

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
September 27

Messenger



SS. MICHAEL, GABRIEL, AND RAPHAEL ARCHANGELS
September 29

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Circular Letter of the Archbishop of Colombo on the 'Year of Faith' in the Archdiocese

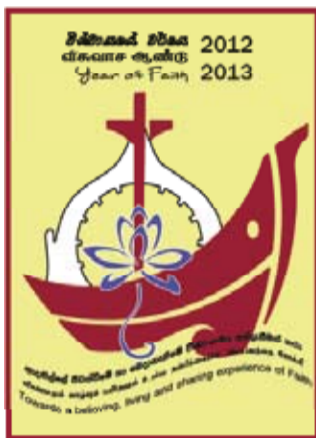
His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith in a Circular Letter (Liturgy Circular - No.06) on the 'Year of Faith' in the Archdiocese of Colombo, as instituted by the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI from October 11, 2012 to November 24, 2013 has stated that faith leads us to the discovery of the fullness of the mystery of God revealed to us in the saving love of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The full text of the Letter of His Eminence follows:

To all Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and the lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Colombo. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Faith is God's precious gift to us. It leads us to the discovery of the fullness of the mystery of God revealed to us in the saving love of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is this same mystery which God, in His infinite mercy, had begun to reveal to us already in His

loving interventions in the history of the People of Israel. And in Jesus, God brought that process of self revelation to its fullness. As the letter to the Hebrews proclaims "God who spoke in the past to our fathers through the prophets in many different ways, although never completely, in our own times has spoken to us through His Son" [Heb 1: 1-2]. It is this same mystery which invites us to a new existence, one that is in profound communion with God through His own Son Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit - which would make us experience, as the apostle Paul stated "the breadth, the length and the depth and the height" [Eph 3:18] of the love of God. A life lived in that communion of faith, which helps us to discover and grow into the over powering and salvific love of God, would also help us to free ourselves both as individuals and as a community from all forms of slavery to sin, selfishness



and death and place us on a far superior level of freedom and dignity which the world itself could never offer us.

Invitation to Communion
It is this richness

which we as disciples of Christ in turn need to offer to the world, this most ennobling and liberative good news of great joy which faith has revealed to us "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have touched, of the word of life ... that which we have seen and heard" [1 Jn 1:1-3]. And so faced with that challenge, that of sharing our own joy with others we need to constantly open ourselves to the beauty of that Communion with God which is its true font and origin. This truly was the

invitation which Pope Benedict XVI placed before the Church at the very start of his Petrine Ministry when he stated "the Church as a whole and all her pastors, like Christ, must set out to lead people out of the desert, towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God, towards the one who gives us life, and life in abundance" [Homily for the beginning of the Petrine Ministry of the Bishop of Rome, 24th April 2005; AAS 97 (2005), 710]. And so the Holy Father, in his *Motu Proprio* or Apostolic Letter "Porta Fidei", has invited us all to

(See P 2)

Opening of St. Jude's Church, Kurana



His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo declared open the new Church of St. Jude's College, Kurana, Negombo, last week. His Lordship was accompanied by Rev. Fr. Leslie Fernando, Rector of St. Jude's College.
Pix by: T. Sunil Fernando

"United in God's Word" A Choral Celebration



The Ceylon Bible Society invites you to "UNITED IN GOD'S WORD" a special praise and thanksgiving Choral Celebration on the occasion of their 200th Anniversary featuring the Choir "INSPIRATION" directed by Priyanthi Seneviratne VanDort, on September 29, at St. Paul's Church Kynsey Road, Colombo 8 at 6.00pm.

His Excellency, Joseph Spiteri, Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka, will grace the occasion as the Chief Guest. Entrance is free as the focus and goal of this choral celebration is the Proclamation of God's Word...in word and song.

The Ceylon Bible Society has laboured for the last 200 years by the grace, mercy and faithfulness of God, to uplift the lives of the people in Sri Lanka by spreading the Word of God.

Trevor Ludowyke

Lankans better than the best

Sri Lankan cricketers who are second to none, took the cricket world by storm when Kumar Sangakkara beat many other contestants to win three awards at the International Cricket Council awards ceremony held at the Water's Edge, last Saturday.

Sangakkara won the 'ICC International

Cricketer of the Year', 'LG People's Most Popular' and 'Test Cricketer of the Year' awards. For a country new to Test cricket, these are commendable achievements.

On the heels of Sangakkara's success, spinning sensation Ajantha Mendis, shook the Twenty20 cricket world returning the fantastic

figures of 6 for 8 in 4 overs against Zimbabwe in the first Twenty20 World Cup match at Hambantota. It was a record-breaking spell. The earlier record too was his, with figures of 6 for 16 against Australia. Great of the Sri Lankans who must be the envy of the cricket world. The Christians in the Lankan squad Anjelo Mathews,



Kumar Sangakkara



Angelo Mathews



Ajantha Mendis



Thisara Perera

Thisara Perera, Ajantha Mendis, Jeevan Mendis, Prasanna Jayawardena and Dilhara Fernando before batting or bowling perform the Sign of the Cross, invoking the blessing of the Almighty. Before them there were Chaminda Vaas and Romesh Kaluvitharana who performed similarly.

Dr. Elmo Rodrigopulle

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Circular Letter

Contd. from Pg. 1

reflect profoundly about this duty to constantly return to our communion with God, to an attitude of profound faith in Him and a true renewal of our commitment to know, love and serve Him.

Without this spirit of constant conversion, he sees the danger of demotivation creeping into the Church through a process of secularization of its faith, seen more in terms of a social, cultural and political commitment. States the Pope: "It often happens that Christians are more concerned for the social, cultural and political consequences of their commitment, continuing to think of the faith as a self-evident pre-supposition for life in society" [PF 2] - a kind of "taking for granted." And what we do not seem to understand or at times seem to purposely ignore is the fact that without a strong return to a profoundly faith based relationship with God, the very same commitment for the social would be weakened and eventually emptied of its inner rationale.

Year of Faith

And so feeling the urgency of a return of the universal ecclesial communion to a strong sense of faith as a means to renewal and reinvigoration, the Holy Father has instituted a special year in the Church starting on the 11th October 2012 and ending on the 24th November 2013, the feast of Christ the King. He has called it the Year of Faith. The 11th October 2012 has been so chosen especially because it marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the 20th anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, both important time-lines in the renewal of the Church in our own times.

The Holy Father has desired to place this special year in close relation to the II Vatican Council in order to once again base this thrust for a renewal of faith on the great expectations of the texts of the same Council which have lost nothing of their value and brilliance all along these 50 years. Yet avoiding certain pitfalls the Holy Father wishes that these texts be interpreted correctly and implemented on the lines of a right hermeneutic - that which is done in line with the living traditions of the Church: The hermeneutic of continuity. And so The Year of Faith would be an occasion for a re-evaluation of the Council and its truthful implementation. At the base of this idea is something close to the heart of the present Pope: That the II Vatican Council is not a new beginning of the Church but a continuation with a new spirit of vigour of the same faith that animated the Church in its bimillennial history.

Call to Conversion

He also wishes that the Year of Faith becomes a summons to an authentic conversion to the Lord, a true return to the faith and to communion with God. States the Pope "only through believing, then, does faith grow and become stronger; there is no other possibility for possessing certitude with regard to one's life apart from self abandonment, in a continuous crescendo, into the hands of a love that seems to grow constantly because it has its origin in God" [PF 7]. In this sense the Holy Father wants each believer to profess his faith courageously not only in the Liturgy of the Church but also personally and through the witness of life. "But I say to you, everyone who confesses me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denies me before

men shall be denied before the angels of God" [Lc. 12:8-9]. During the Year of Faith the recitation of the Credo at Holy Mass and at other events should be done personally, with a profound awareness of what is being proclaimed and with a determination to give witness to that. The recitation of the Credo is the explicit affirmation of this faith, owning it and making it one's life orientation. Besides, the Holy Father wishes that during this year more attention be paid to the reading, understanding and contemplation of the contents of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. He wants this basic text to be widely studied by as many Catholics as possible. The Holy Father also encourages the Church to intensify during this year its commitment to charity while at the same time showing us how faith and charity are inter-connected when he states: "Faith without charity bears no fruit, while charity without faith would be a sentiment at the mercy of doubt" [PF 14].

The Holy Father seems to caution us that faith cannot be taken for granted. Living in a world influenced largely by secularism and irreligious trends which militate against faith, we need to constantly foster this gift. St. Paul emphatically instructs us "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what the will of God is, and what is good and acceptable and perfect" [Rom 12:2].

Faith dimension in the life of the Archdiocesan Church

In the Archdiocese of Colombo following the lead given by the Supreme Pontiff Pope Benedict XVI, we too will dedicate the year from 11th October 2012 to the 24th November 2013, as the special Year of Faith. It will thus be the third year of the decade of the Eucharist which follows the Year of the Most Holy Eucharist which we already celebrated from August 2010 to August 2011 and the Year of the Word of God which we celebrated from the 27th November 2011 upto date. During the Year of Faith, we hope to further strengthen the efforts we have already made for the better appreciation, celebration and living out of the treasures of ecclesial life, the Word of God and the Most Holy Eucharist. The theme in keeping with the requirements of the Year of Faith proclaimed by the Holy Father for the Archdiocesan Community would thus be:

Towards a believing, living and sharing experience of Faith"

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Pastoral Objectives:

With the promulgation of the Year of Faith, the clergy, religious and the laity of the Archdiocesan Community would need to begin a special journey, a journey of a fresh discovery of the beauty of faith. With this in view, all are thus invited to work with special commitment to achieve an even greater degree of awareness and ownership of the mysteries of faith in their life. Parish priests and heads of institutions should consider it their special calling this year to do everything possible to strengthen the faith of their flock (cfr. Lc. 22:32), to teach, instruct and guide them to experience the joy that emanates from faith. With heavy secularism and the intense activities of some groups of Christian fundamentalists, the understanding and the sense of joy in the faith of some of our faithful have indeed been threatened and there are reports of defection. I therefore call

upon our regional Bishops, all our Episcopal Vicars, Deans, Parish Priests and Apostolate Coordinators to pool their resources, knowledge and expertise and their talents in order to effect a true renewal of faith among the Catholic faithful. Be inventive in doing this, because your flock is what God in His great mercy has entrusted to your care. This should basically revolve around a new Catechism of the faith, reaching out to all, renewed interest in the devout celebration of the Sacraments which include a strong return to the Sacrament of Penance and an even more intense and devout participation in the Most Holy Eucharist, the diffusion and use of the Sacred Scriptures especially through Lectio Divina, the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours at parish level and the commissioning of Biblical animators in the parishes, the revival of the ASIPA, SCC programmes, a commitment to the practice of charity which is motivated by and grounded firmly in the faith and a renewed interest in sharing the faith with others. Prayer, and intense prayer at that, should surround all our other efforts in this year. Let prayer be the spiritual energy that drives this effort. Let us encourage our people to pray at home, by themselves, through their associations and movements and in the Church to pray that the Archdiocesan Church may experience a true renewal of the faith and a "time of grace" in this special year.

Let every parish priest consider it his first duty to be the Master Catechist of his people by word and example himself first experiencing and then guiding his flock towards a greater awareness of the mysteries of faith. Let him take special care of the weak ones and make an extra effort to prepare those Sunday homilies in a way that explains to them the different teachings of the Credo and makes them aware of the beauty of God's loving plan of salvation for them.

Programmes in the Year of Faith:

After having reflected about the guidelines set forth by Pope Benedict XVI in his *Motu Proprio "Porta Fidei"* and in keeping with his request, and having consulted different groups of those in the Diocesan Curia as well as others, I decree as already mentioned above that the year starting on the 11th, October 2012 and ending on the 24th November 2013 [the feast of Christ the King] be considered in the Archdiocese of Colombo as the Year of Faith. The solemn opening of the year in the Archdiocese will be held on Sunday the 7th October at 6 p.m. at a special Liturgical service at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Colombo 13. The solemn proclamation of the Year will be effected at this ceremony. All priests, religious communities and lay representatives from parishes of the three deaneries of the City of Colombo and Kotte will be expected to participate in this event. The promulgation of the Year of Faith in these parishes of the city and the Kotte deanery could be done at a morning Holy Mass on the same or on another convenient day within the week. All the other parishes will simultaneously, with the main ceremony at the Cathedral, conduct the special Liturgical service, for the solemn opening of the Year in their main Church and the solemn promulgation of the Year by the Parish Priest. The Liturgical text for the opening ceremony and the decree of proclamation will be sent to them in time by our Liturgy office.

The Archdiocesan Education Office too will prepare the schools for this event, conduct an awareness campaign and on a date convenient to them conduct a ceremony for the promulgation of

the Year of Faith in the schools.

Specific Programmes of the Year

1) Catechesis:

(The Archdiocesan Catechetical Apostolate will,

- Seek to ensure that a further strengthening of the existing catechetical programme directed to school going children is carried out in the Sinhala, Tamil and English languages.
- Establish a programme of adult Catechesis directed to the parents and elders in a given parish. Master Catechists are to be prepared for this and suitable text books found or prepared with the help of the Deva Dharma Nikethanaya and the Tamil and English Theologates
- Make available and diffuse important Catechetical books like the *Mahopadesaya*, the family Catechism and life in Christ series prepared by His Grace Archbishop Oswald Gomis and the Catechism of the Catholic Church in English or in the vernaculars, the Youcat in its English version and as many other Catechetical publications as possible even conducting competitions or quiz programmes as an encouragement for their use.

d) With the help of the Archdiocesan Education Apostolate take steps to ensure that religious instruction is adequately provided to all our Catholic children in the schools, especially in the State Schools and in International Schools where a minimum number of Catholic children can be found. Efforts should be made with the help of the Regional Coordinators to provide alternate Catechesis and religious instructions to those children who unfortunately are not provided with facilities for the study of Catholicism in these schools. A survey of children not receiving religious instructions in these categories of schools should be undertaken and remedial steps based on that should be taken.

e) Intensify the monthly Poya training seminars for Catechists and ensure that they too are exposed to a greater knowledge of the treasures of the Catholic doctrine.

f) With the help of the Archdiocesan Communications Commission useful material such as CDs, DVDs and other such items on the important aspects of our faith be prepared and made available for diffusion and use in parishes, schools and other such institutions.

2) Deva Dharma Nikethanaya

The Deva Dharma Nikethanaya and the Tamil and English Theologates being the premier Archdiocesan Institutions for the diffusion of a profounder sense of theological knowledge will,

a) Organize with the help of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Apostolate study days for a better presentation of ecclesial documents on Catechesis such as *Catechesi Tradendae* [1979] the general directory for Catechesis [1979] and the CCC for priests, religious and the laity.

b) Conduct such awareness programmes for Catechists and lay leaders at the regional level too. Harness the support of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Apostolate, the lay movements and the youth and children's associations in this matter.

c) Organize with the Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate programmes for the preparation of parish Biblical animators, provide them with indications of specific tasks they should undertake at parish level, evaluate such work and reward them with a due recognition at Diocesan level.

(Contd. on Pg. 9)

• Statement issued by the Congress of Religions on the University Crisis

Future generation should be allowed to go forward without hindrance

Several religious leaders have signed a joint statement on the ongoing university crisis stating that as leaders the focus of their attention is on the University student community, who are the most precious resource of the country.

The Statement signed by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith and other religious dignitaries states:

It is natural for problems to arise from time to time in a democratic country. Some problems that arise are ones that should be solved quickly. Some problems can be solved slowly only in stages.

It is close upon two months since the start of the problem of the university teachers who are like the backbone of the country's education.

It is evident that the university teachers strike has taken root on a number of issues. We think it unnecessary to take them one by one for analysis.

We as religious leaders, focus our greatest attention on the university student community who are the most precious resource of our country. It is the prime responsibility of all to ensure that the future generations are provided the opportunities to go forward without any hindrance.

Not only from the university crisis, but from the crisis related to the advanced level students, it is equally clear that those who are responsible for the most important reasons creating this unfortunate situation, have not become fully aware of the issues involved.

We emphasise that destroying totally the aspirations of young university students, who are there to take over the future of the country is something which will give rise to frightening results in the future.

We very kindly advise, the government and the university teachers to humbly and flexibly

work together to get out of this situation without plunging the whole of Sri Lanka from darkness to blackness.

Signed:

- His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, *Archbishop of Colombo*

- His Grace Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis *Archbishop Emeritus*

- Rev. W.P. Ebenezer Joseph *Methodist Church*

- Ven. Dr. Ittapane Dhammalankara *Anunayake Thero*

- Prof. Bellanvila Wimalarathana *Anunayake Thero*

- Ven. Maduluwawe Sobitha *Nayake Thero*

- Ven. Dr. Brahammanawatte Seevali *Nayaka Thero*

- Sri Vithi Nayakar, *Representation from Hindu Religion*

- A. Javid Yusuf, *Representation from Muslim Religion*

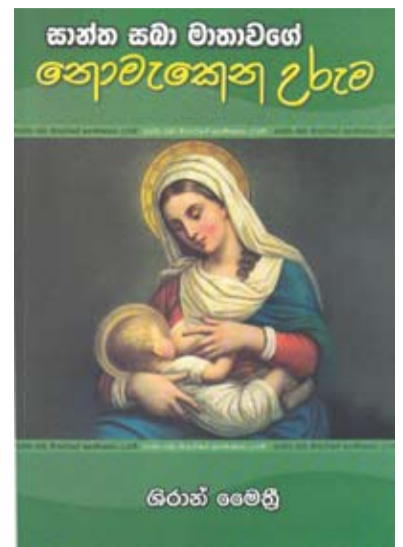
Shiran Maithri's third book "Santha Saba Mathawage Nomakena Uruma"

The third book of Shiran Maithri, Asst. Editor of the Gnanartha Pradeepaya titled, "Santha Saba Mathawage Nomakena Uruma" (Eternal heritages of the Catholic Church), is out for sale.

Shiran is a well-known Catholic author whose books have made an impact with the readers. His speciality is Christian Heritages both local and abroad.

Some of his writings include the Statue and Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu, the Milk Grotto, the Statue of Christ the Redeemer in Brazil, the Miraculous staircase and underwater statues of Christ both in Italy and in the USA.

The 128 page book is very useful for children and adults who are interested in the heritages of the Catholic Church, and is priced at Rs. 200/-



SVP Centenary Celebrations at Batticaloa

The St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Mary's Church, Paliyanthiru which was inaugurated in 1912 will celebrate its centenary on September 29 and 30, 2012, at Batticaloa.

The Chief Guest on the occasion will be His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Swampillai, Bishop of Trincomalee.

His Lordship will celebrate a Thanksgiving Mass on Sunday, September 30.

Financial assistance to Medical Students

The Guild of St. Luke, Ss. Cosmos and Damien (Catholic Doctors Guild) will be giving financial assistance to needy Catholic medical students entering the Medical Faculties of Sri Lanka in 2012/13.

Parish Priest and the students could communicate with Dr. Maxi Fernandopulle, 33 Police Park Avenue, Colombo 05.

Secretary
St. Luke Guild

Journalism Workshop



A workshop on Journalism conducted by Kumara Nayanajith sub-editor Gnanartha Pradeepaya and Lama Pradeepaya was held at the Parish Hall of St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda, last Sunday (16) under the patronage of Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunathilake the Parish Priest of the Church.

Over two hundred students of St. Mary's Daham School Nayakakanda participated at the workshop organised by the "Panhinda Society" of the Daham School.

Both lectures and practicals were included for the workshop which was coordinated by Joseph Pius.

Text & Pic. by Nimal Perera

Low Income Family gets Home

The keys, of a new home constructed by the Holy Rosary Guild of Dehiyagatha under the patronage of Rev. Fr. Dharshana Jaymanna, the Vice Rector of Aquinas University College was handed over recently to the disabled head of the family, Mr. Rukmal Hettiarachi and his wife K. Manel Perera after it was blessed

The substitution of their small hut with the newly completed house came to be realized by the fund raised by Fr. Dharshana, with the assistance of his friends, the Sri Lankan Migrants in New Zealand.

It was in 2005, when Fr. Dharshana was the Parish Priest of Dehiyagatha, the Professionals Guild of Holy Rosary, an able team, was instituted with the view to uplifting the social, economic, spiritual standards and moral values of the less privileged families and children as well as to support the Parish Community.

Having recognized the vast growth of the Guild and its good work done to the society, as an encouragement Fr. Dhashana promised the Guild, further assistance and thus, was able to make this home a reality.

Lawrence Fernando - Dehiyagatha

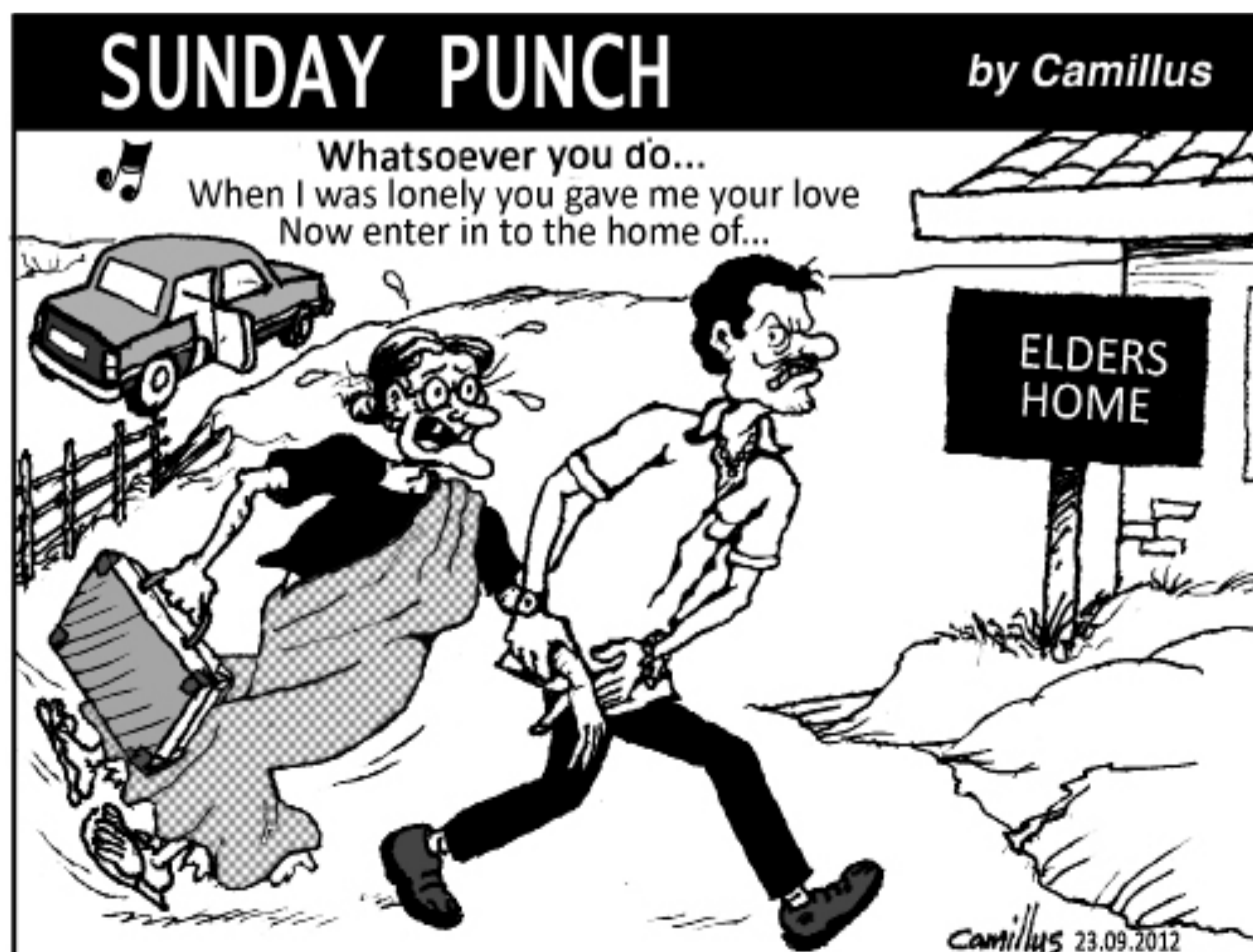
Feast of Holy Cross Church, Kalutara



The Annual Feast of the Church of Holy Cross Kalutara, was celebrated on September 16, 2012.

The chief celebrant at the Festive Mass was Rev. Fr. Lester Wijesuriya, Director of Princess Grace Orphanage, Kalamulla, Kalutara. Picture shows the Rev. Frs. lighting the traditional oil lamp.

D. Anselm Fernando



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
Messenger
සඟුරුවා

EDITORIAL

September 23, 2012

Let's try self government in the Eastern Provincial Council

The Governing Party coalition has won all the Provincial Elections except the Eastern Province where although it won the largest number of seats it failed to secure an over-all majority to form the Council. The three communities seem to have voted more or less on communal lines and the leaders of the two minority communities- the Tamils and the Muslims appealed to their voters to vote for them to protect and safeguard their community interests. Hitherto the ruling party coalitions have been able to control all the Provincial Councils but this time the issue is in the balance.

During the struggle for Independence against British colonial rule our political leaders argued that although the British did provide reasonably efficient government it would still be better to have self government rather than good government. But these same leaders once in power did not have much trust or confidence in the people, and instead decided things for the people which they thought were good for them. This type of

conduct is called paternalism. So our political leaders after Independence merely took over where the British left and centralized power.

After 1956 party rivalries accentuated and the ruling party began to confine their paternalism to those voters in electorates which voted for them and neglected or even discriminated against those voters who voted for their rival political parties. The victims of this policy were the ethnic minorities particularly the Tamil people who were settled in the North and East. They could no longer communicate with the State organizations in English since government employees hardly knew English and in any case were required to deal only in Sinhala which was the only official language. So they nursed a sense of grievance and the rest is unpleasant history.

Now the Government has an opportunity to allow the minorities in the Eastern Province which is equally divided between the three communities to come to a coalition to govern the Eastern Provincial Council. The Communist Party has suggested an All Party Government. The argument against it is that there will be no Opposition then. The Executive arm of the government whether at the Center or in the Provinces must be accountable and there must be an Opposition to expose the wrongs and misdeeds of the Executive. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. So the lack of an Opposition is not conducive to good governance.

The alternative is a coalition of the Tamil and Muslim parties along with the UNP. It would provide an opportunity for government by the people of the

Province who consider their interests are not adequately represented in the National Parliament.

At the recently concluded meeting of the Colombo Archdiocesan Council of Priests (COP) with the Presidential Secretary Lalith Weeratunga, it was highlighted that self governance even if it means that the people will not have access to central government funds according to the prevailing system of political patronage in the development of the country, may be the preferred option for the people of the Eastern Province. If such is the wish of the people of the Province the Government should respect it and enable it to function. This would be the best evidence for the International Community that there is no discrimination against the minorities particularly the Tamil minority who has steadfastly refused to be co-opted to the ruling party coalition even preferring to forego the development expenditure that the central government alone can dispense.

As Milton Friedman put it, "government is essential both as a forum for determining the 'rules of the game' and as an umpire to interpret and enforce the rules decided upon." The grievance of the minorities is that the rules of the game are not being enforced by the centralized state in a fair manner and they are being discriminated against. This is where self-governance comes in and it might work better than we think. When faced with problems people have a natural inclination to devise their own solutions to problems.

Call to Build New Temples in Partnership

St. John's gospel in Chapter 17:21-23 ("Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you....May they be completely one"), gives us the most profound expression of the bond that exists between community and mission.

In his priestly prayer which is also a missionary prayer, Jesus entrusted to his followers the mission of being the sign and reflection of the communion that exists between the Father and the Son by means of their communion among themselves and also to be the sign and reflection of God's unconditional compassionate love for all God's creatures through their love for one another (Jn 13:35). So the ultimate goal of both the community and the mission is to bear witness to God's compassionate love and communion through the compassionate love and communion among themselves. In the first epistle of St. John, the word, "communion" is used to indicate the final goal of the missionary proclamation namely communion with the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ (1 Jn 1:3) through communion with one another (1 Jn. 1:7).

Jesus' Conversion

Jesus, who was born to bring a flourishing of life to all God's creatures (Jn 10:10), was brought up according to the laws of his Jewish society. However, soon after his baptism at Jordan, when he felt deeply loved by God whom he addressed as Father, who is quite sensitive and responsive to the sufferings and the needs of people, Jesus had to recon-

cile what he was told to believe with what he now knew to be true (Jerome Murphy-O'Connor). A need for change of outlook arose because of his new intimate experience of God as compassionate Father. Such an experience and the vision that emerged out of his piety did not permit him to remain silent and inactive facing division and exclusion in his Jewish society. Hence he consulted the Father in prayer (Mk 1:34) to know whether it was Father's will that his children should remain divided and discriminated.

Disunity is not God's will

Disunity and exclusion had been created by a particular interpretation of Leviticus

impure, righteous and sinner. The purity system was a law of exclusion. The non-caring attitude and behaviour of the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37) shows clearly the interpretation which was given to Leviticus 19:2 and the resulting behaviour. The purity laws divided, discriminated and marginalized people, denying them the right to participate in the religious and social affairs of the Jewish society. Such people almost became non-persons.

Jesus, the Community Builder

Jesus deliberately replaced the core value of purity with compassion. Jesus proclaimed, "Be compassionate

with such people. He went out to meet them and eat with them, manifesting his solidarity and communion with them, thus provoking anger and protests by the Scribes and the Pharisees (Lk 5: 29-30).

Jesus also formed his apostles in the art of leadership for community. The apostles who gathered around Jesus were individuals who were not mutually compatible. They came from different backgrounds, occupations and temperaments and had different views regarding Jesus and his mission. Jesus made them transcend their differences gradually and love one another as he had loved them (Jn 15:12-13). He instructed them to resist greed for power, status and social prestige (Mt 20:24), and invited them to understand the meaning and the value of serving one another in humility (Mt 20: 28; Jn 13: 1-10). He told them that he would be present with them whenever and wherever they will gather in his name, after his death and resurrection (Mt 18:20).

Enlightened to be the New Temple of God

Apostles and others who were dispersed after the death of Jesus were once again brought together by the Risen Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in the Risen Lord bonded them together. They accepted baptism as a common sign of their affiliation and communion. The Holy Spirit whom Jesus Christ sent from the Father became the spiritu-

ally unifying agent and the enlightening One. Hence they turned to each other in love and enabled the Risen Lord to be present among them. The community, born out of the compassionate love of God, and mutual love, care, generosity of the believers, preaching of the Good News of salvation and the celebration of the Eucharist, became the new temple of God and of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ. To build such temples, the apostles devoted their time and energy.

Communion and mission are inseparable

Blessed John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, "Ecclesia in Asia", said, "Communion with Jesus, which gives rise to the communion of Christians among themselves is the indispensable condition for bearing fruit; and communion with others, which is the gift of Christ and his Spirit, is the most magnificent fruit that the branches can give. In this sense communion and mission are inseparably connected" (24).

The concepts of communion and community need much emphasis today in Sri Lanka. Therefore the Dioceses, the Parishes, the Religious Congregations and the Lay associations need to work together in the spirit of partnership in this ministry, thereby promoting the glory of God and the salvation of the believers.

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

The community, born out of the compassionate love of God, and mutual love, care, generosity of the believers, preaching of the Good News of salvation and the celebration of the Eucharist, became the new temple of God

19:2 {"You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy"). Holiness was understood to mean 'separation from everything unclean'. Holiness thus meant the same as purity, and the passage was thus understood as, "You (Israel) shall be pure as God is pure." The ethos of purity produced a society structured around a purity system (Marcus J Borg). It created a society with sharp boundaries between pure and

as your Father is compassionate" (Lk 6: 36). Compassion, not cleanliness mirrors God in the society. Purity laws divided and excluded. Compassion unites, includes and connects. The Good Samaritan showed how compassion creates communion with people.

Enlightened by the Father that it is not his will that people should remain excluded and oppressed, Jesus went about forming a community

Joy is the prize

Anyone who loves sport knows it is an art form and can teach us much about life. Most sports call for skill, discipline, imagination, creativity and are clearly vehicles of self-expression. Just think of those magical moments in cycling, basketball, football, rugby, tennis and the rest where humanity shines at its most beautiful and best. There will be many moments like these on display at our 2012 Games this summer.

Those for whom sport is a dirty word often forget that it goes way beyond competitions and encapsulates some of our humanity's most relaxing activities, from dance and aerobics to walking and swimming, from cycling or mountain-climbing to rowing and sailing. It is not necessary to have the physique of a Greek god or goddess to do sport. Just wait and see the prowess, commitment, dedication, daring and character on display in the Paralympic Games.

Sport enables us to discover much about ourselves from reflecting on our performances and the processes we go through when training. The love of sport discloses the spirituality of sport. As they train, and push themselves beyond their comfort zone on through that pain barrier, athletes realise they are in control of the Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual dimensions - or by the mnemonic PIES as I call them - of their lives. They know they are, in the words of the English poet W.E. Henley's poem "Invictus", "captains of their soul".

Without self-control, sport, or life in general, ends in disaster. The joy in every victory as a personal best is achieved is impossible to put into words. To discover what it's like we need to follow the words of Jesus: "Come and see (John 1:39)." Virtue - defined by St. Augustine of Hippo as a good habit consonant with our nature - is something acquired by repetition. This is true of sport and of life. In sport, good habits or skills have to become automatic muscle memory. So that when there is no time to think, for example in controlling a ball or dodging danger, our bodies respond instinctively.

For success in sport, each of

the PIES needs to acquire and develop its own specific cardinal virtue. For the Physical, there is temperance; for the Intellectual, prudence; for the Emotional, fortitude; and for the Spiritual, justice. Tasting success or learning from failure generates joy for everyone who accepts that God is an appreciative spectator of their life.

Sport imitates life's vital processes. Many sports teach the importance of making fast decisions in complicated situations. Loss of temper is mostly costly. Concentration and attention are rewarded. Underestimating the opposition is often disastrous. Hard work and sustained commitment are rewarded. Pushing on through pain, serving a team, facing defeat with dignity and never giving up are essential for success. Sport teaches us to press on to the elusive final victory that we may achieve only once we have passed through death (Philippians 3:13-14).

Until our death and birth into naked eternity, when we shall see the face of God, we do not know whether we have won or lost life's game. Meanwhile, sportsmen and women do well to bear in mind the challenge of Rudyard Kipling's poem "If," spelled out above the players' entrance to the Centre Court at Wimbledon: "If you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same."

Sport may be transformative of the individual and the community. It funnels aggression away from conflict into competition and the quiet joy of growing in self-confidence as performances improve. Sport points towards satisfying answers to questions of identity, values and roles: Who am I? What am I worth? Why am I here? Belonging, being bonded together in a team and around a club, furnishes a sense of identity, a sense of community through experiencing and discussing spectator exhilaration. A common love generates a community.

Sport reminds us of the value of faith, of believing not just us the perception of reality and a system of values but of a commitment to a set of rules that point us to life at its best. Experience demonstrates that my



Sport is Christocentric, carrying within its best aspects the lifestyle of Jesus Christ, who was prepared to lose all to gain even more

performance can be influenced by my intellect: By what I say and bear. Saying things, singing, even shouting - and certainly being encouraged by others - enables us to raise our game to unexpected heights. When I feel low, I sing and hold my head high and, if I am alone, I even shout words of encouragement. As my feeling improves, so does my performance.

Through the optic of love, sport is a sign of God's loving presence in the world. It is Trinitarian, building up communities and based on relationships of giving and receiving. It is Christocentric, carrying within its best aspects the lifestyle of Jesus Christ, who was prepared to lose all to gain even more.

Playing, whether alone or with others, quietly or with enthusiasm, is the way children explore their world and create imaginary ones. Research shows that through play children learn how to plan and solve problems. Play encourages them to develop language and communication skills and to use imagination and creativity.

When it is experienced as play, sport refreshes the hidden memories of our early years as the physical, affectionate expression of love recalls the parental love we experienced in our early months of life. Physical play helps children to develop agility, balance, coordination and fine motor skills.

Children choose to play. They cannot be made to play. A sports person's quality of commitment is under their control and thus offers joy when a personal best is achieved.

Sport has often reminded me that, as Shakespeare put it in *Hamlet*, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Luck or providence, call it what you will in team sports, taps me on the shoulder to remind me that life is far more mysterious than I can imagine.

Experienced coaches who have faith remind their charges that they are more than what they do. They are children of God. Otherwise, once they retire they can all too easily see themselves as without purpose and so become depressed. Through sport we may see humanity at its most sublime. Think about the mutual respect and appreciation of a Federer and a Nadal; the beauty of the skill of a Beckham or Jonny Wilkinson kick; the courage of a nonagenarian Sikh crossing a marathon's finishing line; and all the Paralympians.

Sport seems to satisfy our yearning for spiritual communion between people from every part of our global city, Earth. For those who know it, sport is joy.

(Courtesy: *The Tablet* July 2012)

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

Contd. from last week

Apostolic Religious

The pride of place goes to Jaffna for the first religious given to the Church of Sri Lanka. The first religious to come from the west to Sri Lanka also came to Jaffna. In the history of Jaffna, November 2, 1862 is a golden day when the whole city was in a festive mood welcoming the Sisters who had come from Europe in the traditional way. The Sisters who were astounded, have written about it in their letter to the Superior General in Bordeaux.

At that time the Bishop E. Semeria OMI, was keen that his people especially the young grow in knowledge and moral discipline. He sought the aid of Religious Congregations to give good education, to be a refuge for the orphans and the under privileged, to care for the sick, to give a good faith formation. Our Founder, Rev. Fr. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles in his last days had discussions with the

Founder of the Oblates, Bishop Eugene de Mazenod and an affiliation was agreed, between the two Congregations. This paved the path for Bishop Semeria OMI to get the Holy Family Congregation to come to the North of Sri Lanka and render their services there.

In 1861, on February 8, our Founder, and on May 21, the Oblates Founder respectively went to their eternal reward. Bishop Semeria, after participating in the final rites of his Congregation's Founder returned with the six Holy Family Sisters who had been named for the mission in Jaffna. It is 150 years since these European Sisters imprinted their footprints on our soil, we who have been formed by them should review our lives and apostolates. Living the Spirit of God Alone and bringing into communion the scattered children of God, is the aim and they were totally dedicated to it from the beginning. They were concerned about the education

of girls and their formation. The mission of education which commenced in Jaffna is now carried out in various parts of Sri Lanka. This magnificent mission entrusted as a 'sapling' into the hands of the Holy Family has grown into a fabulous tree spreading its branches to all corners of our country, its fruits are witnessed by the lives lived, the many valiant women and families serving the people in our country and abroad. Not only in the field of education but reading the signs of the times, they are ready to respond to any need, they have transformed jungles into arable lands and towns and they have spread the value of education to the ends of the earth and they are highly appreciated for all their services.

They were one with the people of our region in their political and economic struggle. During the 30 years of war, together with the displaced people they faced the heavy bombing, cluster bombs,

shelling and were even at the brink of death in the blood drenched soil. They were with the people amidst all the displacement and continued their mission as doctors, nurses, farmers, Catechists, preparing for the Sacraments, imparting vocational skills to the youth. Today they work with the poor, the orphans, destitute, differently-abled improving their status in life and collaborating with their Parish Priest. Wherever there was a need our Convents were established. Their special apostolate was to build families, imitating the gentle image of the Trinity and the Holy Family. Earlier the families were considered as the temple, but today this notion has changed and human values, moral teaching are undermined. In these situations our sisters courageously meet the families and with steadfast spirit they render their services. They have wiped their tears, consoled them in their sorrow, in their long journey during

the displacement, like the eagle that carries its young on her wings, they journeyed with our people and these experiences are etched in the minds of our Sisters.

During the Tsunami when many lives were lost and the people lost all their property, our Sisters were in solidarity and a presence which gave them hope. The numerous bodies they buried and many who died on their laps. Many children were brought to the boarding houses, children without any address, they were received with love and were looked after. From the beginning to this day they continue this mission. Added to these ministries they are involved with the differently-abled, which is a challenging ministry. Today there are more disabled people than before the war. Earlier they were born disabled, but today the war has left many differently-abled.

(Contd. on Pg. 15)

From the prayer of Gospel music to the religious nuances of U2 and Coldplay

What does rock 'n' roll have to do with the infinite?

By John Waters
L'Osservatore Romano

There is sometimes far more to rock 'n' roll than meets the eye of the external observer, and we should remember this when considering the music our children love, or that we have ourselves loved. If it is true, as Don Giussani tells us, that desire is always a clue, what attracts the young to this music must bear some relationship, to begin with at least, to the true source of human longing and to the nature of human destiny. This, really, is the case we have sought to state and elaborate upon. For one thing, we must consider the question of roots, for another, the fundamental human impulse which gave rise to the traditions out of which present-day rock music evolved. For yet another, contemplate those among today's practitioners still seeking or adhere to that original impulse, and to add their contribution in a manner in keeping with it, always bringing some newness born of the imperative to say what seems unsayable. The central argument of our exhibition was that music begins as a cry from the heart of man, and that rock 'n' roll at its best continues to provide a conduit for that cry, which nowadays may amount to a secret knowledge shared between musician and listener, carried heart to heart.

Indeed, the cry today comes equally from the heart of that place or condition so eloquently described by the Holy Father last year at the Bundestag: The bunker of man's construction, in which, seeking to pretend to have created the conditions for human life,

"Is it possible that a fleeting song on the radio transmits the most fundamental longing for "something beyond" felt by one human being - the writer/singer/musician and space, to the heart of another, the listener?"

he experiences increasing difficulty breathing. Is it possible that a fleeting song on the radio transmits the most fundamental longing for "something beyond" felt by one human being - the writer/singer/musician and space, to the heart of another, the listener?

The great British rock writer Paul Morley, in his book, *Words and Music: A History of Pop in the Shape of a City*, wrote about the words of a pop song disappearing into themselves "as though boiled down, as if they are changing from solid to liquid, forming a sensuous, absorbing musical form that implies how all music began with the human voice. The



An exhibition at the Rimini Meeting

sound of the human voice imitating sounds around us; the sounds of nature, animals, even the sound of silence. The sound of the human voice copying the voice of God". For the artist/musician the rock 'n' roll "product" begins life as the most private thing. The heart looks to itself and searches for words and notes and sounds to speak of something that is as far from noise and glitz and distraction as is possible to imagine. And then, constructed within an idiom that manages to convey the original impulse an yet encrypt it in a form that can give rise also to the most radical misunderstandings, the song travels through a thousand circuits and channels, via innumerable wires, negotiating the paraphernalia of the world's most fashion-obsessed business, kneaded by the hands of accountants and technicians until finally being decoded in the heart of the waiting listener.

Outwardly reduced by understandings of showbusiness and entertainment, the hliness of the song is therefore forced inwards into a closed circuit, a communicating-and-receiving that becomes mistakable for something else - affection, pose, diversion, constructed mystique - and therefore deniable as to its true nature. Our exhibition sought to show that the reduction has been unsuccessful - that the core communication, heart to heart, between the artist and the listener, continues to occur. In the

beginning, we proposed, there was the cry: the cry of the first baby, the cooed reassurance of the first baby's mother. Later, there was the cry of the grown-up baby, now a slave in the plantations of America's deep south, hollering to his brother further along the chain-gang. Eventually, covered in Mississippi mud, came the Blues, which merged with negro spiritual singing and Country Music, itself the offspring of Irish folk songs, far-traveled into the hearts of starving emigrants fleeing famine at home, to form what is now called rock 'n' roll.

Along the way, we penciled in certain other possibilities, like Bono's suggestion that the Psalms may have been the world's first Blues songs. And today? Bands like Coldplay, U2 and Mumford and Sons, crying out of this modern moment about what it is to be human in a world which recognizes only earthly things. Amy Winehouse giving voice to a plaintive plea for love before dying alone. Van Morrison, who takes us to the heart of the great questions, struggling with them, doubting, pleading for reassurance. Johnny Cash, who told us of his life, right unto the end, enabling us to see our own lives as coherent stories, defined by significance and destination. And always, in the foreground, the gyrating shadow of Elvis, whose spastic dance brought it all together in the back of a Memphis shop. The American rock writer Greil Marcus, contemplat-

ing the contradiction that was Elvis, was moved to observe (in his book *Mystery Train*) that, when Elvis sang a particular song - *Can't Help Falling In Love With You* - it was impossible to escape the realization that he possessed "a capacity for affection that was all but super-human."

How could anyone who had witnessed him not immediately react to such a description without tears? In this phrase, which delves into the body of the rock 'n' roll Trojan horse - built of shiny, glittery, disposable stuff, like fame, diversion, intoxication, glitter, narcissism, money, but inside which the Cry is maintained, preserved and nurtured - we see into the human mission of the singer standing alone in the centre of the stage. Suddenly, he is no longer a star, still less a narcissist, a pleasure-seeker or a degenerate, but a man who seeks from deep within himself the words and sounds to convey something of the love and longing he has

detected in his heart.

Rock 'n' roll has one foot in the sacred world and the other in the material world; part spirit, part flesh; half-holy, half-profane.

Thus, perhaps more than any other in our time, this medium man captures and feeds off the contradictory, dualistic nature of modern life - at once an exhalation of something greater and a flirting with idolatry, an assertion of human self-assurance, a metaphor for the interaction in modern societies of the secular and the sacred, and a cry for help directed upwards from the heart of the bunker. Rock 'n' roll allows for a camouflage, by which the artist contrives to conceal the pure intention of the song, but in a way that the listener, in his or her own heart, can pick it up.

It is really astonishing, when you think about it, that this is necessary - why is our culture so afraid of these questions now? - but also that, in spite of everything, it remains possible.

An Ode to the Church Choirs

Intently recite
Hear now, alert
The prayers
Then ends
Pleasing again
A melody played
In harmony
voices sing
Intone balanced
Varied pitch

Loud, soft
Rise and fall
Praising favours
Requesting needs
In music
The words simple
Praise the Lord
So grateful
To Choristors
Thank all

Miran Perera

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!

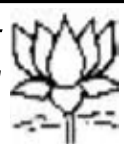


Ben and Tommy were lost in a Muslim village. Both were dying of hunger and thirst both hadn't enough money. Tommy told Ben, "Let us pretend we are Muslims and I will call myself Mohammed." Ben refused to change his name. The Imam was happy to receive them. The Imam gave some food and drink to Ben and said, "Mr. Mohammed, do you not know that we are still in the holy month of Ramadan?"

Rev. Fr. Fraucid Anthony Fernando OMI

First Nuns to arrive in Ceylon

Holy Family Sisters celebrate 150 years

Celebrating Christian Lives 

By Kishanie S.Fernando



On September 8th, 1862, six valiant women intent on the GLORY OF GOD ALONE left their home and country to take ship at Marseilles for Ceylon. It is 150 years since that journey which was to change the history of a country and lives of generations to come.

This journey was the result of the perseverance of two missionary stalwarts of the time. The inspiration being that of Bishop Bettachini, Co-adjutor to the Vicar Apostolic who was in charge of the Northern Province at that time and who realized that one of the primary needs of the day was the establishment of English schools for higher education. It was his earnest desire to have a convent of nuns for the teaching of girls. However it was left to his successor Bishop Semeria OMI to take the necessary initiatives to realize his dreams.

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux had been founded by Father Pierre Bienvenue Noailles in 1820. The affiliation of the Holy Family Congregation to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1858 promised hope for expanding missionary activities. In 1860 Bishop Semeria wrote to Fr. Noailles asking for three Sisters and in 1861 he received the news that the Sisters destined for his Vicarate were named. However there was a delay in their leaving due to the death of Fr. Noailles and the appointment of their new Superior General.

Back in Jaffna when the Catholics heard that soon Religious Sisters would be amidst them they were exuberant, even though there was some attacks on them in the newspapers.

Journey begins

Meanwhile the Sisters prepared for their first missionary journey in prayer. And on September 6, 1862 the six Sisters accompanied by Bishop Semeria who had gone to France to attend the General Chapter, and four Missionary Fathers embarked on the *Canada* - the ship which was to take them on the first part of their journey up to Alexandria. The journey was rough and the Sisters were overcome with sea sickness for most of it. On Sunday, September 14, they arrived in Alexandria and disembarked only to begin the next part of their long journey from Alexandria to the Suez on the September 16. In those days before the Suez Canal was built travellers from Europe to the Orient had to go from Alexandria to the Suez by way of Cairo a distance of a trying 252 miles which had to be covered in three stages. The first stage was from Alexandria to Atieh through the Nile Delta 48 miles by boat. The second stage was from Atieh to Cairo 120 miles on the Nile by steamer. The third stage from Cairo to Suez through the desert 84 miles along the caravan route on asses bearing the passengers and camels carrying the luggage. Along this route they stopped 7 times for rest and refreshments. At Suez the *Echo* awaited to transport them to the Galle Harbour in Ceylon on October 19. During this last part of the journey it was discovered by the ship's crew that there was not enough coal to take the ship on its usual 10-day journey, and the missionary band was requested to pray. Miraculously the weather remained calm throughout and the journey was covered within 7 days sighting the coast of Ceylon.

The journey had taken 45 days 25 of which had been spent at sea. From Galle they proceeded by coach on October 22 for Colombo and from there on the 31st by steamer to Jaffna. The steamship *Pearl* was specially made

available for their transport from Colombo to Jaffna by the Governor of Ceylon. After 2 days they arrived at the Jaffna jetty to a rousing welcome. "A touching scene" The whole of Jaffna were there waiting for us. I shall never forget my feelings at the sight of this crowd so thoughtful and searching....." is how one missionary described the day in a letter back home to Mother General.

Jaffna their First Home

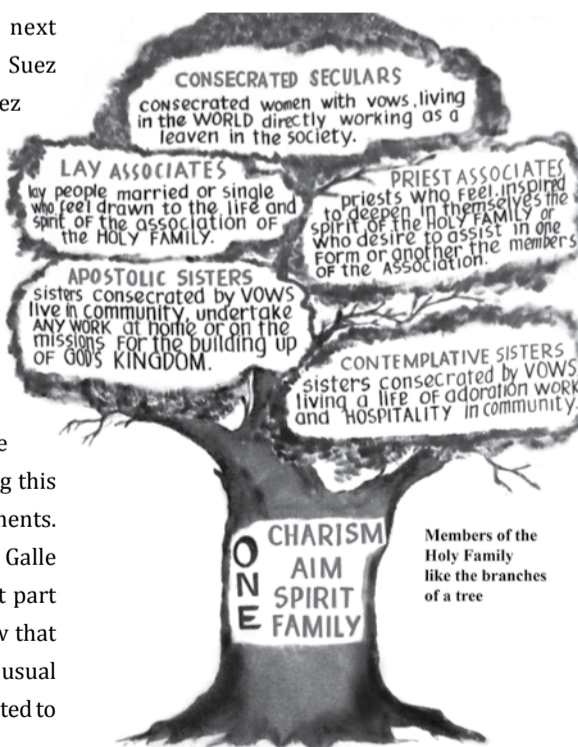


A group of the first missionaries in Jaffna

In Jaffna the English Girls' School managed by one Mrs. Patrick O'Flanagan since 1850 was handed over to the Sisters. Initially the sisters lived in rented out rooms adjoining the school. Besides teaching they opened up a sewing class, a dispensary and an orphanage extending their charity to the adult population too. The school under its first Principal Mother Helen Winter became Jaffna's foremost educational academy for girls.

On May 24, 1864 Bishop Semeria laid the foundation stone for the new convent which was ready for occupation only in 1870. The Sisters life style influenced many native girls to come forward as aspirants to the Religious life. To accommodate these vocations a congregation of the Native Sisters of St. Peter was founded in Jaffna in 1865. Their training as religious personnel to staff of Tamil schools was in the hands of the Holy Family Sisters.

The Family Expands



In 1868 another group of Missionaries joined the first group and together with the increasing number of Native Sisters, they were able to expand their apostolic fields to nursing, pre-schools and non formal education. Their congregations began to spread in the districts, towns, and villages of Kurunegala, Nawalapitiya, Anuradhapura, Chilaw, Wennappuwa, Pamunugama, Bambalapitiya, Dehiwela, Kalutara, Nugegoda, Monaragala, the tea estate

areas. In 1908 the native Sisters of St. Peter who were the first native diocesan Women's Religious group amalgamated with the Congregation of the Holy Family of Bordeaux.

Today

Today the presence of the Holy Family Sisters can be felt all over Sri Lanka, with 41 Communities in the Jaffna Province and 54 in Colombo Province.

The Association for the Holy Family is open to all who are drawn by its spirit and its life. It welcomes lay people, married or single and priests as Associates. Its diversity serving to draw closer the bonds of unity of One Family

Text condensed from the Story of the Holy Family Sisters by Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Peiris OMI. A special thank you to Rev. Sr. Rose Jayasinghe, Archivist, Holy Family for her assistance in compiling this page.



Holy Family Priest Associates



Holy Family Lay Associates



Holy Family Apostolic Sisters

From the Archives

The portraits above show the first habit worn by the Holy Family Sisters in Bordeaux and how it kept changing down the ages.



SUBODHI Institute of Integral Education

SUBODHI Institute of Integral Education founded by Rev. Dr. Mervyn Fernando in 1981, is situated at Wewala, Piliyandala, about 16 Kms (10 miles), south of Colombo, on the banks of the Bolgoda lake, at a picturesque, environmentally striking site. The architecture and landscaping was done by the internationally renowned architect, the late

Fr. Mervyn realized that school education in Sri Lanka (and perhaps the world over) with its focus almost entirely on subject knowledge and examinations, falls far short of that goal. Many vitally important aspects of growth such as the emotional, the ethico-moral, the aesthetic and the spiritual are practically ignored. The result is that school-

"SUBODHI" (SU-BODHI) itself means "full enlightenment" (or full realization).

The **vision** of SUBODHI can be best stated in the following statements:

- (1) "I came to give life, and give it to the full" (*Gospel of St. John Ch.10.v.10*)
- (2) "The glory of God is manfully alive: (*St. Irenaeus*)

through a humanistic integral education. This has been very succinctly expressed by the poet Edwin Markham. "Why build these cities glorious, if man unbuilds goes, in vain we build the world unless the builder also grows"

The mission of SUBODHI therefore is, firstly, to create enlightenment, awareness and conviction about the central importance integral/holistic development of the human person as a pre-requisite for national development and secondly, to initiate, and conduct programmes and services for the practical realization of this goal. They will serve as models of integral development which could be reproduced, *mutatis mutandis*, by the State and other non-Government agencies.

In this regard, SUBODHI offers the following experience-tested programmes:

- (a) Education-for-Life (5 to 6 days, duration) for school leavers.

This programme deals with a number of topics/themes which are vitally important for a full, meaningful life, but not included in the syllabus/curriculum of school education. Among them are (i) Self-understanding: Who am I (ii) emotional maturity (iii) inter-personal relationships

- (3) "Education is humanization" (*Sri Aurobindho*)

Hence it is the conviction of SUBODHI that even the human development of a country is, in the first place, the development of its citizens as mature human persons,



Geoffrey Bawa, with the buildings blending beautifully into the undulating terrain.

For Fr. Mervyn, with his background in Education, Psychology, Science and Religion, education is a total preparation for life - for a fulfilled life in personal and social dimen-

sions. Fr. Mervyn realized that school education in Sri Lanka (and perhaps the world over) with its focus almost entirely on subject knowledge and examinations, falls far short of that goal. Many vitally important aspects of growth such as the emotional, the ethico-moral, the aesthetic and the spiritual are practically ignored. The result is that school-



- (iv) attitudes and values (v) dignity of the human person (vi) love and sexuality (vii) choice of partner and marriage (viii) social responsibility (ix) conflict resolution and peace
- (b) Leadership training (2 to 3 days' duration) for youth leaders

This programme covers basic leadership skills, qualities of a leader, strategies of leadership, meeting challenges, group interactions, goal-settle etc.

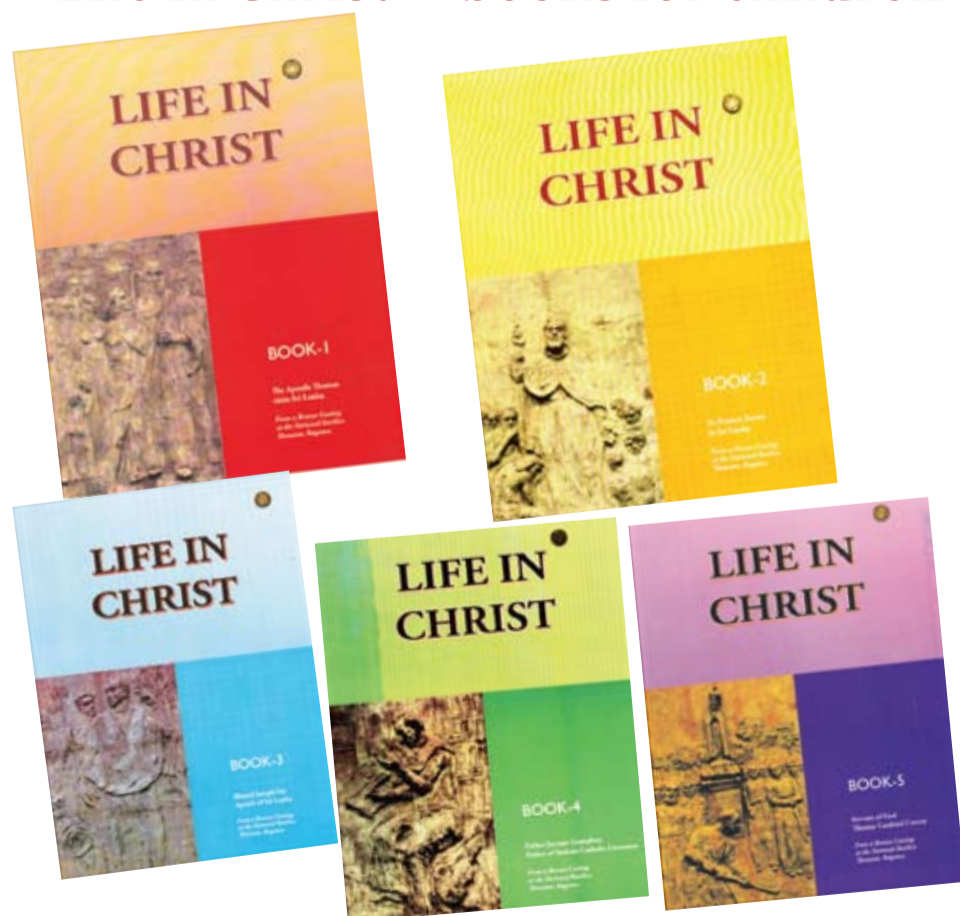
- (c) Teacher as Guru (2 to 3 days)

Training teachers to awaken them to their potential to go beyond mere teaching to be a guide/mentor (guru) to the students - a teacher who makes a difference

Besides inputs from the lecturers/facilitators, participants are put through a number of exercises, group sharings, self-assessments, meditations, games etc. which make the programmes interesting, practical and life-related. The feedback from the participants is always very positive and encouraging.

Rev. Fr. Chinaka Perera
Programme Coordinator

"Life in Christ" - books for children



"Life in Christ," a series of five books suitable for children from Grades 1 to 5, is available for sale now at Catholic Book Outlets.

The series is a companion to the Catholic Family Catechism and is written by Archbishop Emeritus, His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis. The books are very colourfully displayed with attractive pictures suitable for children.

Little ways of St. Therese

While the scientific world is moving fast and the multifaceted development schemes are rampant globally, and the world of youth is lost in the maze of life, the Little ways of St. Therese has inspired many believers. In the face of her littleness and nothingness, she trusted in God to be her sanctity. She wanted to go to heaven by an entirely new little way. St. Therese lived a hidden life and "wanted to be unknown," yet became popular after her death through her spiritual autobiography.

What are her little ways? A kind thought, A kind word, A kind act; "I shall collect these as roses and offer them to Jesus crucified to save souls," said Therese. As she couldn't go out to the whole world to preach and convert souls, she realized her mission was to be with the Great Being, and to be present to the Great Presence of the Heavenly Father, moment to moment.

"I wanted to find an elevator that would raise me to Jesus." The elevator, she wrote, would be the arms of Jesus lifting her in all her littleness. Her life in the cloister of Carmel entailed offering daily sacrifices and the martyrdom of denying psychological and physical needs, desires and



attachments that dragged her down from finding an elevator that would raise her to Jesus. But she triumphantly offered herself as a Victim of Love and reached the height of Spirituality of refusing nothing to Jesus. On an occasion she said; "Jesus will never refuse anything to me since I refused Him nothing."

"If through weakness I should fall, may a glance from Your Eyes straightway

cleanse my soul, and consume all my imperfections-as fire transforms all things into itself; My way is all confidence and love," she firmly believed. Her confidence and trust in the Merciful Father in Heaven led her to forget the "Hundred Sorrows" that came on her way and to count the "Thousand Blessings" graces, mercies and Goodness of God that were lavished upon her while on earth.

She prayed to Jesus! "Spot out little souls...If you find a soul weaker than mine, I know you will fill it with greater blessings, mercies and graces than mine, and stoop down to its nothingness and make it something." "She was just a 24 year old Carmelite Religious, when she said "After my death I shall shower down Roses from Heaven..I shall spend my life in Heaven doing good on earth" Let us imitate her little ways and save souls to Jesus.

Sr. Fatimanayaki.A.C

Circular Letter

Contd. from Pg. 2

d) Prepare a series of leaflets explaining in simple language the truths of the Credo and diffuse them at Parish level.

e) Collect whatever booklets or leaflets available or prepare new ones that answer Christian fundamentalists and their ill conceived and derogatory attacks on the basic truths of the Catholic faith in the different languages and take steps to diffuse them in the diocese.

f) Organize with the help of the University Chaplain programmes of faith presentation and academic dialogue on faith and reason, for Catholic University students and teachers as well as general intelligentsia.

3. The Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate:

The Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate is to make the text of the Holy Bible available in the different languages to as many people as possible, encourage its reading and prayerful reflection [*Lectio Divina*], organize in collaboration with the Deva Dharma Niketanaya programmes of formation for parish Biblical animators and get them to organize in their parishes Bible study groups and other such activities and encourage family Bible reading as a daily habit.

The Apostolate should also make available various publications that have been released lately on the text of the Holy Bible so that a greater awareness of the beauty of the Word of God may help our faithful to better understand their faith and live according to its demands.

4. The Archdiocesan Family Apostolate:

The Holy Family of Nazareth bears witness to the importance of the family in the growth of faith [cf. Lc 2:52]. In today's society, different trends and ideologies, seek to reduce the family to a mere social unit devoid of its supernatural calling - that of being the seedbed for the growth of faith for their children. Special programmes, then, should be organized in order to inculcate in the parents that awareness that theirs is a far noble vocation as the first teachers of the faith to their children. I would therefore request the Archdiocesan Family Apostolate to jointly with the office for Catechetics diffuse among the families copies of the Mahopadesaya. Catholic Family Catechism, Catechism of the Catholic Church and its compendium in

English/Sinhala/Tamil and ensure that these texts are regularly read as a family at home by all concerned. A programme to encourage such reading of texts could be organized at deanery or regional levels.

It would also be important to ensure the further strengthening of the pre-cana and post-cana programmes placing the accent on the need of unity in family life, its profoundly spiritual nature and its role as the teacher of faith within itself and towards its neighbourhood. In this the follow up programme of newly married couples especially if they have moved over to new locations from their original parishes should be considered a *sine qua non*. Generating within the young families the idealism of becoming a family that believes deeply, prays for and serves others generously, and stays together like the Holy Family of Nazareth, would go a long way. Developing the image of the family as the "domestic Church" here becomes a *sine qua non*.

At the same time I request the Family Apostolate to intensify its efforts at conscientising our faithful and the general public on the supreme value of life and at organizing an even more intense campaign against the evil of abortion and all other forms of refusal of the treasure of life which God alone in His infinite mercy gives us.

5. The Archdiocesan Caritas and St. Vincent De Paul Society

A profound sense of faith in Jesus necessarily involves our commitment to issues of justice, dedication to the cause of peace as well as the well being of others and compassion towards those who suffer. In a social context which tends to lead people more and more towards selfishness and greed, the number of those who become marginalized or are in conditions of poverty is ever on the increase. There are also signs of social tension, lack of social accountability and transparency as well as a lack of respect for human dignity. And so I call upon the Archdiocesan Commission for Justice, Peace, Human Development and Integrity of Creation to organize programmes of conscientisation in our communities on these issues based on the principles of faith and the social doctrine of the Church, and also to intensify its programmes of accompaniment of the poor with support projects. I also call upon the parish based units of St. Vincent De Paul Society or other such associations to intensify their programme of help for the poor and request more participation by the parishes in the efforts of the Arch-

diocesan Poor Relief Fund. The Lenten education programme can be a most useful instrument in building up among our people a true spirit of solidarity with those in need.

6. Archdiocesan Liturgical Apostolate

a) Shall in collaboration with the Deva Dharma Niketanaya prepare sermon points for the weeks of the year also making use of the different orientations of the Liturgical seasons and the relevant readings. In this, an effort should be made to direct the arguments towards the presentations of the basic tenets of the Credo, the ten commandments and the Sacraments to the faithful giving necessary indications to the priests from the text of the CCC, Holy Scriptures and the documents of Vatican II.

b) Shall prepare a special logo to be used during the year and banners to be used in Churches and other buildings.

c) Shall prepare a hymn to be sung at Liturgical services during the year on the supreme value of faith and its salvific effectivity.

d) Shall ensure that within this year an even greater awareness about the need to celebrate the Sacraments, especially the Most Holy Eucharist, with due spiritual preparation and veneration is generated especially among the clergy. The Archdiocesan guidelines on the decor of the Sacred Altar, Tabernacle, Vessels, Sanctuary, the Vestments and their use and the beauty of the Altar should be followed carefully and Holy Communion administered kneeling and on the tongue. The office will introduce vesting prayers for the priests so that these can be recited while vesting each of the items as a worthy spiritual preparation for the Holy Mass. Each parish is to equip itself this year with a set of Albs, Girdles, Stoles and Chasubles which are to be used at each celebration or concelebration of the Holy Mass.

e) Shall ensure that during the season of Lent a leaflet/booklet be distributed among the parishes containing brief information and prayers for use at Confession of the greater use of this Sacrament as a way to deepen one's faith, is introduced.

f) Regular campaigns of prayer which include Holy Hours and Rosary are organized through the network of Religious in the parishes and Contemplative Communities for the increase of faith within the Catholic community.

g) Instruct all the priests to ensure that during Holy Mass on the days prescribed the faithful recite the entire Credo and not just parts, devoutly and

attentively

The Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious dialogue could organize various initiatives of presence and faith sharing by our faithful with members of other religious persuasions in order to foster an even stronger spirit of goodwill and cooperation with them.

Much of this would finally resolve around what is done in the parishes and so I address myself at this point to our dear co-workers in priestly ministry, the Lord who in His mercy has chosen us, dear Rev. Fathers, for this noble mission of being shepherds of our people in the image of Christ the Good Shepherd, expects us to give of our best for the realization of His mission, especially during this period of grace to which the successor of Peter has called us - a period of profound renewal. Hence I urge you as a priority to make it a point to visit all your families if you have not done so in the recent past. The mark of the Good Shepherd as you know is that of knowing his flock and they in turn knowing him. You would recall the words of St. Paul "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of good tidings" [Rom. 10:15]. To be seen in your parish, to visit it and walk within it, is already a first step to being the good shepherd. I urge you then to love your flock, pray for them, yearn to bring them closer to God, give of your best, not grudgingly but joyfully, prepare your sermons well as well as the Liturgical services, help the sinners to return to God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, care for the sick, the lonely and the poor and above all be in constant communion with God as St. John Mary Vianney, the patron saint of priests was. Let us practically set our parishes on fire in this year of grace, with the fire of a renewed faith.

As a special event I hope to visit some of the larger parishes on a given Saturday or Sunday and explaining the basic tenets of the Credo to engage in a dialogue with those who wish to seek theological clarifications on the points presented.

May, the Heavenly Mother, whose profound faith in God made Her accept God's will for Her from the annunciation to Her heavenly assumption, and especially at the foot of the Cross, be the role model for all of us. May that faith strengthen us.

Thank you and may God Bless you!
With prayers and my cordial blessing
Yours devotedly in Christ,

✠ **Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith**
Archbishop of Colombo
13th September 2012

Key participants for new Evangelization Synod announced

Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles and 34 other clergymen were announced Sept. 18 by the Vatican as synod fathers for the upcoming assembly of bishops on the New Evangelization.

The synod fathers include Cardinal Sodano, dean of the college of cardinals; Cardinal Schonborn of Vienna; Archbishop Bernard Longley of Birmingham, England; Bishop Dominique Rey of Frejus-Toulon, France; and Father Julian Carron of the Communion and Liberation movement.

Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles is the only American among the 35 synod fathers, who are tasked with guiding the discussions of

the assembly's meetings.

The synod is due to take place Oct. 7-28, and its presidents delegate are Cardinals John Tong Hon of Hong Kong, Francisco Ortega of Guadalajara, and Laurent Pasinya of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. It will bring bishops to Rome from the whole world to discuss the New Evangelization, which is aimed at reintroducing the Catholic faith in lands where it was previously present.

The gathering will be guided by a working document, issued June 19, which is the result of consultation with the worldwide Church for more than a year.

According to that document, the New Evangelization



must provide "an adequate response to the signs of the times, to the needs of individuals and people of today and to the new sectors with their cultures through which we express our

identity and the meaning of our lives."

The synod coincides with the Year of Faith, which will begin Oct. 11, 2012, and is

meant to be a moment of grace to strengthen Christians' faith and joy in proclaiming Christ to the world.

The synod of bishops was established in 1965 by Pope Paul VI to "foster the unity and cooperation of bishops around the world with the Holy See."

There are two categories of synod: general and special. The last special gathering was held in 2010 to focus on the Church in the Middle East, while the last general assembly was held in 2008 on the Word of God. The upcoming meeting on evangelization will fall into the general category and will be the 13th of its kind.

Anniversary of Priestly Ordination Rev. Fr. Merl Mendis OMI

A preacher, teacher and a trainer, Rev. Fr. Merl Mendis OMI will celebrate the 44th anniversary of his Priestly Ordination on September 28, 2012.

Born on January 16, 1941 in Kadalana, Moratuwa he studied at St. Sebastian's College and entered the Religious Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate and received his first vows on May 31, 1961. He was ordained to the priesthood by late Thomas Cardinal Cooray, on September 28, 1968.

Soon after his Ordination, Fr. Merl's first assignment was at St. Anne's Church, Wattala as the Assistant Parish Priest. Owing to his keen interest for studies and pastoral concern for the people, he was sent abroad for further studies and formation.

As a result, he obtained a Post Graduate degree in Mass Media and Communication from the University of Concordia, Montreal, Canada a special diploma in Adult Education from St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Canada, together with a Diploma on Catechetics from Eucharistic College, London. Upon his return he anchored himself at "Nazareth" Wennappuwa, giving leadership to the Preaching Band and initiated an island-wide Pastoral Campaign. He tirelessly undertook many programmes in different dioceses, parishes and shrines, mainly involving preaching. He also conducted a variety of workshops and training programmes for youngsters and adults, alike.

Fr. Merl Mendis was the first Director of the OMI Communication Centre, which was inaugurated at Polwate, Minuwangoda on November 14, 1988. He took the initiative to conduct leadership courses, Mass Media Courses and Bible courses for children youth and adults. He did organize special English courses at the Polwatta Centre until 1993. From 1993 to 1995, he took charge of the Mirigama Parish.

It was the appointment of Fr. Merl Mendis as the Director of Catechetics, Education and Bible Apostolate, which marked a major milestone in his life. He put a great effort to update and give value to the National catechesis. He took a keen interest in Religion and with teachers in Government schools, both in the Sinhala and Tamil medium. He set a new trend in initiating workshops for G.C.E. A/L, and G.C.E. O/L students at school level. While doing these various activities, he took trouble to compile, edit and publish Literature books, pamphlets for Catechism teachers and G.C.E. students. During his term nearly 25 publications came out of the National Catechetical Centre. Among those publications, the Pentateuch, summary Editon of Catechism of the Catholic Church are still very popular among people.

A handbook and the set of posters created by him based on the Sacraments were an efficient audio visual tool for teachers. Fr. Merl managed to utilize the different forces in operation both in Church and in Government, so

that the certificate awarded to the teachers of Catechism was duly recognized by the Government. After six years of tireless ministry in the National Catechetical Centre, he took leave from his office as Director on July 31, 2001.

Soon, this tireless worker looked for new avenues for Oblates Missionaries at Wanaluwawa, Pugoda Retreat Centre. It is a quiet and remote but ideal place to take a walk with the Lord. Fr. Merl leads the centre as the Resident Pastor while continuing to conduct several ongoing formation programmes on leadership life education and community building at present. A good number of Buddhist children and youth took advantage of this centre to gain knowledge and spiritual awareness. As a result, this centre has become a sign of reconciliation and peace. Fr. Merl continues to be the Director for Adult Education and Catechesis for the Archdiocese of Colombo. He was made the Dean of Gurubewila Deanery since 2007.

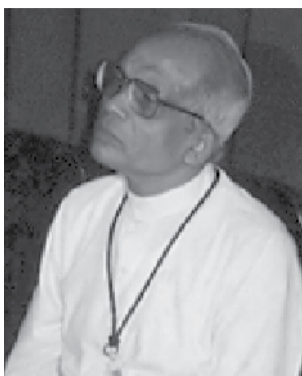
In 2010 Fr. Merl Mendis left Wanaluwawa and pitched his tent in Bopitiya, where there are a good number of Catholic families. There he also found a fitting place for his apostolic work. He started teaching English to the student who have sat for G.C.E. Advanced Level Examination. It was not only teaching a language but he also gave a prominent place for the religious character formation for youth who came to him. Parents were very happy with the all round education they received there and soon the numbers increased year by year.

Rev. Fr. Merl Mendis received a number of invitation from the Catholic schools around to teach English in their schools too. According to the time available he was happy to help those schools whenever possible. He helped the near by churches by celebrating mass, hearing confessions and attending to the spiritual needs of the people when there was a request from the parish priests of the area. He is a very zealous priest who is always ready to help others. We wish a very happy 44th. Anniversary of his priesthood and many more fruitful years in the Lords Vineyard.

During the very fruitful and enriched 44 years of priesthood in the OMI congregation, and in the Archdiocese of Colombo he has engaged himself in a variety of ministries. We pray and wish him God's choicest blessings with the special care and love of Mother Mary, so that Fr. Merl may continue his services.

Ad Multos Annos!

Jude Ravindra Winayasiri Perera



Rev. Fr. Merl Mendis OMI

Milly's Hands



Touching, folding so delicately
Those fine face-edged linen serviettes
To place them, wings folded like butterflies
At rest beside gold-rimmed transparent
porcelain
Plates laid out on that long calamander dining
table
For the family reunion banquet.

Strong hands, Milly's hands,
Wide palms shaped like cradles
To hold and rock babies,
Nine children she had, innumerable grandchildren,
All living their own lives now
So Milly can share her life with others.

Milly's smile as sweet as the coconut fondant
She makes, its pink shimmery crystals
Reposing in silver dishes,
Milly's silvery hair a curving shell
Above her nape,

Hands that are sculptures of life
But flesh and blood, not stone or marble.

Sews exquisite garments out of silks, satins,
Velvets, places bind-stroke stitches that hold
Together, moulded against the bodies of children
And beautiful women, stitches that are more
Enduring that mortality,
Makes sweets, acharus, chutneys, preserves,
Stirs soft dodols, aluwas, kiri topi
For festivals and grand occasions.

"What I would love most is a sewing machine,"
Milly tells her kind mistress Mallika,
She has few other desires,
Visit her children, is free to go where she wills,

I watch her, I, a visitor in the home,
Yes, watch her, arranging those life giving hands
On lacy cloth embroidered with flowers and
Vines, hands that gather those snow-white folds
Guiding an imaginary needle.

"Wait Milly, wait," Mallika says, takes a careful
Camera shot to preserve for the generations to
Come and that one day will be set in a frame,
Hung on the wall with my poem.
Milly's hands pause, but briefly,
Hands that cannot keep still even for
A photo

*Jean Arasanayagam
remembers hands that loved,
that worked, that brought up children,
fed hungry mouths and wiped
angry tears*

Soldier who battled for the conquest of families

Basil Kahasinghe, beloved father of five children, resident at Thimbirigaskatuwa, went to his eternal reward at the age of 78 years. He was a retired soldier attached to the Sri Lanka Army. While serving in the Sri Lanka Army, attached to the Army Training Camp, Diyatalawa, apart from his official duties he involved himself in the extension of the apostolate of families through the Christian Family Movement (CFM), treading hills and valleys, visiting house to

house on foot in the mountainous areas such as Diyatalawa, Kahagolla, Bandarawela, Badulla, Nuwara Eliya Gampola, Utuamkanda, Kadugannawa etc., with the consent and permission of respective Parish Priests. He very unspairingly devoted himself, his time, talent, energy and possibilities for the extension and development of the CFM apostolate amongst the families.

Basil Kahasinghe was a forceful speaker who expressed the doctrine and vision of late Cardinal Joseph Cardinal Cardijn pertaining to the family milieu. He was a sincere friend and a close associate of Percy Silva, the Founder of the CFM of Sri Lanka. Both of them collaborated very actively in the pioneer work from the inception of the CFM in Sri Lanka, which in fact is indelibly recorded in the history of the Christian Family Movement in Sri Lanka. Basil Kahasinghe was really

a Soldier of the conquest of the families who battled fearlessly in and through the true spirit of his secular employment as a soldier, but with a Christian perspective.

In addition to the family milieu, he was involved in a network of services. Basil Kahasinghe was the Founder of the Organization of the Universal Brotherhood, comprising of inter-religious dimensions and values, amounting to re-christianization of society as envisaged by late Joseph Cardinal Cardijn in keeping with his thoughts and vision.

To Basil Kahasinghe, a Pioneer CFM activists who lived, loved and served the Christian Family Movement so much, we the CFM'ers in our turn assure our prayers and may his soul rest in peace in the fullness of Christ, our Divine Leader and Redeemer.

Vivian Silva

Fr. Michael Sandanam OSB Parish Priest - Katugastota Silver Jubilee

*Humble priest with a heart of gold
Won the hearts of young and old.
Did the priestly duty to the content
Of the superiors, elders, young - at his best.
He, truly discharges his pastor's duties
To the best of his wonderful abilities.
He is trilingual and can reach everybody
And has a gift of breaking hearts of nobody.
An active kind parish priest and a guru
An excellent person to the congregation true.
When there is a sudden need for action
He is there to assist with quick action.
Congratulations our dear Father Michael
May God bless your for many many more years.*

Edward Wijeratna

Tribute to a Dear Teacher

Daphne Aunty to all
Always with a smile;
Perfect in her work,
High Proficiency in her speech
Never said no to anyone.
Entered glory making thousands stand
on their own feet
Lovable lady
Oh! I miss you;
Reveredly I honour you
Dear Aunty Daphne

Sunimal Perera

Sri Lankan English (SLE)

J. Michael Meyler

"There are a number of issues encountered in SLE, compiling these issues for no particular reason, is called the "Six Sisters"

1. Spelling Conventions.

Spelling more than any other is one area where dictionaries are expected to be prescriptive. We are so used to "looking it up in the dictionary" to check the correct spelling of a word. But, how do you spell a non-English word, which does not appear in any dictionary, and which is normally used only in spoken contexts?

The only consolation is that English language, having historically absorbed words from so many different languages, already contains so many spelling inconsistencies that it can surely take a few more.

2. The Generation Gap.

Like any language, SLE is constantly evolving. The language spoken by today's younger generation is very different from the language inherited from the British at independence. On the other hand, many of the features of "Colonial" English remain in SLE having fallen out of fashion with British English. Which explains why some aspects of SLE seem outdated and formal to speakers of contemporary British English. Both languages have developed in their own different ways, and a number of factors have influenced the way in which SLE has evolved over the past 60 years.

Most significant perhaps was the "Sinhala only" policy which led to English being dropped as the medium of education in Sri Lankan schools and the emigration of most of the Burgher community and many other first language English speakers. This resulted in what most people would regard as a general "lowering" in the standard of English in the country. As Sinhala became the dominant language of education and Government, its influence on SLE also increased. One result of this was a merging of English and Sinhala by bilingual speakers into the hybrid often referred to as "Singlish" which has become a significant feature of SLE.

The reversal of the isolationist policies of the 1970s, and the increasingly open-market attitudes of subsequent Governments, resulted in greater

exposure to contemporary British, American and Australian language and culture via educational and commercial opportunities. The growth of English-medium "international schools", exposure to foreign media and the internet, the growing expatriate community, and the return from abroad of many younger generation expatriate Sri Lankans, have all influenced the way people speak English.

3. Class Distinctions.

There are also significant class distinctions in the way people speak English in Sri Lanka. The stereotype "Colombo 7" family is likely to speak English as their first language, to send their children to international schools, to spend holidays visiting relatives abroad, and to be exposed to international English via the media, internet, etc. The English they speak is therefore likely to be closer to an international standard. They are also likely to have the ability to switch between "Sri Lankan mode" and "international mode" depending on the context they are in.

The further you travel – metaphorically, if not geographically from "Colombo 7," the greater is the influence of Sinhala and Tamil on the English people speak. Many Sri Lankans can claim to be bilingual in English and Sinhala or Tamil, But there are degrees of bilingualism, and many people speak English as their second language. The result is that as well as the many Sinhala and Tamil words which have entered SLE, there are also many grammatical features which would be considered errors not only by speakers of British English, but also by educated Sri Lankan English speakers.

One feature of the language spoken by bilingual English/Sinhala speakers is a tendency to switch freely between English and Sinhala in mid-conversation, even in mid-sentence. This is further compounded by the tendency of spoken Sinhala to include so many English words – a feature sometimes referred to as "Singrasi." As a result of this mingling of languages, it can be difficult to define exactly where the Sinhala ends and English begins.

Recently, this code-switching between English and Sinhala has become more fashionable – a development which has been picked up by a number of advertisers.

4. Sinhala and Tamil: Striking the Right Balance.

Many Tamil speakers are trilingual, speaking Sinhalese as well as English, this is less common among Sinhala speakers, who are more likely to be bilingual and unable to speak in Tamil. For this reason Sinhala and English (but not Tamil) tend to be the "link" language between different communities. Sinhala speakers can drop Sinhala words into their conversation and make themselves understood, while Tamil words are less likely to be understood by non-Tamil speakers. This helps to explain why Sinhala has had much greater and more visible influence on SLE.

In addition, Sinhala speakers tend to merge Sinhala and English into a hybrid "Singlish" or "Singrasi" – using Sinhala loan – words in English and English loan-words in Sinhala, as well as code – switching regularly between the two languages. Tamil speakers may do the same thing amongst themselves, but they cannot do so to the same extent outside their own language community. Interestingly, this type of code – switching between English and Tamil appears to be more common in Tamil Nadu, where Tamil is the dominant language.

5. Indian English and Sri Lanka English: Where to draw the line?

Indian English has long been recognized as an established variety of English, and has been well documented ever since "Hobson Jobson" was first published in the 19th century. But, "Indian English" is a hugely diverse language, incorporating not only the vast diversity of India itself with all its ethnic groups, religions and native languages, but also other countries in the subcontinent such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. As a result there is a tendency to think of

SLE as being just a sub-variety of Indian English, an impression encouraged by the relative lack of documentary evidence of SLE as a separate entity.

Of course there is a big overlap between Indian English and SLE. Both varieties evolved from the English of the British colonials of the 19th century, and much common vocabulary developed to describe the common flora and fauna of the two countries. Another common factor is the existence of many Tamil words in both Indian and Sri Lankan English.

However, it is also striking how many differences there are between Indian English and SLE. It therefore seems to be valid, to make a distinction between the two, while at the same time acknowledging their common features. Perhaps it is more helpful to see both of them as distinct but overlapping sub-varieties of a more general "South Asian English"

6. British English and International English: Which standard and why?

Why is British English chosen as the standard against which SLE is compared? So-called "standard British English" is only spoken by a tiny percentage of the English speaking world, mostly concentrated in south-east England. It could be argued that a broader "international English" would be a more relevant standard with which to compare SLE.

However, unfortunately "international English" remains an elusive and ill-defined concept. Most of the best-known dictionaries and course books are based on either "British English" or "American English". British English is the language from which SLE originally evolved, and it remains a widely accepted standard for English as an international language. It is still seen (rightly or wrongly) as a "model" to be aspired to by Sri Lankan learners of English, who need to be aware of the differences between SLE and "standard" English – particularly if they intend to sit for a foreign exam which will be marked by a non-Sri Lankan Examiner.

Courtesy: Koinonia

What are Pope Benedict's hopes for each one of us during the 'Year of Faith'?

The Holy Father wants us to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed an even clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ.

He wants us to rediscover a taste for feeding ourselves on the Word of God, faithfully handed down by the Church, and on the bread of life, offered as sustenance for His disciples (cf. Jn 6:51).

- To take the opportunity to read the documents of Vatican II correctly, help them become widely known and take them to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium.

- To approach the Year of Faith as a time of purification for the Church and for individuals, a summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord.

- To intensify our reflection of faith, so we acquire a more conscious and vigorous adherence to the Gospel, especially at a time of profound change such



as humanity is currently experiencing.

- To profess our faith in the Risen Lord in our cathedrals and in the churches of the whole world; in our homes and among our families, so that everyone may feel a strong need to know better and to transmit to future generations the faith of all times.

The Holy Father wants the Year of Faith to arouse in every believer the aspiration to

profess the faith in fullness and with renewed conviction, with confidence and hope.

He wants us to intensify the celebration of the faith in the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist, which is "the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; and also the source from which all its power flows."

To rediscover the content of the faith that is professed,

celebrated, lived and prayed, and to reflect on the act of faith, is a task that every believer must make his own, especially in the course of this Year.

In order for us to rediscover the content of the faith, the Holy Father proposes that the 'Year of Faith' will have to see a concerted effort to rediscover and study the fundamental content of the faith that receives its systematic and organic synthesis in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Pope Benedict is clear, that faced with the urgent need for the purification of the Church the "one thing that will be of decisive importance in this Year is retracing the history of our faith, marked as it is by the unfathomable mystery of the interweaving of holiness and sin." By this the Holy Father means to encourage each one of us to become familiar with the great figures of our Faith, from Mary and the Apostles, to the saints, martyrs, con-

fessors and virgins. *Porta Fidei*, 13.

Taking up one of the recurring themes of his pontificate, the Holy Father expresses the hope that the 'Year of Faith' will also be a good opportunity for each one of us to intensify the witness of charity, which is faith in action.

Pope Benedict concludes with a beautiful expression of his hopes for us:

'Intent on gathering the signs of the times in the presence of history, faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world. What the world is in particular need of today, is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord, and capable of opening the hearts and minds of many, to the desire for God and for true life, life without end.' *Porta Fidei*, 15

From the Internet

A calling to a religious life



Let me share another God-experience, about how I discerned my vocation to a religious life.

I had a great desire to be a nun when I was young. One day I went to meet the Franciscan Sisters at Negombo, and expressed my desire. After one year I was chosen to be a candidate with the July 1990 group. But I needed more time, and my entrance was postponed to January 1991.

As a young girl I used to look after my grandmother who was

sick. Then it became a struggle between whether I should continue to look after my sick and old grandmother, or leave her, and fulfill my desire to enter the Convent. This inner struggle continued for many days. When I shared this struggle with the Sister who was in charge of vocation promotion work, she advised me by saying, "Earlier you said that you needed more time. Now it is the problem of your grandmother. If you know God is calling you to be a religious sister then don't hesitate. If you want to

join us then come before January 31, 1991. Pray and decide!"

There seemed to be no solution to my problem. I kept on worrying. The only solution that came to my mind was to hand over the problem to Jesus. I thought if it is the plan of God, He will find a solution, and I prayed and prayed.... "Jesus, I hand over my problem to you. Sister has given me the date, January 31, and I have to make the decision before January 14. Nothing is impossible for you."

With a lighted

paschal candle I prayed daily. A Miracle! An unbelievable thing happened. My grandmother got well and my aunty undertook to look after her and said that I can go ahead with my plan. On January 14, 1991 I entered as a candidate. It was a decisive moment in choosing my future life.

For you too, to decide on your future, even if it is to find a partner, pray and God will help you to make the right decision.

Sr. Shiroma Fernando
Fmm- Piliyandala

First Holy Communion in Maggona



Forty five children received Holy Communion at St. Mary's Church, Maggona, on September 1, 2012. Arrangements for this event were made under

the guidance of Rev. Fr. Ishan Prameena, Parish Priest in collaboration with Rev. Sisters and Daham Pasal teachers.

(D. Anselm Fernando)

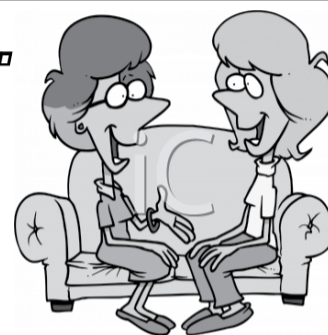
An invitation to all Children and Youth

You are hereby invited to write an article of a few words, or a poem or send us one of your drawings. We will be happy to publish these, because this page belongs to you.

Please take some time to do this, during your holidays. How happy would you be, to see one of your presentations published. Your parents and teachers would be happier than you.

Please send it to:
The Assistant Editor, Messenger,
Colombo Catholic Press, Colombo 08.

Words of Gossip spread..... in spite of saying sorry!



Why do we speak bad about another
It would condemn our very own brother,
How can he face the other
This would make him bother.

Our comments, remarks make him suffer.
Facts far from the truth, would make him gitter,
His own betraying him, would make him bitter,
He would struggle to recover and get better.

Offender would say 'sorry', it would not end there,
Mouth to mouth the word would spread every where,
To stop it, the chances would be very rare,
What would be left, is to suffer and to bear.

Seeking pardon at confession, would be of no use,
The words that spread would be the news.
The effort to stop it, would be of no use
Cannot get away from guilt, the offender should muse.

Speaking against one another is gossip,
Listening to such talk is, encouraging gossip,
Spreading it to one another too is gossip
No pardon then would prevent punishment on gossip.

Words of gossip spread, in spite of saying 'sorry'
That is what, should make us worry,
It is a grievous sin we all could carry,
Thus we should ponder in depth, without a hurry.

RodeZo

Apology

Some of our readers had been disturbed by some words used in last week's article headlined "Mind your language" on this page.

We apologise to them.



What it says in the Readings

Through the Good News God called us to share the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 The. 2: 14

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B
23rd Sept. - 30th Sept. 2012

SUN: 25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Wis 2:12; 17-20; Jm 3:16-43; Mk. 9:30-37

Mon: Prov. 3: 27-34; Lk. 8: 16-18

Tue: Prov. 21: 1-6, 10-13; Lk. 8: 9-21

Wed: Memorial of SS. Cosmas & Damian, Martyrs
Prov. 30: 5-9; Lk. 9: 1-6

Thu: Memorial of St. Vincent de Paul, Priest

1 Aoh 1: 2-11; Lk. 9: 7-9

Saint Vincent de Paul, C.M. (1581 - 1660) was a priest who became dedicated

in serving the poor and founded the Congregation of the Mission, a society of missionary priests commonly known as the Vincentians or Lazarists.

Fri: Memorials of St. Wenceslaus, Martyr & St. Lawrence Ruiz and Companions, Martyrs

Goh 3: 1-11; Lk. 9: 18-22

Sat: Feast of SS. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael Archangels

Dan. 7: 9-10, 13-14;

Jn 1: 47-51

Gabriel brought the message to Mary of the Annunciation, (Patron of telecommunications, radio and TV workers. **Raphael**, guide to Tobias. (Patron of nurses, physicians and the blind).

Michael has been venerated as protector of Christians in general and soldiers in particular (Patron of radiologists, the sick, paratroopers- Patron saint of Israel)



Sun: 26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Num. 11: 25-29; Jm. 5: 1-6;

Apostolic.....

Contd. from Pg. 5

After the war there were many confused and unwanted children who were entrusted to them and they devote themselves generously for their welfare. They have Homes for these children and the Sisters render dedicated services to these children and people.

Through these apostolates/ministries they have promoted vocations among the youth and many have dedicated themselves totally to the service of the Church. Today there are many priests and nuns in different Congregation who recall with gratitude the services rendered by the Holy Family Sisters. "Go forward, there is nothing to stop your Course," these words of our Founder urge us always to be ready to respond to the needs of our people. This year is a golden era not only for the Holy Family Sisters, but for the Church in Sri Lanka and especially for the Church in Jaffna. As we celebrate the 150 years with gratitude we remember the Lord who journeyed with us at every stage and offer Him our thanks and continued fidelity to His mission entrusted to us.

Jubilee Committee, Holy Family Provincialate, Jaffna. (Contd. next week)

Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading:

Wisdom. 2:12, 17 - 20

The righteous man is a challenge to the ungodly. Therefore they would want to see whether this righteous man is truly the Son of God and to see whether the Lord would protect him.

Second Reading:

James.3:16 - 4:3

St. James advises the converts to be full of the wisdom so that there will be peace and mercy in their lives. For all disorders and vile practices exist because of the worldliness and selfishness.

Gospel:

Mk.9: 30 -37

Jesus comes out with the fact that He is not a Messiah who would rule and reign, but one who will suffer and die for the greater glory of God and for the salvation of mankind. He wants all the disciples to be suffering Messiahs if they wish to follow Him.

Reflection

In today's readings Jesus warns us against being worldly, selfish and passionate. Otherwise one is likely to lose his true relationship with God.

A person, who is taken up with the world, is carried away by his passion and being selfish is likely to become a hindrance and a nuisance to the world. He will not have any contacts with the Lord and will even plan to misuse the power that God had given him. He will also upset the plan God has for

the world. These facts are clearly portrayed in today's readings.

In today's first reading we see how the ungodly attached to this world and to sin, would wish to destroy the righteous ones simply because they are opposed to their sinful actions. The ungodly think of being away with the righteous in order to see whether the righteous are true sons of God, They hope to see the Son of God saved in times of destruction. Their idea of the Son of Man is worldly. But God's ways are different. When the day came when they killed the Son of Man; God made use of that death to save all mankind.

In the second reading St. James warns the converts against their passions. He says "where jealousy and selfish ambition exist there will be disorder and every vile practice. This passion and selfishness will lead us to war and destruction. They will lead us away from God and from our neighbor.

The grace of God will not be ours if we act out of passion and selfishness. For it says, "You ask and you do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend on your passions." Therefore let us take the advice of St. James and act through wisdom so that there would be complete peace, and harmony with God and also among us.

In the Gospel Jesus speaks of the suffering and death he has to undergo. He clearly states that he is not a Messiah who would rule and reign, but one who will suffer and die for the glory of God and for the



salvation of mankind. We see the Apostles who had being worldly, discussing about who is the greatest among them. But Jesus made it clear to them when he said that if anyone would like to be first, he must be the last of all and servant of all.

Christian disciples should bear the responsibility of acting out of compassion, peace, faith, selfishness, wisdom and true witness.

Aid Story 1

One girl who was about to get married asked her boyfriend whether he would do anything for her out of love. He said,"yes darling you know that I would do anything for you." She asked him whether he would die for her out of love. He said, "No darling, mine is an undying love."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

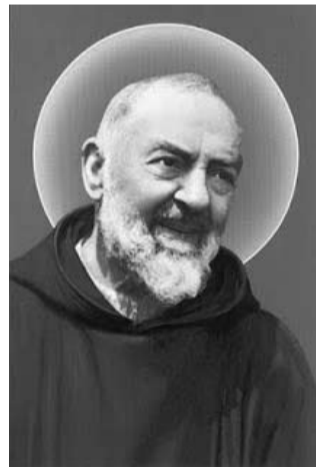
St. Padre Pio de Pietrelcina

Priest Stigmatic (1887 - 1968)

"The cross of Christ is truly the outstanding school of love, indeed, the very 'well-spring' of love. Purified by suffering the love of this faithful disciple drew hearts to Christ and to his demanding Gospel of salvation," said the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II when raising Padre Pio of Pietrelcina to the honours of the Altar on May 2, 1999. Indeed, the actual beatification of Pio could very well have been considered complete in the purification he underwent in that "outstanding school of love", the cross, a purification that brought people and the Good News closer to each other than ever before.

Born on May 25, 1887 to Grazio Forgiogio and Maria Giuseppa De Nunzio in Pietrelcina, Italy, Francois took the name of Pio at his investiture on January 22, 1903 at the Capuchin Friary at Morcone. He made his solemn profession on January 27,1907 and was ordained priest on August 10, 1910. Filled with love of God and neighbour, Pio demonstrated remarkable zest for his vocation which he considered a call to work for the good of his fellowmen. Such was the depth of the piety of this worthy son of Francis d' Assisi that, as early as in 1910, the Lord singled him out for that most significant of graces, the stigmata, i.e., a representation of his wounds. However, it was not until September 20, 1918 that the visible scars of those wounds were finally imprinted on his person at San Giovanni Rotondo.

A man of deep piety, prayer and prudence, the special mission that characterized his life as a priest manifested itself in numerous ways. The special charism he had for spiritual direction and sacramental reconciliation, at which he spent long hours daily, helped bring the touch of God's forgiving love into the aching heart of suffering, sinful humanity. His sanctity made a great impact on all he came in contact with, so much so that he was called the second Saint Francis! But it was his



awe-inspiring manner of celebrating the Eucharist that could be best considered the pinnacle of all his apostolic activity.

Padre Pio was widely believed to have been the recipient of numerous mystical experiences such as visits from our Blessed Mother, bilocation, i.e., being seen in two different places at one and the same time, communication with angels, the gifts of prophecy and healing, etc. However, he was not without his share of anguish and suffering, brought about by the doubts and suspicions harboured and expressed by many as regards the authenticity of his stigmata. Yet, the good padre took it all in his stride in the true Franciscan spirit of resignation.

The first priest-stigmatic of the Church, he became and remained the focal point of edification for numerous believers until he breathed his last on September 23, 1968, prompting Pope John Paul II to comment thus at his canonization on June 16, 2002: "Padre Pio was a generous dispenser of divine mercy ... "

Reflection: "The life of a Christian is nothing but a perpetual struggle against self; there is no flowering of the soul to the beauty of its perfection except at the price of pain" (St. Padre Pio de Pietrelcina).

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Hear us Lord we ask of you.
For the Pope and the Bishops that they may give an example of humble and loving service to all their brothers and sisters in the Church. Let us pray to the Lord.
Response: Hear us Lord we ask of you.
For all those in positions of authority; that they may put the needs of others before personal gain and ambition. Let us pray to the Lord.
Response: Hear us Lord we ask of you.
For all the little ones, those who are on the bottom rung of the ladder and who spend their lives doing menial jobs for others that they may realise that they are close to Christ and important in his eyes. Let us pray to the Lord.
Response: Hear us Lord we ask of you.
May all our Priests the God's anointed, be guided in times of their weakness, strengths them with your Spirit, so that they may joyfully dedicate their lives for your loving service. Let us pray to the Lord.
Response: Hear us Lord we ask of you.