

Happy
EasterLight From
The
Cross

Messenger

Special Easter Issue

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“Why are you looking among the dead for one who is alive? He is not here; he has been raised. (Luke 24: 5-6)

Easter Message by the Catholic Bishops' Conference Sri Lanka

Once again we celebrate the most central fact of the Christian Faith: The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is the Lord's Passover, his glorious transition from death to life and it is so crucial for our Christian existence. St. Paul affirms that "if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain" (1 Corinthians 15: 14) and that "we know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" (Romans 6: 9). Let us join with the universal Church and rejoice in the Lord and thank the Lord for our unique gift of faith in the Risen Saviour.

As we joyfully celebrate the resurrection of the Lord, let us also become conscious of the many obligations it carries. It is not to be a mere external celebration. It needs to touch and affect our lives. All of us "who have been baptized into his death" (Romans 6:3), and are called to share in His resurrection are duty bound to make the Lord's Passover a reality in our lives by moving from death to life just as he did. Thus our celebration invites all of us to share in the new life of the resurrection. However, we realize that our society today abounds with signs of death as well. The ordinary person, amidst the increasing cost of living, finds life almost unbearable. Our roads have become increasingly dangerous and deaths due to road accidents have become most tragic and alarming. Murders of the innocent at the hands of the powerful have become staggering. Women and our children in particular have become increasingly vulnerable as instances of sexual assault have increased. Blessed John Paul of revered memory exhorted the world that amidst signs of death that surround us, the Church ought to be at the service of life (Evanglium Vitae). The Season of Easter is a very apt moment to be reminded of this very specific evangelical obligation. Our joyful celebration of the resurrection of the Lord invites us to be at the service of life while respecting it in all its forms.

This obligation is all the more upon us as we live in the post-war context of Sri Lanka since reconciliation is the greatest challenge of the hour. True reconciliation and our



Painting by:
**Marian
David**

journey to the future demands that we acknowledge the past however painful it might be, learn the lessons we ought to, redress the injustices perpetrated wherever they may be and be determined not to repeat the same mistakes of the past. We need to let the blood that flows from the cross of Christ heal our wounds mindful of our Christian obligation to forgive one another just as God has forgiven us in Christ.

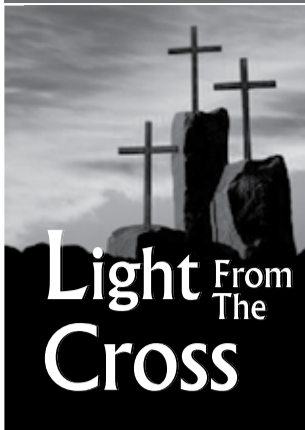
We are called upon to share in the new life of the resurrection

with all those who suffer the pains of death in its multiple forms in our society today. If true harmony and reconciliation are to become a reality, we need to recognize the many pains of the poor and the afflicted of our society today. We are duty bound to identify the many wounds of our society, both past and present, and do all we can to heal them. Only such an option would enable us to move on effectively to the future. Therefore, let us not merely recall the historical resurrection of the Lord but

really and truly come to experience today the new life it offers. Thus such a celebration would affect our lives both as individuals and as community enabling us to experience the new life the resurrection offers.

+ His Eminence Cardinal
Malcolm Ranjith
President

+ Most Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi
Executive Secretary



Light From The Cross

Joint Way of the Cross

Sandalankawa, Tambakanda and Irabedegama, parishes will conduct a joint way of Way of the Cross today Palm Sunday, beginning at 1.30 p.m. near Irabedegama, Ss. Peter & Paul Church.

The Way of the Cross will cover 7 miles and end up at St. Bruno's Church, Tambakande. Rev. Fr. Piyal Janaka, Director of the Archdiocese Catechism, will preside at Holy Mass at 4.00 p.m.

(Cecil Danicius)

Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC, refutes Minister's baseless allegations

A press release has been issued by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Chairman, Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC, on the allegations made by the Minister of Health, Hon. Maitripala Sirisena against the institution.

Full text of the Press Release:

In a news item telecast over ITN at 9.30 pm on 23rd March 2012, Hon Maithripala Sirisena, Minister of Health accused Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC, as an NGO of being responsible for instigating farmers to protest. He also claimed that Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC had a presence in Geneva where the UN Human Rights Council had its 19th Sessions recently.

As Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC which is the social arm of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka functioning under the purview of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka, we unequivocally state that these allegations are baseless, unfounded and without even a semblance of truth.

Apart from the fact that Caritas Sri Lanka

SEDEC is not an NGO, we are especially saddened by the fact that the Hon Minister has chosen to level such accusations at a faith-based institution with a history of over 40 years, having rendered yeoman service to the people of this country without any considerations of ethnicity, religion or political affiliation.

During the many years of ethnic conflict and in the aftermath of the devastating tsunami, Caritas SEDEC Sri Lanka was present among the unfortunate victims of these disasters and helped in the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction process. We always worked in close cooperation with the Government and collaborated with State officials and military authorities with whom we have endeav-

oured to maintain cordial relations. The records will show that our commitment to serve the people of Sri Lanka received the recognition of the highest authorities in the land. Worthy of special mention is the Presidential Award bestowed on Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC in 2005 for the construction of a record 10,713 permanent houses and 12,616 temporary shelters for tsunami affected families, 34,163 tsunami affected farmers and 26,967 fishermen were directly assisted for their livelihood and 46,984 persons in self employment ventures.

Presently, we continue to assist in the resettlement process in the North and East by building core houses, providing livelihoods, educational and psychosocial support to a large number

of war victims who are in need of these services. All such activities are carried out with the approval of the Presidential Task Force (PTF). At the same time, we are mindful of the needs of poor and marginalized people in other parts of the country and are implementing various programs which are of benefit to them.

As a Church institution, Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC has always had the welfare of the people as its motivating force. We have been sensitive to their needs. We have sought to uphold the dignity and the rights of the people even in challenging circumstances.

Moreover, we have never engaged in any activity inimical to our Motherland and her people. Nor have we at any time encouraged or

promoted any unpatriotic measures that would undermine the sovereignty of the nation.

It is regrettable that such serious charges should be leveled at our institution by a senior and responsible Cabinet Minister of the Government. This kind of statement therefore is most unfortunate and yet we reiterate that our commitment to the service of the poor and the marginalized will continue in the true spirit of the faith we represent, even in the future.

Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera

Chairman, Caritas SEDEC Sri Lanka Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development - CBCSL March 28, 2012

Chrism Mass and Blessing of Holy Oils

Chrism Mass and blessing of Holy Oils will be held at All Saints' Church, Borella on April 2nd, 2012 at 10.30 a.m.

The lay faithful are also invited.

St. Joseph's College, Maradana GCE O/L Results

St. Joseph's College Colombo 10 has produced outstanding results at the GCE Ordinary Level Examination of 2011.

Twenty Six students obtained 9 A's, thirty three students obtained 8 A's and twenty two students obtained 7 A's. This is the best performance ever obtained at his examination. 33% of the students contributed to this achievement.

Commenting on the results, Rev. Fr. Sylvester Ranasinghe the Rector said, "It speaks volumes for the efforts of the Academic Staff and the students. I congratulate all of them. All these students will be felicitated at a special ceremony to be held at a later date."

Rector / Principal

Holy Week programme at St. Mary's Dehiwela

St. Mary's Church, Dehiwela will hold a passion play on Palm Sunday (April 1), in the Church premises at 6.30pm. The play will be staged by a group of artistes from St. Mary's Church, Mattakuliya.

Meanwhile the Blessed Sacrament Fathers will lead a Lenten Triduum from April 2 (Monday to April 5 (Wednesday) as spiritual preparation during the Holy Week. The Service with Holy Mass will begin at 6.30pm each day at St. Mary's Church Dehiwela.

A group of priests will also be available on Wednesday (5) to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).

Parish Priest

Catholic Bishops' Conference condemns the tragic assassination of two Venerable Theros

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka expresses shock at the tragic assassination of the Venerable Pitigala Jinasiri and Borrellasgamuwe Guneratne Theros, incumbents of the Rajamaha Viharaya in Kotte.

The Bishops of Sri Lanka express their deepest sympathies to the Chief Incumbent of the Rajamaha Vihare and the Sasana

Sewaka Mandalaya.

In the context of the increasing escalation of violence in the country, we see this act as another grief stricken incident. We strongly urge the government of Sri Lanka and the security forces to take forthwith the necessary steps to eradicate such acts of violence.

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith

President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka

His Lordship Norbert M. Andradi, OMI

Secretary General, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka

Dehabandu Award for Ex National President, SVP



Mr. Lucien Samarawickrema, Ex National President and Treasurer of the St. Vincent de Paul Society was awarded the 'Deshabandu' Plaque by Prof. Goluwamulla Wimalasena at the BMICH, recently.

(Theobald Samaratunga)

Catholic Laity Commission Meets



The Catholic National Laity Commission met recently at Balcombe Place.

Pictures shows the members of the Commission joining in prayer before the meeting. Present at the meeting were Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando sss (Chairman), Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Swampillai (Vice Chairman), Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera OSB, Rev. Fr. Leo Perera (Director, Laity) and Dr. Maxie Fernandopulle (Secretary).

(Theobald Samaratunga)

Notice

There will be no issue of *Catholic Messenger* on April 15, 2012. Colombo Catholic Press will be closed from April 5th to 15th.

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Come to Mary for strength and Hope, the Pope tells Mexicans

Pope Benedict XVI urged Mexicans to wield their faith against poverty and drug violence, telling hundreds of thousands of worshippers in an open-air Mass on Sunday that they would find hope if they purify their hearts.

The Pope delivered his message in the shadow of the Christ the King monument, one of the most important symbols of Mexican Christianity, which recalls the 1920s Roman Catholic uprising against the anti-clerical laws that forbade public worship services.

The Pope flew over the monument in a Mexican military Superpuma helicopter en route to the Mass at Bicentennial Park, where he rode in the pope-mobile through an enthusiastic crowd estimated at 350,000.

Often seen as austere



Pope wears a sombrero presented to him by the Mexicans

and reserved, the Holy Father, charmed a country that adored his charismatic predecessor, John Paul II, by donning a broad-brimmed Mexican sombrero as he was driven to the altar at the sun-drenched park.

Before the ceremony, the vast field was filled with noise, as people took pictures with their

cell phones and passed around food.

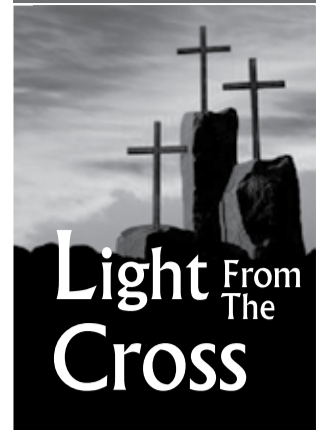
As the Mass started, all fell silent, some dropping to their knees in the dirt and gazing at the altar or giant video screens.

In his homily, Benedict encouraged Mexicans to purify their hearts to confront the sufferings, difficulties and evils of daily life.

"At this time when so many families are separated or forced to emigrate, when so many are suffering due to poverty, corruption, domestic violence, drug trafficking, the crisis of values and increased crime, we come to Mary in search of consolation, strength and hope," Benedict said in a prayer at the end of Mass.

"She is the mother of the true God, who invites us to stay with faith and charity beneath her mantle, so as to overcome in this way all evil and to establish a more just and fraternal society," the Holy Father said.

(Vatican News)



English Hymn book with New Mass Responses

St. Philip Neri's Church, Pettah has made available a revised and classified Hymn Book with the new responses for the Holy Mass.

The book also comes with additional meaningful and inspirational liturgical hymns.

It is available for sale at the Reception Office of St. Philip Neri's Church, Pettah at Rs.120/- a copy.

The Administrator
St. Philip Neri's Church, Pettah
Tel.0112421367

Miserere - A priceless choral presentation to commemorate the Holy Week



At a time when the glorious choral music tradition is rapidly being replaced by easy to deliver rock/pop selections, in our country, St. Cecilia's choir of St. Joseph's College is ready to make a presentation from compositions of great musical masters when they offer a program of sacred music just right for the season.

It will take place on April 2, 2012 (Monday) at 6.30 pm at the splendid chapel of St. Joseph's College, Maradana to commemorate the dramatic

events of the Holy Week including, Christ's defiant entry into Jerusalem, the poignant last supper, the betrayal and abduction in the dead of night, the condemnation, the cross bearing to Calvary, crucifixion, death and the triumphant resurrection will be brought alive.

With the promise to make the event memorable the program will have Gregory Allegri's exquisite "Miserere", Mozart's fiery "Dies irae" and the melodious "Lacrimosa," as well as Pal-

estrina's motet "Adoramus te", Giovanni Battista's mournful "Stabat mater", and Handel's much acclaimed "Worthy is the Lamb" and "Hallelujah Chorus". Adding depth to the lineup will be the polyphonic "Regina Coeli" and Richard Wagner's "Pilgrims Chorus" both sung by the mature Bass / Tenor sections of the Josephian singers.

Joining the 70 strong Cecilia's choir of St. Joseph's College will be the charming choristers of Good Shepherd Convent and the enthusiastic students of Maris Stella College, Negombo. To add to the warmth of the event will include the 60 member talented primary choristers of St. Joseph's. In all, over 250 singers will join in this sacred event.

The Palm Sunday Gregorian chant Pueri Hebreorum will open the program followed with the majestic Lauda Jerusalem. The other selections will include: Gethsamane arranged by the legendary musician Jerry Greig and sung by the shepherdians, who will also vocalize "Harken my people" composed

by the late Bishop Edmund Peiris, the modern composition "Above all power" and the motet "Adoramus te."

"Were You There," the much loved Afro American spiritual as well as "Regina Coeli" the Easter anthem in honour of Mother Mary will feature the senior Josephian singers in accapella style.

The popular hymns "Softly and tenderly", "Old Rugged Cross", "Jesus Christ is risen today" will be congregational. So too will be the Sinhala hymn "Kalvariye" and the Tamil chant "Arathanai".

There will be reflections interspersed on the events of the Holy Week and Christ's Resurrections to take the participants on a journey back in time with a view to enable them face the harsh realities of our age with unwavering faith.

The organizers wish to invite all who seek to enrich their lives through sacred music to attend the presentation which is free.

Francis D'Almeida

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



Funds needed to extend Digana Church

St. Paul the Hermit's Church in the Diocese of Kandy, in Padiwatte Parish is 115 years old. In keeping with the present structural changes and in view of making this the parish church of the intended new parish of Digana in the near future, it was decided to extend the church by 50 feet. The estimated cost for this is Rs. 5.3 million. Already the work is in progress and we are half way through with the generous contribution of the people of the area and other local well-wishers, we have already collected Rs. 2.4 million. We intend to complete this project as early as possible with your generous contribution and God's grace. We appreciate even the little you give.

Please direct your donations to:

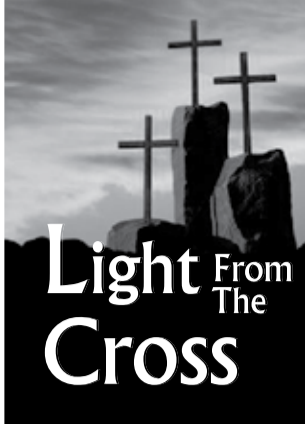
Parish Priest, Fatima Shrine, Padiwatte, Kundasale 20168

Bank Account: Parish Priest, Padiwatte - Digana Church A/C

No: 8040046674 (Commercial Bank - Kandy)

Tax exemption certificates can be issued on request. Please give your details to the Parish Priest for the receipt of acknowledgement and for a Mass to be offered for the donor and the family.

Rev. Fr. Alvin Peter Fernando
(Tel: 077-3725181)



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
Messenger

EDITORIAL

April 1, 2012

UNHCR Resolution and the issue of accountability for crimes during the

The Resolution introduced by the USA in the UNHCR on Promoting Reconciliation and Accountability in Sri Lanka has been passed. It is nearly three years since the war ended and the Resolution says that the Government had the time and space to develop its own roadmap for lasting national reconciliation and accountability. The LLRC has made valuable recommendations to achieve such reconciliation. But the Government has failed to implement them. It also draws attention to the need for additional steps to address accountability issues not covered in the LLRC report. It refers to the need for achieving the kind of meaningful accountability upon which lasting reconciliation efforts can be built.

The resolution has two aspects. There is the concern about the failure to implement the LLRC Recommendations and the failure to address the issue of accountability for violation of human rights and war crimes. The Government is also called upon to work with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It also obliges the Government to report progress on these issues to the UNHCR. This is interpreted by the Government and its supporters as an infringement of the country's national sovereignty although the very accession to the UN involves an erosion of national sovereignty.

It is this latter aspect that has upset the government and led it to carry out a diplomatic campaign to defeat the Resolution. Unfortunately it also sought to incite the people against the Human Rights workers who agreed with the Resolution. Many in the intelligentsia have been privately critical of the failure of the Government to stop the abductions, disappearances and killings of journalists and the violations of the rights of the citizens. But they are afraid to voice their protest. The UNHCR Resolution gave expression to their own privately held views. The Government media carried out a vicious campaign against the Human Rights defenders not only locally but even in Geneva where they were subject to abuse and intimidation and photographed to frighten them into thinking that they would be the next victims of the white vans. These acts of intimidation against the human rights workers drew the attention of the UNHCR itself and Ms. Tamara Kunanayagam had to explain away to the President of the Council and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights the campaign of intimidation and attack against Sri Lankan human rights defenders. Here in Sri Lanka there was a campaign against the Bishop of Mannar and the clergy who signed a petition to the UN supporting the Resolution. Some elements of the army have desecrated a church in Omanthai in anger, perhaps a kneejerk reaction to the petition by the Bishop and some clergy in the North. What saddens us is the desecration of a statue of Our Blessed Lady which was taken out and vandalized. God will not be mocked. We remember sadly the tsunami of 2004 where forty thousand people in the South and East perished.

Those who support the Government come what may, have published posters calling upon the people not to allow the war heroes to be tried by the UN. Yes but the best argument in support of dropping the issue of accountability is a speedy reconciliation between the two communities. It would then be possible for the Tamil Community to join with the Sinhalese to urge the UN to drop the issue of accountability for war crimes and humanitarian violations. But the Government has not taken any effective steps to concede the rights of the Tamil people. The LLRC recommended the demilitarization of the North and the disbanding of para-militaries and the handing over of civil administration to the people. There has been little progress on these recommendations and the LLRC in their final Report drew attention to the failure to implement even their interim recommendations.

A lasting solution to the ethnic imbroglio can be reached only if power is devolved to the Provincial Councils. Such devolution should include police powers, land use and fiscal authority in accordance with the Constitution of Sri Lanka. The governance of the Northern Province should be handed over to democratically elected representatives of the people. Empowerment of the civil administration, effective demilitarization, resettlement of Tamil and Muslim displaced persons, disbanding paramilitary forces, releasing illegally detained persons are all necessary to achieve reconciliation of the two communities. Democracy involves government with the consent of the people. The free and willing consent of the Tamil people of the North and East has to be won and can be won if these matters are attended to by the Government. It would then be possible to mobilize not only the Sinhalese but also the Tamil people behind any opposition to holding accountable those responsible for committing war crimes and violating humanitarian law.

The Empty Sepulchre

The sources that lead us to believe in the Resurrection of Christ are firstly the Gospel narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

These narratives carry within them the guarantee of their own authenticity. Still there are many who question the credibility of these writings on the ground that they contain contradictions. However, Biblical scholars have been forthright in vindicating the truthfulness of these writings which counters such views.

The four Gospels present only one record but from four points of view. Each of the four evangelists, however, show striking differences in their testimonies, both in the omission of what the others have said and also in the inclusion of matter peculiar to himself, using to some extent common sources of information.

Some important aspects of the resurrection are dealt with in all four Gospels. The Resurrection took place in the morning of the third day after Christ's death which was the Sabbath. The women who arrived at the tomb with aromatic spices to anoint Christ's body were the first witnesses to see the stone at the entrance rolled back. On entering they found an empty tomb.

Matthew begins his presentation referring to an earthquake while the others do not comment on its occurrence. It seems obvious that the earthquake occurred before the arrival of the women; perhaps while they were on their way to the sepulchre.

The composition of the groups of women at the tomb is the same in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark but is different in the Gospels of Luke and John. Nevertheless, the Gospel narratives fulfil the basic need in testimony in relation to the Resurrection of Christ. The women saw for themselves that Christ's body was not in the tomb. They were overcome with bewilderment and uncertainty concerning the fate of the body. Initially they could have only relied on the angelic message that Christ had risen from the dead.

Luke and Mark referred to angels at the tomb as men. In serving God's purpose of communicating with men, they appeared in human form. Luke and John wrote that two angels were present at the tomb. As only one angel spoke to the women, Matthew and Mark refer to only one.

Christ's body rose in the exclusive circumstances of its solitary confinement in

the tomb, leaving behind the linen used to cover the body. It was a marvellous manifestation of God's omnipotence to raise Christ's body which remained limp in the tomb for three days after his death. When Christ rose, his body had the qualities of a glorified body. It had extreme brightness and the ability to move through solid substances without resistance. The stone had been rolled back not intended for Christ to leave the tomb but for humans to enter when necessary.

Critics further contend that the Resurrection of Christ is not a historical fact. This is true in the sense that it escapes the



historical perspective. Belief in the Resurrection emerges from the testimonies of witnesses and in no other way does history proceed. Witnesses can only speak of the empty tomb and the subsequent appearances of Christ to those who knew him. The empty tomb is symbolic of Christ's atonement fully made for the salvation of mankind.

After the triumphant assertion of the reality of Christ's Resurrection, Apostle Paul explains its positive implications and consequences in his epistle to the Corinthians: "Well, then, if Christ is preached as risen from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is empty and our belief comes to nothing." (1 Cor. 15: 12-14). As an event involving both the human and cosmic dimensions, Christ's Resurrection logically and necessarily entails ours as well.

(E. M. Aldons)

An Easter interplay

Come this day
Glorious Sunday
Risen stood Christ
Made complete
God's own will
We stand overjoyed
Saviour Jesus Christ
Fulfilled his prediction

Followed conviction
Alive to gladden sight
Faith now revived
Trust prevails still
Jesus' on judgement seat
All hopes in flight
This Easter Day
Jesus showed the way.

Miran Perera

Lights and Shadows of Easter

By Rev. Fr. Leopold Ratnasekera, OMI

Easter time is a period of contrasting experiences. They are its lights and shadows for in the brilliance of a blazing noon-time sun both these are equally possible. It depends on where we stand! One Gospel text says that the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Risen Lord (John 20:20). But the same Gospels also mention that the disciples were crestfallen, sad, sunk in grief and despair as were the two disciples who were journeying from Jerusalem to the Emmaus village (Luke 24: 17-24). These two incidents were but a paradigm of many others such multiple manifestations of the lights and shadows of Easter serving us as two paradigms such as the shocking denial of Peter, the leader of his disciples and the scandalous Thomas the doubting disciple which has become almost proverbial. Though Easter for us is a joyful event that affirms the glory of the Risen Jesus of Nazareth who has become a remarkable sign of hope, yet in the scenario of the present world, the lights and shadows of Easter continue to be a mixed reality.

Though we know that sin has been atoned for, the impact of the evil principalities and powers have been vanquished and the shadows of the grave and death driven out for ever by Christ, still the manifestation of sin and its idolatries continue to stain the redeemed world and even the Church, which is God's Chosen people! There is loss of faith, lukewarm religious practice and scandal at the heart of the Church. That is why, we call Easter a Paschal Mystery for it is a passing over from darkness to light, ignorance to knowledge, death to life and finally, from sin to grace. We are all walking daily this path of conversion and transformation. It is also our pasch! Call it an Exodus, if you wish.

The cross is only a symbol of all the evil forces blocking God's kingdom that converged to nail the Redeemer to his death. But, that tree of death and shame became the **Tree of Life** displacing the tree of Eden that seduced mankind to sin and shame making them shy away from God and hide in the shadows of the

bush. Humanity then was not ready to face God and hold itself accountable for the misdeeds committed in the abuse of freedom and the idolatry of their own wills and desires. Much the same phenomenon is in vogue today as well. There is today a crisis not only of Christianity, but of religion itself and that of religious faith. A culture of pleasure and rationalism that cleaves only to material well-being, has engulfed the modern mind. It is caught up in a whirlpool of distractions and illusions diffused by mass media. Mass media seems to be most pernicious intruder into the inner sanctuary of our lives as individuals and as families. The family fortress is under siege by many a foe. The sanctuary of human civilization which is the family is being violated and vitiated in an alarming way by unseen forces. Once this cultural base is blasted, society just crumbles! Against these evils, the Church proclaims the Gospel of Life and promotes a civilization of love. She calls for a renewal of faith and respect for human life and rights. She fosters interaction between people of different faiths, cultures, races and political ideologies spearheading structures and activities of dialogue in face of diversity -- a de facto social condition, in which we all are obliged to live today. The face of humanity is much like a multi-coloured mosaic.

St. Paul, the great protagonist of the message of the Cross, declared that Christ through his Cross and Resurrection had reconciled the Jews and the Greeks, the most known and major ethnic groups at the time the Gospel was being preached by him. Further, he demanded that the new converts give up the old way of immorality and begin to live a life in the Spirit (Romans 8:1-17 and Galatians 5:22-25). Writing to the new Christians in Rome, he warned of utterly dire consequences of God's wrath on those who refused to live a life of virtue and continued to give themselves to sensuality, debauchery of all kinds and social evils (Romans 1:24-31). All these misfortunes befall because people try to suppress the truth about God and exchange it for a lie.

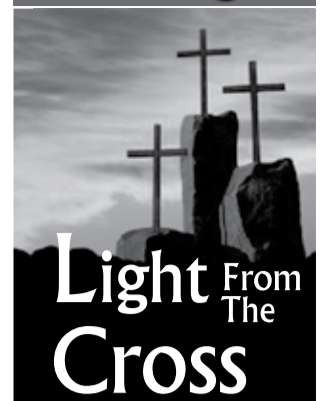


Unfortunately, what we notice today is a protracted and a much more entrenched tendency to even newer forms of evil where sin itself is canonized as legal! These are the shadows of our modernity that is tempted to suppress the truth about God and the dignity of every human person not to mention the integrity of the material world, that handiwork of God's creation and hence not to be despoiled.

Yet, we need not panic or be crest-fallen like the two friends leaving the city of Jerusalem that tortured and killed the Messiah to the village of Emmaus, distressed and sad. For, there are so many signs of holiness, humanity, compassion and love amongst people. There are so many works of charity and compassion going on in favour of the disabled. There are many movements that have taken up the cry of the poor and the oppressed. Media itself while dishing out much filth, also exposes crime and social evils. There are living saints who bear witness to justice and truth: To the truth about God and man's dignity. There are the contemplatives, the sannyasis, the great writers, poets and mystics of our time who raise the mind and the heart of man to the highest and the noblest of ideals. There is still the possibility as Pope John Paul II said, for the two wings of reason and faith together to soar to the heights of truth and beauty. The innate beauty of the flower still is embedded in a mystery to behold and contemplate. The innocence of children are still the signs of God's Kingdom according to the teachings of Jesus and they challenge us to spiritual childhood, the pathway for all adults to

taste the blessings of the Kingdom of God. The Spirit has exploded among the laity creating many movements of holiness and gospel witness.

Easter compels us to remain in hope in the Goodness of God who is ready to embrace the prodigals who return home. It reminds us of the good shepherd who bears even the stench of the sheep standing guard at the gate to defend the sheep and is ready to dance with joy when he does find the lost sheep caught amidst the briars and bleeds. Humanity's wounds are assured of healing for in the words of St. Peter: "In His wounds, we are healed" (1 Peter 2:24). In preserving the spirit of Easter our task therefore is to minimise the shad-



ows and maximise the light and the illumination of the Risen Lord. The more the world approaches the light, greater the feeling of the warmth and security that come from the Divine Light. We can then leave our shadows behind, however long and frightening they may be. God must take the lead in guiding us like the cloud by day and fire by night as He walked with the Israelites on their way to liberation.

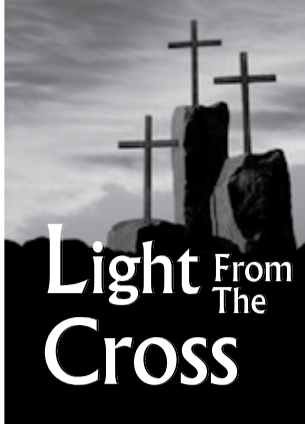
Journey to Emmaus

After the crucifixion of Jesus two men were journeying to Emmaus. Like other people they too were talking about Jesus. A third person, Jesus Himself joined them but they didn't recognise him. When Jesus asked them. What they were talking about they were surprised and asked Him if they didn't know the events that took place these last few day. The passion and death of Jesus.

- 1. Accompany:** Jesus accompanied. Jesus went with the two men. He walked with them.
- 2. Listen:** He listened to their story.
- 3. Interpret:** He interpreted the scriptures. He cleared their doubts, and was about to leave. They were so taken-up that they urged Him to stay.
- 4. Share:** They wanted Him to share their meal. He took the bread, blessed and broke it. It was then that their eyes were opened.
- 5. Mission:** That very night they went back to proclaim the "Good News." They carried out the mission entrusted to them. It was entrusted not in many works but in the accompanying, listening, interpreting and sharing. Now let us see...

1. Are we a companion to others? Do we **accompany** people?
2. Do we **listen** to what others have to say. Are we good listeners or do we interrupt speakers and do our own talking? Jesus knew exactly that they were talking about Him but still He listened to them.
3. Therefore He knew their doubts and was able to **interpret** them.
4. They recognised Jesus Christ in their **Sharing:** Do we share? Not only food and material things, but also the God given talents, Do we share our time? Jesus is inviting us daily to share His banquet. WE can draw strength at the table to share with others.
5. The third Luminous Mystery is "Proclamation of the Kingdom of God." It is our duty, as baptised Christians. It is our **Mission** to spread the Good News.

Emilda S. Douglas



JESUS' PASSION

The most gruesome phase in the life of Jesus was the time of his passion. After celebrating the Passover in the old town of Jerusalem, Jesus came with his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. This location was an olive-press. It was here that the horror of what he would have to suffer gripped his imagination. A little inwards in the Garden, in the company of his chosen three disciples, Peter, James and John, he said, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," which meant that Jesus was overcome with great anguish.

In that state of distress, he prayed even more earnestly and great drops of blood formed like sweat and fell to the ground. This was a symptom indicating uncontrollable anxiety and suffer-

ing. Jesus was not relieved by the presence of his three disciples because he later found them to be asleep.

Jesus' prayer to his Father was that if possible death might be avoided but that his Father's will be done. At that moment, an angel from heaven appeared to give him strength. What maybe understood by this response is that God intervened to give Jesus special courage in his human condition to endure the exceptional ordeal he was going through.

Knowing that he could not escape his commitment to death, he was ready to face it. It was time to tell his companions that the one who would betray him was near. Judas, one of his twelve Apostles, who arrived with a group of armed people sent by the Sanhedrin, the Council of Jews, greeted Jesus with a kiss, the prearranged sign for his identification. Jesus was seized, bound and led away by the people to be officially questioned.

At the night-time

trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, false charges brought against Him did not suffice for the death sentence on him. Two witnesses charged him with claiming to "destroy the temple of God and within three days to rebuild it." Jesus did not respond when challenged by the high priest to declare it under oath. The Sanhedrin charged him with blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God for which they decided he deserved to be put to death. For the official sentence, Jesus was taken before Pilate, the Governor. With the intervention of Pilate's wife, Pilate washed his hands disclaiming responsibility over Jesus and passing that responsibility to all the people. The angry crowd who had gathered outside demanded that Jesus should be crucified.

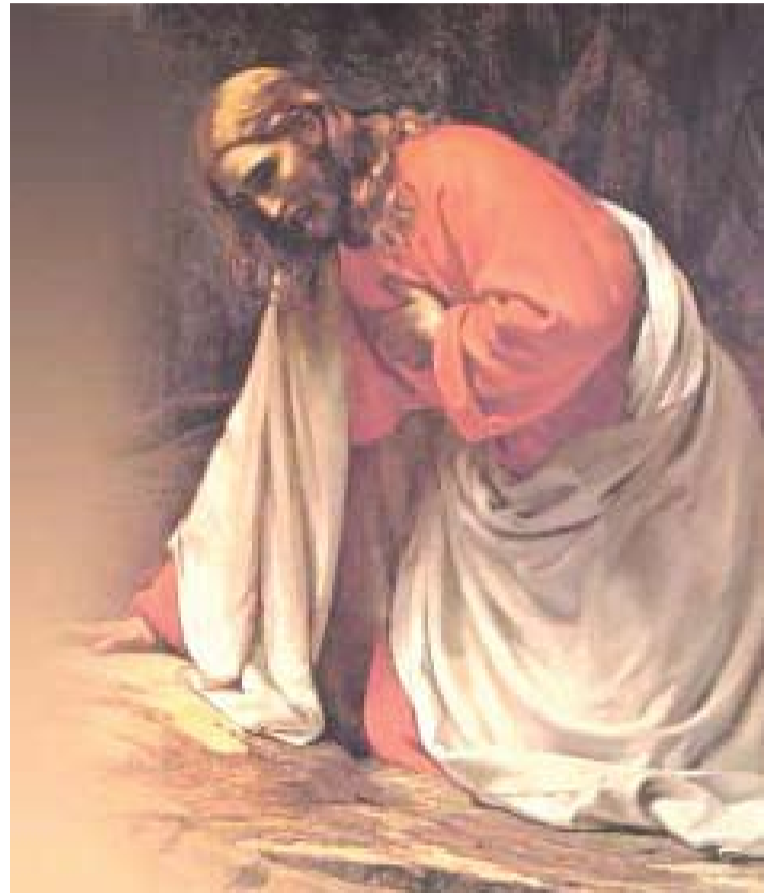
Jesus was scourged by the Roman soldiers according to Roman custom before crucifixion. Weaving a crown of thorns, they placed it on his head and a reed in his right hand. Kneeling before him in ridicule, they said "Hail King of the Jews." They spat upon him and struck his head. Soon after Jesus was led away to be crucified.

Jesus was crucified on Mount Calvary between two criminals. One criminal insulted Jesus while the other defended him. Jesus said to the second criminal, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Paradise is the abode for righteous souls. At the foot of the cross was his Mother, Apostle John and

Mary Magdalene.

Darkness fell over the land from midday till mid-afternoon which was an unusual phenomenon having no scientific cause. It could only be attributed to a supernatural agency. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus cried out "It is accomplished" and died. At that moment, the veil of the temple was torn in two signifying that all people could have access to the presence of God. The earth trembled, graves opened and many bodies of holy people rose. This leads us to believe that in

E.M. Aldons



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dying Jesus had conquered the kingdom of the dead.

The death of Jesus on the cross was a victory for him because he alone contributed to it. It was the victory of his atoning sacrifice to accomplish his Father's redemptive plan for mankind. Jesus died not only to redeem the world from sin but to also give it an example of the practice of virtue. With the death of Jesus, a new community was born.



Resurrection Morn

Day breaks on an empty tomb
but who has rolled the stone away.
And the guards a gape in wonder,
flee in utter disarray.
How the brightness of the heavens,
illumines the vacant tomb.
Lo! the glorious resurrection that dispels
Good Friday gloom.
Hear the trumpets of the heavens.
Hail a welcome to their king.
Thrones and powers, dominations
joyful alleluias sing
And the courts of heaven assemble
to behold God's majesty
To acclaim the mighty Godhead
Hail most Holy Trinity
For he goes to them in glory
by his Father's side to be
He had conquered death
and Satan, He has gained all victory
How His wounds, like crimson jewels
on his flesh, beset their glow.
See where the cruel soldiers rapier
caused his sacred blood to flow



Oh Jesus, gentle Saviour
you saved our souls' from sin
you paid the supreme sacrifice
these souls from hell to win.
So may the holy Paschal joys
and our lukewarm faith renew
and feed the flame that lights
this faith
and kindle hope anew
With faith and hope, thus
strengthened
we can our goal attain.

Ralph Alles

Salubrious N'Eliya, here we come!

Rev. Fr. Leopold Ratnasekara, OMI

During the Easter week this year, I with my sister and brother-in-law enjoyed a short but exotic stay at EHOP, the holiday house for priests run by the SSS Congregation. It was just a matter of four days but quite relaxing and exciting. In fact. It was for my family members the fourth stint! Nestling in the beautiful hills of Nuwara Eliya with a smoothening cool climate to match, in this homely abode one can feel quite at home with one's own family circle.

You could organize your menu to match your taste. Living rooms are spacious and provided with central heating. Looking out from the upper balcony or just stepping out of the main door one is gripped by the striking splendor of the waters of the Gregory's Lake shining under the blue sky and shining sun. The range of hills in the background dotted with tea-gardens adds a serene look to the already striking beauty of the landscape all around. The newly laid side-walk provides safe walking space for joggers as well as for those who want to enjoy a leisurely quiet stroll or a constitutional walk, which we did. The peddling boats (the swans) and the pleasure boats that ride the visitors to add beauty to the lake's countenance. It was nice to see the sea-plane on a clear day land on the lake bringing passengers from Colombo. It looks a multicolour flying toy and many onlookers gather to watch the flying bird.

For those who like the pleasure of reading, there is a host of books among which I found a big volume on the life-story of Blessed John Paul II, which I enjoyed very much. Of course, the possibility of celebrating the Eucharist is a special blessing and a grace that accrues for holiday-makers. The EHOP location could be considered strategic being not too far from the city-centre and thus ideally placed.

The idea of Rev. Fr. Sunil Rupesinghe, SSS in launching this venture deserves high praise and appreciation. There is no other place in the country where priests can relax and spend some quality time with their family members, except in a place like EHOP, which is the one and only venue available for us here in Sri Lanka. Financial constraints pose. no problem to the holiday-makers. What a location! What an opportunity! I would wish many more priests get to the EHOP and avail themselves of the golden opportunity of a fruitful and enjoyable stay with their family members. May God bless this wonderful apostolate of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation.

The Church that Christ Built

It was Christ himself who named the chosen twelve as "Apostles." The first of them was Simon, whom he also named "Peter." (Ref. Lk. 6:13)

When the fishermen of Galilee, and everybody else around were calling him by his first name "Simon," Christ alone called him "Peter." That probably was because there were two "Simons" among the Twelve.

This may well be pure conjecture. But that is how Christ solemnly addressed Simon Peter when he unveiled his plan to build his Church.

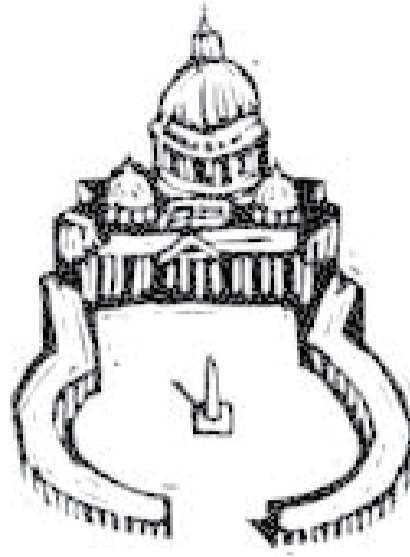
"Thou art Peter..." he said. "Upon this rock, I will build my Church." Mark the words of Christ, "My Church."

It is the Church that Christ subsequently built with his Apostles led by Peter, to whom he said, "I shall give unto Thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatsoever Thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever Thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.

This is the Church to which we belong. Christ built no other Church. For thirty long years Jesus was learning things; and in the 31st year of his life, he began building his Church, with Simon the fisherman whom he met near the Sea of Galilee with his brother Andrew Jesus said to them, "Come, follow me. I will make you fishers of men. (Mk. 1: 16)

Those two were the very first disciples of Jesus and then the numbers began increasing phenomenally and dramatically. At the end of the 33rd year of his life, Christ finished building his Church.

The crowning event was his last supper with his Apostles, when the Holy Eucharist and the Sacred priesthood began. It is there that he offered his body and blood to them. "Do this in memory of me," said he to



his Apostles.

Today, the successor of his Apostles have reached all Nations, sharing the Holy Eucharist in his memory.

Christ built his Church on three personal requests dear to his heart one to the laity, that is us down the ages, and two to the Clergy, that is his Apostles followed by Priests down the ages. The personal request of Christ to the laity was "Come follow me" which our ancestors did, which we are doing and which our future generations will do.

The two personal requests of Christ to the Clergy were, "Do this in memory of me," and feed my sheep - feed my lambs." And that is what our Priests are doing.

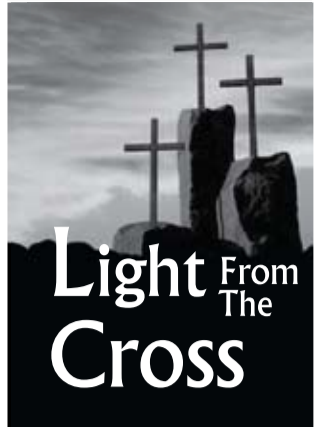
We are the sheep they feed; and our children are the lambs they feed.

And the Holy Mass they offer everyday in memory of Christ, is really the soul of the Church that Christ built nearly two thousand years ago with Peter as its Head. It is where we meet and greet Christ in persons, and also express our love for one another as a community, as Jesus himself loved us. It is where we shake hands and say to one another "Peace be to you."

It is the one and only Church built by Christ. May the Peace of the Lord be always with you.

Then Church that Christ built really began with Easter so; Happy Easter to you!

Alfred Perera



Jesus - Old sins, long shadows

Past sins
Introspection
Catches up
Old Ghosts
Looms near
Tormented
Agitated
This conscience
Crushed
By weight
Jesus reminds
Repent, obey
In faith
Stay pardoned
It burns
Transgress
Lost, swayed
Beaten
By evil
Jesus calls
Embrace me
Giver of Strength
At last find
Bliss eternal
Forgiven
Miran Perera

The missing cup at the Last Supper

By Bryan Landsberger

In the time of Jesus, "Breaking the bread" was a ritual action among the Jews celebrating the Passover. The head of the family, took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his family. The blessing showed that those present were receiving from God the food needed for life. And also they would drink four cups of wine.

After a solemn blessing, the first cup was drunk, followed by bitter herbs that symbolised the bitterness of captivity in Egypt. Then someone would read the Passover story from Exodus 12. They would then sing Psalm 113 (little Hallel), and drink the second cup. After the main meal of lamb and unleavened bread, the third cup - the cup of blessing was drunk. The climax of the Passover celebrated was when Psalm 114 - 118 (the great Hallel) was sung and the fourth cup - the cup of Consummation, was drunk.

At the Passover meal with the apostles, Jesus did something that was hard for the apostles to understand. After the two fold Consecration: "Take and eat, this is my body," "Take and drink, for this is my blood - the blood of the New Covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins," Jesus aban-

doned the most important part when the fourth cup, the cup of Consummation would have been drunk. Jesus left the Upper Room before the Passover was completed and the apostles too followed Jesus, except for Judas who was already on his way to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

Leaving the Upper Room, Jesus and the apostles went to a place called Gethsemane. Falling to the ground, Jesus prayed: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Remove this cup from me, yet not my will, but your will be done". (Mk: 14:35) Thus, he expressed the horror and suffering that represented for him human nature. Crushed by fear and the weight of human sins, Jesus began to experience a bloody sweat, "pouring down his body and falling on the olive roots, forming the first red rosary of redemption." (Bishop Fulton Sheen).

Betrayed by Judas Iscariot, Jesus was arrested and undergoes a religious trial and a Civil trial. As for man", he said to the waiting crowd outside. But, the priests and the Pharisees, in order to preserve their ruling power in Israel aided

out: "Crucify him, crucify him". That Jesus willingly laid down his life is very clear, for Jesus said: "I lay down my life willingly. No one takes it away from me".

Once raised up on the cross, and even in the midst of his long and horrible pain, Jesus found strength to say: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". Then Scripture says, "and when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the land.

At the ninth hour, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished according to the Father's will, and so that Scripture may be fulfilled, he said: "I thirst". (PSALM: 21 :16). This was a thirst that was spiritual as well as physical.

A soldier near by, put some wine on a hyssop, reached it to the mouth of Our Blessed Lord. Jesus when he had taken the vinegar said: It is Consummated". This was the fourth cup of the Passover, that Jesus had not drunk in the Upper Room. And then, Jesus bowed his head and gave up his Spirit, and died.

THE NAZARENE



The frightening shrieks of a marauding crowd
Rent the air in all its severity
Foreboding perhaps a tragedy that was to unfold.
But strange as it may, momentarily it was to only Cries and yells.

My work, unusually, was heavy today
And what needed I most was absolute rest
But this night seemed my moment of triumph
And giving up that thought, I sauntered out deep
Into the night.

Walking further down the road
I beheld the crowd now turn unruly, hysterical
Wielding clubs and swords
They were taking a prisoner, so I thought,
A pathetic sight indeed it was.

Bound with chains and ropes
With a heavy cross slung across His shoulders,
The poor man could hardly trudge along.
Fell thrice but rose up soon as He fell
Appeared beaten on the way, traces of blood
Over His body, proved it all.

A crown of thorns embedded into His head
Saw blood trickling down His face and cheeks
I was now moving closer to Him when
Suddenly He cast a glance at me.
His looks spoke tenderly, yet pleadingly
And in an instance my heart reached out for His.

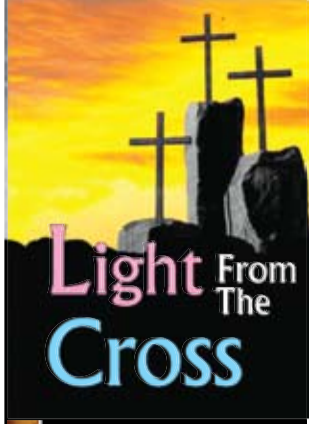
Jostling my way through the crowd,
I was now by His side
And releasing Him, I took upon myself
That heavy, rugged cross of His,
While He walked beside me, staggering as he went.

"Who are you and What have you done?"
I questioned Him.
He remained silent except for a deep
penetrating smile
Emanating from His lips,
An endearing smile which only a God could give.
He spoke consolately.
"This is for you, my son also for all mankind,
Since times began, times now and till times end."

I stood aghast, knowing not what He meant
And gently retrieving the cross from me
He placed it back on His shoulders and with a
Final glance one interspersed with disillusion
and sadness
But with hope, He bid me farewell.
With anguish, I watched Him slowly move away.

J.I Rosairo.





Historical Authenticity of the Markan Empty Tomb Narrative (Mk. 16: 1-8)

By Rev. Fr. Claude J. Perera OMI



We shall deal here with the most original Markan tradition only, since Mt. 27:62 - 28:15 and Lk. 24:13-35 basically depend on Mark. The Markan account of the Empty Tomb is found in Mk. 16:1-8 which goes as follows:

1 And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, (and Mary the mother of James, and Salome), bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.

2 And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen.

3 And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?"

4 And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back; it was very large.

5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed.

6 And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him.

7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you."

8 And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.' (RSV)

However, from this account Hendrickx separates the Markan redactional elements from the extant tradition by identifying the specific embellishments of Markan theology. [Cf. Herman Hendrickx, *Resurrection Narratives*, 14f]. According to him then the extant tradition which we are left with is:

2 And (very early) on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene (and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Salome) went to the tomb when the sun had risen.

4a And looking up, she saw that the stone was rolled back.

5 And entering they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; (and they were amazed) [they saw that the tomb was empty].

6 And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him.

8a And they went out and fled from the tomb.' (RSV)

This extant tradition is simple, theologically unembellished and non-apologetic. It has two identifiable traces; namely, that of finding the Empty Tomb (standard verses above), and that of the angelophany (italicized verses above). The story of the Empty Tomb is said to be older than the present gospel of Mark. Disciples' remaining in Jerusalem after the crucifixion is a late Johannine tradition (Jn 20:2f). The feast of Passover having been ended, and their master no more alive, they had no other sensible choice, but to return to Galilee (Mk 16:7). In such case, it would have been obviously a group of women (who were much more personally attached to Jesus) who stayed back in Jerusalem who went to the tomb to mourn (as the custom was). It must be noted that the reference to 'buying spices and anointing the body of Jesus' becomes superfluous when seen against the careful burial by Joseph of Arimathea (Mk 15:46). Besides, such a strange practice of anointing after the burial cannot be supported by any contemporary evidence, let alone the practical difficulties it involves. The motive of the women going to the tomb must have been to mourn their loved one (Jn 11:31). The finding the empty tomb, which occurs in the morning of the first day of the week, i.e. Sunday, seems to be a very ancient piece of tradition which the evangelist retained at all cost. The fact that the phrase "the first day of the week" in Mk 16:2 (on which the Christians assembled for worship) has been preferred to "on the third day" (which was itself integral to the ancient kerygma as in 1 Cor 15:4) points strongly to the former's greater primitiveness because of which it could not have been abandoned.

The presence of women in the Empty Tomb narrative also contributes to its historical authenticity. In the male-dominated Palestinian society witness of a woman was invalid. Instead of presenting the apostles and male disciples as the witnesses of the resurrection, Mark seems to have had no choice other than the women. For the tradition about the women being the first harbingers of the resurrection was so strong in the Early Church that Mark could not have easily done

away with it. This oldest tradition of the passion and resurrection narratives hardly gave any prominence to the male disciples at the Empty Tomb.

Another factor that contributes to the authenticity of the Empty Tomb is that the opponents of Jesus could not find his body which was allegedly stolen by the disciples (Mt 28:12-15) or removed by the gardener (Jn 20:15). The religious elite had the power and means to re-produce the stolen or missing body of Jesus, had it really been accessible. Had they found the body of Jesus, no apostle or disciple could ever testify to the resurrection. Inability to do so implies that the stealing or removing of the body of Jesus was a mere fabrication on the part of the Jewish authorities. In fact, both the Christians and their opponents agreed on the fact that the body of Jesus was missing. Hence, the empty tomb becomes an undeniable historical fact. Let us now turn our attention to the angelophany in the Markan narrative.

Angelophany

The divergences among the evangelists on the details of the angelophany show that they have freely remodeled it in keeping with their theological motives. It looks that their interest was not so much in what the angels actually said, but in what the evangelists themselves wanted to say. The scholars have looked at the angelophany from two different perspectives. The traditional Catholic stance regards this as a historical event, at which the angels actually did appear. The second approach is to take it as an apocalyptic literary device which conveys that the woman received a special divine enlightenment. The enlightenment they received was nothing more than the primitive kerygma, "He has been raised." [This is not the place to talk about angels. We live in a theologically pluralistic society. But for us Catholics our interpretation of the Bible ought to go in line with our Catholic faith, while we leave the Christians of other denominations free to think in their own way]. What matters to us here are the significance and the function of the angelophany in the Markan resurrection narrative. For the disciples to know the reality of the resurrection they needed a divine revelation brought to them by

the angels. Markan resurrection is not a speculation by the women. It is totally a divine revelation through an angelophany. It was not knowledge which they gained by remembering the passion predictions of Jesus because the evangelist does not resort a "remembrance" motif here as in Mk 11:21; 14:72. There are those who deny the historicity of the empty tomb tradition.

Hodgson and Kaufman are such prominent opponents who deny historicity to the empty tomb story. But the more serious objections for the empty tomb are not historical, but theological. Thus, we have to look at the question from a theological point of view. O'Collins rightly says, "... for the NT writers the empty tomb did not constitute a proof of some reality but a sign" [O'Collins, *The Easter Jesus*, 93]. Their interest was not in the existence of the concrete reality of the empty tomb, but in its significance. Why was the tomb empty? It was empty because the dead one who was buried there is risen. He has vanquished the power of death (1 Cor 15:54b-55). The ancient Christian hymn *Exultet* sung at the Easter vigil vividly proclaims, "This is the Night in which Christ broke the chains of death and rose in radiant victory from the pit of Hades." The emptiness of the tomb gets its value from its significance, viz. that death is no more. This is particularly interesting when we know the negativity which the OT attributed to death and the consequent Sheol as a place of inertia (Ec. 9:10) dissatisfaction (Pr. 27:20), pain (Ps. 116:3; Ez. 31:15) and separation from God (Is. 38:18). Jesus' soul was once and for all spared from this misery and raised to glory (Act 2:27, 31). However, we must refrain ourselves from any Platonistic, Docetic

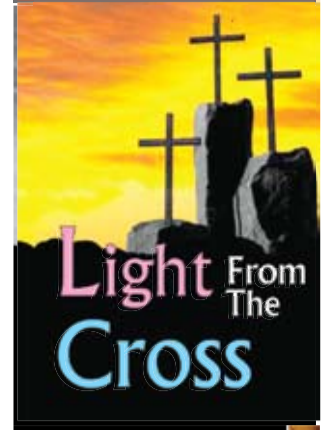
or Manicheistic implications of the Empty Tomb which regard it as an escape from the inevitable corruption inherent to flesh. It must rather be that the flesh is redeemed and glorified. The NT doctrine of the empty tomb teaches us that God wishes to save the whole man (as body-soul) and the whole creation, and he began this process by raising up the dead body of Jesus into glory. Both Evely's and Lampe's objection was that Christ's resurrection cannot belong to a different order than that of ours which implies that his body would have decomposed in the grave. [Cf. Louis Evely, *The Gospels without Myth*, 160; G.W.H. Lampe, "The Resurrection," *Epworth Review* 3 (1976), 88-99, 97, 99]. Such incarnation-oriented theology is found only in John and some Late Greek Church Fathers, but not in Paul. The bodies of Jesus and Mary could not share the fate of decay inherent to the rest of creation because Jesus was God and Mary was absolutely sinless. So their dead bodies had to be transformed into glory. The Empty Tomb is a necessary pre-supposition of this theology of the resurrection. Without believing in the empty tomb we cannot believe in the resurrection since they are intimately related.

Another objection against the Empty Tomb is hurled from the point of view of Pauline theology. In 1 Cor 15:3b-5, which is an ancient piece of tradition (56-57 CE) originated possibly in the Jerusalem Church (Gal 1:18-19), Paul speaks only of the burial and resurrection of Jesus. Does this silence of Paul on the empty tomb marshal against its historicity? This lack of mention needs not necessarily imply that he denied its reality. The empty tomb is implied in the sequence of events introduced by the four-fold *hoti*

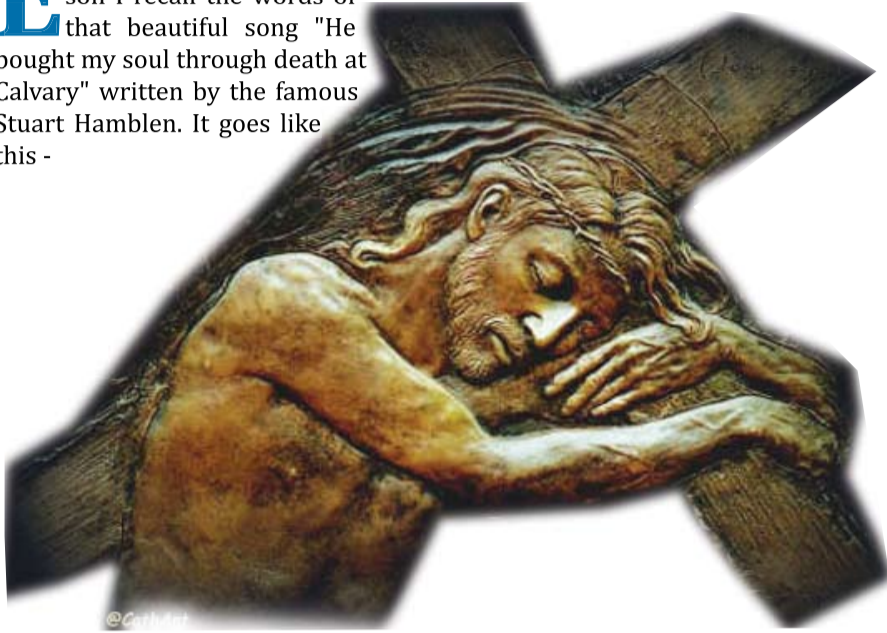
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A LENTEN REFLECTION

He bought my soul through death at Calvary



Every year at the beginning of the Lenten season I recall the words of that beautiful song "He bought my soul through death at Calvary" written by the famous Stuart Hamblen. It goes like this -



*"There's a cross for everyone to bear
But there's a heaven for each soul to share
There's a place in heaven waiting for me
I got it through His death at Calvary*

*Each drop of blood bought me a million years
A soul was born each time he shed a tear
He loosed the chains that fettered you and me
He bought my soul through death at Calvary*

*Though days be long and often filled with care
I talk to Him and with each wondrous prayer
He bids me stay and gives new strength to me
He bought my soul through deaths at Calvary*

*Each year that rolls I am nearer to his side
I know the Lord will always be my guide
I breathe His name each time I see a tree
On one He bought my soul at Calvary"*

Yes indeed Lent is a grim reminder of the indescribable sufferings that Jesus had to undergo to atone for our sins. When he was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night he was betrayed he saw as in a vision the sufferings he would have to undergo. He began to sweat drops of blood as he lifted his eyes filled with fear to heaven and asked His Father "If it is

possible may this cup be taken away from me nevertheless not as I will but Thy will be done."

His human nature shuddered at the thought of such suffering but his divinity made Him bow to the will of his Father.

Some eight hundred years before the birth of Christ the prophet Isaiah foretold the humiliation, the agony and the suffering which our blessed Lord would have to endure during His passion and death on the cross.

He wrote -

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid our faces from Him. He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows

yet we considered Him stricken by God smitten by Him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions: He was crushed for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His wounds we are healed. We like sheep have gone astray: Each of us has turned to his own way and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted yet He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before his shearers is silent so He did not open His mouth." (Is. 53: 3-7)

In his classic on the "Passion and death of Jesus Christ" St. Alphonsus De Liguori states "All the saints cherished a tender devotion towards Jesus Christ in His passion: This is the only means by which they sanctified themselves."

It behooves all of us during this season of Lent to meditate daily on the passion and death of Jesus Christ and by prayer, fasting and sacrifices to demonstrate our sincere gratitude to our blessed Lord for redeeming us. We are conscious of the fact that this small recompense for sacrificing His life for us.

*"Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were a present far too small
Love so amazing so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all"*

Walter Rupesinghe

Historical Authenticity.....

Contd. from Pg. 8

[that] formula in 1 Cor 15:b-5, which runs as: "That [hoti] Christ suffered for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,

and that [hoti] he was buried, and that [hoti] he was raised up on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that [hoti] he was seen by Cephas and after that by the twelve." Referring to this Craig rightly says, "For in saying that Jesus died was buried was raised appeared, one automatically implies that the empty grave has been left behind." Paul makes no explicit reference to the death of Jesus. He only says that Jesus suffered, buried and was raised. If he was buried and raised from the dead, then his

tomb must be empty. The pre-Markan material in the Markan empty tomb episode had a specific function in the Primitive Church.

There would have been an annual or even more frequent Empty Tomb liturgy to celebrate the resurrection at the open empty tomb by the Mother Church in Jerusalem. This is confirmed by the prevalent practice of veneration of tombs in the Jewish society (Gn. 23:16f; Jos. 24:32-33; 2 Kgs. 23:16f; Mt. 23:29). Thus, there would have grown out a practice of venerating the Empty Tomb of Jesus among Christians who did not simply gather there around his non-existent mortal remains, but

to remember the greatest act of God in human history, the resurrection. The episode of the Empty Tomb may have originated in this liturgy. The liturgical overtones in Mk 16:6 testify to the fact that it may have had a liturgical origin.

In this short study we saw that the extant tradition about the empty tomb has certain historicity. The Empty Tomb enjoyed veneration in the Jerusalem Church. However, its emptiness is not a proof for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But it was a necessary precondition for the same. Had his tomb been not empty, the friends of Jesus could not have spoken

about its factuality or his foes of its fictitiousness.

For the disciples to know the reality of the resurrection they needed a special divine revelation brought to them by the angels. The empty tomb itself could not give them that knowledge. We must not forget that the first reaction of the women to the empty tomb was not faith, but distress, alarm and amazement (ekthambeō) which are no positive realities in the gospels (Mk. 9:15; 14:33; 16: 5, 6). All this shows that the Markan version of the empty has its importance as a pre-condition for the resurrection. But the angelophany was more important as the true harbingers of the resurrection.

Gethsamane

*Jesus in Gethsamane in prayer and in tears,
The ground now wet with His sweat and blood
His tender heart beating fast with fear
"Father, take away this cup from me" we hear.*

*Footsteps of Judas and His crowd
Break the silence of the night
And Jesus Rises, His betrayer to face,
Yielding to them without a fight.*

*Like a lamb led to be slaughtered
They tie his hands and take Him away
To be judged and condemned to death by Pilate
While His friends behind the trees they stayed.*

*Gethsamane brings this tragic event to our minds
Proof of our Lord's great love for all mankind.
By His suffering and crucifixion the ransom was paid
And three days later from the dead Jesus was gloriously raised*

*Still this tragedy happens again and again
Every time we commit a sin
So let us stop these terrible deeds
And may our love for God truly begin.*

*What further proof of God's love for man do we need,
Now cleansed and forgiven from every evil deed,
The remedy for it all to overcome sin,
Is a change of heart and life-style and the goal of heaven to win*

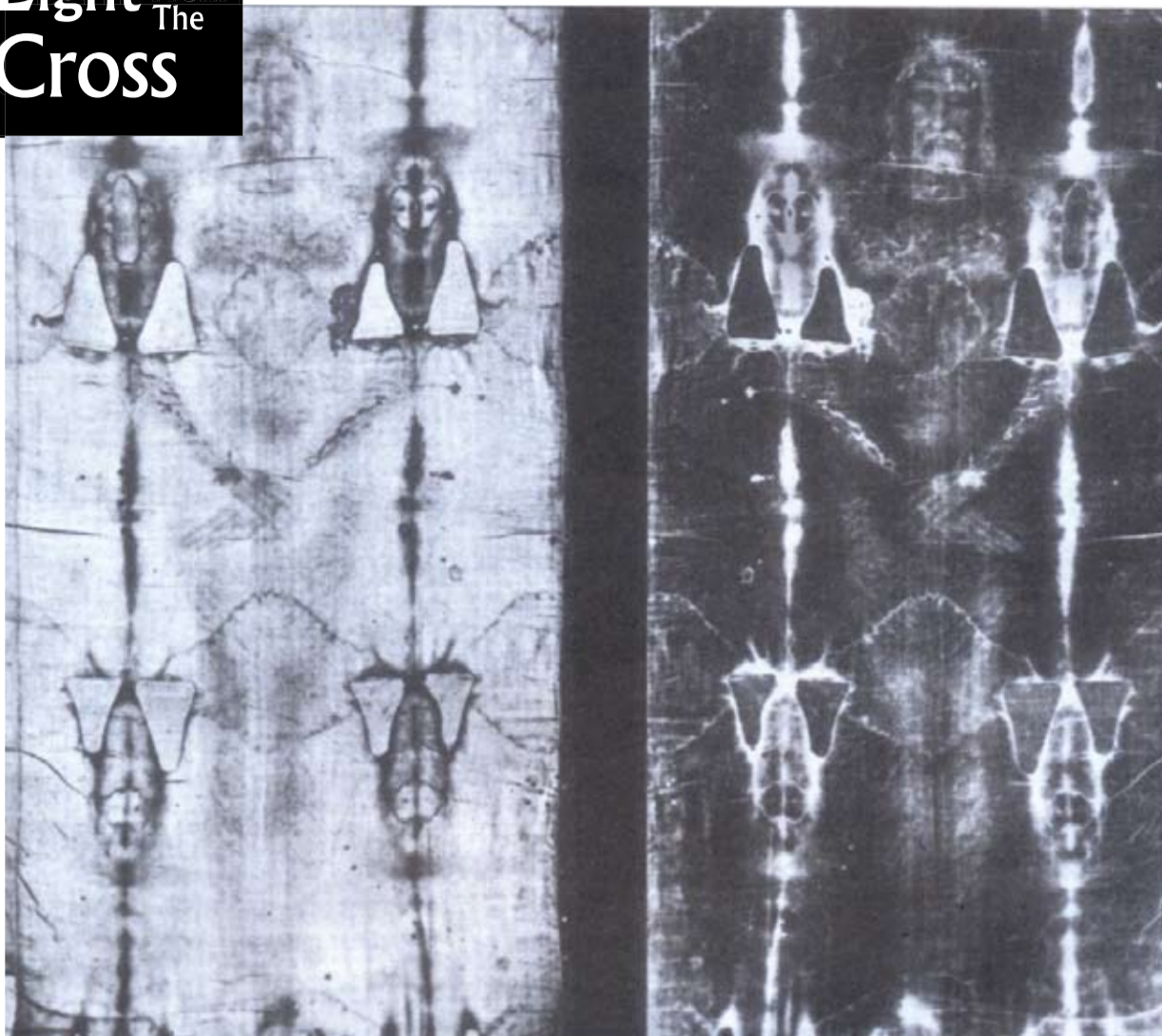
Doubting Conviction

Shouts
Vehemence
Unfounded
Spontaneous
Anger
Barabbas!
Barabbas!
Wavering judge
Nervous Pilate
Swayed
Confused
Indecisive
Innocent Jesus
Impeccable Jesus
Crucify him!
Pilate oblige
In conviction
Ludicrous
In sentence
Posthumous
Making Jesus
Revered more.

Miran Perera

LENT AND THE HOLY SHROUD

Light From The Cross



(Contd. from last week)

Keeping the Image of the Shroud before Our Eyes

I firmly believe that it would be beneficial for us, during this Season of Lent, to try and implement what Pope Benedict suggests: *"May we carry in our eyes the Image of the Shroud."* In fact, the most basic first lesson we could learn from both the above papal homilies (meditations) is the necessity to focus our attention on the Image of the Shroud." After all, keeping our eyes fixed on the Person of Jesus is fundamental to the development of our Christian lives, as often suggested in the Sacred Scriptures. For example, the Book of Hebrews exhorts us: *"Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end."* (Heb. 12:2). Incidentally, the same Scripture seems to offer us a vision of the Lord Jesus quite in keeping with what the Shroud Image offers us: *"But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, so that through God's grace he should die for everyone. We see him now crowned with glory and honour because of the death he suffered."* (Heb. 2:9)

Generally speaking, images can be of great help in our effort to fix our minds on the Lord. A practical example would be the meditations on Mysteries of the Holy Rosary (now being 20 in number - thanks to Blessed John Paul II). Mostly, they are all "images" or "scenes" from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and about our Blessed Mother. Most of the time, we try to "think" or "imagine" these Mysteries in our minds as we recite or pray the Rosary (meditate). But, actually, the use of external pictures or images corresponding to these Rosary Mysteries can be of great help in focusing on our prayer, avoiding distractions! Likewise, we could make good use of the Shroud Image to advance in our prayer and meditation on the whole Paschal Mystery of Jesus, as well as growing in our Christian living. Blessed John Paul II himself recommends this: *"Contemplation of that tortured Body helps contemporary man to free himself from the superficiality of the selfishness with which he frequently treats love and sin."*

In this article, what I am practically sug-

gesting is that, for this Season of Lent, we get a full copy of the Holy Shroud (e.g. as it is shown on the front cover of this booklet) into our hands - it does not matter whether it is big or small, framed or laminated, etc. We could also get the image blessed by a priest, so that it becomes a sacramental for us. In any case, we need to take the words: **"Keeping the Shroud Image before our eyes"** quite literally! Not just metaphorically, or just to have the Image in our minds and hearts - although that is the ultimate goal. So, having the Image of the Shroud "before us": we could proceed to pray, meditate and contemplate better than ever before. Of course, in this way, we will help our "imagination" to dwell on everything and every detail of what the Holy Shroud and its Image mean for us and for all of humanity.

Rightly, the "imagination" is the key! And our imagination feeds on images. In the world out there, as well as right inside us, there is a war going on, a "war of images." We are inundated by a huge barrage of images from all sides. It all depends on what sort of images get caught in the web or the mesh of our imagination! Needless to say, that we are swayed to where the images flow. In point of fact, as a priest and a confessor (and I say this humbly also as a fellow penitent who often joins the line), I could guarantee that most of our sins and the greater part of our sinfulness depend on how we use our imagination. The Apostle, St. James says that anyone who is able to control the "tongue" is a perfect person (James 3:1-12). This same exact thing could be applied to our imagination. So, we need to find ways and means to allow our mind or imagination to be captured by the Lord and heavenly realities (mysteries). Let us try, therefore, to use the Image of the Shroud also for this purpose. It could become part of what the Word of God invites us to do: *"Put on the mind of Christ. ..."* (Phil. 2:5); and *"to be conformed to the image of His Son ..."* (Rom. 8:29); and again: *"fill your mind with those things that are good and that deserve praise: Things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable."* (Phil. 4:8)

Christianity: Religion of the Image and the Face of God

Before going further, I wish to make a digression of sorts. This may be useful for anyone who may still need more encouragement in the use of sacred images, not only in the life of prayer-and-meditation but also in the work of evangelization. What follows is ac-

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tually a couple of paragraphs directly taken from a discussion I have in my soon-to-be-published book on the Holy Shroud.

Let me say one more word about the importance of "image" or "images" in general. Images are essential for human communication. In fact, every word (name-word) has an accompanying "image" in its conception (thought or imagination). So, generally speaking, an "image" always precedes (in the mind) and follows (in reality) every word. Of course, the word "God" may be an exception to the rule because, as St. John puts it *"no one has ever seen God"* (John 1:18). Yet, as the evangelist writes, *"The Only Son has made Him known and we have seen His glory, glory as the Son of the Eternal Father."* (John 1:14&18).

Certainly, in Judaism (as in some other religions too), and generally in the Old Testament, God is not to be represented by any "image" (E.g., Exodus 20:4). But, on the contrary, the whole concept of Christianity begins (and also ends, I would add) with an "image" of God: *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us ... and we saw His glory ..."* (John 1:14). But, even long before the Incarnation of God's Word, there already existed in the world billions and trillions (and possibly much more) of flesh-and-blood "images" of God - since, at creation itself God made the human person *"in His own image and likeness."* (Genesis 1:26).

Unlike Judaism, Christianity basically is a religion of both the **Word** and the **Image** of God - and both these are personally linked to Jesus Christ - the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit is the Divine Power behind the mission of Jesus both as Word and Image of God. If we take the New Testament revelation of God seriously, the story of the Holy Shroud is really about this "image" or "icon" of God - that of His Son Jesus Christ, crucified, died and risen from the dead, for the salvation of humanity (Colossians 1:15- 20). It is a question of coming to "know" Jesus Christ (followed by loving Him). It's like a "come-and-see" experience of the in-depth Mystery of God, hidden *"for ages"* which is now being manifested to the world (Colossians 1 :26). Now, in this "coming to know", it is not just as the **Word**, but also as the **Image** that we have to encounter the Son of God. As for the Written Word, it is indeed through the Bible that knowledge is transmitted; but we also know that there is so much which is not "written down" which also has been transmitted (in the Tradition). It is the Bible itself which attests to this: *"I suppose that if all the other things Jesus did were written down, the whole world could not contain the books."* (John 21 :25)

We need to take one step further in this question of the Image of God; and this is particularly true when we speak of the Image of the Shroud. It is the "Face" of the Man of the Shroud that makes all the difference. No doubt, as both Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI also express their agreement, the sufferings and tortures on the body of the man on the Shroud perfectly parallel those of Jesus in His passion. But, it is the Face of the Man on the Shroud that is truly the focal point of the whole issue of the Shroud Image. Notwithstanding the *"tortured body"*, the **Face** gives the clue to who the person really is. And after more than a century of scientific research on the Shroud, that is, after Secondo Pia's groundbreaking photograph of the Shroud Image in 1898, there is hardly any doubt that the Man on the Shroud is Jesus Christ Himself. In fact, there is plenty of evidence to show that almost all the portraits of Jesus, at least from about the sixth or seventh centuries, were based or modeled on the **Shroud Face of Jesus**. But, for now, as we seek to utilize the Image of the Shroud to inspire us for the Season of Lent, it is sufficient for us to follow the example of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI. When he gave the approval for the last Public Exposition of the Shroud in Turin (2010), he expressed his own personal desire to go and visit and venerate the Holy Shroud himself. In doing so, he addressed the 6000 or more Pilgrims from Turin (accompanied by their archbishop, Cardinal Severino Poletto) gathered at the Vatican: (This is my own translation from the Italian:)

(Contd next week)

Gethsemane's Night of Sadness

Monday Thursday evening almost two thousand years ago when Jesus gathered with his disciples to eat the Passover meal will be remembered till the end of time. It was an evening of love, tenderness and sadness. During the meal Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist which was to be a lasting memorial of his passion; He predicted that one of his disciples would betray Him; he warned Peter who vociferously proclaiming his loyalty to the Lord that on that very night he would deny Him thrice. He prayed with them first for Himself, then for his disciples and lastly for all believers. Those were prayers garnished with a great deal of tenderness understanding and love. He washed the feet of his disciples to impress on them that they were servants not masters.

At the end of the proceedings they sang a hymn and walked out into the night.

A pale moon was shining as they walked down to the valley, crossed the brook Kidron and entered a garden overshadowed by olive trees called Gethsemane because of an olive press which had been there.

This garden was very well known to his disciples because He had often been there with them. Many a time and oft Jesus had spent the night alone in the Garden in communion with the Father. Judas the betrayer was well aware of this.

Having entered the garden Jesus told his disciples, "Sit down here while I go yonder and pray". Then taking with Him Peter, James and John he went further into the garden and asked them to sit and wait for Him and He said to them "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me" Going a little further he knelt with His face to the ground and prayed to His father. While praying he saw as in a vision the terrible suffering, torture and humiliation He had to undergo. His human nature was filled with a gripping fear and he prayed to His Father "My Father if it is possible may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will but as you will". Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. He was sad as he asked Peter "Could you men not watch one hour with me? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."

He went back a second time and prayed "My Father if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it may your



will be done." His anguish was great and he was sweating drops of blood which were falling to the ground. An angel came down from heaven and comforted and strengthened Him. When he came back to his disciples he again found them sleeping because their eyes were heavy. So he left them alone and went away once more and prayed the third time saying the same thing. He was now suffering from a great feeling of abandonment. He returned to the disciple as said to them "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look the hour is near when the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise let us go. Here comes my betrayer".

While he was still speaking Judas the betrayer arrived with a large crowd armed with swords and clubs sent by the Chief priests and elders of the people. He had told them "The one I kiss is the Man: Arrest Him."

Going up to Jesus, Judas said "Greetings Rabbi" and kissed Him. Jesus replied "Friend do what you came for." As the crowd advanced towards Him. He asked them whom they were looking for and they replied "Jesus of Nazareth" Reaching up to his full stature oblivious of the fears that had assailed Him earlier Jesus replied in a voice full of majesty "I am here." They were all terrified and fell at his feet. The question was asked a second time and the same response was given. Even at this dark and dismal moment Jesus did not forget His own. "If therefore you seek me let these go their way".

Peter was very upset at what was happening.

Walter Rupesinghe

As the crowd came forward to seize Jesus, Peter reached for his sword and struck Malchis the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Jesus told Peter, "Put your sword back in its place for all who draw the sword will die by the sword." And He added, "Do you think I cannot call on My Father and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels. But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?"

Then addressing the crowd Jesus said, "Am I leading a rebellion that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sit in the temple courts teaching and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.

Then they all came forward seized Him and bound Him with ropes and chains like a dangerous criminal and dragged Him out of Gethsemane to the courts of the high priest. Jesus said not a word as He was taken away like a lamb being led to the slaughter.

Then all the disciples who had been moving with Him for three years and knew Him as the Son of God abandoned Him and fled.

An imprentable pall of gloom hung over Getsana as the Son of God, the Creator of the world was so ignominiously dragged to His death for the redemption of mankind.

*"The shadows fall mid silence so profound
And naught it heard save but a breaking hart
It breaks for us and He who loves us so
Must die upon the Cross in grief and woe*

*Gethsamane, Gethsamane: Oh sad and dark Gethsamane
Where Jesus prayed the night He was betrayed
Oh Father take this bitter cup from Me"*

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



Mr. Uduravana quickly dressed in the morning with his new coat and tie, climbed the tree and sat on the branch. A neighbour inquired of him as to what he was doing. He showed the telegram. "Undurawana, you are appointed as the branch manager."

Rev. Fr. Fracoid Anthony Fernando OMI

A CROSS The Way 74

By Sirohmi Gunsekera

Easter

"Holy Week is over and Christians the world over celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It is the birth of Christianity and is therefore more important than Christmas," remarked Janine.

"How is that?" asked David.

"Well, at Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Son of God as an ordinary human being. But we must not forget why Jesus came into this world. He committed no sins but He paid the price for the sins of all humankind. He was betrayed and was tortured and mocked and spat upon. Then He had to carry a heavy wooden cross to be crucified. He died after His sufferings on Good Friday and was buried only to rise again three days later on Easter Sunday. So you see, Jesus conquered Sin and Death by rising from the dead

on Easter Sunday and that is why it is the most important festival in the Christian calendar," explained Janine.

"It is also Springtime in temperate countries after the harshness and cold of winter. New leaves and flowers sprout, heralding the Resurrection of Our Saviour," chimed in Irene.

"We should go to church for the

Easter Sunday service and thank God for sending His Son to earth as the Redeemer! Jesus first appeared to a woman, Mary Magdalene, after His Resurrection. That was the honour He paid to womenkind. There is historical proof of His Resurrection. However, unlike Doubting Thomas, Christians believe in the Risen Christ," said Janine.

"Yes, we believe that Jesus was the Son of God but came to earth and grew up as a lowly carpenter's son. He was born in a manger in a cattleshed amid the poor and the destitute. At the age of thirty, Jesus started His public ministry but always proclaimed that He was a humble servant leader," said Irene.

"Jesus led by example and Easter is a time for us Christians to renew our faith in the Risen Lord," concluded Janine.

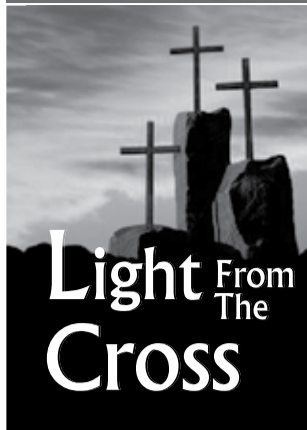
THE REWARD OF THE FATHER

In the depth of silence
In the darkness of the night
Jesus lay in the tomb
The Loving Father descends to earth's womb
Uttering the words of love, words of Confirmation
This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased
[Mark. 9: 7]

He touches the lifeless Body
Caressing the two arms of Fidelity
Kissing the wounds with tender Mercy
Breathing into the Body of His Son the Beloved
The Life that has no end
The Father's Reward of acceptance and
The Spirit's High Reward
Of Gratitude - Sing Alleluia!

The Divine touches the Divine
In deep Intimacy and unbounded Unity
The Father highly exalted Him [Phil.2:9]
The Glorified Body rises in Splendour and Beauty
With the Father's Breath of LOVE
Clad in finest clothes, finer than the silk
White as Snow [Dan.7:9] and bright as the sun
So radiant, so brilliant
'The Lord of The Universe'
Is alive and Active Now.
He is truly Risen, Alleluia !

Rev. Sr. Sunitha A C



The Resurrection Hope Crucifying World



Prof. Anton Meemana

Infinite Singularity and Infinite Love

In the beginning of the universe, there was Infinite Singularity and that means that the universe began with Infinite Love, and the universe is governed and run by Infinite Love and it will also end (whenever and however it will end) in Infinite Love. And that Love shall never end. In the beginning, 15 billion years ago, an immensely dense and tensed fire ball exploded and gave birth to our universe. It was a moment of self-donation, self-sacrifice, self-immolation and self-giving. The Big Bang was a work of infinite divine love. It burst in order to give birth to a new dimension of cosmic existence. Bursting is birthing. It burst in order to birth forth.

Everything in the universe happens according to the Law of the Cross which is the law of self-donating and self-giving. One thing dies or sacrifices itself in order to give birth to a new cosmic dimension. There is no new life without death and there is no death without new life. The Law of the Cross is an all-embracing and over-arching reality; in spite of death, life continues and in spite of life, death continues. Nothing can escape its paradoxical dynamics. Good Friday is the ultimate manifestation, the zenith, the supreme expression, the highest watermark of this divine truth.

Crucifixion and Rejection of Love

But, contrary to popular opinion, most people hate inner freedom and unconditional love deep down. It is too much for them to bear and care for. They may talk about it, sing about it, lament about its absence but deep down they do not know how to handle it once it is offered to them without restrictions, conditions and reservations.

We live in a world that rejects love and freedom. We live in a crucifying world, a world that rejects love, that tries to crucify it, that tries to eradicate it from the face of the earth. Crucifixion of Christ means rejection of unconditional love's ultimate manifestation by us.

Not everything about his death could be grasped by outsiders. One has to become an insider, enter into a path

of discipleship, fellowship and intimate relationship with Christ in order to fully fathom and glimpse the deepest meaning and the broadest implication of his crucifixion. One has to walk his footsteps in order to see what it means to live in a crucifying world.

Crucifixion of Christ is never an isolated event, an individual phenomenon but is a cosmic event. Crucifixion of Christ means rejection of unconditional love by us. By crucifying Christ, we said NO to the gift of divine love. We committed the worst crime we could afford in history; that is, to kill Jesus, the author of life, and yet we remain unrevenged, unpunished, unharmed, free from retribution by God. When Jesus offers unconditional love, it can be a terrifying thing for some people. Either we want to destroy or annihilate what we are afraid of or we want to run away from it, but Christ can never be gotten rid of for Christ is another name for love.

Crucifixion of Christ is Crucifixion of Ourselves

When we crucified Christ, we also crucified the best part of our personality with him. When he rose from death, our best selves were also restored and resurrected with him. With his death, our fears also died. By dying he gave us life.

We have done the worst possible we could do and yet we were not punished or avenged or given retribution. Now nothing worse could happen to us for God has accepted us as we are and offered us forgiveness and life. God accepts everything in the world, even our murderous rejection of love, mercy and forgiveness in order to redeem them. Whatever is not totally embraced by God is not fully redeemed.

With God, there is no human predicament, human agony and misery beyond redemption and no sin beyond forgiveness. We are totally and absolutely accepted as we really are. So what guarantee do we still need for God's unconditional love, mercy and forgiveness? God did not annihilate humanity from the face of the earth as a result of Jesus' murder. Even though we killed Jesus, God's own son, God's love for us never turned into hatred, re-

sentment or avenge. God cannot not love us. God identifies himself more closely and more intimately with the suffering of all creatures.

I am also a member of that humanity, part of that crooked timber of humanity (Immanuel Kant) that nailed Christ to the Cross and I am too part of that humanity that had been redeemed by the Cross of Christ. When we crucified Christ, we crucified the person we were afraid to become. We are afraid of true freedom and unconditional love and therefore we tried to get rid of the person (that is, Jesus) who offered us both freely and generously.

Acknowledgment of my contribution and share in his crucifixion should not lead to a guilt-trip. It is not about wallowing in self-pity and self-accusation for his death which in fact is a very dangerous move. Beating one's breast is a theologically dead end. What is called for is costly involvement with the world, with the victims of history, with the suffering masses. Christ donated himself, offered himself, sacrificed himself and shared himself for the life of the world and to do likewise is the Good Friday challenge for us.

Good Friday is Good News

The Good News must not be made into a nice news, a complacent news, a comfortable news. Good news on Good Friday is a disturbing news, an interrupting news, a demanding news, a challenging news and a liberating news. Good Friday is the ultimate proof of Good News. God loves us no matter what. When we suffer, God also suffers with us, God also feels our pain in order to console us. There is no true consolation without participation in human suffering. By embracing suffering, we transform them and then they become part of our depth, substance and authenticity. Nothing human is alien to Jesus, no human experience is ungraspable by him.

Every injustice perpetuated is also perpetuated against Christ. Every persecution of the innocent is also a persecution of Christ. When we suffer unjustly, Christ too suffers with us heart-bleedingly.

Why are some people not convinced that they are loved totally and uncondition-

ally? Is it too good to be true?

Or is it the grandest illusion in the world? We cannot invent something like unconditional love without an experience of it for we are not intrinsically capable of it and so there has to be a source for it. Unconditional love and forgiveness is the divine revelation, it is revealed once and for all by the Lover and Forgiver par excellence.

Evil men, by trying to destroy others, destroy themselves in the long run. The wicked perish by their own devices slowly and surely.

We die as good as we live and that was certainly the case with Jesus. Jesus, the life-giver, lover and forgiver par excellence gave his life for us even at his death. Only a person who has lived well can die well. Jesus died exactly the way he lived by creating a space for life. Death and life are intimately interlinked. Even one's death can be at the service of life, can enhance life and promote life.

Love will Never End

The exact date and time of world's end is a meaningless category to the person who loves for she or he lives truly in each second. The meaning of human life is in the quality of our love. How much I love, the depth of my love is the real me. It is my real identity, my true self, my authentic self, and my original self.

To hope is to trust in the power of love. To hope is to cultivate unshakable and unbelievable faith in love. To hope is to allow God to work miracles in our lives.

Hope is the memory of the future (Gabriel Marcel). Hoping is coping up with every hopeless situation. To hope is to cling to God under any anxiety, under any despair, under any disappointment. The more hopeless, helpless, restless and desperate we become, all the more we must cling to God. Every attempt to keep hope alive is an acknowledgement of Christ's resurrection. Hope which is not contaminated by human expectation is a real possibility with God. Hope will never disappoint us for it always comes from God. Hope and expectation are not the same. The more we expect, the more disappointed we become. Expectations always kill relationship. The greater the expectation,

the deeper the disappointment. But in hope there is no disappointment whatsoever.

Death is the moment of truth, the moment of revelation and revelation. Death rounds off one's fundamental option and orientation in life. Death becomes absolutely meaningful when we live a full life. Death cannot annihilate those who continue to love. In that sense, death may be the holiest act, the most sacred event in one's life. Death serves human life. Death too is a servant of God. Death gives us a purpose, an orientation, a sense of accomplishment and mission in life.

Death as a Promoter of Life

Jesus went to his death the way he went about his living with the same compassionate attitude. His death was the death blow to sins in the world: sins had neither power nor control over his life and his decisions.

We attain ultimate human maturity at the moment of death. Death is the erotic climax of our spiritual growth, the orgasm of union and communion with God, the orgasmic joy in God, the ultimate erotic fulfillment and satisfaction in God.

When we have not lived properly, we are terrified of letting go. The real fear of life is not fear of death, but fear of life, that is, the fear of dying (or letting go of life) when we have not lived fully. Then we want to cling to the narrow security of material comforts of life at any cost.

Letting go is preparing for death and by so preparing for death every day, we begin to live truly. In this way of living, death is a decision, an ongoing decision to deepen the zest for life.

With Jesus's resurrection, the apostles were able to see what they could not see before, that is, the universe is no longer the same. Resurrection caused an insurrection in the nether world. Now the universe is a transformed, renewed, rejuvenated, reformed, recreated and remade reality.

Christ has absorbed everything unto Him. Whoever and whatever is not absorbed by Christ is not redeemed.

But the good news is that nothing is left unredeemed, untransformed and

(Contd. on Pg. 13)

"Via Dolorosa" The Path that Jesus Trod

By Astrid Fernandez

There were many things I wanted to do in Jerusalem, and walking the *Via Dolorosa*, the Way of Suffering, was high on the list. Deep in my heart I had a yearning to see the Stations of the Cross. The twisty route following the Stations of the Cross was a great spiritual experience for me. I was awestruck and full of wonder as my feet made contact with the *Via Dolorosa*, Christianity's most holy route; the path that Jesus trod as He made His way to Golgotha. The street ahead was busy and crowded as people carried on the business of the day, but there was a certain solemnity when we walked towards the Church of the Holy Sepulchre led by our Spiritual Director and a group of spiritfilled Catholics with one heart, one song, one desire, to follow the final path of Jesus our Saviour who shed His precious blood for us. The *Via Dolorosa*, the road Jesus walked from the place of Pontius Pilate's sentencing to Golgotha means "Way of Sorrows." Our prayer, hymns and meditation on the passion of Jesus Christ led us to picture this last path of Jesus walking the real street in Old Jerusalem that being the

name "VIA DOLOROSA", bringing us closer to the sufferings of Jesus on that first Good Friday; moments I will always hold precious in my heart.

Walking through the Lion's gate, the **First Station** is on the left; it is here where Jesus was condemned to death.

We then move on to the **Second Station** where Pontius Pilate gave his famous speech, bound Christ, placed the crown of thorns on top of His head and gave Him the cross. The **Third Station**

of the Cross, which is located near a chapel is where Jesus had His First fall, and the **Fourth Station** which is on the left hand side is the site where Christ met His Blessed Mother. On the corner of the next street on the right is the **Fifth Station**, where Simon of Cyrene carried the cross for Jesus. The path ascends at this point and on the left is the **Sixth Station**; where Veronica wiped the face of Jesus, creating the Veil of Veronica. The Veil was imprinted with

the image of Christ after she wiped His face.

Our walk continued through the markets until we reached a turning point and a red door straight ahead, the location of the **Seventh Station**; where Christ fell for the second time. We then turn to



the left to continue on to the **Eighth Station**; where Jesus met a group of pious women from Jerusalem and stopped to talk to them. As we keep walking we come to an archway and a cross with the Dome of the Holy Sepulchre in the background; the pillar just behind the cross is the Ninth Station of the Cross, where Jesus fell for the third time. The **Ninth Station** marks our departure from the *Via Dolorosa* and we enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,

where the remaining Stations of the Cross are found. Continuing along the pathway to the courtyard of the Church, we enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre through large wooden doors and walk up the stairs to Calvary; this entire area of the Church marks the other Stations of the Cross.

The **Tenth Station**, where Jesus is stripped off his garments; the **Eleventh Station** the Crucifixion; where Jesus is nailed to the Cross, and the **Twelfth Station** - Jesus dies on the Cross. We then see the place where the Virgin Mary received her Son's body; the **Thirteenth Station** Jesus' body is removed from the Cross, which is symbolically marked by a statue of Mother Mary with a silver dagger wedged into her chest. Every mother at this point ponder on the deep sorrow the Mother of Jesus would have gone through when holding her beloved Son's brutally beaten frail body.

After some moments of reflection, we go down the Calvary stairs, to the Stone of Unction or Anointment; where Jesus' body was laid and prepared for burial, as was the custom of the Jews - "Nicodemus, who at first had gone

to see Jesus at night, went with Joseph, taking with him about thirty kilograms of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes. The two men took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices according to the Jewish custom of preparing a body for burial". (John 19:39-40) This is the holiest of the holiest spots and a very precious and emotional moment,

where people kneel down, kiss the anointed stone, pray, meditate, shed tears, and place their sacred objects on it. Solemnly we then move on to the Tomb of Jesus, the Edicule, which is the sight of the final **Fourteenth Station**. The interior of the Edicule is lined with marble and decorated with pictures, hangings, lamps and candelabra, which are numerically divided between the three principal communities, Greek Orthodox, Armenians and Roman Catholics. There is almost always a line of people waiting to enter the Edicule. The space is confined and no more than four people can be admitted at one time. People are allowed to spend about three minutes praying inside; this is a very profound sacred moment. Returning from the tomb, which certainly is not the end of the journey but the beginning of a new one, we are reminded what a precious gift our salvation is and the price paid for it by our Lord Jesus - "But because of our sins He was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment He suffered, made whole by the blows He received" (Isaiah 53:5).

The scourging and physical pain our Lord Jesus suffered was minor in comparison to the pain caused by the real burden He was bearing - the burden of our sins; He bore our sins to the cross where He paid the penalty for them all. As we think about the pain and humiliation He suffered for us, paying a price that we could never pay ourselves, we can't help but give thanks for Jesus' miraculous victory over death, because of the Resurrection a new life begins, giving the Easter celebrations a deeper meaning CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN! ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!

The Resurrection.....

Contd. from Pg. 12

unrenewed by Him. The whole evolving and emerging cosmos is embraced by him. The universe is an extension of his resurrected and glorified body. So, now human death too is a redeemed reality, a resurrected reality. We are born, live, and die unto Christ's resurrection. We are buried, entombed, enshrined and sepulchred in Christ's resurrected body and nothing can exhume us from it. True life is life towards resurrection and therefore true life is absent without resurrection. Death is the window to resurrection. Resurrection is the micro chip, the compact disk of life, that is, the interpretative key of life. Everything we are curious to know about life contains in the resurrection of Christ.

The resurrection of Christ is not an isolated, individual phenomenon, something that happened to a single individual. It is a cosmic event. It has cosmic repercussions. Resurrection is a biospiritual reality, a theo-seismic eruption, a universal spiritual outburst. Resurrection is the cosmic Tsunami that shakes, stirs, tupsy turvies, our fixed, fixated, stymied and stagnated understanding of God and life.

The resurrection is the grand renewal of the universe. In it, the healing of our minds, the broadening of our cognitive, intellectual, emotional, ethical and spir-

itual horizons was accomplished. It is the healing of our emotional blocks, frozen feelings and ego-centeredness. There is no reason to be afraid of in God's universe. God is in charge of everything and nothing can stop us from loving and being loved. Death has no power over those who love.

Easter and Resurrection Hope

After the resurrection of Christ, there is no such a thing as ordinary time. All time is extraordinary, supernatural and consecrated. Time is resurrected, rejuvenated, redeemed and emancipated. So now we live, move and have our being in resurrected time for time is also a resurrected reality. With the resurrection of Christ, there is no reason for anxiety, worry and restlessness. We must feel sorry for those who worry.

With the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ, the whole creation is redeemed; our lives are on a trajectory of resurrection. Resurrection is the enfleshment of hope. Resurrection is the surest assurance of God's infinite love. Even the tiniest act of love is ultimately recognized and restored by God. No love is ever lost in this universe. Creation is eastering forth. The

resurrection of Christ is also the resurrection of whole creation.

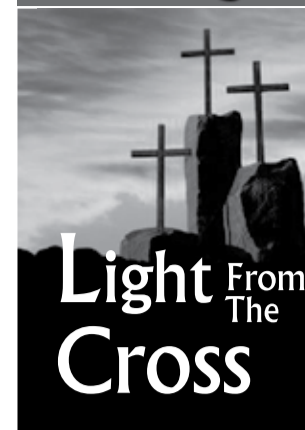
Every creative act is an act self-donating and self-giving. Creating is resurrecting. Resurrection is the revelation of God's creativity par excellence. As Saint Augustine says, "Resurrection is the greatest miracle of God." We now live unto the resurrection of Christ. Christ lives in us now in order to facilitate our own resurrection someday. What happened to Christ at the resurrection is also going to happen to us in the future. It's our true fate. We are born, live, and die to be resurrected one day. Eternal life is our destined life. Eternity is ultimate human destiny.

The one who loves will never die. To the one who loves whether the world will end today or tomorrow is an absolutely non-issue. When we live in love, we live in God and therefore we will live forever. But eternity is not prolongation of time (time continuing ad infinitum). Infinity is eternal now and it never comes to an end. The whole of eternity contains at this moment and to experience it is to experience eternal life.

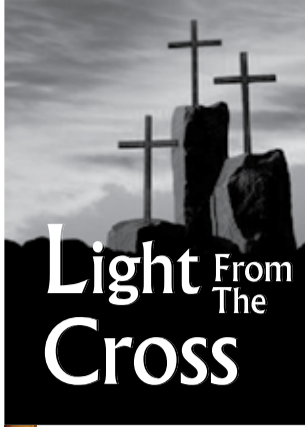
The whole creation, for the meantime, is in preparation for the return of the resurrected Christ and we are eagerly waiting for the early return of its redeemer.



Altar of the Crucifixion Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre



Lent Leads to Easter



Lent and Easter are intimately connected, and it is Easter that gives us the right perspective for Lent, rather than the other way about. Many of our Christians take the celebration of Lent quite seriously, with its traditional

stresses on prayer, fasting and almsgiving. They do realise the importance of prayer and they often follow devotionally the "Way of the Cross." Prayer also leads them to want to renew their life with the sacrament of reconciliation, so meaningful and so connected with Easter. Was it not in one of the Easter appearances that the Risen Lord sent the disciples to announce God's forgiveness of sins? This sense of reconciliation, not only within the Christian community but also of all men and women, is one of the deepest meanings of the resurrection of the Lord we celebrate at Easter. It is also linked to the other two 'Lenten practices': for a Christian fasting is not merely for one's own purification and self-control but also to share, with those most in need, of what we have: this is symbolised and made concrete in almsgiving.

The 'hour' of which Jesus spoke inaugurates the new era Jesus announced to the Samaritan, "Woman, believe me, hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem": then people will worship in spirit and truth. Neither Gerizim nor Jerusalem were abolished, but both were relativized to the higher call of a true spiritual worship. This opens our minds to a universal mission.

The word 'Lent' means 'spring', and derives from the Germanic root for 'long': because during this season the days visibly lengthen in the northern hemisphere. Curiously, the word 'Easter', too, has spring connotations. It derives from *Eostre*, the Germanic goddess whose festival was celebrated in the vernal equinox, towards the end of March. The word suggests 'dawn', for the sun rises in the 'East'.

In the Hebrew tradition three festivals merged in the month of Nisan (March-April), the first month of the Babylonian calendar. They are: the feast of Mazzoth (*Azymes*, unleavened bread, possibly a Canaanite feast), the Passover, and the first fruits. "The character of the feast of Mazzoth indicates that it was an agricultural festival of thanksgiving for the beginning of the harvest. That which comes forth from nature is holy as coming immediately from the deity and must be offered to the deity before man can use it. The ritual of offering consisted in part in abstaining from the use of leaven for a week: to put leaven, a foreign matter, into the dough profanes its holiness" (J.L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 558). The Passover was an Israelite tradition celebrated with a festival banquet in which a yearly roasted lamb was completely eaten (ibid. 643). It eventually was merged into the memory of the historical exodus, which even now we vividly recall during the Easter vigil. The celebration of first fruits is universally kept especially in agricultural societies. For Christians, of course, all these undertones of the feast are enriched by the memory of the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus that inaugurates the eschatological or ultimate times, the true or *paramarthik*

existence, that flourishes in eternity. Easter calls us to 'lengthen' the horizons of our heart to a God who is infinite in mercy and abounding in love. As Karl Rahner said, "Only in love can I find you, my God. In love the gates of my soul spring open, allowing me to breathe a new air of freedom and forget my own petty self." (*The God of My Life*).

The "first fruits" of the Christian Community celebrated during Lent and Easter are the neophytes ("new-born"), and therefore the sacrament of baptism is so central to the Easter vigil and actually to the whole of Lent and Easter. In old times Lent was the time of instruction of the candidates for baptism: even today the official liturgy of adult baptism recommends this particular time for instruction and sacraments. Baptism is the great Christian sacrament, and the Eucharist, so dear to the community, is really the common thanks giving of the baptized for the especial grace (and responsibility) given to us. Baptism, given once and for all as a commitment made possible by God's grace, should not be merely remembered as the most serious decision in one's life, nor, much less, an infancy sacrament, but should be a living reality that grows in our consciousness. The Easter Vigil celebration stresses this by asking us to renew our Christian commitment. This recommitment is also made at all Masses on Easter Sunday. Each year could be oriented to a specific aspect among the implications of our baptismal promises.

At the heart of Lent and Easter there is God the Father who gave us the Son to be one of us, a human being, and to enable us to live the life of Love as God lives it eternally. Jesus reveals to us such a loving God, and undertook paschal pilgrimage in obedience the Father thus opening the doors to life eternal. He enables us to be with him real daughters and sons, not metaphorically but as participants in our brother Jesus' own sonship. As Christian faithful we are called to experience the power of the resurrection made especially present in the Easter vigil. As St. Paul says: "In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died ... All will be made alive in Christ." (1 Cor 15:20,22). His death becomes our own entry into the fullness of the Christian life we accepted at our baptism. "We have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life ... If we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection of his" (Rom 6:4-8). Hence, Lent is not merely a pilgrimage of prayer, fasting" and almsgiving but an invitation to an interior disposition of breaking the narrow domestic walls of human relations into a free atmosphere of God's love, a God who is Abba, Father to all humanity.

"Yahweh says, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping; and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to Yahweh, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from



punishing" (Joel 2.12-13). Jesus says, when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that Your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer gift (Mt 5.23-24). Our Easter renewal must be therefore not only a more committed acceptance of a loving Father, but also a new relation of love with all our neighbours. It may begin with the family members, but will not be restricted to them.

Today we talk so much of corruption and public accountability.

We are all responsible for corruption, we are part of a community which is corrupt, and a collective *metanoia* is needed. It is possible to have a corruption free nation provided we become aware of the covetousness and greed in each one of us. *Vairagya* (detachment) is required to attain corruption free society. *Vairagya* is the movement of freedom from the slavery to things to which we are attached. The Isa Upanishad says, "Give up everything and enjoy everything. Everything that is in this world is shot-through with the Divine, nothing belongs to us." In the Mahabharata's Shantiparvan the Lord says: "From covetousness, proceeds sin. It is from this Source that sin and irreligiousness flow, together with misery. This covetousness is the spring of all cunning and hypocrisy in the world ... From covetousness, proceeds wrath, lust, the loss of judgement, deception, pride, arrogance, malice, vindictiveness, shamelessness, loss of prosperity, loss of virtue ...". Speaking to the Kalamas the Buddha says: "Think of the greed which comes up in man. Whoever is ruled by greed, has his heart in bondage. Such person is violent; he takes things and persons which belong to others. He tells lies. In fact, a greedy man suffers a lot. Hatred too is a great evil. It blinds us. A person who hates another is ready to do violence to him. This is why, I tell you, Kalamas, that you should be free from greed and hatred.

Lent is a gentle invitation to change and turn our hearts to God. God gives us the invitation "Return to me with all your heart."

During the Easter Vigil we renew our baptismal, vows. The sacrament of reconciliation that is organised in parishes at this time can focus on the new life that is to be received when we renew the baptismal vows rather than just on one's sins. We recall and is more to focus on the new life that is to be received when we renew the baptismal vows than to focus on one's sins. We recall and celebrate in the renewal of baptismal vows our birth into new life, which happened some years back when we as children or as adults received baptism. With the risen Lord we also acclaim the new life we have. Renewal of baptismal vows is a challenge to us to be persons who promote life. On Easter day the families could also celebrate their different relationships, for example the husband and wives could at home renew their marital vows and the children and parents could renew their own love. in some symbolic way.

(Courtesy: Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection)

Pray, Fast, Give

A woman in her seventies told me she had been received in Church the previous Easter. She shared that after making her first confession and being forgiven for sixty years of sin, she had a light feeling that she wondered how her

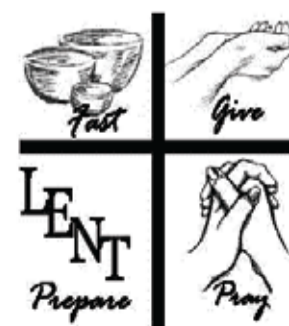
feet could stay on ground. She understood why Saint Paul used the words *holy* on describe members of the Church. Paul recognized that those who are baptized are made holy by their baptism. This is our fundamental identity. But even though baptism and reconciliation are com-

plete gifts from God, there is a time when we don't need conversion, when we don't need to reorient toward God. During Lent we engage in three ascetical practices to do just that; fasting, and almsgiving.

When we pray, we *give ourselves* to God by acknowledging God's

sovereignty, love, mercy, generosity, forgiveness, and willingness to help. When we fast, we *give up* something. When we give alms, we *give* to someone.

Like Christ, who gave his complete self over to death on the cross and ultimately to God's complete care, we



seek to do the same with our whole lives. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving

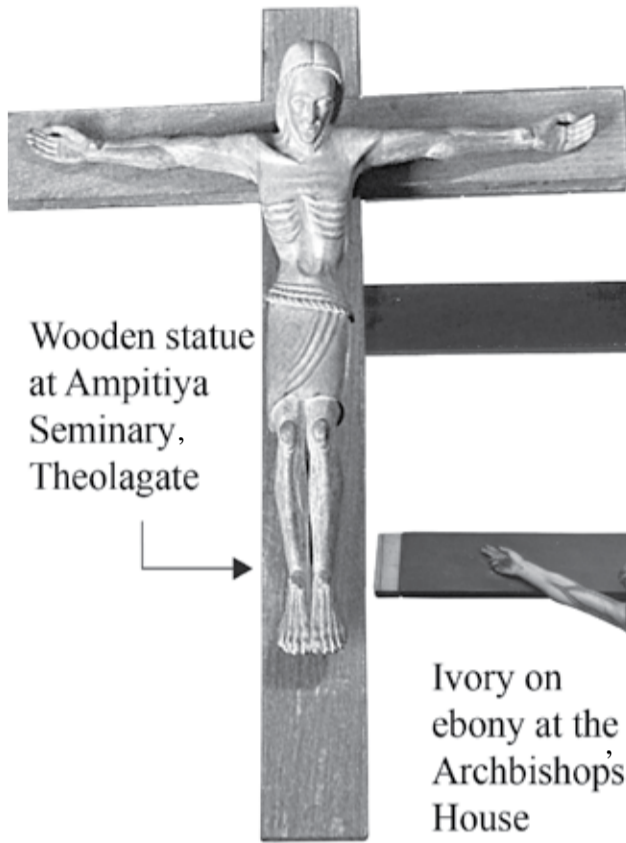
help us along this path, winnowing anything that might prevent us from doing so.

Prayer can take many forms, such as writing in journals, talking to God in our own words, or being open to the challenges of spiritual reading, especial Scripture. These forms of prayer can help us on our path to conversion.

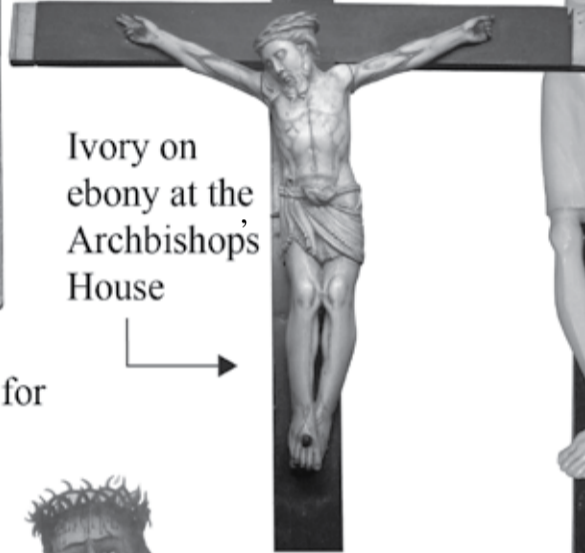
(Courtesy: Lingourian)

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

A picture meditation
**Looking
 to the
 CROSS**

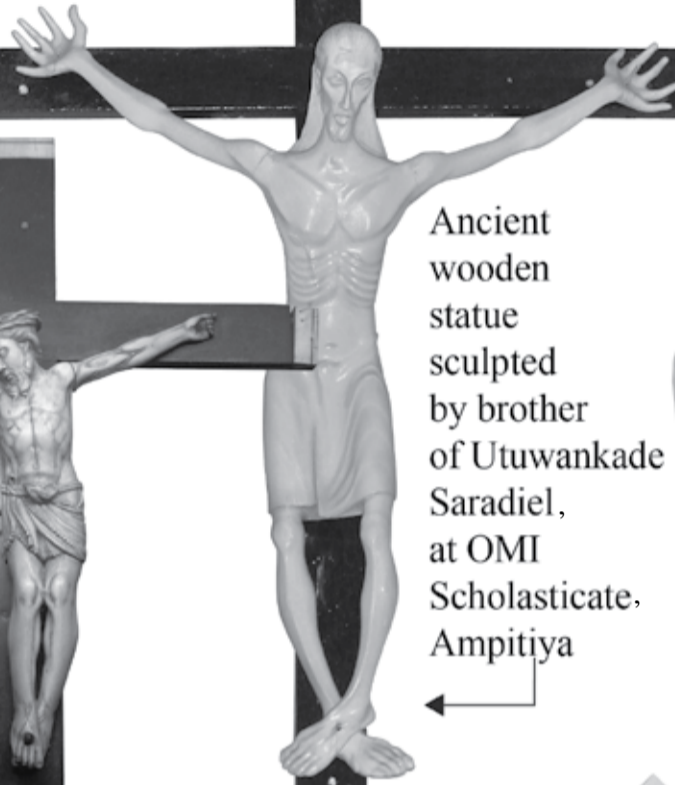


Wooden statue at Ampitiya Seminary, Theolagate



Ivory on ebony at the Archbishop's House

Ancient statues used for Passion Plays



Wooden sculpture by Richard Gabriel at the OMI Scholasticate, Ampitiya

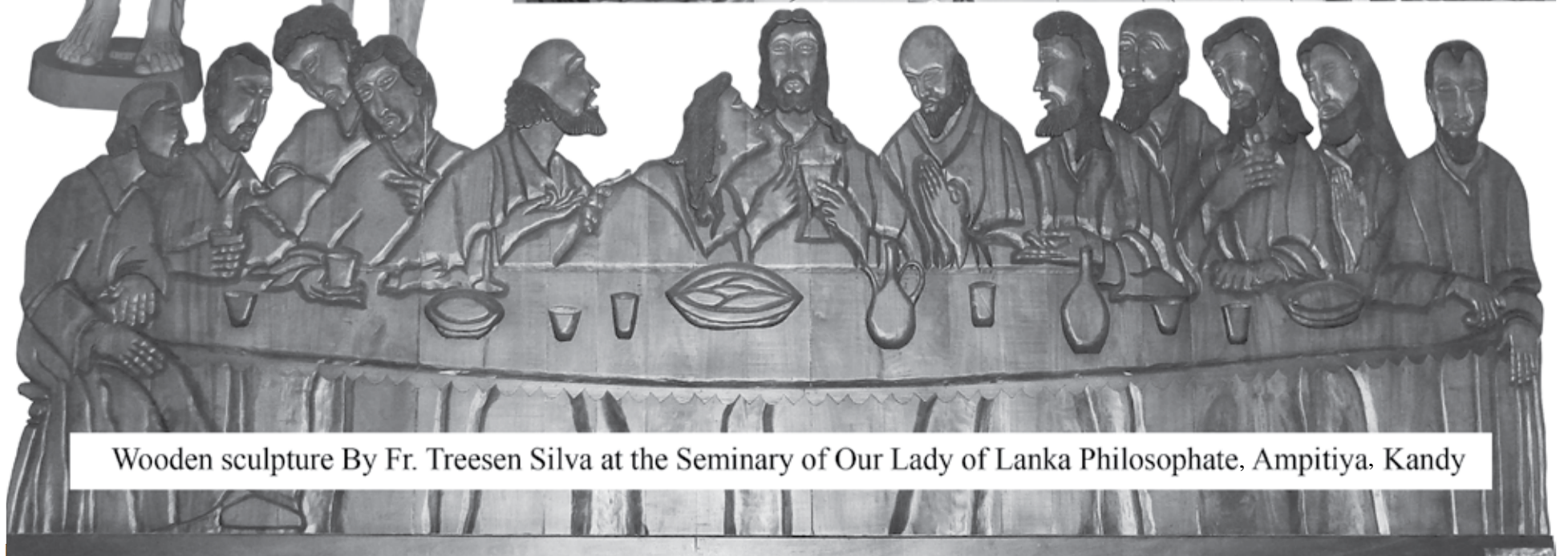
Ancient wooden statue sculpted by brother of Utuwankade Saradiel, at OMI Scholasticate, Ampitiya



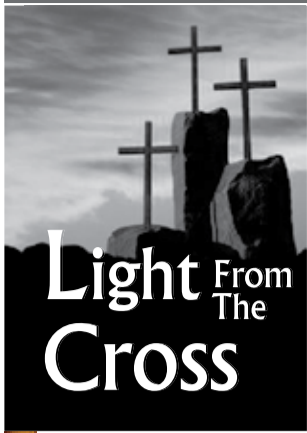
Bronze by Leela at St. Anthony's Church, Kollupitiya



Painting at the Church of the Risen Lord, Kadolkele



Wooden sculpture By Fr. Treesen Silva at the Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka Philosophate, Ampitiya, Kandy



“Behold the place where they laid him ...”

A Reflection on Mark 16:6

The Empty Tomb

As the women, the principal characters in this scene, reach the tomb, they find the huge stone rolled away and a young man in a white robe. He demonstrates and explains to them the cause of the emptiness of the tomb: “He has been raised.” The crucified Jesus is raised and so, the tomb is empty. This is how he explains the emptiness of the tomb. This has been how the Church has over the centuries proclaimed it.

This Christian teaching on the emptiness of the tomb has raised not a few questions in the minds of many. Was the tomb actually empty? Why was it empty? Do we, Christians, believe in the Resurrection of the Lord, simply because the tomb remained empty? Or do we say the tomb was made empty by the Lord’s Resurrection? These are just to name a few of the questions. In this treatise, we will critically deal with the emptiness of the tomb taking Mark 16,6 as our point of departure.

Was the tomb actually empty?

We strongly say the tomb was historically empty. It was made empty by God. It was made empty by the Lord’s Bodily Resurrection. We do say this with reasons logically valid and factually true.

First; all the four Gospels do attest that the tomb was made empty by Jesus’ Bodily Resurrection (Mark 16; Matt 28; Luke 24; John 20). Hence the Evangelists had believed this. The early Christians and preachers had shared this belief. What we believe today is based on the authority of this apostolic witness.

Second; Mary Magdalene is remembered in these Gospels as the basic witness to the finding of the empty tomb. Thus the story that the tomb was empty and it was discovered by Mary of Magdala was part of the historic Christian memory.

Third; if the tomb had not been empty, then Jesus’ disciples could not have been able to preach about Jesus’ Resurrection. Any Jewish non-believer could have gone and pointed to the body corrupting in the grave. If any Jewish non-believer could have gone and pointed to the body of Jesus in a tomb, the

Christian proclamation of the Resurrection would have been impossible. The disciples could preach a risen Jesus because His body had not rotted in the tomb and the tomb had remained empty. St. Paul could write to the Corinthians the living tradition of the Resurrection: “... that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures ...” (1 Cor 15:3-4) simply because the tomb had been made empty.

Fourth: if the tomb had not been empty, then Jesus’ disciples would not dare to die for a belief in the Risen Lord. Their belief in the Risen Lord

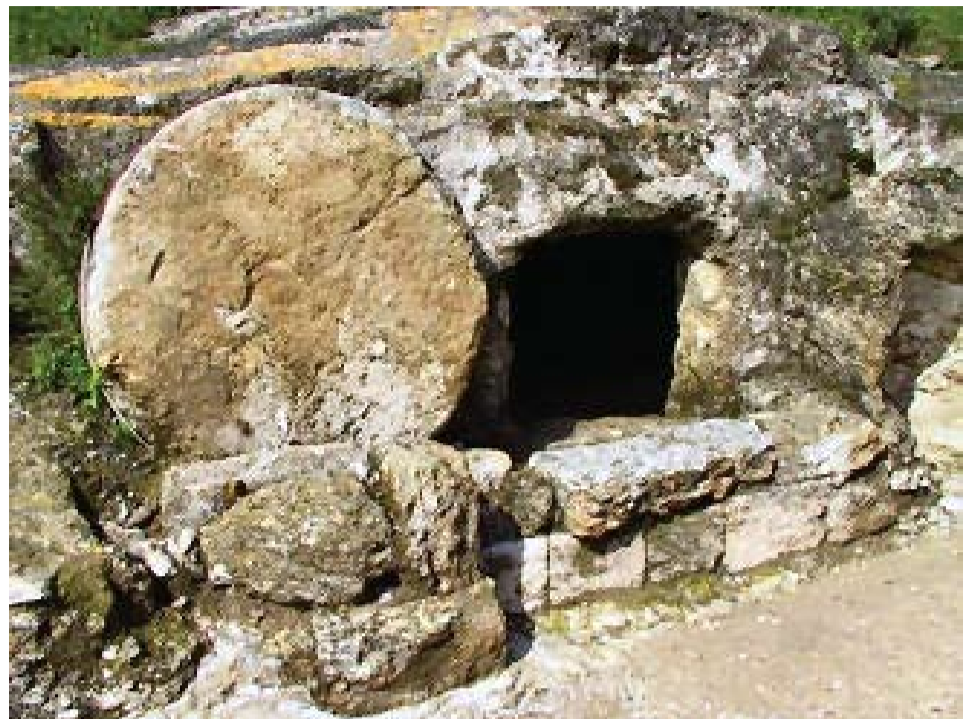
could hardly be a lie invented by them as none would dare to die for a lie. One would dare to die for what one is strongly convinced of. The disciples testified to this fact of Jesus’ Resurrection with their blood. Hence the tomb had been actually made empty by God.

Fifth: the tomb could have been found empty, if ‘someone has taken the body’ (John 20). If so, there was no bodily resurrection. Hence it should be possible to find the body. But it never occurred.

Sixth: the tomb could have been found empty, if, as Jews claimed, ‘The disciples of Jesus stole the body at night’ (Matt 28:13-15). If so, there was no bodily resurrection. Hence it should be possible to find the body. But it never occurred.

Seventh: the bodily Resurrection occurred and hence the tomb became empty. If so, it was not possible to find the Body. So it is! Even today none has unearthed any relic of the Body of Jesus. The Lord had been bodily raised up leaving the tomb empty.

Eighth; the New Testament attests that the Risen Lord appeared to His disciples. Hence the tomb, “the place where they laid him,” must remain empty, as they believed in a bodily resurrection. Moreover, these Resurrection Appearances and the emptiness of the tomb verify the historicity of the Lord’s Resurrection (CCC # 647).



Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi

Easter Message

The Resurrection explains the emptiness of the tomb, not the other way. The empty tomb is not in itself a direct proof of the Resurrection; the absence of Christ’s Body from there could be explained otherwise.

Then what does the empty tomb signify? It signifies that “... by God’s power Christ’s body had escaped the bonds of death and corruption ... prepared the disciples to encounter the Risen Lord” (CCC # 657). It was an essential sign for the disciples. It was the first step towards their recognizing the fact of the Resurrection. They realized that the absence of the Body in the tomb was a work of God, not of man (John 20:1-8). Thus the Christian proclamation is genuine, not fabricated.

In creeds, we profess, “... and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed) and “... on the third day he rose again from the dead” (the Apostles’ Creed). Based on this Resurrection of the Lord, we also profess our future hope “I look forward to the resurrection of the dead ...” (the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed) and “I believe in the resurrection of the body ...” (the Apostles’ Creed). Thus the Resurrection of the Lord who is “the first-born from the dead” (Col 1:18) is the principle and source of our future resurrection.

Easter - Season of Grace

He rose as He had promised,
The glorious Son of God,
The earth shone with His glory.
As from the tomb He trod,
He left us with His Spirit,
Who is with us night and day
It’s we who are deaf and blinded
As we go on our way.
Open our eyes O Holy Spirit
To the wonders of God’s love.
The morning light, the song of birds
Sweet music from above,
Arouse once again in our wayward hearts
Great love for God and man.
The Son of God has conquered death
Trust in Him, then we too can.

Mrs. C. Taylor

Jesus Our Saviour Saved Us

Jesus Our Lord and Saviour,
Came down from Heaven above,
The Son of God and our brother
Who cared for us, with eternal love
He brought salvation to those he chose,
By saving them and forgiving their sins,
He took the cross and bore his pain,
To save us from the fires of hell,
And start a new life again.
His love for us is eternal,
His humility divine,
He is our Lord, our friend and our brother
If we ask Him to guide us
And his will to resign.

Lent is a time to cleanse ourselves
From the life we’ve lived so far,
If we turn from wrong and do the right
He will be beside us forever more.

Shirani David

A Lenten Prayer

A contrite heart Oh Lord!
That truly feels
Remorse for sin
That nailed thee to a tree
A heart that truly reconciles
Forgetting injuries
As thou didst on the cross
Forgive the repentant thief
So too Oh Lord forgive mine own frailties
That nailed thee to that tree
So that on Eastermorn I am re-born
To a new life
For thou art the very truth
The Resurrection and the Life.

By: Jeannette Cabraal



The enduring message of Sri Lanka's miraculous escape on Easter Sunday, 1942

By Hector Welgampola

Easter Sunday, 1942 was an unforgettable experience. That morning, I was at Mass at my village church in Periyamulla, Negombo. It was sermon time and the priest was explaining how some Apostles ran in surprise to the empty tomb. As he dramatized the rolling off of the tombstone, we seemed to hear its rumblings all around. At a time when audiovisual aids were not part of church equipment, the congregation felt rattled. The thunderous noise heightened and even the sermon stalled. We ran out of the church to witness the deafening burst of airplanes that could have turned the entire country into a mass tomb.

I cannot recall how the Mass concluded, but I remember the chaos and confusion following the Easter Sunday attack by the Japanese Imperial Army. The spill-over spread over weeks and months. The basic system of Air Raid Protection was hastily beefed up and ARP wardens appointed countrywide. The program was supervised by Civil Defence Commissioner, Oliver Goonetilleke. Ceylon University Vice Chancellor, Ivor Jennings was Assistant Commissioner. Their knighthoods in later years must have been in appreciation of the war-time service.

Ivor Jennings saw it's a "stupid mistake"

In a later autobiography written while he was Vice Chancellor of UK's Cambridge University, Jennings recalled the 1942 Japanese attack which, he said, left few "minor consequences" other than bombing the Angoda Mental Hospital. Not second to the unwelcome dispersal of its inmates was the exodus of Colombo residents fleeing to suburbs in fear of further air raids.

"If we were wide open to attack before Easter Week, we were helpless after it," wrote Jennings. He added, "After the following Thursday we had four serviceable fighters. If the Japanese had come again, they would have found no opposition."

"There was, of course, no invasion," Jennings wrote. "We still do not know why the Japanese made the stupid mistake of going to New Guinea instead of taking Ceylon which could not have been defended," he added.

Father Claude called it a Marian response

Somehow Jennings, the constitutionalist, failed to recall a similar scenario in Britain after the Spanish Armada had been repelled in 1588. Queen Elizabeth, I, had a coin minted to mark the occasion. It said, "Flavit Deus et Dissipati sunt." (God blew the wind and they were scattered). And for more light on what Jennings saw as a



stupid mistake of the Japanese, let's go to the spiritually astute Father Claude Lawrence. Some 30 years before the posthumous publication of Jennings' autobiography "The Road to Peradeniya", Father Lawrence too recalled, "the hitherto unexplained and inexplicable withdrawal of the Japanese forces from our area when by all military strategy they should have netted Ceylon, having the power to do so comfortably."

Father Lawrence's "Marian Epic", very humbly placed the above paragraph under a simple caption: Our Lady's Response. The booklet published to mark the inauguration of Our Lady of Lanka Basilica in 1974, recorded Archbishop J.M. Masson's 1940 vow seeking the Blessed Mother's intervention to save our country from the ravages of World War II. It also spoke of a letter the Archbishop wrote to children. Written just days before

the attempted invasion, that letter urged children "to obtain by a crusade of Hail Marys and Rosaries a miracle of Ceylon's preservation." Such was the Church's passionate concern for the country's safety.

Cardinal Cooray's dream

The British minted no coins to mark our escape from the fate of Burma, Singapore and Malaysia. But fulfilling Archbishop Masson's vow, Thomas Cardinal Cooray built the National Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka to memorialize the Easter miracle of our country's preservation. The revered prelate reminisced these and other antecedents of our national peace monument, in an interview he gave me just before the inauguration of the Basilica in 1974. Saying that our strength lies in prayer power, not political power, Cardinal Cooray spelt out his dream for Tewatta as a Marian prayer complex rooted in people's Eucharistic witness.

Bringing alive such service to the community was no doubt the aspiration when his successor, Archbishop Nicholas Marcus Fernando, made another vow in the late 1980s. Addressing devotees at the National Basilica, he pledged to "complete" the basilica

project if the Nation was spared the ravages of the ongoing civil war. And now, it has become Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith's role to bring to completion the momentum of community building through people's Eucharistic witness. That has become all the more urgent lest the vestiges of the civil war degenerate into a cold war. Holy Week can be a period of grace for such communizing as an Easter People.

Toward an ongoing peace miracle?

Additionally, such fidelity to the Cooray vision can also make more meaningful the formalities to elevate our revered leader to the altar as a confessor of faith in our country. His confession of faith, like that of his Master, sometimes took the form of prophetic outspokenness and eloquent silence at other times.

May the contextual relevance of such prayerful leadership lead today's Church leaders away from the paths of smart diplomacy toward the much-needed miracle of proactive peace-building. And such witnessing may even better testify to the fragrance of Cardinal Cooray's holiness than the mere exhorting of devotees to private prayer for personal favours.

Easter is here again

By Lenard Ranjith Mahaarachchi

Easter the Spring of Christendom is with us again. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ on Sunday, 9th April, 30 AD, after His body was lain in the tomb at sundown on Friday, is unparalleled in human or any religious history. Needless to say that Easter is the greatest of all feasts, celebrated on planet earth. It was the only event kept in the Early Church and came to be officially celebrated only after the Council of Nicea, held in 325 AD. The date of Easter was decided at this Council whereas Christmas was not an official celebration at that time. Though Christmas is fixed for December 25th, Easter does not have a fixed date. Easter comes from the Scandinavian "Ostra" or the Teutonic "Ostern" the goddess of mythology. The word connotes fertility and was celebrated as a Spring festival on the Vernal Equinox. The Church fixing Easter to follow the Full Moon of Equinox explains why the date changes every year.

It was the Council of Nicea that decided that Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday following the Full moon of Equinox. Therefore Easter falls between 22nd March and 25th April. This year (2012) it is on 8th April, while Good Friday, was Full Moon day, just as it was in the year 30 AD, which also fell on April 7th.

Easter the Christian Spring festival of the New Testament, is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Jewish Passover ordered by Moses, commemo-

rating the flight of the Jews from slavery of Pharaoh's Egypt. Today it is replaced by Easter, the Lord's defeat of death by His Resurrection which has saved men from the slavery of sin. Since Easter is an adaptation of a pagan festival, customs associated with it too has come to our Easter fest like the bun, which is said to have originated in Germany. It was introduced to the USA by the Germans who arrived there in the 17th century. The Easter egg, another burrowing, is a symbol of fertility. The Greeks exchange crimson eggs, which colour signifies the blood of Jesus. In Austria it is green. The Slavic Christians colour it in gold or silver. The Aussies colour it pure white. The Poles decorate it with many colours like the Ukrainians.

Easter, which means the Lord's Resurrection, is reminisced today through two relics that Christ has left for us for posterity. One is the Empty tomb and the other the Shroud of Turin. The body of Jesus lain in the tomb at sundown on Good Friday, was found empty at sunrise on Sunday. I had the privilege of seeing this tomb during my visit to the Holy Land, a couple of years back. The Shroud in which He was wrapped and given an instant burial can be seen today in Turin, Italy. It rests in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. Latest research on this linen cloth (see John 19: 40-41) is now believed to have been used as the Table Cloth at the Last Supper. Rebecca Jackson, the only woman in the 50 odd

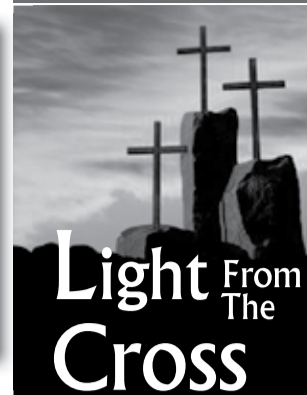


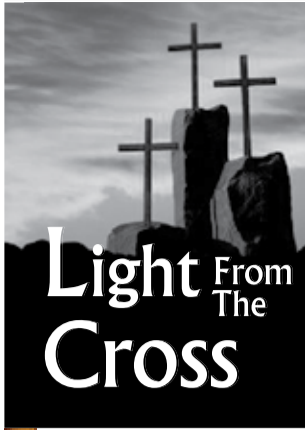
Research is adamant that it was the very table cloth used since the Last Supper was held, in Sencaculum, a hall that was owned by Joseph of Aramathea who, buried Jesus with

Nicodemus after taking Him down from the cross. Holger Curtsen in his book "Jesus lived in India" says that this cloth was given by Jesus to a servant of the High Priest. This has however no gospel base. Latest high tech analyses have proved that it is not a painting as presumed by some earlier before the tests and analyses via modern high tech methods.

Rebecca, a Jewess, became a Christian after her own supposition which none in the research team dared to oppose. So today we have a relic that leaves the Christian world with memoirs of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist by Jesus His passion, death and most importantly His Glorious Resurrection. Among those who have paid their reverence to the Shroud are, King Louis of France in 1147, and St. Charles Borromeo in 1578. In 1978 the whole world saw it on TV for the first time.

The Shroud is eloquent testimony of Jesus's passion too and shows the wounds suffered by Him at the flagellation, the head injuries caused by the crown of thorns and even the two wounds on the shoulders caused by the cross beam. The Empty Tomb and the Shroud of Turin are the legacies left by Jesus for posterity and belief in His salvific death.





The Resurrection celebrates Jesus Christ's glorious rising from the dead. It is the central tenet of our faith. But the story of the Resurrection is also the story of the miraculous

a little boy. The German armies were forced to flee Moscow in the wake of the terrible Russian winter and the relentless onslaught of the Red Army. Twenty thousand German prisoners of war were being forcibly marched through the streets of Moscow.

The pavements swarmed with angry onlookers who were cordoned off by soldiers. The crowds consisted mostly of women- Russian women with roughened hands who had borne the terrible hardships of the

The Resurrection- A story of Transformation

By Terrence Savundranayagam

war. Every one of these women would have lost someone close to them- a father, a son or a brother killed by the Germans. They gazed with hatred in the direction in which the German prisoners of war were to come marching. The march was led by proud Russian Generals. The women who had suffered much during the war looked with disdain on their Russian Generals. Suddenly the crowd stood hushed. They could see the German prisoners of war marching in. they were thin, unshaven, wearing tattered uniforms and dirty blood stained bandages, many of them hobbling on crutches or leaning on the shoulders of one of their comrades. The sight was pathetic and the street became deathly silent. The only sound was the thumping of boots and the shuffling

of crutches.

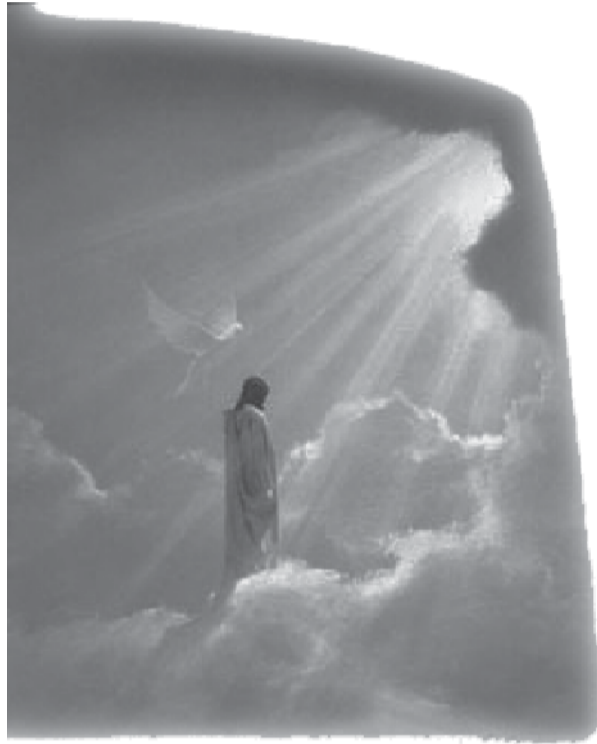
Then something wonderful happened. A very old Russian woman pushed herself through the cordon of soldiers and walked up to the column of marching prisoners of war. From her pocket she pulled out a parcel and unwrapped it. It was a loaf of black bread. She pushed the loaf of bread into the pocket of a German soldier still tottering on his crutches.

At that moment something even more wonderful happened. From every side women were running towards the German soldiers (their enemies), pushing into their hands, bread, cigarettes and whatever items of food they had. That one act of the old Russian woman had transformed the German soldiers from enemies to friends. Here was a sign of God's grace breaking through and bringing about a miraculous transformation. This in many ways shows the true meaning of the Resurrection when violence hatred and sin were expiated and transformed into Divine Love.

transformations that can take place in our life.

The gospels set out many examples of transformation. Jesus made the blind to see, the withered paralytic was made whole, the man possessed by a demon was cured, the sick were healed, water was turned into wine, sorrow to joy and death to life. These transformations were a foreshadowing of the Resurrection when sin and sorrow were turned away and the grace of God broke through. The Resurrection is the glorious event that sees the grace of God breaking through.

What we term grace is a turning point, a special moment or event that transforms us when God's love breaks through and we become living witnesses to the Resurrection. This is exemplified in the true story told by the great Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko. He told of an event which he witnessed in Moscow when he was



The Lord is Risen, Alleluia!

The day of our great expectation dawned to announce the Resurrection of Our Lord crucified on Good Friday to atone for the sins of all and sundry.

Three holy women with sweet spices hastened to the sepulchre at break of day to anoint the Holy Body of Jesus but entering the sepulchre put them in a quandary.

The tomb where the Holy Body laid was empty for the utter dismay of the ladies who were awe struck as the angel illumined the tomb heralding the good news to His followers.

The women in sobs were consoled with the words of the angel
"Why are you seeking one who is alive - among the dead
He is not here, He has risen again."

This is the most opportune time to realize what God has in store for us.
Oh! Redeemer make us steadfast in our faith
As Resurrection is the foundation of our faith.



Leonard Wijesiri

Easter: Let's Encounter The Risen Lord

The Risen Christ is with us now,
To HIM let's go with our country's problem somehow
The situation of our children in His hands let's place
And beg of HIM for the needed grace
"Suffer little children to come my way
Forbid them not." HE did say
All children of our dear fair isle,
To you we bring for blessings to shine.
To our girls and women the misery caused now
Aid us to end it, end it somehow
All guilty - Bring them to brook by your power
And get them to repent this very hour.
Abductions, rape, man slaughter are such
And many more - Robberies, violence as such
Appears to be the order of the day
End this misery, LORD we humbly pray.
LORD on every Sri Lankan citizen Your Spirit fill;
To make our country folk to do your will.
Thus your wisdom from you to them flow
And bring peace and harmony on our country below. (Norma Perera)



Shadow and Light

The light ahead has a shadow behind,
Easter morn, a cross;
It's just like Jesus said, life can't be gained
Unless there is a loss.
A grain must fall beneath the soil and die,
To yield a harvest great;
Words he taught and lived with sacrifice,
With love and not as fate.
The struggles, pain and knots of life,
Help make us only grow;
Then when after dark, the morning comes,
We face the Easter glow.
So it was on Tabor's height
When the light so brightly shone,
It was a sign the cross was nigh
With shadows dark, yet quickly gone.
This Easter Light is our hope and strength
For Jesus, the only risen-One,
Has taken all our shadows upon himself
And for us the light has won.



Rev. Sr. Cynthia Mendis

GOSPEL What it says in the Readings

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

(Jn. 12:26)

**LITURGICAL
CALENDAR YEAR B
1st April - 8th April 2012**

Sun: PALM SUNDAY

Is. 50: 4-7, Phil 2: 6-11,
Mk. 14: 1-15,47

Mon: Is. 42: 1-7, Jn. 12: 1-11

Tue: Is. 49: 1-6, Jn. 13: 21-33, 36-38

Wed: Is. 50: 4-9, Mt. 26: 14-25

Thu: Holy Thursday

Ex. 12: 1-8, 11-14, 1 Cor. 11: 23-26,
Jn. 13: 1-15

Fri: Good Friday

Is. 52: 13-53, 12, Hb. 4: 14-16,
5, 7-9 Jn. 18: 1-19, 42

Sat: Rom. 6: 3-11, Mk. 16: 1-8

Sun: EASTER SUNDAY

Acts 10: 34, 37-43, Col. 3: 1-4

or

1 Cor. 5: 6-8, Jn. 20: 1-9 or Mk. 16: 1-8

Palm Sunday



Theme: Sacrificing oneself for the Salvation of others

1st Reading:
Isaiah 50: 4-7

In the prophecies concerning the Servant of the Lord, the servant is introduced as a prophet, liberator and one who suffers. Here the Servant of the Lord is

said to suffer as a result of proclaiming God's word to the people. Yet he is determined to carry out God's will at any cost. The Old Testament does not seem to identify the Servant historically. The New Testament understands him as Jesus

Christ. His mission of proclamation of God's word, his being rejected, his suffering, his death and Resurrection bear witness to this understanding.

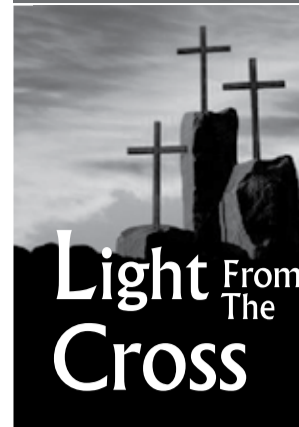
2nd Reading:
Philippines . 2:6-11

This passage summarizes Christ's In-

carnation, Mission, Death and Resurrection. The main theme is Christ's self-emptying. Abandoning all privileges of his divine status and taking the form of a slave in order to obey God unto death constitute Christ's self-emptying. The result of this self-emptying is his glorious Resurrection. Hence the teaching here is that the road to glory is through emptying of oneself of self-centeredness.

Gospel:
Mark 14:1-15,47

The theological basis of the Passion Narratives of Jesus is Isaiah 52:13-53:12 which describes the Suffering Servant of the Lord. Cruel events connected with the suffering and death of Jesus along with the actions and the responses of those mentioned in these narratives have



**Light From
The
Cross**

been persecuted for the purpose of examining our way of life in relation to Christ.

Reflection:

Do you accept that our bearing up of suffering carrying out God's intentions is our Christian obligation?

True Christian way of life is obeying God's will by implying oneself for the good of others. Reflecting on different characters that appear in the Passion Narratives of Jesus is a way to understand where we stand regarding him.

Rev. Fr. Henry Silva

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Stay Awake



Procession: Mk. 11:1-10 or Jn. 12:12-16; Is. 50:4-7; Phil. 2:6-11; Mk. 14:1-15:47

The Passion of Jesus Christ should force us to our knees - not out of a need to adore, but out of a sense of shame.

How do we approach reading the whole Passion and Death of Jesus

Christ according to Mark? Preachers will struggle, knowing that the whole narrative cannot possibly be addressed. Preachers know as well that if they pick a portion upon which to base their preaching, we will lose sight of the whole.

Neither Mark himself nor the early Christian community ever intended that the Passion narrative be broken into its various parts. In the early Liturgy, Mark's Gospel was not broken into parts as we do during our Liturgical cycle today. It was always read in its entirety. The absolute importance of the Passion within the Gospel can be seen in how long it takes to read. In its entirety, Mark's Gospel takes about 90 minutes to read. Reading the whole account of Jesus' three-year ministry takes an hour, but the Gospel account of the final week of His life alone takes 30 minutes, and the last two chapters take about 15 minutes. This measure of time tells us that the whole of the Passion is exceedingly important.

Today's Gospel must also be seen within the context of Holy Week. Just as Mark's Gospel was always approached in its entirety, the celebrations of Holy Week are conceived of as a whole - one uninterrupted service. On Holy Thursday we will make the Sign of the Cross at the beginning of Mass. We will not receive the Final Blessing until the conclusion of the Easter Vigil. Our three services of Holy Week - Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil - will give us the opportunity to look at each moment of the Our Lord's Passion in detail, yet each service is always approached with reference to the others.

What thread might we look for to find what holds everything together? We certainly may look at the Kingship of Christ. Mark's Gospel begins with Christ's kingship; at trial he is accused of claiming to be a king - a claim Pilate seems to accept - and on the Cross Jesus is identified as the King of the Jews. At his death Jesus is recognized as the King by a Roman

Synopsis

We should look at our discipleship and the difficulty of following Christ on the way to the cross.

Jesus' disciples had a hard time staying awake to watch with Him. We must force ourselves to stay awake and find the truth.

Jesus' Passion tells us what love looks like. It is faithful, it abhors violence, and it suffers. We must stay awake and end our abandonment of Jesus.

Centurion who was not one of Jesus' followers. The fact that Pilate might think Jesus is a king and that Christ's kingship is recognized by a Roman soldier leads us in a direction that points to our shame.

We should look at our discipleship and the difficulty of following Christ on the way to the cross. At the end of the Easter Vigil we can rejoice, but not today. Today we must force ourselves to stay awake and find the truth.

Are we faithful disciples of Jesus Christ? It is a

tough question, but Mark asks it.

Jesus' Passion tells us what love looks like. It is faithful, it abhors violence, and it suffers. Today, we are the crowd. Mark sees us, disciples of Christ, as the ones yelling, "Crucify Him!" We make Jesus suffer by abandoning Him, something we do with every sin. We make Jesus suffer by our absence when the community gathers to pray with Him. We make Jesus suffer when we try to justify our sins. We make Jesus suffer when we fail to extend Christian charity to those in need. We make Jesus suffer when we cause hurt or pain in any other human being. We cause Jesus to suffer when we reject individuals or groups or nationalities.

Jesus' disciples had a hard time staying awake to watch with Him. We let our consciousness of Jesus and our consciences wander. We fall asleep in front of human suffering, in front of the needy, and we actually make choices to ignore injustices, saying with Peter, "I do not know this man. I neither know nor understand what you are talking about."

Alexander Schmemmann, an Orthodox priest and theologian, told of being a young man living in Paris. He and his fiancée were riding a train when an old ugly woman sat next to them. Speaking in Russian so that the French woman could not understand them, they spoke of how ugly she was. As the elderly woman got up to detrain, she said to the couple in perfect Russian, "I wasn't always ugly."

Our minds wander, and there are many things we do not want to see, but the Passion tells us that we must see them. We must stay awake and end our shameful abandonment of Jesus when He needs us the most.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: (sung) Cru-ci-fied Jesus, Cleanse me from sin, in your pre-cious blood, wash me clean.

For the Christian community, the flock for which Christ died: That Christ the Good Shepherd may heal in it wounds of sin and division.

We pray in faith.

Response: Cru-ci-fied Jesus, Cleanse me from sin, in your pre-cious blood, wash me clean.

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

Response: Cru-ci-fied Jesus, Cleanse me from sin, in your pre-cious blood, wash me clean.

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

We pray in faith.

Response: Cru-ci-fied Jesus, Cleanse me from sin, in your pre-cious blood, wash me clean.

Easter Issue