

**HOLY TRINITY PROVINCE
KARNATAKA, INDIA**

Saccidananda, Capuchin Provincialate, P.B.No.1060, Rajajinagar, Bangalore – 560 010

PC 06/07

K.101.11

Christmas Message

Christmas is a feast of great joy. It's a feast, celebrated universally, almost in all countries and almost by all peoples. The centre of this feast is the child born in a manger. This child, as we know, has transformed the world by giving a new set of values, a new message and a new vision of life. This child represents the 'meeting point' between the human and the divine, the earth and the heaven, the temporal and the eternity, the material and the spiritual. The child is fully 'human' as it is born in history, at a particular time, in a particular place and to a particular parents. But to the believer this child is a Saviour, the awaited Messiah, the Son of God. How and in what way this child represents the human and the divine? We know and we experience how difficult it is to be divine and to be spiritual. We constantly experience conflicts between the two and we need to struggle a lot to be good, to be just, to be loveable, to be patient and to be committed. The human in us and the sin in us is constantly making us experience conflicts after conflicts in our struggle to integrate the divine and the human.

The child in the manger is divine, because He is the one sent by the Father, the word become flesh. The divine one when entered the earth has to face the temporal, mundane realities. He received no welcome, no acceptance. He found no place to lay down his head. "No place in the inn" was the response received by his parents. They were pushed to the periphery, to the margins of the town of Bethlehem. They became 'homeless' and sought refuge in a manger, in a stable. Such a stable, the dwelling place of animals cannot be called a 'home'. But they transformed the manger, the stable, the cottage into a 'home' by entering into it and by making it their habitation. It became a 'home', a place where they could dwell. Later, when the child was born, the parents, Mary and Joseph, experienced the reality of a 'family'. The three together created really a 'holy family'. What is it that makes a dwelling, a 'home' and a togetherness, a 'family'? When do we experience homelessness? And when do we experience loneliness? Certainly, when we do not have a home and when we do not have a family. 'Home' is a place, where life blooms, where one feels that he is secure and cared for; and a 'family' is a reality where one feels accepted

and experiences a sense of belongingness. In a good family and in a good home there is love, friendship, concern, understanding, acceptance and a sense of security. Christmas is a feast during which we celebrate our experience of love, belongingness and joy. We affirm that the presence of Christ, the Immanuel, has bound us together in mutual acceptance and love. Through his presence he creates 'a home' for us and establishes the reality of a 'family', a 'fraternity' for us. Christmas is meaningful to us and we need to celebrate Christmas every year because we need to affirm these realities, lest we might give up our struggle and experience 'homelessness' and 'loneliness'. Celebration of his birth reminds each one of us that we need to become more and more 'human' so that 'divine' in us might shine forth. There are impulses in us which can 'dehumanise' us and therefore we need to struggle every day to make ourselves 'human', so that the spiritual in us can affirm against all sinful drives. This is the feast during which we affirm our faith, we affirm our hope and we affirm our love for our brother/sister and renew our ties of friendship and greet, wish, share our little gifts with them and strengthen our bonds of togetherness.

The celebration of the Christmas is an occasion for us to remember the millions of our brethren who are 'homeless' and millions in the world who feel at this moment 'lonely' and 'forsaken', who have no one to take care, who, as a result feel insecure and frightened. If we can become true representatives of the Child in the Manger, certainly we can radiate some rays of hope into their lives and create renewed self confidence in them. Finally, the meaning of Christmas is this: God, the divine one has taken our form by becoming fully human in order to make us divine. Now we need to affirm our humanity by becoming truly 'human', so that the divine in us may shine forth. Certainly it is a challenge, a constant striving and a struggle. It is a process of self emptying, self sacrifice and self giving, the realities that go to create a good fraternity, a true home and a genuine family spirit. Christmas therefore is a time to experience our bonds of unity, fraternity and friendship.

Dear Brothers, let me wish you all a very joyous and meaningful season of Christmas and a very fruitful and peaceful New Year 2008. May we all experience the presence of the Lord every day of the New Year.

- Vincent G. Furtado OFM Cap

Provincial Communications:

1. Christmas Message: Due to my accident I was handicapped for a week and I thank Br. Anil Sequeira for writing a message to the Fraternity. My Christmas Message is given above. Let me sincerely thank all brothers who prayed for my speedy recovery.

2. Inauguration of Shiggaon Mission: We announce the solemn inauguration of the Shiggaon Mission on 17th December 2007 by the Bishop of Belgaum, during which the new Church and the Presbytery were blessed. There is a small catholic presence of six families, a boys boarding and social service undertakings. Br. Pradeep Mangali and Scholastic Joseph Coelho are the pioneers who will develop the mission under the direction of the Bishop as our presence is only temporary there.

3. Promotions to the Ministry of Acolyte: The following have been promoted to the ministry of Acolyte at Darshan Institute of Theology, Bangalore. They are Brs. Stephen Claude Mascarenhas, John R., Prashanth Kumar, Cyril Anand Pereira, Francis Sunil D'Souza and William Prabhu from Karnataka, Brs. Gabriel P. M. Fernandes, Milchester P. Furtado and Fransquinho Gomes from the Vice Province of God and Brs. Sebastian Kinny, Robert Gonsalves, Thomas Fernandes, Ronald Bendogamar, Wilson Pegado, Brian Bandya and Victor Bandya from the Vice Province of Maharashtra.

4. North East Mission: The Brothers in the North East Mission have unanimously rejected the idea of a 'Custody'. Instead they have suggested having two Provincial Delegations one in Dimapur and Manipur and the other in Mizoram, Tripura and the Ecclesiastical Unit of Silchar. The CCMSI has endorsed the proposal. The Provincial Definitory has approved it and has decided to send a request to General Minister accordingly

4.1. The Provincial Definitory has decided to start a primary school in Choithar and a high school in Durtlang from next academic year.

5. Sri Lanka Mission: In Sri Lanka the request of the Provincial Delegation to start a house in Kurnegala has been approved by the Provincial Definitory. The Brothers will move there in June 2008. The place will be used later on for Post Novitiate formation.

6. New York: Br. Valerian D'Silva was in the Province for holidays and also to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of his Priesthood. We congratulate him for his fruitful priestly ministry and pray that silver might change into gold. As he returns to New York, we wish him many more years of very happy and meaningful stay there.

7. Assisi Press: The Provincial Definitory granted the request of the Administrative Board to further mechanize the press with the hope of better returns to the Province.

8. Regularization of Buildings (Akrama to sakrama procedure): The Karnataka Government has given its citizens an opportunity to regularize all irregular constructions throughout the state. I request all the superiors to verify the building documents like Conversion Order, License and the like of all the constructions within their jurisdiction and inform Br. Joarchim D'Souza, the Administrator if there is any piece of construction which is irregular - latest by January 31, 2008.

9. The commission appointed by the General Definitory for the redrafting of the

Constitutions has sent the fruits of its labour. A committee will be appointed in the Province to study it and send our response. The Commission members will be announced in the next circular.

10. Condolence: Our heart felt sympathies to Br. Stephen Rego who lost his beloved sister Mrs. Lucy Albuquerque on 28th September '07, to Brs. Lawrence Dilraj Sequeira and John Baptist Sequeira who lost their dear sister on 4th October '07, to Br. Anand Santmajor who lost his beloved brother on 2nd December '07 and to Br. Alban D'Souza who lost his loving brother Sylvester on 2nd December '07. We pray that God may grant eternal happiness to these our dear ones of our brothers.

Provincial's Programme:

December 2007

24 - 27 : Provincialate
28 a. m. : Meeting with the Bishop of Mysore
p. m. : Maria Kripa Ashram Madikeri
29 - 30 : Provincialate
31 : Darshan College: Ph. D examination meeting

January: 2008

01 - 05 : Provincialate
06 - 12 : Ashirvanam: Academic work of M.A. Theology
13 p. m. : Bala Yesu Nivas: Chikmagalur
14 a.m. : Meeting with the Bishop of Chikmagalur
15 - 18 : Provincialate
19 - 26 : Rome: Meeting of the new Provincials in San Lorenzo
27 - 31 : Dubai – Abu Dhabi

February 2008

01 - 03 : Muscat
04 : Mumbai
05 - 07 : Provincialate
08 - 09 : Def. Meeting in Clara Vihar, Pothnal.
10 : PEC meeting: Saccidananda.
11 - 12 : Provincialate
13 - 14 : Pastoral Visitation: Christalaya, Chikkodi
15 : Provincialate
16 (9.00 a.m.): Meeting: Capuchin Education Board at Saccidananda
17 - 22 : Pastoral Visitation, Darshan Institute of Theology

Br. Vincent G. Furtado OFM Cap
Provincial Minister

Place: Bangalore - 10

Date: December 24, 2007