



January 2022

VOL
1

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA CENTRE OF OTTAWA - CARLETON



At Thy Lotus Feet

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President's Notes/Address

At the lotus feet of our Beloved Bhagawan

My heartfelt gratitude and loving pranams at the lotus feet of our beloved Swami. We can't thank him enough for choosing each one of us to be his instrument and sing his glory. We are blessed to be in his fold. We pray to Swami for keep showering his blessing and guiding us all through this journey.

Dear Swami, at your lotus feet we present the first publication of this newsletter from Ottawa Sai Center. We seek your blessings and continuous guidance to keep improving the content and information contained in this newsletter.

This newsletter belongs to us all. This is the platform where we share information related to Swami and sing his glory. This is also a platform to highlight the events and activities of our center. We encourage you all to participate in any shape or form. If you are not sure, please don't hesitate to ask. We would like participation from everyone, kids, youth, my brothers and sisters, seniors....everyone. We will accept all content related to Swami and his teachings. This will also become a good platform for individuals who would like to share their personal experiences with Swami and how that has transformed their lives.

Please send any inquiries, questions, content or anything that you would like to get included in this newsletter to SaiBlessingsOttawa@gmail.com.

My sincere and loving thanks goes to brother Ashok. This would have not been possible without his initiative and hard work. We plan to publish this newsletter twice a year, January and then in July.

Happy Reading everyone. ~Sanjeev Walia





Looking Back at 2021



Swami's birthday celebrations – With Swami's grace and blessings, we celebrated 96 years of supreme love on November 23, 2021 under strict COVID restrictions. The highlight of the morning program was the offering of live Bhajans performed by our SSE students. We had about 150 devotees who attended the morning session. The highlights of the evening program was the offering of supreme love in terms of various performances by our SSE students at the lotus feet of our dear Swami. About 250 devotees attended this blissful evening.



Our SSE group 4 girls took up a project to collect and distribute female hygiene products for Women's shelters.



Monthly Narayan Seva and WCWS, We Care We Share services – Our service team conducted these monthly Seva related services by offering fresh cooked vegetarian meals at various downtown locations for less fortunate and needy people. During Swami's birthday month special 5 WCWS services were conducted. We thank all the devotees who sponsored these services.



Announcement of Seniors Outreach program – We had discussions, brainstorming sessions to finalize this program. We have a group of devotees who have accepted to volunteer for this program. The program was launched recently this month. We will share more news about this program in our next newsletter.



Christmas Celebrations by SSE students – A blissful and beautiful Carol singing by our SSE students. This was a beautiful offering filled with Love at the lotus feet of our beloved Swami. All SSE students learned the Christmas carols. Group 4 girls performed Christmas carols for seniors in our community. All SSE students participated in collecting toys for Toy Mountain.



Live Bhajans by SSE students in November 2021 – Another blissful day where SSE students offered live Bhajans at the lotus feet of our beloved Swami. This was first such opportunity since COVID started in March 2020.



Live Bhajans by adults in November 2021 – We were yet again fortunate to have our adult singers come together and performed Live Bhajans at the center.



Website Changes – We have been making efforts to keep our website up-to-date and making some minor changes and improvements.



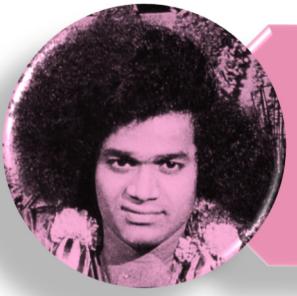
Akhand Bhajans – This was another such event where Swami's grace was felt throughout this event. With his blessings we were able to offer live Bhajans for almost 24 hours. Even though there were few singers at night but the same bliss and vibrations were felt throughout the Bhajans.



Ladies day Celebrations – We celebrated ladies day on Saturday November 20, 2021. Ladies of our center offered Bhajans at the lotus feet of our Swami followed by a recorded discourse.



A talk by guest speaker Preeti Grover – We are really blessed to host sister Preeti Grover on a Zoom session to talk about Supreme Love. A very informative session for all devotees.



10th Anniversary Celebrations of Study Circle - We celebrated 10th year anniversary of the Study Circle with a talk by Dr. K. S. Subramanian. The topic was "WHO DO YOU THINK YOU TRULY ARE?"



From the Newsletter Desk

Dear All, Om Sai Ram to you. Our Pranams to all elders and affection to all younger ones.

We are very pleased to bring this newsletter to you. Doing our bit has been truly a divine blessing and a lifetime opportunity. We lovingly believe this newsletter will foster existing bonds between all of us.

Bhagwan Sri Sathya-Sai-Baba is the gigantic banyan tree, and we like birds seek shelter in that. We sincerely believe that the newsletter will create a lasting legacy for our Sai-Center for succeeding generations. All the precious memories captured in the newsletter will be the digital stream on the side of which we shall sit peacefully and enjoy its gentle flow. We also hope this newsletter divinely inspires us all and bring us closer to Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The newsletter belongs to all of us, and we aim to bring this out regularly. The content of the newsletter will include unique contributions from all of us i.e., the Sai Family. You are welcome to assist in any aspect of the newsletter.

Lovingly yours, newsletter Team.





Calendar of Events for 2022

SaiRam everyone, please note that exact program details will be sent prior to the events and celebrations.

Month	Actual Date	Event and Festival	Regular Sunday program with special message
January	01/Jan/2022 Saturday	New Year	
	14/Jan/2022 Friday	Makara Sankranti	
March	01/Mar/2022 Tuesday	Mahasivarathri	10 pm till 6 am
	18/Mar/2022 Friday		Holi
April	02/Apr/2022 Saturday		Ugadi
	10/Apr/2022 Sunday	Sri Rama Navami	
	14/Apr/2022 Thursday		Tamil New Year Day / Mahavir Jayanthi
	15/Apr/2022 Friday		Good Friday / Vishu
	17/Apr/2022 Sunday		Easter
	24/Apr/2022 Sunday	Sri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsavam	
May	03/May/2022 Tuesday		Eid-al-Fitr
	06/May/2022 Friday		Easwaramma Day
	23/May/2022 Monday	<u>Sarva</u> Dharma Stupa day	
	16/May/2022 Monday		Buddha Poornima
June			Walk for Values (Date TBD)
July	13/Jul/2022 Wednesday	Guru Poornima	
August	19/Aug/2022 Friday	Krishna Janmashtami	
	31/Aug/2022 Wednesday	Ganesh Chaturthi	
September	08/Sep/2022 Thursday		Onam (Celebration on Sunday Sep 04)
October	05/Oct/2022 Wednesday		Vijay Dashami (Dusshera)
	20/Oct/2022 Thursday	Avatarhood Declaration Day	
	24/Oct/2022 Monday		Deepawali (Diwali)
November	08/Nov/2022 Tuesday		Guru Nanak Jayanthi
	12/Nov/2022 Saturday	Global Akhanda Bhajans	
	19/Nov/2022 Saturday	Ladies Day	
	20/Nov/2022 Sunday	Special Program	
	23/Nov/2022 Wednesday	Bhagawan's Birthday	
December	25/Dec/2021 Saturday	Christmas	

Fortified By Faith

During the Second World War, a steamer carrying Indian soldiers was bombed by a Japanese aircraft and was sunk. Many lost their lives. However, five among them managed to board a lifeboat and hoped to survive in spite of the surging ocean. They were tossed about for many hours.

One of them became desperate and cried, "The sea will swallow me. I will be a meal for the sharks!" Due to such fear, he drowned.

Another warrior wept for his family, "Oh, I am dying without arranging for the future of my family." He too lost faith and breathed his last.

The third soldier thought, "I have with me the insurance policy and other documents. What a pity! I should have kept them at home. What will my wife do now? I am sure to die." Needless to say, he too lost hope and died. The other two men, however, reinforced each other's faith in God. They said, "We shall not yield to fear. We shall prove that however desperate the situation may be, God will certainly protect us if we have faith in Him."

Even as they were encouraging each other in this manner, a helicopter sent from a coastal ship, which had received signals for help, caught sight of these two men and hauled them up. When they were safe on land, they said, "It is only five minutes between victory and defeat. Faith earned the victory; lack of it brought about defeat and death."

~ Baba





The ‘Judging Other’ Jeopardy

There is a widely prevalent habit now of judging others and labeling them as devotees or *Nastikas* (Atheists). What do you know? What can you know of the inner working of another’s mind? There was once a queen who was a great devotee of Lord Rama. She felt so sad that her husband, the Raja, never even uttered the name of Rama and had no devotion. She had vowed that the first occasion on which she got evidence of his devotion or at least respect for the name of Lord Rama, she would conduct *Puja* (worship) in all the temples and feed the poor on a lavish scale.

A few days later, one night, while fast asleep, the Raja uttered the name of Rama thrice plaintively and prayerfully. She heard the Namasmaraṇa (chanting of the Divine name) and was happy at the discovery of her husband’s devotion to Rama. She ordered general rejoicing throughout the kingdom and the feeding of the poor. The Raja did not know the reason for the celebration for he was only told that it was an order from the Queen, which the officers carried out.

Similarly, a husband may not be aware of the excellence of a wife’s spiritual attainments. There is the case of a couple who were proceeding through a thick jungle on pilgrimage to an inaccessible shrine. The husband saw on the footpath a precious stone, shining brilliantly when the sun’s rays fell upon it from between the leaves. He hastily threw some sand over it with a movement of his foot so that his wife would not be tempted to pick it up and become a slave to the tinsel. The wife saw the gesture and chided the husband for still retaining in his mind a distinction between sand and diamond. For her, both were the same.

Sai Chinna Katha

~ Baba



Importance of Dharma

Man must dedicate himself to Dharma and be engaged always in Dharma so that he may live in peace and the world may enjoy peace. He cannot acquire real Peace, nor can he win the Grace of the Lord through any means other than the Dharmic life. Dharma is the foundation for the welfare of humanity; it is the truth that is stable for all time.

When Dharma fails to transmute human life, the world is afflicted by agony and fear, tormented by stormy revolutions. When the effulgence of Dharma fails to illumine human relationships, mankind is shrouded in the night of sorrow.

God is the embodiment of Dharma; His Grace is won by Dharma. He is ever fostering Dharma, He is ever establishing Dharma, He is Dharma Itself. The Vedas, Sastras, Puranas and Itihasa proclaim aloud the Glory of Dharma. In the scriptures of the various religions, Dharma is elaborated in the language familiar to the adherents. It is the duty of every man everywhere at all times to pay homage to the Dharma-Narayana the personification of Dharma.

The stream of Dharmic activity should never run dry; when its cool waters cease to flow, disaster is certain. Humanity has reached this stage only because Dharma, like the river Saraswathi, flows unseen, below the ground, feeding the roots and filling the springs. Not only humanity, but even birds and beasts have to adhere to Dharma, so that they may be happy and survive in comfort and joy. Therefore, the waters of Dharma have to be kept flowing perpetually and full, so that the world might enjoy happiness. Disaster now dances madly on the world stage because Right is neglected and there is disbelief in the essentials of Dharmic life. So, man has to understand clearly the very heart of Dharma.

Source: Dharma Vahini, collection of discourses on Dharma by Shri Sathya Sai Baba



What is My Religion

Once a student asked Baba, Swami; people ask us about what our religion is? Swami replied: "There is only one Religion, the Religion of Love." God is Love and Love is God, both are realised through Ahimsa.

In Sathya Sai Prema Vahini (p.44), Swami says: "Love, Lover and the Loved, all these are One and the same. Without Love, there can be no lover. Even if there are both Love and the Lover without the Loved, Love has no function. In all three, Love is the chief ingredient. That which is saturated chiefly, and uniformly in everything that is Paramaatma. So, there is no difference between these three. In all three, Prema is discernable as the Sarvaantharyaami: therefore, can it not be realised that everything is Paramaatmaswarupa? Certainly, it can be realised without fail. Everything is suffused with Prema. So, we can unhesitatingly declare the Paramaatma as Premaswarupa. In the entire creation for all living things, Prema is manifesting itself in various forms. The nature of Prema cannot alter, though it is known under different names like Vaatsalya, Anuraaga, Bhakthi, Ishtam etc. according to the direction in which it is canalised. But whatever the form the essence cannot alter. On the basis of this knowledge and experience, the conclusion becomes clear that Paramaatma is Sarvabhothaantharaatma, the inner Atma of all created things."

When people ask you about Sai religion, Swami once told his students to tell them:

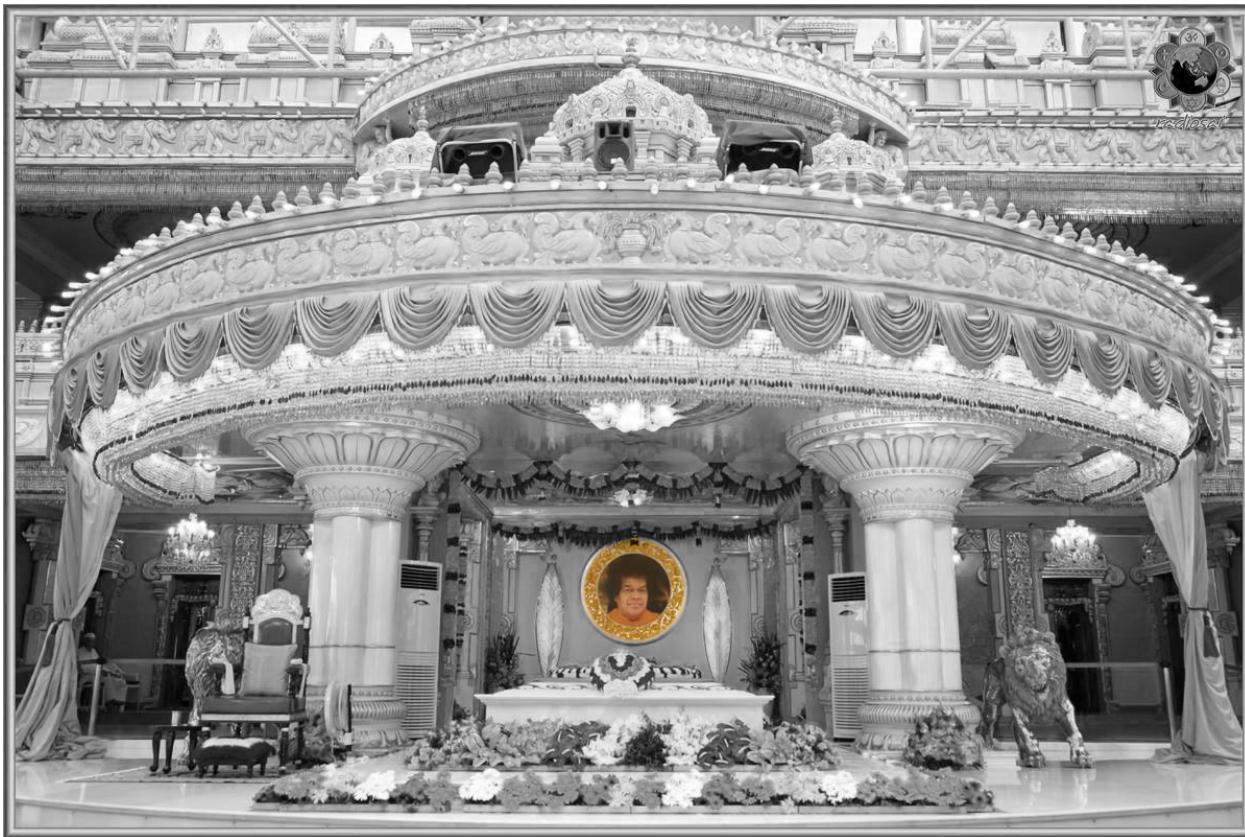
Love is My form
Truth is My breath,
Bliss is My food.
My life is My message,
Expansion is My life
No reason for Love, No season for Love
No birth, No death
Prema, Sathya Ananda: Dharma, Shanti Ahimsa
Prema, Sathya, Ananda, Dharma Shanti Ananda
Shirdi Baba, Satya Baba, Prema Baba Jai Jai
Shirdi Sai, Sathya Sai, Prema Sai Jai Jai



If you Are Interested

The Sathya-Sai Center of Ottawa-Carleton engages in many spiritual and service activities. The details of which can be found here: <http://www.sathyasaiottawa.org/>.

Topic of Interest	Contact/Resource
Conducting Aarati	Email: kanjey@gmail.com
Giving Donation	http://www.sathyasaiottawa.org/make-a-donation.html
Getting involved with service activities	Email: saiservice.ottawa@gmail.com
Attending and participating in Center activities	Email: sanjeevottawasaicenter@gmail.com
Contributing to this newsletter	Email: saiblessingsottawa@gmail.com
Enrolling your child for SSE	Email: sseottawacentre@gmail.com





Keep in Touch

To know about upcoming center activities & events, please visit
<http://www.sathyasaiottawa.org/>.

Please email sanjeevottawasaicenter@gmail.com if you want to receive regular updates on Sai-Center's events and activities.





Disclaimer

This newsletter is a humble attempt to connect all members of Sai-Family of Ottawa-Carleton. Any information presented here is shared for the benefit of the readers. The content of the newsletter is respectfully offered to you to explore, in the hope and with the intention that exploring this material will be useful to you.

You can share this newsletter with your interested friends and relatives.

While we make every reasonable effort to ensure the accuracy of the information, some information may not be complete and may contain inaccuracies or errors. If you believe any information is inaccurate, please let us know by contacting us at: sablessingsottawa@gmail.com





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