



Coimbatore News Letter

January 2021

*Behold, I hope you are prospering in every respect
and are in good health
- just as your soul is prospering 3John 1:2*

2021



Intention for evangelization - Human fraternity

May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.

Highlights of previous Month



Blessing of
Renovated Church,
Ramanathapuram

Christmas Function
Bishop's House



Jubilee Mass
Ramanathapuram

Xmas Mass



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Pope's Message

Dear brothers and sisters!

**PATRIS CORDE
OF THE HOLY FATHER
FRANCIS
ON THE 150th
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE PROCLAMATION OF SAINT
JOSEPH
AS PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**



WITH A FATHER'S HEART: that is how Joseph loved Jesus, whom all four Gospels refer to as "the son of Joseph". [1]

Matthew and Luke, the two Evangelists who speak most of Joseph, tell us very little, yet enough for us to appreciate what sort of father he was, and the mission entrusted to him by God's providence.

We know that Joseph was a lowly carpenter (cf. Mt 13:55), betrothed to Mary (cf. Mt 1:18; Lk 1:27). He was a "just man" (Mt 1:19), ever ready to carry out God's will as revealed to him in the Law (cf. Lk 2:22,27,39) and through four dreams (cf. Mt 1:20; 2:13,19,22). After a long and tiring journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, he beheld the birth of the Messiah in a stable, since "there was no place for them" elsewhere (cf. Lk 2:7). He witnessed the adoration of the shepherds (cf. Lk 2:8-20) and the Magi (cf. Mt 2:1-12), who represented respectively the people of Israel and the pagan peoples.

Joseph had the courage to become the legal father of Jesus, to whom he gave the name revealed by the angel: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). As we know, for ancient peoples, to give a name to a person or to a thing, as Adam did in the account in the Book of Genesis (cf. 2:19-20), was to establish a relationship.

In the Temple, forty days after Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary offered their child to the Lord

and listened with amazement to Simeon's prophecy concerning Jesus and his Mother (cf. Lk 2:22-35). To protect Jesus from Herod, Joseph dwelt as a foreigner in Egypt (cf. Mt 2:13-18). After returning to his own country, he led a hidden life in the tiny and obscure village of Nazareth in Galilee, far from Bethlehem, his ancestral town, and from Jerusalem and the Temple. Of Nazareth it was said, "No prophet is to rise" (cf. Jn 7:52) and indeed, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (cf. Jn 1:46). When, during a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary lost track of the twelve-year-old Jesus, they anxiously sought him out and they found him in the Temple, in discussion with the doctors of the Law (cf. Lk 2:41-50).

After Mary, the Mother of God, no saint is mentioned more frequently in the papal magisterium than Joseph, her spouse. My Predecessors reflected on the message contained in the limited information handed down by the Gospels in order to appreciate more fully his central role in the history of salvation. Blessed Pius IX declared him "Patron of the Catholic Church", [2] Venerable Pius XII proposed him as "Patron of Workers" [3] and Saint John Paul II as "Guardian of the Redeemer". [4] Saint Joseph is universally invoked as the "patron of a happy death". [5]

Now, one hundred and fifty years after his proclamation as Patron of the Catholic Church by Blessed Pius IX (8 December 1870), I would like to share some personal reflections on this extraordinary figure, so close to our own human experience. For, as Jesus says, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt 12:34). My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how "our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others. They understood that no one is saved alone... How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope, taking care to spread not panic, but shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all". [6] Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.

1. A beloved father

The greatness of Saint Joseph is that he was the spouse of Mary and the father of Jesus. In this way, he placed himself, in the words of Saint John Chrysostom, “at the service of the entire plan of salvation”. [7]

Saint Paul VI pointed out that Joseph concretely expressed his fatherhood “by making his life a sacrificial service to the mystery of the incarnation and its redemptive purpose. He employed his legal authority over the Holy Family to devote himself completely to them in his life and work. He turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of himself, his heart and all his abilities, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home”. [8]

Thanks to his role in salvation history, Saint Joseph has always been venerated as a father by the Christian people. This is shown by the countless churches dedicated to him worldwide, the numerous religious Institutes, Confraternities and ecclesial groups inspired by his spirituality and bearing his name, and the many traditional expressions of piety in his honour. Innumerable holy men and women were passionately devoted to him. Among them was Teresa of Avila, who chose him as her advocate and intercessor, had frequent recourse to him and received whatever graces she asked of him. Encouraged by her own experience, Teresa persuaded others to cultivate devotion to Joseph. [9]

Every prayer book contains prayers to Saint Joseph. Special prayers are offered to him each Wednesday and especially during the month of March, which is traditionally dedicated to him. [10]

Popular trust in Saint Joseph is seen in the expression “Go to Joseph”, which evokes the famine in Egypt, when the Egyptians begged Pharaoh for bread. He in turn replied: “Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do” (Gen 41:55). Pharaoh was referring to Joseph the son of Jacob, who was sold into slavery because of the jealousy of his brothers (cf. Gen 37:11-28) and who – according to the biblical account – subsequently became viceroy of Egypt (cf. Gen 41:41-44).

As a descendant of David (cf. Mt 1:16-20), from whose stock Jesus was to spring according to the promise made to David by the prophet Nathan (cf. 2 Sam 7), and as the spouse of Mary of Nazareth, Saint Joseph stands at the crossroads between the Old and New Testaments.

2. A tender and loving father

Joseph saw Jesus grow daily “in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favour” (Lk 2:52). As the Lord had done with Israel, so Joseph did with Jesus: “he taught him to walk, taking him by the hand; he was for him like a father who raises an infant to his cheeks, bending down to him and feeding him” (cf. Hos 11:3-4).

In Joseph, Jesus saw the tender love of God: “As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him” (Ps 103:13).

In the synagogue, during the praying of the Psalms, Joseph would surely have heard again and again that the God of Israel is a God of tender love,[11] who is good to all, whose “compassion is over all that he has made” (Ps 145:9).

The history of salvation is worked out “in hope against hope” (Rom 4:18), through our weaknesses. All too often, we think that God works only through our better parts, yet most of his plans are realized in and despite our frailty. Thus Saint Paul could say: “To keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me: ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness’” (2 Cor 12:7-9).

Since this is part of the entire economy of salvation, we must learn to look upon our weaknesses with tender mercy.[12]

The Evil one makes us see and condemn our frailty, whereas the Spirit brings it to light with tender love. Tenderness is the best way to touch the frailty within us. Pointing fingers and judging others are frequently signs of an inability to accept our own weaknesses, our own frailty. Only tender love will save us from the snares of the accuser (cf. Rev 12:10). That is why it is so important to encounter God’s mercy, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where we experience his truth and tenderness. Paradoxically, the Evil one can also speak the truth to us, yet he does so only to condemn us. We know that God’s truth does not condemn, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us. That truth always presents itself to us like the merciful father in Jesus’ parable (cf. Lk 15:11-32). It comes out to meet us, restores our dignity, sets us back on our feet and rejoices for us, for, as the father says: “This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found” (v. 24).

Even through Joseph’s fears, God’s will, his history and his plan were at work. Joseph, then, teaches us that faith in God includes believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture.

3. An obedient father

As he had done with Mary, God revealed his saving plan to Joseph. He did so by using dreams, which in the Bible and among all ancient peoples, were considered a way for him to make his will known.[13]

Joseph was deeply troubled by Mary's mysterious pregnancy. He did not want to "expose her to public disgrace", [14] so he decided to "dismiss her quietly" (Mt 1:19).

In the first dream, an angel helps him resolve his grave dilemma: "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:20-21). Joseph's response was immediate: "When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him" (Mt 1:24). Obedience made it possible for him to surmount his difficulties and spare Mary.

In the second dream, the angel tells Joseph: "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him" (Mt 2:13). Joseph did not hesitate to obey, regardless of the hardship involved: "He got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod" (Mt 2:14-15).

In Egypt, Joseph awaited with patient trust the angel's notice that he could safely return home. In a third dream, the angel told him that those who sought to kill the child were dead and ordered him to rise, take the child and his mother, and return to the land of Israel (cf. Mt 2:19-20). Once again, Joseph promptly obeyed. "He got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel" (Mt 2:21).

During the return journey, "when Joseph heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. After being warned in a dream" – now for the fourth time – "he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth" (Mt 2:22-23).

The evangelist Luke, for his part, tells us that Joseph undertook the long and difficult journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered in his family's town of origin in the census of the Emperor Caesar Augustus. There Jesus was born (cf. Lk 2: 7) and his birth, like that of every other child, was recorded in the registry of the Empire. Saint Luke is especially concerned to tell us that Jesus' parents observed all the prescriptions of the Law: the rites of the circumcision of Jesus, the purification of Mary after childbirth, the offering of the firstborn to God (cf. 2:21-24).[15]

In every situation, Joseph declared his own "fiat", like those of Mary at the Annunciation and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In his role as the head of a family, Joseph taught Jesus to be obedient to his parents (cf. Lk 2:51), in accordance with God's command (cf. Ex 20:12). During the hidden years in Nazareth, Jesus learned at the school of Joseph to do the will of the Father. That will was to be his daily food (cf. Jn 4:34). Even at the most difficult moment of his life, in Gethsemane, Jesus chose to do the

Father's will rather than his own,[16] becoming "obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8).

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews thus concludes that Jesus "learned obedience through what he suffered" (5:8). All this makes it clear that "Saint Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood" and that in this way, "he cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation and is truly a minister of salvation." [17]

4. An accepting father

Joseph accepted Mary unconditionally. He trusted in the angel's words. "The nobility of Joseph's heart is such that what he learned from the law he made dependent on charity. Today, in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident, Joseph appears as the figure of a respectful and sensitive man. Even though he does not understand the bigger picture, he makes a decision to protect Mary's good name, her dignity and her life. In his hesitation about how best to act, God helped him by enlightening his judgment". [18]

Often in life, things happen whose meaning we do not understand. Our first reaction is frequently one of disappointment and rebellion. Joseph set aside his own ideas in order to accept the course of events and, mysterious as they seemed, to embrace them, take responsibility for them and make them part of his own history. Unless we are reconciled with our own history, we will be unable to take a single step forward, for we will always remain hostage to our expectations and the disappointments that follow.

The spiritual path that Joseph traces for us is not one that explains, but accepts. Only as a result of this acceptance, this reconciliation, can we begin to glimpse a broader history, a deeper meaning. We can almost hear an echo of the impassioned reply of Job to his wife, who had urged him to rebel against the evil he endured: "Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?" (Job 2:10).

Joseph is certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive. In our own lives, acceptance and welcome can be an expression of the Holy Spirit's gift of fortitude. Only the Lord can give us the strength needed to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments.

Jesus' appearance in our midst is a gift from the Father, which makes it possible for each of us to be reconciled to the flesh of our own history, even when we fail to understand it completely. Just as God told Joseph: "Son of David, do not be afraid!" (Mt 1:20), so he seems to tell us: "Do not be afraid!" We need to set aside all anger and disappointment, and to embrace the way things are, even when they do not turn out as we wish. Not with mere resignation but with hope and courage. In this way, we become open to a

deeper meaning. Our lives can be miraculously reborn if we find the courage to live them in accordance with the Gospel. It does not matter if everything seems to have gone wrong or some things can no longer be fixed. God can make flowers spring up from stony ground. Even if our heart condemns us, “God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything” (1 Jn 3:20).

Here, once again, we encounter that Christian realism which rejects nothing that exists. Reality, in its mysterious and irreducible complexity, is the bearer of existential meaning, with all its lights and shadows. Thus, the Apostle Paul can say: “We know that all things work together for good, for those who love God” (Rom 8:28). To which Saint Augustine adds, “even that which is called evil (*etiam illud quod malum dicitur*)”.[19] In this greater perspective, faith gives meaning to every event, however happy or sad. Nor should we ever think that believing means finding facile and comforting solutions. The faith Christ taught us is what we see in Saint Joseph. He did not look for shortcuts, but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it.

Joseph’s attitude encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak, for God chooses what is weak (cf. 1 Cor 1:27). He is the “Father of orphans and protector of widows” (Ps 68:6), who commands us to love the stranger in our midst.[20] I like to think that it was from Saint Joseph that Jesus drew inspiration for the parable of the prodigal son and the merciful father (cf. Lk 15:11-32).

5. A creatively courageous father

If the first stage of all true interior healing is to accept our personal history and embrace even the things in life that we did not choose, we must now add another important element: creative courage. This emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties. In the face of difficulty, we can either give up and walk away, or somehow engage with it. At times, difficulties bring out resources we did not even think we had.

As we read the infancy narratives, we may often wonder why God did not act in a more direct and clear way. Yet God acts through events and people. Joseph was the man chosen by God to guide the beginnings of the history of redemption. He was the true “miracle” by which God saves the child and his mother. God acted by trusting in Joseph’s creative courage. Arriving in Bethlehem and finding no lodging where Mary could give birth, Joseph took a stable and, as best he could, turned it into a welcoming home for the Son of God come into the world (cf. Lk 2:6-7). Faced with imminent danger from Herod, who wanted to kill the child, Joseph was warned once again in a dream to protect the child, and rose in the middle of the night to prepare the flight into Egypt (cf. Mt 2:13-14).

A superficial reading of these stories can often give the impression that the world is at the mercy of the strong and mighty, but the “good news” of the

Gospel consists in showing that, for all the arrogance and violence of worldly powers, God always finds a way to carry out his saving plan. So too, our lives may at times seem to be at the mercy of the powerful, but the Gospel shows us what counts. God always finds a way to save us, provided we show the same creative courage as the carpenter of Nazareth, who was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence.

If at times God seems not to help us, surely this does not mean that we have been abandoned, but instead are being trusted to plan, to be creative, and to find solutions ourselves. That kind of creative courage was shown by the friends of the paralytic, who lowered him from the roof in order to bring him to Jesus (cf. Lk 5:17-26). Difficulties did not stand in the way of those friends' boldness and persistence.

They were convinced that Jesus could heal the man, and "finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. When he saw their faith, he said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven you'" (vv. 19-20). Jesus recognized the creative faith with which they sought to bring their sick friend to him.

The Gospel does not tell us how long Mary, Joseph and the child remained in Egypt. Yet they certainly needed to eat, to find a home and employment. It does not take much imagination to fill in those details. The Holy Family had to face concrete problems like every other family, like so many of our migrant brothers and sisters who, today too, risk their lives to escape misfortune and hunger. In this regard, I consider Saint Joseph the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty.

At the end of every account in which Joseph plays a role, the Gospel tells us that he gets up, takes the child and his mother, and does what God commanded him (cf. Mt 1:24; 2:14.21). Indeed, Jesus and Mary his Mother are the most precious treasure of our faith.[21]

In the divine plan of salvation, the Son is inseparable from his Mother, from Mary, who "advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son until she stood at the cross".[22]

We should always consider whether we ourselves are protecting Jesus and Mary, for they are also mysteriously entrusted to our own responsibility, care and safekeeping. The Son of the Almighty came into our world in a state of great vulnerability. He needed to be defended, protected, cared for and raised by Joseph. God trusted Joseph, as did Mary, who found in him someone who would not only save her life, but would always provide for her and her child. In this sense, Saint Joseph could not be other than the Guardian of the Church, for the Church is the continuation of the Body of Christ in history, even as Mary's motherhood is reflected in the motherhood of the Church.[23] In his continued protection of the Church, Joseph continues to protect the child and

his mother, and we too, by our love for the Church, continue to love the child and his mother.

That child would go on to say: “As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is “the child” whom Joseph continues to protect. For this reason, Saint Joseph is invoked as protector of the unfortunate, the needy, exiles, the afflicted, the poor and the dying. Consequently, the Church cannot fail to show a special love for the least of our brothers and sisters, for Jesus showed a particular concern for them and personally identified with them. From Saint Joseph, we must learn that same care and responsibility. We must learn to love the child and his mother, to love the sacraments and charity, to love the Church and the poor. Each of these realities is always the child and his mother.

6. A working father

An aspect of Saint Joseph that has been emphasized from the time of the first social Encyclical, Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*, is his relation to work. Saint Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one’s own labour.

In our own day, when employment has once more become a burning social issue, and unemployment at times reaches record levels even in nations that for decades have enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity, there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which Saint Joseph is an exemplary patron. Work is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion. It becomes an opportunity for the fulfilment not only of oneself, but also of that primary cell of society which is the family. A family without work is particularly vulnerable to difficulties, tensions, estrangement and even break-up. How can we speak of human dignity without working to ensure that everyone is able to earn a decent living?

Working persons, whatever their job may be, are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us. The crisis of our time, which is economic, social, cultural and spiritual, can serve as a summons for all of us to rediscover the value, the importance and necessity of work for bringing about a new “normal” from which no one is excluded. Saint Joseph’s work reminds us that God himself, in becoming man, did not disdain work. The loss of employment that affects so many of our brothers and sisters, and has increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, should serve as a summons to review our priorities. Let us implore Saint Joseph the Worker to help us find ways to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work!

7. A father in the shadows

The Polish writer Jan Dobraczyński, in his book *The Shadow of the Father*,^[24] tells the story of Saint Joseph's life in the form of a novel. He uses the evocative image of a shadow to define Joseph. In his relationship to Jesus, Joseph was the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father: he watched over him and protected him, never leaving him to go his own way. We can think of Moses' words to Israel: "In the wilderness... you saw how the Lord your God carried you, just as one carries a child, all the way that you travelled" (Deut 1:31). In a similar way, Joseph acted as a father for his whole life.^[25]

Fathers are not born, but made. A man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child. Whenever a man accepts responsibility for the life of another, in some way he becomes a father to that person.

Children today often seem orphans, lacking fathers. The Church too needs fathers. Saint Paul's words to the Corinthians remain timely: "Though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers" (1 Cor/4:15). Every priest or bishop should be able to add, with the Apostle: "I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel" (ibid.). Paul likewise calls the Galatians: "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!" (4:19).

Being a father entails introducing children to life and reality. Not holding them back, being overprotective or possessive, but rather making them capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying freedom and exploring new possibilities. Perhaps for this reason, Joseph is traditionally called a "most chaste" father. That title is not simply a sign of affection, but the summation of an attitude that is the opposite of possessiveness. Chastity is freedom from possessiveness in every sphere of one's life. Only when love is chaste, is it truly love. A possessive love ultimately becomes dangerous: it imprisons, constricts and makes for misery. God himself loved humanity with a chaste love; he left us free even to go astray and set ourselves against him. The logic of love is always the logic of freedom, and Joseph knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself, but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus.

Joseph found happiness not in mere self-sacrifice but in self-gift. In him, we never see frustration but only trust. His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust. Our world today needs fathers. It has no use for tyrants who would domineer others as a means of compensating for their own needs. It rejects those who confuse authority with authoritarianism, service with servility, discussion with oppression, charity with a welfare mentality, power with destruction. Every true vocation is born of the gift of oneself, which is the fruit of mature sacrifice. The priesthood and consecrated life likewise require this kind of maturity. Whatever our vocation, whether to marriage, celibacy or virginity, our gift of self will not come to fulfilment if it

stops at sacrifice; were that the case, instead of becoming a sign of the beauty and joy of love, the gift of self would risk being an expression of unhappiness, sadness and frustration.

When fathers refuse to live the lives of their children for them, new and unexpected vistas open up. Every child is the bearer of a unique mystery that can only be brought to light with the help of a father who respects that child's freedom. A father who realizes that he is most a father and educator at the point when he becomes "useless", when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied. When he becomes like Joseph, who always knew that his child was not his own but had merely been entrusted to his care. In the end, this is what Jesus would have us understand when he says: "Call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven" (Mt 23:9).

In every exercise of our fatherhood, we should always keep in mind that it has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a "sign" pointing to a greater fatherhood. In a way, we are all like Joseph: a shadow of the heavenly Father, who "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt 5:45). And a shadow that follows his Son.

* * *

"Get up, take the child and his mother" (Mt 2:13), God told Saint Joseph.

The aim of this Apostolic Letter is to increase our love for this great saint, to encourage us to implore his intercession and to imitate his virtues and his zeal. Indeed, the proper mission of the saints is not only to obtain miracles and graces, but to intercede for us before God, like Abraham[26] and Moses[27], and like Jesus, the "one mediator" (1 Tim 2:5), who is our "advocate" with the Father (1 Jn 2:1) and who "always lives to make intercession for [us]" (Heb 7:25; cf. Rom 8:34).

The saints help all the faithful "to strive for the holiness and the perfection of their particular state of life".[28] Their lives are concrete proof that it is possible to put the Gospel into practice. Jesus told us: "Learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Mt 11:29). The lives of the saints too are examples to be imitated. Saint Paul explicitly says this: "Be imitators of me!" (1 Cor 4:16).[29] By his eloquent silence, Saint Joseph says the same.

Before the example of so many holy men and women, Saint Augustine asked himself: "What they could do, can you not also do?" And so he drew closer to his definitive conversion, when he could exclaim: "Late have I loved you, Beauty ever ancient, ever new!"[30]

We need only ask Saint Joseph for the grace of graces: our conversion.

Let us now make our prayer to him:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;

in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.

Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.

Given in Rome, at Saint John Lateran, on 8 December, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the year 2020, the eighth of my Pontificate.

Bishop's Message

Dear Rev. Fathers, Religious and Laity,

We have entered into the year, 2021. Let us thank and praise God for this New Year to us. The New Year is a gift to all of us, given by God. Many of the persons whom we know are no more to see this New Year. God, in His generosity, gave us an opportunity to see this New Year and to live our lives. Let us strive to live our lives in accordance with His will. Let us pray earnestly so that this year be one of peace and joy, endowed with good health for everybody.

On the first of January, the Church celebrates the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. First among the saints, she is the loving mother of Jesus and mother of us all. She is the role model for all of us. Let us imitate her life and inculcate the virtues of Our Blessed Mother into our lives and with her help; we shall renew our commitment in pastoral ministry. May God, through the intercession of Our Mother, bless us and guide us.

Thanking you,

Yours devotedly in Christ,

+L. Thomas Aquinas
Bishop of Coimbatore

From Bishop's Desk:

Considering the pastoral need of the Diocese of Coimbatore, I hereby create Karamadai as a new parish, bifurcating from the parish of Miraculous Grotto of Annai Velankanni Shrine, Mettupalayam Grotto. It will come into existence on 8th January, 2021.

The boundaries of the new parish will be as follows:

- East: Periya Puthur and Salaiyur.
- West: Velliankadu and Tholampalayam.
- North: TRS Vijaya Lakshmi Park (M.G. Pudur Road).
- North East: Popular Garden (Chinna Thottipalayam).
- South: Chinna Mattham Palayam Junction (Coimbatore Road).
- South East: Akashaya Garden (Onnipalayam)

Dear Rev. Fathers,

- It is to inform you that the Sisters of the Congregation of Teresian Carmelites (CTC) will start a community in the parish of SITRA on the 7th January, 2021.
- The Covid-19 is not over but it has taken a different dimension which is very harmful than previous year. May I request you to take necessary precautions to remain safe and healthy. Thanking you.

From Vicar General's Desk

MEDICAL FUND PAID UPTO 29.12.2020

SL.NO	PARISH	AMOUNT
1	RAMANATHAPURAM PARISH	5,000.00
2	GROTTO-METTUPALAYAM	6,000.00
3	R S PURAM PARISH	10,000.00
	Total	<u>21,000.00</u>

Yours fraternally,
V.Rev.Fr. John Joseph Stanis
 Secretary to the Trust

Appointments

Parish Priests

Name of the Priest	Appointment
Rev. Fr. Gurusamy	Karamadai(New Parish)
Rev. Fr. Victor Santiago	Lourdipuram
Rev. Fr. Lourdu Irudayaraj	Sirumugai
Rev. Fr. Jacob	Pollachi VF
Rev. Fr. Francis Rosario	Mettupalayam grotto
Rev. Fr. Joseph David	Visuvasapuram VF
Rev. Fr. George Rosario	N.G.G.O. Colony
Rev. Fr. Arul Muthu	Madukkarai
Rev. Fr. Henry Antony	Podanur
Rev. Fr. Henry Lawrence	Mettupalayam
Rev. Fr. Mathew	Akkarai Kodiveri
Rev. Fr. Pitchaimuthu	Pasupathipalayam
Rev. Fr. Philip	Kumar Nagar
Rev. Fr. Alex Antonysamy	Madathukulam

Assistant Parish Priests

Name of the Priest	Appointment
Rev. Fr. David Alexander	Podanur
Rev. Fr. Innasimuthu	Minor seminary
Rev. Fr. Sebastian Maria Sundaram	Sowripalayam
Rev. Fr. John Yesu Shiju	R. S. Puram
Rev. Fr. Jeraldine Stephen	Kattoor
Rev. Fr. Alex Antony Lawrence	Kovaipudur
Rev. Fr. Ranjithkumar	Valparai
Rev. Fr. Paul	Puliakulam
Rev. Fr. Maria Benito	Valparai
Rev. Fr. Immanuel	Cathedral
Rev. Fr. Arul Irudayaraj	Rathinapuri
Rev. Fr. Arul Santhosh	Karumathampatti
Rev. Fr. Sathish MSC	Tirupur
Rev. Fr. Johnson Pallotine	Erode
Rev. Fr. Leo Adaikalaraj MMI	Cathedral

Name of the Priest	Appointment
Rev. Fr. Alexander	Kolappalur Incharge

Name of the Priest	Appointment
Rev. Fr. Peter Mariadass	Helper, St. Antony's Shrine, Puliakulam

Special ministry

Name of the Priest	Appointment,
Rev. Fr. Arokia Pradeep	Residence Thindal Legal cell, Pollachi, Erode and Dharapuram Vicariates

Teaching ministry

Name of the Priest	Appointment
Rev. Fr. Antony Felix	St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Staff member

Retirement

Name of the Priest	Appointment
Rev. Fr. Pancras Joseph	Spiritual Director, Dharapuram

Medical Leave

Name of the Priest	Appointment
Rev. Fr. J. Edward	Medical leave



அருட்பணி மைய செய்திகள்

புதிய ஆண்டின் வணக்கங்களும் வாழ்த்துகளும் கடந்த ஆண்டு கொரோனா தொற்றால் அருட்பணி மையத்தின் பல நிகழ்வுகள் தடைப்பட்டு போனது. திருமண கருத்தரங்கு மட்டும் இருபது நபர்கள் கொண்ட குழுக்களுக்கு ஒவ்வொரு வாரம் சனிக்கிழமையும் நடத்தப்பட்டது. ஒத்துழைப்புக் கொடுத்த தந்தையர்கள் அனைவருக்கும் நன்றிகள்

திருமண கருத்தரங்கு

மேலும் சனவரி மாதத்தில் திருமண கருத்தரங்கு எல்லா சனிக் கிழமைகளில் மட்டும் ஒரு நாள் நிகழ்வாக நடைப்பெறும். வருகிற பிப்ரவரி மாதத்திலிருந்து மாற்றங்கள் இருப்பின் முன்கூட்டியே தெரியப்படுத்தப்படும். அனைவரும் திருமண வகுப்பிற்கு மையத்திற்கு அனுப்பி வைக்க கேட்டுக்கொள்ளுகின்றேன்.

அன்பிய நிகழ்வுகள்

அன்பியம் சார்ந்த நிகழ்வுகள் தங்களுடைய பங்குகளில் தேவைபடுமானால் அருட்பணி மையத்தை தொடர்புக் கொள்ளவும். இம்மாதம் நடைபெற்ற அன்பிய களப்பணியாளர்கள் கூட்டத்தில் களப்பணியாளர்கள் பங்குகளுக்கு வருகைத்தந்து பணி செய்ய தங்கள் விருப்பத்தை தெரிவித்திருக்கிறார்கள்.

PWPN(புதியப்பணிக்குழு)

Pope's worldwide prayer Network என்ற முன்பே இருந்த இயக்கம் புதுப்பிக்கப்பட்டு உலகலாவிய அளவில் திருத்தந்தையின் செபக் கருத்துகளை மக்களிடத்தில் கொண்டுவர சேர்க்கவும், இக்கருத்திற்காக செபிக்க குழுக்களை ஏற்படுத்தவும் இப்பணிக்குழு திருத்தந்தையால் ஏற்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளது.

PWPNவின் அடையாளம்

இதன் அடையாளம் “மனித குலம் சந்திக்கின்ற போரட்டங்களை அடையாளப்படுத்தவும், திருஅவையின் மறைப்பரப்புப் பணியில் உதவி செய்யவும்”.

PWPNவின் நோக்கம்

திருத்தந்தை அடையாளப்படுத்தும் மனித குலம் சந்திக்கின்ற போரட்டங்களுக்காக செபிக்கவும், குறிப்பாக திருத்தந்தையின் கருத்துகளுக்காக ஒவ்வொரு நாளும் மன்றாடவும்.

PWPNவின் பணி

ஒவ்வொருவரும் திருத்தாதர்களாக மாறி கிறிஸ்துவின் பாதையில் நடக்கவும், பணி செய்யவும்.

எனவே நம்முடைய பங்குத்தளங்களில் திருத்தந்தையின் கருத்துகளை கொண்டுவர சேர்க்கவும், செபிக்கவும் பல்வேறு வயது சார்ந்த குழுக்களை, குறிப்பாக சிறார் மற்றும் இளையோர் குழுக்களை நற்கருணை வீரர் சபை என்ற பெயரில் உருவாக்கவும் திருத்தந்தை நம்மை அழைக்கின்றார்.

இதைக் குறித்த விளக்கங்களை அறிந்துக்கொள்ளவும், குழுக்களை அமைக்கவும் அருட்பணி மையத்தை அணுகவும்.

அருட்பணி.ஜோ.செல்வராஜ்,
இயக்குனர்.

News from CMSSS

Dear Rev. Fathers & Sisters,

I am happy to share with you all the events and activities of CMSSS for the month of December 2020.

IPN - Integrated Programme for Narikuravas Entrepreneur Training

The training was conducted about becoming an Entrepreneur.

They shared in the training about interest, skill and local resources identification.

Also about the marketing in outstations, production, need of production, profit, loss, finding resources and the opportunities.

Marketing Training

The information about the various skills in marketing
Marketing analysis about the need based or consumption based in local and out station

The two types of marketing techniques were taught in the training

Marketing about the product in the local festivals and methods of sales

Also, about concentrating on the quality of the products and price fixing with nominal rate

SHG Strengthening

Strengthening about the self-help group

Finding the issues in the groups and also solutions to rectify them

Transparency in the fund management

Roles & Responsibilities office bearers like leader, secretary and treasures

How to operate the bank account of the group

Insist about the importance of the group meetings

Entrepreneur, Marketing & SHG Strengthening Training Programs



FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (SAFP)

The Fund disbursement was made to the 13 Beneficiaries of Partner families to carry the Income generation program total Sum of 1, 72, 500.

15 New Partner Families were selected as Beneficiaries for the Family Development Program

New Family selection, field visit, made to the Kinathukadavu Town, Pollachi, & Coimbatore

13 Six years completed family accounts were closed and 1, 19,700 funds were given to the partner families

Fund Distribution Income Generation Program



Partner families Account closed and Funds Distribution



EZHUVOMIYAKKAM - CANCER CARE CAMPAIGN

- An awareness program organized on cancer, especially how more infection among the women is in high. Importance of self examining of breast cancer was explained to the women clearly
- Various types of cancer and its symptoms were elaborately explained to the women
- The screening services existing in the government health settings and also services available in the private sector were shared in the interaction
- The way how women have to keep hygienic during menstrual period to keep away the cancer disease infection.



SURABI LOAN DISBURSED

- The Loan disbursement made during this month for 6 groups and 15 members benefited.
- The fund totally 5, 10, 000 were distributed to the women group members
- The above said loans issued utilized for keeping medical shop, Cloth sales, Artificial things making, Petty shop, Lorry workshop spares purchasing and Printing press usage.

Sl.no	Centre	No. of Groups	No. of Members	Amount Issued in Rs.
1	Varattuparai	2	4	1,05,000
2	Pollachi	3	4	1,35,000
3	Kinathukadavu	1	7	2,70,000
Total		6	15	5,10,000



NABFINS

Monitoring of Loan Accessed Groups

- Post distribution visit (PDV) done in the places at Rathinapurai, Cheranmanagar, Pollachi and Avinashi.
- Field level Monitoring visit made to the groups for loan repayable confirmation and Receipts were checked.

Process for Loan Sanction

Aadhar card and Ration cards were collected from members who required loans and checked whether they are eligible for loan.



The members eligible for loans assembled for grading and the documentation process and verification are done at the spot.

After the grading the funds were distributed.

NABFINS

LOAN DISBURSED

Sl.no	Centre	No. of Groups	No. of Members	Amount Issued in Rs.
1	Pollachi	1JLG	4	1,60,000
2	Coimbatore	1 SHG	9	6,00,000
Total			13	7,60,000



SURABI

GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Surabhi Governing body was conducted on 05.12.2020 in the respective regions

Federation leaders & staff were attended

Monthly activities and other programs details were discussed

The staffs were asked to communicate about the benefiting families to send the Christmas greetings letter to the donors

Discussed about the Surabhi & Nabfins loan required groups and members details

Coimbatore



Pollachi



Varatuparai



CHRISTMAS 2020 CELEBRATION

Our CMSSS organized the Christmas celebration at Bishop's house campus on 23rd December 2020 at Mother Teresa Animation Centre

In this program **Most. Rev. Dr. L. Thomas Aquinas M.A., DCL., President of CMSSS and Bishop of Coimbatore diocese**, Msgr. Rev. John Joseph Stanis., Vice President of CMSSS, Rev. Fr. V. Arun., Director of CMSSS and CMSSS staff took part in the Christmas celebration.

In this program **Most. Rev. Dr. L. Thomas Aquinas M.A., DCL., President of CMSSS and Bishop of Coimbatore diocese** blessed the Infant Jesus crib. Bishop blessed the CMSSS staff.

Bishop distributed the Christmas gifts and sweets.

Vice President gave the words of blessings.

Director of CMSSS gave vote of thanks.

The program ended with delicious lunch.



Rev. Fr. V. Arun
Director, CMSSS

News from CEEMA

Dear Rev. Fathers & Sisters,
Season's Greetings from CEEMA!

It's my pleasure to share our activities for the month of December 2020.

2020 CEEMA Christmas Celebration:

CEEMA family celebrated Christmas on 19th December 2020 at our premises. The whole



CEEMA campus had a festive look and was beautifully decorated. Rev. Fr. John Xavier Kulandai (joint secretary, CEEMA) and Rev. Fr. Alexander



(parish priest, Kolappalur) were the chief guests. The stage was colourfully engaged with the following dignitaries: Dr. Janet, (General Body member),



Mr. R. M. Subramanian (professor, Nandha Engineering College), Mr. Sunil George Kurian (consultant, CEEMA), Mrs. Dhanya (chief manager, South Indian Bank). General Body members of CEEMA, Fr. Brito (parish priest, Kilampadi), FMM Sisters from Kilambadi, Presentation Sisters from Erode Town and Little Sisters of the Poor, Thindal were also present.

The program started with a welcome dance by our CPSP children. Mr. Jolly Abraham welcomed special invitees and Fr. S. Pushpanathan (director, CEEMA) honoured all guests and well-wishers. Rev. Fr. Alexander gave the Christmas message.

Gifts were given to all the invitees. A special gift was given to Ms. Ragavi, CPSP student. Fr. S. Pushpanathan thanked all

guests and invitees. Rev. Fr. John Xavier Kulandai blessed the Crib and cut Christmas cake. The smiles on the faces of the



participants brightened when Santa Claus moved around distributing sweets. Sumptuous lunch was served.

Special Training Programme - “Mushroom and Honey Bee Cultivation”:

Seven training programmes on 'Mushroom and Honey Bee cultivation' were organized in collaboration with Bharathiar University, Coimbatore. The programmes



were conducted in Perundurai, Nerur, Dharapuram, Kundadam, and Kangeyam. Dr. Zenetta Rosaline (professor, Department of Women Studies, Bharathiar University) was the chief guest and she motivated all participants to get involved in women development and entrepreneurship progress. The trainers were Mrs. Manjula (managing director, Manjuri Honey Products), Mr. R.M. Subramanian (professor, Nandha Engineering College), Mr. K. S. Saravanan (ToT in Mushroom Cultivation), Mr. Parthiban (ToT in Honey Cultivation), Mrs. Maheshwari (ToT in Mushroom Cultivation) and Mrs. Janaki (ToT in Honey Cultivation). The trainers demonstrated mushroom and honey bee cultivation with required training materials in all training programmes. More than 400 women were trained. They had gained knowledge on mushroom and honey bee cultivation, development techniques, and marketing opportunities.

CPSP(Child Sponsorship Program):

- Ms. Ragavi who has joined recently with CPSP was supported with a smart phone to attend online classes and also for medical support for her mother. The gift and support were distributed by Rev. Fr. John Xavier Kulandai during our Christmas celebration.

- We gathered the children to write Christmas greetings to their respective donors at Dharapuram on 01.12.2020 and 62 students participated. Later, these letters were sent to the respective donors. We had also updated the files of our students.



IBC Project: “Integrated and Sustainable Livelihood Promotion for Marginalized Dalit Women Farmers”

Training on Vermi Compost Production and Training on Crop Management



Eight training programs were organized at Perundurai, Kangayam, Dharapuram, and Nerur. 400 Dalit women farmers participated. Mr. R. M. Subramanian (professor, Nanda Engineering College), Mrs. Maheshwari (watershed project,

Mulanur) were the resource persons. The women promised to construct tank for vermi-compost production. The women farmers enthusiastically participated in all the sessions.

THOZHI - “Empower Women at Workplace”:

➤ CEEMA had organized a training on 'Building & Strengthening of District Level Women Worker Federation' on 10.12.2020 @ CEEMA. Six NGO partners and 20 women worker federation members participated in the training. The topic of the training was 'Strengthening of District Level Federation, Federation objective and activities.

➤ CEEMA had organized ten group meetings for working women in Erode, Karur, and Namakkal Districts. During each meeting, the coordinator Mr. Nallaiyan Pandi explained about new labour laws, labour welfare card and health related issues, especially relevant to workplace. 175 women workers participated in these meetings.



➤ We conducted district-level review and planning meeting at Nithineka Educational Trust, Vennamalai, Karur. Five NGO heads participated.

New Thrust Phase VI Follow on Project 3rd Year:

Mr. Jolly Abraham (point person) attended cadre building workshop from 09.12.2020 to 10.12.2020. All respective point persons of the project from all DSSSs were participated. During the programme, point person shared achievements of the project initiatives in the last three years. Rev. Fr. Albert Thambi Durai (director, TASOSS) explained about upcoming project phase and its activities.

Observation Days by CEEMA

1. International Disability Day:

CEEMA had observed International Disability Day on 03.12.2020 along with Erode District's differentially abled Welfare Committee. More than 50 differentially abled people participated. During the programme, the guests had motivated the participants about self-employment in small business.

2. World AIDS Day:

CEEMA had observed World AIDS Day on 1st December 2020. Fr. S. Pushpanathan distributed nutritional foods to the HIV/AIDS infected people. Staff of CEEMA also participated and took pledge against HIV related stigma to support people living with HIV/AIDS. At the end of the



programme, COVID-19 awareness was given along with supply of face masks, and soaps.

3. Human Rights Day:



CEEMA had observed International Human Rights Day on 10.12.2020. 33 members participated to show their solidarity. During the programme, basic Human Rights awareness was shared by Mr. Nallaiyan Pandi. The

participants also took Human Rights pledge.

Christmas is here again. May your home be filled with laughter, contentment, harmony, peace, hope, and abundance of mercy despite COVID-19 pandemic.

Rev.Fr.S. Pushpanathan

Director, CEEMA

May God give them eternal rest

01-01-1919	Very Rev.Fr. Rondy V.G
02-01-2019	Rev. Fr. R. Selvaraj
03-01-2018	Rev. Fr. Maria Irudayanathan
06-01-1960	Rev.Fr. Maria Joseph
07-01-1935	Rev.Fr. Paul
07-01-2003	Rev.Fr.S.M.Amaladass
07 -01-2005	Rev.Fr.George Kunnath
09-01-1969	Rev.Fr. G.M.Manuel
13-01-2006	Rev.Fr.Francis Joseph
16-01-1947	Rev.Fr.A.Rathinanather
16-01-1967	Rev.Fr. A.Lazare
16-01-1910	Rev.Fr. E.Perie
17-01-1942	Rev.Fr. A.Collin
18-01-1947	Rev.Fr. A. Dezest
19-01-2016	Rev.Fr. Maria Mudiappan
21-01-1901	Rev.Fr. Maria Savery
22-01-1957	Very Rev.Fr. D.M. Antony V.G
23-01-1977	Rev.Fr. S.Annasamy
27-01-1921	Rev.Fr. B.E. Bachelard
31-01-1881	Rev.Fr. Joseph Louis Ravel

STATISTICS OF THE PARISH 2020

NAME OF THE PARISH

1. Population

➤ Baptised Catholics

➤ Non- Catholics

1. Members of other denominations

2. Non-Christians

➤ Catechumens

2. Baptisms during the year

➤ Upto 1 year

➤ Between 1 and 7 years

➤ Over 7 years

➤ Total

3. Confirmations

4. First Communions

5. Marriages

➤ Between Catholics

➤ Between Catholic and Non-Catholic

➤ Total

Signature of the Parish Priest with Seal

N.b.: Please fill in the details and send the page through post or courier at the earliest to Secretary to the Bishop.

*Wish You a Long Life and Good Health on
Your Birth Day*



On Jan 1st
Rev. Fr. Melchior



On Jan 4th
Rev. Fr. Kulandaisamy



On Jan 5th
Rev. Fr. Maria Soosai



On Jan 7th
Rev. Fr. Paulraj Vincent



On Jan 21st
Rev. Fr. Ranjithkumar



On Jan 24th
Rev. Fr. Sebastin Maria Sundaram



On Jan 28th
Rev. Fr. Valsas Edward Vimal



On Jan 28th
Rev. Fr. Edward Gnanasekar



On 28th Jan
Rev. Fr. Paul



On Jan 29th
Rev. Fr. Alexander

May God Bless You on Your Feast Day



on 1st
Rev. Fr. Jesudass



on Epiphany
Rev. Fr. Melchior



on 20th
Rev. Fr. Sebastian Durai



On Jan 20th
Rev. Fr. Sebastin Maria Sundaram



on 25th
Rev. Fr. John Paul Vincent



on 31st
Rev. Fr. John Bosco

இதய அஞ்சலி!



அருள்பணி. I. அலெக்ஸ் செல்வநாயகம்

பிறப்பு
21-06-1959

குருப்பட்டம்
03-05-1987

மறைவு
22-12-2020

தந்தை : இருதயசாமி - தாயார் : மோட்சமேரி

கிறைப்பணி செய்த இடங்கள்

- 1974-1978 புனித வளனார் கிளங்குருமடம்
- 1978-1987 திருஇருதய குருத்துவக் கல்லூரி, பூந்தமல்லி
- 1987-1989 உதவிப்பங்குத்தந்தை, புனித அலோசியஸ் ஆலயம், தாராபுரம்
- 1989-1990 உதவி அதிபர், புனித வளனார் கிளங்குருமடம்
- 1990-1993 பங்குத்தந்தை, புனித பிரான்சிஸ் சவேரியார் ஆலயம், சவேரியார்பாளையம், கேரளா
- 1993-2002 கியக்குளர், மேய்ப்புப்பணி மையம்
- 2002-2007 பங்குத்தந்தை, புனித அருளானந்தர் ஆலயம், ஆர்.எஸ்.புரம்
- 2007-2012 பங்குத்தந்தை, புனித பிரான்சிஸ் சவேரியார் ஆலயம், புக்சீளிபாளையம்
- 2012-2014 பங்குத்தந்தை, புனித ஜான் போஸ்கோ ஆலயம், கவுண்டம்பாளையம்
- 2014-2019 பங்குத்தந்தை, அடைக்கலமாதா ஆலயம், கண்ணம்பாளையம்
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