

CHRISTMAS DAY (YELDHO/INCARNATION OF OUR LORD)
(MONDAY, DECEMBER 25TH 2006)

A warm greeting to all the readers of this weekly information messages for the importance of our Sunday services in the name of Immanuel, who incarnated in the manger for all of us. Today, in the town of David a Saviour is born to us; He is Christ the Lord...Glory to God in the highest! On Monday December 25th, we commemorate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the first festival in our Church calendar. Christmas (Latin) is Christ + Mass. As our Achen announced last Sunday, on this day we can hear a lot of joyful and melodious meaningful songs that we cannot hear in our other festivals.

Traditionally, the Christmas service starts in the middle of night. Because of the time limit and for our own conveniences, our Christmas service starts in the morning of the Christmas day. It is glad to inform you that this year we will start with an evening prayer on the Christmas Eve (Sunday) starting at 6.00 p.m. On Monday, the Christmas day, our service starts exactly at 8.00 a.m. with the starting of midnight-service (Rathri Namaskaram). As we all know that there are four parts (Kauma) to the Rathri Namaskaram. At the last part of the fourth 'Kauma', we all go to the fire-pit as a procession and prayers start with the Pauline Epistle continued with the Evengelion. During the middle of Evengelion, Achen will start lighting the fire-pit, which is filled with palm leaves. (The palm leaves used for the Hosanna service will be dried and kept with the maximum respect, and these palm leaves are used for the Christmas service). In remembrance to the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, we offer incense at the fire-pit. All the faithful will circle around the fire-pit and sprinkle incense in the fire-pit as Achen will continue with the Evengelion. Achen starts the special service to celebrate the elevation of the Holy Cross. Morning Prayer continues with the Holy Qurbana. It has seen that the above sequences and patterns changed for convenience and other factors to accommodate our believers living in different parts of the world.

Lighting the fire during the procession service reminds us of the great and joyous event of the birth of our Lord around 2000 years ago, and also of the light of the shepherds saw at the birth of Jesus. The fire light reminds us of Jesus, who said to us "I am the light of the world. After that all the faithful goes back to the church and, after which the Holy Qurbana services will resume. In the Holy Qurbana, the word PEACE is proclaimed several times.

"Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for bringing salvation to all the nations. May the gospel of salvation be proclaimed to every nation today and to every person on the face of the earth. Help us to be a good witness of the joy of the gospel to all we meet."**"**

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for the Christmas Day commemoration.

Bible readings for December 25th.
(The Christmas Day)

Before Holy Qurbana

Genesis - **21: 1-8**
Micah - **5: 1-4**
Isaiah - **9: 1-7**

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles: **I John** - **1: 1-10**
Epistles of St. Paul: **Galatians** - **3: 23 – 4: 7**
Holy Gospel: **St. Matthew** - **2: 1-12**

By the Fire-Pit

Epistles of St. Paul: **Hebrews** - **1: 1-12**
Holy Gospel: **St. Luke** - **2: 1-20**

With prayers,
Thomas Alex