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A New Year Blessing!

May the Sun of Righteousness rise with healing in its wings to our nation (Malachi 4:2 NIV)

ARE WE EATING LIFE OR DEATH?

An Independent Authority required for Food and Nutrition

With the long delayed approval of the long delayed National Medicinal Law to provide quality drugs to the people at affordable prices, health analysts say there is now an urgent need to set up an independent authority to provide safe food and nutrition to the people, especially school children.

At a Seminar held by the Medico-Legal Society last year, experts pointed out that as many as 1200 additives – most of them harmful were being used in the imported and local food items we consume and give to our children. The additives include preservatives such as formalin which is often used by undertakers, flavour enhancing chemical substances, artificial sweeteners and chemicals for colour and texture. The title of the Seminar was, "Are we poisoning our children?" but a people friendly nutritionist who gave the keynote address said the more appropriate title would be, "We



are poisoning our children."

The Nutritionist, Dr. Damayanthi Perera – one of the most highly qualified in Sri Lanka, said the country was being used as a garbage dump for imported junk food and processed rubbish, most of which were and

are banned in some Western countries. Dr. Perera said there was an urgent need for the new Government and the Food Security Ministry to set up an independent authority that will work out a diet of quality Sri Lankan food items that are safe and nutritious.

It was pointed out that Western food models had failed, with the United States for instance having an obesity epidemic where, about 40 percent of the people were dangerously obese and there were a growing number of cases where children were dying before their parents. The epidemic has spread worldwide with the fast-food chains in Kuwait for instance opening the graves for a fast death rate.

An official of the Sri Lanka Consumer Protection Authority said last week, they would be conducting raids and checks on fast-food outlets in

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Rosaries and Easter cakes to Iraqi Christians from Pope



The Solemn Easter Vigil in Erbil, Iraq, concluded in a spirit of joyful celebration with the distribution of dove-shaped Easter cakes and rosaries sent by Pope Francis to thousands of Chaldean Christians displaced by ISIS.

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, sent by Pope Francis to celebrate the Easter Triduum with the persecuted Christians of Iraq and Syria, participated in the solemn ceremony, which was presided over by Chaldean Patriarch Louis Sako I and concelebrated by Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil and dozens of other priests.

The Holy Mass took place in an enormous tent in neighbourhood in Erbil. More than 5,000 Christians, most of them internal refugees, participated in the ceremony that began at 9 p.m. local time.

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NOTICE

Colombo Catholic Press will be closed for business from Wednesday April 15 to Friday April 17.

The next issue of the 'Messenger' will be on Sunday April 26.

CATHOLIC PRESS WEBSITE
www.colombocatholic-press.com

Email:
cmmessenger2014@yahoo.com/
cmessenger@sltnet.lk /
pradeepaya@sltnet.lk

Telephone:
2695984, 2678106,
4899611
Fax: 2692586

Vocation Sunday – April 26

Vocation Sunday or Good Shepherd Sunday this year will be celebrated on April 26, under the theme "Speak Lord, Your servant is listening," from the vocation narrative of Prophet Samuel in 1 Sam.3:10. The theme has been decided by the organizers for Vocation Sunday, the Catholic National Commission for Seminaries, Clergy, Religious and Secular



Institutes. Scripture readings and prayer on this day focus their attention on Christ the

Good Shepherd.

Since the current year is also a special year set apart to reflect on the Family and Consecrated Life, the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith has requested Rev. Fathers to focus attention on this subject in a special way and to collect their campaign material (posters, prayers, sermon notes etc.)

from Very Rev. Fr. J.D. Anthony, Episcopal Vicar, Formation.

His Eminence requests all Rev. Fathers to make use of these materials to speak to the people on the above theme, to solicit prayers and to support and encourage young people to respond generously if God calls them to a priestly or religious commitment.

Koinonia

Meeting of Missionary Activity Commission

The Catholic National Commission for Missionary Activity held a meeting recently at "Lankarama" Balcombe Place, Borella.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus C. Perera, Chairman and Bishop of Ratnapura, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Ponniah, Vice Chairman and Bishop of Batticaloa and Rev. Fr. Reginald Saparamadu, National Director who or-

ganised the event were present.

Mr. Victor Silva, representing the Kandy Diocese made a noteworthy presentation on the theme "What is Evangelization?". This had been prepared with the assistance of Dr. Dalrene Wanigaratna representing "Kithudhana Pubuduwa."

C.R. Dickson Anthony



Opening of Housing Project at Talawila



Minister of Public Peace, Disaster Management and Christian Affairs John Amarathunga was the chief guest at the opening ceremony of a housing project at St. Anne's Shrine premises, Talawila. Mrs. Hyacinth Amarathunga and Media Secretary Lawrence Madiwala are also in the picture.

Nimal Perera

Lenten Programme at Katukurunda

St. Mary's Church, Katukurunda, Moratuwa held a special Lenten programme for its parishioners. The Good Friday programme commenced with the Passion Play depicting the agony of Christ. There was a reflection on the 'Seven Last Words of Christ' and the service concluded with the veneration of the Cross.

The day's programme was presided over by Rev. Fr. Sham Dassanayaka.

The Holy Saturday services commenced at 10.00 pm and at the



end of Holy Mass, a statue of the Risen Christ was taken in procession.

For the first time in this parish, the 40 days of Lent had special significance for the parishioners with the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Rasika Lawrence initiating a reflection on each day's Bible reading followed by Holy Mass, resulting in a more meaningful preparation to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus.

Asika Priyadarshana

Three hour Agony of the Lord at Pamunugama



The picture depicts the crucifixion during the three hour agony on Good Friday at the Pamunugama Parish.

The Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Ananda Vithana together with Rev. Fr. Sheno Silva and Rev. Bro. Amila Piri were the preachers.

Benjamin Kirihetty



Medical and Eye Clinic at Bolawatte

St. Vincent De Paul Society together with the Civil Protection Committee of Bolawatte held a medical and eye clinic recently where free spectacles were distributed to the needy. In the picture are the members of the two committees with Police Officers, Medical Officers and Grama Niladharis.

K. Nihal Fernando



Welfare Societies hold meeting

The Welfare and Death Donation Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church at Polwatte in the Burulapitiya Parish held its 6th Annual General Meeting. This was under the auspices of the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Dudley Saparamadu OMI.

The picture shows Fr. Dudley with the newly elected office bearers.

Saman C. Perera

Olive branches to Sri Lanka from Israel



Subsequent to the blessing of the palms on Palm Sunday, a special Olive branch that was brought from Israel was carried to the Church in procession. This happened at St. Sebastian's Church, Katuwapitiya.

Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Srilal Fonseka and Asst. Rev. Fr. Nadeeka Manchanayake led the procession.

Agnes Siyabalapitiya

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Are we eating...

Sri Lanka to ensure that the people, especially children were not regularly consuming fatty and oily items that had led to a dangerous increase in the number of people suffering from high cholesterol, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases related to obesity.

The Nutritionist Dr. Perera also lamented that officials of the new Ministry of Education appeared to be unaware of the dangers in the nutrition programme they had allowed for hundreds of thousands of school children. Programmes of this nature must conclude with deci-

sions taken to promote the well being of our children, which is directly connected to the intake of food. So that the organizers and sponsors of such events will rejoice at a job well done and our children will eat life not death.

During the past three decades several attempts have been made to revive the dairy milk industry in Sri Lanka because of the country wasting hundreds of millions of dollars every year on the import of powdered milk. Most nutritionists say the processed powdered milk is not even half as nutritious as fresh milk while in some instances recently it was found that chemical flavour enhancing substances and preservatives were being used to

make the powdered milk more marketable.

In the latest abortive effort to revive Sri Lanka's dairy milk industry more than 2000 cows were imported from Australia at a cost of about Rs.150,000 each, but some unscrupulous middlemen here got involved to sell the cows at about one million each. In a deadly turn of events most of these cows have now died because the food and the environment here were not suitable for them. Nutritionists say Sri Lanka has enough cows of its own to revive the fresh milk industry if the Government provides incentives and subsidies to the dairy farmers while setting up an effective marketing network.

Good Friday at Maggona Calvary



Good Friday service was celebrated at Maggona Calvary Shrine recently. The chief celebrant at Holy Mass was Rev. Fr. Anton Grecian OMI, Director "Susithodaya" Maggona.

D. Anselm Fernando

Donation of Plastic Chairs



Former Minister of Western Provincial Council Lawrence Madiwala, donated a stock of plastic chairs to students of the Daham School of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Balagala, Hendala. The chairs were handed over to Rev. Fr. Thusith Pradeep, Parish Priest. *N. P.*



Church in the Modern World

“Pray that God will wash away my filth”

Pope Francis celebrated the Holy Thursday “In Coena Domini” Mass which marks the start of the Easter Triduum at Rome’s Rebibbia prison. During the brief homily he pronounced off the cuff and as he prepared for the feet washing rite, he asked the inmates to “pray that the Lord washes away my filth as well.” Pope Francis then washed the feet of 12 inmates starting with a Nigerian girl who was visibly moved. She held a young child in her arms as the Pope washed her feet and stroked the child’s feet with a smile.

“Pray that the Lord will also wash away my filth so that I become your slave, more of a slave in service of the people, just like Jesus was,” the Holy Father said, kneeling at the feet of

the 12 prison inmates.

“This Thursday Jesus was at table with His disciples to celebrate the feast of Easter,” the Pope said in the homily he delivered in the prison’s ‘Our Father’ Chapel.

“In the Gospel passage we just heard there is a phrase that expresses exactly what Jesus did for all of us: Having loved His people in the world, He loved them until the end. Jesus loved us. Jesus loves us. Infinitely, always, until the end. Jesus’ love for us knows no limits. His love for us grows and grows. He never tires of loving anyone...Just as he never tires of forgiving.”

The Holy Father said that Jesus did something the disciples could not understand:

“He washes feet.” The Pope explained that it was customary at the time to wash the feet because when people entered a house their feet were dirty from the dust along the way. “There weren’t any cobblestones at that time,” the Pope quipped.

“At the entrance to the house they would wash their feet but it wasn’t the master of the house who washed his guests’ feet,” it was the slaves who did it. It was a slave’s job. And Jesus washes the feet of the disciples.

“This is why he says to Peter, ‘you don’t understand what I am doing now, you will understand later’, the Holy Father said.”

“Jesus’ love for us was



Pope Francis washes inmates’ feet at Rebibbia prison (Ansa photo)

so great that He became a slave to serve us, heal us, clean us. Today at this Mass, the Church wants the priest to wash the feet of twelve people in memory of the twelve apostles. But we must be certain in our hearts, we must be sure that when the Lord washes our feet, He wash-

es everything, He purifies us.”

According to a statement, the Pope washed the feet of six female inmates – two Nigerians, a Congolese woman, two Italians and an Ecuadorian – and six men; a Brazilian, a Nigerian and four Italians.

Vatican Insider



Shrapnel: Collector's item for Yemen kids?

Yemeni boys display shrapnel they collected from the rubble of houses destroyed by Saudi-led airstrikes in a village near Sanaa, Yemen, Saturday, April 4, 2015. Since their advance began last year, the Shiite rebels, known as Houthis have overrun Yemen’s capital, Sanaa, and several provinces, forcing the country’s beleaguered President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi to flee the country. A Saudi-led coalition continued to carry out intensive airstrikes overnight and early Saturday morning targeting Houthi positions.

(AP Photo)

More women in the Vatican

The number of women working in the Vatican has grown steadily in recent years. In 2004, just under 13% of employees serving the Pope in Vatican City were women, however by 2014 that number had grown to over 19%. The largest increase, according to data provided by the Holy See’s Personnel Office, took place in the Governorate, where the number of women has nearly doubled over the last 10 years, growing from 195 to 371. A similar increase was seen at APSA (Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See), which includes the employees of the Roman Curia and other entities such as *L’Osservatore Roma-*



no. As of 2014, 391 women are working for APSA, making up more than 18% of all its personnel. Four years ago, in 2011, there were 288 female employees, which comprised 17% of the total. The increase in women’s hiring has been more consistent than that of men.

(L’Osservatore Romano)

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



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Rosaries and Easter

After Cardinal Sako delivered the homily, Cardinal Filoni, speaking in Italian and translated into Arabic by an interpreter, said that Pope Francis asked him to deliver the message to Iraqi Christians that “even though I will be presiding at the Easter Vigil in Rome, my heart is with you, and I will not abandon you in my thoughts.”

“In this way, we can say the Pope is here,” the Cardinal added. More than 70,000 Christians fled to Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, after their villages came under attack by the Islamic State (ISIS) last June. The militants have since established a caliphate and have persecuted non-Sunnis in its territory, which extends across swaths of Iraq and Syria.

ISIS has forced more than 1.2 million Christians, Yazidis, and Shia Muslims from their homes in Iraq, under threat of death or heavy fines if they do not convert.

THOUGHT

Despite the fact that luck certainly plays a role in success or failure, I am convinced that there are no secrets for success. People fail because of their own mistakes. If someone seems to progress without an error others ascribe it to some kind of genius. Success depends more on common sense than on genius.

- An Wang

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EDITORIAL

Email: cmmessenger2014@yahoo.com
Telephone: 011 2695984

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A New Year – a new Lanka

Amid the blessings of the Resurrection and major constitutional changes to consolidate the new political culture of good governance, democracy and social justice, the people of Sri Lanka on April 13 and 14 celebrate their main festival of unity – the National New Year. The festival popularly known as 'aluth avuruddu' is celebrated not only by Buddhists and Hindus but also by most Sri Lankans. The timing of the Sinhala New Year coincides with the New Year celebrations in Thailand, Cambodia, Bengal and Laos.

According to astrology, the New Year begins when the sun moves from Meena Rashiya (House of Pisces) to Mesh Rashiya (House of Aries). It also marks the end of the harvest. Cultural and anthropological history of the New Year goes back to an ancient period in Sri Lanka. The advent of Buddhism in the 3rd century BC, led to a re-interpretation of the existing New Year activities.

Of special significance to Christians is the fact that the Jewish Passover, the most hallowed festival in their history takes place from April 3 to 11. The Passover marks several historic events when God liberated the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt some 1300 years before Christ.

The National New Year this year comes at a time when, going beyond words and symbols, the new National Government is taking steps to bring about lasting unity and reconciliation between the Sinhala and Tamil people. A Presidential Task Force (PTF) headed by former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and comprising eminent persons of all races and religions will chart the course for lasting national unity. For this mission the PTF is to seek the guidance and co-operation of the leaders of all religions.

Since independence in 1948, ethnic and religious divisions began to erupt in Sri Lanka when thousands of Indian Tamil estate workers were stripped of their citizenship and thereby most of their fundamental rights. Short-sighted policies by different governments on racial, language and religious issues led to further divisions and conflicts. The crisis worsened in the 70's, with the illegitimate 1982 Referendum setting the fuse for the diabolical and devastating ethnic war that left hundreds of thousands of people dead or injured, destitute and in different degrees of degradation. In May 2009, the war against the LTTE terrorists was won but there are valid questions as to whether we lost the peace.

First and foremost every Sri Lankan needs to be ready, willing and able to identify himself or herself as a Sri Lankan – not just a Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim or Burgher. For instance the people of India especially when they go overseas do not identify themselves as Tamilians, Gujaratis or Bengalis but they proudly say, "I am Indian." The main task of the PTF and the government will be to rebuild the foundation and the environment for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in a just and fair manner.

History has proved the value of a time-tested conflict resolution process which was followed in essence by the world's six major powers and Iran, when after months of intense talk they reached a historic agreement where Iran promised it would not make nuclear bombs thereby making the world a better place. All parties to the conflict followed the five principles of conflict resolution through dialogue. They began with a paradigm shift or a change of mental perception where they agreed that their view of the conflict was not absolute but relative. On this basis they were able to hold a sincere dialogue with each other, listening instead of arguing thereby they gradually came to an accommodation of the middle path and were to come to a win-win solution, not win-lose solution. Mathematically this means 1+1 makes not 2 but 3 – something new. This is called synergy - the interaction or co-operation of two or more parties to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.

Let us pray and hope that the PTF and others concerned would be able to carry Sri Lanka to this vision and mission, because without lasting reconciliation and unity in diversity little progress, or economic or moral development would be possible.

Images in worship

A religious source that is totally opposed to the use of images in Christian devotion says: "Showing his displeasure with religious images as aids to devotion, God gave his law to the Israelites forbidding their use. Moreover, he warned them against desiring the gold and silver on images they found among the pagans. (Exodus 20:4-5; Deuteronomy 7: 25). Did God's attitude change with the introduction of Christianity? No for the Bible shows that Christians likewise avoided the use of images. (Acts 17:29). Following the apostle John's counsel "to guard yourselves from idols," they walked "by faith, not by sight." They put their complete trust in the invisible God. (1 John 5-21; 2 Corinthians 5,7).

With reference to the texts they have cited, the comments they make are external to what those texts precisely refer to. Image worship was not a part of the Mosaic religion. God showed "His displeasure with religious images as aids to devotion" of another religion in Canaan, as a comprehensible example. God referred to the use of images of Canaanite pagan gods by the pagans themselves. He was particular that the Israelites should not imitate them in worship, as it would mislead them to indulge in competitive worship against Him.

The text in Acts 17:29 in the Catholic Answer Bible reads: "Since therefore we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divinity is like an image fashioned from gold, silver or stone by human art and imagination." This text conveys that God is not like an image made by human hands. The King James version of this text conveys the same sense. This text does not suggest that Christians at that time avoided the use of images, as this source seems to imply. At the same time, it would be erroneous and futile to confuse Christian image worship in present times with Canaanite pagan image worship referred to in Exodus 20:4-5.

Once again, Apostle John's counsel to the Christians to "guard yourselves from idols"



in fact refers to the presence and use of pagan idols which was common at that time. There were no Christian images then.

They also say "Images were unknown in the worship of the primitive Christians." This is understandable as Christianity was an underground religion during the first three centuries. There was suppression of the faith and persecution of Christians by the pagans. Christianity picked up as a practising religion only after the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine in 312AD.

Another excerpt they quote is from *The History of the Christian Religion and Church. During the Three First Centuries by Dr. Augustus Neander*. It reads: "Heathens who, like Alexander Severus (Roman Emperor of the third century C.E, saw something Divine in Christ, and sects, which mixed heathenism and Christianity together, were the first who made use of images of Christ. Since no images of Christ were used by the Early Christians, it is evident also that they had no images of Mary, Jesus' mother."

As stated in this excerpt, heathenism (paganism) could not have mixed with Christianity, as they were two opposing ideologies. Heathens could not have made an image of Christ unless they believed in Christ. Once again, this excerpt refers to the third century when Christianity was not openly practised.

All these excerpts and compositions are merely intended to subscribe to a predetermined view against the use of images in Christian worship. Christians should be able to discern from the Scriptures what is a religious image and what is an "idol."

The word "make" in Exodus 20: 4-5 merely suggests that the Israelites should not carve out, mould or sculpture an image for worship that would take them away from God. The worship of God is singular by itself and the worship of a religious image in the Christian faith belongs to the faith.

E.M. Aldons

Free Will, Conscience and Moral Choice

Catholic teaching on free will recognises that God has given men and women the capacity to choose good or evil in their lives. The Bishops at the Second Vatican Council declared that the human person, endowed with freedom, is "an outstanding manifestation of the divine image" (Gaudium et Spes, No. 17).

Human freedom does not legitimate bad moral choices, nor does it justify a stance that all moral choices are good if they are free: "The exercise of freedom does not imply a right to say or do everything" (The Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1740). Christian belief in human freedom recognises that we are called but not compelled by God to choose constantly the values of the Gospel - faith, hope, love, mercy, justice, forgiveness, integrity and compassion.

Freedom of will is the capacity to act with moral responsibility; it is not the ability to determine arbitrarily what constitutes moral right.

What, then, is to guide the children of God in the use of their freedom? Again, the Bishops at the Council provide the answer - conscience: "Deep within his conscience man dis-

covers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment.... For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God.... His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths" (GS, No.16). Conscience, then, is the judgment of reason whereby the human person, guided by God's grace, recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. In all we say and do, we are obliged to follow faithfully what we know to be just and right.

How do we form and guide our consciences? While the Church teaches that each of us is called to judge and direct his or her own actions, it also teaches that, like any good judge, each conscience masters the law and listens to expert testimony about the law. This process is called the education and formation of conscience.

Catholics believe that "the education of conscience is a lifelong task" (CCC No.1784). Where do we go for this education of our consciences? Our living tradition teaches us that "In the

formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path; we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord's Cross. We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of others and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church" (CCC No. 1785).

As participants in the life of the civil community, we Catholic citizens try to follow our consciences, guided, by reason and the grace of God. While we deeply respect the freedom of our fellow citizens, we nevertheless are profoundly convinced that free will cannot be cited as justification for society to allow moral choices that strike at the most fundamental rights of others.

Such a choice is abortion, which constitutes the taking of innocent human life, and cannot be justified by any Catholic notion of freedom. Because of these convictions we commit ourselves to a continuing witness to and dialogue about, the Gospel values that underlie our understanding of freedom, conscience, and moral choice.

Catholics for the Common Good

Cardinal Walter Kasper, 'The Pope's Theologian,' reveals the Brains behind Francis' heart

ROME (RNS) Pope Francis has repeatedly said he expects his papacy to be a brief one, but Cardinal Walter Kasper is working to ensure that the pontiff's legacy endures long after this pope leaves the scene.

From the first days of his pontificate two years ago, Francis singled out Kasper for high praise; ever since, the retired German cardinal is frequently known as "the pope's theologian."

It's a moniker the churchman shrugs off with a smile, yet it's also a label he's doing nothing to shake, especially in light of Kasper's most recent book, published last month — a short work that basically describes Francis as a theologian in his own right whose pastoral approach is setting Catholicism on a new course.

The title of the book, from the U.S. Catholic publishing house Paulist Press, says it all: "Pope Francis' Revolution of Tenderness and Love." But the title also sums up the two-pronged challenge for those, like Kasper, who hope that Francis' papacy represents lasting change:

First, revolutions can prompt a backlash,

and Francis (and Kasper, as the pope's ally) is already facing powerful and growing opposition from church traditionalists in Rome and around the world.

Secondly, concepts like "love" and "tenderness" and "mercy" are at the heart of the sweeping pastoral reform that Francis is pushing yet can be hard to translate into policies that go beyond a particular person, even if that person is the pope.

"I wanted to make clear, in order to help Pope Francis, to make him better understood to theologians and more academic people, and to interpret some of his good visions — to say that he is fully in the Catholic tradition, in tradition with his predecessors, and much more with (Pope Emeritus) Benedict XVI than it seems," Kasper said during an interview in his book-lined apartment across the street from the Vatican.

"Because there is also a strong conservative wing here which does not see that there is a tradition (in Francis' papacy) that goes back not only to the New Testament but to Thomas Aquinas and many others."

In the Roman

Catholic Church, tradition is a powerful current with the ability to carry a new approach forward, or wash it away. What's usually needed in order to safely navigate that stream is a sturdy theological framework that becomes part of the church's intellectual infrastructure.

Providing that kind of framework is especially important for the success of a papacy like Pope Francis', which seems to be characterized by an "ad hoc" style of ministry focused on gestures and stylistic changes, such as living simply and promoting humility, denouncing clericalism and privilege, and reaching out to the margins of society rather than operating a command-and-control structure from a Roman redoubt.

It is a populist reputation that Pope Francis himself cultivates, as he regularly dismisses theologizing as an academic parlour game that has little relation to what the Church should be doing. "Reality is greater than ideas," as he likes to say.

But Cardinal Kasper takes pains to show that there is a method to Pope Francis' ministry, carefully tracing the



varied intellectual and theological influences on this pope. "If some turn the Pope into some kind of rock star, so others regard him as a theological lightweight. Pope Francis is neither the one nor the other," Kasper writes.

So what is he then?

"He does not speak as a theologian, but there is a 'theology of the people' and of mercy and of many other things" behind what Pope Francis says and does, Kasper said.

At 82, Cardinal Walter Kasper is busier than ever. He had a long career as a bishop in Germany and then in Rome overseeing the Vatican's

Christian unity office. As a respected theologian, he often sparred with Joseph Ratzinger, another more conservative German prelate who went on to become Benedict XVI.

When Benedict retired in 2013, it paved the way for the surprising election of the Argentine Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio as Francis — and the re-emergence of Kasper as the standard-bearer of a more progressive Catholic theology.

A year ago, Francis tapped Kasper to address the entire College of Cardinals, setting the stage for ongoing debates about changing pastoral practices to accommodate divorced and remarried

Catholics, for example, or to better welcome gay people and unmarried couples living together.

Those debates are increasingly contentious, with charges of skullduggery and backroom manipulations, bad faith and defective theology.

Cardinal Kasper remains at the centre of the storm. Before his apartment interview, he had spent hours in meetings with the Pontiff and more than 150 other cardinals on reforming the Roman Curia before returning home to answer emails and phone calls and then heading off to a reception at the German embassy.

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EDUCATING CHILDREN IN VIRTUES

Rev. Fr. Daniel Icatlo, JCD

Education is primarily the responsibility of the child's father and mother. The family is the first school of virtues, as well as, Christian life.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, states that parents have the right to choose the education they want for their children. Moreover, the signatories included this principle among the basic rights that a state can never abrogate or manipulate.

Human beings by their very nature are intrinsically social and dependent beings, with a dependence that is shown most clearly in the years of infancy. All men and women need to receive an education, to acquire knowledge and culture in a social setting.

Procreation and Education

A child is not a creature thrown down to earth by storks. He or she is a result of an act of love between husband and wife. The unitive aspect of marriage is essentially linked to its procreative dimension. By this we understand that the very Author of life wished that human beings be born out of the love of spouses and not out of laboratory test tubes.

From this ethical principle, we understand why it would be wrong to divest the marital act with its innate orientation to life. Any action intended to impede that act of love from attaining its natural purpose runs counter to the plan

of the Creator.

As a corollary to this, there is a close tie between procreation and education. Both are expressions of love. The latter complements and completes the former.

Every human being born into this world has a right to be brought up and educated so that he achieves his full potential. Coupled to this right is the duty of parents to educate their children.

Since offspring are both children of their parents and children of God by Baptism, education extends to Christian upbringing. The spiritual life of a child commences from the moment he or she is baptized. The seed of divine life is implanted in the soul of that child.

Like any life, the Christian life is destined to grow and develop into maturity. Using the expression of St. Paul, every Christian has to reach the "mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13)."

Training in Virtues

If Baptism confers the seed of divine life, the exercise of virtues constitute the developmental process of that life. Acquisition of virtues require effort and grace, struggle and sacraments. It is a lifetime work in progress.

For this, children need to internalize the seven (7) great virtues of Christian life: faith, hope, charity, prudence (sound judgment), justice (re-

sponsibility), fortitude (personal toughness & persistence), and temperance (self-control-an ability to control one's feelings & appetites).

Children learn to acquire these strengths of mind and heart and will, in three ways. First, by example: what they see in their parents and other adults whom they respect. Secondly, through practice: what they repeatedly are led to do, or are made to do by parents and others. Thirdly, by word: verbal explanations for what they see and are led to do.

Experience shows that all three of these approaches are necessary, and in this order: Talks and lectures, scolding and corrections - these are minimally effective without ongoing example and practice at home.

Little children look very innocent but they are on a steep learning curve. They are so receptive to many inputs from what they observe from their surroundings. Adults could fall into thinking that since they are still so young, many things won't affect them. Not so. They are affected.

Taking this into account, parents are bound to give good example. Parental quarrels in front of their children are harmful. Interiorly, even small toddlers are torn between the two sides. They begin to judge and take sides: "mom is good, dad is bad" or vice versa.

Moreover, patience is a must for proper upbringing. Like good educators,

parents must learn to acquire virtues in the process of training their kids. A good teacher musters enough patience to repeatedly say the same things but in different ways, until the child learns and assimilates basic lessons of good behaviour, etc.

Indeed, a great number of parents succeed at this task of upbringing. These successful parents vary considerably in temperament, background, tactics of discipline, and experience. Nonetheless, they manage to raise their children well. Experience indicates that they have several common approaches and principles operating in family life.

Here are some pieces of advice. Don't make the common mistakes of many parents today: (a) seeing discipline mostly as punishment, and (b) seeing its end as mere co-operative behaviour, effective child domestication, peace and quiet at home.

Handling Recalcitrant Teens

Discipline is actually the process of leading children toward responsible Christian adulthood. Parents, kindly keep this aim constantly before you: what kind of adults your children should become, and therefore what needs to be reformed within them now, to bring this goal about.

Sense of responsibility is inculcated in the teens gradually. Oftentimes, teenagers complain of a lack of freedom. They feel that they are straight jacketed.

Contd. on Pg. 14

The Institute of the Marist Brothers was founded in 1817 by Marcellin Champagnat, a newly ordained priest raised in France during the French Revolution. Marcellin and his first two recruits observed and fought against the spiritual and educational devastation the war had inflicted in France. Soon others joined and they were known as the **Little Brothers of Mary**.

In 1863 the Holy See approved the Marist Brothers Congregation as an autonomous Institute of Pontifical Rights. While respecting our original name the Church gave us the title of **'Marist Brothers of the Schools.'**

Like the Marist Brothers of today, the early Marist communities of Religious Brothers were known for their family spirit and simple Gospel way of being fully present to each other and all people. Then as now, the goal was to bring the love of Jesus and Mary to others through their lives of service. The first Marist School was opened in La Valla, France in 1818 and is still in operation today. Marist Schools began to multiply at the rate of almost a dozen a year. Marcellin's mission thus quickly spread to other countries.

At present there are more than 3500 Marist Brothers working in 78 countries in 5 continents. More than 72,000 lay people and well over 654,000 children

Marist Brothers Congregation



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Marcellin
Champagnat

and young people directly share the Marist mission and the Spirituality.

In the year 1911 at the invitation of the Jesuit Fathers in Batticaloa five Marist Brothers reached Sri Lanka. The first batch of Marists worked at St. Michael's College in Batticaloa. In 1917 the Marist Brothers undertook to work at St. Mary's College Negombo at the request of the then Archbishop of Colombo Diocese. In 1922 they founded Maris Stella College in Negombo. Soon there were many invitations and as a result St. Joseph's College, Bandarawela, Joseph Vaz College, Wennappuwa, Christ King College, Tudella were established. Later on the Archdiocese of Colombo once again requested the Brothers to take up Holy Cross College Kalutara, St. Thomas' College, Kotte and St. Joseph's College, Nugegoda. As some of the schools were taken over by the Government the brothers extended their services to very poor and down trodden people in Kapitiya and Haldanduwana both being in the diocese of Chilaw. Brothers have extended their services to St. Mary's, Chilaw since 2009. Though late, the brothers thought of linking north and south by sending brothers to Jaffna. They serve at St. Patrick's College Jaffna.

Marist province now known as South Asia, embraces India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the new missions that are being opened in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia. There is an International Novitiate in Tudella,



Sri Lanka. In order to serve the poor students in and around Negombo the Brothers have begun an evening school where teachers do a voluntary service. There are well over 300 students in this school. The latest addition is the Branch school which was shifted in the year 2014 and named as Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa.

Marist spirituality is both Marian and Apostolic. It is all about living as Mary our Good Mother and our motto is "All to Jesus through Mary, all to Mary for Jesus." Mary plays a vital role in Salvation History but without putting herself in the lime light. We do follow her and Our Founder in all our undertakings.

The trust, belief and the charism of our Founder Marcellin of making Jesus known and loved by the children especially the poor, was so strong and daring, that it moved the brothers to take up difficult challenges in the past. We, the Marist Brothers who serve the church today are inspired by Marcellin's spirituality to take up the challenges of the present day and reaching out to the poorest where many would not approach. May the Almighty grant courage to the Marist Brothers to serve in God's Kingdom!

The normal life-story of a person starts from birth, what he did during his life-time and ends with death. But the life of Jesus is retold starting with the death on Calvary followed by the resurrection. In the first sermon of Peter after the Pentecost, in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, he starts with the death and resurrection of Christ. He addresses the Jewish congregation from various parts of the world who had gathered for the festival of Passover. Peter says: "This man was handed over to you...with the help of the wicked men you put him to death by nailing him on the cross, but God raised him from the dead" (Acts 2: 23-24).

Two of the four gospels do not even mention the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. But all the gospels mention the death and the resurrection of Christ in detail.

Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians speaks about the apostolic tradition that he himself received from the apostles who lived with Christ, who saw Christ after his resurrection. These may be the first oral traditions that the gospels are based on. These traditions could be traced back to almost 50 AD which is less than 20 years after the death of Jesus.

"For what I have received I pass on to you as of first importance; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures and that he appeared to Peter and then to the twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of them are still living, though some have fallen asleep." Then Paul recalls how he himself saw Jesus when he was on the way to Damascus to persecute Christians. "And last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born" (I Corinthians 15:3-8).

In the resurrection narrative in the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene, Peter and John went to see the tomb where Christ was buried. They saw the tomb was empty. Peter and John went into the tomb to check. They saw the linen that was used to wrap the body of Jesus folded in the tomb. They would have thought that the body was stolen. The robbery of dead bodies was common at the time of Christ, so, the Roman Emperor Claudius, who reigned from 41 to 54 AD decreed to give capital punishment to the thieves of dead bodies.

John writes the resurrection episode in the 20th chapter of his Gospel. The dialogue goes on like this: Mary saw two angels in the tomb and she told them crying, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him."

At this she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize it was Jesus.

The Risen Lord



"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener she said, "Sir if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said, "Mary."

She turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni" (which means Teacher) (John 20: 11-16).

The Gospel of Mark may have been traditionally recognized as the original synoptic gospel. Matthew and Luke may have based their accounts about Jesus and his ministry on this original gospel. The Christian tradition has Mark as a disciple of Peter and he wrote down what was preached by Peter about the life of Christ, his ministry and his preaching.

In the last Chapter of his Gospel Mark recalls the resurrection episode as experienced by Mary Magdalene and women who ministered to Jesus. They go to anoint the body of Jesus early in the morning of the first day of the week. They too find an empty tomb. They found a young man dressed in a white robe and they were alarmed. This man tells the women that Jesus the Nazarene is risen.

"He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go and tell his disciples and Peter. He is going ahead of you to Galilee" (Mark 16: 6-7).

Mark does not begin his gospel with the birth episodes of Christ in Bethlehem. He starts his gospel with the ministry of John the Baptist. John, in his gospel mentioned the birth of Christ in one sentence: "The

Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" (John 1:14). We know about the details of the birth of Christ from Matthew and Luke. There are many additional resurrection and post-resurrection nar-

ratives in these two gospels. Biblical scholars think that Matthew got the birth episodes from the oral Josephian traditions and Luke got his birth narratives from oral Marian traditions of the early Church. Matthew writes about the appearance of an angel to Joseph and his response to his suggestions. Luke writes about the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Mary and her reaction to this event

It is by his death and the resurrection that Christ redeemed us. All the four gospels are keen on mentioning the last events in Christ's life in detail. Church recognizes Easter and not Christmas as the most important festival of its liturgical calendar.



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Fr. Ashok Stephen OMI (Attorney-at-Law),
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Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

St. Matthew Passion by Bach

A great way to meditate on the Passion of Christ is to listen to the 'St. Matthew Passion' by Bach. Ethel Marbach describes the richness of this work.

Music at Easter is beautiful. Handel's *Messiah*, with its affirmation that "our redeemer liveth," is traditionally played on Easter, but we personally prefer it at Christmas. Easter means more specially one piece of music: The Bach St. Matthew Passion. In an article Paul Hume gives his interpretation of this great masterpiece:

If you are looking for that single work in music which most incomparably combines the elements of man's humanity with God's divinity, then there can be no question: The 'St. Matthew Passion' by Bach has not even a near rival. Within its pages are contained musical and dramatic beauties unique in their power to convey the story of our Lord's passion and death.

Just what is this work we call Bach's St. Matthew Passion? Why is it so universally acclaimed by musicians and laymen alike? It is a setting of the story of our Lord's passion, in the language of St. Matthew, taken from Chapters 26 and 27 of his Gospel.

There is, however, more to the text than the biblical language. A well known librettist of the 18th century, writing under the name of Picander, provided Bach with added verses in which the dramatic events of the Gospel are interpreted or commented upon, as was the custom in Bach's day.

These verses, following established patterns, represent the Daughter of Zion, and a Chorus of Believers. They serve to amplify the emotional mood of various passages, or to speak for all observers of the drama in which the Son of Man and Son of God makes that sacrifice which forever delivers us from the bonds of death.

It is not the text, however, that makes Bach's setting of the Passion that which it has become around the world: an object of long pilgrimages, a spiritual and artistic experience to be absorbed over a period of between three and four hours. Written to serve as a frame for the sermon in the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig on Good Friday, 1729, Bach's Passion music is an endless fountain of beauty. Out of it pours a succession of flawless streams, each illuminating a different aspect of the familiar story.

Let me tell you something about this music. It contains great choruses, sung by two separate choirs of equal numbers.From his seventeen singers Bach chose those who sing the principal roles in the sacred drama. These include the baritone who sings the words of Jesus, the tenor evangelist who carries the narration along in the magnificent recitatives that are among the work's chief beauties, and the soprano, contralto, tenor, and bass who sing the solos which, at salient points, comment on the action. In addition to these there are brief passages for Judas, Peter, Caiaphas the High Priest, Pontius Pilate and his wife, the two maids who join in accusing Peter, plus two priests, and two witnesses.

Before Bach sets out on St. Matthew's words, he has the chorus and orchestra, with added boys choir, sing an opening passage in which the Daughter of Zion, and the Chorus of Believers engage in a dialogue lamenting that the Bride-groom, like a lamb, is now, out of love and graciousness, carrying the wood of the cross. After this turbulent beginning, representing the crowd that fills the scenes surrounding our Lord in His passion, the biblical story begins. Almost at once we hear our Lord speaking: "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified."

Bach, a staunch Lutheran of the most ardent faith, had a burning love for his Lord for which the Germans have a special word: *Jesusminne*. Over and over in his hundreds of cantatas, and in his passion settings, Bach shows us this in the way he handles the words of Jesus, in the intimate manner of address, saying, "Good-night, my Jesus," or, as in the St. Matthew Passion, by the glowing radiance with which he accompanies the words of his Lord. Here every remark of our Lord is supported solely by the strings of the orchestra, after the manner of early Italian composers. The sound creates an aura, a kind of halo around the Lord. Only once does Bach depart from this custom. With his unerring instinct for painting pictures in his music, he silences the strings at that moment when, from the cross, come the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Here, only the organ, quietly, almost bleakly, plays barren chords.

It is music's power to portray scenes of terror,

"... their eyes were opened, and they recognized him . .



Two friends—people who had known Jesus, who had walked with Him, talked with Him, and eaten meals with Him every day for three years didn't recognize Him even on a long walk down a dusty road. Have you ever wondered about that?

How many times on our walks through life do we not see Jesus? How many times do we talk with a co-worker or a parent or a child or a friend or even someone we have never met before and fail to recognize that this person holds a precious piece of Our Lord and Savior within them? And because we don't recognize Jesus in them, we treat them not as we would treat Jesus, but as just our friend, or just our co-worker, or just our child.

Moreover, consider this: How often if not do we look at one another, and instead of seeing Jesus, we see only the other person's name, job status, family background, religion, racetheir labels?

Pix: (Top) - a mural from The Franciscan Novitiate Rajagiriya, (Bottom) - Emmaus House, from the Private Chapel of Archbishop Emeritus Nicholas Marcus Fernando.

expansion. Up, up, to the top of the tenor's range flies the sorrowing voice.

Then there follows one of the most heavenly arias in all of music. Bach, to whom the sense of God's forgiveness of man's sins, no matter how black they might seem, is one of the solid pillars of faith, writes music that holds within it the essence of much that is great and singular in what we call Baroque music. The violin soloist, one of many instruments that performs alone during the Passion, pours forth a torrent of notes, mirroring the flood of tears that marked Peter's repentance as he realized the truth of his beloved Master's foresight.

The drama of the crucifixion would not be what it is for us today without the intense humanity of Peter. Around this rock of a man, Bach draws a painting in sound that no oils could surpass. It is the aural equivalent of El Greco's *The Repentant Peter*. No excess of notes is possible, no emotion too great to tell us the depth and sincerity of Peter's grief.

This is but one of the instances in which Bach, taking advantage of music's power to penetrate, its adding of a dimension, a new art, to our longstanding knowledge of the Gospel story, intensifies each individual feeling that may move us as we contemplate anew the supreme sacrifice.

There is violence in Bach's music, when the story is violent. Mighty chords cry out "Barabbas!" in answer to Pilate's squirming question. And when the veil of the temple is rent, and the earth quakes, Bach's harpsichord, that constant mark of all music written in the Baroque era, makes a roaring sound as it rushes up and down in agitation, amplified by the heavy sounds of the bass viols. There is calm, too, a peace beyond measure, when Bach seeks to describe the quiet of evening after the beloved body has been laid in Joseph of Arimathea's new tomb. Here we have a brief aria, an "arioso," for the bass soloist, "When Adam's fall was manifest."

There is grandeur, too. When the centurion, standing by the cross speaks with that gift of clear, certain knowledge, "Truly this was the Son of God," Bach is equal to the moment, in simple, but all-embracing chords that establish finality of fact in faith just as unequivocally as they do in music.

of anguish, or of vast power that Bach exploits at every moment in setting the Matthew Gospel. He loves to give us parallels in his music to the precise situation he is describing. Thus, when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus has taken with Him Peter and James and John, Peter sings one of the arias which Picander and Bach insert into the midst of the action.

His aria, "I would beside my Lord be watching," shows us how firm is his intent. Underneath this extended song, in which the tenor soloist and the oboe carry on a duet, Bach has the chorus add the refrain, "So all our sins have gone to sleep." They sing it ten times, once for each of the disciples, other than Peter and the now missing Judas, who are gradually falling asleep.

Earlier, at the Last Supper, after our Lord's prediction that one of the twelve gathered there would betray him, the chorus sang the probing question, "Is it I?" eleven times, as Bach implies that each disciple asks the question, excepting only Judas. It is not only by such devices that Bach heightens the intensity, the heart-rending beauty of the drama. Nowhere else in the entire realm of music has man's sense of human weakness and sorrow at having failed his God been made so unbearably poignant as in the episode of Peter's denial of his Lord.

Bach gives to the narrator the task of describing Peter's profound shame and grief. After the cock crows, and Peter remembers the words of Jesus, "Thou shalt deny me thrice," the narrator sings, "And he went out and wept bitterly," with unforgettable emphasis on the word "wept". On this word Bach composes what we call a *melisma*: a long, florid phrase on a single syllable, as in Gregorian chant when the mood of the moment demands an

Saint Bartholomew

This name Bartholomew is not his real name. But it is a name derived from his paternal side. Jonah's son is Barjonah, Timeus' son is Bartimeus. Similarly the son of Tholomy is Bartholomew. This name Bartholomew is a Hebrew tribal name. According to common opinion and that of the Holy Scripture scholars, the disciple friend whom St. Philip brought to Jesus under the name Nathaniel is none other than Bartholomew. It was this disciple whom the Master praised on account of his innocence and simplicity of heart.

The Gospel of St. John never mentions St. Bartholomew among the Apostles. He only says that Philip and Nathaniel came together to Jesus and that he was among the disciples to whom the Saviour appeared after the Resurrection on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The other gospels never use the name of Nathaniel, but after Philip they always mention Bartholomew.

Learned Doctor

He was a citizen of Cana of Galilee which was about three miles away from Nazareth. He was a learned doctor in the Jewish Law and one time was among the seventy two disciples of Jesus. As mentioned early he was brought to Jesus by

his friend Philip. When he met his friend Nathaniel he said to him. "According to the writings of Moses regarding the Divine Law and the Prophets, we have found Him. It is the Messiah. He is Jesus, the son of Joseph of Nazareth." Nathaniel's reply was "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" "Come and see" was the reply of Philip. Nathaniel left to see Jesus.

From far Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to see Him. He said "Behold the Israelite, indeed, in him there is no guile." Nathaniel said to Jesus: "Where do you know me?" Jesus answered and said to him: "Before Philip called you when you were under the fig tree I saw you." Nathaniel said, "Master, you are the Son of God. You are the king of Israel." Jesus answered and said to him: "Because I said to you I saw you under the fig tree, you believe, greater things than these you shall see." (John 1: 45-51)

It is said that when Jesus appeared to the Apostles after His resurrection near the Sea of Galilee, Nathaniel too had been there. If Nathaniel was then not among the twelve Apostles, why was he not proposed nor chosen as a candidate to fill the vacancy of Judas?

It is certain that when Christ was appointing the council of Apostles, Bartholomew was chosen

by him as one of His Apostles. Bartholomew was also an eye witness, at the glorious resurrection and at other main events of Jesus on earth. It was from Jesus Himself that Bartholomew received advice and counsel. It is said that after the resurrection of Christ, Bartholomew had joined the other Apostles in common prayer and meditation. He too received the Holy Spirit on that same Pentecostal day together with the other Apostles.

Missionary Journey

In his missionary journey Apostle Bartholomew carried the Gospel to savage, cruel and barbaric countries in the East. He went so far as Arabia, Persia and reached India. There he had preached to the Indian Brahmins who were competent in Philosophy. They were idolators. In the beginning of the 3rd century when St. Pantaeus came to India to refute the doctrine of these Brahmins, there had been a few who knew about Christ and believed in Him. They too had shown St. Pantaeus Gospel written by St. Matthew in Hebrew. They also had told him that this Gospel had been brought here by St. Bartholomew who had come over there to preach the Gospel and evangelize the people. So says Eusebius the ancient

writer.

St. Bartholomew after leaving India had come to North-West Asia. There he had met St. Philip in the city of Hierapolis in Phrygia. St. Chrysostom the ancient writer says that St. Bartholomew had preached Christianity to the people of Lycaonia after leaving Phrygia. He also had preached in other countries whose names are unknown and difficult to trace.

Finally St. Bartholomew went to Armenia. Here idolatry was spreading excessively. He fearlessly preached Christianity. St. Gregory of Tours says that Apostle Bartholomew was martyred here. The modern Greek historians say that the Governor of Albanopolis had ordered him to be crucified. Some others say that this same Governor had ordered Bartholomew to be skinned alive for the fault of converting his own brother the king of Armenia to Christianity. In those days skinning alive had been an equal torture to crucifixion in Egypt, Persia and in Armenia.

The ancient writer Theodorus Lector says that the Emperor Athanasius having constructed the town of Duras in 508 AD. had brought there the relics of St. Bartholomew. St. Gregory of Tours says that before the end of the 6th century these relics had been transferred to a small island named Lipary



near the island of Sicily.

Athanasius the Librarian says that in 809 AD, these relics were brought from Lipary to Benevento. The writer Baronius says in 983 AD, these relics were brought to Rome. Thus from that day his relics are venerated at Rome under the altar of the great Church of St. Bartholomew on the island formed by the Tiber.

The bishop of Benevento had sent a hand of St. Bartholomew to St. Edward and through him that had been placed in the Cathedral of Canterbury. Among the statues in the Cathedral of Milan, the statue of St. Bartholomew has a prominent place.

In the Cathedral of Milan Michelangelo the great painter when doing the famous painting of the Day of the Final Judgement had very cleverly and skillfully painted how St. Bartholomew was flayed and carrying his own skin in his hand. The western world celebrates St. Bartholomew's feast on August 24, while the Greeks have it on June 11.

In the art of painting, the Holy Church shows his symbol with three large knives as instruments used at his martyrdom.

(Feast August 24)

*D.C. Jayasinghe
(To be Contd.)*



On our own we human beings do not 'know how to pray as we ought? We are too far removed from God. He is too mysterious and too great for us. So God has come to our aid. He Himself provides the words of our prayer and teaches us to pray. Thus we gradually come to know Him and draw closer to Him.

The Psalms are words that the Holy Spirit has given to

men. They are God's spirit become Word. We thus pray in the spirit with the Holy Spirit.

The 'Our Father' too is an encounter with the Spirit of God. It is an encounter with the Son and the Holy Spirit and thus a - becoming - one with the living God, who is both in us and above us. St. Luke assigns a very special place in his, Gospel to Jesus' prayer. Jesus' entire ministry arises from His prayer and

therefore can never be fully fathomed.

In prayer the first thing we must do is to step outside ourselves and open ourselves to God.

The 'Our Father' is a prayer of Jesus. It is a Trinitarian prayer. We pray with Christ through the Holy Spirit to the Father. This one world 'Our Father' contains the whole history

of Redemption, because Jesus

reveals the Father to us and through Him, we are the children of God. The Gift of God is God Himself. The good things that He gives are Himself. Prayer is all about God's desire to offer us the gift of Himself - that is the gift of all gifts. Prayer is a way of gradually purifying and connecting our wishes and of slowly coming to realise what we really need - God and His Spirit.

God created every individual human being, so every human being is unique, and willed as such by God. God wants to draw all of us into His humanity - to His sonship, and His total belonging to God. This gives the concept of being God's children a dynamic quality. Being God's child is not a matter of dependency but rather of standing in the relation for love and that sustains man's existence and gives it meaning and grandeur.

"Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be yours as well." These words establish an order of priorities for human action, for how we approach everyday life. "Thy Kingdom

come" not our kingdom - a listening heart that God, not we reign. The life of this kingdom is Christ, continuing life in those who are His own. In the heart that is no longer nourished by the vital power of Christ the Kingdom ends, in the heart that is touched and transformed by Christ the Kingdom begins. God may be all in all. Where God's will is done is Heaven.

The sermon on the mount, given the Biblical Revelation - the Decalogue given on Mount Sinai, is simply developed further that allows its full depth and grandeur to shine forth in all its purity. Because our being comes from God we are able, despite all of the defilement that hold us back to set out on the way to God's will and so from His will to find the path that leads into harmony with His will.

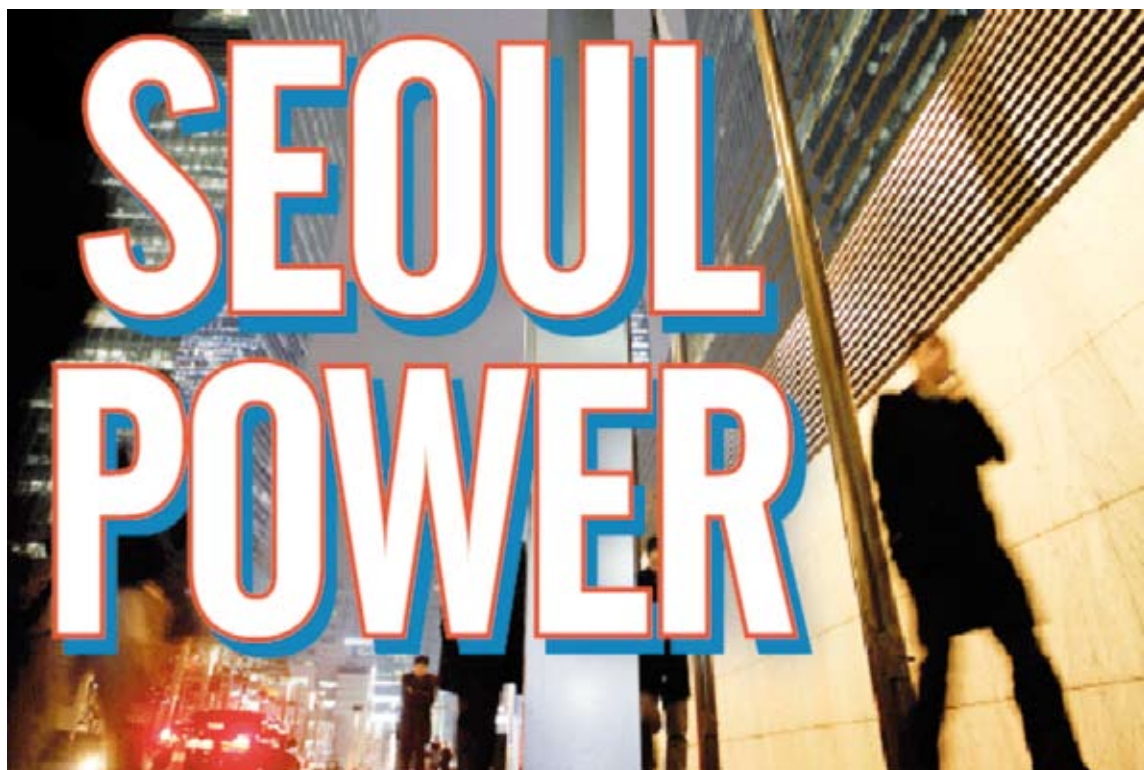
We now understand that Jesus Himself is Heaven. "My food, is to do the will of Him who sent me." As we come closer and closer to Christ, God's grace will help us conquer ourselves and reach the lofty height to which we are called.

Maisie Fernando

South Korea: The little dynamo that sneaked up on the world

Then, it was the West - Now, it is the East!

Compiled by Manohari Samaranayake



Myeongdong Cathedral, the centre of South Korean Catholicism, was a magnet for the country's downtrodden for decades. Pro-democracy fugitives found asylum inside the red brick church in the centre of Seoul during the darkest years of military dictatorship in the 1980s and parents who lost their children to government torture sought solace there.

Today, the activists and their slogans are long gone. As dusk falls, the Church is shrouded in quiet, away from the lights and bustle of the large surrounding shopping and hotel district. Unlike the red neon crosses of the country's more popular Protestant churches, the Cathedral's Cross is barely visible in the night sky.

The practice of Christianity in Korea revolves around two of its largest branches, Protestantism and Catholicism, accounting for 8.6 million and 5.3 million members respectively. Roman Catholicism was first introduced during the late Joseon Dynasty period. In 1603, Yi Gwang-jeong, a Korean diplomat, returned from Beijing car-

rying several theological books written by Matteo Ricci, a Jesuit missionary to China. The faith was strong though shadowed by persecution along the way. Today, the Catholic Church in Korea enjoys a high level of respect from non-Catholics, maintains good relations with other religious communities and, has a history of positive social engagement for the common good. The same can be said of other Christian denominations which today have contributed to make Christianity a popular religion in South East Asia.

According to the Christian Service Monitor about one-third of South Koreans are now Christian. Seoul, the capital, boasts 10 of the 11 largest Christian congregations in the world. And South Korea sends more missionaries abroad to spread the Word than any other country except the United States.

Evangelizing in Asia

Since it is Asia that has the greatest potential for the growth of Christianity in the

21st century, it makes sense to highlight an Asian success story and to recognise the Asian youth who will be called on to continue that growth: One reason why Pope Francis chose South Korea as his destination for his first Asian visit as Pope, was to be among these young Asians - the future of Asia - as they celebrate the Sixth Asian Youth Day in Seoul, the capital of Korea.

Evangelization is in fact a key concern for Pope Francis. His apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, focused on this topic and called for the transformation of the Catholic Church to focus on "the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation."

The Pope's concerns as expressed in *Evangelii Gaudium* therefore resonate with the historical accomplishments of the Korean Catholic Church in that it has grown into a relatively large and healthy Catholic community with much of the work of evangelization being conducted by the laity.

The coming of religious tolerance in the late 19th

century led to an increase in the number of Catholics and Christians of other denominations, but it was not until the 1960s that the Catholic Church in Korea began to grow quickly.

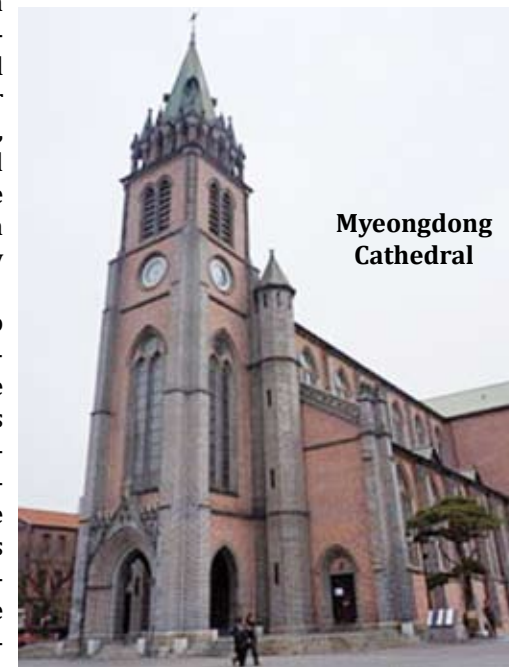
It is also important to understand that the Korean society has many of the difficulties post-industrial societies in the West face, such as the "unbridled consumerism" the Pope decried in his Apostolic Exhortation. It is here that one can see the importance of the 124 martyrs of Korea who Pope Francis beatified during his visit. In their stories, one sees Catholics giving up wealth, sex and even life itself out of their love for others and for God.

The Pope's visit no doubt highlighted how their devotion to the faith led to the growth and development of the Catholic Community in Korea, allowing him to echo the themes found in his Exhortation. The fact that he beatified these martyrs the day after the Koreans celebrated their independence from Japan, will not be missed by Koreans.

Pope Francis travelled to Seoul, South Korea on August 14-18, a significant period in Korean history. The official Independence Day of South Korea is celebrated on August 15, though the actual day of independence was on August 13, 1948 when South Korea was fully liberated from any sort of outside administration. For political reasons, the first President of the country, I Seung-man, chose August 15, instead of 13th as the official Independence Day of South Korea, commemorating freedom from decades of Japanese occupation and the formation of the South Korean Republic.

The Threat

South Korea, long in the shadow of other Asian 'tiger economies,' is suddenly hip and enormously prosperous. Ten million people live in Seoul, the heart of a huge sprawl that is home to half of the Republic of Korea's 49 million people. It is a hard-charging, high-pressure, high-tech hub of the 21st-century global economy - and sits in the cross hairs of an enemy who seems unaware the cold war ended a generation ago. North



Myeongdong Cathedral

Korean missile installations are just 30 miles away - and now the threats are nuclear.

Yet, not long ago, the dream of a single Korea - reconciled in peace like Germany, not through war like Vietnam - seemed like a destiny within reach. In the 2000 Sydney Olympics both Koreas marched under a flag depicting a united peninsula. That same year South Korea's President Kim Dae-jung, a Catholic, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. It is said that his religious faith gave him strength during times of adversity and enabled him to live a life of love and forgiveness.

But the ardour for reunification has cooled with Pyongyang's threats that appear to have decimated the southerners' goodwill. North Korea's new weaponry and "Supreme Leader" Kim Jong-un's bombast - including nuclear and missile tests - raise fears that a single Korea might happen in the worst way possible, through horrible violence.

A Hip Culture of Prosperity

But with all the challenges it faces, South Korea has never been so prosperous, so gregarious, so hip - so much so that it seems as if the nation sneaked up on the world.

Korea is indeed unique; a quick learner. From the Japanese she learned their industrious zeal though challenged by Japanese domination, from the Americans, her saviour, Korea learnt to dazzle. On December 2010, CNN reported that Korea has become the "Hollywood of the East" and South Korea was early to embrace the Internet, rewiring Seoul for lightning-fast connections in the 1990s.



Pope Francis with the Archbishop of Seoul, Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-Jung and members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea

Contd. on Pg. 18

NEARER TO GOD NEARER TO MAN: NEVER DID HE LET THE JOES TO BE FOES

With great sadness I write this short article on the late Rev. Fr. Stanley Abeysekera who received his eternal reward on March 29, 2015.

Being a young Josephian I was not fortunate enough to experience the golden era of St. Joseph's College during his tenure as rector. As Rector of a premier Catholic School, Fr. Stanley led this College from the front, successfully facing all the challenges and obstacles and, uplifting the College standards. Not only as a priest, he was a clever administrator, brilliant mathematician, creative architect, charismatic speaker with a passion for singing, but most of all a kind-hearted counsellor. Truly Fr. Stanley glorified God using the talents given him.

Being in the staff of many great institutions of Catholic education, the service he rendered to the field of educa-



tion cannot be expressed by words. But without any hesitation the place he left a divine legacy was St. Joseph's College, where he was a student, member of the staff and its 10th rector. Serving as Rector is not an easy task for any priest. Yet, fulfilling the mission and vision of the founding fathers of SJC (viz. Frs. Collin, Lytton, Lanigan, Guglielmi etc.) he indeed manifested the glory of this citadel of holistic education.

Academics, extra and

co-curricular fields began to shine brighter and brighter during his 13 year tenure. The gigantic buildings in the middle- and advance level schools were a few of his great achievements. However, the greatest and the most fitting memorial for him is the sports complex cum auditorium, which was later named after him. He achieved all of these due to his humble personality. Not only was he close to God, but to all his students, staff and others. His vision became the light of the College.

I was quite fortunate to know Fr. Stanley during his final years. Nonetheless, he was physically feeble and his eye sight was extremely poor by then. Yet, with all these difficulties Fr. Stanley never failed to come and join us for Holy Mass in the morning until his last 3 months. He was always available to any Josephian who



wanted to make confession and ably transferred it to a true re-encounter with the risen Lord. I used to go the priest's quarters to meet Fr. Stanley and speak with him for hours. We built up a friendly relationship.

He used to recall his past memories as a student during the great Rev. Fr. Peter Pillai, OMI era. Little by little I became interested in the history of our College and later on started to help Fr. Stanley complete his unpublished book on the history of St. Joseph's College. During the time of his death the

book was completed to a great extent. I was inspired by this great personality and wrote an article about him just a couple of weeks ago in the 'Messenger', though he was unable to read it, a friend of his had read it to him over the phone. The last time I met him he was overjoyed and thanked me for it. Sadly, this was the last time I met him. Yet I'm sure he would read this article himself from the kingdom of heaven, he richly deserve. All of us at St. Joseph's College will miss him always, yet his memory will live in hearts for eternity. May your soul rest in peace! God Loves you and so do we, now and forever!!

"Aim for the stars, then you would at least end on a coconut tree" - Rev. Fr. Stanley Abeysekera

Avishka Mario Senewiratne
St. Joseph's College,
Colombo 10.

Remembering B.J. Donald Amarasinghe ON HIS 5TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

"Those who live and believe in me will never die"

We have no words but your own, "Thank God for every turn we take"

Donald Amarasinghe was born in Kegalle on August 7, 1936. He married Helen in 1963 and when the newly married couple entered their home both lit the alter lamp and prayed for guidance from the Almighty. This flame is still kept burning.

He was a devoted, faithful and practicing Catholic. He believed

that everything happens for good and for a reason known only to the Lord. He faced much turbulence in his life. He had to undergo numerous hardships including accidents. Yet, he never lost his faith in God and because of his faith and prayers he miraculously came out of every serious problem.

He was an engineer by profession and underwent training at the FAO in Irrigation, Roadways and Civil Construction. He later served as a project manager in various key projects. From



1956 to 1991 he served the nation in various capacities as Site Manager, Surveyor, Project Engineer and Project Manager in many areas.

Some of the major projects he was involved were, Gal Oya

Development Project, Ceylon Hydro Electric Scheme, Canadian funded Katunayake Airport Project, Lakshapana, Maskeliya Oya and Udawalawe Project, Anuradhapura Water Project, Cod Bay Fisheries Harbor Project, Bowathenna Tunnel and Water Filtration Plant, Ambatale.

In 1974, he was instrumental in the construction of Fr. Joseph Vaz Chapel at Wahacotte, which he considered as the most memorable work in his life. This was when he was stationed in Naula, during the tenure of Rev Fr. Gregory Liyonidas as the Parish Priest.

Appreciation

He was a thorough gentleman with a ever willing nature to lend a helping hand to anyone who is in need. As a practicing Catholic he regularly attended Mass and other religious services despite being a busy and responsible professional serving in remote areas. He always found time to spend with his family. He was a peace loving person who never went to sleep carrying anger in his heart. Whenever the family faced difficulties and problems, which were numerous, he provided the support

to face them bravely and overcome with the guidance of Almighty God.

While leading by example as an ideal husband and a father he was also a role model for many.

He was called to eternal life on January 5, 2010, leaving his beloved wife Helen, sons Senaka, Janaka, Renuka, Dammika, their wives, daughter Krishanthi, her husband and fourteen grandchildren. His demise is unbearable, his memories will live in our hearts forever.

May his soul rest in peace.

(Sons and daughter)

Britto: Across the bridge, where the lion shall lay with the lamb

"God's spirit is in my heart. He has called me and set me apart. This is what I have to do. He sent me to give the Good News to the poor. Tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more. Tell blind people that they can see and set the down-trodden free."

This inspiring biblical song formed the centrepiece of the life and extraordinary work of Britto Motha who died on Monday, March 30 at the age of 90.

Britto - humble and silent but a prophetic servant of God - was faithful, sacrificial and had the feet-washing spirit in his service to Mother Church., as Pope Francis does, Britto did not remain in the comfort zones of the sanctuaries and the mission houses. So he left his boats behind, left them on familiar shores and took a leap with the

Lord into the deep - into areas where he needed to learn over and over again in the fortress of his mind to believe in falling rain while he traversed deserts dry. Britto was educated at St. Sebastian's College Moratuwa where he excelled in studies and sports. He had a British B. Com external degree.

Even while serving in high posts in some commercial establishments, Britto served the Lord as an understanding and wise counsellor because the Lord had opened his spiritual eyes and taught him to listen from the heart. Gradually the Lord led him into service in various dimensions of the Kingdom. Britto served for decades in about 20 social justice and outreach movements ranging from Christian workers Movement, Shanthi Canal Bank project, Sumithrayo and

the Richmond Homes for mentally-ill patients.

Britto lived in a simple and humble way as the Lord did and as Pope Francis is doing. Not for him were luxuries, extravagance or wasteful expenditure. But he saved and he shared with the poor, he did it quietly so that even his left hand did not know what his right hand was doing. Like the Lord and like Pope Francis, Britto was a servant leader, ready to forgive not just seven times but 70 times seven. It was not in his nature to indulge in gossip or slander, which the Pope recently described as spiritual terrorism.

With deep insight and wisdom from the Lord, Britto was one of the founding editors of the Footprints magazine.

Though he complained of a chest pain in the morning, he attended

the Palm Sunday mass and helped in gardening because he believed the hard work of God is revealed in the sunset, the flowers and the trees. It was to be his last sunset because before the next, God would call him to come beyond the sunset to eternal joy in that dear homeland where there would be no more parting and no more pain.

About 5.30 p.m. on Palm Sunday evening, Britto who normally collects and edits the articles for Footprints had told his daughter to email the articles of the Easter issue. Till the last hours he carried out his duties or mission faithfully and responsibly. Promptly he would always rally at duty's call, bearing the cross with the crown in view. To that old rugged cross Britto was always true, its reproach he gladly bore till the Lord

called him on the night of Palm Sunday to the home far away where Britto will forever share the glory of God. Britto has seen the New Jerusalem that will not pass away and like they did on Palm Sunday he is singing hosanna to the King.

Britto leaves behind his faithful and loving wife, Therese, a widely read and much respected author who contributes articles regularly to the newspapers. He also leaves four children.

In a quiet and simple way Britto lived, in a quiet and simple way he died and was cremated. At his request only close family members were informed and the cremation took place in 14 hours. To thank God for the life of this wonderful human - a man after God's own heart - a Holy Mass will be said on Friday April 17

at 6.00 pm, at his parish of St. Lawrence's Church, Wellawatte.

Goodbye Britto, till we all meet again in the sweet bye and bye on that beautiful shore.

And way up yonder you will no more wander, but walk on streets that are of purest gold. In Isaiah's wonderful imagery, where the bear will be gentle and the wolf will be tame and the lion shall lay down with the lamb and where the beasts of the wild shall be led by a child.

Britto had often said during the past two months he was praying for the Lord to give him a peaceful death because he did not want to become a problem or a nuisance to others. God answered the prayer of this good and faithful servant.

Louis

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY: MEDITATION

(Jn. 20:19-31) – Year B

At the canonization of St. Faustina on April 30, 2000, Pope John Paul II decreed that the Second Sunday of Easter, be called Divine Mercy Sunday. We shall meditate on today's gospel as a demonstration of Divine Mercy, as we place ourselves in the scene of the gospel.

It is the evening of the same day – the first day of the week when Mary Magdalene had visited the tomb. She saw the empty tomb and thought the body of Jesus had been stolen. Her mind is locked in ignorance, as is ours! She cannot think of other possibilities. She runs back to Peter and spreads her message of ignorance – they have stolen the body of the Lord. Do we not do the same in many ways and thus obstruct the work of God? Praise be to Jesus! He knows our every weakness. He will not leave us to ourselves. He will appear in person! This is Divine Mercy! Today's gospel, takes up the story. It is the evening of the same day, the first

day of the week. The disciples are huddled behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, and you are in their midst. Fear is contagious. It spreads. I am afraid, too. The tomb is empty. Even the body of the Lord is missing. I feel truly alone. My heart goes out to Mary Magdalene. She has lost everything. Jesus was the one who showed her 'love' and restored her dignity as a human person, by forgiving her many sins. Now, even his dead body has been removed. It's as if every trace of his presence is being deliberately wiped out. I feel so helpless, locked up behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. The mobs are roaming the streets looking for Galileans, for His disciples were mostly from that region and spoke that dialect. Galileans spoke Aramaic not Jewish. Though clearly, an Asian, I too fear to go out by myself.

Though the enemy lurks outside, the Beloved Disciple keeps on insisting that the

Lord is risen. In the midst of it all, I simply pray 'Lord, if you are risen, show yourself to me'. At the same time, I am also plagued by doubts about the purpose of the resurrection. I couldn't help thinking to myself, 'Jesus may have risen from the dead, but life remains unchanged for us. Our problems still remain! The Jews are roaming the streets, searching for us. We are hiding behind closed doors'. My mind is grappling with these doubts, when the Lord appears to us. 'Peace be with you' he says. Instantly, our hearts are glad. We have seen the Lord. Jesus shows us his hands and his side! I marvel at such Divine Mercy that seeks to re-assure the poor, the fearful, the vulnerable, that the Son of God who died for them is truly risen to help them triumph over every form of evil – physical, psychic, moral, cataclysmic and national. Alas, Thomas is not present. He is hiding elsewhere. All of us had been scattered, and are slowly finding our

way back and regrouping. We must be very cautious, in order to survive the onslaught of a 'faceless' enemy who lurks outside – 'faceless' because every Jewish face appears to be the face of the enemy, since it is difficult to distinguish friend from foe. At long last, Thomas creeps in. We sigh in relief. Our brother is safe. Our first words to him are, 'Jesus appeared to us'. Thomas response is most unexpected. It dampens our joy. He snaps back at us, 'Unless I touch his hands and his side, I will not believe'. I say to Thomas, 'Do you expect the Son of God to make an appearance just for you? Are you so special to merit a personal audience?' Behold, Jesus appears again. He invites Thomas to touch his hands and his side. I marvel at such Divine Mercy. Thomas worships Jesus saying,



'My Lord, My God'.

Short Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are truly risen. Each time you help me overcome my difficulties, I experience the power that flows from your pierced hands. Yet, many a time, have I sulked behind closed doors and wanted to run away and hide. At such moments, you have always appeared to me and strengthened me, so that I could be 'sent forth' to do your work, despite my shortcomings and inadequacies. Thank you, Lord Jesus. "I am ready. Send me. I shall do your will" Amen.

Rev. Fr. Nilindra Gunesequera,
SSS

Contd. from Pg. 5

Cardinal Walter...

In between his appointments, he is still finding time to lecture and write ahead of round two of the Synod on the Family, where many observers expect a showdown between pro-reform forces and conservatives that could determine the fate of the "Francis effect."

Kasper himself has said that "a battle is going on," and this book is clearly something of a campaign tract, one of several books presenting competing interpretations of Church history and doctrine on topics being argued at the Synod.

To be sure, theological foundations are one thing, but Church politics are also important in ensuring a pope's legacy. That is what happened in the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s that succeeded in passing reforms that St. John XXIII launched though he died too soon to see them implemented.

Kasper sees Vatican II as a model for what he hopes will happen this fall and beyond. In an effort to claim the centre, he casts Pope Francis as neither right nor left, neither conservative nor liberal, but a radical who goes back to the root, or "radix" in Latin, of the faith. That is, Kasper writes, "no retreat into yesterday or the day before yesterday; rather, it is power for a bold emergence into tomorrow."

That formulation is not likely to convince those who embrace "a kind of ideology that everything is infallible," as he put it. So, he said, Pope Francis "must now make some changes that are visible. With the Synod, the great majority of people are expecting some changes in pastoral practices."

Will he? "He's a strong man, he has a strong will. I think he will succeed."

That may be as much of a hope as a prediction. In the book, Kasper includes an epilogue that expands on the prospects for Francis' papacy, and the cardinal is more nuanced, even uncertain about whether the pope's "storm of love," as he has called it, will indeed transform the Catholic Church. Or "will his pontificate remain only a brief interlude in the church's history?"

No one can say for sure, Kasper writes. It depends not on the Pope, he concludes, but on Catholics themselves — the strength of their faith and their willingness to move beyond their present divisions and categories:

"The challenge of this pontificate is far more radical than most suspect. It is a challenge for conservatives, who don't want to let themselves be surprised any more by God and who resist reforms, just as it is for progressives, who expect feasible, concrete solutions right here and now.

"The revolution of tenderness and love and the mysticism of open eyes could disappoint both groups and in the end, nevertheless, receive its due."

Courtesy: Huff Post Religion

Contd. from Pg. 5

Educating Children....

A mother once narrated an incident with his teenage son. The latter asked permission to attend a party. She said she did not allow him since he was not getting good grades. But the son said, "I'm old enough to take care of myself. Why don't you give me more freedom?" She was speechless.

That mom just missed a golden chance to drive home a point. When teenagers demand more freedom, parents must know how to turn the tables on them. A good way is to ask them what they understand by "freedom."

Many times, they miss the point. They are inclined to believe that to be free is to be given free rein: "to do as they please."

But only God can "do what he wants!" We are not Gods.

We have received freedom from Him. Since we are finite, then anything we receive from the infinite God becomes limited by our "finiteness." Thus, our freedom is by nature always limited.

God does what he pleases because he is "essentially good." Humans are prone to evil and we have to know first what is good, then we learn to decide to opt for it. Education consists precisely in training a person to learn how to choose what is good.

All of us creatures have to "do what we ought." Now, there is a world of a difference between "what we want" and "what we ought" to do. Ideally, they should converge into one. In reality, however, our wishes are at variance with what is in fact the right thing, i.e. what is good for us.

Knowing how to choose the right thing is a telltale sign of a sense of responsibility. Freedom and sense of responsibility are two sides of the same coin. They are co-principles. One cannot exist without the other, or else it turns into a bogus coin.

Similarly, a sense of freedom is a counterfeit when the corresponding sense of responsibility is wanting.

That mother could have reminded her son about his previous comportment, if ever. She should have asked the following questions: "Did he or did he not come back home at the agreed time in the past parties? Was he responsible enough to give priority to his studies?" If so, then perhaps, he could be permitted to attend the party. He seems responsible.

However, if in the past, he has not learned to keep his word, by not coming back home at the agreed time. Or, if he has neglected his studies and gave preference to social affairs, then he is not entitled to demand the freedom of going out partying with his friends as he pleases. Why? He does not seem responsible.

By their late teens, the children should have sufficient practice in living the seven great virtues

mentioned above: three theological virtues and four cardinal virtues.

The tactics of discipline rules, regulations, punishments, etc. are far less important than striving toward the children's later life as strong men and women. This is why so many different approaches to discipline among various parents are equally effective. What effective parents have in common is the ideal: their children's future lives as Christian men and women.

Husband-Wife Teamwork

Finally, some words on parents' teamwork in the upbringing of children. It is indispensable for parents to work as a unified team.

Put your spouse first, then comes the children. Make an effort to come to an understanding prior to resolving family issues. Obvious disagreement between husband and wife send wrong signals to the children.

If the two cannot even put their act together, how would they dare fix the lives of others? They lose moral authority when they don't act in unison as a team should. The kids will find it hard to honour their father and mother who are in frequent disagreement.

This teamwork parenting approach put children firmly on the right track toward responsible adulthood. The children notice everything, and they learn by example. Mutual respect and harmony between parents is a powerful lesson for their youngsters.

Bear in mind: the children's honour toward each parent will mirror the attitudes of the other parent. When a husband honours his wife, the children honour their mother.

When a wife esteems her husband, the children quietly see him as a hero. Differences of opinion in important family matters (e.g., approaches to punishment) must be resolved somehow for the children's sake. Each child has only one mind and one conscience, and therefore must receive one and the same direction coming from both parents. Well-raised children see each parent as the boss (Stenson, James, *Qualities of Successful Parents*, Scepter Booklets, 1996).

Therefore, it is important for parents to reach out to each other and be in agreement. Yielding one's preferences to arrive at a common approach to family issues goes a long way in good parenting.

While parents educate their children in the Faith and in human virtues, they actually educate themselves in the process, as well. They learn to step on their ego in order to be able to work selflessly as a parenting team.

In the parenting team, the "I" has no place. It is the "WE" that matters. After all, "there is no 'I' in the word TEAM.

Jesus said: 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.' (Jn. 20:29)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B
12th April - 19th April 2015

Sun: SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
(DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY)
Acts. 4:32-35; 1 Jn. 5:1-6; Jn.20:19-31
Mon: Memorial of St. Martin I,
Pope and Martyr
Acts. 4: 23-31; Jn. 3:1-8
Tue: Acts. 4:32-37; Jn.3:7-15
Wed: Acts. 5:17-26; Jn.3:16-21
Thu: Acts. 5:27-33; Jn.3:31-36
Fri: Acts. 5:34-42; Jn.6:1-15
Sat: Acts. 6:1-7; Jn.6:16-21
Sun: THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
Acts. 3:13-15,17-19; 1 Jn. 2:1-5a;
Lk.24:35-48

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: This is the day that we rise with Him, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Let us pray to God our Father in the spirit of today's Gospel, so that His risen Son may touch our lives and heal in us the wounds of separation and of sin. We pray to the Lord.

Response: This is the day that we rise with Him, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

For all who celebrate the Eucharist that they may experience the presence of Christ among them as the apostles did on Easter Day. We pray to the Lord.

Response: This is the day that we rise with Him, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

For our leaders, that Christ may touch their minds and hearts and so enable them to build a human society based on love, justice and peace. We pray to the Lord.

Response: This is the day that we rise with Him, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

For all those who are wounded emotionally or physically, that their wounds may be touched and healed by those who care for them. We pray to the Lord.

Response: This is the day that we rise with Him, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Second Sunday of Easter The Feast of Divine Mercy

First Reading:
Acts. 4: 32-35

The Apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of Jesus with great power and as a reason grace was upon them and every other thing fell in its right place in the Early Church.

Second Reading:
1 Jn. 5: 1-6

The importance of faith and commandments of the Lord is stressed. The one who believes that Jesus is Christ becomes a child of God, and the one who keeps the Commandments loves God.

Gospel: Jn. 20: 19-31

The Gospel presents the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ. Jesus appears to the disciples and wishes them peace. He gives the Apostles the power to forgive sins and the power to bind them. He also appears to Thomas who doubted about the Risen Lord.

Introduction

On February 22, 1931 Jesus dressed in white appeared to St. Faustina. His one hand was raised as if to give a blessing and the other was on the chest holding the cassock. From below a red light and another less bright light were flashing. Jesus spoke and said,

"I desire that the feast of Mercy be celebrated as a refuge and a shelter. On that day the very depth of my tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fountain of my mercy" A visual reminder of all that Jesus did for us through His Passion, Death and Resurrection - and a reminder too of what He asks of us in return.

Reflection

Today is the second Sunday of Easter and the Church celebrates the feast of the Divine Mercy. Hence it is known as Divine Mercy Sunday.

The Human Mercy of Jesus was shown very clearly when He suffered and died for the sake of mankind. Thereby He won forgiveness for mankind and brought about salvation. Therefore salvation was brought about by the Human Mercy of Jesus. It was celebrated and came to climax last Sunday when we celebrated the feast of the resurrection of our Lord. But, today we celebrate the feast of the Divine Mercy of Jesus.

Jesus was fully human when He suffered and died on the Cross. And it is then the human offering of His life that brought about salvation for mankind. And Jesus did this

as a human being. But He knew that man was as weak as He is; and with all the trials and tribulations that He faces in the world that man would fall into temptation and sin against God. Therefore the Divine Mercy of Jesus prompted Jesus to bring about the Sacrament of Confession so that even if man sins and loses the salvation that Jesus brought about, still he could through confession be able to receive forgiveness and be saved.

In the resurrection appearance in the Gospel the Risen Jesus' first wish is peace. We all know the Holy Spirit was given to mankind only on the day of Pentecost. But in the Gospel of today we see a special granting of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles. And this is to forgive sins. Jesus breathed upon the Apostles and said. "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive people's sins they are forgiven; if you do not forgive, then they are not forgiven." This granting is by the Risen Lord, therefore Divine Jesus. Hence Confession is out of the Divine Mercy of Jesus.

Forgiveness and salvation is by the Human Jesus, but the forgiveness thereafter is by the Divine Jesus.

Therefore in our day to day lives let us keep the Commandments and

avoid sin. If we fall into sin let us make a good Confession and return to Holiness through Confession.

Aid Story 1

One morning while Holy Mass was being celebrated in the Royal Chapel of Louis IX of France, Jesus appeared to everybody in the Sacred Host, in the form of a child. The courtiers ran to give the news about the miracle to the king. Louis replied impartially, let those who doubt the real presence of Jesus in the host go and see him; I already believe in the miracle even more than it could be seen with my own eyes. I am not going." And he did not, SUCH FAITH.

Aid Story 2

When Pyrrhus (347-272 B.C.) was about to sail for Italy, Cineas, a wise and good man, asked him what his plans were. "To conquer Rome," said Pyrrhus. "And, after that?" "We will subdue Carthage, Macedonia, all Africa and all Greece," "And when we have conquered all we can, what shall we do?" "Do? Why, "then we will sit down and spend our time in peace and comfort." "Ah my lord," said the wise Cineas, "What prevents our being in peace and comfort now?"

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20,19-31)

1. Last week, I was deeply shocked by the sudden demise of a good old friend of mine. 'All men are mortal, Socrates is a man, and therefore, Socrates is mortal' is syllogistically valid and empirically true. But what shocked me most was the way he died - rather, the way he took his own life. I never expected it to happen that way. The man, who fought once for the nation in World War II, lost the battle of life. Worn out and much depressed by the stark solitude, owing to the loss of his loved ones, especially his beloved wife, he hanged himself in the basement. He could have felt, 'My bones are dried up. My hope is all lost. I am cut off.' He could have been drowned in the plight of old age, dramatized by the American playwright, Arthur Miller in his 'The Death of a Salesman.' Adieu, my friend.

2. In today's Gospel passage, we can detect the Risen Lord appearing through shut doors to ten of the Twelve on Easter night, presumably in Jerusalem. He commissions them formally and breathes on (Greek New Testament: enphusesen from emphusao) them saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

3. This action of breathing recalls Genesis 2,7 where we see how God, por-

trayed anthropomorphically as a potter, breathing on the first man and infusing in him the spirit of life: "The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into (Septuagint Bible: enphusesen from emphusao) his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being." Remarkably the same Greek verb (emphusao) in the same verbal form (aorist tense, indicative mood) is found in both John and Genesis stitching the two sacred texts. Adam's life thus came from God. Now Jesus breathes on His disciples and gives them a new spiritual life. He recreates them with the Holy Spirit. Thus the gift of the Holy Spirit flows from the glorified Jesus. It is a real gift of the Spirit, as made clear at the Second Council of Constantinople (553) - against the blasphemy of Theodore who said that Jesus did not give them the Holy Spirit but only breathed on them figuratively.

The dramatic act of breathing reminds us also of the revivification of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37. At the prophesy of Ezekiel the exilic prophet, the spirit came into the dry bones, symbol of the house of Israel, and they became alive in the valley. The exilic people, who were lamenting, 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are cut off' were given hope of return to the Promised Land.

4. Having deciphered the inter-textual relations (both Gen and Ezek), we are now to probe into intra-textual relations to the Text of this Sunday. We may quote John 7:38-39: "On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me; and let him drink who believes in me; as the scripture says, 'From within him there shall flow rivers of living water.' He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. There was of course no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified." In John 7:39 the conferral of the Spirit is connected to Jesus' glorious return to the Father. The sending of the Spirit cannot take place until Jesus' glorification through His death, Resurrection and Ascension. Now it is the moment of exaltation. Jesus returns to the Father from the cross. Hence 7:39 is fulfilled; the promised Spirit is communicated to the disciples. Consequently from within them, "rivers of living water" - i.e. the Holy Spirit - would begin to flow!

5. "Peace be with you." The Spirit, thus given, brings "peace" to our lives. The peace that Jesus speaks of is a gift of salvation that connotes the bounty of mes-



sianic blessing. It is integral. The war may be over. Yet people need peace - prosperity, integrity, well being. To the lamenting hearts that cry out day and night, 'Oh, we are lost. We are not wanted at all in life. Our bones are dried up. Our hope is lost. We are cut off. We would rather die than live', only the Spirit of Jesus can infuse a new lease of life. The frightened disciples, who had locked themselves up and been reduced to dry bones, were revived by the Spirit of Jesus. They were created anew. Let us hence receive the Holy Spirit - the powerful manifestation of the Divine Mercy. Let the "rivers of living water" flow from within us as well. These "rivers" can cleanse our old self and enrich our weary, barren hearts. These "rivers" may heal our depressed hearts and accompany our lonely life to its glorified end. Hence let us allow the Spirit, "rivers of living water", to flood into our lives craving for renewal.

Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi



Sacrament of Reconciliation

* A Practical Examination of Conscience through the Ten Commandments

The Seven and Tenth Commandment

7) Thou shalt not steal

Commands: Respect for the property and rights of others the paying of just debts, paying wages to employees, integrity in public officials.

Forbids: Theft - damage to the property of others, not paying just debts, not returning found or borrowed articles, giving unjust weight or measure in selling, bribery, cheating fraud; accepting stolen property, not giving an honest day's work for wages received, violation of contract.

10) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods..

Commands: Respect for the right of others.

Forbids: The desire to take, to keep, to damage the property of others.

> Did I steal any object or money? How much was it worth/ Did I give it back, or at least, have the intention to do so?

> Have I done or caused damage to others' property? To what amount?

> Did I harm anyone by deception, fraud, or correction in business contacts or transactions, Manipulating accounts and false bills.

> Did I spend beyond my means? Do I spend too much money unnecessarily

> Do I give alms according to my capacity.



> Am I envious of my neighbour's goods?

> Did I neglect to pay my debts?

> Did I retain things found or stolen? Did I desire to steal?

> Am I diligent in my work and studies or do I give in to laziness or love of comfort?

> Was I greedy? Do I have an excessively materialistic view of life.?

Next week Eighth Commandment

Home is not a home without 'Amma'



"The day I come to you as a dove. I saw dreams with care and love, But today I am living alone. As you left me here so long."

My dear friends, I hope to pen this because most of our brothers and sisters in our society today are lacking the love and care of a mother. A mother is a very precious member in the family. A mother can be a friendly character to her children than a father. She is the person who can interact well with her children and understand them. Unfortunately, today the gap between the mother and child has widened. Today, though most children live in large houses with many comforts they are actually orphans homeless, as their mothers leave their children and fly abroad to earn a living or are fully occupied with the materialistic world, trying to match the lifestyles of neighbours.

I don't want to prove that earning money for a mother should be restricted, but it should be limited. As the children need a caring mother and a happy home to live, the mother should be able to make some sacrifice giving the child's needs priority. When a mother moves away from her children, it creates a huge tension in their minds and it is shown in their behaviour and

their attention to studies. These children become dull and lose hope and a fear of life and losing the mother forever creeps into the mind of the child. These children become vulnerable prey to people who want to exploit them and sometimes it could be older children in schools or even relations. It is sad to think of children losing their childhood in this manner.

At any age in their life a child likes to be with their mother. It is with the mother that they share their deepest thoughts, wishes and dreams. They love to introduce their mother to their school friends. It is in such an environment that a child likes to live in. With the absence of a mother, they lose all these little memories that they try to collect through their childhood. Furthermore, when they see other school children with their mothers, these children feel lonely and envious. It creates feelings of jealousy, cruelty, selfishness in the tender hearts of the children. This may lead to psychological problems that they take on to their adulthood.

A child living in the heart of a mother's love never feels loneliness but the child who lacks mother love feels that the home which they live is not a home without their 'amma'.

Krishani Perera
Jennings International College,
Nainamadama



The Chalice

He walked along
With slow measured steps;
Searching, searching.

For a chalice
To hold the wine
To be transformed
Into His precious blood.

"Take me! Take me!"
The golden bowl cried out
'I'm made of gold, I'm carved
I'm expensive"
Heedless He walked along
With measured tread.

'I'm pure, I'm silver
I'm glistening"
Clamoured the silver vessel.
With not a glance
Unmoved
He laboured on.

'Wooden and hard
and strong am I.
The answer to your search"
Ignoring He passed on
'twas not the answer to his search.

"I'm metal, I'm brass
I'd do to end your search"
He was tired, His feet were sore
Yet He moved on.

There lay a clay pot
Broken; utterly broken.
He lingered there tenderly.
"My search is o'er.
It's the like of you
I was looking for.
I'd mould you once again
Into the form I need.
You! broken, discarded thrown away
It's you I seek"

Gently He gathered
The broken clay
He'd knead it, restore it
To serve Him.
To pour into it
His all-saving blood.
The needed, mouldable receptacle
For His purpose.

The broken receptacle - restored
The broken bread - shared
His broken frame - mankind redeemed.

By: Jeannette Cabraal

Inspired by Father Prasad's presentation in
Sinhala on this topic at the finale of the Lenten
Retreat at St. Joseph's Church Grandpass

Follow Your Dream

It is awesome to think a huge mango tree is the realization of something in the mango seed and from which it grew. We might call what was in the mango seed was a plan or a dream. This was built into it and directed each stage of its growth on its way to becoming a majestic tree, the tree did not grow at random, for even though it was shaped by circumstances, its growth is always being directed by a plan of God.

Our lives too are directed by a dream God has built into us, but we differ from the mango tree, in the fulfilment of our dream which is not automatic. We have to get in touch with it and decide to take the responsibility for its realization. It is very easy for the "still small voice" of God directing us unerringly to be drowned by other concerns. It is very important that we become familiar with the voice of our dream and let our lives be guided by it.

The kind of dream?

Our dream is innate, or built into us. It is like the dream which inspires the birds to build their nests, or which guides the rose bud on its way to becoming a beautiful rose. Our dream will keep asserting itself and coming up into consciousness no matter how much we try to over-rule it, our dream is not just something we long for, but a thrust.

The dream in each of us is unique. This uniqueness is what is re-

ferred to in the Scripture, that God calls us by our name. In the Bible, a name sums up a person's unique relationship with God. The uniqueness of the relationship finds expression in the distinctive way along which each of us is drawn. It is very different from the way which anyone else is led.

Another important feature of the dream is that it is realised in a very constant way "every step we are drawn to take towards realizing our dream flows very naturally out of what has gone before. "This constant way our dream develops will show the recurring pattern of enlightenment and attraction which form the ideals and priorities peculiar to each of us.

Just as there is a record of the tree's growth in its rings, so there is a story, a record of how our dream unfolds that is engraved in us. This story springs from the reality that each person's dream is realised in a unique way. Our story is often compared in mythology to a thread running through each person's life. This thread has its origin in God and through many twists and turns make the way back to God like the river inevitably makes its way to the ocean.

Our story is a record of the very distinctive and constant way God has "carried" us from our birth right through our lives. There is an energy, a passionate longing in us, a hunger that will not be satisfied with anything less than God.

This energy constantly draws us towards maturity or wholeness. Just as the dream in the tree never rests until it is realised in its full growth.

This innate dream of ours is not smooth, unless we seek it with all our heart. Here it is different from that of a dream in a seed. If our dream is to be realised we have to get in touch with it and take responsibility for making it happen.

The quality of what we produce will depend on our ability to listen to our dream and then give expression in the main work of art each of us in commissioned with. The realising of our dream in this way is the important and creative thing we can do in life.

Made for Love

When we resist to let our deep dream surface, it becomes dormant. Our preoccupation with our superficial dream sends our deep dream to sleep. However in spite of this repression our deep dream keeps trying to surface. This constant surging up of our deepest aspiration is due to the fact that we are made for love which is the object of our deep dream. Further we are made for degree of this love which only God can satisfy. This is what St. Augustine meant when he said, 'You have made us for yourself O Lord and our hearts will be restless till they rest in YOU.'

To realise this deep dream of

being loved and being loving, God constantly invites us on four journeys.

* First journey on which all others depend is in search for our inmost self.

* Second is inseparable from the first, for deep within ourselves we will discover a "thirst" for God. It is this thirst which the HOLY TRINITY seeks to satisfy by revealing themselves to us.

* Third journey we will seek to befriend others in the way in which that Holy Trinity has befriended us.

* Fourth journey will be to befriend all the areas of our life from which we have become estranged. And this will bring the 'Good News' to the whole of creation.

Rev. Sr. Rita Gunawardena. H.F.



Contd. from Pg. 9

South Korea.....

As the 'American century' fades and the 21st century is said to belong to 'China', it may make more sense to speak of "the Asian century" – and now is South Korea's moment.

South Korea's population is 2/5ths the size of Japan's, 1/7th the size of the US's and 1/26th the size of China's, but pound for pound, it is out-punching the economic heavyweights. Once also-rans, companies like Samsung Electronics, LG and Hyundai Motors are going toe-to-toe with the likes of Apple, Intel, Sony, Toyota and Ford. Critics point out that Apple defeated Samsung in a high-profile patent case last year. Silicon Valley (a nickname for southern portion of the San Francisco Bay Area of Northern California in the United States which is home to many of the world's largest high-tech corporations, as well as thousands of tech startup companies), has long portrayed South Korea as "a fast follower," better at imitating than innovating. Samsung, however, is adept at collaboration: Apple used its chips in the iPhone, while Samsung's smart phones run Google's Android operating system. Samsung has bragging rights to the No. 1 market share in TVs and memory chips – as well as one of the world's biggest arsenals of patents.

South Korea's tech know-how has also helped drive its success in entertainment. It was the Chinese, in the late 1990s, who first fell hard for Korea's TV melodramas and other entertainment, dubbing it *hallyu* – Korean Wave, which has since spread globally by satellite and Internet, winning fans in Europe, the Americas and the Arab world.



South Korean strike wave of 1987 known as the Great Workers' Struggle.

This article may not be complete if it did not touch on the workplace struggles that took place in 1980s. For thirty years South Korea had been ruled by a military dictatorship and growing calls for democracy had echoed across the peninsula through the 1970s and early 80s. Strikes shut down production at many large firms, including Daewoo, Hyundai, Kia, Samsung and Lucky-Goldstar, a large South Korean conglomerate.

Bus and taxi drivers struck in their thousands in Kwangju, Chonju, Kunsan, Okku and Kimje, as well as Seoul. Fishermen struck in coastal areas and in Pusan succeeded in shutting down the city's central fish market. 20,000 miners from thirty-two pits were on strike by mid-August, costing the country nearly half its national coal output. Hyundai workers were often the most militant, clashing with police

and often occupying shipyards and factory buildings.

Pope Francis' Choice

The visit of Pope Francis to South Korea although officially to attend the Sixth Asian Youth Day also included some interest in Korea's outstanding neighbour of the 21st century – China. According to the Christian Science Monitor, Christianity is booming in China, propelling it toward becoming the world's largest Christian nation. But as religion grows, it spurs a government crackdown.

While Christianity is undoubtedly waning in many parts of the world, in China it is growing rapidly – despite State strictures. The rise in evangelical Protestantism in particular, driven both by people's spiritual yearnings and individual human needs in a collective society, is taking place in nearly every

part of the nation.

For decades, Christianity in China was considered something for older female peasants. But the demographics of religion are changing dramatically. China's new faithful are younger, more educated, more urban and more affluent. Western visitors used to seeing empty sanctuaries in the United States or Europe can be dumbfounded by the Sunday gatherings held in convention center-size buildings where people line up for blocks to get in – one service after another.

One surprising change is that a majority of believers no longer view Christianity as something foreign. They increasingly view faith as transcending its Western missionary-derived system. Many Chinese no longer accept the idea that being Christian means forfeiting a Chinese identity.

In 2011, China's religious affairs chief said that 500,000 Christians are baptized each year in the country. A joint study between Baylor University in Waco, Texas and Peking University in Beijing estimated that there are 70 million Christians over age 16 years of age in China. Communist Party membership is about 83 million.

Something here opens our minds to the broader kingdom perspective that Christianity paves the way naturally and supernaturally for the development of people and nations...!

English with Fun and Entertainment

Dear Readers,

In today's lesson which is our 70th let's prioritize three inspirational thoughts, read a family joke and learn to make speeches, read a news item about Pope Francis from the Vatican city and respond to two tasks and learn more about a noun.

Let's also learn a plenty of words with delicate shades of meaning to expand our word power.

Your suggestions to improve our lessons are much appreciated.

God Bless You!

NJ

Activity 1 - Read the three quotes, prioritize them according to your order of preference and make short speech expressing your opinion about your best choice.

(Taken from www.brainyquote.com/quotes/topics/topic_inspirational.html)



'Change your thoughts and you change the world' - **Norman Vincent Peale**

change- alter modify vary
thoughts-opinions, views,
world – realm, domain, sphere

'Health is the greatest gift, contentment the wealth, Faithfulness the best relationship' - **Buddha**

health – fitness, well being
contentment – serenity, pleasure
faithfulness -truth, realism

'Do not judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant' - **Robert Louis Stevenson**

judge- adjudicate, decide
harvest - crop yield
seeds – sources, kernels, grains

Activity 2-

Read the family joke, enjoy the fun and do the activities given-

Speaking -

Were people born from Adam and Eve?

Give five sentences to support your answer?

Activity 1 – Write five sentences to describe the picture A child asked his father, "How were people born?"



So his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their babies became adults and made babies and so on."

The child then went to his mother, asked her the same question and she told him, "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like we are now."



The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to me!"

His father replied, "No, your mom was talking about her side of the family."

Speaking -

Were people evolved from monkeys?

Give five sentences to support your answer

Activity 2 – Describe the picture in five sentences

Activity 3 – Read the text and answer the questions with true / false / not given /

Pope Francis greets homeless at Sistine Chapel



Pope Francis as he greets the crowd in the Scampia district of Naples, Italy, March 21, 2015 (AFP Photo/Filippo Monteforte)

Comprehension activity 1

(i)Dozens of homeless people were given a chance to view the Sistine chapel

(ii)Pope Francis made a surprise appearance to console the vulnerable in the society

(iii) The pontiff gave gifts to these dozens of homeless people

(iv) Around 150 street-sleepers were shown around the chapel and adjoining Vatican museums and gardens.

(v) The pope himself welcomed the group to the Sistine Chapel, taking the time to greet each of the visitors.

Comprehension activity 2

Read the text and answer the questions.

(i)What did the pontiff do in his unannounced visit?

(ii)What did the Argentinian tell them?

(iii)What is the defining theme of his papacy given in the text?

(iv) Where was the homeless man who died on the streets buried?

(v) What did Pope Francis do to mark his 78th birthday?

Give similar words from the text for (i)displaced, (ii)astonishment,(iii)listeners, (iv)mounted, (v)elite, (vi)sidelined, (vi)famous,(vii) invocations (viii)defenceless

Vatican City (AFP) - Dozens of **homeless** people were on Thursday treated to a private viewing of the Sistine Chapel, complete with a **surprise** appearance by Pope Francis himself, in the pontiff's latest gesture towards the most **vulnerable** in society.

Normally one of the hottest tourist tickets in town, the home of Michelangelo's **celebrated** ceiling frescoes closed its doors early to regular visitors to enable the group of around 150 street-sleepers to be shown around the chapel and adjoining Vatican museums and gardens.

In an unannounced visit, it was the pope himself who welcomed the group to the Sistine Chapel, taking the time to greet each of the visitors.

"This is a house for everyone, this is your home. The doors are always open to all," the Argentinian told them.

"Pray for me, I need the **prayers** of people like you," he added.

The pontiff had asked that there be no pictures of the meeting.

It was the latest in a string of highly symbolic initiatives sanctioned by Francis, who has made a focus on the plight of the homeless and other **marginalized** groups one of the defining themes of his papacy.

Last month a homeless man who died on the streets around St Peter's Square was buried in an **exclusive** cemetery within the Vatican that is usually reserved for senior German clerics.

The pope, who says he wants "a poor Church, for the poor," has had showers for the homeless **installed** in public toilets just off St Peter's square.

To mark his 78th birthday in December, he ordered the distribution of sleeping bags across Rome and some homeless people have been recruited to hand out copies of the gospels to the faithful attending Sunday **audiences** at St Peter's.

Activity 4 - Let's examine a different form of classification of nouns according to Communicative Grammar of English (CGE) of Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik

Two key categories of nouns described are count nouns and mass nouns
Count nouns refer in the singular to one object to and in the plural to more than one object

Examples -A star -one star - a single star - two stars three stars seven stars

Mass nouns refer to substances liquid or solid namely oil water butter wood leather iron rock. Mass nouns are always singular .It makes no sense to count. It is not divisible into separate objects Mass nouns are also called non count nouns.

Let's add count nouns / countable nouns, mass nouns / non – count / uncountable nouns and group nouns to our knowledge of nouns in today's lesson.

Study the following list of nouns

Count Noun	Mass Noun
star / moon / ship / airplane/ boat /bus/ car/ train/ cake/ chair/ bed/ table/ cupboard	oil, water, furniture, wood, leather, butter
Group	A group of stars/ a small group of stars/ a large group of stars. A number of stars/ a small large of stars/ a large number of stars
Partition	A slice of the cake/ half of the cake/ a quarter of the cake/ a part of the cake
Unit/Division	A piece of bread/ a blade of grass/a block of ice/ a pile of rubbish/ a lump of sugar/ a sheet of paper/ a speck of dust/ a bar of chocolate/ a load of hay
Units of measure	Depth – a foot of water Length- a yard of cloth Weight- an ounce of tobacco / a pound of butter/ a ton of coal Area- an acre of land Volume- a pint of beer/ a quart of milk / a gallon of oil

Contact us on: 071 8004580
E-mail: noeljayamanne@yahoo.com



Compiled by Noel Jayamanne

* A monument to the victims of the 2008 attack The Martyrs of Orissa



The Christians of the village of Tiangia (Orissa) have built the first monument honouring the seven martyrs, victims of the anti-Christian pogrom of Kand-hamal in 2008. Archbishop John Barwa of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar blessed the commemorative plaque in the presence of many priests and hundreds of faithful. "These seven martyrs," said the Archbishop, "are pillars of testimony for the people of Kandhamal and beyond. We thank God for giving us such men, who sacrificed their precious lives for the love of Jesus. Rather than give up their faith, they clung to Christ with passion. For us, they are a source of inspiration and hope."

The seven martyrs, all from Tiangia, are: Fr Bernard Digal, Trinath Digal, Bikram Nayak, Parikhit Nayak, Darasanth Pradhan, Dibyasing Digal and Dinabandhu Pradhan. They were killed following the murder of the Hindu leader Saraswati Laxanananda on August 23, 2008 by a Maoist group. From the beginning, the Maoist group admitted to the murder, however the Hindu radicals blamed Christians, who — along with bishops, priests and nuns — were criticised by the guru for their social work with tribals and outcasts of proselytising.

Giovanni Battista Montini and his passion for Dante The Poet of Theologians and the Theologian of Poets



Paul VI often asked his private secretary, Msgr Pasquale Macchi, to read aloud to him either a canto from Dante's *Divine Comedy* or a chapter from Manzoni's *The Betrothed*.

Cardinal Paul Poupard, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Culture and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, recalled this habit of Blessed Paul VI during a meeting in the Franciscan cenacolo at the Church of Santa Croce in Florence on March 17, to commemorate the 750th anniversary of Dante Alighieri's birth and the 50th anniversary of the Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* written by Paul VI, entitled *Altissimi Cantus*. It is no accident that this document was preceded by two letters, one written to the Archbishop of Ravenna and the other to the Archbishop of Florence, followed by Paul VI's personal greeting to the directors and associates of the Dante Alighieri Society given at a General Audience in Rome on January 21, 1966.

Cardinal Poupard noted that Paul VI, just like his predecessor Benedict XV, believed that the beauty of Dante's work consists in both the manifold way it

brilliantly reveals truth and in its use of a wide range of artistic devices. Paul VI even set up an endowed chair for Dante studies at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, emphasizing the "ecumenical" aspect of his work. Dante is a universal poet for all people and all times. In fact, his grandeur "embraces heaven and earth, eternity and time, the mystery of God and the affairs of men, both sacred and profane teaching, as well as the understanding made possible by divine revelation and the light of natural reason." At the same time, Paul VI noted that the goal of the *Divine Comedy* is "preeminently practical and transformative," the objective being to help man pass from disorder to wisdom, sin to holiness, misery to happiness.

Written in the first person, the poem tells of Dante's journey through the three realms of the dead lasting from the night before Good Friday to the Wednesday after Easter in the Spring of 1300 AD. It is divided into three canticas - Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, each containing 33 cantos. (It allegorically represents the soul's journey towards God).

Paul VI thus celebrates Dante as the poet of theologians and the theologian of poets, a "master of exalted lyricism" insofar as his subtlety of mind renders him a sharp theologian, the perfect guide within the sanctuary of poetry. A clear sign of Paul VI's passion for Dante is the gift he gave to the conciliar Fathers at Vatican II: A special edition of the *Divine Comedy*.

Benedict XV, paying tribute to Dante in his encyclical letter *'In praeclara summorum copia hominum'* (1921), offers Dante as an exemplary witness to the religious values that contribute to the promotion of human learning and, consequently, how their absence from the formation of young people undermines their maturation and intellectual growth as well as their acquisition of civil virtue. Benedict XV thus wishes Dante to be taken up as a teacher of Christian doctrine, both in the practice of the fine arts and in the development of virtue. In another passage of the encyclical, Benedict XV remarks that the greatest praise that can be given to Dante is that he was a "Christian poet," in other words, "someone who sang Christian doctrine in an almost angelic voice; a doctrine whose beauty and splendor Dante contemplated with his entire soul." Calling the *Comedy* the "Fifth Gospel," Benedict XV declared that Dante is "the most eloquent bard to sing and announce Christian wisdom." (Gabriele Nicolò)

Oscar Romero an example for Religious in Latin America A voice for the voiceless



Pope Francis' recognition of Archbishop Romero's martyrdom has stirred (also within me) a deep sense of gratitude. In a certain way, the Church's official act also involves the heroism of the many men and women religious who have found themselves in similar situations of persecution and violence.

Perhaps they were killed, unjustly slandered or even forced into exile. I believe that the year dedicated to Consecrated Life is a true gift from the Church to religious.

I clearly remember the dawn of March 12, 1977 in Guatemala: We heard our doorbell ringing. There were several Jesuits, called the "Fathers of Zone 5" (which was a poor and marginalized area), who told us about the assassination of Fr. Rutilio Grande García. And I also perfectly remember March 24, 1980, the day when the Archbishop of San Salvador, Óscar Arnulfo Romero, was killed. The reality of those moments are perhaps only truly understood by men and women religious because they are the first ones — after the poor and oppressed — to pay the price of this absurd persecution. It is a campaign of hate justified by the suspicion that religious are the main culprits of the people's subversion.

Most of the men and women religious, but also in part local clergy, are the only voice for the "voiceless." It is they who take on the responsibility of living beside the people, following their way of the Cross, their path of oppression and institutionalised injustice.

After the Latin American episcopate's conference held in Medellín in 1968, a new mentality began to take shape in the Church. The Preferential Option for the Poor' became a radical commitment. Men and women religious tried to mediate the rapid evolution of ideas but they themselves were branded as subversive and were sometimes marginalised not only by the government but also by the diocesan community and by religious congregations themselves. "I myself live as one who is marginalised," a Sister in a Brazilian favela once confided to me, "I am here to mediate, reconcile, pray, prevent and I am marginalised."

Religious consecration began acquiring an increasingly sacrificial dimension. Even if we do not give up our life with blood, we live in constant and passionate solidarity with those who have *'el corazón partido'* ("a broken heart"), as oppressed people often repeat. This solidarity never takes away from the serenity, the joy for life and the hope that freedom was near (but not too near), it is always immersed in the drama in denouncing evil and creates unforeseen results.

One day a novice asked me: "Mother, why must we always live in difficulty?" Yes, religious consecration also has this dimension, the dimension of living "in difficulty" for the Kingdom of God.

These articles are taken from the Vatican newspaper: *L'Osservatore Romano*