



**TODAY IS
WORLD
MISSION
SUNDAY**

Messenger



**SS SIMON
AND JUDE
23RD OCTOBER**

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Process towards Cardinal Cooray Beatification gains grounds



To commemorate the 23rd anniversary of the heavenly birth of the Servant of God, Thomas Cardinal Cooray, which falls on October 28th, a solemn Thanksgiving Mass will be celebrated at the Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka, Tewatte, Ragama.

Holy Mass will be celebrated by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo, with the participation of Archbishops Emeriti, Nicholas Marcus Fernando and Oswald Gomis, Bishops and priests.

The faithful of the nearby parishes are encouraged to be present on this occasion. Many letters received at the Secretariat for Beatification, set up at the Archbishop's House, from those who had received favours and cures through intercessions, prayers and petitions, show encouraging signs of the spread of devotion towards the Servant of God.

The number of devotees coming to pray at the tomb of Cardinal Cooray is now on the increase and a special register has been placed near the tomb in the basement of the Basilica, to enable those who have received favours to notify them.

- Rev. Fr. Leopold Ratnasekera OMI
Postulator

'Fr. Hebert Medal' for Outstanding Service to Sport presented to Francis de Almeida



Mr. Francis de Almeida receives the inaugural 'Fr. Hebert Medal' for Outstanding Contribution to Basketball, from Rev. Fr. Jeyaraj Rasiyah (SJ), the Provincial of Jesuits, during the annual St. Eugene's Trophy Basketball Tournament that concluded on Sunday at the Police Park, Bambalapitiya. (The Island)

'Oktave' in tribute

oktave presents
I WILL NEVER FORGET YOU
A Tribute to Fr. Claver Perera on his first death anniversary
This choral presentation was held on Friday, 14 October 2011, at 7.30 p.m. at St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya. A commemorative Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated before this event.

● Pope's Message for World Mission Sunday "Faith strengthened when given to others"

"Missionary activity renews the Church, revitalises faith and Christian identity and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive, said Pope Benedict XVI in his message for World Mission Sunday, which falls today, (23rd Oct)

"Faith is strengthened when it is given to others."

Full text :

On the occasion of the Jubilee of the year 2000 Venerable John Paul II, at the beginning of a new millennium of the Christian era, forcefully confirmed the necessity of renewing the commitment to bring the Gospel proclamation to all with the enthusiasm



of the very first Christians (Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennia Ineunte*, 58). It is the most precious service that the Church can render to humanity and to every individual seeking profound reasons for living his or her existence to the full. Therefore that same invitation re-echoes every year in the celebration of World Mission Day. In fact the ceaseless proclamation of the Gospel also revitalises the Church, her fervour, her apostolic spirit; it renews her pastoral methods so that they may be ever more suited to new situations - also those that require a new evangelization - and animated by missionary thrust: "Missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity,

(Contd on Pg. 9) >>

Pope announces "Year of Faith"

Pope Benedict XVI, has announced that he was calling a forthcoming "Year of Faith."

The Year will begin on 11 October 2012, which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of Vatican Council II, and will come to an end on 24 November 2013, with the Feast of Christ the King.

Its aim "is to give renewed energy to the Church's mission to lead men and women out of the desert in which they so often find themselves, and towards the place of life, towards friendship with Christ, Who gives us life in all its fullness".

The Year will likewise be an opportunity "to strengthen our faith in Christ," the Pope said.

(See Pg. 2) >>

Awarded for Educational Excellence



His Grace, Archbishop Emeritus, Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis, Chancellor of the University of Colombo, was awarded for his contribution in the field of Education, by the Education Office of the Archdiocese on the occasion of the Archdiocesan Teachers' Day, held recently at the Auditorium of St. Joseph's College, Colombo. (Pic : Rev. Fr. Sunil de Silva)

St. Jude's Lagoon Feast



Through the intervention of St. Jude, the Negombo Lagoon was saved a year ago, from being used as a landing site for sea planes.

This year as an act of thanksgiving, the Negombo Lagoon Small-Scale Fisheries Sector will celebrate the event, as the annual "Feast of the Negombo Lagoon," on October 23rd, Sunday (today).

Festive High Mass will be held at 11.00 a.m., followed by the blessing of boats and crafts. After which a colourful boats' procession with the statue of St. Jude, the patron saint of hopeless cases, will take place.

All are cordially invited. (Fr. Basil Wickramasinghe)

Hoisting of the flagpole on October 20th at 4.00 p.m. Vespers 22nd at 5.00 p.m.

Golden moments at SIGNIS Salutations



Veteran actor Mahendra Perera clinched Gold in the Creative Acting (male) categories for both film and teledrama at the recently concluded OCIC/UNDA/SIGNIS Salutation, held last Friday at the BMICH, Colombo.

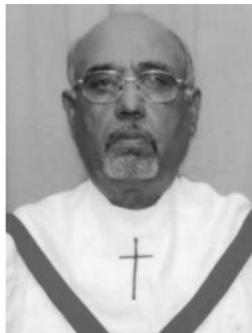
Mahendra was awarded for his creditable performance in Athula Liyanage's directorial debut film "Bambara Walalla" in which he played the role of 'Mel Mahathaya' and for his performance in the teledrama, "Thaksalawa". Actress Damita Abeyratne secured the award in the same category for Creative Acting (female).

Director, Bambara Walalla, Athula Liyanage won the award for Creative Direction, while the film was adjudged the year's most esteemed creation.

(Pic : Leonard Happuarachchi)

News in Pictures

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion appointed as All-Island JP



Mr. Soosaipillai Bastian David of "Cecilyn", 16, Nelson Place, Wellawatte, Colombo, took oaths as an All-Island Justice of the Peace on 7th October 2011, before Mr. H.M.R. Anura Kumara, Magistrate /Add. District Judge at Magistrate Courts, Nugegoda.

Mr David is a Senior Parishioner of St Lawrence's Church since 1969, and was commissioned by the Arch-

bishop of Colombo to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion in the Parish. The youngest son of Mr. & Mrs. T.B. Soosaipillai of "Ratna Villa", Karampon, Kayts he studied at St. Anthony's College, Kayts and at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna.

He was attached to the Sri Lanka Ports Authority as an Asst. Superintendent and retired in 1996. A well-known social worker, much involved in Parish activities and serving the Parish as Parish Councillor, Cluster cum Cottage Leader, Member of the Liturgy and Worship Committee, Member of Pastoral Council Finance Committee, and former President of the Sacred Heart Confraternity.

He is also the Vice-President of St Patrick's College OBA (Colombo Br.), and Coordinator of St Sebastian's Church, Karampon Management Council (Colombo Br.). He also contributes religious articles to National News-papers.

Glory and Praise to God Almighty for the graceful blessing when he celebrates his 75th birthday on 5th November, 2011. *(J.P.T)*

Meth Mihira Moratuwa creates history as first lady scouters



wa Scout Troop at Meth Mihira Special Education Centre at Korawawella, Moratuwa, run by Sisters of Charity of Jesus & Mary, carved a niche in the annals of scouting in Sri Lanka, as they became the first lady scouters in a Boy Scout troop.

Fifteen recruits took oaths and were invested as scouts by Sr. Jacintha Silva S.C.J.M., Dulcie Padmini and Malinthika de Silva the lady scouters of Meth Mihira special Education Centre at Korawawella on 14th September. A large gathering of parents, well wishers, former National Training Commr. Mr. Gerald Cooray, District Commr. Mr. Srilath de Silva, representatives of Moratuwa - Piliyandala District Scout Assn. and Rev. Fr. Leo Camillus, Parish Priest, Korawawella were present on the occasion. *(Christie Ferdinando)*

60th Anniversary and 3000th Praesidium Meeting of Nayakakanda



Praesidium of Our Lady of the Holy Eucharist - Nayakakanda, of the Legion of Mary established in 1951, celebrated its 60th Anniversary with the holding of its 3000th weekly Praesidium Meeting, recently, under the

Museum at St. Anthony's Shrine



His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo laid the foundation stone for the construction of St. Anthony's Museum on 13th Oct. 2011 at the Shrine, in Kochchikade, Colombo.

First Lady, Madam Shiranthi Rajapaksa was the guest of honour. Present also was Very Rev. Fr. Bonnie Fernandopulle, the Episcopal Vicar for Colombo (Western Region) was also present. *(T. Mendis)*

National Catechetical Day at Trincomalee Cathedral



Sunday School Children of St. Mary's Cathedral, Trincomalee, organised a National Catechetical Week from September 18th to 25th.

Holy Mass was officiated by Rev. Fr. George Disanayake, Parish Priest of St. Mary's Cathedral.

With 2012 to be declared as year of Catechism by the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Parish Family Apostolate and the Catholic Youth were given the opportunity of initiating adult and youth catechism.

A National Catholic Day was also organised by the Sunday School teachers and students. Gifts and Bibles were distributed to children. *(Angeline Subramaniam)*

Workshop for G.C.E. O/L Students at Avissawella



A workshop was held for the benefit of G.C.E. O/L students of the Tamil stream at the Avissawella Catechetical Centre to facilitate their studies.

Picture shows the students engaged in group discussion. *(J. Antony)*

patronage of Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunathilake - the Spiritual Director and Parish Priest of Nayakakanda.

The special thanksgiving Mass was followed by a meeting, attended by members of all five Praesidia of the Parish and also members of the Kandana Curia. A fellowship followed the meeting.

The picture shows (left to right) Vice-President Vernon Abraham, Secretary Jayasiri Pathmaperuma, Immediate Past President Lionel James, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunathilake, President Vicent Vass, Valentine Motha, Treasurer Lawrence Joseph, S. Singerayer and Justin Ranasinghe. *(Pic Nimal Perera)*



Church in the World

APOSTOLIC LETTER "MOTU PROPRIO DATA", "PORTA FIDEI"

VATICAN CITY, 17 OCT 2011 (VIS) - Made public today was "Porta fidei", the Apostolic Letter "Motu Proprio data" with which Benedict XVI proclaims a "Year of Faith", to begin on 11 October 2012, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of Vatican Council II, and due to end on 24 November 2013, with the Feast of Christ the King. Extracts from the English language version of the Letter are given below:

"The 'door of faith' is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into His Church. It is possible to cross that threshold when the word of God is proclaimed and the heart allows itself to be shaped by transforming grace".

"Ever since the start of my ministry as Successor of Peter, I have spoken of the need to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ. ... Whereas in the past it was possible to recognise a unitary cultural matrix, broadly accepted in its appeal to the content of the faith and the values inspired by it, today this no longer seems to be the case in large swathes of society, because of a profound crisis of faith that has affected many people".

"In the light of all this, I have decided to announce a Year of Faith. It will begin on 11 October 2012, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of Vatican Council II, and it will end on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King, on 24 November 2013. The starting date of 11 October 2012 also marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, a text promulgated by my Predecessor, Blessed John Paul II, with a view to illustrating for all the faithful the power and beauty of the faith".

"Moreover, the theme of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops that I have convoked for October 2012 is 'The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith'. This will be a good opportunity to usher the whole Church into a time of particular reflection and rediscovery of the faith.

"The renewal of the Church is also achieved through the witness offered by the lives of believers: By their very existence in the world, Christians are called to radiate the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us. The Council itself, in the Dogmatic Constitution 'Lumen Gentium', said this: ... the Church ... clasping sinners to her bosom, is at once holy and always in need of purification".

The Year of Faith, from this perspective, is a summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord, the one Saviour of the world. In the mystery of His death and resurrection, God has revealed in its fullness the Love that saves and calls us to conversion of life through the forgiveness of sins. For St. Paul, this Love ushers us into a new life. ... Through faith, this new life shapes the whole of human existence according to the radical new reality of the resurrection. ... 'Faith working through love' becomes a new criterion of understanding and action that changes the whole of man's life", the Holy Father said.

The Oblate Congress of the Colombo Province meet

The Oblate Congress of the Colombo Province was held from 10th to 14th of October at De Mazenod House, Mat-takkuliya, under the patronage and leadership of Very Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva the Provincial Superior of the Province of Colombo. The theme of the Congress was "the Oblate Mission: Responding to today's emerging challenges." The Province is blessed with 147 religious priests and Brothers, working in different parts of the country. Oblates, representing different missions participated at this Congress. The Congress ended with the celebration of Holy Mass.

Large crowds at Tambakanda feast

The 132nd Church feast of St. Bruno at Tambakanda took place on 16th October, presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Bishop of Kurunegala.

A large gathering of the faithful from various parts of the country were present to pay their respects and honour the saint.

Picture shows the statue been carried in procession through the streets by the youth. Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Stanley Pieris, together with Parish Council, organised the arrangements for the feast. *(Cecil Danicius)*



Bishop Cletus addresses liturgical meeting at Ratnapura



The Ratnapura Diocese Liturgical Meeting was held recently at the Catechetical Centre, Avissawella.

Picture shows the Bishop of Ratnapura, Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera OSB, addressing the meeting.

Rev. Fr. Ignatius Varnakulasingham National Director Liturgy and Rev. Fr. Anton Sriyan from the National Seminary Kandy, also addressed the meeting. *(J.A.)*

Young boy bags big lottery win



At the Raffle draw held recently in connection with the building fund for the Auditorium Complex of Ave Maria Convent, Negombo, young Kasun Lakshman won the first prize of a Brand New Suzuki Maruti worth Eleven lakhs.

Picture shows Kasun with Rev. Sr. Hilerina

Fernando (Superior, Ave Maria Convent) and Rev. Sr. Francine Matugala (Principal) at the presentation ceremony.

Also in the picture are Mr. Modestus Perera, Chairman, Lottery Committee and Mrs. Christobel Tillakaratne, Vice Chairman. *(R. Aponso)*

New Mayor of Negombo meets Cardinal Malcolm



The new Mayor of Negombo, Anton Jayaweera, (UPFA), met the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith recently.

Picture shows the Cardinal in conversation with the Mayor. Also in the picture is Very Rev. Fr. Patrick Perera, Episcopal Vicar, Colombo (Northern Region).

(Raymond Aponso)

Message for Deepavali Festival Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue issuing a Message for the forthcoming festival of Deepavali on October 26th states:

Dear Hindu Friends,

1. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue is pleased to send you its cordial greetings as you celebrate Deepavali on 26 October of this year. May God, the source of all light, illumine your hearts, homes and communities for a life of peace and prosperity.

2. Maintaining our tradition of sharing a reflection on this occasion, we propose this year the theme of Religious Freedom. This subject is currently taking centre stage in many places, calling our attention to those members of our human family exposed to bias, prejudice, hate propaganda, discrimination and persecution on the basis of religious affiliation. Religious freedom is the answer to religiously motivated conflicts in many parts of the world. Amid the violence triggered by these conflicts, many desperately yearn for peaceful coexistence and integral human development.

3. Religious freedom is numbered among the fundamental human rights rooted in the dignity of the human person. When it is jeopardized or denied, all other human rights are endangered. Religious freedom necessarily includes immunity from coercion by any individual, group, community or institution. Though the exercise of this right entails the freedom of every person to profess, practise and propagate his or her religion or belief, in public or in private, alone or in a community, it also involves a serious obligation on the part of civil authorities, individuals and groups to respect the freedom of others. Moreover, it includes the freedom to change one's own religion.

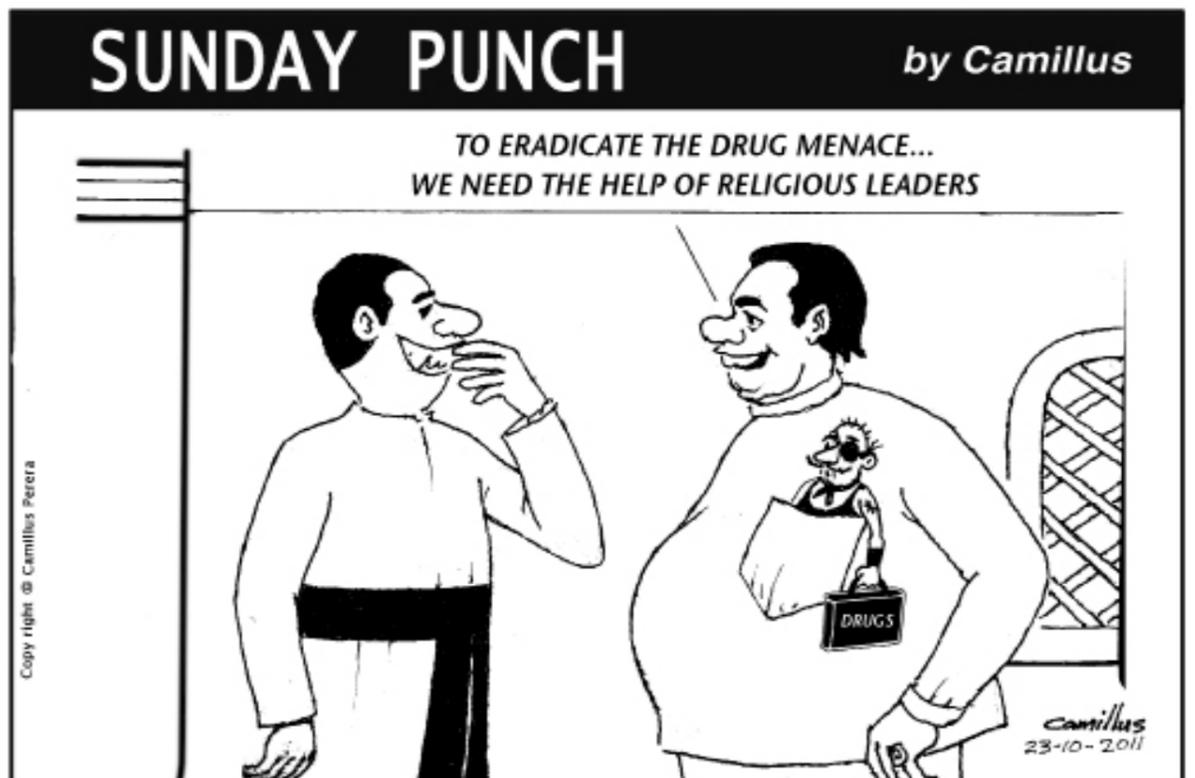
4. When respected and promoted, religious freedom allows believers to be more enthusiastic about cooperating with their fellow citizens in the building of

a just and humane social order. But wherever and whenever it is denied, suppressed or violated, "the growth of the authentic and lasting peace of the whole human family" is stifled and frustrated (cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Peace, 2011*). There are many fields in which a specific contribution can be made to the common good, such as the defence of life and the dignity of the family, the sound education of children, honesty in daily conduct, and the preservation of natural resources, to name a few. Let us strive, then, to join hands in promoting religious freedom as our shared

responsibility, by asking the leaders of nations never to disregard the religious dimension of the human person.

5. The very day after you celebrate Deepavali this year, many religious leaders from across the globe will join Pope Benedict XVI in a Pilgrimage to Assisi to renew the pledge made twenty-five years ago, under the leadership of Blessed John Paul II, to make religions channels of peace and harmony. We will be spiritually united with them, confident that believers will always be a blessing for the whole world.

We cordially wish you a joyful celebration of Deepavali! (Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran -President)



23 October 2011

World Cleanliness Day

We celebrated World Cleanliness Day last week. Cleanliness is the absence of dirt, dust, garbage and other rotting perishable materials which cause bad odour. Why is cleanliness important? In the developing world 2 million children die each year because of bacterial infections and the resulting diarrhea and dehydration. Tragically just about all of those deaths are among children. The absence of clean water and clean air and a clean and sanitary environment where they grow up are major contributors to these completely preventable deaths. Sadly we too have such health hazards with its most frequent manifestation in the form of dengue which has caused several deaths particularly among children.

Many of our public places, streets, lanes, government offices, railway stations, hospitals, public parks, look filthy. There is garbage dumped in the streets by irresponsible citizens. Some deface walls during election campaigns. Others litter the streets, dump waste paper and polythene bags in the streets. In the slums the situation is more than dirty; it is insanitary. The cleanliness of a village or city must begin with the cleanliness of the home. If the home is not clean the people won't bother to keep the city clean. In several countries National Cleanliness Day is observed by people cleaning their surroundings and public-spirited citizens cleaning up public parks and other public places. While observing the day by cleansing our surroundings, we should also resolve to maintain the state of cleanliness as a regular feature in our environment. Pupils in Schools should organize a clean up in their school premises. It is the duty of every one to keep the City clean and the environment healthy.

The importance of cleaning hands before meals is advertised by firms selling cleansing agents. It certainly helps to keep the home relatively bacteria free. When children are unable to clean their hands for days, even weeks, it's easy for them to become ill from the filth they encounter and pass into their mouths. Intestinal distress could be easily treated by modern medicine but it can be a death sentence in poorer neighbourhoods.

When we visit other cities in the developed world we note how clean they are. Public buses, trains, government offices in these countries are clean. So are the streets. Sad to say we are far from these cities in our standards of cleanliness. But we must take this duty very seriously and do our own individual contribution to make the environment clean. We never see anyone in the developed cities throwing dirt on the streets, parks, or public places. It is easy to blame the authorities but can we say that we have not contributed in some way to the lack of cleanliness in our country. The British colonial government used to insist that the village headmen should keep their villages clean and the government agents used to make reports on this aspect of cleanliness in the village inspection reports as their old diaries show.

Cleanliness is part of civilization. A man of dirty habits is far from civilization. So, with the progress of civilization man cleans himself more and more. He cleans his body. He cleans his mind and heart. He cleans all his action and manners. He should clean his soul as well. This will lead him to the highest form of civilization. If we clean our bodies and limbs we will be free from many kinds of diseases. Clean food cooked in clean pots and served in clean dishes, will give us health and happiness. If we clean our bodies regularly, our complexion will be brighter. We will look fit and smart. If we wear clean clothes our minds will be happy. Cleanliness gives us a cheerful mind.

So, cleanliness brings us progress and improvement in all fields of activities and in all spheres of life. By cleanliness of body and limbs, cleanliness of all our articles of use, cleanliness of our dwellings and soul, we gradually move towards divinity. Hence, there is the saying "Cleanliness is next to Godliness."

Pope John Paul II

The Vicar of Christ

Pope John Paul the Second was beatified on the first of May 2011. His first feast will be celebrated on the 22nd of October. John Paul the Second Centre at Ma-eliya, Ja-ela is making great preparations to celebrate this feast

Pope John Paul II, the Vicar of Christ, articulates the wisdom of the faith in a powerful and authentic manner. These excerpts from his recent addresses are, we think, well worth thoughtful study.

What Love Means

To love, is to think about other people, to accept others, to go out of your way to help them, to serve them, to encourage them. It is to share with others the world and its good things, the way that God has shared them with you. In loving others, you will discover the meaning of life; indeed you will discover the Giver of life, the Creator of the world, the God and Father of us all.

Samaritans

This is how we become Good Samaritans for one another... not only by stopping beside a person who is suffering the wounds of life, but by bringing him or her efficacious help, by giving ourselves to this person with whom Christ identified Himself: "What you have done to one of my brothers or sisters, you have done unto me."

Winning Vocations

Youth love high ideals. Therefore do not hide the sacrifices that the consecrated vocation requires, for young people are generous, and this does not frighten them but rather stimulates them. Speak to them of Christ with love and truth, uncovering for them the living witness of this ideal. This is how young people become attracted to Christ.

Selfishness

Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, can break the chains of our personal and collective selfishness. He gives us the power of His Spirit so that we may triumph over difficulties and realize justice.

The Lord's Demands

To us, Jesus' message of the permanent presence of God amidst His creation should be a source of confidence. He loves us, though His love may often be hidden. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He is a God who offers us a future. We can commit ourselves to Him; we can take root in Him ...

"You may now ask. "What

does the Lord demand? How can we translate His will into reality?" "You know the Commandments" is the answer Jesus Christ gives in the Gospel to the young man who addresses that question to Him. "You know the Commandments."

Take them seriously; they show you the way.

Person and Society

Only when the faithful recognize sin in their own lives are they ready to understand reconciliation and to open their hearts to penance and personal conversion. Only then are they able to contribute to the renewal of society, since personal conversion is also the only way that leads to the lasting renewal of society. This personal conversion, by divine precept, is intimately linked to the Sacrament of Penance.

Society's Measure

Unquestionably, the quality of a society or civilization is measured by the respect it has for its weakest members. A technically perfect society where only fully productive members are accepted must be considered totally unworthy of human beings, perverted as it is by a type of discrimination that is no less reprehensible than racial discrimination. These are the convictions of the Church.

The Handicapped

The handicapped person is a human subject in the full sense, with all the innate, sacred, and inviolable rights that a person entails. This is true ... no matter how great the person's affliction might be. We must facilitate his or her participation in all facets of social life and at all possible levels: In the family, at school, at work, in the community, in politics and religion.

In practice, this presupposes the absolute respect of the human life of the handicapped person, from his or her conception through every stage of development.

As has already been seen in the case of abortion, the moral condemnation of euthanasia remains unheard and incomprehensible to those who are imbued, perhaps unconsciously, with a conception of life that is irreconcilable with the Christian message, or rather with the very dignity of the human person, correctly understood.

To find proof of this, we need only consider some of the negative characteristics in vogue in a culture that abstracts from transcendence:

- the habit of disposing at will of human life at its source;
- the tendency to appreciate personal life only to the degree that it can provide riches and pleasures;
- the valuing of material well-being and pleasure as supreme goods, and consequently the concept of suffering as an absolute evil to be avoided at all costs and by every means;



- the concept of death as the absurd end of life that could still have given enjoyment, or as the liberation from a life still continuing although already "deprived of meaning" because it is destined to continue in pain.

All this in general accompanies the conviction that man, leaving God out of the question, is responsible solely to himself and the freely established laws of society.

It is clear that where these attitudes have taken hold ... it can paradoxically appear logical and "humane" to gently put an end to one's own or to another's life when it could hold only suffering and serious impairment. But this is in reality absurd and inhuman.

The commitment that is demanded of the Christian community in such a socio-cultural context is more than a simple condemnation of euthanasia, or the mere attempt to block the road toward its eventual spread and subsequent legalization.

Basically the problem is, above all, how successfully to help the men of our time to become aware of the inhumanity of certain aspects of the dominant culture and to rediscover the most precious values that have been obscured by it.

With Mary's Help

The Holy Spirit exercises, in a certain way, a reconciling action even among those who remain outside the Church, by inspiring in them the desire of a greater unity of all nations and of all mankind, and by stimulating the efforts directed to overcome the numerous conflicts that continue to divide the world ...

The Holy spirit achieves this reconciliation of mankind with the help of Mary, the universal mother of all mankind. At the beginning of the Church, she, united in prayer with the Apostles and the first disciples, contributed to obtaining an abundant outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

'Interior Light'

The Holy Spirit acts as an interior light that leads the sinner to recognize his own sins. As long as one closes his eyes to his own guilt, he cannot be converted. The Holy spirit introduces into the soul the glance of God so that the sinner may thus be liberated from the prejudices that cloud his eyes to the sins committed ...

At the same time that he stirs up repentance and confession, the Holy spirit makes it understood that divine pardon is available to sinners, thanks to Christ's sacrifice. This pardon is accessible to all.

(Courtesy: Don Bosco's Madonna Sent by Emda S. Douglas)

We are Missionaries - The Importance of Mission

The word 'MISSION' comes from the Latin word 'MITTO' which means to send. In the act of sending there are two parties involved. One who is sent and the sender. For a meaningful and fruitful mission there should be a healthy understanding and a growing relationship between the two parties. They must accept, respect and honour each other. The success of the mission depends on this relationship. This in short is the spirituality of mission.

We Christians are a worshipping and believing community. We celebrate what we believe. In our celebrations we have times and reasons to observe. There are obligations and days of solemnity. In this liturgical calendar during the month of October we celebrate the 'Mission Sunday' which reminds us of our missionary calling, activities and responsibilities. In addition to this we celebrate two other feasts with solemnity. That is on the first of October the feast of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, the patroness of missions and the 3rd of December the feast of St. Francis Xavier, the patron saint of missions. Sri Lanka is a Mission country. Majority of our people are Non-Christians. All three events are very important, both to the local church and the universal church.

God Almighty and the Mission

God Almighty is the first and greatest missionary. He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to our midst to offer His life on the cross and to bring forgiveness, redemption and salvation to the fallen human race. This was not an easy task. He shared everything with us except sin says St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians 2: 1-12. Jesus was able to fulfil His mission because of His deep union with the Father. In the Gospels we see on several occasions he went to a lonely place to pray. He was always praying to the Father. All the miracles and healings were done in praying and thanking the Father. His life was a life of prayer Lk. 3: 21 and Lk. 9: 28.

There were temptations and trials. Humanly speaking it was not possible to undergo all the physical and psychological suffering that He had to face. So even on the cross He felt that He cannot do anything without the Father. He asked the Father whether He has forsaken Him, or abandoned Him Mk. 15:34. After the three hour hanging on the cross He completed His God-given mission by breathing His last breath and rendering Himself fully to God Almighty. "Father into your hands I commend my spirit" Lk. 23:46

Jesus Christ and the Mission

The infancy narratives in the synoptic Gospels tell us how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. Mary conceived Jesus in her womb through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus in obedience to the Father became man and fulfilled His God-given Mission on earth. Jesus Christ during His ministry calls certain people to be his close associates and named them as Apostles Jn. 20:21. He hands over His God-given 'Mission' to His Apostles. They were with Him all throughout His public ministry. They were witnesses of His teaching and miracles. In the Gospel of Mk. 6:6-12 we see Jesus send them on missions to preach and heal. They were given power and authority over evil spirits and to cure the sick, not mainly physical healing

but inner healing through repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. They were sent two by two and asked not to burden themselves with worldly things by carrying unnecessary baggage. They had to totally depend on divine providence and generosity and hospitality of the people. They were asked to come back and report. They always had to be in union with him. Without Him they are nothing. Always this loving relationship with the Master will be the success of their mission.

Apostolic Era and the Mission

From the Apostolic time to this day we see in the history of the church how the disciples carried out this God-given mandate. The Apostles went to preach the good news to the then known world. They were not afraid of any forces. They were burning with love for the Master. They were ready to take any risk even at the cost of their lives. They left their families, wealth and property and went all over like mendicants. They were totally depending on divine power and providence.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we see that St. Paul goes on three missionary journeys. It is believed and tradition too says that St. Thomas went to India, St. James went to Spain, St. Andrew to Western Asia (Turkey), St. Bartholomew went to Arabian countries, St. Jude Thaddeus went to Persia and Armenia, St. Barnabas to Syria and his native place Cyprus, St. Matthew to Ethiopia. Some apostles remained in Palestine and Jerusalem. Finally it is believed that St. Peter and St. Paul reached Rome and were martyred there.

Like in the Apostolic era even today so many missionaries all over the world have to undergo physical and psychological suffering. In the recent past it happened in our neighbouring country India. Some of them were burnt to death, others were persecuted and sexually harassed and raped.

The Martyrs and the Mission

It is very clear and visible that the church nourished and grew by the Blood of the Martyrs. There are Apostles, Popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, deacons, religious men and women and lay faithful among the millions of martyrs. They are not limited to a country, nations or race. They are from all over the world. They remind us that the church consists of all the baptised faithful from the whole world.

So whether they are ordained

ministers or religious men and women or lay faithful, all of them have to be missionaries. It is their baptismal call and responsibility. They share this missionary call according to various de-

grees and means. This was very clearly expressed and explained by the Second Vatican Council. The council Fathers declared that the church is missionary by its very nature.

We were to accept the command given by our Lord "go therefore and make disciples of all nations" Mt. 28: 19. To be true Christians we have to be missionaries at all times. This is not easy. Even in our country in the recent past both in the South and the North some priests had to undergo mysterious and brutal deaths. Some people in our country think this land belongs to their religion and others are just tolerated.

St. Theresa of Child Jesus and Mission

St. Theresa was the last of nine children of a devout Catholic family from France. Among the nine children five of them became religious. Theresa followed her sisters and at the age of 15 with a special permission from Pope Leo XIII, she became a Carmelite. At the age of 24 on 30th September 1897 she died and Pope Pius XI canonized her 1925 and declared her as the patroness of missions.

This young sickly Carmelite nun never went out of her monastery to do any missionary activity. At the age of 22 she became the Novice Mistress of her congregation. She was a model and example to everybody in her community. She gave witness to Jesus Christ and to His good news by her very life. A child-like simplicity, utter humility, constant self-sacrifice and a boundless love of God were some of the special virtues and qualities that were very visible in her life.

She is affectionately called the little flower. That is because she offered all her prayers, sufferings, aches and pains to Jesus as bouquet of flowers. Her special task that she imposed on her was her prayers and sacrifices, and doing penance for the priests and missions. So the universal church accepts her as the patroness of missions.

St. Francis Xavier and the Mission

St. Francis Xavier is the second among the original seven Jesuits who formed the Society of Jesus together with their leader of St. Ignatius Loyola. He came from a very noble and wealthy family in Spain. This educated young man's ambition in life was to become a scholar and doctor in philosophy. His father was the president of the royal council. But his call from the Lord was

to become a missionary in South East Asia. Nothing is impossible for God. So God through his university companion Ignatius Loyola moulded him to be one of the greatest missionaries in the Catholic church.

It was the king of Portugal who sent Jesuit missionaries to the East Indies. So St. Francis Xavier started his missionary work in Goa on the west coast of India. Tradition says that he preached, the good news in South India, Sri Lanka, Malacca, China, Philippines and Japan. What is important in his missionary activities was his adaptability to situations. He was able to walk with kings hand in hand, and also with the poor uneducated fishermen of South India. He loved children and through the children he reached the parents. He is the patron saint of missions in the universal church. His mortal remains are preserved and venerated to this day in Goa.

The Church and the Mission

Even after 2000 years the mandate given to the apostles is alive and active in the church. Jesus asked the disciples to be the light and salt of the earth. Mt 5:13-14. There are Christians and anonymous Christians everywhere in the world, without taking into consideration any man-made barriers of race, caste or religion. God's kingdom of peace, love and truth is emerging everywhere. It is the duty and responsibility of the church to spread God's kingdom.

We accept bishops as the successors of the apostles. The second Vatican Council is very clear about it. L.G. 20: 2 "The Bishops in the divine institution have taken the place of Apostles as pastors of the church. Thus whoever listens to them listens to Christ, and whoever despises them despises Christ.

Thus together with Holy Father (Bishop of Rome) and the diocesan Bishops all the members of the Church have to be Missionaries. The church provides ample opportunity to all age groups to engage in missionary activities. The Holy Childhood, Y.C.S, Children of Mary, altar servers, church choristers, Legion of Mary, Y.C.W., family apostolate, Sacred Heart Society, SV.P., parish pastoral council and youth apostolate are some of the opportunities where we can be missionaries. Yes we are missionaries. Let us always be missionaries. It is in our nature.

(Rev. Fr. Hugo Palihawadana)

Towards a healthy spirituality

Over centuries there has been a variety of speculations made in a variety of fields attempting to understand the composite nature of the human being. Some of these have been materialistic interpretations, while others have emphasized the fundamental spiritual nature of man. In claims that attempt to emphasize one aspect more than the other some have even over-stepped the limits.

Two dominant schools of thought have for centuries been in intense conflict. Those who claim that there is nothing more than the physical structure of the man and hence the primary importance

of the body more than anything else vs. that man in essence is the soul and therefore the body which is of mere matter that will decompose is of no consequence.

While these two extreme philosophical thoughts have prevailed over centuries along with them there have existed also those who have attempted to reconcile these opposites giving importance both to the spirit and the body. They walked a middle path between extreme puritanism and unbridled Epicureanism.

They hold the view that a human being is a multi-dimensional person. According to them

a human being realizes his/her fullness when both the spirit and the body are nurtured.

In the history of spirituality we encounter schools of thought that reflect the above conflict. We come across certain spirituality that negate the manifestations of the physical body and certain spirituality over emphasizing those aspects of the physique.

A healthy spirituality seeks to strike a balance between the spirit and the physique. Nurturing such spirituality will lead to the development of healthy persons and thereby healthy societies. **Bernard Pradeepan Jesuthasan**



A guide dog leading a visually impaired person along the busy streets would have caught your attention. Because of physical disability the person totally depended on this professionally trained dog. We also have observed that there are lonely people, especially the elderly, whose lives are spun around the routine of their pets. Senior citizens whose spouses, children and the loved ones have left them achieve companionship, connectedness and comfort from their pets such as dogs, cats, birds and rabbits.

Mental health researchers have found out that the depressed, anxious and lonely people have solace in rearing and living with a pet. They discovered that the pet-owners have fewer incidents of anxiety,

depression and phobia. Playing with pets increases the serotonin and dopamine levels which calms and relaxes people. These are the very chemicals that are in the antidepressant and neuroleptic medications such as Prozac.

Medical research also shows how ownership of pets help people with their physical illness. A decrease in triglyceride and cholesterol, which are indicators of chronic heart disease, are shown in the owners of pets as opposed to people who do not possess pets. People who have had heart attacks survive longer if they have a pet. Gazing at a fish tank with a few fish is another way to calm oneself. Some cardiologists recommend this treatment just like a medication.

Looking after a

Bits and Pieces

Pet Therapy

dog also gives you structure and routine to your day. Dogs have to be taken for walks as an exercise which induces the owner too, to walk and enjoy physical activity. Bathing and grooming the dog certainly give the dog-owner exercise and keeps them in good physical shape. Taking a dog for a walk or chasing a cat or a kitten gives you not only physical activity but a sense of responding.

Pet owners who take them to public parks tend to meet other pet owners or others who are interested in pets. Pets

become a topic of conversation which leads to new friends. Care of pets could be an interesting topic for conversation and sharing satisfaction.

Pets can be our best friends in times of need. They do not argue. You can even talk to your pet and even yell at them, they are not going to talk back. Whenever you come home after a gruelling day a dog will come to the threshold and wag his tail and welcome you. This has made some people regard dogs as their best friends. They are more grateful than humans is a common

saying. They respond with a "thank you" by wagging their tails. They remain faithful to you in good times and bad. Pets have helped some lonely people to find meaning and joy to monotony in life.

I can remember visiting a canine cemetery in Hartsdale, a suburb of the New York City. The villagers boast that the world's oldest pet cemetery is in their village. It was started in 1896 by a New York City Veterinarian Dr. Samuel Johnson. Reading the tomb stones showed that the first burials were made during the early part of the last century. The epitaphs in the grave sites show how much these pets brought meaning and joy to the owner's life. Besides crosses upon the pet graves there were many statues of St. Francis

Madi

of Assisi, the patron saint of the pets.

Pet ownership is not for all. Raring a dog or a cat could be expensive and time consuming. Keeping up with regular injections to prevent diseases and veterinary care can be costly. Some dogs have to be walked daily. Any pet has to be fed, bathed, cleaned and trained. These are chores which help one to move away from self-centered tendencies which trigger self-pity. At the same time these activities take up lots of time and money. But it rewards the owner both psychologically and physically.

The art of fighting without fighting The importance of water in your system

Think you are drinking enough water? If you are not, you could end up with excess body fat, poor muscle tone, digestive complications, muscle soreness, even water-retention problems.

Next to air, water is the elements most necessary for survival. A normal adult is 60-70 percent water. We can go without food for almost two months, but without water only a few days. Yet most people have no idea how much water they should drink. In fact, many live in a dehydrated state.

Without water, we would be poisoned to death by our own waste products. When the kidneys remove uric acid and urea, these must be dissolved in water. If there is not enough water, wastes are not removed as effectively and may build up as kidney stones. Water is also vital for chemical reactions in digestion and metabolism. It carries nutrients and oxygen to the cells through the blood and helps to cool the body through perspiration. Water also lubricates our joints.

We even need water to breath: Our lungs must be moist to take in oxygen and excrete carbon dioxide. It is possible to lose a pint of liquid each day just exhaling.

So if you don't drink sufficient water, you can impair every aspect of your physiology. As mentioned before, "By not drinking enough water, many people

suffer from excess body fat, poor muscle tone and size, decreased digestive efficiency and organ function, increased toxicity in the body, joint and muscle soreness and water retention."

Water retention? If you are not drinking enough, your body may retain water to compensate. Paradoxically, retention can sometimes be eliminated by drinking more water, not less.

Proper water intake is a key to weight loss.. If people who are trying to lose weight don't drink enough water, the body can't metabolize that fat adequately.

Kung Fu Master's advice, "The minimum for a healthy person is eight to ten eight ounce glasses a day, you need more if you exercise a lot or live in a hot climate. Overweight people should drink an extra glass for every 25 pounds they exceed their ideal weight. Consult your physician.

You may wonder: If I drink so much water won't I constantly be running to the bathroom? Yes, But after a few weeks, your bladder tends to adjust and you urinate less frequently but in large amounts.

And by consuming those eight to ten glasses of water throughout the day, you could be on your way to a healthier, leaner body.



Wong Pee Li (Billy Wong) International Gung-Fu

Saints in Concert



Enjoy the smooth harmony of the Saints with a delightful selection of hits from the 60' to 80's, Gospel favourites and an irresistible medley of Pops on Sunday 30th October at the Lionel Wendt from 7 p.m. onwards.

Accompanied by Dayadhree De Silva on Piano, Revel Crake on guitar, Basil Paiva on bass guitar and Christo Prins on drums for added lustre and sparkle.

Tickets and Box plan at the Lionel Wendt. Part proceeds to 'Achievers', - school for differently-abled children.

Principal sponsor Dialog Axiata, Print Media sponsor Sunday Times and Daily Mirror, Radio sponsor Gold FM.

Ideal family entertainment. An event not to be missed!



TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



An American couple came across a restaurant in Kandy named "Steak House". They ordered for two steaks. The waiter with the blank look said, "Sorry sir, we do not serve steak here. We have rolls, cutlets, patties, chicken and beef, Kottu rotti etc." How come you call your place "steak house" and don't serve steak?" yelled the angry American. Thoroughly annoyed, the water replied "Sir, we have Elephant House in Slave Island, but they do not sell Elephants."

Rev. Fr. Fracchid Anthony Fernando O.M.I.

A CROSS The Way 61

By: Sirohmi Gunsekera

'Helpline'

"Oh dear! I can't take any more. I just want to die." moaned Janaki. "What's the matter?" asked Inoka with concern.

"My husband is carrying on with his secretary and my teenaged son is throwing temper tantrums at home. I just don't know what to do," replied Janaki.

"Have you tried praying?" asked Inoka.

"I am just too upset to kneel down and pray," said Janaki.

"No, no. That is the wrong attitude. When troubles come your way, the first thing to do is to offer up your trials to God. Just talk to Him and tell how

these things are troubling you. He has a way of bringing Good out of Evil," explained Inoka.

"But how can prayer help stop my husband's extra-marital affair?" questioned Janaki. "I don't know. All I know is that if you keep praying, you will find Peace of Mind whatever the problems that afflict you," said Inoka.

"I guess I don't have enough faith. After all, God did help my son to recover from his Meningitis. How can I doubt that He will show me the way in this crisis?" said Janaki. "You must just pray for the courage to cope and treat your husband well. After all, we don't know what is going on in his mind," advised Inoka.

"Maybe I neglected him. I will go out of my way to be nice to him and, who knows, he may give up the affair and come back to me," said Janaki.

"As for your son, he is going through the normal teenage rebellion against Authority. Just try to understand him but don't mollycoddle him. Give him a degree of freedom so he can breathe. Rope in your husband to help handle him," said Inoka.

"Yes, I must always remember that God is an ever-present Helpline. I must just get used to sharing my troubles with Him and not try to cope with everything on my own. I must just pray for the strength to cope for the day!" said Janaki.

"Gleaned from the Classics"

By Johannus

Vita, si scias uti, longa est.

(from Seneca)

Translation:

Life, if you know how to use it, is long enough.



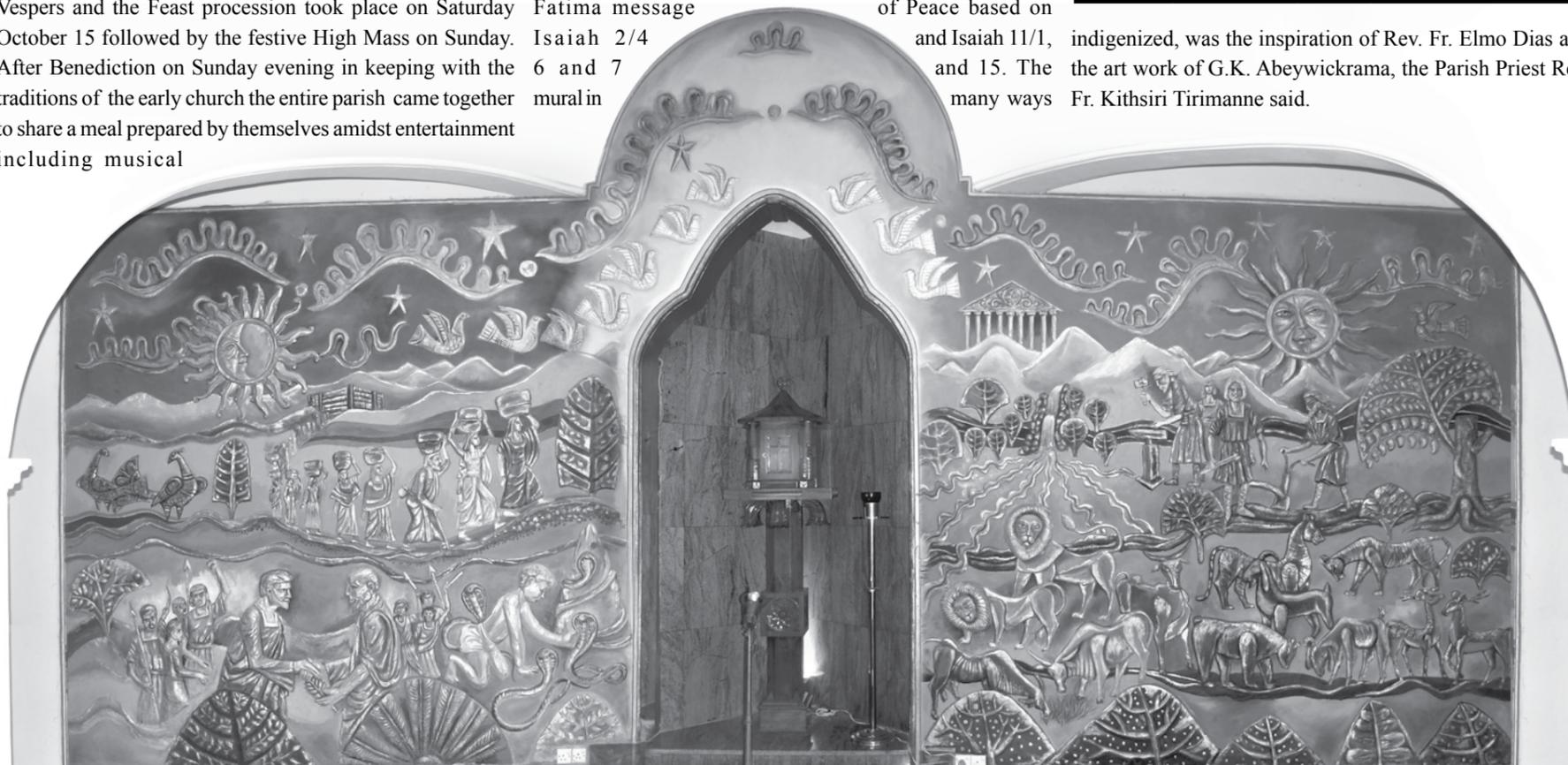
A mural with the Message of Peace

The Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Battaramulla celebrated its feast last week. The hoisting of the flagpole was followed by 9 days of novenas. The Vespers and the Feast procession took place on Saturday October 15 followed by the festive High Mass on Sunday. After Benediction on Sunday evening in keeping with the traditions of the early church the entire parish came together to share a meal prepared by themselves amidst entertainment including musical

chairs for the children.

The mural shown here was recently completed to adorn the sanctuary of the Church. It illustrates the Fatima message of Peace based on Isaiah 2/4 6 and 7 and Isaiah 11/1, and 15. The mural in many ways

indigenized, was the inspiration of Rev. Fr. Elmo Dias and the art work of G.K. Abeywickrama, the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Kithsiri Tirimanne said.



Reverse roles on Teachers' and Children's Day

Children's Day and Teachers' Day was a combined celebration at HFC Bambalapitiya. The day began with a prayer service conducted by the teachers and

students, led by their Principle. This was followed by the teachers renewing the annual pledge to serve the children and school. Presentations were made to 4 teachers who completed 25 years in the service of the school.

children alike. The event was organized by the Principal representing the School administration, the prefects, the School Welfare Association, the PTA and the PPA.

The day's events included dance performances by both students and teachers and a cricket match played between the prefects and the teachers. An unique item was the primary school band played by the primary school teachers dressed in paper caps and overalls. All teachers were presented with tokens of appreciation organized by the prefects, a gift by the Principal and hosted to lunch. While all students were also gifted with a token and treated to ice cream. It was a fun-filled day enjoyed by both the teachers and



World Mission Sunday - 23rd October 2011

"Be a Missionary wherever you are"

BE A MISSIONARY WHEREVER YOU ARE!

"As the Father has sent me, even so I send you", Jesus said to his disciples. (Jn.20:21). It is with these words that Jesus established His Missionary Church. This is confirmed with the command of Jesus to His disciples just before His Ascension - Jesus said to them: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nationsteaching them to observe all that I have commanded you....." (Mt. 28/19, 20). This command was not given only to His twelve Apostles, but includes all those who accept Him and bear His name. "Since the whole Church is Missionary, the work of Evangelization is the basic duty of the People of God". (Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church - Chapter VI of Vat. II). According to Pope Paul VI, "The Church exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be a channel of the Gift of Grace". (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* - Chapter 14) From the words of St. Paul, the Apostle too, let us remember that Evangelization is our responsibility, as members of the Church. St. Paul says: "For if I preach the Gospel that gives me no grounds for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9/16). All these finally go to show, that wherever we may be or whatever we may be doing, we are all called to be Missionaries.

Let us focus our minds to what Blessed Pope John Paul II said, in his Encyclical Letter - *Redemptoris Missio*, written just before the 2000 Jubilee Year. His Holiness begins his Introduction with these words: "The Mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. As the second millennium after Christ's coming draws to an end, an overall view of the Human Race shows that this Mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves whole heartedly to its service". If after 2000 years, the Mission entrusted to the Church is still in its infancy, what are we to do? As it is explained in the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church of Vat. II, let us try to understand the many Missionary Activities assigned to the different categories of the Church and try to fulfill them accordingly.

It is stated there - "All Bishops are consecrated not just for some one in the Diocese, but for the salvation of the entire world; Priests should fully understand that their lives have also been consecrated to the service of the Missions; Religious Communities of the Contemplatives and the Active Life have so far played and still do play a very great role in the Evangelization of the world. It exhorts them to go on untiringly in the work of Missions; Laymen co-operate in the Church's work of Evangelization. As witnesses and at the same time as living instru-



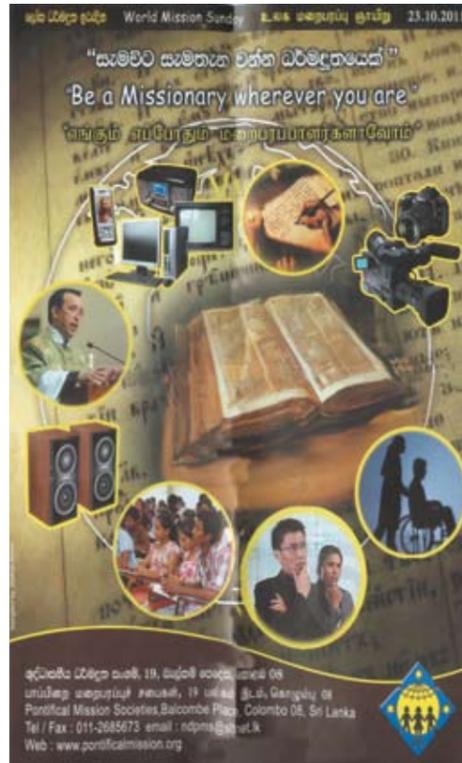
ments, they share in her saving mission. Young persons exert a very substantial influence on modern society. Their highlighted influence in society demands of them a proportionately active apostolate in the Church too. Children also have their own apostolate work to do. In their own way, they can be true living witnesses to Christ, among their companions." In this way we all have a role to play in the Missionary Apostolate of the Church. Wherever we may be and in whatever work we may be engaged in, if we fulfill the task assigned to us in the Church, the Church of Christ will naturally grow.

Late Rev. Fr. Philip Anthony, who was much interested in the Missionary Apostolate, wrote the lyrics of a song for the Holy Childhood Children. They still sing this song with great devotion and joy. The song is titled - "*Dhahamduthaek Vennata - Mata hari asa*", - (I like to become a Missionary) if we too have something to learn from this song, it is for us to learn and become true Missionaries.

As the song goes -
 "I like to become a Missionary !
 To recognize Jesus the Lord and follow in His footsteps
 To give all what I have and share them with others
 To speak about Jesus the Lord and spread His Message
 To learn more about His teachings and worship Lord Jesus
 To think about those who are in need and be of assistance to them
 To reconcile the enemies and build up peace once again,
 Yes, I like to be a Missionary !

On this World Mission Sunday this year, let us all decide to accept the invitation of the Master and become a true Missionary of the Lord.
 Be a Missionary wherever you are !

Rev. Fr. Reginald Saparamadu



The Pontifical Society of the Propagation of Faith



Founded in Lyons, France in 1822 by Miss Marie Pauline Jaricot, to awaken and promote Missionary awareness in all sectors of the People of God, among local Churches, in view of the evangelization of the world and to exchange spiritual, personnel and material resources.



St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552)

Patron Saint of all Catholic Missions

Birth: April 7, 1506; Xavier Castle, Navarre, Spain
Feast Day: December 3rd
Title in the Church: Apostle of the Far East
Known: As a giant in the history of missions, baptizing over 50,000 people of all different races and ages, from children to university students, from poor lepers to wealthy kings.
Relationship to a saint: converted by St. Ignatius of Loyola; he also became one of the first Jesuits.

Evangelized in: Asia, Africa, the East Indies, Portugal, Italy.
Patron Saint of: Foreign missions, missionaries, navigators, parish missions, Australia, China, India, Japan, and New Zealand.

Imitate the saint:

Allow God to use you. Preach the Gospel and serve humanity wherever he wants. Don't let your studies take priority over your spiritual life, and work tirelessly to build up the Kingdom of God on earth even when you are under difficult circumstances.

Did you know?

St Francis Xavier studied with St. Ignatius of Loyola at the University of Paris. St. Francis was living a worldly life and converted when St. Ignatius spoke these words to him from the Gospel: "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul" (Mark 8:26).

Mission Sunday Collection - 2010

Diocese	SPOF Collection 2010	
	Rs.	cts
ANURADHAPURA	67,000.00	
BADULLA	50,185.00	
CHILAW	545,670.50	
COLOMBO	2,113,825.50	
GALLE	46,080.00	
JAFFNA	242,125.00	
KANDY	337,225.00	
KURUNEGALA	228,717.00	
MANNAR	2,433,200.00	
RATNAPURA	80,322.00	
TRINCO/BATTICALOA	154,944.00	
TOTAL	6,299,294.00	

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The Life and Times of Thomas Cardinal Cooray OMI

Rev. Fr. Leopold Ratnasekera OMI

Cardinal Thomas Benjamin Cooray was the sixth Archbishop of Colombo; the first ever Sri Lankan to hold this office and Sri Lanka's first Cardinal. Born on 28th December 1901 and coming from a simple and devoted family in the parish of Periyamulla, Negombo, he began life as a junior seminarian at St. Aloysius' Seminary, Borella, where he pursued his secular studies up to the B.A. Degree excelling in all the examinations. He then joined the Oblate Novitiate and his superiors discerning his vocation and gifts, sent him for his priestly studies in the universities of Rome where he continued his academic career with equal brilliance and distinction and was awarded a Ph.D.

On his return to Sri Lanka as a new priest he was posted to the staff of St. Joseph's College and later appointed as the warden of the Catholic hostel for the university students. His next appointment was to be the Superior of the Oblate Scholasticate during which tenure of office he was called to be Archbishop of Colombo, first with being the Co-adjutor to Mgr. Jean-Marie Mason OMI, Colombo's fifth Archbishop and then taking over the See in 1947.

Cardinal Cooray shepherded the archdiocese for thirty long years and concurrently headed the Conference of the Sri Lankan Bishops. He took a very active part in the preparation of and in all the sessions of Vatican II Ecumenical Council (1962-1965) and was created cardinal by Pope Paul VI in 1965. He retired at the age of 75 in May 1977 and took residence at Tewatte, close to the Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka in the house named "Emmaus" until his death which occurred on October 29th 1988.

The Beatification Committee, on a decision taken at the last meeting held in September, plans to open a museum dedicated to the Servant of God in the Basilica grounds at Tewatte.

II. Socio-Cultural and Political Scenario of his time

a) Political

His ministry began at a time of significant political change in Sri Lanka with 1948 being the year of Independence from colonial rule of the British. The educated élite and those already wielding power and position in the pre-independent era in politics continued to rule until a revolutionary change took place with the SWRD Bandaranayake era of the so-called common man (1954). The sixties led to turbulent times with schools take-over, youth insurrection in April 1971 and with the period of 1971-1977 being looked upon by many critics as a period of economic decadence. From 1977 with new political changes came the free economy with the country open to a capitalistic type of economic system. It was the time of Free Trade and foreign investments with FTZs symbolizing the new economic phase. There were also far-reaching constitutional changes with a Presidential System being introduced.

b) Socio-Cultural

With political independence came in a spirit of nationalism which manifested itself in many ways. Local culture and languages experienced a resurgence. Sri Lankans felt a new atmosphere wherein they could cre-

ate and shape their own society and culture. It also brought in problems that unnecessarily disturbed the national unity and integrity of the country. This was the era of Sinhala-Only, connected as it was with extreme nationalistic tendencies leading to Sinhala-Buddhism. This becomes a little mitigated with the onslaught of a kind of secular mentality creeping in with the open economy. However, it was also an era when Sri Lanka began to experience vividly its multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious nature. Not everyone, however, was comfortable with this paradigm change in the socio-cultural scenario of the country.

c) Religious

The Catholic Church felt quite secure till such time as the time of independence. With political independence, many movements of religious extremism raised their head. Sri Lanka was thought to be the exclusive claim and land of the Sinhala-speaking Buddhists. This situation created an embarrassing situation for other religious minorities including the Catholic Church which was the majority community among the Christians. However, the paradoxical situation was that Christians and the Catholics came both from Sinhala and Tamil speaking population. Even the Archdiocese was composed of these two ethnic and language groups. Worship in some churches had to be bilingual and in some even in English.

The school-crisis of the mid-sixties brought a lot of anxiety to the Catholic Church. While keeping some of the best schools for private administration, the Church had to give many other schools over to the government. This entailed lot of financial constraints as well, which the Church was determined

to hold in check. Some say that with the schools going entirely to government control, the quality of education and especially the formation of youth declined considerably and eventually led to serious socio-cultural and political consequences as with what happened in 1971. Further, the Church had to undergo anxiety of even having Religious Sisters serving in hospitals being asked to leave.



III. Church's Response and Cardinal Cooray's contribution

The main preoccupation of Cardinal Cooray was to bring in a profound indigenisation of the Church. He worked towards creating an indigenous clergy and was determined not to allow the Catholic Church lose clout in socio-cultural spheres. In all these, more than directly engaging social evils, he took recourse through spiritual means to combat their impact.

He was very much a person of foresight and long-range vision. Perceiving the emergence over the horizon of certain new trends, he made sure of making the Church as a religious group ready for the challenges ahead. As early as the mid-fifties he sent a priest to USA to qualify in TV/Radio media and communication. He engineered the Catechetical Centre of Tammita, Negombo, traditional Catholic village to train future religion teachers in schools and parishes to counteract the void of

(Contd on Pg. 15)

Faith strengthened...

Contd. from Pg. 1

and offers fresh enthusiasm and, new incentive. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others! It is in commitment to the Church's universal mission that the new evangelization of Christian peoples will find inspiration and support." (John Paul II, Enc. *Redemptoris Missio*, 2).

Go and proclaim

This objective is constantly renewed by the celebration of the liturgy, particularly by the celebration of the Eucharist, which always ends by reiterating the risen Jesus' command to the Apostles: «Go ...» (Mt 28:19). The liturgy is always a call 'from the world' and a new sending 'into the world' to bear witness to what one has experienced: The salvific power of the Word of God, the salvific power of Christ's Paschal Mystery. All those who have met the Risen Lord have felt the need to proclaim him to others, as did the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. After recognising the Lord in the breaking of bread, they «set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled» and told them what had happened to them on the road (Lk 24:33-34). Pope John Paul II exhorted us to be «watchful, ready to recognize his face and run to our brothers and sisters with the good news: "We have seen the Lord!"» (Ap. Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 59).

To All

The beneficiaries of the Gospel proclamation are all peoples. The Church «is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father» (ECUM COUNCIL VATICAN II, Decr. *Ad Gentes*, 2). This is «the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize» (PAUL VI, Ap. Ex. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14). Consequently, she can never withdraw into herself. She is rooted in particular places in order to go beyond them. Her action, in obedience to Christ's command and under the influence of his grace and his love, becomes fully and truly present to all men and women and to all peoples in order to lead them to faith in Christ (cf. *Ad Gentes*, 5).

This task has not lost any of its urgency. Indeed, «the mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is

entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion An overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service» (John Paul II, Enc. *Redemptoris Missio*, 1). We cannot be content when we consider that, after two thousand years, there are still peoples who do not know Christ and have not yet heard his Message of salvation.

Not only this: but there is an ever greater number of people who, although having received the proclamation of the Gospel, have forgotten it or abandoned it and no longer associate with the Church; and many sectors, even in traditionally Christian societies are today reluctant to open to the word of faith. Cultures are changing, nourished also by globalisation, by movements of thought and by the prevailing relativism, a change that leads to a mentality and a life-style that disregard the gospel. Message, as if God did not exist, and that exalt the search for well-being, easy money, a career and success as the aim of life, even to the detriment of moral values.

The joint responsibility of all

The universal mission involves everyone, everything and always. The Gospel is not an exclusive possession of those who have received it, but it is a gift to be shared, good news to be passed on to others. And this gift-commitment is entrusted not only to some, but to all the baptised, who are «a chosen race ... a holy nation, God's own people» (1 Pt 2:9) in order that they may proclaim his marvellous works.

All activities are also involved in this. The Church's attention and cooperation in missionary activity in the world cannot be limited to some particular moments or occasions nor can they be considered as one of many pastoral activities: the Church's missionary dimension is essential; therefore it must always be kept in mind. It is important that both individual baptised persons and ecclesial communities should be involved not only spasmodically and occasionally in mission, but constantly, as a way of Christian life. Mission Day is not an isolated moment in the year, but a precious occasion for pausing to reflect on whether and how we respond to the missionary vocation: An essential response for the life of the Church.

Global evangelization

Evangelization is a complex process and

includes various elements. Among these, in missionary animation particular attention has always been given to solidarity. This is also one of the objectives of World Mission Day, which, through the Pontifical Mission Societies, appeals for help to carry out evangelizing activities in mission territories. It involves supporting institutions necessary for establishing and consolidating the Church through catechists, seminaries, priests; and also giving one's own contribution to improve the living conditions of people, in nations where poverty, malnutrition, above all infantile malnutrition, diseases, lack of health care services and education are most serious. This, too, is part of the Church's mission. Proclaiming the Gospel she takes human life to heart in the fullest sense. It is unacceptable, the Servant of God Paul VI declared, that in evangelization the themes of human promotion, justice, liberation from every form of oppression, obviously with respect for the autonomy of the political sphere, should be neglected. To ignore the temporal problems of humanity would be «to forget the lesson which comes to us from the Gospel concerning love of our "neighbour who is suffering and in need» (Ap. Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 31.34); it would be inconsistent with the behaviour of Jesus, who «went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness» (Mt 9:35).

Therefore through co-responsible participation in the Church's mission, the Christian becomes a builder of communion, of peace and of the solidarity that Christ has given us, and he or she collaborates in fulfilling God's plan of salvation for all humanity. The challenges it meets call Christians to journey together with others, and mission is an integral part of this journey with all. In it, albeit in clay pots, we bring our Christian vocation, the priceless treasure of the Gospel, the living witness to Jesus dead and risen, met and believed in the Church.

May World Mission Day reawaken in each person the joy and desire to go out to meet humanity taking Christ to all. In his name I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing, especially on those who toil and suffer most for the Gospel.

From the Vatican, 6 January 2011, the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

Pope Benedict P P XVI

A tribute of a friend to a friend

I was hoping that someone else will undertake the task of these few words but the task though pleasant, has nevertheless fallen on me.

My association with Father Claver spans almost his entire priestly ministry of forty four years, beginning with his appointment as Assistant Parish Priest at St Mary's Bambalapitiya under Father Joe De Mel when we were fumbling youth, and upto his physical going away while working with Father Felician at All Saints' Church, Borella.

Yes, Father Claver as Priest, Singer, Artiste and above all a good human being, left a lasting impression on all he met and definitely made an enduring impact on all of us.

Whilst being truly human and having the artistic peculiarities like all artistes his commitment to his Priestly calling and his focus and dedication to his calling taught all of us many lessons.

Though unwavering in his sense of right and wrong and upholding high standards of ethics and morals he could yet be patient and understanding.

He truly believed in following in the footsteps of Christ who would condemn the sin but not the sinner. He was willing to forgive and move on towards greater understanding and meaning. He believed that what was important was to keep genuinely striving with faith in the

Lord no matter what the trials and tribulations. He would often say "Have faith when one door closes, another would open". As his friend Jayantha Dhanapala recently wrote of Father Claver, he was no blind follower of the papacy or the church authority but yet could not be made a willing revolutionary. He believed in dignified dissent and charitable constructive criticism.

He was critical of how we Christians bore witness, to quote from his work "Seasoned Timber" - he said "Perhaps we live in times when even those who attend Mass regularly do so out of formal routine and the participation promoted by the Vatican Council made easier with the intelligible vernacular, is barely honoured. Perhaps also the roots of fundamentalism are to be found in a dull uninspiring liturgy with lay non-participation, giving rise to the craving for emotionally satisfying liturgies and more provocative homilies. The absence of a living example by those who "practise" the faith is largely responsible for the predicament facing the institutionalized churches. The renewal now seems to come from scripture-inspired prayer and a faith personalized in the life witness of individuals who have broken from institutionalized religious practice. A well-informed faith is clearly lacking in the colossal ignorance of

Jeff Alagaratnam

those who have remained "faithful" to the "faith of the fathers" with a lack of knowledge and disregard for the basic Christian virtues of humility and charity."

He quoted Mahatma Gandhi while saying "People don't just abandon Christ and his teaching for lack of interest in faith and religion. They get disillusioned with those who call themselves 'Christians'. When Mahatma Gandhi said "I love your Christ, but not your Christians" this is probably what he meant"

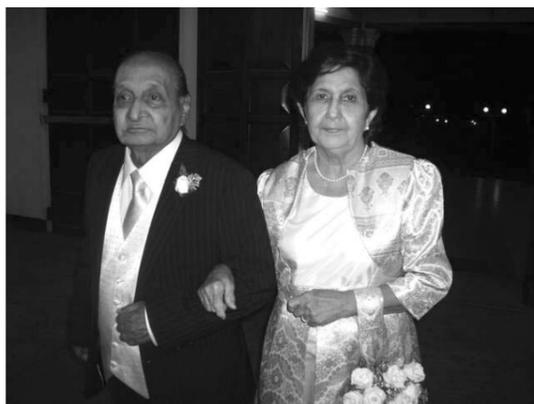
Even when he was tragically affected in his hearing, a certain tragedy for a singer of his calibre he bore his cross with patience concentrating on his writings and meditations by extensive reading and research.

So today we commemorate and give thanks for the life of Father Claver. We thank God for his life and for what he lived for and meant to all of us.

We thank his family and relatives for the source of joy and support they have been to him.

Father Claver will continue to be with us in the undying values he imparted and the impressions he left with us. May we carry it with us through generations to confirm that his was a life well lived and a life worthwhile.

Golden Years of selfless



Kingsley and Avril Noyahr, pillars of strength

There was great doubt that Kingsley and Avril Noyahr would reach their golden anniversary together. The strength of their marriage was never in doubt, but Kingsley was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2006, and doctors in Sri Lanka believed he was unfit for surgery. Backed by intense prayer, surgery proved successful in London.

Prayer has been second nature to the couple, who have gone through many a trial in their long journey that began on 16 September 1961 at St Lucia's Cathedral. On 16 September 2011, they celebrated their golden jubilee Mass at St Anne's Church, Wattala, before a host of relatives and friends who were there to thank God for this milestone. Fr. Nilindra Gunsekera SSS celebrated Mass and gave a moving homily. Kingsley strongly believed in the old adage that marriages are made in heaven, and as a teenager he prayed to his patron, Saint Anthony, for his future partner. The secret to their long wedded life was the two becoming one through the selfless One, Christ Jesus, who was so central to their lives that the storms were calmed, the waters submerged and the fires extinguished.

With the Lord and the Blessed Mother they traversed the highways and byways of life. The family rosary, described by some as the T 59, was their main weapon. (The rosary has 59 beads and a T-shaped cross).

They have been self-sacrificing parents, and faced many a difficulty. Bed-ridden for three months in 1980 with chronic osteomyelitis and a further six months in 1987 with an abscess, their son experienced their loving care. This caring and bearing attitude developed over the years as they tended a premature daughter, who also suffered serious burns from hot water during a family funeral, among other things. The other two daughters had their fair share of illnesses as did the couple. Avril bore the brunt of these events with a smile.

Through all the difficult times one quality stood out - devotion to duty as parents. As example is better than precept, this has left a lasting impression on their four children - Rossaine, Keith, Eileen, and Valerie, the seamstress, who planned out the ceremony from overseas. Rossaine and Eileen did their part of the organising at the ground level. Their grandchildren were in the forefront of the ceremony. Evan did the introduction, Evanka, the reading and Mihiri, the Prayer of the Faithful. At the ceremony and the reception that followed, their sons-in-law Ajith and Jerome contributed in a big way, with the latter giving the toast. Dillon, Keith, Roshini, Mario and Maresha were one in spirit, and upheld the event in prayer.

Avril and Kingsley have been very supportive of their children and grandchildren, and even in old age continue to be pillars of strength through support and prayer.

Keith Noyahr

Blessings for Golden Years in the Service of the Lord

Sr. Mary Paul of the Cross Weerasinghe



Sr. Mary Paul, nee Lucy Weerasinghe, is the eldest daughter of Mr. S. W. Weerasinghe and S. Marian Vimala of Mawathagama, originally practising Buddhists. Her maternal grandmother being an Anglican, she and her younger sisters were first sent to an Anglican school in the village. During this time she came to know of Jesus and had a great attraction towards Him.

Sister Mary Jeanne de Arc, nee Elizabeth Senerath



Sister Jeanne is the only daughter of late Senerath Mudalige Don Raphael Senerath and Mrs. Wijeyathunge Mudiyanse Lage Dona Mary Therese. She had her education at St. John Bosco College, Kaluaggala and St. Joseph's Convent, Hanwella and qualified at the GCE in the English Medium. She was well-trained in dancing. Having much prospects before her she decided to consecrate her life as a Religious.

Sr. Mary Lawrence nee Beatrice Karunaratne



Nee Agala Vidanage Dona Mary Louis Beatrice Karunaratna was born in 1941 in Kaluaggala. She is the only daughter of late Agala Vidanage Don Robert Karunaratna and Mrs. D.T. Mary Maggie Matilda. She had her education at R. C. Mixed School in Kaluaggala and qualified in the S.S.C. Much against the wishes of her parents she entered the Novitiate in 1959.

Sister Mary Ignatius of Loyola nee Winnie Ponnawila



Sister Loyola was born in 1939 at Nalawalana, Dankotuwa. She is the daughter of late Ponnawila Vidanelage Peduru Appuhamy and Mrs. Disanayake Mudiyanse Lage Celestinahamy. She had her Primary Education at the Roman Catholic School, Nalawalana and Secondary Education at R. C. Girls' School, Kuli-yapitiya. Having completed her education there, she entered the Holy Angels' Novitiate in 1960.

Sister Mary Damian, nee Beatrice Cooray Wijewarnasuriya



Sister Damian was born in 1940 at Beruwela. She is the daughter of late Paul Albert Cooray Wijewarnasuriya and Mrs. Maria Fernando. She is a pupil of St. Agnes' Convent School, Balangoda where she had her entire education.

Sister Damian entered the Novitiate in 1960 and made her First Vows in 1962 and Final Vows in 1977.

Sister Mary Ambrose Edirisinghe



Sister Ambrose is the daughter of late Don Ambrose Edirisinghe and Dona Justina Rupasinghe. She was born in Kadugoda, Gurubawila on 14th January 1940. She was educated at Mawalgama Roman Catholic Mixed School. She entered the Holy Angels' Novitiate in 1960. She made her 1st Profession on 8th September 1962 and Final Profession in 1967.

Sister Mary Joseph nee Francisca Ferdinando



Sister Mary Joseph Ferdinando was born on 11th May 1942 at Moratuwa. Her father was late Kurukulasuriya Juan Ferdinando and her mother was late Mrs. Meraya Fernando. She studied at the Roman Catholic Balika Vidyalaya in Kadallana. She entered the Congregation in 1960 and made her First Vows in 1963 and Final Vows in 1968.

Sister Mary Joseph Ferdinando was born on 11th May 1942 at Moratuwa. Her father was late Kurukulasuriya Juan Ferdinando and her mother was late Mrs. Meraya Fernando. She studied at the Roman Catholic Balika Vidyalaya in Kadallana. She entered the Congregation in 1960 and made her First Vows in 1963 and Final Vows in 1968.

“Reflecting on Some Basic Aspects of the 10-Year National Plan for a Trilingual Sri Lanka (2012-2022)”

English has been present in Sri Lanka for over 200 years. But by 1956, it was estimated that only about 8% of the people were able to read or speak English. Though the British had controlled the coastal areas for 152 years and the whole country for 133 years, it is to their shame that they had failed to deliver English language skills to 92% of the population, and that too in a small country like ours. Displaying a total contempt for social justice, fair-play and social equity, despite the high moral ground often deceitfully occupied by them in public discourse, they had shamelessly introduced English, an alien language, as the language of administration to Sri Lanka, a country that is home to the two languages with the oldest literary tradition in South Asia, namely Tamil and Sinhala, thus shutting access to government sector employment, the expanding professions and technical services, and thereby to upward social and economic mobility to 92 per cent of our people.

A small westernized, urbanized, anglicized elite with English as their weapon - a mere 8% of the people - uprooted from the social and cultural mainstream of Sinhala and Tamil speaking Sri Lankan society - a community of culturally displaced internal refugees controlled the avenues of upward mobility and monopolized the administrative, professional and technical services of the country.

What surprised most people in the mid nineteen fifties was that this state of social inequity had been allowed to continue for as much as 8 years after independence in 1948. It only required the institutional support of a culturally rooted social reformist party like the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and a band of charismatic leaders rooted in the soil of the country to give leadership to the Sinhala and Tamil educated rural middle classes in a mass movement to replace English with Sinhala, and later with Sinhala and Tamil, as the languages of administration in the country. These were the political processes that resulted in the replacement of English by Sinhala in 1956 - 55 years ago and thereafter through the Tamil Language Special Provisions Act of 1958 by Sinhala and Tamil.

* Dethronement of English

The dethronement of English as the language of administration in the country and the concomitant shift to Sinhala and later to Sinhala and Tamil prevented a situation that would certainly have escalated into a violent upheaval led by the expanding Sinhala and Tamil educated rural middle classes against the 8% English speakers who controlled the destinies of the people. The language reforms of 1956 and thereafter are an important landmark in the recent history of the country that prevented the explosion of a carefully designed time bomb fabricated around language policy which the British had left behind to shatter the peace and social cohesion of the newly independent nation following their departure.

While this potential threat to social cohesion was annulled by the lan-



guage reforms of 1956, on account of the lack of purpose and commitment with which succeeding governments implemented the statutory provisions for the use of Tamil, first for its reasonable use since 1958 and then from 24 years ago for its use as an official language together with Sinhala, the country saw the widening of the fault lines separating the Sinhala and Tamil people to the point at which it took a violent turn in the last 30 years: a differentiation that need not have proved to be anything as sharp as what it later came to be.

* Distancing Segments

Gradually from 1956 the social and political distancing of the Sinhala and Tamil speaking segments of non English speaking Sri Lankan society became increasingly sharper and more aggressive. This has not been due to any serious shortcoming or deficiency in the country's constitutional or legal framework in relation to language. Rather it has been due entirely to the lack of passion and determination with which the legal and constitutional provisions relating to language have been translated into practical programmes, projects and activities.

For instance it is seen that although it has been the official government policy to evolve a bilingual public service in the shortest possible time, statistics go to show that at the present rate of training of the public service to function in both languages which is 1.5% of the public service trained per year, it will take over 100 years to evolve a bilingual public service in the country. It is also seen that although the country has for a long time been boasting of a programme of teaching the second national language (Sinhala to Tamil and Tamil to Sinhala) to all children in schools, it is estimated that the bilingual teaching programme has only around 4000 inadequately trained teachers whereas the school system would need at least 23,000 well trained teachers to achieve this task with any degree of success.

Thus from 1956 onwards, the lethargy and lack of purpose with which the legal framework of language planning in relation to the use of Tamil in Sinhala majority areas and Sinhala in Tamil majority parts of the country was transformed into action plans has seriously and increasingly affected the social integration of the Sinhala and Tamil speaking people.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding the changes in language law in 1956, English continued to be taught in our schools with the same intensity as before - 5 hours a week for 10 consecutive years to all children in the public school system. Indeed there were, as in the past, diverse levels of competence within the English teacher community. But the point made is that the importance given by the system to the teaching of English was not in any way deterred.

But as there was now no need to qualify in English for employment in the country's speedily expanding government service, the professions and the technical services, and upward social and economic mobility was now very much possible for those qualified in Sinhala or Tamil, there was no great urge to learn English on the part of the ever more socially mobile population of the country. Jobs were available in plenty for those qualified in Sinhala and Tamil.

It can be stated with both pride and confidence that over 95% of all persons occupying the highest positions in the public service, the professions, the corporate sector and the technical services - the cleverest and most accomplished in the land today - are persons who received their education in Sinhala or Tamil and came from rural and small town homes where English was not spoken. All the great achievements of our country in almost every conceivable field in at least the last 3 decades have been accomplished by those who benefited from the dethronement of English in 1956.

"Socio-politically speaking therefore, English can grow and prosper in Sri Lanka only on the lap of Sinhala and Tamil in a strictly trilingual milieu, and never ever on its own. If English is to be socio-biologically sustainable, it must in actual fact be packaged together with Sinhala and Tamil."

* Important Changes

The country moved on in this fashion until the turn of the century when two important changes appeared on the social- linguistic landscape. As the country prepared to move into the second decade of the new millennium, President Rajapaksa sensed these changes, reflected on them, understood them and made them the foundation of a new language plan for the country. The Ten-Year National Plan for a Trilingual Sri Lanka (2012-2022), the first policy document on language planning to come from a Sri Lankan Head of State since independence is expected to be presented to Cabinet by the end of this month.

Let us first see how President Rajapaksa's policy evolved in relation to English. It was clear that by the end of the last millennium government sector employment which called exclusively for Sinhala and Tamil language skills had become rapidly saturated while corporate sector employment opportunities requiring English language skills continued to increase speedily. English was now becoming an important qualifier for employment and upward mobility.

* Qualifier for Employment

English skills are today in great demand in Sri Lankan society and almost all people want to know English. This is because of its increasing requirement as a qualifier for employment. Its growing relevance for accessing knowledge and information from an increasingly globalized outside world also cannot be denied. Employment opportunities in the public sector which is administered in Sinhala and Tamil have failed to meet the demands of the country's aspiring youth. Hence private sector jobs which are much sought after these days require proficiency in the English language as a qualification at most levels.

It is recognized therefore that the vast majority of Sri Lankans seek English for employment. But it is also true that the successful dissemination of English skills in scale to students throughout the country cannot be reached in the near future with the dearth of human, financial and technological resources currently available to the country. While trying to achieve the objective of disseminating English language skills to all students in the country as a national priority, the harsh reality, namely that the severe constraints in human and material resources will not allow equal access

(Contd on Pg. 14)

“Reflecting on.....”

(Contd from Pg. 13)

to English in the foreseeable future also needs to be recognized. The acute dearth of competent English teachers with a bag of innovative teaching tools on the one side and a deep familiarity with the social, cultural and emotional context of our rural and small town children on the other, and willing to teach in the villages, is one gaping resource constraint.

The absence of an enabling school environment in most rural areas for children to practice the English they learn in the classroom is yet another. In such a setting, unless the State were to keep a watchful eye on the deployment of teaching and other resources to ensure social equity, it is inevitable that the bigger urban schools will somehow grab the limited resources at the cost of the more distant rural schools in the country, the political implications of which can be disturbing.

* Political Sensitivity

This creates a situation that needs to be handled with much political sensitivity. The people of Sri Lanka fought for several decades at great sacrifice to finally in 1956 dethrone English as our country's language of administration. English had shut the doors of the administrative services, the professions and the technical services to 92% of our people. English had hitherto blocked the path of social mobility to Sinhala and Tamil educated people of our small towns and villages. It is both immature and foolish to believe that the patriotic masses of our country will allow the remnants of the old westernized, urbanized, anti-national English speaking elites - with or without the collaboration of their foreign intellectual and cultural peers - to bring English back in a manner in which the social, cultural, political and economic interests of the nationally rooted Sinhala and Tamil speaking people are jeopardized.

People need to be empowered with the competencies to read, write and above all to speak in English. This is essential both for their upward mobility as well as for the forward march of our country. Achieving this goal in scale in a short period of time will be just impossible in an environment that just cannot bear the huge cost of such a venture. Skillful management of time frame and an almost passionate commitment to the principle of social equity are of the highest importance to avert social discord and dissonance.

Forcing the pace of the exercise including the pace of extending English medium education in our schools will only inject new life into the remnants of the old English speaking elites. Furthermore it will encourage the creation of new English speaking elites and progressively distance them from the cultural and emotional mainstream of Sri Lankan life.

The seeds for yet another social upheaval could be sown, even if unintentionally, by mismanaging the delicate balance of social equity in the country. There cannot be recourse to a one dimensional focus to swiftly multiply English competence in the country without sensitivity to its social consequences. The process has therefore to be managed with social and political sensitivity.

Next let us see how President Rajapaksa's policy evolved in relation to Sinhala and Tamil. While the last phase

of the war against terrorism was being fought in the first decade of this century, President Rajapaksa had politically sensed a deep desire on the part of both the Sinhala and Tamil speaking people to learn each other's language, communicate effectively across the lines of ethnicity, language and location, know each other, understand each other and integrate with one another. This is not surprising in a country where the different communities though distinct in terms of language, religion and ethnicity share much in the way of lifestyle, values a customs and rituals.

Sensing the mind of the people of all communities, President Rajapaksa while declaring 2009 the Year of English and IT courageously declared that his vision for Sri Lanka was that of a trilingual society in which the Sinhala and Tamil speaking people will relate to one another in each other's language while English will be a life skill for occupation, employment and to access knowledge from the outside world.

By implication we see the country moving away from the older perception of English as a language that links the Sinhala and Tamil speaking people of the country: English as a link language. As it is estimated that even today in 2011 only about 10% of our people are able to work in English, we should not be surprised to find the country losing confidence in the ability of English to function as a link language between our two linguistic communities. President Rajapaksa is therefore moving the country towards an arrangement in which the two linguistic communities link to each other bilingually, by learning each other's language.

* Survey

The Socio-linguistic Survey of Sri Lanka which was conducted by an independent research organization for the Presidential Secretariat in August 2010 proved the correctness of the President's perception. According to this survey conducted across the country, between 80% and 96% of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim people living in both majority Sinhala and majority Tamil speaking areas expressed a strong desire both for themselves and their children to be conversant in both national languages.

The reasons given by them were not of a material or utilitarian order but of an integrative nature - to be able to communicate, understand, appreciate and integrate with each other. The vast majority of respondents from a diversity of age and occupational groups even went to the extent of expressing a desire to live in mixed communities and send their children to bilingual rather than monolingual schools.

The results of the Socio-linguistic Survey of 2010 speak for themselves. They confirm the perception that in most South Asian cultures the desire to learn languages is not provoked by factors that are purely utilitarian in nature. In our case, according to the Sociolinguistic Survey, the reasons are integrative in nature - propelled by a desire to explore and integrate with another culture that one wants to know and understand.

While this is the ground reality in our country, it is sad to find urban intellectuals applying western intellectual categories to what is essentially a Sri Lankan situation and asking a culturally

alien question, namely - what material benefit is there for a Sri Lankan to waste his or her time learning the second national language.

The Socio-linguistic Survey of August 2010 also makes it abundantly clear that the Sinhala and Tamil speaking people of the country in their vast majority clearly desire the development of the national languages, Sinhala and Tamil, as the languages of discourse, discussion and communication in the country. It is not their wish that English should grow at the cost of Sinhala and Tamil or that English should be developed in a manner in which it becomes the instrument of an English-speaking elite that alienates itself progressively from the mainstream of Sinhala and Tamil life to identify itself - as in the past - with the cultural, economic and political interests of foreign countries.

* Trilingual Sri Lanka

The vision of President Rajapaksa for a trilingual Sri Lanka and the perceptions of the people on the manner in which Sinhala, Tamil and English should relate to each other in a trilingual milieu, form the building blocks on which the 10 Year National Plan for a Trilingual Sri Lanka (2012 - 2021) has been constructed. It is proposed in the Plan that the 10 Year Trilingual Project should be placed directly under the President: And that it should be steered at a national level through two new overarching institutions, the Language Agency of Sri Lanka (LASL) and the National Agency for Language Research and Training (NALRT) that should function under the Presidential Secretariat and be implemented through the relevant institutions that come under the line ministries.

However since Sri Lanka still has its share of elitist language planners who, while being insensitive to the aspirations of the people continue to lobby for a revival of English as a differentiator for the elites, it is necessary to state with clarity that it is our view that in the socio-political context of our country English skills can never grow and be disseminated successfully as a stand-alone activity. English can develop only in association with a parallel development, enrichment and dissemination of Sinhala and Tamil language skills.

Sinhala and Tamil cannot in any way be the victim of an English language drive as that will be socio-political unseasonable and disruptive. Sinhala and Tamil should be - as our mother tongue languages - and will most certainly continue to be the languages of discourse, discussion, debate and intellectual interaction in the country.

Thus if we are to move towards a knowledge society as required by government policy, knowledge has to be liberated from the clutches of language. In a country where only around 10% of the people can work in English and resource constraints and other factors will not permit too swift a drive towards island wide English proficiency, we cannot allow knowledge that is imprisoned within the English language to remain inaccessible to 90% of the people even in the short run.

Therefore as listed in the 10 Year National Plan for a Trilingual Sri Lanka, sharply focused Sinhala and Tamil

language development programmes and large scale translation programmes will enable knowledge in all modern subjects of science and technology, economics, management, governance systems and a host of other subjects to be available in Sinhala and Tamil in addition to English.

In any case Sinhala and Tamil would be the languages in which the vast majority will continue to function for very many decades to come. It is the responsibility of the State to make knowledge available to them in the language used by them. If they feel their interests are threatened by a politically insensitive and forceful drive for English dissemination to the neglect of the development of Sinhala and Tamil as has happened on past occasions they will very rightly at politically and make the English drive a failure, even to the detriment of some of their own interests.

* English, Sinhala, Tamil

Socio-politically speaking therefore, English can grow and prosper in Sri Lanka only on the lap of Sinhala and Tamil in a strictly trilingual milieu, and never ever on its own. If English is to be socio-biologically sustainable, it must in actual fact be packaged together with Sinhala and Tamil. In other words Sinhala and Tamil have to be developed, enriched and delivered as the country's primary languages of discourse and interaction. This is a fundamental of the 10-Year National Plan. English on the other hand should be advocated at a different level. English must be promoted as a culturally neutral life skill for occupation, employment and for accessing knowledge from the outside world.

Such a packaging of English in cohort with or as an associate language to Sinhala and Tamil is in a sense what is being designed in the Ten Year National Plan for a Trilingual Sri Lanka which His Excellency is expected to launch later this year. The Trilingual Initiative has been thus drafted with sensitivity to the socio-political dimensions of language use, practice and identity in Sri Lanka. Sociologically speaking the dissemination of English, in the context of the Ten-Year National Plan for a Trilingual Sri Lanka is packaged in conjunction with a parallel development and enrichment of Sinhala and Tamil as the country's undisputed languages of discourse and interaction.

Only an approach such as this will give English a stable and lasting though not dominant place in the language landscape of our country.

*The above is the
Keynote Address given
by
Sunimal Fernando
at the 9th International
Language and Development
Conference on
“Language and Social
Cohesion”
on 18th October 2011
at Hotel Galadari, Colombo.*

What it says in
the Readings

**Open our heart, O Lord, to accept
the words of your Son.**
(Acts 16:14)

LITURGICAL - CALENDAR YEAR A
23rd Oct. - 30th Oct. 2011

Sun: 30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Ex. 22, 20-26, 1 Thess. 1, 5c-10,
Mt. 22, 34-40
Mon: St. Anthony Claret, Bishop
Rome. 8, 12-17, Lk. 13, 10-17
Tue: Rom. 8, 18-25, Lk. 13, 18-21
Wed: Rom. 8, 26-30, Lk. 13, 22-30
Thu: Rom. 8, 31b-39, Lk. 13, 31-35
Fri: Feast of SS. Simon and Jude, Apostles
Eph. 2, 19-22, Lk. 6, 12-19
Sat: Rom. 11, 1-2a, 11-12, 25-29,
Lk. 14, 1, 7-11
Sun: 31ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Mal 1, 14b-2, 2b.8-10,
1 Thess. 2, 7b-9,13, Mt. 23, 1-12

Prayer of the Faithful

Response: Lord, hear us in your love.

For all Christians: That they may never separate the two commandments of love.
With hope we pray.

Response: Lord, hear us in your love.

For the world in which we live: That love and peace may prevail over hate and violence.
With hope we pray.

Response: Lord, hear us in your love.

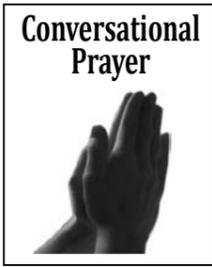
That we may never forget the words of Christ, "Everybody will know that you are disciples of mine if you love one another." With hope we pray.

Response: Lord, hear us in your love.

The sick, the destitute, the abandoned, and the neglected. We bring them all to you to grant them relief. With hope we pray.

Response: Lord, hear us in your love.

**Thanksgiving after
Holy Communion**



The best time to do conversational prayer is after Holy Communion. Try to spend a half-hour after Mass talking to Jesus. It will transform your spiritual life! Here are some examples.

'Jesus, I have you. Thank you! It's so wonderful, to receive you. You're in my heart. When I receive you I feel so recollected. So calm. It's nothing I can do

myself. It reminds me of what the English poet, Edith Sitwell's secretary said of her. "That the calmness she had after Holy Communion was not integral to her." That's true for me. The recollection, the calmness, the pulling inward they are not of me, nor of prayer. They are from you. From you within me. Thank you for the sunshine coming into the chapel. Please, Jesus, bless Mrs. Paulin; she is sick today. Please help Brian's wife, Alice, and the baby she carries. Alice is in the hospital, quite sick, Mrs. Paulin called for prayers. Please heal her and watch over the baby. I haven't seen Brian in two years.' (The baby was born in perfect health).

'Jesus, I'm really excited. This morning I spoke with Brother Ambrose, one of the Benedictines. We had a marvellous conversation about Ray who is a friend of our friend, Mark Sebanc and his family. Ray visited their home in Canada way out in the country. They home-school their five children. Brother is very interested in the Amish. Brother told me about Erik Brende and his wife who live simply on a farm next to an Amish community in Kentucky, I told Brother about visiting the Catholic Worker in New York and how impressed I was with them! We talked about farming communities and the group at New Hope, Kentucky. It

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Mission Sunday - 2011

First Reading
Ex. 22:20-26

God very clearly shows his concern towards the widow, the orphan, the poor and the helpless. He vows to destroy those that commit injustice upon them.

Second Reading
1 Thes. 1:5 -10

St. Paul praises the Thessalonian converts for their life witnessing. They are an example and an encouragement to the new communities in Greece.

Gospel
Mt. 22:34 - 40

At their request Jesus explains to the Pharisees about the greatest commandment. The first and the greatest is the love of God and the second is like it, the love of neighbour.

Reflection

As we have it today, at the time of Jesus and for that matter even before that there were many laws that the Jews had to follow. There were many laws of the Levitical priests, laws of Moses i.e. the Ten Commandments...etc. Each insisted that theirs was the most important. Therefore, the Jews had this problem of finding out the greatest of them all.

One of the Pharisees, a lawyer, put this question before Jesus: "Teacher which is the greatest commandment in the law?"

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind." He did not stop at that but said, "the second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself." This itself shows the state of the Law and the Christian life.

The Pharisees were requesting the greatest commandment in the law. Jesus was supposed to state only one commandment but he instead of one gave them two commandments. Similarly, a person who loves God would not stop at that, but would love his neighbour. There could be men who love their neighbour but do not love God for different reasons. But there cannot be men who love God and do not love their neighbour. It does not mean that love of the neighbour is more important than love of God. What it tells us is that from a person who loves God essentially flows love towards all God's creation. Therefore he loves man who is his neighbour, who is the greatest of all God's creation.

Though God is present in all creation He is not with us as a person. Hence we express all the love having Him in the form of an image, but He is a living God. Whether we do it in prayer, worship or in the life of holiness we have him in our mind as an image. If we are to show this love to Him in concrete action in our day to day life the closest personification of God is man. For man is created to the likeness and image of God. Therefore whoever loves God ought to love his neighbour too.

Apart from all these we are bound to love our neighbour because God Himself loves man. Also as Christians, His chosen people we have to bear witness to his love.

In today's Second Reading St. Paul praises the Thessalonians for their live faith; for they have become

living examples of God's Truth and Love. This is the greatest charitable act that one could do to one's neighbour. That is, you become an example of God's Love and Truth and your neighbour could come to the light of God following your footsteps. This is not just a phrase or a bundle of empty words but a demand. As in the First Reading it is only a matter of God's compassion towards the widow, the orphan, the poor and the helpless for their cry for love and justice will not be unheeded. When it comes to judgment there is no question of compassion. you cannot be genuine in your love towards God if you have failed to love your neighbour. Therefore, let us love God and also let us not forget that we ought to love our neighbour too.

Aid Story

Tradition has given us a touching story concerning the site of the Temple of Solomon. Before the beautiful building was begun, the ground was occupied by two brothers, who had sown it with wheat. At harvest they gathered their portion in separate stocks. On the evening when the harvest was finished the elder brother said to his wife; "My younger brother cannot bear the heat and the burden of the day. I will take some of mine and place them with his; without his knowing it." That same evening the younger brother, who was unmarried said to himself: "My elder brother has a family, and I have none. I will take some of my stock and place them with his."

Next morning both noticed their piles

of wheat were undiminished. For several nights through the darkness they carried the wheat to each other's piles, but always in the morning each pile seemed to be the same size. Unknown to each other they decided to solve the mystery that very night. They would watch closely. In the middle of the night they were caught with wheat, carrying it to the other's pile. The mystery was solved. It is fraternal generosity and brotherhood. Brotherhood is meaningless unless I go out of myself to do something for my brother.

Aid story 2

Once a missionary in Africa received a message from his friend saying that he would visit him. On the day of his arrival the missionary picked him from the Airport. When they arrived at the village the friend thought the villagers would give him a big welcome. But none of them came out even to give them a helping hand in order to carry his heavy load of luggage. He and the priest had to carry them all by themselves.

So the friend inquired from the priest "I thought you told me that you have converted these people and that they are good Catholics now. But how come none of them came even to give us a helping hand." The priest said to his friend "If you had come here before I came here, you wouldn't have even entered this village as you did today. They would have eaten you alive; for they were cannibals, but now they have given it up for Christ."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

was a wonderful conversation-and so is this one!
Jesus, here I am. We're together. Thank you, for this Holy Communion! Thank you for being with me. You are so nice, so kind and so special. No wonder I love you!

Well, let's see. This morning I was thinking about the Enid Dinis book. I'd like to collect some of her stories and perhaps get them published. I especially would like, though it's a long novel, to get the *Shepherd of Weeping Wold* reprinted. Guide me; help

me make all the right decisions about this.
By the 'way, I haven't heard from the editor in England about the sample I sent for the column there. Nor have I heard about the suggestion for another column for the Catholic Twin Circle. Jesus, I think I need a secretary!

I feel a little tired. Help me, dear Love, to organize my life better, especially the writing. I offer receiving you this morning for the intention of being more organised!
(Catholic Truth Society)

The Life and.....

Contd. from Pg. 9
Christian instruction created by the take-over of the schools. He opened the Joe-Neth Studio in Borella to launch out in the communication sector. The more visible step was the creation of a Centre for the Social Apostolate of Animation and charitable assistance of SEDEC which today has grown to a powerful social analyst, animator and an institution that meets the needs of the victims of natural disasters. Today SEDEC houses the National Caritas, the coordinating body of the social arm of the Episcopal Conference in the field of Justice,

Peace and Human Development. The immense rehabilitation work accomplished by SEDEC during the years of war and now during the post-war period is well on record. The gigantic edifice of Paul VI Centre in the heart of Colombo to house all lay-apostolates shows how much he was concerned in having a well-informed and formed laity to carry on the mission of the Church in a world increasingly becoming secular. The need to form a Church of the Laity had dawned on him in good time.
At the end of his ministry in May 1977, he has left a flourishing archdiocese, with many

parishes newly opened, churches built, the votive Basilica in Tewatte completed, an indigenous clergy well established, priests well trained in the area of education and social apostolate, a National Seminary in Ampitiya revamped and reformed, an oasis of spirituality like the Retreat House well in place. The towering National Basilica of Tewatte will stand as an immortal and imposing monument to the memory of this illustrious and holy Prelate whose cause of Canonization has now been opened as an archdiocesan endeavour. We hope and pray that soon he be numbered among the saints of God.