

"The heart of our good Mother Mary is all love and mercy.
She desires nothing else but our happiness.
We need only to have recourse to her and we will be heard"
- St. John Mary Vianney

Holy Father's Visit to Sri Lanka

'Abide in Love'

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Spiritual preparation
for the forthcoming
visit of our
Holy Father,
Pope Francis to
Sri Lanka.

Special intentions for the Sunday Liturgy

SEE Pg. 15 >>

Messenger

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At Inauguration of Diamond Jubilee Academic Year

Rector of National Seminary highlights challenges to Priestly Formation

Rector of the National Seminary, Rev. Fr. Elmo Dias speaking at the Inauguration of the Diamond Jubilee Academic Year of the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka, Ampitiya held on October 1 said, that the Church needs priests who are genuine disciples to face up to the challenges that are looming large against her.

"Therefore, the Seminaries and their formation programmes today have to be geared not only to bring forth men of intelligence and wisdom but also men who are true

examples of discipleship, men who have a deep desire which prompts them to leave everything: "...the boats and the nets."

Presenting the Annual Report of the Seminary to a gathering of Bishops, Religious, Academic Staff and Seminarians, Fr. Elmo Dias called attention to the anti-Christian attitude of the secular world where there was an open "aversion to the Cross and all the values that flow from it."

This negative aspect, he said, is seen in the socio-political, economic, religious and scientific spheres mainly in the Western and some Middle Eastern countries and even in some African and

Asian countries.

"The Christian faithful and clergy in Iraq, Syria and many other countries bear witness to the faith that emanates from the Cross. Their life has become a glaring and a brave example of carrying the Cross as Jesus did."

Fr. Elmo said that this courageous witness to faith amidst threats and challenges sends a strong and powerful message to the clergy and seminarians, to go interior and ask: Have we really sacrificed for the sake of Jesus Christ and what is it that motivates us to move forward in forming ourselves into the Priesthood of Christ?

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'Lectio Divina' Orientation Talk

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando SSS, Bishop of Badulla will deliver an orientation talk on 'Lectio Divina' on Wednesday, October 15 from 4.00 to 6.00 pm at the Peter Pillai Auditorium, Aquinas University College, Colombo 08. The programme is conducted by the Archdiocesan Biblical Commission (ABC), together with the Faculty of Theology, Aquinas University College.

For details contact:
0777749019/
0715300185/
0773688329.

Countdown to Canonization begins



Commencement of 100 Days mission to the canonization of Blessed Joseph Vaz and the visit of Pope Francis to Sri Lanka began last Sunday (5), with a Holy Mass at the National Basilica, Tewatte. The Mass was celebrated by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo. After the Mass a Special Programme was held giving some important facts of the Papal Visit.

Ashen S. Senarathna

Presbyteral Meeting

The next Presbyteral Meeting of the Archdiocese of Colombo is scheduled for Monday, October 27 and Tuesday October 28, from 9.30 am each day, at the Archdiocesan Auditorium, Archbishop's House, Colombo 8.

Koinonia

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Fr. Benedict Groeschel passes away

CNA/EWTN News- Fr. Benedict J. Groeschel, author, former EWTN host, and one of the founders of the Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, passed away on October 3. He was 81-years-old.

"The Catholic Church and the Franciscan family lost a giant today," the Friars said in a statement, expressing deep sadness at Fr. Groeschel's loss as well as relief "that God has set him free from the physical and mental suffering he has experienced over the past decade."

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Calling All the Architects and Artists ► (See Pg. 2)



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Mother Earth is sacred; don't pollute her

With Sri Lanka facing a food crisis where most of the food items we eat daily – ranging from rice and grains to vegetables and fruits – known to be polluted by the excessive use of agrochemicals, Cuba has offered Sri Lanka a way out.

The Cuban foreign minister during his recent visit to Sri Lanka offered to transfer modern technology for organic or natural agriculture. But the Government is not keen to accept it, apparently because of the influence of powerful transnational agrochemical companies, the Government Medical Officers Association has charged.

Dr. Chinthaka Wi-

jewardene, a member of the GMA's subcommittee on national health issues said Cuba had made this offer because it was highly successful in its organic agriculture. He said Sri Lanka's Government was not responding positively apparently because the powerful agrochemical TNCs, were influencing politicians and officials to continue with the large-scale use of imported chemical fertilizers, weedicides and pesticides.

According to people-friendly agriculturists and nutritionists, most of the food items we eat contain poison because of the excessive use of agrochemicals. This may be

the reason why, despite all the marvels of modern medical technology, more people are falling sick more often, hospitals are packed like market places and often medical specialists are unable to diagnose ailments.

Sri Lanka spends hundreds of millions of dollars on the import of these agrochemicals.

Dr. Wijewardene said that in Cuba the use of agrochemicals was banned and the Sri Lanka Government should accept the offer from our old Non-Aligned friend to prevent further poisoning of our people and the pollution of Mother Earth. Besides the agrochemical pollution of our food and

earth, further food poisoning is also taking place in other ways.

At a recent meeting of the Medico-Legal Society of Sri Lanka, speakers revealed that as many as 1,200 additives including preservatives, flavor-enhancing substances, artificial sweeteners, and substances for colouring and texture were being used in imported and local food items.

Colombo's Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Ruwan Wijemuni revealed they had raided several eateries and hotels in Colombo. What they found was shocking. Most of these hotels did not have clean kitchens, toilets or storage places. Some of them did not have

tap water but were instead obtaining slightly muddy water from tube wells.

The Chief MOH said they had found various insects and even snails in the food that had been stored near the toilet or kitchen. He said some of the colouring substances used for popular biriyani were found to be harmful. Dr. Wijemuni warned that the most poisoned or polluted food item that people could eat was the popular kottu roti.

In a positive move last Saturday, seed paddy of traditional or native rice varieties such as Kalu-Heenati, Madathawalu, Siyapath-El, Putchha Perumal, Kurulutuda and Kahawatu were given to about

50,000 paddy farmers in the North-Central Province by Special Projects Minister S. M. Chandrasena.

Dr. Channa Jayasumana, Director of the Presidential Task Force for the Prevention of Kidney Disease, said President Mahinda Rajapaksa had taken the initiative to distribute seed paddy of traditional rice varieties to farmers who would cultivate those varieties without the use of agrochemicals.

Dr. Jayasumana said seed paddy were given free of charge and the farmers had agreed to cultivate the traditional varieties without using agrochemicals.

Calling all.... From Pg. 1

All Catholic architects, painters, sculptors, statue-makers, wood craftsmen, fibre glass and other material/statue-makers, graphic artists/designers, are invited to register themselves in the Archdiocese of Colombo. The registration will facilitate the artists to contribute their talents for the upcoming Papal visit. Guilds will be formed for the artists and architects.

With the guidance of His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archdiocese wishes to launch a programme of decorating churches with paintings and sculptures that help in the catechising of the faithful. Members of the Guilds will be given the opportunity to take part in the above programme.

Please apply with full bio data and descriptions of works of art that you have created in the past. Photo-

graphs to supplement your description are necessary.

Applications should be forwarded by registered post to the address below on or before October 25, 2014.

Those who have registered before need not register again. All who register will be invited for an inaugural meeting with His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith.

Rev. Fr. L.G. Priyantha Silva,
Archdiocesan Consultant for Ecclesiastical
Art & Architecture,
No 990, Aquinas University College, Colombo 08.
For Further information contact - Sulalitha
0773187827/0714917971.

ST. BENEDICT'S COLLEGE, COLOMBO - 13.

Application forms for Grade 06 - Year 2015

Application forms will be issued to Parents on 13th and 14th October, 2014 between 1.30 p.m. and 3.00 p.m. at the College Office.

The following documents should be produced to obtain the application forms.

- * Family Book
- * Child's Original Birth Certificate
- * Child's Original Baptismal Certificate

Rev. Bro. Director.

Josephian Past Teachers outing in Kandy



The members of the Past Teachers Association of St. Joseph's College, Colombo had their annual outing in Kandy recently.

Picture shows the winners of the game competition.

D.C. Jayasinghe

Maggona celebrates the Feast of St. Vincent De Paul



The Feast of Vincent De Paul was celebrated recently. The chief celebrant at the Festive Mass was Rev. Fr. Anton Grecian assisted by Rev. Fr. Shehan Shanaka. The newly ordained priest of the OMI Congregation and Rev. Fr. Dilan Perera Superior St. Vincent's Home, Maggona.

After the Festive Mass the statue of St. Vincent De Paul as carried in procession.

D. Anselm Fernando

Rector of National...

Contd. from Pg. 1

He said that even though there were many young men who are willing to learn and live in an intimate union in love with the Trinitarian God, the challenge they face today is to remain in love with Him. Hence the Spiritual Formation in the Seminary helps each seminarian to appropriate the Catholic tradition by grounding himself in a personal relationship with the Trinitarian God who is the point and purpose of all ministry, study, worship and service.

Speaking on the intellectual formation of seminarians, Fr. Dias said that some academic courses, 'Fr. Dalston Forbes OMI Memorial Oration' at Theological updating Seminars, Philosopher's Day 'Fr. Harold Panditaratne Oration' are geared to enlighten and deepen the knowledge of students on certain local, contemporary and pastoral needs and issues.

"The knowledge that a seminarian attains is not simply for one's personal qualification or edification, but is meant to be shared with God's people through teaching, preaching and daily interactions with the faithful. Intellectual Formation, has to be integrated with the human, spiritual and pastoral pillars of priestly formation.

Therefore it has an apostolic and pastoral purpose.

The Inauguration of the Diamond Jubilee Academic Year was held with His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Viannay Fernando, Bishop of Kandy at the Chair. Among those present were Apostolic Nuncio His Excellency Pierre Nguyen Van Tot, Archbishops' Emeriti, Their Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas Marcus Fernando, Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis, Their Lordships, Rt. Rev. Dr. Valentine Mendis, Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri OSB, Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi OMI, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Ponniah, Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickremesinghe, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, a past Rector and a Professor, presided at the Jubilee Vespers celebrated the previous day.

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Church in the Modern World

Apostolic Nuncios call for end to war in Middle East

VATICAN RADIO

The Apostolic Nuncios representing the Pope in the Middle East gathered at the Vatican last week for a three-day meeting to discuss the dire situation of violence and unrest in the region. The theme of the meeting was "The presence of Christians in the Middle East."

A press brief, titled "No more war and violations of human rights!" was issued last Saturday at the conclusion of the October 2-4 meeting. In it, the Nuncios called for an end to the multiple conflicts currently underway and to the grave violations of human rights.

In the brief, they emphasize:

- The urgency of



These children who have taken refuge from the Islamic State at St. Joseph's Parish in Erbil, are among the 1.2 million internally displaced Iraqis. (Credit: Aid to the Church in Need).

delivering humanitarian assistance to those in need.

- Their concern about the ongoing trafficking of arms and of persons.
- The right of Chris-

tians and of the other religious groups to remain in their lands.

- Their concern for the violent activities of

the Islamic State.

- And the legitimacy of stopping the unjust aggressor, in accordance with international law.

Christians condemn closing down of Mother Teresa Chair

NEW DELHI: Christians have condemned the Indira Gandhi National Open University's (IGNOU) decision to discontinue the Mother Teresa Chair in health, education and social work started in the Christ Jubilee Year 2000.

"We condemn the reprehensible and incomprehensive decision of the Indian Government-sponsored IGNOU to discontinue the Mother Teresa Chair," said John Dayal, Secretary General of the All India Christian Council, in a press statement.

The University's Board of Management "decided to continue with chairs that are sponsored by an outside agency and did not utilize the funds of the University," M Aslam, Vice-Chancellor of IGNOU, had said in the media.

The discontinuance of the Mother Teresa Chair comes at a time when there is a global Catholic campaign urging Pope Francis to fast track the canonization of the Albanian-born Indian-national Nobel Laureate.

The Chair was established in a Memorandum of understanding between the Catholics Bishops' Conference of India and the University on February 29, 2000.

It facilitates the initiatives of IGNOU for launching several socially relevant programs of study. The revised MoU was signed on April 22, 2009 at St. John's Medical College, Bangalore.

Its objectives remain to address the needs of disadvantaged



sections of the society through educational programs, extension activities and research and to develop and launch socially-relevant courses and programs of study such as social work, HIV/AIDS, family life education, substance abuse, and philosophy. It offers various diplomas and degrees in these subjects.

Catholic Medics can lead other people to God

Catholic medical professionals can lead other people to God by dedicating themselves to holiness and following the examples of saintly doctors, A US Bishop has said.

"Medical professionals are uniquely equipped to bring that love of God - by their compassion, their generosity, and in their very presence - to the souls who most need it," Bishop James D. Conley of Lincoln, told the Catholic Medical Association's Educational Conference in Orlando, recently.

The Bishop noted Pope Francis' call to the peripheries: the poor, lonely, rejected, elderly, unborn and those who do not know the love of God.

The Bishop, who is the Association's Episcopal Moderator, told conference attendees that they can follow this call. "Ultimately, your task is to become medical professionals who know that your work and your lives are not your own - medical professionals who have entrusted yourselves entirely to the Providence of God," he said.

He encouraged medical professionals to ask whether their efforts show the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit is calling us on to goodness. Let us respond to that call. Let us seek the will of God together and, let us encourage our friends, our colleagues, and our patients to do the same," the Bishop said.

Fr. Benedict....

Contd. from Pg. 1

Fr. Groeschel was one of eight Capuchin friars in New York City who helped found the Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in 1987. The community is committed to poverty and evangelization.

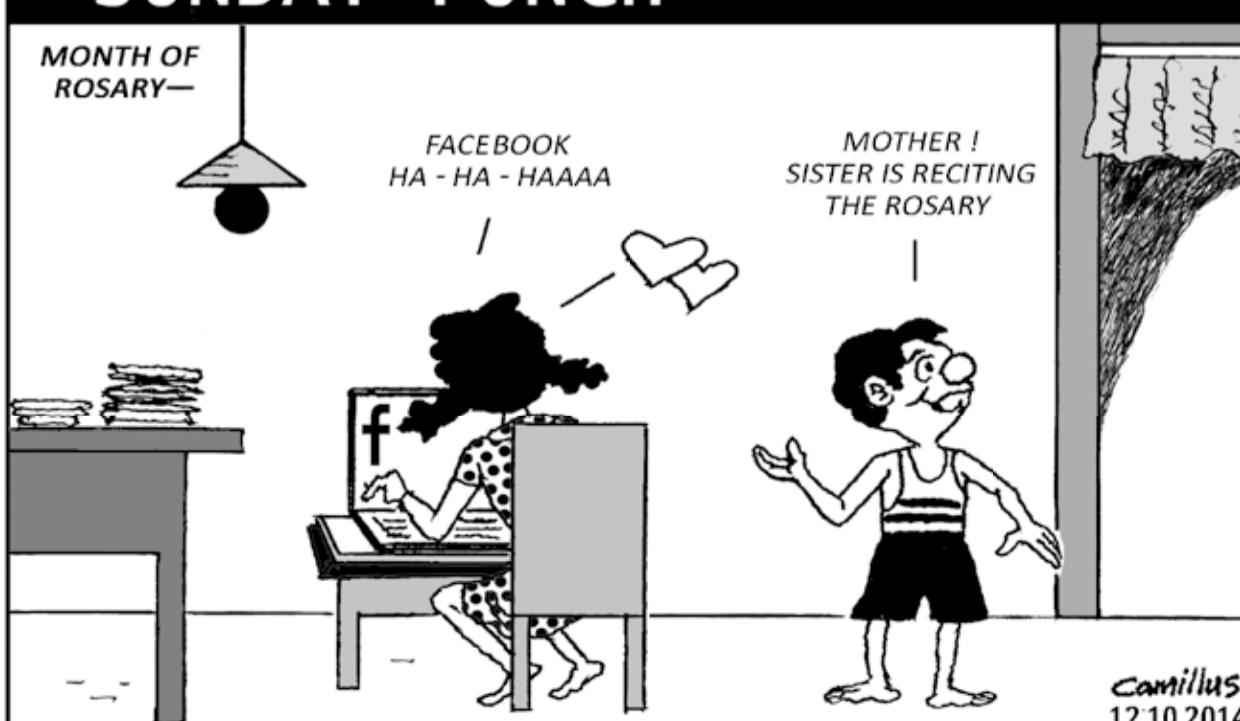
Known for his love of the poor, he founded the St. Francis House for the homeless and Good Counsel Homes for pregnant women in crisis. He also directed Trinity Retreat House in Larchmont, New York, and taught at the Dunwoodie Seminary.

In addition, he became known as an author and preacher. For more than 25 years, he appeared on EWTN, hosting "Sunday Night: Live with Father Benedict Groeschel," among other programs.

"The world knew Father Benedict as a priest, teacher, evangelist, retreat master, and a steadfast defender of and advocate for the Catholic Church that he loved so much," the Friars said, adding that while his religious family saw these traits, "we were also blessed to know him as a father who cared for each of us, a father who was always accessible when we needed him and always glad to see us when we came to visit."

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



More honourable to fail than to teach

Jesus Christ is our greatest teacher or Rabboni as a much loved Mary Magdalene said in a widely quoted proclamation soon after the Resurrection, Christian parents who are also teachers largely by example and teachers in Christian schools need to be aware that if we do not give our children Jesus, if we do not bring them into a deep and personal relationship with Jesus we are really giving them nothing.

Jesus has taught us how to do God's will and how to communicate with the Abba Father. He has shown by His words and more so by His deeds that when we do God's will we will become channels through which God changes history - our personal lives, the lives of our families, churches, communities and the country. The main lesson or commandment that Jesus teaches us is, "Love one another as I love you" (John 15:12).

It is in this light and context that we need to look at the state of education in Sri Lanka. Last Tuesday was World's Teachers' Day and spokespersons for the main teachers' unions have complained that some 220,000 public school teachers and about 15,000 principals have not received promotions or substantial salary increments for several years. Therefore their vocation of teaching has apparently been clouded and they are often involved in protest actions, with the victims as in many cases being the innocent children. At a higher level University student leaders are accusing Higher Education Minister, S. B. Dissanayake of planning behind the black board to privatise higher education or turn it into 'hire' education. In turn the Minister has charged that only a few thugs who are posing as student leaders are against his policy while the majority is with him. Whatever it is Pope Francis himself is insisting that the Church and world leaders need to tackle the structures of capitalism in vital areas such as health and education if we wish to bring about a just and fair society in line with the Kingdom of God.

In this era of selfishness, self-centredness and greed, even education has become far too competitive that children are provoked to get the first place if possible by fair means or even by foul means. Education has become so intensely examination-oriented that, as Mahatma Gandhi said children are learning how to fly like birds or swim like fish but not how to walk as honest and caring human beings.

We need to reflect deeply on the words of the legendary American President, Abraham Lincoln who though being white was forced to go to war to give liberation to the coloured people who were slaves to the domineering white people.

In a letter to his child's teacher, the great leader said:
 "He (my son) will have to learn, I know, that all men are not just, all men are not true. But teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero; that for every selfish politician, there is a dedicated leader... Teach him for every enemy there is a friend, Steer him away from envy, if you can, teach him the secret of quiet laughter. Let him learn early that the bullies are the easiest to lick... Teach him, if you can, the wonder of books... But also give him quiet time to ponder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun, and the flowers on a green hillside.

In the school teach him it is far more honourable to fail than to cheat... Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong... Teach him to be gentle with gentle people, and tough with the tough.

Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone is getting on the band wagon... Teach him to listen to all men... but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.

Teach him if you can, how to laugh when he is sad... Teach him there is no shame in tears, Teach him to scoff at cynics and to beware of too much sweetness... Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidders but never to put a price-tag on his heart and soul.

Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob and to stand and fight if he thinks he's right. Treat him gently, but do not cuddle him, because only the test of fire makes fine steel.

Let him have the courage to be impatient... let him have the patience to be brave. Teach him always have sublime faith in himself, because then he will have sublime faith in people. This is a big order, but see what you can do... He is such a fine fellow, my son!

The Eucharist: Not a disciplinary tool but 'Manna' to harried families

Latin hymns are a distant memory today. They had been thrown out with liturgical solemnity. Nonetheless, a few sacred masterpieces remain etched deep in people's psyche. *"O esca viatorum"* is one such hymn with a sacramental impress.

That Eucharistic song reminds us of how Jesus broke bread as *esca viatorum* -- wayfarers' food -- with two disciples en route to Emmaus. The manna-like role of the Eucharist was especially evident at the Last Supper.

Sustenance to the harried

When Jesus shared bread with His Apostles, He was not unaware of the imminent betrayal by Judas or the denial by Peter. Jesus communed with them, nonetheless. He was not unaware that almost all of His fellowship members would desert him that same night. Yet, He also knew such communing would sustain most of them in faith - food for the onward journey.

That healing effect of the Sacrament of love may have been very much in Pope Francis's thoughts when he addressed Eucharistic congress organizers at September-end. He spoke of the Eucharist's role "in bearing hope, forgiveness, healing and love to all in need, in particular to the poor, the disinherited and the oppressed ...walking with them in search of an authentic human life in Christ Jesus."

Walking with people?

Sadly, the great Sacrament's role in "walking with" people on their search through life's problems has been thwarted often by efforts to distort the Eucharist into a disciplinary tool. The ongoing debate about denying Communion to couples in troubled marriages is an example of such intervention.

Already, some laypersons have been driven away from the Sacrament of Reconciliation by abuse of the confessional or its reduction to a disciplinary tribunal. Such misadventures should caution pastors against denying the Eucharist to some faithful just when they need the Sacrament for spiritual sustenance in fellowship.

Much evident vacuum

Some theologians' efforts to distract the on-going synod with disciplinary issues are not unlike half-century-ago moves to hijack Church renewal with cosmetic liturgical reform.

The Synod on the Family is already hassled with lack of genuine lay participation. Very much like earlier synods on family and laity, this assembly too appears to be overcrowded with bishops and experts. Hence, it is likely to venti-



late perceived views on family issues more than the genuine views of families. In fairness to Christian families, such an unrepresentative assembly should not be further abused as a referendum on divorce.

A lesson for the next Synod

Providentially, this two-week's synod is to be followed up next year by a month-long synod on family-related matters. The experiences of the upcoming assembly should encourage Church leaders to provide for genuine representation of families at the follow-up Synod. Such a synod with active participation of families should be left free to discuss real problems troubling modern families. Also, families should be left free to find faith-based solutions suitable to their specific cultural realities.

No doubt, such a family synod would need wise counsel, not impositions, from pastoral fora experienced in "walking with" families in the Eucharistic role noted in the earlier cited papal discourse. Regional family ministries and regional episcopal bodies will be more competent to offer such counsel than quirky lobbies with a kink to tamper with the ethos of local family life.

Hector Welgampola

On World Teachers' Day, UN agencies urge investing in educators

Investing in teachers is urgently needed to provide the best possible opportunities for millions of children, youth and adults worldwide, the heads of various United Nations agencies said in a joint statement marking World Teachers' Day.

"An education system is only as good as its teachers," the agency chiefs said, calling for more rigorous training, better conditions for employment, quality-based teacher recruitment, thoughtful deployment and attracting new teachers and talents, especially young people and women from under-represented communities.

"Innovative, inclusive and results-focused teaching is crucial for 2015 and beyond," they added in their message for the Day, which this year marks its 20th anniversary.

The statement was issued by UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Director-General Irina Bokova; UN Interna-



October 6 - Teachers' Day

tional Labour Organisation's (ILO) Director-General, Guy Ryder; UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director, Anthony Lake; UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Administrator, Helen Clark and Fred van Leeuwen, the General Secretary of Education International, which represents teachers' organi-

zations across the globe.

One of the main concerns in many countries is a lack of educators. An additional 1.4 million teachers are needed to achieve universal primary education by 2015, the second of the eight anti-poverty Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UNESCO reported recently that a global shortage of teachers has pressured many countries into hiring educators with little or no training, undermining the educational progress of numerous school-age children around the world.

Francis: The Pope's Calling

With leaders of the Catholic Church having gathered at the Vatican to consider the future of the Church's teaching on the family, the BBC's Director of News and Current Affairs, James Harding, asks whether Pope Francis is the moderniser progressives hope for, or an orthodox Pontiff with a personal touch.

Just over a year ago, a phone rang in the offices of *La Repubblica* - Italy's main centre-left newspaper. Stella Somma, personal assistant to the editor, answered. The man at the end of the line said he would like to speak to Eugenio Scalfari, the founder and former editor of the paper, a 90-year-old atheist and a hero of the secular left.

"Who's speaking?" Stella asked. "Papa Francesco," the man said.

"Ah, the Pope," Stella replied - and put the call through to Scalfari. "Listen, I have the Pope on the line."

Scalfari picked up the phone at home and told Stella: "You're crazy, it must be a joke".

"No, it's not a joke, I can't make the Pope wait, so let me put you through."

Scalfari remembers a voice saying, "Good morning, this is Pope Francis... you asked me for a meeting, and I want to do that. Let's fix a date." And with the phone on his ear, he tells me, 'Wednesday I can't. Maybe Monday? Is that OK for you?' And I told him: 'Any day is fine for me. Monday is fine.'"

Eugenio Scalfari: The Pope is "a revolutionary."

Eugenio Scalfari is not the only person to have received a call out of the blue from Pope Francis, who has made outreach to the unexpected, one of the hallmarks of his papacy.

"Pope Francis is not a doctrinal radical," John Allen (Boston Globe)

And their unlikely dialogue about faith and conscience, paedophilia and celibacy, corruption and the Church, produced an intriguing insight into the character of the man who has transformed expectations of the Catholic Church.

After further phone calls and a series of private meetings with Pope Francis, Scalfari concluded: "He is a revolutionary Pope."

The man the Italians dub the "cold-call Pope" has, in little over a year, lifted the mood of the Vatican and raised new expectations of the Catholic Church.

But can he meet them? Is he the radical moderniser that progressives have hoped for or, rather, an orthodox priest with a ready smile and a knack for outreach to the unexpected?

From Sunday October 5, the world will begin to get some answers. Cardinals, bishops, priests and lay Catholics from around the world will arrive at the Vatican to consider how Church teaching on the family relates to the reality of modern life.

The "extraordinary Synod" - the third of its kind in the modern history of the Catholic Church - is part of a process of reflection that will last more than a year. It's likely to reveal both the nature and, most likely, the limits of the change heralded by Pope Francis.

When I visited Scalfari, he recounted his conversation with the Pope: "I told him all Popes have reformed the Church, for better or for worse, but you are not reforming this Church, you are not a reformist. You are a revolutionary." According to Scalfari, the Pope told him he is not revolutionising the Church, that his task is just to apply the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council.

The Second Vatican Council - commonly known as Vatican II - was, in theory at least, the seismic event in the modern history of the Catholic Church. It ran from 1962 to 1965.

Vatican II

Convened by Pope John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council was concerned with Catholicism's renewal in the modern world. The world's 2,800 Catholic bishops gathered in St Peter's Basilica four times in the autumn of four consecutive years starting 11 October 1962, ending in 1965.

Changes brought about include the celebration of mass in vernacular language (although Latin remains the liturgical language of Catholicism) and the positioning of the priest during services facing

the congregation ("versus populum") It was supposed to set the Church on a course to meet the modern world - not by rewriting doctrine, but by spelling out a fundamental change in the Church's outreach to other religions, in the conduct of the Mass, in the role of the laity in the running of the Church and much more.

Not long after the destination had been set, the Church stalled. Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, the head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales from 2000 to 2009, says Pope John Paul II "pressed pause" on Vatican II, while under Pope Francis "we have a push... the button is being pushed again."

"Pope Francis seems to specialise in causing confusion on certain issues" Joseph Shaw Chairman of Latin Mass Society

The Synod will address what Cardinal Murphy O'Connor describes as some "neuralgic questions" - contraception and homosexuality for example. And, the one that has generated most debate - and the greatest expectation of change - is whether Catholics who divorce and then re-marry civilly should be allowed to take communion.

Church teaching is that they can only do so if their first marriage has been officially annulled by the church - civil divorce doesn't count. But obtaining an annulment can be a lengthy and expensive process.

The problem has led to an unusually public spat as conservative cardinals have lined up to argue that Church teaching must not change.

John Allen, a long-time Vatican reporter for the Boston Globe, expects that the outcome will not be new doctrine, but new practice. "Pope Francis is not a doctrinal radical. This is not Che Guevara in a cassock," he says. He predicts annulment will be made faster, simpler and less expensive.

There seems to be agreement among Vatican watchers that on all issues before the Synod, radical doctrinal change isn't on the agenda. Instead, Pope Francis has changed the emphasis.

Jane Livesey, General Superior of the Congregation of Jesus - a global religious order of some 2000 nuns - says Pope Francis's message is: "There are different ways of interpreting the doctrine, and my way of doing it is through the prism of mercy and forgiveness."

The BBC's Director of News and Current Affairs James Harding set out to understand one of the world's most fascinating and charismatic leaders. In this, she says, the Pope leads by example. "Francis is a man who completely gets that - that you can preach all you like, but actually most of the important things in life are caught, not taught."

John Allen says this is because, at heart, Francis is not a theologian or a politician, but a pastor. "When he picks up the phone and calls a mother in southern Italy whose son is in the hospital," he says, "part of that is just genuine pastoral outreach, but part of it is also recalibrating the model of what leadership in the Catholic Church looks like."

The Bishop of Rome, as Pope Francis likes to call himself, has positioned himself as one among many. He has made it clear he's in favour of decentralising the Church, and that means that while the rules may stay the same, he's giving bishops and priests more room to interpret them. "Every parish priest has to make these kind of judgements," says Cardinal Murphy O'Connor. "In moral theology there's what's called the objective truth and subjective and sometimes you have to take account of the subjective situation of various people. And a good priest does just that and I think a good Pope does that too."

Pope Francis surprised some observers by choosing a compact car on his recent visit to South Korea.

But, of course, leaving the teachings of the Church to that kind of subjective interpretation by bishops and priests - making that age-old tradition of ambiguity the guiding principle of the papacy - threatens to disappoint and frustrate people across the Catholic spectrum.



Joseph Shaw, a Catholic blogger and fellow of St Benet's Hall, Oxford, argues there's a danger that the Pope's approach will obscure the Church's teaching. "Pope Francis seems to specialise in causing confusion on certain issues," he says. "It's upset people who appreciated having very, very clear teaching, even when it was unpopular, which is what we got from Pope Benedict."

To judge his papacy so far, Francis has behaved like a man who watched his predecessor - encrusted by the Vatican machine and defined by doctrinal argument - and has chosen, quite conspicuously, to be a different kind of Pope.

How is it working? Well, it's clear St Peter's is busier, Catholics have a renewed spring in their step and, if the issues of child sex abuse and financial wrongdoing have not yet been fully resolved, the Vatican story is nowadays about more than that. Then again, there's no solid evidence yet that the pews are fuller.

Francis has proved a surprise as Pope, even to those who thought they knew him and he has demonstrated the power of a priest with a personal touch. But, by his own admission, he is not a revolutionary. He is, though, a herald of change. A Pope with a deliberately different approach to his calling.

Behind the story

For a number of years, I watched, fascinated, by the apparent paralysis inside the Vatican as Pope Benedict's papacy was engulfed by scandals of child sex abuse, financial wrongdoing and court intrigue. His resignation, the first in 600 years, confirmed that the Holy See was in crisis. Then Jorge Bergoglio succeeded him in March 2013, becoming the first Jesuit and the first priest from the New World to become Pope. From his first evening on the balcony overlooking St Peter's, Pope Francis seemed to take the world by storm.

Although not a Catholic myself, I, like thousands of journalists the world over, was intrigued - and started angling for an interview for the BBC. I began to discuss the possibility with a range of senior figures in the Church and then went to Rome to make the case to Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, that the Pope should consider the BBC, given its audience of 250 million people around the world. Father Lombardi, plainly inundated with such requests, smiled and with some charm left me with the impression that the Pope was having no trouble reaching a global audience.

So, after that, I went for lunch with Ezio Mauro, the editor of *La Repubblica*, whom I had met some years before. (We got to know each other, oddly enough, interviewing Vladimir Putin and, since then, had tried to help each other out getting access to interesting interviewees). He could barely contain his excitement. His predecessor, Scalfari, had just been called by the Pope and gone for a meeting at the Santa Marta Convent. From then on, I kept in touch with Mauro and *La Repubblica* watching, if you like, the unusual drama from the wings.

Then, when I was on holiday in Italy over the summer, I asked whether I could visit Scalfari in Rome and discuss what he'd learned of Pope Francis. It was a way of trying to understand the man who presides over a global congregation of 1.2 billion people. And, in turn, it prompted a more concerted effort to answer the question: what, really, is the calling of Pope Francis?



The 'god of money' discards elders

Pope Francis prayed with his predecessor Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and 30,000 senior citizens, most of whom grandparents for the blessing of long life, at St Peter's Square last week to honour World Elders' Day which fell on October 1. The event was organised by the Pontifical Council for the Family.

The Pope gave a copy of Mark's Gospel to all the elderly present. Some of them, including Marcello Bedeschi, who is responsible for organizing the World Youth Days, went up to receive it.

Addressing the faithful gathered, Pope Francis said, "It is inhuman to abuse elders just as it is inhuman to abuse children. But God will not abandon you. He is with you! With God's help, you are and will continue to be the memory for your people; and also for us, the great family of the Church." Pope Francis said this referring in particular to Mubarak (74) and Aneesa (68), a couple of refugees from Iraqi Kurdistan who spoke about the sufferings of their people.

The Pope described the story of an elderly Iraqi refugee who fled because of anti-Christian persecution. "These brethren here testify that even in the most difficult tests, the elderly who have faith are like trees that continue to bear fruit," he said.

Recalling his visit to the Albanian capital Tirana, Francis added: "The grandfather is in a way twice a father and the grandmother is twice a mother. In those countries the grandparents have to take the children to be baptized in secret, to give them the faith. Truly



great people!"

Of his predecessor, Pope Emeritus, who sat in the rows of seats on the right hand, Pope Francis said, "I would like to extend a special thanks to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. "I have said many times that I like the fact you are living here in the Vatican so much, because it was like having a wise grandfather at home. Thank you."

After the various testimonies and songs which marked today's special event dedicated to senior citizens, Pope Francis' prayer for the family was recited.

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Holy family of Nazareth, today we express our admiration and trust to you; in you we contemplate the beautiful communion of true love; to you we entrust all our families so that the miracles of grace may be renewed in them. Holy Family of Nazareth, attractive school of the Holy Gospel: Teach us to emulate your virtues with wise spiritual discipline, give us the lucidity to recognise the work of Providence in daily life."

Holy Family of Nazareth, faithful guardian of the mystery of salvation, let respect for silence be reborn in us, turn our families into cenacles of prayer and transform them into small domestic churches, inspire a renewed desire for holiness, support the nobility of hard work, education, listening, reciprocal understanding and forgiveness. Holy Family of Nazareth trigger within our society an awareness of the sacred and sacrosanct nature of the family, which is a precious and irreplaceable gift. May every family represent a welcoming, good and peaceful home for children and the elderly, for those who are sick and lonely, for those who are poor and needy. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, we turn to you in trusting prayer and joyfully place our trust in you."

Pope Francis then expressed one final wish: "We welcome the houses for the elderly ... so that they can truly be homes, not prisons! We hope that these homes will truly serve the interests of older persons and not the interests of someone else!" In fact "a people who do not take care for grandparents, does not treat them well has no future: One of the things that make family life so beautiful is caressing a child or receiving a caress from our grandfather or

grandmother."

In the homily he gave at the event's closing Holy Mass, Pope Francis observed: "In the Gospel, Jesus did not abolish the law of the family and the passing of generations, but brought it to fulfillment. The Lord formed a new family, in which bonds of kinship are less important than our relationship with Him and our doing the Will of God the Father. Yet the love of Jesus and the Father completes and fulfills our love of parents, brothers and sisters and grandparents; it renews family relationships with the lymph of the Gospel and of the Holy Spirit.

"How often," the Pope reiterated, "we discard the elderly with an attitude of abandonment that is nothing more than true and proper euthanasia, children are discarded, young people are discarded because they have no job and the elderly are discarded under the pretense of maintaining a balanced economic system at the centre of which there is the God of money. We are all called to counter this poisonous throw away culture, the Christians with all men of goodwill are called to build a more humane, patient and inclusive society."

Vatican News

Do you know?

That there are approximately 2 Million elders in Sri Lanka {Over 60 years of age}
That the elders have a right to

1. Independence.
2. Participation.
3. Care.
4. Self-fulfillment.
5. Dignity.

Sr. Edel Pieris. s.c.j.m.
Community Services for Senior Citizens
33 Tataka Road, Kegalle.



Nostalgic Memories..

Supreme to us Marians of Trincomalee
This year as we embark on our
150th jubilee
Marians old and young as we rally around
your banner
Ably guided by our Apostolic Carmel Nuns
forever
Remember we the super school days at our
Alma Mater
Years of really good and dedicated work
that has made us the smartest

Students were taught not only to do book
work and sit for exams but to
Care, share, compete, sing, elocute and
sports we also did do
Oh! The freedom we had and the discipline
that we got is like gold
Leading our lives today in every part of the
globe

Learning at St. Mary's from 1967 to 1979
has made my life useful to others
Education then was not hi-fi but practical
to we who are now professionals and
dedicated mothers
Great were the nuns and teachers of those
days gone away
Everything we are today is because of you
come what may.

Our Alma mater to whom we say
"Noble pure and true forever,"
As our motto was, is and will be till the end
of time.

A Grateful Past Pupil
Ramani Babu Lakshmanan Nee De Cruze
(1967- 1979)

Children: Knowing their Temperament

(Contd from last week)

*"One night a father overheard his son pray:
Dear God, make me the kind of man my Daddy is.
Later that night, the father prayed:*

Dear God, make me the kind of man my son wants to be" Anonymous

Last week we read about mum and her little girl, today let us see the unique role Daddy plays in being the role model for junior.

Little boys would more often than not, try to imitate dad, (he is my hero, he will be saying to himself) he would try to walk with the same measured steps of his father, sit in dad's favourite chair, maybe even try to have dad's hairstyle parted at the centre - (but, of course when he is older though, he wouldn't be caught trying on dad's hairstyle - it wouldn't be cool)

We, as parents are invited to a wonderful vocation, that is to set godly examples for our children, not just in how we talk,

walk or dress, but more importantly in our morals and values.

Today parents are looking for the day-care centre, montessori, school catechism class, to be the "surrogate parent," or some other programs to help raise their children. This is wishful thinking, in a way it is to say no to God's wonderful invitation to parenthood, saying no to His blessings.

God's plan for the nurturing of our children is quite clear, that plan involves a mother, father and a home, not the schools, nor the day-care centre,

these have their own role to play, but can never be a substitute for Mum Dad and the environment only they can create, it is the parents who must train and instruct their children according to God's will.

The most critical period of development in

a child's life must be in the hands of his/her parents. We, parents are their heroes, their role models, there can be no substitutes:

"Mum and Dad truly leave their reflection on several generations of children."

To be Contd



"By profession I am a soldier and I take pride in that fact. But I am prouder - infinitely prouder - to be a father. A soldier destroys in order to build; the father only builds, never destroys. The one has the potentiality of death, the other embodies creation and life. And while the hordes of death are mighty, the battalions of life are mightier still. It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me not from the battle field but in the home repeating with him our simple daily prayer. 'Our Father who art in Heaven'."

General Douglas MacArthur



by: Kishani S. Fernando

There are three famous paintings portraying the Blessed Joseph Vaz

The oldest of these paintings was discovered around 1876 at the Colombo Archdiocesan Cathedral premises or St. Lucia's Cathedral Kotahena. It was rescued by Thomas Cardinal Cooray the then Archbishop of Colombo, who had it retouched by the Italian art expert Professor Maranzi who was at the time in Sri Lanka to touch up the vandalized Sigiriya paintings. The original artist is not known. The painting now hangs in the private parlor of the Archbishop of Colombo.

The second painting hangs in the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka - Ampitiya Kandy done by D.L.G Perera dated September 1896. This is considered as the official portrait of Fr. Vaz in Sri Lanka.

The third is an Indian painting referred to by Fr. R.R. Rodrigues in his book 207 Stories of Blessed Joseph Vaz. (Goa 2005)

Some other older paintings are mentioned in the Positio Historica on 'Iosephi Vaz, Sacra Congregatio Pro Causis Sanctorum Officium Historicum' (Rome 1985). This is the study done on the historical position of a person at the beginning of the process of canonization and submitted to Rome. This work was undertaken by George Quintus Perera. These paintings include: two of the most ancient portraits that were taken from Ceylon and preserved in the house of Frias Costa of Goa - dated 1702, oil on wood. Portrait found in the house of Lady Isabel Henriques de Vadde'm de Socorro inherited from the House of Visconde de Barde's - oil on wood done after 1702 retouched in 1835. Wall painting in the Rachol Seminary, Goa. The three Oratorians : St. Philip Neri in the Centre with Batholomeo de Quantal on his left and Bl. Joseph Vaz on his right. Dated to the immediate years after 1759.



Some features described

Person of Fr. Vaz

As a Goan he sports an olive skin. It is noted that in some of the paintings cited in the Positio Historica, he sports a beard and moustache.

Dress of Fr. Vaz

He is shown wearing a black cassock, surplice and a stole. V. Perniola in The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka; The Dutch Period Vol 1, records that Fr Joseph Vaz and his nephew were frequently conducted to the Royal presence.... They went to the palace (of the king of Kandy) in their priestly attire, wearing black cassocks, shoes and birettas.... In two of the paintings we see Fr. Vaz dressed in shoes. On one he is barefoot. This is significant. R.R. Rodrigues records that "...Throughout his life right from the day of his ordination, he went barefoot. And he did go barefoot up to the end of his life..... He walked like a poor man." It shows his simplicity in respecting others and ability to adjust to different situations.

He is shown in a surplice and a stole, this he wore to administer the sacraments and presumably when preaching. The stole is in red and gold in the first two paintings and gold in the Indian painting. Red is the liturgical colour of vestments for the feast of Pentecost, Good Friday, Palm Sunday and commemorations of the martyrs. In Christian iconographic tradition, red is the colour used to depict the divine nature and life giving energy and, for this very reason red becomes the symbol of the resurrection - the victory of life over death. It gives an insight to the life of Joseph Vaz - a life led by the Holy Spirit, full of sacrifices. Gold vestments are used for Christmas, Easter, feasts of Mary and the saints thus representing joy, celebration, resurrection, purity and innocence. Christian iconography uses the colour gold for royalty - gold symbolizes the divine light. Fr.

Famous Portraits of Fr. Joseph Vaz

Script and pictures extracted from the Master thesis titled, 'Artistic Sculptural and Iconographic Project of the proposed National Shrine of Blessed Joseph Vaz for the glory of God' by Rev. Fr. Priyantha Silva , 2012, Rome

Vaz reflected the divine light to all whom he came into contact with.

The colour yellow represents gold and this is

him to make the sacrifice. Hence the Maitre is placed on a wooden altar on his left below the hand that holds the Cross.

Flower pot on the floor

There is a flower pot in the ancient painting but its present condition does not permit us to see the details. We rely on the second painting which was a faithful imitation of the first. The flowers resemble the red hibiscus, the China rose or the shoe flower.

In ancient times those condemned to capital punishment were garlanded with red hibiscus as they were conducted towards the execution site. This seems to be adding meaning to the portrait of Fr. Vaz, for when he came to Ceylon it was a prohibited land for Catholic priests and

his decision was like embracing a death sentence. It was also a strict condition to other priests who wished to serve with him in Ceylon that they should come ready to face the persecution and ready never to go back to their homeland.

Further the plant is not on the ground but in a pot. This signifies the fact that he along with the other priests were called to be planted in a different land and not in their own, where they would begin a new ministry.

The Indian painting shows the pot in blue and seems to give a Marian base to the ministry of Fr. Vaz. This is appropriate since Fr. Vaz dedicated most of the churches he built to the Virgin Mary.

In the pot there are 4 flowers; a full bloomed one at the bottom, two half bloomed at an upper level on either side and a still blooming bud at the top. At the bottom of the hibiscus

plant are two designs that resemble the shoots depicted in the Cross found in Anuradhapura which imitate the Crosses of St.Thomas. In fact the four flowers and the design at the bottom of the plant form the shape of the Anuradhapura Cross and the Crosses of St. Thomas. St. Thomas' Cross does not carry the effigy of the Christ. In addition to this unique quality, each of its elements carries symbolic meanings. Generally the Cross symbolizes life rather than death and suffering... (it) presages the discovery of the empty tomb, glorifying the Resurrection of Jesus. The four edges of the cross are floral in shape, symbolizing fruition and life... the three steps below the Cross represent Golgotha, symbolically referring to the death of Jesus. Hence the flower pot definitely is a symbol of the revival of Christianity that was brought about in Sri Lanka through the mission of Fr. Vaz and the Oratorians.

Portrait for the Canonization

A new portrait of Blessed Joseph Vaz to be used for the Canonization mass in January 2015 is in the process of being painted by Fr. Priyantha Silva. This will be in keeping with sacred art and sacred geometry. It will be a theological depiction that will include the mission and service of Fr. Vaz in Ceylon. The proposed art work has been highly commended by the supervisor of Fr. Priyantha Silva's master thesis -Oratorian Professor Fr. U Michael Lang.



Anuradhapura Cross.

The Franciscan Monopoly Abolished

A Provision issued by the Viceroy Ayres de Saldanha in the name of the King of Portugal: "Dom Phelipe, by the grace of God, King of Portugal.

To all those who will see this letter of mine, I make known...that I have planned to go on with the conquest of the Island of Ceylon... It is my bounden duty to see that the Holy Gospel be preached in all the regions of that state....and as the Religious and Fathers of the Blessed St Francis, who have been residing in that island already for many years, can no longer by themselves alone, as they are few, fulfill this obligation in all the regions; and as this island is very extensive and much greater is the number of souls that have to be baptized there; they need the help of Religious of other Institutes. This is also the view of Dom Andreia de Santa Maria, Bishop of Cochin, to whose jurisdiction the island belongs, since after visiting the island personally, he suggested to my Viceroy of India that he should send there other Religious for the same work, choosing the Religious of the Society of Jesus in preference to others. The reason of this choice is that

the Religious of the Society have shown great diligence and fervour in converting infidels, have much experience and are industrious in choosing means that enable them to go forward and do everything with great zeal for God's service and mine.

"This has become clearly evident from their manner of proceeding in India today, from the great fruit they have gathered in very remote places and regions where they live and where they have penetrated. It pleases me and I am happy to see that the same is the opinion of Dom Fra Alexio de Menezes, Archbishop Primate of India whom the Viceroy consulted and with whom he discussed the matter. The Archbishop also thinks that the Fathers of the Society of Jesus should go to the Island of Ceilao" (VP. PP. II . 235-7).

"Though the Friars of St Francis have been residing in Ceylon for more than fifty years, they have accomplished nothing, nor had they even one friar who knew the language nor have they sent to those churches good people, but only those who were punished and who

would be waiting for the moment or the years of their punishment to come to an end in order to return" (VP PP II 232, letter of Fr F. Roiz S.J.).

The Franciscans tried to make use of some experts in Church Law to defend their monopoly. The Viceroy stopped anyone coming forward in defence of the Franciscans appealing to the Council of Trent according to which the diocesan bishop has the full responsibility to see that the Gospel is preached.

The Franciscans took the law into their hands on a day when Captain de Azevedo was not in Colombo. The Franciscan Guardian took ten or eleven Franciscans armed with a variety of tools, went to the place where the Jesuits had built a fence round their property with most of the material needed for their new building. The Franciscan Guardian commanded the friars in virtue of holy obedience to follow orders. After shouting the war cry "Santiago," he ordered the friars to destroy the fence and carry away all the material accumulated. The whole town was immediately alerted and was on the spot to prevent the Franciscans from going forward in their work of

destruction. The Franciscans went away when the military appeared on the spot. Coming from Malwana, de Azevedo set a guard on the spot to prevent any further damage.

This and similar actions did the Franciscans do, losing much credit with the people. "They went from house to house and spoke against the Jesuits; they preached from the pulpit against the Jesuits and against the viceroy and the Archbishop. They said that the Jesuits were robbing their property and taking their churches. They went so far that the Archbishop felt obliged to suspend two of them forbidding them to preach any longer in his archdiocese. The Viceroy told the Custodian that it was for the service of God and of His Majesty and for the spread of the Faith and the conversion of the infidels in Ceylon that the Fathers of the Society of Jesus came there.

(Fr. Perniola will be happy to receive from his readers critique and comments of his articles appearing in the Catholic Messenger to enable him later to publish them in a book. Email:sriprovincesj@gmail.com)

God believes in the Believer

Abraham's life is an exemplary model of unflinching faith. We often become sceptical when faced with challenges and our faith begins to flinch and waver. For people like us the model of Abraham is worthy of emulation. If we try to define faith, we may find an apt definition in Heb11. Looking at the happenings of life with the eye of faith, and accepting them without murmur and complaint, and proceeding ahead with hope is something that does not happen overnight. Only those persons who have unflinching and unwavering faith in divine providence, who strongly believe that God is with them in each of their footsteps, can move ahead with hope into an unclear, unpredictable future.

A baby develops strength and self-confidence as his parents support him in his initial efforts to walk on his own. Just like the baby with wobbly legs and un-steady hands holds fast to the hand of his father, we too must hold the hand of the Lord tightly on our onward march through life. Eric Ericson, the famous psychologist, has divided the cycle of life into 8 phases. He describes the positives and negatives of each phase. In his view, the confidence that the child garners from his mother through their being together most of the time is the basis of the faith that he carries throughout his life. A child who has experienced the loving, protecting, undeceiving care and support of his mother will also learn to hold the hand of God with confidence and go ahead in life without fear, without anxiety, and succeed. Such

child-like confidence is needed when we place ourselves in the care of God (Lk 12:22-31).

In the 12th Chapter of the Book of Genesis, we can see the example of the strong, unwavering and childlike faith of Abraham as he relies on God for each step he takes. One who places his full faith in God can do any sacrifice and can give away even the dearest he has if God wants him to do so. In this chapter we see how Abraham is expected to relinquish all the things dear to him. Abraham does not flinch. He has the confidence to move ahead even into uncertainties because he relies on his God. Some of us might feel that Abraham was foolish in placing such faith in God. But his call was to leave everything he had accumulated over the years, his wealth, his relatives - everything - but it was a call for a new beginning. Even when the future was as dark as rain clouds heavy with water, Abraham did not hesitate even for a moment. He was ready to move forward - He knew God was behind him. Only those who can see faith with their inner eyes can withstand adversities and this was shown very clearly by Abraham.

Only those who have strong will power can take decisions in time and go ahead with the decisions without getting flustered by criticisms and oppositions. We see Abraham ready to leap into the unknown and those who witnessed his action might have laughed at him for his foolhardiness. The age of Abraham is very important here. The Bible tells us: When God tells him to leave Haran, Abraham was 75 years old. At 75 one is not hot-blood-

ed willing to embark upon any adventure. It is an age with so many physical, psychological and mental limitations. When we think like that we will definitely feel that Abraham's move was a leap in the dark.

The later incidents in the life of Abraham amply prove that the journey of one who has God's presence with him is bound to succeed. God will never leave us alone. For fulfilling the scheme that God planned through Abraham, He is always present with him. Whenever God appeared and wherever his promises were fulfilled, Abraham built altars to show that he was not alone and God was with him and to thank God for his guidance. By building the altars, Abraham wanted to show his gratitude to God, to remember His gracious presence and to perpetrate his cherished memories (Gen 12:7-9).

We all have received the Christian faith through our baptism and it is worthwhile to think of the challenges Abraham faced and how he overcame them. We are pilgrims and in our pilgrimage to the eternal kingdom, the Holy Spirit gives us strength and keeps us company. Our journey to eternity might be through family life, through priesthood or through a religious life. The basis of this journey is the love of God that keeps us going. Our faith is fortified through the models we get from our parents, Catechism teachers, teachers and religious leaders like priests and nuns. What is important is to find out if we are willing to surrender ourselves to God, like Abraham, so that God can carry out his plans through us. We should be



"If we are strong in our faith like Abraham, all the troubles, tribulations, temptations - adversities of all sorts - will crack and crumble before the fortress of our faith and our journey to the Kingdom of God will be a smooth sailing, propelled by the breeze of divine grace"

like Abraham, ready for forging ahead even beyond miracles and signs. If we are not deep in our faith we tend to become satisfied with the emotional satisfaction we get through miracles and signs. Such satisfaction is merely peripheral and not deep.

Another person that marvels us with her faith is Mary. Like Abraham, she had

unwavering faith in God. She gave her consent to be the Mother of Jesus and throughout her life she gave ample proof of her staunch faith. To the Good News, she said 'Amen' without worrying about the consequences her Amen would mean to her in the society bent upon finding fault with others. St. Joseph is another example of bold faith. Both Mary and Joseph accepted the Incarnated Lord into their midst. For thirty years they lived with Jesus and during this period there were no miracles and signs. Abraham lived without wavering even amidst troubles and tribulations, just like St. Joseph and Mary did later. God was pleased with Abraham's sincerity. In chapter 17 of Genesis, we see God appearing to Abraham and telling him, "Walk before me, and be blameless" (Gen 17:1). At this time Abraham was 99 years old.

Courtesy: Vachanolsavam

Pope Francis: Blessed Alvaro Del Portillo Sought Holiness in the Ordinariness

The Servant of God, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo teaches us that "in the simplicity and ordinariness of our life we can find a sure path of holiness." Pope Francis stressed this in his message that was read at the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration of the Beatification of Bishop del Portillo. Blessed Alvaro, the first successor as head of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei to its founder St. Josemaria Escriva, was beatified last Saturday, 27th September 2014, at an open-air Mass in Madrid's Valdebebas Park concelebrated by 18 cardinals, 160 bishops (practically the entire Spanish episcopate) and 300 priests from 34 countries.

Pope Francis' delegate to the ceremony and main celebrant was Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Concelebrating with him at the altar were Cardinal Antonio Maria Rouco, Archbishop emeritus of Madrid, and Bishop Javier Echevarria, Prelate of Opus Dei.

Jose Ignacio Ureta, now a healthy and active 11-year-old, was the Chilean boy cured miraculously after his heart stopped beating for 30 minutes through the intercession of Blessed Alvaro. During the Beatification ceremony, the little boy together with his parents, Susana and Javier Ureta, brought the relics of the new Blessed to the altar after Cardinal Amato officially declared Don Alvaro as Blessed.

An estimated crowd of more than 100,000 attended the ceremony, mostly from Spain. Countries with the biggest contingents were: Mexico (3175); Italy (2140); Philippines (1730) and USA (1520). Some 1,300 priests heard confessions and distributed Holy Communion.

Fruitfulness of service to the Church

I have met one canonized saint in my life: St. John Paul II. But now, I can add a

"Blessed" whom I have personally dealt with in the person of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo.

His holiness of life overflowed with abundant spiritual and apostolic fruits. While serving as Bishop Prelate of the Prelature from 1975 to 1994, he called to the priesthood around 800 professional men.

I am overjoyed that, some twenty seven years ago, I was counted among those who were ordained priests, thanks to his paternal call and solicitude. He ensured that each one of us underwent a painstaking process of human, spiritual, doctrinal and apostolic training.

Moreover, he spearheaded the growth and geographic expansion of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. During the nineteen years that Blessed Alvaro governed the Prelature, it began stable apostolic activities in twenty new countries: Bolivia (1978), Honduras, Zaire (now called Democratic Republic of Congo), and Ivory Coast (1980), Hong Kong (1981), Singapore (1982), Trinidad-Tobago (1983), Sweden (1984), Taiwan (1985), Finland (1987), Cameroon and the Dominican Republic (1988), Macau, New Zealand, and Poland (1989), Czechoslovakia and Hungary (1990), Nicaragua (1992), and Israel and India (1993).

In various African countries, Blessed Alvaro "was moved by the religious hunger that exists on that continent." He encouraged Africans to take responsibility and he encouraged Africans who left their home country to become educated to nourish the desire to return home.

His concern did not remain in the level of sympathy nor of mere empathy. He promoted, among other initiatives,

a medical assistance center in the Democratic Republic of Congo and he encouraged the formation of a clinic that has now grown into Kinshasa's

Monkole Hospital. Harambee Africa International is an organization encouraging that the faithful donate to support, in honor of his beatification, those initiatives begun by Bishop del Portillo.

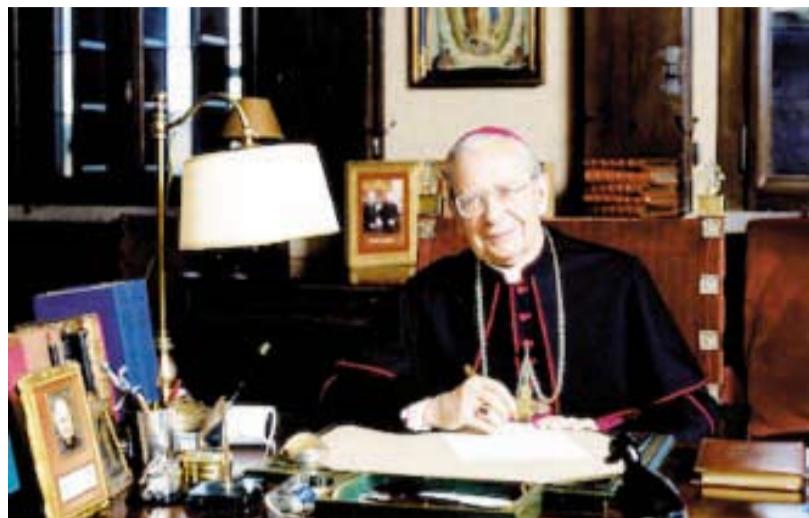
Serving God and neighbour in everyday life

Msgr. Javier Echevarria, the present Bishop Prelate, recalled that his Blessed predecessor, who was a priest then a bishop, was "totally available" at the service of others.

In the interview with the Catholic News Agency (CNA) in Rome, the Prelate reminisced how well "he knew how to be very human when treating people, in the work that he did, knowing that his work was also a springboard, an aid to approach God and to be with God."

"He helped us, he understood and encouraged us and at the same time he was greatly interested in all things that affected us. He didn't feel distant from us or indifferent." Msgr. Echevarria said Bishop del Portillo was "totally at the disposal of others. He was a person who knew how to love, who knew how to serve and who knew how to be at hand." Blessed Alvaro played a role at the Second Vatican Council. His work focused on the role of the laity and their importance in the life of the Church. His preaching encouraged Catholic laity to realize that "many things in the Church depended on their lives." He encouraged his Catholic friends to "live professionally," to serve their family well, to be "true, faithful friends."

"That's how they could best serve the Church," Bishop Echevarria said. He believed Bishop del Portillo's beatification will help bring attention to the knowledge "that all of us are



called to this holiness" of life.

Holiness in ordinary life

Bishop Echevarria recalled that Don Alvaro followed St. Josemaria's saying to "see the souls behind the papers" and to see common life as "a way to get close to God."

He recalled that in the presence of St. Josemaria and Bishop del Portillo, he felt himself to be in the presence of people who "intensely searched for God" and sought how "to love more every day." Blessed Alvaro also served in Japan and Africa, learning much from these parts of the world. From Japan, he learned "how to finish his work well."

During the homily of Cardinal Angelo de Amato in the Beatification Mass, he detailed the new Blessed's life of virtues, which he said "is the message that Blessed Álvaro del Portillo hands on to us today."

He was "a shepherd according to the Heart of Christ, a zealous minister of the Church." He invites us to be holy, living a holiness that is friendly, merciful, good-natured, meek, and humble.

"The Church and the world need the great spectacle of holiness so that its pleasing fragrance can purify the noxious fumes of the many vices which are being praised

so arrogantly and insistently.

"Now, more than ever, we need an ecology of holiness, to counteract the pollution of immorality and corruption. The saints invite us to bring to the heart of the Church and society the pure air of God's grace, which renews the face of the earth."

Pope Francis stressed in his message that "Blessed Álvaro del Portillo is sending us a very clear message. He is telling us to trust in the Lord, that he is our brother, our friend, who never lets us down and is always at our side. He is encouraging us not to be afraid to go against the current and suffer for announcing the Gospel. He is also teaching us that in the simplicity and ordinariness of our daily lives we can find a sure path to holiness."

Finally, it was planned the linen, vestments and liturgical items used for the ceremony, produced by some 600 volunteer workers from all over the world, including cloistered nuns, will be donated to churches undergoing special difficulties in places like Uganda, Iraq and the Philippines where many churches were destroyed in recent typhoons. Pope Francis will visit the latter this coming January 2015, immediately after his pastoral trip to Sri Lanka.

Rev. Fr. Daniel Icalto JCD



Thanksgiving Prayer

Almighty and Eternal God, Our loving Father, we thank you for listening to our humble prayer and pleading and granting us the great blessing of having our beloved Apostle of Sri Lanka, Blessed Joseph Vaz as the First Saint of our Motherland. Father, we thank you from depths of our hearts for the gift of our faith which Blessed Joseph Vaz laboured so valiantly to preserve during the Dutch persecution. We thank you for the many wonders and miracles that have been worked through his intercession over the past three hundred years.

Help us to deepen our faith, strengthen our hope and rekindle our love, to make us spirit-filled witnesses to Jesus Christ Our Lord and the Good News of salvation.

Bless our dear land And grant lasting peace, reconciliation, unity and prosperity to Mother Lanka and her people. Amen.

**Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle
Secretary, National Secretariat for the Cause of
Canonisation of Blessed Joseph Vaz**

National Joseph Vaz Secretariat meets in Jubilant mood

The National Joseph Vaz Secretariat met in a Jubilant mood at "Lankarama," Balcombe Place, Borella on Monday September 29, 2014. At the outset, Bishop Vianney Fernando celebrated a Thanksgiving Mass co-celebrated by several priests representing the different Dioceses. Names of the dear departed members who had worked diligently towards the "cause" were read out during Holy Mass.

After Mass, the members were treated with Kiribath and traditional sweetmeats. The members then walked into the Meeting Hall with smiling faces as an atmosphere of jubilation prevailed. The President, Bishop Vianney Fernando in his opening address informed the "House" that he had received a series of telephone 'calls' and e-mails wishing him on our beloved Apostle being raised to the Altar. His Lordship categorically emphasised that he had convinced all of them stating that this was not

a human effort in any sense of the word and that though late by almost 303 years, the Canonisation has been the direct result of Divine intervention beyond all human efforts.

His Lordship then outlined the order of proceedings for the canonisation ceremony at Galle Face Green on January 14 morning. Around 5 lakhs of Catholics are expected and His Holiness would celebrate Holy Mass together with the Bishops of Sri Lanka. The entire ceremony would be as short as possible as the crowd would be open to the weather elements and His Holiness would be taken right round the Galle Face Green in an open vehicle. His Lordship exhorted all members to get as many Catholics as possible to attend the ceremony.

Having achieved our objective, His Lordship wanted the views of the members as to the future of the National Secretariate. Many views were expressed and it

was unanimously agreed that it must carry on into the post canonisation period as well, with the chief idea of introducing the Saint to the many who do not know him, even at the present moment. Different methods of achieving this was also discussed, such as Talks, exhibitions etc. The Meeting then terminated with a short prayer followed by lunch.

Roggy Corera

National Joseph Vaz Secretariat

APPRECIATION

Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Damien Fernando 'Help of the Helpless'

Rev. Fr. Dr. Damian Fernando passed away on September 9, 2014. He was a friend for 38 long years. I entered the faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo in 1976. All the Fernando's were in one group. There was this young, silent boy from Moratuwa called Damien and there started our friendship. We were together for five long years as batch mates and group mates.



We passed out from the University and Damien pursued higher studies in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He finished his post graduate training in Sri Lanka and went to UK for further training and came back to the country as a fully-fledged Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. During faculty days Damien never ran from one church to another and to all the novenas in churches around Borella as we did. I was shocked to hear that he was going to be a priest after all this sleepless nights of study-

ing to become a consultant. When I asked him he said "God wants me to leave everything and come for his service." It was like in the Bible, God calling his chosen ones. He said "I can't escape this call I have to look after his flock." He had a special place in his heart for Mother Mary so he wanted to become an OMI priest.

We were astonished but we all went for his ordination to see a happy smiling Damien who was radiant in his selected path. After becoming a priest we asked how he was. The reply was "I have never been this happy in

my life"

He went to Buttalal to serve the people and little did he know that disaster will strike him there. He was down with TB meningitis and was unconscious for several days and survived after a prolonged illness. All his illnesses started from there and he could not do what he planned to do serving God in a difficult area.

In and out of hospitals all the time but no complaints. Damien's smile was always there during his worst ill health periods. He was residing at Nazareth, Wennappuwa but he never stopped helping people. He used his expertise in obstetrics to help childless couples and was doing family counselling. He used all of us his batch mates to help people with illnesses who were poor as he knew specialists from all categories all over the country.

Damien is a unique personality. Usually people have one mission in life but

God gave Damien two titles and called him for two missions. He was given the title 'Doctor' so he could heal the physically sick and then he was given the title 'Rev. Father' so that he could heal the spiritually sick. To my knowledge he is the only doctor carrying the title father and only priest carrying the title of a medical doctor.

Personally he was a friend, brother and a spiritual guide for me. During difficult, sad times of my life he was there praying with me to God and during happy times he was there praising God with me. I will miss his familiar voice calling me to ask for help for a poor sick child or for a child who has no money to pay school fees, always trying to help the helpless and poor.

Dear Damien when you are in the presence of God singing praises with Jesus and your beloved Mother Mary pray for us also.

Dr. Manel Fernando

Farewell to an only brother

It is not easy to write about my only brother, my childhood friend and playmate; for he picked me, from the four sisters, to be his shadow. In his pranks, he needed a prop and I trailed him.

One day, he wanted to catch those elusive butterflies. I joined him with a net, running around in the big garden. We did not catch a single that day and he would say "You're a girl and you could not catch one!" This of course, despite him not catching a single either, but I still remained silent!

Cutting reams of kite paper, trying to make a kite with loads of paste, made of flour and water was another uphill task. He never gave up trying.



Francis Clive Fernando

One day, we had a funny looking kite. It danced in the wind, for his sake I was on cloud nine.

Marbles, catapults and me stealing limes from the kitchen, while the domestic yelled. "Just two to make a lime juice for my thirsty brother!" was my reply. Mum would admonish me with "Why are you running around with him,

without playing with your dolls!"

If I ever scraped my knee, Clive would quickly make a paste with kurum bati and daub it because Mum would later be generous with iodine and I would scream! To save me that ordeal he made the paste.

It happened a long time ago, they were happy days, carefree, where we were outdoors, far different from present day challenges.

We went our separate ways, with our own families and he moved to Melbourne, but I always knew that when the chips were down, we belonged. Neither time nor distance could separate us really. Just to know that we lived

in the same world. I remember telling him "You will forget me" and he said "elephants never forget". He never wanted to come back on a holiday.

When I heard that he was ill, I called him, his humour never failed him. I said, "If we never meet this side of heaven, I will leave this world, loving you," he merely chuckled in his response. I imagine my brother reaching the pearly gates meeting St. Peter and saying "Am I late? I know you have room for me; I am Francis!"

That was my brother, the world will not be the same for me.

Farewell my only brother, I will look up at the sky and think of you.

Dawn Fernando

Catechism for the Youth

Compiled by
Fr. Indra Ratnasiri Fernando,
Parish Priest, Nittambuwa

Chapter III (20-24). Man responds to God.

Anyone who wants to believe needs a heart which is ready to listen (1King 3:9). In every human encounter, in every suffering a hidden message of God is present, yet to be sensitive to that hidden message perhaps becomes a challenge to a greater extent. We as the baptized are to trust Him completely, so that we are able to understand him better and also to accept His will.

Faith

Faith is knowledge. It has seven characteristics:

1. It is a gift of God.
2. It is absolutely necessary for Salvation
3. It needs the free will.
4. It is certain.
5. It is incomplete unless it leads to active love.
6. It grows as we listen to the Word of God.
7. It gives us a foretaste of the Joy and happiness of Heaven.

Faith and science are not contradictory. There is only one kind of truth to which both faith and scientific reason refer. God intended reason, so that we are able to recognize the rational structure of the world just as He intended Faith. The Christian Faith demands and promotes the sciences. Faith exists so that we might know things that are apparent to reason, yet are real above and beyond reason. Faith reminds science and it is supported to serve creation, it should not claim the place of God and thereby without violating, it must respect the human dignity.

Faith... Church...

We receive the faith from the Church and live it out in fellowship with the people with whom we share our faith. Thus, Faith is not a private matter, anyone who wants to believe has to be able to say both "I" and "We." The individual believer gives his/her free assent to the "we believe" of the Mother Church from her s/he receives the faith.

Section II

The Christian Profession of Faith (25-29)

The Faith requires definitions and formulae:

Faith is not about empty words, yet about a reality. Condensed formulae of Faith developed over the course of time help us to celebrate and live out this reality.

Indeed, the church needs the precise wordings in order to protect the message of Christ from misunderstanding and falsification. The church's faith has to be translated into different cultures while preserving its essentials since the Church's unity solely depends on a common faith.

Hence, the Creeds are belief formulae of faith which make it possible for all believers to make a common profession. The Creeds go back to Jesus. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," (Mt 28:19). The Profession of Faith in Jesus the Lord and in His Missionary mandate remains the same.

(To be contd)

The Word was made flesh and lived among us; to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God.
(J n .
1:12-14)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR A 12th Oct. 2014- 19th Oct. 2014

Sun:	28TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME Is.25:6-10; Phil 4:12-14,19-20; Mt.22:1-14 or 22:1-10
Mon:	Gal.4:22-24,26,27,31 - 5:1
Tue:	Memorial of St. Callistus I, Pope & Martyr Gal.5:1-6; Lk.11:37-41
Wed:	Memorial of St. Theresa of Jesus, Virgin & Doctor Gal.5:18-25; Lk.11:42-46
Thu:	Memorial of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Virgin Eph.1:1-10; Lk.11:47-54
Fri:	Memorial of St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop & Martyr Eph.1:11-14; Lk.12:1-7
Sat:	Feast of St. Luke, Evangelist 2 Tim.4:10-17; Lk.10:1-9
Sun:	29TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME WORLD MISSION SUNDAY Is.45:1. 4-6; 1 Thes.1:1-5; Mt.22:15-21

Papal Visit

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR PAPAL VISIT AND CANONIZATION OF BL. JOSEPH VAZ SUNDAY MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday October 12th

That we open our hearts to learn that salvation and changing the world for the better require "doing good to those who aren't able to repay us, just like the Heavenly Father did with us, giving us Jesus." *We Pray to the Lord.*

That we as Catholics be graced with "a missionary passion" to share the beauty of faith with others. *We pray to the Lord.*

That heads of governments, leaders of nations the world over may be given the wisdom to realize that "War is never a necessity, nor is it inevitable. Another way can always be found: the way of dialogue, encounter and the sincere search for truth." *We pray to the Lord.*

That the Catholic faithful in Sri Lanka may imitate Blessed Joseph Vaz in rediscovering the power concealed in contemplative prayer. *We pray to the Lord.*

Twenty Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading:

Is. 25; 6-10a.

Prophet Isaiah describes the messianic age in the image of a banquet. It will be for all peoples, not only for the chosen people of the Old Testament,

Second Reading:

Phil. 4: 12-14, 19-20.

St. Paul has faced all situations in life with hope and courage. He has done this with the help of Christ Jesus. Therefore he is thankful to God for ever and ever.

Gospel: Mt. 22: 1-14.

The Kingdom of God is compared to a great banquet in the parable of the marriage feast of the king. The invitees are unworthy. As a result outsiders are brought in. But they too have to be in their wedding garment.

Reflection.

Today's Readings present the kingdom of God as a great banquet. And this banquet is not only for the chosen race, the Jews but also for Gentiles. Therefore it's for everybody. Further, Jesus goes on to say that only worthy ones will be accepted to the great banquet. Therefore we should with the help of Christ Jesus face all life situations and remain faithful to Him. Thus whether we are Jews or not we could reach God's kingdom because of the good lives we lead.

In the First Reading the prophet compares the kingdom of God to a great banquet and this banquet is open to all. He speaks of it as taking place in Jerusalem. This may be because the great life offering of Jesus

Christ was to take place there. With this offering, salvation is made possible for all mankind, and all hopes and expectations of mankind would be fulfilled. Therefore all mankind could sit together for the great banquet which is salvation on the mountain of the Lord. Here salvation is open to all.

In the Gospel too the Lord makes it clear that kingdom of God is for all. Even here the symbol is a great banquet, but this time the message is a formal warning for the people to be worthy to take part in the great banquet. Why this banquet is made open to all is because those who were invited did not accept the invitation. They had their own valid excuses. Some were selfish, others had responsibilities and some rejected the messengers. Therefore the king had the banquet open for the outsiders. All those who were along byroads and lanes were brought in for the great banquet. This does not mean that the sinners too could participate in the great banquet of the Lord.

The moment the king saw a man who was not dressed in a wedding garment, he had him thrown out. This shows that though the king opens the banquet to all, only those who are worthy will be allowed in, those living in sin will be cast into the outer darkness where they will weep and gnash their teeth.

St. Paul in the second reading tells us to cling on to Christ Jesus so that we too like him may be able to face life with



all its ups and downs and remain faithful to God. He is thankful to God for helping him to face and remain faithful. In the same manner if we face life with divine assistance we too could take part in the great banquet. Let us all therefore strive for that great banquet the Kingdom of God.

Aid Story.

In a missionary hospital, a good girl, well prepared, has just been baptized. After baptism she called the nurse and says: "Sisters bring me a rope?" "A rope? What do you want to do with a rope?" "Since I am now in the state of grace, I feel sure I will go to heaven if I die." "That is right, but what do you intend to do?" "I just want to hang myself and not offend God anymore." She was told that her wish to go to heaven was good, but hanging herself is not the

right way, she listened very obediently and resigned herself. However, the Lord who saw such a good and an innocent heart granted the wish of that soul burning with divine love, and she died a few days later as a fervent Christian.

Aid Story 2.

One drought stricken summer the village priest told his congregation. "There isn't anything that will save us except to pray for rain. Go home, pray, believe and come next Sunday to pray for rain!" The people did as they were told and returned to church the following Sunday. But as soon as the priest saw them, he was furious. "We can't worship today you do not believe," he said. "But." They protested. "We prayed and we do believe." "Do you?" he asked. "Then where are your umbrellas?"

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

Saints are trendsetters in the world!

During the Nazi occupation of Austria when there were several floods in Vienna, a man fell into the swollen waters of the Danube. There was a crowd of onlookers, all too afraid to jump into the river, to save the drowning man.

A courageous youth got ready to jump in to save the drowning person. Just then, someone in the crowd shouted aloud. "Don't jump! This drowning man is a Jew! Let him die! Don't risk your life for a dog!"

The crowd too joined in, and in a chorus they shouted. "Don't jump! Let him drown! He is a Jew!" The rescuer quickly replied, "No! He is not Jew! He is German."

Against everybody's approval and at great risk to his life, the young man plunged in. After a long struggle, he brought the man to safety. When the crowd came close to see the saved man, they exclaimed in amazement. "Thanks

to God! Yes, he is a German." The saviour slowly walked away and remarked emphatically for all to hear. "Yes, he is a German! I am a Jew!"

We live in the progressive 21st century. In our times, there is so much of development and growth in every sphere of human life. The communication and transport systems have rapidly broken down cultural boundaries and drastically shortened the distance between nations and individuals.

Today, news and ideas travel faster than the space engine from one place to another. We have hundreds of TV channels and other facilities such as internet that make us aware of world events and happenings instantly and graphically. The world has become a melting pot of cultures.

We are into a new environment with a new mindset. Yet, the fact is that this world of ours is no longer able to

find peace. It is gradually breaking into pieces. There is so much of division and dissension among the people of different nations and cultures. Individuals and different communities are unable to get rid of their prejudices and accept one another as brothers and sisters of one and the same human family. In our times, there is an increase of hatred, violence and billing of one another due to communal disharmony. Men and women are hated because of their skin colour, race, caste, creed, gender, language and economic status. Human beings are not able to live as human beings!

The biggest tragedy of our time is that only a few individuals really confront this agonizing trend. God created one human race. Humanity has divided it into races. What is the solution?

Let us turn to the scriptures. How did Jesus relate to people? He loved everyone but he showed a special

preference to the rejects in society and to marginalized groups.

Once a self-righteous crowd wanted to stone a woman caught in the act of adultery. He cleverly turned the tables on her accusers: "Whichever one of you has committed no sin may throw the first stone at her"(Jn 8:7). He gently corrected the sin and loved the sinner tenderly.

We can think of another example. The Jewish society of old placed several strictures on the leper: A person with the dreaded skin-disease must wear torn clothes, leave his hair uncombed, cover the lower part of his face, and call out, 'Unclean, unclean!' He remains unclean as long as he has the disease, and he must live outside the camp away from others (Lev.13: 45-46). But Jesus deals with the lepers differently. He never shuns them or spurns their request.

Saints for the Modern Generation

A cherished gift to one so young

Sharing this experience with other young Catholics helped me to realise that our friends are an important part of our faith journey. We need to share our gifts and use the strength of others to help us grow closer to God.

There are many things today that can contribute to a young Catholic losing hope. Our society is so materialistic with people always in a rush to acquire the latest things.

We do not think about whether we need more, but instead focus on how objects might make us more popular or enviable.

Rather than serving others first, we are taught to watch out for ourselves and that getting ahead is the most important goal.

Our friends and classmates are often non-believers who do not understand why we devote ourselves to God; they do not always share the same values about life and lifestyle.

In fact, I am one of those Catholics who had been losing hope and faith. I felt like I had been let down a lot of times by my friends, my family and, sometimes even by God.

I joined the Sixth Asian Youth

Day in South Korea, hoping that I would be able to redeem my faith. And surely, I did get my faith back. And the best part? It is stronger than ever!

This was a great experience for me. I had never seen so many Catholics gathered in one place before. It touched my heart to see that there are so many young Catholics standing up for God here in Asia.

For some, the journey to Asian Youth Day was difficult and officials warned them of what might happen to them if they took part. But even then, they were not scared of the consequences of proclaiming their faith and taking part in this event.

It was a very beautiful and moving experience, especially because the theme was martyrdom. I was glad that I was able to see the commitment of the faithful in action, because this helped me to more strongly proclaim what I believe in.

I was also thankful for all the

new friends I made. Sharing this experience with other young Catholics helped me to realise that our friends are an important part of our faith journey. We need to share our gifts and use the strength of others to help us grow closer to God.

Asian Youth Day was a good chance to meet Catholics from throughout Asia and, though we only knew each other for a short while, we talked about our faith like we were a family.

During the formation sessions leading up to Asian Youth Day, I also met new friends in Hong Kong. In our diocese, there are not many chances for young English-speaking Catholics to get to know one another.

However, I connected with people from other parishes and now I have many brothers and sisters in Christ right here in this city.

The best part of my experience, of course, was being able to meet Papa Francesco at such a young age.



Many Catholics live their whole lives without ever having an opportunity to see their Pope. We were lucky that he not only came to South Korea, but that he helped celebrate Asian Youth Day by giving us a special audience.

Hearing him preach to us young people in person is one of my best experiences ever. We were fortunate to have front row seats and watch him come alive when he spoke to us in Italian without any notes.

Even though we did not understand everything he was saying, we could tell that he spoke from the heart and that he really cared for the youth and the problems we face.

To hear the Holy Father, especially one as admired as Papa Francesco, share his excitement for young Catholics in Asia made me feel proud to be a part of the Church here.

Asian Youth Day was really a wonderful gift. It has given me a lot of good memories, but most of all, it has strengthened my faith and made me more hopeful about the life God has given me.

Courtesy: Sunday Examiner

What's your pebble?



Everyone has had a pebble in his or her shoe. You may have one or two now. It is the small, nagging thoughts that eventually weigh you down. Some pebbles have been hidden, undetected for years. Others push, prod, and make their presence felt every day. Each pebble intrudes into the lives of the unsuspecting.

At different times in life the pebbles arrive. Although they are small and mostly undetected, they represent many unresolved thoughts, images and expe-

riences. Some are pebbles of doubt. They form from a single thought that occurred years, months or weeks before. Some pebbles are lodged only in your business shoes. Some reside in your golf shoes while others form in the shoes worn while you parent. Unfortunately, some pebbles travel in all your shoes regardless of where you walk or run.

Some pebbles are of fear. Others are created from guilt, rejection or shame. Maybe not today, but they eventually arrive unan-

nounced and usually at the most inappropriate time. What challenges do they present?

To run the marathon race of life at your most efficient speed, you must be free of embarrassment, guilt, rejection, fear, envy, jealousy, anger, impatience, frustration and worry. All can be lodged in any shoe, from a pair of loafers worn by a city dweller in Colombo, to a pair of boots on a farm in Chilaw. These intangible pebbles are crippling. They destroy relationships.

They contribute to overeating and gaining unhealthy weight. They coax us into drugs, alcohol and other addictions. They destroy families and alienate friends. They thwart the potential of our children and physically snuff extra years from our life. These are the pebbles in the shoe.

The pebble can cause you to quit or perform with complete indifference. It can help instigate a fight or add disrespectful silence to an otherwise dynamic relationship. Even the desire for fame, fortune or power can turn into a pebble in your shoe if left undetected. Most pebbles stir up the past, cloud the future and keep the present to a blink of the eye. Like a garden that is been freshly tilled, a pebble can reappear without warning or detection. Prevention and removal are your only options for simplicity, balance and abundance.

God works in mysterious circumstances!

*Courtesy:
Badulla Diocesan Bulletin*

Sinhala Sahithya Udanaya - 2014

The annual Sinhala Language and Literary Day of St. Benedict's College, Colombo was held recently, on a grand scale. The event was held at the open air stage with a large crowd in attendance.

The theme of the Literary Day was '*Spiritual healing - The salutary aspects of Oriental Dancing*'. The stage was festooned with appropriate decorations related to the theme. The Chief Guest was Mr. Mudiyanse Disanayake, The Senior Professor and the Director of Post Graduate Educational Section, University of Aesthetic Studies Colombo. Mr. Somadasa Werapitiya and Mr. Chithrasena Werapitiya, former Masters of Oriental Dancing were the Guests of Honour. Rev. Fathers, Rev. Brothers, Senior teachers, Old Boys, students of invited schools and parents and well-wishers graced the occasion.

The proceeding were livened up with exquisite dancing performances, songs and absorbing dramas. On this occasion, certificates were awarded to around 350 students who excelled at various Sinhala literary competitions, conducted by the school.

Rev. Bro. Janaka Fonseka F. S. C.
Director

St. Benedict's College, Colombo 13.

Young World

Sinhala Literary Day of St. Benedict's College



Annual Sinhala Literary Day of St. Benedict's College, Colombo was held on September 26 at the College premises. The Chief Guest was Prof. Mudiy-

yanse Dissanayake of the University of Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo.

Ashen S. Senarathna

First Holy Communion at Munhena, Maggona Parish



Ten children received their First Holy Communion at St. Mary's Church Munhena (Maggona Parish).

The children are seen here in a group photograph with Rev. Fr. Ishan Prameena, Parish Priest, Sr. Mary Leonilda, Sr. Mary Subasiri and Daham Pasal teachers.

D. Anselm Fernando



'MIKE WALK 2014'

St. Michael's College, Batticaloa (a National School) Alumni Association organised and sponsored the 141st College day 'Mike Walk' 2014. The patron of the School His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Ponniah inaugurated and participated at the event. A good number of Old Boys took part in the event to honour their alma mater.

Rev. Fr. Ramesh Christy



Talent Trendsetters

A talent show was held at Our Lady's School, Nuwara-Eliya recently titled "Talent Trendsetters 2."

Picture shows the Chief Guest, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando having a little chat with a young trendsetter.

Youth Gathering at Deniyaya Parish



A gathering of Catholic youth took place at the Deniyaya Parish in the Galle Diocese under the guidance of the Parish Priest of Deniyaya.

The programme for the Youth was conducted by Rev. Fr. Devaseelan of the Claretian Order.

A. Antony

Excellence in Wrestling



The College team of St. Joseph's College, Wattala emerged victorious at the All Island schools sport competition 2014 in wrestling events. organised by the Ministry of Education.

Padminie Nanajakkara

Mazenod Youth Session at Mattakkuliya



The Team members of Mazenod Youth came together for another enriching encounter on September 21, at De Mazenod House, Mattakkuliya.

The day was scheduled with Holy Mass followed by two special talks, fellowship and a creative discussion.

Fr. Shivantha Waas OMI addressed the mem-

bers on his experiences in the mission areas of the Anuradhapura Diocese, the meaning of Youth and how to practise the Charism of the Founder in today's world.

The next talk on Media was given by Mr. Susitha R. Fernando, who is Features Editor and Deputy News Editor of the *Daily Mirror* newspaper. He spoke

on the meaning of media and social media and the important role it played today.

There was a practical session after lunch where some creative talent in writing came to light.

*Rev. Fr. S. Randil Fernando OMI
Mazenod Youth Coordinator*

The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do

- Walter Bagehot

English with Fun and Entertainment

Dear Readers,

In our 47th lesson we learnt an activity with conjunctions, an inspirational poem, quotes from "Little Flower of Jesus" and a devotional song.

In this lesson let us learn some great quotes from St. Francis of Assisi, match proverbs with their interpretations and learn a beautiful conversation with delicate shades of meaning of words for vocabulary enrichment.

Comments made by our readers are very encouraging. Thanks for your efforts to make 'English with Fun and Entertainment' an interactive process.

God Bless You!

NJ

Activity 1 - Study the delicate shades of meaning of the words given below and read the quotes of St. Francis of Assisi and experience a deep sense of elation. (**elation** means ecstasy, joy, delight, euphoria, jubilation, excitement, exultation, rapture)

instrument	tool	gadget	device	apparatus
extinguish	put out	douse	smother	quench
sow	spread	prorogate	disseminate	implant
injury	wound	hurt	harm	damage
despair	desolation	anguish	depression	wretchedness
sadness	grief	sorrow	misery	depression
console	comfort	soothe	calm	relieve
eternal	everlasting	perpetual	endless	ceaseless
accept	believe	recognise	acknowledge	admit
wound	injury	gash	cut	hurt

Great quotes of St. Francis of Assissi - Feast - 4th October



"Lord, make me an **instrument** of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me **sow love**.
Where there is **injury, pardon**;
Where there is **doubt, faith**;
Where there is **despair, hope**;
Where there is **darkness, light**;
And where there is **sadness, joy**.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek **to be consoled** as **to console**,
to be understood as **to understand**,
to be loved, as **to love**.

For it is **in giving** that **we receive**,
It is **in pardoning** that **we are pardoned**,
and it is **in dying** that **we are born to eternal life**".

"All the darkness in the world cannot **extinguish** the light of a single candle."

"Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

"He who works with his hands is a laborer.

He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman. He who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist."

"The deeds you do may be the only sermon some persons will hear today"

"For it is in giving that we receive."

"Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that have received--only what you have given."

"Lord, grant me the strength to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

"We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way."

Activity 2 : In order to be an instrument of peace what would you do to rectify your lapses. Match the lapses in column A with the remedial measures in Column B

A - Lapses

B - Remedial measure

(a) Where there is hatred, (b) Where there is injury,; (c) Where there is doubt, (d) Where there is despair, (e) Where there is darkness, (f) And where there is sadness,	(1)I would assure hope; (2)I would become a light; (3)I would bring in joy. (4)I would sow love, (5)I would promote faith (6)I would ask for/ grant pardon;
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Activity 3- Match the proverbs with their interpretations

Proverb	Interpretation
(i) A bad carpenter always quarrels with his tools	(a)One bad quality of a person can outnumber all other good characteristics
(ii) A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush	(b)One's own experience, a bitter one, is a self tutor
(iii)A boat that is not tied up will drift along with the stream	(c) an uncontrolled and undisciplined life can drown one in the end.
(iv) A burnt child dreads the fire	(d)never drop anything in hand to pursue a mirage
(v) A chain is no stronger than its weakest link	(e) Good craftsmanship is determined in one's skill rather than the tools one uses.

Activity 4: Read aloud and practise the conversation. Visiting Sri Lanka - Scene One

Two foreigners Mr. and Mrs. Stefan are in Sri Lanka. They are on their way to Badulla by car. Car proceeding uphill

Anna: Oh, this is **wonderful**. Look at those little paddy fields. They are like steps down the hill. Sri Lanka is a **fascinating** country, isn't it?

Stefan: I **suppose** it is. That's why we came here.

Anna: Aren't you driving too fast Stefan?

Stefan: Am I?.....(Car chugs to a halt)

Anna: Oh! Dear. What **happened**?

Stefan: I don't know. The engine just stopped. What was the last town?

Anna: I'm not **sure**. I think it was Haputale. What are we going to do now?

Stefan: Perhaps someone here speaks English. I'll ask. Does anyone here speak English?

Anna: I think they are calling someone.

Stefan: Yes. Someone is coming.

Upali: Hello. What's the **trouble**?

Stefan: My car has broken down. I don't know what the trouble is.

Does anyone here know about cars?

Upali: There is a mechanic just down the road. I'll send someone to fetch him.

Anna: It's very hot in here.

Upali: Would you like to go to my house. It's down the road. My sister speaks English. She is a **teacher**.

Anna: That's very kind of you. I would like to get out of the sun.

Upali: By the way I'm Upali Gunasekera.

Stefan: U-pa-li Gun - se- ke-ra?. Is that right? Well, I'm Stefan Fleming and this is my wife Anna.

Upali: How do you do?

Stefan: How do you do?

Anna: Glad to meet you.... I'm going to Upali's house. Aren't you coming?

Stefan: No. I think I'll wait here for Mr. Martin Baas.

Upali: I'll leave your wife at my house, Mr. Fleming and then I'll come back

Activity 5: Write five words giving similar shades of meaning to the words underlined in the conversation.

Answers -Activity 2 - (a) -4 (b) -6 (c) -5 (d) 1 (e) -2 (f) -3 Activity 3 - (i)-e, (ii) -d, (iii)-c, (iv) - b (v) - a Activity 5 (i)**wonderful**- delightful pleasing great brilliant perfect ideal magnificent superb/(ii)**fascinating**-captivating charming enthralling attractive mesmerizing interesting absorbing (iii)**suppose** - presume assume understand expect reason guess imagine postulate expect (iv)**happened** - occurred, transpired, ensued, materialized chanced befell followed (v) **sure** - unquestionable indisputable certain definite guaranteed assured confident positive (vi) **trouble** - worry distress anxiety care misfortune suffering woe concern (vii)**fetch** bring carry take get cart move (viii) **teacher**- educator tutor instructor coach trainer lecturer professor (ix)**glad** - willing ready prepared happy eager pleased (x)**think** -reason reflect contemplate ponder deliberate consider meditate





Tension, anxiety and concentration; the girl's face is a collage of emotions (Girl on Wire by Faria Athar).

MUMBAI, India - A signal globalization among this spectrum of Indian colors. The girl, too, exhibits her bit of Indian revelry. Some may dismiss it as childish, but her perseverance and hard work say otherwise. It is clear she has put in hours of hard work to master this craft - it is easy to imagine that her next venture would be making her way across the rope on a wheel. It is an extraordinary moment in an everyday setting. The plastic, hoardings and formal shirts all

do what most people would not dream of doing: Balancing on a tightrope. The sparkly earrings, tiny nose ring, bangles and prominent metal pots on her head bear testimony to her village heritage. Her clothes may not be extraordinary, but her profound facial expressions give her more dignity than any other assets could offer her. She balances on a thin rope tied between two coloured wooden sticks. The

pole she holds on to for balance looks heavy, weighing her down in ways both tangible and intangible. Look carefully and you will see that it is tied around her neck and the thought of an albatross comes to mind. The men in the picture don't seem to be looking at her. They have seen it all before. Walking on a tightrope is probably not her 'talent,' nor does it come 'naturally' to her. It is the result of several hours of "deep and deliberate practice" and the outcome of much failure and perseverance. Here the cost of failing is dangerous and painful - and if the tightrope is situated high enough, perhaps even fatal. The studied expression on the girl's face indicates practice and perseverance, but also a hint of fear. One can only guess. She is

not telling.

Unfortunately, the rewards she gains each day after all her practice are not very impressive, but she does not let that deter her. She will be here again tomorrow, and many more brave children all over the world will do the same. They are applauded and appreciated for their effort, but does this attention make them happy? Although it is nice to think of rosy images of a brave young girl or boy, the real issue is hidden in plain sight: This is probably the most prevalent form of child labor you will see in India. Typically - outside the frame - one will see her parents or other adults collecting money from the spectators who have come to watch. The money they get may not be

much, but it is enough to feed the family for a night. A carnival, the hustle of traffic and of people, makes business better and perhaps more profitable by the end of the day. The sad part of such depictions of sheer bravery is that they are so common; people watching hardly consider the scene to be child exploitation. It is a sunny afternoon in the picture, so the girl has evidently skipped school to perform and earn her keep. The question that must be asked is, does she even go to school? This child may not have all the credentials or accolades to call herself 'great,' but she has the courage and bravery necessary to be successful in her own right.

MATRIMONIAL



Bride

Academically professionally qualified suitable son sought by Sinhala B/CH retired educated parents, for their second daughter. She is 5' 2", 31 pleasant simple, Completed education in Canada and now working for an International organization in Colombo. Prefer Christian values in life. Reply with family details. E-mail:

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tel: 0112231995 after 6.00 p.m.

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Tel: 0773747432. E-mail: jadmdon1946@gmail.com

No. NG7441, C/o, Colombo Catholic Press, Colombo 8.

