



**World Women's Day  
March 8th**

# Messenger

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*"Gleaned from  
the classics"*  
By Johannus

*In omnibus negotiis  
priusquam aggrediare  
adhibenda est  
preparation diligens  
(from Cicero)  
In all matters  
before beginning  
a careful  
preparation must be  
made*

## CBCSL urges Govt. to implement LLRC Recommendations

**The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka has made a fervent appeal to the Government towards implementation of the Recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation. The full text of the statement is given below:**

Much has been written and discussed since the publication of the Report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC). The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL) is conscious of the important ministry of reconciliation Jesus has entrusted to his disciples. Jesus in his well-known Sermon on the Mount exhorted his disciples: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). St. Paul writing his second letter to the

Corinthian Community exhorted: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us" (2 Cor. 5:18-19). CBCSL wishes to look at the Report of the Commission mindful of this biblical imperative and invitation to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation in this post-war society of Sri

### UNDUE MEDDLING

The presenting of a resolution against Sri Lanka by the United States Government, at the United Nations' Human Rights Council (UNHRC) sessions in Geneva and the support given to that move by certain western countries is in our view, an undue meddling in the sovereignty and integrity of Sri Lanka. At the same time it is also an insult to the intelligence of the people of Sri Lanka.

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith is of the view that the authoritative reply which we can give to this unwarranted interference is to immediately implement the recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission report, which are based on the evidence and submissions of the people of our own country.

His Eminence the Cardinal, requests the Government to take immediate action to do that, while requesting all Sri Lankans to unite together in this matter leaving behind all differences of race or religion.

**Very Rev. Fr. Cyril Gamini Fernando**  
Chairman,  
Current Affairs' Committee,  
Archdiocese of Colombo.

Lanka. We believe that it is not incorrect to state that the most unfortunate experience of war was the result of thousands of missed opportunities.



Hence, it is our great responsibility to clinch yet another vital opportunity God places before us. In this connection the Report states in its Preamble: "Sri Lanka now faces a moment of unprecedented opportunity; rarely does such an opportunity come along without equally important attendant challenges (p.1). It states further: "The recommendations of the Commission could nevertheless constitute a framework for action by all stakeholders, in particular the Government, political parties and community leaders" (p. 2).

CBCSL acknowledges that every document formulated within given historical circumstances necessarily contains limitations. Hence, no document can meet all the expectations and answer the needs of everyone. However, the LLRC Report, particularly its recommendations, does contain much potential and hope for the future. We believe that it still does provide the nation with a good basis and a point of departure for the challenging and arduous task of national reconciliation. The Report highlights the hope it encompasses in these words saying that, "The work of the Commission proceeded acknowledging a clear need to heal the wounds of the past and to make recommendations to reconcile the nation by  
**(Continued on Pg. 3) »**

### University problems need urgent solutions - Rev. Fr. Sylvester



Chief Guest, Supreme Court Judge Priyath Dep and Mrs. Dep, with Rev. Fr. Rector, Sylvester Ranasinghe, stepping towards the Stanley Abeysekera Sports Complex Cum Auditorium

Rev. Fr. Sylvester Ranasinghe, Rector of St. Joseph's College, Colombo presenting his Annual Prize-Giving Report at the 110th Prize-Giving of the College held last week, focused on the predicament of University Education in the country and for which he said a solution must be

found. He highlighted three vital causes for the depletion of the quality of university education thereby; (1) Politicization of the University System. (2) Indiscipline and (3) Lack of state of the art technologies and facilities:

**(Continued on Pg. 3) »**

### MUSIC ABLAZE 2012 A Fiesta of Choral Singing

As Thomas Carlyle once expressed, "Music is well said to be the speech of angels" and that is exactly what everyone witnessed on the 17th of February 2012. Making their debut concert 'La Musique Pastorale' in 2007 the choir of St. Lawrence's Convent has reached great heights ever since. Not forgetting their second consecutive performance 'Voce Cantabile' back in 2009, and now in 2012,



yet another mesmerizing event filled with the talent of our young Lawrentian choristers making their third appearance through 'Music Ablaze'.

### SVP National Council holds Retreat at Madhu Shrine after 29 years



The National Council of St. Vincent De Paul held a 3-day retreat at the Madhu Shrine after a period of 29 years. The chief preacher on this day was Rev. Fr. Chandana Sanjeewa (CSsR). Picture shows Fr. Sanjeewa lighting the traditional oil lamp. Also in the picture are Rev. Fr. Leo Perera - National Chaplain, Rev. Fr. Emilianuspillai - Administrator, Madhu Shrine and Rev. Fr. Anniyas. (THEOBALD SAMARATUNGA)

The event started with the welcoming of the Chief Guest, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Granville Silva, the Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo and other guests of honour including Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, and Brigadier J.R Ampe Mohotti. The event held at the BMICH was performed in the presence of many spectators including past members of staff, past pupils, present pupils and their parents, etc who certainly made this event a success.

After the welcome; opening prayers were recited together with the entrance of the senior choir. They amazed the gathering with a musical theme of religious items that included songs such as "Jeewanaye Samidha", "Ave Verum", "Regina Coelli", "Miserere", "Pilgrims Chorus" and "Holy City". The primary choristers, 36 in number made their appearance onstage with a Japanese song "Ue O Muite Arukodu" accompanied by a dance item by the students of the same age,  
**(Continued on Pg. 3) »**



**YEAR OF THE WORD OF GOD**

**"This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to Him!"**

Mt 17: 5

## News in Pictures

## Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Tewatta



The feast of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Tewatta, was held recently.

Picture shows the statue of Our Lady, taken in procession by the faithful.

(H.A. Caldera)

## Passover Retreat at St. Lawrence's Church, Wellawatte

A five day Lenten Holy Week - Passover Spiritual Inner Healing Renewal Retreat in English will be conducted at St. Lawrence's Church, Wellawatte Parish Hall commencing from 2012, March 3rd Saturday till 7th Wednesday (Poya day) from 4.00 to 8.00 p.m. on Saturday and 4.00 to 8.30 p.m. on Wednesday, from 3.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. on Sunday followed by Holy Mass in church and on Monday/Tuesday from 5.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m., respectively.

This retreat will be conducted by renowned international Charismatic Catholic Retreat Preacher Rev. Fr. Kurian Thomas MSFS (Missionaries of Saint Francis De Sales), Director of Charis-Bhavan Retreat Centre - well-known in Kerala, founded by Rev. Fr. James Manjackal MSFS., who preached a ten-day Lenten Reconciliation Healing Retreat in Sri Lanka in 2002. The teaching and preaching of the retreat will be based on Biblical and Sacramental Theology in order to strengthen the Spirituality of our people according to the Catholic Doctrine. This program will conclude with Holy Eucharistic Celebration and Healing Service on all five days. The Praise and Worship session will be conducted by Wendo - the anointed Catholic musician.

Sincerely encourage you to spread the good news to others and come with your friends and family. We are sure you will endeavour to join us in this faith-filled, Spirit-led retreat.. Contact for details 0755 265437. All are welcome.

- Basil Mel

## Reconstruction of St. Joseph's Church, Thannamunai, Batticaloa

St. Joseph's Church, Thannamunai belongs to the Diocese of Trincomalee - Batticaloa. It was totally destroyed by the cyclone that occurred in December, 1978, and was subsequently reconstructed.

Due to the Tsunami devastation in 2004, and also as a result of the recent war, a number of families from various parts of the country have migrated to Thannamunai of which 95% are Catholics and who attend the church services in large numbers. St. Joseph's Girls' Hostel and Somoscan Boys' and Girls' Home have also been shifted to Thannamunai now. Due to this surge in the population, the present capacity of the church is not adequate to accommodate the devotees who flock for religious services in large numbers.

Therefore the



Parish Council of the Church decided to extend and renovate the front facade of the Church estimated at a minimum of Rs. 3,000,000.00 (3 million). With the generosity of philanthropists and their generous contribution most of the work has now been completed. Presently we are in the final stage of our plan and for which another 1,000,000 (one million) is needed.

Therefore we would be grateful to you, if

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Wickramasinghe, Bishop of Galle, presiding at the 21st annual feast of the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Parakaduwa said that, trust in God is the primary source in our lives. Without this trust as humans we are unable to achieve anything in life.

"If we go to the Father with trust, he will not forsake us," His Lordship said. The Church of Parakaduwa has only fifteen families and the annual feast is organised each year by the parishioners of St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda led by Raymond Weeratunga, a parishioner.

Catholics from Wattala, Hendala, Welisara, Ragama, Usuwetakeiyawa, Bopitiya and Kandana participate in this feast annually. The Church belongs to the Dehigapitiya Parish.



In his address His Lordship thanked the concern and efforts of Mr. Raymond Weeratunga and the parishioners of Nayakakanda in organising this annual feast. Rev. Fr. Shiran Dassa, Asst. Parish Priest, Nayakakanda was also present.

Among the others present

were Rev. Fr. Sampath Wilegoda, Secretary to the Bishop of Galle, Rev. Fr. Sanjiva Pieris, of the Ratnapura Minor Seminary, Rev. Fr. Jude Amila Fernando, Parish Priest of Dehigapitiya and Deacon, Nishantha Rohan.

(Text & Pic. Nimal Perera)

## Diocesan Literary Competition in Ratnapura



The Ratnapura Diocesan Literary Competition - 2011, was held recently at the Catechetical Centre, Ratnapura.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Paul Fernando, Director, Ratnapura Diocesan Catechetics and Education, presenting the winners with the certificates.

(Theobald Samaratunga)

## Inter-House Athletic Meet Award Presentation



The Inter-House Athletic Meet of Minu-patala Madampella School was held recently under the patronage of Rev. Fr. Laknath Cooray, Parish Priest of Madampella. Here in the picture Fr. Laknath hands over a certificate to a student who won the first place in the 100 metres, under-15 category. Mr. Ivan Appuhamy (JP) is also in the picture.

(Photo by: Cecil Danicius)

## New Statue donated to St. Mary's Church, Katukurunda

After 30 years, St. Mary's Church, Katukurunda was donated a new statue, to be used for the forthcoming Easter drama.

The benevolent donor was none other than the former Parish Priest of the Church, Rev. Fr. Samantha Kurera.

(Asika Priyadharshana)

you would kindly consider this situation and assist us with your generosity in extending and renovating our church.

Cheques may be drawn in favour of Account No. 073032358810101 Seylan Bank, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. Contact number of Parish Priest: 065-2240856/077 2061962

(Rev. Fr. I.J. Sarvananthan  
Parish Priest - On behalf  
of the Parish Council)

## LENTEN RETREATS

## Halpe-Katana Lenten Programme

Annual Lenten pilgrimage of the Halpe-Katana parish will be held on 18th of March 2012, at St. Anne's Shrine Talawila. Rev. Fr. Amila Gomes, Dean of Katana and Parish Priest of Halpe has initiated this pilgrimage with the help of Rev. Fr. Prasad Indika and Rev. Fr. Kennedy Perera, Assistant Parish Priest. Parishioners of Halpe, Katana, Pathagigodella and Kaluwarippuwa will participate in this pilgrimage.

(Cecil Danicius)

## Shepherdian PPA Lenten Retreat

Annual Lenten Renewal of the Past Pupil's Association of Good Shepherd Convent, Kotahena will be held on Sunday, 11th March 2012, from 8.30 a.m. at the Kotahena Shepherdian Home for Elders (KOSHE).

Rev. Fr. Ajit Ruwan will conduct the recollection which will be followed by Holy Mass.

For further details contact: 0777263610

## Discussion on National Languages and Social Integration

A Round Table Discussion on "LLRC Recommendations, National Languages, Social Integration and Ethnic Harmony," organized by the Christian Alliance for Social Action (CASA), will be held on Monday 12th March 2012, at 4.30 pm, at the Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC Auditorium, 133 Kynsey Road, Borella (at the intersection of Barnes Place and Kynsey Road).

Hon. Vasudeva Nanayakkara MP, Minister of National Languages and Social Integration will be the Discussion Leader at this meeting.

Convenor - CASA  
Ainslie Joseph

## Infant Jesus Novena at St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda

To mark its 150th Jubilee, St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda has started the Novena to the Infant Jesus which will be held every Friday at 6.15p.m.

A new statue of the Infant Jesus was specially brought from abroad and was blessed and installed in the Church by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatillake.

At the installation service, Fr. Mahendra requested all mothers to come for the Novena each week with their children and invoke the importance of the Infant Jesus in their lives.



"Like Mother Mary who was with our Lord till his death, every Christian

mother is enlisted with the duty of being the first spiritual guide of the child,"

said Fr. Mahendra.

(Text & Pic. Nimal Perera)

## CBCSL urges Govt.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

recognizing all victims of conflict providing redress to them and thereby promoting national unity, peace and harmony" (Article 1.7, p. 6).

Hence, the CBCSL wishes to urge the government to do all that is in its power to take a serious look at the recommendations contained therein. Let us not permit yet another valuable opportunity to pass us by. We believe that many of its recommendations have the potential to contribute to healing of wounds and bring about harmony and reconciliation and thus also counteract mounting international pressure. Hence, our earnest plea is to implement the potential recommendations as early as possible since peace and reconciliation are the most vital and urgent needs of the present moment. We believe that serious and honest efforts to implement its recommendations would contribute much for

the forging of national harmony and unity of our beloved country.

We wish to earnestly urge that the government come up with some symbolic gestures and acts that would lead the nation towards harmony and reconciliation. Permit us to identify some of the recommendations. The report needs to be disseminated to the masses. It would be necessary to have the report, particularly its recommendations, translated into the two official languages of the nation. Moving beyond the Sinhala only position, we need to address seriously the issue of the language. Let all that concerns good governance be implemented. Illegal armed groups need to be disarmed. We also urge that the government address the painful issue of the missing persons and present a list of those who are still in custody as it always helps anyone to know if and

when his or her loved ones are no more. The government is duty bound to give an account as to what happened to those who are not in custody. People's right to legitimate information needs to be respected. We need to recognize that grieving over the loved ones lost is a legitimate and a deep-seated need of all human beings. Once recognized, we would enable people to look to the future and move on in life.

We are also urged to recognize our failures. The report states, "Both the government and the public had failed to utilize the potential of the promotion of creativity of arts, for the betterment of society and that we need to recognize how much art could contribute to promote understanding among the communities. We need to identify the linguistic and cultural commonalities and affinities in establishing a Sri Lankan identity and be mindful of the fact, Sinhalese and Tamil cultures had very rich roots, and that there must be a cultural renaissance through art, drama and music ..." (Articles 9.272, 9.273, p. 385).

Mindful of our own distinct role as Religious Leaders and of our responsibility to do everything that is within our purview, we also urge the government to appoint a responsible body of persons who would carefully monitor the intended process of implementation.

We wish to join all those men and women of goodwill and together with them we earnestly exhort the government to do all within its power to implement urgently the recommendations of the Commission and thus contribute to the greatly needed harmony and reconciliation of our beloved nation.

**+ Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith**  
President CBCSL  
**+ Bishop Norbert M. Andradi, OMI**  
Secretary General - CBCSL  
Lankarama, 19, Balcombe Place, Colombo-8  
Tel: 011-2697062/2697110  
Fax No.: 011-2699619  
E-mail: conferencesl@slt-net.lk

## Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Kalutara



The Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Kalutara, was celebrated recently. The chief celebrant at Vespers was Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Granville Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

Picture shows His Lordship being accompanied to the Grotto by Rev. Fr. Chryshantha Kumara, Parish Priest, Kalutara. (Pic. D. Anselm Fernando)

## University problems....

Contd. from Pg. 1

However he said, "It must be understood that to create solutions you must have total quality people involved in education and not half baked academics, charlatans or politicians who have cures for every ill. You have to get quality lecturers, principals, teachers, education policy formulating personnel, knowledgeable and those who are educational visionaries."

The Chief Guest at the this year's prize-giving was Supreme Court Judge Priyasath Gerard Dep, PC, a distinguished Old Boy of St. Joseph's College, Maradana.

Commenting on Free Education, Fr. Sylvester said, "Free Education is a luxury that a poor country such as ours cannot afford. Anything given free is taken for granted as a legitimate right and invariably misused."

He suggested a though screening of students prior to their being given free education. Since local universities are unable to accommodate all those entitled to admission, parents spend a large amount of money to send their children to foreign universities.

"Solutions must be found," said Fr. Rector, "to these problems."

## A Fiesta of .....

Contd... from Pg. 1

36 in number made their appearance onstage with a Japanese song "Ue O Muite Arukodu" accompanied by a dance item by the students of the same age group. Going on to sing "Dona Dona" and "Come back Liza"

Another memorable aspect of the evening was the official launch of our school's Acapela group namely 'Vibrato' whose performance amazed the audience with their items of which were "Kiss from a Rose", a Medley and "Wake me up". The choir of St. Joseph's College made a guest performance onstage with 'Requiem Dies', 'Lean on me' and 'Geeyakin Kesay'. The 47 members of the Junior choral group appeared next with items such as 'Where the gentle Avon flows', 'Mariachi', and "I can see clearly now" while everyone listened to their delicate yet cherubic voices.

The second collection of songs sung once again by the senior choristers included pop songs that enlivened the gathering and filled them with good cheer in response. The songs they sang "Bless the broken road", "Man in the mirror", "Don't stop believing" and "The Show must go on". Jacqueline Hettiarachchi, a past chorister and choir leader of our school did us proud by making a guest appearance onstage which included one of her original singles. The third segment of songs followed soon after which a collection of Sinhalese and Hindi medley was sung by the senior choristers. Items like "Sri Lanka Matha" was accompanied by a wonderful dance item by the Western dance troupe trained by Mr. Antonio Fernandez certainly added colour and essence into the atmosphere onstage. A Sinhala and Hindi medley followed.

The final segment brought the event to a close with two items once again by the senior choir that of which "Listen to the rain" and "The Earth Song." The vote of thanks was read out by Aushi Fernando, the choir leader together with the closing prayer recited by Andrea Todd. The choir sang their final song to wrap up the whole session with "Time to say Goodbye".

Renushi Ubeyrathne

## SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA  
**Messenger**  
SINCE 1869

EDITORIAL

4 March 2012

## The practice of Virtue alone will restore our society

No society can be held together only by the enforcement of laws. Laws can be effectively enforced only if the majority of the people obey the law. The law breakers must be in a minority. If the law breakers are in a majority it will be an uphill task for the Police to enforce the laws. Obedience to the law must arise from a genuine conviction born of virtue that the law is good. The laws must of course be in accordance with moral values and the virtues must be practiced by the people freely and voluntarily. A stable society can be built only on virtues. The practice of the virtues strengthens us as moral agents. Morality must guide all our actions. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "..... a virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do that which is good."

The traditional cardinal virtues are prudence, courage, justice and temperance. To these must be added the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, by which we acknowledge that our human growth and development is rooted in the blessings from God. We must live and have our being in the Lord Jesus Christ. We perceive God's action in our lives. We must have the notion of Divine Providence, of God's action in ordinary affairs, particularly in one's own life. We can see God's actions in our lives. If God is active in shaping our lives then we must trust him.

The virtue of courage means acting boldly where necessary to speak out and uphold the moral values of truth and honesty in our speech and actions. Sadly many of our Judges, high officials in government and professionals whether in the government or the private sector, prefer not to speak out but instead compromise their moral values and conscience. This virtue of courage engages us to stand for truth and justice despite popular opinion and refuse to obey illegal and unethical orders from the powers that be, even if we would lose our jobs and even our lives, thereby. Jesus said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot afterward do anything worse." Luke 12: 4-5.

Courage ensures firmness and readiness to stand by what we believe in even in times of extreme difficulty. It is the opposite of opportunism, evasiveness and compromise to please those in authority. Courage frees us from being enslaved by fear, even the fear of torture and death. Right now there are several Christians in Muslim countries in Iran, Pakistan and Iraq, who refuse to deny their faith despite threats of execution. Christ died to save us. How could he have spread the faith to us except through his death. It is his death and resurrection that strengthened the Apostles to bear witness for him. It was heroism on the part of the Apostles that made it possible for the faith to be spread to us. Courage produces heroism in battle as well as heroism in social reform. We have very few social reformers who take up the causes to eliminate the evils of our society like discrimination on grounds of caste, ethnicity, religion. Abuses against women and children and domestic violence against women is widely prevalent in our society. Courage requires us to resist the peer pressure to conform to the destructive expectations of others and helps us to challenge the assumptions of our traditional culture. There were times not so long ago when the so-called lower caste persons had to sit separately even in our churches or build separate churches for different caste groups.

Justice is another essential social virtue which must be cultivated to bring about a better society. Justice is the virtue by which we strive to give what is due to others by respecting their rights and fulfilling our duties towards others. How many of us treat our servants well. Don't they labour daily without a day of rest as such. Do we treat them with the human dignity they deserve as persons created in the image and likeness of God. How just are we in our relations with our employers or our neighbors?

An important part of our recovery as a stable society will be achieved only through the practice of the four cardinal virtues. It is only then that we will build the trust between individuals and communities which lies at the heart of human relationships. It is this same path that our institutions like the Police, the Judiciary and the Public Service must travel to restore trust among all our people.

Can we build a culture of service between us all, not because it serves our individual material advancement but because it is a genuine value, a vital search for the good of all which alone can truly benefit all.

# Macbeth and

In order to see Macbeth as a man, a human sinner, as God and Shakespeare see him, it is necessary to look at two famous fundamental definitions of sin from Augustine. First, sin is "something done, said, or thought against the law of eternity" (Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, 22.27: *factum, dictum, vel concupitum contra legem aeternam*). Second, it is a "turning from God, a turning toward the creature" (*De Libero Arbitrio*, 2.53: *aversio a Deo, conversio ad creaturam*). From these definitions, sin has a final meaning of not merely being *contra naturam* and *contra rationem* but ultimately *contra Deum*. (These are titles of chapters in Joseph Pieper's 'The Concept of Sin'.) As such, against God, it is his business. Sin is an aversion from him against the eternal law and a conversion toward the creature. Conversely, then, repentance would be a conversion toward him.



The three "weird sisters" grimly work their magic on Macbeth.

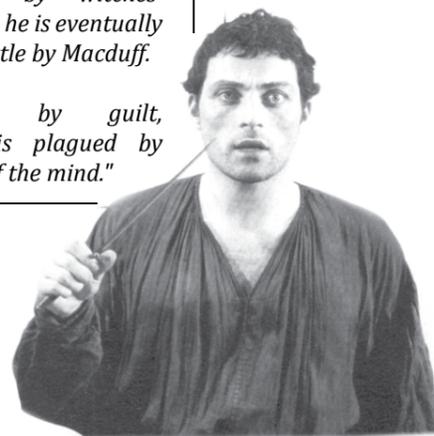
### Victory of the Soul

G. Wilson Knight, in his essay "*Macbeth and the Metaphysics of Evil*," locates Macbeth's final triumph as a soul in peace for having overcome its conflict against evil. The disorder in the world having been created by the disorder in his soul, "the mighty principle of good planted in the nature of things

#### MACBETH

Thane of Cawdor, he is pressured by his wife to murder Duncan and become King of Scotland; tormented by witches' prophecies, he is eventually slain in battle by Macduff.

Consumed by guilt, Macbeth is plagued by "daggers of the mind."



then asserts itself." At the end of *Macbeth* there are "balance, harmonious contact, integrity of soul." Macbeth has been able to achieve this stasis because he has sipped full with horrors and overcome all fear (5.5. 10).

Such a victory, however, is a full acceptance of sin. Knight paints a portrait of Macbeth's complacent damnation. In his account, there is no turn back to God, only a resignation with the status quo of evil in the heart of Macbeth. Goodness, the just cause of Malcolm, comes transcendentally, outside and despite Macbeth, with no cooperation but with passive acceptance. The idea has a New Age, Gnostic, or liberal Protestant tinge of relativism and subjectivism: The content of Macbeth's sinfulness is ignored, and the important thing is Macbeth's inner peace, not the evil that he has done.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, is no relativist. Macbeth may not be redeemed, but he does not give up

his conflict with sin and sin remains a concrete act of specific evil. Macbeth's turning toward evil was never total, for he never tries to justify his actions and in fact admits the evil pointedly in Act 1, Scene 7. In Act 5, Scene 8, at the nadir of his despair, he turns - or to use words that express slight movement at the risk of sounding trivial, twitches or inclines or even smiles - toward goodness. After the loss of his wife and his statement of despair, while still believing himself an invincible immortal and rejecting suicide, he yet cautions Macduff: "But get thee back, my soul is too much charged with blood of thine already" (5.8.5-6). However slight, however impetuous, this momentary compassion for an enemy facing, he thinks, an invincible foe

represents a turn toward God. It is of course not a renunciation of evil, and as Macduff attacks he does not throw down his arms, but it is a human act that proceeds from a will that is not entirely ruined and contains a mustard seed of love of neighbour. Macduff then reveals that he was "from his mother's womb. Untimely ripp'd;" and Macbeth's intellect is enlightened:

*Accused be the tongue that tells me so, For it hath cow'd my better part of man:*

*And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd That palter with us in a double sense;*

*That keep the word of promise to our ear, And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee. (5.8. J 6-22)*

### Catholic Notion

There is now more than a twitch of conversion here. There is a pulling away from Satan, his evil works, and the glamour of evil; a repudiation of unjust violence; a denunciation of equivocation; a return to the hope available in the divine life; a final posture of human humility in the face of divine majesty; and most of all, a flight from the idolatry of fortune-telling. The "Catechism of Trent" writes, "Against (the First commandment) all those sin who ... give credit to dreams, fortune-telling, and such illusions; those who, despairing of salvation, trust not in the goodness of God." We are at the other end of the theological spectrum of

# nd the Tragedy of Sin

salvation from John Calvin's doctrine of "double predestination" in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: "God has once for all determined, both whom he would admit to salvation, and whom he would condemn to destruction." The Fatima Prayer expresses this radical love of the most hardened sinner with the formulation, "lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of thy mercy." This conception of the infinitely merciful heart of God can offend Jews and Muslims who rather emphasise God's justice. It is one of the most radically Catholic notions in Shakespeare's theology, that he is able to imagine, if not the actual salvation of all, at least the potential salvation of the wicked. He can see the last facet of divinity in Macbeth's lost eternal jewel.

In response to Macbeth's surprising generosity in the wake of the nihilistic despair of "tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow," Macduff calls him coward and threatens him with subjection, and Macbeth resists enslavement by an enemy, having been created for freedom, not for the slavery of sin:

*Though Birnam wood be come to  
Dunsinane,  
And thou oppos'd, being of no woman  
born,  
Yet I will try the last: Before my body  
I throw my warlike shield: Lay on,  
Macduff,  
And damn'd be him that first cries,  
"Hold, enough!" (5.8.30-34)*

## Adhering to Divine Will

Macbeth here opposes the prophecies of the evil will and throws himself up as a bodily sacrifice of the divine will. If Lady Macbeth dies by suicide, is it too much to claim that he cooperates in a gratuitous surprising act of martyrdom? It is noteworthy that Shakespeare chooses the word "shield" rather than "sword" as a metonymy for Macbeth's last battle, which is not an assault on a unprepared enemy but a defensive struggle with a worthy adversary held in loving honour to whom, like Christ, he offers his "body."

Far from being a soul frozen in actionless despair, Macbeth ascends into the light of activity. Despite his terrible knowledge that his prophecy does not protect him, he neither runs away from the divine avenger nor gives up the struggle of life. By nature a fighter, he tries the last and throws his warlike shield before his body, finding the mean between cowardice and brutality. He has not abandoned his allegiance to martial values: In his last sentence he claims that damnation comes from cowardice. At the same time, he has turned

toward mercy and respect for the other. He sees more clearly the truth in things.

By contrast, Macbeth in his earlier slaughter of young Siward was merciless. Siward identifies him with Satan twice (5.7.6-8), and Macbeth scoffs at the fallen mortal and boasts of his own super-humanity:

*"Thou wast born of woman: / But  
swords I laugh at, weapons laugh to  
scorn, / Brandish'd by man that's of a  
woman born" (5.7.11-13)*. Muir notes here an allusion to Job 14: 1 and to the Burial Service in *The Book of Common Prayer*: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble"

(RSV). Blind to the suffering of humanity, Macbeth is also asserting his own divinity. The phrase has had a biblical subtext from the forest scene in Act 4 when the bloody child, the second apparition, uses it first to seduce Macbeth with a false promise of invincibility:

*"Be bloody, bold, and resolute: Laugh  
to scorn / The power of man, for none  
of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth"  
(4.1.79-81)*. Jesus uses the phrase in Matthew 11:11 to make a contrast between the inferiority of the greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist, to the "least in the kingdom." Job had used it to assert the inherence of suffering in the human condition. Just after the second apparition uses this phrase, the third apparition, a crowned child, an unmistakable reference to the Infant King of Kings often depicted in medieval and Renaissance art, arrives in thunder, wearing "upon his baby brow the round / And top of sovereignty" (5.7.88-89). Macbeth is blind to the opposition to evil by the sovereignty of God, who has in Jesus consented to being born of woman.

It is Macbeth's suffering, the suffering of a man born of woman, which accounts for this metanoia from hubris to humility: Suffering for which he himself is responsible, but suffering nonetheless. Macbeth's nobility consists in part in recognizing this suffering but not yielding to it. He faces and expresses despair, but, unlike his wife, continues to act as he calls upon his servant Seyton. (Muir surprisingly discounts this identification with Satan, but nothing seems clearer that Macbeth's alliance with the Prince of Darkness):

*I am sick at heart,  
When I behold-Seyton, I say!  
This push  
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.  
I have liv'd long enough: my way of  
life Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow  
life;  
And that which should accompany old age,  
As honour, love, obedience, troops of  
friends,*



*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage / And then is heard no more...Scene 5 vs. 5.*

*I must not look to have; but in their  
stead,  
Curses, not loud, but deep, mouth-  
honour, breath,  
Which the poor heart would fain  
deny, and dare not. Seyton!  
(5.3.19-29)*

## Prevenient Grace

Since medicine will not help the diseased soul of his wife, he'll "throw physic to the dogs" (5.3.48); he'll none of it. He arms himself. Although he is numb to the mournful cries of women (5.5.9-10), he fights like a baited bear (5.7.11-12).

Scotland has been absolved and saved if Macbeth has not. In the last scene, Macduff recognizes the "kingdom's pearl" (5.8.56) in the crown of Malcolm, who represents the will of God, triumphing "by the grace of Grace" (5.8.72). Macbeth's own "eternal jewel," his soul, may not have been given over entirely to the "common enemy of man" (3.1.67-68). Instead, he may have made a humble move of cooperation with divine grace. This sudden indwelling of mercy, this surprising turn toward the good, has no explanation except in the Christian tradition as a mysterious conferring of grace. The "Catechism of Trent," in its explanation of the "Communion of Saints" in the Creed section and following Aquinas (ST, 2, 2ae, a. 128) teaches that "graces gratuitously given" can be extended "even to the wicked." "Trent includes in such graces the charisms (prophecy, teaching, healing, and so on) but does not restrict them to the charisms. More precisely, this divine communication can occur outside of the sacraments: Aquinas's subcategories include prevenient grace, which is a stimulation to goodness that precedes an act of goodness; subsequent grace, which helps the good act in progress; and persevering grace, which brings the act to its end. Thus, Macbeth's moral twitch might be labeled prevenient grace and his sacrificial finale might be an example of subsequent and persevering grace.

Of course, nothing in the lines or elsewhere in the play confirms explicitly that Shakespeare was thinking of these specific Scholastic field identification markings, as commonly known as they might have been, when he was meditating on Macbeth's farewell actions and last words, but a spiritual master can glimpse the mysterious but palpable movements of God by his working understanding of the heart and soul of man displayed in his imagined characters and informed

by the general catechism and popular Christian story. Shakespeare's psychology was not modern but ultimately orthodox Christian, which is to say a medieval version of classical psychology: The origin of human behaviour is not merely toward the end or good of survival or pleasure or power but also toward other goods and good itself.

## Sacrament of Confession

Macbeth may not have damned himself. Unlike his wife, he has confessed his sin in several places; she has held it deep within and washed her hands of her guilt to no avail. His constitutional superiority and perseverance can be due only to his frank confrontation and clear-eyed accounting of personal evil. **Perhaps through Macbeth's self-examination Shakespeare was unconsciously lamenting the lost sacrament of confession in the Reformation (the Twenty-Fifth of Cranmer's Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 for the Church of England allows for only two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper). If this goes too far, the discrepancy between the fates of the Macbeths argues at least for Shakespeare's own understanding that articulated if not auricular moral examen is a requirement for spiritual integrity.**

Malcolm, sure of his righteousness like the complacent Pharisee of Luke 18, boasts of divine right and scorns the Macbeths (5.8.69-72). Macbeth, of course, like Lear, has no awareness of grace's purchase on him. He is merely open to it; he sees more clearly; he is no longer acting absurdly against his better nature and deliberate reason but now moving humbly in accordance with them; his eyes, like those of the sinful tax collector, are cast down in shame but turned toward mercy as he faces Macduff. Macbeth, in his self-inflicted emptiness, falls into destitution, unlike the virtuous older brother of the Prodigal Son and the friends who have not suffered like Job, and this profound sinner may even be touched at the end by the God who wishes to fill and to give rest.

*(The above is an extract from the article 'Macbeth and the tragedy of Sin' by Ken Colston, Logos 13:4 Fall 2010)*



*Or art thou but / A dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain ...Scene 2 vs. 1.*



*Perhaps the most gripping and successful film adaptation of Macbeth remains the 1957 Japanese Throne of Blood, in which the Director, Akira Kurosawa, backdated the story to medieval Japan, borrowed from Noh drama and cast the heroes as Samurai warriors to retrace the tragic fate of Macbeth.*



# Marriage in the Original Covenant

*This original sin of Adam and Eve, like the loss of a title, or the debt of a squandered fortune, would be inherited, with all of its effects, by all of their descendants*



(To be continued next week)  
(Courtesy: Marriage Together in Christ - Catholic Truth Society)

Adam and Eve's sudden loss of intimacy with God also greatly impeded their power of dominion over the earth. They began to suffer pain and hunger. The created world, for the first time in their experience of it, began to resist them, just as they had resisted God, and, for the first time, they had to work and sweat to earn a living.

Work was actually a blessing in disguise. It required them to struggle within creation instead of naturally lording over it, and so they could once again learn their place, as creatures, with respect to

God. Work was an antidote for their sin of pride. Pain, fatigue, suffering and death all stand ready to convince us, if we are willing to listen to them, of our need for God. All of the natural evils of this world, if we know how to read them, proclaim the path to the re-establishment of our intimate relationship with God, a path that leads to and through the cross of Christ.

The pleasure of

sexuality was also damaged by the fall. Not only was the sensual life of Adam and Eve now less intense, but the strong inclination to sin (of all kinds) that they now felt made it harder for them to place their strong desire for each other's bodies within the context of their mutual dignity as persons. At the same time, sexual pleasure actually lost much of the intensity it had for them before they sinned.

**One of their descendants would overcome the lying serpent**

Childbearing would henceforth be done in pain, and in the context of new difficulties in the relationship between man and wife. Their relationship would now be unequal, and marked

by differing desires and expectations (Gn 3: 16). Their mutual understanding, like the 'building of their house' (their descendants), would only be accomplished through a path that included pain and suffering, and their eventual separation through death. God did not design this future for the man and the woman; they chose it for themselves, and for us, by choosing to live apart from him, the source of all love.

## A CROSS The Way 70

By Sihomi Gunsekera

### Lent

"Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of Lent. It is the Season of Penance when Christians fast and pray and sacrifice to commemorate the Passion and Death of Jesus," observed Shirani.

"But surely it can't be all sorrow. Isn't it also about Reconciliation?" asked David.

"Yes. That is the main message of Christianity. During Lent, Christians relive the suffering of Jesus and how He was scourged and made to carry the heavy wooden cross to which He was nailed at the end and strung up to die like a common criminal. Yet even as He hung on the Cross and was dying, He said, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' Thus He forgave His enemies and we Christians are expected to follow His example," said Shirani.

"If only the different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka too could reconcile with each other, then there would be peace in the country. Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers are all Sri Lankans," commented David.

"What about Colombo Chetties, Bharathas, Malays and Ethnic Chinese? Aren't they also Sri Lankans?" chimed in Ira.

"Yes, we must not get stuck in our own little compartments. Sri Lanka is an island and we should all learn to co-exist with each other. We should learn to live and let live," said Shirani.

"There are adherents to the four major orthodox religions in this country. There are Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims and each practices his or her own religion.

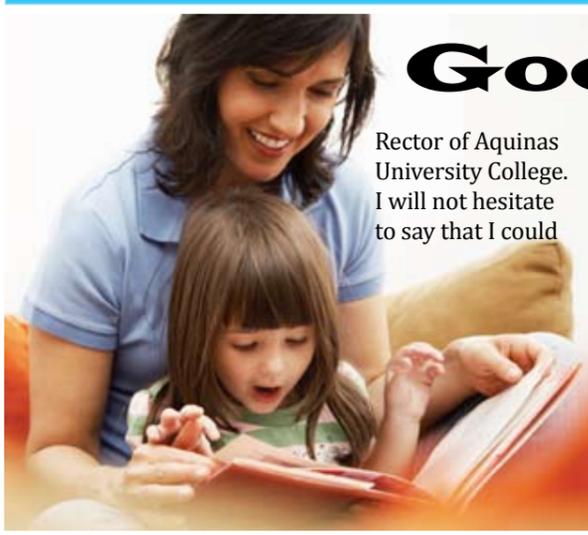
So, there should be peaceful co-existence," observed Ira.

"So even as we give up pleasures and sacrifice for Lent, we should think of reaching out to those of other ethnic and religious groups. 'A stranger is just a friend we do not know.' Isn't that true?" concluded David.

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

"Can I use your car, Dad?" requests the teenager. "No son, not until you cut your hair." "But Father, Jesus had long hair." "Yeah! but Jesus walked everywhere".

Rev. Fr. Fracxid Anthony Fernando OMI



## Good Reading

By E. Goonerwardena

Living alone, I have for a very long time been addicted to reading. I could pick up any book and keep on reading as long as my ideas and policies do not clash with the authors.

A few weeks ago I happened to read "Life Education for Youth" by Rev. Fr. Crispin Leo, former

Rector of Aquinas University College. I will not hesitate to say that I could

keep on reading with deep interest. At first, I thought this was not a book to be read by an old lady like me, but belonging to a very conservative Roman Catholic family I recollected my past where discipline was instilled into us as part of spirituality.

The author

touches on every subject from ethics to partaking of a meal. In very simple language he blends the mundane things of life with the word of God, just like Christ did.

His suggestions how to deal with youth is a study and guide lines not only for teachers, but also for parents, the clergy, the elderly and excuse me, even for today's politicians. He places more importance on attitudes than instructions. It is easy to preach, but how do we practice. Changing our life styles accordingly and focusing on practicing your faith to whatever religion you belong to, brings out the better human being in you.

Very humbly he quotes famous authors

like Thomas Merton, Philip Yancey, Cardinal Newman to prove his point. Personally I feel he has outwitted them. You can have a good laugh over his sense of humour.

Where youth is concerned he does not give up on anyone of them and very wisely allows how to get out the best of the incorrigible. In no uncertain terms does he mention that to be a good Christian you have to first be a good citizen.

I can go on and on in appreciation but I will leave the rest to those who care to read and be entertained.

## Take it to the Lord in Prayer

Though the mountains may fall, and the hills turn to dust Yet the love of the Lord will stand

As a shelter for all Who will call on this name Sing the praise and the glory of God.

Could the Lord ever leave you, Could the Lord forget His love.

Though the mother forsake her child He will not abandon you.

Should you turn and forsake Him He will gently call your name.

Should you wander away from Him He will always take you back.

When studying at the Lancaster University in England I used to run to the chapel during my tea break, to pay a short visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

One day when I walked into the almost empty chapel I heard the sound of someone sobbing bitterly. I looked round and saw a young girl of say 19 years crying her heart out.

She was an English girl and I am a Sri Lankan. Not knowing how to console her, I spoke to Jesus about her, then I got courage. Before I left the chapel, I walked up to her, gently touching her shoulder I said, "I can see I don't know why, but Jesus knows, He will take care of you". I wanted to run away before she told me to mind my own business, - But she immediately turned and clasped my hands tight. There was no getting away. Looking deep into my eyes she asked "Do you have lessons now?" "Yes," I said, "...but I'll be here for the noon Holy Mass." Then she released me and I ran

back to class.

When I came for Holy Mass I saw her in the same place, in the same way I had left her, but not crying.

I prayed very fervently asking the Lord to help me to help others specially her.

After Holy Mass she gave vent to her feelings as if she had known me for a long time. Her present problem was that her boy friend had let her down very badly. She said not being able to bear the shame and pain contemplating suicide she came to the chapel as a last resort. It was then that I touched her she said.

I congratulated her saying "you have come to the right friend. A friend who will never forsake you. Even if you let him down, He would not let you down." "As you said it was He who touched you. Not I."

"Yes, yes, that's how I felt", she said "Thanks be to God" I said "It was He who made me come here at the precise moment. He heard your prayer"

We both parted feeling relieved and happy.

A week or two later she invited me to tea. Her appointment was some distance away. When I tapped on her door I heard voices. I was wondering if I had come to the right room.

Just then the door opened and there she was smiling from ear to ear. "She then introduced me to her parents saying, "This is the guardian angel who saved me..." We still correspond with one another.

Friends in whatever situation you are, go to Jesus. Have no doubt that He can help. Nothing is impossible with God. If we have faith we can surely succeed.

Emilda S. Douglas



# Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

# Lent in Terracotta

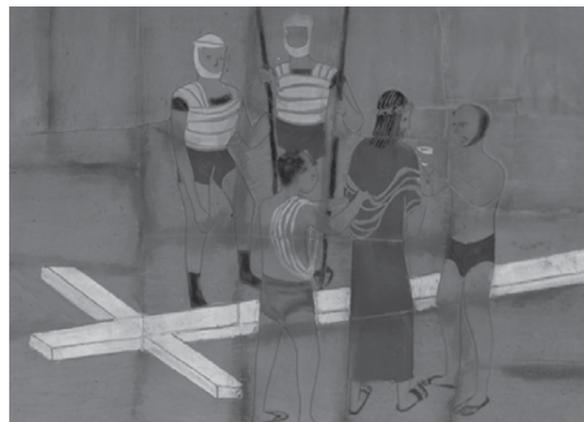
Fourteen terracotta panels made of baked clay show the 14 stations of the Passion of Christ at the Jesuit House Chapel, Bambalapitiya. These murals are fixed over the windows which are placed asymmetrically. They show delicately painted reliefs in earthy blends on shades of clay. The figures are subtly expressive, artistic and imaginative in their continuing movement. The effect is tender, homely, delightful. The artist who designed it was Lonie Peiris. Richard Gabriel carved the Risen Christ which is over the altar in red sandalwood in 1966.

The Chapel itself, a work of art was built in 1960 by Architect Valentine Gunasekara. As to its form the Architect says, "People who see it say it reminds them of Moroccan curves.... but for me it reflects



not too consciously the wonderful rhythms of life, the ocean the tides, the waves, which I very much enjoyed in my youth in the coast. It is captured in the unyielding rhythm of the roof." The building was a non traditional structure with a vaulted ceiling and a tapering vertical shaft above the altar space with light cascading from its skylight into the sanctuary.

The contractor for the project was Michael Fonseka of D.D. Fonseka and Sons. The client was Rev. Fr. Kiriatti who had at that time spent 50 years in Sri Lanka. Architect Laki Senanayake, also worked on this project.



# Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission Report

## Recommendations of the LLRC

A comprehensive summary of the LLRC Report was prepared by Dr Godfrey Gunatilleke and the Marga Institute. The following Recommendations of the LLRC are based on this summary, which is gratefully acknowledged.

### Grievances of the Tamil Community

The Tamil people have been articulating their grievances since the 1950s. These grievances have not been fully addressed by those wielding power who ran the government based on the Sinhala majority vote. These grievances have changed over the years but they still constitute a significant item in Sinhala-Tamil relations. They need to be recognized and addressed directly and fairly as the first step in the post-conflict process of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Over the 30-year armed conflict the majority Sinhalese and the Muslims have also put forward their own grievances.

### Majority-Minority Relations

The process of addressing the grievances was not managed with goodwill by the political leaders of the day. The Tamil-speaking minorities and other disadvantaged communities were not treated with dignity. The strong sense of grievance that prevails in the Tamil community arises from the travails and injustices of that process since the 1950s.

### Grievances of Muslim Community

The treatment leveled at the Muslim community of the Northern Province has led them to believe that they are at the bottom of the list of priorities of the Government, INGOs, NGOs and the international community.

### Grievances of Sinhalese in Adjacent Villages

The perception of people in these areas was that the Government tended to overlook the civilians who lived in these villages. Government must ensure even-handed resource allocation and development of villages.

### Grievances of Tamils of Indian Origin

A larger post conflict development agenda and the programmes for reconciliation should take account of the essential needs of the Tamils of Indian origin (health, education and living facilities).

### Failure to give effect to the Rule of Law

Commission noted the failure of law enforcement officers to investigate offences and bring offenders to book where offences are committed by persons with political connections; continuing acts of extortion, abductions, disappearances, robberies by armed groups; political violence accompanied by the use of firearms recommends that Government should take immediate action to disarm persons in possession of unauthorized weapons and prosecute such offenders, regrets that its interim recommendations have not been given full effect yet.

The Police Department is a civilian institution which is entrusted with the maintenance of law and order. Therefore, it is desirable that the Police Department be de-linked from the institutions dealing with the armed forces which are responsible for the security of the State. An independent permanent Police Commission is a pre-requisite to guarantee the effective functioning of the Police and to generate public confidence.

### Issues of Governance

Deficiencies in the system of administration and lack of



good governance that affect all citizens regardless of ethnicity. These require concerted action by all stakeholders. However specific action is needed where the system functions particularly to the disadvantage of the minorities. The political culture of the country has made the general public powerless and helpless to a point that they have become dependent on politicians to obtain many services and amenities they are entitled to.

### Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration

(Ombudsman) is inadequate to effectively deal with the grievances of citizens arising from state action, even though the amendment introduced by Act No 26 of 1994 has sought to improve the public petitions procedure, the Government should establish an independent institution to address the grievances of all citizens, in particular the minorities, arising from the abuse of power of public officials and other individuals involved in the governance of the country. This mechanism should be invested with a strong investigative arm in order to enable it to effectively discharge its functions.

Interfaith Reconciliation and Peace Committees that may be established at District and Provincial levels could function as a feeder mechanism to support the functions of the Special Institution, in particular, by providing grass root level inputs in the implementation of measures aimed at inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony.

Systems and procedures in the public service need to be guided by criteria, norms and codes of conduct that are sensitive to the concerns and apprehensions of all citizens in particular, the minorities. Full transparency and information regarding the rationale of government decisions should be available to the people to prevent misperceptions that could give rise to a sense of grievance.

The establishment of an Independent Public Service Commission without delay to ensure that there is no political interference in the public service and that recruitment and promotions in the public service are in conformity with the equality provisions in the Constitution.

The Northern Province should revert to civilian administration in matters relating to the day-to-day life of the people, and in particular with regard to matters pertaining to economic activities such as agriculture, fisheries land etc. The military presence must progressively recede to the background to enable the people to return to normal civilian life and enjoy the benefits of peace. Public intervention regarding proposed legislation is an integral part of a vibrant democracy. Therefore, the Government and the Opposition make all endeavours to reach a consensus on an appropriate constitutional amendment, to provide for an adequate time frame to challenge proposed legislation.

### Devolution of Power

Government should provide a process for the purpose of establishing sustainable peace and security in taking into account the rights of all who have been members of the LTTE and a political settlement based on ethnic problem as well as other social and democratic institutions.

Devolution should necessarily promote greater harmony and unity while protecting and applying the identity of all communities are empowered tiers of Government; should not be discriminatory by the people belonging to the majority within the country; democratic processes should take place within the broad framework of the protection and protection of human rights.

Devolution should empower institutions to ensure greater peoples' participation at the provincial level and take into account lessons learnt in the functioning of the Provincial Councils. An appropriate system of devolution should be established for the people, safeguarding the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka whilst fostering its rich diversity.

The establishment of a Special Representative from the Provincial Councils to share power and participating in the development of the people and making them responsible to the people. The effective functioning of the government together with a consensual framework should provide the answer to the grievances.

The Tamil leaders should support the internationalization of the ethnic issue and the exercise by the Diaspora and its political settlement. The perception of the international community can create a sense of insecurity and slow the progress towards an acceptable settlement.

Any devolutionary or power sharing arrangement can be realized within the broad framework of a nationally independent and multi-ethnic distribution of meaningful powers. There are powers which form the core of the State and which cannot be so devolved. Powers which can be exercised by the Government at the local level should ensure that any power sharing arrangements that would effectively address the grievances and tendencies and safeguard the sovereignty of the State.

Underlines the critical importance of the devolution issue, in order to achieve a process of lasting and sustainable peace.

To this end, the Government should have a serious and structured dialogue with those representing the minorities. The content of the dialogue process must take place at a high political level. The official bodies for monitoring performance should include the Tamil-speaking people and Tamil organizations.

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### Language Policy

The full implementation of the language policy should include action plans broken down into specific steps, appropriately covering the Divisional Councils that can be monitored with citizen participation.

It is language that unifies a nation. It is essential that policies relating to language towards this end. It is imperative that a language policy is implemented in an effective manner that respects diversity and national integration.

The proper implementation of the language policy ensuring trilingual (Sinhala, Tamil and English) generations becomes vitally important to allow children from very young days to be able to understand each other.

No district or province should have a language of officers. Officers should serve the people in their own language. It should be made compulsory that Tamil speaking officers at all times should have bi-lingual offices. The complainant should have the right to be heard in the language of their choice.

### a. Education

The removal of the feeling of alienation is a prerequisite for reconciliation between the Sinhala and Tamil a united Sri Lanka. While standard means of affirmative action by the Government in educational opportunities affor-

side leadership to a political framework for ensuring the post-conflict environment all communities, including those of the LTTE, must be ensured. To this end, devolution must address the serious problems that threaten

must be people-centric and 'oneness' and a common appreciation of rich diversity; people must be valued at every level especially in all areas of development or seen to be discriminatory to any ethnic community. Empowerment of the people under a framework of the promotion

Lower Local Government institutions must have participation at the grass roots level. As learnt from the shortcomings of the Provincial Councils system in devising a framework that addresses the needs of the people, the integrity and unity of Sri Lanka must be maintained.

The second Chamber comprising representatives from all communities may be. The real issue of devolution in government is the empowerment of the political leaders accountable to the people. Strengthening of the democratic system and a network of devolution will also benefit the minorities.

Must take account of the unnecessary complexity of the issue and the external pressures that have had an impact on the negotiations for a resolution of external threat and inter-communal security that can seriously impede a viable solution.

Power sharing mechanism should be based on a network of a sovereign, political and administrative Sri Lankan State. While the focus on the periphery is essential, the core responsibilities of the State must be retained and need to be retained and centered. It is also important to ensure that the arrangement has in built mechanisms to prevent secessionist tendencies and integrity of the

importance of making visible progress towards the success of any process of reconciliation.

Government must take the initiative to engage in a dialogue with all political parties, particularly in particular, based on a framework of the Government's own thinking on the form of devolution envisaged. That dialogue must be at a national level and with adequate technical support.

Implementing the language policies and ensuring adequate representation of Tamil-speaking regions.

The language policy should be implemented at the community level, and supported by Provincial and Local Bodies with targets for public participation.

Language binds a nation. Therefore, policies relating to language are formulated and implemented in a manner that the official languages policy promotes understanding, respect and unity.

Implementation of the language policy and ensuring fluency of future generations in (Sinhala and English) fluency of future generations is important. A trilingual education will help the youth to get to understand each other.

Should be categorized in terms of development in any part of the country. It is the responsibility of all Government offices to ensure that the needs of the people are met. In the case of Police Stations, there should be a 24-hour basis. A community member should have his/her statement taken into account.

The feeling of discrimination is a pre-requisite for reconciliation between the Sinhalese and Tamils in a united Sri Lanka. While standardization was introduced as a means of affirmative action by the State to mitigate the imbalance afforded to different communities, it

is in the best interest of future generations a careful review of this quota system with a view to introducing a merit based admission system by a committee of experts in education.

Pursue with renewed vigour a programme of equitable distribution of educational facilities so that it will contribute towards a concerted effort to minimize any feeling of discrimination felt by the minorities.

Should have a proactive policy to encourage mixed schools serving children from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The vital importance of peace education in promoting unity and reconciliation

While restitution enjoys primacy as a legal principle, other forms of relief such as compensation and monetary relief is commonly sought and recommends that the State should review the role and capacity of REPPIA with a view to streamlining and augmenting its role and resources in undertaking post-conflict requirements. The primary focus of REPPIA should be in providing compensatory relief for persons affected by the conflict.

The Commission recommends effective supervision of civil administration officers tasked with the implementation of the Programme, by the respective Government Agents, and the monitoring of implementation quality by the Land Commissioner General at the national level to ensure impartiality and transparency.

The success of the Programme would substantially depend on a clear and unambiguous understanding of the principles, the purpose, the objectives, and the methodology of the Programme by political leaders, the implementers, in this case the public officers and community leaders who would be the members of the various implementing Committees, and the beneficiaries. Conduct media seminar; training programmes for all officers and community leaders selected for various Committees; a settler centered communication campaign primarily in simple Tamil language, as well as in Sinhala language.

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### Diaspora

Government together with the relevant stakeholders, especially civil society, should develop a comprehensive approach to harness the potential of the expatriate community.

Engage the elected representatives of the minority parties in a meaningful dialogue on devolution and other grievances; constructively engage those groups that still harbour adversarial attitudes and the LTTE approach of separation, and find space for those groups to contribute to the local reconciliation and development efforts; proactive diplomatic initiative with the international community, especially those countries that host these diaspora groups; constructively engage its development partners in Sri Lanka and abroad in order to develop a self-reliant, future oriented community in the Wannai, with open minds to build on and sustain reconciliatory community relationships. This is an area where the Sri Lankan 'diaspora' can support the Government of Sri Lanka, working in cooperation with the development partners in areas such as housing, schooling, healthcare.

### Interfaith activities Role of Religion

All religious leaders must unitedly provide leadership, encouraging people of all faiths to act with wisdom and understanding, and to view the conflict and its aftermath from a perspective of tolerance and mutual accommodation. This should be achieved by emphasizing religious commonalities, and focusing on factors that contribute to a shared vision and unity of action.

### Art and Culture

Creating greater awareness of linguistic and cultural affinities among the different communities would be an effective instrument for promoting greater reconciliation. This must be given the highest priority by the State and made part and parcel of a proactive State policy and program.

### People to People Contact

Importance of people-to-people contact in promoting understanding, amity and reconciliation where youth can play a special role, particularly since they have been the worst affected by the conflict. Creative programmes could be initiated by all Government Ministries and other agencies

in the relevant fields within the purview of their responsibilities, in cooperation with civil society groups, so that such exchange programmes can be supported, expanded and broadbased and carried out with due respect to the cultural and language sensitivities of the visiting community as well as the host community.

### Need for Political Consensus

One of the dominant factors obstructing reconciliation in Sri Lanka is the lack of political consensus and a multi-party approach on critical national issues, such as the issue of devolution. In fact there have been instances where 'hate speech' had contributed to major communal disharmony. Since 'hate speech' relating to ethnicity, religion and literature exacerbate ethnic and religious tensions, creating disunity and conflict, deterrent laws must be enacted to deal with such practices, and these laws should be strictly enforced.

The process of reconciliation requires a full acknowledgement of the tragedy of the conflict and a collective act of contrition by the political leaders and civil society, of both Sinhala and Tamil communities.

A separate event on the National Day to express solidarity and empathy with all victims of the tragic conflict and pledge our collective commitment to ensure that there should never be such bloodletting in the country again.

Such a commemorative gesture, on such a solemn occasion, and at a high political level, will provide the necessary impetus to the reconciliation process the nation as a whole is now poised to undertake.



**The Unity Mission Team is not a NGO; nor is it a religious group; It is body of persons, hitherto, who have worked together in a voluntary capacity as a group of concerned and caring citizens who love Sri Lanka who are working to promote unity and reconciliation.**

#### Vision

Foster and facilitate National Unity, Reconciliation, Integration and Healing amongst and between children of the North, Wannai, South, Central and other areas of Sri Lanka.

#### Mission Statement

Reach out to children particularly of the North, Wannai and East of Sri Lanka to provide leadership training, personal capacity enhancement and foster growth of self-confidence in order to facilitate National Unity, Reconciliation and Integration between children of all areas of Sri Lanka, on the basis that children are our nation's most precious resource and foster the belief and acceptance that all children are equal sons and daughters of a United and beautiful Mother Lanka.

#### Specific Goals & Key Objectives

Operate on an inter-faith platform, working in recognition of the multi-plural multi ethnic and multi religious social fabric of our beautiful Motherland.

Focus on working with youth, specifically those in the age group of 15 to 20 years.

Specifically focus on delivering leadership, personality development and capacity building training and development of the children of the North and the Wannai, particularly amongst those who have suffered much trauma during the years of the conflict in Sri Lanka and foster healing, unity and reconciliation.

We also focus on supporting educational needs of these young children by developing reference libraries, providing school books and other requirements to support classroom studies, sports equipment and small scale badly-needed infrastructure projects to facilitate school work.

Will also keep within its mandate the conduct of medical camps, self-employment and skills development projects for school leavers.

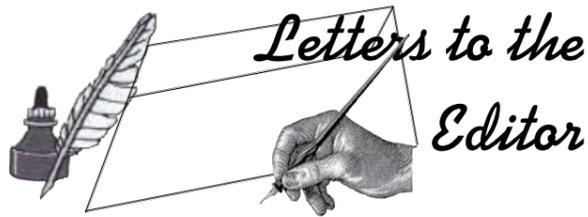
137/6, Kalagoda Road, Pannipitiya

Tel:0094 11 4406599

E-mail:bertal@unitymission.lk

info@unitymission.lk

Internet:www.unitymission.lk



I was happy to read Rev. Fr. Anselm Croos' article, "Cardinal Cooray: A True Son of De Mazenod", in the Catholic Messenger dated 26 February, 2012. While pointing out how the mission-vision of St. Eugene de Mazenod, the Oblate founder, had inspired Cardinal Cooray OMI, Fr. Anselm Croos has very well noted the deep social concern he (the Cardinal) had for the poor fishermen and what he practically did for their wellbeing, particularly in Negombo by encouraging Fr. Anthony Fernando OMI, and Fr. Joseph Fernando, in the parish of Sea Street, Negombo.

#### CIRCULAR NO. 17

May I be permitted to point out a few more good events that took place due to the fact that the late Cardinal left nothing undared to promote the Rule of God's unconditional love among the fishermen and their families. On August 15, 1949, Archbishop Thomas Cooray OMI (later Cardinal), by Circular 17, requested the parish priests ministering in the coastal belt of the Archdiocese to organize fishermen's associations fully managed by

# Social concern of Cardinal Cooray OMI

the fishermen themselves under their guidance, instead of the "Fish Rent" which was administered by them (the parish priests). It was one of his first circulars.

The main objectives of the Circular were:

1. To keep the Catholic fishermen together under the influence of the parish priests and thus to protect their faith,
2. To safeguard them against perverse and disruptive movements,
3. To improve the social and economic conditions of the fishermen and their families.

What occasioned this Circular was the propaganda of the Leftist (LSSP) Movement, led by Dr. Hector Fernando in Negombo. They told the fishermen that the Church was exploiting them through the "Fish Rent" since one tenth of the fisherman's daily catch was given to the Church.

#### JUSTICE FOR THE FISHERMEN

On August 23, 1953, Archbishop Thomas Cooray who presided at the annual meeting of St. Sebastian's Cooperative Society at Sea Street, Negombo said: "I cannot understand the policy of the Government in stinting relief to the fishing industry when mil-

lions have been expended on other industries in some instances to no purpose."

The Archbishop congratulated the society on overcoming many handicaps and hardships and asked the members to be united and not lose courage because the Government had refused their Society a loan. He thought the Government should not victimize the whole Society because some 60 members out of 400 were owing certain loans which they had taken. It must be realized that the Government was going the whole hog to extract a few hundreds from a few poor fishermen when no steps were being taken to get back lakhs of rupees from rich men of the fishing industry to whom the Fisheries Department had lent lakhs."

The Archbishop added: "We are not unreasonable but we are logical. All that we ask in the best interest of those Co-operative Societies, is that the Government should show some latitude in keeping with the local conditions in framing rules for those co-ops fishing societies instead of trying to force down upon us cast iron rules imported from abroad." (Daily News. 25.8.1953).

Rev. Fr. Joseph Fernando had a room specially prepared in the Mission House at Sea Street for Cardinal Cooray who used to visit the parish regularly.

**Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Fernando OMI**

## The Storming of the Chilaw Fishermen

Our elders have strongly condemned the Chilaw shooting as "a brutal killing." Indeed, it was nothing short of man-slaughter.

T-56 guns are used in warfare, to kill enemy forces, and not to quell turbulent crowds.

To suppress aggressive mobs, the use of tear gas and rubber bullets is permissible. But if a criminal or a prisoner, or even a suspect is trying to escape, he may be shot, if possible, below the knee with a shotgun, in order to capture him alive.

But Anthony Fernando of Chilaw was reportedly shot on his head with a T-56 gun, which has caused widespread outrage. He was just an unarmed protester, the sole bread-winner of a poor family.

Some quarters, however trying to justify the action, have shown on certain TV channels some empty arrack bottles and a few clubs and sticks. But they have not shown any protesters with destructive objects or weapons in their hands.

Radio and print media could tell untruths, but TV or video news clips can never lie.

What we saw on TV was an absolutely unarmed crowd. They were only carrying posters and placards expressing their grave concern and resentment over the sudden price-hike of fuel, which for them, was a bolt from the blue.

And furthermore, if it was mob violence, there should have been at least one or two Police casualties during the confrontation like at the recent jail riots.

Some critics, however, pointing their finger at a particular political party, have said that the Chilaw uprising was politically motivated.

But, to be honest, there wasn't a single known politician in the crowd.

Fishermen on the coastline, from Moratuwa through Mt. Lavinia, Mutwal, Hendala, Uswetakeiyawa, Duwa, Pitipana, Negombo, Chilaw, Kalpitiya and beyond, have no politics. The results of the last general elections will bear eloquent testimony to their political tendencies and inclinations.

The fisherfolks of Negombo, Kalpitiya and beyond, have their own problems, which they face gal-

lantly and in a spirit of solidarity.

The lagoon is their heritage. They stood together as one to withstand the proposed seaplane project, which would have seriously off set and disrupted their means of livelihood.

The canal from Poruthota up to Kochchikade where the small-scale fishermen of Negombo anchor their boats, is not to be leased or sold to a private company.

Tourist zones are to be carved out from their traditional fishing grounds. The mangroves themselves are in danger in the face of moves to promote eco - tourism. And the land in and around Kalpitiya, and the thirteen islands and fishing villages are already being threatened by the tourism industry.

Fishing is their bread and butter. And at the same time, they provide a fair amount of the fresh fish and the dry fish that the country needs regularly.

But the sudden increase of the price of oil seriously affected their daily bread.

And when they took to the streets to voice their grave concern, the law-keepers opened fire killing one person.

That is why our Bishops called it "a brutal killing."

**Alfred Perera**

## A Visitor from Goa : Impressions on his Life of Faith

The life and ministry of Blessed Joseph Vaz, a priest of the Oratorian fraternity has had a great impact on the faith life of Sri Lankan people. It seems more miraculous than mere results of responsible ministry. *"...this is the very first account written by a Buddhist author in Sinhala on Blessed Joseph Vaz."*

Blessed Joseph Vaz has made an immeasurable contribution to the missionary activities and Catholic literature. Already we own considerable number of books on his works and Blessed personality. They have been the works of Catholic priests, brothers and laity.

Kusum Waidyaratna is a Buddhist by birth and a devout practitioner of the Dhamma. He is also a senior lecturer in Human Archaeology, Mass Communication and Philosophy.

In his journey of life when faced with struggles and hardships, through the Catholic priests and brothers he had been introduced to the life of Blessed Joseph Vaz, and was drawn closer to his personality.



**Bl. Joseph Vaz**

of faith, of the life of Blessed Joseph Vaz. He says, immersed in the life of Blessed Joseph Vaz he was led to write the book, "A Visitor from Goa" which he reasons as a work of divine intervention. We feel proud to say that this is the very first account written by a Buddhist author in Sinhala on Blessed Joseph Vaz. This book takes the shape of a novel in one sense and a research in another. This book could be considered as a miraculous creation in which the life experiences of the author intrinsically blend with the life and missionary journey of Blessed Joseph Vaz.

his lucrative economical prospects, 'like a deer that years for living water' this book was presented to he had plunged himself in faith, in search of the depth

Kandy on the 15th January 2012.

The same was presented to His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo, on the 7th February 2012, when His Eminence mentioned that the authors of his calibre are precious gifts to the Church.

Our heartfelt gratitude to you Kusum Waidyaratna, to this priceless contribution made to the Catholic Church, based on the life and activities of Blessed Joseph Vaz and your own journey towards transformation through hardships and struggles.

May this book accelerate the journey of Blessed Joseph Vaz to the ranks of the saints, in the Mother Church. May God shower this abundant blessings on you.

**Rev. Sr. Rita Gunawardana HF**

## Prayer of Relief through the Precious Blood of Jesus

Precious Blood of Jesus!

I honour thee, I thank thee and worship thee Sweet Jesus, for all what you have been to me. Precious Blood of Jesus, I am feeble, I am lonely, I am afraid, I am worried and I am tired of my unbearable illnesses and sufferings. Oh Holy Blood of Jesus, touch me, wash me, spread your mighty power on me for a complete recovery internally.

Oh Holy Blood! Oh Miraculous Blood! Send forth the mighty spirit of Thy eternal Blood into my soul and body. Oh Mighty Hands of Jesus! place Thy precious hands on my head and bless me Sweet Jesus. Touch me through Thy miraculous power of Thy Holy Blood. Take away all my aches, pains, injuries from my weak body, mind and soul. Jesus, I can't walk, I have no strength, I am losing strength day by day. Oh merciful Blood! spread over me and take away all my unlimited pains and aches. Oh Precious Blood I am Yours! Nobody is there on earth to console and love me entirely. Never let me fall again Jesus. Hold me

Jesus. Put your miraculous mighty hands on me and hug me Jesus and heal me through your Holy Miraculous Blood. Amen Jesus.

(This personal prayer is my own creation. Experience the power and love of Jesus' Precious Holy Blood)

**P. Sudharshini Gnanapragasam**



## What it says ..... in the Readings

**From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard: 'This is my Son, the Beloved, Listen to him!' (Mt. 17:5)**

### LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B

**Sun: SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**

Gen. 22: 1-2,9-13,15-18,  
Rom. 8: 31b-34, Mk. 9: 2-10

**Mon:** Dan 9: 4-10, Lk. 6: 36-38

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**Wed:** Memorial of SS Perpetua & Felicity, Martyrs

Jer 18: 18-20, Mt. 20: 17-28

**Thu:** Memorial of St. John of God, Religious

Jer 17: 5-10, Lk. 16:

19-31

**Fri:** Memorial of St. Frances of Rome

Gen. 37: 3-4, 12-13,17-28,  
Mt. 21: 33-43,45-46

**Sat:** Mic 7: 14-15,18-20,  
Lk. 15: 1-3,11-32

**Sun: THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**

Ex. 20: 1-17 (or 1-3,7-8,12-17),  
1 Cor. 1: 22-25, Jn. 2: 13-25

Unexpected sicknesses, family problems, sudden deaths, natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunami and floods have always shaken the human race and when these unfortunate incidents occur naturally people ask many questions. Is the end of the world close at hand? Why do people suffer? Are suffering and death the effect of sin? We, Christians believe that Jesus saved humanity from eternal sin as a result of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, which became the path to salvation or resurrection.

Suffering is different from pain. Pain is a physical reaction and suffering is due to conscious reflection on it. For example, an animal is aware of the pain but it does not reflect upon it. Therefore, an animal experiences pain but it does not actually suffer, because suffering is the result of a reflective consciousness. Strictly speaking, it is due to human consciousness that people become self-centered and suffer alone. Capturing human consciousness was the secret of most of the missionaries and saints in spite of worldly challenges they were able to spread the Kingdom of God. During this season of Lent, Christians are invited to connect themselves to the divine mystery of passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, consciously in order to battle against human sinfulness, which takes us away from our centre or self-consciousness.

#### Scriptural background for suffering:

The Old Testament says that evil causes suffering. The Old Testament does not contrast physical and mental suffering. It looks at the totality of the human person. The biblical writers are not particularly interested in the origin of suffering but they inquire into the reason and purpose of suffering. **Example:**

- The Israelites interpreted suffering as a divine punishment for sin. They believed that God's righteous judgment would eventually reach them. *Ps.7: 15-16, Job.21:28-31*

- They also took their own calamities as indications of God's wrath. *Ecc.7:16, Mal.3:7-15*

- They also felt that the members of the nation might suffer for the wickedness of their King, or the descendants for the sins of their parents. *1Sam.22:18, 1Kgs.21:20*

In this background people ask if there was a moral order governing the universe why did the righteous people suffer at all? For this question, we could notice there were also various answers given in the Bible.

#### Example:

- It is the wisdom of God and it is incomprehensible and unfathomable. *Job.42:2-3*

# The Second Sunday of Lent

#### Theme:

It is only through sacrifices one can attain glory.

#### 1st Reading:

Gen. 22: 1-2,9-13,15-18

According to the request of God, Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his only son who was born to him in his old age. God accepting Abraham's great faith spared his son at the same time rejecting human sacrifices that were offered to certain deities. This reading emphasises Abraham's unshakable trust in God and the fulfilment of his expectation of a long line of descendants.

#### 2nd Reading: Romans 4: 31-34

God who spared Abraham's son from death did not spare his only Son who underwent death for the sinful humanity. St. Paul says, if we have a God of this sort there is no reason for us to fear anything or anyone, for he will surely stand by us.

#### Gospel:

Mark 9: 2-10

St. Peter and his two companions did not realize that Jesus' glory on the mountain was on account of the death he was to undergo. Before taking the three disciples to the mountain Jesus was seen speaking to them of the necessity for the Son of Man to suffer, die and be raised to glory (Mk. 8: 31-33). Jesus took with him those who were to witness his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk.14:33). God's revelation about Jesus reminds us of the Suffering Servant of the Lord (Is 42:1). This fact is conferred both by Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). Jesus' glory on the mountain is an antecedent of his Resurrection. His instructions regarding silence about this vision until he is raised from the dead, clearly indicates this fact.



**Reflection:** Although deep trust in God involves sacrifices and challenges it nevertheless leads us towards victory.

As long as God who even sacrificed his only begotten Son for us, sinners, is with us, we do not have to fear anyone or anything.

It is only by facing troubles and trials we can attain success and glory. It is the path to glory Jesus has shown us through his own life.

Rev. Fr. Henry Silva

## Suffering helps to Return to the Centre

- Some of them were not hoping for immediate help or answers, but looked forward to a more distant Day of Yahweh, when all human injustice would be straightened out. *Is. 3:14-15; Dan.12:1.*

- Another answer to the problem of suffering consisted in accepting it as a divine education. *Is.49:26, Jer.9:24*

- Still the question remains: Why does the prophet, the messenger of God, also suffer, and even more so than other people? *Jer.8:18-21, 15:15, Ps.44:23*

- The other interpretation is: In solidarity with the people, the Servant of God takes the punishment upon himself. *Is.53:2-12*

- Lastly, the idea of atoning is suffering or in agreement with accepting the Lord's punishment, one will be delivered of one's guilt.

It is remarkable that, with all their experience of terrible suffering, the Israelites were never moved to take a pessimistic view of life. They strongly believed that God was the Lord and enjoyed life. (*Eccl. 1:2-11, 9:7-10, 11:7-10*). One thing is sure, that in the midst of all sorts of reasoning and philosophies, they experienced God's unconditional love, even in the midst of their disobedience.

#### The New Testament

The primitive church adopted all the Old Testament views of suffering, but modified them in the light of Jesus' passion and suffering on the cross. Scripture reveals and teaches Jesus' suffering as a divine necessity *Mt.16:21, Mk.8:31, Lk.9:22*. This was a new and original idea.

- The atoning effect of Jesus' suffering: His willingness as the sinless one to give his life for sinners. *Rom.3:25, Heb.9:15, 1John 2:2*

- In perfect obedience to God's judgment. Jesus accepted suffering with the spontaneity of love.

- St. Paul points out that the believers who accept suffering not only serve Christ's cause but also, be-

ing united with the Risen Lord, continue his suffering for mankind, because the Church is his body. *Rom.8:18, Rom. 8:31-39, Gal.1:4.*

- Therefore, suffering is the inescapable lot of the Christians and particularly of the apostles. *John.16:33, 1Cor.12:26.*

#### An invitation to be conscious of our suffering and misery

A person who is conscious of his misery and suffering can certainly have absolute confidence in God. We cannot have true confidence in God without the consciousness of our misery. The famous saying of the ancient philosophers: Know thyself, means be aware of your worth and greatness, so that you do not debase and degrade yourself by doing things which are unworthy of your noble calling. It means also 'know thyself' that is your unworthiness, imperfection and your wretchedness. St. Paul teaches us: 'discard the old nature and put on the new' (*Col.3:9-10*). We should not remain unclothed; we have to clothe ourselves with God. Therefore, we should never live in shame, nor with a sad and unquiet heart. It is always self-love, which puts us in shame and suffering. We are often disappointed to know that we are not perfect enough, not so much because of our love for God, but only because of the love of our own selves.

Therefore, during this season of Lent, we are invited to reflect on our sinful nature. We should not fall into a state of discouragement. Rather, we ought to lift up our hearts to God in holy confidence; the foundation of this trust is in God himself and not in our own self. Let us remember that our misery is the throne of God's mercy. It follows, then, that the greater miseries, the greater should be our confidence in God; for confidence is the life of the spirit. Let us be careful do not allow to take away confidence from your heart then you doom yourself to death.

Rev. Fr. Raveen Perera

#### PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer**

For all those who follow Christ: that thy may never choose the cheap and passing things, and so let go of the things that last for ever. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer**

For our leaders: that they may never take the easy ways and so abandon the right way. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer**

For those who are finding life difficult through hardship, illness, or death, that the Lord may change their sorrow into joy. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer**

That we may never forget that sweat is the price of all great things, and that without the cross there can be no crown. We pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer**

# HIS NAME IS JESUS - Lk 2:21



**D**ear children, Jesus' name is above all names and is the most powerful prayer. Jesus Himself promises that whatever we ask the Father in His name we shall receive (cf Jn 14:13-14; 15:16).

The following are some of the experiences of different people that help us to understand how powerful the name of Jesus is!

## There is Peace, Joy and Hope in Jesus' Name:

As I was growing up I remember how my mother used to call on the name, "Jesus, Jesus" as she worked around the house or in the garden or while driving her car. At that time I did not think much about it.

Now I realise the name of Jesus brought her comfort, peace and joy especially in her moments of doubts and fears.

Jesus empowered her as no one else would do. Unknowingly she was teaching me to trust in the name of Jesus which she said that she herself learnt from her mother. As I grow older I find myself calling out the name, "Jesus" and I have the same peace, the joy, the hope that my mother received. When I am in trouble I call out His name for help and when I receive good news His name bubbles out of heart in thanksgiving.

## There is awesome power in Jesus' Name:

A friend of mine was driving through an intersection one day and his little four-year-old son was in the car with him. The car door flew open and the little boy rolled out of the vehicle right into the middle of the traffic coming from four sides. The last thing my friend saw was a set of car wheels just about on top of his son, moving at a very fast speed. All he did was cry, "Jesus!" As soon as he could bring his car to a halt, he jumped out, ran to his son and found him perfectly alright.

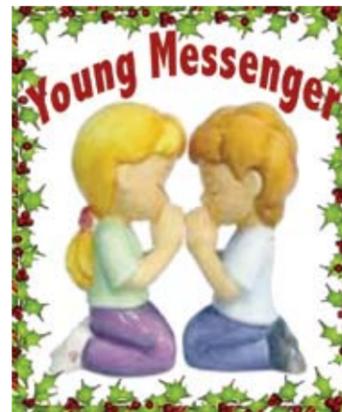
But the man driving the car that had almost hit the child was absolutely hysterical. My friend went over to him and

tried to comfort him..... "Man, don't be upset!" he said. "My son is alright, he's okay.... Don't be concerned about it. Just thank God you were able to stop!"

"You don't understand!" the man responded, "I never touched my brakes!"

## Even the winds and the sea obey Him" (Mt. 8:27)

I remember an occasion several years ago during a "tornado" season in North Georgia. I lived with my mother in our old farmhouse. The boards creaked and groaned as winds whipped against the house. The power was off, thunder and lightning was filling the air with electric currents. Several tornados had been spotted in our area and more were being spawned. The house shook under the power of the storm. I jumped up and ran up to the living room to see my mother standing in the middle of the room, her Bible held



out straight in front of her. She was saying, "I rebuke you winds in the Name of Jesus." She repeated the phrase as she turned to the north, the south, the east and west. "Are you okay?" I asked her as she finished. "I am now." She smiled. "Let's go to bed." I lay in bed and listened as the storm slowly and steadily abated. In the next room I heard my mother's soft, sweet voice saying, "Thank you Jesus, Thank you Jesus."

(Courtesy: Divine Voice)

**In the name of Jesus we have the victory  
In the name of Jesus demons have to flee  
When we stand in the name of Jesus  
Tell me who can stand before us?**

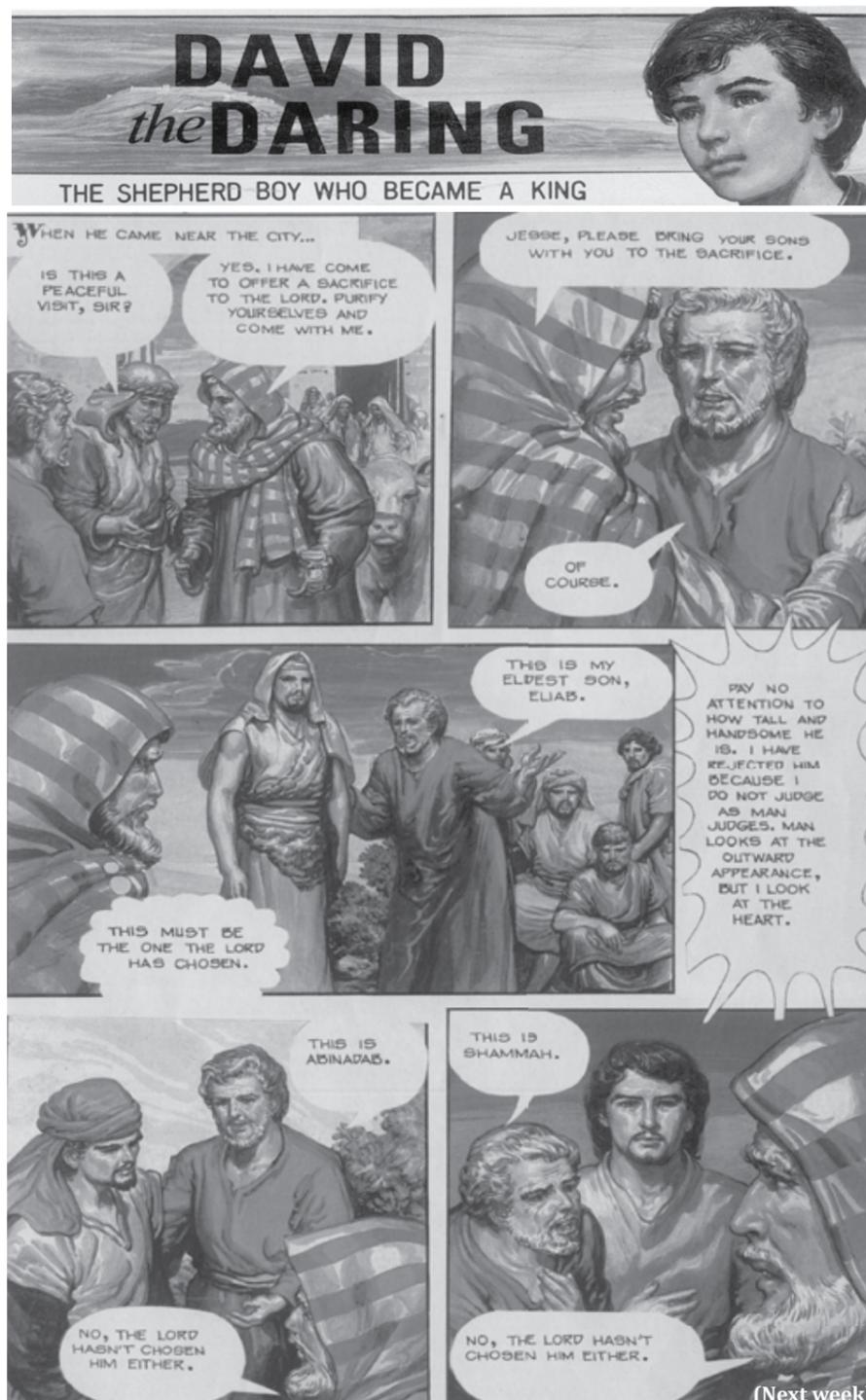
## LENT - A Child's Prayer

Dear Jesus I am so thankful,  
For this special time of the year;  
When I can do my spring cleaning  
Of the untidy spots in my heart, I need clear.  
Penance is an expensive word,  
Often times I hear these days,  
I do not have enough coins to buy it,  
But can spare some little deed,  
If that would somehow equal it.

Perhaps I can share my allowance  
For candy and goodies;  
With some needy child who loves you,  
In lands far off.... I cannot visit.  
A child you love, as much as you love me....  
And then you will look down and smile and hug me,  
Will you?  
As your precious little child,  
With all untidy spots clean and gone....

Amen

Chandrani Warnasuriya



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- Some of them were not hoping for immediate help or answers, but looked forward to a more distant Day of Yahweh, when all human injustice would be straightened out. *Is. 3:14-15; Dan.12:1.*

- Another answer to the problem of suffering consisted in accepting it as a divine education. *Is.49:26, Jer.9:24*

- Still the question remains: Why does the prophet, the messenger of God, also suffer, and even more so than other people? *Jer.8:18-21, 15:15, Ps.44:23*

- The other interpretation is: In solidarity with the people, the Servant of God takes the punishment upon himself. *Is.53:2-12*

- Lastly, the idea of atoning is suffering or in agreement with accepting the Lord's punishment, one will be delivered of one's guilt.

It is remarkable that, with all their experience of terrible suffering, the Israelites were never moved to take a pessimistic view of life. They strongly believed that God was the Lord and enjoyed life. (*Eccl. 1:2-11, 9:7-10, 11:7-10*). One thing is sure, that in the midst of all sorts of reasoning and philosophies, they experienced God's unconditional love, even in the midst of their disobedience.

#### The New Testament

The primitive church adopted all the Old Testament views of suffering, but modified them in the light of Jesus' passion and suffering on the cross. Scripture reveals and teaches Jesus' suffering as a divine necessity *Mt.16:21, Mk.8:31, Lk.9:22*. This was a new and original idea.

- The atoning effect of Jesus' suffering: His willingness as the sinless one to give his life for sinners. *Rom.3:25, Heb.9:15, 1John 2:2*

- In perfect obedience to God's judgment. Jesus accepted suffering with the spontaneity of love.

- St. Paul points out that the believers who accept suffering not only serve Christ's cause but also, be-

ing united with the Risen Lord, continue his suffering for mankind, because the Church is his body. *Rom.8:18, Rom. 8:31-39, Gal.1:4.*

- Therefore, suffering is the inescapable lot of the Christians and particularly of the apostles. *John.16:33, 1Cor.12:26.*

#### An invitation to be conscious of our suffering and misery

A person who is conscious of his misery and suffering can certainly have absolute confidence in God. We cannot have true confidence in God without the consciousness of our misery. The famous saying of the ancient philosophers: Know thyself, means be aware of your worth and greatness, so that you do not debase and degrade yourself by doing things which are unworthy of your noble calling. It means also 'know thyself' that is your unworthiness, imperfection and your wretchedness. St. Paul teaches us: 'discard the old nature and put on the new' (*Col.3:9-10*). We should not remain unclothed; we have to clothe ourselves with God. Therefore, we should never live in shame, nor with a sad and unquiet heart. It is always self-love, which puts us in shame and suffering. We are often disappointed to know that we are not perfect enough, not so much because of our love for God, but only because of the love of our own selves.

Therefore, during this season of Lent, we are invited to reflect on our sinful nature. We should not fall into a state of discouragement. Rather, we ought to lift up our hearts to God in holy confidence; the foundation of this trust is in God himself and not in our own self. Let us remember that our misery is the throne of God's mercy. It follows, then, that the greater miseries, the greater should be our confidence in God; for confidence is the life of the spirit. Let us be careful do not allow to take away confidence from your heart then you doom yourself to death.

Rev. Fr. Raveen Perera

#### PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For all those who follow Christ: that thy may never choose the cheap and passing things, and so let go of the things that last for ever. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For our leaders: that they may never take the easy ways and so abandon the right way. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For those who are finding life difficult through hardship, illness, or death, that the Lord may change their sorrow into joy. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

That we may never forget that sweat is the price of all great things, and that without the cross there can be no crown. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer