

St. Joseph Vaz Eucharistic celebration held on April 29, 2017 at Precious Blood Church

St. Joseph Vaz is the patron saint of TEGSA and this year the celebration took place on

April 29th, 2017 (close to his birthday as he was born on April 21, 1651). He was raised in the village of Benaolim in Salcete Goa.

TEGSA's celebration included a mass followed by a reception/bazaar/entertainment organized by Sheilah D'Souza the Social Secretary and assisted by members of the TEGSA committee.

As people entered the Church, they were greeted and welcomed by members of the committee and spouses namely Lucia Carneiro, Lucinda Pinto, Loretta D'Sylva, Francis Fernandes and Rose Madeira and given a mass Booklet which was printed free courtesy of Lazarus Pereira. They were also given Holy pictures and badges with the picture of St. Joseph Vaz and the date of his canonization which took place on January 15, 2015 (donated by Lazarus Pereira).

As I looked around, I was pleased that the Church was packed with TEGSA members and their friends. What better way to pay tribute to our very own Goan saint?

The choir "Tu Imbe" led by A.C. Pereira sang the entrance hymn as Archbishop Emeritus Lawrence Saldanha and Reverend Father Xavier De Pinto entered along with the servers.

The first reading was done by our President Austin Pinto. The Psalm was beautifully sung by Sheilah D'Souza, Social Secretary. The Prayers of the Faithful were done by Trevor D'Silva and Elizabeth Prabhu also from the committee.

Archbishop Saldanha in his homily, narrated to us the life and journey of St. Joseph Vaz and also talked of the suffering of our fellow Catholics in other parts of the World who were being persecuted for their faith. He said we should be proud of have our very first Goan saint.

I had a feeling of nostalgia and I felt I was in my village Church in Goa as I listened to the choir sing in Konkani. They sang the Gospel Acclamation, Sorvespora Zoi Zoi, the memorial acclamation Jezu melo, Jezu jivont, the Communion Hymn "Tuzo hath Jesu" all in our mother tongue Konkani.

The choir were superb and the musicians and singers blended so well.

Before the last blessing, Austin Pinto, the President made a speech to thank the Archbishop for celebrating the mass and also thanked Rev. Father De Pinto for allowing us to celebrate the mass and the reception in his parish. He mentioned how helpful Fr. De Pinto and his staff were to the committee members as they prepared and set up for the feast. He also joked about the fact that there may be a relationship between himself and Fr. De Pinto as they bear the same last name. He then invited the congregation to meet in the hall for the celebration and bazaar.

As we descended the stairs to go to the hall, we could smell the delicious Goan flavours in the air and it is no wonder that everyone was rushing downstairs.

The hall was very well arranged and organized by Godfrey Cunningham and his helpers, Larry and Elizabeth Prabhu, Trevor and Loretta D'Sylva, Winston D'Souza, Carol and Francis Fernandes, Rose and Paul Madeira. Godfrey also stayed downstairs during the mass to help the 8 vendors who had stalls

around the circumference of the hall. The vendors were selling snacks such as pao de chourico, potato chops and Goan delicacies such as Sorpotel and Sadnas, Chacuti and pickles and sweets like bibinca, gram doce etc. People enjoyed their meal and also bought bags of provisions to take home so the vendors did very well. It honestly felt like we were at a feast in one of the villages in our homeland, Goa.

Inno Soares, who in spite of having another engagement, came early and set up the tea/coffee etc. in the kitchen.

The entertainment highlight was the mando and dulcists performance by Violet Monteiro and her group, singers Effie Coelho, Noemia and Manuel Araujo and Ella Gomes with music by Alexandria and John of the Music Machine and dancers Rose and Menino Vas and Violet and Antonio Monteiro (trained by Effie Coelho). The audience really appreciated the traditional singing and dancing and gave us a thunderous applause.

The Music Machine were very popular and continued to entertain us with their music (English, Konkani and Portuguese) and there were people on the floor right to the end of the function. Dancers were excited and happy when Alexandria came amongst them serenading them with her violin

It was a truly beautiful event to celebrate our Patron Saint, Saint Jose Vaz. Much credit has to go to Sheilah and her team for the success of this event.

Antonio Monteiro