

HALF-YEARLY NEWSLETTER | JULY 2025

IACA SPRING & SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 | Issue 1 – A Fresh Start with a Renewed Spirit



INDIAN AMERICAN CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION – UNITED IN FAITH AND CULTURE

Welcome Pope Leo XIV

The IACA family joins the global Catholic community in welcoming His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, the first American Pope in the history of the Catholic Church. We also offer heartfelt prayers for the repose of the soul of our beloved Pope Francis.

We offer our deepest gratitude for Pope Francis' decade of selfless service, marked by humility, compassion, and a prophetic voice for the poor and marginalized. His transformative leadership inspired millions and will forever remain a guiding light for generations to come. Pope Leo XIV, a native of the United States known for his scholarly insight and pastoral heart, brings renewed hope and direction to the Church. We look forward to seeing how his missionary work, full of bravery and compassion, will shape his papacy.

As Indian American Catholics, we take pride in this historic moment and humbly commit to unity and evangelization under his spiritual guidance.



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Guided by
Grace:
IACA
Families
Gathering
in Love
and
Devotion

President's Message – A New Beginning

BY NESAN ANTONYRAJ

It is a great pleasure to reach IACA families and friends via this 2025 Summer Newsletter. After assuming the Presidency of IACA in January 2025, I have had many opportunities to welcome IACA families to our gatherings. We have enjoyed each other's company as we met for monthly First Saturday Masses and social gatherings. Our most recent Mother's and Father's Day celebration at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Emmitsburg, MD was truly inspiring.

Our devoted IACA families demonstrate unshaken faith and love for Our Blessed Mother and Her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Many come to seek Our Mother's intercession, and to give thanks for the favors received from her. Our praise for Our Lord and gathering in communion as one family are the very embodiment of evangelization. We hope that those who see us gather in unity, see the light we shine and the joy we share. We pray that our efforts will help to guide the world to Our Blessed Mother, who leads them to the Lord Jesus.

As the IACA family, let us continue to pray together for the healing of the sick, the uplifting of hearts, and give thanks for the blessings we have received. Your participation in our mission for Our Lady inspires those around you to also answer her call. I thank you all for your tremendous support in IACA's mission, and look forward to your continued involvement and prayers.

Message from our Spiritual Director

BY FR. CHRISTY AROCKIARAJ

As we continue to journey through this year of hope (2025), we are blessed to have Our Lady of Vailankanni, who stands with us as the beacon of hope especially during times of hopelessness and darkness.

- Our Lady of Vailankanni gave hope to the young boy selling buttermilk, who was worried about his half-empty buttermilk container. Miraculously, he witnessed his container overflowing with buttermilk.
- The physically challenged (lame) boy who lost hope of walking again, started walking after being blessed with the apparition of Our Lady of Vailankanni.
- The Portuguese sailors who were hopelessly lost during a severe storm in the 17th century, landed safely on the shores of Vailankanni because of their prayers to the Blessed Mother, the Star of the Sea (Stella Maris).

Today we continue to gather every month or even more frequently in front of the altar of Our Lady of Vailankanni at the National Shrine in Washington DC, to be enlightened with hope and get answer to our prayers. Mary continues to walk with us as a fellow pilgrim of hope leading us to her Son, Jesus Christ - the true Hope. Let us continue our pilgrimage to Mary with the same hope of St. Bernard who said, "those who seek her protection are never left unaided" (Memorare).



Our Lady of
Vailankanni
and the
Year of
Hope

Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord Jesus at The Temple

On February 02, 2025, IACA families celebrated The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord. Mass was celebrated by the IACA Spiritual Director Rev. Fr. Christy Arockiaraj. Before Mass, the participants had our candles blessed in the atrium of the Crypt Church. This was followed by a candlelight procession from the Crypt Atrium into the Crypt Church. At the end of the Mass, Mr. Johnson Sabariar, President of the Federation of Tamil Catholic Associations of North America (FETCANA), honored Fr. Christy for his guidance, direction, and outstanding support as the Spiritual Director of FETCANA.



Mary, Our Lady. The Best and The Blessed Among Women – Mass



On March 01, 2025, The 1st Saturday monthly IACA Mass was celebrated on March 01, 2025. The IACA faithful came together to honor Our Blessed Mother as 'the Best and the Blessed Among Women'. Children participated in the choir, singing songs, and playing prayerful music, under the guidance of Benedict Antonyraj. Kudos and thanks to Maria Jasmine Gnanasekaran (d/o Edison Paul Gnanasekaran & Kamaladevi Ayyavoo), Savio Raymond (s/o Raymond Arul & Joy Raymond), Samuel Stanly (s/o Stanly Nayagam & Jeyaseeli Savarimuthu) for their beautiful contributions in singing and playing musical instruments for the Holy Mass. We are looking forward to greater participation from the talented children in singing and playing musical instruments for the upcoming monthly Holy Masses, and at our Annual Pilgrimage on September 06, 2025.



Lenten Retreat - April 05, 2025



The IACA Lenten Retreat for the year 2025 was conducted on April 05, 2025. Many IACA families participated in the Retreat. IACA thanks Rev. Fr. Christy Arockiaraj, for leading the reflection on the theme 'Hope and Resurrection in our daily lives', with the emphasis on the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025.

After Fr. Christy's reflection, we prayed and meditated on the Stations of the Cross. Thanks to the ladies who led the reflection and meditation. Thanks to Gabriel Francis, who with the assistance of Tony Britto and Kannan Natarajan, Joseph Kumar and his son Josheroff Joe, presented the Stations within the limited space available at the Chapel of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Thanks to the children who participated and recited the meditation prayers at each station.

Following the Lenten Retreat, our community gathered for our April Monthly Mass. A group photo was taken at the fellowship gathering at the side entrance of the Basilica, following the Mass.



APCN Annual Marian Pilgrimage - May 03, 2025



IACA community members participated in the annual Marian Pilgrimage hosted by the Asian Pacific Catholics Network (APCN), at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on May 03, 2025. IACA representatives took part in the celebration in various capacities:

Fred Semendy and Jacinta Mascarenhas - Planning committee members; Gabriel Francis and Princess Mendrebe - procession; Benedict Antonyraj - emcee for the pilgrimage's 'Call to Prayer' (short liturgical dance movements); Sumati Patrick - Leader for the 'Margam Kali' Indian liturgical dance; Regina Mary Savarimuthu and Dass Savarimuthu - Decoration of the chariot of Our Lady of Vailankanni; the Syro Malankara Kerala community carried the Blessed Mother's chariot in the procession and participated in leading the congregation in praying a decade of the rosary; Claudette Brito, Noela Francis, and Shanthi Antonyraj - for reciting a Prayer of the Faithful in Konkani, Hindi, and Tamil respectively; Agnelo Gonsalves and Mariaselvam Chinnappan - who were gift bearers.

Mother's Day pilgrimage to the Grotto in Emmitsburg, MD – May 18, 2025

The IACA Executive committee thanks all the fathers, mothers, children, and grandchildren who came together to pray for our families and then to socialize after the Mass. Families shared precious moments at the social, reconnecting with old friends and making new friends.

This would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of many. From the planning of the event to its joyful execution, many took up the call to help. The interest and enthusiasm with which everyone brought food and other delectables and participated in the event, shows the camaraderie we share with our fellow IACA families.

May Our Blessed Mother continue to shower her graces on our mothers and fathers abundantly!



Emmitsburg Update

Work is underway to create a visitation space for our Lady of Vailankanni at the Emmitsburg Grotto. This space will serve as a spiritual home for us, where we may gather in thanksgiving to Our Mother, and as a point of introduction for those who do not yet know of Our Mother! The total budget for the project is \$200,000 and expected to be completed by August 2025

It was an immense pleasure celebrating Mother's and Father's Day, at the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, Emmitsburg, on May 18, 2025.



JUNE MONTHLY MASS

Mass of the Pentecost

The Holy Mass Celebration

The Holy Mass was led by Rev. Fr. Brian Stacy. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Goan community for sponsoring the Mass and for their beautiful Konkani songs. Devoted children Jelene Mercy Jesudas, Nolan, and Christina D'Souza elegantly guided the Rosary Decades. A big thank you to the Goan community for also providing refreshments during the fellowship following the Mass and Novena.



JULY MONTHLY MASS

Mass of The Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

The Holy Mass was led by Rev. Fr. Ripon Rozario. Special thanks to the Robert Nathan family for sponsoring the Mass. Kevin Nathan and Celeste Nathan served as lectors during the service, while Aidan Nathan and Josheroff Joe took on the role of altar servers. Following the Mass and Novena, Rita and Robert Nathan's family graciously provided refreshments for the fellowship.



Monthly Mass Sponsors (January 2025 – April 2025)

IACA thank the sponsors of the monthly Masses below:

- JAN 2025 – Mrs. Ann Scaria & Dr. Puthupparampil Scaria
- FEB 2025 – Mrs. Rachel Nathan & Mr. Bijal Dharia
- MAR 2025 – Mrs. Nandhini Natarajan & Dr. Kannan Natarajan
- APR 2025 – Mrs. Rita Nathan & Mr. Robert Nathan; Mrs. Monica Pereira
- June 2025 - Goan community
- July 2025 - Bob Nathan's family

May Our Blessed Mother intercede to Her Son Lord Jesus to grant favors to all your prayer intentions.



Our condolences and an assurance of prayers to the families who lost their loved ones recently:

- Celine D'Souza, mother of Nancy D'Souza, who passed away on January 29, 2025
- Late Mr. Gordon Panicker.
- Mr. Gabriel Gomes passing away on July 19, 2025



28th Annual

Pilgrimage

Saturday, September 6th, 2025



To Our Lady of Good Health, Vailankanni

Celebrated at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
400 Michigan Ave NE, Washington DC 20017

Pilgrimage Program

- 12:00 p.m. Confession (Upper Church)
- 12:10 p.m. Lighting of the Pilgrimage Lamp,
Crowning of Mary, Children-lead Rosary
- 12:30 pm Monsignor Vito Buonanno's Welcome (Upper Church)
- 1:30 p.m. Procession (Side entrance of the Basilica)
- 2:15 p.m. Holy Mass (Upper Church)
- 4:00 p.m. Blessing and Dedication of the Children, Novena (Crypt Church)
- 5:00 p.m. Reception (Catholic University's Caldwell Hall)

Contact Us

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**Celebrated by Most Reverend
Bishop Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of the Diocese of Columbus Ohio**

Hosted by the **Indian American Catholic Association (IACA)**,
a registered 501c(3) charitable organization. IACA is an
umbrella organization supported by the participation of
several diverse Catholic Indian Subcontinent Organizations.
Please consider sponsoring our event by scanning the QR
Code here or via Zelle sent to treasurer@iacausa.org

