



**ST. ALOYSIUS
GONZAGA**
June 21

Messenger

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**THE NATIVITY OF
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BAPTIST**
June 24

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Archdiocese prepares for Eucharistic Congress

The Archdiocese of Colombo with the help of the Blessed Joseph Vaz Trust will organize a very special 3-day celebration of a Eucharistic Congress, from August 31 to September 2, 2012 at St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10.

According to KOINONIA, the Archdiocesan monthly bulletin, the Congress will be in keeping with the spirit of the decade of the Most Holy Eucharist which was started in August last year.

The 3-day programme will also consist of a vocations exhibition with the participation of the religious and the seminaries and a special exhibition on the Eucharistic Miracles.

Continuous exposition of the Most Holy Eucharist will take place from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm on Friday, August 31 and Saturday September 1, 2012. On Sunday, September 2, the Exposition will terminate



with the procession of the Most Holy Eucharist presided over by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, winding its way through the streets of the City of Colombo.

The bulletin states that His Eminence requests all those who are called upon to help in the organization of the event to generously do so.

All Parish Priests of the City of Colombo and the Kotte, Moratuwa, Wattala, Ragama and Kandana deanaries are

informed to encourage the participation of Daham Pasal children and parishioners, especially at the exhibition which will be unique.

A unique feature will be the performances of a 100-member choir of school children.

A committee headed by Very Rev. Fr. Ivan Perera, Rev. Fr. Placidus de Silva and Mr. Gamini Kannangara is currently working out the details of the event.

KOINONIA

His Eminence at St. Anthony's Shrine: "Open your hearts to the Lord"



The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith officiating at the Vespers Service held at St. Anthony's Shrine Kochchikade, on June 12th Tuesday said that God has created every one of us to be superior beings in character; in other words like a saint.

"Human life has meaning and value and if one does not attach the relevant significance to one's life, the plan and creation of God is undervalued," said His Eminence addressing the immense crowd of devotees from various faiths who thronged to the

Shrine of the miracle worker in Kochchikade, Colombo.

"The Lord," he said, "wants us to be superior and great in being the salt of the earth to add taste to the lives of many and to be the light of the world in helping others to see the truth and reality of life. That greatness can only be achieved if we open our hearts to the Lord."

His Eminence said that St. Anthony is upheld as great due to the strong bond that he had with the Lord. If we can deviate from our materialistic tendencies and give prominence to spiritual aspects we could liberate ourselves from this imprisonment.

His Eminence also thanked the President and the authorities concerned for providing the adjoining premises for the use of the Shrine.

Administrator of the Shrine Rev. Fr. Clement Rosairo and Assistant, Rev. Fr. Jude Lakshantha were associated in organizing the festive proceedings.

PIC: T. F. MENDIS

President at the Vatican



President and Mrs. Rajapaksa in the friendly company of Vatican and Sri Lankan officials and His Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith.

O, Mother of All!



"We cling to Thy mantle, O Mother of all! - These children seem to say as they lovingly pray the Rosary at the rosary rally held at St. Anthony's Church Grounds, in Thoduwawa, in the Chilaw Diocese, on May 27, 2012. (See Page 13)

PIC: LAKMAL DIAS.

Blessing of Church and Consecration of new Altar at Bolawatta Parish

BY: K. NIHAL FERNANDO



The new Church of the Bolawatta Parish was blessed and declared open by their Lordships, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy and Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw, on June 8, Friday, which also commemorated the 336th Birth Anniversary of Fr. Jacombe Gonsalvez, whose remains are buried here. Their Lordships also consecrated the new Altar of the Church.



Requiem Mass



A Holy Mass will be offered for the repose of the soul of Rev. Fr. Alfred Alexander sss, at Philip Neri's Church, Pettah on June 20, 2012 at 5.30 p.m.



'He would not speak to them except in parables'

Mk:4:34

First Holy Communion for a 100 Children



For the first time one hundred children from St. Carmel's Church, Marawila received First Holy Communion.

Seen in the picture with the children are Rev. Fr. Felix Colombage, Parish Priest and Rev. Fr. Dilanka Nirman, Asst. Parish Priest. **Shammika Fernando**

Nicholites Venerate the Blessed Mother

St. Nicholas' International College, Colombo, celebrated the annual feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with a thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Rev. Fr. David Hore C.SsR on 31st May at the College Hall, bringing a month-long daily Marian devotion to a close.

In an expression of their love and devotion to the Blessed Mother, the staff and students of the College had conducted a month-long daily meditation on the Mysteries of



the Holy Rosary culminating in a Festive Mass and a colourful procession carrying the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary around the College premises.

(Text by Mrs. Francisca Ludowyke & pic by Mr. Siddath Ramanayake)

Aquinas bids farewell to Fr. Weliwita



A concelebrated Holy Mass was held in the chapel of Aquinas University College to bid farewell to Rev. Fr. Shanthikumar Weliwita, who was Vice Rector of the College and Rev. Fr. Dinesh Priyadarsha Fernando and warmly welcome Rev. Fr. Batepola and Rev. Fr. Chandana Lal Fernando.

Registrar

"Jeeva Raagangal" Tamil Catholic CD Release



Popular Music Director Mr. A. Mahendran attached to the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation was honoured by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar at a ceremonial function held at St.

Benedict's College, Kotahena on 9th June 2012 on the release of "Jeeva Raagangal Tamil Catholic CD, melody and music composed by him in the presence of a large gathering of Revered Fathers, Sisters, distinguished guests, friends and well wishers. The Secretary General of the Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka Rev. Fr. Tony Martyn was the Guest of Honour. May God bless Mr. Mahendran and his service rendered to the Catholic Community.

Basil Mel

New Parish Priest, Kanuwana



Rev. Fr. Lester Nonis, who assumed duties as the Parish Priest of Kanuwana Parish, was warmly received by the Parishioners of the Visakawatte Church, when he came to celebrate his first Mass on Sunday, 3rd June.

Photo-Writeup-Shirly Perera

A sharing of experience by Caritas Sethmini



Caritas Sethmini Eheliyagoda held a press conference attended by several personnel from the print and electronic media from the Ratnapura and Kegalle districts recently. This conference was mainly an awareness programme for media personal regarding the work done by Sethmini.

Sethmini Director, Rev. Fr. Texie Dissanayake, presided at the Conference held at the Sethmini office.

J. Antony

Feast of Queen of May



Parishioners of St. Bernadette's Church, Chilaw extended their devotion to Our Lady Queen of May taking nine statues in procession to their houses throughout the month of May. On 31st all the statues reached the Church in a colourful procession and the devotees participated in the

recitation of the Holy Rosary.

Rev. Fr. Philip SDS and Rev. Fr. Prabu SDS celebrated in the Festive Holy Mass.

Leonard Wijesiri
Pic by Trishani Fernando

AGM of St. Benedict's College OBU

The 108th AGM of the Old Boys' Union of St. Benedict's College will be held on Sunday 24th June 2012 at the College Hall from 10.30 am and will be preceded by Holy Mass at 9.30 a.m.

All Old Boys are cordially invited to be present for Holy Mass and the annual sessions followed by a fellowship lunch and get-together at the Old Bens Sports Club.

Kindly contact the following, for lunch reservations:

Anton Carvalho-0777803430, Anton Leon - 0714805287, Chandra Bastian - 0775 984580, Ashan Stanislaus - 0777 558244, Peter De Croos - 0776 396060, Stephen Corera - 0777 348417, Darrel Ludowyke - 0777 414567, Felix Dias - 2693250

Darrel S. Ludowyke

National Workshop of Catholic University Students

One hundred Catholic University students from seven of our Universities in Colombo, Eastern, Jaffna, Jayawardanapura, Kelaniya, Moratuwa and Peradeniya, gathered together at the Retreat House in Tewatta, Ragama, this year, for their annual 3-day Workshop. Their Chaplains were Rev. Fathers Stalin Navaratnam, Saman Maximus, and Egerton Perera with Sr. Mabel as the lady chaperone who accompanied them.

The theme of the workshop this year was, 'The Path to Wisdom'. The workshop was directed by the National Chaplain of Family Services, Rev. Fr. Julian Patrick Perera, assisted by Prof. Anton Meemana. Each day began with invoking the Holy Spirit

at Mass.

Introducing the workshop, Fr. Egerton said though there is a thought that those who are educated at a University are wise, this need not necessarily be, as there are many educated people who cannot be categorized as wise at all. We can see it today in our own country and the world at large that the most unwise, unfair and unjust decisions have been taken not by the uneducated but by the educated and these decisions have had a devastating effect on the people. So the need today is for all of us to discover and walk "the path to wisdom," by being guided by the Holy Spirit.

Rev. Fr. Egerton Perera, sj.

Poson Dansala at Delgashandiya



Buddhists and Catholics got together to organise a Poson Dansala at Delgashandiya recently for the 8th consecutive year.

Children from Arklow Children's Home, Pathagigodella of Halpe are seen in the picture participating in the meal.

The Dansala was sponsored by Green Farm Mills.

Cecil Danicius

May Feast at Nattyandiya Parish



May Feast was celebrated at Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine, Nattandiya in the presence of a large gathering of the faithful.

Picture shows the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes being taken in procession by the youth of the Parish.

Shyangani Felicia

Sinhala Theology Course in the Galle

The inauguration of a Diploma Course on Theology in Sinhala took place last week under the auspices of His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe, Bishop of Galle.

The Diploma Course has been designed in compliance with the requirements of the National Office of Blessed Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya in Colombo. However, special care has been taken to address the local situation of the Diocese taking into consideration the missionary nature of the Southern Province.

Twenty Three young men and women were registered as the first batch of students to follow the Diploma Course which will spread over a period of three years covering around sixty subjects.

Rev. Fr. Ratnapriya Perera, Director of the Blessed Joseph Vaz Deva



Dharma Nikethanaya in the Diocese of Galle, quoting from the diaries of the missionaries, expressed the importance of studying the history of the local Church in the area. Rev. Fr. Daya Welikadaarachchi, Director of Blessed Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya in the Archdiocese of Colombo delivered the guest speech.

His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickra-

masinghe mentioned the need to draw up a missionary and pastoral plan in line with the spirit of Blessed Joseph Vaz who sacrificed his life entirely to bring to life the Catholic faith in Sri Lanka, that was at the point of succumbing to the threats and repression unleashed by the Dutch persecutors of the time.

His Lordship read out the official Declara-

tion which marked the inauguration of the Diploma Course. The Declaration document was placed in front of the picture of Blessed Joseph Vaz, the Apostle of Sri Lanka, by the Diocesan Director, seeking the power of his mediation and guidance to continue this new mission begun in the Diocese of Galle.

Rev. Fr. Raja Ratnapriya Perera

Under Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue



The Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI, has appointed Rev. Fr. Indunil Janakaratne Kodithuwakku Kankanamalage the Diocese of Badulla, and Professor at the Faculty of Missiology at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, as the Under Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue (PCID).

The PCID is the central office of the Catholic Church for promoting interreligious dialogue in accordance with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, in particular the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*.

Fr. Janaka was an alumnus of the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka, Ampitiya and ordained a priest in the year 2000. He holds a BA (Hons) in Sociology from the University of Colombo, and also Licentiate and Doctorate in Missiology from the Pontifical Urban University, Rome. He has been also a lecturer at the Pontifical Urban University, Rome and also a member of the International Association for Catholic Missiologists.

Rev. Fr. Raveen Perera

Rebuilding Our Lady of Perpetual Help Shrine, Ayithiyamalai (Batticaloa)

We are Happy to invite all the pilgrims who had visited Ayithiyamalai with prayers and thanksgiving years ago. Now the prevailing peaceful situation had opened the doors to all to visit Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ayithiyamalai (EP). The Annual Feast this year is scheduled to be held on the 2nd of September 2012. To accommodate the pilgrims we are working to rebuild the shrine premises. All the available accommodations were damaged and destroyed by the ended war. Now we are working to rebuild the church premises and the Pilgrims rest buildings. Therefore we are inviting you too to join hands in this effort of ours. For more details contact us

Rev. Fr. Douglas James Administrator



Church in the World

Eucharistic Congress opens with reflection on 'treasure of the Church'

DUBLIN, IRELAND, JUNE (CNA/EWTN NEWS).- The Church has nothing greater to offer than Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, Cardinal Marc Ouellet said as he celebrated the June 10 opening Mass of the 50th International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin.

"Our gathering is an act of faith in the Holy Eucharist, the treasure of the Church, which is essential to her life and to our communion as brothers and sisters in Christ," said the Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, who is representing Pope Benedict as Papal Legate at the celebration in Ireland.

The Church, he told pilgrims gathered at the Royal Dublin Society Arena, "draws her life from the Eucharist," and "receives her own identity from the gift of Christ's own body."

"In communion with his body, the Church becomes what she receives: She becomes one body with him in the Spirit of the new and eternal covenant," the Cardinal reflected. "What a great and marvelous mystery!"

More than 12,500 pilgrims from around the world are gathered in Dublin for the June 10-17 Eucharistic gathering. Its opening ceremony, held on the Feast of Corpus Christi, featured a parade of international flags as well as insignia of Ireland's different counties, carried alongside symbols of the Catholic faith.

Cardinal Ouellet concelebrated the afternoon opening Mass with Dublin Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop Robert Jean Louis LeGall of Toulouse, Cardinal Thomas C. Collins of Toronto, and Archbishop Piero Marini, president of the Pontifical Committee for Eucharistic Congresses.

In his homily, the head of the Congregation for Bishops recalled Ireland's "long traditional of fidelity to the Catholic faith." The country's faithfulness "has enriched not only these shores, but has, through her missionary sons and daughters, helped to bring the Gospel to many other, far-distant shores."

But Cardinal Ouellet acknowledged that the 50th Eucharistic Congress comes at a "turbulent time" for the Irish Church, which has suffered in recent years from revelations about sex abuse committed by clergy in past decades. The country also faces a priest shortage, and problems with theological dissent.

"The Church in Ireland is suffering and faces many new and serious challenges to the faith," noted Cardinal Ouellet. "Well aware of these challenges, we turn to our Lord, who renews, heals and strengthens the faith of his people."

The 49th International Eucharistic Congress was held in 2008 in Quebec.

Pope challenges European soccer stars to promote noble virtues

WARSAW, POLAND, JUNE (CNA/EWTN NEWS) - Pope Benedict XVI is urging those participating in soccer's 2012 European Championship to promote "noble human values" during the tournament which begins on June 8.

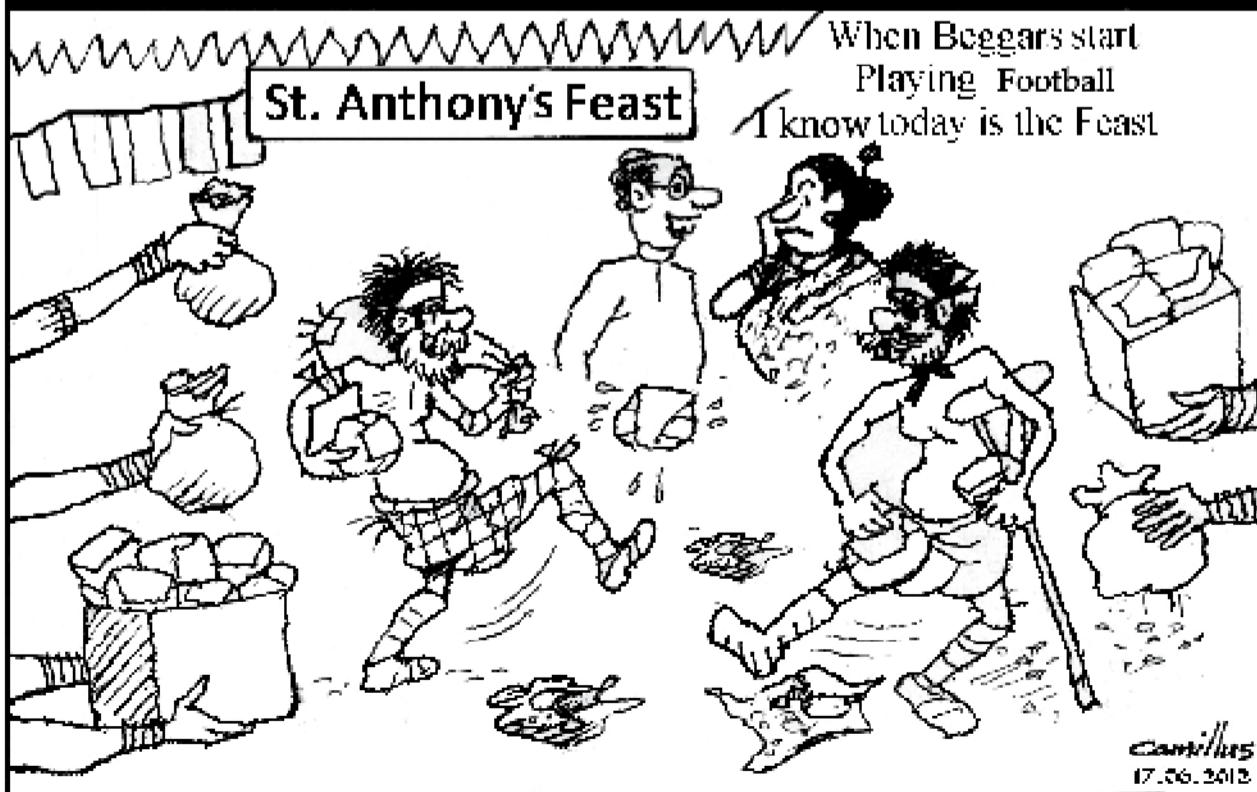
"I encourage all those involved to work to ensure that this event is experienced as an expression of the most noble human virtues and actions, in a spirit of peace and genuine joy," the Pope said in a message to the President of the Polish Bishops Conference, Archbishop Józef Michalik.

The month-long competition will take place in Poland and the Ukraine June 8 to July 1. It features the top 16 national sides in Europe, including the Pope's motherland of Germany and his adoptive nation of Italy. The tournament begins with an opening match in the Polish capital of Warsaw between the host nation and Greece, the 2004 champions.

The Pope's comments come amidst fears that the tournament could be dogged by racist abuse aimed at black soccer players.

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



Messenger

EDITORIAL

17 June 2012

Sympathy for the Tamil prisoners of war could promote reconciliation

It is three years since the war ended in the total annihilation of the LTTE. The World recognizes that the Tamil people have grievances and that their recourse to war against the government was only after the failure of negotiations over a period of 35 years. But the LTTE turned it into a brutal war of the Sinhalese versus the Tamils.

The Government is procrastinating while the Tamil youth are again losing patience. The TNA has said that they want internal self determination and not external self determination so that they will be part of the single State although it would have to be a Federal State. The Government is reluctant to devolve land and police powers fearing that it would be a step towards a separate State of Eelam. The fear may be legitimate but that is all the more reason that the issue should be resolved with goodwill. Meanwhile the election to the Provincial Council in the North should be held to give an opportunity to the Tamil people to at least carry out their limited functions.

The Government is carrying out development in the North under programs like the *"Uthuru Wasanthaya"*. Much money has been spent on repair and reconstruction of roads and highways including the A9. The restoration of the infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the war is necessary and can be done only by the government. But the use of the military and labour contractors from the South has deprived the people from directly benefiting from such development expenditure through what economists call the multiplier effect since the money payments would leak out to the South.

Because of the free and peaceful atmosphere that emerged after the ending of the war, there should have been by now, a noticeable improvement in the economic activities of these provinces. But the figures do not reflect any dramatic improvement in the living conditions of the people. Private sector entrepreneurs are still to invest in any significant way. Nor have all the people been resettled and become able to return to their normal lives which were disturbed by the war. Irrigation tanks were destroyed and there was no conservation of water to carry out agriculture. Fishing was subject to restrictions which were not lifted until very recently. More importantly the people should feel that they are stakeholders in this development effort. But that requires that their representatives should be consulted and made partners in such effort.

The pressing grievance is that the Army still controls civilian activity. The presence of a large number of troops in the North and their visible presence in the streets indicate to the Tamil people that they are under military occupation. The Government must work to dispel this perception among the Tamil people. Recently the Tamil youth have shown impatience. They have resorted to hunger strikes and have staged protests in the prisons. There was the hunger strike in Vavuniya on 24 May in which 500 family members, mainly women, fasted for a day in solidarity with the prisoners.

The detainees ask that they should be either charged or released. Some spokesmen also appeal for a general amnesty as had been extended to Sinhala political prisoners following the youth insurrections of 1971 and 1987-89. Only the JVP leaders were charged on that occasion. The Government says it does not consider these persons as political prisoners. Are they all terrorists? 11,600 LTTE ex-combatants and others caught up in the war surrendered and were held in 'rehabilitation' centres since May 2009. Of this number the military claim that only 698 now remain in their custody. The Government has not made public any registry of the names and locations of Tamils in detention, which has been a demand of family members searching for their missing relatives.

The prisoners demand to be charged or released is legitimate in the eyes of the civilized world. Last week the Minister of Foreign Affairs referred to the Buddhist theory of punishment which is purely rehabilitative and not retributive. Yes that should be so and the Government follow this Buddhist philosophy by granting a general amnesty to those who were not directly involved in crimes against the humanitarian law or the laws of war. Some are said to have been in custody for 10 or even 15 years without having been convicted of any offence. Others have been indicted based on forced confessions or their signature on confessions written in Sinhala (which they cannot read) but which are admissible under the provisions of the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

The Government should consider granting a general or selective amnesty except to those to be indicted and their cases should be heard speedily.

The Listener

By Rev. Fr. Patrick Clarke

Some time ago I was on a bus in Dublin when I noticed something that sparked off many memories. What happened was that I noticed a woman blessing herself as the bus passed a church. That simple act brought me back seventy years. I grew up in Dublin and I went to school by bus. The bus passed several churches and as we passed everyone would either raise their hat or bless themselves. Then, when I got to the school, there would be a stream of kids running in and out of the nearby church to make a quick visit. No one ever told



A view of Mount Fuji from the Church of Fujisawa

us to do this; it was the custom and we just did it.

Later there came another memory. This time I was a missionary priest in a Japanese parish, about an hour by train from Tokyo. Fujisawa Church was situated on the top of a small hill with a long straight road leading up to it. My memory was of the number of people who walked up that hill to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament each day. They were students, elderly people, and people returning from work. Again, how or when that started I don't know: It was the custom.

Another memory was from my teenage years. I remember making a visit to the Church after school almost every day. Looking back I find this rather strange because it was not a common practice for teenagers. Yet there I was making my visits. I remember that on one particular day, as I sat before the Blessed Sacrament, I suddenly felt deep gratitude for the gift of faith. This was followed by a realization of the millions of people in China who did not have this precious gift; somehow I felt that the Lord was inviting me to go to China as a priest missionary. Up to then the thought of priesthood had never entered my head. Two years later I decided to become a member of the "Maynooth Mission to China," now known as the Columban Fathers. After ordination I was sent to Japan as China had been closed due to the Communist takeover.

My final memory concerned my return



Fr. Paddy Clark (centre) in Dublin with his nannie and big brother Shane

home from Japan for my first vacation. One day I was talking with my mother when suddenly she burst out laughing. "What's so funny?", I asked. She said, "Well when you were a small child Nannie Kennedy used to take you out and she must have brought you into almost every church in Dublin." Nannie Kennedy used to help my mother by taking me out almost every day. I was too young to remember those outings but I had fond memories of her from my later years. She was a beautiful person and became my second mother. She died from cancer when I was eight years old. I believe that I owe my vocation to her prayers. I also believe that Nannie bringing me to so many churches was what later led me to a love of the Blessed Sacrament and to receiving many blessings during a long life.

All the above memories were triggered by seeing a woman on the bus bless herself as we passed a local church.

Why do I want to write about these memories? Because they underline for me the power there is in making visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Just to go into a church and spend a short or long time sitting there can change our life.

What do we do on such occasions? Well, we go in believing that the Risen Jesus is present in that church. How he is present I do not know. Maybe in the next life I will understand. I do believe in the words of Jesus "This is my Body," and I know from experience the power of the Real Presence in the lives of people. Someone may ask, "But I'm not into prayer, what do you say?" Well, do nothing; just sit in silence which can itself in time become a deep form of prayer. Or if you are tired, you can

sleep.

St Therese of Lisieux did not have any problems about falling asleep at prayer. Today so many people are out of work, or worrying about their jobs. There are so many people struggling to put food on the table for their children. They need to open their hearts to someone. They need a good listener. In coming before Jesus in His Real Presence, and sharing their burdens with Him, speaking from their hearts, they will discover not only the One who loves them, but also the One who listens. Jesus Himself said. "Come to me all you who are burdened and I will refresh your."

I am not saying that prayer before the Blessed Sacrament is the best way or the only way to come to the Lord. It is one way. As Jesus said "I am with you always." He is present in so many different ways, through creation, through His Word, through the person nearest us, and so on. Prayer, or simply being present before the Blessed Sacrament is a simple, beautiful, and accessible way to experience Jesus as a loving, living and listening person. Parents, grandparents, and those who care for children lead them to many blessings through this practice. Finally I end with a little verse seen on a parish bulletin board:

"Every time I pass a church,
I stop to make a visit.
So that when I am carried in
The Lord won't say, "Who is it?"

Fr Paddy Clarke served in Japan for almost fifty years. He is now retired in Dalgan Park, Navan.

(Courtesy: Far East Magazine)

“ In coming before Jesus in His Real Presence, and sharing their burdens with Him, speaking from their hearts, they will discover not only the One who loves them, but also the One who listens. ”

Give people their Right to Information

All decisions taken by the Government affects its citizens. So the citizen in a vibrant democracy has the right to know what's happening. The right to information therefore is a fundamental right of the citizen constitutionally guaranteed by all modern democracies in the world. In its enactment it empowers the citizen, and as a focal right assures basic freedoms for the creation of good governance. In simple language information in this context means anything that exists in any form with the Public Authority. And such information is deemed to be held by the Public Authority on behalf of the people who are the rightful owners of such information.

It becomes pertinent to recall that the Government of Sri Lanka in 1980 has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights making it incumbent on the government to enact such laws and amendments that may become necessary for effective implementation of this Covenant. As for the democratic rights enshrined in our Constitution our Supreme Court in a judgment in 2004 has held that even a bare denial of access to official information amounts to an infringement on the rights

guaranteed by Article 14(a). Ex-Chief Justice Asoka de Silva making a keynote address to an august audience at a function soon after retirement has emphasized on the need to enact relevant legislation to enhance this basic right of the people recognized by the Constitution of the country to ensure transparency and accountability with regard to governance so as to hold Ministers of the State accountable for their actions. The implementation of the right to information therefore has a legal binding on the Government for openness, accountability and better State Sector Management. Government's own baby, the LLRC, ratifies this in its recommendations as an imperative for Reconciliation and good governance.

The push for the right to information legislation emerged in 2001 under the United National Party led coalition government through a Draft Bill submitted by the Law Reform Commission which failed to see light of day due to change of government. The change saw the beginning of a new administrative culture allowing free rein to politicians and public servants which stretched gathering momentum with deepening impunity, to

indulge in criminal misappropriation, misuse and fraudulent investments of public funds and other related abuses of corruption and waste. Recent events of misuse of public funds amounting to billions of rupees will be shelved as always with no one held responsible.

The United National Party presented a Right to Information Bill as a private member's bill in 2011 which the Government majority humiliatingly out voted in Parliament. Subsequent attempts by the Party were also shot down. Government came out with a pledge to present its own Right to Information Bill which remains in limbo. The disconcerting factor is wrong signals from the President himself. He is on record to have said to a group of journalists last year that a Right to Information Bill is superfluous. This is most unbecoming of a person who shot into limelight in local politics out-striding his political contemporaries as a champion of Human Rights. His on foot protest march, "from Colombo to Kataragama invoking divine intervention for people's rights cannot be forgotten.

Mahinda Chinthanaya for Presidency 2005 did

promise to include a Charter of Rights into the Constitution based on the Declaration of United Nations and other International Treaties to uphold social, cultural, political, economic and civic rights to all citizens. He affirms commitment to good governance in Mahinda Chinthanaya in 2010. He keeps us guessing from some positives that had come from his keynote address to a congregation of Buddhist religious dignitaries at the UN Wesak Commemoration Celebration that was held in Thailand few days ago where he has spoken on respect for human rights.

Whilst we wait in neighbouring India right to information is already law and considered a milestone in the country's democratic process. People of diverse backgrounds have used the right fearlessly to expose corruption and hold public officials accountable. No longer can Government Departments and nameless officials hide behind the red tape curtain for citizens could have the right to know what decisions have been made in their name. Much could be borrowed from the Indian RTI Act. It is important for Sri Lanka to have specific legislation, politically

undiluted providing the right to access official information. Such legislation will promote transparency of public action and help reduce wastage and misuse of public funds and make the government more accountable. In India people are unafraid to agitate for their just rights for they are educated so.

Majority of our people relatively have little knowledge of their rights saving for voting a party into power, especially those from the rural areas. Our system of education does not enlighten, the rural student of modern thinking that is wafting across other developed countries. Hence the space for political exploitation of the innocence depriving their just rights. The political contours are changing and the people will rise in force against corruption and bad governance if the government fails to address the issues in good time. People are freed from war and new horizons opened for reconciliation and good governance. People await freedom from the anarchy of political bondage and bad governance. The ball is in the Government's Court to kick start the process for reconciliation and good governance by presenting the Right to Information Bill in good faith as it must be. If not allow the Opposition to do so.

John Amaratunga, M.P.

Towards Christian Unity

Pope Pius XII died on October 10, 1958. On October 28, 1958, 76-year-old Angelo Roncalli was elected Pope, and he took the name John XXIII. Less than three months after his election on January 25, 1959, the Pope announced the calling of a General Council.

Great popes of the Middle Ages had used Synods and General Councils as a means of promoting reforms addressing the needs of the Church. Ecumenical Councils have defined dogmas, written creeds, condemned heresies, deposed emperors and so on. Pope John wanted his Council to be Pastoral, and Evangelical rather than juridical and dogmatic. "I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out, and the people can see in," he said. And so, Vatican Council II had a different air. It was primarily pastoral, cordial, and communicative - seeking dialogue, perhaps as never before, between the Catholic Church and the world, between the Church and our separated brethren. In other words ministerium rather than Magisterium.

The Council opened on the October 10, 1962, in the presence of 2800 bishops who come from different parts of the world. Whereas Vatican Council 1, in 1870 was Meditterrenian and there was not a single bishop from Asia or Africa. At the Vatican Council II, 60 % of the bishops were from Africa, Asia, North and South America.

In addition there were invited to the Council the Orthodox, Protestants and other observers. Geographically, it was the most Catholic Council in the history of the Church. The 2800

bishops constituted an authentic plurality - a plurality of persons, a plurality of experiences and reflections, plurality of interior lives and a plurality in different conditions. Given this background at the Council, there were, at first, disagreements as the bishops continued to discuss, debate, define and defend in order to hold on to the ancient faith, but reclothe it in words and ways which would speak afresh to the world and to our separated brethren. Disputes are normal to the process. (Acts. of the Apostles Chp. 15). But, the Council turned that plurality into a Unity of belief. Sadly, the media focused more on the disagreements at the Council, than the progress that was been made.

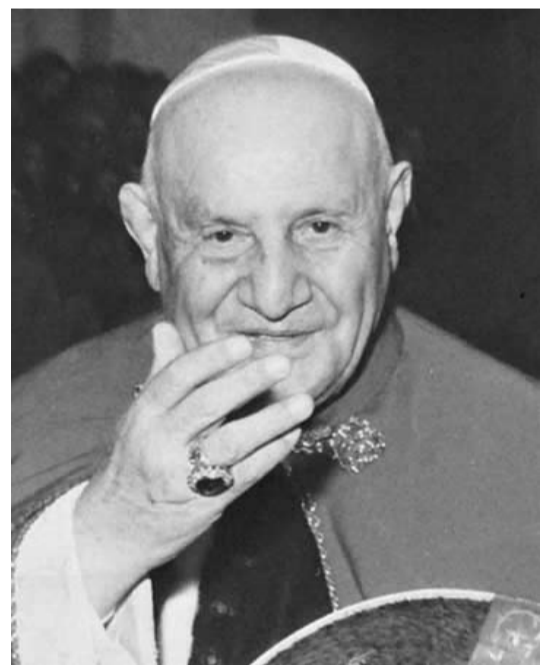
Two things became very clear. The Church had already begun to speak to the world. And secondly, there was a Pope with a warm heart, ready to go out to the world in the name of Christ and try to heal the wounds of existing divisions among the Christians. Europe was once united under the umbrella of the Church Christ had founded until historical circumstances wounded it.

Welcoming a group of non-Catholic Ministers and delegates to Rome, Pope John said: "I am Joseph, your brother." Pope Paul VIth. addressing a similar group in Geneva, said: "I am Peter," thus revealing strong desire to help our separated brethren in their search for unity in the Church governed by the successor of St. Peter and the bishops in communion with him. The Magisterium, that is the Pope and the bishops derive their authority from Sacramental Ordination, and they alone are empowered by Christ

to sanctify, to teach and to rule the people. Christ's promise "Behold, I am with you to the end of the days," was made to Peter and the Eleven, and their lawful successors through Peter as the head of the Church. In brief, it can be said, there can be no Christianity without Catholicism, there can be no Catholicism without the Pope, and there can be no Pope without the Sovereignty that belongs to him.

Since the Protestant Reformation, many people have tried to build the Church anew based on the evidence they find in the New Testament. But they cannot agree on what the New Testament means when it describes the Church, because of it, today it is said that there are 2010 Christian denominations, all claiming to be the one true Church. Everytime that the Church becomes divided, it tears the heart of the Body of Christ. In order to achieve this One Unity in the Church, the wiser course would be to look at the Church that came before the Bible - the Church that gathered the Scriptures together in a book form, and that was universally accepted after the Synod of Rome 380 AD, 393 AD, 397 AD. and 417 AD. In other words, the Church did not come out of the Bible, but Bible came out of the Church.

So, what does re-union mean? Reunion can only mean the resumption of that union which once existed before the Protestant Reformation. The three requirements for Unity must be fulfilled: Belief, Baptism, and Obedience to the

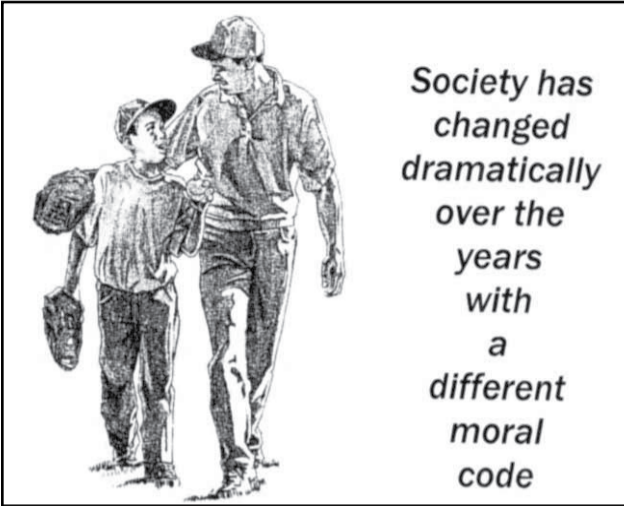


Pope John XXIII

Apostolic Authority. Man being what he is, this can prove to be very difficult. Trying to solve such a huge problem with paper work and signing of MOU, is like trying to stop a tidal wave with an umbrella. Ecumenical spirituality is a spirituality of prayer. Such prayers always gather people together in the same way Mary and the other disciples prayed for the coming of the Holy Spirit. (Cardinal Murphy O, Connor). God has his time when He will chose to unite His Church so that there will be but One Church and One Shepherd. Unity is His gift to us, and we need to go out to meet it.

Bryan Landsberger

Fatherhood's dimming flicker



It has been said; "That of all rocks upon which we build our lives, a family is the most important." And we are called to recognize and honour how critical every father is to that foundation.

A father is a leader, a role model, a builder, a protector and a provider. He has a very important role in the family. A child

feels safe and secure in his father's arms by relying on him in time of peril. His is the guiding hand in a child's first attempt to walk which dispels fear and gives courage to get up after every fall and bolsters belief in oneself. The role of the father makes for a wholesome atmosphere in the home that is easily caught and taught. And for this reason he de-

serves the love and reverence of every child and of the whole family. That was how we were taught and grew up knowing, respecting and loving our father. But this healthy situation is fast disappearing.

A new mind set of our young people seems to be taking over today. It appears that society has changed dramatically over the years with a different moral code replacing the traditional and reputed to be outdated one. We have an increasing number of single mothers who rear the children single handedly. The significance of fatherhood is diminishing. The father's essential role is now in question with a lessening of his share of responsibility. Sad to note that quite a number of the women now dismiss the idea of marriage itself by cohabitating, begetting

children and then later assuming the role of being both parents to any children that are born. And in extreme cases some children come not from the usual conception of one child or twins but through artificial means of conception. This social aberration of children being raised with only one parent is receiving more approval all the time even in movies. This indicates that as we advance to a more highly technological society, the more we appear to regress with our moral standards.

Recent thinking and discussion on this matter in sociological circles shows that a father's absence in the family is linked to a great percentage of juvenile delinquency, criminal records and school dropouts. In a fatherless home, behavioural problems develop with more cases of

Psychological depression.

Recent social evidence indicates that in a relatively high percentage of a father's involvement in the child's growing up years, the child will eventually have better educational achievements and psychological wellness. The child becomes a better linguist owing to the father's use of diversified words of expressions.

He (or she) is emotionally secure, confident to explore, to discover and know more around him and has a higher self-esteem. He can function well intellectually and can exercise self-control over his feelings and behaviours. He can therefore relate better socially with others.

A child's image

of his own father is sometimes taken as his parameter to relate to God, his Creator and Lord.

If his image of a father is faint and dim, somehow his idea of a loving God is equally uncertain. There seems to be a big distance between them so that reaching out to Him is difficult. He cannot reconcile his vague idea with how to relate openly to a concerned and loving father.

Canadian Messenger



Father's Day

Ten Characteristics of Great Men

1. Great men have their priorities in line. They know what is truly important in life, and live accordingly.
2. Great men are tender with those in need of tenderness. They are kind to the elderly, children, and those with disabilities.
3. Great men respect and honour women. They don't objectify, degrade, or demean them.
4. Great men participate in the community. They may spend time volunteering, working for a cause, or being involved with a charity.
5. Great men are honest, and have a sense of morality, integrity, and decency. They have an internal awareness of what is or is not appropriate, good, right, or decent.
6. Great men have a sense of purpose. They do not waste inordinate amounts of time in front of the TV or playing video games. They can balance fun and relaxation with work and productivity.
7. Great men are continually expanding their minds. They do not think they know it all, and are open to new ideas and insights.
8. Great men have a healthy sense of self. They are confident and secure while maintaining, a sense of humility.
9. Great men help and assist others. Whether in their place of employment, in their daily lives, or in the greater world at large, they have a sense of giving back.
10. Great men are in touch with their feelings, emotions, concerns, and even shortcomings. They don't feel a need for pretense or power. They can cry, have compassion, and acknowledge mistakes. They can love and be loved.

Note, a great man is not measured by the amount of money he has, the kind of car he drives, the size of his biceps, or outward appearance.

A great man reflects his greatness in his everyday life. **Jennifer Jones - Health Therapist**

Do we recognize the true heroes?

A few weeks ago, there was an awards ceremony near Galle Face light house organized by the Colombo Dockyard. The chief guest Mr. Channa Ranatunga who was the son of Mr. Ranatunga Karunananda. Why Mr. Ranatunga was invited as the chief guest was that, after nearly 48 years, the organizers decided to recognize and honour his father and give an award. Karunananda died a long time ago. So, the award would be handed over to his son, the chief guest.

Who was Karunananda? He was the 10,000 metre athlete who represented Sri Lanka at the 1964 Olympics held in Japan. What was special about him? He ran the 10,000 metre race at the Olympics which consisted of 14 laps. When all the other athletes had finished the race, he still had to run 3 laps to finish the race. He ran the 3 laps alone.

He finished the race to a standing ovation that exceeded the salutation that the spectators gave Billy Mills from USA, the winner of the race. Mills is reported to have said that the gold should have gone to Karu.

When he finished the race, a journalist asked him, "Why did you run the 3 laps all alone when the other athletes had already completed the race?" His reply was, "I came today to run the 10,000 metres and not to give up halfway. The people in my country were eagerly watching me running. To give up half-way is the nature of the loser. But I fulfilled my duty."

The English text book used by 11-year-old children in Japan has a lesson on world heroes. This lesson is meant to encourage the Japanese students and teach them about perseverance. The first hero mentioned in this lesson is Sri Lankan Karunananda.

The Japanese students know Karu. Do we know him? He is no hero for us. For Sri Lankans, he was the loser.

His son, the chief guest, Mr. Channa Ranatunga, who is he? He is a Presidential award winner for heroism. Today, he is a teacher at Lunuwila Buddhist Vidyalaya. A few years back, some students were burning garbage near his school garbage pit. One of them fell accidentally into the burning pit that was about 8 feet deep. The boy was on the heavy side. Channa, who was in a classroom, saw the boy falling and rushed to the place. Many students and teachers had gathered to the place by then, but no one was doing anything. Channa jumped inside and with great difficulty lifted the boy up whilst another teacher from top raised him and saved him. Channa's face and hand were badly

Thoughts that haunt me

burnt.

Do we need to go to Olympics and break records to become a hero? If you are keen enough, you have ample opportunities for small acts of heroism every day. We like to smell the fresh flowers, not the faded, withered ones. The faded flowers are cast away or thrown on the ground. Similarly, we like to praise the winner, not the loser. The winner is surrounded by his admirers; the loser is left to bite the dust. Very few of us think of the loser and pat him on the back, give him encouragement. We need a grain of heroism within us if we are to add value and flavour to our lives.

Ananda Perera



By Sirohmi Guneseckera

Birthday

"Oh dear, I feel so old. Today is my fiftieth birthday!" moaned Sherica.

"Don't count the years. You have lived a full life. You may not have married and had children but you have spent a useful life," remarked her friend Manilal.

"Well, I always try to be of help whenever I can. Fifty years is a lifetime of service but there were times when I just looked after myself. I guess I have been selfish too, pandering to my ego," said Sherica.

"Nobody is perfect. If we are honest with ourselves we will admit that there have been many occasions when we thought only of ourselves. We cannot spend our lives as adults without being ego-centric. You could not have reached fifty years without falling by the wayside once or twice. That is why we are sinners and need to ask forgiveness from God," said Manilal.

"Yes, we must not forget that Jesus Christ came to earth although He was the Son of God and suffered and died for our sins. So even if we commit sins on earth, if we truly repent, we will be pardoned," chimed in Laila, adding, "the longer we live, the more sins we commit. Sins can be both of commission and omission. In 'The Confiteor' at the beginning of the Mass, we ask pardon for 'what we have done and what we have failed to do.'"

"You are right. There are many things I have failed to do. I will resolve from now on to look out for ways to be a genuine Christian. Besides, on my birthday, I am going to say a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the blessings showered on me. I have reasonably good health and can get out of bed without assistance, have enough money for a plate of rice and curry today. Let me pray for humility and gratitude," concluded Sherica.

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



A famous artist whose paintings were extraordinary wanted to display them. After few days of display, a gentlemen inquired whether the paintings would appreciate in value after his death. "Of course," he said "they might even double in price." Who was that guy who brought all 15 paintings?"

"He was the artist's doctor."

Rev. Fr. Fracced Anthony Fernando OMI



Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

Both St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher were martyred for defending the traditional view of marriage and for remaining faithful to the Catholic Church. Both were executed by the government for their beliefs. Few saints are more relevant to our time. In fact, in 2000, Pope John Paul II named Thomas More patron of political leaders. And St. John Fisher the patron saint of those persecuted for the faith.



Saint Thomas More was born in London, the son of a judge. At a young age, Thomas was placed in the home of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, who, noting the boy's cheerful disposition and scholastic aptitude, arranged for him to attend Oxford. A serious student, and with few financial means, Thomas applied himself and avoided "*vain or hurtful amusements*" to the detriment of his studies. He quickly demonstrated considerable academic skills, mastering both Greek and Latin, becoming expert in French, mathematics, and history, and learning to play both the flute and viola. His gifts quickly attracted attention, and he was admitted to law school, and became a barrister.

It quickly became clear that Thomas excelled at law, but it was not where his primary interests lay. He was deeply drawn to the idea of the religious life, spending considerable time in prayer and contemplation, delivering lectures on the writings of Saint Augustine, and engaging in penance and mortification similar to those enacted by local monks. For example, Thomas wore a hair shirt each day and fasted. He eventually moved into the monastery, but could not ignore the injustices of English society, and eventually left to enter into a career in politics. He was married shortly thereafter.

Thomas entered Parliament, and tirelessly defended the rights of the poor, much to the annoyance of King Henry VII. In revenge, the King imprisoned Saint Thomas' father and would not release him until Thomas agreed to withdraw from public life. After the death of the King in 1509, Thomas became active once more. In 1510, he was appointed one of the two undersheriffs of London. In this capacity, he gained a reputation for being impartial, and a patron to the poor.

More's political career became increasingly at odds with King Henry VIII, who, himself was looking to break from the Catholic Church so that he might remarry. Despite his opposition to the plans of the king to divorce, he was elected Lord Chancellor.

Saints with courage to speak the truth

While his work in the law courts was exemplary, following his vocal disapproval of the king's plans, his career quickly came to a halt. He resigned in 1532, citing ill health. After failing to attend the coronation of the king's new wife, Anne Boleyn, he was one of the people accused of complicity with Elizabeth Barton, the nun of Kent who opposed Henry's break with Rome. Subsequently, Thomas refused to acknowledge the king as the head of the Church of England, defending the papacy. He was committed to the Tower of London, tried in a one-sided trial, and found guilty of treason.

Upon sentencing death by beheading the constable of the Tower of London visited More, respecting him, and seeking his forgiveness. More spoke to him, saying, "Good Master Kingston, trouble not yourself but be of good cheer; for I will pray for you, and my good Lady your wife, that we may meet in heaven together, where we shall be merry forever and ever." His last words, prior to the axe falling were: "I die - the King's good servant but God's first."

Saint Thomas' body was buried in the Church of Saint Peter. His parboiled head was placed on display on the Tower Bridge for one month prior to the local faithful rescuing it. During his lifetime, Saint Thomas wrote extensively poems, fiction, scholarly works, legal reviews, translations, contemplations of scripture, and prayers. Below is one such prayer:

Saint John Fisher was born in Beverly, Yorkshire. He studied theology at Cambridge University, receiving several degrees, and eventually decided to enter seminary. Upon ordination as a priest, he was assigned to Northallerton, England, where he established a reputation as an extraordinary preacher and scholar. Appointed proctor of Cambridge University, he created scholarships, introduced Greek and Hebrew into the curriculum, and brought in the world-famous Erasmus as Professor of Divinity and Greek. It was likely Saint John who introduced Erasmus to Saint Thomas More, beginning their lifelong friendship. In 1504, Saint John was elected Bishop of Rochester and Chancellor of Cambridge, in which capacity he also tutored Prince Henry who was to become Henry VIII.

Much like Saint Thomas, however, Saint John's commitment to the Church, including the sanctity of marriage and the legitimacy of the Pope, that was his undoing in English society. When Henry VIII decided to divorce, he asked Saint John to look into the matter. John, well respected as a theologian and a scholar, was quite vocal in his opposition to the divorce, and even more so regarding Henry's claims as the Head of the Church of England. Like Saint Thomas, John refused to pledge an oath of allegiance to the King, recognizing the Anglican Church, and as such, was arrested and confined to the Tower of London for 14 months without trial. During that time, many former colleagues—bishops, who had pledged allegiance to the king were sent to visit John, hoping to convince him to submit.

As the fourteen months went on, John became frail, ill, and emaciated due to the harsh treatment he received. Also, during this time, he was appointed Cardinal by the Pope. The following day, he was condemned to death by torture, but this sentence was modified to beheading as the jailors feared that the 66-year-old Cardinal was ill and too weak to endure any length of torture.

One hour before his execution, the Tower guard found Fisher standing and dressed, awaiting his fate. The holy Prelate took the New Testament and read aloud the from the Gospel of John: "*Now this is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou*

hast sent. I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now glorify Thou me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which, before the world was, was with Thee" (John 17:3-5). He closed the Bible and said, "There is enough learning in that to last me the rest of my life." And with that, he was led to the scaffold.

Weak and emaciated, Saint John Fisher found the strength to address the crowd gathered before the scaffold. He is said to have proclaimed in a loud voice:

"Christian people, I come hither to die for the faith of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, and I thank God hitherto my stomach hath served me very well there unto, so that yet I have not feared death.

Wherefore I do desire you all to help and assist me with your prayers, that at the very point and instant of death's stroke, I may in that very moment stand steadfast without fainting in any one point of the Catholic faith free from any fear; and I beseech Almighty God of His infinite goodness to save the king and this Realm, and that it may please Him to hold His holy hand over it, and send the king good Counsel."

With those words, having been offered a stay of execution multiple times should he relent his position, Saint John Fisher was beheaded. His head was placed on display on the Tower Bridge, but after two weeks during which time no decomposition was noted, the head was tossed into the Thames to deter those who had begun speaking of miracles. The spot his head had been placed was quickly filled with that of Saint Thomas Moore, martyred just nine days later. Saint John's relics remain in the Church of Saint Peter at the Tower of London.

Church celebrates their feast of St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher on 22 June. The stained glass of the saints is from St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya.

Sculpture by artist Schmalz Timothy P. of St. Thomas More titled A Man for All Seasons

The Four Seasons: *with life scenes in the tree crown*
 Spring: The First Meeting with Erasmus in the London House (lower left) More first met Erasmus during the latter's visit to England in 1499.
 Summer: Alice and Thomas More Playing the Lute in the Evening (upper left) In the background More's daughters by his first marriage: Margaret Roper (left) and Cecily Heron (right).
 Autumn: King Henry VIII at More's House in Chelsea (upper right) The king unsuccessfully attempts to persuade More on the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon.
 Winter: More's Execution on Tower Hill (lower right) More kisses the executioner as a symbol of forgiveness and consolation.



Saint Anthony of Padua



“But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-19)

Last year as we knelt in prayer right in front of the sacred relics of the Vocal Apparatus and Tongue of St. Anthony in the Chapel of the Relics in Padua, our memory rushed back to some incidents in the past, both far and near.

In 1981, a canonical recognition of the Body of St. Anthony was conducted with the permission of His Holiness John Paul II. 750 years after his death, the Saint's mortal remains were examined a second time. After these examinations, people were allowed and so millions and millions came to venerate the relics of our beloved Saint prior to re-burial. Perhaps you might have been among those millions. I was yet a teenager serving Fr. Mahes Ganemulla at the

altar of St. Anthony's Church, Batagama in the Archdiocese of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Doctors and Historians carefully analyzed the remains in order to reconstruct the physical appearance of the Saint. To the surprise of these experts, his *Vocal Apparatus* or the cartilage of the larynx (= the parts of the body used in phonation or speech) was found to be intact. Even 750 years after his death, it had remained incorrupt. Why is it so, dear believer?

The Body of St. Anthony was first recognized in 1263. When the sarcophagus was opened, St. Bonaventure found the *Tongue* of our Saint miraculously incorrupt. Given that tongue is a very fragile part of the body that is usually among the first parts to disintegrate after death, it can hardly remain incorrupt. More than 700 years have passed since his death. But the Tongue remains incorrupt – a perennial miracle, unique in history! Why is it so, dear believer?

We find answers to these questions in the words of our Master, **“But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”** Jesus did not come to abolish the Law. His mission remained within the framework of the Law. He fulfilled the Law extending and deepening its meaning. His Death and Resurrection ushered in the new and final age, the age of the new heavens and new earth. The Law of Moses now completed by Jesus became a standard of conduct for His disciples.

Saint Anthony of Padua not only studied but he also *obeyed* this New Law. Not only did he observe it, but he also *taught* it. He composed sermons for Sundays (around 1228) and feast days (between 1230-1231), as preserved up to this day. He shaped the development of Franciscan theology by introducing the teachings of St. Augustine to the friars and founding in 1223 a theology school for the friars which eventually became the school of theology at the University of Bologna. He traveled all over Italy and France preaching and

teaching the people as well as friars attracting multitudes wherever he went. He preached against heresies of the day so passionately that he came to be called ‘The Hammer of the Heretics.’

It is because the Saint taught the New Law, his Vocal Apparatus and Tongue remain intact for ages. The Tongue is a seal that marks the laborious task of preaching and teaching, carried out by the Saint. Hence Saint Bonaventure, having seen the Tongue when the coffin was for the first time opened in 1263, could not help but sing these praises, with his heart full of admiration: *“O Blessed Tongue, you have always praised the Lord and led others to praise Him! Now we can clearly see how great indeed have been your merits before God.”*

“But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Yes, our Saint was *counted among the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*. On the 13th of June in 1231, the dying Saint was taken on a farm wagon to Arcella near Padua. Having received the Last Rites, the Saint intoned the hymn to the Blessed Mother: “O glorious Queen, exalted above the stars!” His bright eyes gazed ahead. “What do you see?” asked Friar Luke. Then the dying Saint, who was about to be counted among the greatest in the holy heavens in the bosom of the glorious Queen, murmured, *“I see my Lord.”*

Our Saint was *counted among the greatest in the Church of Christ* as well. In the shadows of the evening, crowds of children ran shouting at the top of their voices: *“The Saint is dead! Friar Anthony is dead!”* The Body of the Saint was laid in the small Church of *Santa Maria Mater Domini* in fulfillment of his last wish. The entire population of Padua, dressed in mourning clothes



accompanied the funeral bier. *That very evening miracles began to occur around the grave of the Saint. Miracles continued at an increasing rate.* Pilgrims from the farthest end of the world started visiting his tomb. The process for canonization was commenced and concluded rapidly. *Less than a year* on May 30, 1232 in the Cathedral of Spoleto, Pope Gregory IX, who once called the Saint *‘The Ark of the Covenant’* being moved by his eloquent preaching in front of him, elevated Anthony of Padua to the honours of the altar. The one counted among the greatest in the kingdom of God was also counted among the greatest in the Church.

Today Saint Anthony is a *universal saint*, venerated by Christians and non-Christians alike. I can still remember how we, as altar servers of Rev. Fr. Mahes Ganemulla, could see large numbers of devotees from all faiths crowding our parish church, dedicated to St. Anthony, on Tuesdays in deep veneration of the Saint. His Relics remind us of his zeal for the Gospel. Hence let us obey and teach the Gospel, the New Law of Jesus, which was once faithfully obeyed and valiantly taught by our Saint. May he intercede for us all!

“Jesus’ place should always be in the centre of every heart. From this centre, as if from the sun, emanate rays of grace to each of us”
(St. Anthony of Padua)

Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi

St. Anthony's Shrine in People's Heart

About ten years ago, when I was a kid, I first visited St. Anthony's Shrine during its feast. Being a kid, I was wondering why the Shrine was so crowded. I fired a question to my mother: “Why is the Shrine so crowded?” She replied saying: “The faith of the people!”

Those days, as a child, I didn't fully understand what my mother said that day. But it is important to mention that one has only to visit this Shrine on the 13th of June every year, on its feast day, to see thousands from North, South, East and West of the Island and even from overseas come to visit, pray and to seek help, to fulfill their promises and to thank St. Anthony.

In Sri Lanka, St. Anthony has many devotees and several churches have been established in his honour. But St. Anthony's Shrine at Kochchikade, which is placed in the heart of Colombo, attracts a lot more devotees. People of every race, caste and religion visit this Shrine daily to pray to St. Anthony. Therefore the place is crowded and busy everyday.

I personally believe that this Shrine has a special blessing over its devotees. Up to date, I have asked many things kneeling in this Shrine and the ultimate result has been inspiring. In every single

occasion, I have got what I've wanted. Through the intercession of the Saint. Many say I am lucky. Yes, I am lucky not because I got what I wanted. But I think I am lucky because St. Anthony's Shrine is situated close to our vicinity so that I can go there even though I do not belong to St. Anthony's Shrine.

I am privileged to write this article. Maybe through this article God might be testing a scenario which I don't want to mention here.

However there is something special in this Shrine. Why do so many devotees, irrespective of their religions and racial differences, visit this Shrine throughout the whole year?

Giving a description about the history of this Shrine, according to tradition and gleaned from the documents preserved in the Archdiocesan Archives in Colombo is as follows:

In the 18th Century, Catholicism was still a proscribed religion in Sri Lanka and priests could not exercise their ministry in public. The Dutch were persecuting the Catholics but who preferred to be degraded, impoverished and ridiculed rather than give up their faith. Shrines such as Madhu, Talawila and Kochchikade are souvenirs of those dark days of persecution. (S.G. Perera, *SJ, Historical Sketches* page 14) A few Oratori-



ans from Goa, visited the faithful in Ceylon at the risk at their lives. Fr. Jacobme Gonsalvez, the Superior of the Oratorians who is affectionately remembered in Ceylon as the ‘father of Sinhala Catholic Literature’, lamented the fact the Catholics of Colombo had no resident priest. However a zealous priest, Fr. Antonio, disguised as a merchant took up his abode in a house in Maliban Street, Colombo, close to St. Philip Neri's Church. (*The old Church faced the road*). The Dutch discovered his hiding place, but Fr. Antonio, disguised, fled towards Mutwal. He met some fishermen who knew him and his reputation for sanctity, and volunteered to protect him from the Dutch, provided they obtained from God the favour they wanted, namely the

(Contd. on Pg. 9)

Cordiality extended to the President in Rome



President Rajapaksa meets Bishop Gino Riali



Meeting the Sri Lankan Community in Rome



A group photo with the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI



A section of the crowd present at the Sambuddhathwa celebrations

St. Anthony's.....

Contd. from Pg. 8

stoppage of sea erosion that prevented them drying their nets. Fr. Antonio decided to pray to God and asked St. Anthony's intercession to obtain for the fishermen the request they made. Fr. Antonio then returned to his home at Maliban Street, and came to the shore, clad in his priestly garments and with a large wooden Cross in his hand. Planting the Cross at the spot most threatened by the advancing Sea, he prayed to God to manifest His Glory, by working this miracle. The waves receded and an extensive sand bank was exposed to the view of all.

The Dutch Government appreciated this favour and offered a reward to the people's benefactor. The humble priest asked only the permission to live and die near the Cross he had planted. This was granted and the priest built a Chapel with mud in honour of his patron, St. Anthony of Padua. When he died after many years, he was buried there.

The little Chapel which was made of mud was enlarged in 1806. And in 1922 one of the members of the Congregation went to Goa and brought a Statue of St. Anthony and it was solemnly placed on the altar of the small Shrine. This is the very image that is to day held great veneration at St. Anthony's Shrine, Kochchikade, and the side altar on which it rests, is the altar of the ancient Church and stands on the very spot sanctified by miraculous event to which the origin of the same Sanctuary is due.

A tiny piece of the incorrupt tongue of St. Anthony of Padua is enshrined in a special reliquary and placed in one of the glass cases with a statue of the saint, at the entrance to the Shrine.

Soon after the arrival of the statue of St. Anthony the work of building of a large Church commenced and the Church was completed in 1928. The blessing of the new Church took place on Sunday the 1st June 1934, presided over by the Vicar General Very Rev. Fr. Caetano Antonio. It would appear that people of all creeds, government and military authorities too included, lent their support towards the erection of this Church which continues to be a centre of deep devotion to the Wonder Worker. With the devotees of the Saint increasing, this Church too became congested. In 1938 plans were made to improve and enlarge the structure. A choristers gallery, large wings on either side, the Mission house and meeting room behind the main altar were added. On the growing needs of the present day. It called for replacement, a new and more spacious structure has now taken its place. It is indeed a monument of love and devotion to St. Anthony raised by all, rich and poor, but mostly the latter, in Colombo, as well as in the whole of Ceylon. May St. Anthony protect this City and this Island and all his devout clients and lovers therein. (C.C.M. of 1 -3 - 40)

The present marble altar in the centre of the Church was consecrated by the then Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Cooray OMI in 1951.

Jesus showed his love to humans by sacrificing his life on a cross and it is time to sacrifice our life for the people who we love. God loved people expecting nothing. He loved us only as he wanted to give his love but we "love others expecting their love, care and many more things." According to the Holy Bible, "Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails....."

Jesus spent his whole life teaching humans how to love. On this St. Anthony's feast day we should at least take one step forward to go on the route that Jesus went during his whole life. May God bless you and thank you for reading.

Roshen Steelman



True Facts

I read the valued article appearing in the Messenger titled "Catholic Church - the Family of God" written by Mr. Victor Silva, with interest. I felt I should thank Mr. Silva for letting us know the true facts behind the conversion of Professor Scott Hann and his wife to the Catholic Church. When I called Mr. Silva this morning he was pleased but he said that it is because Fr. Felician publish the article that it became so meaningful.

So Father, I wish to thank you too very sincerely for your decision to print this very valuable article in toto in the Messenger.

Yvonne Amarasekena

St. Anthony helps even lost animals

Some years back I was working on a house - building project at Batagama North Jaela. The building site was within bell-hearing distance from St. Anthony's Church Batagama where Rev. Fr. Linton Joseph was the Parish Priest at the time. Being in close proximity to the church I was able to attend many services including the Healing Service on Fridays and the Novena to St. Anthony on Tuesdays.

A wayside stray dog, a female, that was fed with remnant food by me

and the workmen became friendly with all of us at the site. Very soon she made our site her permanent abode and was given the name Rani. As her mark of gratitude for our caring for her, she guarded the premises day and night. After some time she became pregnant and gave birth to five beautiful pups. This dog-family was living happily till one day the mother, who had gone on her rounds during the day, did not return by evening. A quick search in the immediate neighbourhood by the workmen brought no posi-

tive result. Hence the pups had to be bottle-fed with powdered milk.

When Rani did not return to her pups the following morning, it was clear that something had really gone wrong. Attending Mass in the morning, I made a fervent request to St. Anthony to help us to find the animal. When Rani was not seen in the evening or the next morning either, all but me, had lost hope about the animal. It was then with tearful eyes that I made my appeal to St. Anthony at Mass that morning to help us with a

clue to find the lost animal.

At tea-break on the third day a group of women fetching firewood in the area came to say they heard the barking of a dog in a deserted well nearby. The workmen lost no time in hurrying with ropes to the place mentioned and after a while Rani came running home and went straight to her pups.

This time it was with tears of joy that I went to the church to thank St. Anthony who, at the request of a human, had helped even a lost animal.

Neville Anthony Perera

I was privileged to have known Father Alex and worked with him and I can say with proud conviction - here was a man who walked the line unafraid - with truth and justice as his *raison d'être*!

We mourn his loss, we miss him and though he was not a bold faced name in the way of our celebrity-obsessed society, our country and the world will be the poorer for his having left us!

Dear Father, when Jesus celebrated His victory over death, He chose to give us many things to comfort us in trials, and among the best of them He chose to give us you. Now only the echoes linger to sustain us and always will!

Karen



Fr. Alfred Alexander sss

ingly denied them by war, famine and natural disasters. Father Alex tried to illustrate on many occasions that the invisible barriers of human selfishness and greed were the most pernicious dividing factors in our world today. Service to his fellow men, to uplift the oppressed and tirelessly defend their cause, was the *sine qua non* of his existence.

An exemplary Christian

Mrs. Therese Wijesekara the President of St. Vincent de Paul Society Nagoda, Kandana passed away under tragic circumstances having met with an accident on Friday 18th May 2012 offering her soul to the Lord. The funeral took place on Sunday 20th May 2012, amidst a large gathering at St. John the Baptist Church Nagoda, Kandana. Three priests who had been in this parish earlier Rev. Fr. Priya Jayamanne and Rev. Fr. Daya Dharshana officiated at Church, Rev. Fr. Sameeth Fernando, at the grave site, and Rev. Fr. Ranjan Silva, the Parish Priest, delivered the homily.

Late Therese had a continuous service in St. Vincent de Paul Society of Nagoda for 23 Years, of which she served as Treasurer for 17 years and the final period of two years as President. She was one of the enthusiastic members who initiated the work of the Elders Home in the Parish of Nagoda in 1995. As an exemplary member of the SVP, she had an ardent desire of helping the poor irrespective of the assistance rendered by the members of the SVP, she showed her commitment towards the needy quite admirably.

As Chairperson of the Elders' Home, from the very

poor, the suffering people and as the people are helpless he has to take the mantle upon himself and has to become a voice of the voiceless.

Some of those who wield power in that particular area, do serve the people in a very discriminatory way. When I had the opportunity to meet some fishermen in close vicinity to the town of Mannar, the poor fishermen did explain their difficulties when they had approached the minister concerned about their plight. What was the response of this particular minister? That you did not vote for us at the elections so be prepared to suffer the consequences.

In a recent newspaper account a certain official of the Diocese of Mannar had also accused this same minister for discrimination in employment. Of the 600 posts only ten were given to the majority community. Even 10 vacancies were offered to those people who supported his political agenda. This is indeed a gross violation of justice as there is no equal treatment and this type of discrimination creates reconciliation more difficult. It is the task of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Bishops' Conference to examine such stories of discriminations and violations of human rights not only in Mannar but all parts of the country. This National Commission which is set up under guidance of the Bishops' Conference has to wake up be a voice to the voiceless.

Rev. Fr. Reid Shelton Fernando

St. Anthony's College, Wattala OBA Executive Committee 2012-2013

The following Members were elected to serve at St. Anthony's College, Wattala OBA Executive Committee from 2012-2013.

Patron: Rev. Bro. Denzil Perera

(Provincial La Sallian Brothers)

Vice Patrons: Rev. Fr. Prasanth Amarasekara, Mr. Neil de Silva,

Mr. Gamini Perera, Mr. Clement Fernando,

Mr. Felician Peiris, Mr. Lalith Jayawardena,

Mr. Benedict Silva, Admiral Cecil Tissera,

Mr. Rohan Bernard Fernando,

Rev. Fr. Mal Fernando (Ex-officio - Principal)

President: Mr. John Emmanuel

Imm. Past President: Mr. Ranjan de Silva.

Vice Presidents: Mr. Suresh Amarasekara,

Mr. Susantha Perera,

Mr. Ranjan Mendis, Mr. Raju Ratnavel,

Mr. Ranjith de Mel,

Mr. Clarence Leonard, Mr. Lanka de Silva,

Mr. Kavinda Rodrigo, Mr. Malintha Jayasundera,

Mr. Neomal Perera.

General Secretary: Mr. Lakshman Dinuka

Asst. Gen. Secretary: Mr. Ranjan de Silva

Treasurer: Mr. Roshan Rodrigo

Asst. Treasurer: Mr. Ignatius Perera

Sports Secretary: M. Hiran Dabare.

Asst. Sports Secretary: Mr. Tyronne Fernando

Soc. & Mem. Secretary: Mr. Anuruddha Rajapakse.

Committee Members: Mr. Clifford Spearing, Mr. Oliver Fernanado, Mr. Sanjeeva Weerasinghe, Mr. Sukumal Fernando, Mr. Terrance Nugera, Mr. Bernard Perera, Mr. Indika Abeyratne, Mr. Awanrha Perera, Mr. Chmin-da Roshan, Mr. Jerald de Silva, Mr. Senaka Perera, Mr. Gamini Fonseka, Mr. P.M.S. Jayamanna, Mr. Dimuthu Anayana, Mr. Gayan Lakshitha.

(Clarence Leonard)

APPRECIATION

Memories time cannot erase!

'A voice we loved is stilled,' it's resonance haunts the corridors of St. Philip Neri's and echoes on the back roads of my memory! Father Alex, our hearts are as burdened with grief today as they were one year ago when you left without a goodbye!

Father Alex's character was his supreme attainment and from all that has been written about him it is clear that, as a lover of God, he was possessed with a heavenly charity and mischievous humour. Father Alex was constantly generous not only in deeds but also in his consideration of others. There was one outstanding feature in this priest of God, he was disciplined in mind and personal living to a rare degree and emanated a grace and sweetness which was incomparable. His interior austerity enabled him to be most kind to others.

Father was born on 12th September 1938, at Allaipiddy in Jaffna and he was not to know that even at his birth, God had chosen him for His own. From a family of three boys and a girl, the Lord took the youngest into His fold. Who of us could ever forget his disarming smile and resonant voice raised in praise of his God, the

God he loved so much that he once told me "God is my mother and my father." Equating his heavenly Father to the role of his natural parents was his unequivocal acceptance of God's love and his own unconditional commitment to God. Father Alex lost his mother when he was just one and a half years old and, in 1975, God called his father too.

Father's real strength lay in his remarkable ability to adjust and relate to others and this contributed largely to the success of his priesthood. He was a great priest, not only in his work but as a rare human being. He could accomplish what he did because he was first of all, a holy man.

The boundaries of the real world often frustrated Father Alex, he lived with a single purpose, to uplift the marginalized, the poorest of the poor and be among them. The ethnic war in Sri Lanka was his greatest sorrow and he spent the greater part of his life constantly journeying to the North-East and back, working hard in order to ensure that those less fortunate than he could make it to the next day and beyond. All he wanted to achieve for them was a chance at life and prospects seem-

The Concert that was...

"Memories are made of these"

Review of Trail Blazing Years of Denzil and Bosco

The concert succinctly titled "Memories" featuring Denzil and Bosco became a historic event as it unfolded at the Lionel Wendt, before a packed audience. Those who came knew well that the presentation was by an inimitable duo, who stood shoulder to shoulder at the summit of a journey spanning sixty incomparable years of singing. Perhaps none in this land, and maybe just a handful world over could lay claim to such a tall and justifiable boast. The concert has come and gone, but the memories linger on.

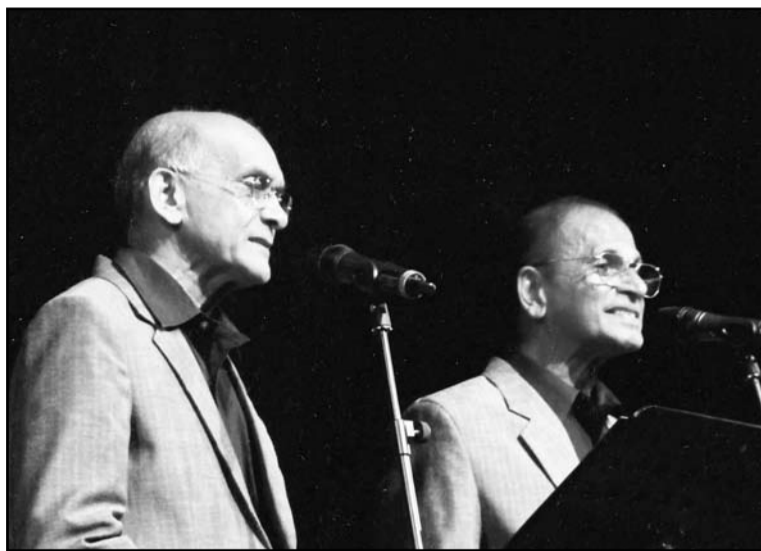
In 1951, Denzil and Bosco joined St. Benedict's College, a cherished cradle for many musicians of repute, literally walking hand in hand. Figuratively they came cheek to cheek straight away to begin their journey together along the less travelled path of vocal music of the harmonious type.

They were amply blessed as they came under the tutelage of another great Old Benedictine musician and choral director Bonny Fonseka who was also a teacher in the prestigious Commerce section of the College. As boy soprano and alto, the

lad enriched the choir of St. Benedict's whose presentation of "Bathiyena Pempala" (music by Bonny Fonseka to the lyrics of Rev. Fr. Don Peter) won the second place in the competition for the selection of the new National Anthem in the post colonial era. The music got perpetuated when it was recorded for gramophone disc and became a treasured possession of Fr. Don Peter.

The Beginning

Denzil Perera and Bosco Fonseka (darling son of mastro Bonny Fonseka), teaming up together as mentioned earlier as an inseparable musical duo from that tender age, progressed through their teens as artistes in great demand in an era where melodious, heart warming music was the norm. The harmony of 'Everly Brothers' in the early 60's stirred their imagination and obviously they became hot favourites at the informal concerts titled "Our Own Show" organised by Rev. Bro. Edward at St. Benedict's Col-



lege. This programme also surprisingly, attracted female vocalists from Good Shepherd Convent. Thereafter they came under the wings of renowned showman Malcolm Andre and began earning fame in public concerts right across the nation.

All through their long musical journey, they enriched their vocal and harmonic skills by training under Maestro Lylie Godridge in his Acapella choir and thereafter as members of "Choro Benedicte" and "Saints" - as they do now.

The Concert

Thus, when the scene opened at the Lionel Wendt on that beauti-

ful Sunday, the audience was pleasantly surprised to hear tender, mellifluous and youthful voices of the senior duo merging and emerging in exquisite harmony. "Take a message to Mary" they began, and sleekly presented all of the "Nashville Blues" and "Listen to the Ocean." How can one reconcile to the idea that here were two "Young" men in their early seventies, singing and sounding as though in their sweet "seventeens"?

Added Musical Flavour

The two men gave way to three sisters. Musically and otherwise charming Shyami, Marcia

and Yasmin, all nieces of Bosco. Within moments they captured the hearts of the discerning audience by their virtuoso on the keyboards, vocal excellence and neat presentation.

Then returned to the stage- the refreshed duo Denzil and Bosco who renewed nostalgia of the past with their rich rendition of "Pretty Blue Eyes", "Besame Mucho", "Las Mananitas", "Like Strangers", "Blue Diamond Medley" and "Sounds of Silence".

After a break, the members of the Choro Benedicte ensemble who in the recent past, have transformed themselves from an elegant Philharmonic Choir of the yester years, to a rock/pop group with the nondescript attire to give a touch of the contemporary age, presented their segment. They excelled in the Acapella singing which they did with much enthusiasm.

The Final Segment

The "D & B" duo by now was immensely

relaxed, evoking hearty laughter with their anecdotes, plunged deep into six decades of musical experience and expertise, to take the audience through an incredibly awesome musical journey. They sang "Are you Sure", "So Sad", "Wooden Heart", "Always", "Michelle", "That's what you do to me" and "Memories are made of These".

They were accompanied by Eshantha Peiris, Revel Creg and the group with sensitivity and elegance.

When they aptly ended their concert with "Maybe Tomorrow", the audience was not convinced by the promise; they wanted more. So the D & B duo graciously responded with a parting song.

As the lights faded and the stage became bare, the enthusiastic applause lingered for a while. With a sense of fulfillment the audience went home, exclaiming "memories are made of these."

"History" they say, is a litany of the events past. Indeed that evening, Denzil and Bosco made it happen.

Francis D' Almeida

O! Mary we crown thee with blossoms today..

The Kingdom of Heaven

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

"He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me".

Causing to Stumble

"If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. "Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!"

Matthew 18:1-7

A Rosary rally was held in the Diocese of Chilaw recently, with the participation of a very large gathering of children from three churches belonging to the Parish of Thoduwwa, with the motive of inculcating in them a devotion to Our Lady and the Rosary.

All the children who participated in the rally were Daham pasal students from Churches of Thoduwwa, Kudaamaduwella and Barudalpola.

Each child was given a rosary and the recitation was led by a group of priests consisting of Rev. Fr. Wimal Siri Jayasuriya, Judicial Vicar (Chilaw Diocese), Rev. Fr. Ivan Peter Fernando, Parish Priest of Kirimatiyana, Rev. Fr. Eugene de Silva, Parish Priest of Thoduwwa and Assistant Parish Rev. Fr. Dushantha Perera.



The rally was initiated by a team of parishioners led by Tony Nishantha Fernando and members of the Choir.

Kumara Nayanajith



Pix : Lakmal Dias

A little bit of adjustment



1. Give up your need to always be right.

There are so many of us who can't stand the idea of being wrong - wanting to always be right - even at the risk of ending great relationships or causing a great deal of stress and pain, for us and for others. It's just not worth it. Whenever you feel the 'urgent' need to jump into a fight over who is right and who is wrong, ask yourself this question: "Would I rather be right, or would I rather be kind?" Wayne Dyer.

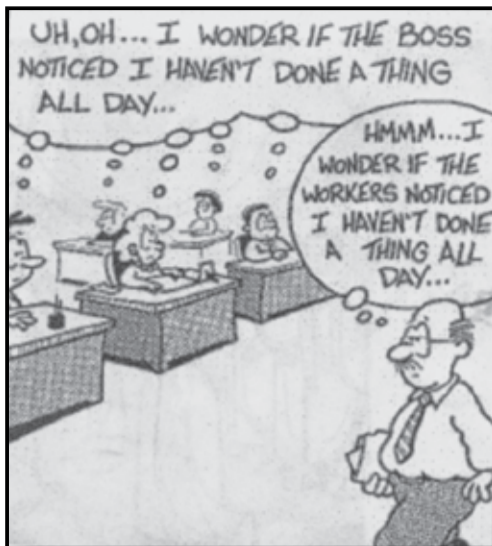
2. Give up your need for control.

Be willing to give up your need to always control everything that happens to you and around you - situations, events, people, etc. Whether they are loved ones, coworkers, or just strangers you meet on the street - just allow them to be. Allow everything and everyone to be just as they are and you will see how much better that will make you feel.

"By letting go, it all gets done. The world is won by those who let it go. But when you try and try. The world is beyond winning." Lao Tzu

3. Give up on blame.

Give up on your need to blame others for what you have or don't have, for what you feel or don't feel. Stop giving your powers away and start taking responsibility for your life.



ity for your life.

4. Give up your self-defeating self-talk

Oh my! How many people are hurting themselves because of their negative, polluted and repetitive self-defeating mind-set? Don't believe everything that your mind is telling you - especially if it is negative and self-defeating. You are better than that.

"The mind is a superb instrument if used rightly. Used wrongly, however, it becomes very destructive." Eckhart Tolle

5. Give up your limiting beliefs

What you can or cannot do, about what is possible or impossible. From now on, you are no longer going to allow your limited beliefs to keep you stuck in the wrong place. Spread your wings and fly!

"A belief is not an idea held by the mind, it is an idea that holds the mind." Elly Roselle

6. Give up complaining.

Give up your constant need to complain about those many, many, things - people, situations, events that make you unhappy, sad and depressed. Nobody can make you unhappy, no situation can make you sad or miserable unless you allow it to. It's not the situation that triggers those feelings in you, but how you

choose to look at it. Never underestimate the power of positive thinking.

7. Give up the luxury of criticism.

Give up your need to criticize things, events or people that are different than you. We are all different, yet we are all the same. We all want to be happy, we all want to love and be loved and we all want to be understood. We all want something and something is wished by us all.

8. Give up your need to impress others.

Stop trying so hard to be something that you're not just to make others like you. It doesn't work this way. The moment you stop trying so hard to be something that you're not, the moment you take off all your masks, the moment you accept and embrace the real you, you will find people will be drawn to you, effortlessly.

9. Give up your resistance to change.

Change is good. Change will help you move from A to B. Change will help you make improvements in your life and also the lives of those around you. Follow your bliss, embrace change - don't resist it.

"Follow your bliss and the universe will open doors for you where there were only walls" Joseph Campbell

10. Give up labels.

Stop labelling those things, people or events that you don't understand as being weird or different and try opening your mind, little by little. Minds only work when open.

"The highest form of ignorance is when you reject something you don't know anything about." Wayne Dyer.

Calling Student Correspondents

To all Rev. Father Rectors, Rev. Sister Superiors and Principals:

All institutions which have English Academies are hereby invited to appoint a student correspondent to link with the Catholic Messenger. This could also be from your media unit.

The correspondent may report to us on any event or matter of importance that needs publicity and may act as a link to forward articles of any student who wishes to write to us.

Please consider this as an opportunity to add prestige to your Alma Mater.

Editor



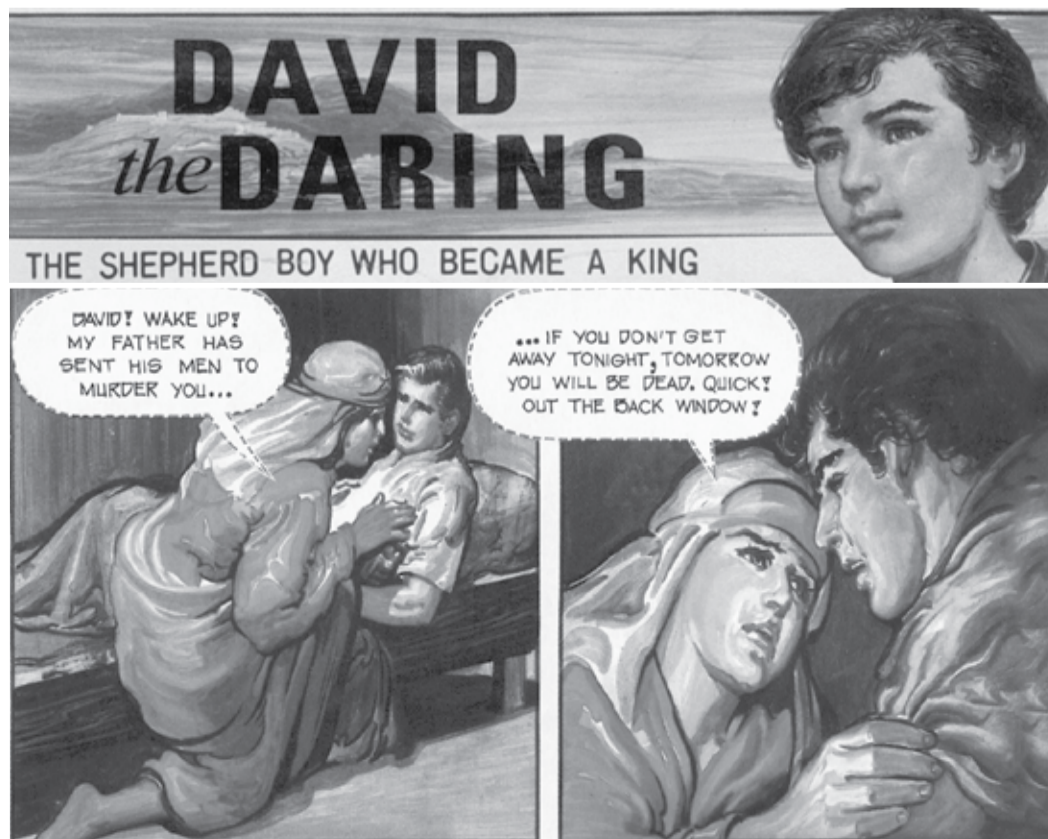
An AELT programme was started on 27th of January for students who had sat for the G.C.E. O/L Examination in 2012. During the programme we had various competitions like drama, singing and spelling. Of the three Houses - Active, Brave and Creative, Active House got first place. Brave House got second place and Creative House came third. We had a good time.

In the last week of the AELT programme we had our final exam, a concert and a DJ party. It was a very enjoyable time. During our programme we met many friends from various schools. We had our farewell on 1st of April. It was a very sad day because we had to say goodbye to our loving friends.

Finally I would like to thank our heavenly Father who guided, protected and blessed us. I also thank our Director Rev. Fr. Cyril Perera and the Rev. Sister. Last but not least I would like to thank our teachers who made us so knowledgeable. I thank specially Madam Douglas, Miss Sanduni Gunathilaka, Mrs. Kumudini Fernando, Mr. Michael Angelo, Mr. Mervin Perera, and Rev. Fr. Hemantha Fernando. I would also like to thank Mr. Buddhika and Mr. Imaalan who taught us Information Technology. I thank all the people who helped us in various ways.

May God bless them all.

Hansani Perera
Active 1
John Paul 2nd Centre,
Ma-eliya, Ja-ela.



(Next week)

What it says in the Readings

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

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B 17th June - 24th June 2012

SUN: 11TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Ez. 17: 22-24, 2 Cor. 5: 6-10,
Mk. 4: 26-34

Mon: 1 Kgs. 21: 1-16, Mt. 5: 38-42

Tue: Memorial of St. Romuald, Abbot
1 Kgs. 21: 17-29, Mt. 5: 43-48

Wed: 2 Kgs. 2: 6-14, Mk. 6: 1-6, 16-18

Thu: Memorial of St. Aloysius
Gonzaga, Religious
Sir 48:1-15, Mt. 6: 7-15

Fri: Memorials of St. Paulinus of Nola,
Bishop, SS. John Fisher, Bishop &
Thomas More, Martyrs
2 Kgs. 11: 1-4, 9-18, 20, Mt. 6: 19-23

Sat: 2 Chr. 24:17-25; Mt. 6: 24-34

Sun: THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN
THE BAPTIST
Is. 49:1-6, Act. 13: 22-26,
Lk. 1: 57-66-80

Prayers of the Faithful

Response: Lord, increase our faith, to face challenges of life.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for our Holy Father Pope Benedict, Our Bishops, all the clergy and religious of our country, and those discerning their vocation. May they remain faithful to the Gospel of your Son Jesus Christ, in word and in deed. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, increase our faith, to face challenges of life.

Lord, we thank you for the graces and blessings you have showered upon all of us, May we care and have compassion and love to all around us, and come to know and love you through the abundance of your gifts. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, increase our faith, to face challenges of life.

Lord, we thank you for our children and young people. Remain close to them in their growing years, may the mustard seed of faith grow within them, and may we show them good example by the lives we lead. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, increase our faith, to face challenges of life.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga

Born in the castle of Castiglione, 9 March, 1568; died 21 June, 1591. He had in fact distinguished himself, when in Spain, by a public examination not only in philosophy, but also in theology, at the University of Alcalá. He made his vows 25 November, 1587. Immediately after, he began his theological studies. Among his professors were Fathers Vasquez and Azor. In 1591 when in his fourth year of theology a famine and pestilence broke out in Italy. Though in delicate health, he devoted himself to the care of the sick, but on March 3 he fell ill and died 21 June, 1591. He was beatified by Gregory XV in 1621 and canonized by Benedict XIII in 1726. His remains are in the church of St. Ignazio in Rome in a magnificent urn of lapis lazuli wreathed with festoons of silver. The altar has for its centerpiece a large marble relief of the Saint by Le Gros.



Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading. Ezek. 17: 22-24

To the people who were living in exile, God promises a king who would rule them with justice and power. This kingdom would be established in Israel. This kingdom will give shelter to all peoples.

Second Reading. 2 Cor. 5: 6-10

St. Paul writes to the Corinthian community to remind them that like him they should live in the world, a life that prepares them to be inhabitants in the kingdom of God.

Gospel. Mk. 4: 26 -34

Two parables of the Kingdom of God are presented. One the parable of the seed is to show us the mysterious growth of the Kingdom of God. And the parable of the mustard seed is to show us the universality of the Kingdom of God.

Reflection

Today's readings speak of the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It was a promise made at the beginning and was established with Jesus. But we have to fulfill this by living lives worthy of the Kingdom of God. This is the message set for us in today's readings.

In the First Reading the Israelites were living in Babylon. There was no hope of freedom from exile. But suddenly prophet Ezekiel comes out with the Lord's message of freedom and re-establishment of their kingdom. But it is now a new kingdom that the Lord promises them. It is a strong and a powerful kingdom. This is said in a symbolic form. The symbol is a Cedar tree growing on a lofty mountain. It will be a universal kingdom where all people could and would find refuge. With the establishment of the new kingdom all would know the power of the Lord. This was the promise made

to the Israelites long before the coming of the Messiah. It is the Messianic kingdom that the Lord promised through the prophet Ezekiel. This promise was fulfilled with the coming of the Messiah.

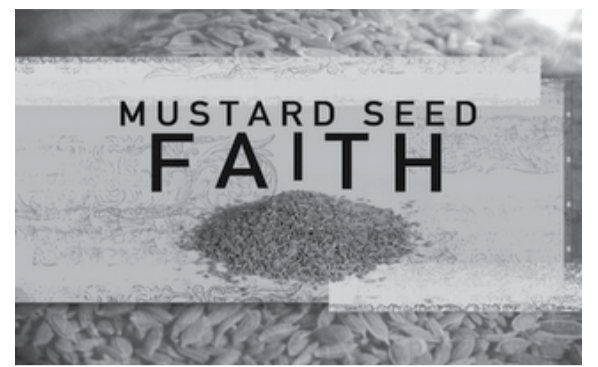
In the Gospel Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God through parables. The first is the parable of the seed. Here the growth of the kingdom is slow, steady, smooth and silent. The farmer merely plants. The growth occurs in accordance with nature. The farmer comes only to harvest. It is so also with the kingdom of God.

The second parable is the parable of the mustard seed. The mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds but it grows to be the greatest of all shrubs. Even the birds of the air build their nests in it. Here the Kingdom of God grows to be the biggest of all.

It also becomes a universal kingdom so that all could find shelter and refuge. It is open to all Jews and Gentiles alike.

The Kingdom of God is not for the priests alone but also for the people. Anyone could come to it, make use of it, find shelter and take refuge therein. Therefore we all should strive for the Kingdom of God.

The Second Reading reminds us though we are of the world, we should live a perfect life. We all should live a life worthy of the Kingdom of God. Then and only then would we be allowed to secure a place in the kingdom of God in the life after. Therefore let everyone strive to live a life worthy of the kingdom of God and thereby reserve our place in the Kingdom of God.



Aid story

When King Darius of Persia planned the conquest of Greece, he gave orders that during the 4 years he was going to take to prepare for the campaign, a slave should wake him up every morning with these words, "Lord, do not forget the war against Athens," War against Greece was but an imperial whim for Darius. However he did not want to lose sight of it for a moment. On the other hand, how does modern man scorn that divine command: "Save thy Soul."

Aid Story 2

A wealthy man, noted during his life time for his selfishness and meanness, died and arrived outside the Pearly Gates. He was disconcerted to find that before entering he was required to explain why he should deserve admission. So he told St. Peter that once on a cold winter's day, he had given two pence to an old lady who was starving, and on another occasion he had given a penny to a little boy whose parents had been killed in a revolution. St. Peter transmitted this information to Gabriel and inquired, "What shall I do with this applicant?" And Gabriel said, "Give him his three pence back with interest and tell him to go to hell."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

The Grace of Baptism

1262 The different effects of Baptism are signified by the perceptible elements of the sacramental rite. Immersion in water symbolizes not only death and purification, but also regeneration and renewal. Thus the two principal effects are purification from sins and new birth in the Holy Spirit.

For the forgiveness of sins...

1263 By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.

1264 Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an inclination to sin that Tradition calls *concupiscence*, or metaphorically, "the tinder for sin" (fomes peccati); since concupiscence "is left for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ." Indeed, "an athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

"A new creature"

1265 Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but

also makes the neophyte "a new creature," an adopted son of God, who has become a "partaker of the divine nature, member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

1266 The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized *sanctifying grace*, the grace of *justification*:

- enabling them to believe in God, to hope in him and to love him through the theological virtues:
- giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues.

Thus the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its roots in Baptism.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church)

