

*Our Lady Of Lourdes Parish, Orlem*

# Reaching Out



*February 2026*

## RENEWED IN SPIRIT

THROUGH PRAYER,  
FASTING & ALMSGIVING





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**Reaching Out Theme  
For April 2026**

**The Emmaus Experience.  
"Do Our Hearts Still Burn?"**

Encountering Christ in a distracted, noisy world. Where do we still allow Jesus to speak to us - Scripture, Silence, Community, the Eucharist ?

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Please send your articles / reports as attached word.doc files and good resolution photographs as jpeg files to [reachingout.orlem@gmail.com](mailto:reachingout.orlem@gmail.com) by 20<sup>th</sup> of next month. Kindly mention your Community and Sector number or the Cell / Association you are reporting for.

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A Newsletter of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Orlem

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### PARISH INFORMATION

#### MASS TIMINGS

**Weekdays:** 6.00 am, 6.45 am, 5.30 pm & 7.00 pm  
**Saturday:** 5.30 pm & 7.00 pm  
**Sunday:** 6.00 am, 7.00 am (Konkani),  
 8.00 am, 9.15 am (Tamil),  
 10.30 am (Children),  
 4.00 pm (Tamil Children),  
 5.15 pm, 6.30 pm (Youth) & 7.30 pm

#### BAPTISM

**Every Sunday at 11.30 am**

Expectant parents are requested to complete the pre-baptismal course and produce the certificate while fixing the date for the baptism.

#### MARRIAGE

Couples intending to marry in our church have to meet any priest at least six months in advance, to check the availability of the church as well as to be briefed on marriage procedures.

Timings for Masses are as follows:

**Weekdays:** 10.30 am & 4.00 pm  
**Sunday:** 10.30 am & 5.15 pm

#### OFFICE TIMINGS

**Monday to Friday:** 9.30 am to 12.30 pm  
 & 4.30 pm to 7.30 pm

**Saturday:** 9.30 am to 12.30 pm  
 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm

**Telephone:** +919920144967

#### CONFESSIONS

Every Saturday at 5.00 pm - 5.30 pm & 6.30 pm - 7.00 pm  
 Dialogue confession is encouraged with prior appointment.

#### FUNERAL

**Weekdays:** 10.30 am & 5.30 pm  
 (By exception 4.00 pm)  
**Sundays:** 12.00 noon

## Beyond the Ashes: A Season of Spiritual Renewal

Fr Clinton Rayar



The liturgical year begins with Advent but liturgical living begins with Lent. Ash Wednesday, while not a holy day of obligation, sees the third-highest Mass attendance of the year, behind only Christmas and Easter. Lent is a period of preparation of our hearts and minds where we participate in the sufferings of Christ endured for our salvation. Lent is not a time to try to punish ourselves into being deserving of God's grace; rather, it is a time to grow closer to God by adopting new habits that lead us toward him and abandoning behaviours that divert our attention away from him.

The Church encourages us to focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Fasting is not only beneficial to one's health and beauty, but it can also provide freedom and joy. According to scripture, the city walls were destroyed when the people of Israel were taken captive by the Babylonians. Nehemiah cried out to the Lord in prayer and fasting, encouraging the people to build the walls of Jerusalem. We fast not just from the outside, but also to strengthen our spiritual walls of faith in God. Therefore, fasting from food, selfishness, or sin is one approach to activate our faith.

Fasting from food enables us to hear God's Word (Mt 4:4). Fasting from malicious speech helps us to understand others (Is 58:9). So, fasting makes us free from sins and captivities and free for God so that we can save goods and money and help our needy brothers and sisters.

Prayer, on the other hand, is more familiar to us; nevertheless, where does prayer come from? Is it an expression or articulation of words? According to Scripture, the heart prays. The heart is God's dwelling place, where He lives. As a result, we must set aside a certain time for prayer, when we are aware and focused as the psalmist in Psalm 92:1-2 speaks of praying in the morning. Make sure you are in a distraction-free environment as Mathew 6:6 speaks of praying in secret.

As Pope Paul VI in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* said, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." Almsgiving is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity where we come to aid of our neighbour in spiritual and bodily necessities. Almsgiving as a corporal works of mercy is a sign of solidarity. Works of mercy includes visiting the sick, assisting in someone's education or extending material need to less privileged.

Finally, Lent is not a time to punish oneself. It is a time to perfect oneself, with the help of grace

## Love Gave Our Lady a Thousand names

Bishop Agnelo Gracias - Archdiocese of Bombay

Our Catholic Faith starts with God's love revealed to us in and through Christ. "In many and various ways God spoke of old by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb.1:1). We believe that Jesus is God's final word to us. That's why we are Christians.

Faith is our commitment to God through Christ in the community of the Church. Our faith is not 'I-God', but 'We-God'. We commit ourselves to God with our brothers and sisters, beginning with the Apostles.

In this Catholic community, Mary has always had a special place beginning from Apostolic times, as we see in the Gospels. We regard her as the 'Mother' given to the Church by Jesus on the cross, (John 19:26). The Church down the ages, generation to generation has cherished this gift expressed in a great love and devotion to Mary. We have received this gift from our parents and we hope to hand it on to our children.

Down the ages, we have expressed our devotion to Mary through different "Titles" or names - 'Queen of Peace', 'Our Lady of Lourdes' etc. "Love gave her a thousand names", as a poet once said. That is but natural - a mother will call her child with different affectionate names. A person in love will call the beloved by different names.

When it comes to the Faith professed by the community, we must ensure that these Titles

are in harmony with the rest of our Faith. A Title of Mary should not in any way clash with the core of our Christian Faith. That is what in a special way is the role of the teaching authority, the Magisterium.

That is what has happened when on November 4, 2025, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (the competent body to safeguard the integrity of our Faith) issued an instruction, *Mater Populi Fidelis*. approved by Pope Leo. It pointed out that two Marian titles, MARY, MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACES and calling Mary CO-REDEMPTRIX are ambiguous and liable to misunderstanding,

The instruction stresses that Devotion to Mary must always highlight the central role that Christ has in our salvation. 1 Tim 2:6 affirms: "There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all." The Letter to the Hebrews 12:24 describes Jesus as "the mediator of the new covenant". We can all be mediators for each other in the sense that we can pray for and obtain God's grace for each other, but it is always within the mediator-ship of Jesus who remains the one Mediator of us all. So also, we can be 'co-redeemers', helping ourselves and others to avail of the redemption wrought by the only Redeemer, Jesus.

Hence, these two titles of Mary are right if properly understood.

## Lent – A Journey of Spiritual Renewal

Melville X. D'Souza



**It's that time of the year when we recall the passion of Jesus who came to save a world filled with sin.** The Last supper, his arrest, the scourging, the painful walk to Calvary, the beating, the jeers, ending up with the crucifixion on the Cross all comes into focus during the period of Lent.

As in previous years, we would once again go through the motions so to say, following Lenten practices like fasting, abstinence, penance, being good to people, etc., etc. Also, praying a little more than usual, attending retreats or recollection, Stations of the Cross, the Three hours Agony service, making confessions, doing charity, etc. And we feel good, satisfied, having dwelt on the passion of Jesus. **Let's ask ourselves however, do we feel renewed at the end of it all? What is the impact, has any transformation happened from within?**

Over the years, did anything touch you deep inside you? After going through the Stations of the Cross – for instance, did you feel the pain of others in your family, in your neighborhood, in society – those subject to harassment, beatings, character assassination, the jeers they face everyday? Did you feel like helping someone carry his load? Did you offer water to a weary passerby? Did you ever help somebody who has fallen on the street or even help someone cross the road? Did the talks at the retreats stir your hearts? Did it bring about some change in your behaviour, your thought process, your attitude, your perception? **If nothing has changed over the years, then perhaps our Lenten journey has been a wasted journey, a waste of time, effort and energy.**

From the cross, Jesus is once again calling for a renewal of our lives, he is calling for a transformation. **The most striking transformation took place right there on the cross when one of the thieves crucified along with Jesus, acknowledged his wrong doings and asked Jesus for forgiveness and Jesus in his magnanimity, promised him salvation that very moment.** Where do we stand? It is only when that sort of transformation takes place, shall we be in a position to experience the joys of Easter. **Yes Jesus' Resurrection brings new hope for mankind. Are we willing, are we worthy of experiencing Jesus' Resurrection?**

## A Lenten Journey with Jesus, the only true Superstar!

Sonia Rodrigues - JBC S2

### THREE PILLARS OF LENT



We often see superstars, celebrities and public figures rise quickly to admiration, only to be ‘unfollowed’ when their choices disappoint or their image fades. This constant cycle reminds us how fragile and short-lived worldly fame, power, and success are. Scripture gently warns us, ‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy. (Mt 6:19). Despite knowing this, many of us shape our lives around imperfect role models, only to feel disillusioned when they fail us.

Lent invites us to reflect on this tendency and to ask whether we are placing our hope in what passes away, or in the One who never changes.

There is only one Superstar who never disappoints—Jesus. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He keeps every promise He makes. Unlike worldly icons who feel distant and inaccessible, Jesus welcomes us unconditionally. No appointments. No filters. Nothing can separate us from His love. He gave His very life so that we may live in grace now and in glory forever. His story doesn’t end at the cross; it triumphs in the Resurrection.

As Lent begins, Jesus sends us a personal invitation—to come, see, and experience Him. Accepting this invitation leads to deep inner transformation through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

**Through prayer,** we receive a daily dose of mercy and love by meditating on God’s Word and speaking to Him heart-to-heart. Prayer builds intimacy and slowly reshapes our hearts.

**Through fasting,** we empty ourselves of negative habits, unhealthy attachments, and selfish tendencies. By abstaining and exercising self-control, we make room for God to renew us from within.

**Through almsgiving,** love overflows. What we receive from God cannot stay contained. We are moved to share, to serve, and to become living witnesses of His compassion.

This Lent, let’s unfollow what drains us and unsubscribe from what pulls us away from God. Instead, let’s choose faith, follow Christ, and allow prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to renew us in spirit—leading to lasting transformation and a life rooted in love and grace.

## The Three Spiritual Acts to Whole-some Living Prayer, Fasting & Almsgiving

Arlene Alves - JBC Sector-1

Prayer, Fasting & Almsgiving are the 3 spiritual acts during Lent which Late Pope Francis said, are the key to Lenten transformation, focusing from moving from self-centeredness to serving others, not for show but to open hearts to God's mercy. Lent is a privilege time for prayer, a time where one can rediscover the direction of life towards God and others.

Matthew 6: 1-18 Fasting should be done not only from abstinence of food but

from negative habits, harsh words, anger and should be replaced with positive

actions. Jesus' fasting teaches a spiritual practice to humble oneself, control desires, recognize God's gift and open our hearts towards the poor. It strengthens the spirit against sin.

Prayer and fasting draw us to Jesus, seeking healing of body, mind and soul. We

pray that we be healed of our illnesses, and expel demons of despair and may our lives be transformed and empowered to carry Jesus's light to the weary world. We have many Saints who carried out the mission of Christian faith by examples of their own lives of Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving.

Fasting and Almsgiving are two wings of prayer. Saint Paul says "fasting brings the soul to an undistracted frame of worship and

prayer." In the Bible some of the people like Moses, Daniel, Elijah, Esther, David, Anna and Paul fasted and prayed as they wanted to draw closer to God, repent, gain victory over temptation and showed their dependence on God.

Some of the ways of praying are vocal, meditative and contemplative. Late Pope Francis said "We need daily pray time, dedicated to God, so He can enter into our time. We need to open our hearts to Him so that He can daily pour out his love on us and nourish our faith. We must pray with perseverance and intercession for one another."

Faith is hearing the word of God, reflecting on it, believing in it, proclaiming it and acting on the word of God.

Mathew 6:3 "But when you give to the poor and needy and do acts of kindness

don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." Almsgiving is a spiritual practice that builds compassion, strengthen faith and fosters community. Instead of self-interest we become self-giving and more caring

towards the less fortunate. As Christians we must strive to act on the three key words Prayer, Fasting & Almsgiving to live a good spiritual life.

## Lent – A Time for Renewal

Olga Pereira, JBC C3S1



We are on the threshold of a New Liturgical Season of Lent, a time to retrospect and introspect. A time to tune our hearts, mind and body, to experience a spiritual encounter through Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. A time to come back to God.

The path of Salvation begins with prayer, Jesus Himself being a model for our prayer life spending long hours in prayer. He also taught us how to pray i.e., The Our Father. He instructs us that when we want to pray, we must go into our room, shut the door and pray to God Our Abba Father. Personal prayer is of priority and will help us sustain our spiritual lives, transform us and strengthen us to reach out in service to others. Community prayer and family prayer are powerful tools and this will fortify us and give us God's spirit of Grace and Love.

Fasting is another pillar of the Lenten season. We need to fast from luxuries, from craving for more material assets. We must cultivate a caring attitude towards our environment. We need to fast from gossiping and rumour

mongering. Fasting and praying are ways that will enrich our spiritual life to experience God's presence. Just as the prophet Anna who was fasting and praying at the temple recognized Jesus as a child and gave thanks.

Almsgiving is one of the practices of Lenten season to use our resources, talents, finance for the less fortunate brethren. There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up. Almsgiving is not just doling out food and money to those in need but also to help them fight for their rights, providing job opportunities, etc. This Lenten season we should make it our priority to seek out those who are truly in need, help them without expectation. Concrete action and humble service will go a long way.

Let us this Lenten season come back to God our Abba Father for He is kind and full of mercy and ever forgiving.

### PEST TREAT

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## United in Christ!

Melville X. D'Souza - (IRD member)

On 22 January, a Christian Unity Prayer Service was conducted by the Interreligious Dialogue Cell (IRD), reflecting on the theme **“One Faith, One Baptism”**, emphasizing unity in Christ, shared hope, and the call to peace. Churches present joined in common prayer, witnessing to oneness amid diverse denominations, as encouraged by various Christian unity resources.

Pastors and priests from different churches were invited; Evangelists Lutheran Church – Pastor Sasi Paul;

St. Thomas Syrian Church – Fr. Sanjeev K. Varghese & Fr. Jerin John; St. Peter’s Jacobite Church – Fr. Jacob Kocheril Cor-Episcoppa;

Harvest of Grace Church – Pastor Nigel Pereira alongwith Fr. Ronny Vaz, Spiritual Director of the IRD Cell.

United in Love, and with the Lamp in the forefront we recited the Nicene Creed which serves as a foundational statement of faith and a unifying declaration of shared doctrine on God's nature and salvation. The lamp was then lit by the Pastor and Priests as the choir sang “Bind Us Together.”

The Scripture reading (Ephesians 4:4–8) was followed by a short homily by Fr. Jerin John from St. Thomas Orthodox Church. He reflected that though many present, were strangers to one another, they had gathered on a common platform because “Christ unites them”. Despite differences in practices and traditions, he emphasized that Christians

remain “One in Christ”, a truth clearly expressed in the Nicene Creed. He concluded by invoking God’s blessings upon all present.

The choir then led the hymn “Yeshu Masih Tere Jaisa” followed by the “Prayer of the Faithful”, offering intentions for the Holy Father and other needs of the Church and society.

The prayer service concluded with the closing prayer by Fr. Ronny Vaz, followed by the hymn “We Are Happy Christians.”

In his reflection, Fr. Ronny echoed Fr. Jerin’s thoughts, describing Christians as pilgrims and strangers journeying toward Christ. Referring to Jesus’ words about the many rooms in the Father’s house, he reminded the gathering that all are privileged to have a place and a purpose. Drawing from his experiences in mission stations, he noted that unity is often lived more deeply there than in cities. In the present context, he urged everyone to remain hopeful and to place complete trust in “Christ Jesus”. He thanked all participants and expressed his willingness to attend similar ecumenical services organized by other churches.

Following the prayer service was a group discussion, dividing participants into three groups. Two questions were explored: how to handle disagreements and how to build bridges with people holding different views. The discussion was engaging and fruitful, with meaningful contributions from all groups. A **young participant** confidently presented his group’s reflections, making the

session inspiring and hopeful. The interaction left everyone with a clear take-home message: to come together more often

and actively participate in shared programs with one another's churches to build bridges with people/churches.



## SSVP Annual Adopted Families meet

Michelle Pinto - SSVP Member

SSVP's adopted families, looked forward to January 18, 2026 as it was their Annual Family Day. The Orlem unit of the SSVP has 52 families which are adopted - given medical, ration or educational aid. The attendance was a near 100%. The morning began with a prayer followed by games for children and adults. The children's excitement to participate in the games was a sight to behold! But the enthusiasm amongst the adults to play the games was no less. Five children who excelled in the studies were awarded cash rewards. One adopted family youth gave her testimony of how SSVP helped her all throughout and she is now doing her MBA. Fr Aniceto Pereira and Fr David graced the occasion and encouraged the families with their words of wisdom and blessing. Each adopted family received gifts

– a mat, towel, bedsheet and a blanket. All SSVP Members were present and enjoyed organizing this programme for the families, serving and having lunch with them. The event was mostly sponsored by the SVP Members with some contribution coming in from a few benefactors.



## Advent Recollection for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)

Francis Fernandes

This year, we held the Advent Recollection for EMHC with a strong participation of 50 members conducted by Fr. Michael D’Cunha on 6th Dec 2025. Our reflection focused on the biblical life of Ruth—a widow and outsider—whose story reminds us that though we are sinners and imperfect, God calls and qualifies us to serve His people. The core reflection was: even though we feel unworthy, how can we still serve the Lord and His people? Ruth’s story echoes this: despite being a Moabite married for ten years without children, God protected her and made her the grandmother of King David, from whose lineage the Messiah came. A key highlight was Ruth’s covenantal declaration to Naomi: “Wherever you go, I will go; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God”, embodies a deep spiritual commitment and a covenant relationship.

### Learnings from the Book of Ruth:

**1. Moving to Bethlehem as a Foreigner:** In ancient times, widows and orphans were marginalized with no rights. Similarly, in our ministry, we may often feel like nobodies, but God calls us nonetheless. Like Ruth, we must pray daily, **“Wherever you lead me, Lord, I will go; your people are my people, and you will be my God.”**

**2. The Importance of Bethlehem:** Bethlehem means “House of Bread” – a place

of sustenance and growth. God feeds His people here and desires a special relationship with us through the Eucharist. As EMHC, when we carry the Bread of Life to the sick, we do not merely distribute Communion as a formality but bring God and the community into their lives. This transformative ministry connects the community to the individual in a supernatural way. We become the “House of Bread.” Through the Eucharist, venial sins are cleansed, and we bring spiritual nourishment. Our calling is not to exalt ourselves but to humble ourselves. When we empty ourselves like Mary, the handmaid of the Lord, God’s presence fills us. We are earthen vessels carrying a priceless treasure—the presence of Christ. Though we are foreigners, God makes us His own.

**3. Bread of Life Discourse – John 6 :** Jesus’ feeding of the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish is recounted in all four Gospels, emphasizing the ministry of both priests and EMHC. The 12 baskets collected afterward symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel, signifying abundance for all. The Tabernacle is the eternal bread, nourishing all who come to it.

**4. Daily Faithfulness and Transformation :** Jesus declares, “I am the bread of life” (John 6). Peter’s confession, “You have the words of eternal life,” reminds us that dealing with the Eucharist means handling the source of eternal life. We are united to this Bread of Life

and called to daily faithfulness. St. Augustine exhorts us, “Behold who you are; you are the body of Christ. Become what you receive.” Before administering Communion, we must strive to become Christ in the world, imitating His humility as described in Philippians 2

**5. Application in Our Ministry:** Our ministry is not merely about physical sustenance but about spiritual transformation and deepening our relationship with God. When we empty ourselves and are obedient, we share in the divine life and mystery of the Trinity. By receiving and sharing Holy Communion, we enter perfect communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We also bring the community to those who cannot attend Mass, embodying Christ’s presence to them.

#### **6. Practical Suggestions for EMHC:**

- Cultivate Eucharistic adoration to recognize your identity as the body of Christ.

- Meditate on Scripture passages related to bread (John 6, and the Last Supper in Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and internalize them.

- Prepare spiritually before every ministry by attending Mass and participating fully.

- Practice the presence of Christ when visiting the sick; recognize you are encountering Jesus Himself.

- Support and build a strong, prayerful, and caring community among EMHC, being a shoulder to each other.

As Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, we are called to embody Christ in the world by emptying ourselves—embracing humility, obedience, and faithfulness—so that God may grow within us and work through us.

## **Philip Gonsalves Reaches 90: A Joyful Milestone**

Francis Fernandes – C4S8

Our beloved neighbor, Philip Gonsalves, formerly of Suman Apartments, marked his 90th birthday. We, the animators of Nivedita Community, were delighted to visit him at the Borivali aged home where he now resides. We personally delivered warm wishes from our building and Nivedita Community families for this special milestone.

We joined his family for a joyful cake-cutting celebration. Philip was thrilled to see us, and the visit became a beautiful time of fellowship



as we greeted his roommates with a Christ-filled "Happy Christmas and New Year."

We thank God for the gift of Philip and pray for His continued blessings upon him.

## The Bombay Catholic Sabha - Orlem Unit

Lloyd Mascarenhas, Chairman

The Bombay Catholic Sabha, Orlem Unit, has been actively engaged in various social, civic, and community-oriented initiatives during the past three months.

**Membership Drive:** Enrolled **384 new BCS members** between August–December 2025, a significant achievement across the Mumbai Diocese.

**Senior Citizen Support:** Assisted **300 members** in registering for the Government Senior Citizen Card.

**Voters' Registration Drive:** Facilitated **430 registration**, including new entries, corrections, and updates.

**Special Children Christmas Celebration:** Organised a Christmas party for **Nihar School's special children** at the Community Hall, with parents, teachers, and Managing

Committee members in attendance. Gifts and refreshments were distributed.

**BCS Crib Competition:** Conducted individual and group crib competitions on the theme **Waste to Creation**, with **11 individual and 7 group entries**.

**Awareness Programme:** Hosted a **“Freedom from Fraud”** session in association with **HDFC Bank**, attended by approximately **50 members**.

**Upcoming Programmes:** Eye Check-up Camp and additional awareness sessions for parishioners.



## Celebrating the 77th Republic Day – IRD Cell, Orlem

Mrs. Candice Collasco - IRD Cell Member

Ephesians 4:2-3... “With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

On the occasion of the 77th Republic Day, the IRD Cell of Orlem organised a Panel Discussion on the theme “True Freedom Stands on Unity, Respect, and Harmony” at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of St. Anne’s School.

The panel comprised eminent speakers representing diverse faith traditions:

1. Sr. Neerja, a Brahma Kumari, Rajyoga teacher and Centre Coordinator
2. Dr. Jalindar Adsule, a Buddhist, former Principal of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar College of Social Work, Dhule, and former Senior Faculty member at Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work
3. Mr. Madhav Singh, representing the Sikh community, an active member involved in various community and social initiatives
4. Mr. Nisar Ali, representing Islam, a journalist associated with Sakal, Pudhari, Tarun Bharat, Navarashtra, and news channels such as Maharashtra 1, Nikhil Wagle and TV9. An active member of Rashtra Seva Dal since 1989.
5. Mr. Kiran Sawant, representing the Hindu community, President of the Mumbai National Atrocities Prevention Force,

member of Bharat Mukti Morcha and a social activist since 2017

6. Fr. Aniceto Pereira representing the Catholic community, Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Orlem and a mentor known for his creative pastoral initiatives and collaborative journey with the laity.

The programme began with the National Anthem followed by a warm welcome and introduction of the speakers by Mrs. Veena. Each panellist shared how their respective traditions teach, believe in, and practice the values of unity, mutual respect, and harmonious coexistence.

A strong common message emerged: True freedom can only be experienced where unity, respect, and harmony prevail. The speakers emphasized that value formation must begin at the grassroots level—within families—where children are nurtured in respect for diversity. India’s diversity, it was reiterated, is not a weakness but her greatest strength and defining identity.

Several moving instances were shared of people risking their lives to protect those from other communities during turbulent times. The speakers highlighted that the Constitution of India is our greatest asset and protector—clearly defining rights, duties, and administrative boundaries—and must be safeguarded vigilantly. In a world increasingly tempted by majoritarian monocultural autocracy, India must continue

to stand as a beacon of a just, inclusive, and democratic nation.

The panel stressed that education, awareness, vigilance, and concrete action are essential and achievable only when people remain united, respect one another's uniqueness, and strive together for harmonious coexistence. Honouring the "Constitution" and the visionaries who gifted India a Sovereign, Democratic Republic is vital for the nation's continued progress and pride.

The programme concluded with the felicitation of the speakers by Mr. Alexio Fernandes and Mrs. Aditi Chakrabarty

followed by refreshments.

This initiative was a deliberate and meaningful effort by the IRD Cell under the guidance of Fr. Ronny Vaz to live out the teachings of Jesus. As Fr. Aniceto Pereira reminded the gathering, Jesus practised unity and respect for all—irrespective of gender, status, or community—and we are called to do the same.

Mr. Inacio D'Souza proposed the Vote of Thanks and the programme concluded with a powerful reminder by Mr. Alexio Fernandes echoing Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's call: "Educate, Agitate, Organise."

## Employment Cell – An Initiative by Prayatna



The Employment Cell, an initiative of Prayatna, aims to help job seekers and employers connect in a simple manner. It provides a space where individuals looking for employment and employers seeking suitable candidates can share their details and explore opportunities together.

This initiative is meant to offer practical assistance to those navigating job searches and recruitment needs. By bringing job seekers and employers onto a common platform, the Employment Cell helps facilitate conversations and connections that may lead to suitable employment opportunities.

Members of the parish are encouraged to make use of this initiative—whether you are seeking a job, or are an employer or recruiter willing to share opportunities.

The Employment Cell is open every **Wednesday from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Prayatna Office**, and welcomes both job seekers and employers.

**To participate, please register on the links below:**

- **For Job Seekers (Employees):** <https://forms.gle/qdNVrHJV2gLbM7BJ6>
- **For Employers / Recruiters:** <https://forms.gle/jLsXiQtxkJ9TaJp46>

**For more details, contact the Employment Cell on WhatsApp: 8591440249**

## Evershine picnics together !

Merlyn Concessio, C7S3

The Evershine Nagar (Community 7) Parish Councilors took on the challenge of bringing residents together at a time when redevelopment projects and shifting neighbourhoods have reduced everyday community interactions – and they truly delivered.

With a group of 60 people of all ages, on Saturday the 24th Jan, we set off to JENEVA farms at Manori.

The fresh air and wide-open spaces with pools and even though the rooms provided were so cozy, everyone was kept occupied and entertained by the various games organised by our energetic Pcs

After a hearty breakfast, the pool beckoned, and many happily headed in for a swim. This was followed by mid-afternoon hot snacks, bringing everyone together again before more games and peppy music filled the space with energy and laughter.

After a sumptuous lunch buffet, we all were charged up for everyone's fav, a good game of Housie. The evening ended after tea and snacks and many good memories and lots of photographs.

While we missed those who couldn't make it, we applauded the efforts put in by our dear PCs of Evershine Nagar who brought all of us together in such a meaningful and joyful way.



## St. Andrew's Sector – Feast Mass

Christabelle Dsouza – Sector 7 Comm.7

The Season of Advent was joyfully ushered in with the celebration of our Feast Mass on Saturday, 29th November 2025. The Eucharist was celebrated by Fr. Ronny, who shared a beautiful and inspiring message to help us prepare our hearts for the Advent season. Clarisse led the congregation in singing Christmas carols, adding to the spirit of joy and devotion. The celebration concluded with dinner and a time of warm fellowship shared by all.



## Celebrating Family!

Melville X. D'Souza, C1S6

The Holy Family community of Baudi continued the spirit of Christmas when they celebrated their sector feast of the Holy Family on 7 January.

Fr. Harry, in his own inimitable style celebrated the Eucharist with good insights and good humour. In his introduction, he mentioned that we are in the season of Christmastide and after the feast of the Epiphany we celebrate the oneness and closeness with Christ.

In his thought provoking homily Fr. Harry explained that whenever the Gospels report a miracle they are not just describing the event but the significance of that event for our lives. Relating to real life, he says in the family,

whenever we face difficulties, struggles and frustrations we need to understand that God is with us, no matter what. We also need to reach out to those who have lost a loved one and feeling lost and alone.

Fr. Harry's humour continued when the Parish Councillor, Inacio while thanking him, recalled one of his earlier sermons when he spoke about a cat sleeping on the chair at the Altar while he was celebrating Mass.

It was heartwarming to see Fr. Harry personally greet each and every member of the community.

Refreshments, games & a simple delicious dinner wrapped up the celebrations.



## An Afternoon of Christmas Joy

Vinisha Tauro, PC C7S6

Evershine Nagar's Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Sector, (Community 7, Sector 6) came together for a joyful Christmas gathering filled with fun, music, and festive cheer. Everyone was welcomed with Santa hats and reindeer antlers, instantly setting the tone for a warm and cheerful afternoon.

At the heart of the celebration was the true spirit of Christmas – a spirit of unity, fellowship, and shared joy. From the youngest child to the most senior member of the community, everyone found a place, a smile, and a sense of belonging. Laughter echoed across generations, conversations flowed easily, and for a few meaningful hours,

the gathering reflected the beauty of coming together not just as neighbours, but as one extended parish family.

The celebration began with a light-hearted icebreaker cup game, followed by a lively round of musical chairs for the children. Couples then took part in a fun back-to-back question game that brought smiles, laughter, and plenty of friendly banter. Each guest also received a small souvenir to remember the day. The afternoon concluded with a hearty lunch, shared together as one community. It was a simple yet meaningful celebration that reflected the true spirit of Christmas – joy, togetherness, and gratitude.



### Services Rendered

Passport – New/Reissue/Changes  
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 Canada / NZ/ Australia & many more  
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 Surrender of Indian Passport, Indian Visas, OCI Card,  
 Affidavits  
 Pancard – New/Reissue  
 Shares – IEPF, Lost Shares, Unclaimed Dividends etc  
 Electric Meter & Gas Meter Name Change  
 Gazette – Name Change

Michael – 8850688112 | Jacintha – 9757167298

### Jonathan Pinto

Civil Engineer, BTech  
 Lic. No: 84005003



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## Republic Day Celebration – A Beautiful Expression of Inclusion

Preeti Kokkatt, C4S4

Our Sector, Mother Teresa Community, led by Jacinta Fernandes, marked Republic Day with a celebration that truly reflected the spirit of unity, dignity, and inclusion. The day became even more special as we welcomed children and teachers from Armaan, the vocational unit of our parish that empowers children and youth with special needs, to hoist the national flag.

Armaan works with individuals aged 14 years and above, helping them discover and develop vocational skills through activities designed to bring out each child's strengths. Equal importance is given to nurturing talents, and students are encouraged to express themselves confidently—especially through singing and creative activities.

We were delighted to host Robin, Paul, Austin Chetty, Austin D'Souza, Yoel, Alitta, Joshua, and Stacy from Armaan, accompanied by their dedicated teachers, Nisha and Clavina.

The celebration began with a warm welcome speech, followed by the pledge and the hoisting of the national flag by the children. As the tricolour fluttered proudly, everyone

joined together in singing the national anthem. Nisha then shared insights about Armaan's mission and how continued support and patronage can help the unit grow and touch more lives.

The cultural segment that followed was the highlight of the morning. The children from Armaan filled the space with energy and happiness as they performed lively dances. Some students also came forward to sing, confidently showcasing their talents. Their enthusiasm was contagious, and the audience responded with constant applause and encouragement.

The event concluded with snacks and tea, giving everyone time to interact and celebrate together. The smiles, claps, and shared moments of joy made the day truly unforgettable.

This Republic Day celebration was more than a program—it was a living picture of inclusion, where every individual is valued, celebrated, and given the opportunity to shine. It reminded us that when we come together with open hearts, we not only celebrate our nation but also the unique gifts within each person.





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## Winners of the Nativity Bible Quiz

<p><b>Community 1 Baudi</b>                  Abigail Azavedo                  Debra Fernandes                  Philomina Mani                  Carol D'Souza                  Maureen Lily                  Diana D'Souza                  Opehila D'Souza</p> <p><b>Community 2 SBLG</b>                  Elizabeth Saldanha                  Francis Soares                  Schneider D'Souza                  Sheldon Lobo                  Helen D'Souza</p>	<p><b>Community 3 JBC</b>                  Arlene Alves                  Sonia Rodrigues                  Simran Gond                  Chriselle Dsouza</p> <p><b>Community 4 Tank</b>                  Valerie Fletcher                  Philomena Pinto                  Brian, James &amp; Shaun                  Gertrude Maria                  Madhwani                  Benezia Menezes                  Silvia D'souza                  Sherwin Clement                  Freda Fernandes                  Cheryl Ann Dabreo                  Leena Rozario</p>	<p><b>Community 5 Lourdes</b>                  Agatha &amp; Aelred Abreo                  Mariana Coelho                  Jennifer Mendonsa                  Philomena Ferrao                  Sydelle Rodricks                  Thereza Dsouza                  Cynthia Pereira</p> <p><b>Comm 6 Mith Chowki</b>                  Meldon Furtado                  Raphael Fernandes                  Gwynette Lucia Gonsalves                  Brendon Fernandes</p> <p><b>Comm 7 Evershine</b>                  Joseph D'Souza                  Anthony Dmello</p>
<p>October Issue - Bible Quiz on Mission. Ms Philomena Pinto and Ms Monica Fernandes from Tank and Evershine Communities respectively, were missed out. We regret the error.</p>		

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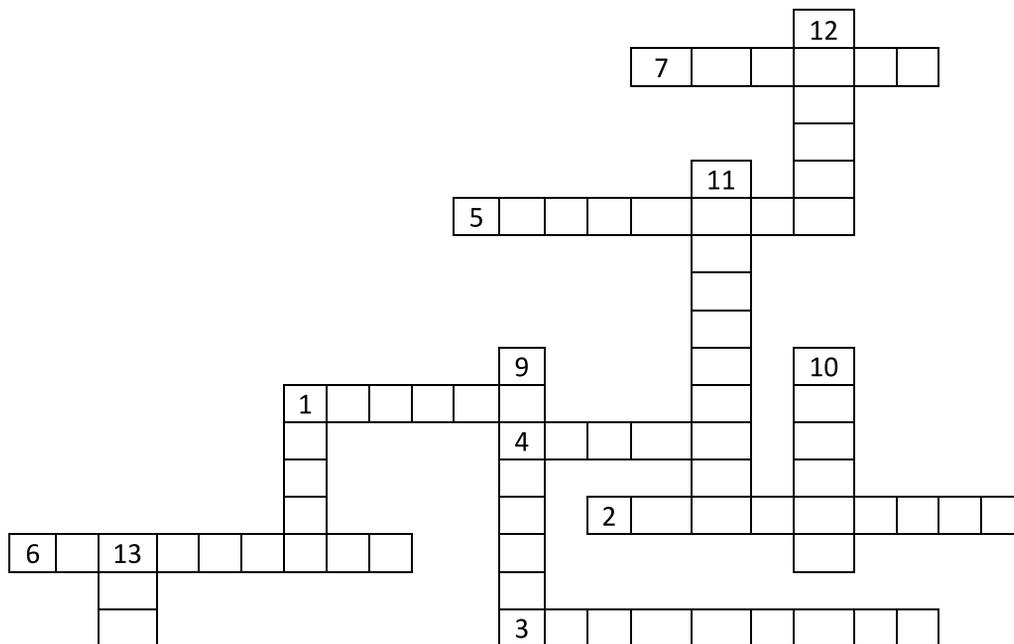
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## Quiz - Proverbs from the Bible's Book of Proverbs.

Read the proverbs and find the correct word. Send your replies to reachingout.orlem@gmail.com, with your name, Community and Sector number



### From the Book of Proverbs

#### ACROSS

1. "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Prov15:1
2. "To answer before listening—that is folly and shame." Prov 18:13
3. "Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends." – Prov 17:9
4. "Those who are kind benefit themselves, but the cruel bring ruin on themselves." Prov 11:17
5. "Whoever fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for their children, it will be a refuge." Prov 14:26
6. "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid." Prov 12:1
7. "Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end, you will be counted among the wise." Prov 19:20

#### DOWN

8. (1 down) "Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity." Prov 21:23
9. "The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Prov 12:18
10. "Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs." Prov 10:12
11. "Better a small serving of vegetables with love than a fattened calf with hatred." Prov 15:17
12. "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." Prov 22:1
13. "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." Prov 22:6

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