



Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

August 15

# Messenger

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His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. J. Winston S. Fernando sss

## Growing old: A Journey with God

**The Bishop of Badulla, His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. J. Winston S. Fernando sss, speaking at the opening of the 'Dev Sarana', Home for Elders at Hali-Ela said that, old age is a journey that sees its final end and fulfillment in God.**

"Old age grows with us. It must not suddenly come upon us and take us by surprise. We need to grow old gracefully and it must be seen as part of our journey with the Lord; a journey of authentic conversion holding on to Christ, our Redeemer, Mediator and the One who has prepared for us a house with many rooms according to the Gospel of St. John."

Addressing a large gathering of young and old in his

Diocese, His Lordship reminded them that we cannot add days to our life but we can add life to our days.

"We cannot," he said, "make a qualitative or numerical subscription to our life but we can make a qualitative contribution to the lives of others especially in respect of the elderly, whom society seems to neglect and marginalize," His Lordship observed.

"Our mission as disciples of Christ is to help the neglected poor and elderly people in need, to realise their dignity. We cannot give dignity to people. It has already been given by God who has created man and woman unto His image and likeness. All we can and must



do is to help them realise their dignity and help discover God's love for them.

"The charisms of old

age are, *wisdom*, that they have accumulated over the years; *disinterestedness*, which is the ability to give away; *memory*, though failing can still recall how God has acted in their lives; *experience*, which they have gone through; *interdependence*, which tells us that the elderly are no more completely independent or dependent, together with *understanding* and *prayerfulness*.

"All these charisms show that the elderly have a complete vision of life," His Lordship explained.

Stating that in God's loving plan of salvation all human beings, the young or old have a special place, His Lordship drew attention to the

(Pg. 2)

"Gleaned from the classics"

By Johannus

*Singula quaeque locum teneant sortita decenter.*  
(from Horace)

Let each thing keep the place that it occupies with propriety.

### Archbishop assures to do his best

A request that the seven naval officers who are presently in the custody of Somali pirates, be helped to gain release, was the plea of Mrs. Vilasini Wakwella, the wife of the chief engineer Mr. Nalindra Wakwella, who is one of the hostages.

This appeal was made on behalf of her husband and all others, to the government, religious leaders and all sections of the public at large. It was an emotional appeal brought forth at the media conference presided over by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith on Monday August 6, 2012 at the Social Communications and

(Pg. 2)

### Help children in need, foster them as your own

The Ark Law Children's Home at the Halpe Church premises and the New Bridge Children's Home at Wewaldeniya, are affiliated to the Grace Kumari Children's Home at Kalamulla, Kalutara.

The 'Archdiocesan Children's Welfare Committee' seeks the kind attention and

assistance of the general public, towards the upkeep of these institutions.

Donations, alms, allocations made on birthdays and other celebrations could be made towards this worthy cause. Please be free to call the Director Rev. Fr. Lester Wijesooriya for more details on 077-201105 or 034-2226338

## 250th Jubilee celebrations of St. Anne's Shrine, Talawila

"It is one's religiosity that matters more than one's religion", this was said by Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, the Bishop of Chilaw, in his homily delivered at the 250th Jubilee Celebrations of St. Anne's Shrine at Talawila on August 6, 2012. His Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, presided at the Eucharistic celebration, with the bishops of all dioceses concelebrating, in the presence of many priests and religious and a large gathering of devotees.

"A person should first exist, even before he or she is to express one's faith and that is why food from Heaven preceded all things," His Lordship said. "Life which

is precious, first begins at conception. No rule or law would have the power or the right to deny or destroy life. It is only the ones who are close to God, who could think of the life of others, more than their own," the Bishop of Chilaw made it clear.

He further stated that, problems and difficulties torment us not because we lack faith, but because many do not practice and bear testimony to one's faith. Referring to the history of the event His Lordship explained that this miraculous statue was washed ashore to the Kalpitiya coast, 320 years ago. It was during the same period that Blessed Joseph Vas visited the Kalpitiya region.



St. Anne, pray for us

"This statue found was first placed in a cavity of a Nuga Tree," the bishop said and "later was housed in a structure of brick and

(Pg. 2)

### 'My Jesus and I' - presented to the Archbishop



His Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith was presented with the first copy of 'My Jesus and I' by little Senahali Amerasinghe at the Archbishop's House on Saturday, August 4, 2012. At the request of the author Mrs. Arundathi Gunawardena, His Eminence gifted a copy each, of this illustrated children's prayer book, to fifteen little ones. Present at this occasion were also their parents, who were deeply impressed by the love and intimacy of His Eminence, shown towards the children.

(See Pg. 14)

### Bro Michael: Fifty Years of Silent Service



at St. Philip Neri's Church, Pettah to mark 50 years of religious life of Rev. Bro. Michael Ravelpillai of the Blessed Sacrament Community.

The Thanksgiving Mass will take place at 5.15 p.m. and will be presided by the Bishop of Badulla, His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando sss, together with Very Rev. Fr. Barbosa Martins Eugenio sss,

(Pg. 3)

A special concelebrated Eucharistic Service of Thanksgiving will be held on August 15, 2012



### Commemorative stamp issued to mark 200th Anniversary of Ceylon Bible Society

A special Commemorative First Day Cover and a Postage Stamp were issued by the Philatelic Bureau of the Department of Posts, Sri Lanka, to mark the 200th Anniversary of CBS at the Bible House Auditorium in Colombo with the participation of Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, Rt. Rev. Dhiloraj Canagasabay, Bishop of Colombo, Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy.

(Trevor Ludowyke)



"I am the living bread which has come from Heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world." John 6:51

### Eucharistic Rally and Exhibition

VENUE: St. Joseph's College, Colombo  
DATE: August 31, September 1 & 2, 2012.

## Feast of St. Anne's Church, Pilapitiya

The Annual Feast of St. Anne's Church, Pilapitiya, Kelaniya was held recently with Vespers sung by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickremasinghe, Bishop of Galle.

The Festive High Mass was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Lalith Felix Perera, Rector, St. Aloysius Seminary, Borella.

Clarence Leonard

## Annual Feast of St. Anne's Church, Wattala



Very Rev. Fr. Shanthikumar Weliwita, Episcopal Vicar, Colombo North, (Jaela sub region) presided at the annual feast of St. Anne's Church, Wattala, held last Sunday, August 5, 2012.

Picture shows the members of St. Anne's Society, Wattala taking the statue of St. Anne in procession.

Nimal Perera

## Kiddies Fair at Weliwita



The Weliwita Good Shepherd Nursery Kids held their Annual "Singithi Pola" at St. Mary's Church premises on Sunday July 22, 2012.

Picture shows Rev. Sr. Marie Sumudhu (Sister-in-Charge, Bursary), Rev. Sr. Marcon (Sister Superior) and the nursery teachers together with the nursery kids in front of the sales outlets.

Weliwita - M. Joe Paaris

## Confirmation Service at Diyalagoda Parish



The Sacrament of Confirmation was bestowed on 186 girls and boys belonging to the Diyalagoda Parish recently. Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo Most Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva presided.

Picture shows, His Lordship along Rev. Fr. Thusith Pradeep Fernando, Parish Priest Diyalagoda, being accompanied for the Festive Mass.

D. Anselm Fernando

## 250th Jubilee...

Contd. from Pg. 1

cement in 1762, which was 250 years ago". It was 80 years later that this present shrine came into being.

After the festive Eucharistic celebration, the miraculous statue was taken in procession and the large gathering of devotees were blessed with it.

Rev. Fr. Luke Nelson the Administrator organized the festive proceedings.

## Caritas Sethmini introduces "Sudath Susuma"



Sudath Susuma (Holy Spirit inspiration) a new spiritual and economic programme introduced by Rev. Fr. Texie Disanayake, Director of Sethmini Ratnapura was held at St. Joseph's Church, Balangoda. Rev. Fr. Surgius Fernando, Rev. Fr. Morris Anton, Rev. Fr. Paul Fernando, Rev. Sr. Benita and Mr. Sunil Fernando Administrative officer of Sethmini participated in the programme.

## Confirmation Service at Raddolugama Parish



His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, administered the Sacrament of Confirmation on 170 children belonging to the Raddolugama Parish, at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Raddolugama.

His Lordship was assisted by Rev. Fr. Sudham

Perera and Rev. Fr. Amila Vanderwal.

Ranjith Lokupothagama

## 'De La Salle Walk - 2011'



The first T-shirt and caps of "De La Salle Walk - 2012" was presented to His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith at Archbishop's House at Borella last week. His Emi-

nence is a distinguished Old Boy of De La Salle College, Mutwal. Picture shows Rev. Bro. A.E. Tarcisius, Director of De La Salle College, handling over the sou-

venirs to His Eminence.

De La Salle College marks its 107th anniversary this year while the Old Boys Union celebrates its 83rd anniversary.

Also present on the occasion were Nalin Anthony, General Secretary of the OBU, Roshan Perera, Chief Organizer of the OBU, Jagath Kurukulasuriya, Social Secretary of OBU, Ranil Rajapakse, Council Member of the OBU, Amal Fernando Deputy President of the OBU and Jayantha Wijesinghe, Council Member and Vice President of the OBU.

Pic: Anju Rajapakse - Text: Ranil Rajapakse

## Archbishop assures...

Contd. from Pg. 1

Cultural Centre, in Borella.

The Somalian pirates have demanded Rs 1.4 million as ransom for the release of these seven naval officers. The respective shipping line have not taken any step towards their release and seem to be evading responsibility.

Further more the shipping line have not paid these employees their salaries or provided their families any benefits up to now. Archbishop Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, assured them that he would do his best by speaking to the relevant authorities concerned.

Meanwhile the Catholic Church has cautioned deep sea fishermen to avoid any infiltration into Somalian territory and to consider it as a danger zone.

Further the fishermen are reminded of the bitter plight of our fishermen who were in the custody of these pirates recently. State intervention was of no avail and it was only divine assistance in the form of a miracle, that saved them all.

## Growing old.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

Gospel passage in Luke 2:25-38. - The prophecy of Simeon, an elderly person about the redeemer- "Now master you are letting your servant go in peace as you have promised." Then the prophecy of Anna who was well on in years, a widow of 84 who spent her days "serving God night and day with fasting and prayer"; she speaks of the child, the Redeemer. A good example of what the elderly may do in their old age!

His Lordship also appealed to the invitees to be generous in helping the Sisters of the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who are the care-givers of the elderly poor. Only those who are helpless and having no one to take care of them are admitted to the Home free. Help in cash and kind as well as alms giving in memory of loved ones can be directed, he said.

Among those present were Rev. Fathers, the Religious, benefactors, well wishers and officials of the government.

Rev. Fr. D. T. Priyalal Cooray

## CBS: A work of enthusiasm and dedication

Archbishop of Colombo His Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith delivering a special message at the 200th Anniversary Celebrations of the Ceylon Bible Society (CBS), said that Bible Societies have become the internationally recognised instruments of diffusion of the Bible and its spiritual riches worldwide, and congratulated the Ceylon Bible Society for doing this work for the past 200 years.

His Eminence commended the CBS for the great enthusiasm it has shown in producing not only vernacular versions of the Sacred Scripture but also a world-wide variety of Scripture - based publications and products for the use of the local Christian Community.

The Thanksgiving Service held to mark the 200th Anniversary of the CBS was conducted at the Cathedral of Christ the Living Saviour, Bauddhaloka Mawatha.

The Archbishop of Colombo also made special mention of the Ecumenical Bible which is a commonly acceptable translation in Sinhala and which has been approved by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka and the National Christian Council.

The Patron of CBS, Rt Rev Dhiloraj Canagasabay, Anglican Bishop of Colombo recited the Opening Prayer while the welcome address was delivered by Mrs Vasanthi Rajaratnam, Chairperson of the Organising Committee for the 200th Anniversary celebrations. Mrs Lakshani Fernando, General Secretary of CBS gave a 'Glimpse of the Past', providing highlights of the 200-year history of CBS.

The occasion was lit up by the excellent choral renditions presented by the choirs of Ceylon School for the Deaf and Blind, Ratmalana, Trinity College, Kandy, Combined Catholic Schools and the Mary-Ann Singers.

August those present at this historic event were many Heads of Churches in Sri Lanka, and international representatives of Bible Societies abroad.

Ainslie Joseph

## Centenary celebrations of St. Roche's Church, Chilaw

The 100th Anniversary of the Church dedicated to St. Roche's at Ambakandawila, Chilaw, will be celebrated on August 19, 2012.

Vespers will be sung on Saturday 18th with the participation of Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Bishop of Kurunegala. Concelebrated Holy Mass on the Feast day Sunday will be presided by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw. Rev. Fr. Bennet Shantha, Parish Priest, St. Roche's Church, Ambakandawila has made all preparations to hold the Jubilee

in a festive manner. St. Roche

popularly acknowledged as 'Rogus Munithuma' is venerated for his miraculous powers in healing. He is also the patron saint of dogs. He had cured many who were stricken with terrible scourges and plagues.

History has



it that the erstwhile Bishop Masson OMI, built the Church in 1906. Father Masson was then attached to the Chilaw Parish.

After renovation, the Church now has a vast open area in front, which can accommodate a large numbers of devotees, who can participate at the ceremonies and celebration of Holy Mass.

St. Roche was born at Montpellier, and was the son of the noble governor of the city. He was born in 1295 and died in 1327.

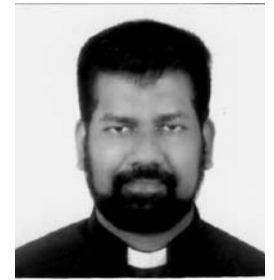
*Christie Fernando*

## Rev. Fr. Prasanna Rodrigo OMI, appointed JP

Rev. Fr. Prasanna Rodrigo OMI, was sworn in as All Island Justice of the Peace in the presence of Hon. I.N.N. Kumarage, the District Judge of Hambantota on the request made by the President of Sri Lanka and recommended by the Hon. Minister of Justice, which appeared in the Gazette of the Democratic Socialized Republic of Sri Lanka, No. 1761 dated June 1, 2012.

Fr. Prasanna studied at the National Seminary Ampitiya, Kandy from 1990 to 1997 and was ordained as a priest in the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate on August 9, 1997.

His appointment was as Assistant Parish Priest Burullapitiya and later as Director of the Technical School St. Vin-



cent's Home Maggona. Rev. Fr. Rodrigo was appointed Parish Priest of China Bay, Trineomalee in 2002 and subsequently served as Director of Vocations in the Congregation of Oblate of Mary Immaculate and was a member in the Preaching Band of Nazereth Wenuwappuwa in 2005. He also served as Parish Priest of Hambantota Parish in the Galle Diocese from 2008. He is at present serving as a Hospital Chaplain at Archbishop's House, Borella.

## Bro. Michael....

Contd. from Pg. 1

Superior General of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, Very Rev. Fr. Luistro Sebastian sss, Vicar General of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, Very Rev. Fr. Graeme Duro sss, Provincial Superior of the Blessed Sacrament in Australia and Very Rev. Fr. Sunil Rupasinghe sss, the Provincial of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation in Sri Lanka.

Born in the traditional Catholic village of Illavai on February 2, 1940, Bro Michael as he is fondly addressed by all, was educated at St. Henry's College, Jaffna. Giving ear to his call for a religious life, he entered the Blessed Sacrament Congregation in 1959 and after two years of Novitiate life, he took his First Vows on August 15, 1962.

From then on he faithfully dedicated his life as a Religious Brother at the Blessed Sacrament Mother House at St. Philip Neri's Church, Pettah. The humble Bro. Michael shunned any prominence but worked hard behind the scenes for various special occasions at St. Philip Neri's Church.

Bro. Michael has been the Director of the Aspiration for many of us. For the last seven years he was the Administrator at St. Philip Neri's Church, and at present he is the Treasurer of the House. His hospitality is known by one and all as a person with an open heart.

Dear Bro. Michael, the service you have rendered throughout the years in the Blessed Sacrament Community is greatly appreciated. You are at times a loving father, at times a big brother and at times a friend to us. It's only by God's favour one can give out one's love and service to all with a spirit of generosity and kindness.

You are blessed by God Almighty immensely with the blessings of love and kindness, and we salute your silent service embedded with love for a very long time and wish that Mother Mary in her chaste and gentleness bless you and protect you always.

*Rev. Fr. Sudath Jayanath sss*

## St. James' Church, Pahalagama celebrates annual feast



The 29th annual feast of St. James Church, Pahalagama, in the Nattandiya Parish was celebrated recently with the Festive Mass presided by the Bishop of Chilaw, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis.

The celebrations were held with the support of the Parish Priest of Nattandiya and Administrator of the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, Nattandiya, Rev. Fr. Upali Churchill and Asst. Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Duminda Suresh.

St. James Church Pahalagama consists of 17 families and the parishioners came together to offer a fellowship lunch to all those who participated in the feast.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Duminda Suresh taking the statue to the Church, in a boat.

*Shriyangani Felicia*

### CATHOLIC PRESS WEBSITE

www.colombocatholicpress.lk

Email: cmesenger@sltnet.lk

pradeepaya@sltnet.lk

Telephone: 2695984, 2678106, 4899611

Fax: 2692586

### ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, COLOMBO 04. ADMISSION TO YEAR 6 - 2013 SCHOLARSHIP EXAM

The above examination for Grade Five students of 2012 who would be admitted to Grade 6 in 2013, will be held on 22nd September 2012 at 9.00 a.m.

Application Forms for the above examination will be issued on 15th, 16th and 17th August from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon at the College Office, Colombo 04.

*Rector*

## Unique identity of Catholic Teachers cannot be hidden

"The unique identity of a Catholic teacher cannot be hidden as a lamp placed on a lamp post. Catholic teachers who serve in schools where there are a majority of teachers of other faith communities excel because of their discipline and dedication." Mr. Austin Silva the former Director of Education said in his keynote address at the First Annual General meeting of the Catholic Teachers' Union, on August 1, at St. Joseph's College, Colombo.

The Catholic Teachers' Union was established on January 22, 2011. The union has taken many steps to promote the rights of the teachers and

to help their development.

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith acts as the chief advisor of the Teachers' Union. Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawala, Archdiocesan Director of Education and the General Manager of Catholic Private Schools was appointed the president of the Catholic Teachers' Union.

Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawala addressing the gathering of teachers said that the Catholic Teachers' Union will not blindly imitate the trends created by the existing Teachers' Unions of the country. Instead it would have its own agenda guided by Catholic Principals and Values.

### ARCHDIOCESAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME (AELT POST A/L) 2012

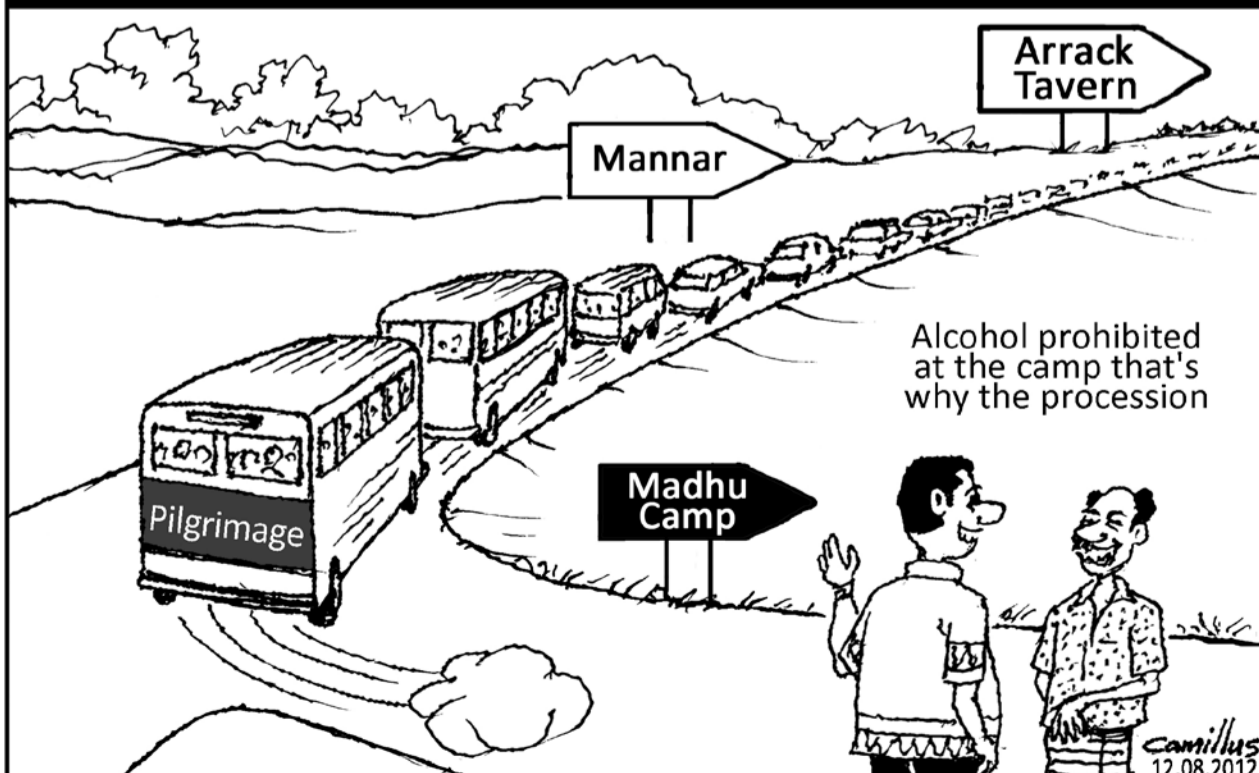
The next residential AELT programme for the post A/L students of 2012 will be at John Paul II Centre, Maeliya, Ja-Ela for ten weekends, from September to December 2012.

Together with AELT we offer Diploma in Computer Applications (DICA) and Certificate in Graphic Designing (CIGD) with a recognized certificate from leading university lectures in the resource pool.

Applications are now available at Rs.100/= per copy. Closing date for applications will be on September 1, 2012. You can also obtain applications by sending a Money Order through the Post Office Ja-Ela, with a self-addressed, stamped long envelop to Rev. Fr. Director, John Paul II Centre, Maeliya, Ja-Ela. Tel.: 011-2236251.

## SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA  
**Messenger**  
SINCE 1984

EDITORIAL

August 12 2012

Someone once said, that a measure of how civilized a people are, can be judged by how that society treats its women. It is said that during the reign of some of our ancient kings a woman could walk alone through the length and breadth of our country bedecked with jewellery. But today no woman is safe even in her own home. Look at the daily reports of rapes and sexual abuse of lonely women, with not even children or grandmothers being spared. We tend to blame the government. True there must be strict implementation of the law and swift punishment for those who are guilty of such offences. Unfortunately our Police are busy doing the work of the powers that be, rather than preventing crimes against fellow citizens as they are required to do by law. Intellectuals blame all this on the abolition of the Independent Commissions and the subjugation of the Police and the judiciary to the absolute power of the Executive Presidency.

But society cannot shirk its own responsibility for this sad situation. We all are responsible for this situation, as parents, teachers, prominent personalities, journalists, neighbors, politicians, religious figures, men and women of this world; we are all responsible, including and especially those of us who have decided to be silent observers of the horrible news we see in the media. What are

## Protect women and children

our mothers doing to look after their children including grown up girls. The mothers in our society who constitute a significant number and who have votes must get together, cutting across the political party divide and campaign for better enforcement of the law. They cannot be silent. None of us can keep silent. It is not OK to accept what we hear or see as part of a normal life. It is not OK to just talk about it and feel it is not our fault. It is not OK to keep still and blame modern inventions like the mobile phone and the Internet, rampant with pornographic websites.

Do the parents instill the value of pre-marital purity, as the mothers of a by-gone age did when girls attain age? Rev Sister Jeanette has published a book just for them, priced at just Rs 200. Shouldn't our modern mothers read and explain the realities of sex and their moral dimension to the teenagers both girls and boys. Fearing restrictions on their mobility, young women often hesitate to report incidents to their families; if and when they do, parents discourage them from filing official complaints with the police. Does this help or promote more abuse? Very often, incidents are dismissed as one-off or trivial. But such impunity encourages offenders to commit worse offences. How do the general members of our society look at these offences? Do they tend to blame the girls as having encouraged such conduct on the part of males through their dress or demeanor? Is there enough public outrage? When the perpetrators are caught, is their suf-

ficient national outrage? Does any woman's organization follow up such cases as rape to see that justice is delivered, without allowing the Police to hush up such crimes? We need such civic action particularly by parents and not only women.

We do have in our penal Code sufficient laws to protect the modesty of women. But is the law against sexual assault or harassment sufficiently enforced? Do our women know the nature of this offence which is very wide indeed? It variously deals with incidents that constitute sexual harassment (section 345) including unwelcome sexual advances. Unwelcome sexual advances by words or action used by a person in authority, in a working place or any other place, outraging the modesty of a woman is an offence. The law provides for imprisonment up to 2 years or a fine. What about gang rape a heinous offence. Should not gang rape be punishable more severely? Even the reciting of obscene acts, songs or words in public places is an offence but does the public protest when such acts take place in public places?

Above all, the under-age persons deserve our special protection because they are especially vulnerable due to their youth. Jesus referring to his believers, once said, "And whoever stumbles one of these little ones who believe into Me, it is better for him if a greater milestone is placed around his neck and he is thrown into the sea." (Mk 9:42)

## The Sacrament of the Eucharist

**1322** The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

**1323** "At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a Sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'"

### I. The Eucharist - Source and Summit of Ecclesial Life

**1324** The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life." "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained

the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch."

**1325** "The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit."

**1326** Finally, by the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life, when God will be all in all.

**1327** In brief, the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith: "Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking."

### II. What is this Sacrament Called?

**1328** The inexhaustible richness of this sacrament is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of it. It is called: Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words *eucharistein* and *eulogein* recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim - especially,

during a meal - God's works: creation, redemption and sanctification.

**1329** The *Lord's Supper*, because of its connection with the supper which the Lord took with his disciples on the eve of his Passion and because it anticipates the *wedding feast of the Lamb* in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The *Breaking of Bread*, because Jesus used this rite, part of a Jewish meal, when as master of the table he blessed and distributed the bread, above all at the Last Supper. It is by this action that his disciples will recognize him after his Resurrection, and it is this expression that the first Christians will use to designate their Eucharistic assemblies; by doing so they signified that all who eat the one broken bread, Christ, enter into communion with him and form but one body in him.

The *Eucharistic assembly (synaxis)*, because the Eucharist is celebrated amid the assembly of the faithful, the visible expression of the Church.

**1330** The *memorial* of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection.

The *Holy Sacrifice*, because it makes present the

one sacrifice of Christ the Saviour and includes the Church's offering. The terms *holy sacrifice of the Mass*, "*sacrifice of praise*," *spiritual sacrifice*, *pure and holy sacrifice* are also used, since it completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.

The *Holy and Divine Liturgy*, because the Church's whole liturgy finds its centre and most intense expression in the celebration of this Sacrament; in the same sense we also call its celebration the *Sacred Mysteries*. We speak of the *Most Blessed Sacrament* because it is the Sacrament of Sacraments. The Eucharistic species reserved in the tabernacle are designated by this same name.

**1331** *Holy Communion*, because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us share in his Body and Blood to form a single body. We also call it: *the holy things (ta*

## CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



CCCB

*hagia; sancta*) - the first meaning of the phrase "communion of saints" in the Apostles' Creed - *the bread of angels, bread from heaven, medicine of immortality, viaticum ...*

**1332** *Holy Mass (Missa)*, because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (*missio*) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God's will in their daily lives.

(Courtesy: Catechism of the Catholic Church)

# The Eucharist: A Foretaste of Heaven

In view of the Eucharistic Rally that will be held from August 31 to September 2, 2012 at St. Joseph's College, Maradana, the theme of which is 'The Eucharist: A Foretaste of Heaven', the purpose of this article is to establish the scriptural basis for the selected theme.

## 1. The Nomenclature

Eucharist is the name given to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar in its twofold aspect of Sacrament and Sacrifice of Mass, and in which Jesus Christ is truly present under the bread and wine. Etymologically, Holy Eucharist means 'thanksgiving'. Other titles are used, such as "Lord's Supper" (*Coena Domini*), "Table of the Lord" (*Mensa Domini*), the "Lord's Body" (*Corpus Domini*), and the "Holy of Holies" (*Sanctissimum*), to which may be added the following expressions, and somewhat altered from their primitive meaning: "Agape" (Love-Feast), "Eulogia" (Blessing), "Breaking of Bread", "Synaxis" (Assembly), etc.; but the ancient title "Eucharistia" appearing in writers as early as Ignatius, Justin, and Irenaeus, has taken precedence in the technical terminology of the Church and her theologians. The expression "Blessed Sacrament of the Altar," introduced by Augustine, is at the present day almost entirely restricted to catechetical and popular devotional writings. This extensive nomenclature, describing the great mystery from such different points of view, is in itself sufficient proof of the central position the Eucharist has occupied from the earliest ages, both in the Divine worship and services of the Church and in the life of faith and devotion which animates her members.

## 2. The Eucharistic Mystery

The Church honours the Eucharist as one of her most exalted mysteries. The mystery of the Holy Eucharist is also connected to the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation. These three mysteries constitute a triad, which causes the essential characteristic of Christianity, as a religion of mysteries far transcending the capabilities of reason. The organic connection of these three mysteries is clearly discerned, if we consider Divine Grace under the aspect of a personal communication of God. Thus in the bosom of the Blessed Trinity, God the Father, by virtue of the eternal generation, communicates His Divine Nature to God the Son, "the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father" (cf. Jn. 1:18), while the Son of God, by virtue of the hypostatic union, communicates in turn the Divine Nature received from His Father to His human nature formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary (cf. Jn. 1:14), in order that thus as God-man, hidden under the Eucharistic Species, He might deliver Himself to His Church, who, as a tender mother, mystically cares for and nurtures in her own bosom this, her greatest treasure, and daily places it before her children as the spiritual food of their souls. Thus the Trinity, Incarnation, and Eucharist are really welded together like a chain, which links heaven with earth, God with man, uniting them most intimately and keeping them thus united. By the very fact that the Eucharistic Mystery does transcend reason, no rationalistic explanation of it, based on a merely natural hypothesis can unravel its uniqueness.

## 3. The Catholic Doctrine of Holy Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist was instituted by our Lord Jesus on the night of the Last Supper. It was meant to signify his passover - his departure out of this world to the heavenly Father, in and through the passion, death and resurrection (cf. Jn. 13:1). The Holy Eucharist is the new covenant sealed by the blood

of Jesus. Leo XIII in the dogmatic Bull "Apostolicae Curae" of 13 Sept., 1896, referred to the Eucharistic "Sacrifice of the true Body and Blood of Christ" on the altar. The main testimony of the New Testament lies in the account of the institution of the Eucharist, and most clearly in the words of consecration spoken over the chalice. For this reason we shall consider these words first, since thereby, owing to the analogy between the two formulas clearer light will be thrown on the meaning of the words of consecration spoken over the chalice.

- Matthew 26:28: For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.

- Mark 14:24: This is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many.

- Luke 22:20: This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you.

- 1 Corinthians 11:25: This chalice is the new testament in my blood.

The Divine institution of the sacrifice of the altar is proved by showing.

- that the "shedding of blood" spoken of in the text took place there and then and not for the first time on the cross;

- that it was a true and real sacrifice;

- that it was considered a permanent institution in the Church.

As our Lord Jesus commanded us, we celebrate the Holy Eucharist in memory of him (cf. Lk. 22:19).

## 4. The Holy Eucharist and the Communion of Saints

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is a liturgical act whereby the

people of God render public and communal worship to the triune God.

The Introductory Rite of the Holy Eucharist contains a Penitential Act, whereby a reference is made to Mary, ever-virgin, the angels and saints. They are invoked in an intercessory prayer whereby we beseech them to intercede on behalf of us,

before the throne of God. Thus, in the Penitential Act, we are made aware that we are in communion with the Mary, the Mother of God, and the angels and saints in heaven. The Apostles' Creed that may be used in Lent and Easter time, also contains an affirmation of faith in the Communion of Saints. Significantly, the four principal Eucharistic Prayers in the Roman Missal also refers to the Communion of Saints. But what is this communion of saints?

As per the Catholic Encyclopedia, 'the Communion of Saints is the spiritual solidarity which binds together the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven in the organic unity of the same Mystical Body under Christ its head, and in a constant interchange of supernatural offices. The participants in that solidarity are called saints by reason of their destination and of their partaking of the fruits of the Redemption (1 Cor. 1:2 — Greek Text). The damned are thus excluded from the communion of saints. The living, even if they do not belong to the body of the

true Church, share in it according to the measure of their union with Christ and with the soul of the Church'.

The Communion of Saints is a dogma commonly taught and accepted in the Church. The Catechism of the Council of Trent (Pt. I, ch. x) by making the communion of saints an exponent and function, as it were, of the preceding clause, "the Holy Catholic Church" (cf. The Apostles Creed - I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints etc.), it really extends to what it calls the Church's "constituent parts, one gone before, the other following every day." Thus, the broad principle it enunciates thus: "Every pious and holy action done by one belongs and is profitable to all, through charity which seeks not her own."

The Scriptural basis and the theological formulation of the Communion of Saints is based on the concept of the Kingdom of God, which as the following gospel texts indicate point to an organic unity (cf. Mt. 13:31), which embraces in the bonds of charity (cf. Mt. 22:39) all the children of God (cf. Mt. 19:28; Lk. 20:36) on earth and in heaven (cf. Mt. 6:20), the angels themselves joining in that fraternity of souls (cf. Lk. 15:10). One cannot read the parables of the kingdom (cf. Mt. 13) without perceiving its corporate nature and the continuity which links together the kingdom in our midst and the kingdom to come. The nature of that communion, called by St. John a fellowship with one another ("a fellowship with us", cf. 1 Jn. 1:3) because it is a fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, and compared by him to the organic and vital union of the vine and its branches (cf. Jn. 15), stands out in bold relief in the Pauline conception of the Mystical

Communion as a means and symbol of the Communion of Saints (in Psalm 64:14). Thus, in this invocation of and sharing in the Communion of Saints, we are shown that the Holy Eucharist unites heaven and earth. For as St. Paul says in Col. 1:13, it is 'the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light'.

## 5. The Holy Eucharist where Heaven and Earth Meet

On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus also exclaimed, 'I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes' (cf. Lk. 22:18). The context of the gospel account implies that it was a meal he intended to partake of again with his disciples in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus exclaims that the full significance of the Last Supper, which we have been commanded to enact in his memory, will be revealed when the Kingdom of God is finally and forever established at the end of the age. Thus, the Holy Eucharist gives us a foretaste of the heaven depicted in the Book of Revelation Ch. 4-5. The Holy Eucharist is the earthly expression of the experience that awaits us in the 'heavenly temple'.

In the Lucan account of the Last Supper, Jesus blesses the cup and passes it to his apostles telling them to 'divide among yourselves' (cf. Lk. 22:17). It is the bestowal of authority and fellowship. For such was the status of those who drank from the same cup as the king. At the same time, drinking from the cup, signifies sharing in the suffering of the Messiah (cf. Lk. 22:20). Since the Holy Eucharist is at one and the same time, a foretaste of heaven and also a signification of our participation in the suffering of the Messiah, our spiritual experience at the Holy Eucharist need not necessarily be triumphalistic. It can also be self-effacing where we are humbled before God, whose Son made the greatest sacrifice ever by dying on a cross for our redemption because of his great love for us. It is also the moment where we unite our sufferings with that of Christ by drinking of the cup (cf. Mk. 10:39).

The Holy Eucharist which is the celebration of Christ's passion, death and resurrection, can be viewed from many different perspectives. The Eucharistic Rally has chosen as its theme the perspective of the Holy Eucharist as a

foretaste of heaven. The path to heaven is the narrow road of renunciation and self-sacrificing love, along which we have chosen to walk because of our faith in Jesus. St. Paul refers to this personal commitment as an 'obedience of faith'. For, in Rom. 1:5 he explains that the goal of his missionary activity, and the purpose of his call, was 'to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his (Jesus') name among all the nations'.

The Holy Eucharist is indeed a foretaste of heaven, and it is especially so, for the poor in spirit, the meek and the pure of heart, and for those who mourn and yearn for justice. Indeed, the Holy Eucharist makes real God's universal offer of salvation, but to be nourished by it, the believers who have been motivated by divine grace, must respond to that same grace by striving to obey the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. Fr. Nilindra Gunsekera, sss



Body. Repeatedly St. Paul speaks of the one body whose head is Christ (cf. Col. 1:18), whose energizing principle is charity (cf. Eph. 4:16), whose members are the saints, not only of this world, but also of the world to come (cf. Eph. 1:20). In that communion there is no loss of individuality, yet such an interdependence that the saints are "members one of another" (cf. Rom. 12:5), not only sharing the same blessings (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13) and exchanging good offices (cf. 1 Cor. 12:25) and prayers (cf. Eph. 6:18), but also partaking of the same corporate life, for "the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and up-builds itself in love" (cf. Eph. 4:16). The complete presentation of the dogma comes from the later Church Fathers. After the statements of Tertullian, speaking of "common hope, fear, joy, sorrow, and suffering" (*On Penance* 9-10); of St. Cyprian, explicitly setting forth the communion of merits (*De lapsis* 17); of St. Hilary, giving the Eucharis-

# The Olympic Games, Religion and Spirituality

Among the many dark clouds hovering over the world today the Olympic Games shed a ray of light. In the first place the Games are bringing almost all the countries of the world to one locus and one event - a celebratory event engaging all the participants -- athletes, coaches, officials etc. - in a common endeavour, binding them into a unity (community?) of sportsmanship at Olympian heights. We cannot but rejoice that peoples and countries, many of them in conflict or at loggerheads with each other - India and Pakistan, Israel and Palestine, US and Cuba and Iran, South and North Korea -- are at play in a spirit of friendly rivalry pursuing earnestly and enthusiastically a common goal.

The Olympic Games is the United Nations at play - actually a better model of it; what the Family of Nations should be, than what the UN is at present. The Games take people away and beyond divisions of race, religion and culture and unite them in their common humanity, which alone can provide the foundation for a world of peace and wellbeing, the kind of world which even the religions are striving to bring about.

## RELIGIOUS QUEST

Strangely enough the Games can provide a model even for the religious quest. Firstly, in the unity forged across all human divisions referred to above. In principle (though not always in fact) the religious life should have nothing to do with such man-made demarcations as caste, race, culture, social status etc. The goal of all religions is to lead the individual to Olympian heights of holiness and saintliness, and socially, to bring about a world of unity, harmony and peace, within Nations and among Nations. This is what the Olympic Games achieve in a stretched "Now" of three weeks or so. But that "Now" is bound to go into the subterranean underground of the future.

Secondly, the religious/spiritual quest involves single-minded commitment and strenuous effort. Watching the Games one can only guess how many hours of strenuous, disciplined practice with committed determination went into an apparently effortless performance --- the pole-vaulter soaring gracefully over the crossbar, bird-like .. Buddhism, for example, thinks it necessary for the one who is serious about the religious quest to enter the monkhood, where he/she can be totally committed with one-pointed attention, free from the distractions of lay life. The same is true of the other religions, mutatis mutandis. In the Christian understanding of the Way, the final stage of mystical experience must be preceded by the ascetical (moral effort), and the illuminative (enlightenment). St Paul himself compares the spiritual quest to a race with the runner seeking the crown of glory at the end.

It is, of course, possible to look at the Games negatively, for example, as a wasteful extravaganza of

time and money. If waste of money is a concern, what can we say of the colossal sums of money spent on the production of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear and conventional, which have no other purpose than to kill, maim and destroy. It has been estimated that the total expenditure on that count (all countries put together) amounts to a staggering US dollars 900 billion annually - the nadir of man's inhumanity to man, in a supposedly civilized world! The expenditure on the Olympic Games would be miniscule in comparison.

## NEED FOR PLAY

The Olympic Games highlights, more importantly, the deep-seated need in man for play. If religion is the depth dimension of human life, it cannot be anything but play in its fundamental meaning; play is man's free and spontaneous self-expression. Physical play - sports, games, recreational activities -- is a limited manifestation of it.

The shackles of burdensome work are shattered by play delivering man to be himself in his/her inner freedom. From a biblical point of view it is clear that the original intention of God for man was a state of play, a state of free unalloyed enjoyment in a playful relationship with God - the paradisaical state which empowered man to live from the centre. But that original human condition was lost through the Fall, and work entered into the world; man was driven from the centre to the periphery, to turn round in circles driven by external forces; compelled to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, in painful labour. Work therefore is connected with sin in a fallen human condition.

**From our Christian viewpoint man has been liberated from that sinful condition to one of freedom and grace in and through the death and resurrection of Christ. Though the residual effects of sin make it difficult,**



Rev. Fr. Mervyn Fernando

St. Paul expressed the same idea when he said that the redeemed person lives by love and not by the law. The law is constraining from the outside, while love is liberating from the inside.

**in principle, it has been made possible for man to make his way towards the centre - to go away from work towards play, namely, to recover his true nature of spontaneity and freedom; in other words to be joyfully creative. Play is truly re-creation.**

The nature of play is such that it allows the player to let himself/herself go, forgetful of self, shedding masks and pretenses. Watch a child at play or an artist painting. He/she is oblivious of the surroundings, literally outside self, in ecstasy-ex-stasis (standing outside). Paradoxically he is most himself outside himself. In this sense, play is the most expressive metaphor for the highest spirituality - the experience of ecstasy.

A person's ability to play therefore can be taken as a measure of his/her redemption from sin. To the degree that the Redemption has become operative in me I will be able to play, namely, enjoy an inner freedom of self-expression, spontaneous and radiant, emanating from the centre, unaffected by external constraints. St. Paul expressed the same idea when he said that the redeemed person lives by love and not by the law. The law is constraining from the outside, while love is liberating from the inside.

The transcendent exemplar of play is, obviously, God himself. If God is love in His being (esse), it follows that His doing (agere) is loving. Both Eastern (Hinduism specially) and Western religions have looked on creation as the lila (play) of God, God expressing Himself playfully and freely in love, outside of Himself (ad extra). If God's play is on-going creation, the God-like person will naturally be playfully creative or creatively playful.

Subodhi Institute, Piliyandala

## Healing a lonely heart

Loneliness can bite into the heart like frost in sub-zero temperatures. It's sting can stay with us night and day, making it hard to function. Loneliness and grief are often intertwined, for the lonely often have experienced loss.

Years ago, as a young wife, having just lost my first baby and living hundreds of miles from family, I encountered real loneliness and grief for the first time. I felt inconsolably lonely! Since God has gifted me with a rational nature, I reasoned that, should I give in to the resounding waves of loneliness and self-pity, despair would overpower me. So, I knew I had to fight it. I could not allow my emotions to rule me, or my judgment. It helped me to reason that others had lost babies and survived.

It is said that Our Lord never allows us to undergo more suffering than we can bear, with His grace. So at my lowest ebb He sent me a dear lady to remind me that 'He' loved me. In Hebrews 13:5, we

read that He "will never leave us nor forsake us," and the Good News is that this is true! I can attest to it.

Recently, I encountered two young women whose spouses had left them; one after nearly twenty years and the other after twelve. Abandonment is one of the worst injustices we can experience.

Abandonment by a spouse can be even more emotionally devastating than the death of a spouse, for in death the partner does not choose to leave. It is out of their hands. But when a spouse leaves by choice, the rejection cuts deep.

When thrown into such a situation against one's will, it is normal to go through the grieving process. There will be times of denial, bargaining, anger, etc. but, eventually acceptance comes. This does not mean one is happy with the outcome; it simply means he/she acknowledges that it has happened, and it is not likely to change.

The positive approach is to muster up

trust in God. He loves you and He loves your spouse!

When we are lonely it is tempting to look for love and acceptance in all the wrong places. So it is good to remember that the only safe arms to flee into are the arms of Jesus. If we confide in Him our every thought, all our hurts, our disappointments, our fears, and even our anger, He can and will give us peace.

Life has taught me, in times of trouble, to take one minute at a time. Do not dwell on the past, or worry about the future. Let each day take care of itself. When things were so bad in my life that I did not want to go on living, I was in my early thirties. Now, thirty more years have passed, and Our Lord has shown me that He does provide all my needs. He does care.

Loneliness does not restrict itself to the young abandoned spouse. It can be a constant companion of the senior citizen as well. A few months ago a very dear friend of mine had to leave her home. Since

she had no family close by, it made sense to go to an Extencicare facility close to her only child. Her son is very good to her, visiting her every day, but the days are long. Macular degeneration has taken most of her sight and neurological difficulties have taken her ability to walk. Since her mind is alert, she has many long hours to lie there and think. She has no friends to visit her in this new city.

The great and positive thing about loneliness is that it can be defeated. Our Lord, Who was rejected, and abandoned by those closest to Him at His darkest hour, has already defeated it. Our hope and consolation lie in the fact that "... nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, not any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus Our Lord." (Rom 8:39) Not even loneliness!

- Canadian Messenger

## The Medical Specialist's prayer

O Lord, I prescribe a cure for every patient who visit me  
Yet I'm stressed out at the end of day  
You gave me brains, status and a lucrative practice  
I charge a phenomenal fee that a few can afford  
Day in and day out my mind is focused  
On gathering riches and comforts.

For most part of each day, the company I enjoy  
Is my table, chair, and my stethoscope  
A patient heavy under a load of worry stares blankly at me  
He might have pawned his daughter's jewelry to pay my fee  
To me, he's just a 'number' treated and dispensed with immediately  
Paving the way 'for the next 'case' and the next.

I have big plans to complete: My children's overseas education  
Many exotic lands scheduled to visit, within this short span of life  
Satisfaction is nowhere near me, I'm burdened with a heavy heart  
When I reach my goals, I keep on shifting my goal posts  
What can it be the matter with me?  
I'm afraid Lord, you are going to ask this dreaded question  
When my earthly sojourn has come to an end.  
You cured many, but couldn't you cure yourself?

Ananda Perera

## Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

Sillalai also called "Little Rome" is a hamlet in the Jaffna District. It is rich in vegetation, surrounded by paddy fields in the North and West and villages in the South and East. A couple of kilometres beyond the paddy fields in the West is the mighty Indian Ocean. There is an interesting story as to how the village got its name. It refers to a "small oil mill" ("Siria Aalai" in Tamil) in the area which extracted oil from gingerly seeds, margosa seeds and the seed of "honey tree or butter tree" ("Illupai" in Tamil) whose botanical name is "*madhuca longifolia*." Over time "Siria Aalai" has become Sillalai and this is how the village was named Sillalai.

Catholicism in Sillalai is well over 500 years when all its inhabitants were Catholics and the main livelihood of the community was farming. History records that the statue of "*Kathirai Matha*" - a rare depiction of Mother Mary was brought to Sillalai by the Portuguese who landed at the Port "Sambil" which is about 3-4 kilometers west of Sillalai. This is also the same Port where Princess Sangamitha landed in Sri Lanka. It is said that the Portuguese, on witnessing the faith and the dedication of the people of Sillalai gifted the statue of Mother Mary "with a crown of gold and diamonds, seated on a throne with the moon under her feet and having the child Jesus on her lap," telling the people that those who had their faith in Mother Mary would never be disappointed. The villagers were very happy, and built a small cadjan hut for the statue and started reciting the Rosary daily at the feet of the statue.

During the Dutch period when the Catholics were persecuted, the people of Sillalai took great pains to protect the statue transferring it from place to place and hiding it in cavities of deep wells above the water level and in abandoned huts in order to escape the eagle eyes of the Dutch persecutors and their stooges. The people of Sillalai, held on to their faith at the expense of their lives displaying their firm belief in their faith by gathering together at night to recite the Rosary and other prayers they knew.

It was during this time in 1687 that God Almighty willed to send a priest from India to strengthen their faith. He chose Rev. Fr. Joseph Vaz, a young priest for this task. The priest and his faithful servant John, disguised as slaves, landed in Mannar after experiencing a long ordeal in the Indian Ocean. Both walked the distance from Mannar to Jaffna and the priest was guided by the Holy Spirit to Sillalai. He entered the village like a beggar going from house to house looking for Catholics. Sillalai was hundred percent Catholics and when they came to know that he was a priest they arranged a dwelling place for him in the Moopar's land (guardian of the Village Church) With Fr. Vaz' leading and guidance the people of Sillalai were once again able to practice their religious rights and beliefs. They built another hut in the vicinity of the priests hut and used it as the church. Fr. Joseph Vaz lived in Sillalai for more than three years. During this period starting with the neighbouring villages he went as far as Jaffna reviving the faith of the Catholics in all these areas. He celebrated the Holy Mass and other spiritual rights in all these places.

During the time that Fr. Joseph Vaz stayed in Sillalai several miracles were documented by the people. Set out here are three such instances.



Cross given by Fr. Joseph Vaz

- One evening the Moopar's wife Annai had gone to the church well to fetch some water. There she had seen the priest in prayer and a small child playing and disturbing the priest. Thinking that it was her grandson, on return she had asked her daughter as to why she allowed the child to go to the church and play. Her daughter had replied that her child was sleeping in the room. Annai had gone to the room and had found the child still sleeping. Annai then realized that the child she had seen was the child Jesus.

## 'Kathirai Matha' in the hamlet of Sillalai

- On a Sunday, a Catholic named Kayar Pranchipillai was thatching his house roof with palmyrah leaves neglecting the Sunday obligation. The priest sent word to stop the work and come for Mass but the direction was ignored and he continued with his work. The roof caught fire and the person went to the priest knelt down and asked for pardon and mercy. The priest pardoned him and gave him a cross saying "keep this cross with you. You will never again have any loss by fire. The cross is still in the possession of his descendants and a picture of it is shown here.
- Fr. Joseph Vaz was suffering from diarrhea/ cholera. The Moopar's wife not only looked after him and nursed him but also gathered others and prayed for his recovery. Their prayers were answered and he was cured quickly knowing that he was cured by the intercession of Mother Mary, he named her "Aarokia Matha" which in English is "Our Lady of Remedies." In appreciation of the assistance and care bestowed on him by the Moopars family Fr. Joseph Vaz blessed them saying, "you will be blessed with the gift of children down your generation and you will never go hungry. Up to this time the descendants of that family are blessed with children and there has been no instance of hunger in that household.

Like Judas Iscarist of Christ's time there had been some stooges who wanted to be in the good books of the then Dutch rulers and they were waiting for an opportunity to hand Fr. Vaz to the Dutch persecutors. When the situation was going out of hand the people of Sillalai led him safely out of Jaffna and bid him good bye.

Once again the people of Sillalai became a sheep without a shepherd even though they continued with the prayers and religious activities that Fr. Joseph Vaz had taught them. One night a devotee with tears in his eyes, after praying at the feet of the statue of Our Lady left a naked flame that he had brought at the feet of the statue and went back home. Late in the night, due to heavy blowing the flame got tilted and the cadjan hut caught fire reducing the hut to a heap of ashes. But the statue of our Lady was miraculously saved. It was in fact without any damage to it. Early next morning when the Moopar who came to the church saw this he sounded the bell and the people gathered and were shocked at the sight of the damage but the elegance of the statue which stood unharmed. They all knelt down and praised the Lord. Thereafter a church was built using limestone and mud.

According to church history, the Sillalai Church was built and rebuilt at the same place where it is now, in 1836, 1896 and 1916. It was the late Rev. Fr. Louis Daisy OMI, a Belgian national who served the parish of Sillalai for 15 years in two terms between 1920 and 1962, to whom credit goes for yeoman service for the propagation and sustenance of the faith as well as the upliftment of the village. During his first term Fr. Daisy built two schools one for boys and one for girls on both sides of the Church. His second term must be written in gold for it is during this time that Fr. Daisy built the Church which is considered as one of the most beautiful churches in the Island. It was thoughtfully designed in the form of rainbow arcs without any pillars that block the view of the Altar from the Congregation. The foundation stone for this building was laid in 1957 and completed in 1961. Sillalai was economically backward at that time. The people contributed whatever they could. The miraculous story of "*Kathirai Matha*" found the necessary funds from here and abroad from his relatives and friends in his mother land and also from charity organizations world over. Fr. Daisy encouraged the people of Sillalai to make their contribution by way of manual work for the building construction. He divided the village into many sections and the people of each section the elders, middle aged, the youth and even the school children contributed in the form of labour. His dedication, hard work, far sighted thinking and planning all put together made his dream a reality in 5 years.

The new church was blessed and declared open by the then Bishop of Jaffna the Late Rt. Rev. Jerome Emilianuspillai. Fr. Daisy in his sermon



thanked God Almighty and Our Lady for the blessings, guidance and assistance received for the successful completion of the project. He thanked the then Sacristan the late Bro. Johnpillai for being his right hand during the whole project. He made a poignant statement about the support given by the parishioners especially by the school children when he said, "This church is built not only with cement, sand, pebbles and water but also with the sweat of the small tots who helped in breaking stones and carrying water, sand, pebbles etc."

Sillalai is fondly called the "Little Rome" for its dedication to Catholicism. The faith of the people have so far produced bishops, priests and nuns - over 50 from each, and many lay servers who serve in the vineyard of the Lord at different levels in Sri Lanka and abroad.

August 15, the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady is the Sillalai Church feast, celebrated in a very grand scale every year. Sillalalais from various parts of the country - Now from various countries also - gather round the altar as one family to celebrate their Church feast. The elegant church, the simple but beautiful decorations, the multitude of devotees is an inspiring sight to anyone who witnesses it.

Mother Mary, Mother of Christ and Mother of us all intercede for us, your children unceasingly.

Article sent by Mr. Sillai Vaethan.  
Pictures by Mr. Weragoda



# Benedictine Mo

## 50 Year Jubilee of Adisham - St. Benedict's M

It all began with the Solemn Vespers at sunset on July 18 (a few weeks ago) in the small but exquisitely decorated Chapel of St. Benedict's Monastery, Haputale. Presided by the Conventual Prior, Very Rev. Fr. Leonard Ranasinghe OSB., the Liturgy honouring St. Benedict was sung in Latin, in the usual Gregorian Chant style – hymns, psalms, antiphons and all. Present at the Vigil celebrations were the members of the Adisham Community, headed by the Superior and Novice Master, Very Rev. Fr. Michael Ekanayake OSB, and the other monks, inclusive of the six young novices presently doing their Novitiate at St. Benedict's Monastery. In the list of guests present at the evening Liturgy was also Rev. Fr. Stephen Kulathinal OSB, who was representing the Sylvestro-Benedictines of the Indian Priors.

The next morning, July 19, the concelebrated Episcopal High Mass took place at 10:00 a.m., with three Bishops participating, namely, the chief guest at the celebration, the Papal Nuncio, His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando SSS, the Bishop of the Badulla Diocese and His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Perera OSB, the Bishop of the Ratnapura Diocese. The Holy Mass was celebrated inside the cleverly designed and decorated tent specially constructed for the occasion – connecting the two sides of the Adisham building which included the front porch. The Jubilee Mass was concelebrated by a large group of priests and attended by religious sisters and brothers, including many family members of the Benedictine monks.

At the Jubilee Mass, a special communiqué sent by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, was read out by the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Spiteri, imparting the Papal Greetings and Blessings on the Adisham Community and the Benedictine monks in Sri Lanka.

After Mass, there followed speeches by distinguished guests; speeches which brought out the different aspects of the Jubilee being celebrated – Adisham, canonically erected as St. Benedict's Monastery and Novitiate House of the Benedictine monks in Sri Lanka, 50 Golden Years ago. While welcoming the distinguished guest speakers to the podium, the Master of Ceremonies, Rev.

Fr. Yovan Saverimuttu OSB, offered a sweeping summary of the historic events that led to the present Jubilee celebrations at Adisham. It was in 1845, he recalled, that the Sylvestro-Benedictine monks began their mission of building up the local church of Sri Lanka within the Southern Vicariate of Colombo. Then, due to the pastoral exigencies at the time, the monks moved up to Kandy in order to nourish and sustain the faith of the people of God in the Central Province. Having established their base in Kandy, the need was felt to have a separate house for the Novitiate, apart from the Motherhouse at Monte Fano, Ampitiya.

Thanks to the initiative and encouragement of Abbot Leo Cornelli OSB, the search was begun. The project was pursued by the then Prior Major, Very Rev. Fr. Simon Tonini OSB, supported by his Councillors, which resulted in finding this "priceless masterpiece of architecture and beauty, wrapped in tranquility on the misty hills of Haputale."

### Papal Nuncio's Message

The Papal Nuncio His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, preached the homily at the Jubilee Mass, the Gospel chosen for the day being from Matthew 19:27-30, where the Lord promises a hundredfold reward to those who follow Him. His Excellency, humorously hinted that people might think it would be quite easy to give up everything to follow Jesus, so they could come and stay at Adisham – and enjoy the hundredfold! He pointed out that we do not follow Jesus for material comfort, but we do so because Jesus has called us. We are answering His invitation, since we have discovered His Love and we want to offer Him our love, limited as it is. We need to renew this love each day if we are to remain faithful to Him, to grow in His friendship and knowledge.

Speaking of the Novitiate in the context of Adisham, His Excellency said that both St. Benedict and St. Sylvester sought the solitude of nature, to sever their ties from human relations and with material goods. These Saints are considered lovers of nature. They saw nature



as a sign of God's love for us, manifesting His presence. They also found in nature the gift of harmony with God and within the community; discover with the help of nature, a new relationship with creation and a more profound spiritual relationship; this opens our hearts to embrace the whole of humanity – as children of the same Father. Referring to the Second Reading from Ephesians, Archbishop Spiteri mentioned that we are called to bear with one another through love; and to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace.

### Celebrating the Year of Faith

The Papal Nuncio went on to mention that Pope Benedict XVI has invited the whole Church to celebrate a Year of Faith through which we are to go back to basics. That is, to rediscover all things in the light of the Risen Lord. So, in order to listen to the Word of God and to be sustained by God's Word, we turn to Our Lady, the Mother of the Incarnate Word. She will help us to receive the very Word of Jesus with an open heart; to be transformed everyday into a living Gospel; to live the Word of the Lord. So that, whoever sees us, will see the Gospel in action. Like Mary, we see all realities in the light of the Gospel, even the more difficult moments of life.

Referring to the common motto of the Benedictines, "Ora et Labora," Archbishop Spiteri, pointed out that Christian love is not a matter of sentimentalism. It is an active love, whereby we extend our helping hands to our brothers and sisters in need. It is to take on ourselves the needs and burdens of those around us. In the light of this, His Excellency expressed the wish that all those who visit Adisham – those who come to pray as well as those who may come out of mere curiosity – may discover not only the beauty and harmony of architecture blending with nature, but also the deeper harmony of the spiritual life. This, he said, people would receive through the hospitality of the monks, their

witness of fraternal life and their life of prayer.

### Message of the OSB, Superior Major

In his short address, the Conventual Prior of Sri Lanka, Very Rev. Fr. Leonard Ranasinghe OSB, offered some useful historical sketches regarding Adisham and its relation to the Jubilee celebra-



tions. He pointed out that the original owner of Adisham came from a place with the same name in Kent, England. It was Sir Thomas Villiers, who designed it according to the pattern found in his native land. As can be observed as noted on the façade at the portico, Adisham is 81-years-old, built in 1931. After some years, the original owners sold it to the Sedawatte Tea Company, whose Directors were the Beligammanes. Mrs. Beligammane was the one who signed the deeds at the selling of the property to the Benedictines. Mrs. Beligammane in turn was the daughter of Mrs. Wimala Wijewardene who was the Minister of Health, in the S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike government. In the 1960s, the Benedictines



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# Monks celebrate

## Monastery - Haputale (1962-2012)

were in search of a suitable location to open another monastery for their Novitiate, which up to then was housed at Monte Fano, Ampitiya. The decision to have a separate house for the Novitiate was accepted by all the monks at a Family Chapter. But, they had not decided upon a location, although it was surmised to be in the hill country. At this time Rev. Fr. Abeysekera, a diocesan priest was the Parish Priest of Bandarawela and had as his assistant, Rev. Fr. Amadeo Visentiner OSB. The former who had come to know that the Adisham Bungalow was on sale broke the news to his assistant, who in turn conveyed the same to his Prior, Rev. Fr. Simon Toni OSB. Rev. Fr. Toni got into the stride quickly and having called a Family Chapter, where all but two voted for the purchase of Adisham. The transaction was completed in 1960 when Rev. Fr. Amadeo Visentiner with Brother Ambrose Amirtham took up residence at Adisham. It was only on December 8, 1962, that the first batch of novices entered there and a community was established, comprising Rev. Fr. Lawrence Hyde OSB, as Superior, Rev. Fr. Bede Amarasinghe OSB, as Prior, and Rev. Fr. Visentiner as

were celebrating the 50th Jubilee of their Novitiate House. He thanked the monks for having invited him and the priests of his Diocese (many of whom were present in the assembly) to participate in the Jubilee celebrations. What was unique in his short speech was the fact that he mentioned how he himself was a product of Adisham, St. Benedict's Monastery.

### Message of the Bishop of Badulla

The Bishop of Badulla, Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando SSS, began his speech by saying that any institute or person could justifiably celebrate a jubilee only on condition that, that person or institute has served the country, the nation or the religion. He said that the Sylvestro-Benedictine monks who began their monastic life at Adisham 50 years ago had truly served the country and religion.

His Lordship, Bishop Winston went further, to express his admiration regarding Adisham as a beautiful and graceful building made in line with the architectural details of British tradition. He said that the Diocese of Badulla was proud to have a community of this nature; this diocese whose first Bishop was a member of the Sylvestro-Benedictine Congregation, namely, the Late Bishop Leo Nanayakkara OSB. No doubt, as visitors enter to see the Adisham building and surroundings, they are awestruck by the beauty and

ambitions in order to live not only for God, but by and in Him, not for a few years but forever. St. Benedict believed that what was of primary importance for a monk was to become a stranger to the ways of this world." His Lordship graciously avowed that this element of true monastic spirit did characterize the monks who lived at Adisham, and he thanked God for it. When the true monastic spirit reigns, certain virtues are manifest in the monks, such as obedience, humility, silence, detachment, modesty etc. The community at Adisham does manifest these qualities, His Lordship, the Bishop said. One word that sums up all this is, peace: "When there is peace in the monastery, then it becomes the House of God."

### Vote of Thanks by the Superior of Adisham

The Superior and Novice Master of Adisham, Very Rev. Fr. Michael Ekanayaka OSB., in offering the Vote of Thanks, offered gratitude to the Chief Guest and other distinguished visitors, Their Lordships, Priests, Religious and friends who were present at the celebrations. Rev. Fr. Michael thanked the Prior, Rev. Fr. Leonard, for having presided over the Solemn Vespers, the previous day (July 18). He thanked all the Benedictine Fathers and Brothers who had come to Adisham a few days prior to the actual celebration to help the Community in every possible way. He also thanked all the friends of the Adisham Community who offered their assistance to celebrate the

Jubilee in a very fitting manner. Rev. Fr. Michael made special mention of the Abbot General of the Sylvestro-Benedictines, Very Rev. Fr. Abbot Michael Kelly OSB, whom he thanked for having sent the beautiful Altar Lamps and the Incense that were used at the Liturgy. Special thanks were also offered to Rev. Fr. Bernard Ramanadan OSB, for his gift of the Chalice to be used for the Jubilee function. Rev. Fr. Michael made it a point also to thank all the musical groups that participated in the day's celebrations: He thanked in a special way the Community Bursar, Rev. Fr. Jude Wilson OSB, who had worked hard, day and night to have a smooth and grand celebration. In the concluding words of his address, Fr. Michael offered his grateful thanks to "the great people behind the scene," namely, the minor staff who had worked tirelessly in preparing for the Jubilee; and also Mr. Ratnayake and his group.

Through the rest of the day, as the participants of the Jubilee partook of the Fellowship Meal, there was no lack of wholesome entertainment by the musical groups. Everyone, the young and the not-so-young, felt the loving and merciful Blessings of the Heavenly Father being showered upon them, all through the day's celebration, through the powerful intercession of St. Benedict and St. Sylvester. To the whole Benedictine Community at Adisham and to all our friends - we wish "Ad Multos Annos"!

Rev. Fr. Louis-Marie Navaratne O.S.B.



ator, Brothers Alberic Ponnasamy and Peter Damian OSB, were the members of the Community. It was Fr. Aidan de Silva OSB, the then Prior who blessed and opened the monastery at Adisham. From then onwards there have been 105 novices and 9 missionaries, who have passed through the portals of Adisham. Rev. Fr. Leonard opened his short address by thanking God for all those monks who had helped to build up the Adisham community to its present status.

In his turn the Bishop of Ratnapur, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Jayasinghe OSB, in the name of his Diocese, congratulated and offered the Best of Wishes to the Benedictine monks who

majesty of the place. But, it does not take too long, as the Bishop said, for them to realize that they were on "holy ground." The building alone, however great in its architectural perfection, cannot give that powerful experience of peace, except by the community that lives there. All those who visit this place, be they honeymoon couples, retreatants, tourists, picnickers and photographers, are made to leave these "hallowed precincts" with something in their hearts fulfilled even without their knowing it, His Lordship said: "There is an aura of sanctity created by the men of God who live here. They all come in contact with men who have entered monastic life, whose vocation is to leave the world with all its desires and

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WITH  
MOTHER  
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ADISHAM - HAPUTALE (1962-2012)**



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"Thanks be to God..."  
"Love is forever"

**Come and Sing with Fr. Louis - Marie OSB**

# Jesuit Jubilarians of August 2012

## ► Fifty Years of Priesthood

Rev. Fr Joseph Frederick Leon, S.J., will celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his Priesthood on August 5, 2012. He entered the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) on September 25, 1951 and followed the novitiate training in Calicut, Kerala, India. He completed his theological studies at the Faculty of St Albert, Leuven, Belgium and was ordained a priest on August 5, 1962 in Brussels.

As a priest most of his life was spent on spiritual guidance of priests, seminarians, religious sisters and brothers and in the pastoral apostolate. The Spiritual Exercises of



St. Ignatius plays a pivotal role in his life. This devoted son of St. Ignatius has a profound love for the Society of Jesus, combined with a deep sense of loyalty and commitment.

He rendered a dedicated and memorable service to youth while he was working on the staff of St Aloysius' College, Galle,

St Michael's College, Batticaloa and St Joseph's College, Trincomalee. Many past students still remember the special type of kicks he taught in football coaching.

Let us remember him in our prayers and wish him many more years of fruitful service in the Lord's vineyard.

### Fifty years in Religious Life

Rev. Fr Baylon Milroy Perera, S.J.,  
Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernando, S.J.,  
Rev. Fr. Anton Pieris, S.J.,  
On August 5, 2012, these three Jesuits

celebrated the Golden Jubilee of their Religious life. They have been engaged in various ministries touching the hearts and minds of many and bringing them closer to Christ. On this memorable occasion the members of the Jesuit Family together with all who cherish the many services rendered by them in diverse apostolates, congratulate them and offer their best wishes.

They pray that God may continue to bountifully bless the three jubilarians with many more fruitful years in His vineyard

## To the Shrine of St Anne-Talawila [Celebrating 250 years]



Against the backdrop of turquoise waters sparkling bright

The Shrine of St Anne stands as an anchor, a beacon light  
Where a sea of pilgrims annually throng,  
in worshipful adoration  
This year completes two hundred and fifty years,  
a joyous celebration.

Then ring out festive bells, a joyful peal  
On this milestone in its history of religious appeal  
Venerated Shrine dedicated to the mother,  
of the Mother of God  
Of national significance, enfolding all.

May it stand as it has, these many years  
Inspiring the faithful midst joys and fears  
May good St Anne the patroness of this revered Shrine  
Cast her benign look and blessing and make our isle  
sublime.

Jeannette Cabraal

## Happy Birthday to Lazarus Perinpanayagam

An old Patrician and an old Josephian and an all round Veteran sportsman and well known IELTS teacher and popular senior Rotarian will be celebrating his 75th birthday on the August 16, at Edmonton, Alberta in Canada with his wife Indri, son Andrew daughter-in-law Maneka his grand daughter Raya, his brother Packianayagam, his wife Theyvy and their children, brother late Ariyanayagam and wife Diamond and their children. We wish him many more years of healthy life and God's Blessings.



Noel

## Bro. Michael

Bro. Michael, we offer our congratulation!  
really great - we should have a great celebration on your 50 years of loving dedication.

Michael the arch-angel will pray for your need.

In times of trouble he'll for you intercede.

Christ has chosen you, to this calling you did heed.

His work to continue on Him you feed

An example to others joy to us you bring,

Eucharistic Lord adoring his praises sing.

Loving Mother Mary help you continue the work of Christ the King

By Emilda S. Douglas

## More about the Genesis of Creation



The Editorial and article on the Genesis account of creation published in the Messenger of 22.07.2012 focus on the creation of the physical world. For

atheists and agnostics these discussions are irrelevant but for believers they are useful. Believers are those who have faith as defined by Hebrews 11:1 to be sure of things we hope for and to be certain of things we cannot see. Then in 11:3 it is said that through faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God and what is visible was made out of what is invisible.

In the universe the 'matter' which can be grasped by human senses is only 5 per cent. The balance is non sensory. Let us look at some non sensory sources of energy that is already found by modern science, which is an invention by the Greeks and originally later developed by others.

If we take light, in the light spectrum only visible light is detectable through human eyes. There is infra red, x-rays, gamma rays which are invisible to human eye.

In case of sound, human ear can hear only a limited range of sounds. But other sound waves need detection through mechanical devices.

In the physical world of things human sense organs can only touch and feel only things that are composed of atoms. The sub atomic particles such as photons such as Higgs Boson can not be touched through sense organs.

In case of space we can see the space created by moving matter and space we observe is limited. But we

know space is curved.

And time we have a unidirectional flow of time past, present and future. But we know time is not unidirectional and it can reverse on non sensory world. So prior to the creation of the world which gave rise to sensory light, sound, atoms, space and time was made out of invisible non sensory. This amply validates Hebrews 11:3 quoted above.

In the New Testament gives proof of Scientific facts regarding the matter. If we carefully study the transfiguration narratives in Matthew 17: 1-5, Mark 9: 2-13 and Luke 9: 28-36 we find that the face of Jesus and his clothes were converted to light. Jesus face and clothes were made of solid matter composed of atoms. These atoms were converted to light which is made of photons and energy, which comprise of visible light perhaps ultra violet light. Then the disciples saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. This account gives an indication that time can flow not only forward but also backward. That is why the disciples saw Moses and Elijah who lived hundreds of years before Jesus. The moment matter is transformed into energy as in the case of transfiguration, the unidirectional flow of time reversed to history.

We know that transfiguration is not a symbolic description in the New Testament. It is confirmed in 2 Peter 1: 17-18 as evidence of a true incident. Thus the definition of faith in Hebrews 11: 1 is now not a mere assumption of believers. It is a scientifically proven fact. So the conclusion is that if we can be more certain of things we cannot see, without doubt we can be sure of things we hope for.

PVD Leo Samson

## Bridging the ethnic divide

In the recent past, much has been spoken of "Reconciliation" between the two major communities in our country. Even in International circles, attention has been focussed on this topic. Locally, the Catholic Church has voiced its concern time and again. The late President Premadasa openly declared that the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka had a major role to play towards this end since the Catholic Church has within its fold members of both Communities who sit together for common worship.

We should replace our Sinhala, Tamil and English Masses with one common Mass as in the years gone by. Thus Holy Masses in our churches could incorporate Sinhala, Tamil and English as it is now done in our churches on major festive days. This could easily be

extended to all Masses throughout the year.

A glaring defect in the present system is that it has divided the Catholic Community into Sinhala, Tamil and English and it is sad to see parishioners within a single parish being unable to have contact with their fellow parishioners due to this "Ethnic Divide." If this "single" Mass concept is adopted, the age old Tridentine Mass could also be introduced in all our churches to cement any differences that may arise as a result of doing away with single ethnic masses. Towards this end, let the Catholics of Sri Lanka hope and pray, that the Holy Spirit will enlighten us to bring back into one fold the "scattered sheep" in our country.

Roggy Corera

## Eight centuries of commune with the Divine

Love is the greatest asset any human receives from his creator and how he disposes of that love depends on his relationship with those around him. Jesus Christ has said "No greater love than this no man has than lay down his life for his friends." This is exactly what Jesus did to show man His immense love for the truth and God his Father. He lived in poverty and died in poverty that man seeing may imitate him.

Nestled in the hillside at Tewatte, Ragama is the Monastery of Poor Clares, which houses a small community of contemplative. Theirs is a life of prayer, penance and sacrifice based on the teachings and poverty of Jesus Christ, which have been imitated by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare, foundress of the Poor Clare Order. They depend entirely on Divine Providence for their basic needs and spend their time in commune with the Father of all creation

seeking His love and will. In the eyes of today's world it would be considered rather foolish, but in the wisdom of the Master Jesus Christ it is called Faith and Trust in God, doing His will. The Poor Clare community housed at Tewatte though nearly sixty years in existence is founded on the teaching and rule of life as given by St Clare of Assisi. On the eleventh of August this year, they commemorate eight hundred years of living in the presence of God.

### The Origin of the Order

A rich young man named Francis, son of a wealthy Italian merchant family did just what Jesus showed him to do. He gave up all his wealth in order to follow a life of poverty and dedicated himself to serving the Lord Jesus. The young Francis and a few of his friends based their lives on the teachings of Jesus and came to be called 'Franciscan' friars, who went around preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the year 1212 a wealthy eighteen-year-old girl of noble birth, named Chiara Offreduccio, was captivated by the preaching of the holy man, Francis and decided to forsake all her wealth and privileges in order to follow Francis and his way of life. She was attracted to the poverty of Jesus the Master who said, "The birds of the air have their nest, foxes have their holes but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head." Then she realized her great love for Jesus and thus

sacrificed all possessions in order to show her love for Jesus. Kneeling before the altar at San Damiano she begged Francis that she be allowed to follow his way of life. In the first instance she allowed the Holy Francis to cut her hair as a symbol of giving up the treasures and pleasures of the world and said "Here I am Lord I come to do your will." At that moment of time the Poor Clare community was born and now count eight hundred years of total existence.

# Why Worry?

**W**orry.... a five letter word that can cause people to frown, bite their nails, or engage in other habits that indicate excessive tension. For some folks, financial difficulties or family struggles can bring an abundance of worry to their busy lives.

Of course there are people who do a lot of worrying about nothing. They are overly concerned about something that might have happened last week, or what might just happen next month. The result is that they use up so much of their energy that they have very little left for the demands which will arise today.

In Matthew 6, verse 24, it says: "No man can serve two masters: He will either hate one and love the other, or be attentive to one and desire the other." If worrying about money has become the centre of your attention, you are letting it rule your life. You have stopped trusting in God's providence and you no longer believe that He will supply all your needs.

As believers we have a responsibility to develop our trust in God's providence and His abiding love. We will always have to face trials and challenges in our lives, but we have the reassurance that the road ahead will not have to be walked alone. As for the difficulties and concerns that came in the past, we have

the Sacrament of Reconciliation to clear that excess baggage. Through confession, we not only erase any guilt we have been feeling about our mistakes, but we can pray for the grace to learn from those errors in judgments.

We are human and should realize that we cannot live a life of perfection. Only Jesus was perfect. It is a daily battle to strive to improve our lives and grow closer to Christ and His example. He knows that with His help, we can improve a little more each day.

The most encouraging words from Matthew come at the end of this chapter, beginning at verse 31: "Stop worrying then, over questions like: what are we to eat, or what are we to drink, or what are we to wear? The unbelievers are always running after these things. Your Heavenly Father knows all that you need. Seek first His kingship over you, His way of holiness, and all these things will be given to you."

Yesterday's faults and mistakes are gone forever, we must work at forgiving ourselves and turn the page of that chapter in our book of life. As for tomorrow and next week, too many changes are possible that might alter the circumstances or plans that we have made. It is best to live this day and try not to worry about tomorrow. And as Matthew continues in verse

34 of chapter 6: "Enough then of worrying about tomorrow. Let tomorrow take care of itself. Today has enough troubles of its own."

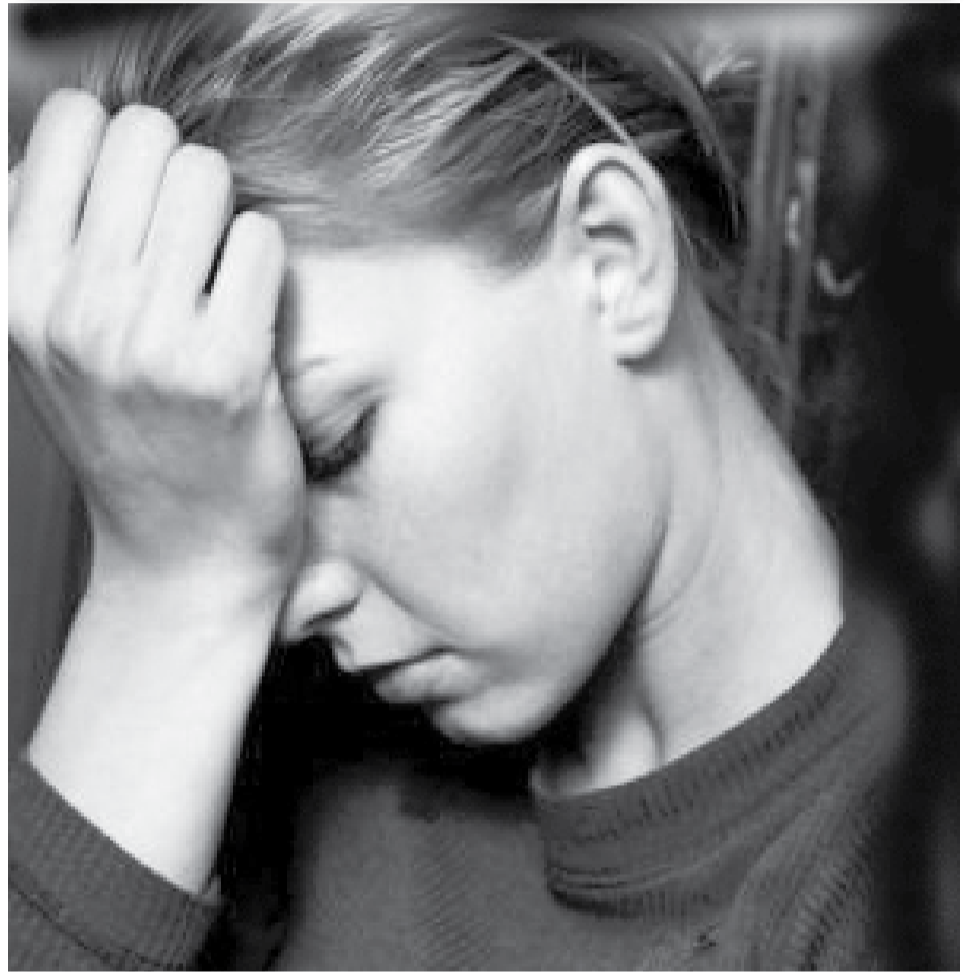
For the problems of today, the answer can be found in Psalm 55, verse 23: "Cast your burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain you. Never will He permit the just man to be disturbed."

So the secret to peaceful living is trusting and depending on God's will. He always has our best interests at heart, and if we know that and practice the philosophy of "His will for me" then life can be more of an adventure, instead of the heavy-weighted burden that was part of the past. The more that we open our hearts to His presence, and depend upon His wisdom, the more peace that will fill our daily lives.

As for the little daily disturbances, we can learn not to whine so openly about them to others. By accepting them, we can more easily resolve them and watch them disappear. The more effort we make to trust God's will, the stronger we will become.

And if you find yourself unable to handle a specific trial, speak to God, and pray for His help. The Bible promises us that He will never leave us unaided. St. Paul spoke these words of encouragement in Romans 8, verse 35: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?"

**'So the secret of peaceful living is trusting and depending on God's will. His will for me can be more of an adventure, instead of the heavyweighted burden, that was a part of the past.'**



Trial or distress, or persecution or hunger, or nakedness or danger, or the sword?" And he adds in verse 37: "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors because of Him who has loved us."

And our daily prayer could include these concluding words from chapter 8 of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans: "Nothing can separate us

from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord."

Of course, we need to be in a state of grace to receive the full benefits, and to be capable of hearing His guidance. When someone verbally attacks you, ask the Lord to heal that wound.

There is no point in seeking revenge or harbouring frustration. The

person that we hurt the most is ourselves. We allow the past to rob us of our peaceful hearts when we retain negative feelings towards others. The grace of a good confession clears the mind, the heart and the soul, allowing for a renewal of our spirits.

*Courtesy:*

*Canadian Messenger*



## Anger Vs Silence

A Counsellor once confronted a person in anger and the dialogue between the two, was recorded as follows.

**Counsellor** : If you give me 'something hot' and if I ignore you and what you give me, how would you react?

**Person in Anger** : I would ignore you in return, and throw that 'something' away.

**Counsellor** : If you project your 'anger' towards me and if I ignore what you say and do, how would you react?

**Person in Anger** : I would ignore you in return and throw that 'anger' away.



*The best way to counteract a person in anger, would be to ignore what he says and does. In other words to be patient enough to be silent. Even Jesus encountered Pilate and the offenders and ignored some of his questions and their remarks. Jesus always maintained 'intelligent silence' and proved His superiority over His adversaries.*

*Jesus practices it even now, when we react against Him, in anger. Jesus is love. Love is patient. Hence Jesus is patient. Let us try our best, to be like Him.*

*RodeZo.*

## Do not speak out of turn

**Those who know - do not jabber,**

**Those who jabber - do not know,**

**The wise - remain silent,**

**The sensible - speak,**

**The stupid - argue.**



# A Student challenges a Master

Recently I read an article in a national newspaper written by an university science lecturer, probably an atheist, saying that believing in the existence of God is frivolous. Further, science was the only way in which one could prove any happening in the world. In my opinion it's a pseudo idea for the ones who believe in God.

Facts could be presented to counteract the viewpoints of the unbelievers, in this manner.

☞ Astronomers are not smart enough to reveal the source which was responsible for the occurrence of

the 'Big Bang'. Thus it remains just a theory.

☞ Neither scientists nor biologists are able to explain how the first sea creature gained life or breath.

☞ The Holy Father was safeguarded by Mother Mary, which was miraculously captured in a photograph that could not be proved to be a fake.

☞ Dead bodies of most of the saints, remain to be preserved by nature, which make the analysts speechless and lost for answers.

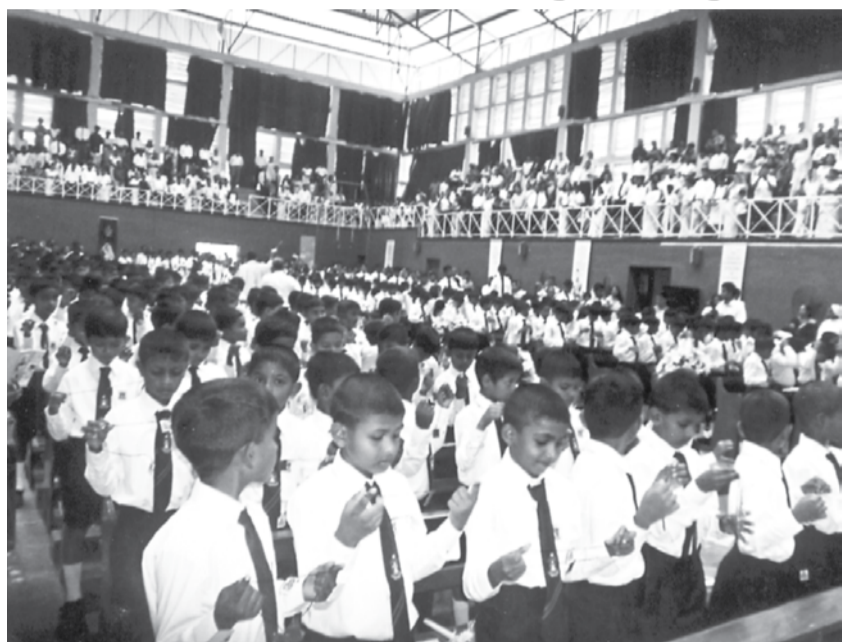
☞ 'Shroud of Turin' gives us adequate proof regarding Jesus. The person we could identify with the shroud, is no one else but Jesus of Nazareth.

☞ No one can ignore or contest the words Jesus spoke when he was alive, nor the miracles He performed in the midst of people.

☞ There is no one who has lived in this world, who had experienced death and resurrection, other than Jesus. That alone proves the Divinity of Jesus.

*Chandimal Mathew Welivita  
University of Kelaniya*

## First Holy Communion of Maristella College- Negombo



Three Hundred and sixteen Children of Maristella College Negombo received first Holy Communion on July 7, 2012 at the Maristella College indoor stadium. Rev. Fr. Prasanna Rodrigo O.M.I, Rev. Fr. Emmasri Priyasantha T.O.R, Rev. Fr. Ruban Leslie Silva and Rev. Fr. Merl Shanthi Perera participated in the concelebration.

All arrangements for the first Holy Communion celebration was made under the guidance of the Principal, Rev. Br. Sunanda Alwis, and Rev. Br. Clinton Perera the Principal-primary section, staff and the students of the College, together with the parents of the communicants.

*G. B. F.T. Livera.*

### HOLY CHILDHOOD SOCIETY

2012 අදාළ වෛෂ්ඨයේ භාග්‍යාදායක දායක වර්ධනය වීමේ වාර්ෂික සැලසුම  
A YEAR PLAN TO GROW IN LOVE OF GOD AND OTHERS  
இறையன்பிலும் பிரரன்பிலும் வளர உதவும் ஆண்டு செயல் திட்டம்

#### A YEAR PLAN TO GROW IN LOVE OF GOD AND OTHERS - 2012

##### August

1. Try to attend daily mass during the holidays.
2. Learn and tell a friend the story about the Assumption of Mother Mary.
3. Say the Rosary with your family.
4. Say an intercessory prayer for your sick.
5. Say something good of another.



## Sacraments made plain and simple.

The Sacraments presented in the form of a 'Card pack', is a new innovation initiated by Rev. Fr. Indra Fernando, the Catechetical Director. It is a colourful and attractive presentation, in a plain and simple format. This provides a more relaxed approach for the students to study the Sacraments, than to memorize it off a text book. It could be described as a 'memory aid card pack' of the Sacraments. A must for every Sunday School student. The Sinhalese version is now available and the English version would be made available in the near future.



## 'My Jesus and I'

(Cont Page 1)

A little prayer book for toddlers

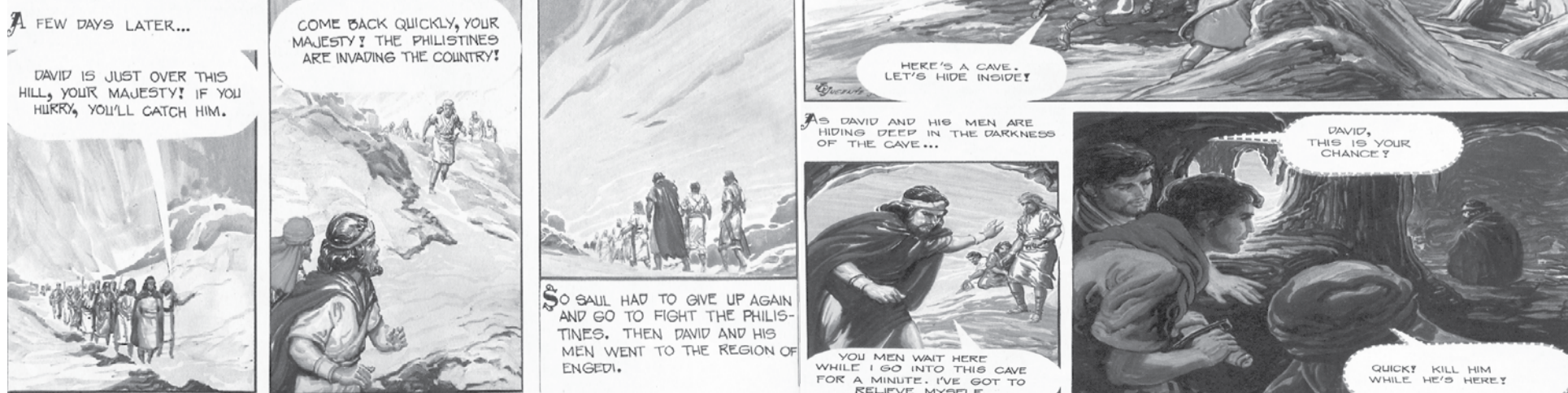


A Gift Book  
By Arundathy Gunawardena

This is the cover page picture of the prayer book for toddlers - 'My Jesus and I'. The pictures in this book accompany a prayer and a message for the little ones. Since it is in colour, it attracts them all. It definitely is a ideal gift book for them. This page which is meant for the children, will carry pictures from this book, in the near future.

## DAVID the DARING

THE SHEPHERD BOY WHO BECAME A KING



What it says ..... in  
the Readings

If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and We shall come to him.

Jn. 14:23

**LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B**  
**12th August - 19th August 2012**

**SUN: 19<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

1 Kgs. 19:4-8, Eph. 4:30, 5:2;  
Jn. 6:41-51

**Mon:** Memorials of SS Pontian, Pope and Hippolytus, Priest, Martyrs  
Ez 1: 2-5;24-28; Mt. 17:22-27

**Tue:** Ez. 2: 8-3-4; Mt.18:1-5;10: 12-14

**Wed: The Assumption of the Bl. Virgin Mary (Day of Obligation)**

Rev. 11: 19, 12: 1-6, 10; 1 Cor. 15:20-26;  
Lk. 1: 39-56

**Thu:** Memorial of St. Stephen of Hungary  
Ez. 12: 1-12; Mt. 18:21 - 19:1

**Fri:** Ez. 16:1-15, 60: 63;  
(or 16: 59-63); Mt. 19: 3-12

**Sat:** Ez. 18: 1-10, 13, 30-32; Mt. 19: 13-15

**Sun: 20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Is. 22:19-23.; Rom. 11: 33-36;  
Mt. 16: 13-20

## Multiplication of the Loaves

### BIBLE BOX



#### 1. Did Jesus actually multiply the bread?

The story of the multiplication is narrated "in all the Gospels in substantially the same form with only minor variants of place and circumstance" - R. E. BROWN, *The Gospel and Epistles of John. A Concise Commentary (Bombay 1993)* 43. Luke (9) and John (6) have only one narrative, whereas Mark (6:8) and Matt (14:15) have two. Hence this sign, being multi-attested, is historical. "When diverse traditions have the same miracle, obviously the evidence for that miracle is of an earlier date" - R. E. BROWN, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible (Bombay 1993)* 67.

#### 2. How did Jesus multiply the bread?

Some try to modernize this sign in a liberal fashion or water down its authenticity, when they say, 'Jesus touched the hearts of those people present so that they opened their knapsacks and brought out hidden food and that was the miracle.' Brown is right to say, "This is absolute nonsense: It is not what the Gospels narrate, but rather an attempt to evade the importance of what is narrated" - R. E. BROWN, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*, 67.

#### 3. Then what did really happen?

Definitely there was an exciting meal when Jesus was with the crowds in an open place. Sparked by compassion for people, Jesus hosted them a meal. This exciting meal marked the turning point in the ministry of Jesus. People wanted to make Him King. But He decided to hunger for the Father's will and so "withdrew again to the mountain alone." In the course of time, this sign performed by Jesus in His public life came to be coloured by what had happened in the OT: The story of manna and quails (Exod. 16; Num. 11) and that of Elisha (2 Kgs 4) and what was happening in the Early Church: The Eucharist.

#### 4. How was this sign relevant to the Early Church?

The early Christians saw this sign as anticipating the Eucharist and foreshadowing the Final Messianic Banquet in the Kingdom. This sign also called the leaders of the Early Church to feed the flock assigned to them with the Word (preaching) and the Bread (the Eucharist). Hence all the Evangelists paid a greater

# Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

#### First Reading: 1Kgs. 19: 4-8

Prophet Elijah was running away in order to escape the pagan Queen. On his way he ran short of food. But the Angels of the Lord fed him with food. In this way the Lord cared for him.

#### Second Reading: Eph. 4: 30;5:2

St. Paul writes to his converts in Ephesus, in order that they would give up living a sinful way of life. He wants them to live a life that is honourable to the Holy Spirit. He wants them to live in love, like Christ.

#### Gospel: Jn. 6:41-51

Jesus pronounces about himself as He comes from the Father and the Jews began to murmur. Then he goes on to say about the deep relationship between Him and the Father. He called Himself the bread of life, the bread that gives eternal life.

#### Reflection

Today Jesus is presented to us as the bread of life. He is the bread that would give us sustenance to reach eternal life. This Jesus would be got only if we live in dignity and in good Christian spirit. In the Old Testament it is just some food that the Lord presents, or blessed us with. It sustains us for a certain period of time. But today it is the flesh of Christ and it would sustain us to attain eternal life. And this bread is received only in the Spirit and is for those who live a life worthy of the Spirit. Therefore we ought to live a good and a Christian life on this earth. Then and only then will we be qualified to receive eternal life. For it is the living bread that we receive in Jesus Christ. And he offered himself to God as a sacrifice so that we would have eternal life. Therefore we all ought to live a

life worthy of this eternal life that Jesus brought about. Therefore let us consume Him and be Him so that we would be able to gain this eternal life that Jesus brought about.

In the First Reading when Prophet Elijah was running away from the pagan queen and was without food, God provided him food, so that he would be able to make it to Mount Horab in forty days and forty nights. This food that God provided at that time sustained him the long journey to Mount Horab.

In the Gospel Jesus refers to manna as life giving but still people died, but the bread that He is speaking of which He refers to as his flesh, is a living bread and it gives eternal life. This bread that he refers to as life giving is Himself, and who ever believes will have eternal life. It is also clear that no one could come to him unless the Father draws him. And those that the Father draws, He will raise on the last day.

The way in which we could reach the Father is made clear in the Second Reading. We have to be imitators of God and walk in love. Therefore we must put away all bitterness and wrath, anger and clamour and slander, and strive to be kind to one another, tender hearted and forgiving towards one another. In other words we must live a perfect Christian life on this earth. That is the only way in which we could gain eternal life. Therefore if we are to gain eternal life we

have to receive Jesus totally and fully into our life, as we would take bread into our body.

#### Aid Story 1

A farmer brought a load of wheat to the market in a nearby town. He stopped at a restaurant and sat down near a group of young fellows who were acting up, shouting at the cook, and heckling the waitress. When his meal was set before him, the old gentlemen bowed his head to offer a prayer. One of the smart-alecks thought he would have some fun with the farmer, so he shouted in a voice that could be heard by everyone: "Hey, Pop, does everyone do that from where you come from?" Calmly the old man turned toward the lad and in an equally loud voice replied: "No, son, the pigs don't."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

#### PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all followers of Jesus that they may always believe that he is with them at every step of our journey. We pray in faith.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all God's children that amidst all the distractions of life they may never forget the meaning of it all. We pray in faith.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who right now are going through a difficult period that the Lord will support them and help them carry on. We pray in faith

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**

interest in this sign and recounted it in their Gospels.

#### 5. How is this sign related to the Eucharist?

First, during the performance of the sign, Jesus *eucharistesas* or "gave thanks." The word 'Eucharist' traces its origin in it. Eucharist means giving thanks or gratitude.

Second, **Jesus Himself distributes** the bread to the disciples at the Last Supper, "... gave it to them" (Mark 14:22).

Third, Jesus makes a **command** to the disciples at the end, at the Last Supper, "Take this, this is my body" (Mark 14:22).

Fourth, at Jesus' command, the disciples gather up *klasmata* or 'fragments.' In early Christian literature, *klasma* was a technical term for the Host.

#### 6. Does the Evangelist portray Jesus as the New Moses?

Yes, he does. On seeing "a large crowd" Jesus Himself **takes the initiative**, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" Thus He becomes the New Moses.

Moses always **took the initiative** to pray to the Lord for the needs of his people (Num. 11:1-15). He was not hesitant to inquire from Him when he heard the people, family after family, crying at the entrance of their tents for meat having been fed up with manna, "**Where can I get meat** to give to all this people? For they are crying to me, 'Give us meat for our food'" (Num. 11:13).

Jesus too raises this question being sensitive to the needs of the people, "**Where can we buy enough food** for them to eat?" Further, Jesus is **seated on a mountain**, "Jesus went up on the mountain and there he **sat down** with his disciples," reminiscent of Sinai. Thus Jesus becomes the New Moses.

#### 7. Does the Evangelist picture Jesus as the New Elisha as well?

Yes, he definitely does. This sign of Jesus al-

ludes the story of Elisha.

Read, 2 Kgs. 4:42-44. A man brought to Elisha 20 loaves of barley bread. Elisha told his servant, "Give it to the people to eat." But he objected, "How can I set this before a hundred men?" On Elisha's sheer insistence, the food was set. All the people ate it. There was some leftover as well, as the Lord had said through the prophet.

Let us compare now. It is five **barley** loaves that Jesus multiplies. Elisha too multiplied **barley** bread, the food of the poor. Both Elisha and Jesus manifest their **desire to feed** the hungry crowds. Both the servant of Elisha and the disciples of the Lord **object** due to the insufficiency of food before a vast crowd. Finally on both occasions there are leftovers after people have their fill.

#### 8. How is this sign of Jesus relevant to us today?

This New Moses, Jesus, takes the initiative even today to feed His starving New Israel, the Church through the Word preached and the Bread broken. As the New Elisha, Jesus often comes to our help in all our needs. Like the boy who offered all he had, the five barley loaves and two fish, to Jesus and placed them in His hands; we must also place all our 'bread and fish' - i.e. our lives, talents, etc. etc. - in the hands of Jesus. He will accept them, bless them, break them and distribute them to the service of His Church. We must not worry like the disciples feeling inadequate, insufficient and unworthy, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little bit ... but what good are these for so many?" Jesus did the impossible, as, at the end, people had had their fill, had more than they could eat and left over twelve wicker baskets of fragments. **Little is much in the hands of Jesus.**

Rev. Fr. Anton Saman Hettiarachchi  
Director,  
Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate