



**Divine Mercy Sunday**  
**April 12**

SINCE FEBRUARY 11, 1869

# MESSENGER

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## ALLELUIA! THE LORD IS RISEN



### Pope Francis Prays for Germanwings Victims

During his celebration of Palm Sunday Holy Mass at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City, Pope Francis commemorated with prayer the lives of those who died in the Germanwings Flight 9525 crash on Tuesday March 24. Speaking to more than 70,000 attendees, the Holy Father also acknowledged the faithful who serve others without concern for themselves as well as those who have had to withstand humiliation, discrimination and even persecution because of their faith.

Pope Francis, who has served as leader of the Roman Catholic Church for two years, wore bright red vestments to recollect Jesus' death by crucifixion. The Holy Mass took on a simple tone, indicative of his papal style.

Towards the end of the Holy Mass, the Holy Father discussed the importance of humility and remembered the 150 people who perished in the French Alps aboard the Germanwings flight. Among the crash victims were a group of German schoolchildren.

Investigators had indicated the flight's co-pilot, Andreas Lubitz, a 27-year-old native of Montabaur, Germany, locked the pilot out of the cockpit and intentionally changed the plane's course so it would crash into a mountainside. Records in the plane's first black box, a cockpit voice recorder, had determined that the flight commander attempted, without success, to break down the cockpit door to regain control of the plane.

### Priestly Ordination

On pages 8 and 9 we carry the who's who of the new deacons who will be ordained priests by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith on Saturday April 18, at 9.00 a.m. at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena.

## Holy Father's Easter Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters, a Happy and Holy Easter!

The Church throughout the world echoes the angel's message to the women: "Do not be afraid! I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised... Come, see the place where he lay" ( Mt 28:5-6).

This is the culmination of the Gospel; it is the Good News par excellence: Jesus, who was crucified, is risen! This event is the basis of our faith and our hope. If Christ were not raised, Christianity would lose its very meaning; the whole mission of the Church would lose its impulse, for this is the point from which it first set out and continues to set out ever anew. The message which Christians bring to the world is this: Jesus, Love incarnate, died on the cross for our sins, but God the Father raised Him and made Him the Lord of life and death. In Jesus, love has triumphed over hatred, mercy over sinfulness, goodness over evil, truth over

falsehood, life over death.

That is why we tell everyone: "Come and see!" In every human situation, marked by frailty, sin and death, the Good News is no mere matter of words, but a testimony to unconditional and faithful love: It is about leaving ourselves behind and encountering others, being close to those crushed by life's troubles, sharing with the needy, standing at the side of the sick, elderly and the outcast... "Come and see!": Love is more powerful, love gives life, love makes hope blossom in the wilderness.

With this joyful certainty in our hearts, today we turn to you, risen Lord!

Help us to seek you and to find you, to realise that we have a Father and are not orphans; that we can love and adore you.

Help us to overcome the scourge of hunger, aggravated by conflicts and by the immense wastefulness for which we are often responsible.

Enable us to protect the vulnerable, especially children, women and the elderly, who are at times exploited and abandoned.

## Called to Eternal Rest



### Well done, God's faithful shepherd

Former Rector of St. Joseph's College, Colombo and revered teacher, Rev. Fr. Stanley Abeysekera was called to Eternal Rest in the Lord on Sunday March 29. The funeral took place at Kandana on Tuesday March 31.



### A Touch of Godliness

Simple and humble that was Fr. Edwin Perera, the priest. He never worked to impress anybody or gain recognition from the community. He lived a Christ-like life - a life of humble poverty. He had no possession to call his own - like many

### NOTICE

There will be no issue of the 'Messenger' on Sunday April 19.

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## St. Thomas' International Prize Giving Ceremony



St. Thomas' Catholic International College held its 4th Annual Prize Giving Ceremony on March 20, 2015 at the College Auditorium. The chief guest was Rev. Fr. Bonnie Fernandopulle, Rector, St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa.

In his address Rev. Fr. Bonnie Fernandopulle said that today, students need the guidance of parents and teachers in studies and conduct.

"Spiritual guidance is a must if they are to meet the challenges of

the times. He congratulated the prize winners on their achievements and encouraged those who did not receive awards to strive hard as "failures are the pillars of success."

The vote of thanks was delivered by Rev. Fr. Kennedy Perera.

## Human Rights Salutation 2015



Human Rights Salutation 2015 was held at the Sri Pushpadana Hall in Kandy under the theme "Let the dignity of ordinary persons be recognized before the Law."

The event was organised by the Human Rights Office in Kandy to salute

three prominent human rights activists and award winners of School and Sunday school art and essay competitions held in view of the Human Rights Day 2014.

The chief guest was His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy. **Lucille Abeykoon**

## St. Thomas Church Kotte plays 'Alokayano'

The Parish Community of St. Thomas' Church, Kotte, performed 'Alokayano', or 'Christ our Light' on March 29, at St. Thomas' College Grounds Kotte. This pioneering effort was inspired by Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle, Episcopal Vicar of Colombo South Region and Parish Priest of St. Thomas' Church, Kotte.

"Alokayano was performed as a thanksgiving to God for giving Sri Lanka its first Saint in Fr. Joseph Vaz and as a tribute to St. Joseph Vaz who introduced the staging of the Passion Play to Sri Lanka," said Fr. Fernandopulle, who is an expert on the subject having completed his doctoral thesis under the title 'Origin and Development of the Passion Play Tradition in Sri Lanka'. He said that: "... Passion plays originated in Portugal and Spain and came to Goa (India) with the advent of the missionaries. They were staged at St. Paul's University in Goa. Two prominent Oratorian missionaries who came to Sri Lanka from



Asiri Warnakulasuriya

Goa, Fr. Joseph Vaz and Fr. Jacome Gonsalves were students at this University and were well versed in this dramatic tradition. It is recorded that Fr. Joseph Vaz staged passion plays in the Vanni and Kandy for the first time in the year 1706 and all the stage equipment was sent from Goa. During the Dutch period the Passion Plays were staged with statues to the accompaniment of the Dukprapthi Prasangaya composed by Fr. Gonsalves. Over the centuries these traditions have evolved and taken different forms and widely spread in the Island".

A cast of over 250 comprising parishioners of St. Thomas' Church,

Kotte and selected talent from the Colombo region went on board.

The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith graced the occasion as the chief guest, while the Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka, His Excellency Pierre Nguyen Van Tot, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy, Archbishop Emeritus His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas Marcus Fernando, Christian Affairs Minister John Amaratunga and former First Lady Mrs. Shiranthi Rajapaksa, were among the Guests of Honour. An estimated crowd of around 5,500 spectators attended this devotion.

## Welcome for New Rector at Holy Cross College, Kalutara



Rev. Fr. Carlton De Silva, new Rector of Holy Cross College, Kalutara was warmly welcomed by

Rev. Fathers, Teachers and students of the College recently.

Picture shows (LtoR) Rev.

Fr. Camillus Fernando, (former Rector), Rev. Fr. Carlton De Silva, (new Rector), Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawala, General Manager, Catholic Schools, Rev. Fr. Bonnie Fernandopulle, Rector St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa, Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ramanayaka, Dean Kalutara, being taken in procession to the College Auditorium.

**D. Anselm Fernando**

## ANNUAL FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH'S



St. Joseph's College, Colombo celebrated its annual feast recently on a grand scale. Rev. Fr. Leo Perera, an eminent Old Boy graced the occasion as the chief celebrant. After a general assembly led by the Rector, Rev. Fr. Travis Gabriel, the Josephian family joined in the traditional procession in the College premises.

**Avishka Mario Senewiratne**

## Easter Drama by Ceylon Bible Society

Ceylon Bible Society will present the 10th Annual Easter Programme with Drama and Choral music on Saturday April 4, at the Holy Emmanuel Church Old Parish Hall at 7.00 pm.

The drama titled "Kurusiyepamula... Galayana Mathakayan" (from the foot of the cross), is directed by Susila de Silva.

**Ainslie Joseph**

## Workshops on Sustainable Agriculture

Under the Caritas Norway-funded project titled "Substantiation of Community Institutions for Sustainable Agriculture to ensure Food Security," a series of workshops were held in the Dioceses of Kurunegala, Anuradhapura and Batticaloa during the month of February 2015.

The general scope of all the village-level workshops covered important aspects of sustainable agriculture such as 'Compost Preparation Techniques', 'Liquid Fertilizer Preparation', 'Vermiculture', 'Preparation of Pest Repellants', 'Methods of Forming and Strengthening Small Groups' and 'Establishment of Domestic Economic Units'.

**SEDEC**

## 'The Resurrection of the Messiah'

The Faculty of Theology, Aquinas University College will conduct a lecture on 'The Resurrection of the Messiah' by Rev. Fr. Anton Saman Hettiarachchi, on Sunday, April 12 at the Peter Pillai Auditorium.

Contact: 0718342319/  
0776692686 or  
2694012/5,

## Pallansena Lenten Pilgrimage



Parishioners of Pallansena, went on a lenten pilgrimage to the Calvary Mount of St. Martin de Pores Church, Horana. Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Jayantha Nimal and Assistant Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Suranga Niroshan Fonseka of Holy Trinity Church, Duwana preached at the Stations of the Cross.

The Way of the Cross, was followed by Holy Mass.

**Melvyn de Costa**



**WELCOME  
THE  
MESSENGER  
TO YOUR  
HOME  
THIS  
EASTER**







## Church in the Modern World

# "A Christian who lets corruption into his soul - stinks"

In his recent visit to Naples, the Holy Father, Pope Francis denounced an economic system that discards the young and deprives them of work, of a possibility to earn their daily bread.

"This lack of jobs robs people of their dignity," Pope Francis said speaking off the cuff. "Your archbishop threatened me, I couldn't come to Naples," the Holy Father joked meeting faithful in the difficult and decaying neighbourhood of Scampia on the northern outskirts of Naples.

Crucially, Pope

Francis began his trip to Naples by visiting the very neighbourhood where St. John Paul II started his own visit to the Diocese of Naples back in November 1990. Over the years, Scampia has become a symbol of the Church's work on the frontline.

"You are a people with a long history marked by complex and dramatic events. Life in Naples has never been easy, but it has never been sad. And this is your great asset: Joy, joyfulness," Pope Francis said in the speech he gave in Piazza Giovanni Paolo II.

"The daily jour-

ney in this city, with all its difficulties, uneasiness and sometimes its very trying moments creates a culture of life that always helps one to pick themselves back up and ensure that evil never has the last word. In fact this great and very precious legacy, this 'soul lifter', is hope - but this hope is also subject to attacks and robberies," the Holy Father said.

"Corruption stinks, corrupt society stinks and a Christian who lets corruption into his soul is no Christian, he stinks. How much corruption there is in the



The Holy Father in Scampia, Naples

world," the Pope added. "It is an ugly word because

anything that is corrupt is dirty."

Vatican Insider

## Pope Francis to visit White House

Washington D.C. - CNA/EWTN News - U.S. officials have confirmed that Pope Francis will make a stop at the White House to meet President Barack Obama on September 23, during his trip to the United States for the World Meeting of Families.

"The President and the First Lady will welcome His Holiness Pope Francis to the White House on Wednesday, September 23," said a March 26 statement from the White House press secretary.

"During the visit, the President and the Pope will continue the dialogue, which they began during the President's visit to the Vatican in March 2014, on

their shared values and commitments on a wide range of issues, including caring for the marginalized and the poor; advancing economic opportunity for all; serving as good stewards of the environment; protecting religious minorities and promoting religious freedom around the world; and welcoming and integrating immigrants and refugees into our communities," the statement said.

A global Catholic event, the world meeting seeks to support and strengthen families. St. John Paul II founded the event in 1994, and it takes place every three years. The Philadelphia gathering this year will take place September 22-27.



President Barack Obama meets with Pope Francis for a private audience at the Vatican on March 27, 2014 (Official White House Photo).

The Pope has also announced that he will canonize the founder of California's first missions, Blessed Junipero Serra, during his US trip.

The announcement of the Pope's visit to the White House comes at a time of mixed relations

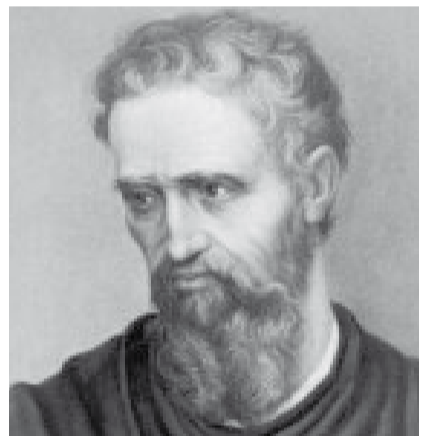
between President Obama and U.S. Church leaders.

Pope Francis will be the third Pope to visit the White House. Pope John Paul II visited the White House in 1979 and Pope Benedict XVI in 2008.

## Stolen Michelangelo letters: Gendarmerie in contact with Italian Police

"The Vatican Gendarmerie is in contact with the competent authorities of the Italian police for the appropriate investigations."

The Vatican spokesman Fr. Federico Lombardi stressed this after the news about the theft of Michelangelo's letters from the Vatican. "Years ago certain documents by Michelangelo (one written by him, another with his signature) were found to be missing from the Archives of the Fabbrica of St. Peter's," Fr. Lombardi said in a statement to Vatican Radio.



"The then archivist Sister Teresa Todaro reported the missing document to the Cardinal-president of the Fabbrica and archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, Cardinal Virgilio Noe in 1997," Fr. Lombardi said.

The current president of the Fabbrica, Cardinal Angelo Comastri, recently received a proposal to buy those documents back for a certain price. "Of course he refused, since the documents were stolen," Fr. Lombardi said.

## "Will the Pope meet me?" Asks Pop Madonna Queen

"God bless Pope Francis. We've got to meet. A plate of pasta, a bottle of good wine. Do I have a chance?" This is what world-famous American pop star Madonna had to say in her interview with journalist Luca Dondoni for Italian radio station RTL 102.5, just as her new album is released.



Answering a question about the relationship the singer has with religion (some of the songs in her new album have strong religious connotations), Madonna said: "They are a bit to do with my relationship with God and/or sexuality or playing with the idea of God and religion or sexuality; these are all themes that are present in my songs - as you know. It's also the reason I have been excommunicated by the Catholic Church not once, not twice but three times... I don't know...do you think the Pope would invite me?"

"Madonna asked Luca Dondoni what the Pope thought about the gay community, to which he answered: 'He says: 'Who am I to judge?'' The singer then replied: 'God bless him. We've got to meet. A plate of pasta, a bottle of good wine. Do I have a chance?'"

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## SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus





SINCE FEBRUARY 1869

# MESSENGER

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA

EDITORIAL  
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April 5, 2015

## Help save God's Creation

In the afterglow of Easter, Christians and indeed the whole world will be taken to a broader, higher and deeper dimension of the Kingdom when Pope Francis presents his 2015 Encyclical on Creation and respect for the environment. The issue is so important that since March last year Pope Francis has been having a dialogue with superiors of the Franciscan Order whose founder St Francis of Assisi, the Pope's model is the Patron Saint of Ecology.

The Pope himself brought up the issue of the environment. And he talked about his deep concern that we need, the Church needs, to find the way to respond, using the best of science. But also using the best of goodwill of all of humanity, to bring together a consensus on trying to respond to this ecological crisis.

To help him reflect on this issue, the Franciscan leaders gave him a copy of their "Franciscans for Ecology" text. In it, they cite several initiatives within this field that the Order has promoted, alongside people of other faiths.

With the Pope taking the initiative to tackle the structures of this potentially catastrophic crisis we in Sri Lanka during this post-Easter period need to reflect on what we should do collectively and individually. The new *Yahapalanaya* government at a national level is taking steps to reduce carbon dioxide emission, deforestation and other issues contributing to climate change which if not checked could lead to self destruction. God has chosen us to be good stewards of nature but what we have seen is large scale destruction and plunder of Mother Nature.

As Mahatma Gandhi has said this world has enough to meet everyone's need but not some people's greed. As individuals, there are many simple and practical ways in which we could help save Sri Lanka and the world from self-destruction. As people do in many western countries, we need to measure our carbon footprints. How much are we contributing towards environmental pollution and the destruction of Mother Nature which God gave us in trust. By using more public transport and less private transport we will be making a significant contribution towards curbing climate change which has led to a severe increase in temperature and rising sea levels so much so that some islands including the Maldives could disappear from the face of the earth.

In addition we could all save nature by cutting down on the use of electrical power and fresh water. The Ceylon Electricity Board is regularly broadcasting advertisements at peak times advising the people on how they could help to conserve energy, conserve valuable foreign exchange and most importantly curb the self-destructive climate change.

For instance here are some tips on the use of the electric iron. Iron clothes for a few days or once a week instead of ironing clothes every day. Start from rough cotton clothes and end in soft clothes. Switch off electricity connection and iron soft clothes using the already heated iron. Keep a thin aluminum paper under the ironing plank. It will reflect the heat allowing the iron to be heated from two directions simultaneously. Keep the iron vertically when keeping the iron away while ironing clothes. Use irons with automatic heat controllers. Do not iron wet clothes.

Here are some tips on the use of the television which is found in almost every house with some families having two or three. Do not use only the remote controller to switch off the television but use the switch on the television as well. When a colour television is in stand-by mode it consumes 18-25 watts of electricity. Switch off the lights of the unnecessary areas while watching television.

Try to use electric fans instead of air-conditioners. Cover the windows of the air-conditioned rooms so that the air will not go out. Use curtains and grow trees if the direct sunlight comes to the air-conditioned rooms. Install the air-conditioners in more shady areas of the building. Leave the temperature control at 26°C. Reduction of 1°C will result in the increase of 4% in the cost.

It is not enough just to hear or read Pope Francis' historic encyclical on ecology, we need to act fast to save God's creation and we hope every person who reads this will decide today to reduce his or her carbon footprints.

# CALL DOWN THE FIRE

*Beautiful, soul-stirring prayers are found in abundance in the Corpus of Teilhard, specially his religious writings. But more often than not, his reflections on God, Man and World are both mystical and scientific, unique in their depth and breadth. The prayer below is typical.*

April 10, 2015 marks the 60th anniversary of the death of Teilhard de Chardin, sj  
(Note by Rev. Fr. Mervyn Fernando)

Over there, on the horizon, the sun has just touched with light the outermost fringe of the eastern sky. Once again, beneath this moving sheet of fire, the living surface of the earth wakes and trembles, and once again begins its fearful travail. I will place on my paten, O God, the harvest to be won by this renewal of labour. Into my chalice I shall pour all the sap which is to be pressed out this day from the earth's fruits.

My paten and my chalice are the depths of a soul laid widely open to all the forces which in a moment will rise up from every corner of the earth and converge upon the Spirit. Grant me the remembrance and the mystic presence of all those whom the light is now awakening to the new day.

One by one, Lord, I see and I love all those whom you have given me to sustain and charm my life. One by one also I number all those who make up that other beloved family which has gradually surrounded me, its unity fashioned out of the most disparate elements, with affinities of the heart, of scientific research and of thought. And again one by one – more vaguely it is true, yet all-inclusively-I call before me the whole vast anonymous army of living humanity; those who surround me and support me though I do not know them; those who come, and those who go; above all, those who in office, laborato-

ry and factory, through their vision of truth or despite their error, truly believe in the progress of earthly reality and who today will take up again their impassioned pursuit of the light.

This restless multitude, confused or orderly, the immensity of which terrifies us; this ocean of humanity whose slow, monotonous wave-flows trouble the hearts even of those whose faith is most firm: It is to this deep that I thus desire all the fibres of my being should respond. All the things in the world to which this day will bring increase; all those that will diminish; all those too that will die: all of them, Lord, I try to gather into my arms, so as to hold them out to you in offering. This is the material of my sacrifice; the only material you desire.

Once upon a time men took into your temple the first fruits of their harvests, the flower of their flocks. But the offering you really want, the offering you mysteriously need every day to appease your hunger, to slake your thirst is nothing less than the growth of the world borne ever onwards in the stream of universal becoming.

Receive, O Lord, this all-embracing host which your whole creation, moved by your magnetism, offers you at this dawn of a new day.

This bread, our toil, is of itself, I know, but an immense



fragmentation; this wine, our pain, is no more, I know, than a draught that dissolves. Yet in the very depths of this formless mass you have implanted – and this I am sure of, for I sense it – a desire, irresistible, hallowing, which makes us cry out, believer and unbeliever alike: 'Lord, make us one.'

Because, my God, though I lack the soul-zeal and the sublime integrity of your saints, I yet have received from you an overwhelming sympathy for all that stirs within the dark mass of matter; because I know myself to be irremediably less a child of heaven than a son of earth; therefore I will this morning climb up in spirit to the high places, bearing with me the hopes and the miseries of my mother; and there – empowered by the priesthood which you alone (as I firmly believe) have bestowed on me – upon all that in the world of human flesh is now about to be born or to die beneath the rising sun I will call down the Fire.

## Commentary: ISIS needs 'Assisian' responses, not sniping crusades

By Hector Welgampola

Amid ongoing Islam-bashing worldwide, comes a bit of good news from the Arab world. According to media reports, in April, Qatar will name the recipients of that country's WISE (World Innovative Summit for Education) Awards for 2015. Given by Qatar's Education City, these awards have been described by BBC as an effort to recycle oil and gas into knowledge.

"The Emir of Qatar believes that a new golden age can be achieved through education and research coupled with creativity and development," wrote James Martin, founder of Oxford University's 21st Century School. The Qatar project would seed "a new Arab renaissance bringing multicultural tolerance, new ideas and education action across the Arab world," he claimed. Others pin hopes on the project's Faculty of Islamic Studies, despite lingering suspicion that Qatar funds reach jihadists.

While saluting the project, BBC noted how "events of the Arab Spring have shown the dissatisfaction of a young population with ris-

ing unemployment and lack of opportunity." The Arab world's youth frustrations have been aggravated by the post 9/11 frenzy to militarily intervene there with a fantasy to impose Western-style panacea for local problems.

Just as lack of social justice incubated communism, prolonged abuse of Arab countries as mere oil wells festered social ills that reignited Islamic militancy. A belated sense of guilt for such abuse led some developed countries to support the Qatar project. A similar sense of guilt should help affirm the inadequacy of military responses to curb frustration-fed jihadism.

Hired armies lack motivation to wipe out guerilla cults or jihadist passion. And eliminating Saddam Hussein, Muammar Qaddafi or Osama Bin Laden did not make the world any safer. If al Qaeda was a geographically diffused adhoc network, its modern avatars like ISIS and Boko Haram showcase bin Laden's dream caliphate still thriving and on martyrdom. The apocalyptic cult goes

Contd. on Pg. 5



# Easter means receiving Life afresh!

**T**he crucified Jesus turned His Good Friday of death and suffering into the glory and new life of Easter. This is the drama of Easter: The defeat of death and victory of life. The teacher who said "I am the Resurrection and the Life" could not have been vanquished by death and submerged in its gloom. In the Gospel narratives of the Passion of Christ, it is said that at the ninth hour Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed His last. There was thunder and lightning and the sky was sunk in darkness. But, the Easter morn saw the glittering Christ alight with glory.

It may be surmised that Jesus during His ministry already bestowed on a few, this Life afresh that was lost for one reason or another. Striking examples can be seen where Jesus anticipated the power and the glory of His Resurrection. Once it was the case of the Samaritan woman at the Well of Jacob who appears in the graphic encounter with Jesus. She was in utter darkness with her life shattered into pieces and love's labour lost. She could not even appear in public places and could come to draw water only at mid-day when no woman comes to any well to seek water. Jesus with great tact, tenderness and patience educed from her the springs of life that had dried out in a life of loneliness, mental depression

and spiritual dryness. He gave her living water that sprang from within her own enlightenment and made her run and call the villagers to gaze at the prophet, the Messiah, who had appeared in this Samaritan region. She in fact became a missionary who announced the appearance of Jesus to her village. From darkness she has reached the light. The eyes of Jesus full of light and compassion fell on her and she rose to a new life of self-esteem and virtue. It was indeed a spiritual miracle.

Then we have Mary of Magdala, a public sinner who having wept at the feet of Jesus the teacher, in the house of Simeon the Pharisee, was able to rise to be a new woman, graced, healed and forgiven. She had loved much in a new way. It was to her that the Risen Lord manifested Himself first according to the Resurrection narratives of the Gospels. We cannot side-track the wonderful story of Simon the fisherman from Galilee, son of John whom Jesus appointed as the leader to care and feed the flock some of which were sheep and others, the lambs. It was a story of love that Simon Peter confessed as the 21st chapter of John's Gospel so vividly portrays. He is being asked: "Do you love me more than these." In his case more love was required since his was the calling to be the Rock on which the Lord would

plan to build the Church.

This fisherman of Galilee became so powerful that not even the powers of hell would prevail against him. We remember Simon meeting Jesus for the first time in Luke chapter five. He was asked to flout all rules of fishing, to go and launch into the deep early in the morning! There was a miraculous draught of fish to the extent that the nets were on the verge of breaking. Besides, Simon had to call his partners to haul the nets out of the calm waters of the Galilean sea. What happens then? Simon goes on his knees before Jesus and tells him: "Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man." Jesus sticks with him and makes him a fisher of men. Now he would fish men out of fossilized water and put in fresh waters of faith and repentance. It would be their living water. Thus Simon's name is changed and the shepherding responsibility comes upon him, thus continuing the work of the Good Shepherd. Simon has come out of his darkness and confusion, his monotonous life in the sea and has been given new horizons to explore and reach catching men and women both by hook and crook. He would also reach great depths of humility when he almost prevents Jesus washing his feet, but humbly gives in when Jesus insists. When God insists, it is our duty to give in freely. Incredible things then begin to

happen. Peter's office continues in the Church in the person of the Bishop of Rome who presides over the universal Church, which in nothing but the worldwide assembly of charity, brotherhood and love cutting across all boundaries of discrimination based on language, ethnic and socio-cultural differences. How did this fisherman from Galilee together with Saul from Tarsus penetrate into the mighty imperial city of Rome, there to become the two mighty pillars of the Church of today?

The story of Judas Iscariot is indeed a lamentable one. After being in the company of Jesus and even savoring a little bit of the kingdom joys, he stooges to the love of mammon, turns traitor, betrays his Master and is crushed by depression that leads to suicide. No wonder, when he took the morsel of Bread at the Last Supper and left the table with crooked intentions, it was night, as St. John's Gospel so succinctly records. In Judas Iscariot, the light became eclipsed gradually to such an extent, that it completely turned into dark-



ness and wrong doing. This is a perfect drama in which mammon and love of money which is today's dominant culture in all spheres of life, can render life itself meaningless for people. Had Judas remained in the light of Christ, he would never have been swallowed up by the satanic powers of darkness that killed his soul long before he took his life.

Easter therefore is receiving life afresh for a fresh start in life. It is a beautiful life of peace and serenity. Even hard-hearted sinners through the waters of repentance can win forgiveness that will open to them the fountains of life. Even those

who received simple healings from sicknesses and those freed from the demons are fine examples of the power of God through Christ to be bestowed with new life and new opportunities. Easter is the best time to seize the opportunity to receive life afresh and step into one's hum drum existence with its daily struggles to lead a life worth living. For such people, the fragrance of new life bestowed will be a soothing balm even on their wounds. The grace of Easter therefore is nothing but being offered the opportunity to pass from darkness to light, from death to life, from sin to grace.

*Rev. Fr. Leopold Ratnaskera, OMI*

Contd. from Pg. 4

## Commentary: ISIS needs...

beyond self-immolation to the ruthless slaughter of those considered to be infidels. It now threatens West Asia, North Africa and beyond.

If Islamism's extremist outreach has gone viral, it has also gone global. It attracts youth from two sources. Unsurprisingly, it volunteers youth from Islamic nations. Addressing a recent Christian-Islamic dialogue meet run by Nigerian bishops, an Islamic scholar attributed the rise of Boko Haram partly to "the impunity, bad governance and corruption of Nigerian elite." Qatar-type projects may help replace such self-serving elite with socially committed cadres.

ISIS also draws youth worldwide. Its media-hyped fantasy appeals to listless young men and young women wearied by the depravity of secularized post-Christian society. Maybe, an erratic society's death-peddling obsession with abortion and mercy killing has so desensitized the young even to fancy jihad as an option. Frequent news reports confirm how the jihadist mirage attracts spiritually starved youths from all continents. But, sadly, such youths' home countries fail to get the message. Their rulers try to prevent the outflow of youths with laws to muzzle social media, patrol borders or deny passports - all inept measures.

Instead, leaders of State, society and religion should heed the unspoken outcry of desperate youth

fleeing parents, siblings, peers, churches and country to embrace jihad. The thousands of young men and women opting for jihad are our own sons and daughters. Their drift to ISIS speaks of our generation's moral failure. Their spiritual thirst is an indictment of our ineptitude to offer them a meaningful goal of holistic life. So, let us stop stigmatizing them as misled youths or blessing counter crusades. Today's society needs to find solutions by re-examining our distorted faith-life, fractured family-life, consumerist lifestyles and counter values based on worship of money-culture.

As evident in the recent Germanwings plane crash too, all youth blamed for atrocities are not jihadists. The crisis of today's youth should alert society to our long abuse of social structures as a mask for power play. Churches and Nations need to return to a moral ethic and restore honesty in public life. The need to wipe out the scandal of duplicity in religio-ethical and socio-economic life was never more urgent. And Church youth apostolates and family apostolates should be so re-oriented as to attract, involve and inspire all levels of youth life and activity.

Meanwhile, initiatives like the March 24 Catholic-Muslim summit in Rome can offer further hope. Interestingly, Cardinal Jean Louis Tauran, Vatican head for interreligious relations, told the meet of his wish to set up a more permanent mechanism for such interaction. For a moment, it brought to mind the environment of interreligious amity facilitated decades ago by the BIRA (Bishops Institutes for Interreligious Affairs) meets and live-ins organized by FABC (Federation of Asian

**"The thousands of young men and women opting for jihad are our own sons and daughters. Their drift to ISIS speaks of our generation's moral failure. Their spiritual thirst is an indictment of our ineptitude to offer them a meaningful goal of holistic life"**

Bishops' Conferences). Such interfaith action-in-prayer fosters inclusive pluralism. And a response of relational sacramentality can better facilitate social awakening than statements, episcopal or papal.

That sacramental mission has to awaken the 21st century Church to a Jesus-like embrace of all youths divorced from community by post-Christian secular cults. Re-communing with the divorced world of youths is a priority task for next October's second Synod on Family. Indeed, that will be a more realistic pastoral agenda than theological cud chewing about Communion to marital divorcees. And instead of premising the synod with a requiem for martyred Christians, let reflection on the waste of life of both jihadists and their victims inspire the synod to seed a Church of Assisian service to the human family.



# THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF JESUS AND MARY



## Year of the Consecrated Life - 2015

Conference of Major Religious Superiors of Sri Lanka (CMRS)

### Religious Congregations in Sri Lanka 10



The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary was founded in Lovendegem, Belgium on November 4, 1803 by Rev Fr. Peter Joseph Triest, on the feast of St. Charles Borromeo.



**The foundation House in Lovendegem shows the humble beginning.**

Rev. Fr. Triest was born in Brussels on August 31st 1760. He received his first education with the Jesuit fathers in Brussels and later attended the Latin school in Geel. On June 16, 1786 he was ordained by Cardinal Van Frankenberg.

#### Fr. Peter Joseph Triest - 1760 - 1836

After his ordination he carried out his pastoral duties in different parishes where he zealously prepared children for their first holy communion, took a keen interest in education and worked to uplift the poor. It was in 1803 that Fr. Triest arrived in the small village of Lovendegem as the parish priest, where the hand of God guided him to reach the destined goal. He had nothing more at heart than to remedy the evils which affected his parishioners and to accomplish all the good that would be in his power. He inspired others to join with him in an effort to bear witness to the God of Love and Compassion. Thus the congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary came into being.



Shortly after the foundation Marie Terese Van der Gauwen a member of the Cistercian Abbey of Maagdendale arrived. She was forced to leave the convent because of the political and religious trouble. Recognizing her as a valuable collaborator Fr. Triest accepted her.

#### Mother Placida van der Gauwen - 1769 - 1844

Imbued with the Cistercian spirit and endowed with sound and clear notions of the religious life, this gifted lady was destined to leave her mark on the new congregation. On July 2 1804, feast of the Visitation of Our Lady, the first six sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary pronounced their



vows and Mother Placida was elected Superior.

It was mainly the contemplative background of Mother Placide which enriched the Congregation with the Contemplative teaching and spirituality of St. Bernard. Dedicated to the "Will of God for the love of God" she was able to instill in the Sisters spiritual poverty and a generous warm hearted joyful simplicity.

Fr. Triest was influenced by the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul and was concerned to restore the material and spiritual ruins in the society. He realized that human beings need a minimum of well-being and happiness in order to be good. Inspired by this great man the mission of the Sisters of Charity goes on today in Education, Nursing and care of the aged, caring for the orphans, care and training of the differently abled, community development and social work, Catechesis, educating street children, youth and refugees etc.



#### First establishment in Sri Lanka Sacred Heart Convent and the School.

The Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary came to Galle, Sri Lanka in 1896. For more than 11 years there was only one house of S.C.J.M. in Galle.

The second foundation was proposed from 1906 especially by Mother Tiburce De Moll Superior of Galle Convent. Followed by the foundation in Galle the Sisters moved all over Sri Lanka to answer God's call according to the signs of the time. Today there are 145 Sisters who are serving in 25 communities in Sri Lankan province and Philippines.

#### Coat of Arms:

Our Motto "ONE HEART AND ONE SOUL", indicates our ideal of life and our programme, not only in what concerns the interior life of the Congregation, but also its apostolate.

The Sisters of Charity must excel in Charity. They will, therefore practice this virtue among themselves as perfectly as possible so that it may be said of them, as it was of the first Christians: "They were of one heart and one soul", they will work for the extension of the Kingdom of God and for His greater glory.



*Sisters Nirmala de Silva and Ira Ellen*

## The Nazarene's Triumph

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

Shouts of 'Hosanna! Hosanna!' rent the air. The crowds lunged forward waving their palms frantically, enthusiastically. There came the Nazarene robed in his simple, white, seamless, garment woven by his mother 'blessed faith in every thread' riding a donkey. The donkey carried his mother through the crowded streets of Bethlehem to the stable when his mother was carrying him in her blessed womb. The donkey carried him as a baby in his mother's arms, in their flight into Egypt to escape the horror of the massacre of the innocents by Herod, guided and led by his venerable foster father Joseph the carpenter. So it was but appropriate that on

his triumphal journey too the choice should have been a donkey. The donkey had his glorious hour too.

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

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

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

He the God-man, who knew the way of the world, would have known this was a farce. That these hosannas would in a few days be followed by

## Tinkering with the Constitution

Since independence in 1948 Sri Lanka had three major constitutions. We were governed after independence by the Soulbury Constitution. According to this constitution the Prime Minister



had executive powers. He was responsible to the Parliament elected by the people. There was also a second chamber called The Senate who were mainly chosen for the most part by the members of the Parliament. There was a separate and independent Public Service Commission and a Judicial Service Commission appointed by the Governor-General responsible for the appointment, transfer, dismissal, disciplinary control of Public and Judicial Services.

In 1972 the First Republican Constitution was adopted. The name of the country itself was officially changed from Ceylon to Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka became a Republic and all constitutional ties with the British monarchy and parliament were abolished. The judiciary became independent from the Privy Council of Britain. The second chamber was abolished. The Prime Minister was given executive powers and was responsible to the National State Assembly elected by the people.

At the moment Sri Lanka is governed by the constitution passed by the UNP regime under the Late President J.R. Jayawardene. The President, directly elected by the people held all executive powers. The Prime Minister and the cabinet was chosen and appointed by him/her. They were directly responsible to the Executive President. The parliament was elected according to proportional representative system. The representatives were not responsible to an electorate but to the district that they are elected from.

This constitution was amended sixteen times by the very government that introduced it and more than once by the successive governments. The President remains the head of the cabinet and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He also is the Minister of Defence and in addition he also can assign any cabinet portfolio to himself/herself. There were provisions in the constitution to appoint independent Public Service, Judiciary, Police, Bribery and Election commissions. But during the last government these provisions were ignored or neglected. The President of Sri Lanka gets all executive powers of the country into his/her hands and becomes a virtual constitutional dictator.

The amendment of the 1978 constitution was one of the promises made to the electorate by Maithripala Sirisena's Hundred Day Program. Many proposals have been tabled by the UNP leader, Ranil Wickremasinghe as well as the other partners of the present government, including the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

There is a general consensus to elect parliamentarians on the proportional representative as well as first past the post (electoral representation) systems. The powers of the Executive Presidency will be curtailed. The Prime Minister will inherit many of the present executive powers of the president. In exercising his executive powers he is responsible for the parliament directly and indirectly to the electorate.

The present government seems to be in a hurry to fulfill the promises made to the people who elected the president to power. They have to enact their hundred day program. But it is a good idea to discuss and think over the proposed constitutional reforms. A new constitution deserves more than mere tinkering or patchwork. More time may be needed and it will be ill-advised to rush through the amendments to any constitution that is going to affect the good governance of the 21 million men and women of this country.

*Not this man but Barabbas  
Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*

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

No matter! This was the triumphal hour for both the Nazarene and his decrepit carrier. He rode on! with a serene expression, strands of his shoulder length hair wafting across his face like shades of what awaited him.

But then he would rise in triumph on Easter morn. He would triumph over sin and death. He the Redeemer, the Saviour of the world.

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

**Jeannette Cabraal**





Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

# St. Thomas' Church Kotte plays 'Alokayano'

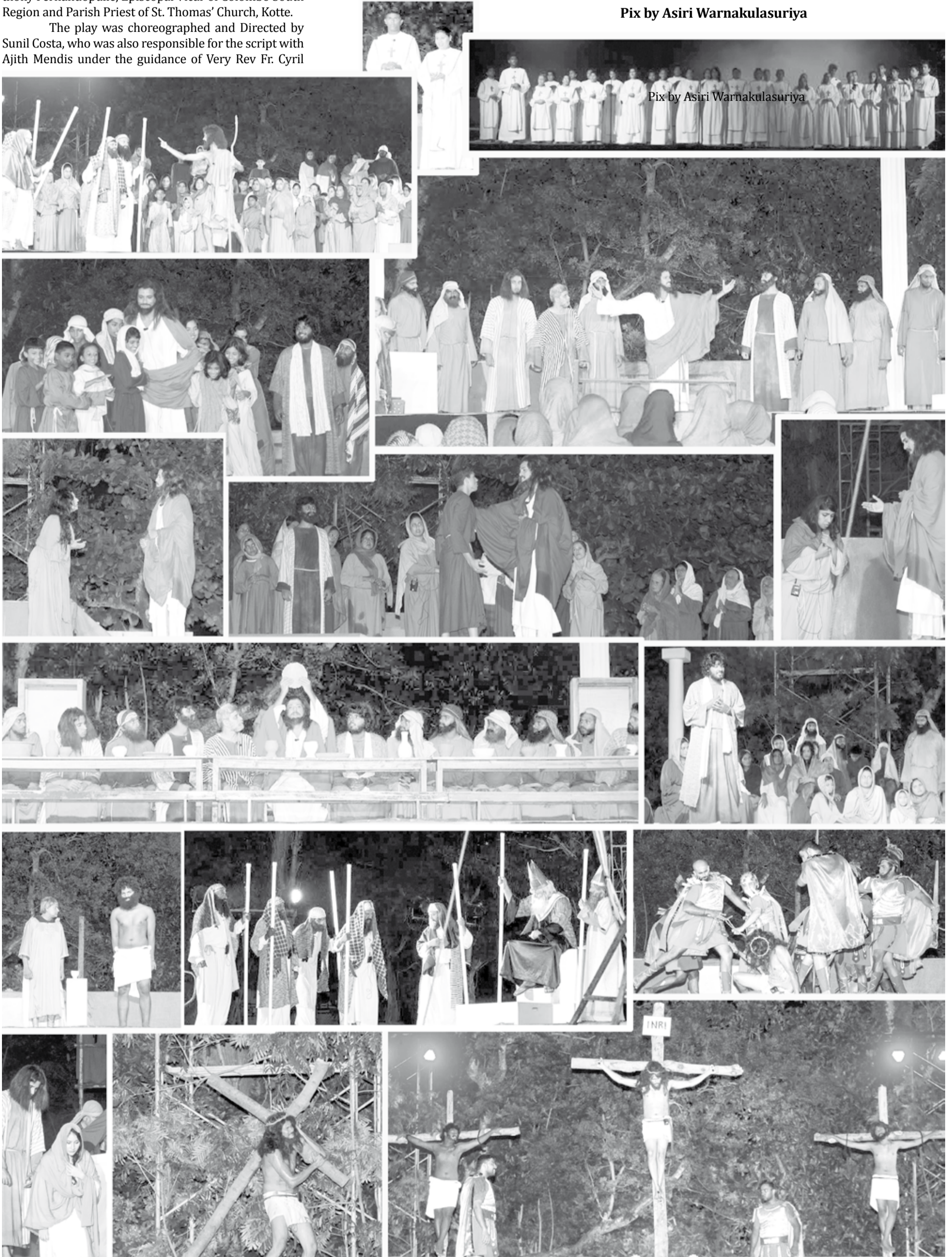
The parish community of St. Thomas' Church, Kotte, performed "Alokayano", or "Christ our Light" on 29 March at St. Thomas' College Grounds Kotte. This pioneering effort was inspired by Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle, Episcopal Vicar of Colombo South Region and Parish Priest of St. Thomas' Church, Kotte.

The play was choreographed and Directed by Sunil Costa, who was also responsible for the script with Ajith Mendis under the guidance of Very Rev Fr. Cyril

Gamini Fernando, National Director for Social Communications. Art Director: Ajantha Alahakoone, Music Director: Milroy Dharmarathne. Music and lyric composers: Kasun Liyanage and Nuwan Liyanage. Costumes and make up: Wasantha Vittachi. Stage design: under the direction of Sagara Jayasinghe. Creative department: Ruwan Malith Peiris, Jihan Srikanth Appuhamy and Nuwan Liyanage. Anthony Adolphus and Anjalie Jayas-

inghe, lead the vocals backed by a 60-member choir. Rev. Fr. Sachitha KelumJayalath, Assistant Parish Priest, St. Thomas' Church, Kotte was in charge of coordinating the production. The cast of 250 included award winning screen actress Veena Jayakody, a devout parishioner of St. Thomas' Church, Kotte who played the role of Mary Magdalene and popular actor Jihan Srikanth Appuhamy played Jesus Christ.

Pix by Asiri Warnakulasuriya





# Sacerdotal Ordination

*The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith will ordain to the Priesthood on Saturday April 18,*

## REV. BRO. ANTON SURANGA WARNAKULASURIYA



Hails from the Parish of Kadolkele, is the son of Mr. Warnakulasuriya James Hilton Upali Fernando and Mrs. Warnakulasuriya Padmini Fernando born on November 22, 1986. He is the youngest in the family and has an elder brother. He attended Maris Stella College, Negombo. With

the guidance of Rev. Fr. Nihal Ivan Perera he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary, Borella on January 14, 2001 and obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Halpe, Kotahena, Payagala and Thalagama. From 2010 for a period of one year he worked in a Japanese Company in Mt. Lavinia.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 8.00 a.m. at the Church of the Risen Christ, Kadolkele, Negombo.

## REV. BRO. KURUVITA ARACHCHIGE CHAMIL SAMEERA

Hails from the Parish of Kimbulapitiya, is the son of Mr. K.A. Somarathne and Mrs. W. Sriyanthi Fernando, born on May 2, 1983. He is the eldest son in the family and has a younger sister. He attended the Roman Catholic Primary School, Kimbulapitiya and then St. Mary's College, Negombo. He



completed his A/L's at St. Peter's College, Negombo. With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Jude Samantha he entered the John Mary Vianney Seminary on November 20, 2006. He obtained his degrees in Theology from St. Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya and from 2013-2014 finished his studies at the National Seminary, Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a Deacon. He practiced his diaconate in parishes Ja-ela, Hanwella and Halpe.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 8.00 a.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes' Shrine, Kimbulapitiya.

## REV. BRO. DILIP SAMPATH CHARLES



Hails from the Parish of St. John the Baptist in Mutwal, is the son of Mr. Roman Anthony Charles and Mrs. P. Jasmine Mary Gomez, born on September 12, 1987. He is the youngest in the family and has an elder sister and brother. He attended St. Joseph's

College, Grandpass. With the guidance of the late Rev. Fr. Siri Cooray he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary in Borella on January 20, 2002. He obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Rawathawatta, Grand Street and Seeduwa.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 8.00 a.m. at St. John the Baptist Church, Mutwal.

## REV. BRO. DILSHAN JOHN LAKMAL GUNAWARDANE

Hails from the Parish of Nugegoda, is the son of Mr. Anthony Gunawardane and Mrs. Antonette Gunawardane, born on March 15, 1987. He is the eldest in the family and has a younger brother. He completed his school education at St. Joseph's College, Nugegoda. With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Sunil de Silva he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary in Borella on January 20, 2002. He

obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Wellawatte, Sea Street and Rawathawatte.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, at 8.00 a.m. at St. Joseph's Church, Nugegoda.

## REV. BRO. ERANGA LAKSRITHA DE SILVA



Hails from the Parish of St. James the Great Mutwal, is the son of Mr. Lakshman Asoka de Silva and Mrs. Asuntha Srimal de Silva on July 1, 1985. He is the youngest in the family and has an elder sister. He attended St. Peter's College, Colombo 4. With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Basil Wickramasinghe, he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary, Borella on January 16, 2005. He obtained his

degree in Philosophy from the National Seminary, Ampitiya and Theology from Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Maryland, USA. On May 24, 2013 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Kadolkale, Pallansena, Thalagama, Kaluthara, Dalugama.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 10.30 a.m. at St. James the Great Church, Mutwal.

## REV. BRO. WAHALATHANTRIGE DON JUDE HESHAN SACHITRA PERERA

Hails from the Parish of Hanwella, is the son of Mr. W.D. Pius Lionel Perera and Mrs. W.D. Henrita Beatrice Perera, born on April 29, 1986. He is the youngest in his family and has an elder sister. He attended St. John Bosco College, Kaluaggala from Grade 1 to 5 and then St. Peter's College, Colombo 4. With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Jude Peiris he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary in Borella on January 20, 2002. He obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Dalugama, Wellawatta, Diyalogoda and Baththaramulla.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 8.30 a.m. at Our Lady of Sorrow's Church, Kaluaggala.

## REV. BRO. HETTIARACHCHIGE DON JUDE ASITHA MADUSHANKA



Hails from the Parish of Pamunugama, is the son of Mr. Hettiarachchige Don Peter Benedict and Mrs. Jayamanne Mohottige Dona Anne Thilakangani Swarna Latha, born on April 13, 1985. He is the eldest child in the family and has a younger sister. He attended Gonsalvez College, Pamunugama.



With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Ruben Lesley he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary in Borella on January 16, 2000. He obtained his degree in Philosophy from the National Seminary Ampitiya and Theology from Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Maryland, USA. On May 24, 2013 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Thalagama, Dalugama and Ja-ela.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 7.30 a.m. at St. Joseph's Church, Pamunugama.

## REV. BRO. WARNAKULASURIYA MANOJ KUMAR FERNANDO

Hails from the Parish of Sea Street, is the son of Mr. Warnakulasuriya Nimal Anthony Fernando and Mrs. Warnakulasuriya Rose Virgini Fernando, born on May 21, 1987. He is the eldest in the family and has a younger brother and sister. He attended St. Sebastian College, Negombo. With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Ignatius Warnakulasingham, he entered St. Aloysius Minor Seminary in Borella on January 20, 2002. He



obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Kotahena, Ja-ela and Wellawatta.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 8.00 a.m. at St. Sebastian's Church, Sea Street, Negombo.

## REV. BRO. NALIN KUMAR FERNANDO



Hails from the Parish of Blackpool, is the son of Mr. Justin Annesley Fernando and Mrs. Ranasinghe Arachchilage Swarnalatha, born on November 3, 1978. He is the youngest child in the family and has an elder brother. He attended Nuwara Eliya, Vidyachakra Vidyalaya and with the guidance of Rev. Fr. Ruwan Reid Liyanage, he entered the John Mary Vianney Seminary

on February 19, 2008. He obtained his degree in Theology from St. Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya and from 2013-2014 finished his studies at the National Seminary Ampitiya. In October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in parishes of Kurana, Dalupotha, Sea Steet.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 26, at 9.30 a.m. at St. Anthony's Church, Blackpool, Nuwara-Eliya.

## REV. BRO. KANDAWALAGE NIROSHAN SUMITH PRIYANTHA PERERA

Hails from the Parish of Katuwapitiya, is the son of Mr. Kandawalage Raymond Lesley Perera and Mrs. Wanniarachchige Jenet Malani Perera, born on September 19, 1975. He is their fourth son. Having started his primary education at St. Joseph's College, Kandawala, he finished his Secondary School at St. Mary's College, Negombo.



With the guidance of late Rev. Fr. Kingsley Adikaram, SJ and Rev. Fr. Jude Nicholas he entered the John Mary Vianney Seminary on December 10, 2007. He obtained his degrees in Theology from St. Joseph Vaz Deva Dharma Nikethanaya in Borella and from 2013-2014 finished his studies at the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained as a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Dematagoda, Mutwal, Indigolla,



# on to the Priesthood

**17 deacons (16 from the Archdiocese and one from the Cisterian Order), 2015 at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena.**

Kurana and Pallansena.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on Sunday April 19, 2015 at 7.30 a.m. at St. Sebastian's Church, Katuwapitiya.

## REV. BRO. LINTHOTAGE PRASHAN DILANTHA FERNANDO

Hails from the Parish of Halpe, is the son of Mr. Linthotage Hemantha Fernando and Mrs. Linthotage Clarice Damayanthi Fernando, born on September 14, 1987. He is the second in his family. He attended Maria Rajini Vidyalaya, Katana. With the guidance of late Rev. Fr. Lawrence Perera, he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary in Borella on May 9, 2004.

He obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Sea Street, Seeduwa, Nagoda (Kalutara) and Kurana.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 7.30 a.m. at St. Francis Xavier's Church, Halpe.

## REV. BRO. DON MANUEL ANDRADI MUDIYANSELAGE RANGA SHEHAN ANDRADI

Hails from the Parish of Kalamulla, is the son of late Joseph Rohan Andradi and Mrs. Sri-mathi Andradi, born on July 21, 1987. He is the eldest in the family and has a younger brother. He attended Holy Cross College, Kalutara. With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Sriyananda Fernando he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary in Borella on January 14, 2001. He obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Grand Street, Pallansena and Hanwella.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 9.00 a.m. at St. Philip Neri's Church, Katukurunda, Kalamulla.

## REV. BRO. HETTIGE RAVIN DHARSHANA FERNANDO

Hails from the Parish of Maggona, is the son of Mr. H. Benedict Fernando and Mrs. Beatrice Fernando, born on August 24, 1986. He is the youngest in the family. He attended Holy Cross College, Kalutara. With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Tyrone Perera he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary in Borella on January 14, 2001. He obtained his degrees

in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Dalupotha, Katuwapitiya and Grand Street.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass on April 19, 2015 at 8.30 a.m. at St. Mary's Church, Maggona.

## REV. BRO. RAVINDRA KUMAR PEIRIS PULLE

Hails from the Parish of Kandawala, is the son of Mr. Lakshman Joseph Peiris Pulle and Mrs. Malinee Fernandopulle, born on February 21, 1986. He is the

youngest son in the family. He attended St. Joseph's Vidyalaya, Kandawala and Pope Paul VI Maha Vidyalaya, Halpe. With the guidance of Very Rev. Fr. H.D. Anthony he entered St. Aloysius Minor Seminary in Borella on May 9, 2004. He obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a Deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Seeduwa, Rawathawatha, Maggona and Indigolla.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 7.30 a.m. at Our Lady of Sorrows' Church, Kandawala.

## REV. BRO. THOMME SWAKEENU SEBASTIAN SUDARSHAN

Hails from the Parish of Grand Street, is the son of Mr. Thomme Swakeenu Kaushanan Mascrimngas and Mrs. Mary Anette Swarna Fernando, born on February 22, 1987. He is the youngest in the family and has an elder sister and brother. He attended St. Mary's College, Negombo. With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Raj Silva he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary in Borella on January 20, 2002. He obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2010 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Mutwal, Indigolla, Katuwapitiya and Kalutara.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 7.30 a.m. at St. Nicholas' Church, Munnakkaraya, Negombo.

## REV. BRO. T. DON AMILA WICKRAMA

In the son of late Thithawallage Don Anthony Neville Wickrama and Mrs. Nandugala Vidhana Pathirana Deepika, born on November 27, 1984. He is the youngest in the family and has an elder brother. He had his pri-

mary education at De Mazenod College, Kandana and completed his College education at St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa. With the guidance of Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunathilaka he entered St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary in Borella on January 16, 2004. He obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate in the parishes of Hanwella, Halpe, Nagoda (Kalutara) and Dalupotha.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 8.30 a.m. at St. Jude's Church, 4th Lane, Rathmalana.

## CISTERIAN ORDER

### REV. BRO. BENEDICT SAMAN JAYAMANNA - O.CIST

Hails from the Parish of Mattakotuwa, is the son of Mr. J.M. Kingsley Jayamanna and Mrs. N.B. Rani, born on February 7, 1981. He is the eldest in the family and has a younger brother. Having started his primary education at Sri Dharmarama Vidyalaya, he finished his secondary education at

St. Joseph Vaz College, Wennappuwa.

He entered the Order of Cistercian in 2007 and did his Congregational Studies at the Holy Cross Monastery in Austria. He obtained his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the National Seminary Ampitiya. On July 19, 2014 he made his perpetual vows becoming a fully-fledged member of the Cisterian Order and in October 19, 2014 he was ordained a deacon. He practiced his diaconate at St. James the Great Church, Mutwal.

He will celebrate his first Holy Mass of thanksgiving on April 19, 2015 at 4.30 p.m. at the Church of the Mother of Good Voyage, Mattakotuwa.



## THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

The Lord Jesus, "whom the Father has sent into the world" (Jn 10:36) has made his whole Mystical Body a sharer in the anointing of the Spirit with which he himself is anointed. (1) In him all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood; they offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, and they proclaim the perfections of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. (2) Therefore, there is no member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole Body; but each one ought to hallow Jesus in his heart, (3) and in the spirit of prophecy bear witness to Jesus. (4)

The same Lord, however, has established ministers among his faithful to unite

them together in one body in which, "not all the members have the same function" (Rom 12:4). These ministers in the society of the faithful are able by the sacred power of orders to offer sacrifice and to forgive sins, (5) and they perform their priestly office publicly for men in the name of Christ. Therefore, having sent the apostles just as he himself been sent by the Father, (6) Christ, through the apostles themselves, made their successors, the bishops, (7) sharers in his consecration and mission. The office of their ministry has been handed down, in a lesser degree indeed, to the priests. (8) Established in the order of the priesthood they can be co-workers of the episcopal order for the proper fulfillment of the

apostolic mission entrusted to priests by Christ. (9)

The office of priests, since it is connected with the episcopal order, also, in its own degree, shares the authority by which Christ builds up, sanctifies and rules his Body. Wherefore the priesthood, while indeed it presupposes the sacraments of Christian initiation, is conferred by that special sacrament; through it priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are signed with a special character and are conformed to Christ the Priest in such a way that they can act in the person of Christ the Head. (10)

**PRESBYTERORUM ORDINIS  
POPE PAUL VI  
DECEMBER 7, 1965**



## Rev. Fr. Stanley Abeysekera - Shepherd and Educationist, His Piety and His Commitment to Task...

### HE LIVED HIS LIFE AND LIVED IT TO THE FULL

One cannot help being baffled before the overwhelming task of formulating words to write about a great stalwart in the calibre of the personality of Rev. Dr. Stanley Abeysekera.

#### Priest of God

A strict disciplinarian in the person of Father Abeysekera was a gift to the local church in the Archdiocese. His ability to compromise, subservient nature to commit himself in obedience to the superiors, willingness to permeate the fragrance of Good News were outspoken and outstanding landmarks that were in his possession as a priest. His appointments in almost all the apostolates wherein he worked with fervour marked a turning point and left his unparalleled hallmark as a holy priest.

#### Spiritual Commitment

His spirituality and commitment to God marked a very special feature in him. In the days of his graceful retirement age back at St. Joseph's College, his forte as an exemplary spiritual father was even seen more vividly than ever before. Despite his indisposed nature with hardly seeable eyesight and with frail physique, he was one of the first persons to be in the Chapel to offer Holy Mass in the morning. When at a time, he could not, perhaps, completely see, he joyfully waited in the chapel for another priest to come and concelebrate with him. Anyone at St. Joseph's would have seen him praying for long hours before the Blessed Sacrament before he went to sleep. One can be taken by surprise to see, sometimes, even with much fatigue in his face, how he cheerfully knelt with others for Benediction. And, though weak and fragile, he appeared robust in his enthusiasm and stood before the statue of our Heavenly Mother with other priests to pray the Rosary. His reflections during Services, which sometimes come off the cuff, touched the very recesses of the listeners.

#### Rector of St. Joseph's

His tenure as Rector marked vintage for St. Joseph's. The appointment of Rev. Fr. Stanley Abeysekera as the 10th Rector of St. Joseph's College, the flagship of Catholic education in Sri Lanka was a major turning point in its perpetual effort to prepare great personalities for the society and its attempt to not to deviate from its principal goal and objective of producing men



of faith, knowledge and virtue. In this daunting endeavor, he made available a happy, caring and stimulating environment where children would recognize and achieve their fullest potential, he set before the children high standards of learning and distinguished ideals for accomplishment and kept aloft the invincible Josephian spirit intact.

He added considerably adequate facilities to the College which obviously enhanced opportunities for the students to grow gracefully in their efforts to become men of knowledge and virtue. He appeared in majestic outfit and gigantic personality traits before his students and teachers and proved his prowess as a dignified and diligent educationist and brought significant changes in the formation of young Josephians.

His appointment as Rector was one of the best things that could have happened to this College. His abilities, commitment and hard work undoubtedly blazed a trail of glory within the precincts of St. Joseph's and the very essence of his work there will be remembered by many a generation yet unborn.

#### Joyful Companion

Cheerful and loving as he was, he would always entertain the crowds with singing and dancing. His ability to adapt himself according to the circumstances, feel one with anyone irrespective of status, position or age, to love with a heart outspoken and to relish the company of friends and loved ones were some of the magnificent traits of this stupendous personality.

He greeted anyone whom he met with his much known slogan, 'God loves you, and so do I...' and made people happy with his cheerful approach. Only a

very few knew that it was only a humble, simple, modest and meek human being that was hidden inside this mammoth personality that at times, frightened those who approached him for the first time. His passion for the poor penetrated their hearts as they approached him for any solicitude and words of comfort.

#### Extraordinary Abilities

One of the most distinguished talents that helped Fr. Abeysekera in his effort in College's formative economy was his ability to converse and write in English, his acquaintance with English literature and orthodoxy in the mother tongue. This rare blend was yet another benchmark of a person of unremitting ability. Fr. Abeysekera used his God-given talents to maximize his service to God and humanity.

His ability to stand for what he believed stood pre-eminent. When it came to the matters within the scope of his work and responsibility, he committed himself with entirety to accomplish the task irrespective of the external challenges and tests. He left no stone unturned to reach the desired goal. His goals were often other-centered and others became the beneficiaries.

#### Conclusion

We are much saddened by the sudden demise of this resolute son of God. While we condole with the bereaved family members and Josephian family, for whom he is still the mentor par excellence, we raise him to God in our prayers. We look at his death with a distressed heart for he was a model for the young priests to look up to.

He lived his life and lived it to the full. His life is an unbelievable saga and his missionary pursuit is a joyful legend. His abiding filial relationship with God is an invigorating affinity and his desire to blossom forth and further the Kingdom of God is a soul-stirring enterprise.

May God take good care of him until we meet in those Beautiful Shores. God loves you, Fr. Stanley and so do all of us.

**Rev. Fr. Gemunu Dias**

*Rector - St. Joseph's College, Wattala*

## With Rev. Fr. Theophane Wickremaratne OSB mentor, guide, counsellor, father

Rev. Father Theophane Wickremaratne brought the Cursillo Movement to Sri Lanka and was the Counsellor Director of this Movement till his death on March 11, 1992.

My first encounter with Rev. Father Theophane was on the train to Kalutara to attend the Cursillo week-end at Mt. Eden in 1979. Having heard about his work and accomplishments, I had imagined him to be a younger person. I was surprised when I saw him with his silver crop. But he had a youthful expression on his face when he spoke.

He held us spellbound with his eloquent speech at the week-end. His humorous anecdotes were punctuated with his characteristic chuckles which developed into a crescendo of laughter which was really infectious. His doctrinal talks were charged with spirituality and delivered with conviction and passion.

The Eucharistic Celebration was an integral part of his life. He celebrated Mass even when he was on his sick-bed. Mass celebrated by Father was a touching experience. He was also meticulous about the preparation of the altar for Mass and also the choice of hymns based on the theme.

The Sacraments became meaningful when he administered them. When administering Baptism, he explained the ritual stage by stage. He attached great importance to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Anyone who approached him for Confession was not turned away under any circumstance. The counselling and Spiritual Direction that a penitent received at the Confessional and the healing power of absolution cannot be easily forgotten. He saw to it that the Sacrament of Christian Perfection was not taken lightly. He always stressed that we should not wait till the point of death for it to be administered.

Another predominant feature of his spirituality was his devotion to Mother Mary. The love that he had for Our Blessed Mother was much in evidence in



the first Saturday Devotions which were really inspiring and well attended because Father guided his flock through the Marian Devotions and also spoke about Our Blessed Mother and her role in the Salvific Plan with much fervour. There were many instances in his life which he unfolded to us with great simplicity, humility and sometimes with tears in his eyes of how Our Blessed Mother protected him from many a danger of both soul and body.

Father was a stickler for discipline and formation. I can remember once at a breakfast during a Moratuwa Ultreya, he asked me to start the Grace before meals in Sinhala. I was right next to Father and was rather nervous because I did not know the full prayer. Anyway I started it and fortunately most of the others who knew it continued. I mumbled something indistinctly and hoped that Father had not heard it. But I couldn't hoodwink Father. He said, "what did you mumble just now? Priscilla, you don't know your Grace before meals. Go and learn it." Yet he was not a rigid disciplinarian. He could also be flexible when occasions arose.

Father was very concerned about others and was selfless in his attitudes towards them. During Cursillo week-ends he personally saw to the needs of the Rollistas, candidates and the kitchen staff. Although sick himself, he went to visit sick people and blessed them and comforted them. He never sent away any person who came to see him, but somehow found the time to attend to his or her needs. Sometimes it meant sharing his meals with people. I have memories of tasting Father's soups and desserts of his own special brands. Sometimes he himself prepared his own soup and put what-

## Appreciation

ever available at hand into it. It was a palatable blend of Kohila, soya, onions and once I found even olives in it. Anything that was not detrimental to his asthma went into it. It was pitiful to see him struggle with his asthmatic wheeze even during his talks. But that did not deter him from giving of his best.

Father was personally interested in the families of Cursillistas. He visited them whenever he got the opportunity. Unless there were unavoidable circumstances, he never refused invitations to birthdays and other occasions. He saw to it that every family had done the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart and the Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Our family was particularly fortunate in having been able to entertain him due to our close proximity to the Cenacle. My husband and I regarded him as our own "Papa" and discussed our little problems with him and asked for his advice on certain matters. He was also very fond of children and had a way with them. He was fond of my son and made him his altar server when he was small.

I don't know much about Father's activities before 1979 except what we heard from his own lips. I can remember him saying that before he joined the Cursillo Movement, he had been putting up buildings wherever he went. After that he had become a builder for God's Kingdom. Yes, he certainly built up souls. The souls that he built up will not forget his deep spirituality. It was this spirituality that sustained him even when he was put in the crucible of suffering to be tried like gold in the furnace. It was not only the physical suffering that he bore; but also mental suffering. All this he bore with stoical courage and humility.

Rev. Father Theophane was a magnanimous personality, a priest par excellence and to me personally a loving father in every sense of the word. I thank God for having brought him into my life and into the lives of many others who remember him with love and gratitude.



**Contd. from Pg 1****Well done, God's.....**

The Funeral Mass was presided by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith.

On Monday his mortal remains were brought to St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10, for all Josephians to pay their last respects for a teacher and priest whom they loved and respected.

An Old Boy of De Mazenod College, Kandana and St. Joseph's College, Colombo Rev. Fr. Stanley Abeysekera was born on February 3, 1935 to Don John Abey-

sekera and Dona Beatrice Margaret who were parishioners of Rilaula, Kandana. He was ordained to the priesthood on December 21, 1963.

Fr. Stanley's first appointment as a priest was to St. Joseph College, Colombo in May 1964, where he served as Prefect of Boarders and as O/L teacher in his favourite subject, Mathematics. His next appointment was to St. John Bosco College, Hanwella and St. Thomas' College, Kotte in 1969 where he was appointed Rector in a short time. In 1974 he was appointed Parish Priest of St. Thomas' Church, Kotte.

After obtaining a Master's Degree in Education from the University of London and a subsequent Doctorate in education in 1982, Fr. Stanley was appointed

Rector of St. Joseph's College, Colombo in May 1983. His excellent vision, foresight and administrative skills helped the school witness many achievements, both in the fields of academics and extra-curricular activities. The Enderamulla branch of St. Joseph's College, was initiated during his rectorship.

In 2013, Fr. Stanley celebrated fifty years of sacerdotal service in the vineyard of the Lord, at the Chapel of St. Joseph's College, Colombo - a monument of elegance and beauty and which was renovated while he was Rector.

The 'Messenger' offers its condolences to the family of Fr. Stanley and assure them prayers for the repose of his soul.

**Contd. from Pg 1****Easter 'Urbi et Orbi' Message.....**

Enable us to care for our brothers and sisters struck by the Ebola epidemic in Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and to care for those suffering from so many other diseases which are also spread through neglect and dire poverty.

Comfort all those who cannot celebrate this Easter with their loved ones because they have been unjustly torn from their affections, like the many persons, priests and laity, who in various parts of the world have been kidnapped.

Comfort those who have left their own lands to migrate to places offering hope for a better future and the possibility of living their lives in dignity and, not in-

frequently, of freely professing their faith.

We ask you, Lord Jesus, to put an end to all war and every conflict, whether great or small, ancient or recent.

We pray in a particular way for Syria, beloved Syria, that all those suffering the effects of the conflict can receive needed humanitarian aid and that neither side will again use deadly force, especially against the defenseless civil population, but instead boldly negotiate the peace long awaited and long overdue!

Jesus, Lord of glory, we ask you to comfort the victims of fratricidal acts of violence in Iraq and to sustain the hopes raised by the resumption of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

We beg for an end to the conflicts in the Central African Republic and a halt to the brutal terrorist attacks in parts of Nigeria and the acts of violence in

South Sudan.

We ask that hearts be turned to reconciliation and fraternal concord in Venezuela.

By your resurrection, which this year we celebrate together with the Churches that follow the Julian calendar, we ask you to enlighten and inspire the initiatives that promote peace in Ukraine so that all those involved, with the support of the international community, will make every effort to prevent violence and, in a spirit of unity and dialogue, chart a path for the country's future. On this day, may they be able to proclaim, as brothers and sisters, that Christ is risen, *Khrystos voskres!*

Lord, we pray to you for all the peoples of the earth: you who have conquered death, grant us your life, grant us your peace!

***Wishing you a Happy Easter!***

**Contd. from Pg 1****A Touch of .....**

us do have. He had no vehicle but just an Indian scooter for his travelling, which was long and well used. He had no antiques or furniture to be transported from place to place.

He was lovable and loved by the young and old alike. Little ones gathered around him for toffees and buns. He always welcomed them and never turned them away, reminding us of the great virtue of the Lord who welcomed the little ones. "Whoever welcomes one

of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me" (Mark 9:37).

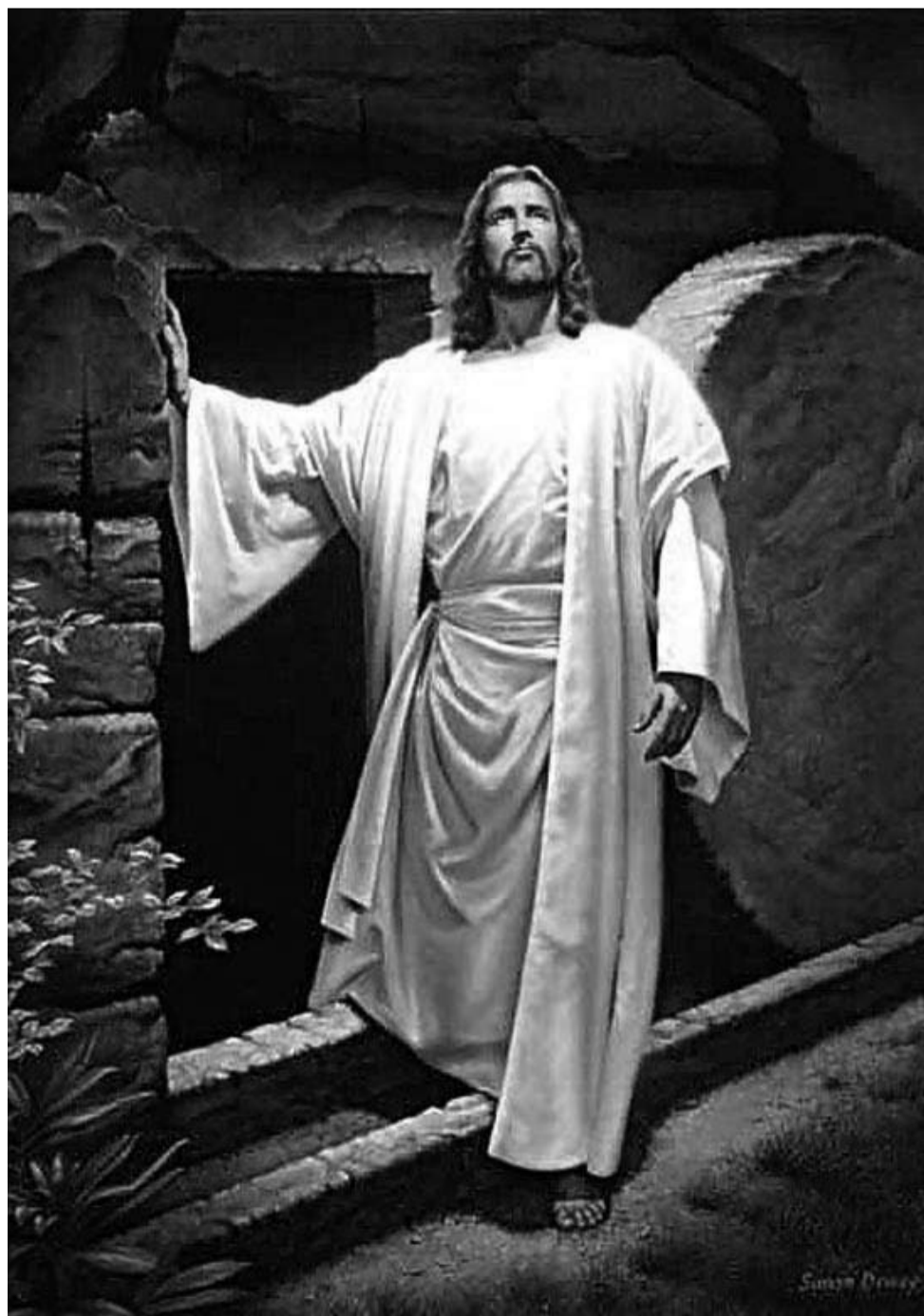
Father Edwin was never in a hurry to accomplish anything in life. He never glorified himself by seeking self achievements or worldly benefits. The mundane and ordinary things in life did not matter to him - they held no awe to him. For him, there were better things than running after earthly matters. The spiritual side was of great importance to him.

There was this funny caption which was descriptive of Father Edwin: "Let the sky fall down, he

would dare not to bother." He was the conventional "cool guy." Even if a calamity struck the world, he was never ruffled. He would calmly listen to it. Such was his character.

He was a class of his own. His charisma was such it generated our interest. Many of us, priests, would talk of his character which brought a smile to our faces when we think of the humble sayings and deeds of this gentle priest of God and made us aware of the Pride of a Silent Priest.

***Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatillake***





# The Great Drama of Life

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve; Him day and night within His presence. They shall hunger no more, the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat, for the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to the springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes: (Rev : 7-15, 17). Let us pause a while and ponder whether we have understood the Divine plan of our Heavenly Father who will reward all those who are ready to receive the crown of righteousness.

There is a channel that all those who wish to be saved has to pass and that is from darkness to light, from ignorance to enlightenment. In the scriptures we read "The earth was without form and void; and darkness upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. (Genesis 1: 2 - 4) Now we see how God by His word created Light, from darkness. We know God made everything perfect and last of all He created man according to His own image to worship Him in truth and in spirit. Therefore anyone who seeks the Truth is seeking God, irrespective of religious terminology. But the truth which is the light was dimmed and a spell of darkness was once again spread over the world as man became selfish. As such the whole human race was heading for doom. Yet we know God so loved the world and gave His only begotten Son, to give light to those who sit in the darkness and the shadow of death (John 3: 16). Through the first man's sin, death came upon man. Christ Jesus became the victim, without any sin. He brought upon Himself the sins of others, and became the Lamb of God who offered Himself through perfect love; by fulfilling the will of the Heavenly Father.

Disobedience brought forth death but obedience of the Son of God brought about salvation, to the whole human race. This is the turning point. By the power of the word of God, He was conceived in the



Womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Holy Son of God did everything in union with the Father, to complete the great drama of life. He had no sin so the grave could not hold Him, thereby after three days according to the set plan of God, Christ was raised from the dead, bringing forth the New Testament, We see Jesus who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering and death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting, that He for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering (Hebrews 12: 9 - 10). Though he had the Divine quality of God, being his only Son. He was human as well, because He was born of Mary. From birth to death He was perfect in every way. So he could not make any mistake, Yet being, the Son of Man He was tempted like anyone of us. Being only the appointed High Priest of

God for the purpose of salvation He could resist all temptations. He faced the cruelest death, shedding every drop of His blood. The shed blood became the ransom for our salvation. Thereby He became the Lord and Saviour of the world, who died for our sins and was raised for our justification, We ought to strive hard to go the same way. As He is 'the way' we should follow Him who is the true light.

If this true light is in us, darkness which is our sinful nature will disappear. The Heavenly Father will bestow all the grace and power to meditate on His holiness. Then, we will be able to live, walk, talk, and be simple like Jesus. Wherever we are, at home, workplace, or street, the spirit of Christ should be reflected. Even if we fail and commit a sin we can always repent and receive forgiveness. For God is ever willing to forgive all those who come to Him. If only we will try we will be able to combat every evil force. Through the great wisdom that God gives us, if we try our best to keep our spiritual eye wide open we will be able to see and understand how God acts to bring His Kingdom upon this earth. Sound the Trumpets and shake the earth that the ends of the earth may hear the message of God. Only then will we be able to gather round the King of Glory and sing praises.

Awake! Awake all people the young and the old. Let us proclaim the good news of the Lord. "What I tell you in darkness utter in the light, and what you heard whispered, proclaim upon housetops". If we do not follow God's way, the consequences will be death and endless misery! Therefore all those who yearn to be saved will have to follow Him who performed the Great Drama of Life.

In the paths of my judgments, O Lord we wait for Thee; thy memorial name in the desire of our soul. My spirit within me earnestly seeks Thee. For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn of righteousness (Isaiah 26: 8 - 9).

By:Laurinda Jayasuriya

## "Teaching is a beautiful but badly paid profession," says Pope Francis



In an audience with the Italian Catholic Educators' Union, Pope Francis asked teachers "to love difficult" students more and said that a computer can teach content but to transmit values you need a good teacher.

"It's a pity teachers are badly paid...because it is not just about the time they spend in school, but the time they spend in preparation, the time they spend on each individual student. Pope

Francis told his audience. "It is a job, because it allows us to see the people who are entrusted to our care grow day after day. It is a little like being parents, at least spiritually. It is a great responsibility!" the Holy Father said.

"Teaching," he added, "is a serious commitment that only a mature and balanced personality can take on. Such a commitment can be intimidating, but remem-

ber that no teacher is ever alone: They always share their work with other colleagues and the entire educational community to which they belong.

"Indeed, as Jesus taught us, the Law and the Prophets are summed up in two commandments: Love the Lord your God and love your neighbour (cf. Mt 22:34-40). We can ask ourselves: Who is a teacher's neighbour? The students! It is with them that he or she spends their days. It is they who await guidance, direction, a response - and, before that, good questions!"

The Pope asked teachers to love difficult students more ... and there are some who really try our patience, but we

have to love them more ... those who do not want to study, those who find themselves in difficult conditions, the disabled and foreigners, who today pose a great challenge for schools."

Moving away from his prepared speech, Pope Francis also recognised and underlined that "teaching is a beautiful profession, ... it's a pity teachers are badly paid...". Here his audience applauded. "It is unfair, it's true," he stressed.

"I think of my own country, where many teachers have to work double shifts just to be able to get a decent wage.

But what state will a teacher be in after a double shift?" he asked.



"Teachers are by nature open to the future, because there are always new generations of young people to whom you may transmit your wealth of knowledge and values. On a professional level it is important to update teaching skills, especially in light of new technologies, but teaching is not just a job; it is a relationship in which each teacher must feel fully involved as

a person, to give meaning to the educational task towards their students."

"I encourage you," Pope Francis urged at the end of his address, "to renew your passion for humanity in the process of formation, and to be witnesses of life and hope. I also ask you, please, to pray for me, and I cordially bless you all.



# The Nazarene's Last Supper



It was the evening of the Passover. The Nazarene had given prior instructions to Peter and John, the two apostles closest to Him to prepare the Passover meal. He had made arrangements for the preparation and partaking of the meal in a large furnished upstairs room of a house, the owner of which was known to Him. It was a secluded enough place for this close farewell meeting with His disciples.

In the meantime in another part of the city, another of His disciples Judas had secretly made a bargain with the chief priests to betray the Nazarene for thirty pieces of silver. Both parties were pleased with the transaction and were gloating over it. Judas said "He on whom I bestow a kiss, hold Him fast. He is the Nazarene Jesus"

It was late evening, not yet dusk when the Nazarene arrived at the venue robed as usual. In His long white seamless garment, his face shadowed by His shoulder-length hair, strands of which wafted across

His face; eagerly accompanied by his twelve apostles pressing on every side.

The Nazarene took His place at the table which was laid out, the apostles leaning over eagerly to listen to Him. Then abruptly He arose confusing the apostles by His action. Fetching a basin of water He began in all humility to wash the feet of His disciples. They were taken aback. What was this? Their Lord and master washing their feet? When it came to Peter's turn He strongly protested. "No master! not mine!" The Nazarene gave Him a look and firmly answered "You shall not be a sharer with me without it." "Oh! Then not only my feet but my hands and my head too" He exclaimed enthusiastically.

The Nazarene the God-man that He was, sadly knew there were two betrayers here. Judas who had already treacherously betrayed His Master, for a paltry thirty pieces of silver and Peter so close to Him and yet He would say "I know not the man"

Having performed His act of humility, washing the feet of His disciples, He sat at the table surrounded by them He took the bread broke it and shared it with them.

"This is my body, take now and share"

Likewise with the wine "This is my saving blood poured out for you"

"Do this in memory of me.

Do this in memory of all that we've shared"

Thereby instituting the Holy Eucharist - the Body and Blood of Christ.

Then as man he couldn't help remarking "The

one who will betray me is here at the table with me" The disciples were appalled." Is it I Lord?" "Is it I?" they queried anxiously. So said Judas too and the Nazarene quietly answered "You have said it" Judas as quietly slipped away. Peter on the other hand was greatly perturbed and assured the Nazarene he would always be with him but he was silenced when the Nazarene spoke "Peter before the cock crow twice you will deny me thrice."

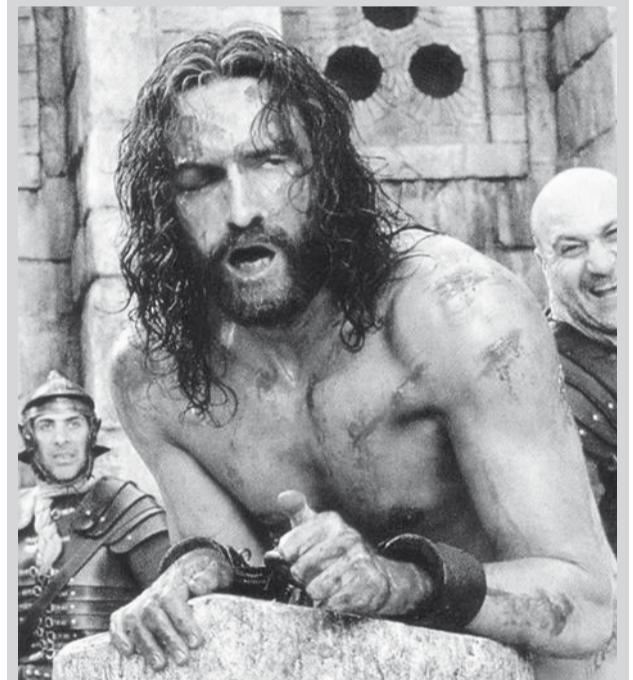
Having partaken of the supper with His disciples he arose and sallied forth leaving the city for the Mount of Olives, to Gethsemane, to go through His destined agony bereft of all consolation, distanced from His disciples, betrayed, forsaken to cry out in agony to His heavenly father as His sweat turned to drops of blood that beaded His forehead.

"Father if it be possible let this chalice pass from me

Nevertheless not my will but Thine be done"

*Jeannette Cabraal*

## LENTEN SEASON



A majority of Sri Lanka's population is Buddhists. Catholics who are in a minority celebrate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The Season of lent begins on Ash Wednesday and after 40 days Easter begins. During The Lenten season we Catholics prepare for Easter by prayer, penance, fasting and making a confession of our sins. We are reminded that Jesus suffered and died on a cross for our sins. He gave his life for our salvation. Over 2000 years ago, Jesus was taken before Pilate and He was condemned to death. Carrying His Cross on shoulders Jesus went up to Calvary where He was crucified.

Think for a few minutes and reflect whether you made the way of the cross, made your confession, did works of Charity during the season of Lent. Think of the time you fought with someone or in secret blamed someone? However, we are all human. Doing something wrong becomes a habit. "To err is human, forgive is Divine". We also must forgive those who have wronged us, "better late than never." Start it now and forgive all your enemies.

During the Lenten season we must get closer to Jesus. But many of us are too busy while others find time to repent and get closer to God. If we are true followers of Jesus then we must overcome all barriers that prevent us from getting closer to Jesus. Our easy way of living and new technologies must be some obstacles that prevent us from becoming better Catholics. Our Easter will be happy if we overcome all barriers and we forgive our enemies.

*Sachin Aroshan*

*De La Salle Juniorate - Colombo 15*

## Our Glorious Good Friday Heritage



Mary became our Holy Mother, and the Cross became our symbol of Christian identity, on Good Friday. "No one has greater love than this to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13)

Christ himself did it as he said it. He did that for all mankind on that black Friday at afternoon on Mount Calvary. And hanging from the Cross there. He showed His own mother and said "Behold Thy Mother."

What we inherited therefore from that great Sacrifice was the Holy Cross of Jesus, and His Holy Mother. Thereafter the Cross became the symbol of indemnity of all Christians everywhere, and Mary became our heavenly Mother that is how that black Friday at Golgotha became

Good Friday for the whole world.

When Jesus was Mary's own son, He showed John to her and said "Behold thy son," And John too had his own mother when Jesus showed Mary to him and said "Behold thy Mother."

John thus symbolised the whole mankind, and that is how we become children of Mary on Good Friday. Hence it won't be wrong to say that Mary became the Mother of God on Christmas Day, and the Mother of all on Good Friday.

And the Holy Cross of Good Friday will remain with us as long as we live; and thereafter upon our graves

The Cross is our mark of Christian indemnity. If you see a Cross somewhere you are sure

to find at least a few Christians around and a Christian place of worship close by We do not plant crosses at every road junction.

The Cross is Sacred to us. It is also our holy and harmless weapon against our enemies. When we wake up in the morning and go to bed at night, and when we begin and end our daily prayers, we make the sign of the Cross on our foreheads and on our chests (and many of us on our lips too) and ask Our Lord to save us from our enemies with the Sign of the Holy Cross." It is very clear in the Sinhala version. We also make the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads, lips and on our breasts before we begin the Gospel reading at Holy Mass everyday.

When we make the sign of the Cross on our foreheads, on our lips and on our chests we ask Our Lord to bless our thoughts, our words and our deeds. The forehead represents our brains, lips represent our tongues and our chests represent our hearts. Those are the key organs that will make

us holy or unholy.

That, then is the power of the Holy Cross that we inherited from Christ on Good Friday. And Mary whom we inherited as our Holy Mother, also on Good Friday, will stand by us until Our dying day.

"Pray for us at the hour of our death." We say, whenever we say the "Hail Mary, and no less than fifty three times when we Recite the Holy Rosary.

Our own mothers may not be there near us at the hour of our death. And how, when and at what time we would die, we wouldn't know either.

But Our Blessed Mother is sure to be there near us when we die." Behold thy son" was what Christ told her just before He died on the Cross.

Other Christian communities, whose source of inspiration is also the Holy Bible, should read John 19:25. And thereafter John accepted her into his house." Is Verse 27 let all other Christians too follow suit. Alleluia.

*Alfred Perera*



Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed; let us celebrate the feast then, in the Lord. (1 Cor. 5:7-8)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B  
5th April - 12th April

Sun: EASTER SUNDAY  
Acts 10:34,37-43; Col.3:1-4 or 1 Cor.5:6b-8  
Jn.20:1-9 or Mk.16:1-7  
Mon: Acts. 2:14,22-33; Mt.28:8-15  
Tue: Acts. 2:36-41; Jn.20:11-18  
Wed: Acts.3:1-10; Lk.24:13-35  
Thu: Acts. 3:11-26; Lk.24:35-48  
Fri: Acts.4:1-12; Jn.21:1-14  
Sat: Acts. 4:13-21; Mk.16:9-15  
Sun: SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER  
(DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY)  
Acts. 4:32-35; 1 Jn. 5:1-6; Jn.20:19-31

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

**Response:** *This is the day that we rise with Him, let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

Let us pray that the physical and glorified resurrection of our Lord reminds us of our fundamental belief that we too will rise one day in our glorified body and that till then at every Eucharistic Celebration we prepare for it by dying to sin and being born to a new life.

**Response:** *This is the day that we rise with Him, let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

Let us pray to the Lord that we make every human effort to help our eyes of faith to experience the risen Christ in all persons.

**Response:** *This is the day that we rise with Him, let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

Let us pray for those whose situation of material poverty draws them down disabling them to rise in fullness with Christ; may those who could afford within our community look after them in brotherhood so that they too would share our Easter joy.

**Response:** *This is the day that we rise with Him, let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

## EASTER SUNDAY GOSPEL MEDITATION (Jn. 20:1-9) – Year B



Today, we celebrate Christ's victory over the most feared enemy of humankind, death itself.

Let us place ourselves in the gospel scene. In his gospel, St. John says it is the first day of the week and still dark. Looking back on the events of the previous day, I am wracked with guilt. It had been a long, hard, heart-wrenching day. I saw them crucify my Lord. I did nothing. I watched and cried. I could not sleep this night. It is just before dawn. I hear the rustle of feet outside. Have the Jews come to arrest me, too? I open the door gently. I take a peep outside. I heave a sigh of relief. It is Mary Magdalene.

This is the woman who wept at Jesus' feet. So, I whisper to her, "Mary, what on earth are you doing outside at this time of the night?" She says, "I am going to the tomb." I blurt out in surprise, "What?" Then sanity prevails, and I agree to accompany her. We walk along in silence, engrossed in our own thoughts. My mind keeps racing back to the past. I remember Mary anointed the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair (cf. Jn. 11:2). I also recall Jesus' words, "her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; for she has shown great love." As we walk on I marvel at this woman, slight of built but large of heart. Love propels her to the tomb.

After a while, I ask, "Mary, what are you going to the tomb for?" "To anoint the Lord" she replies. "I will help you, too", is what I say. She wants to anoint the body, to slow the process of decomposition so that she could have the Lord with her a little while longer. I want one last glimpse of Jesus. We are both locked in the 'darkness of ignorance' because unknown to us a great mystery awaits us at the tomb. A strange sight greets us. The

stone is rolled away from the tomb. Mary gasps in shock. I say in great dismay, 'They have stolen his body.' Our minds are locked in ignorance. We can think of no other possibility. We rush back to inform Peter. There is a big commotion as Peter and the Beloved Disciple rush to the tomb. Not to be out done, Mary Magdalene and I, follow too. The Beloved Disciple runs fleet-footed like a deer. Love propels him like a rocket. But out of respect, he waits for Peter and allows him to enter the tomb first. As we file in, we see the *Soudarion* (the handkerchief placed over Jesus' face) and the *Othonia* (the linen cloths in which he was wrapped). The trappings of death – like the cross and candle sticks which are placed behind a coffin – have been neatly laid aside. Jesus is not imprisoned in them. Even Peter is astounded by the sight. Only the Beloved Disciple says 'He is risen as he said'.

I still am not convinced, and so I stutter, "Are you sure"? He replies with conviction, 'Look, the Lord has escaped from these trappings of death. See how they are neatly folded. They have lost their 'venom' – their power to inflict the sorrow of death!' The Beloved Disciple was the one who was with the mother of the Lord beneath the cross. Even a little sign like the linen cloths leads him to faith because he was close to Jesus at crucial moments of his life, especially at Calvary. I do not say anything. I look on in silence. So, the Beloved Disciple continues to explain, "Remember the words of Isaiah: 'He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will any one hear his voice in the streets; He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory'.

Our Lord was born in a

manger, unknown to and unheralded by the world which still continues in ignorance and sin, even after his resurrection. They are from below. To believe in the resurrection, we must be 'born anew.' This is why Jesus said to Nicodemus, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' But this will not be the only sign. Knowing our every weakness, Jesus will appear again. He loves us too much to leave us on our own." I hope so too, as I plead, "Please Lord, appear to me, in person. I need to believe, too." In answer, Jesus appears to over 500 hundred people (cf. 1 Cor. 15:6).

**Short Prayer:**

We hail thee, Saviour and Lord! For thou art truly risen! Lord, Jesus, my mind is still enveloped in the 'darkness of ignorance'. I keep on making wrong conclusions. I am still suspicious and negative in outlook. Yet, I love you, too. Lord Jesus, when Mary Magdalene came to anoint your dead body, you were alive and risen! Her motives were pure but her actions were wrong. Dear Lord, this is my situation too. Wrong judgments abound in my life. Regret and remorse follow in my steps. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate (Rom. 7:15). Reveal thyself to me, and lead me out of my confusion. Leave me not, though I am a sinful person! Grant me the joy of your resurrection.

Rev. Fr. Nilindra Gunsekera sss

## "He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you" (Mark 16,1-8)

1. It is 6 in the evening; the holy Sabbath is over; the day of the sun has just dawned. The group of ministering women who have followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and watched His passion, death and burial seem to be very busy. They get involved on Jesus' behalf, for they buy spices in order to go and anoint Him. Is the intent to anoint a corpse several days after burial and especially in the hot climate of the Passover time in Palestine historically plausible? It is plausible, in burial practices of the first century AD. Above all, their love of Jesus knows no bounds!

2. The women visit the tomb. They find the stone rolled back and the tomb made empty. It could be empty for various reasons. Someone – friend (Matt 28,13-15: disciples) or foe (John 20) – could take the Body away. But the "young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe" explains the real reason. Unlike the young man who fled naked leaving behind his linen cloth after Jesus' arrest, this young man clothed in a white robe proclaims the Easter message. Jesus has been raised from the dead by God the Father (who makes things happen in the scene without making His appearance:

is the stone not rolled away?) and hence the tomb is laid empty. "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised." The Resurrection explains the emptiness of the tomb. Death is overcome by God; and the tomb is emptied by the Resurrection. The disciples would in future testify to this fact with their blood.

3. The women are commissioned with a very important task by the young man: "But go and tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.'" Why is Galilee given this prominence? Why is this reunion in Galilee? First, Galilee was the place of Jesus' public ministry. Second, Galilee is that of the Gentiles – i.e. the people looked down upon or marginalized whom Jesus is in solidarity with. Hence the disciples ought to continue the mission which He started in Galilee.

4. Jesus thus intends a reunion with His disciples, though they were unfaithful to Him at His passion and death. What is the impact of this Jesus' reunion upon the Christians of Mark? The Marcan Christians, especially the leaders, were leaving

the faith due to religious persecutions. Hence Mark tries to show how Jesus was always good towards His disciples. He chose them, patiently instructed them, while some (Peter, James and John) experienced His life quite closely. Yet they did not understand Him fully, left Him, when He most needed them – namely in the Passion. "And they all left him and fled" (14,50); "Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked" (14,51-52). He died almost all alone. However after the Resurrection, He takes the initiative to forgive them, meet them in Galilee and continue the mission wherein it was once started. The failures of the disciples are redressed; the failing followers are restored to discipleship. The promised reunion in Galilee, "But after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee" (14,28), will take place. The lesson to the Marcan Christian community is not to be discouraged, since Jesus is always be faithful.

5. When engaged in mission, we may face persecution of all sorts from within and without. We could be oft misunderstood. Our rights could be barred. Our

mission could be sanctioned. Because of this heavy avalanche of internal and external persecution, we could easily falter, be discouraged and abandon the mission and the Lord. We too may sing Psalm 22 like Jesus on the cross – of course, in confidence "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" As a custom, we may attend the Easter Mass. But during the whole year we may live apart from the Lord enjoying the perks and privileges of not being His disciples in our work place, school or at home.

But the huge stone has been rolled away; the tomb remains emptied – to the amazement of the holy women, the faithful disciples. God had acted in deep silence; He had not abandoned His Son. Similarly He will act on our behalf, even before we think. The Risen Lord wishes to meet us in Galilee – the place where He once called us and made us His disciples. He waits till we get back to our ordinary Christian life and mission despite the heavy demands and difficulties of being an authentic Christian. Even if we fail, He will forgive us and be ready to meet us again in Galilee.

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Hettiarachchi