



MARY MOTHER  
OF GOD

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# Messenger

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HAPPY NEW  
YEAR 2012

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## Holy Father's New Year Message:

# "Look to 2012 with an attitude of confident trust"



**The beginning of a new year, God's gift to humanity, prompts me to extend to all, with great confidence and affection, my heartfelt good wishes that this time now before us may be marked concretely by justice and peace.**

With what attitude should we look to the New Year? We find a very beautiful image in

Psalm 130. The Psalmist says that people of faith wait for the Lord "more than those who watch for the morning" (v. 6); they wait for him with firm hope because they know that he will bring light, mercy, salvation. This waiting was born of the experience of the Chosen People, who realized that God taught them to look at the world in its truth and

not to be overwhelmed by tribulation. I invite you to look to 2012 with this attitude of confident trust. It is true that the year now ending has been marked by a rising sense of frustration at the crisis looming over society, the world of labour and the economy, a crisis whose roots are primarily cultural and anthropological. It seems as if a shadow has fallen over our time, preventing us from clearly seeing the light of day.

In this shadow, however, human hearts continue to wait for the dawn of which the Psalmist speaks. Because this expectation is particularly powerful and evident in young people, my thoughts turn to them and to the contribution

which they can and must make to society. I would like therefore to devote this message for the XLV World Day of Peace to the theme of education: "Educating Young People in Justice and Peace", in the conviction that the young, with their enthusiasm and idealism, can offer new hope to the world.

My Message is also addressed to parents, families and all those involved in the area of education and formation, as well as to leaders in the various spheres of religious, social, political, economic and cultural life and in the media. Attentiveness to young people and their concerns, the ability to listen to them and appreciate

(Continued on Pg. 5) »

## Mary's virginity guarantees Christ's divinity, Pope teaches

(CNS) Pope Benedict XVI said that the virginity of Mary guarantees Jesus' divinity because it proves the Incarnation is solely the work of God.

"The human being that begins to live in her womb takes the flesh from Mary, but his existence is derived entirely from God," the Pope said in his final Sunday Angelus address before Christmas.

"The fact that Mary conceived while remaining a virgin is, therefore, essential to the understanding of Jesus and our faith, because it witnesses that it was God's initiative and above all it reveals who is conceived."

So while Jesus is "fully human" and "made of earth," he "comes from above, from heaven" and is truly "the Son of God."

Thus, said the Pope, "the virginity of Mary and the divinity of Jesus reciprocally guarantee one another."

## Mary: Source of Refuge

*Seated in the manger  
Or standing by the cross  
Enraptured by her heavenly child  
Or grieving at his loss*

*The range of all emotions  
She knew from end to end  
And thus we know we have in her  
An understanding friend*

*Who knew the depths of sadness  
The heights of joy sublime  
And all the stresses and the strains  
We feel from time to time*

*So when we are in anguish  
There is a friend who heeds  
Our pleas for comfort, care and love  
And help in all our needs*

*So Mother Mary kind and chaste  
We know that you are there  
To help us with your gentle grace  
And with a mother's care*

Judge C.G. Weeramantry

## Vatican decries Nigerian blast

VATICAN CITY (Reuters) - The Vatican on Sunday denounced the Christmas day blast at a Catholic Church in Nigeria that killed more than 15 people as blind and absurd "terrorist violence" that enflames hate.

"We are close to the suffering of the Nigerian Church and the entire Nigerian people so tried by terrorist violence, even in these days that should be of joy and peace," Vatican spokesman Father Federico Lombardi told Reuters.

He called the attack "another manifestation of blind and absurd violence which has no respect for human life and seeks to enflame more hate and confusion".

He said the Vatican hoped that "this senseless violence does not weaken the will of the Nigerian people to live peacefully and promote dialogue in their country".

## Merry Christmas at 'Prem Nivasa'



A moment of joy in this season of joy - Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith and Indian HC, Ashok Kanth and Mr. Ivan Vidanarachchi at 'Prem Nivasa' (Rev. Fr. Sunil de Silva)

"Whoever receives one of such little children because of My name, receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me." (Mk 9: 37)

**His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo and His Excellency Ashok Kanth, the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka visited "Prem Nivasa" on Christmas Day, 25th December 2011.**

Rev. Sr. Mary Eliza MC, Superior of the "Prem Nivasa", Rawatawatta,

was arrested on Friday the 25th November 2011 by Police under the instructions and orders given by the National Child Protection Authority. A team headed by Anoma Dissanayake, Chairperson of the National Child Protection Authority, including Police officers of the Authority had

surrounded the "Prem Nivasa" at Moratuwa, of the Missionary Sisters of Blessed Mother Teresa on 23rd November 2011 to investigate into the children and mothers being looked after by the Rev. Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity.

(Continued on Pg. 2) »

## New Episcopal Vicar for Galle Diocese

Rev. Fr. Charles Hewawasam, Administrator of St. Mary's Church, Matara, has been appointed as the New Episcopal Vicar for the Diocese of Galle.

The appointed was made by the Bishop of Galle, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Raymond Wickramasinghe.

Fr. Charles will also take charge of St. Xavier's



Minor Seminary, Kalegana as the new Rector and as Coordinator of All the Apostolates in the Diocese.



## News in Pictures

### Book Presentation



The first copy of "Memories Do not Die" a book by E.M.M. Wijerama, a lawyer of the Balapitiya Bar Association was presented to Retired Supreme Court Judge, J.F.A. Soza at his residence in Battaramulla.

The presentation took place on November 30. The following members of the Balapitiya Bar, who assisted the author in many ways were also present at the presentation: Balapitiya Bar Association president Padma de Silva, Balapitiya Legal Aid Branch head Mercy Munidredasa, Sujeewa de Silva and Himashi Fernando.

### Love of St. Nicholas the down-trodden



"St. Nicholas who is popularly known as Santa Claus set a fine example of genuine human love towards the poor and the down-trodden by distributing all the wealth he inherited from his parents, freely among the poor families in Milan.

So said Rev. Fr. Ranjith Andradi of St. Joseph's International School, Enderamulla who presided at the High Mass for St. Nicholas' Feast at Bopitiya.

We must determine to follow his footsteps and brighten our life in accordance with the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ who also was compassionate to the helpless, he added.

Rev. Fr. Kennedy Perera officiated at Vespers, and services for the sick were conducted by Rev. Fr. Saman Maximus.

Rev. Fr. Erinton Silva, Parish Priest, made the festival arrangements with the assistance of the Parish Council.

(S.K.J. Kurera)

### Nativity celebrations at Sacred Heart Sunday School Mattumagala



The prize-giving of Sacred Heart Sunday School Mattumagala, in Ragama was held recently, under the patronage of Rev. Fr. Pontius Ronnie Perera, Parish Priest.

The chief invitees on this occasion were the Viharadhipathi of the Mugalanda Kutu, Kelawarapitiya Sumedha Nayake Thero, Rev. Fr. Mahesh Krishantha, Rev. Fr. Nishal Ranatunga and parents and teachers.

Picture shows a scene from the Nativity play enacted by the children.

(Text: K.D. Ruchira, Pic: H.A. Caldera)

### 154th Annual Church Feast of St. Mary's - Maggona



The annual feast of St. Mary's Church, Maggona was celebrated on 11th December. Picture shows the Chief celebrant Rev. Fr. Jayanath Bertram Fernando, Bursar, St. Aloysius' Seminary, Borella (at centre) and Rev. Fr. Asanka Jude (at right) TOR taken in procession to the venue accompanied by Rev. Fr. Hemantha Udaya Kumar Perera, Parish Priest Maggona (at left).

Rev. Fr. Lakpriya Kumara Nonis, Parish Priest Weliweriya, opened the church website on Vespers day. Website: www.stmarysmaggona.com)

(D. Anselm Fernando)

### Celebrating the Joy and Peace of the Holy Season



The annual Christmas carol service of St. Lawrence's Convent, Wellawatte, was held on 2nd December 2011.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Nobert Andradi, Bishop of Anuradhapura was the chief guest. Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawala, Archdiocesan Director of Education and General Manager of Catholic Private Schools (WP) and other invitees from neighbouring schools and churches students and well wishers, also participated.

A donation of Rs. 100,000/- was gifted to the under privileged students of Anuradhapura diocese as a token of love and sharing, which represents the true spiritual value of Christmas.

The photo shown unfolds the story of the birth of the Prince of Peace.

(S. Fernando)

### Merry Christmas.... Contd. from Pg. 1

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, called a Press Conference on 03rd Dec. 2011 at the Archbishop's House, Colombo 8, with the regard incident at "Prem Nivasa" and said, What I have to say that there are several groundless accusations leveled without properly investigating or finding the truth about the services of these Sisters. I make use of this opportunity to protest in the strongest terms, against this high handed action. I appeal to all the Catholics to pray for these Rev. Sisters who, and also for the misguided people and also to express their solidarity with the Sisters. Therefore, I strongly protest against the way this matter has been handled and as a mark of protest, I will not attend any State or State Institution functions during this Christmas period, until this is rectified."

The Colombo Magistrate Courts having received the investigations reports from the Attorney General and from the Criminal Investigation Department, Colombo Magistrate Courts said that there are no illegal activities happening at "Prem Nivasa" of Mother Teresa's Sisters, at Rawathawatta. and released Rev. Sr. Mary Eliza from all accusations NCPA had presented to the Courts.

His Excellency Ashok Kantha, the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, was deeply concerned over the about the arrest of Rev. Sr. Mary Eliza MC and the way National Child Protection Authority and the Police have acted to find out information about "Prem Nivasa".

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith and His Excellency Ashok Kantha, the Indian High Commissioner went around meeting the children and other inmates at "Prem Nivasa" and also participated in a concert presented by the children at "Prem Nivasa" and also met Rev. Sr. Mary Eliza MC, Very Rev. Sr. Johannes MC, Provincial of the Missionary Sisters in Sri Lanka and other Rev. Sisters in the Community.

### 'Gnanartha Pradeepaya' hosts writers and correspondents



Our sister paper, the *Gnanartha Pradeepaya* recently hosted a get-together for its writers and correspondents at the Colombo Catholic Press, under the aegis of its Editor, Rev. Fr. Shantha Sagara Hettiarachchi.

Picture shows a part of the gathering present on the occasion. Holy Mass was also held, officiated by Rev. Fr. Sagara at the Archbishop's House Chapel.

Also present on the occasion were Rev. Fr. Rohan de Alwis, Director, Colombo Catholic Press, Rev. Fr. Dilan Perera OMI, Editor Prabhodana and the staff of the Colombo Catholic Press.

(Cecil Danicius)

### St. Mary's Church, Mattakkuliya felicitates Senior Citizens



Picture shows the senior citizens with the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Calixtus Fernando

As part of the 150th Jubilee celebrations of St. Mary's Church, Mattakkuliya, 150 Senior Citizens were felicitated for their dedication and service to the parish.

A thanksgiving Mass was also held officiated by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Calixtus Fernando. In his homily Fr. Calixtus hailed the yeoman service rendered by the Senior Citizens to the Parish.

Holy Mass was followed by various activities on behalf of the seniors followed by a sumptuous fellowship lunch.

The event was organised by the charity service committee of the Parish.

(Francis Gunasekera)

### Donation of School books to needy children in Wattala



St. Anne's Social Services Society, Wattala, donated school books to children of low income families at St. Anne's Church Hall, Wattala, recently.

Picture (left) shows a prayer service conducted by Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Ruban Lesley Perera and (right) Chairperson, (OKI) International School, Mrs. Nirmalie Saparamadu hands over a set of books to a child.

President of the Society, Malinga Jayawardena and members are also present.

(N. Perera)



## UNIVERSITY CAROLS 2011

### "Messiah – The Word made Flesh"



The Annual Christmas Carol Service, organized by the Sri Lanka University Catholic Students' Movement (SLUCSM) - Colombo Region, was held on 11th December 2011, at St. Joseph's College Chapel - Colombo 10, under the theme "Messiah – The Word made Flesh."

The occasion was graced by the presence of His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, amidst a large gathering of clergy, university professors and lecturers, well-wishers, parents and undergraduates.

The carols were accompanied by the harmonious melodies of the Jazz Symphony Band of the Sri Lanka Police. The Chaplain Rev. Fr. Saman Maximus, Mr Ryan Perera

ily burdened by busy academic schedules, with the tranquilizing message of the birth of Baby Jesus in song.

The SLUCSM has been a source of strength to all the Catholic university students ever since its establishment. In so many different ways, it has reached out to its members to unify them in one body of Christ, while providing

and Ms Nipuni Siyambalapitiya took a personal interest to train the vocalists who were selected from all the Colombo regional state universities.

In a way, it was a rhythmic reawakening into the cheerless, comfortless and downcast hearts, heav-

them with an opportunity to experience God's love and to be moulded as true Catholic professionals. The annual carol service too, was a similar occasion, where the undergraduates joined hands in the name of the Lord to witness to the true Christian values and to enhance their faith in God.

"The Knowledge" the written expression of the Catholic university students' inner experience with regard to the worldly and spiritual matters and a golden opportunity in the arena of creative writing, was launched on the same day with the theme "Messiah – The



Word Made Flesh."

**J. Darshani Rathnaraja**  
Regional Secretary

## Devotion to Maria Rosa Mystica at Queen of Angels' Church, Rawatawatte

The devotion to Maria Rosa Mystica, initiated with a small number of people three years ago in the Parish of Rawatawatte, has presently transformed into a community where laity and clergy come together to pray for the intercession of our Blessed Mother in fulfilling our vocations.

The Maria Rosa Mystica gathers together on the 13th of every month in a prayer service which helps us make aware of the role of our Blessed Mother and the importance of prayer in our lives. The service is enriched not only by meditating upon the mysteries of the Rosary but also praying as a family



for the intentions of our fellow fam-

ily members, appreciating what we have received and most importantly celebrating the Holy Eucharist.

Joining hands with our Blessed Mother, we are journeying in Faith to the Father and praying for ourselves and others for converting our hearts to the Lord, so that we could serve Him better. Every second Friday, we hold a Holy Hour conducted by the priest and mass celebrated afterwards. We welcome all those who are willing to join us on the 13th of this month for the 10.30 a.m. Eucharistic Celebration and prayer service conducted after the celebration.

**Rosa Mystica Missionaries**



"Civil Society members have to come together but unfortunately in Sri Lanka the civil society is divided and therefore there is no common goal and the Sri Lankan identity is lost," said Mrs. Deepika Udagama at the Human Rights Award Ceremony 2011 organised by the Human Rights office of Kandy. The event felicitated Human Rights activists and awarded the winners of the debate, art and essay competitions, held in view of the International human Rights Day 2011, under the theme, "Dignity and Justice to all of us."

The ceremony was held at Trinity College, Kandy with more than 1500 participants comprising students and activists.

The Guest of Honour, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, outlined the urgent need for committed Human Rights activities to protect and promote the rights of citizens.

Four dedicated HR Activists were felicitated on this day for their commitment to justice. They were Rev. Fr. Jeyabalan Croos, Anthony Croos, Sr. Barbara AC, Gayashani Madushika and Attorney-at-Law Surangika Ranaweera.

**Lucille Abeykoon**

## Prize-giving of St. Peter's, Sunday School Negombo



The prize-giving (2011) of St. Peter's Church, Negombo, Sunday School was held recently at Ave Maria Convent, Negombo.

Picture shows a scene of the Nativity play enacted by the students.

The event was organised by the Sunday School teachers under the guidance of the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Lester Wijesuriya.

**(Raymond Aponso)**

## SUNDAY PUNCH

by **Camillus**

WISH YOU A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!



## AGM of SL Movement for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Sri Lankan Movement for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation was held at Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC last month.

The programme commenced with the presentation of the Constitution. As a matter of importance, the name of the Movement was amended unanimously as 'Sri Lankan Movement for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation.' Several other amendments were also adopted.

The following office-bearers were elected at the first General Council meeting of the Movement.

**Presidium:** Bertram Fernando, Ainslie Joseph  
**(Panel of Chairpersons)** R.M.B. Senanyake, Lalith de Silva

**Senior Chairman:** Ainslie Joseph

**Advisor:** Andrew Samarasingha (Immediate Past President)

**General Secretary:** George Fernando

**Co-Secretaries:** Kingsley Karunaratne, B.L.S. Fernando

**Treasurer:** Eligious Fernando

**Deputy Treasurer:** Bernard Alwis

**Director of Projects:** B.C.I. Perera

**Assistant Director:** Trisy Hettiarachchi

**Auditor:** P.A. Pieris

**Kingsley Karunaratne**



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA  
**Messenger**  
SINCE 1965

EDITORIAL

1 January 2012

## Christmas Message is the Message of Good News

The celebration of Christmas has been opposed by materialist ideologies like Communism and recently by Secularism in USA. In 1965 Fidel Castro cancelled the Christmas holiday and erased Christmas from the calendar. It took 30 years for him to reinstate it. Although the USA has over 80% Christians secularists have sought to take Christ out of Christmas and to make it a commercial Christmas or only a commercial holiday season. They have even sought to replace the Christmas greeting of 'Merry Christmas' with "Happy Holidays." Christians have challenged such secularist culture and torpedoed many such attempts by secularists to do away with the Christmas tree and the religious symbols of Christmas in public.

The "Commercial Christmas" requires sacrificing the meaning at the heart of Christmas, the message of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself to the world as the first Christmas present. This is the reason why people continue the tradition of Christmas giving as a sign of this selfgiving of Christ to the world in his Incarnation. Christians should celebrate Christmas by being joyful at the angel's message of tidings of great joy to the shepherds of the birth of Jesus Christ their Saviour. Here in our own country too, Christmas has become more and more a commercial event. But Christian families should celebrate Christmas not only by giving gifts but by leading exemplary lives rejecting the crass materialism of the day and praying for the evangelization of our non-Christian brethren.

The Gospel that has been entrusted to us is the word of truth. This truth sets us free, and it alone provides peace of mind. It is what people are looking for when we announce the Good News. We should not be afraid to preach the Good News for it is the truth and the only truth about human beings and their mysterious destiny, the truth about the world and its destiny. We must be ready to proclaim this truth that God came into this world to suffer and die for our sins and take away the penalty for sin which is the loss of eternal life in the presence of God. Life with God is not only eternal it is so joyful that one moment is equivalent to a thousand years here. Although we are all sinners - both Christians and non-Christians - the Good news is that we can obtain God's forgiveness by believing in Him and sinning no more. We are called to bear witness to the truth and to communicate this truth to everybody else. We also know that the Lord maintains his promise, for he said: "Remember I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Christians have been misunderstood because of their evangelical zeal. But as Pope John Paul II said "Those who have recognized a great truth, those who have discovered a great joy, must pass it on, they cannot keep it to themselves." And this is what happens in the Christian mission. The truth we owe to human beings is, first and foremost, the truth about ourselves. We are sinners and prone to sin. But because of Christ's great sacrifice God has forgiven the sins of mankind and none of us Christian or non Christians needs to despair. If we repent we don't have to pay for our sins through suffering in this world or in any subsequent lives as assumed by those who believe in rebirth. As Jesus pointed out our God is a God of love, ever ready to forgive and does not desire to punish us with sufferings in this world or the next. Mankind's sin has already been atoned for and if we will only sin no more our past sins will be forgiven. But to believe in God we must first hear about him and his great love and this is the message of Good News. As witnesses to Jesus Christ, we are heralds, spokesmen, and servants of this truth. We cannot compromise this truth. Nor can we forget it or betray it.

People today are deeply anxious about their identity and destiny. They have become materialist and irreligious. Human values have been trodden underfoot as never before with universal violations of human rights. But we know that God will intervene with his second coming to inaugurate his Kingdom on earth. Christmas is a season to remember his second coming while celebrating the Good News the angel proclaimed.

# Epiphany and the Educator, the Lesson of the Star

The Epiphany .... Day of the kings ... Day of manifestation .... Feast of the Star. It is extraordinary how stars have always had such a fascination for men!

The Star - it is the golden point in the sky which makes one raise its head without wearying its eyes. The star-it is the ideal beauty whose peaceful light shines in the night. The star - it is always the sign on high which enables the traveler down below to keep to the right path or to find it when lost. For that reason doubtless God wished that a star should have a part to play in the history of mankind in its journey to the Saviour.

Study a little more closely the role of this mysterious-star which, rising in the Orient, gives to the Magi the signal to be on their way, which precedes them, guiding them across the desert to Jerusalem where the priests, guardians of the Scriptures, reside, which disappears just long enough to oblige the Magi to ask advice of the priests of the Law, which silently resumes its place in the vanguard until the Magi arrive finally where the Infant Jesus is, which then remains fixed above the cave, in an attitude of adoration, of prayer, of love. This role of the star is not unlike your own. The star gave the Magi the signal to begin their journey to the Saviour. Many depend upon you for the right path to the Saviour. That is your role." Not only to amuse them, to keep them united, but to show them the right path to him. It is to exercise such an influence on them, an attraction so strong that nothing can withhold them; nothing can stop them in their march to the star. And then, to know how to disappear in Jerusalem, that is the delicate point. It is so gratifying, when one is a leader, to feel that one is followed.

Why the detour through Jerusalem? Would it not have been simpler to go directly to Bethlehem? These are unfathomable mysteries of Providence. God wishes that the priests be consulted, and the star, in order to lead the caravan to God, must first lead the Magi to the priests of the Law. That is, you know, one of the phases of your role as teachers: the priests have received the mission to each, the mission to sanctify:

There are some graces, some light which reach men only through the priest.

Jeanne W. Edward adds that "If God has given you a vision to fulfill His plan and purpose, fix your eyes on Him the 'Star' and you will reach your goal. So don't go wandering in Jerusalem when your vision is Bethlehem!" (Direction Dec. 2011)

Always respect the plan of God. Do not reverse roles. You are the auxiliaries of the clergy; the priest is not your auxiliary. Doubtless the priest owes it to himself to give you as large a share as possible in this collaboration in the apostolate. Know, however, how to efface yourself when necessary, in order to bring souls to him, when they

The generous gifts bestowed upon Jesus by the three kings would prefigure the supremely generous gift the Lord would give to us, the gift of new and everlasting life, paid for by His very blood upon the cross.

Rev. Fr. Joe Mathew in his reflection for Epiphany commented thus, "The Jews as a whole did not accept Jesus as the Messiah while many of the pagans did. The pagans deprived of sacred scriptures, have knowledge of God only through nature (Rom 1:19-20). And so the Magi receive a revelation through astrology. The story of the Magi, therefore, is a miniature gospel. Already, it presents Jesus as a sign that is contra-



have more need of him than of you. Above all never criticize your priests, neither exteriorly - that is understood - nor even interiorly. Respect their priesthood.

Act in conformity with their directives. The star could have said. Since they know the way so well, let them go themselves to Bethlehem. No, the little star resumed its place immediately, scrupulously, following the route indicated by the Doctors of the Law. So it proceeded to Bethlehem and stopped finally over the stable where in white swaddling clothes, newly made, the Virgin lulled to sleep her Child, Jesus.

There we can contemplate the Magi placing at the feet of Mary, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. That is one of the most glorious rewards of your missions: You also, in so far as you are for your pupils the star of God, will see them give more and more to Him who is your adored Master, the incense of their fervent prayer, the myrrh of their generous sacrifices, the gold of their pure hearts.

dicted, a cause for the fall of some but the rise of others, as Simeon prophesies of him (Lk 2:34). In the words of St. Paul, "God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God." (1 Cor 1:28-29) The solemnity of Epiphany elicits in us praise and thanksgiving to God who has revealed his Son to all, on no merit of anyone. The revelation to the Magi is a sign that the "Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and co-partners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph 3:6). (Reflections Dec. 2011)  
*"By its peerless beauty guided  
See the eastern kings appear  
Bowing low, their gifts they offer  
Gifts of incense, gold and myrrh  
Sacred gifts of mystice meaning  
Incense doth the God disclose  
Gold the king of kings proclaimeth  
Myrrh a future tomb fore-shows"*

Camillus Fernando



# Sri Lankan Delegation at FABC Seminar on Pedophilia Bangkok

Four Bishops: Bishop Vianney Fernando (Chairman-Office of Clergy), Norbert Andradi OMI (Secretary General-CBCSL), Harold Perera and Raymond Wickramasinghe (new Bishop of Galle), three priests (Fr. Leopold Ratnasekera OMI, Fr. Maxi Fernando OMI and Fr. Lalith Expeditus) together with two lawyers participated at the international seminar on "The Impact of Pedophilia Crisis on the Church in Asia" held at the Assumption University in Bangkok from 14th -19th of November 2011. Among the 66 participants from 7 countries were one Cardinal, two Archbishops, 7 Bishops and 54 seminary formators.

The topics discussed were: 1) basic definitions, causes, diagnosis of pedophilia 2) the impact of pedophilia on the universal Church

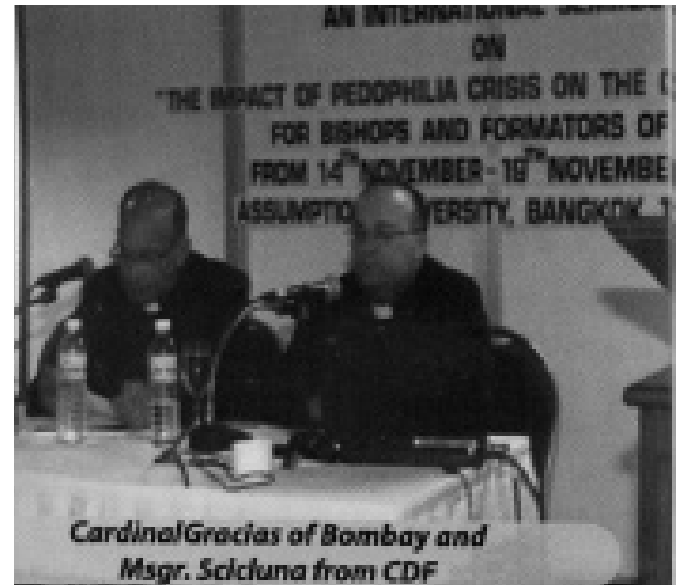
3) the role of the Church leaders in handling the challenge of pedophilia among priests 4) legal implications of allegations of sexual abuse of minors 5) The Church's obligations towards the perpetrators and their victims and 6) therapeutic measures for alleged pedophiles and the need of awareness programs for Church ministers in the dioceses.

Among the guest-speakers was Advocate Shammil Perera from Sri Lanka. An important presentation was also made by Msgr. Charles Scicluna, the Administrator of Justice on this issue in the Congregation for the Doctrine and Faith from the Vatican. Practical measures now in vogue for helping alleged priests and victims and for prevention of sexual abuse of minors was presented by Cardinal

Oswald Gracias of Bombay. Another important input talk was given by the Director of the Galilee Development and Retreat Centre for priests located in Tagaytay, Philippines who briefed the seminar on detailed programs undertaken by the Centre for priests who have been prone to sexual abuse of minors.

The final statement of this seminar carries several important recommendations among which: 1) to look for appropriate therapy and pastoral care of those accused of sexual abuse 2) the problems involved have to be confronted with veracity and transparency while avoiding the surrounding secrecy 3) to train the much needed qualified personnel and professionals to help cure and prevent this social malaise 4) to have a code of conduct for

priests and those working with children 5) creating safe environmental measures while being sensitive to the socio-cultural context of Asia 5) When situations of sexual abuse of minors by priests arise, the Church authority being duty-bound to act promptly with due pastoral care and charity towards both the victimizer and the victim with due regard to what is mandatory in both Civil and Canon Law. When needed recourse has to be had to the Holy See 6) The need our families have of more concerted pastoral and spiritual care 7) to probe the possibility of having a centre for treatment and 8) to ensure that seminary formators and spiritual directors have the adequate skills for discerning and forming of candidate to the priesthood.



The main objectives of the seminar were to make the bishops, priests and formators aware of the gravity of sexual abuse of minors, to explore what remedial measure could be taken to handle this issue and prevent future cases and finally to help prepare guidelines for Church

leaders, formators and those entrusted with children's organizations for the protection especially of the children. In general, there was agreement that one has to evolve a typical Asian response to the problem bearing in mind our socio-cultural and religious context.

(Rev. Fr. Leopold Ratnasekera)

## A Letter from Jesus

*My dear child,*

As you well know, we are getting closer to my birthday. Every year there is a celebration in my honour and I think that this year the celebration will be repeated.

During this time there are many people shopping for gifts, TV commercials, and in every part of the world everyone is talking that my birthday is getting closer and closer.

It is really very nice to know, that at least once a year, some people think of me.

As you know, the celebration of my birthday began many years ago. At first people seemed to understand and be thankful of all that I did for them, but in these times, no one seems to know the reason for the celebration. Family and friends get together and have a lot of fun, but they don't know the meaning of the celebration. I remember that last year there was a great feast in my honour. The dinner table was full of delicious foods. The decorations were exquisite and there were many, many beautifully wrapped gifts.

But, do you want to know something? I wasn't invited. I was the guest of honour and they didn't remember to send me an invitation. The party was for me, but when that great day came, I was left outside, they closed the door in my face and I wanted to be with them and share their table.

In truth, that didn't surprise me because in the last few years all close their doors to me. Since I wasn't invited, I decided to enter the party without making any noise. I went in and stood in a corner. They were having a grand time.

To top it all, this big fat man all dressed in red wearing a long white beard entered the room yelling Ho-Ho-Ho! He sat on the sofa and all the children ran to him, saying: "Santa Claus, Santa Claus" as if the party were in his honour!

At midnight all the people began to hug each other; I extended my arms waiting for someone to hug me and do you know no-one hugged me.

Suddenly they all began to share

gifts. When all had been opened, I looked to see if, maybe, there was one for me. What would you feel if on your birthday everybody shared gifts and you did not get one?

I then understood that I was unwanted at that party and quietly left. Every year it gets worse. People only remember the gifts, the parties, to eat and drink, and nobody remembers me.

I would like this Christmas that you allow me to enter into your life. I would like that you recognize the fact that almost two thousand years ago I came to this world to give my life for you, on the cross, to save you. Today, I only want that you believe this with all your heart.

I want to share something with you. As many didn't invite me to their party, I will have my own celebration, a grandiose party that no one has ever imagined, a spectacular party. I'm still making the final arrangements.

Today I am sending out many invitations and there is an invitation for you. I want to know if you wish to attend and I will make a reservation for you and write your name with golden letters in my great guest book. Only those on the guest list will be invited to the party.

Those who don't answer the invite, will be left outside. Be prepared because when all is ready you will be part of my great party.

See you soon. I Love you!

**Jesus**

Author unknown  
Sent in by Marina Faiz



## Pray for the victims of Mother Nature's disasters

*"That the victims of natural disasters may receive the spiritual and material comfort they need to rebuild their lives." (Pope Benedict XVI)*

There seems to be no shortage of natural disasters in the past year or so. The earthquake in Japan, for instance, was a disaster of great and long lasting destruction. There is no need to itemize the consequences with the lasting radioactivity heading the list. It is not weeks or months before the contaminated area is fit again for human habitation but years, even decades.

There are victims in that area of Japan who need "spiritual and material comfort to rebuild their lives." Numerous other areas of the world that suffered from earthquakes, hurricanes, cyclones, floods, drought, forest fires and whatever have left behind victims who are trying to cope with the upheaval of their lives. The struggle to recover remains long after the news media no longer feature the stricken area.

In the commentary on this month's General Intention prepared at our International Office in Rome, Father Marc Lindeijer, S.J. reflected on these disasters in the context of Mother Nature. 'We call nature a mother, but she's a fickle one. The trees give their fruit, the fields bring forth grain, rice and potatoes, flowers brighten

our day in a million colours, if ... If the sun shines, if it rains, on the right time and in the right quantities, if the earth stays quiet and the sea doesn't move. Let's not talk about the other moving creatures with which we share this planet for better and for worse, varying

from domestic animals to destructive locusts and elephants."

Father Lindeijer then recalls a particular news photo of a man sitting on a water viaduct moments before a tidal wave struck. "How well did he know mother nature? He seemed to trust her. He certainly didn't see the blow coming, the rage, the tender face turned evil."

He then drew a conclusion. "In an instant it became clear to us, again, that we do not have a lasting place on earth, that nature's motherly care has its limits, and that they are uncharted, unpredictable ..... We call nature a mother, in a figurative sense. But we also have a Father, Creator of heaven and earth, literally, and it is to Him that we can safely direct ourselves in prayer."

The lesson Father Lindeijer drew applies to us as we respond to the Holy Father's prayer request. "Mother Nature binds us together, for better and for worse. But in God the Father we can put our trust, completely, frail and vulnerable as we are, and put before Him our needs, their needs, those of the victims of natural disasters."

That is exactly what we should do now and in the future when, unfortunately, there will more victims of natural disasters.

(Canadian Messenger - January 2012)







# THE FAMILY

Is the family dead, as some people claim? In

the place of families, do we have a collection of individuals who are concerned about their own pleasure, comfort, and identity, but who care little for anyone else, except as a means to their personal ends? Are homes now just filling stations, where individuals come because they need to eat, sleep, clothe themselves, and watch TV?

If the answer to any of those questions is "yes," it is one of the greatest tragedies of the Western world - ever! We have the ability today to make our homes and families the best they have ever been capable of being. The slowly evolving attributes of home "comfort" - privacy, intimacy, domesticity, ease, leisure, pleasure, convenience - only gradually combined over about the last 200 years to create a sense of "home" that we take for granted.

Right up to and into the Middle Ages, rooms lacked specific functions. Privacy was nearly non-existent. Many people slept, ate, worked, and loved in one room, and beds enjoyed multiple occupancy. In order for the modern home to take shape, work and residence had to be located in separate buildings; specific functions had to evolve for specific rooms; and society had to have a high esteem for the two values of intimacy and privacy.

All of these began to occur dramatically in the Netherlands in the 17th century. The prosperous Dutch of that time removed the work space, first to a differ-



ent floor, then to another building, and finally to another part of town. Interior spaces began to differentiate themselves along with their functions, windows began to open and close, and a distinction between the public and the private was drawn.

With more light, more privacy, and more children came a stronger sense of family life. The French, a century later, took the next step forward with the production of furniture that, however perhaps overdone, was, above all, very comfortable. British and other merchants visited the Netherlands, admired what they saw, and took it home with them, along with such Dutch discoveries from the East as Chinese tea and Oriental carpets.

The industrial era brought such improvements

as household gas lamps in the 1840's, electricity in the 1880's, and then many labour-saving appliances at the turn of the century. The importance of electricity can not be overemphasized; it provided the mechanical means to achieve comfort and broaden women's horizons, reaching a degree of efficiency and ease hitherto unimaginable. Electric light prolongs daytime, enlarges hospitality, encourages reading.

In view of that long development of which we are the beneficiaries, if our homes have become merely stopping places, that would be, we repeat, a great shame. The wreckers of marriage and destroyers of family used to be thought to be liquor, in vaudeville mothers-in-law, and in the movies designing women; today society itself seems to be anti-family, with its ethos of "me first."

As the basic unit of society, the family is extremely important. Everyone must come in contact with it in one way or another. Though some of the family's borderline aspects may change, its basic principles always remain the same, because family, like marriage, is a process, not an arrived point, no family was or is ever perfect.

Christian love within marriage is a sharing of life together with a deep respect for the other person, a continued concern for their need, a growing understanding of ways to help them, and a genuine appreciation of help received from your partner when you yourself need healing. A real understanding of loving within the family reveals a depth of love which spills over into the world outside the home.

Children need the virtues of the family if they are to develop fully. Good mothers today, like Mary, suffer as well as take pride in their children. There is much truth, but not infallibility, in the words of the Anonymous Poet, who wrote:

*If a child lives with criticism,  
He learns to condemn.  
If a child lives with hostility,  
He learns to fight.  
If a child lives with ridicule,  
He learns to be shy.  
If a child lives with shame,  
He learns to feel guilty.  
If a child lives with tolerance,  
He learns to be patient.  
If a child lives with encouragement,  
He learns to have confidence.  
If a child lives with praise,  
He learns to appreciate.  
If a child lives with fairness,  
He learns justice.  
If a child lives with security,  
He learns to have faith.  
If a child lives with approval,  
He learns to like himself.  
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,  
He learns to find love in the world.*

Parents should prepare their children, from an early age, within the family circle, to think and act in accord with proper attitudes on family life. Children should exercise the same virtues toward their parents and each other that they expect from them - trust, understanding, humility, love for one another, kindness, the emptying of self which is the essence of the Christian life, and respect - plus reasonable obedience. Little by little, and most of all by example, parents should teach their children to go beyond the confines of the family and take an interest in other people and in Church and civic community activities. Thus both parents and children can benefit the entire human family.

Harold A. Buetow



## A CROSS

The Way 65

By Sirohmi Gunsekera

### A Brand New Year

"Happy New Year!" chorused the children.

"Have you made your New Year Resolutions?" asked Mariam, the teacher. "I have decided to cut down on eating chocolates in the New Year!" declared twelve-year-old Ian. "Do you think you can stick to that for a whole year?" asked his teacher.

"Well, I have resolved to try," he replied.

"Just plan on cutting down just for one day at a time. That will be easier," commented Mariam.

"I have resolved not to fight with my little sister however much she provokes me," said thirteen year old Harin.

"You are a good boy. But you will have to pray hard for the strength to resist scolding or even hitting her when your little sister pulls all your books," remarked Mariam.

"I know. I must start the day by asking Jesus for patience" said Harin.

"Mummy says that one needs loads of patience to make the family system work," chimed in eleven-year-old Ursula.

"I practise patience every time I come home from school and find that my little Malli has messed about with my lipsticks and cosmetics," remarked seventeen-year-old Jean.

"You should lock them up in a cupboard knowing that your little brother is at the curious stage of his life. What a ball he must have had pulling all your make up. Did he show up with a black eyeliner moustache?" asked Mariam with a smile.

"Fortunately he was unable to unscrew the caps of the lipstick and mascara. So they are not broken up." "It's just that everything is in such a mess!" moaned Jean.

"Well, let us all pray for the strength to live each day with our family members and not let them get on our nerves," summed up Mariam.

### Mary Was ALWAYS With Jesus!

On hearing the Glad Tidings of the birth of Our Saviour, the shepherds hastened to adore the Babe in the manger and Mary was with Jesus.

When the Wisemen were led by the star to the newborn King, worshipping Him they offered the gifts they did bring - And Mary was with Jesus.

Joseph being warned in a dream that the Babe's life was in danger, hastily fled into Egypt to protect our little Saviour - And Mary was with Jesus.

In Nazareth the Child Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and helped Joseph,

his foster father, a carpenter- And Mary was with Jesus.

When Jesus carried His Cross on the road to Calvary He fell down thrice beneath its weight in agony - And Mary was with Jesus.

Crucified between two thieves Jesus hung in derision, He sacrificed His precious life for mankind's salvation - And Mary was with Jesus.

Taken down from the Cross His limp and lifeless Body was laid in the arms of His Sorrowful Mother Mary, for Mary was ALWAYS with Jesus!



Lilian Ferdinands

### TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



Two doctors were discussing about abortion!

1st Doctor: The father had Syphilis, the mother tuberculosis, of the four children born to them,

the first was blind, the second died, the third was deaf and dumb, the fourth also had tuberculosis. What would you have done Doctor?

2nd Doctor: I would have terminated the pregnancy.

1st Doctor looked at him and said, "Then you would have murdered Beethoven."

Rev. Fr. Fracxid Anthony Fernando O.M.I.



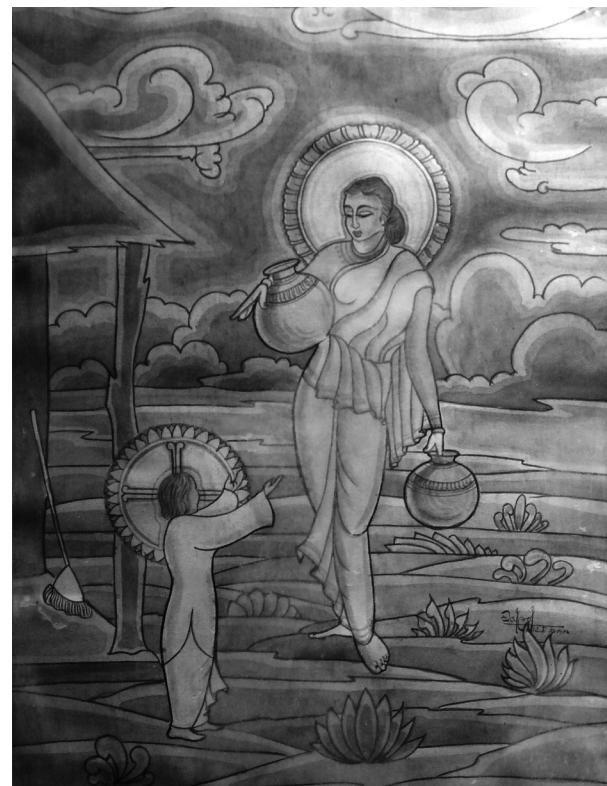
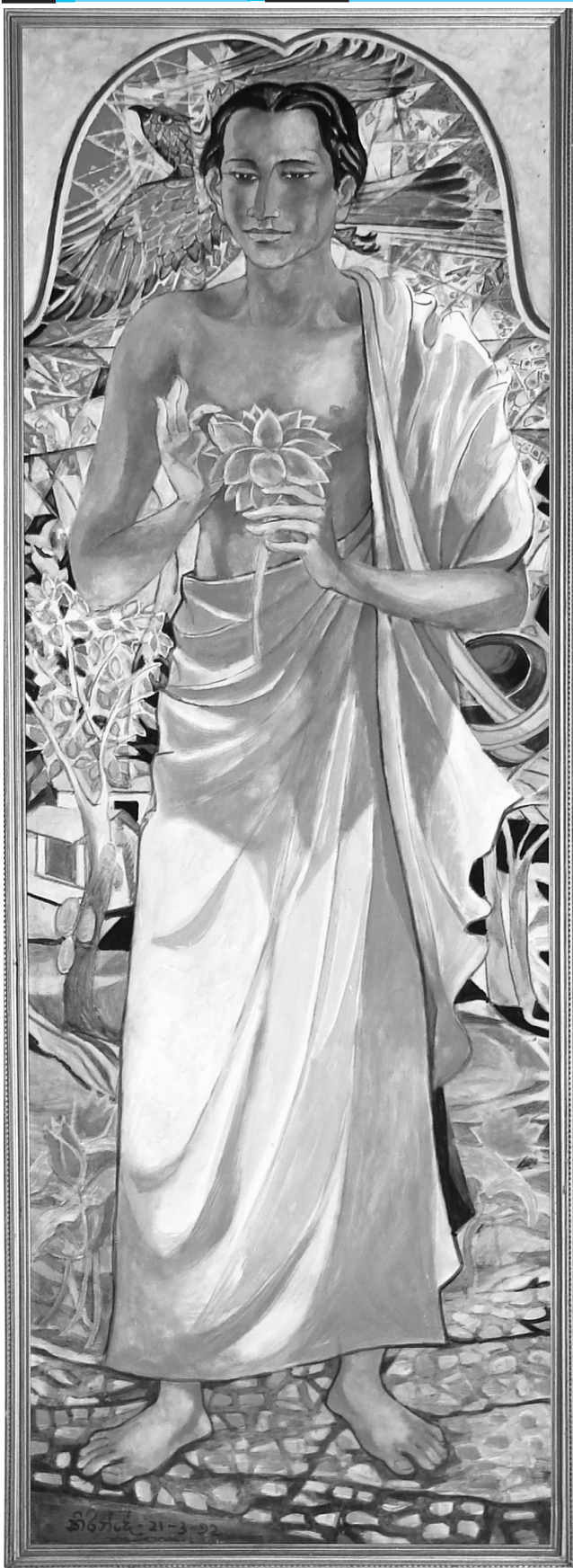
# Mary's greatest title

On 01 January the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, our Lady's greatest title. This feast is the octave of Christmas. In the modern Roman Calendar only Christmas and Easter enjoy the privilege of an octave. According to the 1962 Missal of Bl. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is the Solemnity of Circumcision of Our Lord.

"Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of

salvation and because His Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where His Son and His Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary. Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom."

The two paintings shown here are by K.D.L. Perera (at right) who was one of the foremost artists in indigenizing Christian art in Sri Lanka and Rita Perera (at left).



## The beloved disciple of Jesus

At the Last Supper, he leans on the Master's breast. At the foot of the cross, Jesus entrusts His Mother to his care. He was a fisherman a Galilean, son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother to St. James the Greater. He was called by Jesus to be disciples as he and his brother were mending their nets by the Sea of Galilee. With James, his brother, and Simon Peter, he was one of the witnesses of the Transfiguration. This is John whose pure life kept him very close to Jesus and Mary. John was exiled to the island of Patmos under Emperor

Domitian but afterwards returned to Ephesus. It is believed he died in peace at Ephesus at the age of 94.

On 27 December the Church celebrates his feast, apostle and evangelist, the beloved disciple of Jesus. He is the evangelist of the divinity of Christ.

The painting of St. John by Stanley Kirinda reproduced here is from the CWF chapel Badulla. The painting is unique symbolizing spirituality through artistic attributes.

## A glorious performance at

Holy Family Convent Bambalapitiya held their annual carol service on 14 December at the school chapel which had been recently renovated and colour washed strictly keeping to its original design and colours. It was here in these beautiful environs energized by generations who had gone before them that the school choir stood to perform to a packed audience of students, teachers, parents, past pupils and well-wishers. The theme of the program was 'Mary did you know?'

The program began with the school choirs entering the chapel through the main isle breaking the silence with the rendering of 'O Come All Ye Faithful' keeping to best traditions. The guest choir at the occasion was St. Peter's College.

Thereafter followed a glorious performance of 'Virgin Mary Mother Mild', 'This little Babe', 'Ding Dong', 'Believe', 'Mary did you know', 'Away in the Manger', 'The king of love', 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing', and the 'Hallelujah Chorus'.

The program also included a short skit to remind the audience of the true meaning of Christmas. The Christmas Gospel

was read and followed by a message and Benediction.

The HFC senior and junior choirs were directed by Ms. Rapti Fernando, Ms. Shanila Dayawanse respectively and the Peterite choir by Mr. Eshanthe de Andrado.





# Look to 2012.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

them, is not merely something expedient; it represents a primary duty for society as a whole, for the sake of building a future of justice and peace.

It is a matter of communicating to young people an appreciation for the positive value of life and of awakening in them a desire to spend their lives in the service of the Good. This is a task which engages each of us personally.

The concerns expressed in recent times by many young people around the world demonstrate that they desire to look to the future with solid hope. At the present time, they are experiencing apprehension about many things: they want to receive an education which prepares them more fully to deal with the real world, they see how difficult it is to form a family and to find stable employment; they wonder if they can really contribute to political, cultural and economic life in order to build a society with a more human and fraternal face.

It is important that this unease and its underlying idealism receive due attention at every level of society. The Church looks to young people with hope and confidence; she encourages them to seek truth, to defend the common good, to be open to the world around them and willing to see “new things” (Is 42:9; 48:6).

## Educators

Education is the most interesting and difficult adventure in life. Educating – from the Latin educere – means leading young people to move beyond themselves and introducing them to reality, towards a fullness that leads to growth. This process is fostered by the encounter of two freedoms, that of adults and that of the young. It calls for responsibility on the part of the learners, who must be open to being led to the knowledge of reality, and on the part of educators, who must be ready to give of themselves. For this reason, today more than ever we need authentic witnesses, and not simply people who parcel out rules and facts; we need witnesses capable

of seeing farther than others because their life is so much broader. A witness is someone who first lives the life that he proposes to others.

Where does true education in peace and justice take place? First of all, in the family, since parents are the first educators. The family is the primary cell of society; “it is in the family that children learn the human and Christian values which enable them to have a constructive and peaceful coexistence. It is in the family that they learn solidarity between the generations, respect for rules, forgiveness and how to welcome others.” (1) The family is the first school in which we are trained in justice and peace.

We are living in a world where families, and life itself, are constantly threatened and not infrequently fragmented. Working conditions which are often incompatible with family responsibilities, worries about the future, the frantic pace of life, the need to move frequently to ensure an adequate livelihood, to say nothing of mere survival – all this makes it hard to ensure that children receive one of the most precious of treasures: the presence of their parents. This presence makes it possible to share more deeply in the journey of life and thus to pass on experiences and convictions gained with the passing of the years, experiences and convictions which can only be communicated by spending time together. I would urge parents not to grow disheartened! May they encourage children by the example of their lives to put their hope before all else in God, the one source of authentic justice and peace.

I would also like to address a word to those in charge of educational institutions: with a great sense of responsibility may they ensure that the dignity of each person is always respected and appreciated. Let them be concerned that every young person be able to discover his or her own vocation and helped to develop his or her God-given gifts. May they reassure families that their children can receive an education that does not conflict with their consciences and their religious principles.

Every educational setting can be a place of openness to the transcendent and to others; a place of dialogue, cohesiveness and attentive listening, where young people feel appreciated for their personal abilities and inner riches, and can learn to esteem their brothers and sisters. May young people be taught to savour the joy which comes from the daily exercise of charity and compassion towards others and from taking an active part in the building of a more humane and fraternal society.

I ask political leaders to offer concrete assistance to families and educational institutions in the exercise of their right and duty to educate. Adequate support should never be lacking to parents

in their task. Let them ensure that no one is ever denied access to education and that families are able freely to choose the educational structures they consider most suitable for their children. Let them be committed to reuniting families separated by the need to earn a living. Let them give young people a transparent image of politics as a genuine service to the good of all.

I cannot fail also to appeal to the world of the media to offer its own contribution to education. In today’s society the mass media have a particular role: They not only inform but also form the minds of their audiences, and so they can make a significant contribution to the education of young people. It is important never to forget that the connection between education and communication is extremely close: education takes place through communication, which influences, for better or worse, the formation of the person.

Young people too need to have the courage to live by the same high standards that they set for others. Theirs is a great responsibility: may they find the strength to make good and wise use of their freedom. They too are responsible for their education, including their education in justice and peace!

## Educating in truth and freedom

Saint Augustine once asked: “Quid enim fortius desiderat anima quam veritatem?” – What does man desire more deeply than truth?” The human face of a society depends very much on the contribution of education to keep this irrepressible question alive. Education, indeed, is concerned with the integral formation of the person, including the moral and spiritual dimension, focused upon man’s final end and the good of the society to which he belongs. Therefore, in order to educate in truth, it is necessary first and foremost to know who the human person is, to know human nature. Contemplating the world around him, the Psalmist reflects: “When I see the heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you arranged, what is man that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him?” (Ps 8:4-5). This is the fundamental question that must be asked: who is man? Man is a being who bears within his heart a thirst for the infinite, a thirst for truth – a truth which is not partial but capable of explaining life’s meaning – since he was created in the image and likeness of God. The grateful recognition that life is an inestimable gift, then, leads to the discovery of one’s own profound dignity and the inviolability of every single person. Hence the first step in education is learning to recognize the Creator’s image in man, and consequently learning to have a profound respect for every human being and helping others to live a life consonant with this supreme dignity. We must never forget that “authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension”, including the transcendent dimension, and that the person cannot be sacrificed for the sake of attaining a particular good, whether this be economic or social, individual or collective.

Only in relation to God does man come to understand also the meaning of human freedom. It is the task of education to form people in authentic freedom. This is not the absence of constraint or the supremacy of free will, it is not the absolutism of the self. When man believes himself to be absolute, to depend on nothing and no one, to be able to do anything he wants, he ends up contradicting the truth of his own being and forfeiting his freedom. On the contrary, man is a relational being, who lives in relationship with others and especially with God. Authentic freedom can never be attained independently of God.

Freedom is a precious value, but a fragile one; it can be misunderstood and misused. “Today, a particularly insidious obstacle to the task of educating is the massive presence in our society and culture of that relativism which, recognizing nothing as definitive, leaves as the ultimate criterion only the self with its desires. And under the semblance of freedom it becomes a prison for each one, for it separates people from one another, locking each person into his or her own self. With such a relativistic horizon, therefore, real education is not possible without the light of the truth; sooner or later, every person is in fact condemned to doubting the goodness of his or her own life and the relationships of which it consists, the validity of his or her commitment to build with others something in common”(4).

In order to exercise his freedom, then, man must move beyond the relativistic horizon and come to know the truth about himself and the truth about good and evil. Deep within his conscience, man discovers a law that he did not lay upon himself, but which he must obey. Its voice calls him to love and to do what is good, to avoid evil and to take responsibility for the good he does and the evil he commits(5). Thus, the exercise of freedom is intimately linked to the natural moral law, which is universal in character, expresses the dignity of every person and forms the basis of fundamental human rights and duties: consequently, in the final analysis, it forms the basis for just and peaceful coexistence.

The right use of freedom, then, is central to the promotion of justice and peace, which require respect for oneself and others, including those whose way of being and living differs greatly from one’s own. This attitude engenders the elements without which peace and justice remain merely words without content: mutual trust, the capacity to hold constructive dialogue, the possibility of forgiveness, which one constantly wishes to receive but finds hard to bestow, mutual charity, compassion towards the weakest, as well as readiness to make sacrifices.

## Educating in justice

In this world of ours, in which, despite the profession of good intentions, the value of the person, of human dignity and human rights is seriously threatened by the widespread tendency to have recourse exclusively to the criteria of utility, profit and material possessions, it is important not to detach the concept of justice from its transcendent roots. Justice, indeed, is not simply a human convention, since what is just is ultimately determined not by positive law, but by the profound identity of the human being. It is the integral vision of man that saves us from falling into a contractual conception of justice and enables us to locate justice within the horizon of solidarity and love.

We cannot ignore the fact that some currents of modern culture, built upon rationalist and individualist economic principles, have cut off the concept of justice from its transcendent roots, detaching it from charity and solidarity: “The ‘earthly city’ is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties, but to an even greater and more fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion. Charity always manifests God’s love in human relationships as well, it gives theological and salvific value to all commitment for justice in the world”.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Mt 5:6). They shall be satisfied because they hunger and thirst for right relations with God, with themselves, with their brothers and sisters, and with the whole of creation.

(Contd. on Pg. 15)

## 2012 Star of Expectation

That star  
Appeared  
The darkness  
Kept wroughted  
In sparks  
Heaven opens  
Here is Jesus  
Giving light  
Await  
Patiently  
Besides  
He extends  
Hands in friendship  
Hold me  
Never loose  
Tighten faith  
Sky brightens  
Star dazzles  
Guiding Spirits  
To time  
Expectations  
Never give up  
Jesus comes  
The star begins  
To travel around  
Expectant earth



Miran Perera



# Heliotrope

## A New Year Resolution

The word "heliotropium" is the botanical name for an ancient plant which had the unique habit of turning to face the Sun at all times. The plant's name is derived from two Greek words: 'helio', meaning "sun", and tropos, meaning "turn." The Roman writer Pliny wrote of this plant, "I have often spoken of the wonderful property of the heliotrope, which twines itself round with the sun, even on a cloudy day, so great is its love of that luminary. But at night it closes its azure flower, as if from missing its rays."

Thus the heliotrope excellently represents the attitude of the faithful soul toward the Will of God, which is represented by the Sun. This Sun must ever be gazed upon by us with fixed and unshrinking eye, in whatever direction its course may bend; and this one thing must we ever resolve in our mind;

"As it pleases God, so does

it please me. The Will of God alone is to me the rule of life and death. As it hath pleased the Lord so shall it be done. Blessed be the Name of the Lord!"

He who desires to confirm himself to the Divine Will is accustomed never to complain. No one will ever hear from him such lamentations as - "I can scarcely earn my livelihood, while others fare luxuriously, and yet do not toil half as much as I do. They sow little, and yet reap abundant crops."

Let the Heliotrope be constantly before our eyes. Observe, my friend, that the Heliotrope even on a cloudy day twines itself round with the Sun, through love of it. The Will of God is our Sun. It is not indeed always shining upon us in a cloudless sky; stormy days, accompanied with rain, and wind,



are mingled with fair-weather days. There is no Christian who does not very often experience this heatiness of the atmosphere and stormy seasons.

*"Heliotropium"*

by Rev. Jeremias Drexelius SJ  
Sent by: Francis Jayasinghe



Hail the dawn of the New Year  
Appreciating the wonders of our Creator  
People of all walks of life  
Pray to turn over a new leaf in life,  
Yearning for a grace-filled New Year  
Novelty plays havoc with the enthusiasm of youth,  
Enthusiasm to look for utmost happiness,  
Which is not a reality on earth.  
You, my dear chosen sons and daughters  
Ensure to tread on the righteous path  
Avoiding the adversary, sniffing for prey  
Roaming as a wolf in sheep's clothing

Leonard Wijesiri

## International Year of the UN - Themes

The United Nations did begin immediately after the 2nd World War to bring the warring parties together and to establish peace and welfare of humanity. It was established in 1945 to facilitate cooperation among nations and bring the political leaders to common task with international law, social progress and economic development. As it is approaching seventy years, it is good to make an assessment of its success and failure. In fact apart from international decades that began in 1965, later on they accepted international days and international years. The general assembly through resolutions accepts to have such years and decades to generate study and to decide on practical steps to resolve some problematic issues. In spite of negative criticisms about the UN activities, we also need to accept the benefits that have accrued to our citizens in Sri Lanka.

### UN THEMES FOR THE YEAR 2012

As the year 2012 is upon us it is important that we Sri Lankans do become aware of the two themes initiated by the UN for national and international actions. They are International Year of Sustainable Energy for All and International Year of the Cooperatives.

### International Year of Sustainable Energy

Regarding the first theme of Sustainable Energy, the UN website has indicated that Sustainable Energy will help humanity with power. It is essential to human health and essential to poverty alleviation by income generation. It is also needed for women empowerment, and useful for cooking. The UN had also stated that sustainable energy is essential to education and to maintain economic development creating more opportunities for entrepreneurs.

### International Year of the Co-operatives

Concerning the year of the Co-operatives UN web-site had stated it is essentially about meeting human need, not human greed. People can compete together to benefit the many equally rather than the few unequally. It asserts that the Cooperatives are the best way to go about. Further it is stressed that UN proposes a different way of doing business, focusing on human need rather than on human greed and enjoying collectively the good effects of

entrepreneurship. In this process there are three-fold actions to be undertaken by the Government, the business community and civil society. It is to moot the cooperative model which is not something new for our country.

I do hope that the GOSL is aware of such themes and set the wheel in motion to tap the available resources available within the country as well as from the international organizations. While I try to inform the civil society groups regarding these themes, I am compelled to ask the GOSL and others regarding the three themes for the year 2011.

### For the year 2011 the UN had three themes

The UN had declared three international themes for common action in the year 2011. They are (A) The International Year of the People of African Descent. (B) The International year of Chemistry and (C) The International year of Forests.

As mentioned above for the year 2011 there were three themes which were approved by the UN General Assembly to conscientize the people and also get the people involved. Regarding the first theme, the concern towards the People of African Descent was not only for African Continent but also for the African people who have settled down elsewhere in the world at large. In the Americas there are over 300 million people of African origin. There are more millions living outside the African continent. In declaring the international year the international community was recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights had to be asserted, promoted and protected. As indicated by the UN High Commissioner for Human rights, "International Year offers a unique opportunity to redouble our efforts to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance that affect people of African descent everywhere" Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

There was a historical legacy of transatlantic slave trade and the

people who may not be descendants of these slaves do still continue to struggle to survive and face discrimination. A meeting of UNESCO Executive Board in 1998 decided August 23rd as the day to remember the slave trade and its abolition. This theme would not have any impact on the people of Sri Lanka.

As regards the second theme for the year 2011, it is the International Year of Chemistry. There was some sort of celebrations regarding the achievements concerning Chemical engineering and how it impacts on the population. There was the unifying theme as "Chemistry – our life, our culture" much of the activities were concerning the achievements of Chemistry. It also coincided with 100th anniversary of the Nobel Prize awarded to Madam Marie Curie and at the same time this fact created an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of women to science. It was also the 100th anniversary of the founding of the International association of Chemical societies seeking the benefits of scientific collaboration internationally.

The purpose of these celebrations was also an opportunity to assess the contribution of Chemistry as a creative science to the welfare of humanity and for sustainable development. These will definitely have improvements regarding food, water, health, energy and transportation. It seems that many people were unaware of such activities pertaining to chemistry.

The third set theme for the year 2011 was concerning the subject of forests which would have some impact

on Sri Lanka due to unprecedented deforestation. The goals of the year for International Year of Forests were set as the awareness of the necessity of forest and its sustainable management which would help humanity in many ways than one. Due to ignorance concerning the importance of forests, much damage is caused to the maintenance of forests. There is no doubt that there are many challenges, because some use it for their existence, as an economic resource while for many it helps in the climate, to safeguard the water which is a needed element for humans to survive on earth. More than 300 million people do live in forests. Forests are home to 80% of the terrestrial bio-diversity. They plan an important role in the livelihoods and welfare of a vast number of persons in both developed and developing nations.

Even though the year 2011 has ended yet two of the three themes set by the UN namely the Year of the Chemistry and of the Forests can be useful for Sri Lankans. At the beginning of the year I had tried in vain to discover the themes and only in the later stages that I succeeded. However, I would wish that the civil society be interested in the activities of the UN for greater good of our people in Sri Lanka. Same can be reiterated regarding Human Rights and other UN Conventions. It also can be stated that the two themes of 2011 can still be valid for many more years to come.

Rev. Fr. Reid Shelton Fernando

## In the Drama of Life, God is the Director

the first-ever rendition of "Silent Night."

The story doesn't end there, however. When a man came to fix the organ, Gruber tested it by playing the new song. The repairman liked the song so much that he took a copy of it back to his own village. There, four daughters of a village glove-maker learned the song and began singing it in concerts all over the region. Because of that faulty organ, this new Christmas song blessed people all over Austria and eventually the world.

When things break or when plans change, how should we respond? Often we fret and worry because we don't have the control we would like to have. That's when we need to step back, trust God, and wait to see how He is going to use the situation for His glory.



It was Christmas Eve in Oberndorf, Austria, in 1818. Joseph Mohr, the Vicar of the Church, had written a new song for the Christmas Eve service and the organist Franz Gruber had set it to music. But the organ in the village church broke down. So Gruber grabbed a guitar and accompanied Mohr in



# Centenary of Priestly Ordination of Very Rev. Fr. B. A. Thomas OMI

*January 6, 2012, marks the centenary of the Priestly Ordination of Servant of God, Very Rev. Fr. B.A. Thomas OMI, the founder of the Congregation of the Rosarians.*

"Perhaps Father Thomas will be the first Saint to be canonized from Ceylon." This was the glowing tribute paid by one of those amidst the weeping and wailing of the huge crowd at the funeral service of Rev. Fr. B. A. Thomas OMI, the Founder of the Rosarian Congregation.

Indeed the contemporaries of Father Thomas found Sainthood in the life of this humble servant of God who led a life of deep faith and heroic humility and charity. Inspired by these virtues of Christian perfection Father Thomas gave a clarion call to his monks and nuns and earnestly desired that they should emulate him in Faith, Humility and Charity. It is not without reason that the Rosarians have the primary motto of their Congregation as, "Who is like unto God?" Father Thomas found the answer for this question and surrendered himself totally to God and dedicated himself to Blessed Virgin Mary throughout his 78-year-old life.

He was born on 7th March 1886 to a pious and well respected family at Pandianthalvu in the Eastern sector of Jaffna town. Father Thomas was baptised on the very day of his birth. Though fragile in physique, he was sharp in wit and wisdom and had a very successful literary career in the primary education at his native village and in his higher education at St. Charles's High School and at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna and later in his priestly formation in the Diocesan Seminary in Colombo. He was ordained a priest on 6th January 1912. It was in the early days of his priestly ministry as Director of the Hindu Boarding at St. Patrick's College he received the inspira-

tion that there is a need for an Indigenous Contemplative Congregation to help and aid in the missionary work of conversion of Sri Lanka and India.

His zeal and zest for the conversion of humankind was corroborated by the inspiration and encouragement given by Bishop Guyomar of Jaffna. The encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* of Pope Pius XI was the polar star that steered his desire of founding a Contemplative Congregation under the pattern of the Reformed Trappists.

His dream was fulfilled when the Rosarian Monastery was founded on 2nd February 1928 and the Rosarian Convent, on 8th September 1948. In order to achieve the objective of reparation effectively and live their Charism of Eucharistic-centred Marian Contemplation, Father Thomas wanted his monks and nuns and to consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as loving servants of His Immaculate Mother and recite the Holy Rosary with extended hands day and night before the Blessed Sacrament exposed.

It would be no exaggeration to say that Father Thomas was an earnest model and fitting exemplar for his sons and daughters by his words and deeds and life and achievements. He was a man of prayer therefore a man of God. One finds in the old man Father Thomas all that is usually associated with sanctity. Everything about him responds to our common conception of a man of God.

The man of God radiated his sanctity even to the non-Christians with his humanness and concern

Rev. Fr. Justin Raj CR

for his fellow men. The whole life of Father Thomas was that of an ascetic with austerity and poverty and with simplicity and deep humility. He possessed very little and lived a humble living in a small room where he spent long years of silence and solitude. He was a man of earnest trust in the providence of God. When dark clouds loomed and when trials came in battalion Father Thomas trusted in the providence of God. Providence did wonders in the life of Father Thomas, who always had recourse to it. The last days of Father Thomas were spent under the guidance of the Divine will. It looked as if the Good Lord abandoned his faithful servant Father Thomas as he was going through the 'Dark Night of the Senses'.

This was God's own way of identifying the life of Father Thomas with that of His Crucified Son. But Father Thomas was resigned to the will of God though he endured one of the greatest Crosses of staying far away from the dearest Tholagatty Monastery where he had spent 34 precious years of his life. In fact he had to be away from his sons and daughters to spend his last days at the Bishop's House Jaffna. In spite of his unmitigated sufferings and mental agonies Father Thomas never uttered a word of complaint. Such was his patience and heroic resignation to the will of God. He was very submissive to the will of God in his physical and mental agony. He became a man on grid iron when sufferings tossed him heavily. Nevertheless Father Thomas was always a silent sufferer and offered his sufferings for the conversion of sinners. Quietly he lived, humbly he performed his duties and calmly he breathed his last and went to meet his Lord on 26th January 1964.

## "Called according to the purpose"

I glorify the Lord who gave to this world, Mary Francesca Therese, the seventh of eight children, born of Philomena and Joseph Varnakulasingham. Very rightly she was born in St. Mary's Church compound in Puliyantivu, Batticaloa on the 16th of September 1927.



Sr. Mary Berchmans SCJM

Joseph was the catechist in the same church. St. Michael's College, then run by the Jesuits of Marseille, France, and St. Cecilia's Convent run by the Apostolic Carmelites of Mangalore, India, were in close proximity to St. Mary's Church. She had her entire schooling in St. Cecilia's Convent. Her teaching career too began in the same school where she studied. She then taught for many years in the Carmel School, Batticaloa; All Saints Mixed School, Borella; Carmel Convent, Kalmunai; St. Aloysius' College, Galle, and Sacred Heart Convent, Galle.

She had the advantage of being a pupil of foreign missionaries. Godly virtue they acquired by their missionary zeal. Late Mothers Philip, Michelis and late Srs. Marcelline, Michael, Adrian and Baptista are some of those who served her and who in return she had the fortune to serve. Some of their disciples are still alive continuing their good work.

Sr. Berchmans, as described by her former Provincial Sr. Anastasia in her eulogy was "an ordinary person with an extraordinary vocation". She thus confirmed her consecrated life. She also repeated what Sr. Berchmans used to often say during her visits, "With God all things are possible and yet sometimes His challenges are demanding." What she said corroborated her familiarity with the Word of God. She stood by Romans 8:28 "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose". These words further prove her intimacy with the scriptures.

She must have repeated her "fiat" numerous times, as she matured into a full-fledged nun. She did not serve in one place, town or country or vie for 'positions. In obedience and humility she "bloomed where she was planted". The native land, the community, even the language has changed. Yet she remained firm and faithful to the Creator, community and vocation. May the Father be glorified and praised.

Robert B. Varnakulasingham

## A man blessed with God-given talents

The sad news of the demise of Fr. Anselm Silva forced me to write some words in appreciation of him. Born on 22nd of February 1936 Fr. Liyanage Peter Anselm Clarence Silva dedicated his entire life to God as an Oblate priest. He served as the Provincial Superior of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate some time ago.

Fr. Anselm was indeed a blessed man with many God-given talents. He was an eloquent preacher who could narrate the relevant Gospel passages in a simple yet a meaningful way. He was

our animator during our formation period as young seminarians at St. Joseph's Juniorate Kohuwala. During weekly sessions he shared his wide knowledge with us regarding various matters specially about the ethnic conflict in the country. As a person with an international reputation he lectured at foreign universities too. He, as the acting Rector of the Oblate Juniorate for a short period in 2002 was able to admit our whole class into St. Peter's College. That small example is a proof for the reputation he had within the church.

So many sought



Rev. Fr. Anselm Silva

his guidance and came in search of him. Most of the seminarians chose him as their spiritual director as they believed him to be the most suitable person to guide them. He was actively engaged in various social activities; some have

Madhawa Jayakody

said that his "omi" abbreviation can be replaced as 'out more than in' due to the nature of his mission in society.

The Oblates have lost a precious son whose yeoman service in the vineyard of the Lord may be rewarded by the heavenly Father and it is certain that He would say to Fr. Anselm "Well done good and faithful servant, enter into your Master's happiness." The few words he added to one of his sermons would be a fitting conclusion to this appreciation. "Life is immortal, love is eternal, death is merely a horizon." May he rest in peace!

## Tribute to the founder of Christian Family Movement

Percy Silva, Founder of the Christian Family Movement (CFM) passed away on 3rd December 2011. His mortal remains was laid to rest on 5th December.

At the funeral service held at St. Francis Xavier's Church, Halpe, Katana, prior to the burial Rev. Fr. Julian Tissera, the Dean of Kalutara Deanery officiating at the obsequies paid a glowing tribute to the life and work of Percy Silva. He said the name of Percy is synonymous with the Christian Family Movement (CFM) and cannot be identified in isolation. In his lifetime he

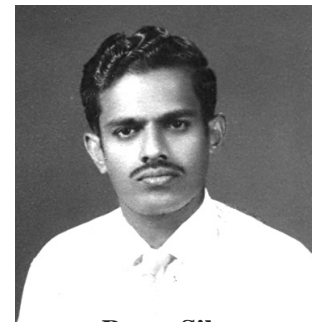
has helped and saved numerous couples and families in the true spirit of Christ and ventured to extend and expand the Family Apostolate through the CFM not only in the Archdiocese of Colombo but in other Dioceses as well Fr. Julian said.

Officiating at the

burial service at the cemetery, Rev. Fr. Terrence Fernando, who had served in the Parish of Halpe 25 years ago, greatly admired and appreciated the lay initiatives and involvements of Percy Silva in the development and extension of the apostolate proper to the families. He emphasised that Percy did not work to please anybody to gain recognition or acceptance but worked for the reign of the Kingdom of God among men and the diffusion of the Kingdom Values amongst the families.

Mr. Hector Peiris, the President of the CFM Archdiocese of Colombo, other CFM leaders and a Parishioner from Halpe, spoke appreciating the apostolic involvements of Percy Silva.

Vivian Silva



Percy Silva

## Letter to the Editor .... Letter to the Editor ...

### Suffering is a blessing in disguise

As far as I am aware, all saints have suffered immensely without grumbling while living, enabling them to go to Jesus, soon after their departure from this world.

Saints are also those who have prayed for others more than for

themselves. Accordingly, those who suffer in this world are fortunate, enabling them to go to Jesus quicker than others. In other words, let us accept the crosses given to us for our own good.

Tommy Wanigesinghe



# Statement by John Amararatunga, MP in Parliament on December 6, 2011



I wish to refer to a serious matter which has caught the attention of the public and caused grave consternation in certain sections of the community, particularly among Catholics and Christian communities.

I refer to the arrest of Sister Eliza of the Missionaries of Charity Order of Nuns on unsubstantiated allegations.

The matter arises from a raid committed by the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) at "Prem Niwasa" Children's Home situated at Rawatawte, Moratuwa maintained by these nuns - consequent to two anonymous telephone calls.

To say the least the NCPA seems totally unaware of the Missionaries of Charity or the work they are engaged in. The Missionaries of Charity is a world renowned Order of Catholic Nuns dedicated to service to the poor and destitute. The service is rendered absolutely free of charge and the Nuns derive no benefits whatsoever from rendering this service.

The Order was founded

by none other than Mother Teresa who has herself received a Noble Prize for peace for her unparalleled service to humanity. The Order under no circumstances engages in any kind of business activities and least of all engaged in the business of running adoption agencies.

In such circumstances it is most distressing that the NCPA has rushed on to a raid on anonymous telephone calls charging in to "Prem Niwasa" in the manner of a hooch raid which has now resulted in the remaining of an innocent nun. This was the first time in world history that a Sister of this Order was arrested.

So much so that the Archbishop of Colombo, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith has himself declared that he will not be participating in any state sponsored functions unless and until a satisfactory solution is found. He condemned the action in very strong terms which by itself shows the extent of the sentiments of Catholics of this country.

The nuns have in several statements denied the charge that

are made against them. Their position is very clear that they do not deal with money, they do not engage in any business activities, they are unaware of any connection to any Adoption Agency. It is also significant to note that sadly the State does not operate a single institution to accommodate unwed mothers such as the victims of rape and the like.

It is the Catholic Church and only the Catholic Church that operates such institutions, two in fact, in the whole of Sri Lanka. They further state that any children in their care given for adoption were on the basis of allocations made by the Department of Probation and Child-Care and under Court Supervision.

In these circumstances I feel that a grave insult and injury had been caused to these nuns and to this Order and the Government must take urgent steps to repair the almost irreparable damage that had been caused.

**John A.E. Amararatunga**  
Chief Opposition Whip,  
Parliament

## National Child Protection Authority raid on "Prem Nivasa"

It is with great dismay and sadness that we note the unfair treatment, wrongful accusations, malicious media publicity and bitter harassment meted out recently to the Sisters of Blessed Mother Teresa's MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY who run "Prem Nivasa" situated at Rawatawatta, Moratuwa.

"Prem Nivasa" which has been in existence since 1984, is a home where the Missionaries of Charity have been carrying out their mission of mercy looking after abandoned children, and unwed mothers including many unfortunate girls (some of whom have been made pregnant by their own kith and kin), irrespective of their race or creed. If not for the tremendous love and care showered upon these unfortunate women by the Missionaries of Charity, many of them would have resorted to aborting their unwanted babies and either committed suicide or ended up as mentally disturbed patients or even as street women. In the same way, the lives of all the abandoned children were not only saved but their future was secured because of the untiring efforts of these Sisters.

While acknowledging the right of the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) and the Police to conduct investigations, we strongly condemn the high-handed and brutal manner in which they acted to question the

Sisters and subsequently arrest and obtain a remand order from Court to detain Reverend Sister Mary Eliza the Superior of "Prem Nivasa" at mid-night on 25th November 2011 without sufficient evidentiary material, on their own admission to Court. The presence of television crews and other media personnel along with the NCPA and the Police, and the subsequent malicious and false publicity given by Some media organizations leave much room for one to speculate whether in fact the raid was a publicity stunt by those involved or whether it was a move by an unseen force seeking to arouse religious disharmony, or both.

We Sri Lankans take pride in our culture, generosity and hospitality. This apparently premeditated and brutal raid on "Prem Nivasa" and obtaining an order to remand Reverend Sister Mary Eliza have, no doubt severely

tarnished the image of Sri Lanka the world over. It is the bounden duty and responsibility of all those in authority to ensure that this type of harassment will never be repeated in our beloved country.

The submissions made to the Court on 15th December 2011 by the NCPA that the investigations did not disclose any illegal child trafficking, and the subsequent ruling by the Court acquitting Reverend Sister Mary Eliza have now vindicated the innocence of the "Prem Nivasa" Sisters.

It was Jesus Christ who forewarned His followers thus:

**"They will seize and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons because of my name. It will lead to your giving testimony. Remember, you are not to prepare your defense before hand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking**

**that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute" (Gospel of St Luke, 21:12-15).**

May the joy of suffering humiliation and persecution for the sake of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen the zeal and commitment of the Missionaries of Charity Sisters (in particular that of Reverend Sister Mary Eliza who became the first MC Sister in the world to be put in remand prison) to continue their mission of mercy and love.

We take this opportunity to commend the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity for their Christ-like spirit of love, mercy, and forgiveness in responding to such harshness, humiliation, harassment and malicious false publicity.

**Victor Silva (FCA, MCIA)**  
Secretary, Catholic National Association of the Laity

19th December 2011.



## Letter to the Editor

### STATEMENT OF CARDINAL

The empathic statement announced at a press conference held early this month at the Bishop's House, Colombo by Archbishop of Colombo, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith that he will not be attending any functions of the State or State Institutions during the Christmas season, till the authorities clear the name of the the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity and stop the unfounded allegations and harassment, was most welcome.

This was certainly good news and some measure of consolation to many ordinary and faithful Catholics and others who are well aware of the noble and selfless service of Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity.

The accusation that these women of God were selling babies and the arrest and imprisonment of Sister Eliza in the Welikada Jail can only be condemned in the strongest terms. Why this criminal act of harassment without proper inquiry and evidence by the very authorities that should be protecting and supporting institutes like the Sisters of Charity Home at Rawatawatta?

The whole country is suffering due the absence of an independent judiciary. The innocent are the victims. Cardinal Ranjith should be saluted for his non-violent stand demanding justice.

It should be remembered that it was Cardinal Ranjith along with three other Buddhist monks who took on the responsibility of travelling to Europe with an appeal to restore the GSP + on behalf of the country. When the Italian Government refused to extend an invitation to His Excellency the President, Cardinal Ranjith turned the tables and facilitated HE President's invitation to Rome through the Holy Father.

When the Government was accused of gross human rights violations, it was Archbishop, Cardinal Ranjith who bravely defended the President and the country, risking his own dignity as the Head of the Catholic Church and further been exposed to criticism of many Christians that he is trying to curry favour with the President and Government.

The President has time and again appealed to the people to be grateful to him and his Government for wiping out terrorism and winning the war. In the same vein, we appeal to the President to reciprocate likewise to Cardinal Malcolm who has bravely and fearlessly stood by him and the country in the Name of GOD and ensure that justice prevails in the serious controversy now raging which threatens the good name and image of the Catholic Church already grievously wounded by false, wild and unfounded reports in the media and other sources.

**Shirley**





# Christmas for deserving children

The annual Christmas treat for needy children by the Dalugama Christian Workers' Movement (CWM), Women's Division was conducted at the premises of St. Francis de Sales Church, Dalugama, on Saturday the 10th December under the auspices of the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Jude Sharman Fernando. Awarding of scholarships and distribution of school books and gifts to children of the "Diriya Matha" project of the Christian Workers' Movement

(Dalugama) also took place on this occasion.

The guest of honour was the Rev. Shanthrapathi Horawala Dharmarama Nayake Thero, incumbent Viharadhipathi of Gangaramaya, Kohalwila, Dalugama. He said he was very glad about this unique combination of the village, the temple and the church.

Delivering the welcome address, Mrs. Swarna R. Perera, President of the Dalugama CWM, Women's Division said, "Appreciate whatever that is good

in the programme, and forgive and forget any shortcomings, unlike what some sections of the electronic and print media did about the "Prem Nivasa" at Rawatawatta.

The Christmas programme for needy children was organized by Mrs. Consy Warnakula of the Executive Committee of the Sri Lanka CWM. Mr. Anthony Manchanayake, former President of the Sri Lanka CWM, who is currently the National Project Director, was also present.

(Alfred Perera)



## Jesus Loves Children



When Jesus Our Lord was sitting near a tree there were some children playing. Then the children saw Jesus and came running, the disciples stopped the children.

Then Jesus said unto them, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Matthew : 19:14). The disciples then let the children to come to Jesus.

What we understand from

**Let's remember the Ten Commandment as in the Bible.**

- 1) Worship no God but me.
- 2) Do not bow down to any idols or worship it.
- 3) Do not use God's name in vain.
- 4) Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
- 5) Honour your mother and father.
- 6) Do not commit murder.
- 7) Do not commit adultery.
- 8) Do not steal.
- 9) Do not tell lies.
- 10) Do not desire another man's house, his wife, his slaves or anything he owns.

Jesus does not see whether your black or white, ugly or pretty - what Jesus wants is everyone to believe in him and to come to heaven.  
"Let believe in Jesus Christ."

From: Hashan Perera

## SRI LANKA UNDER 16 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM BRINGS HONOUR



At the recently concluded Under 16 Asian Basketball Tournament held in Jinan China, the Sri Lankan contingent was able to achieve many victories. While in Group B, they competed against Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Singapore and Macau. Even though the players from Uzbekistan and Macau were much taller and well built, Natasha Perera's team was able to beat them convincingly while giving a good fight to the other three teams.

Natasha Perera of St. Lawrence's Convent, Colombo 6 was the Star Player for the Sri Lankans in all their games. As

at 9th December 2011 she was at the top of the Asian Women's rankings, beating players from much stronger teams such as Champions Japan, Korea and China.

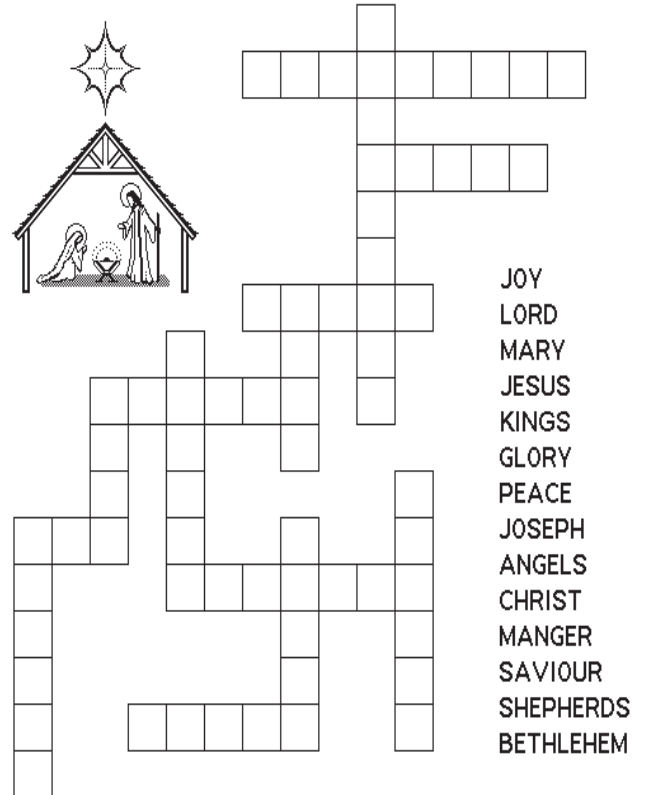
On Saturday 10th December, the Sri Lankan players arrived home and were warmly welcomed by the members of the Sri Lankan Basketball Association and representatives from their respective schools.

Picture shows Natasha Perera with Rev. Sr. Chandrika Perera, Principal, St. Lawrence's Convent, Colombo 06.

J.Sandrian

## Christmas Crossword

Make all the words fit into this crossword.  
Each word is only used once.



**L  
o  
v  
e**



*"In the depth of the New Creation  
In the womb of the gloomy cave  
In the heart-beat of Mother Mary  
Love is waiting to enter.  
In the silence of sanctuary  
In the warm and love -  
filled human heart  
Through wings of the  
Spirit enfolding the earth  
Love is waiting to enter."*

(Sharing Life - Widening Communion)





## What it says .... in the Readings

**At various times in the past and in various differnt ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son. (Heb. 1: 1-2)**

### LITURGICAL - CALENDAR YEAR B 1st Jan. - 8th Jan. 2012

**Sun: FEAST OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD**  
Num 6: 22-27, Gal. 4: 4-7, Lk. 2: 16-21

**Mon: Memorial of SS Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops & Doctors**  
1 Jn. 2: 22-28, Jn. 1: 19-28

**Tue: Memorial of The Most Holy Name of Jesus**  
1 Jn 2: 19-3, Jn. 1: 29-34

**Wed: 1 Jn 3: 7-10, Jn 1: 35-42**

**Thu: 1 Jn 3: 11-21, Jn 1: 43-51**

**Fri: 1 Jn 5: 5-13, Mk. 1: 6-11 or Lk. 3: 23-38**

**Sat: Memorial of St. Raymond of Peynafort, Priest**  
1 Jn 3:22-4, Mt. 4: 12-17, 23-25

**Sun: THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**  
Is 60: 1-6, Eph. 3: 2-3a, 5-6, Mt. 2: 1-12

## Prayer of the Faithful

**Response: May we experience the power of Jesus in the New Year.**

That our country the Nation and the people may be blessed and that we experience peace and unity among all communities and be a better place to live in harmony with each other. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: May we experience the power of Jesus in the New Year.**

For the Church, that the dawn of the New Year be a time of renewal of grace through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: May we experience the power of Jesus in the New Year.**

That all Christians irrespective of their denomination, be proud of Mary, the creature of our own human race being exalted with the title "Mother of God" and accept her as our spiritual mother. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: May we experience the power of Jesus in the New Year.**

That all of us present at this Eucharistic Celebration, may open our hearts to receive the Lord, and that we may re-dedicate ourselves to the cause of justice and peace. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: May we experience the power of Jesus in the New Year.**

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## Look to 2012.....

Contd. from Pg. 15

"Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity."<sup>8</sup> We Christians believe that Christ is our true peace: in him, by his Cross, God has reconciled the world to himself and has broken down the walls of division that separated us from one another (cf. Eph 2:14-18); in him, there is but one family, reconciled in love.

Peace, however, is not merely a gift to be received: it is also a task to be undertaken. In order to be true peacemakers, we must educate ourselves in compassion, solidarity, working together, fraternity, in being active within the community and concerned to raise awareness about national and international issues and the importance of seeking adequate mechanisms for the redistribution of wealth, the promotion of growth, cooperation for development and conflict resolution. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God", as Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:9).

Peace for all is the fruit of justice for all, and no one can shirk this essential task of promoting justice, according to one's particular areas of competence and responsibility. To the young, who have such a strong attachment to ideals, I extend a particular invitation to be patient

and persevering in seeking justice and peace, in cultivating the taste for what is just and true, even when it involves sacrifice and swimming against the tide.

### Raising one's eyes to God

Before the difficult challenge of walking the paths of justice and peace, we may be tempted to ask, in the words of the Psalmist: "I lift up my eyes to the mountains: from where shall come my help?" (Ps 121:1).

To all, and to young people in particular, I wish to say emphatically: "It is not ideologies that save the world, but only a return to the living God, our Creator, the guarantor of our freedom, the guarantor of what is really good and true ... an unconditional return to God who is the measure of what is right and who at the same time is everlasting love. And what could ever save us apart from love?" Love takes delight in truth, it is the force that enables us to make a commitment to truth, to justice, to peace, because it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-13).

Dear young people, you are a precious gift for society. Do not yield to discouragement in the face of difficulties and do not abandon yourselves to false solutions which often seem the easiest way to overcome problems. Do not be afraid to make a commitment, to face hard work and sacrifice, to choose the paths that demand fidelity and

constancy, humility and dedication. Be confident in your youth and its profound desires for happiness, truth, beauty and genuine love! Live fully this time in your life so rich and so full of enthusiasm.

Realize that you yourselves are an example and an inspiration to adults, even more so to the extent that you seek to overcome injustice and corruption and strive to build a better future. Be aware of your potential; never become self-centred but work for a brighter future for all. You are never alone. The Church has confidence in you, follows you, encourages you and wishes to offer you the most precious gift she has: the opportunity to raise your eyes to God, to encounter Jesus Christ, who is himself justice and peace.

All you men and women throughout the world, who take to heart the cause of peace: peace is not a blessing already attained, but rather a goal to which each and all of us must aspire. Let us look with greater hope to the future; let us encourage one another on our journey; let us work together to give our world a more humane and fraternal face; and let us feel a common responsibility towards present and future generations, especially in the task of training them to be people of peace and builders of peace. With these thoughts I offer my reflections and I appeal to everyone: let us pool our spiritual, moral and material resources for the great goal of "educating young people in justice and peace".

*From the Vatican, 8 December 2011  
BENEDICTUS PP. XVI*

## Divine Mother Mary



God chose you from among women  
To become the mother of our Lord  
You are blessed than all other women  
As you had to receive Jesus Our Lord

God chose you to be the beacon  
To all the women in this world  
You proved yourself to be forever true  
To whatever the plan God had for you

Chaste humble sincere and dedicated  
To the cause that you willingly undertook  
Faith hope and love all consanguined  
We find always in you when we look

Be to us Divine Lady a bright star  
Reminding us always the real way  
We should walk to reach very far  
To receive Lord Jesus' salvation way.

*R.V.A. Navaratne*

## The Holy Family

The Holy Family is seen as the model for the human family, the religious community, and the Church itself. The celebration of the Incarnation has brought us to see God's closeness. In the Holy Family we see the ordinariness of the life of Jesus, the simple acceptance of Mary and Joseph of the marvels of God. In the daily life of family and community we can touch the divine, we can come close to God. But we have to learn to live a life centred on God, with respect and love for each other.



## Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

### General: Victims of Natural Disasters

That the victims of natural disasters may receive the spiritual and material comfort they need to rebuild their lives.

### Missionary: Dedication to Peace

That the dedication of Christians to peace may bear witness to the name of Christ before all men and women of goodwill.