

## Provincial Note

Dear Friends,

I offer my Christmas Greetings and New Year wishes -2023!

I congratulate all those who have contributed through their writings on the theme, ***“Born in the Manger, to meet the stranger”***. I observed here that our formees have shown keen interest through their write-ups. I want you to continue and send in your reflections. Your writing skills will make you confident: do keep it up.

I thank Fr. Justin for his reflections. We can take them in our community prayer and meetings on the first Monday of the month.

As Pope Francis stated, ***“Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age*** (Matthew 25:35- 43). The Lord entrusts to the Church's love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future.” Pope Francis summarizes his thoughts on the Churches' shared response to the refugee and immigrant situation in the four verbs: ***'to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate'***

I invite you to recognize the strangers in your respective ministry places and parish mission. You cannot deny the fact that migrants, refugees and the deprived children exist in every neighborhood. Our celebration of the Eucharist is meaningful when we welcome them and include them in to our liturgical and pastoral life. Some parishes who have regular Eucharists with migrants can move further, while the rest the strangers are still knocking at our doors. Could not our communities be a manger for them beginning from this Christmas?

***Christmas Greetings and New Year wishes-2023!***

Fr. D. Peter Jayakanthan sss  
Provincial Superior  
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20-12-2022



# THE POWER OF THE GIFT OF SELF

## PREFACE TO THE VISION STATEMENT



### The gift of self and the vocation of man as such

God is love. He created humankind in his image. This means that the vocation of human beings is to love and let themselves be loved by others. In the present world, there are numerous persons for whom 'the door of faith' remains closed. However, the Holy Spirit does not abandon them. The paradox of the Gospel, which requires that in giving one's life to find it, reveals the very essence of the human person. It is for everyone. Numerous persons are looking for life. They can become our companions in our endeavors for a more just and human world. Let us not forget Jesus' word about the Roman centurion: "Not even in Israel have I found such faith." And St Paul's words have value for all: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

### The need for personal appropriation

Eymard said that he had reflected at length and found only one solution: God's love in the eucharist. This answer he bequeathed to us. The same can be said about his arriving at the understanding of his concept and the living out of his *gift of self*. For him, both were something he discovered personally; for us, it may be only something we have read about. We cannot stop there at second-hand understanding, so to say, but must also walk the way of the Founder until we too *really see* the answer and the power of the gift for ourselves. It is only then that our words will carry conviction and have persuasive power and our lives have a witnessing effect.

### Thinking matters through for ourselves

This kind of personal appropriation of truth was what **Jesus** seems to have wanted too; at least, that is what emerges from the gospel accounts. He is depicted as not satisfied to have the crowds who hung on his words simply accept what he taught them. He challenged them rather to *reflect* on what he told them, urging them explicitly to think for themselves (cf. Lk 12,57). To that end he told them parables that were often far from easy to understand

and asked questions they did not know how to answer, all of which forced them to ponder over the meaning of his words.

In fact, someone has gone to the trouble of counting the questions posed in the gospel, finding 157 of them in all, of which most (110 no less) are found on the lips of Jesus himself! Jesus seems to have been convinced that religious truth that is not personally assimilated has little real hold on the personality. He declared that he had come to transform people not simply to give them moral instruction. Nor was it his purpose to reveal hidden secrets and so add to their knowledge but, as Eymard liked to repeat, to cast transforming fire upon the earth (cf. Lk 12,49).

We find the same awareness in **Saint Paul**, as when he urged the members of the community of Rome to free themselves from the ordinary way of thinking of the society around them and seek to renew their minds so that they might be capable of discerning what was God's will for them (Rom 12,2).

So the Rule invites us to do as **Eymard** did, namely to consider attentively the longings and needs of people of our time and discover in what way God's love, made present and celebrated in the eucharist, can be made comprehensible to them so that *they themselves can come to see* that it offers them an answer capable of satisfying the hungers of the spirit and assuaging their thirst for a fuller, richer life.

Doing so, we will find ourselves launched on a long journey of the spirit that will lead us to a deeply personal discovery of the sacrament as the transforming power of God's love in our midst.

### **A Synodal moment:**

If such searching and discovery will always be something that each one must do for himself, we need to remember that we are not alone. To help one another in this task constitutes one of the most important reasons why we live in communities.

What a blessing it is if we should find ourselves with companions who search together with us, eager to share with us their discoveries and to reflect on our common search for understanding! When that happens, we have a truly Eymardian community, one that fulfils the dream of our Founder and is a precious resource in a local church.

That is why in this 12-monthly recollection notes, entitled, *The Power of the Gift of Self*, after an initial understanding of the explosive words, like, 'captivated', 'being passionate', 'being infatuated', 'being possessed', we have proceeded to reflect on the Vision of the Province, 2022-2026, and then

planned to spend the last five months of the year, on deepening our understanding of Peter Julian's reflection on the Gift of Self from various angles. The five reflections that follow later have been devoted to the Mission of the Province, 2022-2026, again from the perspective of the Gift of Self.

May these reflections for our monthly recollections help us to appreciate the gift our Founder has given to us so that we too will be attracted towards gifting of ourselves, and not see it as something negative and consequently as a burden to be undertaken, but find meaning in giving.

**St. Peter Julian Eymard, Apostle of the Eucharist, Pray for us.**

### References:

- Barbiero Manuel sss, *Letter to Miss Marianne Eymard - February 5, 1846 - (CO 68; II,113)*
- McSweeney Tony sss, *Commentary on the Rule of Life, Spring, Generalate of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, Rome, 2008.*
- Salvi Fiorenzo, sss, *Love must exaggerate*, 35th General Chapter of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation – State of the Congregation, Rome, 2017.
- Salvi Fiorenzo, sss, *Chapter 6: A way of holiness for all starting from the "Vow of personality,"* from the book entitled, "*Absque sui proprio – Eymard and the Gift of Personality*" which was published in French-English, to commemorate and celebrate the 150th anniversary of the "Gift of Personality" of St. Peter Julian Eymard (1865 – March 21 – 2015).

**Fr. Justin sss**  
*Blessed Sacrament Ashram, Kholapur Wadi.*



## VISION STATEMENT OF KJP, 2022-2026

*(Reflection For Jan - 2023)*

### 1. CAPTIVATED BY...



#### **Captivate**

Past tense: captivated; past participle: captivated attract and hold the interest and attention of; charm. When attracted to a beautiful woman: "he was captivated by her beauty"

**What does 'a captivating person' mean? When is a person said to be captivating?**

When people are captivating, they're often very intelligent, attractive, charming, or otherwise fascinating. Something that catches and holds your interest is captivating, like a captivating mystery novel you just can't put down.

**What is a captivated person?**

A person who's captivated is entranced or absorbed by something. A captivated child might stare with wonder at a tiny ladybug for many long minutes. Use the adjective captivated to describe someone who is utterly charmed by something.

Mk. 1:18: And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Mk. 1:20: They left their father Zebedee with the hired men, and followed him.

#### **Passionate**

**The theme at the center of reflection of this XXXV<sup>th</sup> General Chapter:**

To be passionate about: filled with the passion for the Eucharist: The

comment of CGA 2015 and

***« We propose that you belong to a 'little' universal religious family where each member, filled with the passion for the Eucharist, Sacrament of the Love of God, is led as saint Peter-Julian Eymard was, to the gift of self, and to share this passion with brothers and sisters among the laity, in order to offer to the world with audacity and creativity life in the Eucharist».***

**What does it mean when a person is passionate?**

Being passionate is important in life, but it also can be difficult to deal with. Passionate people, overall, do live happier and better lives than the average individual.

Passions give us purpose, but more than that, they make us feel that we have purpose in our lives. Being passionate isn't just about knowing – it's also about feeling. That's what makes passions so important; they make us feel that we're on the right path in life and give us hope for a happy and exciting future.

### **Characteristics of Passionate people:**

Passionate people lead significantly different lives from their less-than-enthusiastic counterparts. Here are some characteristics that passionate people do differently and the good and bad that comes of it.

They start their days early: you can't do much if you spend half the day sleeping and have their passions on their mind. They get excited more than the average person. They are willing to risk more and put more on the line: They are much more willing to give up things that don't fall in their scope of passion. They devote their lives to their dreams: They know what will make them happy and are willing to ignore the rest. They surround themselves with their work: Their work is in them and reflects in everything they have and do. But it doesn't feel like work to them. It feels like life. They can't help but talk about their projects: They know that you probably don't want to hear about it because you hear about it all the time, but they don't really want to talk about much else. They tend to either be pushing ahead full throttle or are completely still: They eventually do run out of steam and crash. Only the seasoned and wise passionate individuals have learned to balance havoc and calm in a healthy manner. They always think positively about the future: Their minds are always looking ahead, looking at what can be instead of what is. This has its good sides and bad, but nevertheless, they are always thinking about their next move.

**Some common synonyms of captivate** are allure, attract, charm, enchant, and fascinate, enthrall, bewitch, beguile (deceptive way), win over, woo, to be infatuated, obsessed by, drawn to something as a magnet attracts iron filings, seduced (Jeremiah), possessed by: adjective: influenced or controlled by a powerful force such as a strong emotion (Eg. the Prophets in the Scriptures were possessed by God's Spirit: cfr Elijah going in a trance and in his frenzy kills the prophets of Baal.), obsessed.

## **Our Founder captivated by the Eucharist:**

Read this letter to Madam Tholin-Bost, written on 22 October 1851, that is, after his grace of foundation. He reveals his dream to her:

***“I have often reflected upon remedies for this universal indifference which takes hold of so many Catholics in a terrifying way, and I find only one: the Eucharist, the love of Jesus Eucharistic.”***

He goes on to explain:

***“The loss of faith comes from the loss of love; darkness, from the loss of light; the coldness of death, from the absence of fire. Oh, Jesus did not say: I came to bring the revelation of the most sublime mysteries. He said: I came to bring fire on the earth, and all I desire is to see it enkindle the entire world.”<sup>8</sup>***

This letter shows that Father Eymard's dream was to do 'great things' for God, as he stated. He envisages the transformation not only of pious persons but of society, of France and the entire world. He speaks of the Eucharist as a remedy for the ills of his time, as a response to the Lord's love 'unto the end'. He takes his inspiration from St John's Gospel chapters 13 to 17 and from his letters. He saw the Eucharist as a goal and means of the Christian life. In time he understood that the specific and dominant virtue of his religious was not to be the virtue of religion, that is, the virtue dealing with cult, the liturgy and adoration, but truly love, *caritas*. Implicitly this conviction is already found in number 3 of the Constitutions, which define our spirituality. It is “The spirit of charity with which the Lord instituted the Blessed Sacrament, in which he perpetuates the gift of his love for the glory of the Father.”

## **Jesus redefined:**

Perhaps you think this idea of you becoming captivating is a joke. It is not. Look at the moments in Scripture is in Acts 11:19-21, where ordinary, unnamed, and unknown Christians captivate the city of Antioch. There were



no “great men” just regular Christians who ignited the fire of faith in that city, which teaches me we greatly underestimate the potential of our individual influence on people.

Maybe this is because we don't believe we should or can be like Jesus? Might the greatest challenge before every Christian and church be the commitment to become captivating...to make the gospel irresistible?

## Reflection:

1. Which of the above words linked with “captivated” has got your imagination? Why?
2. What did the brothers see and hear in Jesus' invitation that made them leave their nets, their Zebedee with the hired men and followed Jesus?
3. Am I infatuated by Jesus? What makes me say so?
4. What do we need to do to be 'infatuated' by Jesus?
5. Go through the characteristics of a passionate person and point out which of these are revolutionary and would make a difference in your life?
6. Feel the fire within Our Founder's heart when he saw so much of religious indifference in his time? What have you to say about the drive that made him dream dreams?
7. With the help of the description above of what a passionate person is like, how could you apply this to ourselves who are called to be 'filled with the passion for the Eucharist'? How could we go about it? What is the extent of this passion? What will be the outcome?
8. How would you describe a person who is 'possessed by the Eucharist'? What is his life-style like?

**Fr. Justin sss**  
*Blessed Sacrament Ashram, Kolhapur Wadh.*





## 2. .... by the Eucharistic dynamism of St Peter Julian Eymard

(Reflection For Feb - 2023)



In speaking of the “dynamism” of the Sacrament, the Rule (no. 30) situates us in relation to the “action” that is constituted by this Sacrament. Indeed, one of the early terms for the Eucharistic Prayer is precisely that of “action.” Such action takes place on different levels.

The concern of our number is with the set of spiritual attitudes and acts and their succession embodied in the liturgical prayers. These are described in terms which the Founder drew from the Council of Trent,<sup>2</sup> known as “the four ends of sacrifice,” namely, “a prayer of adoration, of praise and thanksgiving, of reconciliation and intercession” as our Rule sums them up:

- How did Fr. Eymard come to the original intuition that led him to adopt this form of prayer?
- He reads the presence of Christ in the sacrament exposed for adoration through a dynamic vision: the Christ of the Eucharist (who is adored) is a Christ who acts.
- He proposes to participate in the same prayer / action of Christ, that Fr. Eymard (following the theology of his time) identifies in the four ends and attitudes related to his sacrifice.
- This method of prayer contemplates the love of God for us in Christ and, what is fundamental, leads us, at the same time, to action: to allow ourselves to be taken by the attitudes of Jesus (the four ends) towards his Father (*adoration – praise and gratitude*) and towards his brothers (*reconciliation – intercession*).

In order to synthesize, we can say that the intuition (the preoccupation) of Fr. Eymard is to make Eucharistic adoration an authentic transformation of life, by taking to himself the gift and the attitudes of Christ towards his Father and his brothers.

Today we will say a prayer that proposes again the dynamism and the

elements of the Eucharistic Prayer, the prayer of the Church *par excellence*, the central moment of the celebration. A prayer/action in which the assembly through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, praises and give thanks to the Father, offering itself and interceding for the world.

If today, in the light of studies on the Eucharistic Prayer, this is rightly proposed as a school of authentic Christian prayer, Fr. Eymard would have had some sort of intuition and he would have gone beyond the devotional image of adoration, limited to only a few aspects.

It is not for us to propose again adoration according to this method, but to draw from it the original intuition.

This is how Fr. Eymard formulated this prayer in the Constitutions of 1864:

***The adorers during their adoration shall apply themselves to honor the four ends of sacrifice ; namely, to offer perpetually to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ an hour of praise and honor, of love, and thanksgiving, of propitiation and impetration, for the greatest service and reign of Jesus Christ in his sacrament; for the Sovereign Pontiff, for all the religious orders, for priests and princes for the destruction of all heresies and schisms ; that the Jews may see the light, that pagans adore their Savior, and that all may finally love Our Lord Jesus Christ and come to his sacrament of life. (RR 78,4)***

Prayer of the Church

***Since the form of prayer is the Rule of Life, that of the Society will be the form of prayer of Holy Mother the Church in the exercise of the four ends of sacrifice [...]***

***They will recommend to everyone this method of prayer of the Church, and they shall apply themselves to show its meaning and especially the virtues that compose it and the precious grace that flow from it. (RR 78,10)***

***Remember that we should have our own form of adoration. We should not be taking that of other congregations. We have adapted that of the Church in the holy Sacrifice, and it should be sufficient for us. The others were not made for us, and do not correspond to our needs. If our method is not good enough for us, it's because we don't know how to use it. Are we sick or like children, with the bread of the strong not able to nourish us? How unfortunate. (7 August 1867, PR 107,2)***

A prayer that manifests the wide vision that Fr. Eymard has of the Eucharist:

***We take on all of that, the four ends, to have the entire Eucharist in the perfection of its service. Other religious have their own end and grace; that's very good. We want the Eucharist in all that it has and all that it is. That's why we choose the four ends of the sacrifice and these four ends are practiced. (PS 393,1)***

We can then understand how the way of prayer proposed by Fr. Eymard – and that's what interests us – implies our entire life and moves us to assume the same love that Christ has for his Father and his brothers. That's why this moment should transform our entire life in the *worship in spirit and truth* that the Father loves, and transform us into true adorers that the Father desires (cf. Jn 4,23).

Fr. Eymard will claim that this prayer forms part of the mission, and even that it is the most effective form of mission, because we activate Christ and, at the same time, as his body, we participate in his mission by offering ourselves with him, for him, and in him to the glory of his Father and for the good of his brothers.

***Next, this vocation is the most apostolic. Externally, people believe that we are useless. But, first of all, we are doing the work of our Lord, and I believe that he is the greatest of missionaries, he who sent them. ... We release his power. He is thanking his Father for the blessings that he showers on men. He is a public victim of propitiation through our hands. And the Father, upon seeing him, blesses us, for in this way we complete his reign in this world. (7 August 1867, PR 99,4)***

***Don't you believe that these prayers of Jesus are more powerful than those of all the angels and saints? Our vocation, then, is the most apostolic. Missionaries carry only one grace, and often they are unfaithful, but, as for us, we open the source of graces, and, by uniting ourselves with the life of Jesus Christ, we complete him. Jesus no longer suffers, but we can suffer at adoration and, there, we can make a constant sacrifice of our freedom and of our preferences. (7 August 1867, PR 99,4)***

A mission that is hidden in appearance, but fruitful:

Keep in mind that the active life has its attractions. When a preacher is healthy and speaks to an audience that follows his every word, he can experience all the joys of a mother. But, for us, we don't see the fruits of our

apostolate. We are satisfied to know that we are producing some. The one who baptizes someone doesn't merit any more than the one who merited for him the grace of baptism. And if we didn't pray, the voice of missionaries might be like a clanging cymbal [cf. 1Co 13,1]. What can the winds produce if the sun doesn't come to fertilize what they move? That is our vocation, and it is very beautiful.

You might say: "I want to preach, to save souls", but you will preach, you will save, but through Jesus Christ, and by his direct influence. (7 August 1867, PR 99,4)

## Conclusion

In the retreat that he preaches to his confreres the year before his death (August 7-14, 1867), Fr. Eymard affirms: « ***I state as a principle that the grace of the Society is a grace of prayer and in this area we should be outstanding among other religious groups*** » (PR 114,1).

This form of prayer is the privileged school to know the love that God has for us and to assimilate it ever more, to the point of transforming our entire life into a "Eucharistic life", a permanent gift of self, offered out of love.

This form of prayer is part of our mission, not only because our churches of adoration become a sign of the centrality of Christ in the life of each one, but especially because it always increases our participation in the mission of Christ: « I live, but it is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me » (Gal 2,20).

It is an "apostolic" prayer, because it relies on the prayer of Christ, it embraces the world and the Church, and it makes its own the needs of the times.

In this form of prayer love is a clear sign of the Eucharistic vocation.

***But in your adorations, you must be happy, you must taste God; and if you are not happy there, I'm afraid for your vocation. (PR 114,2)***

Fr. Eymard is fully conscious of the fatigue and the work that is needed to take on this form of prayer.

However, in order to enjoy prayer, we must make our prayer; it must be worked on, prepared, and made the goal of all. You might want to be like the Israelites in the desert where manna fell from the sky every morning, and



simply required that it be gathered. No, in the promised land they had to work, and you must do the same. (PR 114,2)

And he encourages us. In fact, we know how difficult for this prayer to find its place in the life of religious and in the mission of our communities.

***I really insist that you should be happy in your piety – it's your encouragement. [...]***

***If you don't come to that happiness, I pity you greatly, for you will be the unhappiest person in the world. [...] Oh! Believe me, no one can make us happy. [...]***

***Therefore, serve the good Lord with joy; find happiness in the good Lord! (PR 114,2)***

Fraternal help and encouragement: an exercise in Synodality

Since prayer in our congregation is not a purely private matter, but “forms part of the mission of the congregation,” it is appropriate for the Rule to remind us of our duty to support one another also in this, as in other aspects of our way of life. “We will help one another to develop this precious gift.” It is one of the great advantages of belonging to a religious community to enjoy an environment that fosters and supports us on our spiritual journey. Our belonging inserts us into a living tradition, proposes to us the inspiring example of our Founder and his teaching, provide us with the regular practice of spiritual exercises according to the Rule, and gives us the benefit of the example and encouragement of our brothers.

## **REFLECTIONS:**

1. One of the early terms for the Eucharistic Prayer is precisely that of “action.” Such action takes place on different levels. The concern of our number is with the set of spiritual attitudes and acts and their succession embodied in the liturgical prayers. These are described in terms which the Founder drew from the Council of Trent, known as “the four ends of sacrifice,” namely, “a prayer of adoration, of praise and thanksgiving, of reconciliation and intercession”. Why does our Founder find this approach 'dynamic'? Why does PJE see this prayer as manifesting the wide vision of the Eucharist?

2. What are some of the fruits or advantages that he sees in this kind of prayer?

3. In this form of prayer love is a clear sign of the Eucharistic vocation.

***But in your adorations, you must be happy, you must taste God; and if you are not happy there, I'm afraid for your vocation. (PR 114,2). Comment.***

4. What is the fatigue and the work that is needed to take on this form of prayer?

5. In the *Commentary on the Rule of Life* by Rev. Fr. Tony McSweeney sss, pp.407, 408, he mentions a variety of methods that can be used in which these four acts can be integrated. If possible, read that part to further enlightened and enthused in this kind of prayer.

6. What have to say about the idea of supporting and encouraging one another to grow in this kind of prayer?

**Fr. Justin sss**  
*Blessed Sacrament Ashram, Kholapur Wadh.*



## Synodality: A Journey from the Manger to Meeting the Stranger!



Synodality is a concept that is rapidly gaining attention among the Christian community. It is a way of living that emphasizes collaboration, communication, and the importance of diverse voices in the community. It is a journey that starts with the humble beginnings of the Christ child in the manger and expands outwards to meeting the stranger in our midst. In this article, we will explore the concept of Synodality, its origins in the Christmas story, and how it can be implemented in our church lives

### What is Synodality?

Synodality is a way of being that is rooted in the belief that all members of a community have a valuable contribution to make to the life of the Church. It is a recognition that we are all called to be ministers and to serve one another. It is an understanding that the Church is not an institution, but a living organism, and that the members of the Church must be in relationship with one another in order to fully live out their faith. Synodality is a call to collaboration, mutual learning and shared leadership.

At its core, Synodality is a recognition that the Church needs to be open to the diverse voices and perspectives of the members of its community. It is a call to listen to and learn from one another, and to work together to build a Church that is inclusive, welcoming, and responsive to the needs of its members. Synodality is also an invitation to participate in the life of the church and to take part in decision-making and leadership.

### Origins of Synodality in the Christmas Story

The Christmas story is often seen as a story of a humble family and a humble birth, but it is also a story of Synodality. In the Gospel of Luke, we hear the story of the angels appearing to the shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus. This is a story of the shepherds and angels coming together in a shared mission, and it is a beautiful example of Synodality in action.



The Christmas story is also a story of the three wise men, or magi, coming to visit the Christ child. This is a story of people from different cultures and religious backgrounds coming together to worship Jesus. It is a story of people coming together to share in the joy of the Christmas season, and it is a beautiful example of how people of different faiths can come together in a spirit of collaboration and mutual learning.

## **The Eucharist and Synodality**

The Eucharist is a central part of Christian worship, and it is a perfect example of Synodality. The Eucharist is a meal that is shared among the members of the Church. It is a meal that is shared in a spirit of fellowship and unity. It is a meal that is shared in a spirit of sharing and caring for one another. In the Eucharist, we are reminded that we are all called to be ministers and to serve one another. We are reminded that we are all called to be in a relationship with one another, and to take part in the life of the church.

## **Walking Together in Synodality**

Synodality is a journey. It is a journey of walking together as members of the church. It is a journey of listening to and learning from one another. It is a journey of understanding that we are all called to serve one another. It is a journey of recognizing that we are all called to be in relationship with one another, and that we are all called to participate in the life of the Church. It is a journey of recognizing that we are all called to take part in decision-making and leadership. Synodality is a journey of mutual learning and understanding. It is a journey of collaboration and dialogue. It is a journey of recognizing that our differences make us stronger. It is a journey of recognizing that we all have something to bring to the table. It is a journey of recognizing that we are all called to be transformed by the love of God.

## **Listening in Synodality**

Synodality is also a journey of listening. It is a journey of listening to one another and understanding that we all have something to offer. It is a journey where we are called to listen to understand the voice of God in our midst and understanding. It is a journey of listening to the stories of those who are different from us and understanding that we are all called to be together.

## **Examples of Synodality in Action**

Synodality is a concept that has been implemented in many churches around

the world. For example, the Catholic Church in India has implemented a system of Synodality in its congregations, where members of the congregation are able to take part in decision-making and leadership. Similarly, the Catholic Church has implemented a system of Synodality in its parishes, where members of the parish are able to take part in decision-making and leadership.

## Conclusion

Synodality is a journey that starts with the humble beginnings of the Christ child in the manger and expands outwards to meeting the stranger in our midst. It is a journey of walking together as members of the church, of listening to and learning from one another, and of recognizing that our differences make us stronger. It is a journey of communion, of participation, and of mission. It is a journey of understanding that we are all called to be ministers and to serve one another. Synodality is a journey that we can embark on together. It is a journey of understanding that we are all called to be in relationship with one another, and to take part in the life of the church. It is a journey of understanding that we are all called to be ministers and to serve one another. It is a journey of understanding that we are all called to be transformed by the love of God. Let us walk together on this journey of Synodality. Let us walk together in a spirit of collaboration, mutual learning, and shared leadership. Let us walk together in a spirit of understanding and love. Let us walk together in a spirit of inclusivity and hospitality. Let us walk together in the love of God.

**Bro. Infantraj sss**  
*Eymarchan Scholasticate, Pune.*



## An amazing shining star



Christmas is the light of Christ that lights up the darkened world. His radiance shines upon everyone who comes in contact with him. It brightens the hearts and enlightens the minds.

***“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. A light has dawned upon those who lived in the land as dark as death.” Isaiah 9:2***

Christmas is all about love. God, in His infinite goodness, loved us and still loves us in spite of our feebleness, faults and failures. Jesus makes God's love available for us in the modern world which needs love, care, peace, harmony and mutual understanding and sharing.

***“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.” John 3:16***

We have a place for Jesus in our hearts, in our homes and in our cribs. We bring the light of Christ to our homes and to our working places and in our societies. The brightness permeates wherever we go and spreads everywhere. Let us place baby Jesus in the inner sanctuary of our hearts.

The secret of being happy is very simple; count your blessings. Let us be people of gratitude let positivity fill our days because God has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings and graces in Jesus Christ. Let us join with the psalmist and sing every day for his marvellous goodness.

***“Bless the Lord, my soul; All my inmost being, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, my soul, and do not forget all his kindness”. Ps 103: 1-2.***

Let us be thankful for our daily food, water, shelter, clothing, family, friends,

jobs and the Eucharistic Bread. Let us celebrate our Christmas meaningfully. Light a candle and pray for peace in our homes, in our society and in the world. Let us learn to decorate our homes and learn the basic co-operation, co-ordination and togetherness and a little bit of creativity. Let us read the infancy narrative story from the Bible and meditate upon it. Let us celebrate and dine together.

Let us be generous in wishing others in this season because God is generous towards us. Let us be generous in sharing our peace with one another and share our gifts with one another. Let us involve ourselves in singing the Christmas carols at our homes and in our churches in order to evoke some kind of Christmas flavour. Let us do our shopping and at the same time be mindful of the less fortunate and let them see the glimpse of Christmas in their faces through our generosity. Let us make a good confession and get rid of mental and psychological baggage and experience inner healing, freedom and joy in our hearts. Let God bless our nation and let all beings be happy. Indeed, the star is shining in and through me. What a joy indeed to celebrate this Christmas!

**Wish you all a Merry Christmas and hope-filled New Year!**

**Fr. Joseph Jacob sss**

*Blessed Sacrament Shrine, Liverpool*



## Compassion for the Immigrants



Who is the "stranger"? Pope Francis says, immigrants are strangers in today's context. Due to several reasons people migrate from place to place. In every age, the phenomenon of immigration calls for a response of openness and solidarity. In our own day, the growing influx of refugees fleeing war, famine and dreadful poverty is a summons to welcome and care for these brothers and sisters.

We read in the Gospel of Matthew 9:36 when He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. It is not only in the time of Jesus, even today we can witness in our ministry places so many migrants found like sheep without a proper shepherd. This Christmas He is going to be born in the manger to meet the stranger (immigrants). Though he was in the form of God He emptied Himself taking form of a servant being born in human likeness. Through this He showed us the path to become like immigrants in our own way to understand difficulties and sufferings of the helpless and abandoned refugees.

Jesus did it by humbling himself and became obedient to the point of death even death on a cross. Now it is our turn to humble ourselves to understand the condition of the immigrants and refugees in order to open our eyes to see beyond color, caste, language and boundaries to receive them as our brothers and sisters. This is the way we can make ourselves available to the people who migrate from place to place. This will help us to celebrate the birth of Jesus in a meaningful way. Because Jesus himself migrated from heaven to earth to make us all his own brothers and sisters. So may this Christmas help us all to understand the great mystery of birth of Christ? To love all and live in peace with everyone.

**Wish you all Merry Christmas and Happy New year - 2023**

**Fr. Dennis Amal Raj sss**  
*Blessed Sacrament Shrine, Liverpool*



## BORN IN THE MANGER, TO MEET THE STRANGER



Jesus is born in a Manger, to feed the stranger,  
He is eager to gather the weaker and make them stronger.

He brings the last and the least to be the first in the midst of the rest,  
He meets the oppressed and the suppressed and makes them the best.

In life when one thinks s/he is just a passenger,  
He calls them from different walks of life to be His messenger.

Jesus, the new born stranger, becomes food for the weaker and the meeker,  
To feed and quench the thirst of any true seeker.

He promised to all, life in abundance,  
For He Himself is Life in fullness.

It's our great joy to celebrate His birth,  
For He gave His Body and Blood to this earth.

Now it is you and me to be another new born Christ of Bethlehem's manger,  
That all people of this world may never be to us a stranger.

Let us be a living Christ to others,  
And make them another Christ to many others!

***Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!***

**Bro. Solomon Rajan sss**  
*Eymardian Scholasticate, Pune*



## **Born in the manger, to meet the stranger**



The given theme 'born in the manger, to meet the stranger' implicitly expresses that Jesus was born in the manger to meet the human (the stranger). It precisely tells that we are that stranger.

For our sake Jesus took the form of a human to make us all one human family. The term 'stranger' needs to be clarified. How do we define a stranger? The German philosopher Georg Simmel defines stranger as 'a person perceived as being in the group but not of the group; By that definition, the distance of the person is more emphasized than his closeness or nearness. To simplify, we are close yet we are far from each other. This definition definitely helps us to understand that how far we have distanced ourselves from God, disconnected from our neighbours, and disassociated from nature.

We are a stranger to our neighbours, and our neighbours are stranger to us. How do I say this because we have been fragmented and separated from each other in various ways, forgetting that we belong to one human family. We have distanced ourselves from each other in the name of religion, nationality, gender, sexuality; caste, culture and language sometimes even differences of opinion that keep us away from others. It is timely that the church brought forth a synod on Synodality, which emphasizes and invites that we, the people of God, should journey together on earth and that no one is a stranger on the way to salvation. For Jesus made us all one family by his body and blood making us the mystical body of Christ.

Therefore, I conclude with this note let us not remain as a stranger when we meet Jesus in the manger. Wishing you all a Joy filled merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Bro. Nelson Paul sss  
*Eynardian Scholasticate, Pune.*





## **BORN IN THE MANGER, TO MEET THE STRANGER**



Who is Jesus of Nazareth? Why was Jesus born in a manger? These are the questions that people have been asking for centuries and still ask till today. Jesus born in a manger, highlights that there was no place for the Lord, as Jesus himself said in the Gospel of Mt 8:20, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has no place to lay his head". This verse could indicate that there was no place for Jesus' birth. The birth of Christ may be the most famous story of all, that Jesus was born in a stable, because there was no room at the inn. Whomever Joseph and Mary asked for a place in the inn, they were all strangers. There were inns in Bethlehem. According to the custom of Palestine, people were not allowed to stay with strangers, only with their relatives. Therefore, Joseph and Mary stayed in the manger. Though Jesus was the Son of God, God's plan made him to be born in the manger to meet the strangers, like the shepherds, wise men etc. who came to see Jesus in Bethlehem.

A stranger is a person who is unknown. Sometimes we are all strangers. When we do not know about God and do not realize his presence in our life, we become strangers. We are all strangers when we do not share our inner feelings with God. We are all strangers when we do not have hope and are reconciled with God. In today's world, the problem is some Christians rely on modern Nativity scenes; in every Christmas season classical hymns and films are to fill the gaps where scripture is silent. Therefore, Scripture is also a stranger. So, the birth of Jesus is a reminder of the hope we have in God. The birth of Jesus is the arrival of Emmanuel. Although we remember the manger at Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ marks the beginning of our journey toward harmony and reconciliation with God. Therefore, let us welcome our Lord Jesus in each one of our hearts so that this Christmas may bring us hope, faith, love, peace and reconciliation with God and also to strangers who are unaware of Jesus Christ.

***"He is the creator of the ends of all the earth "Is 40:28***

Bro. Antony Pradeep Raj sss

*Regent*

*Sagegar Aruvai Arangan, Manasapet*



## Christmas Among Us



Christmas!!!

Have you heard of Christmas?  
Not the melodious carols;  
Nor the jingle bells  
But Christmas itself,  
Yes, Christmas itself.

How strange is this thing?  
To all strangers' joyous tidings bring;  
As spoken before  
Strangely at the manger  
For the poor, by the poor  
He's born poor.

The cry was so high  
That penetrated the sky:  
Its hearers did not hear Christmas,  
But the humble server  
Of that silent needs of the cry.

Now spread to echo Christmas!  
You who heard Christmas;  
That is behind all rocks,  
And Social blocks  
And no more behind the crib's hillocks.  
For the poor, by the poor, He's born poor.

**Bro. Dhiren Parichha sss**

*Regent*

*Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Kalyan (E)*



## "Born in the manger, to meet the stranger."



The season of Christmas is something very special to each one of us. It is a celebration of joy, love and peace. It is filled with wonderful sights and sounds. However, it is also filled with questions. "Who is this stranger in the manger"?

He is the God man. He is as much God as though he were not man at all and yet as much man as though he were not God at all. We see John: 1, tells us that Jesus is the creator who took on human flesh and Colossians: 1, tells us , Jesus is the sustainer, who holds it all together. He really does have the whole world in his hands.

Many of us have been preparing for months to make Christmas a very unique celebration. All these preparations help us to receive the perfect gift for us, who is born in the manger. God becoming man to save us and His birth in the manger was surrounded by shepherds and oxen. In the same way in our lives too we should manifest the Christmas joy to those who are in our surroundings. During this Christmas, the one who is born in the manger, the stranger, reminds us that he is God's perfect gift for each one of us.

So, let us joyfully become the "mangers" to hold this stranger the perfect gift and give to others, especially sharing with others love, friendship, mercy and hope.

***Wish you Happy Christmas & Happy New Year - 2023***

**Bro. Anil Besra sss**  
*Regent*

*Mãe de Deus Chapel, Siolim.*



## 'Born in the manger, to meet the stranger'



Christmas is God's meeting with his people. It is also a consolation of a mystery of constellations. For me Christmas has always been about contemplating the visit of God to his people. Pope Francis.

Generally, synodality means journeying together and living our faith. It also means the path where God leads us as a creator, healer, friend, parent, Good Shepherd, king, counselor, spiritual director, redeemer etc. Here I mean, the theme, born in the manger to meet the stranger gives a kind of essence where we can really experience God's Love, God's way, God's plan, God's will for each one of us.

When I think about being born in the manger to meet strangers, it signifies the valuable birth of Jesus in the manger to meet the stranger in the world. Generally, the word stranger means we think of a person whom we do not know, who does not belong into a specific place.

However, I feel the birth of Jesus' teaching us a valuable life where he invites us to welcome, the stranger: the strangers are the poor, the needy, the sinners, those who are confused etc. Moreover, it is our basic values to love them and care for them. Through his birth, he invites us to follow the four core values of Advent, they are hope, love, joy, peace etc. because these are the main essence to contemplate and to show through our actions by inviting the stranger in to our lives.

**Bro. Antony Deva Sahayam sss**

*Regent  
St. Antony's Church, Tambipada*



## **“Born in the Manger, to meet the stranger.” (In light of Synodality)**



Christmas never loses its power to touch our hearts. The scene of Jesus lying in a manger is a simple one. Yet, it is a striking gesture of God's closeness to humanity. He is Emmanuel, which means, “God is with us” (Mt 1:23). Jesus took a human flesh to share our poverty and raise us to new life. He walked on the earth to heal the sick, to eat with sinners, and to proclaim good news to the poor.

In the Synodal theme, we are asked to recall how Jesus journeyed with people, then to ask: How is this “journeying together” happening today in the Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take to grow in our “journeying together?” These are the fundamental questions that Pope Francis put before us when he convoked a Synod for the Church.

### **Listening to the Crowd**

We need to constantly reflect on our fidelity to the mission of Christ. The Synodal process calls us to step back and ask: Are we proclaiming the gospel to the widest possible audience? Are we journeying together with the people of ordinary life, like Jesus who attended to lepers, the blind, the crippled, and the poor? He told the parable of the Good Samaritan because he did not want us to leave anyone alone on the side of the road.

Therefore, Pope Francis is asking us to hold gatherings for every facet of society. He is inviting all the baptized to participate in the Synodal process, but he also wants us to listen to the “crowd,” including people who have left the practice of the faith, people of other faith traditions, or of no religious belief. Instructions for the synod states that this consultation is addressed to Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious, and lay faithful. This should happen both in parish gatherings and in groups like pastoral councils. We should be mindful of including those who may risk exclusion: the women, the handicapped, refugees, migrants, the elderly, people who live in poverty, etc. Creative means should also be used to involve children and youth.

## Communion, Participation, Mission

The goal of the Synod is not to produce a document, but to strengthen communion, participation, and mission. The entire baptized share a communion rooted in the love and unity of the Trinity, which unites us with each other in the Holy Spirit. Through the Synod, we will seek to deepen our communion.

Participation is a call for the involvement of all who belong to the People of God – laity, consecrated, and ordained – to engage in the exercise of respectful listening to one another. The whole community is called together to pray, listen, dialogue, discern and offer suggestions on making pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God's will.

Mission: The Church exists to evangelize, to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. This Synodal process is intended to enable the Church to better witness to the Gospel, especially with those who live on the margins.

The goal of the Synod is to grow in our “walking together” with all people to proclaim God's salvation, just as Jesus did from the moment that he was laid in a manger to be with shepherds living in the fields until his crucifixion between two thieves. Let us participate in the Synodal process of consultation and encourage others to participate. May the Holy Spirit inspire us all!

**Bro. Taytas Lakra sss**  
*Eymardian Scholasticate, Pune.*



## "Born in the manger to meet the stranger"



***"Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:11-12).***

The shepherds, overjoyed by the news and overwhelmed with the glory of God, didn't waste any time accepting the invitation. They stampeded to the trough, eager to satisfy the hunger stirred within them. These shepherds were the first of many who would feast on the presence of the long-awaited Messiah, Christ Jesus our Lord—who would soon declare, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35)

Though Jesus was the son of God, He took the form of a slave, and He became the tree that has the most fruit to the extent that the tree bends to the ground. Similarly, Jesus was born in the manger to bring salvation to mankind.

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill!" (LK 2:14). This verse is realized in Jesus Christ. He is the Divine master, the way, the truth, and life; the truth to believe, the way to follow, and the life to possess."

When the angel appeared to the shepherds in the field to invite them to visit the new born King, he told them to look for a baby in a manger. The manger wasn't just a sign for the shepherds; it's a sign to all of us that Jesus is accessible to everyone who seeks Him. The shepherds would not have had access to a baby born in a royal palace, and as strangers, they probably wouldn't even have had access to a baby born in the confines of a family home. But a manger was accessible to all—and still is.

"God became man and took on flesh. The Creator became a creature; the One who hung the stars lay helpless in a manger. The One who we teach our children as so big, so strong, and so mighty became so tiny, so weak, and so powerless. The King of the angels was made a little lower than the angels. The Creator of time entered time. The One whose everlasting arms are underneath His people lay vulnerable in his mother's arms."

"My child, I sense your hunger to grow. No one who seeks My presence leaves



empty. I will feed you, body, soul, and spirit. Come, sit at My feet daily, and we will share. I've baked an abundance of delicious bread you've never even tasted. My manna is not of this world; but once you eat it, you will never be hungry again. I will fill you up with Myself."

The Christmas tree symbolizes the tree of life in the garden of Eden and also the tree of the cross.

"With His coming, Jesus taught us to eradicate every vice and to live lives of righteousness in the faithful observance of our duties. Jesus chose his first earthly adorers from among good, simple, and upright shepherds because they had a lively faith.

**Bro. Albinus Tigga**  
*Postulant, Cenacle, Chennai.*



## “Born in the manger, to meet the stranger”



Dear Fathers and Brothers in Christ. Peace and grace of God be unto you. We; our Mother Church, joyfully celebrates the prelude to Christmas, that is the Advent season. What is Advent? Why do we follow it? Advent is also considered as a preparation for the second coming of Jesus. As we wait for the celebration of Christmas, we are called to prepare ourselves, not only physically but also spiritually and mentally for His birth and calls us to live a simple and humble life.

Jesus' birth is the greatest thing on earth. He was not born in a kingdom, but lived and prepared Himself to build the kingdom; not on earth but in heaven. What a place of His birth! He was born in the manger which is a shelter for animals. What does this manger signify to us? It is just a biblical reference to show that there is something beyond it. His birth itself was a mystery.

The manger indicates simplicity, humility, generosity and poverty. In olden days, only the servants of a particular house are allowed or forced to live in the cowshed or the tent of the flock. So, from His birth, he started the ministry by being humble. He performed lots of miracle not to believe in him alone but to show the whole world that He is son of God.

He was born, died and resurrected. How does this connect with us? It can connect with us through the Eucharist. In reality, we are strangers but He gave his life for us. As a Christian, do I follow the teachings of Christ? We must follow. As we concluded our preparation for the synod of bishops, let us keep in mind the theme is “communion”, “participation” and “mission” and live and lead our lives in favour of the new born king.

**Bro. Antony sagayam**  
*Postulant, Cenacle, Chennai.*



## "BORN IN A MANGER, TO MEET THE STRANGER."



**"God sacrificed his only son and Jesus sacrificed his life for the humanity."**

God became human to be with us in all our needs. As long as He was on earth, He really understood the human need a saviour. And that it was Jesus Who came down from heaven. Jesus was so humble that, He even took birth in a manger. He was born to save humanity. And it is very important that we are not strangers to him. It's because in Jeremiah 1:5, God said, I know you and before you were born, I consecrated you".

So, I believe that everything was a plan of God. That JESUS should come and sacrifice his life for our sake. Then he shall rise again in three days and then go up to heaven.

J - Just man  
E - Enlightenment  
S - Sacrifice  
U - Understanding  
S - Saviour

In spite of many persecutions and problems he was a just man. Next, he was an enlightenment for the humanity. He taught about, who God is and that without Him we are nothing. He sacrificed his life because of our sins. He was so full of understanding that even at his last moment He prayed for us on the cross. "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing". And at last he became the saviour of the world. He was born to wash away the sins of the world and bring peace on earth. This was the mission given by the Heavenly Father to Jesus.

Now what is our duty? It's nothing but only to worship Christ and Christ alone, who is our saviour and redeemer and the one true God on earth.



As our late president Dr. A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM say's "I'm not a *handsome* guy, but I *can* give my hand to someone who needs help. Beauty is in *the* heart, not in *the* face." All the more as Fathers and Brothers in SSS let us be an example of disciples of JESUS CHRIST by taking the Eucharistic Lord to everyone.

***Wish you Merry Christmas & Happy New Year - 2023***

**Bro. James Paik**  
*Cenacle, Chennai.*



## Born in the manger, to meet the stranger



The word “manger” comes from the (old French word “mangier”, the Latin word 'mandere' which means 'to chew'). If we see in the Gospel of John 6:51-59, Jesus says “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” If we think over this word of our Lord Jesus Christ, it gives us a deep understanding that Jesus was born as food in a manger to feed strangers. A manger is a place where all kinds of cattle, horses and donkeys live.

Jesus was born to redeem the people, actually, it was the will of God that Jesus was to be born in a manger and meet the stranger. Because the prophet Jeremiah in 1:5 says **“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”** We know and read in the Bible that Jesus Christ was born to fulfil God's will, because God loves humanity bountifully, or in another words, we can say with an unconditional love. Because of this love God sent Jesus Christ to redeem His people by hanging on the cross and He gave his body and blood as food for His people that whoever eats it will have eternal life, which we are receiving every day during the holy Eucharistic celebration. His body and blood gives us new life every day.

**Bro. Karan Kumar Nayak**  
*Cenacle, Chennai.*



## Born in the manger, to meet the stranger



We know that Jesus was born in a manger. Jesus was not laid in a manger by accident. It was the plan of God that Jesus was to be born in a manger and many strangers would come to meet Him. Jesus is born in a manger because there was no place for Him in the inn. He was born in cattle shed, surrounded by sheep, goats, and cows. He was born to a humble handmaiden, and his foster father was a simple carpenter. He was born for the people who walked in darkness to see a great light.

It is a major spiritual symbol. That animals go to the manger for physical food, but with Jesus lying in the hay, we go to the manger for spiritual food. Jesus has an infinite storehouse of nourishment available, and we can approach him at any time and never go hungry. Jesus feeds us with Word and Sacrament, his gospel and the Eucharist. Jesus wants us to devour his word, chew on it, slowly ruminate on its meaning, swallow and digest it, and make it part of the fabric of our being. Jesus' Word is like no other food. It has the power to save our souls, and not only that, the infant in the feeding trough is the Bread of Life, the true bread that has come down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. As Christians, we need to meet the stranger to proclaim about the true life, where Jesus is a way, truth and life. If a person wants to be spiritually well-fed, it is important to read Scripture and receive the Eucharist often.

The manger is a momentous sign that Jesus is sustenance for us. The shepherds feasted first. Now it is our turn. Jesus born on the first Christmas day is food for our souls.

***Wish you Happy Christmas & New Year 2023***

**Bro. Philip Kisku**

*Postulant  
Cenacle, Chennai.*



## Born in the manger, to meet the stranger



Christmas is upon us. It is filled with wonderful sights, sounds, smells and good things. Since there was nowhere for them to stay in the town, the infant was laid in a manger while angels announced his birth to a group of shepherds who worshipped Him as the Messiah and the Lord. Jesus is born in a manger **because all the travellers had overcrowded the guest rooms**. After his birth, Joseph and Mary are visited by the shepherds, who were overjoyed at Jesus' birth. Luke says that these shepherds were notified of Jesus' location in Bethlehem by angels. However, that was just what was taking place on the outside. Their feelings must have been high; knowing what the angels told them, knowing that the time was near for Mary to give birth to God's Son, and knowing that they had been chosen to participate in this incredible plan of God to save humanity from sin.

The hardships of the journey, and their lack of better accommodation, must have turned their sadness in to overwhelming joy they felt within. It just seems reasonable that a loving God would bless their experience in a most powerful way. This was God coming into the world in human flesh. I cannot help but picture the entire event as something blessed by God in a way that is so unique to that particular time and place.

**John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."**

**Bro. M. G. Philipson**  
*Senade, Chennai.*





## “JESUS IS BORN IN THE MANGER, TO MEET THE STRANGER”



The Lord Jesus is coming to save us and to live with us. His glory will appear in our midst, and the glory of the Lord will shine on us. And like the sun, He will rise over us. Jesus is born in a manger to meet the stranger. A manger means a trough or open box in a stable designed to hold feed or fodder for livestock.

What is a manger, according to the Bible? The manger is associated with nativity scenes where Mary and Joseph, forced by necessity to stay in a room, where a manger was used as an improvised crib for the baby Jesus. He was fortunately born in the manger. Nobody gave place for Joseph and Mary to give birth to Jesus. Therefore, Joseph and Mary went to a stable. It is a place where the animals are fed. Jesus was born in the manger to become food to the stranger.

The spiritual food is the word of God and the word of God was born as human flesh to feed the stranger. He will feed us with the word and sacrament, the Gospel and the Eucharist. Jesus' word is not like any other food. It has the power to save our soul. He comes to feed the stranger, so, that the strangers may proclaim the word of God throughout the world.



Bro. Pradeep Mali  
*Circle, Chavara*

## “BORN IN THE MANGER TO MEET THE STRANGER”



### GOD'S GREATEST GIFT – JESUS, THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Jesus Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the Virgin Mary. God's greatest gift – Jesus, the birth of Jesus. It is the gift to the devotees that come to our mind. God gives the gift of Jesus to the world. It is a great joy for us.

It was full of darkness and there was light. Jesus was born in the manger. It is a holy night. Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bonds of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Inn means, “kataluma”. The angels sing on earth. The archangels rejoice today. Man shouts out for joy. The angels message rings through the world. God chooses the poor, simple, shivering shepherds to first hear the breaking news of his coming. Jesus is born in cattle shed, surrounded by sheep and goats and cows.

### “The birth day of life, to meet the stranger”

Whom you do not know? Jesus born for us to guide our way. It is a gift of our life to welcome Jesus to our house. He will give light to our life. Let us prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord Jesus, to celebrate Christmas in a meaningful way.

**“For unto to you is born this day in the city of David a saviour, which is Christ the lord”. Happy Christmas.**

**Bro. Gnana Reegan**  
*Genade, Chennai.*



## "MERRY CHRISTMAS"



The stars keep roaming,  
As a stranger.

Yes, Baby Jesus is born;  
In the manger.

Hark! O my people,  
Sing a song of a lullaby.  
Yes, the little Jesus is born;  
He is laid on the hay.

The withered flower is blooming  
now,

The broken wings start flying.  
Yes, the Savior is born;  
the Joy is sprinkling everywhere.

If I'm a sky,  
I'll gift the stars,  
If I'm a sea,  
I'll give the pearls.

What gift can I give him?  
Being poor;  
Yes, the infant Jesus is born,  
Nothing but my pure heart.

**Bro. Rex Rajan**  
*Cenade, Chennai.*



## **Born in the manger, to meet the stranger**



### **Our waiting is over! the saviour is born and laid in the manger**

Mary gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger; because there was lodgings available for them.

When I was young, I thought that manger meant a “stable”. I was well into adult years before I realized that manger was a food trough for animals. Etymologically, manger is related to the French verb manger, which means “to eat”. Animals eat from a food manger. No doubt Mary chose the manger, in which to lay Jesus because its straw could make a relatively comfortable bed for a baby.

The manger powerfully emphasizes the humility of Jesus. The king of kings wasn't born in a place, where he might have been laid in a gold gilded cradle. He wasn't even born in a home, as most children were in that day. No, he was an outsider from the beginning, one whose birth would have been embarrassing, even shameful for his parents. He entered this world in humility; one might even say in humiliation; thus, we have a foreshadowing of Jesus, the ultimate dishonour, not in a manger, but on a cross.

**Philippians 2:6-7.** “Though he was God, He did not think of equality with God, as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was as a human being.”

**Merry Christmas and happy new year -2023**

**Bro. S. Wilson**  
*Cenada, Chennai.*



## George in Wonderland: Austria

(Personal Experience from New Mission)



***"God calls me today, tomorrow will be too late"***

"God calls me today (August, 2021) tomorrow will be too late (Reached Austria on August 2022)", our founder SPJE could not wait even a day, whereas the tomorrow became a year for me to come to Austria. I thank the Eucharist Lord for His guidance in the visa process and I thank Rev. Fr. Peter Jayakanthen, Fr. Santiago, Fr. Joel Nelson and Fr. Prabu Metha for their support to get the Visa. Austria is indeed a wonderland in Europe holding some prominent places, great people and unforgettable events in the history of the world. Being in Austria itself is a privilege and leads to a good feeling. Therefore, I like to share with you my experience.

### Honoured and Gladdened and Saddened

1. It's an honour to be chosen for overseas mission.
  2. It's an honour to form a trinitarian community in Vienna. And it's an honor to be part of one of the active and biggest parishes of Vienna diocese.
  3. It's an honour to be of help to a first world country coming from a third world country.
  4. It's an honour to be called a 'Foreigner'.
  5. It's an honour to twist and turn the tongue and the mouth to create new sounds when learning a new language.
  6. It's an honour to be baptized again from GEORGE to KEYORG.
  7. Finally it's an honour to be at the foot of Mount Alps.
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1. It feels good to obey the traffic rules.
  2. It feels good to be in a jumbo-sized refrigerated country.
  3. It feels good to know that I can cook better than the hotel Taj's chef (Hight of exaggeration).
  4. It feels good to give up the fundamental right of the use fingers when eating.
  5. It feels good to know that a banana is costlier than an apple. Therefore,

- we can say: a banana a day keeps doctor away.
6. Importantly it feels good to know that beer and wine are beverages.
  7. It feels good to know that the population of pets and the people are the same.

One thing that saddens my heart is the feeling that my home is far.... far.... far away from Austria. I miss you all. Thank you.

***Wish you Merry Christmas & Happy New Year - 2023***

**Fr. George Anthony Fernandez sss**  
*pfarre Gumpendorf, Wien, Austria*



## **Stewards in the Eucharistic Vineyard (Personal Experience of the Final Vows & the Diaconate)**



Every person has a desire to be fulfilled. That person has to patiently wait upon the Lord who will fulfil the desire in His time, and more than the person expects. The same experience and feeling we nourished on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2022 as we were ordained deacons by His Eminence Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferao. It was a happy and joyful moment in our life and to our Kristu Jyoti Province because it is the first time in our Province brothers were ordained as deacons by a Cardinal.

The Ordination to Diaconate Celebration began in the morning at 7 am, with the Cardinal being the main celebrant and the Provincial Superior Fr. Peter Jayakanthan SSS and General Consultor Fr. Augustinho Castigo Maholele SSS as concelebrants in the presence of our SSS priests, neighbouring priests and all the faithful gathered there for the celebration. The Cardinal focused on 'call' as a main theme for his homily, saying, everyone is 'called' in different ways in our life. Every 'call' that comes from God for His Service to His mission. As Deacons we need to focus on three important qualities in our service: Union with the Lord in Service; Humility in Service; and, being Joyful in Service.

### **1. Union with the Lord in Service**

During His earthly ministry, Jesus was in union with God who gave Him the power to preach, heal, and to serve the people. Being in union is to be one with God. That is why He says; the Father and I are one. I am with the Father and Father is with me. As we are called to do His mission, we should be in union with the Lord. Without being in union with the Lord we can do nothing.

### **2. Humility in Service**

Jesus is the real example for the virtue of Humility. As the Son of God, Jesus humbled Himself by being born as human for us. The culmination of His humility is revealed when He tied the towel around Himself and washed the

disciples' feet, which shows the humility to become slaves for the mission and his asking of disciples to do the same. But when Peter resisted, Jesus replied saying that if you are not allowing me to wash your feet, you have no part in my life. As deacons called by the Lord to do His mission, if we are not ready to humble ourselves in service, we will have no part in His life.

### 3. Joyful in Service

We are called to do His mission joyfully because when Jesus was tired and sleepy, the children came to Jesus for blessing, yet the disciples rebuked them. However, Jesus welcomed the children and He blessed them. As Jesus lived His ministry joyfully, we are called to live our ministry joyfully in service.

This celebration of Diaconate brought in our hearts joy and our eyes tears because we are blessed to have our parents around us and all the faithful praying for us. Being ordained as deacons, we are grateful to God for calling us to do His mission in the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

***Wish you Merry Christmas & Happy New Year - 2023***

**Dn. Dibin sss**  
*Thiruvai Arokia Aruvai Alayan,*  
*Thiruverkadu, Chennai.*

