



I have called upon Mary when
my soul was in trouble and in
her kindness she has heard me.
(St. Bonaventure)

Messenger

PALM SUNDAY



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Archbishop calls for Special Penitential Day on April 11

The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith has requested Parish Priests to celebrate Friday, April 11 as a Special Penitential Day in their parishes, in keeping with the *Marian Year* Programme of the Archdiocese. The sole intention of this move, according to the Archbishop is to insist on the importance of the Sacrament of Confession as a "vital aspect of Spiritual Renewal."

All parishes are called upon to conduct Special Penitential Services and Confessions

NOTICE

Within the *Marian Year* Programme of the Archdiocese of Colombo, the insistence on the importance of the Sacrament of Confession is a vital aspect of Spiritual Renewal. And so in order to focus attention on this vital Sacrament, I request all the Parish Priests to celebrate Friday, the 11th April, which is the Friday in the fifth week of Lent, as a special Penitential Day. A special Penitential Service and Confessions may be organised from 6.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. on that day in addition to the other penitential programmes in Lent.

I along with the Auxiliary Bishops will also

be participating and hearing Confessions personally in selected venues. I appeal to all our Parish Fathers to take every step necessary to conduct such a programme on this particular day and to honour the Blessed Mother who called upon us to "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5)

May God bless you!

✠ Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith
Archbishop of Colombo

He had also requested Parish Priests and the Faith Animation Team to organise a special campaign to impress upon the people about the "Call of the Blessed Mother to conversion of hearts and so to return to the Sacrament of Confession."

In this letter, the Archbishop had lamented that "not all those who receive Holy Communion frequent the Sacrament of Confession. 'The need to be in a state of grace in order to receive the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ should be stressed,' the Archbishop had observed.

in the Parish churches on this day from 6.00 to 7.00 in the evening.

In his Pastoral

Letter on the *Marian Year*, issued on September 8, last year, the Archbishop has requested the

Archdiocesan Liturgical Apostolate, with the help of the Parish Priests to make use of the Advent

and Lenten Seasons to advocate a strong return of the faithful to the Sacrament of Confession.

A Church for Our Lady of Mutturajawela



The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith visited the on going construction work of the Church of Our Lady of Mutturajawela and also met the faithful of the area.

The new Church at Mutturajawela, a part of the Bopitiya Parish, is built as a fitting tribute to the Blessed Mother in this *Marian Year*. Around

400 underprivileged Catholic families live in this marshy land and the Church is seen as a step towards increasing the faith of the community and greater Marian Spirituality.

His Eminence speaking to the faithful who flocked around him said that the Church will reflect religious harmony and be a symbol of mutual brotherhood.

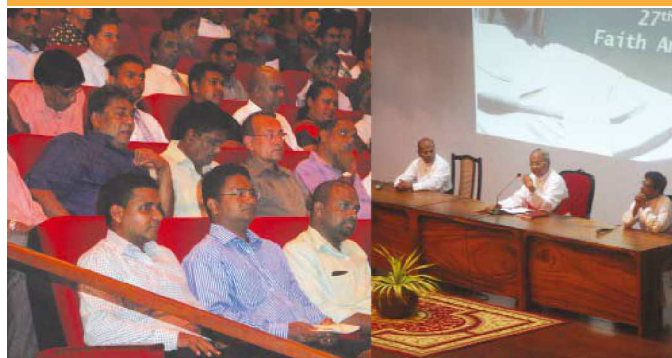
Blessing of Oils



April 14, Monday of the Holy Week.
Holy Chrism Mass at 10.30 am at All Saints' Church, Borella.

The *Messenger* will not be published on Sunday, April 20. Our Easter Issue will be out on Sunday, April 13.

Catholic Business Professionals call on His Eminence



Around 108 Catholic Business Professionals in various executive levels called on the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith. His Eminence briefed the Professionals on the challenges posed to the Catholic Faith and the new evangelical strategies adopted by the Archdiocese to meet them.

This meeting was organised by the Faith Animation Mission Team comprising Rev. Fr. Cecil Joy Perera, the Archdiocesan Co-ordinator and Rev. Frs. Udayadas Arulanandam and Anton Dinesh Priyasad. (Pic: Rev. Fr. Sunil de Silva & Shehan Anton)

Cardinal queries, 'Who should be awarded prizes?'

The address given by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, at the Prize-Giving of All Saints' Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Borella last week, will be broadcast on the National Service of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Cooperation on FM 91.7 and 91.9 at 5.30 pm, on Sunday, April 6.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Diocesan Catechetical Centres' Encounter

The National Catechetical and Biblical Centre organised a Diocesan Catechetical Centres' Encounter recently, under the direction of the National Director Rev. Fr. Piyal Janaka Fernando.

The main purpose of the encounter which was held at the Sanhindi-yawa, Chilaw was to build a healthy rapport among Catechetical Centres of the Dioceses. Around 55 members and Catechetical Directors were present.

The programme had two lively sessions with an interesting talk on "Motivation for Christian Leadership" given by Prof. Anton Meemana and another by Mr. Sanjeeva



Wijesinghe on "Through our self knowledge let us go into the deep in our Apostolate."

Rev. Sr. Santana AC spoke on the same themes to the Tamil par-

ticipants.

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Chairman, Catechetical, Bible and Education Commission, presided at Holy Mass. In his sermon, His

Lordship encouraged more encounters and said it was an opportunity for personal encounters.

Rev. Sr. Mechtilde Marie HF
National Catechetical Centre

Wattala Pradeshiya Sabha awards Uswetakeiyawa Senior Citizens' Society



Wattala Pradeshiya Sabha awarded the Senior Citizens' Society of the Uswetakeiyawa Parish for their excellent and committed service on behalf of senior citizens of the area.

Picture shows the members of the Society with Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Ivan Pietersz.

S.K.A. Kurera

Honouring His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Marcus Fernando

The CD containing the homilies and Way of the Cross Reflections of His Lordship, the late, Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Marcus Fernando, Bishop of Chilaw were released recently.

The first copy was presented to His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw by Rev. Fr. Frank Tissera, Diocesan Social Communication Director.



Aquinas University College Short Course

"The Miracles of Jesus in Synoptic Tradition," will be the next in the series of Short Courses conducted by Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi, at the Theology Lecture Hall of Aquinas University College, Borella, from 8.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

Lectures will be held for seven consecutive Saturdays, beginning April 5, with the last lecture on May 31.

There will be a course fee of Rs. 500/- and at the end of the Course, a valuable certificate will be issued to participant who had attended 80% of the lectures.

Participants are requested to bring their Holy Bibles. A recommendation letter from the Parish Priest is a requirement.

Lectures will be followed by Holy Mass at 12.15 p.m.

Details::
Antoinette Jerom
Tel: 0772168822

"I was homeless you provided me with shelter"



Rev. Fr. Subash Chaminda, the former Parish Priest of St. Hugo's Church, Burulupitiya was generous enough to pro-

vide shelter for a homeless family with the donation that he received from his loving flock.

Fr. Subash's deeds

reflected Christ Words, "I was homeless you provided me with shelter."

Saman C. Perera

'Closer to Jesus'

The finale of the Lenten Spiritual Programme "Closer to Jesus," by the youth choir; Choro Calibre will be held at Fatima Church, Maradana on Friday, April 11 at 6.30 p.m.

The programme includes a Eucharistic Adoration by Rev. Fr. Angelo Wijewickrema OMI and culminating with the glorious Easter Hymn, "From the Sun's Rising."



SVP Katupotha 15th Anniversary



The 15th Anniversary of the St. Vincent De Paul Society of Katupotha was held at the Osanam House, under the patronage of Rev. Fr. Anil Marcus, Patron of the Society. The new office bearers were also elected on this day.

Medicine and Vitamins for Madhu Shrine Hospital

Lions Club of Mahabage donated essential medicine and vitamins to Chief Administrator of Madhu Shrine to be used at the Madhu Shrine Hospital run by Rev. Sisters.

President Lion Senadisha Chandrasekara hands over the consignment of medicine to Rev. Fr. Emilianus Pillai in the presence of club members.





Church in the Modern World

Vatican Plans Social Media Celebration for Sainthood of Popes

The last time a Roman Catholic Pontiff was made a saint, television news was in its infancy and the coverage from St Peter's Square was resolutely black, white and grainy.

Sixty years on from the canonisation of Pope Pius X, two of his successors are to follow in his footsteps – and the Church is keen to show that, in the sphere of communications at least, it has changed with the times.

People around the world wanting to follow the twin canonisations of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II on April 27, will be able to do so via a multi-faceted "digital plat-

form," said Monsignor Walter Insero.

As well as a website – which is still under construction and will be available in five languages – there will be a Twitter handle (@2popesaints), smartphone app, Facebook page and YouTube channel. Insero said other social media sites including Instagram and Storify would also be used to communicate the event to young people effectively.

The Vatican is not putting a figure on the number of people it expects to come to Rome for the twin canonisation, but estimates from city officials have reached into the millions.

On Monday the Vati-

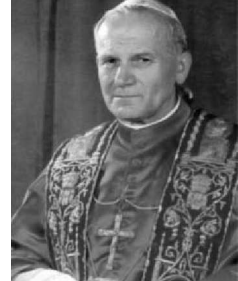
can announced that churches in the centre of the Italian capital would stay open the night before the ceremony for a prayer vigil. However, perhaps in a sign of the current Pope's influence, it stressed that the nature of the event was spiritual not extravagant, and that costly side events would be avoided.

"In Bergamo, the northern Italian province where John XXIII was born, the Church will mark the canonisations with a charity drive. Monsignor Giulio Dellavite said priests would be invited to donate a month's wages to a fund for struggling families.

In Rome, meanwhile,



Pope John XXIII



Pope John Paul II

the signs are that local hotel owners are looking on the canonisations more as an opportunity to make money rather than to give it up. The travel

website *Trivago* said last week that the price of an average hotel room for the night of April 26 was up 63% on last year.

President Obama meets Pope Francis for the first time

Vatican City, (CNA/EWTN News).- During the March 27 meeting between Pope Francis and President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, the two exchanged cordial discussions regarding the state of the Church in the US, as well as topics of shared interest.

Lasting approximately 50 minutes long, the meeting marks Obama's second encounter with a Roman Pontiff since his election in 2008, the first being between him and Benedict XVI in July of 2009.

The US President also extended the greetings of his family, observing that "The last time I came to meet your predecessor, I was able to bring my wife and children."

After the meeting concluded the two exchanged gifts, with Obama giving the Pope a box containing a variety of seeds planted in the White House gardens in celebration

of the opening of the gardens of the Papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo to the public earlier this year.

Presenting a second part to his gift, the U.S. President revealed to the Pontiff that in his honour a donation of seeds would also be given to a charity, which would provide several tons of fresh produce. The seeds, noted the President, represent the Pope's commitment to sowing the seeds of global peace.

When presenting the gift to the Pope, the President extended his own invitation to the Holy Father, telling him "If you have a chance and come to the White House, you can see our garden," to which the Pontiff replied "Why not?"

Offering his own gifts to the US President, Pope Francis presented him with two bronze medals, one depicting an angel representing solidarity



and peace. The second medal commemorates the moment in 1657 when Alexander VII laid the first stone of the north colonnade of St. Peter's Basilica.

Also presented to Obama was a red-covered copy of *Evangelii Gaudium*. Upon receiving it, the President commented that "You

know I actually will probably read this in the Oval Office when I am deeply frustrated, and I am sure it will give me strength and calm me down."

Pope Francis responded to him in English, saying "I hope."

When parting with the

Pope, Obama thanked him in Spanish, saying "Muchos gracias," and asking him to "Please pray for me and for my family. They are with me on this journey, please pray for them," and adding that "My girls and wife have to put up with me."

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus

"CAN'T YOU STAY AWAKE WITH ME FOR AN HOUR AT LEAST?"

WHY NOT,
MY MOTHER WILL BE
WATCHING
FOR 3 HOURS



Rare Vatican manuscripts to be put online free

VATICAN CITY (CNS): In a joint announcement on March 20, officials at the Japanese Technology Company NTT DATA Corporation and the Vatican Library revealed that thousands of rare manuscripts, which until now have only been accessible to scholars at the Vatican, will be made available online over the next four years.

The library was founded by Pope Nicholas V in the 15th century and has some 82,000 manuscripts dating back to the early centuries of Christianity.

Among its treasures are an illustrated edition of the works of the Roman poet Virgil, produced around the year 400AD, as well as illustrations of Dante's Divine comedy by the 15th-century Renaissance master, Sandro Botticelli.

Monsignor Cesare Pasini, the prefect of the Vatican Library, said that with help from various not-for-profit groups the Collection has been being scanned over several years and already 6,800 manuscripts have been digitally archived. But up to now, only some 300 documents are accessible on the library website, vaticanlibrary.va.

LENT AND PRAYER

For us followers of Christ, Lent can be a most powerful and fulfilling period of transition from our baser selves to a higher plain of spirituality and redemption. As we know, Lent is built on the cornerstones of prayer, penance and almsgiving. Prayer, which is our communication with our Creator, Our Loving Father, is the core essence of our lives.

Jesus taught us the perfect prayer in the Our Father (The Lord's Prayer). In it He taught us a few key elements worth mentioning – giving glory to God, inviting His will in our lives and world, asking for providence and sustenance, and requesting His mercy for ourselves, which is reciprocated by our promise to forgive our neighbour. The latter two points in this beautiful prayer are worth noting, especially during Lent.

Many a good priest and religious would have often repeated to us the importance of forgiveness (towards ourselves and others). Given that prayer is key to Lent, we need to fulfil its deepest purpose by participating in it fully. What I mean by that is prayer without forgiveness is incomplete. Prayer without sincerity and commitment is empty.

For a prayer to be complete, we need to follow "the two greatest commandments" which Jesus spoke about. The first is to love God with all our heart, mind, body and soul. The second is to love our neighbour as ourselves. If these two conditions are not met, then our prayers become useless. Many 'good' Christians excel at saying prayers and observing outward rituals. However, the moment they go home after a service or public prayer session they change their colour like a chameleon. They may end up mistreating their spouses, shouting at their neighbours, being unkind to their children and colleagues at work, being aggressive and unruly in traffic when operating a vehicle, being uncharitable in word and deed and so on.

For prayer to be truly meaningful we are called to exercise charity and mercy towards others and ourselves. Make a resolution this Lent that you will endeavour to be a better human being. Learn to forgive others; rush to show kindness and mercy to your fellow human beings. Perhaps even choose the person you find hardest to forgive and extend an olive branch of reconciliation and love. These actions will be far more useful than merely forgoing a slice of butter cake on a Friday afternoon during Lent!

Given that we live in an increasingly violent and selfish world, there is an urgent need for true Christian virtue and fellowship. As Christ said, "Let your light shine for all to see!" That divine light, which our loving God has sparked within us, is characterised by love, compassion, forgiveness, charity, humility, sincerity, strength and confidence through God, empathy and a positive approach to life.

Cast also your thoughts on Jesus, Who for 40 days endured the harsh elements of the Palestinian desert and the attacks of Satan. He weathered all this for us. For you and I. What a huge sacrifice our Saviour has made for us. And it did not end there, for He had to undergo the immense agony and trauma of the Passion. Only a loving and forgiving God could ever do that. So we, as followers of Christ, need to do exactly what He asked us to. Essential to this is the need to forgive each other – for therein lies the fullness of our prayers, which, ultimately, underpins our Lenten experience.

May God bless you abundantly!

Journey with Mary of Magdala

Rev. Sr. Sunitha A.C.

Women are usually sensitive to the needs of others. They are able to foresee and attend to details. Some of them plan well ahead of time and meticulously arrange things so as to avoid any mistake. This gift is given to women by God and nature. Among the women in the Bible, St. Mary Magdalene secures the highest score for her innate capacity to attend to her Lord with love and tenderness bathed in gratitude. After His death she was urged to smother Him with perfume and to anoint Him for the burial. Amidst countless hurried movements after His death she had not a single minute to approach Him to fulfill this rite. Darkness fell on the cemetery, everyone had left. Inside the tomb ... Silence. The smell of death was everywhere.

Mary of Magdala was gaining time. Who can understand this weeping heart and the longing of her desire? "God you are my God, I pine for you; my heart thirsts for you, my heart longs for you, as a land parched, dreary and waterless" (Ps. 62).



read that strength belongs to God and He repays everyone as their deeds deserve, proving that she was highly rewarded. With the strength and power of God the stone was rolled away. Joy filled her heart and she hurried towards the tomb to anoint the Lord. She was not expecting a resurrection, it was the thing farthest from her mind. She never expected the tomb to be empty. Joy turned into despair, surprise and anguish, as she noted how the linen cloth was folded and kept at the side of the tomb and her Lord missing. Where could she go, whom could she ask?

experienced the power of the Risen Lord. The first encounter. "Rabboni" (Master) surely the heart of Mary was burning as it did happen in the hearts of the two men on the way to Emmaus. What is Resurrection? Jesus has conquered our last enemy. He solved the problem of death forever because He entered the realm of death on our behalf and He came out holding the Keys of Paradise. He arose a Victor from the dark domain.

What is Resurrection? It is an experience of the Lord. It is seeking and finding, then proclaiming Him to others. She went to her brethren to give the Good News to others. The two from Emmaus too went back to Jerusalem. The Resurrection was the centerpiece of the preaching of the Apostles. In our days Jesus' command to "go and make disciples" echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges of the Church's mission of evangelization and all of us are called to take part in this new mission of "going forth." Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey His call to go forth from our comfort zones in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel" (E.G. # 20).

Let us experience the Joy of Resurrection. If I have been able to seek Him in my neighbour, if I find His compassionate Face on the Cross shining in the sick and suffering and the needy, then like Mary of Magdala I will find Him. I will experience the power of the Resurrection. Let Him not go. May the Joy and power of Easter remain in you and me always. Let me quote from Pope Francis "There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter" (E.G. # 6). Let us be an Alleluia to one another. This is the Day the Lord has made let us be glad and rejoice.

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She kept everything in her heart and looked forward to do this last act as soon as she was able to. So she was marking time, counting the minutes, looking at the sky so as to get at the tomb as early as possible, even before the sun began to shine. She planned to visit the tomb. Love does such things. Her passionate love for Jesus Christ her Lord and Master, led her to walk through the streets unmindful of the darkness or the comments of the people. Nothing disturbed her since she was seeking the Lord. She feared nothing since she knew by seeking she would find Him.

Passing through hills and dales she went in haste to meet the Lord. What expectation! One who is in a tomb being guarded by soldiers? To see Him she goes. What faith? The question, "Who will roll the stone," did not deter her. In Ps 61, we

Tomb robbing was not unusual in those days. She was more than confused.

In such a confused situation to keep on seeking the Lord is very important. In our lives we too are seeking, seeking Him in joy, in desolation and in confusion. First you will see Him as a gardener since the eyes of faith are still dim. "Woman why are you weeping? Who are you looking for? She thought it was the gardener and answered him "If you have taken Him away, tell me where you have put him and I will go and remove Him." (John 20: 15 ff.) Jesus knew that Mary was using her limited understanding in a difficult situation. Jesus knew that all she needed was to have her eyes opened, and then she would become the first messenger of the Resurrection and a saint whom the Church will never forget. The Lord then revealed Himself to her. She

Palm Sunday

The message of Palm Sunday can be succinctly expressed in the beautiful words of St. Paul as recounted in his letter to the Philippians 2:6-11. "Though He was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave being born in the likeness of men. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus He humbled Himself obediently accepting even death, death on a Cross. Because of this, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name, above every other name, so that at Jesus' name every knee must bend in the heavens, on the earth and under the earth and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God the Father; Jesus Christ is Lord."

It was my good fortune one year to be present in Jerusalem in the Holy Land and be where it actually happened. I was at the threshold of the Passover Feast.

The hustle and the bustle of activity increased dramatically throughout the ancient city of Jerusalem and the countryside. Pilgrims were pouring in huge numbers to celebrate the events of the Passover. Although the political situation was not as volatile as it periodically happened in that part of the country of Palestine, the threat of violence was not entirely absent in the city.

The streets and even the homes were crowded with people who eagerly awaited the celebration of the enactment of the drama of the Holy Week

with a great deal of anticipation, joy and hope. Added to the normal sounds of the occasion, I heard cries of hosannas and other sounds of what appeared to be more a political parade than a religious procession. In my mind's eye, I imagined Jesus on the back of a donkey, although the actual person doing it was the Patriarch of Jerusalem, coming to the city with thronging crowds milling around him and shouting with branches of palms raised on high.

"Long live" is the message of the palm branches, a symbol and sign of victory in Asian cultures. The words they cry out are "Save us." Blessings on the King of Israel who, comes in the name of the Lord." The frame now changes to the time of Jesus. The din and the deafening uproar created by the crowds draw the temple officials to the scene. They are greatly alarmed.

Let me now digress a bit here to make it more real and authentic.

Jerusalem is built on a hill called Zion. Across from the city is the Mount of Olives. Behind the mount is the village named Bethany. Christ's closest friends Martha, Mary and Lazarus lived there. It was from this suburban and serenely quiet and peaceful town that Jesus began His final march to the City of Jerusalem a distance of barely five miles. That is the journey re-enacted every Palm Sunday.

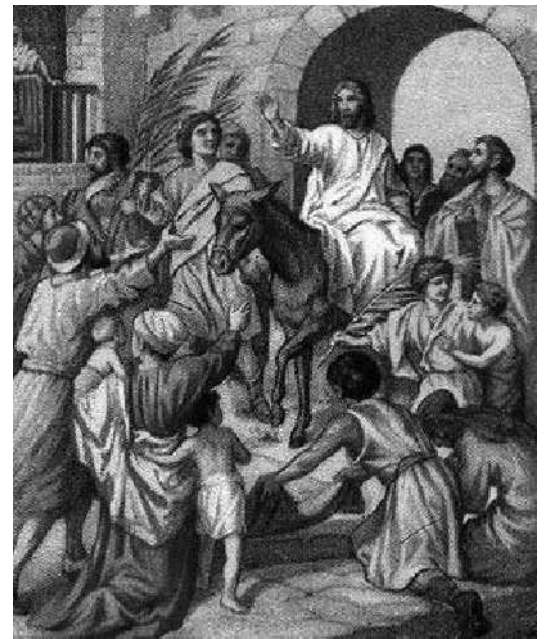
It begins at Bethany with a public reading of the Gospel in which Christ is hailed

as the King of Israel taking possession of His capital city of Jerusalem, the symbol of the heavenly city. Thousands of pilgrims from all over the world, carrying six foot olive branches and enthusiastically singing their national anthems and hymns accompany the Bishop of Jerusalem in the procession of the palms. They parade quite joyfully and even raucously down the Mount of Olives, past the Garden of Gethsamane, across the Valley of Kedron and enter the Holy City through St. Stephen's Gate. They all proceed to the ancient Church of St. Anne, the Mother of the Virgin Mary. It is the traditional site of the home of St. Anne and her husband St. Joachim.

The ceremonial procession solemnly closes with the imparting of the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. As the monstrance is elevated, the pilgrims raise and wave their palm branches and cry out in full throated unison, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

The scene is brilliantly evocative and grandly reminiscent of a medieval mystery play, an act of dramatic worship that beautifully captures the spirit of the Gospel story of the Messianic entry into Jerusalem. The Prophet Zechariah 9:9-10, had foreseen this Messianic joy. "Tell the daughter of Zion, your king comes to you without display, astride an ass, astride a colt, the foal of a beast of burden."

Jesus takes possession



of the Holy City not in the manner of an imperial, powerful and pompous general, arrogantly ensconced in a chariot but very humbly resembling an obediently submissive servant, an heir of the prophets and wisemen of Israel.

Palm Sunday has always generated abundantly great spiritual joy. In so many cultures, it has been observed as a reconciliation day. Neighbours bearing palms visit those with whom they have been at odds and ask for forgiveness in the Lord. The extremely popular Handel's "Messiah" includes the words of the Prophet Zephaniah, "Shout for joy, O!

daughter of Zion. Sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart. The King of Israel, the Lord is in your midst. He will rejoice over you with gladness and renew you in His love, Zephaniah 3:14-15" Good and evil are ready to do battle. The holy martyr to be, does not blink. So let us step into the events of the Holy Week with a profound spirit of faith and follow our martyr to the heights of Calvary and then beyond the jaws of death into the triumphant victory of the glorious Resurrection.

Rev. Fr. Joe Paul Fernando.

A Lenten Reflection in the aftermath of the Malaysian Flight disaster

Australia, the land Down Under, has become the locus of search in the biggest air travel mystery in recent times. In a way, the shift of operational focus must have brought some relief to Malaysia.

Almost four weeks after flight ML370s went missing, Malaysian officials have begun to tire of trying to explain the mysterious disappearance of the aircraft. Equally wearied media keep looking for newer angles to avoid putting the story on the backburner. While search operations gather momentum, families and friends of the 239 persons seemingly martyred on an air-borne modern-day cross continue to hang on to fast fading hopes.

A look back at the events unfolding in the aftermath of the March 8 debacle may give some perspective. At first, reports about the missing jet seemed yet another episode in the 24-hour news cycle – one more disaster story. It did not enthrust too many. The unfolding story seemed to be limited more or less to the instinct of alert news media and routine follow-up by Malaysian Airlines.

None in authority seemed to know where the plane has gone. Others seemed less public-spirited as to share information routinely recorded in

their machines. Initially, the Malaysian military and aviators of neighbouring countries such as China and Thailand hesitated to share available bits of information about the unusual drift of the aircraft. Even Malaysian bureaucrats and airline officials seemed apathetic, until the families of the missing passengers lost patience. That was the turning point.

While some officials reacted poorly to the noisy protests, the heart-wrenching cries of the Chinese families wailing in Beijing and Kuala Lumpur touched the hearts of many worldwide. Such rare outpouring of fellowship elicits the best of the human spirit. Thanks to media, public grief waxed so high as to force lethargic governments to seek ways of assuaging people's calls for action.

One positive development in this sad saga was the assurance given to passengers' families by Malaysia's acting Transport Minister. As international cooperation began to rally, he assured them that the search-and-rescue operation would continue. "As long as there is even a remote chance of a survivor, we will pray and do whatever it takes," he said. Even though hopes of finding survivors became more and more unlikely, the prospect of recovering the remains

of loved ones can sustain bereaved families. In most Asian cultures, such a prospect is essential to bring some form of closure.

No doubt, public outrage was a push factor prompting various other countries to volunteer technical information and backup not offered earlier. People's growing frustration was later followed up with offers of equipment to search for the missing aircraft. If only such goodwill and technical support had been readily available earlier, the routinely monitored erratic path of the missing plane could have been promptly communicated. More importantly, such prompt communication may have helped save the lives of many passengers and crew.

Almost four weeks after the Malaysian Flight 370 went missing, a frantic search involving many nations is now underway for its black box. Ten airplanes and 11 ships equipped with sophisticated equipment from various countries have begun to scour the southern Indian Ocean for any such trace of the missing plane.

What has now begun is more a technological investigation to find why and how the Boeing Aircraft went missing. It is not quite a search for survivors among the missing passengers

and crew. According to media reports, even if the wreckage is located, there is

little or no hope of their survival. Unless the flight had been hijacked elsewhere, the multi-country search off the western coast of Australia is all, too little, too late. That is tragic.

In an age when science is so advanced as to help humans reach outer space and traverse planets, there is no excuse for being ill-equipped to map and master movements in our own airspace and oceans. It is all the more unforgivable, if petty political point-scoring or regional rivalries inhibit inter-country collaboration essential for the welfare of all humans.

And as in the Tsunami or any past disaster, there is yet another unmistakable lesson here. No amount of technical equipment, no mass of scientific know-how can make up for a lack of humanitarian concern. After all, it is that godly spark called love that missions us as humans.

Hector Welgampola





The Fundamentalists

I was trying to get my car serviced and another customer who came in a big brand new Mercedes Benz car approached me and asked me about the place that I worship. He would have seen the Cross and the Rosary that is displayed behind my windscreen and suspected me to be a Catholic. I said that I attend services in a Catholic Church. He confessed that he too was a Catholic but now he is a member of an Assembly of God Church. He invited me to one of the prayer meetings and even gave me his visiting card.

When I was reading about the Fundamentalist Churches I was surprised to find out many of their converts were Catholics. This is true regarding their congregations in the United States. I am sure it is true also of Sri Lanka. If you count the fundamentalist churches that are mushrooming in the Catholic villages you will agree with me.

The Fundamentalists like the Catholics believe in the divinity of Christ. We believe in the divinity because the Catholic Church interpreted the Scripture for us and the Apostles and the Fathers of the ancient Church believed and proclaimed the divinity of Christ. But the Fundamentalists have to read the Bible and have a personal conviction to believe this doctrine.

The Catholics believe that the New Testament was written by the Early Church leaders and evolved with the Church. It

has to be interpreted and explained by the Church authorities. The Bible is the book of the Church. If there are any disputes and doubts about the Bible it has to be interpreted and settled by the Church hierarchy. But the individual and personal interpretations of the Bible, as the Fundamentalists believe, have led many people away from the Church. In the 15th century Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli and Henry VIII interpreted the Bible in their own way, broke away from the Catholic faith and formed their own Churches. Personal interpretation



of the Bible is rather a dangerous act which will lead to Schisms.

Fundamentalists also believe in the Virgin birth of Christ. But they also believe that after the birth of Christ Mary the Mother of God had other children. This is another misinterpretation of the Gospels. The Catholic Church teaches us that the scriptural references to brothers of

Christ are made towards the cousins of Jesus not to brothers born from the same mother. (Mathew 12: 47-49)

They also believe that Christ died for our sins and saved us from our sins. But they go further and say that God punished Jesus to save mankind from their sins and if we believe in him we will be saved. Catholics believe that we should participate in the sufferings and death of Christ by our life and charitable deeds and achieve our own salvation. We will not be saved merely through faith in Christ.

"What good is

it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such a faith save him?" (James 2:14).

The main difference between the Catholic doctrine and the Fundamentalist's beliefs is their denial of all sacraments except Baptism. The Fundamentalists believe that we are saved by our personal faith in Christ revealed through the Scriptures. They profess that we do not need any intervention of a Church or Sacraments for redemption.

We are trying to show a few differences between the Fundamentalist's beliefs and the Catholic faith. There is a big chasm between what Fundamentalists profess and the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Before you attend or join any Fundamentalist prayer groups think about the enormous differences between the two faiths. The Catholic Church does not leave us alone in the process of finding salvation and redemption. As a loving mother who guides her own children (Psalm 23), the Church helps us and guides us on our way to salvation through her Sacramental and prayer life.

Why we should come to the BLESSED SACRAMENT

Lent is not only a preparation for Easter but is also a time for one to reconcile oneself with God Our Father and make a conscious step towards him.

Jesus dwells in the Blessed Sacrament to lighten our burden by comforting us in all our trials and encouraging us in all our disappointments no matter what. For He says "Cast all your anxieties upon the Lord who cares for us."

Most often we are in pursuit of worldly comfort and pleasure and preoccupied with our own selfish motives. All this is passing and futile, it leaves us only empty and disillusioned to the point of despair.

Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the only one who could give us permanent happiness and fulfill our every need. The Eucharist is the fulfillment of His



promise "I myself will pasture my sheep. I will give them rest. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back. The injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal"

This is why our Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament is so important. Jesus chooses to come to us in the Most Blessed Sacrament under

the appearance of bread, as a constant reminder to us of how much He loves us. He waits for us day and night and He says "I thirst with a terrible thirst to be loved by you in this Blessed Sacrament"

I wish to leave you with this thought during this Season of lent.

Enid

Holy Water cured him completely



A middle aged Catholic from Colombo, who was a seaman for a considerable period gave up his post, returned home and was engaged in business. He was a regular Church goer and said his Rosary daily. To everybody's surprise this gentleman was afflicted with a paralytic illness and he could not stretch his fingers and could not ride his motor cycle. He tried all sorts of western and ayurvedic treatment but all in vain. He grew increasingly desperate but never gave up his reciting the Rosary, daily.

One fine day one of his relative visited him. He told our friend that he went on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Lourdes in France and gave him a phial containing Holy Water and asked him to consume.

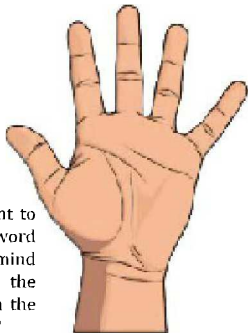
The gentleman thanked his relative and in the night he said his Rosary and gulped the Holy Water.

After dinner he went to sleep. When he awoke on the following morning, to his astonishment, he found his fingers normal. They could stretch and bend without difficulty. He immediately informed his family members as to how he got completely cured and all were excited and immediately knelt and prayed. They thanked Our Lady for curing the bread winner in the family through the Holy Water and the news spread like wild fire. He informed the Parish Priest and the doctors who treated him without positive results and they were all surprised. Today he leads a normal and happy life. This is not a fiction but a true event.

As related by a relative of the patient to J. Anthony.

J. Anthony

The five fingers



I took a moment to look at my fingers, a word of thought came to my mind and wondered why the thumb is separate from the four fingers of my hand?

The story is told of five brothers and sisters in a family. The parents entrusted to the eldest all their wealth and resources with the instruction that he will take care of his brothers and sisters in their absence. But, as the story goes, the eldest appropriated all of what was left by their parents for himself and did not share with his brothers and sisters.

The selfishness of the thumb angered his brothers and sisters. Therefore, the four retaliated by distancing themselves from him.

Yet, the thumb had all the wealth, but he lost his brothers and sisters.

A moment with the word

Dear Lord, I pray that all may be one: that the world may believe that you sent me. (John 17:21)

Sent by Anton Selemberam

A CROSS The Way

By Sirohmi Gunasekera

The Feast of Easter

"Lent is a time of repentance, especially in Holy Week!" commented Jacintha.

"Yes, we need to sacrifice, fast and pray especially for Redemption of our sins," said Malik.

"Maundy Thursday is the night on which we commemorate the Passion and Death of Jesus. He was the Son of God yet He was born as a human being of a Virgin mother. He grew up and suffered and died in agony. Good Friday is the day on which we commemorate the suffering of Jesus," said Jacintha.

"But we must not forget that Jesus was resurrected from the dead three days later and that was the birth of Christianity," said Malik.

"Yes, Easter Sunday is more important even than Christmas day for Christ conquered sin and death at His Resurrection," remarked Jacintha.

"We must not forget that even when He was dying on the Cross, Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.'" Thus Christ, the Sinless One, died to redeem sinners. Also we need no longer fear death for Jesus arose from the dead

in glory and Christians can therefore celebrate Easter as the Feast of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead!" said Malik.

"Easter is also a pagan harvest festival and little children are given chocolate bunnies and Easter eggs to celebrate. But we must not forget that Easter is a spiritual feast first and foremost. We need to ask God to forgive us our sins just as Jesus forgave the sins of those who harmed Him and caused Him to suffer and die," said Jacintha.

"So let us pray and fast in Holy Week. Most of all, let us ask ourselves if we have hurt anyone and reconcile ourselves with our enemies. Easter is a time of Rebirth and Rejoicing and we can only do so if we have left our sins behind. Father, forgive us our sins, cleanse our souls and help us to go forward in prayer!" concluded Malik.



Jaffna Passion Play celebrates fifty

Just as there was a sense of duty on the part of CPArts' Team (Centre for Performing Arts), to stage the Passion Play annually without interruption for fifty years, come what may, so too there were thousands of people who thought that watching the Passion Play was an act of Lenten obligation. CPArts Passion Play is today a part of the Jaffna Catholic Tradition. It is a historical performance that reflects the perseverance and courage of a people who kept the Passion Play tradition alive amidst the bloody war consuming their land. Their commitment is as great as the story they perform on stage. A story of humility, sacrifice and personal triumph.

Birth of a Passion Play Tradition

What distinguishes the CPArts Passion Play is that its creative genius evolves from its contemporary social and political environment. As a production it has maintained high standards expertly blending Catholic theology with Tamil literary and musical background, highlighting various themes of the passion such as sacrifice, pain, atonement, divine love. It sends out a strong social message, some times a revolutionary understanding. But at all times it promotes peace, justice and equality among communities. It seeks the active cooperation of all those around breaking through ingrained barriers of caste, creed and gender to present the message of redemption in different forms in a medium understandable and attractive to both educated and uneducated to Christian and non Christians to believer and non believer alike. Its success originates from being a multi-religious collaboration as CPArts' members belong to all four major religions of Sri Lanka.

CPArts Passion Play is a completely original work distinct from the Passion Plays introduced to Sri Lanka in the 17th century by Blessed Joseph Vaz and the first Passion Plays like the Duwa Passion Play and the Boralessa Passion Play which borrowed heavily from the Oberammergau Passion Play.

This unique Passion Play tradition is the brain child of Tamil Christian Literary genius blessed with the wisdom of a double doctorate in Christian theology and Hindu philosophy (Saiva Siddhantha Philosophy), Fr. N.M. Saveri, is the script writer, director, producer of the play and is the founder of CPArts which is the organization behind the Play. CPArts was established officially in 1965 from an original core group formed even earlier in 1962 in Jaffna. CPArts or the Centre for Performing Arts, also known as Thirumarai Kalamnam and Ranga Kala Kendraya has 20 centres in the North and South of Sri Lanka. Abroad it has established Centres in Paris, London, Canada, Melbourne, Norway where annually Tamil Passion Plays are staged. CPArts vision is to create a family of artists representing all ethnicities and religions in Sri Lanka, that strives to inculcate the values of peace and tolerance.

In the beginning

The very first CPArts Passion Play was staged in 1964 at St. Sebastian's Church (Cathedral), Mannar where Fr. Saveri was Parish Priest. A Tamil play distinct from the traditional plays was scripted by Fr. N. M. Saveri, based on the Bible narratives. The narration and explanation of the events were assigned to the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus in colloquial Tamil. The Passion Play was a break from the existing pasu tradition of the locality. Thus in contrast to the famous passion plays performed with puppets in Pesalai, people began to act in the play. Recorded Western Music was used for the background. Suitable Lenten hymns were sung by the choir.

Urumpirai Passion Plays

The first CPArts Passion Play to be staged in Jaffna was in 1966 in Urumpirai, to where Fr. Saveri was transferred as the Parish Priest. Here a new script was written under different titles focusing on different aspects of the Passion.

This was a mammoth production with more than 100 actors taking part from many parishes of the Jaffna Diocese (which included then the present Diocese of Mannar). A massive stage was erected using the "portico" of St. Michael's Church of Urumpirai as part of the stage. Huge props were used to enhance the production. Unlike in the Mannar production where Church hymns were used here new songs were composed and sung in tune with classical and light music standards. An orchestra was formed and a new and original music - a mixture of classical and light

music suitable for devotional purposes - was composed by one of CPArts' founder-members, M. Jesudasan. Many of these musicians were Hindus including three Brahmins. Interestingly, one who was helping in the Lights Team was Fr. Thomas Savundaranayagam, the present Bishop of Jaffna.

Urumpirai became famous for its annual Passion Plays. In 1970, in addition to the Passion Play, a mammoth Resurrection Play was staged using the same stage and actors.

A revolutionary Passion Play

"Kalankam" (guilt) was a complete break away from the usual Passion Play. Here questions were raised as to who or what really caused the death of the Son of God. It was mostly a mimed play blended with music, song, and short dialogues. This was notable for its revolutionary approach. Another distinguishing feature of this play was the absence of the central figure of the passion - Jesus on the stage. This production was staged in various parts of the Island including Colombo.

Under the Shadow of the Jaffna Fort

In 1971, *Anpil Malarantha Amarakaviyam* (Divine Epic of Love) was staged at the Jaffna Fort and Stadium. It was a huge production with 300 actors and musicians. Time: 4 hours and 30 minutes. The stage was 100 meters broad and had massive settings depicting Jerusalem and its surroundings. The massive stereotypes of the Jaffna Fort was used as the background. The Crucifixion scene took place in the highest point of Fort wall where during the Dutch occupation of



Jaffna executions by hanging had been carried out. Nearly 100,000 spectators are estimated to have watched this production.

The staging of that Passion Play was marked by a historical event. It was the night that JVP insurgents attacked the Jaffna Police Station. Some actors and helpers were witnesses to the unforgettable incident as curfew was imposed and they could not leave the Stadium.

Travelling Passion Plays

In 1972, a new Passion Play called *Palikkalam* or Altar of Sacrifice was first staged in Jaffna and later on in many places. The entire team of actors, musicians, artists and helpers amounted to only about 35 and hence facilitated the troupe to stage it in different parts of the Island. In contrast to other Plays, this was designed to be staged in a Hall (one stage). This play was staged more than 100 times in the North and South of Sri Lanka. It was also the subject of the first TV Film made in Jaffna.

Passion Plays based on Tamil Literary Forms

The nineties, saw several productions of the Passion Play modeled on Tamil literary poetry forms. This was a huge step forward in the development of the Tamil Passion Play Tradition. These classics which had not even been used in secular dramatic performances were transformed to reflect Christian theologies. In one of the plays called "Siluvai ulla" only the voice of Jesus is heard uttering the last seven words. The narrator and the other actors appear to enact the relevant scenes. The cross erected in the centre of the stage appear without Christ till the end. In another play "Kalvari Kalampakam" the stage is dominated by dancers who performed 10 different forms of movement expressing 10 particular concepts which comprise this literary genre. A third "Kalvari Parani" based on a literary form extolling the feats of a hero. Jesus is depicted as a divine hero who conquered evil.

These were profound works and have been described as "technically magnificent" and "sophisticated

stylized presentations." However the common people wanted the Passion Play to convey the story of the Passion in a simpler way.

A Passion Play Pilgrimage

During the early and mid nineties CPArts focused on carrying their talents far and wide here and abroad. 1995 was memorable for a Passion Play pilgrimage. The troupe from the North came to the South and performed two shows at the Tower Hall Theatre Colombo and at the Maharagama Youth Centre with an inter-religious cast and musicians. In a performance at a School in Negombo, the characters of Jesus, Judas and Peter were played by CPArts' Buddhist youths.

A mimed Passion Play was performed together with CPArts partner groups consisting of Professor Saraschandra's actors and Miranda Hemalatha's dancers. Again it performed with Sinhala and Tamil actors. Passion Plays were staged in Hatton, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Vavuniya. The significant aspect of this passion play pilgrimage was the presentation of different plays based on different forms and the participation of Buddhist and

Hindu actors in the production. This tradition has continued and developed in the following years.

A Passion Play in exodus

During the mass exodus of the Jaffna people in 1996, though the Jaffna CPArts members were dispersed, most of them gathered together at Mirusuvil and staged a Passion Play called *Kalvariyan Cuvadukal* (Imprints of Calvary) on a make shift stage with costumes made of gunny painted and stitched. This was an adapted and revised version of Fr. Saveri's Palikkalam. In those difficult days the group did not even have the script to start with. It was with the greatest difficulty they obtained one and Johnson Rajkumar, who had been assisting Fr. Saveri and the Deputy Director, made the necessary revision and wrote new lyrics. Rev. Fr. Jero Chelvanayagam, at present, the Rector of St. Patrick's, who was then the Vice-Director of CPArts Jaffna, took charge of the entire venture. It was also performed in the Vadamarachi camp site in Point Pedro.

It showed that though the people were experiencing extreme hardships due to displacement, they were more than happy - irrespective of religious differences - to be part of CPArts Team's therapeutic efforts.

The Armed Forces have always supported their efforts. In 2007 and 2008, during the periods of strict implementation of curfew in Jaffna the Armed Forces lifted the curfew a few hours for the performance to continue.

A Fourth look at Jesus

Fr. Saveri wrote a new script in 2004. The Play was called *Kaviya Nayakan* (The Lord of History) which was characterized not only by a new style, but also by new ideas. A critic called it A Fourth Look at Jesus and pointed out that the script contained ideas on existence, equality, liberty and fraternity intermingled with a plea for Women's Rights and Children's Rights.

A Passion Play to heal

In 2012, Fr. Saveri came out with another new script. The Play was titled *Velvith Thirumakan* (The Lord of Sacrifice/ Sacrificial Victim). The language used was very simple and the theme of the Play centered around the notion of sacrifice. It is said to have brought solace and consolation to a traumatized population.

As far as the style was concerned, a chorus performing the function of narrators was used on the stage reminding one of Oberammergau. It is to be noted that the actors who were in the chorus were youths from Vanni who were badly affected and traumatized by the last stages of the war. They were given a residential training in Jaffna for more than two weeks. Musical scores were also new because CPArts' assistant musical director, a Hindu, was given the opportunity to be in charge of music composition and execution.

The same Play is going to be staged this year too in Jaffna. The play will be directed for the first time by a Hindu lady - Vaithegi E., who has been a member of CPArts for more than a decade and who has worked as one of the assistant directors since 2004. It will be staged from the 10th to the 13th of April at the Open Air Theatre of CPArts, Main Street Jaffna. Performances start sharp on time at 6.45 and is over at 9.00 pm.

In his Lenten Message the Holy Father invites Christians to help relieve material, moral and spiritual destitution

Rich because we are poor

He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich (cf. 2 Cor 8:9).

As Lent draws near, I would like to offer some helpful thoughts on our path of conversion as individuals and as a community. These insights are inspired by the words of St. Paul: "For you know the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). The Apostle was writing to the Christians of Corinth, to encourage them to be generous in helping the faithful in Jerusalem who were in need. What do these words of St. Paul mean for us Christians today? What does this invitation to poverty, a life of evangelical poverty, mean for us today?

Christ's grace

First of all, it shows us how God works. He does not reveal Himself cloaked in worldly power and wealth but rather in weakness and poverty: "Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor..." Christ, the eternal Son of God, one with the Father in power and glory, chose to be poor; He came amongst us and drew near to each of us; He set aside His glory and emptied Himself so that He could be like us in all things (Cf. Phil 2:7; Heb 4:15). God's becoming man is a great mystery! But the reason for all this is His love, a love which is grace, generosity, a desire to draw near, a love which does not hesitate to offer itself in sacrifice for the beloved. Charity, love, is sharing with the one we love in all things. Love makes us similar; it creates equality, it breaks down walls and eliminates distances. God did this with us. Indeed, Jesus "worked with human hands, thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He truly became one of us, like us in all things except sin" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22).

By making Himself poor, Jesus

did not seek poverty for its own sake but, as St. Paul says, "That by His poverty you might become rich." This is no mere play on words or a catch phrase. Rather, it sums up God's logic, the logic of love, the logic of the incarnation and the cross. God did not let our salvation drop down from heaven, like someone who gives alms from their abundance out of a sense of altruism and piety. Christ's love is different! When Jesus stepped into the waters of the Jordan and was baptized by John the Baptist, He did so not because He was in need of repentance, or conversion; He did it to be among people who need forgiveness, among us sinners, and to take upon Himself the burden of our sins. In this



unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8), that He is "heir of all things" (Hebrews 1:2).

So what is this poverty by which Christ frees us and enriches us? It is His way of loving us, His way of

His unique relationship with the Father is the sovereign prerogative of this Messiah who is poor. When Jesus asks us to take up His "yoke which is easy," He asks us to be enriched by His "poverty which is rich" and His "richness which is poor," to share His filial and fraternal Spirit, to become sons and daughters in the Son, brothers and sisters in the firstborn brother (cf. Rom 8:29).

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

Our witness

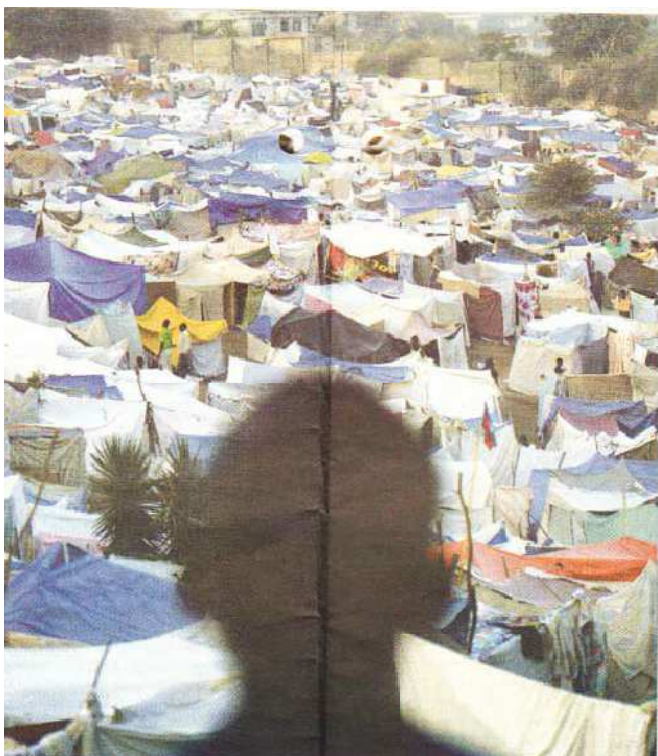
We might think that this "way" of poverty was Jesus' way, whereas we who come after Him can save the world with the right kind of human resources. This is not the case. In every time and place God continues to save mankind and the world through the poverty of Christ, who makes Himself poor in the Sacraments,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

In imitation of our Master, we Christians are called to confront the poverty of our brothers and sisters, to

"Christ chose to comfort us, to save us, to free us from our misery. It is striking that the Apostle states that we were set free, not by Christ's riches but by His poverty. Yet St. Paul is well aware of 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'"

way He chose to comfort us, to save us, to free us from our misery. It is striking that the Apostle states that we were set free, not by Christ's riches but by His poverty. Yet St. Paul is well aware of "the

being our neighbour, just as the Good Samaritan was neighbour to the man left half dead by the side of the road (cf. Lk 10:29ff). What gives us true freedom, true salvation and true happiness is the compassion, tenderness and solidarity of His love. Christ's poverty which enriches us is His taking flesh and bearing our weaknesses and sins as an expression of God's infinite mercy to us. Christ's poverty is the greatest treasure of all: Jesus' wealth is that of His



"God's wealth passes not through our wealth, but invariably and exclusively through our personal and communal poverty...we Christians are called to confront the poverty of our brothers and sisters, to touch it, to make it our own and to take practical steps to alleviate it"

boundless confidence in God the Father, His constant trust, His desire always and only to do the Father's will and give glory to Him. Jesus is rich in the same way as a child who feels loved and who loves its parents, without doubting their love and tenderness for an instant. Jesus' wealth lies in His being the Son;

touch it, to make it our own and to take practical steps to alleviate it. *Destitution* is not the same as *poverty*: Destitution is poverty without faith, without support, without hope. There are three types of destitution: Material, moral and spiritual. *Material destitution* is what

(Contd. on Pg. 9)

To the American Jewish Committee

To flourish in friendship and understanding

Jews and Christians can cooperate in constructing a more just and fraternal world. The Holy Father said this to a delegation of American Jewish Committee in the Vatican's Consistory Hall.

I welcome you here today. Your organization, which on various occasions has met with my venerable Predecessors, maintains good relations with the Holy See and with many representatives of the Catholic world. I am very grateful to you for the distinguished contribution you have made to dialogue and fraternity between Jews and Catholics, and I encourage you to continue on this path.

Next year we will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Second Vatican Council *Nostra Aetate*, which today constitutes for the Church the sure point of reference for relations with our "elder brothers." From this

document, our reflection on the spiritual patrimony which unites us and which is the foundation of our dialogue has developed with renewed vigour. This foundation is theological, and not simply an expression of our desire for reciprocal respect and esteem. Therefore, it is important that our dialogue be always profoundly marked by the awareness of our relationship with God.

In addition to dialogue, it is also important to find ways in which Jews and Christians can cooperate in constructing a more just and fraternal world. In this regard, I call to mind in a particular way our common efforts to serve the poor, the mar-

ginalized and those who suffer. Our commitment to this service is anchored in the protection of the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners as shown in Sacred Scripture (cf. Ex 20:20-22). It is a God given duty, one which reflects his holy will and his justice; it is a true religious obligation.

Finally, in order that our efforts may not be fruitless, it is important that we dedicate ourselves to transmitting to new generations the heritage of our mutual knowledge, esteem and friendship which has, thanks to the commitment of associations like yours, grown over these years. It is my hope therefore that the study of relations with



Judaism may continue to flourish in seminaries and in centres of formation for lay Catholics, as I am similarly hopeful that a desire for an understanding of Christianity may grow

among young Rabbis and the Jewish community.

Dear friends, in a few months I will have the joy of visiting Jerusalem, where as the Psalm says we are all born (cf. Ps 87:5)

and where all peoples will one day meet (cf. Is 25:6-10). Accompany, please, with your prayers, so that this pilgrimage may bring forth the fruits of communion, hope and Shalom!

Rich because....

Contd from Pg. 8

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

No less a concern is moral destitution, which consists in slavery to vice and sin. How much pain is caused in families because one of their members - often a young person - is in thrall to alcohol, drugs, gambling or pornography! How many people no longer see meaning in life or prospects for the future, how many have lost hope! And how many are plunged into this destitution by unjust social conditions, by unemployment, which takes away

their dignity as bread-winners, and by lack of equal access to education and health care. In such cases, moral destitution can be considered impending suicide. This type of destitution, which also causes financial ruin, is invariably linked to the spiritual destitution which we experience when we turn away from God and reject His love. If we think we don't need God who reaches out to us through Christ, because we believe we can make do on our own, we are headed for a fall. God alone can truly save and free us.

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

promotion.

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

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

Francis

Pope Francis
(Courtesy: L'Osservatore Romano)

L'Osservatore Romano

Patriarchs agree to Historic Council in 2016

Patriarchs of the Orthodox Churches have agreed to hold an ecumenical council in 2016, a major event that could bring the 14 autonomous Orthodox Churches closer to each other and allow them to consider closer ties to the Roman Catholic Church.

The summit of bishops is the first of its kind to take place in 1,200 years.

The patriarchs met in Istanbul from March 6 to 9 at a rare summit, or synaxis, called by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, who is spiritual leader of the Orthodox but has no authority over the other Churches.

The Churches, representing about 250 million faithful, are in full communion with each other but often have minor disputes among themselves.

The role of the Russian Orthodox, with 165 million members by far the biggest Orthodox Church, overshadowed the meeting. After seven decades of Communist domination, the Moscow Patriarchate has revived religion at home and extended its influence within the Orthodox world. It has also forged a close political alliance with President Vladimir Putin.

While respecting the historical primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch, based on his role as the bishop of former Constantinople, the Russians have worked to limit his authority by insisting all decisions among Orthodox must be unanimous and issuing objections to Bartholomew's efforts to foster closer ties to the Vatican.

In his opening address, Bartholomew reminded the patriarchs that synodal decisions were traditionally taken by majority vote. He made an oblique reference to strains between Istanbul and Moscow, saying "we sometimes give the impression to outsiders that we disagree even about who is 'first' among us."

Russian Patriarch Kirill argued for consensus voting at the council and

extensive preparations before the council opens. In the final communique, the Russian proposals prevailed. The 2016 date is a year later than expected, to allow for the extra work Moscow wanted. Bartholomew said the council must find a way to strengthen the synodal system to help

Orthodox Churches resolve their differences and work more as one Church rather than many. "Unless the Orthodox Church places its own house in order, it would be unable to address the world with authority and validity," he said.

He mentioned "relations with non-Orthodox Christians" as a topic to be debated before the council but gave no specifics. The Russian Church has effectively blocked closer ties with Rome by recently reiterating its opposition to a 2007 Catholic-Orthodox agreement on papal primacy that it did not sign at the time. Moscow prefers to stress cooperation with the Vatican to defend traditional values and combat secularism.

Bartholomew, who fears some brother Churches are too isolated from each other and the outer world, stressed even the Orthodox had to change with the times. "A traditional Church does not mean a fossilised Church," he reminded them. Pressing problems included the environment, poverty, secularisation, bioethics and the persecution of Christians in the Middle East.

The council, officially called the Holy and Great Synod, will take place in Hagia Irene, a former Byzantine church in a courtyard of Topkapi Palace, the home of the Ottoman sultans. Taken over after the Muslim conquest of 1453, it has been used as a Janissary arsenal and military antiques hall before becoming a museum and concert hall in the twentieth century.

(Courtesy: The Tablet)



The UNHRC Resolution

"Man does not live by bread alone"

Did The Catholic Church Forbid Catholics Reading?

Bryan Landsberger

The President and the Secretary General of the UN in 2009 accepted the need to inquire into war crimes and violations of the International Humanitarian Law during the war. Despite previous UN Resolutions drawing attention to this commitment the Government had failed to honour

Current Affairs

this commitment and the UN sought and obtained approval for an international investigation. The UNHRC voted by a majority of 23 to 12 for the High Commissioner for Human Rights "To undertake a comprehensive investigation into alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights and related crimes by both parties in Sri Lanka during the period covered by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, and to establish the facts and circumstances of such alleged violations and of the crimes perpetrated with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring accountability, with assistance from relevant experts and special procedures mandate holders." Can we complain?

A country or government are abstractions. Crimes can be committed only by persons not by a government or a country. The present Resolution has extended its scope to include continuing violations of human rights after the end of the war and refers to extra-judicial killings, forced disappearances, the suppression of media freedom and the attacks on religious minorities and wants an inquiry into them as well. The people may not know what exactly happened during the last stage of the war. But the public is aware of what has taken place

after the end of the war by way of abductions, extra-judicial killings, the killing of some journalists and the intimidation of others who had to flee the country, the suppression of media freedom and the failure to uphold the Rule of Law and instead to resort to arbitrary actions without conforming to the law as in the dismissal of the former Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake.

The masses may not appreciate these liberal democratic values and be guided entirely by Government propaganda. But the educated and intelligent middle class know that the matters referred to in the UN Resolution are real. The President has not answered any of these charges but instead kept harping on the development work carried out by his Government in the North and East to restore the infrastructure and clear the mines. But these do not eliminate the need to ensure accountability for any offences against the International Law and the Humanitarian Law. He also kept silent about the charges regarding the continuing violations after the end of the war. All countries are obliged to comply with these laws both during a war and in ordinary times. So an investigation into such charges cannot be avoided.

The Government cannot deny that the Rule of Law and the independence of the Judiciary have been undermined by the exercise of the plethora of powers arrogated to the President by the 18th Amendment. Institutions vital for a functioning democracy like an independent judiciary free of interference by the ruling Executive, a Police service free to act in terms of the law, a free media where journalists don't have to fear for their lives because of what they publish; are all essential institutions in a democracy. We have reached the depths in institutional failure. The Annual freedom of the Media Index ranks

the country at the bottom.

Elections alone even if they are free and fair which they are not, are not proof of a functioning democracy. So the Government stands accused of authoritarianism. The people are with him. But even if all the people vote for the Government it does not justify the violation of the International Humanitarian Law for they embody values which are above the people. Russia, China and the USA are not paragons of virtue when it comes to their own conformity with the International Humanitarian Law. But their lapses do not abrogate them. Yes the

VIEW POINT

smaller countries do not have the same liberty to flout these laws. Nor does national sovereignty justify the exclusion of UN authority to inquire into these allegations if the country itself has failed to do so. The birds of a feather are said to flock together and the countries that opposed the Resolution like China, Russia, Venezuela, and Cuba and Zimbabwe are themselves violating human rights.

The Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Report pointed out the lapses with regard to humanitarian violations and made a series of recommendations to restore the institutions required to restore freedom and the Rule of Law. But the Action Plan of the Government ignored most of these recommendations on the ground that they were beyond its term of reference. The government has rejected the UN Resolution. But it must realize that there may be costs to such repudiation and failure to cooperate. Will the government expose the people to such adversity?

To explore this question we need to take three separate issues. (1) The history (2) the situation earlier in the century (3) what is it like today. It is an extremely common claim by some Protestants that the Catholic Church did not permit the laity to read the Bible because she was not following the Scriptures. Keeping the Bible written in Latin was another way of preventing the laity from reading the Bible.

Putting first things first. Where did the Bible come from? The Bible did not just fall from heaven. God did not hand us the Bible as He handed Moses the Ten Commandments. The first century did not have a New Testament because it was not yet written completely. The second and the third century did not have a New Testament because the Councils of the Catholic Church had not yet defined and codified the collection of the Canon of accepted books. The Bible was not put under one cover until the year 397 A.D at the Council of Carthage. Prior to this date the different books of the Bible were scattered in different places. As the years went by the number and extent of these collections increased and the feeling grew that the Church must examine them all and with its divine authority and declare which were to be received as the Word of God and which were to be regarded as works of merely human authorship. So that means, for 400 years after the Crucifixion we did not have a Bible. Yet, the Church was surprisingly well organized before a single line of the New Testament was written. The Church taught by means of Tradition, the Lord working with her, guided by the Holy Spirit and confirming their words with signs following. Nowhere does the Bible say that Jesus commanded the Apostles to go and write. The command was: "Go and preach, I am with you"

Since it was the Catholic Church, the worshipping community, that gave us the Bible and not the other way round, then why would she not want the laity to read it? But, the question still remains: Did the Church actually forbid Catholics reading the Bible. The Catholic Church was and is never opposed to reading the Bible. What she opposed was people reading interpretations, the Bible apart from the teaching authority of the Apostolic Catholic Church. The Church is the custodian, transmitter and interpreter of the doctrine of faith. The Protestant Reformers provided the reading and interpreting of Bible by each individual outside the protective bounds and Traditions of the Catholic Church, and with the invention of paper and printing in 1436, one suddenly saw lots of people making very poor and heretical translations of the Bible. There were many Theologies as there were many heads. Interpretations apart from the teaching authority of the Catholic Church has led to the kind of problems we have today with nearly 30,000 denominations interpreting the Scriptures differently. In fact, a careful study of Biblical history shows that the Catholic Church did encourage the reading of Sacred Scriptures.

A Memorable Meeting of a Teacher and Pupil



At the 50th Anniversary of the Golden Jubilee of the "Hendala Susithawadana Samithiya" held recently, Chief Justice Mohan Peiris, presented a beautiful memento to Mr. D.C. Jayasinghe in appreciation of his loyal and dedicated service to the Samithiya for the last 50 years.

Mr. D.C. Jayasinghe is a Founder Member and the first secretary who continued in this capacity for 5 consecutive years. Later he became the Vice President. The Samithiya was named "Hendala Susitha Wadana Samithiya" by Mr. Jayasinghe which means the Society promoting goodwill among people. Mr. D.C. Jayasinghe who was born and bred in Hendala is now sick and feeble, aged 82 years. During his tenure as a teacher for 40 years of which 20 years was in the capacity of Principal of the Upper school and Middle School of St. Joseph's College, Colombo, he was the teacher of Honorable Mohan Peiris, then a young Josephian.

At the start of the function the Chief Justice Mohan Peiris, while being escorted to the venue in procession preceded by a retinue of Kandyan dancers and drummers suddenly saw a bold-headed old gent, a very familiar face even though many years have passed, seared on a side below the stage. The Chief Justice walked towards this old gent and very warmly embraced his former teacher, Mr. Jayasinghe, with joy.

The Susitha Wadana Samithiya is the brainchild of late B.F. Perera the founder. The Samithiya was unofficially founded with only 15 members in 1964. Today its membership is over 1,600. The Samithiya is an inter-racial, inter-religious and no-political social service organisation committed to assisting the less-privileged persons of our society. It is an approved Charity by Government Gazette Notification No. 1461 of 11-08-1967 and was incorporated under Act of Parliament No. 19 of 1968.

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever believes in me will never die.

(Jn
11:25,26)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR A 6th April - 13th April 2014

Sun: FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
Ez. 37:12-14; Rom.8:8-11; Jn.11:1-145
(or 3-7,17, 20-27, 33-45)
Mon: Memorial of St. John the Baptist de
la Salle, Priest
Dan 13:1-9,15-17,19-30, 33-62
or 13:41-62; Jn. 8:12-20
Tue: Num 21:4-9; Jn. 8:21-30
Wed: Dan. 3:14-20, 91, 92, 95; Jn.8:31-42
Thu: Gen. 17:3-9; Jn.8:51-59
Fri: Jer20:10-13; Jn.10:31-42
Sat: Ez.37:21-28; Jn.11:45-56
Sun: PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE
LORD
Is.50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11;

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Son of the living God, give us life.

"Lord, if you had been here," said Martha.
"My brother would not have died." Lord, make us
aware of your presence and of your call to live your
life. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Son of the living God, give us life.

For all those who are saddened by the
death of a dear one, that the words of Christ may
bring them peace and consolation.
We pray to the Lord.

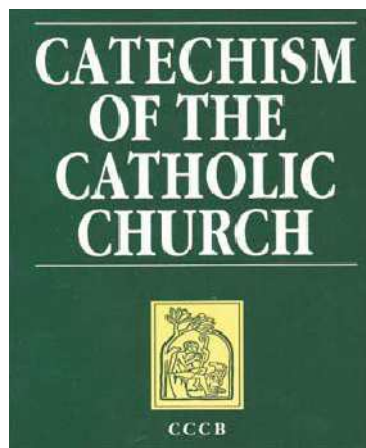
Response: Son of the living God, give us life.

Lord, look on our Christian community.
Make us appreciate life as a gift from you and a task,
so that we can use all our potentials to make it rich
and full for ourselves and for others.
We pray to the Lord.

Response: Son of the living God, give us life.

That we may believe evermore firmly, that
as we journey through life, we are journeying with
Christ and with each other towards the promised
land of eternal life. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Son of the living God, give us life.



The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

What is this Sacrament called?

1423 It is called the **Sacrament of conversion** because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call

First Reading: Ezk. 37: 12-14

Through His
Prophets, God promises
the Israelites who were
living in captivity in Bab-
ylon; their freedom and
a land for them to live.
Though this may appear
difficult as bringing a dead
person to life, neverthe-
less God out of mercy and
love could do it.

Second Reading: Rom.8:8-11

St. Paul advises
the Romans to live in the
Spirit of God; so that they
may belong to Christ.
Those who belong to
Christ will be raised to a
new life because of their
righteousness.

Gospel: Jn.11: 1-45

The Gospel story
is about raising Lazarus
but Christ couldn't go on
time and by the time He
went Lazarus was already
dead. Jesus raises Lazarus
to life to show the Jews
that He is the true Mes-
siah.

Reflection

As we approach
the feast of the Resurrec-
tion, the Readings enlight-
en us of the power of God
which gives us new life.
When we are placed in a
difficult situation or suf-
fer from a body ailment or
even live in sin, we ought
to believe in the Lord plac-
ing all our trust and hope
in Him. For, He is God and
He is all powerful. Whether,
here on earth below or
in heaven above He shows
His blessings on all His

faithful. In all difficult and
impossible situations He
gives hope. Though we
live in sin, if we allow the
Spirit to dwell in us then
the Lord is ready to for-
give and give us a new life.
The power of God is not
confined to the life that we
lead on earth but He could
even give life to the dead.

In the First Read-
ing God through His
Prophet promises the Is-
raelites freedom from the
Babylonian captivity. Not
freedom alone but also
a promise to bring them
back to the Promised Land.
At that time bringing the
Jews out of Babylon was
as difficult as bringing the
dead back to life; because
the Babylonian kingdom
was so powerful. But the
Lord was ready to do it,
as the Israelites believe
and had changed their
wayward lives. God out of
mercy and love was ready
to do anything for the Is-
raelites.

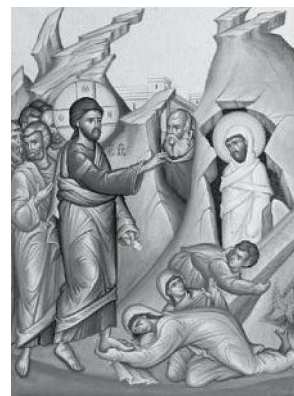
In the Second
Reading St. Paul writes to
the Romans to live in the
Spirit of the Lord so that
God would be pleased
with them. Those who live
in the flesh cannot please
God. If anybody lives in
the Spirit even though he
has been living in sin, his
Spirit is alive because of
his righteousness. This
only reminds us that even
if we have been caught up
in the gish and are living
in sin, the Lord is ready to
forgive and forget our sins
as we make his Spirit live
in us. About this the Read-
ing is clear, "If the Spirit of
Him who raised Jesus from
the death dwells in you,

He who raised
Christ Jesus
from the dead
will give life
to your mortal
bodies through
His spirit who
dwells in you."

In the
Gospel to make
people known
that He is the
Messiah, the
one sent by God
and moreover to
strengthen the
belief and faith
of the two sis-
ters Jesus brings
back Lazarus to life. Jesus
performs this miracle to
prove that God is almighty
and that He cures not only
bodily ailments but also
could bring people back to
life. This gives us a glimpse
of His resurrection too.

Aid Story

A silver cup
slipped out of the hands of
a pupil of Faraday, the Eng-
lish Physicist and Chemist,
and landed in the jar of
Nitric Acid, and was dis-
solved to the displeasure
of the boy. However Far-
aday intervened to rescue
the cup. He put some salt
in the jar which precipitat-
ed, in the form of granules,
the dissolved silver molec-
ules to the bottom of the
jar. He collected them and
made with them a simi-
lar cup but much prettier
and clean. This time it was
much better. It was the
same cup because it was
made of the same matter.
So it will be with the souls
that are forgiven. Though
they are dead because of
sin; once forgiven they will



rise back to be better and
they will be resplendent in
glory.

Aid Story 2

An elderly Chi-
nese Philosopher was
once approached by a
young woman who was
grief stricken by the loss
of her only son. "I will be
able to help you." He as-
sured her, "if you bring me
some mustard seed; but
it must be obtained from
a home where there has
never been any sorrow."
The woman started her
search with hope and ea-
gerness. In every place she
visited, however, there had
been some trial or loss of
loved ones. Returning dis-
appointed, she exclaimed,
"How selfish have I been?
Sorrow is common for
all." "Ah," said the sage,
"You have learned a valu-
able lesson and acquired
a wealth of wisdom which
has not only eased your
grief, but also helped you
to sympathize with others.

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father's
from whom one has strayed by sin.

It is called the **Sacrament of Penance**, since it
consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and eccle-
sial steps of conversion, penance and satisfaction.

1424 It is called the **Sacrament of confes-
sion**, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a
priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a
profound sense it is also a "confession" - acknowl-
edgment and praise - of the holiness of God and of his mer-
cy toward sinful man.

It is called the **Sacrament of forgiveness**, since
by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the
penitent "pardon and peace."

It is called the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**,
because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who rec-
onciles: "Be reconciled to God." He who lives by God's
merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go;
first be reconciled to your brother."

The Acts of the Penitent

Contrition

1451 Among the penitent's acts contrition
occupies first place. Contrition is "sorrow of the soul
and detestation for the sin committed, together with the
resolution not to sin again."

1452 When it arises from a love by which
God is loved above all else, contrition is called "perfect"

(contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial
sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it in-
cludes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacra-
mental confession as soon as possible.

1454 The reception of this sacrament ought
to be prepared for by an examination of conscience
made in the light of Word of God. The passages best
suited to this can be found in the moral catechesis of the
Gospels and the apostolic Letters, such as the Sermon
on the Mount and the apostolic teachings.

The Confession of Sins

1456 Confession to a priest is an essential part
of the sacrament of Penance: "All mortal sins of which
penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious
must be recounted by them in confession, even if they are
most secret and have been committed against the last
two precepts of the Decalogue; for these sins sometimes
wound the soul more grievously and are more dangerous
than those which are committed openly."

"When Christ's faithful strive to confess all the
sins that they can remember, they undoubtedly place
all of them before the divine mercy for pardon. But
those who fail to do so and knowingly withhold some,
place nothing before the divine goodness for remission
through the mediation of the priest, **"for if the sick per-
son too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor,
the medicine cannot heal what it does not know."**

'RUPANTHARANA'



- A Patriarchal film and a film for lost Feminine Sheep

Rupantharana is another film which discusses the post-war situation in Sri Lanka but the plot here is unusual. The story evolves on the family life of a Brigadier and his loyalty to the country.

Nalaka Vithanage, as director has tried to insert a deep patriarchal bond in the film perhaps to educate the audience on the importance of parental bonding with the children, which hardly happens now. Dr. Arosh Fernando, as Producer has proved that he is able to witness to a good art work not only to entertain the spectators but also to make them think of their objectives in life.

More than placing emphasis on the post war ends and their organisation, the film turns a deep curve in the audi-

ence's mind that the love of a father is unlimited. - A father who alerts his daughter about the dangers she has brought into her life. Duty and family are two important entities in the life of this responsible army officer.

The film moves on with a reasonable speed and at the beginning we are given some quick scenes in a foreign land which is almost strange to the Sri Lankan traditional life-style. These strange starting points would definitely carry the audience to a different set up. The audience is given a picture of a romantic and a passionate film at the beginning. At the same time these scenes field some challenges to the Sri Lankan youngsters and portray well the permissive life of many Sri Lankan youth who live abroad.

If the film had been

written in a foreign country, one could justify the behaviour of the young people in the way they choose to make decisions and live as they want. - Smoking, using strong alcohol and the infidelity of each partner blend with the normal lifestyle of the West, but not here in Sri Lanka.

Another significant topic is abortion. The couple seriously agrees to have a child and start their life anew with the blessing of the parents. Later a series of unfortunate incidents sadly create the background for abortion. This message is driven home very powerfully in the middle of the film to signify the value of life.

Abortion is a sin in the Catholic Church. It is akin to murder and clearly goes against the Fifth Commandment. The film cautions young couples

about pre-marital sex.

At the end of the film we are reminded of the Parable of the Lost Sheep, how the shepherd uses all his tactics and means to bring the disobedient sheep back to the flock.

Ravindra Randeniya as the Brigadier, plays the role of the concerned father and the duty conscious army officer.

Angela Seneviratne is exposed as the cultural and exemplary mother in her role as the brigadier's wife who keeps the family in balance understanding the feelings and also the dispositions of the dedicated Brigadier-husband. Ranjan Ramanayake's character in the film shows that he has the capacity to take up different roles.

Tissa Wijesurendra, Damitha Abeyaratne, Nayana Kumari, Saranga Disasekera

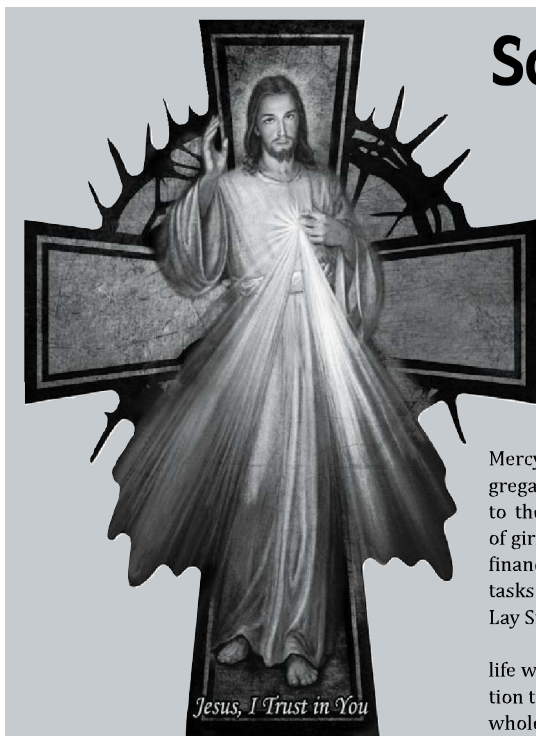
and Manik Wijewardhana add colour to the script. The Director has also introduced new faces, namely; Amila Karunanayake, Shaila Nathaniel, Milinda Madugalla and Kelum Kularatne, all of whom do justice to their respective characters.

Lahiru Perera's music blends well with the script. He has indeed proved himself.

Rupantharana is a film which depicts the various aspects of life with a central message that the audience cannot miss - lead a good life as a citizen of the country and respect others.

Watching the film from a Catholic perspective, the parabolic messages of Jesus Christ in the Bible, come to mind.

Rev. Fr. Randil Fernando OMI
Nazareth - Wennappuwa



Saint Faustina and the Devotion to Divine Mercy

In the year 1925 at the age of twenty, Helen Kowlaszki, a Polish girl entered the congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of

Mercy. The nuns of the Congregation devoted themselves to the education and training of girls who needed moral and financial help. Sister Faustina's tasks were simple ones, as a Lay Sister.

Her great mission in life was to announce the Devotion to the Mercy of God, to the whole world, in order to fos-

ter the devotion to His Mercy, Christ requested Sister Faustina to venerate the picture of the Merciful Christ, to institute a feast of God's Mercy, to pray the Chaplet of Mercy and to observe the Novena to the Mercy of God.

Our Saviour instructed Sister Faustina saying, "Tell ailing mankind to draw close to my Merciful Heart and I will fill it with peace."

The Sunday after Easter Sunday is known as the Feast of Divine Mercy. This year it falls on April 27.



Anthea Lakshani
OKI International School,
Wattala

Young World

The Inter-school Athletic Meet at Katana



The Inter-school Athletic Meet of the Katana Educational Division was held recently at Seeduwa Davisamara School Grounds. Students of Bolawalana Ave Maria Convent emerged champions by obtaining 98 points. They also won

the championships in netball under 15, 17 and 19, Division. Sheini Himasha was awarded the Best Athlete under 21 and Dilki Dilshani became the Best Athlete under 19.

T. S. Fernando

Loyola College, Bopitiya welcomes Rev. Fr. Andradi



Rev. Fr. Ranjith Andradi, the new Rector of Loyola College, Negombo was felicitated by the Principal and Staff of Loyola College, Bopitiya. Picture shows

Fr. Andradi being welcomed to the School.

Benjamin Kiriheiti.

Investiture of new Daham Pasal Prefects



The new Prefects of Our Lady of Sorrows, Daham Pasal, of the Pallansena Parish, took oaths recently, with Holy

Mass presided by Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Jayantha Nimal.

Melvyn de Costa

Bishop Cletus visits Daham Pasal students



His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura spoke to Daham Pasal students of the Dehigahapitiya Parish who were following a programme on media and

writing. The Programme was conducted by Kumara Nayanajith of the *Gnanartha Pradeepaya*.

Sewandi Jayawardena

Holy Cross College, Kalutara felicitates students



A felicitation ceremony was held by the Rector of Holy Cross, College, Kalutara Rev. Fr. Camillus Fernando and staff, to appreciate and acknowledge, students who excelled at the recently

concluded G.C.E A/L examination.

Eleven students obtained 3 A's while one student became first in the Maths stream in the Kalutara District.

D. Antony Andradi

De Mazenod excels at Wushu



De Mazenod College, Kandana emerged Champions at the All-Ceylon Wushu competition, held recently at the Ambepusse Sinha Regiment Auditorium.

De Mazenod won 6 Golds, 3 Silvers and 4 Bronze medals.

Anton Jayasuriya

Lenten Retreat for Children



Rev. Fr. Emery Priyashantha Perera conducts a Lenten Retreat for children of Pamunugama Maha Vidyalaya.

B. K.

Sinhala Day at St. Lawrence's Convent



The 33rd Sinhala Day "Sisumira Kala Ulela" of St. Lawrence's Convent, Wellawatta was held featuring many cultural events; traditional songs and dance, and dramatic acts. The Chief Guest was Prof. Kusuma Karunaratne.

Sinhala Literary Association

English with Fun and Entertainment

Dear Readers,

In our 21st lesson we learnt some foreign expressions, proverbs, words with delicate shades of meaning and followed a module on how to develop an effective self-introduction for an interview.

From our Lesson 22 which is published today after a lapse of six weeks let's move from English with Fun and Entertainment to a General English Course at Intermediate Level covering grammatical expressions and different language functions. This lesson will include English Grammar for institutional exams, a role play, a vocabulary enrichment activity, practising questions and answers for IELTS and trying out teaching a poem.

Those who wish to join the Archdiocesan Certificate Course in English Medium Teacher Development (CEMTD Batch 5) can get information from the Archdiocesan Education Office contacting Sharmalee, the Coordinator of the Course on 2699129.

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.

With Best Regards!

NJ

Testing Grammar

Task 1: Underline the correct word within brackets

- Would you like to go (at/to/in) the cinema tonight?
- We are going (/to/on/in) holiday next week.
- There is a bridge (through/across/outside) the river.
- The flight from Katunayake to Sydney was (about/via/along) Singapore.
- Munich lies 530 meters (above/across/part) the sea level.
- All the boys who (have/had/were) not done their assignments were taken to task.
- We (complete/completed/have completed) our final examination yesterday.
- Today is a public holiday. All the shops (were/have/have been) closed.
- If you go out in the rain, you (will/would/might) get wet.
- My father (love/loving/loves) all his children equally well.
- She was able to answer all the questions.
('was able to' refers to can/could/will/may)
- There are dark clouds in the sky. It may rain soon.
('may' expresses, permission, possibility, intention)
- You should listen to your parents.
('should' expresses obligation, intention, necessity)
- You can go home now. ('can' expresses permission, possibility, certainty)
- An exponent to express fatigue is ('I'm tired', 'I'm hungry', 'I'm angry')

Task 2: Language Function - Giving information at the initial stage of an interview. Complete the blanks of the Role Play given and practise it with a partner

- Receptionist:** Is your registered number R 2068?
You: Yes.
Receptionist: Please take a seat.
You: Thank you.
Receptionist: Your name, please?
You: I'm (write your name)
Receptionist: Your address, please?
You:
 (write your address)
Receptionist: Have you brought your certificates?
You: Yes.
Receptionist: Take this form and go to room No. 5. You will be called for the interview.
You: Thank you.

Task 3: Vocabulary enrichment - Let's learn different shades of delicate meaning for each word given. See whether these words fit into the slots created and learn them.

- Swarna is a very (i) girl and she does all her work in a very manner.
 (i) active / lively / vigorous / energetic / dynamic

- She gave me the (ii) figures so that I could complete the task successfully.
 (ii) actual / real / genuine / definite / concrete
- Her dedication to her work was (iii)
 (iii) admirable / commendable / laudable / splendid / marvellous
- He is such a/an (iv) child that everyone who saw him loved him dearly.
 (iv) adorable / lovable / endearing / cute / charming
- He has such a/an (v) heart and is very pleasant in all his dealings
 (v) affectionate / loving / warm / friendly / kind

Task 4 : Speaking - IELTS Speaking

Part 1: Questions and Answers- Let's practise ten of them

- How are you? I am fine, how about you?
- May I see your proof of identification? Yeah, sure.
- What is your name? My name is Sangeeth.
- How do you spell your name? SANGEETH
- What is the meaning of your name? Well, it is a Sinhala name and the meaning of my name is music (6) What is your first name? My first name is Prasanna
- What is your last name? My last name is Jayalath. (7) How old are you? I am 25 years old
- Describe yourself physically? My height is 5 feet 7 inches. I have black hair and my complexion is whitish. (7) Describe yourself emotionally? I am very a very sensitive person.
- Why are you taking the IELTS exam? I am taking the IELTS exam because I want to get admission to a Canadian University.
- Why are you going abroad? I am going abroad because I want to get a foreign degree
- Will you come back to your country? Yes, I will definitely come back to my country because I want to join my family business.

Task 5: Learning to teach a poem : Instructions:

- Tell the students that they are going to read a poem and answer different questions.
- Ask the students to share their unforgettable experiences with their sisters and brothers at home.
- Put the students into groups of five and distribute adequate copies of the poem to the group.
- Instruct the students to read the poem aloud in their groups and discuss the situation described there.
- Go around the groups and help them to understand the poem.
- Put the questions on the black board and ask the students to copy them down and answer them.
- Get them to read their answers aloud individually and correct them orally.

The Quarrel - Written by Eleanor Farjeon

- (1)
 I quarreled with my brother,
 One thing led to another
 The start of it was slight,
 He said he was right,
 I don't know what about
 And somehow we fell out.
 The end of it was strong,
 I knew he was wrong.
- (2)
 We hated one another.
 Then suddenly my brother
 And said, "Oh, come along
 I was in the wrong."
 That afternoon turned black.
 Thumped me on the back,
 We can't go on all night;
 So he was in the right

- What is the poem about?
- How many are involved in the incident?
- Who are they?
- Why did they quarrel?
- At what time of the day did this incident take place?
- What happened at the end?
- Find the rhyming words for ' brother, slight, wrong, black'

Answers:

Q 1 (i) to (ii) on (iii) across (iv) via (v) above (6) had (7) complete (8) have been (9) will (10) loves (11) could (12) possibility (13) necessity (14) permission (15) I'm tired

Q 4 (i) a quarrel (ii) Two (iii) The poet and his brother (iv) An insignificant matter the poet himself didn't know (v) During the day time (vi) The poet and his brother reconciled each other. (7) another, right, strong, back.

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Compiled by Noel Jayamanne

Anima Christi

A Solemn Choral Presentation for the Holy Week

Friday, April 11, 2014 at 6.30 p.m, at the Chapel of St. Joseph's College, Colombo.



For the eighth consecutive year, the much expected choral presentation for the Holy Week titled ANIMA CHRISTI (Soul of my Saviour), will unfold within the magnificent Chapel of St. Joseph's College at 6.30 p.m.

Presented by the globally recognised St. Cecilia's Choir of St. Joseph's College, the event will retrace the final turbulent days of Christ on earth. This event will depict His defiant entry into Jerusalem, the farewell supper, the arrest, abduction, trial torture and death culminating in His Glorious Resurrection.

The hundred strong Josephian Choir will present selections from great classical masters including Mozart, Plastering and Handle. Apart from the rendering of several contemporary compositions in exquisite harmony, delightfully, the programme will also include some much loved old hymns for congregational participation.

The evening will commence with the Solemn Gregorian Palm Sunday chant - "Pueri Herbarium" followed by the majestic anthem "Lauda Jerusalem". On the classical segment they will present Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus," Palestrina's "Adoramus Te," "Stabat Mater," "Lacrimosa" and Handel's "Worthy is the Lamb" ending with the "Amen Chorus." The programme will conclude with the combined choirs singing the grand "Hallelujah Chorus."

The other selections will feature "Regina Coeli" (Queen of Heaven) and "Anima Christi." Incidentally, the Josephian and the Lawrentian Choirs together sang this beautiful hymn recently for the forthcoming Bollywood film "Bombay Velvet," depicting a Church scene in Goa.

For those who treasure contemporary pieces, the organizers have included "Mary did you know," "Above all Power" and Eric Clapton's "Tears in Heaven" which the singer composed in memory of his four-year-old son who died tragically. Indeed this song captures the essence of Christian faith that there is joyful life after each sad death.

As is customary, the charming Choir of Good Shepherd Convent will open the Good Friday segment with their mellifluous singing, followed by the singers of Maris Stella College presenting well-loved Sinhala hymns in their unique and rich style. The Primary Choir of St. Joseph's College too will lend their voices in all congregational singing. ANIMA CHRISTI, the Josephine Lenten presentation will combine the voices of over 300 singers to make the event a memorable experience.

This colourful and dramatic presentation is open to all who long for and cherish the incomparable beauty of Sacred Music.



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