



Pallotti Notes

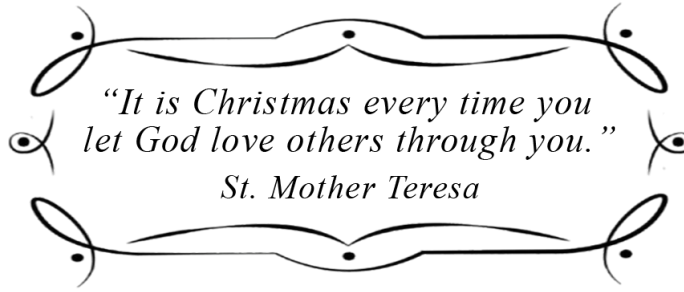
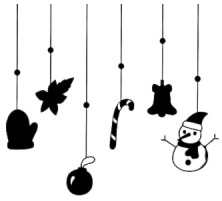
"Vinal family of God moving towards a society where love and concern within the family and the neighbourhood is a way of life."



Bells Baubles and Blessings



DECEMBER 2025



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Pallotti Notes | December 2025

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BELLS, BAUBLES, BLESSINGS

Hey! Christmas is here again. How are you feeling as the season draws near? What Christmas traditions does your family cherish? Family traditions help us remember special moments and bring together people from different generations.

This edition of Pallotti Notes is based on the theme “*Bells, Baubles, and Blessings*”, where bells announce joyful news, baubles celebrate the beauty of our traditions and decorations, and blessings remind us of the grace and goodness we share during the Christmas season. When you think of a “Christmas tradition,” do you imagine special dinners, making Christmas sweets, singing carols, or having a family gift exchange? Maybe you think of your funny neighbour who dresses up as Santa every year, complete with a fake beard.

Every year, our family takes part in what we call a “Christmas Ceremony.” We review the story of Christ’s birth and His sacrifice. Even though the ceremony is the same every year, we always learn something new. This tradition brings a wonderful experience into our home, helping us come together as a family. You’ll see Christmas decorations everywhere, and they’re a big part of celebrating the birth of Christ. But have you ever thought about how some of these traditional decorations can help us connect with the true spirit of the season? If we look at them the right way, they can remind us of Jesus Christ, just as Christians have done for centuries.

- **Crib:** This represents the Nativity scene, where baby Jesus was born.
- **Stars, Lights, and Candles:** The star stands for the Star of Bethlehem, and lights

and candles symbolize joy, hope, and the memory of the star that guided the wise men.

- **Tree, Poinsettia, and Holly:** These are evergreen symbols of life and renewal. Holly’s red berries especially represent the blood of Christ.
- **Wreath:** The circular shape represents eternity and everlasting life.
- **Bells:** They symbolize celebration and are often used to announce special events, such as the birth of Jesus.
- **Candy Canes:** These festive decorations and treats look like a shepherd’s crook, reminding Christians that Jesus is the shepherd who guides His followers.
- **Gifts:** Gifts are important during the season, symbolizing the gifts the Magi gave to Jesus and the spirit of giving.

This tradition helps us understand that Christmas isn’t about the presents we receive; it’s about Christ, His birth, and everything He has done for us. Christmas is a time to slow down from the rush of the year, take a breath, reconnect, and appreciate the simple things: shared meals, familiar carols, and the comfort of loved ones around us. It’s about being a blessing in other people’s lives by sharing joy and happiness through the sound of bells.

This Christmas, may you hear joyful bells, cherish sparkling baubles, and receive overflowing blessings. We wish you all three in abundance.

Fr. Andrew Roshan Alva
Editor



CHRISTMAS: WALKING FORWARD AS PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Christmas is always a season of light, but this year it holds a special meaning for us as we conclude the Jubilee Year with which the universal Church marked the 2025th birth anniversary of Jesus Christ. The theme *Pilgrims of Hope* guided us through the past year, encouraging us to walk with courage, trust, and perseverance. Though the Jubilee Year formally closes, our journey as pilgrims does not end. Hope is not a season; it is a way of life.

The recent Synod of the Church has also reminded us of the need to root ourselves deeply in our faith. Our Archdiocese will focus on faith formation in the coming year, and at the parish level we will journey together through the **Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)** and Scripture - the solid foundation of our faith. You will notice that our parish calendar this year highlights the four pillars of the CCC: Creed, Sacraments, Morality, and Prayer. These are not just doctrines; they are the pillars that support a meaningful Christian life.

During Advent, we reflected each week on Watch, Prepare, Rejoice, and Emmanuel - God with Us. And now, at Christmas, we celebrate the heart of our faith: *God truly is with us*. Yet this is the very truth we question in moments of pain, loss, or confusion. When storms shake our hearts, we wonder, "Is God really Emmanuel for me?" Our faith may drift in these moments, however, if we hold on to our faith, Christmas becomes even more meaningful, reminding us that God truly is with us.

The birth of Jesus teaches us that God did not come to offer us comfort, but courage. He did not promise us a life without burdens, but a cross carried with love. Jesus Himself

says, "*If anyone wants to be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me*" (Mt 16:24). Real love costs something. It is never cheap grace. It involves pain, misunderstanding, rejection, and sacrifice. But love is more than a feeling - it is a choice to remain faithful, to unite ourselves with Christ, no matter what the cost.

All of us carry problems - some small, some heavy. We may not know the weight others carry, so our own troubles often feel the largest. But God knows. God sees. And God never gives us a burden without giving us the grace to bear it. As St. Paul reminds us, "*My grace is sufficient for you*" (2 Cor 12:9). This is the hope we are called to live: trusting that Emmanuel walks with us through every shadow.

This is the gift of Christmas - Christ taking our human nature, sharing our struggles, and filling our darkness with His light. As we continue our journey as pilgrims of hope, may the newborn Saviour strengthen our faith, deepen our love, and fill our hearts with peace.

Wishing you and your families a blessed Christmas. May Emmanuel - God with us remain your hope, your strength, and your joy.

Fr. Victor Martis, SAC
Parish Priest



HOLY LAND: HOPE THAT TRANSCENDS WAR

Christmas is a celebration of the fulfilment of God's promise. For those who were hoping for God's promise of Salvation, Christmas is a fulfilment of that HOPE. Hope is kept alive with the coming of Jesus in human form. The whole world was hoping for a Messiah who would offer true freedom and in Christ, that promise is fulfilled.

God chose Bethlehem to kindle the hope of humanity. As the Bible tells us "*And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.*" (NRSV; Mt: 2:6). Out of all the great cities of that time, God chose the humble village of Bethlehem to become the symbol of Hope in His promise.

But what about today's scenario? If we are aware of the geopolitical environment of Israel and Palestine, we might wonder if there is any HOPE at all for people to experience peace. There has been so much war, violence and unrest with news of missiles flying across Israel and Gaza. We hear of soldiers being killed on both the sides and civilians living in fear of what awaits them. People hope to return to their normal lives where they need not fear missiles landing in their homes; a day when they can just breathe in peace and work to support their families. Businesses have been impacted and are hoping to reopen. With the uncertainty around the area of Holy Land, tourism was abandoned and even the churches became empty of the faithful from all over the world. It became increasingly difficult to maintain these holy places. Yet, they never lost hope that one day things would improve. They kept praying even when everything suggested

otherwise. Their Hope was never in vain.

After a long period of war, when the ceasefire was declared, the faithful from all over the world began visiting the Holy Land again. I, too, had the privilege of visiting the Holy Land in October 2025. As the ceasefire is in place, things have started to improve. The Holy Land is welcoming many pilgrims who were waiting to visit for the first time in their lives. One shopkeeper narrated to me how his shop had to remain closed for almost two years, completely affecting not only his family but also the workers' families who depended on his business for sustenance.

Just as the coming of Jesus in human flesh kindled the hope of salvation for the entire world, the people in the Holy Land pray earnestly that the war, which has temporarily stopped, will end completely and peace will return between Palestine and Israel. The strong hope for a better future, where there is no more war and violence, is still alive in their hearts. While the governments remain skeptical about peace, the people have never run out of hope.

May this Christmas bring good tidings of peace and joy not only to us but also to those living amid the war zones. Let us together extend our prayerful support for all those working toward peace in the Holy Land. May the HOPE for a peaceful Holy Land come alive this Christmas.

Wishing you all a Hope-filled Christmas

Fr. Balraj, SAC

Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion

- **9 Nov** – 21 eucharistic ministers visited Shantighar, Mahakali as part of their social outreach initiative.

Inter Religious Dialogue Cell (IRDC)

- **21 Sep** – 100 participants attended the World Day of Peace prayer service and the program that followed.
- **28 Sep** - IRDC celebrated their 8th Anniversary, and the celebration was attended by 18 members.
- **4 Oct** – 10 members attended the IRDC Jubilee celebration at St. Andrew’s Auditorium, Bandra, which had about 700 attendees overall.
- **20 Oct** – Celebrated Diwali with a special liturgy on the theme ‘Christ, the Light of the World.’ The church entrance was decorated with a rangoli, and all members wore traditional attire to commemorate the occasion.
- **Upcoming**
 - **21 Dec** - Will be involved in organising and attending the Archdiocesan Interreligious celebration of Christmas for people of all faiths, at Holy Name Cathedral, Colaba.

Senior Citizens

- **15 Sep** - 86 senior citizens visited the Our Lady of Mount Basilica, Bandra for a special Mass celebrated by Bishop Dominic Savio.
- **11 Oct** – Organised a Thanksgiving Liturgy and celebration on World Elders Day in the St. Vincent Pallotti Hall. 146 senior citizens attended the event.
- **8 Nov** – Organised a picnic at Manori which was attended by 70 senior citizens.
- **Upcoming**
 - **27 Dec** - Christmas celebration for senior citizens to be organized by the Altar Servers.

Choir

- **19 Oct** – Organised rosary for choir members coordinated in blue and white. The prayerful evening was attended by 26 members.

Society of St. Vincent De Paul (SSVP)

- **28 Sept** – Celebrated the feast of St. Vincent de Paul with the adopted families with a Thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration, followed by games and lunch. A total of 105 participants attended the function.
- **5 Oct** - Organized a Blood Donation Drive for Holy Spirit Hospital Blood Bank and conducted sessions on First Aid & BLS Workshop (Dr. Chetan Bijwal), Strong Joints, Better Life Ahead (Dr. Yash Desai, Rheumatologist), and Diabetes & Weight Management (Leane Fernandes Dias, Dietician) which was attended by 55 participants.

- **12 Oct** – Organised an outreach programme to Christ the King Church, Rasayani with the offerings received during the Novenas. 83 grocery kits were distributed to Adivasi families and parishioners of Christ the King Church, Rasayani. A total of 18 members participated in this initiative.
- **16 Nov** – 45 doctors and nurses of our parish were felicitated at their residences on Doctors’ and Nurses’ Day.
- **19 Nov** - Visited St. Michael’s Church, Mahim to assist at the Sneha Bhojan Service Centre on the World Day of the Poor. The members helped in serving meals to the poor and supporting their ongoing outreach efforts.
- **Upcoming**
 - **23 Dec** – Distribution of Christmas Hampers to the Adopted Families and our Church helpers.
 - **29 Dec** - Outreach programme to distribute food (lunch packs) to the poor and needy.

Sunday School

- **08 Sep** - Organized the liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Girl Child Day.
- **21 Sep** - In commemoration of the Jubilee Year, organized a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Velankanni Shrine, Uttan. It included a session by Fr. Balraj on the importance of the Jubilee year and the Jubilee Cross followed by the Eucharist. A total of 100 students across all classes took part in the pilgrimage.
- **28 Sep** - 11 children participated in the Deanery Psalm Festival hosted by our parish. It was attended by 5 other parishes within the Andheri East deanery.
- **18-19 Oct** - The Confirmation Retreat was held at Atmashodh, Vasai Diocesan. Fr. Robin Dias conducted the retreat for 35 candidates. Archbishop Emeritus Felix Machado catechized the candidates on the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- **16 Nov** – Re-opened for the second term and organized tele-games for children from Std 1 to 10 to celebrate Children’s Day. 191 students participated in the games.
- **23 Nov** - Organized praise and worship for the children to mark the Feast of Christ the King.
- **30 Nov** - Organized a Drawing competition for the students of Std 7 & 8.
- **30 Nov** - Organized a Creative Camp for the communicants and their parents.
- **Upcoming**
 - **21 Dec** - Psalm Recitation Competition for students of Std 4 to 6 and Fancy-Dress Competition for students of Std 1 to 3 as part of the Jubilee Year celebration.
 - **21 Dec** - Farewell for the students of Std 10 with games and lunch.

Creative Team

- **27 Sep** - Organised a picnic to HD Beach Resort, Palghar.
- **Upcoming**
 - Church Christmas Décor including Backdrop inside the Church and the stage on the church grounds.

When the first chill of December touches the air and twinkling lights begin to adorn our homes, one sound rises above the rest – the ringing of Christmas bells. Their joyous chime calls our hearts to attention, reminding us that something beautiful is near. These bells are more than decoration or tradition; they are a divine echo, an announcement of Good News, a musical invitation to rejoice.

In every Christian celebration, the bell has carried meaning far beyond its sound. It rings to gather the faithful, to proclaim peace, and to remind us that *Emmanuel*, God is with us. During Christmas, its peal is a proclamation that hope has been born anew in a humble manger. The bell's music becomes our shared heartbeat, binding our community together in joy, reflection, and faith.

As the Vinpal Choir, we see ourselves as living bells, voices tuned not merely by melody but by love and devotion. Each carol we sing is a call to celebration, a message of joy sent from our hearts to every listener. Whether it is the solemn grace of *Silent Night* or the exuberant Joy to the World, our carols carry the same spirit as the bell: to announce the arrival of Christ's light into a waiting world.

Christmas is a time when our church comes alive with music. The choir loft becomes a space of prayerful harmony – not just of notes, but of souls united in worship. Each rehearsal, each hymn, each moment of song reminds us that our voices are instruments through which God continues to spread His message of peace and goodwill.

This year's theme, "Bells, Baubles, and

Blessings," calls us to reflect on the symbols of the season – the shimmer of the bauble, the warmth of blessings, and the pure ring of the bell. Of these, the bell resounds most in our calling. It tells us to keep ringing – through song, through service, through joy. It tells us to be bearers of Good News in a world that often forgets to listen for it. As we approach Christmas and the New Year, may the Vinpal Family continue to ring loud and true - every heart that sings. May our carols echo through homes and hearts, spreading the same message that first rang over Bethlehem: *Peace on earth, goodwill to all.*

From our choir to every member of the congregation, we wish you a Christmas filled with melody, meaning, and the unending blessing of joyful sound.

Ring the bells, lift your voices, and let His song never cease!

Richard Ambrose
Vinpal Choir





THE GUIDING BELLS OF TRUTH AND WISDOM

Like the bells of Christmas that ring out joy and hope, we in the Senior Citizens Association fill our parish with a melody of faith, wisdom, and cheer. Our joyful presence is an inspiration to all. Our collective witness testifies to a life well-lived in faith, proving that the later years can be the “*very best years.*”. We serve as a living, breathing testament to the truth that life’s meaning is not diminished by age, but is in fact, deepened by it. Our bright, joyful and high-spirited faces play an active role in stimulating fraternity and reminding everyone of God’s enduring love; a powerful vision of what it means to finish the race with grace.

Drawing on a lifetime of faith and experience, we create a warm, welcoming atmosphere that spreads joy to our peers and the entire parish throughout the year. This ministry of joyful presence provides both social connection and a deep sense of purpose that benefits all seniors of the Parish. The aim and mission of the Senior Citizens Association is to engage with our fellowmen and encourage them to actively participate in various programs with courtesy, love, and dignity, thereby promoting positive aging. Throughout the year, we organize activities that strengthen faith and foster camaraderie: pilgrimages to Our Lady of Mount Basilica, World Elders Day celebrations, adorations, picnics, and more. We pray together and we play together, ensuring that while we grow in faith, we also have fun along the way.

The joy experienced by us elders resonate deeply with the spirit of Christmas - the joy, the serenity and happiness observed in us are the natural culmination of a life lived in the light of Christ’s message. This joy is not

merely an annual sentiment but an enduring spiritual reality.

Today, we stand as living bells of history and resilience, echoing wisdom and carrying the libraries of our shared human experience. It’s true that this age can bring moments of solitude. Yet, like bells ringing in harmony, we understand each other and stand together. We may be alone, but we are never lonely; with the joy of Christ resounding within us.

Jerome Martis

Senior Citizens Association



Festivals are experienced as different dimensions of human life and also as occasions for dialogue. The word ‘*festival*’ is derived from the Latin term *festum*, meaning celebrations. Now, here comes the significance of baubles.

The very thought of baubles brings to mind Christmas trees, decorated halls, and glittering shop windows. Bright, colorful, and varied in shape, they create a joyous atmosphere. Yet baubles are not modern creations. In ancient times, they served as charms to ward off evil spirits or as symbols of wealth and power. Over the centuries, they have evolved into emblems of festivity, beauty, and tradition, reminders of craftsmanship and the enduring spirit of celebration.

More than mere decorations, baubles represent the continuity of traditions, linking the past with the present. Though commonly associated with Christmas, they appear in many Indian festivals as symbols of good luck, prosperity, and happiness. The intricate craftsmanship of Indian baubles reflects cultural motifs and spiritual meanings, expressions of both artistry and faith. Their widespread use across communities also bridges social divides, showing that beauty and celebration belong to everyone.

In our association with people of other faiths, baubles symbolize a tangible expression of shared values and traditions. During Diwali, decorative items include *torans*, *lanterns*, *diyas*, and *urlis*. Sikhs focus on symbols like *Ik Onkar* or a simple flower-and-light décor for Gurburab. Muslims employ Islamic motifs such as crescent moons, stars, and scented candles. For Vesak, bamboo-paper lanterns, joss sticks, small Buddha statues, and the Buddhist flag are displayed in homes and streets. Just like Catholic churches and homes are decorated with baubles

during Christmas, followers of other faiths use their own symbols to express joy, reverence, and hope.

This spirit of unity is embodied in the Inter-Religious Dialogue Cell (IRDC) of our parish. Every year, its members celebrate Diwali and Christmas together with people of other faiths. The external preparations, like adorning a Christmas tree or hanging a toran, become signs of internal harmony. The multi-faith Christmas celebration, organized by the Inter-Religious Dialogue Commission of the Archdiocese of Bombay and supported by Cardinal Oswald Gracias, has become a cherished tradition. Inviting members of the *Sarvadharm Sadbhavana Manch* to our church for a get-together has strengthened friendships, broken social barriers, and fostered mutual respect. In these moments, a simple bauble turns into a symbol of collective joy.

Through such efforts, the IRDC weaves a beautiful fabric of togetherness. Like a huge, shining bauble reflecting many colors, it mirrors the light of unity within our community. As Christmas approaches, these small, glittering ornaments remind us that beauty can hold deep meaning, warding off darkness and signaling hope.

May the baubles we hang, whether glass ornaments on a tree or any decorative symbols of faith, represent our shared desire for peace and happiness. As we celebrate Christ’s birth, let these shared traditions inspire continued bridge-building. Let the “beautiful bauble” of unity shine brightly, embracing our parish and neighborhood in the light of joy, peace, love, and togetherness in the new year.

Melissa Nair
IRDC



BEING THE PRESENT THIS CHRISTMAS

How fun would it be to dress up in an outfit made entirely of sparkling gift wrap, finished off with a big, shiny bow? Sounds like a blast! But that's not the kind of *present* I'm talking about.

As children, we looked forward to Christmas - the gifts, the sweets, the new outfits, the parties, and so much more. But imagine having all of that without your loved ones there to share it with. The love and excitement parents put into wrapping those gifts, only for them to sit untouched beneath the tree, without seeing their children's faces light up. The food prepared with care, yet no one there to enjoy it. Is that what this season is about?

Christmas isn't just about receiving, it's about giving - giving time, showing love and grace, and most of all, cherishing the people you get to share it with.

Even Jesus was surrounded by love in His earliest moments - in a humble stable, in the presence of His parents and the gentle animals around Him. That simple, quiet scene reminds us that love and togetherness are what make any place holy and any moment meaningful.

Throughout His life, Jesus engaged deeply with those before Him - listening, healing, and connecting, never distracted by crowds or concerns beyond the person right in front of Him. It was His way of showing love — because everyone deserved His time.

As Matthew 6:34 reminds us: "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Let us live in that same spirit this Christmas — present, loving, and grateful

for the gift of now. Being present isn't just about where our body is; it's about where our attention is. We should learn to be present; not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually. Stay away from constant distractions like our wandering minds, our phones, the internet and stop making excuses for ourselves.

The joy of being present for those who miss it is a blessing we often don't realize we need. Creating memories for those who long for love, laughter and warmth reminds us how easily we forget those around us. This Christmas, take a moment to visit an old-age home, an orphanage, or even a lonely neighbour. Spend a few meaningful minutes sharing, listening, and simply being there. Because more often than not, time is the greatest gift we can give.

Cherish those goofy memories, the silly disagreements, and the playful moments shared between family members. Treasure the little things — helping your child glue on that tiny flower on the card, unboxing the decoration boxes, hanging up ornaments, helping with the sweets, lending a hand with the never-ending cleaning, or simply sitting beside your grandparents while they tell you stories of their time. It's these beautiful memories that keep us going for generations to come.

The gift of being present is worth more than the presents we may receive. This Christmas let's choose presence over presents. Because it's in these small acts that the true magic of Christmas, and family, really shines.

Stefanie Dsilva
Zone – Christ the King



EMBRACING GOD'S GIFT: THE BLESSING OF ADOPTION

We, Patricia and James Trinidad, feel incredibly blessed to have Natasha as our daughter. Adopted from Mother Teresa Orphanage in Delhi when she was just 2.5 years old, she has grown into a remarkable young woman who brings immense joy and pride to our lives.

Our journey to parenthood wasn't easy. After facing challenges in conceiving due to gynecological complications, adoption became a beautiful and grace-filled option for us. The story of St. Joseph adopting Jesus resonated deeply with us, showing that God often enters our lives when we are at our most vulnerable. This example gave us the strength to move forward with adoption, embracing the joys and challenges that came with it. We believe adoption is a way of participating in God's plan of salvation – a powerful expression of love, acceptance, and commitment. It's a reminder that we're all children of God, adopted into his family through Jesus' sacrifice. We focused on the love and commitment that adoption brought, rather than the biological aspect.

From a young age, Natasha has shown maturity beyond her years. Her intelligence, compassion, and kindness are evident in everything she does. Her academic competence is matched only by her passion for spirituality and service. Her involvement in church activities – Sunday school, youth programs, and even playing the keyboard during prayer meetings – is a testament to her strong faith and dedication.

Natasha's artistic side shines through in her beautiful service to the church. She takes the old and discarded statues left outside the chapel, washes them, repaints them, and gives them new life. This reflects her heart for

service and her hands-on approach to faith. The finished products are given as a gift to the priests or laity, spreading joy and devotion to all who see them. Looks like God's artistry runs in the family – Natasha has her mother's untiring feet and my creativity! Adoption is indeed a masterpiece.

Natasha takes great joy in participating in church festivities. Her enthusiasm is infectious, and she brings so much joy to those around her. Natasha's presence has added a new dimension to our family celebrations. We cherish the special traditions we've built over the years especially during Christmas – decorating the Christmas tree, singing carols, and sharing meals together. These moments remind us how blessed we are to experience life with her.

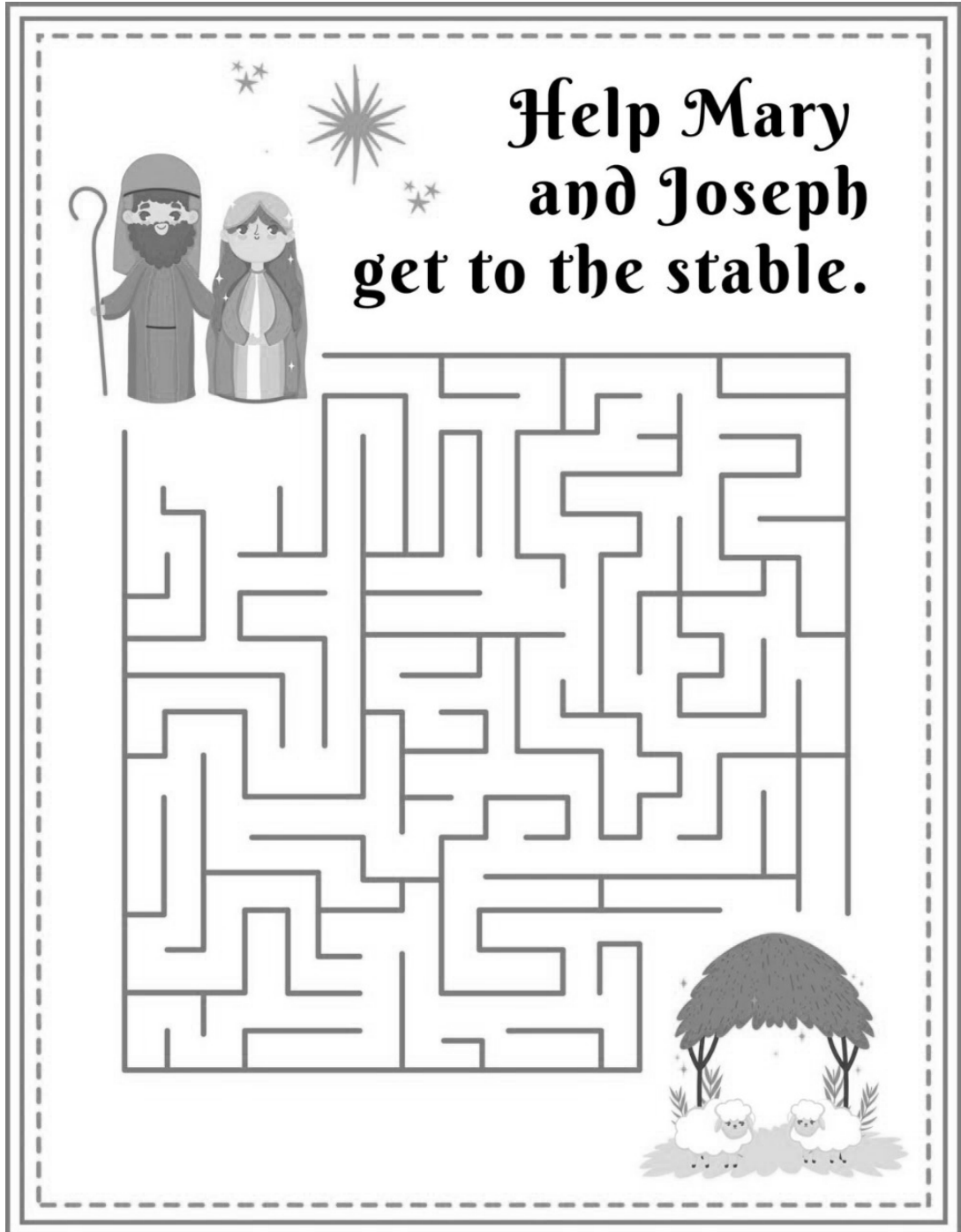
As parents, it's been a privilege to watch Natasha grow and evolve into the person she is today. We've instilled in her the love for Lord Jesus and the values of compassion, empathy, and kindness. We're thrilled to see her carry these values forward, not just in our home, but also in the broader community. Her service reflects her beautiful heart, and we're so proud of the positive impact she's making.

Natasha's presence in our lives has brought a sense of purpose and fulfillment we never thought possible. She's a reminder that family is not just about blood ties, but about the love and commitment we share with one another. As we look back on the years, we're filled with gratitude for the day we decided to adopt Natasha. As Natasha completes 14.5 years of being part of our family, she continues to bring us joy and fulfillment. Watching her blossom into a remarkable person is an honor, and we eagerly look forward to seeing her achieve

great things. We love her more than words can express, and we're honored to be her parents. She's been a blessing in every sense of the

word, enriching our lives in ways we never imagined.

Patricia and James Trinidad
Zone - St. Paul





A SACRED BLESSING FOR OUR PARISH

“If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to God.” – Romans 14:8

With hearts full of gratitude, our parish rejoices in the blessing of the **Pallotti Church Trust Christian Cemetery at Prajapur, Aarey, Andheri (East), Mumbai** - a long-awaited dream now fulfilled by the grace of God and the perseverance shown over many years.

From the early days of our parish, carved out of St. John the Evangelist Church in 1981, we continued to make use of their cemetery. However, as St. Vincent Pallotti Parish grew rapidly, the need for our own burial ground became increasingly urgent. For Catholics, a cemetery is not merely a place of burial; it is a sacred ground of dignity, remembrance, and belief in the resurrection. We honour the mortal bodies of our loved ones, for they are temples of the Holy Spirit, destined to rise again in glory.

The pandemic years especially deepened our longing. With St. John’s cemetery unable to accommodate further burials during COVID-19, we were forced to take our deceased parishioners to Oshiwara, nearly 10 kms away. Those painful moments strengthened our resolve to complete this mission.

The first steps toward acquiring land were taken in 2013, when a parish delegation met the then Chief Minister Mr. Prithviraj Chavan, along with MLA Mr. Suresh Shetty, who promptly sanctioned space at Aarey. But being in the Aarey vicinity, the project required numerous permissions, NOCs, and clearances. Progress was slow and demanding.

A foundation stone was laid in 2017 by His

Eminence, Cardinal Oswald Gracias, in hopeful anticipation that approvals would soon follow. Yet, the journey ahead was long. During the pandemic, when the need became truly desperate, the cemetery committee worked tirelessly to push the process forward. As a result, in January 2024, all permissions were finally secured, and the BMC began construction on 21 January 2024. After nearly 12 years of perseverance, the long-awaited day arrived.

On 17 August 2025, Archbishop John Rodrigues solemnly blessed the cemetery, reminding us of the dignity and holiness owed to our beloved departed. A prayer chapel now stands within the premises for quiet reflection and Masses.

Dignitaries from BMC, our MP, MLA, former ministers, and numerous parishioners joined the momentous celebration. The sight of our new cemetery so close to our parish filled everyone with relief, pride, and profound gratitude.

The Pallotti Church Trust Christian Cemetery stands today as a testimony of faith, unity, and God’s unfailing guidance. May this holy ground remain for generations a place of peace, dignity, consolation, and hope in the resurrection. As we entrust our loved ones to the embrace of God, may we, the living, continue to walk in faith, grateful for this precious blessing granted to our parish and our wider Christian family.

Mrs. Nelly Rego
Zone - St. Paul

“To be blessed is to be a blessing.” — Maya Angelou

This quote beautifully captures what I experienced during our visit to the Children’s Home in Dongri. It was a youth initiative led by Fr. Andrew, along with PYAT members and fourteen youth. What began as a simple outreach became one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.

Before the visit, I felt a mix of excitement and nervousness. I wasn’t sure what to expect or how the children would respond. But the moment we arrived, my uncertainty melted away. The children welcomed us with bright smiles and open hearts. Their laughter and energy filled the place with warmth. It wasn’t pity that I felt; it was admiration for their strength, dreams, and ability to find joy even in difficult circumstances.

Among the children we met, some were juveniles, while others had run away from home, or came from families unable to provide proper care. Despite everything they had been through, they carried within them an innocence and spark that couldn’t be dimmed.

One moment that stayed with me was when I noticed a girl whom everyone seemed to look up to, confident, outspoken, and with a leader-like presence. One of our PYAT members asked how she was so daring and bold. She grinned, and said, *“I’m not pretty; that’s why I have to be bold!”* Her words broke my heart. They revealed how much pain and insecurity can hide behind confidence, and how deeply every child longs to be seen as worthy.

We often take so much for granted, our

families, our freedom, our education, and even the small comforts of daily life. Being with those children made me realise how fortunate we are to have people who love and guide us, providing a safe space to dream. That day, I understood that blessings aren’t just what we receive; they’re also the people, moments, and experiences that shape who we are.

Though we went there to give, I believe we received much more in return. We played games, danced, and laughed together. It reminded me that being a blessing doesn’t require much, just our time, attention, and a kind heart.

This experience gave Christmas a whole new meaning for me. Beyond the bells and baubles, the true spirit of the season lies in sharing love and spreading hope. It’s not about how much we give, but the thought and care behind it. This Christmas, we can all be a blessing by offering our presence, sharing what we have, showing kindness in small ways, and reaching out with gratitude.

Looking back, I am grateful not just for the blessings in my own life, but also for the opportunity to brighten someone else’s day, even in a small way. May we remember that the greatest blessings aren’t found beneath the Christmas tree, but within the hearts we touch and the love we share.

Aloma Castelino
Youth Group



1. With so much war and suffering around me, it seems hard to be festive. How do I get into the Christmas spirit?

It's honestly hard to slip into the Christmas spirit when the world feels heavy — with wars, natural disasters, and so much suffering everywhere. But in a way, that's exactly why the message of Christmas becomes even more important. Christmas was never meant to be celebrated only when everything is perfect. Christ was born into a world full of conflict, fear, and uncertainty too. His coming was meant to bring hope despite the darkness, not after it passed.

So sometimes getting into the Christmas spirit isn't about forcing cheerfulness — it's about leaning into the small, quiet truths of the season. Finding peace in prayer. Doing one act of kindness. Checking on someone who's struggling. Letting the lights, the carols, and the nativity remind you that God hasn't abandoned the world, even when it feels broken.

You don't have to feel festive right away. Just allow moments of hope, gratitude, and compassion to slowly guide you back into the spirit. That, in itself, is deeply faithful — and deeply Christmassy.

2. Christmas is back and so are the colours of red, green, white and gold and the glorious Christmas tree. What significance do these hold?

When you look at Christmas colours, they're not just festive — they actually carry deep Christian symbolism. Red represents the blood of Christ and the sacrifice at the heart of our faith, which makes it especially meaningful during a season that celebrates His birth. Green comes from evergreens and symbolises eternal life and hope — a reminder that through Jesus we're given hope that never fades. White, on the other hand, stands for purity, peace, and light—echoing the innocence of Christ and the cleansing of sins. And gold reflects the glory of God, the divinity of Christ, and the gifts brought by the Wise Men.

The Christmas tree itself is a powerful symbol. Its evergreen nature reflects God's enduring love and the renewal brought by Christ. Traditionally, its triangular shape is seen as a representation of the Holy Trinity, and the lights adorning it signify Christ as the Light of the World, illuminating the darkness.

So remember, when you decorate with these colours this year, you are not just making things look pretty; you are surrounding yourself with reminders of what Christmas really stands for — Christ, hope, and God's unending love.

3. With all the calorie-heavy indulgences during the festive season, my diet is going to go for a toss. Can you share a recipe where I can eat my cake and not feel too guilty about it?

Haha! Great question. Festive feasts can be a calorie overload, but there must be some cake, isn't it? Here's a wholesome Christmas cake that's big on flavor and light on guilt courtesy Patricia Trinidad (*Consultant Chef, Trainer & Educator from our very own St. Paul's zone*). Do give it a try and enjoy your Christmas season.

HIGH FIBRE CHRISTMAS CAKE



INGREDIENTS

- Whole wheat flour – 100g
- Ragi flour – 50g
- Oats flour – 50g
- Baking powder – half tsp
- Baking soda – half tsp
- Chopped soft dates (seedless) – 150g
- Chopped cashews – 20g
- Powdered brown sugar – 150g
- Eggs – 3
- Elaichi powder – half tsp
- Cinnamon powder – half tsp
- Oil – 200g
- Grated carrot – 200g
- Salt – quarter tsp
- Vanilla essence – half tsp



METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C -180C.
2. Grease two 6–7 inch tins (or one 10-inch tin) with melted butter & line with butter paper.
3. Sieve the flour with baking powder & baking soda.
4. Add the chopped dates, nuts & spices into the flour & mix well.
5. In a bowl, beat the sugar, vanilla essence, oil & eggs for 2 minutes.
6. Add the grated carrots.
7. Fold in the flour mixture into the egg-sugar mixture till well mixed (avoid overmixing).
8. Pour into the prepared tins & bake for approximately 40 to 50 mins till done. Cool & serve.

If you are feeling adventurous, sprinkle a little rum or wine after baking for a festive twist.



BORN IN CHRIST

07/09/2025	Athena D'silva	A-201, Shivalik, Military Road
28/09/2025	Janvika Sekar	Unit No. 22, Aarey Milk Colony
26/10/2025	Erin Fernandes	H-14, New Trishul CHS, Bhawani Nagar
26/10/2025	Samuel D'souza	Aarey Milk Colony, Main Pump House
16/11/2025	Yohann Emanuel	403, Sharda Heights, Military Road
16/11/2025	Alvina D'souza	Aarey Milk Colony, Main Pump House

MARRIAGES

14/09/2025	Rommel Xavier & Dhanya Baby	27, Renner DR. Cambridge, ON N3C 4N7
02/10/2025	Deepak Rananaware & Maria Lobo	12/4/1, Sky View CHS, Bhawani Nagar
18/10/2025	Keegan D'souza & Valerie Colaco	9/3/7, Highland Park CHS, Bhawani Nagar
18/10/2025	Steffan D'souza & Rani Gangurde	Aarey Milk Colony, Main Pump House
09/11/2025	James D'souza & Padma Nimse	Aarey Milk Colony, Main Pump House
15/11/2025	Roshan & Arlene	302/A, Hills Borough, Auckland 1042
26/11/2025	Clinton D'souza & Teertha Shetty	C-905, NG CHS Ltd. Military Road

REST IN CHRIST

08/08/2025	Celine Pereira	B-404, Udyan 3, Military Road
11/08/2025	Duming Viegas	A-203, Jagdish Apartments, Military Road
19/08/2025	Edith D'silva	6/8, Blossom Society, Military Road
19/08/2025	Valarian S. Sequeira	A-303, Manavsthal, Military Road
27/08/2025	Nataline D'souza	10/4 Blossom Society CHS, Military Road
29/08/2025	Perpetual Dias	3/12/7, Garden View CHS, Bhawani Nagar
17/09/2025	Jerome Almeida	202, Jyoti Ascent, Bhawani Nagar
21/09/2025	Joseph Rodrigues	R.No.102, Adarsh Nagar, Behind Bhawani Nagar
21/09/2025	Simon Coutinho	18/A/206, Zenith Building, Bhawani Nagar
28/09/2025	Jeronimo Fernandes	B-103, Nest, Vijay Nagar
14/10/2025	Victor Mendonca	D-301, Akruti Aneri CHS, Marol Maroshi Road
15/11/2025	Elizabeth D'silva	2/A/802, Ashok Nagar, Military Road
17/11/2025	Molly Serrao	3/12/1, Garden View CHS, Bhawani Nagar
23/11/2025	Philomena Pereira	LT 31/12, Vijay Nagar
25/11/2025	Gregory D'souza	E-313/314, Lok Sarita, Military Road