

Feast of St. Chad,  
Bishop Confessor

March 2



*'For everyone who makes himself great  
will be humbled and everyone who  
humbles himself will be made great'*  
- (Lk 14:11)

# Messenger

Ash Wednesday



March 5

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## Holy Father's Lenten Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As Lent draws near, I would like to offer some helpful thoughts on our path of conversion as individuals and as a community. These insights are inspired by the words of Saint Paul: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor; so that by His poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). The Apostle was writing to the Christians of Corinth to encourage them to be

generous in helping the faithful in Jerusalem who were in need. What do these words of Saint Paul mean for us Christians today? What does this invitation to poverty, a life of evangelical poverty, mean for us today?

### Christ's Grace

First of all, it shows us how God works. He does not reveal Himself cloaked in worldly power and wealth but rather in weakness and poverty: "Though He was rich, yet for your sake



He became poor ..." Christ, the eternal Son of God, one with the Father in power and glory, chose to be poor; He came amongst us and drew near to each of us; He set aside His glory and emptied Himself so that He could be like us in all things (cf Phil 2:7; Heb 4:15). God's becoming man is a great mystery! But the reason for all this is His love, a love which is grace, generosity, a desire to draw near, a love which does not hesitate to offer

(Contd on Pg. 14)

## Pope Francis tells New Cardinals they are not joining a Royal Court



**Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, made a rare public appearance at the ceremony to appoint nineteen New Cardinals at St. Peter's Basilica, last Saturday.**

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who retired last year, made a rare public appearance at the ceremonial appointing of 19 new Cardinals by Pope Francis at St. Peter's Basilica, last Saturday.

His Holiness Benedict was greeted by Pope Francis with an embrace and by the people in the pews with applause and tears. It is the first time Pope Benedict and Pope Francis have appeared together at a liturgical ceremony since His Holiness Benedict stepped down last March, as the first pope to do so in 600 years.



The "Princes of the Church" who are joining the College of Cardinals, hail from some of the smallest, most remote and poverty-stricken nations in the world. His choice of Cardinals ignored some dioceses that traditionally bear the red hat and included others no one had considered.

Celebrating Holy Mass with the newest members of the College of Cardinals one day after their elevation, Pope Francis urged them to regard their new role not as

(Contd on Pg. 2)

## In Memoriam



W.T.A. Leslie Fernando

Retired High Court Judge W. T. A. Leslie Fernando, who was a contributor to both the Catholic Messenger and the Gnanartha Pradeepaya, passed away on Sunday, February 23, 2014 after a brief illness. His funeral took place on Tuesday, February 25, in Negombo. May his Soul Rest in Peace.

- Ajith Perera

## Applications for St. Aloysius' Seminary, Borella

You are invited to work in the vineyard of the Lord as a Diocesan Priest in the Archdiocese of Colombo. The applications will be issued through your Parish Priests from March 3, for those who are willing to enter St. Aloysius' Seminary, Borella for year 2015, in order to answer the Divine Calling of the Lord. Those who are in Grade 8 and above can send us your applications before April 8, 2014, through your Parish Priest.

Rector  
St. Aloysius' Seminary, Borella.

## Invitation to Catholic Doctors and Lawyers

The Faith Animation Mission of the Archdiocese of Colombo invites all Catholic Doctors and Lawyers in the Archdiocese of Colombo, for a faith enriching discussion led by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo on Friday, March 7, from 7.00 pm, at the Archbishop's House, Borella.

Further details contact  
Rev. Fr. Anton Dinesh 0112695471-3.

### St. Euphrasia's Flag Day at Nayakakanda March 5, 2014

We appeal to you, to be generous in your contributions towards our Flag Day in aid of young girls and women who receive rehabilitation in our institution. Your generosity will help to bring a ray of hope to their lives.

Rev. Sr. Superior

### Very Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI re-elected Oblate Provincial

Very Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI, was re-elected Provincial of the Colombo Province of Sri Lanka, by Very Rev. Fr. Louis Lougen OMI, Superior General of the Oblates of Mary

Immaculate. The new Council comprises: Rev. Frs. Romesh Lowe OMI, Roshan Silva OMI, Irwin Moraes OMI, Dilan Perera OMI and Angelo Wijewickreme OMI.

### Rupavahini telecast

Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation will telecast on Sunday, March 2, at 3.00 pm, the meeting of the Sri Lankan Migrant Community in Italy with the Holy Father Pope Francis and the Holy Mass celebrated by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith with Pope Francis.



Marian  
Year

The Rosary is a wonderful instrument for the destruction of sin, the recovery of God's grace and the advancement of His glory - Pope Gregory XII

## NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

# New Council of Oblates Bishop Cletus at Nattandiya



Rev. Frs. Romesh Lowe OMI, Roshan Silva OMI, Rohan Silva OMI, Irwin Moraes OMI, Dilan Perera OMI and Angelo Wijewickreme OMI



The feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Nattandiya, was celebrated recently with His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera, Bishop of Ratnapura, as Chief Celebrant.

Picture shows Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Upali Churchill making a presentation to His Lordship. Also in the picture is Mr. Kennedy Tissera.

## Peralanda Parish Promotional Drive for Catholic Papers



The Peralanda Parish launched a promotional drive to increase sales of the *Gnanartha Pradeepaya* and the *Messenger* in the Parish Community, under the patronage of the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Liyanage Patrick Perera OMI.

A successful sale of the two papers got underway.  
**C.R. Dickson Anthony**

## 139th Feast of St. Sebastian's Moratuwa

The 139th annual feast of St. Sebastian's Church, Moratuwa was celebrated in a grand scale with the statue of the Saint taken in a colourful procession along the streets of Moratuwa.

The Festive High Mass was concelebrated by Rev. Frs. Ranjan Silva and Susith Silva. The congregation was blessed by the statue of St. Sebastian by the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Bertram Ranjith.

All organisation was done by Asst. Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Shiran Dassa together with the Parish Council.

**Ranjith Cooray**



## Music Book for Sale

In celebrating the Year of Mary in the Archdiocese of Colombo, we have just published the long awaited Music Book to accompany the new revised and classified St. Philip Neri's Hymn Book. For your convenience of use, it is in two parts, with spiral binding. The music book (both parts) is priced at Rs. 850/. Please contact the Reception Office at St. Philip Neri's Church, Pettah directly or telephone 2421367 to reserve your copy.

**Superior**

## New Calvary Stations at Ulhitiya



The new Calvary Stations built at the Ulhitiya St. Anthony's Church, Mahiyanganaya Parish will be opened on March 8 at 10.00 a.m. by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando sss, Bishop of Badulla.

Rev. Fr. Dilese Shantha with parishioners invites devotees to the shrine.

## SVP Mattumagala is thirteen



The 13th Anniversary of St. Vincent de Paul Society Mattumagala was held under the patronage of Rev. Fr. Roshan Prasad, Spiritual Director of SVP Wattala Deanery and Rev. Fr. Anselm Shiran, Parish Priest of Sacred Heart Church Mattumagala. Here the members of the Society are seen with the two priests.

**Nimal Perera**

## Pope Francis tells New Cardinals.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

one of worldly honour but of humble service and sacrifice.

"A cardinal enters the Church of Rome, not a royal court," the Pope said in his homily during morning Mass in St Peter's Basilica. "May all of us avoid, and help others to avoid, habits and ways of acting typical of a court: Intrigue, gossip, cliques, favouritism and preferences."

"May our language be that of the Gospel: 'Yes when we mean yes; no when we mean no,'" he said. "May our attitudes be those of the beatitudes and our way be that of holiness."

Pope Francis celebrated the Mass with 18 of the 19 men he had raised to the rank of cardinal the previous day in the same Basilica. Cardinal Loris Capovilla, who at age 98 is now the oldest member of the College, was absent on both occasions for reasons of health.

The 18 new Cardinals, clad in the green vestments of the liturgical season of ordinary time, sat in

a near semi-circle around the main Altar. More than a hundred of their fellow Cardinals, also serving as concelebrants, sat in rows at the front of the congregation.

Retired Pope Benedict XVI, whose appearance at the previous day's consistory had surprised practically all the participants, did not return to the Basilica for the Mass.

Pope Francis's call for humility echoed a letter he had sent the new Cardinals shortly after the announcement of their elevation in January, telling them that a red hat "does not signify a promotion, an honour or a decoration; it is simply a form of service that requires expanding your vision and enlarging your heart" and that they should celebrate their new distinction only in an "evangelical spirit of austerity, sobriety and poverty."

In his homily, the Pope said that "Jesus did not come to teach us good manners, how to behave well at the table. To do that, He would not have had to come down from heaven

and die on the cross. Christ came to save us, to show us the way, the only way out of the quicksand of sin, and this is mercy."

"To be saintly is not a luxury," he said. "It is necessary for the salvation of the world."

Quoting from the day's Reading from the Gospel according to St Matthew, in which Jesus enjoins His disciples to love their enemies and pray for their persecutors, the Pope said Cardinals are called to live out that injunction with even "greater zeal and ardour" than other Christians.

"We love, therefore, those who are hostile to us; we bless those who speak ill of us; we greet with a smile those who may not deserve it," he said. "We do not aim to assert ourselves; we oppose arrogance with meekness; we forget the humiliations that we have endured."

The Pope's words recalled his previous day's talk to the Cardinals - whose traditional scarlet

garb is said to symbolise the blood of martyrs - when he called on them to pray for "all Christians suffering from discrimination and persecution" and "every man and woman suffering injustice on account of his or her religious convictions".

Following the Mass, the Pope appeared at the window of his office in the Apostolic Palace and addressed a crowd in St Peter's Square before praying the noon 'Angelus.'

He said the weekend's gathering of the world's Cardinals was a "precious occasion for experiencing the catholicity of the Church, well represented by the varied origins of the members of the College of Cardinals, gathered in close communion around the successor of Peter. And may the Lord give us the grace to work for the unity of the Church."

Pope's Francis new Cardinals mark a rebalancing sin the church and reflects the make up of the Church as a whole.





## Church in the Modern World

# Pope makes first overhaul of Vatican in 25 years

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis has announced the first major overhaul of the Vatican's outdated and inefficient bureaucracy in a quarter-century, creating an economics secretariat to control all economic, administrative, personnel and procurement functions of the Holy See.

Australian Cardinal George Pell, one of Francis' core eight Cardinal advisers and a sharp critic of current Vatican governance, was named Prefect of the new office. He reports to a new 15-member economy council made up of eight Cardinals reflecting various parts of the world and seven lay experts.

Francis was elected Pope a year ago on a mandate to reform the Vatican after documents stolen by Pope Benedict XVI's butler revealed the Holy See bureaucracy to be a dysfunctional, Machiavellian world of petty turf battles.

The new structure, the Vatican said, is intended to simplify and consolidate existing management structures, and improve oversight, internal controls and transparency — and provide more support for the Vatican's works for the poor.

It is the biggest reshuffling of the Vatican's internal organization since Pope John Paul II in 1988 issued the apostolic constitution, *Pastor Bonus*,

the blueprint for the Holy See's various congregations, pontifical councils and offices.

The changes appear to significantly diminish the scope of the Secretariat of State, which previously had administrative control over the Holy See while also handling diplomatic relations. The new Secretariat of the Economy's name suggests some sort of parity with the Secretariat of State — and in the official announcement, Pope Francis said that the heads of the two secretariats are to work together.

The new economics body covers the budgets, financial planning and administration of the Holy See — the central

governing structure of the Catholic Church — and the 44-hectare Vatican City State in central Rome which includes the profit-making Vatican Museums and Vatican's post office. An auditor will be empowered to conduct audits of any Vatican agency, at any time, the announcement said.

The new structure is the result of a commission of inquiry appointed by Pope Francis last summer to recommend



ways to improve efficiency and transparency and reduce waste. Last week, with Pope Francis' Group of Eight Cardinal advisers present, the commission reported its findings.

## THE SUFFERING SERVANT ...

# Christian's concerned by lack of protection in Nigeria



WARRI- President of the Christian Association of Nigeria, (CAN), Pastor Ayodele Oritsejafor, has said that his problem with most Northern political and religious leaders was that they were not do-

ing enough to dissuade Boko Haram terrorists from the spate of unprovoked attacks on Christians and the country in general.

Speaking to Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, former Chief Security

Officer, who paid a courtesy visit to the CAN President in Warri, Delta State, Oritsejafor accused Northern leaders of showing little concern for the plight of southerners affected in the crisis.

Al-Mustapha informed the CAN President that he was in Warri with a team of Nigerians, under the aegis of Al-Mustapha Peace, Unity and Development Initiative, to seek Pastor Oritsejafor's understanding and support for peace and unity in the country in the face of the siege to some northern parts of the country and killing of innocent persons by Boko Haram.

Pastor Oritsejafor said that there must be a way of reaching the displaced people, both Muslims and Christians. He said it was sad that the leader of the insurgents was mainly after Christians.



# Christian persecution has increased in 20 countries

In many countries the situation of Christians has sharply deteriorated. This is the finding of the report *'Persecuted and Forgotten'* launched by the UK office of the international Catholic Charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).

The report examines the situation of Christians in 30 different countries, including Afghanistan, China, Laos, Pakistan, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. In particular it analyses the situation in a number of majority Islamic countries and in those states whose political systems have a pronounced authoritarian character. The reporting period covers the past two-and-a-half years.

The principal finding of the report is that in two-thirds of the countries where persecution of Christians is most severe, the problems have become arguably even worse. In fact the Church's very survival in some parts — notably the Middle East — is now at stake.

For Christians the so-called "Arab spring" has in many cases become what the report calls a "Christian winter." Although the political upheavals have brought suffering to people of all faith communities, nonetheless it is above all the Christian confessions that have experienced the most open hostility and violence. They have become victims of every kind of political, economic, social and religious conflict, for example the conflicts between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims. As a result, a great many Christians have been forced to flee. The report describes the exodus as reaching "almost biblical proportions."

## SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



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March 2, 2014

## The Way of the Cross

Saint Paul, one of Christianity's greatest saints and evangelists, probably never witnessed Jesus Christ's passion and crucifixion on that fateful day that changed humanity forever. However, Saint Paul was absolutely correct when he said that humanity is redeemed by "Christ on the Cross" and not by the law, which the Jews for centuries had placed their faith in.

As we enter the Season of Lent, we are called to remember and embrace Christ's sacrifice at Calvary over 2,000 years ago. For here we have been blessed by a God, Who is supreme, Creator of all, including a universe that spans space and time beyond our comprehension, stretched out on bloodied wood, humiliated and scorned. No other religion, faith or belief system can gift its followers with such an ultimate sacrifice as that exhibited by Our Father. No other person, human or near-divine, can gift us redemption and eternal life as Christ has.

What does the "Way of the Cross" represent to us? Is it just a nice, comforting tapestry on our church walls that seasonally remind us Jesus died on a forlorn piece of wood in faraway Palestine? Is it just an interesting series of pictures and cameos of the historical narrative of the Man-God, Christ, from 20 centuries ago? Yes and no, but mostly the latter. The Way of the Cross should represent to each of us the price paid by a loving God, our eternal and supreme Father, Who paid the ultimate price to save us from eternal damnation and destruction. For during that fateful Passion, He gave up what was most precious to Him – His Son, Jesus Christ, so that unworthy humanity may regain dignity on earth and intimacy with Him for eternity.

So what does the "Way of the Cross" mean to us, today, in the so-called 'modern world'? What does it symbolise to the average, Sri Lankan Catholic of the 21st century, who is far removed both spatially and temporally from the watershed moment of over 2,000 years ago?

Well, the answer to the above questions can only be made by each of you. It is incumbent upon you to identify what Christ's suffering after the Last Supper, through His fateful arrest, incarceration, humiliation (including being spat on), scourging and crucifixion – all collectively termed the Passion – is, within the context of your own life. The Church or theologians or society cannot tell you what your intimate interpretation, or lack of, in relation to Christ's Passion should be.

The Church honour, in all its wonderful treasure of accumulated and inspired wisdom and knowledge can lead you to the Truth, a truth that is Christ. The Church guides you to the knowledge of the true meaning of the "Way of the Cross." In its simplest form, it is an expression, if verbalised, where God, Our Father says, "I love you, I redeem you and I give of my very best to show you that I will stand by you through the Valley of Death and into the promised Land of Heaven." The "Way of the Cross" also shows us the value of suffering, compassion, love, sacrifice, obedience, humility, decency, and victory over death – all inherent qualities of our Christian faith and attributes our Catholic Church espouses very strongly.

Recent scientific studies conducted by American academics reveal that each of the three key sufferings that Jesus underwent – the scourging, the carrying of the cross, and the crucifixion itself – could have killed an average human being. It just shows us how much Jesus loved us, by undergoing thrice the suffering of a mere mortal. Perhaps it is an indication of the love for humanity by the Trinity. Hence Christ's suffering is compounded by the Triune God – the Holy Trinity, three Persons in One. Such is the love of God for mere, tainted and faulty human beings! And, ultimately, this is the message of the "Way of the Cross."

Perhaps the question we need to ask ourselves this Lent is: Why does God love me so, to endure what He did, 2,000 years ago and each time the event is celebrated at Mass?

## Social Doctrine of the Church - Commitment of the Lay Faithful

The essential characteristics of the lay faithful who work in the Lord's vineyard (Matt.20:1-16) is the secular nature of their Christian discipleship, which is carried out precisely in the world. "It belongs to the laity to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will." (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church- Lumen Gentium*31).

The identity of the Lay Faithful is born in and nourished by the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. It is the proper duty of the lay faithful to proclaim the Gospel with an exemplary witness of life rooted in Christ and lived in temporal realities; the family, professional commitment in the world of work, culture, science and research; the exercise of Socio-Economic, and political responsibilities.

The Lay Faithful are called, to cultivate an authentic lay spirituality by which they are re-born as new men and women, both sanctified and sanctifiers immersed in the mystery of God and inserted in society. They must strengthen their spiritual and moral lives, becoming ever more competent in carrying out their social duties. The Lay Faithful should act according to the dictates of prudence; the virtue that "makes it possible to discern the true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it."

The Church's Social Doctrine must become an integral part of the ongoing formation of the Lay Faithful. The Church's Social Doctrine is extremely important for ecclesial associations that have pastoral ac-

tion within society as their objective. The presence of the Laity in social life is characterised by service, the sign, an expression of love, which is seen in the areas of the family, culture, work, politics and economics according to specific aspects.

Among the areas of the social commitment of the Laity, service to the human person emerges as a priority, promoting human dignity, implies above all affirming the inviolability of the right to life, from conception to natural death. Culture must represent a privileged area for the presence and commitment of the Church and the individual Christians. The Lay Faithful should look upon the Media as a possible and powerful instruments of solidarity. Service in the economy, service in politics are important aspects which pertain to the social mission of the Lay Faithful.

The Social Doctrine of the Church is developing. It is the responsibility and the competence of local Churches, which include the parishes to study and listen to the teaching and at the same time addressing their own unique needs, and to search for the best means to bring about their complex implementations. The Social Teachings of the Church offer a forum for dialogue between Catholics and the people of the larger society, around them to seek the means to pursue equity, justice, and peace for all the people of Sri Lanka.

**Rt. Rev. Dr. Marius Peiris,**  
Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo

## The Mystery of Salvation

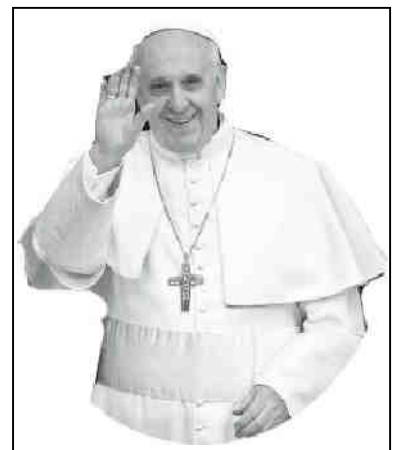
Loving our enemies, those who persecute us and cause us suffering, is difficult and neither is it a good deal because it drains us. Yet, this is the path pointed out and taken by Jesus for our salvation.

Even we, all of us, have enemies - all of us. Some are weak enemies, some strong. So often we too become the enemies of others; we do not love them. Jesus tells us that we must love our enemies.

This is no easy matter, and in general, we think that Jesus is asking too much of us. We think: Let's leave this to the cloistered Sisters who are holy, a few holy souls! But this is not the right attitude.

Jesus says that you must do this otherwise you are like the Publicans, like the pagans, and you are not Christians. In fact, how can we love those who decide to bomb and kill so many people? How can we love who for the love of money do not allow medicines to get to those who are in need, to the elderly and let them die? And once again, how can we love people who seek only their interest and power and do so much evil?

This is the mystery of salvation: With forgiveness, with love for our enemy, we



**"We must  
love  
our  
enemies"**

become poorer. But this poverty is a seed bearing fruit for others, as Jesus' poverty became grace for us all, salvation.

**Pope Francis**



# Tewatta's Upcoming Triennium of Marian Anniversaries

By Hector Welgampola

The National Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka was dedicated by Thomas Cardinal Cooray on February 6, 1974. The 40th Anniversary of that prayerful event in the life of the Sri Lankan Church is now behind us. Similarly, the 55th Anniversary of the inauguration of the new Lourdes Grotto too fell in February. However, several other Marian anniversaries lie ahead.

## Centenary of Marian Devotion

The series of anniversaries begin with this year's Centenary of Marian Devotion at Tewatta Parish. The Parish had existed since 1911, but, according to research done by late Father Philip Disanayake, OMI, a former Administrator of the Basilica, public Marian devotion had commenced at Tewatta in 1914, just 100 years ago. Celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes had begun there in 1916. So, Tewatta had been a bastion of faith even through World War I (1914-1918). And the genesis of the Basilica is providentially linked with the ancestral gene of popular piety centred on that rural church.

## 75th Anniversary of the Vow

Two decades later, even amid World War II, the rural Marian Shrine continued to attract pilgrims from neighbouring parishes. That pious pilgrim tradition was no doubt a grace-filled inspiration drawing then Archbishop Jean Marie Masson to that prayer venue. He paid a private visit to the Lourdes Grotto there on May 26, 1940. Kneeling there in prayer, with faith like that of the Maid of Massabielle, he made a vow.

The head of the country's Catholic Commu-



nity vowed to build a basilica honoring Mother Mary if she mediated to save the country from the ongoing war. Although Father John Herath, his Private Secretary, accompanied the Archbishop on this visit, even he was not told about the secret conversation with the Blessed Mother. The 75th anniversary of that historic vow will be due next year – 2015.

The anniversary of the Marian vow is followed by other anniversaries that testify to the last French Archbishop's faith, which was as firm as the Pyrenees Range where he spent his youth. With implicit trust in the Blessed Mother's mediation to save his adopted country, Archbishop Masson quietly began preparing the groundwork for the faith monument.

## 75th Anniversary of "Sick Day"

Having made his deal with Mother Mary, with a spirituality bedrocked in the tradition of Lourdes, the Archbishop had his mind set on fulfilling the vow. Even before the vow was announced in pub-

lic, he was eager to cultivate in Tewatta a spiritual tradition worthy of a basilica. The local parish dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes was a providential venue for a Lourdes-styled ritual Blessing of the Sick. And so the annual "Sick Day" was started in August 1941. Its 75th Anniversary is due in 2016.

## First Public Announcement

Six months later, Archbishop Masson made the first public announcement of his vow during Tewatta's feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 15, 1942.

He explained it further in his March 6 "Letter to Children." Seeking children's prayer backup for his vow, the Archbishop urged them to: "Unite in a ceaseless and unending series of Hail Marys ... until we are sure that our Heavenly Mother will deign to grant this request, which is yours, mine and of all of us, for the protection of Lanka."

## The Test of Faith

Noteworthy was the French Archbishop's use of the

native name Lanka.

That was long before Ceylon won independence and longer before that name of the country was replaced by the beautiful ancient name. Even as of then, the Archbishop had the secret hope to dedicate the Basilica to the Blessed Mother under the illustrious title – Our Lady of Lanka. A hope to be dutifully fulfilled by his eminent successor Thomas Cardinal Cooray.

One month after the public announcement of the vow, the Japanese bombed Colombo in April, 1942. That seeming test of faith taking place on Easter Sunday could not shatter the fervor of Archbishop Masson. While many leaders, including clergy and even Catholic institutions, evacuated Colombo, he refused to move out of the Archbishop's House, Borella. "The Japanese will not return," he reportedly kept saying. True to his steadfast faith, the Japanese invaders never returned. Their sudden withdrawal from the bombing spree is still a mystery, though not to those with eyes of faith. How will Sri Lanka's Catholic

Church mark the 75th Anniversaries of such profound testimonies of faith, which will be due in 2017?

## The Pope's Timely Counsel

The coming three-year (2015-2017) period of Marian anniversaries can be a triennium of grace if people's prayerful participation is harnessed for faith nurturing and genuine witness, not for pageantry and worldly displays. The tradition of parish pilgrimages that Cardinal Cooray launched as spiritual preparation for the dedication of the Basilica may be just one trend that could be further developed. And in the spirit of ecclesial unity that guided him throughout the Basilica project, the participation of all dioceses in such a spiritual uplift can also be an immense blessing. All Marian Shrines including Madhu and Matara could network that faith revival. And amid such moves, Pope Francis' warning against the dangers of "spiritual worldliness" would be a timely counsel.

## Please bring back the Church I knew!

Bring back the Church I knew  
And how happy I will be,  
To worship the Lord my God  
Reverently, so reverently.

Bring back the Church I knew  
Where the Presence of God was felt,  
And everyone on entering the Church  
Respectfully before Him knelt.

Bring back the Church I knew  
Where silence and holiness prevailed,  
And all who came to Church  
With faith before Him prayed.

Bring back the Church I knew  
Where there was no noise or distraction,  
And our minds were focussed on Jesus only  
And not on any side attraction!

Bring back the Church I knew  
Where women were attired modestly,

And their heads were always covered  
And everyone dressed clean and neatly.

Bring back the Church I knew  
Where the Blessed Sacrament was honoured,  
And the Altar was in the central place  
Where the priest facing It, his Mass offered.

Bring back the Church I knew  
Where the Altar rails were there,  
So that everyone could kneel respectfully  
Receiving the Body and Blood of Our Saviour.

Bring back the Church I knew  
Where hymns of faith were sung,  
And those words filled us with inspiration  
Unlike the introduction of pop song!

Bring back the Church I knew  
Where our faith was made stronger,  
And Sunday Mass was our priority  
And not cricket, football or whatever!

Bring back the Church I knew  
When our priests were dedicated and holy,  
And gave us food for thought  
In their instructive Sunday Homily.

Bring back the Church I knew  
When by the religious attire they always wore,  
We could recognize a priest or nun  
And from them help in our need implore.

Yes, bring back the Church I knew  
With one exception - if I may say so,  
May the Mass be offered in our language  
Instead of Latin which we do not know!

Bring back the Church I knew  
When the Angelus was recited thrice daily,  
And St. Michael's Prayer was offered after Mass  
And also a prayer to Our Blessed Lady.

So PLEASE bring back the Church I knew!  
And soon our faith will grow strong,  
And there'll be no use of lamenting  
Where, how and what went wrong!!!

Lilian Ferdinands



# How to Prevent Cancers

Many of us have lost someone or other to the dreadful disease called cancer. It is a foreign growth in our body that spreads more rapidly than our normal cells destroying and aggressively pushing aside our normal, healthy cells. These are called neoplasms (new cells) and they are malignant, which means that they are destructive or cancerous.

Most common cancers that kill people in the world today are cancers of the lung, breast, colon or prostate. Lung cancer is the most preventable cancer. It is mainly caused by cigarette smoking. The other common preventable cancer is colon cancer. Researchers have found that most of the colon cancers could be prevented by eating foods that cause regular bowel movements. Foods with a high fibre content such as fruits and vegetables and adequate intake of fluids to avoid dehydration can reduce colon cancer.

The causes of breast and prostate cancers are unknown and it is almost impossible to prevent them. The prostate gland which is situated at the lower end of the bladder starts to grow gradually after the age of fifty. The urethra, the duct that takes urine from the bladder to the penis is covered with this gland. This is a normal process in every man. But sometimes this growth becomes cancerous (malignant), and causes problems such as urine retention, blood in the urine and infections in the genito-urinary tract. Prostate cancer could be

treated temporarily with chemotherapy, radiation and surgery. People do not normally die from prostate cancer. But at a certain stage the cancer can spread to the other organs such as the bones, lungs and bladder and may cause death.

One of the most insidious of cancers is breast cancer. There are no known causes of this malignancy. There is a genetic factor which is connected to breast cancer. If one of your blood relations had breast cancer we should take diagnostic measures as getting mammograms to detect growths in the breasts early. Knowing the consistency of your normal breasts will help in early diagnosis. Women after menarche (starting to menstruate) should be taught to palpate their breasts at least once a month to detect cysts or lumps.

Latest research on cancer has shown a link between dairy products and breast and prostate cancer. Professor Jane Plant has contrasted the high prevalence of breast and prostate cancer in the West with the low prevalence of such cancers in oriental people such as the Chinese or the Koreans. She found that the high intake of dairy products, such as cheese, butter and milk, in the Western World may be causing these cancers as against the extremely low rates of such cancers in countries like China. Their intake of dairy products in the diet is extremely low, or almost negligible. In fact, some Oriental Communities abhor the intake of dairy products.

Early diagnosis

**"Cancer is a disease of the body, mind and the spirit. Foster your inner strength. Stress, hatred and anger feed cancer cells. Forgive others. Love others. Live a life of happiness and peace"**

can help to eradicate breast cancer. Women who are diagnosed with breast malignancies early can have the malignant tissues removed with a lumpectomy (removal of just a lump) than a mastectomy (removal of the whole breast). In addition to surgery oncologists also use radiation and chemotherapy (drugs) to eradicate vestiges of the malignant tissues. Delayed diagnosis also will lead to spreading of these tumors (metastasis) to other parts of the body such as the lymph nodes. At this stage surgery will become extensive and more complicated.

This shows the importance of detecting breast malignancies early by obtaining mammograms and getting into the habit of palpating the breasts at least once a month to detect breast

lumps. Women are advised to get a mammogram after forty or after menopause especially if they have a family history of breast cancer.

Lung cancer could be prevented by refraining from inhaling cigarette smoke. Eating fruits and vegetables and keeping the body hydrated can prevent colon cancer. If there are signs of prostate problems such as urinary hesitancy, constant urinary tract infections, and frequent urgency to pass urine or getting up in the middle of sleep to use the bathroom or detecting blood in the urine, you should consult a physician. A simple blood test called PSA (Prostatic Specific Antigen) can initiate the process of diagnosing prostate cancer. Early diagnosis of any illness improves chances of healing.

There is also a cancer in the white and red blood cells called leukemia. In many cases this disease proliferates immature blood cells in the body. The process of blood cell maturation is impaired. The signs and symptoms are fatigue, anemia, shortness of breath, impaired wound healing, etc. These symptoms are linked to the types of blood cells that are affected, e.g. if blood platelets are affected there will be symptoms like nose bleeding and impaired wound healing because platelet blood cells are related to clotting factors. These cancers in the blood cells too are treated with chemotherapy.

Rick Cantrell, MD, PhD., who himself is a cancer victim, advocates alternative treatments for cancer such as acupuncture

**Francis Madiwela, M. Sc.**

ture, homeopathy and herbal medications. At the same time he gives valuable insights about cancer prevention. Dr. Cantrell says that we all have cancer cells in our body. They proliferate only when our immune system is weak. Cancer cells get an upper hand when the body is weak and malnourished. This malnourishment can be caused by eating the wrong type of food.

He advises us to avoid sugar and sugar

substitutes, salt and dairy products. If we cannot avoid he tells us to limit their use. These products feed the cancer cells. He suggests soya as a milk substitute. Avoid meat products and substitute them with fish. Avoid coffee, tea and chocolate. Substitute them with green tea and soya drinks.

Cancer is a disease of the body, mind and the spirit. Foster your inner strength. Stress, hatred and anger feed cancer cells. Forgive others. Love others. Live a life of happiness and peace.

## Refiner's Metal



A bar of steel is worth 5 dollars. When made into horse shoes its worth is 10 dollars... If made into needles its worth, 350 dollars... If made into pen knife blades, it is worth 32,000 dollars... If into springs for watches, its worth is 250,000 dollars.

What a drilling the poor bar of steel must undergo to be worth this much! But the more it is manipulated, the more it is hammered and passed through the fire and beaten and pounded and polished, the greater the value.

It is through pain that God is getting the most out of us for His glory and blessing for others.

We are useful only to the extent that we allow God to use us ... If God has given us resources and special talents we must not regard them as our own creation or special privilege.

*"When a tool boasts of greater power than the one who uses it, it is in danger of being discarded" (Isaiah 10:15).*

**Sent by Rev. Fr. Randil Fernando OMI**

# Your Wedding in the Catholic Church

Canonical, Liturgical and Pastoral Guidelines for Catholic Marriages in the Archdiocese of Colombo

(Contd from last week)

**Dispensation from Canonical Form in Mixed Communion**  
Canonical form: Only those marriages are valid which are contracted in the presence of the local Ordinary or Parish Priest or of the priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who, in the presence of two witnesses takes the consent of the two spouses in a valid marital rite.

1. All baptized Catholics are obliged to follow the canonical form when contracting marriage. However, for pastoral reasons, dispensation from canonical form is granted only to have a marriage in a Christian Church, i.e. with no Catholic Minister officiating (Can.1118)

2. Applications for such dispensation from Canonical form are normally made by the Catholic Party through his/her Parish Priest.

3. A Catholic Priest is not permitted to concelebrate the Eucharist with a non-Catholic Minister in such marriages.

## Disparity of Cult Marriages

Between a Baptized Catholic and a non-baptized, including those of the fundamentalist Christian Sects.

## Dispensation

1. A marriage where there is disparity of cult could be celebrated only after the appropriate dispensation has been

obtained from the Ordinary.

2. A person who has publicly defected from the Catholic Church by a formal act and denounced the Catholic Faith (for example a baptized person who has joined a fundamentalist sect) incurs a latae sententiae excommunication according to Canon 1364/1. The Catholic Party should obtain dispensation from Disparity of Cult when such a person wishes to enter into a marriage with a Catholic Party.

3. If such a person intends to enter into a sacramental marriage with a Catholic Party, he/she should be reconciled with the Catholic Church in the internal or external forum and be received into the Church before the marriage.

fore the marriage.

## Marriage Ceremony

• Holy Mass is not permitted at 'Disparity of Cult' marriages.

However, Disparity of Cult marriages should be celebrated in Church. Usually the signing of the Civil register should take place in the Church.

• The Catholic Party (only) may receive Holy communion at the Liturgical Service. A non-Christian Minister is not permitted to preach the Homily at such Service. There can be no Offertory Procession in the absence of Mass. (Offertory Procession is a liturgical action reserved for the Holy Mass).

• In exceptional cases, with the permission of the Ordinary as for any prior registration, signing of the civil register before hand in a place other than the Church is permitted respecting the customs (e.g. Poruwa Ceremony) of the non-Catholic Party. However, the Church Marriage ceremony should follow the Civil Registration on the same day. The couple should be asked to produce the Civil Marriage certificate and to sign the Church Marriage register after the Church Ceremony. Usual solemnities may be given in such instances.

(Contd. next week)

**Courtesy: Archdiocesan Liturgical Service**





## Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

The time has now come in the Church year for the solemn observance of the great central act of history, the redemption of the human race by Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In the Roman Rite, the beginning of Lent and its forty days of penance is marked with the austere symbol of ashes.

This is the time given by the Church to renew our lives and turn back to God. Our lives have become hectic with too many activities, too many work and family obligations, a constant barrage of noise and visual stimulation through the radio, TV, stereo, movies, com-

puter and games. We need to slow down and turn towards the spiritual world. Remember the basic catechism question, "Why did God make you?" The answer is simple, "God made me to know Him, to love Him and serve Him in this world to be happy forever with Him in the next." Do we believe and live thus.

The Stations of the Cross you see here are from the Chapel at St. Vianney Seminary, Mutwal. The paintings are framed and mounted on a piece of wood bark as if to remind us of the wooden cross on which Christ was crucified.



(Continued from last week)

## Road to Pulmoddai

Part III by Kishanie S. Fernando

The goal of our drive to Pulmoddai was to visit the unique beaches of the area. So there we were wading a muddy track between lagoon and sea beach to reach the famed beach of Arisimalai. At the entrance to this beach was a sign post and a security point. The personnel there showed us the foot path that led to the beach through a thicket. Jungle like trees hung with wild creepers and roots making the path dark. Swarms of yellow butterflies frittered around us. It was an unusual sight. The path having twisted and turned and made several dips ended abruptly down a small cliff on the beach.

The sand was warm under our bare feet. And yes the sand on the beach was unique. It resembled grains of rice in keeping with the many legends of the grain of rice and the bowl of rice as the name Arisimalai was supposed to suggest. In patches there was also the mineral rich black sand with its unusual metallic sheen. It was slow realisation that we stood on a part of a beach which was a very small story of a much larger and richer resource that spread along the beaches round about.

Geological explorations have estimated the total reserve in Pulmoddai to be about 4 million tonnes of sand. Even though the deposit in the Eastern Coast of Sri Lanka is comparatively small in quantity (about 12.5 million tonnes), it is distributed in a small area whereas in other countries a similar size deposit is dis-

tributed over an area about 40 times bigger. And unlike other countries that have to mine heavily to excavate mineral deposits, in Pulmoddai the minerals only have to be separated from the sea sand. It has also been recorded that the distance of the sand deposit is about 7.5 kilometers, having an average width of about 60 meters. Several sand types are found here; ilmanite (70 -72%) zircon (8-10%), rutile (8%), silmanite (15%) as well as monazite (0.3%).

According to experts on mineral sand mining, Pulmoddai beach sand deposit contains minerals consisting of one of the most expensive and important metals in the world that is titanium. Ilmanite and rutile which are found in enormous concentrations are rich in titanium. Experiments have shown that titanium concentration of ilmanite is about 53% while that of rutile is about 95%.

Exporting sand from this deposit started in 1959 and is continued by Lanka Minerals Sands Ltd, who operate the Pulmoddai deposit, one of the richest minerals in the world, with a very low cost of production.

Titanium is extensively used as a metal in satellites, rockets, submarines, engines, weapons, military ware, human body parts, alloys, desalination plants due to its inherited physical properties such as non-corrosion, light weight, high strength, withstanding high tempera-

tures, non toxic etc. Titanium in its oxide form as titanium dioxide is used in a wide range of industrial products such as paper, textile, inks, paints, plastics, pharmaceutical products due to its physical properties such as brilliant whiteness, opacity, high-refractive index, high-covering power, high-hiding power, withstand harsh weather conditions without altering its original properties.

Experts have explained the source of this valuable deposit to originate from the normal rocks that we see inland far away from the sea and the beach. However, rivers, creeks, streams running across the country up to the sea carry rock pieces, weathered due to mechanical and chemical action. Huge rocks break into pieces due to continuous heating during day time and cooling at night. Same thing happens due to chemicals present in water that run through the rocks. These broken rock pieces are transported from place to place by rivers. This is why we find large quantities of sand in river beds immediately after a rain. These particles finally reach the sea along the rivers.

The type of sea waves and currents in the sea are the deciding factors for the minerals that reach the sea to come back to the beach as a concentrated deposit or to move further into the deep sea. The formation of sea waves and currents in the Eastern Coast is such that the sand moves from sea bed to the beaches whereas it is the complete opposite on the Western Coast causing severe erosion taking beach sand into deeper sea.

Continued next week More around Trincomalee



# Biodiversity of Galilee during Jesus' time

**Dr Tyrell Fernando**

MBBS, DFM, PgDip Counselling (Colombo Uni), MSc (Psychology) India

## Climate, Flora and fauna in Galilee

Most of Galilee consists of rocky terrain, at heights of between 500 and 700 metres. There are several high mountains in the region, including Mount Tabor and Mount Meron, which have relatively low temperatures and high rainfall. As a result of this climate, flora and wildlife thrive in the region, while many birds annually migrate from colder climates to Africa and back through the Hula-Jordan corridor. The streams and waterfalls, the latter mainly in Upper Galilee, along with vast fields of greenery and colourful wildflowers, as well as numerous towns of biblical importance, make the region a popular tourist destination.



*Rainbow Cave arch in the Galilee, Israel*

Due to its high rainfall (900–1200 mm), mild temperatures and high mountains (Mount Meron's elevation is 1,000–1,208 metres), the Upper Galilee region contains some distinctive flora and fauna: Prickly juniper (*Juniperus oxycedrus*), Lebanese Cedar (*Cedrus libani*) which grows in a small grove on Mount Meron, Cyclamens, Paeonias and *Rhododendron Ponticum* which sometimes appears on Meron.

Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian described in 66AD, in Galilee 'Lake Region' so often travelled by Jesus that extended along the Lake of Gennesaret is a land of the same name, admirable in its natural beauty. The fertility of the terrain supports all kinds of vegetation. Its inhabitants cultivate the whole area. Moreover its climate is good for all kinds of plants. Walnuts which need a cooler climate than the other trees, flower in abundance here. There are also palm trees, which need higher temperatures. Not far away we find Figs and Olives, which require more temperate climate. One might say that nature has worked to bring the most incompatible species

together here, in one place, or that the seasons of the year compete with one another in a noble struggle to claim the rights of each one to this land. Not only does the soil produce the most diverse fruits, but it strives to keep them ripe as long as possible. The noblest of them, the grapes and figs, are gathered without interruption over a period of ten months because along with the gentle climate, the fertility of this land is nourished by the waters of an artesian well, to which the people had given the name of Capernaum.

## Fruits and Vegetables

Grapes, Apricots, Dates, Walnuts, Pomegranates, Lentils, Wheat, Barley, Onions, Cucumber, Broad Beans, Olives, Garlic.

**Dairy Products.** - Goat's Milk, Curds, Butter, Cheese, Bread, Eggs, Wine, Chicken, Beef, Mutton, Honey. The Galilee of Jesus' time was probably greener than it is now. Even without the flowery exaggerations of Flavius Josephus, we can easily see how beautiful was Jesus' homeland. Its gentle climate, the moist sea breeze which easily penetrated inland, and the

fertile soil made Galilee an exuberant country. By the evidence we have, the valleys of Jezreel and Beth Netopha produced excellent wheat and also barley, which was bitter and hard to digest and so comprised the daily bread of the poorest people. Vineyards are to be seen everywhere, even on gentle hillsides. Apparently Galilee produced an excellent, Aegean-type wine. Olive Trees were highly valued and abundant. Fig trees, pomegranates and fruit trees, grew around the villages or in the middle of the vineyards. Greens and



*A Farm in Galilee*

vegetables were cultivated in the more humid, shady areas.

Galilee was an Agrarian Society. Jesus' contemporaries lived by farming, like most people in the Roman Empire of the first century. According to Josephus, the whole region of Galilee is devoted to farming, and there were no idle lands.



*Jordan River entering Sea of Galilee*

## Sea of Galilee

Sea of Galilee is a harp-shaped fresh water lake in the District of Galilee in Northern Palestine given various names throughout the history, but most New Testament readers recognize "the Sea of Galile" as its most common



*Sea of Galilee*

designation. It is also called the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1, 21:1), and sometimes simply "the Lake" (John 6:16). It is nearly eight miles wide at its widest point, and more than 12 miles long from north to south. Its depth is more than 200 feet in some places. The Sea of Galilee is beautiful. Its calm, peaceful setting, though, does not present a complete picture of the people's perspective in Jesus' day. Many of the biblical images related to the Sea reflect a very different cultural understanding.

The Jordan River is the main source of water for the Lake, supplying about 75 percent of the Lake's annual intake. Direct rainfall provides another 8 percent and the remainder comes from springs and wades in the area. Numerous springs are located around the Sea of Galilee, particularly along the northwestern shore, but because of the higher salinity of these waters, today many of these springs are diverted to flow directly into the Jordan River, south of the Lake.

According to the Gospels, Jesus' earthly ministry centered around the Sea of Galilee. While important events occurred in Jerusalem, the Lord spent most of the three years of His ministry along the shore of this freshwater lake. Here He narrated more than half of His parables and here He performed most of His miracles.

The rabbis of ancient times said, "The Lord has created seven seas, but the Sea of Galilee is his delight."

Anyone who has seen the beauty of the blue water against the green and brown background of the mountains around the Sea of Galilee would understand that statement. This

freshwater lake is the largest in Israel and among the world's most beautiful. The Bible does not tell us specifically why God chose this place as the location for Jesus' ministry, but certainly He (and His Son), having created it, appreciated its beauty. Since Jesus spent most of His short time of ministry near or on the Sea of Galilee, we will be able to enhance our understanding of His message and ministry by learning as much as we can about it.

Surprising to many first-time visitors is the fact that from any point on the rocky shore, all other locations along the shoreline are visible.

Much of the Sea's beauty comes from its being nestled among the hills, which are green in the spring, brown during the dry season, and always in contrast with the deep blue of the Sea.

The slopes of the Golan Heights on the east and Mount Arbel on the west drop sharply down to the Sea.

The Sea's location below the mountains to the east makes it subject to sudden and violent storms as the wind comes over these mountains and drops suddenly onto the Sea. This happens especially when an east wind brings cool air over the warmer blanket of air that covers the Sea itself. The cold air, which is heavier, drops as the warm air rises. This sudden change can produce surprisingly furious storms in a short time, as it did in Jesus' day (Matt. 8:24).

There are several hot mineral springs surrounding the Lake. The largest of these is in the capital city of Tiberias, where Herod Antipas included it in his hot baths. Ten of Jesus' 33 recorded miracles, including a majority of His healing miracles, happened near the Lake. The number of sick people mentioned in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee (see Matt. 14:35-36) may be due in part to the hot mineral springs and public baths in the area. When these springs and baths did not provide cures, people sought the Rabbi from Capernaum, who had a reputation of being able to heal.

As it is today, the Sea of Galilee was teeming with fish in Jesus' time.

*Contd. on Pg. 9*





## Ash Wednesday

Cross of Ash  
Symbolic cross  
Reminiscent of death.  
"Ashes to ashes  
Dust to dust"  
Decay of the corporeal frame  
Return to sod.  
While the soul thus  
Returns to God.

Heralding the Lenten season, Ash Wednesday has come round again in the circuit of the Liturgical Calendar, conveying that annual reminder:

"Man thou art dust  
And unto dust thou shalt return."

In the rush and push of life, there's the tendency to forget this irrevocable fact; even though daily we hear of untimely deaths, horrific deaths, massacres, deaths of children, youth, young adults; deaths under unpredictable circumstances when "In the midst of life we are in death" and yet the thought of death is relegated to the recesses of the mind.

Ash Wednesday is a day set apart for quiet reflection on death. The symbolic cross of ash on the forehead brings home to us the reality that the one thing we can be sure of in this life is death. But enmeshed in the consumerist, commercial, materialistic world of today man has no time for spirituality. Ash Wednesday constitutes the detour sign, to turn away from such distractions and turn to God.

tions and turn to God.

"I come to thee once more my God  
No longer will I roam  
For I have sought the wide world through  
And never found a home."

Ash Wednesday marks the commencement of forty days of prayer, penance and abstinence in reparation for sin, for being the cause of Christ's agony and ignominious death on the cross. It's a brief period in the liturgical calendar when we get the opportunity to look into ourselves, accept our frailties, omissions and commissions and with contrite hearts make a firm purpose of amendment.

"See our saviour bleeding, dying  
On the cross of Calvary  
To that cross my sins have nailed Him  
Yet he bleeds and dies for me."

*Jeannette Cabraal*

## Biodiversity of Galilee.....

Contd. from Pg. 8

This made for a prosperous commercial fishing industry in the many small villages and larger towns along its shore. Among these was Bethsaida, which means "House of fishermen." Jesus' choice of this location for His ministry, along with His selection of several fishermen as His disciples, made it natural that He would illustrate much of His teaching with fishing imagery (Matthew 4:19).

Capernaum, located on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, was a major town home to fishermen, farmers, a Roman garrison, and a customs house (where tax collectors worked). Capernaum had a large synagogue, the remains of which are beneath the ruins of a later synagogue. Many of the New Testament stories about Jesus took place here. Jesus' disciple Matthew, a tax

collector, came from this town (Matthew 8:5-17, 9:1-34, 17:24-27; Mark 1:21-34, 2:1-12; Luke 7:1-10; John 6:16-71).

Jesus acted to demonstrate His authority over the Sea and its destructive power. He walked on the stormy water (Mark 6:47-50; Matthew 14:22-33; John 6:16-20). He calmed the storms on the Sea (Mark 4:35-41; Matt. 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25). He even empowered His disciple to walk on the water (Matthew 14:28-32). Peter's cry of "Lord, save me!" as his lack of faith caused him to sink into the deep takes on intense meaning in light of the symbolism of the Sea (Matthew 14:30). The reaction of the disciples was profound. They were amazed (Matt. 14:33; Mark 6:51) and terrified (Mark 4:41) at Jesus' power. They recognised that his power

was more than just authority over the elements of nature. Some Old Testament heroes had controlled nature; for example, at Elijah's word, it did not rain for years (1 Kings 17:1). This is a feat James suggests might be possible for all righteous people (James 5:15-18). But only God can control the Abyss. The stilling of the storm produced not only awe at the power of God within Jesus, but also the realisation that he was God. "Then those who were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God'" (Matthew 14:33).

The Sea of Galilee is one of the most significant locations in the world. Here God sent his Son to continue the work of salvation with the message that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The

Sea and its fishermen provided images He used to explain His kingdom and His followers' role in it. And the Sea and what it represented gave him opportunities to demonstrate that He was truly God.

There were only two seasons in Palestine, summer and winter, the dry and rainy seasons. In January the flowers began to bloom, and by the end of April the whole land was one vast flower garden.

Early in January a great snowstorm occurred in Galilee. Snow fell two feet deep, the heaviest snowfall and one of the deepest at Nazareth in a hundred years. Jesus had seen snow on the mountains, and several times it had fallen in Nazareth, remaining on the ground only a short time.

Trees and flora commonly seen in Galilee during the time of Jesus are given below



*Juniperus oxycedrus*



*Persian or English walnut,  
Juglans regia*



*Olea europaea, (Olive)  
Dead Sea, Jordan*



*Cyclamen*



*Rhododendron ponticum*



*Cedrus libani*



*Common fig branch,  
showing leaves and fruit in  
various stages*

## ● Dr. Mrs. Juliet Fernando: An Outstanding Academic

Dr. Juliet Fernando (nee Dias) was the eldest daughter of Vinnie and Gertrude Dias from Modera (Colombo). On completing an outstanding academic career at Good Shepherd Convent, Kotalana and later at Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya, she entered the Medical College and passed out as a medical doctor in 1960. She was the wife of late Emmanuel Fernando of Katuneriya, the mother of Supala Fernando (Director, Dip Products, mother-in-law of Melanie and grand mother of Primal, Shehanie, Melanie and Mevidu.

Dr. Juliet fondly called by the seven of her younger siblings as Loku Akka was the eldest in the family. She was always in the fore front. She had such energy, all other siblings could not keep pace with her walk in her heyday. She died at the age of



81 years and was buried on the third death anniversary of her late husband on February 14, 2014 at the ancestral family vault in Madampitiya. She was bedridden for nearly three years. All the while she was waiting to receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, except for last few weeks, where perhaps her mental pain was so intense that she lost her bearings. I was told that she breathed her last prompting the name of 'Jesus'.

After serving in Marawila as the District Medical Assistant, she

### Appreciation

took to private practice in Katuneriya. In 1967 she went to the UK and qualified as a Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (M.R.C Psyche) and worked as a Registrar in several psychiatric hospitals in London, finally in Banstead.

She returned to Sri Lanka in 1998 and was the only Psychiatrist who served patients from Puttalam to Negombo almost until she was ill. During that period there was no resident Psychiatrist in Puttalam, Chilaw and Negombo hospitals. Those who received her kind and efficient treatment for mental illness were numerous.

Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Tissera, one time Parish Priest of Katuneriya in his eulogy mentioned how her

home in Katuneriya became the cradle for the resurgence of Alcoholic Anonymous (AA). Loku Akka's home was the environment for treatment of nearly 400 alcohol addicts and weekly meetings were held at Saint Anthony's Church (Branch of Katuneriya Parish). She was a beloved devotee of St. Anthony.

We are sure that she is enjoying the bliss of Heaven with her near and dear ones.

Rev. Fr. Noel Dias

## LENT: Discipleship, Discovery, Depth

Lent is a time to take time to let the power of our faith story take hold of us,  
a time to let the events get up and walk around in us,  
a time to intensify our living into Christ,  
a time to hover over the thoughts of our hearts,  
a time to place our feet in the streets of Jerusalem or to walk along the Sea and listen to His Word,  
a time to touch His robe and feel the healing surge through us,  
a time to ponder and a time to wonder....  
Lent is a time to allow a fresh new taste of God!  
Perhaps we're afraid to have time to think, for thoughts come unbidden.  
Perhaps we're afraid to face our future knowing our past.  
Give us courage, O God, to hear Your Word and to read our living into it.  
Give us the trust to know we're forgiven and give us the faith to take up our lives and walk.  
Ann Weems

## 'Daham Denuma' - Book for Children

Rev. Sr. Edna Gunawardena AC presents her book 'Daham Denuma' to His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo. 'Daham Denuma' is a book written especially for children.

Leon de Soysa



## A Tribute to Melicia (Mel) Gunasekera....

If I were to describe the 2nd of February 2014, all I can say is that it was like the end of the world for our family. My beloved cousin Mel had bid farewell to this world in the most tragic and gruesome way, beyond description.

With a wounded heart, and on behalf of my grief stricken cousins, I pen these words of tribute.

"Mel," as we in the family called her was the daughter of my mother's sister Manel and Marcus and to me, was like my baby sister. Our family - aunts, uncles and cousins are a very close-knit family; in life we are more like brothers and sisters who are there for each other in good times and bad. We have regular family gatherings and cousins "get-togethers" where we enjoyed each other's company, shared jokes and ended up with a good sing song. My mum's family is a very musical one and music is an integral part of every family event.

Mel and her brother Dayan were part of this musical legacy inherited by us, the third generation of the Malawana clan. I being her eldest cousin have loving and fond memories of our childhood carrying Meli as a little baby and getting into her play pen, pushing her in her pram, and teaching her nursery rhymes. When Aunt Manel and Uncle Marcus were in London with Meli, she had attended a nursery school there and acquired a heavy British accent from her classmates.

When they returned to Sri Lanka I was in my penultimate year in school, and Meli had just entered the Montessori at St. Bridget's. I have

fond memories of her in school - carrying her to school, keeping her on my lap in the school bus and taking her to the Montessori. My classmates used to gather around me just to listen to Meli talking with her "British accent" which they found so sweet. As she passed through the portals of St. Bridget's, she took part in so many extracurricular activities. Aunt Manel being a violinist herself ensured Meli followed in her footsteps. Her skills in Piano and Violin were brought out by Mrs Mary Billimoria, a legendary teacher of her time.

Meli was also blessed with an angelic voice. She was an asset to any choir she sang with. Having returned to Sri Lanka from the UK where she read for her degree in Business Studies, she pursued a career in journalism. Many are the glowing tributes her fellow Journalists have showered upon her, which I will not dwell on in this note.

Meli was born on the 14th of May, in the month of Mother Mary, and she was loved by God so much that He endowed her with His own qualities. I feel humbled that we all realized what a powerful person she was only at her moment of death. Meli's heart was so pure that she was NOT a jealous, vicious, malicious, wicked, selfish, or a schemer. She was generous with her knowledge, always sharing it with others. She bore no grudges or resented anyone. She gave herself away as the ladder on which many climbed on to reach the pinnacle of success, and Meli would rejoice in her heart, just watching it.

She loved her parents and brother so much that her life



Melicia Gunasekera

centered on them. They always did things together. For us cousins, she was always just a call away, whatever our need was.

When I had my CD launch "To God Be The Glory" she was my shadow together with my cousin Marisa. Meli took care of everything, so methodically and meticulously. Many friends told me we bought your CD from Meli as we could not resist her sweet smile. When I decided to form a Trust Fund in memory of my dad to help poor students with the sales of my CD - Meli and Dayan were my strength. Meli accompanied and helped me to open the Trust Fund and all the banking issues. It is sad that she is not here to see the first award being given to a deserving recipient.

Meli came from a deeply religious Catholic family. Today, when many homes give priority to other worldly activities, the Gunasekera family held onto the much loved Catholic devotion of the Holy Rosary. For Meli's family, the Rosary is still an important part of their daily life, and every evening no matter how late; Aunt, Uncle, Meli and Dayan would kneel

before the consecrated image of the Sacred Heart to recite the Family Rosary. Meli would set apart Saturday evening for doing her duty to God. Whatever task she undertakes on a Saturday evening was always after she completed her Sunday obligation at the Sacred Heart Church Rajagiriya and singing in the Church Choir.

On the 1st of February - her last night in this world she fulfilled her duty by attending the Saturday evening Mass at 6.00pm. From there she came over to St. Bridget's to be in the company of classmates, friends and past teachers, as the members of the Past Pupils Association celebrated St Bridget's day.

Later on as the night was drawing to a close around 10.00pm I was making my way out of the Primary grounds and from somewhere came Meli and putting her arms around me, hugged me and kissed me saying "Hi Priyanthi Akki." It was a very warm hug, and we were interrupted for a few moments by my friends who stopped to greet me. I recall while I was briefly engaged in talking to them, all the while Meli kept gazing at me very intently, her eyes very expressive and to date I cannot explain it. We then parted company and she said "Ok then Priyanthi akki, good night take care, love to Mariella, and by the way how are you going home? Are you driving?" She kissed me goodnight again....that was it.

My first thoughts were Aunt Manel, Uncle Marcus and Dayan. They had been at church. On that day aunt and uncle were asked to take the Bread and Wine for the Offertory, which they gladly did. They

both had been praying for Meli as they went together to the Altar saying "Jesus look after Meli, Jesus take care of her..." The Lord had accepted their offering of Meli, who around that time had left this world into his hands.

Our lives have been devastated, and shattered to think that an inhuman diabolical animal claimed the life of our beloved Meli. However the hand of God made sure that he was caught within hours. What amazes us is the great spiritual strength and courage Meli's parents and Dayan have been blessed with to go through this great trial. Despite their hearts breaking with pain and grief at the anguish of losing Meli, they have never questioned God, but humbly and obediently bowed and submitted to God's will in their lives and in the life of their beloved daughter.

Meli, may you enjoy the glorious presence of Mother Mary, St. Joseph and all the Angels and saints, and may you join in the heavenly choral celebration of the choirs of Angels and Archangels, as you rest in heavenly peace. We miss you terribly... please watch over us from heaven and pray for us, until we meet you at the feet of Jesus. On behalf of all the family, your Cousin - Priyanthi Akki.

The family invites all those who knew and loved Meli, and those who have been touched or inspired by her life, to join in the Holy Mass at All Saints' Church, Borella, on Friday the 28th February at 6.30pm, to say thank you to God for blessing our lives, and our families with the gift of Meli.

Priyanthi Seneviratne VanDort



# Holy Father's Lenten ...

(Contd from Pg. 1)

itself in sacrifice for the beloved. Charity, love, is sharing with the one we love in all things. Love makes us similar; it creates equality, it breaks down walls and eliminates distances. God did this with us. Indeed, Jesus "worked with human hands, thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, he truly became one of us, like us in all things except sin." (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22).

By making Himself poor, Jesus did not seek poverty for its own sake but, as Saint Paul says, "that by His poverty you might become rich." This is no mere play on words or a catch phrase. Rather, it sums up God's logic, the logic of love, the logic of the incarnation and the cross. God did not let our salvation drop down from heaven, like someone who gives alms from their abundance out of a sense of altruism and piety. Christ's love is different! When Jesus stepped into the waters of the Jordan and was baptized by John the Baptist, He did so not because He was in need of repentance, or conversion; He did it to be among people who need forgiveness, among us sinners, and to take upon Himself the burden of our sins. In this way He chose to comfort us, to save us, to free us from our misery. It is striking that the Apostle states that we were set free, not by Christ's riches but by His poverty. Yet Saint Paul is well aware of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph 3:8), that He is "heir of all things" (Heb 1:2).

So what is this poverty by which Christ frees us and enriches us? It is His way of loving us, his way of being our neighbour, just as the Good Samaritan was neighbour to the man left half dead by the side of the road (cf. Lk 10:25ff). What gives us true freedom, true salvation and true happiness is the compassion, tenderness and solidarity of His love.

Christ's poverty which enriches us is His taking flesh and bearing our weaknesses and sins as an expression of God's infinite mercy to us. Christ's poverty is the greatest treasure of all: Jesus' wealth is that of His boundless confidence in God the Father; His constant trust, his desire always and only to do the Father's will and give glory to Him. Jesus is rich in the same way as a child who feels loved and who loves its parents, without doubting their love and tenderness for an instant. Jesus' wealth lies in His being the Son; His unique relationship with the Father is the sovereign prerogative of this Messiah who is poor. When Jesus asks us to take up His "yoke which is easy", he asks us to be enriched by His "poverty which is rich" and His "richness which

is poor," to share His filial and fraternal Spirit, to become sons and daughters in the Son, brothers and sisters in the firstborn brother (cf. Rom 8:29).

It has been said that the only real regret lies in not being a saint (L. Bloy); we could also say that there is only one real kind of poverty: Not living as children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ.

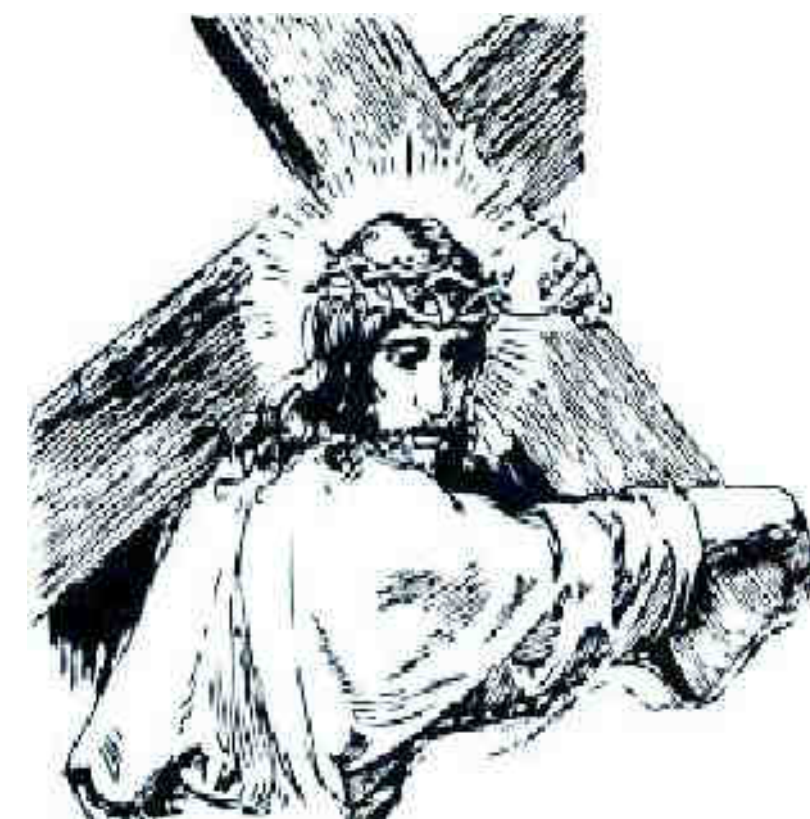
## Our witness

We might think that this "way" of poverty was Jesus' way, whereas we who come after Him can save the world with the right kind of human resources. This is not the case. In every time and place God continues to save mankind and the world *through the poverty of Christ*, who makes Himself poor in the Sacraments, in His word and in His Church, which is a people of the poor. God's wealth passes not through our wealth, but invariably and exclusively through our personal and communal poverty, enlivened by the Spirit of Christ.

In imitation of our Master, we Christians are called to confront the poverty of our brothers and sisters, to touch it, to make it our own and to take practical steps to alleviate it. *Destitution* is not the same as *poverty*: *Destitution* is poverty without faith, without support, without hope. There are three types of destitution: Material, moral and spiritual.

*Material destitution* is what is normally called poverty, and affects those living in conditions opposed to human dignity: Those who lack basic rights and needs such as food, water, hygiene, work and the opportunity to develop and grow culturally. In response to this destitution, the Church offers her help, her *diakonia*, in meeting these needs and binding these wounds which disfigure the face of humanity. In the poor and outcast we see Christ's face; by loving and helping the poor, we love and serve Christ. Our efforts are also directed to ending violations of human dignity, discrimination and abuse in the world, for these are so often the cause of destitution. When power, luxury and money become idols, they take priority over the need for a fair distribution of wealth. Our consciences thus need to be converted to justice, equality, simplicity and sharing.

No less a concern is *moral destitution*, which consists in slavery to vice and sin. How much pain is caused in families because one of their members often a young person - is in thrall to alcohol, drugs, gambling or pornography! How many peo-



ple no longer see meaning in life or prospects for the future, how many have lost hope! And how many are plunged into this destitution by unjust social conditions, by unemployment, which takes away their dignity as bread winners and by lack of equal access to education and health care. In such cases, moral destitution can be considered impending suicide.

This type of destitution, which also causes financial ruin, is invariably linked to the *spiritual destitution* which we experience when we turn away from God and reject His love. If we think we do not need God who reaches out to us through Christ, because we believe we can make do on our own, we are headed for a fall. God alone can truly save and free us.

The Gospel is the real antidote to spiritual destitution: Wherever we go, we are called as Christians to proclaim the liberating news that forgiveness for sins committed is possible, that God is greater than our sinfulness, that He freely loves us at all times and that we were made for communion and eternal life. The Lord asks us to be joyous heralds of this message of mercy and hope! It is thrilling to experience the joy of spreading this good news, sharing the treasure entrusted to us, consoling broken hearts and offering hope to our brothers and sisters experiencing darkness. It means following and imitating Jesus, who sought out the poor and sinners as a shepherd lovingly seeks his lost sheep. In union with Jesus, we can courageously open up new paths of evangelization and human promotion.

Dear brothers and sis-

ters, may this Lenten Season find the whole Church ready to bear witness to all those who live in material, moral and spiritual destitution the Gospel message of the merciful love of God our Father, who is ready to embrace everyone in Christ. We can do this to the extent that we imitate Christ who became poor and enriched us by His poverty. Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: No self-denial is real without this dimension of penance. I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt.

May the Holy Spirit, through whom we are "...as poor; yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything" (2 Cor 6: 10), sustain us in our resolutions and increase our concern and responsibility for human destitution, so that we can become merciful and act with mercy. In expressing this hope, I likewise pray that each individual member of the faithful and every Church community will undertake a fruitful Lenten journey. I ask all of you to pray for me.

*May the Lord bless you and Our Lady keep you safe.*



Your word is truth, O Lord, consecrate us in the truth.

(Jn 17:17)

# LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR A March 2nd - March 9th 2014

Sun:	Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time Is 49:14-15; 1 Cor 4:1-5; Mt 6:24-34
Mon:	1 Pt. 1:3-9; Mk.10:17-27
Tue:	Memorial of St. Casimir 1 Pt.1:10-16; Mk.10:28-31
Wed:	ASH WEDNESDAY Joel 2:12-18; 2 Cor.5:20-6:2; Mt. 6:1-6,16-18
Thu:	Deut.30:15-20; Lk.9:22-25
Fri:	Memorial of SS Perpetua & Felicity, Martyrs Is. 58:1-9; Mt.9:14-15
Sat:	Memorial of St. John of God Religious Is.58:9-14; Lk.5:27-32
Sun:	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT Gen.2:7-9,3:1-7; Rome 5:12-19 or 5:12:17-19; Mt.4:1-11

## PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

**Response: Lord hear our prayer.**

That we may be slow to judge the faults of the others but rather be quick to look into the weakness of our own lives. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord hear our prayer.**

That our families and our homes may be a place where our words build up and heal, and not destroy and tear each other apart. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord hear our prayer.**

That all political and religious leaders may match their words with the witness of their lives. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord hear our prayer.**

That the divine words of Jesus may find a home in our hearts and enable us to produce good fruit in the action of our lives. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord hear our prayer.**

## First Reading: Is. 49: 14-15

For the Israelites who felt that God has abandoned them the Prophet expresses God's love as a love of a mother which never fails for her child at her breast or the son of her womb. Even if they forget God will never forget His people.

## Second Reading:

1 Cor. 4: 1-5

We are reminded that as servants of God we ought to serve Him by our very life. We are called to bear witness to Him. Whether we have done it properly or not is not for us to judge but it is God who should judge us.

## Gospel:

Mt. 6: 24 -34

Jesus wants us to choose God as the sole master in our lives. As human beings we can do nothing compared to what God can do for us. Therefore we are called to place our trust and hope in God and in God alone.

## Reflection

Today's Readings present God as a God of Love. We are called to proclaim this to the world in word and in deed by our very life as His servants and stewards. We are called to give all prominence to God in our lives by refusing the evil one from our lives. The world and the evil one take God away from our lives. As God is all powerful and

is caring we need not give into the world by thinking of life and body and the needs of them. God looks after nature, His creation. How much more will He not do to man His greatest creation? He loves us more than a mother would love her child at the breast or son of her womb.

In the First Reading to the Israelites, who were discouraged as they did not feel God's love Prophet Isaiah proclaims God's love as a love beyond the love of a mother towards her baby. This is quite clear in the saying of God through the Prophet, "Does a woman forget her baby at the breast or fail to cherish the son of her womb. Yet Even if these forget I will never forget you."

In the Second Reading we are called to examine our conscience so as to find out what we have done as the servants and stewards of the Lord. But we are not to judge ourselves for judgment is left for God. It is God who will judge us whether we were worthy of His trust.

As we are in the world we get carried away by the things and the offerings of the world. But the Lord is very clear in the Gospel. As we cannot do anything compared to what God is doing to the world and in the world. We should not give into the world but instead we should place all our trust and hope in the Lord. He



is very clear when He says, "No one can be the slave of two masters. He will either hate the first and love the second or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and money."

Therefore let us not be worried about our life or body. The God who looks after the nature and all creatures in it will take care of us. By worrying we cannot add a single cubit to our span of life. Therefore let us not be worried about tomorrow or our life, body, food, drink or clothes. These are what are done by the pagans. As followers of Christ let us not give into worry but place our hearts on the Kingdom of God and on His saving Justice. And all these other things will be ours.

## Aid Story

Once the ambassador of a great sovereign went to see Pope Benedict XI (AD 1304), to ask a favour for his master. The

Pontiff seeing that the favour requested was illicit replied. "I love the prince so much that if I had two souls I would sacrifice one to please him; but since I have only one. I am not such a fool as to lose it for his sake."

## Aid Story 2

A priest was preparing a dying man for his long journey into the dark night whispering firmly, the priest said, "Denounce the devil. Let him know how little you think of his evil." The dying man said nothing. The priest repeated his order. Still the dying man said nothing. The priest asked, "Why do you refuse to denounce the devil and his evil?" The dying man said, "Until I know exactly where I am heading, I should not make any enemies at the last moment of my life."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

CONTD. FROM LAST WEEK

## USHERS Who Meet, Greet and Seat

We who are active in the Parish may not pay much attention to the ushers because we already feel a part of the community. We may not feel the need to be welcomed. But most of the congregation isn't so easily recognized, nor so quickly made to feel at home. Maybe we should visit another parish where we are not so well-known and see if we feel welcomed. We need to put ourselves into the shoes of the shy, the new-in-town, the infrequent worshiper to get a sense of what we want to look for in our ushers.

Join ushers in a conversation about the difference in your feeling when a hostess seats you in a restaurant you are visiting for the first time, and when a hostess recognises you as a regular.

Have you ever been invited to a gathering knowing you may know only the one who invited you? Do you find it a relief when someone reaches out to welcome you? What does that mean for the ministry of the usher?

How do your expectations for ushers match the ushers' perception of the role? What is their

view of their responsibilities in light of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*?

What are the criteria for choosing ushers in your parish?

Is a refresher course for ushers feasible as part of your Parish Ministries Day?

*"Yours is the first of Christ's face to greet God's people as they assemble for prayer. Your greeting of welcome is the first wish that 'The Lord be with you!'"*

*"Yours is the word that welcomes the stranger to be at home, or the silence that makes of our assembly a foreign land."*

*"Yours is the task of discretion: Knowing how to welcome, and when and where to seat the latecomer."*

*"Yours may be the last word that ushers the community to its week of work in the Lord's vineyard."*

*"Yours is the Lord's face and voice for those who enter and depart the holy ground of prayer."*

Austin Fleming

## Is God really in Control?

Yes God is present and in control. That is our firm belief and our foundation. He knows everything that happens around us and He loves us in a way that we cannot ever comprehend. But sometimes in life, we tend to question this fact.

The tragedy that hit a God-fearing Catholic family in the recent past, shook all those who heard about it. Many are aware of how a Senior Journalist was murdered in her own house on a Sunday morning, while her parents and brother were in Church. In this particular Mass, the victim's parents also took the offertory as well. This incident, made most of us wonder, why did this have to happen, in this manner. Where can we find God in all of this?

God knows and sees way beyond our capacity and understanding. Even though we try to reason out every incident that we see and experience, what we need to understand is, that our human capacity is not equipped enough to comprehend every incident that takes place. The fact is we will never really know why this type of incident had to take place. Also what we need to remember is that, although this is the world that God created, evil also exists. And that is against God's will, thus the evil that takes place in this world, is clearly against God's Plan. But our lives do not end in this world, thus the evil of the world should not shake us, if we surrender our lives to our God Almighty. Even though, a bad or sad incident takes place in our lives, we have a God who can make that a

saving plan for others.

This may sound very confusing but life's many experiences has taught me personally and am sure many others, that every sad or bad incident in life is not the end of the world and that so much good can actually take place, as a result. Of course, sometimes it takes a long period of time for us to realise the positive outcomes of negative incidents. A simple example would be, if we apply for a job that we really wanted, go through the whole interview process and finally not get that job, as humans we would be very disappointed. Later on, if we get a better and more satisfying job, we realise why we did not get the previous job. That is a very simple incident. This same realisation can also happen, in grave situations, such as losing loved ones. Not that it will ever be good that we lost that person, but as time goes, sometimes we realise and learn things in life, and enrich our soul as a result.

Of course, we cannot find reasons and experience positive outcomes from every single negative outcome of life either. The bottom line is we need to trust in God, even in the midst of rough seas, when it seems impossible to understand why certain things happen. Since we, as humans cannot grasp reasons for every incident, it is best, not analyse, but to surrender our pain and confusion to our God, who knows everything and is in control and loves us unconditionally.

Thusini De Silva



## THE EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION IS SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT FROM TRUE SPIRITUAL FOOD

We are all aware of the need to nourish our bodies. The right nourishment comes from eating the right foods in the right quantities at the right times. For example, a person can eat an entire chocolate cake right before he goes to bed. It may satisfy his hunger, but it will do little to nourish his body. A person who continues this practice for several weeks may start having difficulties with his physical health.

The same principle applies to spiritual nourishment. The key to proper spiritual nourishment is that we receive the right nourishment in the right quantities at the right time. For example, the living Word of God as found in Scripture offers nourishment, but if I try to read the entire Bible in

## Simple Yet Profound

one afternoon I probably won't retain much information or gain proper understanding. I may actually damage my spiritual well-being because of personal biases, misunderstanding, and poor interpretation.

So, what is the best balance of spiritual nourishment for the most effective and healthy spiritual life? I can think of no better example than the one given in the celebration of the Eucharist. In this celebration we find two tables, the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist. The living Word of God is proclaimed, and we receive instruction in its meaning. We don't need a lot of Scripture in one setting; we need

just enough to lead us to a spiritual insight for the day. The homily inspires and teaches us how the Word of God can transform our lives. Then we offer prayers and petitions, putting that Word into practice.

As we move to the table of the Eucharist, we bring forth gifts that symbolize our hopes, dreams, fears, thanksgivings, and memories. We give our lives to God, who through the power of the Holy Spirit transforms our gifts into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. A divine exchange has taken place.

Our life is given to God, and God gives us back the life of his Son, Jesus Christ. We find

our daily bread-spiritual nourishment-in him. We are filled with divine life that transforms us into the fullness of who God wants us to be. Here we find the source of strength to witness in faith, hope, and charity and to nourish the world with the love of God.

Each time we approach the eucharistic celebration, we are renewed, strengthened, enlightened, empowered, and transformed. It's spiritual nourishment from true spiritual food.

The meal is simple and profound, but then again, that is how God always speaks to our hearts.

*Courtesy:  
Liguorian*



Elissa Beliketimulla  
Class 2S<sup>2</sup>  
St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo

## FRIENDSHIP

*A candle may melt  
it's fire may die  
But the friendship that  
you've given to me.  
Will always light  
my life.*



*A flower may give  
fragrance  
It's colour may fade  
But the memories we had.  
Will always light my life.*

Jonathan Athukorala

## My Valentine's Day



It was St. Valentine's day. It was the day of love. And we were going to visit the retired Jesuit Fathers Home in Negombo. We took the Katunayake Express way and reached there at 5.30 in the evening. We had a little chat with some of them who were very happy to see us.

First we met Fr. Paul Casperz. Fr. Paul Casperz was my grand father's friend. Fr. Paul worked for the poor people in Kandy when he was young. His favourite words of Jesus are: "I have come to preach the Good News to the poor." His favourite Bible Hero (apart from Jesus) is Mary. His favourite saint is St. Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuit Order.

His favourite hymn is "Ave Maria." His favorite prayer is "Soul of Christ sanctify me." His favourite human hero is Nelson Mandela because he led his people to peace and justice. Actually he was reading the book on Mandela's life story that day. He loves to remember his pet dog Avanki who lived with him in Kandy. He likes to eat cake and drink brandy. His favourite colour is red

And his favourite song is "Oh Danny Boy".

I next spoke to Fr. V Perniola who is going to be 101-years-old this April. Isn't that exciting? He has written many books on the history of the Sri Lankan Church. I saw him writing at his desk full of books, and papers. He is of an Italian family. When he was in Form 5 he was delicate and could not help his family to manage the farm. So his father sent him to study in a school.

One day he told his father that he wanted to be a missionary priest. Then his father said: "We will make any sacrifice, but woe to you if you bring any shame to our family." He

remembers those words from the time he was a boy. His favourite saints are St. Francis Saviour and St. Ignatius.

I also met Fr. Kingsley Adhikaramge. He is always full of jokes for me, although he cannot walk and has to be in bed. He likes children's art, and I hope to send him a painting soon. His favourite Bible hero is St. John the Baptist. His favourite Saint is St. Ignatius. His favorite hymn is "The Lord is my Shepherd".

His favourite prayer is the "Our Father." His favourite animal is the elephant and he remembers his pet dog Tommy. His favourite colour is red. His favourite song is "Amma varune." He likes to eat pastries and drink ginger beer.

I ask all those who read this to pray for the retired Fathers in Sri Lanka. I ask God to bless them and help them through the rest of their lives. Talking with them made it a very special Valentine's day for me.

Devmini Fernando  
Grade 5

9-years-old

## God will be always my Friend

*The Rain Stopped falling today  
All of the Clouds seemed to  
have gone away  
The sun shone bright and clear.  
The dew sparkled with glistening  
radiant cheer  
upon each Flower,  
a smile and touch  
of laughter  
appeared.*

*A sony came singing amiging amidst  
the wind  
So cool and calm  
with a deep sense of Serenity in the air*

*Why then Lord am I feeling such great de-  
spair?  
feeling over loaded with worldly care?  
Why then Lord are my eyes filled with  
much  
Sorrow and tears?*

*My heart aches for comfort, my mind for  
Peaceful refuge through the power of  
prayer.*



Kanishka Siriwardana  
Pannipitiya Parish,

## Young World

### Pope blesses the little ones



The Holy Father Pope Francis met the Sri Lankan community in Rome recently. 'Mithusala' in Italian means journeying with God.

### Lawrentian Sports Day at Police Park



The 49th Annual Inter House Sports Meet of St. Lawrence's Convent was held at Police Park, Havelock Road, recently.

Among the distinguished guests

were Dr. Somaratne Dissanayake, Deputy Minister of Postal Services, Sanath Jayasuriya, Hirunika Premachandra and Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, General Manager of Catholic Private Schools.

### INFERO '14 at St. Benedict's



The Annual Science Day INFERO '14 organised by the Science Union of St. Benedict's College, Kotahena was held at the College Main Hall last week. The Chief Guest was distinguished Old Ben

Dr. Ruminda Wimalasiri, Senior Lecturer, Mechanical Engineering Department of the Open University of Sri Lanka.

Ashen S. Senarathna

### Annual Prize-giving at Dankotuwa Parish Sunday School



The Risen Lord Sunday School of the Dankotuwa Parish held its annual Prize-giving recently with a colourful spiritual performance by the students.

Tekla Caldera

### De Mazenod College Lasallian Trophy '14 Sport Meet



The Annual Sports Meet of De Mazenod College, Kandana was held recently with Dr. Dimuth Ponweera, Director, Marawila Hospital as the Chief Guest. Rev. Bro. Bertram Perera, Principal De Mazenod College, is also seen in the Picture.

Anton Jayasuriya



A Special Cricket Encounter between two leading Lasallian Institutions in Sri Lanka, De Mazenod College, Kandana and St. Benedict's College, Kotahena was held at the De Mazenod College. Grounds last week. The match was drawn and the trophy presented by Rev. Bro. Denzil Perera was shared by the two teams.

A. S. S.

### Badges for Student Leaders of Nagoda Sunday School



Twenty children, appointed student leaders of the Nagoda Parish Sunday School, were awarded badges by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Nirmal Malaka Silva.

Among those were students of the newly formed Gerard Majella Sunday School of Sapugahawatta which is now a part of the Nagoda Parish.

Ranjith Nonis

*Sensible people will see trouble coming and avoid it, but an unthinking person will walk right into it and regret it later.*

*Proverbs 22: 3*



# Lent *Making space for God*

## A Time for Everything

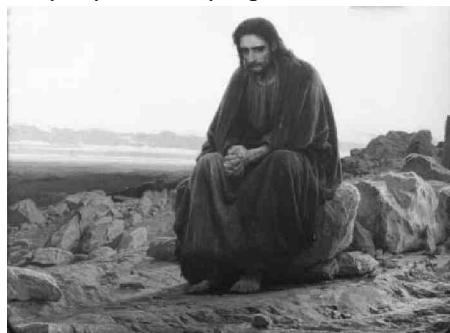
There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven." The writer of the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes, from which this verse is taken, touches upon an essential truth. Look at the world around you; see how the landscape changes through winter, spring, summer and autumn. Each Season brings its own hopes and expectations. Often these hopes remain unfulfilled. The long-awaited Summer ends up a damp squib. But for Christians, our hope has already been fulfilled in the Resurrection of Christ. The Church's 'high summer' is Easter; but to appreciate fully the Easter season of light and joy, we have to pass through the Season of Lent.

## The Landscape of Lent

The word 'Lent' comes from the old English word 'Lenten' (meaning Spring) and refers to the lengthening of days that occurs at this time of year in the Northern Hemisphere. As the natural world undergoes rebirth and renewal during this season, so Lent is a time for Christians to reflect on our rebirth in Baptism and engage in spiritual renewal in preparation for Easter.

To help us in that task, the 'landscape' and worship of the Church is noticeably different. Purple vestments are worn, hymns and songs are more reflective in nature, the Gloria is not sung at the Sunday Eucharist and the Hebrew word '*alleluia*' (meaning 'Praise God') is also omitted from the liturgy. Traditionally, crucifixes and images are veiled to emphasise how sin separates us from God.

## Forty Days and Forty Nights



Lent is 40 days long counting from Ash Wednesday and comes to its climax with Holy or Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Saturday before Easter Sunday. The six Sundays during Lent are not counted because Sunday is always a celebration of the Resurrection. The 40 days help us to identify with Jesus, who spent 40 days of fasting and prayer in the wilderness before beginning his public ministry. The number 40 is connected with other biblical events. It is no coincidence that Moses spent 40 days of fasting and prayer before receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. After escaping captivity in Egypt by crossing the Red Sea, the Hebrew tribes spent 40 years wandering in the desert before reaching the Promised Land of Canaan.

## Making Space for God

As our lives become ever busier, there is the danger that the voice of the Lord gets drowned out. Even in Jesus' own time, it was easy to become distracted by the cares and duties of everyday life as the episode of Martha and Mary shows. As an antidote, Jesus invites us to "come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). In the early centuries of the Church, men and women accepted this invitation quite

literally and withdrew to a solitary life in the deserts of Egypt and Syria. From this began the Christian monastic tradition. While not all of us feel a call to become monks or hermits, there are many disciplines and practices we can all undertake to help us live this season of renewal to the full.

## Fasting and Abstinence



On Ash Wednesday, our foreheads are marked with ash, reminding us that, "you are dust and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19). In order to help us focus on Christ's self-sacrifice and more eagerly celebrate his Resurrection, the Church asks us to practise a certain amount of self-denial during Lent. Christians who are in good health should eat just one whole meal on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. We should also refrain from meat on those days. During the whole forty days, we might consider giving up or consuming less of something we like: chocolate, alcohol. Better still, we might devote some of our precious time to prayer or visiting the sick and lonely. In Comparison with the sacrifice of Christ, our relatively small sacrifices, if done in the right spirit, will enable us to make a more loving response to God.

## Remembering our Baptism

Fasting is one of the traditions Christians have inherited from Judaism. It was common enough at the time of Jesus for Him to warn us: "When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: They pull long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward" (Matt 6:16). During the Middle Ages Lenten discipline became extremely rigorous. Milk and eggs were often discouraged or prohibited. Shrove Tuesday the day before Lent begins, or pancake day' was the occasion when surplus fatty foods were used up. Mardi Gras as it is also called in some countries literally means, 'fat Tuesday' in French.

Today, the Church seeks to rediscover the spirit and meaning of Lent as understood by Christians in the first centuries. At that time, adults seeking Baptism (known as catechumens), were expected to undergo a period of strict discipline during the final two or three weeks of preparation before being received into the Church at the Easter Vigil Eucharist. By the fourth century, it became common for the faithful to join in solidarity with the catechumens and the clergy encouraged them to attend instruction by way of a 'refresher course'. It was at this time that the extension of Lent to a period of six weeks took place.

For those of us who are already baptised Lent repentance and self-denial will help us return to our own Baptism, the occasion when we were washed of sin, joined to God in Christ and received the Holy Spirit. As Paul says in his Letter to the Romans: "When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in His death... so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life" (Romans 6:3,4)

*Heavenly Father,  
give us grace this Lent to die to all  
our worldly cares and desires.  
Help us to make space in our hearts  
for you to enter in,  
and so be healed and restored  
to new life in Christ Jesus.  
Amen.*

## Some practical suggestions.

There are many ways to keep a good Lent. Here are a few:

- \* Try to abstain from a particular food or pleasure.
- \* Do something extra, like attending a Lent study group or visiting the sick.
- \* Spend time reflecting on your own Baptism. Read John 4:5-42, John 9:1-41 and John 11:1-15. Ask God to renew the gifts you have already received.
- \* Take part in Parish penitential liturgies and Stations of the Cross.
- \* Pray for people who will be received into the Church at Easter.
- \* Whatever you do or give up, do it with joy and moderations!

## For More Information

*Catechism of the Catholic Church:*

*Seasons* 1163 - 1178

*Fasting* 2043, 538-40, 1434, 1438

*Baptism* 1210-1274

## Key Books to Read

*CTS Companion to Lent (Do 651)*

*Lenten Meditations, Fr. Peter Stravinskis (Newman House)*

*O God, Why? Gerard Hughes SJ*

*Return of the Prodigal Son, H. Nouwan*

*Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving, CTS Essentials Leaflet (LF 20)*

*Holy Week and Easter, CTS Essentials Leaflet (LF 19)*

*Courtesy: CTS Essentials*



## Young World

# Pope blesses the little ones



The Holy Father Pope Francis met the Sri Lankan community in Rome recently. 'Mithusala', a child of one of the Sri Lankan migrants, when he

met the Sri Lankan community in Rome recently. 'Mithusala' in Italian means journeying with God.

## Annual Prize-giving at Dankotuwa Parish Sunday School



The Risen Lord Sunday School of the Dankotuwa Parish held its annual Prize-giving recently with a colourful spiritual performance by the students.

**Tekla Caldera**

## Lawrentian Sports Day at Police Park



The 49th Annual Inter House Sports Meet of St. Lawrence's Convent was held at Police Park, Havelock Road, recently.

Among the distinguished guests

were Dr. Somaratne Dissanayake, Deputy Minister of Postal Services, Sanath Jayasuriya, Hirunika Premachandra and Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, General Manager of Catholic Private Schools.

## INFERO '14 at St. Benedict's



The Annual Science Day INFERO '14 organised by the Science Union of St. Benedict's College, Kotahena was held at the College Main Hall last week. The Chief Guest was distinguished Old Ben

Dr. Ruminda Wimalasiri, Senior Lecturer, Mechanical Engineering Department of the Open University of Sri Lanka.

**Ashen S. Senarathna**

## De Mazenod College Lasallian Trophy '14 Sport Meet



The Annual Sports Meet of De Mazenod College, Kandana was held recently with Dr. Dimuth Ponweera, Director, Marawila Hospital as the Chief Guest. Rev. Bro. Bertram Perera, Principal De Mazenod College, is also seen in the Picture.

**Anton Jayasuriya**



A Special Cricket Encounter between two leading Lasallian Institutions in Sri Lanka, De Mazenod College, Kandana and St. Benedict's College, Kotahena was held at the De Mazenod College Grounds last week. The match was drawn and the trophy presented by Rev. Bro. Denzil Perera was shared by the two teams.

**A. S. S.**

## Badges for Student Leaders of Nagoda Sunday School



Twenty children, appointed student leaders of the Nagoda Parish Sunday School, were awarded badges by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Nirmal Malaka Silva.

Among those were students of the newly formed Gerard Majella Sunday School of Sapugahawatta which is now a part of the Nagoda Parish.

**Ranjith Nonis**

***Sensible people will see trouble coming and avoid it, but an unthinking person will walk right into it and regret it later.***

***Proverbs 22: 3***