

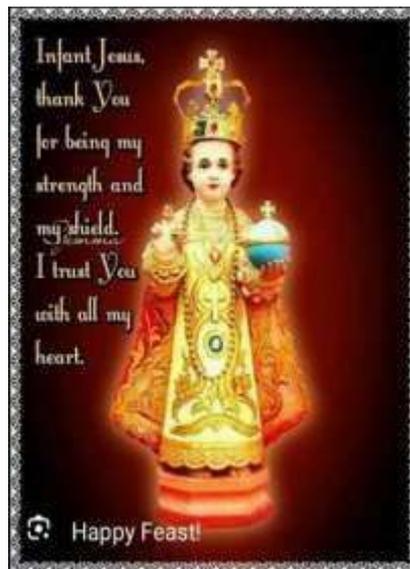
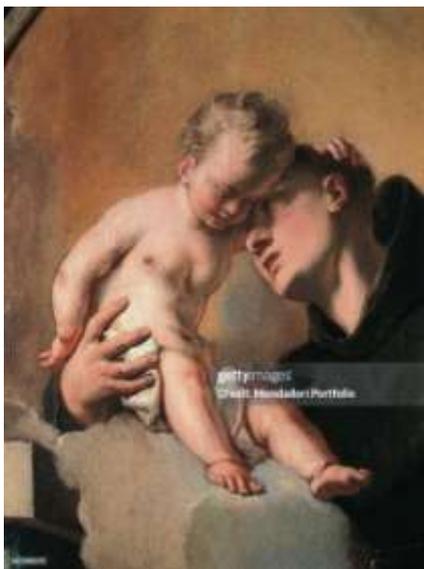
4th March 2025

>>> NEWSLETTER <<<
SOCIETY OF THE SACRED
HEART
PROVINCE OF INDIA



NEWS FROM THE MALWANI
COMMUNITY

The year 2024-025 has been filled with events and activities. We have recently finished celebrating the feast of Infant Jesus on 2nd February 2025 during which there were several activities organized for raising funds for the new church building of St. Anthony's parish. When we celebrated the feast of Infant Jesus, we came across many interesting images of infant Jesus with St. Anthony.



My involvement with the Legion of Mary

One of the main services of the Legion of Mary is visiting families. We had taken up a few case studies too. One of these was a cancer patient who was abandoned by her only son. We arranged help towards her treatment as well as for her daily food. One fine day, she was taken to an old age home in Goa by her son and nobody knew about it until she contacted us by phone after a month. Last October, she died in a municipal hospital. Whenever possible I used to speak to her over the phone in order to give her inner strength and courage to face life in the old age home after having had a flat in Rathodi, Mumbai, with many friends around. Her life, both in Mumbai and in Goa, had become an endless succession of gray days and black nights. She had a lonely death. It was her modern day Calvary experience. Her son did not want to go even after her death. After much efforts made by various persons, he went and received the body. This was one of the most touching experiences of 2024-2025 in my pastoral ministry.

Study tour cum picnic with the members of the Legion of Mary

I had the joy of going for a picnic cum study tour with the members of the Legion of Mary to Erangel. We had senior groups of English speaking from Malawni along with junior English and Marathi speaking groups from Kharodi; thus altogether we were 30 persons. I was given a topic for presentation to the whole group. The topic was "Reasons for many Catholics leaving the Church today and how can it be prevented." Thus, we had some reflection, discussion together, some fun, a fellowship meal and some went to the sea to play. At the end of the picnic, all were fired with more enthusiasm and team spirit.

Study Tour of the Legion of Mary Members to Erangel



Dealing with the Sodality group has been another enriching experience of this year. These members are from lower middle class and poor families. Most of them are widows. They took up a very challenging task of fund raising for building our new church during the nine days novena prior to the feast of Infant Jesus and on the day of the feast. Thirty of them together put up several food stalls and collected a certain amount of money for the new church. Over and above, they decided to donate some more as per their individual capacity. Thus it came to Rs. 39,000/-. In addition, they took a decision during our weekly meeting not to have any big celebration during this year so that they can contribute more towards the “Church building Fund” It indeed touched the core of my being.

Sodality Members visiting the Mount Mary Church, Bandra, on the occasion of the Church Feast, September 8, 2024, as the devotees of Mother Mary



Reflecting on all these experiences as well as visiting many home-bound persons from wealthy families made me realize that light and darkness, hope and despair, love and fear are never very far from each other, and that spiritual freedom often requires a fierce spiritual battle. We are surrounded by people who live in anguish and I feel privileged to be part of their life journey. As I write this, I am reminded of a sodality member who is 80 now. She is a widow since the age of 18. Her life teaches me that success in life is determined by contributions and not by accumulations. We cannot control the length of our life, but we can control and contribute to its breadth, depth, and height. Like trees, let us continue creating new leaves, new branches and new directions for a better tomorrow wherever we are.

N.I. Sophie rscj

PRAYER FESTIVAL

I am truly excited to share the beautiful moment that I experienced at the Prayer Festival held at our St. Anthony's Parish, Malawni. During the year 2024, our parish faced a significant challenge when a part of our church land was acquired for road widening, resulting in the demolition of the parochial house. However, this challenge also sparked a vision – the idea of constructing a new parochial house and a larger St. Anthony's Church, the reason for this being the growing number of parishioners. To fulfill this vision, there was a need to raise funds for this ambitious project. Hence, our parish organized several activities, one of which was a remarkable event featuring Fr. Rob Galea, an Australian priest and musician, who performed live at St. Anthony's Church on 1st and 2nd December 2024. This was a highly anticipated and challenging musical show.

Organizing Fr. Rob's music show, required immense effort and planning. Our parish priest, Rev Fr. Cajetan Menezes, faced numerous challenges along the way. On the day of the event, he was even called to the police station to ensure that the show was not aimed at converting people. Despite these hurdles, the concert was given necessary protection by the police, ensuring its smooth execution.

Fr. Rob Galea, often referred to as the "**Pop Star Priest**," hails from Malta but currently serves in Australia. He brought his unique blend of faith and music to our community, performing as part of the Prayer Festival. He has also authored a book "BREAKTHROUGH." His concert, titled "**Something about You**" was an opportunity for the parish to connect with this inspiring priest through his music and testimony. Fr. Cajetan Menezes, our new Parish Priest, invited the community to experience this unforgettable musical journey. Fr. Rob's performance was a concert with personal introspection and sharing of his spiritual experience. He shared his journey with the youth and spoke about the importance of spiritual maturity, illustrating how he has allowed God to guide him through struggles and personal growth. His music conveyed the message of trusting in God, step by step, and how God's love can heal us in our darkest moments. Through his stories, Fr. Rob encouraged us to embrace suffering with love, knowing that God is always there to help and heal.

Having attended the show myself, I can say it was an experience that I will cherish forever. Fr. Rob's words and music left me inspired, as I reflected on how much the human heart can endure and still remain full of love when we allow God to work through us. His performance reminded me that trusting in God, even in small steps, brings us closer to His embrace.

This was the first time that such an event was held in Mumbai, and St. Anthony's Church, Malawni, was honoured and privileged to host such an inspiring spiritual event. The concert was more than just a musical performance—it was a reminder of the power of faith, hope, and love.

The Prayer Festival was truly a memorable experience for all who attended, and we look forward to more events that will bring our parish community closer together, while supporting the growth and development of our beloved St. Anthony's Church.

Poonam Gaikwad rscj