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Messenger

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**Holy
Childhood Sunday**
January 27th

STUDY TOUR OF THE NORTH BY CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF SRI LANKA

The Catholic Bishops' Conference led by its President, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, made a visit to Mannar, Killinochchi and Mullaithivu districts to appraise for themselves the present situation of the resettlement and rehabilitation of those displaced by the war. It was a four day visit organized by Caritas Sri Lanka with the collaboration of the Diocesan Caritas Centres of Vanni and Mannar.

The visit included areas such as Mullikulam, Killinochchi, Thirunagar, Mullaithivu, Puthukudiruppu and Kerpapalavu. In each of these places the Bishops were able to meet with affected families and interact with them to assess the ground situation. The Internally Displaced People (IDPs) shared their anxieties, sorrows as well as hopes and aspirations regarding their return to normal life. Many families who have lost their dead or

missing loved ones, either parents or children, are still grieving inconsolably. They expressed the hope that they be told if their loved ones are still alive or dead. If they are dead, they wish to mourn for them and get on with their lives. If they are alive they are anxious to know their whereabouts and make contact with them.

In some areas the affected people are being resettled on lands (40 perches per family) and assistance is being provided to build their houses and also basic amenities such as wells and sanitation facilities. As regards livelihood, the people are still being issued with dry rations and some of them go in search of daily labour or work as fishermen. Many of them are farmers and therefore, they wish to have lands allocated to them, preferably in their original habitats, so that they may begin cultivating these lands and earning their livelihood which would help

them to live with dignity.

Educational facilities are minimal as children are still provided with makeshift huts and sheds. The whole atmosphere of devastated buildings and bullet-ridden walls certainly do not provide a conducive atmosphere for children, in particular, to put behind the trauma of the terrible war and get on with their studies.

Some areas are still snake-infested and pose a real threat to the IDP's lives as many areas do not yet have electricity.

Despite so many handicaps and shortcomings there seems to be hope for the future as normalcy is being restored even though at a very slow pace. Mega scale infrastructure restoration is being done and is commendable yet, we feel that the day to day needs of the people too need to receive equal or priority attention. **(CONTD ON PG. 3)**

"SOME WHO PRACTICE THE RELIGION, DO NOT LIVE IT"

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith at Jubilee Celebrations - Mawelgama

"There is a discrepancy between practicing one's faith and living it. This is the challenge that

confronts the faithful and affects our nation. To overcome this situation, those who embrace the religion should live it fully

and totally. Adversities in society could be counteracted, only if one bears testimony to the faith in an adventurous

manner, as St. Sebastian did. It is only then, one could be exemplary in facing and serving society and could make it a habitable place and better place to live in". This was said by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo in his homily, presiding at the 150 Jubilee Celebrations of St. Sebastians Church - Mawelgama, in the parish of Waga, on January 20, 2013.

"Let us be led by the strength of our faith and the truth of our teachings, so that we may reject evil and welcome

(CONTD ON PG. 2)

Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya OMI Called to rest



Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya

Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya OMI was called to rest, on January 17, 2013 at the age of 89. The burial took place at Kanatte-Borella, on the 19th, amidst a large gathering of priests, religious and laity.

(CONTD ON PG. 2)

REV. FR. TISSA BALASURIYA OMI STOOD FOR JUSTICE

Bishop Norbert Andradi at his last farewell

"Let us not bury Fr Balasuriya lock, stock and barrel but only bury what remains of his physical being - the flesh, the bones and the blood. Let us keep with us his ideals and his vision of a just society where human dignity is respected, where human rights are protected, where people enjoy the freedoms they are entitled to and where the poor have their rightful place in the scheme of things. Let us also resolve to take forward the mission to which Fr Balasuriya dedicated his whole life. For, that is the best tribute we can pay to him and his memory".

So said the Bishop of Anuradhapura, Most Rev Dr Norbert Andradi OMI in his homily delivered at the funeral service of the late Fr Tissa Balasuriya OMI held at Fatima Church, Maradana last Saturday. Rev Fr Rohan Silva OMI, Oblate Provincial officiated at the service.

(CONTD ON PG. 2)

Special Lecture

Opening a "door of faith" to the Non Christians (gentiles) Acts 14:27
by: Rev. Father Camillus Fernando (Rector)
Holy Cross College, Kalutara
At 4. pm on Tuesday, January 29, 2013

Bro. Emmanuel, FSC
Director of ISFA

ARCHDIOCESAN COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE PEACE, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

The meeting of the Archdiocesan Commission for Justice Peace, Human Development & Integrity of Creation, presided over by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, is scheduled on January 28 (Monday) 2013, at 4:00pm at the Jubilee Hall, at Archbishops House, Colombo -08.

All members are kindly requested to attend the first meeting of the year 2013.

Rev. Fr. Rohan de Alwis
Director.

ANCHOR YOUR FAITH - DURING THE 'YEAR OF FAITH'

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith in a circular on the 'Year of Faith' as declared by the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI, has stated that 'faith leads us to the discovery of the fullness of the mystery of God revealed to us in the saving love of His Son, Jesus Christ' and has urged the Archdiocese of Colombo to engage in various activities to commemorate this year in a meaningful manner. His Eminence also invited the Diocese to enter into a 'special journey' of a fresh discovery of the beauty of faith.

In order to commemorate the 'Year of Faith', St. Philip Neri's Church, has organized a special half-day of studies, prayer and reflection each month, with a view to deepening our understanding of faith in the light of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Second Vatican Council Documents.

The first of these days of Recollection was already held before Christmas. The day chosen for this commemoration each month is a public holiday, namely Poya, which will enable an even more intense and greater participation. To this end, the next study program is January 26th at 8.45 a.m.

Rev. Bro. Anton Rohitha, SSS

The crib at Katuwapitiya is hailed with admiration



The crib at St. Sebastian's Church, Katuwapitiya was a creation of Nihal Jeewantha. It was done with the encouragement and guidance of Rev. Fr. Srikantha, the Parish Priest.

Agnes Siyabalapitiya

Awards, attributed to God

Mr. Frank Waranaku-la from the parish of Kalamulla, was awarded the 'Employee of the Year' for 2012 recently. Furthermore he excelled in receiving the 'Excellence Award for Leadership' too. He is a past student of Holy Cross College, Kalutara and works as a software engineer at a leading IT Firm 99XTechnology. Many a time he has travelled overseas, for the purpose of the company.



He is a practicing Catholic who attributes all his success not to his talents, but to his Creator, God Almighty.

A donation from a parishioner



The death donation and welfare society of St. Joseph's Church, Kaluwarripuwa, Katana, received a donation of a set of plastic chairs, to facilitate their services towards their beneficiaries. This presentation was done in memory of late Mrs. Irene Kuruwita by her family members and was held at the mission house, to the president of the association, Mr. Henry Perera, in the presence of Rev. Fr. Neville Bernard, Rector, Pope Paul VI College, and the parish councillors.

Bishop Andradi...last farewell

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Speaking further, His Lordship said that Fr Balasuriya stood for the poor, downtrodden, marginalized and voiceless sections of society and played a prophetic role by always voicing against all forms of injustice. In so doing, he had to face many challenges on the way but remained fully convinced that working towards a just society was a Gospel imperative, truly believing in a living theology in action. He founded the Centre for Society and Religion and initiated several people's movements. While working ceaselessly and tirelessly for equality and social justice, Fr Balasuriya also promoted inter-religious dialogue. During the years of the long drawn ethnic conflict and war, he strived for peace and for a negotiated solution to the national question.

Rev Fr Ashok Stephen OMI, Director of CSR presented a detailed narrative of the life and work of Fr Balasuriya at this funeral service, prior to which a meeting was held at the CSR where many tributes were paid to this visionary priest amidst a large gathering which included many religious leaders. Among the speakers were Prof. Carlo Fonseka, Rev Fr Reid Shelton Fernando and Ministers Vasudeva Nanayakkara and Tissa Vitarana.

Ainslie Joseph

The Sacred Heart fraternity expresses solidarity



The Sacred Heart fraternity of the Parish of Wellapalliya, came together to pose for a photograph with their Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Felix Mellowarachi and the assistant Rev. Fr. Veana on account of the annual celebration of the fraternity.

I. Silva

Sharing the joy of Christmas



Mahamaya Balika Vidyalaya Kadawatha, one of the leading Buddhist Schools in the Gampaha District, Kelaniya Zonal had a colourful Christmas carol service lighting the whole area for the first time in the history of the school in keeping with the festive season.

It was a kind gesture of the present principal Mrs. Pushpika Banduwansa who took a great stride in making the carol service a reality even though a majority of the students, staff and parents are Buddhists. Their fullest cooperation made this event a success.

The chief guest was Rev. Fr. Roshan Fernando of St. Anthony's Church, Kirimatiyagara. Rev. T.S. Kumaraage of Biyanwila Baptist Church, Kadawatha, a member of the staff Rev. Nawalapitiya Saranajothi, the Viharadikari Sudharsanaramaya, Kiribathgoda and the I.S.A Roman Catholic for Biyagama Education Division, Mrs. Felicia Irene Fernando witnessed this event.

*Dishna Rajapakse
Grade 11 Sectional Head*

Carols sung with Christmacy feeling

The Daham Pasal Christmas celebration of Lourdes Shrine at Nattandiya, was held with glamour, with the participation of the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Upali Churchill, and assistant Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Duminda



Suresh. It was a presentation where carols were sung both in Sinhala and English. This was a result of the untiring efforts of the Daham Pasal teachers. The picture presents Rev. Sr. Superior lighting the oil lamp besides the Parish Priest and assistant.

Some who practice.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

the cross, expressing the belief that, 'Jesus lives in us'. All of us as faithful, should conduct ourselves with this attitude in mind", his Eminence further stressed.

Present amidst the gathering were religious dignitaries from Italy who accompanied his Eminence, the Episcopal Vicar, Rev. Priests and Religious, together with a Venerable Thero representing the Buddhist Clergy. Rev. Fr. Prasanna Sanjeewa the Parish Priest was instrumental in organizing the festive proceedings.

Bl. Joseph Vaz Feast Aragoda - Polgahawela



The Annual Feast of Blessed Joseph Vaz at Aragoda, in the parish of Polgahawela was celebrated, presided over by the Bishop of Kurunegala, Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera. The renovated Church and the newly built mission house were blessed by His Lordship.

Monitoring all activities of construction and organising of the festive celebration was carried out by Rev. Fr. Manura Shiran. The photo presents the Bishop of Kurunegala, Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony at the Festive High Mass besides Rev. Fr. Manura Shiran the Parish Priest.

Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya.....

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Born in Kahatagasdigiliya he was educated at Maris Stella College, Negombo, St. Joseph's College, Colombo and later at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. Having entered St. Francis Xavier Novitiate in 1945, he was ordained a priest in July 1952 in Roviano, Italy. Rev. Fr. Balasuriya excelled in the field of education with BA (Hons), Ph. STL (Rome), and Dip. Economics, Oxford to his credit. Given below are the responsibilities he efficiently carried out, during his priestly ministry.

1. On the staff of St. Joseph's College Colombo 10, September 1953.
2. Registrar, Aquinas University College, Borella, September 1955. Taught Economics & Political Science at Aquinas University.
3. Member Social Justice Movement, Sub Editor of "Social Justice", 1953-1962.
4. Oxford University - Read Agricultural Economics 1962-1963.
5. Rector Aquinas University College, October 1964
6. Initiated the setting up of the Aquinas Institute of Technology, School of Business, the Law Faculty, School of Agriculture, Sister Formation Institute, Begins to edit "QUEST" and co-edit "LOGOS" since 1967, 1964-1971.
7. Asian Chaplain of Catholic Students, 1969-1979
8. Director, Founder of the Centre for Society and Religion since inception August 1, 1971.
9. Founder Member of Civil Rights Movement, Founding Secretary of the Citizens committee for National Harmony, Member of the Sri Lanka Justice & Peace commission, Founder Member of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, 1971.
10. Visits Canada as Guest Speaker for World Development in Feb 1980, Asian Representative to the International Congress of Theology, March 1980, travels to Austria as a Theological Consultant to the World Council of Churches' conference of Life-Styles.
11. Chief International Speaker at the Summer School of the Catholic Justice & Peace Commission of Australia.
12. Worked among Urban Poor at Summitpura for 25 years. Began "KARUNA SEVANA" for disadvantaged children at CSR, Andiambalama 1998.
13. Retired in March 2007.

His demise creates a void, a loss for the Oblate Congregation and to the Catholic Church at large.
May his Soul Rest in Peace!

Ordination in Galle Diocese

Rev. Deacon Naveen Jude de Silva is the son of Mr. Nape Range Godage Ivor Nalin de Silva and Mrs. Rohini Gamhewa of Tangalle. He is the third in the family and the eldest son out of six children and was born on January 10, 1985 in Tangalle. He did his primary studies at the Primary School, Tangalle, secondary studies at the National School, Tangalle and at St. Aloysius College, Galle.



He entered the minor seminary, Kalegana, Galle in 1999 and in 2004 to the Intermediate Seminary, Kalutara and thereafter completed his Philosophical and Theological studies at the National Seminary, Ampitiya, Kandy from 2005 to 2012. He was ordained a Deacon by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, the Bishop of Mannar at the National Seminary, Kandy on October 27, 2012. He will be ordained a priest by His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Raymond Kingsley Wickramasinghe, the Bishop of Galle on January 29, 2013, at the Cathedral of the Queen of the Holy Rosary at 10.00 a.m. He will offer his first Eucharistic celebration on February 3, 2013 at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Tangalle at 10.00 a.m. Let us wish him God's choicest blessings throughout his priestly life.

*Secretary to the Bishop
Diocese of Galle*

168th Feast of St. Sebastian's Diyalagoda



The 168th Feast of St. Sebastian's Church, Diyalagoda was celebrated recently.

The chief celebrant for the Festive Mass was Rev. Fr. Prasad Niranjan Fernando, Vice Rector, St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa.

Picture shows the statue of St. Sebastian being carried in procession after the festive High Mass. All arrangements for the feast were made by Rev. Fr. Thusith Pradeep Fernando, Parish Priest, Diyalagoda and the Liturgy Committee.

D. Anselm Fernando

Diploma awarding ceremony at Deva Dharma Nikethanaya



The Blessed Joseph Vaz, Deva Dharma Nikethanaya of the Archdiocese of Colombo recently awarded Diploma Certificates to students who completed three years in Religious Studies. Nineteen students received their certificates this year from the Chief Guest, Bishop of Kurunegala, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera at a ceremony held at the Auditorium of the Blessed Joseph Vaz Centre in Borella.

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Marius Peiris, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo was also present on the occasion. Very Rev. Fr. Daya Shelton Welikadaarachchi, Director, presented the Annual Report of the Deva Dharma Nikethanaya. The occasion also marked the welcoming of the new students to the Sinhala and Tamil Theologates. The Blessed Joseph Vaz, Deva Dharma Nikethanaya is affiliated to the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome.

Asika Priyadharshana

The splendour of the Rosary

During this 'Year of Faith', let us turn to Mother Mary to help us and lead us to Jesus Christ.

The Rosary Group of Unit 4, Peter and Paul Church, Ragama decided to spend a day with Mother Mary and her son Jesus Christ. So on November 8, 2012, St. Mary's Church, Grand Street, Negombo



was visited and prayers conducted. Rev. Fr. Udayadas, the co-ordinator for the "Living Rosary" in Sri

Lanka welcomed us. His hospitality was warmer than the cup of tea he offered us and with the pictures and Rosarys he gave us, we went to the Church of "The Risen Christ" Kadolkelle. Here we participated in four Rosaries - Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous. This was followed by Holy Mass.

After visiting a few more churches, we proceeded to 'Supem Uyana' where we shared a fellowship lunch. A lovely Holy Hour was conducted here which nourished us spiritually. It is good to have a spiritual excursion once in a while, to increase and strengthen our faith.

Merril Rajapakse

Study tour of the...

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Listening to the heart-felt sentiments of the people, regarding their life situation in the post-war scenario, the Bishops perceived that their main aspiration is to have a participatory role in all aspects of their lives as well as their day today decision making as all other citizens of Sri Lanka. There seems to be a serious lack of opportunities for the affected people to participate in the processes of their own governance as prevailing in other parts of the country. This vacuum has to be filled at the earliest to prevent frustration from growing into worse proportions. Whether in the field of education, or in the matter of livelihood or securing job opportunities and in all other aspects of civil administration normal structures have to be put in place for people to participate responsibly in the democratic processes. The Bishops felt this sense of disappointment among the ordinary people as well as in their discussions with civil society representatives, religious leaders and other stakeholders involved in the resettlement and rehabilitation process of the IDPs.

The Bishops also met with armed forces personnel to obtain their views about the processes of resettlement and rehabilitation. It was heart-warming to see how in some areas the troops were seen working

closely with the civilians in the construction of houses, digging of wells etc. This collaboration is to be appreciated very much. However, the Bishops felt that the frequent presence of the troops among the war affected people does not create an atmosphere conducive to the restoration of normalcy as there is still a sense of subconscious fear of the uniform. We therefore strongly encourage the early establishment and strengthening of all forms of local government in the said areas including the Northern Provincial Council.

In the area of healing of minds and hearts there is much that has yet to be done. Trained counsellors could be of help specially for children and vulnerable sectors such as widows as the scars of war have to disappear from them if reconciliation is to be effective. Grief always needs to be got over with. Hence while urging the government to restore their places of worship, we also appeal to them to accord this opportunity to seek spiritual solace in their sufferings through religious services as essential for true reconciliation and healing.

It is our contention that the power of healing which would remove the victor-vanquished feeling still prevalent between people in this country in the case specially of the Sinhalese and the Tamils has not reached its desired level of success and more needs to be done. The recommendations of the LLRC with regard to reconciliation need to be taken more seriously, which could also lead to the strengthening of democratic processes in the North and the East and eventually to an acceptable and honourable political solution ensuring true unity in diversity. We wish to commend all these needs to the urgent attention of all the stakeholders of governance of the country.

May God bless our beloved motherland, Sri Lanka, with true Peace, unity of hearts and healing!

Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith

✽ *His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith*
President,
Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka.

Norbert M. Andradi

✽ *His Lordship Bishop Norbert M. Andradi, OMI*
Secretary General,
Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka.

Harold A. Perera

✽ *His Lordship Bishop Harold A. Perera*
Chairman of Catholic National Commission
for Justice Peace and Human Development,
Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka.

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



Camillus
27.01.2013

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
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EDITORIAL

January 27, 2013

Catholic Identity

On January 16, 2013, we celebrated the feast of Blessed Joseph Vaz, the beloved Apostle of Sri Lanka. On this day we thanked the Almighty and Eternal God for sending us this holy priest from Goa (India) in the year 1687, at the time of the bitter persecution carried out against the Catholics by the Dutch rulers of Sri Lanka. He toiled in our beloved country for 24 long years until his death on January 16, 1711. His burning zeal and tireless labour enkindled the faith of our forefathers at the time of this bitter persecution. To express our gratitude we are duty bound to pray daily to inspire Holy Mother the Church to honour him among the Saints. While praying for his speedy canonization, it is also our duty to gratefully acknowledge the heroism of our forefathers who remained loyal and faithful to Jesus Christ and to His Holy Catholic Church - if not for whom the large majority of us would never have received the grace of Baptism.

Faith is God's gift of love for us. Jesus confirms this by saying "Yes, God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him...may have eternal life" (John 3:16). The Evangelist cum Apostle St. John states: "This is love: not that we loved God but that He first loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10). St. Paul assures us that because of God's incomprehensible love for us "He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and without sin in His presence. From eternity He destined us in love to be His sons and daughters through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:4-5), and that Jesus Christ "Though being Divine in nature did not claim in fact equality with God, but emptied Himself...and humbled Himself by being obedient, to death - death on the cross" Philippians 2:6-8).

After His glorious Resurrection, the Risen Lord Jesus commanded all of us thus: "Go, and make disciples to all nations" (Matthew 28:19); "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mark 16:15); and "You will be My witnesses... even to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

There is no better way to reciprocate God's incompressible love for us than to live a true Christian life and to powerfully witness to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the heroic and grace-filled life our forefathers lived during the bitter Dutch persecution, which enabled them to pass on to us the baton of Faith. As commanded by the Risen Lord Jesus, we too are called upon to be His witnesses in our families, in our neighbourhood, in our work place, in our society and in our entire country.

In this regard, can we be happy with ourselves? Do we act like the "salt of the earth" or the "light to the world"? (Matthew 5:13-16) In our eagerness and greed to gain position, power and prestige, and to gather wealth, have we fallen shy of publicly witnessing to Jesus Christ? Do our Catholic politicians speak publicly about upholding Christian values? Are Catholics holding high positions in the many sectors of public life (such as administration, legal, banking, mercantile, etc. etc.) scared to reveal their Catholic identity? It was only very recently, that a Catholic holding one of the most prestigious positions in the banking and economic sector, said in a public interview "I will adhere to the teachings of Lord Buddha". And, the most recent incident was when a Catholic who was appointed to a very high judicial position by His Excellency the President was seen devoutly participating with clasped hands in a Buddhist religious service that was conducted before taking over his official duties. We ought to make our position clear lest we be misunderstood. Living in a multi-religious society we ought to be engaged in inter-religious dialogue and maintain cordial relationship with one another. As Catholics we can be present, at religious ceremonies conducted by those of other faiths. But, devoutly participating in such ceremonies is an act of counter-witnessing to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who humbled himself to die on the cross for our Salvation.

As we thank God for the gift of our faith and pray for the speedy canonization of the beloved Apostle of Sri Lanka, Blessed Joseph Vaz, let us always keep in mind the following warnings given by Jesus Himself to all His followers who would either be ashamed of Him or not acknowledge Him in public.

- (i) "If someone feels ashamed of Me and of My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His Glory and in the Glory of His Father with His holy Angels" (Luke 9:26)
- (ii) "I tell you, whoever acknowledges Me before people, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the Angels of God" (Luke 12:8-9) Also see (Matthew 10:32-33).

In a society that is filled to the brim with corruption, violence, thuggery, political victimization, lawlessness, etc., it is our Baptismal responsibility to stand up to justice, fair play and equality, and also to publicly proclaim our Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of mankind and witness to His Gospel.

During this 'Year of Faith':

- Let us strengthen our Faith, cherish our Faith and pass on the baton of Faith to our children.
- Let us never compromise our Faith for power, prestige and position.
- Let us never lose our **Catholic Identity**.

Guest Editorial

"Unity of Christians"

Every year, from the 17th to the 25th of January we raise our hearts to the Blessed Trinity in a sincere petition so that those words of Jesus in the last Supper become a reality: "that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me." (Jn 17: 21)

The observance of the Christian Unity Octave culminates on the celebration of the Conversion of the Apostle Paul on January 25. The Holy Father points out that "It is meaningful that the Feast of the conversion of the Apostle to the Gentiles coincides with the final day of this important Week, in which we are asking God with particular intensity for the precious gift of unity among all Christians, making ours the invocation that Jesus Himself raised to the Father for His disciples.

In the Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, we read that the desire for unity on the part of every Christian Community and every individual believer and the power to achieve it is a gift of the Holy Spirit and goes hand in hand with a more profound and radical fidelity to the Gospel (n. 15). This observance must fill us with supernatural hope, because we know that it has to be the Holy Spirit who moves the hearts of all those who believe in Christ and who will bring about the perfect unity of all Christians in One Church.

Our prayers on this Octave should, therefore, follow that path marked out by the priestly prayers of Jesus in the Last Supper. Like the good shepherd who gives his life for his sheep, Jesus Christ prays for the unity of His flock. For years He has guided His disciples, He has looked after them one by one; but He knows that the enemy is constantly trying to snatch the sheep and scatter the flock, and His Heart suffers, knowing that many will waver and abandon the sheepfold.

The prayer of Christ also extends to those who have never been counted among His followers, those who never even knew about His flock: "I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold, and I also have to bring them, and they will hear My voice and will form only one flock with one shepherd." (Jn 10:16)

What does this expression "One flock, one shepherd" mean? Christ's words signify that His mission extends to everyone even though His own preaching is addressed, in the first instance, to the sheep of the house of Israel, as He Himself revealed to the Canaanite woman (cf. Mt 15:24), and even though He sent the Apostles on their first mission (cf. Mt 10:6) to preach to the people of Israel.

Now, however, foreseeing the fruits of His Redemptive Death (Jn 10:15), He reveals that these will be applied to "other sheep, that are not of this fold", that is, Israel, and, after the Resurrection, He does send the Apostles to all nations (cf. Mt 28:19), to preach the Gospel to all creation (cf. Mt 16:15), beginning in Jerusalem and extending to all Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8).

This fulfils the ancient promises about the rule of the Messiah covering the whole world (cf. Ps 2:7; Is 2:2-6; 66, 17-19). The universal scope of salvation caused St Paul to exclaim: "Remember that at one time you were separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to



the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the Blood of Christ." (Eph 2:11-13; cf. Gal 3:27-28; Rom 3:22)

The Unity of the Church is to be found under one visible Head, for "it was to the Apostolic College alone, of which Peter is the Head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God." (Vatican II, *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3)

It is a Catholic's constant yearning that everyone should come to the true Church, "God's only flock, which like a standard lifted high for the nations to see, ministers the Gospel of Peace to all mankind, as it makes its pilgrimway in hope towards its goal, the Fatherland above." (*ibid.*, 2; cf. *Navarre Bible*, "The Gospel of St John")

With this Octave, the Church wants us to take one more step in the identification of our sentiments with those of Jesus. Being well aware of the vicissitudes of the Church throughout history, and conscious of the debility of the human heart, so easily swayed by error and discord, our prayer has to take on new energy, uniting itself to that of the Good Shepherd: "as You, Father, in me and I in You, that they be united in Us..., that they be one as We are One. I in them and You in Me, so that they be united as one, and so that the world might know You have sent Me and that You have loved them as you have loved Me." (Jn 17:23).

We realize that at the base of the commitment to ecumenism there is the conversion of heart, as the Second Vatican Council clearly affirms: "There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion. For it is from newness of attitudes of mind, from self-denial and unstinted love, that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way." (Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 7)

Thus, the conversion of St Paul as the culminating point of this Octave invites us to undergo our own personal conversion. This is one of the ends of this 'Year of Faith'. We wish to deepen our knowledge of the Faith in order to transform ourselves from within.

Our Faith, in line with those words of St Paul to the Galatians, must find expression in love (cf. Gal 5:6). Faith is, by no means, a presumptuous self-confidence in one's own merits, but a firm and ready acceptance of all that God has revealed, faith which moves one to place one's hope in Christ's merits and to repent of one's sins. This implies inner conversion.

Deus caritas est (1 Jn 4: 8, 16), God is love, St John tells us. The faith of the Church, in its entirety, is founded on this solid rock. In particular, the patient

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Renovated and extended Church of St. Sebastian, Bulathkohupitiya Celebrates Platinum Jubilee (1937-2012)

The Year 2012 was a very significant year in the annals of the Bulathkohupitiya Parish of the Diocese of Ratnapura! It is because; the parish church which is dedicated to St. Sebastian very proudly and zealously celebrates its Platinum Jubilee with the church renovated, extended and refurbished which undoubtedly doubles the jubilation! Bulathkohupitiya is a small town which lies along the beautiful hilly areas of the Kegalle District. It is said that 'Every great phenomenon always has simple beginnings', so is it with the parish of St. Sebastian, Bulathkohupitiya. When we trace back the pages of the history of the parish, we could gather that in the 1930's there was only one prominent Catholic business family in the area. It was late Mr. Don Charles Muhandiramghe's family from Tharala who owned vast extents of land in Bulathkohupitiya at that time. It was he who on January 2, 1932 donated one of the prime plots atop a hill to Rt. Rev. Gladstone Robichez, S.J., the Apostolic Administrator of the Galle Diocese. Initially a small chapel was built in honour of St. Sebastian which was a mere cadjan hut. Later in 1937, Mr. M.D Charles himself built a beautiful chapel to St. Sebastian which stands proudly today.

At that time, the French and Italian missionaries of the 'Society of Jesus' were serving in the Galle Diocese and they had to travel covering the vast distance from Galle to Kegalle with the very poor transport facilities of the time. Over the years it were the descendants of Mr. M.D. Charles who had been the benefactors of this beautiful little chapel of St. Sebastian, and which was under the supervision of the Yatiyantota Parish.

The year 1998 was a land mark in the chronicles of the church as it was in this year that the substation of St. Sebastian's Church was raised to the rank of a Parish by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the then Bishop of Ratnapura. It was Bulathkohupitiya, that was made a Parish at first. The new Parish of St. Sebastian, Bulathkohupitiya was carved with new territories starting from Undugoda to Kiriporuwa and with the Parish Priest residing at the mission house. The new Parish was looked after by Rev. Fr. K. Devarajah operating from Yatiyantota. The first residential Parish Priest was Rev. Fr. Premasiri Fernando O.M.I. whose dedicated apostolate gathered the flock which was geographically scattered. Following him Rev. Fr. Dudley Attanayake, Rev. Fr. Roland Rodrigo and Rev. Fr. Satheesh Savarimuttu C.M.F.

served as Parish Priests. The Parish is currently being served by Rev. Fr. Singharayal Stephen C.M.F.

At present the Bulathkohupitiya Parish consists of about one hundred and fifty families both Sinhalese and Tamil of whom over ninety five percent work as day labourers in the tea and rubber estates. Yet they live below the poverty line, usually earning very marginally, barely enough for their sustenance. Given these circumstances though, when the church reached 75 years of existence in 2012 and needed to be renovated and extended, the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Satheesh Savarimuttu CMF, together with the parishioners launched into the renovation and extension work with the blessing of His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura, with the funds they had collected. Once begun the renovation and extension progressed quite quickly; unquestionably by the benevolence and mercy of God, and right now the project has been completed.

The Parish with the refurbished



church, proudly celebrates the 75th year of establishment with its Platinum Jubilee, on January 27, 2013 with festive celebrations to be presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura.

Rev. Fr. Stephen CMF who succeeded Rev. Fr. Satheesh Savarimuttu CMF, has been quite busy preparing the parishioners for this great event. The parishioners though poor, have done their best both by cash and by providing voluntary labour and have worked hard tirelessly along with their pastor to make this historic event a satisfying reality both pastorally and spiritually.

Tyron Jude Palihena

Unity of.....

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pursuit of full communion among all of Christ's disciples is based upon it: by fixing one's gaze on this truth, summit of Divine Revelation, it seems possible to overcome divisions and not to be discouraged, even though they continue to be gravely serious.

The Lord Jesus, who broke down the "dividing wall of hostility" (Eph 2: 14) with the Blood of His Passion, will not fail to grant to those who faithfully invoke Him the strength to heal every wound. But it is always necessary to start anew from this point: "Deus caritas est."

In the stage of Salvation History which begins with Christ, the fact that a person is Jewish or Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, counts for nothing as far as Salvation is concerned. What does matter is truly believing that only Christ Jesus can save us: true faith, genuine faith, moves us to love Christ and, as a consequence of this, to love everyone without exception. The Faith to which St Paul is referring can be described, as the Apostle St James implies (Jas 2:17), as "Living Faith", that is, faith which is translated into a profound conviction which motivates us to love: this is "faith working through love."

St Paul is obviously speaking about the supernatural virtue of faith in its proper sense, that is, "living faith." In the Christian tradition, stemming from St James, "dead faith" is a caricature of faith which is incapable of expressing itself in words.

The Magisterium of the Church teaches that "faith, unless it be joined to hope and charity, neither makes us one with Christ nor loving members of His Body. That is why it is rightly said that 'faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead' (Jas 2:17) and idle." (Council of Trent, *De justificatione*, chap. 7) Our Lord, furthermore, clarified that His disciples would be recognized by their charity (cf. Jn 13:35), because faith begets hope, and hope leads on to love.

"When one asks if someone is

good," St Augustine says, "one does not check to see what he believes or what he hopes for, but what it is he loves. For someone who loves rightly certainly also believes and hopes rightly; but he who does not love believes in vain, even if what he believes in is true [. . .]. Therefore, this is the faith in Christ, which the Apostle extols — 'faith which works through love' (*Enchiridion*, chap. 117).

What is it then that truly unites Christian believers? It is love: charity. That is why Pope Benedict XVI said that "It is to the theme of love that I wanted to dedicate my first Encyclical, which was published today; this happy coincidence with the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity invites us to consider, even more than our gathering together, the entire ecumenical journey in the light of God's love, of the Love that is God. (Homily, January 25, 2006)

"If, under the human profile, love manifests itself as an invincible force, what must we, who "know and believe the love God has for us, say?" (I Jn 4: 16)

"True love does not eliminate legitimate differences, but harmonizes them in a superior unity that is not ordered from the outside but gives form from within, so to speak, to the whole.

"As the mystery of communion unites man and woman in that community of love and life known as matrimony, it too forms the Church into a community of love, uniting a multi-form wealth of gifts and traditions. The Church of Rome is placed at the service of that Unity of Love which, according to a saying by St Ignatius of Antioch, "presides in charity" (*Ad Rom* 1, 1).

The Holy Father observes that "Divine Charity is the strength that transforms the life of Saul of Tarsus and makes him the Apostle to the Gentiles. Writing to the Christians at Corinth, St Paul confesses that God's Grace worked the extraordinary event of conversion in him: "By the Grace of God I am what I am, and His Grace toward me was not in vain." (I Cor 15: 10)

"On the one hand, he feels the weight of having hindered the spread

of Christ's message; but on the other, he lives in the joy of having met the Risen Lord and having been enlightened and transformed by His light. He keeps a constant memory of that life-changing event, an event so important for the entire Church that in the *Acts of the Apostles* reference is made to it three times. (cf. Acts 9: 3-9; 22: 6-11; 26: 12-18)

"On the road to Damascus, Saul hears the disturbing question: "Why do you persecute Me"? Falling to the ground and interiorly troubled, he asked: "Who are You, Lord"? receiving that answer which is the basis of his conversion: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9: 4-5). Paul understood in an instant what he would later express in his writings: that the Church forms a single body of which Christ is the Head. And so, from a persecutor of Christians he became the Apostle to the Gentiles.

"The reformation of our unity will make evangelization more effective. Unity is our common mission; it is the condition that enables the Light of Christ to be spread better in every corner of the world, so that men and women convert and are saved." (Homily, January 25, 2006)

Aside from charity, fidelity to the Magisterium and intransigence in matters of Faith and Morals are needed in order to foster an authentic ecumenism. A false ecumenism is one which tends to water down the teachings of Christ to accommodate those who do yet fully share our Faith. This would not lead to true unity but to a denial of truth. The truth is never compromised under the guise of unity and ecumenism, just as nobody would yield and say "two plus two is five" in order to win the friendship of another person.

It must be borne in mind that Catholic Doctrine is not a construct of the human intelligence: we have received it from the Church, which faithfully transmits the truths that Jesus Christ gave to the Apostles. Therefore, if we want to be faithful to our Lord, we have to conserve its teachings, try to know them better, to live them and

transmit them integrally to the rest of mankind.

"Guard the deposit which I have given to you," wrote St Paul to Timothy (I Tim 6:20). And St Vincent of Lerins comments: *What is the deposit? It is what you have believed and not what you have discovered; what you have received and not what you have thought up; something which comes not from personal ingeniousness, but from Doctrine; not the fruits of theft, but fruit of public tradition. It is something that has come down to you, which has not been invented by you; something of which you are not the author, but the guardian; not the creator but the curator; not the conductor but the conducted.*

Guard the deposit: conserve clean and inviolate the talent of the Catholic Faith. May what you have believed remain in you, and give the same to the others. It is gold you have received, give back gold; don't substitute one thing for another, don't replace the gold with lead, don't mix it fraudulently with anything. I am not interested in the appearance of gold but in the pure gold itself (Com-munitorium, 22).

As the Second Vatican Council has reminded us, speaking of genuine ecumenism, the "manner and the system of explaining the Catholic Faith ought not be converted in any way into an obstacle for a dialogue with our brothers. It is vitally necessary that the Doctrine be clearly expounded. Nothing is so foreign to ecumenism as false irenicism, that only damages the purity of Catholic Doctrine and obscures its genuine and definitive meaning." (UR, 11)

Finally, the Holy Father encourages us in this mission of fostering Christian Unity. "The road stretches before us! And yet, we must not lose trust; instead, with greater vigor we must once more continue our journey together. Christ walks before us and accompanies us. We count on His unflinching presence and humbly and tirelessly implore from Him the precious gift of Unity and Peace." (Homily, January 25, 2006)

Rev. Fr. Daniel Icatlo



Family Health and Marriage

A new specialty in medicine is related to the above subject which is also known as sexual medicine. Problems described in sexual medicine (physical relationship difficulties) in married couples are becoming very common. It has become an important cause for unhappy marriages and even divorce... even amongst Catholics. The divorce rate has gone up to 22% in Sri

Lanka.

Doctors have discovered the increased frequency, and have acknowledged the importance of sexual health problems amongst married couples to live a happy married life. This subject is not taught at medical schools. Most doctors are less well informed in this branch of medicine. The couples suffering from sexual medical problems are reluctant to



discuss these problems even with their family doc-

tor unless the doctor is able to reason it out by indirect questioning. Married couples should not feel shy or reluctant to come out freely with their difficulties to an understanding well informed doctor who has set aside enough time for his patients. There is a great yearning amongst practicing doctors to be updated regularly. At the annual academic sessions of the Sri Lanka Medical Association in 2011 and 2012 one entire day each was spent presenting this topic by experts, followed by lively discussions. The halls were filled to capacity.

Quite a few of these problems can be solved between an understanding husband and wife

specially if they keep in mind what a Catholic marriage is. Catholic marriage is a permanent, personal relationship between a man and a woman based on expression of unconditional love with a sense of sacrifice.

Sexual relationship is not for lust but it will certainly liberate some joy. But it is more an expression of love to each other. By understanding each other's desires, limitations, difference in the responses between a male and a female and sincere discussion between the married couple, quite a few of these problems can be solved.

There are certainly difficulties in this component of marital relationship that the couple cannot solve by themselves. Before it is too late then, the couple should seek guidance and counseling from a well informed Catholic doctor.

Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, OMI, founded the Centre for Society and Religion in 1971. As the Director of the Centre he was responsible for conducting many focus-group meetings, seminars and town hall type meetings with so many world-renowned personalities, local academics and political leaders. He took over as the Editor of the journal "Social Justice" from Fr. Peter Pillai, OMI in 1964 and also wrote articles on social, religious and political issues in his paper.

Fr. Balasuriya was instrumental in conscientising many of our famous Sri Lankan politicians and executives of the private sector. His aim was to make them aware of the social and economic problems of our people and in finding solutions to their woes. Because of these contacts he had a great influence on the politicians who were at the height of their power. He could approach them almost without any prior appointment: His point of view was heard and respected.

Fr. Peter Pillai was his mentor and Bish-

Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya

op Leo Nanyakkara was his close friend. They were not frightened to venture into village polas and markets just to know the cost of living, and the prices of day to day groceries consumed by the masses. Once I encountered them in a market in Colombo 8, buying groceries in civilian clothes. In fact, I had to look more than twice to recognize them. This was at a time that Catholic clerics were obliged to wear the religious garb in public.

Fr. Bala took over as the Rector of Aquinas University College in 1964 after the demise of Fr. Peter Pillai, the Rector and the founder. Prior to that, he was the Registrar of Aquinas. He founded the Sister Formation Course in 1965, School of Agriculture and the School for Business and Technology in 1966. The agriculture students could do their practicals in a farm that he bought in Walpola, Ragama. Today the women religious congregations in Sri Lanka appreciate what the Sister Formation program has done for the religious for-



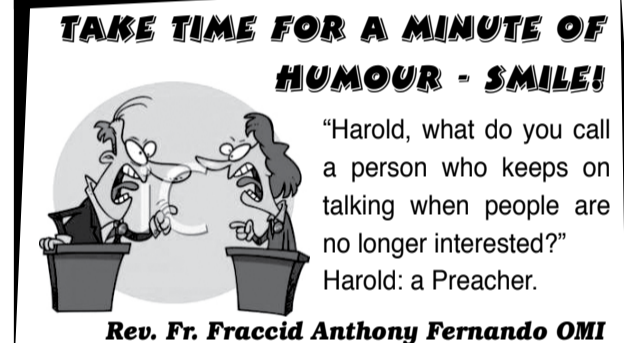
mation of their young Sisters.

Fr. Tissa Balasuriya was recognized as a "Liberation Theologian" the world over. His articles appeared in many Catholic, Sociological and Economic journals around the world. He was invited as guest speaker to many Catholic world-forums. He was the guest of honour at many seminars and focus groups. He was a regular writer to the Catholic Messenger in the seventies.

His radical views in the book that he wrote in 1990, "Mary and Human Liberation" caused him to be excommunicated from the Church. This was a part of a trilogy that he wrote. The other two books were "Jesus and Human Liberation" and "The Eucharist and Human Liberation". His book on the Blessed Virgin

Mary challenged the traditional Catholic image of the mother of Jesus.

In 1998 in a surprise development the excommunicated Tissa Balasuriya was reunited with the Vatican. Though he said: "I have not committed any heresy or deviation from any Doctrine of the Catholic Faith", he agreed to submit future writings on faith and morals to his superiors for review. During the last few years he lived in semi-retirement in his office and residence in the premises of the Centre for Society and Religion in Maradana. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, OMI passed away on the morning of January 17, 2013 after a brief illness at the ripe old age of 89. May he live forever with the Risen Lord!



By Sirohmi Gunsekera

Charity

"Oh, I can't wear this blouse. It's too tight. What shall I do?" asked Naomi.

"Why don't you give it away? I am sure that there are many people who are poor and won't mind wearing nearly new clothes" suggested Lakshmi.

"I know. The priest often talks of 'The Respectable Poor' who cannot beg. They often go hungry and wear threadbare clothes. It's because the Cost of Living is so high! But should we give to charity only what we don't want? I suppose that is why Jumble Sales are so popular" queried Paul.

"Maybe we should give in both cash and kind. What's wrong with being generous? The Lord loves a cheerful giver. So we should give more and keep only what we need as essentials. I'm sure we all have more clothes and sarees and shirts than we need" said Lakshmi.

"Yes, and if we have enough money for our needs and a little put away in the bank for a rainy day, we should give the rest to charity" said Paul.

"I know. Most of us go to church and pray but are stingy when it comes to parting with hard cash" commented Naomi.

"I suppose it's because money can often be misused. But once we find out that it is for a good cause, we should not hesitate to give generously" said Lakshmi.

"There are some people who don't give money to beggars on principle. They should then find out good causes and give of their plenty. After all, we pass through this world but once, and any good thing that we can do let us not defer it, for we shall not pass through this way again" quoted Paul.

During this 'Year of Faith' let us proclaim the 'Good News'

A king could not visit all the towns and villagers in his kingdom. He had a smart handsome son who decided to visit the people of the land.

So the son or rather the prince together with his ministers started his journey. The first person he saw was a farmer. When the farmer saw and recognized the prince he ran away and hid. Next he saw some youngsters working together. They too ran away when they saw the prince. Even a mother feeding her baby did the same thing. And so did all the others.

The prince returned sadly to his place and asked the ministers why people ran away from him. Why they ran from their future king? The ministers told him that it was due to the love and respect they had for him. They said that they recognised their prince, their future king in all the rich and glorious attire. They recognised their prince attended by so many ministers etc. etc.

After some time a young doctor came to that country. He was very simple, kind, understanding and a loving doctor. He soon became very popular. People loved him very much. The next thing that happened surprised the people so much, that they could hardly believe it. They were very happy all the same when learnt that this young doctor, the prince was their future king.

This story was narrated by Rev. Fr. Lakshman



to show why Jesus didn't come in all His glory as a God. He was born as a poor baby in a stable at Bethlehem. He came down to our human level to lift us up to Divine level. God loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to redeem mankind.

During this 'Year of Faith' led us proclaim the 'Good News' to others as simple and humble people. Let us go down to the level of the people to bring them to God the Father, in the name of Jesus together with Mother Mary.

Emilda S. Douglas



& Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

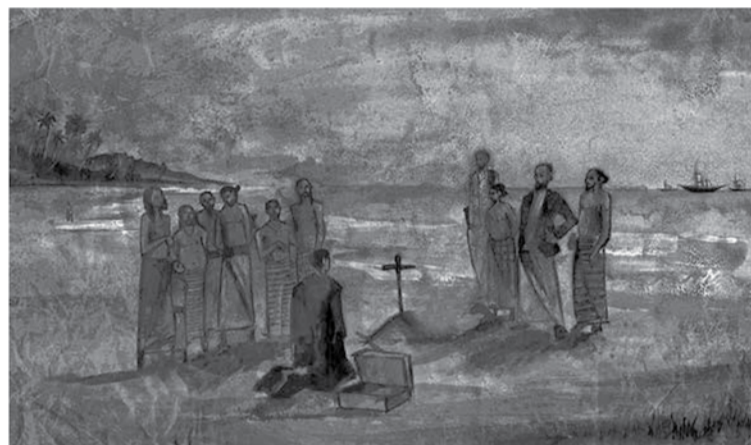
St. Anthony's Museum ; A walk back in faith

The new museum at St. Anthony's Church, Kochchikade unravells a story of faith and devotion. It tells us the story of Fr. Fernando who was born in Lisbon and how he changed his name to Anthony after St. Anthony the hermit. It tells us the story of Brother Anthony as he was called thereafter; his vocation, missionary endeavors, his life in Padua and his early death. It tells us of the miracles performed by him and shows us artistic reproductions of the miracles of St. Anthony as depicted on his tomb. Symbolism associated with the Saint is also explained.

The introduction of the devotion to St. Anthony in Sri Lanka

and the history of the first churches dedicated to St. Anthony in our island have also been traced. The miracle of the Cochin priest Father Anthony in Colombo and how the area Kochchikade got its name is also explained. The scene of the miracle which gave birth to St. Anthony's church in Kochchikade has been effectively reproduced with life size fiberglass statues. Other historic landmarks in the process of building the church and its growth to its present statues as a shrine are also recorded.

Pix sent in by Sagara Jayasinghe -Architect and designer of the Museum of St. Anthony. Author of the Guide to the Permanent Exhibition - Museum of St. Anthony.



The Oneness of Humanity according to Christianity

Rev. Fr. Harold Panditharatne

(Address given during The Inaugural Observance of World Religion Day, at the BMICH, Colombo, on 18th January 1981).

1. Use of the term "humanity" or "human":

Attempted Elimination of Moral Culture

The term "humanity" or "human" has become a dubious and ambiguous term. The ideas of high and low, noble and common, banal and extraordinary are misleadingly intermingled in it. "Human" or "humanity" could mean heart, will, intelligence, conscience, holiness and so on. For the human is precisely that which distinguishes us from the mere animal. But today the expression "that is human" is used in such a way that it excuses everything. People get divorced: that is human; people get drunk: that is human; they cheat in a competition or in an examination: that is human; they ruin their youth in vice: that is human; they are jealous, embezzle one another, hate both friend and foe: that is human. There is not a vice which has not been excused with the aid of the formula "that is human". So the term "human" is often used today to describe, not that which distinguishes us from the mere animal, but that which is the most infirm and banal in us. Sometimes "human" becomes a synonym even for "bestial". What an odd use of language this is!

Attempted Angelism

At the other extreme is the use of the term "human" or "humanity" to refer only to that which is considered superior to the flesh (*sarx*) of the world, namely, mere mind or thought, completely idealized or de-historicized and allegedly spiritualized. This extreme use exemplifies the gnostic or manichaean dualistic view that to be truly or authentically human, one should mentally get away from the clutches of the body or of the material world; that is to say, take to flight in face of man's concrete needs and concerns in this world. The fulfilment of being human would therefore involve contempt for the body, for marriage and procreation, and total concentration on and concern for what purports to be expressed by the slogan "save your soul". "But how can you save your own soul and not save the soul and even the body of the other person?"⁽¹⁾

2. Corporeality as constituting human oneness:

Man, an Expressive Being

Both the above extremes are due to a false duality between body and soul from which modern anthropology has fortunately liberated itself. Body and soul are not simply two factors existing alongside or even in each other. Rather, they both form at all times the whole man who is an indivisible whole. Man is wholly body and he is wholly soul. Our mental life, our thinking and our free-will, has inwardly a profound corporeal character. Into even the most sublime achievements of the human mind, the body or our corporeal element inevitably enters. This becomes very clear in such phenomena as human speech and

gesture, laughing and crying, playing, singing and dancing. Man is an expressive being; he not only has a head, but also a face. In fact man is himself only in his expression; he 'exists' or is present in it. And it is precisely the body which is expression, symbol, incarnation, essential medium of man. Therefore, under this perspective man not only has a body, he is this body.⁽²⁾

Human Existence essentially Co-existence

What is, however, more significant to our present theme is the fact that it is through our body that we are involved with our contemporaries. Through our body we are in a blood fellowship with our family our race, and ultimately with all mankind. But there is a much deeper significance than this biological fellowship or oneness in our involvement with our contemporaries. It is not only our corporeal existence that is constituted by our involvement with our contemporaries; to a decisive degree, our very personal identity is constituted by such involvement. We are defined in our identity and existence by what the others are; our existence is essentially co-existence or existence in oneness, solidarity and fellowship. For freedom is concretely possible for us human beings only in so far as others grant us a space, so to say, for freedom and respect it. As Hegel showed in the last century, concrete and actually realizable human freedom is possible only on mutual affirmation and acceptance in love; possible only within a joint system of freedom where everyone has through everyone else his concrete scope for living and freedom. Oneness, solidarity, fellowship means giving the individual human being his own scope. It even means protecting and defending him. "One for all" means something only if "all for one" also counts; if — that is — the absolute value and dignity of each individual in society is safeguarded. Oneness or solidarity of all and the committed responsibility of each individual human being are mutually implicative and inclusive. As long, therefore, as unfreedom, injustice and discord prevail anywhere in the world, our freedom too is insecure and incomplete. For freedom, which enters largely into the very definition of our personal identity and existence, is really possible only in oneness, in solidarity, in fellowship, in being free for others.⁽³⁾

Achievements of the Present

According to the latest encyclical teaching of Pope John Paul II, "all of us now living on earth are the generation that is aware of the approach of the third millennium and that profoundly feels the change that is occurring in history. The present generation knows that it is in a privileged position: progress provides it with countless possibilities that only a few decades ago were undreamed of. Man's creative activity, his intelligence and his work, have brought about profound changes both in the field of science and technology and in that of social and cultural life. Man has extended his power over nature and has acquired deeper knowledge of the laws of social behaviour. He has seen the obstacles and distances between individuals and nations dissolve or shrink through an increased sense of what is universal, through a clearer awareness of the unity of the human race, through the acceptance of mutual dependence in authentic solidarity, and through the desire and possibility of

making contact with one's brothers and sisters beyond artificial geographical divisions and national or racial limits. Today's young people, especially, know that the progress of science and technology can produce not only new material goods but also a wider sharing in knowledge. The extraordinary progress made in the field of information and data processing, for instance, will increase man's creative capacity and provide access to the intellectual and cultural riches of other peoples. New communications techniques will encourage greater participation in events and a wider exchange of ideas. The achievements of biological, psychological and social science will help man to understand better the riches of his own being. It is true that too often this progress is still the privilege of the industrialized countries, but it cannot be denied that the prospect of enabling every people and every country to benefit from it has long ceased to be a mere utopia when there is a real political desire for it."⁽⁴⁾

3. Contemporary threats and dangers to human oneness:

"Terrible Tensions"

Side by side, however, with all this growth and progress towards oneness, solidarity and fellowship, the Pope draws our attention to a humanity which is entangled in an uneasy, anxiety-ridden and threatening situation of "terrible tensions": atomic stockpiles could mean the partial self-destruction of humanity; a materialistic society which, in spite of "humanistic" declarations, accepts the primacy of things over persons, gives rise to a continuous fear that individuals, societies and nations would fall victim to the abuse of the power of military technology by other individuals, societies and nations. "The history of our century offers many examples of this." The continued existence of torture as a means of domination and political oppression spells out the fear that nations with technological means would abuse such means for a supposedly "peaceful" subjugation of individuals or of entire societies and of nations. There is "a gigantic remorse" caused by the fact that side by side with wealthy and surfeited people and societies, living in plenty and ruled by consumerism and pleasure, the same human family contains individuals and groups that are suffering from hunger. "In various parts of the world, in various socio-economic systems, there exist entire areas of poverty, shortage and under development. The fact is universally known. The state of inequality between individuals and between nations not only still exists; it is increasing... It is obvious that a fundamental defect, or rather a series of defects, indeed a defective machinery is at the root of contemporary economic and materialistic civilization, which does not allow the human family to break free from such radically unjust situations."⁽⁵⁾ Worry and anxiety arise over the perceptible decline in many fundamental values, which values constitute an unquestionable good simply for human morality, for moral culture, and not only for Christian morality. Human relationships are in the grip of a crisis of truth: there is a lack of responsibility for what one says; relationships between individuals are reduced to the purely utilitarian; the authentic common good is alienated with ease, as there is a loss of the sense of such good. "Finally,



Rev. Fr. Harold Panditharatne

there is the "desacralization" that often turns into "dehumanization": the individual and the society for whom nothing is "sacred" suffers moral decay, in spite of appearances."⁽⁶⁾

"What is Man?"

Thus there is much evil, both physical and moral, in today's world; the presence of so much evil makes of it a world entangled in contradictions and tensions, and at the same time full of threats to human freedom, conscience and religion. This picture explains to a degree the uneasiness felt by contemporary men, an uneasiness and anxiety "experienced not only by those who are disadvantaged or oppressed, but also by those who possess the privileges of wealth, progress and power."⁽⁷⁾ However, to attempt to react against such uneasiness, to try to combat its causes "with the temporary means offered by technology, wealth or power" is to fail to discern that "in the very depth of the human spirit, this uneasiness is stronger than all temporary means. It concerns... the fundamental problems of all human existence. It is linked with the very sense of man's existence in the world. It is an uneasiness for the future of man and all humanity..."⁽⁸⁾ As the Second Vatican Council teaches, "... in the face of modern developments there is a growing body of men who are asking the most fundamental of all questions or are glimpsing them with a keener insight: What is man? What is the meaning of suffering, evil, death, which have not been eliminated by all this progress? What is the purpose of these achievements, purchased at so high a price?"⁽⁹⁾

4. Humanity's solidarity in evil (Original Sin):

Biblical Orientation

According to the Scriptures held sacred both by Judaism and by Christianity, and according to the Tradition of the Catholic Church, the uneasy tensions and fundamentally disintegrating relationships in which man experiences, in fear and anxiety, his disastrously wounded situation are not those between soul and body, between spirit and matter, between individual and society, between man and mankind; they are rather those between God and man, between God and world, between Creator and creatures.¹⁰ The biblical vision is that these disintegrating relationships and terrible tensions among men and within the world can be integrated and converted to oneness only if man in his wholeness rises

Contd. on Pg. 10

"We are the Light of Faith, to dispel the darkness of the World!"

(Though this is for the Missionary Childhood Sunday, my Message is for the Adults)

Jesus the Living Son of God - the Creator of the Universe came to this world to bring light to overcome the darkness caused by the sin of our First Parents. His proclamation: "I am the Light of the World; he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (Jh.8/12), confirms the above statement. Again He says: "I have come as the Light into the World, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (Jh.12/46). It is clear now from this saying, that the whole human world became dark, with the sin of man and that it is only the Redeeming Lord who can bring light to it again. Without the Lord of Light, we are no more the Children of Light, but the Children of Darkness. The entire world too without Him will be in total darkness.

The Lord who enlightens the World handed over His Mission to His followers. Jesus says: "You are the Light of the World let your light so shine before man, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven" (Mt. 5/14, 16). Therefore as His followers we too have a Mission to perform. That is to make our lives and our world shine brightly with the Light of Christ and in turn to enlighten our world and also the lives of those who are living in the dark. This is the duty and the responsibility of all the followers of Christ - the young and the old, male and female, boys and girls and also of the children. Let us all join together, hand in hand, to fulfill this task. There is no doubt that this 'Year of Faith' will inspire us in this apostolate. Let us take advantage of this situation and be strong with the Light of Faith and as true Christians

come forward to dispel the darkness of the world.

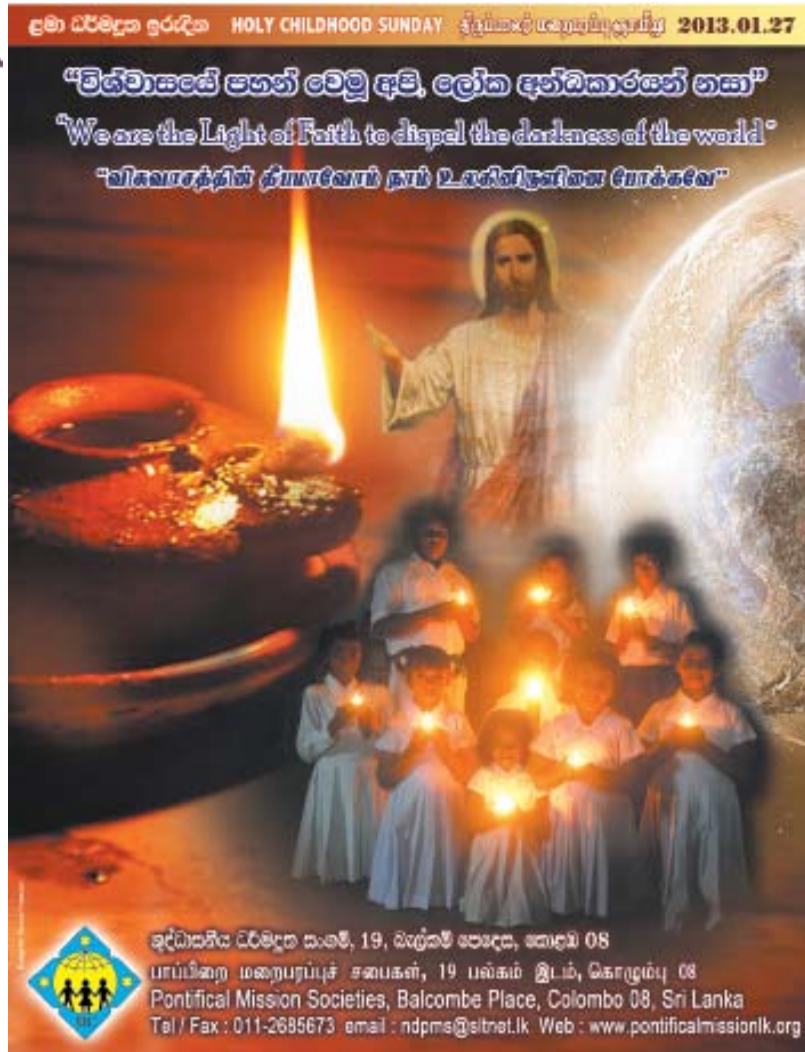
Last year - in 2012, we celebrated the 25th Anniversary or the Silver Jubilee of the Holy Childhood Society, as it exists in Sri Lanka today. For the last 25 years, our little missionaries sang in their Theme Song, the words: "We are the Light of Faith, to dispel the darkness of the world". This is the Theme for this year's Holy Childhood Sunday, as well as for the whole year. How far have we encouraged them in their Apostolate to become little missionaries of Jesus? Have we given them the opportunity to rally round Jesus, the Light of the World? Or through our lack of understanding and also in order to achieve our own desires, have we kept these, our God given gifts away from this Great Light which only could enlighten their lives? Through our ignorance, have we also helped the Angels of Darkness, to dump the valuable lives of our little children into darkness?

Let us allow the Words of the Master - "Let the little children come to me, do not hinder them" (Mk. 10/14), echo in our hearts and minds, constantly. Let us accept this invitation. Let us encourage our children to be members of the Holy Childhood Society; help them to rally round Jesus their True Light. Then it will be possible for them to be filled with the Light of Christ and dispel the darkness that has engulfed the World.

"We are the Light of Faith to dispel the darkness of the World!"

May God Bless you! May Mother Mary Protect you!

Fr. Reginald Saparamadu
National Director - Holy Childhood Society



THE PONTIFICAL Society of Missionary Childhood

Founded in Nancy, France in 1843 by Bishop Charles de Forbin Janson to awaken in every child a strong sense of commitment to Jesus Christ and a zeal for the spread of the Good News everywhere by;

Deepening one's faith
Living it fruitfully and
Sharing it joyfully

To prepare the Catholic children to be joyfull in their fatih and to share it with their other brothers and sisters at school, at play or any point in their lives.

To encourage children to pray, to be loyal to their elders and to bring together all children in a world wide fraternity.

To spread the good news of Jesus far into the remotest corners of the world by drawing their attention to the spiritual as well as the material needs of the children throughout the world, with their prayers, sacrifices and their offerings.

The National Director,
Pontifical Mission Societies,
No. 19, Balcombe Place,
Colombo - 8.
Tel / Fax: 0112685673
e-mail:ndpms@sltnet.lk
Web: www.pontificalmissionlk.org

With the Light of Faith let us brighten the world.

- The commandments of the Lord are clear: they enlighten the eyes. (Ps. 19:9)
- For He reveals himself to those who do not challenge Him and is found by those who do not distrust Him. (Wis 1:2)
- In the same way your light must shine before others, so that they may see the good you do and praise your Father in heaven. (Mt. 5:16)
- The lamp of the body is the eye; if your eyes are sound, your whole body will be in the Light. (Mt.6:22)
- For the Light was coming into the world, the true Light that enlightens everyone. Jn. 1:9)
- The just will be saved by Faith (Cf. Rm. 1:17)
- Be alert, stand firm in the Faith. (ICor 16:13)
- Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, immovable, it stands forever. (Ps. 125:1)
- Your Word is a lamp to my feet, a Light for my path. (Ps. 119:105)
- The child, born in the humility of the cave of Bethlehem, is the Light of the World, who directs the path of all peoples. (Pope Benedict XVI)

With these words of grace let us live our faith and lighten the faith of other children and come forward to help them to live a Life of Faith.

Collection for Holy Childhood Sunday 2012

Diocese	Amount
Anuradhapura	66,884.00
Badulla	50,751.00
Chilaw	362,485.00
Colombo	1,575,587.25
Galle	38,520.00
Jaffna	229,848.00
Kandy	248,816.00
Kurunegala	190,195.00
Mannar	246,220.00
Ratnapura	87,100.00
Trinco/Batti	148,130.00
Total	3,244,536.25

The Oneness of Humanity

(Contd from pg. 8)

towards God; for God alone as Creator, in whose image and likeness man alone of all creatures is created (Genesis,1), encompasses all these dimensions and brings them together as oneness in Jesus Christ who alone, as we shall see, unites them all in their multiform distinctions. (John,1,3-5)

Sin as a Human Factual Existential

But when the fellowship of God and man breaks down, it must lead also to disintegration in man, both between men and between the world and men. Scripture describes that situation of distance from God and the resulting self-alienation as sin (hamartia). But sin is not merely a particular, responsible act on man's part, opposed to the will of God. It is not merely because of his ethical or practical solidarity with all others that man accepts sin. According to Scripture, sin is experienced as encompassing situation and as power which every man accepts in virtue of his ontological solidarity with others, and then ratifies by his own act. This shared sinfulness therefore is not merely something external to man; it is not merely a bad example, evil influence, seductive atmosphere. It characterizes each man inwardly in what he is in the sight of God, of others, and of himself. Shared sinfulness is a factual existential of every man. The deepest reason, therefore, which the Christian Faith finds for humanity's non-oneness, non-solidarity, or disunity is humanity's universally shared sinfulness or oneness in evil. In this sense, man's alienation from God and from the saving will God formed in Jesus Christ give rise to alienation of man from his authentic image, alienation between men, and alienation between man and his world. (11)

5. Jesus Christ, the reason and cause of humanity's oneness:

An Infinite Opposition

Humanity's oneness or solidarity in evil or sin, described above as every human being's factual existential, is in fact opposed to the original saving will of God, who created everything in view of Jesus Christ and wills to fulfil all in him who, as the perfect man, is the concrete, corporeal realization of the image and likeness of God. (12) That is to say, there is in fact an infinite opposition, a humanly unfathomable gulf or distance, between humanity's primordial orientation to and oneness in Jesus Christ and humanity's oneness in evil or sin. But "Blessed he the ' God and Father -of Our Lord' Jesus Christ..." For he has -made known to us in all -wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (13)

The Messiah, Judaic and Christian

Neither, for Judaism nor for the ancient East as a whole does man ever stand before God as an isolated individual. Both sin and salvation are seen clearly in their community or solidarity dimension. By reason of a common origin and a common destiny, the individual is always and everywhere in solidarity with the community of which he forms a member. At the time of the Macabees the idea developed of the representatively atoning significance of the suffering and death of a righteous man. The unjust suffering and martyrdom of the just one are satisfaction not only for his own sins, but for the sins of the others of his community, it breaks through the network of shared evil to become the sign of God's merciful love. The climax of this theology of representation or of vicarious suffering in the Old Testament is the fourth song of the servant-of-God. 'He' has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains... He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed... The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all... (Is. 52:13 - 53:12). To be sure, the identity of this servant of God is disputed. Apparently there is no historical figure, neither an individual nor Israel as a whole, which fits this character. The figure becomes a pointer to someone who is to come. Judaism however

never ventured to apply the statements about suffering to the expected Messiah. Only the cross made it possible to understand the Old Testament in that way. (14)

Highest Perfection, Greek and Christian

To locate one's nature in being a hypostasis or in being self-subsistence was regarded by the Greeks as the highest perfection. According to the teaching of the New Testament, however this is not a basic feature of the human figure of Jesus Christ. Rather, he is the one who steps aside, who stands up for others, and identifies himself with others, especially with the suffering poorest of the poor; it is his nature to exist for others; it is self-surrender, self-abandonment; he emptied himself to identify himself with the human lot. He is thus the man for other human beings. His nature is devotion and love. In this love for humanity, for each and everyone of us without any exception or division, without inference of race, culture, language, or world outlook, without distinction between friends and enemies, he is the concretization of the image and likeness of God in humanity, the concrete form of existence of the rule of God's love for each and all of us. As in relation to God his Father, he is wholly existence in receptivity or obedience, so in relation to humanity he is wholly existence in devotion and representation. In this dual transcendence he is mediator between God and humanity. (15)

The Universal Shalom

Taking on himself our guilt-entangled history, Jesus gives it a new dimension and establishes a new beginning through his voluntary obedience and his vicarious or representative service. In his obedience and service, in his suffering and dying on the cross where his obedience and service reach their supreme summit, humanity's history of disobedience, of hatred and lying, is brought to a halt; these powers of evil wear themselves out on him and rush to their death; since he does not respond to them, he swallows them up, so to say, in his death. His death, then, is the death of death. Evil is swallowed up in victory. He is therefore not only a member of mankind, but the beginning of a new humanity. (16) The universally shared sinful disobedience of the old humanity (or of the first Adam) is expiated by the obedience unto death of Him who is the new Adam (Romans, 5:12-21: 1 Corinthians, 15:45-47) He is the good shepherd who by the surrender of his life gathers his sheep together (John, 10:11). In Galatians, (3:26-28), and in Colossians, 3:11, St. Paul draws attention to the new humanity's oneness in Christ: "... in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"; "Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and "In, all." In the love, obedience and service of Jesus Christ, the old unbridgeable gulf between humanity's primeval orientation to him and humanity's solidarity in sin or evil is bridged; all elements of non-oneness, non-solidarity, non-fellowship are removed. For he is our Shalom (peace) (Ephesians, 2:13ff.). Through him and in his person, God has established the universal Shalom promised already in the Old Testament, the reconciliation of all nations, "in one body, in his person bringing the hostility (between Jew and Gentile) to an end". Shalom, thus, is the concrete historical embodiment of that salvation which was promised in the Old Testament and which, according to the New Testament, has come in and through Jesus Christ. (17).

The Eternal Grammer

For Christianity, ultimate principles indispensable for salvation or plenary fulfilment of humanity (such as those of oneness, love, freedom, reconciliation, peace, justice, which are constitutive of the order of the universe, known as God's kingdom), are worked out from the very beginning with reference to Jesus Christ as the grammer in which and through which God's fatherly, merciful love is to be directly and underivably expressed and realized in humanity and, indeed, in the

universal creation. Jesus Christ then assigns to Christians and to the Church the world as the place of their service, and binds them to co-operate in new world-order, sustained by the new human oneness or solidarity in him. The Christian Faith is always thrown back on him, the unique oneness between God and humanity, and therefore the unique reason and cause of the oneness of, humanity. (18)

Two False Conceptions of Salvation

No system of exchange of material goods and services such as is exemplified if consumer societies and capitalism can take the place of the Christian doctrine of redemption, and the idea based on this of a universal solidarity in and through Christ's representation. For it is intolerable that human beings, each of absolute value and dignity, be ultimately subjected to the objective pressures of impersonal material things. Nor can any group, class, society nor even all human nations together be a substitute for the Christian doctrine of redemption and of a universal human solidarity; for no joint, yet ultimately finite, human efforts can establish' or create each man's absolute value and dignity; they can only recognize it and provide for its concrete realization. Hence, it is intolerable that for a "restoration of the human world, of relationships", Marx should call for emancipation from religion as the condition for all other emancipations. (19)

Concluding Summary

Unconditional recognition and acceptance of every human being is in effect possible only through God. Only when the love of God for man becomes an event in human history, can a new beginning be made in history. Only through the historical solidarity of God in the God-man, Jesus Christ, can solidarity be established among men. The renewed and recreated order of the universe (justice, peace and reconciliation among men) is possible only if God himself becomes man, the man for others, and so establishes the beginning of a new oneness, a new solidarity and fellowship among human beings. By entering into the world in person as the Son of God, he changes the situation of everyone. Every human being is now defined by the fact that Jesus Christ is his brother or sister, his neighbour, comrade, fellow-human being.

"Jesus Christ is now a part of man's ontological definition.." (20) Further, each human being enters into a loved-loving personal relationship with God the Father, since God himself comes with Jesus, who is God the Son. To all human beings, then, to all men and women without any exception or division: without difference of race, culture, language, or world outlook, without distinction between friends and enemies, a new opportunity of salvation a new kairos is opened up. In the one humanity of Jesus Christ, the existence of each and every human being is determined by the existence of all. For it is precisely "in the body of Christ that salvation is personally exemplified and offered for each and every human being. For "Jesus Christ in his living personality is salvation" and salvation means partly "the new man in Jesus Christ who is liberated from the alienation of his former existence to a new freedom, not from the body and from the world, but in the body and in the world". (21)

(1) Walter Kasper, Jesus the Christ, London, Burns Oates, 1976, p.221. (2) See Walter Kasper, o.c., p.201. (3) See Walter Kasper, o.c., p.202. (4) God Rich in Mercy, (L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly English edition, 9 Dec., 1980), n. 10. (5) God Rich in Mercy, n. 11. (6) God Rich in Mercy, n. 12. (7) God Rich in Mercy, n. 11. (8) Ibid. (9) Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, n. 10. (10) See Walter Kasper, o.c., p. 203. See Walter Kasper, o.c., pp.203-4. (12) See Colossians, 1, 15-17. (13) Ephesians, 1, 3... 9-10. (14) See Walter Kasper, o.c., pp.215-6. (15) See Walter Kasper, o.c., pp.216-7. (16) See Walter Kasper, o.c., p. 218. (17) See Walter Kasper, o.c., p.219. (18) See Walter Kasper, o.c., p.225. (19) See Walter Kasper, o.c., pp.224-5. (20) Walter Kasper, o.c., p.205. (21) See Walter Kasper, o.c., p.207.

Late Rev. Fr. Harold Panditharatne
National Seminary
Ampitiya,
Kandy.

Cricket World Cup Champions, team-up for a worthy cause

The 1996 World Cup Champions jellied together as one unit, after a lapse of seventeen years, to be in action at a T-Twenty exhibition cricket match recently. This was with the intention of raising funds to snowball the 'big heart project fund', called the 'Nena Diriya', in order to facilitate the education of children, who run the risk of dropping out from school, due to poverty.

A public survey carried out recently reveals that, approximately 122,000 children islandwide need financial assistance, to continue their education uninterrupted. With the cost of living on the rise, this number is anticipated to be on the climb to giddy heights in the future.

These cricketers who once preferred the 'bat and ball' over the 'book and pen', obviously acknowledge the value of education. Thus the cricketing champions now act as ambassadors, to champion the cause of assisting the marginalized children towards education.

Why don't we take this exemplary gesture seriously and follow suit? Thus you could very well identify a downtrodden family with school going children, within your neighbourhood. If you think otherwise, just look out into the street which leads to a school. An off coloured uniform, a tarnished and worn out pair of shoes, would spell out the sob story of poverty, of the children who struggle to provide for themselves, the basic needs to pursue their education.

When your children enjoy the luxury of receiving transport by a school van, some others cannot find funds even to travel by public transport. Some make it by bus only in the morning to be at school on time. They return home on foot, since they lack funds to afford bus fare twice a day. Yet the lesser fortunate have no alternative, but to make both ways on foot, to and from school.

When your children return home from school, they possibly are served a square meal each day. After a wash and a nap, they make their way for tuition or for some sporting activity or at least enjoy the luxury of watching television. The unfortunate children after a scrappy meal, engage themselves in some activity, to facilitate their parents, to earn a bit more. If their source of income is through agriculture and farming, the children are bound to reach out to the field or to the vegetable plot, the poultry, the piggery or the cattle shed, to be occupied till sunset. If they are from the coastal belt, the children are forced to go out to the beach, to drag in a net, to sort out a haul of fish or to mend a fishing net. If the earnings are from the supply of hoppers, string hoppers or other eatables, which are made available for sale at the eating places in town, the child goes collecting the proceeds and carries home the returns, unsold. This then would be the dinner at the end of the day. How fresh and palatable it would be, is anybody's guess.

**.....make up
your mind to be a
foster parent to adopt
the educational
future of a
needy child.**

When your child has a room of his own, a table and a lamp fixed on to it, a fan besides and more so the silence conducive for studies, these children have the bare minimum or nothing at all. May be a common room, one shaky table and a dim lamp above it, a warped bench or chair to sit on, would be the most that are available. A conducive



atmosphere to concentrate on studies of course, is far beyond reach.

When you as educated parents guide and encourage children to perform better, the uneducated parents of these children, find less meaning in education. They do not have the foresight to reason out that education is an investment for better living. Their immediate insight is to make a living each day. Thus these children lack the encouragement and advice of their parents, to spur them on. If you wish, stay at home and join the force to make a living, is the theme upheld for the sake of survival. This 'come what may attitude' of the parents, lacks the force which motivates these children towards education.

The parents have no funds in reserve, to purchase the set of books at the beginning of the new year. Hence many of these children are seen with book lists in hand, joining queues at church premises, seeking assistance of the priests, the religious and socially oriented charitable organizations. How comforting it is to see your child receiving new books on time, with covers and name stickers fixed and books stacked into order with new uniforms, a new pair of shoes and a new school bag too. What a boost your child gets as against the drawback a poor child faces. Begging for a few books more with outstretched hands, like Oliver Twist did begging for more with a bowl in hand, is what determines their forward journey in education.

As parents you should thank the Lord, for your ability to afford your child's needs, without dragging them into a pathetic and embarrassing state. As children you should thank the Lord, for giving you parents who could well afford your requirements. Make sure you do not tax them beyond their means. Be certain that you would not squander what they provide you for education and more so the time allocated for studies.

As a parent if you wish to adopt a needy child's educational future, how meritorious would it be? You may choose a child who is of the same age as your own son or daughter. When ever you spend on your child's education, it should trigger a reminder of the obligation that lies with you, regarding this child too. Make sure what you provide for the child in need

be handed over, by your son or daughter. This will help your child to realise how privileged he or she is beside the hardships other children face. That exposure would encourage your child and the beneficiary as well, to do the most, to the best of their ability.



**Your 'foster parent
attitude' in adopting
the educational future
of a needy child, should
go on until your child
reaches the final goal
or even beyond.**

Therefore make up your mind to be a foster parent to adopt the educational future of a needy child. After all the child you selected, is a child of God, with similar desires and aspirations as your child. Champion this cause and do not leave it to the World Cup Champions to handle it on their own. Who knows, their efforts could be temporary, till such time, the public focus is on them. This has to go on endlessly, uninterrupted. Your 'foster parent attitude' in adopting the educational future of a needy child, should go on until your child reaches the final goal or even beyond. What a blessing it would be to you, to your child, and more so to the beneficiary. Try and make the beneficiary convinced, that the help which comes his or her way, is through the love of Jesus.

Your child and the beneficiary may gain better results and achieve better prospects of employment, while you as parents would gain more graces and achieve better prospects of life eternal.

Believe in God

When Moses on the mountain saw the bush on fire,
He noticed it kept burning, so unlike a pyre,
Moses knew some person was there, and asked his name,
"I am who I am" replied the voice in the flame.

"I am the God of your fathers" and "I will be with you",
Moses believed all that he saw and heard was really true.
He now went back to his people to tell them the Good News,
They were to be God's very own, a people He did choose.

It was not because of what they had done for Him
Like all the rest they too, were guilty of much sin,
It was due to God's love like a father for a son,
A love that never ends, not a prize for something won.

To believe in God, to love Him with all of one's heart,
Means to serve Him first and always, until life departs.
We know His greatness, majesty and so we give Him thanks,
We love all others whom we know He made equal, without rank.

Things too we use with care and much appreciation,
For God made them to be used, but not for our addiction
This earth is God's garden where
we live and love and play,
It should teach the goodness of Him
who made night and day.

At times people reject God for what He is not,
They adore themselves instead of
the One Whom they ought,
God is a mystery beyond our imagination
Our praise for Him fails,
because of human limitation.



School needs by Samagi Three Wheel Society



Twenty four students of Kaluverippuwa Primary Mixed School who were desperately in need of school items, were provided with the necessary requirements. This meritorious act was carried out by the Samagi Threewheel Society of Katana - Delgashandiya. Here the children are seen with their teachers.

C.D.

Prefects Investiture Ceremony of St. Lawrence's Convent for the year 2013



As always the Prefect Investiture Ceremony of St. Lawrence's Convent, has been a vital event in the school calendar. The newly elected prefects and leaders are given authority, to carry out duties and responsibilities through the year. This was held on January 11, 2013 at the school premises. The Chief Celebrant of the Holy

Eucharistic service was His Excellency Rt. Rev Dr. Joseph Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio of Sri Lanka.

Following the Eucharistic service the badges were blessed by His Excellency.

In this ceremony 62 students were appointed as senior and primary prefects and 40 students were appointed as school leaders for the year 2013.

Nimesha

Grade One Students welcomed at De Mazenod College



The freshers who begin their academic career from Grade One at De Mazenod College, Kandana, were greeted at a welcome ceremony, which was presided by Rev. Bro. Bertram at the open air premises.

The students of Grade Two, wished and greeted the newcomers with a bouquet of flowers and accompanied them in procession to their new classrooms.

'Suspicious'

Suspicion is 'Killer of life' of 'a person'
If I suspect somebody...
I should have an 'eye witness'
If not pray to God to show the 'truth'
But I don't suspect a person,
For a work that has been carried by them in the past.

The day will arise for each one to 'judge' and to 'be judged'
Until then I respect and respond to the signs of the times.

I prevent killing others lives
By suspecting but 'promote'
And embrace them with the Forgiving Heart of "God Alone"

Sr. A Christina Lourdes H.F.



My life is 'precious' in the 'eyes of God'
And also I know that my body Is the 'Temple of God'
I truly believe that I don't have A 'right to judge' others.

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What it says in the Readings

The kingdom of God is close at hand; believe the Good News.

**LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR C
Jan. 27th - 3rd Feb. 2013**

- Sun: THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
HOLY CHILDHOOD SUNDAY**
Neh 8:2-6, 8-10; 1 Cor. 12:12-30 (or 12-14,27); Lk. 1: 1-4,4:14-21
- Mon: Memorial of Thomas Aquinas, Priest & Doctor**
Hebr. 9: 15, 24-28; Mk.3: 22-30
- Tue: Hebr. 10:1-10; Mk. 3: 31-35**
- Wed: Hebr. 10: 11-18, Mk. 4:1-20**
- Thu: Memorial of St. John Bosco, Priest**
Hebr. 10: 19-25; Mk. 4: 21-25
- Fri: Hebr. 10:32-39; Mk. 4: 26-34**
- Sat: Feast of Presentation of the Lord**
Mal. 3: 1-4 or Heb. 2: 14-18; Lk. 2: 22-40 (or 22-32)
- Sun: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
Jer. 1: 4-5, 17-19; 1 Cor.12:31-13: 13 or (13: 4-13); Lk. 4: 21-30

Prayer of the Faithful

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless our Holy Father, the Bishops, the priests and the religious, and help them to dispel the darkness that has engulfed the world. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for twenty five years of the Holy Childhood Society in Sri Lanka and the good achieved by the little children of the society. Always bless the little children and through them help the elders to experience your love. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless the Holy Childhood animators, whom you, yourself had called to lead the little ones to you and help them to be exemplary. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, protect the little children who are helpless because of various problems and lack of basic necessities, and help them to experience your love in their lives. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, help the little ones to know Jesus, live Jesus, and make Jesus known to others, and thereby become little missionaries of Jesus. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord hear our prayer.



Place the whole World into my Holy Wounds

Pray, during these days, even more than before. The times are becoming even more difficult, Oh pray for peace. Entrust the whole world to My Sacred Wounds; Where else can it find salvation and healing? My Most Sacred Heart is waiting for your commitment of love, of prayer and sacrifice. You can and should ask for so many graces. Do not let this time of grace pass by unused. The adversary is enraged at the progress in your apostolate. He will attempt to harm wherever he can. Be watchful, and do not let the chain of unity and love be broken. Take my beloved Mother into your midst and ask Her to be your helper and your Queen.

Rienzie Ivan Perera

Prayer for success at examinations

Oh! great St. Joseph of Cupertino who has obtained from God the grace to be asked at examinations the questions you knew. Obtain for me success like yours in my examinations for which I promise to make your name famous and cause you to be invoked. St. Joseph of Cupertino pray for me.

MG, DG, AG, CM

(N5524)

Oh! Holy Spirit. You who makes me see everything and shows me the way to reach my ideal. You who gives me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me. And you who are in all instances of my life with me. I in this short dialogue want to thank you for everything and affirm once more that I never want to be separated from you, no matter how great the material desire may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual Glory: (Mention your request) Thank you Holy Spirit for your love towards me and towards my loved ones. Amen.

I wish to thank:

Our Heavenly Father,
The Holy Spirit,
The Blessed Virgin Mary,
The Holy Infant Jesus,
St. Josemaria Escriva,
Blessed John Paul II,

St. Padre Pio,
St. Joseph,
Bl. Joseph Vaz,
St. Peregrine and
St. Anthony
For great favours granted.

A.W.

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