

**IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION**
of the Blessed Virgin Mary
December 9



**Most Pure and
Gentle Mother of
Our Lord, Jesus
Christ**

Second
Sunday

in
Advent



Messenger

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The Proclamation of the 'MARIAN YEAR'

John 19: 25-28



The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith proclaimed the *Archdiocesan Marian Year*, at a Solemn Ceremony held at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena on Sunday, November 24.

On that Calvary Hill in April it would have been very hot sun and Jesus was put on the Cross and was not seated on a throne. At the foot of the Cross were standing Mary His beloved Mother and the disciple called John.

The Mother had looked after Jesus from His early childhood. Though they were simple people without much means, the Mother



brought up the child with a lot of love and care. She was with Jesus in His important events as He was growing up as a man, even the first miracle

performed by Jesus was in the presence of the Blessed Mother. As Simeon had already prophesied 'the sword pierce through her

heart' as she stood at the foot of the Cross and saw her son Jesus through all the suffering. It is there, Jesus said to His Mother: "Woman, here is your

son," and to His disciple "Here is your Mother." He did not leave His Mother to be left alone, rather with a true sense of love He entrusts the disciple to

His Mother. In fact on the day of the Pentecost the Blessed Mother was with the disciples.

In history we find that in the year 431 A.D. at the Council of Ephesus Mary was declared as Mother of God, 'Theotokos', in Greek. Then in 1962 when the Second Vatican Council began, Pope Paul VI called her the Mother of the Church. So we must recognize that we have a Mother. She loves us with a deep affection. Out of this love she has appeared at Lourdes, Fatima, Banneux and so forth. For 2000 years she has been taking us to Jesus.

(Contd on Pg. 2) >>>

Sri Lankan Catholic Church bids Adieu to the Apostolic Nuncio, H.E. Joseph Spiteri



Rev. Fr. Sunil de Silva

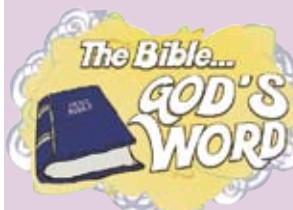
The Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka, Episcopal Vicars, Religious Superiors, Priests and the Religious gathered at All Saints'

Church, Borella last Monday at a Thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration to bid farewell to His Excellency, Archbishop Joseph Spiteri, Apostolic

Nuncio in Sri Lanka. His Excellency leaves Sri Lanka to serve as Apostolic Nuncio in the Republic of the Ivory (Contd on Pg. 2) >>>

Bible Sunday

December 8



Bible & Family

NOTICE

In the realization of our Pastoral Mission in the Archdiocese of Colombo, I, as the Archbishop, make the following appointments to the Catholic Colleges that belong to us. These appointments will be effective from 1st January 2014. Please note that these appointments or changes are not done due to any requests, recommendations or desires of any individual or of any group or of any commission, but purely on the basis of the requirements of the Colleges and my personal assessment. It is done for the wellbeing of all the schools.

In this matter, I make use of the opportunity to express my special thanks to Rev. Fr. Bonnie Fernandopulle and Rev. Fr. Sylvester Ranasinghe, who are leaving their responsibilities as Rectors of St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa and St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10 respectively, for the excellent and committed service they rendered to these schools over many years. I wish to state that I am completely convinced of the integrity, honesty and commitment of these two Fathers to these Institutions.

I thank all the Fathers who are moving into their new assignments and wish them God's abundant blessings for a fruitful mission. The appointments are as follows:

- St. Joseph's College :** Rev. Fr. Travis Gabriel (Rector)
Rev. Fr. Anton Ranjith (Vice Rector)
- St. Peter's College :** Rev. Fr. Trevor Martyn (Rector)
Rev. Fr. Vincent Ashley (Vice Rector)

(Contd on Pg. 2) >>>

Pope to dedicate 2015 to Consecrated Life

Vatican City, (CNA/EWTN News).- At a meeting with the Union of Superiors' General held last week, Pope Francis mentioned that he would be dedicating 2015 to Consecrated Life, thanking Religious for their witness to Jesus Christ.

"Thank you for what you do and for your spirit of faith and your service. Thank you for your witness and also for the humiliations through which you have

had to pass," Pope Francis said to 120 Superiors, present for the group's General Assembly, held in Rome from November 27-29.

The dedication of 2015 to Religious Life should promote and draw attention to the challenges facing God's call to consecrated persons. To proclaim a year dedicated to a specific topic, shedding light on

(Contd on Pg. 2) >>>

FROM THE DIOCESES

NEW APPOINTMENTS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF COLOMBO

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo, has made the following appointments to be effective from 1st January 2014

APPOINTMENTS OF PARISH PRIESTS

Parish Priest of St. Mary's, Dehiwala
Rev. Fr. Bonnie Fernandopulle

Parish Priest of St. Andrew's, Mutuwal
Rev. Fr. Marcus Ferdinandes

Actg. Parish Priest of Our Lady of the Rosary, Dehiyagatha
Rev. Fr. Freely Muthukudaarachchi

Rev. Fr. Jude Samantha
Secretary - Administration

Notice

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St. Sebastian's College:

Rev. Fr. Camillus Fernando (*Rector*)
Rev. Fr. Lakmin Prasanga (*Vice Rector*)

Holy Cross College:

Rev. Fr. Gamunu Dias (*Rector*)
Rev. Fr. Daya Dharshana (*Vice Rector*)

Loyola College:

Rev. Fr. Ranjith Andradi (*Rector*)
Rev. Fr. Ruwan Deshapriya (*Vice Rector*)

St. Thomas Catholic International:

Rev. Fr. J Kennedy Perera (*Rector*)

St. Joseph's College - Branch School, Wattala:

Rev. Fr. Chaminda Wanigasena (*Director*)

St. Joseph's College - Branch School, Negombo:

Rev. Fr. Sudath Gunatillake (*Director*)

St. Peter's College - Branch School, Udugampola

Rev. Fr. Rohitha Rodrigo (*Director*)

St. Jude's College - Negombo: Will continue as it is

✦ **Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith**
Archbishop of Colombo

Appointed as all - island JP



Mrs. A.K.D. Yvonne Nirmala Kaviratna of Welivita, Kaduwela has been appointed Justice of the Peace for the whole Island. She took her oaths recently before Kaduwela Magistrate.

Mrs. Nirmala Kaviratna is the daughter of late Ayurvedic Dr. A.K.D Dharmasena and Mrs. Kaviratna who is an Ayurvedic doctor and member of the Parish Council.
M. Joe Paaris

Sri Lankan Catholic....

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Coast in Western Africa.

At the felicitation ceremony held after the Holy Mass at the Archbishop's House, the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith thanked the Apostolic Nuncio for his very valuable contribution to the growth of the Church in Sri Lanka.

His Excellency Archbishop Joseph Spiteri arrived in Sri Lanka on June 20, 2009. He was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Sri Lanka on February 21, 2009, by Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI.

His pleasant personality and friendly pastoral approach, made him appreciated by the Bishops, priests, religious and the lay faithful. During his stay he had visited all the Dioceses including the North and East, to take the Good News of God's love and mercy to all people.

Archbishop Spiteri hails from Malta. His Priestly Ordination took place on June 29, 1984 and his Episcopal Ordination was on May 24, 2009 at St. John's Co-Cathedral at Valetta in Malta. He holds a Doctorate Degree in Canon Law and entered the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See in 1988. He has served in the Apostolic Nunciatures of Panama, Iraq, Mexico, Portugal, Greece, Venezuela and at the Office of the Secretariat of State Section for Relations with the States.

His Excellency thanked all the Bishops and the Church in Sri Lanka for extending their goodwill and assistance to his apostolic mission in Sri Lanka shared his appreciation of Sri Lankan Catholic Church pastoral activities in all the dioceses and the contribution of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka to the development and progress of the country.

Launch of Christian Sign Directory

The Ceylon Bible Society (CBC) has launched the Sri Lanka Christian Sign Directory at a ceremony held at the Cathedral of the Living Saviour Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7.

The decision to launch the Sign Directory was taken after the CBC made visits to schools for the visually impaired and hearing impaired run by the Roman Catholic Church at Ratmalana and Ragama.

The CBC also worked in close partnership with Rev. Sr. Suneetha Fernando, former Principal of St. Joseph's School



for the Hearing Impaired in Ragama and the present Principal, Rev. Sr. Ann Nirmali and also Mrs. Samanthika Jayasooriya, Principal, School for the Hearing Impaired in Ratmalana.

The CBC intends

that students who are hearing impaired study Christianity not just to understand the stories of the Holy Bible or pass examinations but as a source of their religious beliefs to have a closer relationship with the Lord.

Families encouraged to engage with the Bible

Ms. Lakshani Fernando, General Secretary of Ceylon Bible Society was a delegate at the first-ever "Bible and Family" partnership meeting between United Bible Societies (UBS) and the Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF) held in Rome from October 7 to 9, 2013. The meeting which ended with an audience with Pope Francis was organized as a way of exploring ways in which Bible Societies can work more closely with the Catholic Church to get

the Bible into the hands of more families.

Bible Society and CBF representatives from 30 countries discussed the spiritual pressures on the family in modern society and how they can collaborate on a project to address these concerns.

Rev. Dr. Rudi Zimmer, Chairman of the UBS Global Board said after his direct audience with the Pope that he had particularly showed the "Poverty and Justice Bible" (Catholic Edition) and the "May

They Be One Bible" to the Pope with the explanation that these are being produced by the Bible Societies with the full support of the Catholic Church.

Speaking at this event, Monsignor Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Holy See's Pontifical Council for the Family said that it is vital that practical ways are developed to encourage families to engage with the Bible.

UBS is a fellowship of 146 Bible Societies operating worldwide.

A.J.

The proclamation...

Contd. from Pg. 1

We must remember our Mother will always protect us and she will not abandon us to be left alone. She continues to be Our Mother in heaven. She is there to help us when we face suffering and pain, when we live in sin and when we have life's problems. It is out of our love for her that we have statues and pictures in our homes to remind ourselves of her. After all

when we want to remember a loved one, a father or mother who is no more with us we have a picture to remember them. That is why we carry the Rosary, her picture and so on in our pockets and purses.

As we have a whole year as the *Marian Year* ahead of us let us show our love to her by praying the Rosary everyday as a family, to receive the sacraments and especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Some-

times it is the modern day television that distracts us from saying the family rosary everyday. We have to make a sacrifice of 15-20 minutes and say the family rosary without fail. We can organize pilgrimages to Marian Shrines here in Sri Lanka or even abroad and show our affection to our Blessed Mother.

✦ **Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith**
Archbishop of Colombo

Pope to dedicate....

Contd. from Pg. 1

an issue deemed to be of particular importance has recently become a common tool for Popes.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI proclaimed a Pauline Year in 2008, a Year of the Priesthood in 2010, and the Year of Faith in 2012-2013.

The Consecrated are those who "can awaken the world," he said. "Consecrated Life is prophecy. God asks us to fly the nest

and to be sent to the frontiers of the world, avoiding the temptation to 'domesticate' them. This is the most concrete way of imitating the Lord."

The Pontiff added that newer dioceses are bearing much fruit, and

gave this as a reason for inculturating the charisms of Religious Life.

Religious are to be respected for their charisms, and not seen merely as "helpers" when a local Church is in need of priests.

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Church Feasts

● The Annual Feast of St. Barbara's Church, Talahena will be celebrated on Sunday December 8. Festive Mass at 7 am. Chief Celebrant - Rev. Fr. Rohan De Alwis, Director, Sethsara. Vespers Service on previous day at 7.30 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Lester Wijesooriya, Director, Marcsri Children's Home.

● The 156th Annual Feast of St. Mary's Church, Maggona will be celebrated on Sunday December 8. Festive Mass at 8 am. Chief Celebrant - Rev. Fr. Ronnie Ponsius Perera, Parish Priest of Periyamulla, Negombo. Vespers Service on previous day at 7pm presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Ivan Perera, Archdiocesan Episcopal Vicar.

● The Annual Feast of St. Francis Xavier's Church, Sapugaskanda will be celebrated on Sunday December 8. Festive Mass at 8.30 am. Chief Celebrant - Very Rev. Fr. Daya Shelton Welikadarachchi, Archdiocesan Episcopal Vicar. Vespers Service on previous day at 7pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Jude Bernard Rodrigo, Director, 'Midhuma' Centre for Drug Addicts Rehabilitation, Hendala.

● The 105th Annual Feast of St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya will be celebrated on Sunday December 8. Festive Mass at 8.30 am. Chief celebrant - Very Rev Fr Elmo Dias, Rector, National Seminary, Ampitiya. Vespers Service on previous day at 6.30 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Victor Silva, Rector, St John Vianney Seminary, Mattakuliya.

● The Annual Feast of St Nicholas' Church, Bopitiya will be celebrated on Sunday December 8. Festive Mass at 7 am. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm.

● The 123rd Annual Feast of St Mary's Church, Seeduwa will be celebrated on Sunday December 8. Festive Mass at 8 am. Chief celebrant - Rt Rev Dr Cletus Chandrasirir Perera, Bishop of Ratnapura. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm presided over by Very Rev Fr Patrick Perera, Archdiocesan Episcopal Vicar.

Ainslie Joseph



Church in the Modern World

“The Lord, a person, looks at me, a person”

In his daily homily on the first Monday of Advent, Pope Francis reflected on the season of Christmas, explaining that it is a time to encounter the Lord in faith, and allow Him to renew our lives.

“Christmas,” the Pope expressed “isn’t just a temporal celebration or the memory of a beautiful event; Christmas is more...Christmas is an encounter!”

As we progress through the Season of Ad-

vent, “we go by this road to meet the Lord,” the Pope stated, “We walk to meet Him, to encounter Him alive as He is; encounter Him with faith.”

Turning to the day’s Gospel Reading in which the centurion comes to Jesus asking Him to heal his servant only by “saying the word,” Pope Francis noted that “it is not easy to live with faith,” emphasizing how in the Gospel the Lord marveled at this centurion and at the faith that he had.

“He had walked to meet the Lord, but he did so with faith. For this reason he not only encountered the Lord, but he felt the joy of being met by the Lord.”

“And this,” the Pontiff pointed out, “is precisely the encounter that we want: The encounter of faith.”

The Holy Father then stressed the importance of having an open heart in order for this encounter to take place, explaining that it is also cru-

cial to be open to what the Lord wants to tell us, noting that “what he wants to tell me,” is often not “what I want him to tell me!”

However, the Pope observed, “He is the Lord,” and what He tells us is meant for each of us personally, because the Lord does not look at everyone together, like a mass. He looks everyone in the face, in the eyes, because love is not abstract: Love is concrete!”

Concluding his reflections, Pope Francis



emphasized that this love is “from person to person: The Lord, a person, looks at me, a person.”

“Letting ourselves be encountered by God means just this,” he stated, “to let ourselves be loved by the Lord!”

Popes, Francis and Benedict linked in call for joyful priests

At a presentation of a work by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI on the priesthood, the head of the Vatican’s doctrine office said that both Pope Benedict and Pope Francis share a view on priestly vocation and the crisis it faces.

Archbishop Gerhard Mueller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, told EWTN News in a recent interview that the teachings of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis on priesthood are “linked.”

The Archbishop, who is curator of Pope Benedict’s collected works, was presenting “Herald of the Word and servants of your joy,” a collection of the Emeritus Pope’s reflections on the priesthood written over the course of 50 years. The book was recently republished by the Vatican’s publishing house in Italian as the 12th book in his collected works.

The Archbishop noted that “Joseph Ratzinger began writing papers and reflections on the priesthood



shortly before the Second Vatican Council, which already reflected on the crisis of the priesthood that was to break out after the Second Vatican Council.”

Israeli PM invites Pope Francis to Israel



During an audience with Pope Francis, Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel’s Prime Minister, invited the Roman Pontiff to visit Israel, though the date of the visit has yet to be determined.

The private audience, which lasted nearly half an hour, was held during Netanyahu’s two-day visit to Italy meant to improve relations between the two countries and to sign commercial agreements.

According to the Holy See press office, Pope Francis and Netanyahu’s conversation was focused on “the complex political and social situation in the Middle East, with particular reference to the reinstatement of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, expressing hope that a just and lasting solution respecting the rights of both parties may be reached as soon as possible.”

According to Israeli media, the visit should take place May 25-26, 2014. The last papal visit to Israel was Benedict XVI’s in 2009; that was preceded by Bl. John Paul II in 2000 and Paul VI in 1964.

Netanyahu presented a Spanish translation of the 1995 book, *The Origins of the Inquisition*, to Francis during their 25-minute private audience. He also gave the Pope a large silver menorah.

“The Independent

Indian diocese celebrates 60th Anniversary, focuses on catechesis



EWTN News - The Diocese of Belgaum, in southwestern India, recently celebrated its diamond jubilee (60 years), and Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio, Apostolic Nuncio to India, presided at a Mass with over 3,000 faithful at St. Xavier School in Belgaum to mark the anniversary. The diocese was established September 19, 1953, by Pope Pius XII.

These 60th anniversary celebrations are an important occasion for us to “thank God for his blessings and to evaluate our past, assess the present and plan for the challenges of the future,” Bishop Peter Machado told EWTN News.



Peterite Carol Service

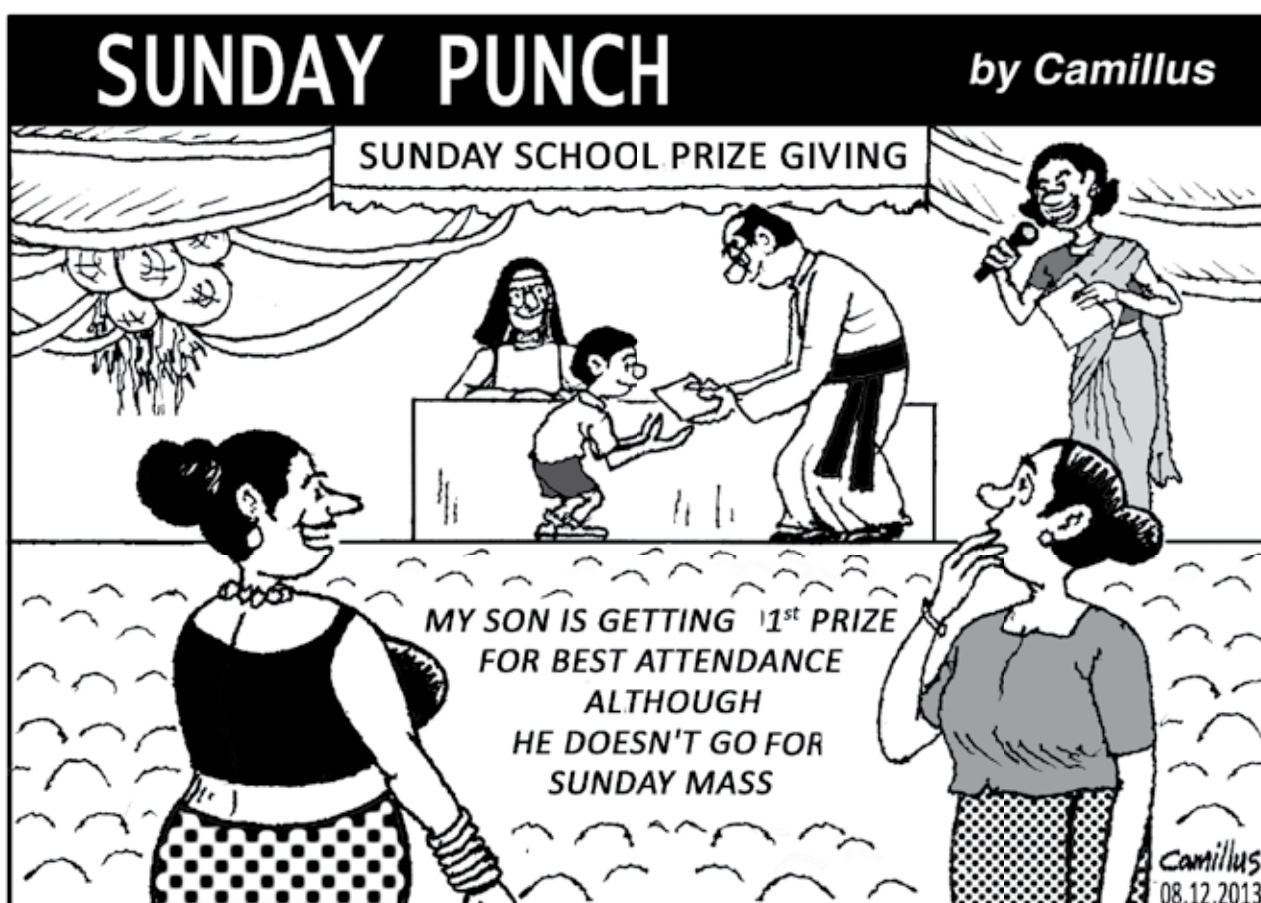
As Christmas draws near, the Choir of St. Peter’s College, Colombo 4, will raise their voices in joy and thanksgiving at their customary Carol Service

on Saturday, December 14.

Titled, ‘The Child of Bethlehem’, the Peterite Choir will be joined by the Primary Choir, the Teachers’ Choir and the Peterite

Chorale in celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ.

All are welcome to participate in this Carol Service which will be held at 6.30 p.m. in the Main Hall of the College.



December 8, 2013

Casinos and Gambling

Many religious and community leaders have opposed the grant of a license to a foreign casino. Some oppose the tax concessions proposed for the casino. Most people believe that gambling is morally wrong and that it is a vice in the same class as prostitution, narcotic drugs or pornography. Buddhists would say gambling is driven by greed and greed is harmful to persons pursuit of the higher or nobler goals of life.

Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith has expressed his opposition to the casino project. The Bible does not directly refer to gambling as a vice, but the Bible presents the stewardship of our material possessions as a crucial aspect of discipleship. The Christian understands that his possessions and money are not his own, but God's. We are trustees who will be judged for the quality of our stewardship. So it will be difficult for the Christian to explain his bets at a casino when God calls his stewards to account.

Gambling depends entirely on chance—for which the chief "virtue" is luck. The worldview of the Bible affirms the active sovereignty of God over all events, persons and time—and thus there is no place for luck. The Christian trusts in God, not in the vain hope of a winning lottery or a favourable roll of the dice but on God's providence.

Gambling seeks to teach people the deception that significant wealth can be obtained without work or the struggle that naturally accompanies it. Gambling is an unchristian attempt to get something for nothing or at another's expense. There may be a reasonable question as to whether or not gambling is in every instance an inherent moral wrong. But beyond such philosophical speculation of that question, stands the evidence of the real and destructive effect that this vice has had upon the poor families, marriages and communities. It is these social evils that prompt Church leaders to oppose gambling as an inherently unproductive, predatory, socially destructive activity that should be discouraged and not promoted or sponsored by the political leadership who truly wish to serve the common good of society and maintain the well-being of citizens and families.

A large commercial gambling outlet such as a casino may attract tourists and provide revenue for the government. But gambling like drinking can become addictive. It can bring more harm to a society than the benefits they generate (such as tax revenue) even if the casinos are banned for local people. Our law enforcement is poor particularly when it comes to enforcing the law against politicians and powerful businessmen. Even if the addiction is by foreigners yet whatever harms any human being ultimately has adverse consequences on human society as a whole. People may become prone to think there is nothing wrong about a casino and begin to question why it should be confined only to foreigners. It may encourage other forms of gambling where gamblers come from locals and poorer segments of our people. It could lead to an addiction to other forms of gambling ... and this addiction destroys marriages, families ... and increases social breakdown. Studies have shown that where gambling businesses are established, crime rates increase.

The Christian must trust in God, not in the vain hope of a winning lottery number or a favourable roll of the dice at a Casino table.

Thomas Cooray, Gardener and Landscape Artist

By Rev. Fr. Anselm de Croos

Thomas Cooray, was a student at St. Joseph's College and came under the scholarly influence of the famous botanist Very Rev. Maurice Le Cog OMI, who wrote a text book on Botany for schools. He not only learned from the master but also received from him a great interest in plants and trees.

When Fr Cooray was appointed Warden of the Aquinas Hostel at Havelock Town he planted a *Na* tree there. Someone has claimed that it was he who told the Cardinal the botanical name of the *Na* tree '*Messus Ferea*' but Thomas Cooray knew by heart the botanical names of most of the trees of Sri Lanka. He was the first seminarian to enter the University of Ceylon where he did his degree with Botany as a subject. When he became Superior of the Oblate Scholasticate at Kynsey Road he planted a *Na* tree there too. When he became Archbishop on July 26, 1947, he went on a spree of planting trees. First a row of small leaved Mahogany was planted along the parapet walls of Archbishop's House and the Minor Seminary. The trees matured and wood of these trees was used by Archbishop Nicholas Marcus to line the walls of the verandah and refectory of Archbishop's House. The entrance to the house was lined with a row of palm trees in the inside and a row of *Na* trees in the outside. The rest of the garden was planted with many different flowering trees. The writer planted a *Hal mila* tree at the entrance from the Seminary to the Press and when the Cardinal saw it he said, "You fool that would be the dirtiest place in the garden because of the large leaves." When the writer wanted to remove it he said, "No let that remain as a monument to your foolishness," and so it is there even today. He got Fr. Reginald Silva to plant an orchard of budded mango trees in the garden of Allagolawa and these became a source of income for the prefecture, pear trees are planted at Underbank Nuwara Eliya and these too were a source of income for the Holiday House.

He bought 2000 acres of neglected coconut land in Palachchola and he planted a new heavy yielding coconut plants and they are now a great source of income for the Archdiocese in lands that were not suitable for coconut he planted cadju whenever he went on pastoral visitation to the parishes he would look at the trees of the mission and the toilets of the Mission House and if these were not cared for and



maintained he readily concluded that the Parish was neglected.

It was at Tewatte that his genius flourished. The land in front of the Basilica was landscaped like a fan and only along the lines of the fan were planted trees with small leaves so that wherever one stood one would see the open-air altar clearly, the small leaves would not litter the ground. The land in front of the Grotto too was landscaped on similar lines and the rest of the property was planted with shade trees so that the pilgrims could camp under them. The land near the bathing wells and the lake was planted with *Kumbuk* trees so that the water was purified. He planted a row of *Sappodilla* trees in the middle garden of the Retreat House so that it would provide the desert for the retreatants and a row of Avocado trees in the back garden of the residency. When he retired at Tewatte the land at Emmaus was planted with fruit bearing trees and when he saw the fruits he was overjoyed.

These are some of the known plantations of the Cardinal and he would not rest until every inch of the Diocese was planted with trees.

Such was Thomas Cooray, the Gardner and Landscape Artist.

Lovely Lady Dressed in Blue

Lovely Lady dressed in blue —
 Teach me how to pray!
 God was just your little boy.
 Tell me what to say!



Did you lift Him up, sometimes.
 Gently on your knee?
 Did you sing to Him the way
 Mother does to me?

Did you hold His hand at night?
 Did you ever try
 Telling stories of the world?
 O! And did He cry?

Do you really think He cares
 If I tell Him things...
 Little things that happen? And
 Do the Angels' wings

Make a noise? And can He hear
 Me if I speak low?
 Does He understand me now?
 Tell me — for you know?

Lovely Lady dressed in blue —
 Teach me how to pray!
 God was just your little boy.
 And you know the way

J.M.R. Casie Chitty

Twilight

The ruddy shades of the after glow
 Hurrying, scurrying,
 Across the ethereal expanse.
 Fleeting from the fiend
 Of approaching darkness.
 The waters of the Kelani
 Speeding along-disturbed
 As a ferry makes inroads
 Displacing its waters
 Carrying its passengers-home-ward bound.
 Impatient, anxious,
 Urgency in every move
 Scuttling to the safety of their domicile
 'ere darkness falls.
 Along the telephone wires
 Above the Kelani Bridge
 Birds gather.
 Waiting, swinging, twittering;
 Simultaneously spreading their wings
 A picturesque flight, above and across the river
 To roost in the sheltering branches
 Of the trees that fringe the waters
 'ere darkness pervades.

Jeannette Cabraal

Jubilee Bells Ring out for Salvatorian Sisters World Wide and in Sri Lanka

Sisters of the Divine Saviour known as Salvatorian Sisters, celebrate their 125th Anniversary on December 8, 2013. The Society of the Salvatorians was founded by Fr. Francis Mary of Cross Jordan on December 8, 1881. Together with him Therese Von Wullenweber proclaimed by the Church as Blessed Mary of the Apostles Co-founded the Sisters' Congregation.

Fr. Francis Jordan was born on June 16, 1848 in Gurtweil, a small village in Baden, Germany, and Blessed Mary of the Apostles was born on February 19, 1833 in castle Millendonk in Germany.

At the time of founding our Congregation there was a social upheaval in Europe. The secularization was dominant. The political system was crumbling, and due to it the social life of the people was dwindling. The Christian faith was slowly dying out. The Universal Church was struggling to react to the needs of this new society. At this moment the Church's response was a missionary movement. The Holy Spirit was awakening Fr. Francis Jordan and Therese to respond to the same needs of the people. The call was irresistible and it was to an apostolic missionary life in a Kingdom as wide as the world. For Fr. Francis Jordan's inner struggle was to call all the priests as well as the faithful to remain true to the Christian faith they had inherited from of old. Jordan was inspired by the Gospel quotation in John 17:3 "This is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent"

At present the Salvatorian family consists of Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, Men, Women and Children having the same Charism, the Spirit, the vision and mission which is evangelization. By all ways and means the Salvatorians try to achieve their vision. We are called to take an active place within the Church to form leaders, animate groups, and activate a prophetic mission for the evangelization of the world. As a Salvatorian family, we seek to provide a visible witness of the Kingdom values to diverse cultures and backgrounds working side by side with all in mission. We have always recognized 'universality' as a characteristic of our Charism. Thus we embrace all cultures, races and languages. In a world of so much division and conflict our ability to be united despite our many differences is a sorely needed witness to the world.

Today we the Salvatorian Sisters reach out to 29 countries. There are 1200 professed members in the Congregation. We nurture trust and respect among us, learn from one another, and value the

contribution that each is able to make for our life and mission. The whole Salvatorian Family shares in the responsibility to promote mutual understanding and a growing sense of common identity by participating in gatherings, dialogue and common projects.

As Salvatorian women, wherever we are in mission, we open ourselves to the culture in which we live, valuing its truth and confronting all that threaten true life, our desire that all know the one true God and Jesus Christ and promote true life, compels us to enter into ecumenical and inter religious dialogue and unite forces with others to promote all aspects of social justice including a special reverence for all of creation (Con. 6.6)

The Salvatorian in Sri Lanka celebrates their 60th year in Sri Lanka. It dates back to the General Chapter in 1953 when Mother Olympia Henel got reelected as Mother General of the Salvatorian Sisters. Our forerunner Rev. Fr. Andradi of Chilaw Diocese was successful in getting the then Bishop of Chilaw, Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Pieris to send an urgent invitation to Mr. Olympia for Nursing Sisters to run the General Hospital in Kurunegala. With God's grace this invitation was accepted and agreed upon by the members of the General Chapter. The immediate action was taken. A request for volunteer Nursing Sisters was sent to the entire Congregation.

In response to the above request, the first five Salvatorian Sisters left Rome for their new, challenging assignment. The Sisters began their rough Ocean voyage on January 31, 1954 and arrived in Colombo by February 16, 1954. These Sisters were quite international. The Sisters on their arrival to Ceylon were stationed for a short while with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary, at Lansigama, home for the elders. From here they moved to their proper destination, the General Hospital, Kurunegala.

As the Salvatorian Sisters were five in number, they requested the Holy Family Sisters to stay with them for about a year till they got more help from their Mother House in Rome.

On March 1st 1954 Sr. Johanna Feder became the Assistant Matron of the hospital. It is with great respect and gratitude we mention here about the Holy Family Sisters of Bordeaux, France who had worked about 70 years at the Kurunegala Hospital. Our Sisters took over from these Sisters. They were withdrawn because of lack of Nursing Sisters in their Congregation. The Holy Family Sisters remained one more year with Salvatorian Sisters in the hospital gently leading and guiding them in to this unknown area and difficult

ministry.

On June 1954 the five Sisters had the happiness to receive the registration as the staff nurses in Ceylon. Then Sr. Johanna could take the full responsibility as the new Matron of the General Hospital, Kurunegala. They worked for five years tirelessly and joyfully with the spirit of Salvatorian commitment.

What happened after those five years? It was said that Salvatorian Sisters were the last to arrive in Sri Lanka as nursing missionaries and were the first to be withdrawn from Government Hospitals. At the time of our Sisters' arrival there had not been Catholic private hospitals in the Island and foreign missionaries of various Congregations had served as supervisors and staff nurses for 80 years in various hospitals in Sri Lanka. In 1958 the Government held several discussions with the Catholic Bishops' Conference on the question of withdrawal of Religious Sisters from the hospitals. In 1959 Sri Lanka voted for a new Democratic, Socialistic Government under a new Prime Minister Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranayika who brought forward the question of withdrawal of the Religious Sisters serving in the Government hospitals and deported them to their native lands. The Bishops' Conference could not be an influence to stop this movement instead the Civil and the Church authorities agreed upon to withdraw the Sisters in 1959. On February 28, 1959 the Salvatorian Sisters were withdrawn. Humanly speaking, it was not an easy moment to get out of a lovingly and painstakingly built niche where our Sisters served. By this time the Kurunegala General Hospital had become the beloved home for the Salvatorian Sisters.

For a while it almost seemed to the Sisters that they



written statement at a later date January 21, 1980 which is now in the Archives of the Chilaw Bishop's House. The Bishop planned to build a small Catholic Hospital in his coconut estate at Marawila, which is situated in the western coastal area along the Colombo-Puttalam road, not far from Chilaw.

Until the above project of the Bishop could be completed the Sisters were allowed to occupy an old but spacious bungalow at Werehena close to Marawila the property of Dr. Patrick Fonseka, a friend of the Bishop who gave it gratis for the Sisters for several years. This house became a temporary home for the Sisters. Since it was a two-storey building it served both as a residence for Sisters and a small maternity of ten beds. Once again getting into settling was not easy. This building needed renovation and remodeling. The Sisters had to face many difficulties and even got deprived of their most basic needs. At the beginning there were no electricity; no sufficient water but with their keen organizing ability, in cooperation with Bishop and their untiring commitment they were able to run, not counting the cost, a temporary maternity and a very small hospital. Sr. Anotnilla started a dispensary on the top of one of the septic tanks, the only clean place they could find in this

Delegate to India and Ceylon graced the occasion. Rev. Fr. Cajetan Fernandopulle was appointed to raise funds for the building and supervise it. The Salvatorian had the necessary hospital experiences and they also helped to draw the architectural plan for the building of a hospital. To the deepest joy of the Salvatorian Sisters the fully equipped beautiful Nursing Home at Marawila saw the opening day on January 1, 1960! Thereon the Sisters gave whole-hearted service to the people of Marawila and to the neighbouring villagers. In the meantime the native vocations increased. The first group of Sri Lankan Salvatorian Sisters had been sent back to Marawila from the formation house in Rome, where the Salvatorian Sisters international formation house was located. This is our history in a nutshell.

All of us know that, today we live in the world of change. The science and technology has brought changes in the lives of people. Thus the people face untold problems. In order to respond to the needs of the modern society, we must find new ways and means to serve people who need our assistance, therefore our recent Provincial Chapter stirred us to respond in the following manner.

"We the Salvatorian women strive to be in solidarity with the suffering world so that all may experience the fullness of life"

To achieve this object, our Congregation's priority is for the following five elements of our life:

- Deepening and reclaiming our Salvatorian Apostolic identity,
- Providing Wholistic contextualized formation, in all stages of life,
- Collaborating with others in a culture of solidarity,
- Creating meaningful congregational structures for mission,
- Continuing our financial and self sustainability plan within a culture of solidarity,

The words of our founder Father Francis are source of strength for our mission.

"As long as there is one person on earth who does not know God and does not love God above all things, you dare not allow yourself a moment's rest'
Rev. Sr. Vasanthini Dionysious,
SDS



had to withdraw totally from Sri Lanka and get back home. Nevertheless, it so happened that His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Pieris, one who invited Salvatorians to Sri Lanka, was a personal friend of the new Prime Minister and the Bishop managed to get a statement from him that the Salvatorians would be allowed to remain in the Island and work in a private Catholic hospital. The Bishop got the

neglected bungalow. In no time they fixed up a cadjan (woven coconut leaves) thatched hut for this purpose.

The hopeful and joyful day dawned for the Salvatorian Sisters! It was August 2 1959! The foundation stone for the future hospital, the Nursing Home, was laid at Marawila in a coconut grove belonging to Rt. Rev. Bishop Edmund Pieris, the Bishop of Chilaw. The Most Rev. J.R. Knox, the Apostolic



"Mommy, is God punishing us?"

She sat on the edge of the stairs in her yellow footed sleeper, her face a picture of misery. In the past two months, her favourite aunt and uncle had been in a near-fatal accident and I had developed a mysterious illness, spent weeks in a hospital and returned home in a wheelchair. In the limited cause-and effect world of the nine-year-old, someone had to be responsible.

I called her over to the couch to sit with me and carefully pointed out that it was our parental responsibility to teach her right from wrong. But I assured her that no matter what she did, we still loved her and would never do such terrible things to punish her. She understood and accepted that.

Well, God loves us too--even more, I offered. But it wasn't enough.

"Well, then, why didn't God stop it? You're a good person. All you do is teach people about God. Why does God want you crippled?"

As we grow to adulthood, many of us have the luxury of believing in a God who takes good care of us if we do right. I am not sure who invented this God, but I know it is the God most of us believe in--until tragedy or illness makes it impossible to do so. Why doesn't God take care of good people or helpless chil-

dren and little animals? Why do they suffer and die?

I stumbled through an answer, trying to explain about the free will of the boys who stole the car that had crippled her aunt and uncle, then trying to draw a parallel with my own illness. Maybe the germs in the universe had a free will and God allowed that to be. The answer sounded lame, even to me. But the last question she asked was the most difficult of all.

"Well, if God didn't cause it, and God doesn't stop it, why pray?"

It is probably the most basic question of all Christianity, which brings us to a point we all arrive at sooner or later. It is the point at which we discover that we don't pray to change God or even to change what is; we pray to change ourselves. But that is hard enough for an adult to accept; it is almost incomprehensible for a nine year-old who is faced with sudden tragedy.

It is important to remember that children perceive all reality on a concrete cause-and-effect basis. Someone has to cause the problem: The illness, the death, the accident. As parents, we are usually good



at pointing out that it is not God, not the doctors, not Mom or Dad; it just happened. What we often fail to recognize is that once we take away all those options, our children, who still see themselves as the center of the universe, blame themselves, no matter how far-fetched that possibility appears to the adults around them--even blaming themselves if their parents divorce. Under all the searching questions my child was asking, the one I failed to hear was the one that lingers just below the surface in every child's mind, "Is it my fault?"

Assuming blame

In the months before I had become ill with multiple sclerosis, my youngest had severe bronchitis, with a hacking cough. I was guilty of saying no more than most parents say in similar situations, "Cover your mouth. You don't want someone else to get sick." Our typical nine-year-old had paid as much heed to that warning as most children her age. But in Liz's case, someone

else did get sick--her mom. And that someone went into the hospital and came home in a wheelchair.

For weeks she walked around looking haunted. We blamed her depression on all the changes my disability caused, the stress level in the household, the fear of the future with which we all lived, without ever guessing the truth. When it finally became too much for her to bear, she fell apart in the middle of an oral presentation in school, and with the help of a school counselor, she shared her terrible secret with us. She was convinced that she had made me ill and that we would all hate her once we knew.

Every child needs to hear "It's not your fault." No matter how far-fetched it may seem to us adults that a child could assume blame for what happened, those are often the times when a child is most in need of reassurance. We spent weeks bringing our youngest with us on my doctor visits, sharing the x-rays, explaining how the disease was hiding inside me long before she was born. Still, eleven years later, as she reaches to help me from a chair when my legs have failed, a shadow of guilt flits across her eyes. There may never be enough assurance to erase it, but I say it again anyway, "It's not your fault."

"Nobody's fault"

When we help our children deal with tragedy, it is important always to be aware of the self centeredness of childhood. Guilt is a natural

reaction to a reality over which we have no control. Everyone of us has had a time when we looked back and felt we did not do enough, help enough, support enough, to avert some-thing that happened, regardless of whether or not it could have made a difference. In childhood, those feelings are magnified by an exaggerated sense of self-importance.

Bad things happen in life to good people and bad people alike, things over which we have no control. What makes us good persons is not what happens to us but what we do with what happens. We can prepare the ground for this understanding by refusing to take a blaming posture in smaller incidents common to family life. Children need to hear often, "It doesn't really matter how it happened; what counts is what are we going to do about it?" When that awareness is carefully taught in small matters, it does not make tragedy any easier to understand, but it does help limit some of the self-imposed guilt.

Recently, while preparing a study guide for parents on communications, I asked my three adult children what expressions they had most liked to hear as a child. For my oldest, it was words of permission: "You may have that ... You may go." For my middle child, it was words of affection. But for the little girl of the yellow footed sleeper, now a confident woman of twenty, her best-loved expression sprang quickly to her lips: "It's nobody's fault."

Courtesy: *Liguorian*

1. Count before you shout

Old advice, but still good. Unfortunately, it's the hardest tip of all and so the one to tackle first. With the adrenaline flowing and the blood starting to boil; it takes a real effort of will power just when that's least easy to command. But do try - and try hard, every time, Counting up to 10 before you open your mouth is rarely much good. To 50 is better. Some situations may need 100!

1. Accept people as they are

Other people have to accept you as you are; unchanging and pretty well unchangeable, so do them the courtesy of accepting them as they are. Don't view them as should-be-perfect beings who would be perfect if only they were more like you. They are not you - so sooner or later you have got to take them as they are. It is so much less wearing all rounds, so saving of temper, if you decide to do the accepting sooner rather than later.

3. Leave the room

This often combines refusal to squabble with breaking the mood. It is also good when you feel about to lose your cool over some trifling matter; also when it is clear you are never going to win an argument with someone else. Don't just leave the room immediately take up some active task. Anything will do; and it will help channel away the build-up of nervous energy.

4. Learn to ignore

Temper in one person so readily starts stoking up another person's blood pressure ... but it need not. It still takes to make a quarrel.

Fighting really is a choice. If you make up your mind to say no, then you can refuse to be drawn. So much of other people's silly behaviour forgetfulness, inconsiderateness, harsh words - like so much of our own - is best ignored. Don't have such high expectations of perfection in others; none

of us is all that marvellous either. Be more tolerant, less arrogant, and learn to let many of these things pass you by. The saving of temper will be immense.

5. Detach yourself from annoyance

It can be done, and is always worth the effort. Simply separate yourself from the annoyance that begins welling up. It is rarely worth getting steamed up over anyway, as we always realise later, usually when it is too late, after the row.

6. Discuss later

Obviously not all causes of confrontations can be ignored or dismissed, especially family confrontations. They have to be faced and ironed out eventually. But later, not in the heat of the moment. Promise your adversary you will quietly discuss the matter at some calmer hour. He or she (and you) will feel less defensive/aggressive then, too.

7. Remember, nothing is really important

People are important, but never things, however valuable or important to you. So never make mere things a cause of flaring - temper and unhappy rows. Things are just not worth anyone getting upset over and in any case, they can usually be replaced. People cannot.

8. See the other person's point of view

See the other persons' point of view. Again, not easy when they start riling you. But they have a right to be considered as much as you. So genuinely try to put yourself in their shoes, to see the situation from their side. This is the first step towards compromise, the only real solution if a row cannot be stopped from blowing up.

9. Don't join in other's upset

Do not take responsibility for other people's behaviour, whoever they are. Their upset,

tantrums and strong feelings are their own, not yours, however much they may try to goad you into joining them.

10. Break the mood

If temper is about to flare, or a "situation" about to break out, deliberately change the mood. A smile, a gesture, a friendly suggestion - all

these and others may help to defuse the situation. Again, the choice is yours to make.

Every one of these ten tips can help you not lose your temper, next time when you are feeling like doing so. That way, the world will seem and be a nicer place!

Keep trying.

Ten ways to keep your temper

The Spiritual Life

The Spiritual life may be defined as a participation in the life of God, given to us in view of the merits Christ. Now since God has given us everything that we are or have, He is not in debt to us. On the contrary, we are in debt to Him. We owe Him our gratitude, our praise, our repentance. As descendants of Adam, his sin impoverished us all, and, left to ourselves, we had no way of making adequate reparation for the affront given to God. On the testimony of St. Paul the Apostle, the remedy for this wretched condition is the grace of redemption.

Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando



Hail Mary

"Hail Mary, full of grace!" For thousands of centuries, millions of times per day the Virgin Mary is greeted by the faithful with the greeting of the Archangel, that we hear resonating anew in today's Gospel. The sons of the Church learn from the words of the Archangel Gabriel that the fullness of the mystery of God's grace was realized in Holy Mary. Mary was Immaculate because she had to be the Mother of God. She is and will always be the Mother of God, the Mother of the Church, the Queen of the Angels and Saints.

Blessed Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854 proclaimed the Dogma of the faith revealed by God that the Blessed Virgin Mary? If the official proclamation of the dogma is relatively recent, the profession of faith by Christians and the liturgy is very ancient in this regard. Furthermore, four years later the same Virgin Mary, appearing in Lourdes to St Bernadette, confirmed the truth of the doctrine by presenting herself with the title 'I am the Immaculate Conception'. Pic; detail taken from the mural on Immaculate Conception - on the ceiling at Grand Street Negombo by Godamane.

On 03 December the Church celebrates the feast of St. Francis Xavier, who greatly influenced Christianity in both the north and south of Lanka. Many are the churches dedicated to the Saint. The Church at Kalegana in Galle claims a well of water used by the Saint. This well is still in existence. The seminary at Kalegana is also dedicated to St. Francis. Locals believe that the Saint on his way to China broke journey at the port of Galle and visited Kalegana. Likewise the locals in Mannar believe that the Saint on the invitation of the people of Mannar, visited Mannar. At this time St. Francis Xavier was in India and had earned an unparalleled apostolic reputation. However there is no definite record to say that St. Francis

visited Sri Lanka. Historians state that St Francis was unable to come in person and sent a young Indian priest trained and

Apostle of Asia



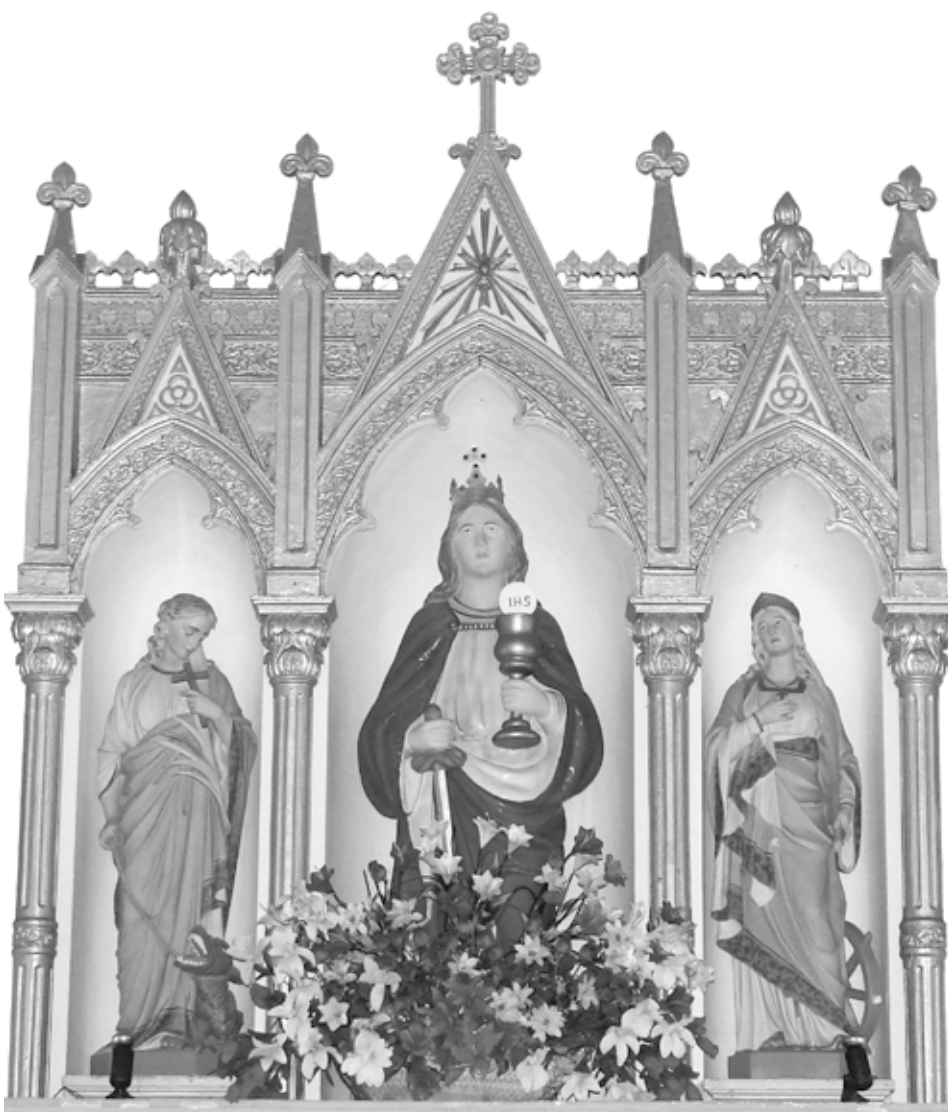
named after him. This apostle came to Mannar, preached, converted, instructed and baptized the islanders including their

Governor, the Viceroy of the King of Jaffna. Pic : Mural by Richard Gabriel St. Francis Xavier being

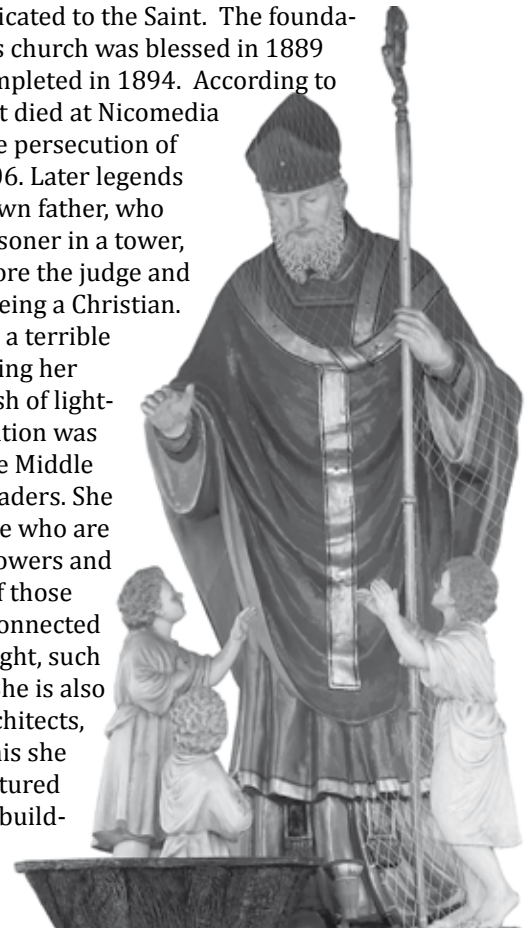
welcomed by natives on arrival in Sri Lanka. The mural is at the Seminary Chapel of Our Lady of Lanka, Ampitiya, Kandy.

St. Nicholas and St. Barbara

December 6, the Church celebrates the feast of St Nicholas. St. Nicholas blesses our children and helps us to guide and mould them through good example. Considered primarily as the patron saint of children, we should think of Nicholas as a saint, a confessor of the faith and the bishop of Myra - not merely as a jolly man from the North-Pole who brings happiness to small children, even though his memory has survived distorted in the unique personality of Saint Claus - the jolly, rotund, white-bearded gentleman who captivates chil-



dren with promises of gifts on Christmas Eve. Pic statue by the road side in Duwa. December 4, the Church celebrates the feast of St. Barbara. A quaint old church dedicated to St. Barbara is found in the sleepy sea side village of Thalahaen along the old road to Negombo. This Church is believed to be the only church in Sri Lanka dedicated to the Saint. The foundation stone of this church was blessed in 1889 and building completed in 1894. According to legend, this Saint died at Nicomedia in Asia under the persecution of Maximinus in 306. Later legends relate that her own father, who had kept her prisoner in a tower, dragged her before the judge and accused her of being a Christian. At her execution a terrible storm arose, killing her father with a flash of lightning. Her veneration was brought from the Middle East by the Crusaders. She is patron of those who are imprisoned, of towers and fortresses and of those whose work is connected with flashes of light, such as bell makers. She is also the patron of architects, because of all this she is commonly pictured holding a tower building in her hand. Pic: Altar piece in Church at Thalahaena.



Evangelii Gaudium: A Map and Guide for the Church's Pastoral Mission

Rev. Fr. Vimal Tirimanna, CSsR - Rome

Exactly a year ago, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI officially opened the 'Year of Faith', and almost simultaneously, he inaugurated the Ordinary Synod of Bishops on "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." Both these events were also to mark the 50th Anniversary of the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council, by Pope John XXIII in 1962. Following the post-Vatican II ecclesial custom of writing a post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation by the Pope at the end of each Synod (often, incorporating the propositions of the same Synod), on November 26, 2013, just two days after the official closure of the 'Year of Faith', Pope Francis released his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (literally meaning "The Joy of the Gospel"). This also happens to be his first most important teaching document ever since he became the Bishop of Rome some eight months ago. It can also be seen as the Pope's official response to the Synod discussions that took place from 7th to 28th October 2012. As already mentioned above, at that Synod, bishop-representatives and their experts from around the world gathered to discuss how the Catholic Church could revitalize the Catholics in strengthening their faith and also in sharing the Gospel with the rest of the world.

One needs to note carefully that in the post-Vatican II period, this is the first time that a Pope (Benedict XVI) called and inaugurated a Synod of Bishops, and then, instead of him, his successor (Pope Francis) wrote the post-Synodal document. This document also happens to be the first one written entirely by Pope Francis himself.

Pope Francis had already announced in July this year that he would not be using the Draft Statement of the last Synod as his base, but would rather be using those Synodal propositions agreed upon by the participant bishops, in formulating this post-Synodal document. Anyone who is familiar with the now well-known unique style of the present Pope would easily recognize that the entire *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG) is his own personal writing, based of course on the last Synodal propositions. Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, in presenting the Exhortation at a press conference in the Vatican said: "Pope Francis offers this document to the Church as a map and guide to her pastoral mission in the near future." And that is exactly what it is, and hence this is also the title of this essay.

The present writer, served as the theological consultant at the special desk set up by the *Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences* (FABC) in Rome last year. This desk was intended to assist the Asian bishop-participants who were present at the last Synod, and was set up at the Filipino Embassy to the Vatican. He experienced first hand the eagerness, earnestness and enthusiasm (three E's) of not only the Asian bishops but also of the other participant bishops, and reading the present post-Synodal Exhortation, he is more than convinced that the Pope has not disappointed those three E's of his brother-bishop-participants.

Some Main Characteristics of this Document

- EG expresses dynamism, reform and change (conversion) that spring forth from what it calls the "Joy of the Gospel" and "the freshness of the gospel". The document begins with the former (joy), and ends with the latter (freshness/renewal) with the quotation: "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev.21:5).
- It is written in a very popular, conversational or narrative style, avoiding any theological jargon. This reader-friendly style (which is so typical of the present Pope) will surely invite all the members of the Church to read it fully and meditatively. Reading through what the Pope says therein, this also seems to be his main purpose in adopting this style, i.e., to reach out to all the baptized members of the Church. In fact, EG could be a superb source for spiritual nourishment and Christian dynamism of any member of the Church.
- The entire document has the single aim of evangelization, but the means to achieve this noble end is 'conversion' at all levels of the Church, of all the baptized members. The document is full of concrete ways to achieve this much-desired conversion at all levels of Church life. Most probably, EG will go down in ecclesiastical history as the most practical and pastoral papal document to-date.
- Running through the Exhortation is the sense of joy, the joy that is derived from the good news which the Pope intends to inculcate in all the readers. Not only the style and the language used, but also the images they evoke give this sensation. Besides, the very word 'joy' occurs some 59 times in this document.
- One of the key themes of EG is the vital importance of dialogue in its many forms. The Dominican Prior of the *Balckfriars College in Oxford*, Fr. John O'Connor (who is also an expert on dialogue between the Church and the World), says that "this Exhortation has a striking theology of dialogue that permeates the entire document."
- Although EG uses the above-mentioned simple language and narrative style, the document is profound and full of theological and pastoral depth. This can be seen from the wide range of sources it has used, as is evident from the footnotes. These sources consist of the Bible, the Church Fathers, Ecumenical Councils, Popes, Episcopal Conferences, renowned theologians (both ancient and recent), Saints and Spiritual Writers,...etc. Interestingly, he has no quotation of his own statements in this document.
- A significant point that one should not lose sight of is the Pope's lavish use of the statements of Continental and Regional/Local Episcopal Conferences. The Pope's repeated desire to incorporate the Universal Episcopate in his official teaching ministry is evident here in EG. It also echoes a sense of Episcopal collegiality of which he is the head.
- The positive point of EG could also turn out to be one of its shady sides: The document is full of excellent spiritual, theological and pastoral insights. However, the over-crowding of such noble and truly Christian insights in one single document could easily make them lose their unique value, as the popular English saying has it: "The trees are lost for the forest!"

Some of the Major Points in the Contents of the Document

EG is a long document with five chapters and some 288 articles. These articles, are brief and to the point. This, and the simple, direct language used, makes it easy reading though the document is relatively long. It tends to cover almost all the aspects of evangelization, especially its implications in the practical/pastoral field. In a brief essay like this, it is not possible to mention all the items that the Pope highlights in EG. As such, we will limit ourselves here only to mention some salient points of this document, as follows:

- This document presents the announcing of the Gospel as a joyful act even when it has to be done under trying circumstances. No:10 of EG says: "Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow." Consequently, the Pope in his characteristic colloquial style says that "an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!" [No:10]. He also says: "There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter!" [No:6]
- The Pope invites the reader to "recover the original freshness of the Gospel," looking for "new avenues" and "new paths of creativity," but without enclosing or locking up Jesus in "dull categories" because "Jesus can also break through the dull categories with which we would enclose Him and He constantly amazes us by His divine creativity" [No:11].
- While calling changes/conversions from all the baptized in order to share the joy of the Gospel with the world, the Pope typical to his life-style, says: "Since I am called to put into practice what I ask of others, I too must think about a conversion of the papacy." Then, he goes on to say that "it is my duty as the Bishop of Rome, to be open to suggestions which can help make the exercise of my ministry more faithful to the meaning which Jesus Christ wished to give it" [No:32]. He also highlights the need for "a pastoral and missionary conversion, which cannot leave things as they presently are" [No:25], and calls for a "renewal" of ecclesiastical structures to enable them to become "more missionary oriented" [No:27].
- As an essential element of the conversion of the institutional Church, we should not be afraid to re-examine "certain customs not directly connected to the heart of the Gospel, even some of which have deep historical roots" [No:43]. In this sense, EG calls for a "sound decentralization" within the Church structures themselves. Re-echoing what Pope Paul VI said in 1971, Pope Francis says: "It is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory" [No:16]. In this sense, the Pope hopes, as the Second Vatican Council itself desired, that the local Episcopal Conferences might contribute to "the concrete realization of the collegial spirit," which according to him, "has not been fully realized" [No:32]. The Pope finally makes a frank comment: "Excessive centralization, rather than proving helpful, complicates the Church's life and her missionary outreach" [No:32].

"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures"
[No:49]

- In No:47 of EG, Pope Francis says that the Church is called to have her doors always wide open "so that if someone, moved by the Spirit, comes there looking for God, he or she will not find a closed door!" The Pope says that everyone can share in some way in the life of the Church.... "nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason." Then, the Pope dares to highlight what is obvious but what is often conveniently forgotten by many a baptized person, especially the Church's pastors, namely "the Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak" [No:47]. Pope Francis then points out that "these convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness" adding that "frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators" [No:47]! This orthodox Catholic teaching of the Pope has many radical pastoral consequences in our Catholic Church which hopefully would unfold in the pastoral field, as time passes by.

Immediately afterwards, the Pope talks aloud of his radical vision for the Church: "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures" [No:49]. The Pope goes on to say that "more than the fear of going astray" his hope is that "we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, with habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving" [No:49].

(Contd. on Pg. 9)

Evangelii Gaudium..... Contd. from Pg. 8

- The Pope repeats what his immediate predecessors have been affirming, with regard to the ordination of males alone to priesthood “as a sign of Christ the Spouse who gives Himself in the Eucharist” and says explicitly that this “is not a question open to discussion.” However, he admits that this issue could be “divisive if sacramental power is too closely identified with power in general” [No:104].
- Highlighting the vital importance of the Sacrament of Penance, the Pope reminds priests that “the confessional must never be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord’s mercy which spurs us on to do our best” [No:44]. This point of being merciful to sinners is very consistent with the present Pope’s preaching, discourses and attitudes ever since his election as St. Peter’s successor early this year. The Pope also reminds confessors of the many mitigating clauses accepted by the Catholic moral and pastoral tradition, such as “immutability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors” [No:44].
- Keeping in line with the numerous requests and complaints made by many a bishop-participant at the last Synod, the Pope highlights the indispensable nature of preaching, especially the preaching of the homily. He dedicates 25 articles [Nos.135-159]

only for the topic of preaching, thus, highlighting its vital importance for evangelization and the need to have much better preaching than what often happens now all over the world! The Pope, in his typical way of expressing his views, does not mince words: “We know that the faithful attach great importance to it, and that both they and their ordained ministers suffer because of homilies: The laity from having to listen to them and the clergy from having to preach them! It is sad that this is the case!” [No:135] Then, the Pope points out that a homily is not “a form of entertainment” nor is it a “speech or a lecture!” Since a homily is within the liturgical context, it “demands that the preaching should guide the assembly and the preacher, to a life-changing communion with Christ in the Eucharist” [No:138]. The Pope goes on to give a method of preparing for preaching, dedicating a lot of space for it in the document. He explicitly mentions reverence for the Truth, personalizing the Word, spiritual reading (*lectio divina*), having an ear to the people and using various homiletic resources as necessary means of preparing for a good homily/sermon [Nos.145-159]. If a priest does not allow God’s Word “to touch his life, to challenge him, to impel him, and if he does not devote time to pray with that word, then, he will indeed be a false prophet, a fraud, a shallow impostor” [No:151]. In other words, no priest could give lack of time as a valid excuse to prepare his homilies, because this is one of his main duties as a priest.

- Quoting Pope Paul VI,

Pope Francis says: “The faithful expect much from preaching, and will greatly benefit from it, provided that it is simple, clear, direct, well-adapted.” Then, the Pope goes on to say that simplicity has to do with the language we use: “It must be one that people understand, lest we risk speaking to a void. Preachers often use words learned during their studies in specialized settings which are not part of the ordinary language of their hearers. These are words that are suitable in theology or catechesis, but whose meaning is incomprehensible to the majority of Christians. The greatest risk for a preacher is that he becomes so accustomed to his own language that he thinks that everyone else naturally understands and uses it. If we wish to adapt to people’s language and to reach them with God’s word, we need to share in their lives and pay loving attention to them. Simplicity and clarity are two different things. Our language may be simple but our preaching not very clear. It can end up being incomprehensible because it is disorganized, lacks logical progression or tries to deal with too many things at one time. We need to ensure, then, that the homily has the thematic unity, clear order and correlation between sentences, so that people can follow the preacher easily and grasp his line of argument” [No:158].

- The topic of using simple, clear, direct language in all our evangelizing efforts occurs again and again in the document. The Pope points out how at times, the ordinary believers, “in listening to completely orthodox language,

take away something alien to the authentic Gospel of Jesus Christ, because that language is alien to their own way of speaking to and understanding one another. With the holy intent of communicating the truth about God and humanity, we sometimes give them a false god or a human ideal which is not really Christian. In this way, we hold fast to a formulation while failing to convey its substance. This is the greatest danger!” [No:41]

- The importance of being in touch with pastoral realities is meant not only for preachers, but also for theologians because theology has to be in dialogue not only with other sciences but also with human experiences to bring the Gospel message to different cultural contexts and groups. The Pope “appreciates and encourages the charism of theologians and their scholarly efforts to advance dialogue with the world of cultures and sciences” and calls them “to carry out this service as part of the Church’s saving mission.” In doing so, however, “they must always remember that the Church and theology exist to evangelize, and not to be content with a desk-bound theology” [No:133].

- The three main elements of the concept of “Triple Dialogue” of the FABC (*Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences*) in evangelizing Asia, namely, inter-religious dialogue [Nos:238; 250-254], inculturation [Nos:115-118] and the option for the poor [Nos:53-54; 210], are repeated by the Pope in a universal sense, i.e., in a sense applicable to the Churches on all the continents.

He explicitly says: “Evangelization also involves the path of dialogue. For the Church today, three areas of dialogue stand out where she needs to be present in order to promote full human development and to pursue the common good: dialogue with states, dialogue with society – including dialogue with cultures and sciences – and dialogue with other believers who are not part of the Catholic Church” [No:238].

- Following the lead given by his predecessors, Pope Francis encourages inter religious dialogue, warning however, of the need to remain “steadfast in one’s deepest convictions, clear and joyful in one’s own identity, while at the same time being open to understanding those of the other party and knowing that dialogue can enrich each side” [No:251]. Evangelization and interreligious dialogue, far from being opposed, mutually support and nourish each other [No:251].

- With regard to inculturation, the Pope says that “Christianity does not have simply one cultural expression” and that the face of the Church is “varied” [No:116]. He goes on to say: “We cannot demand that peoples of every continent, in expressing their Christian faith, imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history” [No:118].

- The Pope highlights his favourite vision of the Church as a Church that is poor and for the poor, and urges us to pay special attention to those who are in the margins of our societies.

Contd. on Pg. 15

“Heart to Heart” – Catholic Youth Camp

December 15 - St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10

A Fun-filled Catholic Youth Day Camp

“Lift Up Your Hearts” Animated by Priyanthi Seneviratne VanDort

“Raise Your Voices” Animated by Francis D’ Almeida

“Hearts on Fire” Animated by Vinnette Perera

“The Burning Bush” Animated by Trevor Ludowyke

“Cross Over” Animated by Uchitha Illangasinghe

Heart to Heart

On Sunday
15th December 2013
At St. Joseph’s College,
Colombo 10

Register with your School/
Parish before 29th November

Set Your Hearts Aglow

For Info:
Trevor on 0777-570071
Rozaine on 0773-688329
Wijitha: gocanada@sltnet.lk

Organized by the Archdiocese of Colombo
(For Colombo North, South, Central and Kotte Regions)

and laity will be chaired by Rev.Fr. Felician Ranjith Perera, Parish Priest All Saints’ Church, Borella. The organizing committee has made elaborate arrangements utilizing the resourceful expertise of experienced youth animators to make this youth day camp an enjoyable and fruitful experience for young ones between ages 14-20. The day’s programme will include the following among others;

- “Raise Your Voices” – a vocal rejuvenation session – by Mr. Francis Almeida
- “Hearts on Fire” – Interactive session on youth relationships – by Ms. Vynette Perera
- “Lift up your Hearts” – An Experience of Anointed Music – by Ms. Priyanthi Seneviratne VanDort
- “The Burning Bush” – a fun-filled Biblical encounter – by Mr. Trevor Ludowyke
- “Cross Over” – Outdoor fun Adventure activities – Mr. Uchitha Illangasinghe (Sethsarana)
- “Youth Christmas Carols” - conducted by Mr. Francis Almeida and Ms. Priyanthi Seneviratne VanDort

Registrations should be made through Parish Priests or Principals of Catholic Schools in the Colombo North, Colombo South, Colombo Central, and Kotte regions. A special Secretariat has been established at All Saints’ Church, Borella to coordinate this programme. For more details contact Mr. Wijitha Ariyaratne - gocanada@sltnet.lk

Mr. Trevor Ludowyke - 0777-570071 or
Mrs. Rozanne Avory - 0773688329

Heart to Heart Secretariat
C/O, Parish Priest, All Saints’ Church, Borella.
Tel: +94-11-2693051

“Heart to Heart” – a Fun-filled Catholic Youth Day Camp will be held on Sunday December 15, at St. Joseph’s College, Colombo 10, organized by the Archdiocese of Colombo. This programme will be open to youth from the Catholic Schools and Parishes in Colombo North, Colombo South, Colombo Centre, and Kotte regions.

The concept behind this programme which has been initiated by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo, is to enable Catholic youth to interact with one another in an atmosphere of fellowship leading to a spiritual rejuvenation and to enjoy their school vacation in a fruitful manner.

The Steering Committee consisting of clergy

Rev. Fr. Stanley Abeysekera celebrates Golden Jubilee of Priesthood

Rev. Fr. Stanley Abeysekera will complete 50 years of dedicated service in the Lord's Vineyard on December 21, 2013. His younger sister, Mrs. Rita Abeysekera recalled sweet memories of the childhood of Fr. Abeysekera who was the Rector of St. Joseph's College, Maradana, Don Bosco Kaluggala and St. Thomas' Kotte.

He got his call to become a priest when his best friend in school, left to become a priest. He then asked his father who readily agreed but mother kept silent. His elder sister cried. He entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary, Borella at the age of 14.

In 1952, he got through the GCE (Ordinary Level) Examination with 6 distinctions and two credits. He entered St. Joseph's, Maradana to do his Advanced Level and afterwards joined Aquinas University College, Borella to pursue higher studies. He completed his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary, Ampitiya where he got through his exams winning gold and silver medals.

He was ordained a priest on December 21, 1963 and first appointment was as an assistant teacher at St. Joseph's College, Maradana and thereafter was appointed Rector of St. Thomas College, Kotte. In



1978 he obtained a Masters Degree in education, from the University of London and subsequently completed his PhD from University of London.

The thesis which he published was titled "Pre Vocational Education in Sri Lanka." While studying in England he also did missionary work.

In 1983, he assumed duties as the Rector of St. Joseph's College, Maradana and devoted himself for the upliftment of the school. Under his administration a more pleasant school environment was created and he worked hard to improve the image of the school with each passing day. He put up new school buildings

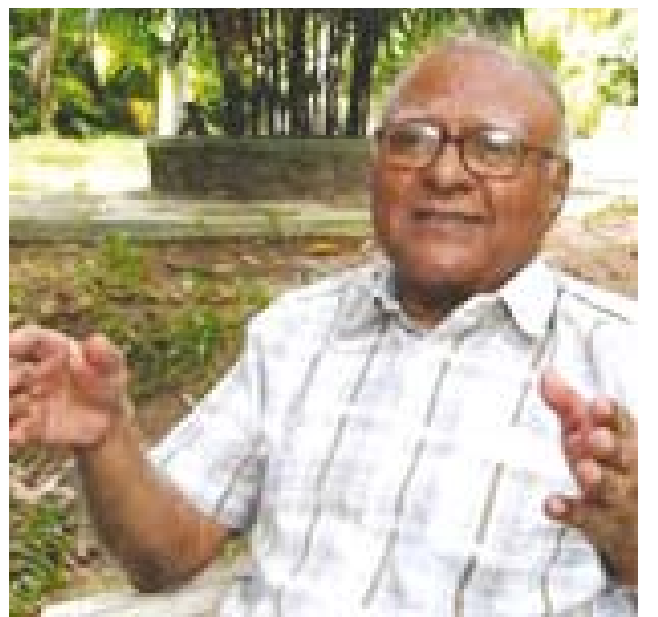
among them an auditorium, Computer Centre, a radio station and modern canteen.

The Enderamulla Branch of St. Joseph's College was opened during his Rectorship and under his valuable guidance the school saw many achievements both in academic and extracurricular activities. The erection of gigantic sports complex capable of accommodating 5000 spectators was an important achievement during his tenure as Rector. After his retirement from St. Joseph's College, he went to Luciana in America to do missionary work. On his return he was appointed as the Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Church, Nugegoda, for 9 months and then at St. Anthony's Church, Kollupitiya.

In 2006 he returned to St. Joseph's College, Maradana and engaged in counselling and giving life education to children. He was also assigned to write the history of St. Joseph's College. A lover of music Fr. Stanley entertains participants, at the annual Christmas get together, by singing Pandit Amaradeva's songs. Though he is faced with impairment in his eye sight still he prefers to engage in religious activities.

May God grant him good health, courage, strength to engage

Rev. Fr. Aloysius Peiris 60 Ordination Anniversary



There will be a gathering of kindred souls in order to celebrate the 80th Birthday and 60th Ordination Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Aloysius Peiris SJ and also to rejuvenate the Asian Praxis of Liberation Theology, on Friday December 13, 2013 at 3.00 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Living Saviour, Badudaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7.

Letters to the Editor ... Letters to the Editor ...

Catholics should awake from the deep slumber they are in

Christmas is round the corner. Catholics, especially, the elderly, live in a cloud.

They love to cling onto meaningless legends and traditions, which no doubt have a damning effect on teenage Catholic children. We force them to live in a fools paradise. These children are unable to decide between fact and fiction. We lead them down the garden path.

In some Catholic homes, the center piece of attraction is Santa Claus, the puppet, fully rigged up with buttons and bows. Children are really thrilled, when he dances to the tune of jingle bells. These innocent Catholic children

think this is Christmas.

Where is Baby Jesus, St. Joseph and the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. We Catholics have forgotten them.

Catholic children are quite oblivious to the fact, that Christmas day is the birthday of Jesus Christ, who was born in a manger. All these are gone with the wind.

Even at this belated stage, Catholics should awake from the deep slumber they are in and guide our children to think anew and break away from archaic legends, traditions and customs, which look so silly and meaningless.

Yours in Christ
(J.T.Mirando).

M. Felix V. Cooray

Centenary Celebrations of Guild of Immaculate Heart of Mary

The Guild of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was inaugurated 100 years ago in very quiet fashion 8th December 1913. It was not heralded into existence with a flourish of trumpets.

Very Rev. Fr. Emile Nicolas, O.M.I., the third Rector, initiated the movement in 1913, and when the Guild was founded by him in the same year it started with a modest enrolment of thirty five members, who were all boys on the registers of the College. The only record extant which perpetuates these pioneers in detail is a photograph.

It is good to know the objects of the Guild. The aims of the Association are two fold: to promote the personal sanctification of its members and to work for the salvation of soul by praying, in union with the Blessed Virgin, for the conversion of sinners.

The criterion is a devotion to Our Lady. For this reason the Guild has been formally aggregated the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary established in the Church of Our Lady of Victories,

Paris. By virtue of this aggregation every member of the Guild is at the same time a member of this Archconfraternity, sharing in its privileges and indulgences as well as in the prayers and good works of its millions of members.

Our founder of the Guild was so thoughtful of the generations of Josephians in time to come and it was a gift that he offered to them. It could be considered a very rare opportunity. Every Josephian should be thankful to God and Mother Mary and pray for our founder late Rev. Fr. Emile Nicholas third Rector of St. Josephs College, Colombo 10 who initiated the Guild.

We specially call upon all old and present Guildsmen together with the young present Josephians and the clergy to gather under the banner of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to celebrate this grand feast on December 8, 2013 being the "100 Year" (the Centenary celebrations) in a pleasing manner to Our Heavenly Mother.

Holy Land 9 DAYS – LKR 175,000 pp
Departure: 3rd February 2014

Christmas In Bethlehem 9 DAYS – LKR 192,000 pp
Departure: 23rd December 2013

Visiting: Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Bethany, Jericho, Dead Sea, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Mt Carmel, Nazareth, Galilee, Amman, Mt. Nebo.

Chennai Velankanni 4 DAYS – LKR 43,000 pp (min 4)
2 nights in Velankanni, 1 night in Chennai.
Return air ticket, Accommodation, Full board in Velankanni, Private transfers, Indian visa fees.

Shrines of Europe 13 DAYS LKR 395,000 pp
Milan, Padova, Assisi, Rome, Fatima, Madrid, Lourdes, Nevers.
International air ticket, Domestic air ticket, Full board meals,
4* accommodation (Twin Sharing), All tours and transfers in A/C coaches.
Departures: 25th April 2014 / 8th August 2014

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Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. (Lk. 3:4,6)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR A
8th Dec - 15th Dec. 2013

Sun: 2nd Sunday of Advent
Bible Sunday
Is. 11: 1-10; Rom. 15: 4-9; Mt. 3: 1-12

Mon: Feast of Immaculate Conception of the Bl. Virgin Mary
Gen. 3:9-15,20; Eph. 1: 3-6,11-12;
Lk. 1: 26-38

Tue: Is. 40: 1-11; Mt. 18: 12-14

Wed: Memorial of St. Damasus, I, Pope
Is. 40:25-31; Mt. 11:28-30

Thu: Memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Is. 41:13-20; Mt. 11:11-15

Fri: Memorial of St. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr
Is. 48:17-19; Mt. 1:16-19

Sat: Memorial of St. John of the Cross
Sir 48:1-4,9-11; Mt. 17:10-13

Sun: 3rd Sunday of Advent
Is. 35:1-6,10; Jas. 5:7-10; Mt. 11:2-11

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

For the followers of Christ: That they may be effective witnesses to the values of the Gospel, and so help to build God's kingdom on earth. We pray to you, O Lord.

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

For world leaders: That through goodwill and cooperation they may strive to put an end to violence, poverty and famine. We pray to you, O Lord.

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

For those who are broken by sorrow and suffering: and for all who are victims of exploitation. That the Coming of the Lord may give them strength and endurance. We pray to you, O Lord.

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

That the faith we profess with our lips may be borne out in our deeds. For this we pray to you, O Lord.

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

Evangelii Gaudium... Contd. from Pg. 9

In response to the vast marginalizations and exclusions that result from contemporary globalization of market economies, EG gives a rule of thumb: "Thou shalt not exclude!" [No:56]. "Until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples is reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence" [No:59].

- EG rejects the well-known "trickle-down theory" in economics which is at the base of the contemporary globalization of market economies as "unjust at its roots" [No:59], pointing out that it has never been proven in lived reality, especially from the point of view of the vast multitudes of the excluded in the world [No:54]. "Such an economy kills" because the law of "the survival of

the fittest" is at its base. Consumerism is also rejected as a man-made "idol" [No:55].

- EG re-affirms the Church's consistent tradition of defending human life in all its stages, from the moment a human life begins in the womb to its death. The underlying principle is that human beings are always 'ends' in themselves and never 'means' to any end whatsoever [No:213].

- For those pessimists who often say that the good old days were better than the present days, the Pope has an eloquent response: "Some people nowadays console themselves by saying that things are not as easy as they used to be, yet we know that the Roman empire was not conducive to the Gospel message, the struggle for justice, or the defence of human dignity. Every period of history is

I Am The Immaculate Conception

By Eric Perera, Sydney, Australia

"We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."

Pope Pius IX in 1854 proclaimed the dogma of Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Immaculate conception does not mean the Conception of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. It means that Mary was born free from original sin in a state of grace.

"The angel came to Mary and said, rejoice, Full of Grace, the Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28)

Mary was born in a state of grace without any stain of sin. Mary was full of grace in all her life. It was necessary that Mary be in a state of grace to enable the Son of God to conceive through her, so that she can carry the Son of God.

When Mary visits Elizabeth, Elizabeth giving a loud cry said:

"You are Most Blessed among women, and Blessed is the Fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:41)

Because Mary was full of God's grace, it was possible for Mary to be immaculate, to be pure, and be the Ark of the Covenant in the New Testament.

In the book of Genesis one can get an idea about the Immaculate Conception. In the Book of Genesis 3:15

"I will make you enemies, you and woman, your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head and you will strike his heel."

This shows how God prepares Mary in a state of grace from the beginning so that her entire life is Immaculate.

This state of grace in the entire life of Mary, this privilege of Mary is the Immaculate Conception. By crushing the head of the serpent by Mary, God wanted Mary to fight the evil and be a perfect creation without any stain of sin.

Mary is the New Eve

Adam and Eve were born in an immaculate position. Similarly the new Eve too was born in an immaculate position. St Irenaeus, a doctor of the Catholic Church states that,

"Mary is truly the new Eve

Eve did not obey God, Mary the new Eve obeyed God and accepted His request made through the angel in the Annunciation Eve through sin bought death to the world Mary through faith, in the Annunciation became part and parcel in saving the world through Jesus."

Pope Pius XII in his encyclical letter *Ad Caeli Reginam* wrote:

"Mary in the work of redemption by God's will, joined with Jesus Christ, the cause of salvation in much the same way Eve joined with Adam the cause of death"

The *Lumen Ggentium*, one of the principle documents of the Second Vatican Council states:

"What the virgin Eve bound by her unbelief, Mary loosened by her faith." (L.G. 56) In the same document, the Eve-Mary parallel is treated in relation to the Church: "For believing and obeying, Mary brought forth on earth the Father's Son. This she did, knowing not man but overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, as the New Eve. Who put absolute trust? Not in the ancient serpent, but

marked by the presence of human weakness, self-absorption, complacency and selfishness, to say nothing of the concupiscent which preys upon us all. These things are ever present under one guise or another; they are due to our human limits rather than particular situations. Let us not say then, that things are harder today; they are simply different!" [No:263].

Conclusion

Although EG is certainly a powerful blow of fresh air, any serious student of Catholic Tradition would immediately notice that there is nothing radically "new" in what it says. Already, the main elements of EG are in the Catholic Tradition, especially in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council which unfortunately had been

in the messenger of God. (L.G. 63) We, the faithful of the Church are called to follow Mary's example of trusting faith and fidelity to the Holy Will of God."

Historical Evidence

Although the Immaculate Conception was officially declared as a Church doctrine in 1854, there is evidence that people believed about Mary's immaculate state even before.

St Augustine, in 390 AD wrote:

"Every personal sin must be excluded from the Blessed Virgin Mary for the sake of the honour of God."

Saint Ambrose (340 AD - 370 AD) wrote:

"Mary a virgin not only undefiled but a virgin whose grace has made inviolate free from stain."

Mary and History of Salvation

It was God's design to make Mary as her whole person (not only her soul). In a state of grace, so that the salvation for the whole of mankind is fulfilled through the Son of God to be born through her.

Mary had a unique role in the history of salvation. According to Pope John Paul II Mary is the biblical woman who is at the centre of God's plan and salvation. If Eve was the witness to God's plan for creation, Mary was the witness to the redemption of the world.

As Abraham's faith was the beginning of a new Covenant of God with Israel, Mary's faith is the beginning of a new covenant. In this special role she received the gift from God, which is the Immaculate Conception.

Ark of the Covenant

Mary is called the Ark of the Covenant. What is the Ark of the Covenant? The Ark, is a chest containing the Ten Commandments (Hebrews 9:4) this was considered precious because it contained a precious item. Mary too is called the Ark of the Covenant as she in a state of grace and carried a precious person that is Jesus in her womb. Mary was the Ark of the Covenant, who brought the saviour into this world. That is why we call her Mary Immaculate.

"HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE

THE LORD IS WITH THEE

BLESSED ART THOU AMONGST WOMEN"

I am the Immaculate Conception

In the year 1858 Mary appeared to a peasant girl called Bernadette in Lourdes, and said, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

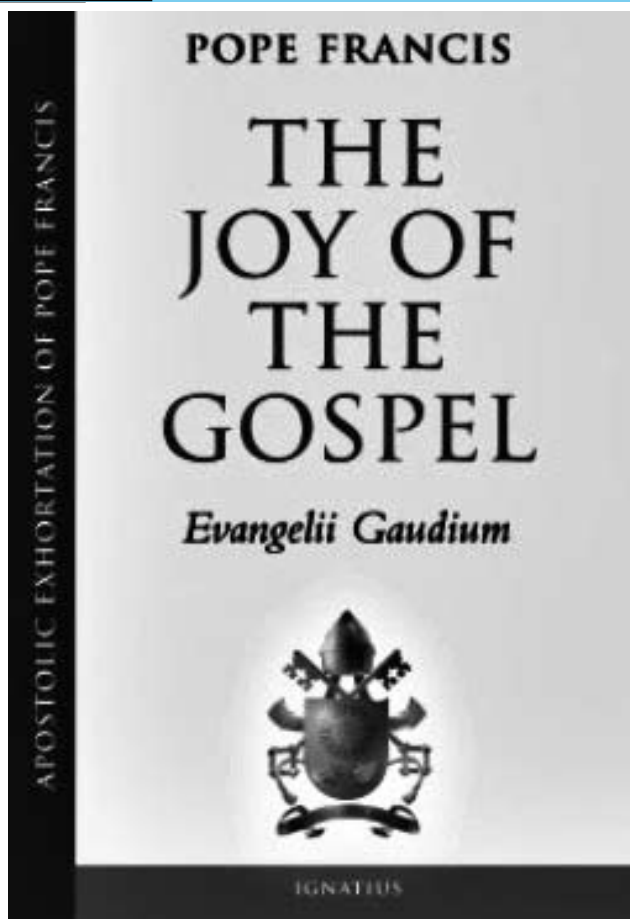
What is the importance of the Immaculate Conception? God wants each one of us to be like Mary. Not only was she conceived without sin but she lived a holy life throughout her earthly life, On this feast day let us ask Mary to guide us, guard us and protect us so that we too be immaculate people of God until the end of our earthly life.

"O MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN
PRAY FOR US WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO THEE"

overlooked, forgotten or even ignored, in recent decades by the Church. For years, they have never been heard in such simple, straight forward language, and that too, from a Pope! It is only in this sense, that most of what EG says may sound as "new". Last but not least, the Pope says he is aware that nowadays documents do not arouse the same interest as in the past and that they are

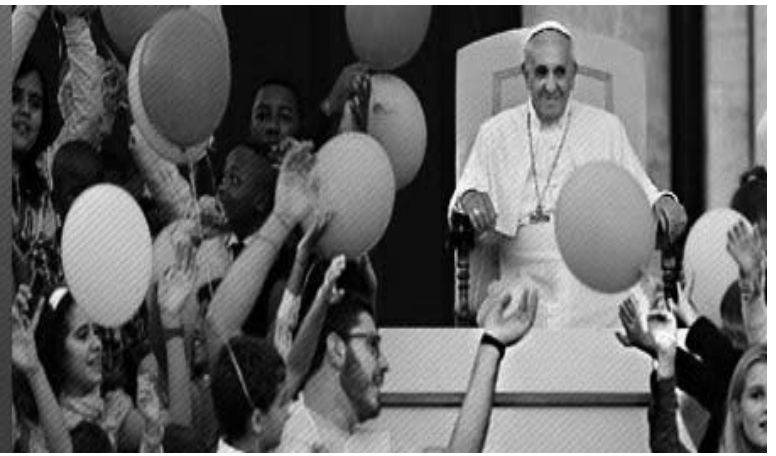
quickly forgotten, and that should not be the fate of this document, because he wants "to emphasize that what I am trying to express here has a programmatic significance and important consequences" [No:25]. One who reads the document seriously and meditatively with the well-being of the Church as his/her main interest cannot but agree fully with the Pope in this regard.





EVANGELII GAUDIUM

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION OF THE HOLY FATHER



Pope Francis' new document

Pope Francis has just released a new document titled *Evangelii Gaudium*. It is his first Apostolic Exhortation and devoted to the theme of the new evangelization.

Things to know and share . . .

1) What does "Evangelii Gaudium" mean?

It is Latin for "The Joy of the Gospel."

2) What is an Apostolic Exhortation?

It is a papal document that, as the name suggests, exhorts people to implement a particular aspect of the Church's life and teaching.

Its purpose is not to teach new doctrine, but to suggest how Church teachings and practices can be profitably applied today.

Some Apostolic Exhortations are devoted to the pastoral challenges faced in particular parts of the world (Europe, Africa, Asia, the America). Others are devoted to particular themes.

Previous Apostolic Exhortations include:

- Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (on evangelization today)
- John Paul II's *Christifideles Laici* (on the role of the laity)
- John Paul II's *Redemptoris Custos* (on St. Joseph)
- Benedict XVI's *Sacramentum Caritatis* (on the Eucharist)
- Benedict XVI's *Verbum Domini* (on the Word of God)

3) How much authority does an Apostolic Exhortation have?

It is one of the more important papal documents. As it is of a pastoral nature rather than a doctrinal or legal nature, though, it is ranked lower than an encyclical or an apostolic constitution as with everything official that the Pope writes, is to be taken very seriously.

4) What leads a pope to write an Apostolic Exhortation?

Frequently, Apostolic Exhortations are written after a meeting of the Synod of Bishops.

The Synod of Bishops is a group that gathers selected bishops from across the world to discuss a particular subject.

At the Synod, the bishops write a document making recommendations for the Pope. It is then given to him for his reflection, and he may then write an Apostolic Exhortation based on the bishops' recommendations.

Exhortations that come about in this way are called "Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations" because they are written after ("post-") a meeting of the Synod. There does not have to be such an exhortation. Sometimes they hold a meeting of the Synod of bishops, but no Apostolic Exhortation is released.

Also, not all Apostolic Exhortations are written after a synod, though sometimes the Pope may decide to write one on his own, without a synod being held on the subject. This was the case with John Paul II's *Redemptoris Custos*.



5) Why did Pope Francis write *Evangelii Gaudium*?

It was written in response to the most recent meeting of the Synod of Bishops, which took place in October, 2012.

It was devoted to the subject of the new evangelization, so that is the subject of *Evangelii Gaudium*. This synod took place before Pope Francis was elected in March 2013.

It sometimes happens that a synod is held and the Pope who presided over it leaves office before the exhortation is released. His successor may then choose to go forward with the project.

For example, the 2005 Synod on the Eucharist was held under John Paul II, but he had passed on before an exhortation was released. Benedict XVI then took the document that the bishops had prepared and had an exhortation written.

(Usually, the Pope does not draft the document himself, but is drafted based on his decisions and he has final approval over what it says.)

Pope Francis decision in this case is similar to his decision to release the Encyclical *Lumen Fidei*, which was primarily drafted by Pope Benedict, but which he completed.

Unlike that case, though, Pope Francis contributed much, much more to this document. With *Lumen Fidei*, he did not add very much to what Pope Benedict had written. *Evangelii Gaudium*, by contrast, is much more a "Francis document." It regularly emphasizes the distinctive thought and themes of the new Pope.

6) What is Pope Francis' main message in *Evangelii Gaudium*?

As suggested by the name, the principal theme involves the need for a joyful proclamation of the Gospel to the entire world.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, who presented the document at a Vatican press conference, summarized its main message this way:

If we were to sum up Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium* in a few words, we could say that it is an Apos-

tolic Exhortation written around the theme of Christian joy in order that the Church may rediscover the original source of evangelization in the contemporary world.

• Pope Francis offers this document to the Church as a map and guide to her pastoral mission in the near future.

• It is an invitation to recover a prophetic and positive vision of reality without ignoring the current challenges.

• Pope Francis instills courage and urges us to look ahead despite the present crisis, making the cross and the resurrection of Christ once again our "the victory banner."

7) What particularly noteworthy things does the Pope have to say in the document?

There is a mountain of them. The document itself is 51,000 words long, which means that it is the length of a novel and takes at least 5 hours to read.

The following seven points, gathered together in the five chapters of the Exhortation, constitute the fundamental pillars of Pope Francis' vision of the new evangelization:

1. The reform of the Church in a missionary key,
2. The temptations of pastoral agents,
3. The Church understood as the totality of the People of God which evangelizes,
4. The homily and its preparation,
5. The social inclusion of the poor,
6. Peace and social dialogue,
7. The spiritual motivations for the Church's missionary action.

The cement which binds these themes together is concentrated in the merciful love of God which goes forth to meet every person in order to manifest the heart of his revelation: The life of every person acquires meaning in the encounter with Jesus Christ and in the joy of sharing this experience of love with others.

Young World

Concert Day at St. Bernadette's Pre School



St. Bernadette's Pre School at Diyalagoda, held its concert at the Diyalagoda Junior School. Rev. Fr. Chaminda Roshan, Parish Priest Beruwala, was the Chief Guest. The Concert was organised by Rev. Sr. Mary Rita, Principal of the Pre School and Staff.

D. Anselm Fernando

Holy Rosary Feast at Meerigama Church



The Youth Society of Holy Rosary Church, Meerigama made a pandal using coconuts and parts of the branches of the coconut tree to celebrate the feast

of the Church. Picture shows the members of the Youth Society with the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Anura Shri Kamal.

Holy Communion at St. Andrew Avellino Sunday School Kadawatha



Around 27 children of St. Andrew Avellino Sunday School received First Holy Communion with Holy Mass presided by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Sunil Kumara Peiris of St. Andrew Avellino Church, Kadawatha.

Pic. Rohan Silva

First Holy Communion at Thalgasagaara



Seven Children of Thalgasagaara St. Francis Xavier Church, Sunday School received First Holy Communion presided

by Rev. Fr. Nimantha Prageeth, Asst. Parish Priest, Nattandiya.

S. Felicia

Teaching Good Music to students



Veteran musician, Sathischandra Edirisinghe gave a talk on the 'Importance of Appreciating Good Music', to students of Our Lady of Lourdes Mahavidyalaya, Nattandiya recently.

Shriyangani Felicia

Programme on Writing Skills



A programme on writing skills was conducted by Mr. Kumara Nayanajith of the Gnanarthapradeepaya at St. Theresa of Avila, Sunday School, Kotikawatta in the

Kolonnawa Parish.

The programme was arranged under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Jude Chyshantha and organised by R. Joseph Priya.

Honour to country and school



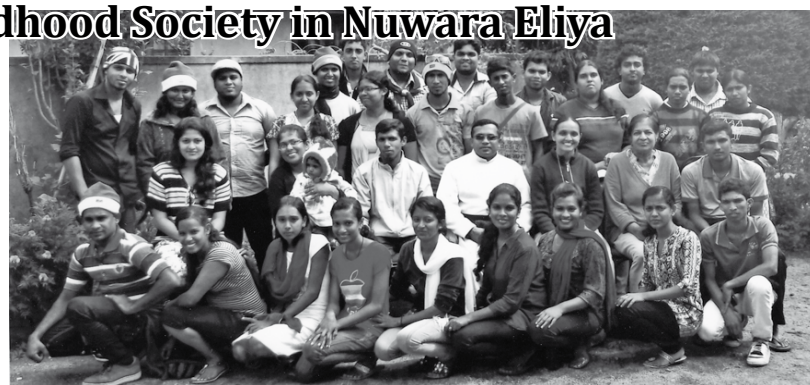
At the South Asian Junior Athletics Championships held in Birsa Mund Sports Complex, Ranchi, India, Amanthi Silva, a student of St. Bridget's Convent won 2 Medals. She won a Gold Medal in Discuss Throw with a distance of 41.65m and a Silver Medal with a distance of 11.96m in Putt Shot.

Media Unit

Chilaw Holy Childhood Society in Nuwara Eliya

The members of the Holy Childhood Society and their Director, Rev. Fr. Nishantha Janaka went on a visit to Nuwara Eliya with the objective of planning out their 'Year Plan' for 2014 as a preparation for the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Society in 2015.

Vasana Jayasaruriya



"Everything the Lord has made has its destiny and the destiny of the wicked is destruction"

Proverbs 16-4

English with Fun and Entertainment

Dear Readers,

In our eleventh lesson we learnt the speech sounds (i) (i:)(e), characteristics of speaking, a useful conversation, two anecdotes, a vocabulary enrichment activity, some riddles and proverbs.

In this lesson you will learn the speech sounds (ei) and (e) a funny tale of a little boy an anecdote about heaven, a role play, quotes about women and five proverbs.

Thanks for the readers who made valuable suggestions and for using these lessons effectively. You are invited to share your experiences to enrich our lessons further. With best regards!

NJ

Task 1 Read aloud with the teacher

(ei)

Read aloud and practice

bay	grey	weigh	age	paid	weigh	make	wait	face
stranger	hated	hasty	remain	display	disgrace	cage	page	wage
ache	bake	cake	lake	make	rake	stake	wake	sake
ate	bate	date	fate	gate	hate	late	mate	rate

1. Could you wait for me for a minute?
2. I hate to get late.
3. Don't get late
4. Bake the cake and wait for the lady
5. Rain in Spain is in the plain

Read aloud and practice (ei) as in date and (e) as in red,
raid - red date - debt later - letter wait wet pain pen waste west

1. Several guests came late
2. Ten days later he was dead
3. They make the same mistake every day.
4. I forgot his name, but I remember his face.

Read the sentences aloud.

1. The date/debt has still to be settled
2. Go to the shop and buy some paper/pepper
3. She got a pain/pen in her hand.

Task 2: Read this funny tale and enjoy the innocent fun

A little boy was doing his math homework. He said to himself, "Two plus five, that son of a bitch is seven. Three plus six, that son of a bitch is nine..." His mother heard what he was saying and gasped, "What are you doing?" The little boy answered, "I'm doing my math homework, Mom." "And this is how your teacher taught you to do it?" the mother asked. "Yes," he answered. Infuriated, the mother asked the teacher the next day, "What are you teaching my son in math?" The teacher replied, "Right now, we are learning addition." The mother asked, "And are you teaching them to say two plus two, that son of a bitch is four?" After the teacher stopped laughing, she answered, "What I taught them was, two plus two, THE SUM OF WHICH is four."

Teachers beware! Make it a point to check the instructions you give your students in setting a task otherwise you will end up as a son of a bitch.

Answer the questions

- (i) What did the little boy say to himself?
- (ii) What did the mother ask the little boy first?
- (iii) What was the reply of the little boy? .
- (iv) The mother asked him whether he was taught like that? .
- (v) Was the mother angry? .
- (vi) What did the mother ask the teacher?

Task 3 :

Whom does heaven belong to? Catholics only. Read the anecdote given below and check with St. Peter.

Heaven
A man arrives at the gates of heaven. St. Peter asks,
"Religion?" The man says, "Methodist."

St. Peter looks down his list, and says, "Go to room 24,
but be very quiet as you pass room 8."

Another man arrives at the gates of heaven. "Religion?" "Baptist."

"Go to room 18, but be very quiet as you pass room 8." A third man arrives at the gates. "Religion?" "Jewish." "Go to room 11, but be very quiet as you pass room 8."

The man says, "I can understand there being different rooms for different religions, but why must I be quiet when I pass room 8?" St. Peter tells him, "Well the Catholics are in room 8, and they think they're the only ones here."

Task 3 : Role play with your friends - Visiting Sri Lanka Scene Two

Upali : Akka, we have a visitor. Mrs. Adams this is my sister Neetha.

Akka this is Mrs. Adams.

Neetha : How do you do?

Maria : Glad to meet you.

Upali : Their car has broken down. I've sent for Martin Baas.

Could you look after Mrs. Adams for a while. I'll go back to Mr. Adams.

He'll need my help.

Neetha: Come Mrs. Adams Come and sit down. You must be hot and tired.

Maria: Yes. I'm rather. We've been travelling for nearly three hours this morning.

Neetha: Where are you going?

Maria: We are on our way to Arugam Bay.

Neetha: I hear it's a nice place. My brother has been there...

Where do you come from Mrs. Adams?

Maria : I'm from Switzerland. My husband comes from England.

I hear you are a teacher.What do you teach?

Neetha : I teach Sinhala and Geography in the village school.

Maria : You don't teach English, then?

Neetha: I don't.

Maria : But your English is excellent.

Neetha: Your English is excellent too, although you are Swiss.

Maria: Well, many of us in Switzerland speak two or three languages and I have been in England for many years.

Task 4 : Imagine you are Neetha and ask ten questions that you would ask Maria to sustain the conversation. Leave space for Maria's response and complete it with one of your friends.

Task 5 :

Read these quotes about women and send us your impressions about women

(i) Next to the wound, what women make best is the bandage.- Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly

(ii) One should never trust a woman who tells her real age. If she tells that, she'll tell anything. -Oscar Wilde

(iii) I could sooner reconcile all Europe than two women.- Louis XIV

(iv) Girls have an unfair advantage over men: if they can't get what they want by being smart, they can get it by being dumb.- Yul Brynner

(v) One of the most difficult things in the world is to convince a woman that even bargain costs money. - Anonymous

(vi) Women have a passion for mathematics. They divide their age in half, double the price of their clothes, and always add at least five years to the age of their best friend.- Marcel Archard

(vii) Women are meant to be loved, not to be understood.-Oscar Wilde

(viii) A beauty is a woman you notice; a charmer is one who notices you.- Adlai Stevenson

Task 6 Match the proverbs with their meanings

Proverbs

1. Between the devil and the deep sea
2. First come first served
3. Empty vessel s make the most noise
4. Great talkers are little doers
5. An idle brain is the devil's workshop

Meanings

- A. The first in the line will be attended to first
- B. Those who have little knowledge usually talk the most and make the greatest
- C. To choose between two equally bad alternatives in a serious dilemma
- D. One who has nothing to do will be tempted to do many mischievous acts
- E. Those people who talk a lot usually do not do much work

Answer:

Task 2 :

(i)The little boy said to himself two plus two that son of a bitch is seven and three plus six that son of a batch was nine.

(ii) The mother asked what he was doing.

(iii)The little boy replied that he was doing math.

(iii) The little boy affirmed that he was taught like that.

(iv)Yes, she was infuriated.

(v) The mother asked what she was teaching her child in math.

Task 6 : 1 - C. 2. A 3. B 4. E 5.D

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Compiled by Noel Jayamanne

QUIZ - On Catholic Themes

(..... from last week)

QUESTIONS

1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

Mary

551. Who is a saint of the Catholic Church?
552. In traditional Christian art saints are often depicted as having halos. What does it symbolize?
553. What is Beatification?
554. What is Canonization?
555. What are the four steps of the canonization process?
556. What is the title given to a person who is beatified?
557. What is the title given to a person who is canonized?
558. What is the name given to the branch of study which has the saints as its object?
559. What was the name of Cure d'Ars?
560. Which queen of Scotland is a canonized saint?
561. Which French king has been canonized?
562. Which saint's famous prayer begins:
"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace"?
563. Who were the parents of St. John the Baptist?
564. According to tradition, who were the grandparents of Jesus on his mother's side?
565. What was the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist?
566. What was the occupation of St. Joseph, Mary's husband and foster-father of Jesus?
567. What tribe of Israel did St. Joseph belong to?
568. When do we celebrate the solemnity of St. Joseph, husband of Mary?
569. When is All Saints' Day?
570. Whom do we honour as the first martyr (also known as proto martyr)?

(contd next week.....)

ANSWERS

I. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

Mary

551. A saint is one whose extraordinary holiness has been recognized by the Catholic Church and is held out as a model for veneration and imitation.
552. Holiness.
553. Beatification is a recognition accorded by the Catholic Church of a dead person's entrance into heaven and capacity to intercede on behalf of individuals who pray in his or her name.
554. Canonization is the act by which the Church declares a deceased person to be a saint, upon which the person is included in the Canon/list of saints.
555. Servant of God, Venerable, Blessed, Saint.
556. Blessed.
557. Saint.
558. Hagiography.
559. John Baptist Mary Vianney.
560. Queen Margaret (1045-1093).
561. Louis IX (1214-1270).
562. St. Francis of Assisi.
563. Zechariah and Elizabeth.
564. Ss Joachim and Anne.
565. They were cousins.
566. Carpenter.
567. Judah.
568. March 19.
569. November 1.
570. St. Stephen.

Courtesy: Clare Ukken fsp

Our Lady, the "New Eve"



Two important roles of Our Lady emerged at the Wedding feast of Cana. First, she is the "New Eve," a role Our Lady carries out clearly at Cana in contrast to the role of the first Eve in the Garden of Eden. Saint Paul had already referred to Jesus as the "last" or "second" or "New Adam." (cf 1Cor 15:45,47)

The title "New Eve" was conferred on Our Lady by the earliest Christian writers of the first and second centuries. Even Jesus' use of "Woman" when addressing His own Mother here at Cana and later from the cross (cf Jn. 19:26), seems a clear link between Eve of old and Our Lady. One point this author remembers distinctly from his Scripture studies in the seminary is, that there was no other known

example in either Hebrew or Greek literature of a man addressing his own mother as "Woman." Such a unique usage must have special meaning.

This meaning, as well as the connection between Our Lady and Eve, is seen in Genesis 3:15 when God speaks to the serpent who is Satan: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel."

The woman here could not have been Eve of old, for she had just been deceived by Satan into sin. On the other hand, the "woman" of Cana and Calvary perfectly fulfills God's prophetic word in Genesis. The first Eve was the one who was deceived by the Devil into eating the "forbidden fruit." (cf Gen 3: 1-7) for her it was a personnel sin, since she did not represent the human race, only Adam did. But Eve enticed her husband into eating the forbidden fruit as well. She certainly played a major part in the story of the Fall, leading Adam into rebellion against God's Command and into the Original Sin.

Our Lady at Cana as the New Eve, plays a parallel role by leading Jesus, the New Adam, toward the cross and our redemption, thus fulfilling the Heavenly Father's will for the world's salvation. Her expectant faith moved Jesus to work His first miracle, or "Sign" as the Evangelist calls it and thus set him on the course leading to His "hour."

Courtesy: Soul

Marian Year 2013 - 2014

*"Lead us to Christ
O Mary our Mother"*