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The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

August 15

Messenger

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Statement from the Archbishop of Colombo

"A truly painful experience"

We are deeply distressed and shocked about the unfortunate situation that happened in the Weliveriya area with regard to the drinking water problem at Rathupaswela recently. Already three innocent lives have been lost due to this incident. A few others have been warded in the hospital with serious injuries. On this occasion we wish to express our deepest condolences to the parents who lost their children and we wish to pray that the Lord may grant them His consolation and strength. We also pray that those who are injured may recover soon.

We wish to reiterate at this point that we do not accept attempts to resolve questions by either taking the law into one's own hands and engaging in causing disruption to peoples normal way of life or by using one's power in a repressive manner to suppress protests, even if they get out of control. For every question the best way out is the

way of peaceful discussion and dialogue. We cannot accept and approve under any circumstances attacking unarmed civilians during a demonstration. We wish to condemn such behaviour unreservedly. Those who lost lives and those who have been made to suffer as a result were not those who engaged in the protest in a provocative manner or those who suppressed such protest abusing one's power, but innocent civilians who had no connection whatsoever with this event or their parents or relatives. This is truly a painful experience.

We wish to condemn unhesitatingly the attack carried out by some elements of the forces on people who had sought refuge at St. Anthony's Church, Weliveriya. It is a sacrilege for anyone to enter such sacred precincts with arms in their hands and to behave in a violent manner there. Such actions cannot be accepted by anyone. It is always necessary that we preserve the sanctity of sacred premises of any religion

and respect the people who enter such premises seeking protection. Hence, we firmly request from the Government and the authorities responsible to conduct an impartial and just inquiry into the incident where innocent people were killed and actions contrary to the sacredness of a Church were carried out and we request that those found guilty be punished without consideration of rank or status.

We also wish to invite all those who are affected and the people in the area to be calm and patient as the noble teachings of our religious beliefs call us to do.

✠ **Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith**
Archbishop of Colombo

* Ravinesh Perera Innocent victim of Weliveriya



His Eminence pays his last respects to young Ravinesh (Pic: Raveen Sandasiri)

The second victim of the Weliveriya clash Ravinesh Perera, a Commerce stream student of St. Peter's College, Gampaha, who was shot on the head succumbed to his injuries while being treated at the Colombo National Hospital. **(CONTD ON PG. 2)**

New look at the Holy Shroud of Turin

Rev. Fr. Louis-Marie's new book: The Holy Shroud - Why We Believe was released to the public last month in Colombo. A copy was presented to the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka, Ampitiya, Kandy.

Published by Magnificat Media Pte Ltd, Singapore, it is available on line at: www.magnificat.com.sg

Hopefully, the book will be available for purchase in Sri Lanka in the near future. The book is one of a kind, in that it goes beyond scientific research to



spell out implications of the Holy Shroud in the areas of theology and spirituality. Based on a solid biblical background the book ventures on to new areas of research,

such as liturgy and evangelization. In this 'Year of Faith' and the launch of the New Evangelization, this book is a must-read by both clergy and laity alike.

Jubilees of Priestly Ordination

Silver Jubilarians



Rev. Fr. Clement Rozairo



Rev. Fr. Ranjan Silva



Rev. Fr. Sudath Gunatilleke



Rev. Fr. Jude Bernard Rodrigo



Rev. Fr. Anura Sylvester

Diamond Jubilarians

Rev. Fr. Joe de Mel
Rev. Fr. Joseph Perera.

Golden Jubilarians

Rev. Fr. Stanley Abeysekara
Rev. Fr. Danny Pinto
Rev. Fr. Chrys Abeyratne

Festive High Mass was celebrated at the Sacred Heart Chapel, Archbishop's House on Monday, August 5. Details and photographs will appear next week.

"Instil Community Spirit in School Children"

His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka speaking at the Prize-giving of Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya said that parents and also teachers face the profound challenge of finding a balance between freedom and discipline when trying to educate the younger generation.

Addressing parents, teachers, students and well-wishers, His Excellency said that while discipline is necessary, "you should also have the courage to allow your children and your students the necessary freedom. If they are sure of your love, as parents and of your caring, as teachers and if they know deep in their hearts that you really trust them, they will also learn to face the risks of life."

Outlining community spirit as one of the main characteristics of a

truly Catholic School, His Excellency observed that community spirit, helps to instil in the students a positive vision of life inspired by the noble ideals of integrity and fairness, of hard work and discipline and especially of respect, mutual trust, sharing and reciprocal love.

"A true community however is not possible without the participation from all, teaching staff, students and parents together with all the other organisations who are PTA and also the personal dedication of each one is important for the success of the community.

"So everyone must feel responsible for the whole family as members of one family. The other important characteristic of a truly Catholic School is that it helps its students search for a deeper meaning in life, through a sincere openness to the love of God



A painting done by Shovana Perera a Grade 11 student, was presented to His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri. The painting is an interpretation of the 'Vessanthara Jathakaya' from the Degaldoruwa Temple

and to the need we all feel for the infinite," said the Apostolic Nuncio.

Pin pointing that all students of the School are not Catholics and some belong to different faiths and traditions, the Nuncio quoted Pope Francis who had, while addressing a

group of school children stressed that schools in particular should be places of encounter, a meeting place to help students grow as mature, simple, honest and competent persons who know how to live and love faithfully.

27th Anniversary of Ben's '86 Batch



The '86 Batch of St. Benedict's College, Colombo celebrated their 27th Anniversary by having a Thanksgiving Mass at the Chapel of Good Shepherd Convent, Colombo 13, followed by a fellowship dinner.

The Chief Celebrant was Rev. Fr. Kennedy Perera, Rector St. Thomas' Catholic International College, Seeduwa.

Rev. Bro. Janaka Fonseka, Director of St. Benedict's College, Rev. Sister Superior and Rev. Sr. Principal of Good Shepherd Convent and the Parish Priest of St. Lucia's Cathedral, Rev. Fr. Ciswan de Croos were among the invitees present at the function. All members of the Ben's '86 Batch and their families participated. The President of the Ben's 86 Batch Mr. Ranmal Perera gifted all invitees and the Staff with souvenirs of specially designed cups and saucers.

Elder's Day at Palangaturai



Over One Hundred sick and elderly persons participated at the Holy Mass celebrated for elders at St. Anne's Church, Palangaturai. This was organised by the Christian Family Movement of Palangaturai under the guidance of the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Kingsley Ivan.

Melvyn de Costa

Feast of St. Camillus



A special Holy Mass to mark the feast of St. Camillus was held at St. Camillus Elders' Home, Nayakanda, Hendala officiated by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

Picture shows His Lordship with Rev. Frs and the Sisters of Chavanod who run the Elder's Home.

Nimal Perera

Awarding of Certificates at Electrotech, Negombo



The awarding of certificates of the Electrotech Institute in Negombo was held recently with the distinguished participation of Very Rev. Fr. Patrick Perera, Episcopal Vicar (Colombo North) and Very Rev. Fr. Shanthikumar Weliwita, Episcopal Vicar (Jaela Region).

T. Sunil Fernando

Innocent victim....

Contd. from Pg.1

Ravinesh, a Catholic from Weliveriya, who was due to sit for his Advanced Level examination last Monday (5), was shot by the Armed Forces at Weliveriya, while returning home. According to reports his brain was heavily damaged with internal bleeding.

Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm

Church Feasts



The 20th Annual Feast of St. Anne's Church, Kalawewa (Vijithapura, Rajarata) will be celebrated on Sunday August 18.

Festive Mass at 8.30 am. Chief celebrant - Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert

Andradi OMI, Bishop of Anuradhapura. Vespers Service on previous day at 6.30 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Samantha Senanayake SSS.

The 103rd Annual Feast of Our Lady of Snows Church, Periyamulla, Negombo will be celebrated on Sunday August 18. Festive Mass at 8 a.m. Chief celebrant - Rev. Fr. Shane Winston de Rosairo OMI. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Anton Arunodha Perera.

The Annual Feast of the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Bakmeegolla (Kurunegala Diocese) will be celebrated on Sunday August 18. Festive Mass at 8.30 am. Chief celebrant - Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Bishop of Kurunegala. Vespers Service on previous day at 7.30 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Indika Perera of Chilaw Diocese.

The 138th Annual Feast of the Church of Our Lady Queen of Heaven will be celebrated in Kuda Payagala on Thursday August 15. Festive Mass at 8 am. Chief celebrant - Rev. Fr. Nilantha Uduwaka. Vespers on previous day at 7.30 pm presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle, Archdiocesan Episcopal Vicar.

The Annual Feast of the Church of Our Lady Queen of Heaven will be celebrated in Bolawatte (Chilaw Diocese) on Thursday August 15. Festive Mass at 7.30 am. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm.

The Annual Feast of the Shrine of Our Lady of Mahaweli in Lathpandura, Dehiattakandiya will be celebrated on Sunday August 18. Festive Mass at 8.30 am. Chief celebrant - Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando SSS, Bishop of Badulla. Vespers Service on previous day at 5.45 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Sumith Priyantha Fernando.

The Feast of St. Joachim will be celebrated in Kalaeliya, Ja-ela on Sunday August 18. Festive Mass at 8 am. Chief celebrant - Rev. Fr. Sudath Gunatileke.

- Ainslie Joseph

"Catholic Responses to Fundamentalism"

The Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate together with the Faculty of Theology, Aquinas University College, Borella will conduct a lecture on "Catholic Responses to Fundamentalism," at the Peter Pillai Auditorium at Aquinas, in Sinhala Tamil and English.



The lectures will be as follows:

August 21, 22 - Sinhala (8.00am - 1.30 pm)

- Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi

August 23 - Tamil (8.00am - 1.30 pm)

- Rev. Fr. Reginald Lucien

August 27 & 28 - English (8.00am - 1.30 pm)

- Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi

Please bring your Holy Bible.

Rozaine Avory

Cardinal Ranjith paid his respects to Ravinesh last Monday. The funeral was held on Wednesday amidst a large gathering of mourners including Rev. Fathers and Sisters.

The first victim of the Weliveriya incident was 17-year-old Akila Dinesh, a student of Chandrajothy Maha Vidyalaya in Yakkala. He was killed during the Weliveriya protest, while he was on his way to pick his mother who was returning from work. The third victim was 29-year-old Nilantha Pushpakumara.

The protest in Weliveriya, Rathupaswela and surrounding villagers was over the pollution of their well water allegedly by chemical waste from a factory in the area.

The Weliveriya attack took the lives of three young people and caused injury to more than 50 people.



Church in the Modern World

Pope writes to Muslims about mutual respect

Vatican City (EWTN/CNA) - With the end of the month of Ramadan approaching, Pope Francis decided to personally write to all Muslims as a sign of friendship and to promote greater respect between the two faiths.

"This year, the first of my Pontificate, I have decided to sign this traditional message myself and to send it to you, dear friends, as an expression of esteem and friendship for all Muslims, especially those who are religious leaders," Pope Francis wrote in the letter, which was signed on July 10.

Ramadan, the season of fasting, prayer and almsgiving ends with the customary feast of *Id al-Fitr*. Pope Francis be-

gan his message, released on August 2, by the Vatican, by focusing on how his ministry as pontiff and the choice of his papal name are founded upon "a very famous saint who loved God and every human being deeply."

"I am aware that family and social dimensions enjoy a particular prominence for Muslims during this period, and it is worth noting that there are certain parallels in each of these areas with Christian faith and practice," he said.

For the theme of this year's message the Holy Father chose: "Promoting Mutual Respect through Education."

He also detailed how respect plays out at the personal level.

"What we are called to respect in each person is first of all his life, his physical integrity, his dignity and the rights deriving from that dignity, his reputation, his property, his ethnic and cultural identity, his ideas and his political choices," he wrote.

"Families, schools, religious teaching and all forms of media have a role to play in achieving this goal," he added.

He explained that this means respecting "the religion of the other, its teachings, its symbols, its values.

"Particular respect is due to religious leaders and to places of worship. How painful are attacks on one or other of these!"



Turning to future generations, the Pope emphasized the importance of Christians and Muslims bringing up their children "to think and speak respectfully of other reli-

gions and their followers, and to avoid ridiculing or denigrating their convictions and practices."

The Holy Father finished his message by wishing all Muslims a

"happy feast" and offering his "prayerful good wishes, that your lives may glorify the Almighty and give joy to those around you."

(SEE PAGE 4)

Four million hosts were made for the various Holy Masses for WYD at Rio

(EWTN) Four million hosts were made for the various Holy Masses, and the final Holy Mass drew more than three million participants, including 664 bishops and 7,814 priests. Catechesis sessions took place at 264 locations throughout the city and in 25 languages, said Archbishop Orani Tempesta of Rio de Janeiro.

He said that pilgrims from 175 countries registered for the World Youth Day (WYD) events. The majority were between the ages of 19 and 34. Fifty-five percent of registrants were women, and 45 percent were men.

According to tourism es-

timates, pilgrims spent nearly 1.8 billion Brazilian reals - the local currency - during the event.

Archbishop Orani Tempesta said World Youth Day 2013 has had a positive impact on the country, not only in economic terms, but also as far as Catholic witness.

"Copacabana has never seen so many joyful and peaceful people committed to building a better world," he said, referring to the more than three million young people who lined the beach for the Closing Mass.

Speaking at a recent press conference to thank volunteers, host families and organisers of World

Youth Day, the Archbishop said the event's success can ultimately be attributed to God.

He pointed to numerous changes that had taken place during the planning process.

"There was even a change of Popes, but we were able to hold a beautiful World Youth Day and serve all the young people," he said.

"It was an event without any violence or crime," he added. "And those positive signs that we saw in young people should continue. We want these young people, inspired by World Youth Day, to continue to be the protagonists of a new world."

Programme launched by the Church for street children in North East India



UCANews - Some 800 street children in Guwahati, in North East India took part in a program to launch a movement to make the city child friendly.

Church bodies and civil societies in Guwahati came together under the leadership of the Don Bosco Society for the initiative. Archbishop John Moolachira of Guwahati is the chief Child-Friendly Guwahati (CFG) patron.

The CFG project aims at generating greater awareness among the people, and to create a sense of responsibility in the community for the rights of the underprivileged children.

"It is our common mission as members of the Church and civil society to join the movement for a Child-Friendly Guwahati," said Salesian Provincial of Guwahati Rev. Fr. Thomas Vattathara.

To ensure that the movement spreads, Fr. Vattathara has appointed a director of the project and an assistant coordinator.

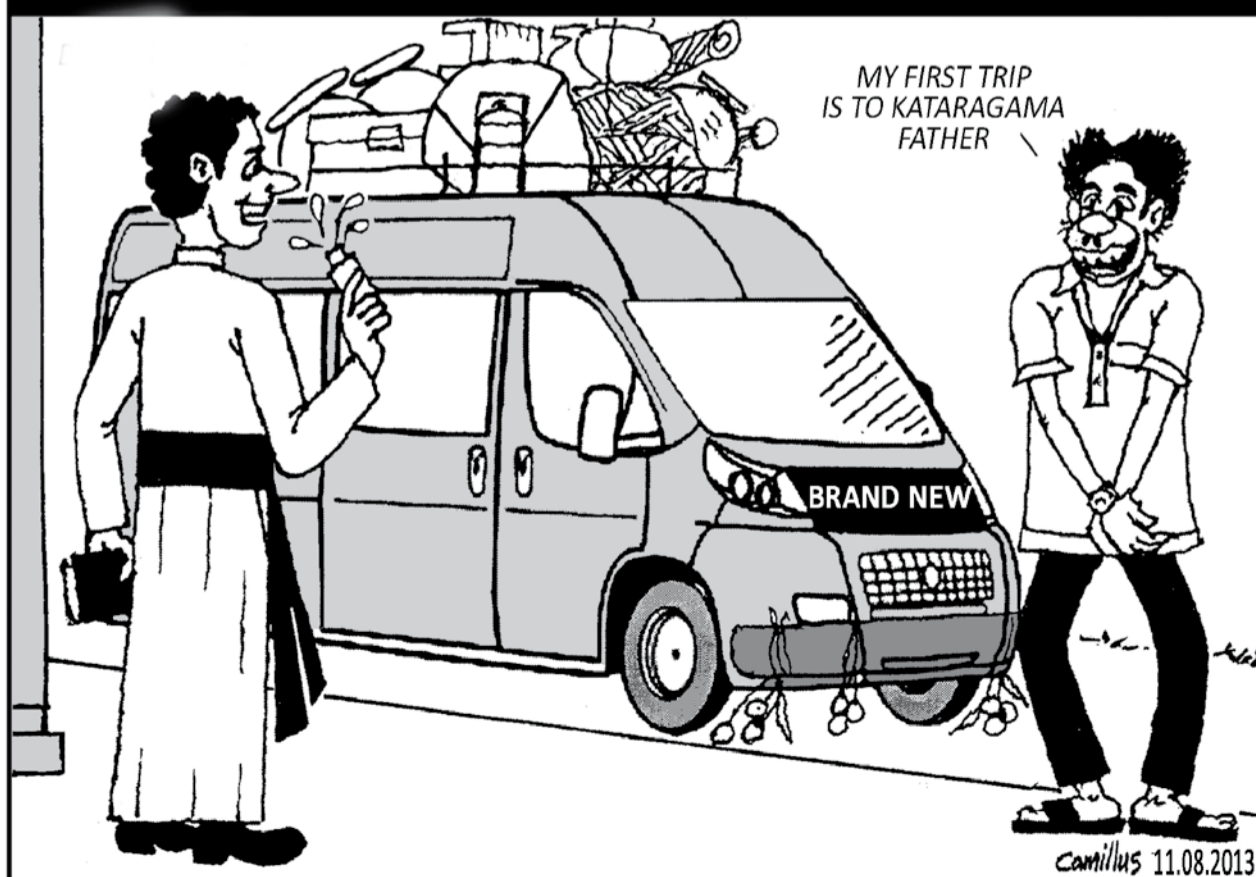
The evening started with a magic show, tea and the inaugural function with songs from children. It was followed by musical evening with pop artistes, DJ night and dinner.

The launch ceremony had 12 children with lighted candles from five Shishu Prerona Kendras, as well as a choir from Snehalaya on stage. Besides screening of a short film on street children on the theme - 'All rights to all children' - two CFG websites were launched: www.childfriendlyguwahati.com and www.thisweekguwahati.com.

"The CFG is a focused project to create a city-wide movement of citizenry for children especially those who are out of school and to ensure their rights to survival, protection, development and participation," said Fr. Solomon.

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF RED LAKE
Messenger

EDITORIAL

August 11, 2013

Why integrity is important in our Christian living

Integrity among those who hold public office seems to have disappeared from our society. The newspapers report daily the lack of integrity among our politicians and persons who hold public office. Jesus, when defending Himself against the religious leaders of His day (His enemies and rivals), said this about His claim of being the Messiah:

John 10:25 - Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me." He says, "what I say and what I do testify as to who I am."

A person of integrity is validated by his words and deeds. If we are pure in heart we can be pure in action. Integrity is making our daily action to conform to what we accept in our hearts as the desirable values in life. It is not enough to merely believe in the Christian values. We must practice them in our daily lives. Sometimes there will be sacrifices we have to make to live according to our values. We may become unpopular when we do not do as the others do. In modern society without moral absolutes anything goes. But we cannot choose the wrong. We know what is right and we cannot prevaricate or justify ourselves by saying that we are only doing what others are doing. We are fortunate in having a standard for our conduct based on the Christian teachings.

When people have to choose what is right and wrong without having a standard, how do they decide which way to go? Some will say that the Conscience should be the guide. But conscience is formed by one's own actions and values and need not be the infallible guide people assume it to be. Yes there is a still small voice which tells us that what we are doing is wrong. But if our conscience is hardened then we will seek to excuse ourselves by invoking our conscience. Eventually we will get caught in our own duplicity. If we live in integrity from our young days as children, then our adult decisions are easier to make - our integrity will guide us.

Mark Twain said: "Speaking honestly is better. It takes a lot of stress out of our lives. If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything, but if you don't tell the truth you have to remember what you said." So Integrity provides one with Security (greater confidence) *Proverbs 10:9 - The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.*

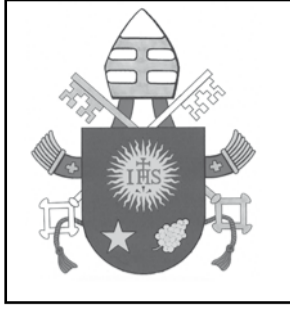
Integrity provides one with Guidance (better decision) *Proverbs 11:3 - People who can not be trusted are destroyed by their own dishonesty."*

But how do we do it? How can we become people of integrity? What can I do or change in my life so that I can experience the benefits of integrity and the blessing of God?

We know about an ECG and what is its purpose. It is to determine the health of the heart - to help find potential problems and diagnose future problems. It is a test of the condition of the heart.

This physical testing of the heart is what God needs to do to us in a spiritual sense. He needs to come in and find out the condition of our heart and fix it before major problems take over!

You see, God is pleased with integrity and examines the heart to see if a person is full of integrity or full of lies and deceit. What you believe in your heart will determine how you act when placed in a tempting situation.



It gives me great pleasure to greet you as you celebrate *Id al-Fitr*, so concluding the month of Ramadan, dedicated mainly to fasting, prayer and almsgiving.

It is a tradition by now that, on this occasion, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue sends you a message of good wishes, together with a proposed theme for common reflection. This year, the first of my Pontificate, I have decided to sign this traditional message myself and to send it to you, dear friends, as an expression of esteem and friendship for all Muslims, especially those who are religious leaders.

As you all know, when the Cardinals elected me as Bishop of Rome and Universal Pastor of the Catholic Church, I chose the name of "Francis", a very famous saint who loved God and every human being deeply, to the point of being called "universal brother". He loved, helped and served the needy, the sick and the poor; he also cared greatly for creation.

I am aware that family and social dimensions enjoy a particular prominence for Muslims during this period, and it is worth noting that there are certain parallels in each of these areas with Christian faith and practice.

This year, the theme on which I would like to reflect with you and with all who will read this message is one that concerns both Muslims and Christians: *Promoting Mutual Aspect through Education.*

This year's theme is intended to underline the importance of education in the way we

Message from Pope Francis To Muslims throughout the World

understand each other, built upon the foundation of mutual respect. "Respect" means an attitude of kindness towards people for whom we have consideration and esteem. "Mutual" means that this is not a one-way process, but something shared by both sides.

What we are called to respect in each person is first of all his life, his physical integrity, his dignity and the rights deriving from that dignity, his reputation, his property, his ethnic and cultural identity, his ideas and his political choices. We are therefore called to think, speak and write respectfully of the other, not only in his presence, but always and everywhere, avoiding unfair criticism or defamation. Families, schools, religious teaching and all forms of media have a role to play in achieving this goal.

Turning to mutual respect in interreligious relations, especially between Christians and Muslims, we are called to respect the religion of the other, its teachings, its symbols, its values. Particular respect is due to religious leaders and to places of worship. How painful are attacks on one or other of these!

It is clear that, when we show respect for the religion of our neighbours or when we offer them our good wishes on the occasion of a religious celebration, we simply seek to share their joy, without making reference to the content of their religious convictions.

Regarding the education of Muslim and Christian youth, we have to bring up our young people to think and speak respectfully of

other religions and their followers, and to avoid ridiculing or denigrating their convictions and practices. We all know that mutual respect is fundamental in any human relationship, especially among people who profess religious belief. In this way, sincere and lasting friendship can grow.

When I received the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See on March 22, 2013, I said: "It is not possible to establish true links with God, while ignoring other people. Hence it is important to intensify dialogue among the various religions, and I am thinking particularly of dialogue with Islam. At the Mass marking the beginning of my ministry, I greatly appreciated the presence of so many civil and religious leaders from the Islamic world." With these words, I wished to emphasize once more the great importance of dialogue and cooperation among believers, in particular Christians and Muslims, and the need for it to be enhanced.

With these sentiments, I reiterate my hope that all Christians and Muslims may be true promoters of mutual respect and friendship, in particular through education.

Finally, I send you my prayerful good wishes, that your lives may glorify the Almighty and give joy to those around you. *Happy Feast to you all!*

Francis

His Holiness Pope Francis
 From the Vatican, 10 July 2013

Prayer in the Christian Life

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"Great is the mystery of the faith!" The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles' Creed (Part one) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (Part two), so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the Glory of God the Father (Part three). This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.

What is Prayer?

"For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy." - *St. Thérèse of Lisieux*

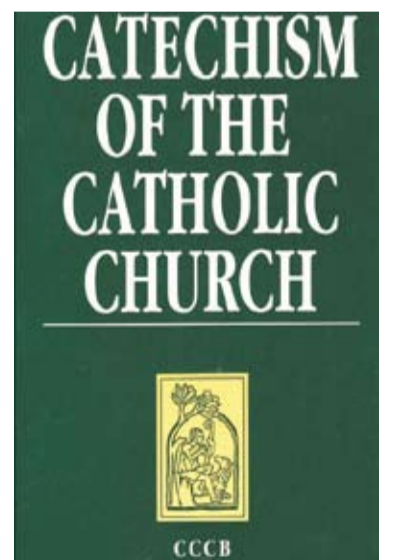
Prayer as God's Gift

2559

"Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God. But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; *humility* is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought," are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God."

2560

"If you knew the Gift of God!" The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is He who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; His asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for Him." (St. Therese of Lisieux)



2561

"You would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." Paradoxically our prayer of petition is a response to the plea of the living God. "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters and hewn out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water!" Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God.

My side of the Confessional: What is it like for a Priest?

By Rev. Fr. Michael Schmitz

I was once riding in a shuttle-bus with a number of older folks on the way from an airport. They noticed that I was a priest and started asking questions about it. "Do you do all of the priest stuff?" "Yep." "Even the Confession thing?" "Yeah. All the time."

One older lady gasped, "Well, I think that would be the worst. It would be so depressing; hearing all about people's sins." I told them that it was the exact opposite.

There is almost no greater place to be than with someone when they are coming back to God. I said; "It would be depressing if I had to watch someone leave God; I get to be with them when they come back to Him." The Confessional is a place where people let Gods love win. The Confessional is the most joyful, humbling, and inspiring place in the world.

WHAT DO I SEE DURING CONFESSION?

I think there are three things. First, I see the costly mercy of God in action. I get to regularly come face to face with the overwhelming, life-transforming power of God's love. I get to see God's love up-close and it reminds me of how good God is.

Not many folks get to see the way in which God's sacrifice on the Cross is constantly breaking into people's lives and melting the hardest hearts. Jesus consoles those who are grieving their sins... and strengthens those who find themselves wanting to give up on God or on life. As a priest, I get to see this thing happen every day.

I SEE A SAINT IN THE MAKING.

The second thing I see is a person who is still trying - a saint in the making. I don't care if this is the person's third confession this week; if they are seeking the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it means that they are trying. That's all that I care about.

This thought is worth considering: Going to Confession is a sign that you have not given up on Jesus. This is one of the reasons why pride is so deadly. I have talked with people who tell me that they do not want to go to Confession to their priest because, their priest really likes them and "thinks that they are good kids."

I have two things to say to this. He will not be disappointed! What your priest will see is a person who is trying! I dare you to find a saint who did not need God's mercy! (Even

Mary needed God's mercy; she received the mercy of God in a dramatic and powerful way at her conception. Boom. Lawyered.)

So what if the priest is disappointed? We try to be so impressive with so much of our lives. Confession is a place where we do not get to be impressive. Confession is a place where the desire to impress goes to die.

Think about it: All other sins have the potential to cause us to race to the confessional, but pride is the one that causes us to hide from the God who could heal us.

DO I REMEMBER YOUR SINS?

NO! So often, people will ask if I remember people's sins from Confession. As a priest, I rarely, if ever, remember sins from the confessional.

That might seem impossible, but the truth is, sins are not all that impressive. They are not like memorable sunsets or meteor showers or super-intriguing movies... they are more like the garbage.

And if sins are like garbage, then the priest is like God's garbage-man. If you ask a garbage-man about the grossest thing he's ever had to haul to the dump, may be he could remember it. But the fact is, once you get used to taking out the trash, it ceases to be noteworthy, it ceases to stand out.

Honestly, once you realise that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is less about the sin and more about Christ's death and resurrection having victory in a person's life, the sins lose all of their lustre, and Jesus' victory takes centre stage.

In Confession, we meet the life-transforming, costly love of God... freely given to us every time we ask for it. We meet Jesus who reminds us, "You are worth dying for... even in your sins, you are worth dying for."

Whenever someone comes to Confession, I see a person who is deeply loved by God and who is telling God that they love Him back. That's it, and that's all.

IN CONFESSION I SEE MY OWN WEAKNESS

The third thing a priest sees when he hears Confessions is his own soul. It is a scary place for a priest.

I cannot tell you how humbled I am when someone approaches Jesus' mercy through me.

I am struck by the fact that they have been able to recognise sins in their life that I have been blind to in my own.



Hearing someone's humility breaks down my own pride. It is one of the best examinations of conscience.

But why is Confession a scary place for a priest? It is frightening because of the way in which Jesus trusts me to be a living sign of His mercy.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen once told priests that we scarcely realise what is happening when we extend our hands over someone's head in absolution. "We do not realise," he said, "that the very Blood of Christ is dripping from our fingers onto their heads, washing the penitent clean."

The day after I was ordained, we had a little party and my dad stood up and made a toast. He has worked his entire life as an orthopaedic surgeon, and he was a very good one.

My whole life, his patients have come up to me at one time or another and told me how their lives have been changed because my dad was such a good surgeon.

So, there my dad was, standing in the midst of these people, and he began to say, "My whole life, I have used my hands to heal people's broken bodies. But from now on, my son Michael... um Michael... will use his hands (at this point, he got choked up)...He will use his hands to heal broken souls. His hands will save even more lives than mine have."

Confession is such a powerful place. All I have to do is offer God's mercy, love, and redemption...but I don't want to get in Jesus' way. The priest stands in judgment of no one. In the Confessional, the only thing I have to offer is mercy.

I GET TO SACRIFICE FOR YOU

Lastly, when a priest

hears Confessions, he is taking on another responsibility. One time, after college, I was returning to Confession after a long time and a lot of sin and the priest simply gave me something like "one Hail Mary" as my penance. I stopped.

"Um, Father...? Did you hear everything I said?" "Yes, I did." "Don't you think I should get a bigger penance than that?" He looked at me with great love and said, "No."

That small penance is all that I'm asking of you." He hesitated, and then continued, "But you should know... I will be fasting for you for the next 30 days."

I was stunned. I didn't know what to do. He told me that the Catechism teaches that the priest must do penance for all those who come to him for Confession. And here he was, embracing a severe penance for all of my severe sins.

This is why Confession reveals the priest's own soul; it reveals his willingness to sacrifice his life with Christ. He sees our sins as a burden that he will take up (with Jesus!) and offer them to the Father, while offering us the mercy of God.

Remember, Confession is always a place of victory. Whether you have confessed a particular sin for the first time, or if this is the 12001, time, every Confession is a win for Jesus. And I, a priest, get to be there.

That's what it's like...I gets to sit and watch Jesus win His children back all day.

(Courtesy: Among Ourselves - Diocese of Kandy)



Assumption of Blessed Mother

Accepting God's word Blessed Mary conceived at fourteen.

Saviour of mankind, God's son was born at fifteen.

Spent thirty three years humbly with Jesus.

Unexpected death of St. Joseph and Christ's public life to save us

Made Blessed Mother prayerful and vigilant about God's mission,

Plan that made her partake in Christ's passion death, resurrection and ascension.

Twelve or twenty four years she lived in a house near Mount Zion after Lord's Ascension.

In accordance with the desire to be united with her Son, in the presence of the Apostles, her soul departed from the body and united to Jesus.

Oh! the love Christ bore for His mother, took that body up into Heaven and there amidst the angels and saints reinforced into it her soul.

Now we have a Queen and Mother in Heaven whose Assumption brings us joy, hope and encouragement to save our souls.

Ruth Peiris

Anna is an accountant by profession and has been employed at a prestigious bank in California for the past 8 years. Anna has now been appointed as the President of the bank and has been given due notice to take up duties at the bank's head office in New York.

"My son is schooling in California. My husband's business is in California. How can I ask them to move with me? Then what about the baby girl? With my new appointment will I have time for my children?" thought Anna. "But, this job is going to help me generate millions of dollars in just a year".

"Honey, is it possible for you to take care of the kids while I am away in New York?" asked Anna from her husband Paul.

"What? You are going to New York! How long are you going to be away?" asked Paul. "It's a seven year contract. I have been appointed as the president of the Bank, and I have to take up duties in New York. I just can't miss this opportunity," answered Anna.

"Why don't you take the kids with you?" asked Paul who was reluctant to take responsibility of the kids solely by himself. "But, honey I have to be committed. I don't want to take the kids along with me when I have to take up such a responsible position. Your work times are flexible comparing with mine," answered Anna who was reluctant to give up her new position.

'She didn't do what she had to do'



"You can give up your job. We have enough money to live a good life. Just think about what is going to happen to our family life," exclaimed Paul.

"Why don't you like to see me become successful? Aren't you happy for me? Or is it that you are jealous?" shouted Anna.

"Honey, just think! You are a mother of two children. The kids are going to miss you," he exclaimed.

Paul and Anna were blessed with a son and a daughter. Paul was a businessman while Anna was a banker. Weekdays were always busy. Yet, Anna would spare so much time with Paul and the children after she returned home. Anna and Paul would also share the household chores daily in the mornings and again in the evenings. The couple lived a blissful life. Every weekend the family travelled around and had fun.

But, after her new appointment was announced, things seem to have changed. Anna had decided to leave the family and fly to New York seeking success in her career, and financial prosperity.

Three months af-

"It was too late when she realised that life was uncertain"

ter her appointment was announced Anna left to New York to take up her new role. She was excited about her new position. That excitement was far greater than the sorrow of leaving her husband and her two children who were only 7 and 2 years in age.

Since Anna's departure life was hectic for Paul. "Daddy, you are still making my breakfast!" shouted Kevin. "Where is my lunch box?" "Wait son. Here you go!" said Paul handing a bowl of oats to Kevin. "This isn't thick enough, dad. I need more oats."

So, yes, life was not easy for Paul. Daily in the morning and in the evenings he had to perform several household chores; chores which he had been sharing with Anna back then. The baby sitter used to help Kevin

Short Story

with his homework, look after the baby, attend to the children's laundry while Paul was away at work. Cooking, cleaning, tidying rooms, and shopping for groceries were always a part of Paul's chores. There were times he neglected himself just to make the kids comfortable.

Paul requested the services of a full-time maid at his house as they were able to well afford one. Yet, Anna did not allow Paul to keep a maid permanently at their house.

Every Friday night Paul and the two kids waited for a call from Anna. This became their sole mode of communicating with her. Friday was the only day that Anna was able to spare some time to talk to her husband and kids. With every week that passed Anna's life in New York became extremely busy. There were times she missed family weddings and even funerals.

At the end of Anna's third year, her husband Paul was diagnosed with cancer. Anna could hardly do anything for him as she lived away from her family. She came home as much as she could, spent a few days together, and then

Rehana Ferdinando Perera

flew back to New York. At this point Anna allowed a maid to be kept at home as Paul was not in a position to perform the household chores. Anna could not give up her job as she had signed a contract.

Paul looked after the two little children despite the severity of his illness. With time his health deteriorated. Paul and the children missed Anna very much. Every time Anna visited Paul she saw him in a weaker state. He lived until Anna held the final conference in New York. She could not even say goodbye to him.

The night of the conference she received a call from her son who was then 14-years-old, announcing of the father's demise. Anna regretted with all her heart for taking over the appointment and giving over her duties to her husband. She regretted for neglecting him and not been there when he needed her the most. She was guilty of giving priority to her career and to the financial benefits.

She did not understand her role as wife and mother. Paul tried his best to make it clear; but she had her way.

"Graces derived from assisting at Holy Mass"

1. The Holy Mass is Calvary continued.
 2. Every Holy Mass is worth as much as the sacrifice of Our Lord's life, sufferings and death.
 3. Holy Mass is the most powerful atonement for your sins.
 4. At the hour of death, the Masses you have heard will be your greatest consolation.
 5. Every Holy Mass will go with you to judgement and plead for pardon.
 6. At Holy Mass you can diminish more or less temporal punishment due to your sins, according to your favour.
 7. Assisting devoutly at Holy Mass, you render to the humanity of Our Lord the greatest homage.
 8. He supplies for many of your negligences and omissions.
 9. He forgives the venial sins you have not confessed. The power of Satan over you is diminished.
 10. You afford the souls in Purgatory the greatest possible relief.
 11. One Holy Mass heard during life will be of more benefit to you than many heard for you after your death.
 12. You are preserved from dangers and misfortunes which otherwise might have befallen you. You shorten your purgatory.
 13. Every Holy Mass wins you a higher degree of glory in Heaven.
 14. You receive the priest's blessing which Our Lord ratifies in Heaven.
 14. You kneel amidst a multitude of Holy Angels, who are present at the adorable sacrifice with reverential awe.
 16. You are blessed in your temporal goods and affairs.
- "In eternity, we shall fully realise that it was certainly worthwhile to have assisted at Holy Mass daily."

Source: *Pieta Prayer booklet*
Sent by Yvonne Amarasekera

Health Screening

We all have heard that the earlier you detect a disease the easier it is to be treated and cured. Less damage it would do to the body of the person. But we often dismiss the symptoms, delay getting expert advice and hope the problem will go away. It is important to be vigilant about lumps, inflammation, unusual pain and redness. If such conditions do not go away within a few days we should definitely contact a physician.

Many symptoms that we mentioned above could be easily detected. But there are other internal conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes or certain anemia that could not be detected unless you do a regular screening test. These could be detected easily with a simple blood test. It is a good idea to see a physician annually and get your blood pressure and your blood and urine checked.

There are many self-screening procedures one could perform. Adult

women are advised to check their breasts for any abnormalities such as lumps, unusual pain or discharge. This can help to detect breast abnormalities such as cancer, early. Testicular cancer is not very common in Sri Lanka. But if you have any unusual pain or inflammation of the area it may be a malignancy. Chronic chest pain may be a sign of heart disease which could be confirmed with an ElectroCardiogram. Monthly weighing can check whether you are over-weight, obese or under-weight.

This could be treated with proper diet and exercise.

Regular blood tests such as the complete blood count can show you whether you are anemic or having a higher or lower white blood or platelet count. These conditions can be easily treated with medications and diet. Lipid panel is a blood test done to check your cholesterol level, HDL (good cholesterol) and LDH (bad

cholesterol) levels. Creatinine levels will show any abnormalities in the kidney functioning.

The gold standard blood test to detect diabetes is the fasting blood sugar levels (FBS). An annual urine test will show you whether you have protein or blood in the urine which shows premature kidney disease. Sugar in the urine may show that you are heading for diabetes. Liver function test (LFT) is another regular blood test to check our liver functions. These tests have to be ordered by a physician and any abnormalities in these tests can be followed up by your physician.

Health care gurus advise women above the age of forty to have at least one mammogram, to rule out breast abnormalities. If needed your physician may order a repeat mammogram. Cervical cancer is another killer of young and old



women.

This condition can be detected early by a PAP smear test and treated and cured. For men above the age of fifty urologists advise a PSA test, which stands for prostate specific antigen to detect early prostate cancer or other prostate problems.

You may say that these tests consume your valuable time and also they could be expensive. It is advisable to screen yourself and your loved ones at least once in two years to detect any abnormal physical conditions which can be treated and thus prolong your life and prevent early death. Your physician will be the best person to recommend and order these tests for you. They will advise you when these tests are necessary and how often they should be repeated."

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



The Psychologist told the young man "If you do not have a girl friend, you are missing something in your life. Young man: "I have a girl friend, that is why I

want you to cut short this session." Psychologist: "If you have a girl friend, you miss everything in life."

Rev. Fr. Fracoid Anthony Fernando OMI

Why art matters in Church

When we think of art in churches we think of statues, paintings and stained glass windows, all of which are standard fixtures in places of worship. But artworks have also often caused controversy. A modern painting of Mary or an art exhibition held in a church can raise high passions. They make us ask what kind of art belongs in churches and more deeply, what place art has in Christian Faith? In this Explorations we shall reflect on the relationship between art and faith, and on why it has sometimes been edgy.

Making Images

The edginess in the relationship between art and faith was already there in the Early Church. Christian preachers often mocked the pagans for worshipping wooden statues, instead of praying spiritually to God. But on the walls of the catacombs, Christians painted pictures of Christ as the Good Shepherd, modeled on the way Romans represented their heroes and gods.

When the Roman Empire became Christian, the tension between the fear of idolatry and the desire for images to make churches beautiful places of prayer increased. Christians had greater resources to make their churches beautiful, but new converts could easily see the Christian God as like the other gods, each of which had its own image.

The issue was made more pressing by the way in which Christians understood images. They believed that human beings are made in the image of God, and that Christ is the perfect image of God. Through our faith we become more like God.

They also believed that when we look deeply at images, we gradually become more like what we see. So to contemplate Christ makes us more like God. But if we look deeply at images of violence or passion, we shall become violent and passionate. Many people concluded that if we look at material images of God our spirit will become crudely material and not spiritual. We should contemplate the spiritual Christ in our hearts and not stare at wooden or painted images of him.



Battle Over Making Images

The tension exploded in the eighth century and threatened to divide the Christian Empire. The Emperors banned the making of images of God, Jesus and the saints, and ordered them removed from churches and monasteries. Supporters of images were killed; paintings and statues were destroyed. For both supporters and opponents of images clearly something vital was at stake.

Opponents of images appealed to the law of Moses, which forbade the Israelites to make or bow down to images of God. This command insisted that the God of Israel was totally different from other gods. God is a mystery beyond our understanding, and cannot be manipulated. For this reason the Early Christians insisted that God should be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

Decorating churches with images and paying reverence to them with candles and by kneeling, they said, weakened respect for the mystery of God. It encouraged people to treat the images as magic, just as pagans saw their gods. By focusing on these material images, people become material minded. These people were lead to believe that God was material, and that the image had power to make God favour them.

Early Christians also insisted that God had given us far better images to lead us to him. We can find God by attending to human beings who are made in the image of God. And of course Christ is the perfect image of God who is present with us through the Eucharist. So when we contemplate Christ and receive Him in the Eucharist, these perfect images of God will transform us and make us like God.

Defending Images

Christians who defended images agreed that people can sometimes think images have magic power, and that we see the face of God most clearly when we contemplate Christ and receive the Eucharist. But they insisted that it is good to place paintings, statues and other images of Christ

By Rev. Fr. Andrew Hamilton SJ

in churches. They pointed out that the Old Testament law against making images was really directed against worshipping other gods.

They also claimed that Jesus made a crucial difference. Because He is the image of God in his human life, it is right to make artistic images of Him, just as it was right for the Gospels to make word pictures of Him. Of course, these are not perfect images. So we do not worship images as if they were God.

Painted images and statues of Christ and the saints, too, had allowed ordinary Christians to appreciate the Gospel and Christ's love. An image was often worth a thousand words.

These arguments proved decisive in the Church. The making of images was praised by Church leaders. But to avoid superstition, strict rules were drawn up for paintings used in church. Painters were to work prayerfully and to paint the images in such a way that we are always drawn to the eyes of Jesus, Mary and the saints. So we are led through the humanity of Jesus to His divinity, and through the life of the saints to Christ who was their life. These icons (icon is the Greek word for image) can still be seen in the Greek, Russian and other Eastern churches.

In the West, religious art changed. As people's attention became focused on Jesus' human life, painters and sculptors explored more deeply the humanity of Christ and the saints. Stained glass windows in churches depicted Gospel stories and were used to explain the faith.

The tension between respect for the mystery of God and making religious images has continued to trouble the churches. Particularly in England, sixteenth century Reformers appealed to the prohibition of images in Scripture when they destroyed religious art in churches. They focused on hearing the word of God in its starkness, making churches become bare places where we wait on God. In contrast, Catholic Churches were decorated exuberantly as if they were the entrance hall of heaven.

In later centuries, art became separated from religious faith. They were sometimes seen as enemies. In our day, artists explore the world and their craft in many ways. Some continue to represent human beings and the world in ways we instantly recognise. Others do so in more abstract ways. Some celebrate the beauty of the world; others focus on the brokenness of society and the human heart.

Art in Churches

Today all Catholics would agree that religious pictures and statues belong in churches. But they differ on what kind of art is appropriate. When statues are moved or churches redesigned, sharp arguments often break out. People appeal to big principles. Art in churches, it is said, should always represent the world realistically. Or that only traditional images are suitable for churches, not modern art. Or that the works of art should be recognisably Christian and not secular.

Although people always have the right to criticise new (and old) paintings in churches, these kinds of principles are not helpful. In the great medieval Cathedrals, for example, are found abstract images of vegetation, carvings of kings on tombs and faces of bishops on gargoyles, and paintings of Jesus and Mary in what was then modern dress. At its best, tradition is always creative and never traditional.

It is more helpful to reflect on what we should ask of religious art in churches. Above all it must help us to pray. For this the design of the Church matters as much as its decoration. The way in which light is focused or diffused in it, the use of colour, and the sense of spaciousness and warmth, can all create an atmosphere that takes us out of ourselves, connects us together in our worship, and encourages us to pray.

Images of Christ and the saints are important because they make faith part of our imagination as well as of



our minds. They help us relate the Gospel story to our own world. Children often get a glimpse of heaven in the rich world of the stained glass windows, whether this is abstract or representational, traditional or modern. The images of Jesus and the saints give faces to prayer and to faith.

Art works in churches should also help us relate our faith to our world outside of Church. It should sometimes surprise us. In one church, for example, a statue of a clearly pregnant and resolute Mary caused some offence because it was not traditional. But it conveyed well the real experience of mothers in our own society in giving birth, and showed that God takes our ordinary experience seriously.

The art displayed in churches should also be good art. Skilled artists who can express their vision of God in art give glory to God and can help us share our faith with our contemporaries. And God deserves the best of skills.

Faith and Art

Art has an important place in faith and so in the Church because our imagination is God's playground. We are made in God's image, we share God's gift for shaping and celebrating the world. We imitate God's creative gift through words, music and art. Being all made in God's image, too, God invites us to recognise His image in one another both by acting compassionately to the poor and by exploring our humanity through art.

Our best response to God is through good art to which we bring skill in design and execution. In the best artworks, artists touch on things that matter deeply to them. It takes great skill to copy a great painting exactly, but the result is not great art. Good artists do something fresh with their skills and material, and represent something that matters to them. They are deeply invested as human beings and as artists in what they are creating.

Good art also touches the world in which the artists live, and so is able to move us in our different worlds. Sometimes art celebrates the world and its beauty. It then helps us recognise and praise the goodness of creation and the triumph of goodness in times of adversity.

But today artists are more likely to explore and to weigh the brokenness of our world and the way human beings exploit one another and the world. They recognise an emptiness that startles us, and may find only flashes of beauty in ugliness and of goodness in desperation. Some representations of Jesus' death, for example, dwell on its horror and remind us how people are still tortured and killed in our day.

Religious art of this kind is placed in few churches, but it is important that it is respected by Christians. If we are to deepen our faith in Christ who died to overcome sin, we must be able to imagine, as well as believe, how horrifying and deep is the evil in our world and the potential of our hearts for evil. Art can help us imagine this and make us grateful for Christ's victory over evil. We may then be able to lead others to take faith seriously.

Conclusion

In our Christian life it is not enough to have correct knowledge, to think right thoughts and do right things. Our imagination needs to be captured by Jesus who has made creation new. The work of artists in churches and elsewhere is important because it feeds our imagination. It invites us to explore both the beauty of God's world and the wreck we human beings have so often made of it. It helps us contemplate not only the happiness of Christ's birth, the grace of His life and the joy of His rising, but also the terror and testing of his death.

Courtesy Australian Catholics

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Lack of explicit mention of the privilege of the Assumption as such in the New Testament (NT) notwithstanding, tradition and sound theological reasoning indicate its implicit revelation in the scriptures. In the Old Testament, the singularity of Mary as the "woman" was declared (Genesis 3:15) as a being through whom the redemption promised would become a reality. The NT declares the fact of that redemption (Luke 1:1; John 3:9), and the Blessed Virgin, was "full of grace" and could not be perfect as God had foretold, unless she remained incorruptible (cfr 1 Cor 15: Rightly, then, St Germanus of Constantinople (d. 733) wrote that Mary's virginal body is an altogether holy and chaste dwelling for God and can never know dissolution into dust.

The tradition of the Assumption was already proclaimed as early as in the year 749 by St. John Damascene. "Mary conceived without detriment to her virginal modesty, brought forth her Son without pain, passed hence without decay, according to the word of the angel, or rather God speaking by the angel, that she might be shown to be full, not half-full, of grace," wrote Pope Alexander III (1159-1181). In 1568, Pope Pius V made the feast of the Assumption a holy day for the entire Church.

The doctrine's de-

velopment is closely related to a feast devoted to Mary that passed from a general celebration in her honour to one celebrated on August 15, commemorating her dormition, or "falling asleep". When this feast, which originated in the Byzantine Empire — probably in the 5th century — came into the Western Church, the term *dormition* was replaced by "Assumption". This reflected an increased theological emphasis on the glorification of the complete person of Mary, i.e., of her body as well as her soul, anticipating the state promised to the rest of humankind.

Incidentally, Christians have always held that Mary is the mother of God; that from the very first moment of her existence, sin had no hold over her; that, always ready to do God's will as His handmaid, she held the most important place in the history of redemption — only next to that of her Son. Indeed, since Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life Himself has said, "Where I am, there shall my servant be also" (John 12:26), how can His own Mother not share his dwelling place? Consequently, it was only after he had sought and obtained from the world's bishops a formal assessment as regards the sentiments of the people in each diocese that Pope Pius XII defined the dogma of the Assumption as a doctrine of faith in his Encyclical, *Munificentissimus Deus*, on

November 1, 1950.

Today, the new, holy ark, who conceived the Creator of the world in her womb, comes to rest in the temple of God Himself. Today, the Church rejoices in the exaltation of the humble handmaid of the Lord. Indeed, God, the Almighty who has "done great things" for Mary, as declared by her in the *Magnificat*, has now done the greatest of all great things for her! Truly, the Assumption has been well described as Our Lady's Easter, for, on this day we celebrate not only her passing from this life but also her resurrection and ascension into heavenly glory, whereby she shares fully in the triumph of the Risen Lord! In the light of this perception, the *Magnificat* can be best understood as Mary's own Testament of Faith—a "Testament" that dares us manifestation of our own faith, a "Faith" that challenges us to look inwards. As the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II says: "Each of us has to look at his and her own life with the eyes of Mary — what He did in her, He did for us, and therefore did it as in us." Rightly then, on this feast, the greatest of Mary's feasts, the Church Universal with one voice joins Mary in exulting: "Holy His Name!"

Reflection: "The feast of the Assumption reminds us that Mary is in heaven body and soul. She is glorified also in her



body, along with the body of her divine Son Jesus. Why? It is because on earth the body of Our Divine Saviour and the body of the Immaculate Mother Mary were sanctified to the maximum degree.

The present life is for

eternity and our happiness is proportionate to our goodness on earth. And Mary our mother will help us to lead a good and holy life" (Blessed James Alberione).

- Saint Companions

Designers recreate churches bombed in Korean War as sacred monuments of unity

SEOUL (AsiaNews) - A new Cathedral dedicated to forgiveness and atonement with mosaic works made by North Korean artists was opened on June this year, on the occasion of the celebrations to mark the 63th anniversary of the armistice that ended the war that divided the peninsula.

According to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of South Korea, the new Church which is situated on the border between the two Koreas in Paju and 50 kilometres north of Seoul "wants to be a clear symbol of the desire for peace and reconciliation in the country."

The inaugural Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Nicholas Cheong Jin-suk, Archbishop Emeritus of the capital: "The Church" the prelate said, "represents the desire for peace, unity and reconciliation that animates the Korean people." During the function prayers were said for those who died in the war seeking the Almighty to grant serenity.

Construction of the new Cathedral began in 1997, when a group of Catholics who fled from North Korea decided to buy the land and donate it to their local church for the construction of a "sign of hope and peace." Since April 2006, the project has been supervised by the Archdiocese of Seoul, which has funded the work.

"The exterior of the building was taken from Jinsadong Cathedral in Sinuiju, North Pyeongan Province, which was built in 1926 and destroyed by communists. The interior was very much inspired by St. Benedict Monastery Chapel in South Hamgyeong Province, which reflects our hopes of peace and unity on the Korean Peninsula," said Kim Hyun-hun, spokesman of the Cathedral.

When Jinsadong Church in the North Korean City of Sinuiju on the Chinese border was bombed and destroyed in the Korean War, it seemed it had been lost forever, so too the Chapel of Saint Benedict monastery in Tokwon in the east of the country.

As Kim Il-sung cemented his rule of the northern half of the Korean peninsula following the end of the war in 1953, religion all but died here and the churches were never rebuilt, at least not north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

Hence with the intention of rekindling hope and reconciliation in the hearts of the Korean people on this 63rd anniversary of the outbreak of the Ko-



Church of Repentance and Redemption

rean War, South Korea's Catholic Church consecrated the Church of Repentance and Atonement.

"The design is aimed at reminding people of the fact that the Church in the South still remembers Catholics in the North," said Father Jerome Chang Keung-sun who designed the Paju Church. Fr. Chang, an expert in

religious icons, designed the interior himself and modeled the shape on that of the Tokwon chapel interior. He then proposed that the Mansudae Art Studio in Pyongyang work together on the design. The South's Ministry of Unification gave subsidies to build the Paju Cathedral as construction was led by the Seoul Archdiocese.

Contd. on Pg. 9

The Latest Eucharistic Miracle

By Lenard R Mahaarachchi

Belief in the Holy presence of the Risen Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar (Eucharist) is an age old central belief in Catholicism. This belief has been confirmed on various occasions by miracles, often the Consecrated Bread and wine turning to Human Flesh and Blood.

Among the manifold miracles confirming the Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, the one that happened at Lanciano Italy is outstanding. Till recently it was a miracle that occurred in USA when the late Pope John Paul II visited a seminary in Boston, but the latest of them all happened in 1996 when His Holiness Pope Francis the current Pope was cardinal in Buenos Aires (BA).

Three days after the feast of the Assumption of Mother Mary, Rev. Fr. Alijando Peset of BA was celebrating Holy Mass, at a Trade Centre in BA. Soon after Communion, a lady in the Church came to see this priest to tell him that a consecrated host was lying on the candle stand behind the Church. It was around sunset when the priest out of respect for the host, brought it from where it was left by someone who had received the host at communion, but out of disrespect, left the host there. Fr. Peset put the host in a small cup with water, and left it in the tabernacle. On the August 26, when the priest opened the tabernacle, he found to his dismay, that the host was a mass of flesh with blood. He immediately

informed Cardinal Bergoglio (now Pope) about this miracle, and was told to keep it a secret. Meanwhile the host was photographed on September 6, two days before another feast of the Blessed Virgin. (Mary's Birthday.)

The miraculous host was increasing in size by the day, and remained a secret till



the same Cardinal (now Pope) ordered an in depth scientific

study of the unheard of episode. A sample of it was sent to the US keeping the original a guarded secret. A specialist team of physicians led by Prof. Fredrick Subiga determined the following facts after an in depth study and research. (1) This muscular object consists of human DNA and is real flesh and blood. (2) It is from the heart

area close to the left muscle wall close to the heart. It consists of white corpuscles and (3) that at the time the blood oozed the owner of it was in great pain. (4) The White Blood cells confirm that they are from a living person, as white corpuscles are not available in a deceased person, and (5) that, at the time the heart was beating. It added that at the time the blood sample was obtained,

the heart of that person concerned was in a deep pain caused by severe slashing on the chest area.

Mike Willesi an Australian journalist and lawyer Ron Tessorioro analyzed the object studied by the earlier panel led by Prof. Subiga. He asked scientists how long white corpuscles can live (remain) in water and was told that only for a few minutes. It was then that the journalist revealed the secret of the Eucharistic miracle to the study team. He told them that the sample host was in normal water for over a month and then in purified water for over 3 years till the time of the analysis. The team expressed their surprise in unison and confirmed that their study was genuine.

Then Prof. Sugibaraised two questions to the study team. (1) - How the blood cells in the sample if obtained from a dead man could show activity during the study remaining mobile and in motion. (2) How a man dead in 1996 could show signs of life in 1999?

Then the journalist told him the truth about the miracle of the host, that the blood sample was obtained from a host that was distributed at communion after the Transubstantiation at a Holy Mass in 1996. He added that this is due to a miracle and defies any scientific explanation.



Then they compared the previous great miracle of the Eucharist that occurred at Lanciano, Italy with the latest one at BA. The study yielded that blood in both belonged to one man who had AB positive type while DNA studies of both proved that the person concerned came from the Middle East region. The study team was baffled to find that the blood samples found in BA, in the continent of Latin America and that of Lanciano, Italy, in Europe could be of the same man. This convinced them of the fact that these two were miracles.

It is the firm belief of Catholics that after transubstantiation at the Eucharistic Celebration the bread and wine offered turns into the Body and Blood of the Resurrected Jesus. So the Eucharist is the 'Real Presence' of Christ crucified and Resurrected.

Designers recreate....

Contd. from Pg. 8



The building is situated inside the Peace and Unity Centre, a Catholic institution dedicated to the unification of two Koreas, which is under construction.

The mosaic works inside the Cathedral were produced by seven artists of the Mansudae Art Studio, one of the most renowned art groups in the North, in 2007. They depicted martyrs from Pyongyang and Hwanghae Province as well as some from South Korea. The areas most affected by religious persecution. The artists reportedly corresponded with their clients in the South via the Internet every day. After



Myeongdong Cathedral

the works were delivered to South Korea, local artists installed the artwork over six months.

The Centre for National Reconciliation stands beside the Church run by the Catholic Community. For several years it has welcomed refugees fleeing the Pyongyang regime offering them courses for social inclusion and to find a job. Also, new missionaries are also trained here in religious dialogue and exchanges with the North.

The Director of the Secretariat of the Archdiocese of Seoul, Fr. Matthias Hur Young-yup, told AsiaNews: "The most important thing that the Korean Church can do to help reunification, is

pray and educate. For years the Commission has been committed to reconciliation in the field of education, to help the South Koreans to better understand their brethren in the North and thus reduce communication problems. Our best hope is dialogue."

The Korean Catholic Church continues to grow. In 2011, the number of newly baptised was 134,562, bringing the number of Catholics in South Korea to 5,309,964 or 10.3 per cent of the population. Overall, Catholics in South Korea have increased at a yearly average of 2-3 per cent in the past ten years. The data is in a report released by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea, the Statistics of the Catholic Church in Korea 2011, which shows both positive and negative trends. The average age of Church members rose and Sunday Mass attendance dropped, especially in the big cities. However for the country's bishops, this is temporary, a problem they will overcome very soon.

Myeongdong Cathedral is the main Catholic Church in Korea and the



With cherubs and cross, the bell at Gamgok Maegoe Virgin Mary Catholic Cathedral

Church of the Archdiocese of Seoul. In 1784 the first faith community gathered on this spot, which was then known as Myeong-Nae-Bang. In 1892 Fr. Coste began working on plans for the construction of a church. Construction began on August 5, 1892 and was completed on May 29, 1898.

Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor Letters to the



Mourning for the war dead - is it only for the victors?

With respect to your editorial in the *Catholic Messenger* of November 4, 2012, I wish to bring to your notice some glaring omissions with respect to the above subject which was your editorial heading.

1. If you are to also mourn the losers you have to mourn Prabhakaran too, and thereby you glorify a criminal who was more brutal than Adolf Hitler.
2. Hitler in spite of his hate towards the Jews, spared the destruction of the city of Paris due to its cultural and architectural value, But Prabhakaran

not only bombed the Dalada Maligawa he even desecrated the precincts of Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi.

3. You cannot bring in parallels between the American civil war and what happened in Sri Lanka. In America it was an internal conflict, but in Sri Lanka it was naked aggression through a proxy. It was the 33rd aggressive incursion with intent to impose the will of others on us. It will not be the last either.
4. Going back to 1978, my cousin Mrs. Gwendalyn Perera and her 9-year-old son were killed in their

own home at Murugan, Vavuniya, all their properties were burned down, the two older sons escaped with gunshot wounds by running to the jungle. When the two boys aged 12 and 14 years, went to the Madhu Church for refuge they were chased away by the Tamil priest in charge, this allegation was made at the Sansoni Commission, the complaint was taken to the then American President Ronald Reagan, by Mrs. Perera's brother Mr. Arden Silva, though nothing came out of the complaint, Ar-

den Silva was shot in the knee in downtown New York and silenced by the Diaspora.

5. My cousin and her child's body was not allowed to be brought down to Colombo for burial (to safeguard the so called national harmony).
6. From my point of view it was sweet revenge at Nandikadal, because as kinsmen of my cousin and her family we had a Divine right to avenge her murder, though all in that area knew who was responsible no one came forward, long before the

so called July 1983 riots. Therefore May 19, 2009 was collective Divine punishment.

7. The victorious forces made a great sacrifice on behalf of justice to all, therefore you have no right to talk on behalf of traitors to the country.
8. The month of November should not be made an excuse for political

gimmicks.

9. Gwendalyn Perera's other children are among the living, you owe an apology to them for not considering your Catholic obligations.

10. Be bold enough to publish this reply to your editorial.

A peace loving Catholic!

Sunil Wimalasuriya

SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD

In this wicked world we hear of terrible tragedies and disasters almost everyday.

During our short life we are bound to face innumerable failures sufferings, trials and mishaps. There is no one in the world who has not faced personal tragedy or failure at sometime or other in life. Discontentment, thirst for wealth, power and worldly pleasures has brought upon man misery and pain. This is because he has taken the wrong path to happiness. Only those, who are united to God and to His Holy will find their souls filled with heavenly peace and happiness. Tender love towards the Divine Will is the only way to genuine and permanent happiness.

According to Fr. Leo Pyzaiski supernatural peace is one of the most precious gifts of God. The Will of God is the perfection of God Himself. Holy, just, pure, merciful, true, and anything contrary to these perfections in thought word or deed is sin. Therefore, let us try to live in constant submission to the Will of God

"Lord Thy Will Be Done."

Maurice Nanayakkara

CATHOLIC SOCIAL DOCTRINE

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "It is useless crying, 'My Lord, My God', if you don't obey my Laws and keep my commands and, unless you feed my less fortunate brethren, clothe them, visit them in their time of distress you shall not have a place in Heaven with me."

I have observed through the *Catholic Messenger* that His Holiness Pope Francis, directly or indirectly, appeals, to us, frequently, to propagate and activate Social Justice through the Catholic Social Doctrine, based mainly on Papal Encyclicals '*Rerum Novarum*' '*Gaudium et Spes*' and '*Populorum et Progressio*'.

We should be conscious of the importance of activating, the Social Doctrine of the Church, in our Parishes through Pastoral Councils, We expect the Parish Priests to give priority to the above and also Inter-Religious Dialogue especially with the Buddhist Clergy.

Parish Pastoral Councils should be enlightened to give priority to the above, since Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world not only to serve the spiritual needs of the flock but also to serve the entire humanity.

Andrew Samaratunge

GOD - INTERVENED

I am a retired Central Bank Executive and have been in service for 37 years. My duties were with the general public and it required a lot of dedication and sympathy. My first visit to the Divine Retreat Centre (DRC) was in 2005 due to my wife's illness.

After praying at DRC, I gave a testimony of a steady recovery of my wife and introduced others to this centre. This is my fourth visit in the Lord's love and service.

I became more aware of God's love and sacrifice from the preaching of the Holy Scriptures at the retreats and that changed my life. I gave up the vanities of the world and surrendered myself to the Lord unconditionally. My faith in God's love, and forgiveness, has increased. Glory to God! Alleluia!

Francis Roland

Religious amity is mere eyewash

All this talk of religious amity is mere eyewash, considering what has happened in the last few years. The removal of the *Sandakadapahana* stone from the premises of a church is the latest. Buddhist fanatics do not like the Sinhala Buddhist Culture to be a part of the Catholic way of life.

In Seeduwa, the statue of the Infant Jesus was removed from the crib during Christmas. Another crib was set on fire, some where in that area. Tar was daubed on the statue of the Risen Christ in Negombo sometime back. Statues were broken and the Tabernacle was set on

fire at Angulana, but they could not burn the Tabernacle, even after lighting 30 matchsticks, after pouring kerosene oil.

Many many years ago a wealthy man from Kurunegala, wrote a book, '*Kanni Marriage Hati*'. This booklet was distributed free from all Post Offices. The Prime Minister at that time was S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. No action was taken to stop the circulation of this booklet. Finally what happened" the man who lived with his family on a mountain in a fabulous house perished with his entire family, when there was an earthslip. Nothing could be done as a

huge rock had slid over his house.

Near the Negombo Town Hall, a place was reserved for a statue of Christ to be placed. Overnight a statue of Buddha was placed there.

Close to the New Olympia Theatre a column was built to place the statue of Rev. Fr. Legog, the famous botanist, who was able to prolong the life of the Sacred Bo Tree at Sri Maha Bodhi. Hereto someone had placed the statue of Buddha on the column.

Knowing very well the attitude of fanatical Buddhist groups, we Catholics should not have anything that has a sem-

blance of Sinhala Buddhist culture in our churches. The Sesatha and Elephant tusks should be taken off from the churches. Catholic churches should be built without a trace of Sinhala Buddhist culture.

Once I noticed a huge Wesak Lantern in a Catholic Church. Wesak Lanterns were also seen outside a grotto of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in Negombo. Hoisting the Buddhist Flag in Catholic homes should be discouraged. Let us stick to the Catholic way of life and not invite trouble from fanatical Sinhala Buddhist groups.

J.T. Mirando

The invalidated Special General Meeting of the OBU of St. Joseph's College, Colombo

The 110th Annual General Meeting of the Old Boys' Union of St. Joseph's College, Colombo which is a constituent body (where the members are present by right) was summarily adjourned till and September, 2013 by the acting President and Hony Secretary without completing the business for which the meeting was convened. Neither was there a motion, a proposer and seconder nor was this issue put to the vote, for members to decide either for or against, prior to the adjournment announcement.

This situation was precipitated after many Senior Life Members and the majority of the vast membership present protested and censured the acting President and the Secretary for deliberately and intentionally not notifying them of this crucial Special General Meeting (SGM) that was held on May 11, 2013

at the Bonjean Memorial Hall to "Resolve and adopt the amended draft constitution of the St. Joseph's College Old Boys' Union in place of the existing one."

Members insisted that this was a serious erosion of their Rights and also that the notice issued in concordance with clause (14/B of the OBU Constitution itself was invalid and ultravires, as it had failed to give due, adequate and clear notice and as such, the SGM of May 11 was not properly and conducted. Hence this meeting has no Legal standing or force of Law.

This purported amended constitution was drafted to redefine and reframe the existing constitution with the ultimate objective of removing the Rectors of St. Joseph's College from holding the position of Ex-officio Presidents of the OBU in future and replacing them, with

elected lay members as future OBU Presidents, while at the same time, denying the present and future presidents from being signatories to any financial transactions of the OBU. This function hereafter to be solely entrusted to the elected lay President, the Hony. Secretary and Treasurer or Asst. Treasurer.

It was the confirmed opinion of the majority of the membership,

that the notices were manipulated and served only to selected members (122 only) for the SGM, out of a total membership of nearly 3000 members, with the sole purpose of removing the present and future Rectors from functioning as Ex-officio Presidents of the OBU who were to be relegated to the posts of Office Bearers and Vice-Patrons.

Senior Life Member, OBU

The gift of listening

You must really listen.

No interruption,

No daydreaming,

No planning

your responses.

Just listen!



What it says in the Readings

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children.

(Mt. 11:25)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR C 11th August - 18th August 2013

Sun: 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time
Wis.18:6-9; Hebr.11:1,2,8-19 (or 1-2,8-12);
Lk.12:32-48 (or 35-40)

Mon: Memorial of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Religious
Deut. 10:12-22; Mt.17:22-27

Tue: SS. Pontian, Poe, and Hippolytus, Priest, Martyrs
Deut. 31:1-8; Mt. 18:1-5,10,12-14

Wed: Memorial of St. Maximilian Kolbe, Priest & Martyr
Deut. 34:1-12; Mt.18:15-20

Thu: Feast of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Rev. 11:19a,12:1-6a,10ab;
1 Cor.15:20-26; Lk.1:39-56

Fri: Memorials of St. Stephen of Hungary
Josh 24:1-13; Mt. 19:3-12

Sat: Josh 24:14-29; Mt. 19:13-15

Sun: 20th Sunday of Ordinary Time
Jer 38:4-6,8-10; Hebr 12:1-4; Lk.12:49-53

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, we place all our trust in you.

Christ says: 'Fear not!' That Christians may follow Him out of love and never out of fear. We pray in faith.

Response: Lord, we place all our trust in you.

Christ says: 'Keep your belts fastened': That our leaders may lead not just by word but also by example. We pray in faith.

Response: Lord, we place all our trust in you.

Christ says: 'Keep your lamps burning': For those who live foolishly and recklessly as if they were accountable to no one for their conduct. We pray in faith.

Response: Lord, we place all our trust in you.

Christ says: 'Stay awake!': That we may be saved from laziness and all forms of apathy so that we may not squander life's opportunities. We pray in faith.

Response: Lord, we place all our trust in you.

St Maximilian Mary Kolbe - Feast Day August 14

Martyr (1894 -1941)

Baptized Raymond, St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe was born in Poland on January 8, 1894 to Julius and Maria Kolbe. As a young man he entered the Order of Friars Minor Conventuals and was ordained priest in 1918 in Rome. Burning with a filial love for the Virgin Mother of God, he founded an association called the "Army of Immaculate Mary," and later the "Knight of the Immaculate," a religious magazine under Mary's protection for the purpose of disseminating the Good News more widely; both of which he propagated in his native land as well as in other countries. In 1930, he went as a missionary to Japan. Working under the mantle of protection and patronage of the Immaculate Virgin, he set up printing presses and founded a community to carry on his

work of evangelizing through the printed word.

Returning to Poland in 1936, he became director of Poland's chief Catholic publishing complex, thus incurring the wrath of the Gestapo-in 1939 he was imprisoned for his anti-Nazi propaganda; released, he was re-arrested in February 1941 for aiding Jewish refugees during World War II and deported to Auschwitz. Here it was that, true to his name which meant "Greatest" (in Latin), his heroism shone brightest. On July 24, 1941, one of the prisoners in the concentration camp escaped. As a result, in keeping with the practice followed there, ten men were selected at random to die of starvation in an empty bunker. One of these, named Franciszek Gajowniczek, a father of nine, wailed: "No,

God! Not me, please! What will become of my poor wife and children?" Deeply moved, Fr. Kolbe stepped out of the ranks and standing before Commandant Fritsch, pointed to Sergeant Gajowniczek and said: "I am a Catholic priest from Poland. I am old. I want to take his place because he has a wife and children," exemplifying Christ's redemptive love—"There is no greater love than this: To lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

As at the camp, Fr. Kolbe continued to be the source of strength and comfort for his fellow condemned, diligently preparing them to meet their end praying and singing praises to the Lord instead of weeping in despair. It was not long before death took its toll on those emaciated bodies. Fr. Kolbe alone remained. It was

August 1941. The cell being needed for the next batch of the condemned, his death was hastened with an injection of carbolic acid, where after his remains were found to be in a state of illumination in the dark cell, before being cremated.

Maximilian had prepared himself for this final sacrifice that made him the symbol of the triumph of good over evil by following Christ closely from the very first years of his life. Consequently, his mysterious childhood vision of the two crowns came to fruition when he received the white crown denoting purity at the hands of Pope Paul VI who beatified him on October 17, 1971 and the red one symbolizing martyrdom when he was



canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 10, 1982.

Reflection: "In the same way, your light must shine before people so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven." (Mt 5:16).

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading:

Wis.18: 6-9.

The author refers to the deliverance of the Israelites from the slavery of the Egyptians. From the same source where deliverance came to the faithful also came the destruction of the enemies. Both blessings and dangers would come to those who are singing the praises of the fathers.

Second Reading:

Heb. 11:1-2, 8-19.

It speaks to us about faith as the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen. It refers to the faith of Abraham from his leaving the land to his readiness to offer his son.

Gospel: Lk.12:42-48.

The Lord instructs His disciples to prepare themselves to receive the kingdom. They should detach themselves from the world and be ready always to go and inherit the kingdom. If not, the Lord will reject them.

Reflection:

Today's Readings invite us to check our faith and faithfulness to the Lord our God. For God wishes His people to be full of faith and be faithful. For with God everything depends on faith and faithfulness to Him. Whether it is for salvation everything depends on this faith and faithfulness. We as the children of God have to place all our trust hope and faith in the Lord our God. Thereby we became faithful to Him. Then and only then we can surrender ourselves totally to Him. These are called for in today's Readings. In the First Reading it is because of the faith and hope that the Israelites placed in the Lord, that they were delivered from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. The Isra-

elites placed all their trust and hope in the Lord and prayed for their deliverance from Egypt. And the Lord heard their cry for faith and delivered them. He not only delivered them but also punished the Egyptians including the king for their stubbornness. Therefore we see both blessings and punishment flowing from the same source. This reminds us that the Lord cannot only bless us for our faith but could also punish us for our lack of faith. Therefore, we should always have faith so that we will always be blessed.

In the Second Reading faith is explained thus; "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Referring to Abraham it proves that by faith he received divine approval. In the case of Abraham he is the father of faith. His very going out of the land is faith. His living in a tent, the reception of the power to conceive through Sarah his wife and the promise of descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as innumerable as grain of sand on the sea shore are some of the results of the faith of Abraham. In other words God rewarded Abraham immensely for his faith in Him.

The Gospel invites us to a deeper faith by way of giving alms. It says, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give alms; provide yourself with purses that do not grow old, with treasures in heaven." It also calls for faithfulness. Blessed is the servant if he is found watchful and awake when the master comes home after the marriage feast for the Son of Man comes in an hour you do not expect.

Blessed is the ser-



vant who is responsible and fulfills his duties to the letter when the master comes. For every one to whom much is given; of him will much is required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand more. This is a call for faithfulness. It is those in whom there is faithfulness, that there will be faith. And it is they who will totally surrender themselves to the Lord.

Aid Story.

Once upon a time there was a monastery where the office was sung everyday, though the monks were all getting old and their voices were thin and cracked. One fine day they all got together and discussed about it and hired a young handsome man. When they heard his beautiful tenor voice the old monks were overjoyed. "Now we shall have the office sung well." So when the boy had been well trained in the chant, the great day came (it was the first Vespers of the feast of Assumption.) when he was to sing in the choir for the first time. Everything went off beautifully, the church was full of lay flock come to listen, and all the old monks sat in the choir and never sang a word themselves

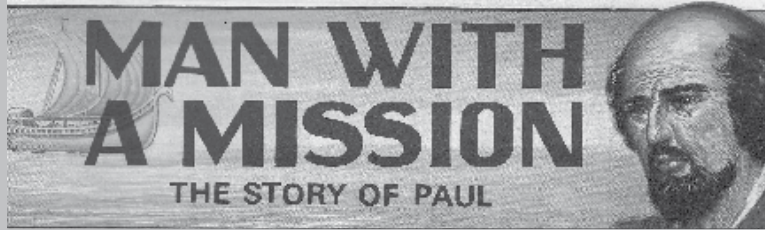
for fear of spoiling the effects. They wept for joy as they heard the beautiful young voice singing the praises of the Mother of God.

That night, as the prior was praying in the cell, Our Lady herself appeared to him in light. But she looked reproachfully. "Why was not the office sung today?" she asked. The Prior stammered out that it was sung and sung better that it had ever been before. "Well" said Our Lady, "I ought to tell you that nothing was heard in Heaven."

Aid Story 2.

A Priest and his assistant from the local parish are standing by the side of the road holding up a sign that reads. "The end is Near! Turn yourself around now before it is too late!" They had planned to hold up the sign to each passing car. "Leave us alone, you religious nuts!" yelled the first driver as he sped by. From around the curve, they heard screeching tires and a big splash. "Do you think," said one clergy to other, "we should just put up a sign that says, "Bridge out" instead?"

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos



Courtesy :
Ceylon Bible Society Publications

(.... from last week)

THE SHIP WAS A TOTAL WRECK.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE??

JUST BE SURE EVERYONE MAKES IT TO SHORE.

BUT EVERYONE WAS SAVED.

THE ISLAND WAS CALLED MALTA. AND THEY WERE STRANDED THERE FOR THREE MONTHS. BUT FINALLY A SHIP FROM ALEXANDRIA WAS ABLE TO TAKE THEM ON TO PUTEOLI. THE REST OF THE JOURNEY WAS BY LAND.

WHEN THEY REACHED THE PLACE CALLED MARKET OF APPIUS...

YOU CAME ALL THE WAY FROM ROME JUST TO MEET US? THEY SAY IT'S A FULL DAY'S JOURNEY!

THERE'S ANOTHER GROUP OF BELIEVERS WAITING AT THE PLACE CALLED THREE INNS.

LATER, IN ROME, PAUL CALLED FOR THE JEWISH LEADERS.

I WANTED YOU TO KNOW WHY I'M A PRISONER OF ROME. IN FACT, I'M IN CHAINS LIKE THIS FOR THE SAKE OF THE PROMISED SAVIOUR WE ISRAELITES HAVE HOPED FOR.

WE HAVE RECEIVED NO NEWS ABOUT YOU FROM JUDEA.

BUT PEOPLE EVERYWHERE ARE TALKING ABOUT THIS PARTY TO WHICH YOU BELONG. WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS.

ON THE DAY THEY AGREED TO MEET...

MY FELLOW ISRAELITES, I HAVE TRIED TO HELP YOU SEE THAT THIS JESUS OF NAZARETH HAS NOW FULFILLED THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

BUT IF YOU STILL CAN'T ACCEPT THIS, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT GOD'S MESSAGE OF SALVATION HAS BEEN SENT TO THE GENTILES. THEY WILL LISTEN!

FOR TWO YEARS, PAUL WAITED FOR HIS CASE TO COME BEFORE THE EMPEROR. HE WELCOMED ALL WHO VISITED HIM, AND HE SPOKE BOLDLY ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND ABOUT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(contd next week....)

Kanjukkuliya Youth Retreat



The Youth of the Parish of Kanjukkuliya in the Chilaw Diocese participated in a Retreat held at Holy Family Convent, Bandarawela.

The Retreat was conducted by

Rev. Fr. Roshan Silva and organised by the Parish Priest of Kanjukkuliya, Rev. Fr. Jude Dias and Assistant Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Ranil Indika Perera

Shehani Sathsarani

Young Jesus → Young Stars

Sick or Well or Doctor

Jesus heard them and answered, "People who are well do not need a doctor, but only those who are sick" (Mark 2:17)

GENERAL IDEA

Jesus as the Saviour came to the world to save sinners and to give them salvation of God. So His main concern were the sinners who are rejected and cornered by society. All those who are righteous are already on the move towards the salvation. They need less attention but they need to be guided carefully to balance their life-patterns.

COMMON CHALLENGES

- * How many are sick in the world?
- * How many are accepting that they are sick?
- * How many have recognised their sickness?
- * How many are proud of their "well-ness"?

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGES

- * Do you accept that you are a sinner who needs a Saviour?
- * Are you comparing your sinfulness with your neighbour?
- * If you have a great spirituality and positive disposition, have you ever felt that you are well and in need of a doctor?
- * Do not be too sure of your 'well-ness'. It can lead to a superiority complex. Remain in God who needs you to be healed.

VISIBLE CHARACTERS

- * Sick people, Well-being people and Doctor

HIDDEN CHARACTERS

- * Sinners, thieves, drug-addicts, righteous people, rich people, authorities, peace makers and Jesus the Saviour.

PRACTICAL INVITATION

1. I must be humble enough to accept my limitations and weaknesses in order to be saved and healed with the blessing of God.
2. Even though I am a righteous person; I might have a negative disposition towards others.
3. Rather than being over confident about my well-being, I must be a channel of peace

Su.Ra.F.



BEST BOWLER



Randira Jayasinghe, son of Mr. Amal Jayasinghe (Old Boy of St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10) and of Dr. Priyangi Jayasinghe, represented the Desert Cubs Cricket Academy in Dullai and won the under 11 Best Bowler's Trophy in England at a recent tour with the other teams.

Maiden Walk

To commemorate their 75th Anniversary, St. Anthony's BMV Kollupitiya held a Maiden Walk under the patronage of Rev. Sr. M. Sonali AC, Principal of the school.

The Chief Guests were Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, General Manager for Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese and Rev. Fr. Travis Gabriel, Rector, St. Peter's College, Colombo.

Instil Catholic Identity in Catholic Schools

I view with the greatest concern that Catholic education today is at crossroads. Changes in educational patterns in schools and the socio-cultural context have radically affected the identity and roles of the Catholic School in recent years. The rising proportion of 'nominal-Catholic' and 'other-than-Catholic' enrolments and of the 'under-participation' of students from poor families are results of this.

Therefore I kindly request all Catholic educational leaders, staff and parents, and the broader Catholic Community, to come together and take up the challenge to ensure that our schools:

- are truly Catholic in their identity and life
- are centres of 'the new generalization'
- enable students to achieve higher levels of 'Catholic religious literacy' and practice.

The Catholic School system is one of the "jewels in the crown" of the Catholic Community anywhere in the world. It has provided the best of education to generations of young all over the world and has been the major arm of the Church's engagement with youth. Even the governments of the country have confidence in our school system.

We are encouraged by this confidence placed in Catholic Schools and we believe we have earned that trust. Catholic Schools have contributed to the whole community through educating a significant proportion of the country's young people, by offering distinctive vision and values, and at the same time complementing the Government School system and enabling choice and diversity in education.

Roles and Responsibilities of Catholic Schools

The roles and responsibilities of Catholic Schools have changed over the years. Most of the schools were established in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to assist poor families to educate their children and to pass on the Catholic faith and practices in a sometimes hostile social context. The mid-twentieth century showed an increased practice of the faith among Catholic families, the surrounding culture was largely Christian and much

Address given at the Prize-giving of Holy Cross College, Kalutara by Rev. Fr. Camillus Fernando, Rector

of the faith was transmitted outside the school. While our school leaders try to ensure that no child is denied enrolment due to the inability to pay school fees, we also recognise that financial stress and other factors press many Catholic families to look elsewhere for schooling. Many of our young people now have little or no connection with the Church outside their schools. This has paved the way for many 'other-than-Catholic' families to entrust their children's education to Catholic Schools.

While we are proud of our educational achievements, we must not be complacent. While the resources, goodwill and experience in our schools present tremendous opportunities, there are also many challenges today. Not all of our students have been well-served catechetically or pastorally as it should, nor have our schools always been well-supported by families and parishes as they would have wished. As a result the tremendous potential of Catholic Education has not always been fully realised. In order to make the most of our opportunities, it will be important for the whole Catholic Community, especially those most intimately involved in Catholic education, to re-examine our situation, central goals, and the means to those goals.

Demand for Catholic Schools keeps rising,

Most of the additional students in our Catholic Schools are not Catholics. That 'other-than-Catholic' families should entrust their children to Catholic Schools reflects well upon the standards and particular qualities of Catholic Schools. Good Catholic Schools are good schools.

Much has been written in previous Church documents and elsewhere on the identity of the Catholic School and we need not repeat all that here. Put simply: The Catholic School is the principal educational arm of Catholic families, parishes and the wider Church for those generally aged under eighteen. It is there to assist parents and parishes in their educational, evangelical and cat-



echetical mission, as well as to help the wider community in its educational and civic service.

However, much more is required from a genuinely Catholic School than just preponderance of students from Catholic families. It is essential that:

- Leaders and staff understand, and are solidly committed to the Catholic identity of the school.
- The Religious Knowledge (RK) curriculum is sound, attractive and professionally taught by teachers with appropriate RK qualifications.
- Schools are Eucharistic Communities, as far as possible; students regularly take part in Holy Mass and Reconciliation.
- Schools continue to be places of prayer, including prayer at assemblies, in classes and in other staff and student meetings, and places where practices are encouraged such as Scripture reflections, the Angelus, Eucharistic Adoration and prayerful silence.
- Schools are places cultivating a Catholic imagination, where prayer and liturgy are supported by a Catholic visual culture, including crucifixes and pictures of Our Lady and the saints.
- Schools are connected to their local diocese, through inviting the periodic presence of the bishop, clergy, religious and parents in the school, and through active collaboration with the wider Catholic Community.

To be Contd Next week

Why we Sing

Taken from *Sing to the Lord, Music in Divine Worship*
USA Conference of Catholic Bishops

Contd. from last week

The Musical Structure of Catholic Worship

Music and the Structure of the Holy Mass

Those responsible for preparing music for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in accord with the three preceding judgments must have a clear understanding of the structure of the Liturgy. They must be aware of what is of primary importance. They should know the nature of each of the parts of the Holy Mass and the relationship of each part to the overall rhythm of the liturgical action.

The Holy Mass is made up of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Although each has its own distinctive character, these two parts are so closely connected as to form one act of worship. "The Church is nourished spiritually at the twofold table of God's word and of the Eucharist: From the one it grows in wisdom and from the other in holiness. In addition, the Mass has introductory and concluding rites.

The Introductory Rites

The first part of the Holy Mass consists of rites that have the character of a beginning, introduction, and preparation. They include an Entrance chant or song, the reverencing of the altar, a greeting of the people, an Act of Penitence and the *Kyrie* (or the Sprinkling Rite), *Gloria*, and Collect.

These rites are designed "to ensure that the faithful who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God's word and to celebrate the Holy Eucharist worthily," so that the people might come together as one. It is appropriate that they always sing at least one piece as a congregation in the Introductory Rites-Entrance Song or chant, *Kyrie*, or *Gloria*-apart from the sung dialogues of the liturgy.

On certain occasions, such as Palm Sunday, or when the other sacraments or rites are celebrated at Holy Mass, some of these rites are committed or celebrated in a particular manner that requires variations in the choice of music. Those responsible for the musical preparation of the Liturgy must be aware of these variations in practice.

Entrance Chant or Song

After the entire liturgical assembly has been gathered, an Entrance Chant or song is sung as the procession with the priest, deacon, and ministers enters the Church. "The purpose of this chant is to open the celebration, foster

the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers."

Care must be taken in the treatment of the texts of psalms, hymns, and songs in the Liturgy. Verses and stanzas should not be omitted arbitrarily in ways that risk distorting their content. While not all musical pieces require that all verses or stanzas be sung, verses should be omitted only if the text to be sung forms a coherent whole.

The text and music for the Entrance Song may be drawn from a number of sources.

a. The singing of an antiphon and psalm during the Entrance Procession has been a long-standing tradition in the Roman Liturgy. Antiphons and psalms may be drawn from the official liturgical books-the *Graduale Romanum*, or the *Graduale Simplex*-or from other collections of antiphons and psalms.

b. Other hymns and songs may also be sung at the Entrance, providing that they are in keeping with the purpose of the Entrance Chant or song. The texts of antiphons, psalms, hymns, and songs for the Liturgy must have been approved either by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or by the local diocesan bishop.

The Act of Penitence

After the greeting, the Act of Penitence follows as the entire assembly prays a formula of general confession. When the third form of the Act of Penitence is sung (e.g., "You were sent to heal the contrite: Lord, have mercy ...") variable invocations of Christ's mercy may be chosen.

The Kyrie Eleison

The ancient invocation *Kyrie* is a "chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore His mercy. If the *Kyrie* is not included in the Act of Penitence, it is sung or said immediately afterwards. It is usually sung in dialogue by the entire liturgical assembly with the choir or cantor.

Blessing and Sprinkling of Water

"On Sundays, especially in the Season of Easter, in place of the customary Act of Penitence, from time to time the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place." The blessing of the water may be sung. The song accompanying the sprinkling with blessed water should have an explicitly baptismal character.

The Gloria

"The Gloria is a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb. The text of this hymn may not be replaced by any other text It is sung or said on Sundays outside the Seasons of Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and at special celebrations of a more solemn character."

The priest, or the cantor or choir, intones the *Gloria*. It is sung by all, by the people alternately with the choir or cantor, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is recited either by all together or by two parts

in responding to it in song, "the people make God's Word their own." The Readings from Sacred Scripture

While the Readings are ordinarily read in a clear, audible, and intelligent way, they may also be sung. "This singing, however, must serve to bring out the sense of the words, not obscure them."

Even if the Readings are not sung, the concluding acclamation *The Word of the Lord* may be sung, even by someone other than the reader; all respond with the acclamation *Thanks be to God*. "In this way the assembled congregation pays reverence to the word of God it has listened to in faith and gratitude."

The Responsorial Psalm

The Responsorial Psalm follows the First Reading, because it is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word, and is in effect a reading from Scripture, it has great liturgical and pastoral significance. Corresponding to the Reading that it follows, the Responsorial Psalm is intended to foster meditation on the Word of God. Its musical setting should aid in this, being careful to not overshadow the other readings.

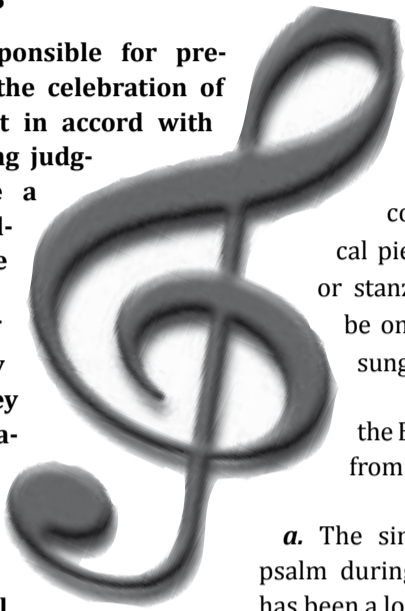
"As a rule the Responsorial Psalm should be sung." Preferably, the Psalm is sung responsorially: "the psalmist, or cantor of the psalm, sings the psalm verses and the whole congregation joins in by singing the response." If this is not possible, the Psalm is sung completely without an intervening response by the community. The proper or seasonal Responsorial Psalm from the Lectionary for Holy Mass, with the congregation singing

the response, is to be preferred to the gradual from the *Graduale Romanum*. When the Latin gradual is sung *in directum* (straight through) by choir alone, the congregation should be given a vernacular translation.

Since the Psalm is properly a form of sung prayer, "every means available in each individual culture is to be employed" in fostering the singing of the Psalm at Holy Mass, including the extraordinary options provided by the *Lectionary for Mass*. In addition to the proper or seasonal Psalm in the *Lectionary*, the Responsorial Psalm may also be taken from the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Graduale Simplex*, or it may be an antiphon and psalm from another collection of the psalms and antiphons, including psalms arranged in paraphrase or in metrical form, providing that they have been approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or the diocesan bishop.

Songs or hymns that do not at least paraphrase a psalm may never be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm.

From
Rev. Fr. Ignatius L. Varnakulasingham
Director - National Liturgy



of the congregation in alternation. While through-composed settings of the Gloria give clearest expression to the text, the addition of refrains is permitted, provided the refrains encourage congregational participation.

The Gloria may not be moved to a different part of the Holy Mass than the one assigned by the Roman Missal. It may not, for example, be used in place of the Entrance Chant or song, or during the sprinkling with blessed water.

The Collect

The priest then invites all to pray and, after a brief silence, sings or says the Collect. Even when the Collect is not sung, the conclusion to the prayer may be sung, along with the response by the people.

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings and responses from Sacred Scripture. In receiving the Word of God with their hearts and minds, and

QUIZ

On Catholic Themes

(..... from last week)

QUESTIONS

1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

General

231. Where is the Holy Shroud of Jesus preserved?
232. What is the theological term for speaking in tongues?
233. Which city in Europe is famous for the devotion to the Infant Jesus?
234. In which country of Central Europe is found the statue called *The Miraculous Infant Jesus of Prague*?
235. Who wrote the hymn *Lead Kindly Light*?
236. The hymn *Anima Christi* was written by a Pope Which Pope?
237. What name is given to the financial support spontaneous or fixed, of the clergy?
238. What is the official daily newspaper of the Church issued from the Vatican?
239. Which famous artist painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel?
240. What is a cathedral?
241. What is a basilica?
242. Which are Rome's four ancient major basilicas (known also as papal basilicas)?
243. Which of the four basilicas of Rome is the most ancient?
244. Which of the four Major Basilicas of Rome is the Pope's parish and the cathedral of Rome?
245. When was the Basilica of John Lateran built?
246. What is the site of the basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls?
247. To whom is the Basilica of St Mary Major dedicated?
248. Who founded the Basilica of St Paul Outside the walls and when?
249. Which is the biggest Catholic Church in the world?
250. What is the site of the Basilica of St Peter?

(contd next week.....)

ANSWERS

I. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

General

231. Turin, Italy.
232. Glossolalia.
233. Prague.
234. Czech Republic.
235. John Henry Newman.
236. Pope John XXII (1249 - 1334).
237. Stipend.
238. *L'Osservatore Romano*.
239. Michelangelo.
240. A cathedral is the central church of a diocese which the bishop has his throne.
241. A basilica is a designation bestowed by the Pope for an important church building that carries special spiritual, historical, and architectural significance.
242. The Basilicas of St John Lateran, St Mary Major, St Peter's and the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls.
243. St John Lateran.
244. St John Lateran.
245. From 311-314 under Pope Melchiade.
246. The burial place of Saint Paul.
247. To the Mother of God, "Theotokos."
248. The Roman Emperor Constantine I in the 4th Century.
249. The Basilica of Our Lady of Peace of Yamoussoukro, a Roman Catholic minor basilica dedicated to Our Lady of Peace in Yamoussoukro in Ivory Coast.
250. The burial site of St Peter; St Peter's tomb is directly under the altar of the Basilica.

Courtesy: Clare Ukken fsp

First Holy Communion at Pallansena



Eighty four children received First Holy Communion at Our Lady of Sorrows Church Pallansena. The Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Jayantha Nimal was the Chief Celebrant on the occasion. The children are seen with Rev. Fathers Jayantha Nimal, Gayan Prasantha, Rev. Sister Anjalita.

Melvyn de Costa

Catholic Prefects of the Archdiocese



A gathering of Catholic Prefects' of the Archdiocese of Colombo took place recently at St. Joseph College, Colombo. This event was the first of its nature and was organised by the Prefects' Body of St. Joseph's College, Colombo. More than 500 prefects from the various schools were present. The Chief Guest was Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela

Anushka Godakandage

Achini bags 'Best Student' Award

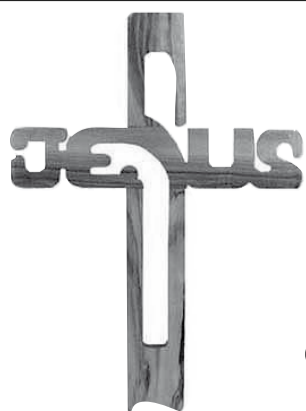


Achini Shenali Fernando of the Godella Parish received the award for the 'Best Student' (English) at the Awards Ceremony of John Paul II Higher Education Centre, Wennappuwa

Achini is an Advanced level student of Ave Maria Branch School, Akkarapanaha, Negombo.

Picture shows Rev. Fr. Neville Coonghe, Rector of the Centre presenting Achini with the Award.

Kumara Nayanajith



To Walk,
To Build,
To Witness,
Always
with the
Cross of Christ

