



FEBRUARY 2008

(For Private Circulation)

PROGRAMME OF ACTING PROVINCIAL

16Feb. : Dindigul
17Feb. : Sec. Edn. GBM at Madurai
24Feb-1Mar : Dindigul

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

General Body Meeting of the Secondary Education Commission on 17.02.2008 from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm at St. Mary's H.S. School, Madurai

NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

LOYOLA COLLEGE, CHENNAI

Fr. Joe Arun states that a sprinkling of the staff and students of Canisius College, Buffalo, the USA participated in a series of lectures on *Indian Cultures and Religions*.

Fr. N. Casimir Raj gave the keynote address on 26th January to the Jesuit Alumni.

The College conducted its Annual Convocation on January 18. A total number of 2096 candidates received the degree.

Mr. Michael O Leavitt, Secretary, Health and Human Services, the USA, witnessed on the College premises the introduction of the Red Ribbon Express, campaigning for HIV/AIDS awareness in the presence of the central and the local health ministers.

The Tamil Department conducted a three-day international seminar on the theme *Education and Social Change through the Medium of Mother Tongue*. A few of the participants besides the Loyola men included Ministers, Vice Chancellors and other dignitaries.

Besides enabling the Province Team of the FSJ Congregation to acquire a mission orientation in today's world, **Fr.P. Francis Xavier** helped its Principals and HMs to acquire administrative capacity building through several workshops. A three-day national conference on *Biodiversity, Bio-resources and Biotechnology for Sustainable Livelihood of Rural Community* was conducted by LIFE with 20 invited speakers and 35 research papers. Fr. Francis Xavier was the conference convener. LIFE, recognised as the nodal agency for Tamil Nadu, organized a workshop for DNA Club school students.

LIBA, combining with the National Centre for Corporate Governance and the Department of Community Affairs held a workshop on corporate governance on 25th January. On 1st February in the presence of **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**, LIBA honoured NTPC with the Mother Teresa Award for Corporate Excellence and Social Responsibility.

A.G. Leonard

LOYOLA INSTITUTES, KUPPAYANALLUR

The parish priests **Frs. Bellarmine, Wilfred and Kennedy** worked round the clock to make the Christmas and New Year celebrations meaningful, and attractive. The Loyola H.S. School made a unique contribution of carol services to the nearby parishes exhibiting their concern for the poor and the talents of the kids studying in the parish school on the initiative of **Frs. Dominic and Gerlin**. We appreciate them.

A group of nine collegians from the USA were here in our campus from 2nd to 6th Jan. Their main purpose was to study Indian situations. It was a fruitful visit as our students interacted with them in English on craft making skills.

Regents of our Province made their Triduum in Kuppayannallur from 29-31 December. Thanks for selecting such a remote place.

Gnanaraj

AHAL, KILPENNATHUR

December and January were the busiest months for the AHAL Centre. It organized Pre-Christmas for Women, Youth and Siruvar Sangams at the Centre on 16th December.

Jesuit Chennai Mission Assembly bore powerful witness through our poor and simple people. Ten from AHAL Centre 7 from the parish and 12 from the AHAL Kalaikulu were taken to the Mission Assembly. Our AHAL Kalaikulu staged two items, namely '**Cell Phone**' and portrayal of '**Paraiattam**' which were much appreciated by the spectators.

Twelve new houses were blessed at Kilpennathur on 17th January by **Fr.A. Victor**, and were inaugurated by **Br.S. Kulandairaj**. Thanks to **Fr. Xavier Johan** and his team from France.

Pongal was celebrated in all the substations of our parish. People came together, cooked together, and shared the meal without any kind of distinction.

The AHAL with the help of the youth and the village leaders organized the **First Arunthathiar Conference** ON 19th January. More than 1000 people actively participated in it. **Fr.A. Victor** inaugurated it by lighting a lamp. **Fr. Jose Inchakal**, lawyer, delivered the inaugural speech illustrating the life mode of the Arunthathiars. **Fr. Eugene Muthu**, Social Action Coordinator, took part in the inaugural session. His talk was mainly on the development of the people. Many others spoke. Their thought-provoking talks stirred the people effectively.

The presence of **Frs. Joe Xavier**, ISI, Bangalore, **Xavier Raj**, PEAK, Kodaikanal, **Anbu**, Palayamkottai, **Schs. Suman, John Paul and Leoline** made us feel like one family.

The fifth release of the magazine '**Ilaiyor Elutchi**' was by **Mr. Palanisamy**, the President of KARISAL Sangam.

We gratefully commit to memory the whole celebration and thank the sponsors who generously contributed to make this event a remarkable one.

S A Durai

DE NOBILI COLLEGE, PUNE

During the Christmas vacation, eleven of us participated in an International Symposium on «Science-Religion Dialogue in a Globalizing World» organized by Indian Institute of Science and Religion (IISR), Pune. It was a nice experience to interact with Scientists and Educationists from various parts of the world.

Fr. Arul Jeevan preached an eight-day retreat in Bangalore. He also attended a seminar on "The Preservation of Archives Using Fumigation Techniques", organized by the Reserve Bank of India.

We, along with the Tamil people of Ghorpuri had a simple and meaningful Pongal celebration with a solemn Mass.

Seven of our second year men have successfully defended their seminar thesis. They were well appreciated by their guides and the attendees of the seminar. A warm welcome to **Schs. Vargheesh** and **Rayappan** who have joined our community after a fruitful and enriching experience in the slum.

Sch. Viji Bose is convalescing after an attack of chicken pox. Kindly remember him in your prayers.

Sebastian Crossian

News from Dharudemala Slum (Pune)

Sch. Vargheesh founded "**Loyola Intensive English Coaching Centre**" (LIECC), to teach English not only to school-going children but also to dropouts and working children. Under his guidance, LIECC students exhibited a project on global warming at ASSR science exhibition in DNC during Balmela 2007. The LIECC students bagged the first prize, a cash award of Rs. 3000/-, which brought much hope to the desperate lives of the slum children and of course smiles on their stained faces. **Sch. Vargheesh** got scholarships from the Papal seminary for the education of 17 students of the slum. **Sch. Divyanandam** taught English in Ashakiran, a study centre for the slum children. His creative method of teaching attracted several children to the centre. **Sch. Rayappan** was the overall coordinator for catechism at the Sacred Heart Parish, Yerwada. His way of organizing programmes was well appreciated by the parishioners.

The birth centenary of **Fr. Pedro Arrupe** was celebrated in Dharudemala slum in a grand manner on November 24, 2007. As part of the celebration, sports were conducted for different age groups and a cultural programme was staged by the slum children which was very impressive.

After completing our six-month slum experience, we are happy and proud to say "Being with the poor and the oppressed is a privilege and a challenge which brings about an inner transformation in our values and attitudes towards others. All this comes about as a result of loving these people as our own brothers and sisters and being loved by them".

Vargeesh Antony

VIDYAJYOTI, DELHI

Fr. T.B. Jeyaseelan, the canonist gave a course on Marriage Law and Parish Law. We, the Maduraians visited Haridwar and Rishikesh along with the first year theologians. It was an enriching experience to be in the holy places of Hindus. On the 11th Nov was the celebration of Balmela. Around 500 children took part.

Fr. Innocent Xess, the administrator of St. Stephen's Hospital was the chief Guest. The birth centenary of Fr. Pedro Arrupe was celebrated on 14th Nov with the Eucharist; "Pedro Arrupe: the Visionary and the Optimist" was the theme. Fr. K.C. Philip was the main celebrant.

Fr. Leo, the advisor of Delhi State AICUF, despite his busy work, led the AICUF students to village exposure. Earlier he and the student representatives had been to Chennai for the national meeting. He also took part in the ISPCCK executive committee and governing body meetings. Fr. Leo is the first Catholic member of this organization. **Fr. Arokiasamy** is a member of the drafting committee for the preparatory documents of FABC general assembly. He went to Hong Kong for five days to finalize the documents with the core committee. **Frs. Eugene and Xavier (PEAK)** were in ISI for the SAPI meeting and made a friendly visit to VJ.

Students and staff of VJ took part in the protest organized by the Christian leaders of India for Dalit Christian Reservation. On 1st December VJ was excited with its Community Day celebration. We celebrated an anticipated Christmas on 14th December. Rev. Valsan Thambu, Principal of St. Stephen's College was the chief guest. **Sch. Michael John** presented 'Kolattam' and received thunderous applause from the crowd.

The third year theologians made their retreat in the last week of December. Pongal was celebrated in a grand way at VJ. **Sch. Loyola** meticulously chose Tamil folk songs for the cultural programme and prepared a meaningful liturgy. People were taken up by the wonderful performance of their children.

Loyola

ARUL KADAL, CHENNAI

Fr. Maria Arul Raja guided a number of groups in the celebration of a meaningful Christmas. He shared on *Incarnational Reach out through our Body* with the Chengalpattu diocesan clergy and CRI general body. He generated a source of woman power from 400 domestic employees and 1600 school girls through his talk on *Integration by woman power*. He also inspired nearly 20,000 pilgrims in Malai Mazhai Madha Shrine in Achirupakkam with his preaching on *Equality through Motherly Affection*. In the Tamil Theology Forum of Chennai Region, he made the gathering spellbound with his talk on *Deconstruction of Images of Women*.

On 12 January, a Balmela for the children from the neighbouring slums was conducted. It was really a day of love and laughter for everyone. The annual Lonergan Seminar on *Intrusion of Media World* was effectively organised on 19 and 26 of January at Arul Kadal and CRDS, Chengalpettu respectively. More

than 200 participants from the parishes and from the NGOs attended this seminar and made it fruitful with their meaningful interventions. We had a one-day outing to Pondicherry on 23rd Jan. **Frs. Maria Arul Raja** and **Raj Irudaya** attended a one-week meeting of the Editorial Board of Dalit Bible commentary organised by the Centre for Dalit / Subaltern Studies, New Delhi.

Paul

BESCHI ILLAM, DINDIGUL

On 16 January, we celebrated the Pongal festival with grandeur and gaiety at our farm with our co-workers and CIS Sisters. **Fr. S. Amalraj** conducted a 4-day course on "Basic Electricals" from 14 to 17 January. The novices were awestruck by Fr. V. S. Manickam's prodigious memory when he unfolded the ins and outs of biological diversity. He also gave a talk on 'Is God Visible?' from the viewpoints of Ecology, Thirukkural and Ignatian Spirituality. Novices won a landslide victory in a volleyball match against the novices of the "Missionaries of Faith". On 17, January 30 Sisters from five different Congregations began their tertianship in CIS.

M. Christu Raja

ST MARY'S, DINDIGUL

Thanks to the efforts, initiative and interest of **Fr. Vinny**, our Superior. St. Mary's is clean and green now. Congratulations to **Fr. Vincent Amalraj**, our Headmaster, who is appointed a member of the vigilance committee for the implementation of the 20-points programme at the district level.

During the function to felicitate our state level hockey winners, many prominent old students and others lauded the achievement of the students by giving them mementos and prizes. Our school hockey team represented Tamil Nadu in the National Hockey Tournament and got the third place.

On the occasion of Pongal, some of our illustrious alumni sponsored and gave prizes and thus encouraged the first and second rank holders in the half yearly exams of 10th and 12th standards and the State level winners and participants in games. The teachers responsible for these achievements were also honoured.

Our alumni association organized on 9th January an interschool seminar on the current ecological issues and our urgent need to protect the earth. Mr. Nammalwar, a renowned ecologist, natural scientist and a protagonist of eco farming was the resource person.

S.M. John Kennedy.

ST MARY'S, MADURAI

It was a colourful Pongal celebration at St. Mary's Cathedral with rangoli (kolam) contest around the church. About 700 people participated in the special Pongal Mass celebrated by **Fr. Stephen**, the APP. The youth of the parish welcomed the gathering with 'Thappattam'; the children, women, farmers and workers offered the fruits of the earth with joy and gratitude for all the gifts received from God; the parishioners shared sweet pongal with all the participants at the end of the Holy Mass.

Br.A. Santiago organized the Pongal celebrations with gusto in our dairy farm and the Melamadai farm in collaboration with our farm workers. The school and the hostel community organized a meaningful celebration of Pongal in their campus.

Recently we had the 99th School Day Celebration. Sr. Jeya Mary, one of the Best Teacher Awardee distributed the prizes to the best students. **Fr. Ignatius Britto**, presented the Annual Report of the school; **Fr. Joe Xavier**, AHM and **Fr. L. Stephen**, Student Counsellor facilitated the cultural programmes.

St. Mary's Computer Academy has been selected by the Government of Tamil Nadu for conducting free coaching classes to candidates of religious minorities appearing for civil service examinations.

Felix Joseph

LOYOLA ACADEMIC & TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS (LATI)

All the staff and students of LATI celebrated Pongal with a difference. **Fr. Anbu**, of the Schoenstatt congregation, touched us with his talk on the richness of Tamil Culture.

Sch. S. Maria Packiam as the representative of Loyola Centre for Collaborative Action Research for Enhancement (LCARE), was invited to participate in the International Symposium on "Science and Religion Dialogue in a Globalizing World" held in Pune and organized by Indian Institute of Science and Religion (IISR). His article on "**Gene Manipulation, its Ethical and Religious implications in the Modern Scenario**" was published in the proceedings of the National Seminar held in Auxilium College, Dept. of Zoology, Vellore. Representing LCARE, **Fr. Stephen J. Muthu** moderated a session on the relevant Psychology and Spirituality for the school dropouts at the World Congress on Psychology and Spirituality held in Delhi.

"Talents Show' at Madurai Community College (MCC) was well organized under the guidance of **Fr. Maria Louis**, the Asst. Director of MCC. Both girls and boys exhibited their talents through games and cultural show.

For the first time at LATI campus, the students of Loyola I.T.I and MCC brought all the teaching and non-teaching staff together and conducted games for them. **Fr. J.S. Jeyapathy** distributed the prizes for the winners.

Bro. Ignacy, organized a guest lecture on Solar Thermal Technology

Maria Packiam

DACA, MADURAI

On 16th January the Pongal celebration brought all the inmates of DACA together in the dairy farm. **Fr. C. Marianthan** blessed the Pongal and the cattle.

Madurai City Conservancy Workers' Development Project gathered the 10th std students from its 16 Evening Study Centres for a one-day camp at IDEAS. The participants had time to clarify their doubts in their subjects.

On 17th Jan **Mr. Stephen** an associate of **Fr. Stephen Martin** enlightened our school going, tailoring and computer students on media education. The students realized the value of a documentary movie.

Ceyrac Medical Foundation (**CMF**) conducted a medical camp at Vadathakulam on 18th Jan. It served the dual purpose of catering to the medical needs of the poor Dalits of the vicinity as well as making known the hospital.

On 26th Jan "**DACA DAY**" began with a thanksgiving Eucharist. In the evening DACA wore a festive look and had a grand cultural celebration. "**Viduthalai Vetkai**", a CD of social awareness songs stole the show. Songs were selected from a competition conducted by DACA Media Centre. The winners were awarded cash: Rs. 5000, 3000 and 1500.

On 27th Jan **Mr. Chandra Bose**, leader of **Immanuel Peravai**, motivated the Self-Help Groups and Evening Study Centres' regional and zonal coordinators on Dalits' Human Rights.

Packiaraj

ST XAVIER'S INSTITUTES, PALAYAMKOTTAI

The feast of St Francis Xavier was celebrated in a very grand manner. The Solemn High Mass in the morning was followed by a sumptuous breakfast for all the teaching and non-teaching staff, alumni, friends and well-wishers of our institution. The staff and students of both the shifts I and II had a meaningful prayer service and the statue of St Francis Xavier was garlanded by the representatives of students, teaching and non teaching staff.

The **INDECO 2007** (Interdepartmental arts and cultural competitions), were held in a very captivating way. This year 24 competitions were held and the

participation and the discipline of our students were exemplary. The inclement weather and downpour did not dampen the spirit of our students. The MCA department clinched the winners' trophy and the Commerce department of shift II coveted the runner's trophy. **Fr. Alphonse Manickam**, the Principal initiated the intercollegiate carol competitions, **SERAPHIM 2007**. Many colleges took part in them. The **Infant Jesus Engineering College, Valanadu**, won the coveted first prize, a cash award of Rs. 3000/- and the second prize, Rs. 2000/- was won by **St Ignatius College of Education, Palayamkottai**. Kudos to **Fr Danis Ponnaiah**, the Vice-Principal and **Fr Rufus** who meticulously planned the week-long events of INDECO 2007 and the SERAPHIM 2007.

The tradition of celebrating Pongal was reestablished this year as the Department of Tamil organized a grand Pongal celebration on 12 January, highlighting cultural and traditional values. Sweet pongal was distributed to all the students. The shift II students celebrated Pongal with a meaningful prayer service and a rich message by **Fr.I. Jesudoss**.

Eighteenth January was a red-letter day in the history of St Xavier's College when 12000 students from 160 colleges gathered in the campus to participate in the Empower IT 2007 conducted by the ELCOT. Three IAS officers, 150 IT specialists and a galaxy of government officials, professors and software corporates led the cyber world students to yet another horizon of IT world. The College management went out of its way to raise the honour of St Xavier's to new heights.

On 23 and 24 January the Xavier Hostel students had their triple celebration of Christmas, New year and Pongal with cultural competitions and a grand debate in Tamil.

The students of the School also celebrated Pongal in a very grand manner. The consumer club organized a food exhibition. The District Collector and the Commissioner inaugurated it and students from different schools participated. St. Xavier's H.S. School bagged the prize. In the National Athletic meet, Merwin set a record in the hundred metres dash and bagged the second prize in the 200 metres dash too. Four students of the School were selected for the National Volleyball team and have created history again.

Fr Rufus preached an eight-day, retreat to a group of Sisters. The scholastics of our community made their triduum preached by **Fr. Charles Tudu** (DUM). On 18, 25 and 29 January Fr Manickam conducted a workshop on Environment to 85 parents of students of Carmel H.S. School, St Xavier's H.S. School and LTI, respectively.

Rufus

ST JOSEPH'S, TIRUCHI

On 3rd January when the college reopened it had its New Year celebrations with the staff and students. After the common prayer service invoking God's blessings for the New Year, Frs. Rector, Secretary and Principal greeted the staff and students. In a separate session with the staff, Fr. Rector urged the staff members to give their ideas and suggestions in order to meet the global challenges and take the College to grater heights.

The College was happy to host a four-day national exhibition called **Samarthya 2008** for the benefit of the disabled. The exhibition organized by the National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD), a unit of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the State government featured in 125 stalls special equipment and devices for persons with various kinds of disabilities. The Social Welfare Minister said that the State Government had increased the allocation for the Handicapped Rehabilitation Department to Rs. 65 crores.

The Jesuit Province Task Force appointed by Fr. Provincial, consisting of **Frs. Kennedy, William Alphonse, Kamal** and **Paul Mike** visited the College on 18th January. They met the community members, the staff, both teaching and non teaching and the alumni members in different sessions and explained to them the proposed revisions of the Corporate Polices for the school and elicited their views on recruitment of the teaching staff for the college.

As part of his All India Peace Pilgrimage **Swami Sachidananda Bharathi** visited the College on 19th January and interacted with the students.

The formal inauguration of the IAS coaching programme of which **Fr. S. Lazar**, is the Director, took place on 23rd January in the JIM Auditorium. Shri. I. Raja, IPS Inspector General of Police, Central Zone, Tiruchirappalli was the chief guest. He exhorted the students to make good use of the wonderful opportunity at their doorstep. The coaching programme with its excellent faculty and course materials is creating waves in Tiruchi Town. The celebration of Christmas, New Year and Pongal by the **Lourdes Parish** was marked by lively participation of the parishioners. Apart from sports for children and cultural programmes that enthralled the audience, nearly a thousand poor people were fed as part of the festivals.

Fr. K. Arockiam has submitted his Ph.D thesis titled 'A Study on the Social Consequences of Protracted Camp Life of the Sri Lankan Refugees in Tamil Nadu' to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchi. It must be noted that his thesis was very much appreciated by his guide.

Fr. S. Mariadoss presented a paper titled 'Micro Finance through NGO – an effective Poverty Reduction

Tool' in the three days' "International Conference on Micro Finance" held by the Department of Commerce, Pondicherry University.

Louis Xavier

GANSOVILLE, DEVAKOTTAI

On 5 Jan., the Health Awareness camp at Andavoorani was very well organized. Nearly 200 people from 6 nearby villages turned up, braving the heavy rains. The cultural programme of the children highlighted the necessity of health and hygiene.

On 6 January 39 teachers of the Evening Study Centres were given special coaching to prepare the students for the annual exams.

After the introduction of the LCD projector, the students have become more enthused during the weekend study camps in the Palmera house, to learn more and more. In the villages too, this medium reaches out to the Evening Study Centres, very effectively.

On 26, January a literary core group, comprising of 10 social thinkers in and around Devakottai, had a preliminary session, to plan out the prospects of the budding library and documentation unit in the Palmera house.

Masillamani

THOZHAMAI ILLAM, KANYAKUMARI

Retreat ministry is our priority and all of us engaged ourselves in directing different groups of retreatants.

Fr. Maria Jeyaraj conducted two dialogue session on Ayya Vazhi, a movement for the liberation of the oppressed.

Fr. Korkoniyas Moses conducted yoga meditations at a camp organized by Fr. Francis Jayapathy for 21 alcoholics. He gave talks on the spiritual aspect of counselling alcoholics to the counsellors who attended a four-day camp at Thozhamai Illam. He also gave classes to the Capuchin novices at Pampanvilai on the practice of meditation.

C. Valiaveetil

AICUF

The Madurai Regional camp was held from Jan 15 to 17, at Karisal with the main theme "Film Analysis and Media Education". Fr. Baskar from Arul Anandar College spoke on "Youth and Fan Club" He insisted that most of the youth are being misled by the Cinema culture and lose their excellence in the academic life. Prof. Kandan from SXC, spoke on "Youth and Cinema". During the course of the camp students were taken to Dalit villages for exposure. The receptive and caring culture of the Dalits of 'Karisal' area has made a tremendous impact on the students. Fr. Michaelraj, the Director of Karisal trained the students to view the films from three different perspectives namely from the

social, political and cultural points of view. He invited the students to create an alternative medium to give awareness to the youth of today.

The 16th Dalit Exposure Camp commenced on 12th January. Forty students from various colleges of Tamil Nadu participated and most of the students expressed that the three days' camp had a tremendous effect on them. At the outset **Fr. V. Thomas** gave the presidential address, **Fr. Wenisch**, and **Fr. Arul Ravi**, gave the felicitation address. They encouraged the students to transform the unjust society by extending their selfless service. Students were sent for village exposure to the nearby Jesuit parish Ariamangalam for two days. On the second day evening students gave a cultural programme to the people.

Tiruchi Regional Camp was conducted from January 25-27, at Punalvasal Parish. **Fr. Anandanathan** and others spoke on the topics such as Reservation and Religion, Buddhism in Ambedkar's Perspective, Religion in Periar's perspective and Religion and Terrorism. People of Punalvasal Parish were very much enthused and edified to send their children to the AICUF.

Arul Ravi

KALANGARAI, NAGAPATTINAM

Consecutively for the third year, Nagai Jesuit team organized in the beginning of January 2008 a six-day analytical exposure programme for the students of Boston College, Graduate School of Social work, the USA. They were exposed to the realities of children, Dalits, widows, youth and fisherfolk, followed by a series of reflection sessions. The students got themselves fully immersed in the programme and were in tears while listening to the experiences of caste and gender victims. On the last day of the programme, they took part with real enthusiasm in the Pongal celebration organized in one of the Dalit villages. To sum up, they were shaken up by the stark realities of life, thrilled by the simple but genuine hospitality of our people and enthused by the hope found among our people in the midst of hardships.

Self-Help Groups (SHG) formed by widows and abandoned women are growing in awareness of their democratic rights. They are knocking at the doors of the district collectors' offices to demand Old Age Pension (OAP) and sanitary facilities for the common good of the village.

It really gives us joy to hear from a boy, R. Muruganathan, (a tsunami victim from P.R. Puram, Nagai) who did a diploma course for house electrician in Madurai Community College and is now drawing a monthly salary of Rs.12,000 in Dubai. He has written a beautiful letter expressing his gratitude to Kalangarai which sponsored his one-year (2005-2006) diploma course.

Ordination companions (2004 batch) gathered together at Vailankanni. Eight of them met for a one-

day sharing-cum-reflection and offered concelebrated Mass for the success of GC 35. The Nagai Jesuit team was doubly happy to receive these young Jesuits and hosted a sumptuous dinner.

Fr.A. Irudayaraj preached a triduum for the Arul Kadal scholastics and also made a presentation on the impact of mass media for a hundred rural youth at LONERGAN Memorial Seminar organized by Arul Kadal.

A. Irudayaraj

FR. SELVARAJ ARULNATHAN WRITES:

I went to Houston, Texas, to combine my Christmas vacation with my field work for my thesis, to have a broader perspective of the African-American social reality. I chose Houston because it is the fourth largest city in the country and in a way a big industrial capital of the Southern States of the US. Hence it was very much in the limelight of the civil rights movement and the integration process later on. It was very significant for me in many ways that I met some people who were directly involved in the civil rights movement and the integration and also who are part and parcel of the modern Houstonian history. I was also fortunate to attend a conference of **Muhammad Yunus** from Bangladesh, the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2006 and the founder of the Grameen Bank which has earned a worldwide acclamation. He was very happy when I shared with him that I too work in creating micro credit units and self help groups. It was a moment of grace to have met a "**modern saint of the poor**" beyond religion.

Back in the chill weather of Chicago I am gradually getting into my interviews and writing the thesis that concerns the African-American social reality. I am planning to do some more interviews in a few other places outside Chicago and adding the results to my thesis. We are expecting colder weather plunging to -20° centigrade in the next few weeks. I hope to survive this and go ahead with my survey.

NEWS FROM THE MADURAI-TRIO IN NAGALAND

In November, **Sch. Philip** conducted a catechism camp for the school children in collaboration with UFS Sisters. A large number of children benefited from this 3-day joint venture. His spirit of motivating the school students was appreciated. All his students in class IX std were promoted to X std. Kudos to Philip. We began the academic year on 2nd February after the winter vacation. Currently Schs. Philip and Cyril are engaged in coaching the IX std students especially in Mathematics and Science. The students will appear for their examinations in March.

Fr. Elankeswaran with his zeal and fervour inspires the people here. Along with him, Schs. Philip and Cyril had a fruitful Christmas ministry in three different villages. The Naga-tribals over here are so kind and compassionate that we enjoy their hospitality whenever we visit them.

After Christmas **Fr. Jerome**, the PCF, invited all the regents of this Region for a day of reflective sharing followed by a triduum and renewal of vows. And so, we seven of us, travelled to Manipur where **Fr. Mathew Isathong**, new priest preached the triduum. We renewed our vows. We also visited our mission centres there.

Cyril Suresh

FR. MARIA SINGARAYAR WRITES:

The FALL semester ended on 14th December. During the holidays I visited Loyola University and Loyola Press in Chicago and was very happy to meet our Province men **Fr. John Gualbert** at Neillsville, Wisconsin and **Fr. Stephen Rodrigo** at Byron Centre, Michigan.

I celebrated Christmas and New Year at the Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Grosse Pointe Woods, Archdiocese of Detroit with my friends **Frs. Devadoss** and **Amirthasamy** of the Diocese of Kumbakonam. The occasion of PONGAL on 13th January, was a great joy to celebrate Mass in Tamil at the National Shrine Basilica of Our Lady of Assumption in Washington DC, organized by the alumni of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli along with the Tamil Catholic Community and co-ordinated by **Fr. Russel Raj, O.C.D.** After the Mass we had a get-together with the Josephites. Many of them praised our contribution to their growth through the best education and discipline and in particular our option for the poor and specially the formation through SHEPERD programme.

The Spring semester begins on 4th February. I am continuing the course in Pastoral Counselling for the second semester and also another course in Christian Social Ethics with particular reference to Human Rights along with different workshops.

NEW RELEASES

"tṭLj i y Ntli f" CD of social awareness songs by DACA Media Centre, Madurai 22. Rs.75/-

"**The Zen Way**" by Fr. AMA Samy, Vaigarai, pp.168, Rs. 60/-.

ABIDE WITH THE LORD

Fr. Vincent D' Silva (BOM) 88/68, on 17 Dec. 2007 at Vinayalaya.

Fr. Joseph Remedios (CCU) 74/53, on 10 Jan. 2008 at Kolkata

Fr. John Pimenta (BOM) 93/60 on 18 Jan. 2008 at Vinayalaya

Mrs. Arul Mary Manohari, 52 sister of Br. Sadhanandam on 12 Jan.

Mrs. Irudaya Mary, 85 mother of Fr.S. Amalraj (Manalur) on 5 Feb.

EVIL WANTS GOOD TO PREVAIL

One day, the Persian poet, Rumi que Mo'avia, the first of the Ommiad caliphs, was sleeping in his palace when he was woken up by a strange man.

'Who are you?' he asked.

'I am Lucifer,' came the reply.

'And what do you want?'

'It is the hour for prayers, and yet you are still asleep.'

Mo'avia was amazed. Why was the Prince of Darkness, who seeks out the souls of men of little faith, reminding him to fulfil his religious duties?

'Remember,' Lucifer explained, 'I was brought up as an angel of light. Despite everything that has happened to me, I cannot forget my origins. A man may travel to Rome or to Jerusalem, but he always carries the values of his own country in his heart. Well, the same thing happens with me. I still love the Creator, who nourished me when I was young and taught me to do good. When I rebelled against Him, it was not because I did not love Him; on the contrary, I loved Him so much that I felt jealous when He created Adam. At that moment, I wanted to defy the Lord, and that was my downfall; nevertheless, I still remember the blessings bestowed on me and hope that, perhaps, by doing good, I can one day return to paradise.'

Mo'avia replied: 'I can't believe what you're saying. You have been responsible for the destruction of many people on earth.'

'Well, you *should* believe it,' insisted Lucifer. 'Only God can build and destroy, because He is all-powerful. When He created man, He also created, as part of life, desire, vengeance, compassion, and fear. So when you look at the evil around you, don't blame me; I merely reflect back the bad things that happen.'

Mo'avia was sure that something was wrong, and he began to pray desperately to God to enlighten him. He spent the whole night talking and arguing with Lucifer; but despite the brilliant arguments he heard, he remained unconvinced.

When day was dawning, Lucifer finally gave in and said:

'You're right. When I came yesterday to wake you up so that you would not miss the hour of prayer, my intention was not to bring you closer to the Divine Light. I knew that if you failed to fulfil your obligations, you would feel profoundly sad and, over the next few days, would pray with twice the faith, asking forgiveness for having forgotten the correct ritual. In the eyes of God, each one of those prayers made with love and repentance would be equivalent to two hundred prayers said in an ordinary, automatic way. You would end up more purified and more inspired; God would love you more; and I would be still further from your soul.'

Lucifer vanished, and an angel of light took his place:

'Never forget today's lesson,' the angel said to Mo'avia. 'Sometimes evil comes disguised as an emissary of good, but its real intention is to cause more destruction.'

On that day, and the days that followed, Mo'avia prayed with repentance, compassion, and faith. His prayers were heard a thousand times by God.

(Courtesy: Like the Flowing River, by Paulo Coelho, pp. 210-212.)