

Messenger

"REGISTERED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS OF SRI LANKA UNDER NO. QD / 50 / NEWS / 2013"

Sunday March 17, 2013 Vol 144 No 11 20 Pages Rs: 25.00 Registered as a newspaper

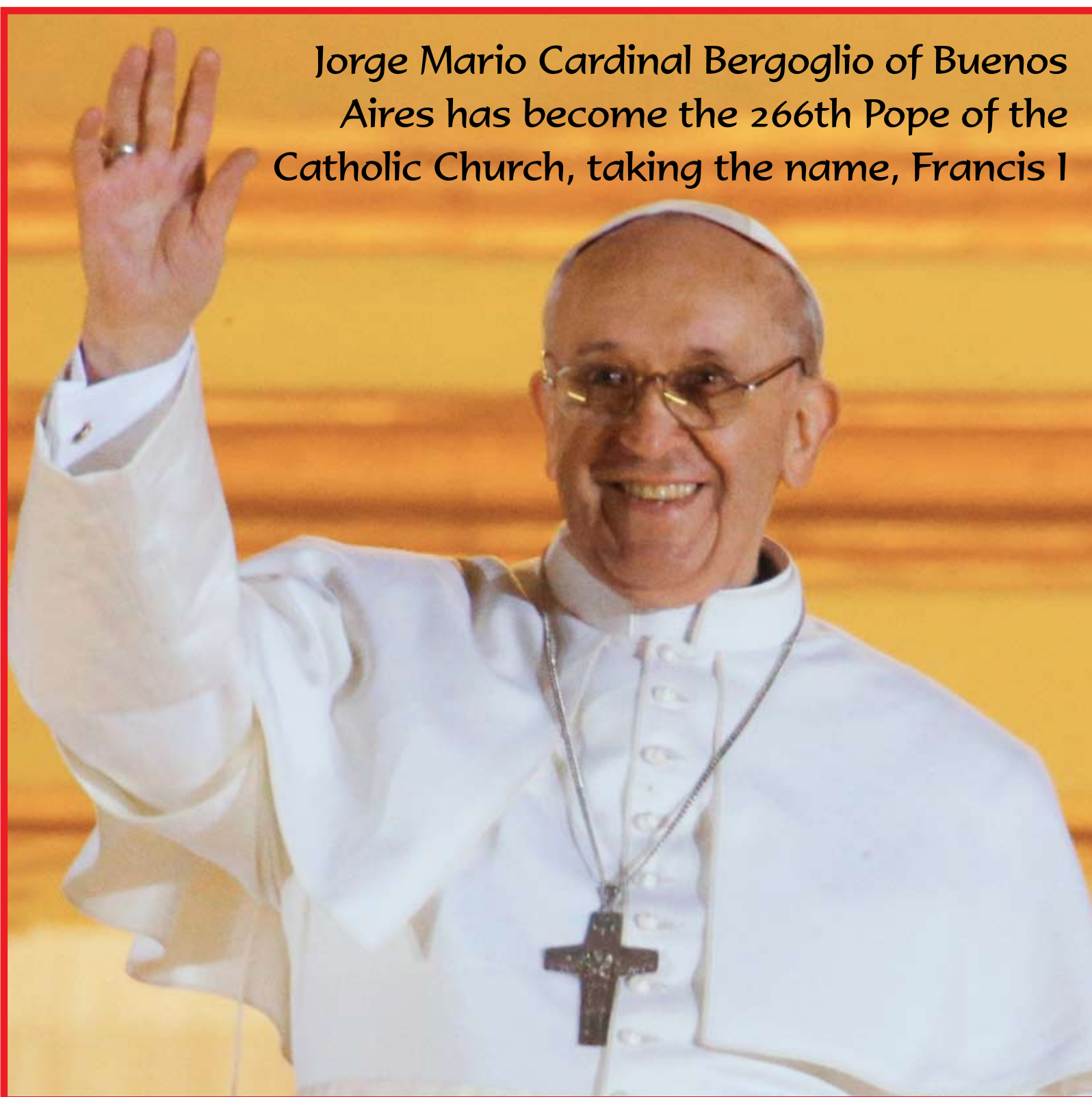


Habemus Papam - We have a Pope

The Church is Full of Hope

● *Latin American Cardinal elected as Supreme Pontiff - The Servant of Servants*

Jorge Mario Cardinal Bergoglio of Buenos Aires has become the 266th Pope of the Catholic Church, taking the name, Francis I



Pope Francis I, was Archbishop of Buenos Aires and is 76-years-old. He is the first Latin American Pope and the first Jesuit Pope. In 2005, he received the second highest votes in the Conclave that elected Pope Benedict. He entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), in 1958, and obtained a licentiate in philosophy and was ordained a priest in 1969. He was a Professor of Theology and a provincial leader for the Society and a seminary rector. Vatican analysts said, the new Pope had chosen the name of Francis because as a champion of social justice he was a great admirer of St. Francis of Assisi. They noted that when St. Francis began his mission he had said that he heard the Lord say to him, "Francis rebuild My Church."

CONTD ON PG 3

The Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek;
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
In pardoning that we are pardoned;
In dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

New evangelisation for the 'Year of Faith'

Thirty-five priests and 60 religious men and women, met at Rockhill, Bishop's House, Badulla recently. The meeting was chaired by Rt. Rev. Dr. J. Winston S. Fernando SSS Bishop of Badulla to chalk out the mission-2013 in their Diocese.

Attention was paid to 'The collaborative role of the Religious in the 'Year of Faith' and the 'New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith' in the Diocese. On this theme His Lordship presented the objective as 'Leading men and women of our times to Jesus, for an intimate encounter with Him' and expanded this in eight areas where renewal is needed- The Liturgy, Catechesis, Dialogue with other Religions, Justice and Human development, Social Communication, Laity, Priestly/Religious Formation and Migrants/ Prisoners/the sick/the tourists.

Explaining further His Lordship said the "The Church is the heart of the world. So we must be committed to preach the Gospel which will never be changed, even though people change. For this collaborative role of priest and religious in new evangelization, we should be new in ardour. Paying attention to new expression, new language, we have to represent to the world, Word of Christ even if the world ignores it. If we love God we love the poor."

His Lordship illustrated the 'Collaboration' in the light of the



Gospel of Luke, as Peter encountered Jesus and He commanded Peter to cast the net to the other side and they got a large catch of fish. Peter signaled to the others and together they dragged the boat. This is collaboration. Our mission should never be done alone, but as a collective body. We are called to work in companionship to realize the dream of Jesus.

The group work under the above eight themes brought to light the mission of the Diocese, highlighting the strategies for 2013.

Bridgetine brings honour to her School

Kamail Edirisinghe, a student of St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo brought honour to her school by obtaining 3 'A's at the GCE Advanced Level Examination held in August 2012 in the Bio-Science stream and has qualified to enter the Medical Faculty.

At the Sri Lankan Biology Olympiad of

2012, organized by the Institute of Biology, Sri Lanka, she was awarded a "Gold Medal," and at the Sri Lankan Physics Olympiad of 2012 organized by the Institute of Physics, Sri Lanka, she was awarded a "Bronze Medal"



Essay Competition to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the CBS and the "Year of Faith"

The Ceylon Bible Society and the Apostolate for Catechetics of the Archdiocese of the Catholic Church will jointly organize an Essay Competition among Catholic Sunday School students to mark the 200th anniversary of CBS and the "Year of Faith" declared by the Catholic Church.

This competition has been jointly conceived by Rev. Fr. Indra Rathnasiri Fernando, Archdiocesan Director for the Apostolate for Catechetics and Mrs. Lakshani P. Fernando, General Secretary of the CBS.

The initial phase of this competition will be held islandwide covering all twelve dioceses in approximately 2000 Catholic Sunday Schools where the

students would be invited to compose an essay on a given topic in Sinhala, Tamil or English with the Bible as their source of reference. The students will be categorized in three age groups namely, 10-12 years, 11-15 years and 15-18 years. Each Sunday school will select 45 best essays, examined at parish level.

In the second phase these 45 best essays would then be re-examined by a panel of judges appointed by the Apostolate for Catechetics of the Archdiocese of Colombo and the best three essays in each language from each of the 12 Dioceses will be chosen, resulting in 108 winners island wide who will be awarded certificates and valuable prizes.

CBS

Guild of Mary Immaculate 100th Year

The Guild of Mary Immaculate of St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10 will celebrate 100 years on December 8, 2013.

The Guild was introduced by the third Rector of St. Joseph's College Rev. Fr. Emil Nicholas OMI who was devoted to our Blessed Mother, to uplift the spiritual formation of present and past students.

Special devotions are conducted by the Guild every first Saturday of the month at the College Grotto with the recitation of the Holy Rosary, Litany, hymns to Our Lady and prayers.

This is followed by an Eucharistic Ccelebration.

Young All-Rounder

A Grade 4 student of St. Peter's College, Bambalapitiya Dinell Silva won the title of Best All-Round Athlete at the Inter House Primary School Sportsmeet held at the College grounds, recently.

Dinel excelled in the 100 metres and 75 metres by winning first place. He participated in the 75m x 4m x100m x 4 relay team which emerged first.

Winning the long jump in the under 10 category Dinell has proved versatility and talent.

Maithri



Free Medical Camp



A free Medical Camp organised by St. Anne's Society Wattala and sponsored by the Lions' Club of Wattala was held at St. Anne's Church premises Wattala. Picture shows Rev. Fr. Basil Wickramasinghe, Parish Priest of the Church lighting the oil lamp to open the medical camp. Rev. Fr. Krishan Jayashantha Asst. Parish Priest and Malinga Jayawardana President of the Society are also in the picture.

Nimal Perera

"It would seem that my brothers went to the end of the world to choose him," he said from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica.

The Pope then called on the crowd to pray for our Bishop Emeritus Benedict."

Before he closed his remarks, Pope Francis asked the crowd for the favour of praying for him in silence before he gave his blessing. He then bowed at the waist as silence settled over St. Peter's Square. The Pope blessed the throng of people, saying, "I give my blessing to you and all people of good will in the world."

"I'm going to say goodbye now, thank you so much for your welcome.

I say good night "because tomorrow I want to go and pray to Mother Mary for her protection."

A marching band playing and the bells of St. Peter's ringing in the night followed Pope Francis' first words.

New books launched by Catholic Writers

Six new books written by members of National Catholic Writers Association (NCWA) affiliated to (ICOM) (International Catholic Organization for Media) based in Geneva, Switzerland was launched at Paul VI Centre Colombo, recently.

The books were published under the Catholic Books Programme, by Godage Publishers Maradana. Among those present were, Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph, National Director of Social Communication and Mr. Sirisumana Godage, Proprietor of Godage Publishers.

The new books were 'Calvary of Sri Lanka' by Maximus Roy Perera; 'Weera Putha' by Leslie Perera; 'Chethana Parisudha Nam' (චෙතනා පරිසුද්ධ නම) by well-known poet Wilson Rodrigo, 'Adaraneeya Undayak' (ආදරණීය උන්ඩක) by Jayantha Paliawadana 'Kithunu 'Divi Magata Athwelak' (කිතුනු දිවි මගෙ අත්වැලක්) by Calistus Jayamanne who is Director of Social Services Department, Battaramulla and a new edition of 'Haulkarayo' (හවුල් කාරයෝ) by Maurice Bollegala. (First published 47 years ago, a record).

The 'Vindana' Magazine official publication of Youth section of NCWA was also launched on this occasion.

M. Emil P. Perera

Children gather around the Cross



Students from the Nayakakanda Parish went on a pilgrimage to St. Anthony's Shrine, Wahakotte accompanied by their parents. Picture shows the students participating in the Way of the Cross organised under the instructions of Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunathilake the parish priest.

Nimal Perera

Habemus Papam.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

The College of Cardinals came to an agreement on the Holy Father's election the afternoon of March 13, after a total of four in conclusive votes earlier that day and the previous day.

Two-thirds of the cardinals present - in this case, 77 of 115 - are necessary to elect a new Pontiff.

Pope Francis began his first words to the Church by saying that the cardinals "went to the end of the world" to find the new Bishop of Rome.

"Brothers and Sisters, good evening. You know that the charge of the conclave was to give a bishop of Rome.

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Savana Diploma Course in Theology

Certificates were awarded to participants of the Savana Diploma course in Theology held under the patronage of His Lordship Rt.Rev.Dr. Winston Fernando sss Bishop of Badulla recently. The course was conducted by Mr. Shirley Lal Wijesinghe, senior lecturer of Christian Studies of the University of Kelaniya for the benefit of the people of Uva. Mr. Sameera Perera of Asian Institute of Missiology co-ordinated the Course.

The course was well attended and the participants included lay faithful, Rev. Sisters of the Holy Family, Salvatorian and Apostolic Carmel Congregations and the members of the Methodist Church.

The Theology Course was conducted at the Institute of Integral



Education, Bible Apostolate and Catechetics in Bandarawela. The Vicar General of the Diocese of Badulla, Rev Fathers and Sisters of Bandarawela Deanary and the Methodist Pastor of Bandarawela attended the function.

S. Mary Amanda

Congratulatory message from the Chief Opposition Whip

It is with great joy that I warmly wish His Holiness Pope Francis I the new shepherd of the universal Catholic Church. The Church has been very blessed by your election which was a momentous occasion for all the Catholics around the world.

With your known simplicity of life and spirituality an inspiring guidance for way forward in the highly challenging modern society Your Holiness can be assured of the prayers and support of the small but spiritually strong Catholic community of Sri Lanka for a blessed and a fruitful pastoral mission.

John Amaratunga

Kalutara District Daham Pasal Lenten Programme



A Lenten Programme was held for the Kalutara District Daham Pasal students from Grade 4 to Grade 11. The programme was organised by Rev. Fr. Ishan Prameena, Director of Daham Pasal, together with the teachers.

Picture shows Fr. Ishan Prameena addressing students at the Calvary Shrine.

D. Anselm Fernando



Special issue of Aquinas Journal 2013 dedicated to Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya OMI

The Aquinas Journal 2013 is a special issue dedicated to the first Registrar and Second Rector of Aquinas University College, Colombo late Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya OMI.

The Journal begins with excerpts taken from certain representations made by Fr. Balasuriya and tributes from close associates. It carries scholarly articles on Sacred Scripture, Information Technology for Evangelization, Literature, Human Resource Management and ends with a book review.

The Journal is priced at Rs. 100/- and available at the Theology Library of Aquinas University College. For details please contact Mrs. Rozaine Avory on 071 530 0185/ 077 368 8329.

Philosophers' Day 2013

The Philosophers' Day of the academic year 2012-2013 marked a double significance. The guest speech which is customary was delivered on a theme pertaining to a philosophical discipline and named after Rev. Fr. Harold Panditharatne, (of the Archdiocese of Colombo, a man of high caliber and a double Doctorate holder for Philosophy) who was the first diocesan Rector of the National Seminary. During his tenure as the Rector, the Department of Philosophy was affiliated to the Pontifical Urban University Rome, with empowerment to confer the Degree of Baccalaureate in Philosophy.

Recently the National Seminary Philosophate received the affiliation from the Pontifical Urban University for the addition of the third year of Philosophy, so that the Brothers can read for their Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy. The Provincial of the Congregation of the Society of Jesus and a versatile philosopher, Rev. Fr. Jeyaraj Rasiah S.J, delivered the first "Rev. Fr. Harold Panditharatne Memorial Lecture" under the theme, "Wisdom of the Orient in the Bagavath Gita," while elaborating on the philosophical and historical dimensions of it. To mark the finale of the programme, it was announced that the first group of Brothers will sit for the BPh Degree (Bachelor of Philosophy) on July 2014.

Rev. Bro. Shalindra Kotikawatte
2nd Year Philosophy



From the Vatican

New Pope lived a simple life in Argentina

EWTN NEWS/CNA -Pope Francis lives very simply, brings a pastoral approach to his ministry, and is a man of prayer, according to the Vatican's press office director.

Father Thomas Rosica, the English-language assistant for the Vatican press office, told journalists at hastily arranged press briefing.

"Sunday night we were out for a walk and he pulled me over. He took me by the hand and said, 'I want you to pray for me. I'm a little nervous right now.'"

In February 2001, Fr. Rosica was at a meeting in Buenos Aires of the bishops from throughout Latin America to promote World Youth Day in Canada. He was told that Archbishop Bergoglio was going to celebrate Mass for the people at the meeting.

"So I went in earlier, and sat and prayed in the back. And I saw this man come in with a simple black cassock and knelt in front of me and prayed for the longest time. And then when he came out in the procession, it was the archbishop."

Later he told Fr. Rosica that he lived "very simply in an apartment in Argentina," where he took care of "a handicapped Jesuit."

Pope Francis also said that he cooks for himself and rides the bus to work.

For his part, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi said that he is still "shocked" at the news that a fellow Jesuit was elected Pope.

Fr. Lombardi said he does not know the new Pope well – although he met him once at a General Congregation of the Jesuits – but that one could see his simple spirituality and pastoral sense in his first remarks.

"I didn't expect it to be white this evening. The choice shows courage on the part of the cardinals. It's the first time we have a Pope from another continent," Fr. Lombardi remarked.

Pope Francis will be inaugurated on March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph, at 9:30 a.m. in St. Peter's Square.

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
Messenger
SINCE 1984

EDITORIAL

March 17, 2013

Habemus Papam **We have a new Pope!**

The election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Francis the 1st is a momentous occasion for celebration at many levels. He is the first South American, which as one layperson remarked "we had to wait 2,000 years for!" to be elected as the 266th successor to Saint Peter. He is also the first Jesuit to become a Pope, which should make Saint Francis Xavier, a Jesuit himself very happy. Pope Francis the 1st is also a very humble intellectual with a deep love for his fellow person. Additionally, his conservative stance and deep commitment to social justice are key attributes that will help him serve God's people with courage and strength in the years to come.

As news of the new pontiff spread far and wide, many of the 1,200 million Catholics worldwide welcome the news with a sense of great elation and excitement. Even the millions and billions of non-Catholics, too, have shown a keen interest in this election, as what happens in the Catholic Church will, invariably, impact what happens in every nation on earth. This, indeed, is a momentous occasion and one that heralds the great season of Easter and Christ's Resurrection most majestically!

Although not a frontrunner prior to and during the electoral process (the Conclave),

the choice of Argentina's Cardinal Bergoglio is a very smart move. True, the final decision was made through the promptings of the Holy Spirit, however the strong Italian contingent of cardinals had been hoping for one of their compatriots to replace Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. They had seen over three decades of foreign pontiffs (a Polish in Pope John Paul II and a German in Pope Benedict XVI) preside as the Bishop of Rome. In that time numerous salient issues had cast turbulence on the Church. Therefore, the strong Italian camp would have preferred to bring the papacy "home" by electing an Italian to the pontiff's position.

But the election of Pope Francis the First has killed two birds with one stone. Firstly, it has satisfied the strong Italian camp by the very fact that he is of Italian descent, although he grew up in Argentina. Secondly, the choice of Cardinal Bergoglio satisfies the needs of the vast population of Catholic South, Central and Northern Americans and the aspirations of the Third World, to which many South and Central American countries belong to.

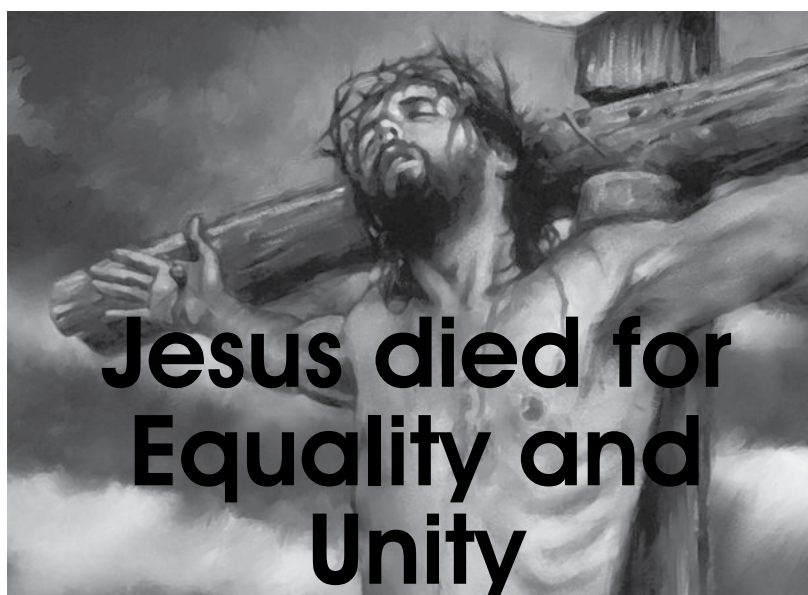
This election is a huge cause for Argentina to celebrate, because its people have endured much in the last 50 years. From being one of the richest countries 100 years ago, its economy sank to amongst the lowest quarter of the tribe of 200 nations on earth. Rising inflation, unemployment, endemic political and economic corruption, wide-scale poverty and an array of social problems threatened the very fabric of that nation. Hopefully, and most likely, the election of Pope Francis the 1st will change

many things for the better in that nation.

We know from his biographical history, that Cardinal Bergoglio has done many wonderful deeds of charity and social justice by reaching out to the poor and the sick. His famous washing and kissing the feet of 12 AIDS patients at a hospice is the stuff of saints. He often travels by public transport and cooks his own meals. No wonder that he is being labelled the "People's Pope". Reminiscent of the great Pope John XXIII, in the 1950s and 1960s, Pope Francis the 1st will no doubt leave an indelible mark on us all. Whether he embraces the ethos of Saint Francis of Assisi or Saint Francis Xavier, he will no doubt embody the characteristics of both of these great saints – that of humility, charity, love of the poor and the downtrodden, and a love of serving God's people through a missionary spirit.

Let us also remember Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who too, has humbly shied away from the limelight and embraced a life of contemplative prayer. We must remember to keep him in our prayers always, for he led the Church through turbulent times and did a marvellous job.

As Catholics we are called to abide by the instructions of our Holy Father. So, in the inaugural words of the newly elected Pope Francis the 1st at the Vatican balcony let us pray for him so that he may serve God well as the successor of Saint Peter. And as with Christ's mandate, let us pray that he hauls in a large catch of humanity from the shores of sin and apathy and establish himself as the rock on which we all stand.



During His thirty years in Nazareth, Jesus observed the social situation of His country and found discrimination, conflict and division.

Enthusiasm of Jesus

After His baptism by John the Baptist, when He was at prayer (Lk 3: 21), Jesus had a profound experience of God's compassionate love which made Him address the God of Abraham and God of Moses as Abba - Father. This personal experience of God as a tender and compassionate Father made Him enthusiastic to make the people of His time to understand that they are all children of God and that they are all equal in human dignity.

Jesus' God-experience made Him dedicate His life to bring about unity among the people. It was through love

("disarmament") and not with power and/or economic interests or weapons that He went about bringing people together and created a movement based on the Love of God.

Jesus' God-experience made Him also to realise that He could not separate love of God from neighbourly love and that love by its nature creates equality and unity among the people, destroying hatred and discrimination based on man-made laws and wrong interpretation of religious laws.

The Pharisees blamed Jesus

The Pharisees and the Scribes imitated God through an interpretation of the Word of God (Lev. 19:2) which considered God as the Pure One. So anyone who was not pure was excluded by them from social and religious activities. Jesus however, based on His

God-experience, interpreted the Word of God as God's compassionate love. Such a love by its very nature tends to bring people together for mutual love. Jesus told the people, "Be compassionate as the heavenly Father is compassionate" (Lk. 6:36).

The Pharisees and the Scribes blamed Jesus saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Lk. 15: 1-3). One day, the Pharisees asked the disciples of Jesus, "Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (Mt 9:10-13). Tax collectors, the sinners, the lepers and the poor were categories of people who were marginalized and excluded from taking part in social and religious activities because they were not pure according to the interpretation of Leviticus 19:2 given by the Pharisees, the chief priests and the elders. The chief priests and the crowd that followed their teachings told Pilate, "He is inflaming the people with His teaching all over Judea; it has come all the way from Galilee where He started, down to here" (Lk 23:5).

Compassionate Love of God energized Jesus

It was compassionate love of Abba-Father that energized Jesus to do what the Father desired. Jesus told the people that He had come from heaven not to do His own will but the will of the One who sent Him (Jn. 6:28) and to do

what pleases Him (the Father, Jn. 8:29). Father's longing is that His children live in mutual love enjoying social equality sharing the resources provided by the Father for everyone's benefit. So, Jesus was engaged in a mission of love.

Father raised the victimised Jesus

It was also Jesus' desire that his disciples should be a sign and reflection of the union that exists between Him and Father. So He prayed, "Father may they be one in Us, as You are in Me and I am in You.... May they be completely one so that the world will realize that it is was You who sent Me and that I have loved them as much as You love me" (Jn 17:21,23).

Bringing people to experience mutual love and social equality invited opposition from vested interests and Jesus paid the price with His life on the Cross. But the Father in Heaven who was so pleased with Jesus and who was with Jesus in His sufferings raised Jesus and vindicated Jesus' way of life (Phil 2:9-11).

Jesus the Catalyst

Jesus is the catalyst who has paved the way for His Movement (the Church) that is born out of faith in His death and Resurrection to continue the mission of love in the world.

The Second Vatican Council articulated the vision of Jesus for the Church in these words, "By her relationship

with Christ, the Church is a kind of Sacrament or sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humankind. She is also an Instrument for the achievement of such union and unity" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, No. 1).

Mystic Meister Eckhart wrote: "Love will never be anywhere except where equality and unity are. Between a master and his servant there is no peace for there is no real equality. And there can be no love where love does not find equality or is not busy creating equality. Nor is there any pleasure without equality. Practice equality in human society. Learn to love, esteem, consider all people like yourself. What happens to another, be it bad or good, pain or joy, ought to be as if it happened to you."

Revolution of Love

"When I think of the great quarrels between Christians that have divided us into Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants, I get the impression that we have turned around the saying of St. Paul and put it this way. 'Now there remain three, faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is faith.' Our quarrels about faith have been the destruction of Christian love. We need today a revolution of love." (Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI of Durban, S. Africa).

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Fernando OMI

Faith and Vocation cannot be segregated

Placing Faith in God entails a special task. Every Christian who is enveloped by faith is demanded to employ himself with a special vocation, to consolidate and to propagate the Kingdom of God which is already realised but not yet visible or achieved on earth. It is obvious that as fragile human beings we often grapple with our vocation which is a byproduct of impaired and feeble faith, because faith is none other than loving God and thus living only for Him. Therefore it is an explicit and concrete fact that by any means faith and vocation cannot be set apart; rather they are two sides of one coin.

Object of our Faith

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen (Heb 1:1). If the object of our faith is seen or rather visible, we will seldom exert effort to place our trust in it, because the object, in which we keep our trust, is seen or we can perceive it: We "believe" only when the object is not seen thus faith originates when the object of our faith is invisible. Then we begin to believe in the very object which is veiled from us and who is supposed to be the Supreme Being who exists above us.

Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament can we find any person who had seen God. But by faith Abel offered to God a sacrifice greater than Cain's. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death. By faith Abraham obeyed God when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive an inheritance; He went out not knowing where he was to go. Finally their faith bore much fruit, thus they pleased God by placing faith in Him (Heb 11: 6). Precisely those profound pillars of faith deserved their due reward from God for having sought Him in faith. Through the sacrifice of Abel he was attested to be upright (Gen 4:4-10). Due to the strong faith possessed by Abraham, though he was a feeble man, came forth descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore (Gen 15:5-6).

Therefore they manifested their heroic and unwavering faith through their actions and they were justified before this Supreme Being in whom they placed their entire trust even though they did not see Him.

With the advent of the Son of God through whom the Revelation of God was perfected, (Heb 1:1) justification of human being or salvation of mankind is totally realized in His obedient sacrifice on the cross but not in the mere observance of the law. The law was our disciplinarian for Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a disciplinarian. For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus (Gal 3: 25-26).

Here St. Paul underlines the fact that the mere observance of the law cannot make a person righteous. However much man tries to be faithful to the law, he fails because man's flesh is weak. "For what the law, weakened by the flesh, was powerless to do, this God has done, by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for the sake of sin, He condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom 8: 2).

It is through the grace of God we are saved. Thus should we believe in Him in order to be saved? Should we place our faith in Jesus Christ in order to be saved? According to Jesus, placing our trust in God is, materializing our faith in our day today activities. Faith should not only be articulated but also manifested in our actions. "What good is it my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?" (James 3:14).

What is the difference between a Catholic who does not practice his faith and Satan? In a way Satan is also a veteran theologian, who knows the Salvation history right from the beginning but he does not practice what he knows. Have we not been the advocates of evil by being aloof to the right actions in conformity with the love of Christ? Or by not practicing our faith in action? Thus to foster a real and genuine faith one should actualize his faith in actions.

Where there is no action, there is no faith. Where there is no faith, the actions are evil oriented.

As far as the right action is concerned, it can be called the "Vocation". Each one has a vocation received by God. Each Catholic has a particular role to play and a special task to carry out. In a construction of a building we can notice that some laborers have been employed by the constructor with an agreement. In putting up the building both the parties have certain demands. On the side of the workers, the quality of the work, faithfulness and clarity are expected. From the side of the constructor, he is expected to be kind and

If one possesses a real faith in God and does justice to his vocation, he may have to be ready to take up the cross and thereby suffer for his vocation which is inevitable. Here we have got to realise that without the cross there is no Salvation. Where there is Salvation there is faith, where there is faith there is love, where there is love there is suffering. Faith and suffering cannot be segregated. Therefore suffering cannot be exempted from the vocation as well. "They were stoned, sawed in two, put to death at sword's point; they went about in skins of sheep or goats, needy, afflicted, and tormented. Yet all these though approved because of their faith" (Heb 11:37-39).

justifiable in paying their wages. When the work is initiated every worker is appointed to do a certain task according to their ability and knowledge. Eventually the quality of the work depends on the faithfulness of the labourers and the amount of work they have done.

Faithful in Vocation

Likewise, every Catholic has been called for a special task. Everyone has received a vocation to be a parent, a priest, a singer, a writer....etc but in each of these diverse vocations God expects one common thing. That is to be faithful in carrying out their task. Here, what is indispensable is faith or faith experience with God. If our faith experience with God is so genuine and deep, nothing will hinder our faithfulness to the vocation that we have received, because the work is carried out with utmost relish and love for God. The stamina that we receive to do justice for our vocations is obtained only from our faith in God. If our faith is shallow our work also will be diluted. If our faith is feeble and wavering, our vocation will be like a tree without roots.

If one possesses a real faith in God and does justice to his vocation, he may have to be ready to take up the cross and thereby suffer for his vocation which is inevitable. Here we have got to realize that without the cross there is no Salvation. Where there is Salvation there is faith, where there is faith there is love, where there is love there is suffering. Faith and suffering cannot be segregated. Therefore suffering cannot be exempted from the vocation as well. "They were stoned, sawed in two, put to death at sword's point; they went about in skins of sheep or goats, needy, afflicted, and tormented. Yet all these though approved because of their faith" (Heb 11:37-39).

One, who is enveloped with deep and unwavering faith in God, will not be aloof to the vocation that he has received from God. He will be genuine to his vocation. He will be loving his vocation and living it to the fullest. Thereby he will be bold enough to confront any kind of hardships that may come on his way as he exercises his vocation. He will be ready to be insulted, afflicted, imprisoned and at last be killed in the Name of Jesus because when one has genuine faith in God, he will love God genuinely and live only for Him.

Bro. Benedict Jayamanna O.Cist

From Jewish Passover to Christian Eucharist

The Lord's Supper occurred in the context of the Jewish Passover.

The Passover celebration occurs only once a year, how is it then the Catholic Church got the notion to celebrate Jesus' sacrificial meal daily in what we call the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? The answer is found in the ancient Israelite sacrifice called the 'todah'. It is Hebrew for 'thanksgiving', and expresses praise and gratitude. It was not accidental that the Last Supper was a Passover meal.

The Person and Works of Jesus is foreshadowed in Moses and the events of Israel's Passover and Exodus. Moses' first sign and miracle was turning water into blood. (Exod: 7:19). Jesus' first sign and miracle was turning water into wine at the great marriage feast at Cana. (Jn:2:1- 11). Another sign and miracle, Moses fed Israel with miraculous bread from heaven known as manna. (Exod: 16:2-30). Jesus multiplies the loaves of bread and fish and feeds the multitude of 5000, and then has twelve baskets of food left over symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses builds an altar at the foot of Mt. Sinai with twelve pillars symbolizing the twelve tribes who will enter the Promised Land. Jesus appoints a set of twelve leaders (the apostles) and then

an additional seventy disciples, just as Moses appointed seventy judges to help him govern Israel. (Matt: 10:1) (Num: 11:16-17). All these signs and miracles correspond to greater realities unfolding according to a single plan in salvation history.

Under Mosaic covenant there are many sacrifices and offerings. The multiple types of sacrifices in Mosaic covenant are detailed in Leviticus 1-7. The major categories are the burnt offerings, the peace offerings, sin offerings, and the 'Todah' offerings. In the Liturgy read each Passover by the Jews, there appears a quotation from Deuteronomy: "Remember the day when thou earnest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life" (16:3). This commandment applied not only to the generation of the Exodus, but to all Jews of all times. The purpose of this feast is so that Israel might not forget the mighty deeds that God worked for the sake of their liberation from bondage in Egypt. The institution of the Slain Paschal Lamb mentioned in Exodus concluded by Moses erecting an altar with twelve pillars symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel. Taking the blood of the sacrifice, he poured one half of it on the altar, and the other half on the twelve tribes and

the people with the words: "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you." Since His death was the reason of His coming, at the Last Supper Christ instituted for His Apostles and their followers a Memorial Action. He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it; and He gave it to them with the words "This is My Body which is given up for you." (Lk:22:19)

He did not say "this represents or symbolises My Body." He clearly said: "This is My Body." Then taking wine into His Hands, He said: "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My Blood, the blood of the New Covenant, shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me." (Matt:26:28; Luk:22:19). We have observed that the key to the keeping of a covenant was its remembrance and the key to remembrance always was repetition. Bishop Sheen puts it well when he said: "Some things in life are too beautiful to be forgotten, but there can also be something in death that is too beautiful to be forgotten." Therefore, for the sake of 'Remembrance' people require certain institution: Canonical Scriptures, a Canonical Liturgy. The Liturgy draws the believer into the drama of the divine economy, not as spectator, but as a participant. In this way the stream of salvation history

moves from generation to generation.

Liturgy is always in the present tense. The past becomes a present presence. The past event is not repeated. They are however re-presented in a way that is real and actual. Putting it in another way, the words of Consecration spoken by a lawfully ordained priest, are not just simply words; they become performative because Christ Himself acts in and through the priest.

Concluding

Christ differs from all the other priests - pagan and Jewish. All other priests offered a victim distinct from themselves. The victim goat, or a dove or a lamb died, but not the priest offering. Christ offered Himself as a Victim. He offered Himself without blemish to God a spiritual and eternal sacrifice. (Heb:9;14) He is both the offerer and the offered/both the Priest and the Victim. Just as the Israelites had to eat the lamb offered in sacrifice, so the Church feeds upon the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. The True Lamb has been sacrificed, now we must partake of the meal. (1 Cor: 5:7-8) This then is the memory of the living Church....the Daily Holy Mass celebrated in the Catholic Church.

Bryan Landsberger

“I was in prison you visited me”

• Sri Lanka needs a Concentrated National Pastoral Approach to the Prison Apostolate



fr. ernest poruthota

“I was in prison you visited me,” says Our Lord (Mt 25:39). This requirement is an indispensable condition that Christ laid down to His disciples on the day of Last Judgment. How can we do it? Not all can go in to prisons. We have so many prison chaplains all over the country and Rev. Fr. Hillary Peiris OMI has found a very practical way of crying out Christ’s dictum in a very touching manner.

Fr. Hilary Peiris is a one time popular editor of ‘*Bakthi Prabodanaya*’ founded in 1899 and now run by the Oblates. He has found three unique ways of putting this dictum of Christ into practice.

1) His visits ‘to prisons to say Holy Masses and hear Confessions.

2) Living close to the Welikada Prison in Borella. – (All Saints’ Church, Borella is in fact



walking distance to the Prison)

3) Caring for all the dependents in prison. Cardinal Malcolm has actively supported him by opening an account in Archbishop’s House with the unique facility of obtaining income tax exemption for all donations made to the fund. The cheque must be written in the name of the Archbishop of Colombo (Prison Apostolate) with the request for income tax exemption for the donation. Fr. Hilary is the Prison Chaplain

for the four sections of the prison. a) Males; b) Women; c) Remand; d) New magazine prison.

Fr. Hilary will state the needs of prisoners very gladly if one only takes the trouble to give him a phone call or write to him to the contact given below:.

• Rev. Fr. Hilary Peiris OMI
Archdiocesan Prison Apostolate
All Saints’ Church,
96 Ananda Rajakaruna Mawatha
Colombo 10,
Sri Lanka
• +94112693051
+94771547410

Email: hilarypeiris@yahoo.com

Oblate OMI priests in Colombo have a tradition of hospital and prison chaplaincies. It is a tradition sanctified by an African (OMI) priest, Rev. Fr. Claude Lawrence who for years had been Hospital and Prison Chaplain. Fr. Claude either walked or traveled on his old, la-

dies’ push bicycle. (I think this bicycle is kept in the Heritage Museum on the left side of the National Basilica at Tewatte)

Besides saying Holy Masses and hearing Confessions, Fr. Hilary Peiris has discovered the well-known fact that most of the remand prisoners are in remand because they can not find the money to pay in cash what the court has ordered. Staying in prison makes them exposed to more fresh crimes. A new methodology of payments for these remand prisoners has to be discovered. If discovered overcrowding of prisons will ease and a more humane manner of treating prisoners will evolve.

Though Christmas gifts are always welcome by everyone, Christmas gifts given to prisoners must be rethought and preplanned. Fr. Hilary ar-

gues that if the bread winner of a family is in prison, how about school exercise books which the student needs and is not included in the Government’s generous grant of free text books and school uniforms?

Though I am highlighting the needs of those in prison in Borella, there are over 20 to 30 prisons in Sri Lanka that needs a “Concentrated National Pastoral Approach to the Prison Apostolate.”

With the talk of inter-religious dialogue and multi-religious approach in Sri Lanka a new approach to prison apostolate is a MUST.

May be like all Oblates and Religious congregations working in Sri Lanka, Rev. Fr. Hilary Peiris OMI, has led the way.



A CROSS The Way 108

By Sirohmi Gunasekera

Hard work

“So you are expecting a baby?” asked Nilani.

“Yes, it’s due in three months’ time,” said Manel excitedly.

“Well, I don’t want to spoil it for you but you must be prepared for sleepless nights and running behind a crawling baby to stop her putting her finger into plug points,” said Nilani who was a nurse.

“I didn’t think of all that. I think my husband and I will have to discuss how to handle the baby. He’s, already thinking of doing overtime to earn more money as I will have to stay home and look after the baby,” said Manel.

“Well, both of you will have to work together to cope with baby work. Dr. Benjamin Spock in his bestselling book, ‘Baby and Child Care’ says that the mother takes on all the work and goes on to become an expert and the father is left behind and this can affect the marital relationship,” said Nilani.

“I never thought of that. My friend Dora who had a baby last year says that it is a full-time job. So if both husband and wife are not prepared to sacrifice, break rest and give up trying to earn more money, you should not have a child. After all, I know some childless couples who share companionship and are content,” chimed in Rohan.

“A child is a gift from God but you must be prepared. It’s not just lullabies and cuddles. At first, it’s a case of trying to stop the never-ending crying day and night. It’s so hard at the beginning that you tend to forget it later on and grandmothers romanticize caring for a baby,” said Nilani.

“I know. Once a child gets married, everyone looks forward to the next event which is childbearing. So do not let society pressurize you into having a baby if you are one who is carefree and enjoying a job. Caring for a child means at least twenty years of sacrifice! Just pray for a happy life with or without kids,” advised Rohan.

How Far Can You Go On The Road To Forgiveness?

When the war with the LTTE drew to a close, you are aware the government appointed a commission called the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) to study all the lessons we can learn after the 30-year war. This move was to take all the steps necessary to bring in reconciliation among the many ethnic groups in our society. Eminent persons represented this Commission and anyone had the opportunity to go before it and give evidence.

A similar commission was appointed in South Africa when Nelson Mandela won freedom and independence for the black people in South Africa, and South Africa became a country ruled by the black people forming a majority in the government with Nelson Mandela as South Africa’s first black President culminating in the end of ‘Apartheid’ (segregation) in South Africa. The commission was called the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Before this commission, a certain frail black woman stands slowly to her feet. She is over seventy years of age. There are white security officers across the courtroom facing her. Among them, Mr. Van de Broek is been tried

and found guilty for murdering the woman’s husband and son some years ago.

The incidents that took place were recollected once again. Mr. Van de Broek visited the woman’s home many years ago, took her son and shot him at point blank range. He then burnt the young man’s body while he enjoyed a party with his fellow officers. After seven years, Van de Broek and his gang came back to take her husband away. The husband’s whereabouts were unknown for many months. However, after nearly two years, Van de Broek came back in search of the woman herself. She recalled all what happened that evening, visiting a place near a river where she saw her husband bound and beaten and still alive, lying on a pile of wood. The officer poured gasoline over his body and set him aflame, the husband cried out, “Father, forgive them.”

The woman now stands in the courtroom and listens to the confession of Mr. Van de Broek. A member of the commission turns to her and asks, “Now what do you want? How can justice be done to this man who so brutally destroyed your family?”

“I want three

things,” the woman says calmly. “Take me to the place where my husband’s body was burnt so that I can collect the dust and give his remains a decent

Thoughts
that haunt me

Ananda Perera

burial. My husband and son were my only family. I want secondly, for Mr. Van de Broek to become my son. I would like him to come twice a month to my ghetto and spend time with me so that I can pour out on him whatever love I have remaining within me.”

“And finally, “She says, “I would like Mr. Van de Broek to know that I offer him my forgiveness because Jesus Christ died to forgive. This was also the wish of my husband. So I would kindly ask someone to come to my side and lead me across the courtroom so that I can take Mr. Van de Broek in my arms, embrace him and let him know he is truly forgiven.”

As the court assistant comes to lead the elderly woman across the room, Mr. Van de Broek, overwhelmed by what he has just heard, faints. Those in the courtroom, friends, family and neigh-

bours, who were all victims of many years of oppression and injustice, begin to sing softly the great hymn, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.”

This lady has taught us the supreme level of forgiveness. Forgiveness is something many of us find it difficult to practise. If someone has wronged us, it is difficult to go to him and say, “I forgive you and let’s forget it.” But we can certainly forgive him in our heart.

Jesus told the parable of the servant who was forgiven a great debt who then went out and dealt mercilessly with a fellow servant who owed him a debt that was a negligible fraction of what he himself had owed; and who for his mercilessness was utterly condemned. This parable teaches a lesson that a man must forgive in order to be forgiven. “Blessed are the merciful, “Jesus said, “for they shall obtain mercy.” (Mat. 5:7) Divine and human forgiveness go hand in hand.

We have been forgiven a great debt which is beyond all paying – for the sin of man brought about the death of God’s own son—and if that is so, we must forgive others as God has forgiven us or we can hope to find no mercy.

A sign of hope for the peoples of the world, says Sri Lankan theologian

By Melani Manel Perera

The conclave to elect Benedict XVI's successor begins this afternoon. Catholic theologian Anton Meemama talks about the future pontiff, who is much awaited by Catholics and non-Catholics in the Third World.

Colombo (AsiaNews) - *The future pope must be a "sign of hope" who, "by loving people will be loved by them," said Sri Lankan theologian Anton Meemama, who looked at the traits the new bishop of Rome should have. What follows is the interview Anton Meemama gave to AsiaNews.*

In your view, what is the essence of the papacy?

The papacy cannot be properly understood by using categories from contemporary corporate management theories. An attempt to do so would be to introduce alien categories and concepts.

The essence of the papacy is authority, authority in the service of humanity, authority that to bear witness to Christ. When we look at the pope, we must be able to recognise Christ in and through him. In the daily struggle to bear witness to Christ, he truly

becomes like Christ. Thus, real authority stems from Christ; in and through the papacy, the power of Christ makes itself a true authority. Therefore, the pope is much more than a manager.

The World today is in need of real authorities, real leaders who are servants of the people's God, that is, servants of God's people. The real need today is for leaders who are authoritative, not authoritarian.

Although, authority has become a bad word in the contemporary world, the concept of authority can be redefined positively and constructively.

What most people really criticise is not authority as such but authorities or leaders who have lost their credibility. People are right; such discredited authorities are a disgrace to humanity. The papacy can truly enlighten political leaders.

Does the papacy still have any weight in our highly secularised world?

The world is badly in need of an authoritative, authentic and audacious pope. His personal character, holiness, depth and integrity must sur-

pass the office he holds. The new pope must become the heart of a heartless world, the true oasis of a dehumanised world, the true light of a perplexed world. His conduct needs to be the fruit of holiness. Only a holy pope can make a holy world. He must be holy as his heavenly Father is holy, so that the whole humanity can grow together in holiness.

What do the peoples of the Third World expect from the new pope?

The Third World is the world of Jesus Christ. We must not forget the fact that Jesus was an Asian. The Third World has no future with capitalism, communism, consumerism or relativism. They have all failed and disappointed the peoples of the Third World. They need Jesus, but Jesus properly interpreted and understood.

Jesus is the greatest friend of the Third World because He laid down His life for us. The future of the Catholic Church is in the Third World. Thus, in the ongoing process of re-evangelising Europe, Third World Catholics can play a decisive missionary role.



Is Catholicism becoming more and more a museum piece?

Without Catholicism, humanity has no future. Therefore, there is a need to retrieve the best in Catholicism and reintroduce it to the modern world. However, it should not be done from a defensive attitude or condescending mentality. Its spirit ought to be one of courage, compassion and infinite humility.

Everybody, Catholics as well as non-Catholics will benefit from a rejuvenated, renewed, recharged, revitalised and rekindled Catholicism. Everybody will love Catholicism, if Catholics begin to live like true Catholics.

When people criticise the Catholic Church, they are in reality, exercising the spirit of Catholicism. There is an urgent need to reintroduce the best in Catholicism to a spiritually lost world. It is the only hope for our contemporary world.

What else can we hope from the new pope?

A teaching pope need be a learning pope. Only a learning pope could become an effective and affective teacher. He should promote solidarity, community, communion, cooperation, collegiality, collectivity and connectivity. Hierarchy must be at the service of basic human communities. The new pope must become a sign of hope.

Jerusalem: The City with a turbulent history

By Walter Rupesinghe

During the Season of Lent when we meditate on the passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ and prepare ourselves for the glory of Easter Sunday our thoughts turn to Jerusalem where all the memorable events took place.

It was on Palm Sunday five days before the Crucifixion that Jesus made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem to the shouts of 'Hosanna to the Son of David' from the large crowds that had gathered to greet Him. It was on Maunday Thursday that Jesus celebrated His last Passover meal with His disciples during which He instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. That very night He was arrested like a notorious criminal and taken for mock trials before the Chief Priests, with Herod and the cowardly Roman governor Pontius Pilate who had Him scourged, crowned with thorns and eventually condemned Him to death. It was through the streets of Jerusalem that Jesus had to carry His heavy cross and drag Himself to Calvary's glory hill to face death by crucifixion. It was in Jerusalem that on Easter Sunday evening the Risen Lord first appeared to His disciples to prove that He had risen from the dead.

How did Jerusalem become the venue of the final act in the immortal drama of the Redemption? To answer that question we have to roll back the pages of history for over a thousand years. According to archeologists the old city of Jerusalem had a history of more than 4500 years but it was in 1003 BC when King David shifted his capital

from Hebron to Jerusalem and ruled there for thirty three years that this city became the centre of the national and spiritual life of the Jews. His son the wise King Solomon reigned there for forty years during which time he built a magnificent temple to the Lord. He also transformed the city into the prosperous capital of his empire which stretched from Egypt to the River Euphrates in Persia. The glory of Jerusalem lasted four hundred years and the city was envied by the rulers of the neighbouring states. Then tragedy struck. In 586 BC the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar invaded the city, destroyed the temple and took the people captive. Writing about the Babylonian captivity the psalmist has said: *"By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion On the aspens of that land we hung up our harps Though there, our captors asked for the lyrics of our songs And our despoilers urged us to be joyous: Sing for us the songs of Zion Now could we sing a song of the Lord in a foreign land"* (Psalm 137:1)

Fifty years later Babylon was conquered by the Persians and King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and granted them autonomy. They built a second temple on the site of the first and also rebuilt the city.

Alexander the Great conquered Jerusalem in 332 BC. After his death the city changed hands once again and the Syrians took control. They desecrated the temple and took steps to suppress the Jewish religion.

The Jews could not bear this any longer. In 164 BC led by that warrior Judah Macabee the city was recaptured. Jerusalem flourished once again for nearly a hundred years until the Romans walked in and installed King Herod (37BC to 4 AD) as the ruler.

Jerusalem in the Christian Era

The infant Jesus was presented to the Lord in the temple of Jerusalem. It was there that Simeon, a very devout and holy man told Mother Mary that a sword of sorrow will pierce her immaculate heart.

When the boy Jesus was only twelve-years-old, Joseph and Mary took Him to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. It was there that Jesus sat among the doctors and teachers of the law in a learned discussion. All who heard Him were amazed at His knowledge and understanding.

During His public ministry Jesus expressed great concern about the future of Jerusalem after His death (Luke 13:34 and 23 :27-31) because they failed to accept Him as the Son of God.

When the Jews rebelled against the cruel Roman rule in 70 AD Roman legions under Titus destroyed the city not leaving a stone upon a stone. For nearly a century after that Jerusalem was nothing more than a provincial town until Emperor Constantine transformed it as a Christian centre.



Once again the glory of Jerusalem was restored and lasted until 638 AD.

The Muslim invasion of Jerusalem

Muslim armies invaded Israel in 634 AD and Jerusalem was captured in 638 AD. The Dome of the Rock was built during the time of the Muslim occupation because according to Islam Prophet Mohammed was miraculously transported from Mecca to Jerusalem and it was from here that he ascended into heaven.

The Coming of the Crusaders

Some 450 years later the Crusaders from the west launched a series of Crusades to recover Jerusalem and the holy places. In 1099 AD they captured the city and made Jerusalem the capital of the Crusader Kingdom. Crusader rule lasted only 68 years and in 1187 the Kurds from Turkey took over the city. Thereafter the city was taken over by the Egyptians in 1250.

They were followed by the Ottoman Turks in 1517 who ruled there for four centuries.

(Contd. on Pg. 13)



His Holiness Francis I

His Holiness Francis 1, the 266th Holy Father Elected on March 13, 2013 as leader of the Catholic Church and as the sovereign ruler of the Vatican City State



Rev. Fr. Jorge Mario Bergoglio



Rt. Rev. Dr. Jorge Mario Bergoglio



Jorge Mario Cardinal Bergoglio

Birth name:	Jorge Mario Bergoglio
Born:	December 17, 1936 (age 76) Buenos Aires, Argentina
Nationality:	Argentine
Ordination:	December 13, 1969
Consecration:	June 27, 1992
Created Cardinal:	February 21, 2001
Previous post:	Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires (1992–1997) Titular Bishop of Auca (1992–1997) Archbishop of Buenos Aires (1998–2013) Cardinal-Priest of St. Roberto Bellarmino (2001–2013) Ordinary of the Ordinariate for the Faithful of the Eastern Rites in Argentina (1998–2013)

Jorge Cardinal Mario Bergoglio, was appointed as the Pope of the Catholic Church having been elected on March 13, 2013. In that role, he is both the leader of the Catholic Church and sovereign ruler of the Vatican City State.

A native of Buenos Aires, Bergoglio was ordained as a priest in 1969. From 1998 until 2013, he served as the Archbishop of Buenos Aires and Pope John Paul II made him a cardinal in 2001. Elected as pope in 2013 following his predecessor Pope Benedict XVI's resignation, Bergoglio chose "Francis" as his name. This marked the first time in papal history that this name had been used and was the first time since Pope Lando's brief 913 reign that a serving pope held a name unused by a predecessor. Francis is both the first Jesuit priest and the first native of the Americas to be elected Pope. He is also the first non-European Pope since Syrian-born Pope Gregory III, who died in 741.

Bergoglio was elected Pope on March 13, 2013, the second day of the 2013 papal conclave, taking the papal name Francis. Vatican deputy spokesman Thomas Rosica said the same day that the new pontiff had chosen the name in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, and had done so because the new pontiff was a lover of the poor. Cardinal Dolan, a first-person witness and participant in the proceedings of the Conclave, confirmed that, immediately after the selection was announced, the new Pope said, "I choose the name Francis, in honour of Saint Francis of Assisi." However, those not initially aware of the statement made by the new Pope in the Conclave mistakenly believed that, as a Jesuit, he chose Francis in recognition of Francis Xavier.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, as one of the five children of Italian immigrants Mario José Bergoglio, a railway worker, and his wife, Regina María Sívori, a housewife. As a teenager Bergoglio had a lung removed as a result of an infection. He studied and received a master's degree in chemistry at the University of Buenos Aires before he decided to pursue an ecclesiastical career. According to another reference, he graduated from a technical school as a chemical technician, and at the age of 21 decided to become a priest.

Monsignor Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the 76-year-old Cardinal of the city of Buenos Aires in Argentina, became the first ever Latin American Pope in the history of the Church today. He is also the first Jesuit priest to occupy St. Peter's position in the Vatican, and the first to use the name Francis (Francisco in Spanish,

Francesco in Italian). Clearly, he is a big fan of firsts!

In Argentina, the Monsignor is very well known. He is very outspoken and participated fully in the politics of his country, and he's openly opposed the government of popular Argentinean President Cristina Fernández in the past. He is very conservative when it comes to same-sex marriage, voicing fierce opposition against gay marriage and adoption by gay parents.

To the rest of the world, however, the new Pope Francis is virtually unknown. Here are the top 10 most important facts you need to know about the new Latino Pope:

1. He is a son of immigrants. His parents arrived in Argentina from Italy, the same way many have come to the U.S. from Latin America seeking a better life.
2. He is with one lung. The other organ was removed during his childhood because of a disease.
3. He refused to live in the Cardinal's Palace in Buenos Aires. He preferred to live in a sparse, small room next to his office.
4. He uses public transportation. The new Pope had refused to have a driver and went around Buenos Aires by subway and bus.
5. He cooks his own meals. He never accepted domestic help and cleared his own living quarters.
6. He became a priest at twenty one after graduating as a chemical technician.
7. He is loved in his native country. Argentineans are currently out in the streets celebrating his election as Pope.
8. His entire career has focused greatly on helping the poor. He clashed with politicians and business leaders over conditions and was outspoken.
9. He openly defends single mothers.
10. He is a huge soccer fan. It is no secret that his favourite team is San Lorenzo de Almagro, known in Argentina as "Los Cuervos."



Rev. Fr. Jorge Mario with his family members



compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

Meditating the PASSION OF OUR LORD with stamps

The visuals of this meditation are stamps from four countries



Stamps issued by
The Republic of Burundi
(Eastern Africa) in 1980.



Stamps issued by the
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
(Middle East) in 1966.



Stamps issued by Nicaragua (Central America)
in 1975. The paintings are taken from the
Stations of the Cross at the Leon Cathedral of
the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
which is the largest Cathedral in Central
America.



Stamps issued by the Republic of Croatia (Europe) in 2011. The
booklet containing the stamps was titled "Krizni Put" methe
many death marches at the end of the World War II, where many
Croats died of starvation, disease, mistreatment and massacre.

The Cross, also known as a gibbet, has a history going back to the time of the ancient Persians and Romans who used it as a device on which they inflicted torture on delinquents. In later times, the cross came to be associated with the Christian faith, the reasons being primarily scriptural and partly historical. Jesus who was put to death on the cross rose after three days, fulfilling His own prophecy. His rising was a marvel unknown in earthly life. It gave credibility to the doctrine He taught which emerged as His religion, creating a new community of believers. They proclaimed to the world something that religions could not attain, that is, a knowledge that points to the paradoxical wisdom of God-Love between God and humans. In Apostolic teaching the cross became the exclusive symbol of the Christian Faith.

Some unorthodox believers have accepted the view that the cross has a pagan origin. They claim that the cross greatly antedates the introduction of Christianity in both East and West. It is rather too abstract and hence difficult to believe what these same sources say that pagans in ancient times made the sign of the cross on their foreheads in the celebration of some of their "sacred mysteries." These statements have no force of argument that could, in any way, derelict

The Cross



the use of the cross in the Christian Faith.

In the formative days of Christianity, Apostle Paul said to the Christians of Corinth "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to proclaim His Gospel. And not with beautiful words! That would be like getting rid of the Cross of Christ." (1 Cor 1: 17). Paul intended to tell them that Christian wisdom is contained in the cross which is representative of the Gospel. This means that the cross should be present in the message that is preached and in the way it is preached. Our minds cannot be taken away from the cross as an instrument

of torture on which Jesus suffered and died as a prelude to bestowing on humans the greater spiritual benefit of salvation.

Apostolic preaching after the Resurrection of Jesus were focussed on the cross as the genuine symbol of the Gospel of Jesus. Continuing his preaching to the people of Corinth, Paul said, "I was determined not to know anything among you but Jesus, the Messiah, and a crucified Messiah. I myself came weak, fearful and trembling; my words and preachings were not brilliant or clever to win listeners. It was, rather a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your

faith might be a matter, not of human wisdom, but of God's power." (1 Cor 2: 2-5). Here Paul invites the people to accept the mystery of the cross and to find there the strength of the Spirit.

The words "a demonstration of spirit and power" purported to mean the power of the spirit, the power of prayer and the power of suffering. The Spirit poured out after Jesus had suffered and died. In Jesus we can expect everything. Healings and miracles are worthless, unless they affirm faith in the crucified Jesus. The cross has therefore become the centre of theology dealing with the truths of the Gospel of Jesus.

In some scriptural texts that refer to Jesus' death, the cross is referred to either as "tree" or "stake." Acts 5:30 reads: "The God of our ancestors raised Jesus who you killed by hanging Him on a wooden post." Acts 10 39 reads: "They put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree." In all texts that refer to Jesus' death, the word "tree" or "stake" that is used cannot be confused in its literal sense with the word "cross." In the precise spiritual context, both words refer to a cross which is the word used in the Gospel.

E.M. Aldons

CLOSER TO JESUS



'Choro Calibre'

Musical Singing is Twice Praying

A Spiritual Journey of prayer, reflection and hymns in the Lenten Spirit organised by the 'Choro Calibre' Youth Choir, together with the Parish Community of All Saints' Church, Borella will be held at the Parish on March 24 (Sunday), following the 6.15 p.m. Holy Mass.

This makes the second year in succession that 'Choro Calibre', the voices that make a difference, intend to take a break from today's busy life's schedules and motion a step closer to Jesus by reuniting the lost sheep, even one at a time, of what once was the Catholic flock.

The initial programme held at Fatima Church, Maradana last year, was a moving experience of huge success resulting in tremendous feedback on the angelic voices and inspirational singing presented in the prayer and worship conducted exceptionally by the youthful OMI priest, Rev. Fr. Randil Fernando.

A special feature this year will be guest performances by veteran Choral Director, Francis D' Almeida, and vocalists Mariezelle Gunatillake and Rukshan Perera.

All are welcome!

Death Acknowledgement

Mrs. Pricilla Rajapakse

Rajapakse - Mary Priscila - born to an eternal life on February 12, 2013. We the husband Ranil Rajapakse sons Sanjaya, Manju and Anju, daughter in law Shivanthi and Rev.Sr Euchrista wish to express our sincere gratitude to Archbishop of Colombo His Eminences Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Rt.Rev.Dr.Emeritus Bishop Oswald Gomis, Rev.Fathers, Rev.Sisters, Rev. Brothers, Rosarian Sisters, Carmelite Sisters, Parish Priest of St John's Church Modara, Rev. Fr Heshan Fernando" Past Parish Councilors and Parishioners, Parishioners of St.Mary's Church, Members of Parliament, Managing Director CEO and the entire staff of Sri Lanka Insurance, Staff, Students and Old Boys Union of De La Salle College Mutwal' Old Boys' Union of St Peter's College Colombo and UK Branch, Directress Mrs.Kumari Hapugala Perera and Staff of Alethea International School,Devon Cricket Club Members (U.K.) Doctors, Nurses and Staff of Cancer Hospital of Maharagama, Newspapers, President of Sri Lanka Newspaper Agents Association Mr. C.H Sirimal Peris. Western Province School Owners Association, all relatives and friends who attended the funeral sent floral tributes, offered prayers, sent message and condolences and assisted us in numerous ways during our bereavement. We regret very much our inability to thank each and everyone personally.

Ranil, Rev. Sr. Euchrista, Sanjaya, Shivanthi, Manju and Anju

"Fathima"
No. 790 Aluthmawatha Road,
Colombo 15.

Twenty five Golden Years of Music

Maureen Seimon was educated at the Convent of Our Lady of Victories, Moratuwa and then started her career as a Western Music Teacher of the School. She has been teaching music to students from Grades 6 to the Ordinary Level, training the school choir and the Western band. Ms. Maureen is a very capable and efficient teacher who involved herself in all the school activities. The primary, junior and senior choirs trained by her, have won many awards at zonal, provincial and national level.

The Western band trained by Ms. Maureen, always secured a place at every competition they participated. She is a dedicated teacher and is ever ready to help anyone. Whenever there is a school function she takes great pains in training the girls and making them perform perfectly. She specially loves the primary section as she says they are very



Maureen Seimon

lovable. She enjoys listening to their stories, and talking to them.

We are sad to say goodbye to you Teacher as you take your leave from us. We know you will be always there when we need you.

I am sure we will be calling you and visiting you often to get advice and to ask you things we do not know. You will always remain in our hearts. We pray that God will bless your son and your family members. We wish you good health and God's choicest blessings upon you.

Anukshi Dissanayake

Jerusalem: The City.....

Contd. from Pg. 8

The Advent of the British

A British army led by General Allenby conquered Jerusalem in 1917 and the British were mandated to administer the city by the League of Nations. This mandate was terminated in 1948 and in accordance with a United Nations Resolution of November 1947 Israel proclaimed its independence with Jerusalem as the capital. The Arab countries who were bitterly opposed to the declaration of independence launched an all out war in 1948/49. At the armistice that followed the city was divided into two with Jordan occupying the old city and areas to the North and Israel keeping the west and southern parts of the city. Jordanian attempts to occupy the western section of the city in 1967 ended in bitter defeat and Jerusalem was one again united.

Jerusalem Today

No other city in the world has had a tumultuous and turbulent history like Jerusalem the city of God. Today it is a bustling and prosperous city visited by millions of pilgrims and tourists. A law passed by the Israeli Parliament in 1980 affirmed that the holy places of all religions be protected from desecration and access to them is guaranteed.

Writing about Jerusalem the prophet Isaiah stated -
"Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad with her all ye that love her
Rejoice for joy with her all that mourn for her
For thus says the Lord
Behold I will extend peace to her like a river
And the glory of the nations like a flowing stream.
(Isaiah 66 :10 - 12)

Walter Rupesinghe

The news that surprised the Church and shocked the world

It was on Monday, February 11, 2013, the 155th anniversary of the apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes, that Pope Benedict XVI held the Consistory at which he made a declaration which not only surprised many in the Church but shocked the world. The news was absolutely unexpected but complies with the Code of Canon Law (can. 332§ 2).

It must also have lain dormant in the Pope's mind in these years of his Pontificate, as he expressed clearly in the book-interview with Peter Seewald, *The Light if the World*. Here we can easily read the Pope's mind. He was waiting for the right moment. It had to be the result of consultation with God, the result of prayer. He needed the moral certainty that this was God's will. Such serious decisions which may have far-reaching historical and moral consequences require time and patience, but above all prayer and discernment.

Consequently resignations by popes have been few and far between. We might say that our present Pope is making history. Apart from the confusion at the time of the Great Western Schism, no Pope has resigned since 13 December 1294, when Pope Celestine V renounced his office after just five months" (The Canon Law: Letter and Spirit).

When this news broke I was in New Delhi area, India. About half an hour later the telephone started ringing; enquiries were being made not only by Catholics but also by various non-Christians. They all wanted to know why Pope Benedict XVI had renounced his papal ministry. We then followed the press

conference given by Fr Federico Lombardi, SJ; Director of the Holy See' Press Office.

I was due to leave India the following morning for Rome. Needless to say practically everyone I met on the flight had a comment or some question to ask about the event. On the long flight I went through some of the newspapers, all of which gave a lot of coverage to the subject. Some people on the flight asked me to pray very specially for the Church in a possible time of crisis.

The barque of St Peter has withstood various storms but has not sunk; and we may be sure that Jesus - although sometimes seemingly asleep in the boat - will not let his Church perish in the tumults of the world. The one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church has suffered down the ages from divisions. She will continue to face difficulties and to be put to the test, but the Church Christ, built on the rock of St Peter, will stand firm, for the Church is not merely human; she is essentially human and divine, visible and invisible (cf. *Sacro Sanctum Concilium*, n. 2).

From the prayer of our Church come acts of love and charity. The powers of earth



Mother Teresa and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger at Mass during the 85th German "Katholikentag" in Friburg, southern Germany, September 1978 (AP photo / KNA)

or hell will not prevail over the Church because she is the visible sacrament of Christ. Through her members the Church gives visibility to Christ (cf. Mt 25: 31-46)

Let us return to our question, since so many people are asking it: why did the Pope decide to nounce his office? The reasons I give here are subjective. You may well see it differently!

Firstly, canon law per-

mits the resignation of a Pope (cf. 332 § 2). So Pope Benedict XVI is abiding by the Church's Law.

Secondly, I believe the Holy Father loves the Church more than himself. If he did not really love the Church he would not have thought of resigning. He feels that the Church is too important and that the problems of the Pope's sickness or old age must not weaken the Church in any way.

Thirdly, the Church is a very large institution with insurmountable challenges, responsibilities and problems. A Pope must be fit in body and mind to face whatever confronts him. Pope Benedict XVI feels he can no longer do justice to his mission.

Fourthly, because the Pope is the Supreme Head of the Magisterium of the Church, he needs to be strong and healthy in body and mind in order to make decisions. Benedict XVI does not want to delegate to others his personal responsibility for the Church of Christ and must fulfil his obligations as Pope; he thinks in conscience he is no longer capable of doing so.

Fifthly, Pope Benedict XVI does not cling to his position as head of the Church but humbly acknowledges he is no

longer fit for it. I think he is an incredible model of humility and detachment. With this act he proves that he really is a "good shepherd", after the example of the Master who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped... This is the Christological dimension of his resignation, a real "kenosis", a self-emptying like that of Jesus (cf. Phil 2: 6-11).

There is still more to his resignation: namely the pope is only leaving his position as Pope in good faith. He is not leaving the Church. Indeed, he will retire to a monastery, to spend his life in prayer, as he said in his *Dectaratio* (February 10, 2013). He will pray for the new Pope, for Pope Benedict XVI knows the problems and challenges which the Pope must face daily. Another reason for the Pope's renunciation might be, that he would like to continue 'to write, and perhaps to complete his autobiography, which could be a real asset for the Church.

In conclusion, I would say that before God, Pope Benedict XVI must have felt that the need to resign from his office as Pope, was God's will. There is no greater way of pleasing God than fulfilling his most holy will.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Holy Father and thank God for him also in the name of the Missionaries of Charity of Bl. Teresa of Kolkata and in the name of the poorest of the poor we serve in Rome and throughout the world.

L'Osservatore Romano

Lent: A Joyful Season

Each year, the season of Lent is offered to us as a time of spiritual renewal and an inner conversion during which we prepare ourselves for two things; our special Easter Confession and communion and our renewal of baptismal promises at the Easter vigil service. Hence, this same idea is reflected in the Vatican Council II documents which say; the Lenten season has a twofold character; 1) it recalls the baptism or prepares for a renewal of it; 2) it stresses a penitential spirit. It is by means of these two characteristics of Lent that the Holy Mother the Church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter (cf SC 109).

Originally Lent was a period during which the catechumens prepared for baptism. Now it is the period when we prepare to renew our baptismal promises as we rejoice with Christ at Easter time. After a time Lent became a period of penance during which the public penitents prepared for absolution and Holy Communion on Holy Thursday. Today we all do penance as a means of purifying ourselves in preparation for our special Easter confession and communion.

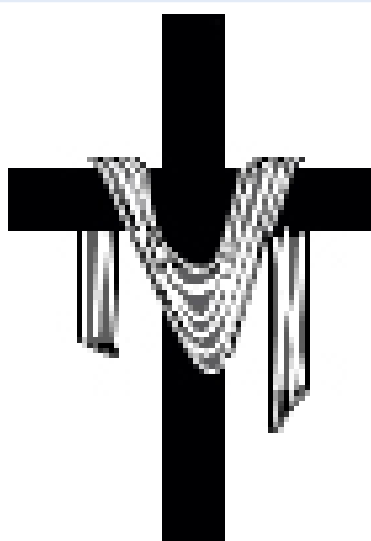
Usually we take up this Lenten journey as the gift of a spiritual renewal in terms of our relationship with the Lord and with others. Thus, by giving, an emphasis on the penitential theme this graceful season begins with the reception of the ashes on Ash Wednesday and it is extended to the forty days. But in the earliest centuries the duration of Lent varied from time to time and place to place. It was not until the end of the fourth century that duration of forty days became universal. This fixing of the number forty has plenty of biblical references and further it is a number, which signifies the

totality and fullness.

For example, Moses was on the mountain for forty days (Ex 34:28), Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Elijah walked for forty days to come to Horeb, the mountain of God (Lings 19:8). Even in the New Testament we read of Jesus' fasting in the wilderness for forty days and the days between ascension and the day of Pentecost are numbered to be forty.

However here what is significant and important is not the duration of time but what followed thereafter. After forty days, Moses was given the Ten Commandments; on arrival at Horeb, Elijah had a deep personal experience of God; after forty days of prayer and fasting Jesus could defeat Satan and after forty days, the infant church was anointed with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, these day or years were simply necessary preliminaries or periods of preparation for some climactic event.

This background is very much important to understand the true meaning and the nature of Lent. Just as the above mentioned periods of time were not an end in itself, the observance of Lent is also not an end in it-



self. Lent is a means, a mode of medium, a preparatory time above all it is a grace filled season through which we are led towards its climax, Easter experience. Lent is truly a journey from death to life, wilderness to the Promised Land, slavery to freedom, sinfulness to sinlessness and the ashes to the paschal fire.

Therefore Lent is not an end in itself but a time of inner preparation of oneself to enter into the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For this reason, this special period also referred to us as joyful season. During Lent we anticipate and foretaste the joy and hope of the paschal mystery which is to come at Easter.

In order to achieve this Lenten joy the Liturgy of Lent constantly focuses our attention on the important and the necessity of a change of heart. of prayer, fasting, and alms giving. The Church gives us these 40 days and urges us to engage in spiritual activities for genuine conversion of heart. We should never regard Lent as a gloomy period, but we should see Lent as a positive time, a time of opportunity and as a period of spiritual renewal. It will be easier for us to experience the joy of Lent if we keep in mind the goals towards which we are striving during Lent. The better we prepare ourselves during Lent the better we realise and experience the paschal, mystery of Jesus Christ at Easter.

Bro. Shameera Rodrigo
4th Year Theology
National Seminary - Ampitiya

What it says in the Readings

I call you friends, says the Lord, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt for my Father. (Mt. 15:18)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR C March 17 - 24th March 2013

Sun: Fifth Sunday of Lent

Is. 43:16-21; Phil. 3:8-14; Jn. 8:1-11

Mon: Dan. 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; Jn. 8: 12-20

Tue: Feast of St. Joseph

2 Sam 7:4-5, 12-14,16;

Rom. 4:13, 16-18,22;

Mt. 1:16,18-21,24 or Lk. 2: 41-51

Wed: Dan.3:14-20,91,92,95; Jn.8:31-42

Thu: Gen. 17:3-9; Jn. 8:51-59

Fri: Jer. 20:10-13, Jn. 10:31-42

Sat: Ez. 37:21-28; Jn. 11: 45-56

Sun: Palm Sunday

Is. 50:4-7, Phil 2:6-11;

Lk. 22:14-23,56 (or 23:1-49)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

That all who follow Christ may refrain from passing judgement on other people. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For all judges and lawyers, that in the exercise of their professions they may work to ensure that in all cases the truth is heard and justice done. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For all those who have been victims of unjust judgement and oppression. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For all those who are engaged in the sacrifices of Lent, that they may persevere in their efforts to reform their lives. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

First Reading: Isaiah. 43: 16-21

God who had brought the Israelites out of Egypt, now promises through prophet Isaiah to bring them out of Babylon too. His promise is to do what is impossible. He requests them to continue in announcing His praise.

Second Reading: Phil. 3: 8-14.

St. Paul expresses his total surrender to the Lord who rose from the dead. Jesus' Resurrection saved all mankind from death, darkness and sin. By his total surrender St. Paul expects to share in the Lord's Resurrection.

Gospel: Jn. 8: 1-11

The story is about the woman caught in adultery. The law is that such persons should be stoned to death. The aim of the Pharisees and Scribes is to trap Jesus. Jesus wants only those who are sinless to stone her but there are none. Jesus is very clear when He says to the woman. "Go, and sin no more."

Reflection.

Today is the last Sunday of Lent. The readings of the earlier Sundays invited us to repent and turn away from sin. They spoke of God's grace which would bring about the conversion.

They spoke of the merciful love of God that would forgive us and make us holy. This sort of

thing happened to the Israelites too very often. But we see them going back to their sinful way of life. Therefore there has to be continuity in the holiness that we attain during this Season of Lent. For this reason today's readings speak to us of gratitude. But gratitude is not like a bribe one normally pays for what one gets. It is a way of expressing our love and faithfulness to the God who brings us out of darkness into the dawn of new light. For, He saves us from sin. Therefore it is expected of us that we continue in the holiness that we have newly gained. It is very clear that God Expects this from us. He wants us to remain faithful to Him. It is for this that He brings us out of our selfishness. Once He brings us out of our sinfulness He wants us to be faithful to Him and continue to be so. This is quite evident in the Readings.

In the First Reading speaking through His prophet Isaiah, God promises to bring the Israelites out of Babylon. He promises to do that which is impossible. He promises to make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. He tells them how the beast will honour Him. He does all these to receive honour, glory and praise, from the people. In other words He wants them to be faithful to Him. Rendering honour, glory and praise are signs of faithfulness.

In the Second Reading we come across St. Paul who out of gratitude and love surrenders and dedicates his life for the Lord. By His Resurrection the Lord saved all mankind from death, darkness and sin. Therefore St. Paul leaves aside all things and totally dedicates his life to the Lord in order to gain everything from the Lord. He labours to make Christ his own, because Christ Jesus has made him His. Therefore St. Paul's gratitude is shown by a total surrender and dedication is also a sign and expression of faithfulness.

In the Gospel the woman caught in adultery is brought before the Lord. The punishment according to the law is that she should be stoned to death. But the Lord saves her. The only way she could do it is to stay away from sin. Staying away from sin is the only way of showing her faithfulness to the Lord. And that is what the Lord expects of us.

During the Season of Lent as we come to the last Sunday. Sunday prior to Passion Sunday the question that we face is; how are we going to show our gratitude to what the Lord has been to us during the season. The only way to show our gratitude is to retain the holiness that we gained this season and to remain faithful to the Lord.

Aid Story. 1.

Some years ago

a vessel was wretched off the cost of Marines. The stormy sea made it impossible for the coast guards to reach the drowning passengers and sailors. One of the passengers started to drift towards the shore. At once a group of men formed a line, hand to hand stretched out to reach the incoming swimmer. Nearer and nearer he came until the lifesaver at the end of the line could reach his hand and help him to safety.

Meanwhile, that very life saver let his hand slip from the next in line. He was dragged under and swept out to the sea before they could seize him. The rescued man finally recovered. He never after engaged in any kind of conversation, no matter what the subject, no matter who was present, without declaring at some time during his talk; "A man died for me once! A man died for me once! Such was his gratitude. Would that all Christians, for whom Christ died might always be as grateful?

Aid Story 2.

A Priest in Florida complained that it was very difficult to get the Christian message across to his parish. "It's so beautiful here in winter," he said, "that heaven doesn't interest them. And it's so hot here in the summer, that hell doesn't scare them."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos.

What vestments does the priest use in the celebration of Holy Mass?

The Priest uses the **Amice, Alb, Cincture (Girdle), Maniple, Stole and Chasuble.**

When the priest appears before God at the Altar he is clad in suitable vestments. God Himself gave directions about the vestments of the Priests in the Old Testament. (Exod. 28: 4). The chief vestments worn by Catholics Priests have come down to us from the time of the Apostles.

1. The **Amice** is a white linen cloth the covers the Priest's shoulders. It reminds the priest to observe custody of his eyes. It represents the cloth with which the soldiers blindfolded Our Lord before they struck Him. (Former times the Amice was placed over the head like a hood to keep the priest from distractions during Holy Mass).
2. The **Alb** is a white linen tunic which envelops the Priests whole body. It betokens purity of heart. It represents the white robe with which Herod clothed our Blessed Lord in mockery. (It was customary in the East to wear a white garment on

3.

festive occasions, as weddings,...etc.)

The **Cincture** or **Girdle** is the cord which fastens the Alb at the waist. It betokens purity and self-control. It represents the cord that bound Our Lord. (The girdle serves the practical purpose of keeping the Alb fastened so as not to inconvenience the Priest in his movements.)

4.

The **Maniple** is a short narrow strip of cloth which hangs from the left arm. It represents Veronica's veil which was used to wipe the face of Our Lord.

5.

The **Stole** is the long silk band that fits around the neck and is crossed on the breast. It signifies the dignity of the Priest. It represents the rope laid around Our Lord's neck after His sentence to death.

6.

The **Chasuble**. (Vestment) is the outer garment that rests on the shoulders and drops down in front and behind, almost to the knees. (It can be the representation of the

7.

fine robe by Herod or the purple robe by Pilate.) At the back is a cross signifying the Cross born by Our Lord. The Chasuble signifies the heavy responsibilities that rest upon the Priest. (In former times the Chasuble was in the form of a mantle, with only one opening, for the head.) (The Chasuble, Stole, Maniple and veil for the Chalice are made as a set, of the same colour, material and design.)

The **Birreta** was a three-ridged square cap worn by the priest in the olden days when he entered the sanctuary. The Cassock or Soutain is the principle vestment used by Ecclesiastics. It is a robe reaching down to the feet, and buttoned in front. For priests it is Black, For Bishops it is Violet, For Cardinals it is Red and for Pope it is White.

*Courtesy My Catholic Faith.(1936)
Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos*

Sunday Rhythm Fifth Sunday of Lent

Jesus: "If there is one of you who have not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.

Jesus: "Woman, where are they..? Has no one condemned you?"

Woman: "No one, Sir."

Jesus: "Neither do I condemn you.., go away and don't sin anymore."

Richest Blessing:

Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with His finger....

Richest Result: They went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman...

TO THINK: Jesus did not answer them, but He was bold enough to challenge them while saving the woman. Am I challenging others while saving the rejected and accepting myself freely?

TO PRAY: Dear Lord of Justice, help me to accept others as You are accepting me and guide me to act justly when others are wrongly judged. AMEN.

TO ACT: Let us not condemn others yet let us be companions who welcome everybody to erase their sins.

Rev. Fr. S. Randil Fernando OMI



YOUTH GROUP

'Culture of Life' from a Sri Lankan Perspective

The phrase "culture of life" is a term used in moral theology. It is shorthand for a concept that human life, at all stages from conception through to natural death, is sacred. As such, a "culture of life" is opposed to practices seen by its proponents as destructive of human life, such as embryonic stem cell research, abortion, euthanasia, contraception, capital punishment, greed, degradation, sadistic humiliation, narcissism, selfishness, poverty and war. The culture of life has often been contrasted with a "culture of death". The expression owes its origins to Pope John Paul II, who first used it in a tour of the United States in 1993. Speaking to journalists at Stapleton International Airport near Denver, Colorado, the Pope returned to the theme in April 1995 through the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (Gospel of Life). (EV)

This article briefly captures: (i) the description of the terms-culture of life as opposed to death; and (ii) their relevance to Sri Lankan situation.

CULTURE OF LIFE & DEATH

The Holy Father first discussed the characteristics of the rampant death culture to be contrasted with the culture of life. The culture of death is a product of the perverse idea of freedom which is disconnected from any reference to truth and objective good asserting itself in an individualistic way without the constitutive link of relationships with others [EV, para 21 (note 2)]. Based on this attitude, man is driven to seek personal pleasure in utter contempt of the needy and the weak. This hedonistic rule permits no worth to human suffering. Seeped in the search for productivity and maximizing pleasure, self-sacrifice is anathema. How can a loving and a powerful God enter into the vision of such a hedonist heart. Thus the Holy Father says: "When the sense of God is lost, there is also a tendency to loose the sense of man".

In stark contrast stands the culture of life. The weakest member has the same right as the strongest. Culture of life presupposes 'ethics of life'. A consistent ethic of life includes all life issues from the very beginning of its life to its end. It is not sufficient to be pro-life in some issues. We must be pro-life in all issues- no matter what our political party, business, union may say. When the powerful raise pro-death voices, then our faith ought to be the deepest source of our values. The pro-

life voices envisage: primacy of BEING over HAVING and of the PERSON over THINGS. The renewed style of the culture of life involves passing from indifference to the concern of others, from rejection to acceptance of one's neighbour [EV, para. 98].

The culture of life derives from 'a love whose actions are grounded in the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ'. This culture values human beings not because man is useful and/or productive but because he is loved by the Creator and thus has inherent worth. Culture of life obviates the suspicion associated with the culture of death, because Jesus Christ himself has assured us: "Love one another, because I have loved you". The culture of suspicion is subsumed in the culture of trust and thereby persons embrace responsibility for every human being, respecting the freedom and dignity of each individual in an authentic culture of life. Culture of life is connected with building a civilization of love where persons are willing to see Christ in the suffering of all human beings. Sharing people's suffering is a responsibility of love.

In building a culture of life that flourishes within a civilization of love, marriage and family serve as true 'living stones'. Thus any attempt to attack the humanity of the unborn, the non-rehabilitable sick or other vulnerable persons must be rebuffed even at the risk of that life defender's personal reputation or welfare.

A culture of life ultimately may thrive when citizens of this world honour Christ as: Above culture, in the sense as one Who is always present to transform culture; a person Who changes one's heart at a time in His love; building a true civilization of love through each one of us; one who calls every human being to "fraternal charity with a pure love." To build a culture of life based on love, one needs to go beyond mere tolerance. We are challenged to build a society that is based on mutual love. This demands committed and concrete love of oneself and of others.

A NEED FOR A CULTURE OF LIFE IN SRI LANKA

Promotion of a culture of life operates via two avenues:

(i) religious environment fertilized by values; and (ii) good governance.

Religious environment fertilized by values

The requisite religious environment that promotes a culture of life is not confined to cultic and ritual performances. One observes that there are manifestations of religiosity in these two spheres abundantly in our country. Way side religious shrines; loud chanting of religious songs and preaching; frequent religious functions; politicians who invoke blessings from religious dignitaries and so on. The question is whether both the leaders and

Today under the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka, unbridled executive power has given way to political interference right from the upper echelons of society to the lowest. Large scale nepotism, bribery, impunity for crime by those having political connections and other abuses go unchecked. One of the urgent needs to move towards a culture of life in Sri Lanka is to reintroduce the features of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution which was repealed by the 18th Amendment. Under the 17th Amendment, the Constitutional Council (a multi-party body) acting as a fetter against absolute executive power, guaranteed the independence of the judiciary and protection to public officials from political interference.

the people live by the tenets of the founders of the four major religions. Any reasonable person would concede that there is large scale break down of integrity and values in our country. Hence, the religious institutions as well as the followers of these religions have a duty to adopt life styles in keeping with the core values of their religions.

To achieve a culture of life in today's context, the

Church in Sri Lanka must deal with the following challenges

(i) North-South dialogue to promote re-integration of the two communities (Tamils and Sinhalese). The thirty years of civil war has devastated both communities. Apart from the colossal loss of valuable human lives, the very life-blood of the Sri Lanka polity, trust between the two Tamils and Sinhalese has been ruptured. No meaningful restoration is possible without building up trust between them. His Eminence Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith drew attention of the priests and members of Peace and Justice Commission of the Archdiocese of Colombo and the Council of Priest (Senate) to work towards trust building. Some possible courses of action are- twining of parishes and schools from the two zones- joint liturgical celebrations- sponsorship of the needy and the like.

(ii) Intimate links between the pastors and the flock. It appears that there is a tendency on the part of the clergy to engage in physical construction of church buildings and shrines which are superfluous. Modern society is plagued by a 'project mentality'. Large scale funds are solicited from the NGOs locally and internationally. Preoccupation with projects leaves the flock untended. It appears that there is a serious shortcoming in the pastor-flock relationships. The availability of the pastors to cater to the spiritual, emotional and pastoral needs of parishioners is woefully inadequate. We often complain that we loose out Catholics for the fundamentalists. One prime reason is that the pastors do not take adequate care of their flock

(III) Solid family ties. The society today is getting more and more individualized. The media (the abuse of TV and computer) has accelerated break down of family ties. The Church must engage in a more aggressive family apostolate. Right from the childhood to the vintage period (children, youth, spouses, widowed, aged), the Family apostolate ought to be strengthened.

(iv) Biblical apostolate. Last year was the "Year of the Word of God" and the present is the "Year of Faith". It is commendable the Chief Pastor has moved in this matter. One of the foremost weapons to kill the culture of death is to arouse the power of God's Word in Faith. This policy decision must reach the grass-roots.

Substantial participation of the clergy and the laity would be a great help towards achieving a culture of life in Sri Lanka.

Good governance in Sri Lanka

While religious attitudes give the spirit to a culture of life, they get transformed to day to day lives by social order. The legal order, on the one hand should reward their citizens for doing good, and on the other provide sanctions to those who do evil. In the aftermath of the political independence from British rule, the bureaucracy remained a fetter to political interference. Starting from the late 1950s, bureaucratic control was weakened due to political patronage. Today under the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka, unbridled executive power has given way to political interference right from the upper echelons of society to the lowest. Large scale nepotism, bribery, impunity for crime by those having political connections and other abuses go unchecked. One of the urgent needs to move towards a culture of life in Sri Lanka is to reintroduce the features of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution which was repealed by the 18th Amendment. Under the 17th Amendment, the Constitutional Council (a multi-party body) acting as a fetter against absolute executive power, guaranteed the independence of the judiciary and protection to public officials from political interference.

In the light of what is stated, there is a need for partnership of the rulers and the ruled. Some possible courses of action are: (i) To give priority to developing existing rights by identifying and securing component rights needed. For example right to life would include rights to secure the right to food, healthy environment, right to livelihood etc. of specific victim groups who bear the brunt of existing human rights violations; (ii) To avoid the distinction between civil and political rights versus economic, social and cultural rights; (iii) Cases that come before courts for redress must be classified not so much in juridical terms but as types of social conflicts that give rise to the violation of a number of human rights of victimized group; (iv) Accordingly a multi-faceted redress scheme should be evolved. Sanctions for violation of human rights must not only be legal in the sense where the perpetrator of crime is punished. Sanctions ought to be participatory involving victim groups, the courts, law enforcement agencies and the general public.

Rev. Dr. Noel Dias



Minu - Katana - Andimula Primary Sports Meet



The annual Inter House Sports Meet held at the Katana Pradeshiya Saba ground recently, had as Chief Guest Rev. Fr. Bernard Neville, Principal of the Minu - Katana - Halpe, St. Paul Vith Maha Vidyalaya.

The rankings of the Under 11 Long Jump was 1st place: Shavin Hasagana (Gamunu House), 2nd place Kaveesha Prabasvara (Gamunu House) and in 3rd place Geethanjana Nirmal (Parakume House)

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Bernard Neville garland the winner while Mrs. Pemreeta Rajapaksa, Principal of the school looks on.

Cecil Danicius

God is my Lord

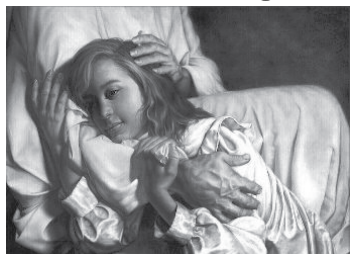
My God,
the greatest Creator of all
Show me the path
to the light of intelligence

My God,
relief of all
lead myself
to pass the mountain
of troubles and sorrow.

Praise my Lord,
For giving Your Precious Love
as a creation of Your mighty hands
I'll keep my faith in my God
Until the end of my life.

Sanduni Maria

"The Everlasting Arms"



I am cradled in His arms of love
Trusting His presence in my life
As I face the unknown
Entrusting myself to His loving care.

As time passes, I find myself to recapture
I am comforted in the knowledge
That 'His Everlasting Arms' are still there
Even when I can not feel them.

All of a sudden I feel His touch
Around my neck and beneath my feet
I feel completely embraced,
Seeming to be held up by something soft and warm.

The touch brings me a new way of life
Knowing my earnest desire to fulfil.
I have experienced counting on His promise
Entrusting 'His Everlasting Arms' to surround me.
Sr. A. Christina Lourdes (H.F.)

Nature is the sap of life

'Nature is the sap of life' was the theme of the English Day Programme of St. Mary's College, Ja-ela conducted recently.

The beauty of the programme was that this was a programme full of nature, right from the beginning. From the entrance where the distinguished guests were led to the hall was nature all around. Entering the hall it was decorated with leaves, fruits and fresh flowers. Even the traditional oil lamp for lighting was a live tree adorned with safety candles. It was beautiful to see nature all around. There were no artificial decorations. "It was nature, nature, and nature all round" said Madam Emilda Douglas. Even the food served to the guests were plates of delicious fruit; apples, oranges, pineapples, sweet-melon, banana etc., all cut and ready to consume with little ekle forks. And what do you think the drink was? Well! It was king coconut. Everybody enjoyed it as a welcome in the great heat of the day.

The programme with reli-



gious observances was led by Rev. Fr. Thusitha Solangaarachchi, the assistant priest at the Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Jaela, after which the distinguished guests Madam Emilda Douglas, Mrs. Jeewanthi Silva, ISA Ja-ela division, and Mrs. Ramani Fernando the principal of Kalaeliya K.V. were cordially invited to light the lamps which were like little bulbs on a live tree.

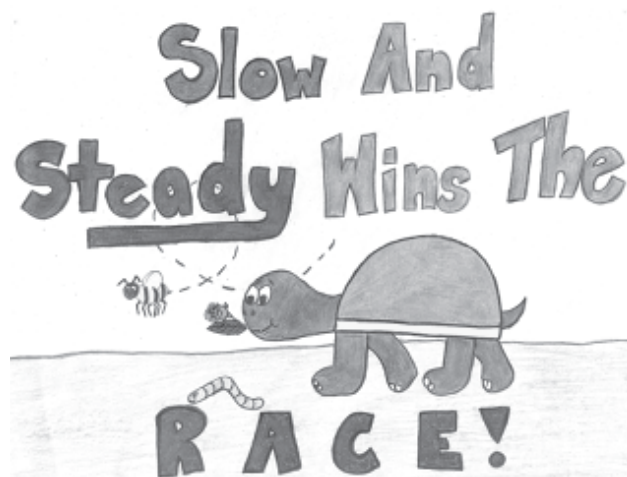
After the welcome song and speech, a student of Grade 11, Aparana gave a wonderful speech

on nature. Many of the themes of the songs were on nature. "Oh, give me a home," "I love to go a wondering along the mountain track" and "If I were a fish". Even the drama "SnowWhite and the Seven Dwarfs" depicted abundant forest scenes.

We congratulate the Principal, Mr. Nihal Gunasekera the English teachers and the entire staff whose support contributed towards making this eco-friendly programme a huge success.

Kumudini Fernando

Slow and Steady Wins the Race



It is not necessary to be very clever to become a successful man. Because success comes to those who are slow but steady in their work. Even clever people may fail if they work in fits and starts. For example, a clever boy or girl who is lazy in his or her day to day work might fail an exam due to the fact that he or she did not work slowly and steadily.

We can see the reality of the proverb illustrated by the story of the hare and the tortoise. The hare agreed with the tortoise to a race. He was sure he would win the race because he could run much faster. He ran fast and the tortoise was left far behind. So he decided to rest and have nap. The tortoise approached the destination slowly and steadily. After a while the hare woke up and found that the tortoise was almost at the goal. Although he leapt forward it was useless. The tortoise had won the race because he had moved slowly and steadily. Nothing is gained by being quick and careless. It is better to be slow and careful in one's work. Those who do things quickly, sometimes make many mistakes. Much time is then wasted to do the work again. It is better to be slow and steady. To conclude we might say that what one needs to succeed is the ability to work hard and to do one's work with patience and perseverance.

Kandambi

On Golgotha



The long, hard journey ended
The long day's task was done
Shamefully on a cross
'Twixt thieves he hung.
His sagging form suspended
From two nails that pierced the palms
The one on his right repentant
The other had no qualms.
"If you are a God then save us
And save Your own self too"
Thus spoke the tone of taunt and jeer
A materialistic attitude.
The other full of pity
Welled in his own dark pain
"Lord in your Kingdom remember me"
He did not plead in vain.
For he plucked from the cross that promise
For a sinner's shame.
A lesson taught.
'tis not despair nor defiance that pays
But the sharing of a common pain
And repentant ways.

Jeannette Cabraal



THE WAY OF THE CROSS



01

Jesus is condemned to death

V. We adore you Lord and praise you
R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

Pilate asked 'What charge do you bring against this man? They replied, 'If He were not a criminal, we would not be handing Him over to you.' ... Pilate brought Jesus out, and seated himself on the chair of judgement about the sixth hour. 'Here is your king,' he said. The chief priests answered, 'We have no king except Caesar.' Pilate ordered Him to be scourged, and then handed Him over to them to be crucified (Mt 26:3-4; Jn 19:12-16).

Prayer

Lord, those sins of mine were the voices that cried out, 'Let Him be crucified.' The willingness with which I committed them was the consent Pilate gave to the multitude, and my hardness of heart and love of sin were the blows and blasphemies rained on You by the soldiers and the people carrying out the sentence Pilate pronounced. (John Henry Newman)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

V. Have mercy on us a Lord. R. Have mercy on us
May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



02

Jesus takes up His Cross

V. We adore you Lord and praise you
R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

The soldiers led Jesus away to the Praetorium ... They dressed Him in purple, twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on Him. They saluted Him, 'Hail king of the Jews', struck His head with a reed, spat on Him, and went down on their knees to do Him Homage. When they had finished, they took off the purple, and dressed Him in His own dothes. The soldiers led Him out to crucify Him. Carrying His own cross, He went out of the city to the place of the skull called Golgotha. (Mk 15:16-20; Jn 19:1-3; Jn 19:17)

Prayer

Lord, you willingly subjected yourself to mockery and scorn. Help us so that we never ally ourselves with those who look down on the weak and suffering. Help us to see your face in the lowly and the outcast... Help us to take up the Cross and not to shun it, and may we never complain or become discouraged by life's trials. (Benedict XVI)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.



03

Jesus falls the first time

V. We adore you Lord and praise you
R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard. I did not cover my face against insult and spittle ... Ours were the sufferings He bore, ours the sorrows He carried, and He was crushed for our sins. On Him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through His wounds we are healed. (Is 50:5-7; 53:4-6)

Prayer

My Jesus, it is not the weight of the Cross but of my sins, that has made You suffer so much pain. By the merits of this first fall, deliver me from the misfortune of falling into mortal sin. I repent with my whole heart of having offended you. Never permit me to separate from you again. (St Alphonsus)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.



04

Jesus meets His Mother

V. We adore you Lord and praise you
R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

As the Child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about Him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His Mother, 'You see this Child: He is destined for the fall and the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected - and a sword will pierce your own soul too - so that the secret thoughts of many will be laid bare. (Lk 2:33-35)

God wanted all perfection to be found in Him and all things to be reconciled through Him and for Him, everything in Heaven and everything on earth, when He made peace by His death on the Cross. (Col 1:19-20)

Prayer

Lord, it was your will that Mary suffered with her Son in her heart. Grant that, in union with her, the Church may share in the Passion of Christ, and so be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. (Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows)

Our Father, Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father etc.



05

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the Cross

V. We adore you Lord and praise you
R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me ... They enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross. (Mt 16:24; Mk 15:21)

Prayer

With Mary, Mother of Christ, we pause beside all the crosses of people today. We ask all the Saints who share Our Lord's suffering in a special way to support us, and we ask all who suffer to become a source of strength for the Church and humanity. (John Paul II)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.



06

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

V. We adore you Lord and praise you
R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

Large numbers of people followed him, and women too, who mourned and lamented for him ... Anyone who wants to become great among you must become the servant to all. The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His Life as a ransom for many. (Lk 23:27; Mk 10:44-45)

Without beauty, without majesty we saw Him, no looks to attract our eyes; a thing despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering, a man to make people screen their faces; He was despised and we took no account of Him. (Is 53:2-3)

The 'Talmud' (collection of Jewish laws and traditions)

The charitable noblewomen of Jerusalem used to give soothing drinks to criminals on their way to execution. That one would certainly have tried to alleviate Jesus' dreadful condition by some small help, accounts for the tradition that a brave woman took pity on Him and wiped His face with a towel on which He left the image of His Face. There were courageous women disciples who followed Him to the end, and it was natural that one of them should come to His aid. In the East, she has always been honoured as Berenice and, since Roman usage can interchange B and V, Berenice could be 'Verenice', the holy woman remembered as Veronica.

Prayer

Lord, grant us hearts that seek your face. Keep us from the blindness of heart that sees only the surface of things. Impress your face on our hearts so that we encounter you on the way and show your image to the world." (Benedict XVI)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.



07

Jesus falls the second time

V. We adore you Lord and praise you
R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

I am the Man familiar with misery under the rod of his anger. I am the One he has driven and forced to walk in darkness and without any light. He has blocked my way with cut stones and obstructed my paths. He has broken my teeth with gravel and given me ashes for food. (Lm 3:1-2, 9, 16)

Prayer

Lord, you have borne all our burdens and you continue to carry us. Our weight made you fall. Lift us up, for by ourselves we cannot rise from the dust. Help us to see the spiritual and material needs of others, and to give them the help they need. Lift us up so that we may lift others up. (Benedict XVI)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.



08

The women of Jerusalem weep for Our Lord

V. We adore you Lord and praise you
R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

The women who had followed Him mourned and lamented for Him, but Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children. The days will surely come when people will say, 'Happy are those who are barren, the wombs that have never borne, the breasts that have never suckled. Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!'; to the hills, 'Cover us! For if men use the greenwood like this, what will happen when it is dry? (Lk 23:27-32)

Prayer

My Jesus, laden with sorrows. I weep for the offences I have committed against you because of the pains they have deserved, and still more because of the displeasure they have caused you who have loved me so much. It is your love more than the fear of hell which causes me to weep for my sins: (St Alphonsus)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.



09

Jesus falls the third time

V. We adore you Lord and praise you
R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

It is good for a man to bear the yoke from his youth onwards, to sit in solitude and silence when the Lord fastens it on him, to put his lips to the dust - there may yet be hope; to offer his cheek to the striker, to be overwhelmed with insults. For the Lord does not reject mankind for ever. If He has punished, He has compassion, so great is His kindness. (Lm 3:27-32)

Prayer

Almighty God, the love you offer, always exceeds the furthest expression of the human heart. Direct each thought, each effort of our life, so that the limits of our faults and weaknesses may not obscure the vision of your glory or keep us from the peace you have promised.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.

The eyes to God - the summit of human freedom

Papal message at General Audience held February 1, 2012



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today I would like to talk about Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Olives at Gethsemane. The scenario of the Gospel narrative of this prayer is particularly significant. Jesus sets out for the Mount of Olives after the Last Supper while He is praying together with His disciples. The Evangelist Mark says: "when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Mk 14:26).

Having reached the grove on the Mount of Olives, that night too, Jesus prepares for personal prayer. However, this time something new happens: It seems that he does not want to be left alone. Jesus would often withdraw from the crowd and from the disciples themselves "to a lonely place" (Mk 1:35) or he would go up "into the hills", St. Mark says (cf. Mk 6:46). Instead at Gethsemane He invites Peter, James and John to stay closer to Him. They are the disciples he called upon to be with Him on the Mount of the Transfiguration, (cf. Mk 9:2-13).

What Jesus says to the three disciples whom He wants near him during his prayer at Gethsemane shows that He feels fear and anguish in that "Hour", experiencing His last profound loneliness precisely while God's plan is being brought about. Moreover Jesus' fear and anguish sums up the full horror of man in the face of His own death, the certainty that it is inescapable and a perception of the burden of evil that touches our lives.

After the invitation to stay with Him to watch and pray, which He addresses to the three, Jesus speaks to the Father "alone". Mark the Evangelist tells us that "going a little farther, He fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him" (14:35). Jesus fell prostrate on the ground: a position of prayer that expresses obedience to the Father and abandonment in Him with complete trust. This gesture is repeated at the beginning of the celebration of the Passion, on Good Friday, as well as in monastic profession and in

the ordination of deacons, priests and bishops in order to express, in prayer, corporally too, complete entrustment to God, trust in Him. Jesus then asks the Father, if this be possible, to obtain that this hour pass from Him. It is not only man's fear and anguish in the face of death, but is the devastation of the Son of God who perceives the terrible mass of evil that He must take upon Himself to overcome it, to deprive it of power.

Dear friends, in prayer we too should be able to lay before God our labours, the suffering of certain situations, of certain days, the daily commitment to following Him, to being Christian, and also the weight of the evil that we see within ourselves and around us, so that He may give us hope and make us feel His closeness and give us a little light on the path of life.

St. Maximus the Confessor says that ever since the moment of the creation of man and woman, the human will has been oriented to the divine will and that it is precisely in the "yes" to God that the human will is fully free and finds its fulfilment. Unfortunately, because of sin, this "yes" to God is transformed into opposition: Adam and Eve thought that the "no" to God was the crowning point of freedom, of being fully themselves.

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus brings the human will back to the unreserved "yes" to God; in Him the natural will is fully integrated in the orientation that the Divine Person gives it. Jesus lives His life in accordance with the centre of His Person: his being the Son of God. His human will is drawn into the, I of the Son who abandons Himself totally to the Father. Thus Jesus tells us that it is only by conforming our own will to the Divine One that human beings attain their true height, that they become "divine"; only by coming out of ourselves, only in the "yes" to God, is Adam's desire - and the desire of us all - to be completely free. It is

what Jesus brings about at Gethsemane: in transferring the human will into the Divine Will the true man is born and we are redeemed.

Dear brothers and sisters, every day in the prayer of the Our Father we ask the Lord: "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10). In other words we recognize that there is a will of God with us and for us, a will of God for our life that must become every day, increasingly, the reference of our willing and of our being; we recognize moreover that "heaven" is where God's will is done and where the "earth" becomes "heaven", a place where love, goodness, truth and divine beauty are present, only if, on earth, God's will is done.

In Jesus' prayer to the Father on that terrible and marvellous night in Gethsemane, the "earth" became "heaven"; the "earth" of His human will, shaken by fear and anguish, was taken up by His divine will in such a way that God's will was done on earth. And this is also important in our own prayers: we must learn to entrust ourselves more to Divine Providence, to ask God for the strength to come out of ourselves to renew our "yes" to Him, to say to Him "Thy will be done", so as to conform our will to His. It is a prayer we must pray every day because it is not always easy to entrust ourselves to God's will, repeating the "yes" of Jesus, the "yes" of Mary.

The Gospel accounts of Gethsemane regretfully show that the three disciples, chosen by Jesus to be close to Him, were unable to watch with Him, sharing in His prayer, in His adherence to the Father and they were overcome by sleep. Dear friends, let us ask the Lord to enable us to keep watch with Him in prayer, to follow the will of God every day even if He speaks of the Cross, to live in ever greater intimacy with the Lord, in order to bring a little bit of God's "heaven" to this "earth".



10

Jesus is stripped of His garments and offered gall

V. We adore you Lord and praise you

R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is the place of the skull, they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall which he tasted but refused to drink ... The soldiers took His clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. (Mt 27:33-35; In 19:23-24)

I can count every one of my bones. These people stare at me and gloat; they divide my clothing among them. They cast lots for my robe. (Ps 21: 18-19)

Prayer

Lord, you were stripped of your garments, took upon yourself the shame of Adam and healed it. You also take to yourself the sufferings and needs of the poor and the outcasts. This is how you make us realize that your Father holds you and all of us in the world in His hands. Clothe us in the light of your grace. (Benedict XVI)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.



11

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

V. We adore you Lord and praise you

R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

They crucified Him there with two robbers, one on the right, the other on the left... One of the robbers abused Him: 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us as well.' The other rebuked him, 'Have you no fear of God at all? You received the same sentence as He did but in our case we deserved it. But this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus,' he said, 'Remember me when you come into your Kingdom.' 'Indeed I promise you,' He replied. 'Today you will be with me in Paradise.' (Mt 17:37-42; Lk 23:33-34)

Prayer

Lord, you let yourself be nailed to the Cross, accepting the terrible cruelty of this suffering, the destruction of your body and your dignity. You allowed yourself to be nailed fast; you did not try to escape or lessen your suffering. May we never flee from what you ask us to do. Help us to remain faithful to you and unmask the false freedom that distances us from you. Help us to accept your binding freedom so that, bound fast to you, we discover true freedom. (Benedict XVI)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.



12

Jesus dies on the Cross

V. We adore you Lord and praise you

R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

Seeing His Mother and the disciple He loved standing near her, He said to His Mother, 'Woman, this is your Son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your Mother.' And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home ... Jesus knew that everything had been accomplished and, to fulfil the scripture perfectly He said, "I am thirsty" ... After Jesus had taken the vinegar He said, "It is accomplished"; and bowing His head He gave up His spirit to His Father. (Mt 27:45-54; In 19:28-30)

Prayer

O most gentle Jesus, you have redeemed us by Baptism from original sin. Now, by your precious Blood offered and received throughout the world, deliver us from all evils, past, present, and to come. By your most bitter death, give us a lively faith, a firm hope, and a perfect charity, so that we may love you with all our hearts. (St Clare of Assisi)

Our Father, Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father etc.



13

Jesus is taken down from the Cross

V. We adore you Lord and praise you'

R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after Him ... When it was evening, there came a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea who had become a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for His body, and Pilate ordered it to be handed over. (Mt 27:55-58)

Prayer

Lord, in the hour of darkness, help us know that you are still there. Help us not to leave you alone. Give us the fidelity to withstand moments of desolation and be ready to embrace you in your helplessness, like your Mother who holds you to her breast. (Benedict XVI)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.



14

Jesus is laid in the tomb

V. We adore you Lord and praise you

R. Because by your death and resurrection you give life to the world

Reading from Holy Scripture

Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. (Mt 27: 57-61)

They gave Him a grave with the wicked; a tomb with the rich though he had done no wrong and there was no perjury in His mouth. (Is 53:9)

Prayer

Father, in your plan of Salvation, your Son Jesus Christ accepted the Cross and freed us from the power of the enemy. May we come to share the glory of His Resurrection, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father etc.