



ST. THERESE OF THE CHILD JESUS
October 1

Messenger



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
October 4

"REGISTERED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS OF SRI LANKA UNDER NO. QD / 11 / NEWS / 2012"

Sunday September 30, 2012 Vol 143 No 37 16 Pages Rs: 25.00 Registered as a newspaper

CHILDREN'S & ELDER'S DAY
October 1



'Unless you change and become like children you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.'
(Matthew 18: 3)

NON-VIOLENCE DAY
October 2



'Do not mistreat or oppress aliens, orphans, or widows; and do not kill innocent people in this holy place.'
(Jeremiah 22: 3)

HABITAT DAY
October 3



'So God created the great sea monsters, all kinds of creatures that live in the water, and all kinds of birds. And God was pleased with what he saw.'
(Genesis: 1: 21)

ANIMAL DAY
October 4



TEACHERS' DAY
October 5



'With all possible wisdom we warn and teach them in order to bring each one into God's presence as a mature individual in union with Christ.'
(Colossians 1: 28)

Islam and Christianity can live together without hatred: Holy Father

Vatican City, (VIS) - Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, addressing a gathering of young people of the Middle East said that the Church is always young, "the Church trusts you and she needs your enthusiasm and your creativity."



"You are living today in this part of the world which witnessed the birth of Jesus and the growth of Christianity. It is a great honour! It is also a summons to fidelity, to love this region, and above all, to your calling to be witnesses and messengers of the joy of Christ," the Holy Father told his youthful audience.

The Holy Father's meeting with the young people was held at Bkerke where the winter

residence of the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch is situated. The place is famous for the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon.

Extracts of the Holy Father's address were: "I am aware of the difficulties which you face daily on account of instability and lack of security, your difficulties in finding employment, and your sense of being alone and on the margins. In a constantly changing world you are faced with many serious challenges.

You are meant to be protagonists of your country's future and to take your place in society and in the Church.

"You have a special place in my heart and in the whole Church, because the Church is always young! The Church trusts you ... (she) needs your enthusiasm and your creativity! Youth is the time when we aspire to great ideals, when we study and train for our future work ... Seek beauty and strive for goodness! ... Open the doors of your minds and hearts to Christ! ... Christ says to you: My peace I give to you! This is the true revolution brought by Christ: That of love.

"Meditate on God's word! Discover how relevant and real the

(See P 2)

Installation of new Bishop of Batticaloa



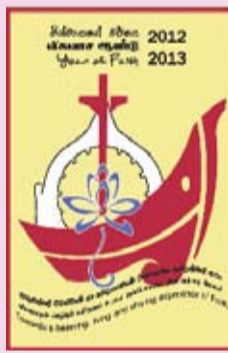
His Excellency Archbishop Joseph Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka, together with His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Swampillai, Bishop of Trincomalee, presided at the Solemn Installation Ceremony of His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Ponniah, as the Bishop of Batticaloa, on Sunday, September 23, 2012, at St. Mary's Cathedral, Batticaloa.

The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, earlier appointed His Lordship Joseph Ponniah as the First Bishop of the newly erected Diocese of Batticaloa, on July 3, 2012.

This Diocese of Batticaloa consists of a population of 1,199,966, comprising 55,225 Catholics, 48 Priests, and 84 Religious.

(Archdiocesan Website)

Promulgation of the 'Year of Faith'



The declaration of the 'Year of Faith' in the Archdiocese of Colombo, will take place on Sunday, October 7 at 6.00 pm at a special Liturgical Service, to be held at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena.

The Solemn Proclamation commencing the 'Year of Faith' will be made at this ceremony by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence, Malcolm

Cardinal Ranjith.

Priests, religious community leaders and lay representatives from all Parishes of the Archdiocesan Deaneries are expected to participate in this event.

Further, parishes in the Archdiocese are requested to independently promulgate the 'Year of Faith' in their respective parishes concurrently.

National Catechetical Sunday

National Catechetical Sunday falls today, September 30, 2012.

The theme for this year is "Experience a renewed life through faith."

Catechesis is an education of faith by which children, youth and adults are helped to grow in their faith, so that they can attain the fullness of Christian life.

The primal duty of today's Catechists is to deepen and strengthen the faith of the children.

"Gleaned from the classics"
By Johannus

Legum Ministri Magistratus, Legum interpretes judices; legum denique Dcirco omnes servi sumus, ut liberi esse possimus.
(from Cicero)

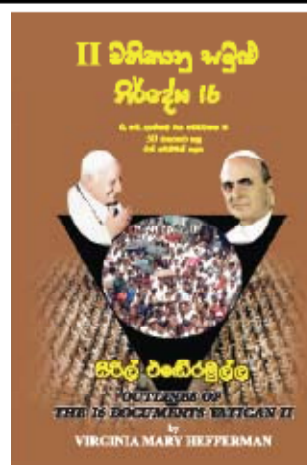
The magistrates are the ministers of the laws, the judges their interpreters; all of us are, in short, servants of the laws, so that we may be a free people.

Vatican documents in Sinhala

The Sinhala version of the sixteen historic documents of the Second Vatican Council originally translated by Rev. Fr. D. J. Anthony OMI, will be published as one Volume with outlines in English.

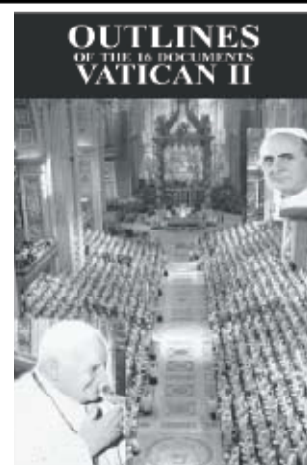
The launch of this Volume will take place on October 11, at Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC and will be presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Chairman of the Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development.

The keynote address will be delivered by Professor Carlo



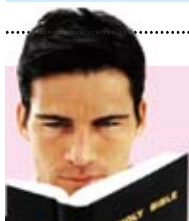
Fonseka.

The Volume comprises a handy reference book to all those who are interested in Vatican documents, especially students of



Theology and GCE O/L and A/L students.

This Volume has been published by the Christian Advisory Board of Godage Publishers, Colombo 10.



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NEW IN BRIEF

2012 - National Christian Literary Festival

The Department of Christian Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Buddhasana and Religious Affairs is organizing the National Christian Literary Festival - 2012, to be held on October 5, 2012 at 2.30 p.m. at Sri Lanka Foundation Institute Auditorium, Independence Square, Colombo-07. Organized for the third time, under the distinguished patronage of His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, President, Catholic Bishop's Conference in Sri Lanka and Archbishop of Colombo together with Hon D.M. Jayaratna, Prime Minister of Democratic Social Republic of Sri Lanka and Minister of Buddhasana and Religious Affairs and with the distinguished participation of Hon M.K.A.D.S. Gunawardana, Deputy Minister of Buddhasana and Religious Affairs.

02. The main events at the festival are

* Presentation of Awards and Certificates to the winners of the All Island Literary Competitions for Christian Sunday School Students.

* Presentation of salutation awards to artist who have rendered a yeoman service to the Christian Hymn literacy in Sinhala, Tamil and English media.

* Introducing a CD of Christian Hymns in Sinhala, Tamil and English which were written before the 80's

* Cultural events in Sinhala, Tamil and English

We cordially invite your institution for media coverage of this unique event. Your co-operation in this regard is highly appreciated.

A.R. Gunawardena
Director

Department of Christian Religious Affairs

First Religious Profession of the Brothers of St. Pio Friary



The First Religious Profession of eight brothers of St. Pio Friary, (Capuchin) Nattandiya, was held on September 8, 2012.

The Brothers, J.M. Uthayna, Javed Masih, Abneer Khen, Danish Daniel Mashal Khan, Atif Nadeem, Rajnal Rehmat and Pio Paras observed their vows of Religious Profession before Rev. Fr. William Osharath.

Shriyani Felicia

Madhu Festival on October 6, 2012

Devotees of Our Lady of Madhu are invited to attend the October Madhu Festival which will be held on the first Saturday of the month, October 6, 2012 preceded by three days of Novenas. The hoisting of the flag will take place on October 3, 2012.

In spite of the prevailing drought situation in the area and the resulting water scarcity, all arrangements are being made to provide pilgrims with their requirements of water. Visitors to Madhu are, however, advised to bring suitable vessels for storing water for their personal use.

Rev. Fr. S. Emilianus Pillai
Administrator - Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu

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Pope Benedict XVI signs Post-Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in the Middle East

Beirut, Lebanon, (CNA/EWTN).- Pope Benedict XVI has signed his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in the Middle East, "Ecclesia in Medio Oriente," during the first day of his visit to Lebanon.

"The Exhortation as a whole is meant to help each of the Lord's disciples to live fully and to pass on faithfully to others what he or she has become by Baptism: A child of light, sharing in God's own light, a lamp newly lit amid the troubled darkness of this world, so that the light may shine in the darkness," the Pope said.

Pope Benedict made his remarks during the official signing ceremony at the Melkite Greek Catholic Basilica of St. Paul in the coastal town of Harissa, on September 14.

"The document seeks to help purify the faith from all that disfigures it, from everything that can obscure the splendour of Christ's light," the Holy Father noted.

"For Communion is true fidelity to Christ, and Christian witness is the radiance of the Paschal Mystery which gives full meaning to the Cross, exalted and glorious."

The exhortation is the Pope's response to the deliberations of the Synod of Bishops of the Middle East held at the Vatican in October 2010. The topic for discussion then was "The Catholic Church in the Middle East: Communion and Witness."

The Pope, who was in the country from September 14 -16, 2012 noted the providence of signing the document on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which has its origins in 4th century Jerusalem during the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine.

He also reminded those present that next month is the 1700th anniversary of the appearance to Constantine of the Chi-Rho, the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek. It appeared to the emperor as a "radiant in the symbolic night of his unbelief and accompanied by



The Pope in Lebanon

the words: 'In this sign you will conquer!'" prior to victory at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge near Rome, thus paving the way for the acceptance of Christianity within the Roman Empire.

Reading the Exhortation with these historic events in mind "leads to renewed appreciation of the identity of each baptized person and of the Church, and is at the same time a summons to witness in and through communion," said the Pope.

"For Christians, to exalt the cross means to be united to the totality of God's unconditional love for mankind. It means making an act of faith!" he said.

"To exalt the cross, against the backdrop of the resurrection, means to desire to experience and to show the totality of this love. It means making an act of love!"

"To exalt the cross means to be a committed herald of fraternal and ecclesial communion, the source of authentic Christian witness. It means making an act of hope!"

Listening to Pope Benedict was a packed congregation consisting of leaders of Lebanon's 40 percent Christian community - mainly Catholic and Orthodox - along with leaders of other religions including the region's dominant faith, Islam.

The Pope thanked God that it was the people of the Middle East who "were the first to welcome his incarnate Son" but also recognized

that following Jesus Christ in the region today often requires much "courage and faith."

This was why, he said, the Synod Fathers were keen to reflect upon the "joys and struggles, the fears and hopes of Christ's disciples in these lands."

"In this way, the entire Church was able to hear the troubled cry and see the desperate faces of many men and women who experience grave human and material difficulties, who live amid powerful tensions in fear and uncertainty."

Such is the way of the exaltation of the cross, said the Pope, and that it often requires following Christ "even in difficult and sometimes painful situations."

"It is here and now that we are called to celebrate the victory of love over hate, forgiveness over revenge, service over domination, humility over pride, and unity over division."

Middle Eastern Christians, therefore, should not fear the future but, instead, should "stand firm in truth and in purity of faith" that results from "the cross, exalted and glorious."

"Churches of the Middle East, fear not, for the Lord is truly with you, to the close of the age!" urged Pope Benedict, "Fear not, because the universal Church walks at your side and is humanly and spiritually close to you!"

Islam and Christianity...

Contd. from Pg. 1

Gospel can be. Pray! Prayer and the Sacraments are the sure and effective means to be a Christian and to live rooted and built up in Christ. ... In Him, all men and women are our brothers and sisters. The universal brotherhood which He inaugurated on the cross lights up in a resplendent and challenging way the revolution of love. "Love one another as I have loved you". This is the legacy of Jesus and the sign of the Christian".

"Christ asks you, then, to do as He did: to be completely open to others, even if they belong to a different cultural, religious or national group. Making space for them, respecting them, being good to them, making them ever more rich in humanity and firm in the peace of the Lord.

"Be heralds of the Gospel of life and life's authentic values. Courageously resist everything opposed to life: abortion, violence, rejection of and contempt for others, injustice and war. In this way you will spread peace all around you.

"Truly discovering God's forgiveness and mer-

cy always enables us to begin a new life. It is not easy to forgive. But God's forgiveness grants the power of conversion, and the joy of being able to forgive in turn. Forgiveness and reconciliation are the paths of peace; they open up a future.

"Young people of Lebanon, you are the hope and the future of your country.

"I should like now to greet the young Muslims who are with us this evening. I thank you for your presence, which is so important. Together with the young Christians, you are the future of this fine country and of the Middle East in general. Seek to build it up together! "It is vital that the Middle East in general, looking at you, should understand that Muslims and Christians, Islam and Christianity, can live side by side without hatred, with respect for the beliefs of each person, so as to build together a free and humane society.

"I understand, too, that present among us there are some young people from Syria. I want to say how much I admire your courage. Tell your families and friends back home that the Pope has not forgotten you.. It is time for Muslims and Christians to come together so as to put an end to violence and war."

Queen of Angel's, Convent, Nagoda Kalutara - celebrating 50 years

His Lordship Cletus Chandrasiri Perera OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura will officiate at Holy Mass to celebrate fifty golden years of the Queen of Angel's Convent, Nagoda Kalutara. The Festive Mass will be celebrated at the Convent Hall, at 10.00 a.m. on Saturday October 6, 2012.

Queen of Angels' Convent, Nagoda is the brain-child of the then Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Cooray OMI. In 1962, the Archbishop, invited Rev. Mother Martina, the Superior General, to take up the apos-



tolate of training young girls from less privileged homes. These young people who were either school drop outs or school-leavers were given training in agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts for two years.

For this purpose an industrial home for girls and the Con-

vent for nuns was build. Both were blessed on August 15, 1962 and dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Angels'. Rev. Sr. M. Hyacinth Fernando was made the Superior of the new Community.

Today the Convent provides a three-year course of training in agriculture, animal husbandry, needle-work and house-keeping

and opens opportunities to further their education. Training is also given in cookery, dress making, beauty culture and computer studies with the generosity of Berendina Development Services..

The Sisters of the Convent owe their gratitude to the Almighty as they complete 50 years of dedicated service in the work of the

OFM, WHAT IS THAT?

When asked sometimes by some priests or other religious and even by some of the laity in this country to which Order or Congregation I belong and I answer, "OFM!" they would quip, "What? What is that?" Yes, OFM without Conv or Cap stands for the Order of Friars Minor (in Latin *Ordo Fratrum Minorum*)

or in more common English, the Order of Lesser Brothers. This Order is the fraternity to which the much loved and popular Saint Anthony of Lisbon or Padua belongs, and was founded by Saint Francis of Assisi, whose feast is celebrated in the Church on October, 4.

All over the world in Franciscan churches of the entire Franciscan Family, his death is commemorated in solemn rites called the Transitus (the Passing Over) of Saint Francis in the evening of the 3rd of the said month. For it is said that he died so at a relatively young age of around 46.

The whole meaning of Francis of Assisi for the Church and society is encapsulated by the title he himself willed for his brothers. He clearly asserts in the Earlier Rule he wrote: "Let no one be called 'prior,' but let everyone in general be called a lesser brother. Let one wash the feet of the other" (ER 6,3-4). The very title itself of the Order as so willed by Francis suggests the Gospel way of justice, peace and solidarity that leads to the Reign of God on this earth. It is by being a minor or lesser that one becomes a brother. There is no other way! Without minority, authentic brotherhood is an illusory reality, a sham. And he realized this because he encountered God is humility in Jesus Christ's self-emptying. Jesus was not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters because he became truly one among us in everything except sin.

While everyone in his times vied for honours, positions, wealth, power and influence in the higher scale of the social ladder even at the expense of others, the brothers and eventually the sisters of the Movement seek to be always a lesser brother/a poor sister. What this means is brought home by bringing in the scene of the Master's Last Supper with his disciples, as he washed their feet (cf. Jn 13,12-15). Take note, that for the Fourth Evangelist, the Eucharist precisely consists in the loving service of Jesus to his disciples even onto death. When he was about to die, Francis ordered according to his first biographer "that the Gospel according to John be read to him, starting with the passage that begins: Six days before the Passover, Jesus, knowing that the hour had come to pass from this world to the Father" (1 Cel 110). He always looked at the Son of God's self-emptying in Jesus Christ as the key to that communion with all.

A final reminder to the brothers would be in place. The fraternity was meant for all; it cut through classes (common people and nobles), clerical distinction (ordained and non-ordained), educational attainment (literate and illiterate) and other dividing or excluding categories. Nothing must stand between them as cause for discrimination. And there must be no domination among them. Let them not be called 'prior'. One recognized only one Father in heaven; all are brothers (and sisters)! And this holds not only for fellow humans but for all God's creatures in this world.

We live now in a world where discrimination and biases of all sorts abound and where the strong and the powerful create havoc in people's lives to get their go-getter schemes fulfilled. If you believe that St. Francis of Assisi's vision of Gospel living as lesser brothers is a meaningful alternative, come and join the OFM—seek to become a lesser brother yourself!

Bienvenido Q. Baisas ofm

St. Therese, the Little Flower of Jesus

The 86th anniversary of the Feast of St. Therese, the Little Flower of Jesus, will be celebrated on Sunday, October 7 at St. Joachim's Church, Kala-eliya.

There are 15 churches dedicated to St. Therese, the Little Flower of Jesus.

Felix Sovis



Jesuit Fathers in Sri Lanka celebrate 50 years of Province

The Jesuits Fathers of Sri Lanka celebrated fifty years of the Jesuit Province in Sri Lanka at a Jubilee Mass held at St. Francis De Sales Church, in Dalugama, Kelaniya.

The Festive High Mass was presided over by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Rev. Rev. Fr. Jeyaraj Rasiah SJ, the Provincial Superior of So-

ciety of Jesus, in Sri Lanka and several other Jesuit Fathers concelebrated at the Jubilee Mass

According to well-known Sri Lankan Church Historian, Rev. Fr. S. G. Perera SJ the first arrival of the Jesuits in the country goes back to the time of St Francis Xavier.

Founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491 -1556) in the year 1533

in Rome, with the original purpose of defending the Catholic Faith at the time of the Reformation, Ignatius gave the Society he founded the discipline that made its members distinguish themselves by their obedience to the Pope, as well as to the Religious Superior.

The Society followed the canons that regulated Religious life,

but launched itself more for the Missions under the guidance of the Popes, thus seeking exemption from such traditional requirements as choir and strict community life.

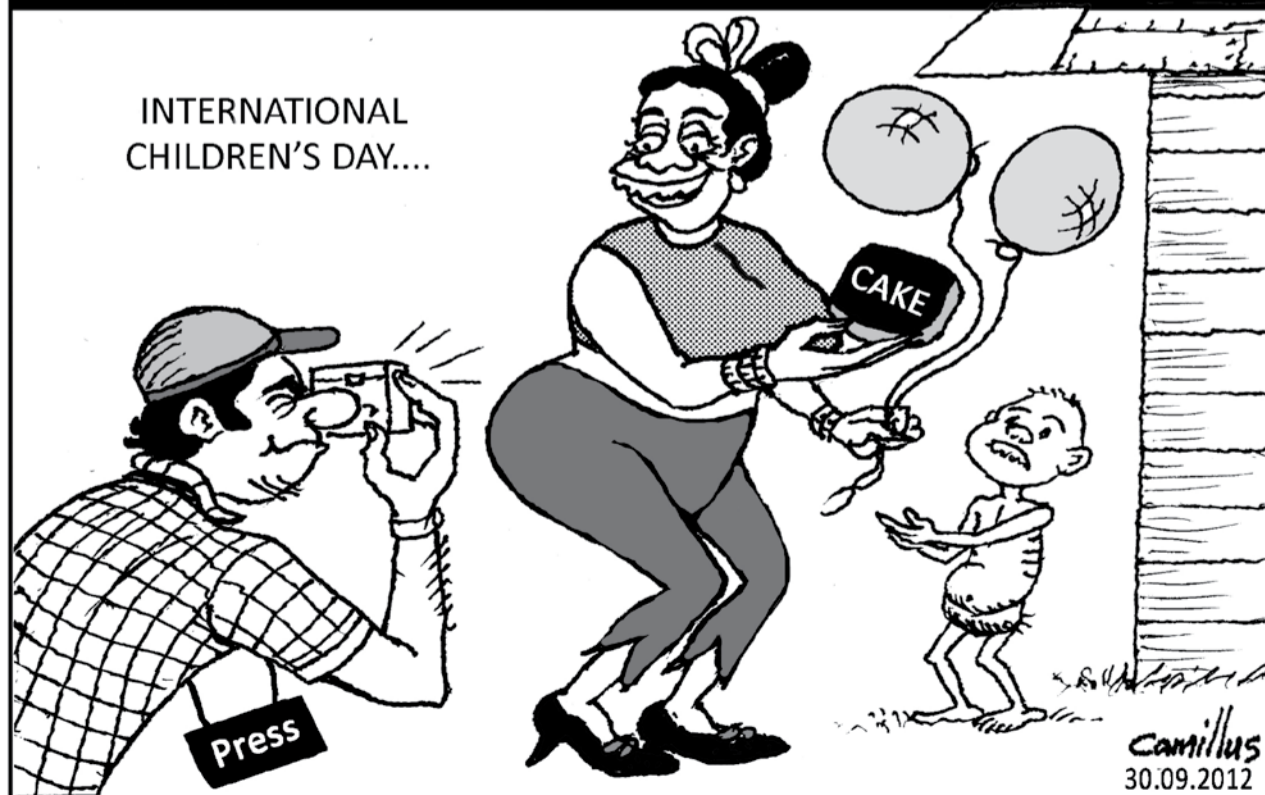
The Society of Jesus is led by a Superior General, currently Rev Fr Adolfo Nicolás. The headquarters of the Society, its General Curia, is in Rome.

(Archdiocesan website)

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY....



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
Messenger
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EDITORIAL

September 30, 2012

Inter-Religious Clergy can help resolve problems

Last week representatives of all the religious groups in the country appeared on television to condemn the film "Innocence of Muslims" which was produced by some malicious person in USA. The position of the US Government is that it cannot interfere with the right of free expression protected in the U.S Constitution. But no freedom is absolute and limits have to be placed in the interests of the larger society. With globalization this larger society now includes the whole world. The US must take cognizance of the cultural and religious values of the world community and not only those of the people of the USA. No community anywhere in the world can operate in isolation today.

It would have been a sign of maturity if the condemnation was confined to the Inter-religious clergy instead of the people who were hurt taking to the streets and carrying out violent protests which inconvenienced the public

at large and cast a burden on the law enforcement authorities.

The Vatican II Declaration *Nostra Aetate* ushered in the era of inter-religious co-operation as the official stand of the Catholic Church. Since then there have been dialogues and meetings between the Catholic Priests and the clergy of other religions.

"There are many social issues in our society where a consensus among the different clergy would be extremely useful. These are issues of democratic freedoms like the Rule of Law and Justice among other issues. Many of these issues have been dealt with in the Report of the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC). The Government has accepted their recommendations and issued its own Action Plan to implement them or at least those recommendations they have accepted. The Sinhalese people think it is to deal only with the Tamil grievances. But it is not so. The Commission has made recommendations regarding the Rule of Law, about the land disputes, about freedom for the media and the need to restore the Independent Commissions. The religious leaders jointly or severally must impress on the Government the need to implement these recommendations for the good of the nation as a whole.

A greater keenness on the part of the Government to implement these recommendations is necessary not only to resolve the grievances of

the Tamil people but also the grievances of the Sinhalese people such as the media personnel who have been the victims of disappearances, abductions and killings. Murders of journalists have not been investigated fully to charge those responsible. Nobody has been convicted of these crimes. It is this situation that has led the United Nations to intervene in the matter of our record in upholding human rights. The best way to avoid the UN examination of our human rights record is to implement the recommendations of the LLRC. The clergy could perhaps meet regularly and monitor the implementation of these recommendations so as to ensure the restoration of democratic rights and justice to all people including the Tamil people who are nursing a sense of grievance.

The clergy must show concern for the lives of all the people irrespective of ethnicity or religion if we are to be one nation under one state. They must promote peace among all communities and look into disputes among communities before they become serious and lead to violence. The clergy of all religions must collaborate for the purpose of justice. The Inter-religious clergy could provide a forum for people's grievances just as in the condemnation of the film which denigrated Prophet Mohammed. This is a good model to establish on a more permanent basis.

Disease & Medicine

Among the ancient Hebrews, folk medicine was available (Jer.8:22) but knowledge of physiology was rudimentary - the heart was thought to be the seat of moral judgement (Job 27:6 and Deut. 2:30). Diagnosis was haphazard. Disease was regarded as connected with sin and good health with good behaviour (Isa.58:8). Medicines were simple in character and the one recommended to the faithful, prayer (Ps. 38). Recourse to a shrine was common (1 Sam 1) and bronze serpents were a part of the therapeutic apparatus (Num. 21: 9; Kgs.18:4).

Observation had led to some sound precautions, such as avoiding a second person living in a house with another person with certain ailments (Lev. 13: 46). Diets were important; balm was used to soothe pain (Gen. 37:25). Regulations governing clean and unclean foods probably had their origin in popular observations about personal hygiene and cases of food poisoning.

By the 2nd cent. BC Hellenistic (Greek) theories were displacing ancient Hebrew beliefs about disease and medicine. Instead of a diseased skin being seen as penalty for sin (Num. 12: 10-11), for which the prescribed remedy was penitence, Greek scientific knowledge led to appreciations of the skills of the physician. Where as Asa was rebuked for resorting to a physician to treat gangrene in his foot (2 Chron. 16:12) Ben Sirach urges that "the Lord has created medicines and doctors, and it is sensible to use their services" (Apocrypha Eccclus.(=Sir.) 38: 1-15).

Physicians were available in NT times, but were not always very successful (Mk. 14:3). The NT however, does not share a former hostility to ordinary medicine (as in 2 Chron. 16:12), and Luke was appreciated as a physician by Paul (Col.4:14).

(Prayer of a Jewish physician Rabbi Moses Maimonides (1135-1204)

Rabbi Moses Maimonides, the third member of the Arabic medical triumvirate was born in Muslim controlled Cordova, Spain, to a Jewish family descended from King David on March, 30 1135. He studied Aristotelian philosophy medicine and other sciences. Driven from Spain by persecution, he settled in Egypt.

He was an excellent clinician and as his fame spread he became the court physician to the Sultan, Saladin and lectured in philosophy in Cairo and Alexandria. It has been said that during the Crusades, Richard the Lion Heart, learning of Maimonides' great skill, asked him to return to England with him and be his personal physician.

He wrote many works in Arabic and Hebrew in which he tried to reconcile the claims of faith and reason. His independent thought and boldness, with which he rejected much Rabbinical traditions, aroused hostility though he was later recognised as one of the greatest Jewish teachers.

Maimonides chief work, first written in Arabic - The Guide to the perplexed - was once used in European Universities. He died at Cairo on Dec.13, 1204.

This is his beautiful prayer as a Physician:

*And now I turn to my calling;
Oh, stand by me, my God, in this truly important task!
Grant me success! For -
Without Thy loving counsel and support
Man can avail but naught
Inspire me with true love for this my art
And for Thy creatures.
Oh, grant
That neither greed nor gain, nor thirst
for fame,
nor vain ambition. May interfere with my activity.*

For these, I know, are enemies of Truth

*and Love of men,
And might beguile one in profession,
From furthering the welfare of Thy creatures.*

*Oh, strengthen me!
Grant energy into both body and soul,
That I may e'er unhindered ready be
To mitigate woes,
Sustain and help,
The rich and poor, the good and bad,
the enemy and friend.*

*Oh, let me e'er behold in the afflicted and the suffering
Only the human being!*

(Courtesy:St. Paul's Church, Kandy - Parish Quarterly)

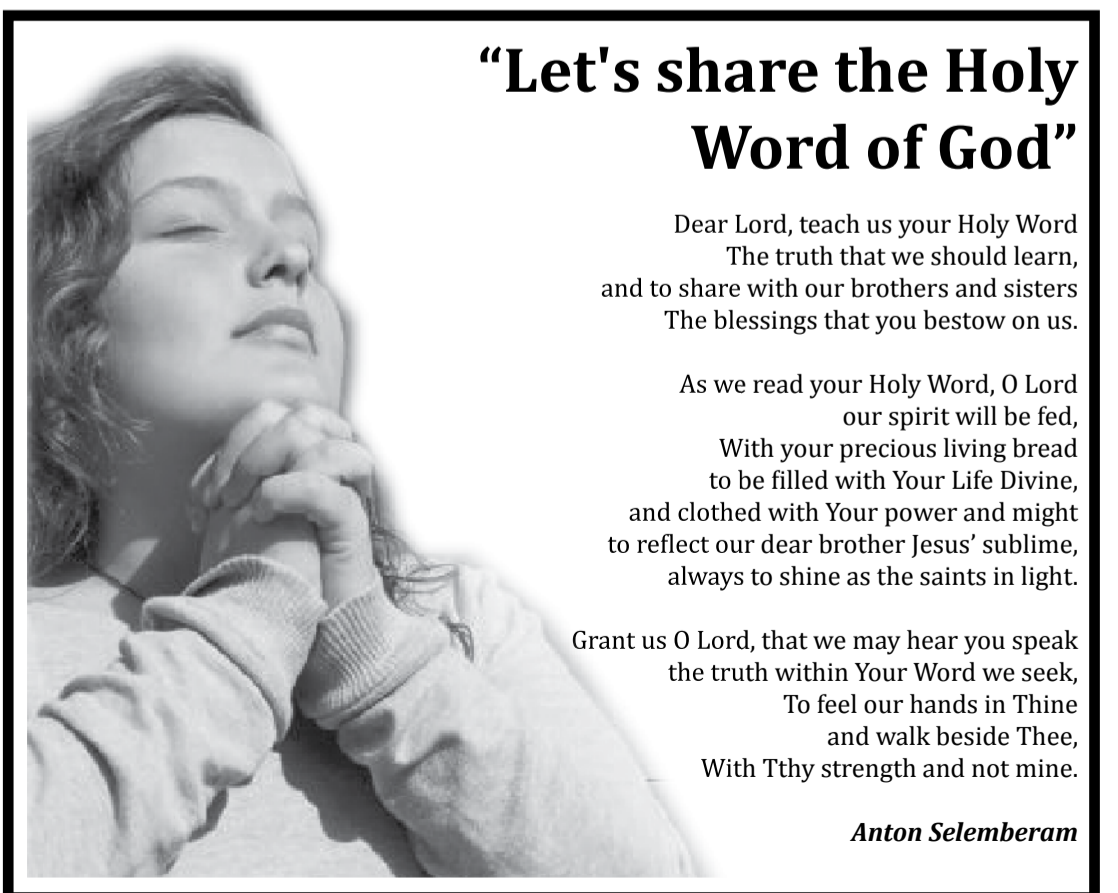
"Let's share the Holy Word of God"

Dear Lord, teach us your Holy Word
The truth that we should learn,
and to share with our brothers and sisters
The blessings that you bestow on us.

As we read your Holy Word, O Lord
our spirit will be fed,
With your precious living bread
to be filled with Your Life Divine,
and clothed with Your power and might
to reflect our dear brother Jesus' sublime,
always to shine as the saints in light.

Grant us O Lord, that we may hear you speak
the truth within Your Word we seek,
To feel our hands in Thine
and walk beside Thee,
With Thy strength and not mine.

Anton Selemberam



What are Sacramentals?

A priest once told me, "In order to answer your question of what sacramentals are, first let me tell you what they are not. They are not sacraments." This seems to be a common point of confusion, likely because the names are similar. Jesus gave the Catholic Church seven sacraments. They are Baptism, Reconciliation (Confession), Holy Communion (Eucharist), Confirmation, Marriage, Holy Orders (which makes a man a priest) and Anointing of the Sick.

While Christ gave us the Sacraments, the Catholic Church gave us sacramentals. There are many of these, probably too numerous to count. Sacramentals are sacred signs of our Catholic faith. They can be material objects (scapulars, rosaries, holy water, crucifixes, prayer cards, pictures of saints, etc) or actions (crossing ourselves, lighting a blessed candle, kissing a Bible, etc.) or blessings (blessing of throats, blessing of animals, house blessings, blessing of dismissal at the end of Mass, etc.)

Although only priests give blessings directly from Christ, parents can pray over their children as a type of blessing. Saying grace before meals is another type of blessing - The other types of sacramentals can be used by any lay person at any time, as long as they are used in a spirit of reverence and faith. We wouldn't use holy water to bathe our pets, or wrap a rosary chain around a bicycle with a padlock attached!

When used properly, sacramentals may increase our faith, give us graces, and can remit venial sins. They can also ward off evil and illness, but that is dependant on our faith in the prayers of the Church, the power of God, and the state of our own hearts, not superstitious beliefs in the object,

itself. For example, if a non-swimmer attaches a crucifix around his neck, then foolishly jumps into an icy lake for no valid reason, he will probably drown. Sacramentals are signs that point to God and His church, not lucky charms that magically save us from our own follies without any effort on our part.

Sacramentals remind us of the Sacraments, since they are tied into these. Wedding rings are blessed by a priest, and these sacramentals remind the couple of their sacred union when they were joined as husband and wife in the sacrament of marriage. The rings also let others know that this man or

**When a priest
blesses a sacramental,
that object becomes
holy and is
consecrated
to the Service of God**

woman is already "spoken for;" consecrated to their spouse for life not available for anyone else's intimate affection. A crucifix reminds us of Jesus, who waits for us in the Eucharist, the one who died for our salvation. Sprinkling of holy water reminds us of the sacrament of baptism, and holy oils help us recall the sacrament of Confirmation. When a priest blesses a sacramental, that object becomes holy and is consecrated to the service of God. Because of this, sacramentals should be used in reverence for our Lord and His Church, and not disposed of thoughtlessly. If a sacramental object is worn out or accidentally dam-

aged to the point where it no longer can be used for its original purpose, it should be returned to the earth, where its raw material came from. This is done by first burning the item (if it is combustible material) and then burying it in the ground, preferably in a place where it will not be trampled upon. Holy water that will not be used should be poured into the ground, and sacramental objects that cannot be burned (statues, etc.) should be broken into small pieces and then buried in the ground. The Church teaches and encourages us in this practice through the example of burning palm leaves left from the previous year, during Lenten season. Many parishioners follow the tradition of burning blessed sacramentals on the feast day of Saint John the Baptist.

Blessed sacramentals only need to be blessed once by any priest. The blessing remains for the lifetime of the object. If an object is sold for profit, though, the blessing is broken. If the object is given or sold privately at cost, the blessing remains. For example, a rosary sold to a customer in a religious store will not remain blessed if it had already been blessed, because it is being sold for profit. However, a friend returning from a pilgrimage who purchased a rosary from a store, then subsequently had it blessed by a priest, may give it to another or sell it at cost, not at profit, and the blessing remains.

Sacramentals are not only for the benefit of Catholics. Along with our prayers, they can also be signs of God's presence for others. Wearing a

**Wedding rings
remind
the couple of
their
sacred union
when
they were joined as
husband and wife...**



scapular or blessed medal can stimulate conversations with non-Catholics that may lead them to understanding our faith, or even joining our Church. I have seen rosaries hanging in cars of non-believers, placed there by caring, concerned relatives or friends, who pray for the ones they love. I have heard of non-Catholics who pray the rosary daily, firmly believing (as they should) that Mary, the Mother of Christ, loves them too. Children having bad dreams or fears of the dark have been soothed by a gentle spray of holy water from parents at bedtime. A picture of their favourite smiling saint enclosed inside a night light gives comfort, too.

Whatever the occasion, whatever the reason, sacramentals give us hope, faith, strength and comfort. They are gifts from God through His Church, who shows His love for us in these signs. Acknowledging that love and thanking our Creator are the best reasons for using sacramentals. So, pick your favourite one and use it, and feel blessed, because you truly are.

(Courtesy: Canadian Messenger)

Holy Family Sisters on accomplishing 150 years in Sri Lanka open their hearts

Contd. from last week

3. Vocation of Holy Family Contemplative Sisters

Rev. Fr. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, the Founder of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, when he was a seminarian used to spend a long time in meditation. He sought the Glory of God and his Kingdom. He was touched by God and lured to mediate fervently on God's love. He was a man of prayer. He was a deeply meditative priest who had a close relationship with God. Whenever, he wrote letters to our Sisters, he often emphasized the importance of union with God and obedience to God's Will.

Hence his firm attachment to contemplation and his experience of God laid the foundation to start the Contemplative Way of life in the Holy Family. Some wanted to live this call and asked him "When are you going to start it? He answered, "The time has not come." He established a Contemplative House in Martillac, to fulfill God's will. He wanted the Contemplative Sisters to be the mystery and the livewire of the Holy Family.

In gratitude for the Eucharistic Miracle at Mazarin Street in 1822, they are continuously engaged in thanksgiving and adoration. Even today in the spirit of God Alone, they live in silence and solitude. They live their spiritual life in prayer and meditation. These sisters live the spirit of their vocation as Holy Family Contemplative Sisters. Their priority is community life. The unity lived in the group sends vibrations throughout the world. There is firm belief that their prayers, life and activities will reach the whole world and transform hatred and conflicts into peaceful living. Their adoration, praises, thanksgiving and intercession for the world and their desire that all must live as a family in Jesus, increases their loyalty and commitment to the way of life they live in this world.

They accept those who come to meet them, earnestly listen to them and try to console them. By their prayers they comfort them. When priests and clergy come for retreat to renew their spiritual life through silence and meditation they welcome and help them. They join with members of the other vocations in mutual love and are happy to participate in special feasts and occasions. They imitate Jesus, Mary and

Joseph, who spent their time at Nazareth in prayer and meditation seeking God's Will in their desire and to live for God Alone. They lead a compassionate life and are committed to obedience, self-denial and sacrifice. They live a virtuous life through chastity and poverty.

In 1973, a House for the Contemplative Sisters was established in Negombo at Bolawalana. In Jaffna in 1976 a Contemplative Convent was established at Manipay. They lived there till 1990. These Sisters had to face untold hardship during the war. They were displaced. Their presence among the displaced people was a panacea which was a moral support for them. Their service during the war time cannot be forgotten. The situation prevailing at Manipay did not permit them to live in Manipay, Now they are living at Nagoda in Kandana with the Contemplative Sisters of the South. At present Holy Family Contemplative Houses are found in France, Spain, Sri Lanka and Argentina.

"Taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him."

4. How Family consecrated Secular Vocation

In the beginning the

mission of Fr. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles was to strengthen and spread the faith in a society where faith had weakened. The French Revolution had affected the people in all strata of society, some were imprisoned, there were abandoned elders and children and a decline in the practice of the Faith. People tried to help them to experience God's Love and did whatever service they could render, to improve their lives. Having God's Will as his goal in life and following the example of the Holy Family, he formed the Holy Family Association. Today the Holy Family Association has different vocations and they render their services in many countries in the world.

Let us look more deeply into the Holy Family Consecrated Secular Vocation. These women have consecrated themselves to a secular way of life. They belong to one of the five vocations in the Holy Family. They do not live in communities or observe the rules and norms of a Convent life, but like lay people in their milieu observing the culture and customs, they live a life in keeping with their rules and live the mystery of Christ's incarnation. Like others, they find an employment to earn their living and sustain their life and mission.

By saying 'yes' to God's call like mature Christian women in keeping with the Congregation's Spirit they will deepen their faith and love and spread it among the people. They will not be recognized as consecrated women by anyone. But like the leaven hidden in the dough, they will live among the people and share the Kingdom Values among them. This is their 'special call and honour'. They will follow Christ by living the evangelical Counsels of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity. In the world, families, workplace and Parishes, they will live their commitment discreetly and will do good to all. In the Parishes and the Church they will render services like the laity.

From the inception of the Association women have been called to this way of life and have lived this vocation. But as time went on history too developed and the Church also recognized this Consecrated Secular Vocation and singled it out to be a unique call with its own rules and structures. Today they are in Africa, Brazil, Canada, Sri Lanka, Argentina, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Belgium and Poland and they are involved in the mission of evangelization. In March 1988,

(Contd. on Pg. 15)

Enthusiasm, the fuel that sparks action

We read in the Acts of the Apostles, after Christ died and rose again, and appeared to his disciples, the disciples shed the fear they had and started preaching the good news after the Holy Spirit came upon them.

The early Christian community sold everything they had, their properties, the gold and they began to share among themselves. They were all fired with the enthusiasm of spreading the message of salvation that Christ preached. The Bible tells us that everyday, large numbers of nonbelievers accepted Christ and joined their ranks. The enthusiasm in the disciples was so great that they were prepared to face any risk, even go to prison or face death for

the sake of Christ. Many disciples and apostles ended their lives with gruesome death. St. John was the only apostle who died a natural death. All the other apostles were either crucified, beheaded, burnt alive or stoned to death. The early martyrs were killed because of their undiminished enthusiasm to spread the Gospel. The rulers of the day thought that Christianity was becoming a threat to their life styles.

The word 'enthusiasm' is Greek in origin which comes from the adjective 'entheos' meaning having God within. An enthusiastic



person is someone who, in an extraordinary fashion, is possessed by the spirit of God. Enthusiasm is the trembling you feel when you take the risk of being yourself. Enthusiasm is a wave coming from the soul, one that lifts you up and takes you along. It is the life energy that flows freely through you

if you dare to be yourself. The world evolves thanks to the thrust of strongly motivated and enthusiastic people. "Nothing great ever happened without enthusiasm" said Ralph Waldo Emerson.

In England, there is a monument, a statue to the sport of rugby football. The statue shows an eager boy with a ball in one hand. At the base of the statue, you find this inscription. "With a fine disregard for the rules, he picked up the ball and ran."

The statue and inscription tell a true story. An important game of football was taking place between two English schools. The scores were level and during the closing minutes of the game, a boy by the name of William Webb Ellis,

bubbling with enthusiasm, was sent into that game to replace a player. Forgetting all the rules, he was more interested in putting the ball into the opposing side's goal. The boy picked up the ball and to everyone's surprise, ran to the opposing goal and dropped the ball there.

The confused officials and players were shocked. But the spectators being so moved by the boy's spirit and entertained by his performance, stood up and cheered. Thereafter, a new sport called rugby football was born in 1823 as a result of one boy's enthusiastic mistake. William represented the Rugby College, hence the new sport was named as rugby football.

Without enthusiasm, nothing will get moving. Your

success rate in whatever you do, depends on the measure of enthusiasm you pile into it. Enthusiasm has many benefits. It can battle worry and overcome stress. It has the ability to persuade. It encourages action. It is contagious. By being enthusiastic, you are inspiring others. Not only are you reaping the benefits of being enthusiastic, but those who are catching it from you are also reaping those same benefits, and so do those they touch, causing a huge chain reaction. For starters, give a generous smile to the first few people you meet in the morning and make their day bright. Your smile will spread like a ripple in a lake. "Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men." (Colossians 3: 23)

Michelangelo

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni born in 1475 is the most renowned, Renaissance artist. Though born in Florence, his works are strewn around Italy, from Milan in the North to Rome in the South. He is renowned for his paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel where Creation as in the Book of Genesis and the Last Judgment are painted. Art critics dispute whether he was more of a sculptor than a painter. This all-round genius, was also an architect.

The sculpture of David is his tribute to the

City of Florence and to his patrons, the Medici family. This larger than life marble masterpiece was created when he was 28 years old. It was exposed to the erratic Florentine weather till a few years ago. Now it is the centre piece of the Academia, an art gallery where thousands throng to appreciate this stunning work of art. Some tourists cancel other tours in Florence and spend time admiring David. The Academia also houses many unfinished works of the genius. The figures look as

if they are trying to get out of the marble blocks.

Michelangelo was commissioned by Pope Julius II to design his tomb. The statue of Moses designed for this tomb adorns the front of the Church of St. Peter in Chains. Moses is seated in a marble chair between two decorated columns holding the tablets on which the Ten Commandments are engraved. This was completed when the artist was 38 and critics say it was "at the height of his genius." Popular tradition claims that Michelangelo violently struck the knee of the statue with his hammer shouting, "Why don't you speak to me?"

Just behind the ancient temple dedicated to the Pantheon (all gods) is a statue of the Risen Christ carved by the artist. This statue was so popular among the visitors to Rome that they touched the toes of



Christ as a mark of devotion and the toes began to wear out. The church officials had to cover the foot with bronze sandals. They also seem to have draped the groin of the naked statue to hide the original nakedness of the Risen Lord.

Catholics as well as non-Catholic tourists do not fail to visit St. Peter's Basilica to appreciate the frescoes

of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel and the Pieta at the right hand corner of the Basilica. The Pieta, the marble masterpiece of the dead body of Christ lying on the lap of the Blessed Virgin, may be the most famous sculpture of the artist. This may be the only masterpiece signed by him. He signed his name across the ribbon on Our Lady's chest.

The frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel show that he was as successful as a painter as he was a sculptor. On the ceiling is the creation scene from the Genesis. Behind the altar is the painting of the Last Judgment where he has painted more than 300 figures. It may be after painting these frescoes lying down on the high scaffoldings, under the high ceiling that he retorted, "This place is not for me. I am no painter." The exasperated artist would have even



threatened to give up this commission. Legends say that at instances like this Pope Julius II even beat him with a cane. The massive dome of St. Peter's too was designed by him.

His masterpieces also adorn some churches in Sienna in Tuscany and in Milan. It is in Milan that the "Rondanini Pieta", supposed to be his last work, is displayed. Tradition says when he finished this work, he was 90-years-old. He is buried in his native town of Florence with Italian scientists such as Galileo, writers like Dante and

Machiavelli in the Basilica of the Holy Cross. Michelangelo was so popular at the end of his life, that his patrons had to arrange three funerals for him, one in Rome and the other two in Florence.



St. Francis of Assisi

Feast Day: October 4

**Born with a silver spoon in mouth
But Francis despised mundane wealth
By a wonderful effect of grace
Bestowed through divine intervention**

**Friar Francis toiled and moiled
To regenerate the moral of the world
Enhancing the value of penance
Through his exemplary routine.**

**Poverty and humility were his forte
To enrich the Church with his might
So, he was privileged to have heard
Christ's voice
"Francis repair my Church"**

**Though he remained a deacon all his life
Wholeheartedly fulfilling Christ's request,
He spread the Kingdom of God far and wide
With thousands of Frairs with missionary zeal.**

**Touched by the divine light
Thousands rushed to follow him
Enabling him to spread his mission
To France, Germany, Africa and Spain.**

Sent by: - Leonard Wijesiri



A CROSS

The way 94

By Sirohmi Gunesequera

Enough

"There are such wonderful things advertised on television. I just wish I had the money to buy them all," commented Laila.

"You are attracted by the presentation. Advertisers deliberately package the products so that they look mouth-watering and colourful, especially to children. The kids then nag the parents till Mummy or Daddy buys them what they want. No wonder the Cost of Living is so high," said Jeevaka.

"You are right. But how can we stop it?" asked Laila.

"Now and then, just sit and watch TV with your child. When the Ad for pizza comes on, point out

that it only looks good and that it is not nutritious like rice and curry. Then tell your little one to talk to Jesus and ask for the strength to say "No" however tasty it looks," suggested Jeevaka.

"If you have more than one child watching TV, you can ask them to have a competition as to which advertisement is the most attractive and then ask them to analyse why. You can also serve "Kadala" or gram which is both tasty and nutritious and praise the child who eats most gram. Children are pleased when adults praise them, so that can be an incentive," chimed in Mala.

"If children are old enough to watch TV, they are old enough to understand that their parents cannot afford to buy them whatever they want. Explain that Mummy and Daddy work hard to give them good food and nice clothes and that they have no money to buy sausages however succulent they may look on TV," said Jeevaka.

"I also think that I must limit the time the kids spend watching TV. At night, the whole family gets together to say a small prayer and we can ask God to show us that we have enough to eat without indulging in fancy junk food," concluded Laila.

The splendid flowering of the Church in Korea

On September 20 the Church honours a group of 103 Korean martyrs. Notable of these were Andrew Kim Taegon, the first Korean priest, and the lay apostle, Paul Chong Hasang. Also among the Korean martyrs were three bishops and seven priests, but for the most part they were heroic laity, men and women, married and single of all ages.

An unique history

Korea is the only country in the world where the Catholic Church was founded, not by foreign missionaries, but by the native people themselves. As such the history of Korea's Catholic community is unique.

Here during the 17th century the laity began to worship as Christians long before missionaries came. Contacts with Catholicism was established through Korean diplomatic envoys who were regularly sent to China where they met Jesuit priests. The priests gave them some Catholic books which they took home with them.

Back at home a group of Korean scholars became interested in the Christian faith books that were brought back from China and began to study the new religion, comparing it with the Neo-Confucianism which was the traditional philosophy in Korea. These lay Koreans began catechizing others and baptizing them. In 1786, as



there were no formally ordained priests in Korea, some leading laymen, began acting as "temporary clerics." However, the Korean Catholics were informed by the bishop in Beijing, that such practices must stop since they were contrary to Church teachings. There would be no ordained priest in Korea until 1795, when a Chinese priest arrived, at which time the Church had grown to over 4000 members. And when the hoped-for religious evangelizers finally managed to gain entrance into this Confucian country, they found their work well begun with more than 50,000 lay people already become Catholics.

It must be noted that Catholicism had its first direct contact with Korea during the Japanese invasion (1592 - 1598). History records of a Catholic priest and a monk who were sent to Korea by a Japanese General as a chaplain for the Japanese soldiers stationed in the southern part of Korea. But they could not have any contact with the native people. They could only take care of the Japanese soldiers, Korean prisoners and orphans of war.

The Peter of the Orient

Yi Sung-hun (1756 -1801) was one of the first Roman Catholic martyrs in

Korea. Yi Sung-hun first came into contact with Catholicism though one scholar named Yi Byeok in 1779. Yi Sung-hun was an intelligent young man who read many Catholic books and tried to imitate the virtues of the saints and to promote the Catholic faith among his friends. In 1783-4, on the suggestion of Yi Byeok, Yi Sung-hun accompanied his father on a diplomatic missions to China. While in Peking he contacted the Catholic priests there, and after being tested in his knowledge of the faith, was baptized with the name of Peter. He returned to Korea and became the first to organize a Catholic faith community in Korea baptizing the new believers himself.

This incident marks the beginning of the Catholic Church, made up entirely of lay people in Korea. These Catholics called one another "believing friends," abolished class distinctions, stopped offering sacrifices to their ancestors and spread the faith using books written in the Korean alphabet.

In 1785, the community was detected by the government and the Catholics were dispersed. Thus began the first of many persecutions suffered by the early Korean Catholics.

Persecutions

The Catholic community in Korea suffered several major persecutions chiefly for the refusal to carry out the traditional worship of ancestors, which the Catholics perceived to be a form of false idolatry, but which the State prescribed as a cornerstone of culture.

The persecutions produced at least 8,000 known martyrs. 79 martyrs of Korea were beatified in 1925 and 24 more were beatified in 1968. The combined 103 martyrs were canonized in 1984 when Pope John Paul II visited Korea. Their feast day was set on September 20. These included Andrew, Paul, ninety-eight Koreans and three French missionaries.

Inspiring faith stories

Andrew Kim Taegon (1821 -1846). This first native Korean priest was the son of Korean converts. His father, Ignatius Kim, was martyred during the persecution of 1839 and was beatified in 1925. After baptism at the age of fifteen, Andrew traveled thirteen hundred miles to the seminary in Macao, China. After six years he managed to return to his country through Manchuria. That same year he crossed the Yellow Sea to Shanghai and was ordained a priest. Back home again, he was assigned to arrange for more missionaries to enter by a water route that would elude the border patrol. He was arrested, tortured and finally beheaded at the Han River near Seoul, the capital.

Paul Chong Hasang 1794/95 - 1839). He was a lay apostle and a married man, aged

forty-five. He was one of the lay leaders who have participated in the establishment of the early Korean Catholic Church. He was also the second son of Chung, Yak Jong, a martyr who was killed during the Shin-Yu Persecution (1801). During these persecutions, Korea's only priest and many prominent leaders of the early Korean Catholic Church were martyred. After these incidents, it seemed impossible to reconstruct the devastated Korean Catholic community. In such circumstances it was Paul Chong Hasang who gathered the scattered Korean Catholic members and ignited their hearts with the raging flames of faith. Furthermore, he reorganized the structures and activities of the Korean Catholic church and initiated a movement for the Beijing Bishop to send priests to Korea.

To accomplish this mission, from 1816, he has crossed the China borders nine times, overcoming many dangers and fiercely cold weathers, totaling 2000 Km of round trips. He entered the China territory as a lowly servant to the Korean diplomatic members who have made their annual tributary missions to China to exchange gifts with the Chinese Emperor. By using these opportunities in Beijing, St. Paul Chong requested many times that the Beijing Bishop send priests to Korea. As many of his attempts failed, he directly pleaded the case to Pope Gregory X. Finally, on September 9, 1831, the Pope proclaimed the legitimacy of the Korean Catholic Diocese to the World.

Columba Kim. Among the martyrs in 1839 was Columba Kim, an unmarried woman of twenty-six. She was naturally of a timid disposition and every time she heard that a Christian had been apprehended she would grow pale and fall silent. But when she and her sister Agnes was produced before a tribunal she displayed an impressionable courage and standing. They were subject to a series of outrages being put into prison, stripped, hung and beaten and burnt by a fire iron in twelve places of her body. For a second time they were disrobed and thrown into a dungeon and kept for two days in a cell with condemned criminals, but were not molested. Agnes was beheaded after 4 months of suffering at the age of 25 and Columbia after 5 months at the age of 26.

Peter Ryou. A boy of thirteen, Peter Ryou, was the son of Augustine, the Government interpreter who was also martyred. He became the faithful imitator of his fathers virtues and had to endure ill-treatment from his mother and sisters avowed enemies of the Christian name. The boy went to the tribunal to give himself up and was tortured eight times and received more than six hundred blows of the "rods". Fourteen times the executors set upon him. He received 40 blows of the "boards." During this torture he displayed so great a firmness and tranquility that amazed his executioners. He took bits of his flesh which were hanging to his body only by shreds of his tender skin and threw them down before the judges with a smile. He was later killed by strangulation.

**Celebrating
Christian Lives**
By Kishanie S.Fernando



Feast of the Guardian Angels

The Church marks the feast of Guardian Angels on October 02.

The role of angels most pertinent to our spiritual lives is our guardian angel. Every person is given a guardian angel because as Eusebius puts it: "Fearing lest sinful mankind should be without government and without guidance, like herds of cattle, God gave them protectors and superintendents, the holy angels in the form of captains and shepherds" (*Dem. Ev.*, 4, 6). We are never without our protector, and the more we request their help, the more he can help us. A guardian angel's roles are threefold: 1) *angel of peace*, 2) *angel of penitence (or penance)* and 3) *angel of prayer*.

As an *angel of peace*, they protect against danger, both bodily and spiritual threats. They also can give peace and comfort to the soul when undergoing tribulations, like Jesus during his agony in the Garden.

As an *angel of penance or penitence*, our angel has the office of chastising and correcting us when we stray from God's path. The angel also helps us in restoring our soul to health after we sin, helping us obtaining remission of our sins.

As an *angel of prayer*, the guardian angel presents our prayers to God, both liturgical and private prayers. "The angel, indeed, of each one, even of the little ones in the Church, always seeing the face of the Father who is in heaven and beholding the divinity of our Creator, prays with us and cooperates with us, as far as is possible, in what we seek" (Origen, *De or.*, 11, 5).

"Have confidence in your guardian angel. Treat him as a lifelong friend that is what he is and he will render you a thousand services in ordinary affairs each day" - St. Josemaria Escriva.



Painting from St. James Church, Mutwal

Jesus holds the Church in His hand

On Wednesday, 5 September, after arriving at the Vatican from Castel Gandolfo, Pope Benedict XVI resumed his teaching on prayer with the faithful gathered in the Paul VI Hall. The following is a translation of the Pope's Catechesis, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, after the holiday break, we resume the Audiences at the Vatican, continuing with the "school of prayer", which I am sharing with you in these Wednesday Catecheses.

Today I would like to talk to you about a prayer in the Book of Revelation, which, as you know, is the last one in the New Testament. It is a complex book, but one containing great richness. It puts us in touch with the vital, vibrant prayer of the Christian assembly, gathered "on the Lord's day" (Rev 1:10): Indeed, the text unfolds into this basic premise.

A speaker presents to the assembly a message which the Lord has entrusted to the Evangelist John. The reader and the assembly are, so to speak, the two protagonists of the book's development; right from the start a festive greeting is addressed to them: "Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear" (1:3). A symphony of prayer wells up from the ongoing dialogue between them and develops with a great variety of forms until it reaches its conclusion. On hearing the speaker deliver the message, and observing the assembly's reaction, their prayer tends to become our own.

The first part of Revelation (1:4-3):22), presents three successive stages in the attitude of the assembly which is praying. The first stage (1:4-8) consists of a dialogue which - the only one in the New Testament - takes place between the assembly that has just gathered and the reader, who greets it with a blessing: "Grace to you and peace" (1:4). The speaker continues, emphasizing the provenance of this greeting: it comes from the Trinity: from the Father, from the Holy Spirit, from Jesus Christ, involved together in carrying ahead the creative and saving plan for humanity. The assembly listens and when it hears Jesus Christ named it jumps for joy, as it were, and responds enthusiastically, raising the following prayer of praise: "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom of priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1:5b-6). The assembly, steeped in Christ's love, feels set free from the bonds of sin and proclaims itself the "kingdom" of Jesus Christ, which belongs totally to him.

It recognizes the great mission which has been entrusted to it through Baptism: To bring God's presence to the world. And, looking once again directly at Jesus and with mounting enthusiasm, it ends this celebration of praise, recognizing "glory and dominion" that will humanity. The final "Amen" concludes the hymn of praise to Christ. These first four verses are already full of instructions for us; they tell us that our prayer must first and foremost consist in listening to God who speaks to us. Submerged by torrents of words, we are not very used to listening, or, especially, being receptive by creating silence, either within ourselves or outside us, so as to be able to pay attention to what God wants to tell us. These verses also teach us that our prayers, especially if

they are only prayers of petition, must first of all praise God for his love, for the gift of Jesus Christ who brought us strength, hope and salvation.

A further intervention of the speaker then refers to the assembly, held by Christ's love, the commitment to accept his presence in its own life. He says: "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him; every one who pierced him; and all tribes of earth will wail on account of him" (1:7a). After being lifted up to heaven on "a cloud", the symbol of transcendence (cf. Acts 1:9), Jesus Christ will return, just as he was taken up into heaven (cf. Acts 1:11b). Then all the peoples will recognize him and as St. John predicts in the fourth Gospel, "they shall look on him whom they have pierced" (19:37). They will remember their sins, the cause of his crucifixion and, like those who witnessed it directly on Calvary, will beat their breasts (cf. Lk 23:48), asking him to forgive them so as to follow him in life and thus to prepare full communion with him after his final Coming. The assembly reflects on this message and says: "Even so. Amen" (Rev 1:7b). The assembly's "even so" expresses its full acquiescence with all of that has been said to them and they ask that it may truly become reality. It is the prayer of the assembly which meditates on the love of God in its supreme manifestation on the Cross and asks to live consistently as disciples of Christ. And there is God's answer: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the One who is, who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (1:8). God, who reveals himself as the beginning and the end of history, accepts the assembly's request and takes it to heart. He was, is and will be present and active in his love in the future, as he was in the past, until the final destination is reached. This is God's promise. And here we find another important element: Constant prayer reawakens within us the sense of the Lord's presence in our life and in history. His is a presence that sustains us, guides us and gives us great hope, even amidst the darkness of certain human events; furthermore, every prayer, even prayer in the most radical solitude, is never isolation of oneself and is never sterile: rather, it is the life blood of an ever more committed and consistent Christian life.

The second stage in the assembly's prayer (1:9-22) examines in greater depth the relationship with Jesus Christ: The Lord makes himself seen, he speaks, acts, and the community, ever closer to him, listens, reacts and understands. In the message presented by the speaker St. John recounts his personal experience of an encounter with Christ: He was on the Island of Patmos, on account of the "word of God and of the testimony of Jesus" (1:9), and it was the "Lord's day" (1:10a), Sunday, on which the Resurrection is celebrated. And St. John was "in the Spirit" (1:10a). The Holy Spirit permeated him and renewed him, expanding his ability to receive Jesus who asks him to write. The prayer of the assembly which is listening, gradually takes on a contemplative attitude, punctuated by the verb "to see", "to look", that is, it contemplates what the speaker suggests, interiorizing it and making it its own.

John hears "a loud voice like a trumpet" (1:10b). The voice orders him to send a message "to the seven churches" (1:11), which are located



Dear friends, the Book of Revelation presents to us a community gathered in prayer because it is precisely in prayer that we become ever more aware of Jesus' presence with us and in us. The more and the better we pray, with constancy, with intensity, the more like Him we shall be, and He will truly enter into our life and guide it, bestowing upon us joy and peace. And the more we know, love and follow Jesus, the more we will feel the need to pause in prayer with him, receiving serenity, hope and strength in our life.

in Asia Minor and, through them, to all the Churches of all times, together with their Pastors. The words "Voice... like a trumpet," taken from the Book of Exodus (cf. 20:18), recall God's self-manifestation to Moses on Mount Sinai and indicate the voice of God who speaks from his heaven, from his transcendence. Here the voice is attributed to the Risen Jesus Christ, who speaks to the assembly in prayer from the glory of the Father, with the voice of God. Turning "to see the voice-(1:12), John sees seven golden lamp-stands and in the midst of the lamp-stands one like a son of man" (1:12-13), a term particularly dear to John which means Jesus himself. The golden lampstands, with their candles lit, mean the Church of every time, in an attitude of prayer in the Liturgy; the Risen Jesus, the "Son of man" is among them and, clad in the vestments of the high priest of the Old Testament, carries out the priestly role of mediator with the Father. A dazzling manifestation of the Risen Christ, with characteristics proper to God - that recur in the Old Testament - follows in John's symbolic message.

He describes "hair white as white wool, white as snow" (1:14), a symbol of God's eternity (cf. Dan 7:14)

and of the Resurrection. Fire is a second symbol which, in the Old Testament, often refers to God, to indicate two of his properties. The first of these is the jealous intensity of his love which motivates his Covenant with man (cf. Deut 4:24). And it is this same burning intensity of love that is perceived in the gaze of the Risen Jesus: "his eyes were like a flame of fire" (Rev 1:14a). The second property is the uncontainable capacity for overcoming evil, like a "devouring fire" (Deut 9:3). Likewise Jesus' "feet", as he walked on to face and destroy evil, are compared to "burnished bronze" (Rev 1:13). Then Jesus Christ's voice, "like the sound of many waters" (1:15c), has the impressive roar of "the glory of the God of Israel" moving towards Jerusalem, of whom the Prophet Ezekiel speaks (cf. 43:2). Three other symbolic elements follow. They show all that the Risen Jesus is doing for his Church; he holds her firmly in his right hand - an extremely important image: Jesus holds the Church in his hand - he speaks to her with the penetrating force of a sharp sword and shows her the splendour of his divinity: "His face was like the sun shining in full strength" (Rev 1:16) John is so struck by this wondrous experience of the Risen One that he faints and falls as though dead.

After this experience of revelation the Apostle has before him the Lord Jesus who speaks to him, reassures him, lays his hand on his head, reveals his identity as the Risen Crucified One and entrusts to him the task of passing on his message to the Churches (cf. Rev 1:17-18). This God was just so beautiful that John fainted before him, falling as though dead. He is the friend of life and places his hand on the Apostle's head. And this is how it will be for us, we are friends of Jesus. Then the revelation of the Risen God, of the Risen Christ, will not be terrible but will be an encounter with the friend. The assembly too, experiences with John the wonderful moment of light before the Lord but is combined with the experience of the daily counter with Jesus, perceiving the riches of the contact with the Lord, who fills every space in existence.

In the third and last stage of first part of the Apocalypse (Rev 2-3) the speaker proposes to the assembly a seven-fold message in which Jesus speaks in the first person. Addressed to the Seven churches located in Asia Minor around Ephesus - Jesus' discourse starts with the specific situation of each Church and then extends to the churches of every era. Jesus immediately enters into the situation in which each Church lives, highlighting the patches of light and shade and addressing

(Contd. on Pg. 15)

A study weekend with the Professor Pope

Ecumenism, truth and children

Though a cradle Catholic from New York, it was only after university that I experienced an intense reverence to the faith and began to study theology. These studies eventually led me to Rome, the Eternal City, where I met my wife and found my vocation. During a period of tremendous upheaval and intense suffering, I began to read *Behold the Pierced One* by Joseph Ratzinger. For those who have read him, this much can be said; here is a theologian whose words verge on the beauty of poetic verse, whose thinking is forged in the crucible of life, and whose contemplative fountainhead is a kneeling before God in the pew of prayer.

When people discover that I am now a fledgling scholar writing my doctoral dissertation on Joseph Ratzinger's theology, I sometimes get the following questions, "What was the Pope like as a professor?" and, "What is Pope Benedict like as a person?" Since I was born too late to have had the Pope as a professor and have had only a few, personal experiences of him, I have been unable to answer these questions in a satisfactory way — until my experience in the beginning of this month. What I experienced during the first weekend of September in the papal summer residence not only answers these questions, but it also allays the lingering media misconception of Pope Benedict XVI as a severe "hardliner".

During this weekend, as he has for nearly the past four decades, Pope Benedict XVI gathered together with his circle of former Ph.D. students — the so-called *Ratzinger Schulerkreis* — for an academic seminar on a particular topic, this year "Ecumenical Outcomes and Questions in the Dialogue with Lutheranism and Anglicanism." From 30 August to 3 September, approximately 50 people convened with the Pope in the placid atmosphere of the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo to listen to and discuss the presentations of this year's invited speakers, all experts on ecumenism: Ulrich Wilckens, a Bishop Emeritus of the Lutheran Church in Germany; Prof. Theodor Dieter, the Director of the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg; Dominican Bishop Charles Morerod from Switzerland; and Cardinal Kurt Koch, the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Participating in this year's seminar were, of course, the Pope himself and many of his former students, which included a colourful panoply of cardinals, bishops, par-

ish priests, men and women religious, and lay people from every continent and corner of the earth, who, however different in culture and race, all share the singular distinction of having had Joseph Ratzinger as their theology professor and doctoral thesis adviser.

In addition Ratzinger's former circle students, the annual academic seminar incorporated a group of younger scholars, known as the *Neuer Schulerkreis*, who have either written or are writing their doctoral theses on some aspect of Joseph Ratzinger's thought. The young group has already produced two books on its own initiative — *the Symphony of Faith* and *the Symphony of the Word*, both of which take their cue from Joseph Ratzinger who has been called the "Mozart of Theology." As a recently accepted member of the *Neuer Schulerkreis*, enjoying the privilege of participating in the Ratzinger Summer School" in Castel Gandolfo, I did not know exactly what to expect during this study weekend but I was eager to listen to and learn.

During our shared meals, one specific task I assigned to myself was to ask the Pope's former students about what made Joseph Ratzinger so popular, almost legendary as a university professor for nearly three decades, so much so that his lecture hall was often packed to maximum capacity with students from other academic departments standing in the back to listen to his captivating words. However differently each one of them answered, the common denominator was this: What distinguished the Pope as a professor was — and still is — his ability to clarify and vivify the most abstruse and ostensibly arcane theological topics through literature and real-life examples accessible to everyone, his passion for the truth balanced by his humility and open-mindedness, and a titanic intellect coupled with an affable demeanor and love for people. In sum, he always was and continues to be both paternal and fraternal, in fact the diametrical opposite of a "hardliner".

As the Pope's former students were also quick to point out to me, unlike some other theologians and professors of his time he never sought to create a theological school centered on him that would in turn parrot and perpetuate his pet theological theories. Instead, the Pope's students told me that through Socratic dialogue Professor Ratzinger was more interested in directing his students' intellectual

gaze beyond himself and outward toward a greater vista, namely the panoramic fullness of faith and the diverse spectrum of theological thinking that could deepen one's understanding of faith's fullness and its inherent truth. Indeed, several times throughout the weekend I consciously stopped myself, looked up and around the room, and noticed precisely this: various people from all corners of the globe representing the fullness of humanity and the universality of the Church who were passionately involved in academic seminar discussions that could not be contained and often spilled over onto the dining-room tables for hours after. However different their individual stripe of thinking may be from each other, I noticed that all of the Pope's students are marked by the palpable, Ratzingerian imprint: intellectual fraternity in quest for the truth and spiritual communion. This is anything but the legacy or imprint a "hardliner" leaves.

Delivered completely off the cuff, the Pope's substantial Homily during Holy Mass on Sunday left no doubts as to who this man is, as a person as well as a professor. Since I had to play the unenviable role of parental "hardliner" throughout Mass and fine-tune the decibel level emanating from our three little children I admittedly found it challenging to focus on the Pope's words. However, at one particular point I unwittingly relinquished my feeble attempts at firm, liturgical parenting and perked up to the Pope's words. Emblazoned in my mental template, this brief part of his Homily is worth quoting verbatim: "No one can say: I have the truth...and, rightly so, no one can have the truth. It is truth that possesses us, it is something living! We are not its possessors, rather, we are gripped by it...As no one can say: I have children — they are not a possession of ours, they are a gift, and as gift of God they are given to us for a task — so we cannot say: I have the truth, but truth has come to us." Hearing this, I couldn't help but wryly ask myself, "Did my little



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children noisily scampering in the back pews prompt the Pope to make that comparison?" If so, well done little ones.

However awestruck I was by Pope's words, by the end of the Homily the task at hand for my wife and I was to cease the liturgical hijinks of our children, corral them back into the pews, and help them to adopt an appropriate mindset as we were about to bring the gifts up to the altar as a family. Watching the Pope eagerly and humbly receive the gifts from my children, smile at and tenderly bless them evoked the memory of how Cardinal Meisner described the Pope to my wife and me after he was elected pope, "He has the intellect of ten university professors but the heart and piety of a child on the day of his first Holy Communion." Nothing could be truer: as this brief exchange with my children showed, as the stories of his alumnae testified, and as the Pope's own words and demeanor throughout the weekend revealed, he is ever the passionate professor seeking to grasp the truth while

also the child who knows that he is always held before he can ever hold.

Finally, the conclusion of Holy Mass was marked by what was for me one of the ecumenical highlights of the weekend; a chant to the Mother of God sung by a Greek Orthodox lay theologian and a Romanian Orthodox priest. I couldn't help but notice that, as they chanted, the Pope's eyes were riveted on them. Why? Not only because this ancient chant to the Mother of God is in itself sublime. Moreover, I think because to the Pope the sight of our Orthodox brothers chanting at the conclusion of a Catholic Mass personifies his own understanding of both ecumenism in particular and Christianity as a whole: A cooperative "seeking-after", a spiritual "rejoicing-and-living-in" and a public "testifying-to" the truth of Jesus Christ — the Truth made flesh in the Virgin Mother's womb and then born a child.

(Courtesy: *L'Osservatore Romano*)

T20 designed for American Market

The T20 Cricket World Cup is upon us. With this exciting event comes global attention, which is great for this magnificent sport and for our country as well.

Interestingly, T20 cricket, and the sport of cricket in general, has parallels to our Christian experience. Some historians of cricket suggest that it was a game invented in France (or Belgium) over 500 years ago and was relatively popular as pastime amongst French farmers. The game was exported to England, and around 1550 evidence of the game being played in England (Surrey) is now known to us. The origin of the name itself is also not English. It is derived from Middle Dutch, with the word being Krik Ket ("stick").

Remarkably, the sport's first official international match was also played (in 1844) by two countries that are not test playing nations today – the United States of America and Canada. More amazingly, it has also been recorded the very first cricket match played by Australia was by a black Aboriginal team that played in England in the 19th century, at a time when Australia was considered a "white" country.

So despite all its English and British Commonwealth flavour, cricket's origins are quite alien to all of us. It was invented in France or Belgium, first played by the US and Canada, and became popular with the English and British Commonwealth peoples only much later.

Add to this the fact that T20 cricket was also apparently designed for the American market, where audiences do not enjoy watching a single sporting event for more than three hours' maxi-

Column: On a Wing and a Prayer

By John Fernando

mum (such as basketball, American Football, ice hockey and baseball). Indian business entrepreneurs were hoping to capture the US market, generate publicity, interest and profits by bringing the sport to the US several years back. But, it has rebounded, and is now popular in the traditional cricketing countries (UK, India, Sri Lanka, Australia etc).

Our relationship with Christ is very similar too. Yahweh, or Elohi, the one true God was a God of the Jewish people initially. But, sadly, the Jewish people were unfaithful to Him or have a long history of rejecting Him (something we, too, are often guilty of). This was especially true of the six-century period between King Solomon's reign 1,000 years before Jesus to about 400 years before Christ. It then was revealed to Saint Paul, primarily, to take the good news of God's love and salvation to the gentiles – to you and I. Saint Peter's conversion of the Roman gentile Cornelius is another milestone in God choosing all humanity to be His children.

As with cricket, the origins of Christianity are far removed from the initial target demographic. Cricket, whether we like it or not, is supposed to have begun in continental Europe and not England. Christianity sprung from Judaism and the Jews, and begrudgingly too. As you may know, the President of the very first Council of Jerusalem, Saint James (the "Lesser" and not Zebedee, the brother of Saint John the Evangelist) was dead against gentiles being converted to Christianity. It took nearly a decade of concerted evan-

gelising by Saint Paul and Saint Luke, and also Saint Peter's influence, to finally convince the Council that gentiles, too, were part of God's salvific plan.

Who would have thought 30 years ago that Sri Lanka, a newcomer to test cricket, would hold a premium position in international cricket today. Nearly half a millennium ago, neither would the French, the Belgians or the English have possibly imagined that someone named Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene, Sachin Tendulkar or Umar Gul from the "colonies" would one day dominate the sport.

Likewise, Christianity as we know it today is so far removed from what the scribes and the Pharisees had desired or planned for. Those people of yore paid close attention to the racial, social, national and ethnic characteristics of their flocks. Those ancient religious leaders got it all wrong. As Christ and Saint Paul constantly preached, by word and deed, God's amazing love, providence and mercy is for all people, not just for an exclusive club or for those who were at the place of origin.

As Sri Lanka is a late comer and late bloomer to a sport that is over 500-years-old and had its origins in a distant continent, so too are we Christians called to belong to the privileged flock. We can confidently say that we have been adopted, by the grace and blood of Jesus Christ, as children of a loving and kind Father. Sometimes the place of origin does not matter; what matters is our loyalty and passion for something – in this case, our faith, or the sport of cricket.

Drop down just one little rose ...

"The sharper the thorn the sweeter shall be my song"
(St. Therese of Lisieux)



These words of yours
Dear St. Therese
Depict how you awaited suffering,
And its amazing to see
your acceptance of
Such incidents

You were of a sensitive nature
It wasn't possible for you
to do so,

It cost you very much
You felt the pain mentally
And later bodily too;
Whenever you encountered
unexpected sufferings
both big and small

But still
Amidst all these
You didn't run away
You faced them
Allowed yourself to be
challenged by them
You tried to see beyond
and finally transcended them.

It's great O Little Saint
It is to be admired,
Year after year,
because I know by my
own experiences of life
It is not that easy
to accept suffering
specially by a person
for whom the slightest pain is great

Though of the same nature
You took these circumstances
as opportunities to express
your great love for Jesus
In accepting these sufferings
You became a partaker
in the sufferings of Christ
who loved us tremendously
and gave this life for us.

This conviction and experience
made you not only await sufferings.

But also accept them
with cheerfulness
So you said "The sharper the thorn
the sweeter shall be my song"

I am far from it dear Saint,
But pick for me a rose
in the Heavenly Garden of Carmel,
to be adorned with this grace
So as to accept suffering
in cheerfulness

On this your feastday
Intercede for each of God's people
and send a rose of grace
to be immersed in the love
Of Jesus from moment
to moment.

Happy Feast to All !
In particular to all the
A.C Junior Sisters who celebrate
their Patroness' feast

Sr. M. Riana A.C.

Fr. Joseph Benedict Fernando Former Parish Priest St. Lawrence's Church Sacredotal Golden Jubilant



Meek and humble virtues Priest of God
Holy Shepherd with a golden heart
Pastor Most respected and loved by all
Scholar in the field of education
Eloquent preacher with high proficiency
He is trilingual and can reach everybody
Soft-spoken never breaks the hearts of
anybody

His greetings with radiant smile relieves all pains
Kind-hearted with quick action when in
emergency

Available even in dark hours with no excuse
Lover of the poor and the displaced victims
An excellent Parish Priest to the congregation
Congratulations our dear Father Joe Benedict
May God Grace you with good health and
wisdom

To serve in God's vineyard for many more years
S.B.David

Golden Jubilee



Sr. Mary Sheila Perera celebrates her 'Golden Jubilee' as a Sister of the Good Shepherd congregation on September 29, 2012.

Sister Sheila was born on the September 3, 1942.

She is the youngest daughter of late Ethmadalage Thomas Perera and of late Tilda Mary Priscilla Fernando Gunasekara Chandraratne of Mutwal. Sister Sheila was fortunate to be in the company of two sisters and three brothers who were elder to her.

Her Godfather

was late Rev. Father Gabriel Gunasekara of the Carmelite Order and his sister, late Sr. Xaverine of Good Shepherd congregation.

Sr. Sheila had her formal education at Good Shepherd Convent, Nuwara Eliya and Kotahena. At the age of 16 she decided to commit herself to the Lord, which had been a wish of her mother.

Sr. Sheila was in the Philippines for studies and after returning to Sri Lanka she served at Good Shepherd Convent Valachchenai, Bolawalana, Gampola, Kandy and Kotahena. She retired from service after teaching English at Good Shepherd Convent Kotahena.

May the Good Shepherd shower his blessings upon her throughout her life.

Ad Multos Annos!

(C.R. Dickson Anthony)

God knows best - a life experience



Although my dad worked abroad, we had financial difficulties. The reason was that from the money dad sent every month, nearly half was used to pay old debts. Thus we had to manage our expenses with only the balance.

My mum was in the habit of buying lotteries. She believed that it was only through the win of a lottery that we could get over this problem.

One day our Parish Priest visited our home. In the course of the conversation, our problem was mentioned.

My mum said, "Father please pray, that we may win a lottery, so that our problem be solved." The priest said whenever you have a problem, please do not dictate terms to the Lord on how it should be solved. The Lord knows best. Say the family rosary daily and ask the Lord for an answer. If everything happens according to His plan, He should know the way it should be solved.

Three months passed. Our family prayed the rosary daily, fervently and faithfully. One day dad suddenly called

with good news. He had been selected as the best worker in his workplace. The best worker was awarded US \$ 1000, which was over one hundred thousand rupees. This was the exact amount we needed to settle our debt.

The Lord always has a plan. Our problems are a part of His plan. Answers too are included in that plan. Without dictating to Him our answers, let us be humble and have faith in the answer. He provides for us. It is all well and good.

RodeZo

A friend in need. Is a friend in deed.



Mala and Kamala are friends. They are in the same class. Both are bright students. These two children help the weak students. Mala and Kamala did everything practically together. But dur-

ing the daily interval Kamala disappears. This was a big problem for Mala.

One day she asked Kamala, "Where do you go during the interval? Why don't you come to share the meal?"

"My father is very sick. He is paralyzed therefore he can't work. My mother does odd jobs for a small payment. We have only one meal a day. We have to spend a lot of money for my father's medicine," said Kamala sadly.

Mala felt very sad. She told this story to her mother. Mala's mother also felt very sad. After that Mala's mother began to send an extra meal for Kamala. Now both of them enjoy their meal together.

Sanduni Prasadika
No : 785/C
Vihara Mawatha,
Narangodapaluwa,

Children

Children dear children, they are like flowers
Help them to grow, into sturdy towers.
Inspire them dear Elders help them to bloom,
Lead them carefully, away from the gloom.
Develop their talents right from the start,
Reassure their reward if they do their part.
Encourage them to study to make the world good.
Never discourage them, teach them "I can, I could."

Emilda S. Douglas

First Holy Communion



Ten children of St. Louis' Church, Kotarupe in the Raddolugama Parish received their First Holy Communion recently. The picture show them with Rev. Fr. Prasad Perera, Parish Priest, Raddolugama and Mrs. Imali Fernando, the Sunday School teacher.

(Ranjith Lokupothagama.)



Thank you God,
For my puppy dog.
He loves me,
I love you,

Methmi Dias
Grade 3
Basilica Primary College
Ragama
Our Lady of Lourdes, Parish,
Tewatta.

DAVID the DARING

THE SHEPHERD BOY WHO BECAME A KING

THEN DAVID CROSSED OVER TO A HILL TOP ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VALLEY, A SAFE DISTANCE AWAY.

AB-NER, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

WHO IS THAT SHOUTING AND WAKING UP THE KING?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE GREATEST WARRIOR IN ISRAEL, ABNER. IS THIS HOW YOU PROTECT YOUR KING?

LOOK! WHERE IS THE KING'S SPEAR? WHERE IS THE WATER JAR THAT WAS RIGHT BY HIS HEAD?

IS THAT DAVID'S VOICE??

YES, YOUR MAJESTY. WHY ARE YOU STILL CHASING ME? WHAT HAVE I DONE?

JUST NOW THE LORD GAVE ME THE CHANCE TO KILL YOU, BUT I DIDN'T DO IT BECAUSE HE MADE YOU KING.

HERE IS YOUR SPEAR, YOUR MAJESTY. LET ONE OF YOUR MEN COME OVER AND GET IT.

I'VE BEEN A FOOL, DAVID. COME BACK. I WILL NEVER HARM YOU AGAIN, BECAUSE YOU HAVE SPARED MY LIFE. MAY GOD BLESS YOU.

THEN DAVID WENT ON HIS WAY, AND SAUL RETURNED HOME.

WE APPROACHED KING ACHISH...

PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY, LET ME LIVE IN ONE OF YOUR SMALL TOWNS. THERE IS NO NEED FOR ME TO LIVE WITH YOU IN YOUR CAPITAL CITY.

LET'S GO AND SEE KING ACHISH

ALL RIGHT, I AGREE. YOU CAN GO AND LIVE IN ZIKLAG, OF COURSE YOU UNDERSTAND THAT YOU AND YOUR MEN ARE TO FIGHT ON MY SIDE WHEN WE GO TO WAR.

SO DAVID AND HIS MEN WENT WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND SETTLED IN THE TOWN OF GATH, IN THE COUNTRY OF THE PHILISTINES.

Communion on the Moon

**An article by Eric Metaxas.
About the events of July 20, 1969**

Forty-three years ago two human beings changed history by walking on the surface of the moon. But what happened before Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong exited the Lunar Module is perhaps even more amazing, mainly because so few people know about it.

"I'm talking about the fact that Buzz Aldrin took communion on the surface of the moon. He and Armstrong had only been on the lunar surface for a few minutes when Aldrin made the following public statement:
"This is the LM pilot. I'd like to take this opportunity to ask every person listening in, wherever and wherever they may be, to pause for a moment and contemplate the events of the past few hours and to give thanks in his or her own way." He then ended radio communication and there, on the silent surface of the moon, 250,000 miles from home,

The background to the story is that Aldrin was an elder at his Presbyterian Church in Texas during this period in his life, and knowing that

he would soon be doing something unprecedented in human history, he felt he should mark the occasion somehow, and he asked his Minister to help him. And so the Minister consecrated a communion wafer and a small vial of communion wine. Buzz Aldrin took them with him out of the Earth's orbit and on to the surface of the moon. He and Armstrong had only been on the lunar surface for a few minutes when Aldrin made the following public statement:

"This is the LM pilot. I'd like to take this opportunity to ask every person listening in, wherever and wherever they may be, to pause for a moment and contemplate the events of the past few hours and to give thanks in his or her own way." He then ended radio communication and there, on the silent surface of the moon, 250,000 miles from home,



he read a verse from the Gospel of John, and he took communion.

Here is his own account of what happened:

"In the radio blackout, I opened the little plastic packages which contained the bread and the wine. I poured the wine into the chalice our church had given me. In the one-sixth gravity of the moon, the wine slowly curled and gracefully came up the side of the cup. Then I read the scripture, 'I am the vine, you are the branches. Who-soever abides in me will bring forth much fruit.. Apart from me you can do

nothing.'"

I had intended to read my communion passage back to earth, but at the last minute [they] had requested that I not do this. NASA was already embroiled in a legal battle with Madelyn Murray O'Hare, the celebrated opponent of religion, over the Apollo 8 crew reading from Genesis while orbiting the moon at Christmas. I agreed reluctantly. "I ate the tiny Host and swallowed the Wine. I gave thanks for the intelligence and spirit that had brought two young pilots to the Sea of Tranquility. It was interesting for me

to think: the very first liquid ever poured on the moon, and the very first food eaten there, were the communion elements."

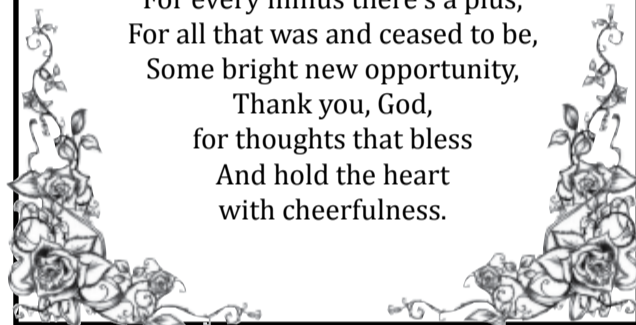
And of course, it's interesting to think that some of the first words spoken on the moon were the words of Jesus Christ, who made the Earth and the Moon - and Who, in the immortal words of Dante, is Himself the "Love that moves the Sun and other Stars."

The background to the story is that Aldrin was an elder at his Presbyterian Church in Texas during this period in his life, and knowing that he would soon be doing something unprecedented in human history, he felt he should mark the occasion somehow, and he asked his Minister to help him.

Thoughts that Bless

By R. H. Grenville

A seed is buried; young shoots arise,
A shell is broken; a song bird flies,
Snow melts; rain falls; bare fields turn green,
Night hides the sun and stars are seen,
Though much in life may puzzle us,
For every minus there's a plus,
For all that was and ceased to be,
Some bright new opportunity,
Thank you, God,
for thoughts that bless
And hold the heart
with cheerfulness.



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What it says in
the Readings

Your Word is truth, O Lord, consecrate
us in the truth.

Jn. 17:17

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B
30th Sept. - 7th Oct. 2012

**SUN: 26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY
TIME**

Num. 11: 25-29; Jm. 5: 1-6;
Mk. 9: 38-43, 45, 47-48

Mon: Feast of St. Therese of the Child
Jesus. Virgin & Doctor

Job 1: 6-22; Lk. 9:

46, 50

St. Therese of Lisieux.
Marie Francois Therese
Martin died at the Carme
in Lisieux on 30 Sep-
tember 1897. She was
declared a Doctor of the
Church by Pope John
Paul II in 1997. Patron of
missions, florists, avia-
tors and France.



Tue: Memorial of The Holy Guardian
Angels

Ex. 23: 20-23; Mt. 19: 1-5, 10

Wed: Job 9: 1-12, 14-16;

Lk. 9: 57-62

Thu: Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi

Job 19: 21-27; Lk.

10: 1-12

**Saint Francis of
Assisi (1181 - 1226)**
son of a wealthy cloth
merchant, was an Ital-
ian Catholic Friar and
preacher. He founded
the Franciscan Order,



and is one of the most venerated religious
figures in history. he was a lover of nature
and as a messenger of peace, mediated at
warfronts.

Fri: Job 38:1, 12-21, 40, 3-5;

Lk. 10: 13-16

Sat: Job 42: 1-3, 5-6, 12-16;

Lk. 10: 17-24

**Sun: 27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY
TIME**

Gen. 2: 18-24; Hebr. 2: 9-11;

Mk. 10: 2-16 (or 10: 2-12)

Twenty Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Num. 11: 25-29

Seventy elders are given
the Spirit to enable them to proph-
esy. At one point they had to stop
but two of them still continued
to do so. A complaint is made to
Moses. Moses presumes that the
Spirit of the Lord is with them and
therefore allows them to continue.

Second Reading: James. 5: 1-6

St. James warns his con-
verts regarding the ungodly life
that they are leading. Riches are
there for one to win the kingdom of
heaven and not to destroy himself
and others, writes St. James.

Gospel: Mk. 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

The Apostles complain to
Jesus about a man who is casting
out demons in his name, but Jesus
is quite open-minded when he says
that it is being done in his name. He
is empathetic that no one should
in his name lead another into sin.
One should be ready to sacrifice
everything so as to remain faithful
to the Lord.

Reflection

The importance of be-
ing faithful to the Lord and to his
teaching is stressed in today's
readings. It is the Holy Spirit who
moves one to remain faithful to
the Lord, to His teaching and to
His values. For whoever is moved
by the Spirit is one who is for the
Lord and therefore not against him.
The Lord urges us therefore to be
moved by His Spirit and not by any
other.

In the Second Reading
St. James warns his rich converts
about the sinful life they are lead-
ing. Riches and possessions are a
blessing and should help to win the
Kingdom of God. But the rich and
the powerful converts have used
their riches and powers to live sin-
ful lives. They are carried away by
the spirit of the world. This has re-
sulted in the accumulation of more
riches and more powers. They even
begin to persecute the poor and

finally destroy the righ-
teous too. This was all due
to their non-seeking the
guidance of the Holy Spirit
but merely being carried
away by the spirit of the
world. But justice will be
meted out on the last day
when the Lord will sit to
judge the world. Therefore
this serves as a warning for
all who are taken up by the
spirit of the world and we
should therefore turn to
the Holy Spirit for guid-
ance and help. We should
therefore with the help of
the Spirit of the Lord use
our worldly possessions to
gain the kingdom of God.

The First Read-
ing and the Gospel speaks
about the Kingdom of God
being activated in word
and deed by outsiders, but Jesus
does not react against this. Jesus
only says, "Do not forbid him; for
no one who does mighty work in
my name will be able to speak evil
of me soon after." He also says to
His Apostles, "For he that is not
against us is for us." Thereby he
leaves no room for anybody to go
against Him or the Apostles, and
also against the Church. There will
be many who will cast out demons
and perform miracles in His name,
but no one who does it with the
power of the true Spirit will ever
go against Christ, His Apostles and
His Church. It is those who do so
with the power of other spirits
who will scandalize the people and
lead them astray. Filled with God's
Spirit we must always become
an example to the world. This is
stressed in the Gospel when it says
that we should be ready even to get
rid of our near and dear. Nay even
parts of our bodies if they cause us
to sin. The only way to be partakers
of God's kingdom is to be always
moved by the Holy Spirit.

Aid story.

Some years ago Chinese



authorities decided to introduce
football into China, and the school-
masters in one district were told
to teach their boys the game. They
sent for a book containing all the
rules of association football. Then
they translated it to Chinese. Then
they set their unhappy scholars to
copy out the many pages of rules
and learn them by heart.

When they could all
respect the rules correctly, the
masters arranged to have lectures
on the rules to make sure they fully
understood. The lecturers were fol-
lowed by test papers, the results of
which were rather discouraging.

Just then an Englishman
happened to visit the town, and
some of the boys told him of their
desire to become footballers and
the many hours of study that they
had devoted.

"Good heavens! He said,
"You'll never learn the game like
that; the only way to learn to play,
is to play the game." He got a ball
and took them to the field, and in
half an hour they knew more about
football than six weeks of study had
taught them.

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

Holy Family.....

Contd from Pg.5

the Holy Family Consecrated Secular Vocation was
approved in the Archdiocese of Bordeaux in France.
This was a very happy event in the history of our As-
sociation. In May 1973, the Holy Family Consecrated
Secular Vocation was established in Jaffna.

In a changing world, identifying the needs in
families, among depressed in the society and in keep-
ing with the spirit of our vocation, we feel that our
Founder Fr. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles is with us in every
stage of our life and ministry. Today strengthened and
convinced we live our life and mission.

Our mission in the world is to be the 'leaven'
and to be a living witness to the Spirit of God Alone.
Like our Founder, we who are living in a wounded and
weakened society, where culture is disintegrating, have
the responsibility to help the people to face their prob-
lems, strengthen their faith, make them understand
God's love and Providential care, guide them to experi-
ence God's presence in their life and in their society.
This is our mission.

In our milieu we serve a broken society and
are witnesses to God's blessing and by that we are
strengthened by God. We will carry forward the
Charism of our Founder - "God Alone." We the Holy
Family Consecrated Secular members extend our invi-
tation to anyone who is living a single life, to consider
this way of committing your life to the mission of God
in the Church.

*Jubilee Committee, Holy Family Provincialate, Jaffna.
(Contd. next week)*

Jesus holds.....

Contd from Pg.8

to the church a pressing invitation: "Repent" (2, 5, 16;
3, 19c); "hold fast what you have" (3:11); "do the works
you did at first" (2:5); be zealous and repent" (3:19b)...
If these words of Jesus are listened to with faith, they
immediately begin to take effect. The Church in prayer,
on receiving the Word of the Lord, is transformed. All
the Churches must listen attentively to the Lord, open-
ing themselves to the Spirit as Jesus asks insistently,
repeating this order seven times: He who has an ear, let
him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches" (27,11,
17, at); 3:6, 13, 22). The assembly listens to the mes-
sage, receiving an incentive for repentance, conver-
sion, perseverance, growth in love and guidance on the
journey.

Dear friends, the Book of Revelation presents
to us a community gathered in prayer because it is
precisely in prayer that we become ever more aware
of Jesus' presence with us and in us. The more and the
better we pray, with constancy, with intensity, the more
like him we shall be, and he will truly enter into our life
and guide it, bestowing upon us joy and peace. And the
more we know, love and follow Jesus, the more we will
feel the need to pause in prayer with him, receiving
serenity, hope and strength in our life.

(Courtesy: L'osservatore Romano)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response : Lord, graciously hear us.

For Christians: That they may be a light
to others and never a source of darkness, a help-
ing hand and not an obstruction. Lord, hear us.

Response : Lord, graciously hear us.

For all employers: That they may never
exploit their employees; rather that they may
treat them in such a way as to further their dig-
nity and self-respect. Lord, hear us.

Response : Lord, graciously hear us.

For all those who have been victims of
exploitation or scandal: That they may overcome
the obstacles that have been placed in their path.
Lord, hear us.

Response : Lord, graciously hear us.

That we may never destroy the clear vi-
sion of others, or make a mockery of their ideals,
or pour cold water on their efforts Lord, hear
us.

Response : Lord, graciously hear us.