

Messenger

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'God bless
our Pope,
the great,
the good'

He is Risen -
Alleluia!



"All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"

Matthew 28:18-19

Church installs Pope Francis



Pic by Rev. Fr. Sunil De Silva

VATICAN CITY - The Catholic Church installed Pope Francis as its first Latin American and Jesuit Pontiff, on the morning of Tuesday, March 19.

In his homily, Pope Francis noted the "significant coincidence" that the installation of his Petrine Ministry fell on the feast of Saint Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary and the name-day of his "venerable predecessor" Joseph Ratzinger, now referred to as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

(CONTD ON PG. 3)

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith pledges his loyalty to Pope Francis



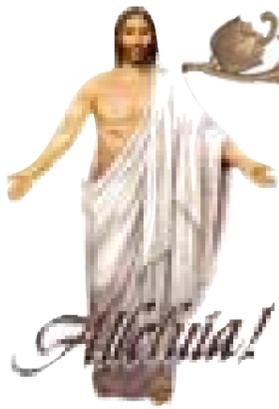
SRI LANKANS GATHER TO PRAY FOR POPE FRANCIS

The Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka, His Excellency Archbishop Joseph Spiteri, presided at the concelebrated High Mass held on Tuesday (19), at St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya, on the Inauguration Day of the New Papacy of Pope Francis.

Several Episcopal Vicars and Rev. Fathers concelebrated at Holy Mass. The faithful gathered in numbers, at the Church to invoke God's blessings and pray for the Holy Father.

Souvenir of Pope Francis

Treasure this pullout as a souvenir in pledging your allegiance to the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Catholic Church, which comes in this issue.



Easter Message by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka

Let us invoke the same gift of peace as we continue to live in post-war Sri Lanka

Easter Issue

Chrism Mass

The blessing of the Holy Oils will take place as scheduled at All Saints' Church, Borella on Monday, March 25 at 10.30 a.m.

Notice

The Colombo Catholic Press will be closed for business from Tuesday, March 26 and will re-open on Monday, April 1, 2013.

Director

Once again, we bring the Liturgical Year to its climax proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth as the Risen Lord and Saviour. We let the words of the angels resound in our ears, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." (Luke 24,5) This year we make this joyful proclamation as the Universal Church goes through the year of faith promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI.

The Pope urged everyone in the Universal Church to discover in this 'year of faith' the joy of believing in Jesus. He also invited us to discover that our faith in Jesus is an inestimable gift given to each and everyone of us. Easter is quite a fitting season to thank God for our faith in the person of Jesus, the Christ. God has bestowed upon us this unique gift of our faith in God's only begotten Son. Thus we also need to thank all those who were instrumental in communicating to us this gift of our faith. Therefore, let us learn to exult in joy as we have been given the good fortune of being believers in Jesus.

The joyful season of Easter invites us to deepen our knowledge of Jesus and to be renewed in the awareness that the Risen

Saviour is alive in our midst. Our faith in the Risen Saviour gives us comfort as He journeys and accompanies us amidst the trials and the challenges life consists of. Easter reminds us that He does not abandon His children and that He is in our midst whatever the challenges we are compelled to go through in life. So this joyful season invites us to renew our awareness of His ongoing presence in our lives and learn to rejoice over the fact that He is our constant companion in life both in sorrow and in joy.

The Risen Saviour appeared to His disciples and granted them his gift of peace. Let us invoke the same gift of peace as we continue to live in post-war Sri Lanka. While there is a certain material development in certain aspects of our lives, there is also the ever widening gap between the rich and the poor in our motherland. Amidst the ever sky rocketing prices of consumer items, day-to-day life is being made more and more burdensome to the poor. There is also the continuing disregard for life and for law and order. Thus the peace the Risen Saviour brought to this world continues to be a dire

need in Sri Lanka. We need to implore the risen saviour for the gift of peace while doing whatever is possible to make that gift of peace real and true in our society.

While we thank God and rejoice in the unique gift of our faith, let us also be mindful of those who suffer for the lack of the basic requirements of life. Our Christian discipleship always invites us to care for those in need since it is our duty to recognise the face of Jesus in those who suffer. Our Easter joy must make us recognise ever more deeply the demands of Christian discipleship. We need to do all we can to alleviate the pains of those around us. May they recognise in and through us, the joy and beauty of believing in Jesus and of becoming His disciples. May we become the agents of the peace the Risen Saviour communicated to His disciples. We unite ourselves with the Universal Church in its prayers for the newly elected Holy Father Pope Francis.

We wish all our readers the joy and the peace of the Risen Saviour.

✠ **Bishop Norbert M. Andradi, OMI**
Secretary General - CBCSL

'Pie Jesu' - A Dramatic Holy Week Choral Presentation

The annual Holy Week choral presentation of sacred songs presented by St. Cecilia's Choir of St. Joseph's College will take place at the splendid chapel of the school in Maradana, Colombo -10.

Date - Monday March 25, 2013 (the day after Palm Sunday) **Time** - 6.30pm.

This solemn programme of hymns, anthems and choruses will be re-enforced with short scripture passages with apt audio-visual clips.

This presentation will take one through the whole gamut of Christ's final days and hours including His defiant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the poignant Last Supper, the tragic betrayal, the cruel torture, the ascend to Calvary, the painful crucifixion, courageous death, quiet burial and the glorious Resurrection.

Undoubtedly, such dramatic scenes will bring out the best of the expanded Josephian Choir of 126 voices, who have earned much acclaim from thousands in the Holy Land and in Rome including plaudits from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

The uniqueness of the Josephian choral outfit in its *Bel Canto* quality, flamboyant style, homogenous balance and above all the versatility to handle a diverse genre with equal finesse.

This Monday they will sing classical masterpieces in polyphonic arrangements apart from majestic choruses, chants and a selection of exquisite contemporary compositions. Sinhala and Tamil as well as traditional English hymns will enable congregational participation.

The programme will include inter-alia:

- Pueri Hebreorum - Chant
- Lauda Jerusalem - Palm Sunday Hymn
- Ave Verum Corpus - William Byrd
- Gethsamane - Traditional
- On a hill far away - Traditional
- Stabat Mater
- Adoramus Te Christe - Palestrina
- Softly and Tenderly - Traditional
- Nearer my God - Modern arrangement
- Kalvariye - Sinhala Hymn
- Above all Power - Contemporary sacred song
- Lacrimosa - Mozart
- Miserere - Gregorio Allegri
- Regina Coeli Laetare - Anthem to Mary
- Worthy is the Lamb - Handel

As is customary the melodious and mellow voices of the 70 strong choir of Good Shepherd Convent will provide yet another facet to the evening.

The culmination of the musically and spiritually rich choral encounter will gather both choirs numbering over 200 choristers who will raise their hearts and voices to sing Handel's majestic Hallelujah chorus.

Entrance is free and Christians and non Christians alike are cordially invited to gain from this awe inspiring musical experience. - **Francis D' Almeida**

St. Peter's College holds special Assembly to mark the Inaugural Mass of the Holy Father

The Papal Nuncio His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri was the Chief Guest at a simple and meaningful but unique ceremony held on Tuesday, March 19, to mark the joyous event of the inaugural Mass of our new Pontiff, Pope Francis. He was accompanied by Rev. Fr. Renato, the Secretary to the Nunciature.

The Papal Nuncio was welcomed by the Rector, Rev. Fr. Travis Gabriel and the Priest Community.

In his address, the Rector, Rev. Fr. Travis Gabriel thanked the Papal Nuncio, His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri for gracing the occasion despite a very busy schedule. He also thanked Rev. Fr. Renato for his presence. He said that the Peterite Family had gathered together to express their love



and loyalty to the Holy See. He also said that we too were partaking at the celebrations at the Vatican City as we are all members of the Universal Catholic Church. He added

that it was our duty to pray for the newly elected Pope Francis. He further stated that it was significant that the Papal Nuncio was not only present with us because he is the representative of the Pope, but also because of his connection to St. Peter our Patron in an indirect sense, his special love and concern for St. Peter's and also because it was the Feast Day of St. Joseph, his Patron Saint.

This had made him join the Seminary to become a Priest. He asked all present to walk together with Jesus, grow in God's love and become witnesses to the world.

This memorable Assembly is something that the entire Peterite Family will cherish with love and devotion.

Rev. Fr. Anton Ranjith
Vice Rector

New building for Convent of Sisters of Providence, Kurunegala



The solemn opening of the new building of the Convent of the Sisters of Providence, Irabadagama, Sandalankawa took place recently with the participation of His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Bishop of Kurunegala.

Present on the occasion were the Bishop Emeritus of Kurunegala, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Peiris, Very Rev. Fr. Piyal Janaka (Episcopal Vicar, Administration) and a large gathering of priests, nuns and the laity.

Paul Wijetunga

Rev. Fr. Edrich Rodrigo - Director
Colombo Catholic Press

Editorial team:

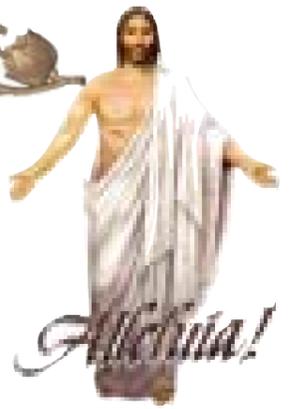
Rev. Fr. Felician R. Perera,
Rev. Fr. Rohan de Zoysa, Manohari
Samaranayake, Valentine Fernando
Sunanda Stembo, Noeline Nicholas,
Seroshini Xavier

Wish all our readers a joyful Easter!

Easter Radio Programmes

- | | |
|------------|------------------------------|
| 28th March | - Holy Thursday - 6.30 p.m. |
| | - Mrs. Maxine Jesudasan |
| 29th March | - Good Friday - 3.00 p.m. |
| | - Mr. Trevor Ludowyke |
| 30th March | - Holy Saturday - 4.30 p.m. |
| | - Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph |
| 31st March | - Easter Sunday - 12.30 p.m. |
| | - Mrs. Priyanthi VanDort |

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Easter Issue

Church installs Pope Francis

Contd. from Pg. 1

Delivering his homily in Italian and focussing on St. Joseph, whose feast day is celebrated every March 19, Pope Francis questioned; How does Joseph exercise his role as protector? Discreetly, humbly and silently, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity, even when he finds it hard to understand. From the time of his betrothal to Mary until the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem, he is there at every moment with loving care. As the spouse of Mary, he is at her side in good times and bad, on the journey to Bethlehem for the census and in the anxious and joyful hours when she gave birth; amid the drama of the flight into Egypt and during the frantic search for their child in the Temple; and later in the day-to-day life of the home of Nazareth, in the workshop where he taught his trade to Jesus.

How does Joseph respond to his calling to be the protector of Mary, Jesus and the Church? By being constantly attentive to God, open to the signs of God's presence and receptive to God's plans, and not simply to his own. This is what God asked of David, as we heard in the First Reading. God does not want a house built by men, but faithfulness to His word, to His plan. It is God Himself who builds the house, but from living stones sealed by His Spirit. Joseph is a "protector" because he is able to hear God's voice and be guided by His will; and for this reason he is all the more sensitive to the persons entrusted to his safekeeping. He can look at things realistically, he is in touch with his surroundings, he can make truly wise deci-

sions. In him, dear friends, we learn how to respond to God's call, readily and willingly, but we also see the core of the Christian vocation, which is Christ! Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation!

The vocation of being a "protector," however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly and those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: Husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves, in time, protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!

Whenever human beings fail to live up to this responsibility, whenever we fail to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters, the way is opened to destruction and hearts are hardened. Tragically, in every period of history there are "Herods" who

plot death, wreak havoc, and mar the countenance of men and women.

Today, together with the feast of Saint Joseph, we are celebrating the beginning of the ministry of the new Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter, which also involves a certain power. Certainly, Jesus Christ conferred power upon Peter, but what sort of power was it? Jesus' three questions to Peter about love are followed by three commands: Feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Let us never forget that authentic power is service, and that the Pope too, when exercising power, must enter ever more fully into that service which has its radiant culmination on the Cross. He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete and faithful service which marked Saint Joseph and, like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God's

people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: The hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (cf. Mt 25:31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect!

In the Second Reading, Saint Paul speaks of Abraham, who, "hoping against hope, believed" (Rom 4:18). Hoping against hope! Today too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others. To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of

hope! For believers, for us Christians, like Abraham, like Saint Joseph, the hope that we bring is set against the horizon of God, which has opened up before us in Christ. It is a hope built on the rock which is God.

Pope Francis says ...

● To Cardinals: Like good wine improve with age

Pope Francis urged the College of Cardinals to courageously persevere in finding new ways to evangelize.

"We have the certainty that the Holy Spirit gives His Church, with His powerful breath, the courage to persevere and to search for new ways to evangelize," Pope Francis said when he met cardinals, including the elderly ones who did not participate in his election.

"Like good wine that improves with age, let us give young people this life's wisdom.

"Half of us are old and I like to think of old age as the seat of wisdom in life," said the Pope.

● To Church: Without the Crucifixion, Church is 'pitiful'

The day after he was elected, Pope Francis emphasized that every believer – including bishops, cardinals and popes – must proclaim Jesus crucified to be true Christians.

"We can build so many things but if we don't confess Jesus Christ, then something is wrong. We will become a pitiful NGO, but not the Church, spouse of Christ," Pope Francis said in his March 14 homily.

"He who doesn't pray to God prays to the Devil," the Pope added in an apparent quote.

● To fellow Argentineans: Help the Poor!

Pope Francis told the Apostolic Nuncio to Argentina to ask his countrymen not to travel to Italy for the ceremony that will begin his pontificate.

"Tell the bishops and the faithful to make an offering and an act of solidarity to the poor with the money instead," so said Director of the Vatican's press office, Father Federico Lombardi, addressing journalists at the Vatican Media Centre.

Fr. Lombardi spoke to the Nuncio, Archbishop Emil Paul Tscherrig, who confirmed that Pope Francis had telephoned him on the night of his election.

"But those who know him find this very normal, since it is his style," said Fr. Lombardi.

● To Journalists: I love you!

Pope Francis told thousands of journalists he loved them and thanked them for their work.

"I love you so much and I thank you for all that you have done," Pope Francis told over 5,000 journalists at Paul VI Hall in the Vatican.

"Your work needs study, sensibility, experience like all other professions, but needs to also give special attention to truth, goodness and beauty," said the Pope.

He thanked the journalists for their "hard work" covering the days since His Holiness Benedict XVI announced his resignation adding that it is not easy to communicate to "a vast and varied public." "Be sure that the Church reserves a big attention to your precious work," said the 76-year-old Pontiff

Hostel for differently-abled at Dalugama



The Martin de Kegel Foundation under the Christian Workers' Movement declared open a hostel for the differently-abled recently at Dalugama.

Among those present were Buddhists and Christians. Picture shows the ceremony in connection with the lighting of the traditional oil lamp.

Theobald Samaratunga

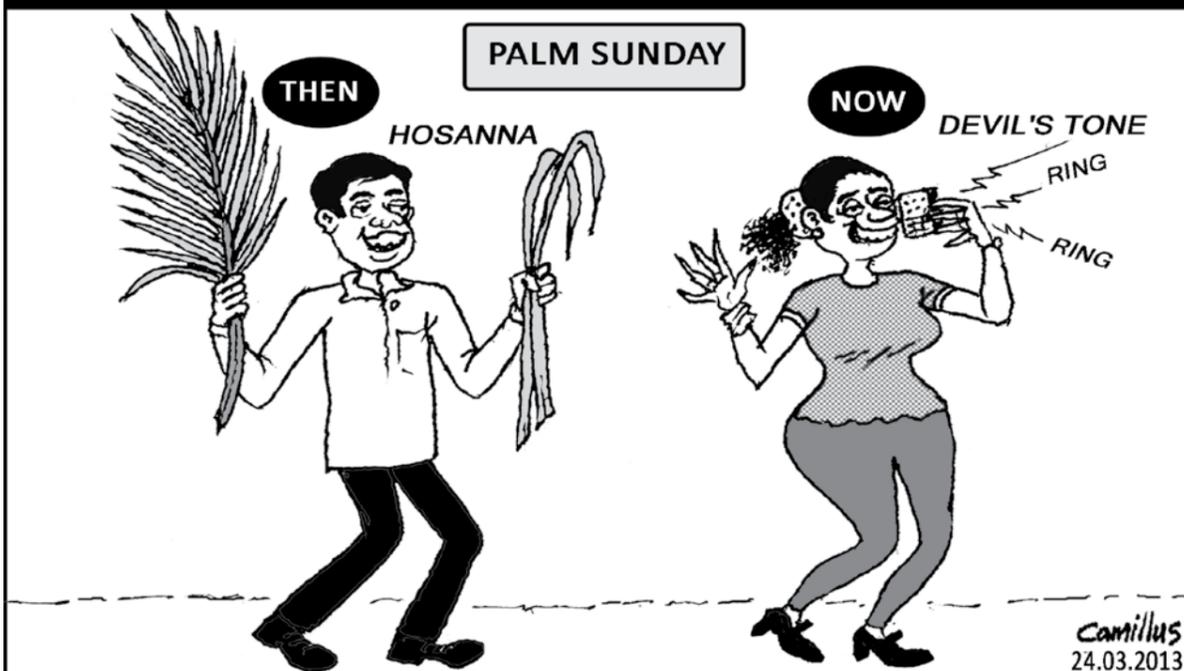
House for Religious Formation

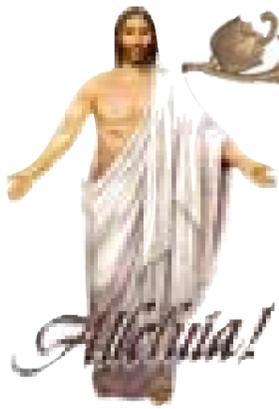
A few houses suitable to be used as a house of Religious Formation or a place of rest are available within the Diocese of Anuradhapura. Conditions are negotiable.

Inquiries: Rev. Fr. Procurator General, Tel: 071-6907396 / 025 2222503

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus





Easter Issue

Fresh air from Buenos Aires (good air) Pope Francis

Rev. Fr. Freely
Muthukudarachchi

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
Messenger

EDITORIAL
March 24, 2013

Easter: A journey closer to God

The Holy Week of Easter is upon us. It should be a grace-filled period of Lent and Holy Week. All Christians worldwide prepare for the climax of Christ's passion and resurrection, marked by the Last Supper, the Agony in the Garden, the Trial, the Scourging, the terrible Crucifixion, the Descent into Hell and, finally, His most glorious Resurrection and appearance to His disciples and others.

The Greek word '*Metanoia*' best describes the transformation we should strive for during Lent and the Holy Week and in our encounter with the Risen Christ. '*Metanoia*' means a profound spiritual transformation; similar to what Saint Paul experienced on his way to Damascus or Saint Francis of Assisi's own '*Metanoia*', when he shed the veneer of his old, earthly ways, to become the man of God that was to become his vocation.

Many Christians make various resolutions at the start of Lent, and that is a good thing. The most common resolution being that of watching what they eat. Some people eat less, or forego meat on certain days, or endeavour to fast a bit more. Others may wish to engage in a deeper prayer life, or exercise greater charity to their fellow human beings. These are all good spiritual exercises. An alternative would be to participate in Lent by exercising love towards neighbour (one of the primary commandments of Christ) or by choosing life-affirming options of drawing closer to God.

This Easter is especially exciting for us, given that we have a new Pope. Pope Francis's unique style of leadership, with his penchant for charity and humility, heralds a new age for the Church. Following on from the wonderful legacy left behind by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, the new Pontiff will help usher in Holy Week with great anticipation for all Christians worldwide.

At the deepest level, Holy Week is a personal calling for each of us to know and love Christ as intimately as possible. It is a calling for us to become one with the Triune God. A mighty God, Who for the love of us became the exact opposite of everything that He personifies - sin. Starting Palm Sunday, through to Easter Sunday, we should relive the accounts of Christ's final week on earth. This should be our priority. There is a saying, "To know Him is to love Him." We should go through the scriptures, participate in each and every key Holy Week service and other religious observances during this time.

If just one thing were to be achieved by us during Lent and Holy Week, it should be a journeying closer with God. In the words of Saint Augustine "Our hearts are restless, until they rest in You, O Lord."

The world rejoiced for Argentina that their metropolitan prelate has been raised to the Papacy. First ever Pope from the Americas and from outside Europe after twelve centuries in the history of the Papacy, Pope Francis was elected as the 265th successor to the Apostle Peter. The chief pastor of the largest diocese in the southern nation of the Americas, Jorge Mario Cardinal Bergoglio, the first Jesuit prelate takes up reigns of the See of Rome as the Shepherd of the Universal Church.

One of the shortest Conclaves, one which received the most attention not only by Catholics but by the whole media world, brought forth the unexpected prelate from the Southern hemisphere. According to his own words, "it seems that my brother cardinals went to the ends of the earth to give Rome a bishop."

The remarkable quality of the new Pope is that in him the intellectual stature of a Jesuit is combined in a truly pastoral simplicity of life. Riding on public transport seems to be his characteristic feature of everydayness as he travelled from his apartment to his office, something he practiced on the very first day in office at Rome.

Inauguration of the Holy Father

The inauguration of Pope Francis took place at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome on March 19, on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Patron and Guardian of the Universal Church. During the ceremony the Holy Father received the Pallium and the Ring. The Insignia and other articles connected to the Papal Office have specific meaning connected to each of them, some by tradition and others by personal choice of the Holy Father.

The Pallium

The Holy Father received the Pallium, the Insignia of the Metropolitan Bishop of Rome. Pallium, a lamb's



wool band with five crosses which is worn around shoulders and back signifies the task entrusted to him as the Shepherd of the Church of Rome. The senior Cardinal Deacon, Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran invested the Pallium on the Holy Father.

The Ring

The fisherman's ring which is a sign of the succession of the Petrine Ministry was given to the Holy Father by Angelo Cardinal Sodano, the senior of Cardinal-Bishop. This ring symbolizes the miraculous catch of fish by Peter



which reminds us of Jesus' promise that He will make him a fisher of people. The figure of St. Peter with keys in his hand is engraved in the ring.

The Coat of Arms

According to the communique from the press office of the Vatican, the Papal Seal contains a blue background with a miter with crossed keys of gold and silver along with a red cord, all symbols of the office of the Roman Pontiff.

"The emblem of the Society of Jesus, the order which Pope Francis belongs to, is placed above the shield. The emblem is an image of a radiant sun with the letters "IHS" the monogram of the name of Christ. A cross is placed above the letter H of the monogram while three nails are placed below it.

On the bottom left hand side of the shield is an image of a star, which according to heraldic tradition, symbolizes the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and of the Church. To the right of the star is the image of the spikenard, an aromatic plant, meant to symbolize St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church. According to Spanish iconographic tradition, St. Joseph is depicted holding a branch of spikenard in his hand.

By placing these two symbols on his coat of arms, Pope Francis wished to express his particular devotion to the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph."

The Motto

The Holy Father will retain his Episcopal Motto '*Misarando Atque Eligendo.*' The motto is - *Because he saw him through the eyes of mercy and chose him* - is taken from a homily by St. Bede the Venerable regarding the calling of St. Matthew by Jesus.

"At age 17, the young Jorge Bergoglio experienced in a particular way, the loving presence of God in his life after going to confession on the feast day of St. Matthew. Following confession, his heart was touched by the descent of the Mercy of God, who with tender love called him to the religious life, following the example of Saint Ignatius of Loyola," a communique stated explaining the Papal Coat of Arms

The Name

The Holy Father recounted "During the election, I was seated next to the Archbishop Emeritus of São Paulo and Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Clergy, Cardinal Claudio Hummes: A good friend, a good friend! When things were looking treacherous, he encouraged me. And when the votes reached two thirds, there was the usual applause, because the Pope had been elected. And he gave me a hug and a kiss, and said: "Don't forget the poor!"

"And those words came to me: The poor, the poor. Then, right away, thinking of the poor, I thought of St. Francis of Assisi. Then I thought of all the wars, as the votes were still being counted, to the end. St. Francis is also the man of peace. That is how the name came into my heart: Francis of Assisi."

The Act of Obedience

The ceremony of the inauguration of the Pope was ended with the promise of obedience, which was made by six cardinals, one of each Order. All the Cardinals made an act of obedience to the Pope in the Conclave, immediately after his election.

Taking Possession of the Cathedral of Rome

The Pope as the Bishop of Rome takes possession of the Diocese of Rome at a ceremony in the Basilica of St. John Lateran. Lateran Basilica is the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Rome from ancient times before St Peter's Basilica was built on the Vatican Hill above the tomb of St. Peter. At the moment of "taking possession" of the Cathedral of Rome, the regular act of obedience by the members of the people of God, laity, religious and clerics make an act of obedience to the Pope.

(Contd. on Pg. 13)



Easter Issue

Faith cannot be presupposed; it must be proposed

By Rev. Dr. Camillus Fernando

This should be an imperative with regard to discussion on the light of faith. Faith is not maintained automatically. It is not a "finished business" that we can simply take for granted. The life of faith has to be constantly renewed. And since faith is an act that comprehends all the dimensions of our existence, it also requires constantly renewed reflection and witness. It follows that the chief points of faith – God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, grace and sin, Sacraments and Church, death and eternal life – are never outmoded. They are always the issues that affect us most profoundly. They must be the permanent centre of preaching and therefore of theological reflection. The bishops present at the 1985 Synod called for a Universal Catechism of the whole Church. Their experience as shepherds had shown them that the various new pastoral activities have no solid basis unless they are applications of the message of faith. Faith cannot be presupposed; it must be proposed. This is the purpose of the Catechism. It aims to propose the faith in its fullness and wealth, but also in its unity and simplicity.

What does the Church believe?

This question implies another: Who believes, and how does someone believe? The Catechism treats these two main questions, which concern, respectively, the "what" and the "who" of faith, as an intrinsic unity. Expressed in other terms, the Catechism displays the act of faith and the content of faith in their indivisible unity. This may sound somewhat abstract, so let us try to unfold a bit of what it means.

We find in the creeds two formulas: "I believe" and "We believe." We speak of the faith of the Church, of the personal character of faith, and finally of faith as a gift of God – as a "theological act," as contemporary theology likes to put it. What does all of this mean?

Faith is an orientation of our existence as a whole. It is a

fundamental option that affects every domain of our existence. Nor can it be realized unless all the energies of our existence go into maintaining it. Faith is not merely intellectual, or merely volitional, or merely emotional activity – it is all of these things together. It is an act of the whole self, of the whole person in his concentrated unity. The Bible describes faith in this sense as an act of the "heart" (Rom 10:9).

Faith is a supremely personal act. But precisely because it is supremely personal it transcends the self, the limits of the individual. Augustine remarks that nothing is as little as our self. Where man as a whole comes into play, he transcends himself: An act of the whole self is at the same time always an opening to others, hence, an act of being together with others. What is more, we cannot perform this act without touching our deepest ground, the living God who is present in the depths of our existence as its sustaining foundation.

Any act that involves the whole man also involves not just the self but we-dimension – indeed, the wholly other "thou, God, together with the self. But this also means that such an act transcends the reach of what I can do alone. Since man is a created being, the deepest truth about him is never just action but always passion, as well; man is not only a giver but also a receiver. The Catechism expresses this point in the following words: "No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life." Paul's description of his experience of conversion and baptism alludes to faith's radical character: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). Faith is a perishing of the mere self and precisely a resurrection of the true self. To believe is to become oneself through liberation from the mere self, a liberation that brings us into communion with God mediated by communion with Christ.

So far, we have attempted, with the help of the Catechism, to analyze "who" believes, hence, to identify the

structure of the act of faith. But in so doing we have already caught sight of the outlines of the essential content of faith. In its core, Christian faith is an encounter with the living God. God is, in the proper and ultimate sense, the content of our faith. Looked at in this way, the content of faith is absolutely simple; I believe in God. But this absolute simplicity is also absolutely deep and encompassing. We can believe in God because He can touch us, because He is in us, and because He also comes to us from the outside. We can believe in Him because of the one whom He has sent. "Because He has seen the Father," says the Catechism, referring to John 6: 56, "Jesus Christ is the only one who knows Him and can reveal Him." We could say that to believe is to be granted a share in Jesus' vision. He lets us see with Him in faith what He has seen.

This statement implies both the divinity of Jesus Christ and His humanity. Because Jesus is the Son, He has an unceasing vision of the Father, because He is man, we can share this vision. Because He is both God and man at once, he is neither merely a historical person nor simply removed from all time in eternity. Rather, He is in the midst of time, always alive, always present.

God becomes concrete for us in Christ. This has two consequences. On the one hand, the triune mystery of God becomes discernible; on the other hand, we see that God has involved Himself in history to point that the Son has become man and now sends us the Spirit from the Father. But the Incarnation also includes the mystery of the Church, for Christ came to "gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Jn 11; 52). The "we" of the Church is the new communion into which God draws us beyond our narrow selves (cf. Jn 12:32) The Church is thus contained in the first movement of the act of faith itself. The Church is not an institution extrinsically added to faith as an organizational framework for the common activities of believers. No, she is integral to the act of faith

itself. The "I believe" is always also a "We believe." As the Catechism says, "I believe is also the Church, our mother, responding to God by faith as she teaches us to say both 'I believe' and 'We believe.'"

Faith is encountering the Living Saviour

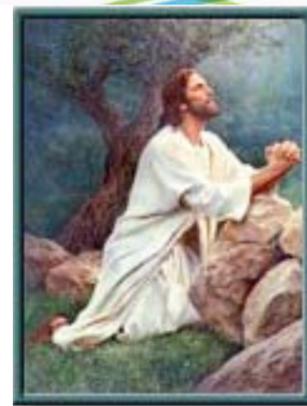
We observed just now that the analysis of the act of faith immediately displays faith's essential content, as well: faith is response to the triune God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We can now add that the same act of faith also embraces God's incarnation in Jesus Christ, mystery, and thus the entirety of salvation history. It further becomes clear that the People of God, the Church as the human protagonist of salvation history, is present in the very act of faith. It would not be difficult to demonstrate in a similar fashion that the other items of belief are also explications of the one fundamental act of encountering the living God. For by its very nature, relation to God has to do with eternal life. And this relation necessarily transcends the merely human sphere. God is truly God only if He is the Lord of all things. And He is the Lord of all things only if He is their Creator. Creation, salvation history, and eternal life are thus themes that flow directly from the question of God. In addition, when we speak of God's history with man, we also imply the issue of sin and grace. We touch upon the question of how we encounter God, hence, the question of the liturgy, of the sacraments, of prayer and morality. Finally, I would like to touch briefly on the question we mentioned at the beginning of our reflections. I mean the question of how we believe. Paul furnishes us with a remarkable and extremely helpful statement on this matter when he says that faith is obedience "from the heart to the form of doctrine into which you were handed over" (Rom 6:17) these words ultimately express the sacramental character of faith. The apostle says that a "form of doctrine" is an essential component of faith. We do not think up faith on our own. It comes not from us as an idea of ours but to us as a word from outside. It is, as it were, a word about the Word; we are "handed over" into

this Word, which reveals new paths to our reason and gives form to our life.

These remarks enable us to understand the concrete literary structure of the Catechism. To believe, as we have heard, is to be handed over into a form of doctrine. In another passage, Paul calls this form of doctrine a confession (cf. Rom 10:9). A further aspect of the faith event thus emerges. That is, the faith that comes to us as a word must also become a word in us, a word that is simultaneously the expression of our life. To believe is always also to confess the faith. Faith is not private but something public that concerns the community. The word of faith first enters the mind, but it cannot stay there: Thought must always become word and deed again.

We must accus-

tom ourselves to God's ways so that we can learn to bear His presence in us. This brings to light the moral dimension of the act of faith, which includes a style of humanity we do not produce by ourselves, but which we gradually learn by plunging into our baptismal existence. The sacrament of penance is one such immersion into baptism, in which God again and again acts on us and draws us back to Himself. Morality is an integral component of Christianity, but this morality is always part of the sacramental event of "Christianization" – an event in which we are not the sole agents but are always, indeed primarily, receivers, and this reception entails transformation.



One Man

Men together at supper,
ONE MAN breaks the bread;
His hands lift up the Chalice,
The eternal words are said.

Men asleep in a garden,
Where ONE MAN kneels alone;
A prayer goes up in the silence,
"Father - Thy will be done!"

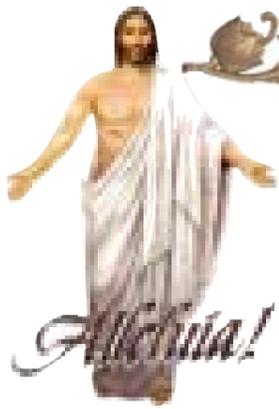
Three men hang on three crosses,
From ONE MAN comes a cry;
"It is finished!" and from that moment
No one need fear to die.

An empty tomb at sunrise,
An angel speaking clear;
"Do you seek THE MAN who was laid within?
He is risen and no longer here!"

ONE MAN - Son of God Most Holy,
Our Living Saviour - Our Friend;
Who loved us before Time's beginning,
Who will love us beyond Time's end!

Sonia Driberg





Was Judas Saved?

Easter Issue

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. According to the Gospel of John his father's name was Simon and he was from a town called Kerioth (John 6:71). In this passage Judas is called a devil and a betrayer. John even called him a thief because he was entrusted with the bag of money and he used to steal what was in the bag. This indicates that he was the treasurer.

In Bethany in the

house of Lazarus, his sister Mary poured an expensive perfume on the feet of Jesus and wiped it with her hair. Judas, the keeper of the money was critical of this act of Mary. He questioned why this expensive perfume was not sold and the money given to the poor. Judas calculated that this perfume was equivalent to a year's wages (John 12:3-6).

Scripture scholars point out that the other disciples addressed Jesus as Lord (Kurios) but Judas always addressed him as Teacher (Rabbi). He was so much engrossed with money, when he realized that the Jewish leaders were trying to get rid of Jesus, he bartered with them and promised to betray

him for 30 pieces of silver (Mark 14: 10-11).

Christ gave Judas so many opportunities to change himself. Even at the last supper, a few hours before His betrayal and arrest, Christ mentioned about His betrayal. "But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with Mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays Him" (Luke 22:21-22). After this utterance the disciples began to question among themselves which person among them would betray their master.

After the Last Supper, Jesus was praying in the garden of Gethsemane when Judas came with a



large crowd of men armed with swords and clubs sent by the chief priests and the elders. The betrayer according to prior arrangement kissed Jesus saying, "Greetings, Rabbi!" Here Jesus addressed Judas as friend. "Friend, do what you came for" (Mathew 26:46-50).

Some Biblical scholars think that Judas knew the supernatural powers of Christ and he thought that he will escape the arrest and subsequent death on the cross.

In Luke's chapter four we come across an incident that happened in his hometown, Nazareth. "All the people in the synagogue were furious when they

When Jesus was condemned to death Judas was "seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders." "I have sinned," Judas said, "I have betrayed innocent blood" (Mathew 27:3-4.)

They replied, "What is that to us? That is your responsibility." The evangelist Mathew contin-

ued in his Gospel: "So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he hanged himself" (Mathew 27:5).

Biblical scholars refer to this passage of Mathew 27:3, that Judas was seized with remorse. They say the Greek word that Mathew uses here is *not Metanoeo*, which means a change of heart and repentance but *Metamelomai*, which means that he felt sorry. That means that Judas did not have repentance.

But some scholars also refer to the fact that at the time of Christ, suicide was not regarded as an offence (sin) according to the Jewish law. They give the benefit of the doubt to Judas and say that he was saved by the infinite mercy of Christ due to his remorse.

Betrayal and arrest of Jesus: A call to radical discipleship

In all the four Gospels we see the evangelists paying special attention to the Betrayal and the Arrest of Jesus (Mk. 14:43-51; Mt.26:47-56; Lk.22:47-53; In.18:1-11). There were few significant incidents that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane which the evangelists have presented as a preparation and in anticipation of the narration of the passion proper. Of them it would be good to reflect on four events that are noteworthy.

1. The crowd that came to arrest Jesus.
2. Judas and his act of betrayal.
3. Cutting off of the ear of the slave of the High-Priest.
4. Flight of the disciples.

1. THE CROWD THAT CAME TO ARREST JESUS

"Immediately while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priest, the scribes, and the elders" (Mk.14:43)

This group of people was an unrecognized gang of excited people manipulated by the chief priests and

the scribes, who did not even know what was actually happening. They accompanied 'the betrayer', not out of their own conviction but just because they were instigated by the opponents of Jesus. Perhaps they must have being commanded or paid to do so. How that incident does relate to us would be the question that we can ask ourselves. We also condemn others, even those who are not truly guilty, perhaps because of the push of our friends or relatives. We have no right to blame another unless we are not convinced of the guilt of the person. It may be due to exaggerated information provided by the people who are against the particular person. Whatever the case, we have no right to judge and condemn others. Christ our Lord clearly taught us about the guilt we incur in judging others and he condemned any sort of negative judgment (Lk. 6:37; Mt 7:1-5). Let us genuinely reflect about ourselves. Don't we condemn others who are not truly guilty, taking the side of our closest friends? We betray our conscience and the truth, and support our friends being partial rather than helping our friends to repair their mistakes. Here we go against the will of God; we commit a sin even without our knowledge. So, we must be careful not to join that crowd who came with knives and clubs to arrest Jesus.

2. JUDAS AND HIS BETRAYAL (Mk.14:43-45; Mt.26:47-50; Lk.22:47-48)

All the evangelists (including John) mention the betrayer as 'One of the twelve' which really heightens the scandal of his act and makes him most guilty of betraying his own Rabbi and Master. He betrays his Master with a kiss as he had already told the crowd that 'the Kiss' would be the sign. Kiss was a normal way of greeting that symbolized one's friendship and loyalty to someone. But here in the case of Judas the sign of respect and affection is perverted into a vicious gesture. Knowing his intention, Jesus calls him by his personal name 'Judas' (Lk.22:48); and in Matthew (20:48) he is addressed as 'friend'. This shows the attitude of Jesus towards His betrayer and traitor. He has no feeling of resentment and vengeance. Thus He becomes the utmost model of forgiveness. In our own lives do we play double games? We at times can cover up our evil thoughts and relate very pleasantly to people with whom we have feelings of jealousy and resentment. We look for opportunities to entrap them. Here is an opportunity for us to reflect as to how far we are genuine in our relationships. It is very unchristian to harbour grudges against another person, thus, we must learn from Jesus how radical He was in forgiving His own betrayers.

3. CUTTING OFF, OF THE EAR OF THE SLAVE

In the Gospels of John (18:9) and Matthew (26:52-55) Jesus speaks of Non-Violence to the Twelve as one of them (Peter according to John) tried to rescue

Jesus by using violent means. And in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus forgives and heals the slave of the High-Priest. It is amazing to see that Jesus totally forgets all His distress, frustration and sorrow at this critical moment of his life and makes use of an opportune moment to preach a kingdom value. He feels the pain of the slave of the High-priest even at the moment of His own suffering and takes necessary steps to deaden the pain of Malchus, the slave. He transcends his own suffering to end the pain of another. For these two reasons offered by the evangelists, He becomes an utmost model of compassion. If we are placed in a similar situation, can we do the same? When we are sad, sorrowful, frustrated do we not look for the attention and consolation of the other, rather than giving my attention to the one who really needs it most. As followers of Jesus we are called to be "wounded healers." The challenges, the difficulties, hardships, pains and sorrows we experience must move us to feel with the other person who needs and deserves our special attention. Our own suffering must lead us to fee the suffering of the other person and become a source of real consolation to the one in difficulty.

4. FLIGHT OF THE DISCIPLES

"All of them deserted him and fled" (Mk. 14:51)

In the face of His suffering His disciples ran away, for they failed to comprehend who He really was. They had not fully identified Him and His mission. His disciples perhaps thought of Messiahship of Jesus in terms of political liberation. Surely they did not understand Jesus' true Messiahship of Suffering and servanthood. "He was in the world and the world came into being through Him; yet the World did not know Him. He came to His own home, and His own people did not accept Him" (In. I: I 0-11). There are two things that we can learn from the flight of the disciples. First message comes to us in a form of a challenge. Perhaps the denial and rejection of friends in their sorrow or rather in their shame and of scandal may be a reality in our life. If we are rejecting our dear and near ones when they became a source scandal we are not real friends in the biblical sense. We are selfish persons in friendly guise. We run away when someone needs our friendship, advice, counsel and attention most. Second message, is a question that each one of us must pose on ourselves. Who is Jesus to me? Is Jesus my personal Saviour? Is Jesus the Master of my entire self or else is there a certain part of my being, to which I deny His right of access?

The Season of Lent is a period of grace when the Church invites each one of us to turn from our sinful ways and return to Jesus Our Lord and Master. A Paradigm shift and a sudden overnight sainthood may not be practical for many of us who have not mastered the art of perfect living. What is important is not to worry about our past sinfulness and its guilt feeling, but to make efforts to improve day-by-day; and reach higher degrees of holiness. God cannot but bless and guide our sincerity of heart.

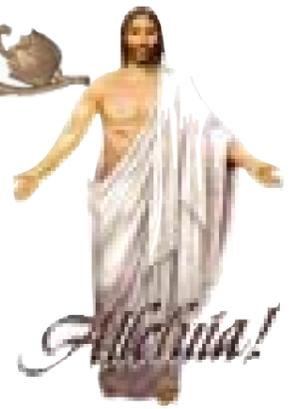
What is Easter?

God looked at the people
Who were created by Him
They disobeyed their Master
So the Lord decided to redeem them

He came to the world
As a light of the darkness
Eventually, He gave His life
for the sake of people's sins
During His time He said that
The kingdom of heaven was near
But all would not accept Him
Instead they put Him to death

Because of our weakness
A lamb was killed
Through it's blood only
The death changed into life
It is true that the
faith of the Christian is the
Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus
So a Christian must live in Christ.

F. Pious
Benedictine Monastery, Kuliapitiya



Why do you seek the Living One with the dead?

An Easter Thought on Luke 24,1-12

Vinnette Carroll's all-black musical "Your Arms Too Short to Box with God" celebrates the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. It is studied with Negro spirituals and stunningly choreographed with dances. The last scene shows the Risen Jesus bathed in a brilliant light. He sings triumphantly, "Can't no grave hold my body down." It is this good news that Easter celebrates.

The women appear at the culmination of their role as they did at the beginning of their role, "... Accompanying Him [Jesus] were the Twelve and some women ... who provided for them out of their resources" (Luke 8,1-3). They come to anoint the Body - a wild goose chase! Their attempt to complete the burial niceties for Jesus turns to be belated and totally out of keeping with developments that had already taken place that morning before they reached the tomb: Jesus is already raised. They search for the dead Jesus while He is already risen. "They found the stone rolled away from the tomb."

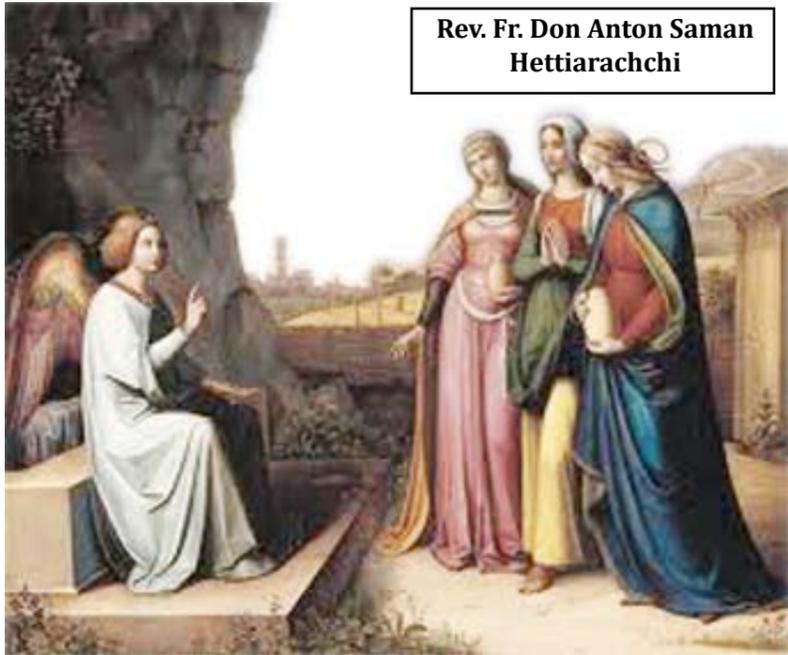
The women's search is similar to that for the ascended Elijah in 2 Kings 2,17-18: fifty brave men thinking that Elijah

is carried away by the spirit of the Lord to some mountain or some valley searched for him, for three days, without finding him whereas Elijah had already gone up to heaven in a whirlwind.

The women observe the fact of the empty tomb, first, for themselves. They are perplexed, fearful and cowed, "While they were puzzling over this ..." But once they receive the good news of Jesus' Resurrection, they begin to remember Jesus' predictions, "And they remembered His words." Their memory is now restored. The empty tomb, remembered predictions and angelic proclamation assure them of the reality of Jesus' Resurrection.

Then the women return and share it with the disciples. They explain the empty tomb in terms of the Resurrection. The initial reaction to their testimony is disbelief, "but their story seemed like nonsense and they did not believe them." Their independent attempt at witnessing seems to the disciples an idle tale, a cock and bull story.

In the cultural stereotypes of the day, the witness of a woman is discounted; legal witness is not accepted from women - as Flavius Josephus



Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi

recounts in his monumental work (which, completed in 94 AD, is a massive collection of 20 volumes about the history of the Jews from Patriarchs to Romans), Antiquities of the Jews 4,219: "But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex ..." In the days of Josephus (37-100 AD), women were not admitted as legal witnesses in courts of justice. Thus to the disciples, these are 'only women' not to be believed

in matters of deep importance. Their report is hence passed off as hysteria. The disciples have been so hard to convince.

But the good effect is that when the apostles are finally found proclaiming the Resurrection out in the open, one can feel more assurance in the truth of their proclamation when one considers how difficult they found it to be convinced.

The report of the women also prompts Peter to make his own investigation of the

Easter Issue

tomb. Peter inspects the empty tomb and reacts with amazement, "... then he went home amazed at what had happened."

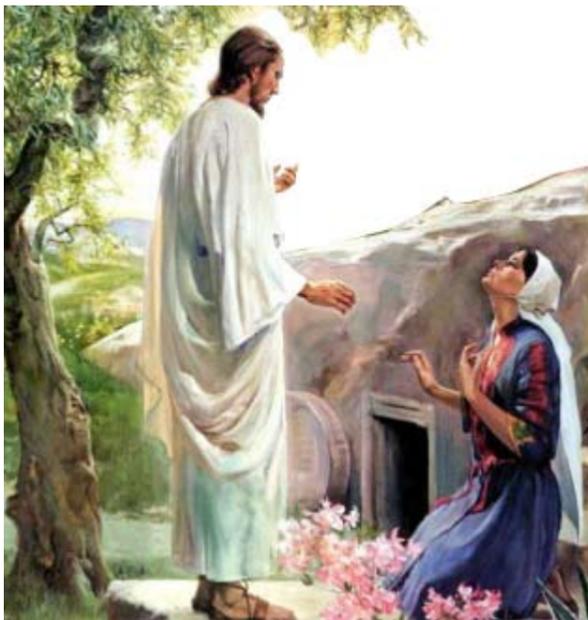
But before long, Peter would testify without amazement to what actually happened: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2,36). In 64/66 AD at Nero's Circus (in the Vatican today), he would testify with his blood, being crucified head down, to what actually happened.

This is the power of Easter. This is the power of the Risen Lord. This power continues to work miracles in people's lives - wherever it is preached and wherever people open their hearts to it. How can we open our hearts more fully to the power of Easter at work in our world? Let us reflect on this

Mary Magdalene-the first witness of the Resurrection

Joseph of Arimathea got permission from Pontius Pilate to take over the body of Jesus Christ. He and his friend Nicodemus placed the body of Jesus in a new tomb and covered it with a huge stone and went away. Mary, the Mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene were witness to all this.

Mary Magdalene was not satisfied with the quick anointing and she spent the whole of Sabbath getting ointments spices and ready to go back to the tomb on Sunday morning. On Sunday morning Mary Magdalene with Mary, Mother of Jesus and Salome rushed to the tomb. When they got to the tomb, they were surprised and noticed that the stone had been rolled away. As they got closer, they found an angel seated at the entrance of the tomb. The angel's appearance was like lightning and his garments were white as snow. Addressing the women he said "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here. He had risen just as he said. Come and see the place he lay. Go quickly and tell His disci-



ples.

Mary Magdalene who found that Jesus' body was no longer in the tomb, ran to the disciples and informed that the body of Jesus was missing. Then Simon, Peter and John with Mary Magdalene ran to the tomb and found it empty. The two disciples returned while Mary Magdalene stayed and kept looking for the Jesus.

Then she heard a voice calling 'Mary, Mary'.

She replied, "Rabboni," which means "teacher". At that moment Mary

Magdalene tried to embrace the feet of Jesus who said to her. "Do not hold onto me for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them "I am returning to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God." (John 20: 7)

Mary Magdalene rushed to the disciples with the news "I have seen the Lord". She was thus the first witness of the Resurrection. Mary Magdalene saw and heard of Jesus. He was alive. At the tomb

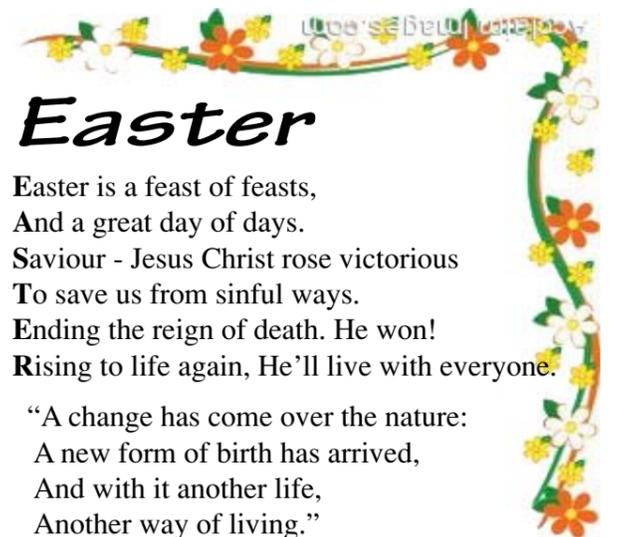
Padminie Nanayakkara

Mary Magdalene was given instructions. She was told by Jesus, "Go to my brothers and tell them." Mary then went and announced. With these words Mary Magdalene was commissioned as an apostle of Jesus. She is called "Apostle to the Apostles." Mary Magdalene was chosen by Jesus to be the first to be given the good news of the Resurrection. The message of victory over sin and death.

This is because Mary Magdalene had strong faith in God. She was close to Jesus during His life and after His death. Unlike the disciples she had stood with Mary at the foot of the Cross, on Good Friday afternoon and had been by the side of Mary during those difficult hours.

Earlier she was a resident of Magdala, a fishing town on the sea of Galilee. She was known to be a great sinner, who had heard of Jesus speak of mercy forgiveness of God and this changed her life

completely. She has always been the example of great love and great forgiveness. The feast of Saint Mary Magdalene falls on July 22nd.



Easter

Easter is a feast of feasts,
And a great day of days.
Saviour - Jesus Christ rose victorious
To save us from sinful ways.
Ending the reign of death. He won!
Rising to life again, He'll live with everyone.

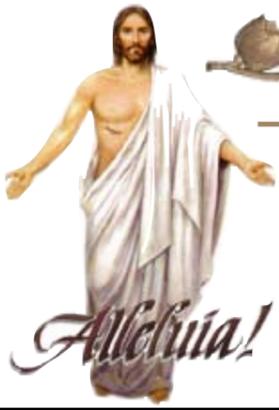
"A change has come over the nature:
A new form of birth has arrived,
And with it another life,
Another way of living."
St. Gregory of Nyssa.

Khristos Voskres! Voistinu Voskres!
This is a Russian Easter greeting which means *The Lord is Risen! He is Risen indeed!*

Easter is a joyful season,
A season of fifty days of feast.
Sunday of Easter to Pentecost
They are celebrated as one continued feast.
Everyone who fasted and prayed in lent
Realise and rejoice more than the rest



Emilda S. Douglas



Easter Issue



Art
**& Architecture
in Liturgy**
Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

**Meditating the
PASSION, DEATH AND
RESURRECTION
OF OUR LORD
with stamps**

The visuals of this meditation are stamps from some countries



David Paynter, Washing of the feet Sri Lanka, 1996



Albrecht Durer, Washing of the feet Cayman Islands, 1978



Johan Van Niekerk, Washing of the feet Bophuthatswana, 1988



El Greco, Last Supper Liberia



Unknown Last Supper Kenya, 1985



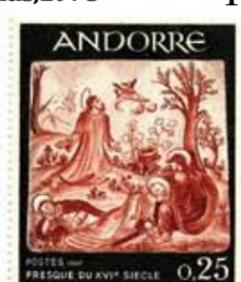
J. de Juarez, Last Supper Spain, 1979



Fra Angelico, Last Supper Argentina, 1984



Meister of Hohenfurth, Agony in the Garden Guinea Equatorial, 1973



J. Combet, Agony in the Garden Andorra, 1967



El Greco, Agony in the Garden Ajman, 1969



Unknown, Agony in the Garden Kenya 2005



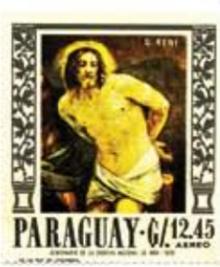
Albrecht Durer, The Betrayal Ghana, 1978



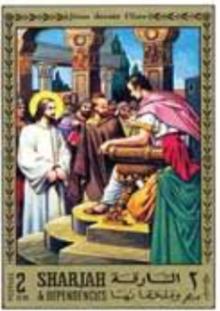
J. Combet, The Scourging Andorra, 1968



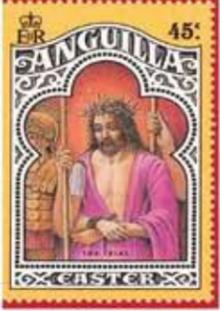
H. Fronius, The Suffering Servant Austria, 1979



G. Reni, The Scourging Paraguay, 1970



Unknown, Jesus before Pilate Sharjah



Unknown, The Trial Anguilla



Unknown, The Judgment Kenya, 2005



Unknown, Jesus carries the Cross Burundi



Albrecht Durer, Veronica wipes Jesus' face Turks & Caicos Isl. 1970



J. Combet, Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem - Andorra, 1968



P.P. Rubens, Elevation of the Cross Ivory Coast, 1983



J. Combet Pierced with a Lance Andorra, 1968



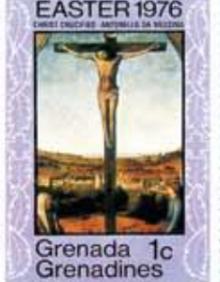
Roger van der Weyden Crucifixion Paraguay, 1970



Cimabue Crucifixion San Marino, 1970



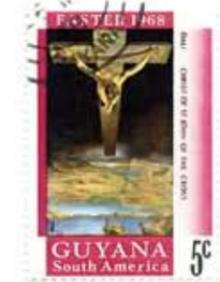
P.P. Rubens, The Crucified Christ Rwanda, 1977



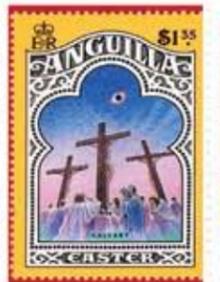
Antonello da Messina Christ Crucified Grenada, 1976



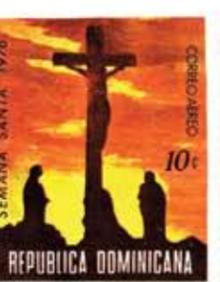
Albrecht Durer Foot of the cross Turks & Caicos Isl. 1970



Salvador Dali Christ of St. John of the Cross - Guyana, 1968



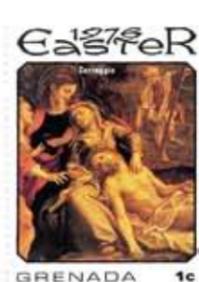
Unknown Crucifixion Anguilla



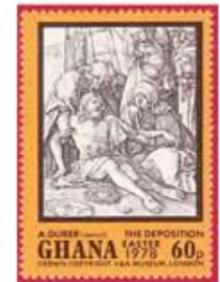
Unknown At the foot of the Cross Dominican Republic, 1976



P.P. Rubens Descent from the Cross Ivory Coast, 1983



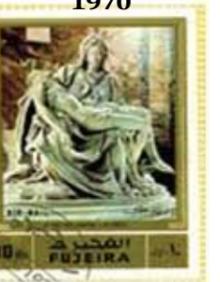
Correggio Descent from the Cross Grenada, 1976



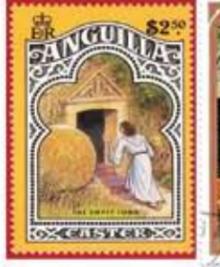
Albrecht Durer The Lamentation Ghana, 1978



Albrecht Durer Mourned by His Friends Rwanda



Michelangelo Pietà Fujeira, 1971



Unknown Empty Tomb Anguilla



Piero della Francesca Resurrection Burundi, 1971



M. Grünwald Resurrection Togo, 1971



Albrecht Durer Resurrection Ghana, 1978



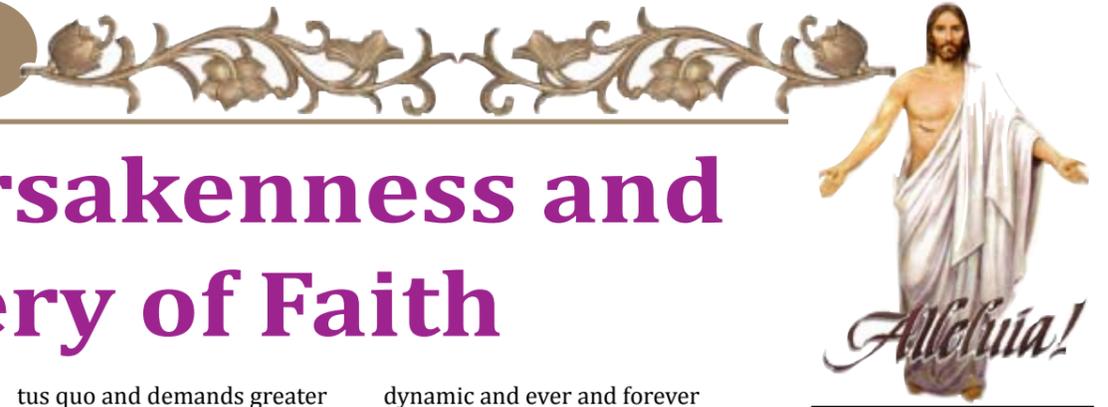
Hendrick van den Broeck Resurrection Vatican City, 2011



J.J. Vlahovic Easter Serbia, 2007



Pericle Fazzini Christ Rising Vatican City, 2013



Easter Issue

The Divine Forsakenness and Rediscovery of Faith

Prof. Anton Meemana

*"Elai Elai lema Sebaqtani"
"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
(Mt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34)*

In uttering these words, while hanging on the cross, did Jesus give into absolute despair? Did He lose faith in God or stop believing in God and being faithful to God? Did He undergo a crisis in faith as many people, Christians as well as non-Christians, seem to imply? Did He die in doubt, in darkness; in theological obscurity? Was His life and death a total waste and a failure and His mission a meaningless passion? Do you really think that God abandoned Jesus? Is it really your gut feeling?

In trying to tackle these complex questions we must not forget the fact that in Judaism there is a long theological tradition of questioning God, even doubting Him, getting angry with Him, making serious complaints about God to God. All these had been part of their historical struggle with the living God. Let us take some representative examples from the Old Testament.

"Or has thou utterly rejected us? Art thou exceedingly angry with us?" (Lamentations 5:22)

*"I cry to thee and thou dost not answer me
I stand, and thou dost not heed me
Thou hast turned cruel to me
With the might of thy hand thou
Dost persecute me" (Job 30:20-21)*

*"Why dost thou stand afar off, O Lord
Why dost thou hide thyself in times
Of trouble?" (Psalm 10:1)*

Questioning God is an intrinsic act of faith not lack of faith or loss of faith. The ascent to faith is trodden through doubt, darkness, dryness and aridity. Those who have diligently watched the movie "Fiddler on the Roof" can amply attest to it.

In questioning, we do not lose but gain faith. Doubting helps us to recover, rediscover, and regain faith. Faith facilitates an interior light which grants us the capacity to comprehend many realities that were previously incomprehensible. Faith is a great illuminator. Faith is the enduring vision.

Doubts purify and deepen faith. A life of faith is

never a smooth process. Lack of faith leads to lack of meaning in life. A faithless life is a meaningless life, a floating life, a wavering life. To air grievances is to trust in the process of the universe and, in the final analysis, it is to trust in the Creator. "Why?" is a grand theological statement. Questions are much more important than answers. Honest questions reveal who we are.

A heart that questions is a heart that trusts. If we have no faith in God, no questions will be asked. God wants us to ask questions about God Himself. Faith in God means

"A heart that questions is a heart that trusts. If we have no faith in God, no questions will be asked. God wants us to ask questions about God Himself"

our increasing capacity to ask all sorts of questions. God is the grand Questioner. Faith compels, prompts, pushes, drives us to ask more and more questions. Prohibition of questioning is anti-theological.

Jesus, in faithfully uttering those words, still bore witness to His faith in God. In actual fact, Jesus's faith, hope and love were perfect. As Thomas Merton points out, "The more perfect faith is, the darker it becomes." Jesus's question was a question from depth to depth, from God to God. One has to feel that despair in order to understand His Resurrection.

Faith is absolute trust in God when everything looks hopeless, dark and sombre. Humanly speaking, when we have lost trust in everything then only we can begin to cultivate faith. Human life is absolutely impossible without faith. Christian faith has concrete historical consequences. Faith asks something of us concretely. Faith is never or politically or economically neutral. There is a value judgment in faith. Faith is never indifferent to human suffering. Faith is never passive, nor does it slumber. Faith always seeks and desires the greater good for all. Faith interrupts the sta-

tus quo and demands greater credibility from it. Judgments born out of faith are the most accurate and objective because it does not serve any political ideologies but challenges them all. God does not desire suffering for the innocent. God wants to abolish all kinds of sufferings. Faith exposes ruthlessly and mercilessly the nakedness of every political ideology for what they really are. Faith is both a great asker and a seeker.

Faithless life is an aimless life. The depth of one's faith is the depth of one's commitment life. Faith is sustained Christian praxis. To have faith is to become faithful to God's commandments. The vision of faith is the most comprehensive vision for it harbours no ideological agenda or follows no party line. Faith is active all the time. Faith must radiate through one's character, lifestyle and relationships. Faith and character cannot be separated. Faith always seeks and desires greater good for all. Faith yearns for greater clarity of vision about life. Faith makes distinctions and nuances. Faith clarifies but never confuses. Faith brings light and dispels darkness. Without faith, we become neurotic, narcissistic and cruel. Without faith one can hardly function as a normal human being. Lack of faith leads to lack of compassion, sympa-

"We need to trust God more and more and in proportion we must also trust others. To have faith in God is also to have faith in the humanity's capacity to do good"

thy and empathy. One's conduct reveals one's faith and one's faith nourishes one's character and integrity.

Without the gift of faith, we cannot cultivate and sustain hope. Hope is faith directed towards future. One's hope is in proportion to one's faith. Faith leads us to hope and brings us hope even in hopeless situations. As we ought to grow in faith, we need also grow in hope. Faith and hope are intimately interlinked. Faith is not a static or a stagnant reality. It is

dynamic and ever and forever active, giving life a sense of mission and purpose. As we grow older, we must also grow in faith. So that by the time we die, we die in faith. Facing one's death is also an act of deep faith in God. True happiness in life comes from faith. The greater our faith, the less anxiety we have and the less our faith, the greater our anxiety and restlessness.

Faith purifies our intentions and brings a greater depth to one's conduct in life. Faith makes us treasure our friends and without the vision of faith, this world is too cruel, brutal, banal and broken to inhabit. In the midst of all the despair and growing anxiety, faith sustains our hope for a better tomorrow. Faith tells me that life is meaningful in spite of all the suffering, pain, difficulties and hardships.

Faith encourages me to love all even my enemies and appreciate even the little good my enemies possess. Nobody is totally evil or bad or malevolent in this world. Faith is never pessimistic about human nature. If my faith in others is too little, then my capacity to love them is seriously hampered.

We need to trust God more and more and in proportion we must also trust others. To have faith in God is also to have faith in the humanity's capacity to do good. Faith asks us the grand question; are we freely capable of loving a Hitler while condemning his evil deeds? Faith makes a distinction between a sinner and sins. It condemns the sins uncompromisingly while restoring and healing the humanity of the sinner.

Faith facilitates healing, wholeness and vitality in life. Faith cleanses our hearts and it is a great gift from God and therefore we must inspire

"Faith whispers to me that truest part of my character is my humblest part. Without faith we cannot become a blessing to others"

"Faith is the zenith of rationality. It brings greater clarity to human mind. Blind faith is not real Christian faith, but emotional immaturity"

people to ask for the same gift from God. God never disappoints people.

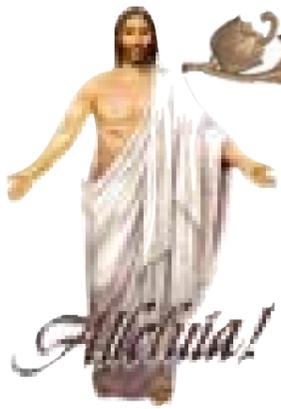
Faith purifies reason and is never an enemy of it. Faith is the most sensible thing on earth. Faith is never blind or bland. Faith is the most purified form of reason. Faith is the zenith of rationality. It brings greater clarity to human mind. Blind faith is not real Christian faith, but emotional immaturity. Faith is neither childish nor naïve. It encourages us to trust the universe more and more for the right reasons and hence faith does no wrong to a neighbour. Faith challenges all sorts of evil and wrong perspectives about the universe.

Faith takes away our selfishness, our me-for-me mentality and ego centeredness. It destroys our bloated ego and restores humility which is our true identity. Faith whispers to me that truest part of my character is my humblest part. Without faith we cannot become a blessing to others.

To have faith is to become a person like Jesus. To sustain faith is to live like Jesus. Jesus was the happiest man ever on earth because He had the perfect faith. The deeper one's faith, the greater one's service to humanity. As Mother Teresa of Calcutta says that our task here is to be faithful not successful. Faithfulness means stability of the hearts. Only

such people become loyal to their spouses, their professions, vocations, friends, country and convictions.

To take one's faith in Jesus seriously is the beginning of a new life in God. We must begin that long journey right now or else we may never begin it. Now is the decisive moment for God is eternal NOW. So let us begin NOW.



ON THE WAY TO PAPACY



Did they ever know about their first born?

The Pope's parents, Regina Maria Sivori and Mario Jose Bergoglio, were from the city of Turin in northwestern Italy, where his father worked for the railway. They then emigrated to Argentina. Here they are seen in their wedding photograph, in December 1935 a year before their son Jorge was born. Pope Francis is a citizen of both Argentina and Italy.



With his brother Oscar.



Looks comfortable travelling in the bus



Pictures sent by Roshni de Fonseca



Bergoglio, as a priest in an undated photo: He speaks German because he spent some time at the Sankt Georgen Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology, located in Frankfurt, in the 1980s.



As Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Cardinal Bergoglio washes feet, on Holy Thursday at the Buenos Aires' Sarda Maternity Hospital on March 24, 2005.

Bergoglio in 1973: The new Pope was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1969. As a teenager, he had a lung removed due to a severe pulmonary infection.

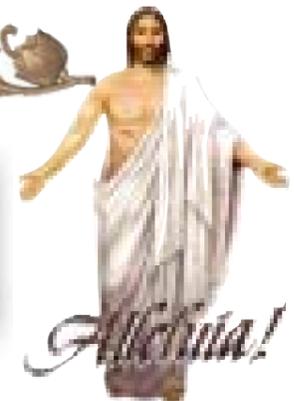


Bergoglio washes the feet of two newborns in a hospital in Buenos Aires in 2005.



With Pope John Paul II, after he was made Cardinal





Believe in God

The Holy Bible says that God made Himself known to mankind at the beginning of time. As He has not existed for His own sake, nor in vain, but being what He is, He has existed encompassing the universe as the prototype of infinite power. Scientific or philosophical speculation may not contribute to the truthfulness of the existence of God. While the Bible is the literary outcome of divine inspiration and speaks of God in an elaborate perspective, humans could of their own disposition, by reason and purposeful observation of mundane realities, come to a satisfactory and logical conclusion of the existence of God.

in Chapter 4: 24, "God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Worship of God must be in truth by those who live according to the truth in a world of



God is a mystery and so is His existence. He had no beginning and will have no end. Although He is a mystery, He does not make it difficult for us to understand the purpose of His existence. He does not isolate Himself from us nor is He inaccessible to us. Preserving His mystery, He presents Himself to us in a certitude that we ourselves fail to realize. His presence being constant, He is always close to people and events. The Book of Wisdom 1: 23 reads, "For He reveals Himself to those who do not challenge Him and is found by those who do not distrust Him."

Being a spirit, God cannot be seen by the human eye. Romans 1: 20 reads, "Because of His invisible attributes - His everlasting power and divinity- are made visible to reason by means of His works since the Creation of the world." John says

deception. God is present everywhere as He says: "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool. (Acts 7: 49). The presence of God's Spirit everywhere is the presence of God Himself: "For God's Spirit has filled the whole world and He who holds together all things, knows each word that is spoken." (Wisdom 1:7)

In God's goodness and wisdom, He did not create evil nor does He rejoice in the destruction of the living. The devil's evil machination brought imperfections to the perfect world created by God, over which humans could have little or no control. Wisdom 2: 23 says, "Indeed God created man to be immortal in the likeness of His own nature, but the envy of the devil brought death to the world, and those who take His side shall experience

death." Those who do evil begin to experience evil. So we are asked to look confidently to God and to think well of Him. In doing so, we deny that God allows evil, death and destruction to befall on humans at will.

While God favours only the opposite, he would not completely transform the world which abounds in disbelief and where the source of evil artfully dominates without reservation. This source of evil with its accomplices would be annihilated only in the course of time because God would not interfere with humans who of their own free will must find the way that would lead them to Him.

God communicates with humans in various ways to suit His own purposes. He spoke to Moses from a burning bush on Horab which was the

Mountain of God. He said "Do not come near; take off your sandals because the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). Moses did as he was told. Moses had no knowledge of God but would respect the exalted reverence expected from him by pulling off his sandals. Presenting his Ten Commandments to Moses, God said "Do not have other gods before me" which meant that He did not want humans to rely on false gods who would be competitive and lead them away from Him. He is the only living and true God.

God is compassionate and just. He forgives the sinful but He does not leave them unpunished. Romans 1: 18 reads: "For the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those who

E.M. Aldons

have silenced the truth by their wicked ways." He rewards the just in a manner that gives them peace and security. He may test them for their obedience and faithfulness in the midst of disappointment (Wis 3: 1-6) but in the end will reward them. (Wisdom 3: 5). Scriptures present God as being symbolic of love and not character-

Easter Issue

istic of iniquity. He should be loved as a God of love. God is not to be feared. But what is to be feared is to come into conflict with the Divine Law given by God Himself. By it, God manifests to humans what they should or should not do in His name.

A Spiritual Reflection

Veronica's Mother's Smile



She was a shy girl who always stayed at home, Even as her mother I couldn't understand her heart, Yet, Today..! I smile from my heart....! Dear loving daughter... I am proud of you... Yet, I had a fear for you, That the world might not recognise you... Yet, Today..! I smile from my heart....! How you were strengthened...! How you were encouraged....! Amidst men, you came forward bravely... Yet, Today..! I smile from my heart....! Oh... Redeemer, going towards Calvary... Did He speak to you...? Did He empower you...? YOU are the ONLY woman who had courage to wipe the Face of Jesus.... Yet, Today..! I smile from my heart...! Because you too became PART of The Salvation Plan of God.

Rev. Fr. S. Randil Fernando OMI

JESUS AND THE CROSS

At the young age of thirty, JESUS began His Ministry, He preached the good news to love each other, even our worst enemy. Many turned from sin and believed in His words of wisdom, They followed Him wherever He went, to seek His Father's Kingdom.

Jesus changed water to wine and gave sight to the blind, The lame did walk, the chains of those possessed from evil He did unbind. With five loaves and two fishes the multitude Jesus fed, He comforted Mary and Martha and brought back Lazarus from the dead.

When the feast of the Passover was near at hand, Jesus rode to Jerusalem on a colt and the welcome was very grand, 'Hosanna to the King of Kings' chanted the crowds waving palms and olive branches, But He knew His death was near, a sad and compassionate look had Jesus.

The feet of the twelve Apostles, Jesus washed before the Last Supper, And lovingly said, "What I do for you, do it to the least of your brother." Jesus then broke the bread and shared the wine, And told the apostles, "Do this in remembrance, as you are mine!"

When Jesus went up to the Mount of Olives to pray, t'was late in the night, Sweat like great drops of blood fell to the ground, as He prayed with all His Might. A plot well planned to kill Jesus, the Roman Soldiers did seek, For thirty pieces of silver, Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus with a kiss on His cheek.

Arrested and bound, to the High Priest and Governor, Jesus was led before a jury, His teachings and His Kingdom, the Pharisees and Scribes accused in such fury. Pilate the Governor, found no fault and to release Jesus he tried to voice, But the Chief Priests and the crowds wanted Barabbas the criminal, released!

With a crown of thorns on His head and a purple robe adorned, the crucifixion began, Jesus was whipped, blind folded, jeered and spat upon yet humbly did He stand. All the way to Golgotha, Jesus staggered with the burden of a heavy wooden Cross, He was stripped off His clothes, nailed to the Cross, to suffer and die for each of us.

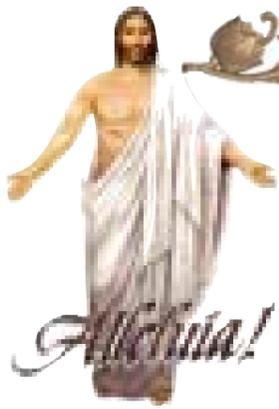
Though in pain and agony Jesus cried out, "Father forgive them for they do not know," When He thirst, the soldiers gave Him bitter wine and asked if He wanted more. The criminal who begged for mercy, Jesus promised Him paradise thereafter, To His beloved Mother and the much loved apostle, Jesus gave them each other.

T'was about the sixth hour when the whole place grew dark and frightful, The curtain of the temple was torn apart, people screamed, the sound was dreadful. "Father, Father why hast thou forsaken me," cried Jesus in a loud voice, And with a deep and tired breath, Jesus yielded His Spirit, a rich and supreme sacrifice.

Our Saviour's death brought salvation to the whole world, He redeemed us from sin and shame, His death more precious than silver or gold. To this date, we hail His CROSS with great love and devotion everywhere, Yes, JESUS is with us, we know and believe and sing joyfully - 'Alleluia! Alleluia!'

Antonette De Cruze





Children



Easter Issue

Outstanding Sportsmen



The Annual Sports Meet of NICE International was held at Leo Club Cricket Ground, Kadolkelle Negombo on February 1, 2013. The Chief Guest Mr. Antony Fernando the Deputy Director of Educational Development in Negombo Zonal Education Office was welcomed by the Principal, Dr. Mrs. Claire Wijayatilake, Vice Principal Mrs. Roshani Madurapperuma, P.E. Instructor Mr. Robert Dorairaj, Board of Directors and other distinguished guests and parents.

Rolan Kurera was presented the outstanding Sportsman of the Year 2012 and 2013 awards. Presently he is the sports captain of the school.
 Details of his Sports Career;
 Under 17 champion in the year 2013 for 100m, 200m, long jump
 Under 15 champion in the year 2012 for 100m, 200m, long jump
 Captain of the under 17 soccer team (2011 - 2013)
 Captain of the under 17 cricket team (2011 - 2012)

Awarded the Man of the Tournament in the inter house soccer, cricket and volleyball tournaments (2012 and 2013) he became the winner at the Table Tennis and Badminton Championships.

Under 10 and 12, Champion of the Regional Junior Tennis Tournament in 2007 he was a member of the Negombo Regional team who became All Island Inter Regional Under 12 Team Champions in the tournament conducted by the Sri Lanka Tennis Association.

Recently the NICE International School Negombo became champions of the six a side soccer tournament, organized by the American College of Higher Education and Lions Club Of Negombo Orient where he won the best player award.

He has been a student of NICE International for the past thirteen years and has also taken part in several Sunday School examinations held by Archdiocesan Apostolate for Catechetical and won group and solo singing competitions. He is the present Choir Leader and attending the English Medium Sunday School at St. Mary's Church, Grand Street - Negombo.

Do not be like Judas

Have you ever met a person by the name of Judas. I guess you have not. Ever since the betrayal of Jesus, every one hated Judas and never dared to use his name. Anybody who betrayed another was sarcastically referred to as 'Judas.'

Having committed the offence of betraying Jesus, Judas repented. He threw back the silver pieces at the Jews, pleaded with them to give up the plan of harassing Jesus and wanted them to set Jesus free.

Judas repented bitterly but he did not take the initiative to meet Jesus and say 'sorry'. Many a time we too do the same. The means of meeting Jesus and saying sorry could plainly and simply be at confession.

Repent and go on your way as Judas did or repent and meet the Lord and say sorry at confession. Let us not be like Judas. Instead say 'Sorry' to the Lord at confession.

She guided her flock to greener pastures....



Days, Months, Years passed
 Slowly we grew up
 In this beautiful oasis called
 St. Lawrence's Convent
 We the flock of mischievous sheep,
 Were headed by a Shepherdess
 Called Rev. Sr. Chandrika, who made life within these walls,
 Indeed exceptional and interesting.

We all have at least one bit of experience
 Under her care
 Joyous, advisory or exemplary experiences,
 which made her unforgettable in our lives.
 These few lines will be somewhat a privilege
 To express my thoughts of her
 And so as yours

Here we are her flock
 A combination of black and white,
 Silent and noisy, lost and found sheep
 Who have been noticed and carefully counted
 By our Shepherdess
 We were all the same to her
 No matter in what nature we are
 I can always recall
 How she stood by the school gate in the pouring rain
 With an extra umbrella in her hand
 Waiting to shelter the ones who were troubled by the rain

She walks about with a heavy heart
 Whispering prayers
 In the middle of a Basketball game
 Begging for blessings
 Upon the tiresome players
 Even if we are facing a certain defeat

She made sure that all of us
 Were treated equally
 In the class room, in the play field or on stage
 Despite whatever race or religion that we belong to

She never hesitated until we got the best of best
 She wanted to make sure that we enjoy
 The school life without any hassle

She is proud of our talents
 And always enjoying our performances
 No matter how small or simple they are
 If she ever noticed what we are good at
 She wants to take us to the very top
 Of that arena until we reach the limelight

Opportunities
 Are the most important gifts We gained from her
"Give them all a chance"
 These are her exemplary words

Dear Rev. Sr. Principal,
 Our gratitude is above all measures
 That, words could never express
 Please accept this little tribute
 As a token of appreciation for your wonderful mission
 From all of us students of St. Lawrence's Convent
 We wish you a very happy Feast Day
 May God Bless You!!

Lethonkie Fernando
 St Lawrence's Convent - Colombo 06

Sitar Solo - A first for OLV, Moratuwa



Uthpala Gajamanne, a Grade 11 student of Convent of Our Lady of Victories, Moratuwa was awarded the first place for the classical sitar solo in the open category in the All Island music and dance competition 2012, for the third consecutive year. We appreciate the encouragement given by Mrs. Nadeeka Andradi, the Oriental Music teacher of the school, who supported her in achieving this award. And also Amesha Dilhari and Maleesha Fernando who supported her with the Tampura and Harmonium. We congratulate her and wish her a bright future filled with God's blessings.

Rev. Sr. Sujeeva Nonis
 Principal



A Gentle Touch..... from God....

You came so quietly, on my way,
 I tried, to go away from you
 But, you came behind me all the way.
 To touch me gently, on my way.

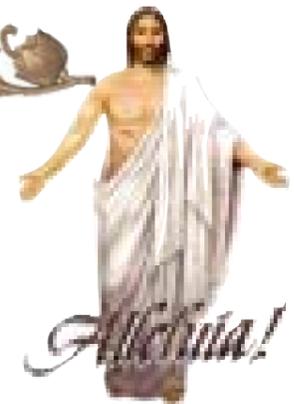
I know not why you came behind me!
 Was there really any worth, or value in me?
 Anyway you kept following me all the way.
 To touch me gently, on my way.

As I went on living in my own sweet way.
 You lingered closer to me, all the way.
 Simply to be me all the way
 And touch me gently on my way.

Yes, I was longing for your gentle touch
 Your bleeding, nailed hands on my head
 I felt your love very, very much.
 Carrying me gently with your touch.
 Saying to me, do go ahead...

Sr. A. Christina Lourdes (H.F.)





Easter Issue

Often the elderly and infirm feel that they have nothing to contribute to others and to society. Nothing could be further from the truth. They have very important lessons to teach us about living and what it means to be a human person and the power to elicit from us compassion, kindness, and charity.

Whoever it was that assigned me to volunteer in the palliative care unit must have been directed by Divine Providence, who knew that there were lessons that I needed to learn about life. Working with the dying has been a great gift. I am very grateful to these wonderful people, who have taught me so much about living life meaningfully.

(Courtesy: Canadian Messenger)

The dying taught me about living

Five years ago, I decided to volunteer at the local hospital after a satisfying and rewarding professional career. I felt it was now time to "pay back." After the basic training programme, I was assigned to the palliative care unit. I was quite apprehensive when I was told about this placement, because I had never worked with the dying and frankly, I felt inadequate, awkward, and unsure of myself.

Rather than complaining about this assignment, I accepted it as the will of God and would endeavour to learn as much as I could, about the process of dying and the needs of those who are at the end of their earthly lives. It helped that I was blessed with a wonderful supervisor/mentor who was very affirming and supportive. I always felt quite comfortable asking her questions when I did not know what to do.

carpet treatment." As time went on, I began to feel more at ease. I learned through trial and error, through consultation, reading, and seminars. I prayed to become kind, gentle, understanding and compassionate. It seemed that I was always praying for guidance. Slowly but surely, I began to trust my instincts. I have grown to love working with the dying. And I must confess that these wonderful people have given me far more than I could ever give to them. They have been a precious gift to me. During these five years, I have learned many lessons about life either through the witness they have provided me and the words of wisdom, which they have imparted to me.

We are all in this together and we all need each other on our earthly journey

I have loved listening to the narra-

thought I had given her a gram of gold. The dying have taught me to appreciate the simple needs and pleasures of life, and not to take these things for granted. I have also learned the importance of living each day well, and not putting off until tomorrow what can be done today. They have also deepened my understanding of varying aspects of positive human relationships. One gentle soul told me how she realized late in life that she had driven her children away from her by being demanding and excessively critical. She changed, became accepting and affirming and in due time her children returned. This change of heart and attitude had obviously affected her other relationships as she was always so appreciative and affirming of the hospital staff and volunteers that we all loved her dearly and vied to spend time with her.

important in life. Jesus said: "Be reconciled with one another."

Frequently during my visits, I have felt quite close to God. When I am asked for a glass of water, I often think of the words of Christ from the cross: "I thirst." When I place a cool cloth on someone's feverish forehead, I remember that Veronica wiped the face of Jesus, and gave Him some comfort. Once when a patient asked me to take her curlers out, and I did so with great care, she said: "Now I know what volunteers are for." I recalled the words of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who said: "Do little things with great love." The dying provide us with many opportunities to be truly human.

I often feel that the Lord is speaking to me through the patients that I work with. One gentleman told me that he had always done whatever he wanted to do with his life; nothing was an obstacle; nothing was unattainable.

Now, as he lay dying, he told me that he could do nothing for himself, and was totally dependent on others.

I suddenly realized that my fierce independence and stubborn reliance solely on myself will not always be at my disposal. This was a humbling experience, reminding me of my own weaknesses. And I recalled that Jesus said to Peter: "When you are young, you girded yourself and walked where you would, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." We are all in this together, and we all need each other on our earthly journey.

As you can see, I have come to love working with the dying. A few times I have been given the privilege of sitting with a patient whose death was imminent. At first, I didn't know what to say, but I realised eventually that it was not important to say anything. What matters most is just being there - being present - and caring

Death like life itself is a great mystery

What always uplifts my heart is to view the love and devotion that family members display towards their dying loved ones. Sometimes I have been fortunate enough to witness family reconciliations. It seems that when one is at death's door one sees things more clearly from both sides of a relationship. At times, patients have wanted to talk about their anger. On these occasions, I listen to them talk through their pain and hurt, and witness

some truly touching reconciliations. One woman was so irate with her daughter and son-in-law that she could talk about nothing else. I let her talk and work it through her system. I listened and listened. As time went on, she grew to feel differently towards her daughter and she forgave what she perceived to be an injustice against her. I teasingly asked her: "Now, how about your son-in-law?" With a twinkle in her eye, she quipped: "Well, there is only so much I can do at a time." We both laughed, knowing that in time this relationship would be healed, too. Oh, how we quibble and quarrel about so many insignificant things! This ninety-plus-years old woman came to realize what was really

tives they share with me about their personal lives. These sapiential stories have helped me to stay grounded and have a proper perspective on life. What is really important, they have reminded me, is not the acquisition of possessions, power or fame, because at the end of the day it is the same for everyone. Death, indeed, is the great leveller. What matters most in life are our relationships with others and our striving to become caring, compassionate people. These are the qualities that endure.

One of the things that really astounded me was the great gratitude expressed for the simplest of actions. I recall one woman who was so grateful for a cold glass of water that you would have



"Do little things with great love"
BLESSED MOTHER TERESA

At first I did not like this placement at all. In retrospect, I now comprehend that step by step, the Lord was leading me and gently guiding me along, while at the same time giving me fresh insights.

My first obstacle was adjusting to and accepting the smells, sounds, and sights associated with suffering and dying. Eventually I learned to focus on the person, rather than what my senses were revealing to me. With that came the realization that as a member of the human family I had an obligation to take care of those in my midst who are weak, vulnerable and sick. Furthermore, I resolved that everyone should "go out in style" and that I was going to endeavour to give every patient "the red

I turn around, But you got me...!

I fell from thousand feet mountains,
I let myself go
I felt I was the fool.

BUT

You got me,
You never let me to go
You taught me 'I am the Victory'

I always forget
I always quit
I turn around
I stop my game

BUT

You always remembered me
You got me
When I stop playing
You played the game of life.

When I was tired
Going on desert
Without water, without a Target
You came around me
Took me on your hands
Gave me water, you showed me
My Target.

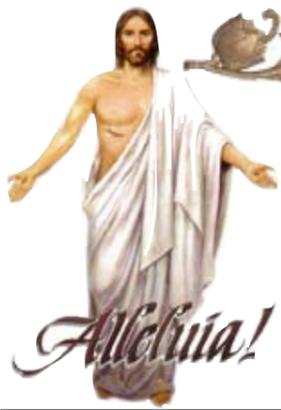
Thank you Jesus
Praise you Friend
I can give you
Only the Praise and Glory.

Now I have a Target
I will never fail
I will play my game
On your hands,



I will always Try
Because I am the victory
I am the greatest
Because my Target is You!!

Relin Athukorala



The Nazarene's Triumph



By Jeannette Cabraal

It was mid-morning on a hot sultry day. Crowds thronged the streets. Men, women and children waving palms in expectation, animation and enthusiasm registered on their eager faces. Cheerful expressions that dearly conveyed their ecstatic delight. They peeped here, they peered there hoping to catch a glimpse of Him whom they were waiting for.

Shouts of 'Hosanna! Hosanna!' rent the air. The crowds lunged forward waving their palms frantically, enthusiastically. There came the Nazarene robed in His simple, white, seamless, garment woven by His mother 'blessed faith in every thread' riding a donkey. The donkey carried His mother through the crowded streets of Bethlehem to the stable when His mother was car-

rying Him in her blessed womb. The donkey carried Him as a baby in His mothers' arms, in their flight into Egypt to escape the horror of the massacre of the innocents by Herod, guided and led by His venerable foster father Joseph the carpenter. So it was but appropriate that on His triumphal journey too the choice should have been a donkey. The donkey had his glorious hour too.

"One far fierce hour and sweet There was a shout about his ears And palms before his feet."

There were palms

waving around the Nazarene, there were palms strewn in His path, there were palms strung across the roads, there were crowds following Him with swaying palms. It was palms, palms, all the way. And so the Nazarene made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem Lift up your gates and sing Hosanna in the highest Hosanna to your king."

He the God-man, who knew the way of the world, would have known

this was a farce. That these hosannas would in a few days be followed by

Not this man but Barrabas

Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

They would mock, jeer, boo Him out of the city, flog, scourge and crown Him with thorns, don Him in the mockery of a purple robe and subject Him to a most shameful death between two thieves.

No matter. This was the triumphal hour for both the Nazarene and His

decrepit carrier. He rode across His face like shades of what awaited him.

But then He would rise in triumph on Easter

morn. He would triumph over sin and death. He the Redeemer, the Saviour of the world.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem Sing for the night is o'er Hosanna in the highest Hosanna for evermore.

The Risen Lord

Chorus :

Christians lift up your hearts and sing Alleluia Alleluia

Joyfully hear the good news we bring Alleluia Alleluia

Jesus is our true Risen Lord Christ our Saviour our Lord and God He has arisen gloriously Jesus arose victoriously

Gladly to Christ your praises sing Praise and worship your Heavenly King Jesus who fills our hearts with love Reigning on His great throne above

Jesus can banish fear away Peace He brings in His gentle way Into our hearts He'll pour new light Saving us through His power and might

Rita Irene Fernando

God's will - be born again

God's will, be born again from sin to refrain Be prepared to change the old, to become mine with pain.

I know the benefits to give, my Grace help you gain

A generous call given to all for them to shine in My Reign

My love was given, by sacrificing my Life, to stretch

Living testimony, remains for ever with no sketch Unite with me, to be glorified, and avoid being a wretch

Mercy with forgiveness removes horror, lights up your path to fetch.

You have forsaken sin, to become a new person All your evil habits have vanished by God's reason.

God within, can completely make you be, another person with no ransom

Everything God will and can, do not expect at random

Happy are we, God promotes no crime, anyone to find,

Praise and Thanks be to God sublime, and Prime Your Spirit and Blessings, we plead let it Shine.

Great Thou Art O God our Lord to be forever Divine and Thine

Francis

Mary the Ultimate Role Model for women

The Virgin Mary is the ultimate role model for women. Mary portrays traits of humbleness, holiness, piety, and perseverance. Mary trusted in the Lord that she accepted the message the angel gave her about her been chosen to give birth to the, Saviour. Mary's faith was tested at that moment. Mary listened to the Word of God and accepted God's plan in her life.

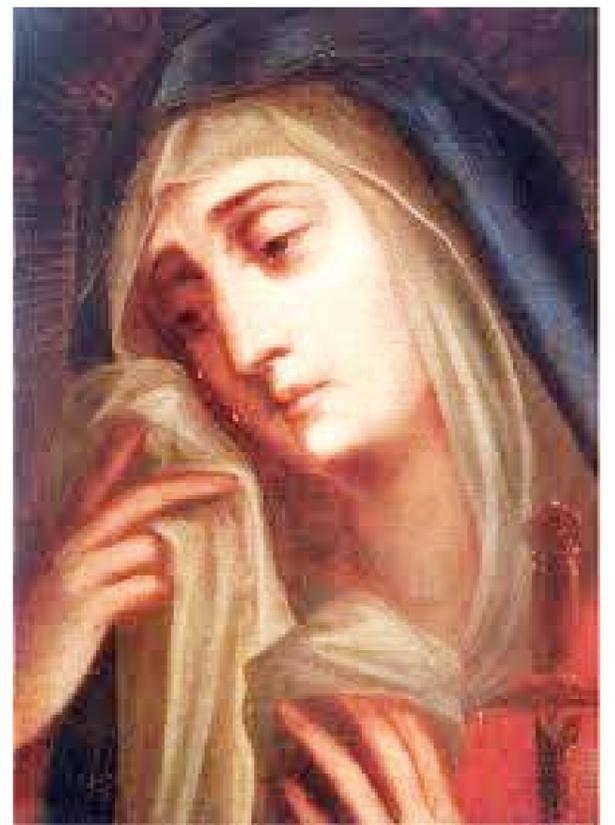
Modern day women should have faith in God. He will never deny His children any necessity. So, don't give up on your faith when you do not get what you want at the time you want. The Lord has a plan which we don't understand. So, we need to have faith and be patient so as to accept His plan in our life.

Another trait of Mary that I wish to focus on is her perseverance. Through every challenge God takes us through, He tries to teach us something. So, always trust in the Lord during times of challenge, sorrow, and despair. An example of Mary's perseverance is the way she coped watching her Son face persecution. It would have been hard for Mary to watch Jesus suffer a painful and slow death. Despite all that she never lost trust in God. She accepted God's plan.

God never leads people to temptation. Temptations come from the evil one. But, if we are humble like Mary we can avoid temptations. Humbleness is the opposite of pride. Those who are humble will not consider themselves above others because of where they live, or what they own or inherit. They will consider themselves modestly; and therefore will not look down at others. The humble person will never laugh or cast remarks at the less fortunate, or the less educated. The humble will respect everyone around them.

Mary was always contended. She was sensitive to the voice of the others and helpful. Yet, she is the mother of all and she is willing to help us by interceding for us from heaven. Let us not only admire her. But, adapt her traits and be an example to all women.

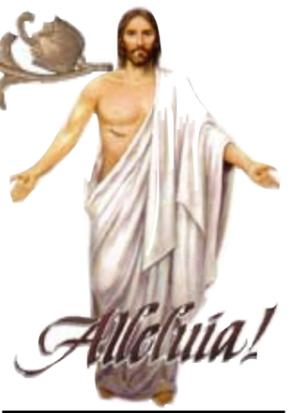
If all mothers follow the traits of Mother



By Rehana Ferdinando Perera

Mary, the daughters too could follow same. The daughters could take this example to their school. During teen years girls think it is a great thing to be loud, egoistic, proud and demanding. Some may change when they realize at some point that they cannot enter marriage unless they are silent, sober, and humble. Some others may continue this way not knowing the implications.

So why not make this Season of Lent a time to adapt the traits of the Holy Mother, and be example to all women?



Faith with works of Love brings Salvation

Rev. Fr. Aloysius Pieris SJ, in his book, *Give Vatican II a Chance*, pg 24-25 says, "Faith in its original Hebrew sense means reliance, dependence or leaning on ('emuna'). The object of such a faith is not a doctrinal formula but a person who is utterly faithful ('emet), which in Hebrew means reliable, dependable - this being one of the characteristics of YHWH. To believe, therefore, is to trust in the absolutely trustworthy God rather than in any creature Jesus did not identify faith in God with adherence to doctrines or dogmas, but with trusting in the all caring and motherly Father with such abandon as to live like the birds in the air and the lilies in the field, "without anxiety" and "without hoarding" (Mt. 6:25-34; Lk 12:22-24).

Abraham, Model of Faith

Abraham is a model of faith. That Abraham migrated in obedience can hardly be questioned. He had to abandon his plans and in place of these God offered a security which came uniquely from God: A promised land, father of a nation, blessings, a great name and a blessing for those who bless Abraham. So, for the first time since the disobedience of Adam and Eve, God and man entered into an "I - thou" relationship. God called upon Abraham as "Thou" and promised as "I"; God who is a person living treated Abraham as a person (Francis J. Moloney SDB)

The best reflection of the "I - thou" relationship of God and Abraham is summarized in

Hebrew 11:8-10: "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land.... For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

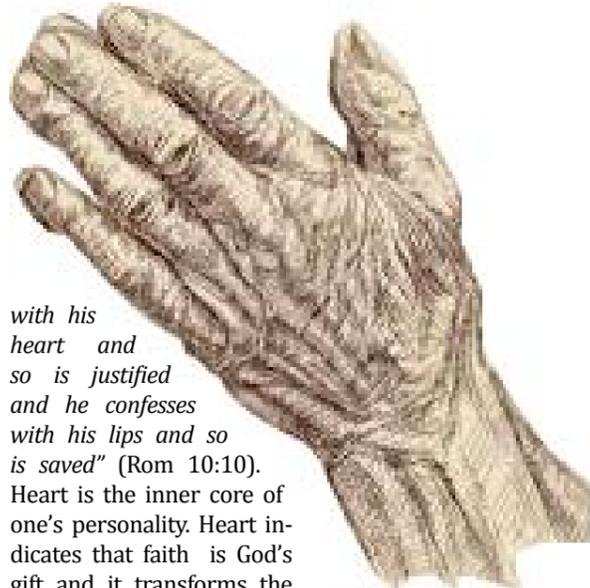
Abraham had faith in God even in adverse times of his life. In his great faith, he even took his own son to be sacrificed at the command of the living God.

His Holiness Benedict XVI on Faith

Pope Benedict XVI in his Apostolic Letter 'Motu Proprio' *PORTA FIDEI* for the 'Year of Faith' (October 11, 2012 - November 24, 2013, Feast of Christ the King) wanted the Catholics to recall the gift of faith during this year of grace and respond effectively. The occasion is to intensify the reflection on the gift of faith in order to help all the believers in Christ to acquire a more conscious and vigorous adherence to the Gospel especially at this time of profound change in the world. It is a year of opportunity to know better and to transmit to future generation the faith; in short, to rediscover the content of faith that is professed, celebrated, lived and prayed and to reflect on the act of faith during this year of grace. The Pope's intention was to sketch a path to understand not only the content of faith but also the act by which we choose to entrust ourselves fully to God in complete freedom (*Porta Fidei*, 10)

St. Paul on the content of faith and the act of faith

St. Paul helps us to enter into the reality of relationship between the content of faith and the act of faith when he writes to the Romans: "For man believes



with his heart and so is justified and he confesses with his lips and so is saved" (Rom 10:10). Heart is the inner core of one's personality. Heart indicates that faith is God's gift and it transforms the person deep within. Pope Benedict in his 'Motu Proprio' quotes also Lydia, who opened her heart to give heed to what St. Paul was saying at Philippi (Acts 16: 14).

St. Paul continued his exposition to the Romans with a clarification of the two phrases: "With the heart and with the lips." He had already identified "the word" of Deuteronomy (Deut 30: 11 -14) as "the word of faith which we preach." So he could have taken the two phrases as referring to the apostolic message and its proclamation: "But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it" (Deut 30:14). Presumably because he remained mindful that the two phrases were speaking of the "commandment," of the

word calling for response, he naturally refers them to the responses called for by the Gospel - namely belief in Jesus' Resurrection and confession of Jesus' Lordship. The emphasis on belief and its expression in open confession marks out clearly the difference from a response

earliest days of the new movement where faith in the apostolic message (Jesus' Resurrection and His Lordship) and proclamation through concrete acts of love within the new movement were visible. St. Paul posed the Gospel as an alternative to what he saw as the typical Jewish presumption of a favoured status before God, demonstrated and affirmed by the identifying rituals of the law and ancestral customs. St. Paul is concerned to describe the Gospel in terms which would command the fullest consent from other Jewish Christians as well as from Gentile believers too.

Faith that saves

To talk of the "heart" is to talk of faith. Faith operates at and from the level of the heart. To talk of the "mouth" is to talk of confession which is the primary and essential outward manifestation corresponding to faith, not a sequence of "ritual works" but concrete works of love. If justification is in view, faith which cannot hold back from public expression, is the way into that gracious relationship with God. If salvation is in view, then confession which springs from a wholehearted inner conviction, is the means through which God's final purpose is achieved. This is what Deut 30:11-14 always looked for, as the Resurrection and the Exaltation of Jesus Christ have now made clear. So faith with concrete acts of love brings salvation, not through ritual works. St. Paul in 1 Cor 13:13 says: "So faith, hope, love abide,

these three; but the greatest of these is love." It is love that brings salvation. "Confession with the lips indicates in turn that faith implies public testimony and commitment. A Christian may never think of belief as a private act.... Faith, precisely because it is a free act, also demands social responsibility for what one believes.... The Holy Spirit makes us fit for mission and strengthens our witness." (*Porta Fidei*, 10).

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Fernando OMI

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The Second Vatican Council was aware of the priority of praxis without denying the importance of doctrine. That is why the Council brought back social justice and neighbourly love as indispensable ingredients of the daily practice of faith. Even here it is not the teaching by itself that brings salvation but doing the truth or practice of one's faith (Aloysius Pieris, SJ).

Let us listen to what St. James says: "What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2: 14).

TIME TO REPENT

"Since lent began, how many souls that were gathered here have passed in to eternity, and before another lent begins, how many will stand before the Great White Throne. Who among us shall be the first to go to Judgement. Let us therefore enter upon this lent as if knowing it to be our last. Let us begin this time of conversion to God as if we are sure that another would never be granted to us". (Matthew: 3:8-10)

Once again the Lord has given us an opportunity to amend our lives. To know and to understand what sin is, its nature, its effects and its

consequences. Sin is the transgression of the law. (John: 3:4). God is a law unto Himself. He made man to know right from wrong.

He made him to understand the nature of purity, justice, truth and mercy.

There are two distinctions to the nature of sin, formal sin and material sin. Formal sin is, committed with the full knowledge of what we do and a full consent to do it. Material sins are actions done without sufficient knowledge or without intention. The malice of sin consists that an intelligent creature having a

power of will deliberately and consciously opposes the will of its maker. Let us therefore firmly resolve to avoid temptation, amend our lives, make sacrifices, do penance, repent and ask God to pardon for our sins.

"But if the wicked does penance for all his

sins which he hath committed and keeps all my commandments, and do judgement and justice, living he shall live and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done, in his justice which he hath wrought, he shall live. (Ezekiel: 18: 21.22)"

Maurice Nanayakkara

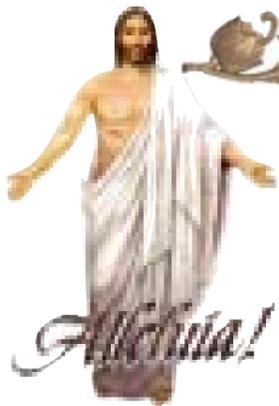


Resurrection

- R - Rising from the tomb He gave a New life.
- E - Easter Sunday was that beautiful day
- S - Saw Mary Magdalene to whom Christ first appeared
- U - Unspeakable was the joy she experienced
- R - Radiant and beautiful clad in white
- R - Repent and forgive, for the wrong done
- E - Easter brings Joy to everyone
- C - Countless blessings for you and me
- T - Third day He arose with great power and might
- I - Instilled into our minds a deep faith
- O - Our Blessed Saviour brought victory over death
- N - Now let us Rejoice, let us unite and sing His Praises
- Alleluia - Alleluia - Alleluia

He Is Risen

Iris Perera



What it says
..... in
the Read-
ings

Easter Issue

Christ was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised Him high and gave Him the name which is above all names.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR C 24th March - 31st March 2013

Sun: Palm Sunday
Is. 50:4-7, Phil 2:6-11;
Lk. 22:14-23,56 (or 23:1-49)
Mon: Is. 42:1-7; Jn. 12: 1-11
Tue: Is. 49: 1-6; Jn. 13:21-33,36-38
Wed: Is. 50:4-9a; Mt. 26:14-25
Thu: Holy Thursday
Ex. 12:1-8, 11-14; 1 Cor.11:23-26;
Jn. 13:1-15
Fri: Good Friday
Is.52:13-53:12; Heb. 4:14-16,5:7-9;
Jn. 18: 1-19, 42
**Sat: Gen. 1: 1-2, 2 or 1: 1, 26-31;
Rom. 6: 3-11; Lk. 24:1-12**
Sun: Easter Sunday
Acts 10: 34, 37-43; Col. 3:1-4
or 1 Cor. 5: 6-8; Jn. 20:1-9 or
Lk. 24:13-35

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: (sung) Crucified Jesus, Cleanse me from sin, in your precious blood, wash me clean.

For the Christian community, the flock for which Christ died that Christ the Good Shepherd may heal in it wounds of sin and division. We pray in faith.

Response: (sung) Crucified Jesus, Cleanse me from sin, in your precious blood, wash me clean.

For all world leaders that Christ may help them in the exercise of their grave responsibilities so that the world may find the way to justice and peace. We pray in faith.

Response: (sung) Crucified Jesus, Cleanse me from sin, in your precious blood, wash me clean.

For those who have lost their faith in God and in man that Christ the Good Shepherd may seek them out and lead them to his fold. We pray in faith.

Response: (sung) Crucified Jesus, Cleanse me from sin, in your precious blood, wash me clean.

Fresh air from....

Contd. from Pg. 4
Pope's first Homily

Pope Francis celebrated the *Missa pro Ecclesiae* in the Sistine Chapel on Thursday afternoon, the day after his election with the College of Cardinals. In his homily he referred to three movements stemming from the readings of the Holy Mass for the Church. He said, "In these readings I see that there is something in common: It is movement." He mentioned that the life of the Church should be always in this movement or going forward by walking, building and professing. He explained it further.

Walking: Our life is a journey and when we stop, there is something wrong. Walking always in the presence of the Lord, in the light of the Lord, seeking to live with that blamelessness, which God asked Abraham, in His promise.

Building: To build the Church. There is talk of stones: Stones have consistency, but [the stones spoken of are] living stones, stones anointed by the Holy Spirit. Build up the Church, the Bride of Christ, the cornerstone of which is the same Lord. With [every] movement in our lives, let us build!

Third, Professing: We can walk as much we

Palm Sunday



First Reading:
Is. 50: 4-7.

It speaks about the suffering servant of Yahweh.

Second Reading:
Philps. 2: 6-11.

Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. Therefore God made Him the Lord of heaven and earth.

Gospel:
Lk. 22: 14-23: 56.

It is the passion narrative. It begins with the Last Supper and ends up with the burial. It refers to the betrayal, denial, the judgment, passion, crucifixion and death in between.

Reflection.

With this Sunday

want, we can build many things, but if we do not confess Jesus Christ, nothing will avail. We will become a pitiful NGO, but not the Church, the Bride of Christ".

When we walk without the Cross, when we build without the Cross, and when we profess Christ without the Cross, we are not disciples of the Lord. We are worldly, we are bishops, priests, cardinals, popes, but not disciples of the Lord.

I would like that all of us, after these days of grace, might have the courage - the courage - to walk in the presence of the Lord, with the Cross of the Lord: to build the Church on the Blood of the Lord, which is shed on the Cross, and to profess the one glory, Christ Crucified. In this way, the Church will go forward".

Holy Father's first message after the Angelus

In his first message to the world after reciting the Angelus from the window of his apartment, the Holy Father spoke about 'forgiveness' making reference to Sunday's Gospel, Jesus forgiving the adulterous woman. He recalled a beautiful story from way back 1992, after his episcopal ordination in Buenos Aires. He said an old lady approached him and asked him for a favour.

"An old lady came to me, a humble lady, very humble, over 80-years-old, I looked at her and I said to her: Grandma, because in our country this is what we call old persons: Grandma do you want to go to confession? Yes, she said to me. But if you haven't sinned... [I said]...and she said to me: We have all sinned... [I said] But maybe the Lord does not forgive them...

"The Lord forgives everything', she told me, certain of what she was saying. But how do you know that, madam? [She said] If the Lord did not forgive everything, the world wouldn't exist. I felt like asking her, tell me, madam, did you study at the Gregorian University? Because that is the wisdom that the Holy Spirit gives: Interior wisdom about the mercy of God."

The Holy Father has sent a powerful message to the world by the choice of his very name, to be people of peace and to care for the poor after the example of St. Francis of Assisi.

we begin the Holy week.

It is known as the Passion Sunday. It is known as passion Sunday most probably because on this day we refer to the passion, death and burial of our Lord. This Sunday is also known as Palm Sunday because it begins with the triumphant entry into Jerusalem during which the followers wave Olive branches.

This could be taken as a full rehearsal of what is to come during the Holy Week. When we celebrate in detail the Lord's Supper, His passion, death and burial in preparation to celebrate His victorious resurrection.

The Palm leaf (Gokkola) which we use in place of Olive branches itself bears witness to the

day's liturgical ceremony. At the beginning it is a tall leaf to wave "Hosanna," at the end we make it into a cross in order to resemble the triumphant Cross upon which the Lord offered His life, in order to bring us salvation. That cross becomes for us a means of protection and blessing. The day's liturgical service too begins on a joyful note, the triumphant entry into Jerusalem and ends up on a note of sadness- the passion death and burial of our Lord.

On this day we refer to the passion, death and burial of our Lord not in order to feel sad and be defeated but to be filled with hope. For the Lord through His suffering and death brought us salvation. He won forgiveness for us sinners.

Therefore we too on our part should through true repentance prepare ourselves to receive His forgiveness. If we have not done this we should do this during this Holy Week.

Aid Story

Some years ago in a New York street a woman dressed in the latest fashion was seen kneeling on one knee besides a gutter with her arm bared to the elbow, searching for something in the mud and mire. A crowd soon gathered. A policeman too approached.

"What's the matter, lady? Lost something?"

"I lost my ring," she sobbed. "It was a diamond ring that my husband gave me before he went away to the war. He never came back. It is the only thing I have that belongs to him. I would not lose it for the world." This explained why a beautiful woman in a beautiful dress was fingering through the slime of a city gutter. Her love was so great that she stooped to mingle with filth in order to find the keepsake of her love.

Likewise, it was love, infinite love that made Christ stoop to the suffering of His passion in order to save us. Because of His Love or humanity, Christ was willing to be misunderstood, misrepresented, mistreated, manhandled and finally killed.

The price, the value of our souls is best seen in the price paid for them through the passion of Christ.

Aid Story 2

It was Palm Sunday but, because of a sore throat, little Jonnie stayed home with a sitter. When the family returned home, they were carrying several Palm Fronds. Little Jonnie asked what they were for. "People held them over Jesus' head as He walked by," his father told him.

"Wouldn't you know it? Little Jonnie fumed, "The one Sunday I don't go and He shows up."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

Sunday Rhythm Palm Sunday of the Holy Week

- The Owner:** "...why are they untying the colt..?"
- The Messengers:** "The master needs it."
- The Pharisees:** "... check your disciples.."
- Jesus:** "... if these keep silence the stones will cry out."
- Richest blessing:** ... Blessing on the King who comes... Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!
- Richest result:** ...the whole of disciples joyfully began to praise God...
- TO THINK:** Have you offered yourself for God's work? God needs you as you need God.
- TO PRAY:** Dear God of Heaven, make use of me to carry away your mission according to your will. Amen.
- TO ACT:** Let us follow Jesus our King while thanking and praising. Let us speak for Jesus from our life experiences. And let us become "an obedient Colt" on whom Jesus will enter into the hearts of many people everyday.

Rev. Fr. S. Randil Fernando OMI