



Priest's Message

Dear TCA members,

Christmas celebrates the dawn of the Light of the World. The powers of darkness are overcome by His coming to share our life. The long reign of sin is ended and grace has been poured out upon the earth. The Sun of Justice has arisen, and evil is vanquished.

Perhaps the hardest thing to remember about Christmas is this: "It celebrates the incarnation, not just the nativity." The incarnation is an on-going process of salvation, while the nativity is the once-for-all-historical event of Bethlehem. We do not really celebrate Christ's "birthday," remember something that happened long ago. We celebrate the stupendous fact of the incarnation; God entering our world so thoroughly that nothing has been the same since. And God continues to take flesh in our midst, in the men and women and children who form his body today. And the birth we celebrate is not just the past historical event but Christ's continuing birth in his members, accomplished by the power of the Spirit through the waters of baptism.

"What we celebrate is our redemption in Christ and the transformation of all creation by the presence of the divine in our midst."

Merry Christmas.

Fr. Theemas

Mother Mary's Role in the Birth of Christ

By: Angelin James

During the Christmas season, people often hear the familiar account of Mary's role as the mother of Christ. The story uses facts from the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke in the New Testament. In Luke's gospel, an angel announces to the priest Zacharias that his wife Elizabeth will miraculously give birth to a son named John, who will later be known as John the Baptist. During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, an angel appeared to Mary, telling her that God has found favor in her and that she will conceive a child who will be the Son of God. Jesus was miraculously conceived through Mary by the Holy Spirit after she allowed God to set forth his plan. Through her struggles on her journey to Bethlehem, prior to the birth of Jesus, Mary pondered her lowly state in comparison to that of God and expressed her trust in God's plan, even if she did not fully understand everything happening in her life.

Through her complete trust in God's plan from the beginning of her conception to the birth of Jesus, Mary remains a perfect model of faith. She fulfills the consequences of conceiving a child without being married in a silent sacrificial manner. She does this without a complete understanding of the events to come in her life; however, her faith in the Lord remains unwavering as she silently always the future God has planned for her. Through the example of Mother Mary, we must completely adhere to the principles of trust in regards to our relationship with God because He has a plan of prosperity for our lives just as Mother Mary surrendered herself to God's plan.



President's Message

Dear TCA Members,

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I welcome all of you to our 15th Annual Christmas Celebrations held on Dec 9th, 2018 at Lyndhurst, NJ. We have grown in strength this year with more and more Tamil families joining the TCA.

I would like to thank our priests Fr. Albin Roby- our Spiritual counselor, Fr. Theemas Pankiraj, Fr. John Berchmans and Fr. James Selvaraj who have supported us with their presence throughout the year.

This year, we specially remember all the families who started and registered this wonderful association 15 years back in 2004. We pray to all those families who are still with us and also who have left to various parts of the country.

I specially thank Mr. Rajesh Vincent, Mr. Benno Francis, Mr. Peter Rajesh, Mrs. Immaculate Antony, Mr. Joseph Arulanandam, Mrs. Shanthi Thangaraj, Mrs. Roselyn Joseph who have taken multiple responsibilities in the last few years in leading and guiding the TCA Activities.

Every year Christmas celebrations have been a very happy occasion for our TCA members. We start our planning in September. We plan to have very grand Tamil mass, cultural activities by our kids, friends and families followed by a festive dinner. This year also, the executive committee with the help of all of you has worked hard to present a great day. All our festivities this year will be recorded and telecasted in Matha TV.

- We have been celebrating First Communion & Baptism of our TCA kids for the last few years. Please reach us if you plan to celebrate the Holy Sacraments of First Holy Communion or Baptism for your kids.
- Youth Group coordinators did participate in some wonderful events in 2018. Similarly, we have planned some wonderful activities for our TCA children all through the year.
- We have a full-fledged Youth choir who has started singing for full mass. I am thankful to all the Youth choir members and the coordinators.

The Team for 2018 is given below:

Officers

Fr. Albin Roby – Spiritual Counselor

Mr. Agnel Bestus Arockiaraj- President

Mr. Anantha Soosairaj- Vice President

Mr. Joseph Ernest- Secretary

Mr. Lawrence Savarimuthu – Joint Secretary

Mr. Anton Fernando- Treasurer

Mr. John Peter – Financial Secretary

Trustees

Mrs. Maria Dominique

Mrs. Prema Dheepak

Mrs. Vijayanthi Benno

Mr. Leo Martin

Mr. Anto Mathu

Mr. Anto Inigo

Mr. Antony George

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2018





The Symbolism Behind the Nativity

By Jenocent Edwardraj

A Christmas nativity is probably one of the most recognizable symbols of the Christmas season. Almost everyone has a nativity set up in their home, whether it be a very fancy one or a home-made one. We all know that it is a model representing the birth of Jesus. However, every time you walk past it at your home, have you ever stopped to think about the true meaning of the nativity. What does the nativity really symbolize? We may be thinking to ourselves, what it is that's so special about the nativity? Why does nearly every home have it next to their Christmas tree? It may be just for decoration, but there is more to it than that. The word nativity is taken from the Latin word *nativus*, which means "arisen by birth." The scene generally contains the same elements: Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the angel, various barn animals, and three wise men, all inside of a little stable. However, how did we come to incorporate this lovely scene into our Christmas tradition. Saint Francis of Assisi created the very first nativity scene in 1223 in an effort to promote the true meaning of Christmas and worship of Jesus Christ. His idea caught on, and soon a new Christmas tradition was born.

Today, it's almost impossible for one to go through the Christmas season without seeing a nativity scene in front of a church, in a Christmas play, in someone's yard, or placed in model form on a fireplace mantel. In early Christian art, the cave or stable was the setting for Nativity scenes. Even though it was likely that Jesus was born in the lower level of a home, amongst animals who were brought inside for the night (Luke 2:7), we still incorporate this setting of a cave or stable into our modern nativities. The ox and the donkey are included in Nativity art from the very beginning, even when Mary and Joseph were absent in the 4th century. Mary is sometimes absent from the earliest artistic representations of the Nativity, but by the end of the 5th century she is always found at the manger. For the first thousand years of Christian art she was usually depicted lying down, in a posture apparently intended to convey exhaustion after giving birth.

This begins to change in western European art during the 14th century, and from the late 15th century onward, Mary is normally shown kneeling with both hands together, praying to her divine Child. Mary's kneeling pose, with her hands folded in prayer, reflects the influence of certain Franciscan writings and also the mystical visions of St. Bridget. Joseph is frequently shown holding a staff, which sometimes terminates in a flower. This attribute has its origins in an apocryphal story of how Joseph was selected to be Mary's husband. When Mary had reached the age of marriage, the high priest asked all the eligible suitors to come to the Temple with their staves in hand. According to the Infancy Gospel of James, Joseph was chosen from among the suitors when a dove miraculously came forth from the top of his staff. In a later version of the story, a dove lands on the staff, which also blossoms. For this reason, in later times, the lily became the emblem of St. Joseph. Joseph is even shown with a lily in the ceramic Nativity made by Josefina Aguilar in Oaxaca, Mexico.

The shepherds are often portrayed as reacting to the news of the Annunciation, or in the act of Adoration, after the angel of the Lord appeared to them. The angel or star is often located on the roof of the stable or cave, often looking down upon the holy scene as if protecting all of them. The three wise men, or magi are often shown kneeling with their gifts after following the star for days. Modern nativities may replace the gold, frankincense, and myrrh with gifts appropriate to the local culture of the artist. For example, in the ceramic Nativity, made by Native American artist Cheryl Fragua, it shows the wise men offering painted pottery and a drum.

Each figure in the nativity scene symbolizes something important. Whether it be the hay on the ground, or the manger in which Jesus lays. Pay attention to the ornate details made by each artist, and why it was put there. So, the next time you walk past your nativity at home, instead of just giving it a quick glance, take time to observe the whole scene and imagine how it must have been like two thousand years ago.





Where to Donate Gently Used Toys this Holiday Season

By Anusha Mathias

Do you have gently used toys or books your kids aren't using anymore? Instead of abandoning them on the Island of Misfit Toys, donate them to one of these organizations and make someone else's holiday brighter. Check out each organization's website to see if they accept other donations besides toys and books, too.

Donation Town

Don't have time to sort through all your kids' stuff for each different charity? Donation Town brings hundreds of organizations together, so you can send your used games, sports equipment, action figures, dolls or stuffed animals to one place. Keep in mind they don't accept broken toys or toys with missing parts.

<http://donationtown.org/>

Pick Up Please.

Guidelines: Accepts everything light and small enough for a person to easily carry. Downsize their stuffed animal collection this season by giving a few to a child in need. In partnership with The Vietnam Veterans of America, you can schedule a pickup that benefits the org through Pick Up Please. Give away everything from board games to dolls to sports equipment.

<https://pickupplease.org/>

Reach Out and Read

Guidelines: Donate new or gently used children's books. This organization specializes in promoting literacy at a young age. Medical providers associated with the organization provide the children with books at well-visits. There are 67 spots to drop your books off in the state, so you're bound to find a locale near you. You can also give a monetary donation, donate via your Amazon purchases and more.

<http://www.reachoutandread.org/>

Where to Donate Gently Used Toys This Holiday

Salvation Army

Guidelines: You can donate just about anything. The most famous symbol of giving back during the holiday season accepts all kinds of stuff from clothes to bikes to stuffed animals. Schedule a pickup of your items or drop it off at a NJ donation box.

<https://satruck.org/>

Second Chance Toys

Guidelines: Plastic toys This group will give the old toys in your house a new life (and your family more living space). Plus, handing them in at one of the locations in NJ or NYC keeps that non-degradable plastic out of landfills. Keep in mind this organization requires batteries to be included if a toy needs them to operate. Also, they're a seasonal operation, so drop-offs near you may only be running around Earth Week in April and December during the holidays. Check back online as the holiday season draws nearer.

<http://www.secondchancetoys.org/>

Toys for Tots

Guidelines: Nothing that looks like a realistic weapon or with food; must be new. Run by the US Marines, Toys for Tots has several toy drop-off locales where you can leave new, unwrapped toys at. Search by county to find a spot near you. You can also set up a collection near you yourself, host your own Toys of Tots event at home or volunteer at a nearby warehouse.

<https://www.toysfortots.org/>





TCA Christmas Pledge Contribution

Please pay the TCA Christmas pledge and the 2019 membership (\$60) through any of the following methods:

Quick Pay: You can add the email tamilcatholicsusa@gmail.com from BoFA, or Chase and Pay

PayPal: Payment using PayPal can be made to tamilcatholicsusa@gmail.com

Check: On the day of the Christmas event or other TCA events, you can pay with checks (Payable to “TCA of USA”).

Credit Cards: On the day of the Christmas event you can pay by credit card.



2019 Events

February 10th: Couple’s Mass

April 14th: Palm Sunday Mass

May 5th: Easter Celebration/ Tamil New Year Celebration Mass

June 15th: Blue Army Shrine Pilgrimage Mass

September 8th: Back to School Mass

October 13th: Gathering Mass

December 8th: Christmas Mass



For this issue:

Editor-Athalya Joseph


Contributors- Anusha Mathias, Avina Mathias, Rislyn
Feron Raja, Jenocent Edwardraj, & Angelin James

Are you interested in contributing to the TCA
newsletter or work in the editorial committee? Then

please contact Anton Fernando at

antonfernand@gmail.com or any of our TCA executive

members to join the team!



The History of Christmas Traditions

By Rislyn Feron Raja

What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear Christmas? Probably presents, snow, and decorating the Christmas tree. But, have you ever wondered how all of these traditions started? A common tradition during the holiday season is exchanging gifts. This comes from the Christmas story of Jesus' birth itself. The Three Wise Men came to give Jesus gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh. A popular treat during the holidays are candy canes. There are many different ideas as to why candy canes look the way they do. Some say that the "J" shape of the candy cane symbolizes the crook that the shepherds that came to see Jesus used. Others say that it represents the J in Jesus. According to whychristmas.com, "The white of the cane can represent the purity of Jesus Christ and the red stripes are for the blood he shed when he died on the cross. The peppermint flavor can represent the hyssop plant that was used for purifying in the Bible." And what about greetings we exchange for the holiday, why do we say Merry Christmas instead of Happy Christmas? The first time this phrase has been recorded was in 1534 and it may have been popularized due to other Christmas traditions. The first Christmas card, sent in 1843, included the phrase: "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you." Furthermore, a very famous Christmas story by Charles Dickens: A Christmas Carol, published the same year, included "Merry Christmas" a total of "21 times in the book". Maybe next time one of your friends brings up Christmas, you can tell them a little bit more about the history of their favorite traditions!



Christmas Day in the Roman Martyrology

By Anusha Mathias

The Roman Martyrology is a Catholic Encyclopedia, an official and accredited record of the history - glorious deeds of saints and martyrs in all ages of the Church. It's organized as a daily calendar. The following is recorded as a proclamation of the birth of Jesus Christ for Christmas Day:

The Twenty-Fifth of December

When ages beyond number had run their course
From the creation of the world,
When God in the beginning created heaven and earth,
And formed man in his own likeness;
When century upon century had passed
Since the Almighty had set his bow in the clouds
After the great flood,
As a sign of covenant and peace;
In the twenty-first century since Abraham, our father in faith,
Came out of Ur of the Chaldees;
In the thirteenth century since the People of Israel were led
By Moses in the Exodus from Egypt;
Around the thousandth year since David was appointed King;
In the sixty-fifth week of the prophesy of Daniel;
In the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;

In the year seven hundred and fifty-two
Since the foundation of the City of Rome;
In the forty-second year of the reign
Of Caesar Octavian Augustus,
The whole world being at peace,
JESUS CHRIST, eternal God and Son of the eternal
Father,
Desiring to consecrate the world by his most loving
presence,
Was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
And when nine months had passed since his
conception,
Was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judah,
And was made man:

*The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to
the flesh.*



Birthdays

Aaron John Edwin Raja	11/21
Adlin Savio	12/9
Agnel Bestus	12/15
Alastair Ryan Andrew	11/18
Allen Thevarajah	12/22
Amala Arogyaraj	11/21
Anantha Susairaj	11/27
Anish Rojar Vinoj	12/21
Anitha Bethusamy	12/8
Anitha JosephPushparaj	11/23
Anton Antony Arockiasamy	11/18
Anton Santha Vijayakumar	12/8
Antonica Rowona Rajan	11/28
Antony Sudharsan Gnanaraj	11/19
Arockiasamy Diraviam	12/9
Arokia Rajan Devaraj Sundaram	12/12
Arul Savarimuthu	11/15
Arun Joseph	11/24
Blessy Christa	11/23
Bridget Joseph	12/31
Catherine Juana Leo	11/4
Cecil Deepika Britto	11/22
Chris Gerald	12/20
Christian Mahipan	12/28
Deepak FrancisXavier	12/25
Dhayaa Raj	12/20
Duke Harrison	11/21
Esther Jayakumar	11/30
Ethan Lazer	12/27
James Rethinam	12/19
Jennifer Francis	11/12
Jennifer Gerald	11/9
Jenniston Francis	11/17
Jessica James	11/8
Joanna Jesudas	12/10
Jonathan Ligo	12/25
Jovitha James	12/13
Julianne	11/9
Kevin Arputharaj	11/10
Kevin Gerald	11/25
Kevin Joseph	12/6
Kingslee Rethinam	12/20
MaryPreetha Frank	12/28
Mathias Arokiaaraj	12/26
Melvin Joseph	12/4
Nancy Mathias	11/5

Birthdays

Nancy Poornam Francis	11/2
Naomy Ignatius	12/5
Nirmala Robert	11/16
Niteesh Thangaraj	12/13
Prakash Raj	12/13
Rev. Bala Belavendiram Rathinam	11/21
Rhea Princy	12/19
Rithvikka Prakash	11/2
Robert Navin	12/3
Roseline Joseph	12/12
Ruban	11/29
Ryan Pius	11/22
Saharika Sahay	11/15
Shahira Innocent	12/27
Sharvanand Thirunavukkarasu	11/6
Sheeba Abraham	12/14
Sherin Fernando	12/30
Shoba Davadasan	12/9
Shoba Devadhasan	12/9
Simpson Joseph	12/1
Siphina Peter	11/1
Stephen D Alex	11/28
Steve Charles	11/25
Thami	12/25
Thevaraj Pathinathan	12/4
Veniesha Majella Arockiasamy	11/9
Vijay Arockiasamy	12/8
Xavier Rajesh Vincent	12/4

Wedding Anniversaries

Anbu Benzigar & Jenis Anbu	12/27
Antony Sagayaraj & Immaculate Sagayaraj	11/30
Christian Mahipan & Tresa Mahipan	11/28
Francis Xavier Francis & Mary Grace Francis	12/30
Harriet Michael & Michael Manoj	11/29
Joseph Cruz Durai & Roseline Joseph	12/14
Kingslee Rethinam & Usha Maria Selvam	12/1
Lawrence Manickam & Janita	12/28
Maria Antony Pius & Femila Nayagam	12/28
Michael Karthik Antonyraj & Deepthi Baskar	12/27
Patrick Gabriel Pillai & Raji Gabriel Pillai	11/21
Raymonds Vijay Edmen & Jerine Arputha Peter	12/9
Robert Ligo / Thilagam Ligo	12/30
Terryne Edwardraj & Shahira Innocent	12/29
Thomas Amutharasu Mathias & Anita Jayasingh	
Mathias	11/3





Merry Christmas!

Kids Page by Avina Mathias



Advent	Angel
Baby	Camel
Candle	Gifts
Jesus	Joseph
Kings	Nativity
Manger	Star
Stable	Mary
Love	Holy

X	S	M	B	I	Y	L	V	Y	Y	J	U	H	O	L	Y	S	F
D	O	S	E	C	A	M	E	L	S	O	J	G	S	Z	S	T	G
J	V	T	T	Z	A	M	A	N	G	E	R	T	Y	F	J	A	I
O	B	A	H	Z	O	Y	S	C	T	Z	G	J	J	I	Q	B	F
S	D	R	L	N	A	T	I	V	I	T	Y	C	R	E	P	L	T
E	B	Y	E	Q	D	D	O	N	K	E	Y	I	A	I	S	E	S
P	A	J	H	J	Y	X	E	E	J	H	U	V	A	N	J	U	G
H	B	O	E	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S	N	M	D	L	S
O	Y	H	M	T	C	R	J	X	W	A	R	X	G	T	P	L	I
P	E	X	L	O	V	E	P	E	A	C	E	C	E	R	E	V	E
K	I	N	G	S	I	Y	F	Y	B	P	X	A	L	D	Y	L	P
D	H	P	J	Y	A	U	A	D	V	E	N	T	M	A	R	Y	Q

