



FEAST OF
OUR LADY OF
GUADALUPE
12 th December

Messenger

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FEAST OF
ST. LUCY
13 th December

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NEWS-IN-BRIEF

Churches to hold Holy Hour on Sunday, December 11

"Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances." (1 Thes: 5:16-18)

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo, requests the Catholic faithful of the Archdiocese to observe December 11, Sunday, as a day of prayer. An Holy Hour to be held in every church, for the safety and protection of the Sisters of Charity, in order that they may continue their Christ-like missionary work with greater zeal and enthusiasm in Sri Lanka.

Episcopal Ordination of Bishops-elect on February 18th

Episcopal Ordinations on 18th February 2012, of Msgr. Fidelis Lionel Emmanuel Fernando and Msgr. Maxwell Grenville Silva.

New Executive Committee of CMRS for 2011-2013

New office bearers for CMRS were elected at the Annual General Meeting of CMRS, which was held at the Retreat House, Tewatte on 30th November -1st December. CMRS is the body of the Religious Congregations serving in Sri Lanka. At present there are 56 member Religious Congregations in CMRS, of which 17 are Clerical Congregations, 04 are non Clerical men's Congregations. There are 28 Apostolic Women's Congregations and 07 Contemplative Congregations.



New Executive Committee of CMRS for 2011/3.

President:- Fr. Jeyaraj Rasiah SJ
Vice President:- Sr. Deepthika Silva SCJM
Treasurer:- Bro. Denzil Perera FSC

Committee Members

Fr. Sunil Rupasinghe sss, Sr. Antoinette Gomez FMM, Sr. Malathie Dassanayake PH

Executive Secretary:- Sr. Bernadette Fernando SCC

Kurunegala E.V. New National Catechetical Director



Very Rev. Fr. Piyal Janaka Fernando, the Episcopal Vicar of the Diocese of Kurunegala has been appointed as the National Director of Catechetics and Bible Apostolate, by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka.

(Continued on Pg. 3) >>

100 years since the arrival of Marist Bros

Marist Brothers of Sri Lanka celebrated their Centenary Celebrations on 10th December. To commemorate this joyful event, a Thanks-giving Eucharistic Service was held at the Maris Stella College, Gymnasium.

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith officiated at the Festive High Mass.

Houses for war victims in Badulla

Six houses built by Caritas for war victims were handed over to beneficiaries in Buttala (Badulla District) on 22nd November 2011, by Rev. Fr. Sam Perera, Diocesan Director of USCOD Badulla, in the presence of Tory Jones and Sarah Barrett of CAFOD-UK whose financial assistance helped to complete the construction of the houses.

Cardinal shocked at allegations levelled against 'Prem Nivasa'

By Rev. Fr. Sunil de Silva

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo, called a Press Conference with regard to the incident that took place at "Prem Nivasa."

Press Conference was held at the Archbishop's House, Borella, on 03rd December 2011. His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Episcopal Vicar Very Rev. Fr. Ivan Perera, Episcopal Vicar Very Rev. Fr. Cyril Gamini Fernando, Rev. Fr. Noel

Dias, several Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, Senior Counsel Neville Abeyratne who appears for the Court case on behalf of the Rev. Sr. Mary Eliza, and several other Rev. Fathers participated in the Press Conference.

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo addressing the Press Conference said, "Today we have gathered here to clarify certain matters and questions that have arisen

(Continued on Pg. 5) >>

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith



Pic by: Rev. Fr. Jude Samantha

Daily Mirror Editorial hails prophetic proclamation of Cardinal

The 'Daily Mirror' of 7th December 2011, upheld the stand taken by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo in the allegations levelled against 'Prem Nivasa', run by the Sisters of Charity, at Rawatawatte, Moratuwa. Referring to the Cardinal's statement to the press as a 'prophetic proclamation', the news paper called the mission of the Sisters of Charity, 'as a painful struggle like a Gethsamane or Calvary'.

Below we produce the full editorial:

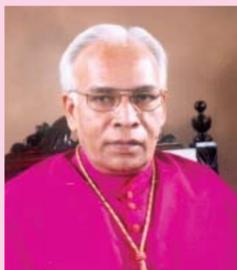
With controversies and slander or scandal-

mongering still swirling over the arrest of the nun in charge of Blessed Teresa's Rawathawatte home for pregnant women or children who had been raped, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith in a prophetic proclamation has said he would not attend any state ceremonies for the Christmas season until the baseless and dangerous allegations in some sections of the media against the well-loved missionaries of charity were rectified.

The Cardinal, who is also the Archbishop of Colombo, called a news conference to express dismay over the irresponsible, unbalanced and unfair reporting of what was happening at the Prem Nivasa with some officials telling the media that babies were being sold from the home and even that disabled children were being sold for their organs to be transplanted. The Cardinal said he had personally visited Prem Nivasa

(Continued on pg. 3) >>

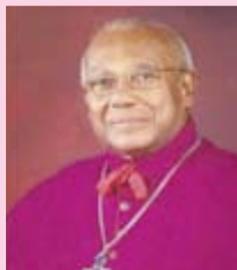
TO ARCHBISHOPS EMERITI WITH LOVE



Happy Feast and Many Happy Returns!

His Grace, Archbishop Emeritus, Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas Marcus Fernando.

6th December



His Grace, Archbishop Emeritus, Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis.

12th December

Ad Multos Annos!

Annual Christmas get-together of St. Patrick's College Jaffna (Colombo Branch)

The Patrician Annual Christmas get-together 2011, organized by St. Patrick's College, Jaffna Alumni Association, (Colombo Branch), will be held on Sunday, December 18 2011, at "Concord Grand" 141, Galle Road, Dehiwala. From 6.30 pm onwards.

For further details contact:

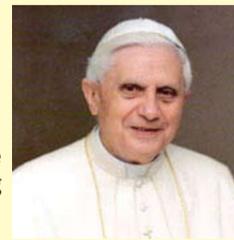
Mr. Rajkumar Swampillai - Project Chairman
Tel: 2585035, 0777-680302, Mr. Roy Nicholas - Secretary Tel: 3158691, 077-9007900, Mr. J.B.M. Ponrajah - President Tel: 2361108, 0777-557826, Mr. Patrick Mariampillai Tel: 2508065, 077-3113825.



Court drops seat belt charges against Pope

Freiburg, Germany, (CNA)- In a case that brought amusement to the Vatican, a German court decided to throw out charges against Pope Benedict for not wearing a seat belt during his recent papal visit to the country.

"There will be no fine for the Pope," city spokeswoman Edith Lamersdorf told German news agency Badische Zeitung on Nov. 30. "The charges were quashed." Lawyer Christian Sundermann had filed a complaint on behalf of an unnamed Dortmund resident who voiced concern over the Pope's safety. In August, the pontiff visited his native country, making stops in the cities of Berlin, Freiburg and Erfurt, where



he greeted locals from his pope mobile.

Officials ruled that although Germany requires all citizens to wear seat belts—even in slow-moving vehicles—the law didn't apply to the Pope since he was on public streets that were closed for papal events.

Vatican spokesman Fr. Federico Lombardi, S.J., said on Nov. 30 that the charges provoked "curiosity and smiles of amusement" at the Holy See, "beginning with the Pope himself."

News in Pictures

Youth Committee distributes food parcels to mark 125th Jubilee of St. Francis Xavier's Church



The Francis Xavier Youth Committee of Kongashandiya, Katana distributed food parcels to the deserving to mark the 125th Jubilee of St. Francis Xavier's Church, Katana.

Picture shows the first food parcel been given to an elderly person by Deacon Rev. Bro. Anton Sudharaka.

(Pic. Cecil Danicius)

"Christ Message is a Message of hope for all"



The 125th Jubilee of St. Francis Xavier's Church, Halpe, Katana, was celebrated last Sunday, officiated by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith.

Addressing the large gathering of priests, religious and the faithful, His Eminence in his homily said that the message of Christ is the message of hope for all humanity. "It was this Word," he said "that created the earth, became flesh and dwelt among us."

Picture shows the Cardinal receiving the offertory from two First Holy Communicants of the Parish.

(Pic. H.A. Caldera)

Awareness Program by Sethmini



Very Rev. Fr. Texie Dissanayake was appointed as the Director of Sethmini, Caritas Ratnapura, which has its main office on the Hospital Road at Eheliyagoda in the Ratnapura diocese.

At a recently held awareness programme by Sethmini at Ruwanwella Tamil Vidyalayam a Sethmini co-ordinator is seen addressing the students.

(Text and Pic. by J. Antony)

Awarding ceremony at St. Mary's College, National School Trincomalee



The awarding ceremony of St. Mary's College, Trincomalee took place recently. Under the patronage of His Lordship, Bishop Kingsley Swampillai, Bishop of Trincomalee/Batticaloa. The Chief Guest Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Swampillai Mr. N.A. Pushpakumara Secretary, Ministry of Education Cultural Affairs, Land Development Transport Eastern Province special guest, Mr. Murugupillai Zonal Director of Education, are seen in the picture.

(A.F. Subramaniam)

Feast of St. Maria Antony Claret - 2011

The feast of St. Maria Antony Claret, the Founder of the Claretian Missionaries was celebrated at VAROD (Vanni Rehabilitation Organization for the Differently Aabled), Pampaimadhu, Vavuniya recently.

This event was held in two sessions. The morning session was the 'Certificate Awarding Ceremony'. The staff who took part in the various seminars held for enhancing the efficiency were awarded the certificate of participation. This programme was implemented with the sponsorship of ZOA Refugees Care, Netherlands.

Around 75 participants awarded certificates. Mr. S. Sivapalan, Manager, FCCISL, Vavuniya and Mr. Antony Calicious, Programme Manager, Zoa Refugees Care, Vavuniya graced the occasion.

The evening session was

celebrated with the Eucharistic Liturgy, with His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar as the celebrant. The religious, priests and nuns from various Catholic congregations also participated. At the same time, St. Claret Arunothayam Girls' Centre also feasted their centre day.

The 'Pathivukal' (Achievements) which is the Semi Annual Report of the entire activities of VAROD and 'Unkalukkul Naam' {We



are with you} the video clip were also released by His Lordship.

All the arrangements were made with the guidance of Rev. Fr. Albert J. Arulraja CMF, Executive Director, VAROD.

(Amirthan M)

CWM opens new branch at Galaboda Parish



The Christian Workers' Movement (CWM) of Ratnapura, inaugurated a new branch at St. Francis Church, Galaboda last month.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Niroshan Vaz, Parish Priest of Galaboda, in a discussion with the new President of the CWM, Mr. S. Arulanandan and members of the new branch.

(Theobold Samaratunge)

SVP (Colombo South Deanery) assists Don Bosco Boys' Home

The six Conferences of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) that fall within the Colombo South Deanery, namely St. Anthony's Church, Galkissa, St Mary's Church, Dehiwela, St Lawrence's Church, Wellawatte, St Theresa's Church, Thimbirigasyaya, St Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya and St Anthony's Church, Kollupitiya, joined hands to serve the needs of the orphaned boys at St Don Bosco's Home, Maggona.

This home, which comes under the supervision of the Department of Probation and Child Care, is managed by the Franciscan Brothers headquartered at No. 116, Vihara Road, Matale. This donation coincided with the arrival of St Don Bosco's relics in Sri Lanka. The relics were brought to St Lawrence's Church, Wellawatte: a member of the Colombo South Deanery.

At the request of Rev. Bro. A M. Marcus, Director of St Don Bosco's Boys Home, the SVP of the Colombo South Deanery donated essential items of food, consisting of Milk Powder, Sugar, Biscuits, Chocolates, Medicines and miscellaneous items such as Soap, Toothpaste and Tooth brushes, for the use of 60 Catholic boys within the age range of 5 -18. These boys are either orphans or boys affected by the Tsunami, whose parents find it difficult to maintain them in their homes. The total value of the items donated, amounted to Rs. 50,000.

The gift packages were handed over to Rev. Brother Marcus, on 28th November, 2011, at St Mary's Church, Dehiwela, in the presence Rev. Fr. Marcus Ferdinandusz, Parish Priest, and the President and the members of the Deanery SVP.

In addition to this specific project, which the Deanery SVP handled, the Conference in each parish gives financial assistance to the poor on a monthly basis to meet their personal needs as well as ad hoc assistance for housing and medical needs. A summary of



the expenditure incurred on behalf of the poor, by each parish unit in 2010, is given below.

Mrs. Dorinda de S. Wijeyeratne
President, SVP - Colombo South Deanery

Church	Expenditure
St Anthony's-Mt Lavinia	Rs.235,131
St Mary's-Dehiwela	Rs. 498, 650
St. Lawrence's-Wellawatte	Rs. 159,765
St Mary's-Bambalapitiya	Rs. 629,219
St Anthony's-Kollupitiya	Rs. 576, 000
St Theresa's-Thimbirigasyaya	Rs.361,460

At rest with the Lord

The Catholic Messenger announces with sorrow the passing away of Mrs. Evelin Elizebeth Silva, loving mother of Rev. Fr. Raj Silva.

The funeral was held on 9th (Friday) at 3.30 p.m.

Notice from the Colombo Catholic Press

The Colombo Catholic Press will be closed for business from 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 21st December, and will reopen on Tuesday, 27th December.

On Monday, 2nd January 2012, the Press will be open for business from 10.00 a.m. onwards.

The Christmas issue of the Catholic Messenger will be published on December 18th. There will be no issue for the 25th of December.

Rev. Fr. Rohan de Alwis - Director

'Kitunu Magata Saviyak' helps Mission House Fund

Mr. Sajith Premadasa, Deputy leader of UNP and MP for Hambantota, who visited St. Jude's Church, Wellaboda, donated Rs. 50,000/- under the 'Kitunu Magata Saviyak' programme, for the building fund of the Church Mission House.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Erington Silva, Parish Priest of St. Nicholas' Church, Bopitiya in conversation with Mr. Sajith Premadasa.

Also seen in the picture is Mr. John Amararatunga, former Minister of Christian Affairs.

(K.J. Kurera)



Daily Mirror: Editorial.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

and found that the nuns were looking after the pregnant women and girls or their babies with love and compassion which few others were willing or able to give them.

The missionaries of charity, formed by Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, has more than 5,000 sisters who are well-trained and work in almost every country in the world, even in countries where religion is not allowed. When young girls or women even underage children are raped and have involuntary pregnancies, it is the responsibility of society to help such desperate victims.

Who will look after these children who are raped and then abandoned? Even the underage child who was in Prem Nivasa was raped by her mother's sister's son. How will we help such children?

The Cardinal who spoke out like a John the Baptist significantly on the eve of the day when the Gospel reading focused on the ministry of the great prophet, said that recently in a medical report published by the Ministry of Health it was revealed, there were nearly 300,000 abortions a year in Sri Lanka. This is a crime against the future generation and we need to take legal steps to curb this because society as a whole is responsible for such abortions. It is our prime responsibility to see that these children are born, loved and looked after. This comes from the teachings of all religions to look after such children and the orphans instead of persecuting or attacking those who are doing it selflessly, sincerely and sacrificially, sometimes working from 4.00 in the morning till late at night.

The sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, are world renowned for their dedicated and selfless service and they accept these children lovingly and look after them with utmost care. These sisters look after not only such desperate children, but also the elderly, the sick, the handicapped, the abandoned like lepers, the rejected, the destitute and the disabled.

The Cardinal said that what happened at Prem Nivasa on November 25 was that the National Child Protection Authority and Police did not find out the real

information about the home, but instead gave to the media totally incorrect information which was used maliciously against the sisters.

The mission of these sisters is a painful struggle like a Gethsemane or a Calvary. In the process, they also may sometimes fall and fail and not all ways act according to the letter of the law. But the fruits of inner liberative spirituality are love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, meekness, gentleness, humility and self-control. Against such ever-lasting virtues the letter of the law becomes a dead letter.

Be grateful for the education you received Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, tells students



"Most children after completing their education and having moved into society as the educated and the learned, tend to forget the very people who helped them to be what they are; their school, their teachers and most importantly the parents." So said Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, Archdiocesan Director for Education and General Manager, Catholic Private Schools.

Fr. Madurawela was speaking at the one-day worship for O/L students organised by St. Anne's Society, Wattala, held at the Parish.

He said that this action was totally wrong and called upon the children to look back with gratitude at the people who were involved in moulding their lives.

Present on the occasion were Rev. Fr. Ruben Leslie Perera, Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Krushen Kumara Perera staff, St. Anthony's College, Wattala, Buddhist Prelates and parishioners.

(Nimal Perera)



Church in the World

Black Catholics' survey finds strong ties, strong engagement in church

WASHINGTON (CNS) - African-American Catholics are much more engaged in their church on a variety of levels than are white Catholics, concludes the first National Black Catholic Survey.

Whether in a majority black church, a mixed or mostly white parish, the survey found African-American Catholics feel satisfied and fulfilled in their parishes, explained retired Bishop John H. Ricard of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Fla., who is president of the National Black Catholic Congress.

By "engaged," Bishop Ricard explained, the authors of the report mean African-Americans are involved in their parishes well beyond simply attending Mass somewhat regularly. That includes having strong networks of friends and family in their churches, participating in multiple parish activities and saying their spiritual, emotional and social needs are met there.

Bishop Ricard, who is Rector of the Washington seminary of his religious order, the Josephites, said the results of the survey surprised and pleased him and the leaders of the National Black Catholic Congress who commissioned it, along with the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Church Life.

Jesuit journal urges measure to make Internet accessible, democratic

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - The Internet is a global public good that should be accessible to all and respectful of the rights of others, said an influential Jesuit magazine.

With repressive regimes restricting access to information and communications, democratic governments should work to guarantee access to the Internet and adopt general principles to ensure network use respects universal human rights, said an editorial in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, a Jesuit journal reviewed by the Vatican before publication.

The "only widespread international consensus" on online material to be censored regards child pornography and cyberterrorism, the article said.

The Jesuit journal said that with individuals abusing the freedom of expression, with companies potentially exploiting computer users for financial gain and repressive regimes blocking information from their citizens, the world needs a "Charter of Human Rights for the Internet."

Slain Pakistani teenager proclaimed a martyr by local Church

Catholic girl who was murdered in Pakistan in November has been proclaimed by the local Church leaders as "a martyr of the faith."

Mariah Masih, an 18-year-old from Faisalabad, was abducted by a Muslim man. According to some reports the man attempted to rape her; other reports said that he pressured her to convert to Islam and marry him. In any case she resisted, and he shot and killed her on November 27.

"She is a martyr," said a local priest, Father Zafal Iqbal, at the victim's funeral.

Kurunegala E.V. New...

Contd. from Pg. 1

Fr. Piyal Janaka Fernando was ordained on 21st July 1990 and was appointed assistant Parish Priest of the St. Joseph's Church, Kuliyaipitiya.

In the year 2010 His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera appointed him as the Episcopal Vicar Administration. Since then he has involved himself in the coordination of all the apostolates in the diocese apart from the administrative work. Having taken into consideration all his capacities, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka appointed him as the National Director of Catechetics and Bible Apostolate to be effective from the 1st December 2011.

National Catechetical Centre.



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
Messenger
SINCE 1869

EDITORIAL

11 December 2011

Don't undermine the dignity of Parliament

When people go to the courts they are careful about their behaviour and do not do anything that would undermine the dignity of the courts. But if the lawyers and the judge were to behave in an unseemly manner the courts would lose the respect of the people. Parliament is an equally important institution in a functioning democracy. The Parliament is the lynchpin in a democracy. So no one should undermine the dignity of Parliament. But that is exactly what the Members of Parliament seem to be doing.

The spectacle which the public witnessed on TV during the Budget Day in the Parliament resembled a street brawl. Government Members of Parliament pushed and punched Members of the UNP in the House. The UNP Members then left the House. The provocation was provided by the UNP Members displaying protest placards inside the House. We do not know whether such action is covered by the Rules of Parliamentary Conduct but if it is not then the UNP is also blameworthy. Perhaps a new Code of Conduct needs to be drawn up to prevent such displays inside the House. People voted for persons who would represent them in Parliament to bring to the attention of the Government their grievances and provide a feedback on how the country was being governed. Has the Parliament been reduced to the position of "yes" men who bow down to their leaders to obtain some favour or perk from them?

Politics is a noble field of activity of serving the public, and Parliament is a forum for making laws and holding the Executive accountable for their acts of omission and commission. But it has now so degenerated that it is one in which must engage, not for the purpose of serving the Country or the People, but purely as an exercise in career advancement. As things stand today, it is the party leaders who have a decisive voice in respect of such matters which explains why sycophancy, boot licking, and leader worship abounds in all parties. This type of conduct is unbecoming of free men and has no place in a democracy. How can Parliament safeguard the Fundamental Rights provided for in the Constitution when the Members themselves do not allow fellow Members to exercise their right of free speech? What we see happening in Parliament is constant interruptions and disruption of Opposition speakers.

Parliament is a forum for debate and discussion. But if the other side is not allowed to speak because what they say displeases the government Members then there is no possibility of intelligent debate. Instead Members of Parliament are resorting to theatrics which may provide some entertainment to those who like cheap entertainment. The audience consists of other members and if some Members want to exert their dominance by using their brawn rather than brain it ceases to be a forum for debate. It also shows that the government Members of Parliament are not interested in what the Opposition says even if it is true. They seem to have given up the quest for truth. This type of behaviour in Parliament by MPs will only cause public disillusionment with the working of Parliament. The next step is for them to lose interest in the Parliament and that would have dire consequences for the future of democracy.

Any citizen would be disgusted and even appalled by the level of misconduct that has now become the norm among parliamentarians during official sittings of the House. Conduct void of common courtesy and respect to the other person shows a level of debasement.

Perhaps the Code of Conduct should stipulate more deterrent punishments such as expulsion from Parliament for the unexpired term of the Parliament and such expulsion may result in loss of pay and privileges.

"Mother Teresa's Sisters absolutely not involved in child-trafficking" Lawyer Neville Abeyratne informs the Court

Attorney-at-Law Neville Abeyratne presenting his submissions on behalf of Rev. Sr. Mary Eliza and "Prem Nivasa," of the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, informed the Court, that "Prem Nivasa" or the Sisters of Mother Teresa were absolutely not involved in taking any money when the children were given for adoption. "Prem Nivasa" is registered under the Department of Probation and Child care which is under the Social Service Ministry of the government. Therefore, everything at 'Prem Nivasa' had been done in consultation and on the instructions of the children for adoption have been given through a legal procedure and through the Courts"

Attorney-at-Law Neville Abeyratne made these submissions when the Case filed by the NCPA was taken in the Magistrate Courts on 01st December before the Colombo Additional Magistrate, Yvonne Fernando.

Responding to the accusations of the National Child Protection Authority, about keeping underaged children at "Prem Nivasa" Attorney-at-Law Neville Abeyratne said, "NCPA mentioned that there are three underaged children at 'Prem Nivasa'. One of them had been sent to the 'Prem Nivasa' by the police and who had been raped by her mother's sister's son. The other child was sent by the Probation Dept and the third child is a Tsunami victim, who had her lost parents and family members and was handed over to 'Prem Nivasa' by her aunt, since there was no one to look after her. Therefore, Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity are involved in this kind of humanitarian work.

But NCPA had given information to the media that the Sisters are involved in selling children. NCPA, therefore, as a children protecting unit must act in a manner of assisting and helping these homes to look after the children."

He further made submissions, that, "several women who go abroad for employment, have returned to Sri Lanka having fallen into various difficulties. Several pregnant women have come to the Sisters to find refuge, since they could not go to their homes or villages. Besides, there is no such law in Sri Lanka prohibiting such pregnant women seeking refuge in a safe home."

Attorney-at-Law Neville Abeyratne, informed Court that several news papers and the media carried malicious reports about 'Prem Nivasa' and which caused severe problems to the functioning of the home for the children as well as for the unwedded mothers. During the past few days, when they were taken to the hospitals for medical care, hospitals had refused to treat them". Therefore, he requested Courts to stop the media and NCPA publishing such incorrect information about "Prem Nivasa."

NCPA requested for more time for further investigations to submit full reports. The additional Magistrate, Yvonne Fernando gave time for further submissions and for submitting the reports. The Magistrate ordered the NCPA to investigate the rape incidents and submit a report to the Courts.

Next hearing will be on 15th December 2011.

Catholic Lawyers at the Annual Red Mass

This was held on 3rd December, at 9.00 a.m. at the Chapel of Little Sisters of the Poor, Darley Road, Maradana. His Eminence Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith was the Chief Celebrant. Rev. Fr. Noel Dias, (Spiritual Director of the Catholic Lawyers' Guild) and Lawyers, Mr. Shammil Perera and Mr. Neville Abeyratne were actively involved in organising this annual Red Mass.



(Pic by Rev. Fr. Noel Dias)

The Second Vatican Council - a momentous event

An event that shook the Church and brought it up to date with the modern world was the Second Vatican Council. It was indeed a sudden inspiration of the Holy Spirit that Pope John XXIII, announced to a surprised group of Cardinals in the Basilica of St. Paul.

Pope John Paul II speaking of the Council said, "it is a sure, compass for the Church in the 21st century. He insisted the Council documents needed to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium within the Church tradition.

In another 12 months the Church will mark the 50 anniversary of that momentous event. More than 2600 bishops participated but not many are still alive. There appeared to be only 39 left and most of them are in their eighties or nineties.

The youngest is 83-years-old Archbishop Mendonsa Castro of Peru. Only three men in this rare group wear Red Hats, Cardinals Eugenio de Araujo Sales of Brazil, Giovanni Canestri and Fioreso Angelini of Italy. Eleven from Latin America, eight from Europe, five from Asia, three each from Africa and North America, and two from Australia. Ninety-three-year-old Archbishop Loris Carpo villa was not a Council Father but he was Secretary to Pope John and a valuable eyewitness of the historic event. None of the present bishops of Sri Lanka attended the Council.

Frs. Alex Dassanayake, Mervyn Fernando, Nicholas Gunaseelan and the writer were priests students studying in Rome at that time. We attended the solemn proclamation of the decree on the liturgy by Pope Paul VI, in the Vatican Basilica.

We were also able to be present in the Council Hall when Archbishop Thomas Cooray celebrated the Eucharist for the Council Fathers. However we very assiduously followed all the press releases that were daily published about the proceedings and met personally many of the Council Fathers including the first African Cardinal Rugabwa who was resident in the College where we lived.

Of the Council, one author recently wrote, "The Second Vatican Council had brought in an astonishing and life-giving summer into our lives. The new passion for the possible fired us up as we listened to the visiting prophets of that time. God's love was unconditional. The Church was the protective mother of Jesus' dream of the world. Liturgy was that purifying celebration of the Divinity of our daily lives. Catechesis was about liberating our hearts for miracles. Contemplation was the moment of intimacy between lovers. Our imagination and senses were agents of grace and we moved to the rhythm of Incarnation. Such was the Council to the Church and to the world.

Rev. Fr. Anselm de Croos

Cardinal shocked...

Contd. from Pg. 1

with regard to the "Prem Nivasa" at Rawathawatta. This home administered and looked after by the Catholic Church, with the assistance of the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity. Therefore the Archbishop of Colombo responsibly take care of this home."

"Recently in a medical report published by the Ministry of Health stated that there are nearly 300,000 abortions per year in Sri Lanka. This is a movement of destroying the future children of Sri Lanka and it is a crime against the future of this country. We need to take legal steps on this matter and the society as a whole is responsible for such involuntary pregnancies. It is our prime responsibility to see that these children are born, loved and looked after. This comes from own religious thinking to protect and look after such children and the orphans. When young girls or women or even underage children are raped or even abused by this society and have involuntary pregnancies, it is the responsibility of the society to help such desperate and victimized persons. Who will look after these children, children who are raped or abused and then abandon? Even the underaged child who was in this home was raped by her mother's sister's son. How will you help this kind of children?"

"The Congregation of the Missionaries of Charity established by Mother Teresa is world renowned for their dedicated and selfless service and they accept these children lovingly and look after them with utmost care. Mother Teresa's work has been recognized and acclaimed throughout the world. These Sisters are serving almost in all the countries in the world, even in the countries that do not accept Religion, have invited these Mother Teresa's Sisters to serve and look after the desperate children. These Sisters look after not only such desperate children, but also elderly, sick, handicapped, the abandoned, the rejected, the destitute and the disabled persons as well." said Cardinal Malcolm.

Mother Teresa (Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu) was born as the youngest of three children in Albania, on August 26, 1910 in Skopje, Macedonia. She felt that August 27, 1910, the day of her baptism, was her true birthday.

At the age of 18 she joined the Order of the Sisters of Our Lady of Loreto in Ireland. She trained in Dublin, where the motherhouse of the Loreto Sisters was. She chose the name of Sister Teresa, in memory of Saint Terese of Lisieux. In December, 1928, she began her journey to India and continued to Darjeeling, at the base of the Himalayan Mountains, where she would continue her training towards her religious vows. Soon after, on January 6, 1929, she arrived in Calcutta, the capital of Bengal, India to teach at a school for girls. While in Calcutta, she was moved by the presence of the sick and dying on the city's streets.

On September 10, 1946, on the long train ride to Darjeeling where she was to go on a retreat and to recover from suspected tuberculosis, something happened. She had a life-changing encounter with the Living Presence of the Will of God. Mother Teresa recalls: "I realized that I had the call to take care of the sick and the dying, the hungry, the naked, the homeless - to be God's Love in action to the poorest of the poor." That was the beginning of the Missionaries of Charity.

She didn't hesitate, she didn't question. She asked permission to leave

the Loreto Congregation and to establish a new Order of Sisters. She received that permission from Pope Pius XII. Surely it was no coincidence that she chose a simple white sari with sapphire blue bands (representing God's Will) as her order's garment.

His Eminence further said, "Mother Teresa, who established this Congregation, is beatified in the Church. These Sisters' primary task is to love and care for those persons nobody was prepared to look after; She devoted herself to working among the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta. She walked through the streets of Calcutta and gathered the dying off the streets of Calcutta and brought them to this home to care for them during the days before they died."

Mother's Order, founded in 1947, has nearly 5040 nuns running orphanages, homes of poor, AIDS hospices and other charitable centres around the world.

In 1948, she opened the first school for slum children in Calcutta. She used to help the poor and taught them about hygiene. In 1952, she opened *Nirmal Hriday* (or Pure hearts), a home for the dying. On the very first day, Mother Teresa picked up a woman literally half-eaten by rats and ants and carried her to the home and cleaned her. This Home for dying became more and more popular where the dying who had no place to go were brought and were given proper medical treatment.

Mother Teresa also started a home for babies and for destitute children whose parents could not care them, or whose parents have left them on the streets of Calcutta.

Mother Teresa also started a colony for lepers where they could build their own houses and could work on their own fields. The colony was called *Shanti Nagar*. The biggest problem, according to her, was not the disease, but the lack of love and charity, the feeling of being unwanted.

Mother Teresa considered abortion as the biggest evil. On abortion she said:

"A nation that destroys the life of an unborn child, who has been created for living and loving, who has been created in the image of God, is in a tremendous poverty."

When Mother Teresa was called to Eternal Rest in the Heavenly Home, then Vice-President of India Krishan Kant said, "With the death of Mother Teresa, a messiah of the poor has left us. The poor will feel poorer. This shock will sprout forth a fountain of love and compassion for the causes she served. She will remain a symbol of dedication and selfless service."

His Eminence Cardinal Malcolm said, "Mother Teresa looked after the dying and the destitute. It is a responsibility entrusted to us in our faith and religion. Her services are very well recognized by the Indian Government and even the Hindu Organizations. These Sisters serve with a great commitment, not looking for financial benefits or gains. They get up very early in the morning by 4.00 am and begin the day with prayer to serve the poorest of the poor and the helpless in the society.

Even at the "Prem Nivasa" these Sisters have been serving in a very similar way. I have personally visited this home and have met the children and I have spoken to them and to others in this home. When pregnant girls and women come to this home seeking shelter and refuge, these Sisters do not ask them any questions about their religion or caste or creed or even whether they are rich or poor, etc, they never ask such

questions. Some girls or women who have been raped, even thinking of committing suicide in their desperate situation, because someone has destroyed their life and dignity, their name has been tarnished, unable to go home or to their village, come to this home for refuge.

So these Sisters accept them and look after them very well. Raped girls or women who come to this home are sent by the Courts after the Court's procedure is over and they are sent through the Probation Office, which is under the Social Ministry.

When the children are born, these unwedded mothers are free to decide to take the child along with them or handover the child to the Sisters through the Courts and Probation office to look after the child and be given for adoption. Adoption is done through a Court procedure and it is through the Court a child is handed over for adoption having carefully and thoroughly investigated into the background and the intentions of the married couple who had asked for a child, and also inquiring the intention of the original parents of the child. Children for adoption are given through the Probation Office after following the proper Court procedure. There could be some unattended work, since the Sisters accept them as they come. However, Sisters accept these children or girls or women and help them first to overcome their sufferings, their tensions, trauma in minds and desperate situations they have faced."

Anonymous caller

"Some of the Sisters serving in these homes are from other countries and do a magnificent service to the humanity. While these Sisters were serving in this way, there had been an anonymous telephone call to the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) and purely acting on this call, NCPA accompanying the police personnel and the media personnel, and entered "Prem Nivasa" on 25th November 2011 and surrounded the home. And NCPA had given different interviews and information to the media, even without following a proper investigation of the anonymous telephone call they received. And they have spoken and published many things against the Sisters without a thorough inquiry. I was listening to the interview NCPA gave through SLBC (Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation) radio channel and I was shocked to hear what NCPA said. What happened here is that NCPA and police did not find out the true facts and information about the "Prem Nivasa" and about the inmates of the home, instead gave to the media totally incorrect information, which was used maliciously against the Sisters and their service." said Cardinal Malcolm.

He also said, "I asked the Sisters personally about their service and about the allegations leveled against them, then the Sisters told me very clearly, that they have never sold any child or have not given any child for adoption either to foreign married couples or to Sri Lankan married couples, without following the Court procedure and the procedure of the Probation Office, which is under the Social Ministry in the government. Probation Office had been closely working with the Sisters and they have been visiting this "Prem Nivasa" very regularly to help the Sisters in their service to the destitute children and other helpless girls and women. The Director of the Probation Office gave an interview and confirmed that the work of the Sisters at "Prem



Nivasa" is in order."

"Some news papers in the published articles, had mentioned about money being taken by the Sisters for adoption, in some news papers, it was Rs. 07 lakhs or Rs.35, 000/= and different figures were given. These are totally lies. Some news papers reported saying that they found a couple who had come at that time with Rs.35,000/= to take a child for adoption. This money was to pay the Court fee and to open a bank account in the name of the child for his or her future. So this money was not taken by the Sisters." His Eminence said.

"Lankadeepaya news paper published a news item, with the heading "It is questionable to see only the handicapped children are taken abroad". When such a heading is published, that Rawathawatta home gives only the handicapped children for abroad, this creates wrong impression to say that handicapped children are taken abroad for an ulterior purpose and to remove different organs and there is always room for misinterpretation. This is a very dangerous and serious allegation. We deny it vehemently and totally. I tell this with responsibility. We say in Catholic religion, "Do not tell lies" and even in Buddhism, it says, "*Musa Vada Veramani sikkhpadam samadiyami*" (Do not tell lies) is one of the Panchaseela precepts. Therefore we should not tell lies to cause harm on others."

"Since there is a Court Case, I didn't want to give any statement or say anything to the media. But several things are written at the international level drawing attention to the incident at "Prem Nivasa" of Mother Teresa's Sisters. There are also several news published at the international level against this action of the authority. The Director and the Founder of Sarvodaya has said that he is well aware how the Sisters look after the "Prem Nivasa" and the children and other inmates. I have been accused in the overseas Press that I, as the Archbishop of Colombo, has been silent over this matter and this silence caused the media to publish news as they want about the "Prem Nivasa" and the work of the Sisters in this home. I was silent, since there was a Court Case going on. This kind of pressure pushes me to express my views over this matter as the Head of the Church in Sri Lanka," said Cardinal Malcolm.

His Eminence Cardinal Ranjith further said, "What I have to say is that there are several groundless accusations leveled without properly investigating or finding the truth about the services of these Sisters. I make use of this opportunity to protest in the strongest terms, against this high handed action. I appeal to all the Catholics to pray for these Rev. Sisters and also for the misguided people and also to express their solidarity with the Sisters.

Therefore, I strongly protest against the way this matter has been handled and as a mark of protest, I will not attend any State or State Institution functions during this Christmas period, until this is rectified."

Many people are not in the habit of saving money. We think about the folly of not saving money for a rainy day only when we are facing a crisis such as a sudden illness or a family emergency. The breadwinners of families must take the responsibility to set apart a certain amount of money to be used when the family is facing a crisis. Sometimes we have to use credit cards and borrow money at high interest rates to ward off a crisis. Saving is better than borrowing money and getting indebted.

Sudden illness, pregnancy or a family disaster can deplete you of all your savings. We have to budget for our day-to-day expenses such as food, travel, schooling of children, housing etc. If ever



Bits and Pieces

SAVING

we intend saving money we should spend less than what we earn. Financial experts advise us to save at least 10% of our earnings.

We have to plan and budget our expenses. An annual and a monthly budget will help us to stick to our financial goals. If there is no planned budget, we will be spending more than what we earn and get into serious financial difficulties. We should include our spending ceilings and our saving goals into this budget. Keep a record of all our expenses and at the end of the month evaluate

whether we spend money wisely or unnecessarily. Even if you earn a small salary it is paramount that we get into the habit of saving 10% so that we will be ready to face any financial crises. We should not bank on borrowing money or using credit cards which charges high interest rates.

Financial advisers tell us to pay back our credit cards first, because the banks who issues credit cards charge very high interests. Sometimes unwittingly we pay up to 30 to 35% as credit card interests. They also advise

us to refrain from borrowing from banks. It is cheaper to mortgage your valuables such as jewellery and get money to ward off an unforeseen financial crisis than to borrow. Interest rates are comparatively low when you borrow money mortgaging your valuables.

Get all the members of your family involved in the savings. It is paramount to teach the habit of saving to your children. They could be taught to save a part of their pocket money in a "piggy-bank" or in a savings account. Saving with

Madi

your spouse is vital because when you get an urge to spend on a useless item discussing this with your spouse and the family will help you to postpone that urge and also to take a more reasonable decision. I can remember one of my friends who was duped by a car salesman to buy a brand new car on loan, instead of keeping his own car. He thought that buying a new car is important, till he discussed the plan with his wife. She showed him that there are more priorities in the family budget than spending millions to buy a new car.

Take part in all the possible saving schemes at the place of work. Contribute to a pension plan or an Employee Provident Fund. It is sad to hear from retirees who have not contributed to any saving schemes

regretting what they have done. Their life-style will face a precipitous downturn just after they retire. If there is a life insurance plan at work contribute to that too. In case of your death, life insurance plans will look after your spouse and the children at least to a certain extent.

Keeping your savings in the bank may not give you more than 10% interest. Financial planners also advise you to invest in secure financial or business organizations that will give you more return for your money. But they also instruct you to diversify your investments; not to invest all your money in one organization. We have heard horror stories about investors who even went to the extent of committing suicide because they lost all their savings when one financial organization went bust. They had lost all their life savings.

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



Once a famous artist was invited to see some paintings at a gallery: He remarked "I suppose this horrible looking thing is what you call modern art?" Art dealer: I beg your pardon, Sir that is a mirror.

Rev. Fr. Fracxid Anthony Fernando O.M.I.

What Advent should mean to the laity

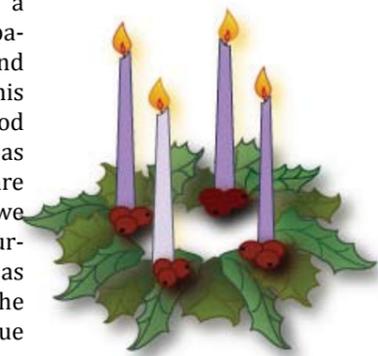
Advent is upon us. That season of preparation for the coming of the Messiah. As the forty days of Lent prepare us for the great celebration of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, so too this is a time of preparation to welcome the long-awaited Messiah - the Redeemer who was born to die and set us captives free from the shackles of sin. But how many of us look at Advent in this light.

Today the preparation for the great birth takes on materialistic and commercial forms and norms. The great feast has been so commercialized that the true nature and spirit of Christmas is entirely lost. We are drawn into the vortex of entertainment, enjoyment, fun, merriment and gormandizing to the detriment of the spiritual aspect.

We are caught in the whirlpool of the glamour of the festival and forget the reality of the event. - A babe born in a stable as there was no room for him at an inn (just as there are elderly mothers and fathers relegated to Elders' Homes as there is no room for them in their own children's homes) among lowing cattle, on a cradle of straw wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Advent is a period of anticipation, expectation and contemplation of this great event of God made man. Just as much as we prepare materialistically, we must prepare ourselves spiritually as we prepare in the Lenten season true contrition of heart, a joyful anticipation yet a charitable disposition, a readiness to forgive and be reconciled would surely be in keeping with the spirit of advent. Understanding how the other half of the world lives and reaching out to them- they who do not know it's Christmas time at all!

It would be an appropriate precursor to that joyful Christmas morn would enable us to enjoy a truly meaningful Christmas.



By Jeannette Cabraal



By Sirohmi Gunsekera

Being Bored

"My life is so boring. I work on weekdays and go to Church on Sundays," complained Jilka.

"Don't you have a hobby?" asked Nimal.

"Well, I collect stamps and listen to music. But my life is so monotonous," said Jilka. "Maybe you should try to make Christ come alive in your life. Why don't you look at every person you meet as if it was a meeting with Jesus? Try seeing the person without judging according to our human values and weaknesses. Remember the hymn, "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers, That you do unto me.

When I was hungry, you gave me to eat. ...

When I was restless, you calmed all my fears ... "

Then you won't be just a "Sunday Mass Christian" said Nimal.

"Yes, I remember the words of Mother Teresa that love should emanate from you whenever you meet someone. Let kindness shine from your eyes to encompass everyone you meet," said Jilka.

"Then you won't feel bored for you are spending each day usefully in the service of the Lord. Let Jesus come and live with you and make you enthusiastic about life. Look for ways in which you can spread the Good News and make Christ known to everyone," said Nimal.

"I know. Even when I am at work, I must try to be kind to everyone and be a true witness to Christ. There is a girl in my office who has a lot of family problems so I must find the time to befriend her. I think being a good listener is important so we can empathise with another. It doesn't matter that she is not a Christian," said Jilka.

"If you can find the time to befriend someone else, you won't feel bored with your life." commented Nimal.

Familians of '79 reunite



Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya, class of '79, recently held a reunion after 35 years at Hotel Tangerine, Kalutara. It was a happy event of exchanging school day memories and playing childhood interval games in the hotel grounds. Later the participants held a champagne toast alongside a cake in the shape of the school uniform. There were 27 participants from Sri Lanka and abroad along with their families. A prayer and two minutes silence for three departed classmates, the late Christobel Outschoorn, Sonali Gooneratne and Marianne Deckker was observed.

The reunion also included visiting the alma mater the next day which included visiting the school grounds and former classrooms.

Pregnant Mother

*P*regnant Mother listen to my plea,

*R*esponsible job God has given thee.

*E*verloving children you must bring forth

*G*ood and virtuous they must be. *N*ine month you live, not for you.

*A*lways think of the baby, what ever you do.

*N*ote how the builders the best things they choose

*T*o build a strong building, no stones left loose.

*M*other the most loving word in the world.

*O*ther than God. I have heard.

*T*hank God, it's up to you to bring,

*H*appy children healthy and loving.

*E*very day sing God's praises, you yourself.

*R*emember it's in your hands, with God's help.



Emilda S. Douglas

In the name of God's poor

On 23 November a team led by the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) Chairperson, Anoma Dissanayake, raided 'Prem Nivesa' run by the Missionaries of Charity, caring for the unloved and abandoned unwed mothers, infants and children. On 25 November the Superior of 'Prem Nivasa' Sister Mary Eliza, from the Missionaries of Charity, was remanded pending investigations. On 28 November bail was granted to Sister Mary Eliza. On this day it was revealed in the course of submissions of the Counsel, that if at all, the only charge that could be maintained at that time, was a charge under Section 199 of the Penal Code, which is the intentional omission to give information of an offence by a person bound to inform. The NCP stated to court that investigations are still going on.

Who are the Missionaries of Charity

Mother Teresa working among the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta, on October 7, 1950, received permission from the Holy See to start her own order, "The Missionaries of Charity." In 1965 Pontifical recognition was given to the Sisters whereby the congregation came directly under the authority of the Holy See.

Mother Teresa tells how she for the first time picked up a woman from the street, "The woman was half eaten up by rats and ants. I took her to the hospital, but they could do nothing for her. They only took her because I refused to go home unless something was done for her. After they cared for her, I went straight to the Town Hall and asked for a place where I could take these people, because that day

I found more people dying in the street. The employees of the health services brought me to the temple of Kali and showed me the "dormashalah" where the pilgrims used to rest after they worshipped the goddess Kali. The building was empty and he asked me if I wanted it. I was very glad with the offer for many reasons, but especially because it was the center of prayer for Hindus. Within 24 hours we brought our sick and suffering and started the Home for the Dying Destitute". This place was renamed Kalighat, the Home of the Pure Heart (Nirmal Hriday). Those brought to the home received medical attention and were afforded the opportunity to die with dignity, according to the rituals of their faith. "A beautiful death," she said, "is for people who lived like animals to die like angels loved and wanted."

In the mid 1950's Mother Teresa established a leper colony on a land donated by the Indian Government. She called it Shanti Nagar (City of Peace) and people suffering from leprosy could live and work with dignity under medical care. In 1955 she opened the Nirmala Shishu Bhavan, the first Children's Home as a haven for orphans. These children were housed and fed and medically cared for. When possible, the children were given for adoption. Those not adopted were given an education, learned a trade skill, and found marriages.

Ever since, thousands of men, women and children have been taken from the streets of Calcutta to an environment of kindness and love. "The hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone."

To sustain her vision Mother Teresa established the Contemplative branch of the Sisters in 1976, the Contemplative Brothers in 1979, and the Missionaries of Charity Fathers in 1984.

Her inspiration was not limited to those with religious vocations. She went on to form the Co-Workers (1969), the Sick and Suffering Co-Workers (1953), Lay Missionaries of Charity (1987), Corpus Christi Movement (1981).

Missionaries of Charity in Sri Lanka

The Missionaries of Charity have served for over 25 years in Sri Lanka. Presently they have convents and homes for the destitute, in the dioceses of Kandy, Trincomalee, Galle, Kurunegala, Jaffna and also in Vavuniya.

To this day MC Sisters' homes have admitted 6179 destitute adults, 2501 children, 1156 have been adopted, 1890 unwedded mothers have taken shelter in the houses of MC Sisters. "Some have taken their babies with them, others have given up their children for adoption, since they couldn't face their families or society"

Becoming a Missionary of Charity

It takes nine years to become a full-fledged Missionary of Charity. For one year, candidates become "come-and-see's." At first, aspiring Sisters work as assistants in Shishu Bhavan and Nirmal Hriday, tending to the patients there. After one year, if the young women still wish to join and are still considered candidates, they choose religious names and begin to study. During the novitiate they study Sacred



Scripture, the Constitutions of the Society, Church History, and Theology. If they are not from English-speaking countries, they learn to speak the language. Novices wear white saris without the three blue stripes. After two years, they take vows, and renew them after the fourth and fifth years. They also receive the blue striped sari of the Congregation. In the sixth year, they travel to Rome, or Calcutta, for a year in deep spiritual growth.

A Sister's possessions include: three saris (one to wear, one to wash, one to mend), a pair of sandals, a crucifix and rosary. They also have a plate and metal spoon, a canvas bag, and prayer book. In cold countries, possessions also include a cardigan. They never wear anything but sandals on their feet.

The routine of these sisters is relentlessly arduous, with every waking moment given either to the people they care for, or God. Indeed it is hard to understand how anyone could actually choose to dedicate his or her entire life to such a cause. However as Mother Teresa explained "The miracle is not that we do this work, but that we are happy to do it."

Awards and accolades

More than 124 awards and prizes have been bestowed on Mother Teresa (and her community of sisters) for her work as a Missionary of Charity. All the money received thus, she gave to the centers she set up. The following may be noted. In 1962, the Indian government conferred on her the 'Padmashree' (Lord of the Lotus) for her commitment to the poor of the slums in Calcutta. This was the first time the award was given to a non-Indian national. In 1962, Mother Teresa received the Philippines-based Ramon Magsaysay Award for International Understanding, given for work in South or East Asia. The citation said that "the Board of Trustees recognizes her merciful cognizance of the abject poor of a foreign land, in whose service she has led a new congregation. In 1971, she

was awarded the first International Pope John XXIII Peace Prize and in the same year received the John F. Kennedy International Award. Later in 1972 she received the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding. This followed the Templeton Prize for 'Progress in Religion' in 1973 and the Albert Schweitzer Prize in 1975. Mother Teresa who became a symbol of selfless charity was awarded the Noble Peace Prize in 1979 for her decades of work among dying and destitute in the slums of Calcutta. She accepted the Noble Prize declaring. "It gives me great joy and fulfilment to love and care for the poor and neglected. The poor don't need our sympathy and pity. They need our love and compassion." In 1980 she was awarded with the highest Indian award 'The Bharat Ratna' (jewel of India) and in 1983 Queen Elizabeth II invested her with the highest British award - the prestigious Order of Merit. She was appointed an honorary Companion of the Order of Australia in 1982, "for service to the community of Australia

and humanity at large."

She is also the recipient of the Gold Medal of the Soviet peace Committee in 1987 and in 1997 United States Congressional Gold Medal. In 1992, she received the 12th UNESCO Education for Peace Prize and a year later the first Rajiv Gandhi National Sabhavana Award. In October 1996, US President Bill Clinton signed a bill giving her honorary American citizenship and she

became one of only five foreigners to receive the accolade in the American history. Befittingly, 'The Herald' the Catholic weekly newspaper declared Mother Teresa as 'Christian of the Year 1989' by an all India poll. Her pioneering efforts to uphold the dignity of the human beings touched the hearts of people of all religions all over the world and received the constant guidance and blessings of the Catholic Church. From the very inception she was constantly in touch with the Holy Fathers and in 1964 when Pope Paul VI visited India the Pontiff presented her with his limousine. She immediately raffled it to finance her leper colony. In 1988, Pope John Paul II opened a vagrant's shelter she set up inside the Vatican walls.

On 28 August 2010, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of her birth, the government of India issued a special 5 Rupee coin, being the sum she first arrived in India with. President Pratibha Patil said of Mother Teresa, "Clad in a white sari with a blue border, she and the sisters of Missionaries of Charity became a symbol of hope to many - the aged, the destitute, the unemployed, the diseased, the terminally ill, and those abandoned by their families".

After death

Mother Teresa died on September 5, 1997, nine days after her 87th birthday. At the time of her death, the Missionaries of Charity had over 4,500 sisters, and an associated brotherhood of 300 members, operating 610 missions in 135 countries. Under the church rules, five years must pass after a person dies before the long bureaucratic procedure of sainthood can begin. But in 1999, Pope John Paul II who has held the Nun in high esteem granted a dispensation so the procedure could start less than two years after her death. In 2003 after her death she was beatified by the Pope and given the title Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.

Message of the Chairman of the Catholic National Commission for Migrants

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS' DAY

The International Migrants' Day will be marked on 18th December. The significance of this day is to focus our attention and to pray for migrants who have left their motherland and are scattered in all parts of the world. As we mark this day, naturally we remember our brothers and sisters of Sri Lanka who have migrated to other countries for employment. Human mobility after all is a feature in the modern world. Thus there should be effective structures which are able to respond to the changing social and economic situations so as to ascertain human dignity and human rights. "Migration and New Evangelization" is this year's theme of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI's Message for the World Day of Migrants. His Holiness states that proclaiming Jesus Christ, the unique Saviour of the World, constitutes the essential mission of the Church. It is a task and a mission which the vast and profound changes of present day society make all the more urgent.

We have Sri Lankan migrants mainly in the Middle East. They are also spread out in Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Europe, Australia, USA, and Canada. There are also migrants in small percentages in other countries as well. Migration has become an issue today because of the difficulties, challenges, harassment and injustices that a good number of them go through. Some of the Sri Lankan women working in the Middle East have narrated some horrendous experiences they have faced. Some have been deprived of their basic rights and treated like slaves. They need to be accompanied so that they live with dignity and self-respect. The Episcopal Commissions for migrants practically in every country fulfills this task of journeying together with the migrants.

There are various personal problems that we face as a result of Migration. Long separation from one's family has resulted in bringing about disharmony in the family. As a result the pastoral care of the migrant family has become a necessity today. Then there are the difficulties that their children face as some of them grow up without the love and protection of the parents. At times they grow up with one parent. The worst is when they grow up in a different home without the security of both parents. It has been discovered that often such children are going through psychological trauma. Those children need to be cared for pastorally. It is a well accepted fact that parental love is a basic requirement for a child's growth. If these issues remain unattended, certain unhealthy responses in their later life would be inevitable.

In addition, there is also a need to protect people from human trafficking and smuggling. The Church has the responsibility to insist on the



fundamental importance of protecting the migrant family and the right to family unity. At the level of the Universal Church under the guidance of the Holy Father, there is a special commission that looks after the issues of Migration. Each country has now established their own structures. Through the National Commission for Migrants in Sri Lanka issues are being followed up at this end (sending country) and at the other end (receiving country). The CNC for Migrants Work in co-operation with various other Episcopal Conferences to ensure that the basic pastoral and spiritual needs of the migrants are met. The fact that we have been able to send Priests and Religious as Chaplains to many countries including the Middle East is a result of such co-operation among Episcopal Conferences.

One of the main reasons for migration is poverty. Even those who are not so poor may migrate looking for greener pastures. Because of the social as well as pastoral exigencies that have arisen due to migration, the Church is conscious of accompanying the migrants so as to help them to face various challenges. It is also the task of the Church to help the migrant Catholics to keep their faith alive and practice the religion wherever they may be. The Church also seeks to be in solidarity with those who have been victims of domestic violence, corruption and being ill-treated by the employer.

It is necessary that we become more and more aware of this global phenomenon which has a direct relevance to Sri Lanka. We remember that the Holy Family of Nazareth became migrants and the helplessness, uncertainty and vulnerability experienced by them give us the basic material for reflection as we mark the International Migrants Day. Let us also pray for those Sri Lankan Missionaries who work for migrants and live with them in those countries sharing in their struggles and walking together with them in a foreign land.

Devasritha Bishop Valence Mendis
Bishop of Chilaw

"Therefore, on the World Migrants' Day which falls on the 18th of December, it is our duty to open our eyes to look at those children who are saddled with word broken sorrow for want to parental affection."

International Migrants' Day

(December 18th)

CNC for Migrants - National Director's Message -
Rev. Fr. Ajith Rohan Fernando

International Migrants' Day is universally celebrated on the 18th of December. "Migration and the New Evangelization" is the theme chosen by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, for the Year 2012. There are 214 million estimated migrants worldwide. Out of them 49% are women.

The Pope's message invites all Christians to a greater solidarity with and spiritual care of migrants. It is to make known God's compassionate love to all especially to the stranger - as an aspect of wider understanding of the new evangelization.

The Holy Father reminds all Christians in his message, the importance of making migration an opportunity to reach out to strangers, refugees, the poor and weak in order to proclaim the gospel values of love, peace, justice and human dignity.

According to the recent estimates, 47 percent of Sri Lankan labour migrants are female housemaids, and most are married with children. Very often children are left behind to be looked after by their father and/or other relatives. These children are often neglected and demotivated, and many drop out of school. They are sometimes harmfully influenced or are abused. Most of them come from the rural sector where poverty is high. After these women migrate, the complaints we repeatedly hear are; unpaid wages, excessive working hours, with no time for rest, heavy burdens of debt, isolation in private homes, forced confinement to the work places that contribute to psychological, physical and sexual violence and trafficking etc.

As these people are looking for better living conditions, in our pastoral care of migrants, there is a need to promote and to commit ourselves towards the aspired migrants or returnees. A meaningful reintegration should be envisaged by programs to enhance human dignity, skills development and very specially strengthening of family bonds.

There is also a need to promote combined activities with governmental and non governmental sectors,

especially in safeguarding the children of migrant families, providing access to dignified housing, education, protection from all abuses, health care and wholeness and wellbeing.

On the other hand the migrants themselves are called to play a new role, in turn, becoming "heralds of God's word and witnesses to the Risen Jesus, the hope of the World" where they live mingled with different ethnic, religious and social groups.

Thus the Holy Fathers' Message calls to deepen the faith and Christian values of migrants and, refugees and to transform their experiences to a new form of evangelization through the sharing of stories of the struggles, challenges and successes of each other.

The Migrants Commission has been facilitating the Sri Lankan priests and religious sent to Lebanon, Jordan, Italy- Singapore and Cyprus to care for the Sri Lankan migrants throughout the year. The priests are sent to a number of countries for pastoral care. The main objective of this commission is to promote and coordinate the Catholic Apostolate for pastoral care for migrants and to provide efficient and effective services to them. Human Trafficking issues are also addressed specially that of women irrespective of caste, creed or ethnic consideration

The Commission has been active on the different issues of migrants through programmes in various ways. Let us continue in solidarity and with faith, the task assigned to us with the aspirations of the Holy Father to bring solace and comfort to the least of our brethren who are going through the paschal mystery of Christ in their day to day living.

**Catholic National Commission
for Migrants, Tourists, Prisoners and
Health Care Workers
Lankarama, No. 19 Balcombe Place,
Colombo 8**

"Let us pay attention to the women who attempt to migrate to arid climes of the desert in order to build up their economy which is the source of many a problem."

The mental impact caused to young husbands due to the departure of their young wives from the family too is by no means a small one.

While the mother is the most sensitive character in the household, the mental impact caused on the minds of children as a result of her absence from the family is tremendous.

"Lessons taught to us by society remind us again and again that time has come for us to decide once and for all whether it is the male or the female who should go abroad for employment."

"It should also be looked into as to whether it is possible to follow an alternative course of action to create job opportunities in the Sri Lankan society."

22 Oblates to be Beatified in Madrid

Martyrs of the Spanish Civil War

By Very Rev. Fr. Clement
Waidyasekera OMI
Asian Councillor of Oblates

Religious Persecution of Spain

The three-year period from 1936 until 1939 was a time of bloody martyrdom for the Church in Spain. During this religious persecution, there were thousands of persons who suffered violent death, who were tortured and shot solely because they were believers; or because they wore a cassock or religious habit; or because they were priests or religious who conducted pastoral ministry in parishes, schools and hospitals; or because they were dedicated laity, committed to their faith in Jesus Christ.

Priest and journalist, Antonio Montero, now a retired archbishop, in his doctoral thesis entitled *History of the Religious Persecution in Spain (Historia de la persecución religiosa en España)* presents a statistic of 6,932 members of the clergy and religious, sacrificed in this persecution: 12 bishops, 4,172 diocesan clergy, 2,365 religious men and 283 religious women. It was impossible to come up with the number of Catholic laity murdered because they were believers. Furthermore, he narrates the Oblates martyrs as given below.

The Story of the Martyrs of Pozuelo

Among those who were martyred there were 22 Oblates: Priests, Brothers and Scholastics from Pozuelo de Alarcon (Madrid). The Oblates had established themselves in Estacion Pozuelo in 1929. They served as chaplains in three communities of sisters. They also provided pastoral service in the surrounding parishes; confessions and preaching, especially during Lent and Holy Week. Oblate scholastics taught catechism in four neighbouring parishes.

The ministry of the Oblates worried the revolutionary committees, such as the socialists, communists and the radical lay labour unions in the Estacion neighbourhood. They were greatly worried that the "friars" (as they called them) were the driving force behind religious activity in Pozuelo and the surrounding area. This created anger among the revolutionary groups. It irritated the Marxist revolutionary groups that the Oblates went around in the streets in cassocks wearing the Oblate Cross.

Nevertheless, the Oblates did not allow themselves be intimidated. They simply adopted an attitude of prudence, composure and calm, committing themselves not to respond to any provocative offence. It should be noted that none of the Religious Orders or Congregations got involved in political activities, not even occasionally. In spite of that, they maintained their program of spiritual and intellectual formation and carried on the various pastoral activities that were part of the priestly and missionary formation of the scholastics. Oblates never suspected or imagined that they would be victims of hatred and dealt severely being messengers of Jesus Christ. But on July 20, 1936, the socialist communist youth took to the streets and began to burn churches and convents in Madrid. The Militia of Pozuelo, on the other hand, attacked the Chapel in the Estacion neighbourhood; they threw vestments and images into the streets and set them afire. On 22nd

July, a large contingent of Militia, armed with shotguns and revolvers, attacked the Oblate House. The first thing they did was to round up the Oblates about 38 and lock them into a small room where they were closely guarded and threatened by the gns. It was a terribly tense moment because they could not expect anything else and they felt that the moment of death has come.

Thereafter, the Militia meticulously searched the Oblate House looking for guns. All that they managed to find were religious pictures, crucifixes, rosaries, and sacred vestments. They threw all these objects outside the house and set fire. Oblates were made prisoners in their own house. It was their first jail.

On the 24th, the first executions took place. There were no interrogations, trials or defense. Seven Oblates were the first to be called and sentenced: Juan Antonio Pérez Mayo, 29, priest and professor; and students Manuel Gutierrez Martin, 23, sub-deacon; Cecilio Vega Dominguez, 23, sub-deacon; Juan Pedro Cotillo ermindez, 22; Pascual Alaez Medina, 19; Francisco Polvorinos Gomez, 26; Justo Gonzalez Lorente, 21. They were put into two cars and taken to their martyrdom.

The rest of the Oblates remained imprisoned at the Oblate House and spend the time in prayer, preparing to die. On the same day, someone probably the Mayor of Pozuelo, communicated to Madrid the risk the others were in and that a guard truck arrived with orders to take the Oblates to the General Security Office. After filling out some forms, they were unexpectedly set free. The Oblates thereafter sought refuge in private homes.

The Provincial put himself at risk by going around to encourage the others and bring them communion. However in the month of October, by a search and capture order, they were captured, detained and taken to prison. There they endured a slow martyrdom of hunger, cold, terror and threats. There are testimonies from survivors of the way they accepted that difficult situation with heroic patience, foreseeing the possibility of martyrdom. Charity and a climate of silent prayer reigned among them. For the majority of them, the end of their Calvary came in November.

On the 7th, Father Jose Vega Riano, 32, priest and formator, and a scholastic Serviliano Riano Herrero, 30, were shot. On being called by the executioners, the latter went to the cell of Father M. Martin and asked for sacramental absolution.

Chaos of Hatred

The executions did not end. Twenty days later, it was the 13 others. The procedure was the same for all. There were no accusations, trials or defense. They were taken from Prison to Paracuellos de Jarama, Where their names were called via loudspeakers and one by one they were executed. Those are: Francisco Esteban Lacal, 48, provin-



Mártires Oblatos de Pozuelo - Madrid

Francisco Esteban – Vicente Blanco – José Vega – Juan Antonio Pérez – Gregorio Escobar – Ángel Bocos
Juan José Caballero – Justo Gil – Eleuterio Prado – Marcelino Sánchez – Cecilio Vega – Juan Pedro Cotillo
Clemente Rguez. – Pascual Aláez – Francisco Polvorinos – Justo Fdez. – Publio Rguez. – Serviliano Riaño
Manuel Gutiérrez – José Guerra – Cándido Castán – Daniel Gómez – Justo González

Cuando estábamos "gustando" el momento en que nos iban a matar, queríamos pronunciar alguna oración y no nos salía, pero, sin embargo, lo que sí salía espontáneamente eran sentimientos de amor hacia Dios, de afecto hacia nuestros hermanos y de perdón hacia los que nos iban a matar, así como una petición de perdón a Dios por nuestros pecados y debilidades.

cial superior; Vicente Blanco Guadilla, local superior, 54; Gregorio Escobar Garda, 24, newly ordained priest; and the scholastic brothers: Juan Jose Caballero Rodriguez, 24, sub-deacon; Publio Rodriguez Moslares, 24; Justo Gil Pardo, 26; Jose Guerra Andres, 22; Daniel Gomez Lucas, 20; Justo Fernandez Gonzalez, 18; Clemente Rodriguez Tejerina, 18; coadjutor brothers Angel Francisco Bocos Hernandez, 54; Marcelino Sanchez Fernandez, 26 and Eleuterio Pardo Villarroel, 21.

The newly ordained priest Gregorio Escobar had written to his family: "I have always been extremely moved by the accounts of martyrdom that have always existed in the Church, and on reading them I have always been overtaken by a secret desire to run to the same fate as theirs. That would be the best priesthood to which all of us Christians could aspire: Each one to offer his own body and blood in holocaust for the faith. What happiness it would be to die a martyr!" All died professing the faith and forgiving their executioners and, despite the psychological tortures during their cruel captivity, no one apostatized, or failed in the faith, or lamented having embraced the religious vocation.

Gregorio Escobar Barbarin, a nephew of the young newly ordained priest killed at 24, who bears his name, and is the only relative of the martyr who is still in Estella, has said, "Moments like this are the occasion we all

have to walk toward reconciliation." Escobar Barbarin, who was Town Councillor in the Municipality of Estella between 1999 and 2003, said he believes it is necessary to learn from history. "Gregorio and his companions gave their lives generously in correspondence to their faith. Their young hearts longed only to give help and consolation to those who needed it. However, they were taken as sheep to the slaughter amid a chaos of hatred and confusion." (Reported by Zenith, 08.11.20110)

The 22 Oblates will be beatified on December 17, 2011 at the Cathedral of Nuestra Señora de la Almudene in Madrid, Spain.

"To this glorious band of martyrs belong many Spanish Christians, executed out of hatred for the faith in the years 1936-1939 ... during the wicked persecution unleashed against the Church, its members and its institutions bishops, priests and religious were persecuted with particular hatred and cruelty; their only fault - if one can express it that way - was believing in Christ preaching the Gospel and leading the people on the road to salvation. The enemies of Christ and of his teaching believed that by eliminating them they could make the Church completely disappear from Spanish soil.

(John Paul II, Decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints 1992)

Oblate Postulation, Rome

'PREM NIVAS' OF SISTERS OF MOTHER TERESA, AT RAWATAWATTE

The chairperson of the National Child Protection Authority, Anoma Dissanayake commenting on the raid that she has conducted says that "this is not about religion". (Sunday Leader, 4.12.11, Inside Story, Pg. 11).

The manner in which the raid was done on Prem Nivas, at Rawatawatte, Moratuwa, with a horde of policemen, accompanying journalists and cameramen at hand to show that Anoma Dissanayake is personally directing the operation clearly shows that this was neither to "inspect" or to "monitor", to "supervise" or "advise" the nuns of Blessed Mother Teresa, who maintain this home for those poorest of the poor in dire need.

Anoma Dissanayake's intention is evident from her actions. Facts being stubborn, as she herself says, her actions show that she was intent on broadcasting to the world her perception that this was a 'baby farm' as some newspapers said, run by nuns of the Catholic Church for the purpose of selling babies to foreigners and local applicants for questionable purposes and not a home for abandoned and 'unwanted' children and unwed mothers who had nowhere else to go for the delivery of their children.

If she now thinks that "the Probation Officers should have supervised and advised" those in charge

of the home about matters pertinent to the welfare of inmates, we could ask her, "who should train and instruct probation officers to do their job of supervising and advising without leaving room for Anoma Dissanayake and her cohorts of policemen, cameramen and journalists to act in the manner of bulls in a china shop?"

If an anonymous caller on a hotline can activate a government authority to run riot in a well-ordered and well-maintained institution, we could ask whether the NCPA would act decisively and promptly on being informed by an anonymous neighbour that a parent closely is punishing a child at home very cruelly. How does the NCPA check the veracity of the accusation or the nature of the cruelty? By raiding that particular home with a horde of policemen, journalists and cameramen?

There are many government officers who try to show performance in their job primarily to attract the attention from their own bosses, to show that they are in firm control of the affairs entrusted to them, to show that they are very efficient in Sri Lanka where the various departments and institutions under the purview of the government and its ministers are well known for their delay, procrastination, passing-the-buck, inefficiency and lethargy,

to get some notoriety and publicity for themselves, to get a further promotion. Then there are those people whose 'efficiency' masks their vindictiveness, their malice and various types of revenge. Their efficiency also could mask religious prejudice and downright jealousy that does not wish to see any good work done by those of an other religion. Then there is the conscientious public officer who gets threatened, assaulted, injured and tortured, and even politically cornered and punished for doing his or her duty fearlessly.

As for the 'adoption agencies' which some journalists and the NCPA also wish to link with the Sisters, this gives rise to many other questions. One can observe all sorts of other parallel 'agencies' in Sri Lanka linked to immigration to and employment in foreign lands and entrance to foreign universities of many countries being advertised in the newspapers of Sri Lanka. The accredited embassies of some countries in the meantime also warned Sri Lankans about the spurious nature and the false promises held out by some of these 'agencies'.

Are these agencies registered with the Government of Sri Lanka? What are their credentials? Is any Sri Lanka Government agency or department aware of deception of the citizens of Sri

Lanka by these agencies and what steps, if any, are the respective government departments taking to rectify matters? Are there job opportunities in foreign countries, for example, in Korea, for Sri Lankans for which only UPFA political authorities can do the recruiting on grounds of political affiliation and loyalty? Is there any other authority who can do a raid on government departments, co-operations and political offices and investigate the rightness and the wrongness of such recruitment?

Also, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka was also warning prospective investors about spurious financial institutions. And the Central Bank authorities themselves are being questioned by those with public interest into its own bludgeoning and halting of some investigations in process!

We have the right to ask, "In whose interest is that done?", "Who is protecting whom?" The government and government agencies must also learn the meaning of the dictum, "*Bonum ex tota causa, malum ex quocumque defectu*". Someone in the omniscient and self-righteous government departments should know its meaning!

We do perceive all these things and are not strangers to also such religiously prejudiced officers, especially working in gov-

ernment departments very authoritatively but very maliciously acting and persecuting Catholics. Facts are stubborn. It is a fact that at the funeral of Mr. Nonis of the Education Department who had been a teacher, principal, director of education etc., Very Rev. Fr. Don Sylvester (later Bishop) when he was National Director of Religious Education, publicly accused the Department of Education of persecuting this man and finally killing him. At the end of the funeral service some other officers of the same department came and confirmed to the Reverend Father that what he had just said was quite true! Ironically the killers themselves were at the funeral!

As for the protested impartiality of the NCPA Chairman we have our own views. From very high pedestals of authority one may make judgements and decisions and carry them out. But the generality of people too have a sense of fairness and justice that see very solemn judgements pronounced and decisions taken in high places as motivated purely by revengefulness, vindictiveness, malice, partiality political and otherwise and downright wickedness.

There could be quite a few well wishers of other religious persuasions who support the Sisters of Mother Teresa to continue their works of charity to-

Very Rev. Fr. Augustine Fernando
Diocese of Badulla

towards the poorest of the poor and in some way recognize that they do what they do because of their love of Jesus Christ (John 13.35). The Nuns pray for the benefactors daily that God Himself may reward their generosity. In any case, Lord Jesus Christ himself kept the standard at a very high level for His followers. He said, "I command you to love one another as I have loved you." (John 13.34)

As for the Catholic Church, the works of mercy that her faithful strive to engage in will go on irrespective of the kind of reciprocity or publicity they get. But it is a crucial moment not only for the Catholic faithful in Sri Lanka and the world over - the Prem Nivasa raid, the first of its kind has been publicised the world over - to assess the service rendered to humanity by those who are engaged in various works of mercy and support them, but also for the people of Sri Lanka to perceive whether the Consecrated Religious of the Catholic Church devoting themselves for such services are rendering services that are genuine and useful and cannot be neglected or whether they are just a cover-up for unworthy purposes on which presumption the raid was conducted on Prem Nivasa.

CUBE - the Benedictine exhibition, a fitting farewell, tribute to Rev. Bro. Granville Perera - Director

In what could be considered as an outstanding team effort, the students, staff and past pupils of St. Benedict's College produced and presented the CUBE exhibition which they curiously defined as "conspicuously Utilitarian," from 15th 17th September 2011 at Kotahena. As things turned out, it became a fitting farewell tribute to Rev. Bro. Granville Perera, a La Sallian Brother, who gave his sweat, toil and tears to re-engineer the 146 year old institution to regain some of its past glitter. Bro. Granville, as he is popularly known in the educational and sports fields for his lead role, laid his reins down on October 31, 2011, paving the way for Rev. Bro. Janaka Fonseka to assume the mantle with ease.

The CUBE gave an excellent count of the height, length and the breadth of the recent developments of the school.

Team Effort

Supporting the students in the exhibition project, were a committee of teachers with Tyrone Perera as Project Chairman and the Old Boys' Committee headed by Tony Ganlath in an administrative capacity. The well designed and informative souvenir was designed and compiled by the smart Board of Prefects headed by Stefan Irugalabandara.

Clear Objectives

The objectives of the exhibition were to "raise awareness that the classroom theoretical knowledge to be transformed into day to day empirical reality as well as to create an environment for students to demonstrate their creative power." In this endeavour they obtained the inputs from the universities, educational institutions, government departments and the Central Bank.

Everyone Involved

The programme covered all students from Grade 1 to Grade 13. The childrens' stalls from Grade 1 - 5 were supported by the teachers and parents. Stalls from Grade 6-11 presented individual creations and



group projects and included a miniature salt producing complex, cement processing plant, lime kiln and environmental system among others.

Science to the fore

The mathematical section had three stalls, with math games, practical application of maths, history of maths, models of mathematical concepts and computational maths.

The two chemistry stalls, under the guidance of Old Ben. Dr. Russell de Silva of the University of Kelaniya, inter alia, exhibited the magic of chemistry, chemical synthesis and colours of complexions.

The biology students produced four stalls with the assistance of Old Ben, Dr. Saminda Fernando and Dr. Basil Alexander which included human anatomy, environmental science, specimens from the Dehiwala Zoo, specimens from Peradeniya University as well as food and tissue culture exhibits.

The physics department provided two stalls depicting Nano technology, electronics, magic of physics, nuclear energy (power plant) and solar power.

Wider Area Covered

Space compels me to summarize the rest of the stalls. Astronomy, Geography, Commerce (3 stalls), Media and Publicity which section also ran a radio station

Francis D' Almeida

with the signature CUBE FM that did a running city-wide broadcast.

Ultimately it was the College stall that drew much interest which depicted the history of the College, the De La Salle Congregation, education, extracurricular activities and sports.

The only criticism that could be raised about the project is that it did not produce an exclusive stall on Christianity based on the College Motto: "Religio." It could have brought to life, the multi-dimensional aspects of our faith and more information on the De La Salle Congregation.

CUBE was inaugurated on the 15th of September at 9 am by the scientist turned politician Prof. Tissa Vitharana, a virologist of great repute.

Outstanding Exhibit

The 3-day exhibition set up in a carnival atmosphere drew hundreds of students from far and near, as well as the young and old. It generated much friendship and fun whilst shedding a bright light on the multiple and diverse skills and creative excellence of the Boys of St. Benedict's.

Of all the exhibits, one that won admiration was created by Grade 9 student Bimsara Surenka, who invented the water level indicator with LED visuals.

If Not For Him

We will end with the spot from where we began - the saga of Rev. Bro. Granville whose vision went beyond the newly built swimming pool, the 5 storey building nearing completion and the modernized playing field with a posh sports hostel. He believed in the sage's words "*mens sana in corpore sano*" - a healthy mind in a healthy body. Indeed these dual aspects of human development which Bro. Granville held in focus will remain in the hallways and playing fields of St. Benedict's College for long.

How they forecast a cold winter



One day in early September the chief of a Native American tribe was asked by his tribal elders if the winter of 2011/12 was going to be cold or mild. The chief asked his medicine man, but he too

had lost touch with the reading signs from the natural world around the Great Lakes.

In truth, neither of them had any idea about how to predict the coming winter. However, the chief decided to take a modern approach, and the rang the National Weather Service in Gaylord Michigan.

'Yes, it is going to be a cold winter,' the meteorological officer told the chief. Consequently, he went back to his tribe and told the men to collect plenty of firewood.

A fortnight later the chief called the Weather Service and asked for an update. 'Are you still forecasting a cold winter?' he asked.

'Yes, very cold', the weather officer told him.

As a result of this brief conversation the chief went back to the tribe and told his people to collect every bit of wood they could find.

A month later the chief called the National Weather Service once more and asked about the coming winter. 'Yes,' he

was told, 'it is going to be one of the coldest winters ever.'

'How can you be so sure?' the chief asked.

The weatherman replied: 'Because the Native Americans of the Great Lakes are collecting wood like crazy.'



Diving into God

A young man who had been raised as an atheist was training to be an Olympic diver. The only religious influence in his life came from his outspoken Christian friend.

The young diver never really paid much attention to his friend's sermons, but he heard them often.

One night the diver went to the indoor pool at the College he attended. The lights were all off, but as the pool had big skylights and the moon was bright, there was plenty of light to practice by.

The young man climbed up to the highest diving board and as he turned his back to the pool on the edge of the board and extended his arms out, he saw his shadow on the wall. The shadow of his body was in the shape of a cross.

Instead of diving, he knelt down and asked God to come into his life. As the young man stood, a maintenance man walked in and turned the lights on. The pool had been drained for repairs.

(Unknown)

(BV) Negombo Ave Maria emerge tennis Champs



Ave Maria Balika Vidyalaya, Negombo emerged winners at the tennis tournament organised by the Sri Lanka Tennis Association and sponsored by Bartlett Finance.

Raymon Aponso

Programme on Enhanced Writing Skills



A programme on Enhanced Writing Skills was held at All Saint's Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Borella, recently

The programme was conducted by Mr. Kumara Nayanajith, staff member of the "Lama Pradeepaya" and "Gnanartha Pradeepaya"

Reflections for Life



1. God may send a load, but He will never send an overload.
2. Compassion offers whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others
3. Don't spend your time, invest it.
4. We sow the seed - God produces the harvest.
5. When God permits suffering, He also provides comfort
6. When wealth is gone, little is lost, when health is gone something is lost but when character is gone all is lost
7. The supreme need in every hour of difficulty is a vision of God - (G. C. Morgan)
8. Don't let the noise of the world keep you from hearing the voice of the Lord.
9. Whether you are a candle in a corner or beacon on a hill, let your light shine.

Source: "Our Daily Bread"

Sent by:

Newton Fernando
St. Mary's Elders Home
Marcsri, Paiyagala

Holy Cross College, Gampaha, emerge Under-10 Badminton Champions



Holy Cross College - Gampaha emerged Girls' 'B' Division Runners up at the All Island Inter Schools Under-10 Badminton Championship 2011, conducted by the Sri Lanka Schools Badminton Association and concluding at the Ruhuna University Indoor Stadium, Matara

The Team :- Seated from Left to Right : Mr. Mahesha Ekanayake (Coach), Rev. Sr. Mary Deepani (Principal)

Standing From Left to Right : Oshadee Karunarathana, Poornavi Harshika Kumarawansa, Dulakshi Pathivila, Himaya Dinithi Perera (Vice Captain), Hasini Chamodaya Weerathunga (Captain), Kawya Parames Nanayakkara

(Kumara Nayanajith)

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(011N3023)

The Third Sunday of Advent

What it says in the Readings

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor.

(Is. 61:1)

LITURGICAL - CALENDAR YEAR B
11th Dec. - 18th Dec. 2011

Sun: THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Is. 61: 1-2,10-11, 1 Th 5:16-24,

Jn. 1: 6-8,19-28

Mon: Memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Num. 24: 2-7,15-17A, Mt. 21:23-27

Tue: Memorial of St. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr

Zeph. 3:1-2,9-13; Mt. 21: 28-32

Wed: Memorial of St. John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor

Is. 45:6-8,18,21-26,Lk. 7, 19-23

Thu: Is. 54,1-10; Lk. 7, 24-30

Fri: Is. 56, 1-3,6-8; Jn. 5: 33-36

Sat: Gen. 49:2, 8-10;Mt. 2: 1-17

Sun: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

2 Sam 7: 1-5,8-12,14,16; Rom. 16: 25-27,

Lk. 1: 26-38

1st Reading: Is. 61, 1-2; 10-12

The Second Isaiah, a prophet, who lived in the time of the Babylonian exile, understood his mission in terms of announcing to the exiles, the good news that God will bring them back to their own land. This good news comprised also bringing liberation to the destitute along with those who fail to understand the situation they were in, and those weighed down with various forms of slavery. By this great act God was to declare his justice to all nations, and that it would be an incentive for everyone to praise and thank him.

2nd Reading: 1: Thes. 5: 16-24

St. Paul ends his first letter to the Thessalonians, exhorting them

to sort out, with case, the authentic Christian message. They are asked at the same time, to allow the Holy Spirit dwelling in them to guide their lives. He encourages them to live a holy life in order to prepare for the second coming of Christ.

Gospel: John 1, 6-8, 19-28

The first part of the prologue of John's Gospel, contains a clear contrast between Jesus and John the Baptist. While Jesus is presented as God and light of men, John the Baptist is described as man and only a witness to the Light. The reason for this contrast is the presence of disciples both of Jesus and John the Baptist, in the Early Church. John himself declared that he is not the Messiah and that he has



come merely to prepare the way for the Messiah.

Reflection

The prophet Isaiah inspires us to focus on liberating from fetters our brothers and sisters who live in a self-seeking world that ignore social and moral obligations towards one's fellowmen.

As St. Paul says, the best way to prepare for the second coming of Christ is to live a holy life guided by the Holy Spirit

who dwells in us. This means also to sort out for ourselves the authentic message of Christ in order to bear witness to it.

Living out the values of the Gospel through a sincere and simple way of life, like John the Baptist, is indeed our Christian obligation and the best preparation for the Lord's coming.

Archdiocesan Commission for the Biblical Apostolate

Third Sunday in Advent Aid Stories

Aid Story

An urgent call came from the great Lama of the South to the great Lama of the North asking for a wise and a Holy monk to initiate the novices in the spiritual life. To everyone's astonishment, the great Lama sent five monks instead of one. To those who enquired, he said, "we will be lucky if one of the five finally gets to the Lama."

The group had been on the road one day when a messenger came running up to them and said. "The priest of our village died. We need someone to take his place. "The village seemed a comfortable place and the priest's salary was a handsome one. One of the monks was seized with pastoral

concern for the people. "I should not be a true Buddhist if I did not stay on to serve these people." So he dropped out.

Some days later they happened to stay at a place of a king who took a fancy to one of the monks. "Stay with us, and you shall marry my daughter and when I die you will succeed to the throne." The monk was attracted to the princess and the luster of the kingship. So he said, "What better way to influence all the people of this country for good than to become the King? I should not be a true Buddhist if I did not accept this opportunity for serving the cause of our holy religion. So he too dropped out.

The rest of the group went on their way

and one night, in a hilly region came upon a village of poor people. In one of the homes they were treated with hospitality by a young pretty girl. Her parents had been murdered by bandits and the girl was all alone and full of anxiety. Her father was the only male who gave a good leadership for the whole village. Next morning, when it was time to leave, one of the monks said, "I shall stay with this girl. I should not be a true Buddhist if I did not practice compassion."

The remaining two finally came to a Buddhist village and found to their horror, that all the people had abandoned their religion and were under the way of a Hindu guru. One of the monks said "I owe it to these poor people and to the Lord Buddha to stay on here and win them back to the true religion." He was the last to drop out.

The fifth monk eventually got to the Lama. The Great Lama of the North had been right after all.

Aid Story 2

A priest in Florida complained that it was very difficult to get the Christian message across to his parish. "It's so beautiful here in winter," he said, "that heaven doesn't interest them. And it is so hot here in summer, that

St. John of the Cross

Feast Day 14th December

John of the Cross was a Spanish mystic, Carmelite friar and priest. He reformed the Carmelite Order, along with Saint Teresa of Avila, the founder of the discalced Carmelites. He is known for his writings in poetry and studies on the growth of the soul.

Imprisonment, writings, torture, death and recognition

On the night of 2 December 1577, John was taken prisoner by his superiors in the calced Carmelites, who had launched a counter-program against John and Teresa's reforms. John had refused an order to return to his original house, on the basis that his reform work had been approved by the Spanish Nuncio, a higher authority than John's direct superiors in the calced Carmelites. John was jailed in Toledo, where he was kept under a brutal regimen that included public lashing before the community at least weekly, and severe isolation in a tiny stifling cell barely large enough for his body. He managed to escape nine months later, on 15 August 1578,



through a small window in a room adjoining his cell. (He had managed to pry the cell door off its hinges earlier that day). In the meantime, he had composed a great part of his most famous poem Spiritual Canticle during this imprisonment; his harsh sufferings and spiritual endeavours are then reflected in all of his subsequent writings. The paper was passed to him by one of the friars guarding his cell.

After returning to a normal life, he went on with the reformation and the founding of monasteries for the new Discalced Carmelite order, which he had helped found along with St. Teresa de Ávila.

Advent from 17 to 24 December

- The weekdays of Advent from 17 to 24 December take precedence over the memorials of Saints, which may therefore be celebrated only in the particular form laid down by the liturgical books (IH 237-239; 1M 355a: see in this Ordo)
- Only when some genuine need or pastoral advantage and occasions to be celebrated (1M 374). Votive Masses and daily Masses for the Dead are prohibited (1M 381).
- Liturgy of the Hours:
 - The Invitatory antiphon, the Hymns for the Office of Readings, for Lauds and for Vespers, are taken from those prescribed for the season;
 - Proper antiphons are assigned for the weekday psalms at Lauds and Vespers;
- In the Eucharistic celebrations likewise proper readings are given for the days from 17 to 24 December, and these should be used instead of those indicated for the weekdays of the third or fourth week of Advent.

Pope Benedict: Advent is a time for self-examination, repentance

Vatican City, (CNA/EWTN News).- Pope Benedict XVI used his Sunday Angelus remarks to encourage Christians to embrace self-examination and repentance during Advent.

"As we prepare for Christmas, it is important that we find time for self-contemplation and carry out an honest assessment of our lives," he told thousands of pilgrims in a rain-soaked St. Peter's Square last Sunday, (4).

"May we be enlightened by a ray of the light that comes from Bethlehem, the light of He who is 'the greatest' and made Himself small, He who is 'the strongest' but became weak."

Prayer of the Faithful

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

That Christians, by the way they live, may show forth the light of Christ's love and mercy to all people. Lord hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For all rulers that they may work for the good of those they govern. Lord hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

That hearts that are broken with sorrow, disappointment, or loneliness may experience the gentle healing of Christ. Lord hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

That we ourselves may witness to the Good News that there is forgiveness for sin, and that there is hope for our world, by the way we speak and act. Lord hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.