



EVENT REPORT

Report on International Day of Peace 2025 Celebration

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About Event

A Legacy of Peace – St. Mary Euphrasia’s Inspiration

The International Day of Peace 2025 was observed with great spirit and solidarity by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Partners-in-Mission, and members of Amaithi Sangamam (Peace Collective) in Salem. This year’s theme, as declared by the United Nations, was “Act Now for a Peaceful World”, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 16, which stresses the need to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide justice for all, and build accountable and inclusive institutions at every level. The day became not only a time to celebrate but also a platform to reflect on how both collective and individual actions can contribute to building a cohesive and resilient community where no one is left behind.

The celebration opened with a reflection on the life and mission of St. Mary Euphrasia, the foundress of the Good Shepherd Sisters. She lived through the turbulent years of the French Revolution and emerged as a beacon of peace and compassion for the marginalized. Embracing people without discrimination, she became a true ambassador of justice and peace. Her vision continues to inspire the Good Shepherd Sisters and their collaborators to embrace the ministry of peace and justice in present times.



Peace Rally

Marching for Harmony – The Peace Rally

As part of the day's observance, a Peace Rally was organized, flagged off jointly by three religious leaders representing Hindu, Christian, and Muslim faiths, symbolizing unity in diversity. The rally commenced at Masinaickenpatty Bus Stop and concluded at Ayothiyapattinam Bus Stop, with vibrant participation from interfaith group members representing ten working villages, volunteers, and members of Amaithi Sangamam.

The streets echoed with spirited slogans that called for a society free from caste-based discrimination, religious hatred, and gender-based violence. Participants boldly declared that religion is the right of every person, that women must be given equal opportunities to flourish, and that families and communities share a collective responsibility to uphold the dignity and rights of women. The rally was not just a procession but a public awakening, with each voice calling for justice, equality, and peace.



Voice for Peace

Voices for Peace – The Public Meeting

Following the rally, a Public Meeting was held at the Good Shepherd Convent Campus. The event was graced by eminent speakers and faith leaders, including:

- Fr. Amalajeya Rayan – President, CRI Salem
- Mr. Moulavi A. Faizullah Bukhari – Principal, Hadhiya Women Arabic College and Board Member of Tamil Nadu State Imams' Association
- Sr. Maheswari – Brahma Kumaris, Salem
- Fr. Lourdu swamy – Community Superior, Udhayapatty Parish
- Mr. Anand – Founder, Mei Unarvu Foundation
- Mr. Babu @ Shanavaskhan – Secretary, Jamia Educational Trust
- Fr. Albert – Udhayapatty Parish
- Sr. Arockiamary – Project Director, GSC Salem

Through their speeches, reflections, and personal experiences, these leaders sowed seeds of change and highlighted the urgent need for peacebuilding in the face of challenges caused by casteism, communalism, and gender inequality. The event also included skits, songs, and cultural programs performed by local children and women, which creatively depicted both the struggles of social discrimination and the possibilities of interfaith harmony and peaceful coexistence.



Wisdom Shared

Wisdom Shared – Key Messages of Peace of the Day

The gathering offered powerful insights and reminders for peacebuilding:

- **India's Global Peace Ranking:** India currently stands at 126 out of 163 countries in the Global Peace Index, lower than several neighbouring nations, underscoring the urgent need for harmony.
- **Ancient Tamil Wisdom:** The timeless verse of Kaniyan Poongundranaar, “Yaadhum Oore, Yaavarum Kelir” (“All places are ours, all people are our kin”), was recalled as a call to equality and fraternity.
- **Freedom of Religion:** The Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion under Articles 25–28, affirming that no faith should be discriminated against or privileged above others.
- **Role of Religious Leaders:** Leaders have a noble responsibility to guide communities in cultivating love, inclusion, and harmony.
- **Countering Division:** Anti-social elements exploit differences; citizens must replace hatred with compassion and action.
- **Peace as a Journey:** Peace is not a destination but a lifelong commitment to be nurtured and passed on to future generations.
- **Education for Peace:** Prejudice is not innate but learned. Therefore, youth must be guided with right values, and schools must revive interfaith activities promoting universal brotherhood.
- **Peace Begins at Home:** True peace must start in families, through love, listening, and even simple gestures like a smile.



Religious Leaders Advocate for Peace and Harmony

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Three religious leaders jointly addressed the media, advocating for peace, unity, and harmony in society. Under the banner of “Amaithi Sangamam”, they emphasized their role as agents of peace, committed to fostering interfaith awareness and strengthening social harmony. Through various awareness activities, they aim to make people conscious of the dangers of harmful convictions prevailing in the community while sharing effective strategies to counter intolerance and division. With one united voice, they stand as advocates of justice, compassion, and peaceful coexistence.

Spreading Peace Through Culture

The event came alive with folk arts, songs, and dramas performed by children and women from the villages. These performances vividly portrayed the challenges of discrimination and conflict while also highlighting the hope of building a peaceful and inclusive society. Art became a medium of transformation, proving that peace can be communicated across generations and communities without barriers.



A Call to Action

Building the Future – A Call to Action

In her concluding remarks, Sr. Arockiamary and Religious Leaders of different faiths emphasized that peacebuilding is not optional but a responsibility of every citizen. Guided by the Indian Constitution, which enshrines equality, liberty, fraternity, justice, and secularism, she reminded participants that peace cannot thrive in isolation but requires the united effort of families, communities, and institutions. Small, consistent actions—such as teaching children values of dignity and respect—are the seeds that grow into lasting peace.

The speakers also reminded participants of the dangers of neglecting family dialogue in today's technology-driven world. Parents often struggle to meaningfully engage with children, leading youth astray and even into destructive behaviours. Therefore, the family must become the first school of peace, where love, respect, and communication flourish. Echoing the words of Mother Teresa, "Peace begins with a smile," the celebration concluded with a united call to begin the peace journey within families and expand it to communities and the wider world.

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**Act Now
for a
Peaceful
World**

Conclusion – Act Now for a Peaceful World

The International Day of Peace 2025 celebration at Salem was not merely an event but a living testimony to unity in diversity. By bringing together leaders and people of different faiths, castes, genders, and backgrounds, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd have shown that celebrating differences and learning from one another is the true foundation of peace.

This gathering reminded us that dismantling discrimination, countering harmful ideologies, and strengthening interfaith harmony are not abstract ideals but urgent tasks for our times. Every gesture—a smile of acceptance, a kind word across divides, a just action in daily life—becomes a seed of transformation.

As **St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier**, Foundress of the **Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd Congregation**, wisely said:

“One person is of more value than the whole world.”

Now is the time to act. Together, across differences and through solidarity, let us Act Now for a Peaceful World.