

The November - December 2020
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YCS/YSM National News Letter

Book 40

Vol: 6

Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people of good will. This is the message of Peace given to us by God. Christmas means joy, love, sacrifice, peace and equality among humanity. This is the gift of God to us in the form of Jesus our Savior.

The good news of salvation will always remain relevant because every one of us needs deliverance from sin and wretchedness. We have become so small today, that we don't even deserve to beg for this gift, yet God in his goodness showers on us the gift of peace.

We need peace today in our self, in others, in society, in countries and in the world. Let us pray for this gift of peace always. At Christmas let everyone experience this peace and share it with all, so that God may always be present among us.

Immanuel – God with us!!!!

Joyous Christmas
Happy New Year 2021





Greetings to all or should I say Merry Christmas to all!!..

We all know with each year ending, we enter into a season of joy and happiness. This season brings families and friends closer once again. And the season is Christmas Season. We share our joys with each other on this day. Today people belonging to every religion celebrate Christmas. Decorating homes with small fairy lights, baking cakes and cookies, singing Christmas carols, decorating Christmas tree and making crib, these things gives us another level of happiness.

It's a great time of the year. People dressed up like Santa Claus surprise kids by giving them chocolates and gifts. There are different and unique ways in which people celebrate Christmas. I am from Kerala and live in Madhya Pradesh so I have experienced two unique ways of celebrations. In Kerala, the churches are decorated like a carnival celebration. Rallies take place with music and band with people dancing, praying and admiring the beautiful night. People come to the Church with their friends and family to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. People prepare delicious food and the most important part of the celebration is sharing. No matter what you give or what you get, it's just a festival of GIVING and SHARING.

In Madhya Pradesh, churches are decorated by all the youth with a beautiful crib. People here celebrate their happiness with dance. The joy at everyone's face makes the place even more beautiful. After the Christmas mass, people gather together to wish everyone with a hug and a smile. There's a thing which is same at each and every place that people like to share whatever they have with others. That's the beauty of this festival.

After a great celebration here comes the time to say goodbye to 2020. The year 2020 was full of surprises and stress. We did face many challenges this year, many problems and many difficulties. We faced a global pandemic, earthquakes, floods and many more natural calamities. Even with all the negativity, we found some time to know who we are and got to know our true potential. I guess I should find myself lucky that God protected me with all the harms. I would also want to say that this year made me realise that whatever happens the hope is not going to die because it is a gift of God..

With the year ending and a new beginning, it's a time to take resolutions. Resolutions which we can follow. Don't let the coming year go waste. Try to correct your mistakes and enter the new year with full of energy and happiness.

May this Christmas bring joy and prosperity in your life and may the next year be the best year for you all.

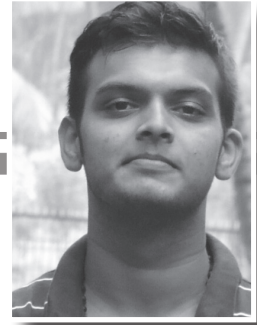
A Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

- *Ashita Jimmy*
Editor - *The Search*

EDITORIAL



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PEACE JOY & HAPPINESS

Greetings to all my dear YCS YSM'ers.

“Lets keep the Christmas spirit in our hearts, and try to keep it all the year.”

Blessed Christmas And Happy New Year to you all..!!

Christmas is the time of joy, peace and happiness. It's the time when the whole world celebrates the birthday of our saviour Jesus Christ. Apart from these happy and joyful moments we also reflect on the hardships and difficulties Mother Mary and foster father Joseph had to undergo to bring our Saviour into this world to wipeout all our sins. For Christians Christmas is the prime festival which is celebrated joyfully all around the world.

The Christmas celebration begins much more earlier than the eve of Christmas. We decorate our houses with lights stars and Christmas tree, prepare varieties of goodies and buy gifts for our loved ones. The Christmas tree, star and crib brings the Christmas vibe in our homes. Gifts are placed underneath the Christmas tree in wrapped boxes and are not to be opened until Christmas day. The church is also decorated for the special event. People sing carols and Christmas songs to mark this day and also some places they perform skits and live tableaux. Here in Udupi (Karnataka) on the Christmas eve sweets called “kusvar” is distributed among the neighbours and friends which is a symbol of giving and spreading love and good news that the saviour is coming.

Jesus, during his worldly mission always taught about love and sacrifice. He asked his disciples to love their enemies and neighbours. Christmas is a time where we celebrate and be happy in addition to that we must also think of other people who are in need and help them with whatever way possible. With difficult time prevailing throughout the world, this year it is not the usual way of how we used to celebrate Christmas. Many places churches are not yet opened and there won't be any Christmas



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mass and celebration but that doesn't mean that we should also keep our hearts closed. This is an unusual time but lets believe that the birthday of our saviour will save and bring good news to the world.

This Christmas lets welcome our saviour Jesus Christ in our hearts, families and our neighbourhood. Let's spread the good news and values taught by him and continue the good work. Therefore, this Christmas along with decorating our homes and ourselves, lets decorate and transform our inner selves and welcome our saviour in our hearts and our families.

Once again on behalf of YCS/YSM India I wish you all a very happy and joyful Christmas and happy new year filled with love. Hope the coming year will bring new beginnings, joy and success to all of our lives.

Let YCS/YSM light shine

Deril D'Sa, National Convenor



Christmas Celebration in my region

Christmas, being an auspicious and important festival for Christians in India, is celebrated very joyfully, considering this festival as a refreshing, happy and exciting one. As on this festival, i.e. on 25th December, our Messiah, Lord Jesus Christ took birth on this planet as a human, people refer a new beginning of life which would be accompanied by Jesus Christ's blessings.

In our region, Madhya Pradesh, compared to other festivals, Christmas is quite a small festival, due to the number of Christians. People in Madhya Pradesh love to celebrate Christmas.

People decorate their houses with lanterns, cribs, giant stars and Christmas trees waiting anxiously for 24th December night. On this night a special midnight service is conducted in the churches. People of other religions too participate in this celebration. Christians place their presents and gifts at the altar singing with the choir announcing the message of Jesus' birth.

Christians in Madhya Pradesh prepare local sweets, which includes *Mawa Bati* stuffed with dry fruits and many more local sweets with cakes and pies which are then distributed to their friends and relatives on Christmas. Here, children anxiously wait for Santa Claus to come and place his gifts in the socks which are hung in their courtyards. In this way, Christmas Eve is celebrated in our region which motivates and energizes everyone to go ahead for the next year with a zeal in their hearts.

With a last message I would end my experience that no matter where you live or who you are, Christmas season brings joy on everyone's face. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

Muskan Bhagore, Regional secretary
Madhya Pradesh

[k h dh ryk'k

खुशी कोई तलाश की चीज़ नहीं,
ज़िंदगी में 'खाली न रहना यही है प्रथम
सीढ़ी' ।

खुशियों की तलाश को प्राथमिकता;
जीवन का बेतकल्लुफी बरकरार,
यही है खुशियों की बरसात ।

आज पैसों में होती है, खुशी की तलाश,
खुशी तो दस्तक देती है, प्रकृति में मशाल ।
दुःख के बाद सुख; सुख के बाद दुःख,
खुशी के लिए बदलना जीने के रूख ।
तितलियों के संग उड़कर; पतंगों से
कट-कटकर ,
कभी आसमान कभी जमीन, यही है जीवन की
मशीन ।

भीड़-भाड़ से दूर रहकर; कुछ काल अपने लिए
बचाकर,
खुद से दो-चार रिश्ते बनाकर; दिल में खुशी की
झाँझ बजाकर ।

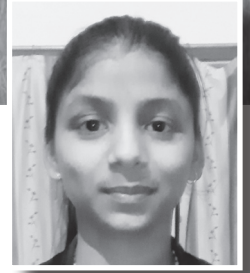
न कोई कोशिश; न कोई पैसा,
न कोई साधन; न कोई सफलता,
बंजर भूमि में फूल उगाकर,
जीवन को जीना साज बजाकर ।
कभी प्रकृति से मिलकर ,
आकाश, हवा-पानी से घुलकर ।
मोमबत्ती से कुछ सीख लेकर,
आसमान के तारों से कुछ खुशी भीख लेकर ।
जीवन को रंगों से भरकर,
खुशियाँ हों सादगी से जी कर ।

खुशियाँ स्वयं में ही है ऐसी कविता,
जिसे गुनगुनाने को सदैव है मन कहता ।
छोटे बच्चों की हँसी में खिलखिलाकर ,
छत के कोने; मिट्टी- पत्थर को भी संगी दोस्त
बनाकर ।



Joysi John

Bareilly, Agra Region



काली- घटी रात सूरज उड़ा ले जाए,
काली दुःख की नालियाँ भी, सुख के समुद्र में
समा जाएँ ।

खुशियाँ बाँटो; दुगुना होगा,
दुःख बाँटो; काल का अँधेरा घटेगा ।

धूप- छाँव से खुशियाँ लेकर,
कच्चे मकान- कच्ची गलियों में सुख के बीज
बोकर ।

खुशामद- खुशाल - खुशाली- खुशियाँ,
खुशियाल बाँटेंगे,
अतीत भुलाकर वर्तमान को मित्र बनालेंगे,
दुःखों व माया- लालच पर बाँध लगा लेंगे ,
जीवन को शहद से भी मीठा बना लेंगे ।

माला भी मोतियों से मिलकर बनें,
थाली भी फूलों से सजाकर चमक उठें ।

जीवन को भी अंतरात्मा के बहुमूल्य मोतियों
से पिरोकर,
ईश्वर से जुड़कर , सारी खुशियाँ बसा लेंगे ।

Joysi John won the first prize in the Hindi Poetry section.



Jesus, Others, before You.



A certain missionary was working in a rural African village that had no easy access to good drinking water. People walked for miles to the nearest river to get water. With his encouragement the people undertook a self-help project to sink a borehole. The local government supplemented the people's efforts and a borehole was sunk in the village. In the meantime the missionary had left the village. Soon the village was enjoying fresh and clean drinking water from the borehole. So they wrote the missionary to come and see them and the great difference the borehole had made in the village. He went back to the village and rejoiced with them for the borehole that now gave fresh, clean water on demand. Then he decided to go round and visit some of his old friends. He entered the house of an old woman and asked her to give me a cup of the borehole water to drink. To his surprise she said that there was no drinking water in the house. "But the village now has water," he said. "Yes," she replied, "but the trouble is with my grandson who lives with me. I tell him to go and get water from the borehole and he wouldn't listen to me. All he does is run about and play."

There you are! You see, it is possible for someone to die of thirst in a village that has abundant drinking water. Why? Because there is no way the water out there in the borehole can become your own personally until you lift your foot to go there and draw the water that already belongs to you. The water in the borehole is yours by right. You are entitled to it. But you need to do something to claim this right before it can become your own personally, before it can actually quench your thirst. So is the good news of great joy that God showers on the world at Christmas. We still need to do something, make a little effort, before we can personally experience this joy in our lives, in our families, and in our world.

How do we do that? Well, that is rather easy to explain but pretty hard to practice, so I'll explain. Look at the word JOY. You see that it is made up of three letters: first J, then O, and lastly Y. J stands for Jesus, O for Others, and Y for You. Joy therefore is: Jesus, Others, before You. To know joy in our lives we need to place Jesus first in everything. Secondly, we need to try to please others before trying to please yourself. That is the recipe for joy. That is how we can convert the Christmas "joy to the world" into a personal "joy in my life" now and always.

The story of Christmas has many lessons to learn. It teaches us to SHARE. God shared the gift of his only son! Secondly it teaches us about the SACRIFICE. In the story we hear about the sacrifices made by Joseph and Mary. Later, Jesus sacrifices his own life for humanity. Christmas brings us the HOPE of PEACE and JOY. Jesus brought peace to the people of good will.

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Every year we celebrate Christmas. Today it has become a big celebration where people are busy with decorations, fashions, Santa Clauses and gifts! We do everything but fail to welcome the prince of peace who was born on this day.

This year as we celebrate Christmas, lets not forget to prepare a nice place for Jesus and welcome him. He wants to stay with you and transform your life. There is everything but we need to do a little homework i.e., we need to rise from our slumber, leave the darkness and walk to him.

The year 2020 was tough and difficult, full of uncertainties. For the students, it was very difficult as they had to study from home, online classes, no regular exams, postponement of exams etc. For some it was like a year lost! As we know, God sent his people to give us hope. Doctors, nurses and scientists have given us hope. As we are preparing to enter the new year we have a good news of the vaccine. God is with us. He will always protect us when we do our best. I wish our students, animators, readers, well wishers and benefactors a Blessed Christmas and a grace filled New Year 2021.

Fr. Chetan Machado, National Chaplain



Christmas the culture of giving

“The best things to do with the best things in life is to give them away” - Dorothy Day



With these beautiful and meaningful lines I wish you all a very joyous Christmas and happy New Year 2021.

Dear YCS/YSMers, once again we are all set to celebrate Christmas, the happiest season of the year. It brings joy, happiness and hope in each ones life. Jesus was born to dispel darkness and bring light to the world. He was born to show the humankind the way and hope. We celebrate Christmas by spreading the good news of his coming. During this season, groups of singers go around bringing good news to people. On the Christmas night people gather in Churches to celebrate Jesus’ birthday. People wish each other and share their gifts on this occasion.

This year due to pandemic we may not celebrate Christmas in a usual way. We can celebrate differently by praying for each other, for their safety, good future and so on. We can give small gifts to all those needy people who have nothing and need our help. Helping them and giving them happiness will give us the double happiness and God will bless us.

Wishing you all once again a very happy Christmas and Happy New year

Arpit Katara, Madhya Pradesh
NEXCO

Did You Know?

St Nicholas The True Giver

St. Nicholas or as we know him *Santa Claus* was a bishop who lived in the fourth century, in a place called Myra in Asia (now in Turkey). He was a very rich man because his parents died when he was very young and left him a lot of money. He was also a very kind man and had a reputation for helping the poor and giving secret gifts to people who needed it.

Christmas 2020 is an unusual Christmas with unusual circumstances. People are in much pain and difficulty than normal. Let's try to be *Santa Claus* in someone's life this Christmas, that doesn't mean to purchase expensive presents but small time efforts. Gifts doesn't have to be materialistic. We may not be as rich as St Nicholas. Just providing a listening ear to someone is a more valuable gift than any other gifts (personally made it a point to check on my friends through a call) and believe me it has worked well for both the sides of the call.

Let's be optimistic during this Christmas and pray to God to send global relief from COVID-19.

Andy Fernandez, Madhya Pradesh.

Christmas - the culture of giving

The history of Christmas is one that dates back to a very long time; the first Christmas was celebrated in 336 A.D. in Rome. It played a very important role during the famed 'Arian controversy' that took place in the 300s. After years passed then the day was considered as the birth day of Jesus Christ. Christmas is celebrated in all Christian countries but there are differences in the way each nation celebrates this date.

It is a cultural festivity that entails a lot of preparation. The common preparations include decorations of the place with Christmas trees, lighting etc. The Christmas tree brings the Christmas spirit in homes. This a festival that is equally loved and cherished by adults and kids. It is all about sharing and helping others. On this day, people remember Jesus Christ and his teachings. The festival definitely teaches us to practice kindness and love towards each other and help those who have less than us. It also shows the importance of joy and happiness. It is generally an opportunity to think about nature and the reason for our existence .

Christmas is an opportunity for you to forget your biases and become kind towards

- Vinita Panna, Madhya Pradesh

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A vision for INDIA



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India has emerged as a significant regional power because of rising economic power house and nuclear-armed state. India for Indians is definitely a country with exploding population where the states are divided on the basis of lingo people speak. And for non-Indians India is country with tricolor flag and vivid ancient culture. But the beauty of India lies in its mesmerizing exquisiteness, its

It has to be land which provides opportunities for capable Indian youths to become industrialist and entrepreneur of excellence.

ancient sculptures, Vedas and its explicit culture varying from one piece of land to another. The extensive cultural heritage of India has been inherited by our ancestors. Coveted ethnicity of India has fascinated

many, and certainly the evolution from prior civilization till date has flabbergasted people all over the world. And thus the progression still needs to be continued in order to reach the utmost peak. India is a profound country, and we all extremely love it. Nevertheless one cannot forget the flaws that are making us really lack in the areas of development and humanity. We suffer from many mentality issues, discrimination, stereotypes and hypocrisy. A better India can be shaped only if we rise above it.

Why that India is not innovative? Innovation is requisite. It demands to be constantly improving and trying to be better, not satisfied with what we currently have. So every software and hardware firms are observed to upgrade themselves to a better version. Firstly, I envision India in establishing own startups, which in turn upsurges economy of

India. India must have its own startup, not just 'make in India' but founded, innovated, developed in India and flourished across all countries. Startup helps India to prosper. It makes sense that new businesses lead to job creation. Some of the top Indian startups are quite out of the ordinary, namely Paytm, Xpressbees, Ola cabs, Zomato etc., India has become a popular destination for foreigners to chase their startup dreams and further it has to be land which provides opportunities for capable Indian youths to become industrialist and entrepreneur of excellence. This helps to eradicate unemployment in India. The greatest purpose also exists in instigating the youth with high potential to come out with new ideas and notion.

Secondly, I envision India to have good literacy rate and to have an education that gives both theoretical as well as practical knowledge to students. Currently the education system has least grading system which grades each individual on their academic scores. Intelligence of the students is judged by exam papers. This in turn discourages the students who are graced with unique talents. And as a result distinct talents of the nation are suppressed. Here the perspective of the parents towards the education of the children also plays major role. Furthermore



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the spotlight is on theory and not practical. This makes to run after a bookish knowledge which makes them perplexed on going out to the real world due to the lack of practical knowledge. This raises the shortage of skilled manpower in India which emphasizes practical learning. Education system must help students to understand the concept practically instead of merely mugging up the whole thing. Also the education must be extended to each and every individual of the country and none must be deprived of education and opportunities.

It's best picture to foresee Indian government to recognize the skilled manpower and implement its dexterity in developing the country. When compared with other countries India has best skilled manpower but due to lack of opportunities we find the extreme talents of India flying abroad to show up. We have personalities who are celebrated example for skilled manpower in India. Most certainly, Pichai Sundararajan, CEO of Alphabet Inc. and its subsidiary Google LLC and Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, powerful technology executives in the world. Sharp-witted young Indians have fled in part because corporate and research environment of India has been unsuccessful to value and make up for their talents. The emigration of India's promising young workers leaves a vacuum of talent which

remaining population hardly manages to fill. Thus government has an urge to create an environment of opportunities in the country so that geniuses of India benefit India globally. Unwieldy bureaucracy, the overall absence of meaningful reform will continue to hinder modernism and employment-generation. Thus the improvement of fundamental conditions is required or else India's best talent will continue to be found in its airport departure lounges.

One of the ugly faces of India is slum. India's economy bangs over the past decades but there are approximately 24% of 100 million urban people who are poorest citizens of India surviving in the dilapidated conditions in the world. Slums have become one of the indispensable and obscure sides of our country. People who live here are mostly illiterate and their condition remains the same in spite of all efforts. These are people who are divested from basic needs and resources like functional toilets, breeding indignity and lack of ventilation and sanitation facilities. Katherine Boo, an investigative reporter for Washington Post, in her non-fiction book **"Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in Mumbai under city"** minutely researched, compassionately reported account of waste-pickers in an Indian slum. In this work she writes about the daily anxiety and dilemma that inhabitants must

contend with, which include poverty, hunger, disease, dirt, ethnic strife, violence, the constant fear. To keep India beautiful is a humongous task and hence need humongous attempt from government as well equal participation of the communities.

Women safety should be a matter of concern for every Indian. With a profound



understanding of what is happening around us, it is duty of Indian citizen to strive for security of women. Eve teasing, sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence against women are the weapons used by the male to display their superiority. But data obtained in whole is just that, statistics. Social stigma is also the reason because of which many crimes don't get reported at all. In 2013, India is considered to be 4th most dangerous country for women. As per 2018, a survey conducted by Thomson Reuters Foundation has ranked India as the world's most dangerous country for women, ahead of Afghanistan, Syria and Saudi Arabia. The sense of freedom is a rather hollow term for women while we as a country attained it more than 74 years ago. National Crime Records states that one woman is raped every 15 minutes in India. It doesn't differentiate between a 3-year-old kid and an 80-year-old lady. As per Swami Vivekananda, **"it is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on single wing"**. Along with the mindset that people have, slow pace of operation of Indian judiciary is another major reason for the increasing women safety in India. Further, not in next 5 years but this very moment I foresee India to implement fast-track courts to hear the cases and the cases should be investigated in a time bound manner. Strict laws alone cannot solve the problem of women safety in India more exactly the implementation of these laws in a time bound manner can solve the issue to a greater extent. With this I would also like to add respect to the third gender.

I dream India to have efficient governance and proper enforcement of laws which

could solve most of the problems faced by Indian citizen. Indian judiciary system is well organized equipment towards crime but the loopholes among them have let the criminals to move freely and left innocents insecure. Disease and defective organs can often be identified and discarded. Exploitation and injustice are far trickier to deal with. Good governance assures minimization of corruption, consideration of the views of minorities and that the voices of the most vulnerable to be heard in decision-making in the society. It is responsible to the present-day and imminent needs of society. Main focus should lie on **'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'**. Association of



Democratic Reforms states that 43% of Members of Parliaments of Lok Sabha 2019 are facing criminal charges. Thus disqualification of a person against whom the criminal charges that relate to grave and heinous offenses and corruption should be obligatory. Corruption is a chief hindrance in improving the quality of governance. India must also focus on developing probity in governance, which will make the governance more ethical.

India is a country, where the people worship the land and the water both as their mother and god, but shows no decency towards it in

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veracity. People do not mind answering their natural calls on their motherly streets and their holy water, double standards again. Keeping our environment clean, having healthy air to breathe and sanitation is not only the duty of government but matter of prime concern of each living being on earth. *The better India* (TBI) founded by Dhimanth Parekh and his wife Anuradha Parekh is a huge revelation which inspires thousands of people across India by focusing on innovations, initiatives by common citizens, grassroots-level change. It celebrates eco-warriors, who have shown through their unrelenting efforts and collaborative spirit that it is never too late to rise and fight for our environment. If the present scenario persists, no matter whether we reach Mars or Moon, there would be no humans to celebrate those countless efforts. There are numerous issues which lack the interest of society they might be disposal of wastes, polluted drinking water, planting, promoting and protecting trees, illegal sand mining, cleaning of lakes and rescue of endangered species. The least a person can do is not being a reason behind the crisis and be more conscious about his\her act.

“Drugs” are the new emerging trends in world. Drugs take us to hell disguised as heaven. As the drug epidemic continues to meticulously seep into the social and cultural aspects of the country, narcotics naturally trickles into younger generation. The youth of our country hold massive responsibility. And as potential



of India rests delicately in their hands the drug outbreak continues to rage on the sidelines. Officials at all levels of law enforcement and government are corrupted by drug traffickers so as to continue with their criminal activities without any stumbling block. It is essential to record that these correlations may not be direct, as feeble governance (resulting also from issues not related to drugs) can also lead to more unlawful drug crop cultivation, drug production against the law, producing and trafficking and additional drug abuse. What can society do to reduce overall cost of drug abuse? It is vital to build strong communities and families, mostly seeking to provide young people with the skills to make healthy choices and decisions. Aim of the government must also lie in precise and objective anticipation.

India has already developed in the last five years from being the 11th largest economy in the world to the sixth. And hopefully India could also be renowned as fifth largest economy. At the same time, India needs a high level of growth to achieve its goal. As Dr. Kalam said, **“Unless India stands up to the world, no one will respect us. In this world, fear has no place. Only strength respects strength”**. Change should be within and then inspire others which ultimately will flourish across the nation. These are certain glimpses of what I envision India to be in next 5 years. Dr. Abdul Kalam and Y. S. Rajan in their book “India 2020” seek the assurance of the people to work together to transform India into a ‘developed nation’ from a ‘developing nation’. Igniting the young minds is a powerful resource. Thus concept of this essay also would be the same to foresee India into a developed nation where every citizen of India breathe peacefully and live in harmony and prosper globally.♣

- **Felicita Almeida**
(This essay won the 3rd prize at the National Essay writing competition)

The Quest for Happiness

“Enjoy life and don’t think twice!”
 “You only live once so have a ball!”
 “To find your lovely paradise
 Heed your desire’s every call!”
*Such are views of what happiness is,
 Just a fleeting feast of worldly bliss.*

For like the desert shrubs in the rain,
 Lush and green and full of might,
 They think not of the looming pain
 When their pleasures are out of sight.
*For if true joy is only material
 What within us is immortal?*

True happiness shouldn’t be worldly,
 Nor a mood which comes and goes;
 Rather a stream which flows steadily
 From a spring of ceaseless source.

*‘Cause the tree on the bank of a river
 From a lack of rain, doesn’t wither.*

A spring such as music, craft or art,
 Or to work for the disheartened’s sake;
 To leave an indelible mark on another’s
 heart,
 One which no one else could ever make!
*For if you want happiness eternal and
 true,
 Seek to make lives beautiful, for all but
 you.*

- Royston D’Souza
 Diocese of Mangalore

*(This poem won the 3rd prize at the
 National poetry competition)*

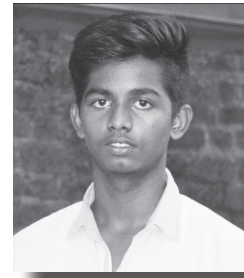
CHRISTMAS-THE CULTURE OF GIVING

“ Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection ”

Happy Christmas to all my YCS/YSM Friends. We, in Tamilnadu begin the Christmas celebration from the first week of December. The celebration begins with carol singing. In my parish we visit every home during this season. Christmas means buying new clothes, preparing crib, decorating Christmas tree, and making star. Christmas is not only celebrating the birth of Jesus, showing and sharing our happiness to others. In Tamilnadu at 24th Night we gather in the church to celebrate Christmas. At the starting day of 25th we show our happiness by shaking our hands and by giving gifts. After the holy mass we start share our loves. After that we come back to our home and go to sleep. At Christmas we cook a lots of food and share the food to poor people. The smile from the poor is the real Christmas. This is the way we celebrate Christmas in Tamilnadu.

Once again I wish you a happy and safe Christmas to everyone.

Tony Mariya Richard.C , Tamilnadu, Madurai



CHRISTMAS

THE CULTURE OF GIVING



Lizan Meryl Pereira
Miyar, Udupi

Christmas is synonymic with joy and happiness, a season filled with ecstasy, surprises and reunions. While the cool breeze freezes the land and mountains, there are Christmas trees decorated with gifts, cribs built with hope and Carols of glory being sung in every corners. What else can be more beautiful than this feel of Christmas! There are thousands of reasons to be happy in Christmas but the most piquant part of Christmas is none other than the 'Culture of Sharing'. The significance of Christmas in a Christian point of view is receiving the greatest gift given to

mankind - Jesus Christ. God loved his people to an extent where he gifted his only son to redeem our sins. It's nothing but love that is pure as the driven snow that led him to give us greatest gift even though we were unworthy of it and this is the core of Christmas, selfless love and caring. We exchange gifts to commemorate this virtue of Christmas.

The culture of giving took birth along with the birth of Jesus. The gift of our lord Jesus from Almighty to the mankind is and will be the greatest of all. The gift our Mother Mary received to carry the son of God in her

womb is exceptionally glorious. The Magi offered gifts to the new born baby Jesus in Bethlehem. The idea of Giving has been an eminent part of the Universe ever since. We have received many gifts and talents. When we share what lord has blessed us with, we are taking forward this culture of giving. 'Sharing is Caring'. The smile on a person's face speaks volumes of what he or she feels. If we become a reason for that smile, there's no more satisfaction than that gesture. I'm pretty sure we all have experienced this when we played Secret Santa with our loved ones.

But, after all these celebrations with Santa Clause, how many of us know about St. Nicholas? – The Santa Himself? The legend of Santa Claus can be traced back hundreds



THE JOY OF GIVING,
AND WHY IT MUST BECOME
CORE TO COMPANY CULTURE

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of years to a monk named St. Nicolas. A Saint known for his kindness and piety. Often, we tend to lose the true essence of our traditions in time and St. Nicolas aka 'Santa Clause' is just one of them. A Greek born bishop in a small city of Myra of Asia Minor (Turkey) St. Nicolas once found an old man with three daughters who struggled to get them married but was unable to pay dowry. One-night St. Nicolas dropped a bag of gold through the chimney and thus helping the man. He did this until all three girls got married. He started helping people in disguise by putting

gifts through the chimney and thus helping them. He was the saviour for oppressed and a hope for the children who waited for their magic man to get them gifts. Today, after celebrating many Christmas with the hope for Santa Clause, did we ever try to become a Santa for someone else? St. Nicolas acknowledged his duty for the mankind by accepted "the call" he received. Did we ever realise 'A call' we got from Jesus?. I think that is what we are called for! And that is the message the festival of Christmas conveys. To be for someone else in need. We should learn to give without expectations and conditions, we should adapt this message of 'Giving' because when we give, we become Santas, the followers of Christ. We need a good caring heart ready to be gifted to people. St. Nicolas set an example for all of us on how to uplift this astounding culture of giving. We often forget what Christmas actually is and who 'SANTA CLAUS' actually

was. Let us not fall in trap with what the world portrays, instead learn the actual facts and know more about the legendary people.

2000 years ago, a joyful news spread across Bethlehem which is the Birth of our lord that we celebrate as Christmas today. we decorate our houses, hang in a star, Distribute Sweets and there's excitement all around. But this year, the pandemic has made most of our lives miserable. We are in the verge of losing hopes. This Christmas let us be the beacon of hope! Let us enable each other and help people in need, let us learn to love and care each and every one. Let a positive news spread all over this Christmas as it did 2000 years ago to give life to the lost hopes. Before we say Adieu to 2020, let us come together in Prayers to have a Beautiful Year ahead and thank God for protecting us amidst this pandemic.

Let this festival of Christmas spread Hope, Joy and Happiness to everyone out there. Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas.♣



Celebrate the BIRTH DAY OF JESUS which is the real Christmas.



The melodious carols announce the coming of our saviour, but this year is going to be different for all of us. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, this time there will be no one knocking at our doors at midnight and sing the message of Christmas with joy and enthusiasm. Christmas is the festival which is cherished by people of all faiths and religions, it reminds us of the importance of sharing, exchanging gifts and living in peace and harmony with our family, friends and neighbours.

But it is difficult for us to follow all the tradition of celebration of Christmas due to COVID-19 this year. How shall we celebrate Christmas this year? Can we do something meaningful to spread the joy and happiness this year too. Will it be possible for us to bring joy in some ones life? Or Is COVID situation going to spoil the celebration of Christmas in our families ? But before answering these questions we need to keep in mind that celebration of Christmas does not depend on any external thing. Like any other year we can still celebrate Christmas in a very meaningful way.

What we need to do is, first and foremost we need to pray for each other. We can decorate our hearts to welcome Jesus. We live a meaningful life by respecting parents, practising values taught by Jesus and living in perfect harmony understanding every human being is what makes our Christmas celebration good. Added to these, consider buying a gift for someone who doesn't get it, share your goodies/cake with a friend, visit a friend or another person and make him/her happy. That is the real meaning of Christmas.

We celebrate Christmas because on this day Jesus was born. He taught us to love our enemies. He taught us to spread peace, love, equality and harmony. He came into this world to bring light amidst darkness. As true disciples of Jesus, we are called to do the same.



Celebrating Jesus birthday by sharing cakes and singing carols is not enough, we need to do at least one good deed or practise a value taught by Jesus. It is difficult to live a life full of good values but when we make an honest attempt God will bless our attempt and we will be able to change our life.

This Christmas let us take a decision to change a little bit and become positive in our approach. Lets practise one value taught by Jesus as a gift to him on his birthday. I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and happy New Year 2021.

Let YCS / YSM light shine.

- Oscar Martin, Nexco Agra region

CHRISTMAS

New Beginning

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Greetings from the YCS/YSM family

“ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Cor 5:17)

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New year to all my fellow leaders.

What is Christmas? It is the birthday of Jesus Christ where all Christians offer prayers in the church with joy and happiness. Christmas Eve is celebrated very joyfully in our homes decorating the house with lights and crib. We go around and spread love and joy of Christmas by singing carols. Jesus came into this world to wipe our tears and forgive us from our sins. May this birthday of Jesus Christ bring smile on everyone’s face.

And as we are going to say Good bye to 2020 let us welcome all the good memories and prepare ourselves for a better year. Let’s start our 2021 with a positive note and take some resolutions for this new year to change self and others.

The new year brings new start, new craze and new opportunities. It gives us one more chance to forget all the bad things and think about the new beginning. It is good to remember your hard times and go forward on a positive note. Where ever you go if you find negative mindset, try to bring in more positive energy.

Let this Christmas of joy and new year happiness bring you all good memories and new beginning to your life. I would like to conclude with a quote saying that ‘ *Everyday brings chance for you to draw breath, kick off your shoes and dance* ’.

Live long YCS/YSM

L. Joseph Pranav Reddy, Nexco Telugu

Future Programmes:

1. 7-9 January 2021 - National Students Leadership Training Programme, online on e-learning portal. Kindly register. Reg. Fee Rs.50. Limited seats. visit our website www.ycsysmindia.com
2. 25 December 2020 - Online Christmas card making and Christmas Tree decoration Competition.
4. February 2021 - NT/EXCO meeting (dates will be finalised as soon as schools reopen)
5. Ymap Programme for the animators (online) next batch starting in January 2021

YEAR 2020 – A quick flashback!



A terrible plague struck humankind, but scientists responded with unprecedented speed and common purpose; cooperating across national lines to decode the virus and then discover and manufacture vaccines that can prevent the disease.

We learned to appreciate the selfless dedication of nurses, orderlies, doctors and other health workers who risked their lives to save ours — and the selfless dedication of truck drivers, grocery stockers, farmworkers and so many more who risked their lives to keep the economy from collapsing.

Many of us felt isolated and frustrated in our social distancing, but many found meaning and connection with young or adult children, older relatives and other pod mates.

We also connected and reconnected with friends, relatives, colleagues and therapists across great distances as we became accustomed to Zoom calls and video chats. We wouldn't suggest that in-person wedding celebrations are gone forever — but the advances we made in telehealth, remote work and virtual gatherings will outlast the pandemic.

As movie theater chains struggled across the country, some family-owned drive-ins made a comeback, bringing a sense of community to small towns that had thought they were gone forever.

America elected the first female vice-president, first Black vice-president and first Asian American vice-president: Sen. Kamala Harris of California.

The Supreme Court ruled that no one can be fired for being gay or transgender.



One of the most horrifying acts of police brutality ever caught on video — the killing of George Floyd — led to an outpouring of protest and reflection and, in many cities and state capitals, the beginning of reform.

Carbon dioxide emissions declined — in part due to the recession, yes, but also because the cost of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, is declining more quickly than many experts had predicted.

With the United States set to rejoin the Paris agreement, and China pledging to reach carbon neutrality by 2060, momentum grew for the global community to take its climate emergency seriously.

COVID-19 pandemic

The World Health Organization announced Jan. 9 that a deadly coronavirus had emerged in Wuhan, China. In a matter of months, the virus has spread across the globe to more than 20 million people, resulting in at least 751,000 deaths. India was one of the most affected countries.



Black Lives Matter protests

The police-involved killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor this year sparked a wave of peaceful — and sometimes violent — demonstrations and riots across the world to demand an end to police brutality and racial injustice.

Beirut explosion

A massive explosion at a Beirut port, sparked Aug. 4 by the accidental detonation of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, killed at least 190 people and injured thousands of others.

Joe Biden becomes president-elect

Joe Biden became the 46th president of the United States on Nov. 7, defeating President Trump with a critical assist from his birth state, Pennsylvania, which delivered the votes to propel him to victory and end one of the most contentious elections in recent memory.

Communal riots in Delhi

The 2020 Delhi riots included multiple waves of bloodshed, property destruction, and rioting that killed 53 people, in North East Delhi beginning on the night of February 23. The events were the result of fallout from the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the dangerous rhetoric employed by some political parties.

Farmers' Protest at Delhi Borders

The *Delhi Chalo* farmers' protest at border points in New Delhi has entered the 21st day (17 Dec 2020). Thousands of farmers from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh are in protest against the three new agri reform laws. This protest is spreading all over the country and drawn international attention. Several rounds of talks between the farmer groups and government officials have failed.



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**YCS/YSM
Movement –
Fond Memories
and Life Lessons**

Irudayam, New York
Former National Chaplain

Continued from the last issue...

[This narrative is a re-write of an article submitted in Tamil to a publication by past Tamilnadu YCS/YSM student leaders and animators in 2009.]

The growth of the movement...

Thanks to Father Johnny Montero, the movement was growing in all parts of India. There were hundreds of trained animators who were dedicated teachers, priests and sisters. There were many full time student leaders and animators sacrificing their time and career, working with the movement. Most of the catholic dioceses appointed Diocesan, regional committees of student leaders and animators were established and functioning well. Though the movement was initially depended on grant funding, many of the grassroots activities were supported by locally raised funds. The student leaders' team and I focused our task to deepen the student awareness of the methodology of the movement and its spirituality. The vast expansion of the

YCS/YSM India is grateful to Irudayam, our former chaplain for sharing memories with us. We will publish these memories of former Chaplains in the coming issues

movement must also have deep roots to its call and mission, our inter-religious identity as YCS/YSM, and our option for the poor.

YCS/YSM Methodology & Spirituality...

In my early days in the movement, I watched Sister Jeanne teaching and practicing 'YCS methodology' with her full timers' groups: Think, Act and Reflect. What makes a YCS/YSM group distinct and different is its thinking and the kind of thinking. Thinking starts the YCS mode of living. YCS/YSMers think, question, analyze, discover, and plan action. Right thinking leads to action; YCS/YSMers are doers; they plan action in their own small environments. Their little 'action' may inspire or shame the bigger world around them. Action leads back to reflective thinking. Did they contribute to the goodness and welfare of other human beings around? If not, why? Back to 'Think', and move forward to 'Action', again to 'Reflection'. This marvelous cycle of energy of mind and heart creates a 'newness' in



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people, groups and the environment; given time, it has the force to change a nation and the world.

However, it is not easy to do the 'Review of life' - Thinking – Action – Reflection day after day, continuously and untiringly. Every student leader has experienced in his group life that things can go wrong: his own thinking might not be perfect, her actions might not yield results, his group's stability could be shaken, her tears of discouragement might make her want to stop. We need a spiritual energy to continue the challenge of methodology. The spirituality of the movement is the fuel for YCS/YSM life and the movement.

Spirituality is the force God gives to every human being in his or her spirit and is cultivated in life, in order to live and practice what one believes to be true and just. YCS is not a humanist movement; we cannot be assured that we can rise above our own self interests, when most of the time we are drawn and dominated by our own interests. YCS is a theistic movement; we believe in God; we believe God in us and with us. We are all God's children and God gives us the spirit and strength to change our world a better one for all.

In a sense, the 'review of life' of the movement is a divine initiative in us; God gives us the courage and resolve to think, act and reflect on behalf of his people. Such spirituality is identified most of the time with a particular religion to which we belong. Yet, YCS spirituality is more than a particular religion. It is a basic religious sense in our heart that God is like a Father, who created us all, and made the world for our living. We are all God's children, brothers and sisters in God's big family. All the inequalities, injustice and suffering we see around us are not what God wants for us his children. As God cares for us, we will care for each other. Such a 'spiritual attitude' is truly a religious attitude, going beyond structures and boundaries of religions.

YCS is a Christian movement in its origins: it was started by Christian leaders for Christian students. It believes in Christ who came to give life for the world; He is the way, the truth and life for all Christian students in the movement. Christian student leaders are trained and experienced to get their inspiration and motivation from God and Christ in order to live and work with students of all religions and cultures for the common cause of God's world. Jesus Himself reached out to Jews and Non-Jews of his time.



YCS/YSM is a special Indian Charism ...

Though the movement started with Christian ideals as a Christian movement, from the beginning, it embraced students of all religions and cultures in India. Without losing our individual religious identity, we learned to 'religiously' treat each other as brother,

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sister, friend and citizen. To create a new India, we resolved to work together beyond religious borders. This character of the movement is unique in the international scene of YCS movement. In 1983, when we went to Montreal for the YCS World Council, the Indian delegation included Hindu, Moslem and Christian student leaders. The presentation made by our delegates surprised the world of students, that we can peacefully live and work for each other, without our religions becoming a hurdle among us. I remember student leaders from Arab and African countries wanting to know more about YCS/YSM India. This is especially true and valid in today's



environment of religious intolerance in India. YCS/YSM student leaders should be the sacrament of peaceful living and constructive cooperation for the Indian mind and way of life.

Option for the poor...

'Option for the poor' is a signature mark of the movement from the beginning. It was the characteristic approach of Jesus Christ. He was poor and reached out to the poor. The movement trained student leaders and animators on their response to the plight of the poor, not only to plan social services, but also to impact on the root causes of inequality, injustice and poverty in society. This character of the movement was reflected in the student action at the grassroots cells all over the nation. Students helped the poor in their schools and neighborhood; action-oriented services were planned and implemented among tribal people and refugees. Students created greater awareness of the problem of child-workers and prompted the local communities for appropriate action.

The movement is aware that poverty cannot be completely destroyed as long as selfishness and greed governs us, our relationships and our way of life. The 'option for the poor' brings to our consciousness that we also participate in the cause of the problem, and so we should be all the more part of the solution. This prompts us to review our thinking, attitudes and life style in the context of the poor brothers and sisters next to us. We reach out to them to share ourselves. We also know that the poor around us have greater riches of love and humanity to share with us.

... to be continued

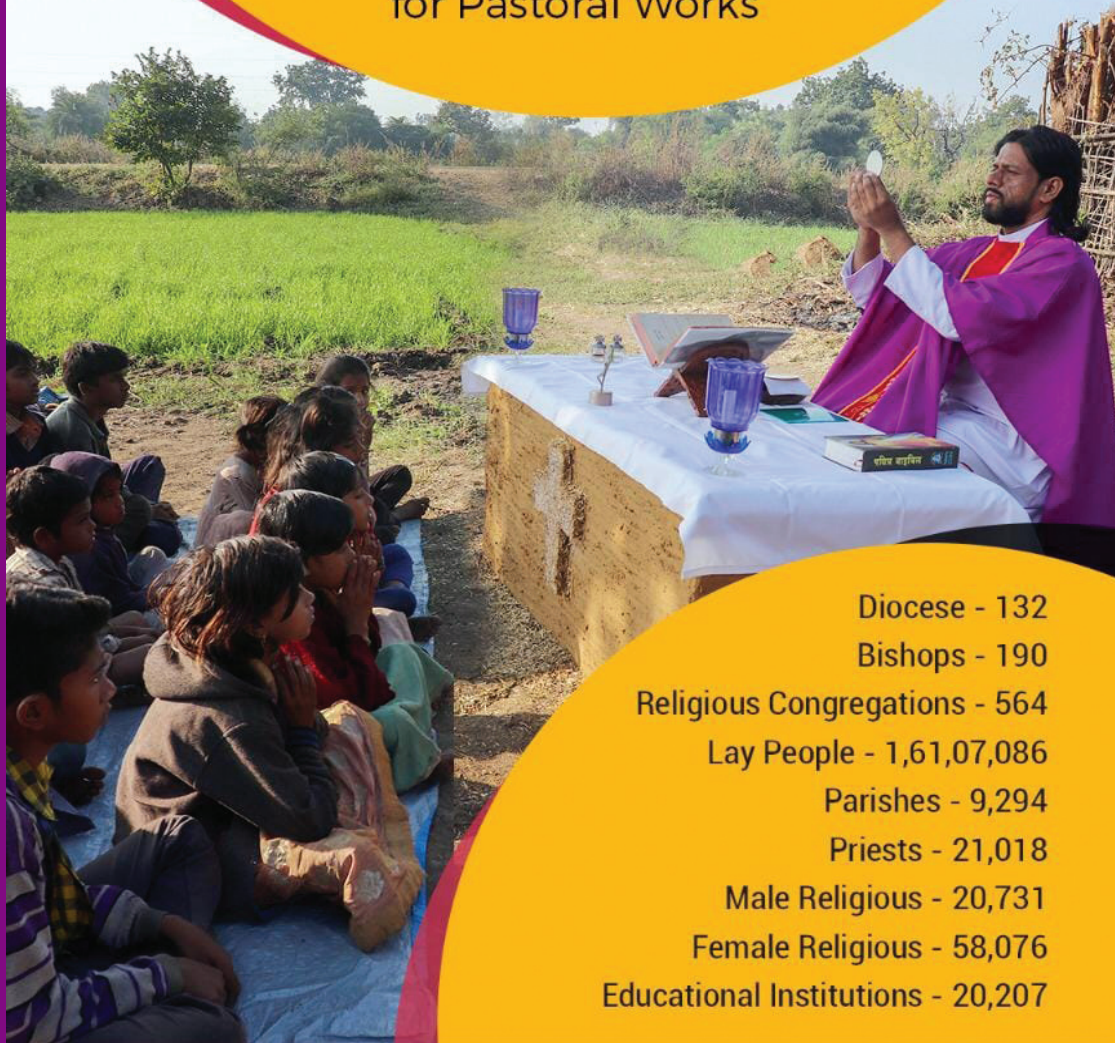
We wish our readers, subscribers, sponsors, well wishers, benefactors, students and animators **Blessed Christmas and a grace filled New Year 2021.**

YCS/YSM INDIA OLD MEMORIES



COMMUNIO INDIA

Support our Dioceses and
Religious Congregations
for Pastoral Works



Diocese - 132

Bishops - 190

Religious Congregations - 564

Lay People - 1,61,07,086

Parishes - 9,294

Priests - 21,018

Male Religious - 20,731

Female Religious - 58,076

Educational Institutions - 20,207



Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI)

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