

**Eucharistic Exhibition:**

- (1) Vocational Exhibition (SJC Auditorium)
  - \* Religious Congregations & Archdiocesan Seminaries
  - \* Archdiocesan Apostolates
- (2) On Eucharistic Miracles

# Messenger

**Eucharistic Adoration**

at SJC Chapel with Prayer & Reflection.

**Choral presentation:** On Friday, Saturday & Sunday

(A festival of 1000 voices)

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## "He touched me and made me whole.."



(Pix: Archdiocesan website)



the country, seeking the healing touch of the Lord.

"The 'Real Presence' of the Lord stimulates us to overcome our mental, physical and spiritual shortcomings," His Eminence said and observed that in an era where we are downtrodden by the struggles of life, the solace we gain to bear the agony we face, comes from the Lord.

The Solemn Service began with the blessing imparted through the Statue of Our Lady by Archbishop Emeritus, His Grace Nicholas Marcus Fernando.

The height of the proceedings was initiated with the Blessed Sacrament, being ceremoniously brought in amidst the vast crowds led by His Eminence, Archbishops Emeriti and Their Lordships.

The Secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio, Their Lordships Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando and Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Episcopal Vicars, Priests and the Religious, participated in the proceedings.

The concluding proceedings were the Blessings imparted from the Blessed Sacrament, and the final hymn to Mother Mary.

Some had pitched their stents for days within the sprawling grounds while others came in their thousands, those spiritually, psychologically and physically sick, to be touched, healed and made whole as they placed before the Lord in faith, their guilt, their misery and their

transgressions. This was the scene last Sunday (26) at Tewatte when the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith presided at the Solemn Service of the Blessing of the Sick, at the Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka.

In an address that

brought solace to their hearts, His Eminence made them understand that pain, sorrow and tears are inevitable to human life. They should be borne courageously and be seen as a tribute we pay, to the victory of the Cross.

"Let us not evade it but bear it, for the sake of the Lord,"

His Eminence said. "Pain, sorrow and tears should not be seen as a bitter experience of defeat and abandonment, but as an avenue to link with the 'Real Presence' of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament," His Eminence explained to the multitude that thronged from all corners of

**Pope Benedict XVI:**

### World needs a mature and committed laity

VATICAN NEWS (EWTN/ CNA) - Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI told a group of lay persons this week, that the world needs their courageous and credible testimony to bring the hope of the Gospel to all areas of society.

"The world needs a mature and committed laity, that can make its own specific contribution to the ecclesial mission with respect for the ministries and tasks that each one has in the life of the Church, and always in cordial communion

with the Bishops, the Holy Father has stated. In a message sent to the International Forum of Catholic Action in Lasi, Romania, the Pope reflected on the laity's responsibility to the Church and society.

(See P 2)



### Soup kitchen for the needy at St. Anthony's Shrine

St. Anthony's Shrine, Kochchikade in Colombo, was gifted with a 5.2 perch block of land, from the Ports Authority premises, in order to construct a soup kitchen. This is to provide for the welfare of the poor and the needy, in the neighbourhood.

At the invitation of the Administrator, Rev. Fr. Clement Rozairo, the Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, blessed and laid the foundation stone. Among those present was the First Lady, Madam Shiranthi Rajapaksa.

### Eucharistic Celebrations of the Jubilarians

The Golden and the Silver Jubilarians will celebrate a Thanksgiving Eucharist at the Archbishop's House Chapel, with the presbyteral family at 9.30 a.m. on Monday, September 3, 2012.

Rev. Fr. Bertram Dabrera will celebrate a special Thanksgiving Eucharist on September 6, 2012 at 5.00 p.m. at All Saints' Church, Borella.

Rev. Fr. Xystus Kurukulasuriya will celebrate a special Thanksgiving Eucharist on September 9, 2012, at 7.30 am at St. Mary's Church, Grand Street, Negombo.

The Thanksgiving Eucharist of Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph was celebrated on August 25, at the Carmelite Convent, Mattakkuliya.

(See P 8)

### The giant step to restore God as Creator

Neil Armstrong, the first human to set foot on the moon was called to rest on August 25, 2012 at the age of 82.

He was a pioneer amongst one of the many who entered orbit. Previous space travellers' derogatory comments on God as the Creator, had disturbed the faith of many. "We have been in orbit, but we never found God," was one such arrogant remark that was made.

On July 20, 1969 while stepping on the dusty surface of the moon, Armstrong

said, "That's one small step for man but one giant leap for mankind."

Furthermore, when he said, that he saw the glorious splendour of creation, he obviously made reference to God as the Creator. Thus the faith that was shaken by the previous space travellers was restored.

The giant step he made was to restore faith in God as the Creator. He could be reckoned to be the first eye witness to God's creation.



<p><b>The Miracle of Lanciano</b></p>	<p><b>4</b> Pg</p>	<p><b>The Art of Gentle Persuasion</b></p>	<p><b>6</b> Pg</p>	<p><b>The Day Mother Teresa kept the Pope waiting</b></p>	<p><b>8</b> Pg</p>
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## Confirmation Service at St. Nicholas' Church, Bopitiya



A student who received the Sacrament of Confirmation recently from His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, is seen receiving a certificate from His Lordship at St. Nicholas Church, Bopitiya.

*SK.J. Kurera*

## Welcome!



Rev. Fr. Leo Perera, Parish Priest gets a welcome back garland from a senior parishioner of St. Anthony's Church, Mt. Lavinia.

## President Sri Lanka Scout Association meets His Eminence

President, Sri Lanka Scout Association Mr. Pintharuralalage Don Leonard Albert, better known as Leonard Albert and his wife Prema Albert, met His Eminence, the Archbishop of Colombo, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith at his office, at the Archbishop's House, Colombo, recently. During the meeting they had a very cordial exchange of views with His Eminence on religion, family matters, Scout Brotherhood and Orphanage assistance. The Alberts and their five children and their families are benefactors of the Church and orphanages. His Eminence who was pleased with their endeavours sought their assistance in certain matters and assured them of his prayers and blessings for their future journey and



for their entire family for Christmas and the New Year.

Leonard, a life long parishioner and benefactor of St. Theresa's Church, Thimbirigasyaya, is also an ardent devotee and benefactor of many churches, among them All

## Free Medical Clinic for Senior Citizens of Diyalagoda



A free Ayurvedic Medical Clinic was held at Diyalagoda R.C. Junior School Hall, recently. Nearly a hundred patients attended the clinic. This event was sponsored by the Western Province Ayurvedic Department.

Rev. Fr. Thusith Pradeep Fernando, Parish Priest together with the St. Vincent De Paul Society of Diyalagoda organised the clinic.

*D. Anselm Fernando*

## St. Lazarus Church, Kurukulawa celebrates Feast



The 86th Feast of St. Lazarus' Church, Kurukulawa will be celebrated on Sunday, September 2, 2012. St. Lazarus is the patron saint of Seafarers.

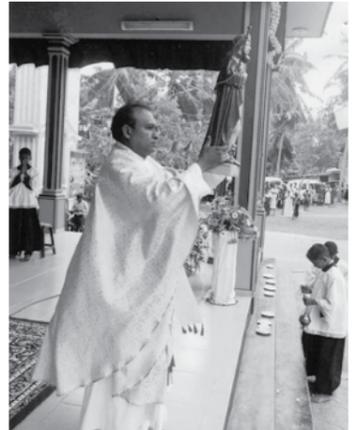
*H.A. Caldera*

## 109<sup>th</sup> Feast of the Church of St. Roche's, Hettirippuwa

Very Rev. Fr. Austin Marcus, Vicar General of Kurunegala presided at the 109th Annual Feast of St. Roche's Church, Hettirippuwa, in the Irabodagama Parish of Kurunegala on Sunday, August 19, 2012.

Vespers was sung on Saturday, August 18, with the participation of Very Rev. Fr. Piyal Janaka Fernando, Episcopal Vicar, Administration of Kurunegala, Rev. Fr. Patrick Jayakody and Rev. Fr. Thusitha Priyanga.

*G.B.H. Livera*



## Walahapitiya celebrates feast of St. Anne



The annual feast of St. Anne's Church, Walahapitiya was held recently with the Festive Mass officiated by Rev. Fr. Shehan F. Fernando, Asst. Procurator General, Diocese of Chilaw.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Upali Churchill Perera, Administrator, Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine, Nattandiya and Rev. Fr. Duminda Suresh, Asst. Parish Priest assisting at Mass.

*Shriyangani Felicia*

## World need....

Contd. from Pg. 1

"Co-responsibility demands a change in mentality, in particular, about the role of the laity in the Church, who are considered not as 'collaborators' with the clergy, but as persons truly 'co-responsible' for being and acting of the Church," he said.

The laity's role is of fundamental importance, especially "in this phase of history," the Holy Father stressed, to be interpreted "in the light of the Church's social Magisterium."

Lay men and women should also aim to "grow, with the whole Church," he noted, "in the co-responsibility of offering humanity a future of hope and with the courage to formulate demanding proposals."

Recalling the "long and fruitful history" of Catholic laity as "courageous witnesses of Christ," the Holy Father invited the participants in the Forum to renew their commitment "to walking on the way of holiness, keeping up an intense life of prayer, encouraging and respecting personal ways of faith."

## Annual Feast of St. Anne's Thibirigaskatuwa



St. Anne's Church, Thibirigaskatuwa celebrated the 22nd Annual Festive celebration. Picture shows Rev. Fr. Jude Suresh the chief celebrant being accompanied by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Srikantha Fernando and assistant Dilran Peiris, to celebrate the festive Eucharistic Celebration.

## Vocation Promotion Camp for Altar Camps



A Vocation Promotion Camp for altar servers children in the Ratnapura Parish was held at Thanganthanne St. Mary's Shrine. Picture shows Rev. Fr. Ranjanmal Moraes Parish Priest of Ratnapura, Rev. Fr. Priyantha Fernando Asst. Parish Priest of Thanganthanne and Mr. Sunil Fernando Administrative Officer of Sethmini with children.

*Theobald Samarungu*

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# Centenary celebration of lay Franciscan Order



**Church in the World**



The lay group of the Franciscan Order celebrated their centenary, presided by the Archbishop, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, at St. Mary's Church,

Bolawalana. The Spiritual Director Rev. Fr. Benet Silva, together with the Katuwapitiya members of the Franciscans, are seen posing for a photograph with His Eminence.

Also present is the Episcopal Vicar for the Negombo Region, Very Rev. Fr. Patrick Perera.

*Agnes Siyabalapitiya*

## Marriage Encounter Bureau

A Marriage Encounter Bureau to facilitate those interested in finding a partner in life is available at St. Mary's Church Lauries Road, Bambalapitiya

The Bureau is open on Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The parents or those interested are welcome.

A file could be opened after filling a form giving the relevant details with a photograph. Those interested could go through available files and ascertain a suitable partner and communicate with him or her.

*Dr. Maxie Fernandopulle*

## President, National Catholic Youth Association



Young Lakshan Gurusinghe from Kegalle Parish in the Ratnapura Diocese was chosen as new National President of the National Catholic Youth Association recently. He was the President of Diocesan Catholic Youth Association in Ratnapura.

*T. Samaratunga*

## Housing for war affected families in Batticaloa



Fifteen houses built for war-affected and displaced families were handed over to the beneficiaries in Pavatkodichenai, Manmunai West Division, Batticaloa recently.

These houses were built by Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC with funding support from partners in the Caritas International Network.

The handing over ceremony was presided over by Rev. Fr. Cryton Outschoon, Director of Caritas EHED Batticaloa. Rev. Fr. George Sigamoney, National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC was also present.

*Ainslie Joseph*

## Pope Benedict XVI: Insincerity is 'the mark of the devil'

Pope Benedict XVI has said that a lack of sincerity in life is "the mark of the devil" as witnessed in the decision of Judas Iscariot to continue following Jesus Christ even after he had ceased to believe in him.

"The problem is that Judas did not go away, and his most serious fault was falsehood, which is the mark of the devil. This is why Jesus said to the Twelve: 'One of you is a devil,'" Pope Benedict said in his midday Angelus address to pilgrims at Castel Gandolfo last Sunday.

The Pontiff said that Catholics pray to the Virgin Mary to help them to believe in Jesus as St. Peter did and "to be always sincere with him and with all people."

After Christ declared himself to be "the living bread which came down from heaven" many of those who had followed him, records St. John in his Gospel, "drew back and no longer went about with him."

Asked by Jesus if they too will leave, St. Peter replied on behalf of the Twelve "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

The one exception, Pope Benedict said, was Judas Iscariot who "could have left, as many of the disciples did; indeed, he would have left if he were honest." Instead, he chose to remain with Jesus. Not because of faith or love, said the Pope, but out of a secret desire to take vengeance on his master.

"Because Judas felt betrayed by Jesus, and decided that he in turn would betray him. Judas was a Zealot, and wanted a triumphant Messiah, who would lead a revolt against the Romans." Jesus, however, "had disappointed those expectations."

The Holy Father reminded the faithful of "a beautiful commentary" of St. Augustine in which the Church Father observed how St. Peter "believed and understood."

"He does not say we have understood and believed, but we believed and understood. We have believed in order to be able to understand," wrote St. Augustine in his Commentary on the Gospel of John.

After reciting the Angelus, the Pope expressed some special words of welcome to the new class of seminarians at Rome's Pontifical North American College.

"Dear seminarians, use your time in Rome to conform yourselves more completely to Christ. Indeed, may all of us remain faithful to the Lord, even when our faith in his teachings is tested. May God bless you all!"

## New pontifical website aims to help lay Catholics worldwide

EWTN/CAN - The Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Laity launched a new website as a resource for lay men and women ahead of Pope Benedict's Year of Faith, which will kick-off in October.

"It is directed to all the lay faithful that want to know more about their vocation, about their role within the Church," Ana Cristina Betancourt of the Pontifical Council's Women's Section told EWTN News in Rome.

"So, it is a way of being in contact with what we do day-to-day and that was our aim in having it, to make more known the things that we do, the reflections that we have, the things that we are thinking about and also the guidelines that the Pope is giving the laity to better live their vocations."

The Pontifical Council for the Laity was created by Pope Paul VI in 1967 and re-founded by the same Pontiff in 1976.

Its stated aim is to assist the Pope "in all matters concerning the contribution the lay faithful make to the life and mission of the Church, whether as individuals or through the various forms of association that have arisen and constantly arise within the Church," Betancourt explained

The site also carries links to its four sections - "Associations and Movements," "Women," "Church and Sport," and "Youth."

## SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA  
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EDITORIAL

September 2 2012

## Truth and Justice must precede Reconciliation

With the defeat of the LTTE in May 2009, the armed conflict came to an end. But the root causes of the conflict remain and the concessions for autonomy to the Tamil people have not been implemented despite the passage of fifty years since 1957, when the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact recognized the need for such autonomy. They must be resolved for a successful process of Reconciliation to take place.

Reconciliation must also be based on the acknowledgment of the truth and validity of the grievances of the Tamil people. This point was made by the LLRC in its Report. There are both short term and long term grievances. Both require the attention of the Government.

Since the war was largely fought in the areas occupied by the Tamil people the death and destruction of life and property was disproportionately high in these areas. A large number of people lost their lives in the last stage of the war with allegations being made against the forces of war crimes and humanitarian offences. The truth or falsity of these allegations require verification sooner or later, although the need for punitive action against those responsible is perhaps a matter for reconciliation rather than justice. But the need to determine the truth cannot be avoided. An acknowledgment of the Truth must go hand

in hand with the process of Reconciliation, giving a pardon to those who acknowledge their guilt. This type of action has been done in other countries through a Truth and Reconciliation Commission,

The short term problems arising from the displacements of the people who had to live in refugee camps must also be dealt with. These people have undergone much deprivation due to the death and disappearance of loved ones, repeated displacements, the destruction of their homes, and loss of their lands and livelihood. There should be an affirmative processes for restoration and reparation. It is not satisfactory to consider that the refugees have been resettled because they have left the camps and are staying with relations. They have to be properly resettled in accordance with the UN Resolutions on refugee resettlement. UN Agencies handle such refugee problems in post conflict countries like Libya, Syria and Somalia and a UN Presence should be welcomed. These Agencies could ensure impartial resettlement without allegations of partiality to one community or the other.

But first the people must be given the autonomy promised since the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1957 which was abrogated. The 13th Amendment cannot be looked upon as an Indian imposition for it was only the culmination of the process of negotiation which began with the acceptance of the right to autonomy, a right accepted by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, Dudley Senanayake and latterly by J.R Jayewardene under the Indian mediation. It is incumbent on the part of the Government to implement the provisions of the 13th Amendment in its present form to show its bona fides in the matter of devolution of power. So the elections for the Northern Provincial Council should be held without prevarication.

The grievances of the Tamil people began with the passing of Sinhala as the only official language. Concessions were agreed under the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact in 1957. The B-C pact advocated the creation of regional councils in Sri Lanka as a means to giving a certain level of autonomy to the Tamil people of the country in the North and East. It also included a commitment not to change the majority status of the Tamil people in the North and East. But the Pact was torn up after protests by a section of the Buddhist clergy. Prime Minister S.W.R.D Bandaranaike tried to salvage the situation. On August 5, 1958, he introduced the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act No. 28 of 1958, as a compromise measure. It provided for Tamil to be the official language in the North and East and a reasonable use of Tamil in the other provinces. The bill was a part of the original Official Languages Act, but had been removed at the insistence of Sinhalese extremists.

The Bill was passed on August 14, 1958, and it dealt with the provisions regarding education, public service entrance examinations and the administration of the North and East. No attempt was made to implement these measures until the Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam Agreement of 1965. It provided for measures to implement the provisions of the Reasonable Use of Tamil Language Act, This Agreement too was scrapped owing to opposition by Sinhala extremists.

The special problems both short term and long term that have long prevailed in the North and East must therefore guide and direct the National Policy on Reconciliation, at all times, with mechanisms for accountability and the protection of Human Rights that take full account of the special nature of their grievances.

## A visit to the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, Italy

As we come to the threshold of the Eucharistic Rally and Exhibition, I thought it would be opportune to share the experiences of my visit to the Eucharistic Shrine of San Francesco in Lanciano, Italy. It was on Palm Sunday, April 1, that I had the privilege of being a participant in the Eucharistic Celebration at this memorable Shrine of the Eucharist.

It was not Palms that they used but Olive branches. I thought to myself whether Olive branches signify the Peace and consolation we get through the Eucharist.

Lanciano is a small, medieval town nestled in the coast of the Adriatic Sea in Italy, halfway between San Giovanni Rotondo and Loreto, 160km away from Rome. The name of the town was changed from Anxanum (in ancient times) to Lanciano, meaning "The Lance." Tradition has it that the centurion Longinus, who thrust the Lance into the side of Jesus, striking Him in the tip of His Heart from

which He shed blood and water, (in the Gospel account of the Crucifixion) Mk 15:29, was from this town. After seeing the events which followed the piercing of Jesus' heart, the darkening of the sun, and the earthquake, he believed that Christ was the Saviour. A more physical sign, however, was that Longinus had had poor eyesight, and after having touched his eyes with the water and blood from the side of Jesus, his eyesight was restored.

The Church of the Eucharistic Miracle is located in the centre of the town. It was managed by the Basilian Monks. When the Eucharistic Miracle occurred it was called the Church of St Legontian and St. Domitian and was under the custody of the Basilian Monks of the Greek Orthodox Rite. One of the Basilian monks was having difficulties with regard to the Real Presence of our Lord Jesus in the Eucharist. He prayed constantly for relief for his doubts.

One day, when he

began the Consecration of the Mass for the people of the town, what he beheld as he consecrated the bread and wine caused

his hands to shake and also his whole body. He stood for a long time with his back to the people, and then slowly turned back to them and He said; "O fortunate witnesses to whom the Blessed God, to confound my disbelief, has wished to reveal Himself in this Most Blessed Sacrament and to render Himself visible to our eyes. Come, brethren, and marvel at our God so close to us. Behold the Flesh and Blood of our most beloved Christ."

The host had turned into Flesh. The wine had turned into Blood. The people, having witnessed the miracle for themselves, began to wail, confessing their sins, and spreading the story

throughout the town and surrounding villages.

Pilgrims flocked to Lanciano to venerate the Host turned flesh and wine turned Blood. This miracle that occurred in 700 was just the beginning. It is still present in the reliquary. Belief in the Eucharist had been

**"After the priest had shown all the pilgrims the Eucharistic Miracle, he came down to the foot of the altar. Then he told us, You have come so far to see this miracle but this miracle happens every day in every church in the world."**

reborn. The gift from the Lord was complete. The feast is held on the last Sunday of October. In 1574 testing was done on the Flesh and Blood and an unexplainable phenomenon was discovered. The five pellets of coagulated Blood are different sizes and shapes. But any combination weigh the same as the total. In other

words, 1 weighs the same as 2, 2 weigh the same as 3 and 3 weighs the same as 5. Since the miracle occurred there had been several declarations and Papal exhortations regarding Lanciano.

Upon entering the Church, your attention is immediately focused on the unusual altar. There are two tabernacles, rather than the traditional one. The second tabernacle is on top of the first, Continuing down the aisle toward the main altar, we see a large tablet on the wall, dating back to 1574, which tells the story of the Eucharistic Miracle. On the right of the main altar, is a painting of the Eucharistic Miracle.

The painting opens out from the wall, revealing a set of doors, behind which is hidden an old iron tabernacle. This is the Valsecca Chapel, and was the home of the Eucharistic Miracle from 1636 until 1902, when the present altar was built.

We walked to the back of the main altar, where there is a stairway leading up to the second tabernacle, to the Eucharistic Miracle. The Monstrance and the miracle are before our



eyes. This is an actual heart muscle. With the light in the background, the fibres of the heart can be seen. The chalice which holds the Blood is believed to be the same one into which the Blood was placed after the miracle, and possibly the actual chalice which was used for the Mass when the miracle took place. The Host has turned light brown over the years. The Blood has an ochre appearance

It is impossible to truly appreciate the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano without seeing the impact it has on those who witness it. How many tests have been made over the years, how many times Our Dear Lord Jesus allows Himself to be prodded and cut, examined under microscopes, and photo

(Contd. on Pg. 5)

# Miraculous Shrine of Our Lady of Matara

Celebrates her Feast On 7th, 8th, 9th September 2012

By M. Felix V Cooray

On Sunday, September 9, 2012 Catholics will witness thousands and thousands of pilgrims who will gather at the feet of our Heavenly Mother at Matara to celebrate her feast. They will come in all modes of transport and pitch their tents near the former Rest House premises, right along the beach, in lanes and by lanes proving beyond doubt the favours they receive and have received through the years from Our Lady of Matara. The Shrine of Our Lady of Matara is a National Shrine today.

When Msgr. T.N. Alles was parish priest in 1950 he remarked that this Shrine will be a haven where pilgrims will flock to the feet of Our Lady for redress.

## 'Matara Meniya'

Rev. Fr. Charles Hewawasam administered the Shrine of Our Lady of Matara for over 10 years and it was during his tenure of office that the tsunami took place in 2004, damaging the Church and Mission House and old buildings. Due to his hard work the Church stands as a beacon of light for the entire Southern Province with Matara Meniya as our Mother who intercedes on behalf of all her children.

The Shrine is now administered by Rev. Fr. Damian Arsecularatne who took over as administrator after Rev. Fr. Hewawasam.

## Mystery

The Statue of Our Lady

has its own history. Legend has it that a huge wooden crate was hauled out of the sea by a fisherman at Weligama in the South. When the crate was opened a beautiful statue of the mother and child was found inside, untouched by sea water. The statue was handed over to the Parish Priest of Matara and subsequently placed at St. Mary's Church, Matara. From where the statue came is a mystery and many cures and favours are claimed to have been obtained by devotees who prayed before it.

## Cholera Epidemic

It gained its miraculous nature through a great incident which occurred a few years later. A cholera epidemic raged through the district and claimed hundreds of lives a few years later. The Catholics rallied round the statue and prayed to Our Lady.

The statue was taken in solemn procession through the streets of Matara and many non-Catholics participated in it. After a few days the area was declared safe with no fresh cases reported.

## Miraculous Statue

Since then the people of Matara have come to look upon the miraculous nature of this statue.

Since the statue looked faded and worn out the first Bishop of Galle, His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Van Reith, who was a Belgian, made arrangements with the then famous sculptor and painter M. Zeus of Gehent, to redo the

statue. Accordingly the statue was sent to him on June 2, 1911. M. Zeus not only restored the wasted parts but also brought out its original colours.

However the ship was caught in a fierce storm and was nearly wrecked. When the ship entered Colombo harbour it was minus the statue. His Lordship the Bishop and a Belgian Priest in the Galle Diocese at that time wrote to friends and relatives in Belgium and through their intensive investigations traced the statue to a man in Middlesborough who happened to be an thief. He refused to hand over the statue and demanded a fabulous sum of money which was refused. In his disappointment and rage, he smashed the face of the statue with a hammer and threw it away, but the statue was recovered and it came back to Mr. Zeus. He repaired and painted it. His was a labour of love and zeal. He spent all his energy and time on it till it was restored to its original beauty. Three days later a cargo boat arrived in Colombo with the missing statue.

## The Third Miracle

It was December 26, 2004 (Holy Family Sunday) and the Church was celebrating the Eucharist.



Rev. Fr. Charles Hewawasam the Administrator and the celebrant of the Holy Mass noticed the gushing waters and the killer waves of the tsunami and shouted at the people to run for safety. Even Fr. Charles had to run for safety. It was then that he realized that he should remove the Blessed Sacrament and the Miraculous Statue of Our Lady but by then everything was taken by the cruel waters.

The valuable jewellery presented in 1918 to the Blessed Mother also went missing. The water receded and Fr. Charles with a few parishioners and relations went towards the main road. There he suddenly noticed that a man was carrying a bucket and recognized it as the bucket used for church collections. They persuaded the man to show them what he was carrying and to their utter surprise found the jewellery intact there.

## A Solemn Surprise

On December 29, 2004, Fr. Charles was informed

by some visitors that the statue had been washed ashore 400 metres away from the land, that the Sisters of Charity of St. Mary's Convent were hoping to buy.

On January 2, 2005 on the feast of the Epiphany the then Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency, Most Rev. Dr. Mario Zenari, arrived in Matara accompanied by the Vicar General of Galle Rev. Fr. Nihal Nanayakkara and Secretary to the Bishop of Galle, Rev. Fr. Christopher Lalith Fernando, who celebrated Holy Mass and imparted blessings with the statue of our heavenly mother.

The statue is now installed in a special place right on top of the main altar as seen today.

The Church feast begins on September 7 and the chief celebrant at Vespers and the Festive High Mass will be His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. J. Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy.

## A visit to.... Contd. from Pg. 4

graphed. The most recent, an extensive scientific research done in 1970, used the most modern scientific tools available. The results of the tests are as follows:

- The flesh is real flesh. The blood is real blood.
- The flesh consists of the muscular tissue of the heart (myocardium)
- The flesh and blood belong to the human species.
- The flesh and blood have the same blood type (AB).
- In the blood, there were found proteins in the same normal proportions as are found in the sero-proteic make up of fresh, normal blood.
- In the blood, there were also found these minerals: Chlorides, phosphorous, magnesium, potassium, sodium and calcium. The preservation of the flesh and of

the blood, which were left in their natural state for twelve centuries (without any chemical preservatives) and exposed to the action of atmospheric and biological agents, remains an extraordinary phenomenon.

Another unusual characteristic of the blood is that when liquified, it has retained the chemical properties of freshly shed blood. When we cut ourselves and stain our clothes, the chemical properties of the blood are gone within 20 minutes to a half hour. If blood is not refrigerated within an hour maximum, the composition rapidly breaks down. This blood is over 1250-years-old and still contains all the properties, chemicals and protein of freshly shed blood. And yet in the testing, it was determined that no preservatives of any kind were found in the blood.

"He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food, and my blood real drink" (John 6:54-56).

The most perfect form of love is the Eucharistic Love of Jesus. In the Miracle of Lanciano, He loves us by revealing His very Heart and His very Blood and helps us to understand his love.

After the priest had shown all the pilgrims the Eucharistic Miracle, he came down to the foot of the altar. Then he told us, "You have come so far to see this miracle but this miracle happens every day in every church in the world, at the consecration of the Mass." Let us participate in our Eucharistic celebration in our own Parishes with faith and devotion.

Stephanie Rodrigo, from Lanciano, Italy

## Mary forgives the defiled

So pure, Inblemished  
Virgin of Nazareth  
Gods supreme choice  
Undefiled, Immaulate  
An innocence holy  
Nazarenes so revered  
Mary's life exemplary  
The character cleansed  
A sinless youthful maiden  
Compassionate merciful  
Her Love beyond reality  
Obedient in God's command  
Forgives all impure  
Guides faithfully binding  
To God's own Kingdom



Miran Perera

We celebrated the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady a few days ago. Christians believe that she was taken into Heaven body and soul. This was mainly because she was the Mother of God and fulfilled her task on earth according to the will of God. She lived up to what she uttered at the Annunciation: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) We never heard that she preached or performed miracles. But she fulfilled her vocation as a devoted mother and a faithful wife.

The calling to Mary and to us is just the same. All of us have to fulfill a mission. God promises help and strength to fulfil the tasks. He has given us abilities and talents to be used to help our fellow human beings. Christ, in the parable about the master who gave talents to his servants, shows that the talents are given to be used. They are gifts from God. The servant who got five talents invested it wisely and made it ten. The man who was given two talents increased it to four by investing it wisely. But the servant who got one talent

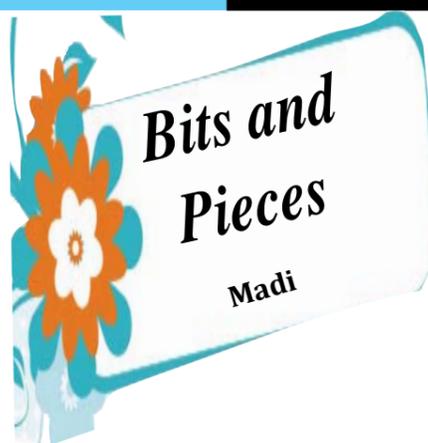
buried his talent and on the day of reckoning he could not show any gain. The master treated him harshly and admonished him saying, "You wicked and slothful servant ... and cast the worthless servant into outer darkness; where men weep and gnash their teeth." (Mathew 25:26:30)

Many articles were published about the Eucharistic Rally to be held at St. Joseph's College, Colombo. Thousands of lay men and women are engaged in organizing and planning, prior to and during such events. Most of them are families persons. They are involved in various Church organizations. These dedicated lay people are donating their time, energy, talents sometimes even their hard-earned money to make such events a success.

We need not mention here the hundreds of priests, brothers and sisters who are involved in planning and organizing such massive proceedings. They too are using their God-given talents to honour the Eucharistic Lord and also reflect a Christian message to the participants in the liturgical services and exhibitions.

At the parish level how

many people donate their time and talents for daily and weekly parish activities? Thousands of Catholics take part in parish associations, religious education, door to door visits, parish councils and other lay organizations. They are using their organizational, listening and teaching skills properly in making these parish activities



## Contributions

a success. These are men and women like you and me who have responded to the call of God to contribute to the upliftment of their communities. They are participating in the apostolic work of the Church just like Mother Mary did; to participate in God's redemptive mission by using each one's talents.

We are also called by God to contribute to our village or the town and the country that we are living in. How many Catholics take the time to learn about their candidates and vote during the

elections? After all it is a civic duty. How many of us care to visit the poor, sick, disabled, elders, physically or mentally compromised people who are living in our midst? Including them in our life style by visiting them, listening and empathizing and helping them in their needs. This is reaching out to bear witness to Christ. Contributing a few minutes means a lot to them..

St. Paul, writing to the citizens of Corinth says, "Now you are the body of Christ



and individual members of it. And God has appointed in the Church, first the apostles, second prophets, then teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues." (1Cor 12: 27-29) Let us find our vocations and our talents, and decipher how we can be of service to our community.



## A CROSS

The way 91

By Sirohmi Gunsekera

### A Little Love

"Nobody loves me. I don't have a boyfriend," moaned Ayoma.

"There are so many women without lovers in this world. What if all of them started feeling sorry for themselves like you? Surely you did not reach adulthood without having known some kind of love? What of your mother?" asked Lalit.

"Well, I do remember how she cuddled me when I was small. But that was a long time ago. Now I go to bed and sleep alone and feel sad," said Ayoma.

"You must be thankful for the memory of your mother's love. Just a little love is enough to face life alone. Besides, there is someone who loves you with an unconditional love," said Lalit.

"Who is that?" asked Ayoma.

"God. He is our All Compassionate Father and He loves you in spite of all the bad things you think, say and do. That is why we say that God's love is without any kind of condition. And He is always there watching over you." said Lalit.

"Well, I guess that is true. I was so busy feeling sorry for myself because I was looking around at others who appear to have lovers," said Ayoma.

"Things are not what they seem. How do you know how many share true love and companionship just because you see them together?" pointed out Lalit.

"You are right. Besides, there is heartburn and pain if a relationship breaks up. I think I prefer to think of God and talk to Him in prayer. I know that He will never let me down." said Ayoma.

"So then you can kneel down at bedtime and say a prayer of Thanksgiving for a good day and for helping you through the hard parts. Then you can cuddle a pillow and go to sleep." suggested Lalit.

"That's a good idea. I must be thankful for a little love from human beings and for a lot of love from our Abba Father God!" concluded Ayoma.

## The Gentle Art of Persuasion

"You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." (Italian proverb)

In "How to get people to do things," Bob Conklin relates the story of Ralph Waldo Emerson and his son who were struggling to lead a female calf into the cowshed. Frustrated with many failed attempts, Emerson was getting irritated when a servant girl offered help. She caressed the animal and thrust her finger into the animal's mouth. Enticed by the maternal gesture, the calf gently followed the girl into the cowshed.

"People are like the calf," concludes Conklin. "You can prod them, push them but they don't move. Yet give them a good reason, one of *their* reasons - a way in which they will benefit, and they will follow gently along. People do things for *their* reasons. Not *your* reasons, and those reasons are emotionally, aroused by the way they feel."

In the 'parable of



the widow and the judge,' Christ said, "There was a judge in a certain town. In the same town, there was also a widow who kept on coming to him and saying, 'I want justice from you against my enemy.' For a long time he refused, but at last, he said to himself, 'Even though I have neither fear of God nor respect for any human person, I must give this widow her just rights since she keeps pestering me (Lk.18:1-5). The judge relented, as her constant appeals gradually softened his hard stance.

The most effective method of getting anything done is through gentle persuasion. A high-handed, domineering approach antagonizes people and they

will not budge. Persuasion is winning others over. It is more about leading someone into taking actions of their own, rather than giving direct commands. Persuasion is showing others an advantage to them, if they toe your line.

True leaders follow the dictum "persuasion is the art of letting someone have your way." Instead of pushing the other side toward an agreement, pull them in the direction you want them to move. President Dwight D. Eisenhower well understood the importance of pulling instead of pushing. In one cabinet meeting, he demonstrated the art of persuasion by placing a piece of string on a table. "Pull the string and it will follow wherever you wish," he explained. "Push it, and it will go nowhere at all."

The story is told that when Michael Faraday invented the first electric motor, he requested the backing of the British Prime Minister, William

Gladstone. So Faraday took the crude model, a little wire revolving around a magnet and showed it to the Prime Minister. He was obviously not interested.

"What good is it?" he asked Faraday.

"Someday, you'll be able to tax it," replied the great scientist.

He won the endorsement for his efforts, by appealing to the interests of the Prime Minister.

St. Thomas Aquinas, who knew more about persuasion than almost anyone else, once said that when you want to convert someone to your view, you go over to where he is standing, take him by the hand (mentally speaking) and guide him. You don't order him to come over to where you are. You start from where he is and work from that position. That's the effective way to get him to budge. "A gentle tongue breaks the bones." (Proverbs: 25: 15).

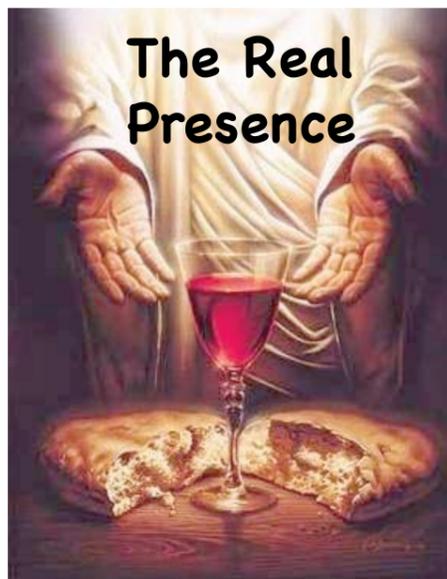
Ananda Perera

With the feast of Corpus Christi behind us, and the forthcoming Eucharistic Congress, it is good to ponder upon the following anecdote:

In France where wine is a staple drink, a little girl was asked "Why do you believe that the sacred host is the body and blood of Jesus Christ?" She answered: "If the bread that I eat and the wine that I drink is turned into my body and blood, why can't Jesus Christ who is the Son of God turn bread and wine into his own body and blood?"

This was a stunning affirmation of the Real Presence.

Terrence Savundranayagam



### The Real Presence

### "Just for a day"

Dear Lord, if only for a day we can be really good, and always ready to obey to do the things we should.

We can take trails and fun anything that comes and say, not our will but thine be done.

Dear Jesus, if only for a day we all can do this,

when each new morning comes and we will pray, for grace to persevere again.

Anton Selemberam

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



"What happened darling Tom! You haven't changed much "No mama my laundry is on strike"

Rev. Fr. Fracfid Anthony Fernando OMI

# A mother to the poor, a living witness to the thirsting love of God



*Celebrating Christian Lives*

By Kishanie S. Fernando

On 05 September the Missionaries of Charity and their friends will be celebrating the feast day of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta. As a mark of deep love and appreciation for her life example we reproduce here some passages from the book "Stories of mother Teresa," edited by Jose Luis Gonzalez-Balado.

When Mother Teresa started her work with the dying destitute she was in desperate need of a place in which to care for them. Local authorities in Calcutta offered her a section of the temple to the goddess Kali, which, though originally intended for the temporary housing of pilgrims, had become a hangout for thieves, drug addicts, and pimps. When the news circulated that the temple was being used by a woman and a foreigner and that she was trying "to convert the poor to Christianity," groups of people protested at the city Hall. Others went to the nearest police station to demand that the woman be evicted. The police commissioner promised to do just that, but wanted first to personally check things out. When the police commissioner went to see Mother Teresa, she was caring for a poor sick man by putting potassium permanganate on wounds from which worms were crawling out. The stench was unbearable.

Mother Teresa treated the officer with respect and offered to show him about. He answered that he preferred to look around on his own.

When he came out he met some of the people who had complained about Mother Teresa and said, "I gave you my word that I would throw this woman out of here, and I would like to keep it. But, before I do so, you will have to get your mothers and sisters to do what she does. I make that the only condition for exercising my authority."

At the home for the dying which the Missionaries of Charity have in Calcutta there was a man who had cancer, his body half-consumed by the sickness. Everyone had abandoned him as a hopeless case. Mother Teresa came near him to wash him tenderly. She encountered, at first, only the sick man's disdain. "How can you stand my body's stench?" he asked. Then, quite calmly the dying man said to her, "You're not from here. The people here don't behave the way you do." "No," replied Mother Teresa. "Glory to you who suffer with Christ." Then they smiled at each other. The sick man's suffering seemed to stop. He died two days later.

Mother Teresa carefully limits her use of the term "co-workers" to refer to those who actually share in her work with her.

There are today probably more than 150,000 Co-Workers. Some of them are Catholic; more of them are non-Catholic Christians or adhere to non-Christian religious traditions.

Among her Co-Workers in Denmark there is a group that knits sweaters and covers. It is made up of elderly men and women from all over Denmark who had been alone, sick and felt forgotten. Now those who hardly knew their neighbours belong to a close-knit group of friends and have united and found a reason for living. They are knitting in order to help poor children, and in doing so forget their own problems. They have been able to send 1,219 covers and 2,344 sweaters to Calcutta, Bombay, and Dacca.

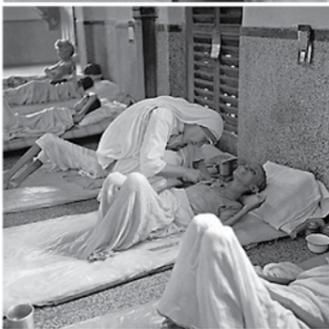
An English priest had decided to go to India to work in the slums among the poor, and so notified Mother Teresa. He expressed the desire to join the Missionary Brothers of Charity, who follow a rule of life similar and perhaps even more austere than that of the Sisters. Mother Teresa dissuaded him: "Don't do that, Father. Stay where you are and take care of the poor in your country. My poor are easy to take care of because they are satisfied with a piece of bread and a cloth to cover their bodies. That's why my work is easier than yours. The poor in your country are poor in spirit. That's why it is harder to get rid of their kind of poverty."

Many wonder how Mother Teresa reacted when she first heard that she had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. One of the Sisters who was with her when she found out gives the following account.

"On October 17, the news arrived that Mother Teresa had been awarded the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. There was great joy among the Sisters in the community, but Mother Teresa's first reaction was to quietly go to the chapel to humbly pray and thank God for his gift to the poor. One by one, the rest of the Sisters followed her into the chapel and

in unison sang a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God. When we saw the number of television cameras, newspaper reporters, and people—including our poor—who came to congratulate her, we prayed even more for her. We asked God to help her, since it had been his will for her to give her all this, and to give her strength and health to endure it calmly and without weakening."

Her trip to Oslo was a very festive occasion for many, but not so much so for Mother Teresa. She wanted to share, symbolically, what the Nobel Prize meant to her with all her Sisters, and chose to do so through the first two who went with her when she left the Sisters of Loreto to start a new life. A few days before the date set for receiving the prize, Mother wrote the "God December be in Oslo. Nobel Prize has sent besides my use them to love and for all the



Terese following: willing, on 8th I will Since the committee own, I will show my gratitude other Sisters



group who courage to there was Their joy h a v i n g yet having the fullest Jesus they poor. For all be taking Agnes and with me to

Prize has to me the poor. that this beyond the has, for awakened consciences the world. It as a reminder poor are our and sisters should give

in that first had the go when nothing. was in nothing and Jesus to—in loving loved the this I will Sisters Gertrude Oslo."

The Nobel been given because of But! I think prize goes obvious. It a fact, m a n y throughout has served that the brothers and that we them proofs of our love for them.

When Mother Teresa visited Spain for the first time, on June 2, 1976, it took some time to convince the chief of police to allow her into the country. When finally told that everything was fine, she revealed that she also had a second passport: A diplomatic one issued to her by the Vatican State. Paul VI had personally offered it to her. He was a great admirer of her and a benefactor in her work. He had given this passport to her to facilitate her entry into Bangladesh when her Indian passport would have hindered her mission of "universal love."

When she returned to Spain in 1980 after winning the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize the police were very kind to her. She had to wait, however, for her luggage, just like the other passengers, for over an hour.

Finally, when the attendant at the luggage carousel spotted Mother Teresa's cardboard box tied with a string, in the middle of the better-looking luggage of the other passengers, he quickly grabbed it, gave it to her, kissed her hand, and said: "Mother, you deserve this and much more."

In the meantime, others had recognized her. A group of Japanese people asked her to pose with them for a picture, and Mother Teresa did so. An American girl asked her for her autograph, and Mother Teresa did not refuse her. The young girl, lacking a piece of paper, offered her a page of her passport.

There were quite a number of people waiting for passengers, but there was a small number waiting for Mother Teresa. When the crowd saw her and recognized her, a round of applause was offered in her honour. Mother Teresa simply smiled at everyone and greeted them with an Indian greeting: both hands joined above her head.

Immediately upon arrival at the Sisters' House, Mother Teresa asked to see the Chapel. She liked it very much and asked the two priests, who had been sent by the Cardinal-Archbishop of Madrid to welcome her, if there be a Mass celebrated right away, even before she saw the rest of the House.

After Mass she was offered dinner, and she wanted everybody to eat with her. She ate very little but was not ungrateful. She took a piece of bread, an orange, and a glass of water. She also ate a piece of cheese that she had saved from the plane. She encouraged the others to eat more, but for the moment they seemed to imitate her.

The news of the Nobel Prize prompted the Communist Prime Minister of Bengal, Jyoti Basu, to give a reception in Mother Teresa's honour. "Up to this point you have been Bengal's mother," Jyoti Basu said to Mother Teresa. "Now you have become the

Mother of the entire world."

When President Varahagiri Venkata Giri awarded Mother Teresa the Nehru Prize for International Understanding in 1972, he said: "Mother Teresa is one of those superior souls who have gone beyond all barriers of race, religion, creed, and nationality."

When Mother Teresa opened the first American house of the Missionaries of Charity in Harlem, one of her first visitors, check book in hand, offered to give the Sisters whatever money they could possibly need. Mother Teresa said to him, "Thank you, but we don't need any money. What we need is land—a lawn—a yard."

There was a big lot available but full of rubbish. The Sisters wanted to turn it into a park that all the people in that overpopulated and unhealthy area could enjoy. The man with the check book answered: "I'm in the construction business. I have tractors and trucks. They're at your service with enough men to operate them." The building of the public park took only a few days.

Such responses to Mother Teresa's needs are not rare.

Paul Charron, a Canadian Co-Worker of Mother Teresa, was present when the Missionaries of Charity opened a small house in Detroit in June 1979. He describes the event in one of the Co-Workers' publications.

"We had started with furnishing the house. But when the Sisters arrived, they asked us to remove the refrigerator which had been given to them. After breakfast, we welcomed Mother Teresa as well as two Sisters from India and one from the United States.

"When I saw Mother Teresa arrive with her coarse handbag, tied with a string, I was unable to stop my tears. It is impossible to describe her. She is one of God's marvels. She is living and tangible proof of God's love for us.

"At the meeting we had in the parish, Mother Teresa spoke about her work. Her message is always the same, but she added two phrases which really impressed me: 'My gift to you is my Sisters. Protect their poverty.' Then I understood having to take the refrigerator away.

"The simplicity and humility of Mother Teresa is always impressive. She radiates the indescribable inner happiness of Jesus' presence everywhere, from the moment of first contact."

# The Golden Jubilarians

## Rev. Fr. Bertram Dabrera



Amongst those who received their ordination to the priesthood in 1962, the most senior member is Rev. Fr. Bertram Dabrera. He was born in Bolawatta. His primary education was at Joseph Vaz College,

Wennappuwa and he continued his education at St. Thomas' College, Kotte and St. Aloysius College, Galle.

Rev. Fr. Bertrem was at one time the Director of the Colombo Catholic Press, during which time he refurbished the printing department, introducing the offset mechanism.

In 1978, he was the Parish Priest of All Saints Church, Borella and in 1982 he held office as the Procurator General of the Archdiocese. While being a member of the Council of Priests, he expressed qualities of a far-sighted leader. During his priestly ministry, he served the parishes of Grand Street, Negombo, All Saints Church, Borella, and St. Mary's Pallansena as Parish Priest. He was the pioneer in constructing the Church at Maligawatte. He now spends the evening of his life in retirement.

## Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph



Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph was born in Moratuwa. He received his primary education at Holy Cross College, Kalutara and later entered St. Joseph's College, Colombo. In 1955 he entered the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1962. He assumed duties in the staff of St. Aloysius

Seminary and later joined the tutorial staff of St. Peter's College, Colombo. In 1976 he was the Vice Rector of St. Joseph's College, Colombo after which he was associated with responsible duties right through. He bid farewell to parish activity after being parish priest at St. Lawrence's Church, Wellawatte. Still he continues his services at St. Aloysius Seminary as the Spiritual Director and as a Latin Lecturer of the Faculty of Theology of Aquinas University College.

## Rev. Fr. Xystus Kurukulasuriya

Rev. Fr. Xystus Kurukulasuriya was born in Munakkare. He received his primary education at Munakkara Tamil School and St. Mary's College, Negombo. After receiving his priesthood in 1962, his first



appointment was to St. Lucia's Cathedral as an assistant. Subsequently he served the parishes of Wellapalliya, Slave Island, Matugama and Horana. In 1976 and 1986 he travelled to Rome for higher studies. As a person interested in church history and the cultural heritage associated with it, he was appointed in charge of the Colombo Diocesan Archives.

## The day Mother Teresa kept the Pope waiting....

As a former Confessor for Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, American Msgr. John Esseff recalled the day she was late for an appointment with Pope John Paul II in Rome because she was tending to a dying man on the street.

"Mother Teresa was to meet the Pope as she was looking to establish a home for the poorest of the poor in the Vatican," said the 84-year-old priest, who is in Australia to run spiritual retreats and workshops for the Missionaries of Charity Sisters.

"As we were driving down the avenue leading to the Vatican, there on the street lay a dying man.

"She asked one of the Sisters to stop the car. Mother Teresa then got out of the car and was tending to him, holding his hand and wiping his face.

"The Sisters got a little nervous because for an hour and a half, she was kneeling by him and praying with him. Finally the Sisters told her that she was going to miss the appointment with the Pope.

Then she said: 'You go and take my place. I am with Jesus. Tell the Pope that I am sorry, but I'm here with Christ.'

"So she saw Jesus in the poorest of the poor." Msgr. Esseff says Mother Teresa was "loved by the communists" and retold the story of her meeting with Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega.

"One day she was with Daniel Ortega, who

was the head of the Communists in Nicaragua, and one who hated US President Ronald Reagan," he said.

"She was there with some of the Sisters who had come to Nicaragua to help out following an earthquake, and Ortega was canvassing his political views about Ronald Reagan. He was giving a Communist manifesto.

"Mother Teresa was just standing there and listening. She then said to him: 'President Reagan really needs prayers doesn't he?' Ortega replied: 'He sure does.' She then said: 'And you do too because I was talking to your wife and you're a Catholic aren't you?' "He said: 'Yes, I am.' She said: 'But I understand that you haven't had your children baptised. You really can't run a country unless you can run your home. Let's have your children baptised and I will be their godmother and we will get that done right now.'"

A priest in the diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania, Msgr. Esseff met Mother Teresa in Beirut in 1984 and worked alongside her in Calcutta, Lebanon, West Africa and Haiti. "I was stationed in the Middle East for some years," he said. "I had a bishop in Scranton - John O'Connor - who then became the Cardinal Archbishop of New York.

"He knew I spoke Arabic and came from a family that had connections with the Middle East. He also knew that I worked with the poor because I worked with

him in my diocese. A mission opened up in Beirut called the Pontifical Mission for Palestine.

"It was an office that was in his archdiocese, and so the post in Beirut needed someone to direct it. The director of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine had gotten quite ill and there had been quite a few years of war at that time, and so he was asked to recommend someone for that post.

"At this time he was the Archbishop of New York and he asked if I would take that post. That was in 1984. "When I went there Mother Teresa had a mission there in a section of Beirut called Sid el Bouchrieh. I got to offer Mass for her Sisters there and I got to know her.

"What made her such a remarkable woman was her complete and total trust in God. While on a retreat she heard from God that there were millions of people who were on the streets of Calcutta, and they were suffering and dying.

"God came to her actually in this cry to take care of them. She was teaching geography to a wealthy group of students in Calcutta as a Loreto Sister. God said to her: 'I love them, and I want them, and I don't have a way to get there. You, your hands, your feet and your heart will reach out to them.'

"She heard that cry of Jesus, and when she heard that, she wanted to fulfil that cry. "Not for the poor, but for the poorest of the poor

and there began her journey.

"She left the Loreto Sisters and formed the Missionaries of Charity. "She lived just like they lived. She radically lived that life which means that she totally trusted in God.

"Pope John Paul II called her the greatest missionary of the 20th century. She died in 1997 but her spirit is continuing." Apart from Mother Teresa, Msgr. Esseff also had the privilege of having a special relationship with Padre Pio, who became his spiritual director in 1959.

### Padre Pio

He was favoured by St Padre Pio and thus has been blessed with special charisms in the confessional. "Padre Pio is well loved, admired and looked up to in the world today, but he wasn't always," said the Monsignor.

"In 1959 he was banished from Rome, sent to the furthest monastery they had - San Giovanni Rotondo - which has now become world famous. "He was silenced; he couldn't preach because his bishop said his stigmata were self-induced.

"They put him through all kinds of examinations because they thought the bleeding of his hands and feet were inflicted by himself, so they made him go to a hospital. "They measured every output of his body and put him through humiliating experiences.

"I heard about Padre Pio so I took a bus from Rome to the Adriatic Coast, where San Gio van-

ni Rotondo is, and there was a woman there, Mary Pyle, who really believed in him. "I didn't speak the southern dialect of Italian, but I remembered her name when I got off the bus.

"And they indicated the cottage that was hers. Another priest and I had supper with her that night. "And then Padre Pio comes and he is standing there. He starts talking to me and asks me why I came - was I a curiosity seeker?

"He was very confrontational, he was right in my face. So I told him that I really believed in the stigmata and that I wanted to celebrate Mass with him." Following that first meeting, Mons Esseff says Padre Pio had a profound impact on his life and faith.

"Every Mass I have offered since is completely different," he said. "When I saw him at the altar with his hands bleeding, blood running down his sleeves. There were people dabbing up the blood from around the altar. Blood was pouring out of his feet.

"The contemplative look he had on his face as he contemplated Jesus on the cross. The Mass is the re-presentation, not like representation, but actually he was there on Calvary and you were there with him as Jesus was on the cross. And his whole body was a sign of that. His whole mind was completely with the crucified Lord.

"Padre Pio told me he would be my spiritual director and that all I had to do was send my angel to him and he would help me, especially in the confessional.

"His ministry was to hear confessions - 15 or 16 hours a day. That was really his greatest gift, outside of his celebration of the Eucharist. "He actually had a power of seeing souls. The influence that I have through him and with him, is to help people find that union with Jesus again, and the remission of their sins."

Currently Msgr. Esseff travels the world leading retreats for religious and teaching bishops and priests about exorcism. He believes issues such as pornography, abortion and same-sex marriage are a result of the world being under the "satanic influence of obsession and oppression".

"Every Christian is under the power of Satan, and Satan's normal activity is temptation," he said. "Now there are other times when the evil one has a power over souls. I will call this the extraordinary, the ordinary is temptation.

"In the extraordinary it's increasing more and more not only in Australia, but in every place in the world. "Satan has a power to obsess people. Billions and billions are being spent on pornography today.

"Satan's main activity is to separate souls from Jesus. Jesus, the captain of the army of light and truth, is also the king of light and love. "They're on a head-on course in every soul, and also in the world today. The violence of war and its consequences are horrible.

(Catholic Weekly, Sydney)

# Astronauts Who Found God

**A**stronaut, John Glenn's return to outer space many years after his awe-inspiring orbit around the earth is a reminder of the kind of heroism that makes space exploration possible. What author, Tom Wolfe called the "right stuff."



John Glenn

What you may not know, however is that for many of the early astronaut heroes, the "right stuff" included deep religious faith. Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin are best known as the first astronauts to land on the moon and take that "giant leap for mankind." But you

*"To look out at this kind of creation and not believe in God is to me impossible"*  
— Astronaut John Glenn

probably don't know that before they emerged from the spaceship, Aldrin pulled out a Bible, a silver chalice, and sacramental bread and wine. There on the moon, his first act was to celebrate communion.

Frank Borman was commander of the first space crew to travel beyond the Earth's orbit. Looking down on the earth from 250,000 miles away, Borman radioed back a message, quoting Genesis One: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." As he later explained, "I had an enormous feeling that there had to be a power greater than any of us that there was a God, that there was indeed a beginning."

The late James Irwin, who walked on the moon in 1971, later became an evangelical minister. He often described the lunar mission as a revelation. In his words, "I felt the power of God as I'd never felt it before."

Charles Duke, who followed Irwin to the moon, later became active in missionary work. As he explained, "I make speeches about walking ON the moon and walking WITH the Son [of God]."

Guy Gardner is a veteran astronaut who speaks in churches on the reality of God.

What is it about being in space that seems to spark our innate religious sense? Two centuries ago the philosopher Immanuel Kant said there are two things that "fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe: The starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."

Reflections about these things, Kant wrote, lead our minds to contemplate God Himself—the moral law revealing His goodness, the heavens revealing His power.

As the psalmist put it: "The heavens declare the glory of God." Or as John Glenn put it just a few days ago as he observed the heavens and earth from the windows of Discovery: "To look out at this kind of creation and not believe in God is to me impossible. It just strengthens my faith."

Many of us have thought that science is antagonistic to faith. Yet most of the great figures who shaped the scientific enterprise from the beginning have been devout believers—people like



Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin Aldrin  
(1969, Apollo 11 Mission)

Blaise Pascal, who invented the first calculator; Isaac Newton, who discovered the law of gravity; and James Maxwell, who formulated the laws of electromagnetism. All were Christians who felt that the study of nature did not challenge their faith but rather strengthened it.

And that's exactly what space exploration can do in the lives of those who take part in it. If you are watching the Discovery mission with unsaved friends, explain to them how over the decades space travel has provided an unexpected dividend. Astronauts who powerfully encountered the God who created the heavens and the earth.

Chuck Colson

## Music is self-explanatory



A person writing music is guided by the teeming sounds, thoughts and images in the mind. Every great score is born from experiences, passions, visions and sums up emotions connected to events in the composer's life. Yet musicians know that works must stand on their own. They must

detach themselves from the first teeming inspiration to evoke other responses in the audience, which do not necessarily coincide with the authors emotional experience.

Beethoven would have considered it a professional error to write works that to be understood required the

support of images or descriptions, even though listeners might well feel reassured to have their emotions guided by some indication.

Music must be self-explanatory. Throughout his life in fact, Beethoven never ceased to be bombarded by questions about the meaning of his individual works. Publishers obliged him to provide explanatory titles to works that originally had none: "Pathetica," "Aspasionata," "Moonlight" etc. He wrote the "Pastoral Symphony," the only one in which each movement allows the listener the comforting support of images — in spite of satisfying both his public and publishers — Beethoven noted, on Recollections of Country Life, the expression of feeling rather than of painting as if to say, "don't interpret the Pastoral Symphony as an 18th-century description of nature but, rather, listen to it as a long journey among the sentiments that nature stirs in the human soul." There is nevertheless something 18th century about Beethoven's manner of presenting nature.

He remains distant from the dreary and cloudy nature that Romanticism was

*On Wednesday, 11 July, the Feast of St. Benedict Abbot, Patron of Europe, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim gave a concert in honour of Benedict xvi in the courtyard of the Papal Residence in Castel Gandolfo. Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies were performed. The following is a translation of excerpts from an article in Italian by Franco Pulcini, with specific reference to the Pastoral Symphony.*

to inherit from *Sturm und Drang* (a proto-Romantic movement in Germany, in vogue from the late 1760s to the early 1780s). Yet it is also true that the theme of shepherds and shepherdesses has always been dear to profane music since the time of the troubadours.

Beethoven put everyone on guard against "painting" because he knew well that he had used descriptive elements, such as setting the scene with the *attacco* that recalled the old "pastorelle" with the rhythms of peasant dances, the rustic pipes that even mimic bird-song, drum beats (for thunder), whirling musical flurries to convey the fury of the wind and the harmonized ecclesiastic

and varied choral music in the final hymn.

Thus Beethoven was right: Feelings rather than painting. His descriptive details dissolve into meditation, pieced together from fragments of sound captured in reality. The poetry of the "Pastoral Symphony," its enchanted music, has been one of the iconographic sources of Beethoven that tempers the tumultuous fields of his creative passion. When he was not portrayed with dishevelled hair and a morose expression, he was perceived with a dreamy look among the greenery; with a top hat and a note-book in hand as the pantheist of the Enlightenment.

(Courtesy: *L'osservatore Romano*)

# Fifty Golden Years of Serving the Lord

Gracing the same altar at St. Sebastian's Church Katuneriya, where he celebrated his first Holy Mass 50 years ago, Rev. Fr. Joe Paul Fernando will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving, for the great gift of priesthood, on September 1, 2012.

Rev. Fr. Joe Paul Fernando was ordained with three of his classmates, Rev. Frs, Peter Swaris, Francis Tissera and Michael Lusena, for the Diocese of Chilaw, at the altar of St. Joseph's Church Wennappuwa on September 1, 1962.

Rev. Fr. Joe Paul Fernando was born on March 22, 1937, at Katuneriya and was a student at Joseph Vaz College, Wennappuwa (1950), a junior seminarian at St. Paul's Seminary Marawila (1955), and a graduate at the National Seminary Ampitiya, Kandy in 1962.

As a priest ordained for the Diocese of Chilaw, he worked as the Assistant Parish Priest at Our Lady of the Assumption Church, at Bolawatta (1963-1966), as Parish Priest at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, at Mawathagama (1966-1973), St. Mary's Church, Puttalam (1974-1975) and at St. Michael's Church, Nalawalana until 1976, before migrating to the United States of America.

After having worked in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles as Associate Pastor at St. Bridget's of Sweden, in Van Nuys and St. Michael's in Los Angeles, and as hospital chaplain at St. Francis Medical Centre in Lynwood, he moved to St. Ignatius Mar-

tyr Church, in Long Beach New York. He retired from parish work and hospital chaplancy to return home to Sri Lanka as a retired priest of the Diocese of Chilaw, on April 19, 2012.

Fr. Joe Paul Fernando is a voracious reader and talented writer. He is a gifted and effective homilist in both English and Sinhala. His influence has been far-reaching touching the lives of many different people here at home and abroad bringing them God's love, compassion and forgiveness, best known to him alone, and who chose him to be His faithful priest calling Him "you are my own."

We the family wish him well and pray that our loving God be gracious to him bestowing upon him the gift of good health in his golden years of retirement.

May he have the constant protection of our Immaculate Mother Mary. *Ad Multos Annos!*

**Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando**  
(Younger brother on behalf of the family.)



**Rev. Fr. Joe Paul**

"Lotus Pond" was the ancient name for Thambarawila, Hewaweerage Joseph Cyril Michael Lusena was born into the family of H. Antony Lusena and B. Jane Perera on September 9, 1936. He will be celebrating the golden jubilee of his priesthood on September 1, 2012, together with Rev. Fr. Joe Paul Fernando who was ordained on the same date.

A special Mass of Thanksgiving will be celebrated by both of them at St. Sebastian's Church, Katuneriya, to mark this very special event.

Fr. Michael Lusena's preliminary education started at the Thambarawila parish school. After attending Maris Stella College, Negombo for his secondary education, he entered St. Paul's Minor Seminary, and later the National Seminary Kandy to study for the priesthood.

On September 1, 1962, he received the gift of the priesthood from the hands of the late Bishop Edmund Peiris at St. Joseph's Church, Wennappuwa, together with Rev. Frs, Swaris, Tissera and Joe Paul.

He served in the capacity of an associate at the Chilaw Cathedral for three years, before assuming duties as the parish priest of the Church of St. Peter and Paul at Irabadagama for two years. His next assignment was as parish priest of Our Lady's Church, Bandarawatta.

As his priestly ministry continued, he

served in the parishes of Kattimahana for two years, and at St. Sebastian's Church, Katuneriya for six years. He then went to Rome for higher studies in Canon Law.

After two years, of higher studies he returned to Sri Lanka and spent six years as the parish priest of St. Joseph's Church, Kuliyapitiya and at St. Sebastian's Church, Madampe. Returning to America for further studies and on completing his Doctorate in Canon Law, he came back and was appointed Judicial Vicar in the Diocese of Chilaw. After dealing with difficult marriage cases for 15 years, he now lives at the St. Joseph's House for retired priests.

Our wish and prayer is that you continue your ministry, especially in prayer, for the increase in vocations and the preservation of all vocations currently serving the Church, at this time in Sri Lanka.

**Merista Lusena**  
(Niece on behalf of the family)



**Rev. Fr. Lusena**



**Shamal De Silva**

Shamal de Alwis' Choro Calibre, Sri Lanka youth choir presents 'Road to Victory' on the 11th of this month.

The Choro Calibre ensemble has already won silver and bronze for their performances abroad bringing glory to their motherland.

The choir consists of highly talented young male and female vocalists nurtured from leading school choirs in Sri Lanka and singing under the leadership of former Josephian Shamal de Silva. The group has won three awards, Silver and two Bronze Diplomas on the folklore and chamber categories, by competing with 20 choral groups around the world at the "Asia Cantate" International Choral Festival which was concluded in Thailand in July 2012.

The architect of the 'Choro Calibre Choir' is a young man with versatility, plus plus, Shamal de Silva who handles all music arrangements bringing together in fusion soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices of the youthful members of his choir.

'Road to Victory' opens at the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton Colombo, and for all music lovers this will be a real treat.

Let's read what the veterans have to say about these youngsters. Veteran Choral Director, Francis D' Almeida congratulates Shamal de Silva and his choristers on their award winning performances at the Asian Choir Competition in Thailand.

## "Road to Victory"

"Perhaps it is the first time a musical ensemble has presented such a high calibre presentation to gain the coveted title, "The Most Entertaining Choir."

Leading theatre personality Jith Pieris. "I first saw Choro Calibre at a practice session at All Saints' Church, Borella. I was



**Francis D' Almeida**

pleasantly surprised by their vibrancy and enthusiasm and as I settled in to listen to them further, their discipline and dedication impressed me."

One of Sri Lanka's top singers and music star, Mariazelle Goonatillake after meeting the group, was highly taken up by them and described them as "a group of very young gifted, dedicated and motivated singers who have come together to achieve one goal and that is to be different to the rest of the choral outfits one listens to in Sri Lanka."

Choreographer Bryan Kerkoven says that having been invited to give an opinion of the choreography, he was pleasantly surprised by the wide selection of songs chosen and the creative choreography of the group.

And what do the most sought after duo in music today have to say, "With beautiful blends of music and an added flavour of choreography, these singers give their audience a spell binding spectacle."



**Jith Pieris**



**Mariazelle Goonatillake**



**Bryan Kerkoven**



**Bathiya & Santhush**



**2012 ASIA CANTATE INTERNATIONAL CHORAL FESTIVAL PHUKET, THAILAND**

## Born to be a gifted person

Rev. Fr. K.D. Joseph, Parish Priest of St. Lazarus' Church, Uttuwankande, in the Kegalle deanery was called to eternal rest on August 13, at the age of 67. The burial took place at Gurugalla Church cemetery on August 16.

Fr. Joseph was born on February 18, 1946 at Gurugalla, a small Catholic hamlet in the diocese of Ratnapura. He was ordained a priest on August 4, 1975.

He served as Assistant Parish Priest at Maddegama, Yatiyantota and Balangoda parishes. As Par-

ish Priest he served in Hinduma, Tangalle, Balangoda, Kegalle and finally at Uttuwankande. He was instrumental in giving a new face-lift to St. Joseph's Church at Balangoda.

Fr. Joseph was an orator par excellence. His sermons were of passionate eloquence and which kept the church congregation spell bound. His sense of humour was singularly infectious. He was well versed in the life stories of all the saints. Fr. Joseph attended the Silver Jubilee celebrations of three diocesan

priests held at St. Theresa's Church, Dehigahapitiya, on August 13. He delivered a heart rending sermon, none thought it was his last. After the sermon he was quite normal and walked to the mission house without any signs of fatigue. Later he was feeling a giddiness and was rushed to the Avissawella Base Hospital. He breathed his last the same night, presumed to be heart failure.

The funeral Mass held on August 16 at St. Francis Xavier's Church, Gurugalla, in the absence of the parish priest who was

overseas, was presided over by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, assisted by Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus C. Perera, OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura, Bishop Emeritus His Lordship Dr. Raymond Peiris, Very Rev. Fr. Nihal Nanayakkara, Diocesan Administrator, Galle, and Very Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando, Vicar General, Ratnapura Diocese.

Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral service from the various parishes served by Father Joseph.

**J. Antony**

## Book Release

### 'Deva Rajyaye Udawa'

The fourth part of a presentation of the Catholic Faith for youth and adults, in Sinhala - 'Deva Rajyaye Udawa' (Dawning of the Kingdom) has been released. The book features the Biblical picture of the Kingdom of God; the Holy Spirit - the Source and the Life of the Kingdom; dawning of the Kingdom - the Mystery of the Incarnation; Christmas Story and the Blessings of Christmas; the Childhood and the Hidden Life of Jesus in Nazareth.

Today the Kingdom is spoken of so much, yet it is misunderstood. This is a good handbook for every Christian family and for all engaged in any ministry in the Church. The book is presented by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary Province of Sri Lanka. The author of the book is Rev. Sr. Nimal Perera FMM. It is available at all Catholic Book Centres.

## Dad gave him something more



The doctors diagnosed the child as a kidney patient. He needed one of his kidney's to be transplanted urgently. They searched high and low to find a kidney to match his. They did not succeed. Their attempts were all in vain.

Every day his father visited him in hospital, and each day he revealed,

that finding a kidney had been a failure. Suddenly his father stopped visiting him, and within a few days the surgery was arranged and performed. Even after the surgery, the father did not turn up to see him. This puzzled the son, who made inquiries from all, about this mysterious absence of his father. "What has happened to my dad? Has he abandoned me? Doesn't he love me?" These unanswered questions rattled him.

After a week or so, suddenly his father came to see him. "Where have you been dad?", the son questioned him in surprise. The dad said, "Son, I have been in this hospital, in the next room. I sent you something and you have got it." "What is it, that you sent me dad?" the son inquired.

The dad said, "Son you are my own flesh and blood. My absence was because, I had to give you something more. The kidney that was transplanted into you, is mine."

*Lalith Sebastian*

### An invitation to all Children and Youth

You are hereby invited to write an article of a few words, or a poem or send us one of your drawings. We will be so happy to publish these, because this page belongs to you.

Please take some time to do this, during your holidays. How happy would you be, to see one of your presentations published. Your parents and teachers would be happier than you.

Please send it to:  
The Assistant Editor, Messenger,  
Colombo Catholic Press, Colombo 08.

## Show me the way to go home



When you are at cross roads,  
When many roads confuse your direction,  
When there aren't any sign boards to guide you,  
What else could you do,  
Other than to give ear to the voice from beyond which says,

"Jesus is not one, of many ways  
Jesus is not the best, of several ways,  
Jesus is the only way,  
to go home, to the Father."

Then hurry up, go to Jesus,  
acknowledge your guilt and confess,  
be cleansed and be renewed,  
be reunited with the Father.

*Asoka Perera  
Moratuwa*

## Dip your hand in water



If you dip your hand into a bucket of water, you could stir the water in it.

The moment you withdraw your hand out of it, you would loose the impact you had on the water. Neither will your hand leave an impression in the water. The space occupied by your hand, would be no more. Everything would be watered down.

Soon the water will settle to remain calm, as though you never ever touched it. Similarly, as long as you live in

society, you could create an impression on it. Your presence would be recognised by all.

The moment you are no more, nothing remains other than your memory. What you leave behind is the good that you have done. If not, you are totally forgotten. Another would fit into your place and do even better. No one seems to be indispensable other than one. He is the Lord.

*RodeZo*

## Life is worth living

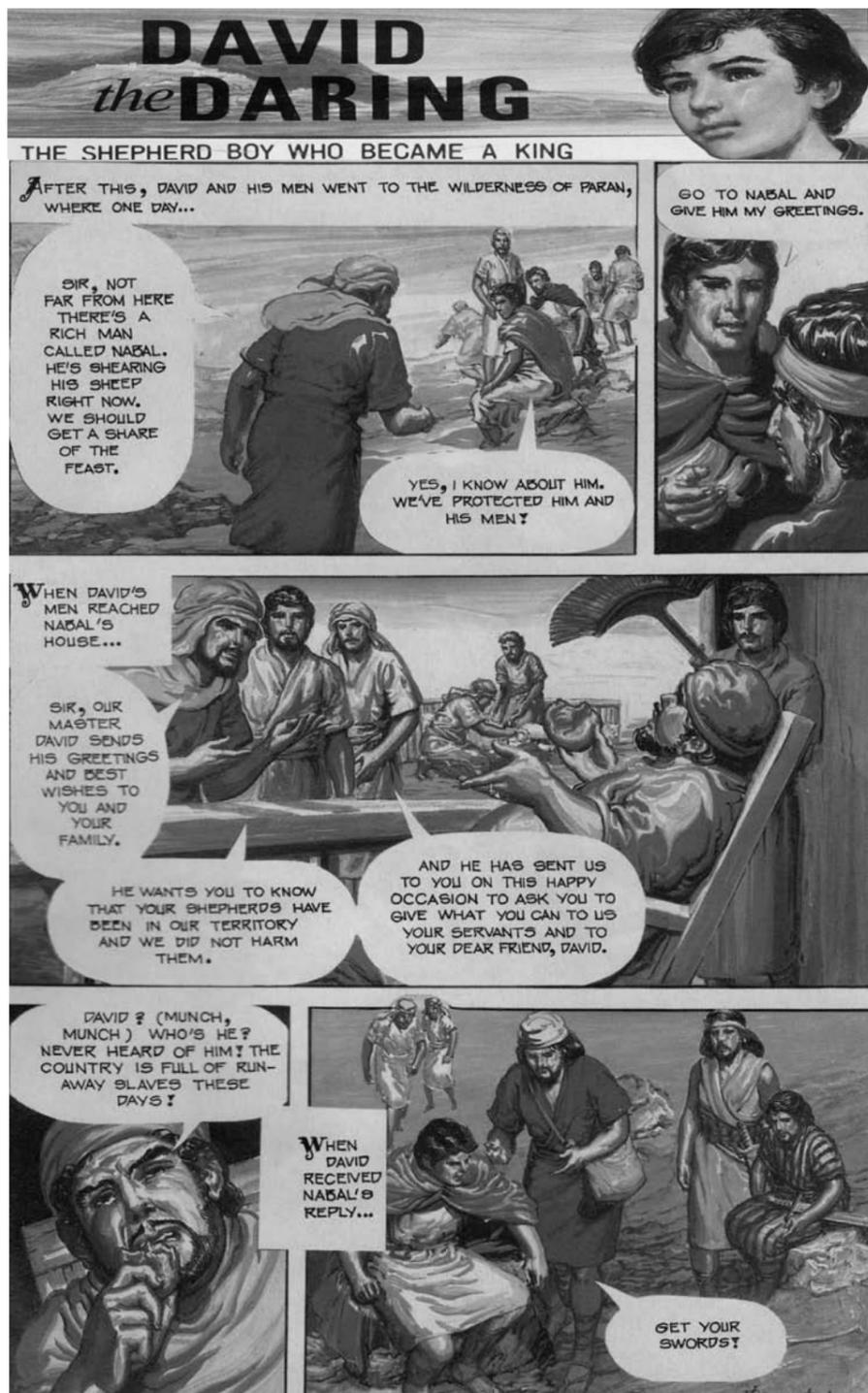
Life is to live and let others live,  
It is all what we make of it, that makes us fulfilled,  
It does not belong to us, the Creator owns it,  
Clean and pure, we have to give it back to Him.

Give without counting the cost,  
Work without seeking rest,  
Search until it is found,  
Expect nothing in return, not even a word of thanks,  
Cause praise and thanks are fitting and due, to God alone.

The experience gained in life,  
Truly lights up your life,  
Elevates your spirits high,  
Does good to you and to others too.

Fear not, goodness and mercy prevails,  
Be faithful to the Lord, for He is good,  
The breath of life, He blew it on you,  
He would take it back and make you through,  
To grant life eternal, your dream come true.

*Francis Irugalbandra  
Hunupitiya - Wattala*



# Why and when do we cheat the Lord?

***"We cheat the Lord, yet through His love He does not react. Thus the consequence and repercussions are not felt immediately"***

"This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad." That refrain from Psalm 118:24 speaks in depth, the attitude of joyful participation that we are invited to share, in our celebration of the Eucharist each Sunday.

Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us of the significance of Sunday gathering, for the Eucharist. He invites us to spend Sunday, as a family day, a day of rest and a sacred day that includes time for meeting the Lord, in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Few keep Sunday sacred. Some look out for it as a rest day after a busy and demanding week. However for some others it remains just another day, to clear the backlog of work or to earn a bit more through overtime. Yet some replace the sacredness of experiencing the Eucharist, with sports, leisure and entertainment. How much we miss, we fail to realize. The sustenance that comes to us is lost when we break the word of God. The opportunity of being fed from the Eucharistic table of the Lord is all lost, if we do not take part in the Eucharist Celebration. To participate with fellow worshippers in liturgy tends to boost one's faith, one being a living example to another. Every one is called upon to unite with one's own family and with the parish family at large, around the table of the altar. All these benefits get forfeited if we give up the opportunity of the Eucharist on Sunday.

Sunday is the day on which the Lord rose and the Risen Lord invites us to His banquet. Pope Benedict has stressed, "How much more necessary is it today, to affirm the sacredness of the Lord's Day and the need to take part in Sunday Mass." He is referring to our cultural context of religious indifference and secularism. It is not easy to be a faithful practising Catholic. We live in a culture that is gaining momentum each day. It is necessary we slow down in moderation, to acknowledge the significance of the Lord's Day. It is essential to take time off, to rest, to reflect and to be renewed, getting away from our busy schedule of activity.

The very meaning of the word Eucharist is Thanksgiving. Through the Eucharist we express our gratitude for all we have experienced in the previous week. Likewise we look forward for strength to face a new week, one that will have its usual share of challenges. When we participate collectively as a congregation, we ensure mutual support to each other as well.

If one is to fail in his or her obligation in attending Sunday Service, how does one feel? Is it a guilt feeling of violating the third commandment or a worrying feeling of missing something we often do? Don't we feel we neglect when we cheat the Lord?

The time we ought to spend at the Eucharist with the Lord, we owe it to Him. What we owe someone, if not paid back, amounts to cheating. If we do not give that time, set apart for the Eucharistic Lord on Sunday, we cheat the Lord. It is plain and simple logic.

If we cheat at our places of work, we would be dealt with severely, interdicted or even dismissed. If we do it to our neighbours, we would be taken to courts. But when we cheat the Lord, the Lord forgives.

The Lord through His love, does not react. Thus the consequences and repercussions are not felt immediately. Hence cheating the Lord continues. One who cheats never thrives for long, we know it by our own experience. That's why the ones who cheat the Lord, do not thrive to be happy and joyful Christians. The one who does not rejoice with the Lord, at least one hour per week at the Eucharist on Sunday, finds no satisfaction in one's life. Thus one experiences frustration, in finding no meaning

and purpose in life, and the guilt of defaulting the Lord weighs one down. A person guilty of ignoring the Eucharist on Sunday, little

realizes that the opportunity of thanking the Lord, receiving the strength and graces from the Lord are forfeited. What a huge loss that would mean. A loss that never could be compensated.

**Keep Sunday sacred, make it yours with the Lord, and the Lord will make you His own.**

**Most who read this article possibly would be those who take part in the Eucharist on Sunday. If so, why don't you take this message to those who do not do so. Try your best to convince at least one more, to be so.**

RodeZo



## Stewardship is an act of love



In Genesis we read how from the very beginning God instructed us to "cultivate and care for" the earth. From the very beginning we have been called to take care of the environment. But are we on the right path? Environmentalism has practically become a secular religion today in our western society where we see animals and crops being treated better than humans.

The Church has always approached the care and protection of the environment, from the point of view of the human person. Fostering and protecting human life and dignity, from conception to natural death, lies at the heart of what the Church teaches on the environment, where respect for human life and respect for nature are inextricably linked.

Pope Benedict clearly stated in his 2008 World Peace Day message: ***"The family needs a home; a fit environment in which to develop its proper relationships. For the human family, this home is the earth, the environment that God the Creator has given us to inhabit with creativity and responsibility. We need to care for the environment: it has been entrusted to men and women to be protected and cultivated with reasonable freedom, with the good of all as a constant guiding criterion. Respecting the environment does not mean considering material or animal nature more important than man. Rather, it means not selfishly considering nature to be at the complete***

***disposal of our own interests, for future generations also have the right to reap its benefits and to exhibit towards nature the same responsible freedom that we claim for ourselves"***.

Stewardship is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. Stewardship implies living in moderation and avoiding over consumption, which is good for the environment and is an integral part of seeking holiness and detachment from worldly things. Stewardship implies that we must care for creation and be resourceful in finding ways to make the earth flourish. Stewardship wishes to conserve and protect the natural resources of the planet for the sake of future generations while environmentalists wish to eliminate future generations for the sake of the planet.

In our family life we have always tried to teach our children stewardship by teaching them to live the virtues in many creative ways. The virtue of temperance and justice are two of the virtues needed to become good stewards. Temperance is the virtue that restrains and directs our disordered appetites, the virtue required for the proper ordering of consumption. Temperance suggests that simplicity of life, self-discipline, and self-sacrifice are part of our every-day life. Justice is the virtue which enables us to give God and neighbor their due, thus safeguarding the right of God and others. The virtue of justice prohibits selfish destruction of the environment, without regard for those in need or for the need of future generations.

For example, since they were young our children have been taught to turn the lights out when they leave a room as a way of using responsibly the electricity God has given us. When our children learned to brush their teeth, we taught them to not let all the water run down the drain, to wet the toothbrush, turn off the water, brush your teeth and then turn the water back on to finish up. They have been taught not to litter to keep God's earth clean and beautiful. If we take a walk along the countryside we can see the beauty of God's creation, and come know God through its beauty and learn to see the environment as a gift from God.

Thus we are obliged to take care of the environment. The obligation of the stewardship falls upon us. It should not be considered a burden but as an act of loyalty to reciprocate God's love.

Courtesy : Canadian Messenger.

What it says ..... in  
the Readings

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they  
are life: You have the message of eternal  
life. Jn. 6:63

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B  
2nd Sept. - 9th Sept. 2012

**SUN: 22<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY  
TIME**

Deut. 4: 1-2, 6-8; Jm 1: 17-18, 21-22, 27; Mk. 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23-

**Mon:** Memorials of St. Gregory the  
Great, Pope & Doctor

**St. Gregory the Great, 540-604**

AD. A Roman noble  
who was Prefect of the  
City before becoming  
a monk. As Pope he  
established a pattern  
for the papacy in years  
to come. He sent mis-  
sions to Lombardy,  
Sardinia, and England.  
Patron of musicians.



1 Cor. 2:1-5; Lk. 4: 16-30

**Tue:** 1 Cor. 2: 10-16;  
Lk. 4: 31-37

**Wed: Blessed Teresa  
of Kolkatta**

"At the mo-  
ment of death we will  
not be judged accord-  
ing to the number of  
good deeds we have  
done or by the diplo-  
mas we have received in our lifetime.  
We will be judged according to the love  
we have put into our work."

1 Cor. 3: 1-9; Lk. 4: 38-44

**Thu:** 1 Cor. 3: 8-23; Lk. 5: 1-11

**Fri: Blessed Frederic Antoine  
Ozanam**

"Man becomes great exactly in  
the degree in which he works for the  
welfare of his fellowmen." 1 Cor. 4: 1-5;  
Lk. 5: 33-39

**Sat: Feast of The Nativity of  
The Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Reflection:** "To-  
day the Virgin is born,  
tended and formed, and  
prepared for her role as  
Mother of God who is  
the universal King of the  
ages."

Mic 5: 1-4 or  
Rom. 8: 28-30;  
Mt 1: 16, 18-23

**Sun: 23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY  
TIME**

Is. 35: 4-7; Jm. 2: 1-5,  
Mk. 7: 31-37



## Twenty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

**First Reading**  
Deut. 4: 1-2, 6-8

Before send-  
ing the chosen people  
into the Promised Land  
Moses tells them to be at-  
tached to the Lord and to  
keep His laws. This was  
because they were going  
to settle down among  
pagans, and their life  
example and faith had  
to be demonstrated very  
strongly.

**Second Reading**  
James. 1: 17-18, 21-22, 27

St. James advises  
the Christians to be true  
followers of Christ. As  
the word is from God  
he wants the people to  
adhere to it not just by  
merely listening to it but  
also by living it. In this  
manner we are called to  
love God and also our  
neighbour.

**Gospel**  
Mk. 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23

The Pharisees  
and the Scribes chal-  
lenged Jesus because  
His disciples had broken  
the law by eating with  
unclean hands. Though  
Jesus is concerned about  
the exterior perfection  
of man he reminds them  
that they must also be  
concerned about their  
inner self, as that is the  
place from where every-  
thing that makes a man  
clean or defile flow.

**Reflection**

Today's read-  
ing's call for a total  
commitment and for a  
complete dedication of  
one's life for the Lord  
and His teaching. This  
commitment or dedica-  
tion of one's self should  
not only be from outside  
but should also be from  
within. For this inner  
commitment is impor-  
tant in relation to the  
salvation of the soul.  
Jesus was very clear  
when he said, "Then are  
you also without under-  
standing? Do you not see

that whatever goes into  
men from outside cannot  
defile him? Since it en-  
ters, not his heart but his  
stomach, and so passes  
on but what comes out of  
man is that which defiles  
a man." For Jesus said,  
"For within, out of the  
hearts of man comes evil  
thoughts, fornication,  
theft, murder, adultery,  
coveting, wickedness,  
deceit, licentiousness,  
envy, slander, pride and  
foolishness. All these evil  
things come from within  
and they defile man."  
Therefore as much as we  
are concerned about the  
external holiness and  
cleanliness we must also  
be concerned about our  
internal holiness and  
sinlessness.

This total com-  
mitment and dedica-  
tion should not be for a cer-  
tain period but it should  
be for life. Whatever  
the life situations be we  
ought to be committed  
and dedicated to the  
Lord.

In the First  
Reading the people are  
asked to be committed  
and dedicated to the  
Lord on their way to the  
Promised Land. It was  
because it was thought  
that the chosen people  
would go back to the old  
pagan religions. Instead  
he wanted them to be  
true witness among the  
pagans in the Promised  
Land. For this reason he  
wants their commitment  
or dedication to be total  
and lifelong.

This total dedi-  
cation and commitment  
should not be limited to  
words only but it should  
be transformed into ac-  
tion by our deeds so that  
we could experience life  
in the Lord. This is stated  
very clearly in St. James,  
"Receive with meekness  
the implemented word,  
which is able to save  
your soul. But be do-  
ers of the word and not  
hearers only deceiving



yourselves. The religion  
that is pure and unde-  
filed before God and the  
Father is this: to visit the  
orphans and widows in  
their affliction and to  
keep oneself commit-  
ted and dedicated to the  
Lord by way of word and  
deed so that we would  
love our God and our  
neighbour both in word  
and in deed.

**Aid Story**

In allegory, John  
Bunyan has described  
the capture of the city of  
Mansoul. A strong and  
good king had built the  
city for the peace and  
safety of the people. The  
mightiest enemies could  
not break down its walls  
or enter its five gates  
which were called - Ear-  
gate, Eyegate, Nosegate,  
Mouthgate and Feetgate.

A wicked giant  
named Devil wanted that  
city for himself. He called  
a council, but no plan of  
attack seemed to prom-  
ise success. Devil de-  
clared: "We can conquer  
Mansoul only by deceit.  
Open attack will steal the  
defenders." "What is your

plan?" asked his advisers.  
"Make the people believe  
we are their friends, Tell  
them lies. Flatter them.  
Make false promises.  
Give them the idea it is to  
their advantage to have  
us. Once we are in, we  
can take over."

Devil made a  
start. He walked up to  
the Eargate and cour-  
teously asked to see  
Captain resistance and  
Judge Conscience who  
led the defense. He told  
them that he was their  
friend, come to help  
them. He went on to say  
that their king was using  
them for his own selfish  
purposes. "He is keeping  
you in slavery. I will help  
you gain your liberty."  
The people were fool-  
ish enough to listen to  
these lies. They opened  
Eargate and Eyegate. The  
enemy came in. Once in  
they let in more attack-  
ers. Mansoul fell to its  
enemies because the  
defenders were not loyal,  
because they opened  
their gates to the enemy.

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

### I Resolve....

Let then our first act  
every morning be to  
make the following  
resolve for the day:

I shall not fear anyone on earth.

I shall fear only God.

I shall not bear ill will toward anyone.

I shall not submit to injustice from anyone.

I shall conquer untruth by truth.

And in resisting untruth I shall put up with all suffering.

Mahatma Gandhi

### O Eternal truth, true love and beloved eternity

"Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new,  
late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was  
outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In  
my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which  
you created. You were with me but I was not with you.  
Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not  
been in you they would not have been at all. You called,  
you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You  
flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness.  
You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath  
and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger  
and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for  
your peace."

From the Confessions of Saint Augustine

