

Message of the Chaplain

Hearty Welcome to the New Academic Year: 2007-08. A new phase of life begins with all its strains, but with hopes of joy and strength. Let us thank the Lord for protecting us in the past and for guiding us in the future. Listen to what Jesus tells us: “Fear not, I will be with you every moment of your life, till the end of the world.” Indeed, we have to be with Him like the living branches of the “true Vine” in order to bear fruits of life in the form of joy, peace and prosperity. The Malayalee Catholic Parish in Vienna (ICC) is blessed by God to be a unit of fruit-bearing branches of the living Vine, Jesus Christ. In fact, the basis of our creativity, growth and fulfilment is our strong and intimate communion with the Risen Lord.

We shall remember the following events of this month of SEPTEMBER:

- 1) Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 8th Saturday.
- 2) Pope’s Visit to Vienna from 7th to 9th September.
- 3) Opening of the Kairaly Nikethan School on 15th Saturday.
- 4) Inauguration of the Academic Year of Catechism on 16th Sunday.

The Pope’s visit to Vienna is an occasion to express our loyalty and solidarity with the Head of the universal Catholic Church. Let us prepare ourselves with all enthusiasm to make this occasion a memorable event of expression of the Catholic Faith and Communion. Kindly follow the timing of the Pope’s Visit and join the celebrations, as many as possible from our Community. Let us also pray intensively for the success of this mega-event.

This year we move to a new venue for the dance and language training of the Malayalee children in the BUNDEOBERSTUFENREAL GYMNASIUM, Hegelgasse 12, A-1010 Wien. We are thankful to the Archdiocese of Vienna for arranging this School for our Community. Kindly be careful to make use of this facility, to keep it clean and not to spoil anything there. The parents will have to pay for the damages which their children may cause there.

The religious formation of our children is a major concern of our Parish Community. The bishops of Kerala have asked us to do it with all seriousness and responsibility, motivating repeatedly parents and children for the catechetical training. Let the whole Parish Community take interest and strains to motivate the Malayalee children and the youth to our Catechism Programme. The bishops who are in charge of the pastoral care of the Pravasi Catholics of different Rites have asked us a detailed report of the participation of the Catholic Families in the Malayalee Parish in Vienna and of the catechetical formation of the Malayalee Children here. We are ready to give the respective Bishops in Kerala a report of the registered Catholic Malayalee Families of the ICC and of the children who participate in our Catechism training. We are thankful to HE Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil for giving us through Mar Gregory Karotempel the official approval of the Marriage Preparation Course of the ICC Parish in Vienna.

We shall prepare intensely for the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the ICC on 13th and 14th of October, 2007. Kindly cooperate with the coordinating teams for this memorable mega-event of our Parish Community. We will present copies of the ICC Family Registration Book 2007 to the Archbishop of Vienna and to the Rector of ARGE AAG on 1st of October, 2007. Kindly give your jubilee contribution definitely before the last Sunday of September. Dues will be recorded in all the copies of the ICC Family Registration Book – 2007. All are most welcome to give your suggestions and critical comments on any matter of the ICC parish life and activities. Kindly give them in writing to the ICC Parish Committee.

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Message of the Assistant Chaplain

Birth Day of Our Mother Mary

Birth day is certainly a significant event and the children specially love to celebrate their birth days, and the grown up too. The birth day celebrations are not something foreign to Christians and we celebrate birth day of Jesus, John the Baptist, and the birth day of Mary, mother of Jesus and our spiritual Mother in the Christian Liturgical calendar. The Birth of Mother Mary is celebrated on September 8, in spite of very many other feasts of Mary, with its due solemnity in the Church. Saint Romanus (457), a native of Syria and later deacon of a church in Constantinople, was probably the first one who brought this feast to the attention of the authorities of the Greek Church. This celebration was accepted and adopted by the Roman Church at the end of the seventh century.

While coming to many places of central and Eastern Europe the Feast of Mary's Nativity is traditionally connected with ancient thanksgiving customs and celebrations. A blessing of the harvest and of the seed grains for the winter crops is performed in many churches. The formula of this blessing may be found in the Roman Ritual. It is said that in some sections of Austria all the milk obtained on Drive-Down Day is given to the poor in honour of our Lady, together with the meat, bread, and pastries left over from the feast in the evening. Nevertheless the unique preparation to the feast of birth of mother Mary is something particular to eastern churches and especially to Kerala Churches with out any exceptions to rites. While in Kerala it is celebrated with eight day fast and abstinence starting from 1 September. *Ettunoyambu* is some thing very special to Syrian Christians of Kerala. This Feast provides us with an occasion for praise and thanksgiving in honour of the personal sanctity and vocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the mother of Lord Jesus.

The relatively recent Roman Catholic dogma in 1952 of the Immaculate Conception affirms only that Mary was conceived without Original Sin by a special grace of God, not that she herself was born of a virgin. The Eastern Orthodox Church never believed in this doctrine as stated, but only that Mary lived without actual sin. However, the universal Church has always believed emphatically in the Virgin Birth of Christ.

The above mentioned thoughts may help each one of us to spend some time in fast and abstinence in respect and in honour of Mother Mary who is entrusted with the whole world and whose intensive presence and appearance constantly reminds us of her readiness to be with us as she herself dedicated her whole of life for Jesus. Let this tradition in the church strengthen us to live our committed life reminding us that we are destined to be with the Lord. And let us find asylum in Mother Mary.

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Keep these Events in mind :

1. Prize Distribution of the ICC Sports on Sunday, 2 nd September, 2007, Beginning at 12:50 Hrs after the Malayalam Mass in Maria Lourdes.
2. Pope's Visit: On 7 th September, from 10:00Hrs AM HOF through Wipplingerstraße and the Färbergasse; on 9 th September at 10:00AM in Stephansdom.
3. Kairaly Nikethan Classes begin on Saturday, 15 th September in BUNDESÖBERSTUFENREAL GYMNASIUM , Hegelgasse 12, A-1010 Wien.
4. Catechism Classes begin on Sunday, 16 th September in Meidling and Stadlau. Exams as per schedule.
5. Kids Liturgy (with Children till 6 years of age): on 23 rd Sept., 11:30 in Meidling;17:30 in Stadlau
6. Half Day Recollection on Saturday, 6 th October, 2007 : from 13:00hrs to 17:00 Hrs in Stadlau
7. Jubilee Cultural Evening on 13 th October, 2007 in Haus der Begegnung Floridsdorf.
8. Solemn Concluding Liturgy of the Silver Jubilee Year on 14 th October 2007, at 15:00hrs in Meidling.

(Verleger: Thomas Sebastian for the Indian Catholic Community Vienna)