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The Ascension of the Lord

May 12

# Messenger

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## Cardinal celebrates Holy Mass with Pope Francis after the Sri Lankan Rally at Padua



His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith concelebrated Holy Mass with Pope Francis on the day after the Sri Lankan Rally in honour of St. Anthony at Padua.

Very Rev. Msgr. Neville Joe Perera, National Coordinator for Sri Lankan Migrants' in Italy organised the annual rally with the help of other Sri Lankan Priests serving in Italy.

### Feast of Corpus Christi

The Pontifical Council for New Evangelization on the advice of His Holiness Pope Francis has planned to organise worldwide, a specially synchronized celebration of Holy Hour on Sunday, June 2 which is the feast of Corpus Christi. The Holy Hour will be presided over by the Pope and will be celebrated at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome from 5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

The Holy See has requested us to celebrate a simultaneous Holy Hour with all our faithful in our Cathedrals, Parish Churches and religious communities. Due to the time difference, locally it will have to be celebrated in Sri Lanka from 8.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. on that day.

The Archdiocesan main ceremony will be held at St. Lucia's Cathedral. His Eminence encourages all the parishes, institutions and religious communities to follow suit at the same time in their own Churches and Chapels.

Rev. Fr. Indrajith Perera, Liturgy Coordinator will forward prayers and theme material for the use of the parishes.

- Koinonia

### Education is our contribution to country's development: Cardinal

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, addressing students, parents, staff and clergy on the occasion of the blessing and opening of the new building of St. St. Peter's College Branch School, Gampaha said that the purpose of Catholic education is to provide the country with well-educated, spiritually formed and disciplined citizens for the future and that the Church had no other ulterior motive for opening these schools for the hundreds of students who seek the right to a good education.

(CONTD ON PG. 3)



### Colombo Regional Pilgrimage to Madhu

The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith has

initiated a pilgrimage to Madhu National Shrine to mark the 'Year of Faith' for the Colombo- South Region which comprises of the Deaneries of Colombo North, Colombo Central, Colombo South, Kotte, Moratuwa and Katutara

covering 48 parishes. All preliminary arrangements have been made in consultation with the Administrator of the Madhu Shrine. His Eminence will preside at all the liturgical celebrations including Holy Mass, Benediction

and the Candlelit Procession together with Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar. The Railway Department has taken a keen interest in providing transport to the pilgrims, since it is for the first time in thirty three years that

they will be operating up to Madhu. The Railway Department wishes to deploy two trains to leave early morning on Friday May 24, one starting from Aluthgama and the other from Mt. Lavania.

(CONTD ON PG. 2)

"Gleaned from the classics"

*Nemo potest personam diu ferre fictam*

(from Seneca)

No one can feign a part of ever.



# Panadura Parish Celebrates 75 Years in September

Panadura Parish established in the year 1938 will celebrate its 75th anniversary in September this year.

The Parish with its main Church, Mother of Sorrows has three other churches coming under the pastoral care of Rev. Fr. Sisira Priyashantha who has brought about a number of positive changes in a short period of time for the good of the faithful of his parish. One notable blessing has been the introduction of an additional Holy Mass given every week to the four churches. On Sundays, Mother of Sorrows Church, Panadura will have an additional Mass at 5 pm.

The Church gives due prominence towards the devotion to Mother of Sorrows and on every Friday, a significant number of devotees attend the Novena and Holy Mass. The Church which was closed during week days earlier is now opened to the faithful from 6.30 in the morning until around 7 in the evening on weekdays, a prudent step as many flock to the Church seeking the intercession of the Blessed Mother.

The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith has given his approval for a project to construct a new entrance to the Church. Both parishioners and devotees have extended their fullest cooperation to the Parish Priest to make the project a reality.

Panadura was blessed with the Church of Mother of Sorrows way back in 1864. In the early years of its existence the Panadura mission belonged to the Moratuwa Parish and later in the

year 1895 it was amalgamated with the Wadduwa Parish.

It was in 1938 that Panadura became a separate parish with Rev. Fr. Joseph Jayasuriya (1938-1941) as the first parish priest. During that time it consisted of the Mother of Sorrows Church in Panadura, St. Anne's Church in Sarikalimulla and Holy Rosary Church in Aruggoda. In 1966, (newly established) St. Joseph's Church, Waththalpola also came under the Panadura Parish.

This land in which the (Mother of Sorrows) Church is built now was bought by the foresighted visionary and educationist, Rev. Fr. Alex Ranasinghe (1948-1955) in 1952 with financial help given by His Eminence, Thomas Cardinal Cooray. This was a vital breakthrough in a predominantly Buddhist area.

The new church building was started in the latter part of 1961 by Rev. Fr. Joseph Jayasuriya with the permission of local authorities. The construction of the Church was not a smooth piece of work as there were many protests lodged and work had to be abandoned due to a directive issued by the then Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Having enormous faith in Our Lady, Rev. Fr. Jayasuriya started the Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour seeking her intervention for the smooth completion of the construction of the Church.

Construction work was started again under Rev. Fr. Benedict Jayatilleke (1966-1971) and during the time frame



of Rev. Fr. Alexius Benedict as Parish Priest (1972 - 1976), a new altar was built. The first Holy Mass was offered in April 1974 by the then Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo Rt. Rev. Oswald Gomis who blessed the new church building and consecrated the Altar.

During Rev. Fr. Raymond Samarakoon's (1976-1982) time as Parish Priest the shrine outside the church was built by Mr. and Mrs. Percy Fonseka in memory of their parents. The belfry was donated by the family members of District Judge Mr. Shirley Dissanayake. Rev. Fr. Sunil Kumara (1982 - 1987) contributed immensely to our church both spiritually and to its constructions.

The good work done by the predecessors was followed by the sub-

sequent parish priests who devoted their time and energy to bring the Church of Mother of Sorrows to its present position.

The Parish of Panadura extends many words of appreciation and thanks to the unsung services rendered by the Rev. Sisters of Good Shepherd Convent of Panadura since its inception in 1951 and also by the number of lay devotees who laboured and sweated for the well being of the Church.

A booklet to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the Church was authored by late A.P.Fernando (Guruthuma) in 1988 when the present Procurator General, Rev. Fr. Merl Shanthi Perera was the Parish Priest of Panadura.

Lalith Fernando

## Annual 'Acies' Function of Jaffna Comitium



Rev. Fr. Regi Rajeswaran (Director) Anusha Anton Jayarajah (Correspondent), P. Maria Karunainayagam (President), Glania Angelo (Secretary), Selvathy George (Treasurer), Daisy Mahendran (V. President)

Annual 'Acies' function of Jaffna Comitium was held recently at Jaffna St. Mary's Cathedral. It was presided over by the Diocese Spiritual Director Rev. Fr. Regi Rajeswaran and organised by Bro.R Karunainayagam.

About 670 legionaries from 57 praesidiums participated in this important ceremony with whole-hearted devotion. All members were dressed

in white and were holding their respective praesidium flag staffs which showed their gratitude towards Mother Mary. They pronounced their annual solemn promise by saying "I am all yours, my Queen, my Mother, and all that I have is yours."

Holy Mass celebrated after the promises by, Rector of the St. Xavier's Seminary Rev. Fr. Jebaratnam. During his

Homily he insisted that "All sinners should repent for their sins and for repentance we should pray along with our Mother Mary."

Sis. Anusha Anton Jayarajah (Correspondent of Jaffna) who came from our hierarchy Senatus in Colombo, participated in this prestigious function and we consider it as our pleasure to see her at this memorable ceremony.

## Colombo Regional ..... Contd. from Pg. 1

The organising committee has also made arrangements to provide all the six meals to the pilgrims for Rs. 1000/= per head. The Administrator assures of better facilities to the pilgrims with water supply and electricity with State sponsorship. However, the Administra-

tor announces that housing facilities will not be handled by the Shrine but the Organising Committee.

For booking of Railway Tickets and food, a counter will be opened at the Archbishop's House, Borella on Sunday, May 12, from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00

noon. Those who wish to join the pilgrimage could register themselves and obtain further information from this counter.

**Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Femandopulle**  
Episcopal Vicar,  
Colombo South Region

## Pope Francis asks: Do you know the gate of Jesus?

Pope Francis warned that some people, even in the Church, are "social climbers" that try to promote themselves, instead of seeking to glorify Christ.

"These social climbers exist even in the Christian communities. Those people who are looking out for themselves ... and consciously or unconsciously pretend to enter are but thieves and robbers," he said recently at a Mass for Vatican Press Office and Vatican Radio employees.

"Why? Why steal the glory from Jesus? They want glory for themselves and this is what Jesus said to the Pharisees: 'You seek for each other's approval,'" the Pope responded.

The result of this approach is that faith becomes "something of a 'commercial' religion," he reflected.

"I give glory to you and you give glory to me. But these people did not enter through the true gate. The true gate is Jesus and those who do not enter by this gate are mistaken."

Christians can know which way or gate is Jesus' by looking for the marks of the Beatitudes, the Holy Father said.

Vatican News

## ● From a Reader Vigil at Pamunugama

It was reported in your last week's edition of May 5, that a Vigil was held at the Pamunugama Parish of the Risen Christ after midnight.

This may be the first instance of such an incident that has occurred within our Catholic Community. Rev. Fr. Ananda Vithana and his parishioners should be highly commended for this great and edifying novel creation.

As Colombo Catholics or even elsewhere one cannot imagine that the people in our parishes could ever think of participating in such a festivity. The only time the Catholics keep awake is for Christmas Midnight Mass.

Keep up the good work Father and God Bless you for this bold and invigorating idea.

Dulelep C.C.

## Blood Donation Campaign by SLT Ragama



Members of the Sri Lanka Telecom Branch in Ragama organised a blood donation campaign to mark the seventh anniversary of the Branch.

The Campaign was conducted under the care of doctors and nurses of the Ragama Hospital.

W.M. Leslie Perera

## CATHOLIC PRESS WEBSITE

www.colombocatholicpress.lk  
Email: cmesenger@slt.net.lk  
pradeepaya@slt.net.lk  
Telephone: 2695984, 2678106, 4899611  
Fax: 2692586



# Inauguration of Diocesan Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development (JPHD)

His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe, inaugurated the Diocesan Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development (JPHD) at Caritas SED Galle, recently.

The Committee comprises of four members of the Diocesan Clergy and two members representing men and women Religious congregations serving in the Diocese,

and five members representing the Professional field of Law, Management, Medicine, Education and Finance.

The Commission will assist the Bishop to foster and promote Catholic Social Teachings, and scrutinise the signs of the times and serve the Diocese by promoting a greater awareness, understanding and involvement in the area of

Justice, Peace and Human Development, by working with the poorest and most vulnerable, regardless of ethnicity or religion and address justice and peace concerns in the Diocese (Southern Province)

Bishop of Galle is the Chairman and the Director of Caritas SED Galle is the Secretary of this newly formed Diocesan Commission.

*Rev. Fr. Michael Rajendram*

## 'Aluth Sahal Mangalya'



Each year the traditional 'Aluth Sahal Mangalya' is celebrated in the Parish of Godella with the faithful bringing rice packets prepared with freshly harvested paddy.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Danusha Fernando, Parish Priest of St. Sebastian's Church, Godella distributing the rice packets to the parishioners after the blessing.

*H.A. Cyril Perera*

## Education is our .... Cond. from Pg. 1

However, His Eminence said that any student of any religion or caste or creed have the privilege of being admitted to our schools so that they could benefit from the facilities provided by Catholic schools.

"This is our contribution to the development of the country by being able to provide a sound education to our children. This we do in the understanding that the dignity of education lies in fostering the true perfection and happiness of those to be educated," His Eminence expressed.

Principal of the St. Peter's College Branch School, Gampaha, Rev. Fr. Chaminda Wanigasena in his address said that the Gampaha branch school of St. Peter's College, Colombo is entering into the stage of maturity as an academic institute after having completed 20 years of fruitful service to the nation. It had a humble beginning at the premises of Holy Cross Church, Gampaha

Fr. Wanigasena thanked His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith by making possible the transfer of the primary school from Holy Cross Church, Gampaha to its new building. "This transfer should be seen as a positive step of our journey towards being an educational institute of excellence," he said.

Remembering in gratitude the Founder-Rector of the Branch School the Late Very Rev. Fr. Joe E. Wickramasinghe, Fr. Wanigasena said, "As Founder-Rector of the branch school, Fr. Joe happily accepted the request made by the then Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis to establish a branch school in Gampaha. It was declared open by His Grace Most Rev. Nicholas Marcus Fernando the then Archbishop of Colombo in 1993.

The successive Rectors, Rev. Fr. Felician Ranjith and Rev. Fr. Travis Gabriel showed great concern for the branch school. Each in turn introduced many facilities for the betterment of the students. May God reward them abundantly."

## London A/Level Classes at St. Bridget's Convent

Bridgetines have obtained excellent results at the G.C.E. (O/Level) Examination held on December 2012 and have now begun their A/Level Courses of Studies. They are given the option of selecting either the Local or London A/Level Syllabuses.

London A/Level Classes that began in the Year 2010 have produced good results with one student even winning a World Prize in Accounting.

The Subjects offered by the School are: Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, Psychology, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

Those who wish to join the London A/Level Classes may apply to:

*The Principal  
Collegiate School  
St. Bridget's Convent  
Colombo 7*



## Church in the World

### Absorb Church's Catholic identity, Pope tells new Swiss Guards

EWTN/CNA - On the day that it swears in 35 new members and commemorates the fallen, the Swiss Guard was told by Pope Francis that it has a "privileged opportunity" to deepen its knowledge of Christ by breathing in the Catholicity of the Church. Every May 6, the Corps remembers the 147 Swiss soldiers who died defending Pope Clement VII during the 1527 Sack of Rome. In addition, the Swiss Guard also swears in new members for two years of service at the Vatican.

In anticipation of the new recruits joining the corps, the Pope received them and their families in an audience today at 12:45 p.m.

"Today," the Pope began, "you are not called to this heroic gesture but to another form of sacrifice, which is also challenging: To put your youthful energies at the service of the Church and the Pope. To do this you must be strong, motivated by love, and sustained by your faith in Christ."

Pope Francis advised them to remember the faith that led them to choose to join the Swiss Guard. "The faith that God has given you on the day of your baptism is the most precious treasure you have! And your mission of service to the Pope and the Church also finds its source there," the Holy Father said.

### Costa Rica campaign highlights dignity of babies with birth defects

EWTN/CAN - A pro-life association in Costa Rica has launched a campaign to raise awareness about the plight of babies with anencephaly, who are often used to justify calls for the legalization of abortion in Latin America.

Babies born with the condition are missing all or part of their brain and usually die within a few hours, although some babies live longer. One baby with the condition born in Brazil lived for 16 months.

In a statement sent to EWTN News, the pro-life group Por la Vida underscored the importance of defending the right to life of babies with anencephaly, one year after Brazil legalized abortion for babies with the condition. A baby with the same condition is currently making headlines in El Salvador, as a similar debate rages in the country.

The awareness campaign in Costa Rica includes testimonies from families who have had babies with anencephaly.

One woman explained that she did not see her baby as deformed. Rather, she explained, "to me he is and always will be my baby, the fruit of my womb, my gift from God, my first and only love."

### Catholic-Jewish belief in creation of man

EWTN/CAN At a local synagogue, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles urged Catholics and Jews to proclaim together the "Good News" that every man and woman is "created in the image and likeness of God."

"They need to know that angels go before us. They need to know that they are God's image and that everyone they meet is God's image, too," he said.

"We need to be the ones who tell them that their lives are not trivial. That humans are not just random beings, contingent products of evolution, going through life with no 'why' or reason."

Archbishop Gomez spoke at Los Angeles' Sinai Temple, a Conservative Jewish congregation, on May 1 on the topic of shared witness to God.

He said the truth about man's creation in God's image "holds the key to the rebirth of charity and compassion in our society." Living with this awareness would change the way people think, he said.

## SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus





## Tamil Diaspora must give up claim for Eelam to help resolve ethnic problem

The Tamil Diaspora is playing a negative role in the process of reconciliation after the war. Some of them are LTTE supporters who consented to the brutalities and the crimes against humanity committed by the LTTE.

They kept silent when the LTTE committed terrible acts of terrorism against the civilian population - the Sinhalese, the Muslims and the Tamil political and civil society leaders and intellectuals. They are morally if not legally responsible for the terrorist activities indulged in by the LTTE. They contributed to the LTTE funds voluntarily. They are therefore culpable to a degree for the LTTE crimes against humanity and the humanitarian law. They were well aware of the LTTE recruiting child soldiers but kept silent.

They were aware that in the last stages of the war the LTTE were forcibly taking Tamil civilians of the Vanni area from one side of the A9 towards the other. They were aware that they were using these civilians as human shields. They would have been aware that those civilians who tried to escape from the LTTE were shot at point blank range by the LTTE. While Church leaders appealed to the LTTE to release the civilians the Diaspora pretended that these poor civilians were voluntarily accompanying the LTTE fighting units. Did the Diaspora voice their protests? Did they ask the LTTE to surrender when they knew they

were outnumbered and outgunned? Could the Diaspora not have used their influence with the LTTE leadership to convince Prabhakaran to release the civilians taken as human shields to go to the Safe Zones declared by the government instead of accompanying them to hospitals in these safe zones? Had they done so many lives of innocent Tamil civilians would have been saved. While they are clamouring for an international investigation of the alleged war crimes and crimes against the humanitarian law by the Army they are silent about the same crimes committed by the LTTE.

Some say the Tamil Diaspora is keeping alive the Eelam claim in order to justify their claim for asylum. If the issue of Sinhalese-Tamil ethnic conflict is resolved some of them may be repatriated to Sri Lanka. So they stoke the fire and keep the issue burning. Unfortunately the Government has been dragging its feet on the process of reconciliation giving a cause for the Tamil Diaspora to keep pressing the issue of a separate state for the Tamils.

The LLRC view was that while some 'Tamil Diaspora groups' seek to contribute constructively to broad-based reconciliation efforts, other Diaspora groups, especially, those described as supporting the LTTE, seem to adopt an adversarial approach. They cite the alleged lack of meaningful dialogue with the Tamil political parties to find political solutions to post conflict issues such as devolution and other unresolved minority grievances pertaining to equality and justice, as justification for their actions.

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

As recommended by the LLRC the Government should take action to constructively engage those groups that

still harbour adversarial attitudes and the LTTE approach of separation, and find space for those groups to contribute to the local reconciliation and development efforts, engage in a proactive diplomatic initiative with the international community, especially those countries that host these Diaspora groups.

The purpose of this initiative should be to brief those countries on the meaningful dialogue referred to above and the effective and visible action being taken to address the post conflict issues, including the implementation of recommendations of the Commission. It is only by doing so that the Government can persuade the host countries to listen less to these hostile Diaspora groups, while being more receptive to the information provided by the Government. In addition, the Government must also be proactive in encouraging and supporting the work of the expatriates who do not advocate the discarded LTTE ideology of violence and separation and who espouse the democratic principles of ethnic harmony and consensual politics.

The Government must also have more liberal policies and attitudes towards those expatriates who wish to invest and work in Sri Lanka, for instance by making it easier to obtain dual nationality status, effect remittances and be able to travel throughout the country without undue restrictions.

The Commission recommends that the Government constitute a Multi-Disciplinary Task Force that will include representatives from the Presidential Secretariat, External Affairs, Defense, Foreign Employment, the Private Sector, and Academia, to propose a programme of action to harness the untapped potential of the expatriate community, and to respond to the concerns of the so-called 'hostile Diaspora groups,' and to engage them constructively with the Government and other stakeholders involved in the reconciliation process.

# Are we an 'Irreligiously Religious' Nation?

## The Paradox of Religiosity in Sri Lanka

By Rev. Fr. Mervyn Fernando

Sri Lanka to all appearances is a very religious or religious-minded country. The following could be cited as "proof:

(1) The ubiquitous presence of Buddhist temples, Hindu kovils, Christian churches and Moslem mosques all over the country, and they are frequented by the respective adherents in large numbers on Poya days, Sundays, Fridays and festival days, unlike in the West where Church-going and religious practice have dropped dramatically.

(2) Unlike other countries (in the West) hardly anybody in Sri Lanka would say "I have no religion," except for a handful of rationalists. There is in general a very positive feeling and respect for religion and religious personages (monks, priests, sadhus etc.).

(3) The high visibility of the external signs and symbols of religion such as statues of the Buddha, of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, a variety of Saints and deities, in addition to wayside shrines open to offerings of the travelling public. (Not applicable to Islam).

(4) Public profession of religion by the State, particularly of Buddhism which enjoys a favoured status, at all public events. The President, Ministers and other public officials consider it important to invoke

the blessings of the Triple Gem, broadcast over the media, at the commencement of term of office and other significant occasions.

(5) The traditions of the religions themselves to engage in processions and peraheras on public roads, with loud, visible expressions of devotion - singing, chanting, dancing, drumming etc. - on occasions of religious significance respectively - celebration of Church feasts (Catholic), the Kandy Perahera, the Vel festival etc. (Again not applicable to Islam.).

(6) Sri Lanka has the highest number of religious public holidays in the world, counting the 12 (or 13) Poya holidays.

(7) The prohibition of public entertainment (cinema, theatre) and sale of liquor on Poya days.

(8) The explicit conviction of the Buddhist Sangha and the Buddhist faithful that the Buddha himself entrusted the preservation of the purity of the Dhamma (*Theravada*) to Sri Lanka.

(9) The emphasis on the importance of religious education in dham pasalas and in regular school education, with religion as a compulsory subject, both by the government and religious authorities.

(10) The State has deemed it necessary to see to the wel-

fare and well-being of religions at no less than the ministerial level.

It would appear therefore that Sri Lanka would be a deeply religious society with the majority of people abiding by the precepts of the respective religions; and all of them are in close agreement with regard to the major principles of moral and religious behaviour. Going by the above-mentioned indicators, we could expect religiosity to be the hallmark of attitudes, values and behaviour patterns of the Sri Lankan people, making allowances for the normal weaknesses of human nature.

But social reality contradicts such an expectation. It is only too obvious that irreligious and immoral behaviour of all kinds pervades the country across the board. For example:

(1) The daily papers are full of reports of murders, rapes, child abuses, robberies, abductions and crimes of all kinds. Violence seems to be the order of the day.

(2) The accusation that elections are not free and fair in significant degree is the constant lament of organisations monitoring them

(3) Most financial dealings in government, and in public service are tainted with bribery and corruption; the public can hardly get anything done in a government department without greasing a number of palms.

(4) It is common knowl-

edge that nepotism and favouritism are rampant in the areas of politics and governance.

(5) The heavy politicization of the public service including the Police has left victims of injustice helpless, and shrunk the space for the exercise of human rights

(6) The blatant violation of election laws and connected malpractices at both national and local elections with the connivance of the Police has become the norm

(7) Though the country is supposed to be a practicing, and even exemplary democracy, there is palpable control of the media directly and indirectly. Victimization of political opponents, openly or covertly is a common feature

(8) Despite the preachings of all the religions, specially Buddhism that *thanha* (greed) is the principal obstacle to spiritual progress, and the commitment of the State to socialism, the socio-economic order of the country is driven by unabashed and blatant consumerism. Luxuries take precedence over necessities, making the rich richer and the poor poorer

All this and other phenomena point to an inversely proportional relationship to the expected religiousness of Sri Lanka society. So we have the strange paradox of a "religiously irreligious" country. Its religiosity is only apparent, not

real. What is particularly inexplicable is that a nation which is avowedly and self-consciously religious-minded could manifest a level of irreligiosity which seems to be lower than that of some countries (in the West) which have all but excluded religion from the public domain.

What response can the religions and the religious leaders give to this sad paradox? They are supposed to be the teachers, and guardians of the moral order. It is difficult to ignore the unpalatable conclusion that they have failed to deliver the goods, to make Sri Lanka a truly religious country, in spirit and in truth. If they had done so over the centuries, to 'inject' moral, religious and spiritual values into the social fabric of the country in significant degree, the evolution of the political and public order over time would have been far more conducive to generating a regime of social justice, interracial harmony, a democratic polity and total human development all of which have become problematic one way or another, in Sri Lanka today.

The current socio-political crisis in the country should be a wake-up call to the religions and religious leadership an examination of conscience which could lead to initiatives of energetic engagement for the upliftment of the moral/spiritual quality of the country.

Better late than never!

(Courtesy: *The Enlightened Life*)



# The Splendour of Catholicism and poverty of Fundamentalism - 2

*Contd. from last week*

*Prof. Anton Meemana*

## THE 'REAL PRESENCE' OF CHRIST

Let us take one prominent misunderstanding about the 'Real Presence' of Christ in the Eucharist. Everything is absolutely possible with God. God is and can also be present everywhere and anywhere. Now, if God can be present everywhere, then God can also be truly present in the bread and wine consecrated during the Holy Mass. If we say that Christ is not present in the Eucharist, then what we are really saying is that God is not that powerful and there are things God cannot do and one of them is that He cannot be truly present in a piece of bread and a cup of wine. Then, what kind of a God do we believe in? He is such a weak and impotent God that He cannot even be present in a piece of bread and a cup of wine. Why do we have to believe in such a weak God?

If God is really almighty and powerful, then He is capable of doing anything which certainly includes being truly present in the bread and wine during the Mass. The good news is this: Indeed, everything is possible with God, including transubstantiation. In the final analysis, transubstantiation (transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ) is not a work of human hands or an invention of the Church. It is truly a work of God and a teaching from God. So what God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

## TO SERVE ONE'S NEIGHBOUR IS TO PRAISE GOD

The true essence of Catholicism is quality service to humanity under the guidance of the Triune God. Loving God single-mindedly, wholeheartedly, soulfully and artfully and loving one's crooked and vicious neighbour self-sacrificingly are the two main features of Catholicism. To praise the Almighty God and serve humanity out of faith, hope and love are two sides of the same coin. Our love towards our neighbour proves our love towards God. Some Christians praise God but do not do anything substantially to alleviate human sufferings. Praising God is not good enough. Faith in Christ as one's Lord, Saviour and Master and loving service to suffering humanity are intimately and intrinsically interlinked.

In spite of failures, setbacks, blunders, betrayals and temptations, the Catholic Church has been striving mightily to be faithful to her mission mandated by Christ. We must recognize the fact that the Catholic Church has, in recent times, accepted, acknowledged, come to terms with and repented, without being defensive, the blunders she had committed in her long history.

The more one learns from and reflects upon one's mistakes and shortcomings, the holier and more spiritually mature one becomes. Every mistake is a means for interior purification and sanctification. We come to know God more intimately through our mistakes. The more blunders we commit, the more we must cling to God. God works in and through our blunders and weaknesses and He makes us magnanimous

and great precisely through them. The greatness and grandeur of God is that He could live with human imperfections and, at the same time, love us unconditionally and everlastingly. An imperfect God is not existentially and ontologically capable of accepting a sinful humanity. Only a perfect God can accept and love an imperfect humanity and help human beings to grow spiritually.

The Catholic Church keeps the memory of this love affair between a sinful humanity and an ever-faithful and ever-loving God alive. In order to be ever-faithful to her mission, the Catholic Church is in need of ongoing renewal and reform and is continuously in the process of self-examination and repentance. She is a learning and self-correcting Church and that is her true greatness. Holiness is a patient process not a readymade and an instant product. Holiness is a never ending love affair between God and human beings. An unrepented life is not worth living and unrepented church is not a living Church. But the Catholic Church is a truly living Church.

## CATHOLICISM AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

To be human is to be Catholic. To be fully human is to be fully Catholic. Catholicism sustains and nourishes authentic values of all cultures and civilization and therefore everybody could live the spirit of Catholicism out. The more one attempts to self-appropriate the spirit of Catholicism, the more magnanimous, gregarious, exotic and exuberant one continues to become. The spirit of Catholicism is an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. The best of Catholicism is best for all peoples because it offers many possibilities and opportunities for human redemption than Christian fundamentalism. Catholicism is the only future for humanity because Christ is the light of all nations.

Catholicism radiates the universality of Christian faith and tries to capture and accommodate the totality of Divine Revelation and embrace the cultural diversity of all nations. Catholicism is an attempt to sanctify not only individual human beings but also time, space and the whole of creation. Our world is a world created, sustained, blessed and sanctified by God and Catholicism is the most comprehensive attempt to understand that world and cherish its sacredness without giving into the latest spiritual fad.

## GOD AND OTHERS

Splendour of truth is the splendour of Catholicism and nothing else. Catholicism is also for the benefit and welfare of non-Catholics. The glory of Catholicism is the festive joy of human beings becoming fully alive and we become joyfully alive when we serve and love others in God. Catholicism recognizes the best achievements in every culture and preserves them for posterity. Whatsoever is best in Buddhism, for instance, does not contradict whatsoever is best in Catholicism, even though both are not the same.

Catholicism takes human history, cultures, languages, races, tribes, nations and art forms very seriously. They all have an irreplaceable niche in the Church. Catholicism nourishes other

cultures while being nourished by them in return.

Fundamentalism treats people like infants and idiots. If fundamentalism prevails, it would curtail human creativity and originality. Christian fundamentalism (or any fundamentalism, for that matter) is a work of human beings where as Catholicism is a work of God. True Christian teachings are infinitely greater and bigger than fundamentalist groanings. Fundamentalism imposes and forces while Catholicism proposes and proposes. Catholicism encourages a universal journey of faith, hope, love and humility. It does not impose itself upon anybody but invites everybody to a happier and holier life. To be really happy is to be holy. One cannot be deeply happy without becoming uniquely holy. In that sense, nobody is uninteresting in the eyes of God. That is the reason why the Church should become universal, global, inclusive, planetary and all-embracing not fanatical, provincial or fundamentalist. A fundamentalist church is a contradiction in itself. Catholicity is the true hallmark of a church.

One cannot become a Christian once and for all. Becoming a Christian is a daily and an ongoing struggle and striving till the end of one's life. It is all right to be "born again" but one must become "born again" again and again in a Catholic manner, not just for a brief period of time, nor in a literal and lateral manner.

## FUNDAMENTALISM AND BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Fundamentalism reads the Bible arbitrarily and selectively and promotes some selected Biblical passages as the sole and whole truth of Christianity. The Holy Bible must be read as a whole for all its worth and meaning and interpreted in a balanced and coherent manner in its proper historical, cultural, theological and philological context. Taken out of the context, the meaning of the Bible becomes distorted.

What God has revealed and what the Catholic Church has historically defined is infinitely richer, greater and profounder than anything Christian fundamentalism could offer. To think that for the last 2000 years, Catholics have not understood the Bible properly until fundamentalists came along and explained it is the zenith of arrogance and ignorance. They are blissfully, pathologically and hopelessly naïve and ignorant about the ongoing discoveries and new insights in Biblical scholarship and historical research in Christianity.

Fundamentalists have a limited number of teachings but they have mistakenly and narrowly put them forward as the whole truth and in so doing, the richness of the Divine revelation is distorted and truncated.

Glorification of little knowledge or aberrated knowledge and putting it forward as the total truth is one of the salient features of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is the tyranny and slavery



of literalism. Only an extremely narrow-minded person could remain a life-long fundamentalist.

## CHRIST AND CHURCH

To persecute the Church is to persecute Christ Himself. "Now as he journeyed he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:3-5; 22:6-8). Christ is the head of the Church and the Church is His mystical and martyred body. They are not two distinct realities. We cannot come to know, love, serve and follow Christ without His Church. Christ becomes visible, viable, tangible and audible in and through the Church. Christ radiates and shines in and through the Christian community. The fire of Christ ignites the spark of the Church.

Catholicism takes into account the complexity, richness and ambiguity of the human condition. Fundamentalism has a one-dimensional approach to everything and has reduced the Divine Revelation to a few theologically manageable propositions. It is reductionist through and through in its approach and interpretation.

## WORLD WITHOUT CATHOLICISM?

If fundamentalism continues to prevail, not only the world will become a boring and dry place to live in but also it would be the end of true Christianity teachings. Could you imagine a world without the exuberance, diversity, festive joy, unity and complexity of Catholicism? Even the broad-minded non-Catholics love the spirit, splendour and majesty of Catholicism. The glory of God is Catholicism fully and completely activated and unleashed for the benefit of everybody - Catholics and non-Catholics as well.

Catholicism is a sacrament of the Reign of God. It is a sacred icon of the coming Reign of Christ. Catholicism is the actualization and concretization of the Word-became-flesh down through the centuries cutting across cultures, races, nationalities, languages and ethnic barriers.

Instead of staying in temporary spiritual shelters, sheds, shades and shanties, fundamentalists should come home and come inside. Catholic Church is the true home of every Christians. How could one abandon one's real home and true family and wander aimlessly in a pathless fundamentalist land?

*(Contd. on Pg. 15)*





## Status of Women

According to the Old Testament, women were considered property of men and they did not have any rights of their own. According to Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Old Testament, a man who marries a woman can divorce her if "she is displeasing to him because he finds in her something indecent and he writes a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house." (Deuteronomy

24:1). The Book of Deuteronomy is an interpretation of the laws of the Old Testament attributed to Moses.

Jesus was born into male-dominated society. Pharisees questioned Jesus about this law of divorce. Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who di-

vores his wife, unless the marriage is unlawful, and marries another woman commits adultery." (Matthew 19: 8- 9). "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, Let man not separate." (Matthew 19: 6). Jesus Christ uplifts the status of women by not allowing women to be divorced according to the whims and fancies of men.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus too was born and

bred in the Old Testament tradition. She too did not have a status in the society of her own. Women were always defined in relation to a man. From her birth she is the private property of her father, Joachim, till she got married to Joseph. Then she became the wife of Joseph. According to tra-

dition Joseph who was a carpenter in Nazareth supposed to have died, before the public ministry of

3. Till the end of her life, John had to look after her welfare.

The status of women and Christ's attitude towards them is clearly depicted in the Gospel of John chapter eight. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus. The Gospel of John says: "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. In the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" ... Jesus said, "If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first one to throw the stone at her." He stooped down and wrote on the ground. While He was writing, the crowd who brought her disappeared one by one.

At the end Jesus asked the woman: "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No Sir," she said.

There are so many interpretations to what Christ was writing on the ground. May be He wrote the sins of the accusers, which made them depart from the scene one by one. May be He wrote something like: "She was caught in adultery. Where is the man?" In a male-dominated society men can get away even with murder.

### Bits & Pieces Madi

Jesus began. Then Mary became the Mother of Jesus. At Calvary Jesus was almost breathing His last when He realized that His mother Mary would be an "orphan" after His death. Looking down from the cross He sees His mother, few other women and John, the only disciple who followed Christ to the cross. He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son." He looked at John and said "Behold your mother." The gospel of John says, "From that time on, the disciple took her into his home." (John 19:26- 27).

This episode teaches us three facts;

1. Mary, as a woman needs some man to whom she belongs to. In the Old Testament every woman is defined in relation to a man.

2. Mary did not have any other children, except Jesus. Otherwise Jesus would not have entrusted His mother to the care of one of His disciples.

3. Till the end of her life, John had to look after her welfare.



### By Sirohmi Gunsekera Work

"May Day began as the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker. So we should all follow the example of the foster father of Jesus who worked hard at his trade. He was a carpenter," remarked Nalin.

"Does that mean we should all work as carpenters?" asked Jill.

"Not at all. But we should all take pride in our work even if it is not paid work. Housework and caring for children are also aspects of work even though a housewife is not paid a salary," chimed Marlene.

"Isn't it better to call a housewife a "Home-maker" giving her pride and dignity?" suggested Jill.

"That's a good idea. There are many women who stay at home and feel frustrated because their

work is not recognised even though they cook, clean and slave all day," said Marlene.

"I know. Man's work is recognised because he earns a salary and is called the breadwinner. But what about the silent work of the woman behind the scenes? She cooks, washes dishes and clothes, irons and cleans the daily mess of children. Her contribution is recognised only if she falls ill and is unable to perform her chores," said Jill.

"Even priests have women housekeepers and many women do their work as a labour of love. Most girls are brought up to cook and clean while there are some mothers who encourage their sons to idle at home, only coming to table to eat and drink," observed Nalin.

"I know. Household chores should be shared by every family member. Then there is no excuse for husbands and fathers to go out and drink alcohol and misbehave. In the West, there are no servants and men take out the trash and some even cook and clean," said Jill.

"So let us follow the example of St. Joseph and work hard," concluded Marlene.

## The Science of a HAPPY MARRIAGE

Can a married couple be too close for their own good? Can intimacy lead a couple to break up? New brain science shows us that it can. If couples have not mastered the changing stages of marriage, break-up is possible, and often predictable because the human brain dictates a series of natural responses during the life of a relationship. How we handle those stages can make or break a marriage.

For 20 years I have been studying how women's and men's brains affect marriage, from the first blush of romance all the way through to lifelong partnership. Understanding the behavioural differences involved can be the key to making love last a lifetime.

### 1. Romance

When two lovers come together, their brains begin to "fall in love." The couple's pheromones chemical signals that work through our senses - are very high, so when they smell each other or look into each other's eyes, their separate male female

minds become like one.

High levels of oxytocin, a bonding hormone, may hide irritating behaviours from each other. But "lovers' bliss" ultimately ends, and a new biological stage of the relationship begins.

### 2. Disillusionment

After a few months or even a year, our hormones and brain chemistry begin to change, and our "thinking" brain - the cerebral cortex - may notice that our partner is flawed. We feel anger towards each other, irritation, even fear at times. If we married our partner during the Romance Stage, we might, in Stage 2, begin to have second thoughts.

Perhaps the wife starts wondering, *What could he be thinking?* as he lies on the couch watching TV instead of doting on her. She feels rejected, especially since he no longer tells her what he is feeling when he feels it. He cannot understand why she is become critical of him about little things. They have been together a few years;

they may have a child by now. What else could she want? He feels he is doing something wrong, but can not figure out how to fix it.

The brain chemicals that took over during the early stages of courtship and romance have dissipated, as if a rug was pulled out from under love. How easy it is to think there is now something wrong with ourselves or our partner. How easy to say, "He/she is not the person I married."

But this confusing place is a normal stage, a chemical let down in both their brains. It is also a necessary next step in helping two very different brain systems come together for life.

### 3. Power Struggle

Two people who experience disillusionment will usually initiate Power Struggle. They will counter the invisible chemical let down by trying to change each other back to who they were - or thought they were - in the Romance Stage. A man and a woman who are in love

and struggling in this way will have the added difficulty (and ammunition) of being neurally "different" - for the male and female brains think, act, behave and even love quite uniquely.

This is a painful time. But couples who are locked in power struggle do not realise their brain differences can actually be the key to long-term marriage.

After Romance ebbs, the man may want more independent activities, the woman more contact with friends. While this tendency has a foundation in learned behaviours and gender roles, hormones such as testosterone and oestrogen support these differences.

What is the impact of this on marriage? Well, one of the main reasons we pick at each other mercilessly during the Power Struggle Stage is our differing attitudes towards marital independence. Not surprisingly, first marriages that end in divorce last an average of seven to eight years - the very time we are trying to "change"

the other person.

Yet nature does not allow us to turn back the chemical and neural clock. Nature keeps moving forward in the life cycle. A new stage of marital love awaits when the couple can finally discover each other, both as lovers and as men and women. It will require one or both to awaken to something that has been hiding beneath the surface.

### 4. Awakening

What many couples do not understand is that before drifting apart, there is an earlier step that goes unnoticed. In Romance, Disillusionment and Power Struggle, the man and woman become too close, erasing one another's individuality. A man might see his wife's emotionality, need to communicate, desire for sensual romance, even attitude towards house work as a waste of time. She might see her husband's habits, hobbies, preoccupation with work and need for independence as dangerous or selfish. In Stage 4,

the couple awaken to the realisation that they have been too close to each other in unhealthy ways and must now psychologically separate. This separation does not mean divorce it means understanding. In this new stage, the thinking brain overrides emotional responses that could cause conflict and a feeling of grief over their lost romance.

A man might step back and say nothing when he sees his wife doing something that irritates he just mentally steps around it. A woman might supportively say, "I get what that's about now," when he does something equally irritating to her.

Ultimately men realise that women are right: A relationship is most likely doomed if there isn't enough togetherness. But men are right, too: It is most likely in serious trouble if there is not enough independence.

When we are too far away from each other, that amazing love we

(Contd on pg. 14)





# & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

## Mary fills the World Month of May devotion Part 2

Continuing from last week our journey to more countries that have honored Mary with postal stamps

**Mexico**, is where the most visited Marian Shrine in the world is located - Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Heavenly Patron Saint of all Latin America and the Philippines Islands. The Marian piety of the Mexican people dates back to the time of the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Today, Marian devotion is so strong in Mexico, that there is no diocese or any important city that does not have at least one sanctuary dedicated to the Mother of God. It is interesting to note that the Virgin is venerated in Mexico under at least 200 different names, while some like 'Our Lady of Guadalupe' have become universally known.



Pic. see above : Four-hundred and fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the City of Zacatecas, Arms of Zacatecas (Statue and 4 notables on Guard by the statue of Our Lady).

**Argentina**, like the rest of Latin America, grew deeply Marian at the same time that it became Catholic in the 16th century. The principal sanctuaries dedicated to Mary in Argentina are: 'Our Lady of Lujan' in the East who is the very special patroness of the Republic of Argentina, 'Our Lady of the Valley' in the North, 'The Virgin of Itati' on the sea coast. Many cities in Argentina bear the name of Mary. The largest

City of Buenos Aires founded in 1535, when translated to English reads "City of the Holy Trinity and Seaport of Our Lady of Good Air." Likewise Rosario, the second biggest City in Argentina, derives its name from Our Lady of the Rosary and Mercedes was named in honour of Our Lady of Mercy. Marian devotion is so popular in Argentina that both official institutions and families frequently choose the Holy Mother of Jesus as their own patron eg: the Navy, the Army, the Air Force, and other State administrations.

Pix see below from left : Virgin of Lujan Patroness of Argentina, 150th Anniversary of the Apparition of the Holy Virgin to St. Catherine Laboure (Medal), Fresco in Ukranian Cathedral Buenos Aires, A statue in the Isaac Blanco Museum Buenos-Aires, Our Lady of Sorrows Church of Mumahuaca Jujuy.



ports of this new country began with a tiny church that was usually dedicated to Mary.

Pix see above from left : Our Lady of Aparecida and Map of Brazil, Our Lady of Globe marking the Centenary of the Daughters of Charity in Brazil, Virgin Standing on Globe marking the Centenary of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.



**Brazil**, is the largest Catholic country in the world, as Pope John Paul II reminded us during the centenary celebrations of the crowning of Our Lady of Aparecida in 2004. Our Lady of Aparecida is the greatest evidence in Brazil of the devotion to Mary. It was Pope Pius X who solemnly crowned the Virgin Mary as "Queen of Brazil" in 1904.

**USA**. In the United States of America 4,200 churches and 46 cathedrals are dedicated to Our Lady. The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington is the pre-eminent American Marian Shrine, dedicated to the patroness of the United States. Our Lady of Victory National Shrine in Lackawanna, New York, is an architectural marvel and now a minor basilica. Another national shrine located in Carey Ohio, Mary Consoler of the Afflicted attracts countless pilgrims. The National Shrine of Our Lady of Snows, in Belleville Illinois, offers a peaceful atmosphere on over 200 beautifully landscaped acres. Let us also mention Boston, Massachusetts, and the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Pix At left : The Virgin and child from world renown artists Raphael, Tiepolo, Fra. Filippo Lippi etc.



But the story of devotion to Mary in Brazil began in the 16th century, when the fleet of the Portuguese led by Admiral Pedro Alvarez Cabral first set foot on Brazilian soil in April 1500 and arranged for a Mass to be celebrated before the Statue of the Virgin that he had brought to this new land. Thereafter all the villages and

## Togetherness in

Rabans sounded amidst the crackers lit as Christians and non Christians joined as one big family to welcome the newly ordained Catholic priest Rev. Fr. Sameera Perera, back home

to celebrate Holy Mass in his Parish church. It was a grand day for the parishioners of the little village church built on the sea shore of Angulana as they decorated the church, set up pandols on the road and the mothers of the community

prepared a milk rice meal for everyone to share.



Church of St. Francis Xavier Angulana

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The day before was a hive of activity as the village of Angulana and parishioners get ready to welcome Fr. Sameera

Decorating the sanctuary



# Annual National Rally at Padua



**T**he Migrant Sri Lankans living in Italy gathered for the 15th consecutive year at Padua recently to take part in their annual national rally organised by Msgr. Neville Joe Perera, the National Coordinator for the Sri Lankan Catholics in Italy.

The devotees of St. Anthony gather every 1st of May in the Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua to take part in a solemn Eucharistic Celebration of Thanksgiving in honour of

the favours received from God through the powerful intercession of St. Anthony. The festive High Mass was presided over by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo and His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw and Bishop in-charge of the Migrant Missions.

During the Holy Mass, the Statue with the Relic was crowned by His Eminence with a gold crown of 105 precious

stones from Sri Lanka. The precious stones have been gifts offered by the faithful to St. Anthony's Shrine at Kochchikade, Colombo in March, 2010 when the Relic of St. Anthony was brought to Sri Lanka from the Basilica of Padua.

Addressing the people on this historic occasion, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith said in his homily, "We are a people who cherish matters close to the heart without breaking our heads trying to

achieve great things in life. Generally, our aspirations are not grandiose in terms of material wealth and social repute. The common masses of our people seek contentment in doing their daily work well like St. Joseph the worker whose feast coincides with the celebrations."

"St. Joseph," said the Cardinal quoting Pope Francis, "laboured everyday to look after the family. The vulnerable little boy Jesus and His mother Mary needed the tender warmth and loving kindness of a caring husband and father as much as daily bread on the table."

St. Anthony chose a life similar to St. Joseph's ardent fervor and zealous faith in God. Sri Lankans have a rich spiritual heritage at the root of their inherent religiosity and living our faith on a foreign soil, notwithstanding the fact that the Catholic faith came from the West, we can show our unique way of living it everyday by being profoundly faithful and responsible in small things, the Cardinal added. He insisted that

the great designs of God, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, had humble beginnings in sinful men and that they turned out to be great saints in the end like St. Augustine, St. Anthony St. Francis of Assisi etc.

His Eminence urged the faithful to rediscover in their life the transforming power of a life lived as a testimony to the love of God shown to us in the Paschal Sacrifice on the Cross.

The Holy Mass was followed by a solemn procession of the crowned statue of St. Anthony and some 10,000 Catholics and devotees of other faiths including senior Member of Parliament, Minister Milroy Fernando took part on the occasion. Archbishop Antonio Matiazzo, Bishop of Padua greeted His Eminence and the Sri Lankan faithful and His Eminence expressed his thanks to the Archbishop and to Fr. Enzo Poiana, the Chief Prelate of the Basilica for their friendship with the Sri Lankan Church.

*Rev. Fr. Deninton Subasinghe reporting from Rome*



## Spare that tree

Spare! Oh spare that tree my countryman  
 Already devastation ensues  
 Long drawn out droughts prevail  
 Parched arid earth cries out for rain  
 Then raging torrents swell and spill  
 Hapless folk in peril.  
 Unpredictable rains that lash hill slopes  
 Denuded soil that erodes.  
 Landslides that annihilate  
 Entire villages in its spate  
 This land, this people yours and mine  
 To conserve and save our task sublime  
 Withhold that axe and spare that tree  
 The land needs it "Let it be."

*Jeannette Cabraal*





His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith concelebrated the Holy Mass with Pope Francis on the day after the celebration and briefed His Holiness on the Sri Lankan rally at Padua. Very Rev. Msgr. Neville Joe Perera National coordinator for the Sri Lankan Migrants in Italy too joined His Eminence in his audience with Pope on the occasion.

## Newly ordained Priests visit their home parishes



*Rev. Fr. Lalith Chrysantha Tissera who hails from Kochchikade celebrated his first Holy Mass at Holy Trinity Church, Pallansena.*

*Picture shows the newly ordained Fr. Chryshantha being accompanied to the Church.*

*The homily at the Holy Mass was delivered by Rev. Fr. Rohan Perera CSsR, Parish Priest at Theresa's Church, Thimbrigasyaya.*  
*Melvin de Costa*



*Rev. Fr. Jude Chrishman Perera, a son of the Bopitiya Parish, celebrated his first Holy Mass at St. Nicholas Church, Bopitiya.*

*Picture shows the newly ordained Fr. Jude being accompanied to the Church.*

*Pic. S.K. J. Kurera*

## Prayer for Favourable Climate



*Lord God, in the beginning you created heaven and earth. On the earth that was a formless void, you, in your divine mercy, ordained fine weather, conducive to good harvest and thus blessed the humankind and all other living beings. We thank you for your infinite mercy. God the Father, you made passage in the mid-sea and brought out springs of cool water from fiery rocks. Protect us and our land from natural calamities and adverse weather conditions. Protect our land from extreme heat and cold, giving us favourable weather conditions and a prosperous year. Be compassionate and give us abundant results for our efforts. Give men the wisdom to realize their misdeeds which pollute the environment causing climatic deviations. Give them the wisdom to know that violence against, and exploitation of, nature will prove catastrophic for them in the long run. Bless us so that we can work harmoniously with not only our fellow beings but also with nature and its flora and fauna which you created in your infinite wisdom. Make us gracious enough to thank you for your blessings, even as we entreat you to bless us abundantly forever more. Amen!*



# Happy 80th Birthday and 55th Ordination Anniversary!

The 80th birthday and 55th Ordination Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Anselm de Croos was celebrated on Sunday, May 5 with a Thanksgiving Mass at St. Thomas' Church, Kotte. We carry below an extract of the Homily given by Rev. Fr. Victor Silva of St. John Mary Vianney Seminary, Mattakkuliya, who hailed Fr. Anselm as a true man of God and a man for others.

"We are here to thank God for the gift of life given to Rev. Fr. Croos for the love and blessings poured out on him. We are also here to thank Fr. Croos for the gift of friendship and intimacy he has freely shared with us and with many others who are not here today. It is this, friendship and intimacy that he radiated with his students during their academic priestly formation.

Fr. Croos is the Good Shepherd, priest, friend, spiritual director,

guide, confessor and counselor and most of all he is our dear 'Daddy'. Some of us call him 'Croos Papa'.

Many of us priests were his pupils and spiritual sons from the Junior Seminary in Borella through Intermediate Seminary at Haputale and Major Seminary in Kandy. Later as young priests and today as senior priests for us he is still our guru, our master. We were moulded, supported, appreciated, encouraged and accompanied by him.

It has been said that 'what you are speaks louder than what you say'. Fr. Croos does not say much. He is no lecturer. In fact he dislikes and conveniently avoids seminars, talks, courses and discussions.

For him what matters is to be a human being. That is where his greatness lies, in being fully human.

Dear friends, the



Rev. Fr. Anselm de Croos

success or greatness of a person is not judged by the academic and professional qualifications he has nor by the position or status he holds in society or in the Church. But one is judged by his human qualities and his dedication and commitment to one's chosen profession or vocation.

Fr. Croos is not a professor. He has no degrees or letters after his name. He is simply 'Fr.

had to struggle very hard to get through the matriculation examination in those days. - Something in the lines of the present Ordinary Levels.

Fr. Croos prefers just to be a priest. He never sought high positions in the Church as a Bishop, Vicar General, Episcopal Vicar, Rector, even though all these positions have been offered to him more than a few times. He prefers to be a leader without a title.

The more human you are the more saintly or divine you become. This is what one experiences in the life of Fr. Croos.

Fr. Croos is a well-spring of knowledge and is an authority on many subjects, Be it history, church history, politics, art, architecture, music, literature, traditions or

culture, gardening etc and now he is proficient in computer, internet, singing, dancing etc.

Fr. Croos may be 80-years-old but he does not grow old, he moves forward with enthusiasm. Like Jesus, Fr. Croos knows his sheep well. He loves you and provides for you, and stands by you at times of need.

As seminarians and young priests we were very influenced by his love for nature. Fr. Croos is a naturalist and his love of plants, trees and flowers have been displayed wherever he had been stationed. He has an immense love for gardening and has that golden touch!

Today wherever we are stationed we too take a singular interest in gardening and enhancing the natural beauty of our surroundings.

Mother Teresa always says, 'As Christians we are not called to be

successful but are called to be fruitful'. Therefore here with us is a true Christian who blossoms with us like a beautiful flower and bears good fruits, a rich harvest in life as a human being and more as a priest of God.

As a true disciple of Christ, Fr. Croos loves Jesus. He shows this by his deep prayer life and his love for one another as Christ wanted of us to.

Today we felicitate you dear Father Croos and pray for your good health and happiness. We wish you many more fruitful years in the service to Jesus and His Church and your love and service to all of us.

The Gospel today invites us to love. Let Fr. Croos' life be a model for us to live in love with God and with one another, so that God can come and make his home with us."

Rev. Fr. Victor Silva

## Sister M. Paulita, AC,

### 'She lived her life to the full'

Sister Mary Paulita's demise came as a rude shock to many of us who knew her quite intimately. She was ailing for a brief period of time, but it took a sudden turn for the worse where death seemed inevitable. Death, it is said comes when one least expects, as a thief in the night.

My association with Sister Paulita, the genial and down to earth human, goes back to a little over 17 years when I opted to join the clerical staff of Holy Cross College, in Gampaha. She was a distinguished student of Holy Cross and later became a member of the Tutorial Staff as an English Teacher. Besides teaching English, she did much to promote Guiding. As a Guide herself, she trained young students to be model guides by holding discourses and training camps.

After her retirement, she organized classes for mothers covering such subjects as sewing, house and table decor, food and beverages, table manners and many more. Apart from these, she spent her leisure time to gardening, by beautifying the plot of land facing the convent., which she kept impeccably clean, while giving of her best to whatever that came her way.

Being an English typist and somewhat of a writer too, Sister Paulita found in me the ideal helper to put her manuscripts into typed form, which she made use of to distribute among her prospective elder students. I remember typing lengthy notes and instructions running into a number of pages on how to lay a table, table manners and the correct handling of forks, spoons and knives, when at table and one's general behaviour when at table, a thorough knowledge of which she considered to be of paramount importance. Perhaps, neither Sister Paulita nor I was aware that this was the very last note that she prepared and I typed out, before she was called to rest by her Creator.

She was at all times generously thankful for whatever work that was done for her whether it was by me or someone else. She always carried a smile that undoubtedly came from the depths of her heart, while her simplicity and humility were beyond compare.

It is said that a life once lived short or long, has achieved its full potential just as many a flower is born to blush unseen, wasting its fragrance in the desert air. Every flower is a unique creation and Dear Sister Paulita was indeed such a one. A new life of fulfilment and happiness for her has begun where she now rests in a land of glory, somewhere beyond the sunset.

Requiescat in Pace.

J.I. Rosairo



**In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: 'Do you believe in life after delivery?' The other replies, "Why of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later. "Nonsense," says the other. "There is no life after delivery. What would that life be?" "I don't know, but there will be more light than here Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouth." The other says "This is absurd! Walking is impossible. And eat with our mouths? Ridiculous. The umbilical cord supplies nutrition. Life after delivery is to be excluded. The umbilical cord is too short." "I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here." the other replies, "No one has ever come back from there. Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery it is nothing but darkness and anxiety and it takes us nowhere." "Well, I don't know," says the other, "but certainly we will see mother and she will take care of us." "Mother??" You believe in mother? Where is she now? "She is all around us. It is in her that we live, without her there would not be this world." "I don't see her, so it's only logical that she doesn't exist?" To which the other replied, "Sometimes when you're in silence you can hear her, you can perceive her." I believe there is a reality after delivery and we are here to prepare ourselves for that reality...**

(From the Internet)

## Very Rev. Fr. Superior of the O.S.B

The Superior of the Benedictine Congregation Monte Fano Seminary at Ampitiya, Kandy. Very Rev. Fr. Leonard Ranasinghe Was the Superior of the Congregation.

He was a humble priest in the Church Who has served in many parishes Well known person among the priests With a broad smile to everyone.

He has a soft smiling heart Among the common ordinary people. Served in many parishes in the country

And also served at St. Anthony's College, Kandy

A teacher and a strict warden Won the hearts of the students. A very friendly priest among students And a kind hearted administrator

Popular among students, and teachers Won the hearts of every one under him God took him suddenly from us May he rest in peace ever after.

St. Anthony's College Kandy



# Homilies of Pope Francis



## ‘No gossip, no fear’

“If you want to solve life’s problems you have to look reality in the face. Like the goalkeeper of a football team, you have to be ready to catch the ball from whatever side it comes. And you have to do this resisting fear or the temptation to complain, because Jesus is always beside us.” So said His Holiness Pope Francis at Holy Mass, in the Chapel of the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, in Rome.

Present at Holy Mass were several disabled people who were taking part in a Vatican congress.

In the passage from the Acts of the Apostles (6:1-7), proclaimed in the First Reading of the day, the Pope explained that there is a piece of the history of the Church’s early days when the Church was growing and the number of disciples was increasing. But it was at this very moment that the problems arose,” he said.

Those who spoke Greek murmured against those who spoke the Hebrew language because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

“Life,” he continued, “was not always calm and beautiful even in those days and the first thing we do is to murmur, to gossip about each other: But this does not lead to any solution.”

“On the contrary,” the Holy

Father said, “the Apostles with the help of the Holy Spirit reacted well. They summoned the group and spoke to them. This is the first step: When there are difficulties, it is necessary to examine them closely, to take them up and to talk about them. Never hide them. Life is like this. Life must be taken as it comes, not as we would like it to come.”

“It is,” the Pope said, using an effective metaphor that is dear to him, - “a little like the goalkeeper of the team, isn’t it? He grabs the ball wherever it comes from. This is the reality. Thus the Apostles spoke to each other and came up with a lovely proposal, a revolutionary proposal, for they said: ‘But we are the Apostles, those who Jesus chose’. However, that was not enough. They realized that their first duty was to pray and to serve the Word. And as for the daily assistance to widows, they must do something else. So this is what the deacons decided to do,” His Holiness said.

Pope Francis ended his homily with an invitation: Ask the Lord for the grace to have no fear, to be able to take life as it comes and solve problems as the Apostles did by seeking an encounter with Jesus who is always beside us, especially at life’s bleakest moments”.

(Scripture Readings for April 13)

## ‘Slander kills’

Slander destroys God’s work because it is spawned by hatred. It is a daughter of the ‘father of lies’ and wants to wipe out man and distance him from God. ‘Slander is a little breeze’, Basilio sings in the Barber of Seville. For Pope Francis it is a strong gale. He said so recently, at Holy Mass celebrated at *Domus Sanctae Marthae*.

“Slander is as old as the world and is mentioned in the Old Testament. When they cannot obtain something in the right way, in the holy way, people have recourse to slander which destroys. This reminds us that we are sinners: All of us. We have sinned,” Pope Francis commented.

“But slander is something else It is a sin but also something more, for it wants to destroy God’s work and is spawned by something very nasty. - By hatred. - And the person who generates hatred is Satan. Falsehood and slander go hand in hand,” the Holy Father told the gathering.

Pope Francis then drew inspiration from Psalm 119 of the day’s Liturgy to explain the state of mind of the righteous man. In this case St. Stephen, the proto martyr who was stoned to death by Saul.

“*Even though princes sit plotting against me, your servant will meditate on your statutes. Your testimonies are my delight*” (v.23-28).

The Holy Father said that Stephen gazed at the Lord and obeyed the law.

“Martyrs abound in our day too,” Pope Francis said. “Here in Rome we have a great many martyrs starting with Peter but the

season of martyrs is not over. We can truly say the Church has more martyrs today than she had in the early centuries. Indeed, she has a multitude of men and women who are slandered, persecuted and killed, in hatred of Jesus, in hatred of the faith,” he observed.

“The Christians persecuted in our time are our brothers and sisters who are suffering today, in this age of martyrs. This must give us food for thought,” the Pope added.

In this time marked by “so many forms of spiritual turbulence,” the Pope asked those present to reflect on a medieval icon of Our Lady “the protagonist of protection”, who is “covering her people with her mantle. She is Mother.”

(Scripture Readings for April 15)

## “Long live our Pope”

*Praise be to the Lord  
For He has manifested His Divine love  
To a human so humble and humane  
To guard and guide the Universal Church.  
We hail you Holy Father  
Pledging our allegiance to you  
Making us steadfast in our faith  
And praying for the return of flock -  
drifted away from the Church.*

*May the Holy Spirit sustain you -  
- with immense grace  
To steer the ship of faith amidst -  
turbulent waters  
May Almighty God grant you a long  
span in life  
In the capacity of Supreme Pontiff.*

W.L.W. Fernando

## A “Taste” of Teilhard: Poet, philosopher, mystic

*“A limpid sound arises amidst the silence; a trail of pure colour drifts through the glass; a light glows for a moment in the depths of the eyes I love ....”*

Three things, tiny, fugitive; a song, a sunbeam a glance ... So, at first I thought they had entered into me in order to remain there and be lost in me.

On the contrary, they took possession of me, and bore me away. For if this plaint of the air, this tinting of the light, this communication of a soul were so tenuous and so

fleeting it was only that they might penetrate the more deeply into my being, might pierce through to that final depth where all the faculty of man are so closely bound together as to become a single point. Through the sharp tips of the three arrows which pierced me, the world itself had invaded my being and had drawn me back into itself.

We imagine that in our sense perceptions external reality humbly presents itself to us in order to serve us, to help in

the building up of our integrity. But this is merely the surface of the mystery of knowledge; the deeper truth is that when the world reveals itself to us it draws us into itself; it causes us to flow outwards into something belonging to it everywhere present in it and more perfect than it.

The man who is wholly taken up with the demands of everyday living or whose sole interest is in the outward appearances of things, seldom gains more than a glimpse,

at best, of this second phase in our sense perceptions, that in which the world, having entrusted into us, then withdraws from us and bears us away with it; he can have only a very dim awareness of that aureole, thrilling and inundating our being, through which is disclosed to us at every point of contact the unique essence of the universe.

From, *‘The Hymn of the Universe’.*

(Courtesy: *The Enlightened life*)

## Happy Marriage

(Contd from Pg. 6)

at the beginning will die. Yet when we are so close that one person will not allow the other to be himself or herself, the marriage cannot survive. Understanding the strengths of male and female chemistry is the key to success.

### 5. ‘Long-Term Marriage

The balance between the prototypical male and female ways of relating is a balanced state of love I call Intimate Separateness. The Power Struggle of Stage 3 dissipates, and strategies of mature love that nurture

both intimacy and separateness take over. Couples live together, raise children, love and are loved, but not because they have become the same as each other - in fact, because they have learned to be happily different.

#### To Foster Intimacy

A happy couple in a happy marriage develops bonding rituals, like date nights, family dinners, talking on the phone or e-mailing one of them. Every moment of the relationship does not have to become the pillars that hold up the marriage. Every moment of the rela-

tionship does not have to be intimate - the husband and wife know that the bonding rituals will sustain the power of love when they get busy and stressful.

“They practise kindness and politeness with each other in at least 95 per cent of their interactions. There is perhaps no one who deserves better treatment than one’s spouse, but when we are locked in Power Struggle, we think our partner should be our constant object of stress ventilation. The frontal lobes are really doing their mature job when we realise how a

good marriage depends on kindness.

- They resolve arguments rather than letting things fester. Sure, they get angry and argue, but they apologise for meanness, and solve their conflicts. When needed, they get help from friends, extended’ family or professionals.

#### To Protect Separateness

They appreciate each other’s eccentricities and differences, especially as woman and man. Perhaps he monopolises the remote control when they watch TV. Instead of reacting, she chuckles. Or perhaps she wants to talk

about her feelings with him; he understands how important this is to her as woman and takes the time to listen.

They develop different sets of friends, generally female for her and male for him, and encourage each other in these friendships. Over the years they may find that even while their spouse is their best friend, they are still getting much of their emotional needs met through others.

- They allow each other different marital domains. If a project, a hobby or sport, a way of socialising is very important to one, the other helps pro-

mote that. This way, each partner has a personal place, a time, an activity that brings meaning and power.

There is tremendous value in knowing that your feelings towards one another are likely to change over time and that change is normal. Your brain chemistry plays a role, and there is no point in fighting it. Instead, let biology guide you towards understanding and natural, long-term love. After all, human beings are creatures of nature, and nature is very wise indeed.

Michael Gurian  
Courtesy: Readers Digest



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

Go, make disciples of all the nation and I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.  
(Mt. 28:19-20)

#### LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR C 12th May - 19th May 2013

##### Sun: The Ascension of the Lord

Ac 1: 1-11; Eph 1:17-23 or

Heb. 9:24-28, 10:19-23; Lk. 24:46-53

##### Mon: Memorial of Our Lady of Fatima

Ac 19:1-8; Jn. 16:29-33

##### Tue: Feast of St. Matthias Apostle

Ac 1:15-17, 20-26; Jn. 15:9-17

##### Wed: Ac 20:28-38; Jn. 17:11b-19

##### Thu: Ac 22:30, 23:6-11; Jn. 17:20-26

##### Fri: Ac. 25:13b-21; Jn. 21:15-19

##### Sat: Memorial of St. John I Pope and Martyr

Ac 28:16-20, 30, 31; Jn. 21:20-25

##### Sun: Pentecost Sunday

Ac 2: 1-11; 1 Cor 12:3-7, 12-13 or Rm 8:8-17; Jn 20:19-23 or Jn 14:15-16, 23-26

### PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

**Response: Lord, help us to fulfil Your mission in our life.**

That Christ, taken up in glory, may enkindle in all His followers an ardent desire for His kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, help us to fulfil Your mission in our life.**

On this day Jesus promised to send His Holy Spirit to His disciples: May He strengthen by the power of that Spirit all those who are working for a more just, peaceful and human world. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, help us to fulfil Your mission in our life.**

In Jesus we see One who is crowned with glory because He suffered death: Let us pray to Him for all those who have no faith in and after life. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, help us to fulfil Your mission in our life.**

Christ is seated in the glory of heaven: May He intercede for us who put our trust in Him and help us to bear witness to Him in the world. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, help us to fulfil Your mission in our life.**

## The Splendour of.....

Contd. from Pg. 5

These fundamentalists are confused and lost. The multiplicity and mushrooming of their sects and denominations is the best proof for their confusion. If they are the real Christians and if they possess the truth (as they proudly claim), why do they not get united and become one universal church? Why do they remain separated, in disarray and disunited? Is it because they have some hidden agendas?

### BIBLICAL LITERALISM AND DOGMATIC THEOLOGY

Fundamentalism operates within and rotates around a very narrow orbit of Biblical literalism. Literalism is one of the spiritual and interpretative maladies of our times. Literalism leads to shallowness and

shallowness is a grave sin against God's grace and greatness. Literalism usually stems from a spiritually arid soul and theologically malnourished mind.

Each fundamentalist has become his or her own Pope and each one of them acts as a magisterium. They seem to think that they have nothing to learn from others or historical Christianity, but are very eager to teach the rest of the world.

Biblical interpretation is not complete without dogmatic theology. Biblical message is couched in the common sense mode of expressions while dogmatic theology operates on the level of sophisticated and differentiated technical and intellectual analysis. In dogmatic theology, the Biblical insights and truths are scrutinized, amplified, purified and raised to a higher and broader level; truth is

explicitated and articulated more fully and comprehensively.

Dogmas are sign-posts. They show the way to understand the Divine Mystery. Dogmatic theology does not solve or explain the Divine Mystery but puts it in its proper place. Dogmas encourage us to avoid the theological dead-ends and pseudo spiritual ideas. Dogmas safeguard the fullness of Christian truth.

Without dogmas, what we will have is private opinions and individual idiosyncrasies. We can teach and promote dogmas without being dogmatic and one dimensional.

The greatness of Catholicism is in the depth of its dogmas. Catholic dogmas are part of the heritage of the whole humanity.

(To be continued next week)

## ASCENSION OF THE LORD

### First Reading. Acts. 1: 1-11.

Jesus having appeared to His Apostles for forty days gives them His final instructions. They are asked to remain quite till they receive the Holy Spirit. Once they have received the Spirit they are asked to bear witness to Him throughout the whole world. Jesus then ascended into heaven.

### Second Reading. Heb. 9: 24-28, 10:19-23.

Jesus offered His life in expiation for the sins of mankind. Unlike the High Priests, Christ entered once, offered once and saved all mankind once and for all. He became both the offerer and the offering and thereby saved man by His blood.

### Gospel. Lk. 24: 46-53.

Jesus reminded the Apostles about what He had foretold regarding His suffering, death and the Resurrection and about His Good News being preached to the nations. He wanted them to stay till the coming of the Holy Spirit and later Christ ascended into heaven before their very eyes.

### Reflection.

Today is Ascension Sunday wherein we celebrate the feast of the Ascension of Our Lord into heaven. In the history of our salvation we see God out of mercy and love tries to save us. As it did not work out because of human weaknesses, God sends His own Son in order to save us.

In the Incarnation His only Son took flesh and was born into this world. Thereafter He prepared Himself for His great salvific mission by being obedient to the religious laws of the time, went about preaching the Good News and also performed miracles in the name of God. He gathered many disciples. At the end He was put to death, having died on the Cross, God raised Him on the third day. After the resurrection Christ appeared to His Apostles to convince them of His resurrection and divinity and gave them the final instructions before ascending into heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father. It is this same Jesus who will judge the living and the dead later.

The Ascension of Our Lord gives many insights into our faith life. It proves that there is a life beyond to which we are called. The only way to reach it is through Christ. Those who accept Christ's words and keep the commandments will attain life everlasting. The feast reminds us also to prepare ourselves to face the day of the Lord which will be at the end of time. To face this day we ought to preach the Good News and become witnesses of the Gospel, everywhere. This is to be done by our good example, by our words and deeds and by prayer.

### Aid Story.

In Blue Mountain, North Carolina there lived

years ago a family by the name of Carpenter. The oldest boy was a strong lad who knew mountains and not more until His father took him on a trip to the city. There for the first time he saw cement sidewalks, skyscrapers, trains, electric lights and lots of people. As the lad wanted to stay in the city and get an education, his father arranged to have him stay with some friends, who took a liking to the lad and financed his education when he expressed the wish to be a Doctor. Graduating with honors, young Dr. Carpenter was invited to practice in the

big city but he answered: "Thank you very much, I appreciate your kindness, but I am going back to my home in the mountains. There are many sick people there. I want to help them."

For many years he ministered to the sick, the poor as well as those who would pay. He gave his very best. He helped every one. In his old days he was broken in health and practically penniless. Two small rooms above the grocery store were his home and office. At the foot of the creaky stairs leading to his office was a sign with these words: 'Dr. Carpenter is upstairs'.

One morning someone climbed those stairs to find the devoted doctor dead. The entire

community was plunged in grief. They wanted to erect a tombstone to honour him; then one fellow suggested they put the sign, 'Dr. Carpenter is upstairs,' on his grave. His life of unselfish service certainly merited that he be "Upstairs," in heaven. The divine Physician is "Upstairs" too, after a life of going about doing good. Christ can and does help us still.

### Aid Story 2.

A man was once heard making fun of women who go to confession often: "For every man going to confession, you'll find thirty women in the queue."

Back came the retort from a woman in the crowd: "And that's why you'll find thirty men in jail for every woman."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

## Sunday Rhythm - The Ascension of the Lord

**Jesus:** "...Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead..."

**Jesus:** "...repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nation..."

**Jesus:** "You are the witnesses to this."

**Richest Blessing:** "Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high."

**Richest Result:** "They worshipped Him and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy;... praising God."

**TO THINK:** Do you really feel the blessing of God...? Jesus blesses all of us and guides us in His direction.

**TO PRAY:** Dear God who blesses us, help me to come under your rain of blessing in order to enjoy your comfort of life-eternal. Amen.

**TO ACT:** Let us march forward to preach His words and deeds to everybody while becoming witnesses to His love and blessing. Let us understand each other that we are His sons and daughters under one Saviour and Protector.

Rev. Fr. S. Randil Fernando OMI  
Maradana



# FLOOD LIGHTS UNDER NIGHT SKIES IN KOTAHENA PROMOTES REVIVAL OF TENNIS AT THE 'KCYMA'



The Kotahena Catholic Young Mens' Association nestled in the shadow of the majestic Cathedral of St. Lucy, is a socio-recreational club that was inaugurated in 1909 by the parishioners of Kotahena and was one of a handful of prime sports clubs that graced the City of Colombo. Fondly, it was known as the KCYMA.

With a colonial type mansion as its hub, the club boasted of a gleaming boarded upper floor, which was a much sought after venue for wedding receptions in its heyday. Spread around were two clay Tennis courts, Badminton, Volleyball and Basketball courts together with the standard conventional equipment of parallel bars and the likes catering to the fitness conscious. Indoors, green velvet dazzled many and the two world class Billiard tables proved their mettle by producing a world champion in the late M. J. M. Lafir. Friskier indoor action was constant on the two Table Tennis tables.

Though patronized by the elite and not so elite alike for several decades, the communal riots of 1983 saw this landmark razed to the ground much to the dismay of the high spirited patrons of Kotahena. Hooliganism and low down cowardice that could only raise its ugly head under the cover of such a situation, had prevailed.

Subsequently the premises were taken over by the Church to construct a Technical Training Centre and a Community Development Centre and on completion, housed a kindergarten, a reception hall and some administrative offices of the Church. The KCYMA occupied a section of this new building.

In 2005 activities of the Club were revived after a long lapse, on the

initiative of the then Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Placidus De Silva (presently - Rector of Aquinas University College) who demarcated a fresh plot within the premise to house a tennis court. Untiring efforts by him, together with a few dedicated committee members saw completion in 2007. Rev. Fr. Tony Martyn who succeeded as Parish Priest (presently - Asst. Secretary General to the Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka) was instrumental in gathering the scattered membership and took an active interest in the promotion of indoor sports and camaraderie among her members.

The current committee of management of the KCYMA, with Parish Priest of St. Lucia's, Very Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos as President took a bright step forward in December 2012 when they decided to install 'flood lights' to facilitate members to play tennis after office hours. This was in view of the increasing demand for the sport, from health and fitness conscious senior and junior members.

The project began rolling with generous donations from members of the club, present and past parishioners, well wishers from Sri Lanka, lavish contributions from Qatar and the Old Benedictine Sports Club which enabled it to see light by the end of March 2013. There was no necessity to organize a fund raising event.

A grand candle lit opening ceremony and thanks giving service was held at dusk on Saturday, April 6th with the participation of the former Parish Priest as Guest of Honour, special invitees and parishioners together with donor members and their families.

Commencing proceedings with a prayer Rev. Fr. Ciswan and Rev. Fr.

Tony Martyn, then invited Rev. Bro. Janaka Fonseka (Director - St. Benedict's College, Kotahena) and Malsiri Perera (President - Old Benedictine Sports Club) to switch on the lights concurrently, after which the Rev. Fathers proceeded to bless the court prior to playing the first opening shots amidst cheer and applause from the large gathering present. Rev. Bro. Janaka and Malsiri Perera too displayed their skills on the clay, marking the occasion.

Welcoming the invitees and guests General Secretary, Dilip Johnpulle briefly mentioned how the club was revived in 2005, and thanked Rev. Fr. Placidus De Silva *in absentia* (due to an unavoidable commitment) for his vision and generosity in allocating this valuable piece of land to revive a tennis court. He also thanked Rev. Fr. Tony Martyn and Rev. Fr. Ciswan for the encouragement and guidance given in support of the initiative.

Addressing the gathering, Rev. Fr. Ciswan mentioned that the indoor and outdoor sports activities would be supplemented with basic gym facilities in the near future. He encouraged the parishioners to partake in membership and enjoy these recreational facilities offered at very nominal rates. He also congratulated the project committee for achieving this milestone in record time.

Rev. Fr. Tony Martyn quoted the biblical text of St. Paul who compared a good Christian to a good athlete who wanted to win the race. He expressed his happiness to see the progress at the KCYMA, and was delighted to meet the members of the club and the parishioners who were present to greet him.

The Vote of Thanks was proposed by the Tennis Secretary, Kumar

Sabaratham who thanked all members, parishioners, well wishers and specifically the Old Bens' Sports Club (of which he was former president) for their valuable financial patronage. A brief mention was made of the future plans in promoting tennis by employing professional coaches for all levels and participating in tournaments, thereby producing players of high standards.

Newton Fernando, President of the Community Development Society of St. Lucia's Cathedral also graced the occasion.

Among the special invitees was George Paldano, ex-parishioner of Kotahena, who has cut a prominent figure in the tennis circuit over the years. A former Davies Cup player who has toured many countries and one time coach of St. Benedict's College, he is International Tennis Federation qualified and was also the National Davies Cup coach. Presently an administrator and advisor to the Sri Lanka Tennis Association and whilst being a popular newspaper columnist on the sport, he has generously assisted with his expertise in the compiling of a comprehensive syllabus for conducting coaching camps for kids, juveniles and adults, with a systematic approach that needs to be implemented at the KCYMA.

The event was concluded with some exhibition games by the junior members, who amply indicated that their potential needed to be subject to exposure at the very earliest.

Inquiries on playing hours, coaching schedules and other relevant details could be obtained from the General Secretary or the Tennis Secretary of the KCYMA contactable on 0777583393 and 0777587810 respectively.

We invite you to make the serve, your call.

*Kotahena Correspondent*

## Ladies Karate Champion from Wattala



Miss J. M. Dasuni Malsha Jayamanna hails from Wattala Galwetiya. She is a bright and outstanding student of St. Anne's Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Wattala. Gifted with many skills such as dancing, drama, writing, cadet-ting and karate she has won the junior and senior National Female Championship in Karate and obtained 1st place at District level in Gampaha, the 2nd place in the Western Province and was ranked 3rd, All Island.

Dasuni won the Under 19 All Island School Championship in Karate in 2012, and rose to Continental level. She participated in the 7th Junior Female Cadet and Karate World Championship held in Malaysia representing the National Team and won the 1st Round thereby becoming the first Sri Lankan female

Karate Champion in Sri Lanka. Beside her successful achievements in sports, she successfully got through the A/L Examination and was ranked 2nd in the Gampaha District.

Acknowledging her achievements in the fields of sports and education, Dasuni expresses her gratitude to Sr. Kanthi Perera the efficient and enterprising principal of her Alma Mater, St. Anne's Balika Maha Vidyalaya. Sr. Kanthi has spent precious time on the development of the results of the G. C. E. O/L and A/L with the cooperation of her staff and the school has performed exceptionally at Government Examinations. Sr. Kanthi is a very clever, creative and hardworking Principal and is adept at guiding her students towards their goals.

*P.D. Felicia Irene.*



# MAN WITH A MISSION

THE STORY OF PAUL

(..... from last week)

courtesy : C. B. S. Publication

Saul was given a letter of authority to go to Damascus and arrest any Christians he could find.

He's really bloodthirsty!

When the synagogue leaders see the high priest's signature, they'll have to help me.

**SAUL! SAUL! WHY ARE YOU PERSECUTING ME?**

Suddenly, as they neared the city...

WHA--WHAT'S WRONG??

???

SAUL? SAUL! WHY ARE YOU PERSECUTING ME?

Who are you, Lord?

I am Jesus! Get up! Go on into the city, you will be told what you must do.

Are you alright, Sir?

I--I can't see!!

There was a voice, but we couldn't see anyone!

Saul had to be led into the city.

Saul became a changed person. He was baptized as a follower of Jesus and soon regained his strength. Then after a few days with the believers in Damascus, he went to the synagogue.

And so, my fellow Jews, I am convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is alive. He is the son of God, the saviour we've been waiting for!!

???

I can't believe what I'm hearing!

But he sounds very convincing.

This man is confusing our people. But I don't know how to answer him.

And to think he actually killed people in Jerusalem for believing this nonsense.

I've got to pray and think carefully about everything.

Three years later, back in the Damascus synagogue...

He's even more of a threat now than he was before.

I hear he's leaving for Arabia.

One evening...

We'll have to get rid of him this time.

The best place is at the city gate.

I must tell Saul!

I'll arrange for the guards there to grab him the next time he goes out. And then we'll have him killed secretly.

Farewell, my friends, and thank you!

But Saul escaped.

In Damascus... He hasn't eaten anything for three days now.

And he still can't see a thing!

Lord God of Israel, show me what to do.

Meanwhile, in another house... Ananias?

Yes, Lord??

Saul went to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples there, but they were afraid of him. Then a Christian named Barnabas came and helped him.

We welcome you then, Saul.

He is really one of us, Peter. The Lord has changed his life completely. His powerful preaching in Damascus has won many converts to "the way."

Saul started teaching in Jerusalem what he had taught in Damascus. Some of the people tried to kill him, especially the Greek-speaking Jews.

Go to the house of Judas who lives on the street called Straight. Ask to see a man from Tarsus who is staying there. His name is Saul. He'll be expecting you.

But Lord Jesus, I know about him. He has done terrible things to your followers in Jerusalem.

And now, he has come here to Damascus to arrest all who worship you.

Go and do as I tell you. I have chosen him to be one of my followers. He will be my special messenger to the Gentiles.

All non-Jews were called Gentiles.

The believers took Saul to Caesarea and sent him to his home in the city of Tarsus in the province of Cilicia.

You were well-named, Barnabas. You have surely been an encouragement to me. Thank you, friend.

The name Barnabas means "one who encourages".

The Lord has great plans for you, my brother. We will meet again.

Sometime later in Jerusalem...

We've just received word that our group in Antioch is growing rapidly. Both Jews and Gentiles are becoming believers. We feel that you, Barnabas, are the best man to go there and check things out.

So Ananias did as he was told.

Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus has sent me so that you might be able to see again.

Suddenly...

I can see! I can see!

So Barnabas went to Antioch.

The Lord has really blessed us. See how Jews and Gentiles can get along together!

It's wonderful, Simeon! But I'm going to need some help. And I know just the man to help me.

So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul.

Saul can really help me look after all these new believers.

(contd next week...)



# Stories from the Bible

## Noah



**The first in a series of popular Bible stories with Scriptures taken from today's version of the Bible.**

(Gen 6:9-9:17)

*The story of Noah relates how God punished those who disobeyed Him.*

*Noah was a good man. He was obedient to God.*

*God said to Noah "Build a big strong boat with large logs of timber."*

*Noah built the boat, exactly the way he was instructed by God.*

*After the boat was made, a pair of animals from each kind were taken into the boat as instructed by God.*

*Noah and the members of his family got into the boat with the animals.*

*Then it rained continuously for forty days and forty nights. There was a great flood. The boat was lifted off the ground and it began to float.*

*Every living creature on earth was destroyed. The only ones alive were Noah and his family and the animals in the boat, Noah built.*

*After several days Noah sent out a dove. It returned with a fresh leaf in its beak. Noah then knew that the water had subsided.*

*Noah and the others who were in the boat stepped out, when the water on the earth had dried. God promised Noah, that He will never send rain again to flood the whole earth. As a sign of His promise He set the rainbow in the sky.*

### Noah

(Genesis 6:9 - 22)

This is the story of Noah. He had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Noah had no faults and was the only good man of his time. He lived in fellowship with God, but everyone else was evil in God's sight, and violence had spread everywhere. God looked at the world and saw that it was evil, for the people were all living corrupt lives.

God said to Noah, "I have de-

cidated to put an end to all people. I will destroy them completely, because the world is full of their violent deeds. Build a boat for yourself out of good timber; make rooms in it and cover it with tar inside and out. Make it 150 metres long, 25 metres wide, and 15 metres high. Make a roof for the boat and leave a space of 500 millimetres between the roof and the sides. Build it with three decks and put a door in the side.

I am going to send a flood on the earth to destroy every living being. Everything on the earth will die, but I will make a Covenant with you. Go into the boat with your wife, your sons, and their wives. Take in to the boat with you a male and a female of every kind of animal and of every kind of bird, in order to keep them alive. Take along all kinds of food for you and for them." Noah did everything that God commanded.

### The Flood

(Genesis 7:1-24)

The LORD said to Noah, "Go into the boat with your whole family; I have found that you are the only one in all the world who does what is right. Take with you seven pairs of each kind of ritually clean animal, but only one pair of each kind of unclean animal. Take also seven pairs of each kind of bird. Do this so that every kind of animal and bird will be kept alive to reproduce again on the



earth. Seven days from now I am going to send rain that will fall for forty days and forty nights, in order to destroy all the living beings that I have made." And

Noah did everything that the LORD commanded.

Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came on the earth. He and his wife, and his sons and their wives, went into the boat to escape the flood. A male and a female of every kind of animal and bird, whether, ritually clean or unclean, went in to boat with Noah, as God had commanded. Seven days later the flood came.

When Noah was six hundred years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month all the outlets of the vast body of water beneath the earth burst open, all the floodgates of the sky were opened, and rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights. On that same day Noah and his wife went into the boat with their three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives. With them went every kind of animal, domestic and wild, large and small, and every kind of bird. A male and a female of each kind of living being went into the boat with Noah, as God had commanded. Then the LORD shut the door behind Noah.

The flood continued for forty days, and the water became deep enough for the boat to float. The water became deeper, and the boat drifted on the surface. It became so deep that it covered the highest mountains. It went on rising until it was about seven metres above the tops of the mountains. Every living being on the earth died—every bird, every animal

ings, animals, and birds. The only ones left were Noah and those who were with him in the boat. The water did not start going down for a hundred and fifty days.

### The End of the Flood

(Genesis 8: 1-17)

God had not forgotten Noah and all the animals with him in the boat; He caused a wind to blow, and water started going down. The outlets of the water beneath the earth and the floodgates of the sky were closed. The rain stopped, and water gradually went down for a hundred and fifty days. On the seventeenth day of the seventh month the boat came to rest on a mountain in the Ararat range. The water kept going down, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains appeared.

After forty days Noah opened a



window and sent out a raven, It did not come back, but kept flying around until the water was completely gone. Meanwhile, Noah sent out a dove to see if the water had gone down, but since the water still covered all the land, the dove did not find a place to land. It flew back to the boat, and Noah reached out and took it in. He waited another seven days and sent out the dove again. It returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. So Noah knew that the water had gone down. Then he waited another seven days and sent out the dove once more; this time it did not come back.

When Noah was 601 years old. On the first day of the first month, the water was gone. Noah removed the covering of the boat, looked around, and saw that the ground was getting dry. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

God said to Noah, "Go out of the boat with your wife, your sons, and their wives. Take all the birds and animals out with you, so that they may reproduce and spread over all the earth."

*courtesy : C. B. S. Publication*



(From the last week)

# QUIZ

## On Catholic Themes

### QUESTIONS

#### 1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

##### History of the Church

21. In which year did the papacy return to Rome?
22. Which pope led the return of the papacy back to Rome?
23. Two women saints are credited with persuading Pope Gregory XI to return the Papal See to Rome. Who are they?
24. What is the East-West Schism?
25. Who started the Anglican Church? When?
26. What is the main difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church?
27. Who was the first Indian Cardinal?
28. In 1964 a very important Congress took place in Mumbai. What was that?
29. What is a Eucharistic Congress?
30. What are Catacombs?
31. According to tradition, Sts Peter and Paul were imprisoned together for a period in Rome before their martyrdom. What is that prison called?
32. Which Roman emperor burnt the city of Rome and blamed it on Christians?
33. During the persecution of Christians which ancient monument in Rome was used for their torture and martyrdom?

(Contd next week)

33. The Colosseum
32. Emperor Nero
31. The Marmetine prison in the Roman Forum in ancient Rome
30. Catacombs are the ancient underground burial places, under or near Rome. Here Christians gathered to celebrate their funeral rites, the anniversaries of the martyrs and of the dead. During the persecutions, in exceptional cases, the catacombs were used as places of momentary refuge for the Celebration of the Eucharist.
29. A Eucharistic Congress is a gathering of clergy, religious and laity for the purpose of celebrating and glorifying the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist and of seeking the best means to spread its knowledge and love throughout the world.
28. The 38th Eucharistic Congress
27. Cardinal Valerian Gracias of the Archdiocese of Mumbai.
26. The Roman Catholic Church accepts the authority of the Pope as its head whereas the Anglican Church does not.
25. King Henry VIII in 1534
24. The East-West Schism of 1054, sometimes known as the Great Schism, formally divided the State Church of the Roman Empire into Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) which later came to be known as the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, respectively.
23. St. Catherine of Siena and St. Bridget of Sweden
22. Pope Gregory XI
21. 1377. On September 13, 1376 Gregory XI abandoned Avignon and moved his court to Rome, arriving on January 17, 1377, officially ending the Avignon Papacy.

##### History of the Church

#### 1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

### ANSWERS

## Prefects Investiture at SJC - Wattala



Investiture of school prefects of St. Joseph's College, Wattala was held recently. Addressing the gathering Rev. Fr. Ranjith Andradi, Rector St. Joseph's College, Wattala said, "True leadership qualities should be identified and recognised. We should chose active courageous persons as student leaders and not give into favouritism. The Gospel gives the example of how Jesus chose active people as disciples. We should follow the same principle, as otherwise expected results will not be achieved." Rev. Fr. Ranjith Andradi, also commended the work of Rev. Fr. Kamal Kumara, Deputy Principal of the College, Mr. Prasanna Silva, Master in Charge of College Prefects and Mr. Manoj Silva, Head Master of the College for their effort and hard work in making this event a success. The award of medals to the prefects was followed by a variety entertainment and cultural presentation.

Text:

Padminie Nanayakkara

Photo :

Shewin Mahawatta



## 'Aluth Avurudu' and Workers Day combined celebrations

For the second year in succession the youth group of Our Lady of Lourdes, Nattandiya commemorated Worker's Day by holding the 'Aluth Avurudu' celebration on May 1st. This was under the guidance of the Administrator, Rev. Fr. Upali Churhill and his assistant Rev. Fr. Nimantha Prageeth. Rev. Sisters from the convent in the parish also participated in the celebration. Picutre shows the children enjoying the events while Rev. Fr. Nimantha and Rev. Sisters look on.

Shriyani Felicia