



# Epiphany of the Lord

January 5

# Messenger



Pic by : Ashen S.S.

A Blessed and Peaceful New Year 2014

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## • Fraternity, the foundation and pathway to peace

# Message of His Holiness Francis for the Celebration of World Day of Peace, January 1, 2014

In this, my first Message for the World Day of Peace, I wish to offer to everyone, individuals and peoples, my best wishes for a life filled with joy and hope. In the heart of every man and woman is the desire for a full life, including that irrepressible longing for fraternity which draws us to fellowship with others and enables us to see them not as enemies

or rivals, but as brothers and sisters to be accepted and embraced.

Fraternity is an essential human quality, for we are relational beings. A lively awareness of our relatedness helps us to look upon and to treat each person as a true sister or brother; without fraternity it is impossible to build a just society and a solid and lasting peace.

We should remember that fraternity is generally first learned in the family, thanks above all to the responsible and complementary roles of each of its members, particularly the father and the mother. The family is the wellspring of all fraternity, and as such it is the foundation and the first pathway to peace, since, by its vocation, it is meant to

spread its love to the world around it.

The ever-increasing number of interconnections and communications in today's world makes us powerfully aware of the unity and common destiny of the nations. In the dynamics of history, and in the diversity of ethnic groups, societies and cultures, we see the seeds of a vocation

to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another. But this vocation is still frequently denied and ignored in a world marked by a "globalization of indifference" which makes us slowly inured to the suffering of others and closed in on ourselves.

(Contd on Pg. 3) >>>>



## His Eminence Angelo Cardinal Bagnasco visits Sri Lanka



His Eminence Angelo Cardinal Bagnasco, the Archbishop of Genova in Italy and the President of the Italian Episcopal

Conference, arrived in Sri Lanka on Friday, December 27, and was welcomed by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith and



(Pic: Rev. Fr. Sunil de Silva)

His Lordship Bishop Emmanuel Fernando. His Eminence Angelo Cardinal Bagnasco declared open

and blessed the new Auditorium building at the Archbishop's House, Colombo last Monday, December 30.

## Annual Feast of Blessed Joseph Vaz

Annual Feast of Blessed Joseph Vaz, the Apostle of Sri Lanka will be held island wide in all Dioceses from Thursday, January 16.

The Archdiocesan celebration will be held at St. Mary's Church, Pitipana Vidiya, Duwa Parish, Negombo at 5.00 pm on January 16, with Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ananda as the Chief celebrant.

(Programme on Pg. 2)



## Booklets with Bible Puzzles with Answers

Three booklets, each containing 25 Bible Puzzles with answers and attractively displayed in three languages and published by the Archdiocesan Biblical Commission, are now available for sale.

These booklets can be purchased at the Colombo Catholic Press, Catholic Bookshop Pettah, Archbishop's House Bookshop and Library, Balcombe Place Catechetical Centre, Bl. Joseph Vaz Devadharma Nikethanya, All Saints' Church Bookshop and at the Aquinas University College, English Theologate.

# CHRISTMAS MESSAGE – 2013

## His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith

Christmas is about the greatest and the most important event in human history when the Almighty God, out of love for us, became man.

Pope Benedict XVI explains the importance of this event, when he stated, "By material standards, the creation of the world obviously seems to be immeasurably greater.

In comparison with that, this little event in Bethlehem, which was at first entirely overlooked by historians, seems hardly worth mentioning. Judging by quantitative measurements, then, one is enormous and the other really small. But when we realise that a single human heart stands on a higher scale than the whole

extent of the Universe, as Pascal (the Philosopher) expressed it, then we can begin to understand that the act by which God becomes man, that He who is the Creator, the eternal Logos, comes down to enter into human existence and unites Himself with it, so that He himself is this man - that this act is an event of a far greater

order of significance. God Himself comes into the world and becomes a man. This opens up a dimension beside which the apparently immeasurable material dimensions represent a significantly lesser order of magnitude" [Joseph Cardinal 'Ratzinger, (God and the World, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2000, T. 215-216].

(Contd on Pg. 2) >>>>

## Holy Cross Students excel at A/L exam

Master Amila Pasan of Holy Cross College, Kalutara secured the first place in the Math stream in the Kalutara District at the recently released Advanced Level Examination results for 2013. Eight other students in the Commerce stream of the College secured 3 As, obtaining the second place in the Kalutara District and island wide the 12th place. Fifty five students of the College qualified for University admission.

(Kalutara Correspondent)



# Christmas Message....

Contd. from Pg. 1

What the Pope seems to tell us is that we ought to look at Christmas and its inner meaning beyond the tangible expressions of joy that humanity experiences with it. That is the very reason why the evangelists present the event in such humanly humble circumstances. In the simplicity of the manger, the unknown humble beginning of God's existence as a human being, the poverty of the first witnesses, the shepherds, the great event is shrouded from the proud and noisy brawl of the city. It is mystifying. God is born in silence, in the midst of the poor and yet in the beauty of the cold starry night. It is the challenge of the words "my thoughts are not your thoughts and my ways are not your ways" (Isaiah 55:8) which is echoed here. Or as St. Paul stated, "God has chosen what the world considers foolish, to shame the wise, He has chosen what the world considers weak to shame the strong" (1 Cor. 1:27).

Christmas indeed, this most important moment in history, has to be celebrated. But it should bring out the best in the human spirit. The externals are important yet more important is the message, "Do not be afraid, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David the Saviour, which Christ the Lord." (Lk. 2:10-11).

The tidings indeed should fill us with joy, because Christmas is about joy. But it should not just be limited to the externals only. Thus, shunned should be all expressions of pride, of noise brawl of reveling, partying, etc., as well as the attempts to make Christmas a sad one with Christmas trees decorated with guns, pictures of emaciated children and the depiction of everything that is inhuman in the world as some used to do in the name, an "option." The former will turn Christmas into just a meaningless and noisy brawl without a proper understanding of its beauty and challenge and the latter would only

result in adding a spirit of pessimism and hopelessness to our already "difficult" existence. Both are to be avoided.

And so may I call upon all of you to celebrate Christmas with a humble sense of joy, give that joy to the others, help those in need, be more conscious of the beauty of becoming yourselves the humble crib in which the God - Emmanuel (God-with-us), is born. Make it truly a spiritually enriching and joy filled experience and seeking to make it that way for all those whom you serve.

May I then wind up wishing you all God's blessings for a Happy and Holy Christmas Season!

**+ Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith**  
**Archbishop of Colombo**  
**Archdiocesan website**

## Archdiocesan Crib Competition Winner



Mr. Piyal Jayakody, staff, Colombo Catholic Press won 3rd place at the Crib Competition conducted by the Archdiocese of Colombo in the 17 years upwards category, held at Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Ragama recently.

Piyal received a sum of 25,000, as prize money.

## Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination



Prayerful wishes to His Lordship Bishop Emeritus Rt. Rev. Dr. Elmo N.J. Perera, Bishop of Galle.

**January 6**  
**(1993)**

*Ad Multos Annos!*

**CATHOLIC PRESS WEBSITE**  
www.colombocatholicpress.com  
Email: cmesenger@sltnet.lk  
pradeepaya@sltnet.lk

Telephone: 2695984, 2678106,  
4899611  
Fax: 2692586

## Certificate Award Ceremony



The Annual Certificate Award ceremony of St. Vincent's Technical Training School, Maggona was held recently at the 'Tulip Hall.'

The Chief Guest on the occasion was Rev. Fr. Jude Rohan Silva OMI, Provincial Superior (Colombo Province).  
**D. Anselm Fernando**

## Midnight Mass at Ratnapura



Christmas Midnight Mass was celebrated by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Perera OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral Ratnapura.

Rev. Fr. Ranjanmal Moraes, Parish Priest Ratnapura, Rev. Fr. B.A. Sriyan, Academic staff, National Seminary, Ampitiya also participated.

**Pic. Theobold Samarathunge**

## Annual Feast of.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

### The Programme for Celebration Island wide:

#### Jaffna Diocese

January 16, at Blessed Joseph Vaz Shrine, St. Mary's Church, Sillalai  
Chief celebrant: His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundranayagam, Bishop of Jaffna

#### Colombo Archdiocese

January 19, 2014 at 8.00 am

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Wellapalliya Parish, Hendala, Wattala  
Chief Celebrant: His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo

January 19, at 8.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya  
January 19, at 08.30 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Makola  
January 19, at 8.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Kandewatta, Waga  
January 12, at 6.30 am - St. Francis de Sale's Church, Kattuwa  
January 19, at 08.00 am - St. Jude's Church, Daluwakotuwa  
January 19, at 8.00 am - Holy Cross Church, Gampaha  
January 19, at 08.00 am - St. Michael's Church, Nagoda, Kalutara  
January 19, at 7.00 am - Infant Jesus Church, Kalamulla, Kalutara  
January 26, at 08.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Modera, Moratuwa  
All other Parishes in Archdiocese will celebrate the Feast on Sunday, January 19,

#### Kandy Diocese

January 19, at 7.30 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Shrine, Ampitiya  
Chief celebrant: His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy

January 19, at 9.30 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Kadiyanlena  
January 19, at 8.15 am - St. Theresa's Church, Peradeniya

#### Galle Diocese

January 16, at 9.00 am - St. Mary's Cathedral, Galle  
Chief celebrant: His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe, Bishop of Galle

#### Trincomalee Diocese

January 19, - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Thannemunnai

#### Chilaw Diocese

January 19, at 8.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Shrine Wattakkalliya, Chilaw Parish  
Chief celebrant: His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw

January 17, at 8.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz National College, Wennappuwa  
Chief celebrant: His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw

January 17, at 4.00 pm - Holy Cross Shrine, Marawila

January 19, at 8.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Simawasigama, Puttalam Parish

January 12, at 9.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Kaladhi, Wanathawilluwa Parish

February 23, at 9.30 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Pradeepagama, Thenuwara, Kaluwaragaswawa

January 19, at 8.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Redbana, Periyasandre, Kurinagpitiya Parish

#### Badulla Diocese

January 12, - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Balleketuwa Parish, Namunukula (1st Parish Church of Blessed Joseph Vaz)

Chief celebrant: His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando sss, Bishop of Badulla

#### Anuradhapura Diocese

January 19, at 9.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Pemadhuwa, Anuradhapura Parish  
January 16, - Blessed Joseph Vaz Chapel, Ehalawawa, Horoupathana

#### Mannar Diocese

January 16, at 7.00am - South Bar, Mannar (In 1687 Blessed Joseph Vaz landed here, disguised as a coolie)

Chief celebrant: His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar

#### Kurunegala Diocese

January 14, at 9.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Shrine Mahagalgamuwa, Galgamuwa  
Chief celebrant: His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Bishop of Kurunegala and His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Peiris, Bishop Emeritus of Kurunegala

#### Ratnapura Diocese

January 19, at 9.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Athoya, Ratnapura Parish  
Chief celebrant: His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus C. Perera, Bishop of Ratnapura

January 19, at 10.00 am - Blessed Joseph Vaz Church, Welekubura, Balangoda Parish  
Chief celebrant: Rev. Fr. Alen Wimaladas

#### Batticaloa Diocese

January 16 - St. Mary's Church, Thandavanyley  
All Dioceses, Parishes and Colleges will celebrate the Feast on January 19.



# Message of His Holiness Pope Francis....

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In many parts of the world, there seems to be no end to grave offences against fundamental human rights, especially the right to life and the right to religious freedom; the tragic phenomenon of human trafficking, in which the unscrupulous prey on the lives and the desperation of others, is but one unsettling example of this. Alongside overt armed conflicts are the less visible but no less cruel wars fought in the economic and financial sectors with means which are equally destructive of lives, families and businesses.

Globalization, as His Holiness Benedict XVI pointed out, makes us neighbours, but does not make us brothers. The many situations of inequality, poverty and injustice, are signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the absence of a culture of solidarity. New ideologies, characterized by rampant individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism, weaken social bonds, fuelling that "throw away" mentality which leads to contempt for, and the abandonment of, the weakest and those considered "useless". In this way human coexistence increasingly tends to resemble a mere *do ut des* which is both pragmatic and selfish.

At the same time, it appears clear that contemporary ethical systems remain incapable of producing authentic bonds of fraternity, since a fraternity devoid of reference to a common Father as its ultimate foundation is unable to endure. True brotherhood among people presupposes and demands a transcendent Fatherhood. Based on the recognition of this fatherhood, human fraternity is consolidated: Each person becomes a "neighbour" who cares for others.

## "Where is your brother?" (Genesis 4:9)

To understand more fully this human vocation to fraternity, to recognise more clearly the obstacles standing in the way of its realization and to identify ways of overcoming them, it is of primary importance to let oneself be led by knowledge of God's plan, which is presented in an eminent way in sacred Scripture.

According to the biblical account of creation, all people are descended from common parents, Adam and Eve, the couple created by God in His image and likeness (cf. Genesis 1:26), to whom Cain and Abel were born. In the story of this first family, we see the origins of society and the evolution of relations between individuals and peoples.

Abel is a shepherd, Cain is a farmer. Their profound identity and their vocation is to be brothers, albeit in the diversity of their activity and culture, their way of relating to God and to creation. Cain's murder of Abel bears tragic witness to his radical rejection of their vocation to be brothers. Their story (cf. Genesis 4:1-16) brings out the difficult task to which all men and women are called, to live as one, each taking care of the other. Cain, incapable of accepting God's preference for Abel who had offered him the best of his flock – "The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering; but for Cain and his offering He had no regard" (Genesis 4:4-5) – killed Abel out of jealousy. In this way, he refused to regard Abel as a brother, to relate to him rightly, to live in the presence of God by assuming his responsibility to care for and to protect others. By asking him "Where is your brother?" God holds Cain accountable for what he has done. He answers: "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). Then, the Book of Genesis tells us, "Cain went away from the presence of the Lord" (4:16).

er's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). Then, the Book of Genesis tells us, "Cain went away from the presence of the Lord" (4:16).

We need to ask ourselves what were the real reasons which led Cain to disregard the bond of fraternity and, at the same time, the bond of reciprocity and fellowship which joined him to his brother Abel. God Himself condemns and reproves Cain's collusion with evil: "Sin is crouching at your door" (Gen 4:7). But Cain refuses to turn against evil and decides instead to raise his "hand against his brother Abel" (Genesis 4:8), thus scorning God's plan. In this way, he thwarts his primordial calling to be a child of God and to live in fraternity.

## Fraternity, the foundation and pathway to peace

This being said, it is easy to realize that fraternity is the foundation and pathway of peace. The social encyclicals written by my predecessors can be very helpful in this regard. It would be sufficient to draw on the definitions of peace found in the encyclicals *Populorum Progressio* by Pope Paul VI and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* by John Paul II. From the first we learn that the integral development of peoples is the new name of peace. From the second, we conclude that peace is an *opus solidaritatis*.

Paul VI stated that not only individuals but nations too must encounter one another in a spirit of fraternity. As he says: "In this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also... work together to build the common future of the human race." In the first place, this duty falls to those who are most privileged. Their obligations are rooted in human and supernatural fraternity and are manifested in three ways: The duty of solidarity, which requires the richer nations to assist the less developed; the duty of social justice, which requires the realignment of relationships between stronger and weaker peoples in terms of greater fairness; and the duty of universal charity, which entails the promotion of a more humane world for all, a world in which each has something to give and to receive, without the progress of the one constituting an obstacle to the development of the other. If, then, we consider peace as *opus solidaritatis*, we cannot fail to acknowledge that fraternity is its principal foundation. Peace, John Paul II affirmed, is an indivisible good. Either it is the good of all or it is the good of none. It can be truly attained and enjoyed, as the highest quality of life and a more human and sustainable development, only if all are guided by solidarity as "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good." This means not being guided by a "desire for profit" or a "thirst for power." What is needed is the willingness to "lose ourselves" for the sake of others rather than exploiting them, and to "serve them" instead of oppressing them for our own advantage. "The 'other' – whether a person, people or nation – [is to be seen] not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our 'neighbour', a 'helper'."

Christian solidarity presumes that our neighbour is loved not only as "a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but as the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the per-

manent action of the Holy Spirit", as another brother or sister. As John Paul II noted: "At that point, awareness of the common fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of all in Christ – 'children in the Son' – and of the presence and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit, will bring to our vision of the world a new criterion for interpreting it," for changing it.

## Fraternity, a prerequisite for fighting poverty

In his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, my predecessor reminded the world how the lack of fraternity between peoples and men and women is a significant cause of poverty. In many societies, we are experiencing a profound poverty of relationships as a result of the lack of solid family and community relationships.

We are concerned by the various types of hardship, marginalization, isolation and various forms of pathological dependencies which we see increasing. This kind of poverty can be overcome only through the rediscovery and valuing of fraternal relationships in the heart of families and communities, through the sharing of joys and sorrows, of the hardships and triumphs that are a part of human life. Moreover, if on the one hand we are seeing a reduction in absolute poverty, on the other hand we cannot fail to recognize that there is a serious rise in relative poverty, that is, instances of inequality between people and groups who live together in particular regions or in a determined historical-cultural context. In this sense, effective policies are needed to promote the principle of fraternity, securing for people – who are equal in dignity and in fundamental rights – access to capital, services, educational resources, healthcare and technology so that every person has the opportunity to express and realize his or her life project and can develop fully as a person.

One also sees the need for policies which can lighten an excessive imbalance between incomes. We must not forget the Church's teaching on the so-called social mortgage, which holds that although it is lawful, as Saint Thomas Aquinas says, and indeed necessary "that people have ownership of goods," insofar as their use is concerned, "they possess them as not just their own, but common to others as well, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as themselves."

Finally, there is yet another form of promoting fraternity – and thus defeating poverty – which must be at the basis of all the others. It is the detachment of those who choose to live a sober and essential lifestyle, of those who, by sharing their own wealth, thus manage to experience fraternal communion with others. This is fundamental for following Jesus Christ and being truly Christian. It is not only the case of consecrated persons who profess the vow of poverty, but also of the many families and responsible citizens who firmly believe that it is their fraternal relationship with their neighbours which constitutes their most precious good.

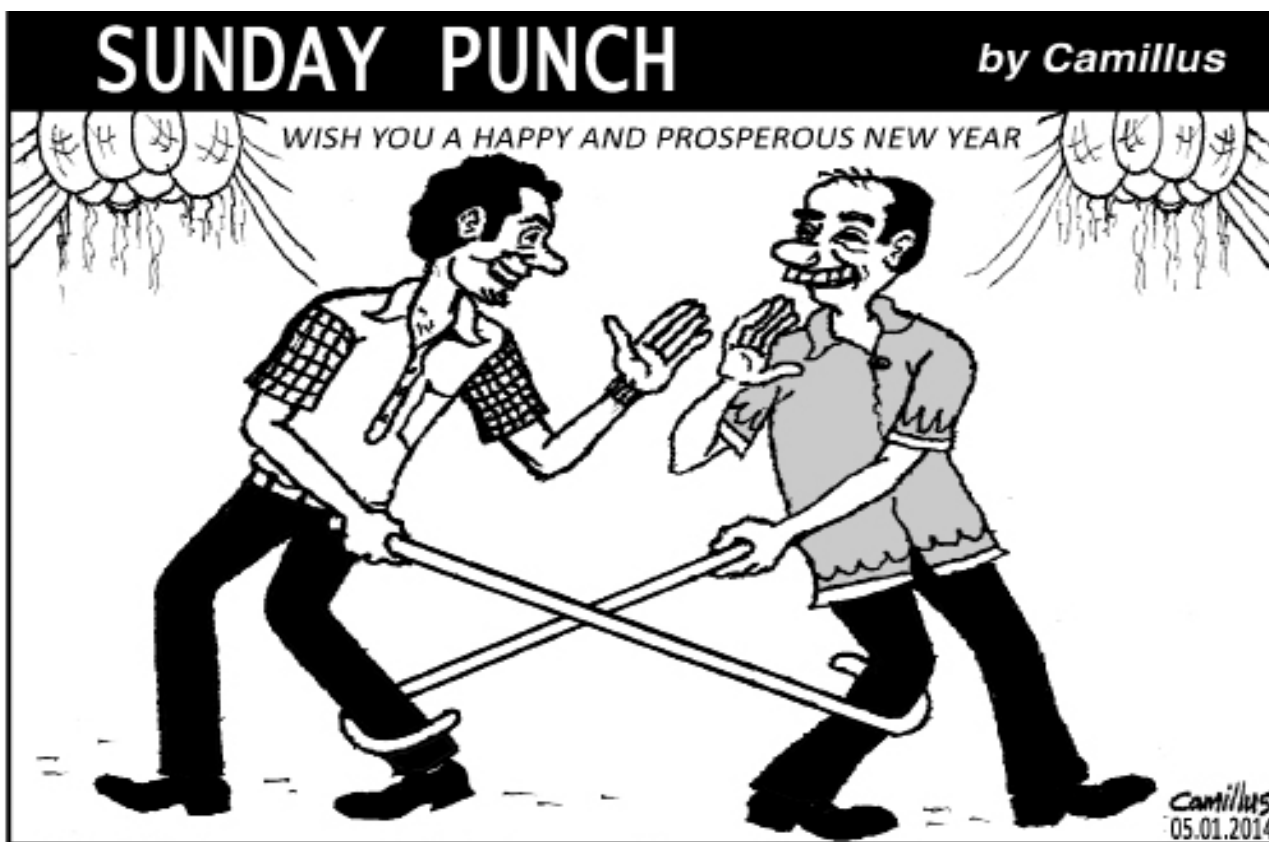
## The rediscovery of fraternity in the economy

The grave financial and economic crises of the present time – which find their origin in the progressive distancing of man from God and from his neighbour, in the greedy pursuit of material goods on the one hand, and in the impoverishment of interpersonal and community relations on the other – have pushed man to seek satisfaction, happiness and security in consumption and earnings out of all proportion to the principles of a sound economy.

In 1979 John Paul II had called attention to "a real perceptible danger that, while man's dominion over the world of things is making enormous advances, he should lose the essential threads of his dominion and in various ways let his humanity be subjected to the world and become himself something subject to manipulation in many ways – even if the manipulation is often not perceptible directly – through the whole of the organization of community life, through the production system and through pressure from the means of social communication."

The succession of economic crises should lead to a timely rethinking of our models of economic development and to a change in lifestyles. Today's crisis, even with its serious implications for people's lives, can also provide us with a fruitful opportunity to rediscover the virtues of prudence, temperance, justice and strength. These virtues can help us to overcome difficult moments and to recover the fraternal bonds which join us one to another, with deep confidence that human beings need and are capable of something greater than maximizing their individual interest. Above all, these virtues are necessary for building and preserving a society in accord with human dignity.

(Contd. on Pg. 13)





January 5, 2014

## Implement the Recommendations of the LLRC Report

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith and the Bishops' Conference has urged the Government to implement the recommendations of the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC).

The Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission was appointed by the Government and it presented an interim and a Final Report. The Interim Report recommended that the armed groups in the North and East should be disarmed. In its Final Report (December 2011) the Commission regretted that its recommendations in the Interim Report had not been implemented. The LLRC noted "the clear need to heal the wounds of the past and to make recommendations to reconcile the nation by recognising all victims of conflict, providing redress to them, thereby promoting national unity, peace, and harmony." The LLRC pointed out the need to create an environment which made reconciliation possible.

There are some important recommendations regarding governance and human rights which the Commission thought necessary but which the Government has not included in the Action Plan for implementation of the Recommendations of the LLRC (December 2011). One set of recommendations relate to the last stage of the war. Chapter 5 refers to Human Rights and covers missing persons, disappearances and abductions. It referred to the duty of the Government to take definitive action against alleged cases of disappearances as well as to put in place preventive measures. It recommended:

- That a Special Commissioner of Investigation be appointed to investigate alleged disappearances and provide material to the Attorney General to initiate criminal proceedings as appropriate;
- That an Independent Advisory Committee be appointed to monitor and examine detention and arrest of persons taken into custody under any regulations made under the Public Security Ordinance or the PTA;
- New domestic legislation to criminalize enforced or involuntary disappearances,
- It stated that the next of kin of the detainees have the fundamental right to know the whereabouts of their family members who are in detention and that the next of kin be given the right of access to detainees.
- That "Proper investigations should be conducted in respect of the allegations against the illegal armed groups with a view to ascertaining the truth and the institution of criminal proceedings against offenders where sufficient evidence can be found.
- That there should be Freedom of Expression and the Right to Information, which are universally regarded as basic human rights. It affirmed the need for media freedom to be enhanced in keeping with democratic principles, and to enact legislation to ensure the Right to Information.
- That it should ensure the Freedom of Movement of media personnel in the North and East and the Freedom of Association and Movement in general.
- That the Government create an environment, which respects, promotes and protects people's right to freely engage in observing their religion.
- That Government should take immediate action to disarm persons in possession of unauthorised weapons and prosecute such offenders and regrets that its interim recommendations have not been given full effect yet.
- That an independent permanent Police Commission be set up as a necessary pre-requisite to guarantee the effective functioning of the Police.
- That an Independent Public Service Commission be set up without delay to ensure that there is no political interference in the public service and that recruitment and promotions in the public service are in conformity with the equality provisions in the Constitution.
- That the Northern Province should revert to civilian administration in matters relating to the day-to-day life of the people and in particular with regard to matters pertaining to economic activities such as agriculture, fisheries land etc. The military presence must progressively recede to the background to enable the people to return to normal civilian life and enjoy the benefits of peace.
- Since Public intervention regarding proposed legislation is an integral part of a vibrant democracy it recommended that the Government and the Opposition make all endeavours to reach a consensus on an appropriate constitutional amendment, to provide for an adequate timeframe to challenge proposed legislation.

The Cardinal has called for the appointment of civilians as the Governors in the North and East while calling for direct talks by the Government with the TNA.

# Our Lady of Guadalupe

On December 15, 1531 Our Lady appeared to a native called Juan Diego. On Tapaya Hill near Mexico City. Diego was a convert to Catholicism. On his way to Holy Mass on the feast day of the Immaculate Conception he saw a beautiful young lady surrounded by light. She asked Diego to go to the local bishop and request him to build a church in that place.

But the Bishop wanted a sign from heaven to prove that it was an authentic message. Diego returned to Mary to ask a sign. Then Mary asked Diego to pick some beautiful roses from the hill. He picked some roses from the hill and gave them to Mary. Mary placed the flowers in Diego's cloak and asked him to report to the Bishop. Diego went to the Bishop as Mary said. When Diego met the Bishop and opened his cloak to hand over the flowers to bishop a beautiful image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was on it. The Bishop having seen this miracle decided to build a church as requested by Our Lady.

It is believed that Mary appeared in her glorified body at Guadalupe. Also Mary in her own hands arranged the flowers in Diego's cloak.

### Words of Our Lady to Juan Diego

"Know for certain least of my sons, that I am the perfect and Perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of the true God, through whom everything lives, the Lord of all things new and far, the master of heaven and earth it is my earnest wish that a temple be built here to honour her. Here I will demonstrate, I will exhibit I will give all my love, my compassion, my help, and my protection to the people. I am your merciful mother the merciful mother of all of you who live united in this land and of all mankind of all those who love me of those who cry me, of those who seek me, of those who have confidence in me. Here I will hear their weeping, their sorrow and will remedy and alleviate all their multiple sufferings, necessities and misfortunes"

### Image on Diego's Cloak

Even scientists cannot explain how the image of Virgin Mary was imprinted on the cloak. Scientists cannot find any paint or dye although the colours are bright. The painter or scientist cannot explain how the image was created.

### Message of Guadalupe

In the five apparitions in Guadalupe what was the message the Virgin Mary gave to mankind?

"I want very much to have a little house built here for me"

During this time people in Mexico did not follow God. They were moving away from God. By the request for a church to be built, Our Lady wanted the people to come closer to God. Also she wanted to console those who were suffering.

During this time there was violence in Mexico. There was fighting between the Spaniards and the native Americans. The apparition made the people united. After the Apparition



some 9 million Mexicans were baptized and became Catholics.

In Guadalupe Our Lady chose a Native American as her messenger. The Apparition was very special because by her own hands Mary arranged the flowers in Diego's cloak. Diego's cloak with the image of Mary still does not show any signs of decay.

God shows His love to mankind through this apparition. During this time Mexican people were involved in various kinds of sin and violence. The entire community was stained with sinfulness. Through this apparition Mary showed the world the importance of honouring God and abstain from sin.

### "I Am Your Merciful Mother"

In the first appearance Mary says "I am your merciful mother"

As Pope John Paul II says, this Apparition had a greater influence in the evangelization of the Americans. After the Apparition thousands of people were converted to Catholicism in Mexico.

Mary shows her affection and love to the mankind. Will a son ever refuse a mother's request? The Wedding Feast in Cana is a very good example. She shows mankind that she will intercede with God on our behalf with love and affection. Let us pray to her that she will protect, guard and guide us.

Pope Pius XII declared Our Lady of Guadalupe as the patroness of the Americas. Her feast day is celebrated on December 12, each year. It is a day of Holy day of obligation in Mexico. Pope John Paul II visited four times to the Guadalupe Shrine.

*Eric Perera  
Sydney*

## A Challenge is born

The centuries bloodily pass;  
Honeyed words fall from lips thick and fast,  
Truces painstakingly shored -up today  
Are brazenly broken tomorrow  
While cloak-and-dagger deceits harrowingly rise  
And the despotic finger on the trigger breeds blight.  
All this, while the Challenge of the ages goes unmet:  
'Love Thy Neighbour as Thine own self'

*Lynn Ockersz*





*In recognition of the fiftieth anniversary of Vatican II, let's explore the mandates' effects on liturgy and our relationship with it.*

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), completed by the Second Vatican Council in December 1963, set in motion the most far-reaching liturgical reform in Catholic history. The initiation of this momentous change within the Catholic Church in America came on the heels of the social and political upheaval of the 1960s that included civil rights marches, demonstrations for women's liberation, and protests against the Vietnam War. Historians and theologians alike would look back on the sixties as a watershed in our political and religious culture—the end of the modern era and the beginning of postmodernism.

The Council voted by a margin of 2,147 to 4 to approve the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy—the first of sixteen documents of Vatican II. These teachings would bring about a profound reform of the liturgy and also open up new questions about how to understand our ancient heritage today. The Catholic Church in America would soon feel the reverberations of the decisions reached in Rome as changes in the liturgy appeared in parishes worldwide.

#### **Active Participation**

It would be a mistake, however, to think that the liturgical reforms of Vatican II sprang out of nowhere. The background can be traced to the nineteenth century, when a liturgical movement began in Benedictine monasteries throughout France and Belgium. Historical research brought about a deeper understanding of Catholic liturgy and also revealed the changes it had incurred over the past centuries—changes that were not always for the better.

Originally, liturgy was highly participatory. However, over time it became less the prayer of the whole assembly and more the special province of the clergy alone.

By modern times, most people no longer understood Latin and therefore could not comprehend the prayers. The Congregation's role of making the responses and singing the songs of the Mass had lapsed, leaving these roles to acolytes and the choir. The faithful seldom received Communion and remained silent through much of the Holy Mass.

In sum, the people in the pew had become passive observers of

the liturgical action rather than active participants in it.

Pope Pius X's 1903 statement that "the genuine source of the true Christian Spirit" was to be found in active participation in the liturgy was welcomed by liturgical-movement leaders. They produced Latin-English hand missals, published books about the liturgy, and taught at Liturgical Weeks (conferences devoted to liturgical education for priests and religious). This movement soon became a worldwide phenomenon. Pope Pius XII approved of the Liturgical Movement. He called for the reform of the Holy Week liturgies in the 1950s, a reform of the Breviary, and a simplification of the rubrics (liturgical instructions). When he revised the liturgies of Holy Week, for the first time in history the rubrics included explicit instructions about not only the priest's role but also that of the people.

By the time Pope John XXIII convened Vatican II in 1963, the desire for reform was strong. The Council fathers approved a thorough reform of the liturgy and identified active participation in the liturgy as the pastoral goal to be considered "before all else."

#### **Reforms**

At the heart of the liturgical reform was a profound theological commitment to celebrate the paschal mystery: The passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The faithful are immersed into this mystery by baptism and live it out through all the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

The Council fathers called for the reform of the Holy Mass, sacraments, and Liturgy of the Hours. They wanted the rites to be simpler and more accessible. It was recommended that repetitive and confusing elements that had crept in through the ages be pruned away so the main actions of the celebration could be seen more clearly.

Music and art that did not adhere to the form and spirit of the liturgy were to be replaced. The fathers encouraged choirs to be maintained, but not at the expense of or to replace congregational singing.

Latin would be used along with modern languages. The calendar was reformed to emphasize the main seasons that celebrated the mystery of Christ and ensure that secondary elements, like the celebrations of the saints, wouldn't overshadow them.

Reform would also bring new treasures to light from the storehouse of the Church's history. New prayers that drew on ancient sources would enrich the liturgy along with the inclusion of more Scripture Readings. Communion, under both forms, would be available on some occasions.

The fathers also wanted liturgy to be adapted to the various peoples around the globe, allowing a diversity of cultures to find expression in the rites of the Church. The Theologian Fr. Karl Rahner, SJ, who was present at the council as an advisor, remarked that Vatican II was the beginning of the "world Church." No longer would Catholicism see itself primarily as a European Community.

The work of many generations of missionaries had borne fruit: All portions of the globe were represented at the council and would be embraced by its reforms.

#### **Ecumenism and Evangelization**

Pope John XXIII had four objectives for the council: Updating to the times, renewal of the faithful, ecumenism, and evangelization. Liturgical reform was considered the foundation for furthering all four because liturgy is the most central act of the Church—an expression of the Church's deepest identity.

By returning to the roots of tradition in the liturgy, the Church became better able to overcome the division between Catholics and other Christians. Some of these Christian groups had been separated since the eleventh century by the great schism with the East, others since the sixteenth-century Western Reformation. Some divisions remain, but we are much closer than we were.

Dialogue with other world religions, especially Judaism, also flowed from the council. The increase in Biblical Readings from the Old Testament helped Catholics to cherish a more positive relationship with the Jews. (Before Vatican II, 1 percent of the readings heard at Mass were from the Old Testament; after, it rose to 17 percent.)

In general, the Church began to appear less like a fortress and more like a bridge-builder. The addition of the Prayer of the Faithful and the Sign of Peace, gave Catholics a sense of solidarity through faith-filled relationships within the community and in the rest of the world.

#### **After Vatican II**

Most of the principles enunciated by Vatican II were put into practice from 1963 to 1975 by revising the liturgical books and implementing the changes.

Indeed most of the phenomena people associate with Vatican II took place not at the Council itself but in the period immediately following. Altars were turned around so that Mass could be celebrated facing the people. More English was used in the liturgy. Communion was offered standing and in the hand. The restoration of the catechumenate (RCIA) made its appearance, and the rite of baptism for children included roles for parents as well as godparents—to name just a few of the changes.

After this time of industrious and creative expansion, the Church settled down to become more deeply rooted in the reforms of the rites. In 1985, Pope John Paul II said—echoing the Synod of Bishops—that most people experienced the fruit of the council primarily through liturgical reform, and they had embraced it.

Not all Catholics were happy with the reforms. For some the changes came too quickly and interrupted either their personal piety or their sense of value toward rites that predated the Council. Through the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century, continuous refinement of the reforms was called into question by those who wished to either go back to the preconciliar liturgy or reconstruct the reform along different lines.

Nevertheless, liturgical reform continues to flourish. It has assisted the phenomenal growth of the Church in Africa and Asia. It continues to provide a strong experience of active participation that engenders a sense of community and mission in parishes and dioceses worldwide.

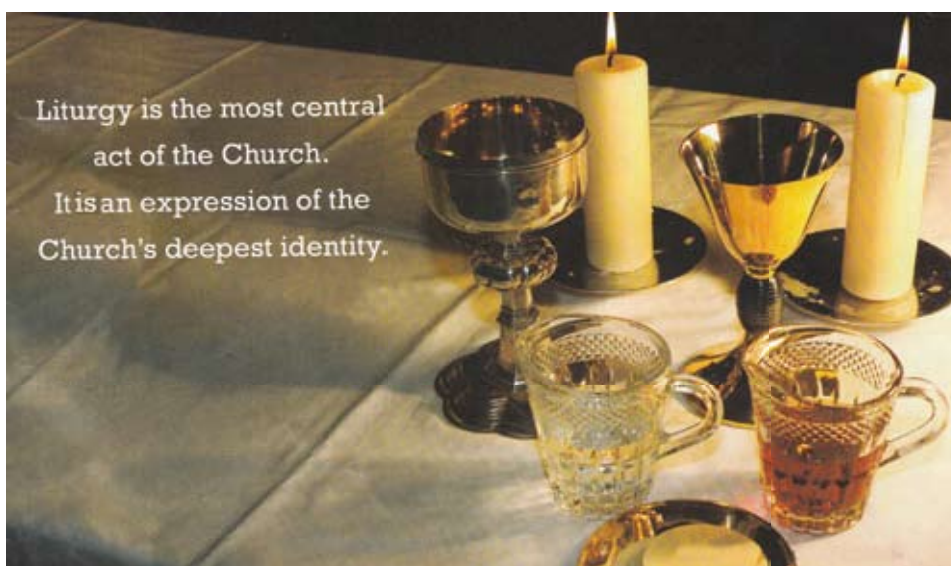
The liturgical reforms of Vatican II walk hand in hand with the new evangelization, ecumenism, and the love of sacred Scripture. They've made Catholicism more responsive to both the ancient truths of the faith and the demands and needs of the modern world.

#### **What About My Parish?**

In the end, the test of reform lies in the way it is implemented in local communities. Full celebration of the paschal mystery includes music that expresses the beauty and meaning of the celebration, preaching that inspires, and full participation of the faithful who offer themselves with Christ in the sacrament of the altar.

The work of Vatican II continues through daily efforts to celebrate the liturgy so that all are sent forth renewed, to bring Christ's love to the world.

*Courtesy Liguorian Magazine*





# God wants us to slow down

A friend phoned me yesterday and left me breathless as I said goodbye. She told me, as usual, how busy she was and just listening to her tired me out!

She is a wonderful person and I really admire her participation in community projects while she balances a home, tends to her magnificent garden and occasionally minds her grand children, but it's tempting to tell her to slow down. She would not listen though. Her busyness is an ingrained habit she has fostered for a long time, and my advice would have no effect on her.

As I compare myself with her, I seem to be standing still. It is not that my life is not fulfilling and rich. However, I do not rise at 6 a.m. as she does and my schedule is not crammed with nearly as many activities; but that is the way I want it. When my life becomes too stressful and I find myself constantly on the go, I become mean-spirited and snap at my husband and my family for any little irritation.

Listening to people such as my friend discussing their frantic lives used to leave me throbbing with guilt. My habit of sitting silently in the morning sipping coffee while I prayed, read, meditated or

simply scanned the morning paper, hinted that laziness was motivating me to have this quiet time.

Also, because I was not overwhelmed with chores and did not participate in too many social events, I decided my life was too easy and much too slowly paced. Everyone else seemed constantly in motion and consequently stressed out. Was there something terribly wrong with me? Had sloth become my greatest fault?

I began my march on the road to reform. My days became jammed with chores and the house began to show it. Even my children commented on how immaculate our dwelling looked, for I had never been an exceptional housekeeper. But best of all, I began bragging about how industrious I was.

Things did not run smoothly, however. By the end of each day I was exhausted and when the family members returned home from work or school, I would snap at them for the least little irritation. The house was neat and sparkling when unexpected visitors arrived, but the reflection of myself which I spotted in the gleaming toaster early each morning appeared both anxious and depressed.

My writing was no lon-

ger a priority, either. How could I compose a poem, article or story when I was too busy to think? Why, despite my hectic lifestyle which finally labeled me as one of the crowd, was I so miserable? And why was I no longer available to listen patiently to my children's problems or merely sit with my husband and discuss his day?

The mood of family members was also less cheerful, and laughter was no longer heard as often. Gradually I realised that my life needed to be reassessed, to find out what was wrong.

Wisely I began to return slowly to my old way of living. A time of solitude in the morning for reading, meditation and prayer once more became a common practice. I also dropped some of the activities outside the home in order to devote more time to my family.

And I noticed that the house was beginning to appear "lived in" again. As I slipped back into a more relaxed life style, the mood of family members improved and laughter ran out more often.

You may feel that my return to a slower pace of life is a weakness; however I do not agree. Do you recall Christ rushing about in a frenzy, attending



meetings and other duties and having no time to relax? He always took time alone to pray and renew His energy.

Also, while visiting Martha and Mary, He reminded the former that her concentration on being a perfect hostess was not necessary. Instead, He gently urged her to relax and listen to Him as her sister Mary was doing.

It is true that being busy in our fast paced society is a trait widely admired. Everywhere we turn, we are reminded that much is expected of us and we had better rise to the occasion. Commercials in the me-

work extremely hard to acquire material possessions. But we do not have to pay attention.

When we simplify our lives we have more to offer. As we spend our energy only on what is really important, an inner peace centers us and enables us to be open to others and to spread God's love wherever we happen to be.

It is true that when we reach this stage of maturity we will no longer be able to brag about our frantic lifestyles, but hopefully we will have become wise enough to no longer care.

Courtesy: Canadian Messenger



Two young boys were spending the night with their grandparents. At bedtime they knelt to say their prayers. The younger one began praying at the top of his lungs, "I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE, I PRAY FOR A NEW X-BOX, I PRAY FOR A NEW DVD ... ." His older brother leaned over, nudged the young brother and said, "Why are you shouting your prayers? God isn't deaf." The younger brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"

Merton, a Trappist monk, a Christian mystic, was born in France, lived in England, Italy and in the United States. He became famous as a writer, poet and a student of comparative religion. He was born in 1915 and had a mercurial career and was ordained a Catholic Priest at the age of 34 in 1949. His autobiographical writings contained in his famous book, *'The Seven Storey Mountain'* made him a best-selling non-fiction author. He was writing and addressing conferences on meditation, mysticism and comparative religion till his mysterious and untimely death on December 1968.

In the silence of the Trappist monastery he had the opportunity of leading and meditating on Christian and inter-religious academic and monastic writings. Besides these Merton was interested in learning the Asian Hindu and Buddhist meditation practices and he seriously studied Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Jainism and Sufism. He was quite fascinated by the meditative practices of Zen Buddhism which had its roots in China and Japan. He had personal encounters with the Dalai Lama and the Zen Master T.M. Suzuki.

He came to Asia to participate in an Inter-religious Conference in Bang-

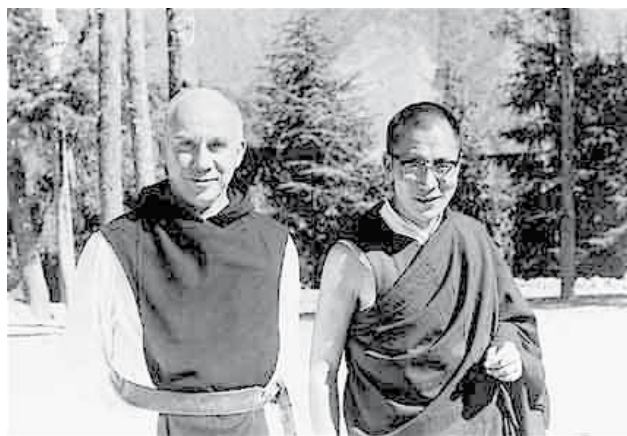
## Thomas Merton in Ceylon



kok which was scheduled in December 1968. The Conference was organised by the Benedictines to implement monastic renewal throughout the world. Father Thomas Merton was to give a keynote address in the final stages of the Conference in Bangkok in mid-December. He intended to meet as many Buddhist and Hindu monastic leaders as possible to study monasticism practiced by Asian religions.

Merton did not forget to meet Buddhist religious leaders in Sri Lanka, the haven of Theravada Buddhism. He met Ven. Walpola Rahula, in Colombo and Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, a German-born Buddhist monk who lived a monastic life near Kandy. He wrote in his diary that Colombo is a well-organised and a cleaner city than many Asian cities that he had visited. In Kandy he also visited the then Bishop of Kandy, Leo Nanayakkara.

"Bishop Nanayakkara is very progressive and we talked long about my idea of Buddhist dia-



Fr. Thomas Merton with the Dalai Lama

logue and of a meditation monastery that would be open to Buddhism. We continued to talk about the Church today and the problems of Christians. I think he sees the situation clearly - or in any event we agree."

Merton also met the retired Bishop of Kandy, Rev. Bernard Regno. Bishop Regno told him, judging from what he had read in Merton's book, *'Seven Storey Mountain'*, that Merton was a hippie. With upraised hands the Bishop said, "Oh! Oh! Oh! All the whiskey! All the cigarettes!" Merton wrote "I reminded him that hippies have no interest in whiskey and that they smoked pot, not cigarettes ... During the conversation he urged me to write a book about the authority of the Pope, since the world is going utterly mad."

Merton also visited the National Seminary, Ampitiya, and addressed the Brothers who were studying there. "Then I saw the Seminary, a large, roomy, shady place ... A big Romanesque German style Church. When I came back in the evening for dinner and talk to the seminarians, the Alma Redemptoris was sung rather faintly in Latin and Gregorian and I could not feel this was any more out of place than, say, English hymns!"

He had written in his journal about his visits to places of historical interest in Sri Lanka. He was fascinated by the Gal Vihara in Polonnaruwa. He left Colombo on December 4, for the Interfaith Conference in Bangkok. On the December 10, Fr. Thomas Merton was found dead in his hotel room in Bangkok. Cause of death: Electrocution.

## A CROSS The Way

By Sirohmi Gunasekera

### A New Year

"Happy New Year!" greeted Nelun, adding "I hope all your dreams will come true this year!"

"I don't know about that. My dreams are infinite. I hope to meet my Dream Man and marry and live happily ever after. I also want there to be peace in the world and especially in Sri Lanka! I want my father to cope with his diabetes and live a good life. I want my mother to stop worrying about us and to have peace of mind," confessed Maureen.

"Well, that's quite a Wish List! Maybe each one of us should just wish for a Good Day! If you are happy and contented today and it continues from day to day, then you can reasonably wish for a Good Year," remarked Nelun.

"You are right. 'Happy New Year' means a succession of happy days. Undoubtedly, there will be sad moments and a crisis or two. But the main thing is to have a Positive Attitude and look on the bright side," said Maureen.

"Yes. There is always a silver lining behind every dark cloud. I know a person who has breast cancer and was operated and now lives happily from day to day. She is ready to face death and believes that each day counts," said Nelun.

"We must learn from the example of others. After all, you can get knocked down while crossing the road. In the midst of life we are in death. I believe that each moment counts. Even if you are going through a bad patch, remember that it will pass," said Maureen.

"I know. It's just that we get bogged down in the bad patch and feel that it will last forever. I think it's because we tend to be sad and forget to be happy even for a while. Let's clink glasses and wish each other A CONTENTED NEW YEAR!"



# Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

Artists throughout have tried to portray the Nativity scene in the way they understood it best. This freedom has inspired immense creativity and ingenuity.

Locally we have seen Paul Navaratne (1930's) who was at the forefront of indigenization of the Christian Art in Sri Lanka, introduce Kandyan Art features to the scene in Bethlehem. His figures are clad as typical villagers, while the three kings are dressed up in the regalia of chieftains who have come on elephant back to worship the baby. The angels are replaced with devata figures and the firs are replaced with a Na tree

in flower. The *Na* or the Ceylon iron wood is an indigenous tree to our country and the symbolism of its flower has been attributed to Mother Mary. The clouds the star, the architecture, the furniture and the colour combinations used with red as background makes this a unique piece of work in the best Kandyan tradition.

Rev. Fr. Priyantha Silva's painting is an elegant piece that shows mother and child surrounded by the joyful strains of heavenly music. The drums beat and the conch shell blows to announce the Good News Nalini Jayasuriya's mural can be seen at the Anglican Cathedral Kurunegala. It is a mural of great detail, which shows heaven and earth rejoicing on the birth of the Saviour. Richard Gabriel's medallion on the Nativity is at St. Theresa's Church Thimbirigasyaya. It is an endearing scene with the baby shown flat on his stomach in-between his concerned parents.

Ven Hatigamma U-tarananda Thera in his painting has followed a Buddhist philosophical approach with the introduction of the deer to the crib. His figures show the emotions of child birth of pain and suffering.

The painting at the bottom is by Godamane found at the St. Mary's Church, Grand Street Negombo. It follows the traditional western Christian Art imported to our island. It is a rich timeless piece of work.

- Kishanie S. Fernando





# Works of God done through Mother Bernarda Heimgartner

**M**aria Anna Heimgartner was born in Fislisbach, a rural community in Canton Aargau (Switzerland) on November 26, 1822. She was the first born in a family of six children, five girls and one boy. Even in her early youth Maria Anna Heimgartner evinced a pronounced religious stamp. Faith was alive in the family.

After she lost her father in 1836 at the age of 14, Maria Anna felt the need to help her mother by working as a house maid in the neighbourhood. In this way she was accustomed to endure the deprivations and hardships of life in the spirit of Christian courage, always trusting faithfully in God's compassion and providence. At the age of 18, Maria Anna wished to dedicate her life to God and to the service of youth. When she came to know that Father Theodosius Florentini, a dynamic Capuchin, animated by social zeal, was planning to found a teaching congregation, she gladly allowed herself to be guided by him. Father Theodosius' dream was realized in 1841 and started training three young girls (Maria Anna-later Sr. Bernarda, Anna Kramer - Sr. Feliciana and Walburga Mader - Sr. Cornelia) with the aim of founding a new congregation

## FOUNDING CHARISM OF THE CONGREGATION

It was Father Theodosius' vision of a society healed of the infirmities of materialism and lack of faith in God that gave birth to our Congregation in 1844 when the first three members of the Congregation made their Commitment to God in the Capuchin Chapel at Altdorf in Switzerland. Of the three, then Anna Maria Heimgartner later Sr. Bernarda Heimgartner was appointed by him as the first Superior of the Congregation and she shared with him the role of the Foundress of the Congregation.

His plan of founding a new type of religious community at a time when women religious lived in cloisters could be considered as a revolutionary one. His idea that 'religious women should step out of their enclosures and be more involved in the active life' was quite indigestible for the Church/people of his time and place.

According to his vision the three young girls pursued their teachers training studies in Freiburg/Breisgau in Germany and later their religious studies and novitiate in Ribeauville in Alsace/France. At the end of their novitiate freely and joyfully embraced a new form of religious life in their own country Switzerland proving themselves to be worthy followers of Fr. Theodosius whose

maxim was "The need of the time is the will of God." On October 16, 1844 the three sisters made their first profession according to the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis in the Capuchin Church at Altdorf.

Taking up the leadership of the new Congregation at the age of 21, Sr. Bernarda, later christened the religious family as Teaching Sisters of the Holy Cross, a name suggested by Sr. Feliciana inspired by their lives of trials and sufferings of the early days. In the years ahead the small community of three started growing slowly as girls started joining them; The Sisters were fully engaged in teaching in village schools. Numerous were the struggles and tensions the infant Congregation had to face in the early years. Facing these challenging situations with tranquility of mind and undaunted courage, Mother Bernarda portrays for herself, the picture of a valiant cross bearer; When the infant Congregation was deprived of the guidance and spiritual direction of the Founder Fr. Theodosius as he had to move away to a far away mission the whole burden of guiding, encouraging and supporting the Sisters of the new Congregation fell on the shoulders of Mother Bernarda, who possessed firm determination and clarity in her dealing because her gaze was ever directed only towards Jesus Christ, her duty, the good of the Institute and God's Providence.

Father Theodosius and Mother Bernarda were prophets of their time and their purpose in starting the Congregation was to bring about a social change in the society in which they lived. Mother Bernarda believed that social change is possible by concentrating on education of girls and young women. Her aim was not merely to educate the girls but to give them a sense of their inherent dignity and form them into mature human beings – Education as Liberation and Empowerment. In the face of great oppositions and difficulties, Mother Bernarda remained firm and true to her convictions. In about 15 years after starting the Congregation, there were about 70 schools in villages and small towns far and wide, where the Sisters were sent out to teach – one or two Sisters to each centre. The clarity of vision our Foundress had is something remarkable. Her idea was mass education, educating multitude of women who will build up the society and contribute to the transformation of the society. In striving towards this goal the first Sisters experienced the Cross – the Paschal Mystery. They deserved to be called Sisters of the Holy Cross.

## SESQUI CENTENARY

As we the Sisters of the Holy Cross commemorate sesqui - centenary of the Heavenly Birth of our Foundress, we are urged to reflect about her life. Mother Bernarda lives out of the Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Mother Bernarda's courageous commitment to the education of the young, her faithfulness for the work she had begun and her determination for a new life-style of insertion in the villages in the midst of people occurred at a cost of high price. Her generous lay in her steadfastness. Neither external opposition nor inner hurts could make her deviate from the good she recognized in the task undertaken. The adherence to this clarity in her direction caused her great suffering shows her great sense of discernment. In her strong belief that the Cross is a necessary passage to true life. She found strength even when the future of her work was questioned. Mother Bernarda lived the Motto: IN THE CROSS IS SALVATION.

The young Congregation grew rapidly after her early death (December 13, 1863). Many young people, especially girls, were given the chance of a good Christian education and equipped with practical skills for life. Above all they received a clear orientation for life based on faith.

"She chose the Cross, she bore the Cross, and she was victorious in the Cross."

## IN HOPELESS SITUATION MOTHER BERNARDA PUT HER TRUST IN GOD

In Mother Bernarda's life one desperate situation and disappointment followed another with the exception of only a few years of quiet. With this dark background the brightness of her unshakeable trust in God shines out even more clearly. To burdensome situations she responded spontaneously with an act of trust in the 'Loving Father' and then continued her task with renewed energy. Today her Spirit is alive in the hearts and minds of 1800 Sisters live in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa. It is when we meet at an international level that we recognize our differences in languages, appearances, the way we dress, think, and live. What unites us in our multiplicity of cultures and over continents are our common origin and our roots out of which our Congregation grew.

## HISTORY OF THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS (MENZINGEN) IN SRI LANKA

The Order sent its missionaries to the various parts of the world over the years. In July 1930, the then Bishop



of Jaffna Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Alfred Guyomer OMI of revered memory –convinced of the crying need of the service of the Sisters, invited them to serve in the civil hospital in Kayts – an island off the Jaffna Peninsula in the north of Sri Lanka. The 1st batch of missionaries came to Sri Lanka in July 1930 to serve the sick, the elderly and the poor. They were nursing Sisters, motivated towards improving nursing care of the patients, irrespective of race colour or religion. Very soon new needs arose and more service communities were opened viz. Jaffna Government hospital in the Jaffna town, Home for Elders – Colombogam on the outskirts of Jaffna and a Day Care Centre for children of working mothers in Gurunagar, predominately a fishing village in Jaffna.

The Government of Ceylon then banned missionary Sisters working in civil hospitals and all missionaries below 60 years had to leave the country in the year 1960 – 1961. This left only six European Sisters to remain back to guide and care for the young province. It is in this year, the first batch of local Sisters was making their final vows. This indicates clearly how young at that time our Province was. Our pioneer Sisters, then, launched out into new dioceses and started new ministries according to the need of the time. By the Grace of God it started to grow again. Today there are 110 members in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Sri Lanka working in 6 dioceses with 19 established communities. The presence of the Sisters in the communities helps people to live in harmony with one another. The ministries they are involved in are open to all people irrespective of race and religion. The main aim of the Sisters is to work towards a 'holistic growth' of every person viz, physical, psychological and spiritual growth which leads to the wellbeing of the person. This was made very evident during the major evacuation in the North; the Sisters moved along with the

people and lived as refugees with them. The Sisters are present in the midst of broken people, patients, children, youth and aged irrespective of their race and religion. Thus being messengers of peace and love.

Our ministries are wide reaching from womb to tomb. Although the purpose of the Congregation initially was purely dedicated to education, in keeping with the Founder's motto "the need of the time is the will of God," our Sisters saw the need of the people in the Northern Province at that time for nursing; so quite a good number of European Sisters together with four of five Indian Sisters began working in the hospitals as nurses and matrons. It is creditable that Sisters were quite open to the needs that were unfolding in the society. Thus young apostolate and social work too were started in Colombo.

With the termination of the nursing Sisters working in the government hospitals, Sisters began working in private nursing homes such as Michael's Nursing Home in Kollupitiya and the 2nd branch at Havelock Town – Anderson Road and Holy Cross Health Centre – Jaffna where the Sisters worked as gynecologists, anesthetist's, pharmacists, radiologists and lab technicians besides nursing.

They also branched out to render their service in the fields of teaching – Montessori, primary, secondary, and even university, besides social work, refugee work, caring for the children, caring for the elders, caring for the youth, pastoral activities, prison ministry, Mobile health service, counseling, training nurses and so on. Our service extended to the dioceses of Colombo, Jaffna, Badulla, Matale, Mannar, Kandy and Trincomalee. We will reach the unreachable star by contributing our bit of responsibility towards society by lighting the candle of knowledge, of love and of peace.

**Rev. Sr. Lawrence Lawrence HC**



# St. Alphonsus and the Link between Crib and Cross

**His View of Redemption was unique during his Lifetime**

My introduction to two great themes of Alphonsian Spirituality did not come from a seminary retreat or a spiritual workshop. Rather, it came during my first visit to a major seminary Chapel at Mount St. Alphonsus in Esopus, NY, that I was introduced to the themes behind St. Alphonsus' understanding of the redemption: the crib and the cross.

The chapel contained the symbols found in any church or chapel: the altar, the tabernacle, the crucifix, etc. But then on either side of me I noticed a number of small side altars, each with a marble statue. The side altar on my left held a full-size replica of the Pieta from the 1939 World's Fair, or so we were told as students. (I never confirmed the truth of this statement.)

The side altar to my right showcased a life-sized manger scene with the infant Jesus in a creche.

Each of the Chapel's pillars was decorated—as one might expect—with the Stations of the Cross. But as I walked around them I discovered something else I'd never seen: a series of stations created by St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori to help people meditate on Jesus and the story of his infancy. For example, Station IV: Jesus is wrapped in swaddling clothes. Station VI: Jesus is adored by the Magi. Station XI: Jesus sleeps.

And so it was during this chapel journey that I received St. Alphonsus' message.

Over time I've come to understand his message and its delivery through a variety of religious symbols. Each Redemptorist will study them, because they are central to the core thinking and spirituality of St. Alphonsus. He viewed the mystery of the redemption as being linked not only to the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord, but also to the incarnation. And he believed the two must be presented together for a full understanding of the gift provided by our Redeemer.

St. Alphonsus' view of redemption was unique from that of other spiritual thinkers of his time. In his day, redemption was primarily focused on the passion of Christ. St. Alphonsus expanded this view to include the infancy story, which he saw as an essential part of the mystery of redemption. St. Alphonsus used the infancy story to offer insight into some of the core spiritual attitudes every person needs to bring to their reflection on redemption: amazement, tenderness, compassion, and gratitude.



## Amazement

***Just how close does God want to come to us?***

Humanity has posed this question for centuries. The pagan religions understood God as distant and not at all interested in this world. We then listen to the Hebrew Scriptures that speak of one God, a God of heaven who can be approached only by select people such as priests and prophets; thus, he's still somewhat distant from us. But through Moses and the prophets, we learn of God as we know him: one who looks down from heaven with mercy and compassion on those who seek him. In the infancy story of Christ, God reaches out to us in a dramatic way by descending from heaven and entering our world. This is a God who, as attested to by the shepherds, journeys among ordinary people, a God who reaches out to both Jews and Gentiles, as represented by the Magi. *Amazement* is the best term to use here—amazement toward our God—he who reaches out to us in a way we could never imagine. We never dreamed God wanted to be that close to us.

## Tenderness

Pagan religions saw gods as distant and mysterious divinities who kept their distance. When the gods did deal with us, pagans believed, their actions were often perceived as unsympathetic and aggressive.

The Hebrew Scriptures speak of a God who is all-powerful but also has a tender side. The prophet Isaiah says our God will not break a bruised reed or snuff a smoldering wick. This

***If only we stop to listen, we can hear the infancy story's clear message about God's desired relationship with us***

text references a God of mercy.

The infancy story of Christ then presents us with a God who is very approachable, a God who comes to us as a vulnerable infant so we will not be afraid to enter into his midst. God presents himself in a way to remove fear and encourage a relationship. This presentation changes God's portrayal from an all-powerful "crashing through the heavens" force to an image of gentleness and tenderness. What infant does not draw a response of gentleness?

## Compassion

***Just how will God deal with our sinfulness?***

The pagan religions came to an understanding that the gods would deal with us in a harsh and vengeful way if we didn't listen to their commands or acted against their will. But the Hebrew Scriptures tell us about a God who presents us with commandments and understands our weaknesses in responding to his will. Although we may find statutes and ordinances overwhelming, we also find forgiveness through sacrifice.

In the infancy story, we learn our God who dwells with us is one who understands our difficulties and therefore is gentle with us. Jesus will not change the commandments, but because he has walked in our shoes he is acknowledged as one who understands the difficulties of doing good and avoiding evil. And it is in Christ that we are able to find forgiveness from our transgressions.

## Gratitude

***Just how can we thank God enough?***

Both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are filled with gratitude for God's activity in our lives. And here is where the infancy story of Christ is most alive. The heavens sing out gratitude through the angels. The shepherds are grateful, for as twenty-four-hour workers in the field they are unable to approach God in the Temple. And now with joy they discover a God who reaches out to them where they are.

This is a God who will do anything to become approachable, even go to the extreme of becoming a vulnerable infant.

The Magi are grateful because God cares about all people, no matter where they're from, and

because they may approach God with confidence that they won't be turned away.

Through the star in the heavens over the manger and through the approach of the animals to the creche, all creation is now seen as celebrating the birth of the Savior who will bring about redemption for all. All of this, which we learn about in the infancy narratives, opens the way to the passion story of a God willing to continue to be vulnerable for us by offering himself up to death on the cross.

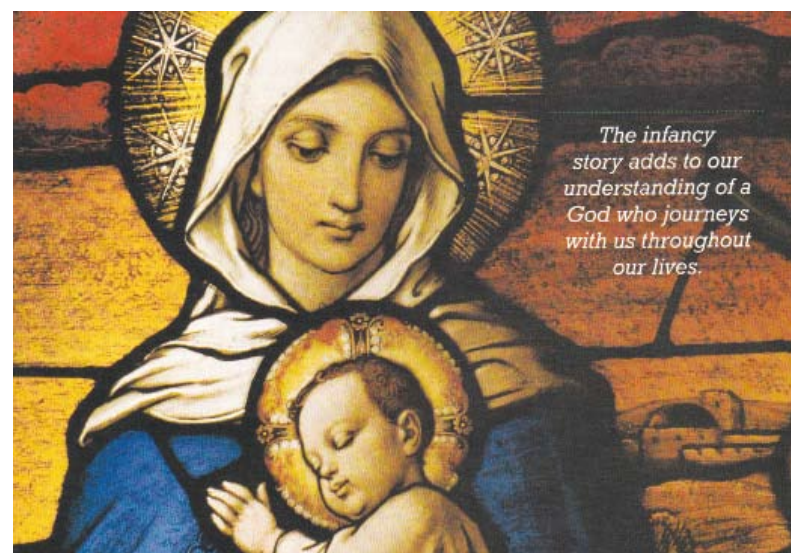
The themes of amazement, tenderness, compassion, and gratitude will continue through the passion narrative that the infancy narrative has prepared us for. *Amazement*: God's vulnerability will include death on a cross. *Tenderness*: Even in his dealings with Pilate, Jesus is respectful and not filled with anger at his persecutors. *Compassion*: Jesus will even forgive those who put him to death and reach out with mercy to the repentant thief. *Gratitude*: Through his passion and death, we understand that our sins are forgiven and the way to eternal life is opened for us.

In St. Alphonsus' mind, when you merge the infancy and passion stories you get a complete understanding of the gift and mystery of redemption. The infancy story adds to our understanding of a God who not only suffers and dies for us but who also journeys with us throughout our lives.

This is the core of St. Alphonsus' understanding of redemption, which I have learned through discussions with my Redemptorist confreres who continually reflect on his spirituality and writings. But my first experience with all this began with my journey into the chapel at the major seminary and my encounter with the symbols of our faith.

Today, symbols of the wonders of the infancy story and of our redemption are still all around us. I pray during this Christmas season that the religious symbols that surround you will continue to deepen your understanding of the gift of our Most Holy Redeemer and help reflect on the infancy themes of amazement, tenderness, compassion, and gratitude.

*Courtesy: Liguorian Magazine*



*The infancy story adds to our understanding of a God who journeys with us throughout our lives.*



# Fr. J. Heemrood OMI: Revered Scripture Scholar and Mentor

Rev. Fr. Jan Heemrood OMI, is no more - that is among the living, but he is vibrantly alive in our minds and hearts. He was our Scripture Professor and remains greatly and fondly revered in our memories.

He was undoubtedly an excellent teacher but is better remembered for his pleasing manner and impressive personality, which made him popular.

Fr. Heemrood lived with us for more than fifteen years in the National Seminary and we carry in our hearts and minds the most, interesting and fondest recollections of him. For a long time he guided the spiritual destinies of so many of us and I am sure most of his erstwhile students and spiritual sons would say that they are priests today by the grace of God, thanks to Fr. Heemrood and him alone. He was our spiritual guide, professor, mentor and friend. I believe most of us would readily agree that he led us to the Altar of God through many vicissitudes, trials and moments of discouragement. Everything was not lost, things were not so bad after all, and there was hope for even the

By Rev. Fr. Joe Paul Fernando

most hopeless and worst of us. There we saw the silver lining in the dark cloud. Often we walked out of his room completely reassured, with the smell of cigar smoke hanging on to us.

He was extremely fond of our Jaffna cigars so much so that he managed to get them over even to Texas where he eventually settled down to spend the twilight years of his priestly life.

Fr. Georgie OMI once reminded me of an incident that took place in one of Fr. Heemrood's Scripture classes. Fr. Georgie somehow found that what Fr. Heemrood said about a certain passage in the Old Testament, did not quite tally with what was given in Msgr. Knox's version. He promptly spoke up, "Father, Msgr. Knox's version says something totally different from what you say." Then Fr. Heemrood thought for a few moments, shook his head and said, "In that case, Knox is wrong." That pithy remark opens the door to another side of his wonderful personality which I think only his spiritual

sons were privy to.

He was not without his critics. However, all had to agree that his judgment was mature, opinions were considered and his decisions were firm.

Those of us who come from the Chilaw Diocese had a very special regard and respect for Fr. Heemrood as he was well liked by our former Bishop the late Edmund Peries. He could not stand people who were nervous. So, out of all the professors in the National Seminary then, he chose Fr. Heemrood as our holiday companion at 'Hazel Mere' in Bandarawela. Some of the younger Fathers of the time had very colourful and glowing stories to share about him. His wonderful kindness, large hearted generosity, imperturbability and gentlemanly ways appealed to us so much that they have become treasured memories.

Fr. Heemrood enjoyed life to the fullest. He was a real friend who shared our joys and sorrows. He was our support when we were discouraged especially when that inevitable

thought that comes to our mind whether we were headed in the right direction. Fr. Heemrood made the goal of the priesthood a pleasant journey for us. Unlike now, there were so many obstacles designed and even calculated to discourage the aspirant from proceeding.

Punctuality was Fr. Heemrood's forte. He was never known to be late for any class and neither was there anybody who answered the bell so promptly when it was rung to finish up a class. He used to break up even in the middle of a word and continue up from where he stopped in the subsequent class.

Anybody who had seen Fr. Heemrood doing his meditation and saying his Mass in the small chapel would have got an idea of what he really considered to be important for a deep spiritual life.

Fr. Heemrood was immensely popular in the Seminary and his advice was sought by many. He was very clear in his advice, friendly in his approach and very human in his

dealings with us. He never imposed any rules but pointed the way and urged us to follow it. We were completely free to accept or reject it. That way, I think he gave us a great deal of freedom and personal responsibility which has stood in good stead even after so many years in the priesthood.

I presume I cannot possibly wind up this article without quoting my own father who made a speech at Katuneriya on the day of my first Holy Mass fifty one years ago. He said, "Fr. Heemrood you have taken my son and made him your son. I am very grateful to you for that."

I think all his spiritual sons can say that he made us his sons in more ways than one. It is said that when he finally had to say goodbye, he died just like he lived; calmly, quietly, peacefully, happily and joyfully.

"May the Good Lord bless and keep you till we meet again."

*Requiescat in pace!*

## Appreciation

### Presentation of Medal



Mr. Celestine Jayasinghe of Nayakakanda, former sub-editor of the *Messenger*, was presented medal for his valuable contribution and service for over 50 years as a member of the Christ the King Association of Nayakakanda. The presentation ceremony was held on the 85th Anniversary of this Association.

Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleka, the Parish Priest of Nayakakanda and the Patron of this Association presented the medal the Christ the King Very Rev. Fr. (Dr) Romesh Lowe was the Chief Guest. Mr. Jayasinghe, once held the posts of Vice President, Chief Secretary and Chief Treasurer of the Christ the King Association.

### \* Swinitha Bernadette Wijeyeratne

## An example of lived Christianity

December 12, is a day I usually remember as Bernie's birthday. Swinitha Bernadette Wijeyeratne as her name goes undoubtedly touched our lives and has left an indelible mark in each and every one of us with her generous and loving personality.

There is so much to say about Bernie. I think my meeting with Bernie, at Lanka Milk Foods, where we both worked, was indeed planned in Heaven and a precious gift from God, for in her I found not just a colleague, but a close friend, a guide, a mentor and soul-mate. She touched the lives of each and every one she befriended in a unique and extraordinary way. Anyone who has had

the tremendous good fortune of being a close associate of Bernie, would certainly know what I am talking about. In biblical terms she was, as St. Paul said in his first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 9 verse 22: "I became all things to all men that I may save some of them at any cost." That was her motto in life, to become all things to all men.

Bernie lived a Christian life. Her faith and trust in God was explicit. She was blessed with many gifts both spiritual and material. There were many good times in her life, but her strength was in the way she handled the challenges of life. Her model was Mary and like

the Blessed Virgin her whole life was a continuous "yes" to God's Holy Will, even when she did not understand or comprehend it. From the time she lost her husband and took on the responsibility of being both Father and Mother to Niro and Suresh whom she loved the most, through various ups and downs of life; litigation, migration, conflicts, and finally her battle with cancer, her life was always a "yes" to God. That was why she has become for us a shining example of 'lived Christianity'.

Her love and care for humanity was equally

manifested in and through her caring not only for her family and loved ones, but also for the underprivileged the downtrodden, the destitute, the sick and in fact any human being in need. Bernie had a heart of gold and her generosity had no limits. If there was someone in need Bernie was there ever ready to help.

To you dear Niro and Suresh, the greatest gift both of you have received is to have Bernie as your Mother, and the greatest honour you could give her is to make her your model and guide and to follow in her footsteps.

God Bless You!

## Distinguished Old Antonian and Educationist

It is with deep regret that many heard the sad demise of Mr. R.I.T. Alles, a distinguished Old Boy of St. Anthony's College Kandy who later became the founder Principal of D.S. Senanayake College, Colombo. The late R.I.T. Alles is best remembered for his enormous contribution towards education in this country. Undoubtedly there is a large contingent of old Antonians who were and still are proud of him for entering the hallowed portals of St. Anthony's College, Kandy for his secondary education.

One could argue that Mr. Alles was influenced by the Jesuit priests of St. Aloysius College, Galle where he studied for a short time or the influence of Benedictine priests of St. Anthony's College, Kandy. Undoubtedly yet he rose above all, dedicating himself towards the younger generation through the advancement of education in this country when he was appointed Secretary to the Ministry of Education. His dedication was felt around all when he became the

founder Principal of D.S. Senanayake College, Colombo and began the Gateway Collegiates around the country.

It is reliably learnt that the late R.I.T. Alles became a dedicated pupil at St. Anthony's College, Kandy much impressed by the studious exemplary life of St. Anthony who was a doctor of the Catholic Church. This fact may have made him determined to make himself devoted to the cause of education in Sri Lanka gathering to his fold many students who

were in need of guidance.

His contemporaries at St. Anthony's College, Kandy recall his duty to honour all rules and regulations imposed by the College. The Catholic religious background made young Alles to absorb what is good and to leave out what he did not agree.

St. Anthony's College has lost one of its most distinguished Old Boys and the nation one of its prominent educationists.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

*Miran Perera*

## The Star

*What is that star?*

*A king is born they say.*

*We are anxious to see Him*

*Where is He?*

*How shall we see Him?*

*Who will direct us?*

*The three kings wondered.*

*A voice came.*

*Follow the star.*

*The star will lead you to a stable.*

*'Thanks to the star'*

*The kings were drawn to the stable*

*Thy went on their knees and worshipped the King of kings.*

*Joy to the world a king is born.*

*Sheila Perera*







## THE ANNUAL FEAST OF THE HOLY INFANT JESUS AT THE HOLY ROSARY CHURCH, SLAVE ISLAND, COLOMBO 02.

Thursday 9th January 2014 Hoisting of the Flag Staff at 5.30 p.m.  
Followed by Benediction

Friday 10th January 2014 Usual Novena & Masses

Saturday 11th January 2014 Evening Mass at 6.30 p.m.

Sunday 12th January 2014 Feast Day Masses

6.30 a.m. in Tamil, 8.00 a.m. in Sinhala, 9.30 a.m. in English

5.00 p.m. Mass in English followed by Procession &  
Blessing with the Statue of the Infant Jesus

(Parish Priest) (N5299)

## Message of His Holiness....

(Contd from Pg. 3)

### Fraternity extinguishes war

In the past year, many of our brothers and sisters have continued to endure the destructive experience of war, which constitutes a grave and deep wound inflicted on fraternity. Many conflicts are taking place amid general indifference. To all those who live in lands where weapons impose terror and destruction, I assure you of my personal closeness and that of the whole Church, whose mission is to bring Christ's love to the defenceless victims of forgotten wars through her prayers for peace, her service to the wounded, the starving, refugees, the displaced and all those who live in fear. The Church also speaks out in order to make leaders hear the cry of pain of the suffering and to put an end to every form of hostility, abuse and the violation of fundamental human rights.

For this reason, I appeal forcefully to all those who sow violence and death by force of arms: in the person you today see simply as an enemy to be beaten, discover rather your brother or sister, and hold back your hand! Give up the way of arms and go out to meet the other in dialogue, pardon and reconciliation, in order to rebuild justice, trust, and hope around you!

"From this standpoint, it is clear that, for the world's peoples, armed conflicts are always a deliberate negation of international harmony, and create profound divisions and deep wounds which require many years to heal. Wars are a concrete refusal to pursue the great economic and social goals that the international community has set itself."

Nevertheless, as long as so great a quantity of arms are in circulation as at present, new pretexts can always be found for initiating hostilities. For this reason, I make my own the appeal of my predecessors for the non-proliferation of arms and for disarmament of all parties, beginning with nuclear and chemical weapons disarmament.

A conversion of hearts is needed which would permit everyone to recognize in the other a brother or sister to care for, and to work together with, in building a fulfilling life for all. This is the spirit which inspires many initiatives of civil society, including religious organizations, to promote peace. I express my hope that the daily commitment of all will continue to bear fruit and that there will be an effective application in international law of the right to peace, as a fundamental human right and a necessary prerequisite for every other right.

### Corruption and organized crime threaten fraternity

The horizon of fraternity also has to do with the need for fulfillment of every man and woman. People's legitimate ambitions, especially in the case of the young, should not be thwarted or offended, nor should people be robbed of their hope of realizing them. Nevertheless, ambition must not be confused with the abuse of power. On the contrary, people should compete with one another in mutual esteem (cf. Romans 12:10).

In disagreements, which are also an unavoidable part of life, we should always remember that we are brothers and sisters, and therefore teach others and teach ourselves not to consider our neighbour as an enemy or as an adversary to be eliminated. Fraternity generates social peace because it creates a balance between freedom and justice, between personal

responsibility and solidarity, between the good of individuals and the common good. And so a political community must act in a transparent and responsible way to favour all this. Citizens must feel themselves represented by the public authorities in respect for their freedom. Yet frequently a wedge is driven between citizens and institutions by partisan interests which disfigure that relationship, fostering the creation of an enduring climate of conflict.

An authentic spirit of fraternity overcomes the individual selfishness which conflicts with people's ability to live in freedom and in harmony among themselves. Such selfishness develops socially – whether it is in the many forms of corruption, so widespread today, or in the formation of criminal organizations, from small groups to those organized on a global scale. These groups tear down legality and justice, striking at the very heart of the dignity of the person. These organizations gravely offend God, they hurt others and they harm creation, all the more so when they have religious overtones. I also think of the heartbreaking drama of drug abuse, which reaps profits in contempt of the moral and civil laws. I think of the devastation of natural resources and ongoing pollution, and the tragedy of the exploitation of labour. I think too of illicit money trafficking and financial speculation, which often prove both predatory and harmful for entire economic and social systems, exposing millions of men and women to poverty. I think of prostitution, which every day reaps innocent victims, especially the young, robbing them of their future. I think of the abomination of human trafficking, crimes and abuses against minors, the horror of slavery still present in many parts of the world; the frequently overlooked tragedy of migrants, who are often victims of disgraceful and illegal manipulation.

As John XXIII wrote: "There is nothing human about a society based on relationships of power. Far from encouraging, as it should, the attainment of people's growth and perfection, it proves oppressive and restrictive of their freedom." Yet human beings can experience conversion; they must never despair of being able to change their lives. I wish this to be a message of hope and confidence for all, even for those who have committed brutal crimes, for God does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he converts and lives (cf. Ez 18:23).

In the broad context of human social relations, when we look to crime and punishment, we cannot help but think of the inhumane conditions in so many prisons, where those in custody are often reduced to a subhuman status in violation of their human dignity and stunted in their hope and desire for rehabilitation. The Church does much in these environments, mostly in silence. I exhort and I encourage everyone to do more, in the hope that the efforts being made in this area by so many courageous men and women will be increasingly supported, fairly and honestly, by the civil authorities as well. Fraternity helps to preserve and cultivate nature

### The human family has received from the Creator a common gift: Nature

The Christian view of creation includes a positive judgement about the legitimacy of interventions on nature if these are meant to be beneficial and are

performed responsibly, that is to say, by acknowledging the "grammar" inscribed in nature and by wisely using resources for the benefit of all, with respect for the beauty, finality and usefulness of every living being and its place in the ecosystem.

In a particular way, the agricultural sector is the primary productive sector with the crucial vocation of cultivating and protecting natural resources in order to feed humanity. In this regard the continuing disgrace of hunger in the world moves me to share with you the question: How are we using the earth's resources? Contemporary societies should reflect on the hierarchy of priorities to which production is directed. It is a truly pressing duty to use the earth's resources in such a way that all may be free from hunger. Initiatives and possible solutions are many, and are not limited to an increase in production. It is well known that present production is sufficient, and yet millions of persons continue to suffer and die from hunger, and this is a real scandal.

We need, then, to find ways by which all may benefit from the fruits of the earth, not only to avoid the widening gap between those who have more and those who must be content with the crumbs, but above all because it is a question of justice, equality and respect for every human being. In this regard I would like to remind everyone of that necessary universal destination of all goods which is one of the fundamental principles of the Church's social teaching. Respect for this principle is the essential condition for facilitating an effective and fair access to those essential and primary goods which every person needs and to which he or she has a right.

### Conclusion

Fraternity needs to be discovered, loved, experienced, proclaimed and witnessed to. But only love, bestowed as a gift from God, enables us to accept and fully experience fraternity.

The necessary realism proper to politics and economy cannot be reduced to mere technical know-how bereft of ideals and unconcerned with the transcendent dimension of man. When this openness to God is lacking, every human activity is impoverished and persons are reduced to objects that can be exploited. Only when politics and the economy are open to moving within the wide space ensured by the One who loves each man and each woman, will they achieve an ordering based on a genuine spirit of fraternal charity and become effective instruments of integral human development and peace.

Christ embraces all of humanity and wishes no one to be lost. "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:17). He does it without oppressing or constraining anyone to open to him the doors of heart and mind. "Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves" – Jesus Christ says – "I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:26-27). Every activity therefore must be distinguished by an attitude of service to persons, especially those furthest away and less known. Service is the soul of that fraternity that builds up peace.

May Mary, the Mother of Jesus, help us to understand and live every day the fraternity that springs up from the heart of her Son, so as to bring peace to each person on this our beloved earth.

From the Vatican, 8 December 2013



# Mary and the Heart of Jesus

How did Mary's heart respond to Jesus' Heart-given invitation: "Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened and I will give you rest?" If other saints can guide us in returning the love of the Heart of Our Saviour, how much more can Mary!

"Come to me." Who can describe Mary's journey to Jesus? It began long before her life comes before us at the Annunciation. All faithful Jews were begging for the Messiah's coming. Mary's prayers pierced the skies. It has been said that she conceived Jesus in her heart before she conceived Him in her womb.

At the Annunciation we find her coming to Jesus by her loving submission to God's plan. She took a great leap toward Him by her "Be it done to me." She came putting body and soul at His disposal. Through her *fiat*, her body began to form His body and her Immaculate Heart His Sacred Heart. Nourishment from her blood made His Heart grow. Before the end of the first month, scientists tell us, His Sacred Heart would have begun beating close to her own. So much were they one that before He was delivered, cells from His body would be mingled with her blood.

Next she came in grief searching for Him when she had lost Him in His boyhood. That cry of pain burst from her heart to His: "Son, why have you done this to us?" Her boy was before her eyes again, and in an instant would be in her arms, but the cry had to be released. Three days of picturing Him wandering alone in an occupied country with marauding revolutionaries was still curdling the blood in her veins. Who can describe the confluence of emotions when she took Him in her arms? The heavens opened. in a downpour of joy upon the bosom of the ocean of her sorrow.

Her cry of Why? was the cry of every suffering soul to God. And the answer to her is the answer to us all: The work of the Father has to be done. The suffering that lifted Christ to glory must be shared by us and lift us up to Him.

We can only imagine the ways she came to His Heart during those childhood years. If every child stirs our hearts with its innocent gaze of love, what did the eyes of this Child do to her Immaculate Heart? If the sweet embraces of a loving little son can melt any mother's heart, what melting took place in hers when the little Son of God clasped her to His breast?

She came to Him at Cana in petition for the wedding couple. "They have no wine." His answer sounds not at all reassuring to us: "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." But knowing His loving Heart better than we, she prepared the servants for the gift her prayer would bring: "Do whatever He tells you." She herself always followed the advice she gives, and it stands as her last word to us all. It is the very secret of how to come to Him.

When things went wrong for Him, and He was beset by troubles on every side, she went to His side again: "Your mother and your brethren are outside." The words she spoke then to comfort His bruised Heart we



she needed rest? Her burden was the grief beyond measure of the plight of her sinful people. Moses before her was so pierced to the heart by their state he cried to God: "Either forgive this people their sin or blot me out of Your book!" So identified was he with his people that he could take no comfort in his own salvation without theirs. Paul after him would express the same sentiment: "I could be anathema for the sake of my brethren." Does anyone think Mary loved her people less than they?

Was it not the grief in her heart that brought the Archangel Gabriel from the Father? He saw in her heart a sentiment like His own. He saw too that she sorrowed for all the children of Adam. She took us all to her motherly heart even before we were given to her, the New Eve, from the cross by His words: "Behold your son."

She could find no rest until she could say: "My Redeemer lives! He lives, the Redeemer of us all!" Then "Be it done to me," she said, and the moment of His coming came. Never again, in all her sorrows, did she lose the peace that moment gave, for the Father would never withdraw the gift of His Son to her and us.

"Take my yoke upon you." When draft animals are yoked together, each feels every pull and movement and slackening of the other. Unless they work intimately together, the yoke is painful for them both. What was that yoke for Mary except that every pulse of His Heart became a pulse of hers, and His every care a care of hers?

How terribly she experienced the yoke she must bear with Him as she stood beside Him crucified. There she learned the Gospel of Suffering, and received it to live and hand on to all her children. Who can teach us the need for reparation as well as she? She saw the "Repairer of the Breach" at His work on the cross, closing the gap between God and man with His carpentry of suffering.

"Why suffering?" we cry. Do we not learn the

are not privileged to know.

Of the many, many other times she came to Him we can only imagine. But of the last time we know. She came to Him at the foot of the cross, bleeding in her heart as His Body bled before her, pierced to the soul to see the brutal sword pierce His Sacred Heart.

"Come, you who labour and are burdened and I will give you rest." What were Mary's burdens that

answer by standing at the foot of the cross time after time in the Mass and in our meditations? "Why suffering?" We ask God. "Follow me," He says. He is the answer, better than all words! That is why Mary knew better than Paul what Paul knew, and what we must learn, that we have to fill up in our own flesh what is lacking in the suffering of Christ.

**There is no true devotion to His Heart without devotion to His truths!**

"I have overcome the world," said Jesus. He overcame it by suffering, by bearing all and never turning from His path. In His risen wounds He shows us the victorious power of suffering. We, said the Pope, are "writing" the next chapter of the Gospel of Suffering which overcomes the world. We do it, he tells us, with the help of His Holy Mother.

The mystery is that suffering in our lives is an opening through which the graces won by Christ pour in and through us to the world. How does it work? It works by love, as the Pope explains so well:

"Suffering is present in the world in order to release love, in order to give birth to works of love towards neighbour, in order to transform the whole of human civilization into a 'civilization of love', 'the kingdom of the Heart of Christ. The Morning Offering recognizes this by drawing us to offer everything we are and do to bring His kingdom.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." What did Mary learn of Jesus? What did she not learn? She knew all the intimacy every mother shares with her child, multiplied a thousandfold by her sensitivity and her love and grace.

"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus," said St. Paul. Whose mind ever became so one with His as Mary's? What would she hold true that Jesus denied? What value clasp to her heart that was not in His? In the Bible both mind and affection are encapsulated in the word Heart. There is no true devotion to His Heart without devotion to His truths. Mary knew this and lived it to the full. "Blessed are you because you believed."

"I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls." None experienced His meekness as she did. "He was subject to them." What did she not learn from Him about perfect obedience, above all to God the Father? And yet, beautifully, did not He learn from her as well? As He grew, was not His childhood Heart formed in meekness and lowliness by her example and her husband's?

She found rest simply in gazing upon her Son and Saviour. The rest she found by uniting her heart to His is more than words can tell. It is the inexpressible grace to which His invitation calls us all. And the way to His Heart is what Mary shows us all.

(Courtesy: Canadian Messenger)

## There is a Pre-Family Synod Consultation

Hong Kong (SE): Various sections of the media expressed whether or not the Holy See is actually 'consulting Catholics worldwide on issues of marriage, family life and understanding of Church social and moral teaching, many dioceses do in fact have a 46-point questionnaire circulating, as well as having it posted on their websites.

The questionnaire is intended to collect information as part of the preparation for the Synod of Bishops that will be conducted in the Vatican on family life between October 5 and 19 this year.

It encourages people to respond to as many questions as possible, but to leave spaces blank if they wish, whether because they do not know anything about the matter or do not have any particular opinion to express.

While some questions seek a personal response, some are directed at people's observations or reflections on the communities they belong to or, asking for comments to the best of their knowledge, about the attitudes of this wider society.

For example, one question asks, "What place does the idea of the natural law have in the cultural areas of society: In institutions, education, academic circles, and among the people at large? What anthropological ideas underlie the discussion on the natural basis of the family?"

It then repeats the question in regard to how people perceive the opinions of their fellow Catholics.

It then moves into a wider arena by asking, "How is the theory and practice of natural law in the union between man and woman challenged in light of the formation of a family? How is it proposed and developed in civil and Church institutions?"

It then moves on to pastoral practices around difficulties people may be experiencing, asking. In cases where non-practicing Catholics or declared nonbelievers the celebration of marriage, describe how this pastoral challenge is dealt with?"

It asks about attitudes towards the teaching authority of the Church and also seeks to glean an idea of how much people actually know about documents like; "The Church in the Modern World" (*Gaudium et Spes*), as well as natural law and the role of the Christian family in modern society.

Several questions seek information on attitudes towards divorce, single-sex unions or marriage, artificial contraception and how people view responsible parenthood.

The survey is searching in its nature and the prefix explains that it is estimated that it should take about one hour to fill it in completely.

In most cases the cutoff date for return was December 6 to allow the data to be processed and pre-

sented to the Vatican by December 18.

All dioceses have been asked to conduct the survey in some way or other and the Holy See had asked to get the processed results back one week prior to Christmas.

The preparatory documents for the survey are also made available as part of the exercise and many bishops' conferences made the decision to make a collective response to Rome.

The website of the diocese of Broken Bay in Sydney, Australia, describes one of the purposes of the consultation as to help the Church develop concrete proposals for another Synod, which will produce specific guidance on the pastoral care of families in our time.

It also seeks information on how wider society incorporates Catholic values into its daily life and, more specifically, how Catholic people perceive they are being lived out or ignored.

While Pope Francis is being praised for seeking the views of Catholics in the pews, with some media even describing it as unprecedented, it is not the first time it has happened, as the Holy See did ask bishops' conferences to consult widely on the new evangelisation and the new translation of the liturgy.

(Sunday Examiner)



# Mary exemplary of our Faith

**"Blessed is she who believed"** *Luke 1:45*

Let me begin this reflection on Mary as exemplar of our faith with a story told by Cardinal Suenens. It seems Father Karl Rahner was asked why there has been a decline in devotion to Mary? Father Rahner's reply was most interesting. He said that all Christians, Catholics and Protestants alike, who face the common temptation of turning the central truth of the faith into abstractions and abstractions have no need of mothers" (cf. Cardinal Suenens, "Mary in the World of Today," *L'Osservatore Romano*. June 15, 1972).

Today we still face the temptation to reduce the faith to a series of abstractions. In teaching, in pastoral practice, in confronting social evils, the Church must be vigilant lest her living Faith be reduced to a mere intellectual or mythical system, to any ideology, to "the spirit of the age". The sorrowful Mother and the beloved disciple did not come to Golgotha to consider theories about mercy and Redemption:

## Temptation to Abstraction

Our vocation demands that we take our stand each and every day beneath the Cross with Mary and John. We are called to bear witness not just to something; we are sent to be the witness of Someone, whom we gladly call "Son of God" and "Son of Mary."

In the world today, many names other than the name of Jesus are presented as sources of Redemption and Joy. At times redemption are presented not only as part of the Gospel, but indeed as the Gospel itself. What results is a Gospel without Christ!

As a mere literary figure or myth, Jesus is presented as the proponent of various competing Philosophical and political systems. The ordinary Magistrerium of the Church has spoken forcefully about the dangers of allowing either collectivism or capitalism to claim the faith as its own. The Church has exercised great vigilance in pointing out the danger of a Gospel without Christ.

## Faith in the Person of Christ

We must look into our own hearts, to examine our own personal life of faith. For example, homilies can be filled with good ideas and good admonitions, all in accordance with the teaching of the Church, yet lack the witness of a heart that is daily transfigured by contact with the person of Christ. We may find ourselves speaking always about something but seldom about Someone! It is that Someone who must daily inhabit our innermost self and constitute the substance of our ministry.

Father Rahner was right when he said that "abstractions do not need a mother." If we take Mary as our model in faith, we will



**His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Marius Peiris  
Auxiliary Bishop &  
Vicar General**

not succumb to the danger of reducing our Faith to a series of abstract points and teachings.

Mary, gazing upon her dying Son, understood that he and no other is Savior and Messiah. Mary did not learn this from any source other than her intense and loving relationship with Jesus, the fruit of her womb.

As our mother, as Mother of the Church, she engenders in us a deeply personal knowledge and union with her Son. She stands with us when we preach about her Son, helping us to unveil for those we serve the mystery of his saving love, She, who was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, "the Lord and Govern of Life," encourages us to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, who enables us to speak convincingly of Christ and his saving deeds.

## To live in Christ Jesus

The Cross makes it possible for us and for those whom we serve to lead lives that bear the unmistakable marks of Redemption in Christ Jesus. Indeed, that conversion of life is an essential part of coming to know Christ. The homilies of the Fathers of the Church made it clear that the first condition for entry into the Community of Believers was precisely this transformation of life. The Fathers were giving a way of life that makes it possible for the word of Life to penetrate their minds and hearts.

Standing beneath the Cross with Mary, we must find

**It seems Father Karl Rahner was asked why there has been a decline in devotion to Mary. Father Rahner's reply was most interesting. He said that all Christians, Catholics and Protestants alike, face the common temptation of turning the central truth of the faith into abstractions and abstractions have no need of mothers" (cf. Cardinal Suenens, "Mary in the World of Today," *L'Osservatore Romano*. June 15, 1972).**

the courage to preach the Gospel in undiluted fashion "the gospel without compromise." The moral demands of the Christian life, are the concrete form that living our faith takes. The truths and realities that we embrace by faith and celebrate by worship (*lex orandi est lex credendi*) must find expression in the decisions great and small of day-to-day living. Without genuine moral conversion, faith remains a stock of pleasant thoughts, a series of abstractions.

We must sometimes suffer the martyrdom of saying "No." No one likes to be thought unduly negative or to have the reputation of being "behind the times." Few of us relish the thought of being a sign of contradiction to the culture in which we live, and yet it is precisely that sort of witness that is asked of us.

The temptation to take refuge in an abstract Gospel is almost as old as the Church itself. In a sense, the old temptation dons a new guise in every age. To know Jesus, who has known and loved us first, is our joy, our strength, and our message. May we, like Mary, be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit so that Christ and him crucified (1 Cor 1:23) will truly live in us.

We saw his star as it rose and have come to do the Lord homage.

(Mt. 2:2)



## The Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord

### First Reading. Is. 60:1-6.

The Prophet gives a ray of hope to the Israelites who live in exile. That hope is the freedom that the Lord will bestow on them. They are promised of a glorious Jerusalem. Other nations will come to them with all wealth.

### Second Reading. Eph. 3:2-3, 5-6.

St. Paul tells the Gentiles about his direct conversion and gives them a hope of a share in the kingdom of God. He tries thereby to tell them that they are equal with the Jews in Christ.

### Gospel. Mt. 2: 1-12.

The wise men followed the star to Jerusalem and went to the king. The king wanted to destroy the Child. The wise men having worshipped the Lord went along another way, as was directed in a dream.

### Reflection.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany, the Feast of the Three Kings. It is so called because the Gospel of the day too tells us that the wise men, or the Magi came from the East to Jerusalem saying; "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and we have come to adore Him." This feast is significant for us because the Saviour is not to the Jews only, but for the Gentiles too. The Gentiles are equal with the Jewish converts in the mystical body of Christ, the Church. Earlier the understanding was that salvation was only for the chosen race, the Jews; but now it is to all mankind and it is signified in the Feast of Epiphany, when the Lord revealed himself to the Gentiles.

There are some who mix up and at times mess up the love of God with the love of neighbor, little knowing that there by they place the neighbor before God. At times prominence is given to the love of neighbour over the true worship of God. This is wrong. But this does not mean that we could totally neglect our neighbor. They refer to the Feast of Epiphany and try to assert that there were four kings who came to worship the babe and one of them stopped to show some care and concern to the poor neighbors. This of course is a dream story, but one thing is sure that this king, if there was one such, never met the new born King, the Lord; whereas the others worshipped the Lord in the manger. The three Kings met the Lord and as for the other we will have to ask the author himself who created him in the story.

### Aid Story.

On the feast day of Christ the King in 1939, Pope Pius XI consecrated in St. Peter's twelve new Bishops and set them forth like the twelve Apostles to teach all the nations. They came from Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Mexico; there were also Chinese, a Hindu and two Negros and one from Uganda and one from Madagascar. It was the second month of the second Great War. Many nations of the world were fighting one another because they had thought too much about nations, races and not enough about being one family. The Holy Father spoke to the new Bishops, white, brown, yellow and black.

"Christ took His title of King in the darkest days; When He stood a prisoner before Pilate. Happy are those nations which accept the reign of Christ and make their laws according to the Gospel and live in justice and freedom." The present events will pass. The Catholic Church is not afraid of time. Mankind is divided by greed and hatred and jealousy, but the church of God is for all peoples without distinction of race. "Go out and conquer the world, said the Pope "not with armament but with the power of truth and love."

**Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos**

## LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR A 5th January - 12th January 2014

**Sun:** The Epiphany of the Lord  
Is. 60:1-6; Eph. 3:2-3,5-6; Mt. 2:1-12  
**Mon:** 1 Jn. 3:22-46; Mt. 4:12-17, 23-25  
**Tue:** Memorial of St. Raymond of Penyafort, Priest, after Epiphany  
1 Jn. 4:7-10; Mk. 6:34-44  
**Wed:** 1 Jn. 4: 11-18; Mk. 6:45-52  
**Thu:** 1 Jn. 4:19 - 5:4; Lk. 4:14-22  
**Fri:** 1 Jn. 5:5-13; Lk. 5:12-16  
**Sat:** 1 Jn. 5: 14-21; Jn. 3:22-30  
**Sun:** The Baptism of the Lord  
Is. 42:1-4,6,7; Acts 10: 34-38; Mt. 3:13-17



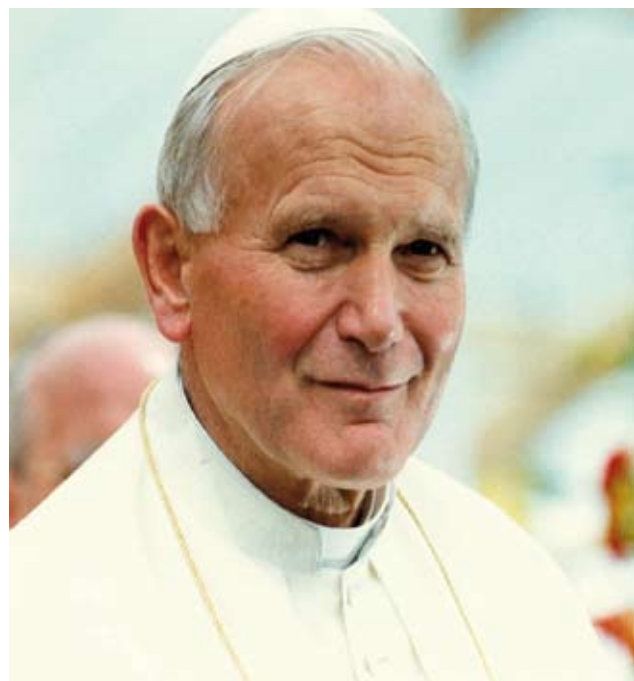
# Marian Spirituality of Blessed John Paul II

Eric Perera

## Marian Year 2013 - 2014



*“Lead us to Christ  
O Mary our Mother”*



Blessed John Paul II's motto “Totally Yours” (*Totus Tuus*) indicates his great devotion to Mary. He lost his mother when he was nine-years-old. He loved his mother so much and he strongly believed that his mother contributed immensely for his priestly vocation. After his earthly mother's death he turned into Mother Mary, the Blessed Mother and from there onwards his devotion and trust in Mother Mary grew day by day.

In 1995 Blessed John Paul II declared that Mary is the Mediatrix and the Co-Redemptress. By this Mary was to be considered as the co-redeemer together with Jesus in the salvation of mankind. Mary too was with Jesus contributing to His immense suffering until He died on the cross. By contributing to Jesus' suffering, Mary too participated in the act of redeeming the world. He said that Mary is the path that leads us to Christ. In his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* of 1987 he urged Christians to look to Mary as our common mother. In his encyclical *Mulieris Dignitatem* of 1988 he emphasized the motherhood of Mary.

After his earthly mother passed away, his affiliation and trust was focussed on the heavenly mother. He believed that she would grant the grace-required to us. He believed that she stands between the Son and mankind as shown at the Wedding Feast at Cana, where she told Jesus, “They have no wine.” He emphasised that Mary will mediate on behalf of us. Does the Son ever refuse a request made by His mother?

The pain and suffering he had to undergo during his earthly life, increased his devotion to Mother Mary. Just a few years after his mother's death his brother passed away. Within another three years time his father died. This was a very big loss to him. He said, “I never felt so alone” (*Biography of John Paul II*).

On the feast day of Our Lady of Fatima in 1981 he was shot in his stomach, right elbow and left hand at St Peter's Square. He narrowly escaped death. The x-rays showed that the bullet that went through his stomach showed the letter M. The Pope strongly believed that it was Our Lady who saved him from death. In the following year he travelled to Fa-

tima, to show his gratitude to Mother Mary for saving his life.

Blessed John Paul II emphasised about Mary's faith. He compares Mary with Abraham in the Old Testament. Due to his faith, Abraham built a relationship and a Covenant with God. Mary through her faith at the Annunciation, made a new Covenant with God. Mary through her faith became the Mother of God and because of her faith participated in the suffering and cruel death of her Son, until His death in Calvary, on Good Friday afternoon.

Blessed John Paul II always mentioned the importance of reciting the daily Rosary. He said, “To pray the Rosary is to hand over our burdens to the merciful hearts of Christ and His mother.”

He added the new *Luminous Mysteries* to the Rosary. He believed that with the Rosary the Christian people sit at the School of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer.

Once he said that to recite the Rosary is nothing other than to contemplate with Mary the face of Christ. In contemplating Christ's face we become open to receiving the Mystery of Trinitarian life,



**“At the Wedding Feast in Cana, Jesus changed water into wine at her humble prayer, and this was His first miracle through Mary and He will continue then through her until the end of time” (True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin – 19).**

experiencing ever the love of the Father and delighting to the joy of the Holy Spirit.

Blessed John Paul's II devotion to Mother Mary was greatly influenced by Saint Louis Marie the Montfort. Saint Montfort wrote several Books about Mother Mary and had a great devotion to her. Blessed John Paul II often meditated on Saint Montfort's book *“True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin”*. He was inspired by the writings of St Montfort about Mary and made his motto “totally yours” as he believed “to Jesus through Mary” as his principle all the time.

“At the Wedding Feast in Cana, Jesus changed water into wine at her humble prayer, and this was His first miracle through Mary and He will continue

then through her until the end of time” (True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin – 19).

Blessed John Paul was greatly influenced by the ideas of St. Montfort specially the idea of reaching Jesus through Mary.

Blessed John Paul when he was elected Pope in 1978 said, “As it is well known in my Episcopal Coat of Arms the motto *Totus Tuus* (totally yours), is inspired by the teaching of St Montfort. These two words express total belonging to Jesus through Mary. (I am all yours and all that I have is yours). The teaching of this Saint has had a profound influence on the Marian devotion of many of the faithful and on my life.”

On May 25 1984 before the official statue of Our Lady of Fatima, Blessed John II Paul consecrated the world to Mary's Immaculate Heart.

“Let it be revealed once more in the history of the world, the infinite saving power of the redemption, the power of merciful love, may it put a stop to evil, may it transform the hearts, may your Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of hope.”

From his childhood until his death Blessed John II Paul had a very strong devotion to Mary. A painting of Mother Mary was hung in his papal apartment. When he died a letter M was marked on the casket.

When he was young he wrote a poem about Mary. It was about how Mary accompanied him in his final journey.

“How attentive your stillness. It will always be part of me. I lift myself towards it, will one day grow so used to it that I will lay still, transparent as water vanishing into a dry riverbed, though my body will remain. Your disciples will come, and hear that my heartbeat has stopped” (*Collected Poems. Karol Wojtyla*).

Could it be a premonition of his death?



# Young World



## Prize-giving of St. Anthony's Sunday School

Annual Prize-giving of St. Anthony's Sunday School, Batagama was held at the Main Hall of the Church.

Rev. Fr. Anton Dinesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

*Ashen S. Senarathna*



## "Let there be light"

Young Ishantha Maduwanna is seen lighting the traditional oil lamp before the beginning of the Festive Holy Mass to celebrate the 54th Annual Feast of Our Lady of Good Health Church,

Pathinigodella, Madampella.

Holy Mass was presided by Rev. Fr. Bernard Neville, Principal, Paul VI Maha Vidiyalaya.

*H. A. Caldera*

## Christmas of St. Anne's College, Wennappuwa



Annites' Christmas Concert of St. Anne's English Medium College, Wennappuwa was held recently. Very Rev. Fr. Peter Charles Fernando, Vicar General,

Diocese of Chilaw, was the Chief Guest and Mrs. Rosy Senanayake (Member of Parliament), was the Guest of Honour.

*Ajith Perera*

## Christmas at Nattandiya Pre-school



Under the guidance of Rev. Sr. Saduni Opatha, children of St. Joseph's Pre-school, Nattandiya staged a Christmas Play, under the distinguished presence of Rev. Fr. Upali Churchill, Parish

Priest Nattandiya, Rev. Fr. Nimantha Praegeeth, Rev. Sr. Marlene Fernando and Rev. Sr. Shiromali.

*Shriyangani Felicia*

## Children's 'Pola' at St. James' Pre-school, Madampella



Children from St. James' Pre-school Madampella held a 'Pola' recently and they happily involved themselves in selling various commodities to customers. Here we see a little vendor, selling a bundle of curry leaves to a delighted customer.

*H. A. Caldera*

## 'Reaching the Unreached'



Everyone is not perfect. Each person differs from another. God is great and He knows what is best. Every person should gain eternal happiness with God's will!

'Reaching the Unreached' is a small contribution from the Benedictine Board of Prefects '13 of St. Benedict's College, Kotahena to the less fortunate children of Mannar, who are in need of help. The Prefect's Board distributed stationery and clothing items to the children.

*Ashen S. Senarathna*

## Milk of Human Kindness



Deepaloka Welfare Association, Balagala supplied a free cup of milk to children of the Balagala Sunday School recently. Rev. Fr. Kamal Kumara, Deputy Principal of St. Joseph's College Wattala is seen distributing cups of milk among the children.

*Nimal Perera*

## FROM THE VATICAN DOCUMENTS

### Duties and Rights of Parents

"It is the task of the State to see to it that all citizens are able to come to a suitable share in culture and are properly prepared to exercise their civic duties and rights. Therefore the State must protect the right of children to an adequate school

education, check on the ability of teachers and the excellence of their training, look after the health of the pupils and in general, promote the whole school project. But it must always keep in mind the principle of subsidiarity so that there is no kind of school monopoly, for this is opposed to the native rights of the human person, to the development and spread

of culture, to the peaceful association of citizens and to the pluralism that exists today in ever so many societies."

### GRAVISSIMUM EDUCATIONIS 6

Declaration on Christian Education

Pope Paul VI

October 28, 1965



# English with Fun and Entertainment

## Dear Readers,

In our thirteenth lesson we read Christmas inspirational quotes, poems related to Christmas and a legend about a Christmas gift.

In this lesson let's read some Christmas jokes, call to heaven and New Year greetings for 2014

Thanks for the readers who made valuable suggestions and for using these lessons effectively. You are invited to share your experiences to enrich our lessons further.

NJ

**Task 1:** Christmas jokes. Read and enjoy the fun.

*What do elves learn in school?*  
The elf-abet!

*What is the difference between the Christmas alphabet and the ordinary alphabet?*  
The Christmas alphabet has no L!

*What Christmas Carol is a favorite of parents?*  
Silent Night

*What do snowmen eat for breakfast?*  
Frosted Flakes

*What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?*  
Frostbite

*What kind of bird can write?*  
A Pen-guin!

*How do sheep in Mexico say Merry Christmas?*  
Fleece Navidad!

*What does a cat on the beach have in common with Christmas?*  
Sandy Claws!

*What do you get if Santa goes down the chimney when a fire is lit?*  
Crisp Cringle

*What kind of candle burns longer, a red candle or a green candle?*  
Neither, all candles burn shorter!

*Why was Santa's little helper depressed?*  
He had low elf esteem!

*What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?*  
Claustrophobic

**Task 2 :** GIVE A CALL TO HEAVEN AND SEE THE RESPONSE

What if God decided to install voice mail?"  
Imagine praying and hearing this

Thank you for calling My Father's House. Please select one of the following options:

Press 1 for request                      Press 2 for thanksgiving  
Press 3 for complaints              Press 4 for all other inquiries

What if God used the familiar excuse, "All the angels are helping other customers right now. Please stay on the line. Your call will be answered in the order it was received.

Can you imagine getting these kinds of response as you call on God in prayer?

If you would like to speak to Gabriel, press 1 now  
If you would like to speak to Michael, press 2 now  
For a directory of other angels, press 3 now  
If you would like to hear King David sing a Psalm while you're holding, press 4 now

To find out if a loved one has been assigned to heaven, enter his or her social security number now.

For reservations at My Father's House, press the letters J-O-H-N and then 3-1-6.

For answers on nagging questions about the age of earth and where Noah's Ark is, please wait until you arrive here.

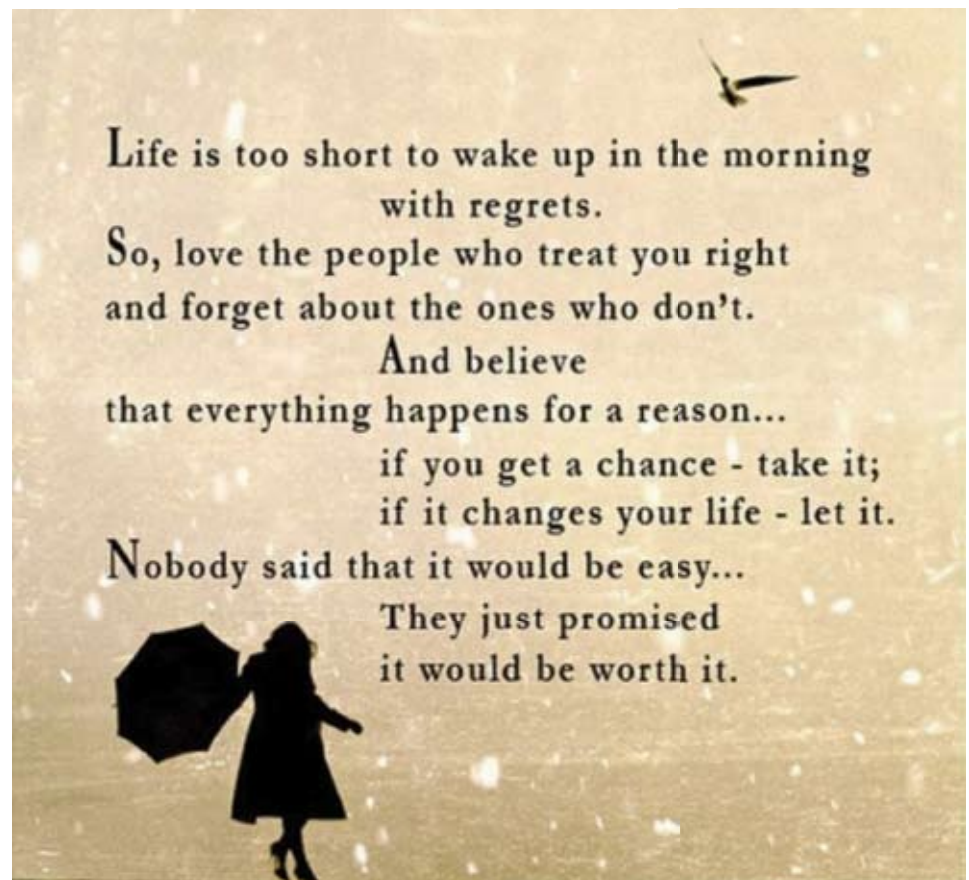
Our computers show that you have already called once today. Please hang up and try again tomorrow.

This office is close for the weekend. Please call again on Monday after 9:00 a.m.

Thank God you can't call God too often and when you call, the Lord will answer.

"Your cries for help will be answered 'Here I Am'" (Isaiah 58:9)

**Task 3:** Read the New Year greetings and make a decision for the year 2014  
New Year Greetings for 2014



**Task 4:** Make a resolution for the New Year to read as much as possible to be informed



**Task 5 :** A beautiful wish to all readers for the year 2014



Contact us on:  
071 8004580

E-mail: noeljayamanne@yahoo.com



Compiled by Noel Jayamanne



# QUIZ - On Catholic Themes

(..... from last week)

## QUESTIONS

### 1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

#### *Saints*

571. By what means did St. Stephen meet his end?
572. What were the last words of St. Stephen recorded in the Acts of the Apostles?
573. Which saint volunteered to work among the lepers in Molokai and died a leper himself?
574. Who is the popular saint of desperate cases?
575. Who is the first declared saint of the Malankara Church?
576. What was the nationality of Mother Teresa?
577. What name was Mother Teresa given at Baptism?
578. In what country did Mother Teresa spend most of her life?
579. When did Mother Teresa die?
580. Which saint's canonization in 1950 was attended by her murderer?
581. Which saints, none of whom are known by name and none of whom had ever heard of Christ, have a feast day in their name?
582. In what country was the saint known as Anthony of Padua born?
583. Which saint is generally depicted with a dog?
584. Two saints were beheaded in 1535 in England under King Henry VIII. Who are they?
585. What was the crime that St. Thomas More and St John Fisher were accused of?
586. What position did St. Thomas More hold at the time of his martyrdom?
587. What ecclesiastical rank did St. John Fisher hold at the time of his execution on Tower Hill in 1535?
588. To whom do we pray to keep our throats healthy?
589. Who founded the St. Vincent de Paul Society?
590. Who is the saintly author of the book, Confessions?

(contd next week.....)

## ANSWERS

### I. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

#### *Saints*

571. Stoning unto death.
572. "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60).
573. St. Damien of Molokai.
574. St. Jude.
575. St. Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala, popularly known as Parumala Thirumeni who passed away on November 2, 1902.
576. Albanian.
577. Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu.
578. India.
579. September 5, 1997.
580. St. Maria Goretti.
581. The Holy Innocents (December 28).
582. Portugal.
583. St. Rock or Roch (patron of invalids).
584. St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher.
585. Treason. For refusing to take the Oath to the Act of Succession proposed by King Henry VIII.
586. Lord Chancellor of England.
587. Cardinal (Pope Paul III had created him cardinal when he was in prison).
588. St. Blaise.
589. Blessed Frederic Ozanam.
590. St. Augustine of Hippo.

Courtesy: Clare Ukken fsp

# Jesus and Cricket

We all love Jesus and we know that He is our Saviour. There are many cricket lovers in our country and so I thought of comparing His life with cricket. I hope this will help all the cricketers and cricket lovers to see the spiritual side of this gentleman's game.

Rev. Bro. Nimal Gurusinghe F. S. C.

Jesus	Cricket
1. Jesus always lived for others. His whole life was dedicated to God and mankind.	1. A cricketer plays for his country or his school or his club. He should not play the game for himself.
2. Jesus always forgave people who committed sins and mistakes, or people who went against Him.	2. When we play cricket we may have to suffer because of our team mates. You may be run-out because of your partner's mistake or your team mate may miss a catch off your bowling. In each case you have to forgive them.
3. Jesus always played the straightforward game. He never lived a crooked life.	3. A cricketer who plays the straight bat will service for a long time.
4. Jesus had the guts to face any problem and He faced them with guts.	4. A cricketer should have the courage to overcome any situation and play the game with determination.
5. Jesus has only one aim - to do His Father's will. He never deviated from the goal.	5. A cricketer should have only one aim, that is to play for his team's victory, not just for his own glory.
6. Jesus never lived His life to please others. He was never carried away by the mob.	6. A Cricketer should never play the game just to please his fans. Neither should he play to the gallery.
7. Jesus was always calm and quiet. He was never upset by any incident in His life.	7. A good cricketer never gets upset. He is always calm and quiet, especially when things are not rosy.
8. Jesus was always active and never showed laziness in His life. He was always prepared to work for others.	8. A cricketer should not show any laziness. He must be always active so that he can give his best to the team.
9. Jesus never lived for money. As well as, He never helped people for money. He always performed everything for others without expecting anything in return.	9. Of course, a professional cricketer is paid for his services. But he should not be crazy for money. Nor should he play just for money. He ought to play the game for his team.
10. Jesus never gave up because He encountered obstacles or problems. He faced them bravely without getting discouraged.	10.Cricketer must never become discouraged. Things will not always go smoothly. When that happens he should have the courage to play the game with vigour and vitality. By doing so he will lift his team from any situation.