

THE LITTLE FLOWER



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పునీత జోజప్పగారా!



మా కొరకు ప్రార్థించండి!

POPE'S MESSAGE

RENEW OUR ACCEPTANCE OF BAPTISMAL GRACE DURING LENT

VATICAN CITY, 22 FEB 2011 (VIS) - Made public today was the 2011 Lenten Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI. The text, dated 4 November 2010, has as its title a passage from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians: "You were buried with Him in Baptism, in which you were also raised with Him". Extracts from the English-language version of the document are given below:

"The fact that, in most cases, Baptism is received in infancy highlights how it is a gift of God: no one earns eternal life through their own efforts. The mercy of God, which cancels sin and, at the same time, allows us to experience in our lives 'the mind of Christ Jesus', is given to men and women freely". "Hence, Baptism is not a rite from the past, but the encounter with Christ, which informs the entire existence of the baptised, imparting divine life and calling for sincere conversion; initiated and supported by Grace, it permits the baptised to reach the adult stature of Christ.

"A particular connection binds Baptism to Lent as the favourable time to experience this saving Grace. In fact, the Church has always associated the Easter Vigil with the celebration of Baptism. This free gift must always be rekindled in each one of us, and Lent offers us a path like that of the *catechumenate*, which, for the Christians of the early Church, just as for catechumens today, is an irreplaceable school of faith and Christian life. Truly, they live their Baptism as an act that shapes their entire existence.

"In order to undertake more seriously our journey towards Easter and prepare ourselves to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord - the most joyous and solemn feast of the entire liturgical year - what could be more appropriate than allowing ourselves to be guided by the Word of God? For this reason, the Church, in the Gospel texts of the Sundays of Lent, leads us to a particularly intense encounter with the Lord, calling us to retrace the steps of Christian initiation: for catechumens, in preparation for receiving the Sacrament of rebirth; for the baptised, in light of the new and decisive steps to be taken in the 'sequela Christi' and a fuller giving of oneself to Him".

"The Lenten journey finds its fulfilment in the Paschal Triduum, especially in the great vigil of the Holy Night: renewing our baptismal promises, we reaffirm that Christ is the Lord of our life, that life which God bestowed upon us when we were reborn of 'water and Holy Spirit', and we profess again our firm commitment to respond to the action of the Grace in order to be His disciples. "By immersing ourselves into the death and resurrection of Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are moved to free our hearts every day from the burden of material things, from a self-centred relationship with the 'world' that impoverishes us and prevents us from being available and open to God and our neighbour. Through the traditional practices of fasting, almsgiving and prayer, which are an expression of our commitment to conversion, Lent teaches us how to live the love of Christ in an ever more radical way.

"Fasting, which can have various motivations, takes on a profoundly religious significance for the Christian: by rendering our table poorer, we learn to overcome selfishness in order to live in the logic of gift

and love; by bearing some form of deprivation - and not just what is in excess - we learn to look away from our 'ego', to discover Someone close to us and to recognise God in the face of so many brothers and sisters. For Christians, fasting, far from being depressing, opens us ever more to God and to the needs of others, thus allowing love of God to become also love of our neighbour. "In our journey, we are often faced with the temptation of accumulating and love of money that undermines God's primacy in our lives. The greed of possession leads to violence, exploitation and death; for this, the Church, especially during the Lenten period, reminds us to practice almsgiving - which is the capacity to share. The idolatry of goods, on the other hand, not only causes us to drift away from others, but divests man, making him unhappy, deceiving him, deluding him without fulfilling its promises, since it puts materialistic goods in the place of God, the only source of life".

"The practice of almsgiving is a reminder of God's primacy and turns our attention towards others, so that we may rediscover how good our Father is, and receive His mercy. "During the entire Lenten period, the Church offers us God's Word with particular abundance. By meditating and internalising the Word in order to live it every day, we learn a precious and irreplaceable form of prayer. Prayer also allows us to gain a new concept of time: without the perspective of eternity and transcendence, in fact, time simply directs our steps towards a horizon without a future. Instead, when we pray, we find time for God, to understand that His 'words will not pass away', to enter into that intimate communion with Him 'that no one shall take from you', opening us to the hope that does not disappoint, eternal life".

"The Lenten period is a favourable time to recognise our weakness and to accept, through a sincere inventory of our life, the renewing Grace of the Sacrament of Penance, and walk resolutely towards Christ. "Dear brothers and sisters, through the personal encounter with our Redeemer and through fasting, almsgiving and prayer, the journey of conversion towards Easter leads us to rediscover our Baptism. This Lent, let us renew our acceptance of the Grace that God bestowed upon us at that moment, so that it may illuminate and guide all of our actions. What the Sacrament signifies and realises, we are called to experience every day by following Christ in an ever more generous and authentic manner".

A good Lent to you all!

Benedictus P. Kn
BENEDICT XVI

PASTOR'S MESSAGE FOR THE FLOCK

My Dear Priests and Religious,

This month we enter into the holy season of lent which helps us to cultivate Christian virtues and grow more and more in to the likeness of Christ, our Lord and Master. During this season our attention is drawn to the passion and death of our true brother and friend Jesus who gave his life for us. Let us reflect, pray and interiorize this message by applying, exercising and experimenting with our pattern of thinking, talking, behaving and working. I wish you the sanctifying grace of the season. Please pray for me too as I do for you.

We enjoy celebrating Palm Sunday. The children get to make palm leaves and for many it is one of the few times they get to take an active role in churches. We wave the palm leaves and celebrate. And we all love Easter Sunday! It is a happy time with flowers, new clothes and the new season. But it is too easy and promotes too cheap a grace to focus only on the high points of Palm Sunday and Easter without walking with Jesus through the darkness of Good Friday, a journey that begins on Ash Wednesday. Lent is a way to place ourselves before God humbled, bringing in our hands no price whereby we can ourselves purchase our salvation. It is a way to confess our total inadequacy before God, to strip ourselves bare of all pretenses to righteousness, to come before God in dust and ashes. It is a way to empty ourselves of our false pride, of our rationalizations that prevent us from seeing ourselves as needy creatures, of our "perfectionist" tendencies that blind us to the beam in our own eyes.

Through prayer that gives up self, we seek to open ourselves up before God, and to hear anew the call "Come unto me!" We seek to recognize and respond afresh to God's presence in our lives and in our world. We seek to place our needs, our fears, our failures, our hopes, our very lives in God's hands, again. And we seek by abandoning ourselves in Jesus' death to recognize again who God is, to allow His transforming grace to work in us once more and to come to worship Him on Easter Sunday with a fresh victory and hope that goes beyond the new clothes, the Spring flowers and the happy music. But it begins in ashes. And it journeys though darkness. It is a spiritual pilgrimage that I am convinced we must make one way or the other

for genuine spiritual renewal to come. I have heard the passage in 2 Chronicles 7:14 quoted a lot: “. . .if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” This usually is quoted in the context of wanting revival or renewal in the church, and the prayer is interpreted as intercessory prayer for others. But a careful reading of the passage will reveal that the prayer that is called for here is not intercessory prayer for *others*; it is penitential prayer for the faith community, for us. It is not to call for others to repent; it is a call for us, God’s people, to repent. It is our land that needs healed, it is our wicked ways from which we need to turn, we are the ones who need to seek God’s face.

Perhaps during the Lenten season we should stop praying for others as if we were virtuous enough to do so. Perhaps we should take off our righteous robes just long enough during these 40 days to put ashes on our own heads to come before God with a new humility that is willing to confess, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.” Maybe we should be willing to prostrate ourselves before God and plead, “Lord, in my hand no price I bring; simply to the cross I cling.” That might put us in a position to hear God in ways that we have not heard Him in a long time. And it may be the beginning of a healing for which we have so longed.



f. M. D. Prakasam

+Moses D. Prakasam

Bishop of Nellore.

NEWS FROM THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2011

2nd : Bishop celebrated Holy Mass at Kanuka Matha Church on the Feast of Presentation of Child Jesus. The procession began with the lighted candles to the Grotto and then bishop blessed the newly constructed multipurpose hall. In the homily, he preached about our dedication and offering to God for His service and for his people by living exemplary Christian life. He prayed for the Religious.

4th : Bishop visited Podili Parish and laid a foundation stone for a Rural Hospital. He blessed the land and prayed for the success of this project. Deanery clergy and religious attended the inaugural ceremony.

5th : Bishop Participated in School Day celebrations at Holy Cross English Medium School, Sullurpet. The celebrations were message oriented and full of entertainment. In his message bishop emphasized the importance of cultivating social values and charity towards our fellow brethren.

6th : Bishop went to St. Anthony’s Shrine, Fathekhanpet to celebrate the Nuptial Mass for the engaged couple M. D. Prashanth Kumar and Mary Soumya. He blessed the couple and asked them to live a happy and responsible life, taking the lives.

8th : Bishop presided over the General Body Meeting at Jesus Center, Nellore. Many issues pertaining to spiritual, moral, educational and financial matters were discussed in the forum.

9th : Bishop met Junior Priests at Jesus Center who gathered for a day of seminar. He encouraged them to

put heart and soul in the field of evangelization and be an exemplary to the faithful. He also spoke about the availability to the faithful, hard work in the mission field which bring personal satisfaction and success in ministry.

In the evening bishop visited the villages in Giddalur Parish. He prayed and blessed the Over head tank at Rangareddipalli. He made a Pastoral visit to Satyavolu Catholic Community. He prayed Rosary with people, celebrated Holy Mass and had an informal dialogue with people.

10th : Bishop blessed a newly constructed Parish Church at Pullalacheruvu Parish. Most Rev. Poola Anthony, Bishop of Kurnool celebrated Holy Mass and preached homily.

In the evening bishop went to Gunadala Matha Shrine, Vijayawada. He offered the Holy Eucharist and gave Apostolic blessings to the Pilgrims.

11th : In the morning bishop went to Karamchedu Parish and celebrated the Holy Mass as the Parishioners celebrate the Parish Feast-Our Lady of Lourdes. He blessed the faithful and conversed with the people.

In the evening bishop participated in the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Kavali Parish Church. Bishop blessed Theru, joined **Theru Pradakshana** and prayed for the faithful. Later, bishop celebrated the Holy Mass concelebrated by the diocesan clergy and blessed the faithful.

13th : Bishop paid a visit to Infant Jesus Shrine, Emjal, Hyderabad. He blessed Infant Jesus Statue, joined the procession and prayed for the pilgrims. Later on, he celebrated two Pontifical High Masses at the Shrine and preached homily on Divine Infancy.

14th : Our Shepherd paid a pastoral visit to Siddayapalem

Parish. He celebrated the Holy Mass in which he administered the Sacrament of Holy Communion and Confirmation to the children and adults. He blessed the faithful and conversed with them.

16th : Bishop celebrated the Nuptial Mass and rectified the Marriages in St. Joseph's Cathedral, Nellore. 38 couples had the privilege to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. The ceremony went on for three hours. He blessed the couple and their children. He further said that this day remains historical in St. Joseph's Cathedral.

19th : Bishop attended the Feast Day Celebrations at Bitragunta Parish. He blessed **Lourdu Matha Gruha**, celebrated the Holy Eucharist and preached on life style of Mother Mary taking her as the perfect model of the families.

20th : In the morning bishop inaugurated St. Joseph's Cathedral Family Festival at St. John's School premises. He blessed the couple and instructed them to take Holy Family as their role model living a holy and responsible life. Almost 210 families gathered for this festival. It was lively and entertaining program.

In the evening bishop went to Infant Jesus Church, B.V. Nagar. The parishioners prepared well to celebrate their Annual Feast. Bishop was welcomed with shawl and garland. After reaching the Parish, bishop blessed Theru and then led the procession in the streets of the Parish. It was prayerful and colourful with fire works. After the procession, our shepherd offered the Holy Mass for the faithful and blessed them.

22nd : Ursuline Provincial paid a visit to our Bishop along with her counselors. Our Shepherd spoke to her about the possible means to serve the people of God at

Udayagiri Parish. Later on, Charity Sisters of St. Ann's of Bombay Provincial visited our bishop along with the superior of Amancherla and Parish Priest.

26th : Bishop Participated in School Day celebrations at St. Johns English Medium School, Nellore. The celebrations were message oriented and full of entertainment. In his message bishop emphasized the importance of cultivating human values to build our moral life.

28th : Bishop went to St. Joseph's Church, Bhimanpally, Nalgonda for Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Rev. Fr. Reddimasu Papaiah. He congratulated him and wished him a good health and a success in pastoral ministry.

PASTOR'S MISSION FOR THE MONTH

- 1st -2nd : Regional Commissions work, Hyderabad.
 3rd – 5th : APBC Meeting at St. John's Seminary, Hyderabad.
 6th : Wedding at Kadapa.
 PM : Golden Jubilee Celebrations at Proddutur, Kadapa.
 7th : Yedamakallu Chapel blessing, Komarolu Parish.
 8th : Pastoral visit to Bodapadu Parish.
 9th : Sagar Matha Feast, Guntur.
 10th : Sewing Machines distribution at Ongole Parish.
 Visit to St. Theresa's School.

- PM : Blessing and inauguration of flag post, hoisting flag of St. Joseph and Holy Mass at Cathedral.
 12th : Holy Mass at Thallur, Bitragunta Parish.
 13th : Holy Mass at Besthavaripet Parish.
 17th : Jubilee Celebrations of Rev. Fr. Pogula Rajareddy, Nalgonda.
 19th : Final Professions, Hyderabad.
 20th : Anniversary Mass for Rev. Sr. Allam Josephine at Jesus Center.
 21st : Jubilee Celebrations of Rev. Fr. Pasala Solomon, Nalgonda.
 25th : School Day Celebrations at Kanigiri.

DIOCESAN SELF RELIANCE FUND

Fr. Anthaiah, Don Bosco, Ongole	3,000
JMJ Sisters, Santhapet	2,000
Gunadala Shrine	5,000
Fr. Raphael, Karamchedu	2,000
Servite Sisters, Athmakur	2,000
Fr. P. Rayanna, Pullalacheruvu	10,000
Fr. Koi Arulraj, Siddayapalem	2,000
Emjala Parish	4,000
Fr. Bosco Benedict, Kondayapalem	5,000
Fr. M. L. Anthony	\$ 250
Ursuline Provincial	3,000

Thank you very much for your generous contribution. If anyone's contribution is missing, please inform us. Thank you.

COMMUNICATION CORNER

- ❖ Denary level monthly recollection will be conducted on 8th of March. Kindly avail this opportunity to be effective in our ministry.
- ❖ Please encourage and motivate the faithful to observe the spirit of Lent by praying, fasting and alms-giving. Let it be a time of conversion for a new and better life.
- ❖ Kindly send Holy Childhood collections to the Office on or before 15th of March.
- ❖ Rev. Fr. Gudipalli Devasahayam has left for Germany for his pastoral ministry. Please pray for him. Rev. Fr. Ch. Paul Rajashekar is appointed as Caretaker of St. John's Boarding Home, Sangam.
- ❖ Summer Camp for Children begins from 25th April to 10th June. Please identify children, make a list and send it to Suvartha Nilayam on or before 25th of March. Thank you. Rev. Fr. G. Fernandez.
- ❖ C.D. containing **Lent and Tridum Liturgical Singing**, presented by our diocese, will be available in MP3 format by Ash Wednesday. For copies please Contact : Fr. G. Fernandez, Fr. G. Alphonse, Fr. S. Suresh, Fr. S. Thomas and Fr. S.P.A. Suresh.

MARRIAGE RECTIFICATIONS

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL, NELLORE

"It is better to lose an argument than a Soul"
was one of the first advice which bishop gave me when

I took charge of the Cathedral parish. Inspired by these words in my pastoral ministry, I along with my associate Fr. S. John Paul took a special effort to visit the Catholic families regularly especially on Tuesdays and Wednesdays with Sisters and Legion of Mary members. During these visits we came to know that many who were married outside the church were longing for spiritual nourishment and for the reunion in the church. We talked to them and listed all the names of the couples who were willing to rectify their marriage. We announced in the Church regarding the rectification of the marriage on three Sundays. We gathered them together to instruct them and to know each case. We explained to them the importance of the Sacrament of Marriage and being in full union with the Catholic Church.

Taking the advice of our Bishop, I invited Rev. Fr. G. Innaiah Canonist and the Chancellor of the Diocese. We also invited few elders of the Parish to study each case to find out and see if there are any impediments for their marriage and possible cases for dispensation from the Bishop. We prepared the couples adequately for the Sacraments of Baptism, Confession and Holy Communion. After a careful preparations and instructions they were given the required sacraments and accepted them back to the church. Thirty-eight couples out of fifty were qualified for the rectification of marriage without any impediments. On 16th of February 2011 our Bishop Most Rev. Dr. Moses D. Prakasam rectified the marriage of 38 couples during the Holy mass. It took us three hours to complete the entire ceremony. After the Marriage all the Couples along with their parents and children had a fellowship meal with the Bishop, priests and nuns.

I and my Associate along with the Parishioners are very grateful to his lordship for all his inspiration,

support and guidance in making this event a beautiful one. I also express my sincere appreciation and thanks to the Religious and the Elders of the Parish for their cooperation. Special thanks to Rev. Fr. G. Innaiah; and also to Rev. Frs. Kuriakose, Anthony Reddy and Mathew Kandrikal for helping us with confessions.

Fr. Thomas Navy Kumar, Parish Priest.

APPRECIATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

I as the bishop am very appreciative of the pastoral initiative that was undertaken by Rev. Fr. Navy Kumar and his associate Rev. Fr. S. John Paul along with the Religious and the Parishioners in rectifying the conjugal relationships and coexistence of as many as 38 couples. I wish and pray that such pastoral initiatives could be undertaken in many more parishes wherever there is a need and possibilities for proper rectifications of relationships. God bless the good work done.

+ Moses D. Prakasam.
Bishop of the Diocese of Nellore.

FAMILY DAY CELEBRATION

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL, NELLORE.
20TH FEBRUARY 2011.

We the St. Joseph's Cathedral Family celebrated a Family festival on 20th of February 2011 in St. John's Campus. On Sunday after the Second Mass our Bishop **Most Rev. Dr. Moses D. Prakasam**, Inaugurated the '**FAMILY DAY**' by lighting of the Candle along with Sr. Showrilu superior of St. Mary's community, Sr. Hilda the superior of Disciples community, Fr. T. Navykumar Cathedral Parish Priest and a family from the parish. People expressed their Joy by felicitating our Bishop for

sparing his precious time to be with Cathedral family, in spite of his busy schedule as we all well aware of it.

During his speech he spoke about the importance of the sacramental life of every family in the parish. He invited each family to lead a Responsible, Holy and exemplary life, to be the light of the world. Our Bishop inaugurated the Games and all the people; parents, children, priests and nuns along with the Bishop participated happily. In the afternoon there was a fellowship meal, around 500 people took part in this meal.

At 5pm Rev. Msgr P. Ignatius distributed the prizes to all those who participated in the games. The day ended with the heart of gratitude. Let me take this occasion to express my sincere thanks to our beloved Bishop for sparing his most precious time to multiply our joy by his presence. My sincere appreciation to Fr. John Paul, Organizing committee, Teachers, Volunteers and St. John's School management for their wonderful co operation in coordinating this programme and all those who helped us in a very special way to make this event a joyful and successful one.

Fr. T. Navykumar, Parish priest.

BEHOLD A RIGHTEOUS MAN

Everything we know about the husband of Mary and the foster father of Jesus comes from Scripture and that has seemed too little for those who made up legends about him. We know he was a carpenter, a working man, for the skeptical Nazarenes ask about Jesus, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55). He

wasn't rich for when he took Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised and Mary to be purified he offered the sacrifice of two turtledoves or a pair of pigeons, allowed only for those who could not afford a lamb (Luke 2:24).

Despite his humble work and means, Joseph came from a royal lineage. Luke and Matthew disagree some about the details of Joseph's genealogy but they both mark his descent from David, the greatest king of Israel (Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38). Indeed the angel who first tells Joseph about Jesus greets him as "son of David," a royal title used also for Jesus. We know Joseph was a compassionate, caring man. When he discovered Mary was pregnant after they had been betrothed, he knew the child was not his but was as yet unaware that she was carrying the Son of God. He planned to divorce Mary according to the law but he was concerned for her suffering and safety. He knew that women accused to adultery could be stoned to death, so he decided to divorce her quietly and not expose her to shame or cruelty (Matthew 1:19-25).

We know Joseph was man of faith, obedient to whatever God asked of him without knowing the outcome. When the angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him the truth about the child Mary was carrying, Joseph immediately and without question or concern for gossip, took Mary as his wife. When the angel came again to tell him that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned, all his family and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby. He waited in Egypt without question until the angel told him it was safe to go back (Matthew 2:13-23). We

know Joseph loved Jesus. His one concern was for the safety of this child entrusted to him. Not only did he leave his home to protect Jesus, but upon his return settled in the obscure town of Nazareth out of fear for his life. When Jesus stayed in the Temple we are told Joseph (along with Mary) searched with great anxiety for three days for him (Luke 2:48). We also know that Joseph treated Jesus as his own son for over and over the people of Nazareth say of Jesus, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" (Luke 4:22)

We know Joseph respected God. He followed God's commands in handling the situation with Mary and going to Jerusalem to have Jesus circumcised and Mary purified after Jesus' birth. We are told that he took his family to Jerusalem every year for Passover, something that could not have been easy for a working man. Since Joseph does not appear in Jesus' public life, at his death, or resurrection, many historians believe Joseph probably had died before Jesus entered public ministry. Joseph is the patron of the dying because, assuming he died before Jesus' public life, he died with Jesus and Mary close to him, the way we all would like to leave this earth.

Joseph is also patron of the universal Church, fathers, carpenters, and social justice. We celebrate two feast days for Joseph: March 19 for Joseph the Husband of Mary and May 1 for Joseph the Worker. There is much we wish we could know about Joseph — where and when he was born, how he spent his days, when and how he died. But Scripture has left us with the most important knowledge: who he was

"a righteous man" (Matthew 1:18).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I am penitential everyday. Why do you only do it for 40 days out of the year?

We also believe it's important to be penitential everyday, if by that you mean confessing our sins and making amends to God and those humans whom we have offended. However, if you mean that Christianity is always about fasting and self-denial, then we would respectfully disagree. Christianity is also a religion of feasting. The resurrection of our Lord and his triumph over death should fill us with great joy. However, Christianity also has a penitential and somber side. Our Lord was crucified before he was raised. So, we also don't believe in feasting all the time either. There are proper times for each, which is the beauty of the Church year.

2. Why Only Work on Spiritual Discipline 40 Days a Year?

Spiritual discipline and growth in Jesus are not limited to 40 days of the year and should occur everyday. Likewise, things done during Lent should always be done with the purpose of integrating them into our entire Christian life. Here the spring-cleaning analogy works well. Lent is a time of extra intense spiritual house cleaning, where the focus on prayer, fasting and almsgiving becomes the most important and supersedes all else. Although many claim to do this kind of self-evaluation frequently, I'd say it's a safe bet that traditions without Lent rarely come close to devoting even forty days to it.

3. What are The Western Catholic Lenten Fasting and Abstinence Guidelines?

The *minimum* the Catholic Church expects is fasting on

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and abstinence on the Fridays of Lent. **Fasting** means eating only one full meatless meal on that day. However, one may still eat a breakfast and even a lunch in addition to a full meal *if the two additional small meals do not add up to a second full meal*. Snacking is not allowed. Drinking coffee, tea, juices, etc, between meals is permitted on fast days. **Abstinence** requires abstaining from meat, and soups and gravies made from meat, for the entire day. Meat is defined as the "flesh meat of warm-blooded animals." This is the reason why Catholics often eat fish on Fridays, but anything meatless works. The requirements are slightly different for those of certain ages. Fasting is only required of those from ages 18-59, and abstinence is required of all people 14 and older, although parents are expected to teach their children the reasons behind their fasting, etc. Those with health conditions are excluded. Note that some Western bishop conferences may have more strict/less strict fast and abstinence requirements, so it is wise to check with your local parish for local fast and abstinence expectations. Also, Eastern Catholic Rites have different fasting guidelines. These are simply the minimum expectations. Additional forms of self-denial, within reason, can also be spiritually beneficial.

4. What if a Solemnity (such as the Annunciation or St. Joseph) Falls on a Friday? Do We Have to Abstain from Meat?

In the most recent version of Latin Canon Law, Canon 1251 specifically states that if a solemnity falls on a Friday, Catholics are not bound to abstain from meat. However, Canon 1253 states that Conferences of Bishops can determine exact Lenten observances for local Catholics, so it is always best to check with your local priest if you have questions related to abstinence and fasting.

FORTY DAYS OF LENT

The number forty has many Biblical references: the forty days Moses spent on Mount Sinai with God (Exodus 24:18); the forty days and nights Elijah spent walking to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8); the forty days and nights God sent rain in the great flood of Noah (Genesis 7:4); the forty years the Hebrew people wandered in the desert while traveling to the Promised Land (Numbers 14:33); the forty days Jonah in his prophecy of judgment gave the city of Nineveh in which to repent (Jonah 3:4).

Jesus retreated into the wilderness, where he fasted for forty days, and was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1-2, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-2). He overcame all three of Satan's temptations by citing scripture to the devil, at which point the devil left him, angels ministered to Jesus, and he began his ministry. Jesus further said that his disciples should fast "when the bridegroom shall be taken from them" (Matthew 9:15), a reference to his Passion. Since, presumably, the Apostles fasted as they mourned the death of Jesus, Christians have traditionally fasted during the annual commemoration of his burial.

It is the traditional belief that Jesus lay for forty hours in the tomb which led to the forty hours of total fast that preceded the Easter celebration in the early Church (the biblical reference to 'three days in the tomb' is understood as *spanning* three days, from Friday afternoon to early Sunday morning, rather than three 24 hour periods of time). One of the most important ceremonies at Easter was the baptism of the initiates on Easter Eve. The fast was initially undertaken by the catechumens to prepare them for the reception of this sacrament. Later, the period of fasting from Good Friday until Easter Day was extended to six days, to correspond with the six weeks of training, necessary to give the

final instruction to those converts who were to be baptized.

Converts to Christianity followed a strict catechumenate or period of instruction and discipline prior to baptism. In Jerusalem near the close of the fourth century, classes were held throughout Lent for three hours each day. With the legalization of Christianity (by the Edict of Milan) and its later imposition as the state religion of the Roman Empire, its character was endangered by the great influx of new members. In response, the Lenten fast and practices of self-renunciation were required annually of all Christians, both to show solidarity with the catechumens, and for their own spiritual benefit. The less zealous converts were thus brought more securely into the Christian fold.

BIRTHDAYS-MARCH-2011

5th : Fr. E. K. Thomas

15th : Fr. P. Francis

21st : Fr. S. Stanislaus



**LET US REMEMBER THEM
IN OUR PRAYERS**

Sincere thanks to all: I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our beloved bishop Most Rev. Moses D. Prakasam and to you all my brother priests and sisters for your prayers, condolences and your presence on the death of my mother M. Maria Magdalena. Your support and prayers are very much appreciated by the family. Please keep my family in your prayers. Thank you.

Rev. Fr. M. C. Arulraj

నీతిమంతుడు

నీతికే నిర్వచనంగా
నమ్రతే అమృతంగా
వినయమే విప్లవంగా
జీవించిన ఓ పుణ్యమూర్తి

జోహారు - జోహారు - జోజప్ప తండ్రికి
జయహో - జయహో జగజ్జీవ ప్రయునికి

1. అనుమానమే పెనుభూతంలా వెంటాడినా
దూత మాట విని - దైవ సంకల్పమెరిగి
మరియ చేయి అందుకున్న ధీరుడ, మగధీరుడా
2. పురుషాధిక్యతే పెను సవాలుగా ఎదురైనా
కన్యతల్లి మరియ కన్నబిడ్డ యేసు నాదరించి
కంటికి రెప్పలా కాచిన పోషకుడా - సంరక్షకుడా
3. నాది కానిదేది కాదునాదనే స్వార్థలోకంలో
సర్వమాణవాళి రక్షణే పరమావధిగా ఎంచి
అహమును వీడి అనురాగం పంచిన దీనుడా - త్యాగ ధనుడా

రచన, స్వరకల్పణ :
+ యం.డి. ప్రకాశం.
నెల్లూరు పీఠాధిపతులు

SISTERS OF INFANT JESUS (SIJ)



FIRST PROFESSION