



ANTONIAN

ST. ANTHONY'S CHURCH, VAKOLA

APRIL, 2012



HOLY WEEK PROGRAMME 2012

CONFESSIONS

19th, 20th & 21st March 2012, 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon & 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 1, 2012

Blessing of Palms: At the 7.45 a.m. Mass
Passo Service/Veronica Singing/Sermon: 5.00 p.m.
Kindly Note: No 5.00 p.m. Mass. Mass at 6.30p.m. in English

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2012

Liturgical Services: 5.00 p.m. in Konkani; 7.30 p.m. in English
Holy Hours: 10.00 p.m. in Konkani; 11.00 p.m. in English

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 2012

Stations of the Cross: 6.30 a.m. in Konkani; 7.30 a.m. in English; 8.30 a.m. in Marathi; 9.30 a.m. for Children; Agony & Passion of the Lord: 11.00 a.m. Preacher:
The Lord's Passion Service: 5.00 p.m. in Konkani; 7.30 p.m. in English followed by Passo Service in Marathi

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2012

Easter Vigil Service: 8.30 p.m. Celebration of the Lord's Resurrection

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 8, 2012

MASSES: 6.30 a.m. in Konkani; 7.45, 9.00 & 10.15 a.m. in English
NO EVENING MASS

FIRST COMMUNION – On 21 April, Saturday at 5.00 p.m. Mass

CONFIRMATION – On 22 April, Sunday at 10.15 a.m. Mass

The Parish Fathers, Sisters and the Antonian Team wish our parishioners a "HOLY AND HAPPY EASTER" - Rejoice! Hallelujah! For Christ has Risen! Hallelujah!

O QUEEN OF HEAVEN REJOICE! ALLELUIA!

The Parish Team

Fr. Seraj Pinto (Parish Priest)

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Diana Fernandes

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Designed by

Lenin d'Cruz

The "Regina Caeli" is an ancient Marian Hymn of the Church, one of the four seasonal antiphons of the Blessed Virgin Mary prescribed to be sung or recited in the Liturgy of Hours at the Conclusion of the Night Prayer. The Regina Caeli is sung or recited in place of the Angelus during the Easter Season, from Holy Saturday through Pentecost Sunday. The Latin word, "Caelum" meaning "Heaven" from which the English word "Celestial" comes, was the only form in Classical Latin.

While the authorship of the Regina Caeli is unknown, the hymn has been traced back to the twelfth century, used by the Franciscans after the Night Prayer in the first half of the following century. Legend has it that St. Gregory the Great, heard angels chanting the first three lines one Easter morning in Rome, while following barefoot in a great religious procession with the icon of the Blessed Virgin painted by St. Luke the Evangelist. He was thereupon inspired to add the fourth line.

"Queen of Heaven" is the title given to the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Catholic Church at the Council of Ephesus in the Fifth century, where the Virgin Mary was proclaimed "Theotokos" (God-bearer), a title rendered in Latin as "Mater Dei" (Mother of God).

The Catholic teaching on "Regina Caeli" is expressed in the Papal encyclical "Ad Caeli Reginam" issued by Pope Pius XII. It states that Mary is called "Queen of Heaven" because Her Son Jesus Christ is the King of Israel and heavenly King of the Universe. For by His Death and Resurrection, He is the Conqueror over sin and death. The Second Vatican Council in 1964 referred to Mary as the "Queen of the Universe" - Section 59 of Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church states - "Finally, the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all guilt of Original Sin, on the completion of her earthly sojourn, was taken up body and soul into the heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen of the Universe, that she might be more fully confirmed to her Son, the Lord of lords and the Conqueror of Sin and Death." This reference



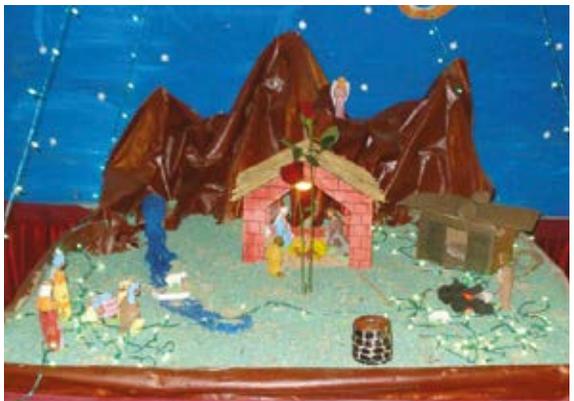
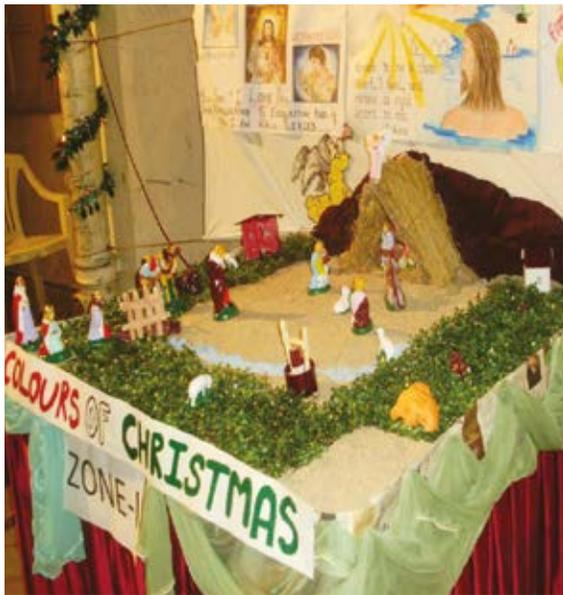
came at a time during which space exploration was beginning (LG. 8).

Pope Benedict XVI stated in his address on November 27, 2006 that "Mary's acceptance of the divine will is the ultimate reason she is Queen of Heaven, whom we hail on Easter Morn, and whom God exalted above all creatures and Christ crowned her Queen of heaven and earth. These words of the Holy Father set the tone to our Paschal Season even as we will keep company with Mary on Good Friday, awaiting the Resurrection of Her Divine Son on Easter Vigil. The Church offers us 40 days of Lent, an opportune time to seek God's Will in our lives just as Jesus and Mary did in the entire Paschal event of His Passion and death. We can do this when we "REPENT & RENEW" our lives by acts of penance signifying our self-denial and by almsgiving signifying our Charity towards the poor and suffering. Repentance and Renewal will lead us to truly REJOICE with Mary on that Easter Morn, when we will join her in greeting her Risen Son and our Lord as we say in great joy -

O Queen of Heaven, Rejoice, Alleluia!
For He whom you did merit to bear, Alleluia!
Has Risen as He said, Alleluia!
Pray for us to God, Alleluia!...

May the Blessed Virgin Mary lead us to obtain the joys of everlasting life in our Families, relationships and Communities. A VERY HAPPY EASTER TO ALL!

Fr. Lawrence A. D'Souza
Editor



COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS

A festival celebrated by sweets preparations, purchases and house decorations saw a new dimension of being welcomed in our parish this year. In an endeavour to live the festive spirit of Christmas, the Small Christian Community co-ordinators in association with animators and Parish Councilors put up Zonal Cribs in our parish this year.

With two weeks given to plan, each zone, collectively worked towards setting up a Zonal Crib with their unique theme for Christmas. The efforts were acknowledged with lots of appreciation and devotion from parishioners coming to Church during the entire Christmas Week. We would like to thank each of the animators for their efforts in making this Christmas a special Parish family celebration.

- Diana Fernandes (Community No. 1)



FAMILY – A REASON FOR CELEBRATIONS

Coming together is a beginning, working together is progress, executing plans together is success.

Under the able leadership of our Spiritual director Fr. Lawrence D'souza, the family cell of our parish successfully organized two programmes in 2 consecutive months.

The Family Day which was held on 15th January 2012, saw families from all corners of our parish coming together to celebrate their togetherness. In the meaningful Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Lawrence, we thanked and praised God for the gift of our families. Our youth Sarah and Belmira then kept the crowd enthralled and active with their interactive games. St. Charles School hall provided the ideal venue for the exciting treasure hunt. The celebration concluded with a fellowship meal which helped one and all to mix and interact with one another.

The World Marriage Day was planned keeping "Couples" in mind on 19th February 2012. Fr. Cajetan from Snehalaya began with an Enriching

& Enlightening Eucharistic Celebration and the exchange of marriage vows which set the tone for the celebration. Keeping with the theme "Rings and Roses," the family cell members welcomed the couples with a rose and a balloon. It was indeed a joyful sight to see the husbands pinning a rose in the wife's hair and the wife in turn tying the balloon on the husband's wrist. There was excitement from the word "go" which was aptly kept alive by the jovial and lively compere Thereza Fernandes.

The cutting of the cake by the senior most & youngest couple was followed by a few insights on married life together by Eric & Josephine. The couples posed joyfully under the watchful eye of the photographer Saby. The action songs & dances coupled with the exciting spot prizes helped the couples forget their worries and cares as they danced away to the feet tapping music provided by none other than Victor.

After a fun filled, enjoyable morning our appetites were satisfied by a sumptuous lunch provided by our caterer John. As everyone said Goodbye, there was one wish on every one's lips "yeh dil maange more".



We owe our success to the support of our Parish Priest, Fr. Seraj and the tireless efforts of Fr. Lawrence. A word of praise to the Family cell, who with the cooperation of SCC, worked hard to make this event a memorable one.

- Mayola Gomes (Family Cell)

VAKOLA TALENT ON DISPLAY IN 'TALENTIA'

On Sunday, 29th January 2012, the youth of St. Anthony's Parish organized Talentia. It was a great opportunity for all the parishioners to bring forward their talents. The main focus was on Singing, Dance & Instrumental which included both English & Regional, Solo & Group performances. We had a wonderful team of Compeers that helped lighten our event and an esteemed group of judges to justify the competitors. The Organising Committee did a good job with the backdrop, stage, sound and snacks. Trophies, Prizes and Certificates were awarded to the best performers. This event was a great success. It brought the spirit of liveliness in our Parish where we witnessed the support and love of the families & friends

which was a needed encouragement. BRAVO! to all the members who were a part in every little way of this great event and to all the Priests for their support.

We are looking forward for many more such events and above all a continued support from all the parishioners of St. Anthony's Parish.

- Aurealia D'mello
(President, Parish Youth Council)

CELEBRATING BISHOP BOSCO@75.COM

25th February 2012 was a memorable day as the Central Suburbs Deanery took pleasure in organizing the celebration for Bishop Bosco Penha's 75th Birthday. The programme was held at St. Francis Xavier's quadrangle in Vile Parle.

Since the strength of our Small Christian Community animators is huge, a limited number of animators and co-ordinators were invited. There were around 10 to 12 lively programmes put up for that evening. It started with a prayer dance. Later, the youth of our parish performed a German Polka Dance which

received lots of appreciation from Bishop Bosco. He congratulated the choreographer and participants for introducing western dances in our predominantly Bollywood culture.

Each of the 6 parishes also put up different items of song, dance and skits to celebrate this

day. The celebration ended with the project coordinators of each of the parishes gifting Bishop Bosco a spiritual and floral bouquet on behalf of their parishes. I was very happy to be present in this celebration.

- Martha Pinto (Community No. 17A)



MISSION: ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

Our parish was blessed to have a special mission conducted in the season of lent from 26th February to 3rd March 2012, by Redemptory Priests Fr. Shane Verghese and Fr. Peter Michael. This mission began with a rigorous drive of visiting all the families for a personal invitation to the missions by these Fathers along with Fr. Anthony Cardozo.

This simple visit garnered a lot of parishioners to attend the missions which witnessed an over-packed church. The seven days of the mission gave each of us an opportunity to reflect on the Word of God more deeply. Beginning with a time of praise and worship with devotional hymns immediately after the mass, the priests preached about different subjects associated

with our everyday life. The main aspects focused during this mission were on sin, forgiveness, responsibility, love between couples and within the family. On the sixth day, a way of the cross was conducted during the missions that led people to ponder on their personal life in relation to each of the stations. Later that evening, a Healing retreat was conducted for an hour. The mission concluded on the seventh day with a preaching during the Holy Mass. The priests also invited people to make their confessions during each of the days in the morning, evening and after mass as well.

We would like to thank the priests, ushers, Eucharistic ministers, choir, sound system organizers and our dear parishioners for their unanimous participation that made this Encounter with Jesus a spiritual experience.

- Diana Fernandes (Community No. 1)

GENESIS OF EASTER

Christianity is basically an EASTER religion, “for if Christ be not risen our faith is in vain” (1 Cor 15/14). Hence, for three centuries, Easter was the only feast that was kept throughout the whole Church and it is the only Solemnity that can claim to go back to apostolic times. It is very likely the “festival” St. Paul refers to in 1 Cor 5:8, which Christians must have celebrated with heightened intensity. Its dependence on the lunar calendar while making it a “moveable” feast, indicates that it was observed during the first century when Jewish influence was still effective.

Though most dictionaries tell us that the word “Easter” takes its origin from ‘Eastre’, the Teutonic goddess of the dawn whose rites were celebrated in spring, it may more likely have come from the German ‘Urstand’, that is, Resurrection. Or it may even have come from ‘East’ from where the Sun rises and the dawn (Estarun) appears.

Easter of course has its origins in the shepherds’ celebration of Passover and the farmers festival of Unleavened Bread both of which commemorated the coming of Spring (Lev 23: 5-6). Easter also has its “type” or blueprint in the Passover from Egypt to Sinai under Moses who gave a fuller meaning to both “Lamb” and “Bread”. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus freed us from the slavery of sin and put us in right relationship with God. This new relationship or “COVENANT” makes us His sons and daughters. Through His resurrection, we too rise to new life. In doing this He became the “PASSOVER LAMB” and the “UNLEAVENED BREAD”. Hence, Easter is the celebration of Christ’s Passover.

Just as Springtime in which everything is burgeoning and flowering, reminds us each year of the creation of the world, so does Easter inaugurate and stand at the core of

a new celebrative time, what we call the “LITURGICAL YEAR”. For Hippolytus, Easter is to the whole year what the head is to the body. For at Easter, the sun begins its course, the storms of winter with its floods and long nights are over and there is a newness of a shining atmosphere which invites the sailor to go out to sea once more and prompts humankind to give thanks as creation springs up again.

The Fathers of the Church also give an interpretation in which the figures of the Old Testament are connected with chronological details of the life of Jesus. Thus, the “Lamb” is to be taken captive on 10 Nisan: these first ten days of the month are a figure of the Old Testament, of the Decalogue. It is to be killed on 14 Nisan: an interval of time would separate the immolation of Jesus from His arrest. The Passover Lamb was to be immolated on the 14 Nisan, “in the evening” (Ex 12). While some see this as announcement that Jesus would be immolated on Good Friday evening, others take “evening” to mean the last years of the world (Iraeneus, Origin, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril, 1 Pet 1: 22). Eusebius also sees the Resurrection of Jesus as a fulfillment of both the cosmic feast of spring and the Jewish feast of the Exodus. St. Cyril of Alexandria brings out a whole parallel between winter and sin, the spring winds and the Holy Spirit, the perfume of flowers and that of virtues.

Quite early in the history of Christendom, there was a controversy about the date of Easter. The Quartodecimans who hailed from Asia Minor were so called because they held that Easter should be celebrated on the 14 day of Nisan, the exact anniversary of Christ’s death. Obviously, Easter would then fall on a variable day of the week. In Rome and in the West, however, Easter was celebrated on the Sunday following 14 Nisan (the spring full moon day). With the intervention of Iraeneus, the controversy which

would have created schism ended and saved the unity of the Church and the Roman tradition of celebrating Easter on a Sunday was followed everywhere.

Originally, Easter was celebrated during the night between Saturday and Sunday. This nocturnal celebration was a joint commemoration of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Christian Passover replaced the Jewish one. At that time it was unthinkable for a Christian not to attend the Easter Vigil, the great annual victory celebration of Christ's triumph over sin and death. The Vigil was not just an optional extra. It was at the very heart of Christian life and worship.

This "Night of nights" was also the normal occasion for converts to be initiated into the Mystery of Christ; hence the service was both baptismal and eucharistic. The next seven weeks, ending with the day of Pentecost were regarded as a festal season. From the fourth century, the one-day celebration of the Paschal Mystery became expanded into a triduum and a period of preparation called Lent also developed, which is called the "Easter cycle".

Both Ascension and Pentecost are not feasts unto themselves but rather aspects of the Passover or Easter Mystery. For just as the Jewish Passover was completed fifty days after the Exodus event by the sealing of the Covenant in blood, so also Christ's Exodus is completed by the outpouring of the Spirit who writes a new, interior and everlasting Covenant upon the heart, a Covenant sealed by the blood of Jesus.

And so, Ascension day even though being the fortieth day after Easter always falls on a Thursday, it is now celebrated on the following Sunday, so that its message may be brought home to the people. At the incarnation, the Eternal Word entered time but with the Ascension He did not leave it. Rather He filled all space and time with His death and resurrection when He said, "I will be with you always to

the end of time" (Mt 28:20). Ascension and Pentecost are God's ways of continuing the work of Jesus on earth. The Church is the instrument He uses to carry out His plan.

Some of the Fathers tell us that the scene of Christ's ascension mentioned in Eph 4: 7-13 is reminiscent of the Temple scene of the high priest who enters the sanctuary to pour animal blood upon the mercy seat to expiate sin. What the high priest had to do year after year, Christ did once for all, not with animal blood, but with His own blood. And just as the high priest brought gifts from the sanctuary to the people waiting outside, so also Christ the High Priest when he pierced the curtain, poured upon his people the Spirit with its manifold gifts. Thanks to the Mystery of Easter that fills our lives with His Spirit and His seven-fold gifts!!!

- Fr. Lawrence A. D'Souza

AGAPE LOVE OF JESUS – SACRIFICIAL LOVE OF CHRIST

Love is so powerful because being loved causes one to love oneself.

Nothing contributes to the self-image more than being loved by another."

Almost a month back we celebrated Valentine's Day. A day the world rejoices with acts of love displayed through gifts and deeds. What is so different in this Love and Christ's Love? Jesus didn't have fancy dinner parties for His friends but celebrated the Last Supper knowing that one of His close disciples would soon betray Him and yet forgave him.

In love we tend to recreate a new world of expectations, conditions and frames of various desires which depend on how we perceive the world. Love is a religion by itself which has its reflections in every walk of life. This season

of lent as we aim to renew, relive and repent through acts of Sacrifice, Prayer and Love, let us dwell further into the Death and Resurrection of Christ, through which we are called to truly love one another.

The death of Jesus helps us to experience and witness a divine love that was proclaimed to a world so lost. Jesus sacrificed His life for us, throwing light on the highest form of love. Christ's suffering and dying for us is a great mystery, a mystery of unfathomable love.

Ancient Greeks defined love into four categories- Eros, Philia, Storge and Agape. "Agape" is total love, the love that devours those who experience it. This was the same love Jesus felt for humanity when he spoke of forgiving our enemies, an unconditional form of love, which is patient, kind and not jealous. Agape is the love that seeks only the highest good of others.

1 Cor. 13:4-8 speaks of love that does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. 1 John 3:16 states, "We know love by this, which He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." During our lifetime as we search for our true identity, our purpose to live, a reason to love, the resurrection of Jesus teaches us that each of us can breathe new life through charity, humility and selfless love. Jesus is the path of true forgiveness and just like the grain of wheat that falls on the ground & dies and yet bears much fruit, we are all called to true repentance.

Writing is much easier than actually practicing! We are so prone to living in a self-centred fashion of love. How are we to have, self-giving, agape love towards one another? If we are to expect the people of our community to come to know Christ, we must love them with a love that can only come from God. To love unconditionally is to live in peace. To live in peace is to breathe a new sense of forgiveness, which comes from the heart setting us free from hatred.

During this season of Lent may Jesus be our constant inspiration to love and forgive through contemplation and prayer.

- Belmira Miranda

THE SEVEN FOLD GIFTS

Every birthday and Christmas, we look forward to receiving gifts from our near and dear ones. Be it chocolates and toys when small or electronic gadgets and other lifestyle products as we grow older. But do these material gifts value much more than the spiritual gifts that we receive through our Christian faith?

As Christians, we are endowed with gifts from our Baptism. The first and most important gift most of us receive even before our first birthday is that of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit by its mere presence within our being blesses us sevenfold with its gifts.

2 The spirit of the Lord will give him wisdom

and the knowledge and skill to rule his people.

He will know the Lord's will and honor him,

3 and find pleasure in obeying him.

He will not judge by appearance or hearsay;

These verses from Isaiah 11:2-3 summarize the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit – wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

The first and highest gift of the Holy Spirit, Wisdom teaches us to value our faith. As children, we attend Catechism classes and we receive sacraments at different stages of our life. This helps build a foundation in our faith. The Sunday mass too is a grace that helps strengthen our faith throughout life. Charismatic renewal meetings, missions, retreats and other

training programmes also on contemplation and through sincere prayer, help deepen our faith and thus bestow wisdom.

Understanding, the second gift of the Holy Spirit differs from Wisdom. This grace helps us grasp the teachings we receive through people we interact and learn from. It helps us understand the basic essence of facts and truths we come across in our catechism classes, mass or any session conducted about our faith. These simple truths remind us about God's abundant love for us and helps us revere Him.

Many a times we come across situations when it is hard to decide what is morally right or wrong. Making an unbiased judgment does not come naturally for all. But understanding the situation and acting with prudence happens through the next gift of the Holy Spirit known as Counsel. A cardinal virtue, Counsel sails us through the toughest of situations with the guidance provided by the Holy Spirit.

Fortitude is courage that sets us to do what is right. It's the virtue that allows us to overcome fear and remain steady in our will to face obstacles. From young we learn 'Honesty is the best policy'. But over the years, how many of us can stand strong against adversities and face them with honesty? Only with the grace of the Holy Spirit within us can we challenge what is wrong and endure the toughest of situations. A virtue that best describes the spirit of martyrs who suffer death rather than renouncing their faith, fortitude is ranked as the fourth gift of the Holy Spirit.

Giving us a practical outlook to our life, Knowledge helps us to accept our limitations as humans and teaches us to deal with them. The specialty of this gift is that it enlightens us with our purpose in God's vineyard. Different from Wisdom and Understanding, Knowledge helps perfect faith thus linking understanding of the truths of the Word of God with our personal lives and rationale.

Even before we start talking, we are introduced to God, to fear Him for every wrong that we do. But as we grow a little older, we learn the TEN Commandments and that's where we are taught to revere Him, to love and respect Him. Still our understanding about God's grace is limited because of which reverence is more like a blind ritual than an act of faith. It's while spending time with God in solitude and prayer that we slowly build a deeper relation with God, respecting Him, watching our words and deeds, not to disrespect him in any way. That's when we learn to fear the Lord and hope in his providence, submitting to him for our needs and hoping he grants them to us. This sums up the last two gifts of the Holy Spirit – Piety (the understanding of our religion) and Fear of God.

Our mere effort towards following faith as an obligation has led to the acceptance of some of the most powerful gifts of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This lent, let us spend time in reflection and thanksgiving to make use of these gifts for our faith and to have an unbiased conduct in society. May the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit transform your lives for its better this Easter.

- Diana Fernandes

FASTING - THE SCIENTIFIC VIEW!

Fasting: It is the act of willingly abstaining from some or all food, drink, or both, for a period of time. Fasting is prominent in various religions like Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Fasting technically commences within the first twelve to 24 hours of the fast. When the body is deprived of food for some time it begins to take rest and initiates the process of detoxification and removal of toxins. Removal of toxins enables the body to rejuvenate and increases the immunity levels. Though the body is inbuilt with great system to eliminate toxins, fasting appropriately, gives the digestive system a

break. Restoration of cells and tissues takes place hence increasing the metabolism of the body and stamina.

Fasting should not be confused with a diet plan. When you fast it shouldn't bother how many calories you have lost. It isn't a short cut to lose weight. There are various medical reports stating that fasting not only renews the body but also the mind and soul go through a holistic reformation. Patients under medical supervision need to be more careful while observing a fast. However a fast is one's own decision to withdraw from food for a brief amount of time. Fasting also serves as a way to self-discipline the body.

Fasting sensibly and occasionally does enable

you to lead a healthy lifestyle, being more motivated and energetic. Every coin has two sides and as we do talk about the health benefits of fasting it is very important to understand the capacity of the human body to refrain from food intake. Fasting clears away the thousand little things which quickly accumulate and clutter the body, mind and the heart. It cuts through corrosion and renews our relationship with God. Though I wanted to focus with the excerpts that I had collected from the Internet with regards to "A scientific Approach to fasting" writing this made me realize one thing with every 40 days of fast comes the rainbow of a new and renewed joy of sacrifice!!

- Belmira Miranda

ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

Norms for the Disparity of Cult Marriages

ISSUE: The Sacramental Marriages cannot be performed at the same Mass as the Marriage of the Disparity of Cult.

Disparity of Cult: is a Marriage between a baptized Catholic and an unbaptized person (of other faith).

Hence, it is NOT a Sacrament, but a Sacred Reality (It is the baptism of both baptized parties that makes Marriage a Sacrament).

- Therefore, the nuptial rite is NOT performed within the Mass, but either before or after the Mass.
- The Mass celebrated is the Mass of the day or of thanksgiving or various needs but NOT a nuptial mass.
- Hence, the Choir must bear this fact in mind and choose hymns of the ordinary day and NOT wedding hymns.
- The different liturgical roles like that of the lector may only be done by Catholics.
- No other items edible or inedible may be distributed to the congregation before, during or

after the distribution of communion.

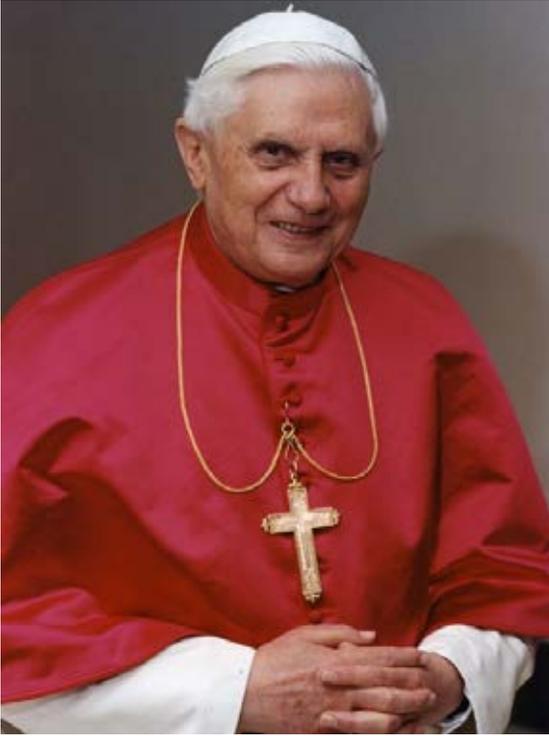
The Nuptials of two Catholics should not be solemnized at this mass and vice versa.

Therefore, the Time schedule finalized for the Disparity of Cult marriages to be performed at St. Anthony's Church, Vakola, henceforth:-

1. ON SATURDAY & SUNDAYS : At 12.00 noon (After scheduled baptisms)
 2. ON WEEKDAYS : At 11.00 a.m.
- It is true that these marriages are not encouraged but when they are duly permitted by the Church through a dispensation, they must be treated with respect and due consideration. And so, courtesies such as placing of the special predieux, floral arrangements, a choir, the prayers of the faithful could all be made available.
 - However, the Catholic party cannot get married in the rites of the partner of other faith, either before or after the nuptials. To do so is to renounce the Catholic Faith, which brings about ipso facto excommunication for the Catholic party, who can no more avail themselves of the sacraments.

REFLECTIONS ON THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
Basilica of St John Lateran
Holy Thursday, 21 April 2011



Dear Brothers and Sisters!

"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Lk 22:15). With these words Jesus began the celebration of his final meal and the institution of the Holy Eucharist. Jesus approached that hour with eager desire. In his heart he awaited the moment when he would give himself to his own under the appearance of bread and wine. He awaited that moment which would in some sense be the true messianic wedding feast: when he would transform the gifts of this world and become one with his own, so as to transform them and thus inaugurate the transformation of the world. In this eager desire of Jesus we can recognize the desire of God himself – his expectant love for mankind, for his creation. A love which awaits the moment of union, a love which wants to draw mankind to

itself and thereby fulfill the desire of all creation, for creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God (cf. Rom 8:19). Jesus desires us, he awaits us. But what about ourselves? Do we really desire him? Are we anxious to meet him? Do we desire to encounter him, to become one with him, to receive the gifts he offers us in the Holy Eucharist? Or are we indifferent, distracted, busy about other things? From Jesus' banquet parables we realize that he knows all about empty places at table, invitations refused, lack of interest in him and his closeness. For us, the empty places at the table of the Lord's wedding feast, whether excusable or not, are no longer a parable but a reality, in those very countries to which he had revealed his closeness in a special way. Jesus also knew about guests who come to the banquet without being robed in the wedding garment – they come not to rejoice in his presence but merely out of habit, since their hearts are elsewhere. In one of his homilies Saint Gregory the Great asks: Who are these people who enter without the wedding garment? What is this garment and how does one acquire it? He replies that those who are invited and enter do in some way have faith. It is faith which opens the door to them. But they lack the wedding garment of love. Those who do not live their faith as love are not ready for the banquet and are cast out. Eucharistic communion requires faith, but faith requires love; otherwise, even as faith, it is dead.

From all four Gospels we know that Jesus' final meal before his passion was also a teaching moment. Once again, Jesus urgently set forth the heart of his message. Word and sacrament, message and gift are inseparably linked. Yet at his final meal, more than anything else, Jesus prayed. Matthew, Mark and Luke use two words in describing Jesus' prayer at the culmination of the meal: "eucharístesas" and "eulógesas" – the verbs "to give thanks" and "to bless". The upward movement of thanking and the downward movement of blessing go together. The words of transubstantiation are part of this prayer of Jesus. They are themselves words of

prayer. Jesus turns his suffering into prayer, into an offering to the Father for the sake of mankind. This transformation of his suffering into love has the power to transform the gifts in which he now gives himself. He gives those gifts to us, so that we, and our world, may be transformed. The ultimate purpose of Eucharistic transformation is our own transformation in communion with Christ. The Eucharist is directed to the new man, the new world, which can only come about from God, through the ministry of God's Servant.

From Luke, and especially from John, we know that Jesus, during the Last Supper, also prayed to the Father – prayers which also contain a plea to his disciples of that time and of all times. Here I would simply like to take one of these which, as John tells us, Jesus repeated four times in his Priestly Prayer. How deeply it must have concerned him! It remains his constant prayer to the Father on our behalf: the prayer for unity. Jesus explicitly states that this prayer is not meant simply for the disciples then present, but for all who would believe in him (cf. Jn 17:20). He prays that all may be one “as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21). Christian unity can exist only if Christians are deeply united to him, to Jesus. Faith and love for Jesus, faith in his being one with the Father and openness to becoming one with him, are essential. This unity, then, is not something purely interior or mystical. It must become visible, so visible as to prove before the world that Jesus was sent by the Father. Consequently, Jesus' prayer has an underlying Eucharistic meaning which Paul clearly brings out in the First Letter to the Corinthians: “The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:16ff.). With the Eucharist, the Church is born. All of us eat the one bread and receive the one body of the Lord; this means that he opens each of us up to something above and beyond us. He makes all of us one. The Eucharist is the mystery of the profound closeness and communion of each individual with the Lord and, at the same time, of visible union between

all. The Eucharist is the sacrament of unity. It reaches the very mystery of the Trinity and thus creates visible unity. Let me say it again: it is an extremely personal encounter with the Lord and yet never simply an act of individual piety. Of necessity, we celebrate it together. In each community the Lord is totally present. Yet in all the communities he is but one. Hence the words “una cum Papa nostro et cum episcopo nostro” are a requisite part of the Church's Eucharistic Prayer. These words are not an addendum of sorts, but a necessary expression of what the Eucharist really is. Furthermore, we mention the Pope and the Bishop by name: unity is something utterly concrete, it has names. In this way unity becomes visible; it becomes a sign for the world and a concrete criterion for ourselves.

Saint Luke has preserved for us one concrete element of Jesus' prayer for unity: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren” (Lk 22:31). Today we are once more painfully aware that Satan has been permitted to sift the disciples before the whole world. And we know that Jesus prays for the faith of Peter and his successors. We know that Peter, who walks towards the Lord upon the stormy waters of history and is in danger of sinking, is sustained ever anew by the Lord's hand and guided over the waves. But Jesus continues with a prediction and a mandate. “When you have turned again...” Every human being, save Mary, has constant need of conversion. Jesus tells Peter beforehand of his coming betrayal and conversion. But what did Peter need to be converted from? When first called, terrified by the Lord's divine power and his own weakness, Peter had said: “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” (Lk 5:8). In the light of the Lord, he recognizes his own inadequacy. Precisely in this way, in the humility of one who knows that he is a sinner, is he called. He must discover this humility ever anew. At Caesarea Philippi Peter could not accept that Jesus would have to suffer and be crucified: it did not fit his image of God and the Messiah. In the Upper

Room he did not want Jesus to wash his feet: it did not fit his image of the dignity of the Master. In the Garden of Olives he wielded his sword. He wanted to show his courage. Yet before the servant girl he declared that he did not know Jesus. At the time he considered it a little lie which would let him stay close to Jesus. All his heroism collapsed in a shabby bid to be at the centre of things. We too, all of us, need to learn again to accept God and Jesus Christ as he is, and not the way we want him to be. We too find it hard to accept that he bound himself to the limitations of his Church and her ministers. We too do not want to accept that he is powerless in this world. We too find excuses when being his disciples starts becoming too costly, too dangerous. All of us need the conversion which enables us to accept Jesus in his reality as God and man. We need the humility of the disciple who follows the will of his Master. Tonight we want to ask Jesus to look to us, as with kindly eyes he looked to Peter when the time was right, and to convert us.

After Peter was converted, he was called to

strengthen his brethren. It is not irrelevant that this task was entrusted to him in the Upper Room. The ministry of unity has its visible place in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Dear friends, it is a great consolation for the Pope to know that at each Eucharistic celebration everyone prays for him, and that our prayer is joined to the Lord's prayer for Peter. Only by the prayer of the Lord and of the Church can the Pope fulfill his task of strengthening his brethren – of feeding the flock of Christ and of becoming the guarantor of that unity which becomes a visible witness to the mission which Jesus received from the Father.

"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you." Lord, you desire us, you desire me. You eagerly desire to share yourself with us in the Holy Eucharist, to be one with us. Lord, awaken in us the desire for you. Strengthen us in unity with you and with one another. Grant unity to your Church, so that the world may believe. Amen.

Courtesy: Zenit News Agency

FRESHLY SERVED

Easter (8th April)

Enter into a communion with God through prayer, fasting, repentance and forgiveness.

Attend devotional prayer meetings, way of the cross, retreats and ponder on the word of God.

Shop for Easter goodies to share with the less fortunate.

Thank God for the graces He has blessed you with.

Enjoy the festivity at an Easter Ball.

Rejoice with near and dear ones by visiting them and greeting.

Mother's Day (8th May)

Make your Mummy's day special with a surprise.

Order a special gift or flowers for her.

Thank your Mummy with a handmade greeting or cook something for her.

Help her in every way you could. Don't limit your appreciation to Mother's Day alone.

Entertain her by taking her out for a movie, meal or shopping.

Respect and pray for her each day.

Father's Day (19th June)

Feast on special memories with your Dad.

Attend Mass and pray for your Dad.

Thank him with a handmade greeting or cook something special for him.

Have a special surprise planned for him.

Enjoy his company the entire day with activities like playing games or watching a movie.

Respect and love him every day.