



**Dedication of the  
Lateran Basilica**

**November 9**

# Messenger



**World Freedom Day  
November 9**

Sunday November 4, 2012 Vol 143 No 42 16 Pages Rs: 25.00 Registered as a newspaper

## Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka issues statement in support of Pro-Life **ABORTION IS MURDER!**

**T**he Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL) has issued a statement calling all Catholic faithful to be "aware of the gravity of the crime of abortion" and requests the faithful to refuse any attempts at facilitating its practice as acceptable.

*Full statement follows:*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Holy See's instruction *Donum Vitae* on Respect for Human life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation, of February 22, 1987 states: "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves 'the creative action of God' and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: No one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being." [Introduction N. 5]

The Second Vatican Council too in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, speaking about marriage, family and their intrinsic relationship to the service of life states: "Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained towards the begetting and educating



### **Sunday of the Unborn Child**

Sunday, November 11, 2012 has been declared as the Sunday of the Unborn Child in all Dioceses. The CBCSL has declared this day as a special day of prayer and fasting.

of children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute very substantially to the welfare of the parents" [GS 50]. The same document

then went on to state that transmitting human life was the proper mission of the parents, who thus become cooperators of God's love renewing humanity through the gift of life to their children. And so it is the duty of the parents to safeguard the life of their born and to be born progeny in a manner worthy of human dignity. The document further states that "from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care, while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes" [idem 51].

### **Life: Infinite in Dignity**

The reasons for this ecclesial teaching and discipline, concerning the duty to safeguard life at all cost, stem from the very teachings of the Church which always upheld the incalculable dignity of every human person from the mother's womb to the tomb, irrespective of any cultural, social, physical or psychological difference. Blessed Pope John Paul II in his encyclical letter *Evangelium Vitae* states that "the dignity of life is linked not only to its beginning, to the fact that it comes from God but also to its final end, to its destiny of

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## **Commemorating the 24th Death Anniversary of the Servant of the Lord His Eminence, Thomas Cardinal Cooray**



A Thanksgiving Mass was held on Thursday October 29, at the Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka Tewatte, to commemorate the 24th death anniversary of His Eminence Thomas Benjamin Cardinal Cooray, the

Servant of the Lord.

The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith presided at Mass while

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### **Book on Cardinal Cooray**

A book written in Sinhala, by veteran writer and former Editor of the *Messenger*, Hector Welgampola on the Life of Thomas Benjamin Cardinal Cooray was presented by Archbishop Emeritus His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis at the end of the Mass. This book is available at the Archbishop's House Bookshop, Colombo.

## **Putting the Seminarians in touch with Jesus: Very Rev. Fr. Elmo Dias**

**R**ector of the Kandy National Seminary, Very Rev. Fr. Elmo Dias speaking at the Solemn Inauguration for the Academic Year 2012-2013 stated that when the world today was facing crisis in various different ways it was important that we aim at "a Word-centred formation putting Seminarians in touch with Jesus Christ, the Word-made-flesh in all realities of life; the good the bad, planned and unplanned, pleasurable and burdensome, satisfying and frustrating, in the



Seminary and outside the Seminary."

"It is leading them to encounter Jesus Christ, the Word-made-flesh, in people they encounter or live with. It is guiding them to respond to all these encounters with

**(Contd. P 3)**

## **Seminar for English Catechists**

**A**ll English medium Catechists in the Archdiocese are invited for a seminar on Saturday, November 10, from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. at the Deva Dharma Nikethanaya, Borella (Joseph Vaz Centre- 4th Floor) under the patronage of His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo.

For details please contact your Parish Priest or Amali on Tel: 0777-425015 / Trevor on Tel: 0777-570071 and confirm your participation. Lunch will be provided.

**Rev. Fr. Jude Samantha**  
Secretary Administration



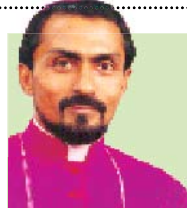
**Contemplation  
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## **Hands off Negombo!**



**"T**he children, the younger generation is our utmost treasure. To preserve and secure them is our obligation. To be nurtured with parental love, to receive education and to lead a righteous, holy life should be their aim and desire. No one should interfere and snatch these away from them."

This was stated by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, at the protest rally organised by the priests of

Negombo against escalating trends of drug abuse and other forms of social evils prevalent in the region.

The rally initiated at St. Mary's Church, Grand Street proceeded via Sea Street to Palangathurai, with priests, religious and Rev. Sisters of the region, braving on despite inclement weather. The proceedings ended with a Benediction, presided by His Eminence.



# Abortion is .....

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fellowship with God in knowledge and love of Him" (Ev 38). And so God is not only the author of human life; in that He created man as the apex of all creation [cf. Gen. 1]; made him in His own image and likeness [cf. Gen. 1], made him, man and woman and gave him His own breath but also its redeemer, effecting that salvation through the sacrifice of His one and only begotten Son, the greatest expression of His love for humanity. Such was the unique consideration that God gave humanity. Besides, He also gave man the stewardship over all creation - "be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it; govern over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky" [Gen 1:28]. Similarly He also offered His own Son's precious life in order to redeem mankind from sin and death and to make it enjoy God's own eternity: the fullness of life. Jesus indeed presented His own life as the way to life's eternal fulfillment: "[ am the way and the truth and the life"

[In. 14:6]. At the resurrection of Lazarus Jesus told Martha; "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" and indeed He did affirm that He came on earth in order to let us "have life and have it unto fullness" [In. 10: 10]. As Blessed Pope John Paul II stated, from all of this, it is clear that in Jesus, human life assumed a fullness which is incomparable to any other. Stated the Pope "in Christ, the Gospel of life is definitely proclaimed and fully given" [EV 29]. Besides, the scriptures and Jesus Himself insisted on the need to protect life. All of this shows how unique in the eyes of the Lord human life is.

For this reason the Catechism of the Catholic Church quoting the Holy See's Instruction *Donum Vitae* of February 1987 affirmed that "from the first moment of his existence a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent human being to life" [DV 1, 1]; The book of Jeremiah offers us the reason for the infinite value of human life when it stated of the Prophet, "before I formed you in the womb I knew you and before you were born, I consecrated you" [Jer. 1:5]. Life is precious not only because God has created man but also because He saved him through the sacrifice of His own Son and then has designed a plan for each and everyone which is unique. So it was with Abraham, Moses and the Prophets or Mary, the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, Sts. Peter and Paul and all those whom He called to His service. Every life is precious to Him.

## Abortion is Murder

Thus every abortion, which is a refusal to life, is a criminal interference and an infringement on God's own plans for any human being and so is intrinsically evil. From earliest times the Church always condemned direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means. The 2nd century book of Instructions - *Didache* had this teaching as follows "you shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish" [Didache 2:2: SCKL 248, 148; cf. Ep.J]. It follows then that, the Church always held that whatever the justification, abortion in

itself should be considered gravely sinful and evil and is not defensible by any institution or individual whether it be the State or any other. Blessed Pope John Paul II called procured abortion as the "deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence" [EV 58] and called it "murder" and any Catholic who commits it "incurs automatic (*latae sententiae*) excommunication" (Canon 1398). This means the person who aborts a child on his or her free choice commits a grave sin and suffers automatic excommunication, that is of cutting oneself off from the Church, and such excommunication also applies to anyone who actually supports or encourages such action. And so no Catholic is permitted to aid, advice, decide or take active part in this abominable crime, which cries to heaven [Gen. 4: 10]. There is no choice in this matter for them.

## Ecclesial Discipline

And so in fulfillment of our shepherdly duty, we wish to make our Catholic faithful aware of the gravity of this crime: abortion, and get them to refuse any attempts at facilitating its practice as acceptable. This has been necessitated especially because of some statements purported to have been made by responsible State officials that a relaxation of the existing laws of the country on abortion allowing such an option for the women folk especially in cases of incest or rape or of deformed fetuses is in the offing. Whatever these special situations be, for the Church abortion even of a fetus resulting from rape, incest or of a defective nature is blue murder of a voiceless and defenseless innocent human being and is morally wrong. And the position justifying such elimination of life cannot be held by any sane thinking human being let alone by the Catholic faithful. And the practice of abortion even in such cases is gravely sinful and incurs excommunication for Catholics. It is in this light that, we as members of the Catholic Bishops Conference in Sri Lanka, wish to condemn in the strongest possible terms such a process of legalization of abortion even for cases that may draw a tone of sympathy for the exceptional situations mentioned above. And we call upon all the Catholic faithful especially all our adolescents, youth and families to become aware of the gravity of this move, to express their disapproval of it to the people that matter, to pray and offer acts of mortification and penance in order to ensure that this murder of innocents does not become a plague in our beloved motherland.

## Taking a Position

We therefore urge all our priests, religious associations and movements as well as all the laity to;

- Celebrate a special day of prayer and fasting on Sunday November 11, 2012, which we declare as the Sunday of the Unborn Child in all our Dioceses,
- if the proposed bill is presented in Parliament by the relevant ministry to demonstrate peacefully against it after the Sunday Holy Eucharist of the same day, near or within the Church premises,
- to wear a black band on their shirts

- or dresses as a sign of protest during that same week,
- organize Holy Hours and special prayers on that Sunday praying for the conversion of all those who support or encourage this move,
- collect cash at parish level and help any individual mothers or families that may be contemplating such action due to an unwanted pregnancy or poverty, so that they may desist from doing so,
- write appeals to Parliamentarians or State policy makers known to them, encouraging them not to be part of this move or to vote against such a bill if it is presented in Parliament
- take active part in defending life always, especially of the unborn child, and
- inform and educate the Catholics about the intrinsic evil in this type of action and to form their conscience against it.

We call upon those in charge of the Family Apostolate to;

- Intensify their pre-Cana and post-Cana programmes with more information on the moral and spiritual ill effects of abortion and all forms of action that deliberately prevents God's gift of life and why they should be shunned at all cost,
- organize through married couples active in the parishes, programmes of education and formation for youth and adults on the ill effects of abortion and its intrinsically sinful and evil nature as explained by ecclesial doctrine.
- stimulate with the help of the parish priests a greater sense of awareness among the parishioners of Catholic moral teaching on this matter and the value and dignity of life, especially with regard to the Creator's plans for each human person, often unknown yet powerfully seen in many lives.
- conduct life education programmes for school leavers with the help of our diocesan Directors of Education and Institutions like the Subodhi and the relevant school principals placing accent also on the sacredness of married life and its relationship to the generation of love and life in the world and of the value of sexuality as a God given means for the transmission of life and for creating true communion.

We call upon the adolescents and youth of the parishes and schools to;

- Value their life and the life of others and even of the unborn so that they may facilitate the full realization of God's eternal plan for each and every person
- be in the forefront in the search for an upright and pure life, based solidly on the teachings of Christ and of the Church so that they may shun that which is not in keeping with their God given dignity and freedom.
- share with others the beauty of that which Christ taught us on the total selflessness of love and of the way of the Cross in creating a better world where selfishness should be eliminated and a just and peaceful as well as a welcoming society created.

We wish to make a special appeal to Catholics in the medical profession not to engage in the procuring of abortions nor in advising young women or couples to do so. The noble aim of the medical profession is the protection of life as is also indicated in the Hippocratic Oath and for a Catholic his obligation should always be to safeguard what God has created.

We also call upon the media institutions to be attentive to the values

that are sacred to our society especially those concerning the dignity of sexuality, modesty in dress and language and be serious in the preparation of their programmes and publicity materials. Needless to state that a corrupted generation of youth in the long run are not able to construct a morally upright and exemplary society.

And finally we call upon all our priests and religious to educate the flock on the evil of abortion through their sermons and other programmes that can be organized and help create among their faithful a life friendly attitude. It would also be good to establish at Deanery or Parish levels counseling units that would advise couples on how to overcome any difficulty which may tempt them to use abortion as a way out. We also call upon all our school principals to educate their senior students on the value of personal spiritual purity and the sacredness of life and marriage and to encourage them to follow the example of Jesus, our Lord and Master who exemplified in Himself a total commitment to the Kingdom of God.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, as the Blessed Pope John Paul II did, let us direct our thoughts to Mary our Heavenly Mother "in whose motherhood, the vocation to motherhood bestowed by God on every woman is raised to its highest level" [EV 103] and whose consent at the Annunciation allowed the great plan of God for the salvation of humanity and all of creation be realized in Jesus. Her "fiat" to motherhood was that which opened the way to the redemption of sinful mankind from sin, corruption and death. Let that be our example always. May our most loving Mother, Our Lady of Lanka, pray for us.

✠ *Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith - Archbishop of Colombo, President, CBCSL*

✠ *Bishop Norbert Andradi OMI Secretary General, CBCSL*

✠ *Bishop Winston Fernando SSS Bishop of Badulla*

✠ *Bishop Valence Mendis Bishop of Chilaw*

✠ *Bishop Harold Anthony Perera Bishop of Kurunegala*

✠ *Bishop Thomas Savundranayagam Bishop of Jaffna*

✠ *Bishop Vianney Fernando Bishop of Kandy*

✠ *Bishop Raymond Wickramasinghe Bishop of Galle*

✠ *Bishop Kingsley Swampillai Bishop of Trinco*

✠ *Bishop Ponniah Joseph Bishop of Batticaloa*

✠ *Bishop Rayappu Joseph Bishop of Mannar*

✠ *Bishop Cletus Perera OSB Bishop of Ratnapura*

✠ *Bishop Marius Peiris Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo*

✠ *Bishop Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo*

✠ *Bishop Maxwell Granville Silva Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo*



# Faith overcomes spiritual blindness, Holy Father says at closing of Bishop's Synod

At a Mass on Sunday closing the Bishops' Synod on the New Evangelization, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on the need for faith in overcoming spiritual blindness and also appealed on behalf of the victims of Hurricane Sandy.

Drawing from the day's reading from the Gospel of Mark, the Pope noted that Christ curing the blind man Bartimaeus "is the last miraculous healing that Jesus performs before his Passion, and it is no accident that it should be that of a blind person, someone whose eyes have lost the light."

Pope Benedict noted that physical blindness "has great significance in the Gospels" because it "represents man who needs God's light, the light of faith, if he is to know reality truly and to walk the path of life.

It is essential to acknowledge one's blindness, one's need for this light; otherwise one could remain blind for ever."

The blind Bartimaeus represents mankind, the Pope went on to say, because he "represents man who has lost the light and knows it, but has not lost hope."

Pope Benedict made his remarks at the close of the October 7 - 28 Synod on the New Evangelization in Rome, which gathered Bishops from the world over to Rome to discuss the transmission of the Christian Faith in the modern world.

The Synod "meaningfully coincided" with the opening of the 'Year of Faith' and the 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council.

## New Metre Bands for FM programmes

All English Catholic Programmes will be heard on metre bands FM 97.4 MHz and 97.6 MHz.  
All Sinhala Catholic Programmes will be heard on 91.7 FM. Colombo and 91.9 FM. out

## Mass for deceased clergy

A Requiem Mass will be held at the Sacred Heart Chapel of Archbishop's House at 11.30 a.m. on Monday November 5, remembering the souls of all departed Bishops and Priests who served in the Archdiocese.

## Memorial Mass

A Memorial Mass for Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Colombo Province will be held at the Roman Catholic Chapel, Kanatte, Borella, on Monday, November 5, 2012, at 4.00 p.m.

All Oblates, and family members, relatives and friends of all deceased Oblate Priests and Brothers are kindly invited to join in remembering the dear departed who dedicated their lives in service to God and His people. For further information, please contact: Rev. Fr. Dileepa Jayamaha, OMI - 071-4819330

**Very Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva, OMI,**  
*Provincial Superior.*

## Commemorating the.....

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their Lordships Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando and Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva concelebrated with other priests. Their Grace, Archbishops' Emeriti, Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas Marcus Fernando and Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis also participated.

Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph delivered the homily highlighting the Holy life of His Eminence and the work he did for the Church in Sri Lanka.

The Archbishop, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith said that the Late Cardinal was truly a very holy servant of God who now intercedes for us.

After the Eucharistic Celebration, the Arch-

## Putting the.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

and experience of Jesus Christ according to His one command, 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide by my love...this is my commandment that you love one another as I loved you.'" (Jn.15:9, 12-14)

Quoting from the Vatican Council's Decree on Priestly Training, *Optatum Totius*, where it states, "Spiritual formation should be conducted in such a way that the students may learn to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father, through His Son, Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit..." Fr. Elmo said that a priest had to present Jesus in every aspect of his priesthood, therefore spiritual formation takes precedence in the formative years of a Seminarian because of the challenges that come from the fast moving secular world..

Addressing the distinguished gathering present including the Bishop of Jaffna, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundranayagam, Heads of Departments, Major Superiors, Superiors of Religious Houses, members of the Academic staff, Rev. Fathers and Rev. Sisters and Seminarists, he said that Seminarists are constantly reminded of the need to grow in the habit of getting closer to Christ as friends particularly through the vehicle of personal prayer and visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

Speaking on intellectual formation of Seminarists, Fr. Elmo said, "The first task of intellectual formation is to acquire a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Formation is first and foremost, cooperation with the grace of God. Therefore intellectual formation will have as its base the relationship one will keep on building with God through a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, who is the very person who lives and works in a seminarian and in a priest.

bishop conducted the prayer service at the grave of His Eminence.

His Eminence appointed Rev. Fr. Christo Viraj as the Promoter of Justice as Very Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Fernando was appointed as a Bishop and Rev. Fr. Jude Samantha as the Notary, in the place of Rev. Fr. Quintus Fernando.

## Archdiocesan Annual Clergy Retreat - 5

Sunday, 11th to Friday 16th November (evening)

Venue : Retreat House, Tewatta.

Preacher: Rev. Fr. Tyrell Alles OSB

### Name of Priest

1. Rev. Fr. Abayaratne Oscar
2. Rev. Fr. Appuhamy Kingsley Ivan
3. Rev. Fr. B.L.D. Anton Premalal
4. Rev. Fr. Christy Nicholas
5. Rev. Fr. Coonghe Darrel
6. Rev. Fr. Cooray M. Chaminda Laknath
7. Rev. Fr. De Silva Ronald
8. Rev. Fr. Don Anthony Cyril
9. Rev. Fr. Don Bertram Ranjith
10. Rev. Fr. Don Jude Denzil Lakshman
11. Rev. Fr. Fernando Edwin J,
12. Rev. Fr. Fernando G.L. Srikantha
13. Rev. Fr. Fernando Indra Ratnasiri
14. Rev. Fr. Fernando M. Anthony Jayalath
15. Rev. Fr. Fernando Mahesh Chrishantha
16. Rev. Fr. Fernando Mervyn A.S.
17. Rev. Fr. Fernando Prasad Suranga
18. Rev. Fr. Fernando Priyanal Asantha
19. Rev. Fr. Fernando Ranjan Priyadharshana
20. Rev. Fr. Fernando Roshan Prasad
21. Rev. Fr. Fernando Samith Rangana
22. Rev. Fr. Fernando W. Patrick Roshan
23. Rev. Fr. Fernandopulle Bonnie
24. Rev. Fr. Fonseka Suranga Niroshan
25. Rev. Fr. Gabriel Travis
26. Rev. Fr. H. Stanley Cecil Kumar
27. Rev. Fr. Hettiarachchi Shantha Sagara
28. Rev. Fr. Hettiarachchi John
29. Rev. Fr. Jayamanne Victor Florence
30. Rev. Fr. Jude Nuwan Buddhika
31. Rev. Fr. K.A. Terrence Prasanga Viraj
32. Rev. Fr. K.D. Ishan Prameena
33. Rev. Fr. Keerthisinghe Dinesh
34. Rev. Fr. Kulatunga Mervyn
35. Rev. Fr. Madurawela Don Ranjith
36. Rev. Fr. Mendis Ruwandana
37. Rev. Fr. Nonis Noel Stephen
38. Rev. Fr. Peiris Dilren
39. Rev. Fr. Peiris Sunil Kumara
40. Rev. Fr. Perera Suranga
41. Rev. Fr. Perera Gayan Prasantha
42. Rev. Fr. Perera Kennedy
43. Rev. Fr. Perera Krushan Kumara
44. Rev. Fr. Perera Lalith
45. Rev. Fr. Perera Noel Sampath
46. Rev. Fr. Perera Tharanga Sampath
47. Rev. Fr. Prageeth Chamara
48. Rev. Fr. Rodrigo Jude Bernard
49. Rev. Fr. Rodrigo Sumith Roshan
50. Rev. Fr. Rozairo Clement
51. Rev. Fr. Samarasinghe Athanasius
52. Rev. Fr. Silva Henry
53. Rev. Fr. Silva Ruben Leslie
54. Rev. Fr. Silva S. Kirul Jayanath
55. Rev. Fr. Sovis Jayashantha
56. Rev. Fr. Trevor Martyn
57. Rev. Fr. Wanasinghe Claude Martinus
58. Rev. Fr. Wijesooriya Lester

## A REFLECTION ON CHRISTIAN DEATH ON CATHOLIC HALF HOUR

"We believe in the resurrection of the dead"(Credo) Tune into Catholic Half Hour presented by Catholic broadcaster Mr. Trevor Ludowyke on Sunday November 4, 2012 at 8.00 p.m. over Radio Sri Lanka, the English National Service of SLBC on 97.4 MHz for a scripture based theological reflection on the meaning of Christian Death to mark All Souls' Day and also as part of the series of reflections on the "Year of Faith." (Kindly note the change of frequency of broadcast)

## Celebrating 50 years of Vatican II

Renewal in the spirit of the Council, and re-visiting the epoch-making Jubilee Event of the Church.

Conferences and Retreats for Priests and Religious based on the Teachings and Inspirations of Vatican II (During Easter and July-September of 2013).

Please contact:

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## SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus





THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA  
**Messenger**  
SINCE 1987

EDITORIAL

November 4, 2012

## Mourning for the war dead - Is it only for the victors?

Last week elderly mothers and middle-aged widows gathered at a memorial in Seeduwa to remember their loved ones who had died or disappeared during the 1987-88 JVP terror. There were also a number of women from the North and East and one or two of them recounted how the authorities had stopped them from any public mourning for their loved ones. Some priests said even memorial services in churches were not allowed.

We did not fight with a foreign invader but with people whom we consider as our own and who the government wants to be part of the one nation State. This requires reconciliation and reconciliation requires that those who are looking for the disappeared during the war should know whether they are alive or dead. The father of modern psychology Sigmund Freud differentiated between mourning and melancholia. People can mourn for the dead but cannot mourn for those who disappeared until the authorities tell them whether they are actually dead or being held for crimes under the law. Mourning on both individual and collective levels mean the acceptance of the loss and a willingness to go beyond it. Freud believed that a period of mourning varying in length with the individuals concerned and appropriate to their religious traditions was healthy and had therapeutic value to the individual souls.

The Government is cautious not to allow any glorification of the enemy dead for fear of a resurgence of violence seeking revenge that would threaten the State. The defeat in the war may have different meanings for different individuals as for the collective in the North. But what is required is not to suppress them but to bring them to the surface and reach a common understanding for reconciliation between the two communities. Post-war Germany found it difficult to come to terms with the atrocities of the Nazi regime but they did over time. Denial of the holocaust is still prohibited there. The British Government was strongly criticized by Veterans associations for celebrations on the anniversary of the D-Day. Veterans' organizations have assumed ownership of national martial memory.

Like us the Americans of the North and the South fought a brutal civil war. It was not possible to give the dead a proper funeral and bury them according to traditional customs. There were brutally slaughtered masses of bodies or hopelessly diseased soldiers dying in hospitals or camps. The enemy soldiers retreated leaving their dead exposed to the elements. This upset conventional patterns of disposal, as well as established attitudes about religious rituals, and personal respect in the face of death. What counted as proper and appropriate action for burial in an earlier time often proved impossible during the conflict, though in some cases efforts were made to treat the dead with a dignity that evoked prewar sensibilities. The Civil War forced Americans to reconsider what counts as appropriate treatment of the dead, as well as to re-conceptualize the symbolic meanings of the dead body. Unprecedented levels of social grief and mourning throughout American communities required extraordinary efforts at "meaning-making" that spoke to the profound emotional pain of individual citizens as well as to a shared sense of loss.

So after the American Civil war military cemeteries

were established near major battlefields, Union camps and hospitals. Most of them were in the South which had fought the war. All fallen soldiers both of the North and the South were buried in such military cemeteries-President Abraham Lincoln in his famous Gettysburgh Address articulated the essential meaning underlying the cemeteries that the soldiers on both sides had fought to establish a government of the people by the people for the people.

"It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth".

Lincoln's approach to the defeated enemy created the conditions for reconciliation. What was needed for reconciliation was to mourn the deaths of all who died during the war whether they were from the South or the North.

Northern and Southern leaders in America also gave meaning to the war dead through public pronouncements, participating in religious services, and by glorifying individual stories of heroism and sacrifice during and after the conflict. Our leaders should be inspired by President Lincoln's words and actions.

The month of November is an ideal time to reflect on the above and remember the dead and pray for them.

# Contemplation as revolution

*On the evening of Wednesday October 10, during the fifth General Congregation in the presence of Pope Benedict XVI, His Grace Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of England and of the Anglican Communion, gave an intervention.....*

I am deeply honoured by the Holy Father's invitation to speak in this gathering: as the Psalmist says, "*Ecce quam bonum et quarn iuandum habitare fratres in unum*". The gathering of Bishops in Synod for the good of all Christ's people is one of those disciplines that sustain the health of Christ's Church. And today especially we cannot forget that great gathering of "*fratres in unum*" that was the Second Vatican Council, which did so much for the health of the Church and helped the Church to recover so much of the energy needed to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ effectively in our age. For so many of my own generation, even beyond the boundaries of the Roman Catholic Church, that Council was a sign of great promise, a sign that the Church was strong enough to ask itself some demanding questions about whether its culture and structures were adequate to the task of sharing the Gospel with the complex, often rebellious, always restless mind of the modern world.

The Council was, in

so many ways, a rediscovery of evangelistic concern and passion, focused not only on the renewal of the Church's own life but on its credibility in the world. Texts such as *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* laid out a fresh and joyful vision of how the unchanging reality of Christ living in His Body on earth through the gift of the Holy Spirit might speak in new words to the society of our age and even to those of other faiths. It is not surprising that we are still, fifty years later, struggling with many of the same questions and with the implications of the Council; and I take it that this Synod's concern with the new evangelization is part of that continuing exploration of the Council's legacy.

But one of the most important aspects of the theology of the second *Vaticanum* was a renewal of Christian anthropology. In place of an often strained and artificial neo-scholastic account of how grace and nature were related in the constitution of human beings, the Council built on the greatest insights of a theol-

ogy that had returned to earlier and richer sources—the theology of spiritual geniuses like Henri de Lubac, who reminded us of what it meant for early and mediaeval Christianity to speak of humanity as made in God's image and of grace as perfecting and transfiguring that image so long overlaid by our habitual "inhumanity." In such a light, to proclaim the Gospel is to proclaim that it is at last possible to be properly human: the Catholic and Christian faith is a "true humanism," to borrow a phrase from another genius of the last century, Jacques Maritain.

To be fully human is to be recreated in the image of Christ's humanity; and that humanity is the perfect human 'translation' of the reation of the eternal Son to the eternal Father; a relationship of loving and adoring self-giving, a pouring out of life towards the Other. Thus the humanity we are growing into in the Spirit, the humanity that we seek to share with the world as the fruit of Christ's redeeming work, is a contemplative humanity. St Edith Stein observed that we begin to understand theology when we see God as the 'First Theologian', the first to speak out the reality of divine life, because 'all speaking about God presupposes God's

own speaking'; in an analogous way we could say that we begin to understand contemplation when we see God as the first contemplative, the eternal paradigm of that selfless attention to the Other that brings not death but life to the self. All contemplating of God presupposes God's own absorbed and joyful knowing of himself and gazing upon himself in the Trinitarian life.

To be contemplative as Christ is contemplative is to be open to all the fullness that the Father wishes to pour into our hearts. With our minds made still and ready to receive, with our self-generated fantasies about God and ourselves reduced to silence, we are at last at the point where we may begin to grow.

And the face we need to show to our world is the face of a humanity in endless growth towards love, a humanity so delighted and engaged by the glory of what we look towards that we are prepared to embark on a journey without end to find our way more deeply into it, into the heart of the Trinitarian life. St Paul speaks (in 2 Cor 3:18) of how 'with our unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord', we are transfigured with a greater and greater radiance. That is the face we seek to show to our fellow-human beings.

And we seek this not because we are in search of some private 'religious experience' that will make us feel secure or holy. We seek it because in this self-forgetting gazing towards the light of God in Christ we learn how to look at one another and at the whole of God's creation. In the early Church, there was a clear understanding that we needed to advance from the self-understanding or self-contemplation that taught us to discipline our greedy instincts and cravings to the 'natural contemplation' that perceived and venerated the wisdom of God in the order of the world and allowed us to see created reality for what it truly was in the sight of God — rather than what it was in terms of how we might use it or dominate it. And from there grace would lead us forward into true 'theology', the silent gazing upon God that is the goal of all our discipleship.

In this perspective, contemplation is very far from being just one kind of thing that Christians do: It is the key to prayer, liturgy, art and ethics, the key to the essence of a renewed humanity that is capable of seeing the world and other subjects in the world with freedom — freedom from self-oriented, acquisitive habits and the distorted understanding that comes from them.

(Contd. on Pg. 5)



# Contemplation.....

Contd. from Pg. 4

To put it boldly, contemplation is the only ultimate answer to the unreal and insane world that our financial systems and our advertising culture and our chaotic and unexamined emotions encourage us to inhabit. To learn contemplative practice is to learn what we need so as to live truthfully and honestly and lovingly. It is a deeply revolutionary matter.

In his autobiography Thomas Merton describes an experience not long after he had entered the monastery where he was to spend the rest of his life (Elected Silence, p. 303). He had contracted flu, and was confined to the infirmary for a few days, and, he says, he felt a 'secret joy' at the opportunity this gave him for prayer — and to do everything that I want to do, without having to run all over the place answering bells'.

He is forced to recognise that this attitude reveals that 'All my bad habits... had sneaked into the monastery with me and had received the religious vesture along with me: spiritual gluttony, spiritual sensuality, spiritual pride'. In other words, he is trying to live the Christian life with the emotional equipment of someone still deeply wedded to the search for individual satisfaction. It is a powerful warning: we have to be very careful in our evangelisation not simply to persuade people to apply to God and the life of the spirit all the longings for drama, excitement and self-congratulation that we so often indulge in our daily lives. It was expressed even more forcefully some decades ago by the American scholar of religion, Jacob Needleman, in a controversial and challenging book called *Lost Christianity: The words of the Gospel*, he says, are addressed to human beings who 'do not yet exist'. That is to say, responding in a life-giving way to what the Gospel requires of us means a transforming of our whole self, our feelings and thoughts and imaginings. To be converted to the faith does not mean simply acquiring a new set of beliefs, but becoming a new person, a person in communion with God and others through Jesus Christ.

Contemplation is an intrinsic element in this transforming process. To learn to look to God without regard to my own instant satisfaction, to learn to scrutinise and to relativise the cravings and fantasies is to allow God to be God, and thus to allow the prayer of Christ, God's own relation to God, to come alive in me. Invoking the Holy Spirit is a matter of asking the third person of the Trinity to enter my spirit and bring the clarity I need to see where I am in slavery to cravings and fantasies and to give me patience and stillness as God's light and love penetrate my inner life. Only as this begins to happen will I be delivered from treating the gifts of God as yet another sex of things I may acquire to make me happy, or to dominate other people. And as this process unfolds, I become more free — to borrow a phrase of St. Augustine (*Confessions IV 7*) — to 'love human beings in a human way', to love them not for what they may promise me, to love them not as if they were there to provide me with lasting safety and comfort, but as

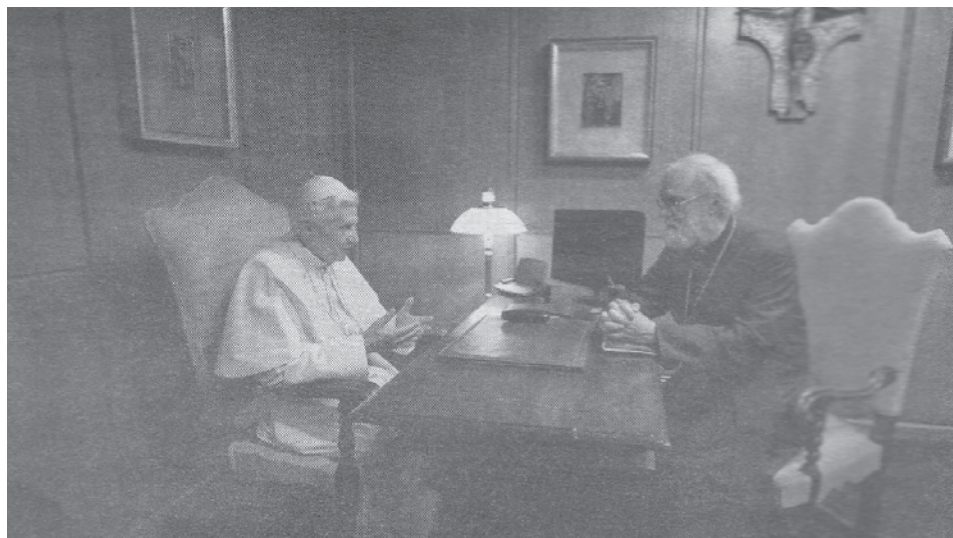
fragile fellow-creatures held in the love of God. I discover (as we noted earlier) how to see other persons and things for what they are in relation to God, not to me. And it is here that true justice as well as true love has its roots.

The human face that Christians want to show to the world is a face marked by such justice and love, and thus a face formed by contemplation, by the disciplines of silence and the detaching of the self from the objects that enslave it and the unexamined instincts that can deceive it. If evangelisation is a matter of showing the world the 'unveiled' human face that reflects the face of the Son turned towards the Father, it must carry with it a serious commitment to promoting and nurturing such prayer and practice. It should not need saying that this is not at all to argue that 'internal' transformation is more important than action for justice; rather, it is to insist that the clarity and energy we need for doing justice requires us to make space for the truth, for God's reality to come through. Otherwise our search for justice or for peace becomes another exercise of human will, undermined by human self-deception. The two callings are inseparable, the calling to 'prayer and righteous action', as the Protestant martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it, writing from his prison Cell in 1944. True prayer purifies the motive,

*"We begin to understand contemplation when we see God as the first contemplative, the eternal paradigm of that selfless attention to the Other that brings not death but life to the self. All contemplating of God presupposes God's own absorbed and joyful knowing of himself and gazing upon himself in the Trinitarian life."*

*To be contemplative as Christ is contemplative is to be open to all the fullness that the Father wishes to pour into our hearts. With our minds made still and ready to receive, with our self-generated fantasies about God and ourselves reduced to silence, we are at last at the point where we may begin to grow.*

*And the face we need to show to our world is the face of a humanity in endless growth towards love, a humanity so delighted and engaged by the glory of what we look towards that we are prepared to embark on a journey without end to find our way more deeply into it, into the heart of the Trinitarian life. St Paul speaks (in 2 Cor 3:18) of how 'with our unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord', we are transfigured with a greater and greater radiance. That is the face we seek to show to our fellow-human beings."*



true justice is the necessary work of sharing and liberating in others the humanity we have discovered in our contemplative encounter.

Those who know little and care less about the institutions and hierarchies of the Church these days are often attracted and challenged by lives that exhibit something of this. It is the new and renewed religious communities that most effectively reach out to those who have never known belief or who have abandoned it as empty and stale. When the Christian history of our age is written especially, though not only, as regards Europe and North America — we shall see how central and vital was the witness of places like Taizé or Bose, but also of more traditional communities that have become focal points for the exploration of a humanity broader and deeper than social habit encourages. And the great spiritual networks, Sant'Egidio, the Focolare Movement, Communion and Liberation, these too show the same phenomenon; they make space for a pro-founder human vision because in their various ways all of them offer a discipline of personal and common life that is about letting the reality of Jesus come alive in us.

And, as these examples show, the attraction and challenge we are talking about can generate commitments and enthusiasms across historic confessional lines. We have become used to talking about the imperative importance of 'spiritual ecumenism' these days; but this must not be a matter of somehow opposing the spiritual and the institutional, nor replacing specific commitments with a general sense of Christian fellow-feeling. If we have a robust and rich account of what the word 'spiritual' itself means, grounded in scriptural insights like those in the passages from II Corinthians that we noted earlier, we shall understand spiritual ecumenism as the shared search to nourish and sustain disciplines of contemplation in the hope of unveiling the face of the new humanity. And the more we keep apart from each other as Christians of different confessions, the less convincing that face will seem. I mentioned the Focolare Movement a moment ago: You will recall that the basic imperative in the spirituality of Chiara Lubich was 'to make yourself one' — one with the crucified and abandoned Christ, one through Him with the Father, one with all those called to this unity and so one with the deepest needs of the world. "Those who live unity ... live by allowing themselves to penetrate always more into God. They grow always closer to God ... and the closer they get to Him, the closer they get to the hearts of their brothers and sisters" (*Chiara Lubich: Essential Writings*, p. 37). The contemplative habit strips away an unthinking superiority towards other baptised believers and the assumption that I have nothing to learn from them. Insofar as the habit of contemplation helps us approach all experience as gift,

we shall always be asking what it is that the brother or sister has to share with us — even the brother or sister who is in one way or another separated from us or from what we suppose to be the fullness of communion. "*Quam bonum et quam jucundum....*"

What people of all ages recognise in these practices is the possibility, quite simply, of living more humanly — living with less frantic acquisitiveness, living with space for stillness, 'living in the expectation of learning, and most of all, living with an awareness that there is a solid and durable joy to be discovered in the disciplines of self-forgetfulness that is quite different from the gratification of this or that impulse of the moment. Unless our evangelisation can open the door to all this, it will run the risk of trying to sustain faith on the basis of an un-transformed set of human habits — with the all too familiar result that the Church comes to look unhappily like so many purely human institutions, anxious, busy, competitive and controlling. In a very important sense, a true enterprise of evangelisation will always be a re-evangelisation of ourselves as Christians also, a rediscovery of why our faith is different, transfiguring — a recovery of our own new humanity.

And of course it happens most effectively when we are not planning or struggling for it. To turn to de Lubac once again, "He who will best answer the needs of his time will be someone who will not have first sought to answer them" (*op. cit.* pp. 111-2); and "The man who seeks sincerity, instead of seeking truth in self-forgetfulness, is like the man who seeks to be detached instead of laying himself open in love" (p. 114). The enemy of all proclamation of the Gospel is self-consciousness, and, by definition, we cannot overcome this by being more self-conscious. We have to return to St Paul and ask, "Where are we looking?" Do we look anxiously to the problems of our day, the varieties of unfaithfulness or of threat to faith and morals, the weakness of the institution? Or are we seeking to look to Jesus, to the unveiled face of God's image in the light of which we see the image further reflected in ourselves and our neighbours?

That simply reminds us that evangelisation is always an overflow of something else — the disciple's journey to maturity in Christ, a journey not organised by the ambitious ego but the result of the prompting and drawing of the Spirit in us. In our considerations of how we are once again to make the Gospel of Christ compellingly attractive to men and women of our age, I hope we never lose sight of what makes it compelling to ourselves, to each one of us in our diverse ministries. So I wish you joy in these discussions — not simply clarity or effectiveness in planning, but joy in the promise of the vision of Christ's face, and in the foreshadowings of that fulfilment in the joy of communion with each other here and now.

(*L'Osservatore Romano*)



# Divorce

Men and women are commanded not to divorce their spouse if there is any possible way they can reconcile their marriage! Being "incompatible" is not a good excuse to get a divorce. Praying together, fasting, reading the bible, going to Church and receiving Christian counseling will help you become compatible, again!

According to the Bible, a man or woman should not get a divorce simply because he (or she) is no longer sexually attracted to his (or her) spouse - or because he (or she) is sexually attracted to another person! In God's eyes marriage is very serious. Many people treat it as if it is a casual thing you may keep or discard.

If a man divorces his wife, (or a woman divorces her husband) when his (or her) mate is not guilty of having sex outside the marriage, it may cause the person who is being divorced to commit adultery! Why? Because, when a man or woman was married he (or she) was accustomed to having intercourse! After either marriage partner receives a divorce it does not necessarily make the sex drive suddenly go away! Therefore, the temptation is too great! "It was also said, 'whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce'. But I (Christ) say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." (Matthew 5:13-32)

The Pharisees tempted Jesus by asking him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause? He answered, "Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning, 'made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her? He (Jesus) said to them, "It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so, And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery," (Matthew 19:3-9/ Mark 10:2-12)

Luke 11: 17 says: "Every kingdom divided against itself becomes a desert, and house falls on house."



Luke 16:18 says: "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."

Mark: 3:25 says: "And if a house is divided against itself that house will not be able to stand."

Before you get engaged be sure to ask God to reveal to you if the person you are dating is the person he prefers that you marry! Don't be in a big hurry to get married! Wait for God to give you an answer! He will never leave you angling and he will answer your prayer!

Before you exchange wedding vows, and say ... "I do" ... make sure the person you are about to marry is the one God would choose for you to marry! After you have exchanged the vows and the priest announces you to be husband and wife ... honour those vows as long as you live! "If you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not postpone fulfilling it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and you would incur guilt." (Deuteronomy 23:21)

1 Corinthians 7:1-17 says: It is well for a man not to touch a woman (not to marry). But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. This I say by way of concession, not of command. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God that it is well for them to remain

unmarried as I am. But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be blamed with passion. To the married I give this command - not I but the Lord-that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. To the rest I say - I and not the Lord - that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in

such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife. However that may be, let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you. This is my rule in all the churches.

1 Corinthians 6:13-20 Says: "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food", and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins are against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body"

Psalms 124:8 Says: "Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth."

Acts 16:31 Says: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

A wife is bound as long as her husband lives. But if the husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 7:39

God does not merely ask us in a cordial way to clean up our lives and hearts. We are commanded to!

God is not mocked! Do not be deceived; "God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow." (Galatians 6:7)

## PRAYER

Dear God, Please help me do everything in my power to keep my marriage together. I know that you bless those marriages which put JESUS in the center of them. I do not want to end up in the divorce courts. Help me and my spouse realize that this is not Your divine will for our lives. Come into my heart and please forgive me for my sins. Forgive me for not doing all I could to make my marriage a blessing. I will read my Bible each day and pray for wisdom and instruction. I will go to church and worship with other believers. I will fast as you have instructed we should do. I will obey Your commandments to the very best of my ability. Come live in me and let me feel Your presence. In Jesus' name, I pray. AMEN!

## TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



"Mercy Auntie, a talkative lady known by everyone in the little village, was called to the witness box. The prosecuting attorney asked her "Mercy Auntie, do you know me?" "Of course I have known you as a young boy, a great disappointment to everyone. You lie, you cheat on your wife, yes I know you" Stunned and shocked he pointed to the defence attorney "Do you know him?" "Yes I have known Mr. Bradley as a youngster too. He is an alcoholic, bigoted and lazy. He won his last case after pulling all the lies from hell. He cheated on his wife with three other women; one of them was your wife." The defence attorney almost died. The judge called the lawyers and muttered in a whisper "If you ask her if she knows me, I will jail you both for contempt of court."

Rev. Fr. Fracxid Anthony Fernando OMI



**A CROSS**

The Way 97

By Sirohmi Gunsekera

## Keeping Grudges

"I can't help it. Every time I see Sashika I think of how she stole my boyfriend. I know that we are cousins and that our families are close but. .. "complained Preena. "Isn't there anything good that Sashika has done for you?" asked her friend Mayura. "Well, she has given me her books to study and I must confess that I passed my exam thanks to her notes." revealed Preena.

"There you are. Try and force yourself to think of the good deeds and train your mind to switch off from the unpleasant thoughts. Anyway, I think that your boyfriend was not worth keeping if he could be led astray. What if you were married and he was unfaithful? Perhaps you should think that it was good riddance of bad rubbish. Who knows, a better man might come your way and you could be thankful to Sashika at the end of it." commented Mayura.

"You are right. I shouldn't keep grudges because that spoils my outlook on life. Maybe I should pray that I will be able to forgive Sashika and try my best to forget the whole episode. Maybe I should start dating other men and start a new chapter in my life." said Preena.

"That's the spirit. There are as many more fish in the sea as those that come out of it."

Just keep praying and look forward to a New Day and meeting new people. Yesterday is in the past and you and I should think, as in the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling ... "If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance - run ... "Just forget whatever happened in the past and make the most of Today!"

## The Festival of the

November settles  
With its brooding atmosphere  
Bringing memories  
Of those gone before  
To their eternal reward.  
Clusters of flowers,  
floral wreaths  
Adorn the graves  
Whitened sepulchres  
But within them the  
decaying forms  
Of mortal remains.  
A timely reminder  
Of man's mortality  
And the immortality  
of the soul.  
To pause awhile to reflect  
On our own fleeting lives.  
Candlelight flickering  
on the graves  
As prayers waft heavenwards  
For those we've loved in life  
Who've left a lasting imprint  
On our hearts and minds  
God rest their souls  
In the peace of Christ

Jeannette Cabraal





# Celebrating the lives of Saints

On November 1, All Saints Day, the Church celebrates the lives of the Saints.

There are great Saints whose stories are well known to us, like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Anthony of Padua. There are other Saints whose stories have received legendary status, like the legend of St. Nicholas (Santa Claus). Some Saints wore armour, like Saint Joan of Arc and King Saint Fernando III. and others, like Saint Valentine, are usually forgotten even on his own feast day.

The Liturgical Calendar of the Church assign a day for each Saint officially recognized by the Church. These days are celebrated by the faithful both spiritually and materially according to traditions and customs of different countries and communities.

On All Saints' Day the lives of all the Saints are celebrated, those whose names are known and unknown, those who have been officially recognized as Saints by the Church and not.

The exact origins of this celebration is uncertain. However we are told that the inception of the feast was in the celebration of the Martyrs of Rome which with time evolved into the feast of All Saints.

Christianity was legalised in Rome in A.D. 313 by Emperor Constantine the Great. This ended the period of persecution of Christians that had taken place at its worst under Emperor Diocletian (284-305). State patronage and acceptance of Christianity instigated the commemoration of the martyrs of the persecution, which was celebrated on different days by different Christian communities. The need of a universal

date for the celebration was felt and in 610 Pope St. Boniface IV (608-615) fixed the commemoration of the Martyrs for May 13, when he restored, rebuilt and rededicated the Pantheon an ancient Roman temple, under the title St. Maria and Martyrs.

The designation of November 1 as the feast of All Saints occurred over time. It is recorded that Pope Gregory IV (827-844) officially declared November 1 the feast of All Saints, transferring it from May 13.

It was Pope Gregory VII (1073-85) who finally suppressed May 13 and mandated November 1 as the date to celebrate the feast of All Saints.

Saints play an important role in our lives. They are examples for us to

follow. They teach us the way to spirituality.

Custom has it that infants are christened with the names of Saints, and churches, schools, organizations, towns, are named under their patronage. Churches and other holy places are often decorated with stained glass, statues, paintings depicting the Saints to inspire the faithful towards holiness.

The pictures below show classic statues of some lesser heard of Saints to whom our local churches are dedicated in and around Colombo. These statues are almost or larger than life in size, imported and for most the main statue of the Church.



compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando



St. Christopher,  
Kochchikade



St. Roche,  
Delatura



St. Odelia,  
Kammala



St. Isidore,  
Mellawagedera



St Mary Magdalene,  
Dungalpitiya



St. Martin De Porres,  
Horana



St. Cecelia,  
Raddoluwa



St. Joan of the  
Arc, Pitipana



St. Lucia,  
Kotahena



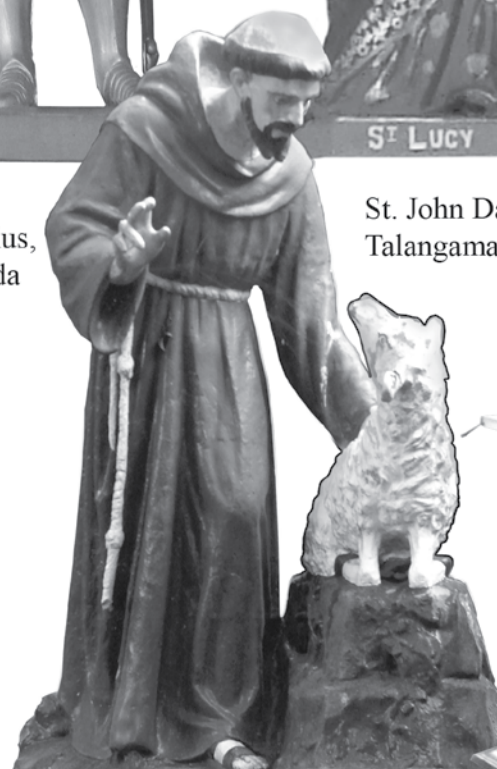
St. Barbara,  
Talahena



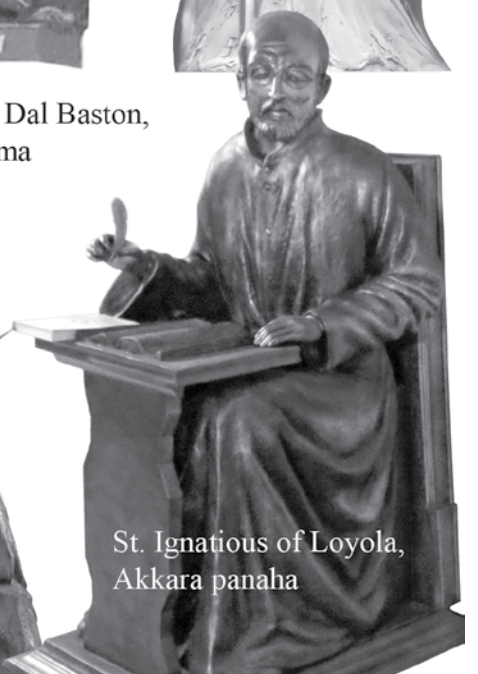
St. Nicholas,  
Bopitiya



St. Blasius,  
Indibedda



St. John Dal Baston,  
Talangama



St. Ignatius of Loyola,  
Akkara panaha



# Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith

Homily given on October 27, 2012

By Bishop Julian Winston Sebastian Fernando, sss (Sri Lanka)

Dear Holy Father, my brother Bishops, brothers and sisters in the Lord,

My reflection in three points is based on the passage of Scripture we just listened to; (1 Kings. 8:60-61).

**The first point:** "May all the peoples of the earth know that the Lord is God that there is no other". These words of Solomon uttered in prayer and blessing for the people already in the 9th century before Christ, seems foretell the missionary mandate of Christ for the Church Universal.

Many peoples of the earth know that the Lord is God, that there is no other by the splendor of the universe, its order and beauty. Many peoples of the nations do know God through their conscience and power of reason. Yet people need to know who the Lord God really IS, not as a distant God who has left everything to their destiny, but a personal God, ever loving and caring, one who relents, merciful and redeeming, a Father!

How could transmission of that knowledge be possible unless God reveals Himself, and gives the grace to accept and welcome in faith, that revelation which is not opposed to reason? With the acceptance of revelation the knowledge of the head must lead to the knowledge of the heart. We are the people of God to whom God has revealed Himself down through the ages by His covenant through Noah and Abraham, spoken through Judges, Rulers and Prophets and finally in and through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus gives us a glimpse of the Trinitarian nature of

God, three persons living the most profound relationship of communion. That relationship which could not be contained, overflowed into revelation through the Son of God made flesh. God's true face was thus unveiled in and through Christ, who lived among us suffered and died and rose from the dead. Our belief therefore, is not in a God for whose sake man suffers and dies, but in the God who suffers and dies for man. God has fully revealed Himself in Christ, His beloved Son. The Lord tells Philip: "if you have seen me, you have seen the Father".

**That brings us to the second point:** "Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God". The loving initiative of God beckons our personal response, in fact for an engagement of all our human faculties of heart, soul, body and mind. Jesus reiterated to the lawyer as we read in **Lk. 10:27**, what was expected in the formulation of **shemalsrael** in the old dispensation, but he takes us further in the new dispensation, to love one another as He has loved us.

God the Father of Jesus and God our Father is a personal God indeed. He entered into a deep relationship with us, and His people, through His son who redeemed us by His death. The Lord Jesus sacramentalized this loving relationship with us in the Eucharist. And when Jesus described this in his discourse on the Bread of life, "Many of His disciples went away and accompanied him no more". But Jesus would not go back on his word (**Jn.**

**6:66**). No wonder then that He asked the twelve: "What about you? Do you also want to go away?" (**Jn.6:67**).

People would not mind committing themselves to an ideology or to a code of moral conduct but not to a person, entering thereby into a personal and deep relationship with that person. And furthermore, to find in that person, one's source of life will be far too much to expect humanly speaking. Moreover, entering into a relationship with Christ meant entering into a network of relationships that breaks all barriers (**Cf. Eph.2:14**). Such was the challenge and invitation to his followers!

In reference to family and ethnic relationships it is said, that "blood is thicker than water" but I believe, that Baptismal water is thicker than blood as it brings followers of Christ to prefer Him to one's father and mother, to leave one's country and even to die for others in the name of Christ. We have great examples of this in many martyrs, saints and missionaries (like Maximilian Kolbe, Mother Theresa of Kolkata and Father Damian of Molokai, 'the apostle of the lepers').

The Holy Father Pope Benedict XV1 **Deus Caritas Estno.1** teaches, that "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction". Some of Jesus' disciples went away not because he asked for a moral response to one or the other of his teaching but because of his demand

to enter into a deep personal relationship with him by making him the source of life, as Jesus says in **Jn. 6:53**, "In all truth I tell you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you". The Lord therefore, calls us His Church, to encounter Him in the Eucharist. We also need then to interiorize this encounter in Eucharistic Adoration which leads us to true humanism and to live the gospel of life.

It is this call to relationship that is most difficult and the biggest challenge to our secularized, consumerist and individualistic society. Perhaps, secularized society can be defined as an ethos that gives no value to relationship with God and man. Therefore, the New Evangelization is a clarion call to put relationship with God and man at the heart and centre of Christian life. New evangelization is a call from God to globalize justice, charity and peace in and through our respective cultures; a call to globalize the genuine, not "virtual" relationships with people. It is a call to widen the space for greater network of relationships in Christ.

The Church is more than a collector of artifacts from various cultures and nations but an assimilator of life-giving values of all cultures and nations, as St. Paul says to the Church at Philippi, in Ch. 4:7-8. to value whatever is true, honourable and admirable, upright and pure, good and praiseworthy thus creating a counter culture in view of a civilization of love and life.



**Concluding with the third point:** "Walking in His statutes and keeping His commandments". These words in common parlance today, would be 'to walk the talk'. The truth that we know intellectually and commit ourselves to proclaim by word, in our teaching, preaching and ministry, we need to bear witness to, in our lives; then we make credible our encounter with Christ which is the heart of evangelization. Does not Jesus tell us in **Jn. 14:15** "if you love me you will keep my commandments"? Loving and living in Christ are as it were two sides of the same coin.

The New Evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith is a call to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments in the midst of all social pressures, trends and winds of change and above all with moral relativism making inroads into the social fabric. Realizing the tremendous task before us we may feel like the disciples who experienced helplessness during the storm, while Jesus was asleep in the boat, and cry out to Him: "Master do you not care, we are lost" (**Mk. 4:39**). But we have the reassuring words of Christ in Lk. 18:27 "Things that are impossible by human resources are possible for God. Amen."

## Medjugorje Cross in the Sky after Mass



For half an hour from 7.40 pm on August 15, many pilgrims and local Medjugorje citizens noticed how a Cross appeared in the sky. Though the Cross formation may initially look like contrails from two airplanes crossing each other, eye witnesses say it appeared in the clouds, shortly into the evening Mass on the Feast of the Assumption.



# Remember November...

We enjoy so many new and fresh mornings in our life but hardly pause to think or thank the Giver of each new day. We sing: "Morning has broken ..." with not much thought, reflection or thanksgiving. Then, suddenly or slowly, the day MOURNING breaks, for a loved one or dear one and we are silenced or stunned. We ask questions. WHY death? HOW is it after death? These are perennial questions posed by all faiths as death is a universal reality. Answers have been hard to come by. This is perhaps why all faiths have funeral rites and rituals. Just as they have rites for birth, to welcome a person's arrival into this world, so do they, for one's departure from this world. Death still remains a mystery as its fullest and deepest meaning is hidden, in the "tomb" of human experience.

Somehow, the month of November has become a special time for us Catholics to reflect on death, pray for our dear departed, offer Masses and alms in their memory and even visit their burial places. This is not strange as we also have special days for mothers, fathers, teachers, children, women, etc Why not for our loved ones who have gone ahead? Why not keep their memory alive in varied ways till we meet them again as our faith teaches us? And what does the Creed that we profess every Sunday tell us? I believe in "the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come..." In this year of Faith, November can help us remember the tenets of our faith and seek understanding of these last things from the Word of God.

In the OT there is a progressive understanding of death and resurrection, till its acceptance as that of leading to an eternal life with a resurrected body at the end of time. Wisdom 2.23 says: "...for God created man for incorruption and made him in the image of his own eternity, but through the devil's envy death entered the worlds..." Later, in OT understanding the resurrection, of the body was assured: "The dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy." Job 19.25-26 says: "For I know that my Redeemer lives and at last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has thus been destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God."

In Jesus' time the Pharisees accepted the notion of resurrection of the dead while the Sadducees rejected the theory—Matt 22:23-33; later, in the early church too"... the Sadducees came upon them, annoyed because they (Peter and John) were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:1-30). Jesus' messages on death through his

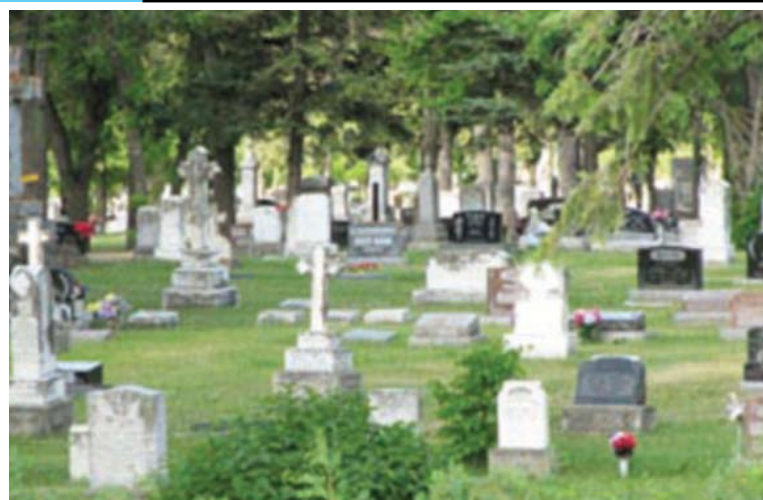
words and deeds, manifesting his power over death, were often misunderstood— eg. the raising to life of Jairus' daughter; the young man in Naim and Lazarus his friend, after the resurrection of Lazarus "they took counsel now to put him to death" (John 1: 1,53). Often it is because they were "amazed," and "baffled," that they would rather plot against him and offer Jesus himself "death" rather than accept freely his power over death. When Jesus spoke about his own resurrection they ridiculed him and once he was upon the cross, they mocked and jeered. "Come down," they said Did they prefer Jesus alive rather than dead, for fear his prediction of a resurrection would come true? However, the fact of Jesus' own resurrection is the hope we have in our resurrection as he is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep ... John 14: 2-4: "... I go to prepare a place for you... I will come again and take you to my self that where I am you may be also." "If Christ had not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:14,20). Christ's resur-

rection is not an isolated fact and the prerogative of the leader, but becomes that of the members of his mystical body as well: "He is the head of the body, the church, he is the beginning, the first-born of the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent" (Col. 1:18).

The first preaching of the early church is also on the resurrection. Since the Passion was familiar to everyone, the resurrection alone was the subject of the message preached as accomplished Messianism: Acts. 2:22-32: "... this Jesus (foretold by the prophets), God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses..." Today, the Sacraments we receive are also a proof and an experience of the resurrection. Baptism is a Resurrection experience as Paul reminds us in Romans 6: 4: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." The Eucharist is a

pledge of the resurrection-John 6:50: "This is the bread which comes down from heaven that a man may eat of it and not die." [John 6.50]. It is a messianic meal in anticipation of the marriage supper of the lamb—"Blessed, are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev.19.9). The fact of resurrection also calls us for a moral resurrection or conversion in day-to-day life, in our mind-set, life-style, our priorities and becoming God-centred and not world-centred. Exph. 4:17-24; 5: 1-20 are texts which remind the sleeper to awake from worldly "sleep" in order to rise from the dead with the Lord.

These are living words of faith in a Living Lord which appear like a rainbow in the dismal and dark moments of death and in the grieving thereafter. Faith enables us to rise above circumstances to view this experience from another dimension. Then, we have something helpful to pay attention to, a spiritual dimension to our human experiences and something beyond ourselves... a touch of "divinity" in the all too human and stark reality of death. It is only divinity that



can break through dark, tombs and roll away stones to make an Easter dawn. With it, there is hope for the future in our belief in the resurrection and on after-life for ever with God. When mourning breaks into, our lives, if we can live with a certain resilience and ability to bounce back or move forward, then we see beyond today and tomorrow even towards a resurrection of life with our loved ones.

Faith must be proved in action. There is a great ministry for us who have experienced the comfort of faith in a God of comfort, to comfort others (2 Cor: 1.3,4). There is a ministry to help the dying, to talk to them and prepare them for death. We can help ease the ultimate journey of those we love and care for. What is called

for is respect for the mystery of death and real attentiveness to each one's individual journey to the end. We can encourage them with the strength of Word and Sacrament to confront and accept the end, to finish any unfinished business in life, and to live each day of what is left as fully and serenely as possible. How precious are the final days of a person's life.' They are not meant to be lived with a fear of death. It can be deeply moving to share these moments with the dying. It can bring peace and dignity to the dying and meaning into our own lives. It is a ministry of re-empowerment. Along with the sorrow there is the bright hope and joy which God alone can give us.

*Rev. Sr. Cynthia Mendis*

## All Saints and All Souls Days

It should be with great joy and pride that we must celebrate All Saints Day. As Catholics we are extremely privileged to have hundreds of known and possibly thousands of unknown saints in our midst. Saints are the cornerstone of our faith, and Christ himself proclaimed his deputy, Saint Peter, "the Rock". The origin of All Saints Day dates back to the 7th century (the year 609 or 610 AD), when Pope Boniface IV consecrated the Pantheon at Rome to the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the martyrs. What might be an interesting fact is that the highest number of Christian and Catholic martyrs were not from the first or second centuries, but from the 20th century! Many men, women and children were martyred in the last century by various ungodly men, organisations and systems.

On this great feast day we need to ponder on who saints are and reflect on the wonderful things they did in their lives and for our Church. It is also a good time for us to affectionately think about who our favourite saints are. There are many brilliant saints and each one has either one or numerous characteristics that make them very special. Leading our legion of saints and angels is Our Lady, who is supreme amongst all humanity and is the most blessed by far.

Saints reach level of holiness that we sometimes imagine is beyond us. But that is not true. There is an old saying that "Every sinner can be a saint and every saint was once a sinner" (except perhaps Our Lady). Holiness too

can be defined in many ways. One that is a beautiful explanation is that "holiness is being close to God or being a friend of God". If we consider ourselves true friends of God, or endearing children of God, then we have the key building blocks of holiness.

Sainthood is something that we should all strive for and that we are all capable of. But it starts with a great desire and love for God. There should also be a deep love for our neighbour as well as all of God's creation. Additionally, prayerfulness, humility, service and a heart for missionary work are all vital, if one desires to be a saint.

A good spiritual exercise is to reflect on a different saint each day of the year. We can ponder on their lives, their heroic deeds, their prayers and the gifts they bear to God and humanity. As Catholics we need to find the proper resources (books and the like) to educate and familiarise ourselves with all the saints, bar none, in our Church.

Almost straddling All Saints Day is All Souls Day, which too is an important day of remembrance. All of us have someone we love who may have passed on to eternal life. We must always keep them in our hearts, daily, and pray and think kindly of them. Death is not the end to it all, but a closer walk with God, if that is what we have desired in our earthly lives and in our souls. Death can bring us closer to God. Most of our loved ones maybe so much closer to God than we are.

Many irreligious political and cultural systems do not

believe in life after death nor in the human soul. Such sceptical people end up living empty, unfulfilling lives, and as per the accounts of the writings of saints (such as Saint Alphonsus Liguori) die perilously close to losing their souls. We know that we live one because Jesus came back from the dead. We know we can trust Jesus, because He is truth manifest. Truth cannot lie. So if Jesus said that we have eternal life and that He prepares each of us a room in His mansion, then we should believe Him. None of this is fairytale stuff. We need to open our hearts to this reality.

Numerous accounts of ghostly apparitions, messages from beyond the grave, and even the resurrection of Lazarus by Christ all prove the existence of life after death. So All Souls Day offers us an opportunity to draw closer to our near and dear ones who have gone before us. It is a time to pray and ask our saints to intercede on their behalf, so they may enjoy eternal rest with our loving God, who is merciful, kind and caring towards each of us.

Someday, we too will leave this earthly realm. We too will need the prayers of those left behind on earth. But if we keep our eyes and hearts fixed on Our Lady, Christ and the saints, we will never go wrong, however grave our doubts may be and however difficult our temptations and struggles may be.

So pray to the saints, and pray for your loved ones, not just on these special feast days, but every single day of your life.

*John Fernando - Australia*



# 'Holy Rosary in the Year of Faith'

It was a happy coincidence that the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated the Year of Faith in the month of October, the month traditionally dedicated to the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

We wish to delve now into the intimate link uniting the Faith that we profess and the Holy Rosary. The pilgrimage of Faith which we now make on earth consists in striving to live What we believe. We are proclaiming, therefore, with our lives and deeds that Jesus is the Lord and Saviour, "the Way, the Truth and the Life (In 14:6)" This proclamation takes the form of embodying in our daily conduct the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

There are some, however, who call themselves Christians but do not fully share the Catholic Faith. These pose an objection to our Marian devotions. They falsely construe that loving the Blessed Virgin Mary takes us away from the true and only Mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ (1 Tm 2:5). By no means!

Blessed John Paul II taught in his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (n. 1) that the Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart

## LIVING FAITH

a *Christocentric* prayer. It is, in fact, centered in Jesus Christ. "In the sobriety of its elements," the Blessed Pope continued, "it has all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety, of which it can be said to be a compendium, Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Mariialis Cultus* (2 February 1974), 42: AAS 66 (1974), 153). It is an echo of the prayer of Mary, her perennial *Magnificat* for the work of the redemptive Incarnation which began in her virginal womb."

What then is the connection between praying the Holy Rosary and the Year of Faith?

On the one hand, "with the Rosary, the Christian people sit at the school of Mary and are led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer (*Ibid*)."



On the other, the Year of Faith consists in intensifying the reflection on the faith, "so as to help all believers in Christ to acquire a more conscious and vigorous adherence to the Gospel, especially at a time of profound change such as

humanity is currently experiencing (*Porta fidei*, 8)."

Both the Rosary, therefore, and the Year of Faith converge in the contemplation of Jesus Christ so that we could live his life in ours. We are approximating that goal which St.

Rev. Fr. Daniel Icatlo

Paul proposed to all Christians, that we may reach a point when we could say "It is no longer I who live; but Christ who lives in me (Gal 2:20). This Marian devotion is nothing else but looking at Christ through the eyes of Mary, his loving Mother who is also the Mother of each one of us. It is a prayer "to Mary" and "with Mary."

Reciting the Holy Rosary, however, does not consist in the mere praying of a series of Our Fathers and Hail Marys. St. Joseph emphatically underscored the importance of meditating

the mysteries. This meditation is the very soul of this devotion. Without the requisite contemplation of the mysteries the Rosary loses its very soul. It is reduced to a lifeless spiritual exercise. Our words become mere "tinkling cymbals," as St. Paul puts it.

We are, then, contemplating the mysteries of Faith as we meditate on the mysteries of the lives of Jesus and Mary. In the Holy Rosary, we ponder with Our lady "on the mysteries which she as Mother pondered in her heart (cf. Luke 2:19), and still ponders, still considers. Because they are the mysteries of eternal life." (Blessed John Paul II, Homily, 21-X-1979).

## Faith

Faith is Precious, to be treasured, as God's gift to a chosen few.

Determined at the time of Creation to blow His life-giving Breath to be His followers is nothing new. Experiencing enormous proportions of Graces and Virtues we Humbly Adore and Worship our Creator. Realising these will never be anything that could measure God's ways as one Benefactor.

Love bearing, sharing, sparing with Humility. Purity, patience, obedience, trust with Allegiance God cares Seeking God we must truly be committed and totally surrender to His Holy Will and share Live with Hope and Trust to see how God's generous ways come to Bear Nothing is left for anyone to doubt when you yield completely to leave all in God's care

Right now, beg God's intervention, to Bless You, and Provide Providential choice. Come unto me, God is sure to say, as you are, without a Prize. With God there is never sorrow, with joy and peace its nice Please reject not faith, you will lead a miserable Life. Father's Almighty Infinite Trust Heavenly

Francis

## A Tribute to a Great Teacher

In celebration of Mrs Audrey De S Wijeyerathne's fifty years of teaching at St Lawrence's Convent Wellawatte.

Fifty years in general is no short span of time. For fifty of her seventy years a truly amazing lady has been educating, counselling and mentoring the students of St Lawrence's Convent. To stay in the same place doing the same thing for so long must seem monotonous to many but when it comes to doing that which one loves the very idea of monotony must seem pretty ridiculous.

In June of the year 1962 a bright faced young lady walked through the gates of St Lawrence's Convent, no doubt a little anxious because it was her first day at a new job. Fifty years later the same lady walks in through the much larger gates of the same school and just like the school so has the lady changed. The young face is now wrinkled and marked by age, the slender young lady is now a stout straight-backed old lady but the bright look on her face has not changed, the burning energy, which has inspired so many of her students and fellow teachers, has not so much as flickered once during the past fifty years. All the girls know her and they rush to greet her whenever they see her walking by. It is difficult to imagine what school would be like without "Audrey Teacher" as the girls call her.

Mrs Audrey De S Wijeyerathne has played an important role in the administration of St Lawrence's Convent since her very first day at the school. She has played the role of vice principal, teacher-in-charge of the Prefects, teacher-in-charge of the English Literary Association and even temporarily played the role of principal. She never grudged her help to anyone whether it was just a word of advice or to stay after school for something or other.

Mrs Wijeyerathne started out at St. Lawrence's as a teacher of Sinhala Literature and not English Literature for which she is well known, thus being a perfect example of versatility, a quality she tries hard to instill in her students and today it is one of the main qualities for which Lawrentians are famed. Throughout her years of service

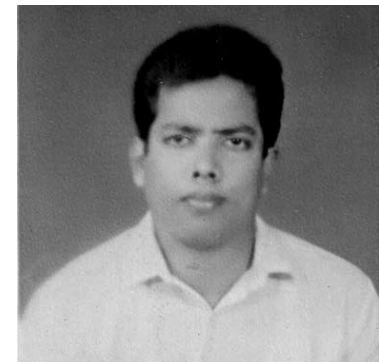
Mrs. Wijeyerathne has been a beacon of light to all students who have passed through the gates of St Lawrence's. There are a certain number of present day students who have the honour of saying, "Audrey teacher taught my mother as well as me."

She taught so much more than just literature or arithmetic or civics, she taught us how to live good and honourable lives, she taught us that it is by our actions and not just our qualifications that we show people who we truly are, she always encouraged us to make the most of our talents and being girls she taught us the important lessons of modesty and decency as well as to respect ourselves. She is a teacher who gives her students much more to take home than just homework. A motherly figure in every way she is always ready to do whatever she can for those who come to her for help. I am certain that students past and present will join me in saying that "Audrey teacher" is one of the main reasons that we are proud to be Lawrentians, for she has indeed worked to the Greater Glory of God and for the honour of our school.

A deeply religious person she inspired us to follow the example of the Blessed Mother and she would give us a sound lecture if she found that we had not gone for Sunday Mass. "Why can't you give just an hour of one day of the week to God who has given you so much?" she would ask. Indeed she has a firm faith that it is the Lord who has enabled her to follow her dream in teaching for all this time. Such is her humility and faith that she refuses to take more than 10% of the credit claiming that it was all the Lord's doing and that she only did what was expected of her. People thank her and she in turn thanks God. And as we look back on all that she has done for us at St Lawrence's and every other person whose life she has touched all we can do is raise our hands in praise to God and thank him for the wonder that is Mrs Audrey De S Wijeyerathne.

Stephanie Nugara

### 20TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF RANSIRI CLAUDIUS SENAKA FERNANDO



Born: 07-07-1965

Died: 04-11-1992

Twenty years have passed since that sad day,  
When the one we loved was called away.

God took him home; it was His will,  
But in our hearts he liveth still. Ransiri, your life was a blessing,

Your memory a treasure.  
You are loved beyond words,  
and missed beyond measure.

Fondly remembered by Ammi, Thaththi, Aiyah, Ramani Akka, Akki, Shevanthi and Rakitha

8/6, Ramanathan Avenue, Dehiwela.

(N4084)



# Personal encounter with Christ is indispensable for a genuine faith



Baptism becomes the irrevocable mark which is imposed and carved on us as to identify our undivided allegiance to God. It opens our hearts and minds to a greater reality which we will discover and unfold through our journey. Even though our life journey begins with Baptism (Rom 6:4) towards the heavenly Jerusalem, it is not the only criterion through which we can be called the children of God. The authenticity and credibility of a genuine Catholic depends on the realization and in living the true faith in day to day activities and renewing and adhering to all the commit-

ments which we have undertaken through Baptism. Above all else the vigorous binding force between God and us becomes the true and authentic faith without which Baptism has no credibility and value.

Faith is full submission of one's intellect and will to God (*Dei Verbum*, Vatican Council II). When a person submits himself to faith in God he makes a choice without any compulsion to stand with the Lord so as to live with Him. When a person is single-minded in rendering his total will to whom he is related (God) freedom and tranquility will be obvious. Thereby man is ushered into a state of being where explicitly and completely assurance, protection and love of God are confirmed. Man is provided no room to doubt the gratuitous actions of God. Here God enables us His eagerness to extend Himself to us in order that we may get to know Him and consequently open ourselves to deepen the union with Him. This union can be caused and effected only through the action of faith which assures us our final salvation. Thus faith becomes the sole criterion of our

salvation.

Unless we open our hearts and avail our selves of the right action of faith, delusion of our faith in God cannot be overcome. St. James says, "What does it profit, my brothers, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? (Jas. 2: 14-18). What would it be, if instead of catering to the needs of the child, the mother sets off from the child; and the child being inclined to maternal care, searches for ways and means of fulfilling such? Pope Benedict XVI says in his '*Motu Proprio Data*', '*Porta Fidei*', faith without charity bears no fruit while charity without faith would be a sentiment constantly at the mercy of doubt. The foundation for such kind of faith which accompanies charity is obviously the personal experience. It is said that faith is a gift and this precious gift can be achieved only by the personal experience with Jesus Christ. If instead a child does not experience the maternal care, is he able to claim his trust towards his mother? If the disciples had not encountered the magnanimity of Jesus and His resurrection, would the disciples dare to proclaim Je-

sus to the other people boldly?

Are we resolved to say that faith can be renewed and strengthened only through personal encounter with Jesus? Saul, being a persecutor of Christians, after having encountered the risen Lord personally, dared to confess himself "for me to live is Christ." Thus in faith, what is inevitable and indispensable is "our personal experience with Jesus Christ" in whom we set ourselves to experience "a change of heart" (*Metanoia*). It is faith that enables us to recognize Christ and it is His love that impels us to assist Him whenever He becomes our neighbour along that journey of life (*Porta Fidei*, Pope Benedict XVI, 2011).

Whenever we are invited to open ourselves to a profound experience with Jesus Christ in the light of faith, we have got to seek ways and means to effect this personal experience. Prayer is the only way and the effective instrument in which we are able to aim at faith and the possible platform on which faith is enlarged and re-energized. If one is not resolved to be in the presence of God silently, it is impossible to

envisage a genuine faith.

"The self-sufficient do not pray, the self-satisfied will not pray, the self-righteous cannot pray. No man is greater than his prayer life." (Leonard Ravenhill)

By prayer, man begins to touch the invisible realities of God and seeks out the deeper meaning of such realities and thereby to reshape, to purify his faith and to proclaim it with open heart and mind. Our attention should be drawn to the great and profound example of Holy Mother Mary who became a beacon of love and faith in God and who became so courageous not to relinquish her inextinguishable prayer life in spite of all the hardships that she had to undergo. She became blessed by believing and blessed by praying (*Lex Orandi et Lex credendi*). Let us reach out to this profound example of Mother Mary as to nourish and renew our faith in the light of prayer, expecting to experience Jesus Christ personally as our Lord and the Master.

Bro. Benedict Jayamanna O.Cist.  
Cistercian Community,  
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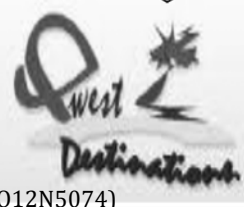
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## JESUS WEEPS WITH ME

When I am happy or when I am sad,  
Jesus is aware of what ever I do,  
And all my sorrows He takes as His own,  
And He will never leave me alone.

Lord, you have called me to witness,  
To tell others about your son Jesus,  
That the spirit of the living God,  
Falls a fresh on me.

God's unseen presence comforts me,  
I know that He is always near,  
When life's storms besiege my soul,  
He will say "My child", I am Here.

- Anton Selemberam



## Junior National - Badminton Championship



The shuttlers of Holy Cross College - Gampaha, sliced their power through the Junior National Badminton Championship - 2012, conducted recently by the Sri Lanka Schools Badminton Association in the Gampaha District.

They won the 09 Individual Championships out of 09, and were Runners-up in 06.

### Champion Team :

#### Seated Left to Right :

Shehani Modaragama, Mahesha Ekanayaka (Coach), Rev. Sister Mary Deepani (Principal), Ashini Navoda (Captain), Petronilda Biyanwila (Vice Captain)

#### Standing Infront of (Left to Right):

Hashini Chamoday, Oshadhee Karunarathene

#### Standing Behind (Left to Right)

Poornavi Harshika, Salini Dias, Dilushi Hasinika, Januli Thinara, Dakshina Nishani, Tarushi Ishara, Anuki Viveka, Hansani Jayasinghe, Manesha Dilakshi, Dinithi Dias, Pavani Navodya, Thehani Sanjula, Nethini Himasha.

## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AT THE PARISH OF NAYABEDDA.



Picture shows the First Holy Communicants of Nayabedda Parish in the Diocese of Badulla.

## Vazian's Walkathon held at Wennappuwa



The walk (Vazian's Walkathon) of Blessed Joseph Vaz College, Wennappuwa was held on a grand scale with the participation of a large gathering of Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and parents. The present and past students enlivened the event held on September 1, 2012.

Leading the procession was a beautifully decorated Chariot carrying a Potrait of Blessed Joseph Vaz, followed by floats, banners and bands which proceeded down the Colombo - Puttalam Road to Katuneriya St. Sebastian Church Square, before returning to the College.

The walk was organized by a committee led by Rev. Fr. Priyanjewa Gunarathna the Principal of Blessed Joseph Vaz College, Wennappuwa.

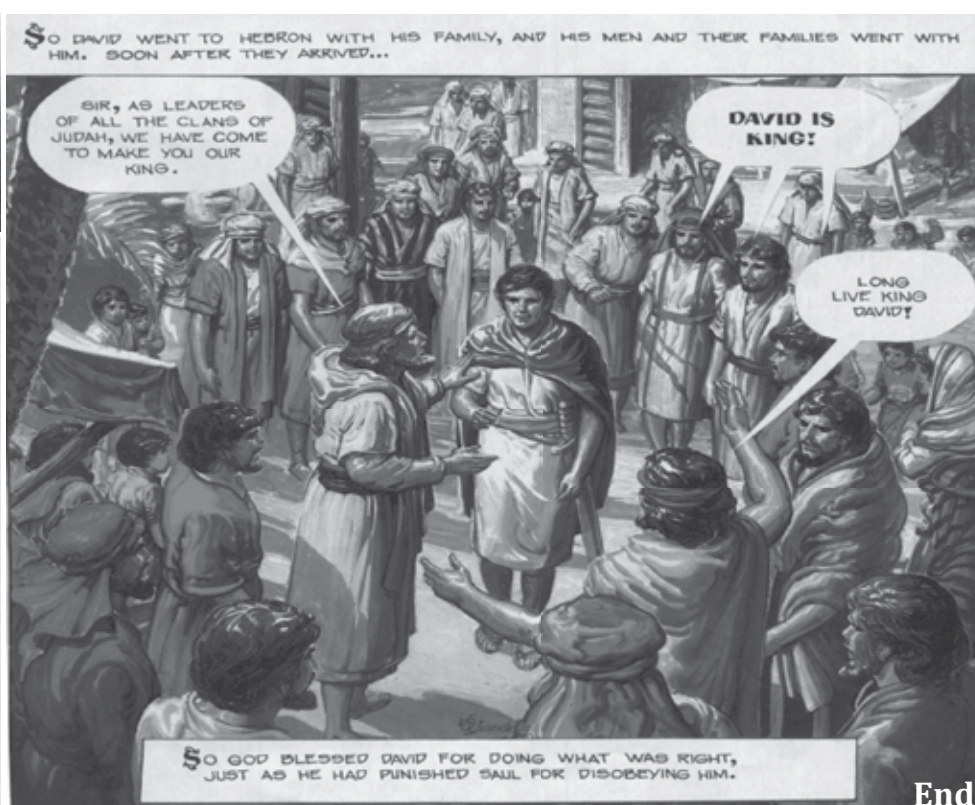
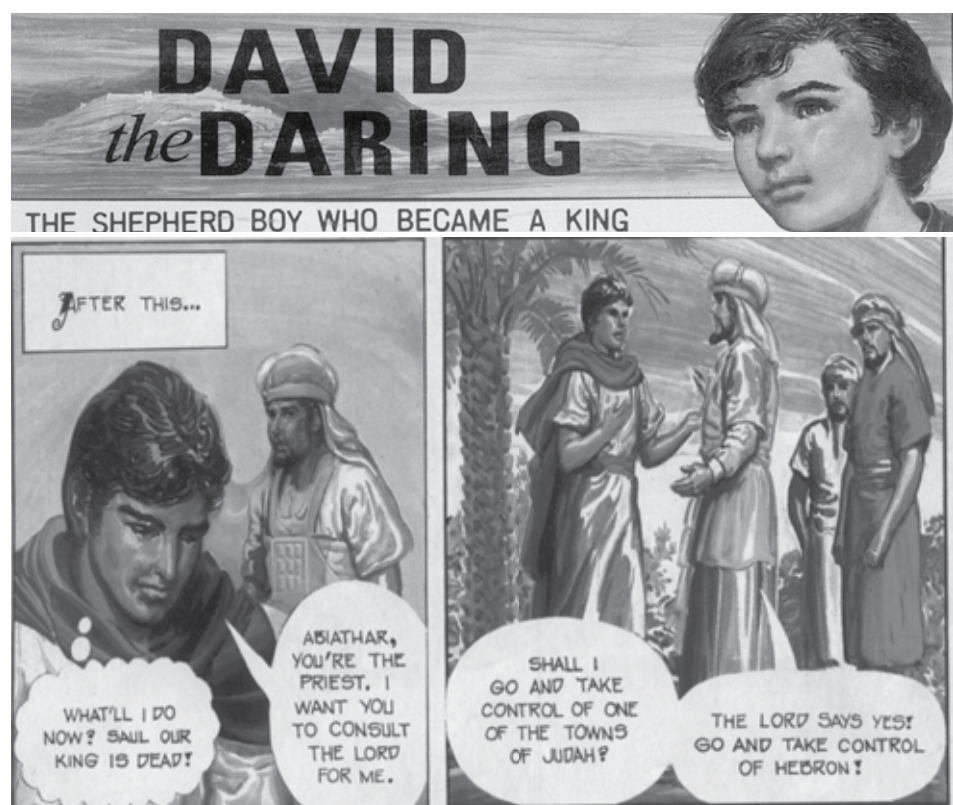
G. B. H. Livera

## First Holy Communion at St. Nicholas' International College Colombo



Ten students of St. Nicholas' International College, Colombo, received Jesus in First Holy Communion at a solemn Eucharistic Celebration on Friday October 12, 2012 at St. Theresa's Church, Thimbirigasyaya. Delivering the homily the Chief Celebrant Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis, Emeritus Archbishop of Colombo and Chairman of St. Nicholas' International College said that parents today shoulder a big responsibility in bringing up their children as good Christians, and that they should take this responsibility seriously and do it properly. The picture shows His Grace with the First Holy Communicants after the service.

Text: Mrs. Francisca Ludowyke, Pic.: Siddath Ramanayake





What it says ..... in  
the Readings

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they  
are life: you have the message of eternal  
life.

Jn. 6:63

**LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B**  
**4th Nov. - 11th Nov. 2012**

**Sun: 31<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY  
TIME**

Deut 6: 2-6, Hebr. 7:23-28;

Mk. 12: 28-34

**Mon:** Phil 2: 1-4; Lk. 14: 12-14

**Tue:** Phil 2: 5-11; Lk. 14: 15-24

**Wed:** Phil 2: 12-18; Lk. 14: 25-33

**Thu:** Phil 3: 3-8; Lk. 15: 1-10

**Fri:** Feast of The Dedication of the  
Lateran Basilica

Ez. 47: 1-2,8-9,12;

1 Cor. 3:9-13,16-17; Jn2:13-22

**Sat:** Phil 4: 10-19; Lk. 16: 9-15

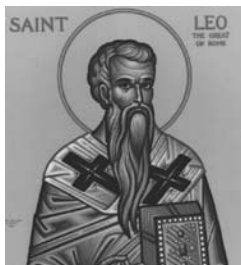
**Memorial of St. Leo  
the Great**

**St. Leo the Great,**  
died 461, taught the  
two natures, human  
and divine, of Christ  
at the Council of  
Chalcedon, 451 and  
the Primacy of the  
See of Peter.

**Sun: 32<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY  
TIME**

1 Kgs. 17: 10-16; Hebr. 9: 24-28;

Mk. 12: 38-44



**First Reading: Deut. 6:  
2-6**

Moses was given  
the Ten Commandments  
on Mount Sinai. Having  
come down he explains  
these Commandments to  
the people. He urges them  
to observe all these com-  
mandments with due rev-  
erence to God. The people  
are to love their God with  
all their heart, with all  
their soul and with all their  
might.

**Second Reading: Heb. 7:  
23-28**

The priesthood of  
Christ is compared to the  
Jewish High Priesthood.  
The priest's priesthood  
ends with his death but the  
High priesthood of Christ  
doesn't. Also the sacrifice  
that Christ offered was  
once and for all.

**Gospel: Mk. 12: 28-34**

Jesus is ques-  
tioned as to what is the  
most important and the  
greatest of all Command-  
ments. Jesus tells that  
the most important com-  
mandment is the love for  
God and the love of the  
neighbor. These two are  
inseparable.

**Reflection**

Today's readings  
tell us that we should live  
a blameless life so that

our lives too would be like  
that of Christ, a total sac-  
rifice for the glory of God.  
We should be concerned  
about two things; first the  
relationship that we have  
with God and the second  
the relationship that we  
have with the neighbor.

In baptism we  
share the priesthood of  
Christ. The prime duty of  
a priest is to offer sacrifice  
to the honor and glory of  
God. This flows as a result  
of the love that we have to-  
wards God. From that very  
love also flows the love to-  
wards our neighbor. These  
two become inseparable  
in our life on earth.

The first reading  
teaches us the Command-  
ments which bring out the  
total dedication to God.  
Moses goes on to explain  
it at length. He tells the  
Israelites "fear the Lord  
your God, you and your  
sons and your son's sons  
by keeping all his statutes  
and his commandments,  
which I command you, all  
the days of your Life." And  
he goes on to say, "Hear O  
Israel; the Lord our God is  
one Lord; and you shall live  
the Lord your God with all  
your heart, with all your  
might." Such is the love we  
have to offer to the Lord in  
our daily lives.

The Gospel ex-  
tends this love in the same



form and depth to our  
neighbor as well when it  
says. "Hear O Israel; the  
Lord our God, the Lord  
is one; and you shall love  
the Lord your God with  
all your strength; the sec-  
ond is this, you shall love  
your neighbor as yourself."  
Thus making us respon-  
sible for the wellbeing of  
our neighbor as well. This  
show that we too love not  
only the Lord our God but  
also our neighbor.

These two find  
their fulfillment in the life  
of Jesus the High priest  
about whom we hear in  
the second reading today.  
Christ was holy, blameless,  
unstained, separated from  
sinners and therefore ex-  
alted above the heavens.  
He had no need like the  
high priest of his time, to  
offer sacrifices daily, first  
for his own sins and then  
for those of the people; he  
did this once and for all  
when he offered himself  
up on the Cross. The sac-  
rifice on the Cross is the  
peak expression of his love  
towards God and towards  
mankind. For this reason  
his priest hood goes on  
forever and is permanent.  
We too are expected to  
live a life filled with love; a  
love that extends towards  
God and also embraces the  
neighbor.

**Aid Story**

According to a  
Tolstoy story entitled, "He  
who sees his neighbor has  
seen God." An old pious  
shoemaker dreams that  
Jesus Christ will pass next  
day before him, and from  
a window of his workshop  
located in a cellar, he is  
looking with great interest  
at the passers by. He sees  
a poor desperate woman  
who is going to commit  
suicide with her son, and  
asks her to come in, com-  
forts her and helps her  
as best as he can. Then a  
man shoveling snow shiv-  
ering with cold passes by,  
and the shoemaker asks  
him to come in, comforts  
and helps him and allows  
him to get warm and eat  
something. The shoemaker  
waits till midnight. He  
has not seen Jesus pass by  
and tired and somewhat  
disillusioned gets ready  
to go to bed, but he wants  
to read first as is custom  
a passage from the scrip-  
ture. He opens the book  
and happens to find these  
words: "Whenever did  
unto one of these, the least  
of my brethren you did it  
unto me." The shoemaker's  
heart warms up and he re-  
alizes that Christ did visit  
him several times during  
the day in the persons of  
the needy brothers.

**Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos**

# MARY'S SONG: The Magnificat

*Tanya Ferdinandusz*

"And Mary said,  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God  
my Saviour'" (Luke 1:46-47)

**A humorous poster  
quipped: "I'M ON MY WAY  
UP... BUT WHICH WAY IS  
UP?"**

Worldly wisdom says  
things like: Might is right; Look  
after No. 1; Stand up for your  
rights; Don't be a doormat. But we  
worship a King who reigns in an  
upside-down kingdom, a kingdom  
that propagates upside-down val-  
ues. The wisdom of God's upside-  
down kingdom dictates: The last  
will be first, and the first last (Mat-  
thew 20:16); Whoever wishes to  
be great among you must be your  
servant (Mark 10:43). The Gospel  
for the 29th Sunday in Ordinary  
Times reminds us that "the Son of  
Man himself did not come to be  
served but to serve" (Mark 10:45).

It is of this upside-down  
Kingdom of God that Mary sings:  
the powerful brought down, the  
lowly lifted up; the hungry filled,  
the rich sent away empty. In wit-  
ness to the lasting importance  
of this message, Mary's song is  
sung as part of the evening liturgy  
known as 'Vespers' (in the Roman  
Catholic and Lutheran churches)  
or 'Evensong' (in the Anglican  
Church).



Replaying my conversa-  
tions over the past 24 hours, I am  
uncomfortably conscious of how  
frequently I have used the words 'I',  
'me' and 'my'. Reading Mary's song  
(Luke 1:46-55), I am struck by how  
she consistently turns the spotlight  
on God, while she herself is content  
to stand in the shadows.

Mary's song is called the  
'Magnificat,' which is the first word  
of the song in the Latin translation.  
The dictionary offers several defini-  
tions of 'magnify,' but let's consider  
this one: "to have the power of  
increasing the apparent size of an  
object, as a microscope does."

Mary magnifies God.  
Through the lens of Mary's life,  
through her eyes, her words, and  
her transparent excitement and  
joy, we glimpse something of the

goodness, the greatness and the  
glory of God: A God who does great  
things for those of 'low estate,'  
as he did for Mary; a God who is  
merciful; a God who acts in power  
and strength; a God who provides  
unfailingly for those who depend  
on him; a God who helps those who  
serve him faithfully as Mary did.  
No wonder Mary bursts into this  
joyful song of praise!

A microscope changes not  
a whit in size when it magnifies the  
objects placed under its lens. But  
those who magnify the Lord grow  
continually in spiritual stature: the  
humble handmaid would be called  
'blessed' (v.48)! Mary declares  
that God has 'exalted those of low  
degree' (v.52b). 'Humility exalted'  
describes what God does in the  
lives of all who magnify him as  
Mary did.

## PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**

For all the followers of Christ: That they  
may not be content to declare their love for God in  
Church on Sunday, and then go out and ignore other  
people during the week. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**

For all our civil leaders: That God may fill  
them with a strong and unselfish love so that they  
may work for the progress of all people. Let us pray  
to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**

Without love the world is very dark. For all  
those who have known little kindness in their lives  
and who practice even less. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**

For ourselves; that having experienced  
the love and mercy of Christ in our own lives, we  
may generously reach out to others and share these  
blessings with them. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear us in your love.**