



"IGNORANCE OF SCRIPTURE IS IGNORANCE OF CHRIST"

St. Jerome

# Messenger

TOWARDS A RENEWAL OF FAITH THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

Year of the Word - Season of Advent 2011 - Season of Advent 2012

Archdiocese of Colombo

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## Archdiocesan parishes requested to initiate the Year of Word of God

# Proclamation of the Year of the Word of God

The Archdiocese of Colombo will begin a special Year on the Word of God on Saturday 26 November 2011, at a special ceremony to be held at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena at

6.00pm. All Rev. Fathers in the city parishes and a representative group of people from each city parish have been invited to this ceremony. In keeping with

this the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith in a letter to parish priests belonging to the Archdiocese has kindly requested all parishes to initiate the year of the Word

of God in their respective parishes with a suitable Vespers service or a Holy Mass on either the 26th simultaneously with the main ceremony or on Sunday 27th November at Holy Mass or at a para-

Liturgical service, or Vespers or Benediction service.

The formula of the ceremony could be obtained from the Archdiocese Liturgy Office.



## Jesus not the name in SMS texts

Pakistan has forbidden the name "Jesus Christ" in SMS text messages, sent via mobile phones. This was established by the Telecommunications Authority in Pakistan in a measure that orders mobile phone companies to block text messages with certain words considered vulgar, obscene or harmful.



Among more than 1,600 banned words, reports a local source to Fides, there are also the words "Jesus Christ" and "Satan". The companies have seven days to give effect to the regulation, but the Christian Churches and organisations for human rights in Pakistan.

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## Effective leadership skill a must in school curricular

Rev. Fr. Trevor Martin, Rector, Loyola College

Rev. Fr. Trevor Martin, Rector Loyola College, Negombo, presenting the Annual Report at the Prize giving off the College held last week highlighted the importance of effective leadership principles for quality in life.

Addressing the large gathering of parents, students, clergy, religious and invitees, Fr. Martin

said, "People and practices come and go but principles of effective leadership will always remain the same everywhere."

"Leadership principles must focus on helping students to take responsibility for their lives, to work with others more effectively, and to do the right thing even when no one is looking. It is only then as another school

principal stated that students will leave school with skills for life and committed to change the society and the country."

Stressing the responsibility of Catholics schools he said that most parents expect the school to train their children and inculcate them not only in proper leadership skills but also to be responsible, caring, compassionate

human beings, with the ability to get along with others.

"Though most parents are concerned about examination results they are equally or much more concerned with their children's character and basic life skills", Fr. Trevor Martin said.

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## Cardinal at Red Mass



The Traditional Red Mass for Lawyers will be held on the 3rd December 2011 at the Convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor, 204, Darley Road, Maradana.

The Chief Celebrant for the Eucharistic Celebration will be His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo.

The Mass will be followed by breakfast.

The Catholic Lawyers' Guild of the Archdiocese of Colombo cordially invites all Catholic Lawyers to this Annual Traditional Celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

## Art Exhibition on gender-based violence

'SAAKSHI' - an Art Exhibition by Sindhu and Mani De Livera, depicting violence against women, will be held on 27 November 2011, at the Barefoot Gallery from 10.00am to 5.00pm.



The Exhibition is an awareness raising event to coincide with the UN 16 days of activism against the gender-based violence campaign.

## AGM of SL Movement for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation

The Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lankan Movement for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation will be held on Saturday, 3 December 2011 at 3.00 p.m. at Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC, 133/1, Kynsey Road, Borella.

The programme begins with the presentation of the annual report, followed by the statement of accounts, programmes of work, amendment to the constitution and the resolutions.

The programme also includes the elections of a new Central Council after which Holy Mass will be held. Members are kindly requested to bring a suitable offering for Holy Mass.

The AGM ends with the meeting of the new Central Council.

## Relics of St. Don Bosco arrive in Sri Lanka

Hundreds of people gathered along the road from Katunayake Airport to the Dulgalpitiya Don Bosco Chapel to have a view of the Sacred Relics of St. Don Bosco which was brought to Sri Lanka on Saturday, 19th November.

A large number of youth and children were also seen, waving flags and balloons, singing hymns and dancing

in joy to welcome their Patron Saint. Provincial Delegate of the Salesian Fathers Very Rev. Fr. Nihal Liyanage said, "Our loving father of our family has come to see us and bless us."

The Sacred Relics were received at the Katunayake Airport. by Very Rev. Fr. Nihal Liyanage, together with His Excellency Archbishop Joseph



(Rev. Fr. Sunil De Silva)

Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka, and Rev. Fathers of the Salesian Congregation,

Italian Ambassador in Sri Lanka, several government Ministers and Members of

Parliament and Provincial Councilors were also present.

(Continued on Pg. 2) >>

## Two veteran Oblates called to eternal bliss and joy

Former Oblate Provincial Very Rev. Fr. Anselm Silva OMI and Rev. Fr. C. M. Rupasinghe OMI were called to Eternal Rest on 18th November 2011. While Fr. Anselm OMI passed away at the Oblate Fathers' Home "Marian Groove" at Kohuwala, on the same day

Rev. Fr. C. M. Rupasinghe OMI passed away at the De Mazenod House in Mattakkuliya. Their mortal



Fr. Anselm de Silva OMI

remains were kept at De Mazenod House, Mattakkuliya until Monday 21st November 2011. Thereafter



Fr. C.M. Rupasinghe OMI

the remains were transferred to Fatima Church, Maradana, for the Funeral Mass. Their mortal remains were

buried at the Catholic section of the General Cemetery, Kanatte, Borella. Acting Provincial of the Oblates, Rev. Fr. Roshan Silva OMI, presided at the funeral Mass together with the other Rev. Fathers present. Archbishops Emeriti Nicholas Marcus Fernando, Oswald Gomis and His Lordship Bishop of Anuradhapura, Norbert Andradi OMI, participated at the funeral Mass.

## News in Pictures

### Don Bosco Relic at Palliyawatta Church

Palliyawatta, Nayakakanda and Wattala missions, warmly welcomed the Holy Relic of St. Don Bosco, when it visited St. Carmel's Church, Palliyawatta last Sunday.

Picture shows the Holy Relic being conducted to the Church by Rev. Fr. Nihal Liyanage, Salesian Provincial Sri Lanka together with Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunathilaka, Parish Priest, Nayakakanda.

(Nimal Perera)



### Service of Thanksgiving to the Lord



Rev. Fr. Anton Premalal, Parish Priest, Enderamulla, an Old Boy of Pamunugama MV, receives offerings from Mrs. M.D.M. Annestin, Dy. Principal of PMV at the Thanksgiving Mass at Bopiti-

ya Church, to mark her retirement after 30 years of service as a teacher. Behind her is Mr. Anura Gunawardena, Principal of Pamunugama MV.

(S.K.J. Kurera)

### New statue of Risen Lord unveiled in Kohalwila

A new statue of the Risen Lord, placed at the Kohalwila Junction in the Dalugama Parish, was solemnly unveiled and blessed before a large gathering of the faithful recently, by Rev. Fr. Camillus Fernando, Rector of Holy Cross College, Kalutara.

A House of Prayer, built for the statue was also declared open and blessed on this occasion.

The 4-perch block of land for the prayer room and the statue, was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Amarasinghe of the Dalugama Parish on May 2010, when Fr. Camillus



was the Parish Priest of Dalugama.

The construction of the House of Prayer and the statue commenced in May, 2011, with assistance from donors, benefactors, and the community, under the direction and guidance of Rev. Fr. Jude Sharman Fernando, the present Parish Priest.

In this homily,

in the Holy Mass that followed, Fr. Camillus said that with Faith, nothing is impossible. That is how his vision of May 2010 became a reality in November, 2011.

He asked the congregation to step into this House of Prayer and say a small prayer at the feet of the Risen Lord, whenever they pass the place.

(Alfred Perera)

### A statue of the Risen Lord from Sri Lanka to the Pope



Dr. Jayalath Jayawardena, MP, and Deputy General Secretary of the UNP during his recent special audience with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican, donated a statue of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ made in Sri Lanka by sculpturist Ranil Fernando. Mr. Roshan Lowe is also seen in the picture.

### Jesus not .....

Contd. from Pg. 1  
announce battle.

Rev. Fr. John Shakir Nadeem, Secretary of the "Commission for Social Communications" of the Episcopal Conference, announces to Fides: "The Catholic Church of Pakistan will make all necessary pressures on the government to eliminate the name of Christ from the prohibited list.

We understand the desire to protect the minds of young people, indicating a list of obscene words. But why include the name of Christ? What is obscene? Banning it is a violation of our right to evangelize and hurt the feelings of Christians. If the ban is confirmed, it would be a black page for the country, a further act of discrimination against Christians

and an open violation of Pakistan's Constitution. We hope that the government will make the appropriate corrections."

Organizations for the defense of human rights and freedom of citizens such as "Bytes For All" have announced that they will contest the order in court, saying it "violates the right to freedom of speech and expression, "it is an intrusion into the citizens privacy and it is not only oppressive and hegemonic, but also unconstitutional."

The Telecommunications Authority said that the freedom of Pakistanis is "subject to the limitations provided by the law, in the interest of the glory of Islam." The list contains over 1,600 words most commonly considered vulgar, others of a sexual nature.

### Effective leadership .....

Contd. from Pg. 1

Rev. Fr. Madurawala, the Chief Guest, in his address focussed on the modern day devices and techniques that have revolutionised the teaching and learning process. He said that, "through the emerging trends it can be visualized that books, teachers and classrooms will become outdated in a future date and will be replaced by technology."

He questioned that as Catholic educationists, "What is our reaction to this emerging trend? We cannot and should not resist it."

### At rest with the Lord



The Catholic Messenger announces with sorrow the passing away of Mrs. Winifrida Agnes de Silva, loving mother of Very Rev. Dr. Placidus de Silva, Rector, Aquinas University College, Colombo, on Tuesday November 22, 2011.

The funeral was held on 24th November, (Thursday) at 3.00 p.m. at St. Anne's Church cemetery, Wattala.

### Help needed for a deserving Catholic Parishioner



Twenty six-old Karunanayakage Priyanka Roshan Kularatne, is a parishioner of Christ the King Church, Mahena, Warakapola.

He is mentally impaired and lives with his mother who is unable to meet the cost of his medicine.

He makes this kind appeal for help on the recommendation of the Parish Priest of Warakapola.

Donations can be sent to the People's Bank Galapitamada, A/C No. 054-2-001-01-0003786.

(Parish Priest - Warakapola)

### Catholic journalist needs your help

A senior media person, Mr. Siyabalapitiyalage Gerard Appuhamy of 94, Janajayagama, Bollowalana, Negombo is suffering from paralysis and needs your help.

He was the former Katana corespondent for the Lankadeepa and Dinamina newspapers.

He is a Catholic and lives with his son Jude Prasanna Kumara.



(Cecil Danicius)

### Relics of .....

Contd. from Pg. 1

The pilgrimage of the statue begins a three year celebration in preparation for the bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth in 2015. The visit provides an opportunity to reconnect with the life, mission and spirituality of Don Bosco whom the Holy Spirit has given the world the remarkable gift which is the 'Salesian Spirit'.

# National Seminary hosts Diaconate once again



Twenty two Brothers who completed their Major Seminary Formation at the National Seminary, Ampitiya, were admit-

ted to the Sacred Order of Deacons during the Holy Mass held on 29th October, 2011.

This was the first

time, after a lapse of seven years that the conferring of the Diaconate was held in the National Seminary. In the year 2004 the Cath-

olic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka decided to hold the Diaconate in their respective dioceses.

The Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy, before a large crowd of priests, Religious and lay faithful present.

Nine Brothers were ordained as Deacons in view of the Priesthood for the Diocese of Chilaw, eight for the Archdiocese of Colombo, and three for the Diocese of Kurunegala, one for the Diocese of Kandy and one for the Cistercian Congregation.

Bro. Anton Dinesh



## Church in the World



Archbishop Claudio Celli, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, assists Pope Benedict XVI with the new Vatican news portal on an iPad at the Vatican last June. (CNS/L'Osservatore Romano)

### Pope set to light world's largest Christmas tree using iPad

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- With a tap on an iPad, Pope Benedict XVI will light the world's largest electronic Christmas tree in the Italian town of Gubbio without having to leave his home in Vatican City.

The City of Gubbio and the Diocese of Gubbio announced at a news conference recently that the Pope would light the tree via a video link set up by the Vatican Television Centre. The tree-lighting ceremony takes place on the evening of Dec. 7, the eve of the Immaculate Conception.

From his apartment in Vatican City, the Pope will turn on the tree using an application on the iPad 2. Before lighting the tree, the Pope will send a video message to the citizens of Gubbio thanking the volunteers on the committee who organized the event and who have been responsible for setting up the tree for decades.

### Pro-life leaders call to end to abortion and threat to family life

EWTN - Pro-life leaders from around the world gathered at the International Pro-life Congress in Costa Rica to call on governments to end abortion and other threats that undermine the family.

At their Oct. 28-30 meeting, the leaders issued and signed the San Jose Declaration in support of the dignity of human life as well as political parties that endorse the family based on traditional marriage.

The document condemned efforts to legalization abortion in various parts of the world, especially in Latin America, by international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for American States, the World Bank, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, "Catholics for a Free Choice" and Amnesty International.

## Two deacons ordained to the Holy Priesthood

### Rev. Bro. Ravindra Seneviratne

Bro. Ravindra Seneviratne is the son of late Seneviratne Mudiyaeselage Dammika Seneviratne and late Kotte Disapatilage Ranjani Bernadette Kannangara of Peradeniya. He was born on 27th November 1975, and educated at the Sri Deerananda College, Pilimatalawa.

He completed his Philosophical and Theological studies at Dewa Dharma Nikethanaya, Borella and at the National Seminary, Ampitiya.

Bro. Ravindra will be ordained a priest by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Kingsley Wickramasinghe at the Cathedral of the Queen of the Holy Rosary, Galle, on 03rd December 2011, at 10.00 a.m. His first Eucharistic Celebration will be at St. Theresa's Church, Peradeniya on 4th December 2011 at 8.30 a.m.



Vidyalaya, Talawakelle and his secondary education at Central College, Nawalapitiya and Berreawarts College, Ampitiya.

He joined St. Joseph's Juniorate OMI Kohuwala in 1995). Bro. Harold completed his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary, Ampitiya.

He will be ordained by His Lordship Most. Rev. Dr. Raymond Kingsley Wickramasinghe at the Cathedral of the Queen of the Holy Rosary, Galle, on 03rd December 2011, at 10.00 a.m. He will celebrate his first Holy Eucharist at St. Anthony's Cathedral, Kandy on Sunday, 04th December, at 8.30 a.m.

### Rev. Bro. Harold Leo Merril Peiris

The son of late Stephen Peiris and Mrs. Rita Peiris of Bahirawakanda, Kandy, was born on 4th April 1973.

He obtained his primary education at Nu/Sumana Maha



## New Prioress General for the Contemplative Rosarian Nuns

The General Chapter 2011 of the Nuns of the Congregation of the Contemplative Rosarians was held in Mannar from October 20th to 31st.

Very Rev. Sr. Mary Helen Jayanthi CR was elected the new Prioress General of the congregation.

Rev. Sr. Rose Mary CR, (Vicaress General) and Rev. Sr. Mary Pauline CR were elected General Councilors representing the Indian province while Rev. Sr. Helena and Rev. Sr. Elizabeth were elected General Councilors representing Sri Lanka.

Rev. Sr. Mary John Baptist CR (Former Prioress General)

## SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus

WE ARE AGAINST HAVING PRIVATE SCHOOLS

SCHOOL ADMISSION



Camillus 27-11-2011

## Battle of the Champions

1996 World Cup Champs led by Arjuna Ranatunge Vs. Kalutara Warriors, led by Malinga Bandara have organized an Exhibition T-20 match, in aid of the building fund, of St. Jude's Church, Halkandawila, (Diyalagoda Parish) on 11th December 2011 at Maggona, Diyalagoda "Surrey" ground at 1.00 p.m.

The program is organized by Rev. Fr. Thusith Pradeep Fernando, Parish Priest Diyalagoda, in collaboration with the parishioners of Halkandawila.

(D. Anselm Fernando)

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA  
**Messenger**  
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EDITORIAL

27 November 2011

## No Justice without Impartial Judges

Last week there were two important court decisions. One was in respect of the former Army Commander Sarath Fonseka who is already serving a jail sentence on a conviction by a military tribunal. This judgment was by the High Court of Colombo. The court found him guilty of the charges in the so-called white flag case where he is said to have told the Sunday Leader Editor that the Defense Secretary ordered the Brigadier Shavendra Silva to kill the LTTE leaders who came to surrender carrying a white flag. The former Army Commander was found guilty although many members of the public may consider otherwise. He was sentenced to 3 years jail in addition to the current jail sentence he is serving. The judgment was not unanimous and one judge has dissented showing that there was legitimate room for dissent.

The other case involved the killing of former MP Bharata Lakshman Premachandra. The Magistrate ordered the arrest of Duminda Silva. We bow to the Magistrate and pray that God would bless him and protect him. So, the Police have to act now on the Magistrate's order. There are instances where the Police have disregarded the orders of magistrates in recent times.

If judgments against the State and the Executive for that matter, any ordinary citizen of the country, are not carried out, there is no justice and no rule of law.

Our Constitution provides for the institutional independence of the Judiciary. This is considered a *sine qua non* in a democracy. In many democracies the President merely exercises formal powers of appointment. Not so in Sri Lanka after the 18th Amendment. But such independence alone is not enough for there must be judges who will not compromise their conscience.

Traditions require that no Supreme Court Judge should hold public office after retirement. This is to eliminate the possibility of the Executive dangling carrots before serving judges to influence their judgments.

Our Judges and Prosecutors must have personally experienced attempts by the Executive to influence their decisions. Can Judges honestly state that there have been no attempts by the Executive to influence their decisions? We do not expect them to disclose such unseemly attempts. But the public have a right to expect these persons to disregard such attempts to influence them and act according to their conscience and dispense justice. Democratic Constitutions in some countries expressly provide that no person or organ of state should 'interfere with the functioning of the courts.'

The fair and effective enforcement of court judgments both against private individuals as well as the State is of crucial importance to the Rule of Law and dispensation of justice. It is when people think that there is no justice in the country and that the rulers are free to rule as they like trampling the rights and freedoms of the people, that civil disorder breaks out.

There is also a growing body of international jurisprudence that requires countries, under their international and regional human rights treaty obligations, to enforce court judgments fairly and effectively and to support the independence of the judiciary.

Any failure by the Executive arm of the government including the Police to implement and satisfy final judgments of the courts represents a serious injury to fundamental values enshrined in the Constitution, and may, in respect of the individual officials in question, represent a breach of the oaths of office undertaken by them.

There is also the matter of interpretation of the Constitution vested with the superior courts. How do Judges, Prosecutors and legal draftsmen view the principles in the Constitution regarding the separation of powers, the independence of the Judiciary and the sovereignty of the people? Shouldn't they uphold such principles in interpreting the Constitution if they value them?

From the Biblical perspective, the words of Christ the King, the heavenly judge, par excellence, spelling out the Christian principles of judgement, at the Last Judgement, separating the goats from the sheep, give us a higher spiritual vision of judgement. "I tell you solemnly, whenever you refused to help one of the least important ones, you refused to help me. These, then, will be sent off to eternal punishment, but the righteous will go to eternal life." (Mt. 25:45)

# Creating a Peace Culture that reaches out to others

Jehan Perera

The triumphant tone in sections of the Western media at the death of former Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi was comparable to that in Sri Lanka at the demise of the LTTE and its leader. There was similar rejoicing when Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden was killed in the midst of his family. This rejoicing has overpowered another ethos that has a long history. This ethos was articulated in the year 1624 by John Donne who said, "No man is an island entire of itself, each is a part of the continent, a part of the main... Therefore, send not to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee."

It was this kind of thinking that saw the inter connectedness of life, and which religious teachers like the Buddha explained in depth over two thousand years ago, that gave rise to the concept of universal human rights. This said that human rights belonged to human beings irrespective of whether they were black or white, European or Asian, dictator or democrat. The rule of law, that it applies equally to all, whether high or low, arose from this basic understanding. By and large Western countries have demonstrated their commitment to universal values within their own societies. However, with respect to other societies, their adherence to universal values appears to be much less.

### Negative Peace/Positive Peace

In Sri Lanka there was three decades of internal war. The LTTE used terrorism and became described as the world's deadliest terrorist organization. The government had to resort to the army, navy and air force to defeat the LTTE with large scale collateral damage to Tamil civilians. This has generated a lot of negative emotions, such as ethnic nationalism, hatred and mistrust of each other. We need to address these emotional issues.

One of the leading scholars in international peace studies, Professor Johan Galtung has said there is a difference between negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace is the absence of war, which is the present reality in Sri Lanka.

Positive peace is where there is reconciliation, a change of heart, and a change of political structures that gave rise to war. In this respect Sri Lanka has to move forward to positive peace. At the present time, the Tamil people continue to vote against the government. At every election after the war, they have voted against the government. The government in turn is increasing the size of the military budget even though the war has ended. There is continued military domination of the north and east where Tamil people live and where the thirty year war was fought.

What is worrying and sad about the recent developments in Sri Lanka is the absence of a change of heart. The polarization and hatred continues. The governmental machinery that

was set up during the war to cope with the terrorism of the LTTE also continues to be in place. There is a climate of impunity, which makes people afraid to voice their opinions, especially if they are critical of those in power who are misusing their powers. There is a belligerent nationalism in dealing with others who are from different communities or nations.

### Peace Museum

One international beacon of hope in this situation is the change that took place in Japan after the Second World War. The fact that Japan lost the war and was subjected to the cruelty of atomic bombing that lay waste to two of its big cities, and killed over 200,000 people instantaneously, must not detract from the change of heart that took place. A change of heart is a change of heart, whether it comes from having won a war or lost a war.

In the years before the Second World War Japan was a highly militarized society and it invaded other countries and subjected them to harsh rule. But today Japan is a very peaceful country with a great deal of social cohesion, and its constitution states that it has renounced violence as a means of governance. One of the main methods of teaching peace is through peace museums that inform people of what happened in the wars of the past.

At the peace memorial museum in Okinawa, and also in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I saw a lesson that Japan can offer to Sri Lanka. Those museums are designed to heal wounds and not to make them worse. In Okinawa we saw the photographs of all the 200 children who were recruited to the student medical unit of the Japanese army. Most of them died in the fighting, although they never killed or harmed anyone. They reminded me of the children forcibly recruited by the LTTE and who died in confrontation with the Sri Lanka military. They remind the present generation of mistakes that must not be repeated, and of suffering that must not happen again. I saw hundreds of school children come every day to those museums along with their school teachers. They come to learn about a peace culture in which violence has no place.

There is a great potential to set up peace museums in Sri Lanka as part of a system of education that provides a peace culture to the people. It will be harder for us today in Sri Lanka, than it is for Japan today. Sri Lanka's war is only over two and half years, and so the wounds of war are raw. Peace museums require a non-partisan approach that is not the tool for one-sided propaganda. But today the government is partisan; the Tamil opposition is partisan. This is where multi ethnic civil society and inter-religious groups have to play an important role in establishing a healing culture of peace.

## Verbum Caro Factum Est Et Habitavit In Nobis

Rev. Fr. Hugo Palihawadana

### What Does it mean?

The above Latin saying tells us, 'The Word became flesh and lived amongst us.' In simple terms we say it is the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This Divine Truth is revealed to us by the Evangelist John. "The Word became a human being and full of Grace and Truth, lived among us."

"We saw His Glory the Glory which he received as the Father's only Son" (John 1: 14). When we pray the Rosary we meditate this Divine Truth in the Joyful Mysteries. St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians 2:1-5 affirms and explains this event saying that Jesus shared everything with us except sin. God becoming man is the greatest event that took place in the history

of mankind. In the Catholic Tradition we give the highest prominence to this Sacred Event. It is the custom in the Catholic Church to ring the church bells thrice a day calling the faithful to meditate upon this event and give praise and thanks to God for His love and mercy. He has shown to mankind by sending His only Son Jesus Christ as the Saviour, at the dawn of the day [sunrise] midday and in the evening [sunset] we recall this event when we pray the Angelus.

### The Word of God in the Old Testament

From the beginning of creation throughout the Old Testament we see that the Word of God was creative and active. It is alive and it bears fruits. Things happen and come to existence when God speaks in the book of Genesis, (Contd. on Pg. 5)

# Season of Advent

The liturgical year dawns with the Season of Advent; time of preparedness to the feast of the Incarnation. Liturgically speaking, the four weeks of Advent are divided into two segments (parts) which indeed point out the significance of its real purpose.

The **first segment**, beginning from the 1st Sunday of Advent to 16th of December invites us to ponder over the Second Coming of the Lord. The Word of God read in the Eucharistic Celebration could be understood as an invitation extended for the faithful to reflect about the end of Christian existence.

The **second segment**, beginning from the 17th of December to the mid night of 24th, vividly highlights how God became man; mystery of Incarnation

*"In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: To you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah the Lord. This will be a sign for you: You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a*

*multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favours!' " (Lk 2:8-14).*

St. Paul in his hymn to the Philippians is very explicit about this reality. The real purpose of becoming a human being is portrayed very clearly *"Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (2:6-11).*

God emptied Himself and embraced human nature in order to show His infinite love for the whole human race. The Advent of the Lord for the second time is pointed out in the first (part) segment of the Season of Advent while the second segment reveals how the second person of the Holy Trinity came as a human being into our midst.

## Advent Wreath

When we focus our attention

to Advent Wreath, it is obvious that the four candles lit in the four weeks are a reminder of the four eras in the Old Testament through which God Himself prepared the Messiah. Eras of Patriarchs, Judges, Kings and prophets are in fact, symbolized in the New Testament though the Advent wreath.

The fifth candle which is lit on the 24th night as the Christmas Mass begins is a later addition, perhaps, this candle (white in colour) indicates Christmas as a feast of light (idea of unconquered Sun as a pagan feast can be to some extent related with this).

Three candles in purple colour are lit in the 1st, 2nd and 4th weeks while the pink colour candle is lit at the beginning of the 3rd week signifying the joyful aspect of God becoming man. Purple colour always liturgically symbolizes the idea of repentance, yet, it is to be noted that idea of repentance is not as in the Season of Lent, such a deep - rooted repentance is not highlighted during this season.

## Preparedness

Repentance and hope are closely linked in this context of preparedness,



thus each baptized Christian is expected to be prepared in this contextual situation. Christmas can be authentically celebrated as an enjoyable feast in this way.

This is undoubtedly a time of great hope. The birth of Jesus in a manger is to a greater extent can be a challenge for all of us in the aspect of sharing. I am reminded of once again the hymn of St. Paul to the Philippians. *"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves" (2:3).*

*Rev. Fr. Indra R. Fernando*

## Eucharist is an Act of "Father Centric" Thanksgiving



Generally we understand the Eucharist as an act of thanksgiving. The whole Eucharistic Celebration is centered around Jesus Christ the Saviour. As we know He becomes the victim in an unbloody manner in the Eucharist and shared by the participants. So it is an accepted norm that the Eucharist is Christ-Centric since we re-enact the paschal mystery of Christ in the Eucharistic Celebration and the importance of the sacrifice of Christ is inevitable.

Although it is an act of thanksgiving. Yet it is totally directed to our heavenly Father. This dimension of "Father Centric" is essential to understand the Eucharist in its proper perspective. The awareness of Jesus having received everything from the Father is essential to the Father-oriented understanding. In order to thank the Father with all the sincerity in our hearts, we must know what the Father has given to us. Jesus acknowledged that he had come from the Father and the Father had placed everything in his hands and so His gratitude rose to the Father. As Son He received all what the Father possessed and the Father's generosity had been manifested without the slightest reserve.

Jesus knew that he had come from the Father and

was returning to the Father. He clearly expressed it at the end of the disclosure held during the Supper (Jn.16:28). The consciousness of returning to the Father and this will to do so, constitute an essential aspect of thanksgiving as it is expressed in the Eucharist. Returning to the Father, the Son can restore to that Father everything that He has received. Given this return, Jesus can express His gratitude under the form of a total offering. As the Son, who has a relationship of equality with the Father, with His offering he can restore to the Father all that the Father has bestowed upon Him. This act of thanksgiving culminated in His immolation out of His greatest love for His Father in His sacrifice at Calvary.

This offering of Jesus belongs to the nature of the Eucharistic thanksgiving in a real manner. We will fall short of understanding the Eucharist as a mere act of thanksgiving and praise if we do not add propitiatory value to Christ's sacrifice. Eucharist is not an expression of a sentiment of gratitude alone but rather we must conceive it as an expression of Christ's thanksgiving in the fullness of meaning and value it took on with His sacrifice. It is a response to the Father's gift, which consists in a propitiatory gift that obtains reconciliation between God and a sinful humanity.

Thus this thanksgiving includes a maximal generosity, through the commitment of the Saviour in the redemptive offering. All that the Fa-

ther has bestowed on the Son in the Incarnation has its objective, the work of salvation. All that the Son offers in response to the Father is intended as accomplishment of His mission. His thanksgiving derives from the Father's primordial gift and realizes the Course of the offering that ascends to God.

Not without reason, then in the institution of the

new Supper, Christians recognized the essential importance of thanksgiving and called the meal offered by Christ to His disciples the Eucharist. They saw, in the impulse of the Son's thanksgiving to the Father, the secret power that transformed the bread and wine into the Saviour's body and blood. We must acknowledge in the Eucharist the decisive influence of

Jesus' thanksgiving directed towards His Father. We could say the whole Eucharist celebration becomes "Father Centric" in joining Christ our Saviour in thanking the Father for the gift of His Son and for His redemptive act.

*Rev. Fr. Stany Antony OMI,  
St. Francis Xavier Major  
seminary - Jaffna.*

## Verbum Caro.....

Contd. from Pg. 4

when God spoke it came to be. In the first chapter of the book of Genesis we see the words uttered by Yahweh; "Let there be" [Gen 1:3-31]. God said number of times; Let there be then it came to existence. The words that come from Yahweh effect what it signifies. No accident or by products in God's plan. Everything came to existence according to His sacred will and wish. Under His creative words and protective guidance and care the whole creation came to its existence, this is affirmed in Genesis first chapter and Psalm33:6.

The Lord created the Heavens by His command the Sun, Moon and Stars by His spoken words' It is the words uttered by the creator that the whole of Creation came to a peaceful and tranquil existence. Prophet Isaiah says even the minute details of the creation came to its existence with the knowledge of God. Isaiah 40:26-28." The Lord is everlasting. He created all the world." The Word of God is full of power. Jeremiah 23:29 says "My message is like a fire and like a hammer it breaks rocks into pieces." The Word of Yahweh is addressed to certain privileged people personally.

We see in the book of Genesis the call of Abraham (12: 1-2). God asks Abraham to leave his country relatives and father's home, and go to the land God gave him. It was very challenging and demanding. When he did not have a child God promises to make his descendants like the stars in the sky. Abraham believed in God. When his wife gave birth to his son Isaac he was hundred years old. Gen 21: 5. Nothing is impossible with God. Abraham placed his full trust and confidence in God. So Abraham is accepted as the Father of Faith. In the book of Exodus we see the call of Moses. It was through the Burning Bush the word of God came to Moses. Exodus 3: 1 -22, God calls Moses and reveals Himself to Moses and gives him the responsibility of redeeming Israelites from the Egyptian bondage and slavery.

It was a very hard and difficult task; God gave Moses all necessary powers and instructed Moses on how he should carry out his mission. Once again in the book of Samuel God speaks to Samuel directly, because the sons of the Priest Eli went away from God. So God chooses Samuel to be the Prophet of the people.

In this book we see that disobedience bring disaster and the faithfulness bring success Sam. 3: 1-21. Samuel is made the Prophet of Israel and when Samuel spoke all Israel

listened to him. In the Old Testament the Israelites became a monotheistic people. They had to worship the one true God. They were prohibited to give offerings to pagan Gods. Those who went away from the one true God welcomed disaster on them. They were destroyed by the enemies. Yahweh the one true God demanded worship and honour from his people. It is God who gave them norms and precepts to live their lives in the way that He wanted. In the book of Exodus 20: 1-17, God gave them the Ten Commandments so that they may form their lives to please God. Prophet Isaiah once again affirms that there is no other God except Yahweh Is. 44:6-7. "I am the first and the last the only God there is no other God but Me".

Finally we see in the Old Testament it is the law and the Word of God that guided the people of Israel. The Word of God and law came to the people through the Patriarch and Prophets. Ps 119:105, tells "Your Word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path." These people were very faithful to the Word of God and The Commandments. They gathered to listen to the Word of God. This habit of going to the Synagogue to listen to the Word of God was there during the time of Jesus. Mk 1: 21- 28; 3:1-66; 2-6. We see Jesus goes to the Synagogue to read the Word of God and to teach.

*(Contd next week)*

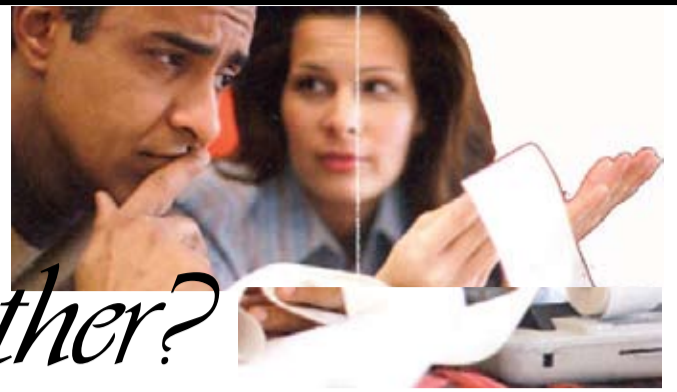
**LOTS OF QUESTIONS**

Most people, above all those who are thinking about getting married, worry about marriages falling apart. Is this the right person? Will the marriage last? Can I spend the whole of my life with him? What if she turns out to be different, once the ring is on her finger? Questions such as these make the idea of a 'trial run' seem attractive, even sensible. For those who have experienced divorce in their family the imperative for living together can be even stronger.

# Get married

# OR

# live together?



**TAKING A VERY BIG STEP**

Most people want to make sure marriage is really going to work, and want it to be for life. They see living together as a way of making sure they don't make a mistake. Given that the Church is so strongly in favour of marriage being for life, why doesn't she endorse these sentiments and suggest that people live together first?

**LET'S LOOK AT THE FACTS**

In truth, living together beforehand doesn't make marriages last longer. What evidence there is suggests that it actually makes things worse. Studies in the United States indicate that people who live together first are twice as likely to divorce, while some British studies suggest that they increase the chances of divorce by about 10%. One British study says that it makes no difference. Why?

Living together presupposes that if things don't work out, the couple can easily go their separate ways, as many do. Up to nine times more people separate while living together than get divorced after marriage. And such break-ups can be devastating. Separating assets such as possessions and property can be as complicated as in a divorce. The emotional trauma of breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend is often painful; and much more painful when it means the loss of home and shared possessions. Such experiences make a successful marriage later on even more difficult.

**THINKING IT THROUGH MORE CAREFULLY**

People choose to live together for various reasons. Some couples simply drift into cohabitation; for others, circumstances conspire to make living together an easier option than staying apart. What began as staying one night because it got late, becomes a regular thing which eventually becomes a permanent arrangement. Others, already planning to get married, buy a house to-

gether, then find that pooling their funds becomes a financial necessity.

**FACING UP TO OUR FEARS**

In some cases one partner may want very much to be married, while the other is nervous about the idea, and keeps putting off a deci-

sion. In other cases, people bring a lot of emotional baggage from their parents' break-ups and don't want to go through the same thing themselves. Living together can seem a less threatening option, a means of finding human intimacy without having to face deep-rooted fears and anxieties and responsibilities.

Yet only when such fears are addressed can we move on to build sound, mature, life-giving relationships of our own. If we don't address these fears, they have a habit of weaving themselves into our new relationships, causing havoc and heartache. Building a marriage upon such a start is much more complicated and demanding than beginning with a clear and free choice, with proper preparation and with the support of God's grace to heal and renew us.

**SOME HARD TRUTHS**

Living together is fundamentally a relationship based on mutual convenience, which lasts only as long as the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Is such a relationship really going to enable us to grow and develop into happy and healthy human beings? Can such a situation enable us to become the people God wants us to be? Can it challenge and transform our selfishness and self-centredness?

**WHAT DOES MARRIAGE OFFER THAT LIVING TOGETHER DOESN'T?**

Marriage is about the 'equality and mutuality' of a couple making an honest and open choice to be there for each other, no matter what happens; and to marry not just for themselves but for the children they hope to have together.

**SOLID AND LASTING FOUNDATIONS**

In order to be truly happy, we need someone who is always there for us, no matter what we have done or what difficulties we may face. That is why parents and children are so special: They are fundamentally committed in relationships for life. Without them we fail to thrive as human persons. Marriage is about giving those relationships a proper chance, a real foundation. Marriage offers a permanent companion with whom to share the good times but also the bad times. Whether you are rich or poor, sick or healthy, you have someone who will always be there for you. Children deserve as much and adults need as much.

**LEARNING TO LOVE, AND RELYING ON GOD**

However, we are not meant to try and achieve all this out of our own abilities. Now is the time to begin to build 'Our relationships with the help ('grace') of Jesus Christ. Faith in Him calls us to a new dimension of living, one which calls us beyond the mundane and the minimal, to a life that offers the very best. Marriage is about a love worthy of the name, a love which makes life truly worth living. Christian marriage is about a happiness that will endure.

*(Catholic Truth Society)*

## The Story of a Revengeful Teacher

Rehana Ferdinando

**Short Story Fiction**

her parents about the visitor. Her parents welcomed Devani to the house.

No sooner Devani sat down she held her face and began to cry. "I came here today to plead forgiveness. I took bitter revenge off your child for the dispute that occurred between your family and mine many years ago".

Rani's parents were astonished when they learnt that their daughter had silently suffered in the Grade 5 class. Rani's father was aware of the personal grudge between Devani's family and his family, but had not expected Devani to take revenge off a student.

"I know that I should be a shamed of myself. I didn't know what it was to forgive and move on in life. But, I have learnt my lessons for been a revengeful character. That is why I'm here today to plead forgiveness."

"We all need to move on in life and leave the past behind," answered Rani's father.

Rani was surprised at the kindness her parents poured on Devani even after Devani admitted to have mentally tortured Rani. "Why did you forgive her, daddy," asked Rani. "We must not be revengeful, dear. We must forgive people even if they have hurt us a great deal," said Rani's father.

plained to her parents about what she was going through; instead she suffered silently.

Rani enjoyed Christmas and prepared herself to enter Grade 6 hoping to have a new life. Rani became a very competitive student. Her competitive nature was overwhelming. She returned home everyday with a smile.

At the end of the year Rani's class teacher informed the students to visit Devani at the primary school office as she was going to resign from school. It had been a sudden decision taken by Devani. So, the students visited Devani to say Good-bye. Rani didn't feel sad on Devani's departure; instead she was happy.

A few months later one evening while Rani was playing in her garden, she saw her former teacher Devani standing by the gate. She thought it was her imagination. She looked hard again, and to her surprise Devani was at the gate. "Please open the gate," she cried. Rani ran inside the house to inform

"Mama, I just can't stand school any longer", said Rani. "Why what's wrong?" asked her mother. "She just keeps bullying and insulting me. I am tired of school, mama," cried Rani. "Who are you talking about?," asked her mother. "You will know someday", said the little girl who was then only 10 years old.

Rani was an excellent student at her school. Sbe was very much liked by everyone. However, Rani's class teacher Devani displayed a hateful attitude towards her. The little girl was repeatedly bullied and insulted. Rani's health too deteriorated while she was in Grade 5. Devani took advantage of Rani's poor health to bully and insult Rani even more. Devani's behaviour towards Rani was devastating. Rani felt distressed whenever she was bullied and insulted.

While in Grade 5, Rani wondered what criteria she needed to fulfill to be favoured by teacher Devani. Even when the year came to an end Rani had not found an answer to her question; she remained perplexed. She never com-

### Showers of Blessing on 60th Wedding Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. S.A. Pitchche of Ratnapura, celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary recently with a Thanksgiving Mass at the Chapel of the Convent of the Child Jesus, Ratnapura.

The Mass was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Hariharan Rajapriya, Parish Priest, St. Mary's Church, Bulutota, Asst. Parish Priest of Ratnapura, and Rev. Fr. P. Romeh of Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Ratnapura.

Mr. Pitchche was a former officer of Hapugastenna Plantation limited. He was also a former member of the Ratnapura Parish Council and a member of the Catholic Workers' Society of Ratnapura.

Rev. Sr. Patsy of the National School of the Child Jesus Convent, Ratnapura is one of their daughters.

**Theobald Samarungua**

**TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!**



The English teacher was teaching the past and future tenses. He said "I killed a person." Now children convert this sentence into the future tense. "You, Banda?" The future tense is, "You will go to jail."

**Rev. Fr. Fraccid Anthony Fernando O.M.I.**

# St. Joseph's Home: Heaven for the aged



**Art**  
& Architecture  
in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando



The bungalow with 5 acres of coconut land immediately behind the house was donated to the church in 1952, for the establishment of a Home for the Aged. An additional wing was built

next to the main house for the inmates with separate facilities for males and females. The Archbishop of Colombo at that time Thomas Cardinal Cooray who was a blessed the house and named it 'St. Joseph's Home for the Aged Tammita' in accordance with the wishes of the Donors. Mr Dudley Senanayake was also present at the opening ceremony as were the members of Mr De Livera's family and friends.

Presently the Home is refuge to 50 women and 29 men. The Home is managed by the Sisters. Good Shepherd



**C**arlston was the charming bungalow of Mr. J.M. De Livera and family in Tammita, Negombo. The bungalow with its quaint roof lines, hexagonal tower, semi circular rooms, and verandahs is unique in its architecture.

It was in this house that Joe De Livera his son and Rita his daughter were born and spent their childhood years. Joe De Livera (82) remembers his semi circular room upstairs at the back of the house with its wide set of windows overlooking the back yard, which has to be ascended through a spiraling wooden stairway.

## An evening of harmony by the Archdiocesan Choir of Colombo



of the choir and the music director of the show. The music arrangements, mixing and mastering of the CD to be launched at this show is credited to him. The last few days have been sleepless nights for him due to the CD project," he added.

**Janith Tissera** who is employed at Atom Technologies Pvt. Ltd, is one of the leaders of the choir. He said that he was very excited about the event. "The choir will treat you to an evening of sacred music, carols

**T**he Archdiocesan Choir of Colombo will stage 'An evening of harmony' on Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> of November at the Bishop's College Auditorium at 7.00 pm.

In 2007, a bunch of young adults some married and most not, came together to form a choir. They all had one passion in common; love for music. It was their dream to praise and glorify their Creator through song and music. It was their prayer to lead people towards spirituality.

Their mentor trainer and good friend was none other than Rev. Fr. Prasad Niranjana Fernando, himself a talented musician. The choir in fact had been Fr. Prasad's brain child. In his casual visits to churches and schools he had earmarked several of those who ultimately came together around him to form the choir.

At first the choir did not have a name in particular. However in 2009 supported by Rev. Fr. Cecil Joy, the then Archdiocesan Liturgy Coordinator and the then Archbishop Oswald Gomis, the time had come for the choir to be named and it was designated as the 'Archdiocesan Choir of Colombo'.

At present there are 51 choristers from various parishes within the Archdiocese. The Archdiocese of Colombo comprises the whole of the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The choristers come from Avissawella, Negombo, Payagala, Kadalana, Ragama, Moratuwa, Maligawatte, Nitambuwa, and Kotigawatte.

I visited one of their practice sessions at St. Joseph's College Auditorium to meet with a very lively and enthusiastic crowd of people, whose happy faces and spirit was contagious.

So how do you coordinate the choir I asked **Fr. Prasad**. "I have two leaders who help me to keep the choir together. I am happy to get young people together and bring them close to God through music. It is very much their choir and they manage it," he said. "And I have a highly talented organist, audio engineer and skilled music director in Udara Fernando who has always been a big support to me. Udara is the regular organist

and a medley of golden oldies. The choir will be conducted by Rev. Fr. Prasad. There will be three guest artists: Nirosha Viraginee, Chandana Liyanarachchi, Angeline Gunathilake and a dance performance by Channa and Upuli's dancing troupe. The chief guests at the occasion will be His Eminence Malcom Cardinal Ranjith and the Guest of Honour will be the Apostolic Nuncio Joseph Spiteri. Proceeds of the show will be in aid of the poor relief fund of the Archdiocese," he said.

**Lakmali Fernando** the other leader added : "It is the first time that our choir will be staging a choir show. Some events at which our choir had sung previously are: the President's felicitation ceremony to his Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith at the BMICH and his first Thanksgiving Mass in Sri Lanka after being elevated to the College of Cardinals, Eucharistic celebrations for Archbishop Oswald Gomis' 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, 50<sup>th</sup> Priestly Anniversary and farewell to His Grace as the outgoing Archbishop, Archbishop Emeritus Dr. Nicholas Marcus' 50th Priestly Anniversary, Presbyterian Diaconate to the priesthood in 2009 at St Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya, Blessed Joseph Vaz' mass of tercentenary at Tewatte, the Diocesan youth retreat and the Blessing of the sick at Tewatte.

Our new CD of carols will also be launched at this show. It is our Christmas gift to the world. It is titled 'Jesu Bilindu Ipaduneya' or 'Christ the Saviour is born'. Earlier in 2006 we released two CDs which were devotional songs to the Blessed Sacrament and Mother Mary titled 'Sirasa nama' and 'Ma Mavuni', she further added.

*This is what some of the choir members had to say:*

**Udara Fernando** ( Employed at Auido Lab Boralessgamuwa. He has his own audio studio as well).

"It was Fr. Prasad who introduced me to liturgical music. I love it and enjoy it and find that it even helps in my job as a music producer. I must thank my wife Michelle who is also in the choir for being always supportive of my work".

**Ramesh Fernando** (Commercial Bank) The choir has grown to be one big family. We belong to different parishes and some of our parishes do not have much opportunity other than the church choir. This is a God given opportunity to go on stage and



perform in polyphony music. It needs a lot of commitment. Fr. Prasad takes a huge interest in training and keeping the choir up to standard even with his busy schedule as a Vice Rector at St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa.

**Randika Fernando** (Star Garments).

The choir is awesome. God has given us talent and we serve Him with it. It is also an opportunity to get to know people from different parishes with different living styles. Even with such differences the choir has taught me that we can feel like one family.

**Cilani Wijesinghe** (MAS Holdings Pvt. Ltd).

It is great to be together and sing together. We put a lot of effort to it, even attending practices on Sundays, Poya days and late nights. We love giving our voices to God and worshipping Him -all for the Glory of God. Fr. Prasad is very concerned about us. After late night practices transport is organized and he makes sure that we have all reached home safely.

**Kervyn Lewis** (Maharaja Entertainment).

It was only through Fr. Prasad that I got to know what real spiritual music was. It helps in my spirituality as well. And being part of the choir is fun.

**Clifford Prasantha Fernando** Professional Photographer.

To be part of the choir means a lot to me. Here under the guidance of Fr. Prasad we are given the opportunity to learn more about how to sing and harmonise in particular with regard to liturgical and sacred singing.

Tickets are priced at Rs. 500/=, Rs. 750/=, Rs. 1,000/=, Rs. 1,500/= and will be available at Vibrations and at the gate. For more details of the show please contact Janith 0777344923 and Lakmali 0774171120.



# CIRCULAR ON THE YEAR OF THE WORD OF GOD

Archdiocese of Colombo



## Preamble

"Just as from constant attendance at the Eucharistic mystery the life of the Church draws increase, so a new impulse of spiritual life may be expected from the increased veneration of the Word of God, which stands for ever" (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation No. 26). These closing words of the Second Vatican Councils' Constitution '*Dei Verbum*' on Divine Revelation bring out best the intimate relationship that exists between the Eucharist and Sacred Scripture. And so, even though we have officially come to the end of the Year of the Eucharist in the Archdiocese while continuing to focus our attention on this most Holy Sacrament for the entire decade (2010-2020), we have thought it timely and appropriate to declare the year 2011-2012 as the Year of the Word of God, for in and through His Word, God continues to speak to us and along with the Sacred Tradition of the Church reveals Himself to us.

## Importance of the Year of the Word of God

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, keeping this centrality of the Word of God for our life of faith and witness in mind, at a gathering of Priests of the Archdiocese of Colombo held on the 24th and 25th October 2011, we decided that the Liturgical Year 2011-2012 would be declared a year dedicated to the Word of God within the Archdiocese.

This decision which we took in consultation also with the Archdiocesan Biblical Commission, I think is very timely because the Word of God is the basic foundation of committed Christian living. The Apostle speaks to us of hearing, seeing, touching and looking upon {c.f. 1 Jn 1:1} the word of life, since life itself was made manifest in Christ. Called to communion with God and among ourselves, we must proclaim this gift. From this kerygmatic stand point, the Synodal assembly was a testimony, before the Church and before the world, to the immense beauty of encountering the Word of God in the communion of the Church" (*Verbum Domini*, No.2).

Hence it is expedient that the Catholic Community of the Archdiocese study and pray with the Word of God in an effective and convincing manner lest they look for it elsewhere. Even though for decades the Church has continued to insist on the centrality of the Word of God, sadly though a considerable number of our faithful have sought refuge among various evangelical sects to satisfy this genuine need. So, as pastors and members of the Catholic Community, we need to come to terms with this situation and re-affirm our joyful yet strongly ecclesial way of praying and inter-acting with God's very Word.

## Solemn Opening

In order to aptly usher in the Year of the Word of God, it has been decided to solemnly declare the

Year open on the 26th of November 2011, the Vigil of the first Sunday of Advent, at our Cathedral Church, St. Lucia's at 6.00 p.m. with a liturgical Evening Prayer Service. And so, I extend a special invitation to all the pastors of the city parishes of Colombo, members of religious communities and ten lay faithful from each of the city parishes to join us on this occasion.

It is for reasons of practical mobility and time that this ceremony has been limited to the participation of the city parishes. Yet all are welcome. At the same time, in every other parish similar ceremonies should be organized either simultaneously on Saturday the 26th or on Sunday the 27th November, which is the first Sunday in Advent. The main ceremony will consist of the exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, Vespers, bringing of the Holy Bible in procession and enthroning it, reading of the proclamation of the Year and benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. Formats of this ceremony and of a possible proclamation ceremony within the Holy Mass will be made available through the Archdiocesan website by the Archdiocesan Commission for Liturgical Apostolate. The Parish Fathers could make use of that for the organization of their own opening ceremony at parish level.

## Objectives

As regards our objectives in declaring and celebrating the Year of the Word of God, it must be said that all of us who are of the clergy would be duty bound to lead our Faithful to the Word of God, who is none other than Christ Himself, so that their spiritual life may be nourished and enriched by Him, in all its aspects.

The apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy says, "Proclaim the Word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching." (2 Tim. 4:2). This admonition ought to be a source of inspiration to proclaim God's Word constantly and consistently. Hence we ought to intensify what is being already done by the Biblical Apostolate in the Archdiocese and make the Bible even more read and responded to. This also means that the Small Christian Communities too will have to be energized further and strengthened towards a more zealous living out of their faith.

The Holy Bible needs to be better distributed, read and prayed, become the well-spring of a true renewal of faith and be studied and better understood by all. Finally, an ongoing interest and thirst for the frequent and prayed use of the Word of God will have to be generated in this year within the Catholic community of the Archdiocese.

## Programmes

And so, in order to achieve these objectives, the Archdiocesan Commission for the Biblical Apostolate in conjunction with the Catechetical, Liturgical and Social Communications Commissions will launch the following programmes during the Year of the Word of God:

- Make the Holy Bible available to more families that do not possess it. The intention behind this would be to encourage reading the Bible and praying with it, as a family.
- To do this it would be most appropriate to recommend to families that could donate a Bible to a family that does not have one as a way of sharing the faith.
- Promote the study of the Bible systematically at the parish level, with the parish priest taking a leading role and cooperating with the Commission in its work in preparing the Bible sharers or organizers of Bible study or prayer groups.
- Promote Biblical prayer with the more frequent use of the Liturgy of the Hours (Yama Yaduma).
- Harnessing the support of the Deva Dharma Nikethanaya or such institutions to prepare parish level Biblical animation.
- The Biblical Commission to provide with short notes and comments on the Sunday Readings, especially for the Season of Advent, Lent and Easter.
- The Blessed Joseph Vaz Theologate to organize three short courses on Sacred Scripture to facilitate the study of the Bible. Participation in this programme is to be encouraged for parish and institutional representatives.
- The Archdiocesan Social Communications

Centre to embark on a project to produce CDs and DVDs on the Bible and on the prayer based on the Bible.

- The Archdiocesan Biblical Commission, with its expertise, should train Bible Instructors giving preference to those who have completed the degree on Christian Studies.

- A prayer on the Word of God will be provided to the parishes to be used before or after the Eucharistic celebration or on other suitable occasions.

- The Biblical Commission is to prepare a poster for Year of the Word of God. The year's theme would be: "Towards a renewal of faith through the Word of God".

At this point, I urge all shepherds of parishes and heads of institutions to take it upon themselves personally to bring their communities ever closer to a profound sense of love of the Divine Word and readiness to be inspired by its challenge in their lives.

## Concluding Remarks

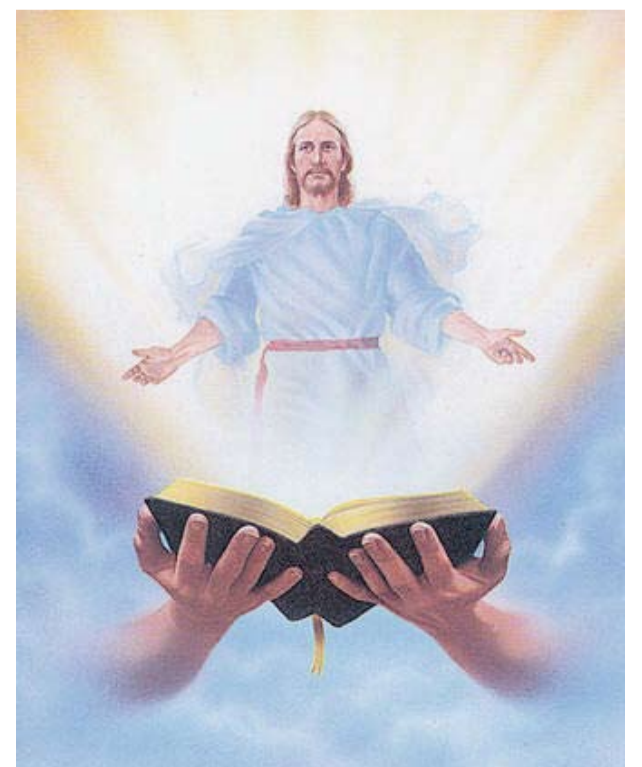
Dear Brothers and Sisters, the Lord has given us a golden opportunity to be familiar with His Word, to pray with it, to strengthen our faith in Him in this Year of Faith and conduct our lives in a manner pleasing to Him. Hence, in this year of Grace let us make maximum use of the opportunities He is going to provide us with, in order to bear witness to His Word so that many will come to know Him and be saved.

Finally, let me stress that these activities should initiate an ongoing process going beyond the programmes organized for this special year and help many to love and cherish the Word of God and learn to be sensitive to its demands.

It is only in this manner, that is through a life committed to responding to the challenges that come our way from God's very Word and a strong desire to enter into a profound spirit of Communion with Him in the Most Holy Eucharist that the Archdiocesan Church would be blessed with the gift of many heroic and saintly witnesses of the faith and prepare ourselves for the Year of Faith which the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI himself has decided to call for, from 11th October 2012 to 24th November 2013.

May Mary the Blessed Mother, whose womb by God's own choice became the tabernacle of the presence on earth of the Divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, be our inspiration and strength as we seek to ourselves become bearers of the Word to our brothers and sisters.

✠ **Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith**  
Archbishop of Colombo





# Advent, Christmas & Epiphany



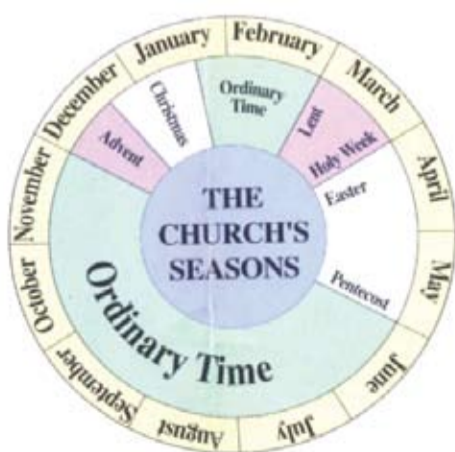
Rediscovering their true meaning

## Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

Despite the merriment, shopping, carols and bright lights, for many Christmas can be a painful, isolated and unloving time — many are swept up in entertainment only to be plunged back into isolation. Despite all the Christmas trappings, what is the reality of this precious time?

### Have we lost the meaning of the seasons?

Advent and Christmas are two of the Church's 'seasons' - a bit like nature's seasons. Another is the Season of Lent, which prepares us for the Season of Easter. Easter, not Christmas, is the Church's greatest festival, when we remember Christ's resurrection from the dead, the favourite time for baptising new Christians.



### What is Advent?

Advent means more than preparing for Christmas. It starts each new year for the Christian, a period of waiting and expectancy. The joyful Season of Advent, (observed for at least 1500

years) starts in late November or early December, and leads us into Christmas in a four week season of preparation. Advent resets the clocks and calendars for Christians we move into another cycle of prayer, liturgy and scripture. Autumn ends, winter begins. Advent calls us to a new beginning.

### First part of Advent - looking forward

Curious and apprehensive about when 'the Lord will come again', Christians live in the 'in between' period of their salvation, between the 'two comings' of Christ:

1. When Christ came to Bethlehem giving us the opportunity to receive him in the flesh - celebrated in the last nine days of Advent (a Novena).
2. When Christ will come again to take his Bride, the Church, at the end of time - celebrated in the first part of Advent.

This is the heart and tension of Advent, waiting expectantly, in joy and hope, since the Risen Christ will be revealed to everyone on the last day. When we think of his Second Coming at the end of the world, gloomy ancient pictures of doom are not appropriate. God's judgement is the ultimate expression of his tender mercy. Advent is a time to face our own end, and to fix our eyes on heaven however uncomfortable that may seem.

### The flavour of Advent

Joy is restrained during Advent - there are no flowers on the Altar and the vestments are purple (sobriety, not sadness). Such restraint only enhances the happy outburst of joyful white and gold of Christmas. Advent always contains just four Sundays. Advent Scripture is dominated by 3 figures:

- The Prophet Isaiah promising light to dispel darkness;
- St John the Baptist calling us to prepare a way for the Lord; and
- Mary of Nazareth accepting the incarnation of the Messiah in her flesh.

By midnight on 24 December we are ready for the Light of God coming into the world's darkness.

### Advent calendar, Advent wreath and candles

These are popular, and enhance the sense of waiting, counting the days. Many such calendars miss the point by giving a piece of chocolate or some other present every day. The five candles

of the wreath, found in Churches and homes, similarly mark the progress of advent by lighting a new candle on each of the four Sundays and on Christmas day itself.

### Charity

There is a strong tradition of fasting and charity in Advent, and especially of hope. A shopper may occasionally drop a little change into a charity box, or even write cheques for Christmas gifts to the poor, and give a hand with Christmas parties for the homeless; but this is sometimes a fleeting expression of sentiment. A well-kept Advent teaches us to share with the poor at a deeper level. We learn to cope with our own spiritual poverty; and to appreciate our true riches: Faith in Jesus Christ.

### Second part of Advent - preparing for Christmas

Anyone who keeps Advent carefully will get nearer to the truth about Christmas, and have a happier Christmas than one who simply attends church on Christmas day. Nine days of prayer (from 17 - 25 December), waiting and meditating on the incarnation, focus our lives on Christmas itself. In Russia, there is a custom of fasting and silence on Christmas eve until the first star appears (the star which shone above Bethlehem).

### Christmas and the 12 days of Christmas

Christmas time, celebrating the nativity and first 'manifestation' of Christ to mankind, lasts until the Epiphany (6 January). December 25 roughly coincides with the winter solstice when the sun begins to rise in its orbit and the long winter nights grow shorter. It was the season of ancient pagan festivals, since transformed by Christianity. Churches and families often have a small crib, depicting the nativity scene to keep in mind the wonder of the Incarnation and the characters involved in it. The Christmas tree reminds us of the eternal life Jesus came to bring since in winter the evergreen fir becomes a sign of undying life.

The twelve days of Christmas (25 December to 6 January) are filled with many feasts, each with its own reward and character not to be lost: The Feast of St Stephen, the first martyr; St John the Evangelist; Feast of the Holy Family, to reflect on the family of Nazareth; Feast of the

Holy Innocents, recalling all (including children) slaughtered throughout history. Even the passage of 31 December to 1 January (New Year) can be rediscovered also by celebrating the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, a time to reflect on the past year and place our lives in the hands of God our Father in the coming year.

### The 'Epiphanies' of Jesus

The Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated on 6 January. The 'Epiphany' is the 'manifestation' of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Saviour of the World. This great feast celebrates three important and connected events, reflected in the readings and liturgy



over the period -

- The adoration of Jesus by the magi — Jesus is revealed to the pagans and nations who welcome the incarnation, God made present. Traditionally, three magi (or kings) named Balthazar, Caspar and Melchior bring gifts to the child Jesus: gold for a king, incense for God, and myrrh ointment for one who is destined to die.

- The baptism of Jesus in the Jordan by John the Baptist, - his public life begins as the Messiah of Israel (usually celebrated on the Sunday after the Epiphany); and

- The miracle of Jesus at the wedding in Cana, - his first great public act where he reveals his power and mission.

So, from the end of November through to January, Christians have much to celebrate and be grateful for: A strong light of hope shines in the darkness of winter.

(Catholic Truth Society)



# November - Month of Our Dear Departed

In Christianity, November, the 11th month of the English calendar brings to mind remembrances of our dear departed relatives, family members and deceased friends. But in the killing fields of Sri Lanka euphemistically called the "Land of the Dhamma" we do not have to wait for 11 months to think of the dead, for there isn't a day that someone does not get killed. But November starts with the feast of All Saints and on the following day those who died are remembered. Though the dead are remembered throughout the year, in November merits to the deceased are freely offered via Masses, prayers and the giving of alms.

Purgatory is a mystery of God's Justice and Mercy and part of the Divine Plan. The location of this place has been revealed to some saints among whom are St. Theresa, St. Louis Bertrand, St. Mary Magdala de Pazzi, Gregory the Great, and St. Frances of Rome while the pain endured there and its nature have been narrated by Ss. Francis de Sales, Catherine of Genoa and Venerable Bede. The pain of sense and its diversity the duration and the cause of suffering too, have been revealed to other saints, according to a book authored by Fr. F.X.Schoupe.SJ where purgatory is explained via lives and legends of many saints.

It is history that the Protestant "Reformers" of the 16th century rejected this teaching though Calvin had admitted that it had been a common belief always. In the publisher's preface the Jesuit notes that it is the Protestants who languish in purgatory for long, and suffer the worst since they have few friends or relations to pray for them. He adds that it is a revelation made to Anne Catherine Emmerich. The Jesuit also quotes a disproportionate number of instances where religious

personalities have come back from the place to make revelations about how they suffered. In the Author's Preface Fr. Schoupe says that St. Catherine of Sienna in order to spare her father the pains of purgatory, offered herself to the Divine justice to suffer in his stead during her whole life and that God accepted her offer and inflicted the most excruciating torments upon her which lasted till she died. As a consequence the soul of her father was admitted into Eternal Glory in return for which "this blessed appeared frequently to his daughter to thank her and made many a revelation in the process to her.

In a closing chapter the author exhorts the faithful to have a devotion to Mary who has promised to assist her children in cleansing their souls and shortening their duration in Purgatory. The Blessed Mother is reported to have told her servant Jerome Carvalho thus. "Have confidence my son I am the Mother of mercy for my dear children in purgatory just as I am for those on earth. To St. Bridget, Mary has said" I am the Mother of those suffering in the place of expiation. My prayers mitigate their suffering." It is believed that like those who recite Mary's Rosary, the faithful who wear the holy scapular enjoy the right of protection of Mary. This devotion of wearing a scapular goes back to the 13th century and was first preached by Bl. Simon Stock the celebrated servant of Mother Mary. Mary has promised two wonderful promises also to those wearing the Brown Scapular. The promise given to our saint on 16.7.1251 runs like this. "Whoever dies wearing this scapular shall not suffer eternal fire." The 2nd promise given to Pope John XXII in the year 1322 is as follows. "I, the Mother of Grace, shall descend on the Saturday after their death, and whomsoever I find in purgatory, will be freed."

Defining death varies according to different philosophies. The Buddhist teaching on death is that there is no cessation of life after death but you will have a rebirth depending on how you lived the previous life.

By Lenard R. Mahaarachchi



The Hindu religion also teaches that the dead are to be reborn until the karma is exhausted and the soul is liberated. In Islam the spirit of the dead are tormented unless one has lived an exemplary life which will enable him or her to lie in peace till Judgement day: The Jewry of Jesus's day believed that death is the gate where eternity meets time. The Psalmist said, "The Lord is not praised by the dead, or by any who go down to the land of silence." "In the book of Tobit and in Macabbees, death is justified by the alleviation of suffering by prayers of the living. "It is a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, to be loosed from their sins." (2 Mac. 12:45).

St. Paul said, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. "While that was the sentiment of the first century Christian community, in our time there are people who literally interpret death's positive side. The late Bishop author Fulton Sheen gave a fine interpretation of it. When he was to face surgery that was nigh fatal, a friend is said to have asked him, "How if you die as a consequence of the operation?" He is said to have answered, "If I do not die, Christ will live in me, and if I die, I will live in Him." What great sentiments from the evangelist and preacher of our day?

Finally, death to a Christian is not the end but a new beginning and thanks to the Resurrection of Jesus, death to a Christian is the prelude to, Resurrection and Life Everlasting, depending of course on the type of life one leads on planet earth.

*This is the last letter my mother gave me before she passed away into the arms of Jesus and Mother Mary.*  
Arushan V.S. Kirk, Doha, Qatar

## A voice from beyond

I went, dear ones  
My journey has just begun  
Not to make you grieve  
But my time was over  
That, you have to believe  
Remember I loved you  
And I always will  
It's just that I can't wait And forever live  
Now it's your tum  
To live your life  
Heavenly grace you must earn  
And always do what's right  
I have now come to the end of the road  
And the sun has set for me  
I want no rites in a gloom filled room  
Why cry for a soul set free  
Miss me if you will  
But not forever  
And not with your heads bowed down  
Remember the fun we once shared  
This is a journey we all must take  
And each of us goes it alone  
It's all a part of the Master's plan  
A step on the road to home  
When you are lonely and sick at heart  
Bury your sorrow in doing good deeds  
Be thankful for our many beautiful years  
I gave you my love you can only guess  
How much you gave me in happiness  
Thank you for the love you have shown  
But now it's time I have to travel alone  
Grieve for me awhile, if grieve you must  
Then let your grief be comforted by trust  
Bless the memories within your heart  
For it's only for a time we have to part  
Though I am far away life has to go on  
So if you need me, call and I will come  
Though you can't see or touch me, I will be near  
And if you listen with your heart, you could hear  
All my love around you soft and clear  
When you must come alone  
I will greet you with a smile in Jesus  
And say welcome home.

Amma

## Franciscan Missionaries of Mary Provincial Superior



Sister Antoinette Gomez, FMM

Sister Antoinette Gomez has been elected Provincial of the Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. She is the eldest daughter of Mr. Gaspar Emmanuel Maximus Gomez and of Mrs. Mary Helen Gomez of Borella.

She entered the Novitiate in the year 1989 and made her first vows in 1991, and final vows in 1997. For many years she had been in Canada as a missionary.

Sister Antoinette took over as Provincial of the Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary Sri Lanka on 31st October 2011.

We assure her our prayers and may God's blessings be upon her.

Sr. Ethel de Silva FMM

## A lovable personality and enthusiastic social worker

Two minutes silence was observed at the Parish Pastoral Council meeting of St. Anne's Church Wattala for the late Nimal Saparamadu.

Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Ruban Leslie Silva took in the chair, with the Secretary Mr. Hector Paris.


Mr. Gerard Kithudasa, former secretary of the Parish Council speaking said, the inexorable hand of death has removed from our midst one of the foremost sons of Wattala Parish, Mr. Nimal Saparamadu, Chairman and founder of the OKI International School.

He was an enthusiastic social worker, a lovable personality and above all, a perfect gentleman. he moved among the people of the Parish and the parishioners liked him. His ability, his honesty and integrity above all, his courtesy and honourable conduct brought him rich rewards.

His sympathy towards poor children made him to serve the orphanages and to uplift the knowledge of the young generation. Hence, he opened up branches of the OKI in different parts of the island.

May his memory remain fresh and sweet among those who knew him and may the Good Lord grant him eternal life!

D.G. Kithudasa  
Ex-Secretary



### GOOD SAMARITAN

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan.

She asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence,

"I think I'd throw up."

**LIFE EDUCATION  
for Teens**



**Fr. Chrispin Leo**

"Life Education for Teens" written by Fr. Chrispin Leo is a fine start to a very few books that provide guidelines in the field of Youth Education. Life is the best Educator. Education from life is worth many books written on theories of life.

It is said that knowledge from experiences is better than knowledge from books. No wonder the author of "Imitation of Christ" Thomas A. Kempis said it is better to be a simple famler with life experiences than

a proud philosopher who theorizes. Life Education is a life long process, from womb to the tomb. In this process youth occupies a very important phase in a person's life. It is a transitional period from adolescence to adulthood.

Pope John Paul II said, "If the Church has a special interest in the young, it is because they are at all times the hope of both world and the Church." This is particularly true in our time.

The mission of the Church is to establish the kingdom of God on earth, to build up a new era, a new temporal order, based on Gospel values. It is characterized by justice, peace, equality, freedom, love. The mission aims at the creation of a fully mature human being, a person, "fully human and fully alive"

Ministry is the concrete expression of the mission. Mission is effected through Ministry. Ministry may be considered as a means of achieving the mission. It may be defined as the generous sharing of the gifts of the Community of believers among themselves as Jesus did, so that the world may be a better place to live in. Life Education for the pre-university students, is one of the many expressions of Ministry in the Church.

Youth Ministry is not new in the Church. However there has been a consistent appeal from all quarters to give our adolescent students who are at the threshold of tertiary education or seeking employment a fresh outlook to life education, to build them up to its stature through. Today more than ever before. it is felt that without the Youth Ministry the Church's mission to the world cannot be accomplished in its totality. In this context Youth Ministry is part and parcel of the Church's Ministry in the world.

Work on Life Education by Fr. Chrispin Leo is a pioneering work in this field. Fr. Chrispin has well in-

tegrated the insights he has gained as YCS, Youth and University Chaplain with the theoretical knowledge he has from books.

This book would be a fine guide to all teachers of G.C.E. Advanced Level students who are looking for a guide book. I wish to congratulate Fr. Chrispin Leo for his work on life Education.

**Rt. Rev. Dr. Marius Pieris -  
Auxiliary Bishop,  
Archdiocese of Colombo.**

Rev. Dr. W.D.G. Chrispin Leo is a scholarly priest in the Archdiocese of Colombo, Sri Lanka, with a long standing experience of handling youth and students. He was ordained a Priest in Rome by Pope Paul VI.

He has worked as YCS (Young Christian Student movement) Chaplain for number of years and 3 years as the Chaplain of IYCS Asia. Many of his years in life was spent working with youth in different capacities such as Chaplain of University Students and Diocesan and National Youth Chaplain. He has attended many International Seminars on Youth and Chaplains and has travelled across the world many a time.

He obtained a post-graduate Diploma and a Master's Degree from London School of Economics, UK. He was the Rector of Aquinas College of Higher Studies for seventeen years and raised it to a Degree Awarding Institute.



**Rev. Dr. Chrispin Leo**

**Futsal Championship - 2011**



The Soccer Team of Holy Cross College, Kalutara which has been rated as one of the leading schools in the field of Soccer once again has proved its standards by winning three Championships in the Futsal Tournament organized by the Soccer Advisory Committee of St. Joseph's College, Colombo on 2nd November 2011, with the participation of 35 schools from different parts of the Island.

Holy Cross College Under-13 Soccer team emerged bowl champions beating Maris Stella College, Negombo in the finals. Holy Cross College under 15 Soccer Team emerged bowl champions beating Joseph Vaz College, Wennappuwa and our College under 17 Soccer Team emerged bowl champions beating Maris Stella College in the finals.

In the picture the teams are seen together with Rev. Fr. Camillus Fernando, The Rector

**'Messenger'**  
**The Catholic paper in every Catholic home**

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**TIN MEMORIAM**

**23rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY**  
**Born : - 13th September 1932**  
**Died :- 30th November 1988**



**M. K. ROCKSAMY**  
**(Music Director)**

*"Death Leaves a heartache no one can heal"  
Love leaves a memory no one can steal*

*The love and devotion you gave us  
and the sweet memories of you  
are what fills our aching hearts  
that overwhelming compassion for you*

*Your guidance is of true value  
And we promise that we'll never forget  
Your honest and genuine virtues  
And that you were a God among men*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by Your ever - loving Wife, children, grandchildren and all loved ones.  
**31/52/A, Asokarama Mawatha  
Balagala Road, Hendala Wattala.**

(N1757)

# The Diamond Necklace

This story was written by a french writer. It was implied to suit our Sri Lankan youth.

The main character Malini a pretty but selfish girl was weak so everyone had to give in to her. She married Sunil a clerk who did all he can to please her. But Malini was never satisfied.

One day Sunil's boss invited them to his party. Sunil thought that this would make her happy but she complained that she had nothing to wear, So Sunil sacrificed the money he collected to buy a motor-bike to get her a saree. Even then she grumbled saying that she had no proper jewellery to go with it. She borrowed a diamond necklace from her rich friend Yasoda who willingly gave it.

Malini was the prettiest woman at the party. Everyone, even the boss admired her. Malini was on top of the world. Everyone was very happy but the happiness didn't last long. For when she reached home she discovered that she had lost her Diamond Necklace.

Malini and Sunil had to borrow money, take loans, etc. to replace the Diamond Necklace Both had to work very hard to repay the loans. Sunil now had become a drunkard. Malini had to go from house to house to sell goods. The once pretty Malini became an ugly woman in shabby clothes. So much so that her friend Yasoda didn't recognise her at first. Surprised she asked Malini what happened to her. Malini told her

the whole story. Yasoda cried and said "Poor Malini, It wasn't a real diamond Necklace. It was an imitation necklace.

### The lesson we learnt from this story :

- 1) We should be satisfied with what we have.
- 2) To think a out others starting with the family. We must learn to share our joys and sorrows together.
- 3) Sunil should have changed his wife's attitudes and ways. We should change for the better.
- 4) The diamond necklace is a symbol of Malini. Malini wanted to shine like the diamond, but with her selfishness and bad qualities she was only an imitation. The moment she learnt her lesson and

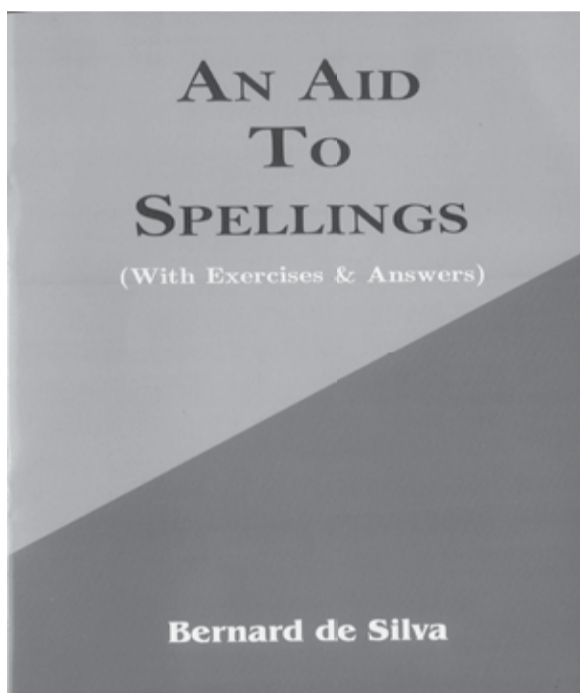
changed her ways she become a real Diamond.

We did this story for Literature and discussed many things we could do to cultivate virtues and eradicate vice. Very often we are like Malini. We want to be what we are not. Let us become real diamonds by cultivating virtues.

Sent by:  
Kushan  
Sajini  
Shalini  
Malisha  
Mahesh  
Shalika  
Suraj



## An Aid To Spellings



"An Aid to Spellings" is the latest publication of the well - known author and Kalabhushana Award winner, Bernard De Silva.

It is a very interesting book on Spellings, which will be much useful not only to school children and teachers but also to university students, government and private sectors employees, and all those working in the English language.

Chapter B. of the book deals with spelling rules, which will help you to a certain extent remember the spellings of some words, A reader will find various examples given under suffixes very useful.

The book contains 25 spelling exercises with answers. These exercises will test the learner's ability to spell English words correctly. This publication will be much popular among learners of the English language.

This is the first book published by an author in Sri Lanka on English spellings.

## The Sting

This is a little story told at a funeral recently. It has a play on words about a "sting" which is vivid in its application:

Once a boy and his father were driving along the road in through the family car, when a bee flew in the window. The boy got very upset when he saw the bee buzzing around his head, and he began throwing his arms around madly, almost causing an accident. Maybe you think he was a coward, but that boy was a special case. You see he was allergic to bee stings! The doctors had told him that if he ever got stung by a bee again he would die of the sting! So naturally enough the boy was very frightened of the bee. The father tried to brush it out of the car window, but couldn't make it go out. So he quickly grabbed the bee! But it escaped, and buzzed around the boy's head again making him scream with terror this time.

Well, the bee was still in the car, but the father pulled over to the edge of the road and said to the boy, "It is OK, you are all right."

Then he opened his hand, and there sticking into his palm the boy could

see the bee sting! His father had allowed the bee to sting him self He had taken the sting out of the danger. There was no danger about the bee any more.

The priest told that story to show us all, that Jesus Christ has taken the "sting" out of death itself. He let death "sting" Him instead of ourselves, so we could live forever and never die. How wonderful. The Bible tells us about that "sting" being taken out of death by Jesus Christ:

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through Our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)

The sting of death is sin-and the strength of sin is the law Sin makes us unable to face a Holy God after we die. We cannot keep God's Law. But Jesus Christ has fixed that for us. He has given believers the "victory" or made us winners over death. Praise God, we will never really die when we trust in Jesus as Our Lord.

-Author Unknown

## CROSSED CONNECTIONS

A Minnesota couple decided to vacation to Florida during the winter. They planned to stay at the very same hotel where they spent their honeymoon 20 years earlier. Because of hectic schedules, it was difficult to coordinate their travel schedules. So, the husband left Minnesota and flew to Florida on Thursday. His wife would fly down the following day.

The husband checked into the hotel. There was a computer in his room, so he decided to send an e-mail to his wife. However, he accidentally left out one letter in her e-mail address, and without realizing his error, he sent the e-mail.

Meanwhile.....somewhere in Houston, a widow had just returned home from her husband's funeral. He was a minister of many years who was called home to glory following a sudden heart attack. The widow decided to check

her e-mail, expecting messages from relatives and friends. After reading the first message, she fainted.

The widow's son rushed into the room, found his mother on the floor, and saw the computer screen which read:

**To: My Loving Wife**  
**Subject: I've Arrived**  
**Date: 16 May 2003**

I know you're surprised to hear from me. They have computers here now and you are allowed to send e-mails to your loved ones. I've just arrived and have been checked in. I see that everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Looking forward to seeing you then! Hope your journey is not as uneventful as mine was. P.S. Sure is hot down here!

One day an ass and a fox entered into an agreement with the lion that they would assist each other while hunting for food. They felt that their combined efforts would ensure that none of them would have to starve.

Of course, both the ass and the fox were a little nervous about accompanying the lion in the hunt. But the thought of the game they would acquire with his help, made them salivate. They put the nervousness down to nerves.

It was an excellent hunt. The three had combed the jungle in their search for food. When they came to a clearing by the lakeside, they dispersed.

It was decided that the ass would keep an eye out for animals to prey on;

when he spotted one, he would go up to the animal and introduce himself. The introductory bray would alert the other two, who were hiding.

The fox would come out at first, growling at the animal. The frightened animal would try to run, the fox would give chase and in trying to avoid him, the animal would run directly in the path of the lion. The lion would then finish the animal off in one swoop.

In the evening, the tired but happy trio assembled in front of the lion's den with their large booty. The lion or-



dered the ass to allot to each of the three partners, his due portion in the treaty.

The ass was very happy. He felt that, by asking him, the lion had bestowed a great honour on him. Very carefully, he divided the spoil into three equal shares. "Sirs, I have done the needful. I modestly request the two of you to take your shares," he said.

The lion stared at the shares for a minute. "Oh! So you think each one of us deserves an equal share. You think

that your feeble attempts to chat with the game compares with my efforts to kill them," he said and jumped on the ass. He killed the ass in one second.

Then he told the terrified fox to make the division. The fox accumulated all that they had killed into one large heap and left to himself the smallest possible share. The rest he requested the lion to have.

"Who has taught you, my dear fellow, the art of division? You are perfect to a fraction," said the lion, pleased as punch.

"I learned it from the ass sir, by witnessing his fate," replied the fox. He made up his mind never to take a lion as partner in any future venture.

## The Lion's Share

What it says ..... in the Readings

**Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help. (Ps. 84:8)**

**LITURGICAL - CALENDAR YEAR B  
27th Nov. - 4th Dec. 2011**

**Sun: FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Is. 63, 16-17, 19:64, 1, 3-8,  
1 Cor. 1, 3-9, Mk. 13:33-37

**Mon:** Is. 2, 1-5; Mt. 8: 5-11

**Tue:** Is. 11:1-10, Lk. 10:21-24

**Wed:** Rom. 10: 9-18, Mt. 4: 18-22

**Thu:** Is. 26:1-6, Mt. 7: 21, 24-27

**Fri:** Is. 30:19-21, 23-26, Mt. 9:35--10, 1, 5a, 6-8

**Sat:** Dan. 7, 15-27, Lk. 21, 34-36

**Sun: SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Is. 40:1-5, 9-11, 2 Pt. 3: 8-14, Mk. 1: 1-8

**St. Cecilia - November 22**

2nd century A.D.  
Patron Saint of Musicians



The martyrdom of Cecilia is said to have followed that of her husband and his brother by the prefect Turcius Almachius. The officers of the prefect then sought to have Cecilia killed as well. She arranged to have her home preserved as a church before she was arrested. At that time, the officials attempted to kill her by smothering her by steam. However, the attempt failed, and she was to have her head chopped off. But they were unsuccessful three times, and **she would not die until she received the Sacrament of Holy Communion.**

Cecilia survived another three days before succumbing. In the last three days of her life, she opened her eyes, gazed at her family and friends who crowded around her cell, closed them, and never opened them again. The people by her cell knew immediately that she was to become a saint in heaven. When her incorruptible body was found long after her death, it was found that on one hand she had two fingers outstretched and on the other hand just one finger, denoting her belief in the Trinity.

**Prayer of the Faithful**

**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**

For those people who with their lips call themselves Christians, but who deny it by the way they live. We pray in faith.

**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**

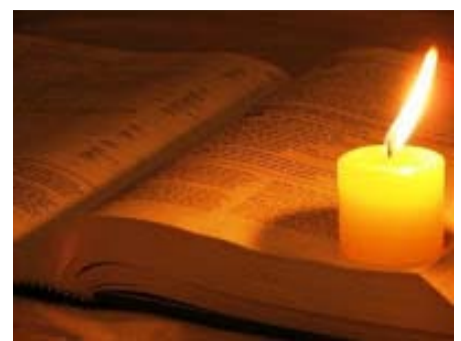
For all those who hold positions of trust and honour in our country but who betray both by their

**1st Reading:**  
Is. 63:16-17, 19; 64:1, 3-8  
God allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed by the Babylonians and made the hard-hearted, unrepentant survivors to be sent into exile in Babylon. The contents and the form of presentation of this reading resemble those of a psalm of lament. These hard-hearted Jewish people, instead of repenting of their sins, kept on blaming God for their distress and frustration. At the same time, recalling the mighty deeds, God had done for the Israelites in the past, they appeal to God rend the heavens and come down to alleviate their sufferings and distress. This appeal resembles an earnest request of a child made to his father.

**2nd Reading:**  
1 Cor. 1, 3-9  
St. Paul makes a thanksgiving to God on account of the Corinthians who had accepted the message of the Gospel. He commends them for living it and bearing witness to it. Hence he exhorts them to remain blameless and

spiritually alive until the dawn of the Day of the Lord.  
**Gospel: Mk. 13, 33-37**  
Jesus presents a parable of a householder who goes abroad after assigning each of his servants his tasks to perform until he returns. Jesus exhorts his hearers to be always alert about his second coming which could take place at a moment they least expect.

**Reflection:**  
The Jewish people placed their trust solely on sacrifices, various forms of ritual and traditions for the sake of attaining salvation. Until the destruction of Jerusalem and Babylonian exile that followed it, they completely disregarded warnings of the prophets like Jeremiah's God's severe judgment. They were not ready to change their way of life. Are we going to remain unrepentant as regards changing our unholy ways of life, continuing to trust only in formal rituals and devotion until the disaster overtakes us?



Like the Corinthian Christians, are we in this Season of Advent, prepare for conversion in us. Are we prepared to live the values of the Gospel in the society we live so that we become powerful witnesses for Christmas and the second coming of Christ?

As we do not know the time of the coming of Christ are we aware that we have to give him an account of our life? Hence we have prepared for it by living a life worthy of him. This is by faithfully carrying out tasks entrusted to us. Hence let us celebrate Christmas and prepare for the second coming by doing our duty towards God and fellow human beings.

**Archdiocesan Commission for the Biblical Apostolate**

**Christ's Glorious Return**

On the First Sunday of Advent, we enter that four-week Season with which a new liturgical year begins and that immediately prepares us for the Feast of Christmas, the memorial of the Incarnation of Christ in history. Yet, the spiritual message of Advent is more profound and already orients us to the glorious return of the Lord at the end of our history. *Adventus* is the Latin word that could be translated by "arrival", "coming" or "presence". In the language of the ancient world it was a technical term that indicated the arrival of an official, and especially the visit of kings or emperors to the provinces, but it could also be used for the appearance of a divinity, which emerged from its hidden dwelling-place and thus manifested its divine power; its presence was solemnly celebrated with worship.

**The visit of the King**

By using this term, "Advent", Christians wanted to express the special relationship that bound them to the Crucified and Risen Christ. He is a King who, having entered this poor province called Earth, made us the gift of his visit and after his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven desired in any case to stay with us; we perceive his mysterious presence in the liturgical assembly. Indeed, in celebrating the Eucharist, we proclaim that he did not withdraw from the world, that he did not leave us alone and, even though we cannot see and touch him as with material and tangible realities, he is in any case with us and among us. Indeed, he is in us, because he can attract to himself and communicate his life to every believer who opens his/her heart to him. Thus, Advent means commemorating the first coming of the Lord in the flesh, with his definitive return already in mind, and, at the same time, it means recognizing that Christ present in our midst makes himself our travelling companion in the life of the Church who celebrates his mystery.

This knowledge, dear brothers and sisters,

deeds. We pray in faith.  
**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**

That those who find life a burden too heavy to carry may find strength and hope. We pray in faith.  
**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**

That the coming of Christ may find us steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and untiring in love. We pray in faith.  
**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**

nourished by listening to the Word of God, must help us to see the world with different eyes, to interpret the individual events of life and history as words that God addresses to us, as signs of his love that assure us of his closeness in every situation; this awareness, in particular, should prepare us to welcome him when "he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end," as in a little while we shall repeat in the Creed.

In this perspective, Advent becomes for all Christians a time of expectation and hope, a privileged time for listening and reflection, as long as we let ourselves be guided by the liturgy, which invites us to advance to meet the Lord who comes.

**"Come, Lord Jesus"**

"Come, Lord Jesus": dear friends, this ardent invocation of the Christian community of the early days must also become our constant aspiration, the aspiration of the Church in every epoch, which longs for and prepares herself for the encounter with her Lord. Come today, Lord; enlighten us, give us peace, help us triumph over violence. Come Lord, we pray precisely in these weeks: "Lord ... let us see your face and will shall be saved" (Ps 80[79]:3), we have just prayed with the words of the Responsorial Psalm. And the Prophet Isaiah revealed to us in the First Reading that the Face of Our Saviour is that of a tender and merciful father who cares for us in all circumstances because we are the work of his hands:

"You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name" (63: 16). Our God is a father prepared to forgive repentant sinners and to welcome those who trust in his mercy (cf. Is 64:4). We had drifted away from him because of sin, falling under the dominion of death, but he took pity on us and, on his own initiative, without any merit on our part, decided to meet our needs, sending his only Son as our Redeemer. As we face such a great mystery of love, our thanksgiving rises spontaneously and our invocation becomes more trusting: Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, today, in our time, in every part of the world, let us feel your presence and grant us your salvation.

