

"Gleaned from the classics"
By Johannus

O fallacem hominum spem
(from Cicero)
Oh how deceitful is the hope of man

Messenger

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PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

March 19

"Glorious St. Joseph, model of all who are devoted to labour, obtain for me the grace to work in the spirit of penance in expiation of my many sins; to work conscientiously by placing love of duty above my inclinations; to gratefully and joyously deem it an honour to employ and to develop by labour the gifts I have received from God, to work methodically, peacefully, and in moderation and patience, without ever shrinking from it through weariness or difficulty to work; above all, with purity of intention and unselfishness, having unceasingly before my eyes death and the account I have to render of time lost, talents unused, good not done, and vain complacency in success, so baneful to the work of God. All for Jesus, all for Mary, all to imitate thee, O patriarch St. Joseph! This shall be my motto for life and eternity."

- Pope Pius IX

Called to eternal rest



Fr. Sritharan Sylvester
Rev. Fr. Sritharan Sylvester, Procurator General of Trincomalee-Batticaloa Diocese, died in a heart attack on 8th March 2012.

Before being appointed as the Procurator General, Fr. Sritharan served as the Director of Caritas (EHED) of Trincomalee-Batticaloa. His mortal remains were buried at the Alaiyadicholai Catholic Cemetery, Batticaloa, after the Funeral Service at St. Mary's Co-Cathedral, Batticaloa on Saturday, 10th March 2012.

Permission must be given to start more schools to impart religious education: Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith

The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith has stated that religious institutions, whatever the religion may be, must be given permission to start more schools to give religious education to the children.

Speaking after declaring open the 2nd Building Project of St. Joseph's College Branch School, Kadolkele, Negombo, the Cardinal said, "It is difficult to purify the society or even to bring about unity among all nationalities without religious education. It is only through religious education, children could be educated well. Without religious education, even in some of the Western

countries students have embraced concepts of materialism and are looking for only technical knowledge. Education is not this, education is meant to give integral education to the children and form their lives accordingly. Only the religious institutions could do this.

"Therefore the authorities must give permission to the religious institutions, whatever the religion may be, they must give permission to start more schools to give religious education to the children. No child should be denied his or her right to religious education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation," His Eminence pointed out.



The Special Delegates from the Office of the President of the Milan Province declared open the new building and His Eminence, Malcolm

Cardinal Ranjith blessed the building and laid the foundation stone together with the delegates for the 3rd Building Project for the A/L section of the School.

The Delegates also presented a cheque to His Eminence as further financial assistance for the 3rd Project.
(Archdiocesan website)

Abducted fishermen's families seek help from Church

The families of the six fishermen abducted by Somali pirates have requested the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka to appeal to the Government to help in the release of the six fishermen.

They also appeal to the Church for prayers and to unite with them in their time of agony.

The six fishermen were reported to have been abducted by Somali pirates for fishing in international waters. They had left Negombo in mid last year.

- Cecil Danicius

Kimbulapitiya Parish lands are safe



Airport and Aviation Authority officials pose for a picture with the Cardinal.

The Katunayake Airport and Aviation Authority has given an assurance to the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, that no land will be acquired from the Kimbulapitiya parish or from its vicinity for the construction of the Katunayake Airport Highway.

Apart from the land already acquired no other land will be taken over by the government, the Airport and Aviation Authority had stated.

Keep on praying intensely and unceasingly

The Archbishop Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith has appealed to all the clergy and the faithful to always abide in the Lord and offer prayers constantly for better understanding and unity among different races and religions in our country.

"Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances.

This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus"
(1 Thess: 5:16).

Articles for Easter Issue of the 'Catholic Messenger'

The Easter Issue of the *Catholic Messenger* will be published on April 1st. We welcome our readers to send in their contributions on or before the 25th of March.



Jesus not political but prophetic says the Pope

in Jerusalem.

"It is impossible to interpret Jesus as a violent person. Violence is contrary to the Kingdom of God, it is a tool of the Antichrist. Violence never serves humanity, but dehumanizes," said the Pope in his March 11 Angelus address at the Vatican.

His remarks criticized the occasional interpretation of this episode in a political revolutionary sense that places Jesus in line with the Zealot movement.

The Zealots were a Jewish political movement who were "zealous" for God's law and "ready to use violence to enforce it," the

Pope explained. They were waiting for a Messiah who would liberate Israel from Roman rule. Jesus, however, "disappointed them in this" to the extent that "some disciples deserted him and even Judas Iscariot betrayed him."

Though Jesus was not being political he was being prophetic, said the

Pope. The prophets "in the name of God, often denounced abuses and they did so sometimes with symbolic gestures." The key to understanding the actions of Christ, the Pope said, is to listen to Jesus' words during the event: "Take these things and make not my Father's house a market!" (EWTN)



A Big Thank You!

Mr. Anthony Fonseka of No. 10/1, St. Mary's Road, Katukurunda, Moratuwa, who appealed to the generosity and kindness of the readers of the *Catholic Messenger* to help him undergo a by-pass surgery recommended by his Cardiologist Dr. Gamini Weerakoon, sincerely wishes to thank all those who generously helped in contributing the essential funds to meet the expenses of his operation, which was conducted successfully.

While thanking the Messenger for the publicity given, he wishes to thank each and everyone for their kindness and consideration extended during his time of need.

New Secretary for Bl. Joseph Vaz National Committee



Rev. Fr. Anton Fernandopulle was appointed Secretary of the National Committee of Blessed Joseph Vaz, recently.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Anton Fernandopulle, Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney J. Fernando, Mr. Roger Corera and Rev. Fr. Christopher Corera, Spiritual Director, Ratnapura Diocese., at the meeting.

(Theobald Samaratinga)

Distribution of desks and benches to deserving schools



Leader of the Opposition in the Dehiowita Pradeshiya Sabha, Sestus Arsakularatna, distributed desks and benches to Daham schools in the Dehiowita DS division to mark his entry to politics 21 years ago. He is the only Catholic member in the district who was never defeated in elections. Picture shows Felician Wethasinghe receiving the furniture donated to St. Anthony's Church, Daham School. From L-R Champika Premadasa, Kegalle District MP, Dr. (Mrs.) Thusitha Wijemanna Provincial Council member and Sestus Arsakularatna.

(Text & Pic by: J. Antony)

New organ donated to St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda



The Catholic Association of the Inland Revenue Department, donated a modern electric organ to St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda recently. The organ was handed over to Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunathilaka the Parish Priest by the President of the Catholic Association Ivan Dissanayaka at the Church.

(N. Perera)

Bishop Cletus addresses meeting of the Ratnapura Pastoral Committee



The Pastoral Committee meeting of the diocese of Ratnapura was held at the Bishop's House, Madola, Avissawella, on 3rd March, chaired by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura.

A proposal by the Bishop to

make Our Lady of Lourdes' Shrine Kudagama, a place of pilgrimage was unanimously adopted. It was also decided that all the parishes in the diocese will go on a pilgrimage to Kudagama on Saturday 14th July.

A suggestion was made to the effect that Catholics who had

embraced other faiths should be denied burials in the Church cemetery.

A committee headed by Rev. Fr. K.D. Joseph was informed to enrol members in all the parishes.

Pictures show the Bishop addressing to meeting.

(J. Antony)

Senior Students' Day at Deva Dharma Nikethanaya

Blessed Joseph Vaz, Deva Dharma Nikethanaya, held its "Senior Students' Day" on 7th March, 2012 with the Solemn Mass co-celebrated by three newly ordained priests.

The day was enriched by talks given by Rev. Fr. Lalith Felix Perera, Rector, St. Aloysius (Minor) Seminary, Borella, Rev. Fr. J. Balagalla and Dr. Maxie Fernandopulle.

(Asika Priyadarshana)

Programme on writing skills at Thalghapitiya Parish



A programme on "Enhanced Writing Skills" was held recently for Daham Pasalas belonging to the Thalghapitiya Parish, in the Kurunegala Diocese at St. Francis Xavier, Junior School, Thalghapitiya.

Children from the Daham Pasalas of five Churches in the villages of Thalghapitiya, Weerakodiya, Karawwa, Bingiriya and Hirigolla, participated at this programme.

The programme was conducted by Kumar Nayanajith of the *Lama Pradeepaya* and *Gnanartha Pradeepaya*, under the patronage of Rev. Fr. Andrew Fonseka, Parish Priest.

(K.D. Pious)

Pallansena Parish makes Lenten Pilgrimage to Alagollawa



The parishioners of the Pallansena Parish held their Lenten Pilgrimage at Calvary Hill, Alagollawa, Anuradhapura. It was organised by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Jayantha Nimal and Rev. Fr. Sisira Samarakoon, Asst. Parish Priest.

The Way of the Cross was conducted by Rev. Bro. Chaminda Perera and Holy Mass was presided by Rev. Fr. Sisira Samarakoon.

(Melvyn de Costa)

Vincent De Paul Society at Balagala Church



The inauguration of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Balagala was held at the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Balagala recently.

Mrs. Fatima Thalayasingham was appointed as the President, Mrs. Amila Nirmani as the Secretary and Mrs. Hema Chandrasekara as the Treasurer.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. H.D. Anthony, Resident Priest, Mrs. M. Cooray of the SVP Wattala and other members of the SVP.

(Nimal Perera)

Liturgical Awareness Programme at Ratnapura Diocese



A Liturgical Awareness Programme for members of Liturgical Committees in the Diocese of Ratnapura, organized by the Diocesan Commission for Liturgy and Worship, was held last Sunday (11), at the Pastoral Centre, Avissawella.

The Programme was conducted for both Sinhala and Tamil Liturgical Committee members. Rev. Fr. Anton Sriyan Fernando of the National Seminary, Kandy, conducted the programme in Sinhala, while Rev. Fr. T. Soosaithasan OSM, conducted the Tamil programme.

The awareness programme was sponsored by Caritas Sethmini, Ratnapura. The programme was conducted under the auspices of His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera, Bishop of Ratnapura.

(Theobald Samaratinga)

St. Joseph's College, Branch School Kadolkele

A mission to educate the less-privileged: Rev. Fr. Sudath Gunathilake

The 2nd Project of St. Joseph's College Branch School, Kadolkele, Negombo was declared open by the special delegate of the Province of Milan, Italy and was blessed by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, last Saturday (10th).

The foundation stone was also laid for the 3rd Building Project for the A/L section of the School. A cheque was presented by the special delegate from Milan to His Eminence as further financial assistance for the 3rd Project.

Rev. Fr. Sudath Gunathilake, Principal of the School, addressing the gathering said that presently St Joseph's College, Negombo being a growing institution has passed another milestone in its short but eventful history. "We have just witnessed the solemn opening of the sec-

ond building of the school and the laying of the foundation stone for the Third Phase. It is indeed a grace-filled occasion." Fr. Sudath thanked the efforts of His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith for his abiding interest in the development of Catholic Education and the care and concern he showed for the development of Catholic schools.

"As the Shepherd of the Archdiocese, His Eminence is concerned that our schools must not only educate the children but must also provide a conducive environment for their Christian formation," Fr. Sudath said and assured that St. Joseph's College, Negombo will do its utmost to uphold these values.

He said that many of the children attending the school were from underprivileged families and some of them have

had no schooling at all. "But we have given them equal opportunity and equal treatment, thereby restoring their human dignity and helping them to stand shoulder to shoulder with their colleagues from more fortunate backgrounds. Thus, we have tried to establish an important mission of the Church, that of, educating the poor," he said.

Present on the occasion were Archbishops Emeriti, Their Grace, Nicholas Marcus



Fernando and Oswald Gomis, together with His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva- Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, Honourable Delegates from the Province of Milan-Italy, Msgr Neville

Joe Perera, Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, Manager of Catholics Private Schools, Rev. Fathers, Rev. Brothers, Rev. Sisters, Parliamentarians and other distinguished invitees.

(Archdiocesan website)

"This is the way we conduct our Pola"

Pre-childhood Development Centre of Andimulla at Halpe St. Francis Xavier's Church, organized a pola to educate the children on buying and selling. Here Mrs. Leonie Perera and Mrs. Sujeevani Fernando, pre school teachers are seen instructing the little ones on how to conduct a Pola.

(Pic: Cecil Danicius)



Flagstaff hoisted at St. Joseph's College, Colombo

The sweltering heat of the noon day sun did not by any means dampen the Josephian spirit. The neatly clad youngsters in school uniform assembled in front of the school chapel on March 12th to hoist the flag-staff. It was a red letter day in the annals of College history.

The flagstaff was hoisted in the College premises to mark the College feast which falls on Monday, March 19th.

The students, teachers and clerical staff organized this significant event. The students enthusiastically hung the flags on the flagstaff.

The flag-hoisting ceremony and the prayers were conducted by Rev. Fr. Sylvester Ranasinghe, the Rector of St. Joseph's College.

It was indeed encouraging to witness the traditional flagstaff being hoisted at school level as it is generally raised for church feasts.

This gives more meaning and added dimension to St. Joseph's feast. The preparation for the feast of St. Joseph instills values in a student's spiritual life.

The proceedings culminated with the students and teachers being served milk rice - this was another milestone in the school's calendar.

Kevin Jansz

Parish Level Cricket Tournament at Pallansena



Altar Servers belonging to the Pallansena Parish held an Inter-Church Four Over, Cricket Tournament recently, at the Negombo Municipal Council Grounds, Kochchikade. The tournament was organised by Rev. Fr. Sisira Samarakoon, Asst. Parish Priest, Pallansena.

The team from Holy Trinity Church, Duwana emerged champions while the 2nd place was secured by St. Sebastian's Church, Porutota. Awards were also given for the categories of Best Batsman and Best Bowler.

The Pallansena Parish has five churches and this was the first tournament match to be organised on an inter-church level.

Rev. Fr. Jayantha Nimal, parish priest, speaking on the occasion expressed his pleasure in having such a tournament which he said gave an opportunity for the parishioners of Pallansena to intermingle and get to know each other better. "There is sharing and harmony on occasions like this," Fr. Jayantha said.

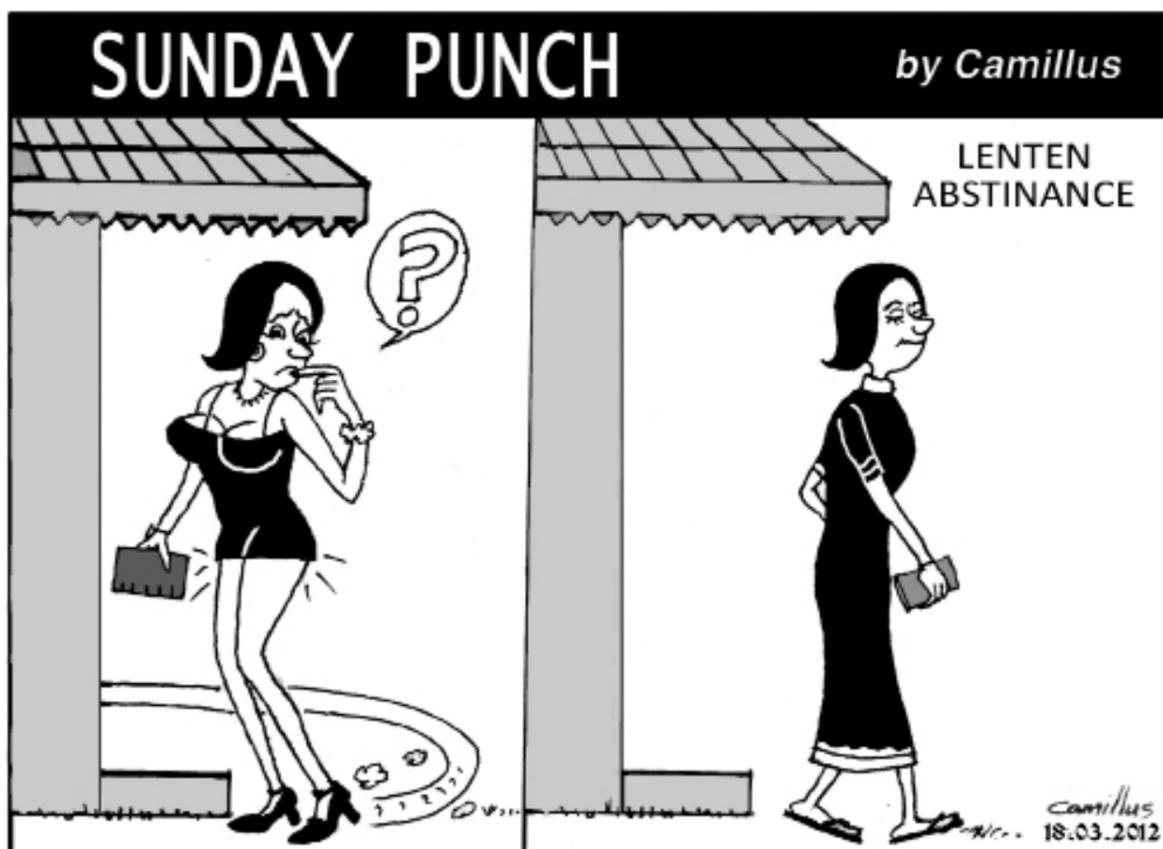
(Melvyn de Costa)

Katana deanery Sacred Heart Societies hold Lenten pilgrimage



Sacred Heart Societies in the Katana deanery held their annual Lenten retreat at St. Bruno's Church, Tambakanda. Rev. Fr. Bernard Kurera (TOR) parish priest of Koongodamulla and spiritual leader of Sacred Heart Society of the Katana deanery had organised this Lenten programme.

(Pic: Cecil Danicius)



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EDITORIAL

18 March 2012

Teach Yourself?

A certain feeling of inadequacy comes over in writing about holiness. Goodness cannot be produced by any kind of trick or technique.

Holiness ranks as a top priority of Priests and Religious. It is their *raison d'être*. In writing about holiness one's immediate reaction must be much like that of Gandhi in the famous story told of him, and the girl who was addicted to eating sweet foods. A troubled mother comes to Gandhi to persuade the girl to give up this harmful habit. Gandhi sat for a while in silence and then said, "Bring your daughter back in three weeks time, then I will speak to her." The mother came back after three weeks. This time Gandhi took the daughter aside and in a few simple words pointed out to her the harmful effects of indulging in sweet foods. He urged her to abandon the habit. Thanking Gandhi the mother then said to him in a puzzled voice "still, I would like to know, Gandhi-Ji why you did not say those words to my daughter three weeks ago?" Gandhi in reply said, "three weeks ago I myself was still addicted to eating sweet foods!"

However, writing about holiness does not arise simply out of a sense of one's own incompetence and unworthiness. It calls to mind those systems of self-improvement, reading a book entitled 'How to be Holy or Teach yourself Holiness.' We are embarrassed when our friends discover that we are reading about how to be a better tennis player, or more successful after-dinner speaker. We do not read books on holiness, in order to grow in holiness. And the very act of trying to write about holiness in itself is a search for holiness. People will grow in holiness-an area in which practice is everything and theory is not everything.

Imitation of Christ is a central theme in Christian holiness. Following Christ or the imitation of Christ is a comprehensive definition of Christian life as discipleship. It consists of trying to be and act like Jesus. 'In the Idea of Holiness' - Rudolf Otto describes Holy as "*mysterium Tremendum et Facinans*." Otto's investigations drew attention to the fear, wonder, shock, amazement and astonishment evoked by the holy. The holy elicits both awe and fascination because it is different from the ordinary or profane. The holy is that which is of the realm of transcendence. Thomas A. Kempis (1380-1421) the author of the spiritual manual '*Imitation of Christ*' praises the simple farmer with a simple faith than a proud philosopher.

One truly holy person is worth more than any number of books about holiness. Today the market is being flooded with books on spirituality, meditation, mysticism and so forth. Some desire on top of the cake an icing of spirituality. What can be offered is just a few crumbs of dry bread, that only becomes sweet if well chewed. Fortunately, there is a good precedent for collecting crumbs, when Jesus was travelling in the region of Tyre and Sidon a Canaanite woman asked Him to heal her daughter, and Jesus replied that He had not been sent to Canaanites, but to Israelites; 'It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the house dogs', to which the Canaanite woman retorted. 'ah! Yes, sir; but even house dogs can eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table'. (Mk 7:26-30) And Jesus himself used a similar image when He told the disciples after the miraculous feeding, 'Pick up the crumbs that are left over, so that nothing gets wasted'. (Jn. 6:12).

By recycling the crumbs Jesus gave an example for anyone who wants to grow in holiness. For many generations thousands of the most gifted and exemplary human beings have been devoting their energies of mind and body to becoming holy; on the way they have let fall many crumbs of wisdom; it is a privilege, as well as a joy, to pick up those crumbs of wisdom and recycle them.

Guest Editorial
 Rt. Rev. Dr. Marius Pieris

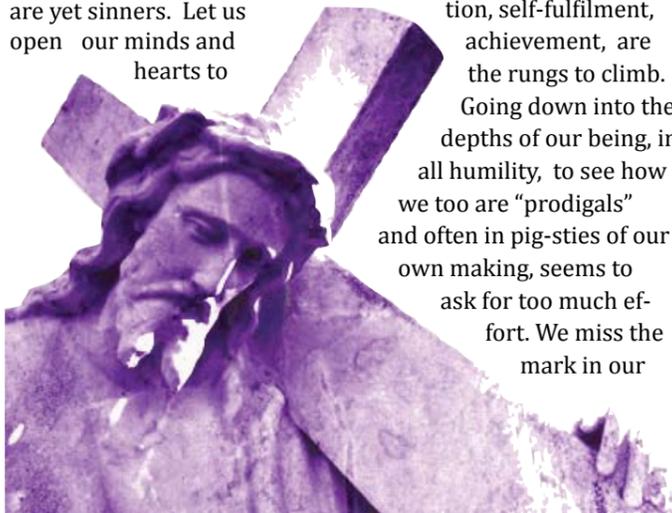
A LENTEN REFLECTION

"Remembrance"

Rev. Sr. Cynthia Mendis

The Bible is a book of "remembrance." It always portrays the saving actions of God which the Israelites remember in faith, hope and love. In the history of Israel there are significant events that are kept in the storehouse of their memory and *remembered* ever so often, to keep their faith in Yahweh-God alive: The events of creation, the great flood, the stupendous rescue from Egypt into the Promised land, God's provision in the wilderness, their 'home-coming' after bitter exile, God's stand with his prophets and finally, the climax of it all - the Christ-event. The frequent call to them is: '*Remember* what the Lord your God has done for you' (Deut. 7.18). God's actions are always salvific and they are to be recalled and remembered in love.

"Remembrance" is also a key-word for Lent. Just as through the year, in our walk with Jesus, we are inspired and guided by his words and deeds, the Church offers us the Lenten Season to reflect more deeply on a God whose love is so lavish that he is willing to sacrifice his only Son to die for us, while we are yet sinners. Let us open our minds and hearts to



new insights, experiences and challenges this Lent. Through the various liturgical seasons the church encourages us to reflect more deeply on one or other aspect of the life of Jesus. In Lent, our focus can be on the word, "*remembrance*." Every gospel story is a saving act of Jesus - healing, forgiving, transforming, loving another into being a better person. The culmination of this great love is in the final event of his passion, death and resurrection.

The 40-day season of Lent, brings to our *remembrance* this significant number in Israel's history with Noah and the rain for 40 days and nights, the 40 years in the wilderness, the 40 days Moses spent on Mt. Sinai and Jesus' own fast of 40 days in the wilderness. The church offers us also 40

days to let the Lord commune with us, till the soil of our hearts, prune and make room for new growth. We need a 'wilderness' time to experience a deeper conversion and repentance. "*Remember* the words of Hosea - "Therefore, behold I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her ... and there she shall answer as in the days of her youth (2.14-15). When we have lost the first fervour of our Christian faith and commitment, we need God's own saving action to bring us back to the fold. At the beginning of the 40 days, we are invited, with the symbol of ash on our foreheads, to "*Remember* that you are dust and unto dust shall you return." At the end, with the Easter Triduum we read the word again, "*Remember* me when you come into your kingdom."

Lent is a special time of the year given to us by the Church to remember our true nature - dust, sinful, wayward. We often shy away from this realization especially in an age when success, ambition, self-fulfilment, achievement, are the rungs to climb. Going down into the depths of our being, in all humility, to see how we too are "prodigals" and often in pig-sties of our own making, seems to ask for too much effort. We miss the mark in our

lives. So, the Church urges us - Now is the time - repent - be converted - start anew - come back 'home' where a Father's embrace and welcome await you. If we are willing to accept our weaknesses and waywardness, we are also offered 'anti-dotes.' Traditionally they are prayer, fasting and almsgiving, which can also be practiced during the year. Let us *remember* Jesus' own words: When you pray, pray in secret to your Father and not like hypocrites in the public gaze; and when you fast, do not look dismal; when you give alms, let not one hand know what the other does. Jesus prayed and fasted during



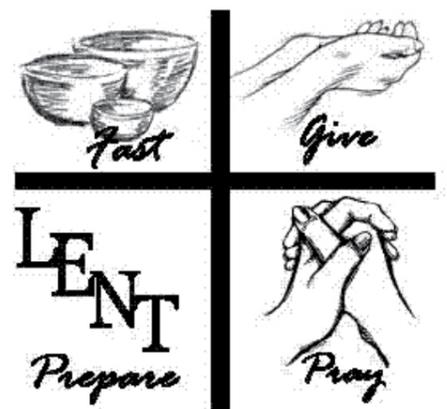
his life-time. His 'almsgiving' is the giving of his entire self in sacrificial love. The Church reminds us that Lent is an excellent time to renew ourselves through these and other practices such as the Way of the Cross and Sacramental Confession. It is a time to *remember* our baptismal call to renounce Satan and all his works and profess our belief more and more in a God whose love is steadfast and merciful. We renew these promises on Holy Saturday night. Through these practices, we can make efforts to "live" our Lent.

The Easter Triduum becomes the high-point of Lent as we read the Gospel stories and recall the first time Jesus pronounced the words, "Take and eat... take and drink... do this in *remembrance* of me." At every Mass we continue to do what Jesus did. More than once at his meal-times with people, Jesus called his host and guests to a change of heart. Lent is a special time to heed this call to conversion.

Our loving God offers us so much through the sacrifice of his beloved Son. What is our response? The thief on the right said, "*Remember* me when you come into your kingdom." He didn't ask for much, such as to be relieved of his agony or to come down from the cross, nor even for forgiveness, or, to sit on Jesus' right hand in the kingdom (a request made by others).

He only asks for a "*remembrance*" and Jesus gives him everything. Irrespective of his own death struggle, Jesus' positive assurance is there: "Today, you will be with me in paradise."

If we take but one step towards him, he will surely come all the way and take us on the path to Easter.



Understanding the Opposition to the Geneva Resolution

--Jehan Perera

The government's opposition to the resolution to be presented in the UN's Human Rights Council may be found in its concern that a section of the international community is planning to play a more interventionist role in Sri Lankan internal affairs using the vehicle of the LLRC report. Apart from issues of national sovereignty that the government uses to present its case, the only real threat at the present time to the government's control and centralization of power is the one that comes from abroad where there are forces outside of its control. The present array of opposition forces within the country presents no serious political threat to the supremacy of its power. The public protests against economic hardships have been more or less localized and spontaneous ones with no sustainable political leadership.

The government's mobilization of its supporters to come to the Sri Lankan streets when the UN Human Rights Council met on the opening day of the 19th sessions was typical of its ability to rally the people to its side on the basis of proud Sri Lankan nationalism. By and

large, most people in Sri Lanka, especially those from the Sinhalese majority, believe that the eradication of the LTTE was necessary and an unmitigated good. They have also been informed by the media, and by government leaders, about civilian casualties in other conflicts, most recently in Syria, Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq where the United States and other western countries were involved. They have seen video footage of those called terrorist leaders being shot in cold blood in front of their families and watched by world government leaders.

Rallying the nationalistic sentiments of the general population to resist intrusions into the country's sovereignty is not a difficult task when the disjuncture between what is being applied to Sri Lanka and the practices of other countries are pointed out. Media reports stated that people in 150 towns across the country protested against the proposed resolution on Sri Lanka. Government leaders who led these protests stated that the western powers are the ones who are blocking reconciliation within the country by setting up Sinhalese against Tamils, and that more time is needed for the govern-

ment to implement the LLRC recommendations. The mobilization of people with the call to protect the government and military had a resonance even with those who did not go the streets to protest but oppose international punitive sanctions.

Despite its promises about implementing the LLRC, the government has been proceeding slowly. It does not appear to have even translated the LLRC report into the Sinhala and Tamil languages, which are the languages of the vast majority of the people and ensured its distribution. In this context, those sections of the international community that seek to put pressure on the government to implement the recommendations of its own commission would be more constructively employed to find a way to make the people of Sri Lanka more aware of what their motivation is and also what the LLRC says. Sometimes these processes have been led by governments and on other occasions by civil society. In the past three decades there have been many mechanisms that have evolved in different parts of the world to deal with post conflict stresses that accompany the transition

to democracy and reconciliation.

In their statement on the issue, the Catholic Bishops' Conference urged "the government to do all that is in its power to take a serious look at the recommendations contained therein. Let us not permit yet another valuable opportunity to pass us by. We believe that many of its recommendations have the potential to contribute to healing of wounds and reconciliation and thus also counteract mounting international pressure. Hence, our earnest plea is to implement the potential recommendations as early as possible since peace and reconciliation are the most vital and urgent needs of the present moment. We believe that serious and honest efforts to implement its recommendations would contribute much for the forging of national harmony and unity of our beloved country."

Whilst the LLRC is clear in its call for a political solution, it seems to provide no mechanism to deal with the sharp ethnic divide especially with regard to the violence perpetrated during the course of the war. This has been viewed as the principal weakness of the LLRC report. Several foreign governments have endorsed the recommendations of the LLRC on good governance and a political solution, but expressed disappointment on its findings regarding accountability for war crimes. However, a closer reading of the findings on accountability by the LLRC would suggest

that it has kept the door open to further findings of the issue of accountability. It has called for credible investigations into incidents where civilian killings did take place, while also recommending further investigations and for the appointment of a special commissioner with adequate power to investigate and refer cases to the government for action.

Although appointed by the government, the LLRC struck an independent path in terms of its analysis of the roots causes of the violence and war in Sri Lanka and in its proposals for institutional and political reform. Indeed, the LLRC's recommendations in the areas of accountability, peace building, good governance and reconciliation do not correspond to many of the government's practices. Thus, the only major post-war constitutional reform engaged in by the government has been the passage of the 18th Amendment. But this further centralized power in the Presidency and weakened institutions of State and thereby further undermined the separation of powers.

By way of contrast, the main thrust of the LLRC's recommendations is the restoration of the Rule of Law and the sharing and devolution of power. It may be here, and not in nationalism alone, that the answer as to why the government is opposing the resolution in Geneva that will call on it to implement these same recommendations may be found.

The Thirteenth Apostle, by Joan Chittister in Winds of Change (redacted)

Jesus called his apostles ... and they weren't ready!

Jesus called Peter ... but he was unfaithful

weak
with a bad temper
lacking courage

Peter wasn't ready.

Jesus called James and John ... but they were ambitious.

They followed Jesus for the wrong reasons.

They followed Jesus for their own glory.

They lacked purity of motivation.

James and John weren't ready.

Jesus called Phillip ... but he was blind

Phillip couldn't see a spiritual reality

if he tripped over it.

He lacked intelligence and insight.

Phillip wasn't ready.

Jesus called Matthew ... but he was a crook.

money-hungry

He had hurt people.

He lacked an honest past.

Matthew wasn't ready.

Jesus called Thomas ... but he lacked faith.

He was a doubter

He wasn't around enough.

He lacked trust in the invisible.

Thomas wasn't ready.

Jesus called Andrew ... but he was a cynic.

He could not take Jesus' words seriously.

He still had the eyes of the world.

He lacked maturity.

Andrew wasn't ready.

Jesus called Simon the Zealot ... but he was a militant

with a belligerent streak.

Simon was a social justice type.

He lacked nuance.

Simon wasn't ready.

Jesus called Luke ... but he wasn't tough enough.

He was too gentle.

He couldn't do the hard confrontation the gospel asks.

He lacked the courage for prophecy.

Luke wasn't ready.

Jesus called Mark ... but he was a stoic,

a neurotic

He made an ideology out of suffering.

Mark lacked joy and optimism.

He wasn't ready.

Jesus called Bartholomew and James the Lesser ... but

they lacked talent.

They had little to contribute.

They were shy introverts, lacking charisma.

Bartholomew and James weren't ready.

And today, Jesus calls us ...

And we, what do we lack?

We lack it all ...

courage
purity of motivation
intelligence and insight

integrity
an honest past
trust in the invisible
maturity
nuance
courage for prophecy
joy and optimism
charisma

We, we aren't ready ..

but this is the thing ...

Jesus doesn't call the ready, Jesus calls the willing.





Pope Benedict XVI has warned that legal recognition of same-sex marriage, alternative forms

of family life and abortion on demand are threatening the proper education of young people and the future of humanity.

Speaking to ambassadors accredited to the Holy See recently, in what is commonly known as his annual "state of the world" address, the Pope said the family unit - "based on the marriage of a man and woman" - was "not a simple social convention," but an institution that was "fundamental for the educational process and for the development of both individuals and States."

Laws that allowed abortion "for reasons of convenience or for questionable medical motives", he said, compromised "the education of young people and as a result, the future of humanity."

During his 25 minute speech in French, Pope Benedict spoke of other perils to the human family, including the global financial crisis, violence in places in Africa and the Middle East and the persecution of Christians.

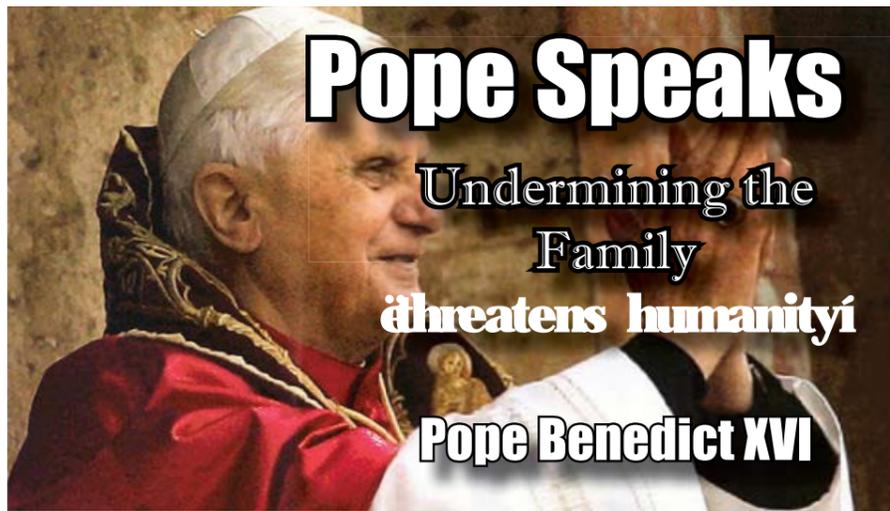
"The present moment is sadly marked by

profound disquiet and the various crises - economic, political and social are a dramatic expression of this," he told diplomats representing some 179 countries.

He stressed that it was a particularly difficult moment for young people.

"Their disquiet has given rise in recent months to agitation which has affected various regions, at times severely," he said seated on a throne

in the Apostolic palace's ornate Sala Regia. Poverty, unemployment and fear of an uncertain future, the Pope continued, had prompted young people in North Africa and the Middle East to lead a "vast movement" for political and social reforms. Though he admitted it was still "hard to make a definitive assessment" of the events he said the "best way to move forward" was to recognise the fundamental rights of all people and to



oppose "every form of unjust discrimination".

The Pope said he was pleased that Israeli-Palestinian peace talks had started again, but he said world leaders needed to lend a greater hand. He also called for "respect for Creation", and pointed out the "connection between fighting poverty and fighting climate change."

(Courtesy: Archdiocesan Bulletin)

In the desert, God gave Israel a Law, to help his chosen people to recognise their need for him. Under this Law, Israel began to appreciate the unity and the indissolubility of marriage. The Law gradually educated Israel away from certain residual effects of the 'hardness of hearts' that followed the fall (CCC 1610), and toward a fuller understanding of the dignity and complementarity of the spouses. Although the Law tolerated a form of polygamy, and permitted the putting away of one's spouse for certain reasons, adultery was prohibited (cf. Ex 20:17; Lv 20:10), as were incest and other sexual aberrations (cf. Lv

Marriage in the Original Covenant The Law

21:10; Dt 22:22). The People of God was called to "Be holy, for I, Yahweh your God, am holy" (Lv 19:2); Jesus would later interpret this call to perfection in light of the universal commandment not only to love, but to love even one's enemies (cf. Mt 5: 43-48). In the Law, human sexuality was beginning to be re-understood in light of a call to universal love.

In the Ten Commandments, the mutual belonging of one spouse to another is further recognised through the prohibition of the coveting of another's spouse, a prohi-

bition that recognises the sanctity of the relationship between the two.

The final two commandments, which prohibit coveting one's neighbour's wife or one's neighbour's goods, are sometimes superficially juxtaposed, out of context, in order to make the claim that women were somehow considered as 'property' in the Old Testament (cf. Ex 20: 17; Dt 5:21). There is no real evidence or basis, however, to support such an interpreta-

tion. The purpose of these commandments is not to reinforce the 'property' rights of a man, but to prohibit anyone from having an attitude of conniving desire toward that which does not pertain to oneself. If anything these commandments reinforce the sanctity of the relationship that is already characterised by Adam's exclamation that this one is "flesh of my flesh."

As a further sign of the sanctity of the People of God, Hebrew men were



sary, to provide him with descendants, if he had failed to father any (Dt 25: 5-10)

In the Mosaic Law, the Covenant of God with his People and the covenant of marriage are one and the same. Both result in the same blessing (cf dt 7:11-14; 30:19-20), which makes one able to have descendants and to enjoy the fruits of one's labours, and which renews the original blessing (Gn 1:28). One who keeps the Covenant faithfully and well is richly rewarded with a good and happy marriage and with children. (Ps 127, 128).

While marriage was threatened and disturbed by the original sin, it was still basically good, and if couples lived it faithfully, giving generously of themselves to each other, it would help them to overcome some of the other effects of the fall, like selfishness and a tendency to live in isolation from community. Having lost its original splendour, the natural marriage of a man and a woman would yet become a prophetic sign as well as an ethical imperative, a task to be realised as part of a renewed fidelity to God's plan.

(To be continued next week) (Courtesy: Marriage Together in Christ - Catholic Truth Society)

Faith and Health

Researchers have found that people who are religious, who pray and attend services in churches, temples, mosques and synagogues regularly, live longer than those who do not. They have found that those who have faith in a higher power and pray, reap benefits of longevity up-to seven years.

In a book published in 2007 "The Long Life Equation," Trisha Macnair, MD and Olga Calof, MD testify, "In virtually every one of more than a thousand studies examining the effects of spirituality in healing, a powerful link was found between faith and longevity."

A twelve-year long study done by the University of Iowa, in the USA, found that those who attend religious services at least once a week were 35% more likely to live longer than those who never attend a church or other faith-based events.

One of the reasons for their longevity may be the ethical and moral living of such people. They look after the community that they are living in and are concerned about the needs of others. They go out of their way to help the needy as well as look after their health. The church-goers normally do not indulge in risky behaviour as taking drugs and drunken driving. They are more law abiding wearing seat belts when driving and keeping to the designated speed limits.

Church-goers also normally indulge in community activities and tend to live with others which boosts their immune system. This involvement in community activities boosts one's immune system and helps to keep high blood pressure and clogged arteries at bay. This type of life style is associated with the lower levels of interleukin-6, which is a mediator of inflammation linked with age-related diseases such as arthritis and arteriosclerosis. Modern cardiologists have found out that coronary artery diseases too are associated with high inflammatory processes in the body.



Church goers also get the opportunity of ventilating their feelings in prayer as well as in conversation with others. Verbal ventilation of feelings can reduce stress and repressed anxieties and make people come out of depression and neurotic anxiety. Specially in the Catholic Church the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) helps people to confess their wrong doings with the intention of obtaining pardon from their sins. This sacrament is freely available to the Catholics, which is a great way of catharsis. It is like visiting a psychologist free of charge.

Modern psychologists are also discovering the benefits of meditation. Many prayers are a type of meditation. E.g. when we pray the Rosary we are supposed to meditate on the mysteries based on the life of Christ. Meditation has been recommended for centuries as a natural path to healing and longevity. Research has shown that meditation reduces stress, keeps blood pressure low and reduces clogging of the arteries. The restorative effect of meditation is evident in those who meditate. Overall, the peace and tranquility they achieve certainly lead to better psychological and physical health.

Present day scientists are finding obvious connections between faith in a supreme being, prayer, meditation and longevity. It is time to wake up to these facts and reap the longevity benefits of our faith in God.

prohibited from marrying foreign wives, who might well have been expected to introduce them to the worship of other gods (cf. Dt 7: 3-4). An exception was made, however, when the woman in question first sincerely converted to the faith of Israel (cf. Rt 1:16).

Marriage and sexuality were interpreted largely in light of the call to purity of the entire People of God and their commitment to Yahweh. Israel was ever conscious of the importance of the original blessing, and of God's promise of redemption through their descendants, as well as the practical need to have a line of descendant. if Israel was to possess the promised land. A man was therefore required to marry his brother's widow, if neces-

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE! The doctor: "Your husband had a mild heart attack, I prescribe absolute silence so that he can have a good rest. Here's a sleeping powder." Wife: "When do I give it to him doctor?" Doctor: "No you take it yourself." Rev. Fr. Fracxid Anthony Fernando OMI

A Kenyan Way of the Cross



Artists have long put paint to canvas, or chisel to stone, in an effort to help us comprehend the sacrifice Christ made for us.

In Kenya, one church has used this practice to reach the local Christian community at its heart. A trained team of young Kenyan artists were asked to paint a set of stations that would reflect the life and environment of the people of Turkana, Kenya. Authentic Turkana people, dress and localities are pictured in the familiar scenes of the Passion. Roman soldiers are replaced by Kenyan warriors. Pilate is shown in the traditional dress of a Turkana chief, and the cross fashioned from a local tree. The backdrop of many of the stations is comprised of local scenery, including the shops and houses of its residents.

How it came to be

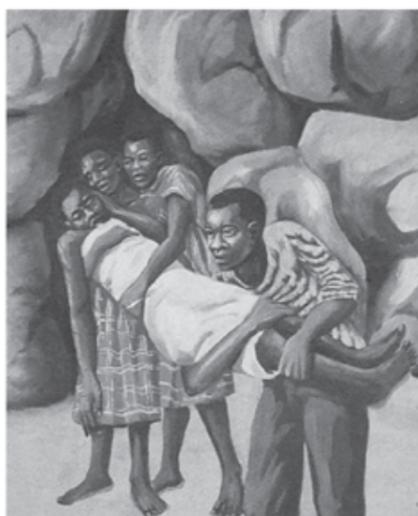
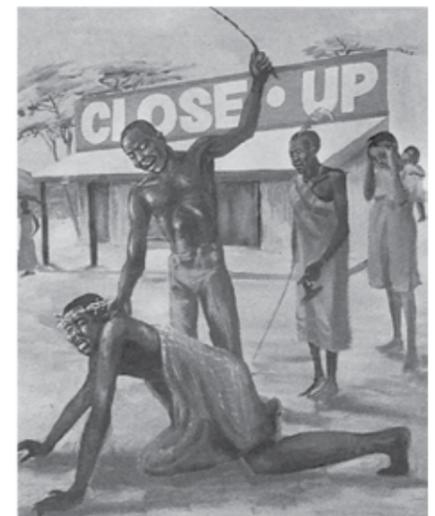
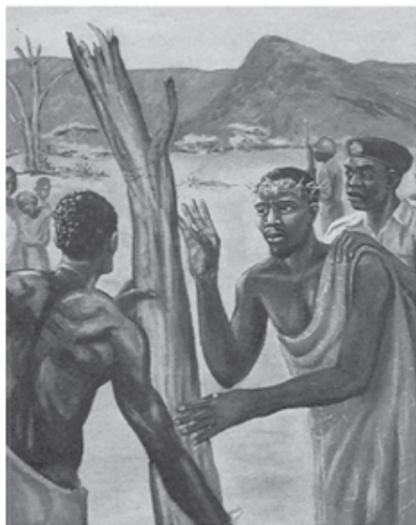
The church in Lodwar was getting too small for its growing congregation so, having extended and improved the design, they began to think about new church furnishings and stations of the cross. This was in 1995 when the Church in Africa from the African Synod of Bishops' had just been issued. In the chapter dealing with Evangelization and Inculturation it said, "The Synod considers inculturation an urgent priority in the life of the particular Churches, for the firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa".

The congregation decided to take this proposition seriously and set about trying to have some authentic African art in their new church. They contacted an American Sister of Notre Dame, Sister Janet Mullin, who had trained a team

of young Kenyan artists who agreed to help them after some ideas were given. The request was to paint a set of stations that would reflect the life and environment of the Turkana people. Faces, dress and places would be authentically Turkana. Soldiers would be Kenyan, not Roman. Pilate would wear the traditional dress of a Turkana chief and the cross would be a rough piece of a local tree. Lodwar's shops and houses would be the background in many of the stations.

The reaction of the Christians community was excellent when the stations were unveiled. The suffering Christ is central to their spirituality and prayer. The Turkana are a people who suffer a lot, from diseases, sickness, insecurity and hunger and have been left behind in Kenya's struggle for development. So, when they saw a Jesus who looks like them suffering and being crucified in their own locality they were able to identify very closely with him. "Look at Veronica wearing Turkana beads!" or "That's our shop on the corner!" were comments by children and adults as they stared at the stations or discussed them excitedly.

"Our new stations help us remember that Jesus is still present among us and so the roots of the Gospel sink a little deeper here in Turkana" a spokesman for the Turkana community said.



If you have information on any Christian art work specially that of the Way of the Cross please contact us on 0777489510.



Catechism to be a major guide for Year of Faith

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) has urged parish priests, religion teachers, university professors and seminary formators to make greater use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church during the upcoming Year of Faith.

That is just one of a number of suggestions that the CDF makes in a nine-page document issued recently called, "Note with pastoral recommendations for the Year of Faith." It offers ideas for initiatives at the universal, national, diocesan and parish levels "without precluding other initiatives which the Holy Spirit will inspire among pastors and faithful in various parts of the world."

The new text is designed to assist all Catholics in "living this time of grace" which Pope Benedict XVI hopes will help "contribute to a renewed conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the rediscovery of faith." The Pope

chose to inaugurate the Year of Faith on 11 October, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the twentieth anniversary of the promulgation of the Catechism.

The CDF hopes the celebration – which will culminate on 24, November 2013 (the Feast of Christ the King) – will be a "special opportunity for all believers to deepen their knowledge of primary documents" of the Council and "their study of the Catechism." The latter volume is something that the last two Popes have seen as "both an authentic fruit of Vatican Council II and a tool for aiding in its reception." It is especially dear to Pope Benedict who over saw the monumental project of compiling it when he was still head of the doctrinal office. But it has not been as enthusiastically embraced by all Catholics as he and John Paul II had hoped.

"The Year of Faith will be a

propitious occasion to make Vatican Council II and the Catechism of the Catholic Church more widely and deeply known," said the CDF in a text representing its new "recommendations."

In fact among its lengthy list of suggestions, the CDF is urging diocesan bishops to issue pastoral letters on the "importance" of Vatican II and the Catechism. It also invites them to promote pilgrimages to Rome and the Holy Land, foster devotion to local saints and devise pamphlets that help Catholics defend their faith against the questions posed by "sects" or "problems related to secularism and relativism."

These are in addition to encouraging a greater participation at Mass and the revival of individual confessions. A grand prayer service is planned – a "solemn ecumenical celebration in which all the baptised

will reaffirm their faith in Christ."

Since the Year of Faith is one of the first major events connected to Pope Benedict's ambitious plan to re-evangelise formerly Catholic lands that have become secularised, the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelisation will help "coordinate" the worldwide initiatives connected to it. It will do so through a special "secretariat" consisting of 11 cardinals and five bishops, mostly from Europe and North America

"Every initiative for the Year of Faith should be designed to aid in the joyous rediscovery of the faith and its renewed transmission," the CDF says in its new document. The Vatican believes that the Catechism of the Catholic Church is the "magna carta" for achieving that.

(Koinonia - Archdiocesan Bulletin)

Striking At the Roots

At the very outset I am describing an incident that took place in a pious Catholic village some years ago where many people used to go for daily mass. A poor widow of seven children who was struggling to educate her children, had burrowed some money from a rich devout lady. Unfortunately she could not pay it back on time. It happened one morning immediately after Mass when the poor woman came out, the money lender also got out of the Church, and hurled so much of abusive language on her that she returned home broken and desperate. Ideally what could have been the effect of encountering the Lord of Love in the Eucharist? Is this the way of responding to the precept of Jesus, "Love one another as I have loved you?" (Jn. 15:12).

Did not Christ denounce this form of religion which is indeed an escapism from a living encounter with him? Isn't it much easier to offer worship rather than to come to grips with God's word and to change my egotistic ways? "This people honour me with their lips but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines, human precepts." (Mt15:8.)

The passage from an exterior form of religion to the

interiority of our self is a long process. I must strike at the very roots of my sinful nature. It is here that we see the need for conversion at deeper levels.

I am presenting some incidents and episodes where conversion at a deeper level was demanded.

A Jewish Christian suffered the loss of many of his family members in the Second World War under the Nazis. He confessed in a prayer meeting that he had forgiven the perpetrators of such crimes. It happened one day, when he was travelling in a train, he saw seated in front of him, the Concentration Camp official, responsible for the death of his family members. Immediately his heart unconsciously surged in anger. As he realized his uncontrollable emotions, he bowed his head in pain. Forgiveness is not only in the mind but also in the heart. Finally when he learnt to forgive him from the heart, he said, "Past memories, yes it is true that I cannot erase, but they have lost their stings to haunt me or hurt me. 'Forgive and you will be forgiven!'" (Lk. 6:37)

There was a girl who always felt very jealous of her classmate who topped the highest rank in the class. She would neither look at her nor talk to her. One day when she was making her retreat, the

preacher explained the gifts of God given to the members, are not for their glory but for the building up of Body of Christ; We are all called to give thanks and praise to God; where-as jealousy is a fire that destroys oneself and the other. That gradually changed the way she had been thinking and feeling. "Love is not jealous or boastful" (Cor.13:4). During the retreat itself she spoke to that class mate from the heart; a new understanding and therefore a new relationship. Isn't it a genuine conversion?

After the termination of the war, there had been a North-South encounter of war affected children. The first day, the faces were rigid and the feelings mixed with resentment and fear. As they started sharing their tales of sufferings, numerous displacements, loss of lives and properties, there developed feelings of understanding and empathy. The children of the North central province shared their pains, loss of some of their family members and occasions of displacements; in this encounter, their former attitudes, and prejudices dissolved. As they sang and danced there developed feelings of solidarity. "He has made one, the human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth" (Acts7:26). Many people live and die in their prejudices and racial discriminations because they never see the true reality

of oneness.

There are deep seated anger, revenge, jealousy, addictions to such as alcohol, drugs, pornography and spirit of attachment to wealth, power and positions; they are deeply edged in our psyche. No one can change himself relying only on his will- power and human strength. It can take months and years, but change is possible provided I totally surrender myself to the transforming power of the Spirit. Any slackening will retard my progress. "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Phil.4:13).

Our life is not integral. I give a good message but my way of life contradicts it. I preach about unity and peace in a flowery language, but do things which contribute to division. I go for Mass regularly and do all the pious exercises, but I

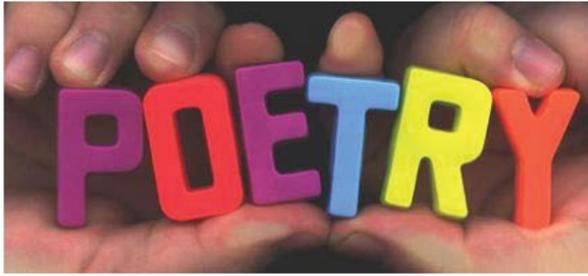
am either unconcerned about the poor or exploit the poor; even the surplus I have I am not ready to share with those who go hungry. I speak about love but I refuse to forgive my neighbour. It is here that I need conversion and integration.

Conclusion

True conversion will lead to integration. It is experiencing wholeness; unity with myself, with others and with the whole creation. Integration signifies that where the messenger and the message find union. Christ is the messenger and Christ is the message. It amounts to saying that I must be the embodiment of the message. Striving toward this state of conversion- integration is a life long process and a work of grace.

Rev. Fr. Thiruchelvam OMI





Obedience our Axiom

God's love in abundance is
For those who obey Him.
So has, the depiction of, the
Holy Bible with many a legends.

'Worship to God Almighty only' was
Refused by a luminous few negation obedience
They became devils lead by Lucifer
Bad, worse and the worst are their tenets.

The contrary belongs to the Angels
Engaged in the mission of the merciful Lord.
Superseding internet to communicate with humans
Who have absolute freedom mostly misused.

Being jealous of God's love to men
Satan incited disobedience for his gain.
Eve entire Adam with fruit forbidden.
Causing death befalls and the Saviour to be born

Abraham in his old age fathered Isaac
His heir, whom he loved and cared
He took him to Moriah to offer him there
Burnt to God who wanted to test Abraham's fair

'Let thy will be done on me' was
The 'Aye' of Blessed Mary's obedience
We are now all saved from our loss
With a crown for her humility by the Cross

Unity and uniformity in Catholic community
Are based on the code of ethics
Streamlined by obedience, our axiom
Under the Pope delegating Christ the Son of God

Malcolm Fernando

UNITED IN GOD'S WORD

United in God's Word

Neath the CROSS of God the Son,

In times past a sign of shame and fun

Today a sign of victory, by Jesus won.

Earnestly round the cross united - together

Divided, how can we take **GOD'S WORD** to another?

In your name dear Jesus whatever we do.

Nothing will separate us from you.

GOD the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

On you we rely. Your call we heard.

Do with us Lord what Thou wilt

'Send us to spread Your Holy Word

WORD made flesh to nourish us all,

On you we feed and answer Your call.

Redeemer help us to work hand in hand,

Divided we fall. United we stand.

The Ceylon Bible Society has chosen the theme
'UNITED IN GOD'S WORD' to celebrate their bi-
centenary

Emilda S. Douglas

World Poetry Day - March 21st

World Day for Water - March 22nd

World Meteorological Day - March 23rd

World TB Day - March 24th

World Theatre Day - March 27th

"He raised his eyes"

Like the rich man who loved a life of pleasure
I, too, have loved pleasures that pass away
With this animal body of mine,
In the pleasures of that fool.

And from so many and such great blessings
That you have so freely given me
I have not paid back the tenth
From your own gifts.

But, out of everything under my roof,
Gathered from earth and sky and sea,
I believed your numberless blessings
To be my own possession.

Nothing of these have I given to the poor,
Nor set anything aside for his needs:
Neither food for the hungry
Nor covering for the naked body,

Neither shelter for the homeless
Nor abode for the foreign guest,
Nor visit to the sick
Nor even concern for the prisoner (Cf Mt 25:31f.).

I was not saddened for the sorrow
Of the one cast down by his burdens,
Nor shared the joy of the joyful
But burned with jealousy against him.

All of them were another Lazarus...
They lay outside at my gate...
Yet I, deaf to their appeal,
Never gave them the crumbs from my table...

The dogs of your Law outside
Comforted them, at least, with their tongues;
Yet I, who listened to your commandment,
Wounded the one who bore your likeness with my
tongue (Mt 25,45)...

Yet only grant me repentance here below
That I may make reparation for my sins...
That these tears may extinguish the blazing furnace
With its burning flames...

And, instead of acting like the merciless,
Set merciful compassion within me,
That, by showing mercy to the poor,
I may obtain your mercy.

S B David

Yes you loved me first

Jesus my Lord and my only God
I want to make You my only love
Will You accept me as I am?
Then I'll be free in Your hands Jesus,
Jesus be my only love

Love is the gift that You gave me
What else more can You give me Lord?
I love You more and more my Lord
This is my gift to You
Jesus, Jesus this is my gift to You

You are my life and my strength Lord
I need You every moment Lord
When I cry out aloud Your name Lord
Yes.....You are there to comfort
Jesus, Jesus You are the strength of my life

Love is the only word You say
Accepting the Cross You proved it true
You gave yourself in loving me
YesYou, YOU LOVED ME FIRST
Jesus, Jesus yes Your love is so true

Sr. M. Charmain A.C.

The Last Meal of Jesus

On a Thursday night
Jesus called His friends
For a meal that was free
Prepared well ahead of time
He excluded none
From His chosen twelve
The place was indicated
A certain man's house was chosen

The twelve were happy
Who came for the meal
No premonition of any kind
Good company with the Master
The Lord their Guru
Stood up to bend down
Took a basin of water
To wash their feet
The feet of His own students
The feet of His created beings
The feet of His future saints
The feet of His betrayer and denier
Stunning act of Humility
Turned the system of disparity
Equality is the rule
Called to do the same

The meal was mysterious
No money for the bread and wine
But the price was paid
With the Blood of a God Son
The meal was dangerous
Friends though they may be
A plot was planned
To betray the loving Master

No money for the meal
But thirty pieces of Silver
Was the prize high priest paid
To the betrayer --- friend
It was Thursday Holy
The Eucharist was born
In form of bread and wine
True testament of love on earth

Prayer for the Unity
That the world may be one
Was His last plea
The commandment to love
To wash the feet of any
As He did -- Amen

Rev. Sr. Sunitha A.C

Lent

Lent welcomes all Christians
to cast away the shadows of sin
through a life of repentance.

Lent calls us, sinners
to bear up the weight of our cross
in search of eternal life.

Lent reminds of our life after death
created from dust and unto dust
we shall return one day.

Lent begins with the symbolic cross
marked on Christian foreheads
thus reminding the 40 days of repentance
urging to save our souls, rather than failing to
gain the world.

Ivor Hapuarachchi

Social concern of Cardinal Cooray OMI

I was happy to read Rev. Fr. Anselm Croos' article, "Cardinal Cooray: A True Son of De Mazenod," in the *Catholic Messenger* of 26 February 2012. While pointing out how the mission-vision of St. Eugene de Mazenod, the Oblate founder, had inspired Cardinal Cooray OMI, Fr. Anselm Croos has very well noted the deep social concern he (the Cardinal) had for the poor fishermen and what he practically did for their wellbeing, particularly in Negombo by encouraging Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernando OMI, and Rev. Fr. Joseph Fernando, in the parish of Sea Street, Negombo.

May I be permitted to point out a few more good events that took place due to the fact that the late Cardinal left nothing undared to promote the Rule of God's unconditional love among the fishermen and their families. On August 23, 1953, Archbishop Thomas Cooray OMI (later Cardinal) by Circular 17, called for organizing the fishermen's associations fully managed by the fishermen themselves under the guidance of the parish priests. It was one of his first circulars. The main objectives of the associations according to the Circular were:

1. To keep the Catholic fishermen together under the influence of the parish priests and thus to protect their faith,
2. To safeguard them against perverse and disruptive movements,
3. To improve the social and economic conditions of the fishermen and their families.



On August 23, 1953, Archbishop Thomas Cooray who presided at the annual meeting of St. Sebastian's Co-operative Society at Sea Street, Negombo said:

"I cannot understand the policy of the Government in stinting relief to the fishing industry when millions has been expended on other industries. In some instances to no purpose."

The Archbishop congratulated the society on overcoming many handicaps and hardships and asked the members to be united and not lose courage because the Government had refused their society a loan. He thought the Government should not victimize the whole society because some 60 members out of 400 were owing certain loans which they had taken. It must be realized that the Government was going the whole hog to extract a few hundreds from a few poor fishermen when no steps were being taken to get back lakhs of rupees from rich men of the fishing industry to whom the Fisheries Department had lent lakhs

"The Archbishop added: "We are not unreasonable but we are logical. All that we ask in the best interest

of those Co-operative Societies, is that Government should show some latitude in keeping with the local conditions in framing rules for those co-ops fishing societies instead of trying to force down upon us cast iron rules imported from abroad" (Daily News, 25:8.1953)

Rev. Fr. Joseph Fernando had a room specially prepared in the mission house at Sea Street for Cardinal Cooray who used visit the parishioners.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Fernando OMI
'Dev Arana'
Minuwangoda.

Bring back the goodness of yesteryear

On a recent visit to the Madhu Shrine, I noted with regret, a large Notice-Board displaying the weekly timings of all the Liturgical Services in the Shrine, from Sunday morning to Saturday evening. Below, in bold letters was written "Janashakthi - Insurance Co. Ltd." giving the impression that it was in charge of all Liturgical Services or even conducting these services in the Shrine.

My thoughts immediately went back to my schooldays, when we would visit this Shrine in August every year. The then Administrator of the Shrine, the late Rev. Fr. J. Brohan OMI, would display such Liturgical notices, hand written by himself and signed legibly together with the rubber-stamp of the Shrine. I earnestly hope and pray that we get back to yesteryear by having this rectified at a very early date.

Roggy Corera

Thoughts that haunt me

There are diverse ways of showing affection and love. Some actions of others that show affection and love remain in our memories only for a short while. Thereafter they are forgotten like the footprints in the sand. But certain actions remain permanently etched in our memories. The actions may be small in importance, very insignificant, but they are remembered for a lifetime.

The person I am going to talk about is Jane. Her elder daughter was

getting married. A wedding means so many things to organize. The church, the hall, caterers, the music-makers, the photographers and so on. A few days before the wedding, she was at the hall seeing to the arrangements. She saw an elderly gentleman looking through the door. He wanted to just come in and have a look. He looked lonely and not very normal. He wanted to talk. He said that as a child, he had suffered a bad fall on his head and spent most of his life in an institution for

the mentally handicapped. Like a child he asked whether on the day of the party, he could just come and peep in.

The wedding day came. After the church service, the reception was at the hall. There was music, speeches, cake-cutting, dancing and laughter. In the midst of everything, one of the waiters came to say that a gentleman at the door wanted to see Jane. There he was, well dressed and quite shy. Although he was asked to come in, he wouldn't. So,

"It was a special gift from a world of despair to a world of hope"

Jane went back to get him a piece of wedding cake. He then brought out his present. "For the bride," he said with pride. It was a badly wrapped little brown paper parcel tied with string. Jane placed it on the table along with many other gifts. The old man waved goodbye and left.

When all the im-

portant activities were over, it was time to open the gifts the next day. Each gift was opened and names of the giver written down. It was the little brown parcel to be opened. What was it? A jug, an ordinary little milk jug, the kind they use in hospitals, in train or in mental institutions.

Jane started crying. She cried for the happiness of her daughter. She cried for the loneliness of this man who had spent most of his life in a mental asylum. The jug would have been very close to his life. He would have had very few belongings and this jug would have been

most precious to him because he would have been drinking from it daily. But he sacrificed it as a gesture of love and affection.

They packed their gifts in a nice cabinet. Among all the silverware and all the other expensive gifts, they kept this little jug right in front as they felt it was the most valuable gift they got. Why? It was a special gift from a world of despair to a world of hope. It's not money that decides the value of a gift. It's the love, sacrifice and caring that is behind the gift that makes the gift so valuable and precious.

Ananda Perera.

I Hate Lent . . . and I Hope You Do Too

"I hate Lent!" once exclaimed the great Samuel Johnson in 18th century England. To tell you the truth, I can't help wishing that contemporary Catholics would echo his brief but heartfelt cry. A devout Anglican with barely concealed Roman Catholic sympathies, Johnson, I suspect, might well be part of the new Anglican Ordinate by now if he'd been born a few centuries later. As it was, he publicly defended the Catholic Church a surprising number of times on a surprising number of issues. And, from the above quotation, I - think it's safe to assume he had a good, old-fashioned Catholic appreciation of Lent. He would have fit right in during Lent back in the days in which I grew up.

However, I wonder how many of today's Catholics can even understand Johnson's words. His words should make us realize that it's high time to help our parishioners develop a good old-fashioned aversion to Lent once again.

How do we do that? I think we can all agree that the Season of Lent has become anemic - flabby - and is in desperate need of some reinvigoration. It's not particularly original to note that the sense of sin among people in our culture has gradually but consistently diminished over the last few decades to a point where the word "sin" has come to have almost no meaning beyond the actions of mass murderers. Of course, it stands to reason that if we can't see ourselves as sinners in need of repentance and God's grace, we will not see any great need for something like Lent.

So how do we reintroduce an idea of the real-

ity of our own sinfulness this Lent? Well, it wouldn't hurt to preach on it regularly and consistently and with some real zeal. It also wouldn't hurt to point out not only the many places where we can easily fall into sin, but also some of the many great corporate sins of human history. Americans like to feel that they are good people, and most are. But we often fail to remember the many great sins in our nation's past that were committed by people who were fairly good in many ways but tragically and willfully blind in certain respects to the will of God. Slavery is only one of many examples.

Another thing we can do is to reintroduce some of those wonderful practices that make people think about their own failings, their need to turn their lives around and come closer to God. Not coincidentally these things were usually the very things that used to make people hate Lent.

If you're as old as I am (and few people are) you will remember the Black Fast. What a wonderful term that is! You can't say it without thinking of sackcloth and ashes. By the time you've said it twice I guarantee that you'll be in the mood for Lent - and an old-fashioned Lent, at that. The Black Fast really wasn't so black when you get right down to it; it just meant that no meat, dairy products, or eggs - no food whatsoever from an animal - were permitted on the Wednesdays, Fridays or Saturdays during Lent. But it reminded us that we were doing without something we thought was important and we were doing without it as a form of penance for our sins. The Black Fast made

By Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR

us feel wonderfully afflicted, and it actually helped us connect with the reality of our own sinfulness. It was a physical practice that could have a spiritual benefit, and it helped make Lent mean something to us.

The idea of fasting is not unique to us but is common throughout the religious world. The Jewish people engage in a kind of concentrated Lent on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. During that day they abstain from all nourishment including even a sip of water. During Islam's month-long Ramadan, the Muslim faithful abstain from food and drink every day from sunup to sundown. Now those are black fasts. Other religions, including Hinduism, have periods for the recognition of sins, and each of these religions associates some kind of fast from food with these periods.

I'm perfectly aware that bringing back a few of the traditional Lenten practices isn't going to change the world, but it may help to change a few souls. It may help to remind people that, as we prepare to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, we must acknowledge our faults and acknowledge that we are flesh and blood creatures who love our comforts more than we love Christ.

So this year I hope that priests will do their level best to help their parishioners say with Samuel Johnson, "I hate Lent!"

(Courtesy: The Priest - March 2012)

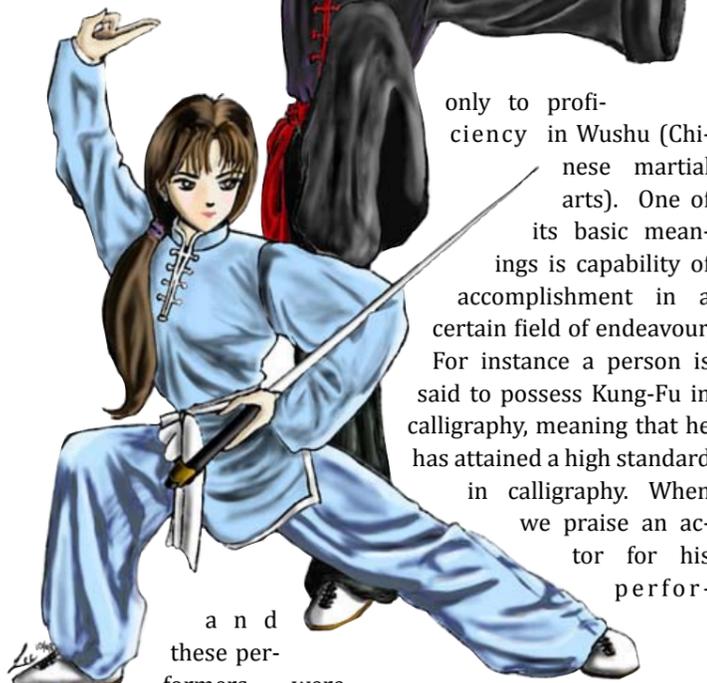
What is the difference between Kung-Fu and Wushu?

Wushu is not a very familiar term to most people in foreign countries. It has been translated in different ways such as, Martial Arts, Combat Arts, fighting skills, offence and defense arts, and so on. What is more familiar to foreigners is the term, 'Kung-Fu', so that people practicing Chinese-style boxing are usually described as practicing Kung-Fu and Chinese Wushu films are called Kung-Fu films.

To say that a person is good at Kung-Fu is to say that a person is well-versed in Wushu - (martial arts). From this we see that Kung-Fu has become a synonym - a term used as a substitute for Wushu in some countries - though the term may differ in some cases.

The term Kung-Fu, of course, originated in China. In the old days, itinerant entertainers who wandered from place to place to make a living often performed feats of strength by the roadside or in a square to attract passers-by and win their applause before asking for meagre donations. They would for instance smash a stone slab to pieces with their palms or make someone among those watching hit hard at their bodies so as

to show their invulnerability. Such feats of prowess were described as Kung-Fu



foreign countries.

Actually, the term Kung-Fu has a much wider meaning and does not refer

only to proficiency in Wushu (Chinese martial arts). One of its basic meanings is capability of accomplishment in a certain field of endeavour. For instance a person is said to possess Kung-Fu in calligraphy, meaning that he has attained a high standard in calligraphy. When we praise an actor for his perfor-

and these performers were

said to excel in Kung-Fu. It was probably because of this that in late years, with more and more Chinese going abroad and taking up residence there, the term Kung-Fu gradually came to be used in

manance, we often say he has Kung-Fu. In commenting on an article we may say the writer has put Kung-Fu into it, meaning that the article is well written and that the writer has extensive

knowledge of the subject in dealing with it.

The term Kung-Fu also refers to the amount of time and energy involved in doing a piece of work. For instance when we say that a person has spent three hours Kung-Fu in repairing something, we mean the time and amount of energy expended in doing the job.

What is Wushu then?

Wushu is a branch of knowledge dealing with offence and defense techniques. Of course it does not include the use of firearms. The basic movements of Wushu include kicks and blows, grapples, thrusts, chops and so forth. These movements which vary in speed and power are arranged in set patterns according to the objective laws of offence and defense to meet the requirements of combat; or they may be employed flexibly according to actual circumstances in order to gain the upper hand in a combat requiring resourcefulness, strength and techniques.

Regular practice of Wushu is conducive to health and helps improve one's moral qualities and increase one's

willpower. In this regard, it takes various forms, including routines for individual or dual practice, free combats, TUISHO (push-hand) exercise and fighting with short weapons (sword and dagger), and long weapons (spear, cudgel and scimitar).

Since Wushu is a branch of knowledge and science, it is not limited to these specific techniques. In a broad sense, Wushu is closely connected to Chinese history, philosophy, culture, medicine and the art of keeping in good health. In Wushu circle there is the saying that, "One may keep practicing Wushu until he is old, but he cannot attain perfection without knowing 'TAO' (philosophy)."

There is another saying, "Learning TAO without practical is like walking with only one leg."

In addition, Wushu is related to such modern science as anatomy, biology, chemistry, psychology, education and certain frontier disciplines. It is precisely because of its distinct national features and multi-functional characteristics that Wushu is regarded as a gem of Chinese culture.

Archdiocese of Colombo celebrates Children's Day

The Archdiocesan Children's Day was celebrated on 3rd March 2012, at the Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka, Te-watta. A colourful celebration marked the day with children, teachers and parents attending from many schools and churches from various parts of the Archdiocese.

The celebrations began with a beautiful drama directed by Very

Rev. Fr. Cyril Gamini Fernando, Episcopal Vicar for Southern Region, and Rev. Fr. Prasad Harshana and was staged by the pupils of All Saints' Babilika, Borella at the beginning of the programme.

This was based on the theme for the day, "O Mother Mary, You are the handmaid of the Lord. We are your children".

The drama's in-



tention was to make the children listen to the call of God, like Mary Our

Mother did when God called her to be the mother of Jesus. Mary was very

young but accepted God's decision with trust. - (Never say no but accept

the will of God in your lives with a YES).

Pix : H. A Caldera

DAVID

the DARING

THE SHEPHERD BOY WHO BECAME A KING

BACK AT THE PALACE, THE LORD'S SPIRIT HAD LEFT SAUL, AND AN EVIL SPIRIT TORMENTED HIM.

... THEN WHEN THE EVIL SPIRIT COMES ON YOU, THE MAN CAN PLAY HIS HARP, AND YOU WILL BE ALL RIGHT AGAIN.

GOOD. FIND A MAN WHO PLAYS WELL AND BRING HIM TO ME.

JESSE OF BETHLEHEM HAD A SON WHO IS A GOOD MUSICIAN. HE IS ALSO BRAVE AND HANDSOME.

GOOD! SEND FOR HIM AT ONCE.

SO A MESSENGER WENT TO JESSE AND TOLD HIM WHAT SAUL HAD COMMANDED.

SIR, JUST GIVE US THE ORDER, AND WE WILL LOOK FOR A MAN WHO CAN PLAY A HARP...

DAVID, TAKE SOME GIFTS WITH YOU FOR THE KING - A YOUNG GOAT, SOME BREAD, AND SOME WINE.

(Next week)

What it says in
the Readings

God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son; everyone who believes in him has eternal life. (Jn. 3: 16)

**LITURGICAL
CALENDAR YEAR B
18th March - 25th March 2012**

**Sun: FOURTH SUNDAY OF
LENT**

2 Chr. 36: 14-16, 19-23, Eph. 2: 4-10, Jn. 14-21

Mon: Feast of St. Joseph

2 Sam. 7: 4-5, 12-14, 16, Rom. 4: 13, 16-18, 22, Mt. 1, 16:18-21, 24 or Lk. 2: 41-51

Tue: Ez. 47:1-9, 12, Jn. 5: 1-16

Wed: Is. 49:8-15, Jn. 5: 17-30

Thu: Ex. 32:7-14, Jn. 5: 31-47

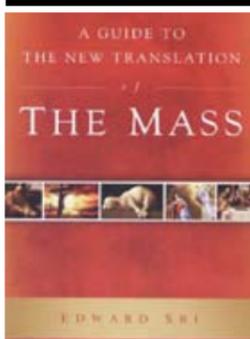
Fri: Memorial of St. Thuribus de Mogrovejo

Wis 2: 1, 12-22, Jn. 7: 1-2, 10, 25-30

Sat: Jer. 11: 18-20, Jn. 7: 40-53

**Sun: FIFTH SUNDAY
OF LENT**

Ez. 37: 12-14, Rom. 8: 8-11, Jn. 11: 1-45



The Meaning Behind Some of the Changes

The Greeting ("The Lord be with you ...")

One of the most noticeable changes in the Mass parts is the people's response to the priest's greeting, "The Lord be with you." In the new translation, we will reply, "And with your spirit." This more adequately reflects the Latin text of the Mass and the biblical language of St. Paul (see Galatians 6:18; Philippians 4:23; 2 Timothy 4:22).

It also more fully expresses an important theological point. When we said, "And also with you" in the older translation, one might get the impression that our response was merely intended to express an exchange of personal greetings or reciprocal good will: "May the Lord be with you, too, Father."

But there is much more to this response. When a man is ordained a priest, the Holy Spirit comes upon him in a unique way, enabling him to perform the sacred rites of the Mass and consecrate the Eucharist. By responding, "And with your spirit," we acknowledge the Spirit's activity through the priest during the sacred liturgy. It is Jesus Christ who is the head of the community gathered for Mass and it is his Spirit who is the primary actor in the liturgy, regardless who the particular priest celebrating Mass may be.

2. The Confiteor ("I confess to almighty God ...")

In the prayer known as the *Confiteor* (which begins, "I confess to almighty God ..."), the new translation better reflects the Latin text of the Mass and helps us cultivate a more humble, sorrowful attitude toward God as we confess our sins. Instead of simply saying that I have sinned "through my own fault," as we have in the old translation, we will now repeat it three times while striking our breasts in a sign of repentance, saying: "Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault."

This repetition more fully expresses our sorrow over sin. When we are at fault over something small, we might simply say to the person whom we have wronged, "I'm sorry." But if it is a more serious matter and we deeply feel sorrow over our actions, we sometimes apologize several times and in varying ways: "I'm so sorry ... I really regret doing that... Please forgive

The Fourth Sunday of Lent

Theme: God's unfailing Mercy toward sinful man

1st Reading: 2 Chronicles 36, 14-17, 19-23

The leaders as well as the people of the Jewish kingdom continually sought refuge in animal sacrifices and other forms of rituals. They harassed the prophets who appealed for their conversion. God's wrath and his severe judgment against them was actualized through destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C and their exile unto Babylon thereafter. Yet God showed his unfailing love and mercy by bringing them back to their own land through Cyrus, the Persian Emperor. Disciplining His people in this manner, God showed himself as a God, rich in mercy.

2nd Reading: Ephesians 2: 4-10

St. Paul understands God making his son a sacrifice of expression for our sins as the highest

expression of his love and mercy towards us. Hence he emphasizes that our being saved is not a merit we can boast of.

Gospel: John 3: 14-21

As mentioned in chapter 21 of the Book of Numbers the brazen serpent raised by Moses in the desert was a sign of God's mercy towards the hard-hearted Israelites who distrusted in divine providence. Similarly Jesus affirms that his being raised on the cross for our sins is a sign of God's unfailing mercy towards us.

Reflection:

Do we realize that our being steeped in sin without realizing the need for conversion is a reason for God's severe judgment on us? It is important to realize the God of compassion and Mercy expects us to be converted towards Him.

God, through the saving death of Christ, reconciled us to him. Our compassion towards the needy and helpless is a witness to



God's infinite mercy.

Christ showed us his boundless mercy by sacrificing his life for us sinners. Hence sacrificing ourselves for the good of others is the apt response to God's mercy and love.

Rev. Fr. Henry Silva

me." This prayer in the liturgy helps us recognize that sinning against God is no light matter. We must take responsibility for whatever wrong we have done and whatever good we failed to do. At Mass, one does not simply offer an apology to God. The revised translation of this prayer helps the Christian express even more heartfelt contrition and humbly admit that one has sinned "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault."

The Gloria ("Glory to God in the Highest ...")

In the new translation Jesus is addressed as the "Only Begotten Son." This more closely follows the theological language used in the early Church to highlight how Jesus is uniquely God's Son, sharing in the same divine nature as the Father. This also reflects the biblical language in John's gospel, which uses similar wording to describe Jesus' singular relationship with the Father. While all believers are called to a special relationship with God as his sons and daughters through grace (see John 1:12; 1 John 3:1), Jesus alone is the eternal, divine Son by nature. He is the "only begotten Son" of the Father (see John 1:14, 18j 3:16, 18).

The Creed ("I believe in one God ...")

Several changes have been made to the translation of the Nicene Creed used in the Mass. Here are some of the major revisions:

"We believe" is now "I believe"

We have begun the Nicene Creed with the words "We believe in one God ..." The new translation, however - "I believe in one God" - unites us with the rest of the Catholic world in using the singular. After Vatican II, English was the only Western language that translated the opening Latin word of the Creed (Credo, "I believe") with the plural "We believe." The singular "I," however, makes the Creed more personal and challenges each individual to interiorize the faith. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, "I believe" expresses "the faith of the Church professed personally by each believer" (no. 167).

This is what we do when we renew our baptismal promises during the Easter season or when we attend a baptism. The priest asks if we believe in the various statements of faith in the Creed: "Do you be-

lieve in God the Father Almighty ... ?" "Do you believe in Jesus Christ ... ?" "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit ... ?" Each individual answers for himself or herself, saying, "I do." It is fitting that we will regularly make a similar personal act of faith by using the singular "I believe" whenever the Creed is recited in the Mass.

"One in being with the Father" is now "Consubstantial with the Father"

While this change involves what some may see as arcane or technical theological language, it is important to be as precise as possible when speaking about the nature of God. The revised translation of the Creed aims at helping us more precisely profess a concept about the nature of the Son and his relationship with God the Father. The previous wording referred to Jesus as "one in being with the Father." We will now speak of Jesus being "consubstantial with the Father."

So what's the difference? Simply put, the new wording more closely reflects the theological language of the bishops at the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) who wanted to safeguard that Jesus was acknowledged as the eternal Son of God, equal to the Father. The council condemned the false teaching of a man named Arius who held that there was a time when the Son did not exist. According to Arius, God created the Son and then adopted him. He said the Son of God "came to be from things that were not" and the Son was "from another substance" than that of the Father (*Catechism*, no. 465).

In opposition to this, the Council of Nicea taught that the Son is "God from God, light from light, true God from true God" and "of the same substance" (*homoousios* in Greek) as the Father. The Son was not created by the Father, but rather is a distinct divine Person who has existed from all eternity, sharing the same divine nature with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

When *homoousios* was translated from Greek into Latin, it was rendered *consubstantialem*, which has traditionally been translated as "consubstantial" in English. The new translation of the Mass returns to this traditional rendering. Although the term "consubstantial" might not roll easily off the tongue, its use preserves the precise theological tradition of the Council of Nicea and invites us to reflect more on the divine nature of Christ and the mystery of the Trinity.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Crucified Jesus, cleanse me from sin, in your precious blood, wash me clean.

For the followers of Jesus that they may shun the darkness of sin, and walk in the light of truth and goodness. We pray in faith.

Response: Crucified Jesus, cleanse me from sin, in your precious blood, wash me clean.

For all those holding public office that the light of truth and justice may shine in their words and actions. We pray in faith.

Response: Crucified Jesus, cleanse me from sin, in your precious blood, wash me clean.

That the light of Christ may shine gently on the sick, the lonely, and those who are going astray. We pray in faith.

Response: Crucified Jesus, cleanse me from sin, in your precious blood, wash me clean.

That the words and deeds of Christ may be a lamp for our steps and a light for our path. We pray in faith.

Response: Crucified Jesus, cleanse me from sin, in your precious blood, wash me clean.