

# KeySTONE

ST. PETER'S CHURCH BANDRA  
NEWSLETTER

COMMITMENT • LIVING FAITH • INTEGRITY • CONCERN • (CLIC)



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FEBRUARY - MARCH 2026

## THE CONJUGATION OF LENT

As early as the 4th century, Christians practiced a 40-day fast before Easter, influenced by Jesus' own 40 days in the wilderness. In 325AD the Council of Nicaea implemented Lenten practices, establishing a widespread observance. But today's culture values productivity and speed.

If not careful, Lent can become little more than a 40-day challenge.

Will I be able to swap Netflix for the rosary? Every night!! How much of the Bible can I read in 40 days? Can I skip the weekend outings? ( $40/7 = 5.714$  weekends)

Well-intentioned, maybe, but when spiritual practices become a means of testing Christian 'bonafides' we've simply adopted the world's value system. And then there's this giving up of meat, chocolate, TV, unnecessary spending, whatever. Till finally we're fed up and give up the giving up.

It's like a 40-day diet that never fails to fail. We try to muscle-up on 'virtues' via a crash course that crashes. The workout doesn't work out. However good it may appear to be for me, it doesn't bring me any closer to God. There's a reason for it.

Lent isn't a fast-paced self-improvement program.

It's an un-hurried journey towards God.

Slow down says Lent. Become aware says Lent.

Aware that He suffered for us and doesn't want us to suffer for Him.

That He gave up His life so that we can live ours more fully.

That He loves us not because we are good, but because He is.

Lean on Him. Soak in His love.

Lean on Him. Let His blood heal you.

Lean on Him. Become one with Him this Lent.

Then the Lenten practices start to make sense.

Then they will lift us up with new life instead of dragging us down with sorrow.

Then when He rises at Easter we too can rise – renewed, refreshed and ready to continue His work.

No counting of sacrifices, deeds of charity, works of mercy. No counting of days.

Lent will no longer be a phase to get Past.

Lent will be a Perfect Continuous Present to remain in.

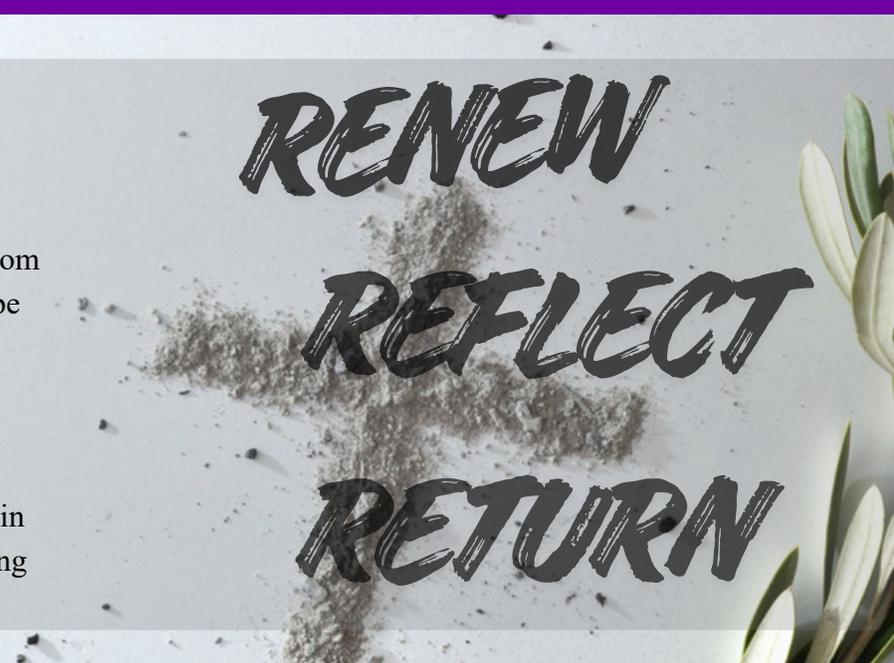
# LENT - A Season of Reflection and Renewal

## What is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, representing repentance, mortality and a call to spiritual renewal. Christians receive ashes (often from the previous year's Palm Sunday palms) in the shape of a cross on their foreheads with the words "remember that thou art dust and to dust thou shall return".

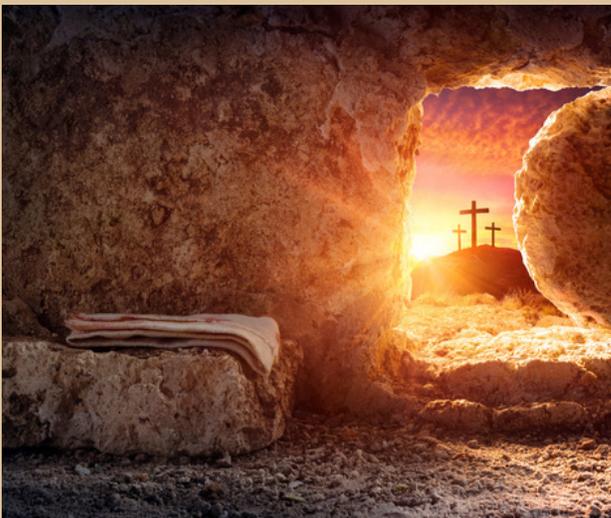
It signifies human fragility, grief for sins and hope in Christ's resurrection, prompting practices like fasting and prayer for the next 40 days.

**RENEW**  
**REFLECT**  
**RETURN**



## Why do we have the Stations of the Cross every Friday in Lent?

This is to commemorate Jesus' crucifixion. Good Friday was the day Jesus was crucified, so Fridays during Lent become a special time to journey with Jesus through his passion, deepening our empathy and gratitude for his sacrifice. It helps us to turn inward, renew our faith and prepare our hearts for Easter.



## What is Holy Saturday?

Holy Saturday (that falls between Good Friday and Easter Sunday) is a day to meditate on Jesus' sacrifice. It's a day of deep spiritual significance, representing rest, hope and Christ's victory over death, often observed with silence, fasting and anticipation for the resurrection.



*December was a busy month for the Bombay Catholic Sabha.*

*Here's a gist of the activities.*

Held a seminar on the awareness of the freedom of Religion Bill, understanding the implications and challenges to our constitutional right to faith, potentially threatened by the proposed Maharashtra Bill 2025

Made parishioners aware and helped get them prepared for the municipal elections. Set up help desks for locating booths. Transportation and meeting with candidates was organised.

A crib completion was conducted with the theme 'trash to treasure'. Cribs were judged on the basis of them being biodegradable, economical, original and creative.

The St. Peter's unit has won the Challenge award and has been judged the best unit in the Bandra Deanery for it's dedication and outstanding contribution.

- Brian D'Souza

Our TIME, talents & treasure are on loan to us from God. Give them away with unlimited generosity.



**THE BOMBAY CATHOLIC SABHA**  
St. Peter's Unit, Bandra

# FREEDOM OF RELIGION BILL

AWARENESS SEMINAR

Understand the implications and challenges to our constitutional right to faith, potentially threatened by the purportedly proposed Maharashtra "Freedom of Religion Bill" 2025

NOVEMBER 30, 2025  
11.00AM  
ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT HALL  
HILL ROAD, BANDRA  
ENTRANCE FROM GATE NO. 5

**SPEAKERS**

**BISHOP DOMINIC SAVIO FERNANDES**  
Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Bombay

**ADV. IRFAN ENGINEER**  
Director of Centre for Study of Society and Institutions



## *A Sacred Milestone*

21 children received  
the Sacrament of the Eucharist  
for the first time  
on the 4th of January  
making Jesus their guiding star



## *Shift to Thrift ... Waste Not*



The Care for Creation Group (CCG) of St.Peter's Parish, successfully concluded the year 2025 with a two-day market on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2025, focussing on the *Rs* of Sustainability – *Reuse, Reduce, Repurpose*.

The market featured stalls selling pre-owned, pre-loved items such as clothing, household goods, decorative pieces alongside products made from *Waste* such as bio-enzyme cleaning solutions, compost, upcycled fabric

creations as also natural remedies made from plants, leaves, herbs etc.

Free Workshops were held showcasing how used plastic bottles can be transformed into beautiful Christmas Stars and old T Shirts into carry bags (can never have enough of them!)

The “shift” to “thrift” was very evident from the large numbers, all eagerly hoping to grab a bargain.

Sustainable solutions is gaining momentum and both individuals and organizations, big and small, are creating alternate solutions to reduce the detrimental effects on Mother Earth.

*There is Wealth in our Waste, lets innovate!*

**WILL YOU?**



*Janet D'Souza*

# SERVING WITH LOVE

- Berna Macsarenhas

Our Social Outreach team was on the go through the month of December! Putting together the various functions, tested our dedication and organizational skills, but at the end, gave us a deep sense of fulfilment and accomplishment.

From the inspiring 'Yes We Can' event, to the fun filled Christmas party for the differently abled young adults and their parents, culminating in a heartfelt Christmas Eve mass for the the homebound...we had our hands full!

"Under the 'Yes We Can initiative, the SOC organised a heartwarming 'flea market' to coincide with World Disability Day. From handmade art and craft to delicious treats, every item on sale told a story of talent, effort and determination.

Parishioners attending the Sunday mass generously supported our young adults.

The event was a reminder that with a little support and encouragement, the differently abled too, can take baby steps to becoming financially independent, which in turn can do wonders for their self esteem and sense of dignity.

Our hearts swell with gratitude for all you do, dear SOC members.

THANK YOU seems too small a word indeed!"

-Tripti Lakshminarayanan - a parent



With Darryl orchestrating the games and dancing, with Lyle handling music, with delicious snacks from Zita caterers, with Glenda's traditional Christmas sweets... our differently abled young adults and their parents had a GOOD TIME!

"The decision to have a Christmas party was taken at short notice, but bravo! all hands to the deck... they never fail to deliver. Fabulous, fantastic!"

- Olga Pereira - a parent



The Christmas eve mass for the homebound was a heartwarming experience for many who'd been unable to attend in-person services for a long time.



## Seniors recollection

with Fr. Dan

Fr. Daniel Fernandes led the Advent recollection and benediction for seniors, making it interactive with group skits on Christmas songs.

- Mona Gracias



## Congratulations to all involved

St. Peters Youth (S.P.Y) 2nd place in the Santacruz–Bandra Crib Competition under the Church Category

This was a joint effort by SPY and our Confirmation students, who came together with creativity, faith, and teamwork to bring this crib to life

Our crib reflected a powerful message — the true meaning of Christmas versus what it has become today.

In a world where “XMAS” often removes Christ from Christmas, our crib aimed to remind everyone of the love, humility, and hope that Christ represents.

Proudly, our crib was made using reused and sustainable materials as far as possible celebrating not just faith, but responsibility too.

This win belongs to us all!

- Althea Sequeira



## Spreading Christmas Cheer

The YSS team's annual Christmas party on the church square was a hit with 250 underprivileged children joining in for an evening of fun, magic and music!

Thank you to our generous sponsors.

We're also grateful for the support of Bishop Agnelo Gracias, Fr. Luke Rodrigues and Fr. Baptist Pinto.



# UNWRAP 2025

## Three Days of Faith, Fun and Fellowship

This Christmas season, St. Peter's Youth brought the parish together through UNWRAP 2025, a three-day celebration that beautifully blended faith, joy, creativity, and community. Entirely organised by the youth, with the guidance of Fr. Ivan D'Souza, Sr Althiya and Lyle, UNWRAP was a true reflection of youth-led ministry in action.

### Christmas Ball

UNWRAP began on an elegant note with the Christmas Ball, which commenced with the lighting of the Christmas candle, symbolising hope, peace, joy, and love — the true essence of the season. This was followed by a prayer. A lively march, followed by dances filled the evening with joy and laughter.

### Golden Globe Night

Retro ambient music set the mood for the second evening. Participants enjoyed interactive games.

### Carnival Night

The evening brought UNWRAP to a joyful close. A fun appearance by the Grinch and an Elf, dancing with the crowd, set the tone for the night. Carol singing reminded everyone of the true meaning of Christmas.

Adding to the festive spirit were vibrant stalls, music and dancing, concluding a celebration of unity, faith and joyful fellowship.

- Althea Sequeira



## *Unity in diversity.*

Members of various communities came together for an interfaith Republic Day service prepared by Fr. Aubrey Mascarenhas. Verses from different holy books highlighted the shared value of reaching out to our neighbours.



## *Nurturing families, building community*

- The Family Cell -



The St. Peter's family cell, founded in September 2007 with seven couples under the guidance of Fr. Joel Mascarenhas (later led by Fr. Juan), aims to give families a platform to share their experiences, challenges, joys...

Today, the family cell is led by Michelle D'Souza under the guidance of Fr. Trevor Miranda.

### **The Vision**

Enriching family through understanding, communication and Christian values.

Over the years, this Vision has been brought to life through many creatively organized programmes focusing on family issues and Christian values.

### **Objectives**

- To encourage family unity through thought, work, prayer and effective dialogue on a daily basis.
- To create awareness among families about economic values and financial security.
- To create awareness among parents regarding their failings and shortcomings.
- To promote the sharing of best practices among families.

Join the St. Peter's family cell! All are welcome - couples, single parents, widows/widowers, youth, professionals. Help enrich family lives. Contact the parish office to get involved.





### *Love In Action*

- Christian Unity Octave -

As part of the global Christian Unity Week, St. Peter's had a short service with prayers prepared by the Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the oldest Orthodox churches.

A short but thought provoking homily by Pastor Abhijeet Sasane, from the Methodist Church at Claire Road, Byculla was really excellent. He stressed the fact that unity doesn't mean uniformity and we should not look for perfection, but remember that they will know we are Christians by our love. We must always remember that when we stand together, we are drawn by the Man on the Cross.

### *Age is just a number!*

- Stay active. Stay motivated - St. Peter's Senior Citizens show you how -

Christine Saldanha completed the half marathon at the recently concluded Tata Mumbai Marathon, finishing 12th out of 60 participants in the Women's 60 - 64 years category.

Reflecting on her achievement, Christine said "Ever grateful to Jesus for seeing me through to the finish line and giving me an injury free run despite health setbacks" Her performance highlights the power of faith and determination in overcoming challenges.



Meanwhile Berna Mascarenhas marked her fourth consecutive year completing the Senior Citizens run. Describing the experience, she shared "Crossing the finish line is an incredibly satisfying moment. The feeling of a temporary high is unmatched"



And here in our parish, on every alternate Wednesday of the month, Our Lady's Room comes alive with Senior Citizens bending, stretching and finding balance at a yoga class. It's more than exercise. It's community. It's wellness. It's joy.

Come and experience the benefits of staying active and motivated together. Contact the parish office for details of the yoga class.

**Reminder!**

THE FAMILY CELL TOGETHER WITH THE WOMEN'S CELL ARE ORGANISING

## Celebrating Love Down The Ages

Date: 15th February 2026

Eucharistic celebration at 6 pm followed by get together at St. Peter Church square.

A CELEBRATION FOR ALL PARISHIONERS

MASS FOR STUDENTS PREPARING FOR 10<sup>TH</sup>, 12<sup>TH</sup> & OTHER EXAMINATIONS

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2026  
Time: 10 am  
Venue: St. Peter Church

## Family Retreat

Guided by Fr. Gerard Rodricks SJ, Mrs. Rupa, and the MFC Team

6th (4PM) to 8th (4PM) February  
Vinayalaya Retreat House, Andheri East

Separate sessions for children, youth and adults.

Contact / Registration:  
Veronica 8828104989, Fr Wesley SJ 7977529821  
vinayrethouse@gmail.com

### Youth Events Ahead...

- First week of Feb taze
- Second week of Feb confession
- 22nd Feb youth mass
- 28th Feb orphanage visit

## Milestones...

### BORN IN CHRIST

Zyla Abigail Tamboowalla

Parents: Keith Tamboowalla & Rifa Khan

### UNITED IN CHRIST

Adrian Kamble & Gizelle Gonsalves

Chinchpokli Road

### REST IN CHRIST

Sarita Fernandes	18.11.2025	Viegas B'ldg., National Library Road
Sean Menezes	03.12.2025	Behramabad, T.P.S. IV
Philomena Saldanha	08.12.2025	The Mascotte, T.P.S. IV
Cassandra Marie Fernandes	21.12.2025	Rizvi Mahal, Water Field Road
Lynus Paul Misquitta	06.01.2026	Anand Mahal, M.G Road
Teresa Pereira	16.01.2026	Happy Home, St. Martin Road
Carmen Robert Vaz	26.01.2026	Baba Nagar , St. Peter's Road
Zeferino John D'mello	26.01.2026	D'monte Street, Chinchpokli Road
Bosco Joseph Fernandes	27.01.2026	Khyber, Almeida Road
Julie Joseph Pereira	27.01.2026	Rebello House, Hill Road

We welcome your suggestions, if any.

Reach us on email @stpeyerschurchkeystone@gmail.com