

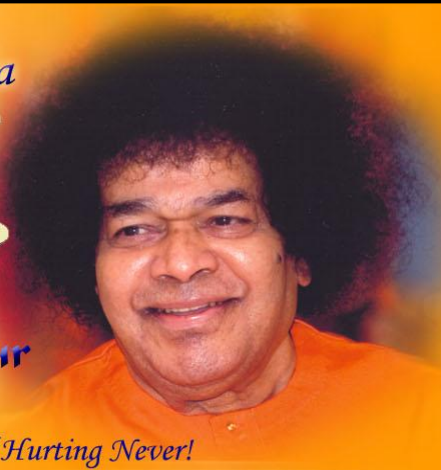
Aum Sri Sai Ram

Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Chicago Sai **WATCH**

Dear Swami, please help us to watch and control our Words, Actions, Thoughts, Character and Heart

So that we realize our inherent Divinity by Loving All, Serving All, Helping Ever, and Hurting Never!



Upcoming Events!

April 8th Sunday Easter: 10 AM to 1 PM

Venue: Ramada Inn, 780 North Ave., Glendale Heights, IL 60139

April 24th Tuesday Mahasamadhi Anniversary: 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Venue: Manav Seva Mandir, 101 S Church St, Bensenville IL 60103

April 28th Saturday Des Plaines River Clean-Up: Begins 9 AM

Venue: The Depot, 401 Thatcher Avenue, River Forest IL 60305

Participation is free but registration required.

May 6th Sunday Easwaramma Day: 10 AM to 5 PM

Venue: Ramada Inn, 780 North Ave., Glendale Heights, IL 60139



Love All , Serve All

Date	Calendar of Events
04/07 – Saturday	06:30 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 06:30 pm – 08:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at Sarah’s Circle Women’s Shelter (on N. Sheridan Rd.)
04/08 – Sunday	09:00 am – 01:00 pm: Easter Sunday Program at Ramada Inn, Glendale Heights (on North Ave.)
04/14 – Saturday	06:00 am – 08:00 am: Breakfast Service at Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.)
04/15 – Sunday	09:00 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program
04/21 – Saturday	06:30 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 06:30 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at Jesus People USA Men’s Shelter (on Kenmore Ave.)
04/22 – Sunday	09:00 am – 01:00 pm: Sunday Center Program
04/24 – Tuesday	07:30 pm – 09:30 pm: Mahasamadhi Anniversary at Manav Seva Mandir, Bensenville (on Church St.)
04/28 – Saturday	06:00 am – 08:00 am: Breakfast Service at Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 09:00 am – 01:00 pm: Des Plaines River Clean-Up at The Depot, 401 Thatcher Ave, River Forest, IL
04/29 – Sunday	09:30 am – 01:00 pm: Sunday Center Program
05/05 – Saturday	06:30 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 06:30 pm – 08:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at Sarah’s Circle Women’s Shelter (on N. Sheridan Rd.)
05/06 – Sunday	10:00 am – 05:00 pm: Easwaramma Day Program at Ramada Inn, Glendale Heights (on North Ave.)
	<p>Sunday Center Schedule: 09:00 am – 09:30 am: Center Setup 09:30 am – 10:25 am: Study Circle 10:30 am – 11:30 am: Devotional Singing</p> <p>Ongoing service projects on Sundays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grocery collection for the needy families (Delivered at the end of every month) • Sandwich preparation & delivery for residents of Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (Lawrence Ave.)



Be A Good Christian... A True Christian... A Better Christian



This is the season in which Christians celebrate Easter ' Jesus' resurrection from the dead after his crucifixion. What is the significance of this celebration, not only for Christians but for all people everywhere? How have the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba illuminated the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in the lives of Christians who have come to know him?

To fully appreciate the story of Easter, we must start with the fact that Jesus was born into the culture and religion of the Jewish people over 2,000 years ago. According to the first book in the Jewish Holy Scriptures, humanity was originally created by God in a state of purity and blissful intimacy with God:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness..." So God created man in his own image... male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number... I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food..." God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Genesis 1:26-30)

Jesus as the Good Shepherd

Try to be like Jesus. Jesus was a person whose only joy was in spreading Divine love, offering Divine love, receiving Divine love and living on Divine love. Jesus was a supremely pure and sacred person. (Sathya Sai Baba ' 25 December 1979)

This state was known as "the Garden of Eden." But man developed ego and self-will, and "fell" from grace and purity and was sent out of the Garden. God promised to send the Jewish people an "Anointed One" ("Christ" in Greek or "Messiah" in Hebrew, the language of the Jews) to save humanity from this plight. Christians believe that Jesus was this "Anointed One", the "Christ" sent by God. Since the name "Jesus" is Greek for the Hebrew name Joshua, which means "the Lord saves," he became known as Jesus Christ ' "the anointed one who saves," who would restore humanity to its original state of purity and intimacy with God. Jesus was born of a virgin, Mary, in very humble surroundings near their capital city of Jerusalem. He had a distinct mission, which Sathya Sai Baba describes this way:

Jesus was to shatter the darkness that had enveloped the world... to spread the light of love in the heart of man and councils of humanity. (24 December 1972)

In order to carry out his redemptive mission, Jesus had to correct mistaken ways of thinking, which he did through teachings such as:

You have heard that it was said, "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist an evil person. If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:38-39, 43-44)

Jesus gave spiritual teachings and performed many miraculous healings for the people of his time, as Sathya Sai Baba relates:

Jesus taught simple, practical lessons in spiritual advancement for the good of mankind. He manifested Divine powers to instill faith in the validity of his teachings. He marked out the path that can confer on man the sweet nectar of Divine bliss (ananda). He exhorted people by precept and example to cultivate the virtues of charity, compassion, forbearance, love and faith. These are not separate and distinct qualities; they are only the many facets of the Divine in man, which he has to recognize and develop.

In the course of his ministry and miracles, even raising people from the dead, certain religious and political leaders felt challenged and threatened by Jesus' popularity. Sai Baba tells us:

Jesus was the epitome of compassion and the refuge of the poor, needy and forlorn. But, many people tried to create troubles for Jesus, since they did not like his sacred teachings and activities. Their hatred for Jesus increased day by day. Even the priests turned against Jesus as they became jealous of his growing popularity. Many people out of jealousy laid obstacles in his path and even tried to kill him. (25 December 2000)

Jesus foretold what was to happen to him ' that he would be crucified and then rise from the dead on the third day. After three years of ministry, Jesus was going to Jerusalem for an upcoming Jewish holy festival, the Passover Feast, and a great crowd heard that he was coming:

They took palm branches and went out to meet him shouting, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (John 12:13)

Christ sacrificed his life for the sake of those who put their faith in him. He propagated the truth that service is God, that sacrifice is God. Even if you falter in the adoration of God, do not falter in the service of the living God. Be ready to sacrifice even your life for the sake of God.

The spirit of sacrifice is essential. To speak about devotion without a spirit of sacrifice is meaningless. If the name of Jesus is glorified all over the world today, it is because of his boundless love. He served the lowly and the lost, and in the end, he offered his life itself as a sacrifice. (Sathya Sai Baba ' 25 December: 1970, 1998, 1993)

As we reflect upon the significance of Easter ' not just for Christians but for people of every faith ' we are again reminded of Sathya Sai Baba's words from the opening of this story:

What is the resurrection, really? It is the revelation of the divinity inherent in man. (28 February 1964)

What was the key that Jesus gave the world to realise our inherent divinity? His message is contained in one word: Love.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:37, 40)

As Sathya Sai Baba reminds us:

The followers of Jesus have broken into schisms on various counts; but the life of Christ is a lesson of unity. He taught people that there was only one God and all were His children. Recognize in each being, in each man, a brother, the child of God, and ignore all limiting thoughts and prejudices based on status, color, class, nativity and caste. (24 December 1972, 25 December 2001, 01 March 1974)

The influence of Sathya Sai Baba in the lives of countless Christians has led to a resurrection of their relationship with Jesus, a rebirth of appreciating who Jesus was, and a renewal of their sincere practice of what Jesus taught. The result has been, time and again, lives fulfilled as good Christians, true Christians, better Christians.

- Excerpt from Heart2Heart
(http://media.radiosai.org/journals/Vol_04/01APR06/coverstory_be-a-christian.htm).



Love Is The Greatest Binding Force



- Continued from February 2012 edition of WATCH
(http://r05il002ct.saimedia.org/WATCH/2012/WATCH_Feb_2012_WV.pdf)

You think you are doing great Sadhana. You sit for meditation for one hour. But during this one hour of meditation, how long does your mind remain steady? When your mind is not steady even for a second, what is the use of wasting time in this manner? Whatever work you do, consider it as God's work. This is the most correct and easy path. Why do you subject yourself to so much hardship leaving this easy path? Even your household work is God's work. How can we say that? God is the indweller of your heart. It is only due to the presence of God within you that you are able to perform all actions. Your eyes can see and ears can hear only because of the power of God that is within you. In fact, all your sense organs are governed by divine power. Therefore, any work that you perform with any of your sense organs is in reality performed by God and for God. For whose satisfaction do you perform a particular task? You may say that you are performing it for your own satisfaction. But, what does 'you' refer to? Are you the body? No. If you are the body, then how can you say, "This is my body"? If you think you are the mind, then how can you say, "This is my mind"? When you say, "my body, my mind", then whom does 'my' refer to? You are not the body, you are not the mind, you are the master. Body, mind and senses are mere instruments. It is God in the form of Atmic consciousness who makes these instruments function. This consciousness is present in everyone. There is none in this world without consciousness. Hence, God is present in everyone in the form of consciousness. Isavasyam Idam Jagat (the entire world is permeated by God). The entire world is the manifestation of God. Easwara Sarva Bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings).

If you ask, "In whom does God reside"? the answer is, "He resides in all". Then why is He not visible? All of you may be aware that there are many types of rosaries such as Tulasi Mala, Rudraksha Mala and Sphatika Mala (rosaries made of basil seeds, Rudraksha and crystal beads). The thread is the same in all these rosaries but it can be seen only in Sphatika Mala, and not in Tulasi Mala and Rudraksha Mala. Similarly, God as Brahma Sutra (principle of Brahman) is present in all but He can be seen only in those hearts which are pure and transparent like Sphatika. Therefore, you should make your heart pure in order to see God. God can be realised only by those who have a pure heart.

Get Rid of Desire, Anger and Greed

Man performs many spiritual practices like Japa and Dhyana (chanting and meditation). He also performs Yogasanas and physical exercises. But, what is the use of doing all this when you are not able to get rid of your evil qualities, wicked thoughts and mean mentality? The Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata are the main source of teaching for mankind. What do they teach? They teach that man should not harbour the wicked qualities of Kama, Krodha and Lobha (desire, anger and greed). Ravana's evil quality of Kama was the root cause for the story of the Ramayana. Similarly, Hiranyakasipu's anger was responsible for the Bhagavata and Duryodhana's greed was responsible for the Mahabharata. Due to his anger and hatred towards God, Hiranyakasipu became bereft of the power of discrimination and lost everything. Due to his greed, Duryodhana was not prepared to give to the Pandavas the land even equal to the point of a needle. What was their ultimate fate? What did Ravana get in the end? Though he was endowed with all types of powers, he lost his kingdom as well as his entire clan because he became the victim of Kama. Hiranyakasipu harboured anger against Hari, lost his power of discrimination and without even a

trace of kindness and compassion subjected his own son to untold suffering. What happened to him ultimately? He was endowed with all powers and could control even the five elements. In spite of that, he earned a bad name and ruined himself because of his anger. What was the use of his acquiring so many powers? In the end, he achieved nothing. Due to his greed, Duryodhana suffered a devastating defeat and lost all his brothers. He harboured hatred towards the Pandavas who were the very embodiments of Dharma. He pretended as though he had faith in Krishna but in fact he had no faith. He even developed hatred towards Krishna because He supported the righteous Pandavas. Ravana, Hiranyakasipu and Duryodhana bore hatred towards God. Those who harbour such evil qualities, the doors of liberation are always closed for them. Evil qualities are the greatest obstacle in the path of Moksha. What is Moksha? Is it attaining Kailasa or Vaikuntha or Swarga (heaven)? Moha Kshaya is Moksha, i.e., giving up of attachment is liberation. When you gradually reduce your attachment, that itself leads you to liberation.

Once upon a time, Narada asked Lord Vishnu, "I always come for Your Darshan wherever You are. But sometimes there is an emergency, and I want to meet You for an urgent work. Where is Your head office so that in such a situation I am able to come to You immediately and convey the message? Is it Vaikuntha, Kailasa or Swarga"? Vishnu replied, "Narada! Write down My address. Mad Bhakta Yatra Gayanti Tatra Tishthami Narada (I reside where My devotees sing My glories, Narada). Vaikuntha, Kailasa and Swarga are only My branch offices. But wherever My dear devotee sings My glory, I install Myself there permanently. That is My head office. In all other places, I am like a Utsava Vighraha (an idol meant for taking out in a procession). They are My temporary dwelling places. But you find Me installed permanently wherever My devotees sing My glory". God is the resident of every heart. Therefore, do not be deluded to think that you are mere mortals. All are the embodiments of God. You think, you are mere mortals and observe differences on the basis of name and form due to your attachment to physical body which is made up of five elements. Forget all differences of names and forms and realise the truth. Contemplate on the eternal principle of divinity. Do not waste your life in the pursuit of mundane, physical and worldly endeavours.

Love is the greatest binding force

Therefore, develop love, talk to each other with love, perform all actions with love and always contemplate on the principle of love. There is no easier path than this. Many people close their eyes, tell the beads of their rosary and think that they are doing Japa. They hold the rosary in their hand but their mind wanders to the house of a washerman or a barber. They sit for meditation but their mind goes to the kitchen when they get the smell of an overfried curry. Can you call this Japa or Dhyana? What is the meaning of Japa? Real Japa is when you think that God is in you and you are God. The consciousness present in you is Brahman. Therefore, everything is in you. The Mahavakya (profound statement) Ayam Atma Brahma signifies I am Atma and Brahman. These words convey the truth. But the scholars create confusion in you and destroy your faith by misinterpreting these words. Do not give room to this confusion. Do not spoil your mind by the jugglery of words. Follow the path of love. The easiest, sweetest, most sublime and blissful path is love, love and love alone.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Prema Mudhita Manase Kaho")

- Excerpt From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 5th July 1996.



God Is ...



Once a king wanted to know answers to three questions about which he had been contemplating for a long time. One day the king raised these questions in his Court Hall. The questions were: Where is God? In what direction does He cast His look? What does He do? None could answer these questions. The King then summoned with due honor a sage to his court. He asked the sage to answer these questions.

The Sage replied: "Like butter in the milk God is everywhere". To answer the second question the sage asked for a lamp. He lit the lamp and asked the King: "In which direction does this lamp shed its light?" The lamp sheds its light in all the directions" replied the king. The sage said "Likewise God is Effulgence itself and His vision is not directed to a particular place or person. He is all seeing". The king asked: "What does He do?" The sage said: "Since I am in a way instructing you in spiritual matters, I am in the position of a preceptor, you a disciple. So we have to exchange our places. Are you prepared for this?" The king agreed and came down from his elevated position and sat on the seat in which the sage sat. The sage said with a twinkle in his eyes: "This is what God does. He brings down the mighty and elevates the humble. He can make the poor rich and the rich poor. He can do anything. He is all pervading. He is all seeing and Omnipotent." The king was very much pleased with these answers. He expressed his gratitude to the sage and honored him in a fitting manner.

Like the king in the story, every one of us should try to understand the true characteristics of God: God is Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent.

Devotional Activities in Chicago and Suburbs

Activity	Time	Venue	Contact
Every Monday – Bhajans	07:00 pm to 08:00 pm	Aurora (Shirdi Mandir)	630-854-2004
Every Wednesday – Bhajans	07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	Hoffman Estates	847-519-1631
Every Friday – Bhajans	08:00 pm to 09:00 pm	Oak Brook	630-655-1718
1st Thursday of the Month – Bhajans	07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	Hoffman Estates	847-695-7110
1st Saturday of the Month – Bhajans	03:30 pm to 04:30 pm	Glenview	847-729-2779 / 773-510-5936
Saturday, April 14 th – Padhuka Puja	03:30 pm to 05:00 pm	Bolingbrook	630-819-9081
Monday, April 23 rd	07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	TBD	312-970-0857

For more information, please contact any of the Center Officers

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Education Coordinator:	Sai Prasanna Ravichandran	860-558-0976	sairavichan@gmail.com
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