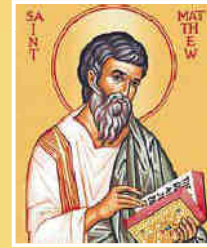


Messenger

SINCE FEB 11, 1869



**St. Matthew
Apostle and
Evangelist**

**Sept
21**

"REGISTERED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS OF SRI LANKA

UNDER NO. QD / 50 / NEWS / 2013"

Sunday, September 15, 2013 Vol 144 No 36 20 Pages Rs: 25.00 Registered as a newspaper

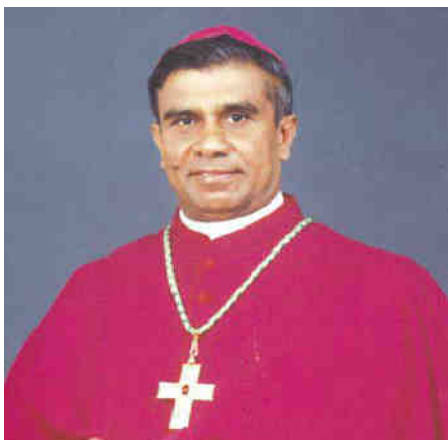
Statement by the Bishop of Kurunegala on the forthcoming NW Provincial Council Elections

His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Bishop of Kurunegala, in a statement issued on the occasion of the forthcoming North-Western Provincial Council Elections, to be held on September 21, has said that the election period should be one of renewal, earnest prayer and reflection and a time to refrain from anything that would erode human values, before, during and after the elections.

"Let us be magnanimous in victory, courageous in defeat and accept the verdict of the people with equanimity," the Bishop has said.

Full text of the Bishop's Statement follows:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
I am sure you are aware of the acts



of violence that took place during election times in the past in the North Western Province (NWP). There are persons who hold various views regarding this issue whatever their views may be it is incumbent upon us to inculcate salutary and positive attitudes not only in the minds of

the candidates but also among the voters. Let us look positively about the future and well being of our country and nation. Investing millions of rupees on elections is a useless exercise unless its benefits go to the people at large at grass-root level.
The Sath Korale
where we live and

labour is a land which produces plentiful and bountiful harvest for the nation, agriculture being the chief livelihood of the people together with the fisheries and aquatic resources in the NWP. It comprises a population of different living faiths such as Buddhists, Christians, Muslims and Hindus. It is a blessed land indeed with a cultural heritage of its own, with a calm and peaceful environment. As such we should not permit such a peaceful environment and atmosphere to be tarnished and destroyed by violence and bloodshed owing to political elections. Let us protect our own villages.

Candidates who feel the pulse of the people give various promises during election

(Contd on Pg. 2) >>>

Embrace Peace, Pope tells massive Prayer Vigil



VATICAN CITY (EWTN/CNA) - Addressing a myriad of people in St. Peter's, Pope Francis denounced war as a "defeat for humanity" and called on world leaders and individual Christians alike to rebuild a "shattered" harmony.

"Let us pray for reconciliation and peace," the Pope exhorted the crowds. "Let us work for reconciliation and peace and let us all become, in every place, men and women of reconciliation and peace!"

Pope Francis with an estimated one hundred thousand people knelt in prayer together in St. Peter's Square last Saturday evening, seeking peace throughout the globe, especially in Syria. The Vatican Prayer Vigil included hymns, Scripture readings, and silent reflection as incense drifted into the night sky.

The US, has threatened military strikes against the Syrian Government, which the US blames for the deaths of over 1,400 people, including hundreds of children, in an August 21 chemical weapons attack. The conflict between the Syrian Government and rebel forces has claimed over 100,000 lives since it began in March 2011. Many fear US intervention would increase the violence and spark a wider conflict.

Echoing, Pope John Paul II's words before the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, "War always marks the failure of peace. It is always a defeat for humanity," he said.

(Contd on Pg. 2) >>>

Creations for the 55th "Sama Mihira" Annual

The 55th "Sama Mihira" Annual, containing creations in trilingual - Sinhala/Tamil/English and which has been freely distributed since 1969, will be released in parallel with the "Sama Mihira" Nattal Kalapaya.

Please send in your articles, short stories and creative poems based on topical themes to reach the Editor, "Sama Mihira" Nattal Kalapaya, No.822/J, Dharmapala Mawatha, Tewatta, Ragama on or before October 30, 2013.
Tel: 0771-4449575
E-mail: samamihira50@gmail.com

Jayantha Sri Padmakumara

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF HOLY CHILDHOOD SOCIETY



The 25th Anniversary of the Holy Childhood Society of the Archdiocese of Colombo was celebrated last Saturday, September 7, amidst a very large gathering of children, Rev. Fathers, Rev. Sisters, Religious and the Laity at the Sports Complex of St. Joseph's College, Colombo.

Presiding on the occasion was the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith who is also the founder of the Society in the Archdiocese. The Society was started in 1988.

Asika Priyadarshana

"Gleaned from the classics"

O Quam contempta res est homo, O what a contemptible thing is nisi supra humana sorreserit man unless he rises above the (from Seneca) human condition

Colombo International Book Fair



The 15th Colombo International Book Fair organised by the Sri Lanka Book Publishers' Association, will be held from September 14 to 22, at the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Exhibition Centre at the BMICH Complex.

The Stall number of the Catholic Bookshop of the Archdiocese of Colombo is J413

INSIDE PAGES			
page 04	>>> Canonizing G.K. Chesterton ...?	page 07	<<<
	A bouquet for Mary		
page 08	>>> Star of the Sea	page 09	<<<
	Sinthathirai Matha		

FROM THE DIOCESES

Art and Craft Exhibition



St. Anne's English Medium College, Wennappuwa organised an Art and Craft Exhibition recently to celebrate the first anniversary of the College. Rev. Fr. Dilan Fernando,

Director of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Chilaw, was the Chief Guest and Veteran Actress Ms. Nita Fernando, was the Guest of Honour. Picture shows the Guests and the

Patron of the School Rev. Br. Placidus Fernando (FSC) being welcomed. While Rev. Sr. Annie Mary (HF) and the Principal Mr. Ajith Perera look on.

Church Feasts

V The Annual Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows Church Jaela will be celebrated on Sunday September 15. Festive Mass at 8 am. Chief celebrant- Very Rev. Fr. Shanthikumar Welivita, Archdiocesan Episcopal Vicar. Vespers Service on previous day at 7.30 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Thusitha Gayan Solongarachchi, Asst. Parish Priest, Dehiwela



V The 131st Annual Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Hambantota will be celebrated on Sunday September 22. Festive Mass at 9 am. Chief Celebrant Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Kingsley Wickramasinghe, Bishop of Galle. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Nihal Nanayakkara, Vicar General of Galle Diocese.

V The 88th Annual Feast of Holy Cross Church, Marawila will be celebrated on Sunday September 15. Festive Mass at 7.30 am. Chief Celebrant - Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw. Vespers Service on previous day at 7pm presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Peter Charles Fernando, Vicar General of Chilaw Diocese.

V The Annual Feast of Holy Cross Church, Munna-kkara, Negombo will be celebrated on Sunday September 15. Festive Mass at 7.30 am. Chief Celebrant - Very Rev. Fr. Patrick Perera, Archdiocesan Episcopal Vicar. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm.

V The Annual Feast of Our Lady Of Good Voyage - "Sinthathirai Matha" - will be celebrated in Chaddy, Kayts on Saturday September 14 Festive Mass at 7 am. Chief celebrant - Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundranayagam Bishop of Jaffna, assisted by Rev. Fr. Stanislaus Philip, OMI, Administrator of the Shrine. Vespers Service on previous day at 6.30 pm, preceded by Solemn Eucharistic Procession.

V The 5th Annual feast of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Karambe - Puttalam (Chilaw Diocese) will be celebrated on Sunday, September 22. Festive Mass at 8.00 a.m. - Vespers on Saturday September 21 at 6.00 p.m.

- Ainslie Joseph

Eucharistic Rally in Diyalagoda and Maggona Parishes



Parishioners of Diyalagoda and Maggona, celebrated the Eucharist Rally last Sunday. The Chief Celebrant on the occasion was Rev. Fr. Krushan Kumara, Staff, St. An-

thon's National School, Wattala.

All arrangements for the Rally were made under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Thusith Pradeep Fernando and Rev. Fr. Ishan

Prameena, Parish Priests of Diyalagoda and Maggona, along with the Parish Liturgy Committees.

D. Anselm Fernando

Annual Church Feast at Uthuwankanda

The annual Feast of St. Lazarus Church, Uthuwankanda was celebrated recently. Rev. Fr. Sriyan Fernando, lecturer, National Seminary Ampitiya, presided at the Festive High Mass.

Vespers Service on the previous day was conducted by Rev. Fr. Tony Hapuarachchi Asst. Parish Priest, Kegalle.

The feast was organised by the parishioners under the guidance of the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Arunodaya Perera.

Chrishendra Fernando

Blood Donation Campaign at Pallansena



To celebrate National Youth Day at the Pallansena Parish the members of the Youth Society 'Yawwana Kendraya' organised a blood donation campaign for the 27th successive year at 'Calvary Sevena' in the premises of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Pallansena under the patronage of the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Jayantha Nimal.

The campaign was conducted doctors and nurses of the National Blood Bank. Fifty four donors had donated blood.

Picture shows Assistant Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Gayan Prasanthan donating blood for the 13th year in succession.

Melvyn de Costa

Feast of St. Roche's Hettirippuwa

The 110th Annual Feast of St. Roche's Church, Hettirippuwa of Kurunegala Diocese was celebrated last month.

The Chief Celebrant at Festive Mass was Very Rev. Fr. Austin Marcus, Vicar General of Kurunegala Diocese.

Arrangements for the feast were made under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Hilary Rufus Thalys, Parish Priest of Irabadagama and Parishioners of Hettirippuwa.

G.B.H. Livera

Statement by the....

Contd. from Pg. 1

times but it is our bounden duty to vote for candidates who are ready to dedicate themselves for the welfare of the people and not seek benefit for themselves.

Universal franchise is a human right and we should come forward to protect its dignity and excellence. Instead of gloating over evil deeds of the past let us not be lethargic at the present moment and not refrain from casting our precious vote. Terrorizing the people, steeling poll cards, impersonation are abuses. Let us not allow such evil deeds to occur. All candidates should dedicate themselves and listen to the voice of the people.

Instead of giving importance to party or colour act diligently and prudently to choose candidates who possess the charism of genuine leadership. Let not our leaders and candidates resort to the malpractice of "Hunting for preferential votes but respect the freedom of the people to choose their leaders.

The election period should be one of renewal. Let this period be one of earnest prayer and reflection and a blissful experience of God's abundant blessings upon us who live in a land (NWP) with a proud history and heritage of its own. Let us refrain from anything that would erode human values, before during and after the election. Let us be humble and magnanimous in victory and courageous in defeat and accept the verdict of the people with equanimity. Choosing a leader by an election is a democratic and human right vested in the people and a sacred one too. Therefore do not be lethargic, go to the polls and cast your precious vote. It is our sacred duty and obligation as Christians.

In conclusion we call upon God's abundant blessings on our people, on the leaders we hope to elect.

May peace be with you all!

Yours in Jesus Christ,

Harold Anthony Perera
Catholic Bishop of Kurunegala
And the Diocesan Pastoral Council
01. 09. 2013
Bishop's House
Kurunegala

Embrace Peace....

Contd. from Pg. 1

"Look upon your brother's sorrow and do not add to it. Those who pray for peace must consider their own responsibility for conflict in a fallen world," the Holy Father said.

"Violence," he said, "repeats the sin of the first murderer, Cain. We bring about the rebirth of Cain in every act of violence and every war," Pope Francis declared. "Even today we continue this history of conflict between brothers. Even today we raise our hand against our brother."

He considered whether it was possible for humanity to change direction.

Placing the Crucifix at the centre of his homily, the Holy Father said, "My Christian faith urges me to look to the Cross. How I wish that all men and women of good will would look to the Cross if only for a moment!"

"In the silence of the Cross, the uproar of weapons ceases and the language of reconciliation, forgiveness, dialogue and peace is spoken," he explained.

The Pope reflected on the goodness of creation as taught in Genesis, where humanity is "one family, in which relationships are marked by a true fraternity."

Antonian Walk 2013

'Antonian Walk 2013' organised by St. Anthony's College, Wattala Old Boys' Association together with the Parent-Teacher Association and School Development Society will be held on Saturday September 21.

The Walk will begin at 1.30 p.m. from the College via Old Negombo Road, New Negombo Road, Market Junction, Aweriwatta Road and back to the College. There will be a Grand Carnival and Musical Show after the Walk at the College Grounds.

Clarence Leonard



Church in the Modern World

Pope to baptize unmarried mother's child

Pope Francis made a personal phone call to a young Italian woman facing a difficult pregnancy, applauding her bravery in choosing life for her child and offering to baptize the baby.

Anna Romero, a 35-year-old woman from central Italy, was on vacation when she received a phone call from the Pope.

She had written the Pontiff earlier this summer, describing her anguish at discovering that she had become pregnant by a man who – unknown to her at the time – was already married.

"In June I discovered I was pregnant through him and when I told him instead of being happy he told me he was

already married, already had a child and to have an abortion," Romero said, according to the Daily Mail.

"I told him that I would not have an abortion and told him to get out of my life."

Romero described her situation in a letter to the Pope, sharing that she had never

had luck with men, and that after marrying young and getting divorced, she thought she had found the perfect man.

However, after learning about the man's existing marriage, she felt "humiliated and betrayed," and told the Holy Father that she wrote to him because she had "no-one else to turn to."



Pope Francis: Follow Jesus' Way of the Cross

EWTN News/CNA - Pope Francis spoke to crowds gathered in St. Peter's Square for last Sunday's Angelus, encouraging them to follow Christ on the Way of the Cross.

"Following Jesus does not mean participating in a triumphal procession!" he said. "It means sharing His merciful love, entering into His great work of mercy for each person and for all mankind. And this forgiveness passes through the cross."

The Pope reflected on the Gospel, in which Jesus "insists on the conditions to be His disciple: To not place anything before love of Him, to take up one's own cross, and to follow Him."

Although there are many who want to follow Jesus, especially when there are miracles, "Jesus does not want to deceive anyone," explained Pope



Francis.

"Jesus knew well what awaits Him in Jerusalem, what the way was that the Father asked Him to walk," the Pope continued. "It is the Way of the Cross, of sacrifice of Himself for the forgiveness of our sins. Yet Jesus does not want to complete this work alone, Christ wants to include us also in the

mission that the Father has given Him," he added.

He emphasized the need to pray for the countries of Lebanon "that it may find its hoped-for stability" and Iraq "so that the sectarian violence may lead to reconciliation."

He reiterated his strong opposition to war, noting that there is a much more profound per-

sonal war that each person must fight.

"This war entails a strong and courageous decision to renounce evil and its seductions and to choose the good, ready to pay the price for such a choice. Such sacrifice is a true 'taking up of the Cross,' the Holy Father told the faithful.

Jesuit disappears in Syria



Father Paolo Dall'Oglio inside an ancient cave near the Mar Musa monastery in Syria in 2008.

RAQQA (SE:) Syrian Jesuit Father Paolo Dall'Oglio disappeared over one month ago in the area of Raqqa, Syria, and little has been heard of his whereabouts since then.

However, *Fides* reported that young people of Free Youth Committee in Raqqa, which is linked to the Syrian opposition, are continuing to search for him.

The Jesuit priest set out for Raqqa at the end of July from the border of Tell Abiad.

He was assisted by an armed Kurdish group in negotiating his way across

the country through the minefields of danger.

Local sources told *Fides* that he was trying to smooth out differences between Kurdish and Arab groups and rebuild unity within the Syrian opposition.

It was a delicate mission. Forces opposed to the Syrian regime took over the city of Raqqa in March this year, making it the first independent city of the revolution.

Fides quoted some of the young people from Raqqa as saying, "We know that Father Paolo is in serious danger."

Italian pastor donates used car to the Pope

An Italian pastor has donated a used Renault 4 with 186,000 miles to Pope Francis, in response to the exhortation he made to priests and seminarians in July to live simply and humbly.

Father Renzo Roca, 69, who is pastor of St. Lucy Parish in Pescantina, wrote to the Holy Father offering to donate his car, according to news reports out of the Vatican.

The car was delivered to the Pontiff on September 7, at St. Martha's Residence, shortly before the beginning of the Vigil for Peace which the Holy Father led in St. Peter's Square that evening.

"When I gave it to him, we got into the car, but I didn't have to explain anything to the Pope because he told me that he also used a Renault 4 in Argentina and that it never left him stranded," Father Roca said.

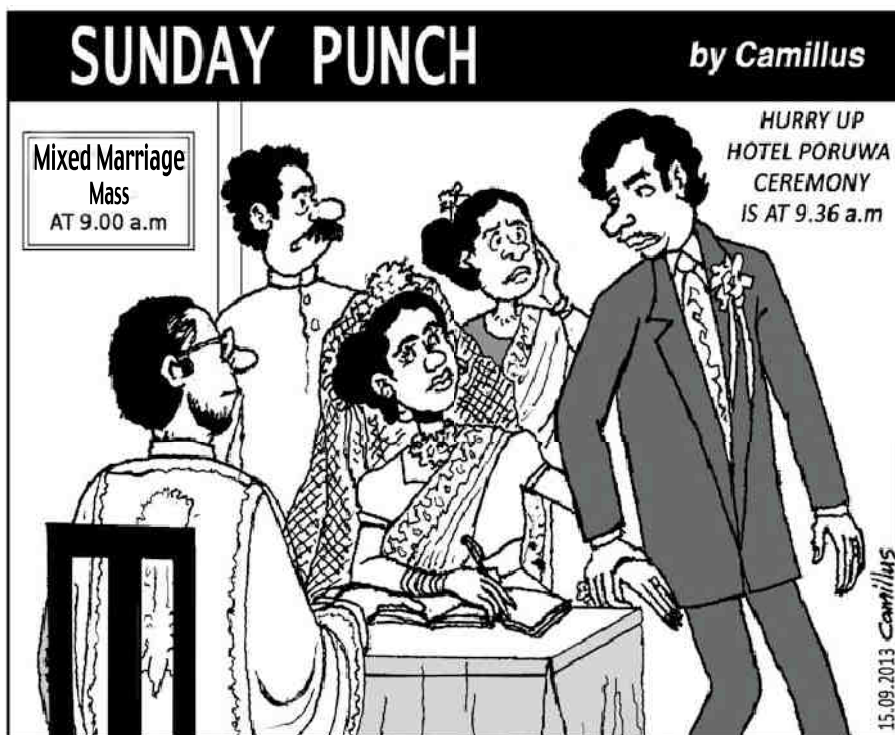
After receiving the car, the Pope rode together with Father Roca to meet with the group of faithful that travelled with him to Rome.

During the brief encounter, a young man gave the Pope a t-shirt and Father Roca explained that "normally we sell the shirts for five Euros to raise money for parish activities, but we gave it to him for free."

However, the Pope said he would pay for it.

"He took out his wallet and gave us ten Euros and asked for change. Luckily I had five Euros in my pocket. Incredible," Father Roca said.

He also joked that a Swiss Guard standing nearby told him, "Now we are going to be a little worried because we'll have to watch what Pope Francis does with that Renault 4."



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF THE EAST
Messenger
MAY 2013

EDITORIAL

September 15, 2013

A call to peace

Less than a year after our new pontiff, Pope Francis, was elected he has ushered in a fresh perspective for our Church. Continuing in the great tradition of his predecessors, Pope Francis has called on his flock to draw ever closer to Christ through prayer, penance and sacrifice. His salient comments on the first weekend of September and on the eve of Our Lady's nativity on September 8 reaffirm his message of peace.

For several days Pope Francis has called on Catholics worldwide to pray for Syria, a nation ripped apart by civil war. He has also called on us to pray for other troubled countries, including Egypt.

Syria's descent into civil war is both tragic and pervasive. With thousands of people killed and wounded, over five million innocent civilians find themselves reduced to homelessness and destitution, within and outside the borders of Syria.

We are no strangers to war in Sri Lanka. The same is true for many nations worldwide. Over the centuries civilised humanity has engaged in wars and acts of violence that claimed millions of lives. Beneath the darkest shadows of the two world wars, numerous imperial, regional, international and civil conflicts have punctuated humanity's progress through history.

War and the weapons of war can often seem seductive. At various stages of history, fascinating weapons capture peoples' imagination. From the siege of weapons and tactics of the Romans to the space age laser guided-precision munitions of the United States' military, it is easy to be seduced by military weapons and war.

But our Holy Father calls us to a greater warfare than the common form plaguing humanity. In his message to the faithful last week he urges us to delve deeper and fight the good fight against evil. This, he says, is a far greater calling and heroic struggle. The first step is to fight evil within ourselves. Pope Francis states we must love every human being and never engage in acts of violence against any person. However, we must carry Christ's cross and work united for peace and the common good of all.

This week also marks the anniversary dramatic events of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11th. This key event in American history is not a unique incident. Our own country and many others have suffered numerous similar events. What makes this event different is that much of it unfolded on television and other forms of mass media in front of a global audience. Secondly, it was the first time the very heart (New York City, Washington DC and Pennsylvania) of a superpower was attacked with no quarter given.

Although we as Sri Lankans may not easily identify (as Americans would) with September 11, we as Christians can identify with the pain and suffering of what the victims of this attack suffered. For the thousands of innocent victims of this attack, the only recourse was to accept their fate, pray and eventually forgive the perpetrators. Harboring hatred and revenge are not viable options, especially if one is a Christian.

Our Holy Father makes it very clear that we are to follow in the footsteps of Christ. We must embrace sacrifice and courage, even if it means dying for our faith. Being a Christian is not easy but its rewards are immense. The greatest reward of course is eternal life in the presence of Christ.

At a time when global issues continue to haunt us, it is good to know that God our loving Father has provided a wonderful shepherd, in Pope Francis, to tumultuous water. And at the same time reinvigorating our faith, so that we live the Christian life we are called to.

Can a cigar-smoking overweight literary scribbler become a saint?

MINNEAPOLIS (SE): Can an overweight literary scribbler like British journalist and apologist Gilbert Keith (G.K.) Chesterton, often characterised with a pen in one hand and walking cane in the other while perennially chewing on a cigar, become a canonised saint in the Catholic Church?

While it remains to be seen, at least Dale Ahlquist, the President of the American Chesterton Society thinks it would be a great inspiration to many people.

Coming to the Catholic Church from a Baptist background, Ahlquist told the *Catholic News Agency* that the idea that someone like Chesterton could be a saint attracted him to the Church in the first place.

"The fact that a 300-pound, cigar-smoking journalist could be a saint of the Catholic Church made me understand what the communion of saints is all about. They're not just one particular type of person," he reflected.

Across the world fans of the English writer and Catholic apologist of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are overjoyed at the news that Bishop Peter Doyle, from Northampton in England, wants to open a formal investigation into the possibility of the bulky, cigar-smoking journalist for sainthood.

Chesterton was born in London in 1874. He studied as an illustrator, but did not finish his course and began working for a publisher, Redway and T. Fisher Unwin, in 1896.

It was there he began his lifelong career as a journalist, art and literary critic.

At times a superstitious man, who had brushes with and worried profoundly about the movements of the Ouija Board, his marriage to a devout Anglican, Frances Blogg, in 1901 did much to settle his anxiety and develop a more rounded spirituality.

He later joined the Catholic Church in 1922, mostly through the influence of his great friend and often ideological sparring partner, Hilaire Belloc.

Nevertheless, there is a lot of enthusiasm for the move to put his cause for sainthood forward.

"A lot of people have been hoping for this for a long time," Ahlquist told the *Catholic News Agency*.

"Chesterton inspires a huge devotion around the world, particularly here in America. There are people who have long believed that he is someone who should be raised to the altars and have already privately started asking for his intercession," Ahlquist continued.

He made the news public on August 1 during the American Chesterton Society National Conference at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts in the

United States of America.

He cited Martin Thompson, the head of an English Chesterton group, as his source of information.

Kevin Jones reported on the *Catholic News Agency* that Thompson said Bishop Doyle is sympathetic to those who want to see Chesterton canonised and is "seeking a suitable cleric to begin an investigation into the potential for opening a cause for Chesterton."

Ahlquist added that the announcement caused huge cheering and applause and great emotion at the conference.

"People jumped to their feet, they started cheering. People were crying. It was a great moment," he explained.

Chesterton lived from 1874 to 1936. Known for his witty writing and love of finding truth in apparent paradox, Chesterton authored literary essays, novels, poetry, plays, philosophical works and Christian apologetics.

His short stories include the Father Brown mystery series and he influenced the thinking of many converts and writers, including C.S. Lewis. The intriguing conversations of the priest in the series form a complex study of the interplay of good and evil in human nature.

Ahlquist described Chesterton as "an articulate defender of the Catholic faith... very prophetic."

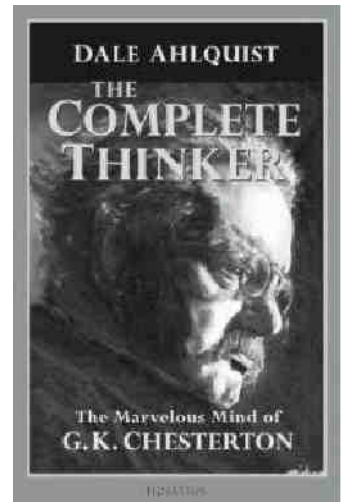
He added, "He definitely saw what's going on in our culture with regard to the attack on life, the attack on marriage and the huge economic disparities that exist. Chesterton seems to get it right about all those things. But he does it with joy, with charity and with goodness, without banging the table of condemnation."

Chesterton was continually at odds with some of his greatest friends, including George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells over economic disparity. He rejected both all out capitalism and socialism, and wrote extensively about what he called *distributivism*.

Ahlquist believes that the Chesterton cause for canonisation may have received a boost from the election of Pope Francis.

A March 10 letter to Thompson from Miguel Angel Espeche Gil — an Argentine ambassador who heads a Chesterton group in his own country — noted that the then-Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Cardinal Bergoglio, "Encourages us in our aspiration to see the initiation of the cause of Chesterton to the Altars."

Cardinal Bergoglio, who was elected as Pope Francis on



March 13, approved the text of a private prayer for the canonisation of Chesterton.

Pope Francis was also a member of an honorary committee of a conference for the Argentine Chesterton Society and celebrated a Mass for the delegates. He owns several books by Chesterton.

The first stages of a canonisation cause include collecting evidence of heroic virtue. Ahlquist said that Chesterton's personal character shows this abundantly.

"There's a goodness that just exuded from him," he explained. "The biographical accounts of Chesterton always portray him as being very joyful, and humble and good, so that everyone was just drawn to that, including his intellectual and philosophical enemies. The people who violently disagreed with Chesterton on the issues were drawn to him as a person, because of his charity."

Ahlquist cited stories of Chesterton emptying his pockets for the poor and showing great love and appreciation for children.

"He would always stand in the presence of a woman, no matter how old or how young she was. He would always make the sign of the cross over a room before he would enter it," he said. Chesterton would receive the Eucharist with great emotion, explaining, "I am afraid of that tremendous reality."

Still, Ahlquist points out that the apologist is not the stereotypical saint, citing his profession as a writer, which he described as being right in the midst of the heartbeat of London journalism.

Any investigation for sainthood can take many years and not all causes succeed. A Vatican investigation and two recognised miracles attributed to the candidate's intercession are necessary for the declaration of sainthood.

(Courtesy: Sunday Examiner)

Lumen Fidei (The Light of Faith)

By Eric Perera
Sydney, Australia

On June 29, 2013

Pope Francis released his first encyclical letter *"Lumen Fedei"* (The Light of Faith) to the faithful. This encyclical is a continuation of Pope Benedict XVI's encyclicals *Deus Caritas Est* and *Spe Salve*.

This encyclical consists of four chapters.

- 1) We have believed in one
- 2) Unless you believe you will not understand
- 3) I delivered to you what I also received
- 4) God prepares a city for them

Chapter 1

The first chapter starts with the faith of Abraham. The word Abraham means father of many. God tests his faith and because of his faith he is made father of all nations. Abraham's wife was beyond the child-bearing age. But God raised a son for him. Due to Abraham's faith he was able to participate in God's love and affection.

In this chapter Pope Francis emphasises that the Christian faith is centered in Christ. The life of Jesus now appears as the focus of God's definitive intervention, the supreme manifestation of His love to us. The encyclical is Christ centered by its nature. Pope Francis states that "Christians profess their faith in God's tangible and powerful love which really does act in history and determines its final destiny. A love that can be encountered a love fully reveals Christ's passion and resurrection."

Jesus's dying on the cross proves us God's love to the mankind.

Chapter 2

Chapter two is about the faith and the truth. Its titled "unless you believe you will not understand." Faith without truth will not save.

The truth is inter connected to love, which is coming from the heart. "One believes with the heart (Rom 10:10). Actual human love should come from the heart. A person's love from the bottom of the heart is connected to his faith. Faith is hence tied to love. Love is based in the truth. Without the truth love cannot establish a firm bond. We understand the love of Jesus to mankind. We understand the love of God. Faith amongst us is born through His love.

Faith is also connected to hearing and seeing. During Jesus's time people saw His miracles and believed Jesus. How does it happen today? It is happening today through the Sacraments. Through sacraments we see Jesus's love to mankind. In the New Testament we see how people seeing Jesus performing miracles and become His disciples. Today through the Sacraments we touch Jesus who transforms our hearts. According to St. Augustine "to touch Him with our hearts, that is what it means to believe."

Faith illuminates the path to those who seek God. During our life we search God. When can we find God? "Man with faith see signs of God in

the daily exposure of his life. God is light and can be found also by those who seek Him with a sincere heart.

"Anyone who sets off on the path of doing good to others is already drawing near to God"

Chapter 3

This is about passing on the faith to one another. It says, "Faith is passed on we might say by contact from one person to another." Chapter 3 begins with a quotation from an address to Corinthians by St. Paul. "We have received the same spirit of faith referred to in the Scriptures, that says I believed so I spoke - we also believe and so we speak." This means that the faith is transmitted from one person to another. People receive faith through their parents, grand parents, friends, and clergy etc. Christians have a duty of passing on the faith to one another. It is then to pass on to the future generation.

Church passes on the faith through sacraments. Through the Sacrament of Baptism we enter into God's family. We enter into communion with God. Pope Francis explains how the faith is passed on through the parents and godparents through baptism. The sacramental character of faith finds its highest expression in the Eucharist. It is an act of remembrance and also a food for eternal life. It could be considered as a nourishment of faith.

Pope Francis also explains the importance of the



Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Creed is not only a prayer, but the believers are invited to enter into the mystery of which they profess and transformed by it. He or she cannot truthfully recite the words of faith without being changed.

Also the importance of the Lord's Prayer is highlighted as a prayer through which people come to know God and can kindle in others the desire to draw near to Him.

Chapter 4

Faith and the family is inter-connected. In the family children have a certain amount of trust regarding the parent's love towards them. The faith inculcated to the children by their parents will help children to mature in their faith in the future.

Suffering is part and parcel of a person's life. But through faith we can entrust it into the hands of God. By contemplating Christ's suffering on the cross the faithful will gain strength through their faith to

bear human suffering one has to face. Faith will guide us to continue in our journey.

Pope Francis explains about the portrayal of faith Virgin Mary had when the Guardian Angel appeared to her. Mary is the perfect icon of faith. As Elizabeth would say "Blessed is she who believed" (Luke 1:45).

Pope Francis says that faith becomes a light capable of illuminating all our relationships in society. Faith teaches us to see that the light of God's face shines on me through the face of my brothers and sisters.

Conclusion

According to Pope Francis this encyclical was written by four hands. That is Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. This encyclical confirms that ultimately it is the Love of God that enables us to believe. Because we love God, we have faith in God. Love and faith goes together. Because a person loves his wife, he has faith in her. If there is no love, the relationship cannot continue, as there is no faith

Ss. Andrew Kim, Paul Chong and Companions - September 20

The Christian Faith first sprouted in Korea when Yi Sung-hun started to study Christian doctrine by himself and was eventually baptized as Peter in 1784. In the beginning, because of their belief in God, the early Korean Christians were constantly persecuted, rejected by their own families, and subjected to loss of not only their social rank but even their fundamental human rights. Nevertheless, the Faith continued to spread.

The Christian community in Korea which had begun without any priestly ministers finally got the assistance of two Chinese priests. But their ministry was short-lived, and another forty years passed before the Paris Foreign Mission Society began its work in Korea with the arrival of Fr Maubant in 1836. Until then the Christian community consisted only of lay people.

In the meantime, moved by an ardent desire for the graces of the sacraments, the Christian community of Korea appealed to the Bishop of Peking and to the Holy Father in Rome to send them bishops and priests. Serious dangers awaited



those missionaries who dared enter Korea. In fact, until the granting of religious liberty in Korea in 1886, there was a multitude of "disciples who shed their blood in imitation of Christ Our Lord, who submitted to death joyfully, for the salvation of the world" - more than 10,000 martyrs died in persecutions which extended over 100 years. They included 103 martyrs, consisting of 11 priests and 92 lay people, who were canonized on 14 May 1984 by Pope John Paul II, foremost among these being Andrew Kim Tae-gon and Paul Chong Ha-Sang.

Andrew Kim Tae-gon, the first Korean priest, prompted by his faith in God and his love for the Christian people, found a new way to achieve the difficult task of making a missionary entry into Korea. However, within just 13 months of his priestly ordination, he was put to death by the sword, barely 26 years old and the oil of Christ still fresh on his hands.

Paul Chong Ha-Sang, Augustine Yu Chin-gil and Charles Cho Shin-Chol had made several visits to Peking seeking more effective ways of introducing missionaries into Korea. Since the persecution of 1801, there had been no priest to care for the Christian community. Finally, they succeeded in opening a new chapter in the history of the extension of the Church in Korea with the arrival of a bishop and some priests of the Paris Foreign Mission Society. Among the 103 martyrs were 15 virgins, including the two sisters, Agnes Kim Hyo-ju and Columba Kim Hyo-in, who loved Our Lord with undivided hearts. These women, in an era when Christian religious life was known in Korea, lived in community and cared for the sick and the poor. Similarly, the martyr John Yi Kwang-hyol also lived as a celibate in consecrated service to the Church.

Do You Know Him?

Do you know the Gentle Shepherd?
Have you heard His loving call?
Have you bowed in faith, believing
And surrendering your all?
Are you in His Holy Kingdom
Where true peace and joy reside?
Friend, have you come to know Jesus?
In your heart does He abide?

It's not the good deeds that you do
That gets you into heaven
It's the Good Shepherd that you know
And the life He has given.
When He comes again in the clouds...
Will you meet Him in the air?
Will He take you home to glory
To reside with Him there?

Do you have a portion right here
Of eternal life sublime?
Has God blessed you abundantly
With new birth in this lifetime?
Then you can know He'll come for you...
He is coming for His own
He has gone to prepare a place
And one day He'll take us home...

Maureen de Zilwa

Sixty five years of married bliss

It makes one gasp, does not it, to hear of a couple who have stayed happily married for 65 years, in this age of disposable marriages! Being old friends, I was able to coax this exceptional couple, to tell me something about their journey together these many years. They first met on the tennis courts of St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya, and were not indifferent to each other, when an extraordinary coincidence occurred. Therese's parents, who had no idea that the two knew each other, sent a formal proposal to Britto's parents, as was the custom in the Bharatha community to which both belonged. They were formally engaged in October 1947 and they tied the knot at St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya, on August 18, 1948. Therese was 22 years old and Britto 24.

The young couple lived with Therese's parents on Vajira Road for the first 6 ½ years of their married life. The first two children, Lal and Priya, were born there. Therese's father was Chevalier I.X. Pereira, a member of the State Council. When Mr. (later Sir), Claude Corea who was Minister of Trade and Commerce and Industries went abroad for a period, Mr. Pereira was ap-

pointed as Acting Minister. A road was named after him in the Pettah in recognition of his services to the country and a special stamp was issued to commemorate his 100th birthday in 1988. Her father had immigrated to Ceylon (as it was then known), from Tuticorin in S. India with his parents as a young boy. Therese was one of 9 children - 5 boys and 4 girls. Britto came from a family of 8 - 6 of them were boys and 2 were girls.

Therese and Britto moved into their own home on Frederica Road, Wellawatte, in June 1957. It was here that a second son, Dilip, and their younger daughter, Sharmini, were born. When the children grew up and got married, Britto built flats adjoining the main house for each family. The Brittos are a close and loving family and this suited them all very well. On Sundays, they all met for dinner in the parental home. Therese's interest in cookery had begun early and at age 13 she had volunteered to prepare dinner on Sundays. What her siblings clamoured for was the deserts she liked to turn out. When her father was appointed Acting Minister, a large crowd of friends and well-wishers had thronged the house and it was

By Anne Abayasekara

Therese who made all the short-eats served on that occasion. Come December each year, after marriage, Therese indulged in her two specialties, a sweet milk wine and delectable Christmas pudding, for both of which she had long-standing orders for 40 years.

Therese's fame spread when she started writing her column, "Of Cabbages and Things," in the old weekly 'Lanka Woman' paper launched in 1984, with Clare Senewiratne as editor. It was a very eagerly read feature in that paper. She continued it until 1997. She published a very well-received book which was a compilation of those columns. In 2007, Therese followed it up with a second volume which contained the columns she wrote for the *Daily Mirror's* "WOW magazine" (to which she still contributes), and I know that this has also been a hit with her numerous fans.

Britto qualified as an accountant and he also obtained the degree of B.Com. as an external student of the London University. In 1978, Britto went to Riyadh as Commercial Manager of an electrical company there. Britto and Therese do not make a show of

their religious beliefs, but quietly try to put them into practice. Britto told me that Christ's injunction that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, has been his guiding principle. He is co-editor and manager of a magazine named FOOTPRINTS" that carries articles advocating the practice of this commandment. He has long been a leading light of the 'Richmond Fellowship' which runs a halfway house for the mentally ill on the Colombo Road, Bopitiya. At 89, Britto is Chairman of the St. Lawrence Assistance Bureau which reaches out to needy people in the area in numerous ways. For forty years, Therese was coordinator of its "Pre-Cana Programme" (pre-marital counselling for engaged couples, a 'must' for all RC couples before they get married). She also served on the Board of the 'Catholic Messenger' for two years. I asked them what advice they would give a young couple just beginning life together. Therese immediately replied she would tell them never to go to bed angry, a maxim that the two of them have followed for 65 years.

(Courtesy of the Sunday Times).

There was a famous monastery which had fallen on very bad times. Formerly its many buildings were filled with young monks and its big church resounded with the singing of the chant, but gradually it was deserted. People no longer came there to be nourished by prayer. A handful of old monks shuffled through the cloisters and praised their God with heavy hearts.

On the edge of the monastery woods, an old Rabbi had built a little hut. He would come there from time to time to fast and pray. No one ever spoke with him, but whenever he appeared, the word would be passed from monk to monk. "The Rabbi walks in the woods." As long as he was there, the monks would feel sustained by his prayerful presence.

One day the Abbot decided to visit the



Rabbi and to open his heart to him. So, after the morning Eucharist, he set out through the woods. As he approached the hut, the Abbot saw the Rabbi standing in the doorway, his arms outstretched in welcome. It was as though he had been waiting there for sometime. The

two embraced like long lost brothers. Then they stepped back and just stood there, smiling at one another with smiles their faces could hardly contain.

After a while, the Rabbi motioned the Abbot to enter. In the middle of the room was a wooden table with the Scriptures open on it. They sat there for a moment, in the pres-

WHERE do you find God?

ence of the Book. Then the Rabbi began to cry. The Abbot could not contain himself. He covered his face with his hands and began to cry too. For the first time in his life, he cried his heart out. The two men sat there like lost children, filling the hut with their sobs and wetting the wood of the table with their tears.

After the tears had ceased to flow and all was quiet again, the Rabbi lifted his head. "You and your brothers are serving God with heavy hearts," he said. "You have come to ask a teaching from me. I will give you a teaching. But you may only repeat it once. After that no one

Thoughts that haunt me

must ever say it aloud again." The Rabbi looked straight at the abbot and said, "The Messiah is among you." For a while. All was silent. Then the Rabbi said, "Now you must go."

The Abbot left without a word and without even looking back. The next morning, the Abbot called his monks together in the Chapter Room. He told them he had received a teaching from the 'Rabbi who walks in the woods,' and that this teaching was never again to be spoken aloud. Then he looked at each of his brothers and said, the Rabbi said that one of us is the Messiah.

The monks were startled by this saying.

Ananda Perera

"What could it mean?" they asked themselves. "Is Brother John the Messiah? Or Father Matthew? Or Brother Thomas? Am I the Messiah? What could this mean?"

They were all deeply puzzled by the Rabbi's teaching. But no one ever mentioned it again.

As time went by, the monks began to treat one another with a very special reverence. There was a gentle, whole-hearted, human quality about them now which was hard to describe but easy to notice. They began to live with one another as men who had finally found something. But they prayed the Scriptures together as men who were always looking for something.



A CROSS
The Way

By Sirohmi Gunasekera

Fault

"Whatever I do is wrong for my mother. She keeps finding fault with me. What shall I do?" moaned Neluka.

"Cheer up. Your Mum is probably in a bad mood. Is she sick?" asked Joshua.

"Well, she always complains of migraine," said Neluka.

"Well, that can be a problem. Why don't you try sympathising with her instead of thinking of your own problem with her?" suggested Joshua.

"Well, I guess I never thought of her having a problem. Maybe I was only thinking of my side of things. Perhaps she is really unhappy and I am not helping her," said Neluka.

"Why don't you spend a quiet evening with her and perhaps soak a hanky in vinegar and place it on her forehead? That might relieve the headache even temporarily. Anyway, she will be glad that you showed concern for her. Who knows? You might even be able to say a 'Hail Mary' with her and comfort her. It will help to say together 'Blessed art thou amongst women,'" said Joshua.

"I never thought of the details of the 'Hail Mary.' I am so used to saying it without thinking. I can also pray with her 'pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen. I am sure that will bring her solace. Then I too will feel good. You see. I love my mother whatever she says or does. That is why I feel hurt when she scolds me," said Neluka.

"Well, now you understand her better, I think. I'm glad you love her. So don't let minor scoldings get you down. Try to grow up and see the Big Picture," advised Joshua.

"Thank you. I am so glad I was able to share my problem with you. I feel sure that things will improve from now on. Thank God for a wise counselor," summed up Neluka.

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



Client: "Sir! my wife is introducing new bills at my house all the time"
Counselor: "Has she been a Politician?"

Client: No Sir!

Counselor: Ask her to be a Politician.

Rev. Fr. Fracidd Anthony Fernando OMI



Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

A bouquet for Mary from around the world

Some Marian Shrines to mark the Birthday of Our Dear Mother

Virgin Mary? Well NOT REALLY. Mary is present throughout the entire world, on every continent. Of these some have become international sanctuaries visited by millions of pilgrims each year. For instance, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, or Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, or O.L. of Czestochowa in Poland, O.L. of Loretto in Italy, O.L. of Vladimir in Moscow or O.L. of Altötting in Germany, O.L. of Walsingham in England, O.L. of Lourdes in France, and many others still, where crowds of pilgrimages gather to honour and pray to Mary, the Virgin of the Holy Rosary and advocate of all causes...

THE FIRST MARIAN SHRINE (Nazareth)

The story of Mary began 2000 years ago in Nazareth where Mary received a visit from the Archangel Gabriel. It was later called the Annunciation. Today a large Basilica rests on the exact site where the Virgin Mary pronounced the "yes" that made her become the Mother of the Messiah. As such Nazareth is the first Marian shrine.



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE (Mexico)

In 1531, a "Lady from Heaven" appeared to a poor Indian in Tepeyac, on a hillside to the North of Mexico City. She introduced herself as the Mother of the True God, and gave Juan Diego instructions to ask the bishop to have a church built on the very spot of the apparition. She left an image of herself miraculously printed on his tilma - a very plain garment made of cactus fibre that would have normally deteriorated within about 20 years. Today, more than 470 years later, it shows no sign of deterioration and the origin of the image it bears still defies all scientific explanations. It is said the eyes of the Virgin even reflect the image of the Indian who was standing in front of her in 1531!



OUR LADY OF APARECIDA (Brazil)

The devotion began in the 18th century, when some fishermen, used to casting their nets into the River Paraiba near Sao Paolo, hauled up a headless statue with their catch. When they re-cast their nets, they brought up the head of the statue: It then appeared to be a Black Virgin. Legend has it that when the fishermen recovered the body and then the head, the slender figure of the Aparecida Virgin became so heavy that they couldn't budge it. Since then, in the Brazilian religious tradition, the Aparecida Virgin, was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, and became the Patron Saint of Brazil. The new Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida is the second largest Basilica in the world, after St. Peter's in Rome.



THE APPARITIONS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES (France)

In the list of Marian Shrines, Lourdes is always at the top. Between February 11 and July 16, 1858, a beautiful young woman appeared eighteen times to a 14 year-old girl - Bernadette Soubirous. The occurrence took place at a grotto called Massabielle, not far from Lourdes. Bernadette was the only person to have seen and heard the Virgin, although she was never alone at the grotto. Bernadette was the eldest child of a poor family, an asthmatic and attended neither school nor proper catechism classes, and was unable to make her first Holy Communion. But her family was very close and deeply religious. The Lady gave Bernadette a mission: "Tell the priests to have the people come here in procession and to build a chapel." It was only on the 16th apparition, that the Lady told Bernadette her name: "I am the Immaculate Conception."



IN PORTUGAL, OUR LADY OF FATIMA (Portugal)

The Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, in Portugal, is one of the most universally known for the promises of Mary, miracles witnessed by those gathered at the site and the three secrets of Fatima. Here the Blessed Virgin appeared to three shepherd children: Lucy dos Santos (10) and her cousins, Francisco Marto (9) and Jacinta Marto (7) in a green oak tree, at the opening of the 20th century. The Blessed Virgin revealed to the children heartrending episodes which were to occur in the world. She called the faithful to pray for sinners and a true conversion of the heart, asked for the consecration of the world and Russia to her Immaculate Heart and promised a great miracle. She asked them to come 6 times consecutively, the 13th of each month at noon.



THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA (Czechoslovakia)

The Miraculous Shrine of the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa or Jasna Gora, dates back to the fourteenth century and is one of the most famous shrines in Central Europe. According to tradition, the original icon was painted by Luke the Evangelist on a tabletop built by Jesus Himself, used by the Holy Family for their daily meals, and the icon was discovered by Saint Helen, mother of Emperor Constantine and collector



of relics in the Holy Land. Traditionally all the great Polish dignitaries would pray at the Shrine of Czestochowa, including the Polish kings whose custom was to pay homage to the Black Madonna after their coronation. In 1430, Hussites (pre-Reformation reformers) attacked the icon, slashed the Virgin's face with a sword, and left it desecrated in a pool of blood and mud. Even today, the two scars on the Black Virgin's face are still visible.

OUR LADY OF LORETO (Italy)

The Virgin's house in which the Word took flesh at the salutation of the angel was, according to ancient tradition, transported to Loreto, Italy. The Holy House of Loreto soon became the first Shrine of international renown dedicated to the Virgin. It was for several centuries the true Marian centre of Christendom. Mary's house was built in a grotto hollowed out of the rock, and near its opening a small area was surrounded by three walls; these walls form the Holy House in Loreto are the object of veneration.



KNOCK (Ireland)

On a rainy Thursday evening in August 1879, Our Lady, St Joseph, and St John the Evangelist appeared in a blaze of Heavenly light at the south gable of Knock Parish Church, to a group of fifteen people whose ages ranged from six years to seventy-five and included men, women, teenagers and children. They distinctly beheld the Blessed Virgin Mary clothed in white robes with a brilliant crown on her head. Over the forehead where the crown fitted the brow, she wore a beautiful full-bloom golden rose. She was in an attitude of prayer with her eyes and hands raised towards Heaven. St Joseph appeared on her right and St John stood on her left. The witnesses watched the apparition in pouring rain for two hours, reciting the Rosary. Although the witnesses were drenched, no rain fell in the direction of the gable. They felt the ground carefully with their hands and it was perfectly dry as was the gable itself.



THE VIRGIN OF VLADIMIR (Russia)

It is a miraculous icon of the Eleousa style (tender loving). This is one of the oldest icons of this type and probably also one of the best known in the West. The icon was painted in Constantinople by a Hellenic iconographer at some time during the eleventh or twelfth centuries. It turned up in Kiev, then the Russian capital city in 1131. Then in 1155, Prince Andrew Bogoliubski moved northwards to found a new capital, today's Vladimir. He brought the icon with him, captivated by its splendour. At this time, the icon began to perform miracles and attracted many followers. Later, the icon was moved to Moscow in 1395, where it has remained until now. Russians hold three feasts a year in honour of the Vladimir Virgin, considered as a sacred treasure of the Russian people.



OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM, THE NAZARETH OF ENGLAND

The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham Norfolk "England's Nazareth" is medieval in origin and is held in high regard by the Christians of the country. As popular legend has it, the Shrine originated with a noble widow, Lady Richeldis, in 1061. A fifteen century manuscript records the Walsingham ballad, which explains how the noble woman wished to honour Our Lady. Mary responded by asking her to build a chapel. Mary led Richeldis "in spirit" to Nazareth to show her the place where the Archangel Gabriel had greeted her, and directed the widow to take measurements of the house so that she could build one like it at Walsingham. In this spot, the Virgin Mary explained, the people would celebrate the Annunciation, the "root of mankind's gracious redemption," and would find help in their needs. Lady of Walsingham is also known as "The Virgin by the Sea". And is a sanctuary of prayer and healing.



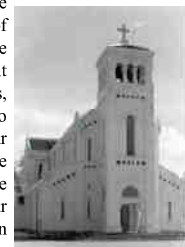
OUR LADY OF ALTÖTTING (Germany)

Our Lady of Altötting is a Shrine in Bavaria in southern Germany famous for its 9th century Black Madonna. Altötting has attracted pilgrims since the 15th century. The Royal House of Germany has had a particular devotion to Our Lady of Altötting since the Middle Ages, a preference that had become a tradition. During the terrible period of Nazism the Shrine and its pilgrims were persecuted, but the number of pilgrims coming to Our Lady of Altötting only doubled.



OUR LADY OF LAVANG

In 1798, Christians were forced to flee into the jungle to escape government persecution. At this time a series of apparitions of the Virgin Mary took place: Our Lady came to comfort and support them. Since then, there has been a constant stream of pilgrims to the Shrine of Lavang, midway between the south and the north of Vietnam. "She was wearing a beautiful, oriental style cloak, holding the Infant Jesus in her arms," a witness said. "She simply stood on the grass, like a mother with her children. She asked everyone to be happy to be suffering for their faith." She said: "I have already granted your prayers. Now all those who pray to me here in this place will have their wishes fulfilled." A number of cures and conversions have occurred at the Shrine. In 1901, a church was built here and Our Lady of Lavang was declared the protectress of the Catholics in Vietnam.



Star of the Sea

"Matara Maniyan"

The Feast of Our Lady of Matara was celebrated on September 8. Festive High Mass was officiated by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe, Bishop of Galle and Vespers Service the previous day was presided by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.



Their Lordships Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo and Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickremasinghe, Bishop of Galle, being welcomed to the Church.



Former Parish Priest Very Rev. Fr. Charles Hewawasam and the Bishop of Galle, welcome the Buddhist Prelates



Blessing with the Statue after the Festive High Mass by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickremasinghe, Bishop of Galle.



"We cling to thy mantle, O Mother of all"

Pix. Dunstan Wickremaratne & the Matara Correspondent

The Power of the Pilgrimage

A pilgrimage usually includes fun, learning, shopping and good food. But it is not primarily a vacation. The ultimate goal is not recreation, but re-creation. It is a journey of devotion, undertaken by the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

What is the purpose of a pilgrimage?

It is to worship God, do penance and be transformed. A pilgrimage to a holy place is so spiritually powerful that under the Old Covenant it was commanded. Though not commanded today, it is so highly recommended that the Church offers a plenary indulgence to all those who answer the call.

I was a College student when I was first invited to make a pilgrimage to Rome. Initially, I brushed off the suggestion as ridiculous. I was broke, like most College students.

Besides, the pilgrimage took place during final exams, but I felt an inner tug that I thought just might be the Holy Spirit. I had been struggling with a holier-than-thou attitude that I could not overcome. I had been pleading with God to help me.

Maybe, I thought, this pilgrimage is His answer to my prayer. So I spoke to my professors. They gladly rescheduled my exams. I began cobbling money together. Soon there was enough. I decided to go and make the trip a penitential pilgrimage, seeking the grace to change.

It was an amazing adventure. The experience of Rome bonded me to the Catholic Church, its heritage and its rich tradition in a profound way.

It whetted my appetite for learning. Some



friendships were deepened, new friends were made. But the most important thing was a gift of special grace I received when I least expected it.

Early one morning, before St. Peter's Basilica

The ultimate goal is not recreation, but re-creation.

was filled with tourists, I spent some quiet moments roaming through the crypt. I felt moved to kneel and pray at one of the tombs and there received a touch of God that I will never forget. The tomb was that of Pope John XXIII, who had a remarkable gift of humility and a unique ability to make people feel loved, affirmed and appreciated.

These gifts were exactly what I had lacked and had been praying for. Some measure of this spirit was shared with me that day, and I was changed. The following year was among the happiest of my life.

The Holy Land brings Scripture alive. After going, you never read the Bible the same way again. Rome knits you to the Universal Church and the heritage of the saints in a way that is hard to describe.

The mediaeval charm of Assisi, the beauty of Lourdes at the foot of the Pyrenees—these special places impart an atmosphere of serenity and draw one to prayer. Pilgrimage is about more than the place. It is about grace, a special grace, custom-designed for each pilgrim by the Holy Spirit, imparted in God's perfect time. This is the greatest reason to listen for and respond to God's call. (Courtesy: Sunday Examiner)

The Annual Gazetted Festival of Our Lady of Good Voyage Chaddy, Velanai, Jaffna

The Shrine of Our Lady of Good Voyage is situated at Chaddy, Velanai, in the Diocese of Jaffna. This Shrine is situated among the palm, fringed, isles of Velanai. It has a history of 450 years. In 1544 a Portuguese ship was caught in deadly storm and was on the verge of sinking. The Captain then prayed to our dear mother to save the crew and the ship. Miraculously the ship landed in the Island of Chaddy, Velanai. In gratitude for the great miracle the Captain built a little thatched shed in the sea shore and placed the statue of Our Blessed Mother inside it. He spent a few days in prayer with the crew. From that day onwards the miraculous statue attracted many pilgrims.

With the advent of the Dutch and the destruction of Catholic Churches the Catholic faithful were dispersed and the Church became an underground Church. This little hamlet of Our Blessed Mother was also demolished and there were no traces of the Miraculous Statue. In 1687 with the arrival of Bl. Joseph Vaz, Catholicism reemerged. While some excavations were done in Chaddy this



Miraculous Statue was found in a well.

One of the Catholic workers enshrined the miraculous statue in a hut where the Shrine is located now. Catholic devotees from the Islands of Karampan, Kayts popularised the devotion to our Lady of Good Voyage. The feast was celebrated on September 24. Large crowds of pilgrims visited this Shrine because of its miraculous power many people of different faiths paid homage to Our Mother and sought her intercession. Woman who were barren conceived, sicknesses were cured the lame walked, the dumb spoke and she became the patron for those who travelled to foreign countries. Some described their travel ordeal to other countries, starvation, sickness, shipwreck and it was through the intervention of Our Mother that they were able to receive permanent residency in foreign countries. They had strong faith in our

dear mother. Their prayer life and sacrifices have earned them a comfortable life in foreign countries. These expatriates who visit Sri Lanka to be with their kith and kin make it a point to visit this Sacred Shrine, as a Thanksgiving.

It is the popular belief of the Hindus that the existence of a good, drinking water well and the bannian tree is where the deity resides and holiness emanates. People of different religions, languages gather during the annual feast to pay their homage to Our Lady. With the number of pilgrims increasing, the little hamlet took the shape of a church and to this day it is admired as a very beautiful architectural complex with a scenic landscape, the blue sea, the golden sands and palmyrah groves.

The annual gazetted feast of Our Lady will commence on September 5 with the hoisting of the flag. It ends with the festive Eucharistic celebration on the 14th presided by his Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Saundaranayagam Bishop of Jaffna.

Rev. Fr. Stanislaus Philips OMI

"Morning Star"

This is the most beautiful title of Our Lady. The stars have always been a source of beauty, wonder and praise. W. Habington, in his poem, "When I survey the Bright Celestial Sphere," writes:

*"When I survey the bright celestial sphere;
So rich with jewels hung, that night
Doth like an Ethiop bride appear,
My soul her wings doth spread and
heavenward flies.
The Almighty's mysteries to read
In the large volume of the skies."*

In that large volume of stars, there is one that outshines and outlasts all the others. How could the Great Devotees of Our Lady not advert to this beautiful symbol of Our Lady? They hailed her as the "Morning Star."

This title is derived from the Bible. We read Balaam's oracle in the Book of Numbers 24:17: "A Star shall come out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel..." and in the Book of Revelation 20:16, "I am the root and descendant of David, the bright Morning Star. Both the quotations cited above have specific reference to Jesus. However, they can aptly be applied to Our Lady, as she is the Mother of Jesus.

The Morning Star, the planet Venus, continues to shine long after the darkness has been put to flight by the golden rays of the rising sun. In a sense, the Morning Star triumphs over darkness. It ushers in the light and then gives way to it. In the West it is known as the Hesperos. It is the first to shine even as the

darkness starts to creep over the earth. The evening star, as it is known then, appears first in the sky. It challenges the darkness and the darkness "cannot overpower it." In both instances, the Star leads to the light and then gives way to it. So Our Lady takes us to Jesus, the Light of the World.

The symbolism of the Star is indeed rich and befits Our Lady for, "Thine are the graces unclaimed by another, sinless and beautiful Star of the Sea" (from the hymn *Ave Maria, Maiden*).

In her Immaculate Conception, she is 'full of grace', fair and sweet as the morning, shedding pure and beautiful radiance (from the hymn "Who is this cometh..."). Our Lady has crushed the darkness of Satan. The Star in the sky, from dawn to dusk, reminds us of her vigilance. Though a fallen world may lie in darkness, her light will ever prevail. "Fairest star of the morning, cheer our hearts with the light; pierce the clouds that hang over us, in the region of the night."

The Star, besides being a reflection of light, is also an object of wonder and praise. This is what Our Lady really is. Wisdom 7:26: "For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, an Image of his Goodness." V.29: "She is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the Stars! After all, she is the pinnacle of creation, an extraordinary artifact of God's creative power; a habitat of the Spirit.



"Bright as the glittering stars appear, bright as the moonbeam shine,

So bright in my mind's eye is seen thy liveliness divine."

(From the hymn: "Mary! How sweetly falls that word")

The stars in the firmament of heaven, beside! singing the glory of God, have also been guides to wanderers and wayfarers over the ocean. In the darkness of the night, sailors have used the stars to plot their destinations and navigate the oceans. When lost and adrift in the formless seas in the midst of raging waters and threatening waves, sailors cried to Our Lady that she protect them from all harm and bring them safe beneath "her sheltering wings of love." They hailed our Lady as the "Star of the Ocean," the protector and guide of all sojourners. Life, indeed, is a journey. Along the pathway come the mountains and the ravines, the rivers and

the oceans! Like a boat adrift on the unknown seas, sails torn and bark battered, our hope of reaching the haven of safety is the presence of the Star above, Our Lady, who is the "portal of the sky," "the Star of the Ocean."

"We observed his star," said the Magi (Lk 2:2) and following its guiding light, they journeyed to the discovery of Jesus. So is our Morning Star, Our Lady guiding us in our life's journey so that after this our exile she may take us to her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray:

*"O vision bright, the eternal light
Of the dear Son may we descry
Where brighter far than moon or star
Mary, our Mother, reigns on high."*

Amen.

(From the hymn 'O Vision Bright')

*(Courtesy: Mary Flowers
- Titles of Our Lady*

Conditions for Truth and Justice in the State

The President has rejected the contention that he is a dictator as he is regularly holding elections. Yes elections are important but they are not the same as democracy even if the elections are free and fair (According to Election Monitors they are not, since voters are allegedly bought over with selective government benefits for supporters and intimidatory violence imposed on those who are of the Opposition). There is also no independent Elections Commission to supervise elections. Of what use are elections if those from the Opposition who win any election cross over to the ruling party through carrots dangled before them by those in power? Are not these politicians making a mockery of the people's will? Is it a democracy if those elected from the Opposition betray the people who voted for them?

Democracy is valued not because majority decision of the people is always right but because it provides the under-lying conditions for truth and justice to emerge in the functioning of the State. This requires the elimination of the exercise of arbitrary power by the State and is the chief feature of a democracy and its most valuable one. These conditions are promoted by the existence of checks and balances on the exercise of arbitrary power by the ruler unlike in the feudal kingdoms of old including our own ancient kings. The King of England agreed to give up arbitrary exercise of power when he signed the Magna Carta of 1215. This was the real beginning of the Rule of Law and Constitutional government which are the key features of democracy.

The President after winning over opposition MPs to the ruling party Coalition by dubious methods

POINT OF VIEW

passed the 18th Amendment by which the independence of the Commissions - the Police Commission, the Public Service Commission and the Judicial Commission was undermined. Then the Attorney General who heads the Criminal Justice Administration was brought under his direct control. The stage was set for return of the arbitrary exercise of power by the State. An important victim of the new order was the former Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake. All appointments of officials are now at the sole discretion of the President untrammelled by any requirement regarding eligibility or suitability of the holder to hold the post. These are not features of a democracy.

The President has legal immunity from civil or criminal actions conferred on him by the Constitution as interpreted by the Bench headed by the former Chief Justice Mr. Sarath Silva. But by his grace many others in the Political Establishment are also enjoying de facto legal immunity. So politicians at all levels get away with rape, sexual harassment of women and even murder, robbery and pillage.

Where there is one law for the ruling politicians and another for the people, can there be democracy? Democracy is said to be government of the people by the people (or their elected representatives) for the people. The people include the minorities - the Tamils, Muslims and the Christians. If the Government were to take sides in favor of the Sinhala Buddhists it becomes a sectarian government and not a democracy.

The representatives who exercise power in the name of the people should be accountable not only at future elections but to the Parliament and the Judiciary

Current Affairs

for the manner in which they act both in public office as well as in their private lives. They should be accountable for any violations of

the law and charged before the courts. This requires that the Police and the Attorney General's Department are free to abide by the truth instead of being influenced by the powers that be. Such attempts to influence used to be considered as acts of contempt of court.

Where are the fundamental freedoms guaranteed in our Constitution such as the freedom of speech and association? Are not journalists attacked and killed for voicing views which are not acceptable to the rulers? Why was Lasanta Wickrematunge killed in a high security zone? What has happened to the journalists who have disappeared? Do these things happen in normal democracies?

If the President does not want to be characterized as a dictator or his government charged as authoritarian then he must retrace his steps and restore the independent institutions including the Elections Commission. He and his Ministers must allow the Police to do their duty without fear or favor and act according to the Law. They must see that the media are allowed to function without fear and to exercise freely their right to publish any criticism of the government. The truth can emerge only through the clash of ideas and there must be freedom to publish if the truth is to emerge.

Parliament must be restored to its status as an independent body to hold the Executive accountable. The separation of powers of the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary must be restored and respected.

Rev. Fr. Alexander Costa OMI, celebrates his Golden Jubilee of Priesthood

Rev. Fr. Alexander Costa OMI celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his priestly Ordination with a Jubilee Mass offered at St. Anthony's Church, Nittambuwa organised by family members. The theme runs "How can I repay the Lord for His goodness to me? The cup of salvation I will raise, I will call on the Lord's name" - Psalm 115.



Yes, Uncle, Fr. Gratian Alexander Costa OMI, was close to all the family members. He was loved by everybody and we have fond memories, down the years from our childhood when our families visited him as a seminarian and as a priest and also when he visited us. We still remember the joy we had at his Ordination

at Ampitiya Seminary on September 13, 1963 in the presence of many relations and the first Mass he offered at the Church at Bolagala, Katana.

Fr. Alexander hails from Bolagala, Katana being the third in the family of six of Mr. Paul Costa and Mrs. Martha Ratnasakara. He had his primary education at Maris Stella College, Negombo and then joined St. Aloysius Semi-

nary, Borella. He then entered the OMI. Novitiate at Kalutara and the National Seminary, Ampitiya.

As a young priest of the Oblates he was sent to Wennappuwa - preaching band. We were also privileged to listen to some of his sermons as an eloquent preacher, in our parishes. He joined the tutorial staff of the OMI Scholasticate, Ampitiya. He was sent to Philippines for studies.

He served at Sacred Heart Novitiate-Sidupiyani-Bandarawela from 1973 to 1996 in various capacities like, the assistant to the Novice Master and then from 1978 as the Novice Master. In 1976 he served in India as the Novice Master for one year. During his tenor

of office a large number of novices passed through the portals of Sidupiyani. In 1984 he completed his S.T.L. in Rome. He was selected a Provincial Councillor and the Superior of De Mazenod House, Mat-takkuliya. At intervals he served in Parishes like Burulapitiya and Maradana. He was appointed a Spiritual Director for the Brothers in the National Seminary, Ampitiya in 2005, where he still is at the service of the Church.

We thank the Lord for His goodness to him, for the blessings he has brought to our families and the service he has rendered to the Church and congregation and at large to the people.

Rev. Sr. Jennette Rajasekara A.C.

Catholic Responses to Fundamentalism

May I be permitted to publicly thank and commend Rev. Fr. Placidus de Silva, the Rector of Aquinas University College and Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Het-tiarachchi, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology for organizing and conducting the Bible Seminar "Catholic Responses to Fundamentalism" on August 27 and 28, 2013. The Seminar was timely, the handouts were well prepared, and the presentation by Fr. Anton Saman was lucid and extremely effective.

I thank God for giving me the opportunity of participating in this Seminar which comprehensively dealt with the following important issues:-

The beginnings of Christian Fundamentalists and Cults. Sunday Worship.

Is the Name of God, Jehovah?

Book of Revelation

* Will only 144,000 individuals go to heaven?

* Which city is referred to as Babylon?

* Who is the Beast with the number 666?

As explained by Fr. Anton Saman, this series of seminars was organised by the Archdiocesan Biblical Commission in response to the initiative taken by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith to save the Catholic flock from the deception of the Fundamentalists. As such an initiative deserves the fullest cooperation of all (Priests, Religious, Laity), it is a pity that there were not more than eighty participants at this seminar.

I sincerely hope that a concerted effort would be made by all concerned - (very specially by the Parish Priests and those in charge of Catholic Institutions), to give wide publicity to the seminars that would be conducted in the future on this important topic and encourage as many people as possible to participate.

Quoting the words of the first man on the moon, Neil Armstrong, Rev. Fr. Anton Saman said that this Bible Seminar is "one small step" taken by the Faculty of Theology and hoped that it would turn out to be "one giant leap" for the Archdiocese of Colombo.

May God bless all those involved in this project and may this "one small step" turn out to be "one giant leap"!

Victor Silva
Kandy

Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya OMI, Commemorative Stamp

A Commemorative Stamp in honour of Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya OMI, Social Justice Activist and founder of Centre for Society and Religion, was issued on Thursday, August 29 at the CSR auditorium, Deans Road, Colombo. The occasion was chaired by Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva, the Provincial Superior of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The welcome speech was given by Rev. Fr. Ashok Stephen OMI, Director, CSR who explained the future vision of Fr. Tissa. A short documentary film elaborating the vision of Fr. Tissa Balasuriya was also shown.

The commemorative address was given by Former UN Ambassador for Sri Lanka in Geneva, Dr. Dayan Jayathilaka, who said that Fr. Tissa Balasuriya was honoured by the government of Sri Lanka for his yeomen service rendered to the country having a clear vision pertaining the country. He needed to change the country for the good of the marginalised and the down trodden masses. He always tried to implement the 'Jesus Chintana' (Vision of Jesus). He was a strong follower of



Jesus and so championing on social justice. He was a humble man, never lived a comfortable life but lived a simple life setting an example to others.

Several distinguished guests including

Rev. Fathers, Rev. Sisters, laity and members of the civil society organizations participated in this ceremony to mark the 89 Birthday of Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya.

What it says in
the Readings

May the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope His call holds for us. (Eph. 1: 17.18)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the Shepherds of the Church: That they may faithfully watch over the flock of Christ, showing special care for the lost sheep. Lord Hear us.

Response: Lord graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we pray for those in charge of civil affairs, that they may be caring in their jobs; for all parents that they may create homes where their children will know they are loved. Lord hear us.

Response: Lord graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we pray for all those who are lost and who have no one to take an interest in them: That they may be comforted and consoled. Lord hear us.

Response: Lord graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, grant us the wisdom to realise how precious we are as individuals to you: That we may try to be loving towards all those we encounter each day. Lord hear us.

Response: Lord graciously hear us.

Faith - The Channel of Grace

By grace, God has already "blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3) and provided us with everything that we will ever need for our everyday lives including healing, prosperity etc. So then, why is it that most Christians continue to live in self-imposed spiritual poverty? It is because they do not know how to receive from God, the blessings which are already theirs. Unaware of the riches that they already possess through Christ, they are trying to earn God's blessings by their own good works.

Many things exist that we can not perceive by our physical senses. For example, there are television signals wherever you are right now. You can not see or hear them, but they are there. All you have to do is turn on a television set and tune it in to the signal, and then you will see and hear that they do exist. The signal does not begin broadcasting when you turn on your set; it was already being broadcast before you tuned in. That is just when you began to receive. Likewise, the Lord has already blessed you with ALL things. Your life may not reflect that, but it is not because the Lord has not given; it is because you have not received.

If your television set was to suddenly go blank, what would you do? Would you immediately contact the station and urge them to fix their transmitter? You would check your set first, wouldn't you? Yet in the spiritual realm, Christians are constantly going to the Lord and

asking Him to fix His transmitter instead of checking their receivers. For example, if they do not see an instant manifestation of their healing, they just automatically suppose that God has not healed them. They rarely consider the fact that maybe it is their reception that is the problem. We must remember, that God has already done His part. Any delay in our manifestation is not His fault.

FAITH is the channel through which we receive the grace of God to meet our every need.

Our faith like the TV, is of no use unless it is 'plugged into' the source of power, which is the grace of God. This is why spending time in fellowship with God on a daily basis is of such critical importance. If we are not willing to make that sacrifice, we can forget about being victorious and enjoying peace in our lives, because it is only in the presence of God that we receive the POWER of the Lord. "Be strong through the grace that is ours in our union with Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 2:1)

(Courtesy: Divine Voice Sri Lanka)

The Story of "Amazing Grace"

All of you know the hymn "Amazing Grace," but did you know that the person who wrote this hymn was once a terrible sinner?

His name was John Newton. He was born in 1725 and died in 1807. His mother was a devout Christian who hoped that one day he would become a priest, but she died when he was about six years old. John believed that there was no God and made fun of others who believed in God. He was stubborn, disobedient, spoke bad, filthy language all the time and had a terrible temper. Not only did he love to sin, he tempted others to sin too. It seemed that he got into trouble wherever he went. John's father was a sea captain and he started sailing at a very young age. Later he was forced into the Royal Navy and finally deserted. He served on many boats, trade ships and slave trade ships (ships that transported slaves from Africa to England). He later became captain of his own slave ship.

John had many narrow escapes especially while at sea. Once when he was on a slave ship, it ran into a terrible storm that battered the ship and nearly destroyed all the people on board. It was during this storm that he finally cried out to God



for mercy as they were all about to die. That is when he first began to think about God. Although it took many long years, by the Grace of God, he slowly started changing his ways. He started praying and studying the Scriptures. When he was about 30, he fell very sick and never sailed again. Finally, at the age of 39, he became a pastor. He wrote a number of hymns and played a major role in putting an end to the slave trade. His real life experiences are reflected in "Amazing Grace." It is the story of a wretched sinner saved by the Grace of God. Although John wrote the words, this hymn as we know it today was not sung until much later after his death.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR C - 21st September - 8th September 2013

Sun: 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time
Ex. 32:7-11,13,14; 1 Tim. 1:12-17; Lk. 15:1-32-
Mon: Memorial of SS. Cornelius, Pope and
Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs
1 Tim 2:1-8; Lk.7:1-10
Tue: Memorial of St.Robert Bellarmine,
Bishop and Doctor
1 Tim 3:1-13; Lk.7:11-17
Wed: 1 Tim 3: 14-16; Lk.7:31-35
Thu: Memorial of St. Januarius, Bishop
and Martyr
1 Tim 4:12-16; Lk.7:36-50

Fri: Memorial of Ss. Andrew Kim Tae-gon,
Priest, and Paul Chong Ha-Sang
1 Tim 6:2c-12; Lk.8:1-3
Sat: Feast of St. Matthew Apostles and
Evangelist
Eph. 4:1-7, 11-13; Mt. 9:9-13
Sun: 25th Sunday of Ordinary Time
Am. 8:4-7; 1 Tim 2: 1-8; Lk. 16: 1-13 (or 10-13)

Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading:

Ex. 32: 7- 11, 13,14.

The Lord complains to Moses about His people who had turned to other gods and vows to destroy them completely. But Moses appeals to the Lord and this changes God's mind and the people are spared.

Second Reading:

1 Tim. 1: 12-17

St. Paul reveals the fact that he was converted by God to be one of His disciples. Before his conversion St. Paul persecuted the Church by putting Jesus's followers to death. Therefore he bears witness to the fact that God is forgiving.

cuted the Church by putting Jesus's followers to death. Therefore he bears witness to the fact that God is forgiving.

Gospel: Lk.15:1-32

The question is raised as to why Jesus ate with sinners. Jesus answers this with three parables namely the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son. These show God's happiness when a sinner returns to Him. It also presents God as a forgiving God.

Reflection.

Today's Readings elaborate an important aspect of our religion which is not found in any other religion. And it is forgiveness of sins. God in His goodness, mercy and love forgives the repentant, sinful man. The Bible contains the salvific history of mankind; the creation story, the sin of our first parents and man's redemption through Jesus Christ and the efforts of the Early Church to continue this mission with the aim of individual salvation. As man is constantly challenged by temptation, he falls pray to sin. Therefore there is a continued mission for the Church to save man through forgiveness. There is no state of sin that God cannot and will not forgive. But conversion is a must. For this reason we should all turn to the Lord for He is forgiving and loving. That God forgives our sins is shown explicitly in today's Readings.

In the First Reading the Lord complains to Moses about the people who have turned away from Him and are worshipping other gods. He vows to destroy them but Moses appeals to the Lord to forgive them. And the Lord changes His mind. Such is the Love of God. He is always ready to answer any prayer that is said on behalf of sinners.

In the Second Reading the story is about St. Paul. Paul prior to his conversion was going about persecuting the early Christians and Christ's disciples. But the Lord encounters him on his way to Damascus and converts him. He forgives him and makes him an Apostle. Such is the Love and forgiveness of God.

In the Gospel the Pharisees and Scribes react to Jesus taking meals with the tax collectors and sinners and Jesus comes out with a few parables about sinners and about the forgiving love of God. Whatever the state of our sinful lives is; the Lord is more than happy to forgive us. There are three stages of sinfulness in the life of man that Jesus re-

fers to in the Gospel. First of all it is a human stage; it is the Prodigal Son who is still human that decides to return to the father. The father accepts him back with open arms. The second stage is the animal stage. The shepherd has to go in search of such sinners to be brought back. The sheep will only respond to the sound and the call of the shepherd. But still the shepherd is happy when he finds the lost sheep. The third stage is material stage. In this stage the sinner is reduced to the state of matter; like a lost coin. Thank God if the coin is found by the one who searches. There is no life at all in this sinful state. But, still the one who searches is happy when he finds the coin. Such is the forgiving love of God towards sinners. Therefore let us not postpone the conversion that is needed in our lives. Let us turn to the Lord here and now for His Love is forgiving.

Aid Story

A certain king once visited a prison. At each cell he stopped and asked the prisoner whether he was guilty of the charge. Everyone said that they were innocent, except one man who really repented that he had killed an old man, and asked forgiveness from the king. The king having come out immediately released him, while other prisoners looked on and repented because they had not admitted their guilt.

Aid Story 2

A preacher said to a farmer, "Do you belong to the Christian family?" "No" said he, "they live two farms down." "No, no, I mean are you lost?" "No, I've been here thirty years." "I mean are you ready for judgment Day?" "When is it?" "It could be today or tomorrow." "Well, when you find out for sure when it is, you let me know. My wife will probably want to go both days!"

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

Impressions of a Teacher



In times gone by the student sat at the feet of his Guru and imbibed all the spiritual (internal) and material (external) knowledge of the teacher. Teacher and student lived under the same roof and there was hardly any talk of competition or progress. The Way, the Truth and the Life were transmitted not so much by scholarship but by word of mouth and deed. Thought and feeling went hand in hand.

How does this peaceful atmosphere compare with what we see around us today? Religious instruction has little, or no effect on the youth who are clamouring for an informal education that would enable them to manipulate the world and earn a living. The root cause of restlessness and violence is largely due to the nature of knowledge that is imparted to the student and not due to economic deprivation.

There is no denying the fact that the knowledge we call science today had its origin in the west, beginning with the Plato-Pythagoras-Socrates-Democritus-Archimedes-tradition of the Greeks and gradually spreading out to Europe with remarkable "Progress" in the work of Copernicus-Galileo-Newton-Einstein.

The entirety or the Unity of the world is made up of two parts, the External world and the Internal world. This was known to the ancients, to be equally important, for such indeed is the nature of man. One has only to read the Bhagavad Gita, the way of Lao Tze, the Holy Bible the Koran and the Dhamma to realise the universal nature of man.

Western science starts with the assumption that there exists an objective world independent of us perceiving human beings. This world can be comprehended conceptually by ideas and not so much by direct experience of the individual human, which is regarded as subjective. Along with this attitude of the human mind there arose the problem of power, values and economics. All this trend runs contrary to the inner world of man. With globalisation the human condition has got worse.

Nature of Knowledge

It is said that vices are as old as the heavens. There have been violence among tribes and wars among nations from time immemorial up to the present day.

What is frightening today is the nature of knowledge that has become not only uncertain as to its long range effects, but leads to the creation of mass destructive weapons. All this is pursued at the expense of the Internal World. The so called "Progress" is a misnomer. Most People, including students, have been carried away by such language without reflecting on the meaning of the word "Progress." Every language has its own nuance and it is difficult to fathom the meaning of a word in a language.

Einstein and Tagore had different views of reality. Einstein held steadfastly to the western tradition where the outer objective reality has to be comprehended by Ideas (*Begriff*) of the human mind (*Geist*) while Tagore maintained that the world was a human universe (*Atman*), which grows with man quite in keeping

with the Vedic view of the ancients. But Einstein admitted later in his life that the mind should not be worshipped as a God, while Tagore felt that Einstein was a lonely man engrossed in his own metaphysics.

In more recent times Konrad Lorenz the distinguished Biologist has written about the 'Waning of Humanness in Man' and Hermann Weyl the distinguished mathematician has pointed out the trend of 'Symbolism in both Mathematics and Physics', resulting in a Slough of Despond.

The student today has to be made aware of these trends if he is to receive a good and humane education, for the future of the human race depends on the type of knowledge -- Glory or Threat.

It is disturbing to see politicians the world over contesting elections on pure ideological terms in economics, biology and nuclear; not realising the gravity of the problem facing the human race. Language is the defining mystery of man but it could be a blessing or a curse.

The wise sayings of Zhuang Zi, Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Schweitzer who have spoken with concern about the future of man have been thrown to the winds by the present generation.

Teachers have a sacred duty to guide the students on the right path as to what is meant by the external material world and the inner spiritual world. (not the mind or Geist which is used in western science)

Let me give you an example. Oppenheimer the Director of Los Alamos laboratory that made the first atomic bomb was a cultured intellectual who knew several languages, including Sanskrit, had this much to say when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. "Physicists have at last known sin. Our strongest bonds lie with our fellow human beings." It is clear that all the knowledge of the external world came to nought.....!

By V. Joseph

Inner Spiritual World

When I was in my teens I was so much taken up by the knowledge of the external material world that I pursued it relentlessly thinking that it was God's creation and paid scant attention to religious instruction. Looking back at my life over the last fifty years I am ashamed to say I had never read the Bible or the Bhagavad Gita. I wish somebody in school or home had guided me to the inner spiritual world, which today appears to me to be as important as the outer material world.

Catholic Schools spend too much time teaching Catechism and rituals. The Bible should be read by the head of the family and its profound meaning should be expounded to each member. Christianity is a religion of both righteousness and mercy, avoiding deception and iniquity.

God is a living Spirit (*Atman*) of the inner spiritual world, as opposed to the mind, and more real as the external material world we have constructed with our mind. (*Geist*), which is but an abstraction.

This message or vital difference between the two worlds should be brought to the attention of the student in school and every member of the family.

Since this article deals with culture and language, which have an important bearing on education, I would like to add the following post script without prejudice:-

Human nature is universal, but languages and cultures often lead to apparent differences and unnecessary conflicts. This could be overcome if one recalls Goethe's famous lines:-

"Every language is a spiritual journey. He who does not know a foreign language does not know his very own"

Note: The words in parenthesis are either in German or Sanskrit.

An Atheist in the Woods

An atheist was walking through the woods in Alaska.

'What majestic trees!
'What powerful rivers!
'What beautiful animals!
He said to himself.

As he was walking alongside the river, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him.

He turned to look. He saw a 7-foot grizzly bear charge towards him.



He ran as fast as he could up the path. He looked over his shoulder and saw that the bear was closing in on him.

He looked over his shoulder again and the bear was even closer.

He tripped and fell on the ground.

He rolled over to pick himself up but saw that the bear was right on top of him, reaching for him with his left paw and raising his right paw to strike him.



At that instant the Atheist cried out:

'Oh my God!'

Time stopped.
The bear froze.
The forest was silent.

As a bright light shone upon the man, a voice came out of the sky.

'You deny my existence for all these years, teach others I don't exist and even credit creation to cosmic accident.'

'Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament?'

'Am I to count you as a believer?'

The atheist looked directly into the light, and said 'It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask you to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps you could make the BEAR a Christian?'

'Very well', said the voice.

The light went out. The sounds of the forest resumed. And the bear dropped his right paw, brought both paws together, bowed his head and spoke:



'Lord bless this food, which I am about to receive from Thy bounty through Christ our Lord, Amen.'



Why do we Celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross?

The Church celebrated the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14. Do you know why the Church celebrates this feast?

Early in the fourth century St. Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, went to Jerusalem in search of the holy places of Christ's life. She razed the second-century Temple of Aphrodite, which tradition held was built over the Saviour's tomb, and her son built the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher over the tomb. During the excavation, workers found three crosses. Legend has it that the one on which Jesus died was identified when its touch, healed a dying woman.

The cross immediately be-

came an object of veneration. At a Good Friday celebration in Jerusalem toward the end of the fourth century, according to an eyewitness, the wood was taken out of its silver container and placed on a table together with the inscription Pilate ordered, placed above Jesus' head: Then "all the people pass through one by one; all of them bow down, touching the cross and the inscription, first with their foreheads, then with their eyes; and, after kissing the cross, they move on."

To this day the Eastern

Churches, Catholic and Orthodox alike, celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the September anniversary of the Basilica's dedication. The feast entered the Western calendar in the seventh century after Emperor Heraclius recovered the cross from the Persians, who had carried it off in 614, fifteen years earlier. According to the story, the emperor intended to carry the cross back into Jerusalem himself, but was unable to move forward until he took off his imperial garb and became a barefoot pilgrim.

Blessed Mother's Seven Sorrows

Sorrowful Mother carrying the Infant Jesus for His purification,

Entered the temple and on hearing Simeon's Prophecy,

Verily her heart was pierced by the first sword.



Even more when the Holy family fled to Egypt to save the Infant Jesus from Herod's massacre, the....



Notable second sword pierced her sorrowful heart.



Readng the words "King of Jews" and participating in Christ's agonizing death her heart suffered martyrdom when the fifth sword pierced her.

Sorrowing Mother Mary with St. Joseph and Jesus at twelve went to the Temple in Jerusalem,



On returning, when they found Jesus was lost, the most painful third sword pierced her heart.



On the sixth sword that pierced her weeping heart was compassion, when she took Jesus' tortured body into her arms at the foot of the cross.



Weeping, she laid Jesus in the sepulcher when the seventh sword pierced her afflicted heart.

Road to Calvary was so agonising when her maternal heart was struck with the fourth sword on witnessing her suffering beloved son carrying the cross.



So let us repent for our sins and make reparation to console the Most Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Our Heavenly Mother.

First Holy Communion in Maggona



Forty Nine children from the Parish of St. Mary's Church, Maggona, received their First Holy Communion recently.

The Chief Celebrant at the Eucharistic Celebration was Rev. Fr. Noel Mervyn OMI, of St. Vincent's Home, Maggona.

Picture shows, the children with Rev. Fr. Noel Mervyn, Rev. Fr. Ishan Prameena, Parish Priest, Maggona. Rev. Sr. Priyadarshani and Daham Pasal teachers.

(D. Anselm Fernando)

Chilaw Diocese Bible Quiz Programme



At the Bible Quiz programme held in the Diocese of Chilaw, Lourdes Maha Vidyalaya of Nattandiya, bagged the first place in the Senior Category.

Picture Shows the Lourdes Maha Vidyalaya Team with Rev. Sr. Patricia of the Sisters of Providence and Ms. Sandya Fernando, Catechism teacher.

Shriyani Felicia

Programme on 'Youth and media

A programme on 'Youth and the Media will be held for Daham Pasal students from Grade 8 upwards from 9 to 10.30 a.m. today September 15, at Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine, Nattandiya

The programme will be conducted by Mr. Kumara Nayanajith of the Gnarthatha pradeepaya.

SF

Correction

The news item "Confirmation Service at Pallansena Church" and picture in our issue of September 1, 2013 was by Mr. Melvyn De Costa.

Preparatory programme for students receiving Confirmation



A special preparatory programme for students receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Wennappuwa Parish was held recently at the Wennappuwa Zechariah Hall.

The programme was conducted by Mr. Kumara Nayanajith of the Gnarth-

pradeepaya the programme was held under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Eric C. Fernando, Parish Priest, Wennappuwa and was organised by Rev. Fr. Sujan Nishanka, Asst. Parish Priest.

Text : Priyantha Peters
Pic. Michael Perera

Young Jesus->Young-stars Happy or Found or Celebrate

"I am so happy I found my lost sheep. Let us celebrate..!" (Luke 15:06)

General Idea

Happiness is the sole target in each person's life. We do everything in order to make ourselves and our family happy. Happiness always follows a celebration in various ways. Happiness is something that happens within us and is also something that invokes emotion.

Everybody belongs to a family to whom we are responsible. Whether I am a mother; father; brother or sister; I have a duty to look after my family and to see to their well being. From the very inception God has shown through His love that we are His children and He is responsible for our lives here on earth and thus guards us from all dangers. So how would it be for Jesus, the Good Shepherd if one of His sheep is lost? Jesus loves all of us and He needs us to be with Him.



Common Challenges

- * How many would be happy to celebrate when the lost one is found?
- * How many of us would go in search of a lost one?
- * How many would help the Shepherd to find the lost one?
- * How many would realise that they are lost?
- * How many would pray till the lost one is found?

Spiritual Challenges

- * Do you feel the need for celebration when happiness comes to your family?
- * Do you see the dangers lurking to grab your family's happiness in the world?
- * Have you ever surrendered your family to God's hand?

Jesus needs you. He comes searching for us whether we are lost or not. Can you hear Him call you by name? Be alert always to the signs of the times or else you too could be lost.

Visible Characters

Jesus, Shepherd, Sheep

Hidden Characters

Mother, Father, Son, Daughter, Husband and wife.

Practical Invitation

1. Let us become the co-workers of Jesus who is always there for the lost and poor.
2. Let us make an effort not to be lost. Let us not make the Shepherd unhappy and helpless.
3. Let us not jeer at the lost one but do our best to accept the lost one into our fold and celebrate the happiness.

Su.Ra.F.

The groaning of the sinner.....

**I am a slave to sin
It leads me to hell
Therefore I live in a
state of bitterness and
blindness,
I cannot see the path towards
the eternal life.
I do not see the love of God
but suffer a lot because of sins.
As a result of this blindness
I am like a straw that blows away
with the wind.**



**I fail to turn from sinfulness to Holiness.
Thus, I feel sorry in the midst of my
weakness**

**To create a vast distance between God and I.
I feel ashamed of me among others,
when they laughed at me
Because of my sins.
When I was rejected,
I have come to know,
where I was wrong.**

QUIZ

On Catholic Themes

(..... from last week)

QUESTIONS

1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

Liturgy

336. What is an Advent wreath?
337. When and where did the Advent wreath originate?
338. How was December 25 chosen as the birthday of Christ?
339. What is Lent?
340. When does Lent begin in the Western Church?
341. How long does Lent last?
342. Which day of the week is not counted in the forty days of Lent?
343. How many Sundays are there in Lent?
344. What is the sixth Sunday in Lent called?
345. How is the last week of Lent called?
346. How many full meals may be eaten on a fast day?
347. What name is commonly given to Thursday before Easter?
348. What great feast does Lent lead to?
349. What do we mean when we say that Easter is a moveable feast?
350. Which major feast in the Catholic Church is calculated based on the moon?
351. On what day does the Roman Catholic Church celebrate Christ's resurrection from the dead?
352. What do we understand by the term Paschal Mystery?
353. What is Paschal Time?
354. Which feast is celebrated 40 days after Easter?
355. What is the significance of the Paschal candle?
356. What is incense?
357. What is the significance of incense in Catholic worship?
358. Why is the Apostles' Creed called so?
359. When and where was the Nicene Creed formulated?
360. What is the difference between a solemnity, a feast, and a memorial in the Catholic Church?

(contd next week.....)

From the Vatican Documents

Faith, Hope and Love go together.

HOPE is practised through Virtue of patience

FAITH tells us God has given His Son for our sake

LOVE is the light and in the end, the only light

Pope Benedict XVI
Deus Caritas Est
(Encyclical)
December 25, 2005



ANSWERS

I. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

Liturgy

336. The Advent wreath is a circular garland of evergreen branches representing eternity. On that wreath, four candles are typically arranged. During the season of Advent one candle on the wreath is lit each Sunday as a part of the Advent services. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the Coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ.
 337. It is commonly held that it originated among the Lutherans of Eastern Germany in the 16th century.
 338. It is commonly claimed that December 25 was selected as the birthday of Christ (Christmas) in order to correspond with the Roman festival of the birthday of *Sol Invictus* (Sun God). Many other theories are put forward by other scholars but there is no conclusive evidence for any of these.
 339. Lent is the forty days before Easter Sunday, during which we do penance, fast and pray to prepare ourselves for the resurrection of Our Lord and also to remind us of his own fast of forty days before his passion.
 340. On Ash Wednesday.
 341. 40 days.
 342. Sunday.
 343. Six
 344. Palm Sunday.
 345. Holy Week.
 346. One.
 347. Maundy Thursday.
 348. Easter.
 349. It means that it is not fixed in relation to the civil calendar.
 350. Easter. The First Council of Nicaea (325) established the date of Easter as the first Sunday after the full moon (the Paschal Full Moon) following the northern hemisphere's vernal equinox.
 351. Easter Sunday.
 352. The Paschal Mystery is the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 353. Paschal Time is the period between Easter Sunday and Pentecost.
 354. Ascension.
 355. The flame of the Paschal candle symbolizes Christ as light of the world and his presence in the midst of his people.
 356. An aromatic substance which is obtained from certain resinous trees and largely employed for purposes of religious worship.
 357. The smoke of burning incense, with its sweet smelling perfume and high-ascending smoke is interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church as a symbol of the prayer of the faithful rising to heaven.
 358. Because it is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the faith of the Apostles.
 359. At the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 AD and it was expanded at the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381 AD.
 360. A solemnity is the highest rank of celebration and is identified in the calendar with an S, e.g. Easter, Christmas, All Saints' Day, etc. The Gloria and Creed are always said on such days. Solemnities are like Sundays, though most of them are not days of obligation.
- Feasts the next rank down and are identified with an F. They consist of the celebration of certain saints like the feast of the archangels or most of apostles. The Gloria is required on these days, but not the Creed.
- Memorials are the lowest rank and are simply the celebrations of most of the saints. The Gloria is not said on these days. Obligatory memorials, identified with a capital M, must be observed. Optional memorials, identified with an m, may be observed but such observation is not required.

Courtesy: Clare Ukken fsp