these difficulties. Ven.Fr.Agnel has answered my prayers as almost all the difficulties are overcome. With grateful thanks an offering of ₹.1000 to the Ashram.

-Joyce Sagar Jamble

EYE OPERATION SUCCESSFUL

Bandra: I have been visiting the doctors regarding my eye problem for some time. The doctors suggested an operation. Before going for the operation I prayed to Ven. Fr .Agnel so that there should be no problem. I am now happy to say that the operation was successful and I have regained my normal sight. With a grateful heart an offering of ₹.100 to the Ashram.

-Maria Michael Fernandes

MEDICAL REPORT WAS GOOD

Dabolim-Goa: I work in the Navy where we have to undergo a routine medical examination every year. This year the test was conducted and the report was good except that I had pressure on undergoing an ECG the report indicated that I could get a heart attack any time. The doctors told me to be careful. In great faith I prayed to Ven.Fr.Agnelo and drank the water mixed the relic of the mud from his grave. I am happy to say that the next ECG report showed that everything was okay. I thank Ven.Fr. Agnelo and pray for his early beatification.

-Esmy Fernandes

GOOD JOB SECURED

Dockyard Road: I have been trying to get a good job for quite some time. I have great faith in Ven.Fr.Agnel and prayed to him fervently to help me. I am now happy to say that through his powerful intercession I have secured a good job in a multinational company. With a grateful heart I send my offering of ₹.500 to the Ashram.

-Charle Boban

GOT ADMISSION FOR MBA

New Zealand: For a long time I was trying to get admission to MBA in Wellington, New Zealand, but being over-age my application was rejected. With great faith in Ven.Fr.Agnel I started the Novena and prayed fervently for his help. I am now very happy to inform you that by the blessings of Ven.Fr.Agnel I got admission for MBA and successfully completed the course and secured a good job. I will soon be sending my thanks offering to Ven.Fr.Agnel from my first salary.

-Paul Vincent

The Spiritual Significance Of Christmas

-Ibonio D' Souza.

Christmas is known to all men the world over historically as the memorable day of the birth of Jesus, the Saviour. Yet, it also symbolises a very deeply significant truth of the spiritual life. Jesus Christ lived and symbolised Divine Consciousness. He was born at a time when ignorance, superstition, greed, hatred and hypocrisy prevailed upon the land. The rulers were arrogant and unrighteous. The people were avaricious, indolent and heedless. Morality was neglected. They were intent upon worshipping mammon than adoring God. But Christ worked a transformation in the lives of people. He gave a new and a spiritual turn to their lives. People started upon a new way of life. A new era thus dawned for the world.

Those conditions of darkness, impurity and materialism that prevailed before the coming of Christ signify to you the inner state of the seeker's personality before a spiritual awakening had taken place. In that period the seeker has no thought of God or higher spiritual life. He is immersed in the pursuit of the material things of this external physical world. He is the slave of his senses. He is desire-ridden. Arrogance, avarice and sensuality characterise his personality.

If this state of things must cease and the seeker must enter into a new life of spiritual aspiration, purity and devotion, then the Christ-spirit must take its birth within his heart. That is the real Christmas when the Divine element begins to express in the heart of the man. From then onward, light begins to shine where darkness was before. Ignorance gives place to the beginning of wisdom. Impurity is replaced by purity. Hatred ceases and love begins to blossom forth.

There are the forces of good and evil, of light and of darkness, that operate in the

human consciousness of man. We can overcome and eradicate completely the undivine elements and fully manifest the supreme Divine element in all its radiant light and glory only through living of the Christ-life in the utmost faithful detail. This is the method of Self-realisation. This is the great path which leads us to Immortality, Supreme Bliss And Eternal Peace.

To live a Christ-life, first of all, the child-Christ has to be born in us. The first manifestation of the Divine urge in the form of spiritual aspiration and the recognition of the spiritual ideal signifies the birth of the infant Jesus within the seeker's being. From thence starts the living of the Christ-life in all its spiritual details of sublime purity, mercy, compassion, love, selflessness, desirelessness, prayerfulness, etc. So also, starts the life of earnest Sadhana, of self-restraint and simplicity, of unbroken serenity and peace, balance of mind, and perfect dedication to the worship of God through the service of man. This is the spiritual implication within of the Christmas that is celebrated without.

With the advent of this Christ-spirit within the heart of the seekers, all human desires come to an end and they are replaced by pure higher Divine aspiration. You break free from your slavery to the senses. You begin to live a new life, a divine life of purity, love, renunciation, humility, non-attachment and selflessness. You begin to live a life of complete faith and dependence upon God. Helping others becomes a real joy to you. You become a living witness of the Divine. All your life's activities flow towards God.

Out of Their Bounty

P. Srivastava	Mumbai	40000	M.R. Valiyaveetil	Mumbai	1000	K.A. Nirmala	Kerala	300
L.B. Chrisiano	Kuwait	25000	T. Dalmeiy	Bhayandar	1000	R.L. Victoria	Kerla	300
Bejon Desai foundation	Nashik	12000	Avani D. Sheth	Mumbai	1000	K.A. Joseph	Kerala	300
S.R. Alphonso	Kuwait	10000	David Patrao	Mumbai	1000	Alphonsa Nirmala	Kerala	300
J.J. Alva	Dubai	7000	V.S. Bilolikar	Mumbai	1000	R. Victor	T.N.	300
M.J. D'Souza	Dubai	7000	A. Gala	Dombivli	1000	S. Merlyn	T.N.	300
Bibhu	Mumbai	5000	S.A. Stephen	T.N.	1000	S. Mistry	Pune	300
M. Carvalho	Goa	5000	M.M. Athanil	Karnataka	1000	Ramesh J. Patil	Mumbai	251
S.S. Machado	Virar	5000	Girly Elgin	Kerala	1000	C.Desmier	Tamil Nadu	200
V.J. Pijwala	Gujarat	5000	E.L. Rodrigues	Goa	1000	A.k.Joseph	Kerala	200
C. Shah	Mumbai	5000	R. Arulanandham	Mira Road	1000	L. Amalanayagam	T.N.	200
I. Menacherry	Kerala	5000	A.K. Augustine	Kerala	1000	Celine Xavier	Pondicherry	200
Pratima N.P.	U.S.A.	3500	Annet P. Giri	Pune	1000	Alphonsa P.K.	Kerala	200
Jose D.K.	Kerla	3000	T. Mistry	Gujarat	1000	F.M. Kobla	Mumbai	200
J.A. Saldanha	U.k.	3000	Arun Jadhav	Kerala	1000	L. Allwyn	T.N.	200
N.V.Anthony	Tamil Nadu	2000	S.A. Selvaraj	TN.	900	J.A. Clement	Bangalore	200
Thevagi Murugiah	Mumbai	2,000	R.Pachikara/Neena	T.N.	800	A. Benny	Kerala	200
K.N. Patel	U.K.	2000	Iryudayaraj M	T.N.	750	Bertha M. D'Cruz	Kerala	200
P.R. Ved	Mumbai	2000	Agee O. King	Mumbai	700	X. Francis	Chennai	200
N. R. D'Souza	Mumbai	2000	Monica D'Souza	Pune	700	Alice Antony	Kerala	200
Ciciliya Pinto	Mumbai	2000	Mathew Pinto	Mumbai	600	D. Mathew	Kerala	200
Dominic Pinto	Mumbai	2000	K.M. Karbhari	Mumbai	505	V.F. Jagan	T.N.	200
Asnon Pinto	Mumbai	2000	Dilip Parkhe	Raigad	400	Anto Paul	Kerala	200
Angeleena Pinto	Mumbai	2000	A. Kuriakose	Mumbai	500	Beatrice Joy	Kerala	200
Mable Pinto	Mumbai	2000	Sheeba Joseph	Mumbai	500	Prema Indirani	T.N.	200
Veena Pachikar	Baroda	2000	A. D. Nadar	Mumbai	500	B. Susainathan	T.N.	200
Leo Fernandes	Mumbai	2000	D. Pathare	Mumbai	500	H.N. Desai	Valsad	200
D.M. Oliver	Mumbai	2000	Dean & Clavia	Vasai	500	J. Miranda	Goa	200
S. Mithagiri	Mumbai	2000	Priya L. Dias	Vasai	500	Deepak Mathew	U.S.A.	200
Ayesha Mithagiri	Mumbai	2000	M.G. Coutinho	Vasai	500	Anna Mathew	Kerala	150
Rosy Oliver	Mumbai	2000	Y. Fernandes	Mumbai	500	Jose Augustine	Kerala	150
P. Ghiradher	Vasai	2000	Evita A. D'Costa	Mumbai	500	S.S. Kajave	Mumbai	150
Joby Thomas	Kerala	2000	C. Wilson	Mumbai	500	T. Sebastian	Kerala	150
S. Chaudhuri	Kolkata	2000	C.R. D'Mello	Virar	500	S.B. Remjie	Mumbai	111
C. Simon	Hyderabad	2000	Steffi R. D'Mello	viRAR	500	K.B. Bhosale	Ahmednagar	101
Sybel D'Mello	Vasai	2000	Nirav G. Parmar	Gujarat	500	Vijay Amolik	Ahmednagar	100
Abhilesh H. Gala	Dombivli	1500	P. Idnani	Mumbai	500	Mikhayil Padale	Maharashtra	100
A. Jayasimhan	Mumbai	1500	A.J. Hariawala	Mumbai	500	J.N.Diwan	Gujarat	101
S. Panchal	New Zealand	1151	D.M. Patel	Virar	500	Antony R.	T.N.	100
J.H. Sampat	Mumbai	1100	M. Kapadia	Mumbai	500	Daisy Polly	Kerala	100
S. I. Agarwal	Mumbai	1100	N. Bhalerao	Mumbai	500	Jose Mathew	Kerala	150
Shashikant Babulal	Mumbai	1001	Sunita Vikas X.	Mumbai	500	Louise Cecilia	Pondicherry	100
L. Moraes	Thane	1000	Tyronne Barrow	Mumbai	500	S. Philip	Kerala	100
J. Soares	Mumbai	1000	K.S. Rao	Mumbai	500	M. Joseph	Kerala	100
John P. D'Costa	Thane	1000	Joseph C.D.	Kerala	500	A. Raju	T.N.	100
J.M. Patel	Mumbai	1000	M.J. Pereira	Pune	500	A.R. Ekka	Ranchi	100
Mejo John	Bangalore	1000	V. sophia	T.N.	500	E.C. D'Souza	Karnataka	100
N.M. Noronha	Mumbai	1000	G. Veeramani	T.N.	500	T. Sebastian	Kerala	100
Aadit Sheth	Mombasa	1000	Kurian Thomas	Kerala	500	P. Attick	Orissa	100
V.N. Patel	U.K.	1000	C. Nazareth	Mangalore	500	A. Amaldan	Bangalore	100
Sanjay V.S.	Thane	1000	S. Chettiar	Mumbai	500	K.S. Raju	Chennai	100
N.S. D'Mello	Vasai	1000	Arokia Nadar	Mumbai	500	Dilip Prabal	Jharkhand	100
Michelle D'Mello	Vasai	1000	M. Antony Raj	Mumbai	454	Daisy Polly	Kerala	100
P.K. Raghuvanshi	U.S.A.	1000	Mary Antony	Kerala	400	Y.I. Kalpey	Mumbai	100
N.S. Manuel	Mumbai	1000	D. Solanki	Vadodara	301	M.K. Padale	Nevasa	100
			V. Fernandes	Mumbai	300	Stella Thomas	Pondicherry	200
			J. Mathew	Kerala	300	M.J. Harris	Jabalpur	50

Fr. Agnel School, New Delhi celebrated 40th Anniversary



Justice Joseph Kurian lighting the lamp along with other dignatories



Jesus Christ the Superstar in action



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*May all the sweet magic
Of Christmas conspire
To gladden your hearts
And fill every desire.*

Agnel Ashram Community &
Balbhavan Children



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