



8th May, 2012

Messenger



LAITY SUNDAY

6th May, 2012

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* Message to the Lay Faithful: Sacraments, the indispensable life-giver of the faithful



who are guided and served by the ordained ministers work in close collaboration, the Church is able to carry out the mandate given by Christ to evangelize the world from within like salt and heaven, and being torch bearers in the society.

+ Bishop J. Winston S. Fernando, S.S.S.
Chairman,
Catholic National
Commission for Laity.

The Church in Sri Lanka has set apart the 5th Sunday of Easter as National Laity Sunday to highlight the importance of the Vocation and Mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the World and to call on the laity to be conscious of their nature, dignity spirituality, and responsibilities.

The primary and fundamental vocation of the lay faithful is to seek holiness. "What God wants is for you all to be holy" (1Thess.4:3). The family and the society are the

two main areas of renewal and sanctification.

The Synod of Bishops' convened by Blessed John Paul II in October 1987 (cf. Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Christi Fideles Laici") re-focusing on the teaching of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council cautioned the laity, on the one hand to avoid the temptation to be satisfied only by attending Church Services and Church related activities to the neglect of being actively involved in the spirit of the Gospel in the cultural,

social, professional and political realities; and on the other hand to avoid the temptation to keep their life of faith from having the desired influence and impact on their day to affairs, thus creating a separation of faith from life.

Baptized in Christ, the Word of God and the Sacraments are the indispensable life-giving sources for the lay faithful. Their spirituality need to be strengthened and deepened by prayer and contemplation on a daily basis.

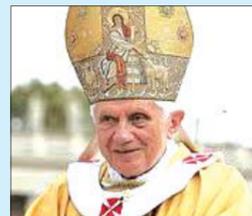
The lay people

possess a certain manner of life described as the "Secular Character" which is proper and particular to them since the world in which they live, work and are involved is both the place and the means by which they seek holiness in life.

It is also the vocation and calling of the laity to renew and sanctify the temporal realities by engaging in them with a Christian Conscience according to the teaching of Christ explained by the Church.

When the laity

Pope's Prayer in May: The family



VATICAN CITY, MAY 1 - Pope Benedict XVI is praying this month for the defense and promotion of the family.

The Apostleship of Prayer announced the intentions chosen by the Pope for May.

His general intention is "that initiatives which defend and uphold the role of the family may be promoted within society."

The Pontiff's mission intention is "that Mary, Queen of the World and Star of Evangelization, may accompany all missionaries in proclaiming her Son Jesus."

'Go ye and preach the Gospel to all'

Mt.28:19



The new animators of the Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya

In keeping with the Year of the Word of God, which began last November, in the Archdiocese of Colombo and promulgated by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, thirty-six students of the Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya, Borella, who had completed their final year in theological studies, have been sent out as animators to teach the Word of God at school and parish level.

According to Rev. Fr. Daya Shelton

Welikadarachchi, Director of the Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya, this is a kind of 'send off' for these students who have finished their final year in theological studies and who are also employed and having their own commitments in life. He said as animators, the students would coordinate their work with him and report to him regularly.

The final training session for these students was conducted at Tewatte by Rev. Frs, Henry Silva, Lalith Expeditus and Daya Shelton Welikadarachchi.

In addition to this, these students also underwent Spiritual and Missiology training at Supuwath Arana, Seeduwa and at the Deva Dharma Nikethanaya. Twenty other students of the Nikethanaya who are still in their second and third years but who had also followed the training courses in Spiritual and Missiology, have been put to assist the 36 animators.

A con-celebrated Eucharistic Celebration was held last Saturday (29), at the Sacred Heart Chapel at Archbishop's House, with His Eminence

Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, officiating as the Chief Celebrant. Rev. Fr. Daya Shelton Welikadarachchi and Rev. Fr. Henry Silva were also associated in the Eucharistic Celebrations.

The Archbishop blessed the new batch of animators and awarded them with badges as a form of identification in their missionary work.

Students of the Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya, priests and nuns were also present.

- Asika Priyadharshana

USE OF THE ENGLISH NEW MISSAL

As copies of the Revised Roman Missal and the Ordo Missae of the Mass are now available, the use of the English New Missal will become obligatory for our country, with effect from Pentecost Sunday, 27th May 2012.

We therefore, request all clergy to familiarise themselves with the New English Missal and also prepare the faithful for its use, so that the use of the New English Missal will be a smooth transition with effect from 27th May 2012 - Feast of Pentecost.

Handwritten signatures of Bishop Vianney Fernando and Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith.

+ Bishop Vianney, Fernando
Chairman - CNC for
Liturgy & Culture

+ Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith
President - CBCSL

Vatican Commission affirms scripture as 'soul of theology'

Catholic theology can be judged by its fidelity to Biblical revelation, the Vatican's International Theological Commission, affirmed in a new document on the role of theologians.

"Theology in its entirety should conform to the scriptures, and the scriptures should sustain and accompany all theological work," the Commission said in its document "Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria."

Fidelity to scripture is essential, the commission stated, "Because theology is concerned with the truth of the Gospel, and it can know that truth only if it investigates the normative witness to it in the canon of sacred Scripture." Such investigation "relates the human words of the Bible to the living Word of God," Jesus Christ himself.

The International Theological Commission assists the Vatican's highest doctrinal office, the Congregation for the Doctrine

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'And he instructed them to take nothing'

MK.6:7

Miran Perera receives Citation Certificate

World Poetry Day was celebrated on 21st March 2012 at John de Silva Theatre, Maradana, organised by the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Arts. Well-known Catholic Poet Miran Perera received a certificate of citation for his poetry which included 'Beautiful Mary' and other poems.

The citation included appreciation and great concern for skill in creation and aptitude showed under poetry creation by the poet. Minister T.B. Ekanayake graced the occasion on World Poetry Day.

Athurugiriya Parish celebrates Avuruddu



The children and youth of the Athurugiriya Parish (Padre Pio Shrine) celebrated Sinhala and Tamil New Year with games and other events held in the Church premises last Sunday. The event was arranged with the fullest cooperation of all the parishioners and with the blessings of the Parish Priest, Rev Fr Albert Pulliyadan OFM.

Pictures show the children and youth enjoying the fun and frolic.

Aiaslie Joseph

Archdiocesan Seminar on Pro-life Formation and Transformation

The Archdiocesan Family Apostolate will hold a "Pro-Life Formation and Transformation" Seminar series at the Paul VI Centre, 6th Floor, Malwatte Road, Fort, every Sunday from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. beginning May 20, 2012 to September 23, 2012.

The Course will be conducted by Rev. Fr. Julian Patrick Perera (PHD) and Prof. Anton Meemana.

The medium of instruction is English. A sum of Rs. 100/- will be levied for each seminar.

Some of the topics taken up at the Seminar will

be: Morality and Spirituality; Self mastery and Sexuality; Christian Self-discovery and the new life; Abortion, Euthanasia and artificial birth control; Spiritual discernment and prayer; Christian approach to food and eating; Social teachings of the Church; Introduction to Biblical Theology and Biblical Spirituality; Beauty and splendour of Catholicism.

Further inquires: Rev. Fr. Julian Patrick Perera
Tel: 011-2236457 - Prof. Anton Meemana - 077640609

"Singithi Avurudhu Kumari"



St. Joseph's Pre-school in Nattandiya, a mixed pre school, held its Sinhala and Tamil New Year celebrations recently in a grand scale.

Children of all communities and religions attending the school, participated in the Avurudhu games and the main feature was the selec-

tion of the "Singithi Avurudhu Kumari".

Picture shows Sr. Monica (Superior) garlanding the "Singithi Avurudhu Kumari." The two little Runners-up are seen on either side.

St. Joseph's Pre-school is run by the Sisters of Providence



and the Daham Pasala is conducted in all three streams, Sinhala, Tamil and English.

The school has a mixed student population of Christians, Buddhist, Hindus and Muslims.

Sriyangan Felicia

Passion Play at St. Isidore's Church Thibbotugoda



St. Isidore's Church, Thibbotugoda, held its Passion play on Good Friday, organised by the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Terry Ranjith and the parish community.

Picture shows the scene of the Crucifixion.

Pic: A. Calistus Anthony

Awarding of certificates for photography and Essay Competition winners



Certificates were awarded to children who took part in the Photography and Essay competition recently organised by the publishers of 'Hidesa,' monthly magazine.

Fifty-over Cricket Tournament



A 50-over Cricket Tournament for the Janaka Bogollagama Memorial Trophy was played recently between St. Anne's College, Kurunegala and Maliyadeva Vidyalaya, at the Welegedara Stadium, Kurunegala.

Picture shows, Shehan Cooray of St. Anne's College, who emerged best batsman, being congratulated by the chief guest.

V.K.T. Reginald

Holy Robe in the City of Trier, Germany

I had the opportunity of visiting Trier at the request of a friend of mine from Germany.

The City of Trier is the oldest in Germany and known as the "Rome of the North." It served as the key city of the Roman northern territories. Trier's original Latin name, Augusta Treverorum reflects its founding in 16 BC by the Roman emperor Augustus.

It is located where four countries France, Luxemburg and Belgium meet in southwest Germany. Luxemburg can be seen from the houses in Trier. It is surrounded with mountains and forests of the Hunstruck and

Eifel, the vineyards by the Moselle, Saar, Ruwer and Sure River Valleys. No where in Germany is the Roman era so vivid as in Trier. The UNESCO has declared the Porta Nigra, Roman Imperial Throne Room, the Church of Our Lady and Trier Cathedral as world Heritage sites.

Trierer Dom (Cathedral), like the city itself is the oldest in whole of Germany. The Holy Robe, Christ's Tunic, is Trier Cathedral's most precious treasure. It is enclosed in a shrine where it cannot be viewed. It is shown publicly rarely and only during Holy Robe Pilgrimages.

The history of

the Holy Robe is woven of legends and traditions. St. Helena, the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, who lived in Trier in the 4th century, is said to have found the garment during her pilgrimage to Jerusalem and then presented it to the Trier Church.

The occasion for the Holy Robe Pilgrimage 2012 is a historical date. In 1512, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, sojourned in Trier for an Imperial Diet and at his insistence the Holy Robe was taken from the high altar of the Cathedral. Since this first Holy Robe Pilgrimage 500 years ago, millions of people world-

wide have made their pilgrimage to the Holy Robe. This was exposed to the public last in 1996. For Christian, it is not the relic, the garment that is the focus. For the faithful, the Holy Robe points to the One who wore it: Jesus Christ, the Light of the World and the Saviour of all mankind. The present Pope Benedict XVI, commenting on it said recently that the Robe brings unity among people and emphasized the need to be in solidarity with others.

I was blessed to be a pilgrim in April 2012 to see the Holy Robe, this was a touching moment in my life. I was able to at-



tend the festive Mass.

The signing and the participation of the congregation impressed and inspired me very much. I am happy to mention that I had the opportunity to speak to Bishop Stefan Ackerman, the Bishop of Trier who was very friendly and humble person. Many people from different parts of the world had converged at this site with their own banners. There was a spe-

cial atmosphere as there were a lot of cultural activities expressing their joy and happiness at this momentous occasion in Trier. The Holy Robe could be seen until the 13th of May 2012.

I praise and thank God for the opportunity given to me.

Stephnie Rodrigo from Trier, Germany

Message from the Director of the National Laity Commission

This year the National Laity Sunday is celebrated on the 5th Sunday of the Easter. Reading and reflecting on the Gospel of the Day, the Pastors can tell the Lay People that the Gospel challenges them to bear fruit specially in the social context of their lives.

As lay Christians they are in every field of society, in every level of socio-political life and in every context of life's journey from birth to death. Bearing fruits means that the values of Christian life, absorbed through a contact with the Lord in the Scriptures/Word of God, grow and change the whole atmosphere of society in a positive way. But there is another aspect in the reflection on the Scripture on the Vine and the Branches which is the Gospel of the Day. The Branches can only bear fruit if they remain united

to the Vine and are nourished and strengthened by the very life of the Vine itself. In other words the life of the Laity has to be constantly kept in contact with Jesus, the true Vine.

Therefore as the shepherd leads the flock to green pastures, in the parable of the preceding Sunday, so too the labourers in the vineyard are called upon to ensure that branches are always in touch with and nourished by, the life giving sap of the Vine.

When you look at it this way one can see the inter-related roles of the Lay Christians active in the world, and the Pastors who are animating the life journey of Lay Christians. For the Branch to bear fruit the Pastors must ensure the ongoing contact of the branch to the main Vine, Jesus himself. The service of the Pastor should then

ensure that the life of the lay person is nourished by the Word of God.

The world today is encountering rapid changes and challenges to the traditional value systems and the Christian values are all in a state of chaos. In our country too the end of the war has not brought the expected peace and security. Daily the economic battle for survival imposes de-humanising burdens and tensions on the daily lives of the people. This context itself makes a very challenging field for lay Catholic activity.

The Lord nourishes His people but the people must respond to this by animating their milieu by nourishing the faith and life of their fellow humans. Thus only a sharing of responsibility can help to produce fruit in abundance in the mission of the Church.

*Rev. Fr. Leo Perera
National Director.*



Church in the World

New generation, old rite: The enduring appeal of Catholic tradition

ROME (CNS) - Of all the Catholic Church's modernizing reforms that followed the Second Vatican Council, none was more evident to ordinary members of the faithful than changes to the liturgy. Latin gave way to local languages, women ceased to wear veils in church, and Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony and 19th-century hymns were replaced by devotional music in popular contemporary styles.

Most Catholics embraced these changes or at least accepted them without dissent. But a minority persisted in their devotion to the traditional Tridentine Mass, and eventually the Church accommodated them.

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI lifted practically all restrictions on celebration of what is now known as the extraordinary form of the Roman rite.

In the near future, the Vatican is expected to announce results of reconciliation talks with the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X, which broke from Rome almost 25 years ago in protest against several elements of the legacy of Vatican II, including the liturgical reform.

According to Fr. Joseph Kramer, pastor of Rome's Church of the Holy Trinity of the Pilgrims, the enduring appeal of traditional worship is in large part a matter of aesthetics. Classical liturgical music has an "uplifting, energizing effect, it really moves people to prayer," he says. "Both Gregorian chant and polyphony highlight the texts of the liturgy. When you're listening to them, you meditate on the words and internalize their meaning."

'Pacem in Terris' is model for preaching, teaching

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - As the Catholic Church increases its new evangelization efforts and works for justice and peace in the world, it would be wise to imitate the positive, prophetic approach taken by Blessed John XXIII in his encyclical "Pacem in Terris," a French archbishop said.

Archbishop Roland Minnerath of Dijon was addressing the opening session on April 27, of a meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, which was holding the second of three planned meetings preparing to mark the 50th anniversary next year of "Pacem in Terris," the encyclical "on establishing peace in truth, justice, charity and liberty."

First Holy Eucharist Service of New Priests



Newly ordained priest, Rev. Fr. Dinesh Prashan Appuhamy, parishioner of Kandawela, Katana offered this first Holy Mass at Kandawela Our Lady of Sorrow's Church. Here Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle, Episcopal Vicar for Colombo North, is seen accompanying the new priest. A large gathering of priests, nuns and faithful were present.

Photo by: Cecil Danicius



Newly ordained priest, Rev. Fr. Samindu Pathum Janitha, presided at his First Eucharistic Service at St. Anthony's Church, Kepungoda.

Picture shows, the new priest being welcomed to the Church with his family.

Benjamin Kirihetty

Vatican Commission...

Contd. from Pg. 1

of the Faith, in its examination of questions about Church teaching.

According to the commission, true Catholic theology "arises from an attentive listening to the Word of God"; "situates itself consciously and faithfully in the communion of

the Church"; and is "orientated to the service of God in the world" through the communication of revealed truth.

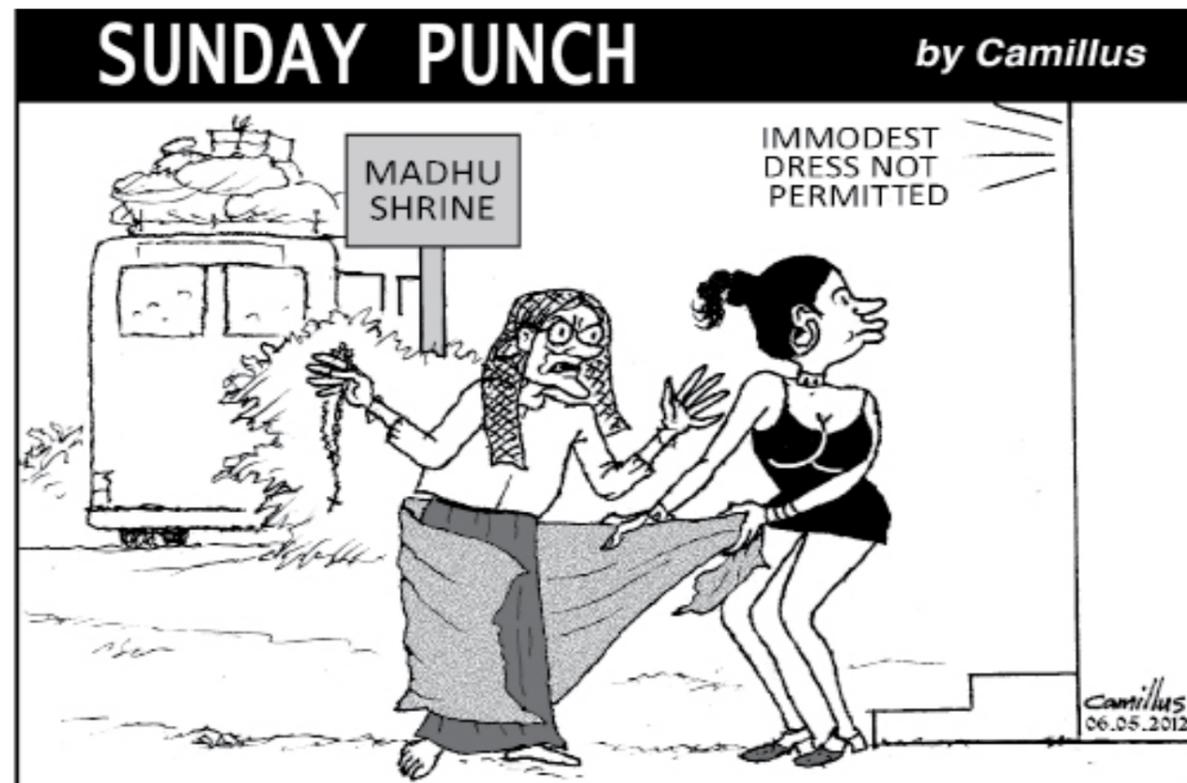
Catholic theology can also be judged by its faithfulness to the Church's constant tradition - which includes its forms of prayer

and worship, its formulation of creeds, and the moral rule of life which it sets out for its members.

The harmony of faith and reason, a key theme of both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, is strongly affirmed in the new document's final chapter - which stresses the value of reason, in con-

trast with postmodern philosophies that devalue it.

"Reason is stirred to explore paths which of itself it would not even have suspected it could take. This encounter with the Word of God leaves reason enriched, because it discovers new and unsuspected horizons."



Sixth death anniversary of Fr. Joe Wickremasinghe



The sixth death anniversary of Rev. Fr. Joe Wickramasinghe, former Rector St. Peter's College, Colombo 4, falls on May 8, 2006.

Let us remember him in our prayers.

SL Catholics in Italy make annual trip to Lourdes



The Sri Lanka Catholic community in Italy went on their annual pilgrimage to Lourdes during the Lenten season, under the guidance of Msgr. Neville Joe Perera, National Coordinator for Sri Lanka Clergy and Migrants in Italy and chaplain to the Holy Father.

Pic: Tony Nishantha Fernando

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
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EDITORIAL

6 May 2012

Amity among religions is needed for nation building

Do the teachings of the Buddha in any way envisage a situation which requires the removal of a place of worship of another religion from a 'sacred area' whose boundaries are subsequently determined by the State? This is the unfortunate situation that has arisen in Dambulla and all religious minorities are concerned about the implications of the government's decision to remove elsewhere the Dambulla mosque to presumably outside the sacred area. It would not have become an issue if the mosque was not allowed to be constructed in the first place. But to remove an existing place of religious worship, which its adherents claim to have existed for over fifty years is a serious matter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was condemned and crucified by the Religious dignitaries of the Jewish Religious Establishment. Established religious dignitaries everywhere want to maintain a monopoly of beliefs and do not take kindly to other religions entering what they consider is their turf. But the large majority of our people do not support such intolerance as these religions have existed in the country for a long time. Yet it is easy for extremist demagogues to stir up people to attack places of religious worship of those adherents who do not belong to their religion.

The philosopher Hobbes who lived during the Civil War in England in the 17th century stressed the necessity for a State to avoid the evil of discord and civil war. Hobbes postulated what life would be like without government, a condition which he called the state of nature. In that state, each person would have a right and license to everything in the world. This, Hobbes argued, would lead to a "war of all against all." It is therefore the duty of the Government to implement the Rule of Law and see that no person whether in robes or in plain clothes, is above the law. But in Dambulla, the law enforcement officers stood by and made no attempt to stop the incursion into the mosque by the rabble. All minorities would be perturbed by the failure of the law enforcement authorities to prevent the violation of the law before their very eyes.

We also wish to suggest to the Government to allow the Police to function without interference by politicians even if they are Ministers or Prime Ministers, for a selective enforcement of the law is not only unjust but a matter that causes deep concern to others. The Government should restore the Independent Police Commission if the Police is to win back public confidence. All government authority flows from the consent of the people and when people lose confidence in the law and its enforcement they will take the law into their own hands. Alternatively they will appeal to outside authorities such as the United Nations. It is easy to condemn such action but what other course of action is available for them if the State officials take the side of the majority race and religion, whether right or wrong.

We also urge the Government to introduce a law which prohibits hate speech and rabble rousing rhetoric. It is of course an offence in common law to incite another person to commit a criminal offence even though that other offence has not been committed or even attempted. But the Police rarely use this common law and hence it is necessary to bring a law which will criminalize the incitement to religious hatred. This can be achieved by amending the Public Security Act so as to extend the offence of incitement to include incitement to racial and religious hatred. Incitement to racial hatred in public was made a criminal offence under the Race Relations Act 1965 of UK. The legislation extends beyond the realm of that which ordinarily would be called public in that it is an offence, to use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour or display written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting and which is intended to or is likely to stir up racial hatred in private premises as much as in public. India has made the causing of disaffection among communities during elections a criminal offense. This law has curbed some of the abusive caste based utterances by Indian politicians during election campaigns.

We also need to establish civil society organizations which cut across ethnic and religious boundaries. Traders organizations should not be for Sinhalese traders or Muslim traders or Tamil traders but for all traders. Sports Clubs and other social organizations should not be exclusive to a particular community; last week the National Peace Council sponsored an Inter-Religious Seminar in Galle. We need many more such efforts to build bridges between the three main communities inhabiting the island.

In his prayer of unity, Jesus prayed, "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word...." *John 17:20*

Message from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

On the Feast of Vesakh/Hanamatsuri



"Christians and Buddhists: Sharing Responsibility for Educating the Young Generation on Justice and Peace through Interreligious Dialogue" is the theme of the Message of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue for the Feast of Vesakh/Hanamatsuri 2012 A.D. 2555 B.E. The following is the English text of the Council's message.

Dear Buddhist Friends,

On behalf of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, I am happy to offer again, this year, heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of *Vesakh/Hanamatsuri*. It is my wish that this annual feast may bring joy and serenity to the hearts of all of you throughout the world.

Today, more and more in classrooms all over the world, students belonging to various religions and beliefs sit side-by-side, learning with one another and from one another. This diversity gives rise to challenges and sparks deeper reflection on the need to educate young people to respect and understand the religious beliefs and practices of others, to grow in knowledge of their own, to advance together as responsible human beings and to be ready to join hands with those of other religions to resolve conflicts and to promote friendship, justice, peace and authentic human development.

With His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, we acknowledge that true education can support an openness to the transcendent as well as to those around us. Where education is a reality there is an opportunity for dialogue, for inter-relatedness and for receptive listening to the other. In such an atmosphere, young people sense that they are appreciated for what they are and for what they are able to contribute; they learn how to grow in appreciation of

their brothers and sisters whose beliefs and practices are different from their own. When that happens there will be joy in being persons of solidarity and compassion called to build a just and fraternal society giving thus hope for the future (*cf. Message of World of Peace, 1st January 2012*).

As Buddhists you pass on to young people the wisdom regarding the need to refrain from harming others and to live lives of generosity and compassion, a practice to be esteemed and recognized as a precious gift to society. This is one concrete way in which religion contributes to educating the young generation, sharing the responsibility and cooperating with others.

As a matter of fact, young people are an asset for all societies. By their genuineness, they encourage us to find an answer to the most fundamental questions about life and death, justice and peace, the meaning of suffering, and the reasons for hope. Thus they help us to progress in our pilgrimage toward Truth. By their dynamism, as builders of the future, they put pressure on us to destroy all the walls which unfortunately still separate us. By their questioning they nurture the dialogue between religions and cultures.

Dear friends, we join our hearts to yours and pray that together we will be able to guide the young people by our example and teaching to become instruments of justice and peace. Let us share the common responsibility we have towards the present and future generations, nurturing them to be peaceful and to be peace makers.

Happy Vesakh/Hanamatsuri !

*(Courtesy: L'Osservatore Romano
 Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran- President)*

Our Daily Life

Our daily life is a mix of the good and the bad,
 A bit of the glad and a bit of the sad,
 A pinch of contentment and a time of unrest.
 A dash of the worst and a lot of the best,
 A time of failure and a little bit of luck,
 A little bit of disaster and plenty of pluck.
 And who would live long must be willing to know,
 That God is our Heavenly Father, where ever we go.

Anton Selemberam

Knowing Mary Through the Bible

The Bible is unique. It is the only book that truly can be claimed to have both human and a divine author, the Holy Spirit. The whole of the scriptures can be viewed as the story of God's preparation for and completion of His greatest work. Thus, we need to go through the moments of creation, the fall of our first parents (Adam & Eve), and the promise of a redeemer.

Where precisely does God swear the covenant oath? He does so in the very act of creating the Heavens and the earth. The creation itself becomes a cosmic temple with Adam as it's high priest and Eve as his helpmate and queen. The seventh day after creation was the sign of the covenant that God made with man and woman, Adam and Eve and their offsprings, on condition that the couple remain faithful to His expressed command: "Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death."

Adam and Eve failed to keep this single command, and broke their covenantship with God. But, God did not abandon man to his fallen nature. He promised to send a redeemer when he said to the serpent: "I shall put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

This set the stage for the Annunciation. At the Annunciation the Angel Gabriel greets Mary with the words, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou has found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus." The name Jesus, means 'saviour'. The Angel Gabriel's greeting, 'full of grace' confirms Mary's purity. She was free from sin from the first moment of her life to the end of her earthly life. Mary's redemption from sin was an act of preservation, while for others it is an act of deliverance. Through study and reflection of the scriptures, we find that Mary is God's salvation plan from the beginning of time.

At first, we note that Eve and Mary were virgins. "As the human race fell into bondage to death by means of a virgin, so it is rescued by a virgin." (St. Irenaeus). Origen wrote: "Whenever the divine plan involves human affairs, God takes on human intelligence, manners, and human language." In this, way, God always prepares people before He reveals his plans.

In His providential plan, only Jesus as God-man, could choose his own mother; and He found it fitting to preserve his mother from sin completely all the days of her life. Her Immaculate conception was by a singular grace of God won for her by Jesus, her Saviour. Cardinal Henry Newman remarked: "If Eve was raised above human nature by that indwelling moral gift which we call 'grace', is it rash to say that Mary had even greater grace; and if Eve had this supernatural inward gift given her from the first moment of her personal existence, is it possible to deny that Mary too had this gift from the very moment of her personal existence? Let's listen to St. Augustine: "It would be an offence against Jesus to say that his mother was a sinner."

Let us look back on the Fall

of man in Genesis. Eve, conceived the word of the serpent, while in the New Testament Mary conceived the Word of God. Eve believed the devil, and Mary believed the angel at the Annunciation. The Medieval poets point out to us that the name 'Eva', was reversed by the Angel Gabriel's greeting, 'Ave'. God's providence Mary's obedience became means of undoing Eve's disobedience and it's devastating effect.

In Caana, Jesus was at the wedding feast with his disciples, and Mary, his mother was there too. It was at this feast that the wine had run out, at which point Mary tells Jesus, "they have no wine." (John:2:3), and Jesus responds, "O, woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not come." We need to understand this phrase. It was not that Our Blessed Lord intended to reproach his mother. We note that in the end Jesus does respond to Mary's observation and performs his first miracle. Jesus, turns water into wine. From that moment onwards, Jesus begins his public ministry having revealed His divinity, and the apostles begin to believe in Him. It was 'woman', the first Eve, who led the old Adam to his first evil action. In the New Testament, it is 'woman', Mary, as the new Eve who led the New Adam, Jesus, to his first glorious work. Mary then is no longer just the mother of Jesus, she also becomes our mother - the mother of the living. And that is what the word 'woman' means.

Jesus, once again addresses Mary as, 'woman', but in a very different circumstance. As he hangs dying on the cross, Jesus addresses his mother 'woman' when he gives her as mother to his beloved disciple John. (Jn: 19:26 and to John he said, "Son, behold thy mother; and John stood for us all as the first born in a redeemed humanity, and Mary remains to all who have new life in Baptism. Divine Motherhood is the place where God wants Christians to meet Jesus. Jesus then is addressing Mary as Eve, to the New Adam dying on the cross for the old Adam.

Biblical typology leads us to see Mary as the Ark of the Covenant - the holiest object in ancient Israel (Rev:12). The old Ark of the covenant was made of acacia wood. It was box shaped, covered with gold ornament, and overshadowed by carved Cherubim. Atop of the Ark was the mercy seat which was always unoccupied. The glory cloud shrouded the Ark of the Covenant and signified God's presence. This Ark contained the relic of the manna - the food God gave to His people during their 40 year journey through the desert which was their march into freedom from slavery in Egypt. The Ark also contained the tablets of stone on which the finger of God wrote the Ten Commandments. The Ark also preserved the rod of long ago ancestral priest, Aaron.

Mary as the New Ark of the Covenant contained the word of God. Her body also contained the Divine Person, Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest.

Her body also contained the very Bread of Life. Thus what made the old ark holy, made Mary even holier.

St. Luke's Gospel tells us the story of Mary's visitation to her cousin Elizabeth that echoes the account in the sacred book of Samuel, of David's travel as he brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. The story begins as "David arose and went" (2 Samuel 6:2). Luke's account of the visitation

begins with the words "Mary arose and went (Lk:1:39). In their journeys, then both Mary and David proceeded to the Hill Country of Judah. David acknowledges his unworthiness with the words: "How can the Ark of the Lord come to me." Similar words we find echoed as Mary approaches Elizabeth: "Why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me."

We read further that David danced for joy in the presence of the Ark. (2 Sam:6:14-16); we find similar expression used to describe the leaping of the child within Elizabeth's womb as Mary approached. The old ark remained in the house of Obed-Edam for three months, the same amount of time Mary (the New Ark) spent with Elizabeth.

We also see Mary, in the queen mother of Israel's Monarchy. In the ancient Near East, most nations practiced polygamy. So, a given king had several wives. King Solomon is said to have had 700 wives and 300 concubines. This posed problems. First, whom should people honour as queen? Secondly, whose son should receive the right of succession to the throne? These twin problems were resolved by a singular custom. The woman ordinarily honoured as queen was not the wife of the king, but the mother of the king. Thus, King Solomon reigned with his mother Bathsheba. Israel's queen mother had real authority. Consider the following scene: "So, Bathsheba, went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the King rose to meet her, and bowed down to her, and then sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother, and she sat on his right (1 Kings: 2:9). When Adonijah approaches Bathsheba to beg her intercession, he says: "Pray, ask king Solomon, he will not refuse you." King Solomon had a track record of granting his mother's wishes, but his power and authority are in no way threatened by her.

In the beginning, Christ as God-Man had honoured His mother by pre-



serving her from sin from the first moment of her personal life; but he did not stop there. At the end of Mary's earthly life, she also received bodily resurrection and heavenly glory (Rev: 12:1). St. John of Damascus explains it this way: "How could corruption dare touch the body that had contained divine life?." Taken up into heaven, Mary now reigns with her Son, as Queen Mother, and as queen mother of the living who advocates on our behalf.

This brings us to the very heart of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, solemnly defined by Pius IXth in December 1874; and the dogma of the Virgin Mary's Assumption into Heaven was defined by Pope Pius XIIth. Without these dogmas and belief, Mary remains unreal, and insignificant in her individuality. And when Mary becomes unreal, so does the Incarnation of God which depended on Mary's great "Fiat." It brought a new intimacy to mankind's relationship with its Creator. Mary fills the pages of the Scripture from the beginning of the first book of Genesis through the entire Book of the Bible to the Apocalypse. A full scale study and reflection on the Book of Revelation will result in an exciting discovery to find who Mary really is, and gives us the right spiritual attitude in which to experience the love, the respect, and honour that is hers. This is not to be confused with worship. For worship, that belongs to God alone.

Bryan Landsberger

Happiness

Happiness is simply a state of mind,

All who seek it, do they find?

Place others before you help them in their need,

Pray! what you give others will return to you indeed!

In giving others your talents and time, you'll see

Neighbours, relatives, friend etc. become friendly.

Everytime you do this *Happiness* you gain,

Sweet words of love never go in vain.

So smile, love and show kindness and you will find *Happiness*.

Emilda S. Douglas

Where do we go in search of happiness?

A man sat at a metro station in Washington DC and started to play the violin. It was a cold January morning. He played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that thousands of people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

Three minutes went by and a middle-aged man noticed there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds and then hurried up to meet his schedule.

A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip. A woman threw the money in the till and went her way. A few

minutes later, someone leaned against the wall to listen to him, but the man looked at his watch and started to walk again. Clearly he was late for work.

The one who paid the most attention was a three-year-old boy. His mother tagged him along, hurried but the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced them to move on.

In the 45 minutes the musician played, only 6 people stopped and stayed for a while. About

20 gave him money but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected \$32. When he finished playing and silence took over, no one noticed it. No one applauded, nor was

before his playing in the subway, Joshua Bell sold out at a theatre in Boston and the seats averaged \$ 100.00. This is a real story. Joshua, playing incognito in the metro station, was organized by the Wash-

ington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and priorities of people.

The outlines were; in a common-place environment at an inappropriate hour; do we perceive beauty? Do we stop to appreciate it? Do we recognize the talent in

an unexpected context?

One of the possible conclusions from this experience could be: If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world playing some of the best music ever written, how many other things are we missing in life?

We expect beauty and happiness in big chunks. We look for happiness by throwing wild, noisy parties. We organize long, tiring trips to reap happiness. However, happiness and beauty falls in droplets. It doesn't ever rain down like a down-pour. Mother nature offers us beauty and happiness in piece-meal form in 'secret hideouts.' There is beauty and happiness in a

Ananda Perera

bird's song, in a flower in bloom, in a mist-covered garden. Isn't there happiness in a child's smile, in a good book which awakens your thought processes, in an enlightening conversation, in an encouraging remark that spurs you to lively action and makes your day wonderfully productive?

Happiness lies in unexpected corners. It is not an intruding visitor but an amiable guest whom we should discover to enjoy the bounties it offers. Hence don't expect it to fall onto your lap. Search for it as if it were buried treasure ...



there any recognition.

No one knew that the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world.

He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written with a violin worth 3.5 million dollars. Two days

At 17, he ought to be on the dance floor with his friends; yet Christofelse remains on the floor of his little house in Wellawatte. At 7 a.m. he ought to be getting up from the chair after a hurried family breakfast; but Christofelse remains sitting on the floor while his parents stand by the table and put food into their mouths; their eyes on their, most precious possession - their only child.

"We were so happy when he was born. March 31, 1992 was the happiest day of our lives. He was such a beautiful child and everything about him was normal," they recalled.

Then Christy and Sagayam noticed that their child did not do what other children of two years were doing. "We noticed his movements, and growth for, about two years - he was not walking or getting up. He was always lying in bed or on the floor. He, was keeping his legs crossed. We were worried and wondering why he was like this. We thought he is a late developer. At this stage we took him to the doctor and after an examination he said the child was suffering from cerebral palsy. It was shocking news for us and shattered all the dreams we had for our only son," said Sagayam.

From then onwards it was a case of going to one doctor after another and all kinds of medication. This trend had continued till Christofelse was 12 years and soon his parents found that nothing was helping their child:

For 10 years the only visits that the Sagayams made were to hospitals and doctors. There were no birthday parties, no films, no visits to weddings and functions of relatives. Their whole world centered around their son.

It did not take long for the Sagayams to discover that their son was suffering from autism and hyper activeness and not cerebral palsy.

Soon, Christy who was employed had to give

Parents In Pain



up her job and care for her son full time. Sagayam, educated, yet employed on a contract basis found that he had to not only support his family but also look after the heavy costs incurred on medication, transport and diapers for the 17-year-old.

"He gets excited when he sees crowds. He begins to get hyperactive and beat himself. Thus public transport was not a possible choice. We have to always hire a vehicle to take him to see the doctor," said Christy. "We have even tried newspaper advertisements asking for a sponsor - to take care of our child's transport and medication, We are also praying that someone will give us a home with a large space even on a temporary basis just so that we can bring a little happiness into the life at our teenaged son," said Sagayam in tears.

Christofelse did not go to places where other children his age go to. Instead, he remains almost imprisoned by the little house that his parents live in.

"We wish we had a house with a garden just so that our son can run around and play. We want to get him a swing and a slide and some play equipment but that is just not possible in this small house," they said. Truly their house was just enough for a newly married couple. It seemed like a prison for a hyperactive 17-year-old. In a small space divided by an iron railing sat Christofelse.

His whole world revolved around his parents and however unhappy and confined he may be in this small house, it was his parents that mattered to this autistic child.

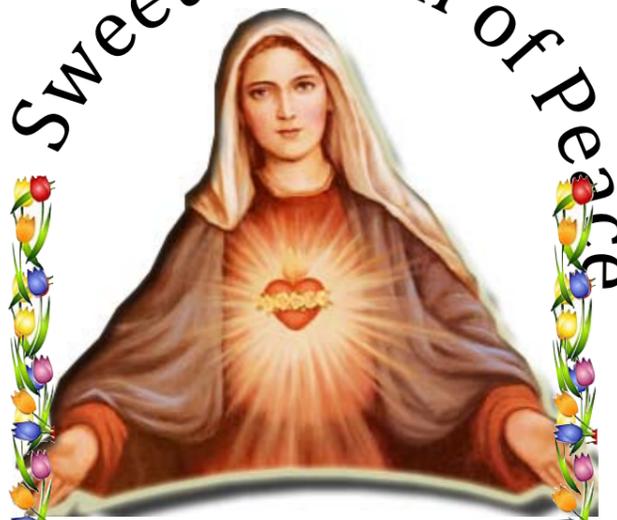
The Sagayams are weighed down by an unbearable financial burden. Yet they are too respectable to beg; too frightened to ask. But their needs are crying; their hearts are breaking for they are unable to give their only ailing child the best that they want to give.

It is the season of giving and the Sagayams attend prayer meetings and ask that help comes their way. The wait is long - the wait is painful. 'Give, and ye shall receive,' says the Bible - and young Christofelse sits on the cement floor and waits for someone to bring some light to his life - for some happiness that his parents are unable to give him - due to financial shortages.

As the Sagayams struggle on with life, they refuse to give up on Christofelse. To them he is not a burden - he is their 17-year-old whom they have to carry, feed and keep an eye on 24 hours of the day. It is definitely like in the good old days when he was a baby.

The Sagayams portray the dedication of parents all over the world. The devotion and love that they give their children and the sacrifices they make may appear strange to everyone else - other than to other parents.

Sweet Queen of Peace



Within the clasp of these fifty three beads
Guided by the Virgin Mother so sweet
I take the world to the Lord's feet.
With **Decade one**, his blessings I invoke
on bishops, priests, nuns, and Pope.
On statesmen, leaders, scientists who make
decisions great, for their nation's sake.
Decade two, is for parents and children.
I implore God's mercy for their protection
to him I take my kith and kin
I ask for grace to combat sin.
With **Decade three**, its thanks and praise
for daily' bread and prosperous days.
for health and strength to work and play
for blessings many we get all day.
With **Decade four**, to him I bring
those who are well and those ailing,
those in sorrow, those in mirth,
those who are lonely, or hard at work,
those who live 'in fear and doubt,
the dumb, the cripple in crowds, those
who, blaspheme and love him not,
the blind and the poor, who accept their lot.
For **Decade five**, for-those beyond the
shores (woes)
whom death has freed from earthly woes,
for those who died without a warning
for those who left after years of ailing.
All those souls to him I offer
my rosary over what pearls what power.
Hail Holy Queen all thanks to you
for showing the way
to use these pearls when we pray.

Ralph Alles

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



The teacher at Maris Stella College asked Mario "What is a hospital?" Another boy answered almost immediately "A hospital is a place where people who are rundown generally wind up."

Rev. Fr. Fracxid Anthony Fernando OMI

(Courtesy: Sunday Leader)

Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

Teaching our children traditions and customs

the girls dressed up in traditional attire; the Sinhalese in colourful reddai hettai (cloth and jacket) with flowers adorning their hair and bangles to match and the Tamils in vibrant havani (half saree) with jasmine strings decorating their hair, bangles and anklets on their feet, assembled in the school quadrangle for the first part of the day's celebration. The school too was decorated with traditional motifs and to heighten the festive spirit a special swing was installed much to the delight of the girls.

Present on the occasion were Rev. Fr. Ranjith - Madurawela, General Manager Catholic Private Schools Colombo, Rev. Sr. Henrietta - Superior of the Convent, Rev. Sr. Chandani Jayasooriya - Principal, the Vice Principals - Rev. Sr. Priyanthi Jayatunga and Ms. Shiranee Doss, teachers, representatives from the school's extended family: The Welfare Association, Parent Teacher Association, Past Pupils' Association and the Past Teachers' Association.

The comperes for the day representing the Sinhala and the Tamil Unions of the school declared the celebration open with a short and meaningful prayer service. The auspicious pot of milk was boiled and overflowed to a loud cheer of all those present and the bursting of crackers. The traditional oil lamp was lit and the festive table of sweetmeats was declared open. It was heart warming and beautiful, when parents and daughter representatives from the two cultures came together to partake of the traditional first meal. The anointing with the oil on the head was initiated by Rev. Fr. Madurawala. *Ganu-thenu* followed. The traditional customs completed, several Sinhala and Tamil dance and song items were performed.

The girls then dispersed to their classrooms to greet their teachers and to take part in their own traditional

te-meses (traditional sweetmeat tables). The classrooms were colourfully decorated in keeping with Sinhala and Tamil traditions.

The second part of the celebration was dedicated to new year games and the girls once again assembled in the quadrangle. The many games and competitions organized included raban playing, kana mutti, coconut scraping, weaving coconut leaves, the best laugh, the best cry, lime and spoon race, placing the eye to the elephant etc. But the highlight of the day was the tug-o-war between the teachers and the prefects with the prefects emerging winners.

Competitions were also organized for the service staff, administrative staff, academic staff and the representatives of the school's extended family. The final item of the day was the much awaited Avurudu Kumari competition with a twist, with emphasis on the best costume done up with natural throw-away items. This was indeed very creative with the winner in the senior category modeling an osariya made up of coconut and jak leaves with motifs done in pink bougainvillea and tiny yellow flowers. The traditional blouse was made with newspaper while a necklace of jak seeds adorned the neck of the winner. The winner was crowned with a crown made of leaves.

The celebration was initiated by the PTA and organized by the Sinhala and the Tamil Unions' of the schools together with and the Prefects.

It is often alleged that Catholics have alienated themselves from the local culture of the country. To dispel such notion and also to teach the children to appreciate the local culture, traditions and games, Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya took a day off from books to celebrate the National New Year. On that very special Friday the day dawned with blue skies contrary to world weather forecasts.

7.30 a.m. saw all



compering the event



anointing the head with oil



greeting elders



taking part in the traditional first meal



Tamil traditions



Tamil dance



Sinhala dance



weaving coconut leaves



service staff race



kana mutti



scraping coconut



Sinhalese traditions



traditional swing



tug-o-war Teachers Vs. Prefects



Alut Avurudu Kumari 2012

Being a Godparent

I've been asked to become a godparent. What does this involve? What is expected of me?

Why Godparents?

The baptism of a child or an adult is much more than a joyful family celebration. It is the moment when the person becomes a member of God's family, the moment of birth into the Church. Therefore, baptism concerns the whole people of God, the Church, not just the child's parents, family and friends. In a particular way, the Godparents represent the wider spiritual family into which the child is received at baptism. What is said here regarding infant baptism, would apply equally to an adult who is being baptised.



What happens at baptism?

Parents will bring their child for baptism to ask the Church for the gift of faith for the child. They are setting their child off on the journey to receive and grow up in the Christian faith, and to become part of the Catholic Church. Baptism is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Why are Godparents important?



It is a great privilege to be a Godparent. It is also a great responsibility. As a Godparent you are to be a major influence on the upbringing of the child in

the Catholic Faith. Your prayers, your example, your encouragement are vitally important if the seed planted at baptism is to grow and flourish.

The origin of the Godparents' role in baptism dates back to the earliest times. Their presence at the ceremony reminds us that faith is never a purely personal journey: It involves being part of God's people, the Church.

How can I understand the ceremony?

There are different signs and symbols used in baptism, which help you to understand fully what is happening. These are oil, water, candlelight, and a white garment. Throughout the simple ceremony, there is a dialogue between the Church, represented in her minister, and the parents, and Godparents.

• **Oil:** Is used in many ancient cultures, a sign of health and well-being. In the Bible it also denotes someone specially chosen by God: Priests, prophets and kings were all anointed. The Oil of Catechumens is used to anoint the child's breast, a mark of God's protection.

The Oil of Chrism is specially blessed by the bishop. It is poured onto the child's head after baptism as a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit who will help the child in their Christian life.



• **Water:** A sign of new life. When water is poured over the child, it is a sign that the child shares in the death, resurrection and new life of Jesus.

• **Candlelight:** Jesus is the light of the world and the baptismal candle is a sign that the light of Jesus has entered the baby's life.

• **White garment:** This can be a white shawl also, and is put on the child as a sign that the child has 'put on' Jesus and shares in his new life.

What do Godparents do at the baptism?

• At the baptism the Godparents, together with the child's parents, profess the Church's faith in which the child is baptised.

• With the parents, they the Godparents present the child for baptism and attest that they are ready to help the parents in their duty as Christian mothers

and fathers.

• Then they are invited to follow the parents in tracing the Christian sign, the cross, on the child's forehead with their thumb.

• Just before the child is baptised, the Godparents with the parents are asked to renew the vows of their own baptism saying, "I do" to three questions about turning from sin and then three questions about with in the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

• A further question is put to parents and Godparents. "Is it your will that (Name) should be baptised in the faith of the Church which we have all professed with you"? They answer, "It is" and the child is baptised.

What is expected of Godparents?

As Godparents you will naturally want to keep in touch with your Godchild and the child's parents. Godparents will want to encourage and support the parents as they bring their child up within the community of the Church. You will pray regularly for your Godchild and the family.

At the anniversary of baptism each year, you might think of sending a card or even a present. This will remind the parents and the child of the great gift their child has received in baptism and then, when the child is a little older, he will want to know why this day is special. As the time for First Holy Communion approaches, and later Confirmation, (- these are two other important sacraments of 'Christian initiation' -) the Godparents will be involved in supporting the child and the family. In every way as Godparent, you will strive to support, encourage and assist your Godchild along the pilgrim path of faith.

Who can be a Godparent?

A Godparent should be an active member of the Catholic Church, who has received baptism and confirmation and who goes to Mass and receives Holy Communion regularly. People often chose other family members or long-standing friends to be Godparents. It needs to be a person who is trustworthy, mature (at least 16-years-old) and responsible. Being a Godparent is a very important spiritual responsibility and is not to be thought of as a favour handed to a friend or relative or even worse, a new acquaintance of one of the parents.

How many Godparents does a child need?

A child can have either a Godmother or Godfather or both. At the request of the parents, a baptised and believing Christian not belonging to the Catholic Church may act as a Christian witness along with a Catholic Godparent.

The Sacrament of Baptism

1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in Spirit (*vitae spiritualis inania*), and the door which gives access to the other sacraments.

Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."

What is this Sacrament called?

1214 This sacrament is called Baptism, after the central rite by which it is carried out: To baptize (*Greek baptizein*) means to "plunge" or "immerse"; the "plunge" into the water symbol-

izes the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as "a new creature."

1215 This sacrament is also called "*the washing of regeneration and renewal the Holy Spirit*," for it signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and to Spirit without which no one "can enter the kingdom of God."

1216 "This bath is called *enlightenment*, because those who receive this [catechetical] instructions are enlightened in their understanding Having received in Baptism the Word, "the true light that enlightens every man," the person baptized, has been "enlightened," he becomes a "son of light,"

indeed, he becomes "light" him self.

Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift We call it gift, grace, anointing, enlightenment, garment of immortality, bath of rebirth, seal and most precious gift. It is called *gift* because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own; *grace* since it is given even to the guilty; Baptism because sin is buried in the water; *anointing* for it is priestly and royal as are those who are anointed; *enlightenment* because it radiates light; *clothing* since it veils our shame; *bath* because it washes; and *seal* as it is our guard and the sign of God's Lordship.

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*)



A new Pastoral Agenda for Fishermen

(Learning also from the past)

There is an urgent need to nourish the Catholic faith and develop the fishing industry of the Catholic fishermen. This need is being expressed also by many fishermen and their families, who feel that there are forces at work trying to disrupt and cause damage to the existing Catholic spirit and unity among them.

The Catholic fishing population along the coastal belt of Sri Lanka has been bonded together by their occupation, their Catholic faith and their caste-system. While the caste system in many villages seem to dwindle away due to social (education) and physical (migration) mobility, fishing as a worthwhile industry keeps them self-employed and free, without being a burden to the State and to the Catholic Church, while Catholic faith preserves their identity and solidarity.

People, who are not conversant with the struggles and genuine aspirations of the Catholic fishing communities, need to become at least participant observers of their lives and activities to understand also their social psychology, their history and their many good traditions and customs.

Learning from the Past

Efforts were made in the past to promote the development of the fishermen by individuals like Rev. Fr. B. Antoninus OMI. After Archbishop Thomas Cooray OMI (later Cardinal) issued a Circular in 1949 to protect the Catholic faith of the fishermen and their families, improve the socio-economic conditions and safeguard them against disruptive movements, new pastoral approaches began to emerge in the parish of Sea Street, Negombo, as a follow-up of the Circular. Under the pastoral care of Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernando OMI, new fishing grounds were found in the Eastern Province, a fishermen's Cooperative Society was organized and candidates were selected and sent to the Seminary.

Rev. Fr. Joseph Fernando (popularly known as Fr. Joe), who succeeded Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernando as parish priest, had to face three big challenges, namely the Mudalalis (Middlemen), Vested Interests and a Leftist Movement. Like Moses, he had to rescue the fishermen and their families from oppression and lead them to a new situation in which they could enjoy fuller life. Fr. Joe scrapped the Fish Rent which was a method of Church revenue and began bringing together the young fishermen for learning (conscientisation/education) through seminars and small discussion groups. He made them understand the importance and the need for unity and leadership among them for their own advancement and organized the Sea Street-Kudapaduwa Young Fishermen's Cooperative Society and taught them to manage their own affairs, in the spirit of self-help and mutual help. He inculcated the spirit of saving, pooled their savings to create a

fund to introduce mechanization of fishing craft, build new houses and encouraged and supported the education of boys to enter the University with the hope of starting a Fisheries School at Sea Street, Negombo. Fr. Joe used Catechetics and the Liturgy to build the parish Christian community. Rev. Fr. Joe's apostolate of community formation of the fishermen in the parish of Sea Street through education and economic cooperation, using the Antigonish Principles and Y.C.W methodology, had also demonstrative effect in other fishing areas. For example, as Director of SEDEC/CARITAS, at the invitation of Rev. Fr. H. Moreau OMI, who was parish priest of Iranaitivu, Rev. Fr. Joe was able to reach out to the fishermen living in that island, to improve their living standards by providing big mechanized boats and also a competent person to teach them the art of managing such boats.

Tourism and the Fishermen

When the construction of new hotels and guest houses along the coastal belt of Negombo became a problem to the fishermen, the priests of Negombo Deanery, under the chairmanship of Fr. Anthony Fernando OMI (then Parish Priest of Grand Street and Dean of Negombo), wrote a letter to M.P and Mayor of Negombo, Mr. Denzil Fernando on 8th May 1973, making the following observations: "Tourism should not be promoted at the expense of fishing industry in Negombo which is one of the biggest fishing centres in Sri Lanka. Proximity to the International Airport does not mean that tourism should be developed to the detriment of a traditional occupation. Hotels could be put up in other parts of Sri Lanka where there are no people or fewer people without causing inconvenience to the fishermen."

The hoteliers at that time were buying land and even blocking access to the beach which the fishermen and their families so freely used from time immemorial.

Sea Beach, Chilaw was a missionary area administered by the priests of St. Mary's Cathedral, Chilaw. In 1970 it became a parish. When Rev. Fr. W. Don George OMI became its parish priest, he initiated with the help of priests and Sisters a socio-pastoral animation programmes to create greater awareness of the dignity of the fishermen, collective self-reliance and community formation through small group discussions and meetings of the zonal leaders. Those who succeeded him as parish priests have also remained close to the people. The present parish priest, Rev. Fr. Claude Fernando, has indentified himself with the parishioners.

Concerted Action

A Memorandum, signed by Fr. Anthony Fernando OMI, pointing out



the many complex problems that were emerging in the coastal fishing areas of Sri Lanka, and requesting the Bishops to set up a Mandatory Lay Apostolate Organisation, was sent on 20th November 1980 to Bishop Frank Marcus Fernando, the then President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, Acknowledging the receipt of the Memorandum, Bishop Frank Marcus had said, "It is well thought out and well presented....We will try our best to see what could be done. Certainly the problem is serious." A few years later, Bishop Frank Marcus was much involved in two new problems faced by the fishermen - "VOICE OF AMERICA" at Iranawila and "COAL POWER PROJECT" at Norachchola, in his diocese.

During the recent protests against the sudden price-hike of fuel, the Catholic fishermen of Chilaw and Negombo have publicly announced that they looked to the Catholic Church for guidance and assistance. They certainly knew that their bishops and priests had been always aware of the struggles and challenges faced by them and had been involved in finding meaningful solutions. So their spirit of belonging, obedience and loyalty to the Catholic Church is rooted in their faith-history. (Moreover, they know that many Catholic fishermen have died for their faith in Sri Lanka and that some of their lay leaders in Negombo who defended their faith and protested against the Dutch Calvinist rulers (who persecuted the Catholics), had been banished from Sri Lanka).

Unity is Strength

Shouldn't eagerness to understand and appreciate the religious past of the Catholic fishermen and their families make the clergy to become also nostalgic about the shared life of the first Christians (Acts 2:42) in order to draw from it inspiration and new enthusiasm for rekindling the spirit of communion and koinonia (fellowship/solidarity) among today's Catholic fisher-families. Jesus had taught his

disciples by bringing the scattered and the peripheral people together. It needs to be remembered that such a Christian spirit of unity which prevailed in the Early Church broke the barriers based on race, language, status and gender and eventually brought down the mighty Roman Empire.

Partnership for Fuller Life Needed Today

Trying to capture the spirit of the first Christians for today's pastoral praxis in the coastal belt should also make the clergy understand the need for partnership today in the parishes, following the example of the apostles Peter, James, John and Paul, the pillars of the Church (Gal 2:9; Rom 16). It is the spirit of partnership that can enable the clergy, the Religious and the lay faithful to achieve the objectives in the present situation, namely to help the families involved in fishing achieve the flourishing of the Catholic faith and the development of their industry. Such a partnership is an urgent need given the structure within which the parish priests are called to minister. Priests exercising collaborative pastoral leadership can help to evolve desirable and viable common action programmes and projects to respond to the ongoing struggles and pains of the fisher-families and enable them to lead lives worthy of human dignity and unity. Action programmes must meet the specific felt needs of the people. Hence through small group discussions, the people (the young and the adults) must be taught to understand their life situation critically, reflect in the light of the Word of God, the teachings of the Church and practical wisdom and arrive at meaningful decisions. Value education through small group discussions and seminars will surely be the key that will unlock fuller life for the fishermen and their families.

**Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Fernando OMI,
Dev Arana Mission Animation Centre,
Polwatte, Minuwangoda.**

Tribute to Late Rev. Dr. Aloysius Hari Vanigasooriyar

Late Rev. Dr. A. Hari Vanigasooriyar was born on 16th June 1932 to a conservative, illustrious Catholic family in Jaffna with three brothers and four sisters. After completing secondary education at St Patrick's College Jaffna, the then Bishop of Jaffna, Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmalianspillai sent young Vanigasooriyar to Papal Seminary in Kandy. When the Papal Seminary was shifted to Poonai India, Vanigasooriyar was transferred to Poonai and continued his studies, for priesthood.

On completion of his theological studies he was ordained a priest of God in Calcutta India. The Archbishop of Calcutta sent Fr. Vanigasooriyar for further studies to Rome and he qualified as a Doctor of Divinity and Canon Law. While in Rome he worked as a spiritual mentor in the Boys' Town. After returning to India he worked as head master of schools. He was appointed Parish Priest at Kolkata a remote village in India.

A devout virtuous Priest of God, totally dedicated to the teachings of Christ he preached the word of God to the non-Christians and converted many to Christianity - Having learnt the difficulties of this remote area's orphaned children he pioneered and established a Boys' Town in Kolkata with the approval of his superiors and provided them with all facilities including education. It was during this time that Rt. Rev. Dr. Malcom Ranjith was in Rome in charge of assisting the under privileged children in the Asian Region. Fr. Vanigasooriyar approached His Grace for financial assistance for the orphanage project and His Lordship gracefully obliged his request. He was able to raise funds from foreign friends and relatives and

established many schools for the marginalized.

Fr Vanigasooriyar gave his whole life for the service of the orphaned children and for the development of his parish. He extended his services and was involved with Mother Teresa's missionary work and assisted them spiritually. This meek and humble servant of God will be remembered gratefully for decades by his beloved orphans and parishioners for his dedicated loyal services rendered with love and affection.

He celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his Priesthood in India. After a glorious fruitful service of over 50 years in India he returned to Sri Lanka and by providence, the Archbishop placed him to serve his parish of St. Lawrence's Wellawatte. He was privileged to be at Wellawatte and be in close contact with his sisters, Rukmani and Carmini who live close to the Church. They looked after him with love and affection.

I came to know of Fr. Vanigasooriyar at St. Lawrence's Church as a man of God with a kind and generous heart to help the needy. He always spoke to me with his traditional smile and words of affection. He was a source of inspiration for many and was an outspoken clergyman. He was always available and ever ready to serve the parishioners in their spiritual needs. His sermons explained the deep theological teachings of the scriptures which touched the hearts of his loving flock. The young and old members of catechumenate community appreciated his noble qualities and were privileged to have moved with him closely and enjoyed his love and wisdom. His faith in God sustained him in all his trials and triumphs.

Fr. Vanigasooriyar's declining health prevented



S.B.David

him from continuing his services and he entered the "Little Sisters of the Poor" Elders' home in Maradana and lived there for nearly one year. The "Little Sisters of the Poor" provided him with all facilities and comforts and shared in both his joyous and sorrowful times. His sisters visited him very

often with palatable food and fruits that he enjoyed.

On 27th March 2012 Fr. Vanigasooriyar after having his morning coffee was found unconscious on bed and was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit at Durdens nursing home, Colombo. On 29th March 2012 he was called to rest to enjoy the Eternal Bliss at the age of 80. It was a very sad news to the parishioners of Wellawatte and to the Archdiocese of Asansol, Kolkata. His mortal remains was brought to St Lawrence's Church and was received at the porch by Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, and kept inside the Church for viewing. His Eminence Malcom Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop Emeritus, Most. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis, and many Priests and Nuns paid their last respect and imparted their farewell Blessings.

In recognition of Fr. Vanigasooriyar's noble and dedicated services rendered in India the Archbishop of Asansol Rt. Rev. Dr. Monis, flew down to Colombo with his Archdiocese Vicar General, Rev Fr. Jerry Machado on 31st March to pay their last respects with graceful obligation and gratitude to honour the altruistic servant of God. Archbishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Monis offered Con-celebrated Eucharistic Sacrifice with Rev. Fr. Jerry Machado Vicar General (India) and Rev. Fr. Rajakariyar (Jaffna) for the repose of Fr. Vanigasooriyar's soul and conducted the funeral service at St Lawrence's Church, Wellawatte and final rites at the burial at General Cemetery Kanatta.

Fr. Vanigasooriyar's beloved sisters with their relatives and fellow parishioners attended in large numbers to bid farewell to their affectionate Holy Priest of God.

It is a sad loss for all of us but as Christians we believe that we will meet again in God's kingdom. This humble, saintly son of the divine vineyard and illustrious son of Jaffna, will be in our hearts as a friend and a father who represented Christ at the Altar.

May the Merciful Lord Bless his soul and welcome him into the Kingdom and Grant him Eternal Bliss.



Sacrament of Confirmation

I agree with Mr Jansz' letter on "Sacrament of Confirmation-a plea to revert" published on April 22, 2012, in his view that the preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation should be done in Schools.

My child too received this very important Sacrament a few weeks back and I was really sad to see how lightly the child faced this holy day. My thoughts went back to School as I remembered how special and holy we felt that day. It is true that each School cannot have the service separately. What can be done is to prepare the children in School where more time and attention is given to the children. And then have a joint celebration for 2 or 3 schools in the area.

One cannot have a hard and fast rule as to the number of schools for a service, rather it should depend on a manageable number. Further, I suppose with more Bishops now the frequency too could increase. The parents too should be able to come to Church and partake in the celebration.

What is important is that children receive this Sacrament with awareness, else in time to come, the value of the Sacrament will be lost.

R Fernando

Liyanage Joseph Leslie Fernando - Appreciation

I find it extremely difficult to come to terms with the fact that you are no more in the land of the living. Your death was not sudden but an aurevoir after enduring the agonies of a terminal disease courageously and patiently borne for one and a half years which was indeed admirable. In the final moments you were surrounded by your wife, son and daughters praying for you for a peaceful departure - a bundle of energy finally gasped its last breath out with a faint smile on your lips.

Already two eminent sports journalists have written about you. They had lauded you for the contribution you made as a dedicated sports journalist who won the hearts of its readers by writing in an inimitable style of your own. I am too inclined to echo the candid sentiments experienced by them.

So many incidents and nostalgic memories of our growing together flash across my mind. Being the youngest in a family comprising of five brothers and three sisters you were the pet of our parents. Though you were the last but not the least when considering your achievements as you grew up into a matured individual.

The playing fields at the Mutwal beach, Elie House Park, Rutnam and Paradise playgrounds where we played soft ball cricket in the sultry heat of the day was the nursery from which we graduated to play cricket in school, clubs and State services

tournaments.

We shared life together since the difference was only three years. We shared family life together until marriage separated us. At times we silently applauded each other in our achievements. Your duties as a husband, father and father-in-law were executed to perfection.

I have haunting memories of you excelling in various forms of sports both in college and at club levels. How could I ever forget the numerous times we have played in the opposing sides in the State services cricket tournaments and at club level. I found it extremely difficult to dislodge you as an opener with my fastish off cutters and leg cutters. You really excelled as a batsman in the mould of Collin Cowdery, close in fielder, a slow bowler and a shrewd captain.

Your entry into this ribald trade of sports journalism did not provide a shock to me since you had the practical experience both locally and abroad which you put to good effect in sports reporting. Sports you covered from various countries for the benefit of your astute readers.

Journalistic achievements did not alter your humility and simplicity. That soft smile that emanated from your eyes perpetually was indeed a remarkable sight to behold.

You took life as it came even the terminal illness that terminated your life was accepted ungrudgingly.

You were an ace dancer who could hold

the dance floor sway with dignity and poise, adopting yourself to any type of rhythm with ease, a gifted slicer too.

I hope journalists of your calibre will not gradually fade away into oblivion but remembered for yeoman services rendered to the citadel of journalism for which you were recruited by the eminent journalist late Clar-

ence Fernando. If there is a reward to be conferred to a sports journalist posthumously, I feel certainly you quite rightly deserve it.

Anyway, I miss you badly. Good bye dear brother, until we meet in the bliss of eternity. May the turf you loved so much lie lightly on you.

With undying love
Sudu Aiya
Camillius Fernando

"A priest at the altar is like Jesus Christ on the Cross"

May these words of the humble village girl Bernadette of Massabielle ring in the ears of our pastors - young and old. When the tormentor shows you an easy way, remember dear pastors the selfless love of Jesus, on the old rugged cross.

Let us love the cross on this earthly sojourn.

Camillus Pullenayegam

A Poem of Appreciation

It was a dream come true,
When the path was opened for me too.
To follow the footsteps of the Lord,
Became a reality, that I cherish and praise my God.

For the warm welcome of the travel agency,
The instructions before hand was a real guidance
in a special way.
The souvenirs given as identification were so precious,
And the friendly manner in steering the group, we will always treasure.

Helping us to feel the 'Living moments of our Loving Jesus.'
Guiding us to sing praise and spend time in prayer and Holy Masses.
Walking along the footsteps of our God with experience as now we recall.
We say, 'Thank You' for this service you render and 'May God Bless you All.'

Yvonne Daniels

(Pilgrimage to Holy Land 12th March 2012)



THE TRUE HAPPINESS

There was a beggar who begs everyday at the bus stand. Though he was poor he lived happily. So all were surprised at how he could be happy. One day a rich man came to know about him and wanted to know the secret of his happiness. So he asked him:

- Rich man :** I have enough money and everything I want but I am not happy as you are. May I know the secret of it?
- Beggar :** Of course. If you want to be happy you must journey through the eight mile posts in your life, then you will find that happiness.
- Rich man :** What are those?
- Beggar :** The first one is that you must *be poor* in everything and then you will not worry about property or materials. You will become a free man too.
- Rich man :** It is impossible but I will try my best.
- Beggar :** Secondly you must feel *hungry* and help those who are hungry, then you will be satisfied with what you have.
- Rich man :** I have never experienced hunger because I have everything but I will help the hungry.
- Beggar :** Next you must *weep* for yourself and for others. And the time will come for you to laugh.
- Rich man :** I don't cry for myself or others.
- Beggar :** If it so you should do that. At the same time you should be *hated, insulted and rejected* by others. You will have to pass these three miles stones too. It will be hard for you to take it but if you want true happiness you have to go through it.
- Rich man :** OK, now we have passed six posts, what are the other two, I think those will be the most difficult ones.
- Beggar :** Yes. If there is no difficulties we will not experience true happiness. To find those two posts I will ask you to just open the Holy Bible and read Luke 6:20-23, because you must know the person who gave these ideas and the way of living and he will show you the way to enter into eternal happiness.
- Rich man :** Thank you very much.
- Beggar :** You are welcome. I think I have told you what you expected from me. I pray that you will be happy throughout your life.

The rich man went happily and found true happiness in Lk 6:20-23.

If so dear friends can't we the followers of our Saviour experience happiness in our lives too. Our fore fathers found their happiness when they came to know God and his wonderful deeds in their lives. When the apostles of Jesus found real happiness in Jesus they surrendered themselves to the will of God and lived a happy and witnessing life in order to have true happiness in the Lord, because they walked on these eight mile stones. They did not look back at the worldly things which give the happiness that doesn't last long.

So as followers of our Sav-

our and the apostles let us take a step to walk in the way of eight miles stones in order to experience the true happiness in our life. If you think that you need it then take a step? Do you really want to experience the real happiness? If it is so you needn't do very heavy things but just surrender in the will of God and walk in His path because He is the way, the truth.



"Always be happy and cheerful towards all in the Lord."

Ven. Fr. Francis Jordon of the Cross
[Founder of Salvatorian Family, Sp D 11/78]

Sr. Anne Lambert SDS. Salvatorian Sisters. Mabola.

YOUNG BLITZ CHESS CHAMPIONS



Raveen Nimesh Askey of St. Peter's College, Colombo 4 and Roshell Natasha Askey of Ave Maria Convent, Negombo emerged Champions winning gold in the Under - 10 category of Boys' and Girls', respectively, at the Sri Lanka National Youth Blitz Chess Championship 2012, organised by the Chess Federation of Sri Lanka, held at Royal College, Colombo 7.

Both qualify for the Asian Youth Blitz Chess Championship to be held in June this year in Sri Lanka. Roshell has been nominated as the official Sri Lanka player for the Under-10 Girl's category.

New year celebrations

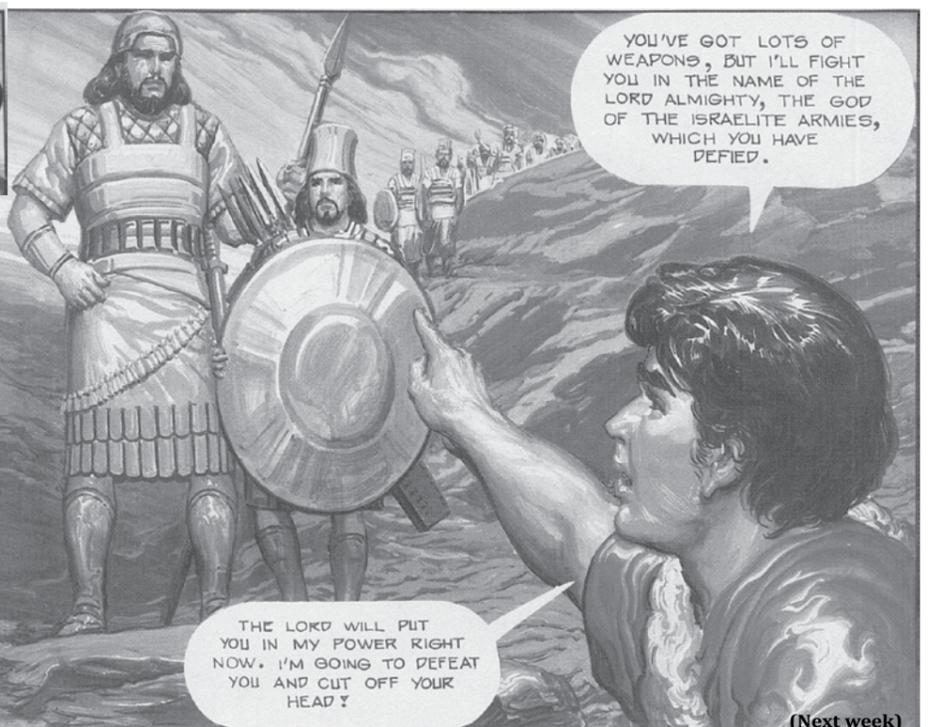
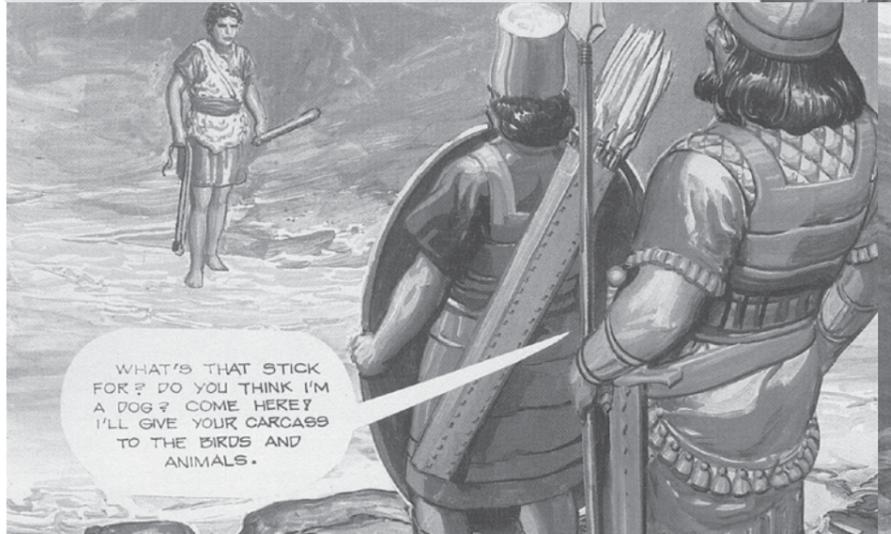


Principal of the St. Francis Xavier's Montessori at Andimulla, Katana in Halpe Parish, is seen presenting a gift to a little one at the annual Sinhala, Tamil New Year festival held at the Church Grounds, recently.

Pic: Cecil Danicius

DAVID the DARING

THE SHEPHERD BOY WHO BECAME A KING



(Next week)

National Laity Sunday, 6th May, 2012

What it says in
the Readings

Theme - *"The Word of God nourishes the Faith/Life of the People of God"*

Make your home in me, as I make mine
in you. Whoever remains in me bears
fruit in plenty. (Jn. 15:4-5)

Introduction

Today is the 5th Sunday of Easter where we continue to proclaim with joy the Resurrection of Jesus who broke the bonds of Death by being deeply united to the unfailing love of the Father. Today is also the National Laity Sunday and the faithful are reminded of the necessity of sustaining a deep union with the Risen Lord. They are to feed themselves regularly and nourish themselves properly through the word of God, by reading, listening and by pondering over the proclaimed Word at every Eucharistic gathering. This gathering shouldn't be a mere ritual, but rather a moment of deep communion with one another and with Jesus himself. So let us reawake ourselves as lay faithful to this call today. Let us pray for one another so that all will begin to realize that we cannot bear fruit unless we remain in Jesus.

Penitential Rite:

Lord for the moments we tried to be fruitful and efficient on our own accord without being united to YOU
LORD Have Mercy

For not endeavouring to actualize the Baptismal call we received from you to be your living witnesses by remaining in you and united to each other
CHRIST Have Mercy

For the occasions we disregarded your WORD and neglected to nourish our brothers and sisters by helping them to unite with you in the Holy Eucharist
LORD Have Mercy

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, who sent the power of the Gospel like leaven into the world, grant that your faithful whom you have called to live amid the world and its affairs, may be fervent with the Christian spirit and, through the tasks they carry out in this present age, motivated by uniting to Jesus the true vine, may constantly build up your kingdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God forever and ever.

Introduction to the

First Reading: Acts 9: 26-31

"And so Saul stayed with them and went all over Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the LORD"
A reading taken from the Book of Acts.

Saul on his way to Damascus encountered Jesus Christ - the WORD of GOD who became Flesh, and lived among men and died on the Cross and rose again. This Risen Lord changed Saul radically and made him anew. We too are being invited to Encounter the same Risen Lord in our daily life.

Introduction to the

Second Reading: 1 John 3: 18-24

"Those who obey God's commands live in union with God and God lives in union with them." It is only by obeying his commands of Love that we can truly recognize Jesus, the mediator and the righteous one. When we obey his word, we are the ones whose love for God has really been made perfect.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

"Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you. Those who remain in me will bear much fruit."
Alleluia!

Gospel Jn 15: 1-8

Reflection Points for the Sermon

a. The Word of God is Jesus Christ Himself.

The Gospel of today tells us of the intimate relationship that the Lord Jesus Christ has with His faithful, the laity. Jesus Christ the Word of God is the vine and we the people of God are its branches.

- No one can be a true disciple unless he/she is united with the Risen Lord, this is the central message of today's Good News.

- "And My Father is the Gardner." Is a quote from the Old Testament to show the relationship between Yahweh and People of Israel. Jesus uses the same to affirm and confirm his relationship with the Lay People.

- "A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it can do so only if it remains in the vine." The branch has no life apart from the vine similarly no one can be called a Christian unless he/she is united to Jesus. Our Church, the Diocese, the Parish, the Novena Zone, Small Christian Community, the Christian Family all these groups are deeply connected to Jesus, receive life from Jesus, and live with Jesus.

- As long as the branch is connected to the vine it is the vine which provides it with the nourishment it needs to grow and to bear fruit.

- The vine permits the vinedresser to prune its branches so that it will bear more fruit. There is no life without trials and tribulations. All these challenges an obstacles we face as individuals and as well as a community are opportunities for growth in Faith and bear much fruits in service.

- Even if it is a branch of vine if it doesn't bear fruit the farmer will cut it off and throw it into the fire. So these are words of warning for us, that being a nominal Christian, and an unfruitful member of the Community is useless. It is a futile life.

- It is as if the vine has accepted the meaning and pur-

pose the vine dresser has given to its existence. Therefore by submitting to the pruning, the vine gives proof of its faith in the vinedresser to do what is beneficial to it.

- The word "bearing much fruit" occurs six times in this passage indicating its importance. The true disciple of Jesus must bear fruits of Love by living out like Jesus. He/She must feed oneself from his life giving Word daily. This is the Call of Laity.

- We are by nature dry and fit for nothing but the fire. Therefore, in order that we may live and be fruitful, we must first be grafted into Christ, as it were into a vine, by the Father's hand and then be daily moulded with a continual meditation of the word, and the cross: Otherwise it will not avail any man at all to have been grafted unless he cleaves fast to the vine, and so draws juice out of it.

b. Practically- We are invited to become conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit (the Uniter) that we received at our Baptism - the day we were grafted back into the True Vine.

- It is through Baptism we are made to be in union with Jesus. Sacramental union with Risen Lord.

- It is not a mere ritual or a traditional custom.

- It is a Call to a New Life in the Risen Lord, an invitation to a life of Love in a Community.

- No Christian is an island by himself/herself.

- He/She is a person/member/organ/cell/ a living branch which cannot be separated from the Body (Community) of Christ (Vine)

Prayers of the Faithful

1. Let us pray for all the Faithful.

Heavenly Father, Let Your children Laity, Religious and Clergy be united and recognize each other as brothers and sisters, may they be filled with your spirit of love, let them continue to be nourished with your living word in their gatherings and be real witnesses to the Resurrection of your beloved Son Jesus Christ.

Let us pray to the Lord!
Lord Hear our Prayer.

2. Let us pray for all the Leaders of the Church.

Father, look upon all those who are responsible for forming, nourishing and leading your people. Let them be examples in abiding in your living Word and remain in union with your son Jesus, as they preach and proclaim your Kingdom of Love.

Let us pray to the Lord! *Lord Hear our Prayers.*



3. Let us pray for all the lay Missionaries.

Father, may the lay men and women who follow the call of your Son to spread the good news to the ends of the earth, be fruitful in their mission by their close adherence to your Word and the light of the Gospel shining out through their lives.

Let us pray to the Lord! *Lord Hear our Prayers.*

4. Let us pray for all the Lay Animators of various apostolates.

Father, may all the Apostolates which function in the Church for the empowerment of mankind and for the formation of people to be more active in the Mission of your Son in diverse fields, be blessed with dedicated leaders and animators who will nourish the members on the Word of God.

Let us pray to the Lord! *Lord Hear our Prayers*

5. Let us pray in silence for all the particular intentions of all gathered here.

Let us pray to the Lord! *Lord Hear our Prayers.*

Prayer over the Gifts

O God, who willed to save the whole world by the sacrifice of your Son, grant through the power of this oblation that your servants living in the lay state, whom you unceasingly call to the apostolate, may inspire the world with the spirit of Christ and be the leaven of its sanctification. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer after Communion

As we draw upon the fullness of your grace, we pray, O Lord that your faithful, who by your will are engaged in the things of this world, may be strengthened by the power of the Eucharistic Banquet, to be tireless witnesses to the truth of the Gospel and may make your Church ever present and active amid the affairs of this age. We make this prayer through the Risen Christ our Lord. Amen

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B 6th May - 13th May 2012

SUN: FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LAITY SUNDAY

Acts. 9:26-31, 1 Jn. 3: 18-24, Jn. 15: 1-8

Mon: Act. 14: 5-18, Jn. 14: 21-26

Tue: Act. 14: 19-28, Jn. 14: 27-31

Wed: Act. 15: 1-6, Jn. 15: 1-8

Thu: Act. 15: 7-21, Jn. 15: 9-11

Fri: Act. 15: 22-31, Jn. 15: 12-17

**Sat: SS. Nereus & Achilleus, Martyrs
& St. Pancras, Martyr**

Act. 16: 1-10, Jn. 15: 18-21

Sun: SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Act. 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48, 1 Jn. 4: 7-10,

Jn. 15: 9-17