

## VOCATION SUNDAY TESTIMONIES

REV. FR. RAVI MARMENI:

Fr. Ravi shared his vocation testimony with the parishioners on Vocation Sunday, 19th January, 2020. He joined the Diocesan Seminary for a short while but decided to come back. After that he and his brother were running a successful business. Sometime later, one of his cousins took him to visit the PIME seminary. After staying there for three days, he decided to go home and get his luggage which was an excuse not to return to the seminary. But to his utter surprise, he was shocked to see that his devout parents had already brought his luggage to the Seminary. As usual, he went home for his Christmas holidays and made up his mind not to return to the PIME seminary. His parents who were very keen that he joins the priesthood pleaded of him to stay on. After that there was no looking back. His mind was made up. After his Ordination, he was posted in different Mission Stations, where even the basic facilities were lacking. His strong resolve and prayerful life to soldier on in spite of the many challenges, made him head many institutions. He narrated how the life of a priest is so stressful especially in parishes, as all that they encounter is criticism and negative profiling. Fr. Ravi spoke candidly about stress taking a toll on a number of young priests, dying young, in the Archdiocese which is not a good trend and will only see declining vocations in the future.

REV. FR. MATEUS:

Fr. Mateus is a young, dynamic Brazilian priest doing his degree course at TISS. He resides at Irla Parish and attends College at Chembur. Like any other youth, he also had dreams to make it big in life, but the one nagging question that kept him perplexed was WHAT IS THE AIM OF MY LIFE. Slowly but surely, the Lord unfolded what was in store for him. After his final examination and not even waiting for the Graduation Ceremony, he accepted the Call of the Good Shepherd. Fr. Mateus is an early bird always the first to be in church for a one to one with the Lord. His down to earth homilies where he takes everyone along with his question/answers, make it interesting and easy to understand the WORD OF GOD. Let us lift him up so that the Good Lord may be with him in his missionary journey.

-Cicily Jose

## CONFIRMATION RETREAT: BEING A RESPONSIBLE CHRISTIAN

The Confirmation Candidates from our Parish made a one-day Retreat at Swarg Dwar, Talaja on 19th Jan. 2020:

They reflected on the topic 'Being a Responsible Christian'. Fr. Daniel, Rector at Swarg Dwar, led them through various spiritual and reflective exercises to make them understand what it's like to be a Responsible Christian. The day ended with the Sacrament of Reconciliation followed by a Eucharistic Celebration. It was indeed a day spent well amidst nature reflecting on one's Christian Responsibilities. We thank Fr. Ravi for arranging this Retreat.

- Sunday School Team



## SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

The newly established Sunday of the Word of God is an invitation to Catholics across the world to deepen their appreciation, love and faithful witness to God and His Word, said Pope Francis. By Papal decree, the third Sunday in Ordinary Time – January 26th, this year, is to be observed as a special day devoted to the "celebration, study and dissemination of the Word of God." A day dedicated to the Bible will help the church "experience anew how the Risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of His Word and enables us to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world."

Dioceses and parishes had been invited to respond with creative initiatives, helpful resources and renewed efforts for helping Catholics engage more deeply with the Bible at church and in their lives. Our Parish celebrated the Word of God Sunday with a solemn enthronement of the Bible during the 7am Parish Mass with an appropriate banner as a



backdrop with the words of the Psalm: YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO GUIDE MY FEET AND A LIGHT FOR MY PATH.

Fr. Mateus homily dwelt on the 3 steps like the Lectio Divina which are a) WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY (by itself) b) WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY TO ME (my life) and c) WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MAKE ME SAY (prayer). With these words, Fr. Mateus requested the congregation to read at least one chapter every day, which is food for the soul.

-Vera Sequeira

## GOING GREEN IS THE DREAM

Plastic Recycling was initiated in Irla Parish with a Street Play on 28th April, 2019. The next day the plastic recycling was started. Initially only 5 kgs would be collected weekly. Overall in 29 weeks we have sent 964 kgs (including plastic drive started in 2 neighbouring Societies)



Bisleri had also done a photo shoot at Irla Parish in December, 2019 taking interviews of our Parish Priest and members. One of our members interview was uploaded on "Bottles for Change" Facebook site.

Recognizing our effort Bisleri has gifted us this beautiful recycled bench made of 40 kgs recycled plastic on 25th January 2020.

Would like to thank Fr. Ravi, Bombay Catholic Sabha members and the parishioners of Irla for this achievement.

- Stanley D'Souza

Editorial Team: Fr. Ravi Marmeni (Editor), Susan D'Mello, Vera Sequeira, Macjoyle Barretto, Clayton Fonseca.



# VELANKANNI IRLA CALLING

FEBRUARY  
2020

Church of Our Lady of Health of Velankanni

## FROM THE DESK OF PARISH PRIEST

Dear Parishioners, Devotees, Pilgrims of Our Lady of Velankanni,

Though the shortest month of the year, February is rich in Liturgical activity. It contains a feast (Presentation of our Lord) that bridges two other seasons (Christmas and Easter)! In addition, the faithful may receive in February two of the four major public sacraments that the Church confers during the liturgical year: Blessing of the Candles and the Blessing of Throats.

The feast of Presentation of the Lord was first observed in the Eastern Church as "The Encounter." In the sixth century, it began to be observed in the West: in Rome with a more penitential character and in Gaul (France) with solemn blessings and processions of candles, popularly known as "Candlemas." The Presentation of the Lord concludes the celebration of the Nativity and with the offerings of the Virgin Mother and the prophecy of Simeon. In obedience to the Old Law, the Lord Jesus, the first-born, was presented in the Temple by his Blessed Mother and his foster father.

Focus of the Liturgy: The Gospel readings for the Sundays in February are taken from St. Matthew and are from Year A, Cycle 2 of the readings.

February 2nd - Presentation of the Lord	When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord
February 9th - Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time	Jesus said to His disciples, "You are the salt of the earth."
February 16th - Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time	In this Gospel Jesus says that He came to full the law not abolish it.
February 23rd - Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time	Jesus says to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
Feb. 26 <sup>th</sup> - Ash Wednesday	Joel 2: 12 - Return to me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing.

This year we begin the season of Lent on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> with Ash Wednesday. The Lenten season is intentionally set aside for examination, instruction, repentance and prayer. This season is one of preparation for all the people of God.

The significance of the 40-day period of Lent is based on two episodes of spiritual testing in the Bible: the 40 years of wilderness wanderings by the Israelites after the exodus from Egypt (Numbers 33:38 and Deuteronomy 1:3) and the Temptation of Jesus after he spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13).

- I. THE LENTEN SEASON IS THE TIME OF PREPARATION
- II. THE LENTEN SEASON IS THE TIME FOR PENITENCE AND DISCIPLINE
- III. THE LENTEN SEASON IS THE TIME FOR SPECIAL PRAYER

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Have a Blessed Lent!

Fr. Ravi Thanaiah Marmeni, PIME  
(Parish Priest)

### Parish Team:

Parish Priest – Fr. Ravi T. Marmeni,  
Asst. Parish Priest – Fr. Jaya Prasad  
Yekula, CPPS

### Sisters of St. Ann:

Sr. Fatima  
Sr. Teresa Elamthuruthy

### Parish Office Timings:

Monday to Friday: 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Saturday: Closed.  
Sunday: 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

### Donation & Mass Offering:

At donation stall from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### Book stall:

Monday to Thursday:  
2 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. FRIDAY HOLIDAY.  
Saturday: 7 a.m. to 7.30 p.m.  
Sunday: 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. & 5 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

### Mass Timings / schedule:

#### Saturday (Novena):

6.30 a.m. English  
8.00 a.m. Tamil  
2.30 p.m. Marathi  
3.30 p.m. Marathi  
4.30 p.m. Konkani  
6.30 p.m. English

#### Sunday:

7.00 a.m. English – Parish Mass  
9.00 a.m. English – Children's Mass  
6.30 p.m. English – Youth Mass

#### Weekdays:

6.30 a.m. & 7.00 p.m. (English)

#### Baptism:

Sunday during 9 a.m. Mass.

#### Confessions:

Fridays from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
or on request

#### Sick calls:

Anytime on request.  
SCC animators / PPC member /  
Eucharistic Minister to be informed.

#### Funeral:

To inform Parish Priest or  
SCC Animators.

#### Sunday school:

7.45 a.m. to 9 a.m.



## SPECIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2020

### HOLY FATHER'S UNIVERSAL INTENTION

#### LISTEN TO THE MIGRANTS' CRIES:

We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal trafficking, may be heard and considered.

Day/Date	Events
Saturday, 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb.	Bible Study after 6.30 pm Mass & Novena Service
Sunday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb.	Feast of the Presentation of our Lord. Celebrated as day of consecrated life. Parishioners to carry their own candles to be blessed.
Monday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb.	Feast of St. Blaise. Blessing of Throats during the masses
4 <sup>th</sup> - 10 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	Health week. A prayer for different ailments to be said during this period at the masses.
Friday, 7 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	First Friday of the Month. Chaplet of Mercy recited at 3pm in church. Half-hour adoration after 7pm mass to be conducted by St. Anthony's community
Sunday, 9 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time. 2 <sup>nd</sup> collection for Holy Childhood association
Tuesday, 11 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes [World Day of the Sick]
Sunday, 16 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> Feb.	Annual Pilgrimage to Infant Jesus Shrine Nasik, organized by Sr. Citizens Association. Kindly give your name to the sisters of St. Anne
Saturday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb.	Feast of the Chair of St. Peter, Aposptle.
Sunday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb.	Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Wednesday, 26 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	<b>Ash Wednesday</b> A day of fast & abstinence. Ashes to be imposed at 6.30 am and 7.00 pm masses.

### INSTALLATION AND INAUGURATION OF ST. ANTHONY'S STATUE



The statue of St. Anthony was installed and inaugurated on 5th January 2020 after the 7 a.m. mass on the auspicious feast of The Three Kings coinciding with the birthday of our Parish Priest Fr. Ravi. It is a boon for our parishioners since many of them go to St. Xavier's church, Vile Parle every Tuesday to attend the novena of St. Anthony. As usual our Parish Priest is always thinking of ways and means to enhance other devotions and it's probably because of this that he thought of installing St. Anthony's statue, making use of the small space available.

Fr. Ravi has already started the novena prayer to St. Anthony every Tuesday.

We thank Fr. Ravi for having started the novena prayer.

-Blossom Coates

### PARISH PRIEST REV. FR. RAVI MARNENI'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Psalm 16/8 says "I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand I will not be shaken." That is Fr. Ravi, our Parish Priest. The PPC members, the Assistant PP, sisters and the Sunday school students, all joined in the celebrations. The first thing Fr. Ravi did after celebrating the 7am Eucharist was to bless and inaugurate the newly installed statue of St. Anthony of Padua.

All then gathered outside the church for a small felicitation when he was thanked and prayed over with outstretched hands by the parishioners. A befitting hymn May the good lord bless and keep you was sung by the young and old. Raffelia Fonseca, a parish councillor, expressed her gratitude to the Parish Priest, 'for taking our parish from where it was to where it stands today.'

As Father cut his birthday cake, the parishioners sang the birthday song and also Showers of Blessings. As a token of our love, a floral bouquet was given to him in appreciation for all the work he has done in the Parish. Fr. Ravi thanked the parishioners and asked each one to pray for him so that he may continue to work for the Ministry that God wanted him to choose. Cake and coffee were



served to those who had gathered for the occasion.

The function was brought to a close with the words from the Scriptures "May the Lord Bless You; make his Face shine on you; and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance on you and give you peace!" This is our prayer and wishes for you on your special day.

-Vera Fernandes

### SVP STUDY CLASS – SPORTS DAY

The Annual Sports Event for our study class students was held on Sunday, 12th January, 2020 at the Velankanni Recreation Grounds from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. About 48 children along with one of their parent, and our SVP members were present at the sports day event.



A few older children came in early and prepared the grounds with white chalk markings of the "Start and Finish lines. By 11 a.m. after a sumptuous breakfast of buns and bananas, the children led by Br. Liju and some SVP members were ready to take the oath. Multi-colored balloons were released to declare open the games. The children were divided into six groups, age wise and participated in 3 events each. Some of the races were: Flat running race, bunny hop, eating the Biscuits, collecting

Potatoes, Marble and spoon race, passing through the loop, Getting Ready for School, Book Balancing and Memory Test. The children enthusiastically participated in all the events and competed for the first, second and third prizes. There was also eating the Banana race for the parents and "Book balancing race for the SVP members. By 12.30 p.m. the children were tired and hungry and indulged into the unlimited chaat items freshly prepared, like pani puri, bhel puri, sev puri and ragda pattice.

After 1 p.m. the main sponsor of our event arrived with her son "Jiven" with a huge iced cake to celebrate his 11th

### MEDICAL AID DISBURSED TO NEEDY PATIENTS

Our Parish disburses medical every year to patients of all faiths for the treatment of cancer and kidney diseases (especially Dialysis). The process begins in January every year. Necessary notices are issued well in advance to intimate the patients the date on which tokens will be issued on a first come first served basis.

This year this procedure was conducted on 10th January, 2020. Nearly 500 patients were allotted dates to receive the medical aid. This aid is given to patients on every Friday of the year, except during lent, nativity devotions and Christmas.

Patients are required to submit their applications together with a photo copy of the attending hospital or clinic. Needless to say the original is required for the purpose of verification, related bills and address proof, for them to be considered eligible for the aid.

This year the aid was increased from Rs. 3,000/- to Rs. 4,000/- for non-Catholics and from Rs. 4,000/- to Rs. 6,000/- for Catholic patient. However, Catholic patients are also required to furnish a letter of recommendation from their respective Parish Priest. In cases of emergency, medical aid is also distributed to our Catholic Parishioners during the year at the discretion of the Parish Priest.

-Herbert Coates

### THREE WISE MEN VISIT BABY JESUS AT IRLA CHURCH



Three Wise Men from the Sunday School: Royce Fernandes, Jitesh Khakha, Godwin Gavdar.

birthday, and Return gifts of Bath towels. We had a special event of "Book Balancing" Race where he participated and won the first prize and also a trophy. Fr. Ravi our Parish Priest arrived and graced the occasion with his presence. He addressed the children and then distributed the cash prizes to the first three winners in each event. Trophies were also distributed to those children who bagged prize in all three events in their age group. Scholarship prizes awarded by Area Council and Irla Welfare Centre were also distributed to our meritorious students. SVP also distributed scholarship to the remaining children to motivate them to perform better in their studies. Sport Day ended on a happy note with the distribution of the sliced cake and return gifts.

Everyone had a great time and enjoyed the day. Our special thanks to our Parish Priest, Fr. Ravi, for his presence and use of the grounds to hold our function. Our thanks also go out to all our sponsors, the sound system DJs and all our SVP members who participated whole heartily to make the event a resounding success.

-Jennifer Lopez

