



Pallotti Notes

"Vincipal family of God moving towards a society where love and concern within the family and the neighbourhood is a way of life."

A Thrill OF HOPE



DECEMBER 2024



As part of the Parish Family, we, Fr. Victor, Fr. Andrew and Fr. Balraj wish all a
Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

CONTENT

1. Fuelled with Hope	5
2. Christmas 2024: A Journey of Hope and Light	6
3. Ratan Tata: The Modern Santa	7
4. Activity Reports – September to December 2024	8
5. Building the Future with Hope	11
6. Home Maker or Hope Keeper	12
7. An Evergreen Celebration with the Elderly	13
8. The Giving Tree of Hope	15
9. Community Fund Contribution (2023-24)	20
10. Navjyothi – Our Modern Day Stable	21
11. When a Child is Born	23
12. Life After Death: A Panel Discussion	25
13. Ask Me	26
14. Vinpal Diary	28

EDITORIAL TEAM

5	: Editor
6	: Fr. Andrew Roshan Alva, SAC
7	: Bulletin Coordinators
8	: Gizelle Rodrigues
	: Rachel Dlima
	: Vinita Rodrigues
	: Winona Lobo
11	: Art and Graphics
12	: Joshua Vaz
13	:
15	:
20	:
21	:
23	:
25	:
26	:
28	:

Pallotti Notes | December 2024

A triannual News Bulletin of St. Vincent Pallotti Church, Vijay Nagar, Marol Maroshi Rd, Andheri E, Mumbai 400059.
Website: www.vinpalparish.church Email: pallottinotes@yahoo.com, vinpalchurch@gmail.com.
For Private Circulation Only

“The thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.” These beautiful words from my favourite Christmas song, *O Holy Night*, resonate deeply with me. I am especially drawn to the phrase, ***“the thrill of hope”***. What would life be without hope?

Hope is defined as *“a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.”* This definition reveals that hope is much bigger than just four letters. It carries with it an expectation - a desire for something better. We often speak of hope when we have a need, like better health, a better job, protection for our loved ones, or faithful children. But where is the ***“thrill”*** of hope in these moments?

The thrill of hope is that deep-seated anticipation and promise that what we will receive what we need. And when it does, our burdens are lifted, and we feel the thrill. In this weary world, isn't that exactly what we all long for? So many children and families today are yearning for a *new and glorious morn*. This is what Advent is about. In the midst of darkness and pain, we have a real and tangible hope in the coming of our Savior, who has conquered sin, death, and darkness. The thrill of hope is Jesus Christ.

When I think of the Magi in Matthew 2, I am struck by their unwavering expectation, their Hope. They weren't driven by wishful thinking that they would perhaps find the King of the Jews, but they were expecting and anticipating that they would see Him. So, they came prepared with gifts to honor Him knowing very well that He would be there. Similarly, when the angels appeared to the shepherds in the field, proclaiming the birth of the long-awaited Savior, the thrill of hope reverberated through their hearts. They said, ***“Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”*** And they went

with haste, finding Mary, Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger (Luke 2:15–16).

The hope God brought to us through the birth of Jesus is not mere wishful thinking. It is real hope - a confident expectation of salvation from sin, eternal life, and the promise of Heaven. Those of us who have received this hope experience its joy and blessings daily. But if you haven't, don't let this Christmas pass without embracing that *thrill of hope*.

As Christmas Eve 2024 approaches, a magical moment will unfold in Rome. Giant, historic doors hidden within famous churches of St. Peter's Basilica, St. John Lateran's Basilica, St. Mary Major Basilica, and Basilica of St. Paul will swing open to mark the beginning of the Jubilee Year. The motto, *“Pilgrims of Hope,”* perfectly encapsulates the essence of this sacred season.

We must fan the flame of hope that has been given to us and help each other find renewed strength, trust, and vision for the future. The Jubilee Year offers an opportunity to restore hope and trust, paving the way for the renewal and rebirth our world so desperately needs.

Dear friend, no matter where you are or what your circumstances may be, may you experience the thrill of hope that God has prepared for you.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

Fr. Andrew Roshan Alva
Editor



CHRISTMAS 2024: A JOURNEY OF HOPE AND LIGHT

Dear Parishioners,

As we approach Christmas 2024, the Universal Church readies itself to commemorate a significant milestone - the 2025th birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Jubilee Year 2025 invites us to journey as “Pilgrims of Hope,” guided and rooted in prayer. In a world often overshadowed by despair, the birth of Christ offers a moment to rediscover the hope that Baby Jesus brings to every heart open to His message.

There’s a touching story of a young mother overwhelmed by life’s challenges. Her marriage was strained, her children were struggling, and she felt disconnected from her loved ones. On Christmas Eve, she sat alone, feeling utterly hopeless. Then, her eyes fell upon a small nativity scene she had arranged with her children. She gazed at the tiny figure of Baby Jesus lying in a humble manger and felt a profound realization. This child, born into poverty and vulnerability, had transformed history - not through power or wealth but through love, humility, and hope. In that quiet moment, peace swept over her heart, and for the first time in ages, she believed in the possibility of new beginnings. As we come together this Christmas, we are invited to pause at the manger and let Baby Jesus rekindle hope within us. His presence reminds us that strength can emerge from weakness, love can conquer fear, and faith can light even the darkest paths. In a world teeming with chaos, this serene child offers peace, assuring us that God is ever-present in our lives. When we feel burdened or lost, He invites us to trust that, despite our struggles, a divine hand is holding us together.

What if we embraced life’s challenges as Mary and Joseph did - with patience and a sense of purpose, recognizing them as part of a greater plan? Each struggle, frustration, and anxious prayer can pave the way to deeper faith. Our families, much like the Holy Family in Bethlehem, can become sanctuaries of God’s love, where forgiveness, compassion, and laughter thrive.

This Christmas, let’s celebrate more than the birth of Jesus; let’s embrace His message of hope and humility. Instead of succumbing to the holiday rush, let’s cherish simple moments with loved ones, reflect on our blessings, and seek God’s presence in one another. Through small acts of kindness, comforting words, and shared meals, we can experience the true spirit of Christmas.

As we look forward to the Jubilee Year 2025, let’s carry the hope of Christmas into the year ahead. Though small and vulnerable, Baby Jesus transformed the world forever. His presence in our hearts can transform our lives, filling us with peace, guiding us through uncertainties, and reminding us of the promise in John 1:5: *“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*

This Christmas, let us hold onto the truth that with Christ, even the darkest night holds the promise of a new and radiant dawn.

“Wish you a Merry Christmas 2024”

Fr. Victor Martis, SAC
Parish Priest



RATAN TATA: THE MODERN SANTA

Christmas season is a time when we think about St. Nicholas, who is popularly known as Santa Claus. He was appointed the Bishop of the Church of Myra and firmly followed Jesus' profound words, "Let your left hand not know what your right hand is doing. The father who sees in secret will reward you."

The legend of St. Nicholas tells us of his generosity and kindness for the poor, and he was even said to have thrown gold-filled purses through the windows as gifts to help needy families. St. Nicholas thus became a blessing to many in need and, in turn, found joy in adding happiness to others' lives. In his memory, parents in Myra left surprise gifts by their children's bedside on his feast day. This custom was later incorporated into the season of Christmas since his feast always fell during the same time. Today, for our convenience, we have shortened the name and call him *Santa Claus*. The arrival of Christmas season is marked by the images of Santa Claus on streets, malls, and homes. Any Christmas decoration is incomplete without the presence of Santa Claus in it.

Similarly, Ratan Tata, who was loved by many, possessed traits that can attribute him to Santa Claus and continues to carry a legacy that extends far beyond any other corporate houses in the country. Like St. Nicholas, he found joy in giving. He always worked to better the lives of the economically weaker sections of society. In a world driven by profit, he endeavoured to provide the best services accessible to even poor sections. His effort with the Nano car was one such example.

He found true joy in reaching out to the needy. He recalled an incident when one of his friends

requested him to help sponsor wheelchairs for some differently abled children. He donated 200 wheelchairs, which he handed out personally, and shared this experience in one of his interviews by saying, "I saw

a strange glow of happiness on the face of children. I saw them all sitting in wheelchairs, moving around and having fun. It was as if they had reached a picnic spot and were sharing a winning gift. I felt a real happiness inside me". As he was leaving the place, one of the children caught hold of his legs. He asked whether the child needed any other assistance. The child's words shook Ratan Tata when she said, *"I want to remember your face so that when I meet you in Heaven, I can recognise you and thank you once again."* These words are a testimony of the very life of Ratan Tata, who found happiness in sharing what he had. He lived life as a *Santa* who blessed the lives of the poor without expecting any reward in return. His charity for the poor speaks volumes of his love for the poor and is a true inspiration for many entrepreneurs.

As we prepare to celebrate this wonderful celebration of Christmas, which is a sign of God's benevolent gift of his son, let us strive to give the best we have to those who deserve our generosity. Let us look for Jesus in the lives of the poor, as these great figures have shown us. Let us become Living Santas like Ratan Tata and bless everyone around us.

"Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

Fr. Balraj, SAC

Legion Of Mary

- **07 Sept** - Assisted the Prayer Group in conducting the rosary for the Prayer Marathon. The Prayer Marathon was attended by 9 legionaries.
- **08 Sept** - 5 junior and 11 senior legionaries celebrated Mother Mary's birthday at a fellowship gathering.
- **14 Sept** - Crowd contact & counselling at Mount Mary. The legionaries were able to contact 70 people and counsel 14 people.
- **28 Sept** - 40 auxiliaries attended the Auxiliary Rally.
- **08 Oct** – 9 legionaries attended the Recollection at Canossa Convent on the theme 'You are Precious to Me'.
- **12 Nov** - 11 legionaries virtually prayed along with an expectant mother living abroad.
- **3 Dec** - Special Mass for the legionaries will be organised on the 40 years of the Legion.
- **Upcoming**
 - **28 Dec** - Program for special children will be organised on the Feast of Innocents.

Society of St. Vincent De Paul (SSVP)

- Distributed lunch packs to the needy on the streets of Andheri Kurla Road, MIDC roads & Western Highway below the bridge.
- Visited an old age home at Dabul Marine Lines (Our Lady of Piety Home) and prayed the Rosary with the inmates, played some games & shared lunch with them.
- Distributed grocery items received at Novenas to Navjyoti Home, Immaculate Conception Mission, Masat – Daman, YWAM (Youth with a Mission) and SSVP Adopted Families.
- **29 Sept** - Organised the Annual Thanksgiving Mass followed by games and fellowship for adopted families, benefactors, and SSVP members.
- **10 Nov** - On the occasion of Doctors & Nurses Day, the SSVP youth felicitated all doctors & nurses of our Parish at their residence.
- **16 Nov** - SSVP youth felicitated all doctors & nurses of SevenHills Hospital.
- **Upcoming**
 - Distribution of Christmas hampers to the adopted families & all church helpers.
 - Distribution of lunch packs to the needy on the streets during the Christmas week.
 - A visit to a children's home by the SSVP youth during the Christmas season.

Youth group

- **01 Sept** - Launched our first official volleyball tournament, bringing together 42 participants across 7 teams. The champions received a winning cup and cash prize. The winning teams and the best volleyball player were presented with medals.

- **07 Sept** - Celebrated Teacher's Day by honoring over 250 teachers in the vicinity.
- **15 Sept** - Hosted a youth mass with the theme, 'Reimagine Jesus in a vintage flair'. It was attended by 70 youth in the retro dress code. It was followed by fellowship with games, best-dressed awards, and dinner finishing with a dance session.
- **31 Oct to 03 Nov** - Organized the annual sports event, Ignite 2024, uniting 29 zones into 6 teams. The event celebrated sportsmanship and team spirit.
- **08 Dec** - Organised a mini fete with the proceeds supporting a charitable cause.
- **Upcoming**
 - **14 to 15 Dec** - Youth picnic.
 - **22 Dec** - Christmas float to spread the joy of Christmas.
 - **29 Dec** - Grand Christmas ball to wrap up the year in style.

Senior Citizen

- **16 Sept** - 95 seniors visited Our Lady of Mount.
- **05 Oct** - Celebrated 'World Elders Day' with a mass and get-together with 165 attendees.
- **16 Nov** - Senior citizens picnic with 80 participants.
- **01 Dec** - Reached out to the underprivileged Children in Aarey. The children were given notebooks, pencils, compass boxes and lunch.
- **Upcoming**
 - Senior Citizens' Christmas celebration in collaboration with the altar server's association.

Sunday School

- **08 Sept** - Organized the liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Girl Child Day.
- **22 Sept** - 31 students from Std 5th and 6th attended the Deanery Faith Celebration on the theme of 'Prayer' hosted at Holy Family School.
- **29 Sept** - 20 children participated in the Deanery Psalm Festival hosted by our parish. It was attended by 5 other parishes within the Andheri East deanery.
- **18 Oct** - Conducted adoration at the parish level reflecting on the theme of Discipleship.
- **10 Nov** - Reopened semester 2 and organised tele games for children from Std 1 to 10 to celebrate Children's Day. 245 students participated in the games.
- **15 to 17 Nov** - Retreat for 41 confirmands at Carmel Oasis Retreat Centre, Karjat conducted by Dn. Ivan Fernandes.
- **24 Nov** - Organized praise and worship for the children to mark the Feast of Christ the King.
- **01 Dec** - Creative camp organized for First Holy Eucharist the candidates and their parents.
- **08 Dec** - Deanery catechist recollection will be hosted by Infant Jesus Parish.

Vinpal Charismatic Prayer Group

- **07 Sept** - Organised a 3-hour Prayer Marathon from 7.30am to 10.30am, praying for the parish youth and their families. Around 200 parishioners including 35 youth attended the Prayer Marathon, which consisted of exhortations by all three parish fathers, varied prayers such as

reading of the psalms by Prayer Group, rosary by Legion of Mary, Divine Mercy chaplet by Divine Mercy cell, parent's prayer, mentor's prayer and youth prayer. Pope Francis' message on World Youth Day was read out and 2 young adults gave their testimonies. The Prayer Marathon ended with a blessing for the youth.

- **09 Dec** - Organised a parish Advent Penitential Service to prepare our hearts for Christmas. Pius Seminary, Goregoan. It was an engaging and insightful experience with about 40 parishioners in attendance.

Civic and Political Cell

- **Aug to Sept** - Conducted 3 voter registration camps in preparation for the Maharashtra assembly elections. Volunteers from various parish cells contributed to the 100% voter-ready parish initiative. Special thanks to the PPC and volunteers: Elwyn D'souza, Janet Pinto, Adrian Pereira, Meena Dias, Max Gomes, Allan Pinto, Vernon Fernandes, Nisha Cerejo, Michelle D'Souza, Flavia Lobo, James Trinidad, Neil DSouza, Anand Lobo, Jonelle Ambosta, Karuna D'Souza & Kian Rodrigues. 200 parishioners benefitted from the camp as below -
 - New registrations - 87
 - Shifting/ name corrections - 92
 - Checking / download / deletion - 21

Inter-Religious Dialogue Cell (IRDC)

- **24 Sept** - Celebrated the 7th anniversary of IRDC.
- **06 Oct** - Organised the alumni day for BIRD (Basics in Interreligious Dialogue) and a symposium on 'Life After Death'.
- **30 Oct** - Organised a special mass for Diwali and the Annual Thanksgiving Mass of IRDC. People of other faith were invited for mass and fellowship.
- **17 Nov** - Organised World Day of the Poor by inviting poor street vendors, labourers working in the cemetery and marginalised individuals of the vicinity.
- **Upcoming**
 - **14 Dec** - organising/attending Cardinal's Archdiocesan Interreligious Christmas celebration for people of all faiths, at Holy Name Cathedral.
 - Christmas celebration for people of all faiths in our parish.

Bible Cell

- **02 Oct** - Organised the "Parish Recollection - 2024" on the theme 'Prophetic Leadership'. The key speaker was Fr. Mario Mendes who is a great scripture teacher currently teaching at St. Pius Seminary, Goregoan. It was an engaging and insightful experience with about 40 parishioners in attendance.



BUILDING THE FUTURE WITH HOPE

In the present world, we see constant contradictions - rapid advancements in technology that promise progress, yet often lead to disconnection from human relationships; social media that brings people together instantly yet creates feelings of isolation and comparison. Our children and youth are often burdened with navigating these contradictions as they must learn to discern the right path in a world that often pulls them in conflicting directions.

The dictionary defines hope as **“to want something to happen or be true.”** As a catechist and a parent, I strongly believe that to create a better future, young minds must be nurtured in hope through Spiritual Growth, Human Development, and Individual Growth.

Spiritual Growth

The interrelationship between faith and hope might seem obvious: people who have faith have hope, and people who have hope have faith. It seems that one cannot exist without the other. Yet, the situation is more complex than that. As a catechist, developing the courage in young people to have unwavering faith amidst challenges will help them grow spiritually and is the foundation of instilling in them everlasting hope.

Emotional Growth Through Values

Values are not taught but caught. In today's fast-paced world, where parents may not always have as much time or opportunity to interact with their children, it can be more challenging for young people to absorb these important values. Basic human values like love, truth, peace, and non-violence are primarily instilled at home, especially by parents. These values provide the hope and assurance needed

for emotional growth, helping our children and youngsters build resilience to face the world. While academic pursuits like JEE/NEET preparations and sports coaching are important, they alone cannot build the well-rounded future that many parents envision for their children.

Individual Growth Acquired from Social Circles

In today's rapidly changing world, where societal shifts occur every 10 to 15 years, children often skip the typical stages of childhood, transitioning into adulthood too quickly. With the pressure of expectations, they don't always have the time to develop into the individuals they aspire to be fully. It is important for youth to focus inward and not let external pressures dictate their growth. They need to nurture strengths such as self-esteem, the courage to take responsibility and ownership, leadership, the ability to experience true success, and a clear understanding of the opportunities that lie ahead.

Once the youth develop the right principles, values, and aspirations, they are wired for success. They will cultivate a sense of hope grounded in confidence rather than anxiety. At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of a child, a tiny hope of tomorrow. Just as the baby in the manger holds the promise of a brighter future, our youth, too, are the bearers of hope, poised to shape the world with the values, faith, and wisdom they receive today.

Saji Sebastian
Catechist



HOME MAKER OR HOPE KEEPER

The roles of women as homemakers and hopekeepers carry deep cultural and emotional significance. They highlight a woman's ability to nurture, support, and maintain both the physical and emotional well-being of those around her. These roles, often rooted in tradition and shaped by societal expectations, reflect a profound strength and resilience. As homemakers, women often take on the responsibility of creating environments where families feel secure and loved, balancing a myriad of tasks to ensure harmony in their households.

As women in our individual families, we play a vital role in homemaking. We organise household activities in such a way that every small detail is taken into consideration. We are blessed with a quality that can cater to all age groups in a single family. As a mother, we care for our children, looking after them in their needs. As a wife we carry out our duties towards our husbands. As daughter-in-law, we fulfil responsibilities towards the extended family. We make sure that every member of a family feels loved. Despite all the hardships we face, we still continue to be a beacon of hope and faith within our homes. We inspire the little ones to imbibe great qualities very early in their lives. Sometimes, we, as women, single-handedly bring up our children. We keep the needs of the family before ours. Even if the world seems dark and confusing at times, we still hold on to the light of Hope and Faith.

Raising children in God's footsteps is one of the most profound responsibilities entrusted to women. As mothers, caregivers, and role models, women play an integral role in nurturing faith, instilling values, and fostering

a relationship with God in their children's hearts. Rooted in love, discipline, and spiritual guidance, this journey is both a sacred calling and a powerful testament to their influence as spiritual leaders within the family. The Christmas season is a reminder of how the Blessed Virgin Mary kept the hope of humanity alive. She chose to say yes, not for her own welfare but for the good of the entire human race. The hope of Salvation was realised because of her mighty YES. She did not just give birth to a child, but she made an opening for God's saving grace, that is, JESUS CHRIST Himself. God's Love story is Christmas, and His Love was nurtured in the womb of the Virgin Mary. She silently kept doing what had to be done. As a woman, she remained faithful to God's covenant. When she had an opportunity to revive the world's hope, she willingly accepted it. She was courageous enough to hope that one day, God's plan of salvation would be fulfilled by her Son. We have Christmas because of her. She is the Star of Hope for all Christians. Like her, let us infuse hope into our own families. Let us pray for all women that their lives may become a sign of hope to all around them.

Pallotti Women's Cell





AN EVERGREEN CELEBRATION WITH THE ELDERLY

The societal fabric is made up of different cultures, denominations and age groups – young and old alike. Each contributes to making the society rich and dynamic. However, it is often seen that the younger generation fails to understand the importance of elders in society. Elders are the ones who preserve the traditional and cultural values present in any ethnic group or community. Without them teaching the younger generations about the diversity of traditions and cultures, it would have been long lost. Elders are like the roots of a tree. They hold the family firm and make them strong. From their experiences accumulated over the years, they can judge a situation and give constructive advice to the younger generation. They play an important role by providing a safe and loving environment to grow, which is something that no childcare center can provide. Hence, it is important that we give our elders a chance to smile, a reason to live and a life they all deserve.

Our Parish recognizes the importance of elders, and hence, we have a dynamic Senior Citizen Association. The seniors involve themselves in parish activities and keep themselves young at heart. This year, the parish celebrated the World Day of Older Persons on 5th October, 2024. The

main aim of this celebration was to appreciate the contribution of the elders and to reflect on their needs. The day was a huge success, with 165 senior citizens registered for the celebration. It started with the Holy Eucharist, which is the most profound Sacrament of the Church, celebrated by our Parish Priest and Spiritual Director - Fr. Victor Martis. He delivered an inspirational homily and highlighted that the presence and essence of an Elder is the most comforting and secure feeling one can ever experience.



After the Holy Eucharist, the seniors moved to the Parish Hall where Anchor Romi Furtado got the celebration started. Our Spiritual Director gave his welcome address and expressed that after a lifetime of working, raising families and contributing to the success of society, elders deserve to retire with dignity. Subsequently, the President of the Senior Citizen Association, Jerome Martis, expressed his profound gratitude to the Spiritual Director by acknowledging his encouragement and also thanked the committee members for their continued hard work and dedication. He also emphasized to the gathered seniors about ageing with dignity and the importance of good health and living conditions. Thereafter, the anchor got into

action and engaged the audience in some fun games, quizzes, spot prizes, garba dance and Housie, ensuring that everyone worked up a good appetite for lunch. The program ended with a vote of thanks by the Secretary, Nelly Rego, thanking Fr. Victor, the anchor, all who made the necessary arrangements and finally, the seniors who made it for the celebration. The program ended with a delicious buffet.

The event was a grand success, and we look forward to the Christmas celebration for elders that will be organised by the young Altar

servers on 28th December. Christmas is a time of warmth, joy and togetherness, which evokes memories of the past and serves as a poignant reminder of the changes and challenges the elderly face in their lives. It's heartening to see the youngsters of our parish taking their time to celebrate Christmas with the elders thus ensuring that they feel included and joyous during Christmas. It is an apt way to truly imbibe the spirit of the season and a great way to see the young and the elders bonding and sharing the Christmas spirit.

Jerome Martis
Senior Citizen Association





THE GIVING TREE OF HOPE

The holiday season brings festivity and joy; the Vinpal youth group celebrates it with events like the Float and the Ball. But beyond the laughter and dancing, our mission for the season centres on something deeper: the Giving Tree.

The Giving Tree is not just a decoration in our church; it is a symbol of hope and a reminder that Christmas is about giving, not just receiving. Our youth group creates each ornament by hand—cutouts of Santa Claus, snowmen, reindeer, and gingerbread figures made from ice cream sticks, cardboard, and more. These ornaments are crafted with love and for a purpose.

At our Giving Tree stall, children and adults alike carefully select their favourite ornament, write a small, personalized message, and hang it on the tree, joining a growing display of names and good wishes. Every ornament sold helps fund charities and organizations, extending hope to families and children in need who may not have the chance to celebrate as we do.

Each name added to the tree reminds us that everyone has the power to make a difference, no matter how small. The Giving Tree unites us in the spirit of Christmas, making an almost unspoken promise that we are all part of something bigger and more meaningful. Each handcrafted ornament is more than a decoration—it is a symbol of unity and a promise of brighter days.

This year, along with our Giving Tree, comes something special – the Mini Games Fair. It is more than just a fair; it is an opportunity to create joy and an impact. This fair will feature

a variety of fun and nostalgic fete games, perfect for all ages. From roulette to ping pong ball games there will be something for everyone to enjoy. Every game you play, every ticket you buy, and every bite you take will help bring Christmas cheer to needy families and children. All the proceeds from the Mini Fair stalls will go directly to the same charitable causes supported by the Giving Tree.

The Giving Tree and the Mini Games Fair are a special opportunity for our youth group to connect with each other and our community, capturing the true spirit of Christmas. The simple act of giving brings excitement and joy to all involved, reinforcing the lesson that the value of giving lies in the heart behind it. Through this simple yet powerful tradition, we each play a part in spreading joy to those who may need it most this season.

Let us unite in this beautiful mission and bring joy and warmth to those who need it most. Together, we can make this Christmas shine a little brighter for those who face hardship.

Liane Pinto
Vinpal Youth



VINPAL YOUTH
UNITED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Let your Spirits be Merrier this Season

Presenting

The Vinpal Christmas BALL 2024

APPETIZERS • DINNER & DANCE • LUCKY DRAW • SPOT PRIZES



29TH DECEMBER 2024
6:30 PM ONWARDS

Vinpal Lawns, Vincent Pallotti Church,
Vijaynagar, Marol, Andheri East

DRESS CODE: STRICTLY FORMAL

FOR BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES

Jovita Aranha - 7900152907

Liane Pinto - 7045131611

Teagan Ferrao - 9773139991



SENIOR CITIZEN



PRAYER GROUP



BIBLE CELL



SVP



SUNDAY SCHOOL



CIVIC & POLITICAL CELL



IRDC - WORLD DAY OF POOR



LEGION OF MARY



YOUTH GROUP



COMMUNITY FUND CONTRIBUTION

2023-24

Sr. No.	Communities	Amount Allotted (15%)	TOTAL
1	Ave Maria	16,890	1,12,600
2	St. Teresa of Kolkata	39,030	2,60,200
3	Christ The King	31,275	2,08,500
4	Don Bosco	11,565	77,100
5	Holy Family	17,790	1,18,600
6	Infant Jesus	21,228	1,41,522
7	Rose of Sharon	59,790	3,98,600
8	Sacred Heart	18,931	1,26,204
9	St. Michael	12,255	81,701
10	St. Lawrence	19,455	1,29,700
11	St. Peter	64,785	4,31,900
12	St. Theresa	32,805	2,18,700
13	St. Paul	38,400	2,56,000
14	St. Francis Xavier	32,880	2,19,200
15	St. Patrick	22,598	1,50,650
16	St. Jude	27,240	1,81,600
17	St. Francis of Assisi	36,765	2,45,100
18	St. Anthony	18,345	1,22,300
19	St. Stephen	42,210	2,81,400
20	St. Sebastian	37,935	2,52,900
21	St. Bonaventure	34,935	2,32,900
22	Our Lady of Lourdes	28,140	1,87,600
23	St. Ignatius of Loyola	37,365	2,49,100
24	Our Lady of Mount Carmel	36,555	2,43,700
25	St. Joseph	35,987	2,39,913
26	St. Thomas	225	1,500
27	St. Mary	4,770	31,800
28	Our Lady of Velankanni	4,845	32,300
29	Poomeri	705	4,700
	TOTAL	7,85,699	52,37,990

EXPENDITURE FOR THE FY2023-24		
1	Community Activities	6,44,444
2	Parish Activities & Social Outreach	17,44,342
3	Church Maintenance	18,53,739
4	SSVP Activities	5,87,373
i	Educational Aid	1,55,100
ii	Medical Aid	2,60,799
iii	Food & Housing Aid	1,71,474
	TOTAL	48,29,898

On a cold winter night, Mary and Joseph looked for a place for Jesus to be born and finally found shelter in a poor stable. Amid all those struggles and uncertainties, a thrill of hope kept them determined to fulfil God's dream for humanity. It was Mary and Joseph who first co-operated with God's salvation plan, which began with a humble beginning in a manger. Jesus' birth was a visible sign of God's self-emptying love – a God who became a man and dwelt amongst us. On this occasion, there was great rejoicing among the angels as they sang in chorus, *"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of goodwill."* The shepherds left their flocks and came to adore the Messiah. The star in heaven showed the way to the three Magi, who came and offered their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the newborn King. This little babe in the manger was a sign of hope to all facing challenges and difficulties in their lives. Emmanuel walked with His people, teaching them love, compassion, humility and a determination to face life.

The story of the women and young girls at Navajyothi Homes around the world resonates with the Christmas story. The women and girls coming to our Navajyothi Homes have faced the same helplessness that Mary and Joseph faced. They come by themselves, or we go in search of them and rehabilitate them in our centres. A question can arise: why do these women and girls require shelter, and why do they not stay with their own families?

The women and girls who come to Navajyothi Homes helpless and despaired have gone through bitter experiences and rejections from their loved ones and society. Eventually, they find safety and protection at Navajyothi

Homes. A ray of hope emerges, and they begin to realize that their worth, identity and dream of a better life are far greater than the hardships and unpleasant moments they have faced in their lives. On their life journey, they are trafficked, abused, tortured, labelled and finally victimized and marginalized. A spark of fire begins to burn in them, and they start discovering new possibilities and new chapters in their lives. The scars of the past begin to vanish, and they come out with renewed faces that shine in the outer world.

The Navajyothi Homes welcome and accept women and girls from various backgrounds and problems, even abandoned little babies. They are given shelter and protection without any judgement and condemnation for their mistakes. They are counselled to come out of their traumas. Women are given job opportunities in a safe place where they can feel comfortable and protected. They start interacting in society and regain their respect and dignity. Single mothers also get the opportunity to settle in their lives and gradually get reconciled with their own families—the younger girls who are brought up as orphans are looked after till they are settled in marriage. Navajyothi Homes educates them, allows them to explore their talents and abilities, and sends them for vocational training or whichever field they are interested in. The abandoned babies are put up for adoption through CARA (Central Adoption Resource Authority).

St. Maria Micaela says, "I will not spare means so as to save one soul." Hence, the Navajyothi Homes provide the women with varied opportunities and help them to see life differently and have renewed experiences.

During this journey, they recognize their importance and contribute to society by offering services in schools, hospitals, houses, etc. However, not everyone who comes to the centres have successful stories. One thing is certain: those who have hope in them always flourish.

In our own lives, inspite of the challenges,

Christmas brings with it a renewed sense of Hope with Jesus' birth. Similarly, Navjyothi Homes becomes a beacon of Hope for the women and girls in despair. With Emmanuel God with us, may we Hope in the Lord and renew our strength.

Sr. Soniya Bhandari
Navjyothi/Sisters Adorers





WHEN A CHILD IS BORN

“Hope is a good thing. Maybe the best of things. And no good thing ever dies.” This saying from the movie ‘Shawshank Redemption’ comes to mind when we look back at the years post-marriage, waiting patiently for our little one to arrive.

Jaya and I were married in October 2015 and have a wonderful life together as a couple. Like most other couples living in cities, we both had jobs to do, keeping us busy for most of the day. However, the longing for a child was in our hearts right from the start.

Although several years had passed, praying and yearning for a baby, we did not lose hope. Jaya not only believed in the saying, ‘what we confess, that we possess’, but also put it into practice. She maintained a book where she would repeatedly enter the words ‘Baby is coming’ every day. Pictures of babies adorned our room, and we kept our hopes high.

Finally, eight years after we walked down the aisle, Jaya’s pregnancy was confirmed. It was a wonderful feeling, and our joy knew no bounds. We were finally going to receive what we hoped for. For the next nine months, Jaya and I prayed for a safe and healthy pregnancy while also preparing for the one who was going to complete our family. In the seventh month, we attended the pre-baptismal course, which helped us understand our responsibilities as parents - how our conduct, behaviour and attitude as parents will be imbibed by the baby as an infant’s brain can form conscious experiences that shape their emergent self. We were also guided on the role of Godparents, who should be practising Catholics and chosen ideally from the immediate family such that their physical presence and positive influence

are experienced by the God Child. During the pre-baptismal course, there was also an emphasis on the importance of speaking to our unborn child, talking lovingly to each other as a couple and listening to music, all of which have a positive effect on the baby in the womb. Above all, the main takeaway was to keep Jesus as the centre of our family lives, understanding the significance of baptism and raising the child as per the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Attending the pre-baptismal course well in advance gave us enough time as parents and godparents to prepare for Baby’s baptism. The birth of a baby is nothing short of a miracle.

To welcome our girl child on 1st March 2024 in the labour room was a blessing; nothing we had experienced before felt as precious and joyful. Watching our baby emerge felt like a divine experience. It was only after the delivery that we truly realised what it meant to love unconditionally. It is rightly said that a baby fills a place in your heart you never knew was empty. Baby Emma has taken centre stage, and we both have a common agenda of caring for the baby and bringing her up lovingly with Christian values. Fortunately for Jaya, taking a break from work proved to be a good decision as she could now focus all her energies on nurturing our bundle of joy.

Having a baby changed us, indeed. All those years of concern and anxiety seen in our parents for us as kids and even till date became so understandable. It’s a different journey altogether and a new you. The first year has been challenging, but with time, we set into the new routine happily. One look at her, and we forget all our tiredness, discomfort, or lack of sleep. To ensure the right environment and

habits for Emma to grow up with, we happily made sacrifices like cutting down on screen time. Instead, we sing to her and play musical instruments to entertain her. We also follow a proper timetable for baby's sleep, feed and playtime, which means we as parents also adapt to a more disciplined lifestyle. We are more aware of how we speak with each other in her presence or otherwise. Sometimes, as a couple, we have our disagreements, but we consciously calm down and share our opinions without getting worked up. To give her a Eucharistic experience and receive the Lord's blessings, we

started getting baby Emma for Sunday mass at 5 months of age. We also introduced her to prayer, hymns, and a community experience by participating in the Rosary.

Each day has wonderful surprises in store. Hearing Emma say Da-da and Mumma is pure bliss, and we are experiencing all this because we kept our faith and hope in the Lord! He guided us, brought the right people into our lives, and filled us with happiness galore! Thank you, Jesus!! Thank you, Mumma Mary, for interceding for us.

Vijay and Jaya D'Costa
St. Peter's Zone



On the occasion of the Annual Alumni Day of the Basics of Inter-Religious Dialogue (BIRD) course, the Inter-Religious Dialogue Cell (IRDC) of our church in collaboration with the Archdiocesan Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue organised an interesting and insightful panel discussion on the topic “Life After Death.” Six distinguished and highly qualified speakers from different religions were part of the panel; a Prabhujī from ISKCON, a Buddhist scholar, a Brahmakumari sister, an Islamist Maulana, a Sikh expert, and a Christian priest and scholar. The event took place on 6th October 2024 in the church hall. Around 150 people of various faiths, which included the BIRD alumni, members of the IRDC of different churches across Mumbai, and both lay people and religious attended this event. Ms. Melissa Nair, the president of the IRDC from our church was the host for the event.

The event started with a Bharatnatyam dance, followed by the lighting of the samai by our esteemed speakers, our parish priest, Fr. Victor Martis, and Secretary for the Archdiocesan Commission of IRD, Dr. Fr. S. M. Michael. Fr. Victor gave the welcome address, wherein he encouraged us to open our hearts and minds to search for meaning beyond this life. He said that this symposium was an opportunity to examine the different religious perspectives on this topic and to create deeper respect and understanding amongst people of different religions.

The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Edelweiss Quadros, a member of the Archdiocesan commission and part of the IRD community in Mumbai since 2010. She

formulated three questions for the panelists to discuss on. (1) What is the belief about life after death according to your faith or belief? (2) What is the thinking or belief based on? (3) How does belief in life after death affect our everyday life? How can we live our lives better? The speakers spoke on these questions.

At the end of the discussion the moderator summarised the different views put forth by all the speakers based on their religion. She outlined that “How we live our lives when alive will decide the kind of life we will have after our death, whether our soul enters another form of life, or if we go to our God in heaven, or in jannat, where one person’s good deeds on earth will be rewarded. Whatever good we do on earth will not go in vain. We are a soul, passing through earth in this body. Whatever be our religion, we have to live a good life when on earth. Loving one another will only get us closer to God”. At the end of the discussion there was an interactive session with the audience.

Fr. Michael gave the closing speech. There was a devotional song on the “atma” by the IRDC team of our church, followed by a vote of thanks by Ms. Asmitha Vaz. The panelists were presented a token of appreciation by the Commission members. The organisation of the symposium and the knowledge of the speakers was well appreciated by the audience. The event ended with sumptuous snacks and a fellowship amongst those present.

Wilfred Menezes & Asmitha Vaz
IRDC



1. During Advent, why are we encouraged to go for confessions? Isn't it supposed to be a happy season?

Advent, the season leading up to Christmas, is all about preparing our hearts for the coming of Jesus. While we often think of Christmas as a joyful time, Advent is also a season that calls for reflection, and that's where repentance comes in. Going for confessions to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation means recognizing that we've gone off track and choosing to turn back toward God. Think of it like cleaning up your room before a special guest arrives - you want everything to be ready and welcoming. Advent invites us to do something similar with our hearts: to look within, acknowledge anything that is not aligned with God's ways, and ask for forgiveness to start fresh.

This time of year, many people look forward to celebrating Jesus' birth and the love and peace He brings. But that celebration is even more meaningful when we've taken time to clear out what doesn't belong like anger, jealousy, or impatience. The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us make space for God's love and grace, preparing us not just for Christmas Day but also for the real joy and peace that Jesus offers. John the Baptist, a significant figure in the Advent story, called people to "prepare the way for the Lord" by repenting and returning to God. By repenting, we allow God to fill our hearts with His love and transform us, making us more like Him and more ready to receive the gift of Jesus at Christmas.

2. With so many props, décor, signs, lights during the Christmas season it becomes difficult to focus on the what's important viz. Jesus. What should I do to have meaningful Christmas?

Very good question. We often lose the true essence of Christmas amidst the hustle, bustle and glamour of the season. But we don't need to look far away. The Christmas story itself provides us with several symbols which we can use to focus and find our way to what's important. My favourite symbol has always been the Star of Bethlehem for its relevance then and now.

The bright star led the 3 wise men to find baby Jesus in Bethlehem. The star reminds us to keep our eyes open for signs of God's guidance in our lives. Just like the star led the wise men to Jesus, God gives us signs and moments in our own lives that help point us toward Him. These signs might not be a literal star in the sky, but they can come through moments of inspiration, comforting words from a friend, a helpful Bible verse, or even in those quiet moments of peace and calm when you feel reassured that everything will be okay. That feeling can be a way of God showing He's with you, reminding you that He's got a plan, and helping you refocus.

In our world today, it's easy to feel lost or distracted by so many things - school, work, relationships, social media, and more. The Star of Bethlehem reminds us to focus on what really matters and to seek out God's direction in our lives. Just as the wise men kept travelling, trusting the star to lead them to Jesus, we are invited to trust that God also has a purpose for us. So, every time you see a star this Christmas, let it remind you to look for God's guidance in your life. And when you get

overwhelmed, think of the Star of Bethlehem and find your way back to Jesus.
Merry Christmas!!

3. I have always wanted to bake a Christmas Cake and start a family tradition. Can you give me a good Christmas cake recipe?

Oh wow, that is a beautiful tradition to start; nothing better than the family coming together to bake a lovely cake. Unfortunately, I am not that good at baking. So, I asked our talented and versatile parishioner Sunita Joseph from St. Teresa of Kolkata zone who runs the successful Degree Celsius Cake Studio (@degreecelsiuscake) to help out and share a Christmas recipe. Thank you, Sunita. And I hope you and everyone else enjoys creating this beautiful cake



*Christmas spiced bundt cake
with cream cheese frosting*

Ingredients

Veg oil - 130 ml	Ground ginger - 2.25 tsp
Treacle - 130 ml	Cinnamon powder - 1 tsp
Brown sugar - 140 gms	Clove powder - 1/4 tsp
Water - 65 ml	Nutmeg powder - 1/4 tsp
Eggs - 2	Cream cheese frosting
Whole milk - 65 ml	Cream cheese - 125 gms
All purpose flour - 135 gms	Unsalted butter - 65 gms
Cocoa powder - 45 gms	Icing Sugar - 160 gms
Baking soda- 3/4 tsp	(can be increased or decreased if needed)
Salt - 1/4 tsp	Milk - 2-4 tbsps
	Vanilla essence - 1/2 tsp



Method

- Preheat the oven to 160° C .
- Grease a 9" Bundt pan.
- Dust cocoa powder and tap out the excess.
- Melt oil , treacle , brown sugar and water in a medium saucepan until all the brown sugar has dissolved .
- Allow to cool.
- Whisk the eggs and milk into the treacle mixture after it has cooled , set aside.
- Sift together flour , cocoa powder , baking soda, salt, ground ginger , cinnamon , clove powder and nutmeg powder into a bowl.
- Fold the flour mixture into the treacle mixture until just combined.
- Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for about 30 - 40 mins or till the toothpick inserted comes out clean.
- Allow to cool.

Frosting

- Beat the butter and cream cheese .
- Gradually add the Icing sugar.
- Add vanilla essence and milk a little at a time.
- Add more sugar or milk at this stage if required.
- Invert the cake on a platter and frost with cream cheese frosting .



BORN IN CHRIST

08-09-2024	Exodus Eamon Dsouza	6/5/11, Tulip CHS, Bhawani Nagar
06-10-2024	Thea Sequeira	A2/202, Ashok Towers, Military Road
27-10-2024	Jared Dean Mascarenhas	E/1101, Manavsthal Heights, Military Road
10-11-2024	Hazel Coelho	A2/301, Ashok Towers, Military Road

MARRIAGES

03-11-2024	Danny Dsouza & Lavina Solanki	3/14/9, Garden View CHS, Bhawani Nagar
------------	-------------------------------	--

REST IN CHRIST

27-07-2024	Allan Gomes	Shanti Apartments - 3, Military Road
06-08-2024	Eliza Diago Mascarenhas	Adivasi Bhunikhan Pada, Pump House
09-08-2024	Alice D'souza	C/405, Manavsthal Heights, Military Road
14-08-2024	John D'silva	A/2/802, Ashok Nagar, Military Road
22-08-2024	Flory D'souza	LT 5/4, Vijay Nagar
30-08-2024	Martin Vaz	8/8, Blossom Society, Military Road
08-09-2024	Wilma Fernandes	18/C/403, Zenith CHS Ltd, Bhawani Nagar
28-09-2024	Philomena Gilbert D'mello	LT 4/14, Vijay Nagar
19-10-2024	Joyce Ann Stephens	C/7/10, Kini Complex, Naigaon (E)
20-10-2024	Louis Noronha	B/301, Mayur Plaza, Military Road
25-10-2024	Margaret Victor Pereira	LT 8/22, Vijay Nagar
27-10-2024	Vincent Raymond D'souza	5/28, Blossom Society, Military Road
09-11-2024	Mary William	LT 28/34, Vijay Nagar
12-11-2024	Xavier Gracias	4/8, Blossom Society, Military Road