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News Bulletin Diocese of Sultanpet

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Bishop Speaks...

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Faithful,
May the peace, joy and mercy of Infant Jesus be with you all!

Wonders of Christmas!



This is Christmas season! We come across 'Seven Wonders of Christmas Card Set of 20' or music albums like 'The Wonders of Christmas.' Indeed, Christmas brings various wonders to the world! Advertisements such as: '*Christmas in Singapore*' or '*Christmas in Paris,*' bring to the fore the commercialization of Christmas, prevalent in modern society. Even those who do not know about Jesus or anti-Christ or even atheists are also eagerly looking forward to Christmas as it brings monetary transactions and affluences in their business. Is this not a wonder that Christmas brings to the world?

Jesus a Wonder!

Indeed, the birth of Child Jesus is a great wonder to the Christian believers. When I see the detailed genealogy list of Jesus given by Matthew (Ch 1) I wonder at the ancient, long and faithfully observed historical traditions of Jews, starting from Abraham to Joseph and Mary, being fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. It is a historical wonder! The first prophecy about the Messiah, given to Abraham (Gen 12:3), carried through Nathan (2 Sam 7: 12-14), Isaiah (7:14; 9:2-6; 11:1-9) and finally Micah (5:2) comes to a historical reality in the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. We can say that the events leading up to the birth of Christ were like the gears of a fine watch that had to mesh together so that when the fullness of time had come, Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem. In fact Jesus, the Messiah, was prophesied by Isaiah saying: "his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor" (Isa 9:6). What a prophetic wonder! Again, the profound wonder to the human mind is "God becoming man" (Jn 1:14). Jesus, by his birth in Bethlehem, (sacrifices) empties his divineness and takes the form of a man (*sarx*) with every human weakness (*sarkikos*), of course, except sin (Phil 2:8; Heb 4:15). This condescension is a unique and still profound wonder! However, a greater wonder is that God touches the human condition in order that He would transform the weak humanness.

Birth is Wonder!

When Mary of Nazareth was announced of the birth of a child to her, she legitimately declined saying "I am a virgin." But she was told that "nothing is impossible with God (Lk 1:27). At that moment a virgin becomes a Virgin-Mother! This wonder is too unique and brings to reality the ancient belief of Israel as expressed by Isaiah (7:14). This is marvellous! It is a divine vocation given to the Virgin Mary of Nazareth and she proved it by being the first and greatest disciple of her Son, Jesus Christ, not only during the earthly life of Jesus, but also throughout world history by imparting his mercy to all people. A barren and old woman Elizabeth (Lk 1:7), on account of this Child Jesus, brings forth a child (Lk 1:36). This is amazing and beyond the power of human reckoning. Elizabeth gave witness to it by saying: "the child in my womb leaped for joy" (Lk 1:44). Let us stand and worship this Child Jesus!

Third Wonder: Love for the Abandoned!

Raymond Brown, the renowned Catholic Biblical scholar, wrote the famous book on Christmas: *The Birth of the Messiah*. It is evident that, he, very scholarly, puts the adult Christ back into Christmas, treating the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke as the entire Gospel story in miniature. However, the totality of Christ, which we see in three years of his ministry in Palestine, can be seen in the birth of Jesus itself. Albert Nolan, writing a beautiful book: *Jesus before Christianity* (1980), presents Jesus as the one who is full of compassion. This distinctive identity of Jesus, love for the abandoned, is very evidently seen in Bethlehem itself. The very fact of an unknown and alien place of birth, that too in a manger, speaks of his preferential option for the poor. Again, the first announcement of his birth goes to the shepherds and to the Magi, the Gentiles, who are all considered to be sinners and the manifestation to the old people like Simon and Anna, the marginalised in society, reveal the splendid wonder that Christmas has brought to the world. The child who “is holy and Son of God” (Lk 1:35) is embracing the poor and sinners. From a human point of view it would seem a contradiction. But Christmas brings this wonder, an amazing change in the society, which is very hard to understand this even today. Child Jesus wants us to celebrate Christmas only by executing this option for the poor, the marginalized, the immigrants, the ostracised and the minorities who are burdened with the torture of selfishness.

St. Francis of Assisi saw the wonders of Christmas in loving the whole creation, putting humans, animals and also plants in the crib; the loving concern and care of the lepers of Molokai was the Christmas celebrated by St. Damien De Veuster, a Dutch Roman Catholic Priest (1840-1889); the care for the destitute was the celebration of Christmas for St. Mother Teresa. They followed the words of Jesus: 'whatever you did to one of the least you did it to me' (Mt 25:40). In the Christmas event Jesus soils himself by the 'sinful' dust of the world. If we have to be united with the same Child Jesus to celebrate the same feast meaningfully, then, as Pope Francis exhorts, in the process of witnessing to Jesus, we should not be worried even if “our shoes get soiled by the mud of the street” (EG 45). True to the same spirit Pope Francis declared on 19 November 2017 the first “World Day of the Poor;” This is a wonderful expression of abiding with the spirit of Christmas, a divine event for the poor.

The Bethlehem Jesus shows us not only how to be poor in spirit (Mt 5:3), but also to reach out to the poor and the marginalised.

In the context of polarization and growing religious fundamentalism most of the Christians in India today are thrown to the peripheries by the ruling and majoritarian forces. We shall learn from this Christmas as to how to weep for the victims of injustice, like the holy Innocents (Mt. 2: 17-18). In celebrating the wonders of Christmas we shall remember that if we cannot encounter the poor and the victimized with pro-active concern we cannot encounter Jesus!

Let this Christmas motivate us to be poor in spirit, to see the wonders of God in humans and to share our spiritual and material riches with the poor and marginalized. If we witness to this Child of Bethlehem- is this not a great wonder Jesus brings to us?

Christmas Wishes!

I take this opportunity to wish a very Happy Christmas to all the priests and religious working in the Diocese, all the faithful, friends and benefactors of our Diocese. May love and mercy of the Child Jesus shower upon you all!



The Blessing Ceremony will be in the august presence of

INVITATION

BLESSING & OPENING of the BISHOP'S HOUSE & CURIA

DIOCESE OF SULTANPET
PALAKKAD, KERALA, INDIA

Thursday 30 November 2017 at 10 am

Most Rev. Dr. Antony Pappasamy, (Archbishop of Madurai & Primate, Tamil Nadu Bishop's Council)
 Most Rev. Dr. George Antonyparambil (Archbishop of Madurai-Bishop)
 Most Rev. Dr. Chacko Theottamattickal, SVD (Bishop of India)
 Most Rev. Dr. Stanley Roman (Bishop of Quilon)
 Most Rev. Dr. Varghese Chakkalakkal (Bishop of Calicut)
 Mar. Jacob Mananathodath (Bishop of Palghat)
 Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Karikkassery (Bishop of Kottayam)
 Most Rev. Dr. Stephen Athipuzha (Bishop of Alappuzha)
 Most Rev. Dr. Vincent Samuel (Bishop of Neyyattinkara)
 Most Rev. Dr. Selvaraj Primmuthan (Bishop of Ponnani)
 Most Rev. Dr. Alex Vadakkumthala (Bishop of Punalur)
 Most Rev. Dr. Udumala Bala (Bishop of Wanganjil)
 Most Rev. Dr. Anandapan Amalraj (Bishop of Ottumparam)
 Most Rev. Dr. Lawrence Pius Dorais (Bishop of Dharmapuri)
 Most Rev. Dr. P. Thomas Puthanveedu (Bishop of Ootacamund)
 Most Rev. Dr. Christudas Rajappan (Auxiliary Bishop of Tiruvananthapuram)
 Very Rev. Fr. Henri Rosal, MEP (MEP Regional Superior, Bangalore)
 Mr. Rajesh, MP (Palakkad)
 Mr. Shaji Parakkal, MLA (Palakkad)
 Mr. Krishnakutty, MLA (Cheruvu)
 Mr. Pramela Sankaran, Chairman, Palakkad Municipality
 Mr. Krishna Kumar, Vice-Chairman, Palakkad Municipality
 Mr. Shaji George, Vice President, KRCC, Cochin



Programme

10:00 am Blessing and Opening
 10:30 am Procession of the Bishops & Priests to the Hall
 10:45 am Eucharistic Celebration
 11:45 am Civic Function

With immense joy and profound gratitude to God

The Diocese of Sultanpet (Palakkad, Kerala, India)

cordially invites you to the BLESSING & OPENING of the BISHOP'S HOUSE & CURIA

presided over by
 Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Kalathiparambil (Metropolitan Archbishop of Verapoly) and
 Most Rev. Dr. L. Thomas Aquinas (Bishop of Cochin)

on Thursday 30 November 2017, at 10 am.
 We appreciate your participation and blessings!

Mr. A. S. Madhankutty, VC, (Sultanpet Diocese)
 Archbishop Kalathiparambil (Verapoly)
 Archbishop Antony Pappasamy (Madurai)
 Archbishop George Antonyparambil (Madurai)
 Bishop L. Thomas Aquinas (Cochin)

Relinquishing the History & Directory of the Diocese
 Presented by: Bishop Stephen Athipuzha (Alappuzha)
 First Copy received by: Bishop A. Amalraj (Ottumparam)

Felicitation
 By: Rajesh, MP (Palakkad)
 Mr. Shaji Parakkal, MLA (Palakkad)
 Mr. Krishnakutty, MLA (Cheruvu)

Dance
 Presented by: Mrs. Pramela Sankaran, Chairman, Palakkad Municipality
 Mr. Krishna Kumar, Vice-Chairman, Palakkad Municipality
 Mr. Shaji George, Vice President, KRCC, Cochin

Relinquishing the Statue & Guidelines of the Diocese
 Presented by: Bishop Vincent Samuel (Neyyattinkara)
 Bishop Selvaraj Primmuthan (Ponnani)
 Bishop Antonyparambil Peter Abir (Sultanpet)

First Copy received by: Bishop of Thiruvananthapuram

Prayer Address

1:00 pm Lunch

Place: Near Stadium Bus Stand, Sultanpet, Palakkad.
 RSVP: Mr. Vimal Kumar : 9846223623
 E-Printer: 9846223623, gsd@dioceseofsp.com



Blessing of the New Bishop's House cum Curia

God's grace is abundant! In the fourth year of its inception our Diocese is gifted by God with a new Bishop's House cum Curia. Many benefactors, both in India and abroad, came forward generously to extend their helping hands to realise this project. I wish to thank every one of them all very sincerely. In the presence of 19 Bishops and other dignitaries, from Kerala, Tamilnadu and other parts of India, Bishop Thomas Aquinas (Coimbatore) blessed and Archbishop Joseph Kalathiparambil (Verapoly) opened the Bishop's House on Thursday 30 November at 10 am. The blessing was followed by the concelebrated high Mass, presided over by Archbishop Kalathiparambil, in which Bishop Varghese Chakkalakkal (Calicut) preached the Homily. I would hereby like to thank all the Archbishops, Bishops, and the other dignitaries who graced this function. I offer my sincere thanks also to all my Priests and religious, both men and women, for their generous contributions to make this event a great success.

Felicitation to Bishop Mar Jacob Mananathodath



Mar Jacob Mananathodath, Bishop of Palghat, celebrated his Silver Jubilee of his Episcopal Ordination on 28 November 2017. With all my clergy, religious and faithful, I would like to offer my hearty Congratulations and Felicitation to His Excellency Bishop Mananathodath. May God Bless him and his mission abundantly, "Ad Multos Annos!"

Bishop Mar Jacob Mananathodath is blessing the Tabernacle in the New Chapel of our New Bishop's House on Monday 18 December 2017 when we, with all the Clergy of Our Diocese, offer him our felicitations. He will also address our priests and conduct the Eucharistic adoration which will be over with the Christmas lunch.

+ *Antony*

+ **Antonymsamy Peter Abir**
Bishop of Sultanpet

Bishop's Appointments

Date	Time	Programme	Place
1		Visit of Bishop Udumala Bala	
2	10.00 am	St. Michael's Brothers: Centenary Celebration Mass	Karumathampatty
3	8.30 am	Feast Mass	Saveriyarpalayam
	5.00 pm	Feats Mass	Vandazhy
5-10		Madha TV Programme	Chennai
16	10 am`	CRI Christmas Programme	Palakkad
17	5.00 pm	Carols Competition	Kanjikode
18	10.00 am	Felicitation to Bishop Mar Jacob Mananathodath, Priests' Recollection & Christmas Celebrations	Palakkad
22-23		Out of station	
24	11.30 pm	Christmas Midnight Mass- Cathedral	Palakkad
25	8.00 am	Christmas Mass	Plasampathy
27	9.00 am	Feast Mass	Attapallam
29-30		Marriage Mass	Chennai
31	11.30 pm	New Year Midnight Mass- Cathedral	Palakkad
1 Jan '18	7.00 am	New Year Mass	Kopumenon Challai

From Vicar General Desk

The Priests' Recollection will be on Monday, 18 December at 10 am. We shall also have the Christmas celebration in this Meet. As informed earlier all priests are encouraged to share your joy of Christmas with the other priests.

I take this opportunity to thank all the priests who generously helped to make the Blessing and Opening of the Bishop's House a very successful event.

*Rev. Msgr. A. S. Madalaimuthu,
Vicar General*

CRI Christmas Gathering

We shall have the Christmas celebration of the women religious working in our Diocese on **Saturday 16 December** at the Bishop's House, Sultanpet, Palakkad. The programme begins at 10 am. There will be confessions and Eucharistic adoration which will be followed by Christmas dinner.

*Sr. Reena, OLM
Women CRI Coordinator.*

From the Procurator's Desk

1. Parish Audit reports are available with the procurator. Please collect them at the earliest and please pay the annual contribution of the parish to the Diocese as per the audit closing balance.
2. Please remit as early as possible the pending special collections and the mass stipends of the year 2017.
3. Make arrangements for the Mission Sunday collections and remit it to the procure by the end of January 2018.

*Rev. Fr. Lorraine L.,
Procurator*

Family Commission

Marriage preparation classes in 2018

As it was decided in the Priests' meeting the marriage preparation classes will be held **only once in three months** at Sorapara. It will be held in the following months in the coming year: January, April, July and October. In the month of January this course is held **on 27-28 (Saturday and Sunday) 2018**. Please note it and send your candidates for the classes on these months.

Fr. Paul Vincent
Family Commission

SMSSS News



Kolping Annual day Celebration and Inauguration of Udayam Cultural Group

Sultanpet Kolping Region celebrated the 4th annual day on the 28 October 2017 Saturday with the theme of **Yes to life, No to Cancer**. It was participated by with 910 members. Most Rev. Dr. Antonysamy Peter Abir presided over the function. Mr.M.B. Rajesh Palakkad, MP, Rev. Fr. Antony Raj, Kolpling India National director, Fr. Prince Robert, regional director, Fr. George Vettikkatil KSSF Executive and

Dr. Sr. Reena Rose gave motivation talks in this great event. The Kolping youth members of SMSSS have started the "UDAYAM CULTURAL GROUP" for the folk and cultural development.

Ashakiranam Cancer Care Campaign at Eruthenpathy Parish

Parish level Ashakiranam Cancer Care Campaign started at St. Sebastian Cathedral, Palakkad on 5 November 2017 and at Eruthenpathy parish on 12 November 2017. Fr. Prince Robert, the Director celebrated mass and inaugurated the campaign and rally. Youth members gave the awareness street play and drama on Cancer.



Visit of Most Rev. Dr. Lumen Monterio, Chairman Caritas India

Most Rev. Dr. Lumen Monterio, Chairman Bishop of Caritas India visited our Diocese and social work centres on 22 November 2017. He inaugurated the School level Ashakiranam Cancer Awareness Campaign at St. Paul's Hr. Sec. School, Kozhinjampara. He visited Sorapara parish and had an interaction with Rev. Fr. Albert Anandaraj and RBC committee members.



SMSSS and PSSP Volunteers gathering for Ashakiranam Cancer Care Campaign

SMSSS and PSSP (People Service Society Palakkad, Diocese of Palakkad) jointly conducted the Volunteers Gather of Ashakiranam Cancer Care Campaign on 23 November 2017. Most Rev. Dr. Lumen Monterio, Chairman Bishop, Caritas India, Most

Rev. Dr. Antonysamy Peter Abir, Bishop of Sultanpet, Most Rev. Dr. Jacob Manethodath, Bishop of Palakkad, Mr.MB. Rajesh, Palakkad MP., Mr. K. Krihsnankutty, Chittur MLA, Mr.Shafi Parambil, Palakkad MLA, and Fr. Paul Moonjali, Asst. Executive Director of Caritas India participated in the Programme. More than 800 volunteers joined in the event.

Rev. Fr. Prince Robert,
Director, SMSSS

Vatican News



Pope: the saints weren't perfect, but they allowed God to touch their lives

Nov 1, 2017 - 05:54 am .- Pope Francis marked All Saints' Day Wednesday saying the saints are honored not because they were perfect or did everything right, but because they allowed God to touch their lives and fought hard against sin.

Pope bans sale of cigarettes in Vatican on health grounds

Nov 9, 2017 - 06:52 am .- In a move likely to have some Vatican employees fuming, Pope Francis has decided to ban the sale of cigarettes inside the City State on the grounds that the Holy See cannot profit from a proven health hazard.

Pope Francis got a Lamborghini, and he's auctioning it for charity

Nov 15, 2017 - 05:09 am .- On Wednesday, Pope Francis became the new owner of a papal-themed Lamborghini Huracán, which was given to him by company executives at the Vatican and will be auctioned off for charity.

Ahead of Burma visit, Pope says he's coming to promote peace

Nov 17, 2017 - 05:29 am .- On Friday, Pope Francis sent a video greeting to the people of Burma also known as Myanmar ahead of his Nov. 27-30 trip, saying he is coming to proclaim the Gospel and promote peace in a country gripped by a heated humanitarian and political crisis surrounding the Rohingya Muslim minority.

Pope Francis: the poor are our 'passport to paradise'

Nov 19, 2017 - 02:34 am .- On the first World Day for the Poor, Pope Francis said caring for the needy has a saving power, because in them we see the face of Christ, and urged Christians to overcome indifference and seek ways to actively love the poor that they meet.

St. John Paul II relic given to 2019 World Youth Day

Nov 20, 2017 - 07:00 pm .- At a Nov. 17 ceremony at the Polish Embassy to the Holy See, Ambassador Janusz Kotanski delivered a relic of Pope St. John Paul II to Panama's Ambassador to the Holy See, Miroslava Rosas Vargas. The relic is a gift from Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz to the Church in Panama, as it prepares to host the 2019 World Youth Day.

Pope eager to meet Catholic, interreligious leaders in Bangladesh

Nov 21, 2017 - 06:33 am .- On Tuesday, Pope Francis sent a video greeting to the people of Bangladesh ahead of his Nov. 30-Dec. 2 visit to the country, saying he is looking forward to meeting everyone, especially Catholics and other religious leaders, and to bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ

BIRTH DAY

6 Rev. Fr. Jesmin Nelson

14 Rev. Fr. Rejimon Devasia, MF

25 Rev. Fr. Jesudoss

30 Rev. Fr. Antony Asariparambil, OSJ

*SNL wish you a
Happy Birth Day*

FEAST DAY

3 Rev. Fr. Saji Joseph, MF

14 Rev. Fr. Jomon Virippil, MSFS

17 Rev. Fr. Lazar Arulappan

25 Rev. Fr. Jesudoss

26 Rev. Fr. P.M. Joseph, MSFS

26 Rev. Fr. Stanley Stephen

31 Rev. Fr. Sylvester

SNL wish you a Happy Feast Day

ORDINATION DAY

3 Rev. Fr. Philip Parackal, MSFS

9 Rev. Fr. Jose Michael, MF

11 Rev. Fr. Stanley Stephen

15 Rev. Fr. Aloysius Santiago, SDB

18 Rev. K.P. Vincent

28 Rev. Fr. Antony SJ

29 Rev. Fr. Patrick Alphonse, SDB

30 Rev. Fr. Maria Joseph

*SNL wish you
a Happy Ordination Day*