

The monthly newsletter of St. Mary's JSO Cathedral Youth Association

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DEC 2020



LET US UNMASK THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

By Fr. Jerry Kurian



As we go into the beginning of December, the climate changes from moderately cold to a winter cold. That special feeling of baby Jesus, Mother Mary, Joseph, a manger and all the wise men come back as a warmth in the midst of the cold. But this December is different. It's been masked by the Covid 19 virus. Celebrations, visits and services are all going to be low key and the one season most families look forward to may be washed out completely. But all is not lost.

In St. Matthew 2:1-11 the wise men follow a star to witness the birth of the Messiah Jesus. They lose their way in between because the star is masked by a cloudy sky and by the thoughts of the wise men that King Herod would lead them to the Messiah. They are mistaken, as Herod will allow no King other than himself. The wise

men are sent on their way with the instruction to inform Herod about the whereabouts of Jesus. The star is unmasked though and the wise folk wanting to see Jesus are led properly to the baby and his earthly mother and father. What was masked before them is unmasked to reveal Jesus.

We are now living in a culture of masks. We think we don't need to smile, cry, touch or care because no one can see us anyway. But the mask is only a temporary diversion, like the wise men were to the palace of King Herod. Despite the mask, they break free and find Jesus and worship him with their presence and gifts. No mask can prevent them from their journey to see the Messiah.

Our masks are just temporary diversions. They should not prevent us from living out the season of Christmas. Someone is waiting for our visit, a phone call, a smile and perhaps even a gift! Come, let us unmask the season of Christmas!

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AN ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

By Rohan Jacob

The Praise and Worship session was conducted by Team Antioch on the 15th of November, 2020.

The meeting, hosted by Punnya Ebin, began with Deeya Cherian leading the session in prayer. Rini Jacob rendered a song worshipping the Lord. The main theme for the praise and worship was 'Encounter' which was taken from John 14:1-4.

"Do not be worried and upset," Jesus told them. "Believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. You know

the way that leads to the place where I am going."

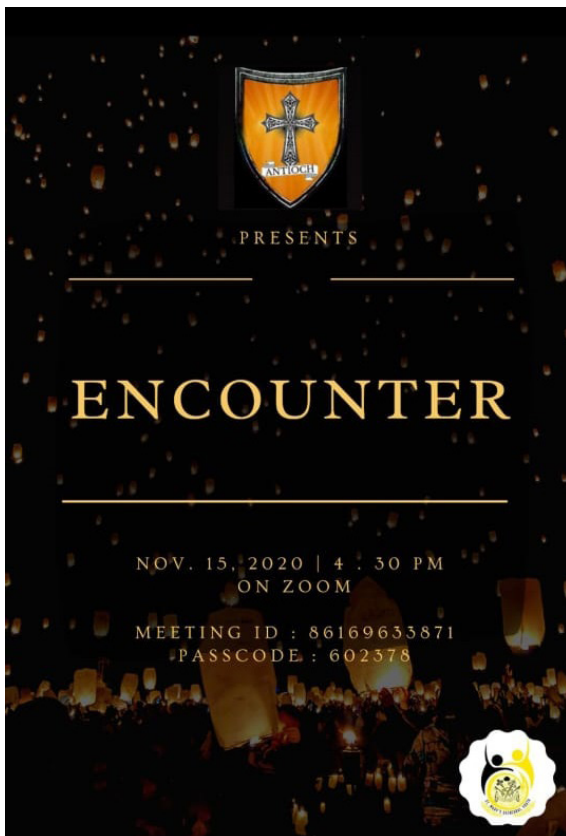
The theme is based on Jesus' promises towards His disciples as well as each one of us as we prepare ourselves and others for the second coming of Jesus Christ. Nikita Biju read the Bible scripture St. John 14:1-4.

The Gospel message was shared by Fr. Manish Kuriakose all the way from Australia. In order to break the monotony of the online mode of communication, Achen used a number of activities to promote interaction and discussion among the youth participants.

The first half of the message was centered primarily on the things that

one must do in order to receive eternal life from God. A highlight of the first half was on the activity conducted which required participants to create a priority list which showed the youths' priorities with special regards to prayer. A takeaway was on the importance of loving our neighbors and helping them in their shortcomings. The latter part of the message was about the Holy Spirit and the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The meeting was one of love and fellowship as well as the learning and understanding of God's word that strengthened the youth members, preparing us for any 'Encounter' knowing that we have a loving and faithful God above!



CHRISTMAS DAY – VIEW FROM THE ALTAR

By Simon Kuriakose



Yeldho Perunal also known as the festival of advent is celebrated on 25th of December.

In the Jacobite church, the Christmas liturgy is celebrated during Christmas Eve. The service begins with the evening prayer and concludes with the Holy Qurbana. The special prayers are taken from the “Andu Thaksa”.

Lighting of fire (Theejwala sushrusha) is the main part of the Christmas liturgy. A pit generally in the shape of a cross has to be dug in the courtyard in front of the church or any other convenient place where people can participate in the ceremony. The palm leaves used on Palm Sunday and the cotton used on Good Friday are placed in the pit and arranged for the theejwala.

After the 3rd kauma of the midnight prayer the procession starts from the church to the venue of theejwala. All church articles such as Melketti, Kodi, Marukasa, Kaimani, Sleeba, candles etc. are used for the procession.

On reaching the location of the theejwala, the sexton reads from the epistle of St. Paul to Hebrews which is followed by the evangelion reading by the priest from the Gospel according to St. Luke.

During this reading, the priest lights the fire from all four sides. At this time, people have to walk around the theejwala chanting the prayer of angels (Malakhamarude sthuthippu) and put incense in the fire. After the completion of the reading the procession returns to church for the sleeba akhosham.

The sleeba akhosham is followed by the remaining prayers of the liturgy. The special liturgy of Christmas is concluded with the Holy Qurbana.

Image above - Theejwala sushrusha performed by the Patriarch.



CHRISTMAS AWAY FROM HOME

By Carol Mathai

You know what they say, home is where Christmas cakes and wines are!

A lot of beautiful memories come to my mind when I think of Christmas. For me, Christmas always started with decorating the Christmas tree, setting up the star at home and waiting for the carol singing to begin at church. The fun filled late night bus drives where some of us practiced and composed (yes!) songs while savoring ingi mittai (ginger candy) that were given by one of the elderly uncles will always remain close to my heart.

Likewise, the practice sessions for the carol night celebration, playing secret santa, attending the midnight service,

and celebrating the season of love and peace with family and friends is what Christmas means to me.

It has been a year and a half since I moved to Australia for my higher studies and the present conditions restrict me from travelling back to India which means another Christmas away from home!

It is Christmas here even before you realize it. The city, shopping malls and all other public places are decorated with beautiful Christmas trees and lights by the end of October. People decorate their houses and gardens with Christmas trees and lights for competitions and to raise funds for

charity every year.

I cannot deny that all of these beautiful decorations, lights and the events spread the warmth of Christmas around and it is funny how this warmth not only reflects the festive spirit but also the climate here during this time of the year!

I will definitely miss my family, friends and the cold wintery Christmas in India. Nevertheless, in all Christmas spirit my friends here and I are hoping to celebrate with each other by maybe baking some cake, cook food and sing lots of carols cause you know what they say, home is where Christmas cakes and wines are!



CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA!



ROSSI'S AT THE WHEEL!

By Basil Wilson

It all started a couple of years back in 2018, when Jen Uncle had come to us after our Sunday School class and asked if I was interested in playing for the Church Football Team. I was ecstatic as football was my favourite sport and so I went for the selections and managed to get into the team. There were a lot of people that I didn't know from church that were present that day and so at first it was a little awkward for me. We soon started training every single week for the upcoming Jacobite Football League (JFL) and as a team we became so close to each other.

We then played our first Tournament together in July 2018. The 'B' team had put on an exemplary performance but unfortunately had to crash out in the quarter finals. The 'A' team were able to successfully overcome every

challenge and beat St.Mary's Cathedral, Hennur in the finals on penalties. The girls team had also put up a fighting performance and had emerged as the Runners Up. We had all become like family at the end of that day. We then started meeting up and playing every weekend, eventually practicing for the following tournament. We ended up playing in various Inter-Church tournaments.

Our church was given the responsibility to host the JFL in 2019 and we were very excited to go out there and defend our title in 2019. We had practiced well and made our teams stronger. Both the Boy's teams put up extraordinary performances and both the 'A' and 'B' teams faced each other in the final, making it the best possible result for our church. The Girls again put up

a strong performance and bagged the Runners Up again!

It's been 3 years now since we've been playing at tournaments together but we play ourselves almost every weekend, keeping our friendship and camaraderie strong. It's been an amazing journey for me personally, having made new friendships especially with the ones older than me as they have not only helped me play better but also helped me become a better person as well. I'd like to think that we are one big family. I would like to thank every single person that helped us throughout these years.

P.S - For those not familiar with football, 'Rossi's at the wheel' emulates a famous chant in English football!



REMEMBER WHEN...

By Alina Iype

'Christmas is a day of meaning and traditions, a special day spent in the warm circle of family and friends.'

I have thought of sharing my childhood memories with you all on how I celebrated Christmas in St. Mary's Cathedral Sunday School, with this beautiful quote above. Christmas season brings a lot of excitement and enthusiasm within all of us and I am always super thrilled to celebrate this festival with all my friends and family.

During our Sunday school Christmas celebrations, we basically had two performances; the Christmas carol and a skit on the nativity of baby Jesus. I remember being a part of the skit and playing the role of an angel almost every year. The most fun part was chilling with my friends during carol practices, decorating church with them, participating for various competitions, preparing for Shantharathri, being super excited to receive chocolates from Santa, discussing Christmas outfits with my girl gang and of course, arguing on which ward was better during carol rounds!

So this was all I did while in Sunday school during Christmas, keeping aside all the mischievousness. I can't believe that none of this is going to happen this year. I'm just wishing and praying that I don't need to write another article next year on how I spent my Christmas at home during lockdown. I am anyway glad that I made the best memories in Sunday school with my amazing bunch of friends and I will cherish these forever.



A CHRISTMAS SCENT!

By Nikita Sunil

Come December 1st, a special warm feeling fills each one of us. The smell of mixed fruits soaking in rum sets off the holiday season. Not to forget, waking up to the sensory delight of home-made delights like cakes,

murrucus, wine, etc. all of which according to me is a true labor of love.

I would like to share with you all my family's recipe of a personal favorite, the infamous rose cookie (or as we

call it, Achappam). It's light, crisp and not too sweet and when eaten hot it is almost like a version of a crisp waffle. Here is the recipe, handed down two generations, hoping you enjoy it as much as we do! :)

Ingredients:

1. 0.5 Kg/ 2 cups Maida
2. 0.5 cup Milk (Alternatively coconut milk can also be used)
3. 1 Egg
4. 1 tsp White or Black Sesame seeds
5. 0.25 cup Sugar
6. A pinch of Salt to taste
7. Rose Cookie Mold (Achu)

Let's get Cooking!

Mix the milk, egg and sugar. Beat it well. Into the mix, fold in the flour little by little until there are no lumps left and you have a smooth batter.

Add in the salt and sesame seeds and mix well. The batter should be the consistency of dosa batter, add a bit of water if you feel it needs to loosen up a bit.

Take a kadai and pour the oil into it for deep frying. Let the oil heat. Place the mold into the oil and allow it to heat.

Once the mold is sufficiently hot, place it into the batter up to 3/4th of the mold. Place the mold dipped in batter into the oil and wait until it starts to come away from the mold. You can choose to shake the mold to help the rose cookie separate.

Take the rose cookie out once golden brown and place on a napkin to drain the oil. Allow to cool. Repeat the process.

Your home-made rose cookies are now ready to eat! :)



CHRISTMAS WORD SCRAMBLE!

Now for a little bit of fun. Unscramble the letters to find words which have to do with Christmas! The answer key will be in the last page of the newsletter but don't peek until you've given it a good try!

PORDUHL
 NAAST
 GRAMEN
 GALEN
 TRAWEH
 GISEHL
 WAMSONN
 SOETTELIM
 CLIESCI
 YITDEELU
 AVENDT
 NGOGEG
 REHDSA
 AIOITTSNEP
 SWLRLSMAHMOA

ILMERCA
 RONTH OEPL
 BUBSLEA
 AIITTDNOR
 NWSO SLAEKF
 GOTSCINK
 ATSR
 RLACOS
 VANIIYITT
 STRANNEOM
 DRESSEPHH
 SCAMSTHIR
 EMEEBCRD
 LEVES
 LENO

REMINISCING...

This section of the newsletter will feature a series of interviews, amongst other things, in an attempt to acquaint the youth members with the early days of our church, St. Mary's JSO Cathedral. This way we also connect with some of our grandparents and parents, the pillars of our church! We hope you find this interesting!

From Grace to Grace

Conversation with Grace Thomas Cherickal, fondly called Gracy aunty, as told to Nikita Sunil and coordinated by Joshua Philip Mathew.

1. At what age did you start singing?

I started singing in the Jacobite choir around the age of 28-30 after my marriage.

But from the age of 4 I have been singing and was part of the CSI choir in my home church in Kerala.

2. How did you come about this passion for singing?

I joined the church choir as a child and have sung all my life. God has given me the talent to sing and it is a crime if I do not use it. Although I have not trained formally, we had choir masters who taught us everything from singing, to the discipline required to be a part of the choir.

3. What is the fondest memory you have of carols during Christmas time?

I have lots of memories although I do not remember my younger days too well. In my youth, we used to have a lot of house visits, me walking with the tambourine in hand singing about the birth of Jesus is one of them. I cannot deny we eagerly waited for the kappi and snacks the houses had to give us.

If it's at St. Mary's, back when our church had just started, we had people from UTC come and train us. We had a choir master who specifically taught us wedding and Christmas songs line by line.

During the time of Saji Achen, he brought new life to the choir, practice sessions for Christmas would start as early as October. Those were the good times! Due to my health I have not been able to attend evening practice session for the past few years. I must add that all our Achens in St. Mary's Cathedral have shown special care for the choir.

4. Where do you get your energy and great sense of humor from?

I have always been like this, I love to sing and dance (Onam at church has

some good memories too) and I think of it as God given, we must use it until we can't anymore. All my brothers sing as well so we had a good time growing up. We would win all the competitions, the next generation too is blessed with good voices.

5. What is your advice to the youth of today?

I would say, visiting the homes of elderly people above 70, especially those who are alone and sick is important.

A few songs, a reading from the bible and a prayer, this fellowship is very much necessary and it will make the youth stronger as well. This would bring joy and happiness to their homes and the blessings would be carried forward.



A DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS THIS TIME AROUND!

By Sanjana Thomas

When the clock strikes 12 on December 1st, my countdown for Christmas begins. As a child, Christmas for me was all about food, carols, Santa with a big tummy and the list never ends. Christmas always feels incomplete without a mass. The Christmas Mass at our church takes place every year and we prepare ourselves for 25 days of Lent in order to fully imbibe the importance of Christmas and Jesus. The Mass is beautiful and it's a moment of joy, prayer and faith that is reiterated every year.

I used to always be excited to attend the mass after 25 long days, waiting to wish people "Merry Christmas" with a huge smile at the end of it and of course, the chicken biryani! None of us can deny the fact that we were never distracted by the smell that filled the air.

Well, even if we can't have the biryani at church this time, we could still have it at home. Video call your friends, boast about the variety of food that's there at home, play some fun online games and

spend an intimate and maybe virtual Christmas.

Let's celebrate this quarantine Christmas with a bang and have something to really look forward to. Make the best use of this time, spread love and unleash your creativity.

I genuinely hope that we all will be able to celebrate Christmas with the same spirit and I wish for an even better New Year. Whether at home or church, let's keep Jesus close to our hearts!



BUN AND KAAP! CORNER!

Conversations on a regular pre-pandemic Sunday at #13, Queen's Road.

COVID ACTION TEAM

Covid-19 has changed our lives dramatically and we don't know when we will be meeting each other again. We hope that all our members and their families are in good health. If in case you need any assistance with regard to the pandemic, a Covid Action Team has been formulated by our church.

Dr. Elsa John, who is a committee member and a part of the Covid Action Team, can be contacted for any queries.

CHRISTMAS SCRAMBLE ANSWER KEY

RUDOLPH	MIRACLE
SANTA	NORTH POLE
MANGER	BAUBLES
ANGEL	TRADITION
WREATH	SNOW FLAKE
SLEIGH	STOCKING
SNOWMAN	STAR
MISTLETOE	CAROLS
ICICLES	NATIVITY
YULETIDE	ORNAMENTS
ADVENT	SHEPHERD
EGGNOG	CHRISTMAS
DASHER	DECEMBER
POINSETTIA	ELVES
MARSHMALLOWS	NOEL

In case you haven't been able to fill the Google form to join the teams yet, this is your chance. Scan the QR code, fill in the form and you're good to go!



All our activities and meets are uploaded on our YouTube channel so that whoever missed out can still catch up. Do check it out!



BIRTHDAY BABIES OF THE MONTH!

Anusha Thomas	4th December
Nikhil Babu	12th December
Amal Kuriakose	18th December
Basil K Wilson	22nd December
Jesus Christ	25th December

WEDDING BELLS ARE RINGING!

Our dearest friends Felina John (Daughter of John P. V.) as well as Rinku Maria Paul (Daughter of Fr. M. U. Paulose), got married!

May God bless them and their new families!

OUR BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS

Name : St. Marys JSO Youth Association
Account Number : 0009053000011473
IFSC Code : SIBL0000009
Bank : South Indian Bank, Bangalore Cantonment

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