

REMEMBRANCE DAY

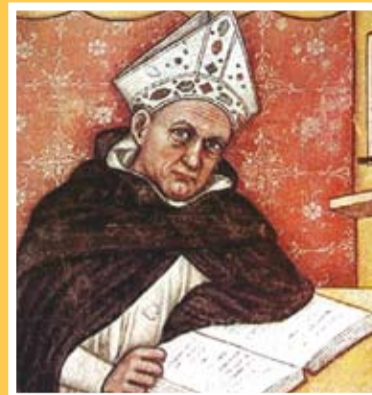


We remember Soldiers on the hillside
 We remember Soldiers on the hillside
 On this day Far away
 On this day Far away

Nov 11



St. Albert the Great



November 15

Messenger

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Colombo hosts Commonwealth Heads of State 2013



The Sri Lanka Government will hold the 23rd Commonwealth

Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), from November 15 to 17, 2013 at the BMICH, Colombo.

This will be the first time in 40 years that Queen Elizabeth II, the Head of the Commonwealth will not be present at the CHOGM. Representing the Queen will be Prince Charles.

Reports state that one main item to be considered at the meeting is a proposal to make the position of Head of the Commonwealth hereditary to

descendants of Queen Elizabeth II.

In 2012, the Commonwealth produced a nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$9.767 trillion, representing 15% of the world GDP when measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). This represents the second largest nominal GDP and GDP PPP in the world.

Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper,

has stated that he would not attend the meeting as a protest against Sri Lanka's failure to improve its human rights record.

A state-of-the-art media centre has been established at the main CHOGM venue at the BMICH, to facilitate coverage of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, by approximately 800 media personnel. The

media centre will be fully-equipped with live broadcasting facilities, briefing rooms, work stations, communications facilities and Internet access, among other services and will be open 24-hours a day during the executive sessions of CHOGM.

Synod on Family set for October 2014

L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper, states that Pope Francis has called for the third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops which is to take place in the Vatican from October 5-19, 2014, on the theme, 'The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization'.

The newspaper states that the Holy See Press Office announced this in a statement recently.

Meanwhile the Catholic World Report, published that the presentation of the preparatory document for this Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops took place in Vatican City on November 5, headed by



Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, Hungary, Bishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, and Archbishop Bruno Forte of Chieti-Vasto, Italy, respectively relator general, secretary general and special secretary of the Third Extraordinary Synod of Bishops.

The preparatory document, while somewhat long, indicates the direction being taken by Pope Francis as he and the bishops' focus on the

Patronal Feast and Birth Anniversary



Prayerful wishes to His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith November 15. Ad Multos Annos!

Bhakthi Prabodhanaya launches website



The 'Bhakthi Prabodhanaya', Sri Lanka's oldest magazine catering to the family, recently launched its website - www.bhakthiprabodhanaya.org. The magazine, started in 1899, has been published continuously up to date by the Province of Sri Lanka of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI).

Cardinal Cooray Memorial Oration

A Memorial Oration of the first Sri Lankan Archbishop and Cardinal, Servant of God, Thomas Cardinal Cooray, will be delivered by His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis, Archbishop Emeritus of Colombo and Chancellor of the University of Colombo, on Friday November 8, at 5.30 p.m. at the Don Peter Auditorium of Aquinas University College, Colombo 8.

Thank you for your excellent services, dear Excellency!



His Excellency, Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, Apostolic Nuncio to Sri Lanka since June 2009, will take up office as Apostolic Nuncio to the Ivory Coast in December, 2013.

During his term in Sri Lanka His Excellency Joseph Spiteri visited the dioceses and many parishes in the North and South.

We extend our prayerful wishes for his success in all his Apostolic Services.

Best Writer (2013) - Messenger



At the Catholic Literary Awards Day organised by the National Catholic Writers' Association, Mr. Francis Madiwela received the Award for the Best Catholic Writer of the Messenger for 2013. Picture shows Mr. Madiwela receiving the award from Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph, National Director Social Communications.

Nimal Perera

Special Seminar on Catholic Faith

There will be a Special Seminar on 'Catholic Faith' for the Catholics serving in Government Departments, Banks and the Forces organised by the Faith Animation Team of the Archdiocese of Colombo on Saturday, November 23, from 8.30 am to 3.30 pm, at the Archbishop's House, Borella. Rev. Fr. Cecil Joy Perera, the Director of the above evangelizing team, invites the faithful to contact him through the relevant Catholic Unions at their earliest.

- 8.30 am - Registration
- 9.00 am - Input Talk 01: "Upcoming Challenges to Catholic Faith" - Rev. Fr. Cecil Joy Perera
- 10.00 am - Tea break
- 10.30 am - Input Talk 02: "The Modern Face of Fundamentalism" - Mr. Nimal Fernando
- 12.30 pm - Lunch
- 1.15 pm - Group discussion
- 2.30 pm - Evaluation
- 3.30 pm - End of the programme

Rev. Fr. Cecil Joy Perera Director - Faith Animation Mission Archdiocese of Colombo

The agenda will be as follows:

FROM THE DIOCESES

Bishop Winston opens new building at Bandarawela



An additional new building for the Integral Education, Bible Apostolate and Catechetics, was blessed and declared opened by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. J. Winston Fernando sss, Bishop of Badulla at Bandarawela. A large gathering of Priests, Religious, Catechists, Sunday School children, parents, well-wishers and benefactors participated.

Media Unit of Badulla Diocese

The 133rd Annual Church Feast of St. Bruno's Thambakanda

The 133rd Annual Church Feast of St. Bruno's at Thambakanda in the Kurunegala Diocese was held recently.

Festive High Mass was officiated by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, assisted by Very Rev. Fr. Christy Leonard Fernando, Dean of Kuliyaipitiya Deanery, Rev. Fr. Thilakasiri Fernando (TOR), Principal of Loyala College, Bopitiya.

G.B.H. Livera

Elder's Day celebration at Kegalle Parish



The Senior Citizens of St. Mary's Parish Kegalle, along with the Sisters of Charity and the Lay Associates of the Sisters of Charity, organized a get-together for Senior Citizens of the Parish recently to celebrate Elders' Day and the 27th Elders' Week, in Sri Lanka.

The day's proceedings commenced under the patronage of the Parish Priest of Kegalle Rev. Fr. Milton Wicramasinghe and Assistant Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Tony Hapuarachchi at the Mission Hall.

In order to make this event a meaningful one a song composed by the Rev. Sisters, bringing to focus the appreciation

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Nayakakanda Parish on peace mission

The Parish Community of St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda will embark on a journey to strengthen relations with the Community of St. Joseph's Church at Kulumurippu, Mullaitivu, on December 6 and 7. The theme of the mission is 'A meaningful dialogue for reconciliation and peace'.

Parish Priest of St. Mary's Church, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilaka said the parishioners decided to set out on this journey at an appropriate time when extremist elements are at a peak in the country and added that a dialogue between the North and the South will help build peace and reconciliation.

"There has been a lapse in communication and interaction between the people from the North and the South for several years.

"A mission of sharing with the parish community in Mullaitivu will help re-build trust and friendship among people," Fr. Mahendra said.

The Parishioners about around 300 families, will share meals with the community at Kulumurippu.

"We will lay the foundation for a church and provide gift packs comprising kitchen utensils, stationery for school children, dry rations and household items for the families in the parish," Fr. Mahendra said. "This will be an ongoing mission to share with the brethren in the North and build relations with the rest of the country," he said.

Rev. Fr. K. Vincent said he welcomes the Parish Community of Nayakakanda which has decided to celebrate Christmas with the community in Kulumurippu who are going through immense hardships. A goodwill gesture of this nature will make a big difference in rebuilding trust and friendship between the North and the South, he said.

Nayakakanda Correspondent



Retreat - 5

Date: Sunday, November 17 - 22 Friday, 2013

Venue: Retreat House, Tewatta

Preacher: Rev. Fr. Justin Chauwan SSS

Name of Priest

- 1 Very Rev. Fr. Cyril Gamini Fernando
- 2 Rev. Fr. De Soyza Rohan
- 3 Rev. Fr. Anton Arunodaya
- 4 Rev. Fr. Asitha Niranjana
- 5 Rev. Fr. Attidiya Suran
- 6 Rev. Fr. Bertram Ranjith
- 7 Rev. Fr. Cecil Joy
- 8 Rev. Fr. Cooray Laknath
- 9 Rev. Fr. Dassanayaka Sharm
- 10 Rev. Fr. Daya Dharshana
- 11 Rev. Fr. Dewshan Asanka
- 12 Rev. Fr. Eumal Anton
- 13 Rev. Fr. Ferdinandez Marcus
- 14 Rev. Fr. Fernando Chaminda Roshan
- 15 Rev. Fr. Fernando Dinesh Jnr.
- 16 Rev. Fr. Fernando Linton
- 17 Rev. Fr. Fernando Samith Rangana
- 18 Rev. Fr. Fonseka Francis G.
- 19 Rev. Fr. Fonseka Manjula Niroshan
- 20 Rev. Fr. Gunathilaka Mahendra
- 21 Rev. Fr. Hettiarachchi Shantha Sagara
- 22 Rev. Fr. Jayamanna Victor Florensis
- 23 Rev. Fr. Jayananda Anton
- 24 Rev. Fr. Jayantha Nimal
- 25 Rev. Fr. Jayashantha Ananda Chrisantha
- 26 Rev. Fr. Joseph Benedict
- 27 Rev. Fr. Jude Denzil Lakshman
- 28 Rev. Fr. Kasun Ishara
- 29 Rev. Fr. Leo Camillus
- 30 Rev. Fr. Muthukudaarachchi Freely
- 31 Rev. Fr. Nagaratnam Manokumaran
- 32 Rev. Fr. Noel Sampath
- 33 Rev. Fr. Nonis Noel
- 34 Rev. Fr. Peitersz Ivan
- 35 Rev. Fr. Perera Jude Lakshantha
- 36 Rev. Fr. Perera Patrick Jnr.
- 37 Rev. Fr. Perera Prasanna Sanjeewa
- 38 Rev. Fr. Perera Tyronne
- 39 Rev. Fr. Perera Lalith Felix
- 40 Rev. Fr. Perera Gihan Ridley
- 41 Rev. Fr. Pradeep Kumar
- 42 Rev. Fr. Prameena Ishan
- 43 Rev. Fr. Prasad Indika
- 44 Rev. Fr. Prasad Perera
- 45 Rev. Fr. Priyanal Asanka
- 46 Rev. Fr. Ranjith Terry
- 47 Rev. Fr. Reyhart Bernard
- 48 Rev. Fr. Roshan Prasad
- 49 Rev. Fr. Ranasinghe Sylvester
- 50 Rev. Fr. Sumith Kumara
- 51 Rev. Fr. Terrence Kithsiri
- 52 Rev. Fr. Tyronne Ajith
- 53 Rev. Fr. Wijesooriya Lester
- 54 Rev. Fr. Withana Ananda

Rev. Fr. Lalith Expeditus
Coordinator - Priests' Retreat

Church Feasts

➤ The Annual Feast of the Church of St. Andrew Avilenio, Kadawatha, will be celebrated on Sunday, November 10, at 8.30 am. Chief Celebrant - Very Rev. Fr. Nihal Nanayakkara, Vicar General of Galle Diocese. Vespers Service on previous day at 7.30 pm, presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Jude Sharman Fernando, Dean of the Ragama Deanery.

➤ The Blessing and Dedication of the renovated Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, Ratnapura, will be held on Saturday November 9, at 9.30 am under the patronage of Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura. Festive High Mass on Sunday November 10, at 9 am. Chief Celebrant - His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, Apostolic Nuncio.

➤ The Annual Feast of St. Jude's Church, Galkandawila, will be celebrated on Sunday November 10. Festive Mass at 8 am followed by solemn procession. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm.

➤ The Annual Feast of St. Charles Carlo Borromeo will be celebrated in Willorawatte on Sunday, Moratuwa, November 10. Festive Mass at 8.30 am. Chief Celebrant - Very Rev. Fr. Lalith Fernando, Assistant Procurator of Galle Diocese. Vespers Service on previous day at 7.30 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Priyalal Cooray, Parish Priest of St. Mary's Cathedral, Badulla.

➤ The Annual Feast of All Saints' Church, Borella, will be celebrated on Sunday, November 10. Vespers Service on November 9 at 6.00 p.m. presided over by Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph, former Parish Priest of All Saints. Festive High Mass at 6.15 p.m. Chief Celebrant Rev. Fr. Lalith Felix, former Parish Priest of All Saints.

Annual Feast of Holy Rosary Church, Andiambalama

The annual feast of the Church of the Holy Rosary, Andiambalama, was held recently presided over by a priest son of the parish, Rev. Fr. Roshan Chaminda Fernando, Asst. Parish Priest of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Hanwella. Assisting at the Eucharistic celebration were Rev. Fr. Gregory Jayantha (a priest son of the parish), Rev. Fr. Roshan Vaas OMI and Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Nimal Ponweera.



T. Sunil Fernando

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Church in the Modern World

'St. Peter's Cricket Club' - the Vatican Cricket Team



It may not be able to compete with the giants of the game, but at least it should get some divine intervention in the form of an LBW decision: The Vatican is forming its own cricket team.

The tiny sovereign nation might not quite rank in the league of cricketing giants like Australia or India, but officials are setting their sights high – they want to arrange a match with a Church of England First XI at Lord's in London next summer.

The new team, to be called St Peter's Cricket Club, will recruit players from among the 300 priests and seminarians from cricket-loving countries such as England, Australia, South Africa, India and Pakistan who live and study in Rome.

The new cricket club comes under the patronage of the Pontifical Council for Culture, in particular its sports department headed by Spanish Msgr Mechor Sánchez de Toca y Alameda.



Monsignor Sánchez de Toca y Alameda during the presentation of the Vatican cricket club at the Vatican (Photo: AP)

In what was perhaps a first for the Vatican, a plate of daintily-cut cucumber sandwiches were served with a pot of tea as bewildered Italian reporters inspected a cricket bat and ball and a navy blue batsman's helmet.

Their official club

outfit will bear the Vatican colours of yellow and white and an emblem featuring the crossed keys of St Peter.

"Cricket will start to speak a new language," said Father Theodore Mascarenhas, an Indian priest and off-spin bowler who is

the Chairman of the new club.

"We hope that cricket will become so popular in Rome that some day we will have to translate "silly mid on" into Italian ... or maybe Latin."

St. Peter's Cricket Club is the brainchild of

Australia's Ambassador to the Vatican, John McCarthy.

The new Vatican team will play on an astro-turf pitch that is officially approved by the England and Wales Cricket Board, on the outskirts of Rome.

The Holy See has plans to finally beat the Church of England at its own game: Not in a theological debate, but on the cricket field. The Vatican's new official cricket club that aims to encourage dialogue between cultures, as well as growing virtue among the athletes, both on and off the field.

"Cricket can bring together the many nationalities that work for the Holy See. Sport and faith are closely related," Father Theodore Mascarenhas.

The Telegraph

"I too can sit on the seat of St. Peter?"

VATICAN CITY (NDTV) – Pope Francis was speaking in St. Peter's Square about the important role grandparents play when a little boy walked up behind him and confidently climbed up and sat down on the Pontiff's white chair.

The Vatican says Pope Francis was surrounded by elderly faithful and their grandchildren on Saturday (October 26) night, at a rally to encour-



Pope Francis was delivering a homily but a little boy stole the show.

age family life when the boy came up, wearing a striped shirt, jeans and sneakers.

Acting like an indulgent grandpa, Pope Francis let the boy explore the area undisturbed be-

fore tens of thousands of people.

The Pope smiled while reading his speech as the boy sat in the empty chair, gazed up at him and even at one point clung to the Pontiff's legs.

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus

ALMS GIVING PARTY

FOR RELATIONS ONLY



Showing our democratic credentials to the Commonwealth Heads of Government

The Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference will commence on November, 10. The Commonwealth has some common values binding the countries. They are the democratic values which mean not only elected governments but governments that uphold civil liberties and human rights. The world questions our commitment to these democratic values owing to some unfortunate incidents that are alleged to have taken place during the last stage of the war and certain changes in democratic institutions in the period after the war when the power of the Executive arm of the State was expanded unsettling the balance of power between the three branches of the State. This has had negative effects on certain essential institutions of governance like the Police, the Rule of Law and the Independence of the Judiciary.

But recently the Government has set about restoring the democratic rights of the Tamil people. The most surprising step was the holding of the Provincial Council election in the North. But that is only the first step. It must be followed by making the Northern Provincial Council work. Previous exercises in devolution of power to the Tamil people were undermined by the governments of the day. One hopes history will not repeat itself. The British Prime Minister has said he would visit Jaffna and so may some others as well. One hopes that the Northern Provincial Council will speak without any rancor or resentment for the past. All communities have suffered owing to the actions of extremists among both communities. It is now the time for reconciliation. So it is up to the Government to remove any obstacles to the exercise of power by the Northern Provincial Council as provided for in the 13th Amendment at least as it applies to the Provincial Councils of the South. Any further devolution may be sorted out later but the immediate task is to ensure that the Northern Provincial Council does not become a white elephant as the PCs in the South. This requires that the Government allows the necessary funds and the freedom of action to the Northern P.C. It must stop the military interfering in civilian affairs monitoring civilian behavior like the Big brother in George Orwell's novel "1984". The Army should be confined to barracks. The Government needs to trust the NPC for trust begets trust. Co-operation requires trust between the two parties and the exercise of devolved power means that the Government trusts the good faith of the NPC. It is only by allowing the NPC to function smoothly that the Government can prove to the Commonwealth Heads that there is no antagonism or hostility to the Tamil people. This will help to dampen even the hostility and antagonism of the so-called Tamil Diaspora.

As for the alleged violations of the human rights in the South they are much less now. But institutional changes must be effected to restore the independence of the Judiciary and the misuse of the bureaucracy and the Police to violate the rights of the people.

For too long since the end of the war, certain forces have been allowed to run rampant and ride roughshod over the rights and freedoms of the people. It's time for that to end. For when a government no longer fears its people, they turn to force to maintain their power, and the cost in terms of loss of freedom of the people becomes measured in blood and life.

"Numquam Satis De Maria" One can never say enough about Mary

"Something must be for something to be said"

-Paul Ricoeur

Prof. Anton Meemana

THE MOTHER PAR EXCELLENCE

Every controversy about Blessed Virgin Mary largely depends on the intention, character and theological comprehension of the controversialist and at the same time every opinion about her is a partial opinion.

But Roman Catholicism has historically and quite successfully attempted to offer a panoramic view of her life which was also her mission. Every generation has to grasp and grapple with her significance. A generation that does not grasp her theological significance deprives itself of spiritual nourishment. To despise her is to under-nourish our souls. Our soul needs its real mother. She is our real mother, our spiritual mother par excellence. Real mothers nourish us spiritually too.

MOTHER OF GOD

Mother of God is also the mother of everybody. How did she become the mother of God the son? Obviously one cannot make oneself the mother of God or mother of anybody else for that mother. One has to be made a mother, and likewise her divine motherhood is not her own work but a splendid work of God.

She did not give herself that title of honour but God through the authority of the Holy Catholic Church bestowed upon her that title of honour. She was made the mother of God and therefore she also became the mother of us all.

If you do not have your earthly mother with you now, go to her and she will welcome you, embrace you, nourish you and protect you. Not to love her is to become a very unhappy child. Not to experience her deep love is not to know what love is all about.

She will love you with the same love she had for Jesus. She loves us the way she loves Jesus and therefore we must love her the way Jesus loves her. Not to love her is also not to love Jesus. By loving us, she radiates divine love around us.

God's love for us is unconditional and she also radiates a spark of that divine love. God's humility is absolutely incomparable and she also radiates the splendour of God's humility.

PERPETUAL VIRGINITY AND PERPETUAL HUMILITY

God being God could come as a human being into this world without violating anybody's physical virginity or bodily integrity. That means God desires no unnecessary suffering for anybody and harms nobody. God is the restorer and preserver of everything. The mystery of divine incarnation is absolutely unique and has never happened prior to the coming of Jesus of Nazareth and it can only be understood in

relation to another mystery. One mystery can deepen and amplify the meaning of another mystery.

The perpetual virginity of Mary, that is, her remaining as a virgin before, during and after the birth of Jesus, and the divine incarnation is intimately interlinked. As Saint Augustine of Hippo enumerates; Mary "remained a virgin in conceiving her son, a virgin in giving birth to him, a virgin in carrying him, a virgin in nursing him at her breast, always a virgin." From the very moment of her conception, she has been holy, pure, undefiled, immaculate and blessed and she never ever lost that holiness or took it for granted, even for a single second. She is forever pure, radiant luminous and numinous.

She did not make herself immaculately conceived but received it freely as grace from God.

She did not ask for anything and therefore she received everything from God. She did not desire to be anybody and so she became the mother of God. That means that even in the future God can do wonders through her. Mary's intercessory power is eternal and unceasing.

THE ASSUMPTION OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Body speaks louder and profounder. The body radiates one's true spiritual depth. How we look at and treat our bodies is a spiritual attitude not a biological one. Body is the outer garment of the soul. A purified soul also brings healing and wholeness to the body. Both her body and soul were virginal and unspotted.

Body which is made of dust and ashes is divinely created and is intrinsically capable of assuming a heavenly destiny. Human body is made for heaven, for heavenly joy and celestial bliss. We live temporarily here on earth in order to dwell eternally in heaven.

The direct assumption of Mary's body and soul into heaven repeatedly reminds us of our ultimate destiny. What we desire deep down and wholeheartedly is nothing else but complete heavenly bliss and celestial joy. Immortality and eternity is waiting quietly and patiently for us.

2000 years ago in Bethlehem, the Saviour and the Redeemer of the entire humanity and the whole creation was born of a very ordinary, low-key and unassuming rural Galilean girl named, Mary of Nazareth and at the same time, that Saviour and Redeemer had exited from all eternity; He had been with God from the very beginning and he was not created. He could be born amongst us humans precisely because he was uncreated.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND WORKINGS OF THE MYSTERY

Promptings and strivings of the mystery cannot be adequately comprehended through

human rationality but at the same time, it is not anti-rational, anti-theological, irrational or anti-intellectual. For instance, let us take the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (That Mary was born free from the stain of original sin and this was a result of Christ's grace and never outside His saving grace. This dogma does not mean that Mary does not need Christ for her salvation).

This dogma may not appeal to some fundamentalists or they may find difficulties with it. But this fact should not surprise us Catholics. Through this doctrine, we are grappling with the mysterious workings of the Divine Mystery and we must be open to the ongoing revelatory potential of that unfathomable Mystery.

If it is the will of God to make Mary the Queen of Heaven or the Queen of Peace, why must fundamentalists object to it? What is really their problem? They must do some thorough self-examination and be able to detect as to where this psychological and theological reluctance comes from. The one who has an issue with Mary has an issue with oneself. It may be a projection of one's personal inadequacies and lack of self-awareness.

JESUS AND MARY

Christ is the Saviour of the whole universe and Mary is the mother of that Saviour. What hinders us from appreciating, honouring, recognising and venerating Mother Mary? To neglect and ridicule Mary is to insult Jesus. By insulting Mary, one cannot give honour to her son. We venerate Mary in order to better worship Jesus.

The truth is this; that Mary played a very decisive role in the economy of human salvation and her salvific contribution should not be underestimated or downplayed. Even by a simple logic, this can be argued. Whose flesh and blood did Jesus acquire? Jesus acquired the flesh and blood of Mary. Jesus took His genetic code from Mary. So how can you separate Jesus from Mary and Mary from Jesus? So how can you honour Jesus while dishonouring Mary?

Why are the hearts of fundamentalists full of malice, envy, hatred, resentment, viciousness, apprehension and vexation.

To hate Mary is to hate oneself. To hate Mary is to suppress the most sensitive, caring and loving part of oneself. By insulting Mary, fundamentalists (unknowingly express their self-hatred, their inner wounds and deep-seated brokenness.

As Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen, O. C. D., one of my spiritual mentors, used to tell me; "There is no salvation without Jesus and there is no Jesus without Mary and therefore there is no salvation without Mary." Mary is the Mother of all lovers of Jesus.

(Contd. on Pg. 10)

Education for Humanisation

Rev. Fr. Mervyn Fernando's answer to the question: **Education for What?** An Excerpt from his essay on "Education for Whole Being: Personal and social and its implications for national development" - the Editor

The main mechanism or Institution, by which society is supposed to humanize its members and pass on the ensemble of its human heritage, is the educational system in tandem with the Institution of the family. Hence the crucial importance of the system of education of a country cannot be overemphasised. Education, from the perspective of the individual, is that by which he grows and unfolds gradually into fullness and maturity, with each of the structural and relational components developing in balanced, inter-related harmony; from the societal point of view, its goal is to pass down its heritage to a new generation capable of keeping it alive and adding to its richness, in a context of change. The design and thrust of the whole process, which will involve the school, home and social milieu, should enable the majority of students to attain relatively high levels of 'being human' from which 'doing human', namely, human and humane action, will naturally flow.

Hence, education, particularly in the early stages (primary and secondary) should concern itself more with the process of psycho-social and moral/spiritual growth of the student within the framework of a broad-based intellectual culture in the context of today's world, than with specific employment-related skills. Specific orientation towards job/profession will be appropriate at a later stage, still on the basis of a sound, value-based (humanistic/religious) foundation.

Educational reform must begin by asking and responding to the fundamental question: What kind of citizen should go out of the classroom into society? Just a knowledgeable and/or skilled employable person, or one who is, in the first place a fine human being, a mature, socially conscious person, an asset to self and society, even if he does not excel at examinations. A clear vision of the final goal of human life, as spelt out by the religions for example, must provide the backdrop of the educational enterprise. Orientation towards employment through vocational skills etc. will bear fruit, as stated above, only on the firm base of holistic, value-permeated, goal-oriented education. Moreover, the problem of unemployment should be tackled primarily through appropriate economic policies which will expand avenues of and opportunities for, employment, in the country. No amount of vocational training in schools or other educational Institutions, will help unless there be sufficient space and scope in the

world of work into which the students will enter later. The two specific weaknesses of the present system, in this regard, are: First, the lack of clarity and conviction about the central goal of education and the means thereto and second, the big gap between the objectives of education (of the present system) and socio-economic realities. Its main preoccupation seems to be still, knowledge/information/skills supposedly with a view to employability. So, year after year, it turns out hordes of young people with certificates and degrees, with great expectations of remunerative employment. (In passing it should be mentioned that the meaning of work too has to be radically re-thought in terms of personal and social goals, in the context of the modern and post-modern world - a subject which, though important, cannot be discussed here adequately). No questions are asked at all about the human quality of those who pass out - their attitudes, values, moral probity, character, sense of social responsibility etc., as if they did not matter for personal and social well-being. The intent and thrust of the system gives a clear message to the student - pass the examination at any cost in order to get a well-paid job. The concluding lines of "A Parable" (by J.R. Kinghorn) are the lament of a student: *"You helped me extend my hands with incredible machines, My eyes with telescopes and microscopes, my ears with telephones, radios and sonar, my brain with computers, but you did not help me extend my heart, love, concern to the entire human family. You, teacher, gave me half a loaf."*

That lament is applicable more to the system itself than the individual teacher.

There is no doubt that economic development and employment are over-riding concerns in Sri Lanka today. There is, therefore, a strong temptation to link education directly to employability and related economic programmes for 'quick-fix' solutions and short-term results. But the economic order, if plucked out of the context of the larger human order is bound to collapse, sooner or later; the economic good is only a means to the end of the over-arching common human good. To break the link between ends and means is to court disaster for both person and society. Education is far too serious a matter to be left in the hands of economists and politicians.

The Social Costs

The consequences of the existing system are all

too plain. We have a surfeit of knowledgeable people, well versed in every branch of knowledge - doctors, engineers, lawyers, scientists, civil servants and other professionals - but how many of them have attained any degree of wisdom? How many of high integrity/probity? The poet T. S. Eliot lamented, *"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge, where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"* If those who have reached the highest levels of education in the system and hold positions of responsibility in the Government and the private sector were persons of wisdom and virtue, committed to service and the common good, we would not be in the mess we are in today. An MA or PhD may guarantee knowledge but not high human stature. In politics, for example, we have hoards of politicians but hardly any Statesmen, namely, those who put the good of the country before personal gain and Party interests. This is only to be expected if the real goal of education, namely, a total preparation for life and work, a process of transcending humanization, against the background of the final end of human life, has been made subservient to mechanical rote-learning, "cribbed, cabined & confined" to the classroom and lecture notes (even at University level), in a rigid system of compartmentalized subjects (of very doubtful relevance), taught by poorly motivated teachers. This is aggravated by the constraints of human space for socio-economic well-being on graduation from the formal education system. A good part of the evils we lament in our country - social irresponsibility, corruption, political opportunism, exploitation, violence and war - are direct and indirect outcomes of the debasement of education as accumulation of knowledge/information, without vision or direction, without any Dhamma, to be tested at examinations, in a context of intense, individualistic competition.

Key Players: Teachers and Parents

It cannot be over-emphasized that teachers and parents play crucial roles in the kind and quality of education envisaged in this paper. Information and knowledge can be imparted even by a machine - TV, Radio, Computer, Internet etc: but humanization takes place in the context of existential interaction and relationship with human beings in a social context. And those closest to the child/student are parents and teachers. We have forgotten that the human quality and character of the teacher is as important, or even more so as



her knowledge and teaching skills. The teacher as Plato said plays the role of mid-wife to the second birth of education; or, in the Asian context, of a guru, that is, a role-model, embodying ideals, albeit imperfectly, which can be emulated by the pupils. Training programmes for teachers and Principals of Schools should be based on this concept.

The eminent psychologist-philosopher Erich Fromm expressed this idea very succinctly: "When you look for a good school, do not in the first place pay attention to magnificent buildings, the latest facilities and equipment, but look for the people working in them. Not the stones, not the splendid sports halls, not the very latest audio-visual techniques make a school what it is, but the living persons who give it their heart. The quality of a school depends on the quality of its teachers, instructors, professors. Their quality is not determined merely (but also, of course) by their scientific qualifications and expertise, but also, to a high degree, by their human qualities, their mentality and dispositions as human beings, their way of 'being', their style of life. When educators are good fine persons, enthusiastic and visibly committed, then the school becomes an oasis. When in a school there is no longer enthusiasm, when one cannot find in it a certain sense of giving oneself to one's task when everything has come business-like, then the school is dead, a part of the desert."

The Sinhala language uses the word guru, very rightly, for both teacher and parents - *guru, de-guru*. Their roles are complementary and inter-linked in relation to the common goal of the integral development of the child. It is generally accepted today that the foundations of personality development are laid in childhood which unfolds at home, school (and the social ambience) particularly in the pre-school and primary stages. Even on a more practical level

"The Sinhala language uses the word guru, very rightly, for both teacher and parents - guru, de-guru. Their roles are complementary and inter-linked in relation to the common goal of the integral development of the child."

we know that the performance of a school is tied up with her life-situation. It is a pity that both parents and teachers are unaware of their vital importance in the personality development of children. Parents tend to thrust that responsibility on the school, while teachers consider themselves mere dispensers of knowledge according to the dictates of the syllabus and the curriculum; and the children fall between the two stools.

Schools, therefore, cannot overlook the aspect of parent education — educating parents to understand the growth process of children, in appropriate non-formal ways. The need for such education is becoming more and more urgent in the increasing complexity and rapidity of change in the country today. But there is hardly any place in the present system for parents; they are for all practical purposes ignored. The occasional parent-teacher meeting does not serve at all the purpose discussed here. The possibility of parents making a valuable contribution to a programme of holistic and socially relevant education in the school and the school in turn being a resource for parent education has not even been considered.

Courtesy: *The Enlightened Life Magazine*

The Redemptorist Congregation will celebrate its 75th year in Sri Lanka in 2014. Three Irish priests, Frs. Matt Hickey, Jerry McDonald and Liam O'Hallaran came to Kandy on January 5, 1939, at the invitation of Bishop Bernard Regno, the then Bishop of Kandy. They were preachers and conducted Missions and Retreats in the parishes and schools. In 1946 they purchased a land and started their own house in Anniawatta, and named it Sancta Maria. This house close to Kandy became their missionary center.

The Redemptorist Congregation was started in 1732 in Italy by Saint Alphonsus Liguori. He gathered a few diocesan priests and started the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (CSsR) with the purpose of preaching the Gospel to the poor. St. Al-



Redemptorists



phonsus was a lawyer and was born to an aristocratic family in Naples, Italy. He was ordained a priest in 1726. As an enthusiastic young priest his twenty-four-hour apostolate to the poor made him sick and the physicians requested him to take a break.

He retreated to Scala, a village of sheep and shepherds, who were not bothered about God or religion. In Scala he began his mission to the poverty-stricken shepherds. He was so popular among them that people began to flock around him for spiritual direction and help. This experience in Scala gave him direction to his new religious life. He decided to bring the redemption of

Christ to the poor.

St. Alphonsus during his life time became a preacher as well as a prolific writer. He has written more than 100 books mainly on Moral Theology. He was also a musician and a painter. Some hymns composed by him are still sung in the congregations in Italy. Later he was made a bishop and died in 1787, at the age of 91. He was canonized 52 years after his death. His congregation spread to more than seventy countries and has a following of almost 6000.

The Redemptorists in Sri Lanka follow the example of their founder by preaching the Good News of Christ's redemp-



tion to the people. One of their contributions to Sri Lanka is the propagation of the devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The first three Redemptorists who came to Sri Lanka carried with them the Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual (Succor) Help. They started the Novenas to the Our Lady in the late forties in their humble Chapel in Santa Maria. People from the hill country as well as from all parts of the island flocked to this small chapel to pray to Our Lady and to ask for material and spiritual favours.

Due to the miraculous powers of the Icon and the popularity of this devotion the Redemptorist Fathers introduced the Perpetual Help devotion to other parts of the country. Rev. Fr. John Herath OMI, started the Novena in English at All Saints' Church in Borella and Rev. Fr. Nicholas Perera started this devotion at St. Anne's Church, Wattala, in Sinhala. The Redemptorist Congregation was entrusted by Pope Pius IX to be the guardians of this Icon and they were given the mandate to spread this devotion throughout the world. The original Icon still adorns the Church of St. Alphonsus de Liguori in

Rome.

The Congregation in Sri Lanka is celebrating a year of jubilee, especially to thank God for the seventy-five years of their presence and successful apostolate in this island and also to ask God for more vocations as priests and brothers to continue their good work in this country.

The Congregation of the Redemptorists in Sri Lanka has successfully lived up to the principles of their founder, during the past seventy-four years. By their preaching, parish and social apostolate, their mission to the poor and the sick, they have proved what the motto of their congregation says is true: "With Him there is plentiful redemption."

The social worker regarded the elderly lady compassionately. "It's your decision," she assured her gently. "It's a big one and no one can make it for you. Think about it before you decide."

Veronica rose, adjusted her oxygen and, leaning on her walker, preceded her daughter from the small room into the elevator and out of the hospital. In the car she said again, "I just can't do it, Penny."

"O.K. Mum, if you can't you can't. Just be sure. Think about it for a week or two."

The tears that threatened all day escaped down the wrinkled cheeks after Veronica went to bed that night. My life has been full of beginnings, she thought, but I'm too old to take on this one.

Unable to sleep, Veronica began to recall many of her beginnings. Her mother's story about her birth. Her brother's arrival. And the earliest occasion she actually remembered - her first day of school. She'd worn a pink dress and her favourite pink socks that day. She could still see Fred, the boy she eventually married, shyly reaching to take her hand as they walked into the classroom.

Her first job was an exciting beginning. The war years held many more. Fred's return from flying fighter jets over Germany heralded a special beginning, that of their marriage. That led to the beginning of life for their two girls. After they grew up, she and Fred began their travels to various parts of the world. And always there were the celebrations of her birthdays, each one beginning another year full of surprises. Just a week ago her family and friends had made a big fuss over her 90th.

That was when she decided there would be no more beginnings for her. Already her life had begun to feature endings. Ten years ago, when Fred died, her years as a wife had ended. Lately, she had given up her driving license; could no longer do the walking she used to enjoy; had no desire to travel anymore; and been forced to stop eating the spicy foods she loved.

No, there would not be any more beginnings for me, she decided, only endings from now on.

Now, a week later, a doctor at the Kidney Care Clinic had informed her that her kidney function had worsened and she must consider beginning dialysis treatments.



"Three sessions a week. Four hours a session," a nurse told her after the doctor, smiling sympathetically, left the room. When the nurse left, the social worker who had been there earlier returned to stress the fact that she had a choice.

"And if I choose not to go on dialysis?"

Veronica asked.

The woman shook her head. "I'm afraid that kidneys seldom improve," she said. "But if you choose not to go on dialysis, we'll honour your decision and help you in every way possible."

Now Veronica reached for a tissue to wipe the tears away. I can't do it. It will take over my whole life.

Halfway through the night she woke up struggling for breath. The oxygen inhalator had slipped out of her nose. She replaced it and went into the living room to sit in her comfortable chair. How often had she done that this past year? And how often had that not been enough and she had to call the ambulance and go to the hospital?

After the oxygen was prescribed she was able to sleep through the night. But breathing was not the only problem the kidney failure had caused. Nausea had made eating almost impossible, her skin itched in a different place every day, and she was so tired all the time.

Wasn't it better to die than live like this? She was feeling very sick when Julie phoned. "Hi Mum. What have you decided?" Julie was the down-to-earth member of the family. Don't mess around. Just get on with what needs to be done was Julie's theory.

"I can't do it," Veronica told her.

An unwelcome beginning

"How are you feeling?"

"Right now? Absolutely rotten."

"I'm told dialysis will make you feel better."

Veronica held back the tears with an effort and did not trust her voice to answer.

"We don't want to lose you, Mum. We'd all miss you so much." Julie paused, then continued more rapidly. "But I agree with Penny. It's your decision."

A grim smile lifted the corners of Veronica's lips. It was so typical of Julie to try to influence her decision and then say it was hers alone.

A week later, feeling too sick to do anything but sleep, she called the Kidney Care Clinic and said she was ready to have the catheter inserted in her neck so she could start dialysis.

Penny took her to the hospital for the small operation and for the first dialysis sessions. Then bus rides were arranged. Veronica hated everything, the treatments, the bus rides, and most of all the time waiting for buses and for her turn to be hooked up to a machine when she got to the hospital.

The social worker continued to visit and, noting her glumness, assured her again of her right to stop treatments.

"It's almost as though she wants me to stop," Veronica told Penny who assured her that could not possibly be the case.

"How long before I feel better?" she asked a nurse one day.

"It could be two or three months."

That left her even more depressed. However, she managed to smile at the other people on the bus who were always ready to greet her with a bright good-morning.

One day she sat beside a young man who told her he'd been having dialysis for eight years and hoped to get a transplant soon. "I wish my brother lived here," he said. "He's got the same problem

but hasn't the money to cover dialysis costs in the States. We Canadians are so lucky."

Lucky? She had not thought to use that word in connection with her condition. But if she was not ready to die, it was certainly lucky

the government was willing to cover the cost of the treatments even at her age.

A few days later she was at a tea when a woman, hearing she could not attend the next one because it was her dialysis day, said, "How I wish they had discovered dialysis a few years sooner. Then my husband would not have died from kidney failure and I might not be a widow today. You're very lucky."

There was that word again.

One night, tired from being at a show with some friends, she forgot to put on her oxygen and, without it, slept the whole night. A few days later she went shopping and decided to leave the heavy oxygen bottle at home. Throughout the day she had no discomfort. Stopping for lunch, she realized the nausea was absent too.

Was it better to be at home feeling sick all the time or to sit in the hospital three days a week so she could feel well enough to do things she enjoyed the other days?

Walking past the cancer area of the hospital she was suddenly conscious of the great number of people sitting there, waiting for radiation or other interventions that would probably make them feel worse than when they arrived.

I could be one of them and feel sicker instead of better every time I come here.

The word lucky crept into her mind again. "Want me to pick you up at the hospital today?" The voice on the phone could be Penny or Julie but more often it was one of her four grandchildren. Veronica had been a willing babysitter for each of them over the years. Now they were grown up and she had become their confidant and frequent companion.

I am so lucky to have such a caring family. Lucky! That word seemed to be popping into her mind often these days. Maybe she should stop counting beginnings and endings and instead count her many blessings.



**Art
& Architecture
in Liturgy**

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

The life size marble statue we see on the left side of St. Mary's Church, Grand Street Negombo is that of Monsignor J.B. Vistarini popularly referred to as 'the Apostle of Negombo'. The following words are etched at the bottom of this monument:

TO OUR DEAR FATHER J.B. VISTARINI DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO HIS HOLINESS THE POPE THE BENEFactor OF THIS TOWN BY HIS PATIENT AND DUTIFUL MINISTRY AND CHEERFUL LABOUR AMONGST THE POOR AND THE SICK FOR THIRTY EIGHT YEARS 1857 - 1895. WITH GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE FROM HIS ADMIRERS AND THE PEOPLE OF NEGOMBO 1915.

Thus the people of Negombo have immortalized the memory of their beloved pastor who left not only a beautiful Church for them but memories of a loving and dedicated priest in the vineyard of the Lord.

Fr. John Vistarini was born to an aristocratic family in Lombardia, Italy on September 1, 1817. He was nephew to the Empress of Austria. His first assignment as a priest was to serve the mentally retarded in a hospital in Naples. Sometimes beaten by those whom he served he was inflicted with a nervous disorder. In such circumstance he made a vow that if he recovered from the said ailment he would sell half his wealth and give to the poor and serve in the missions overseas anywhere in the world. This is how Fr. Vistarini came to serve in our little island then known to the world as Ceylon.

On August 29, 1846 he set sail with three other priests. They reached Ceylon on December 7, 1846 and were posted to serve in Jaffna where Fr. Vistarini became an assistant parish priest in the Valikamam District. He learned Tamil, travelled far and wide in the region on foot in the unbearable heat of the northern sky and came to be known as "Sammanas Swami" or the angelic priest.

In 1857 he was transferred to Colombo and put in charge of the Parish of St. Mary's Church, Grand Street, Negombo and eighteen other churches in the region, which he served. It is said that Fr. Vistarini practised the

Let's Remember: A Prince who served the poor

holiness that he preached to others so fervently that the people were instinctively drawn to him attracted by his holiness and his life of prayer.

The Church records of the Parish indicate that it was in his time that the Corpus Christi celebration, devotions to the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, May devotions and societies such as the Church Committees, Sacred Heart Society, Solidarity of Our Lady and the Fisherman's Society were started. His personal contribution to the construction of St Mary's Church Grand Street, Negombo is legendary.

Fr. Vistarini was also a great social leader and innovator. He knew the need to uplift the condition of the poor fishermen of his parish. By forming societies he encouraged the saving habit in them. These savings were used to set up a fund to assist fishermen in distress or in times when they would not be able to go out to sea. Fr. Vistarini shared his meals with the poor and even helped poor families to give their daughters in marriage by contributing to the dowries. He was their friend, philosopher and guide. They came to him with their joys and sorrows, domestic quarrels and village disputes.

In 1863 there was an outbreak of cholera in Negombo and Fr. Vistarini walked through the length and breadth of the Parish, tending to the sick providing food and medicine and burying the dead. In the far corner of the island of Munakkara, he fixed a cross and buried the dead around it and in later years, it was this cross that gave rise to the "Kurusa Palliya" the Church of the Cross.

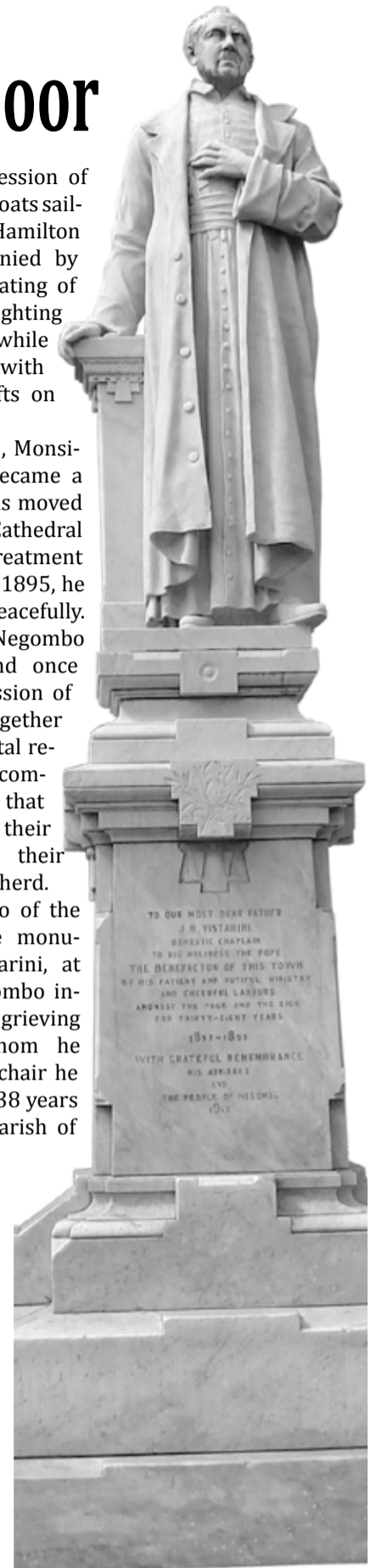
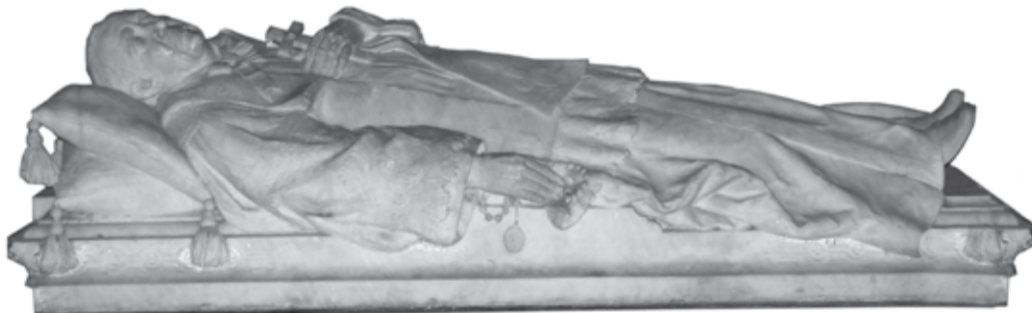
Another unforgettable aspect of his work was his interest in education. The establishment of a Boys' Tamil School in 1858 and a Girls' Tamil School in 1862 while the beginning of St Mary's College, Negombo, was also his initiative.

In 1890, on his Golden Jubilee year of Ordination, in recognition of his service to the Church, the Holy Father honoured Fr. Vistarini with the title of 'Monsignor' which was awarded to him by the Bishop of Colombo at a special ceremony held at St. Lucia's Cathedral Kotahena. It is remembered how he was conducted back to Negombo

in a grand procession of gaily decorated boats sailing along the Hamilton canal accompanied by the rhythmic beating of drums and the lighting of fire crackers while being showered with garlands and gifts on his way.

By 1892, Monsignor Vistarini became a sick man and was moved to the Kotahena Cathedral for medical treatment and on Mary 19, 1895, he passed away peacefully. The people of Negombo wept openly and once again the procession of boats came together to bring his mortal remains to the incomplete church so that they could pay their last respect to their much loved shepherd.

We see here two of the life size marble monuments of Fr. Vistarini, at St. Mary's Negombo installed by the grieving parishioners whom he served, and the chair he used during the 38 years he served the parish of Negombo.



First Holy Communion: An integral part of Catholic School Education

One hundred and ninety seven children received First Holy Communion on October 12, at Holy Family Convent Chapel, Bambalapitiya. The children were prepared for the occasion from the beginning of the year with special classes held after school and seminars in addition to the daily catechism. A seminar was also held for the parents of these children at which they were reminded of their responsibilities and duties as Catholic parents. Parents were also afforded the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation together with their children at the School Chapel. The offertory at the First Holy Communion Holy Mass was for the lesser privileged children of a school in Vakara. After the ceremony the children were hosted to a

breakfast. The Chapel was most beautifully decorated enhancing its French Gothic Architecture. It was a perfect day for the children who looked radiant after receiving Jesus for the first time.



Unity Camp 6 - Killinochchi Post

500 student leaders aged 15-20 and 40 teachers from 70 schools all the way from Jaffna to Matara gathered at Killinochchi Central College from October 17 - 23, 2013 to attend the Unity Camp 6 hosted by Ekamuthu Oray Makal Unity Mission Trust. The Unity Mission Trust has been in existence since May 2009 and is a non-profit Trust that is dedicated to fostering unity, integration, healing and reconciliation between the teenagers and young adults in the Wannu area and their peers from all over Sri Lanka.

As in other camps, Unity Camp 6 had three major objectives. 1) Fostering new and long term relationships amongst Student Leaders of the North and the South, 2) Understanding and accepting their status as equal sons and daughters of a beautiful Mother Lanka, 3) Providing leadership and personal capacity building to strengthen the youth to strengthen Sri Lanka through their unity.



To achieve these goals the children were put into groups of 20 and were taken through a carefully-structured program for four days. Bertal Pinto-Jayawardane - Founder Trustee and Coordinator of Unity Mission Trust and Mr. Reyaz Mihular, Managing

Partner - KPMG Sri Lanka and a Trustee of Unity Mission Trust gave a powerful presentation on leadership and personal capacity building. Thereafter the groups competed with each other in sports activities, oratory, drama, singing and dancing. Furthermore they were involved in Art and Craft workshop, led by Shyamala Pinto-Jayawardane, Co-Founder Trustee of Unity Mission Trust, team building and mind development activities, like singing and dancing to the beat of their favourite songs and enjoying the beat of baila -all these programs were structured to give the youth the opportunity to interact and enjoy with each other and strengthen their new friendships.

The campers who showed outstanding leadership and other skills were recognized at a prize-giving, which included the awarding of the very first Lakmali Nanayakkara Memorial Challenge Trophies to the most outstanding female and male camper respectively in honour of the late Ms. Lakmali Nanayakkara an original Trustee. The inaugural winners were Krithiha Ratneswaran from Kandy and Malin Udayakumar from Ratnapura. Sushmitha and S. Selvakumar, both from Killinochchi won Special Awards for leadership in fostering unity and integration. Rasinka Jayasinghe of Kegalle and Rushdi Hanan from Kandy were awarded the best female and male Group leader Awards.

The camp received very positive accolades from various groups at its conclusion who stated that the level of unity seen on the Camp had not been seen in Killinochchi in recent times. At the end of the Unity Camp students were seen crying as they said goodbye



to their new found friends from all parts of Sri Lanka promising to stay in touch and visit each other. It was an emotional sight to witness Groups getting together for a final 'group hug' and group cheer. This very real and previously unimagined levels of integrations and understanding between Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim students overcoming barriers to focus on the common factor of being Sri Lankan. The final closing candle ceremony for students had them eventually chanting out "Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka," bringing tears into the eyes of some of the adults who witnessed this.

The Unity Team is currently structured as a voluntary organization with a pool of around 60 volunteers who are available to support ground level projects. In addition the Unity Mission Trust Team also has in affiliation a group of senior consultants, most of whom are retired Education Officers who have volunteered their time towards the work of Unity Mission Trust.

Further, UMT encourages and partakes in the development of the skills of these young leaders so that they will then understand and accept their status as equal sons and daughters of a beautiful Mother Lanka and move forward united as one, to build a new Sri Lanka, a Sri Lanka that has the strength of all its people, heralding in the most wonderful part of our history. UMT now has over 4000 students from all parts of the country who are linked together in a network of Unity who will be ready to become the new leaders of peace in the future. You can find out more about their Journey of Love at www.unitymission.lk

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Importance of the Funeral Mass

The Funeral Mass is our ultimate declaration of hope for a soul's passage into eternal life. It is often accompanied by tears, but it is essentially a joyful occasion, for the hope is solemnly and prayerfully expressed that another soul will enter the kingdom of heaven. "The world is only peopled" as St. Francis de Sales once wrote, "to people heaven."

I attended recently, what most, if not all the people present, regarded as a joyful Funeral Mass. It took place in a small Polish Parish where the Church and its adjacent elementary school and cemetery form the spiritual centre of parish life. The proximity of these concrete images of life, death, and resurrection provide parishioners with an unmistakable down-to-earth realism.

The deceased passed away just shy of his 88th birthday. In one sense, he was a simple man who earned his bread by cleaning hallway floors in various institutions. More significantly, he was lighting corridors through which his children and grandchildren would pass to discover more enterprising endeavours. The pathfinder is no less important than those who benefit from the path he blazes. Death, of course, is the great leveler, making equal the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the celebrated and the hidden. How we live in the eyes of God, needless to say, is the only thing that really counts.

But the lowly in the eyes of the world can be capable of extraordinary virtue. It was said of the deceased that he never had a bad word to say about anyone. Appropriately, the following words of St. Faustina were inscribed on his obituary card:

"Help me, O Lord, that my tongue may be merciful, so that I should never speak negatively of my neighbour, but have a word of comfort and forgiveness for all"

He once lost a chess game to his brother, an event that proved very disappointing to his daughter. Though a man of few words, he had an important lesson he wanted to give her. "There is no dishonour in losing to a worthy opponent," he said. Then, so that his daughter would not regard him as a "loser," he added: "If one can rejoice over his brother's victory, he cannot be said to be a loser." Here is some wisdom that could be most beneficial, especially, these days, to sports celebrities.

While he served in World War II he always felt that he was under God's special protection. At one time, he came perilously close to death. A Russian soldier was about to assassinate him when fate (or Providence) intervened. At the very last second, the Russian was dispatched by another soldier. I looked at two of his darling little grand-daughters with new appreciation, realizing how close they came to never being. We are all beneficiaries of Divine Providence, much more than we can possibly realize.

Abundantly evident at the Funeral Mass was the love of the family, the faith of the community, and the loyalty of friends. Afterwards, there was the festivity of good food and sparkling fellowship. The experience altogether was, indeed, joyful, though there was a note of expressed sadness.

At the close of the Mass, the celebrant commented on how sad it is that Funeral Masses are becoming less common. Why is it that even Catholics seem less enthused about eternal life? Is this symptomatic of a general anti-life attitude that has infected what that great Polish Pontiff, Blessed John Paul II called, "The Culture of Death"?

I thought of the contrast between the Funeral Mass which emphasises Life after Death, and the Shopping Mall, which I find to be a form of Death after Life. The contrast is far from frivolous.

People come to the Shopping Mall with their

desire for things: Clothes, furnishings, trinkets, gadgets. Many of these things are not meant to last for longer than a season. Being passé can be more deadly than merely passing on. In time, after their brief period of usefulness, these things pass through



"The pathfinder is no less important than those who benefit from the path he blazes"

various stages of death. They become out-of-fashion, clutter, grist for the garage sale, and finally reach their nadir of value when classified by that dishonourable term "junk." And then it is time, not for the cemetery, but for the junkyard.

The American essayist Maclin Norton has, I believe, put things in the proper perspective when he writes: "The mall is a place of death in life, and therefore it is appropriate to be sad there; the cemetery is a place of life in death, a place in which to rejoice and be glad."

Merchandise purchased at the Shopping Mall depreciates as soon as it is possessed by the consumer. The rewards for a soul who lives a life of virtue, as Christ has promised, is a hundredfold. When our own day arrives, we could all benefit from a Funeral Mass which could very well give us the extra boost we need in order to get into heaven.

*Courtesy: Canadian Messenger
November*

The Brown Scapular:

An external sign of our promise to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ

The practice of vesting the faithful with the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (popularly known as Brown Scapular) at the time of their First Holy Communion as children or later on as adults shows forth as the sign of their promise to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ, in other words as a sign of their consecration to Our Lady and as a means of their share in the Power of Prayer in the Catholic Church.

The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is best understood in the context of our Catholic faith. It offers us a rich spiritual tradition that honours Mary. This scapular is an outward sign of the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother and queen. It offers an effective symbol of Mary's protection to the Order of Carmel—its members, associates, and affiliates—as they strive to fulfill their vocation as defined by the Carmelite Rule of Saint Albert: "To live in allegiance to Jesus Christ."

While Christ alone has redeemed us, the Blessed Virgin Mary has always been seen by Catholics as a loving mother and protector. The Blessed Virgin has shown her patronage over the Order of Carmel from its earliest days. This patronage and protection came to be symbolized in the scapular, the essential part of the Carmelite habit. Stories and legends abound in Carmelite tradition about the many ways in which the Mother of God has interceded for the Order, especially in critical moments of its history. Most enduring and popular of these traditions, blessed by the Church, concerns Mary's promise to an early Carmelite, Saint Simon Stock, that anyone who remains faithful to the Carmelite vocation until death will be granted the grace of final perseverance.

As it is widely accepted it was on July 16, 1251, Our Lady appeared to the Carmelite Prior-General, St. Simon Stock, holding in her hand the Brown Scapular. "Receive, my beloved son," Our Lady said, "this Habit; whosoever dies clothed in this shall not suffer eternal fire!" The Carmelite Order has been anxious to share this patronage and protection with those who are devoted to the Mother of God and so has extended both its habit (the scapular) and affiliation to the larger

Church. Then the Blessed Virgin Mary also promised to St. Dominic as follows; "One day, through the Rosary and the Scapular, I will save the world." It was further given prominence in Fatima, as Our Lady Holding the Rosary and the Scapular, requested all men and women to consecrate themselves to Her Immaculate Heart. In this request she has asked us to pray the Rosary, do penance and wear her Brown Scapular. In the final Fatima vision on October 13, 1917, the Virgin appeared clothed as Our Lady of Mount Carmel holding the Brown Scapular in Her hands. During this time no words were spoken. Sister Lucia, later said: "Our Lady never looked so beautiful as when she appeared in Her Carmelite habit." *The very fact that she was holding the Brown Scapular tells us that she wants us to take it and use it!*

Sr. Lucia again said of the Brown Scapular and the Immaculate Heart of Mary: "Our Lady wants everyone to wear it (Brown Scapular); it is the sign of consecration to her Immaculate Heart." In an audience on August 15, 1950 answering the question raised by Rev. Fr. Howard Rafferty, O.Carm., "Do you mean to say that the wearing of the Brown Scapular is not just something Our Lady would like us to do, but that it is essential to the Message of Fatima?" Sister Lucy said: "Exactly! One could not follow the Message of Fatima unless he fulfilled the five conditions, one of which is the wearing of the Brown Scapular all the time, day and night." Thus, Sister Lucia of Fatima concluded the Most Holy Rosary and the Brown Scapular are inseparable!

Private revelation can neither add to nor detract from the Church's deposit of faith. Therefore, the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel echoes the promise of Divine Revelation: The one who holds out to the end is the one who will see salvation (Matthew 24:13), and remain faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a reminder to its wearers of the saving grace which Christ gained upon the cross for all: All you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves in him (Galatians 3:27). There is no salvation for anyone other than that



won by Christ. The Sacraments mediate this saving grace to the faithful. The sacramentals, including the scapular, do not mediate this saving grace but prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: "Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it. For well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which flows from the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. From this source all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power." (CCC 1670)

We see, therefore, that the Church clearly teaches that all grace, including that of final perseverance, is won for us by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord. Simply wearing the Brown Scapular does not confer that same result.

What about the various statements of the Popes and Saints over the centuries about the Scapular?

Over the years many popes and saints have strongly recommended wearing, the Brown Scapular to the Catholic faithful, including St. Robert Bellarmine, Pope John XXII, Gregory XIII, Clement VII, Pope Saint Pius V, Pope Saint Pius X, Pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII, and Pope Benedict XV, and Pope John Paul II—have repeatedly spoken about Saint Simon Stock or the Sabbatine Privilege which was believed to be made to Pope John XXII (that the Blessed Virgin will assist the souls of deceased members of the confraternity, especially on Saturday, the day which the Church dedicates to the Blessed Virgin) for which one should actively practice the above mentioned Carmelite Spirituality.

Pope Saint Pius X declared: "... I believe in the Scapular Vision!... I desire most vehemently that the cloth Scapulars be worn, as heretofore."

Pope Benedict XV declared on July 8, 1916: "In order that one may see that it is Our desire that the Brown Scapular be worn, We concede to it a grace that the Scapular Medal shall not enjoy." And the Pontiff proceeded to grant an indulgence of five hundred days for each time the Scapular is kissed.

Pope Pius XII went so far as to say: "The Scapular is a practice of piety which by its very simplicity is suited to everyone, and has spread widely among the faithful of Christ to their spiritual profit."

Pope Bl. John Paul II witnessed on March 25, 2001 as follows: "...I too have worn the Scapular of Carmel over my heart for a long time! Out of my love for our common heavenly Mother, whose protection I constantly experience..."

St. Alphonsus said: "Just as men take pride in having others wear their livery, so the Most Holy Mary is pleased when Her servants wear Her Scapular as a mark that they have dedicated themselves to Her service, and are members of the Family of the Mother of God."

The two great founders of their own respective Orders, St. Alphonsus of the Redemptorists and St. Don Bosco of the Salesians - both had a very special devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and both wore Her Brown Scapular. When they died, they were buried in their priestly vestments and Scapulars. Many years later, their graves were opened, the bodies and sacred vestments in which they were buried decayed-dust! But the Brown Scapular which each was wearing was perfectly intact. The Scapular of St. Alphonsus is on exhibit in his monastery in Rome.

Prepared by: Rev. Fr. Uthayadas Arulanantham

Deaths and Hope

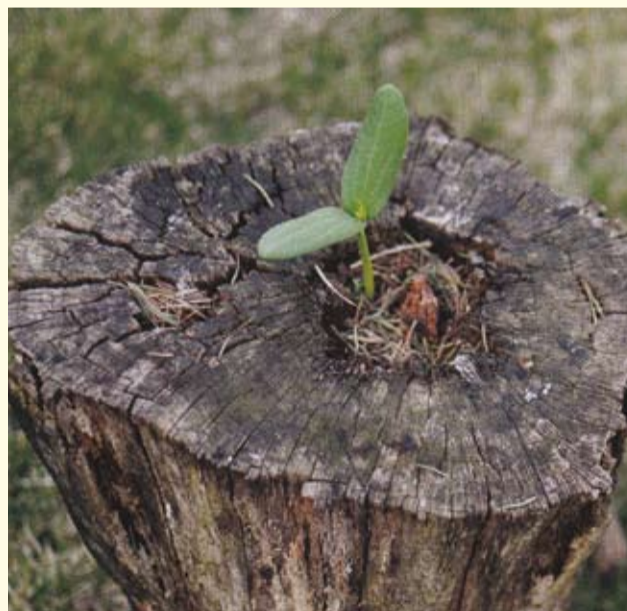
In words that chill one to the bone the psalmist lays bare the anguish of someone facing death, trapped by fear at the horror of that final severance from life. "I am numbered by those who go down into the pit; I am a man without strength ... You have plunged me into the bottom of the pit, into the dark abyss ... with all your billows you overwhelm me ... I am imprisoned, I cannot escape... Your terrors have cut me off... Companion and neighbour you have taken from me; my only friend is darkness" (Ps 88).

The psalmist is not alone in his fear of death, in experiencing the desolation it brings, the awful finality of separation. That precious, lovely body, that unique personality is no more - is lifeless clay. Gone now, and forever. No one will ever, ever fill that gap left when those we love die.

"Will Jesus be there? Will he accept me or reject me?" Teilhard de Chardin wrote in his retreat notebook in the years before he died. That great Jesuit priest, scientist, mystic who in the

course of his life wrote such profound words on Christ, was no stranger to doubt. And who can tell the anguish St Therese of Lisieux experienced behind her beautiful smile as she endured inexpressible bodily pain and annihilating darkness of spirit on her deathbed? Her community hoped she would have a 'holy' death, serene, edifying for all. Not the dreadful rattling tubercular cough, the unbearable suffering laying her waste. But, Therese pointed to Jesus. How did he die? "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34).

For her, as for all who believe, Jesus is the touchstone. When we die in faith we share in His death, in His cry from the Cross, in His terrifying aloneness. When we believe in Him, no matter how we 'rage against the dying of the light' no matter how racked by doubt, we will be brought, in ways we cannot understand, to share in His resurrection. We have His word for it. Death is dreadful but in its darkness, in our grief and loss, we will find a



seed of hope. We do not know what comes after, but we can believe (even if we cannot feel it) that God's love is stronger than death and so we can trust Him absolutely: Jesus really has prepared a place for us (Jn 14).

"When the signs of age begin to mark my body (and still more when they touch my mind); when the illness that is to diminish me or carry me off, strikes from without or is born within me; when the painful moment comes in which I suddenly awaken to the fact that I am ill or grow-

ing old; and above all at that last moment when I feel I am losing hold of myself and am absolutely passive within the hands of the great unknown forces that have formed me; in all those dark moments, O God, grant that I may understand that it is you (provided only my faith is strong enough) who are painfully parting the fibres of my being in order to penetrate to the very marrow of my substance and bear me away within yourself." Teilhard de Chardin, SJ.

(Courtesy: Far East Magazine - November)

Human Trafficking Alias Modern Slavery

An article written to mark the Anti-Human Trafficking Day which fell on October 18, 2013.

The slave was the most vulnerable human being on earth prior to the 19th century as he did not have the right to take decisions on his life in terms of economic, social, political and cultural aspects. He was a property of another who controlled his life by all means. He was bought, exploited and sold. He was not treated as a human but as an animal, whose labour was taken by force. Not only were his movements restricted but his decision for occupation and even marriage too. Understanding 'slavery' as inhumane and a sin made the states abolish it during the 19th century.

The conditions faced by the slave in the

olden days are still being experienced by people who are victims of human trafficking. People were made modern slaves not by capturing them through wars as in the old days but through fraud or making false promises. The victims of human trafficking are exploited in many ways including forced labour, prostitution, drug trafficking and even removal of organs.

A handbook published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), defines human trafficking as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or

of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."

Trafficking in Persons report 2013 of Department of State, United States of America, indicates that modern slavery around the world claims 20.9 million victims at any time. Sri Lanka is considered primarily a source, as a huge number of migrant workers especially women domestic migrant workers, experience various forms of human trafficking such as forced labour, restrictions on movement, withholding of passports, threats, physical or sexual abuse, contract switching, changing conditions of the job contract including the job, employer, conditions,

or salary after arrival and threats of detention and deportation for immigration violations and so on. Examples for internal human trafficking in Sri Lanka include sex trafficking, beach boys, use of individuals with physical deformities for begging and child domestic workers. Sri Lanka prohibits all forms of trafficking through Article 360(C) of its Penal Code enforced in year 2006, prescribing punishments up to 20 years of imprisonment.

The community can play a vital role in eradicating human trafficking. Before accepting a job internally or overseas it is important to obtain all

the information about the job including the credibility of the company as well as the recruitment agency. The applicant should not depend on the information provided by the recruiting agency or the sub-agent, who is usually a neighbour, a friend or even a relative. The relevant information should be gathered through other external sources such as obtaining information through internet, obtaining details directly from the company or from the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment. The job seeker should give all the details in relation to the job to the members of his family and should leave copies of the

job contract and the passport with them. If there is any violation of his contract or if the family could not contact the job seeker they can immediately take action on behalf of the victim by making a complaint to the relevant authorities. The community should be alert, and in identifying human traffickers or victims of human trafficking, the relevant authorities should be immediately informed. Complaints with regard to Human Trafficking should be made to Children and Women Bureau, National Child Protection Authority, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment or to any police station.

Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC

Letters to the Editor ... Letters to the Editor ...

"It Is Our Duty to Be Civic Minded"

With reference to the above titled article published in the *Messenger* of October 13, 2013 sent by Shehan, I wish to pen my views from a religious perspective.

When I contemplate the church feasts celebrated during the past few months in some churches in the Colombo South area, I presume that even at this age of grace we are walking in the Garden of Eden with Eve. When Eve was tempted by Satan, she looked at the forbidden fruits and saw, that the fruits were good for food and pleasing to the eye and desirable for gaining wisdom and took some and ate it (Gen.3:6). I feel that we have acted in that same way in the above circumstances. It is no doubt that at a time of financial crisis a very generous offer from an outside source would look so very attractive. But the question is whether it is righteous of us to accept it? The Church is the House of God, and whatever given to it should be with love for God and not with any self interest or for a political gain. God looks at the heart and the intentions of the giver.

As Shehan has explained very well in detail the abusing of the Council funds and manpower to celebrate church feasts, I agree with him and in fact I observe that we have been participants of injustice to the community. The funds allocated to the council to provide facilities to the community had been utilized to celebrate our church feasts depriving not only the tax payers but the less fortunate people

of their privileges. When questioned about taxes Jesus Christ has given a direct answer, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (Lk .20:25). In the past years we have celebrated the church feasts and have renovated our churches with our own efforts from the contributions of our parishioners.

Catholics and Christians are in an era of persecution; our churches, statues and Holy Eucharist are burnt and damaged, missionary workers are arrested, organized groups are trying their utmost to prevent the word of God being spread, innocent people are being killed, legal system is failing and we are fast moving away from democracy and end times are getting closer. Under these circumstances we should keep the politicians away from the Church. As St. Paul said, we must put on the armour of God and resist all devils tactics (Eph. 6:11). I note with regret that we cannot change what had been already done, but if we are united and alert we could prevent such happenings in future. Let us enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is broad that leads to destruction (Mat.7:13).

I conclude this by stating that whatever comments I have made is without malice, but only with my deep love for Jesus Christ, Blessed Mother and concern for the Church.

Sharmani Alwis
Mt. Lavinia

Sea of heads storm Kurunegala!

With the arrival of our dear Mother Mary to Kurunegala on October 16 for her Rosary Rally, the town of Kurunegala witnessed an over-flowing of her devotees much to the delight of the local population while at the same time being a surprise to the organisers of the Rally.

The Rally was a tremendous success, convincing her unbelievers how dear Mother Mary was to her people, to brave the mid-day heat and participating in the strenuous and lengthy holy exer-

cise, conducted in a solemn, prayerful manner. Those who gathered from around the country to make this occasion a great success made a great sacrifice, about which I am certain Our Lady would have been very pleased, and also with those who were instrumental in organizing and conducting the Rally. Eventually, with the conclusion of this great event a change in the weather pattern was also experienced the same day ushering a sigh of relief to all the people.

I am certain the conviction of her people around the world made the Holy Father entrust the world to her on October 13 and demonstrating our total trust in her love for us and thereby bringing us closer to her son Jesus, who entrusted His mother to us on the cross in Calvary.

If you wish to save your soul, love her the way she loves you. Recite the family Rosary everyday!

Tommy Wanigesinghe
Kurunegala

University Catholic Students' Workshop



University Catholic Students Workshop - 2013 took place at Panditeruppu, Jaffna from October 24 to 27. The workshop was organised by the University Catholic Students of the Jaffna University. Around 82 Catholic students representing all universities in Sri Lanka, participated at this National Workshop. The theme of the workshop was, "Radiating Faith in Professional Life."

An Appreciation

Rev. Fr. Anselm Silva, OMI

2nd Death Anniversary
November 18, 2013



Far far away you went leaving us bitter sweet memories
Reaping the well earned rewards of a life well spent serving God
Amazingly candid, cheerful and amiable in disposition
Never said no to anyone although you had plenty to do
Service was your priority even at the expense of your health
Exhibited maturity, knowledge and leadership in all humility
Lovingly helped us all to be what we are today
May you enjoy eternal bliss in heaven till we all meet again.

(Inserted by ever grateful family members)

Numquam Satis

Contd. from Pg. 4

Fundamentalism seems to have uttered the last word about Mary while Catholicism continues to remain open to the ongoing divine inspiration. A Christianity that does not honour Mary is a malnourished form of Christianity. Those who despise her have not understood the real nature of Christianity.

A true follower of Christ is a lover of Mary, and one who dishonours Mother Mary insults her son Jesus. The veneration of Mary leads us towards a deeper adoration of the Holy Trinity. Without a devotion to her, our soul becomes a wasteland and a sapless and dried-up soul is not capable of adoring God.

Since Mary's whole life is a work of God's grace, to venerate her is to adore God. Mary has absolutely nothing that has not been bestowed upon her, by God. To understand Mary is to understand how God quietly and patiently works in human lives. One can recognise the whole of salvation history in a miniature form in her life and conduct.

Even if you have to die, says the Lord, keep faithful, and I will give you the crown of life.

(Apoc 2:10)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR C
10th November- 17th November 2013

Sun: 32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time
2 Mac 7:1,2,9-14; 2 Th 2:16- 3:5;
Lk. 20:27-38 (or 27:34-8)

Mon: Memorial of St. Martin of
Tours, Bishop
Wis 1: 1-7; Lk. 17:1-6

Tue: Memorial of St. Josephat, Bishop &
Martyr
Wis 2: 23- 3:9; Lk. 17:7-10

Wed: Wis 6:1-11; Lk. 17:11-19

Thu: Wis 6: 22- 8:1; Lk. 17: 20-25

Fri: Memorial of St. Albert the Great,
Bishop & Doctor
Wis 13: 1-9; Lk. 17: 26-37

Sat: Memorials of St. Margaret of Scotland
& St. Gertrude, Virgin
Wis 18:14-16, 19:6-9; Lk. 18: 1-8

Sun: 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time
Mal 3: 19-20a; 2 Th 3:7-12; Lk. 21:5-19

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For the Church; that through the faith of its members it may be a beacon of hope for the entire world, Lord hear us,
Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For all of mankind; that those who live without hope and who do not know Christ may come to believe in the eternal life he promised, Lord hear us.
Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

Christ dried the tears of Martha and Mary by raising their brother Lazarus from the dead; may he comfort all those who mourn the death of a loved one, Lord hear us.
Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

That we may grow in the knowledge and love of Christ during our life on earth, so that we may come to see our death for what it is a joyful encounter with him, Lord hear us.
Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

Thirty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading:
2 Mac. 7:1,2, 9-14.

A mother and her seven children are arrested and are tortured. The mother encouraged her children to remain faithful to God, and the children willingly offered their lives for their faith.

Second Reading:
2Thess.2:16-3:5.

St. Paul prays for the converts that their faith may be safeguarded and that the Lord who called him would continue to shower His blessings upon them so that they would continue to serve Him.

Gospel. Lk. 20:27, 34-38.

The Sadducees who did not accept the Resurrection questioned Jesus about the seven brothers who got married to the same woman after the death of their brothers. "To whom does the wife belong after the Resurrection?" They do not realize that the state of the life after is completely different from the present one. For, they do not die any more.

Reflection.

Today's Readings endeavour to prepare us for the life after. This life is much more valuable than the present one on earth. But this has to be won by sweat and blood. It is unlike the life here on earth. It is much more different and is worth dying for. St. Paul in the Second Reading prays and begs God to shower this grace as coming down from heaven. He prays for the converts and in turn requests them to pray for him, in order that he will be strong enough to fight the evil one. For, it is the evil one that can destroy the relationship between God and man. Once this

relationship is destroyed there is no way of attaining eternal life. Therefore constant prayer is needed if one were to remain faithful to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ His Son. Therefore let us pray that the Lord will save us from the evil one and give us eternal life where every tear will be wiped away and death will not have power.

But this eternal life cannot be had free; we have to sweat and labour for it. In other words we have to get it the hard way. At times we will have to be totally dedicated and even offer our lives for it.

In the First Reading we see the mother of the Maccabee brothers asking them to offer their lives to gain eternal life. The Maccabees were asked to eat flesh of swine which was then forbidden by their religious law. They preferred to offer up their lives rather than become unfaithful to God, thus securing a place in heaven. The cost of faith here was death. Anything is worth as long as it gives us eternal life. Therefore, let us too seek eternal life rather than pleasure on earth. Let us do it the hard way. The life hereafter is quite different from the life here on earth. We do like to live our earthly lives. But the fruits of the life after death are great and are much more valuable. People here on earth get married and give in marriage but in heaven it is quite different as in heaven people neither marry nor give in marriage; for they do not die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God. Being Sons of the resurrection and as our God is a living God.

Living with Him is much more valuable than living on earth with our dear and loved ones. That is the reason why we ought to live

a life worthy of the Lord, so that we will be able one day to live in the presence of God as that life is eternal. Let us do it by living a life faithful and a witnessing one.

Aid Story 1

Two Christians women brought before a Roman prefect were ordered to renounce their faith and worship the gods. They courageously refused and the prefect had a brazier lighted before the gods and said to them, "Either you burn incense before our god or you will be burned in this fire." The two martyrs replied without one moment's hesitation. "We do not fear this fire which will soon go out, but we do fear hell's that will never be extinguished, and so as not to end up there we detest your idols and worship Jesus Christ." Both women suffered martyrdom in the year 258.

Aid Story 2

There is nothing to worry about the life after. Everything that you worship, pray for and, cherish or become slaves of, while on this earth will be freely available in your life after. There will be money bundles and bundles you only have to grab them to find that the amount is not printed, There will be vehicles you only have to get in and put the key and start only to find that there are no engines, there will be big houses, you only have to open the front door to find only the front wall is there. Racks and racks of different kinds of liquor bottles you only have to take the kind you love to find the bottles are without a bottom. That will be the hearts burning; the hell fire for those who live a sinful and a slavish life of the world.

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

CHRISTIAN DEATH

Some theological insights

Death and new life

November 2 was traditionally called All Souls' day. Today it is more appropriately called the remembrance of the faithful departed. The reason is in the Bible that the human person is one entity; not two parts composed of body and soul. Hence the whole person is born, the whole person dies.

At death the person makes the final definitive option, more technically called the Fundamental option. Those who have made constant options for God's will naturally make the fundamental for God at death. Those who have not done so will be given a final chance at the last moment of their life. So good is God giving us chances all the time. God made us for Him, he is not at rest until we rest in Him.

Purgatory

However we all have to go through a process of purification or purgation to see God face to face. This purgation is a painful process. More painful for those who are in need of more purification.

When we stand before that brilliant light of God all in us that needs purification is burnt out before Him. Then we shall go into His

all holy presence to live with Him and with those who have gone before us.

What about our dead body? It is no more needed. It will turn into dust. It is like a snake that sheds its outer skin and a new skin emerges from within, the inner body. So with us. A new body is created, the identity of course remains the same. It is always the creative power of God working within us. We can visit the graves of the dead. They are like relics. We use our senses of sight and touch to remember them and pray for them.

Praying for the dead

In praying for the dead we primarily give thanks to God for the precious gift of their lives and the example they have left behind for us. We do not pray for the canonized saints, we pray to them to intercede for us. So also we pray for our loved ones, have masses celebrated for them



and above all we can pray to them. Who knows better our condition here in this vale of tears than our loved ones who are now saints in heaven.

The canonized saints are given to us for public veneration. We revere our loved ones who are now saints in heaven, we revere them and seek their intercession.

May the divine assistance remain always with us. And may the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in the eternal peace and happiness of God.

*Rev. Fr. Dudley Perera, OMI
De Mazenod House,*

Remembering the Dead

Memories of loved ones gone before
November restores;
As in prayerful thought, in charitable deeds
We, merit to them bestow.
Helpless souls in purgatory
Awaiting release;
Depending on the prayers of the faithful
To obtain relief.
A candle, a rose, a sigh, a tear
Reach out to them in love, remembrance and
prayer. Remembering in gratitude,
their contribution
to our welfare.
They touched our lives
Parents, grandparents, family members,
relatives, teachers, friends
They befriended us, our turn to
befriend them.
Thank God!
For those kindly souls and lisp a prayer
That God's eternal peace
and rest be theirs.

Jeannette Cabraal

The 23rd Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

The 23rd Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from November 15 to 17, 2013 at the BMICH, Colombo. This will be the first time in 40 years that Queen Elizabeth II, the Head of the Commonwealth will not be present at the CHOGM. Reports state that one of the main items considered at the meeting is a proposal to make the position of Head of the Commonwealth hereditary to descendants of Queen Elizabeth II.

So what is the 'Commonwealth of Nations'?

The Commonwealth of Nations is an intergovernmental organisation of 53 member states that were mostly territories of the former British Empire. The Commonwealth operates by intergovernmental consensus of the member states, organised through the Commonwealth Secretariat, and non-governmental organisations, organised through the Commonwealth Foundation.

The Commonwealth dates back to the late 19th century with the decolonisation of the British Empire through increased self-governance of its territories. It was however formally constituted by the London Declaration in 1949, which established the member states as "free and equal." The symbol of this "free association" is Queen Elizabeth II who is the Head of the Commonwealth, a wholly symbolic position.

Member states have no legal obligation to one to another. Instead, they are united by language, history, culture, and their shared values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. These values are enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter and promoted by the quadrennial Commonwealth Games.

The Commonwealth covers almost a quarter of the world land area and spans all the continents and has an estimated population of 2.245 billion, almost a third of the world's population.

In 2012, the Commonwealth produced a nominal gross domestic product (GDP) of \$9.767 trillion, representing 15% of the world GDP when measured in purchasing power parity (PPP). This represents the second largest nominal GDP and GDP PPP in the world.

When was the CHOGM first held?

The first meeting of the heads of government of the Commonwealth of Nations was held in 1944 when the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' gathered together in the United Kingdom, between May 1-16, 1944. It was hosted by the then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Winston Churchill. It was called the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

The Conference was attended by the Prime Ministers of all the Dominions within the Commonwealth except Ireland, Prime Minister John Curtin of Australia, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King of Canada, Prime Minister Peter Fraser of New Zealand and Prime Minister Jan Smuts of South Africa. Also attending was Prime Minister Sir Godfrey Huggins of the self-governing colony of Southern Rhodesia and representing India was the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and members of the Churchill War Cabinet and the High Commissioners of the Dominions.

Ireland did not participate although at the time the British Commonwealth still regarded Ireland as one of its members.



Prime Ministers of five members of the Commonwealth met at the 1944 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

What is the 'New Commonwealth'?

As the Commonwealth grew, Britain and its pre-1945 dominions became informally known as the *Old Commonwealth*. The New Commonwealth emerged in 1949 when it was agreed that India could remain a member of the Commonwealth on becoming a Republic. Prior to that members shared a common allegiance to the British Crown. Its growth accelerated in the 1950's and 1960's with the independence of many new member States in Africa and Asia.

What is the structure of the Commonwealth?

Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth, a title that is by law a part of Elizabeth's royal titles. However, when the monarch dies, the successor to the crown does not automatically become Head of the Commonwealth.

The position is symbolic, representing the free association of independent members, the majority of which are republics, with five of them having monarchs.



Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth

What is the main decision-making forum of the Commonwealth?

The main decision-making forum of the organisation is the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), where Commonwealth heads of government assemble for several days to discuss matters of mutual interest. CHOGM is the successor to the Meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. There are also regular meetings of finance ministers, law ministers, health ministers, etc.



Heads of Commonwealth meet

The Head of Government hosting the CHOGM is called the Commonwealth Chairperson-in-Office and retains the position until the following CHOGM. After the most recent CHOGM, in Perth, Western Australia, in October 2011, Australia's then-Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, became Chairperson-in-Office. In the 2013, CHOGM to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from November 15-17, Sri Lanka's President, Mahinda Rajapaksa, will become the Chairperson-in-Office and will continue to hold the title until the next CHOGM in Mauritius in 2015.

What is the purpose of the Commonwealth Secretariat?

The Commonwealth Secretariat, established in 1965, is the main intergovernmental agency of the Commonwealth, facilitating consultation and cooperation among member governments and countries. It is responsible to member governments collectively. The Commonwealth of Nations is represented in the United Nations' General Assembly by the Secretariat as an observer.

The Secretariat organises Commonwealth summits, meetings of ministers, consultative meetings and



Marlborough House, London, the headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth's principal intergovernmental institution

technical discussions; it assists policy development and provides policy advice, and facilitates multilateral communication among the member governments. It also provides technical assistance to help governments in the social and economic development of their countries and in support of the Commonwealth's fundamental political values.

The Secretariat is headed by the Commonwealth Secretary-General who is elected by Commonwealth heads of government for no more than two four-year terms. The present Secretary-General is Kamalesh Sharma, from India, who took office on April 1, 2008, succeeding Don McKinnon of New Zealand (2000-2008), and was re-elected in 2011 to his second term in 2012. The first Secretary-General was Arnold Smith of Canada (1965-75), followed by Sir Shridath Ramphal of Guyana (1975-90) and Emeka Anyaoku of Nigeria (1990-99).

What is the motive behind the Commonwealth Games?



All sport lovers have heard of the Commonwealth Games. The Games are the third-largest multi-sport event in the world, bringing together globally popular sports and peculiarly "Commonwealth" sports, such as rugby sevens, shown here in the picture at the 2006 Games.

The Commonwealth Games, a multi-sport event, is held every four years; the 2010 Commonwealth Games were held in New Delhi, India, in 2010, and the next in Glasgow, Scotland, in 2014, and the next after that in Gold Coast, Australia, in 2018. The games are the Commonwealth's most visible activity and interest in the operation of the Commonwealth increases greatly when the Games are held.

What is the Commonwealth War Graves Commission?

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission serves to commemorate 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead and maintains 2,500 war cemeteries around the world. In Sri Lanka too we have four such graves in Trincomalee, Peradeniya, and in Colombo at Jawatte and Borella. The Commission is responsible for maintaining these war graves of service personnel that died in the First and Second World Wars fighting for Commonwealth member States.



Young World

Holy Cross College, Gampaha emerge Badminton Champs



Holy Cross College, Gampaha emerged winners at the Open Badminton Tournament which concluded recently at the D.B. Welagedara Stadium in Kurunegala.

Picture shows the winners of the tournament. Seated, Left to Right: Mahesh Ekanayake (Coach), Rev. Sr. Mary

Deepani (Principal), Mrs. Pushpa Perera (Teacher-in-charge). Standing, Left to Right: Hasin Chamodya, Himaya Perera, Pavani Navodya, Hansani Lakmini, Dakshina Rajaratne, Nethmi Chethana, Nethini Godagampala.

Mahesh Ekanayake

Prize-giving at Ave Maria Convent (Branch) School, Bolawalana



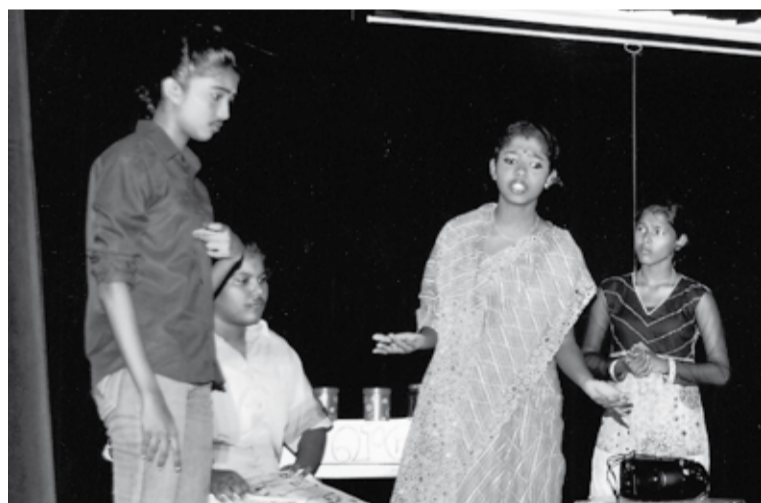
The Annual Prize-giving of Ave Maria Convent (Branch) School, Bolawalana, was held recently. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Very Rev. Sr. Carmelita Borg OP, Superior General of the Dominican Sisters of Malta.

The Guests of Honour were Rev.

Sr. Dorothy Mizzi, the Vicar General of the Congregation and Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawala, General Manager of the Catholic Private, schools. More than 750 students were awarded for their academic performances.

(Pix by: T. Sunil Fernando.)

Shepherdians' Commerce Day



The Annual Commerce Day named 'Kakushin 13' of Good Shepherd Convent, Kotahena was held recently at the School Main Hall.

The Chief Guest

was the Dean of the Management Faculty of the University of Kelaniya, D.M. Semasinghe.

The curtain of "Kakushin 2013" was opened with a Sinhala and

Commerce Union delivered the welcome address. This was followed by a Sinhala drama on the impact of technology in Society. At the games held for the in-



ited Schools, St. Joseph's College, Colombo was adjudged the winners. The Tamil medium students also staged a drama titled "Consumer Protection."

The day ended with the distribution of prizes to the winners of the Commerce Day com-

petitions. A power point presentation of the committee and the people who gave their fullest support for the success of the Commerce Day, was displayed.

The event wound up with the singing of the National Anthem.

The efforts, hardwork and the team spirit made "Kakushin 13" a success. This was an unforgettable day in our school calendar.

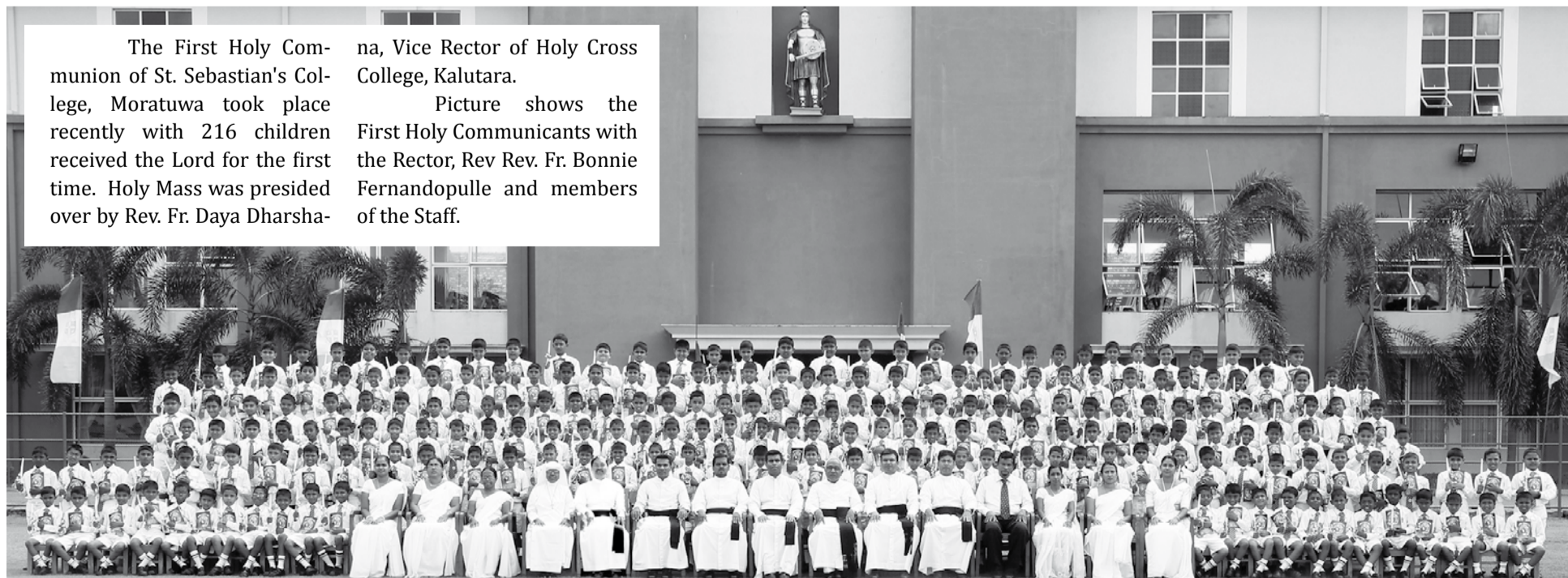
*Vinotheeba Reginald
Grade 12
(Commerce Stream)
Good Shepherd Convent,
Kotahena.*

First Holy Communion at St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa

The First Holy Communion of St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa took place recently with 216 children received the Lord for the first time. Holy Mass was presided over by Rev. Fr. Daya Dharsha-

na, Vice Rector of Holy Cross College, Kalutara.

Picture shows the First Holy Communicants with the Rector, Rev. Fr. Bonnie Fernandopulle and members of the Staff.



English with Fun and Entertainment

Dear Readers,

In our seventh lesson we learnt the teacher's prayer, a simple poem about the teacher, speech sounds (m) as in map (n) as in nose (ŋ) as in hang, two funny anecdotes on male assertiveness and Our Lord's Prayer, vocabulary enrichment teaser on word formation, checking plurals, mild intelligent tests and introducing oneself.

In this lesson you will practise the speech sounds (b) (n) (f) (r), learn 8 riddles, 5 Palindromes, go through a short course in human relations, learn a short composition on my pet and read one exciting anecdote about happy marriage.

Thanks for the readers who made valuable suggestions and for using these lessons effectively. You are invited to share your experiences to enrich our lessons further.

With best regards!

NJ

Task 1

Read the following tongue twisters very fast

- (b) big black bug bit a big black dog on his big black nose!
- (n) Ann and Andy's anniversary is in April.
- (f) Four furious friends fought for the phone.
- (r) Round and round the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran.

Task 2 - Riddles

- (1) I run over fields and woods all day. Under the bed at night I sit not alone. My tongue hangs out, up and to the rear, waiting to be filled in the morning. What am I?
- (2) Throw it off the highest building, and I'll not break. But put me in the ocean, and I will. What am I?
- (3) What can run but never walk, has a mouth but never talks, has a head but never weeps, has a bed but never sleeps
- (4) No sooner spoken than broken. What is it?
- (5) A certain crime is punishable if attempted but not punishable if committed. What is it?
- (6) You use a knife to slice my head and weep beside me when I am dead. What am I?
- (7) I am mother and father. I'm rarely still, but I never wander. What am I?
- (8) I am weightless, but you can see me. Put me in a bucket, and I'll make it lighter. What am I?

Task 3 - Palindromes

A palindrome is a word, phrase, verse, or sentence that reads the same backward or forward. Try out our palindrome riddles!

Like "a Toyota" or "Civic", I'm just as good in reverse?
What am I? _____ (10 letters)

The answer is "Palindrome", because a palindrome is a word, phrase, verse, or sentence that reads the same backward or forward.

Let's try some more palindrome riddles!

- (i) What word becomes a palindrome when viewed upside down and backwards?
- (ii) Pronounced as one letter but written with three, only two different letters are used to make me.
I'm double, I'm single I'm black, blue, and gray.
I'm read from both ends and the same either way.
- (iii) What word, when written in capital letters, is the same forwards, backwards and upside down?
- (iv) What call for help, when written in capital letters, is the same forwards, backwards and upside down?
- (v) How did Adam use a palindrome to introduce himself to Eve when they first met?

Task 4 - A Short Course in Human Relations

The six most important words:	I admit that I was wrong.
The five most important words	You did a great job.
The four most important words:	What do you think?
The three most important words:	Could you please. . .
The two most important words	Thank you.
The most important word	We.
The least important word:	I.

Task 5 - Composition helps the student to express his views on what is happening in the world around him, besides expressing personal thoughts, feelings and experiences. Read the following composition and write a short composition on your pets and email them to me.

My Pets



I have two pretty birds as pets. They are green-and-blue budgies. Their home is a shady tree in the garden where they are free to fly from branch to branch. Yet they are safe from the cat as the whole tree is inside a wire enclosure. I have nailed a wooden box on the tree. This is their 'nest' where they sleep at night and where they find shelter whenever it rains.

My pets are called 'Polly' and 'Sally'. They enjoy flying about among the branches and they chirp happily all day long. Every morning, I feed them with birdseed and give them a bowl of water to drink. I also clean their 'nest'. They are pretty birds and I like to watch their movements. I find them cheery and lively, so I never feel dull spending my time with them. I love my pets very much.

budgie	'budgie' is short for 'budgerigar'. A parakeet native to Australia and having green, yellow, or blue plumage. It is a popular cage bird bred in a variety of colors not found in wild populations
chirp	make high-pitched sounds; of birds
cheery	bright and happy

Task 6 - Anecdotes - Read and enjoy the fun and humour

Happy Marriage

- Honey, both that journalist and the engineer proposed to our daughter!
- So who's the lucky man?
- The engineer. Our daughter married the journalist (Submitted by Abby)

Answers

Task 1: Read aloud

Task 2: (1) shoe (2) tissue/ wave (3) river
(4) silence/ secret (5) Suicide/ Coup d'état. (6) an onion
(7) a tree (8) a hole

Task 3: (i) Swims (ii) eye (iii) NOON (iv) SOS
(v) Madam in Eden, I'm Adam

Task 4 - Given

Task 5 - To be written and emailed

Tasks 6 To be read aloud

Contact us on:
071 8004580



Compiled by Noel Jayamanne

E-mail: noeljayamanne@yahoo.com

QUIZ

On Catholic Themes

(..... from last week)

QUESTIONS

1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

Matrimony

481. What is the Sacrament of Matrimony?
 482. What are the primary purposes of marriage?
 483. Who is the minister in the Sacrament of Matrimony in the Western Church?
 484. What is the role of the priest or deacon at the Sacrament of Matrimony?
 485. What are the published announcements of a proposed marriage in Roman Catholic Church called?
 486. In Canon Law what is the legal age for marriage?
 487. Can a Catholic marry a non-Catholic Christian?

Holy Orders

488. What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?
 489. Can Ordination to the Priesthood be annulled?
 490. What are the three degrees of the Sacrament of Holy Orders?
 491. What is the principal duty of Deacons?
 492. Who is a Permanent Deacon?
 493. There are certain duties a Deacon cannot do in relation to the Sacraments. Mention three?
 494. Who can confer the Sacrament of Holy Orders?
 495. Who can receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders validly?

(contd next week.....)

ANSWERS

I. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

Matrimony

481. Matrimony is the Sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ to sanctify the lawful union of one man and one woman in an indissoluble bond.
 482. The procreation and upbringing of children and the mutual well-being of spouses.
 483. The couple. They confer on each other the Sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church.
 484. He is a witness.
 485. The Banns.
 486. Sixteen for boys and fourteen for girls.
 487. Yes, but special permission from the bishop is required. The non-Catholic partner must promise to help the spouse to practise his/her faith and to bring up their children in the Catholic faith.

Holy Orders

488. The Sacrament by which bishops, priests and deacons are ordained and receive the power and grace to perform their sacred duties.
 489. No. Once a priest always a priest.
 490. Bishops, Priests and Deacons.
 491. Deacons are servants of all. They assist the Bishops and priests in the celebration of the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, proclamation of the Gospel, assisting at marriages and funerals, and various ministries of charity.
 492. The Permanent Deacon (married or single) is an ordained minister of the Church, ordained for the service of God's people in communion with the bishop and his body of priests. Becoming a Deacon involves a vocation from God; once ordained a Deacon is always a Deacon.
 493. 1. They cannot perform the Act of Consecration at the Eucharistic Celebration.
 2. They cannot hear Confession.
 3. They cannot administer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.
 494. Validly ordained bishops.
 495. Only a baptized man.

Courtesy: Clare Ukken fsp

JESUS with a DIFFERENCE

[Spiritual Reflection]

Luke 5:1-11. Jesus Calls His First Disciples

What happened to the fish they caught?



Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

...they caught such

a large number of fish that their nets began to break. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."

So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Jesus

He asked them to change their fishing spot. They listened to a carpenter. Yet they were successful. They were satisfied with what they caught. They knew it was not from their own effort but from the Word of God.

Hidden Points

Didn't Jesus consider that they were professional fishermen who knew what they were doing?
 Why did Jesus tell them to change their place of fishing?
 Did Jesus know they could be great men fishing elsewhere?
 Why did they leave out a huge number of fish?

Difference

Are we also ready to leave all what we have earned for Jesus?
 Would I change my life style for Jesus if I am called to do so?

Turning Points

Yes..! It's interesting to note that Jesus chooses people for His work. Yet he never abandons the family whom they have sacrificed. He allows His followers to leave all they have for their families in order to serve God better.

Rev. Fr. S. Randil Fernando OMI
 Nazareth, Wennappuwa

How I miss her!

Oh how green the grass is
 It makes me think of someone I miss,
 Someone I long to feel and kiss
 Her cheek so pure so smooth.

But I am afraid that can not be done
 Even if I do my hair up in a bun,
 For my loving grandmother is gone
 Gone forever from this earth to
 Heaven to the Lord above.

And I pray I see her in Heaven one day!

Devmini Fernando
 Grade 4,
 Holy Family Convent,
 Colombo 4.



FOSTERING RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS

Mystery of the Church

"Priests and Christian educators should make serious efforts to foster religious vocations, thereby increasing the strength of the Church, corresponding to its needs. These candidates should be suitably

and carefully chosen. In ordinary preaching, the life of the evangelical counsels and the religious state should be treated more frequently. Parents, too, should nurture and protect religious vocations in their children by instilling Christian virtue in their hearts."

Perfectae Caritatis 24
 Decree on the adaptation and
 renewal of religious life
 Pope Paul VI
 October 28, 1965