



67th Childrens' Day
Tewatte, Basilica
March 7

SINCE FEBRUARY 11, 1869

MESSENGER

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• Chilaw Diocese Youth Rally "Young man I say to you, rise"



His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw addressing the Chilaw Diocesan Youth Rally at the National Shrine of St. Anne, Talawila gave an affirmation to the youth saying, "As a mother comforts her children, the Mother Church would willingly and joyfully comfort you in all your struggles and accompany you to Jesus." The reason, "You are too precious to us," said the Bishop of Chilaw to the massive gathering of youth who had assembled at the Talawila Shrine under the theme, "Young man, I say to you, rise" (Luke 7:14).

The Rally brought to a close the Year of the Youth in the Diocese to which the Year 2014 was dedicated and was attended by more than 6500 youth from all the parishes of the Chilaw Diocese.

His Lordship told the young men and women who had come with one mind to walk with Jesus and walk with the Church, that while aspects such as education, psychology, physical health and economy were very important for their development, these cannot see fullness unless it is characterised by a well-balanced life and deep-rooted spirituality.

His Lordship also cautioned the youth about the present challenges that they are faced with due to numerous post modern social trends which tend to attract them.

The year 2014 was dedicated to the youth in the diocese to create an atmosphere for the youth to feel the love and the guidance of the Church towards them. The objective of this special year was realised through particular youth programmes, events, talks and meetings organised both in Parish and

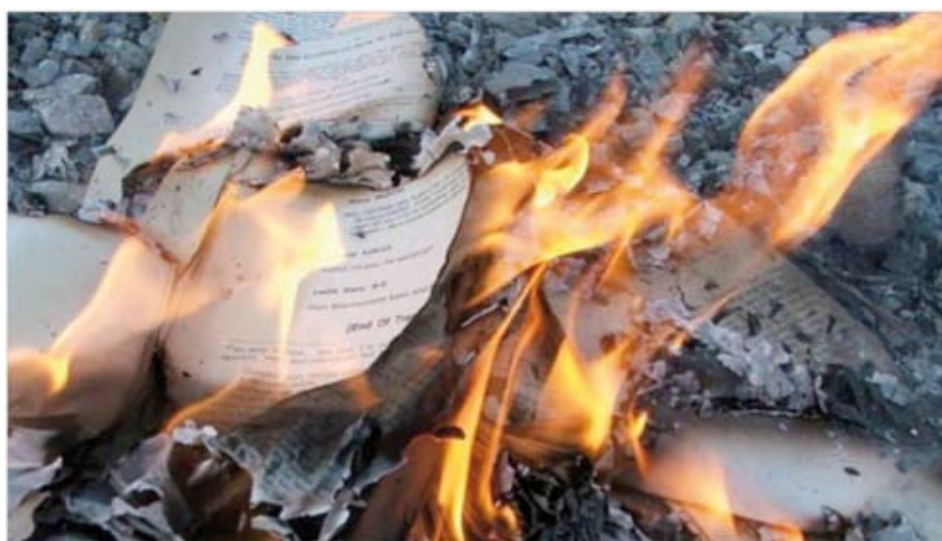
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ISIS burns 8000 rare books and manuscripts in Mosul

While the world was watching the Academy Awards ceremony, the people of Mosul were watching a different show. They were horrified to see ISIS members burn the Mosul public library. Among the many thousands of books it housed, more than 8,000 rare old books and manuscripts were burned.

"ISIS militants bombed the Mosul Public Library. They used improvised explosive devices," said Ghanim al-Ta'an, the Director of the library. Notables in Mosul tried to persuade ISIS members to spare the library, but they failed.

The former assistant director of the li-



brary Qusai All Faraj said that the Mosul Public Library was established in 1921, the same year that saw the birth of the modern Iraq. Among its lost collections were manuscripts from the eighteenth century,

Syriac books printed in Iraq's first printing house in the nineteenth century, books from the Ottoman era, Iraqi newspapers from the early twentieth century and some old antiques like an astrolabe and sand glass

used by ancient Arabs. The library had hosted the personal libraries of more than 100 notable families from Mosul over the last century.

During the US led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the library was

looted and destroyed by mobs. However, the people living nearby managed to save most of its collections and rich families bought back the stolen books and they were returned to the library, All Faraj added.

On the same day the library was destroyed, ISIS abolished another old church in Mosul, the Church of Mary the Virgin. The Mosul University Theatre was burned as well. Last December, ISIS burned Mosul University's central library.

Iraq, the cradle of civilization, the birthplace of agriculture and writing and the home of

Contd on Pg. 14 >>>

New Provincial of Claretians



Rev. Fr. Callistus Joseph CMF has been elected as the new Provincial of the Province of Germany of the Claretian Congregation. The election took place on January 8, 2015 at Claretinerkolleg, Weissenhorn, Germany. Among the 20 participants of the Provincial Chapter, six represented the Dependent Delegation of Sri Lanka.

(Contd on Pg. 10)

WRITE TO US

The 'Messenger' wishes to open its pages for readers to contribute articles on various subjects ranging from religion to socio-economic, social justice, family, youth and subjects relevant to our readership. We would appreciate if the articles are based on moral and spiritual values.

The Editor

New Unit to Tackle Drug Abuse

In this 'Year of the Family', a special unit to save the family from the danger of drug abuse has been established. This Unit will function under the direction of the National Dangerous Drugs (Control) Board and will meet the above objective of saving families from drug abuse.

Volunteers are called from all over the island to join this project. Both male and female volunteers are welcome. This is an excellent opportunity for everyone desirous of performing some social service to lend a helping hand.

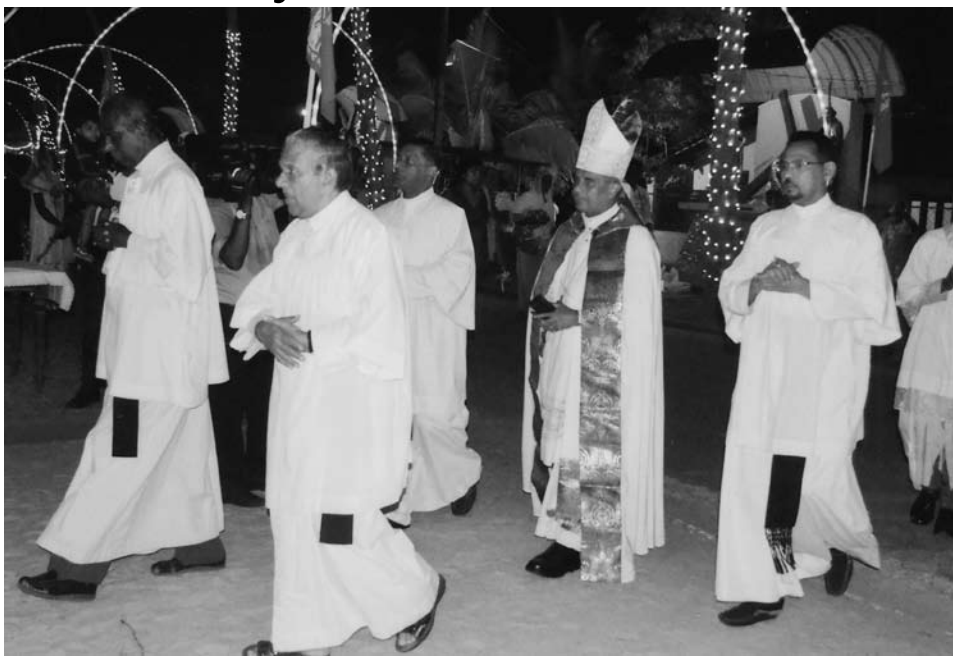
All necessary training will be pro-

vided and volunteers will be assigned to work in the locality they live in.

The new Unit will rehabilitate persons addicted to drugs at State expense.

Contact: Rev. Fr. Alexis Benedict
Tel: 077 6552545

Nattandiya Parish Church Feast



His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Antony Fernando, Bishop of Kurunegala officiated at Vespers at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Nattandiya, recently.

Shriyangani Felicia

Feast of Our Lady of Purification, Nayakakanda

The Annual Feast of Our Lady of Purification at St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda, Hendala, was held on recently. Picture shows the students of the Daham Pasal taking the statue of Our Lady in the procession after the Festive Mass.

A statue of St. Joseph Vaz was blessed and installed in the Church, before the Church Feast.

Pic. Raymond Wannappa



John Paul English Medium School gets new Music Room



His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw, declared opened the Music Room of John Paul II English Medium School in the Diocese of Chilaw.

S.F.

Church Feast at Welihena

The Feast of St. Sebastian's Church, Welihena Kochchikade was celebrated recently with Rev. Fr. Jayantha Wickremasinghe, Principal, St. Mary's School, Negombo as the Chief Celebrant. *H.A.*



Feast of St. Sebastian's Church, Ottarawadiya



Rev. Fr. Ajith Suranga, Asst. Parish Priest Badalgama was the Chief Celebrant at the Festive Holy Mass at St. Sebastian's Church, Ottarawadiya, Madampella. Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Laknath Cooray is also in the picture.

H.A. Caldera

Feast of Our Lady of Lanka and St. Don Bosco



The Feast of Our Lady of Lanka and St. Don Bosco was celebrated at the Don Bosco Home Diyalagoda, Maggona. The chief celebrant at the Festive Mass was Rev. Fr. Dilan Perera OMI, Director St. Vincent Home, Maggona

D. Anselm Fernando

Donation of desks and chairs for Sunday Schools



On a request made by Dehiowita Pradeshiya Sabha, Opposition Leader Sestus Arsakularatna, the only Catholic holding office in the local government in Sabaragamuwa Province, Deputy Minister of Industries and Commerce, Champika Premadasa allocated the necessary funds for the purchase of desks and chairs to be distributed to Daham Schools and pre-schools in Dehiowita.

J. Antony

Celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Kalutara



106th Annual Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes Kalutara was celebrated recently. The Chief Celebrant at Vespers was His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

Picture shows, His Lordship being accompanied to the Grotto by Rev. Fr. Suran Attidiya, Parish Priest, Kalutara and Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ramanayake, Dean Kalutara Deanery.

D.A. Fernando

Thanksgiving Mass at Nattandiya Parish



A Thanksgiving Mass was held for the year of service rendered as Assistant Parish Priest by Rev. Fr. Jude Shanaka at the Nattandiya Parish. Fr. Jude Shanaka has been transferred to the Katuneriya Parish as Assistant.

Shriyangani Felicia

'The Death of the Messiah'

The Faculty of Theology, Aquinas University College will conduct the above lecture on Thursday March 5 (Poya Day), from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m., at the Peter Pillai Auditorium of Aquinas University College, Colombo 08, followed by Holy Mass. Entrance Free! All are welcome! Contact: 0718342319/ 0776692686 2694012/5, 4616311/8689, ext. 311

Mass for the sick at Pitipana



As part of the Feast celebrations at the Church of St. Mary, Mother of Presentation in Pitipana, the Legion of Mary organised a Mass for the sick.

The parishioners took steps to convey their thanks to the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Elmo Raj, Asst. Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Jude Lakshan for officiating at the very meaningful Eucharistic Celebration.

Their thanks also go to the Rev. Sisters, Bro. Chanthura who assisted with the singing and music, the three-wheeler drivers who assisted to transport the sick, the members of the Legion of Mary who tirelessly organised the programme and the many others who assisted in numerous ways.

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Church in the Modern World

Pope condemns beheading of Egyptian Christians, says 'blood cries out to be heard'

EWTN - Pope Francis mourned the 21 Egyptian Christians beheaded by the Islamic State, calling them martyrs that "belong to all Christians."

"The blood of our Christian brothers and sisters is a testimony which cries out to be heard," the Pope said. "Their only words were: 'Jesus, help me!'"

Pope Francis made these off-the-cuff remarks in his native Spanish, one day after the release of a video from the self-proclaimed Islamic State purporting to show the grisly beheadings of 21 Coptic Christians from Egypt.

"It makes no difference whether they be Catholics, Orthodox, Copts or Protestants," the Pon-



Prayer vigil outside the White House remembers 21 murdered Coptic Christians in Libya (CNA).

tiff continued. "They are Christians! Their blood is one and the same. Their blood confesses Christ."

They were killed

"only because they confessed Christ," the Pope said. "I ask that we encourage each another to go forward with this ecumenism which is giving us strength, the ecumenism of blood. The martyrs belong to all Christians."

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Teachers attacked and killed in Myanmar

The army of Myanmar tortured, raped and killed 20-year-old Maran Lu Ra and 21-year-old Tangbau Hkawn Nan Tsin, volunteer Christian teachers who belonged to the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC). The violence occurred in January in the village of Shabuk-Kaunghka, Mung-baw Township, northeastern Myanmar. The two women, who came from the northern State of Kachin where there is an ongoing exodus of thousands fleeing violence, were the target of the attack because of their ethnicity. The soldiers tortured and gang-raped the two Christian teachers before killing them. The girls, according to Francis Khoo Thwe of AsiaNews, had been sent by senior members of the KBC to this remote zone to teach village children.

Hundreds of people gathered in prayer for a final farewell to the two victims. Eyewitnesses reported that the army had threatened the inhabitants, warning them not to spread the news.

Patriarch of Moscow on persecution of Christians

Speaking recently to the Bishops' Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow spoke about the dramatic persecution of Christians, especially in the Near East. "Hundreds of thousands of the faithful have become hostages to the extremely serious situation and have been forced to leave that region. There is a real tragedy taking place before our eyes, a real genocide of the Christian population in the lands from which the Good News spread to the whole world. The scale of the disaster is yet to be evaluated," according to the Orthodox Primate. He explained that the suffering Christians of the Patriarchate of Antioch have been given all possible material support by the Russian Orthodox Church and public organizations, concluding that "Christians in the Middle East see in our Church today and in Russia a defender of their interests. And we should not forget our duty to do all that is possible to preserve the Christian presence in the Middle East."

Symposium on Consecrated Life

The FABC Office of Consecrated Life will organise a symposium on the theme, "Consecrated Life at the Service of New Evangelization." The Symposium will be held at the Redemptorist Centre in Pattaya, Thailand from July 20-25, 2015.

Media must invest in journalists who understand religion

The BBC recently announced that its head of religion and ethics would be losing his commissioning role. The current incumbent, Aaqil Ahmed, would be invited to apply for a new role in factual programming, which combines religion with science, business and history. Before that decision, Ahmed was the only executive in British television with a role dedicated to the commissioning of religious programming.

This cost-cutting exercise by the BBC seems related to another phenomenon: The demise of religious affairs correspondents.

Last year, Ruth Gledhill departed from the Times, leaving the national papers without a reporter dedicated to this portfolio.

Many papers have columnists on religion (Giles Fraser at the *Guardian*, for example) or journalists who cover faith among other things (eg, the *Telegraph's* John Bingham). But this media landscape suggests that religion does not command anywhere near the same weight of attention and investment as sport, politics or even showbiz.

This is a worrying trend - and not just because I'm a newly qualified journalist with a theology degree in need of full-time employment.

Religion is undisputedly a major driver of news. Two months into 2015, many of the biggest and most shocking stories have had a strong religious theme: think of Charlie Hebdo, the Rt Rev Libby Lane, and the rise in anti-Semitism in Britain and across Europe.

Ukraine, poverty, G7 discussed by Pope Francis and German Chancellor

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine was among the topics covered by Pope Francis and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in their February, 21 meeting at the Vatican, recently.

Chancellor Merkel helped to negotiate the latest ceasefire agreement between Ukrainian government forces and Pro-Russian separatists, hoping to ease a continuing conflict that has left more than 5,000 dead.

The Pope has repeatedly called for prayer and negotiations aimed at peace in the area.

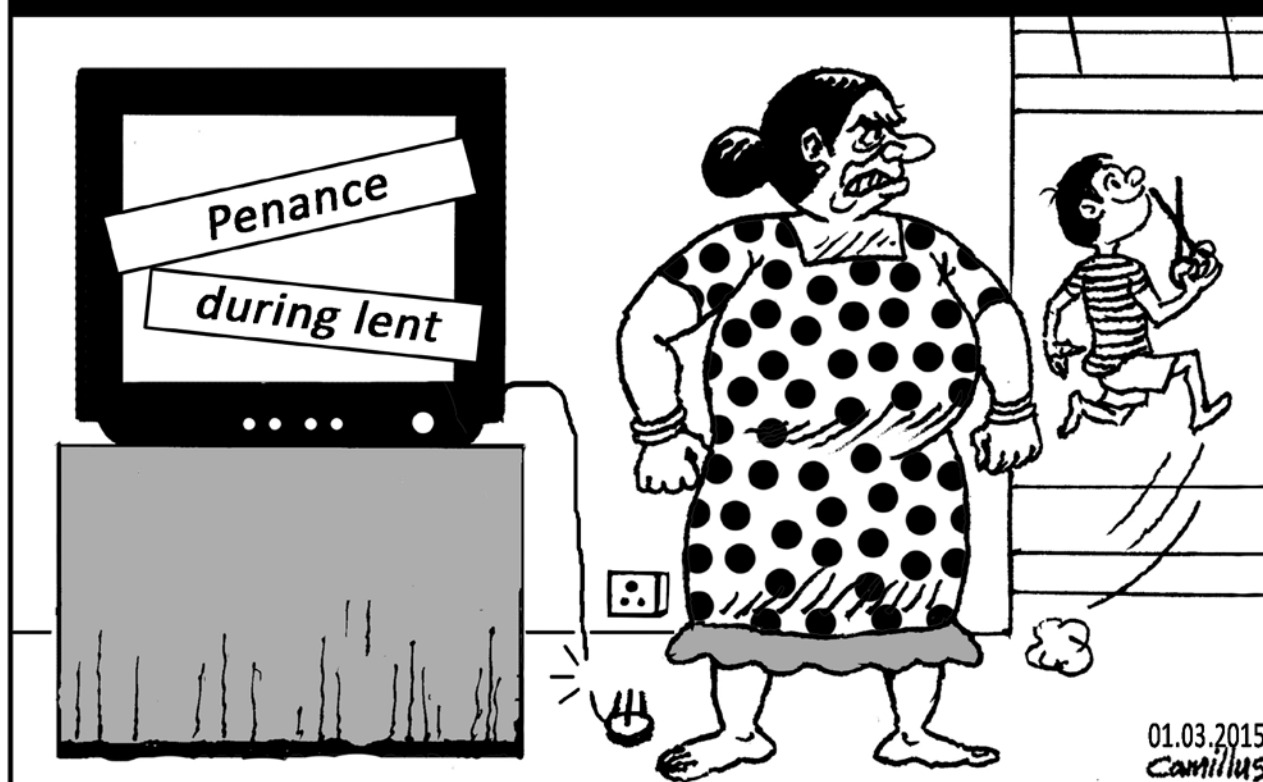
Fr. Federico Lombardi, Director of the Holy See press office, told EWTN News before the meeting, "It is natural that the Pope and Angela Merkel will talk about the Ukrainian situation. The principle that the Holy See will not interfere with the government agenda and will



not prompt solutions to crisis, will remain firm. But it is likely that both the Pope and the Secretary of State will express their concern and will encourage any effort to bring peace in the Ukraine."

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



MESSENGER

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA

EDITORIAL

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March 1, 2015

The Voice in the Wilderness

Last Sunday's Reading from the Gospel of Mark gives a typically brief report of the experience of Jesus in the wilderness where He was tested by the evil spirits. Luke's Gospel however, gives a deeper insight into what happened in the wilderness and the response that Jesus gave. (Luke 4:1-13). This came soon after He was baptised in the Jordan and God mightily blessed His son. Jesus became fully aware that He was the beloved son of God and the Father had for Him a mission that would change history and bring salvation to the world.

The Gospel tells us that soon after this historic experience, the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the desert where He fasted for 40 days, tempted or tested. In Jewish culture 40 is symbolic of a complete period and the reality may have been less or more than 40 days. More than the time, what happened is of a deeper significance.

Jesus had just experienced the reality that He was the beloved son of God. So Satan in the first two temptations says, "If you are the Son of God..." In and through the suffering death and resurrection of Jesus we who believe it and do what Jesus tells us to do also grow in our awareness that we are sons or daughters of God the Father. Often in our lives the evil forces will tempt us to doubt the fact that we are sons or daughters of the Father.

In the first temptation the devil tells the hungry Jesus to turn stones into bread. Catholic Bible scholars say the deep meaning here is the abuse of power. Jesus had the power to turn the stones into bread and He had valid reasons to do so, but it would have been an abuse of power. How does this apply to us? We all have being given different degrees of power. Fathers have some power in the home, so do mothers and adult children. We also have power in our work places and even churches or communities. Do we use this power to serve people or give them servant leadership? Or do we use this power to dominate or make use of others for our own selfish personal benefit. The deep message here is that we should not abuse power for personal gain or glory but instead use it to help and serve others.

In the second temptation, the devil tells Jesus to jump from the highest point of the Temple so that He could become popular. This is a major temptation that comes to us often even in religious areas. We seek popularity and prestige but the Bible tells us that while people look at outward appearances, God looks at the heart, God looks at our motive, not so much at what we are doing but why we are doing it.

In the first two temptations the devil twists and distorts the Holy Scriptures. In the third temptation the devil tells lies because he is known as the father of lies. The devil claims that everything on earth belongs to him but the Bible clearly tells us that the earth and all its resources belong to God therefore we need to be good stewards of the earth and its resources.

In essence we need to remember Jesus' warning that we cannot serve God and money or mammon. We will love one and hate the other. So we need to reflect deeply in one area: Does money give us security and success, prestige and power? If the answer is yes then to that extent we are distant from God. If so let us sincerely repent experience forgiveness and take a decision that we will love God, give Him first place and do His will in every area of our lives.

The Glory and the Grime

A Reflection on Mark 9:2-10

By Tanya Ferdinandusz

Context (Mark 8:27ff): Peter proclaims Jesus as Messiah (Mark 8:29). Yet, his understanding of Jesus' identity is deficient. When Jesus teaches that the Messiah must suffer and die, this teaching is unpalatable to the disciples. They are concerned with how to get him out of this difficulty (in a very human sort of way), rather than supporting him to get through it (since it was God's will). It is in this context that the Transfiguration takes place 'six days later.'

Glory: Jesus is transfigured. His clothes became 'dazzling white such as no one on earth could bleach them'—which suggests a heavenly being. 'Dazzling white', in the Bible, is typical of angels and heavenly beings. William Barclay explains that the word used to describe Jesus' clothes is 'stilbein', a word used to describe the glistening gleam of burnished brass or gold or the golden glare of sunlight. Alan Cole suggests that this recalls John's vision of the glorified Son of Man (Revelation 1:13-16)—which may suggest that Jesus is temporarily reassuming his TRUE form—the glory He had with the Father (John 17:5), the glory He would soon reassume.

Cloud: The presence and glory of God was frequently manifested to Israel in a cloud (Exodus 16:10, 19:16, 24:15-18, 33:9-11, 40:34ff; 1 Kings 8:10f). Barclay comments, "It was the dream of the Jews that when the Messiah came, the cloud of God's presence would return to the Temple." The descent of cloud may have been a signal that the Messiah had come!

Moses and Elijah: The presence of Moses and Elijah is not arbitrary. John Nolland (Word Biblical Commentary) points out, "They are the only two figures of Scripture associated with meeting with God on Mount Sinai/Horeb (Exodus 24; 1 Kings 19)." Moses represents the Law and foreshadows the coming of 'another prophet' like himself; Elijah was considered the greatest of the prophets, who would restore the people of God. These two great figures coming together signals that here is the fulfilment of Jewish dreams, here is what all history has been leading up to.

Disciples' reactions: Before the glory of the Lord, frail humans tremble. When the angel appeared to shepherds, "the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified." (Luke 2:9). The terrified disciples "did not know what to say" (v.6). Fear may lead to us speaking or acting foolishly. Perhaps it was fear that made Peter start babbling about building plans, without thinking through the implications of what he was witnessing!

The Transfiguration occurs shortly after Jesus' first intimation to the disciples of His forthcoming suffering and death (Mark 8:31). As Peter witnessed the Transfigura-

tion, surely hope rose strong in his breast. Perhaps, yet again (as in Mark 8:32), Peter was grasping at a shortcut to glory—an easier way sans the cross. Perhaps dazzled by this glory, Peter got caught up in his plans for God's kingdom and paid no attention to what the King had in mind.

Spiritual high points feed and nourish our faith, and make our faith come excitingly alive. But although we may long to remain on spiritual mountain-tops, Jesus will not allow us to cling to such moments. We need to climb down the mountain, for there is work and a mission waiting for us in the world. Jesus had to set His face towards Jerusalem. In fact, the first task awaiting Him was to heal a boy possessed by a spirit (Mark 9:14ff). The disciples made the same mistake we often do—wanting to cling to moments of glory, rather than facing the grime of everyday living.

Jesus alone: The Transfiguration does not merely show three great figures, three great men of God—for Moses and Elijah are not on par with Jesus. This may have been Peter's understanding (or misunderstanding!) when he suggested making three dwellings (v.5). But just as Jesus rebuked him earlier (Mark 8:33), the voice from the cloud corrects Peter: It is Jesus to whom the disciples must listen (v.7). In addition, the climax of the story (although on a superficial reading, it may seem like an anticlimax!) is what all three Gospels record; that, in the end, they find Jesus alone. The unspoken message is that Jesus not only fulfils the Law and Prophets (Matthew 5:17), represented by Moses and Elijah, but surpasses them. In former days God spoke through the prophets, but now He speaks, powerfully, gloriously, through the Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). There are many great figures of faith, both past and present, but our worship is reserved for the Lord alone; our salvation is found in Jesus alone.

As Philip Van Linden, C.M. (in the Collegeville Bible Commentary) writes: "Glimpses of glory that Christians receive from God are real, but... they are given so that Christians can move on with him, and with him alone."

Voice: The combination of mountain, cloud and voice would have powerfully recalled God speaking from Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16, Deuteronomy 5:22). The voice that thundered forth affirmation at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Mat-



thew 3:17) speaks again in affirmation of Jesus, but also with a clear command to the disciples: "Listen to him" (v.7). In Deuteronomy, God, through Moses, repeatedly urges the people to listen to His voice and to obey. At the Transfiguration, the disciples are told to listen to Jesus—the new Moses, who fulfils and interprets the Law and is the One whom the Law points.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus allowed the Father to direct His steps—listening to the Father's voice, rather than the voice of clamouring crowds (Mark 1:37, Matt 21:8-10). He heeded neither the taunting voices of His enemies (Mark 15:29-32) nor the well-meaning voices of His fearful friends (Mark 8:33). Now His disciples are reminded to listen to Jesus, rather than other voices, including their own inner voice of fear. This was precisely what they had failed to do just a few days before (Mark 8:32). In fact, in the face of hard teaching and some unpleasant realities, they themselves had been misleading voices, trying to tug Jesus in ungodly directions. 'Listen to Him' refers both to what Jesus had already said (Mark 8:31ff) and would continue to say (Mark 9:28-32, 10:32-45) about His identity as suffering Messiah and about the way of the cross that he and his disciples would have to follow. This it is a command to listen to what Jesus teaches about His mission as well as about the nature of our discipleship.

Myriad voices vie for our attention, with a variety of messages. Do we discern God's voice? Do we listen to Jesus alone, even when his words go against our natural inclinations, even when he dishes out hard teachings, even when he insists on a longer or more difficult way?

Why the Transfiguration? The Transfiguration affirmed Jesus and confirmed the direction he was taking (Luke 9:31). But the Transfiguration was also for the 'benefit' of the disciples, who had been shaken by the horror that awaited them. The Transfiguration gave them something to hold on to and made

Contd. on Pg. 14

Learn to love and to be loved

By Rev. Fr. Daniel Icatlo, JCD

What is the most important lesson that you have to learn in life? Pope Francis gives us this answer: "It is learning how to love. This is the challenge which life sets before you today, learning how to love."

'Love' is such an enchanting word, owing to such a fascinating human reality. Yet it suffers inflation. At times is used to express opposite realities. It could be expressed in terms of greatest heroism or in the form of most refined egoism and selfishness. We have heard songs about it, seen it in the movies, heard it talked about on talk shows by relationship experts and read about it in thousands of self help books. But, what is true love?

A definition of love could be as broad and varied as the persons who love. Many times, we do not care to define it at all. It simply comes with being human.

God is Love

"God is Love and He who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16). Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI points out that these words from the First Letter of John, "express with remarkable clarity the heart of the Christian faith: The Christian image of God and the resulting image of mankind and its destiny." In the same verse, Saint John also offers a kind of summary of the Christian life: "We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us." We have come to believe in God's love: In these words the Christian can express the fundamental decision of his life.

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. St. John's Gospel describes that event in these words: "God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should ... have eternal life" (3:16).

In acknowledging the centrality of love, Christian faith has retained the core of Israel's faith, while at the same time giving it new depth and breadth. The pious Jew prayed daily the words of the Book of Deuteronomy which expressed the heart of his existence: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might" (6:4-5).

Jesus united into a single precept this commandment of love for God and the commandment of love for neighbour found in the Book of Leviticus: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (19:18; cf. Mk 12:29-31). Since God has first loved us (cf. 1 John 4:10), love is now no longer a mere "command"; it is the response to the gift of love with which God draws near to us (cf. Deus Caritas Est, 1).

Man: An image of God

"God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,'" we read in the Book of Genesis (1:26).

Why is love the most important lesson we need to learn in life? Because God, who is love, made us unto his image and likeness. Our origin and destiny converge in the same love of God who is our Creator, our beginning and our End.

Love for God and our neighbour is not only the summary of the Law and the Prophets. Not only is it the gist of the Christian Faith. It also the bottom line of our daily living.

How can we enjoy life to the fullest? Love is the answer. It determines the quality of the life we live. It is not the material facet of our existence that really matters. Rather, it is the spiritual dimension of charity which gives life its true sense. It is the one thing necessary, since it unites us to our neighbour and to the Lord. Ultimately, our destiny is that total and unending happiness of union with our Maker in heaven.

We all aspire for happiness. God has laid this innate longing in our hearts. If he so placed it deeply lodged in our being, it must be attainable.

But alas, many are those who look for it in the wrong places. Inner joy remains an elusive dream for those who seek it outside the love of God. He who placed this yearning in our soul is the same one who will gratify it.

Love and be loved

Pope Francis adds a nuance to this truth. In a rather disconcerting phrase, he said that what is important in true love consists not in loving but in allowing ourselves to be loved by God. In his impromptu address to some university students, the Holy Father stressed that, "True love is both loving and letting oneself be loved. It is harder to let ourselves be loved than it is to love. That is why it is so hard to achieve the perfect love of God, because we can love him but the important thing is to let ourselves be loved by him." Clarifying further, the Pope believes, "True love is being open to that love which was there first and catches us by surprise. If all you have is information, you are closed to surprises. Love makes you open to surprises. Love is always a surprise, because it starts with a dialogue between two persons: The one who loves and the one who is loved.

"We say that God is the God of surprises, because He always loved us first and he waits to take us by surprise. God surprises us. Let's allow ourselves to be surprised by God.

"Let's not have the psychology of a computer, thinking that we know everything. What do I mean? Think for a moment: the computer has all the answers: never a surprise. In the challenge of love, God shows up with surprises



"Love for God and our neighbour... is the bottom line of our daily living"

(Meeting with Young People, 18 January 2015)."

Fascinated by the calling of Levi or Matthew, Pope Francis pointed out that "He was a good businessman. He also betrayed his country because he collected taxes from the Jews and paid them to the Romans. He was loaded with money and he collected taxes. Then Jesus comes along, looks at him and says: "Come, follow me". Matthew couldn't believe it.

"If you have some time later, go look at the picture that Caravaggio painted about this scene. Jesus called him, like this (stretching out his hand). Those who were with Jesus were saying: "[He is calling] this man, a traitor, a scoundrel?" And Matthew hangs on to his money and doesn't want to leave. But the surprise of being loved wins him over and he follows Jesus. That morning, when Matthew was going off to work and said goodbye to his wife, he never thought that he was going to return in a hurry, without money to tell his wife to prepare a banquet (ibid.). It was a banquet for the one who loved him first, who surprised him with something important, more important than all the money he had.

The Roman Pontiff concludes, "So let yourselves be surprised by God! Don't be afraid of surprises, afraid that they will shake you up. They make us insecure, but they change the direction we are going in. True love makes you "burn life", even at the risk of coming up empty-handed. Think of Saint Francis: he left everything, he died with empty hands, but with a full heart.

He warned young people not be like "museums, storehouses," but young people who are wise. To be wise, use the three languages: think well, feel well and act well. And to be wise, let yourselves be surprised by God's love, then go out and burn life (ibid.)!

The Religious and Community Development

By Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Fernando, OMI

The Second Vatican Council and the Popes have invited the Consecrated men and women (the Religious) to scrutinize the situation of the oppressed and the marginalized, to discern and provide new solutions to their socio-economic and spiritual ills.

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Letter to all the Consecrated men and women on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, says the distinguishing sign of the consecrated life is prophesy and as prophets they receive the ability from God to scrutinize the times in which they live and interpret the events, discern and denounce the evil of sin and injustice, being on the side of the poor and the powerless because God Himself is on their side (2).

Pope St. John Paul II, in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Vita Consecrata, said that the Holy Spirit calls consecrated men and women to present new answers to the new problems of today's world...In this way they will contribute by putting into effect new initiatives of evangelization (73).

People in Need

The estate workers, the fisherfolk, the cultivators, the shanty dwellers and the unskilled workers in Sri Lanka are struggling to live with dignity. Poverty is a moral evil and an enemy to human happiness. It destroys freedom and makes certain virtues impracticable and others extremely difficult. Jesus often spoke of the poor and not of poverty and had compassion for the poor. The above-mentioned social categories that are poor need to overcome their poverty and improve their living conditions and their natural environment. Hence they need to come together as communities and not merely as individuals to know the strategy and the techniques to bring about their own community development which will be their own new response to their own problems. To begin this process of education, they need the assistance of dedicated social animators.

At present in Sri Lanka, the Religious as consecrated persons, are concentrating on formal education of students in the schools and colleges and are also taking care of the orphans, the elders and the delinquents. They also serve the victims of war, floods, cyclones and tsunami. The Salesians and the De La Salle Brothers are providing technical training for young men. Will the consecrated men and women (the Religious) launch out also into community development of the above-mentioned social categories?

Need for Community Development Animators

The above-mentioned social categories in Sri Lanka need the help of dedicated Religious men and women, trained in community development, who will live in close proximity with them to bring them together to learn the principles and the techniques to improve their own socio-economic conditions. Community development is a gradual process. Learning together includes the following points:

- Becoming aware of their own intrinsic dignity as human beings, experience self-esteem and respect each other,
- Finding the forces which keep them oppressed,
- Changing their fatalistic and negative attitudes,
- Knowing how to organize themselves, conduct small group discussions and effect desired changes in their lives,
- How to save and invest on productive ventures,
- Knowledge and the ability to communicate, write the minutes of their meetings, book-keeping and to make a statement of accounts.

Community development animators through a process of education should also enable the above-mentioned social categories not only to organise themselves but also to own their organisations and become agents of their own development and enjoy fuller life.

Contd. on Pg. 14



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers)



Year of the Consecrated Life - 2015

Conference of Major Religious Superiors of Sri Lanka (CMRS)

Religious Congregations in Sri Lanka 5



NAME OF THE CONGREGATION:

De La Salle Brothers
(Brothers of the Christian Schools)

CHARISM OF THE FOUNDER:

Faith and Zeal in the life of total dedication to the Christian education of youth, especially the poor

FIRST FOUNDATION IN SRI LANKA: St. Benedict's College, Colombo 13. (1865)

SCHOOLS AND ESTABLISHMENTS:

Archdiocese of Colombo - De La Salle Provincialate - Colombo 15, Institute of Spiritual Formation - Colombo 15, Lasallian Community Educational Services - Col. 15, St. Benedict's College, Colombo 13, St. Joseph's College, Colombo 14, La Salle Institute, Colombo 13, De Mazenod College, Kandana, Diyagala Boys' Town, Ragama.

Mannar - St. Xavier's College, Mannar, St. Anne's MMV, Vankalai, Nanattan MMV, Karunkandal, Roman Catholic Tamil MV, Adampan, Fatima MMV, Pesalai, La Salle Education Campus, Mannar

Kurunegala - St. Anne's College, Kurunegala

Kandy - Agro Training Centre, Nuwara Eliya

SPECIAL APOSTOLATES: Education of Youth, Informal and Non-Formal Education

History

John Baptist de La Salle was born into a world very different from our own. He was the eldest son of wealthy parents living in France, 350 years ago. Born at Reims, John Baptist de La Salle was named Canon of the Reims Cathedral at sixteen and entered the National Seminary and the Sorbonne University at the age of 19. At the age of 21, due to the death of his parents he had to assume the administration of family affairs but with determination completed his theological studies and was ordained a priest on April 9, 1678. Two years later he received a doctorate in theology. Meanwhile he became tentatively involved with a group of rough and barely literate young men in order to establish schools for poor boys.

At that time a few people lived in luxury, but most of the people were very poor peasants in the country or slum dwellers in the towns. Only a few could send their children to school. Most children had little hope of a future. Moved by the plight of these poor children who seemed so "faraway from salvation," either in this world or the next, De La Salle was determined to put his own talents and advanced education at the service of the children who were often left to themselves and badly neglected. To be more effective, he abandoned his family home, moved in with the teachers, renounced his position as Canon and his wealth, and so formed the community that became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Pioneering Efforts

His enterprise met opposition from the higher authorities who resisted the creation of a new form of religious life, a community of consecrated laymen to conduct gratuitous schools "together and by association." The educational establishment resented his innovative methods and his insistence on gratuity for all, regardless of whether they could afford to pay. Nevertheless De La Salle and his Brothers succeeded in creating a network of quality schools throughout France that featured instruction in the vernacular, students grouped according to ability and achievement, integration of religious instruction with secular subjects, well-prepared teachers with a sense of vocation and mission and the involvement of parents.

In addition, De La Salle pioneered in programs for training lay teachers, Sunday courses for working young men and one of the first institutions in France for the care of delinquents. In 1719, worn out by austerities and exhausting labours he died at Saint Yon near Rouen on Good Friday, only weeks before his sixty-eighth birthday.

John Baptist de La Salle was a pioneer in founding training colleges for teachers, reform schools for delinquents, technical schools, and secondary schools for modern languages, arts, and sciences. His work quickly spread through France and, after his death, continued to spread across the globe.

Saint

In 1900 John Baptist de La Salle was declared a Saint. In 1950, because of his life and inspirational writings, he was made Patron Saint of all those who work in the field of education. John Baptist de La Salle inspired others how to teach and care for young people, how to meet failure and frailty with compassion, how to affirm, strengthen and heal. At present there are De La Salle Schools in 84 different countries around the globe.

In Sri Lanka we have 55 Brothers and they live in nine communities and in three Formation Houses. They serve in 13 major institutions (Formal and Non-Formal), three Formation Houses and in number of other minor institutions. We share our mission with nearly 850 Lay partners and instruct about 15,700 students under our care. May God bless you all

Rev. Bro. Denzil Perera

Provincial Visitor for Sri Lanka
130, De La Salle Street, Colombo 15



Founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers), Patron of Christian Teachers.

Indian Mosaic

On 23rd December 1972, Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, commemorated the nineteenth century of Christianity in India. She said, "We have gathered here to

commemorate the mission of one of the direct disciples of Jesus Christ. It is our special pride that all the major religions of the world live and thrive in India ... Historical evidence and numerous traditions show that Christians were accepted from earliest days as a part of the Indian mosaic."

It is a historical fact that Christianity was introduced to India by St. Thomas the Apostle, one of the twelve apostles of Christ. Christian Churches that claim their origin to Apostle Thomas still exist in the Western coast of India, especially in the State of Kerala. Some of the sects even recognize the Pope as their spiritual head and profess allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church.

It is evident that the disciples of Christ first preached Christianity to Jews. All the twelve apostles were of Jewish origin as their Master, and they felt quite at home in the Jewish synagogues. Acts of the Apostles quotes several times about apostles preaching in the synagogues. "He (Paul) went straight to the synagogue and began to preach that Jesus was the Son of God (Acts 9:20)." "Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of Jews and Gentiles became believers" (Acts 14:1).

Jewish people facing persecutions and invasions left their homeland, and they settled down in other parts of the world. This is the origin of the Jewish Diaspora. Jewish communities settled down all over the world. The Churches in Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, Antioch and Rome have their origins in the Jewish communities of these cities. Some Jews gave up their Jewish faith and embraced Christianity. The Gentiles (non-Jews) joined the Christian communities later.

The same pattern occurred in the case of the Church in India. There was a Jewish community in Cochin, Kerala. They trace their origin to as far as the time of King Solomon (950 Be). They came to Cochin as traders and dealt mainly with precious stones, ivory and precious metal like gold and silver. Jews make it a point to keep in contact with their ancestral center of worship in Jerusalem. Some of these Indian Jews would have encountered Thomas in Jerusalem and invited him to preach the new faith to their communities. Thomas would have joined them and arrived in Cochin.

His first converts were Jews and later on history records that he converted Brahmins, farmers, fisher folk, traders and shepherds. These trade categories are important because during that time all these men and women belonged to different castes where inter-communications and inter-marriages were strictly prohibited. There are seven churches in this region attributed to have been founded by St. Thomas. They are Kodungalur, Palayoor, Paravur, Kokkamangalam, Niraham, Nilakal and Quilon. History records that after ten years of missionary work in South Western India mainly, in the present day Kerala, he crossed over to the Eastern coast of India.

In spite of the strong influence of Hinduism there are three shrines dedicated to St. Thomas the apostle in the present day Tamil Nadu. One is the famous Basilica of St. Thomas erected over the tomb of the Saint. Other two shrines are the Little Mount where St. Thomas preached, performed miracles and baptized thousands of Indians. St. Thomas Mount, the third shrine, is the place where he was praying and meditating while hiding from the persecutors who were pursuing to assassinate him. He used a small cave as his shelter. It was here that the Saint was martyred with a spear while he was praying. Oral traditions testify that the spear-head used to assassinate him was also buried with his body.



Lenten Message of the Director, Seth Sarana - Caritas Colombo

"I Thirst" (John 19: 28)

We could hear these words from the Cross as Jesus finally showing us His human side. We could interpret these words simply as a part of the humanity of Jesus. In the holy season of Lent, the Church sets out once again on the path of leading to Easter. With Jesus as her guide, and walking in his footsteps she invites us to cross the desert.

As Pope Francis says, Lent is a time of renewal for the whole church, for each community and every



believer. Above all it is a "time of grace." Lent is the time for greater love,

listen to Jesus' thirst. "Repent and Believe" Jesus tells us. What are we to repent? Our indifference, our hardness of heart. What are we to believe? Jesus thirsts even now, in your heart and in the poor. Today, Christ repeats His request and relieves the torments of His Passion in the poorest of our brothers and sisters.

This year too, we continue our commitment to address the poverty by helping the most vulnerable and marginalized people who approach the church for assistance with

their housing problems and alleviate suffering. This allows us to support vulnerable families around the Archdiocese of Colombo who would otherwise go unnoticed. Their lives are worth our concern and our partnership.

"...Fast by sharing your food with the hungry, bring to your house the homeless, clothe the one you see naked and do not turn away from your own kin." (Isaiah 58: 1-9)

Rev. Fr. Rohan de Alwis

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

The Mystery of Lent

Take up your cross and follow Jesus and you will enter eternal life. If you die with Him, you will also live with Him and if you share His suffering, you will also share His glory.

His victory is our renewal, our "spring" — which is the meaning of the Anglo-Saxon word, "lengten" or Lent. In this penitential season we have the opportunity to make an annual spiritual "tune-up," a 40-day retreat with Our Lord. Have we allowed worldly cares and the "daily drama" to obscure our call to holiness? Have self-love and materialism eroded our relationship with God? Then let us renew our efforts, and through our Lenten observance, discipline the body and master it as we "follow in the footsteps of the poor, and crucified Christ"

Pix on extreme right: 14 wooden plaque Stations of the Cross in the Theologate Chapel at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka at Ampitiya, Kandy. These were carved by Fr. Treason Silva in 2008 when he was a student in the Seminary. He also carved an-



other series of wooden stations of the cross for the Philosophate Chapel which will be highlighted next week.

At left: The traditional figure of Christ used in Lenten Services and the Way of the Cross at St. James Church, Jaffna. St. James Church stands on Main Street Jaffna. Even though one sees the date 1861 etched on its façade, there is evidence of an earlier church having occupied the same site in 1783. The present church with its twin towers and its larger main dome is a culmination of ornate moldings, arches, pillars, crosses and crowning lanterns. Over the entrance doorway is a silver plaque of a makara figure - the symbol taken from the flag of the community that built this church and still worships here.

Joseph Vaz installed in Kandy

The wooden statue of Joseph Vaz that graced the altar dais of the Canonization Mass at Galle Face Green on January 14, 2015 was duly installed at St. Anthony's Cathedral, Kandy last week. The statue was welcomed

by the parishioners of the Cathedral led by their Bishop His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando and Parish Priests. Pix by Anthony Christopher.



Saint Peter

St. Peter, the peerless and dignified leader and the Chief of the Apostles; the Captain of the ship of the Holy Church was called Simon before he became a disciple of our Lord. He was the son of Jonah and the brother of Andrew. Peter seems to be younger than Andrew. Peter was a resident of Bethsaida, a town in the Upper Galilee near the Lake Genasareth or Sea Galilee. By profession he was a fisherman. From Bethsaida he went and resided at Capharnaum. It could be because of his marriage. His mother-in-law (wife's mother) lived there. That too was a fishing centre near the River Jordan.

'Caefas'

Andrew who recognised Christ as the Messiah took his brother Peter to Christ. It was his desire to make his brother Peter also a partner. As soon as Jesus saw Simon, He gave him a new name. It was the name "Caefas." According to Aramaic its meaning is "Rock." When translated into Greek it becomes "Petros," in Latin "Petra," from which we have "Peter."

Once on the request of Our Lord, Peter cast his net into the sea, and caught such a large number of fish, the net was almost tearing. With the help of John and James the catch was brought to the shore very carefully. Peter fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, leave me for I am a sinner." It was at this moment that Jesus wanted Peter and Andrew to leave their boat and the nets and follow Him. A few days later at Caphernaum Jesus healed the mother-in-law of Peter.

In the year 31 AD after the Jewish Pascal festival our Lord chose His Apostles and appointed Peter as the Head. Where the list of the Apostles is mentioned, all the evangelists make it a point to write Peter's name as the first in the list. Jesus always mentions Peter's name in His sermons. Peter as the interpreter always speaks on behalf of other Apostles and

answers Jesus' questions. After His resurrection Jesus appeared to Peter first. It was to Peter that Jesus gave the authority, the special power to "feed His Lambs and His Sheep." It was Peter that God first chose to preach to the Gentiles, the non-Jews. The Gospel often mention that it was Peter who always worked as the leader.

About one year prior to His death, Christ appointed Peter the Head of His Church, an after His resurrection He confirmed that by making Peter to certify that three times. Some disciples, who did not accept His teaching were leaving Him. Jesus asked Peter "Are you also leaving me?" "Lord, where can we go, you have the words of eternal life," was the immediate reply of Peter. At the Transfiguration Peter saw the heavenly majesty in the face of Jesus. Peter was so pleased he told our Lord, "Master, it is good for us to remain here everyday, it is very much better to remain with you and see the heavenly majesty here everyday."

Once when Our Lord mentioned about His agonizing death, Peter affirmed that he would never allow such a thing to happen. "Satan, get behind me, you are a stone on my path," was Jesus' reply to Peter. When Peter saw Jesus walking towards him on the sea, he was restless and was so anxious and jumped twice into the sea to reach Him. Peter too was walking on the water, but when he realised that, he almost drowned he shouted, "Lord save me, I am drowning."

At Caesarea-Philippi when Jesus asked his apostles, "Who do people say that I am?" "It is John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, another Prophet" was their reply. When Peter heard this he jumped toward and replied: "You are Christ, the son of the living God." "Peter, you are the rock, on this rock I shall build my Church" Jesus answered thus. After His resurrection Jesus asked thrice "Simon, Son of Jonah, do you love me" Peter was very sorry

and replied thus: "Lord you know all things, you very well know that I love you."

Teardrops

At the Last Supper when Jesus came to wash the feet of the Apostles Peter said, "Lord, I will never allow you to wash my feet." When Jesus said "If you do not allow me to wash your feet, you will not have any share with me," Peter immediately said, "Then Lord, wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." A little while later when Jesus spoke about His journey of death, Peter at once shouted, "I will go to prison or death with you, I will even give my life for you." Jesus said, "Before the cock crows twice this day, you will deny me thrice." That prophesy was fulfilled. Peter was



so much repenting over it all throughout his life, it is said that there were visible lines on his cheeks of of teardrops flowing from his eyes.

At the Transfiguration, at the miracle of raising from dead the daughter of Jairus, at sending to the town to prepare for the Last Supper, later at the passion in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter was a prominent figure. When Jesus

was dragged away by the soldiers, Peter was so furious, he pulled out his sword and attacked them. Whereby he cut the ear of Malkus one of the soldiers. But Jesus healed his ear and told Peter: "Put your sword in, for those who take the sword, die by the sword." When Peter heard from Mary Magdalan that Jesus has risen from the dead, he ran as fast as possible towards the sepulchre. John ran before and reached the tomb, but he allowed his master, Peter to go in and peep first. At the death of Judas the betrayer, Peter chose Matthias as the Apostle to fill his place.

Conversions

After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Peter preached so eloquently at the Temple, the people were wondering how this



power He has risen again." The same day 3000 and the following day 5000 people were converted and became Christians.

At the gates of the Temple of Jerusalem there was a man lame from birth, begging from every one passing by. Peter had sympathy for this beggar. Peter said "Gold and Silver, I have none; what I have I will give you; in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and walk," thus saying Peter took the beggar's arm and raised him up. He recovered in an instance, then walking and dancing went to the Temple and thanked God. The first Christians led a common life. They sold all what they had and gave that money to Peter. He gave each one what was needed for the day Ananias and Saphira who cheated Peter died on the spot for the lie they uttered.

Peter went to surrounding districts and preached the Gospel. At Lydda, Peter healed Aeneas' the paralytic, he gave life to the widow Tabitha at Joppa, who had died. Peter, established the Church in Antioch and preached in the Asia Minor. Later in about 40 A.D, he went to Rome. Between 45 to 55 A.D., Peter wrote two Epistles to fight the heretics.

When the cruel Emperor Nero was persecuting the Christians from year 64 A.D., Peter was requested by the Early Christians to leave Rome. With great reluctance he was leaving Rome. At the

border of the town Jesus appeared to Peter and Peter unexpectedly in great excitement asked. "Lord, where are you going?" The Lord replied "I am going back to Rome to be crucified again." Peter knew these words were directly uttered for him. Peter at once turned back and went to Rome where he met St. Paul. Both were imprisoned. At the end of the 8th month in prison Peter and Paul converted Processes and Martinian, the chief jailors and 47 others and baptised them to Christianity.

In the year 65 A.D., both Peter and Paul were put to death. It was on 29th of June in Rome. Peter told his executioners to nail him to the cross with his head downwards and his legs upwards, because he did not want to be crucified in equal manner with his master, Christ the Lord. He said he was not worthy of such a death.

It is said that the body of St. Paul was buried far away from Rome; while the body of St. Peter was buried in the hills of Vatican. Today the heads of both Peter and Paul, are placed in a silver casket and kept in the Church of St. John Lateran.

The symbol of St. Peter consists of a golden key and a silver key. With this we are reminded of the words of the Lord: "I will give you the keys of Heaven."

(Feast June 29)

D.C. Jayasinghe

Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent.

St. John of the Cross

The bread you store up belongs to the hungry; the cloak that lies in your chest belongs to the naked; the gold you have hidden in the ground belongs to the poor.

St. Basil the Great

The Jesuits wanted in Colombo

Rev. Fr. Vito Perniola, sj

Some Portuguese might have come to know the Jesuits in Goa or in Cochin. Others might have benefited when they listened to Fr Emmanuel Morais S J, who preached the jubilee in Colombo and in Kotte in 1552. Still others might have listened to Fr. Melchior Nunes Barreto S.J., preaching when Bishop Temudo O.P. made the pastoral visitation of Colombo in 1566. But it was the Jesuit Fr Antonio Schipano that made such an impression that led the people to ask for the Jesuits to be permanently with them.

Fr. Antonio Schipano S.J. was an Italian. When he was still young he had secured a double doctorate in Ecclesiastical and in Civil Law. Then he joined the Society of Jesus and asked to be sent to the mission in India where he learnt both Tamil and Malayalam. He was a good friend of Captain General Pero Lopez de Souza.

In 1594 Captain de Souza was assigned to the island of Ceylon. His first duty was to see that Princess Dona Catherina was recognized as queen of Kandy under the pro-

tection of the Portuguese. Since it was the first time that people could go to Ceylon after the long war of thirty years, several Franciscans and other priests took their chance to travel from Goa to Ceylon. Captain de Sousa invited his friend and spiritual guide, Father Antonio Schipano S.J., to go with him.

Though clearly warned, de Souza never believed that a so-called good friend of his was a traitor. It was this traitor that led the small Portuguese army into a valley where it found itself surrounded by Kandyans. Most of the Portuguese were killed. About 100 of them were tied to posts waiting for a merciful death.

Fr. Schipano escaped death with a small wound. The new king of Kandy, Wimaladharm Suriya, spared his life and prevented those who were trying to kill him from doing so. Then he sent him to Colombo with the terms of peace. It took ten months to send the terms of peace to Goa and to have a reply. During these ten months Schipano was the guest of the Franciscans and he was very

careful not to violate the laws of hospitality.

It was evident to all that Schipano was becoming very popular among the inhabitants of Colombo. The Franciscan friars saw this clearly and they thought that they might teach him a lesson by repeating what they had heard about Japan lest the Jesuits should try to come to Ceylon. They told him how in Japan the Franciscans tried to enter and the Jesuits prevented them. Schipano, rather sharply replied: "in Japan it was the FRANCISCANS who tried to enter; in Ceylon it was the PEOPLE who wanted the Jesuits.

The people realized that they needed the Jesuits for their Catholic life both intellectually and morally; they needed the Jesuits for the education of their children. But, how to get the Jesuits to Ceylon?

The people suddenly seemed to have found an occasion to succeed in their plans. There came to Colombo a Jesuit, Father Emmanuel de Veigas, who was going to Rome for a meeting. The people of Colombo prepared two letters, one to the King of Portugal and the other to the Pope and

entrusted them to Fr Veigas. In Portugal Fr. Veigas showed those two letters to the Jesuit Provincial who clearly forbade him to hand over those letters to the King and to the Pope. In Rome he showed the letters to Fr. C. Aquaviva, Superior General of the Jesuits. The answer he received was simple and to the point: "For no reason whatever should we take this question with the Supreme Pontiff, but the citizens of Colombo should be told that if they are so anxious to have the Society of Jesus, they should propose the matter to the Viceroy and to the bishop. If these agree, it will be for them to pacify the Franciscans who were the first to go to that island for preaching the Gospel. Otherwise the work will be greatly hindered since we will be involved in repeated discussions and offences." (VP PP II 165).

Though the question had been officially submitted to the King, the Bishop of Cochin did not wait for a reply. He felt that the salvation of souls was his responsibility. He discussed the matter with the viceroy and with the Archbishop of Goa and invited the Jesuits to come

to Colombo.

The desire of the Catholics, to have the Jesuits in Ceylon, had reached the king who, on the 12th of October 1602 wrote as follows: "Viceroy, friend, I the King, send you greetings. I have been informed that the Religious of the Order of St Francis of those parts have worked for the conversion of the people of the island of Ceylon. But since the island is vast, it would be good for God's service and mine, if the Religious of the Society of Jesus were also to go to that island. I am writing to the Archbishop to discuss this matter with you so that both of you may arrive at a decision and carry it out." The Archbishop, together with the Viceroy, had already arrived at a decision.

Though the higher authorities were fully informed, the Franciscans were also planning what steps they should take to prevent the Jesuits from coming into their territory. Some of them went to those parts of Ceylon which the viceroy might allot to the Jesuits. They went up and down and planted Crosses in order to have a better title to as-

sert their right over those lands.

In spite of this, the Bishop of Cochin, to whose diocese Ceylon belonged, though he himself was a religious of St. Francis, insisted that the Fathers of the Society of Jesus should go to Ceylon. He would divide that extensive island into two parts between the Jesuits and the Religious of his Order. To the Jesuits he allotted the region from the Maha Oya to the kingdom of Jaffna. The Jesuits were very happy since in this region they were linked up with the Jesuits in Mannar and in South India where they had the school of language. The Franciscans were given the entire region from the Maha Oya to Matara and beyond. Bishop D. Andrea de S.M. very clearly pointed out to the Prelates of his Order that they should make their Religious learn the language of the people since, out of forty Religious, only one knew it. (VP PP II 205-6).

(Fr. Perniola will be happy to receive from his readers critique and comments of his articles appearing in the Catholic Messenger to enable him later to publish them in a book.)

Flying with Pope Francis

A Sri Lankan Airlines official who was on the Airbus A340 which took the Pope to Manila says so:

Although Pope Francis arrived at Kattunayake on Alitalia, it is customary for the Pope to leave on the national airline of the host country. Sri Lankan Airlines offered to fly him to Manila on their account. The Vatican graciously accepted. The 80 Vatican-accredited foreign journalists who accompanied the Pope paid their way. Their aircraft went empty from Manila.

"We offered our newest aircraft but the Vatican team chose the Airbus

A340," said Kapila Chandrasena, Sri Lankan Airlines Chief Executive Officer. The plane was not modified in any way and the small Papal party occupied the front.

There were no special meal requests and no fuss. "They looked at menus and made their choice, both Eastern and Western cuisine," Mr Chandrasena said. "He did not eat breakfast, only a light meal for lunch."

There were 12 in-flight crew members and three instructor captains for optimum safety. "The flight was operated as VVIP," he explained. The pilots and crew were all Catholic or Christian. "We wanted to give them this opportunity," Mr. Chandrasena said, adding that other selection criteria such as seniority and



The Pope waves just before he steps inside the plane



Pope Francis with Philippines' President Benigno Aquino on arrival in the Philippine

performance were also applied.

"It was the highlight of my life," Mr. Chandrasena said. "The Holy Father was so humble and simple. I felt he was someone who really practises what he preaches. I hardly saw him rest. He keeps up an incredible pace. He came onboard carrying his own bag."

"When we were airborne, the first thing they did was pray," he continued. "He rested for an hour or so before giving a briefing to the journalists at the back. He blessed each crew member as well as rosaries and other personal items they brought to him."

A small replica of an aircraft was presented to the Pope on behalf of Sri Lankan Airlines. Later, he had a meeting with his officials. He did some reading and would have dozed off briefly before landing around 5.30 p.m., local time, in Manila.

Each time the aircraft overflew another country, greetings from the Pope were conveyed through the flight communications system to the head of that nation. He also sought permission to enter the cockpit and to thank the pilots.

"And when he left, he said, 'Pray for me,'" Mr. Chandrasena concluded.

APPRECIATION

Her life was like a shooting star-that brought so much joy to so many

There is a special person we admire most throughout our life. She was the central figure and who looked into everything in our family. We were all dependent on her. She was the special bond that held our family together. She is none-other than Esme Abeyaratne, who left us to be with the Lord after a brief period of ill health, on March 1, 2012.

She was a remarkable woman of many qualities, among them were generosity, kindness, patience, calmness, sincerity, understanding, courage and intelligence. She was a person who was ever adorable, affectionate and down to earth. Her simplicity was admired by all who knew her. She was also a role model and great source of inspiration to many. She was a humble and polite person who treated all with due respect. Her life was like a shooting star that brought much joy to many. She performed her duties to the utmost perfection. She looked after her parents with love and care.

Aside from her duties to her immediate



family, she also was a pillar of strength to her relatives. Whenever there was a family crisis she would be the first person that her relatives would call for moral support. We also recall her care and concern when we fell ill and countless sleepless nights she spent by our bedside. She was also very considerate towards others. She lived as everyone's friend and lived her life for others. She never looked for praise and was never one to boast. She had a heart made of gold. She graciously helped everyone around her, whether they were family members in need or the less fortunate. It could truly be said of her that her left hand did not know what her right hand gave.

She was a devout catholic. Her vibrant

faith in the Lord was the dominant characteristic of her life. She was a great cook too. She specialized in making various types of delicious dishes which everyone enjoyed, we also remember the lovely dresses and elaborate machine embroidery she did.

She is missed by all of us every single day. We will forever cherish the precious memories of her.

"Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near."

Most affectionately remembered with love and prayers by **Eustace, Shivoli & Nishantha**

PRISCILLA FERNANDO

Although it seems just the other day, it will be two years on February 25, since the demise of my friend, Priscilla Fernando. When I was admitted to St. Mary's Convent Matara as a little kid, I had to stay in the hostel as we were from Kimbulapitiya, Negombo and I got the bed adjoining Priscilla's and we became friends which developed to a great extent. We maintained this friendship till her death. She was very kind hearted and was always prepared to give a helping hand to anyone.

After a longstanding love affair, she married her cousin Dunstan, who lived in close proximity, two houses next to hers at Lake Road, Kalutara. They were best of friends from their young days and was

so even after marriage. They were so close that even their friends called them the young couple. Although I had heard of Dunstan, I saw him for the first time when we were returning home for the April 1957 holidays when he was at the Aluthgama Railway station with her brother.

Dunstan is an Engineer and was employed at Sri Lanka Telecom. He was an outstanding sportsman who later became a sports administrator. He served in the executive committees of Athletic Association of Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Cricket and also of the Old Boys' Union of St. Peter's College for nearly two decades.

Both were religious minded and at-

tended parish work of Kalamulla, Kalutara. Her brother was the late Rev. Fr. Solomon Fernando and her sister was a Good Shepherd nun, Rev. Sister Jean Marie.

She was fond of her grand children. She used to relate that she has a big grand son who would carry her coffin, which he did. Jeremy is sitting for the GCE/AL exam this year. Two grand daughters are at St. Bridget's Convent.

She was looking forward to their 50th wedding anniversary which was to be on April 18, 2018, which can never happen now. She always mentioned that after celebrating the 50th anniversary, she was prepared to die.

She looked after Dunstan very well and their love remained strong throughout their 45 years of married life and her last words to the children was to look after their father.

Even after Priscilla's death, we, her friends maintain the friendship with Dunstan and used to call him often, so is Marie Samarasinghe who is living in England. All of us will call him on his next birthday which falls on March 25.

May she rest in peace.

Leela Fernando

Short Course on Christian Family Life

St. Joseph Vaz Theologate, Tamil Divison, in the Archdiocese of Colombo will be conducting a short course on Christian Family Life, commencing from Saturday, March 14, 2015, at Aquinas University, Tamil Theology Lecture Hall.

The Current Year being dedicated to family in the Archdiocese, it is a golden opportunity to all Tamil speaking Christians to enrich their knowledge on family life.

Course commencing March 14, will be on nine consecutive Saturdays, from 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. At the end of the course, all those who have attended 80% Lectures will be awarded with a certificate.

The course will be conducted by Rev. Fr. Lloyd Shanthikumar. A fee of Rs. 500 will be charged from every participant. All are welcome.

Rev. Fr. Reginold, OMI
Director

EVENTS

Rev. Fr. Callistus Joseph ...

(Contd from Pg. 1)

Fr. Callistus Joseph was born in Kandy on July 7, 1964 and had his primary and secondary education at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. He had his philosophy and novitiate in India and went to the Philippines for the study of theology. After his priestly ordination at Hatton, Sri Lanka on May 16, 1992 he served as formator and econome at Claret Nivas, Gurudeniya, Kandy and Superior at St. Claret Seminary, Kattuwa, Negombo. In 2003 he went for specialization in counseling to Kent, UK and Chicago, USA and later prepared himself to work in Germany. His availability to work in the universal mission of the Congregation brought him to South Sudan in the African continent and he joined the Intercongregational Team of Religious men and women to work for the upliftment of the masses on health and educational sectors in South Sudan ravaged by civil war. He was the co-ordinator of this venture for a few years and in 2013 he returned to Germany to form part of the Claretian community at Dreifaltigkeitsberg, Spaichingen.

It is indeed a sign of the times that a non-European has been elected to lead and guide a province of religious in Europe and a promising trend of the interculturality of the religious congregations in the modern world and Church.

Fr. Cyriac Njayarkulam cmf

"The man who burns with the fire of divine love is a son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and wherever he goes, he enkindles that flame ..."

Statue of St. Joseph Vaz ceremonially installed in Kandy

The wooden statue of Saint Joseph Vaz which graced the stage during the Papal Mass for the Canonization of the Saint at the Galle Face Green on January 14, was ceremonially installed in the Kandy Cathedral by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy.

The statue was sculptured by Mr. Raymond Fernando of Moratuwa.

Kandy was the city where St. Joseph Vaz was imprisoned in 1692 by King Wimaladharmasuriya II which paved the way for him to master the Sinhala language and also befriend the King. It was in Kandy that he worked the famous miracle of rain and looked after all the victims of the small-pox epidemic (without any discrimination) sparing no pains and at great risk to himself and to his brother Priest, which earned for him the respect and admiration of not only the King but also of the people as a great person of holiness. Kandy was his "head-quarters" for nearly 20 years from where he walked barefoot the length and breadth of Sri Lanka rekindling the faith of our forefathers during the bitter Dutch persecution. Finally, he breathed his last in Kandy on January 16, 1711 and was buried 3 days later, after the body lay in state on the orders of King Narendrasinghe. Therefore, the installation of the life-sized wooden statue of our beloved St. Joseph Vaz in the Cathedral of the very city which he chose as his "head-quarters" and where his mortal remains lie in a hitherto unknown place is of great significance and joy not only to the Catholics but also to all the people of the Central Province of Sri Lanka.

It is our fervent wish and prayer that the desire of the Diocese of Kandy to have St. Joseph Vaz declared co-patron of the Diocese will soon be a reality.

May St. Joseph Vaz the beloved Apostle of Sri Lanka inspire all of us to strengthen our faith and joyfully proclaim the Good News to all our fellow citizens so that all may experience the love and mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



Victor Silva

Catechism for the Youth

Compiled by
Fr. Indra Ratnasiri Fernando,
Parish Priest, Nittambuwa

(Contd from last week)

Chapter two (2):

The Sacraments of Healing. The Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation- 224-239)

The Sacrament of penance is also called the sacrament of forgiveness of sins. Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn. 20:22-23). God alone forgives sins. Jesus could say "your sins are forgiven" (Mk.2:5), since he is the Son of God. Priest can forgive sins in Jesus's place only since Jesus has given them that authority. Penance is making satisfaction for a wrong doing that has been committed. Essential elements of every confession are an examination of conscience, contrition, purpose of amendment, confession and penance. Thus, it is the duty of a catholic to confess his or her sins. The church advises the faithful to do this at least once a year. Thus, confession is a great gift of healing which brings about closer union with the Lord.

The elderly, the sick and the needy are central in the characteristics of Christianity. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the sick can be received by any catholic whose healing is a central state. The anointing of the sick as a Sacrament imparts consolation, peace and strength and unites the sick person in his or her sufferings with Christ in a profound way.

The sacrament of Anointing (240- 247)

Administration of the Anointing of the sick is reserved to bishops and priests, for it is Christ who acts through them by virtue of their ordination.

The term "Viaticum" is the last Holy Communion which a person receives before dying

(To be contd)

Catholic Church in Sri Lanka has the responsibility of fostering the faith enkindled by St. Joseph Vaz

One of the greatest dreams of Sri Lanka is Catholic Church is to see our beloved Apostle Blessed Joseph Vaz, be raised to sainthood. Our prayers have been answered and our efforts were blessed by God and we have received our own saint. It was our own Cardinal His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith who made the final and definite effort in the process of canonization. I know about it as the secretary of the Nation of Secretariat for the Cause of Canonization of Blessed Joseph Vaz. We thank His Eminence and the Bishop of Kandy, Vianney Fernando who have led the church to have this great gift of God to us.

Now the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka has a greater responsibility to foster the faith of our people which St. Joseph Vaz enkindled in the hearts of our forefathers. We learn that all the good traditions we inherit today are from St. Joseph Vaz. To mention a few:

1. St. Joseph Vaz has visited families and communities of the faithful who lived as sheep without a shepherd. He went from village to village bare-footed disguised as a beggar to recognise Catholics and form communities of believers. Today too we have our faithful scattered and unattended. Our mission is to go in search of the lost sheep.
2. St. Joseph Vaz has appointed laity as leaders-in-charge of communities and established them. Lay leaders were recognised by all as *Annavi, Muhuppu, Kanakapillai and Kovilpillai*. Today, our mission is to work together with the laity and for the laity. The leadership

and active participation is essential. The only concern of St. Joseph Vaz was his mission of winning the hearts of people for God and never interested in their caste, language, social status or even their religion. Following his example we need to work with a great sense of openness and availability to our people.

3. Today we inherit a rich Christian culture and literature from St. Joseph Vaz. It was the Oratorian Fathers, particularly St. Joseph Vaz who inspired Fr. Jacome Gonsalves to create such a great volume of Christian literature. Singing of Pasan, Carol, Lathoni, Passion Play, Drama and Poetry come to us from the Oratorian Fathers. It was St. Joseph Vaz who performed the first ever passion play in Sri Lanka at Vanni in 1706. Oratorian reports say that even the necessary costumes and statues were brought from Goa. This year when he is canonized as the first saint of the island we intend to stage a passion play '*Alokayano*' as a tribute to St. Joseph Vaz at Kotte, on Palm Sunday March 29, 2015. We need to treasure this great Christian culture, drama and literature and pass it on to the future generation.

4. St. Joseph Vaz is the hero for all our faithful. Particularly children need heroes to follow in their life. We propose to include St. Joseph Vaz in the subject of Christianity in all syllabi for all grades up to University education and make them compulsory for all examinations.

5. In the Archdiocesan St. Joseph Vaz Committee we have competent people to conduct pilgrimages to visit footsteps of St. Joseph Vaz locally and also to Goa. They

have become very popular and informative. If any Parish or Institution wants to organize one such pilgrimage, we will be able to provide guides. They are also low cost pilgrimages and enlightening.

6. Now Your Eminence, one of the most important request from you as the President of the Bishops' Conference is that; At this time of great history in the Sri Lankan Church we need to have a National Shrine dedicated to St. Joseph Vaz as a monument and as our tribute to him.

7. Dear Fathers, at different levels we need to promote the devotion to St. Joseph Vaz in terms of conducting Novenas, reciting the Thanksgiving prayer and including St. Joseph Vaz in the canon of the Holy Mass. Novena books, prayer cards and the film/Joseph Vaz are available with us.

8. It is highly recommended to form a St. Joseph Vaz Association in every parish and institution to carry out his mission in this island. We also could study and employ the missionary methods and initiate his heroic faith which he initiated as the Apostle of Sri Lanka and as the first ever Saint of our own.

I thank you Your Eminence and all of you for giving me this opportunity to share these few thoughts with you all God Bless you.

Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle
Episcopal Vicar
Archdiocese of Colombo

"Young man ...

Contd. from Pg. 1

Deanery Levels and it culminated with the diocesan youth rally at Talawila, on February 17, this year.

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour. Many priests and religious of the Diocese attended the rally to encourage the youth.

Rev. Fr. Isanka Mihiran.

ISIS Burns 8000

Contd. from Pg. 1

the Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Arab civilizations had never witnessed such an assault on its rich cultural heritage since the Mongol era in the Middle Ages.

Last week, a debate in Washington and Baghdad became heated over when, how and who will liberate Mosul. A plan was announced to liberate the city in April or May by more than 20,000 US trained Iraqi soldiers. Either way, and supposing everything will go well and ISIS will be defeated easily which is never the case in reality, that means the people of Mosul will still have to wait for another two to three months.

Until then, Mosul will probably have not a single sign of its rich history left standing.

The Fiscal Times

The Glory...

Contd. from Pg. 4

hope tangible. The disciples were also made witnesses of God's glory so that, later, they could testify (Mark 9:9, 2 Peter 1:16-18).

The Glory and the Grime: Although Mark is silent about the subject of Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah, Luke reports that they were talking of His 'exodos' or 'departure' (Luke 9:31), a clear reference to His death—a deliverance foreshadowed by the exodus and deliverance from Egypt.

You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs! John Nolland comments that the disciples have seen "the glory to which Jesus is destined as chosen Son, but the glory they have glimpsed can reach fullness and permanence only by way of the cross." As he so beautifully expresses it (emphasis added):

"It is not possible—and nor is it right—to 'freeze' this moment of glory.

The aftermath of the voice speaks as eloquently as had the voice itself. The moment of glory has vanished. Jesus is alone. The mountaintop experience has passed and what remains is the way of the cross as the way to permanence of glory. They have seen the glory that by right belongs to Jesus, but it belongs to Him the other side of death and resurrection."

We live in the period in-between Christ's first and second comings. We, too, see glimpses of glory, the in-breaking of the kingdom of God. But this is a partial and a temporary glory; the fullness and the fulfillment are yet to come. For us, as for the first disciples, this glory comes only by way of the cross. This means that while we welcome, enjoy, and grow through, spiritual 'mountain-tops' upon which God may lead us, we must also set our feet firmly, determinedly, in the grime of the 'real world,' ever willing to get our hands dirty with the tasks entrusted to us and all the while, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus alone.

The Religious...

Contd. from Pg. 5

Biblical Spirituality needed for Community Development

Consecrated men and women who are willing to dedicate themselves for the upliftment of the poor and the marginalized will not persevere in their commitment to the poor without genuine love for the poor, which is born of the spirituality rooted in the unconditional compassionate love of God. Jesus experienced Father's compassionate love and became sensitive to the pains of the excluded people in the society.

Like Jesus, those who experience God's compassionate love will also respond to the painful cries of the poor. Then

they become social apostles and not mere social workers. It should be biblical spirituality that will make and energise them to experience God's loving kindness and mercy, and love other human beings and the natural environment.

It is such a spirituality that will empower the consecrated men and women to be close to the above-mentioned categories in Sri Lanka and help those oppressed also to experience such a spirituality and have self-esteem and spiritual power for mutual love to resist oppression and injustice in an assertive manner (non-violently) and achieve for themselves abundant life promised by Jesus (cf Jn 10:10; 15:5,9; Mk 3:14). With such a spirituality, consecrated men and women as community development animators will demonstrate their prophetic role in today's Sri Lankan situation.

Pope names St. Gregory of Narek a Doctor of the Church



VATICAN CITY (CNS) - A 10th-century Armenian monk has been named among the doctors of the Church.

Pope Francis approved the designation for St. Gregory of Narek during a meeting Feb. 21 with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes.

The Church confers this designation on saints whose writings are considered to offer key theological insights for the faith.

St. Gregory of Narek is considered one of the foremost figures of Arme-

nian theology and thought, and many of his prayers are included in the Armenian Divine Liturgy.

He was born in 950 in the Armenian town of Andzevatsik, located in present-day Turkey. He entered a monastery at a young age and was ordained a priest at 25. He lived at the monastery at Narek his whole priestly life and taught at the monastic school.

His best-known writings include a commentary on the Song of Songs and his "Book of Lamentations," more commonly known as "Narek."

"Narek" is considered his masterpiece. It includes 95 prayers and has been translated into more than 30 languages.

St. Gregory died in 1005 AD. St. Gregory brings the current number of Doctors of the Church to 36. His feast in the Roman Catholic is on February 27.

From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard: This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him! (Mt. 17:5)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B
1st March - 8th March 2015

Sun: SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT
Gen. 22:1,2,9-13,15-18; Rom. 8:31-34;
Mk. 9:2-10
Mon: Dan.9:4b-10; Lk.6:36-38
Tue: Is.1:10,16-20; Mt.23:1-12
Wed: Jer.18:18-20; Mt.20:17-28
Thu: Jer.17:5-10; Lk.16:19-31
Fri: Gen.37:3-4,12-13,17-8; Mt.21:33-43,45-46
Sat: Memorial of Ss. Perpetua & Felicity,
Martyrs
Mic.7:14-15,18-20; Lk.15:1-3,11-32
Sun: THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT
Ex.20:1-17 (or Ex.1-3,7,8,12-17);
1 Cor.1:22-25; Jn.2:13-25

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For all those who follow Christ; that they may never choose the cheap and passing things, and so let go of the things that last forever. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For our leaders; that they may never take the easy ways and so abandon the right way. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For those who are finding life difficult through hardship, illness, or death, that the Lord may change their sorrow into joy. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

That we may never forget that sweat is the price of all great thing and that without the cross there can be no crown. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

First Reading:

Gen. 22: 1,2,9-13, 15-18

God tests Abraham. We see him place all his trust and hope in the Lord. He is even prepared to offer his son to the Lord as a sacrifice. The Lord rewards Abraham's deep faith.

Second Reading. Rom. 8: 31-34

The Reading invites us to be among God's elect. Then no power on earth could defeat us. St. Paul assures us that Christ, who died and was raised from the dead, will intercede for us.

Gospel. Mk. 9: 2-10

The story of the Transfiguration is presented to us. Jesus the dedicated Saviour is discussing the life sacrifice that He is about to make and of His resurrection. This is endorsed by a voice from the heaven.

Reflection

The Season of Lent invites us to true repentance and for a deep inner conversion in order to be dedicated to Lord. In today's context, man, it appears, is in a situation where he does not know what to do, where to go and even whom to turn to, in a situation like this, the Lord offers His guiding hand in order to help man to choose the right way. And this way leads to the Lord. And the Lord became everything to him.

In the First Reading we saw God testing Abraham. He is asked to offer his son as a sacrifice. This son was born in Abraham's old age and was the only hope to carry on his tribe. This was disheartening for Abraham. But Abraham places all his trust in the Lord and even takes all

steps to offer his son. He is rewarded for his deep faith in the Lord. In the same way the Lord blesses and rewards those who place their trust and hope in Him.

The Second Reading too exhorts us to be with the Lord. God loves all those who are His. God loves the sinful man. And how much more will He love those that are His. He did not spare His Son from death to save mankind. The Reading invites us to be among God's elect so that we would be saved. Jesus who died and is raised from the dead and who is at the right hand of the Father will intercede for those who are His.

That God helps those who place all their trust, hope and faith in Him is proved even in the Transfiguration story. When this event took place Jesus has come to almost the end of His mission. He now discusses about the great sacrifice that He is to make in order to accomplish His salvific mission. He discusses this with the divine. God help Him to choose the right way. And that is endorsed by the voice from heaven. This proves that if we too live according to the will of God; we too will be guided and helped on our way.

Therefore let us place all our trust, hope and faith in the Lord and give up our old sinful ways and begin a new life. And let us also not be afraid to give up our old sinful ways to begin a new life in the Lord.

Aid Story 1

A girl from the town of Andalusia, all dressed up in her wedding dress, impatiently awaited the arrival of her father in order to proceed to the capital of the province

where she was going to get married that same morning. Everything was in readiness, the groom was waiting with his entourage and the bride's attendants filled the house. The young girl had lighted two candles before the picture of the heart of Mary so that her father would arrive on time, but he telegraphed that he would not arrive until the next day. The young girl, in despair, put out the candle and turned the picture to the wall. The next morning she heard that the train her father would have taken collided with another and 60% of the passengers had been killed or wounded.

Aid Story 2

There is a little Old Catholic lady living next door to an atheist. Every morning the lady goes out on her front porch and shouts, "Praise the Lord!" And every day, the atheist yells back. "There is no God." After a while, though, the lady runs into financial difficulties and had trouble buying food every morning she goes out on the porch and asks God for help with groceries and the shouts "Praise the Lord!"

One morning when she goes out on the porch, she discovers the groceries she's prayed for, of course she shouts "Praise the Lord!"

Just then, the atheist leaps out from behind a bush and says, "Ha, there's no God - I brought those groceries for you."

The lady looks at him and smiles. Then she shouts all the louder. "Praise the Lord! Not only did you provide for me. Lord, you also made Satan pay for the groceries!"

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

"This is my beloved Son. Listen to him" (Mark 9,2-10)

1. Today Jesus goes up "a high mountain." There two figures who are also linked to a mountain, Mount Sinai, appear. God revealed to Moses on Sinai (Exodus 19 - 20); God revealed to Elijah on Horeb = Sinai (1 Kings 19). Moses represents the Law; Elijah represents the Prophets. The Law and the Prophets are parts of the Old Testament. Hence Moses and Elijah represent the Old Testament. They have got something to talk about with the transfigured Jesus in clothes of dazzling white.

2. When Jesus' divinity is revealed in such a privileged way, how do His disciples respond? They are terrified. Peter does not know what to say. But he says something as usual. "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Oh, he feels so happy ("it is good that we are here")

that he likens his joy to the joyful celebration of the harvest festival of Tabernacles ("three tents"). The Israelites dwelt in booths during the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land: Leviticus 23,39-42 "... when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate a pilgrim feast of the Lord for a whole week ... for a week you shall make merry before the Lord, your God ... during this week every native Israelite among you shall dwell in booths." So Jews of Jesus' day too live in booths during the liturgical feast of the Tabernacles reliving their ancestral experience. The joy of Peter turns to that liturgical custom as he suggests making three tents.

3. Then comes a cloud! In the wilderness, the cloud covered the Meeting Tent (Exodus 40,34-35). Later, it came to rest upon the

Temple of Jerusalem at the time of its dedication (1 Kings 8,10). Hence the cloud indicates the Lord's presence in the midst of His people. Once again it casts its shadow. Yes, the Lord is present now on the high mountain.

4. From the cloud comes a voice! Once at His Baptism before the ministry, the heavenly voice identified Jesus as "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (1,11) - that He was the Suffering and Dying Messiah. During the ministry, Peter confessed, "You are the Messiah" (8,29). Once again the heavenly voice identifies Him as "This is my beloved Son." Thus God and man, heaven and earth both confess that Jesus is God's Son and Messiah.

5. From the cloud also comes a command! "Listen to Him." Whom should the disciples listen to? "Sud-

denly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them" (9,8). Both Moses and Elijah have departed. Only Jesus is left as the Teacher to be listened to. Only He should be listened to.

The Transfiguration of Jesus is the Sinai Theophany of the New Testament. On Mount Sinai, God revealed Himself first: "I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery" (Exodus 20,2). Then based on this self-identification (on what He did to Israel), He gave Israelites Ten Commandments which they should listen to and obey. Now God reveals His Son on such a high mountain ("This is my beloved son") and then gives disciples only one Commandment, "Listen to Him." We need to listen to Jesus and then He will explain everything, including the Ten

Commandments, to us.

Why does God command the disciples to listen to Jesus? That is simply because they do not listen to Him. What precedes this happy scene of transfiguration is Jesus' first prediction of His impending passion, death and Resurrection: "that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days" (8,31). When He predicts like this, how do His disciples respond? "Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him" (8,32). They fail to listen to Him and hence, the divine command on the high mountain "Listen to Him." The Paschal Mystery remains a mystery to us as well. It has been a mystery for all ages. But we need to listen to Jesus!

6. How do we listen to Jesus today? In 1984

Velma Barfield was the first woman in 22 years to be executed in USA. In prison she underwent a conversion. Evidence of it appears on every page of her Bible. She once told a friend, "This Bible is where I get my strength. I could not get up in the morning much less go through the day without his Word." Yes, we can listen to Jesus through His Word today!

The moment we read the Scriptures is a moment, when the border between heaven and earth appears to fade for a brief second. It is a moment, when, for a split second of time, God's presence touches our lives deeply. It is a moment when, for a split second of time, we are blessed with a faint glimpse of eternity and God's glory. Let us rejoice over this and say, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here!"

Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi



Sacrament of Reconciliation

Contd from last week

* A Practical Examination of Conscience through the Ten Commandments

The Second Commandment

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"

Commands: Reverence in speaking about God and holy things, the keeping of oaths and vows.

Forbids: Blasphemy, the irreverent use of God's name, speaking disrespectfully of Holy things, false oaths and the breaking of vows.

> Do I try my best to fulfil the promises and resolutions, which I made to God?

> Did I take name of God in vain? Did I make use of God's name mockingly, jokingly, angrily or in any other irreverent manner?

> Did I make use of the Blessed Virgin Mary's name or the saints of names mockingly, jokingly, angrily or in any other irreverent manner?

> Did I tell a lie under oath?

> Did I break (private or public) vows?

> Did I seriously doubt in matters of faith?

The Third Commandment

"Remember, thou keep Holy the Sabbath Day."

Commands: Going for Mass on Sundays and Holy days..

Forbids: Missing church through one's own fault: Unnecessary servile work: public buying and selling, court trials.

> Did I miss Holy Mass on Sundays or Holy days of obligation?

> Did I allow myself to be distracted during Mass by not paying attention, looking around out of curiosity etc.?

> Have I arrived at Mass so late without sufficient reason that I failed



to fulfill the Sunday obligation?

> Did I misbehave or have an improper posture or dress in Church, or caused others to get distracted?

> Did I generously help the Church in her necessities to the extent that I am able?

> Did I fast and abstain on the days prescribed by the Church?

> Have I done or commanded servile work on Sundays or Holy days of obligation?

Next week Fourth Commandment



In this year of Family and Consecrated life:

Taking one aspect of the above theme Family Life - it is appropriate that some parishes have started invoking special prayers on one Sunday in the month, to bless the couples celebrating their wedding anniversaries in that month.

Marriage is a Sacrament from God and all married couples must relive and commemorate that special day when they were united. This must be a celebration of the love that God meant should last a life time... though in practice we see many failures. Thus all the more reason to celebrate once again with God's blessings, the love of those who go forward in love's togetherness not withstanding life's many challenges in the modern world.

Srilal



Mountain Tops and Holy Ground

(Based on Mark 9:2-9)



I sought the mountain-top,
A heavenly place
That touches the sky;
But try as I might,
I never could reach it,
The climb was steep and high.

I sought transfiguration,
With its shining, shimmering
heights of glory;
But strive though I may
I just could not lay claim
to the splendours of that story.

I avert reluctant eyes
Away from visions
of rapturous beings, of radiant faces.
I entrust my heart
To nail-scarred hands...
And I became Your dwelling-place.

In surrender,
I stand arrayed,
In the swirling mists of grace;
And when at last
The clouds have cleared,
I will behold - Your Face.

No mountain-climbing,
No frenzied scrambling,
Yet, truly, grace abounds;
Peace that surpasses
All understanding;
I stand on holy ground.

By Tanya Ferdinandusz

Let Nothing Upset YOU

Let nothing upset you:
Let nothing frighten you.
Everything is changing;
God alone is changeless.
Patience attains the goal.
Who has God
lacks nothing.
God alone fills
every need.

Courtesy:
Fareast



The Meaning of 'Lent'



Lenten the Season of quietude and reflection
Of life and its conclusion
Here on planet Earth
And the hereafter,
For those who've run the race

To win, St. Paul stipulates 1 Cor. 9-24.
Yes and played the game;
The rules of Jesus
The values of heaven
One home to inherit;

As there never was an Easter
Sunday without a Good Friday.

Jeanne Sittampalam

A CROSS The way

By Sirohmi Gunasekera

Gossip

"Did you know that Amali's husband is carrying on with his secretary?" Said Piyali breathlessly.

"That's an old story. Amali and Rohan are just staying together for the sake of the children. Rohan and his secretary have had their affair for months now," said Charith.

"Well, I didn't know and I don't care. I am friendly with them both and I will start praying for them," chimed in Jacintha.

"That is the true Christian spirit without spreading gossip like Piyali," remarked Mala.

"Well, I only wanted you to know so you won't make mischief," replied Piyali, adding, "It is so easy to tread on sensitive ground if you don't know."

"We are all working in the same office so temptation can easily come our way. Anyway, marriage is difficult, especially if one has to raise children as well," said Jacintha.

"I know. People don't realise the problems of a husband and wife living day in day out together coupled with the burden of growing children. Most families have difficulties but we just see father, mother, son and daughter coming to church together and we think all is well," said Charith.

"The best thing is to pray for everyone and try to avoid getting involved in Gossip. Who cares who sleeps with whom? Only the husband and wife need know and they can sort things out without rumour mongers spreading the word," summed up Mala.

The Messiah

Twelve centuries before Jesus' birth, God made a covenant with the people of Israel on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:8). The Covenant conferred on them and their children an identity that they, among all races, would be the chosen people of God. As time passed and the infidelities of God's people became more evident, the prophets understood that something more meaningful was to come, that is, a covenant, the prime purpose of which would be the forgiveness of sins. A text in Jeremiah reads: "The time is coming - it is Yahweh who speaks - when I will forge a new covenant with the people of Israel and the people of Judah" (Jer. 31-31). Under that new covenant, the family of God would no longer be of a particular race but would be a family of believers, pardoned of their sins. This was God's intended covenant to bring salvation to all mankind. To accomplish it He sent a Messiah to the world, who was His son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus committed Himself to this new covenant on the eve of His death. (Mk.14-12). At the last supper, Jesus wanted to clarify the meaning of His imminent Passion. He was destined to face a death which He freely accepted. It was a death that gave an attribute of permanency to the new covenant and purified those who were a part of it of their sins. In this deliverance, the people of all nations needed to mature to confront one

another and finally to be united in one body.

Inevitably the world would pass through innumerable crises and deaths in order to come to the climax of the messianic covenant which is the day of resurrection revealed by the Messiah. The Messiah who was the protagonist in the covenant had presented a message that would guide humans. The family of God would however be a minority who would be inclined to be committed to God's work and to whom God would commit Himself.

During Jesus' life in adulthood, He was baptized in the Jordan and on the same day He was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah. He thereafter started His public ministry having chosen His apostles who were His close companions during this ministry. He preached His Gospel and did many miracles in the regions of Judea and Galilee. His teachings were different from the religious tenets of the people followed and they concerned the composites of a singular way of life to share in the Kingdom of God.

There were many in the Jewish community to which Jesus belonged who disliked Him. They questioned, "Where did He get this wisdom and special powers?. Isn't he the carpenter's son?" (Mt.13-55) and they took offense at Him, mainly because He was critical of those who made a pretense of being truly religious.



Among them were the Pharisees, who practiced the law and the Saducees who belonged to priestly families. They together with the priests and elders of the Jewish community were responsible for the death of Jesus.

On the day Jesus died there was darkness from noon till 3 p.m. At the time He died the earth trembled, rocks cracked, the veil of the Temple tore and spirits of holy people rose. These occurrences were divine responses to His death.

E. M Aldons

A Child's Ten Commandments to Parents



1. My hands are small; please don't expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture, or throw a ball. My legs are short; please slow down so that I can keep up with you.
2. My eyes have not seen the world as you have; please let me explore safely; don't restrict me unnecessarily.
3. Housework will always be there. I am only little for a short time please take time to explain things to me about this wonderful world and do so willingly.
4. My feelings are tender; please be sensitive to my needs; don't nag me all day long. Treat me as you would want to be treated.
5. I am a special gift from God; please treasure me as God intended you to do, holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to live by, and disciplining me in a loving manner.
6. I need your encouragement, but not your praise, to grow. Please go easy on the criticism; remember, you can criticize the things I do without criticizing me.
7. Please give me the freedom to make decisions concerning myself. Permit me to fail, so that I can learn from my mistakes. Then someday I'll be prepared to make the kind of decisions life requires of me.
8. Please don't do things over for me. Somehow that makes me feel that my efforts didn't quite measure up to your expectations. I know it's hard, but please don't try to compare me with my brother or sister.
9. Please don't be afraid to leave for a weekend together. Kids need vacations from their parents, just as parents need vacations from kids. Besides, it's a great way to show us kids that your marriage is very special.
10. Please take me to Sunday school and church regularly, setting a good example for me to follow. I enjoy learning more about God.

Dr. Kevin Leman

Ashes remind us of our tasks as Christians

Year after year, we hear the familiar words, reminding us "that you are dust and to dust you shall return." If we don't hear those words, we may hear, "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel."

As Catholics and other Christians went for worship on Ash Wednesday, many were marked with blessed ashes in the form of a cross on their foreheads. As the ashes are placed on the forehead, the words help, above all, to remind us that Lent is here.

The tradition of receiving ashes goes back to Old Testament times, also a time when some would wear a sackcloth.

In the Gospel according to Matthew, (Mt 11:21) we hear about the unrepentant towns whose lack of remorse is noticed by what they chose not to do: "Tyre and Sidon were pagan cities denounced for, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes."

The ashes symbolise our penitence, but why are they in the form of a cross? Biblically speaking, a mark on the forehead is a sign of ownership and being marked with a cross on the forehead shows that we belong to Christ. It also calls to mind the references in the Book of Revelation to the servants of God:

"Do not damage the land or the sea or the trees until we put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God" (Rev 7:3).

Other parts of the Book of Revelation say that "they were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or any tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads" (Rev 9:4).

Marking the ashes in a cross also echoes the seal that was put upon us at baptism. During the sacrament of baptism,



"The ashes symbolise our penitence, but why are they in the form of a cross? Biblically speaking, a mark on the forehead is a sign of ownership and being marked with a cross on the forehead shows that we belong to Christ"

the priest or deacon makes the sign of the cross with chrism oil on the forehead of the person who is to be baptized, and says, "The Church of God welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Saviour by the sign of His cross."

We are thus marked for Christ then and forever.

The ashes we received on Ash Wednesday should remind us that we have work to do in order to fully align our lives with Christ. They are an invitation to leave our sinful ways behind and start anew, first by repenting and then by wearing the mark of Christ. It is an opportunity to allow ourselves to be reclaimed for Christ, now and forever.

"You are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Sunday Examiner

English with Fun and Entertainment

Dear Readers,

In today's lesson which is our 65th the concept of word classes is further discussed and a few tasks based on TKT and FCE are given. A reading comprehension is given based on lent with delicate shades of meanings of selected words.

Certificate Course in English Medium Teacher Development (CEMTD Batch 6) organized by the Archdiocesan Education Commission will commence on 01st March 2015 at 9.00 a.m. Contact officers in charge (Sharmalee 011 2699129) (Noel, 0112291540, 0718004580) for enrolment and academic guidance.

Your suggestions to improve our lessons are much appreciated.

God Bless You!

NJ



The book is on the table. The book on the table is **Ruth**.



The girl in the picture is very pretty.

The girl in the picture is **Dilini**

Abstract noun -A **noun** denoting an idea, quality, or state rather than a **concrete** object, e.g. *truth, danger, happiness* An abstract noun means the opposite to a concrete noun. If you cannot taste, touch, hear, smell or see something it is an abstract noun. Examples of abstract nouns are *kindness, bravery, love, mankind, behaviour, honesty, courage and loyalty*

Activity 3: Write the abstract nouns for the words given

beautiful, annoy, educate, please, skillful, courageous, revengeful, loyal, natural, communicate, love, hate, think, creative, lonely, fair, free, wise, obey, true, high

Activity 4: Match the example language with the grammatical terms given. There is one extra option you do not need to use.

| Example language | Grammatical term |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. His, her, their | A. subject pronoun |
| 2. Who, whom, whose | B. possessive pronouns |
| 3. He, I, They | C. prepositions of movement |
| 4. After, before, during, | D. relative pronouns |
| 5. Through, along, towards, | E. prepositions of time |
| | F. Interrogative pronouns |

Answers –

Activity 1 similar words –

- (1) **Inspiring** – inspirational, stirring, rousing, exciting, stimulating
- (2) **Spiritual** - mystical divine, unworldly, nonphysical, transcendental
- (3) **Fasting** – withdrawing, starving, refraining, desisting, ceasing
- (4) **Unique** – sole, single, exclusive, exceptional, inimitable
- (5) **Self-control** –self-discipline, will power, restraint, will power, strength of mind
- (6) **Deny** – repudiate, refute, reject, contradict, negate
- (7) **Desires** – needs, wants, longings, cravings, yearnings
- (8) **Allows** – lets, permits, agrees, consents, tolerates
- (9) **Focus** – emphasis attention, effort, concentration, application
- (10) **Profound** – deep, thoughtful, reflective, philosophical, insightful

Q2 : Spiritual fasting has a place, a purpose, and a unique benefit for God's people today.

Q 3. Fasting requires self-control and discipline

Q4. As fasting directs our hunger toward God it draws us close to him.

Q 5. Fasting wants to produce a transformation in us—a clearer, more focused attention and dependence upon God.

Activity 3 beauty, annoyance, education, pleasure, skill, courage, revenge, loyalty, nature, communication, love, hatred, thought, creativity, loneliness, fairness, freedom, wisdom, obedience, truth, height.

Activity 4 1 B, 2D, 3A, 4E, 5C,

Activity 1: Read the text and answer the questions given below.



Today's Inspiring Thought: Spiritual Fasting

Jesus affirmed that after His death fasting would be an appropriate practice for his followers. **Spiritual fasting** clearly has a place, a purpose, and a **unique** benefit for God's people today.

Fasting requires **self-control** and discipline as we **deny** the natural **desires** of the flesh. It **allows** us to move our **focus** away from the physical things of this world and concentrate on God. Put differently, fasting directs our hunger toward God. It draws us close to him.

Fasting also demonstrates a **profound** need for God's help and guidance through complete dependence upon Him. Most importantly, fasting is not a way to earn God's favour or get Him to do something for us. Rather, the purpose is to produce a transformation in us—a clearer, more focused attention and dependence upon God.

Q 1. Give five words similar in meaning to the words in italics in the text.

Q2 : What does spiritual fasting have?

Q3. What does fasting require?

Q4. How does fasting draw us close to God?

Q5. Most importantly what purpose does fasting want to produce in us ?

Word Classes - TKT - Nouns - continued

In prescriptive grammar – The classification of nouns according to **A Practical English Grammar** of A.J Thomson and A.V. Martinet are common nouns, proper nouns, Abstract Nouns and Collective Nouns

Examples: common nouns – dog, book, girl, kennel, table, picture
 Proper nouns - Rex, Good Earth, Dilini



The dog is in the kennel. The dog in the kennel is **Rex**

Never too old for a "VALENTINE"

Oh yes! I have a Valentine, at 94, you say?
A Valentine at 94
Just what will people say,

But I say I have a Valentine
He's, been with me o'er the years
Even before I knew the meaning of
Valentine's Day, I suppose.

Yes, you guessed it correctly,
If you stop to think a bit,
Lord Jesus is my Valentine.
My never failing love
Through all these many years,

I know He's with me all the day,
And lonely night time too,
Till one day I meet Him face to face,
My love, my friend.
Jesus my Valentine.

Clivee Dassanaik Taylor,

He lit up Galle Face with his smile

We are proud that Pope Francis visited Sri Lanka on January 13, this year. He landed at the Bandaranaike International Airport and was welcomed by the people of all the religions of Sri Lanka. The road from the Airport to Colombo was decorated and people stood on either side of the road to greet him. There were even beautifully dressed elephants.

The Holy Mass he said at Galle Face Green was a great success. Thousands of people came to participate in the Mass including people from other countries like India. Most of them came the night before and camped overnight in order to get a good place to follow the Mass. Even I participated in the Mass with my parents. It was hot

and tiring but I did not mind because I wanted so much to see the Holy Father.

When I saw him at last - his face was overflowing with kindness and love. He must have been very tired but he did not show it but lighted up the Galle Face Green with his smile. I will always remember his smile.

I like him because of two main reasons. First his face radiates with love and kindness and he seems so simple and makes you feel not shy to talk to. Two, because I think he likes dogs.

I cannot help thinking that if this is what the Pope is like what would have Jesus been like in His time. Now I understand why so many



people followed Jesus long ago.

Devmini Fernando
Grade 6

Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya

Your Catholic Voice Foundation

When You Give - Others Live

If you can't feed a hundred people, feed just one.
- Mother Teresa



Dear Reader,

It is our Holy Father's wish this Lenten Season that EVERY Catholic participate in 'Prayer & Action' Please do what you can, every little bit makes a difference.

ACT NOW TO END WORLD HUNGER

"I was hungry and you gave me food."
(Matt 25:25)



GIVE GENEROUSLY NOW

At Lent, Sacrifice is about Giving

Giving has to cost you something so it can change you.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

This Lent, the Staff of a leading Catholic journal in the United States, decided not to give things for Lent but to take things up. One place to start is with the Corporal Works of Mercy, which all Catholics are called to practice in their personal lives. This is how they do it.

1. Feed the Hungry:



How to do it: When it is possible, offer some food. Share your food and when we cannot do that, just try

to give people your time. Take a second to smile, to acknowledge the humanity and the dignity of people around you. Try to be present, if only for a moment because so many people in this world hunger for that recognition. We want to know that we are loved. And when we are present to each other we become examples of Christ's love.

2. Give drink to the Thirsty:

How to do it: Every day, millions of people must walk miles for water, or fear that their water is not clean enough to drink. Similarly, we are called to pay attention to our own use of water, perhaps in the form of an over-reliance on wasteful water bottles or long showers. There is a spiritual element to thirst. When we drink fully of God's living waters our spirits are replenished and we are better able to serve others.



3. Clothe the Naked:

How to do it: Maybe we should not be holding onto closets full of clothes long after we have stopped wearing them. Maybe we don't need 10 or 12



different sweaters. What does what is in your closet - and on your body today - say about you? Does protecting your own possessions keep you from generously loving and giving? Can you re-evaluate what it is that you wear, and instead choose to put on a garment of love?

4. Shelter the Homeless:

How to do it: Open your home to those who need a place to rest - not only to the literal homeless, but to those who need to feel at home: A homesick coworker? A lonely acquaintance? Sheltering the homeless is all about "growing the walls of your heart."



5. Visit the Sick:

How to do it: It can be uncomfortable to deal with the messiness of illness. Sometimes there is little we can do but sit by someone's side. We must be willing to answer that call to service again and again. Not to hide behind our doubts, our fear or our pride. Who in your life is physically or mentally unwell? Can you overcome your discomfort or doubt to let them know that you are there for them? Can you change a



bandage, serve them a meal, or just hold their hand?

6. Visit the Imprisoned:

How to do it: We are called to recognize that people in prison are still human, still connected to us. Still, we don't need to be behind bars to feel trapped. Can you reach out in charity to someone trapped by their circumstances and, in a spirit of generosity with your time, or money, help them to be freed? Can you choose to love, to let go of anger and grudges? Can you ask God to free you from a prison that traps you in a way of thinking or acting?



7. Bury the Dead:

How to do it: Pray for the dead. Bury grudges that you have been holding onto. Send cards to the surviving family members or offer to make a meal to help them through a difficult time. Share the sorrows and helplessness of widows and orphans among your own midst. Do we stop and learn from the Communion of Saints that preceded us?





MATRIMONIAL

Catholic parents living in UK/Sri Lanka, seek a Catholic beautiful daughter for their 28 years, son to be given in marriage. He is 5' 8", religious, sportsman, qualified medical engineer, permanent job in Central London Private Co. Hospital, owns a house in UK / Sri Lanka and family investments. Daughter should have an unblemished character, attitudes to lead a role model marriage, live in motherhood as for the Sri Lankan Culture. Interested parents with similar status please send the daughters details to anuradushidesilva@yahoo.com. Will be in Sri Lanka March.

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