



A CAMILLIAN NEWSLETTER OF INDIA
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Word Becomes Flesh

Mathew Perumpil MI

*We are celebrating another Christmas. For some it may be another usual annual event and for others an occasion to celebrate a holiday and perhaps for some **to feel and make a difference** because it is a powerful reminder that "God is with us". My wish and prayer for each one of you is that this Christmas may not pass away without our getting involved in the true meaning of Christmas.*

At Christmas we celebrate God's coming amidst us...EMMANUEL – "God-With-Us". God humbled himself to share in our humanity as Emmanuel. And this loving act of God continues in history as Jesus is born again to live amidst us through each one of us.

As we become more Christ-like, we take on the role of sharing in our Messiah's mission, by

- *Entering into a deeper solidarity with one another, especially with the poor, sick and the marginalized.*
- *Bringing "Good News" into their lives, into the world which is full of 'bad news'.*
- *Dispelling the darkness from the lives of people who continue to experience darkness in many ways.*

Thus the WORD becomes flesh through us today, making Christmas a reality for all those who long to experience God's living with us.

In this way Christmas become an occasion to get involved with the lives of people, especially where there is darkness, pain, suffering and disharmony. Let the truth and love that God brought on that first Christmas Day shine in our hearts now and may the little babe's love warm our hearts to bring this love to others.

*Vartha wishes our readers
Merry Christmas
and a Prosperous New Year*

General Council, Provincials, Delegates Meet

Mathew Perumpil MI

The General Consulta organized a meeting of the Provincials and provincial Delegates in Rome in November to share, consult, and plan the coming six years of the Order. The Consulta wanted this fraternal exercise to be an occasion to discuss the six-year plan taking into consideration the motions and the operative guidelines of the General Chapter.

First three days were spent in discussing the “Chapter Document” that Fr. Francisco Alvarez, Provincial Superior of the Spanish Province, finalized following the indications of the General Chapter. The exercise was really refreshing and gave a solid foundation for the planning of the coming years.

The meeting also discussed and decided on the “Camillian Task Force” defining its scope and indicated a possible framework in which this fruitful initiative of the Order will continue. Secretariat of Mission will coordinate its activities.

The motions and operative guidelines were also discussed and reflected together to develop a working plan for the coming years.

The whole gathering was a sign of solidarity and fraternal sharing, listening to each other coming from the various parts of the world, understanding various issues.

Christmas Virus

Joy Inchody MI



We are a virus people. Each day of ours begins and ends surrounded by virus talks. No day comes to a close without a mention about terms like viral load, infection control, CD4 count, and ART. Even our casual talks, dinning table conversation, pulpits and meetings are filled with matters of virus. No matter the occasion, we are determined to go ahead with the message: to control the spread of the virus, to prevent the infection and to eliminate the virus from the face of the earth. Is it amazing that with or without our knowledge we are so much affected with this virus!

Christmas is a season of break for this virus talks. Now our talks are more about Christmas friends, greetings cards, e-cards, stars, cribs, gifts, cakes and holidays! Slowly we are catching up with Christmas virus! A subtle shift. Once we are infected with the Christmas virus, there is no waiting for the window period for the diagnosis, the virus itself manifests as love and other centeredness, peace and harmony. Only one difference: HIV ends in AIDS and Christmas Virus ends in AID. Let's control HIV, and spread Christmas virus.

Camillians Observe World AIDS Day in collaboration with other NGOs



Mission On The Street

Staff Reporter

Mangalore: Proclaiming its solidarity with the people living with HIV/AIDS and its pledge to continue providing care and support to those infected, Snehasadan observed the World AIDS Day.

Snehasadan, in association with Jeevadaan, Rosa Mystica educational institutions, Gurupura and Kandavara panchayaths and Bramari Friends club, organized a public awareness rally (*jana jagruti jatha*) from the church gate Kaikamba to Shri Radhakrishna Bhajana Mandir, Kinnikambala. The rally in which nearly six hundred people participated shouting slogans and holding placards began at 10.00 a. m.

During the public gathering that followed the rally, held at the Bhajana Mandir, Dr. Rajaram Rai, the part-time doctor at snehasadan, provided basic information about HIV/AIDS. Speaking on the occasion, the vicar of Pompei Church, Kaikamba, Fr. Paul lauded Snehasadan and Jeevadaan for their humanitarian works. The students of Rosa Mystica School staged a skit on the occasion.

Fr. Siby Augustine (The administrator of Snehasadan), Fr. Teji Thomas (Patient care coordinator, Snehasadan), Sr. Theresitta (The project coordinator of Jeevadaan) also participated in the function.



The Students of Rosa Mystica School participate in the programme



Youth Participating in the campaign in Bangalore

Youth Renders Caring Hands

Bangalore: *Snebadaan* observed the world AIDS day 2007, involving the youth to 'take the lead' in the fight against HIV/AIDS and the stigma associated. A guided exhibition was conducted to make the youth aware of the infection and its possible preventive measures, make them concerned of their fellow beings, and to get them involved with the world community in caring and supporting the persons living with HIV/AIDS. It aimed at making each participant assuming the roles of educators to share the HIV-awareness at least to five acquaints.

A blood donation drive was also conducted, on this occasion, in association with the Rotary TTK Blood bank, Bangalore in which 102 youth representing different colleges (viz. Christ College, Krupanidhi college of

Nursing, Dharmaraam) and religious institutions, shared their blood as a sign of their solidarity in caring and supporting PLHA. It can be viewed as a responsible response to the growing requirements of blood and its components in caring the PLHA.

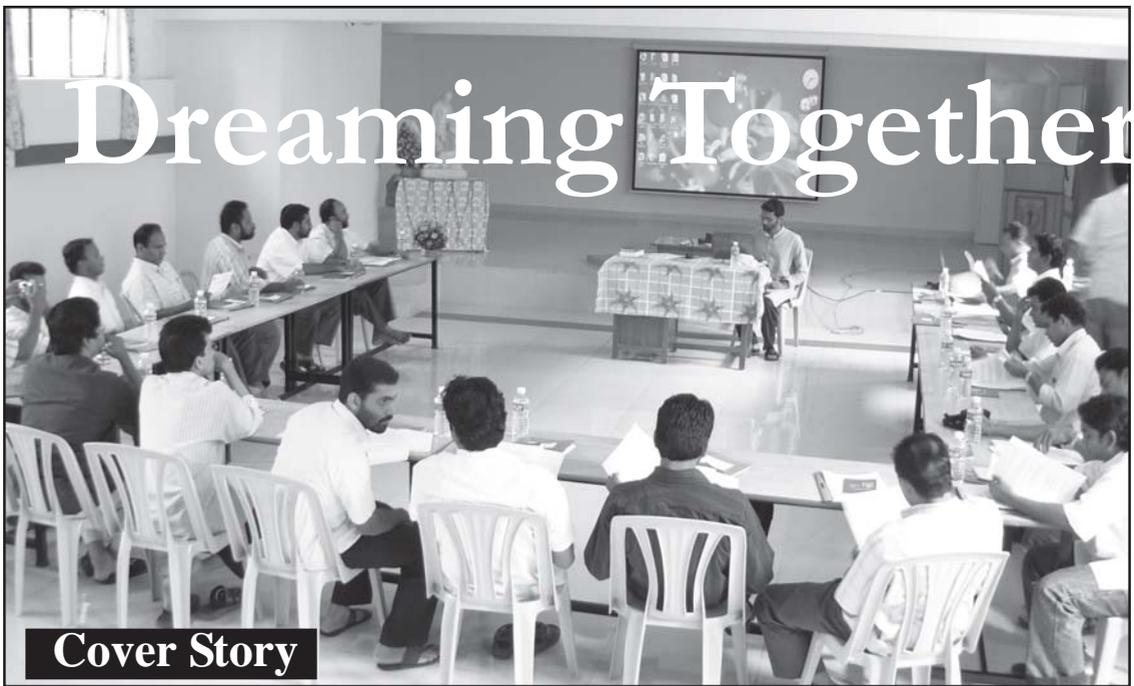
The programme was marked with the participation of more than 450 people, who putting on the red ribbon in their fingers shouted the slogan "STOP AIDS, KEEP THE PROMISE".

The programme was formally inaugurated by Sr.Lilly Chengappura (The President, CHAI, Karnataka) and the Provincial Delegate Fr Mathew Perumpil MI, delivered the key-note address.



In Solidarity

Snehatheeram observed the Aids Day by conducting awareness talk, prayer service, lighting candles and cultural programmes.



Special Correspondent

Drawing up a road-map for the Delegation, all the communities and residences presented their visions and activity plans for a dynamic future, with an emphasis on compassionate service to the sick.

A general gathering of all Camillian confreres residing in India took place at Upasana, Bangalore on 27-28 October in an atmosphere of fraternal love and support. The gathering witnessed the presentations of all the communities and residences regarding their visions and specific plans to enhance ministry activities during the coming years.

After discussing many times on various plans, each community/residence had formulated its own specific plans beforehand. Visions and plans of the community were basically in the areas of Ministry/formation, community and spiritual life, vocation promotion, and administration and finance. Each presentation was comprised of vision of the community within the broader vision of the Order, specific mission, objectives, and proposed activities to meet the objectives. It was also an occasion for the communities to look into their history and to be aware of their identity.

The specific ministry visions of Mananthavady, Trichy, Eluru communities caught the attention of everyone and some discussions and clarifications followed and they were conceived as the ministry vision of the Delegation for the next three-year term.

The specific visions of each community were conceived as the vision of the delegation.



At A Glance.....

○ Mananthavady



Compassionate home-based care for persons who are for a long term or terminally ill, with very special preference for those suffering with cancer

Pastoral care to the suffering and the affected at home and in the hospitals

○ Jyotidarsan

Coordinating the healthcare ministry of the diocese

○ Trichy

Health/medical check-up once in three months



○ Snehasadan

Developing a learning site for the care of orphaned and vulnerable children

○ Snehadaan

- Extend care and support services to the community level
- Establish an OPD clinic in the city
- Organize training programme for healthcare personnel



Spiritual animation of healthcare professionals

○ Snehatheeram



○ Snehakiran

Community Outreach programme for HIV-affected children

For the People

Benny Chengalikkavil MI

When *Snehakiran*, a care and support center for people living with HIV/AIDS, had to close down due to a government move to acquire the land for a proposed water canal project, the Camillians did not close down their ministry-project to provide care to those infected and affected people.

Snehakiran decided to begin a community outreach programme for HIV affected children in the wake of an alarming situation of increasing number of HIV-infection and all the related complexities. It functions now as a centre for community health for the seven neighboring villages.

It tries to take care of many affected and orphaned children. Their parents being succumbed to death due to AIDS-related complexities, most of these children bear the brunt of life at a very young age. When their counterparts elsewhere enjoy the childhood, they face the hard challenges of life as their old grand parents are unable to look after them because of utter poverty.



The children under the care of *Snehakiran*



Snehakiran provides them nutritious food to meet their most basic need

Education and nutrition being their prime needs, *Snehakiran* decided to focus its activity on providing them nutritional and educational support. It helps the poor children for their education by providing them school uniforms, study materials and other expenses. It also provides them nutritious food and mostly required medicines. The members of the Camillian community at Eluru make occasional visits to those families in need of help and assess their situation.

The awareness programmes conducted in the villages and various classes in the centre on health issues and hygiene are meant to increase their quality of living. Gatherings of all those who receive assistance from *snehakiran* take place once in every fifteen days. These support group meetings are occasions for them to share their difficulties and concerns.

Sneha Charitable Trust provides the required financial and material help to this project at present, but it looks forward to find out its own sources of income to meet the expenses of this community based care and support programme.

Solemn Profession Celebrated

Staff Reporter

Bangalore: Declaring his willingness to a life-long adherence to the service of God and of the sick, Thakidipurathu Binoy solemnly professed his vows in the Order during a function held here in Snehadan on December 8.

The function began at 11.30. a.m. with the Eucharistic Celebration during which Binoy vowed his commitment to the Order and to the sick, and the Provincial Delegate Fr. Mathew Perumpil accepted his profession and united him to the Camillian family.



MOU with God: Binoy signs the profession formula at the Altar during the ceremony.

Photo: Jim

Blood Donation Camp Held

Teji Thomas MI



Great Indeed: A participant in the camp donates blood.

Photo: Siby A.

Mangalore: Snehasadan organized a blood donation camp in Kandhavra Panchayat hall at Kaikamba on November 18.

The camp, organized in collaboration with Fr. Muller's Hospital, Mangalore and youth clubs of Kaikamba, was intended to help those poor PLHA of Snehasadan. It was the first time a blood donation camp being conducted in Kaikamba, and around fifty people donated blood.

The professor, Department of Medicine, Yenepoya Medical College Dr. Ravi Vaswani was the guest of honour.

Supernormal...Abnormal...Normal

The gospel of the first Sunday of the Advent brings me to reflect on the behavior of the people in Noah's time as though it was not normal. It is said "Before the disaster, they were eating and drinking, taking wives and husbands..."

As we closely read this comment of Jesus and as we see this in the eyes of Jesus, we understand that whatever the people were doing was wrong and that something was not normal and we may ask ourselves why it was wrong in the eyes of Jesus and why it was not normal.

First of all, as far as I am concerned, whatever they did is 100% **supernormal**, mean to say, when they were not supposed to do what was not asked of them in that particular moment, they overdid, that is to say, they did more than they were expected to do and so it was something supernatural.

Secondly, whatever they did is 100% **abnormal**, because in that definite moment when they were asked to convert their heart from sin and unrighteousness and do penance in order that God would change his anger into mercy, they did what was outside of normality and so it is something abnormal.

We are called to be normal. To be normal is something that makes you be coherent within and without. It is something that makes you do what you are supposed to do, something that makes you avoid what is to be avoided, something that makes you do justice where it is not done and forgotten, something that makes you be free and respect the freedom of others.

To be normal is something that makes you be sensitive positively and be sensible to the needs of others, something that makes you open your eyes and see the realities outside.

To be normal is something that makes you take risk even though you are understood differently by different people. To be normal is something that makes you be different and to be different is to be Christian, a name given to the one who represents Christ and not to the one who replaces Him.

Normal, abnormal, supernatural...how do you like to be during and after the Advent/Christmas season? Decide for yourself how to be.





Learn From Nandigram

Much to the shock of Indian conscience, the conflict between 'land-rights' and 'development' projects took a bloody turn again in Nandigram (West Bengal) recently, following the ruling-party-sponsored mission to recapture villages for the proposed Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

The trouble in Nandigram began around one year back, after the leak of government plans to acquire 22,000 acres of land and build a petrochemical plant in SEZ. Most of the zones, including the one planned for Nandigram, were to be built on farmland. According to media reports, as many as 29 villages in East Medinipur would be affected by this programme of land acquisition designed to support greater industrialization. It would dispossess the villagers of their lands and livelihoods and displace them from their ancestral homes.

The vast majority of our people are still connected to the land, their lives governed by the rhythms of the seasons. Their traditions and cultures accumulated over generations and are inseparable from the land and the same land is at stake in Nandigram.

This issue also raises the question of side-effects of 'economic growth'. Attracted by the rising GDP numbers and growth rate, we often fail to realize the plights and displacements the poor experience. While the multinationals, mass media and advertisement industry are happy to feed

consumerism, farm land is hijacked for 'infrastructure', ancestral villages drown under 'power projects' and green fields are turned into industrial wastelands.

The underlying stories everywhere are the same. Land takeover in the name of development or big industry. As a result, eviction and displacement. Inadequate compensation. Police action and state oppression. The breakdown of democratic process etc..

'Nandigram' and other related issues raise series of vital question: Are special economic zones necessary? Can a democratically elected government use the political system to trample all the property and individual rights? Should democratic politicians collude with corporate power to push through projects?

Now that the issue has been politicized as it happens with any other issue in India, who will benefit from it, the people of Nandigram or Thrinamool Congress leader Mamata Banarjee? Can the lost-lives be compensated in anyway?

The policy makers must make sure that the rights of the people are not compromised with 'development projects'. The media should not be the instruments of political horsetrading, instead should stand for justice and truth.



*Hark! The herald angels sing, -
“Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’ angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem.”
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!*



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