
Priory of the Most Holy Trinity, South India



Madonna & Child. Raphael

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

Have you ever chanced upon something, a view, a scene, a face, an action that caused you to draw breath or made you feel as if your heart missed a beat for its very beauty?

Imagine for a moment that you were in Bethlehem on the night of the birth of the infant Jesus. Imagine that as you gazed heavenward at the frosty glittering splendour of the heavens, and at one unusual star in particular, you were almost knocked over by a group men hurrying in

the opposite direction, in a state of nervous confusion....

"Is this it? Is this the right one?" ... "Look there's a light, yes this is the one."

You follow them, intrigued. They are poorly dressed, poorly spoken but they seem to be hesitantly excited about something.

"There's someone inside, I can see someone moving."... "You go first."... "What are we going to say, they might be frightened, perhaps we should knock."

Falling over each other they enter the stable and disappear from sight; there

follows a brief sound of rustling and then silence.

What can it be? Gently opening the stable door, you slip inside too, and there it is:

The most beautiful child is in the arms of the most beautiful mother surrounded by the darkness and filth of a winter stable. Her face, aglow in the lamplight, is purity and modesty, and her gaze is love of the sort that only a mother can have for her new born child. It is the perfection of nature, a climax of natural beauty. How pathetic, how sublime, how wonderful!

Consider now the ardour of this natural love that our Lady had for our Lord during their lives together. He was the most perfect of men in possession of every virtue to its greatest degree and He was *her* child, everything He had of the material order was hers—He was flesh of her flesh. Having the physical beauty of his mother, imagine the joy with which she watched Him grow, imagine the pleasure that His company, His conversation and His reciprocal love brought her.

She, herself, the most perfect of creatures, had an unequalled capacity to love among creatures; her natural love for her son was the most intense and most constant possible...

And now consider this aspect of our Lady's love so far described: it was love of the natural order, it was natural love, and between natural love and supernatural love there is a world of difference. In fact, the least act of supernatural love is of a degree infinitely superior to the greatest act of natural love.

Our Lady of course loved our Lord

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with the greatest degree of supernatural love too, but if supernatural love is infinitely superior to natural love, consider the implications of this reality for us. By redeeming mankind and infusing supernatural virtue with His grace into our souls, our Lord has made it possible for the least of our acts of love in a state of grace to be raised to a greater act of love than the natural love that Our Lady had for Our Lord (nb. for the distinction of acts see *Summa Theologica* 3a.q19.a1).

Reflect upon the enormity of this truth for a moment. It means that, in a state of grace, when you bestow a kindly smile, or open a door for someone, or tell a joke, or even pour the tea... all these mundane acts, when performed in divine charity, are made greater acts of love of God than the greatest, most sublime natural love. And all this was made possible by our Saviour's birth. Can there be a more precious gift?

I wish I could pour you all a good cup of tea this Christmas.

In Jesu et Maria,
Father Robert Brucciani

CHRONICLE

▪ 8th September: Srs. Maria Theresa and Maria Celina made their first vows as members of the Consoling Sisters of the Sacred Heart at the priory of Albano, Italy. There was a sung Mass at the priory for their intentions.

▪ 13th September: Great rejoicing accompanied the return of the of the newly professed Tuticorin Sisters. Mass

was sung at the orphanage in thanksgiving.

▪ 19th September: Our dear leader, Fr. Couture, landed in Trichy for a visit to the Priory of the Most Holy Trinity and a flash visit to see Fr. Joseph Pfeiffer in Chennai.

▪ 24th September: The Ave Maria football team played its first match against the best team in the neighbourhood (St. Xavier's School). Our team was missing key players and was half the size of the opponents etc....they played well and lost only 5-0. The team is under the management of Herr Josef Huber of Bavaria who persuaded a local department store to donate the football kit. Herr Huber also bought them new sports shoes, but at least half of them took them off during the match—bare feet are much better! We look forward to the rematch on 5th October.

▪ 27th September: Mr. & Mrs. Stössel and their son, Raphael, and daughter, Therese, came to visit their other daughter, Franziska who has been a volunteer



Rapid coastal erosion on the south coast: a punishment for abandoning the faith?

here at the orphanage for the last three months. Miss Ingrid Eigenmann from Switzerland arrived on the same flight to also help at the school.

▪ 1st & 2nd October: Fr. Brucciani and the boys spent a wet few days in Christurajapuram. The beaches all along the south coast continue to be eroded at an astonishing rate (about 10m per annum it seems). As the faith continues to decline in the villages that St. Francis Xavier evangelised (largely because of the demise of the clergy), one cannot help but think that this is a punishment sent from God.

▪ 3rd October: The orphanage cele-



Anna Maria Suma Latha requests the supernatural gift of Faith on the day of her baptism. She can now love and be loved with more than natural love—she can now share in the Divine Act of Love which is God Himself. Her godmother is Miss Franziska Stössel of Switzerland.

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The Ave Maria Football Club. The Manager is Herr Joseph Huber brought in from Bravaria. The Coaches are Oliver Alderson and Joshua Coward, both of Newbury, U.K.

brated its 10th anniversary. Sunday Mass at the priory was offered in thanksgiving.

- 4th October: Franziska Stössel left for home in Switzerland; the rest of the family went to Kerala for a week. Franziska was a model of piety and gentleness for the girls.

- 5th October: St. Xavier's College - vs. Ave Maria FC: 3-1. Maybe next time. The junior team drew 1-1.

- 10th October: It was our turn for a day of perpetual adoration at the priory.

- 12th October: Fr. Todd Anderson arrived at Tuticorin Airport to visit the priory, orphanage and school. Unfortunately he spent most of the time in his room with fever. He was deposited back at Tuticorin Airport on Friday of the same week. The second leg of his tour was a

trip to do the Mass circuit in Chennai and then proceed to Goa and Bombay.

- 13th & 16th October: Miss Laura Steinle arrived from Germany and Miss Maria Kimpton arrived from the U.S.A. to help at Veritas Academy for 6 months. Divine Providence has kept the volunteers coming.

- 26th October: Fr. Brucciani left for Singapore for a three day stay to satisfy his visa obligations. It took six visits to For- eigners Section of the police station to obtain an exit permit!

- 10th November: Negotiations for the purchase of 2.8 acres of land were concluded. Only a little paperwork and boundary verification needs to be done for the contract to be signed. The new land will eventually be used for the boys' school. The land is about 400m from the girls' orphanage.

- 20th-30th November: Miss Julie Zapp arrived from the U.S.A. Miss Monica Marshall, Mssrs. Oliver Alderson and Joshua Coward, and Mlle. Alix Du- sausoy departed from our midst. May they receive an abundant temporal and eternal reward for their generosity.



Michaelas (top photo with hands in pockets) is managing the construction of the new boys' dormitory and study hall. It should be ready for Easter. All donations welcome!



Mr. Joshua Coward of Newbury, U.K. shows Albert how to repair a widget.



Fr. Gregory wonders why nobody has scored.