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WORLD MISSION SUNDAY



October 20

Messenger

SINCE FEB 11, 1869

"REGISTERED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS OF SRI LANKA

UNDER NO. QD / 50 / NEWS / 2013"

Sunday, October 13, 2013 Vol 144 No 40 20 Pages Rs: 25.00 Registered as a newspaper

Archdiocesan 'Marian Year'

Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013 to First Sunday in Advent (Nov. 30), 2014

Today, October 13, 2013 Pope Francis will Consecrate the World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary



* Bishop Emmanuel addresses Catechists

"Sunday School, a Door of Faith"



His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo urged catechists to be creative

and find new ways to impart a stronger faith to the children and adults in order to invite them also to bear witness to

Christian life with a firm conviction. Addressing the Colombo Region Catechists' Day on behalf

of the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, held at St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa, His Lordship said that Sunday School is not an ordinary classroom, but a 'door' for the children to enter into a journey of faith and every catechist is a pillar of faith education who guides and accompanies the child in this journey.

His Lordship explained that the life of a catechist is a life

that witnesses to the Gospel. Rather than presenting oneself as "knowledgeable experts," the best way to bond with the child is to unite more with Christ and make him the centre of your life.

"This is your initiative and whole-hearted commitment which you as catechists make to help the children to start a dialogue with the Lord," His Lordship stressed.

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Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate

The meeting of the Archdiocesan Biblical Commission (ABC), presided over by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, is scheduled on October 15, 2013 at 4.00 p.m. at Cardinal Cooray Auditorium in Aquinas University College, Colombo 8. All members are requested to attend this meeting.

Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi Director Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate

Silver Jubilee of Samata Sarana



Seen in the picture is the late Rev. Sr. Bernie Silva, foundress of Samata Sarana with Rev. Fr. Joe de Mel Director of the Institute. Samata Sarana, a Social Service Institute of the Church celebrates 25 years of Service in October.

Rev. Fr. Leo Perera is the new Executive Director of Samata Sarana. There will be a fund-raising concert of song and dance performed by the children of Samata Sarana on Sunday October 20 at St. Peter's College, Colombo at 6.00 p.m.

Archbishop Oswald Gomis Auditorium

The opening of the Refurbished Auditorium of St. Peter's College - Gampaha will take place on October 15, 2013 by its founder, Archbishop Emeritus, His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis and will be blessed by Very Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, the Archdiocesan General Manager of Catholic Private Schools. The Auditorium will be named Archbishop Oswald Gomis Auditorium.

Ashen S. Senarathna

Happy Birthday Your Lordship!



With Prayer-filled Wishes for Good Health and Happiness. October 11. Ad Multos Annos Vivat!

Catholic Scholar felicitated



The Faculty of the Humanities of the Kelaniya University felicitated Catholic scholar, grammarian, historian and centenarian Rev. Fr. Vito Perniola SJ, at a grand ceremony that involved all the departments of the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University.

Fr. Perniola's invaluable service to Academia as a Linguist in Pali and (Contd on Pg. 2) >>>

Prayerful Wishes! Golden Jubilarians



Sr. Mary Philothia



Sr. Mary Crescentia

These Rev. Sisters of the Congregation of Holy Angels will celebrate a Thanksgiving Mass for their 50 Golden Years of Religious Profession on October 18, 2013 at St. Michael's Church, Nagoda, Kalutara.

A.M.D.G

National Youth Rally at Tewatta

The National Catholic Youth Federation will hold a National Youth Rally on October 19, 2013 at the National Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka in Tewatta, Ragama.

Youth are requested to assemble at the old grotto premises at 9.00 am from where the Rally Procession will begin.

Holy Mass will be celebrated at 12.00 noon in front of the National



Basilica.

The event is held under the patronage of His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera, Bishop in Charge of Youth Apostolate in Sri Lanka.

FROM THE DIOCESES

SVP Kotte Deanery celebrates Elders' Day

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Kotte Deanery, comprising the conferences of Rajagiriya, Battaramulla, Thalanga, Kotte, Nugegoda, Maharagama and Pannipitiya, celebrated their Annual Elders' Day recently.

The event was held at St. Dal Bastoni Church, Thalanga and the day's events commenced with Holy Mass celebrated by Rev. Fr. Jude Nicholas, Spiritual Director of the Kotte Deanery.

Thereafter all elders were garlanded and warmly welcomed for the day's events by the Thalanga conference members.

The climax of the day's events was the selection of 'Thalangama Kumaraya and Kumariya', where the elders not only recalled their youth, but entertained the audience with their on-stage performance and also with their sense of humour.

The event culminated with the singing of

the SVP Theme Song and the National Anthem.

The President and the SVP Kotte Deanery wish to express their thanks to Rev. Fr. Jude Nicholas, Rev. Fr. Sanjeewa Mendis, Parish Priest of St. Dal Bastoni Church and members of the Thalanga conference for their contributions in making this event a success.



Church Feasts

The 127th Annual Feast of the Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Galwetiya, Wattala will be celebrated on Sunday October 13. Festive Mass at 8 am. Chief Celebrant - Rev. Fr. Prasanna Amarasekera. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Prasanna Christopher and preceded by solemn procession at 6.30 pm.



The Annual Feast of St. Theresa's Church, Talwila (Chilaw Diocese) will be celebrated on Sunday October 13. Festive Mass at 7 am. Chief Celebrant - Rev. Fr. Nishantha Janaka, Catechetical Director of Chilaw Diocese. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Pius Kennedy, Dean of Wennappuwa Deanery.

Ainslie Joseph

SVP Mount Lavinia, 'Day-Out - 2013'



The SVP of St. Anthony's Church, Mt. Lavinia recently spent a 'Day-out' accompanied by their Parish Priest and Spiritual Director, Rev. Fr. Leo Perera, Assistant Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Priyan Tissera and beneficiaries, past and present of the SVP.

The group spent a time of personal prayer at *Supuwath Arana* in Seeduwa and then proceeded to Negombo where the Day-out was spent with fun and games.

It was undoubtedly an enjoyable day for all those who participated and a day of mixed feelings as we were bidding farewell to both Fr. Leo and Fr. Priyan who were leaving the Parish of Mount Lavinia, to serve God in their new assignments.

Rienzie de Silva

Grand Mission at Malkaduwwa



On an invitation by the Parish Priest of Kurunegala, Rev. Fr. Jerome Perera, the Oblate Fathers of Nazareth conducted a Grand Mission recently at Our Lady of Fatima Church, Malkaduwwa, a sub-station of the Kurunegala Parish, in view of the forthcoming Jubilee.

The Oblate Fathers had a full house visiting Cottage Masses as a preparation for the Grand Mission under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Gamini Silva OMI.

There was a thirst among people of the parish for the Word of God irrespective of age and it was evident in their positive participation in all the sessions. The Family Service conducted by the Fathers was very much appreciated by the people.

*Rev. Fr. S. Randil Fernando OMI
Nazareth - Wennappuwa*

Donor needed for Kidney Patient



Mr. Denison Silva (29 years) is undergoing treatment for Kidney failure and is in need of a transplant. He urgently needs a donor with O+ (Positive) blood group. Financial assistance also needed.

AC No. 00302617674
Hatton National Bank
Please contact:

0719766083/072 9413152

Catholic Scholar...
Contd. from Pg. 1

Sanskrit and his translation of original historical documents of value to Sri Lanka into English and also his study published into many volumes on

Bens Celebrate Teachers' Day



St. Benedict's College, Kothahena celebrated Teachers' Day last week. On the same day, the College also celebrated children's day. This special event proceeded with Holy Mass at St. Lucia's Cathedral officiated by Rev. Fr. Anthony.

A special ceremony took place

at the College premises after Holy Mass where Rev. Bro. Director Janaka Fonseka and Mr. Leonard Hapuarachchi made interesting speeches on the importance of Teachers' Day. The day's proceedings ended with a fellowship.

Ashen S. Senarathna

the history of the Catholic Church which continues to benefit scholars in the various fields was very much appreciated. Fr. Perniola's book of Pali grammar is today a text book at the University of Oxford, London.

The Italian Embassy was also represented at the felicitation ceremony.

St. Benedict's College, Colombo 13
Application for Grade 6, Year 2014

Application forms will be issued to the child's Parents from 14th and 15th October 2013 between 1.30 p.m. to 3.00 p.m. at the College Office.

The child's birth certificate and the baptismal certificate have to be submitted to obtain the application forms.

Bro. Director

Archbishop to open Sunday School Building at Lenchiyawatta

A new building for the Sunday School of Christ the King Church, Lenchiyawatte of the Ragama Parish will be declared open by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith on Wednesday October 16 at 5.00p.m

Prior to the opening and blessing of the new building His Eminence will preside at a Thanksgiving Holy Mass.

Dickson Anthony

Free Medical Camp
in Wattala

A Free Medical Clinic jointly organised by the Wattala Deanery of St. Vincent de Paul and the Lions Club of Mahabage was held at St. Joseph's Church premises Kerawalapitiya, Hendala. Mrs. Mabel Cooray President of the SVP, Yvonne Perera Secretary, W.W.S. Chandrasekera President of the Lion's Club of Mahabage, Sarath Goonasekera Secretary and members are seen in the picture.

N. Perera

Balagala celebrates Feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help



The feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Balagala was celebrated recently with Festive High Mass officiated by Very Rev. Fr. Cyril Gamini Fernando.

Picture shows the statue of Our Lady being taken in procession. Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Jude Raj Fernando leads the procession.

Nimal Perera



Church in the Modern World

UN pays tribute to Mother Teresa

Recalling the anniversary of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta's death, the UN General Assembly designated September 5, as the International Day of Charity, for the first time this year. The Pontifical Council *Cor Unum*, joined countless number of people throughout the world in remembering her and giving thanks to God for the eloquent witness of love that she had given to the Church and the whole human family. The recognition of the person and work of Blessed Mother Teresa by the international community is an invitation for us to continue to offer this witness of love to those in need.

As we have all been witnessing, in word and deed, our Holy Father, Pope Francis has a par-

ticular love for the poor and suffering. In fact, from the beginning of his Pontificate, Pope Francis has constantly encouraged us through his example and teaching to strive to be "a Church for the poor." He invited the Church to go out of herself and go to the peripheries: Those of the mysteries of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and of religious indifference, of thought, of all misery. By daily contact with these peripheries, the Church is called to bring healing and love through her charitable service.

Every time we look at Mother's Teresa's image, we are reminded of the words of Pope Benedict XVI. "Love - *caritas* - will always prove "necessary, even in the most just society. There is no ordering

of the State so just that it can eliminate the need for a service of love. Whoever wants to eliminate love is preparing to eliminate man as such. There will always be suffering which cries out for consolation and help. There will always be loneliness. There will always be situations of material need where help in the form of concrete love of neighbour is indispensable" (*Deus Caritas Est* n.28b).

Christian charity is always at the service of the integral good of every human being without distinction of religion or race. The exercise of Christian charity does not only rely on professional competence and is not simply content with an impersonal effort. Our approach is with a "heart that sees"



beyond material needs. In the poor that we serve, we strive to see their wholeness and integrity as they stand before God. Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta is a compelling example of the fact that such sensitivity does not affect efficiency. In her service to the poorest of the poor, her

faith saw beyond their material needs. She once said, "God has identified himself with the hungry, the sick, the naked, the homeless; hunger, not only for bread, but for love, for care, to be somebody to someone; nakedness, not for clothing only, but nakedness of that compassion that very

few people give to the unknown, homelessness, not only just for a shelter made of stone, but that homelessness that come from having no one to call your own." This initiative of the UN urges us to always be faithful to this spiritual heritage that Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta has left us.

L'Osservatore Romano

Vatican strikes Commemorative Medal for Pontificate of Pope Francis

An official medal issued by the Vatican to commemorate the first year of the Pontificate of Pope Francis went on sale last Tuesday, October 7.

The Medal, produced by the Italian State and available in gold, silver, and bronze, features a portrait of the Pontiff and the signature of the artist who designed the coin, Mariangela Crisciotti.

Around the portrait is the inscription: Franciscus Pont. Max. An.I

The reverse side



The 200 gold coins, 3,000 silver, and 3,000 bronzed all numbered, come with a certificate of authenticity from the Vatican Secretariat of State



carries the quotation that moved the young Jorge Mario Bergoglio when he felt the call to the priesthood.

Vatican analyst warns of global 'war' against Christians

CNA- In his new book "The Global War on Christians," Vatican analyst John Allen, Jr. details anti-Christian abuse worldwide, drawing light to the tremendous scale of violence against the world's most persecuted religion.

Allen's work, published by Image Books, arises directly from a conversation he had with Cardinal Dolan in 2009, in which the prelate made the point that Christians "need to do a better job of telling these stories" of Christian persecution, like the body of "Holocaust literature" showed the suffering of Jews under Hitler.

Allen notes that throughout the first decade of the 21st century, 100,000 Christians were killed per year - 11 new martyrs every hour - and secular human rights groups estimate that 80 percent of religious freedom violations are current directed against Christians.

Despite these massive figures, the worldwide persecution of Christians is little known in the US and Allen said the first purpose of his book is "to end the silence about anti-Christian persecution ... to put it on the map."

Theologia author sets Limca record

NEW DELHI - Catholic theologian and author Doctor Felix Podimattam created history when Limca Book of Records accepted him this month as the person who has authored the most number of books on moral theology in the world.

Podimattam has written 135 books in his four-decade long teaching and theologizing career on varying moral subjects such as celibacy to sex and artificial insemination to euthanasia, said a press release from his publisher, the New Delhi based Media House.

"It is now official that no one in the world has written books on such varied aspects of the same subject and in such a prolific manner," said Father Baiju Chalackal, Media House Director.

Podimattam is one of the best-known Indian authors in the field of ethics and morality.

He holds a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Mysore, a Licentiate degree in Theology from Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome and a Doctoral degree in Moral Theology from the Alphonsian Academy, Rome.

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



Sunday School...

Contd. from Pg. 1

"This is your initiative and whole-hearted commitment which you as catechists make to help the children to start a dialogue with the Lord," His Lordship stressed.

Cautioning the catechists never to allow the spirit of the world to spoil the work which they have been called to do, His Lordship added, "The more you unite with Jesus and make Him the centre of your life, the more He makes you to witness to your Christian life and open your faith-filled life to others."

Referring to the theme of the day, "The Field of the Catechist with the signs of the times," His Lordship said that often we meet couples preparing for marriages, but who do not know their basic catechism or even the Sacraments. So naturally they are unaware of the sacramental nature of married life. His Lordship thanked the catechists for their magnanimous contribution to spread the message of Christ to the children.

October 13, 2013

Feasts of St. Francis and St. Therese

What did they have?

Firstly, they both had God in full measure in their lives. Both came from a strong and traditional Catholic family. But with Saint Francis, the full abundance of God in his life came about only through a dramatic transformation upon return from war with the neighbouring enemies in the town of Perugia. With Saint Therese, her faith and life was imbibed with God through the course of her childhood, youth and convent life with the Carmelites.

We all know that Saint Francis was close to nature and all her beauty. In nature and simplicity, he saw the creation of God alive and yearning for our Creator's love. Saint Francis lived in perfect harmony with nature, as the first true environmentalist. His love of humanity, poverty, the sick, and the downtrodden were all fundamentally important in defining his relationship with God. But, ultimately, it was his deep love for Christ that marked his journey from spoilt, rich man to saint par excellence.

With Saint Therese, despite failing health (tuberculosis) and humble family circumstances and great suffering, she clung to Jesus as an infant clings to a parent. Her innocent and trusting love of God showcased the purity, honesty and intensity of her love for our Saviour. Her pilgrim journey was tread gently through the humblest acts of work, prayer and piety, which the world would easily overlook, amidst its daily vagaries, blinding lights and deafening noises.

What else did they have to mark them out as amongst the greatest in the Church?

As Christ said, the first will be last and the last will be first. We all know humility is the cornerstone of good discipleship. Mary our Lady had it in wonderful measure. In fact, it was her humility and humble "yes" to God that has provided all of us with a close and eternal relationship with the God of the universe. It is this same humility that Saint Francis and Saint Therese exhibited in their lives. In the case of Saint Francis, he could have gone on to inherit his father's great wealth and prestige in Assisi. He could have lived a life unfettered by the insecurities and dangers that poverty and disease pose. He could have lived like a king. Instead, he chose to serve as a humble worker in the field.

With Saint Therese, nothing was more important to her than Jesus. It is this singular and all-encompassing love for her spiritual spouse and father that guided her through a challenging and seemingly difficult life.

One of the key reasons why these two great saints and many others like them have earned God's and our eternal love and respect is the legacy they left behind. Saint Therese's legacy for us is evident in her pure, beautiful and unflinching dedication to God. These three virtues veil the manifest gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were ever-present in her.

With Saint Francis, it is his level of service that stands salient amongst all else; his service to God, to the Church and to the poor. From washing the wounds of the leper to feeding beggars on the streets of Tuscany, this saint has shown us the way. His love of God's creation should instil in us the same.

Ultimately, we too are called to sainthood. Our earthly lives are fleeting, a mere punctuation mark in the great novel of eternal life. If we wish to live eternity in the joyous presence of God, we too should spend every moment of our lives focused on Him and Him alone. As Christ said, all else will be given unto you. So as we go about our daily lives, our work, our sports, our budgeting, our travelling, our child rearing, our charity, our frustrations, our parties, our pilgrimages, one thing needs to be ever present. That is, we must always have God before, above and beside us. We must not live a single moment in the absence of His presence. To do so would be to invite the world and the devil into that void. Some saints are known to constantly whisper the name of God beneath their breath. We are not called to be that extreme, however, if we consecrate ourselves and all our daily activities to God, then we are on the right path to sainthood, which is what we, each of us, are called to.

We are also immensely blessed to have as the head of our Church on earth a pontiff who embraces the virtues of these great saints. Pope Francis has shown us why it is important to embrace Christ and humility. Despite his position of great power and privilege, he has impressed us all by journeying humbly and truly as Peter the big fisherman did, and as Therese and Francis of Assisi did too.

Weak yet called: Called yet Weak

Rev. Bro. Gihan Dushmantha Senadeera OMI,
 Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya.

Weakness is something that the world has always despised and looked down upon. In the same way the world has always excluded the 'weak ones' whenever it has chosen people for any important task or an office right through the human history. But this does not apply to Salvation History or the Biblical History. Scripture clearly shows us that God never called "the strong" or "the mighty," instead he has always called "the weak" and "the unnoticed."

It is nowhere said in the Bible that anyone who was called for God's mission had being called just because he or she was the best person capable of the mission entrusted to him or her. This reality corresponds to one of the Eucharistic Prayers which sounds the following way, "God calls the weak and makes them strong in bearing witness to Him." So weakness is seen as an essential requirement whenever God recruits a candidate for His mission. So, there arises a question as to why God chooses the weak and leaves-out the strong and the seemingly capable. The reason is hidden in the instruction given to Prophet Samuel to anoint the boy David as the new king of Israel. "Do not look into his outer appearance or his stature, the Lord sees as not man sees, man looks at the outer appearance but God, into the heart" (1Sam 16:7).

First, I would give few examples to support my theme that God has always chosen 'the weak' for His work. When God called Moses, Moses rejected the invitation, for he was not good in speech as he was a stammerer. God wanted him to go and speak to Pharaoh and insist that he let the Israelites to go out in freedom. The decision of Pharaoh apparently depended on the skill of Moses' speech, yet God called him for this mission.

When God sent Samuel to choose a king among the sons of Jesse, David was so insignificant and unnoticed that Jesse nearly forgot to bring him in front of Samuel. But Prophet Samuel insisted that Jesse call David from the field, where he was tending the lambs. Finally, he was anointed as the king and he turned out to be the most valiant and mightiest king who was able to bring all Israelite tribes together as one nation under one crown. This reminds me of the Psalm that says "The stone that was rejected by the builders has become the corner stone."

Joseph the son of Jacob, whom his brothers sold for twenty silver coins, turned out to be the administrator of Egypt and was chosen by the Lord to keep the Israelites alive during the famine. This reality of calling 'the weak' was even more highlighted in the life of Jesus. The disciples whom he called were just uneducated, ordinary fishermen. But Jesus called them for he wanted them. Also he called Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed him. He was called by the Lord perhaps because He expected from Judas a change of life from wickedness to holiness for which 'calling' he failed to respond positively. Mary Magdalene, who went to the tomb to anoint the body of the Lord was instead chosen by the Lord to carry the Good News of Resurrection to the Apostles on Easter morning (Jn 20: 11-18). Women were so insignificant and had no honor and standing in Jewish patriarchal society. Yet the Risen Lord chose her to be the first witness of His Resurrection on which Christianity is built.

Was it not a greatest privilege that was granted to a woman, generally so despised and unrecognized by the Jewish community and considered a sinner?

These few examples from Holy Scripture must make us aware of the mystery behind our own individual callings. God has called us not because we are the best, but simply because we are weak. It is very important to keep in mind that God does not call us to remain "weak" but to get rid of our negativity and to make progress along the path of Christian holiness. But it should be noted, that in our pilgrimage there are possible moments of failure. Call to holiness is a call to choose between good and evil daily. We are given freedom of deliberation to choose between them by our Creator. Freedom is the greatest gift from the Creator to his human creature and this is exactly the reason for possible failure despite our calling.

Moses led the people out of Egypt and in the wilderness people rebelled against God, Moses and Aaron when they ran short of drinking water. God instructed Moses to supply them with water by striking the rock at Herob. But Moses failed to acknowledge divine providence in front of the crowd and took the credit upon himself, and thus he failed in spite of the fact being called. David was so pleasing to God and was highly favoured by God. But there came a moment when he gave into the temptation which led him to violate three commandments of the Decalogue. Eventually, he had to murder Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, with whom he sinned.

When we look at the New Testament also we can find ample examples to support the fact of possible failure while carrying out the mission of Christ. The Apostles (*according to John, 'disciples'*) who shared Jesus' life and mission ran away from Jesus at time of trouble. So the flight of disciples in the face of persecution is a clear sign to show that they failed to remain faithful to Jesus when He needed them most.

To arrive at the conclusion let us take the lives of Peter and Judas in comparison and also in contrast. Comparison shows us that both Peter and Judas betrayed Jesus. Judas was privileged to be counted among the Apostles and Peter was even more privileged to be appointed as the leader of the "Twelve" by the Lord Himself. But they proved themselves to be 'weak' even though they were called very specially to share in their unique vocation. We can also contrast Peter and Judas: Peter though he denied Jesus three times, repented and was reconciled to Jesus, whereas Judas' betrayal marked the end of his vocation in the despair of suicide.

We all, the laity, the Religious or the ministerial priests have been called to share in the same baptismal dignity of three-fold vocation of Christ, namely to be priests, Prophets and Kings. When we respond to that vocation there will come moments of distraction and failure. But what we must make clear is that those moments of sin and failure would not mark the end of our missionary journey or our call to Christian holiness. What is important is to rise with courage and determination at each moment of failure and reconcile ourselves to God's mission. The grace we receive from God would not make us saints overnight but would give us strength to rise above our human weakness and the courage to withstand evil ("Grace does not destroy the nature, but perfects it"). It is a constant conversion and renewal.

Pope Francis and his Option for the Poor

Rev. Fr. Leopold
Ratnasekera OMI

Pope Francis is the 266th successor of St. Peter, a seat of responsibility and leadership that has remained with the Church for the last two millennia: A span of twenty one centuries.

The papacy is one of the most ancient and enduring institutions in the world and has had a prominent part in world history. Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the former Jesuit Archbishop of Buenos Aires, the metropolitan capital of Argentina has brought to this Vatican post an incredible sense of simplicity and charm that is in stark contrast to the usual picture of pomp, pageantry and grandeur that is usually associated with anything about the Vatican City in Rome. In fact, apart from official engagements that take him to the papal apartments, he has opted to live in a simple suite within a Vatican building that hosts the visiting Church dignitaries.

Pope Francis wishes to be a man of the people and to be among the people as befits a pastor and a shepherd wearing as he says, not the shoes of an emperor but the sandals of a fisherman! While Cardinal-Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he was willing to sweat it out like ordinary folk trundling to work on buses and trains on pastoral engagements to the villages, cooked his own meals, picked up his newspapers from a nearby kiosk and took care of an aging Jesuit priest in his apartment. Simplicity of life seems to come to him almost naturally. It is not without reason that the *Time Magazine* names him as the one of the 100 most influential personalities in the world today. It is because he portrays a new image of leadership and is already become a modern-day icon. A Cardinal from the third-world raised as a son of an Italian migrant family in Argentina, now sits on the throne of Peter.

I - Gospel of Poverty and Church of the Poor

He chose the name of Francis in memory of St. Francis of Assisi, the 13th century saint who revolutionized the life and structures of the Church, choosing to live a life of rigorous poverty while embracing a very poor life-style. Thus, he challenged the

pomp and the power structure of the Church that seemed to him to militate radically against the sublime teachings of the Sermon on the Mount so characteristic of the message and life-style of Jesus Christ Himself who founded the Church. Christianity began with the appearance of this humble carpenter's son of Nazareth, an itinerant and homeless religious teacher, who chose twelve simple men, most of them fishermen, to begin His spiritual revolution which called for inner religion: Worship in spirit and truth with practicing of charity and mercy without borders. It is significant that the blessings of the kingdom He brought went out first to the materially poor and those poor in spirit. They were destined to be its first beneficiaries.

Authentic Christian thinking convinces us that this tradition of the poor has to continue down human history till the end of time for the Blessings of the Kingdom of God to touch every age of mankind. The Church is the home of the poor and the spirit of poverty must be Church's basic spirituality. The dramatic picture of world poverty, the oppression and depression of the poor classes that are constantly on an alarming increase in many regions of the world should only heighten our awareness of the imminent need of a Church of the poor and for the poor which Pope Francis is resolved to build during his papacy.

Pope Francis comes from Argentina which is part of the third-world in the southern hemisphere. In comparison with North America and Western Europe, the third-world countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America continue to experience financial hardships and are afflicted and wounded by a host of other socio-cultural and political problems. What is at stake is the loss of human dignity resulting from various socio-economic evils that threaten the daily lives of people. The struggle to live a decent human life, with employment offering a just wage and just working conditions, decent housing, health and educational facilities, food and water are some of the concerns that keep worrying the third-world populations. Even in the most exotic of cities that dot the first-world countries, it is heart-

rending to see, pockets of urban poor who are on the margins of society huddled in shanties and in squalor and hanging on to social security. The modern pandemics such as AIDS and terminal deceases strike the poor in such a ruthless manner that there seems to be no way out of these modern-day-killers that devastate human life. The cry of the worker is still heard across the globe. They feel the exploitation of their labour and energy being sacrificed to the commodity of production, leaving them emaciated in their bodies and physical health. This is the world of the poor that Pope Francis has experienced in his own country as priest, bishop and Cardinal and which he has decided to embrace and respond to. It is absolutely essential that this trend of world poverty is reversed if the millennial goals of the UNO are to be achieved tangibly and in favor of the poor. When politicians fail, religious leadership has to take up the challenge of espousing the cause of the poor and thereby give meaning to their struggle to have fullness of life which everybody else enjoys. In the Church's work, the task of human liberation is an essential and demanding concern and a controversial issue as well.

II - Papacy in Recent Times

The Catholic Church has seen providential signs of leadership at the top as is evident in its recent history. Pope Pius XII fought single-handed the onslaught of communism and the German invasion under Hitler that brought in such misery and destruction which now is common knowledge. Pope John XXIII who succeeded him in his short span of five years, launched the greatest historical Christian event of the modern times, the Second Vatican Council in the early sixties whose inspirations and call to action for the updating and renewal of the Church continue to sustain efforts in meeting the challenges of the present-day world. Pope Paul VI who followed him, sent a clarion call from the podium of the UN in October 1965 in a stern voice: "Never again one against the other, never, never again war...If you want to be brothers, let the arms fall from your hands... If you want peace work for



human development...."

Then appeared the colossus of the Pope from Poland, John Paul II who challenged the world of consumerism, materialism and hedonism and worked relentlessly to build a more humane and just world. He summoned all religions to dialogue together in order to be at the service of a world that has to be renewed in peace, solidarity and brotherhood. With his initiatives for winning human dignity and freedom for those under political subjugation and dictatorship, he effected imposing political changes in his own communist Poland that triggered the freedom movement of entire Eastern European countries and led to the crumbling of the shameful Berlin wall.

Pope Benedict XVI his successor, went all out to condemn the dictatorship of relativism that created confusion in the modern mind and prevented the building of bridges between peoples and nations. Relativism threatened even the decent way of life that befits mankind: Human beings endowed with reason and freedom of will to choose the good and the best among the better choices at hand. In this trend now comes Pope Francis who has begun denouncing human trafficking and the worship of money.... the golden calf that has returned to rule the world's economic system that marginalizes the poor, wounds human dignity and deranges the worship of the True God.

III - Issues & Challenges of Today

Pope Francis sees the youth and the elderly as the most neglected of modern society and in its way of life. He says that a society that neglects them is a sick society. He wishes the

youth to cry out for their rights and claim their due attention. Christian youth must swim against the current, he says, in the sense they must not spoil their young, robust and enthusiastic lives in a wasteful life-style of drugs and sensuality, fleeting pleasures and hopelessness. They must feel challenged by higher ideals and commitment to build a better world than the one they are in today. There is not the least doubt that in the future, Pope Francis's voice will be clearly heard in favour of life and against abortion, in favour of care for the aged and the terminally ill and against euthanasia, in favour of the sanctity of marriage and family and against same-sex marriage that distorts the time-tested social institution of marriage: The basic cell and foundation of society and social relations. The Christians see it as the sanctuary of love and life and as the first school of humanity. In a recent meeting with a sports group, Pope Francis reminded them that before being champions, they strive to be human, be of noble character and protagonists of humanity.

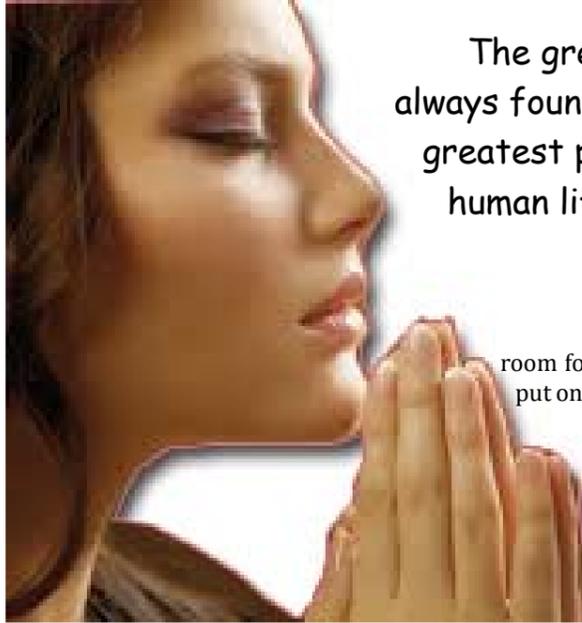
Whatever ideology one may hold or religion one may adhere to, we can now be rest assured of having a world religious leader who stands for humanity and wishes to be on the side of the poor. As such therefore, a transformation of civilization and a society of economic justice will assuredly have a commanding voice of impact in our world. As spiritual head of the Catholics worldwide, Pope Francis has a spiritual mission of making the Church truly a Church that lives according to the teachings of the Gospel. As the Sovereign Head of the Vatican State, he takes the place among other Heads of States, in

"Above all, the poor masses of the world, the aged, the sick, suffering and the youth have found a leader from the third world. Pope Francis will be hailed in the days to come as a very powerful voice of the voiceless and the marginalized."

working towards justice in the world and peace among nations. Above all, the poor masses of the world, the aged, the sick, suffering and the youth have found a leader from the third-world. Pope Francis will be hailed in the days to come as a very powerful voice of the voiceless and the marginalized. As he himself has said so poignantly many times over, power is meant for service and those in seats of power have the responsibility of loving their people, of caring, especially for those who most need their care and concern. That confidence and trust must not be breached.

We may expect Pope Francis in the near future to be heard in the UN with his ardent appeal not only for world peace and end to conflicts through dialogue among the nations with a firm "no" to war, but above all with an ardent appeal for reversing the world system and planning in favour of the masses of the world's poor away from the greed of the market and idolatry of money. His name will be carved not only as the "People's Pope" but more, as the "Poor Man's Pope" in the annals of modern day's history, religious as well as secular.

Much Time Should Be Given to Prayer



The great masters and teachers in Christian doctrine have always found in prayer their highest source of illumination. The greatest practical resolves that have enriched and beautified human life in Christian times have been arrived at in prayer.

- Canon Liddon

WHILE many private prayers, in the nature of things, must be short; while public prayers, as a rule, ought to be short and condensed; while there is ample

room for and value put on ejaculatory prayer-yet in our private communions with God time is a feature essential to its value. Much time spent with God is the secret of all successful praying.

Prayer which is felt as a mighty force is the mediate or immediate product of much

time spent with God. Our short prayers owe their point and efficiency to the long ones that have preceded them. The short prevailing prayer cannot be prayed by one who has not prevailed with God in a mightier struggle of long continuance. Jacob's victory of faith could not have been gained without that all-night wrestling. God's acquaintance is not made by pop calls. God does not bestow His gifts on the casual or hasty comers and goers. Much time with God alone is the secret of know-

ing Him. He yields to the persistency of a faith that knows him. He bestows his richest gifts upon those who declare their desire for and appreciation of those gifts by the constancy as well as earnestness of their importunity.

Christ, who in this as well as other things is our Example, spent many whole nights in prayer. His custom was to pray much. He had his habitual place to pray. Many long seasons of praying make up His history and character. Paul prayed day

and night. It took time from very important interests for Daniel to pray three times a day. David's morning, noon, and night praying were doubtless on many occasions very protracted. While we have no specific account of the time these Bible saints spent in prayer, yet the indications are that they consumed much time in prayer, and on some occasions long seasons of praying was their custom.

We would not have any think that the value of their prayers is to be measured by the clock, but our purpose is to impress on our minds the necessity of being much alone with God; and that if this feature has not been produced by our faith, then our faith is of a feeble and surface type.

(Courtesy:
Power through Prayer)

Can we expect good governance if we elect bad politicians?

Solomon advised in Proverbs 14:34 that "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people"-not just to the sinner, but to the whole nation. We are today seeing politicians behaving in the most irresponsible and evil manner. The general opinion is that many of them are corrupt and hand in glove with criminals and some of them are behind the smuggling of narcotics which is causing great harm to our youth. Recently a very large consignment of narcotic drugs were detected in a consignment of lubricants imported from Pakistan. So far no one has been arrested and there is no news about the investigations. During the recent Provincial Council elections there was much terror and misuse of government vehicles. No action is being taken against those politicians who resorted to such illegal and criminal behavior. They seem to have immunity in law and act with impunity.

We do not condemn our politicians when they indulge in criminal and evil behavior. The Chinese scholar, Chang Hsin-hai, in his article on "The Moral Basis of World Peace," asserts that this disease of our society stems from a double standard of morals. He says that the root of our troubles, both national and international, lies in the acceptance of moral standards in government totally different from those accepted and demonstrated as necessary for a good society so far as individual conduct is concerned. If a politician, either national or international, engages in practices and policies which in individual conduct would be considered as most contemptible, he is commonly honored for his "progressiveness and farsightedness, and for the great service he is rendering to the citizens of his country." He is elected again and again to public office, even though the same practices by the operator of a private grocery store or a farm would lead to his being all but run out of town".

There is an ancient Hindu saying that as is the King so are the people. The Bible says wicked kings are sent to rule when people are evil. A western saying is that a nation gets the rulers they deserve. Let us elect as our representatives men or women of character who have good values if we want good governance and peace.

Current Affairs

VIEW POINT

Finding solace in the Rosary Beads

My friend grabbed a cup from my rack and stood before the percolator lest someone beat her to the punch. I took the cup from her hand and told her to sit and I would look after her. Minutes later my friend took a good long sip of the hot brew, sighed and poured out her worries.

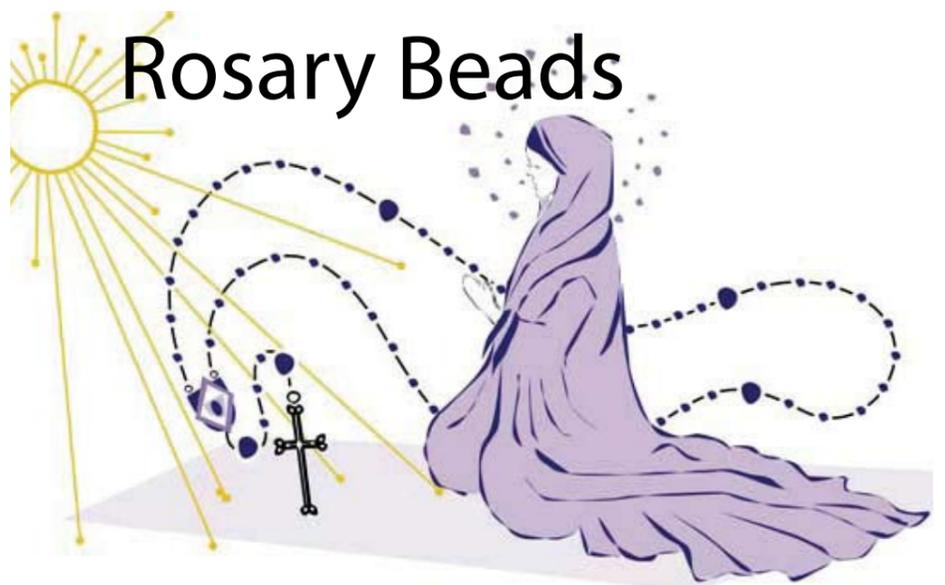
"Jim's contract with the Johnson Brothers will not be renewed," she began "if head office decides on a different direction to pursue." She began her hiccupping, a rather humorous habit my dear friend had when overwhelmed with concern. "We can't live on what I make part-time." She added quickly. "I needed to pray but I don't know how to pray properly, but I knew you would help."

I assured her I was always ready to be a prayer partner. My friend was not a Catholic but she took comfort in the knowledge that we could pray together. She did believe in the power of prayer as we had prayed a number of times together over the years when life's tensions interrupted the sense of peace. As I refilled her cup she reached for my crystal rosary beads which had its special place on the kitchen counter.

"Can I use these?" she pleaded as her hiccups filled the room.

"Of course," I replied, as I reached into my apron for the broken pair of olive wood beads I had. I sat down and prepared for prayer.

"I remember you



saying that the rosary is prayed to God with Mary's help." She said breathlessly as she tried to stop her hiccups.

"Yes!" I said: "Mary takes our worries, our petitions, our needs and brings them to her Son. The Rosary is known as the prayer of Peace.

She replied quickly. "You also said we could go straight to God if we wanted but since God chose Mary to be His handmaid we can go through her too. Am I right?"

I nodded as I lit the votive candle I had before a small statue of Mary on the open shelf above the counter. My friend sat quietly fingering the beads as I sat opposite her with my broken ones. I did remember her interest in the rosary prayers and how quick she was to learn the Hail Mary. My friend took a deep breath as we settled quietly for the first prayer.

And so we began our first Rosary together, stopping between decades to focus or refocus

on the events in the life of God most Holy and His Blessed Mother. "The mysteries help us stay on track lest we get overtaken by our worries." I whispered. She nodded and refocused on her beads.

We finished our Rosary with the final prayer to Our Lady, The Hail Holy Queen. My friend had her eyes closed as she held the beads in both hands and listened quietly as I prayed the response to this great prayer. "Pray for us O Holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ."

We prayed our Amen together!

"Do you think things will turn out for us?" She sighed.

"Well," I said, "remember if you are open to what God wants for the two of you, God knows what is best. You have asked Him for direction in your prayer. He will not disappoint!"

"I feel better already!" she said. "No mat-

ter what happens I know God will show us the way. You know, Ev. I can't believe how calm I am now. When Jim first told me I was a basket-case and didn't sleep a wink. I love your Rosary prayer and I hope I can say it with you again."

"Of course, you know where to find me."

I said, placing the broken beads back in my pocket. "The beauty of the Rosary is that it carries us into a quiet place where Christ is present and Mary our mother holds our hand. The soft rhythm of the prayers helps us to settle down and shut out the world for a little while."

"How comforting!" my friend replied, pouring herself another cup. "I think I may have cream in my cafe this time around!" she smiled, while ne'er a hiccup was heard. I thanked our Lady silently as I stepped over to the fridge to fetch the cream.

(Courtesy:
Canadian Messenger)

Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

On October 6, at the Thrithva Bhavana Church at Attidiya, a new sacrarium was blessed in the sacristy. For many people in Sri Lanka this may sound a strange occasion - a new word. What is a sacrarium? Rev. Fr. Cecil Joy Perera Director - Parish Faith Animation Team (Resident at Attidiya) quotes Paul Turner who offers the following description summing up practically everything about a sacrarium:

"The sacrarium is a special sink found in the sacristy of most Catholic churches. The first time you see one it looks like someone made it wrong. The drain opens into a pipe that bypasses the sewer and runs straight down into the earth. The basin often hides beneath a hinged cover.

The sacrarium provides for the proper disposal of sacred substances. Most notably, after Mass the vessels which held the Body and Blood of Christ are rinsed and cleansed there. In this way any remaining particles of

Sacrarium

communion are washed into the earth. The sacrarium has also been used for the disposal of other substances: old baptismal water, leftover ashes, and last year's holy oils. There was a time in history when the leftover consecrated wine was poured down the sacrarium, but today the Blood of Christ is consumed by the faithful, not discarded.

If the consecrated wine is ever spilled during the Mass, it is to be cleaned up with care. Accidents happen, and the instructions for Mass offer this procedure: The area should be washed, and the water poured down the sacrarium.

The presence of the sacrarium shows our reverent care for holy things. When materials designated for a sacred purpose have completed their service, we honor them even in their disposal. By returning our sacred substances to the earth beneath the church building, we honor them, the ground over which we worship, and the God who created them and consecrated them to nourish our faith".

Fr. Cecil Joy further explains that this was actually not uncommon before Vatican II. But with the changes that took place after 1965 these things got thrown out of our sacristies. Now we



Thrithva Bhavana church at Attidiya

need to revive this for many reasons. Some might want to know why we are trying to revive what is archaic. Nothing is farther from the truth. A careful analysis into what is happening in some of our churches and sacristies would convince us of the need for a sacrarium. For instance, how do we dispose small pieces of Holy Communion which get collected in the ciboria in our churches? In some cases they are buried and in some cases they are consumed and in some cases they are simply thrown away into a flower pot or to a drain! This is sacrilege. What happens to holy oils, especially OC and SC which normally is left over each year? In many

churches the small bottles remain for years without any disposal. How do we rinse and cleanse sacred linen and sacred vessels? They are simply washed along with any other things, and the sacred attitude which we follow at Holy Mass and at the altar are no more when these things reach the sacristy. Very often small particles of the sacred hosts are stuck on communion plates. What is sacred is always sacred be it during Mass or outside of it. The response of the church to this kind of need was the sacrarium and at Attidiya and that is why we have restored it, he said.

The beautiful sacrarium possibly the first of its kind to be revived in Sri Lanka was turned out by Shyamal De Silva of the Attidiya Catholic Community. It stands in the sacristy immediately behind the altar of the church.

The Joyful Good Pope: Meet John XXIII

"I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out and the people can see in," John XXIII

"Everyone remembers the image of Pope John's smiling face and two outstretched arms embracing the whole world. How many people were won over by his simplicity of heart, combined with a broad experience of people and things! The breath of newness he brought certainly did not concern doctrine, but rather the way to explain it; his style of speaking and acting was new, as was his friendly approach to ordinary people and to the powerful of the world. It was in this spirit that he called the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, thereby turning a new page in the Church's history Christians heard themselves called to proclaim the Gospel with renewed courage and greater attentiveness to the "signs" of the times. The Council was a truly prophetic insight



of this elderly Pontiff who, even amid many difficulties, opened a season of hope for Christians and for humanity. In the last moments of his earthly life, he entrusted his testament to the Church: "What counts the most in life is blessed Jesus Christ, His holy Church, His Gospel, truth and goodness" — John Paul II.

Popes John XXIII and John Paul II will be canonized on April 27, 2014: The feast of Divine Mercy. Pope Francis announced the date for the joint canonization ceremony at an ordinary consistory in Rome on September 30.

On the October 11, the Church marks the Feast of Blessed John XXIII, - the last feast where the beloved "Papa Roncalli" will be addressed as the 'Blessed' John XXIII before being elevated to the status of sainthood.

Pope John XXIII was born Angelo Roncalli, the fourth in a family of fourteen children. His parents were sharecroppers. In 1904, he was ordained a priest and then served as secretary to the Bishop of Bergamo, Italy. During this period, he wrote a five-volume biography of St. Charles Borromeo. During World War I, he served as a medic and a chaplain and then after the war worked in Rome as the Italian head of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Many years of his priestly life were then spent serving as a papal diplomat, most notably to Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, and France. In 1953, he was named the patriarch of Venice and elevated to cardinal.

His election after the death of Pope Pius XII was unexpected. Because of his advanced age (a month shy of 77), most observers thought of him as an interim Pope who would not serve long or accomplish much. However, Pope John's warmth, sense of humour, and kind heart quickly won over the entire world, contrasting sharply with the aristocratic bearing of his predecessor. One of his first official acts was to visit prisoners in Rome telling them, "You could not come to me, so I came to you." One of his famous jokes involved his response to a ques-

tion from a reporter, "Holy Father, how many people work in Vatican City?" The Pope responded, "About half of them."

What surprised most people was John's assertion that the idea for calling the first Ecumenical Council in ninety years came to him like a ray of blinding light, an inspiration from the Holy Spirit. When he announced the Council to a gathering of eighteen cardinals in January of 1959, they were dumbfounded. Days later, they voiced their reservations, but John insisted that the Church lived in a new age. The Catholic Church was no longer just a European community, but a worldwide Church embracing many people. Moreover, the Church needed to dialogue with the fast-changing world of politics, economics, science, technology, and so forth. This council would be unlike previous councils which were called in times of crisis and heresy. It would be a pastoral council, one of mercy and hope, one that would reach out to the modern world and invite people around the world to consider the joyfulness of the Gospel. Pope John famously gave this as his reason for the Council: "I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out and the people can see in."

The biographer Peter Hebblethwaite, in his book John XXIII: Pope of the Century, puts it simply: "His aim in life was to be a holy priest."



Pastoral Letter on the Marian Year

Archdiocese of Colombo

✠ **Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith**
Archbishop of Colombo

Given on the 8th September 2013 feast of the
Birthday of Mary in Colombo, Sri Lanka

Beloved Brethren,

The Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 'Lumen Gentium', speaking about the Blessed and Heavenly Mother, the Virgin Mary declares: "At the message of the angel, the Virgin received the Word of God in her heart and in her body and gave Life to the world. Hence, she is acknowledged and honoured as being truly the Mother of God and Mother of the Redeemer. Redeemed in a especially sublime manner by reason of the merits of her Son and united to Him by a close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the supreme high office and dignity of being the Mother of the Son of God. As a result she is also the favourite daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth. At the same time, however, because she belongs to the offspring of Adam she is one with all human beings in their need for salvation... taught by the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church honours her with filial affection and piety as a most beloved mother" [LG 53].

Mary: God's Chosen Servant

Thus the Council once again re-affirmed what has been the faith of the Church all along with regard to the role of Mary in salvation history. For by God's own delightful choice she became the Mother of His only Begotten Son, the Saviour of the world. Her heart was filled with joy at the grandeur of the call given to her, a call that overwhelmed her and made her sing the praises of the almighty for "he had done great things" for her. The lowly handmaid, a daughter of humanity, had become God's own choice to be the tabernacle in which His own Divine Son will assume human flesh. The Angel greeted her "hail full of grace" because not only had God's choice fallen upon her, for she had found favour with Him [cfr. Luke 1: 30], but also His Divine Spirit would "overshadow" [Luke 1:35], her and the eternally prepared mission of salvation will be brought to fulfillment in her. And since she is a true representative of the human race, the mystery of incarnation of God becoming man in order to save mankind would be rendered possible. Mary thus became the pontifex or the bridge between divinity and humanity, the bridge through which God Himself became man and entered human history. No more does God speak to mankind through the prophets but through the humanity of Christ which is Mary's own contribution to salvation history. What a great privilege indeed!

She became the way through which God came among us and became our Emmanuel, God with us: God no more the invisible and eternal but God-man: Jesus Christ. For this reason even more than in the case of the priest who celebrating the Eucharist makes Christ present at the altar, Mary is preeminently the handmaid elected by God to make Christ fully human and present in the world as the Emmanuel: God with us. It is Mary that made the redeeming

sacrifice of Calvary, which is re-enacted at the altar each time we celebrate the Eucharist, ever possible by her "fiat" or acceptance of the call to be the Mother of God. If not for her yes, filled With faith, salvation itself would not have been possible and so too the Eucharist. That is the very reason for which Blessed Pope John Paul II called her "the Eucharistic Woman" for, already "at the Annunciation, Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of His Body and Blood, thus anticipating within herself what to some degree happens sacramentally in every believer who receives, under the signs of bread and wine, the Lord's Body and Blood" [Ecclesia de Eucharistia 55]. Not only in and through her answer to God's call with that "let it be" but also through the acceptance of the tremendous suffering she underwent at the foot of the Cross when Christ accomplished His self-effacing mission Mary became the Woman of the Eucharist, the priest par excellence of the new covenant.

Our Loving Mother

And it is indeed at the foot of the Cross, as the Gospel of St. John tells us [Jn.19:25-27], that her mission of motherhood assumed a new and challenging dimension. Jesus entrusted to her the beloved disciple as her son and to the disciple entrusted Mary as His mother. Thus her mission of motherhood, as the mother of the Saviour, was extended till the end of time. Mary was given the task of helping all His disciples to be faithful to their own Eucharistic calling. It is a tribute the Lord paid to His mother for being so cooperative with the Father and for all the love with which she "stood by" [Jn. 19:26] Him, even until the very end of His sacrifice at Calvary. It showed the conviction that Jesus had, that she was eminently suited to be the mother of all His disciples and the mother of the Church. He surely felt that Mary's love for Him which protected, nourished and strengthened Him in the first place and encouraged Him in His own mission, could be a sure sign of care, hope and encouragement for all His disciples. She would thus be the ideal Heavenly Mother to us all, to the community of His disciples, the Church. It is for this reason that from the earliest times the Catholic Church showed special veneration and closeness to her for, she had been made, by Christ's own choice, our mother too. It is He who gave her to us and us to her. And so, just as the solemn proclamation of Mary as the mother of God - *Theotokos* - took place at the Council of Ephesus held in the year 431, at the close of the 3rd session of the 2nd Vatican Council that is on the 21st November 1964, Pope Paul VI solemnly proclaimed Mary as also the Mother of the Church. It is significant that Jesus entrusted us to Mary and Mary to us at the very moment He completed His redemptive mission, on the Cross at Calvary. In this gesture we experience the love with which He gave His own most precious mother to us, the one single person on earth whom He must have

loved most. And so, He gave us not only His Body broken on the Cross as eternal food for our life but His own mother and her maternal love which would make us strong in our journey of discipleship: Two great gifts of His love.

Mary, Queen of Our Home

The most heartwarming news in that same episode is found in the words that follow this entrusting: "And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home" [Jn. 19:27]. And so Mary's mission is far from over. It did not end at the Cross. Jesus extended her "let it be" to mean an eternal, unending mission. Just as she loved, cared for, nourished, protected and encouraged Jesus in His mission, Mary is called to take care of all His disciples. In fact as the Scriptures state "from that hour" the disciple "took" her to his own home. With the words "behold Thy son" Jesus entrusted us to Mary as her own sons and daughters and, in the same vein, with the words "behold thy Mother" to His beloved disciple, the Heavenly Mother is entrusted to our care. And so He wants us to take her to our homes.

States Blessed Pope John Paul II "The Marian dimension in the life of a disciple of Christ is expressed in a special way precisely through this filial entrusting to the Mother of Christ which began with the testament of the redeemer at Golgotha. Entrusting Himself to Mary in a filial manner, the Christian, like the Apostle John "welcomes" the Mother of Christ "into his own home" and brings her into everything that makes up his inner life, that is to say into his human and Christian. "I": he "took her to his own home. Thus the Christian seeks to-be taken into her 'maternal charity' with which the Redeemer's mother cares for the brethren of her Son" [Redemptoris Mater 45]. And so, it is from that Cross at Calvary that every single disciple of Christ and the Church itself has been entrusted to Mary which means that the Catholic faith can never be visualized at something totally devoid of the role of Mary. Marian dimension of our faith is an integral component of its faithful living out. True discipleship of Christ would miss something if this tenderness in our adherence to Christ is taken away. Mary our Heavenly Mother would make it so easy and so loving. She would encourage us with the admonition "do whatever He tells you" [Jn. 2: 5] because it is, as she knows, what pleases the Lord the most and elicits a loving response from Him. She knows it because she has been so close to Him. Though at that first miracle He worked in Cana, Jesus at first refused to be involved; yet when He saw how the servants followed the guidance of His mother, He worked the miracle of turning the water into wine. Mary, our Mother, can be that gentle and loving motivator towards true discipleship of Christ.

Mother of the Sinners

It is thus essential that we as the Archdiocesan Catholic Community understand, accept and value the mediatory role that Mary fulfills in the History of Salvation, in the mission of the Church and in our own personal quest for salvation. The Church as a whole possesses an immense body of teachings on this loving mission of the Blessed Mother, which go back to the times of the Early Church. There is hardly any Father of the Church or Sacred Council or Pope that has never spoken of her. Jesus' own love of the

Blessed Mother, her presence by His side all along His public life and at the foot of the Cross, her loving presence among the disciples in the nascent Church [cfr. Acts 1:14] and her continuous apparitions in different places along the bi-millennial history of the Church and the expressions of her continuous concern for the salvation of souls, and the continuous messages pleading for our conversion away from sin and the ways of eternal death are the concrete manner in which she exercises her maternal love for all of us. Indeed on this St. John Mary Vianney has the following to state: "The greater sinners we are, the more tenderness and compassion does she feel for us. The child that has cost its mother most tears is the dearest to her heart. Does not a mother always run to the help of the weakest and the most exposed to danger? Is not a physician in the hospital most attentive to those who are most seriously ill? The heart of Mary is so tender towards us, that those of all the mothers in the world put together are like a piece of ice in comparison to hers" [Little Catechism of the Cure of Ars, Tan Books and Publishes, Inc. Rockford, Illinois 61105, 1951, p16]. According to the Saint, Jesus as the Son of God is naturally inclined to justice, that is to punish the sinner but the heart of the mother filled with mercy and love, especially towards the weaker one, makes her interpose herself between Jesus and the sinner. If only we grab her loving hands!

Marian Year

For these and many other reasons, and appreciating along with the Church which in her bi-millennial history has loved and has been loved by the Heavenly Mother, the role of Mary our Mother, let us, as the Archdiocesan Ecclesial community **dedicate to her the year that starts with the closing of the Year of Faith on Sunday the 24th November this year until the 1st Sunday in Advent in the year 2014, which falls on the 30th November.** The Marian Year would also be a fitting continuity of the Year of Faith as Mary is truly the best example of a life filled with faith, for, it is through her "let it be" given in deep faith that God's divine plan became reality. It will be the 4th year in the Archdiocesan programme of the decade of the Holy Eucharist - the Marian Year - which we proclaim joyfully and with filial devotion to our Heavenly Mother Mary, the mystical sweet rose in God's beautiful garden. We do so with utmost devotion entrusting to her along with ourselves, bishops, priests and the religious all our dear faithful, young and old. We say: "Mother, O Heavenly Mother, help us to come closer to your Son and obtain for us through your maternal intercession happiness of soul and body and your loving protection and care and most of all holiness of life."

During this special year dedicated to her, I urge all my beloved brethren, men and women, to study and learn about the beauty of Mary's own role in God's plan of salvation, develop a personal attitude of love and filial affection for her, either personally or as families or communities praying the daily Rosary, engaging in pilgrimages not only to her shrines in Sri Lanka but also if possible overseas, joining in the Archdiocesan pilgrimages to Madhu and Lourdes which we plan to organize during the year and above all to heed her call for the conversion of hearts by embracing the habit of regular confession and Holy

(Contd. on Pg. 9)

Pastoral Letter... Contd. fromPg. 8

Communion and becoming proud sons and daughters of the Heavenly Mother calling her with that lovely exclamation "mummy" from the very core of their hearts, I call upon the Legion of Mary and other such groups like "The Children of Mary," "Marian Movement of Priests," the Living Rosary Groups and the Heralds of the Gospel to take a lead in this campaign of Marian prayers and personal sanctification.

The Programmes

At the level of the practical programmes for the year, I call upon the following apostolates to be the prime movers in some of the areas of animation of the Archdiocesan Ecclesial community towards a stronger Marian spirituality.

1. Archdiocesan Catechetical Apostolate:

I propose the following initiatives as part of the Catechetical preparation of the people towards that goal.

- To prepare special leaflets or booklets instructing Sunday School children on the value of the role assigned to the Blessed Mother in salvation history, especially in the Sacred Scriptures.
- To organize competitions such as essay, quiz, art and singing in order to enhance a better appreciation of the role of Mary and Marian devotions in the Church.
- Along with the Deva Dharma Niketanaya, to produce a series of books or leaflets introducing themes of Mariology, especially answering the objections of some of the sects to the devotions to Mary.
- Conducting if possible and with the help of the Deva Dharma Niketanaya a series of talks or weekend seminars in parishes on the Catholic teachings on Mary and her importance in salvation history, specially stressing that it is Jesus who gave her to us.

2. Archdiocesan Educational Apostolate:

It is necessary that, both in the private and the public schools with a considerable presence of Catholic children, depending on the level of influence one could bring to bear, special programmes be organized throughout the year in order to enhance awareness on the role of Mary in the Church and Marian devotions. If during the year some cells of the Legion of Mary, the Children of Mary or the Junior Legion can be established in the schools it would be a most welcome development.

Marian prayer, novenas and the special celebration of the Marian months would be helpful. Vocation promotion through Marian prayer among the school children would also be an important initiative that could be launched during the year. I call upon the Archdiocesan education office to spearhead along with the Legion, the YCS, Youth For Christ and other such students movements this campaign. School principals are invited to kindly cooperate in this matter. Holding an annual Marian rally in each school would be most welcome.

3. The Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate:

Most Mariological doctrines have their origins in the Sacred Scriptures and so I call upon the Archdiocesan Commission for the Biblical Apostolate

in collaboration with the Sinhala, Tamil and English Theologates; to organize special seminars or study programmes on the scriptural and theological roots of Marian theology in the Church.

- To bring out leaflets or booklets on dispelling some erroneous conceptions being spread in some quarters on the Catholic doctrine on Mary and her role in the history of salvation and in the life of the Church.

- To effect a study and produce some articles or even leaflets on the value of the Rosary especially in the light of the Apostolic letter of Blessed Pope John Paul II entitled "Rosarium Virginis Mariae"

- To bring out summary presentations of some of the writings of the Popes on Mary like "Marialis Cultus" of Pope Paul VI - "Redemptoris Mater" of Blessed Pope John Paul II and the final chapter of "Lumen Gentium", the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

4. The Archdiocesan Liturgical Apostolate:

In the light of the proper Liturgical celebration of the events connected with the Marian year, the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission shall, prepare a logo and a new Marian hymn to be sung at all Marian devotions in the Archdiocese. In conjunction with the Social Communications Apostolate a CD or CDs of hymns could be produced. A competition for the composition of deeply devotional hymns or songs on Mary could also be organized.

- Banners with quotes from the Sacred Scriptures and the teachings of the Church on Mary to be used in the parish Churches should be prepared and distributed.

- Meditative prayer and reflection on the mysteries of the Rosary to be used at parish or family level could be prepared and published.

- This office should organize the inauguration ceremony for the year at parish, community or school levels with the help of the Episcopal Vicars and in the case of the school programmes with the Archdiocesan Director of Education.

- Prepare a leaflet/booklet of possible special Marian dates to celebrate in the year and provide guidelines for such celebrations.

- Organize with the help of the Regional Bishops, the Episcopal Vicars and Regional Coordinators the Archdiocesan Marian pilgrimage to Madhu and a Marian Congress involving the clergy, religious and lay representatives and inviting suitable resource persons to address the assembly,

- Organize an international pilgrimage to Lourdes for all those who wish to join and get the support of the local travel agents to make it as cheap and accessible as possible to the ordinary faithful.

- Make use of the Advent and the Lenten seasons to advocate a strong return of the faithful to the Sacrament of Confession and with the help of the Parish Priests and the Faith Animation Team organize a special campaign to impress upon the people about the call of the Blessed Mother to conversion of hearts and so a return to the Sacrament of Confession. It is unfortunately, noted 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. A campaign to that effect should be launched.

5. Archdiocesan Caritas:

It is necessary that, reflecting upon the Blessed Mother's visit of charity to Elizabeth, her kinswoman and the contents of the Magnificat and her call to the Lord to bring happiness to the lives of the people at the wedding at Cana, the Archdiocesan Catholic Community go all out to help the poor and the needy as part of the Marian Year programme.

Hence, I call upon the Archdiocesan Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development and the Integrity of Creation:

- To conduct animation programmes at the parish level for social action - especially in caring for the less privileged and the suffering,

- To give special attention to programmes that would enhance better relations and understanding between the Sinhalese and the Tamil communities in a given parish and between parishes in the North and the parishes of the Archdiocese, with mutual visits, help etc and between the Catholic faithful and the other religious communities in a given parish [inter-religious harmony].

- To diffuse as part of this conscientisation programme, in an organized way, information on the social teachings of the Church among the faithful,

- To animate the parishes to at least construct or repair a few houses belonging to some of the poorest of the people living in that parish as a tribute to the Blessed Mother.

- To get the SVP or Sethsarana Community group cells involved in this programme so that without being exclusivist they become more active and aware of their role in animating others towards their social responsibilities.

6. Archdiocesan Apostolate for Social Communications:

With the growing influence of the print media, radio, TV and the internet on human life, our campaign needs to necessarily make use of all these facilities in the animation of our faithful on the celebration of the Marian Year. Hence I call upon the Archdiocesan Commission for Social Communications to:

- Cooperate with and support in the best way it could the programmes of animation organized by the other Apostolates on the Marian Year.

- Discuss and decide on a plan of action of its own for the animation of the Archdiocesan Ecclesial Community on the Marian dimension of its Catholic faith, and

- Make available various productions or prepare suitable newspaper write ups and radio and TV programmes in this regard.

- Explore the possibility of launching out on a Radio Station of its own as a tribute to the Blessed Mother in this special year.

7. Archdiocesan Family Apostolate:

In all these programmes a pivotal role should be played by the Catholic families. It is often the family that prays together that stays together. And so let us this year launch a strong campaign to get all the Catholic families in the Archdiocese to recite the family Rosary as a tribute to the Blessed Mother. Let all the families pray for unity and spiritual renewal within the families themselves. Let the Family Apostolate spearhead this programme of prayer all over.

Let it also in conjunction with the Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate see to it that each Catholic family owns a Bible, reads and prays with it and reflecting on the divine mysteries of the Holy Rosary, grow in their faith and commitment to the Lord, to one another and to their fellow brethren. Let the

Family Apostolate have as its target the daily recitation of the Holy rosary by all the Catholic families in the Archdiocese during this year and thereafter as a fitting tribute to the Blessed Mother.

Much of this programme would, as is obvious, depend on the role played by the Parish Priests and their assistants or the Heads of Institutions or Communities for its success. And so, I appeal to all parish Fathers, Superiors of Communities of the Religious and the Heads of Institutions like Catholic Schools, Theologates, University Colleges, or other such Institutions to make use of this year of grace for the animation of their flock towards a greater Marian spirituality. A true Marian spirituality indeed, it must be stressed does not take anyone away from Christ, as some would say, but instead bring him or her even closer to Him. This is because it is Mary that fully realized in herself the mystery of God's incarnation, God becoming man in her. And so, the more we are united to her, the more would we "draw" closer to Christ whose assuming human flesh was realized in her. Stated Pope Paul VI, "Knowledge of the true Catholic doctrine regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary will always be a key to the exact understanding of the mystery of Christ and of the Church" [Discourse of 21st November 1964, AAS56 (1964) 1015].

And so I appeal to all concerned especially our parish Fathers to make good use of the Marian Year to build up the awareness of our Catholics on the indispensable role of the Blessed Mother in the history of salvation, and the role she can play in their search for spiritual happiness and redemption and to organize as much as possible different programmes in their parishes to increase their Marian faith, especially through the diffusion of literature, DVDs, CDs and other productions on Marian Doctrine and Theology; encourage family prayer, especially the Rosary and its Cottage Group recitation; encourage and organize occasions for more frequent participation in the Sacrament of Confession; Marian feasts and pilgrimages; encourage them to join the Archdiocesan pilgrimages and special programmes; encourage and organize special programmes of animation towards family unity through prayer, concern for the poor and efforts to be agents of social change, peace building and dialogue and to offer to Mary, our Heavenly Mother, a resolution to lead a life that is faithful to the Lord as an year end gift.

Let us make use of this year to strengthen the faith of our communities and also as a special tribute to her from us, members of the clergy beautify our churches, visit all the families, celebrate the Liturgy with devotion and love, help the poor and strive to be kind and gentle shepherds in the image of Christ Himself, our supreme Good Shepherd.

May I then wind up this Pastoral Letter with a prayer by Pope Benedict XVI adapted for this occasion, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, you have given the world its true light, Jesus, your Son - the Son of God. You abandoned yourself completely to God's call and thus became a well spring of the goodness which flows forth from Him. Show us Jesus, lead us to Him. Teach us to know and love Him, so that we too can become capable of true love and be fountains of living water in the midst of a world that thirsts for goodness. Intercede for us and help us to have a deep sense of faith in your Son and to love you and with you the Church He founded" Amen.

The Catholic Faith in Sri Lanka

From whom did we receive the Catholic Faith in Sri Lanka? Faith is a divine gift and thus the answer is simple. We received the Catholic faith as a gift from God but God works directly in an invisible way, and indirectly through the cooperation of human beings. In this case the human beings were the Missionaries both Portuguese and of other nations, sometimes through the Portuguese civil authorities and sometimes even through soldiers. Some people accepted this gift of God for human advantages. Later some of these people deepened their faith and remained convinced Catholics others fell off and returned to their previous religious allegiance or to no religion at all. Are we to be ashamed if we have received a divine gift through unworthy persons or through unworthy means? God is the master of his gifts and our duty

is to be grateful for such a gift and to shape our lives accordingly. Naturally it was our ancestors that received this gift which is granted to us at baptism.

But the question is being raised again and again: Did our ancestors receive this gift from God at the time of the Portuguese or did they get it earlier?

I have not been able to examine all relevant documents personally and it may be that here and there what I say is only my actual personal opinion.

From history we know that Christianity found its way to India and chiefly to South India from very early days. We know also that some of these Christian communities very early separated themselves from their union with Rome and owed their allegiance to Constantinople or to Persia, etc.

From our own history we know that Sri



Lanka was invaded several times, at first from South India and then from North India. Is there anything strange if we find some indication here and there, like the symbol of the Cross at Anuradhapura, that some Christian soldiers came from India to Sri Lanka? Some may have remained and settled

down in the island. Some business people may have done the same. At the time of the Portuguese we have evidence that the pearl fishery from Puttalam to Chilaw was in the hands of the Indians who came and camped there for several weeks. Were there

any Christians who remained in the island? There were certainly some Christians here and there and European travelers met them and wrote about them. But these Christians, so far as I know were never from a real stable community. What I mean is very simple. When the Dutch replaced the Por-

Rev. Fr. V. Perniola SJ

tuguese in Sri Lanka, they forbade the practice of the Catholic Religion. Many Catholics migrated to the Kandyan kingdom, settled down there and formed real communities faithful to their religion. Take for instance the community of Wahakotte.

When the Portuguese came to the island, they did not find any Catholic community. So far as I know, nobody has shown that the Portuguese missionaries found any Catholics anywhere.

But it has been said that there was an Episcopus Columbensis in 1330. First of all I would like to know how the name is spelt. The similarity of sounds has often been the pitfall of philologists and perhaps of historians as well! Colombo may not have existed at all in 1330. With Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Gampola as capitals the economy of the country was chiefly agricultural. Those who came from abroad for any

commerce found a good shelter for their boats at Puttalam or at Galle. Perhaps the two mentioned in the document of the Vatican Library refers to Quilon in South India and not to Colombo. I wish we could have a photocopy of the document.

When did Colombo become a town with a harbour? I do not know. I would like to mention two details I know. The Sandesa literature describes the journey of the bird that carries a message. Kotte is mentioned five times in five different Sandesa. Colombo is mentioned ONLY ONCE in the Tisara Sandesa, the last of the Sandesa literature which seems to have been written in 1440. Again when the king of Portugal, King Manoel, communicated to Pope Julius II the happy news that Lourenco de Almeida had "approached that most renowned island, Taprobane... now called Zeylon." Colombo is not mentioned.

Let's protect our Christian heritage sites

Time is ripe to protect the Christian Heritage sites from vandals who not only destroy Buddhist Shrines but other archeological items of esteem value.

The most important Christian find in the Anuradhapura period is the Lotus Cross kept at the National Museum at Anuradhapura. It is time that the cross is removed to a more secure place under the administration of the Church for veneration and for the posterity of the future children of the Christian community. It is recorded that the cross and the foundation stone found during the Sigiriya period belongs to the Persian Christians who happened to be here for trading. The Cross can be located in a suitable place in the Cathedral of St. Joseph Anuradhapura with the permission by the Department of Archeology. Dr. Senarath Paranavithana has conformed that the Cross belongs to the Anuradhapura period.

Then comes the Holy well found at the Jawatta cemetery near the ruins of the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance which was there during the Portuguese period as described by Rev. Don Peter, that needs refurbishment.

bishment.

There was an estimate drawn by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, when the Rev. Fr. Don Peter wrote to the then Secretary of the Ministry of Christian Affairs Mrs. Rose Fernando. Accordingly, St. Peter's College, was expected to coordinate with the Ministry on the matter. The matter still remains buried.

There are several sites and statues which belong to Christian heritage but unfortunately we do not have the Church mechanism to proceed action on the paper work and approval. Even the Church of the Gate of Heaven in Telheiras in Portugal and the tomb of Fr. Dom Yamasinghe (Black Prince) of is a foreign site that belongs to our Christian Heritage. We have our cultural stone carvings there belonging to the Kandyan period. Dr. Don Peter sent the national flag of Sri Lanka to be kept near the body of the Prince of 'Candia' who became a Priest in the Church in the 15th century. It was the intention of the late Rev. Fr. Don Peter to revive the faith of Our Lady of Deliverance once prevailed at Narahenpita or Marahenpita as it was then known. The old statue can be identified with the collection of statues of Our Lady in Colombo.

Hope the newly formed Heritage Unit of the Colombo Archdiocese will hereafter take up the matter without delay.

Bandula Nonis

Bro. Matthew wins National Sahitya Award

Rev. Bro. S.A.I. Matthew has won the National Sahitya Award for his book titled "Law, Religion, Governance," a result of his deep study and long research for fifteen years on the subject. This is third award in the field of his writing.



The award ceremony was held at BMICH last month, under the auspices of Chamal Rajapaksha, the Speaker of the Parliament.

Bro. Matthew who authored 55 books, has secured the same award twice, in 1999 and 2009 for his research study on 'The Christians' Educational Contribution in the East Lanka' and "St. Paul - Action Oriented sage" respectively."



It is our duty to be civic-minded

I wish to express my concerns with regards to some observations I made during several church feasts that were held in the areas south of Colombo over the past few months. I would stress upon the fact that this letter was written with no intention of bringing any disrepute to our beloved Fathers or accuse them but simply to voice my concern which I thought was the duty of me as a Christian.

Firstly I consider it totally wrong to involve the Municipal Council for renovations and decorations for a church feast. As you may agree we have been celebrating church feasts over the past so many years in whatever way we could with the help and involvement of our parishioners and clergy. But sadly today even the renovations of the church and

painting are done by the council, most of the parapet walls of houses leading to the church are painted and even the roof tops painted. Large number of bulbs used for illumination and a pandal erected by the council incurring large cost and use of manpower of council. Sadly as you know most of the drains under the council are clogged and breeding mosquitoes resulting in the loss of valuable life. Roads are in a pretty bad state, garbage collect up in piles with no one to remove them for days, most streets are in darkness due to the inability to replace fused street lights, the poor are totally neglected with no water, electricity or proper housing.

Did you ever wonder why the Council may have got involved? What I strongly feel is that

its for political gain and mileage. We as a God fearing community should be ashamed for abusing the Council funds and manpower just to celebrate our feast when that money could have been used for the betterment of the entire tax paying community. What right does anyone have to use it for personal gain. By accepting such things we as a community have done grave injustice to our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Why cannot our parishioners afford to renovate our churches and decorate it? Would you not have contributed in whatever way you could if those responsible approached you. Are you not guilty and ashamed of using the tax payers hard earned money to celebrate your feast? I am sure Jesus would have been

very unhappy and saddened with all that happens during our church feasts. So my humble plea is let us rally round our Church leaders and try to save our Church from the evils of being politicized which has already happened. Let us pray to God so that our priests and nuns will be shepherds guiding their flock based on the Holy Scriptures rather than handing us over to others to lead us all astray.

This is my personal opinion and I once again do wish to state that I have no intention at all to hurt any one's feelings but feel ashamed to be silent when such things are happening around.

I would value if you could share your views as well so that we could generate a constructive discussion that would help us follow Jesus.

Shehan

**Saviour
of the
Apostate**

*In belief
Steadfast
Abide faith
Strength
Wisdom
Truth reigns
Patience
Perseverance
Fortitude
Never abandon
Jesus saves
Retains trust
All apostate*

Sent by:
Miran Perera

Our Journey of 25 years

I am pleased to pen a few lines to thank and praise the Almighty for the great things He has done for us and to give an account of the wonderful things He has done during the past 25 years of our mission at Melsiripura in the Diocese of Kurunegala.

As the saying goes, every dark cloud has a silver lining and so has been the case in the mission of the Dominican Sisters of Malta in Sri-Lanka, whose inception goes back to 1954 when the first Maltese Sisters to Sri Lanka arrived and started the Mission at Thimbirigasyaya, at the invitation and with the blessings of His Eminence, the late Thomas Cardinal Cooray. Due to the adverse political situation when the missionaries were expelled from the country in 1966, the Dominican Mission came to an end.

Beginning

At the beginning of the founding of Dominican Order, even St. Dominic was left alone when all his companions abandoned him, but he remained faithful to his call. In the same spirit, our congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Malta waited patiently until "the Lord commanded the seed to rise even though the farmer is unaware."

This is what Jacques Maritain in his book *St. Dominic and the Order of Preachers*; has to say regarding the state in which St. Dominic found himself when Don Diego left him:

His little band of followers had not grown very much since he had become their leader on the departure of Diego, six years before. In fact, they now numbered but seven, all told. This, however, did not prevent him from setting about the realization of his lifelong dream of founding an order for the conversion of heretics and the spread of Christian truth.

The mission of the Dominican Sisters of Malta began to see the silver lining in the clouds when the Diocese of Kurunegala which was erected in 1987 with Rt.Rev.Dr.Raymond Peiris as its first Bishop, presented itself a potential mission territory for the Dominican Sisters of Malta and the Superior General of our Congregation, Rev. Mother Virginia Ellul began to explore the possibility of a new Mission in Sri-Lanka which the few local Sisters could serve.

The Mission was established in 1988 with the local Sisters and it was not an easy task for the Sisters who had to face trials and turbulences, a characteristic not alien to the Order. Nevertheless the dream of serving the motherland was seeing the day. The founder of the Order itself had a similar dream.

We can readily believe that more than once since his Order had been firmly established, the saint had cast a longing glance in the direction of Spain, and yearned for the opportunity of implanting in the soil of his native land a branch

tered pockets of Catholics. We are really grateful to the then Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Edward Ivan who was a brother and a source of strength to us.

The year 1988 was one of the darkest years in the recent history of Sri Lanka when

We started the first ever Montessori to be set up in this area and it was headed by Sr. Therese Fernando. Since we did not have a proper place for it for sometime we had it in the corridor of the old parish church.

We helped the Diocese with the catechetical work and the youth work and also with the Holy Childhood project as well as with the Lakrivi project because we catered to both Buddhist and the Catholic children.

Then came another blessing and it was the elevation of Melsiripura to the status of a parish in January 1991 with Rev. Fr. Rohan Perera CSsR as its first parish priest. It brought much happiness to the people who could now access Church services and receive sacraments at their doorsteps without having to go

many miles to Bakmeegolla.

Basic Christian Communities

The next remarkable development was that we could now establish Basic Christian Communities which became the live wire of the Kurunegala Diocese. It was the wish of the Bishop Raymond to establish BCCs in all parts of the diocese and with the help of the parish priests the Sisters were now able to expand their Mission.

At Moroththa, the Church was dedicated to our Lady of Madhu and the feast of Our Lady of Madhu was set for the 2 of July. To celebrate the feast, a few Catholics from Maravila joined as a custom, since it was not possible to go to the Shrine of Madhu due to war many people from all around the country started to come there for the feast of Our Lady of Madhu and it became a Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu.

During these twenty-five years, the Lord blessed us with new vocations.

We are grateful to His Lordship and the brother priests in the Diocese of Kurunegala who supported us by sending vocations and helping the Sisters' spiritual formation. Here, most especially, I must remember with gratitude Rev. Fr. Lucian Perera, then the first Procurator General of the newly erected Diocese of Kurunegala, who helped us so much to find a suitable place and to obtain funds to build a new convent and a hall for the nursery.

As the Lord was blessing us with new vocations, we felt the need for the opening of a new mission in the Diocese of



Dominican Convent, Ave Maria Branch

of that religious tree which in so short a space of time had matured, blossomed and borne abundant fruit in the other countries of Europe."

In 1988 when Sr. Hyacinth Nanayakkara and Sr. Therese Fernando met with His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Pieris to explore the possibilities of reopening our Mission, the Bishop graciously accepted our request and when he went to Rome for his first Papal visit as the newly consecrated Bishop, he made a point to go to Malta and meet our Superior General, Mother Virginia Ellul one of the pioneers of the Mission in Sri Lanka. This meeting paved the way to prepare the ground for the establishment of the Dominican Mission at Melsiripura as the first group of Religious nuns to serve in his new Diocese of Kurunegala.

On the April 3, 1988, Sr. Hyacinth and Sr. Therese Fernando who were already in Sri-Lanka prepared the parish residence built to house a parish priest in future as the residence of the community of Dominican Sisters of Malta. Then in August 1988 Sr. Sirima Opanayaka who had just finished her MA in Theological studies in Rome joined them to form the new community, with Sr. Hyacinth Nanayakkara as the first Superior.

Dark Times

Our Mission territory consisted of the stations of Moroththa, Diddeniya, Galewewa, Dodangalanda and Bakmeegolla which was the main parish where the Parish Priest resided and which was around 20 kilometers away from Moroththa where there were scat-

tered pockets of Catholics. We are really grateful to the then Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Edward Ivan who was a brother and a source of strength to us. The year 1988 was one of the darkest years in the recent history of Sri Lanka when the JVP insurrection was at its peak. The villages of Melsiripura, Moroththa and Diddeniya were deeply affected and there were occasions when our own lives were in danger. When we went out in the morning for house visits or field visits in these areas we could not return home because of the curfew imposed by the JVP and every night we stayed in these villages, we could hear gun shots. In the morning we could find few dead bodies on the roads and some times, even in front of the Church. 'We had many sleepless nights trying to protect the youth in the villages. One night we were threatened by JVP because we were protecting the young people and guiding them to do the right thing. In this dangerous situation, we had to leave the Convent as early as 3.00 in the morning. Rev. Frs. Edward Ivan and the late Anthony Tisssera often came to our rescue and accompanied us.

Once we had to remain at Holy Family Convent at Wenuppuwa because of our two foreign Sisters, Sr. Mary Grace Calleja, the Assistant Superior General and Sr. Francis Faruija who had come for the first canonical visit after the establishment of the new community.

Whenever we remember those hard times, we could only say "praise be the name of the Lord who had done marvellous things." With such experiences, our faith was truly strengthened and our mission made fruitful, strong and steady for 25 years. Today when we look back at those dark clouds we could see the silver lining in our Mission.

Though there were so many hardships, we were able to carry on with our Mission.

Very Rev. Sr. Sirima Opanayaka O.P.
Regional Superior
Dominican Order

Kandy in order to start our formation. With a thankful heart, we remember His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando the Bishop of Kandy who accepted us to his Diocese. We chose Kandy since it was the centre for priestly formation and because of the availability of facilities for spiritual formation.

* While we carried out our Mission of informal education where-ever we were, the Lord called us for a greater commitment in this Mission by entrusting us with the responsibility of managing Ave Maria Branch School at Akkarapana, Negombo to cater to the education.

With the invitation of His Grace Bishop Emeritus Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis, we sought the permission of our Congregation to accept the offer. Our heart felt gratitude goes to our present Superior General Very Rev Sr. Carmelta Borg for giving us this opportunity and trusting us in our ability to carry out the great Mission of educating the young ones in our country.

When we accepted the management of the School, there were only 500 students in the primary section up to grade five. Today, with the grace of God, we are catering to about 1400 students, the future generation of our country.

Education has a very important place in the Dominican charism and it is said of St. Dominic that "he worked very hard in the following years to spread education about Christ." As Fr. Timothy Radcliff says, "Our centres of study are schools of hope."

Good News

Today, with the grace of God, we are serving in three dioceses, and doing our best to spread the Good News among our people as the Lord has commanded to "go out to the whole world and spread the Good News":

* In Pastoral and social works of the rural missions,

* Caring for the Children of the under privilege by providing shelter and Education

* In Education field, by Teaching in both Government and Private schools.

Our Order is known to have been founded from the beginning expressly for preaching and the salvation of souls. To this end, we ought to pursue preaching and teaching from the abundance and fullness of contemplation in imitation of our most Holy Father Dominic, who spoke only with God or of God for the benefit of souls. (First Constitution of the Order.)

The Sacred Altar is the symbol of Christ. Therefore, we refrain from keeping flowers on top of it or covering it by keeping flowers in front of it.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

That as followers of Christ we may be grateful for the gift of faith by which we know Him and His purpose for us. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For all the human family: That people may see their lives as a gift from God, and show their gratitude by living a good life. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For all the sick and those who are handicapped in any way: That they may experience the healing touch of Christ. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

That we may be able to see the hand of God in our crosses, pain and failures, because they help us to grow and to discover who we are. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR C
13th October - 20th October 2013

Sun: 28th Sunday of Ordinary Time
2 Kgs 5:14-17; 1 Tim 2:8-13; Lk. 17:11-19
Mon: Memorial of St. Callistus I, Pope & Martyr
Rom 1: 1-7; Lk. 11:29-32
Tue: Memorial of St. Teresa of Jesus, Virgin & Doctor
Rom 1: 16-25; Lk. 11:37-41
Wed: Memorials of St. Hedwig, Religious, & St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Virgin
Rom 2: 1-11; Lk. 11:42-46
Thu: Memorial of St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop & Martyr
Rom 3: 21-30; Lk. 11:47-54
Fri: Feast of St. Luke, Evangelist
2 Tim 4:10-17b; Lk. 10:1-9
Sat: Memorial of SS. John de Brebeuf and Isaac Jogues Priests, and Companions, Martyrs
Rom 4:13, 16-18; Lk. 12:8-12
Sun: 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time
World Mission Sunday
Ex. 17:8-13; 1 Tim 3:14-4:2; Lk. 18: 1-8

Beatification of 23 Spanish Claretian Martyrs

*Rev. Fr. Cyriac Njayarkulam CMF
(St. Claret Seminary, Kattuwa-Negombo)*

In this Year of Faith 522 persons will be beatified on October 13, 2013 in Tarragona, Spain by Cardinal Angelo Amato, the Representative of Pope Francis. It is a matter of great joy for all Christians all over the world and in a particular way for the Claretians in Sri Lanka as 23 of their Confreres are going to be beatified on that day who form part of the "Martyrs of the 20th Century."

The 23 Claretians who are going to be beatified are from three places: Tarragona, Sigüenza and Fernancaballero in the South of Spain. For the city and Archdiocese of Tarragona this beatification signifies a link to the martyrial sources of their faith: The admirable testimony of Bishop Fructuosos and his Deacons Augurios and Eulogius (3rd century). For Claretians it reminds them of the testimony of the first martyr of the Congregation, Fr. Francisco Crusats, assassinated in Selva del Camp in 1868, close to the city of Tarragona.

Among the Martyrs of Fernancaballero there was also a Claretian student hailing from Columbia in South America, Jesus Anibal Gomez. After hearing that he was a Columbian, one of the Communist revolutionary militia men grabbed him in the face: "Have you come so far to become a useless friar?" Anibal responded: "Yes, and with great honour." The militia man jabbed him brutally with the rifle: "Well, then take their same fate." Bishop Juan del Rio states: "Behind the Christian Martyrs there are no political or ideological flags: There is only faith in God and love of neighbor."

Neither in Fernancaballero, nor in Sigüenza nor on the distinct 'altars' where the martyrs of Tarragona were sacrificed were heard cries other than "Long Live Christ the King!", "Long Live the Heart of Mary," "Long Live Spain!" Why were they killed? The Martyrs did not want to impress those who executed them, rather they were afraid to die.

These sentiments were not improvised. In the religious community of Ciudad Real "We were all prepared for death; we saw that it was very close. The humiliations and the deprivations were suffered with resignation and docility and commiseration for with the

persecutors." The Superior testified later: "The force that encouraged the Martyrs to deal with death was 'faith in God and love of neighbour.' The Martyrs, at the time of sacrifice showed complete freedom. Without hatred, they chose words of forgiveness and feelings of love towards those who took their lives."

It is important to keep alive the memory of these martyrs. Faced with the temptation of distrust, comfort or mediocrity, their testimony challenges and encourages us. Martyrdom is certainly an exceptional situation, but if it is in line with what already involves the decision to become a Christian and a Religious: The renunciation of wanting 'to share one's life' in the sense of living it only for our own interests, our own tranquility, our own projects offering it generously so that others 'may have life and have it abundantly.' An option like this never ceases to be a 'dying' continued to live and to help live. Such was the life and death of Christ and that of so many who have followed him.

When it comes to martyrs of a civil war, it is necessary to underline that the tribute to these martyrs have nothing to do with being vengeful or challenging. They forgave their enemies and hoped that their blood was 'blood for forgiveness and hope.' Therefore their memory is nothing less than a call to reconciliation and peace. Let us hope that their heroic witness of faith, courage and forgiveness will help us to live with joy and strength the challenges being presented to us by the mission in our day.

In this 'Year of Faith', the testimony of these brothers helps us greatly. Together with them it is easier to believe. "One does not believe by oneself, without the prior intervention of the grace of the Holy Spirit; one does not believe alone, but together with one's brethren," proclaimed Pope Benedict XVI at the General Audience of October 24, 2012.

These martyrs were persecuted for their faith, to follow the footsteps of Christ; but as the Church says in the Liturgy of the Martyrs, "now live rejoicing in heaven." May God grant that their testimony inspire the hearts of all of us, especially of many young people who, animated by the same spirit, will carry out those missionary desires that they were not able to reach.

Twenty Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading:
2Kgs.5: 14-17.

On the advice of the Prophet Elisha Naman the Syrian dips seven times in the pool and is cured of his leprosy. Now he wishes to give a gift to the prophet but the prophet would not accept and the Syrian wishes to be faithful to the Lord throughout his life.

Second Reading:
2 Tim. 2: 8-13.

St. Paul writes to Timothy as to why he is faithful to the Lord. Because St. Paul is faithful he wishes to preach the Good News and even endure suffering for the sake of the Lord.

Gospel. Lk. 17: 11-19.

Jesus cures Ten Lepers. They are asked to show themselves to the priests. On their way they are cured. But only one returns to thank the Lord.

Reflection.

Today's Readings invite us to serve the Lord



in thanks giving and gratitude. Even though we may not be lepers, fallen ill or been cured we still ought to thank the Lord for what He has been to us. Even if we were to forget the redemption brought by Him we still ought to thank for our birth and our continual existence. What if our

lives were to end at this very moment? How sad we would be to leave this world and our loved ones and the things both near and dear to us. That is why we should show our gratitude to the Lord by being grateful to Him.

The best way to show our gratitude to the

Lord is to accept Christ as Our Lord and master and totally dedicate our lives to Him. In other words we should serve Him by way of spreading the Good News and bearing witness to the Kingdom of God. This is shown quite clearly in the Readings of today.

In the Gospel ten lepers go before Jesus and ask Him to cure them of their illness. Jesus, seeing their faith advised them to go before the priests. An action, that is done only by those who are cured. The lepers follow the Lord's instructions. On their way they are cured and one of them came back to thank the Lord. He wanted to show his gratitude to the Lord. Out of the ten only one came back to thank the Lord and that too was a foreigner. The Lord appreciated his gratitude.

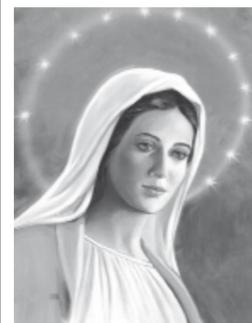
In the First Reading Naman the Syrian who is a leper goes before the prophet to be cured. The prophet directs him to dip seven times in the pool and

at his servant's request and pleading Naman dips in the pool and is cured. He comes back to the prophet to thank him and wishes to give him a present but the prophet would not accept it. And then Naman, promises to be faithful to the Lord for the rest of his life. In the Second Reading it is St. Paul, the only Apostle chosen directly by the Risen Lord; out of gratitude, so dedicated to the Lord that he wishes to endure any hardship or suffering in order to spread the Good News. Here he writes to Timothy about the resurrection of Jesus which is the crowning act of redemption. He wishes that all be faithful to the Lord out of gratitude and share his task of spreading the Good News in word and deed.

Therefore let us too, show our gratitude to the Lord by way of dedicating our lives to the service of the Lord whatever our vocation is.

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

Mary Rock our Souls



Mary divine
Comfort sought
Troubled souls
Rock all faith
This plead hurts
Sustains, continues
Pain, Sin, Torment,
The grieved defeated
Sadness, Tears pour
Make placid
Tortured minds
Please, elegies today
Never to write
Epigrams of wit
Still a verse rocks
In appeal to Mary
By all afflicted

Miran Perera

Choro Calibre 'This is it' rescheduled for November 25, 2013



"THIS IS IT" the Ultimate Choral Concert by Choro Calibre, which was to be held in October at the BMICH at Nelum Pokuna, has been POSTPONED as the above venues will be occupied for the preparation towards Commonwealth Heads of Government Annual Meeting (CHOGAM). The concert 'This is it' is rescheduled for November 25, 2013 at the Nelum Pokuna Theatre.

The Ultimate Choral Concert which marks the choir's success as Choro Calibre directed by Shamal De Silva celebrates their 4th Year Anniversary whilst contributing to a worthy cause as the proceeds from this concert will be donated to the Community Building Extension Project at All Saints' Church, Borella.

'This is it' will showcase the best of Choro calibre and comprise a variety of carefully arranged segments ranging from Classical to modern music in different styles and languages, together with choreography, dancing, acting, accompaniment, Hi-Tech lighting, superior sounds, stage props and special effects.

The Backing accompaniment for 'This is it' will be

by the Band 'Miracle' also led by Shamal.

'This is it' will challenge boundaries and deliver maximum satisfaction to the Audience and will comprise the following diverse segments.

Curtain Raiser

The dramatic start with the 'Phantom of the Opera' flows to a medley of all time hit theme songs in an epic classical rock orchestral arrangement ending with 'Mission Impossible' and surprising stunt which will set the exact tone for the show, and deliver what the audience is supposed to expect...the unexpected!!!

Classical Segment- The stage is transformed into a traditional choral setting with selections from great works such as Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana," Enigma, Josh Groban followed by a GOSPEL ACCAPELLE.

Modern Segment- An array of contemporary music of different styles including house, hip-hop and techno music combined with beat-boxing, modern choreography and costumes in an alien theme

Retro Segment- Time travel to the 'Golden Era' from the classic 70's to the scintillating 90's with variety of styles in music ranging from Latin, Disco and Rock N' Roll .

Country Segment- This Cowboy theme segment consist of the choir's arrangement of a variety of country music, combined with a touch of humour, and highlight the choir's acting and dancing skills.

Ethnic Segment-This segment kicks-off with the choir's trademark and the award winning act, "The Wannam Medley" and ends with a colorful and glamorous performance of upbeat Indian dance music.

Dance Segment- Dance music of Yesteryear and Contemporary in this vibrant segment, will move the audience to cheer along and tap their toes with Sri Lankan Baila for a Grand Finale

Tickets for "This is it" are priced at Rs.10000 (VVIP), Rs.5000 (VIP), Rs.3000, Rs.2000 and Rs.1000 and will be available from the 1st of November 2013 at *Tickets.lk, Nelum Pokuna* and *Vibrations*.

Choro Calibre promises to deliver a concert of a life time to the Sri Lankan music lovers by proving their slogan, "Expect the Unexpected."

*For Ticket reservations or any further details contact Malshi on 0774835533



JESUS with a DIFFERENCE

[Spiritual Reflection]
LUKE 10 : 38-42

At the Home of Martha and Mary

"As Jesus and His disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him."

Jesus

He was on His way with His disciples. He came to a village. He was invited to Martha's house.

Hidden Points

- Did Martha forget to invite the disciples?
- Did Jesus ask the disciples not to come to Martha's house?
- Where did the disciples go when they were not invited?
- Did Jesus ask the disciples also to follow Him?

Difference

- Are we also welcoming only Jesus?
- Are we leaving Jesus' followers as not important?
- Have we failed to realise Jesus in the life of others?
- Are we not considered as followers?
- Am I distinguishing the people of God in my dealing?

Turning Points

- Martha took the initiative to welcome Jesus. Mary to receive Jesus' whole heartedly.
- Martha was keen to prepare the platform for Jesus to teach.
- Mary was keen to grasp the teaching of Jesus.



Rev. fr. S. Randil Fernando OMI
Nazareth, Wennappuwa

"A LOVING SMILE"

The smile you've got
Is very attractive, indeed!
Whether you're sad or otherwise,
It's unable to recognize.....

Let me ask you a question.
"How can you smile,
Through difficulties, woes or cares?"
Here's the answer, short and sweet.....

It's in the "LORD JESUS"
I find joy and happiness.....
When I talk to Him.
My life takes on an easy smile

Surely, my Lord helps me.....
Carry my struggles of every kind.....
What else then do I need ?
Having Him and His help,
Is enough for me and "My loving smile"

Rev. Sr. A. Christina Lourdes (HF)



Being HUMBLE is more important than being WISE. Because GOD doesn't need a PROUD mouth that SPEAKS much, but a KIND heart that LISTENS.

Young World

'Sabbath Day' at the University of Colombo



"Sabbath Day" of the Catholic Student's Movement (CSM) of University of Colombo was held recently at the University premises.

On Sabbath Day which is an annual event of the University, all Catholic students of the various Universi-

ties in the Archdiocese of Colombo come together in a friendly gathering. The Celebrant at Holy Mass was Rev. Fr. Bonnie Fernandopulle, the Rector of St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa.

Muditha Perera

Fun day for students



'World Children's Day' was celebrated at Our Lady of Lourdes Maha Vidiyalaya, Nattandiya.

It was a day when the staff of the School took the initiative of performing for the students.

It was a day of high fun and entertainment.

Shrriyanganani Felicia



First Holy Communion

Forty One children from the Parish of Sacred Heart Church, Mattumagala, received their First Holy Communion recently. Holy Mass was presided by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Anselm Shiran. Picture shows the children with the Parish Priest, Rev. Sr. Esther and the Sunday school teachers.

T. Kirshan Panandu

Donation of musical instruments



A set of musical instruments worth Rs. 1,75,000 was donated to the Western Band of Good Shepherd Balika Vidyalyaya, Nayakakanda, Hendala by the former Minister of Christian Affairs, John Amarathunga recently.

Here Mr. Amarathunga is seen handing over the musical instruments to the students.

Principal Rev. Sr. Vajira Abeysinghe, Former Minister of the Western Provincial Council Lawrence Madiwela are also in the picture.

Nimal Perera

Christ the King, College, Tudella Walks



In view of the forthcoming 70th Anniversary celebrations of Christ the King, College, Tudella, a walk was held with the participation of students, staff and Old Boys of the College, under the patronage of the Principal of the College, Rev. Fr. Nihal Rodrigo.

C. D. Anthony

Celebrating World Children's Day



'World Children's Day' was celebrated at Infant Jesus Pre School, Peralandu under the patronage of the Principal of the Pre-school, Mrs. Nadeesha Gunathilaka.

To commemorate the day, a workshop on *Art and its Importance to*

Children was conducted for parents and the children, by two teachers from De Mazenod College, Kandana, Mr. Parindu Geeth and Mr. Sampath Kavindu.

After the workshop the children posed for a picture with the teachers.

Dickson Anthony

ON HER FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

A GRANDMOTHER'S PRAYER

As She Kneels At Thy High Altar

Lily White, Heart Filled With Love
Heavenly Father, Shower Thy Blessings
From Thy Bright Throne Above

Increase Her Faith Until It Burns

Firebright Within Her Soul
To Tread The Straight And Narrow Path
Make It Her Life's Only Goal

When Things Go Awry Make Her See

Thy Hand That Guides That Dart
And Taking Hope, Help Her Lord
Anew, A Fresh To Start

Mother Mary Be Thou Her Guide

In Every Walk Of Life
Keep Her Pure In Heart And Mind
And Shield Her From All Strife

Bless All Her Friends

She Feasts As The Lord's Own Guests
And Keep Them Pure Steadfast And True
To None But Thy Own Behests

Doreen Peiris

English with Fun and Entertainment

Dear Readers,

In the third lesson of English with Fun and Entertainment we learnt the Speech Sounds (k) (g) (tʃ) (dʒ), tongue twisters, the story of how the squirrel got his stripes, a warmer for teachers, some riddles and teasers and inspirational quotes for young and the old.

In this lesson you will learn the speech sounds (f) (v), (θ) (ð) think (ð) this, tongue twisters, two funny stories namely Mouthology and Elephant, some riddles, inspirational quotes and an exciting teaser. You will be touched emotionally and tickled intellectually.

Thanks for the readers who made valuable suggestions and for using these lessons to cultivate the habit of reading in the young and the old.

You are invited to share your experiences, thoughts, comments and suggestions to make our lessons down to earth and useful.

With best regards!

NJ

Task 1

Let's add four more **English Speech Sounds** today. They are (f) (v) (θ) (ð)

e.g. (f) fine (v) vine (θ) think (ð) this

(f) fin fit fat fell file (v) van vat vine vim vineyard

(θ) thin think thank three thirty (ð) this these that those then

Read aloud very fast and enjoy the fun.

1. That fat man bought a van for thirty three thousand dollars..
2. Thank you very much for the bottle of vine.
3. I think these feathers are very expensive.
4. Victor got them to vote for him.
5. These friends are fine

Tongue-Twisters. A tongue-twister is a sequence of words that is difficult to pronounce quickly and correctly.

- Four furious friends fought for the phone.
- Very well, very well, very well
- I thought, I thought of thinking of thanking you..
- This is the sixth zebra .

Funny Short Stories by Stephen taken from the internet

Task 2

(i) Read aloud very fast /

(ii) Can you make a similar comment on mouthology

Mouthology:

A Professor was traveling by boat. On his way he asked the sailor:

"Do you know Biology, Ecology, Zoology, Geography, physiology?"

The sailor said no to all his questions.

Professor: What the hell do you know on earth. You will die of illiteracy.

After a while the boat started sinking. The Sailor asked the Professor, do you know swimology & escapology from sharkology?

The professor said no.

Sailor: "Well, sharkology & crocodiology will eat your assology, headology & you will dieology because of your mouthology."

Task 3

Read the story, enjoy the fun and name an animal, a bird and a fish that begins with 'e'

Elephant:

The class teacher asks students to name an animal that begins with an "E".

One boy says, "Elephant."

Then the teacher asks for an animal that begins with a "T".

The same boy says, "Two elephants."

The teacher sends the boy out of the class for bad behavior.

After that she asks for an animal beginning with "M".

The boy shouts from the other side of the wall: "Maybe an elephant!"

Task 3 : Write an animal, a bird and a fish beginning with the letter 'e'

Task 4

Riddles

Q Q: You walk into a room with a match, a kerosene lamp, a candle, and a fireplace. Which do you light first?

Q: A man was driving his truck. His lights were not on. The moon was not out. Up ahead, a woman was crossing the street. How did he see her?

Q: What kind of tree can you carry in your hand?

Q: If an electric train is travelling south, which way is the smoke going?

Q: You draw a line. Without touching it, how do you make the line longer?

Q: What has one eye but cannot see?

Task 5

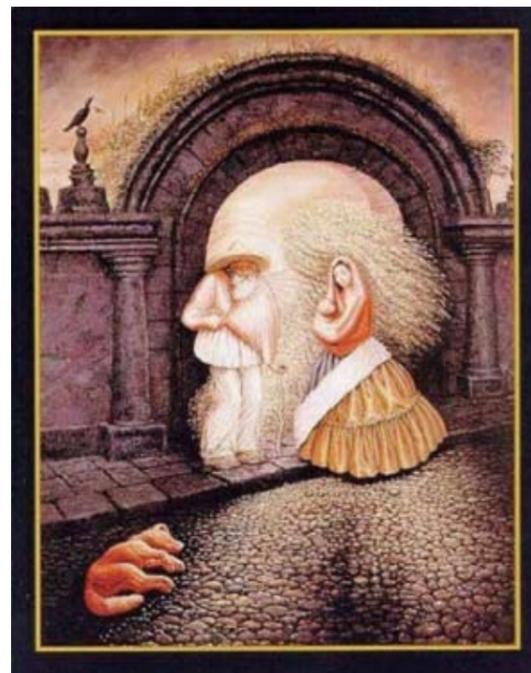
Read aloud and prioritize the following inspirational quotes according to your preference

1. The mind is everything. What you think you become. –Buddha
2. The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now. –Chinese Proverb
3. An unexamined life is not worth living. –Socrates
4. Eighty percent of success is showing up. –Woody Allen
5. Don't wait. The time will never be just right. –Napoleon Hill
6. Winning isn't everything, but wanting to win is. –Vince Lombardi
7. I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions. –Stephen Covey
8. Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up. –Pablo Picasso

Task 6

Try out these brain teasers

This is an interesting test of your observation powers. The point of this brain teaser is to "see" how many people you can spot in this picture. Hallucinations don't count!



Answers

Task 2 : (ii) Mouthology is a wonderful piece of morphology -NJ

Task 3 : elk eagle eel

Task 4: (i) A: The match.

(ii) A: It was a bright and sunny day!

(iii) A: A palm!

(iv) A: There is no smoke, it's an electric train!

(iv) A: You draw a shorter line next to it, and it becomes the longer line.

(v): A needle

Task 6 : There are nine people in this picture. If you find six, you have ordinary powers of observation. If you find seven you have above average powers of observation, if you find eight, you are very observant. If you find nine you are extremely observant. You can rival the observant powers of Sherlock Holms. This will test your ability to take control of your brain and make it do what you want it to do.

Contact us on:
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Compiled by Noel Jayamanne

QUIZ

On Catholic Themes

(..... from last week)

QUESTIONS

1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

Baptism

410. What is the Sacrament of Baptism?
411. By what act is a person incorporated into the Body of Christ?
412. What are the two principal effects of Baptism?
413. Are all sins forgiven in Baptism?
414. Who can receive Baptism?
415. Who is the ordinary minister of Baptism?
416. How many kinds of Baptism are there?
417. Why is Baptism necessary?
418. What is Baptism of desire?
419. What is Baptism of blood?
420. What is Baptism of blood ordinarily known as?
421. What is conditional Baptism?
422. What does the word "christening" mean?
423. Why is the name of a saint given in Baptism?
424. Why are godfathers and godmothers given in baptism?
425. Can a person who is not baptized give it validly to another in case of necessity?
426. What is the matter of Baptism?
427. If water is not available can any other liquid be used for Baptism in case of necessity?
428. How is Baptism given (the form of Baptism)?
429. What is the purpose of a baptismal font?

(contd next week.....)

ANSWERS

I. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

Baptism

410. It is the Sacrament that cleanses us from sin, brings us into a new life in Christ thus making us children of God, and heirs of heaven.
411. Baptism.
412. (1) Purifies us from sin and (2) makes us adopted children of God.
413. Yes, both the original sin and actual sins together with all the punishment due to them.
414. Every person who is not yet baptized.
415. The Bishop or priest or deacon is the ordinary minister of baptism; but in case of necessity when a priest is not available anyone who has the use of reason and who believes in Christ may baptize.
416. Three: Baptism of water, of desire and of blood.
417. Because it is the only means which the Church knows that assures entry into eternal life and communion and Jesus Himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation.
418. An ardent desire to receive Baptism, together with repentance for sins, and to do all that God has ordained for our salvation.
419. The shedding of one's blood for the faith in Christ.
420. Martyrdom.
421. Baptism given in grave situations, e.g. in danger of death, on the condition that it can be received as soon as it is possible.
422. It is another word for Baptism.
423. The name of a saint is given in Baptism in order that the person baptized may imitate his/her virtues and have him/her for a protector.
424. So that they may promise, in the name of the child, what the child itself would promise if it had the use of reason.
425. Yes, provided he is a believer in Christ.
426. Natural water
427. No, in such a case the Baptism cannot be given.
428. By immersing the candidate in water or pouring water on the head and saying at the same time "I baptize you (name) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
429. It serves as a receptacle for Baptismal water in which the candidate for baptism is immersed, or over which he is washed, in the ceremony of Christian Initiation."

Courtesy: Clare Ukken fsp

First Holy Communion at Welivita Parish

Sixty Eight children from St. Mary's Church, Welivita received their first Holy Communion recently.

Picture shows the children with the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Ernest de Mel, Rev. Sr. Marian Fernando, Rev. Sr. Marie Celine and Daham Pasal teachers.

Pic: Sajeewa

Text: M. Joe Paaris



PHOTOGRAPHY
SAJEWA PHOTO
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FROM THE VATICAN DOCUMENTS

VOCATION OF THE LAITY

There are innumerable opportunities open to the laity for the exercise of their apostolate of evangelization and sanctification. The very testimony of their Christian life and good works done in a supernatural

spirit have the power to draw men to belief and to God; for the Lord says, "Even so let your light shine before men in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16).

Apostolicam Actuositatem 6
Pope Paul VI
Decree on the
Apostolate of the Laity
November 18, 1965