

News and Views

Newsletter of the Divine Providence Province



Hope and Joy-Filled Easter People!

The resurrection of Jesus creates hope for our present and future existence. We see and recognize God present in each and every creation that has the capacity for complete transformation and fulfillment. We have a partial resurrection in each and every minute of our lives as we exist on earth: *child leaving the womb, the adolescent entering the adult life, the adult experiencing middle-age crises and finally the human person leaving this earthly life with his/her death, all these move towards a fuller life.* Are we living our lives with a hope of resurrection or minds filled with all the negative elements over self and others? Easter is a call for all of us to see the goodness of each other and avoid finding fault with others because of our disillusionment.

Resurrection is a missional event to enter into new ventures like that of the disciples of Jesus Christ. It is not an event of fear but the event of peace and joy. The very first word that Jesus uttered to the disciples was "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:21) or "Fear Not" because they were filled with fear. Our mission, hence, is not to create our own presence but be the presence of the Risen Christ that leads people, structures, systems and cultures. Be ever ready with an open mind and heart to become border crossing persons because the scenario we are living in is impelling us for missionary stations. Instead of saying something like the system is not good or the persons in authority are not very effective, let's strive to create an impact of the resurrected Jesus by giving hope to others amidst desolation.

In this hope and joy filled season of Easter, may I earnestly make an appeal to all for a personal experience and encounter with the living Christ as we are fast approaching the 20th General Chapter. Please be filled with the presence of the Resurrected Jesus by increasing our prayers and be spiritually united with the delegates of the chapter. May this Easter be an illumining experience of the Risen Christ the light of all nations to move beyond our bindings and borders to become intercultural persons filled with hope and courage to be Servants of Charity to the universe!

Fr. Soosai Rathinam

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“Peace be with You!”

Jn 20,21

April Calendar of Fr. Provincial

- 3-6 **Cuddalore:** Guanellian Charism School
- 7-28 **Italy:** 20th General Chapter - Barza D'Ispray
- 25 **Last Day to Submit Applications**
- May 5 **Return to India**

Marriage By Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC

Anytime the subject of marriage comes up in a conversation, the questions are always the same. Why is the Church so adamantly opposed to “gay marriages” and civil unions? Doesn’t the Church’s stance discriminate against homosexuals? What harm is done if homosexual activity is between consenting adults? How does it affect my marriage and family? Why does the Church care if in fact the Church won’t be required to witness such unions?



These are just some of the questions debated today over gay marriage and civil unions. For the sake of the record, there is no difference between the two: just different terminology for the same thing. It seems however, that some advocates use civil unions as a stepping stone to legitimize gay marriage.

As the debate continues, it’s really important that Catholics understand why this is such a critical moral issue and why the Church is involved. And we begin with a review of the Church’s fundamental teaching about marriage. As Catholics we believe that matrimony is a sacred institution, designed by God and raised to a level of a sacrament by Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly sets forth God’s plan for the human race: “God created man in His image, in the divine image He created him, male and female He created them. God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.’” (Gn 1,27-28).

The teaching of the Church explains: the intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by Him with its own proper laws. God Himself is the author of marriage.

The two divinely established purposes of marriage are obvious: to promote life and love and to be creative and unifying. “This life giving complementarity between the sexes is natural and normative. Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another.” (Catechism, #1604). A statement of the Pontifical Council for the family explains it this way: “We can also see

how incongruous the demand is to grant marital status to unions between persons of the same sex. It is opposed, first of all, by the objective impossibility of making the partnership fruitful through the transmission of life according to the plan inscribed by God... Marriage cannot be reduced to a condition similar to that of a homosexual relationship: this is contrary to common sense.” (#23).

The statement refers to “common sense and I think that’s important. When we learned about the birds and the bees, it was always male and female; it was always male and female birds and bees, wasn’t it? Some advocates of homosexuality point to the fact that there is evidence of homosexual behavior in the animal kingdom, and I suppose that’s true. But it always emerges as an exception to the norm.

Finally, even from a biological standpoint, the “facts of life” are obvious: man and woman are physically designated for union with each other. In short, from the evidence of the Bible, the teaching of the Church, common sense and biology, so called gay marriages and civil unions are contrary to God’s plan, morally objectionable, and an unacceptable substitute for marriage.



Visit of Guanellian Laity

BANGALORE - Guanellian Cooperators and Lay



Movement members of the Guanella Preethi Nivas community paid a Lenten visit to the GPN residents February 25th-26th. In the evening on the first day all made a pilgrim walk to St. Joseph's Church, Soosaipuram reciting the Rosary and visiting the mother Mary statue which came from Fatima, Portugal. On the next day, members were so dynamic in doing the mission for our residents: cutting nails, giving them showers, and cooking a variety of delicious food for our residents. At noon the Holy Eucharist was offered for the intentions of the residents and the GLM. The residents thoroughly enjoyed the meal. After lunch everyone gathered for an inspirational, motivational talk by Mr. Rosario, brother of Fr. Ligory, who shared an anecdote of his life.

On Mount Calvary

BANGALORE - Every year to meditate on the passion of Christ, the Guanella Preethi Nivas community 'climbs the mount.' A few of the residents and staff took part in the Calvary journey led by Frs. Nevis and Gabriel and Bro. Regent on March 2nd. As a Lenten preparation, parishioners from area villages gathered to take part in the passion of Jesus. The Sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy Mass were offered on 'Mt. Calvary' which is in the forest near Mudhiyanur. With the protection of forest guards they worshipped safely without disturbance by the wild animals. At the end, lunch was served by the parishioners in the forest.



Evening School Children go on a Picnic

CUDDALORE - March 11th was a great day for St. Joseph's Evening School, the children, teachers, staff and Fr. Arockia Raj went on an outing. The tour began with an amazing boat trip through the canals of Pichavaram Mangrove Forest. The second stop was at Poombuhar where everyone ate lunch and enjoyed taking photos at the sea. But the best part of the day was when they reached Tharangambadi beach: the children were so happy and joyful, playing in the waves and sand, collecting seashells, and running on the seashore.



When it came time to leave, it was really hard to get them out of the water. Everyone enjoyed the entire day, every place they visited and playing songs, singing and dancing during the travel. They arrived home that night, tired but happy to have spent a wonderful day out.

In Honor of St. Joseph

CHENNAI - March 19th is celebrated as Saint Joseph's Day. This year on this special occasion the Don Guanella Major Seminary community invited the Guanellian family to be nourished spiritually and physically. A special Mass was celebrated by superior



Fr. Samson along with all the community fathers and brought the blessings of the Lord amidst us. People who are sponsoring the seminarians were invited as special guests for the event. As a sign of gratitude, they were honored for their benevolence to our community and

given a memento for their generous contribution to our congregation. Everyone enjoyed a delicious meal and Fr. Samson concluded the day with a final blessing.

The World is a Book

CHENNAI - If the world is a book, those who do not travel read only one page. To assist the theology students to read more pages, the Don Guanella Major Seminary community organized an annual two-day tour. The journey departed from DGMS on March 20th with the prayer of Fr. Samson. The first day was joyfully spent in Valparai visiting many tourist places and Churches. Breezy wind and natural sceneries offered peaceful relaxation and mesmerized the travelers. The second day journey began from Valparai to Palkad. The confreres enjoyed the day, sharing their togetherness and happiness with all the community members.



Annual Day Closes the Year

CUDDALORE - On March 22nd, to conclude the academic year, Annual Day was celebrated with the Evening School Children in the auditorium of St. Joseph's Seminary. The celebration began with the welcome address given by the rector of the seminary, Fr. Assisi. Fr. Amal Raj, vice-rector of the seminary, was also present and Sr. Maria, Principal of St. Mary's Mat. High Secondary School was the chief guest. In her speech, Sr. Maria spoke



about the Evening School as a great opportunity for the children as well as for their families. She invited the children to make good use of it for a better future. One of the parents shared her feelings and her gratitude to the Institute and to St. Guanella for the precious service given to their children. Fr. Assisi distributed prizes for various the competitions: regular attendance, best student, best attitude. After the vote of thanks given by Fr. Arockia Raj, Annual Day concluded by sharing a delicious meal. The children were very happy. They made the celebration much more joyful with their cultural programs.

Spiritual Awakening - Desert Experience

BANGALORE - The seven novices of the Guanella Preethi Nivas community went on a ten-day desert experience under the guidance of Fr. Gnanaraj. They went to the Servarayan Hills, at Sagayapuram in the Thiruvannamali District. It is



a desolate mountain top with a substation church. They had a spiritual awakening by spending lot of time in prayer, meditation, discerning their vocation, speaking to God and journeying into one's own self. It was an atmosphere conducive to listening to the voice of God and to be enlightened to one's true self. After morning Eucharist and instruction all went into the forest, having no contact with anyone except God in solitude. Fr. Gnanaraj beautifully guided each novice to discern their vocation through fasting, prayer and spiritual direction. Everyone would return in the evening, share their experiences and collectively prepare dinner. They had inexplicable Tabor experiences on that mountain. On the way down the mountain, they visited the Cloister of Poor Clare nuns. Talking to those spiritual giants was awesome and enlightening for the novices at the threshold of their Religious profession.

Learning to Cook

CHELSEA - Every Thursday while the Day Program goes out to deliver Meals on Wheels, Kierra stays at SLC with 1 or 2 of the residents to cook lunch for the entire group. The residents are learning basic cooking skills as they prepare the food with Kierra's assistance.

This program began in January and so far the menu has included spaghetti with meatballs, chef salad, BLT sandwiches and chili dogs.

The residents really look forward to their time with Kierra. She thoughtfully prepares the menu, gathers the ingredients from the main kitchen and gently guides them through safe food handling procedures. It also helps that she plays soothing music to help create a calm atmosphere.

"I really like cooking hot dogs, and helping out in the kitchen," said Mike. Kierra enjoys cooking and is glad to teach the residents.



Wearin' O' the Green

CHELSEA - In honor of the patron saint of Ireland, St. Patrick, the residents of St. Louis Center were treated to an Irish feast fit for all lads and lasses on Wednesday, March 14th. The kitchen staff prepared shepherd's pie and some green treats. Stephen made the rounds as the leprechaun this year spreading a bit of gold to all of those eager for a treat.



St. Joseph Draws a Crowd

GRASS LAKE - The feast day of the Pious Union at the Shrine of St. Joseph in Grass Lake is March 19th, the Solemnity of Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary. It is an occasion that takes many weeks to prepare due to the great quantity of pilgrims that make their way to the shrine to venerate St. Joseph. This year the pilgrims began to arrive on Saturday, March 17th when the St. Joseph's Women's Guild and other Shrine volunteers welcomed

a total of 6 buses. On March 19th there were 4 buses of Chaldean pilgrims. These St. Joseph devotees lit candles, received individual blessings, and had quiet time in the Shrine for personal prayer. The weather was lovely and some were even able to spend time at the outdoor Grotto, Calvary and Stations of the Cross.



Sacred Triduum Begins

GRASS LAKE - On Holy Thursday all of the local Servants of Charity confreres joined the faithful in celebrating the Mass of the Last Supper at the Shrine of St. Joseph. Many local devotees of the Pious Union attended to witness the washing of the feet by the Shrine Director, Fr. Satheesh. One of the St. Louis Center residents was among the faithful taking part in this solemn tradition. At the end of Mass the congregation processed to the rear gathering space of the chapel for a period of Adoration in the 'Garden of Repose.' It was a moving way to begin the events of the Sacred Triduum.



April Calendar of Events

- 1 **Easter Sunday of the Resurrection**
- 8 **Divine Mercy Sunday**
Anniversary of the First Communion of St. Louis Guanella (1852)
Beginning of General Chapter
Chelsea: Mass for the Disabled - St. Mary Cathedral, Lansing
- 9 **Annunciation of the Lord (moved due to Holy Week)**
- 12 **Grass Lake:** Mother of Divine Providence Day-PUSJ
- 14-15 **Manila:** Vocation Seminar
- 19 **Grass Lake:** Monthly St. Joseph's Day - PUSJ
- 20 **Feast of Blessed Clare Bosatta**
- 21 **Anniversary of the Beatification of Blessed Clare Bosatta**
Chelsea: Vocational Retreat for Boys
Grass Lake: Prayer and Pizza Girls' Group
- 25 **St. Mark, Evangelist**
- 27 **Chelsea:** Randazzo Family Men's Social to Benefit SLC
- 29 **Chelsea:** Italian American Club Dinner Dance to Benefit SLC
- 30 **Feast of St. Joseph Cottolengo**

Best Wishes and Prayers to:

- 1 **Fr. Fortunato Turati, Fr. Badugu Christuraj, Bro. Anil Merugu, Bro. Johnson:** birthday; **Fr. Piero Lippoli:** ordination day
- 3 **Fr. Jerin:** birthday
- 6 **Fr. Francis Assisi:** birthday
- 8 **Fr. Britto:** birthday
- 10 **Nov. Carlos Nayak N.:** birthday
- 13 **Fr. Selvakani:** birthday
- 16 **Fr. Vincent M.:** birthday
- 20 **Fr. Gabriel G., Bro. S. Packiyaraj:** birthday
- 21 **Fr. Luigi De Giambattista, Fr. Silvio De Nard:** ordination day
- 24 **Fr. Antony Samy:** birthday
- 28 **Fr. Alfonso Crippa:** ordination day



PRAYER FOR THE XX GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE SERVANTS OF CHARITY

Lord Jesus, you have called us to come after you as Servants of Charity, send your Spirit to enlighten our minds, and to set on fire our hearts in preparation for the Twentieth General Chapter, (during the Twentieth General Chapter). Renew us in living joyfully your Gospel, and rekindle the Charism you have given us through our Founder, St. Louis Guanella. May this time of grace be for us an occasion of spiritual renewal. Strengthen our bond of charity that makes us open to appreciate the beauty of fraternal love, and to understand and treasure the different cultures into which our Congregation carries out its mission of charity. Grant us the courage to be in our world prophets of communion and servants of the poor that your mercy entrusts to our care. We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Divine Providence, and of our Holy Founder. Amen.

In February, the Pious Union of St. Joseph will begin sharing an email offering a Midweek Reflection. Reflections will be quotes from the Bible or by Saints offering you a moment of reflection in the midst of your week.

Interested in receiving the weekly reflection to your inbox? Please share your email address with Kelly Flaherty at kellyf@stlouiscenter.org.

Have questions or comments about this newsletter? Email the Communications and Community Relations Office at: kellyf@stlouiscenter.org