

Messenger



OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

NOVEMBER 25TH

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CBCSL Statement on Independence of the Judiciary

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL) views with grave concern certain events that seem to threaten the independent and fair functioning of the Judiciary.



In a truly functional democracy the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary should be able to carry out their responsibilities freely and solely on the basis of the accepted norms of the Constitution of Sri Lanka. Whatever differences the Legislative and the Executive may have with the Judiciary should be resolved amicably. The Judiciary with its specific role of being the interpreter of the Law should be respected and given its freedom to function as it should and any interference in this is a serious threat to the Rule of Law and democracy.

Given this situation we call upon the Executive and the Legislative stake holders to address this issue and to ensure that the freedom of the Judiciary should not be violated under any circumstances.

Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith
President, CBCSL

Bishop Norbert M. Andradi, OMI
Secretary General, CBCSL

07th November 2012.

* His Eminence addresses Archdiocesan Biblical Commission

"The Bible is Life"

The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith instructed the Archdiocesan Biblical Commission (ABC), to draw up a constitution to regularise its meetings and ensure a better organization of its programmes in this Year of Faith.

Addressing the ABC recently, at the Cardinal Cooray Auditorium of Aquinas University College, Borella His Eminence said that the challenge before the ABC was to take the Word of God to the people in all three languages – English, Sinhala and Tamil.

"We have to go to where the people are and give this living expression of the Sacred Scriptures in its real form," he said.

His Eminence called upon the ABC to give impetus to the programmes scheduled for the Year of Faith comprising the distribution of the Bible in all three languages,



Lectio Divina programmes, reading and study of the Bible at family level and the formation of Biblical animators.

"The Bible is not just empty sounds of theological studies. The Bible is life - God incarnating Himself in the community. This is what is important and it is this knowledge that we have to bring to our people. That

is the challenge before us," His Eminence pointed out.

Quoting from his pastoral letter issued recently for the Year of Faith, His Eminence noted that the task before the ABC was not to have meetings and constitutions and structures but to get down to work to spread the Word of God and to create a sense of love for

the Word of God which is mentioned in the Vatican II Document, *Dei Verbum* (Divine Revelation).

"So that she may nourish her children unceasingly by the divine words. Hence the Church rightly encourages the study of the Holy Fathers of East and West and of the ancient liturgies. Catholic exegesis and others

(Contd. P 2)

3000 Novenas to Our Lady



Commemoration of the 3000th Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help was celebrated at St. Mary's Church, Maggona on Wednesday, October 31. The Chief Celebrant at the Festive Novena and Mass was His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, assisted by Rev. Fr. Maurice Namal and Rev. Fr. Jude Asanka.

Prayerful Festive Birthday Greetings



The Patronal Feast and Birthday of Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith was celebrated on November 15, 2012. A Thanksgiving Mass presided over by His Eminence, concelebrated by the Auxiliary Bishops, the Episcopal Vicars and Priests was held at Sacred Heart Chapel, Archbishop's House. A gathering of priests, religious, staff and well-wishers participated.

Ad Multos Annos Vivat!

Decades of Rosary overpower Decades of War



Visuals of the National Rosary Rally of the Legion of Mary held in Jaffna on Sunday, October 28, with the participation of His Excellency, Archbishop Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka.

MESSAGE TO THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

VATICAN CITY - Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has sent a message to the new Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican Communion, the Right Reverend Justin Welby. Writing on behalf of Pope Benedict XVI and of his own dicastery, the Cardinal expressed his "congratulations and warmest best wishes."

The message states that relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion are a hugely important part of the ecumenical call for all Christians to seek greater fidelity to the Lord's will.

Christmas Articles

Please send in your contributions for the Christmas Issue of the *Messenger* before December 7, 2012.

Editor



'Nolo Abortium'

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The Divine 'Office'

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Judging another

13 Pg

Serving twenty five years in the Vineyard of the Lord



Rev. Fr. Jude Rohan Silva O.M.I. Provincial Superior of the Oblates, celebrated his 25th Anniversary of Service to the Lord. A Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated at St. Joseph's Church, Payagala on November 3.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Julian Tissera, Rev. Fr. Shiran Ranasinghe O.M.I. and other Rev. Fathers, proceeding for the Festive Mass.

D. Anselm Fernando

Hurricane Sandy could not bring her down



The Virgin Mary is all that remains from a home which was destroyed during super-storm Sandy in the Breezy Point neighbourhood in USA.

Photo: Getty Image

Blessing of Graves



Dehiowita Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Piyal Fernando is seen here blessing the graves of the Church cemetery on All Souls' Day.

J. Antony

The Bible ...

Contd. from Pg. 1

dedicated to theological studies should by zealous collaboration devote their energy so that under the watchful eye of the sacred magisterium and making use of all acts of studies may investigate and interpret the sacred books" (Dei Verbum).

His Eminence said that according to the Holy Father the primary setting for scripture interpretation is the life of the Church. Without the Church you cannot have authentic scriptural interpretation. This he said was because the scriptures were born in the Church and was formed in the worship of the community. In the breaking of the bread, the apostles came out with their 'memoria'. - Memories of

their encounter with the Lord and these memories were recounted and later became texts.

Addressing the Parish Priests and the vital role that lies before them in this Year of Faith, His Eminence said that the Parish Priest should be the animator of the faith of the people or else he is not a parish priest. His position just becomes a title. "The personal conduct of the Parish Priest in his sharing, witnessing and proclamation, should be an example to the people. The Parish Priest is the first witness otherwise how can you tell other people to go straight when you are not going straight?"

"So the responsibility is to strengthen people in the faith. That is your first task as par-

Gampaha Deanery Rosary Rally at Miriswatte

All parishes of the Gampaha Deanery teamed up at the premises of St. Anne's Church, Miriswatta, to hold a massive Rosary Rally. Priests, Rev. Sisters, Religious and the Laity were present in numbers, representing churches of the Deanery. The statue of Mother Mary was brought in procession, in a elegantly decorated chariot and was placed in a special enclosure.

The Episcopal Vicar for the Southern Region Very Rev. Fr. Cyril Gamini Fernando presided at the Eucharistic celebration together with priests of the Deanery. Braving the inclement weather, the congregation stood in devotion till the end. This rally was organised by the liturgical committees of the parishes in the Deanery. The arrangements were handled by the parish of Miriswatta led by the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Kirul Jayanath Silva.

Benedict Wanasinghe

ish priest, then you have to teach, to instruct and guide them to experience the joy that emanates from faith, In his mercy the Lord has considered handing over these people to your care. So there is a challenge for you. Hence you should be happy to be a disciple of Christ, and you should not think of your job as a burden but as an animator of the faith," His Eminence said and added that when a parishioner sees a parish priest he or she should get the feeling "I see something in this man's life."

He also noted with concern the influence Christian fundamentalists were having on some of the Catholic faithful.

"With the heavy secularism and the intense activity of some groups of

Tamil CD for Year of Faith



Sri Lanka Broadcasting Cooperation Music Director Desabhandu A. Mahendran B.A., is seen presenting the "Year of Faith" Tamil CD, with lyrics written by him to His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo at the Archbishop's House recently. Rev. Fr. Ignatius Warnakulasingham, National Director, Liturgy was also present.

Basil Mel

Seth Sarana provides assistance for flood victims



The rains which brought about floods affected the Dalathure area. Seth Sarana, the social arm of the Colombo Diocese, stepped forward in response to an appeal made by the Parish Priest of St. Rogus Church, Rev. Fr. Noel Sampath.

The present Director of Seth Sarana, Rev. Fr. Rohan de Alwis is seen making an inspection of the activities and assessing the relief measures provided.

W.T.C. Perera

Blood donation campaign by the Catholic Youth at Kala-Eliya



The Catholic youth of St. Joachim's Church, Kala-Eliya organised and conducted a blood donation campaign for the fourth consecutive time. Dr. Mrs. Chaminda Seneviratne was the main source of inspiration, assisted by a unit of the blood bank of the National Hospital. Many parishioners donated blood, considering it a meritorious act, to revive a patient in need.

A Good Shepherd helps displaced flock



The inclement weather that resulted in floods, displaced many, in the area of Mathumagala. Lunch parcels were distributed and their needs were looked into by the Parish Priest of Matumagala, Rev. Fr. Shiran Anselm. The picture shows the shepherd reaching out to the flock in need.

Christian fundamentalists, the understanding and the joy in the faith of some of our people have indeed been threatened and there are reports of defection. I therefore call our Regional Bishops and all our Episcopal Vicars, Deans, Parish Priests and the Apostolate Coordinators, to pool their resources, knowledge, expertise and their talents in order to affect a true renewal of faith among the Catholic faithful," he advised.

Wedding Anniversary Mass and Post Cana Programme at St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya

A wedding Anniversary Mass was celebrated at St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya for couples married for the last five years. This was organized by the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Sunil De Silva.

Prior to the Eucharistic celebration, a very relevant Post Cana programme was conducted by Rev. Fr. Sunil Rupasinghe on the psychological aspects and psychosocial related issues in married and family life. Fr. Sunil made an excellent presentation with the use of multimedia visuals and down to earth examples to demonstrate these issues.

The other presentation was made by a married couple Francis and Carmel Madiwela who spoke on the importance of proper and effective communication between a married couple to avoid problems and the dire need for transparency. The third presentation was by Dr. Maxie Fernandopulle on the Catholic Church's view point and the current ground situation in Sri Lanka on abortion, contraception and subfertility. He also touched on the



sexual health problems in married life which are getting common and is an important cause for unhappy marriages and even ending up with divorce.

The programme concluded with the Wedding Anniversary Eucharistic Celebration and a beautiful ceremony of renewal of marital vows. Dilki Fernando, Phae Gunasekera and the Youth in the

Parish assisted the Parish Priest to organize the day's programme.

St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya continues to assist Catholic families to look for Catholic partners through the service of the Marriage Bureau presently functioning in the Church. Marriage Bureau is opened on Thursday and Saturdays from 9.00 am 12.30 noon.

Remembering Rev. Fr. Nicholas Lowe

A Holy Mass to commemorate the first death anniversary of Rev. Fr. Nicholas Lowe (National Director Catechetical), was held on November 10, at St. Mary's Church, Marawila presided by Very Rev. Fr. Patrick Wijesinghe Episcopal Vicar, Chilaw Diocese.

A large gathering of Rev. Fathers, and Rev. Sisters were present together with the members of the family of Fr. Nicholas.

To mark the occasion computers were donated to St. Rita's School, Talawila and several school necessities were donated to the Thisogama Junior School, organised by Rev. Fr. Dilan Marius (Director Education) and the Catholic Education Unit.

Rev. Fr. Dhanushka Fernando



Church in the World

New academy to promote knowledge of Latin

The Pope is launching a new Pontifical Academy for Latin to help priests and academics deepen their knowledge and ability with the language.

The new academy was announced in a letter titled "Latina Lingua." The document is known as a Motu Proprio, a phrase that means "by his own initiative."

The academy will have two goals. The first is "to promote the knowledge and study of the Latin language and literature, both classical and patristic ... especially in Catholic educational institutions where priests both train and educate seminarians."

The second aim of the school will be to promote the written and spoken use of Latin. The new academy will replace the Latinitas Foundation, which was established by Pope Paul VI in 1976.

In his recent Angelus address, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on Sunday's Mass readings featuring two poor widows who provide timeless models of faith and charity.

Election shows need to better present marriage beliefs

Vatican.org Bishops and Catholics must work to better deliver the Church's teaching on marriage in light of the recent US elections, said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York.

"Our role, our sacred responsibility is to defend marriage from anything - anything - that would dilute it from what nature intends and what the God of nature intends namely, a life-long, life-giving, faithful union between one man and one woman," Cardinal Dolan, President of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, told the Press recently.

Rather, he explained, the Church opposes anything that "eats away" or "militates against" the sanctity of marriage, including "frivolous divorce" and "trial marriage."

However, opponents of traditional marriage continue to "caricature us as these mean-spirited, bigoted people who are trying to impose their medieval views upon the rest of society." "It is Beautiful to Be Elderly"

CATHOLIC HALF HOUR RADIO PROGRAMME

Catholic Half Hour on the 'Solemnity of Christ The King' presented by Priyanthi Seneviratne VanDort will be broadcast on Sunday, November 18, at 8.00 pm on SLBC's English Service, on FM 97.4 for Colombo listeners and FM 97.6 for listeners island wide.

Ainslie Joseph

Crib Competition and Exhibition 2012

St. John Berchman's Confraternity of Altar Servers, St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena will be organising their Crib Competition and Exhibition for the 18th consecutive year.

The Altar Servers' Associations and parishioners belonging to the City of Colombo are invited to participate at this competition. It will be held on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th December at the Parish Hall to coincide with the Feast of their Patroness St. Lucy.

The entry forms are available at the parish office and at the Rosary Stall. For further details please contact Mas. Anthony Sanjith (0757532900) or Mas. Daniel Aloysius (0775377923).

Prizes will be as follows:

- 1st - Air taxi ticket for two
- 2nd - Dinner for two at Cinnamon Grand Hotel,
- 3rd - Gift voucher from Nolimit and 5 consolation prizes.

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
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EDITORIAL

November 18, 2012

The treatment of prisoners must conform to acceptable minimum standards

I was sick and in prison but you would not take care of me.
Matthew 25:31

Jesus is talking to the disciples about the final judgment. All of the people will be gathered before Christ. As the people come before Christ they are separated into two groups. One group is told that they have cared for Christ. They cared for Him when He was hungry, thirsty, lonely, and naked. They have taken care of Christ when He was sick and when He was in prison. By contrast, the other group has not done any of these things for Christ.

Amazingly neither group can remember when Jesus contacted them nor when they responded to his call or failed to do so. Jesus tells them they either responded to Christ or refused Christ when they had opportunities to help other human beings. According to their response they are divided into the two groups of sheep and goats. Jesus' words here teach us that we are in a common brotherhood with our brothers in prison. Jesus showed us this brotherhood when "They crucified him with the criminals, one on either side of him." Luke 23:33. Jesus died not for good men only but for evil men, and he promised the repentant criminal who was crucified with him that he would be in his Kingdom the same day.

Last week there was a riot in Welikada prison and in suppressing the riot many prisoners were killed as well as some Army personnel. One hopes there was no wanton killing. What is our obligation as Christians towards prisoners? We have to visit them as do our priests and the religious, who do so as prison chaplains.

A significant plan to reduce overcrowding at Welikada and address related social issues has been launched by the veteran Oblate Priest Rev. Fr. Hilary Peiris OMI, chaplain of the Welikada prison. He has set up a prisoner relief fund at the Archbishop's House to help those who are unable to pay their fines or compensation. But we cannot leave this task to the priests only. We must take an interest in the welfare of the prisoners as commanded by Jesus.

Our prisons are overcrowded. The Welikada prison is holding more than double its capacity. There have been reports on the over-crowding in prisons. Mr. Walter Ladduwahetty, a former Judge of the High Court has highlighted this and many other issues. But have his recommendations been implemented? All States are required to comply with certain minimum standards laid down by the United Nations' in the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners adopted on August 30, 1955. The treatment of prisoners is also addressed in the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

They provide guidelines for international and domestic law for citizens held in prisons and in other forms of custody.

There is also a set of standards referred to as the "Handbook on prisoners with special needs" published in 2009 by the United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime. Are we in breach of UN Rules? The Government and prison authorities should go into this matter.

There are also too many accused being remanded. Our Judges are guided too much by the Police in refusing bail. Walter Ladduwahetty points out that the judges should speak to the accused himself and form his own judgment on whether the accused would appear in court or jump bail. The public must prevail on the Government to ensure compliance with UN Standards.

As **The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church** says "Punishment does not serve merely the purpose of defending the public order and guaranteeing the safety of persons; it becomes an instrument as well for the correction of the offender, a correction that also takes on the moral value of expiation when the guilty party voluntarily accepts his punishment. There is a two-fold purpose here. On the one hand, encouraging the re-insertion of the condemned person into society; on the other, fostering a justice that reconciles, a justice capable of restoring harmony in social relationships disrupted by the criminal act committed."

• A reflection on the significance of praying for the dead

The most sensible gift on the Feast of All Souls'

Increasingly, obituary notices recommend that as a way of memorialising or honouring the deceased, the donation of a monetary contribution to one of the deceased's favourite charities would be appropriate. The sentence in point often reads: "in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to (fill in the name) Charitable Organization". It is quite laudable when a person's death moves his or her survivors to an act of charity. It seems like a holy and pious thing to do.

In some cultures, the donation of flowers to help decorate the funeral parlor (or the family home or even the fresh gravesite) has been a touching custom that has lent support to grieving survivors. The arrival of a suitable bouquet often represents a valued, personal message of support from a friend or associate. In some instances, the bouquet constitutes the virtual presence of a sender who is regrettably unable to be present for the funeral rites. Much to the consternation of the florist industry, in the recent past many people have decided that instead of sending flowers, a donation to a worthy cause is a more suitable way to honor a deceased person. The sentiment behind these activities is, in part, a holy and pious thing that should be encouraged, but when Catholics offer this kind of gesture, they can be denying their beloved departed valuable assistance in reaching Heaven.

For many Catholics in English-speaking lands, belief in the ability of the living to help the dead through prayer and sacrifices often falls prey to cultural suspicion about the Church's belief in Purgatory because most English-speaking Catholics live in countries whose culture is primarily Protestant. As a rule, Protestant Christians believe neither in Purgatory nor in the living person's ability to be of assistance to the deceased. This is because at the time of the Protestant Reformation, among numerous other texts, Martin Luther removed from the Bible that section which teaches that there is great value in praying for the dead. The text reads, "He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, in as much as he had the Resurrection in mind; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin" (2 Mac 12:43-6). This text from Maccabees, which Protestant Bibles do not contain, conveys the scriptural basis for the Church's belief that some of those who have died who will be saved have not yet achieved heaven (i.e. they are in Purgatory), and that the living can provide help for those souls by performing prayers and sacrifices.

Catholic faith holds that we can indeed continue to care, help and express generosity toward people even after they have died through prayer. This is because the Book of Maccabees ranks among those texts that Luther been edited out of the scriptural canon, Protestantism is bereft of this consoling ingredient of our Christian patrimony. In Christian lands that are primarily Protestant, the Protestant sense of the futility of praying for the dead has easily entered into the popular consciousness, regrettably causing even some Catholics to question the practice. It behooves pastors not only to clarify this belief for their flocks, but to encourage the growth of the Catholic observance of praying for the dead and in particular, of offering Masses of the dead.

It must be acknowledged that the Church has a very limited understanding of the specifics related to Purgatory, yet Church teaching on the existence of Purgatory is made clear in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, articles 1030-32, which begins with "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven (1030). The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned (1031)."

Ancient Christians believed in the practice of praying for the dead. Many locations in the ancient catacombs reveal passages marked into the walls reminding the living to pray for the dead. St. Monica begged her son, St. Augustine, to pray for her after her own death. In 1439, the Second Council of Florence acknowledged that some souls must still expiate for past sins after their death and they do so in Purgatory. The 16th-century Council of Trent, legislated "that purgatory exists, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar."

Catholic faith is unambiguous in its belief that those who die without mortal sin but with many of life's imperfections still unhealed will experience a time of perfect healing from sin and brokenness and a time for whatever expiation from sin the merciful God requires of a soul before that soul may enter Heaven. Further, the Church has been clarifying for centuries that prayers, sacrifices and most particularly, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, are of assistance to those souls who are in Purgatory.

Several extracts from the Mass reveal the Church as she understands her ability to be of help to the dead. In the First Eucharistic Prayer at Mass we pray: "Remember also, Lord, your servants N. and N., who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace. Grant them, O Lord, we pray, and all who sleep



in Christ, a place of refreshment, light, and peace. (Through Christ our Lord. Amen)" The Second Eucharistic Prayer reads: "Remember also our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the hope of the Resurrection and all who have died in your mercy: welcome them into the light of your face." When Eucharistic Prayer three is used in Masses for the Dead, the following is prayed: "To our departed brothers and sisters and to all who were pleasing to you at their passing from this life, give kind admittance to your kingdom. There we hope to enjoy forever the fullness of your glory through Christ our Lord through whom you bestow on the world all that is good". Each of these liturgical prayers officially acknowledges that some of the dead who will be saved are not yet in Heaven and that the Church's prayers are helpful to them.

The understanding then, that prayers, sacrifices and particularly the offering of the Mass helps the souls in Purgatory, prompts one to ask why in the world a Catholic would choose to memorialise a deceased person by making a gift of flowers or a charitable contribution to an agency instead of arranging to have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered for that person's soul. Certainly flowers provide solace for the survivors, and the Church urges all toward acts of charity, so these are good and holy gestures that should not be eliminated. But they should not run competition with the pious practice of having Masses offered for the dead as well. The greatest favour anyone can make to a deceased person is to have the Mass offered for them; nothing surpasses this in efficacy.

All Souls' Day (The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed) on November 2, is especially important to recall the Church's teaching that there is indeed a Purgatory in which the souls of the saved but imperfect are awaiting the fulfillment of their purification and healing, and that these souls can be greatly helped by the prayers, sacrifices and Masses offered by the living. This is an aspect of the Catholic patrimony that must not be forgotten or de-emphasized. Justice demands that our brothers and sisters in the faith who have died find in us faithful friends who acknowledge that it is indeed a good and pious thing to pray for the dead.

(Courtesy: L'Osservatore Romano)

Nolo Abortium - Had Your Parents Aborted You...?

Prof. Anton Meemana

The Beginning Of Life and You

Neither this fabulous universe nor all existing life-forms were created by us human beings. There is a mysterious process going on and on and on in the universe, the origins of which we hardly know anything.

If there is a life, there has to be a creator of life, a giver of life. Life, therefore, is a gift from a giver and the generous giver of that grand gift is the good God. (Jer 1:5, Job10:8-12, Ps 22:9-10, 139:15-16)

Human life begins to blossom at conception and continues to blossom throughout pregnancy. In other words, human life begins before its live birth. Conception only provides a biologically and morally significant point in the continuous development of a person. It is also equally valid to argue that until its live birth, there has been a life and unless there has been a life, there is absolutely nothing to be born.

Post-natal baby is a direct and logical result of pre-natal development. Although it is true that the neurological and psychological development of a human foetus is gradual, it does not follow at all that one stage of foetal development is much more significant and crucial than another.

A foetus is intrinsically an evolving and a developing human being from its birth. That is to say, you, my dear reader, were a potential person from your very conception. Otherwise you would not be here today even to read this article. Since a new human life is present from the moment of conception, the State has a legal duty and moral obligation to protect pre-natal life. Any Government which is not committed to this task makes itself illegitimate and damages its credibility and authority to govern.

Abortion and Exceptions

The kind of abortion that is under discussion here is abortion as a deliberate action intended to bring about the death of a foetus. There are very rare exceptions such as therapeutic abortion (when the mother's life is seriously in danger), but something cannot be legalized based on rare exceptions. A sound moral theory is not under obligation to yield right answers to all rare cases.

Such rare cases must be individually discerned and decided upon. Every rare case requires serious discernment and a very painful, decision making process on the part of the parties concerned.

For instance, let us consider a rape case. Rape is much more pernicious, diabolical and inhuman than murder and at times I reluctantly tend to be in favour of capital punishment for rapists, but we need an honest and open debate and discussion about the complexity of this issue. The victim must be given some choice to discern and decide about the future of the pregnancy. But in order to facilitate this there is no need

to legalise abortion. Such a case can be handled in the way therapeutic abortion is handled. Every single exception need not be made into a law. In actual fact, instead of solving any problem, legalisation of abortion may in all likelihood, encourage rapists. There have been courageous women everywhere in the world who have not undergone an abortion even though their pregnancy was due to a rape. Instead of punishing the baby, we must punish the rapist.

We must not forget the fact that we have created a society that glorifies and honours rapists. Rapists are protected and promoted by our deceased cultural (dis) values.

A man who does not re-

"Every pro-abortionist owes his or her very life to their parents' anti-abortion policy. Every pro-abortionist's life is a direct result of an anti-abortion policy"

spect women disgraces himself. The one who rapes a woman is not a real man as he has already raped and destroyed his very soul. A rapist is a dear friend of Satan, a representative of Lucifer, and an ambassador of the Devil.

Abortion and The Future Generations

The aborting of a potential person is killing of a future generation. A potential person has a right to life, since everything in this universe starts with potentiality or emergent probability. Everything in this universe has a beginning. From a cosmological point of view, the beginning of a person is at the beginning of the universe. It has taken, according to the best modern scientific calculations, at least 15 billion years for the universe to have created us. I am an irreplaceable product of 15 billion years and you too are a marvelous product of 15 billion years, and hence abortion is a very clear violation of this cosmic design.

Had God decided to destroy the universe, two seconds or five seconds or one day or one week or one month or three months after its beginning, there will be absolutely nothing to talk about. So is abortion. Had your parents aborted you at any second or hour or day or month after your conception, you would not be around even to be a pro-abortionist.

Every pro-abortionist owes his or her very life to their parents' anti-abortion policy. Every pro-abortionist's life is a direct result of an anti-abortion policy. A consistent pro-abortion policy coming down through the centuries would have annihilated all the pro-abortionists in the world and the entire human race.

Most pro-abortion ar-

guments rely heavily upon Cartesian (that is, the philosophical legacy of Rene Descartes) body and soul dichotomy. But if human beings are truly embodied souls or ensouled bodies, then every conception has an intrinsic value. Every new human conception is a beginning of a new dimension of the universe. It is not just a set of genes or a bag of cells, but a unique piece of God's image and likeness.

Conception and The Sacredness Of Life

Right to life begins at conception. Life itself is extremely sacred, holy, divine and mysterious from the very moment of conception until death, nay, even after its death, it has a sacred destiny and a heavenly destination. In short, human life is sacred through and through. Every child, born and to be born, is a word from God, a letter in the divine alphabet, a unique utterance from God, a proclamation from God. Every conception contains a spark of divinity. Every child, born and to be born, is a wonder child, a revelation from God, a manifesto of God's boundless generosity. Human life, the whole of it, is a precious gift from God.

The foetus is this blossom of a blooming human being. Parents bear an irreplaceable responsibility in tending this bouquet. Even in non human life isn't it morally and intrinsically evil to torture puppies or kitties for fun or to kill birds or fishes for no reason at all?

Killing of a foetus imposes the injustice of premature and untimely death. This injustice underlies the evil of abortion. It deprives the foetus of its future, of the life it would have had and the chance of living out its natural life span.

The loss of a conscious life is what clearly underlies the injustice of premature death as a result of an abortion. One does not have an unlimited right to do as one pleases to one's body. Limits enable us to cherish and appreciate life more. A foetus is not only a part of a mother's body but also part of her soul. In that sense, every abortion is soul-murder.

Women's Rights are also protected in protecting the unborn. Part of that right is to protect her unborn baby, that is, to protect her body and soul. She can protect her rights only to the extent that she safeguards the rights of others.

A women's body is not her sole private property, since she has no personhood apart from her body and whatever she does unto another body will also damage her own body. Whatever a mother withholds from her baby, she withholds from herself. Since the right to control one's body is a property right, it is at best a rather feeble argument for the permissibility and legitimacy of abortion. It is not sound to argue that the right to obtain an abortion, is in any way derived similarly from the right to own property. Mere ownership of a body does not give us the right to kill innocent babies. A person who kills an unborn child disgraces and destroys the entire human race. A

person who protects an unborn child protects the entire human race. Women's liberation must be a blessing to unborn babies too. Emancipation begins at conception and likewise charity begins at the womb.

The greatness of a nation depends upon its attitude towards unborn children. Tell me what you think of abortion and I will tell you who you are. Our compassion towards what is most vulnerable reveals who we really are.

Human Law and The Divine Law

Legalization of abortion also leads to commodification of sex. Abortion has become the only mysticism of consumerism. Human law makes sense only in the light of Divine law. Law must be at the service of life, not at the service of murder, destruction or annihilation. Civil law is only a reflection of Divine Law. It can never be against Divine law. Legalization of abortion is our inability to love our yet-to-be-born neighbour as ourselves. To be rational is to be compassionate. Compassion to the womb is the highest form of rationality. Legalisation of abortion shows how confused and deceased we have become as a nation.

The one who does not abuse power is the most powerful one. True power is the power to protect. The one who destroys the defenceless is the coward par excellence. The one who advocates abortion is fearful of the future and wants to control the future of the human race. Every pro-abortionist wants to play the role of God. Legalisation and justification of abortion may stem from a guilty consciousness.

Abortion has become the opium of a lost generation, a confused world, and a soul-less

"A rapist is a dear friend of Satan, a representative of Lucifer, and an ambassador of the Devil"

society. In this Godless world that we live in a bit of stolen orgasm here and there has become the only solace for many people. In this sense, legalization of abortion means legalization of Godlessness, interior emptiness and sexual irresponsibility. Abortion is a mortal sin. To sin is to become subhuman. To be truly human is to become sinless. Abortion is a sin against love, that is, against God. Abortion takes away our intrinsic capacity to love. Whatever we do against love is a sin.

Sex is never value-free. Sex must make us all the more generous, altruistic, compassionate, sensitive, gentle and magnanimous. I truly find myself in giving myself to others and when I truly and deeply find myself, then I find God too. Sex addicts never enjoy sex. Only a saintly figure can truly enjoy sex. Sexual intercourse is a spiritual act between a man and a woman and the only legitimate context for that is marriage. Sex without conjugal commitment

and love is always a sin. Sex is not a commodity that one consumes. It is a total offering of one's soul, one's total self. It is total outpouring of oneself for the spiritual growth of another person.

Since sexual intercourse has consequences, the unborn has a right to the use of his or her mother's body. Sexual intercourse is certainly not for teenagers since there is a proper time for everything in life. Whether we like it or not, sexual intercourse requires psychological and spiritual maturity. It is not the advocacy of abortion that can prevent unwanted pregnancies but growing self-mastery over one's sexual urges.

The increasing capacity to regulate and tame sexual urges and not to be enslaved by them is part and parcel of growing self-mastery. This is also an authentic ingredient of any spirituality. What is most personal is most moral and spiritual and what is most moral and spiritual is also most personal. What people do inside their bedrooms in never morally neutral and has long term repercussions. Without self-mastery people cannot truly enjoy sex. If people consider sex as a sacred activity, a spiritual enterprise, there will be no room for unwanted pregnancies and abortion.

The Catholic Church and The Future Of Humanity

The process of the dechristianisation and legalisation of abortion go hand in hand. The gospel values must be destroyed in order to legalise abortion. So every moral crisis can be an opportunity for evangelisation and every persecution is a moment for rekindling of evangelical fire. But evangelization is not a cheap adaptation to a world mentality but rather a profound retrieval and renewal of the power of the gospel. The Catholic Church is the pro-life church par excellence in human history. The life of the church must be the life of Christ. Jesus Christ is the pro-lifer par excellence. When it comes to life-long pro-life, Christ is incomparable. As a male, Jesus had womb compassion (ho kurios esplagchnaisthe ep aute, Luke 7:13) on people. So every male too should develop such a compassionate attitude. To be truly human is to be Catholic and to be Catholic is to be pro-life. Those who say that religion is a private matter do not know what religion or spirituality is all about.

There are no crimes beyond forgiveness with God as long as we humbly, sincerely and heart-bleedingly repent. This article is not an attempt to condemn mothers who have undergone an abortion but to redeem them. A forgiven sinner is no longer a sinner.

The teaching of the Twelve Apostles, commonly called the Didache, which was written in the second century has this to say about Catholic morality; "You shall not kill; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not have sexual intercourse with boys... You shall not practice magic; You shall not murder the child in the womb, nor kill newborns."

Faith Experience

*Faith is the centre of our Christian life ..
All of us know it well.
It is Jesus who implanted in us.
Through whom we become the chosen
faithful of God.
He invites all of us to become the "living
faith."*

*Exodus brought the people of Israel to
become faithful.
e (X)periencing Yahweh as their Father.
Peter kept the first step to spread the
faith of the Risen Christ.
Eleven apostles followed the same.
Ready to become the believer of Christ
like them.
In the midst of all trials and difficulties.
Every step you keep let it be through faith.
Never turn back to see the doubtful world.
Chance to turn to God through faith this
year.
Experience it by believing, living, and
sharing.*

Sr. Anne Lambert SDS.
Salvatorian Sisters.
Mabola

Praying to the dead

Month of November is the month where we pray for the dead in a special manner. We have masses celebrated for them, visit their graves in cemeteries and give alms on their behalf. All these spiritual exercises we do in order that they be released from purgatory and reach their eternal reward in heaven. But for how long should we pray for them for this to happen?

Purgatory

It is the doctrine of the Catholic Church that there is a purgatory. However there is no doctrine about the duration of purgatory. It is left to the theologians to speculate. Purgatory comes from the verb to purge-to cleanse. Traditionally, purgatory is a place where one is cleansed by fire after death. A fire that is milder than that of hell. An opinion expresses the process like this: When we die we go immediately to the presence of the all Holy God. God's holiness is as bright as the sun. When we stand before Him everything that is unholy in us is purged away painfully and we are taken immediately into the presence of the Holy God to enjoy eternal life. Hence the dead are saints though not canonized. That is why we can pray to them like to other saints to intercede with God for us. Still we can continue to offer masses etc for them, to think of them and thank God for their precious lives and for all that they have done to us.

So let us thank God for our departed loved ones by praying to them.

Rev. Fr. Dudley Perera OMI



There is something about churches. Though they are places of worship, the magnificence of their architecture and their interior décor make everyone simply stand and marvel at their splendour and majesty. This could be because churches today have become mere showpieces and this is reflected in our country as well, since the worship aspect is sadly lacking and is overarched by the new impetus given to modern construction and unnecessary beautifying of church premises.

Instead of making people stand and marvel at its magnificence, a church should possess the divine power to beckon the onlooker with a call for worship. This is what is important in a church, where the 'Real Presence' is felt and that, which beckons.

It has been long years since I stepped into Phillip Neri's Church, Pettah, a church I had been in and out of, as a child, a teenager and as a teeth-cutting journalist. During all those times what went on at the Altar did not count much to me. It was either you were dragged to church by your parents or if you went on your own it was just to tell the home administration that you were a

good Christian and did not disobey the Decalogue and kept Holy the Lord's Day. This Church in Pettah has undergone a major transformation over the recent years. There is no necessity now, to tussle with pavement hawkers as was the form in those days to get inside its precincts and with

The Divine 'Office'

*"The Church must discover the Power of Silence -
Confronted with the sorrows, doubts and uncertainties of people,
She cannot pretend to give easy solutions.
In Jesus, silence becomes the way of attentive listening, compassion and prayer.
It is the way to the truth.
The Church's humility, respectfulness and silence might reveal more clearly -
The face of God in Jesus"*



luck even a parking space is available for you.

However, there was something. Something that had not changed in all those years. It was this aura of silence which at one time I thought was eerie, a sort of formidable presence in the Church but today I can see that this pervading silence is part of the Church; - it is deafening and threatening and yet composed and all that chaotic mad rush which goes on outside the Church and the activity inside does not seem to bother the Silence.

One day I stepped into the Church at three in the afternoon. Most churches are closed at that time but the doors of Phillip Neri's were opened, perhaps like

Prophet Jeremiah would say to 'inebriate the weary soul and replenish the sorrowful soul' (Jer.31:25). Weary as I was and in consternation I entered the Church to pray but something made me halt, transfixed. It was the Silence - formidable - with the Altar glowing in the Majesty of the Risen Lord. - The effect was awe-inspiring!

In this threatening silence one cannot pray. The command is to LISTEN.

"In Jesus, silence becomes the way of attentive listening, ... It is the way to the truth."

And, in this conflict-ridden "City of Man," the Church is the only visible 'office' of the Divine.

AMS

Smiles and tears are important

'Hate' wounds, but a 'Smile' heals and reconciles. Smiling in the midst of difficult times shows that we are courageous from inside because we still have the strength to smile in the face of our pains and struggles.

Let us just open our eyes to the suffering around the world. Suffering happens because there is an absence of smiles and love. There is hunger, homelessness, disease and malnutrition that cause death for too many people and children around the world because there is

lack of sharing a smile and a helping hand.

There are wars, killings and violence, all because of the absence of love. Furthermore, powerful countries support and promote nuclear weapons that annihilate.

Hatred only creates gaps and divisions, and most of all leads to the misery of humankind. Innocent people, mostly children, are often the victims of violence and cruelty.

Let love and peace start with a smile, as love

begets love and peace produces peace.

On the other hand, crying does not mean we are not brave. Well in fact, brave people often cry the most. Why? It is because they are courageous enough to surrender their tears and admit that they still are weak before the Lord. We can always offer our tears of repentance to the Lord who welcomes us at any time with open arms.

Pride does not make a person brave, rather it hardens one's heart and

hinders the grace, healing and forgiveness of the Lord from flowing in our lives.

Our world becomes aggressive and cruel but it shows bravery behind guns and bombs. The real brave ones are those who boldly stand and speak for God's love, truth, equality and justice without a sword at all, but courageously fight to promote God's peace and reconciliation for all the people.

Courtesy: Sunday Examiner

What makes ancient revelation contemporary?

The Bible is old. Actually, It is ancient. Yet the Bible is always new and much alive. How can both points be true?

For believers, the Bible constitutes an ancient treasury of revelation: Not surprisingly, extremely old bibles tend to be esteemed. Often they are considered objects of great historical and even artistic interest.

Did you ever visit a museum where part of a Bible was on display, copied by hand prior to the advent of the printing press? Maybe you gazed into a temperature-controlled glass case designed to assure the continued, intact existence of the irreplaceable treasure inside.

This respect for the Bible is admirable. Some endeavour to clarify however, that the Bible is much more than a past treasure.

True enough, the words of scripture communicated clearly with our faith ancestors thousands of years ago.

Nonetheless, many believers happily report that the Bible is not solely ancient, but speaks now-dynamically illuminating the realities and predicaments of 21st-century lives.

The *Dogmatic Constitution* on Divine Revelation, approved in November 1965 by the Second Vatican Council, stated that the Bible contains divinely revealed realities that were committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

There is, however, this problem: "Whenever our awareness of its inspiration grows weak, we risk reading scripture as an object of historical curiosity." Pope Benedict XVI offered that observation in his 2010 apostolic exhortation. *The Word of the Lord*.

But what does it mean to say that God's revealed word in scripture is a living word today?

□ It means, in the words of the *Constitution* on Di-

vine *Revelation*, that God meets his children with great love. In all divine revelation, it indicates, God speaks to us as friends.

□ It means, as the Second Vatican Council said in its *Constitution* on the Sacred Liturgy, that it is Christ himself who speaks when the scriptures are read in the Church.

□ To bear scripture during Mass is not only to bear how Christ spoke long ago, but how Christ initiates a dialogue with people now.

□ It also means, as Pope Benedict stressed in his apostolic exhortation, that God's word is not inimical to us; it does not stifle our authentic desires, but rather illuminates them, purifies them and brings them to fulfillment.

Pope Benedict added that God's word has the capacity to enter into dialogue with the everyday problems that people face. He said in this dialogue, we come to understand ourselves, and we discover an answer to our heart's deepest questions.

• Catholic News Service

Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions

On November 24 the Church celebrates the feasts of St. Andrew Dung-Lac, priest and martyr and companion martyrs. St. Andrew was one of the 117 people who were martyred in Vietnam between 1820 and 1862. The last of this group of martyrs were 17 lay persons, one of them a 9-year-old, executed in 1862. They were all canonized by Pope John Paul II on June 19, 1988. Of the group of 96, eleven were Spaniards, and 10 were French. There were 8 bishops, 50 priests and 59 lay Catholics in the group

A little bit of History

It was in the 16th century, that the first Portuguese Franciscan missionaries preached in Vietnam followed by Spanish Dominicans.

In the 19th century sadly religion was exploited by the French colonialists in their scheme to occupy Vietnam.

In 1954 when Vietnam was divided many anti-communists Catholics went south and became the mainstay behind the South Vietnamese government. When the country was united in 1975, Catholics were treated with suspicion by the new government. This mistrust originated during the 19th century, when some Catholics collaborated with the French colonists in conquering and ruling the country and in helping French attempts to install Catholic emperors, such as in the Lê Văn Khôi revolt of 1833. Furthermore, the Catholic Church's strongly anti-communist stance had made it an enemy of the Vietnamese State.

Present situation

The present situation may show some improvement from its earlier times. The faithful can practice their faith, they can go for church services, they can meet with their

Vietnam's Catholics live in hope

pastors freely and they can carry out ministerial activities among themselves.

However the Vietnamese government implements tight control over religious activities, and Catholics are often victims of violence and abuse, both individuals and entire communities. Even though religious freedom is a fundamental human right in the Vietnamese Constitution it is still seriously violated by the Communist regime.

As such the Catholic Church in Vietnam cannot freely select the candidates for the priesthood. The selection of priestly candidates and their formation and their training of seminarians and priests, must be approved by the local government. The appointment of a Bishop must also be approved by the central government. The bishop as the head of a diocese cannot make an assignment and/or transfers of his priests without the approval of governmental authorities.

The Vatican Church is officially banned, and only government-controlled Catholic organisations are permitted. The Vatican has attempted to negotiate the opening of diplomatic relations with Vietnam in recent years. (See "Holy See and Vietnam discuss opening of diplomatic relations." AsiaNews. it. February 27, 2012)

In such a situation the following legitimate demands on religious freedom continue to be made by the Vietnamese Catholics.

- To lift all bans, restrictions and arbitrary control of religious activities, including worship, ceremonies and rituals, religious activities and organizations, transfers and movements of priests.

- To repeal any ban, restriction and control in the recruitment, training and ordination of candidates for priesthood.

- To return to the Church all properties, facilities and institutions confiscated by the State.

- To lift restrictions and bans imposed on the Church of their humanitarian social, cultural, charitable and educational activities.

Phat Diem Stone Cathedral

Phat Diem Cathedral is Vietnam's most distinct Catholic Church. Unmistakably Vietnamese in its architecture it was designed by a Vietnamese priest Father Sau.

It is recorded to have taken 24 years to build this church from 1875 to 1898. Its name is taken from the fact that it is built entirely of stone and wood available in the surrounding mountain areas.

Phat Diem Cathedral can be seen as a complex comprising of a lake, a Cathedral, a stone church, a bell house and three artificial grottoes.

The square lake in front of the Cathedral has a small island in the middle on which is a statue of Jesus Christ.

The bell house is 25 metres high and 17 m wide and 24 metres long with three stories. The middle and upper floor houses the bell weighing nearly two tons. The walls are decorated with stone relief angels who overlook carved dragons.

The great Cathedral is 74 metres long 21 metres wide and 15 metres high with four roofs. Within the Cathedral are four small churches of different styles.

Next to the grand Cathedral is the Church referred to as the stone church because its floor, walls, pillars, roof beams are made of stone. Inside the Church there are many carvings and reliefs including that of chrysanthemum, bamboo, fir and apricot trees, symbolizing the four seasons of the year.

The Jesuit Father responsible for transposing the Vietnamese language into the European characters that are



the basis for the modern script, was based here in the early 19th century.

In 1951, Graham Greene stood from the cathedral bell-tower and witnessed raging battles between Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh forces and French colonial forces. He included the experience in his novel, *The Quiet American*.

In 1953, French shells hit the structure damaging the roof. In 1972, American bombs fell on the complex flattening one of the surrounding chapels and severely damaging the main Cathedral structure. Despite the ongoing war, the local community rallied to repair the Cathedral in subsequent years.

Phat Diem Cathedral which is the centre of Catholicism in North Vietnam is located 130 kilometres south of Hanoi and 28 kilometres southeast of Ninh Binh.

Pix: Top - Statue of Our Lady dressed in ao dai (Vietnamese dress) at Phat Diem Cathedral, Ninh Binh Province, Vietnam. Bottom some views of Phat Diem Cathedral. Stone relief of angels. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0vyj6ULKg8> for Phat Diem Cathedral.



The newly canonised Saints

Contd. from last week

St. Marianne Cope (1838-1918)

Barbara Cope was born in Heppenheim, Germany on January 23, 1838. She was the daughter of a farmer, Peter Koob and his second wife, Barbara Witzemberger Koob. They had five children born in



St. Marianne Cope

Germany and five born in the United States when, in 1839 the family emigrated to Utica, New York. Barbara became a naturalized citizen with the rest of her family in the 1850s. She wrote of experiencing a call to religious life at an early age but as the oldest child at home, after completing an eighth grade education she went to work in a factory to support the family when her father became an invalid. Only when her younger siblings became independent, in 1862, did she feel free to enter the Franciscan Sisters of Syracuse, (today the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities). She took the name Marianne.

A year later she made her profession as a Sister of St. Francis. Her desire was to teach and she did so for a period of time serving as teacher and principal in several schools in New York State. As a member of the governing boards of her religious community she participated in establishing two of the first hospitals in the central New York area: St. Elizabeth Hospital in Utica (1866) and St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse (1869), of which she became administrator in 1870.

In 1877, she was elected Mother General. As such she accepted a request from the Sandwich Islands (today Hawaii), to send Sisters to care for the sick. Learning that they suffered mainly from Hansen's disease (leprosy) her devotion to St. Francis who deeply cared for the sick poor and her own special concern for those with leprosy convinced her that this was God's will. Mother Marianne originally accompanied the six volunteer Sisters only to see them settled at the mission, but deeply moved by the plight of those with Hansen's

disease she chose to stay on with them. In 1884 she established Malulani Hospital on the Island of Maui. She was put in charge of the Branch Hospital at Kaka'aoko, Honolulu, and in 1885 the Kapiolani Home was opened for the well children of patients with Hansen's disease on the premises of the hospital.

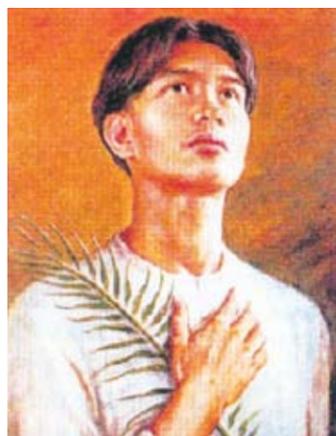
Mother Marianne is known to have brought to fruition many projects of St. Damien DeVeuster, the "Apostle to Lepers." She met him in 1884. When the priest was diagnosed with the dreaded disease, in 1886, Mother Marianne gave him hospital care. In 1888 she agreed to take over the settlement for exiles on the Kalaupapa peninsula on the Island of Molokai. She arrived several months before Fr. Damien's death in 1889, assuring him that she would provide care for the patients at the Boy's Home, Kalawao. In fact, she was officially appointed his successor.

Mother Marianne's treatment of patients was far ahead of her time. She advocated educational programmes in collaboration with hospitals in Syracuse, Honolulu and Kalaupapa and, aware of the need for beauty, encouraged an interest in needlework and landscaping. She was also attentive to spiritual needs and arranged for religious education for patients in their homes.

Mother Marianne died in Kalaupapa on August 9, 1918 and was buried among the people she so loved. In 2004, her remains were moved to the Mother house Chapel in Syracuse. The "Mother of Outcasts" was beatified on May 14, 2005. Her legacy of caring is continued today by the Sisters of St. Francis who, besides their many other activities, are still present at Kalaupapa, Molokai, with a small group of people with Hansen's disease and minister at several schools and parishes on the Island.

St. Pedro Calungsod (c 1654-1672)

Pedro Calungsod, a Filipino, was born in the Visayasa Islands, of the Philip-



St. Pedro Calungsod

ippines, in around 1654. Few details are known of his early life. When he was about 14-years-old he was chosen as exemplary among the boy catechists to accompany some Spanish Jesuits on their mission to the Ladroncs Islands in the western Pacific. They set sail in 1668 to evangelize the Chamorros. Missionary life was difficult: As provisions often failed to arrive, the jungles and terrain were difficult to travel through and the islands were frequently devastated by typhoons. Nevertheless the missionaries persevered and the Mission was blessed with many conversions. The missionaries later renamed these islands "Marianas" in honour of the Blessed Virgin and the Queen Regent of Spain, Maria Ana who was the benefactress of the mission.

However, a Chinese healer named Choco, jealous of the missionaries' prestige, spread rumours that the baptismal water was poisonous. And since several sickly Chamorro infants had died after Baptism, many believed the slanderer and apostatized that Chamorro's campaign was supported by the *mac-canjás* (sorcerers) and the *ur-ritaos* (young male prostitutes) who began to persecute the missionaries, killing many.

The worst assault occurred on April 2, 1672. At around seven o'clock in the morning Pedro, who according to written testimonies of his companion missionaries, with the Superior of the Mission, Fr. Diego Luis deSan Vitores, arrived at the village of Tomhom on the Island of Guam. They were told that a baby girl had recently been born so they asked the child's father, Matapang, to bring the infant for Baptism. Matapang, formerly a Christian and a friend of the missionaries, having apostatized angrily refused. To give Matapang time to reconsider, Fr. Diego and Pedro gathered the children and some adults on the nearby shore and started chanting with them the truth of the Catholic faith. They invited Matapang to join them but he shouted back that he was angry with God and was already fed up with Christian teachings. Set on killing the missionaries, Matapang tried to enlist in his cause another villager named Hirao, who was not a Christian. Hirao refused, remembering the missionaries' kindness, but Matapang provoked him by calling him a coward and he agreed.

Meanwhile Fr. Diego and Pedro made the most of Matapang's absence to baptize the child with the consent of her Christian mother. When Matapang learned of the Baptism he became even an-

grier. He hurled spears, first at Pedro who avoided them. Witnesses said that Pedro had every opportunity to escape but did not wish to abandon Fr. Diego. Those who knew him believed that if he had any weapons he would have defeated his aggressors but Fr. Diego never permitted his companions to carry arms. Finally a spear hit Pedro in the chest and he fell to the ground. Hirao immediately charged towards him, killing him with the blow of a cutlass on the head. Fr. Diego had time to give Pedro sacramental absolution before the assassins killed him too. Matapang took Fr. Diego's crucifix and pounded it with a stone, blaspheming God. Three assassins then stripped the martyrs' bodies, tied stones to their feet took them out to sea on a boat and threw them into the deep. Their remains were never recovered. Fr. Diego was beatified in 1985. Pedro Calungsod was beatified by John Paul II on March 5, 2000.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680)



St. Kateri Tekakwitha

Kateri "Tekakwitha, known as the "Lily of the Mohawks," was born in 1656 to a Christian Algonquin mother and a chieftain of the Mohawk tribe of the Iroquois Nation in Ossernenon, a Mohawk village (today Auriesville, New York). Her Indian name was Ioragode (Splendour of the Sun). It was here that she spent the first part of her life before moving to Canada. When she was four-years-old, her parents and her only brother died in a smallpox epidemic, thus she was raised by her uncle, a chief of the tribe of Agniers, more commonly known as the Mohawks. She herself contracted the disease and, although she survived, she was left with impaired vision, poor health and severe pockmarks.

Despite her afflictions, from childhood Kateri had a sweet nature, inclined to virtue and hard work. Her mother had secretly introduced her to the Christian faith. She was baptized Kateri on Easter Sunday in 1676 by Fr. Jacques de Lamberville, a devout Jesuit

missionary committed to the evangelization of the Indians. She took the name Catherine (Kateri), after St. Catherine of Sienna, and fully embraced the life of the 14th-century mystic. She continued her domestic duties but resisted offers of marriage, reportedly displeasing her uncle.

Fr. Pierre Cholenec, a Jesuit missionary, said of her: "in less than a few months she became for her companions a model of humility, devotion, sweetness, charity and all of the other Christian virtues." But her extraordinary virtue sparked jealousy and led to harassment even by those who had once admired her.

Her situation was far from easy. In addition she was distant from any Christian community and so deprived of the comfort of the Sacraments. The Jesuits, including Fr. de Lamberville, therefore encouraged her to move to Kahnawake, a Christian Iroquois village on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, in the prairie of La Madeleine, opposite the city of Montreal. The Jesuits of the Mission of St. Francis Xavier considered Kateri's arrival as that of an envoy of God to edify all with her exemplary life. At the mission she had the good fortune to meet a devout woman, a former friend of her mother's, who acted as godmother to her. From her arrival at the mission until her death Kateri always sought to do what was most pleasing to God. In this period she intensified her penitential practices which her spiritual director Pierre Cholenec was obliged to restrict so as to prevent the deterioration of her already frail health.

Fr. Cholenec was so impressed by her devotion that on March 25, 1679 he permitted her to make a vow of perpetual virginity. This was the first act of the kind recognized among the North American Indians. In taking this decision Kateri knew she risked living in poverty, because an Indian girl depended on her husband for a home and support; yet Kateri was content to live in poverty for the love of Our Lord. In her last and very painful illness, she gave sublime proof of the heroicity of her virtues and especially of her faith, hope, charity, patience, resignation and joy in suffering. She died at three o'clock in the afternoon on April 17, 1680 on Wednesday in Holy Week, with the words "I love you Jesus" on her lips. She was 24-years-old. Pope John Paul II beatified Kateri in 1980 on the basis of her reputation for healings and answered prayers.

(Courtesy: L'Osservatore Romano)

Pope Benedict XVI continues his Catecheses for the Year of Faith

Why believe today

Does it still make sense to believe in a world in which science and technology have unfolded horizons unthinkable until a short time ago but which have been unable to dispel the shadows of the new forms of slavery afflicting humanity? This is the disturbing question that the Holy Father asked at the General Audience on Wednesday morning, October 24, Faith, he explained, is not merely an intellectual assent of the human person to specific truths about God, but is a gift of God and an absolutely free and human act of entrustment to his love. The following is a translation of the Pope's Catechesis on the affirmations of the Creed, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last Wednesday, with the beginning of the *Year of Faith*, I started a new series of Catecheses on faith. And today I would like to reflect with you on a fundamental question: What is faith? Does faith still make sense in a world in which science and technology have unfolded horizons unthinkable until a short time ago? What does believing mean today? In fact, in our time we need a renewed education in the faith that includes, of course, knowledge of its truths and of the history of salvation, but that is born above all from a true encounter with God in Jesus Christ, from loving Him, from trusting Him, so that the whole of our life becomes involved.

Today, together with so many signs of goodness a certain spiritual desert is also developing around us. At times we get a sort of feeling, from certain events we have news of every day, that the world is not moving towards the building of a more brotherly and peaceful community; the very ideas of progress and wellbeing have shadows too. Despite the greatness of scientific discoveries and technological triumphs, human beings today do not seem to have become truly any freer or more human; so many forms of exploitation, manipulation, violence, abuse and injustice endure... A certain kind of culture, moreover, has taught people to move solely within the horizon of things, of the feasible, to believe only in what they can see and touch with their own hands. Yet the number of those who feel bewildered is also growing, and search to go beyond a merely horizontal view of reality they are prepared to believe in everything and nothing.

In this context certain fundamental questions reemerge that are far weightier than they seem at first sight. What is life's meaning? Is there a future for humanity, for us and for the generations to come? In which direction should we orient our free decisions for a good and successful outcome in life? What awaits us beyond the threshold of death?

From these irrepressible questions it becomes clear now the world of planning, of precise calculation and of experimentation, in a word the knowledge of science, although important for human life is not enough on its own, We do not only need bread, we need love, meaning and hope, a sound foundation, a solid terrain that helps us to live with an authentic meaning even in times of crisis, in darkness, in difficulty, and with our daily problems. Faith gives us precisely this: it is a confident entrustment to a "You", who is God, who gives me a different certitude, but no less solid than that which comes from precise calculation or from science. Faith is not a mere intellectual assent of the human person to specific truths about God; it is

an act with which I entrust myself freely to a God who is Father and who loves me; it is adherence to a "You" who gives me hope and trust.

Of course, this adherence to God is not without content; with it we are aware that God has shown himself to us in Christ, He has made us see His face and has made Himself really close to each one of us. Indeed, God has revealed that his love for man, for each one of us, is boundless: on the Cross, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God made man, shows us in the clearest possible way how far this love reaches, even to the gift of himself, even to the supreme sacrifice. With the mystery of Christ's death and Resurrection, God plumbs to the depths of our humanity to bring it back to Him, to uplift it to His heights. Faith is believing in this love of God that is never lacking in the face of human wickedness, in the face of evil and death, but is capable of transforming every kind of slavery, giving us the possibility of salvation. Having faith, then, is meeting this "You", God, who supports me and grants me the promise of an indestructible love that not only aspires to eternity but gives it; it means entrusting myself to God with the attitude of a child, who knows well that all his difficulties, all his problems are understood in the "you" of his mother. And this possibility of salvation through faith is a gift that God offers all men and women. I think we should meditate more often - in our daily life, marked by problems and at times by dramatic situations — on the fact that believing in a Christian manner means my trusting abandonment to the profound meaning that sustains me and the world, that meaning that we are unable to give to each other but can only receive as a gift, and that is the foundation on which we can live without fear. And we must be able to proclaim this liberating and reassuring certainty of faith with words and show it by living our life as Christians.

However, we see around us every day that many remain indifferent or refuse to accept this proclamation. At the end of Mark's Gospel we heard harsh words from the Risen One who says: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:16), loses himself. I would like to invite you to reflect on this.

Trust in the action of the Holy Spirit must always impel us to go and preach the Gospel, to the courageous witness of faith; but, in addition to the possibility of making a positive response to the gift of faith, there is also the risk of rejecting the Gospel, of not accepting the vital encounter with Christ. St. Augustine was already posing this problem in one of his commentaries



on the Parable of the Sower. "We speak", he said, "we cast the seed, we scatter the seed. There are those who deride us, those who reproach us, those who mock at us. If we fear them we have nothing left to sow and on the day of reaping we will be left without a harvest. Therefore may the seed in the good soil sprout" (*Discourse on Christian Discipline*, 13,14: PL 40, 677-678). Rejection, therefore, cannot discourage us. As Christians we are evidence of this fertile ground. Our faith, even with our limitations, shows that good soil exists, where the seed of the Word of God produces abundant fruits of justice, peace and love, of new humanity, of salvation. And the whole history of the Church, with all the problems, also shows that good soil exists, that the good seed exists and bears fruit.

Yet, let us ask ourselves: where can man find that openness of heart and mind to believe in God who made himself visible in Jesus Christ who died and rose, to receive God's salvation so that Christ and his Gospel might be the guide and the light of our existence? The answer we can believe in God because he comes close to us and touches us, because the Holy Spirit, a gift of the Risen One, enables us to receive the living God. Thus faith is first of all a supernatural gift, a gift of God.

The Second Vatican Council says: "Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior help of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and 'makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth'" (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum*, n. 5).

Our journey starts from Baptism, the Sacrament that gives us the Holy Spirit, making us become children of God in Christ, and marks our entry into the community of faith, into the Church: one does not believe by oneself, without the prior intervention of the grace of the Holy Spirit one does not believe alone, but together with one's brethren. As from Baptism every believer is called to new life, and to make this confession of faith his or her own, together with the brethren.

Faith is a gift of God, but it is also a profoundly free and human act. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says so clearly: "Believing is possible only by grace and the interior help of the Holy Spirit. But it is no less true that believing is an authentically human act...

contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason" (n. 154). Indeed, it involves them and uplifts them in a gamble for life that is like an exodus, that is, a coming out of ourselves, from our own certainties, from our own mental framework, to entrust ourselves to the action of God who points out to us his way to achieve true freedom, our human identity, true joy of the heart, peace with everyone. Believing means entrusting oneself in full freedom and joyfully to God's providential plan for history, as did the Patriarch Abraham, as did Mary of Nazareth. Faith, then, is an assent with which our mind and our heart say their "yes" to God, confessing that Jesus is Lord. And this "yes" transforms life, unfolds the path toward fullness of meaning, thereby making it new, rich in joy and trustworthy hope.

Dear friends, our time needs Christians who have been grasped by Christ, who grow in faith through their familiarity with Sacred Scripture and the Sacraments. People who are, as it were, an open book that tells of the experience of new life in the Spirit, of the presence of that God who supports us on our way and opens us to everlasting life. Many thanks.

(Courtesy: *L'Osservatore Romano*)

Church - The gathering

Assembled
Pacified
In purpose
We stand
Respecting
In reverence
An aura
Sanctified
One among
Many welcome
Dispense
Duty
Oblige
Commitment
Time
Stands
Still
Refresh
Meditate
Reflect
Praise, Plead
Thank
Purpose remains
Fulfilled

Miran Perera

YUGAPURUSHAYANO (Epochmaker) a biography of His Eminence, Thomas Cardinal Cooray

Author Hector Welgampola, 2012, Published by Catholic Publications Bureau, Ragama, Sri Lanka. 268pp.

Thomas Cardinal Cooray, 1901-1988, was the first Sri Lankan Archbishop of Colombo from 1947-1976. The Oblate Missionary was appointed cardinal in 1965 and voted twice in the conclaves of 1978. He had many firsts in his life, first priest to obtain a degree in a secular university. He was a botanist and excelled in academic work and continued his priestly studies in Rome.

After serving on the staff of St. Joseph's College, Colombo, he was the first native Superior of the Oblate Scholasticate and taught Canon Law in the Major Seminary. Even though he had no pastoral experience, yet as the Shepherd of the Archdiocese for almost 30 years he indigenized the training of local diocesan clergy and began an Intermediate Seminary. He was a leader who acclimatized to the times and acted according to the demands of situation. He faced with great agility the difficulties encountered in this role of pastoral leadership.

In this book, author Hector Welgampola, former Executive Editor

of UCAN, has captured all the salient highlights in the life and service of this epic Church leader, whose beatification cause is currently in process. The author, who hails from the same village as the late Cardinal, not merely relates the village hero's life story but also highlights the saintly leader's virtuous lifestyle.

The life of Cardinal Cooray was exemplary to the letter. In the various episodes of his life, he placed implicit trust in the Lord. Before taking any decision, this man of God would pray before the Lord seeking divine enlightenment. He was a man of the Church and he sacrificed his entire life for the good of the Church.

His initiatives in pastoral apostolate were very open-ended and allowed his coworkers even to take risks for the welfare of the people. He was a future-oriented Shepherd whose total commitment was centered on his Archdiocese. He maintained contact with his people through regular pastoral visits and was available to his people. He appointed three Vicars General to run



the affairs of the Archdiocese. These appointments were done according to the various needs and accepting the capabilities of these priests.

Pope John XXIII appointed him to the Preparatory Committee of Vatican Council II and he had figured in conciliar thinking. Though he seemed rather conservative in his thought, he absorbed the new thinking that emerged on the Council floor. He was instrumental in the post-Vatican II era to initiate a

National Synod in Sri Lanka to implement the Vatican II recommendations. Then he figured in the establishment of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in the early 1970s. He gave the keynote address at the first Asian Bishops' Meeting in Manila in November 1970 and along with Indonesian Cardinal Justinio Dharmojuwono mooted the idea of a permanent structure for the Asian Bishops. This move was opposed by the Vatican Curia already apprehensive about CELAM

Rev. Fr. Reid Shelton Fernando

(Latin American Bishops' Conference). The Cardinals of Asia living at that time did not take no for an answer but went on with greater courage. Finally it was Cardinal Cooray, Cardinal Dharmojuwono and Korean Cardinal Stephen Kim who approached Pope Paul VI to get the green light for FABC.

While reading this story of the Sainly Cardinal Cooray, I was really enthused about his approach to heavenly concerns which had repercussions on social life. His spirituality was not merely other worldly but also concerned with the lives of the poor and he visited them and took the side of the poor and the suffering at moments of natural disasters, floods or cyclones.

During his episcopacy he had to face many problems and difficulties for the Church in Ceylon. Nationalization of Schools, Discontinuance of Religious from the Hospitals, the violence of a youth insurrection and alienation of the faithful due to their faith, were

some such problems. But as a man of God he encountered all these problems in an effective manner at times initiating dialogue with the State authorities. He was a man of faith and placed his complete trust in the Lord and sought the Divine will. He allowed the Charismatic Movement to initiate the faith-life encounter. He gave permission to begin the centre for Integral Human Education which is known as the Subhodi. He gave the full support for the lay apostolate movement to thrive.

I fully endorse the view, that the life of Thomas Cardinal Cooray brings new vistas for the Churchmen of Sri Lanka. His vision, his method of action, his spirituality must not only be endeared but must be emulated by all. I endorse that every person should take time to read this life-story and even discuss the contents in a methodical manner. The credit must be given to the author Hector Welgampola for presenting this story in a readable manner.

In appreciation of Carmen Dharmaratne

This month of November reminds me of your birthday and fills my mind with nostalgic memories of my visits to your place during our youthful days.

Your close friends never failed to visit you on your birthday and you entertained us with your beautiful singing and piano playing. From my young days. I had a special regard for you because you were exceptionally talented and versatile. You were a lovely person. - always friendly and out-going, gifted with a fine sense of humour. There was never any insincerity in you-not a trace of pettiness in your character. You were the "star pupil" at O.L.V. Convent.

In every school you were selected for the main drama and you always gave a superb performance. It was a treat to see you on the stage. Your solo singing, and rich ringing voice reverberated in the hall, delighting the audience. In oratorical contests, your clear diction and eloquence held us spell-bound. You were a bright student and a much-loved and respected head-prefect. Whenever you visited us I would get you to sing and play "Sleepy Lagoon", over and over again. Your magical touch on the keys, your lovely singing & flowing interludes gave immense joy to me. A few years ago when I commented on your playing to another music teacher, she made this remark - "Carmen's playing is like water flowing down a precipice." Yes Cannen, that was an apt description of your playing.

You used to go for music lessons to Mrs. Irene Vanderwall who was the best teacher in Sri Lanka. When I wrote to her asking her whether I could come to her for lessons, she had inquired about me from you and because of your recommendation she accepted me and gave me an excellent training. I am very grateful to you for that good turn that you did. Latterly we did not meet often, but I am grateful to you for visiting me when I was sick and I thank God for the nice friendship that we had in our youthful days. May your soul rest in peace.

*How well I recall your lovely singing
Your silvery touch your beautiful playing
You were a friend sincere & true
Fondly & gratefully I'll remember you.*

Rita Irene Fernando

She lives still in our hearts

Though" Franciscan Sister Rev Irene Seneviratne : passed away 20 years ago she still lives in our hearts. Her whole life was dedicated in yeoman service to the poor and orphans, through the length and breadth of this land and in foreign climes.

She was born to a rich and very religious, Catholic family in Kegalle. During her school days she was a very bright and a popular student at St. Joseph's Convent, Kegalle. At that time none could have predicted that some day she would be a nun. Yet she answered God's call for the noble service and joined the Franciscan Missionary of Mary, which devoted its service to the downtrodden of the society.

From the beginning of her service one feature was very visible. It was her deep concern for the poor and sick people. She also began to help people without shelter, children with no proper education and patients without adequate and loving care.

Soon after she entered the Franciscan Missionary of Mary, she started serving as a nurse and worked at the General Hospital, Colombo. She became very popular and was respected by the patients and the nursing staff.

She started a Montessori school in Negombo. Soon after, she was honoured with a degree in Sociology from Coady International Institute in Canada. She launched a rural development program in the country.

She also started the Magulokuna Village Development Project in Ragama with Canadian aid. She built 140 houses and distributed them among the poor villagers.



Sr. Irene Seneviratne

She built, likewise, 84 houses in Nuwara Eliya and developed Magastota village too. During her final years at Jeevani Orphanage in Moratuwa, Sister Irene gave the children meaningful and excellent education in the English language, typing, book-keeping, scientific dressmaking, drama, dancing etc. She also arranged good Christian marriages for the orphans and provided them with jobs and houses. She was a mother to all orphans.

During the last stage of her valuable life, even as her health was failing, greater service was rendered to Moratuwa and Modera villages. She bought bare land in Modera, Mahawatta, constructed houses and distributed them among the orphans in the Jeewani convent.

This in brief, is only a fraction of her many achievements of silent service to the helpless people in the Lord's vineyard. She was also deeply concerned about the younger generation.

We are grateful for the service rendered by Reverend Sister Irene to the Modera church. This will always be in the heart of those Christians who worship at this Church.

On November 3, 1992 she was called to heaven by the Creator and earned her eternal reward. November 2012 would be the twentieth death anniversary since she was called to her eternal rest. As one who had been very closely associated in her social endeavours, I take pride in paying her this humble tribute from the heart.

Every step she took for the poor in various parts of Sri Lanka will linger long in memory. I am certain she has been richly rewarded for her endeavours on this earth.

Anthony Christopher

Who do you think you are to judge another?



Accusing and pronouncing another as guilty, would be to insulate oneself from guilt. Psychologically this would be the common mentality, in declaring oneself as innocent.

Looks can be deceptive. One could be pretentious in impressing another, through courteous gestures and facial expressions. Although it is said that first impressions count a lot, all the same one could get the count all wrong, if misled. Thus one should not rush into judgement, but ponder and reflect before doing so. After all who are we to judge another?

Jesus expressed His profound sense of judgement, when confronted with the sinful woman caught in adultery. The Jews compelled Jesus to give an answer 'yes' or 'no', to a question raised "should she be stoned to death or not?" In response Jesus said, "Let the one without sin, throw the first stone." Jesus in return compelled the agitators to judge themselves first, before judging others. Surely there would have been some among the crowd, who would have patronized her. The law of Moses prescribes, if caught in adultery, man and woman both should be stoned to death. (Lev 20:10) It is curious to discover, as to what Jesus

wrote on the sand, till such time the Jews left pleading their guilt. Presumably it would have been to find an answer, to the question. "Where is the man? Without him should I pass judgement on the woman?" Since no man pleaded guilty, the woman too was exempted from the guilt, with these words, "go forth and sin no more."

A twilight woman was once brought to court, accused of prostitution. The judge questioned her, "are you guilty or not?" The accused answered, "I plead guilty, but I was forced into this act. Before condemning me Sir, I kindly beg of you to give ear to my story, which I have been longing to reveal to no one else, but you. Although you do not recognize me now, I was the house maid at your residence, a few years ago. It was your son who took liberties with my life, misused me and soiled me. It was your good self who fixed blame on me and pushed me to the streets, which compelled me to this present state. If you were to consider my pathetic sob story Sir, would you still condemn me?"

When one initiates or entices another to an immoral act, should the one who succumbs to it be victimized, devoid of the compeller? That is the manner in which we judge, but the Lord thinks differently. Rather both involved should be held guilty.

In the event of a murderous act of abortion, who is to be blamed and condemned? Is it the woman who undergoes that trauma? Then how about the husband who encourages and persuades her and the one who chaperones her to the clinic and the doctor who performs the merciless act? Are not all stained with blood and liable of the guilt of murder? Then why not all of them acknowledge guilt and repentance, without confining it to the woman alone. How often do we clamour to level judgement over another and fix the tag of guilt, over looking our own sinfulness.

Accusing and pronouncing another as guilty, would be to insulate oneself from guilt. Psychologically this would be the common mentality, in declaring oneself as innocent.

Just imagine A, B, and C, a gang of three, performing theft in an organised form, in this way. A picks a pocket and passes it on to B, who slips away unnoticed. If A is detected, then C the able bodied one steps in, and pretentiously catches hold of A, questions, and searches him and finally exonerates him. This scenario which is tactfully executed, dupes the on-lookers and the public at large. There are times the culprits are subtly exonerated and accusations leveled at dummies, to shield offenders. Thus the suspects are permitted to sneak through the loophole and judgements are subject to ridicule.

When we are in distress or in a confused state of mind, excited and overwrought by a situation, we tend to rush to judge and jump into conclusions.

The parents of a child who was to undergo urgent surgery were waiting impatiently for the surgeon, at the given time. The surgeon arrived a few minutes late, which made the child's dad furious and abusive. "I am sorry, I had to revive a critical patient at the Intensive Care Unit," the doctor said. So saying the surgeon entered the operating theater. After the surgery on his way out the surgeon spoke to the child's dad, "your son's condition is stable, the surgery was successful." With that comment the surgeon rushed towards the ICU. The child's dad blurted out, why was he so arrogant? Should he not stop to explain my son's condition. It was then that the nurse in charge intervened and said, "Did not the doctor say that your son's condition was stable? The doctor had to rush back to the ICU to monitor the condition of a critical patient. That patient was none other than the doctor's very own son."

Try not to be hasty and harsh in your judgements. Many have valid reasons which motivate their movements and behavior. A bit more patience, common sense and gentle inquiring, would make you more sensible and prudent in your judgement.

Sometimes we encounter a vehicle from behind tooting the horn out of turn, clamoring to make head way. This often annoys us prompting us to be adamant in not permitting them to proceed beyond us. All this is because we are fast in judging them, as arrogant and indecent. You would

realise that you were harsh in your judgement, if you knew that they were trying to make headway transporting a patient to hospital or trying to fetch a doctor or respond to an urgent call. After all it is seldom one drives in such a frenzy, other than for some valid reason.

Have you judged a friend as arrogant, if he failed to acknowledge you with a broad smile or did not stop to speak to you. Is it that you failed to recognize that your friend was preoccupied in thought or racing against time to keep an appointment?

How many emotional judgements have proved erroneous, leading lovers to break away, leaving the broken hearted in the lurch and in disarray? How many of our reckless judgments, endorsed by the court of law, have led to separation and divorce? Resultantly this has denied parental care for so many helpless children. It would be poor discernment and indiscretion that leads to a lopsided judgment, causing suicide, homicide or even a disturbed mental state.

In the field of sports, umpires and referees hold the key to decisions and judgements. When two teams are at play, an erroneous decision or a judgement would be crucial, amidst a mass of divided spectators. Most of these are judgements based on snap decisions, which are forced to be taken within a split second or two. Mounting tension and pressure, together with noisy cheer creating an electrifying atmosphere, make the judgements all the more difficult. Thus the element of human error is always possible. Since all these sporting events are videoed, fallible deci-

sions and judgements are placed on record. Unfortunately no sport, other than the sport of cricket, uses available technology to review or reverse a decision or judgement. A reckless decision by an umpire or referee, caused by a lapse of concentration or oversight, may lead to unfavorable repercussions of disharmony.

Sometimes we are forced to deliver predetermined judgements, whether right or wrong, dictated by our authorities. In these events the one who pronounces the judgment turns out to be the scapegoat. Pilot delivered a judgement against Jesus, determined by the Roman authorities. One cannot get away from an act such as that, by 'washing off the hands' as Pilot did. Thus one should be bold enough to be adamant to resist the challenge or the overruling of ones' authority. This may even lead you to be stripped off your ranks.

Do not ever be misled by the judgments of others, since one has no right nor the means to do so. If you desperately need to make a judgement, be open to the Holy Spirit and be led by the Spirit. Confine your judgement only to the person concerned. Act similar to a priest at the confessional. Bear in mind, to judge is not to condemn, but to assess who and what is right or wrong, in order to put things into place, if necessary. **"God is the only law giver and judge. He alone can save and destroy. Who do you think you are, to judge your fellow man?"** (James 4: 12)

So let us not judge others, Instead let us judge our selves first. Let us be convinced to imitate God in every possible way, other than being a judge on others. Even God defers His judgement till the end, to give us ample time to repent and to seek forgiveness.

God prefers to forgive through love, than to judge. The one who has no love to forgive, prefers to judge. That is exactly why we clamour to judge than to forgive. You will never do it, if you have abundant love.

God prefers to forgive through love, than to judge. The one who has no love to forgive, prefers to judge.

Students of the English Catechism School, Nayakakanda felicitate their teachers



The special song to their Teachers performed by the senior students

The English Catechism School of the Parish of St. Mary's Nayakakanda was inaugurated on the July 29, 2000. The classes have 412 children on the "Roll" and to-date well over 1000 children would have benefitted from these classes over the last 12 years.

This year students from Grades 1-11 rallied around Rev. Fr. Malcolm Candappa, Asst. Parish Priest, and priest in charge of the Catechism Schools to felicitate the teachers at a very simple ceremony just before commencement of classes on Saturday, October 27th.

In his address to the students and to the parents, Fr. Malcolm stressed on the commitment and dedication of the teachers, who teach their "charges" without charge. He thanked them for the tremendous service and sacrifices they are making towards Mother Church and the Parish.

The senior students had composed a special song, which they rendered with so much feeling and emotion, that the end had the teachers reaching for their handkerchiefs. The words that evoked

tears was the chorus of the song:

**"We thank you,
May God bless you;
We really love you, from the
bottom of our hearts-
Happy Teacher Day"**

The students also presented special hand made "Thank You" cards, designed separately for each teacher along with "Daily Scripture Readings" publications as a little token of appreciation.

Faith in God

God gives faith with wisdom
Help us know about his kingdom
Love and care you get so seldom
Choice is given with God's freedom.

God's faith is vital,
Makes every thing possible,
God is so very Humble,
Leaving nothing to grumble,

God's Holy spirit is full of mercy
On the Cross offered his life
in sympathy.

God's love and grace
will lead to eternity.
God dwells with us for ever as
Almighty. Marie



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What it says in
the Readings

Stay awake and stand ready, because
you do not know the hour when the Son
of Man is coming

Mt 24:42

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B
18th Nov. - 25th Nov. 2012

**Sun: 33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY
TIME**

Dan 12: 1-3; Heb.10:11-14,18,
Mk. 13: 24-32

Mon: Rev. 1: 1-4, 2, 1-5; Lk. 18: 35-43

Tue: Rev.3:1-6, 14-22; Lk.19:1-10

Wed: Zec. 2:14-17; Mt.12:46-50

Thu: Memorial of St. Cecilia, Virgin
& Martyr

Rev. 5:1-10; Lk.19:41-44

Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of musicians and Church music is one of seven women, excluding the Blessed Virgin, commemorated by name in the Canon of the Mass. She, with her husband Valerian, his brother Tiburtius, and a Roman soldier Maximus, suffered martyrdom, c. 230, under the Emperor Alexander Severus

Fri: Memorials of St. Clement I, Pope & Martyr & St. Columban, Abbot

Rev. 10:8-11; Lk.19:45-48

St. Clement I, (fl 96) Bishop of Rome consecrated by and succeeded St. Peter. He was the first Apostolic Father of the Church. He was imprisoned under the Emperor Trajan and then executed by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the Sea.



Sat: Memorial of Ss. Andrew Dung-Lac, Priest and Companions

Dan 6:12-28; Lk.21:20-28

SS Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions. In the 17th, 18th and 19th

centuries in Vietnam, many Christians suffered martyrdom. On June 19, 1988 Pope John Paul II canonized 117 of these, 96 native Vietnamese men and women, 11 Dominicans from Spain, and



10 French missionaries.

**Sun: 34TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY
TIME**

**FEAST OF OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE**

Dan 7: 13-14; Rev. 1: 5-8;

Jn. 18: 33-37

Thirty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading:

Dan. 12: 1-3.

The Reading speaks about the end times, the rising of Michael, the great prince and also of the rising of people from the dust. Some will rise to everlasting life whilst others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Second Reading:

Heb. 10: 11-14, 18

The Reading refers to the great sacrifice Jesus made for the salvation of mankind. The sacrifices offered by priests, who lived before him were not sufficient to save mankind; but Jesus' sacrifice alone was sufficient.

Gospel: Mk.13: 24-32

We are invited to read the signs of the times. In as much as we interpret nature through signs, the end time too should be recognized through signs, then the end of the world and then the judgment. All these will take place with the Second Coming of Christ.

Reflection.

As we come closer to the end of another liturgical year, the theme for today's Eucharistic celebration is on the Second Coming of Christ at the end time. About the

end time no one knows. "Not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son of Man, but only the Father" says the Gospel; that is why we should always be ready. But the Reading invites us to read the signs of the times.

There will be signs which will precede the end time. If one is alert, one will be able to recognize these. These signs are as simple as the signs of nature. For example when the branches of a fig tree become tender and puts forth its leaves, we know that summer is near. Similarly when we see the things and signs that are related to the end time we should be able to recognize them. The end time is important as it is also the Second Coming of Christ. About the signs and the Second Coming, the Gospel says, "In the day after the great tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give it's light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth

to the end of the heavens."

With the end time will also come the great judgment where Christ will gather all from the ends of the earth. "Even those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Depending on what they have been; some will be rewarded with everlasting life and others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who instruct many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever," Says the first reading.

Could we be saved from eternal damnation because of our original sin? The Second Reading tells us that unlike the sacrifice offered by the priests before Jesus, the sacrifice of Jesus in once and for all, and it saved all mankind. Therefore we need not be discouraged about original sin, but what we should be concerned about is the present state of our lives. For it is the present state of our lives which will decide our future. If we are



good and holy then we will enjoy life everlasting and if bad and sinful we will have to face shame and everlasting contempt.

Aid Story.

A Brother had read a book written by a priest in the same order. When they met, the Brother remarked, "Father one day God will greatly reward your writing."

"Brother," replied the priest with humility, "On judgment day my book and the broom you are holding will be worth the same; and if your intention when sweeping was better than mine when I write, you will surely have a better place in heaven."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

St. Cecilia - November 22

St. Cecilia was born a patrician in Rome, towards the close of the 2nd century, while Alexander Severus was the reigning Emperor, but was brought up a Christian. From her early age she had determined to remain single for the love of God; she used to fast and perform all kinds of penance and charitable works. But her parents had other designs for her and so gave her in marriage to a young patrician named Valerian.

In the evening of her wedding day, with the music of the marriage-hymn still ringing in her ears, Cecilia renewed her vow of virginity to God. On retiring to the bridal chamber, Cecilia plucked up courage and said to her bridegroom: "I have a secret to share with you—I have an angel of God watching over me. If you touch me in the way of marriage, he will be angry and you will suffer; and if you respect my maidenhood he will love you as he loves me."

Valerian, a nobleman, agreed to comply if Cecilia would but show him this angel. "If you believe in the one living and true God and receive the water of baptism, then you will see the angel," was Cecilia's reply. Valerian consented and she sent him to find Bishop Urban, who baptized him. When he returned to Cecilia with the news, he found her to his dismay conversing with an angel. The angel approached him and laid upon the head of each a chaplet of roses and lilies. Valerian was so moved that within a few days he and his brother, Tiburtius, who had been brought by him to the knowledge of the Faith, sealed their confession with their martyrdom—they were beheaded by Almachim, the Prefect.

Cecilia had their bodies buried and then



when she in turn was called on to repudiate her faith, her answer to the threats of the Prefect was, "Do you not know that I am the bride of my Lord Jesus Christ?" Though sentenced to death by suffocation, she remained alive a day and a night even immersed in boiling water! Emerging unscathed, she was then struck with an axe in the head and breast. She lay bleeding for three days, praying and exhorting all who visited her, and at last expired, singing God's praises. She is also, according to legend, reported to have sung on the day of her scheduled marriage, seeking God's aid in her hour of trouble and is therefore venerated as the patroness of sacred music.

Reflection: "Do you not know that nothing will make me so happy as to die for Christ?" (St. Cecilia)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church: That all its members may give effective witness to the truth of the Gospel by the way they live. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those in charge of civil affairs: That the teaching of the Gospel may inspire them in their efforts to ensure justice for all their brothers and sisters. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the unemployed, and for all those who are in pain or distress: That the words of Christ may give them strength and hope. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That we may not be mere nominal believers, creating for ourselves a thousand false gods, and living by values that we do not even remotely resemble those of the Gospel. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

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