



OUR LADY OF THE HOLY ROSARY
OCTOBER 7

Messenger



ST. TERESA OF JESUS
OCTOBER 15

REGISTERED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS OF SRI LANKA UNDER NO. QD / 11 / NEWS / 2012"

Sunday October 7, 2012 Vol 143 No 38 16 Pages Rs: 25.00 Registered as a newspaper

A special Press and Electronic Media Conference

A special meeting of Priests of the Negombo region was organized by the Episcopal Vicar of Negombo, Very Rev. Fr. Patrick Perera. His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo presided over this meeting held on October 4, 2012 at the Cardinal Cooray Centre in Tammita, Negombo.

Some of the questions taken up for discussion were the deterioration of the Law and Order situation in the Country, and the complaints of the Catholic Community of Negombo.

Centre for Social Communication

Catholic Half Hour on Year of Faith

Tune into the Catholic Half Hour programme on Sunday, October 7, 2012 at 8.00 p.m. over the English National Service of SLBC (Radio Sri Lanka) on 95.6 MHz.

'Seek the common good of all citizens'

Holy Father urges all Catholic politicians

At the end of his General Audience on September 26, Pope Benedict XVI called on Catholic politicians to work for the common good of all, in accordance with Church Teachings.

During his remarks to attendees in St. Peter's square, the Pope reminded Catholic lawmakers "of the need to generously seek the common good of all citizens, in a way that is consistent with the convictions proper to the sons and daughters of the Church."

Pope Benedict's words were aimed in particular at the president of the Chilean House of Representatives, Nicolas Monckeberg Diaz, and a group of fellow congressmen who were visiting Rome.

He devoted his catechesis that morning to explaining the importance of praying in the Church's liturgy. The Pontiff encouraged Catholics to celebrate and live it "in an attitude of prayer, united to the Mystery of Christ and his dialogue as the Son with the Father."



The Pope concludes the third volume of 'Jesus of Nazareth'

The Holy Father, Benedict XVI has recently finished writing the third volume of "Jesus of Nazareth", dedicated to the childhood of Jesus (*Die Kindheitsgeschichten*). This is the final volume and the book will be translated into several languages from the original German text. The publications in other languages is expected to happen contemporaneously. This process may take some time to ensure accurate translation of such an important and anticipated text.

(Courtesy: L'Osservatore Romano)

PROCLAMATION OF THE 'YEAR OF FAITH'



"We treasure the great God given gift of faith to us". Our Universal Shepherd, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, declared a Special Year of Faith beginning from October 2012 through to November 2013.

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, will preside over the Archdiocesan Opening Ceremony of the Year of Faith on Sunday, October 7, at 6.00 p.m. at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena.

His Eminence invites the faithful, particularly from the Deaneries of Colombo North, Colombo Central, Colombo South and Kotte to participate in large numbers and that Parish Associations, Christian Communities and children and teachers of all Sunday Schools, grace this Universal Archdiocesan event.

Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle
Episcopal Vicar for the Southern Region

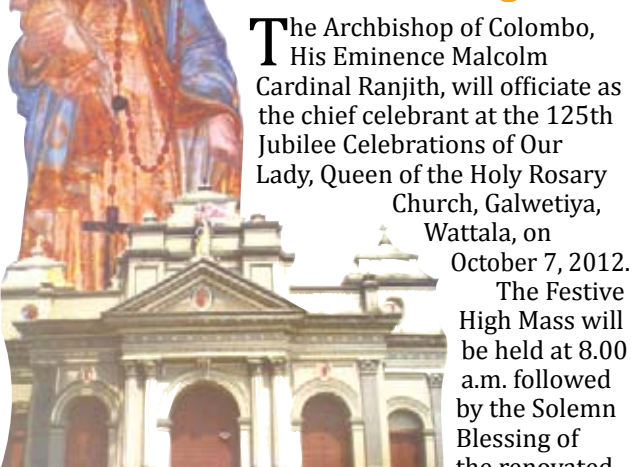
"Gleaned from the classics"
By Johannus

Singula quaeque locum teneant sortita deceter.

(from Horace)

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

Holy Rosary Church, Galwetiya - Wattala
125 years



The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, will officiate as the chief celebrant at the 125th Jubilee Celebrations of Our Lady, Queen of the Holy Rosary Church, Galwetiya, Wattala, on

October 7, 2012. The Festive High Mass will be held at 8.00 a.m. followed by the Solemn Blessing of the renovated

Church and unveiling of the plaque for the new Mission House for resident Priests.

Presentation of scholarships to poor children of the Parish will also take place after Holy Mass.

Vespers was sung on October 6, presided over by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

(Rev. Fr. Basil Wickremasinghe)



A documentary film on the Mission of the Holy Family Sisters in Sri Lanka, directed by Sanjeya Nirmal will be released on October 13 at Wennappuwa, amidst a ceremony organized to commemorate 150 years of the arrival of the Holy Family Sisters in Sri Lanka.

(Kishani Fernando)

English proficient Theologians of the laity to the Fore

The Faculty of Theology of Aquinas University College, Colombo created history on Wednesday, October 3, during the annual convocation when Degrees were awarded to six undergraduates, who were the preliminary recipients of Bachelors of Arts in Religious Studies, conducted in English.

Rev. Sr. Benita Felisitas, Miss Antoinette Jerom, Miss Mercy de Silva, Miss Romany Rasquinho, Mrs Rozaine Avory and Mrs. Rosanne Fernando received their certificates from the Chancellor of Aquinas University College and Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith.

The English Medium of the Faculty of Theology was established in 2009, under the directorship of Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, with the objective of guarding and deepening one's God given deposit of faith, studying extensively in depth the Sacred Theology in a bold step forward to open the doors of faith (Porta Fidei) to all.

Rev. Fr. Peter Pillai OMI, the first Rector of Aquinas, at the initial convocation cited: "Aquinas was founded not merely, as in every university to provide universal knowledge but

(Contd. on Pg 3)



Saint Francis the "Second Christ"

3



Holy Family Sisters Commemorate 150 Years

8



Current Affairs

10

A Sinhala book captioned "Catholic Education and School Take Over"

The objective of Mr. W.M.Fernando, the author of the above book, has been to prove the fact that the attempts to get the objective of vesting schools in the Government fulfilled, have been an utter failure and therefore the stand taken by the Catholic Church in that regard, by disassociating itself with it, was quite correct. It seems that Mr. Fernando has been highly successful in his attempt to achieve that objective. By referring to the Hansard he says, according to Hon. Badiuddin Mahmud, ex Minister of Education, the objective of vesting schools in the Government was to 'provide equal opportunities to all for education'. Then Mr. Fernando shows, quoting the following para from the final report of the National Committee for formulating a New Education Act for General Education, all the efforts to achieve that objective have been futile.

Quoting the following para from a letter of Hon. Anura Bandaranaiaka to the "Times" of 3rd October 1999, Mr Fernando says, according to Hon. Bandaranaiaka, by vesting schools in the Government, his mother has made a grave mistake.

"I think my mother made a grave mistake when she decided to take over the Roman Catholic Church managed denominational schools in 1961. Those schools like St. Joseph's, St. Peter's, Maris Stella in Negombo and her own school, St. Bridget's were dedicated to discipline in education."

Mr. Fernando has

mentioned in his book, quoting Hansard, that Hon. Dr. W. Dahanayaka, ex Minister of Education in the Government of late Hon. S. W. R. Bandaranaiake has said, that vesting schools in the Government was a tragedy of the first order.

"What was my conviction? The denominational schools are very much better managed than the Government schools. There is not the slightest doubt about it. I can boldly say that denominational schools were the pride of this country. We should be proud of them. This is my humble view.

The author has emphasized the fact that to allow International schools to be started, while starting of private schools which are conducted by following education rules and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education has been prohibited, is a grave mistake. He has done that, by quoting the following para of the above mentioned Government report itself, in regard to International schools.

The author asks the question, how justified it is, to allow International schools which are opened with an intention of earning profit and with a right to earn profit to be started, while starting of Private schools which are not entitled to earn profit under education rules, have been prohibited.

Mr. Fernando has shown, that in a certain judgement, it has been said, under the present circumstances the objective of education was just opposite of the accepted

objective of it. He has quoted the relevant part of that judgement, which had been delivered referring to an editorial of a leading national newspaper, as follows:

"The education sector is in a total mess, become manifestly clear year in and year out from the brochure over the Grade One admissions. If the objective of education is to produce good citizens, the opposite that happens in this country. Children are trained to be liars from the very beginning of their schooling. Parents forge bundles of documents to "prove" that they live within the stipulated distance of their choice and children are trained to memorize and utter blatant lies to cover up that crime at the interviews which they are debriefed by teachers and principals to check whether their parents are lying." S.C (F.R.) 10/07, 11/07, 12/07,13/07.

The author who writes an open letter to the Government about education says, to fulfill the aspirations of the public. is a must, to implement the following suggestions in the report of the above committee, which has been appointed by the Government itself.

"Public - Private partnership should be supportive of the State enterprise in education and private educational institutions be subject to guidance and monitoring by the State." (Page No. 13)

"Private sector participation in education at national level has



come to stay with a popular demand due to many complexities in providing education with the 'rising revolution of expectations' of the lower and upper middle class segments of society. This private part-

nership in general education should be recognized." (Page No. 16)

"Section 25 of the Assisted Schools and Training Colleges Act No. 8 of 1961 should be amend-

ed to allow the registration of private and international schools." (Page No. 46)

Foward to this book has been written by National Catholic Director of Social Communications, Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph.

Sacred Heart Society



Members of the Sacred Heart Society of the Archdiocese of Colombo are seen with Rev. Fr. Nishantha Vilathgamuwa in the stall at the Eucharistic Congress held recently at St. Joseph's College, Colombo.

H.A. Caldera

Dr. Jayaratnam Memorial building

The ground floor of the Dr. Jayaratnam Memorial Building constructed on the premises of St. Bernadette's Church, Chilaw with the funds generously donated by late Dr. Jayaratnam's family was



blessed and opened by Rev. Fr. Roncallie De Silva the Parish Priest of St. Mary's Cathedral, Chilaw.

The long felt need for a multi-purpose building was accomplished under the guidance of Rev. Fr. M.R. Prabu S.D.S. Leonard Wijesiri

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus

Classes on religion for those about to marry



Students donate a new House to a Senior member of the Minor Staff

Grade 4, students of St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10 who are preparing themselves to receive the First Holy Communion donated a new house to Mr. Gurusamy one of the members of the minor staff of the College, with the help of their parents on the children's and adults day.



This was done according to a vision and the mission of the Principal of the Primary School, Rev. Fr. Gihan Gunathilake and under the guidance of the Rector, Rev. Fr. Sylvester Ranasinghe.

The above picture shows some of the students who cut the ribbon to declare open the new house, with Rev. Fr. Rector, the Principal and Parents.

Stanislas Pius

The Archdiocesan Priest - Pilgrimage 2012



Led by the Chief Pastor, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, fifty priest belonging to Archdiocese of Colombo, availed the opportunity of a pilgrimage to Rome, Lourdes, Fatima Barcelona, Padua and Assisi. Here they are all gathered together as one family at St. Peter's square in Rome.

YEAR OF FAITH ON CATHOLIC HALF HOUR

A "Year of Faith" has been declared in the Universal Catholic Church by the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI commencing 11th October marking the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the 20th Anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and ending on 24th November 2013, the Feast of Christ the King. His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo will declare the Year of Faith in the Archdiocese of Colombo at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena on

Sunday October 7, 2012 at a Solemn Liturgical Service.

Why declare a "Year of Faith"? What shall we do during the Year of Faith? What are the expected fruits of the Year of Faith? Tune into the Catholic Half Hour programme presented by Mr. Trevor Ludowyke on Sunday October 7, 2012 at 8.00 p.m. over the English National Service of SLBC (Radio Sri Lanka) on 95.6 MHz for a deeper understanding on the meaning of the Year of Faith.

St. Benedict's College, Colombo 13 Grade 6 - Year 2012

Applications for new admission to Grade 6 can be obtained from the College Office on the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th of October between 1.30p.m. and 3.00 p.m.

Application forms are issued only to the child's parents. The following documents should be produced.

1. Child's Birth Certificate
2. Child's Baptismal Certificate
3. Family Book

Rev. Bro. Director

English proficient Contd. from Pg.1

also and especially to promote wisdom. I will therefore be solicitous to form intellectual personality of students, by inculcating in them a respect for truth and by guiding them to independent lines of thought, because it is crowned by the teachings of Christian Philosophy of life, Christian morals, with civic and social responsibilities" (March 1960).

(Aquinas Correspondent)

Saint Francis the "Second Christ"

On a Wing and a Prayer

By John Fernando - Australia

He was known as the "Second Christ". His example of humility and commitment to God is a remarkable testament to this wonderful human being, as was his deep love of nature and God's beautiful creation.

Saint Francis of Assisi stands tall in the pantheon of saints. Born 830 years ago in Italy, this son of a wealthy cloth merchant was destined to be a key instrument in building God's kingdom on earth. We celebrate his feast day each **4th of October**, but his eternal contribution to our faith needs to be recognised with gratitude daily.

Saint Francis, as a young man, seemed the unlikely person to be destined for greatness in Christ's kingdom. He loved to party and make merry. He was initially averse to the needs of the poor, the sick and the maligned. It was only after he returned from battle (fighting for his town Assisi against the town of Perugia) that his epiphany and transformation (somewhat similar to that of Saint Paul) was realised. He came back ill from battle and whilst convalescing with the aid of his family (especially his mother) that he realised his mission for God.

The salient moment of his transformation occurred when Christ spoke to him from a wooden crucifix at the derelict local church of San Damiano in Assisi. Christ told him "rebuild my church". This command was given not just for the

rebuilding of that particular church, but of the whole Church worldwide.

The church did need reinvigoration and a rebuild in that time, because it had just survived a terrible period of over three centuries of decay, corruption and internal abuse. Between 800AD and 1100 AD, the Church was in a sad state and hardly reflected the beautiful bride of Christ it is called to be.

God chose the right person in Francis. Immediately after his transformation, Saint Francis embraced his mission with a zeal and vigour that is an example to all of us. He shunned the worldly wealth he was to inherit, and donning a tunic made of a canvas sack, he wholeheartedly accepted the vow of poverty and the Christ-like attributes of humility, compassion, service, kindness, gentleness and the like.

It is interesting that Francis's name actually means France. His father was someone who was enamoured by all things French (Francis's mother was French too). As a result, his father named him Francis.

This great saint's litany of miracles and heroic deeds for the Church can fill volumes of books. But perhaps his most beautiful deeds include dying to self and attending to the needs of the sick - especially the lepers who were ostracised, unloved and suffering in his country. Saint Francis also embodies the very virtue of self sacrifice, as

he bravely walked away from a life of luxury, comfort and wealth and dove into a world of earthly poverty, suffering, discipline and denial. But in doing so he gained all the vast treasures of heaven, not just for himself, but for all humanity.

Saint Francis lived a short life by today's standards, just 44 years (1182-1226). Yet, in that time he allowed God to work miracles and great works. This saint's way of life, in serving Christ, became so popular and attractive that numerous wealthy men and women, mostly young, joined him in working for God and serving their neighbours. The most prominent being Clare, who began the Poor Sisters of Clare, and was herself canonised as a great saint in our Church.

Despite all his sacrifices, Saint Francis had much joy and happiness in his life. If you read the biographies and other books that provide accounts of his personal and religious life, you will realise that here was a man unfettered by the world's problems and vices. His love of nature and of all God's creatures allowed him to enjoy a sense of peace and harmony that we can only dare to dream. Amidst all his achievements, he was also one of the world's first true environmentalists.

Amongst his followers was Saint Anthony of Padua, who, too, got to meet this humble saint during their lifetimes. Wherever we go around the world, we are greeted by the distinct brown and

grey habits of the men and women who call themselves Franciscans or of the order of the Poor Sisters of Saint Clare.

Such was the humility of one of our Church's greatest-ever saints that he never thought himself worthy to be an ordained priest; hence, he never was. He lived and passed on to eternal life only as a brother. But what a brother he was!

The title of "Second Christ" is truly apt for this wonderful saint. The world and us are better for his witness of Christian faith. His beautiful canticle and life's deeds and prayers resonate through the centuries to our modern times too, and will likely do so till the end of the world.

Following are the words of his most famous prayer:

Lord, make me an instrument of your 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.

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. Amen.

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
Messenger
NOV. 1984

EDITORIAL

October 7, 2012

Embrace this 'Year of Faith'

Currently worldwide there are numerous trigger points that could, if further exacerbated, lead to the spectre of global conflict akin to World War One or World War Two of the 20th century. Between these two wars over 70 million people were killed, millions more injured or displaced, and almost the entire tribe of 200 or so countries worldwide were affected adversely.

There are several "hot spots" globally today, which give reason for serious concern. There is the worldwide agitation of Muslims against the blasphemous film made in the West. This could pose a further deterioration of the already troubled and friction-filled relationship between Islam and the West. Secondly, there is the tense situation between Israel and its Middle Eastern neighbours (namely Iran and some of the Arab countries). Add to this China's agitation against Japan over disputed territory and the ongoing civil wars in Iraq, Libya and Syria and you get a rather vitriolic and volatile cocktail similar to a time bomb ready to blow up in our faces.

The world spends more on weapons today than at any stage in history. Annually \$1,500 bil-

lion or over \$4 billion a day is spent on arms. The United States leads the way, accounting for over 50 per cent of all defence spending globally. This is a sad indictment of humanity, where we collectively spend possibly 100 times more on weapons than we do on humanitarian aid, relief and assistance.

The recent Gospel readings, especially from the letters of Saint James, clearly describe that human ways are not God's way. Our world, even in the so-called "modern" context has not been able to shake off its sinfulness. Anger, hatred, avarice, apathy, anarchy, violence and murder, wickedness, selfishness all still abound, despite great innovations in science and technology. Despite the progress of time and constant evolving of the species, we are no better now than on that fateful and chilling day, when Cain killed his brother Abel.

In context of the above, the only answer to this tragic human condition is God. He alone can right our wrongs, He alone can mend our ways. In 1939 the world was plunged into war, which threatened to destroy the very fabric of human civilisation. Today, those forces of evil are still very much in the foreground. We Catholics need to therefore take a stand against the forces of darkness by embracing this upcoming *Year of Faith* (October 2012 to November 2013), which the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI has proclaimed.

The *Year of Faith* is a very important and good choice, especially from a global perspective. The Holy Father has witnessed the deterioration of Christian faith in the West, and in some parts of the East, in addition to the rise of selfish secularism and atheism. Some countries seem to worship the self-centredness of individualism, material-

ism and consumerism to the hilt. For them God does not exist. It is all about their own selfish benefits and well being and about moral relativism – that is, doing anything that makes you feel good, despite it being right or wrong in the broader context.

Humanity is tainted by original sin. We are a fallen race. Our only lifeline is Christ and the resurrection He offers. We must therefore reinvigorate our lives of faith and Christian worship and fellowship, by daily living out the virtues which God's own Son came to teach us. Nothing on earth can save us; only God can.

The Archdiocesan opening ceremony of the *Year of Faith* being held on Sunday, October 7, at 6.00 p.m. at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kothahena, will be a fitting occasion to plunge in to the *Year of Faith*. We need to embrace this *Year of Faith* and participate daily, or as often as possible, in the Sacraments. We must familiarise ourselves even more with our Bibles and set aside time each day to read the Holy Book. It is also good for us to read supplementary Christian texts, like those on the lives of Saints and any good Christian book that could nourish our souls for eternal life.

With war, hunger, violence, disease and terrorism all lurking around, the only antidote is God and our Faith. So start afresh each day and embrace this wonderful *Year of Faith*. For each step you take towards God, He will rush to greet you, as did the father of the prodigal son. God is the only way for us and surely the only true source of happiness and love, in a world that often seems to get it wrong. May God bless you abundantly...

Magnificent Miracle of the Millennium The 2nd Vatican Council

By Rev. Fr. Anselm de Croos

It was an unprecedented event in the life of the Church that its Catholicity was so clearly manifested in the gathering of the bishops from the four corners of the world under the presidency of the Pope. It was good Pope John XXIII who expressed that the Council was a sudden inspiration of the Holy Spirit and there was no doubt in anyone's mind that the Holy Spirit himself guided the Council in its deliberations to provide for his Church the fresh air that was badly needed.

One was privileged to be in Rome during those exciting and exhilarating days of the Council. The Holy Spirit himself served new wine in new wine skins to the Church. And although some especially the Roman Curia wanted to put the new wine in old wineskins the Church as insisted by Jesus served the new wine in new wineskins. The vision that was engendered and spread swiftly to most of the Church especially through the bishops and the theologians was contained in the Council documents.

However the impetus to this new thinking was inspired a century ago by the erudite Cardinal Blessed John Henry Newman who succinctly summed up its agenda by cogent arguments that the faith was not a permanently fixed deposit and immutable but as a living faith it underwent the development of doctrine, because of this influence it

was in total called Newman's council.

There are many experts who guided the thinking of the Council but the Dominican Yves Congar whose passion for the Council, was so pervasive and infectious, that he was no doubt a star of the Council. He said, "The Council had to liberate the Church from the stifling regime of Pius XII and the precouncilar theology textbooks and the Renaissance ceremonialism that prevented the Church from carrying on its life-giving mission in the world and the dedication to the Will of Christ for unity which demanded an abiding commitment to ecumenism."

Thus it was characteristic of Pope John XXIII, that when asked whether it was difficult to succeed such a great Pope as Pius XII, he replied that when he was faced with a problem in the Church he thought of what Pius would have done and then did just the opposite. Such was the originality that Pope John brought to the Council.

The leading prelates attending the recent international Eucharistic Congress in Ireland said that there could be no reversal of reforms of the Council particularly in the Liturgy and there was no going back on the renewal of the Church.

Archbishop Pietro Marini the master of ceremonies of Blessed John Paul II said that liturgical changes of the Council including the active participation of the Congregation was irreversible, he continued that he was



not against the Mass of Pius V but that was an expression of a particular period of the Church. He recalled how in his home village prior to Vatican II, men would not enter the Church but rather sit outside during the Mass. It was the same in the churches in Sri Lanka before the Council. Now, specially the men folk go to Mass because they want to go, and the whole congregation including the men folk receive communion which they never did before the Council. The Council reformed the liturgy by connecting it more closely with scripture and the rites of the Early Church where the Eucharist was celebrated facing the people which custom the Popes continued uninterrupted whenever they celebrated Mass in the papal basilicas

and now this custom has extended to the whole Church. The Council made the simplicity of the Gospels be reflected especially in ecclesiastical dress especially among the hierarchy.

"The fundamental principles enunciated by the Council were that the Church is to be known as the people of God, a participatory Church at all levels and a firm dedication to ecumenism and unity in the Church. The Church had to regard the Early Church, in order to know how she can mirror the mission of her founder.

Although only Latin was permitted on the Council floor but to emphasize that the Catholic Church was not only that of the Latin Church, the Patriarch of Antioch although he knew Latin perfectly yet purposely spoke in French much to the annoyance of the Roman Curia and with such inputs the liturgy now would be celebrated in the vernacular with adaptations to different peoples with the growth of local rites.

Thus the Council transcended beyond the parameters of whether it was a rupture or a continuity but because certainly fresh air blowing in the Church which made Pope Benedict XVI to recently state that for the new evangelization which he has launched had to go deeply into the work of the Council if it is to bear fruit. The Council then was certainly the work of the Spirit who breathes where it will to the glory of God and the good of the Church which Jesus founded.

Just escaped –

A short story of fiction by *Rehana Ferdinando*

It was 5am in the morning when I escaped. Yes! I was out into this world again. I started running as fast as my feet could carry me. I didn't want him to come after me again. The streets lights shone dimly. I ran along the main road looking for a place to hide. When I did find one I rested until the tooting horns of the morning traffic awoke me. Hurriedly, I boarded a bus that would take me to where I belonged. Telling the bus conductor I had no money to pay, since I was running away from the master who abused me, I reached my village at 10am.

Everything in the village seemed to have changed since my departure. I vaguely recalled the name of my lane. Asking a passerby for directions, I walked down my lane desperately longing to reach home. Suddenly, I heard a voice shout "Edward, Edward". It was my mother's youngest sister. So many people came out of their houses but I could not recognize anyone. Suddenly, "Edward, where have you been my son?" cried my mother as she ran to me with tears of joy. She

had changed so much during the past few years. Her hair had turned gray, her face had wrinkled, and she had a look of depression. I was not surprised for I knew that it was my disappearance that had caused it all.

"I'm finally free! Out of slavery and abuse! But, there are several others trapped and I need to save them soon", I said.

Edward a boy of 15 revealed the above story. When he was a little boy of 10 he went missing from the village he lived in. Today, after a period of 5 years Edward had returned to his village. On April 20th 1990, Edward was kidnaped by an expatriate who visited Edward's village on a project. The expatriate who was involved in pornography and trafficking had blindfolded Edward when he was walking by the river. Edward had been trapped in the residence of this expatriate for the 5 years, together with several other boys. All of them had silently suffered physical and sexual abuse. They had had no way to escape. Edward had tried to escape several

times but had not succeeded.

One fine day when the master was loading some baggage to the boot of his vehicle, Edward had managed to escape without been noticed by the master.

Having wasted so many precious years of his life, Edward was determined to save the other little boys trapped in this house. Together with his parents they rushed to the police station to report the abusive master. The police reopened Edward's case after 5 years. They were perplexed. They had suspected Edward to have been trafficked to another country, as the search operations during the past few years within the country had not been fruitful. Having listened to Edward, the police officers admitted him to be examined at the nearest hospital, before continuing further investigations. Having facts confirmed by the Medical Officers, the police raided the home of the abusive foreigner. They were successful in rescuing the other children, and immediately arrested the expatriate for prosecution.

Holy Family Sisters on accomplishing 150 years in Sri Lanka open their hearts

Contd. from last week

5. The Mission and life of Lay Associates of the Holy Family

The Founder of the Holy family Association, before he established the branch of Apostolic Sisters, dedicated and committed himself to work with the youth. People, religion, social life and the economy were badly affected by the French revolution and in particular there was an urgent need to revive the Faith.

In order to develop the life of faith among the people, he decided to share the 'charism' he received from God. He was called by God to spread faith and love and to unite the scattered people through the Eucharistic Mystery. Fr. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles was called to achieve the spiritual perfection in the formula "God Alone" and to establish a Church in unity. The Founder and the people who worked with him, fulfilled the worldly needs and spiritual needs of the people of his time, while propagating Faith among them. He conducted religious classes with his seminary students when he was a sub-deacon. He identified the importance and indispensable role of lay people in evangelization. He was very firm, that all Christian commitment should be found in Christ

only. Thereby when he went to St. Eulalie Parish, he immediately made arrangements to conduct religious classes for elders. This was welcomed by all. This work was extended to other areas too. He expected to reap the same benefits achieved in Paris, in Bordeaux as well. This became a reality on November 21, 1819. He categorized the people according to their age and status and prepared rules for them. He received permission from the Church authorities to legalize the religious classes. His younger sister Fanny was in the Novitiate at that time. Fr. Bienvenu was united with the whole group through some spiritual activities and prayers. The call to the lay people by the Holy Family is a call from God. God invites all Christians to live their baptismal consecration to the full. They are called to live the life of the Holy Family and the first Christians. They follow the spirit of faith, brotherly love, poverty, patience, humility and simplicity and live the spirit lived by the Holy Family of Nazareth, in their life they are nourished by the Eucharist and the Word of God. A member is committed to live the Christian way of life in his own particular spheres of activity, within their daily family life and working place. There were 2500 Lay Associates during the time of our Founder. Some young

women who followed religious classes became nuns and became the founding members of the Association.

Jaffna Holy Family Lay Associates

In 1977, in Jaffna, three Sisters started the Holy Family Lay Associates in the Contemplative Sisters House at Manipay with 7 lay people. They gave them the fundamental knowledge, the purpose, and the spirit to form the Group of Lay Associates. Later in several parishes the Sisters animated those who wished to join this Group. Special handouts on the spirituality of Holy Family and rules for the members are sent periodically by the General Council in Rome. The Sisters helped the Groups formed in different areas to function and to live up to their call. They continue to encourage and empower them. At present there is an Asian leader, Sri Lankan National Leader, and Zonal leaders who are responsible for the Lay Associates. They are elected according to the structure specified in the Statutes of the Lay Associates.

These Lay Associates meet monthly to share their faith and ensure their concern, care and to strengthen the unity among the members. There is a book of guidelines, called, "A Way of Life" it is the statute for the members, to live their lives in keep-

ing with the Holy Family Charisma and spirituality. The members follow these statutes as far as possible. There are about 650 Lay Associates in the Jaffna Province. There are 16 zones comprising 43 areas. In these areas their mission is to extend and promote their particular vocation in greater depth and to be a witness to Christian charity among the people. They strengthen their relationship among the members of the Family of Bienvenu Noailles and live in complementary with the other vocations of Holy Family. Through their Annual Retreat, annual get-together. Family feasts, picnics and family celebrations they experience their sense of belonging to this great Family. They also publish a magazine called "Uravin Palam" which is a useful booklet for all. The Lay Associates are functioning in Parishes in Colombo, Talawakelle, Mattakelle, Haputale, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mannar, Vavuniya and the Jaffna peninsula. May God bless the Church to prosper on the earth through their committed life and services! Glory to God Alone!

6. History of the Holy Family Priest Associates

When Fr. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles founded the Holy Family Association /Congregation there were Priest

Mary, Mary

(1) Mary, Mary,
Young and innocent;
Heart filled with girlish dreams of wedding bells
and wedding plans;
Weaving innocent fancies into your wedding
gown;
Anticipating,
Joyously awaiting,
The day of your gladness of heart.

(2) Mary, Mary,
The Angel hailed you with tidings from the Lord;
And as you ventured a timid 'How?'
Did something deep within cry out,
'O Lord, not me, not NOW?'
And when you proclaimed that great, big 'YES',
did you know how many other 'yes's' it contained?

(3) Mary, Mary,
Was it heart-breaking telling Joseph?
How did you feel when you saw the doubt rise in
his eyes?
And when you glimpsed the depth of your be-
loved's pain,
Did you regret your 'Yes', and wish you could have
done it over again?

(4) Mary, Mary,
Was the waiting very hard?
Waiting, waiting, anxiously awaiting
Joseph's response?
Was his silence worse than bitter reproaches?
Did your heart ache FOR him and WITH him,
as you withdrew and let God convince him?

(5) Mary, Mary,
Did you feel God's living presence, both in you and
around you,
When at last your Joseph took you in his arms,
and asked forgiveness for his doubts,
and reassured you of his love,
and shared with you his vision from above,
and told you that the wedding would go on?

(6) Mary, Mary,
Did you dread the long, hard journey?
Did your feet drag with every mile?
And did you fret about the little one,
growing deep inside you?
And when they all turned you away,
and you had no place to stay,
did you wonder at the welcome
God had planned for His own Son?

(7) Mary, Mary,
What was it like to feel the very life of God stir
within you?
To feel Him kick His legs, and flap His arms inside you?
When starlight bathed His new-born face,
did you laugh, did you cry, did you cuddle Him close
in a loving embrace?
God He might be,
All-powerful, divine,
But in that moment did it seem,
He was just your little child?

(8) Mary, Mary,
Do you still treasure
those memories of shepherds and wise men
paying homage to your Son?
Did your heart overflow
with motherly pride,
as you gazed proudly upon Him,
with Joseph close by your side?

(To be continued)

(Taniya Ferdinandusz)

Associates. In 1822, Fr. Noailles with his brother Fr. Amand Noailles and Fr. Charriez formed the community of "Poor Priests" they drew up their plans and Rules and began to live as religious priests, practiced all virtues and accomplished all good works and to live strictest poverty. On October 5, 1825 their Statues were approved by the Archbishop of Bordeaux They were to live their priestly life in depth, assist the Bishop, be involved in Catechis-

ing and support the other members of the Congregation. But unfortunately this community did not last long. Fr. Charriez and Peyre joined the Sisters in Paris and created a division and disturbance. Once again a group was formed called the "Auxiliary Priests of the Holy Family. They were diocesan priests who were not members living a community life. On 18th April 1840, the community of

(Contd. on Pg. 15)

The 'New Disciples' of Kotahena - AD 1974

The Genesis: Raymond's Dream

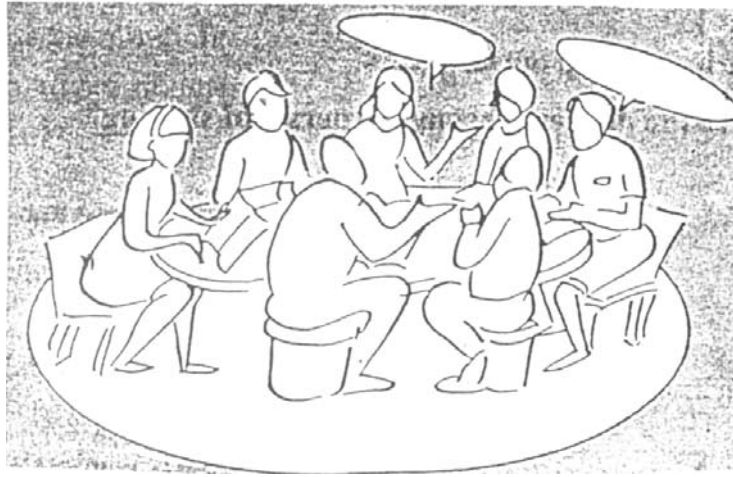
Remember the story of "Jacob's Dream" in the Book of Genesis? In 1974, Rev. Fr. Raymond Peiris, Parish Priest at St Lucia's Cathedral had a vision about giving the youth of Kotahena a "ladder to heaven." So, he met with his young priests Reggie Saparamadu and Noel Dias, and a young Brother Mervyn of St. Benedict's College to discuss the idea of starting a Catholic Youth Movement with a nucleus of young parishioners who had demonstrated leadership qualities.

Fishers of Men (and Women)

Fr Reggie and Fr Noel were commissioned to invite the young people who fit the calling. Fr Reggie spoke to my mother about recruiting my sister Anna and me as founding members of the St. Lucia's Youth Movement Nucleus Group. Other original members of the group included Bertie Motha, Fidelis Fernando, Fatima Candappa, Joe Muthupulle, Irma Lord, Peter Gnanapragasam, Sherwell Fernando, Brian Thiele,

Hillary Anandappa, Molly Corera and Rienzie Joseph. A few days later, in a meeting room in the Church that would later be known as the Nucleus Room, Fr Raymond led a lively discussion about activities to get the youth engaged and involved in the Church. As the youngest of the group and the only one not yet working, I had plenty of time to come up with creative ideas. We were divided into six zones: College Street, Wasala Road, Bloemendhal Road, Wall Street, Kotahena Flats and Green Street. Fidelis Fernando, Bertie Motha and I were assigned to College Street and surrounding areas.

The 7 a.m. Mass was designated the Youth Mass. To draw more young people to this Mass, we formed a youth choir led by Dennis Ramanaden. Dennis took on this role with zeal and had us practice for hours to ensure our singing was flawless at the packed Mass on Sunday morning. To make the Mass more interesting, I wrote Christian parodies to pop songs. After the initial shock, even the



older parishioners looked forward to the 7 a.m. Mass and the Youth Choir was sought after to sing at weddings and other special occasions at St Lucia's.

Coat of Many Colours

It was a very colourful time - we had frequent Zonal meetings where we took turns hosting them in each zone and in the spirit of friendly rivalry, we did our leg work to boost attendance and see who could have the most interesting meetings. The meetings included lively Christian songs, games and Bible Studies and talks about youth issues by priests with very interesting perspectives.

The Christmas Pageant, a mainstay of the Parish, had been directed by Mrs. Daphne Lord for as long as I remember. As I had the honour of being one of her favourite students, Aunty Daphne passed the mantle on to me in 1974. She also encouraged me to write and direct Catholic radio dramas that were broadcast once a month on Sunday evenings on SLBC's Channel One. In 1975, we also presented an Easter Variety Show with music and a comedy called "The Proposal" written and performed by the Nucleus Group.

Who can forget

the intensely competitive Inter-Zonal Drama Competition where women won in every category?

The all-girl production from Bloemendhal Zone won for best drama. In the Green Street Zone's production, Niranjani de Alwis who

played a male role won for Best Actor. College Street Zone performed a scene from "The Philanderer" by George Bernard Shaw and I won for "Best Actress."

Pearl of Great Price

As the Youth Movement gained momentum, several founding members who got married were replaced with other vibrant personalities. Fr Reggie and Fr Noel and a couple of other priests were transferred and their replacements, Fr. Felician, Fr Marcus and Fr Selvam joined the swing of things. We even roped in Fr. Berard to participate and sometimes fund

Molly Ponnampalam USA

our lunches and dinners after meetings or singing practice. We widened the scope of our activities to include house dances and held well-attended picnics and a very introspective 2-day Youth Retreat. The Youth of Kotahena had found meaning once again in the Catholic Church. Participation in any church activity was now actively sought after. We never lacked volunteers to work at the Sunday Pola to raise money for the Church and our amateur production of Jesus Christ Superstar.

Ark of the Covenant

Many of the youth of the seventies are scattered around the globe - some have left to be with the Lord, others are now parents or grandparents. As our lives evolved and we faced harsh realities of life as adults, professionals and parents, we found strength in the teachings of the Catholic Church, much like the Ark of the Covenant guided the Israelites centuries ago.

How do we thank God in prayer?

There are many ways to thank God. King David becomes a role model for prayer as he constantly cried to God for help when faced with dangers and difficulties in various forms. He had a tender and grateful heart toward his Creator that endeared him to God. He regularly expressed his thanks and praise to the Lord.

"It is good to give thanks to the Lord and sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your loving kindness in the morning, and your faithfulness every night." (Ps. 92:1-2) That's how you should face each day. When you wake up in the morning, remember his loving kindness. Wake up with a whisper in your lips thanking God for gifting you another day, entrusting yourself in his care and protection. During the day, offer praise and thanksgiving even for small mercies such as a smile, a 'thank you,' or a warm greeting of a friend.

At the close of the day, remember God's faithfulness. No matter how difficult the day may have been, God had a purpose in offering every moment with its burdens, challenges and blessings. We may not understand God's purpose in every situation. But we are pretty sure that God does not abandon us even when we sink to the depths of sin.

Give thanks to God for he heard your cries for help when you were in trouble. "I called to God in my anguish, I cried for help to my God: From his temple, he heard my voice. My cry came to his ears."

(Ps. 18:6) "For he has not despised nor disregarded the poverty of the poor, has not turned away his face, but has listened to the cry for help." (Ps.22:24)

Give thanks in all situations. "Always be joyful, pray constantly, and for all things give thanks; this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thes.5:16-18) These verses give three identifying marks of a genuine Christian.

1) A true Christian is always joyful. True Christianity is not depressing but exhilarating.

2) A true Christian prays constantly in every situation asking for God's wisdom and guidance.

3) A true Christian gives thanks always: Even on the darkest day, there are blessings to count.

Give thanks for strength and confidence God gives you. "Lord is my light and salvation, whom should I fear? The Lord is my life's refuge, of whom should I be afraid? (Ps.27:1) This Psalm tells us that when we fear God, we need not fear anyone else. Allow the Lord to illumine the dark corners of our life and lead us to the path that goes straight to him. Let us be guided by this light always. Cheer up someone who seems to be burdened with a nagging fear,

guilt or doubt.

Give thanks for the glories of his creation and what he provides you. "You send rain on the mountains and you fill the earth with the fruit of your labour. You cause grass to grow for the cattle. You cause plants to grow for people. (Ps.104:13-14) We thank God for our breath, health and strength, care, guidance and protection and innumerable divine gifts each day. By the end of each day, our hearts should be overflowing with a deep sense of gratitude that can in no way be repaid.

Give thanks for what God does in peoples' lives. "We always thank God for all of you, remembering you in our prayers unceasingly, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and your continual anticipation of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thes.2-3) Do we think only of ourselves when praising and thanking God or like St. Paul, do we thank God for the virtuous and exemplary lives of others too? Do we honestly praise God when our relations, friends and neighbours surpass us on the road to a successful life leaving us far behind?

O Creator God,
I thank you for the breath of life,
the strength of body and mind:
For my parents, relations, friends and neighbours,
Persons who inspire me through their lives.
For the books, conversations, encounters with people of wisdom,
Incidents that make me reflect and draw me close to you.
I thank you for the challenges and obstacles, even setbacks:
You sent them to me to strengthen me.

Thank you Lord, for the beauty of your creation,
the morning splendour and the flowers that bloom.
The birds that chirp and the evening stillness
I sorely need after a burdensome day.
I thank you for the silence you gift me from time to time;
It draws me to you to pour my heart out to you.
I thank you for the restful sleep you give me each night
To face the challenges each new day brings

I thank you for the stranger's smile that brightens up my day
The gentleness, the little acts of tenderness of those whom I have not met before.

I thank you for the wisdom through your living word in

Thoughts that haunt me

the scriptures.

As I travel to work each day, hapless beggars I do find on the way;
The blind, the lame, the walking skeletons,
Those whose home should be a mental asylum,
Elderly parents dumped like garbage,
as some thought they were a mighty nuisance.
I'm grateful to you Lord, you made me whole in body and mind,
But my heart grows heavy as I can't reach out to them.
However I whisper a prayer, to keep them under your protective care and grant their daily needs.
O Lord, you have showered me with an abundance of riches.
I'm deeply aware, they're not for my own gratification,
But to take a load off the burden of others, Making it less-burdensome.

Ananda Perera

October: The Rosary Month

The month of October is with us now:
Let's hover round the Rosary Queen somehow
At her feet our great problem place
The Family Rosary - Bring back Mother of grace.
In the past at a special time each day;
The family knelt with hope and trust to pray
The Family Rosary which bound them together
Helped them to overcome difficulties - no bother
In this fast changing world we got to face
The cost-of-living rising at a terrible pace.
To keep the wolf away from the door now
Mothers, too go a jobbing somehow.
Growing children have no guidance as such
After school to tuition classes they rush
Return home after the set of sun
Spend their time indulged in their own fun.
Look down O Mother, on our fair isle:
Remedy all errors for ever, not for a while
The Rosary power to one and all instill
Thus lead them all to do HIS Divine will.
The Family Rosary is fading away;
Reader to you I earnestly say.
Through the Family Rosary reach the SON,
Then all your troubles would end not one.

Norma Perera

Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

Church celebrates the feast of Lawrence Ruiz the first Filipino to be canonized a saint on September 28. He and 15 others were martyred at Nagasaki, Japan in 1637. The group included two consecrated women, two other laymen, two brothers and nine priests.

Lawrence was born in Manila in the Philippines; his father was Chinese and his mother Filipino. He became associated with the Dominicans, and was a member of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. These Dominicans taught him Spanish, and from his

parents he learned Chinese and Tagalog. He became a professional calligrapher and transcribed documents.

He married and had three children. In 1636, he fled the Philippines after being accused of murder. He joined a missionary group headed for Japan, where Catholics were being persecuted. It was soon found out that the members of this group were Catholic, so they were arrested and taken to Nagasaki. They were tortured for several days, first crushed while hanging upside down for three days, then the bodies were burned.

Pictures clockwise: with the ashes thrown into the Pacific Ocean on September 30, 1637.

Pope John Paul II canonized these martyrs on October 18, 1987.

The image of Nuestra Senora de Guia, or Our Lady of Guidance which is the oldest Marian image found in the Philippines, dating back to

Snapshots from Manila

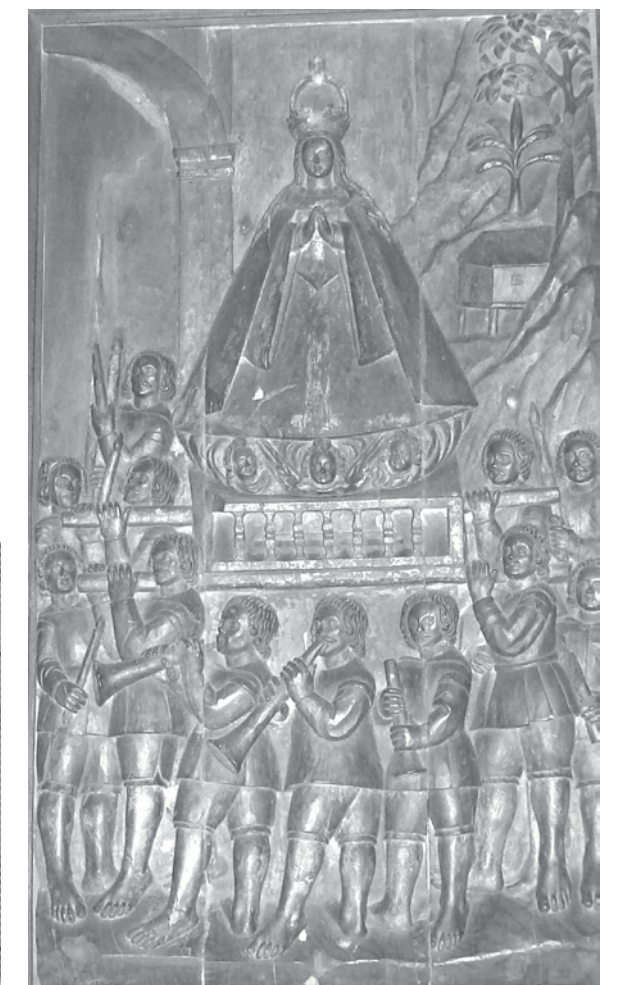
1571. It is at the Ermita Church Shrine which got its name from the Shrine and hermitage that stood here dedicated to the greatly venerated said image of Mary

A wooden panel showing the Spanish conquerors carrying the image of Mary into Philippines. The panel hangs at the San Augustin Monastery Museum in Intramuros Manila. The Augustinian monks arrived in the Philippines in 1565, forty four years after Magellan. The museum was originally used as the living quarters of the Augustinians. The Monastery was converted into a museum in 1973. Today San Augustin Museum showcases Spanish and Filipino art, artifacts and treasures.

The Pieta Malate is a sculpture found outside the church, in memory of the people of Malate who were killed during the Second World War. It is found outside of the Malate Church dedicated to Nuestra Senora de Remedios ("Our Lady of Remedies"). The Church was built originally on this spot in the sixteenth century by the Augustinians. It is one of the oldest churches in Manila.

Sculpture of Mary in front of the Malate Church, Manila showing the heavily Spanish influence.

The image of St. Lawrence Ruiz at the Colonial Culture Museum in Manila.



St. Francis cycle at the Basilica di San Francesco in Assisi

It was common for artists in the Middle Ages to paint a series of panels representing progressive scenes in a story. A famous cycle of frescos of this kind, depicting the life of St. Francis, adorns the walls of the Upper Church of St. Francis at Assisi. The cycle consists of twenty-eight panels around the lower part of the walls of the nave and entrance. They are arranged three to each window bay, with the exception of the first bay from the main door, which contains four panels. In the entrance, there is one scene on the wall on either side of the main door. The succession of events shown in the fresco cycle follows the story of the saint as set out in St. Bonaventure's Greater Life of St. Francis, written between 1260 and 1263. Giotto worked on the fresco cycle between 1290 and 1296. It is unlikely that he worked on his own, as the frescos vary in quality and some of the painting is not of the highest standard. It is likely that Giotto was responsible for the overall design and for the preparatory drawings, with a large team of helpers involved in the actual painting.

We highlight here some of the more favourite panels representing: St. Francis giving his mantle to a poor man, The miracle of the crucifix; sermon to the birds, institution of the crib.





Sisters of the Holy Family: 150

**Excerpts from an interview with Rev. Sr. Francisca Perera,
Provincial Superior of the Holy Family Sisters (Colombo Province)
by Melani Manel Perera of Asia News**

This month, the Sisters of the Holy Family will celebrate 150 years of mission in Sri Lanka. Today, the Sisters of the Holy Family have 41 communities in the Jaffna Province alone, and another 54 in the Province of Colombo. The theme chosen for this important anniversary is "Towards Reconciliation."

Can you tell us about the arrival of Holy Family Sisters in Sri Lanka?

Yes, it was very moving, exciting and a tiring journey. Our Ven. Founder Pierre Bienvenu Noailles whose zeal to spread the Good News to all nations knew no bounds accepted the invitation of Bishop Sameria and sent six of his Sisters to Sri Lanka.

They began their journey over seas, rivers, canals, land and deserts on September 6, 1862 and after 45 days reached Galle. They then proceeded to Colombo and finally set out for Jaffna on October 31, in a steam ship provided by the Governor. They arrived in Jaffna on November 1, on All Saints' Day.

Their beginnings were very hard and hazardous. Sleepless nights with serpents and rats on the roof, torrential rains drenching their beds, epidemics of cholera and malaria as well as deprivations, trials and challenges had to be faced. Their total trust and abandonment to

divine providence gave them the strength and courage to respond to the needs with great zeal and untiring devotedness.

Seeing the urgent needs that presented themselves, they did not delay in entering into the field of action. They began their ministry with English education in schools, which was followed by the setting up of orphanages, teaching Tamil and conducting sewing classes and dispensary work. The mission began to be alive. Mother Xavier, the leader of the community mentions, in her letters that the orphans were their consolation and that they were a beautiful bouquet to God.

Listening to the signs of the times and their calls, formation of both the Holy Family and the indigenous religious was also started. The Sisters spread their services all over the Peninsula before they found a permanent place for themselves. By 1870 their mission field extended up to Kurunegala, the capital of the North-Western Province, and then to Anurad-

hapura in the North-Central Province. Here too, priority was given to Education in English and Sinhala medium, taking care of orphans and nursing. The next extension was to the Western Province, with Wennappuwa as the centre while Jaffna became the centre of the Northern communities.

At present there are 41 communities in the Jaffna Province and 54 communities in the Colombo Province. The two Provinces were established mainly for convenient management. In the present Sri Lankan political and social context we realize the importance of building bridges and working as one family in order to witness to communion in our divided land. With this aim in view, we have one basic formation centre with retreats and seminars organized for both Provinces and working in mixed communities. At the leadership level too, the planning is worked out together. This has brought about deep mutual understanding and growth in love and communion and family spirit.

How are you preparing for this anniversary, and how do you feel as you approach it?

I am filled with deep gratitude to God who has journeyed with us lovingly and powerfully during all these long years, empowering



Sr. Francisca Perera

us to implant Family charity. Because, it evokes joy and deep gratitude to God for their zeal. Also, it is our own commitment to move forward in our mission respond to the

We have this great event

October 13, members of P.B.N. Family vocations -namely Apostles, Consecrated Seculars, Lay Family Children, Youth, and associates.

The period of special prayer service re our Missionaries to Sri Lanka conditional commitment thanksgiving and petition celebrations and a fellow

The following are features of this process

* Thanksgiving M where we are present as together with the parent

* Getting to know experiences of being with Sisters living and working

Spirituality of the Holy Family

The celebration of the 150th anniversary of the presence of Holy Family Sisters in Sri Lanka gives a deep motive for rejoicing and thanksgiving. It is also an invitation to reflect on our own lives in the light of the profound commitment and faithfulness of our pioneer Sisters, Mother Xavier Marchand with her five companions and their successors. It is not my intention to speak about the hardships and trails our missionaries had to face to spread God's Kingdom in an unknown land in the early period after their arrival in 1862. What I wish to highlight here is what stands out powerfully in their commitment in the midst of these trails and obstacles.

Our pioneer Sisters were obviously, driven by the vision of our Founder - the vision of family embracing all Christian callings. Their aim was to extend and strengthen the faith and to renew the witness of the first Christians who had but one heart and one mind. Animated by the spirit of the Founder which they had the privilege to absorb directly from him, their zeal to bring about God's reign knew no bounds. Their deep trust in God made them courageous in the face of risks and obstacles when undertaking works opened up for them by God's providence. The spirit of God Alone which unified and energized their lives made them truly free to let go of anything that stood in the way of their commitment to the mission entrusted to them. In the footsteps of our Founder their untiring dedication was to build a 'new society' where all could live with human dignity and love, unfettered by class, race or creed.

In the light of the deeper understanding of our Holy Family spirituality today we know that the 'new society' the Founder wished to create is the 'family face' of the church to witness by our lives that the church is the family of God's children. He received this inspiration and call in his contemplation of the mystery lived at Nazareth by Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the earthly image of the Trinity and the embryo of the church. "The Son of God came down on earth to create the Holy Family and He wished that the first three

members of this family should serve as models to those who were to form part of it." It was the family united by their search for God Alone and by their loving obedience to God's plan of salvation. It was the new creation of the spirit, the dawn of a new era.

I wish to dwell on the concept of the family, the 'new society' as it was expressed and lived by our Founder and the first Holy Family Sisters. It is relevant to us today as well. Anyone who wishes to live the Christian calling seriously and meaningfully can find in the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph the most perfect model. It is a specific way of living our Christian life which has meaning and value for the life and mission of the church. We will try to understand this spiritual way by considering three important aspects which continue to inspire and guide us.

1. The Mystery of the Incarnation:

At the heart of the mystery of Nazareth is the presence of the Son of God who came to dwell among us in order to communicate to us the life He had with the Father. It is here that God incarnates Himself in the human family, fully assuming our human condition with all its values and limitations. The Word of God often repeated by the Founder, calls us to reflect on this tremendous mystery of what it means for God to become one of us.

- "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son" (Jn3:16).

- "See what love the Father has for us that we should be called the children of God and so we are" (Jn3:1).

- "He came to His own and His own received Him not and raise them to this dignity the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:12).

Assuming fully our human condition, Jesus accepted to be fully man, totally dependent on the Father, doing His will. This humble life of Nazareth reveals a special stage in the total realization of Jesus' mission of salvation. It is the beginning of the new creation. All that makes up the ordinary, daily life and work, leisure, relationships, struggles and hopes

has now received a true meaning and value in Jesus. They have become means by which God comes to transform all that is human to give it a divine redemptive dimension. The humble realities of daily life have become the place where God reveals His will, gives Himself and continues His saving work.

The incarnation continues to take place, when, in faith we say 'yes' to God's love, and do His will in trustful abandonment as the Holy Family did. In our consumerist society of propaganda and competitions where power, wealth, prestige and pleasure have become Gods, the Holy Family shows us where the true values lie. Nazareth gives us a clear vision of God's Family and a specific way of living this vision. The light, guidance and support received from the family, is a source of strength in our life's journey.

2. Communion:

"Nazareth is the gentle image of the Trinity." The Founder loved to repeat. The unity lived in this home is a powerful example to all of us. This communion of love that united Jesus, Mary and Joseph with God and with one another united them also with all those around them. A simple family among others they shared their daily struggles, work, joys and pain. These relationships were lived without egoism and desire for wealth, power and prestige. Like the Holy Family we are called to live, in the light of faith, the real solidarities of our human existence. Our mission is to promote unity where we live and work, being aware of the forces of division at work in the form of egoism, isolation and selfishness that exist in our hearts, in our milieu, and in fami-



lies and communities.

Nazareth, the mystery of opens out to become the church of the Cross when Jesus entrusts to the beloved disciple. "Jesus did the scattered children of God" (Jn 17:21). The mystery of the church is a mystery of communion. "Father, may they be one as (Jn 17/21). It leads us to the ultimate of communion in the Divine Family and love the whole human family and the entire universe share. We thus form a family of God in Jesus. With His Brother, we become brothers to one another. Today our cosmic communion enabled us to recognize that our family embraces the entire cosmic family we form a sacred community of creation whose source is our Trinity. Openness to change of mentality and ways of seeing God will lead to spiritual awakening and discovery of the mysterious presence in the universe make of us agents of reconciliation and communion.

3. The Spirit of God Alone:

The mystery of presence and communion shows us our specific way of life. We are the Holy Family Associates of the Holy Family. It is

150 years of Mission in Sri Lanka



and make our Holy Spirit alive in this island. It evokes in us feelings of appreciation, love and our pioneer Missionary courage and missionary spirit as a call to reflect on our commitment; a challenge to new ventures in our ordinary field in order to see the signs of the times. We planned to celebrate the centenary as a Province together with all the Sisters, belonging to the five Charismatic, Contemplative, Lay Associates - Holy Family Adults and Priest Associates.

Spiritual preparation began on May 14, with a recalling the arrival of the Holy Family in Sri Lanka and their uniting to the Mission with the Holy Family; followed by family worship meal. *Some of the special preparation:* Mass in every parish as well as on our schools and students. Messages from the people through the Holy Family in their villages at

different times, and the impact we have made in their lives, by preparing a poster depicting the journey made by the schools with the Holy Family Sisters working there;

* Organizing a day for creative writing of essays, and poems in parishes, Catechism classes and schools on the influence of Holy Family Sisters in their lives and in their milieu;

* Producing a film showing the arrival of the first missionary Sisters, the hardships they faced in their mission fields, the Holy Family Spirituality and common mission and the expansion into various areas and ministries.

What were the major challenges the Sisters of the Holy Family had to face in these past 150 years?

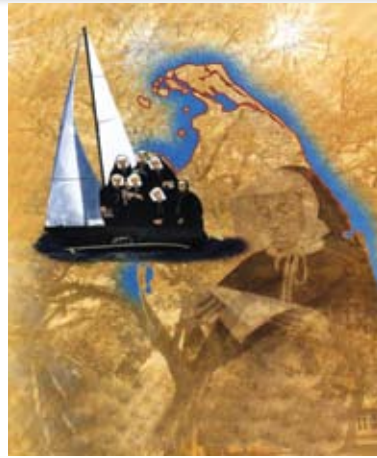
It seems to me some of the biggest challenges faced by our pioneer Sisters was at the beginning and during the period of expansion of their mission field. Working in an unknown land, with people of different cultures, needs and demands. Deprivations, trials, epidemics, difficult climate conditions etc.. Bringing about unity and peace in the midst of strife and division.

And the great blow to the Church in Sri Lanka was the takeover of Catholic Schools in 1960. It caused many adverse results in several areas of education in Catholic schools for the Catholic population. Nationalizing Training Schools and dearth of Catholic teachers and funds etc...However these challenges encouraged rethinking and renewal of ministries

and commitment. New ventures and modes of 'Presence' in remote areas and among poor people of different religions especially in Buddhist areas. Development of catechetical teaching at Parish level.

As a Congregation and as a Province the need was strongly felt to move out of the Island where we were well established serving in all the dioceses to reach out to other mission fields, needing missionaries bringing the Good News. Thus our Sri Lankan Sisters together with Sisters from other countries started Foundations in under privileged countries.

30 years of war have caused disaster in the country. Our Sisters had the opportunities to meet the brothers and sisters in the North to help in their tragic conditions As a Province and as Inter-religious groups we were able organize ourselves to work in camps and hospitals, weeks and months bringing comfort and care to them. It was a great challenge to leave our comfort zones and commit ourselves to the need of the hour.



And your greatest achievements?

Spreading out our apostolate in underdeveloped and rural areas. To be a Presence to the people regardless of cast, creed or race. Sending Sisters as missionaries to other countries such as Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Cameroon, Rwanda, Uganda, Congo Botswana, Argentina, France, Italy, and Britain.

Our formation has taken a positive step to give the formees a contextualized formation to be prophetic religious. In view of this we are giving the pre-novices extra one year of work experience, outside the convent.

Sr. Francisca, how will you approach the theme of reconciliation?

War has brought about mistrust between the people in the North and South. What we need is to build up broken trust and encourage confidence between the two groups. We as a Province have taken this theme "Towards Reconciliation" for our reflections as we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Holy Family Sisters to Sri Lanka realizing that it is the need of the day. As a Province we have had many discussions and reflections on this theme realizing our need to be healed from our past memories. The Sisters have participated in many programmes and discussion groups organized by different joint groups.

Asiannews

Family



ality of God alone as lived by the Holy Family. It is a radical choice of God and His Kingdom as spelt out in the general rules of 1844. "Jesus, Mary and Joseph loved, desired and sought only God Alone."

For the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, God meant everything. He was a living presence, the centre of their family life. His will, no matter how demanding, was the deepest source of their oneness. In utter faith, they were available to fulfill the Father's dream for humanity. They abandoned themselves trustfully to God, so that He could make of them the life-giving seed of the family of God's children. This is how the Holy Family lived for God Alone and His kingdom. It opened their hearts, their home and their lives to the whole world whose salvation was their greatest concern. To follow in their footsteps as our pioneer sisters did is to make their way of life, and their values, particularly their obedience, detachment and abandonment to providence, love and communion, simplicity and gentleness our own.

In the context of the many forces of evil at work around us - scant respect for life and human dignity, violence, crime and emptiness created by the growing sense of God's absence, the need for meaning and direction is a crying need today. Our faith in a loving, compassionate God who is our father, as revealed by Jesus, gives us an outlook, a way of life and values that form the point of reference for our thinking, deciding and acting. Yes, we are sons and daughters of God. Humankind and God's creation is our family. This gives us a deep sense that life is a blessing, and that we are under the unfailing care of God. Praise and thanksgiving then becomes a constant attitude of life.

Rev. Sr. Melanie Fernando

Rev. Fr. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles (The Founder of the Holy Family Sisters) His Childhood and Youth

Pierre Bienvenu Noailles was born on October 21, 1793. Pierre Noailles', father, was a native of Perigord. He had married a young Lorrainer Melle Madaleine Richard. The new born was their eight child. "It's a boy" says the father. "It's God who sent him to us" says the mother, Let us call him Bienvenu (which means "WELCOME"). He was baptized on the same day. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles was born at the height of terror and was baptized at the Cathedral of St. Andre, some weeks before it was desecrated and transformed into shops for the sale of forage and the making of saltpeter for the army. The Church of Bordeaux was in a tragic position.

Of the brothers and sisters born before him, three had died young, two brothers were left, Pierre and Cheri and two sisters Desiree and Catherine-Aimee. One brother and a sister came after him to that family, Amand and Fanny. In all there were in that family ten children. Before the French Revolution they were a well-to-do family, but during the Revolution they lost everything. They found it very hard

to make ends meet. The daily bread, hard to find and so dear made heavy expenses beyond their purse. Bienvenu's foster parents found means to send supplies to the large Bordeaux family.

From his younger age Bienvenu showed himself to be very amiable, affectionate and refined. His soul was clear as crystal. He had very pleasing qualities. His heart, has been deeply impressed by his mother's tenderness. His mother's tenderness became a best safeguard for his youth. One day sitting at her work, with her daughters around her, Madame Noailles became silent and tears began to fall. Little Bienvenu standing before her and not knowing what to do jumped suddenly to his mother's knees and began drying up her tears with his kisses. "There, mother I've drunk all your tears. Now do not weep anymore," affectionate and charming as he was the pet of all his sisters and brothers. One of them said, "That child will be the honour and glory of our family one day." Bienvenu possessed quite unusual intelligence. He made rapid

progress in his studies.

One day he was passing St. Andre's Cathedral, the spires were being repaired. Then were ladders set up. Bienvenu looked up drew near, took a grip. There he went up and up. He climbed the rope ladder, the others followed him, swinging as it swayed and courageously they arrived at the top. He was very brave and mischievous too when he was young.

Another time one evening, through a lit up window, he saw that a house was on fire. He ran up the staircase and threw himself against the door which did not open. A ladder reached a window, he broke the glass and found himself in the presence of a poor woman engulfed in the fire. Alas! The rescuers efforts were all in vain. The poor woman died after several hours of horrible suffering. When he was a young man Bienvenu's bravery had a successful issue.

Once Bienvenu passing through the Tonde Quarter saw three houses on fire and the people all bewailing themselves. Just for a little while he thought what can he do.



Something to help these people came to his mind. He collected all the buckets and vessels from the neighbouring houses and formed a chain of workers from a neighbouring well and crawled up on the roof where others followed him. The fire was extinguished. But there was an old man still missing up there in an attic "A ladder" cried Beinvenu. He came down went up the ladder and reached the infirm old man in the midst of smoke, carried him down the stairway already in flames and laid him down on the grass.

He will come back here some day to this Tonde Quarter a priest and a missionary, to exercise his ministries as a rescuer and a saviour of souls the people said.

Rev. Sr. Mechtilde Marie Fernando

40 YEARS A MISSIONARY

He rests in peace

Rev. Fr. Gilbert Perera, a pioneer Oblate Missionary, who had spent 40 of his 47 years of priestly life in nine parishes in the Anuradhapura Diocese, which included Kekirawa, Polonnaruwa, Nochchiagama, Padaviya, Medavachchiya and Habarana, went to his eternal rest four years ago, on September 26, 2008.

From the day he started off his missionary work from the Alogollewa Church, he moved with people to serve them. He cared for the poor always, but not for his health. And he never used a conveyance of his own to travel about. "I know my sheep, and my sheep know me," he once said to me, when I met him at Anuradhapura.

For us at St. Joseph's College, Maradana, he was John Gilbert. And he was the simplest guy in our class. He was a close relative and an amiable townmate. And among those of us who walked with him



Fr. Gilbert Perera

down the rail track heading for home after school, were young Oswald Gomis (now Archbishop Emeritus) John Perera (Johannes of the *Messenger*) and late Annesley Dias. It was Bishop Gomis who appointed Fr. Gilbert as the Vicar General of the Anuradhapura Diocese, years later, in 2002. His Lordship was the Bishop of Anuradhapura at that time.

Fr. Gilbert Perera was born on October 16, 1929, at Dippitigoda in the Dalugama Parish, as the second son of an exemplary and popular Catholic family. His father, late P. Vincent Perera, with

his golden voice, was a much liked Annavi of the Dalugama Church.

The land on which the Church of Our Lady of Fatima at Dippitigoda was built, was donated to the Church by his eldest son Wenceslaus Perera. The locality is now known as Vincent Place.

Every year, in the second week of October, Rev. Fr. Gilbert Perera was present at Dippitigoda for the annual feast of the Church on the land where he was born.

His last visit to the Church was six years ago for the ceremonial unveiling of a new statue of Our Lady of Fatima, which his younger brother Paul Perera had brought from Fatima in Portugal as a gift to Dippitigoda from the Basilica.

Even at that time Fr. Gilbert was feeble and weak due to poor health. And two years later, he passed away peacefully at the Oblate House in Kohuwala. The funeral rites

were performed at the premises of St. Joseph's Church, Anuradhapura.

Thus came to an end the illustrious spiritual life of a loyal servant of Christ, which began nearly fifty years ago.

Rev. Fr. Gilbert Perera OMI joined the Oblate Novitiate at Kalutara on September 8, 1953, for his preliminary formation and did his advanced theological studies at the Ampitiya National Seminary. He was ordained a Priest on April 8, 1961, by His Lordship Leo Nanayakkara, OSB.

The people of the Anuradhapura Diocese, where he was finally the Vicar General, and in particular, the Parishioners of Alagollewa, his first Church in Anuradhapura, and also the faithful of Habarana for whom he built a new church, will always remember him as "The poor man's Priest."

May God Bless Him.

Alfred Perera

Silver Jubilee of Priesthood

Rev. Fr. Callistus Perera, TOR, who was born at Bambukuliya, a sub-station of the Thoppuwa Parish, in the Diocese of Chilaw, had his religious formation at the Franciscan Mother House, Maggona and made his Simple Profession as a Franciscan Friar in 1970. After having obtained a Bachelors' Degree from the University of Kelaniya, he joined the tutorial staff of St. Mary's College, Negombo and St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa. He received his Priestly Ordination in 1986, as the second TOR priest ordained for the Province of Our Lady of Lanka, Sri Lanka.

Let us give glory to God while being grateful to him for the untiring service he rendered to the Franciscan Order as well as to the Holy Church during his 42-year religious life and 25-year priestly life. He served the Franciscan Order assuming duties as the Minister Provincial, Treasurer, Councilor, Novice Master and the Director of Formation. As his priestly ministry continued, he served as Assistant Parish Priest at Minneapolis Parish in America and as Parish Priest he served in the Parishes of Welihena, Bolawalana and Weliveriya. He was also well-known for his heart rending sermons. At present, he serves as the Superior of St. Anthony's Friary, Chilaw, while offering his priestly service to the nearby parishes.

The most striking quality we saw in his character, was his ability to face and overcome challenges without being overwhelmed by them, and he is also known as a nature lover throughout the Province.

Our prayer is that Almighty God will bless him abundantly and shower upon him all the graces he needs to carry out long years of fruitful service in His vineyard.

Rev. Fr. Mark Fernando, TOR

Daughter of the Church

*A Saint ever to remember
Born in Spain with splendor
With a desire for Martyrdom
Longing ever for the Eternal Kingdom*

*Many were the Spiritual gems in Spain
Teresa shone brightly among them
Filled with grit and grace
She gained both name and fame*

*Filled with Wisdom as a child
She ran to the land of the moors side
To win the martyr's crown
Eternal reward ever to gain*

*Charming were her ways
Physical beauty she displayed
Higher than all she possessed
Stands out her life of contemplation.*

*A woman of love and beauty
Searching the will of His Majesty
Struggles were many in her life
Battles were countless to write*

*The Herculean task of reform
Began she meticulously
Within the walls of Carmel
Facing all fearlessly*

*Opened the doors to Vocal Prayer
Taught the prayer of Contemplation
Her life showed no hesitation
In living what she taught*

*Left behind precious teachings
Glittering stars in the world
Adding new sight to the Christian
Honored doctor of the Church*

*Humble, humane and courageous was she
Mixed with common sense wit and humor
Carmelites treasure her as their mother holy
Daughter of the Church Teresa will always be.
Her yearning was nothing but
To suffer or to die.*

Sr. Sunitha A.C

Winning the Confidence of the Tamil people to be members of one state despite cultural and ethnic diversity

As soon as the war ended the major concerns were, the maintenance and welfare of the thousands of war displaced people, Tamil Tiger surrendees and LTTE terror combatants arrested by the security forces. There were about 280,000 IDPs and 11,700 LTTE combatants surrendered or arrested by the security forces. Most of the refugees have now left the camps although not all have been resettled in their original villages. According to government reports during the last 'Maha' season, farmers had been able to cultivate over 80 percent of the paddy lands which were abandoned in the north due to the conflict. Impressive growth rates have been recorded in food crop cultivation and livestock development.

On the rehabilitation of reservoirs and large and medium scale irrigation schemes the government has invested nearly Rs. 1 billion to supplement over 100 schemes. According to government reports farmers have cultivated 145,000 acres out of 180,000 acres which remained abandoned when the conflict ended. In the north the government has invested nearly US \$ 490 million to construct over 500 km of major roads. Reconstruction of major bridges such as Sangupiddy, Mannar and the construction of Kokavil transmission tower have now been completed. In the rehabilitation of the northern railway, the government has invested US \$ 652.4 million to construct 252 km of roadway. Renovation of the KKS harbor, KKS Cement Factory and the Palali airport runway etc. are nearing completion.

Impressive progress has also been made in the health and education sectors. The government has spent over Rs. 2.6 billion to repair hospitals, build new ones and provide equipment and drugs. Almost all the major hospitals and small and medium scale medical centers have been renovated. Over 900 schools out of 1020 are already functioning. The government says it has invested over Rs. 1.2 billion in the education sector so far. These are valuable economic benefits that have accrued to the Tamil people owing to their membership of the single common State for which they must be grateful.

But economic growth even at sustained, spectacular rates has not produced the kind of life satisfaction crucial to a stable society in the North. The people in the North are not happy. They complain about the presence of the Army. They complain that their lands have not been released to them. Above all else, they want to be treated in the same way as the majority Sinhalese. As Ivor Jennings said "The people in a democracy can't de-

cidate until somebody decides who the people are". The majority Sinhalese by turning to a nationalism based on ethnicity and religion - the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism, instead of a Sri Lankan nationalism, opened the way for the Tamil people to consider themselves a separate nation because of their linguistic, cultural and religious differences from the majority Sinhalese Buddhists. Every minority treasures its linguistic, religious and cultural identity and attempts at forcible integration have failed in every country with a plural society. The majority Sinhalese did not define the nation as a Sri Lankan nation but as a Sinhalese Buddhist nation. It then follows that the Tamils do not form part of this nation. It is perhaps too late now to change the mindset of a Sinhala Buddhist nation among the Sinhalese.

But recognition of the Tamils as a separate ethnic group need not mean they should form a separate state. This is why reconciliation is so important. In the West the problem of ethnic and cultural diversity was accommodated within the same State by making the State secular and allowing for devolution of power through some sort of federalism. By denying devolution of power the Sinhalese majority is risking its existence as a single state. What is required is to provide for a wide devolution of power. This is already provided for in the 13th Amendment but it has not been implemented. In particular there has not been fiscal devolution. The Provincial Councils can do nothing without money, and if they are totally dependent on the Central Government for funding, they become totally subordinate to the Central Government and cannot exercise power according to the needs and priorities of the local people. The police powers and land powers were to be devolved under the 13th Amendment but this has not been done. Instead some schools and hospitals in the provinces have been taken under the control of the Central Government. People therefore argue that the Provincial Councils are white elephants. But this is so only because there is no real devolution of fiscal power. The Finance Commission has been ineffective and instead its powers have been usurped by another Ministry. Attempts are being made to take funds such as the Samurthi Fund which are best disbursed in local areas through the provincial councils and pradesiya sabhas, under the Central Government.

R.M.B. Senanayake

Current Affairs

Blessing of the A/L students



St' Anne's Church, Wattala, celebrated the Holy Eucharist to invoke blessings on students within the Wattala area, who sat for A/L examination in August 2012, just before the examination was held. Students from St' Anne's Balika Maha Viddiyalaya, St' Athony's College, Good Shepherd Convent, Nayakakanda and the Christ King College, Hekitta participated in the Holy Mass. This Eucharistic Celebration was

organized by Rev. Fr. Gregory Fernando O.S.B., Director of morality and Catholic Education at Isurupaya whose moral support to our students at many sessions was appreciated very much by all participants.

The Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva celebrated the Holy Eucharist with Rev. Fr. Gregory Fernando and Rev. Fr. Mal Fernando. Among participants, there

were Directors and Directresses from the Department of Education. During liturgy, Rev. Fr. Mal Fernando delivered the homily on education and its impact on their life and it was a very encouraging and inspiring one.

Corporation among Principals and teachers of relevant schools, and the guidance from Parish Priest of Wattala, Rev. Fr. Basil Wickramasinghe made this event a success.

First Holy Communion Service at St. John the Baptist Church Nagoda - Kandana



Seventy five children received first Holy Communion on Saturday, September 1, 2012 at St. John the Baptist Church, Nagoda, Kandana.

Rev. Fr. Ranjan Silva the Parish Priest was the celebrant at the Holy Mass and in his homily said that, he is very glad to note that the children had taken much trouble during the past few months at their training and have come to receive the Eucharistic Lord today.

The parents of these children should set an example to them. They should take the initiative to come for the Eucharist not only on Sundays, but on week days as well.

Tom de Silva

Dog - a faithful friend created by God

A dog would be one's very own pet, it is a good friend that we all should get. to be beside us, to relax and rest., loyal to the master, doing its very best.

It does faithfully it's own duty, besides its glamour and beauty, providing everyone utmost security, bringing all of us to safety.

It rains like 'cats and dogs' they say, fighting like 'cats and dogs' they may, 'barking up the wrong tree' the likely way, expressions related to dogs, have come to stay.

Dog's are faithful friends that we gain, we don't realize it, though we have brains, we often use it's good name in vain, to ridicule others into shame.

'Children's food should not be thrown to dogs', 'Lazarus's sores were even licked by dogs', Jesus in His discourse made reference to dogs, God bless the beloved and faithful friends, our dogs!

K. D. K. S.



God is here, there and every where,
Looking upon us, with intense care,
All our sin He did spare,
Carried a cross of pain, He did bear.

Just a thought of God, is all we share,
Peace and joy in abundance will be there,
Faith and hope with trust are rare,
Seek these always in God's tender care.

Holy Spirit open our hearts and minds,
Come to our aid, our redeemer Divine,
God's graces upon us, would ever shine
Treasures from God, be yours and mine.

Presence of God is universal



Francis



What it says in
the Readings

As long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us.

1 Jn. 4:12

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B
7th Oct. - 14th Oct. 2012

SUN: 27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Gen. 2: 18-24; Hebr. 2: 9-11;
Mk. 10: 2-16 (or 10: 2-12)

Mon: Gal. 1: 13-24; Lk. 10: 25-37

Tue: Memorials of St. Denis, Bishop & Companions, Martyrs, St. John Leonardi, Priest



St. Denis, beheaded in the persecution under Valerius in 258, is a patron of France and regarded as the first bishop of Paris. **St. John Leonardi**, (16th century), an Italian pharmacist, became a priest along with a group of laymen worked in the hospitals and prisons. He is one of the founders of the College for the Propagation of the Faith.



He is one of the founders of the College for the Propagation of the Faith.

Wed: Gal. 2:1-2, 7-14; Lk. 11:1-4

Thu: Gal. 3: 1-5; Lk. 11: 5-13

Fri: Gal. 3: 7-14; Lk. 11: 15-20

Sat: Gal. 3: 22-29; Lk. 11: 27-28

Sun: 28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Wis 7: 7-11; Hebr. 4: 12-13;
Mk. 10:17-30 (or 17-27)

Holy Family.....

Contd. from Pg. 5

'Auxiliary Priests disintegrated. Even later, he did not succeed. In 1861, when Fr. Pierre Noailles died, the records show that there were 900 Priest Associates. As time passed, these priests were neglected and the group's identity weakened. For more than 100 years the number of Priest Associates too decreased.

After Vatican II, religious Congregations experienced a revival. They were called to return to their root. The Holy Family Congregation too began to look at its origin. At that time Sr. Marie Paule Chauvin, was the Superior General, she revived the Priest Associates vocation and also advised the Provincials/Heads of Delegation to promote this vocation in their Provinces and Delegations. Then some Sisters animated some priests about this vocation. In 1977, Fr. J.B. Devarajah invited the Holy Family Sisters to collaborate with him and to be with the people in the North who were affected by the war. Their commitment and dedication attracted him. He had the opportunity to know more about the Holy Family Congregation and realized that he too could become a Holy Family Priest Associate and so he opted to be formed in this vocation and committed himself as a Priest Associate. After 100 years he was the first priest to become a Priest Associate and in the history of the Congregation he has a special place. After him in the Jaffna diocese, Fr. J. P. Selvarajah, after coming to know the Charism of the Holy Family Congregation and studying about it made his commitment in 1983.

These two Priests Associates faithfully participated in all Holy Family events and were confirmed in their call and way of life. Following this priests from India, Fr. Serversius and Fr. Peter Fernando (now Bishop) who came to Sri Lanka to facilitate our Provincial Chapter and Annual Retreat respectively got a closer insight into our charism and spirituality and they too opted to be Priests Associates. In 1985 they made their commitment. In 1987, Fr. Francis Joseph who was teaching at St. Patrick's College and Fr. Bernard who was teaching in the same school made their commitment. In 2002,

First Reading. Gen. 2:18-24

God created man and gave him power over every other thing. Man with this power named all animals. There was no partner for him among them. Therefore God created the woman out of a bone taken from the rib of the man, "that they will cling on to each other and would become one flesh" is mentioned.

Second Reading. Heb. 2: 9-11

The example of Jesus' life is given to us as a base for Christian marriage. Jesus who was divine was made lower than the angels. He suffered and died for the salvation of all mankind.

Gospel. Mk. 10: 2-16

The Pharisees question Jesus about divorce. Moses had permitted divorce because of the hardness of the heart of people, but for Jesus there is no question of divorce. Anyone who remarries commits adultery. Everyone has to accept the kingdom of God like a little child, without any question.

Reflection

The monogamous state and the indissolubility and unity of marriage are stressed in today's readings. There is no question of divorce in Christian marriage. It is a fact that a couple has to undergo a lot of suffering pain and hardships in marriage. At times they will appear to be insurmountable and may appear even close to death. But still, there can be no question of a divorce. This is the position in Christian marriage; at the same time it is also a value in Christian marriage. Marriage is indissoluble. Only death could separate one from the other.

In creation God created man and said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." So the Lord caused him to sleep and took a rib out of his flesh and formed a woman. Then the man said, "This at least is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." They were equal and are of the same status. This was followed with the institution of marriage, where it is said, "therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh."

This marriage is monogamous and indissoluble.

It's a fact that, in the time of Moses, he had allowed man to divorce with the issue of a certificate of divorce, and then put the woman away. But Jesus says that it was done because of the hardness of the hearts of the people and he urged his followers to strictly adhere to the indissolubility of marriage. He goes to the extent of declaring that whoever remarries having divorced his partner, commits adultery. There is no question of divorce when it comes to Christ. Anybody and everybody, whether he likes it or not has to accept the kingdom of God like a Child. A responsibility. It is them who he will bless.

This does not mean that our religion is not aware or is ignorant of the many problems and the unbearable suffering some have to undergo in marriage. Problems like unfaithfulness, drunkenness, harassment, dissatisfaction...etc. are there, but we have to bear them up because we are the followers of Christ.

Today's Second Reading gives us the base for our marriages. It is an answer for all those who undergo suffering. First of all Christ was stripped of His Divinity and He made himself lower than the angels to enter the world of suffering. He was betrayed, flogged, spat upon, crowned with thorns, and abandoned by those close to Him once. He had to carry the cross; was nailed to it and finally died on it. He underwent such an enormous amount of suffering so as to be faithful to the Father. In comparison we always should feel that our suffering is nothing compared to what our Lord underwent on our behalf. This should serve us as an object lesson as to why we the disciples of Christ cannot bear up our suffering when it comes to the question, marriage.

Aid Story

Father Fouquet in West Africa, baptized during the winter an old native man and an old woman, and after their baptism they were married and returned to their distant village.

In the spring time when

the Christians came to visit the mission, the old couple was among the first, and the missionary could see from their face that joy of the honeymoon was indeed a thing of the past. "Father" said the old man, "I am very pleased to see you. We had a long and a weary winter, and the old woman you married me to is quite unbearable. Instead of marrying her I ought to have got rid of her long ago. Please, Father, can you UN-marry us?"

"Yes, Father, do UN-marry us!" The old woman broke in with torrents of indignant complaints against the husband, so that Father Fouquet had no time to think things over.

"Well, my children," he said at last, "You can be unmarried, but it is a long and difficult business." They both insisted that they must be unmarried.

Very well, let us begin at once. Go and wait for me in the church.

He followed them in, taking with him the Breviary and a Holy water sprinkler. He made the couple sit close to each other in the front bench, then he knelt before the altar and began saying his office. At the end of each psalm he got up made a big sign of the Cross over the couple and gave a rap with the sprinkler first on the head of the man, then on the woman. When this had gone on for many hours his office was finished and no visible effect had been made on the couple, except they rubbed their rather sore heads occasionally.

"Wait a moment," he said, "I must fetch another book and then I will come back and go on UN-marrying you!"

He returned with a larger book of spiritual readings and after reading a paragraph he got up as before and grasped the sprinkler. But the old man took hold of his arm. "Father is this ceremony going to last much longer?" "Well it depends on the hardness of your heads. You know you were married saying "Till death do us part." "So I have to go on until one or the other of you drop dead." The couple said, "If it is so difficult we will manage to bear up each other and live the rest of our lives."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

Fr. Jacob Nicholas made his commitment and in 2004, Fr. Mary Joseph, Fr. Michael Savundranayagam and Fr. Jebaretnam committed themselves as Priest Associates. In 2006, Fr. A. P. Devasagayam, in 2007, Fr. Xavier Croos of the Mannar Diocese, in 2008 Fr. Maulis, 2009, Fr. X.W. James and in 2012, Fr. Emil Paul and Fr. Anthonipillai made their commitments. In the Batticaloa Diocese the first priests to commit themselves as Holy Family Priest Associates were Fr. Ignesi Joseph and Fr. Ambrose.

In Asia - Sri Lanka there are 59 Priest Associates; Philippines - 5; India - 15; Ireland - 1; Scotland - 1; Africa - 2; France - 2; in all there are 85 Priest Associates in the Holy Family Congregation.

In 2004, the Priest Associates had their first International meeting at Monte Fano, OSB Monastery. Sr. Margaret Muldoon presided at this meeting with her Councillor and other apostolic Sisters. The 4th article in the Constitution was studied and reflected on during the meeting, 29 Priest Associates participated in it. The second International meeting was held in Martillac Spirituality Centre in Bordeaux, France in 2007. At this meeting the Holy Family spirituality was deepened through inputs and workshops. This gave them the opportunity to visit the birth place of our founder and where he grew up, together with this the visit to the island in Martillac which was the centre of our founder's spiritual life had its effect in living their commitment as Holy Family Priest Associates..

We express our gratitude to the Superior General and the Apostolic Sisters who journeyed with us and with whom we continue to deepen our call and commitment as Holy Family Priest Associates.

Rev. Fr. Jacob Nicholas Co-ordinator
Jubilee Committee, Holy Family Provincialate, Jaffna.
(Concluded)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response Lord, hear us in your love.

For the Christian community that it may be a sign and a source of unity for a fragmented world. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response Lord, hear us in your love.

For all married people that the bond which drew them together and which God blessed on their wedding day may enrich them and prove to be truly unbreakable. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response Lord, hear us in your love.

For marriages that are under stress, and for those that have broken down, that Christ may heal the wounds of them all. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response Lord, hear us in your love.

For single and widowed people that they may find love and support within the Christian community. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response Lord, hear us in your love.