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PANJIM CITY - THE SLOW FADE

Faithful Hearts: The Devotion to the Infant Jesus of Colva

Devotion to the Infant Jesus in Colva, a coastal village in Goa, is a cherished tradition for many locals and visitors alike. The Infant is often celebrated for embodying innocence, purity, and the profound love of God

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The devotion to the Infant Jesus (Menino Jesus) in Colvá is a legacy of Fr Bento Ferreira, a Jesuit priest from the 17th century who served as the church's vicar in 1648. While sailing to Mozambique, he is said to have seen the Infant on a rock in Sena. He was sailing when the ship sank, but he miraculously survived the collision. After bringing the statue of the infant from Mozambique to Goa into his living room in Colva at the church residence, Fr Ferreira discovers that the image had been emitting bright rays of light.

After realizing this, the image was put on Colva church's high altar. The statue had likely been magnificently enthroned on a special altar along the church's left side at a later date. One of the main contributors to the miraculous image's embellishment was the Kshatriya gāonkar community from Colvá, Sernabátim, Vánelim, and Gandáulim, who made elaborate vestments adorned with gold and silver brocade and other priceless objects. A total of 20,000 Xerafim was collected for the same purpose from kindhearted individuals. This Infant statue is said to possess miraculous abilities, despite the fact that the original image is kept in the Church of Saint Ignatius of Loyola in Ráchol.

The original statue was moved to Ráchol by the Jesuits, who claimed it as their own property. The Colvá villager's vain attempts to retrieve their statue were unsuccessful. Judge Manuel Ferreira Lima finally gave it to the Jesuits in Ráchol in 1728, following several attempts to obtain it. Thus, on May 2, 1723, the gāonkars of Colvá made the decision to create a look-alike of the original. The new statue is adorned with their sole belonging, a gold ring that is said to have been discovered after it fell off the original statue during its

transportation to Ráchol.

According to a different source, in 1677, Fr José Figureido, the vicar of the Colvá Church, left the church due to problems the Catholics in Sálçete were having. At that time, the rector of the Ráchol church arrived in Colvá and brought the image of the Infant to Ráchol.

There was a highly ornate door with three locks covering the niche where the image was placed. The priest and members of the confraria ceremoniously unlocked each of these locks in a specific order on the day of the Fâma. This was followed by a high mass at 5:30 am.

Then, on a tall tree in the church compound known as 'Maddi,' a flag honoring the Infant was raised. Since this tree (*Sterculia foetida*) is a natural lightning conductor, churches and chapels have it grown in front of them so as to shield the bells they contain. The Infant spent the rest of the year hidden behind the door and was only revealed to the congregation on this day and the feast day. The detailed rituals involved in bringing down the image of the Infant on the day of the Fâma have sadly been abandoned with the removal of this door. A glass door has been installed today, making it possible for the devout to see the image all year round. Thousands of followers swarm the church on the day of the Fâma to ask the Infant for blessings. That evening, the image is ceremoniously cleaned with sacramental wine and returned to its niche before 12 am. Known as "lavato," these wine washings are given out among the gathered faithful.

Colvá locals can tell you an intriguing legend concerning the Menino image in Ráchol. They claim that, Fr Bento discovered the image while taking a stroll along the Colvá shoreline one evening. They mention



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that the image was seen floating on a stone near the shore of Colvá, which the locals think is the stone kept inside a little shed along the shore. In reality, the stone is a tomb stone. Is this the tombstone belonging to Fr Bento?

They also claim that the image was put on an altar in the Colvá church, which was targeted for robbery by unidentified people from Ráchol. They attempted twice but were unsuccessful because it is thought that the Colvá church bell rang by itself, drawing people to the area. Nonetheless, they were successful on their third attempt



Our Lady of Mercy Church, Colva

to remove the Infant. However, the infant's golden ring fell onto the Colvá church altar as they were carrying the image to Ráchol.

According to some references, the ring fell somewhere along the road in Sonsodo (Raia) during the taking of the statue and was discovered by the devoted gāonkars from Colvá who went in search of the Infant. The original gold ring that had fallen (either on the church altar or in Raia) was then used by the Colvá gāonkars to adorn a replica of the Menino. Miracles continue to happen in Colvá even now, but not in Ráchol. They say that no one dares celebrate the Infant in Ráchol. Those who try to do so, experience poor health. Colvá elders will frequently declare, 'Menino Jezu Raitura pun salsai Koleant!' (Infant Jesus is in Ráchol, but the blessings and positivity is in Colva.)

The Masses on Fama, October 14 at Our Lady of Mercy Church, Colva will be celebrated at 5:30 am, 8 am, 9 am, 10 am, 11 am, 12 am, 3 pm, 4 pm, 5 pm, 6 pm, and 7 pm.



PIC: SAGUN GAWADE

Music for the soul: The choir's dedication and practice for the Herald Anniversary Mass shone through their performance that made the Eucharistic celebrations melodious. The choir members included Pio Esteves on the guitar, Santan Fernandes on the keyboard and the vocals by Savia D'Souza, Lavina Mendonca and Fraser Andrade.

Pampering children without a second thought

Pio Esteves

Tiatr: 'Konnache Chukik Lagon'

Cast: Pascoal Rodrigues, Roma, Joylixa, Frazer, Antonette de Maina, Joylita, Franky Gonsalves, comedian Sally, David, Myron, Richard, Sanica

Director: Saby de Divar

Band: Senon (trumpet), Nazareth (saxophone), Lenoy (keyboard), Manu (drums)

Stage/Lights: Anthony de Ambajim, Romeo



Tiatr Review 'Konnache Chukik Lagon'

The story revolves around two families, namely Pascoal (Pascoal Rodrigues), his spouse Roma (Roma) and their two children Joylixa (Joylixa) and Frazer (Frazer). On the other hand, there's power minister's daughter Antonette (Antonette de Maina), who is a widow and residing with her two grown-up children Franky (Franky Gonsalves) and Joylita (Joylita).

Serving as a security in a bank, Pascoal tries his level best to bring up his family, including his children by giving them the best of education. Frazer's dream is to become a software engineer and Joylixa's

dream is to become a doctor.

Antonette boasts of the wealth that she owns and does not hesitate to give to her children whatever they seek from her. Franky and Joylita enjoy late night life in the pubs and are entangled in drugs.

Unfortunately, Frazer and Joylixa meet with a major accident and both

are grievously injured and restricted to wheelchairs at home. But despite their disability, both do not give up their studies and careers. Franky and Joylita continue enjoying life at the cost of their mother, who equally relishes life as a single parent.

Over a period of time, what follows next in both the families is worth the watch during the second half of the drama. Will Frazer and Joylixa recover from their injury and succeed in fulfilling their dreams? What is Franky and Joylita's

fate for living a lavish life?

Noted for political songs, Saby de Divar's seasonal tiatr 'Konnache Chukik Lagon?' is a family melodrama, focusing on the pros and cons in the family. When children get what they demand and when provided without a second thought, what is the outcome has been highlighted in the drama. Sometimes parents are responsible for misfortunes in the family and its rectification could be too late.

All the artistes have given a fine performance on stage with actors selected artistically as per the characters.



As disciplined guardians, Pascoal and Roma stand out, while Antonette de Maina after the materialistic things also give her best in acts. As good siblings, Frazer and Joylixa are good, while Franky Gonsalves and Joylita as spoilt brats are equally good.

In the comic acts, there's comedian Sally taking along with him David, Myron, Richard and Sanica and they entertain with good dose of laughter pills. They are a treat to watch on stage.

In the section of songs, Joylita and Joylixa come on stage for the opening song, following by solos from Xavier Gomes, Jr Reagan, Lawry Travasso

and Pascoal Rodrigues. There are other songs by Antonette de Maina, Joylita and Roma, Jr Reagan and Joylixa, Richard and Myron. A solo by Saby de Divar, a song by Myron, David and Fr Ancliff as a tribute to late comedian Selvy receive encores from the audience. A song by Frazer, Lawry, Xavier and Saby de Divar also receive encore. The band offstage by Senon (trumpet) and his musical team Nazareth (saxophone), Lenoy (keyboard), Manu (drums) have provided good live music. The stage sets are by Anthony de Ambajim and lights have been handled by Romeo.