

BAY AREA TAMIL CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

இனிய தமிழால் இறைவனில் இணைவோம்

**SANGAMAM 2011 – The Great Fiesta of Tamil Catholics!**

BATCC celebrated its 8th Year Anniversary "SANGAMAM" on Aug 27, 2011 at Our Lady of Peace Church, Santa clara, CA. This grand celebration was based on the theme "Love Your Neighbor".

The Sangamam celebration started with the Holy Mass in Tamil by Fr. William and Fr. Arokia raj followed by a Rosary Procession with Vailankanni Maatha. Around 150 people attended the holy mass and procession. It was a wonderful gathering of all Tamil catholic families around Bay Area.

The cultural programs were held at Fr. Sweeny Hall in OLOP. All members of BATCC from 3 year old children to adults showed very impressive talents, interest, and contribution towards participation and organizing. Everyone got themselves involved in lots of activities. It was quite a great sight to see the talents of kids; their interest in performing for Sangamam. Everybody present were very appreciate of the show and praised BATCC for a meticulously planning this event.

Few lucky among the gathered crowd took home amazing prizes they won via Raffle. Sincere thanks to the raffle sponsors!

Many thanks to the Parish Priest Fr. Jose Giunta, Sisters and the office staff at OLOP for allowing us to celebrate our annual event for the fifth time here.

Our gratitude goes to Fr. William, Fr. Ed Samy, Fr. Andrew, Fr. Arokia raj, and all visiting Priests for being supportive and a guiding force. Their presence has always been a blessing for our community.

Our warm and heart-filled thanks to all volunteers without whom this event would not have been made possible. We look forward for more such support and prayers from members in all future activities.

We did it again!

God bless,
Agnes Matilda



CELEBRATING EIGHT YEARS OF BATCC: THE NEW FACE OF BATCC

- Kavitha Kumar

BATCC, as we know it today was started by a small group of friends who went to school together in a Jesuit Institution in Tiruchy. This small group of friends were inspired by the Holy Spirit, to start a Tamil Mass Group. They looked for a place and were able to arrange to have the Tamil mass every second Saturday at St. Joseph's Church, Mountain View. Gradually this group grew to encompass a large number of Tamil Catholics; we are now a group of about 300 families.

Our activities grew: Initially we celebrated mass on the second Saturday of each mass, then the group started to pray the Rosary before each mass. The group also celebrated some fun filled social occasions together for the families: Annual Summer picnic at the Baywood Park each Summer. One of the most fun social occasions of the group came to be Sangamam, the annual celebration of our BATCC anniversary. Sangamam 2011 marks the eighth anniversary of BATCC, and was celebrated in a church that is special to many Tamil Catholics in the Bay Area: Our Lady of Peace Church.

In recent years, BATCC has expanded its religious activities to the following: two annual retreats are conducted for adults: one at Advent, and the other, during the Lent Season. In 2010 March, our community organized a retreat by the Divine team from Pota, Chalakudy. Father Augustine visited the Bay

Area and conducted a retreat at St. Joseph's Church, Cupertino. BATCC organized this retreat in English, so as to benefit all Catholics, especially Indians who speak different languages, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Goan and so on.

We also conduct an annual children's Retreat, where we study the Bible and the Mass. We have several faith building activities for our community children, BATCC Children's Retreat, Children's Mass, Altar Boys training, Children's Choir in Tamil. Thus the children of the BATCC Community are enriched through several spiritual experiences.

Thus, our community grew, and acquired a character of its own. The people in our BATCC enriched the community with their presence, and their prayers, some enriched the community with their work, their leadership, some enriched the Community with new faith filled activities and traditions. All these traditions and activities grew, encouraged by the community, and with God's blessing, BATCC is beginning to acquire a culture and character of its own. BATCC is slowly growing into a strong and faith filled community representing the culture of the Catholics from Tamil Nadu, India, who now live in California.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT - STRAIN OUT A GNAT BUT SWALLOW A CAMEL

Jesus accuses the Pharisees by this sentence in Matthew 23:23-24 (Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel).

The Pharisees followed the law strictly by tithing 1/10th of everything while neglecting matters of justice, mercy, and faithfulness. So Jesus is trying to explain justice, mercy and faithfulness are more important than anything else. Jesus did not say we should not tithe but it is not our main focus. Our main focus should be justice (act of righteously judging others), mercy (showing compassion for the suffering) and faithfulness (loyal to Christ) while not neglecting the tithes.

In the modern world, we are also doing the same as the Pharisees did. While we are very busy in completing our religious obligations let us think whether we give importance to justice, mercy and faithfulness.

If we take justice, we judge people based on their financial status and position. Are we showing our mercy to the needy and poor people we see on the streets? While we never fail to complete our religious obligations are we showing our faithfulness to our own family members and relatives, at work, at worship places and wherever we gather?

Giving perfect attention to the details while neglecting true service to God and our fellow man will only result in our condemnation as one who strains out the gnats and swallows the camel.

Jesus charges teachers of the law and the Pharisees as "blind guides" because of the reasons given below.

- You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. (Matthew 23:13)

- You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are. (Matthew 23:15)
- You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? (Matthew 23:16-17)
- You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? (Matthew 23:18-19)
- You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. (Matthew 23:23)
- You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. (Matthew 23:25)
- You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean (Matthew 23:27)
- You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started! (Matthew 23:29-32)

Yours in Christ,
Leenus Rich