

MESSENGER

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Ash Wednesday
Feb. 18

HOW TO DELIVER A GOOD SERMON

Homilies are "not sermons on an abstract theme nor are they an occasion for the preacher to address issues that bear no relation to the liturgical celebration and its readings or to abuse the texts of the Church, distorting them in order to make them fit a preconceived idea. They are not simply an exercise of Biblical interpretation, they must not be used by the preacher as a moment of personal testimony, they must not simply tell the preacher's personal life story, nor must they be purely moralistic or indoctrinating," says a new directory on how to deliver a good sermon presented by the Vatican, recently. **See Pg. 3 >>>**

Shepherd Speaks



Beloved Brethren,

May God and He alone be praised for the tremendous success of the visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Sri Lanka. It was indeed a great blessing to our flock and to all the people of Sri Lanka. From the moment he landed on our soil till the moment he left there were expressions of great joy, affection and admiration in his regard among even the non-Catholics in the Island. He electrified us all with his great spirit of closeness, joy-filled smile, simple ways, generosity of heart and profound faith in the Lord which he radiated in many ways. He too was touched by the smiling faces of our people, the love and loyalty they showed him and the enthusiasm with which they welcomed him.

In a letter written to me after the visit dated 21st January, the Holy Father states: **"There were two things in particular which impressed me about the Sri Lankan people: Their warm welcome on my arrival (the twenty-nine kilometres of people who lined the roads from the Airport to the city centre), and at the Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu. To have seen people of different religious beliefs praying to the Blessed Virgin Mary strengthens our confidence that she will never abandon her people and that she will guide them along the path to peace and harmony."**

Indeed the Holy Father was impressed by the way we in Sri Lanka live and inter-mingle with one another in spite of our racial, linguistic or religious differences. The fact that at the grassroots there is so much of harmony and transparency of life, including a certain amount of cultural porosity between people, was seen by the Holy Father as a positive sign for the future. In a long conversation I had with him while flying to Madhu in a helicopter he spoke to me about the importance of considering this more as an opportunity than a threat. That probably was the conviction which made him take that decision to accept my proposal to somehow visit the Maligakanda Temple even if it was not in the original programme. And that was indeed a great gesture of openness of the Holy Father towards the vast majority of the followers of the Lord Buddha in Sri Lanka.

The spirit of fraternity with which the Holy Father spoke at the inter-religious gathering at the BMICH and the way he conversed personally with all the main religious leaders of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and non-Catholic Christianity, greeting them and exchanging pleasantries with them, were indicative of that spirit of openness. The visit thus basically helped create a better atmosphere of understanding and harmony between the Catholic Church and all the other religious communities. It thus would help us to be accepted better by the others – a sort of coming of age, free from the usual historical prejudices and tensions. The Holy Father addressing this gathering stated: **"At this moment of your nation's history, how many people of goodwill are seeking to rebuild the moral foundations of society as a whole?"** **Contd on Pg. 2 >>>**

Pope returns funds: Tells Church to help the Poor

The gift of cash donation given by the Catholic Bishops' Conference to His Holiness Pope Francis was handed back to the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith by the Pontiff.

According to the Archdiocesan Monthly Bulletin 'Koinonia', the donation which was given to the Pope's Charity Fund amounted to Rs. 8,760,690.25. The contribution from the Archdiocese of Colombo was Rs.6,323,490.00. In his monthly letter addressed to the clergy, His Eminence states, "Just before emplaning to Manila, His Holiness gave the cheque back to me and requested me to help the poor with it and report back to him."

In view of this the Bishops' Conference has decided to distribute the cash donation among the dioceses asking each bishop to use it



to help the poor in the diocese and to send a report to His Eminence on how the cash was used so that a comprehensive report could be sent to His Holiness, the Bulletin states.

Meanwhile in keeping with the year 2015 being consecrated to the Family and Consecrated Life in the Archdiocese, His Eminence has requested the formation of a Family Care Committee in each parish or substation Church to ensure continuity in this matter. The establishing

of teams of exemplary married couples as trained counselors helping to heal families in crisis will be another important move in this direction.

Pope Francis who has spoken extensively on the rights of the poor, the injustices of unemployment exhorts in his Apostolic Exhortation 'Evangelii Gaudium' (The Joy of the Gospel), a spirit of "generous openness" and urges care for the weakest members of society - the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned and migrants.

A sign of God's openness is "that our Church doors should always be open so that those who seek God will not find a closed door, nor should the doors of the Sacraments be closed for simply any reason."

Koinonia

South Bar Cross Tower in Mannar

Under the guidance of His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar, a tower bearing the Oratorian Cross was erected at the place where Saint Joseph Vaz first landed in Sri Lanka. This place is presently called the South Bar.

On behalf of the Bishop of Mannar, this 18 foot high Cross Tower, was blessed and consecrated by the Vicar General of the Mannar Diocese, Rev. Fr. Victor Sosai on January 15, before a large gathering of devotees and faithful from South Bar and St. Sebastian's Cathedral in Mannar. The gathering also included Rev. Fr. Robin Rodrigues and about 90 pilgrims from Goa, the hometown of Saint Joseph Vaz.

The erection of the Tower was the initiative of Messrs. Anthony Christopher, Shelton Fernando and Angelo Lovendhal. A new statue of the Saint installed at the site was also blessed by Rev. Fr. Jayalath Balagalla OP, on this occasion.



St. Euphrosia's Home Nayakakanda Flag Day

We appeal to you to be generous in your contribution towards our Flag Day in aid of young girls and women who receive rehabilitation in our institution. Your generosity will help to bring a ray of hope to their lives.

Family Page, from now on will appear on Page XVII.

Contd on Pg. 2 >>> See also Pg. 7 >>>



DIALOG TV CHANNEL 83

PEO TV CHANNEL 93

Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination (2012)



Prayer-filled
Best Wishes to
Auxiliary Bishops
(February 11th)



His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr.
Emmanuel Fernando

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr.
Maxwell Silva

Ad Multos Annos Vivat!

Regional Trip to Kalamatiya

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith will be participating in the Consistory in Rome in the middle of February 2015 and therefore, the proposed trip to Kalamatiya will be postponed to 25th and 26th of July 2015. Please keep these two days free and we expect all the Fathers to participate in this event.

Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle
Episcopal Vicar
Colombo South Region

Contd. from Pg. 1

Shepherd speaks....

May the growing spirit of co-operation between the leaders of the various religious communities find expression in a commitment to put reconciliation among all Sri Lankans at the heart of every effort to renew society and its institutions."

Secondly, the Canonization Mass was indeed a bold expression of the faith of our people, a majority of whom were already there the day before, roughing out, sleeping in the open, sharing the space within the green with each other, praying, singing and giving witness to their love for the Lord and His Vicar here on earth, the Pope. The numbers and the joy manifested at the sight of the Holy Father were signs of that simple and unquestioning faith. The personality and the great missionary success of the Apostle of Sri Lanka, St. Joseph Vaz, assumed visible expression in these people. The Church in Sri Lanka is what it is today because God called this great son of Goa and sent him to our ancestors as the expression of His mercy and loving care for us. It is clear that had St. Joseph Vaz not made this offering of his life to God many of us would not have been Catholic today - inheritors of the faith of the Apostles and Martyrs in Rome. The Holy Father in his homily called St. Joseph Vaz an exemplary priest, one who needs to be a role model for us priests today: A person who served everyone in charity irrespective of their belonging to any religion or racial group and an exemplary missionary who *"knew how to offer the truth and the beauty of the Gospel in a multi-religious context, with respect, dedication, perseverance and humility"* [Sermon of Pope Francis at the Canonization Mass, 14th January 2015, Galle Face, Sri Lanka].

At Madhu, the Holy Father was deeply touched by the love and affection with which people of all races and religions hold the Blessed Mother close to their heart and explained how even during the years of war she had been their refuge and consolation and how she surely can help them from her heavenly abode to forgive and seek reconciliation with one another after the terrible sufferings they went through. For the Pope, Mary is the prototype for such reconciliation for *"just as she forgave her Son's killers at the foot of the cross, then held His lifeless body in her hands, so now she wants to guide Sri Lankans to greater reconciliation, so that the balm of God's pardon and mercy may bring true healing to all"* [Sermon at Madhu on 14th January 2015].

Beloved brethren, the Visit of the Holy Father is in itself a miracle as the unexpected declaration of a presidential election just a few days before the said visit caught most of us by surprise and caused an acrimonious debate as to whether we should go ahead with the Visit. Many thought that as is usual in our country, violence would result and thus create an atmosphere not suitable for the Visit. Many letters, telephone calls, public write ups and even open attacks in the press were organised. Our dilemma was that since everything was already planned for the Visit, a visit linked to another country too, we just could not cancel or call for a postponement. Besides, such a move would have looked extremely impolite towards the Holy Father who of all places in Asia chose to visit our tiny little island. It was a singular honour that he had bestowed on us, unworthy as we are. Besides, unwittingly we would have condemned our motherland as a place that is inhabited by people who are violent and who cannot even hold an election in a civilized manner. But the Bishops' Conference decided to trust in God and go ahead. Of course, at moments I was feeling confused in the midst of a barrage of attacks, even personalized. But where was the Lord in that? - was my question. And so we went ahead with faith and placing our hopes in the Lord Himself and in St. Joseph Vaz. And it was that faith which was recompensed by an election and the transition of power which was completely peaceful and became one of the best government changes in our post independence political history. Thus, in His eagerness to answer our prayers and make the Visit of the Holy Father and the Canonization a memorable experience, God worked the miracle of a peaceful election and transition of power possible. He is great indeed and may His name be always praised.

Beloved brethren, let us then thank God for everything, for His many blessings, for His great shepherdly love for us manifested so touchingly by His Holiness Pope Francis and for St. Joseph Vaz, our own Apostle and heavenly intercessor. Let us be proud and happy to belong to the Church of Rome and the inheritors of the faith of the Apostles and Martyrs. May the Lord be praised and exalted forever.

Thank you

Yours devotedly in Christ
✱ Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith

Prize-giving at St. Sebastian's Sunday School, Moratuwa

The prize-giving of the Sunday School of St. Sebastian's Church, Moratuwa took place recently. The Chief Guest on the occasion was the Catechetical Director of the Moratuwa Deanery Rev. Fr. Rasika Lawrence.

Also present were Rev. Fr. Nilantha Edirivickreme, Asst. Parish



Priest Moratuwa and Rev. Sr. Catherine Fernando.

Pradeep Suraweera

'General Introduction to the Holy Bible'

The Faculty of Theology of Aquinas University College, Borella will commence a new short course every Saturday, beginning February 21, 2015 on the above theme. The course will span for four consecutive Saturdays.

For details contact: 077 6692686/ 0718342319

Members of the Asian Family Apostolate visit Sri Lanka



Mr. Cyril de Souza, President of the Catholic Family Apostolate in Asia and his wife Carmen de Souza who visited Sri Lanka recently, met His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

C.R. Dickson Antony

Diyalagoda Parishioners bid farewell to Rev. Sr. Mary Juliet



A Thanksgiving Mass was held at St. Sebastian's Church, Diyalagoda to bid Farewell to Rev. Sr. Mary Juliet Superior of St. Bernadette's Convent Diyalagoda recently. The Chief celebrant on the occasion was Rev. Fr. Dinesh Taranga Keerthisinghe, Parish Priest of Diyalagoda.

D. Anselm Fernando

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South Bar ...

A concelebrated Holy Mass was offered in Tamil and Konkani by Rev. Fr. Anthonithas Christopher, Chaplain of the Sri Lankan, Tamil Community in Switzerland. The concelebrants were Rev. Fr. Robin Rodrigues - former Vice Postulator for the Cause of the Canonization of Saint Joseph Vaz in Goa, Rev. Fr. Arulpragasam - Priest-in-Charge of the Joseph Vaz Secretariat in Goa, Rev. Fr. Peppe Sosai - Administrator of the Mannar Cathedral, Rev. Fr. Jayalath Balagalla OP and Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ananda Fernando.

Fr. Vaz and His faithful follower John carrying no baggage but the sacred vessels and an altar stone concealed in their person, landed in the shores of Mannar, famished, thirsty and penniless in 1687.

Ajith Mendis

Annual Meeting of St. Michael's Youth, Korawalwella

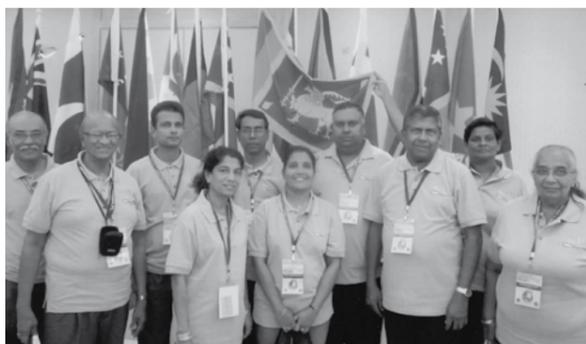


The Youth of St. Michael's Church, Korawalwella had their annual meeting recently under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Gihan Indika.

At this event the office bearers of St. Michael's Youth were elected.

Roshan Fernando

"THY WILL BE DONE" A Vincentian Response



SVP members from 30 countries participated at the Pan Asian gathering held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in October. The programme commenced with the blessings and participation of Apostolic Nuncio Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Marino and the presence of Archbishop and President of Bishop's Conference of Malaysia Rt. Rev. Dr. John Hock.

PANASCO the Asia Oceana gathering of members of the Society of Vincent De Paul (SVP) takes place once in 5 years in a member country in the region to share experiences and to strategise new directions for the Society in the region and to enhance and build networks of Charity and develop the spirituality of the members of the Asia Oceana Region.

The Society in Sri Lanka was represented at the congress by the National Spiritual Director Rev. Fr. Leo Perera, Rev. Fr. Quintus Fernando, Spiritual Director Chilaw, with Leonie Fernando President and eight members from the Sri Lanka National Council.

Marie Fernando



Church in the Modern World

From page 1

How to deliver a good sermon - The 'Homiletic Directory'

The 'Homiletic Directory', a 156-paragraph handbook on how to prepare and deliver good homilies, created by the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of Sacraments was presented in the Vatican at a media conference recently.

Speaking on the new directory His Holiness Pope Francis stated, "Many concerns have been expressed about this important ministry and we cannot simply ignore them."

The work on this directory which was started under the pontificate of His Holiness Benedict XVI was hastened under Pope Francis and headed by

Guinean Cardinal Robert Sarah, is addressed to all bishops, priests and seminarists around the world and gives advice on how to deliver a good sermon and what mistakes to look out for. Homilies are "not sermons on an abstract theme nor are they an occasion for the preacher to address issues that bear no relation to the liturgical celebration and its readings or to abuse the texts of the Church, distorting them in order to make them fit a preconceived idea. They are not simply an exercise of Biblical interpretation, they must not be used by the preacher as a moment of personal testimony,

they must not simply tell the preacher's personal life story, nor must they be purely moralistic or indoctrinating.

At a press conference in the Vatican, Cardinal Sarah explained that the directory was created for a reason and quoted Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (135): "Many concerns have been expressed about this important ministry, and we cannot simply ignore them. The homily is the touchstone for judging a pastor's closeness and ability to communicate to his people. We know that the faithful attach great importance to it, and that

both they and their ordained ministers suffer because of homilies: the laity from having to listen to them and the clergy from having to preach them! It is sad that this is the case."

The directory has two parts to it. The first, which is entitled: 'Homily and the liturgical environment', an introductory decree explains and describes, "the nature, function and unique context of the homily." The second part, titled 'Ars praedicationis' sets out a methodological framework and guidelines on content which the preacher should know and take into account when prepar-

ing and pronouncing a homily. Finally, there are two appendices, one with references to the catechism and the other with references to Magisterial documents on the homily.

So the homiletic directory "is not a collection of ready-to-use homilies, nor is it another of the many aids that exist with exegetical spiritual and pastoral explanations of mass readings," clarified Fr. Corrado Maggioni, the dicastery's under-secretary. Nor does the directory aim to "introduce new norms, but gathers together existing ones," he added.

- Vatican Insider

Pope makes surprise visit to shanty town in Rome



Residents at Campo Arcobaleno, or Camp Rainbow, in Rome had the surprise of a lifetime when Pope Francis showed up for an unannounced visit last Sunday.

Pope Francis on his way to the nearby parish of San Michele Arcangelo to celebrate Mass asked his aides to make a detour at the shantytown, of Campo Arcobaleno.

Italian television station TV2000 captured the scene as Pope Francis greeted the shocked crowd, many of whom reportedly were from South America.

Pope Francis got out of the car and people were shocked when they saw him in front of their shacks," Father Aristide Sana, the pastor of the local parish,

told Vatican Radio.

A fierce advocate for the poor and disenfranchised, Pope Francis made a similar visit to the Varginha favela, or slum, in northern Rio de Janeiro in July 2013, where he denounced the "culture of selfishness" that increasingly widens the gap between rich and poor.

The issue hits close to home for Pope Francis, who is the son of Italian immigrants and grew up within minutes of an impoverished slum in Buenos Aires. As a Jesuit, Pope Francis took a vow of poverty and worked closely with poor populations in his capacity as priest and later as archbishop of Buenos Aires.

Papal tweet on International Holocaust Remembrance Day

The cry of Auschwitz

"Auschwitz cries out with the pain of immense suffering and pleads for a future of respect, peace and encounter among peoples". With this tweet, Pope Francis joined in International Holocaust Remembrance Day, commemorating the victims of the Holocaust.

On 27 January 1945 the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by Soviet troops. Seventy years later a solemn ceremony was held in the camp, which included a number of survivors as well as 38 delegations from around the world and 15 Heads of State. At the ceremony Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, Archbishop of Krakow, spoke, underlining that "the most important aspect of this anniversary is still being able to listen



Survivors walk past a watch tower after paying tribute to fallen comrades at the "death wall", an execution spot in the former Auschwitz concentration camp in Oswiecim, Poland, on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp (AFP)

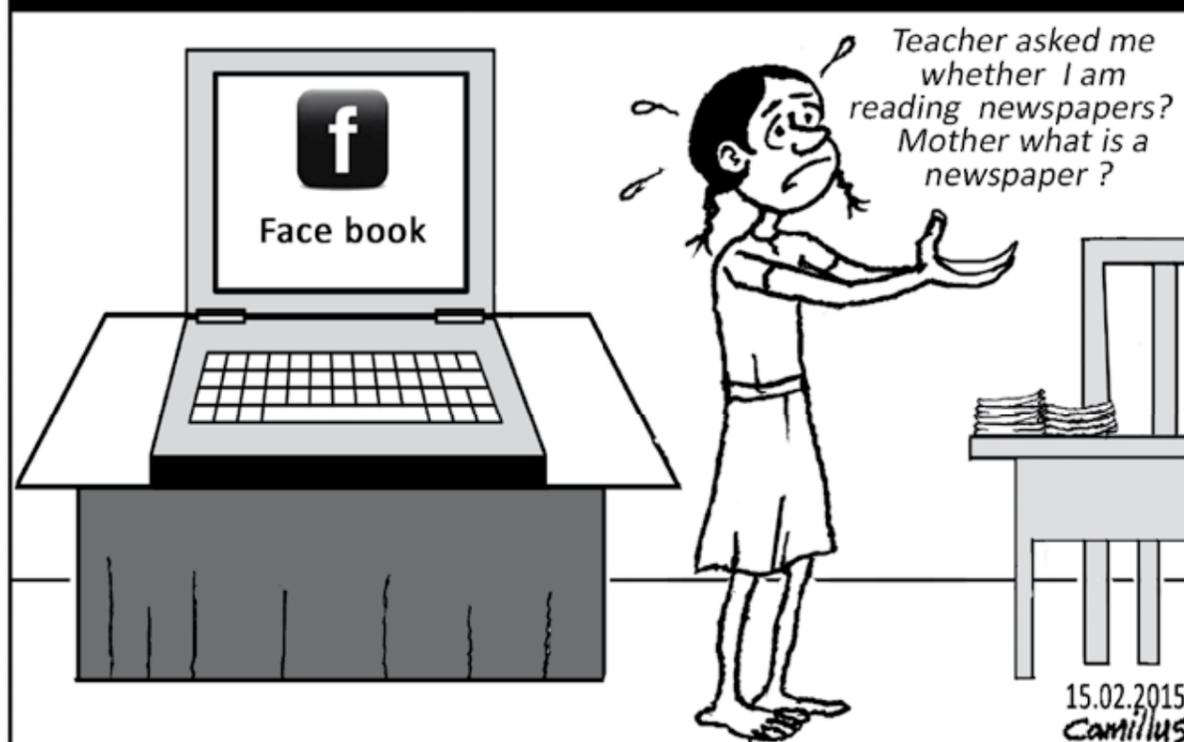
to those who experienced those horrible days, and to make the cry of the victims heard".

"As long as the survivors are still with us", continued the Cardinal during the Mass he celebrated with the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, at the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer, "we must make their voices heard. And we must help the world to listen to their words because the time is

coming when the memory will be handed down only through documents, books, films and interviews. The younger generation must know what happened in order to set their lives accordingly". In fact Halina Birenbaum (85, born in Warsaw), Kazimierz Albin (93, born in Krakow) and Roman Kent (86, born in Lodz) recalled the horrors of Nazism for the world during the ceremony which was held outside in the snow.

SUNDAY PUNCH

by Camillus



Six million flocked to see Pope at Vatican last year

Vatican City (CNS) More than 5.9 million people joined Pope Francis for an audience, liturgy or prayer service at the Vatican in 2014, the Prefecture of the Papal Household reported on December 29 last year.

The total was down by about 680,000 from the 6.6 million visitors Pope Francis received in the first nine-and-a-half months of his pontificate in 2013, between his election on March 13 and the end of the year.

In 2014 at least 1.19 million people attended Pope Francis' 43 weekly general audiences; more than 567,000 participated in special group audiences; over 1.1 million in papal liturgies at St. Peter's Basilica or St. Peter's Square; and more than three million joined him for the angelus or the Regina Coeli on Sundays and major feast days.

The figures released by the prefecture do not include numbers from papal events in Rome or Italy, and exclude foreign trips. The numbers are approximate and based on tickets requested and estimates of crowd size.

15.02.2015
Camillus

MESSENGER

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA

EDITORIAL

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February 15, 2015

Health for all

Jesus Christ makes available Divine Medicine through the Holy Eucharist while in His name many miraculous healings are taking place.

But we also need to be aware that it is God who gave the knowledge and wisdom to doctors and other paramedical personnel to heal through natural means or by using chemicals and other substances of which God is the producer.

Seen in that perspective, medicine is a vocation similar to the priesthood. This was emphasized by Jesus in one of His most important parables, 'The Parable of the Good Samaritan'. Jesus explained that the Samaritan, though despised by the Jews, did God's will when he risked his life to go to the aid of a dying Jew. But the two priests, who passed by their dying fellow citizen and went for a religious service, were not doing God's will.

Tragically, for the past 40 years the vocation of medicine gradually became a profit-making profession and then degenerated into a big business by one of the world's biggest profit-making giants, the trans-

national pharmaceutical corporations or Big Pharma as they are known.

In 1971, Professor Senaka Bibile one of the world's greatest prophets of modern medicine worked out an 'Essentials Medicines Concept' which Sri Lanka implemented with great success. The State Pharmaceutical Corporation was set up to buy drugs in their low-cost generic names and Doctor Bibile, as Chairman of the Corporation was often seen seated with the workers to help seal the drugs in airtight packets.

It was also the first time the Chairman of a corporation wanted to be the head of its trade union as well so that he could fight for the rights of the workers. The State Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing Corporation was also set up to locally manufacture as many drugs as was possible. The process worked well until 1976 when Big Pharma managed to influence the then United States government.

As a result the then Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike got an ultimatum from the US. If the Bible policy was not scrapped US aid to Sri Lanka would be stopped. At that time Sri Lanka was heavily dependent on US aid such as PL480 (Public Law 480). Mrs. Bandaranaike had no choice. She called Professor Bibile to Temple Trees and on the way he told a colleague, "I think we are finished." So it was.

The Prime Minister told Professor Bibile what had happened. He understood her position and told he would quit. Sri Lanka lost not only Professor Bibile but an Essentials Medicine Concept, which the World Health Organization (WHO) had recommended and which was being successfully implemented in many countries.

After that, it was Big Pharma which remote-con-

trolled and manipulated, especially the private health sector in Sri Lanka. In Professor Bibile's time Sri Lanka had imported 335 essential medicinal drugs. By January 2015, the number of drugs registered for import, prescription and sale had soared to more than 15,000. As a result a debt-ridden Sri Lanka was wasting millions of dollars every year on the import of thousands of non-essential drugs, many of them under highly expensive brand names.

Many medical consultants and others became billionaires at the expense of unsuspecting patients. It was a plunder of the patients.

After a delay of more than 10 years the National Medicinal Drugs Policy - approved by the Cabinet as far back as October 2005 - was reborn this month and a Bill to implement it was approved by the Cabinet last Thursday, the new Health Minister Rajitha Senaratne announced.

Dr. Senaratne said the new all-party National Unity Government hoped to get the legislation approved by Parliament this month and implement it from next month. The Minister said one of the immediate benefits to the people would be a reduction of 60% to 75% in the prices of essential drugs. In addition, the country would be able to save thousands of millions in foreign exchange by reducing the number of drugs being imported from the present 15,000 to about 1000.

Health is God's gift to us. For the past few decades some evil or satanic forces denied it to poor and unsuspecting patients. Thank God that the kingdom principle of 'health for all is' now coming true in our land.

Repent and change direction in the journey of Life during this Lent - a true about turn

Each year on the occasion of Lent the Church invites us to a sincere review of our life in the light of teachings of the Gospel. On Ash Wednesday we begin the Lenten journey, a journey that takes 40 days and brings us to the joy of the Lord's Resurrection. On this spiritual journey we are not alone because the Church accompanies and supports us from the outset with the Word of God, which contains a programme of spiritual life and penitential commitment with the grace of Sacraments.

The words of St. Paul give us a precise order "We entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain... Behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

Conversion

Lent gives an invitation for conversion. Conversion is a word to be understood with its extraordinary gravity, grasping the surprising newness it releases. The appeal to conversion lays bare and denounces the superficiality that often marks our lives. To repent (or convert) is to change direction in the journey of life not however by means of small adjustments but with a true 'about turn'. Conversion means swimming against the tide, where the



tide is the superficial life style, that overwhelms us and makes us slaves to evil. With conversion we aim for a high standard of Christian living, entrusting ourselves to the personal Gospel which is Jesus Christ. He is our final goal and profound meaning of conversion.

In this movement towards Christ everyday becomes a moment of grace because everyday presses us to give ourselves to Jesus, to trust Him, to abide in Him, to share His light and lifestyle, to learn true love from Him, to follow Him in the daily fulfillment of the Father's will, the one great law of life. Everyday, even when it is filled with difficulties, weariness and set-backs, even when we are tempted to leave the path of the

following of Christ and withdraw into ourselves, into our selfishness, without realising our need to open ourselves to the love of God in Christ to live the logic of love.

Lenten Liturgy reminds us of death. "Remember man you are, dust and to dust you will return." It is an invitation to realism and wisdom; but on the other hand it impels us to understand and live the unexpected newness that Christian

faith releases from the reality of death itself.

Man is dust and to dust he shall return but dust is precious in God's eyes because God created man destining him to immortality. Hence the liturgical formula "Remember man you are dust and to dust you will return" finds the fullness of meaning in reference to the new Adam, Christ.

New Life

This new life in Christ was bestowed upon us on the day of our Baptism, when we became sharers in Christ's Death and Resurrection. Most of us received Baptism in our infancy, it is a gift of God; no one earns

eternal life through their own efforts. The mercy of God which cancels sin and allow us to experience in our lives the mind of Christ Jesus (Ph. 1:2-5) is given to us freely. The letter of St. Paul to the Philippians expresses the meaning of the transformation that takes place through participation in the Death and Resurrection of Christ pointing of the goal: "... that I may come to know him and the power of the resurrection and partake of his sufferings by being moulded to the pattern of his death, striving towards the goal of resurrection from the dead," (Phil.3:10-11).

Hence, Baptism invites us to a sincere conversion initiated and supported by grace, it permits the baptized to reach

the adult stature of Christ. For the baptized, Lent is a favourable time to experience the saving grace. Fathers of the Second Vatican Council exhorted all of the Church's Pastors to make greater use "of the Baptismal features proper to the Lantern Liturgy" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 109).

The Sacrament of Baptism realises the great mystery in which man dies to sin, is made a sharer in the new life of Risen Christ and receives the same Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead. (Rom. 8:11) This free gift must always be rekindled in each one of us.

Sr. Rita Gunawardene H.F.

A Prayer to Jesus

Dear Jesus, I live alone
Please come and stay by my side,
In all my daily needs, You be my guide
And grant me good health and strength,
For that indeed, I pray
To carry on my duties from day to day,
And keep pure my mind, thoughts and deed
To be kind, unselfish to my neighbours need.

If sickness or an accident befall
Lord, I pray that You will hear my call,
I live alone dear Jesus
And have no fear,
Because I feel your presence,
Ever near. Amen.

Sent by - Anton Selemberam

Oblates of Mary Immaculate celebrate 189th Anniversary of Papal Approbation

1. Historical background of the Foundation

The Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) had its initial beginnings in the aftermath of the French Revolution that left France in a state of not only political, cultural and social chaos but Church itself degrading to a deplorable state. It led to the loss of faith in the lives of the faithful and to apostasy of priests and clergy themselves. Touched by this sad spectacle Fr. Eugène de Mazenod belonging to the Diocese of Aix-en-Provence in Southern France, himself of aristocratic birth having been displaced with his family as a young child and a youth but returning to his native village of Aix-en-Provence, decided on becoming a priest, gathered together a few companions and began preaching rural missions in the ordinary dialect of the people. In the course of the long struggle to establish themselves and to cope with the developing engagements, he gathered more co-workers and from being "missionaries of Provence" named themselves "Oblates of St. Charles" and finally working towards the Papal approbation on February 17, 1826 were named Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate by Pope Leo XII.

Fr. De Mazenod eventually became the Vicar General of the Diocese of Marseilles and later its Bishop. While bishop he played the dual role of shepherding his See and of guiding the destinies of his congregation. Though still small in numbers, he dared respond to the missionary needs of the Universal Church and began sending his Oblates to England and the northern-most parts of Canada (1841), to Asia (Sri Lanka-1847) and Africa (Natal) in 1852. Bishop de Mazenod was much respected in the political circles of France and was named Senator by Napoleon III and even considered for the cardinalate. He died at the age of 79 and his legacy is to be found in his last words: "Among yourselves charity, charity, charity and outside zeal for the salvation of souls." The Oblate motto is: "He has sent me to evangelize the poor."

Eugène de Mazenod was beatified by Pope Paul VI on October 19, 1975 and canonized by Pope John Paul II on December 3, 1995. During his life-time word went round: "If you want to see Paul, go to Marseilles." At present, 4,111 Oblates work in 71 countries around the world. Our highest numbers

ran to over 8,000 in mid-sixties. On principle the Oblates reach out in their missionary work to the poorest and the most abandoned and seek to serve wherever the needs of the Church are the most urgent and in missions considered difficult.

2. Arrival in Sri Lanka

At the request of Bishop Bet-tachini, at that time the Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna, who made a desperate plea for missionaries, a band of four Oblates landed in Jaffna in November 1847 of which the Superior, Fr. Semeria succeeded as Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna. Ever since, numerous Oblates have come here as missionaries from Europe: France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, England, Ireland and Spain. They worked here and majority of them have buried their bones in our soil. They have worked mainly in the Archdiocese of Colombo and Diocese of Jaffna and laid the foundation as we can see to two greatly flourishing local churches they are today. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say, that the history of the Oblates, their service and apostolic endeavours are a constitutive part not only of these dioceses but also of the whole Church of Sri Lanka. The Oblates have a special spiritual and apostolic link to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family who are well known here. Their founder entrusted the spiritual care of these Sisters to the Oblates and ever since these two congregations have closely cooperated in common apostolic endeavors. The Holy Family Sisters arrived in Sri Lanka at the request of the Oblates in 1862 and they too have grown into two Provinces: Colombo and Jaffna.

3. Missionary Apostolate of the Oblates in Sri Lanka

Oblate apostolate in Sri Lanka had been from the very start in the field of parish and rural pastoral ministry trying to build up local Christian communities which eventually grew into parishes and in the course of time consolidated into dioceses. This happened with apostolic vicariates been constituted as an ecclesiastical province in 1883 and the appointment of the first hierarchy in 1886 when Colombo became an archdiocese with Jaffna and Kandy as two suffragan dioceses. While Oblates were appointed as the first bishops of the Archdiocese and Jaffna, Kandy was entrusted to the Sylvestro-Benedictines (OSB). History

shows that Oblates and Benedictines have launched many ventures together in Colombo. Bishop de Mazenod was ever ready to supply as much personnel as possible to the mission of Sri Lanka. Taking into account the volume of apostolic activities including founding of religious orders undertaken by Msgr. Christopher Bonjean OMI the first Archbishop of Colombo after his taking over Colombo as well as earlier in Jaffna, he is considered as the "Second Joseph Vaz" of Sri Lanka. There were five Oblate bishops in Jaffna, while there were six in Colombo, sixth one being the first Sri Lankan Archbishop who became also Sri Lanka's first Cardinal: The Servant of God, Thomas Benjamin Cardinal Cooray OMI, consecrated in 1945, began his ministry in 1947 and retired in 1976. Work on his cause for beatification was launched in October 2010. His cardinalate marked 100 years of glorious Oblate apostolate in Sri Lanka, considered by St. Eugène as 'the most beautiful island in the world' and the 'most promising Oblate mission' he accepted. In recent history, three other Oblates are among those appointed to head other dioceses.

Besides the work of building up urban and rural communities that evolved into stable parishes, the Oblates also launched a massive educational apostolate building such pioneering institutions such as St. Patrick's and St. Henry's Colleges in Jaffna, while in Colombo they began St. Joseph's and St. Peter's Colleges which are some of the most prestigious ones today. De Mazenod College was single handedly built in the 1930's by an Oblate as well. Oblates have pioneered also higher education such as Aquinas University College by Rev. Fr. Peter Pillai. St. Bernard's Major Seminary in Colombo, the two minor seminaries in Borella and Jaffna were pioneered by Oblates. National Seminary of Ampitiya first entrusted to Oblates by Propaganda Fide in 1955 was administered by them till 1972.

Among the other significant apostolates include the formation of Youth at St. Vincent's Home, Maggona, the Rehabilitation Centre for the mentally sick run by Rev. Fr. Fraccid Anthony Fernando in Ja-Ela, the pioneering Dialogue Apostolate initiated by Rev. Fr. Michael Rodrigo in Buttala, the Dialogue Centre in Anuradhapura, the Oblate Preaching Centre of "Nazareth" in Wennappuwa, well known for their Lenten and Advent mission retreats in parishes, the Mission Animation Centre of Polwatte meant for the renewal of

youth, families, priests, religious etc. The Centre for Society and Religion pioneered by Fr. Tissa Balasuriya OMI, a former Rector of Aquinas in the early seventies has become a powerful hub for harnessing resources for engaging in the ministry for social justice, human rights and contextual theological reflection. The family magazine "Bhakti Prabhodanaya" a historical venture caters to family catechesis/faith education in Sinhala has published its first-ever issue in English in January 2014. The NWP mission that later grew into the Diocese of Anuradhapura was from its inception a pioneering missionary apostolate entrusted to the Oblates. At present, Oblates also teach in theological institutes and faculties both ecclesiastical and secular. Among the internationally known figures are Rev. Fr. Marcelline Jayakody and His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Peiris in the respective fields of media, music and literature.

Since 1989, there are two Oblate Provinces, that of Colombo and Jaffna which are autonomous. At present in the context of the mission of reconciliation there are many programmes that are undertaken together. The Colombo Province has grown strong with foreign delegations opening up in India (1965), Pakistan (1970) and Bangladesh later. They are now entrusted also with the delegations of Korea and Japan with the onerous task of supplying future personnel as well. The Jaffna Province while consolidating her presence in Jaffna has now embarked on ministries overseas to serve migrants in different European countries. Both Provinces run common programs on the level of first formation and are committed to the foreign missions as well as the work of ethic harmony and national reconciliation in Sri Lanka. It is hoped that as in the past, the Oblate Ministry in Sri Lanka and Asia will diversify more. Efforts are now being made, to create new pastoral models, explore more channels of evangelization and to enter into new contracts with the dioceses to broaden their apostolate. Faithful to their charism and heeding today's urgent call of the Church, Oblates have demonstrated their creativity and willingness to enter fully into the task of the new evangelization. It was the dream of the founder that they "leave nothing undared to extend the Kingdom of Christ".

**Rev. Fr. Leopold Ratnasekera OMI,
Superior, Oblate Scholasticate,
Ampitiya.**

The Religious: Consecrated Persons in the Church

By Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Fernando, OMI

The Year 2015 has been dedicated to the Consecrated Life in the Church by Pope Francis and I like to reflect on the concept of Consecration which can help us, the Religious, in the Church in Sri Lanka, in a special way to praise and thank God for the gift of Consecrated Life (Religious Life) and renew ourselves in the vocation to which we have been called in the Church.

Emphasis in the Second Vatican Council

The Catholic Church in the Sec-

ond Vatican Council has emphasised the notion of consecration as the true foundation of Religious life. By such emphasis, the Council has invited the Religious to live out their particular invitation from God with creative fidelity, consciously striving always for a holiness of life, more closely imitative of Jesus and be available for God's specific mission of love without undue attachments and worldliness in order to respond with inner freedom and openness to the Spirit of God.

The notion of consecration stresses primarily the overwhelming loving presence of God in a person's life and also the response of that person to God's invi-

tation. By the profession of vows, a person answers the divine call to live for God alone by renouncing sin (Rom 6:11) and worldliness. Strictly speaking, it is only God who consecrates because God who is the Holy One makes holy. God's overpowering love leads some people to remain unmarried in the Church so that they will be fully available to promote God's values and virtues in the world as shown by Jesus during His life-time on earth. Such unmarried consecrated persons are called the Religious in the Church.

By emphasising the notion of consecration, the Second Vatican Council has invited the Religious to be faithful to the response they have freely given

to God publicly and visibly in a liturgical setting in the Church. God is always faithful. He is always reliable. His love is constant and steadfast. It is never taken away. It is unconditional love. It is the human person who fails to remain steadfast in the response given to God publicly.

Jesus: The Consecrated One

Jesus, totally belonged to God and He made Himself available to achieve God's own purposes. Francis J. Moloney SDB, in his book, *Disciples and Prophets*, p 113, says, "It is the overwhelming power of the presence of the Kingdom in

Contd. on Pg. 14



Year of the Consecrated Life - 2015

Conference of Major Religious Superiors of Sri Lanka (CMRS)

Religious Congregations in Sri Lanka 3



Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate - OMI Founder of the Oblates - St. Eugene de Mazenod

St. Eugene de Mazenod was born in Aix-en-Provence, in France on August 1, 1782. Being a victim of the French Revolution, he was forced to flee for his life as a child from place to place and in fact, it was through these gruesome experiences, he was able to recognize God's voice and discerned it with the help of many people whom he encountered during the times of exiles. The crucial turning point of his life was the encounter of the crucified Lord whom he experienced on a particular Good Friday.

Moved by the Lord, he introduced himself to years of priestly formation and on December 21, 1811 he received the Sacrament of Priestly Ordination at Amiens Cathedral. Because of his love and commitment for the poor, he seemed to have been destined to journey with the Lord in a different path. As a result, the birth of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate began to surface gradually with its unique charism for the poor. On February 17, 1826, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate were officially recognised by Pope Leo XII as a Missionary Congregation of the Church. Fr. De Mazenod was then anointed as the Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Marseilles on October 14, 1832 and later he rendered his service to the same diocese as its bishop.

While he was still alive, he started sending the priests of his Congregation, though handful in number, as missionaries. Accordingly, Canada, America, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Lesotho were blessed to have the missionary Oblates of St. Eugene De Mazenod. Recognising his committed service, he was also decorated with the title 'Senator' by Napoleon III.

When he breathed his last on May 21, 1861 he was 79 years old and was the most senior bishop of France. On October 19, 1975, Bishop De Mazenod was beatified by Pope Paul VI and on December 3, 1995 he was canonized a saint by Pope John Paul II. His feast falls on May 21 and, his intercession is sought as the patron saint of peace and unity in the family life. Today, there is a shrine dedicated to him in Marseilles, France.

The Generalate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate is situated in Rome and Very Rev. Fr. Louis Lougen OMI, currently serves as the Superior General of the Congregation.

The Arrival of Oblate Missionaries to Sri Lanka.

Heeding to the request made by Fr. Orazio Betachini, the first four Oblate missionaries arrived to the country on November 27, 1847: Frs. Etienne Semeria OMI (superior), Lewis Keating OMI, Joseph Ciamin OMI and Bro. Gaspard de Steffanis.

The establishment and the growth of the Sri Lankan Church as it is today, owe much to the labour and the commitment of the Oblate missionaries. Being present in the world for 200 years and in the Sri Lankan soil for 168 years, the Oblates commit and operate themselves being faithful to the original motto of their founder: "To preach the Good News to the poor."

Amidst those varied works that the Oblates steered in their task of building up the local Church, they pioneered the groundwork for the establishment and the structuring of the opening up at the same time seminaries for the formation of the indigenous clergy. By

opening schools they qualitatively raised the standard of education, they were involved in the struggles of fishermen, farmers, workers and the voiceless of the society. They stood for their rights. Oblates also contributed a lot for the growth and enhancement of local literature, art, music, and also in the areas of printing and civil administration.

At present, a good number of Oblates have been sent out to other countries as missionaries. The Mother House (Provincialate) of the Oblates belonging to the Province of Colombo is located in Mattakkuliya and the present Provincial Leader is Very Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI.

Though a few number of churches have been dedicated to St. Eugene De Mazenod, the Founder of the Oblates, many churches built by the Oblate missionaries have been dedicated to Mother Mary, the patroness of the Oblates all over. Among the churches dedicated to St. Eugene, the churches found in Kaluttra-Palatota, Anuradhapura-Pothanagama, Haputale-Pitarathmale are of significance.

The Ministries and Delegations of Oblates in Sri Lanka

To facilitate the administration, there are two provinces within Sri Lanka: Colombo and Jaffna. Some dioceses of Sri Lanka and the delegations of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Korea and Japan come under the purview of Colombo Province and therefore, under its Provincial Leader.

Following are Oblate Ministries spread in various parts of the country:

- Preaching Band in 'Nazareth', Wennappuwa.
- St. Vincent's Home, Maggona comprising homes for children, a technical school, a vocational training centre, a press, a farm and an English Academy.
- Nimala Mariya Daham Piyasa - Maggona. Prayer and worship ministry
- Centre for Society and Religions (CSR), Maradana - Justice and Peace Apostolate
- LAKRIVI Centre, Maradana - Children's apostolate
- Office of Bhakthi Prabodanaya (Sinhala/English), Maradana - Media Apostolate
- Hospital and Prison chaplaincies, Colombo
- Suba Seth Gedara, Buttala - Inter-religious dialogue, dialogue of life
- Rajabima, Anuradhapura - promote dialogue at different levels, inter-Churches and inter-religious
- Dev Arana and English Academy, Polwatta
- Sahana Madura, Ja-Ela - Half way Home for the differently able persons
- De Mazenod English Academy, Katuwapitiya
- Tissa Balasuriya Daham Ketha, Andiambalama - promote encounters/value education for peace building
- University Chaplaincy, Peradeniya
- Mazenod Youth Centre, Wennappuwa - Youth Ministry
- Teaching and School Chaplaincy.
- Parish Ministry.
- Convent chaplaincy and Home for the elderly Oblates
- Formation Houses, Kohuwala, Mannar, Bandarawela and Ampitiya
- Missions overseas.

Valentine's Day Message

Ten thousand engaged couples gathered in St. Peters Square in the Vatican on Valentine's Day of 2014 to meet Pope Francis. This event was organized by the Pontifical Council for Family. Their starting point was the idea that one must not think once a girl and a boy fall in love and get married all their problems will be solved. This is not true. There will be everyday problems that have to be encountered by the couple. The couple gets married to face and solve these problems together. People think that it is a risk to say that we get married to live together "forever." But it gives us courage to put our trust and hope in God and say the words, "Our marriage lasts forever" (until death do us part).



We can say that we love each other and live together forever because there is a third person in our married life. This third person has no beginning and end. He is eternal. He is God. Christian marriage is not a contract like a civil marriage. A contract is restricted by rules and regulations. If these rules and regulations are infringed upon, the contract gets nullified. But Christian marriage is a covenant which is more than a mere contract between two partners. In this covenant there is a third party, who is God, who will give us support and courage to go on "forever."

Pope Francis gave three ingredients that will help us to love each other and to live together as husband and wife forever. He summarized these in three words: Please, Thank you and Sorry. Here "please" is equivalent to the phrase "May I?" It is a request to enter into another person's life with respect and care. True love does not impose itself with harshness and aggression. St. Francis of Assisi said, "Courtesy is the sister of Charity. It extinguishes hatred and kindles love." It is violence and aggression that reigns in our families. Let us ask our partners "May I?" without taking for granted our rights over his/her body, life and time. These rights do not belong to us merely by virtue of our marriage.

There are so many occasions to say "Thank you", in our family life. We take for granted cooking, cleaning and the child care that our wives do daily. A grateful word of "Thank you" after a sumptuous meal or a refreshing cup of tea prepared by your wife is not only a sign of courtesy, but a way of appreciating what the wife is doing in the house. A "Thank you" for your husband for earning a decent income to maintain the family, for the chores that he is performing at home and for helping children to do their school work are occasions when we can say "Thank you!" to each other.

We are human beings and we are imperfect. We are liable to hurt each other unconsciously. We trample on each others toes on a daily basis when we try to live together "forever." There are umpteen occasions when we can say "I am sorry." We make mistakes and errors on a daily basis. Sigmund Freud was under the opinion that human beings project their faults on others. It is common to accuse our partner and put the blame on them for family mishaps. It takes deep reflection and courage to say "Sorry", to recognize our mistakes and to apologize.

Let us trust God who created both men and women, but ...

In what is undoubtedly a milestone in the history of the Anglican Church, the very first woman Anglican Bishop was ordained very recently. Many applauded this move as a triumph for equal rights; others decry it noting that Christ particularly chose men as His Apostles. As Catholics, however, you might be wondering, will we be the next to ordain women?

The short answer is NO. The longer answer is also NO, but a bit more nuanced. The reasons are fairly straightforward.

Christ established an all male Priesthood. While some of Jesus' closest friends on earth were women, He chose only men to be priests, making them his apostles and giving them the power to forgive sins.

The Catholic Church will never depart from what Christ taught us during His life. "The Catechism tells us, "The Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the Ordination of women is not possible." (CCC 1577).

In his Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* Holy Father St. John Paul II said, "I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer Priestly Ordination on women and that this judgement is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful."

The Priesthood isn't "right", Christ and the Catholic Church have always held women in the higher regards. After all, what Church honours Mother Mary more than the Catholic one? Not only that, there are number of women Doctors of the Church, legions of women Saints and entire Papal Encyclicals dedicated to the subject of the dignity of women. None of the women have the right to be Priests, it is a vocation God ask of some men, but each of us has a vocation equal in dignity with an equal capacity for holiness. It is not like, that priesthood is the only way into eternal life!

Let us trust God who created both men and women, but asked men to be His Priests.

A Lenten Resolution

Holy Spirit
Make my heart
open to the Word.
Make my heart
open to Goodness
Make my heart
open to the Beauty
of God - Everyday.

Pope Francis



Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

Ninety pilgrims accompanied by their parish priest Rev. Fr. Romualdo Robin Rodrigues and his assistant Rev. Fr. Peter Simon Mascarenhas, from the Church of Our Lady of Hope in Candolim – Goa, arrived in Sri Lanka on January 12, 2015. The main event on their agenda was the Canonization Mass of the Blessed Joseph Vaz in Colombo. Their program also included visits to historic sites closely associated with Fr.



Joseph Vaz in Vauda, Kandy, Wahakotte, Juse Vaz Pura in Galgamuwa and Mannar. The last leg of their pilgrimage took them to the Mannar District, to the site where Fr. Vaz had been washed ashore on his way from Tuticorin to Jaffna.

This site situated in South Bar is about 3 ½ kilometers from the Mannar town and within sight of the Mannar Railway Station. It has been marked by a cross and a statue of Mother Mary from time immemorial. Recently a tower crowned by an Oratorian Cross was constructed to further confirm the significance of the site.

When the buses carrying the Goan pilgrims reached South Bar they were greeted by the parishioners of South Bar and St. Sebastian's Cathedral Mannar led by Rev. Fr. Peppi Soosai the Parish Priest and his assistant.

It was not easy to reach the site having to wade through a salt marsh and make way through thorn bushes.

Blessing the Cross Tower at South Bar

es. But a temporary pathway had been made by the local parishioners by placing heavy steel sheets over the mud and water and cutting down some of the thorn bushes. A make-shift altar table had also been set up on the dais that held the base of the memorial tower for the celebration of the Mass.

For the Goans this historic and holy site undoubtedly invoked much nostalgia in their hearts as they read the plaque explaining the importance of the site in Tamil, Sinhalese, English and their own mother tongue Konkani - affixed to the base of the Cross Tower. The Vicar General of the Mannar Diocese Rev. Fr. Victor Sosai Anthony welcomed the Goans. Rev. Fr. Robin



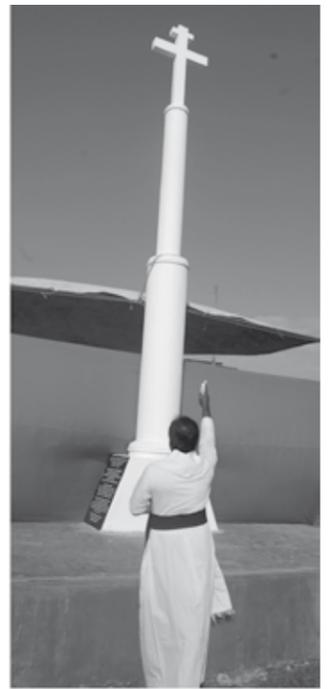
Rodrigues responded emphasizing on the importance of the site and the link that had been brought about between the two communities. He also thanked Shelton Fernando and Angelo Trevon Lovendhal for the initiative taken to erect the Cross Tower.

The Cross Tower was blessed by the Vicar General Rev. Fr. Victor Sosai Anthony who had coincidentally also laid the foundation stone for it. Thereafter Mass was concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Anthonidas Dalima Christopher from the Tamil Catholic Chaplaincy Switzerland, Rev. Fr. Victor Sosai Anthony - Vicar General Diocese of Mannar, Rev. Fr. Romualdo Robin Rodrigues - Parish Priest, Our Lady of Hope Goa, Rev. Fr. Jayalath Balagalle - Saint Joseph Vaz National Secretariat, Colombo and Rev. Fr. Arulpragasam - Saint Joseph Vaz National Secretariat - Mannar and Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ananda - Saint Joseph Vaz National Secretariat, Chilaw.

The sermon was preached by Fr. Robin Rodri-

gues in Konkani and English while the Vote of Thanks was delivered by Fr. Peter Mascarenhas. This was followed by the singing of the Hymn to St. Joseph Vaz in Konkani, Tamil and Sinhalese. A new statue of St. Joseph Vaz which was installed at the site was blessed by Rev. Fr. Jayalath Balagalla. After Mass the local parishioners treated the visitors and the others with light refreshments which was reciprocated by the Goans who distributed sweets to each and every one.

It was a historic



day for the Catholic Church of Sri Lanka - for it was the first time a joint Mass in Konkani and Tamil was celebrated at this holy site, where 328 years back Goan born Joseph Vaz stepped into our island, having left his home and land, knowing very well the dangers of the Calvinist persecution that was prevalent in the island at that time, with the sole intention of saving the Catholic faith from extinction.

A Unique Book Launch

- 207 stories of Blessed Joseph Vaz by Rev. Fr. Romualdo Robin Rodrigues (3rd edition).
- Saga Lova Karaa - a pictorial guide to the sites of St. Joseph Vaz by Rev. Fr. Jayalath Balagalla (in Sinhala).



The two books by Rev. Fr. Rodrigues and Rev. Fr. Balagalla were launched under the historic Palu tree at Cheddikulam, where Fr. Joseph Vaz had installed a wooden cross inside a hollow of a tree trunk.

It so happened that the selection of this venue was quite by accident.

Originally the book launch was planned to take place on the 15th at South Bar under the auspices of His Lordship the Bishop of Mannar Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph and the Goan pilgrims who had arrived in Sri Lanka to take part in the Blessed Joseph Vaz Canonization Mass. However due to His Lordship's overnight stay in Colombo, subsequent to the departure of the Holy Father Pope Francis on January 15, this could not take place.

Angelo Trevon Lovendhal who co-ordinated the book launch relates how the new venue happened:

"When we realized that the book launch could not happen at South Bar on the 15th the venue was shifted to the Bishop's House, Mannar, where we were to await the Bishop's arrival from Colombo. We had spent that night at Madhu and after Holy Mass we set out from Madhu to Mannar. While on the Mannar road



by chance we were able to contact his Lordship who was then in Puttalam travelling to Mannar. At our request the Bishop agreed to meet us at Cheddikulam where we had a scheduled stop to visit the cross installed by Fr. Joseph Vaz in the hollow of the tree trunk. This new arrangement suited us well since we would save about 5 hours and about 70 kilometres of travel. And Fr. Robin would be able to realize his dream of launching the third edition of his book in our island".

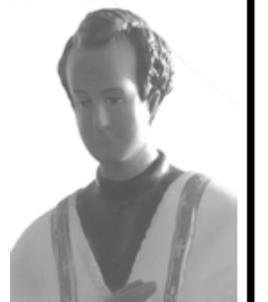
"But this shift of venue required new arrangements to be made. We immediately contacted Rev. Fr. Alexander Silva David, the Parish Priest of St. Anthony's Church, Cheddikulam and informed him of the new arrangements to meet the Bishop in his Church. Fr. David who was out at that time hastened back to the Church to make arrangements and be present at the event. We proceeded to the site of the tree with the cross and was listening to Fr. Balagalla's informative talk of the history of the site, when we were surprised to see His Lordship who came to meet us at the tree and did not wait in the church for us to come to him - an admirable quality consistent in his life. After His Lordship's welcome talk, at the request of Fr. Rodrigues the 3rd edition of the book

'207 stories of Blessed Joseph Vaz' was launched with a presentation of the first copy to His Lordship. Thereafter Fr. Balagalla also presented his new book 'Saga Lova Karaa'. Thereafter the Goan pilgrims made presentations of statues of St. Joseph Vaz and gifts to His Lordship Bishop Rayappu Joseph and Mr. Shelton Fernando and Mr. Angelo Trevon Lovendhal - the two main organizers of the event and pilgrimage. Further, a statue of St. Joseph Vaz was blessed by His Lordship and installed under the tree."

"A request was made by Fr. Alexander Silva David to build a chapel at this site. The pilgrims from Goa undertook to contribute to the construction at this site while His Lordship promised to grant a plot of land adjacent to the tree for the purpose. After a quick vote of thanks and some group photos, His Lordship moved among the pilgrims blessing each and everyone. It was such a beautiful sight to see this Shepherd so relaxed and at ease amongst his sheep - a characteristic unique to Bishop Rayappu Joseph," concluded Mr. Lovendhal.

Joseph Vaz Statues

With the intention of increasing the devotion to Saint Joseph Vaz, Mr. Angelo Trevon Lovendhal and Mr. Shelton Fernando have initiated a project to supply the statue of Saint Joseph Vaz and distribute novena books to all churches. The project has already commenced in the Mannar District having supplied statues to the Mannar Cathedral and St. Antony's Cheddikulam and many other out posts in the area. Presently statues are being allocated to churches in Mannar, Cheddikulam, Vavuniya, Parappankandal, Puttalam. All those who would like to sponsor a statue and part take in the project are welcome to contact Mr. Lovendhal on 0777749019.



Hearts and Souls raised in song

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando Bishop of Kandy appointed Rev. Fr. Jude Nicholas Fernando from the Chilaw Diocese as the Priest-in-Charge of the Choir Sub-Committee to form and head the National Choir. Fr. Jude was greatly assisted by Rev. Fr. Edmund Tilleggeratne, Rev. Fr. Kamal Fernando, Ms. Priyanthi Seneviratne VanDort and Yohan De Alwis of the Colombo Diocese, Fathers Alex and Shiran Chamaka from the Chilaw Diocese, Fathers Soosainathan OSB, Araliya OSB and Ivan Jayasundera from the Kandy Diocese, Fr. Anton Sriyan from the Ratnapura Diocese, Fr. Rex Saundra from Jaffna. The Committee received the support of the respective Bishops of the Dioceses, to make this a memorable experience for the Catholic students and youth in their respective diocese, especially those in remote and war torn areas, who had no opportunity to sing in any choir, due to poverty, or lack of influence or being less affluent, to sing in a national choir.

Many had doubts if this National Choir would ever work out or be successful given the simple and humble background of the Choristers, their lack of Choral training and experience. But the power and grace of God made the impossible to become possible. God called these young people and His anointing, His favour and power was upon them. Pope Francis spoke of Reconciliation and forgiveness throughout His trip in Sri Lanka. This National Choir comprising of youth from the Dioceses of Jaffna, Mannar, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Kurunegala, Galle, Ratnapura, Chilaw, Colombo, gathered around the Altar of the Lord, lifting their hearts and voices to God as one family despite ethnic difference which does not count around the Altar of God.

Priyanthi, assisted by Yohan De Alwis, shared their professional expertise. They were ably supported by Fr. Kamal, Fr. Soosai, Fr. Jude Nicholas and Fr Araliya to bring out the talent of these youth to sing in all three languages – Sinhala, Tamil and English, for the Papal Mass.

**Deepalakshmi Babu
Lakshmanan
(Kandy Diocese)**

"It was a very inspiring, spiritual experience. We met and made many new friends during these practice sessions.

I was thrilled when Rev. Fr. Ivan Jayasundara phoned me one evening and spoke to me saying that he had chosen me to be one of the members of this historical choir. My family and I considered it as a special blessing bestowed upon all of us.

**Salithra Pathirana
(Galle Diocese)**

"It was an enriching moment where we all got the opportunity to represent the historic National



National Choir

Choir which came together for the first time, to praise God at the Canonization Mass of Blessed Joseph Vaz conducted by the Holy Father. We hope and pray that this team will be blessed with more opportunities in the future to praise the Lord as the National Choir."

**Aruni Rasangi
(Ratnapura Diocese)**

"It was an enriching experience to sing together with the youth from all parts of the island, Tamil, Sinhala singing together as one choir. We became friends. We sang together, we shared our life experiences with each other. We could see the Holy Father very close and to be part of this historical event was truly a blessing."

**Jerome De Mel
(Kurunegala Diocese)**

"On behalf of the choristers chosen from the Diocese of Kurunegala to sing for the Holy Mass on the Canonization of Blessed Joseph Vaz, I wish to express my gratitude to His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando and his team to give us the opportunity to become a part of the first ever National Choir of Sri Lanka.



Choir members from Ratnapura Diocese



Choir members from Jaffna Diocese

**Suresh Augustine
(Jaffna Diocese)**

"We the choristers from Jaffna feel happy and proud of our Diocese having been invited to join in the National Choir. We were given time to pray, attend Holy Mass and make our confessions. We realised that it was not only the singing practice but the spiritual preparation was the cause of our successful performance. Further we had the opportunity to meet and was able to make friends with choristers from the other dioceses"

**Delantha Fernando
Chilaw Diocese**

"We have been singing as choristers for years. But being a part of the National Papal Choir our usual attitude to the Church Choir changed."

**St. Joseph's Boys' School
Nugegoda**

Sean Dreano: "It was a great pleasure to sing with others boys and girls from other schools. The sweet smile of His Holiness Pope Francis when we sang *Ben Venuto* in Italian is a golden memory."

St. Thomas' College, Kotte

V Selvaraj: "We will never get a chance like this in our life time. We were blessed by God that Ms. Priyanthi decided to come to our school and audition some of us for the choir."

All Saints' Balika, Borella Sandhali Weldt: "There were mixed group of students from big and small schools, but because of Pope Francis we became like one family. Nobody bothered about which school we came from. Our parents and family members gave us their full support."

**Christ the King
College, Pannipitiya**

Chamidu Mendis: "When there are so many big schools in this country, with students who are cleverer than us, it was God's blessing that three students from a humble school like ours were chosen to be a part of the National Choir."

LENTEN OBSERVATIONS

Lent is a time of Prayerful Reflection on our sinfulness before the Most Holy, to make amends with a firm resolution to repent, engaging in acts of Spiritual self-discipline and seeking His mercy and forgiveness

With a view to achieving this objective let us cast our minds back to the incident related in Luke 7:36-50 about the woman intruder who came to the house of Simon the Pharisee who had invited Jesus Christ for a meal. According to Sacred Scriptures, when Jesus arrived at the house of Simon the Pharisee, He was received with little enthusiasm and given a cold reception and denied the common courtesies of having His feet washed, bestowed with a kiss or the anointing of the head, as was customary among the Jews when a Jewish guest arrives at the house. We could surmise that the reason for such discourtesy shown to Jesus could well be to spite Him because unlike a typical Pharisee who endeavours to gain the admiration of the people, Jesus despised the acclaim of men seeking only to win God's favour doing His will.

The woman intruder as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures was known to be a public sinner and when she learned that Jesus was in the house of Simon the Pharisee, went boldly into his house and fell at the feet of Jesus who was reclining at the table with His feet stretched out and sobbed her heart out with a profuse out-pouring of tears and wiped His feet with her disheveled hair and breaking her jar of precious perfume poured out its contents, for love knows no limits, in the certain hope that our Lord would give her new hope. There was an intensity of love in her boldness, repentance in her tears, sacri-

fice and surrender of self in her perfumed ointment.

Meanwhile the Pharisee was comparing himself with this sinful woman, self-righteously looking down on her saying to himself "If his guest was truly a Prophet He would know what kind of woman was touching Him." Jesus perceiving the thought pattern of the Pharisee made an intrusion into his thinking with the words "Simon I have something to say to you" and having gained his attention began a discourse with the Pharisee beginning with the Parable of the Creditor who had two debtors one of whom owned five hundred pieces of silver and the other fifty. They did not have any means of repaying this debt and the creditor mercifully discharged them both of their debts. Then Our Blessed Lord posed the question 'Which one did love him more?' (Lk. 7 - 41-42).

"The implication of the story is that God is the Creditor who trusts us with His goods until a day is set for the payment of that debt and rendering of an account of our stewardship. Some are indebted more because they have sinned more. It could have been that the woman's sins would have been like the debt of 500 pieces of silver while Simon's were only like a debt of fifty. Though no man in strict justice could pay the debt he owes to God through sin, God is nevertheless willing to forgive all debts whether they be great or small."

"It would be wrong to deduce that it would be well to

have sinned much or to have run up a bigger debt in order that a sinner might be granted more forgiveness." It is here that the words of Jesus comes into effect when He admonished the woman taken in adultery. After seeing that no one accused her He uttered those most consoling words 'Neither do I condemn thee but go and sin no more' (Jn 8:11) It could well be that it was the same woman who was now shedding copious tears of repentance at the feet of Jesus in the house of Simon, displaying her gratitude for such a great favour. Therefore the lesson is that flagrant sinners are much more likely to come to the realisation of their sinfulness than the self-righteous who think that they are good.

The love of the woman grew in proportion to her gratitude for pardon. It was not the quantity of sin but rather the consciousness of it and the mercy extended in forgiveness which manifested the great love of this penitent woman. Much was forgiven her; therefore she loved much. Nothing so much brings one person to contact with another as the confession of sin. He who makes light of sin will make light of forgiveness. Simon had something to learn so he invited a teacher and the woman had something to be forgiven and in repentance poured out her contrite tears on the Divine Creditor who proved to be her Saviour.

Simon had not denied the existence of guilt but felt himself relatively innocent when he saw the woman who was a sinner. Guilt is not just breaking up of



love it is the wounding of someone who loved. We are made conscious of the seriousness and the gravity of sin as we approach Jesus in all humility mindful of our sinfulness. Beholding the Cross of Christ and feeling the agonies of Him whose death was necessary for the atonement of sin had made Paul the Pharisee of Pharisees to call himself the greatest of all sinners.

The lesson was over and the woman was dismissed with the words 'Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith has saved thee go in peace (Lk. 7:48-50). Her faith in God had told her that God loves purity, goodness and holiness and before her stood Him who also could restore her to that holiness. The woman before Him had her debt of sin blotted out but she had no idea

how much it cost Him. All the tokens of tenderness the sinful woman showed Jesus, He would receive again in another form. A kiss would come from Judas, the washing of His feet would be reversed as He would gird Himself with a towel and wash the feet of His disciples and for the anointment with oil His head would be crowned with thorns as He would pour out the perfume of His own blood and in conclusion we have the words of St. Peter as written in his first letter, "On the Cross His own Body took the weight of our own sins. It was His wounds that healed you (1 Peter 2:24)"

(Excerpts from Life of Christ by Fulton J Sheen)

Ridley Casie Chitty
SFO

ALOKAYANO Passion Play 2015

In honour of St. Joseph Vaz who was canonized by His Holiness Pope Francis, the Passion Play 'Alokayano' will be performed at St. Thomas' Church, Kotte. The inauguration of the production took place on January 28, this year and was organised by Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle, Episcopal Vicar for Colombo South Region and the Parish Priest of Kotte.

Rev. Fr. Cyril Gamini addressing the participants of the Passion Play stated that like the Oberammergau Passion Play village in Germany, Kotte would also become a Passion Play village as the parishioners have undertaken such a task. The history of the Passion Play in Sri Lanka reveals that it

was Fr. Joseph Vaz who performed the first ever Passion Play in 1706 in the Vanni. Oratorian reports witness the fact that the costumes and statues were brought from Goa for the Passion Play.

Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fer-

nandopulle stated that the seed of Passion Play tradition introduced by Fr. Joseph Vaz, the Apostle of Sri Lanka, has greatly evolved throughout the past few centuries. In this year as he is canonized, the Parish of Kotte in collaboration with the Kotte Deanery in thanks-

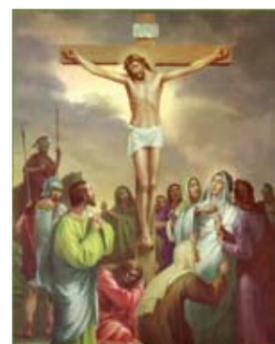


giving to our own Saint and God Almighty we intend to perform the Passion Play 'Alokayano'. It would be staged on Palm Sunday, March 29, 2015, at St. Thomas' College Grounds, Kotte. Practices for the Play have been successfully carried out with prominent artistes

involved in training the actors and actresses. They wish that the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ would bring the light of Christ to all who participate and witness to have a great spiritual experience.

Rukshantha Fernando

The Stations of the Cross



fourteen "stations", visual images to be contemplated, as a devotion for people who could not travel to the Holy Land itself.

Today, Catholic churches have the fourteen Stations depicted around the walls, and "praying the stations" brings people together, most often on a Friday, during Lent. The Stations can also be prayed individually and silently, or by two or three friends joining together, or even in bigger groups. There are small booklets with prayers and meditations for each Station.

In some places, there are outdoor Stations of the Cross, where you can walk through woods or around a garden as you follow Christ's path to Calvary. It is also possible simply to follow the stations prayerfully in a book while on a train journey or sitting at home.

A Priest who reached the Peripheries

An appreciation of Rev. Fr. Ronald de Silva

As Rev. Fr. Ronald de Silva, who recently celebrated his Golden Jubilee of Priestly ministry, it is fitting to pen a few words on his ministry towards the faithful at the social and religious peripheries in the Archdiocese of Colombo, the Western Province of our nation.

His father, Dr. C.J.C. de Silva, was not only a British qualified physician but also an active member of Catholic action, who sought ways and means to apply the social doctrine to the poor, deprived, marginalized and the neglected labour forces in our country. His mother was an active social worker and president of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in the parish of Bambalapitiya. This family background became a source of inspiration and formation to young Fr. Ronald de Silva.

He was first appointed as the As-

sistant Parish Priest of Dehiwela, where he went in search of the marginalized and even started the Parish of St. Anthony at Galkissa, for the poor fisher folk of the area. Then after 12 long years over there, he was appointed as the Parish Priest of Mattakkuliya, where he travelled on foot to visit the families and empower them in Christ. His simple and poor life style attracted the flock towards Jesus, who became poor so that we become rich and have life in full measure. There he soon realized that the Tamil speaking Catholics in the shanty areas of Mattakkuliya, were not spiritually catered for and as a result most of them had left the Church and were non practicing or partly practicing, such as going to Talawila, Madhu, Kochchikade, etc. He therefore immediately started a Tamil Mass at St. Mary's Church, Mattakkuliya, it was not an easy

task to accomplish yet, the grace of God moved him along this firm decision. After nine years being there, he was appointed to Modera, St. Andrew's Church. There with his open heart and helping hands he was not understood by some, it became a blessing in disguise, thus 'Mithuru Sevena' at Modera was started for the apostolate to the poorest in the parishes of Colombo North. He visited shanties, educated the poor children, catechized the needy, rectified their marriages, provided food, clothing, shelter and counseling. He even trained some fulltime and part-time catechists for the mission. During our discernment year, we too had an experience of his apostolate to the poorest of the poor; indeed he is a man of principles.

At 'Mithuru Sevena', every Saturday evening he arranged priests for the

celebration of vigil Mass for Sunday in Tamil for Tamil speaking people. At that time apart from Mattakkuliya, where he began the Tamil Mass, there was no Tamil Mass in the area from Bloemendhal through Lunupokkuna to Modera and Mahawatte. Today if we have some remnant of old Tamil speaking Catholics in this area, it is because of his 'Mass Centre' at 'Mithuru Sevena'. Fr. Ronald is a genuine pastor, although he did not know much about the Tamil language, his love and pastoral charity overcame the barriers. Therefore, this worthy pastor should be given due recognition and appreciation.

God bless His Pastors who are after His own Heart. Ad Multos Annos Vivat!

Rev. Fr. A. Uthayadas

Archdiocesan Faith Animation Mission

NEW RECTOR AT ST. NICHOLAS' INTERNATIONAL, COLOMBO



Rector Rev. Fr. Darshana Jayamanne

The staff and students of St. Nicholas' International College, Colombo 7 extended a warm welcome on January 5, to their new Rector, Rev. Dr. Darshana Jayamanne, M.Phil. (Bangalore), PGSM (New Zealand), Ph.D. (New Zealand). Fr. Darshana was appointed by the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, subsequent to the takeover of St. Nicholas' International College, by the Archdiocese of Colombo in December 2014.

St. Nicholas is the only Catholic International School in the city of Colombo and has a history of 23 years catering to the demands for disciplined and holistic education. (Pic: Siddath Ramanayake)



Catechism for the Youth

Compiled by
Fr. Indra Ratnasiri Fernando,
Parish Priest, Nittambuwa

The Sacrament of Confirmation (203-207)

Confirmation as a sacrament completes baptism; the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us. Anyone who freely decides to lead an authentic life as a child of God and asks his spirit, under the sign of the imposition of hand and anointing with Chrism receives the strength to witness to God's love. He or she through confirmation becomes a very responsible member of the church.

• What happens at the Sacrament of Confirmation...

The soul of a baptized Christian is imprinted with a permanent seal that can be received only once in ones lifetime. Thus, to be confirmed means to make a 'covenant with God'. Any Christian who is baptized can be admitted to the sacrament of confirmation. The Sacrament is usually administered by the bishop. The bishop can delegate a priest to do it (adult baptism), in danger of death, any priest can administer.

The Sacrament of Holy Eucharist (208-223)

The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament in which Jesus Christ gives himself (his body and blood) for us. So

Appreciation: Rev. Fr. K. William Perera O.M.I

In remembrance of 110th Birth and 39th Death Anniversaries

Rev. Fr. K. William Perera O.M.I. was born on November 4, 1904 at Nedurupitiya in Kandana to K. Bastian Perera and Johana Hamy.

He attended the Sinhala School of the area under the shadow of the Valient Soldier St. Sebastian and gradually showed signs that was made for the glory of God's Kingdom on earth. He came under the benign influence of Rev. Fr. A.M.B. Jayamanne O.M.I. who was then the Assistant Parish Priest at Kandana, during the latter part of the first world war. William was an altar boy then. He joined Fr. Jayamanne's choir and learned the art of Music from him. Fr. Jayamanne's spirit of prayer, zeal and example led William to the priestly vocation.

He was ordained a Priest in 1931 and continued studies for one year more. He left the Seminary for the mission field in December 1932 as Rev. Fr. William Perera O.M.I.

Having served only three years as Assistant, he was made Parish Priest and detailed for duties in various missions. Among them are Veyangoda, Bona Morte Church (Hultsdorf) Kotugoda, Tarala, Enderamulla and Ja-Ela are a few to be mentioned.

He was a great builder of Church Schools. Being an Architect he shared interest in renovating old church buildings. His love for our Blessed Mother was esteemed.

The Sorrowful Novenas in honour of Our Lady of Seven Dolours at Ja-Ela church which he initiated and dedicated to her is still in progress. Rev. Fr. William Perera was the second Parish Priest of Ja-Ela Mission and served for eight years. The main building that is visible on top of the Ja-Ela Calvary is the great task of Fr. William.

we can give ourselves to him and be united with him in the Holy Communion. In this way, we are joined with the one Body of Christ, the church. The Eucharist is the mysterious centre of all the sacraments. The celebration of the sacrament is the ' source and summit' of the Christian life (LG 11).

Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist on the evening before his death (1 Cor. 11/23), ' this is my body which is for you. Do this in memory of me'.... This chalice is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in memory of me... thus, the celebration of the Eucharist is the heart of the Christian communion. So called the different names have been given to the sacrament; The Holy Sacrament, Holy Mass, The sacrifice of the mass, The last supper, The breaking of bread, The Eucharistic Assembly, The memorial of the Lord's Passion, death and resurrection, The holy and divine liturgy, The sacred mysteries and Holy communion.

The liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist are the major components of the Holy mass.

The structure of the Holy Mass:

1. Gathering of the faithful and the entrance of the priest and the others who in a way serve in the sanctuary (altar-servers, lectors and cantors).
2. After the gathering, the Penitential Rite.
3. Glories is sung.
4. Readings (from old and new testaments), followed by the responsorial psalm.
5. Acclamation (Alleluia)
6. The proclamation of the Gospel.
7. Homily (on Sundays).
8. The Creed.
9. Prayers of the faithful.

In appreciation of his great and valuable services rendered, on the day of the 2000th Sorrowful Novena Celebration the road leading to the Railway Station was renamed as Rev. Fr. William Perera Mawatha and was declared open by the Most Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

He strictly followed Christ's teaching of "Let your left hand know not what your right hand has given." He maintained this principle until his death. Those who were in distress financially or other wise approached Fr. William for redress. They never returned empty handed or without any valuable advise. Hence he was called "Sweet William."

He encouraged the young to join the Seminary in order to increase the labour needed to serve in the Vineyard of the Lord Jesus. Rev. Fr. Benedict Joseph once said that it was on the recommendation of the saintly Priest Rev. Fr. William, that he entered the Seminary.

On February 3rd 1976 the day before Sri Lanka Independance day celebrations, Rev. Fr. Kanugalawattage William Perera O.M.I entered eternal glory at the age of 72. By then he had served in the Lord's Vineyard for 44 fruitful years.

His death came as a shock especially to the Parishioners of Ja-Ela.

On February 4, 1976 his last journey look place with the presence of His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund J. Fernando and His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis. The funeral oration was delivered by Rev. Fr. Joseph Aloysius O.M.I.

Dear Fr. William, you are no more with us in person, but, your good work will remain in our hearts until we die.

L.S. Nelson Fernando

Tribute to Mr. Rex Silva of Moratuwa

I write this approbation with much feelings on Rex Silva who passed away eight months ago. Feelings of happiness for the beautiful memories we have of him. Feelings of sadness that he was no more with us to share his only son's, Vimorsha's wedding on January 31. We miss him but we know that he is free now. We remember him as a loving brother - friend and silent social worker with love and gratitude. He hailed from a distinguished family from Moratuwa and was a gentleman per excellence. It could be said that there was a place in his heart for everyone he came into contact with. He was respected by all for his sympathy, affection and compassion. He was also one who walked among high society, but never lost the common touch, we loved him in life and shall not forget him in death. His passing away is a major loss to many. He was married to Nilanthi Cooray of Kalamulla who served as the Asst. Director of Agriculture. He was blessed with two brothers, the eldest Bishop Maxwell Silva and Angelo Silva. His only sister Therese is in America, his only son Vimorsha works as a civil engineer in a construction firm. I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention his cousin's family Sampathwaduge Silva of Moratuwa, who helped and visited whenever possible. May he attain the supreme bliss of Jesus Christ. In our hearts he lives still.

Angelo Silva

May the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us.
(Eph.1:17.18)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B
15th Feb. - 22nd Feb. 2015

Sun: SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
Lev. 13:1,2,44-46; 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1;
Mk. 1:40-45
Mon: Gen 4:1-15,25; Mk. 8:11-13
Tue: Gen. 6:5-8;7:1-5,10; Mk. 8:14-21
Wed: ASH WEDNESDAY
Joel 2:12-18; 2 Cor. 5:20-6:2; Mt. 6:1-6,16-18 Th u :
Deut 30:15-20; Lk. 9:22-25
Fri: Is. 58:1-9; Mt. 9: 14-15
Sat: Is. 58:9-14; Lk. 5:27-32
Sun: FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT
Gen. 9:8-15; 1 Pt. 3:18-22; Mk. 1:12-15

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For the Christian community that it may be warm and caring towards the rejects of society. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For the world and all humankind that God may bind the human family in ties of love, friendship, and mutual acceptance. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For all those who feel rejected and unwanted that they may realise that even if people reject them God never does. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

That we may realise how the quality of our presence, of our looks and words, affects others, bringing them happiness or misery, life or death. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray that He may deliver us from hardness of heart, and help us to accept others as he accepts us. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Lev. 13: 1-2, 45-46

The Lord gives Moses and Aaron certain rules which a leper has to observe. They are to show themselves to the priest, they should wear torn cloths, have their hair loose, cover their lips and cry 'Unclean' and remain outside the camp.

Second Reading: 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1

St. Paul requests the Corinthians to give glory to God in everything they do. They should not offend their neighbour. He also wants them to imitate him as he is of Christ.

Gospel. Mk. 1:40-45

A leper makes an earnest plea to Jesus and is cured of his leprosy. Jesus wants him to observe the Commandments of Moses; He also wants him to keep silent. Instead the leper goes on to speak of Jesus in public.

Reflection

Today's theme attempts to show us the importance of giving glory to God, in and through whatever we do or say and the importance of the community and its benefits.

Leprosy in the OT was treated as a disease which made a person both unclean and a menace to the health of his neighbour. Hence they had for the wellbeing of the community to live away from the rest of the people. They could not take part in their life or in the liturgy.

According to the understanding of that time the people thought that a leper is struck by God and therefore unfit to worship Him. Hence they were not able give

glory to God in and through their lives. For this reason they were considered exiles, but living in the vicinity. In the time of the Old Testament this was done purely for the benefit of both the community and the glory of God, so that the community will not be affected with the disease and also that they may be able to worship the Lord in purity. In the second reading St. Paul is worried about the state of life of the Corinthian community. He leads an exemplary life in imitation of Christ. This he has been doing for the sake of the community. Therefore he wants them to imitate him so that their lives too could be modeled on that of Christ. He wants the Corinthian community to give glory to God in and through whatever they say or do. He also is worried about the increase in the community. He doesn't want them to offend the Jews or Greeks for that would hinder them from joining the church. Neither does he want them to offend the church fearing that the members would leave in discouragement. These instructions were laid down by St. Paul for the good of the community and for the glory of God.

Though in the OT a leper is considered an untouchable, in the Gospel Jesus breaks this observance so as to give glory to God by way of curing a leper. This is also done for the benefit of the community. But He breaks the rule only to give glory to God and for the benefit of the community. For we see that he wants the cured leper to observe the command of Moses. Sickness at that time was considered to be the result of sin. Here Jesus shows that He could even forgive sins. Therefore He does

not want the leper to speak about Him. For His mission is far superior than providing material benefits to the people. His mission is to save mankind from sin and to bridge the gap between man and God. This was His way of giving glory to God and working for the good of the community.

We ought to give glory to God in everything we do or say and it should always be for the benefit of the community.

Aid Story 1

Perillus asked Alexander the Great to help with his daughter's dowry, and the Macedonian King complied, ordering that 50 talents be given to him. "10 would be sufficient sire," said Perillus, overwhelmed by king's generosity. "That would be sufficient for Perillus," said the King, but it would be very little for Alexander." The gifts that God designs to give men, His grace and friendship, are in proportion to His infinite goodness and omnipotence.

Aid Story 2

A minister told his congregation. "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon. I want you all to read Mark. 17."

The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the minister asked for a show of hands. He wanted to know how many had read Mark 17. Every hand went up. The minister smiled and said, "Mark has only sixteen Chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

"Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, 'I do will it. Be made clean'" (Mark 1,40-45)

1. God cured lepers in the days of the Old Testament. He healed Miriam the sister of Moses (Num 12,10-15). He also cured Naaman the Syrian (2 Kgs 5). Now Jesus, the Son of God, who has already triumphed over the powers of demon possession and sickness, cures an unnamed leper.

2. On this Sunday, we want to feel with this miracle of Jesus. In order to feel with it, we need to go back to the times of Jesus and Moses. In the eyes of the Jews, this leper is ritually unclean; the disease could be contagious. They are ever mindful of the divine command, "Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy" (Lev 19,2). The holiness spoken here encompasses bodily wholeness and integrity. Hence the leper is cut off from the ordinary Jewish life - "The LORD said to Moses, "Order the Israelites to expel from camp every leper ..." (Num 5,1-4).

The leper now cannot live with his family. He cannot walk into Jewish synagogue or Temple. He cannot move

around with his friends and villagers. Thus there is so much that he 'cannot.' He has to cry out in warning if he is being approached or is approaching a healthy person. Excluded from contact with God and society and confined to a certain area set apart to such persons, he just suffers and lives dead within from seclusion. It is painful to think of the plight of such social outcasts since Jewish life is thickly gregarious and group-oriented; a person needs community to live just as a fish needs water.

3. This background helps us fathom the depth of what Jesus does to this man with such a skin disease. The leper does not cry in warning but beseeches Him. He acts in an unconventional way; he does something of which he has no right. Why does he 'misbehave' then? It seems he has found something unique in this Folk Healer. Jesus is good, merciful and acts with authority. Hence the leper cuts through all taboos and fear of ritual uncleanness and ap-

proaches Him.

When the leper acts in an unorthodox way, the Galilean Healer reacts in the same way. He does not send him away at all. Instead, He touches him. From the eyes of ordinary Jews, this is an action of ritual impurity and human foolhardiness. But by touching the leper, He challenges the cultural thinking of His day. In His view, this helpless leper does not pollute the sacredness of God's People; in brief, he is not dirty.

Further Jesus utters, "I do will it. Be made clean." He commands "Be made clean" in divine or theological passive acknowledging God as the one who performs the action. Thus Jesus wills it; God cleanses the leper!

4. Jesus heals him physically ("The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean"). Then a priest acknowledges this healing after a thorough and long examination; sacrifice is offered according to the dictates in Lev 13 - 14; then the man, now declared clean, could

return to his ordinary life. Thus Jesus does not heal him simply physically but psychically (as mentally agonized by physical ailment and socio-religious taboos), socially (as he is socially ostracized) and religiously (as he is barred from public worship). In other words, He reinstates him into his psycho-somatic and socio-religious life. The leper is now a full member of God's People; he is in total solidarity with God and man. It is such an integral healing that Jesus imparts him.

5. Can we heal today? Yes, we can. How? We can heal others by being sensitive to their sufferings and our loving care for them. May this Year of Family which plans a lot on personal, family and school counseling be an oc-



casation for our families to enjoy the touch of Jesus!

Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi



Lenten Mending

* Four Ways to Celebrate Lent



1. THE WORLD

How often we miss the beauty of Creation: The salmon tinge of sunset, the rustle of branches in the wind, the shimmering of sun on water, the grace of a bird's flight. Many people yawn and think, "How ordinary."

But the truly enlightened know how to find God's presence in the world God made. When we receive a wonderful gift from a person we love, we explore it, treasure it, take it out often and wear or admire it. God gives us a magnificent world each day, yet how often do we look for the Creator's hand prints there?

2. THE SELF

We have come a long way from the Lent's of mortifying the flesh to the Lent's of taking better care of ourselves. Odd as it may seem, Lent is the perfect opportunity to get the rest, prayer time, exercise and diet we deserve. If we are cranky, short-tempered, or dull-witted for that reason, restoring good humour through

adequate sleep, might be just the penance we need.

Mention prayer and many people groan. They know they should pray, but they just don't seem to be able to squeeze it in. Lent, offers the chance for a deliberate effort in a positive spirit. If we think of prayer as a personal encounter with our one great Love, we will find the time. Simply turning off the television can create that space for many people. We often pray better when steeped in beautiful music, surrounded by artwork or plants, gazing outside at trees or sky, smelling the fragrance of candles or flowers, or reading inspirational literature. When we come to see how quiet time alone with the Lord restores serenity, trust and balance, it becomes an invaluable part of each day, which we could not neglect even after Lent.

If our body is God's temple, it is wise to set it in order once a year. Perhaps Lent is the time for that daily walk or a yoga or water-aerobics class, at the local health club or recreation centre. And while the subject of diet is tricky, statistics indicate that most people need to forgo fast food and Lent is the time for abstinence.

3. OTHERS

For most of us, the mending of relationships simply demands more time, care, and attention lavished on those we love. How often has a harsh word scarred the child we never intended to hurt? Have we projected stress at work onto those at home, who know nothing of the cause? Has failure to deal with our own angers or dilemmas spilled unfairly onto our friends? Lent can penetrate our cozy cocoon, leading us to look outward Whom have we neglected because, in the current cliché, "We're so busy?"

At the fringes of almost everyone's conscience gnaws an awareness of lonely people who would love to hear from us. Could a three-minute E-mail or a five-minute phone call really be that difficult? It is a challenge to think beyond those we usually worry about to

those who are off our radar screen. Jesus could look at a crowd and identify the one most needing a cure. Can we find the one who longs for our attention?

4. GOD

To avoid the pitfall of turning Lent into a self-help manual, we must ultimately ask ourselves why we perform these special practices. If our answer is not to deepen our relationship with God, to praise our Creator and to love better, then we are on the wrong track. Who is Christ for us? Christ is not a chameleon who shifts to fit our moods, but throughout a lifetime, as with any friend, our relationship changes.

At different times we may respond better to different faces of God. To broaden the question, then, we might ask ourselves which is our favourite Scripture story about Jesus and what our choice tells us about ourselves. To which of His words do we cling most ardently?

Once we have identified these words, we may want to memorize them so we can repeat them as quiet prayer when we don't have access to the Bible: In line at the grocery store, on the train, the otherwise-fidgety minutes in traffic or before a meeting starts.

Jesus asked blind Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mk.10:46-52). It may seem obvious that the beggar wanted his sight back, but Jesus respectfully invited his participation in the miracle. If Jesus peered into the mending baskets of our lives, where would He see the need for grace, for intervention, for sewing what is torn? We may be tempted to shrug off these questions quickly, but Lent offers the perfect chance to spend long, slow time on them. Perhaps doing so will mean a day of prayer or a weekend of retreat. Perhaps we can set aside one hour a day for reflection. But what could be more important than digging deep into those answers at a pivotal time that might shape the rest of our lives?

Courtesy: Liguorian

The Holy Rosary

You sometimes hear people say, today, the Rosary is on the way out. It is finished. They say it almost as if they were glad. Is it true?

Some Irish fishermen got lost in a storm at sea off the Donegal coast. They kept their heads, used all their skills and held on for relief and help. They said they prayed like they never prayed before. They said the Rosary.

A woman in Belfast was snapped at her doorstep by a photographer as she surveyed the aftermath of terror and violence in the street. Held unself-consciously in her hand was a Rosary.

A patient waited in hospital, alone, on the anxious eve of a critical operation. The nurse marvelled at his calmness and his courage and noticed

that he was saying his Rosary.

Word came to the house that the father was in an accident, was in hospital and on the operating table. The family's reaction, "Immediately we started to say the Rosary."

In times of danger, grief, anxiety, and strain we do not look for fine phrases or become self-conscious about how we pray. We want to pray. We want to contact God and His Blessed Mother and experience the strength and calmness of contact with them. The Rosary helps us to do just that and that is why it is a prayer that will never die or pass away.

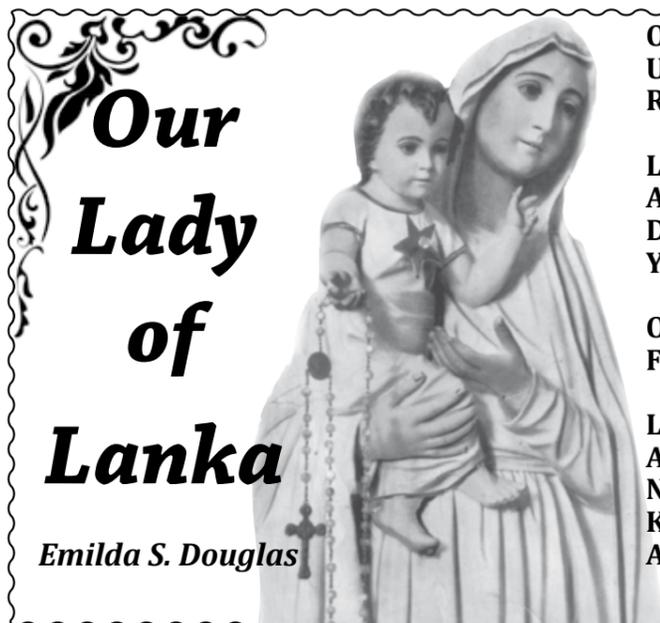
Are some people neglecting to pray the Rosary today?

Will they deprive their children of the strength of this prayer?



If they are, have they put something better in its place, have they something better to offer? Has the neglect of the Rosary made them better people, their homes happier, their families more united more unselfish, more loving, stronger in hope and faith? If so, well and good and may God be praised. If not, let the Rosary come back to your home and help you to get God's blessings and Our Lady's protection.

*Bro. Y. Stephen,
St. Joseph's Seminary, Kandy*



Our Lady of Lanka

Emilda S. Douglas

Our Lady of Lanka
Universal Queen so sweet,
Remembering your help, we kneel at your feet,

Lovingly you protected, dear Mother of God,
A pleasant island - our country from being bombed.
During World War II which prolonged,
Your help made us build a house of God.

O! mother we still feel your loving touch,
For helping us always - thank you very much.

Lady of Lanka, God's love to proclaim.
A Basilica was built-dedicated to your name.
Now on its anniversary every year,
Keeping in mind that you are near,
Ave Maria, dear Lady of Lanka.
we sing with cheer.

A CROSS

The way

By Sirohmi Gunasekera

'Preparing'

"We are in February which is a short month and we must prepare for Lent," observed Lima.

"You are right. We celebrated the Pope's Visit and then came Independence Day. Now it is time to settle down and start thinking of making sacrifices for Lent. Many of us think of giving up something we enjoy eating, like chocolates or ice cream. But maybe we should start thinking of doing something for someone. What about Reconciliation? There may be someone who has hurt you and it is time you spoke to her and made amends," suggested Haren.

"You are suggesting that we build bridges, especially between Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. Is that what you mean?" asked Lima.

"Yes, we don't have to do it on a big scale. Maybe there is one person who would welcome a kind word and you could look for a Sinhalese, a Tamil or a Muslim. Let's face it, deep down we are racist and unconsciously categorise individuals according to their ethnicity. Then why can't you reach out and speak an extra considerate word as you pass by?" said Haren.

"I never thought of that. We only wait for festivals and eat each other's goodies. You and I can spare a thought for another soul and make this island a pleasanter place if we only try," said Lima.

"So then we don't have to wait till Lent. Each day we can say or do something to make life easier for someone else. Let us try and be sensitive to another's feelings," said Haren.

"We don't have to target other ethnic groups. Let us try and be politically correct with everyone, especially by being kind!" pointed out Lima.

Young World

Independence Day and Induction of Stewards of the Josephian Family -2015



St. Joseph's College, Colombo celebrated the 67th Independence Day in grand scale, with an eminent Old Boy, Archbishop Emeritus Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis gracing the occasion. His Grace delivered an inspiring speech emphasising the Christian contribution

towards Independence. After this function the pinning of badges of 36 senior stewards and 28 junior stewards took place.

*Avishka Mario Senewiratne
Pix: ICT Society*

New Superior for Diyalagoda Convent



A warm welcome was given to Rev. Sr. Mary Sarojanie new Superior of St. Bernadette's Convent, Diyalagoda.

D. Anselm Fernando

Newly renovated Football Grounds at De Mazenod



A friendly football exhibition match was played recently between St. Benedict's College, Kotahena and De Mazenod College, Kandana to inaugurate the new Football Grounds at De Mazenod College, renovated at a cost of Rs. 6 million

C. R. Dickson Antony

We Worship the Holy Eucharist

We praise You O Holy Eucharist
You strengthen us by living inside of it
Lord quench my thirst
by pouring out Your blood
And fill me with Your glory O God

Chorus -

We worship the Holy Eucharist
Because You live inside of it
We give You the utmost praise
Because You love us always

You converted Your body and blood
To bread and wine our Holy God
You are our only Sacred Meal
Through which we all Christians heal

Chorus

*Jeremy Valencia,
St. Joseph's College, Colombo*



Sesquicentennial-Benedictine Walk 2015

St. Benedict's College, Colombo a government assisted Catholic educational institution managed by the De La Salle Brothers since 1865 has been nurturing students from all walks of life especially within the city of Colombo and its suburbs. The College celebrated 150 years of proud existence on February 7, 2015. To mark the event the College held a walk with the enthusiastic participation of students, parents, Old Boys and well-wishers.

Text and Pics By Ashen S. Senarathna



A Performance for the Elders



Children perform at the Elders' Day celebrations at the Maria Nirmala Elder's Home, Ranpokunugama

Dickson Antony

Welcome for First Years at De Mazenod



Grade One students of De Mazenod College, Kandana are seen being welcomed by Staff and students on their first day at School.

Anton Jayasuriya

English with Fun and Entertainment

Dear Readers,

In our 61st lesson we learnt a few inspirational quotes, two poems and a simple text.

In this lesson you will learn and match foreign expressions, identify language functions and express their exponents, complete a text underlining the appropriate words and form questions on a text about drowning.

Certificate Course in English Medium Teacher Development (CEMTD Batch 6) will commence shortly. Anyone interested in joining the course can contact me for academic guidance.

Comments made by our readers are very encouraging. Thanks for your efforts to make 'English with Fun and Entertainment' an interactive process.

God Bless You!

NJ

Activity 1: Foreign expressions are universal in nature. Read the following and see how people of the world have more things in common than we tend to realize

- (1)The more languages you know, the more human you are. *Czech.*
- (2)Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you who you are!
Assyrian, Persian, Spanish, Turkish, etc
- (3)A woman and the sea are the same in anger. *Greek.*
- (4)A lie has no legs. *English*
- (5)When you pick up the stick, the robber dog knows. *Armenian*
- (6)If wishes were horses, beggars would ride. *English.*
- (7)When they shouted, "Pumpkin thief," he touched his shoulder to check. *Indian*
- (8)When you pick up the stick, the stealing cat gets alert. *Persian.*
- (9)He who knows to praise sure knows to slander. *Albanian.*
- (10) Avoid those who constantly praise you. *Swahili.*

Activity 2: How would you express your feelings when you face the following situations in life? One example is given. Complete the grid with your examples.

When you are tired.	When you are hungry.	When you are thirsty.
When you are disappointed.	When you are satisfied.	When you feel sorry

Expressing fatigue	1.	3.	5.	7.	9.
e.g. I'm very tired.	2.	4.	6.	8.	10.

Activity 3: Learn the following Phrasal Verbs with their meanings

- (1)The principal **turned down** our proposal
(rejected) disallowed, overruled, vetoed
- (2) Our factory **turns out** fifty cars a day.
(produces) makes, manufactures, assembles
- (3) I shall **call on** you this evening.
(visit) call, see, meet
- (4) If he is late, **turn him off** (send him away) drive away
- (5) At what time did he **turn up**? (come) be present
- (6) I wonder what will **turn up** next (happen) occur, transpire
- (7) Do not **back out** on your promise (quietly withdraw) pull out
- (8) I shall **back you up** in the election (support) help, assist
- (9) The party in power will **bear down** any opposition
(crush) destroy, finish, terminate
- (10) His evidence **bears out** mine (confirms) settles, endorses, ratifies

Activity 4 : Select the most appropriate word from the brackets and underline it.



Something funny had happened at home yesterday, while I was away on a picnic. On the (1. previous/same/different) day I asked my father, whether he would allow me to take the camera and the radio with me. He

readily gave me permission and told me to be (2. careful/careless/strict) about them. But in the morning he had forgotten all about this. When he found that the radio and the camera had vanished he had informed the (3. hospital, police, school) about it. He had thought that a burglar had entered the house (4. but, because, and) taken them away. He had telephoned the police and they had come to make (5.complaints, inquiries/questions) and take fingerprints.

In the evening when I returned home (6.with/before/between) the camera and the radio my father was surprised. He insisted that I (7.was not taken, am not taken, had not taken) permission. He was very angry but my mother saved me. My mother wanted my (8.father/ son/daughter) to call the police and tell the real situation. (9 So/But/Unless) my father did not (10.hungry/agree/angry) with her. When I left the scene my mother and my father had a small quarrel about the incident.

Activity 5: Read the text given below and frame questions with key words to match the information taken from the text.



Four drown in boat tragedy

Three members of the same family drowned in the Ingimitiya reservoir in Galgamuwa along with a relative who went to rescue them, OIC Galgamuwa Police Station told the Daily News.

G.P. Rupawathie Menike, 36, from Kurunegala, Ratkarawa area was killed along with her daughter Nilanthi Priyantha ,11, and son Danushka Niroshan, 13, when the canoe toppled after the oars broke suddenly in the middle of the reservoir. They had gone canoeing in the Ingimitiya reservoir after visiting a relative, the OIC added. H.Ranhamy, 48, who rowed the canoe drowned after rescuing two persons. There had been eight persons on the canoe at the time of the accident. Two had swum ashore. Ranhamy rescued two persons. But he also drowned when he tried to rescue the mother and the two children.

- Q 1.OIC Galgamuwa Police station reported this incident to the Daily News. Who
- Q 2.Four people drowned in the Ingimitiya reservoir. Where
- Q 3.There had been eight people on the canoe at the time of the accident. How many
- Q 4.Dhanushka Niroshan was 13 years old at the time of his death. How.....
- Q 5.They had gone canoeing in the Ingimitiya reservoir after visiting a relative. When.....

Activity 6: Match the foreign expressions with the meanings given

Foreign Expression	Language	Meaning	Letter/Number
1. Alma mater	Latin	a. to the end	
2. Anno Domino	Latin	b. one's school	
3. Ad infinitum	Latin	c. in the year of our Lord	
4. Ad finem	Latin	d. things to be done	
5. Ad majorem Dei gloriam	Latin	e. to infinity	
6. Agenda	Latin	officer who helps a general	
7. Aide-de-camp	French	g.in good faith	
8. Au revoir	French	h.for the greater glory of God	
9. Bona fide	Latin	i. Good bye/ till we meet again	
10. Bon jour	French	j. I have found it !	
11. Bon soir	French	k. Note well	
12. Eureka	Greek	l. In peace	
13. ich dien	German	m. Good day/ Good Morning	
14. In pace	Latin	n. A pleasant voyage	
15. Nota bene	Latin	o. I serve	
16. Al fresco -	Italian	p. in the open air	
17. Carte blanche	French	a blank paper; unconditional terms	
18. Communi consensus	Latin	by common consent	
19. Corrigenda	Latin	corrections to be made	
20. Cui bono?	Latin	for whose benefit is it	
21. Deo gratias	Latin	thanks be to God	
22. Deo volente	Latin	God willing	
23. Divide et impera	Latin	divide and rule	
24. O tempora ! O mores!	Latin	O the times! O the manners	
25. Veni, vidi, vici	Latin	I came, I saw, I conquered	
26. etc et cetera	Latin	and the rest; and so on.	
27. NB nota bene	Latin	mark well	
28. e.g. exempli gratia	Latin	for example	
29. i.e. id est	Latin	that is	
30. R.S.V.P. Repondez, s'il vous plait	French	reply, if you please	

The Shattered Rice Bowl of Asia



Unless a grain falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it produces much fruit (John 12:24)

Last November, I had the pleasure of attending an amazing performance, 'Rice', by the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, choreographed by Lin Huai-min.

With the help of superb videography, lighting and projection design, Rice transports us to the fields of Chiayi where Lin grew up.

The dancers' varied movements against a backdrop of new green seedlings, elements of nature and mature, swaying panicles capture the life cycle of rice - Soil; Wind; Pollen; Sunlight; Grain; Fire; Water - Lin's breathtaking visual poetry honours the way of sustainable farming and living. However, he also notes the threats:

In the past, the rural areas were the mainstay of economic production, the heart of community networking and relationships and the very essence of humanistic qualities such as modesty, warmth, respect for nature and the land. But the rural areas of Taiwan today are facing critical challenges: The loss and abandonment of arable land, the conversion of arable land into construction sites, the downward ratio of self-sufficient food production and ecological disasters.

Rice in China

China is the top pro-

ducer of rice in the world. According to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), China produced 204 million metric tonnes of rice in 2012, compared with 121 metric tonnes of wheat and 205.6 metric tonnes of maize/corn (some used for fuel and animal-feed).

Due to strong economic growth in Asian countries in recent years, more people are changing their diet from rice to richer foods such as meat, dairy, fruits, and vegetables. This is especially the case in populous China and India. As a result, global per capita rice consumption has stayed put.

Data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation shows rice yields grew by 1.8 per cent in Asia between 2000 and 2011.

Central Asia made the fastest progress with 4.7 per cent annual yield growth. Rice yields in Southeast Asia grew at a robust 2.7 per cent. But in China, rice yield growth is almost stagnant. Though the yield is stagnant, rice is moving in China!

Depending on the variety and environment, rice can yield one or two crops per year.

Rice and geo-political movements

Curiously, once a major exporter of rice, China is becoming the world's largest importer of rice. *Reliefweb*, a leading humanitarian information service, examines the reasons and effects:

1) Chinese rice production may

be over-reported to boost performance records.

2) China's agricultural sector is now less competitive. It is cheaper to import.

3) The transport, delivery and storage of grains in China is less efficient.

4) Food safety. Consumers are worried about rice contaminated with heavy metal and arsenic and prefer foreign imports.

Common Threats

China's growing rice imports take place against a background of food price volatility. World food prices have risen sharply since 2006.

China and its neighbours face common threats to food security, such as climate change, rising fuel and fertiliser prices, poor harvests, rising global food demand and low food stocks. But instead of working together, China's demand for imports may also trigger a race among other Asian countries to protect their access to affordable rice.

They may raise crop subsidies, cut back on exports and bring more land under cultivation. This drive toward self-



reliance can be a burden to the region as the economic and environmental cost of producing rice is much higher today.

Of Humus and Humility

Let her glean among the sheaves themselves. Do not molest her. And be sure you pull a few ears of corn out of the bundles and drop them (Ruth 2:16).

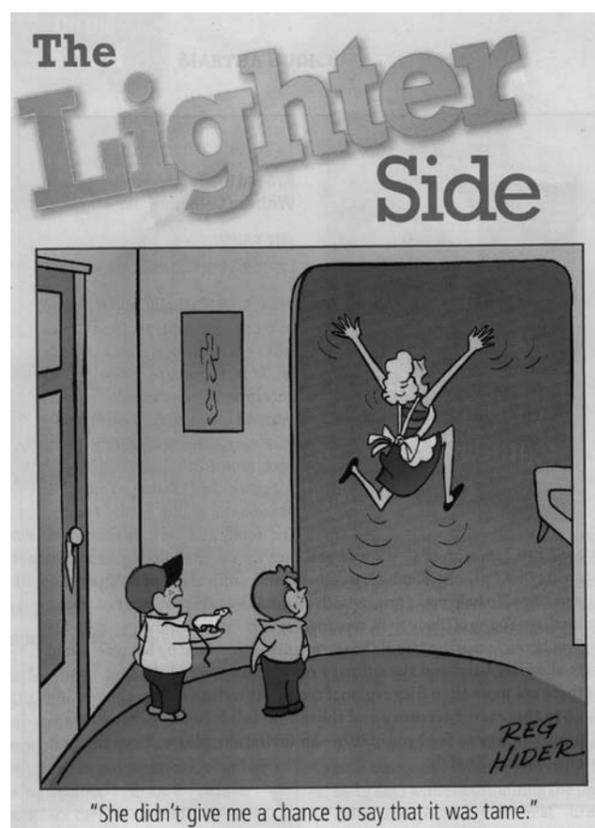
That was Boaz's instruction to his servants in a book in the Old Testament about fidelity and compassion. The gleaners come behind the harvest workers. They bend down to pick up the grains that

have fallen to the ground. Their bodies in a humble posture, gleaners are also in a vulnerable socio-economic position.

Humus is the dark organic matter (full of nutrients) that remains when plants decay. It is also the Latin word for earth or soil. Often, as we strive to feed ourselves, do we remember from where we come? What does it mean to be humble?

Unless we respect one grain, one person, the growth and life that we desire are not sustainable.

Courtesy: Sunday Examiner (Hong Kong)



"She didn't give me a chance to say that it was tame."

St. Joseph Vaz

St. Joseph Vaz for us please pray,
Today, and pray for us everyday.

Joseph Vaz dear Saint, we were stranded,
On our dear soil when you landed.
Sri Lankan Catholics were being persecuted,
Eagerly you came, when help was needed.
Prayed for rain, without it people were frustrated,
Heaven smiled on us, your prayer was answered.

Very prayerfully you faced every situation.
Answered God's call for others' salvation.
Zealously you worked for our nation.

Emilda S. Douglas

