



St. Vincent College
(Affiliated to Savtribai Phule Pune University)
Pune -411037

Title of the Event	Interfaith Celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr: “Unity in Diversity, Harmony through Dialogue”		
Date of the Event	5th April 2025	Place of the event	St. Vincent College, Pune
Objectives of the Event	The event aimed to celebrate festivals as an expression of cultural inclusivity while fostering interfaith understanding through dialogue, shared experience, and collaborative participation. It sought to reinforce values of mutual respect, communal harmony, and empathetic citizenship within the college community.		
Name/s of the Resource Persons	Dr. Gilbi John		
A short narration of the program			
Interfaith Celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr: “Unity in Diversity, Harmony through Dialogue” In a vibrant affirmation of India’s pluralistic ethos and St. Vincent College’s enduring commitment to communal harmony, the institution celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr on 5th April 2025 with a thoughtfully curated program that seamlessly blended cultural festivity with interfaith reflection. Titled “Unity in Diversity, Harmony through Dialogue,” the event transcended ceremonial observance to become a meaningful platform for fostering mutual understanding, empathy, and shared humanity among students and staff of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. The celebration commenced with the traditional preparation and sharing of Sheer Khurma—a rich, vermicelli-based dessert symbolizing joy, generosity, and community in Islamic tradition. Under the guidance of staff members and students, students from various faiths gathered in the college to collectively prepare the dish, engaging in informal conversations that dissolved barriers and nurtured camaraderie. This hands-on culinary activity served as a powerful metaphor for collaborative living: diverse ingredients coming together to create something nourishing and beautiful. The Sheer Khurma was later distributed to all attendees, embodying the spirit of seva (service) and sabr (patience) that underpins both Eid and the college’s Jesuit values. The centerpiece of the event was an Interfaith Seminar featuring Dr. Gilbi John, a respected faculty member, scholar and long-standing advocate for interreligious dialogue. Dr. John, known for his active involvement in the Inter-Religious Talk Series organized in collaboration with the Snehsadan Institute, delivered an			



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insightful and deeply resonant address on “The Imperative of Interfaith Dialogue in Contemporary India.”

Drawing from theological, sociological, and historical perspectives, he emphasized that dialogue is not about erasing differences, but about building bridges of respect across them. “In a world increasingly marked by polarization,” he noted, “educational institutions must become sanctuaries of listening—where curiosity replaces judgment, and shared values outweigh doctrinal divides.”

Dr. John highlighted the role of festivals like Eid, Diwali, Christmas, and others as natural entry points for intercultural learning, urging students to move beyond passive tolerance toward active appreciation. He commended St. Vincent College for institutionalizing such inclusive practices, stating that “when a Catholic-affiliated college celebrates Eid with authenticity and reverence, it sends a powerful message about the possibility of coexistence rooted in dignity.”

The seminar was followed by an open-floor discussion where students from Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, and Buddhist backgrounds shared personal reflections on their experiences of interfaith friendship, familial traditions, and the challenges of navigating identity in a complex social landscape. These testimonies underscored a collective yearning for spaces that honor both individual faith and collective unity.

This Eid celebration exemplifies St. Vincent College’s holistic approach to value-based education, where cultural literacy, ethical engagement, and social cohesion are integrated into the academic environment. By combining experiential learning (Sheer Khurma preparation) with intellectual discourse (interfaith seminar), the event fostered empathetic citizenship and aligned with national priorities of communal harmony, inclusive development, and peace education.

More than a festive gathering, the program served as a living testament to the institution’s belief that education at its best is a practice of radical hospitality—one that welcomes the “other” not as a guest, but as a co-creator of a just and compassionate society. Through such initiatives, St. Vincent College continues to nurture a campus culture where diversity is celebrated, dialogue is cherished, and every festival becomes an opportunity to reaffirm our shared humanity.

Name of the Collaborating Agency	Snehsadan Institute
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Learning Outcomes of the Event for the Participants	Students and staff deepened their appreciation of traditions through the participatory preparation of Sheer Khurma and gained critical insights into the importance of interfaith dialogue from Dr. Gilbi John's seminar. The experience nurtured empathy, challenged stereotypes, and encouraged active engagement with India's pluralistic heritage.
Learning Outcomes for the Organizing team	The organizing faculty and student coordinators enhanced their capacity to design and implement values-driven, intercultural programs that integrate experiential learning with intellectual discourse. They strengthened institutional partnerships—such as with Snehsadan Institute—and refined strategies for promoting inclusive campus practices aligned with ethical and social responsibility.
No. of Participants	100+ Students and Staff
Faculty in Charge	Dr. Gilbi John
Documents Attached	1. Attendance Sheet 2. Geotag photographs 3. Resume of resource persons if any 4. Copy of remuneration paid if any 5. Notice of the event 6. Thank you letter to the resource persons