

News and Views

Divine Providence Province



LENT

A SEASON OF LOVE



Dear Confreres!

The forty days of Lent in the Catholic tradition revolve around the three pillars of fasting, prayer, and alms giving. As all these require a bit of sacrifice on our part, it is often difficult to get excited about the Lenten season. Many actually begin the season of Lent with a huge carnival celebration in “preparation” for the sacrifices ahead. In contrary, I suggest a purposeful shift in your perspective on Lent that could actually change your outlook. Instead of emphasizing the sacrifices we are making, I would suggest focusing on the LOVE that inspires it!

This year, the calendar collision of the sacred Ash Wednesday and the far more secular Valentine's Day is a way for us to reflect on the true meaning of love, an act of self-giving. The calendar collision of the sacred Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day may look like opposites attracting, but you don't have to search too hard if you're looking for love in Lent. Ironically, it can be a very appropriate way to start Lent. The February 14 mash up reminds us that God's love is a key part of the penitent season that is meant to prepare us for the Easter celebration.

There is Lent in **Valentine**, and I mean that literally. The origins of the Valentine celebration are found in selfless love anyway. Lent and true Valentine celebrations will always be intertwined because true love involves self-denial and sacrifice. *'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends'* (Jn 15:13). Lent is meant to prepare us for the Pascal Mystery, the celebration of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection, which, of course, is the greatest act of love the world, has ever known. During the Lenten season, we retell the story of God's love for us. We remember the passion



FEBRUARY 2024



and death of Jesus and the fact that He loves us so much He was willing to suffer and die for us. The main thing we are called to do in return is to love Him back. The three pillars of fasting, prayer and alms giving are specific “acts of love” that we can engage in to show God that we do indeed love Him back!

When we fast, we are saying to God that we love Him more than anything in this world. We choose to give up something for a period of time and are willing to endure a brief period of sacrifice in order to say to God “I love you.” When we pray or add to our prayer time, we are showing our love for God by carving out time to spend with God. When we give alms during the Lenten season, we are showing God our love in our willingness to recognize Christ in others. When we give to those in need, we should recall Jesus own words *'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me'* (Mt 25:40). By giving to those in need, we are again showing God we love Him.

As we can grasp the message, **Lent is really a season of LOVE that is expressed through sacrifice.** We recall God's sacrificial love for us and we show our love for Him in return through our own small sacrifices. I pray that this Lent will be a time for us to grow in our understanding of God's deep love for us, as well as a time for us to grow in our commitment to love God back!

- ❖ Our heartfelt condolences to our confrere Fr. Johnson on the sudden demise of his beloved father Mr. Vincent. Let us continue to keep the family in our prayers.
- ❖ Tutelage program for the young confreres are scheduled on February 8 & 9 at DGMS, Chennai. Hearty welcome to the participants enlisted.
- ❖ Annual Gathering of Guanellian Cooperators and Guanellian Lay Movement has been scheduled for 17 and 18th Jan. 2024 in Cuddalore. The details of the program will be communicated soon by Fr. Gnanaraj, the Provincial Councilor.
- ❖ Mission Animators meeting is rescheduled for February 25 & 26, 2023 at DGMS, Chennai. All the Parish Priests, Mission Directors, Confreres involved in the mission exploration in Cuddalore St. Joseph's Seminary, Yesu Gutta and Kumbakonam are invited to attend without fail. Agenda of the program will be soon communicated by Fr. Kulandai Samy, the Vice Provincial.

- ❖ Project Desk Meet will go along with the Mission Animators Meet and further details will be communicated by Fr. Stalin Savarimuthu, SdC, Incharge of DPP Project Desk.

FR. RONALD. J SDC
Provincial Superior





WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE



While the people waited for the Lord's salvation the prophets announced his coming, as the prophet Malachi proclaims, "the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming." (3:1). Simeon and Anna are the image and figure of this longing. Upon seeing the Lord enter his temple, they are enlightened by the Holy Spirit and recognize him as the child whom Mary carries in her arms. They had been waiting for him all their lives: Simeon, "righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him" (Lk 2:25); Anna, who "did not depart from the temple" (Lk 2:37).

It is good for us to look at these two elders who were waiting patiently, vigilant in spirit and persevering in prayer. Their hearts have stayed awake, like an eternal flame. They are advanced in age, but young at heart. They do not let the days wear them down, for their eyes remain fixed on God in expectation (cf. Ps 145:15). Fixed on God in expectation, always in expectation. Along life's journey, they have experienced hardships and disappointments, but they have not given in to defeat: they have not "retired" hope. As they contemplate the child, they recognize that the time has come, the prophecy has been fulfilled, the One they sought and yearned for, the Messiah of the nations, has arrived. By staying awake in expectation of the Lord, they are able to welcome him in the newness of his coming.

Brothers and sisters, waiting for God is also important for us, for our faith journey. Every day the Lord visits us, speaks to us, reveals himself in unexpected ways and, at the end of life and time, he will come. He himself exhorts us to stay awake, to be vigilant, to persevere in waiting. Indeed, the worst thing that can happen to us is to let "our spirit doze off", to let the heart fall asleep, to anesthetize the soul, to lock hope away in the dark corners of disappointment and resignation.

I think of you, consecrated sisters and brothers, and of the gift that you are; I think of us Christians today: are we still capable of waiting? Are



we not at times too caught up in ourselves, in things and in the intense rhythm of daily life to the point of forgetting God who always comes? Are we not too enraptured by our good works, which runs the risk of turning even religious and Christian life into having “many things to do” and neglecting the daily search for the Lord? Don’t we sometimes risk planning personal and community life by calculating the odds of success, instead of cultivating the small seed entrusted to us with joy and humility, with the patience of those who sow without expecting anything and those who know how to wait for God’s time and let him surprise us? We must recognize at times that we have lost the ability to wait. This is due to several obstacles, of which I would like to highlight two.



The first obstacle that makes us lose the ability to wait is neglect of the interior life. This is what happens when weariness prevails over amazement, when habit takes the place of enthusiasm, when we lose perseverance on the spiritual journey, when negative experiences, conflicts or seemingly delayed fruits turn us into bitter and embittered people. It is not good to ruminate on bitterness, because in a religious family, as in any community and family, bitter and “sour-faced” people are deflating, people who seem to have vinegar in their hearts. It is necessary then to recover the lost grace: to go back and, through an intense interior life, return to the spirit of joyful humility, of silent gratitude. This is nourished by adoration, by the work of the knees and the heart, by concrete prayer that struggles and intercedes, capable of reawakening a longing for God, that initial love, that amazement of the first day, that taste of waiting.

The second obstacle is adapting to a worldly lifestyle, which ends up taking the place of the Gospel. Ours is a world that often runs at great speed, that exalts “everything and now,” that is consumed in activism and seeks to exorcise life’s fears and anxieties in the pagan temples of consumerism or in entertainment at all costs. In such a context, where silence is banished and lost, waiting is not easy, for it requires an attitude of healthy passivity, the courage to slow our pace, to not be overwhelmed by activities, to make room within ourselves for God’s action. These are lessons of Christian mysticism. Let us be careful, then, that the spirit of the world does not enter our religious communities, ecclesial life and our individual journey, otherwise we will not bear fruit. The Christian life and apostolic mission need the experience of waiting. Matured in prayer and daily fidelity, waiting frees us from the myth of efficiency, from the obsession with performance and, above all, from the pretense of pigeonholing God, because he always comes in unpredictable ways, he always comes at times that we do not choose and in ways that we do not expect.





As the French mystic and philosopher Simone Weil states, we are the bride waiting in the night for the arrival of the bridegroom, and: "The role of the future wife is to wait.... To long for God and to renounce all the rest, that alone can save us" (Waiting for God, Milan 1991, 196). Sisters, brothers, let us cultivate in prayer the spirit of waiting for the Lord and learn about the proper "passivity of the Spirit": thus, we will be able to open ourselves to the newness of God.

Like Simeon, let us also pick up this child, the God of newness and surprises. By welcoming the Lord, the past opens up to the future, the old in us opens up to the new that he awakens. This is not easy, we know this, because, in religious life as in the life of every Christian, it is difficult to go against the "force of the old". "It is not easy for the old man in us to welcome the child, the new one – to welcome the new one, in our old age to welcome the new one – ... The newness of God presents itself as a child and we, with all our habits, fears, misgivings, envies, – let us think of envies! – worries, come face to face with this child. Will we embrace the child, welcome the child, make room for the child? Will this newness really enter our lives or will we rather try to combine old and new, trying to let ourselves be disturbed as little as possible by the presence of God's newness?" (C.M. MARTINI, Something So Personal. Meditations on Prayer, Milan 2009, 32-33).

Brothers and sisters, these questions are for us, for each of us, for our communities and for the Church. Let us be restless, let us be moved by the Spirit, like Simeon and Anna. If, like them, we live in expectation, safeguarding our interior life and in conformity with the Gospel, if, like them, we live in expectation, we will embrace Jesus, who is the light and hope of life.

POPE. FRANCIS





A PROPHET AMIDST FUTURE PROPHETS



Galaxy A34 5G

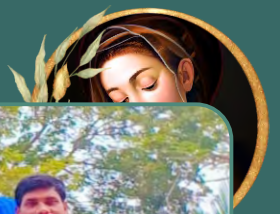
Koppakka: On the 31st of January, our brothers gathered for their monthly Day of Recollection, focusing on the theme of “The Prophet.” Fr. Praveen OMI, preached on the lives of various prophets such as Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, Saul, and David. He emphasized the significance of prophets in bringing God's favor to the people. Fr. Praveen highlighted the pivotal role that prophets play in conveying divine messages and guiding the community toward righteousness and grace. Throughout history, prophets have been instrumental in leading people toward spiritual enlightenment and moral rectitude with their unwavering commitment to truth and their ability to communicate with the divine. Their legacy serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration, urging us to embrace righteousness and seek favor from God. The Day of Reflection was a profound and enriching experience for all our brothers as they sought to deepen their connection with the divine and embrace the virtues exemplified by the prophets. The combination of reflection on the prophetic message and the sacrament of Reconciliation contributed to making the day a truly meaningful and transformative day for our brothers as they concluded the month on a spiritually uplifting note.

ONE WITH THE NATION

Koppakka: Republic Day is a momentous occasion that is celebrated with fervor and enthusiasm across the length and breadth of India. The celebrations began with a spirited march as the brothers paraded with the national flag held high, displaying their unity and patriotism. Our cook, Mrs. Sunitha, was honored as a chief guest and hoisted the flag.

Following the flag hoisting, Fr. Yesu Babu delivered an inspiring speech that touched the values of democracy, equality, and justice that are mentioned in the Indian Constitution. His words resonated deeply with the audience, reminding them of the significance of upholding the principles of liberty and fraternity that





form the bedrock of our nation. Next, the brothers exhibited their talents through a variety of programs that depicted the rich cultural heritage and diversity of India. The celebration culminated with a collective pledge to uphold the treasured values of democracy, secularism, and unity, enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The Republic Day celebration at Guanella Bhavan in Koppaka was a testament to the unwavering spirit of patriotism and unity that binds the diverse fabric of our nation together.

ENRICHMENT FOR THE CHILDREN AND RESIDENTS

Bangalore: Recently, the students from United International School visited our home for the elderly and destitute. Approximately 100 children from different sections participated in the trip. They entertained our elderly men by exhibiting a wide variety of talents, such as singing with guitar accompaniment, dancing, and performing dramatic skits. One of the most important aspects of the visit was this is the interaction between the students and the elderly. When the young and the old share in each other's company, a spirit of charity and love flourishes, and both groups benefit from the exchange. Our elderly men were so happy to see the children and felt loved and cared for, which gave them hope and rejuvenated their spirits. As a gesture of goodwill, the visitors brought snacks and necessary daily toilet articles as gifts





for the residents. At the conclusion of the day, the youth shared the gifts with our elders.

SPREADING JOY THROUGH SMILES

Bangalore: The Presidency School students and faculty paid a visit to our home. Fr. Kulandaiswamy welcomed the staff and gave a brief introduction about the various aspects of the home. The guests and our residents were delighted to engage with one another. The visit engendered a sense of delight and rejoicing among visitors and residents alike. The faculty gifted us a wheelchair, some provisions, and stationery for the evening school tuition children. The students donated some money that they had saved as a remembrance of their visit. Towards the end of the day, the students sang a few carols to entertain the elderly and wished them Happy Christmas.



LIFE IS A GIFT TO BE SHARED

Bangalore: It was a special day for the GPN community as we celebrated the birthday of Mr. D. Devaraja, ACP, Central Division of Karnataka, and UH Uma Shankar ACP. Mr. Arun and Mr. Ranga Swamy, the Inspectors of Hennur and Banaswadi Police Station, and other police personnel joined with us to celebrate this occasion. Mr. Calvin, the intern, emceed the program and welcomed the gathering in Kannada, and Mr. Louis Anthony, our Coordinator, spoke in English. Rev. Fr. Mathias shared a brief description of the nature of the house, honored him with a shawl, and wished him a Happy Birthday. Mr. Devaraja D. ACP cut the cake and shared his joy of being with Thathas. Then he also assured us that he would continue contact with the home in the future and provide some help. Finally, snacks and cool drinks were provided for the guests, and all enjoyed the day.



FEBRUARY 2024





SPIRITUAL RENEWAL



DPP: Divine Providence Province organized the Annual Retreat for Perpetual Professed Confreres in India, Suhalayam, Irudayakulam, Tirunelveli. The participants were organized into two groups. The first met from January 8 to January 13, 2024, and the second from January 15 to February 20, 2024. Fr. D. Alphonse from the Diocese of Kottar was the retreat director for both the groups. He guided the retreatants in a reflection on the humanity of Jesus. There was ample time for personal reflection and prayer. Eucharistic adoration was held throughout the retreat, and there was an opportunity to avail oneself of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This annual retreat refreshed and revitalized, allowed more time to be spent in prayer and contemplation, and rekindled and deepened the participants' relationship with God. Moreover, it was an opportunity to seek God's healing grace and thereby attain a degree of spiritual renewal and rejuvenation in our call to Guanellian religious life.



PONGAL CELEBRATION

DPP: Pongal, the Day of Harvest, was a joyful celebration with our Evening School Children in the Divine Providence Province Provincialate, Chennai, on January 15, 2024. The celebration was instrumental in allowing students to learn about culture and tradition. The children were given school bags as gifts. As part of the





traditional custom, everyone shared the Pongal meal from an earthen pot, and then all departed for home with a sugarcane.

ENGLISH ACADEMY ON DRUG ADDICTION

Cuddalore: "What is addiction, really? It is a sign, a signal, a symptom of distress. It is a language that tells us about a plight that must be understood," says Alice Miller, the Polish-Swiss psychologist. Today we hear many stories about how lives are in the process of being ruined due to addiction to drugs and alcohol. It is so painful to realize that in our culture, drug use is fast becoming normal and pervasive. It is like inviting a robber to our homes with a red carpet. The minor seminarians at St. Joseph's Seminary chose this topic for study and presentation during the English Academy on January 27. Brothers spoke on the causes, symptoms, and treatment of drug addiction, how it affects the individual and the family, and what it means for the future. It was nice to hear from the mouths of the young seminarians the desire for a healthy world without the anguish of addiction. Rev. Fr. Anthonyraj, Headmaster of St. Joseph's Primary School, who was the chief guest of the event, highlighted how today's students are affected by substance abuse and are destroying their future. He spoke of the importance of being aware of this evil and striving to protect people from the bondage of such a peril.





GOOD CHILDREN LEARNING ABOUT THE EPIPHANY



Cuddalore: Brothers at St. Joseph's Seminary enacted the Epiphany story to the good children at Guanella Day Care Center in Cuddalore. The drama, familiar to us, detailed how the three wise men searched for the newborn king and, by following the star, reached the crib. The children, who are mostly Hindus, and had never heard the story of Jesus, were excited to hear the Bible account. Through the vivid narration of the Brothers, the story came to life. Jesus continues to reach out to the Gentiles and save them even today through his faithful and merciful stars on earth.

THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Kumbakonam: The feast of the Epiphany commemorates the arrival of the Magi (referred to as Three Kings or Wise Men) to visit Infant Jesus. Guanella Nagar Parish commemorated the feast of the Three Kings and Pongal together. Fr. A. Bernandas celebrated Holy Mass and, in his homily, said that if we search, we will find Jesus among us. The Holy Mass was organized by catechism children and parishioners who incorporated creative ideas. At the Offertory, our substations, people, youth, GLM, choir, parish council, altar children, catechism children, and





the Legion of Mary brought the Pongal and presented it. After Mass, we enjoyed games and programs and received the Three Kings' sweet Pongal.

PONGAL CELEBRATION



Kumbakonam: The Woman Empowerment Committee of our Lady of Divine Providence Church celebrated Pongal 2024 on January 30, 2024, in a grand manner. Women are precious gift from God. They are creative, sensitive, compassionate, intelligent, talented, and according to the Bible, equal to men. Woman empowerment does not mean that women are to be the supreme power of society or the Church, but it means that women should have an equal role in the decision-making process in every sphere of life. Leading up to the occasion, they discussed the cooking of Pongal with the parish priest. The responsibility was divided among them, and they made a plan for the year. The program ended with sharing the Pongal and the blessing of the parish priest.

PILGRIMAGE TO KONNAKUPPAM

Cuddalore: On the 16th of January, the Legion of Mary and some parishioners went to Our Lady of Periyannayagam Shrine, Konnakuppam. We began our journey at 8:30 a.m from our Church with the holy Rosary. We arrived at the shrine at 11 o'clock and participated in Holy





Mass. We prayed for our intentions and the growth of our parish and nation. Continue to intercede for us, Our Lady of Periyamayaki.

AWARENESS PROGRAM/SUBSTANCE ABUSE



Cuddalore: On the 29th of January, the MSW students of St. Joseph's Arts and Science College, Cuddalore, held an awareness program detailing "The Effects of Substance Abuse" for Boys' Home students. It is important to educate young people about the dangers of substance abuse. Today many youngsters are addicted to drugs and alcohol. Mr. Durai, Head of the Department, gave a nice speech, which included asking questions and interacting with the students. It was highly informative and useful for our Boy's Home students. Fr. Director thanked everyone.

PONGAL CELEBRATION

Cuddalore: On the 12th of January, we celebrated Pongal in our Don Guanella Boys Home, Cuddalore. Fr. Vanathiyan celebrated Holy Mass and preached the homily. In his homily, he mentioned that, we thank the Lord for all His blessings during Pongal. Pongal is the harvest festival of Tamil Nadu, celebrated for four days in the middle of January, commencing from the last day of the Tamil month. The sun, earth, and cattle are worshipped by farmers as people thank them for giving a bounteous harvest. The people of Tamil Nadu participate in this



FEBRUARY 2024





festival with lots of hopes and aspirations. After Holy Mass, the games were organized. Then Fr. Superior thanked all the domestic staff in our community. The boys enjoyed the whole day.

PONGAL CELEBRATION



Cuddalore: On the 15th of January, we celebrated Pongal in our parish. Fr. Amalraj SdC celebrated Holy Mass and preached the homily, and Fr. James concelebrated. In his homily, Fr. Amalraj mentioned that Pongal, the four-day harvest festival celebrated in South India, especially Tamil Nadu, will be celebrated with great enthusiasm from January 14 through 16 this year. The purpose is to thank the Lord for all his blessings. After Holy Mass, games and activities were organized. Then, Fr. Parish Priest thanked all the Parishioners who donated Pongal materials and the Legion of Mary who organized the cooking. At last, all departed with smiling faces.

REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION



Cuddalore: On the 26th of January, we celebrated Republic Day in our parish. We began the day with Holy Mass. The special chief guest of the day was Mr. Prasana,





Ward Councilor, who hoisted the flag. Mr. Bosco Elizan, teacher at St. Joseph's HSS, delivered the Republic Day message. In his speech, he mentioned that we, the people of India, celebrate and honor the achievements of the nation, pay tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives for the safety of our country, and remember the rich history of India's freedom struggle. A thousand salutes to this great nation of ours, and may it become even more prosperous and great. Let us remember the golden heritage of our country and feel proud to be a part of India. Mr. Don Bosco organized the program. At last, sweets were distributed to all.



AWARENESS PROGRAM/LOVE FOR READING

Cuddalore: On the 30th of January, Mr. Thirumurugan, a retired teacher, designed and delivered an awareness program on the topic "Love for Reading." He outlined strategies on how to read books and magazines and stressed the importance of doing so. He created a thirst for reading among the students, which will be an extremely useful skill for them in the future. Fr. Stalin and Fr. Vanathiyan thanked him at the end.

75TH REPUBLIC DAY

Eluru: "A just society is that society in which the ascending sense of reverence and descending sense of contempt is dissolved into the creation of a compassionate society," says B. R.





Ambedkar, a leading activist and social reformer of India's past. This Republic Day is special because it is the 75th Republic Day of India. So, we, the Guanella Karuanalaya, unfurled the national flag on the 26th of January 2024. Our boys put on a beautiful parade that day, which was spectacular for the viewers.



NEW CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

Eluru: "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain" Psalm 127:1 The foundation for the new church construction was laid on the 25th of August 2023. We marked the day with a small prayer service for 'Dedicating New Church Construction. Our Guanellian family members, village elders, and the faithful of our Sacred Heart Church, Vatluru joined in this historical event. I also sincerely appreciate and acknowledge my heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported and assured their prayers.

FLOURISHING WITH FOOD

Chelsea – An organization that collaborates with St. Louis Center to keep the residents well-fed is Food Gatherers. Food Gatherers is a food bank and food rescue program serving the area





local to the Center. In the last few years, St. Louis Center has been a recipient of a grant that consists of multiple food donations from Food Gatherers. The donations often consist of things like bread, juices, dessert mixes, snacks, foil pans, beans, and other various canned goods. Each week, one of the Center staff visits the Food Gatherers warehouse to pick up items that were requested and any additional items that might be available. These contributions from Food Gatherers have been a pivotal support to the kitchen staff. At St. Louis Center, we are home to 54 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Among the residents, about 87% have some form of specialized diet. Keeping up with these dietary restrictions and needs is a large undertaking. The Center staff greatly appreciates any support that lessens the load of this incredibly important task.

HOME TEAM FANS



Chelsea – The Detroit Lions are the local NFL football team. The St. Louis Center residents were all very excited this year since the team advanced so far into the playoffs. With the help of equally excited staff members, the residents prepared to cheer on their team. The Lions did not make it into the finals, but they sure made the residents proud to be their fans.

Provincial Calendar

- 4-5 Blessing of new Presbytery in Sivakasi
- 6-7 Visit to GPN Bangalore
- 8-9 Tutelage Program in Chennai
- 10 Parish Feast in Dindigul
- 11 Episcopal Consecration in Kumbakonam
- 12-16 visit to Srilanka
- 17-18 GC & GLM Meet in Cuddalore
- 20-21 Mission Animators Meet in Chennai
- 24 Pilgrimage with Cuddalore Parish
- 25 Requiem Mass in Palani
- 26-29 Visit to Thalavadi Community



FEBRUARY 2024



FEAST DAYS

2- Fr. Kannikai Raj. A
 4 - Fr. John Paul Britto
 Fr. Anandhan. T
 Fr. Arul |Bro. Arul Pandian.

11 - Fr. Anthony Lourduraj. S
 Fr. Lourduraj. C

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

11 - Fr. Arun Fr. Jesu Doss
 |Fr. Johnson Fr. Kumar
 Fr. Paul Dhinakaran
 Fr. Rambabu Fr. Suresh
 Fr. Thambu Samy
 12 - Fr. Soosai Rathinam. R

BIRTHDAYS

1 - Fr. George Vinsula.
 10 - Fr. Kuriakose. A
 14 - Fr. Amalorpavanathan. R
 15 - Fr. Silvio De Nard
 18 - Bro. Rex Milton
 19 - Fr. Sagayaraj. S
 23 - Bro. Arul Pandian. R
 24 - Fr. Chandra Nevis. D
 Fr. Arputharaj. J
 25 - Fr. Francis. S



LENT

SUSTAINING STRENGTH
 FOR THE STRUGGLE