



NIRMAL PROVINCE BULLETIN



Nirmal Sadan, Dharampura PO, Jagdalpur, Bastar Dt., C.G. 494005
Ph: 07782 229196, e-mail: cmijagcmi@gmail.com

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The Lenten Season and Paschal Mystery

Fr. Thomas Srampickal CMI

The Fifty Days' Season of Lent is the time when the followers of Christ dedicate themselves especially to prayer, abstinence, fasting and works of charity in preparation for the great celebration of the Paschal events of Jesus' suffering, death and Resurrection. From the testimonies of the early Christian writers we know that at least by the end of the second century AD onwards the Good Friday and Holy Saturday were considered as days fasting. By the middle of the third century there arose the custom of Christians fasting for six days before Easter. In the fourth century the practice of Forty Days' Fast in preparation of Holy Week came into existence both in the East and West. The fasting was to start six weeks before the H. week and calculating 40 days they started it in the western tradition on the Wednesday of the first week. But the Orientals calculated exempting the Sunday of the first week and the Lazarus day (the Saturday before Palm Sunday when Jesus raised Lazarus) and started the Lent on the Monday of the first week. In the St. Thomas Christian tradition of India they called this Lent as the Fifty Days' Fast (*Ampathu Noiampu*) and kept abstinence and fasting from



**Create
in me a
clean heart,
O God,
and put a
new and right
spirit within me.**

the Monday of the first week to the Holy Saturday. As it is a privilege to keep on this patrimony of our tradition from immemorial times, it is befitting to commence the Lenten Season on the Monday of the first week celebrating it as the Ash Day.

In Aramaic, *pesaha* means passing over. It was transcribed into Greek as *Pascha*. According to OT tradition it indicated the passing over of the people of Israel from Egypt, the land of slavery, to Canaan, the land of promise and freedom. The Gospels understand Jesus as the Pascal Lamb of the New Covenant. At the last supper Jesus proclaimed the inauguration of a New Covenant in his blood, "This is my blood of the Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28). The Apostolic community soon understood Jesus' death and Resurrection as the New Pascha and as the event of salvation for humanity

“ ईश्वर केलिये हम सबकुछ छोड दिये हैं लेकिन आलस्य के कारण अगर इश्वर को छोड दें तो उसे पागलपन ही कहेंगे। ”- धन्य चावरा

and as our deliverance from the power of sin to grace and eternal salvation. Why had Jesus to suffer and die? To find the real reasons for the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus, we may have to search into the life of Jesus and his proclamation and praxis of the kingdom as it appears in the gospels. Jesus' preaching of the gospel and its praxis prompted a complete reordering of things in the society. He turned against the existing established order as he found it to be a religious and social disorder. In the place of true religiosity and practices, Jesus saw in the contemporary Israel an absolute legalistic approach, hypocrisy and mechanical practices. The Torah was interpreted letter by letter multiplying the legal observances and making the life of the common people unbearable. There existed a religion with all external paraphernalia devoid of all internal spirit and life and Jesus strongly criticised it (Mk 7:6-7, Mt 15:7-9 etc). At the same time, the social set up and the life situation was fully oppressive of the poor and the ordinary people. The privileged classes – the Sadducees, Pharisees, and the Scribes enjoyed all advantages and privileges.

In this context Jesus always gave priority to the person, to each and every person, especially to the poor and the sick, to the overlooked and defenceless or the socially and religiously excluded - the lepers, the outcast and those who were stamped as sinners like the tax collectors, prostitutes and so on. He reached out to the insignificant and gave them hope of salvation. Jesus disposed of all taboos, monopolies and demanded the society to revalue their perceptions and patterns of behaviour. This new path of life earned for him the wrath of all those external and internal forces in the society who controlled the life of Israel in that juncture of history. The path Jesus chose was fatal for him; he was an impossible man for the society of his times. His life was revolutionary both in social and religious fields. Therefore, it had to be brought to a violent end. He served the cause of God and humanity. These two were not different for him, but they coincided. Jesus was, then, condemned because of his complete fidelity to his God-given Prophetic Messianic mission. He accomplished his Messianic mission not in accordance with the Jewish expectations but in accordance with the will of the

Father and that fulfilment of God's will brought him the cross. He accepted it with all braveness and complete surrender to the will of the Father.

The sum total of Jesus' life was love – love of the Father and love of humanity. Jesus loved God and humanity unto death and it brought salvation to the world. His whole life, suffering and death, had been an offer of divine salvation; it was God's liberating deed for humanity. In Jesus God's true will for humanity is manifested. God's love and care for the oppressed and abandoned humanity and God's condemnation of the injustice and oppression, violence and crime and all kinds of evil in the world is revealed in the life and death of Jesus. His life and mission was a model given by God to humanity, a model for all his followers to serve God and humanity as the agents of ongoing liberation and salvation for all human beings in all ages. Yes, this model and this person given to humanity is valid not only for the people of Palestine in the first century AD, but to all people of the world for all times. Therefore, his gospel and his model have to be preached to generations in all places. God's message of liberation and salvation through this divine human person is to be made available to all humanity and it is an obligation and privilege set on all his followers in every age.

In the Resurrection experience, by the enlightenment of the Spirit the disciples realized the deeper meaning of Jesus' cross, his suffering and death and of his whole life in the light of the OT prophecies (especially Is 52:13 – 53:12 and Ps 22). The basic early Christian confession was that Jesus died for our sins. He is the '*Ebed Jahweh*', the servant of God who carries the sins of the people. His whole life was given for the service of humanity and this was fully manifested in his death. In Mk 10:45 we see the full meaning of Jesus' life summarized, "I came not to be served but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many". This realization of the great meaning of Jesus' life and death effected in the disciples a deeper conversion. Until Jesus' death they were calculating and judging according to the worldly standards and were competing with one another for power and positions. They realized that the Messiah

“ आज्ञाकारिता, विनय, सादगी, खैरात, भक्ति आदि संन्यस्त जीयावन के बुनियादी गुणों को व्यवहारिक बनाये बगैर-

whom God offers to the world, is a different one than what they had expected. He is a Messiah who teaches the humankind to live as persons who live selflessly for God and others. Disciples saw in Jesus one who lives doing good for others and finally they saw in him one who offers himself for the salvation of the world. He is the Son of God who liberates the human kind from all their bondages both spiritual and social and leads them to the eternal kingdom of his Father. When they in faith stood and contemplated the one dying on the cross they realized the true nature of God's Messiah, the glory of the Son of God who gave himself as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45). The Season of Lent is the salutary time when we have to focus our attention on the Paschal Mystery of our salvation in the spirit of the fast. Even today it is not possible for us to realize the mystery of Jesus, his true nature as the Son of God, unless and until we stand at the foot of the cross in faith and realize the deeper meaning of his suffering and death, the mystery of the cross. It would bring a new attitude to our lives, deeper dedication to Christ, commitment to the values of the gospel and for the service of humanity.

NEWS UPDATES

Chain Adoration Schedule

As per the Prior General's Circular (REF: PG/327/2008) the chain adoration for the spiritual renovation of the congregation scheduled for Nirmal Province begins this month. It is requested that all the local Superiors/Directors may see to it that the adoration in each centre is held meaningfully without fail. The schedule for Nirmal Province is given below:

March 10	Nirmal Sadan, Dharampura
11	Vinayalaya, Bhanpuri
12	Chavara Bhavan, Dugoli
13	Nirmal Aram, Naktisemra
14	Suman Ashram, Palligaon
15	Nirmal Ashram, Thellakom
16	St. Joseph's School, Bhanupratappur
17	Bastar Rachana Samiti, Bodhghat
18	Nirmal Niketan, Dentewada
19	Prerana Sadan, Karpawand
20	Christ Bhavan, Rajendra Nagar
21	Devdan CMI Ashram, Mardum
22	Nirmal Farm, Nelesnar
23	Sangam, Mettuguda
24	San Tom Bhavan, Kapsi
25	Amar Jyothi Ashram, Junawar

BDKS News

The social Apostolate department has extended its helping hand to Mr. Baddu of Palligaon to construct a house for him. It is the fruit of the timely intervention of Suman Ashram community. The social Apostolate department is also starting a tailoring centre for the tribal girls at Pahurbel this month with the intention of economic empowerment of tribal girls. The MSMI community at Pahurbel is taking a keen interest in this programme.

Sataspur Samachar

Encouraging presence of Samanvaya Brothers

Bro. Saju and Bro. Jibi from Samanvaya, Kolchoor joined the Sataspur catholic community on 11th February as a part of their village exposure programme. They are conducting catechism classes and prayer services. They are with the people preparing them for Holy Communion and visiting families. Their presence has a highly boosting effect on this emerging catholic community.

A healing touch

Medical camps were conducted twice in the neighbouring villages of Sataspur in the month of February. Many people from near and far off places came and benefited from it. S.A.B.S. and S.M.S Sisters from Jagdalpur were very much helpful in this venture.

“ वैचारिक स्तर पर सीमित रखने वाले संन्यस्त समाज का ह्रास होते देर नहीं लगेगा। ” - धन्य चावरा

A Place for worship

The Kasturpal Catholic Community at Mardum is more enthusiastic to build a small chapel for prayer and worship. The construction of the chapel is in progress. A new tube-well was made with the help of SWC Adawal. It is a great blessing for the community because they had to go a long distance to fetch water. Thanks to Fr. Abbas for his timely assistance.

The man behind these humanitarian interventions in and around Sataspur is Fr. Tiju. Hats off to him for his energetic missionary activities.

First Commitment

Five of our brothers, Bro. Bibin Thymoottil, Bro. Bince Kadukkakunnel, Bro. Nijo Lanithottam,

Bro. Sanjay Kujur, and Bro. Shaiju Elamthuruthypadavil are making their first commitment on 19 march. Let us keep them in our prayers.

Diaconate

Bro. James Erasseril was ordained deacon on 15 February by His Excellency Mar Antony Chirayth, bishop of Sagar. Congratulations and prayerful best wishes to Deacon James.



Law and Justice Summit 2009

Legal Awareness programme for Priests and Sisters

The Nirmal Province is planning to organize a three day legal awareness programme at Samanvaya, Kolchoor from 6.p.m. June 15th Monday To 1. pm. June 18th Thursday. The resource persons for the programme will be Rev. Fr. K.M. Joseph SJ and Rev. Sr. Tessa OSF. The detailed programme schedule will be announced later. For further Information and registration please contact Fr. Francis Vallapura CMI (mobile No: 9424226009)

Many Many Happy Returns of the Day

Birth days

Palathara Jose	01
Incheril Joseph	04
Srampickal Augustine	09
Manneduppamkuzhy Babu	10
Theodore Toppo	14
Perumpananickal Shaju	14
Payappilly Vineeth	17
Puthukattukaduppil Kuriakose	17
Koorkkakalayil Gabriel	18
Thannmavumkal Xavier	19
Kavalam Joseph	25
Thamarassery Josey	31
Perumpallil Juatine Issac	01
Stantly Sebastian	01
Jibin Nayattuparambil	24

Feast days

Kaipuzhavakkal Patrick	Mar.17	Payappilly Biju	Mar.19
Eroorickal Jose (Jr)	Mar.19	Vadakinezhath George	Mar.24
Eroorickal Jose	Mar.19	Konunalpathil Lalichan	Mar.19
Incheril Joseph	Mar.19	Manalyil Jossey	Mar.19
Kavalam Joseph	Mar.19	Roshan Toppo	Mar.19
Kollamparampil Joseph	Mar.19	Kadiyamkuttiyil Anoop	Mar.19
Kuttianickal Joseph	Mar.19	Kollithadathil Jenesh	Mar.19
Mankottil Jose (Tiju)	Mar.19	Thaliparampil Twinkle	Mar.19
Nediyakalayil Jose	Mar.19	Kadukkunnel Bince	Mar.19
Panthalanickal Jose	Mar.19	Lanithottam Nijo	Mar.19
Pazhoor Joseph	Mar.19	Thymoottil Bibin Xavier	Mar.19
Perumpananickal Shaju	Mar.19	Kizhakakunnel Nithin	Mar.19
Puthukulangara J.C.Prasad	Mar.19	Anoop Mathew Thundiyl	Mar.19
Thamarassery Josey	Mar.19	Manu Mani Edattu	Mar.19
Valiyankal Joseph	Mar.19	Jibin Chacko Pattiyal	Mar.19
Vadakekannanchira Joseph	Mar.19	Kallukulam Bennimon John	Mar.20