

**St. Peter  
Damian**

**February 21**

*"What you are, I was; what I am, you will be.  
Remember me, I pray for you.  
Have pity on the dust of Peter that lies here"*  
(Epitaph on the tomb of St. Peter Damian, written by himself).



**Chair of  
St. Peter  
Apostle**

**February  
22**

# Messenger

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## "I will come to see the Pearl of the Indian Ocean," says Pope Francis

**By: Rev. Fr. Deninton Subasinghe in Rome**

The Migrant Sri Lankan Community living in Italy met His Holiness Pope Francis at St. Peter's Basilica, Rome in a special audience offered to them on Saturday, February 8. It was the first time in history when the doors of the Basilica in the Vatican remained closed for the rest of the pilgrims from morning till afternoon, making room for a full day Sri Lankan programme at the Vatican.

The Papal Audience was an outcome of a suggestion made to His Holiness by the Archbishop of Colombo,



His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, early last year concerning a

special occasion to meet the Pope as a nation at St. Peter's Basilica.

The program began with the Eucharist of Thanksgiving in



Sinhala and Tamil presided over by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith together with Their Lordships, Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Bishop-in-charge of Catholic Migrants Overseas, Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando, Bishop of Badulla, Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, Bishop of Chilaw,

who concelebrated with the priests serving as chaplains to the Sri Lankan Catholic Migrants in Italy. A massive gathering of over 12,000 Sri Lankans from various parts of Italy congregated at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome to meet the Pontiff.

(Contd on Pg. 02) >>>

## 450 acres of Marshland to be reclaimed for Railway Expressway

**Will the areas of Bopitiya, Pamunugama, Uswetakeiyawa and Kandana, one day be destroyed by floods?**

It has been understood that the Government has acquired 450 acres of prime land in Bopitiya and Kerawalapitiya areas for the proposed Colombo-Katunayake Railway Expressway, which has given rise to a number of environmental and social issues.

The land acquired for this proposed project is a part of the priceless wetland of the Mutturajawela marshland, which is the largest wetland



area in Sri Lanka, rich in bio diversity. This marshland was also named as one of the 41 internationally important wetlands in Sri Lanka by the Asian Wetland Inventory of 1989.

The Mutturajawela marshland is situated south of Negombo and covers an area of approximately 6000 hectares, inclusive of the Negombo Lagoon.

## Second Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination



His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando

*Prayer-filled  
Best Wishes*

**Ad Multos Annos**

**Vivat!**



His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva

## Discussion on National Reconciliation at SEDEC

A discussion on 'National Reconciliation: Where are we now?' - will be held on Tuesday, February 25, at 3.00 pm, at Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC, Auditorium, 133, Kynsey Road, Colombo 8.

The speakers are, Dr. Dayan Jayatillaka,

Prof. Savitri Gunasekera and Prof. Kumar David.

The discussions will revolve on what has been done on promoting healing and reconciliation, factors contributing to the present situation, internal and external factors leading to

the delay in the implementation of the recommendations of LLRC, etc.

Please confirm your participation on or before Thursday February 13.

**National Director  
Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC**



# Marian Year

**Devils flee before Mary's face as wax melts before fire**

- St. Bonaventure



## NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

## Relic of St. Anthony enshrined in Batagama Church



A relic of St. Anthony of Padua was brought to Sri Lanka on Tuesday, February 4 and was enshrined at St. Anthony's Church Batagama. The Service was conducted under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop of Colombo, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith. Devotees were given the opportunity to pay homage to the Relics after the Service.

*Ashen S. Senarathna*

## New four-storey building for St. Lawrence's School



Rev. Sr. Rohinie Mendis declared open the new four-storey building of St. Lawrence's Convent, Colombo 6. The Chief Celebrant was Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, who blessed and consecrated the new building.

The new building will house the computer lab, aesthetic complex and school canteen.

*S. Fernando*

## Thanksgiving Holy Mass for country's Independence



The 66th Anniversary of Independence was celebrated by the Parish Priest of Ratnapura Rev. Fr. Ranjanmal Moraes, at Manresa Retreat House, Pillayarvadi, Batticaloa. The Mass was organised by the Ratnapura Parish Council, which visited Batticaloa on their annual trip.

*Theobald Samaratunga*

## St. Sebastian's Relic at Balagala



Relic of St. Sebastian was brought to the Balagala Parish on February 8. Picture shows the Relic taken in procession to the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

*N. Perera*

## Tamil Theologate begins Short Course in Religious Studies

The Blessed Joseph Vaz Tamil Theologate, will begin a series of Short Courses to be held every Saturdays from 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m., at the Tamil Theology Lecture Hall, Aquinas University College, Colombo.

The duration of each course will be 10 consecutive Saturdays. The first course will be on 'Liturgy' and lectures will begin on Saturday February 22. The lecturer on this occasion will be Rev. Fr. Andreas Fernando OMI.

Registration for the course will take place from 3.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. on February 22. A nominal fee of Rs. 500 will be charged. At the end of the course a valuable certificate will be presented to the participant who has completed 80% of the lectures.

Please bring your Holy Bible.  
*Rev. Fr. Reginald Lucien Co-ordinator*

## Feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Parakaduwa



The Annual Feast of the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parakaduwa, was held under the patronage of His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Raymond Wickramasinghe Bishop of Galle, Very Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando Vicar General and Treasurer of Ratnapura Diocese and Rev. Fr. Jude Amila Fernando Parish Priest of Dehigahapitiya Church.

*Nimal Perera*

## Church Feasts

The 33rd Annual Feast of St. Mary's Church, Suduwella, Tudella, will be celebrated on Sunday February 16. Festive High Mass at 8 am. Chief celebrant - Rev. Fr. Quintus Fernando. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm presided over by Rev. Fr. Claude Nonis, Archdiocesan Director of Family Apostolate.

The 105th Annual Feast of Our Lady

of Lourdes Church, Kalutara will be celebrated on Sunday February 16. Festive High Mass at 7.30 am. Chief celebrant - Rev. Fr. Kalana Peiris, Archdiocesan Coordinator for Tamil Apostolate, Eastern (Missionary Region). Vespers Service on previous day at 5.30 pm presided over by Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

The Annual Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

Church, Raddolugama, Seeduwa will be celebrated on Sunday February 16. Festive Mass at 8 am. Vespers Service on previous day at 7 pm.

The Annual Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Dampe (Willorawatte Parish) will be celebrated on Sunday February 16. Festive Mass at 8.30 am. Vespers Service on previous day at 7.30 pm.

*A.J.*

## "I will come...."

**Contd. from Pg. 1**

Addressing the crowd that filled the Basilica to capacity and referring to one of the country's cherished appellations from of old, Pope Francis made a strikingly creative use of pun when he said that the Pearl of the Indian Ocean is a lovely expression that captures the impression of the island's geographical shape and its extraordinary beauty, as a country richly blessed with natural resources on the one hand, while the pearl on the other hand, is supposed to be formed by the tears of the oyster.

"Unfortunately many tears have been shed over the past thirty years," the Holy Father said, "on account of the internal conflict which incurred much damage to life and property."

"The passage is not easy, I know, to let the wounds heal and begin to collaborate with an erstwhile foe to construct together a common future, though there is obviously no other path to sustainable peace than hope of a better tomorrow," the Holy Father said. He assured that a special prayer will arise from his heart for the relentless human desire for development and aspirations of peace.

The Pope reminded the Lankan Community present, that in the past, God's favour was espe-

cially granted to Sri Lanka at the height of the Second World War, when the then Archbishop of Colombo, His Grace, Msgr. J. M. Mason knelt in prayer at Tewatte pleading for divine intervention against the imminent Japanese aerial bombings, where later Thomas Cardinal Cooray, his successor, the first Sri Lankan Archbishop, erected the National Basilica and dedicated it to Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

"The Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka at Tewatte, whose 75th anniversary of consecration falls this year, remains a covenant of God with her pilgrim people in this part of the world which should serve as a symbol of God's perennial pact with all humanity that seeks with all their strength the path to true peace," the Holy Father said.

The Sri Lankan Government's invitation extended to the Holy Father to visit the country has been richly received and he asked the Sri Lankans to pray for the grace of realising such a project in the midst of carrying out his challenging daily task as the universal pastor of the Catholic Faithful.

The Pontiff was highly impressed by the local music he heard as he entered the Basilica and at the end of his address requested the Sri

Lankan faithful to sing to him in native languages a hymn of their choice. The congregation, in reciprocity, broke into loud singing in Sinhala and Tamil, of "Ma mauni athi premaneeya," a household Marian hymn loved by the Catholics of Sri Lanka and sung at the concluding ceremonies at the Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu.

Pope Francis imparted his apostolic blessings to all Sri Lankans living in Italy, amounting to nearly 150,000, who, in the main, work as domestics whose plight has been adversely affected by the ongoing world economic crisis and the lack of employment opportunities in Italy which render despondent the forlorn migrants fighting a desperate battle to remain hopeful on a foreign soil away from their fatherland as Cardinal Ranjith mentioned in his words to the Pope.

His Eminence thanked Pope Francis for the great kindness and the gesture of friendship shown to all Sri Lankans by way of his presence among them on the occasion.

Ministers, Rajitha Senaratne, Sarath Guneratne and Dayashritha Tissera with many other diplomats and distinguished guests represented the Sri Lankans at the Vatican. Msgr. Neville Joe Perera, the National Coordinator for the Sri Lankan Catholic Migrants in Italy organised the ceremony.



## Admission Particulars - Grade One 2015

No	School	Date	Time
1	Holy Cross College Kalutara and Payagala	03rd March / 04th March	8.00a.m to 12.00p.m
2	St. Thomas' International College, Seeduwa	3rd March to 8th March	8.00a.m to 12.00p.m
3	Bolawalana, Ave Maria Convent, Negombo	6th March / 7th March	12.30p.m to 3.00p.m
4	St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo 07	10th March / 11th March	8.30a.m to 9.30a.m
5	St. Joseph's Branch School, Kadolkelle, Negombo	10th March to 14th March	8.30a.m to 1.30p.m
6	Maris Stella College, Negombo	15th March	8.00a.m to 10.00a.m
7	St. Benedict's College, Colombo 13	15th March / 22nd March	9.00a.m to 12.00p.m
8	Loyola College, Negombo	18th March 21st March	2.00p.m to 4.30p.m For Catholic Children For non Catholic Children
9	Holy Angels' School of Hope, Payagala	19 March	8.30a.m to 1.30p.m
10	Holy Family Convent, Kalutara	20th March / 21st March	2.30p.m to 4.00p.m
11	St. Peter's College Branch School, Gampaha	24th March/25th March /26th March	2.00p.m to 5.00p.m
12	St. Peter's College, Colombo 04	24th March, 25th March 26th March 27th March	2.00p.m to 5.00p.m For the Children of old boys 2.00p.m to 5.00p.m Others
13	St. Joseph's Branch School, Wattala	24th March to 28th March	9.00a.m to 1.30p.m
14	Christ King Branch School, Welliveriya	26th March/27th March	9.00a.m to 12.00p.m
15	Loyola Branch School, Bopitiya	26th March /27th March 28th March	2.00p.m to 4.00p.m
16	Good Shepherd Convent, Colombo 13	29th March, For Good Shepherd Convent Montessori children of members and non members of PPA	8.00a.m to 9.00a.m
		31st March / 1st April All Catholic Children	8.00a.m to 9.00a.m
17	St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10	31st March to 4th April	9.00a.m to 2.00p.m
18	Holy Family Convent, Colombo 04	1st April / 2nd April	8.00a.m to 12.00p.m
19	St. Jude's College, Negombo	3rd April / 4th April	8.00a.m to 12.00p.m
20	St. Lawrence's Convent, Colombo 06	4th April Children of past pupils, Children of St. Lawrence Convent Montessori, Children who have sisters in the school 5th April Other Catholic Children	9.00a.m to 11.00a.m 9.00a.m to 2.00p.m
21	De Mazenod College, Kandana	5th April / 6th April	8.30a.m to 1.30p.m
22	Ave Maria Convent, Negombo	9th April /10th April	8.30a.m to 3.30p.m
23	Holy Cross College, Gampaha	10th April / 11th April /12th April	8.30a.m to 12.00p.m
24	Christ King School, Pannipitiya	23th April / 26th April	9.00a.m to 12.00p.m
25	Our Lady of Victories Convent, Moratuwa	24th April/25th April /26th April	9.00a.m to 12.00p.m
26	Good Shepherd Convent, Panadura	28th April / 29th April	11.00a.m to 1.30p.m
27	St. Joseph's College, Nugegoda	2nd to 30th May (Weekdays)	10.00a.m to 1.30p.m
28	St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa	5th May to 9th May	8.30a.m to 12.00p.m

Please forward your Family Book, Child's Baptism Certificate and Birth Certificate and other documents requested by the School according to their special requirements. Since it is not possible to give admission to all who apply we request you apply for Catholic vested schools too. Do not be deceived by fraudsters who claim money promising to admit your child to Catholic Private Schools.

General Manager of Catholic Private Schools (W.P)  
Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawala

## Pope Benedict XVI's legacy as a great teacher



Rome, Italy, (CNA/EWTN News)- A former translator of Benedict XVI has predicted that the retired Pontiff's legacy will only grow, given the "wonderful freshness" and clarity of his writings.

"I think the judgment of history will be very kind, very generous, because once all the topical controversies have moved into the past, people will see what he said in all of its luminous clarity," Monsignor Philip Whitmore, Rector of the English College in Rome, told CNA.

He said the retired Pontiff will "really be admired and respected for the great man, for the great teacher that he was."

Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation from the Papacy on February 11, 2013. He said that he no longer had the strength to continue the duties required by his role. He moved to Mater Ecclesiae Monastery in Vatican City, where he spends much of his time in prayer.

Msgr. Whitmore has lived in Rome for 15 years, working in the Roman Curia. He became a college rector in September 2013.

He knew Pope Benedict XVI before his 2005 election to the papacy, when the man then known as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger headed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Msgr. Whitmore helped the congregation in its English-language work before it expanded its staff.

"The legacy of Pope Benedict above all will be his writings, his teachings. He has a wonderful freshness, a wonderful clarity, wonderful insights all through his writings," said the priest.

He noted the retired Pope's homilies, encyclicals, and speeches during his world travels, particularly singling out for praise Benedict XVI's "Jesus of Nazareth" books.

He said the Pope's "substantial" body of teaching will be read "not only for years, but, I think, centuries."

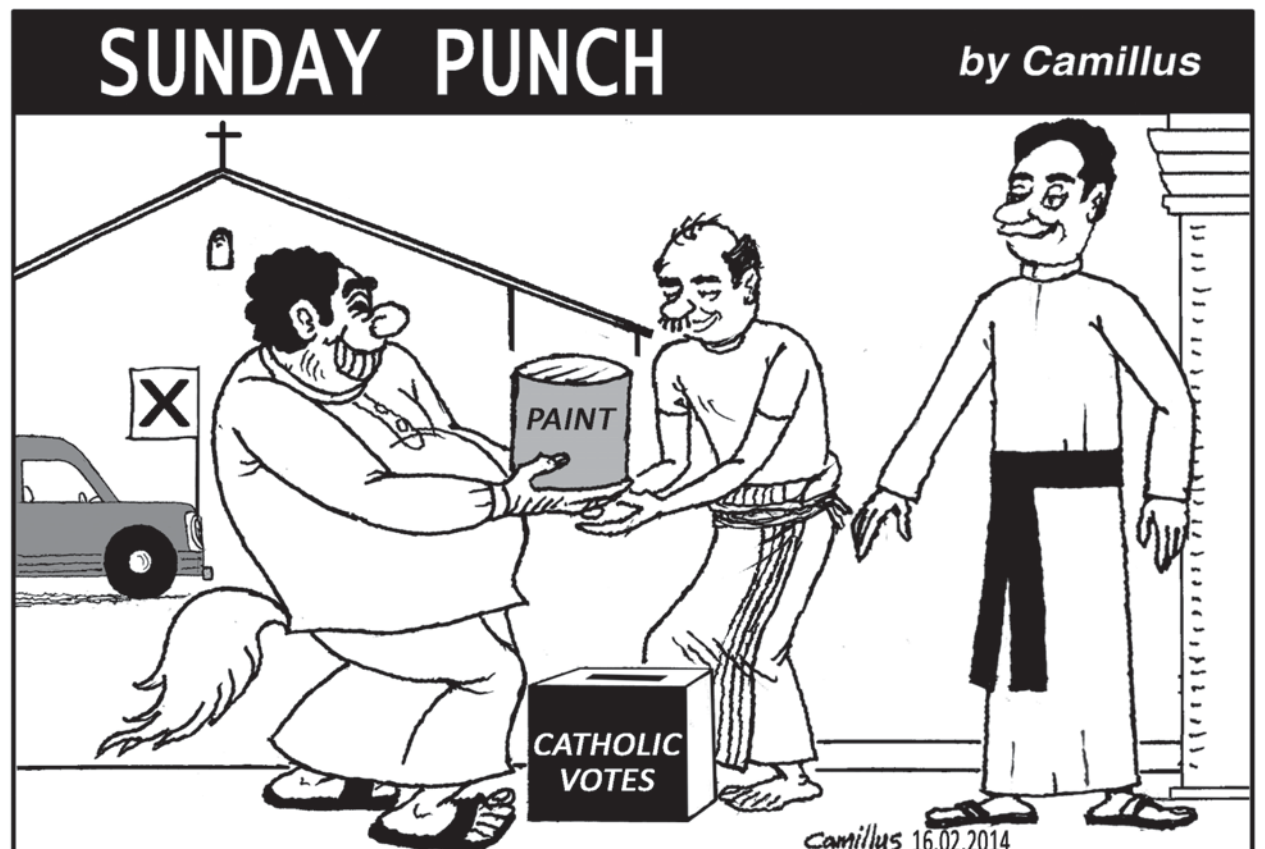
## Diploma in Catholic Education and Teacher Training - 2014

Applications will be received for "Diploma in Catholic Education and Teacher Training" organized by the Catholic Education Office for the Teachers of Catholic Private Schools.

Application forms have been sent to all Principals of Catholic Private Schools. Please fill the application with the Principal's signature and return same to Catholic Education Office at Archbishop's House, Colombo - 08, on or before February 20, 2014, together with the receipt of deposit of Rs. 350.00 at Commercial Bank, Borella Branch to A.C No. 1190020913.

Last date to send the application forms is February 2014.

General Manager  
Catholic Private Schools (W.P)  
Archdiocese of Colombo





THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY SRI LANKA  
**Messenger**  
SINCE 1869

EDITORIAL

February 16, 2014

## Marian Year Cardinal writes.....

It is now nearly three months since we initiated a special year dedicated to our Heavenly Mother and I would like to remind you about the different programmes suggested for the year. In this, the first place should be given to a correct Catechesis on the figure of Mary, especially her unique role in salvation history and the Church.

Infact Christian fundamentalists do spread all kinds of distortions on Mary and try to confuse our faithful. The Sunday sermons could be a forum for such a Catechesis other than the usual lessons of the Daham Pasala or of specific programmes of Adult Catechesis. There is a beautiful presentation of the Blessed Mother in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos 484-511 and 963-975, which I feel we should at least read and reflect on for our own edification and then it could be presented to our faithful. Mary, infact, is the unique gift that Jesus gave us, the Church, the community of His disciples born at the sacrifice of the Cross, when blood and water came out of the lacerated Body of Jesus and, from which Cross Jesus told John, His beloved disciple, "Here is your mother" [Jn. 19: 26-27]. It follows only the gift of Himself in the Eucharist in importance. The Cross and the motherhood of Mary are so closely knit together.

The Lord must have felt that the young community would best be served by entrusting His own beloved Mother to it and the Church to her. It must have been so painful to see her suffer so much at the foot of the Cross and He must have truly felt that she could be the Heavenly Mother of all of us, His beloved disciples, who will be able to accompany us lovingly on our own Way of the Cross.

Indeed it is the Church of the Apostles, the Catholic Church that honours her so much and cherishes her maternal love to such great heights. No other Church or denomination does so. Let us then present her beauty to our faithful and generate in them a filial sense of belonging to her. She is not only intimately bound to Jesus, her Son, but to His redemptive and community creating sacrifice on the Cross. That must have been the reason for which Blessed Pope John Paul II called her "The woman of the Eucharist." No other person in the Scriptures is closer to Him than Mary.

A proper Catechesis on Mary then is a must for us. Besides, we also need to strengthen the daily recitation of the Family Rosary. I suggest that specially the Parish Fathers do everything possible to revive this time tested devotion among all their parishioners, encouraging them to not only carry the Rosary with them but also to recite it as a family or even individually whenever they can. Prayer cards and booklets could be distributed to facilitate that. The Archdiocesan Liturgy office has published such and they can be obtained easily from that office. In order to generate more Marian devotion, I propose that the Marian Year theme song or a suitable hymn to Mary be sung preferably at the end of each Sunday Mass in the year.

Since the Blessed Mother's call in all her appearances down the centuries has been one of conversion, the Archdiocese in all its parishes and institutions shall celebrate a special Penitential Day on Friday the 11th April 11, 2014, which is the Friday of the fifth week in Lent and on that day in the whole Archdiocese from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. a special Penitential Hour shall be organised where the priests will sit in the confessional symbolically and be available for Confessions. I too along with the other Bishops and Episcopal Vicars will hear confessions during that hour in one of our parishes. One of the unique roles for which a priest is ordained is that of absolving sins, which is a great gift God has given us - "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven and whatever you loosen on earth will be loosened in Heaven" [Mt. 18:18] - and so let us show our joy at helping our faithful to set right their relationship with the Lord, through this gesture which will give a new value to something so unique in the Catholic Church. Let us also frequent this Sacrament ourselves for the purification of our own selves. May I also request all the Parish Priests to see to it that a proper Confessional is installed in the year in their Churches and that they give new value to this Sacrament by being available for Confessions regularly.

Do also note that the Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Madhu will take place on the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th of May this year as earlier informed. His Lordship Bishop Emmanuel Fernando is heading the Committee that organises this pilgrimage. I invite all parishes to join in this important venture of the Marian Year. As part of the year, I invite Parish Fathers to organise more events in their parishes in order to enhance Marian Devotion especially in the months of May and October but also at other times. It would be very significant if you could during this year also organise Bloc Rosary Rallies and processions, Sunday evening Rosary and Benediction services and acts of charity and sharing for and with the poor. Besides, if during this year you could visit the families and consecrate them to the Immaculate Heart of Mary enthroning her in the homes it would be most appropriate.

*Koinonia - Archdiocesan Bulletin*

# Bishop del Portillo to be Beatified in Madrid

Following Pope Francis's approval of the required miracle and the formal decree of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints (July 5, 2013), the Holy See has confirmed in a letter dated January 21, 2014 that the Holy Father, at the request of the Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarria, has established that Alvaro del Portillo will be beatified on September 27, 2014 in his native city of Madrid.

The beatification ceremony in Madrid will be presided over by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, Cardinal Angelo Amato, and faithful from all over the world are expected to participate. The next day, Bishop Javier Echevarria, Prelate of Opus Dei, will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving.

"In this moment of profound joy," said Bishop Javier Echevarria, "I wish to thank Pope Francis for his decision to proceed with the beatification of this bishop who loved and served the Church so much. From now on, let us entrust to the soon-to-be Blessed Alvaro the intentions of the Holy Father: The apostolic renewal and service to God of all Christians, the care and support of the needy, the upcoming Synod on the family, the holiness of priests."

### **Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo and Madrid**

The life of Bishop del Portillo, whom many people call "Don Alvaro," is closely linked to the City of Rome, where he lived for 48 years, and Madrid, where he was born on March 11, 1914, and where he spent his childhood and youth with his parents and 7 siblings. It was also in the capital of Spain that he met St. Josemaria Escrivá and decided to join Opus Dei in 1935.

As a 19-year-old engineering student in Madrid, the young Alvaro del Portillo took part in the activities of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, teaching Catechism to children in Vallecas and other poor neighbourhoods and distributing donations and food to needy families. Later, encouraged by St. Josemaria, he continued to carry out similar activities with the young people who participated in the initial work of Opus Dei organised around the DYA Academy.

After finishing his civil and ecclesiastical studies, he was ordained in Madrid by the Bishop of the Diocese, Leopoldo Eijo y Garay, on June 25, 1944, and he carried out his priestly ministry there until he moved to Rome in 1946.

### **Holiness of Life**

Bishop del Portillo gave himself heroically to the service of the Church and of souls, faithfully following the example of Saint



Josemaria Escrivá. He brought many people closer to God.

"To open a cause of canonization, the decisive factor is a well-established reputation for holiness, which is both spontaneous and widespread among a significant portion of the People of God. Bishop del Portillo's cause was initiated because, right from the day of his death, there were very clear signs of this reputation. Many people all over the world were convinced that he was a saintly man and invoked his intercession with a view to obtaining favours from Heaven. The role of the "cause" is to verify that this reputation has a real basis. The decree regarding heroic virtues promulgated by the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints on June 28, 2012 tells us that the Church has indeed reached a positive judgment about his holiness of life.

"In addition to his personal struggle for holiness, one should also consider the decisive push he gave to the creation of institutions for the good of others, such as for example the Monkole Hospital in Kinshasa (Congo), the Niger Foundation hospital in Enugu (Nigeria), the Campus Bio-Medico University in Rome, the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross and International Ecclesiastical College Sedes Sapientiae, also in Rome, where thousands of seminarians and priests receive careful doctrinal and spiritual formation." One priest and two seminarians from the Archdiocese of Colombo are now doing their graduate studies in Social Communications and Theology, respectively, at the University of the Holy Cross in Rome.

### **Testimonies of Popes**

The soon to be canonized Blessed Pope John Paul II said of Msgr del Portillo: "He was an example of fortitude, trust in divine providence and fidelity to the See of Peter."

Then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and now Pope Emeritus, said of him: "I remember the humility and availability in any circumstance that characterized the work of Msgr. del Portillo as Consultor of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. With his competence and experience, he offered an exceptional contribution, as I was personally able to verify."

## Prelate's Visit to Sri Lanka

Bishop Javier Echevarria, the Prelate of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, made a brief visit to Sri Lanka on January 15-18 to have a firsthand view of the incipient apostolic works of Christian formation being carried out by the Prelature in Colombo.

The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, warmly welcomed the Prelate at Katunayake airport and invited him for lunch at the Archbishop's House the following day after his arrival. The Cardinal was also

pleased to give him a tour of the site and structures presently under construction of the future Benedict XVI Theological Institute at Bolawalna, Negombo, where they prayed together for the service to the Church that the institute will be able to offer.

It has been almost two years ago now since the apostolic works of Opus Dei began in Sri Lanka upon the invitation of



Cardinal Ranjith. Two priests  
(Contd. on Pg. 15)



# "The role of the Church as a Moral Teacher during War": A Response

I was quite amused and amazed to read the article under the title "The Role of the Church as a Moral Teacher During War," by an anonymous writer on page 4 of the *Messenger* dated February 9, 2014 in the "Current Affairs" column. Whoever the writer was, he/she makes bizarre claims and sweeping statements and then, tries erroneously to attribute them to the rich Catholic moral tradition on violence, war and peace. The article also unfortunately (again erroneously) finds fault with what it calls "the local Church." My main purpose of writing this brief response is to rebutt those tall claims, and also to point out that his/her criticism of "the local Church" is without foundation. For brevity's sake, I will do so by taking point by point and giving appropriate responses based on the cherished Catholic Social Doctrine which is part of the official Catholic Teaching.

- The writer of that article begins his/her harangue with the accusation against "the local Church" when he says: "The local Church has rejected the need for an International Inquiry and pointed out that the Sri Lankans can resolve their problems themselves. The Church however cannot deny the validity of the international Law and the Laws of War since the Church herself has played the most important role in the formulation of these laws." One cannot but agree fully with the latter part of the above statement, namely, it was within the Christian tradition on war and peace that what is now known as "international law" came into being, thanks mainly to theologians like Francesco de Vitoria, Francesco Suarez and Hugo Grotius. So, there is no doubt that what is known today as "international law" has its roots within the Christian fold. But in what way does this intrinsic link of the Church to the formulation of that law makes the unknown author of that article irrationally and abruptly conclude that "the local Church has rejected" that law? To my knowledge, nowhere in the official statements of "the local Church" has this happened. As that writer himself/herself implies in the above quotation (without realising it, of course!) what "the local Church" has rejected is an International Inquiry. As a matter of fact, the "the local Church" has time and again, repeated the call to implement the proposals of the LLRC which includes also a credible local inquiry into some of the allegations.

- According to that writer: "War has always had two faces: One marked by violence, the other by compassion". However, the Catholic tradition has always held that war is evil because it has got to do with violence. From the time of St. Augustine (the one who first propounded solid arguments for a credible Catholic doctrine on war and peace) through St. Thomas Aquinas (who systematized and reaffirmed the Augustinian doctrine) to John Courtney Murray (who held that the Church's preoccupation during a war is always to limit the violence it invariably entails), the underlying presumption has been that war is a violent affair. Even in the just war doctrine, it is always presumed that war is violent, and that's why there is the *prima facie* presumption against war in that doctrine, and that is also why the same doctrine puts forward conditions which need to be fulfilled by any and every warring party if it is to gain any moral credibility. In this back-

ground, the so-called "face" of compassion of that article is a strange concept to the Catholic tradition!

- The writer also rightly insists that "every bearer of weapons.....is under the obligation to observe the rules of international humanitarian law when using violence." I would add that this is particularly the case when it comes to recognized governments. While for the sake of common good (the promotion of which is the prime duty of any legitimate government, according to Catholic Social Doctrine) a government is expected to defend its citizens (for example, against attacks by terrorists that disrupt and destroy their day-to-day existence, as it happened in Sri Lanka for 30 years during LTTE terrorism), no government is exempt from going beyond the limits imposed by International Law. The statements of Pope John Paul II especially in the aftermath of the September 11, attacks in 2001, in Manhattan are illustrative of this point. It is precisely here that the accusations against the Sri Lankan government and its military hold some water, if and only if proven with substantial, objective evidence, that they did indeed go beyond those limits imposed by International law. It is also for this very reason a credible investigation is called for in Sri Lanka, but that investigation need not be an international inquiry, as the president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL) has rightly pointed out. Instead, it can be a credible local inquiry, as recommended by the LLRC. With regard to its alleged atrocities in Iraq and Afghanistan by its military, the British Government itself relied only on an internal inquiry not an international inquiry! So, why should Sri Lanka be singled out for this, and that too, for fighting a terrorist group within its own land? However, at the time of writing this response, the Sri Lankan Government of course cannot claim any credibility of its complete innocence with regard to the allegations levelled at her military, simply because it has not respected even the recommendations of the very LLRC which was a creation of itself. However, even now, it is not too late to implement those LLRC proposals, not because of UNHRC but because of sheer moral demands for accountability. This will be one sure way of warding off an international inquiry.

- The other tall claim made by the anonymous writer of that article is his/her assertion that while the Church in our country has not been able to play a role as a teacher of Moral Law, in several Latin American countries, the Church has been successful in instructing the parties concerned. He/she cites the example of Colombia, but having visited that country in 2006 for an international seminar on violence and terrorism and having directed doctoral dissertations and theses for Licentiate of Colombian students at the Pontifical Alphonsian Academy in Rome on the same subject for the past 10 years or so, I have no evidence to support this claim of the author. Rather all evidence that I have gathered indicate that the local Church there has not succeeded (though it is a predominantly Catholic country) in getting the warring parties to listen to the Church!

- The writer of that article is also correct in saying that the Holy See has always voiced a defence of Inter-

national Humanitarian Law. In fact, in the contemporary world, it is only the Catholic Church which is a credible, impartial voice in this regard, and thus, even prophetic. However, the same Holy See, beginning with Pope Pius XII (in his Christmas Radio message of 1944) has also voiced aloud the need to have a credible, impartial international organization to enforce International Law in various parts of the world. To have a certain law is one thing, but to impose it impartially and credibly is completely another. Even after the establishment of the United Nations, Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI have explicitly called for such an impartial world authority, thus implying that the UN is no longer credible in enforcing the International Law impartially. Ever since the collapse of the then super power, the Soviet Union in late 1980's, the sole super power of the world has been the United States. The wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, the ex-Yugoslavian Republics and the unceremonious removal of Saddam Hussein and Muammar Quaddafi (dictatorial leaders whom the US led Western nations once supported to achieve their political objectives, but later, they wanted to get rid of them!), are all concrete examples that show how the UN has been manipulated or even ignored whenever the West wanted to do so. Moreover, other dictatorial, undemocratic leaders in the world such as those in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, etc. are not only tolerated but have the full backing of the West through the UN simply because they are counted as Western allies, a qualification which Sri Lanka lacks. Which of the Western violations of International Law has been subjected to an international inquiry? In such a background, what is the credibility of those who selectively call for an international inquiry only against Sri Lanka, and that too, only against the last phase of the war?

- The writer of that article unveils his/her true intent in writing this piece when he says: "Unfortunately the Church has not been able to spread the teaching to the foes in our country. So people in the South justify any and all violations of the humanitarian law and the laws of war." This is surely a gross exaggeration, a deliberate distortion and a very selective interpretation of ground facts! First of all, he/she never identifies who those "foes" are?! Is this a time to divide our people as "friends" and "foes" and thus inflict further wounds on our already wounded nation? Can the writer credibly establish that all people in the South "justify any and all violations...." as he/she alleges? Inversely, can he/she also establish credibly that people in the North do not justify the LTTE atrocities, and find fault only with the government? If the people in the South are so insensitive to violations of humanitarian law as the writer tries to make us believe, then, how come that the Tamil civilians who were fleeing violence of both sides during the war, decided to settle down among those very Southerners and some of them continue to live in the South even today? The above-mentioned assertions of the writer are over-generalized, simplistic, rhetorical statements that are sweet music to those who are still hell-bent to divide out people and our country. They surely are not helpful in anyway for reconciliation of our diverse communities.

- What sort of justice does the

writer of that article expect from an international inquiry? Who conducted such an inquiry even after the awfully, unprecedented atrocities at the end of the Second World War? It was the victors of that World War (the Western nations) who established the Nuremberg tribunals to judge their own atrocities and the outcome was to blame and condemn only their enemies! Does the writer of that article expect that sort of vindictive justice, that further divides our already bruised communities? The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka has always tried to bring reconciliation based on justice to all concerned in our country, even during the height of war and terrorist intimidations of the the LTTE. The Church has never stood for vindictive justice that divides and hurts further our communities. The Church is all out to promote restorative justice, that is justice that builds peace and reconciliation. Which sort of justice is more in accord with the Gospel?

- My last question to the writer of that article is: Where was he/she when the LTTE was destroying and murdering not just the Sinhalese civilians but also Tamil civilians? Where was he/she when the same LTTE was annihilating any and every opponent of their so-called "cause"? Where was he/she when the LTTE was forcefully recruiting children as soldiers to fight on their behalf? The International Humanitarian Law of which that writer is so selectively and rhetorically vociferous applies also to any and all warring parties, including the LTTE! Merely saying that the LTTE is no more is no response because those who promoted the LTTE in every sense of the word, such as the Tamil National Alliance, the Tamil Diaspora, etc. are still alive and they too should be held accountable.

In what I have written above, my main concern is to highlight that during a war against terrorism (during any war for that matter!), there are no black and white moral issues. There are many grey areas on either side. As such, to limit oneself only to the last phase of the war in 2009, and then, to take only one side of the war to task, is itself an injustice! This is because that war was launched not without a reason/cause, namely, the LTTE terrorist intimidations to ordinary daily living. Then, we might rightly ask: Why did the LTTE come into being? Again, there are many reasons/causes some of which are still not addressed. So, can we be so simplistic if not naive as the writer of that article seems to be in projecting reality in clear cut categories of black and white? Will an international inquiry solve all the problems of justice and peace in this country or will it not create further problems that would never be solved? These questions should not be avoided by anyone who involves in any serious discourse on peace-building and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Of course, the key to peace and reconciliation based on justice at this moment is in the hands of the government, in the hands of our Executive President. But unfortunately, their deafening silence and glaring indifference about the implementation of the very resolutions proposed by their own LLRC will in no way help to build peace in our country, but rather would further increase the bizarre calls for international inquiries as that of the writer of that article, based of course on flimsy grounds.

Rev. Fr. Vimal Tirimanna, CSSR

# Restore Vision Naturally With Eye Exercises and Diet

## How Eye Exercises Help:

Eye exercises play a major role in managing sight problems such as eye irritation, eye pain, eye blurriness, itchy eyes, eye infection, eye dryness, etc.

## Eye Exercise Instructions:

Including eye exercise in your regular exercise schedule is important. Do not be hasty to perform the exercise. Sit down, be calm and relaxed. Then do the eye exercises. The whole exercise needs only 25 minutes. Take it slowly first and then gradually increase to the required duration. Do not strain your eyes.

## Eye Concentration:

Mark a small black spot on the wall of your home with a black pen. Sit down comfortably on a blanket or a chair. Start focusing at the black spot for as long as you can. This will help make your eyes strong.

## Eye Open and Close:

Open your eyes wide and close it tight. (Be gentle in doing this exercise to avoid eye pain). Repeat for ten times with one second pause on each set.

## Eye Rolling:

Roll your eyes clockwise for 5 counts, followed by anti-clockwise movement for another 5 counts. This strengthens your eye muscles.

## Eye Movement:

Move your eyes up and down slowly. Then from left to



right for 5 counts each to enhance flexibility of eye movement.

## Eye Twitching:

Blink your eyes frequently to improve nourishment to the eye muscles to avoid dryness.

## Blood Circulation to Eyes:

Yoga too has a great impact on eye health.

## Food that is Good for Eyes:

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Carrot         | 7. Cold-water Fish |
| 2. Eggs           | 8. Collard Greens  |
| 3. Milk           | 9. Grapefruits     |
| 4. Apricots       | 10. Grapes         |
| 5. Berries        | 11. Lemons         |
| 6. Black Currants | 12. Spinach        |
|                   | 13. Fish Oils      |

## What is Harmful for your Eyes:

1. Foods and additives containing Mono sodium Glutamate (MSG)
2. Looking directly at the sun.
3. Drugs which are harmful to the eyes.
4. Cell phone games may also be harmful

## - A Spiritual Reflection

Mission of Jesus completed

- TOTAL NUMBER -

**26**

Special places in the Life of Jesus

Bethlehem	+ Nazareth	+ Jerusalem	
2	+14	+10	= 26

## Some influential characters in the Life of Jesus

Angel Gabriel	+ Judas Iscariot	+ Joseph of Aramatheae	
7	+ 9	+ 10	= 26

## Some figures in the Life of Jesus

Manger	+ Emptied to love	+ Cross	
18	+ 5	+ 3	= 26

## Some items at His death

Nails	+ Cross	+ INRI	
14	+ 3	+9	= 26

## Born to love + Taught to love + Died for love

2	+ 20	+ 4	= 26
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## Love your God + Love your Neighbour + Love Your Enemy

7	+ 14	+ 5	= 26
---	------	-----	------

## Jesus fulfilled the mission of G+O+D

7	+ 15	+ 4	= 26
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(Total amount of the letters written here)

LOVE	YOURSELF	AND	LOVE	YOUR	GOD	
4	+ 8	+ 3	+ 4	+ 4	+ 3	= 26

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

## A CROSS The Way

By Sirohmi Gunasekera

### Jealousy

"My, she is really very pretty. I am so jealous. I am practically ugly when compared with her," thought Hema as she shared her private thought with Rehena.

"I am glad you told me. Jealousy is so common but you and I must offer the feeling up to God without saying or doing anything about it. That is the only way to handle Jealousy which can be very destructive," commented Rehena.

"You are right. I have often said and done bad things due to Jealousy. It is so common and we all feel that it is okay because the feeling is shared. Most of us are jealous of a good-looking person

while others are jealous of wealth," said Hema.

"Yes, Good Looks and Riches are two major factors causing Jealousy and I have traced both to the early conditioning from the Fairy Tale. In the fairy tale, the pretty girl gets to marry the rich and handsome prince and little children begin to think that they must be good-looking and end up rich. They begin to think that if one is good-looking, one ends up marrying a rich prince and living happily ever after," chimed in Shirin, a psychologist.

"I never thought of that. All of us were exposed to the Fairy Tale as our first book and we never questioned the values imparted by the story. Most of us think that it is okay to feel jealous of a good-looking or rich person. I also know that a pretty or rich girl is aware of jealousy and tries to hide her wealth. But good looks cannot be hidden!" said Hema.

"Besides, no-one lives happily ever after for each day brings its share of ups and downs. Anyway, a person has moods and no-one is always happy! Let's first pray to handle our Jealousy," concluded Rehena.

(Contd from last week)

# Your Wedding in the Catholic Church

Canonical, Liturgical and Pastoral Guidelines for Catholic Marriages in the Archdiocese of Colombo

## Selecting your musicians

Very often, parishes have a list of their own musicians who have been trained and will be happy to assist you in planning and ministering the music and singing for your wedding. In accord with the primary focus of the celebration, all instrumentalists and vocal musicians should fulfill their roles as ministers of the liturgy, and their location in the Church needs to reflect this. It is also important that those serving as musicians for your wedding be truly competent. This competency includes a thorough understanding of the structure of the Catholic wedding liturgy.

## Selecting your music

The Church has set forth guidelines regarding the

music in any liturgy, including that for weddings, music you choose for your wedding should be assessed using the same criteria: Liturgical, pastoral, musical.

- **Liturgical:** Is the music appropriate to the liturgy and celebration? Songs which are appropriate for the reception or the wedding party, that originate from movie soundtracks, are inappropriate for liturgy.
- **Pastoral:** Does the music allow for the assembly participation?
- **Musical:** Is it easily singable by the assembly? Is music creating an atmosphere conducive to prayer?

In order to avoid any

inconveniences inform the choir that their role is not to demonstrate their talents but to help and lead the congregation in singing and prayer. Hence, solo singing is not allowed at Church weddings. It is also important to note that the hymns that you select are already approved by the National or Diocesan Liturgy Commission.

## Liturgical environment and decorations.

You may already have some ideas about decorations for your wedding, but be sure to check with the Parish Priest to see if they have any policies on decorations before you make your plans. There may already be plants, flowers, or other decorative objects in the Church depending on the liturgical sea-

son and time of year. You will want to check with the Parish Priest to find out what kind of environment will already be in place at the time of your wedding. Always bear in mind that the decorations in the Church should complement the assembly's celebration, and not hinder or get in the way of it.

The placement of floral decorations is of utmost concern. Flowers or plants should not be placed on the Altar or ambo. Containers and stands should be placed in appropriate areas, so as not to obscure the Altar, ambo or chairs for the Priest celebrating and the couple.

## Photography

Most couples today choose to have photographers

and/or videographers record their marriage. In the Archdiocese we have guidelines that your photographer and/or videographer need to follow:

- They should keep to the sacredness of the rite of marriage.
- They are not permitted within the sanctuary space.
- No photographs during the Eucharistic Prayer.
- No repetition is to be done in the Liturgy at their request.
- They should not distract the couple unnecessarily especially during the rite of Marriage.

(Contd. next week)

(Courtesy: Archdiocesan Liturgical Service)





**Art  
& Architecture  
in Liturgy**

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

February 22 is the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter. And yes, there is a physical object known as "the Chair of St. Peter."

#### What is the Chair of Peter?

On the one hand, there is a physical object—an ancient, ornamented chair—located in the apse of St. Peter's Basilica. On the other hand, there is the spiritual authority that this chair represents.

#### What is the physical Chair of St. Peter?

This object known as the *Cathedra Petri* (Latin, "Chair of Peter"), is located in the apse of St. Peter's Basilica. It is behind the famous altar, on the far, back wall, below the well-known, stained glass image depicting the Holy Spirit as a dove. This display contains an ancient chair that has been repaired and ornamented over time. The Catholic Encyclopedia states of the original chair: The entire height of the chair is about four feet seven inches.

According to examination made by experts during early times, the oldest portion is a perfectly plain oaken arm-chair with four legs connected by cross-bars. The wood is much worm-eaten, and pieces have been cut from various spots at different times, evidently for relics. To the right and left of the seat four strong iron rings, intended for carrying-poles, are set into the legs.

#### How has the chair changed over time?

Various modifications have been made to the chair, to repair and ornament it. Most notably, the famous Italian artist/architect Bernini (1598-1680) created the current display. The Catholic Encyclopedia notes: During the Middle Ages it was customary to exhibit the chair

# Did St. Peter really sit in this chair?

yearly to the faithful; the newly-elected Pope was also solemnly enthroned on this venerable chair. However in order to preserve for posterity this precious relic, Alexander VII (1655-67) enclosed, the designs of Bernini, above the apsidal altar of St. Peter's in a gigantic casing of bronze, supported by the four Doctors of the Church (Ambrose, Augustine, Athanasius, Chrysostom).

#### Did St. Peter really sit in this chair?

In the early 20th century, the Catholic Encyclopedia stated: We conclude, therefore, that there is no reason for doubting the genuineness of the relic preserved at the Vatican, and known as the *Cathedra Petri*. However, since that time the fields of history and archaeology have advanced considerably, and, when Pope Benedict addressed the subject in 2006 and 2012, he spoke in a more reserved way, saying: Dear brothers and sisters, in the apse of St Peter's Basilica, as you know, is the monument to the Chair of the Apostle, a mature work of Bernini. It is in the form of a great bronze throne supported by the statues of four Doctors of the Church: Two from the West, St Augustine and St Ambrose, and two from the East: St John Chrysostom and St Athanasius [General Audience, February 22, 2006]. Then again in 2012: The Chair of St Peter, represented in the apse of the Vatican Basilica is a monumental sculpture by Bernini. It is a symbol of the special mission of Peter and his Successors to tend Christ's flock, keeping it united in faith and in charity [Angelus, Feb. 19, 2012]. He thus placed less emphasis on the archaeological authenticity of the chair than on its spiritual significance.

#### What is the spiritual significance of the feast the Chair ?

According to Pope Benedict: This is a very ancient tradition, proven to have existed in Rome since the fourth century. On this day we give thanks to God for the mission He entrusted to the Apostle Peter and his Successors. "*Cathedra*" literally means the established seat of the Bishop, placed in the mother church of a diocese which for this reason is known as a "cathedral"; it is the symbol of

the Bishop's authority and in particular, of his "magisterium," that is, the evangelical teaching which, as a successor of the Apostles, he is called to safeguard and to transmit to the Christian Community.

The See of Rome, after St Peter, thus came to be recognised as the See of the Successor of Peter, and its Bishop's "*cathedra*" represented the mission entrusted to him by Christ to tend his entire flock.



CHAIR OF ST. PETER (Vatican Basilica)



## Road to Pulmoddai Part one by Kishanie S. Fernando

It was a bright and sunny day in Trincomalee, even though the weather forecast had predicted rain.

We were all set to drive up north of Trincomalee to visit the mineral rich beaches of Pulmoddai and Arisimalai. It would be a 50 km drive from Trincomalee on route B424, assured to be one of the best roads in the country. I was looking forward to the journey since it was not far back in 2002 that we had visited the village of Tiriyaya along the same road. That was during the 30-year-civil war between the Tamil Liberation Tigers and Sri Lanka Government. It was definitely not the best time to travel to the east coast. But then, who would have thought the war will ever end! At least during our life time!

#### Story in 2002

I remember getting ready for the 2002 trip. Maps and guide books did not afford any reliable information on the situation then. Many people advised us against making that trip. But we would not listen and ended up in Trincomalee quite late in the evening with no place to stay. It was Fr. Olvan, the Parish Priest of Palaiyoothu who came to our rescue and offered his own room for the night. Over dinner we informed him that we intended to visit the Tiriyaya Vatadage the next morning. Possibly quite taken aback but still very accommodating he introduced us to Fr. Marcelia who was then the Parish Priest of Nilaveli. Fr. Marcelia, we were told travelled weekly by scooter taking Holy Communion for the small Catholic communities who lived in Kuchchaveli and Pulmoddai.

So there, we were the next morning having breakfast at the Nilaveli Mission House which was falling into pieces. There were gaping holes in the roof, electric wires hung loose and the effects of war seemed to be deeply felt here with everything looking hopelessly depressed if not for a bright new fridge which looked so out of place. After breakfast we started off on the narrow broken road towards Tiriyaya carefully maneuvering our jeep between pot holes, ruts, drains humps and security check points.

We crossed bridges over at least two lagoons one of which I remember was named *Salapayaru*. The road was deserted. There was nothing but wilderness and barbed wire fences on either side of the road only broken in by lagoons, deserted golden beaches and turquoise seas. Rarely we passed a man tending a crop of onion or tobacco and on those occasions they would stop their work to look suspiciously at our vehicle. No one smiled. Most of these people were from the refugee camps in the out skirts of Trincomalee we were told. At Kuchchaveli near the church which was almost in front of the police station the road was diverted to avoid the army camp.

From here we had to take the Kallampaththai Road. This was more of a sandy path which cut through the forest and which disappeared completely more than once. There were absolutely no road signs and no one in sight to find out if you were lost. We had to trust the instinct of Fr. Marcelia who directed us to take left turns and right turns, while relating tales of wild elephants. I remember the trees, bushes and grasses on route bursting with colour, and where the fields stretched flat on either side of the road a tiny purple wild flower spreading endless royal carpets. After some time we reached the Tiriyaya village and the track forked towards the Girikandi-caitya west of the village on a summit of a small hill. Well that was the story in 2002!



#### Ten years later

Ten years from 2002, the scene was unbelievably different. A wide carpeted road invited us to proceed up north on the eastern coastline. Smart modern bridges spanned the successive lagoon crossings. Lamp posts stood guard on either side of the road and telecommunication towers rose sky high from the fields. The road sides were populated with blocks of newly built houses in military precision. Home gardens, farms and salt pans seemed to be busy prospering. There were people walking on the road, vehicles, cattle etc. It was like any other village in the country except that everything looked so bright and new. Before we knew it we had reached Kuchchaveli which had taken much labour and longer back in 2002.

At Kuchchaveli the road forked with one leading towards Tiriyaya and the other riding the coastline, heading up north to Pulmoddai. The Kuchchaveli Church stood on one side of the road dwarfed by the new road now elevated and running in front of the Church. The police station, the former army camp, and an archeological site stood on the opposite side. From here on the scenery seemed to change from the busy village to the idyllic pastoral. Paddy fields spread in endless green. Men could be seen working the fields with modern machinery. Squads of palmyrah palms stood to attention from time to time.



We also passed thick jungle areas. Peacocks seem to abound the area and several crossed the road in front of our speeding vehicle. The lagoon scenery was my favourite, with motley tree-scapes in different shades of green over which the odd coconut palm would rise. Where the river met the sea colourful fiberglass boats filled every available space. While the vision of endless blue horizons, golden beaches and cluster boulders made perfect pictures that challenged the photographer in you.

#### Return Road

At this point it is interesting to recall our return journey in 2002. Fr. Marcelia decided to bring us back via the Pudavaikattuwa ferry. The route was shorter by many miles but the wait for the ferry was long. However we busied ourself exploring the lagoon waters whose muddy banks were filled with fish that had legs. The waiting however was worth the while, for it was the first time and possibly the last time - we jeep and all, traveled by ferry across a water way.

But ten years from then, the return trip from Pulmoddai is different, as you speed back crossing modern cantilever bridges, skirting busy fishing harbors and bathing beaches of east coast.

Next week visiting the Kuchchaveli Church, St. Sebastian's Sagarapura and the Tiriyaya Vatadage.





# The Hearth Keeps Burning

The hearth is kept burning by a Loving, Caring GOD in the life of Perpetual Help Sisters.

GOD keeps His Word from age to age,  
Is with us to the end of days  
A cloud by day, a flame by night  
To go before us on His Ways.

Today, it is very common and fashionable and from every nook and corner, we hear the word "Jubilee and Celebrations"- Copper, Silver, Gold, Diamond and Sapphire jubilees of priesthood, religious life, married life, or of any congregation, church or establishment.

The provenance of the word jubilee is "jobel" from the Hebrew language. It means the horn of a ram which is formed like a small trumpet. In the Old Testament a "jobel" or trumpet was used to announce a jubilee year.

So, our Congregation is proclaiming this double jubilee, 85 years since the arrival of the first group of Sisters in 1929 to our shores from their native country Belgium and the 60th Anniversary - Diamond Jubilee of the establishment of the novitiate in Periyamulla in 1954.

## AT A GLANCE Belgium

Born in 1733, Johanna Francisca Maximiliana Amerlinck, our Mother Foundress was touched by the flame of God's compassionate love. Coming from a noble wealthy family; she abandoned everything in the service of the poor, especially women and girls. It is recorded that she even pawned her clothes. Tortiter Et Efficaciter"- Fortitude and Efficacy being her motto and trusting in Divine Providence, she stepped out of her comfort zone, to start the first "House of Charity" in 1768 and became the first Superior General of a new religious group, building a new generation, with a Rule of Life, that went against the existing monastic way of life. Touched by the flame of God's love, she manifested qualities of poverty, simplicity and humility which attracted many other ladies to her first "House of Charity." For 42 years, the Lord led her through many trails and challenges- even confisca-



tion of property. On many occasions her sisters, ladies and children extolled her virtues. In 1810, the flame of her life ebbed away only to flow across the seas.

### The Hearth keeps burning across the seas:

1. At Ragama T.B. Hospital
2. At Ragama School
3. At the Novitiate at Periyamulla

### Convents at:

1. Thimbirigasyaya
2. Negombo (Kochchikade)
3. Gothatuwa
4. Pitipana
5. Eppawela
6. Lunuwila

### Decisive turn of History

June 6, 1982 was a red letter day in the history of our congregation, when we became a local diocesan congregation under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Colombo, His Grace Nicholas Marcus Fernando, with our own local Superior General. The Generalate is now in Periyamulla, Negombo. A new and difficult step began, where we drafted our own Constitution drawn up with the help of experts and the consultation of the Sisters. A specific feature of this Constitution is its attempt to "localize" Religious life adapted to our own culture, with emphasis on the traditional and other-faith values of our people.

### 1. Rajagiriya

After the Fourth General Chapter in the year 1996 on March 13, the Perpetual Help Convents started at Rajagiriya.

### 2. Weralugama

As an extension of the apostolate for hearing impaired, we were able to start a Training Centre for the deaf youth, for their self-employment at Weralugama.

### 3. Moratuwa.

The training centre for the deaf youth of the St. Joseph's Past Pupils Welfare Association of the deaf was functioning as "Sew Smart" in a small rented house at Wattala temporarily.

Another branch of our apostolate for the hearing impaired was started at Dalugama-Kelaniya. With simple, humble, difficult beginnings in 1982, it has grown very much to be a huge-big tree giving shelter to many hearing impaired children, irrespective of any region, creed and caste. Today it is known - CEHIC -Centre for Education of Hearing Impaired Children.

### Cyprus: This is Our First Mission Abroad.

After the seventh General Chapter, our Sisters being a Cyprus and working for the Sri Lankan mi-

grants women for the last 11 years, felt that God is calling them, to extend their joyful and generous service to Sri Lankan migrant women in Israel. In the year 2013 November two Sisters accepted the challenge to move on to Israel.

### Present Focus:

At our fourth General Chapter, guided by the power of the Holy Spirit, we, the Perpetual Help Sisters formulated the Vision and Mission Statements enabling us to move forward in our apostolate. As our focus for the present we ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us and guide us on the right path.

**Our Vision:** Journeying together towards the fullness of a new creation nourished by a spiritual force.

**Our Mission:** Rooted in Christ, we commit ourselves to be constantly challenged by the poor and needy especially women and girls and to be fellow struggles with them to a liberated life.

### Our future Thrust:

At our seventh General Chapter we formulated together, our Charism and Spirituality as our guiding Flame and Star for the future into new unknown horizons.

### Charism:

Trusting in Divine Providence, living out the compassionate Love of God, in simplicity and fortitude.

### Spirituality:

Our spirituality is an on-going God-Consciousness, lived out like Mother Mary, through a simple way of life, with fortitude, trusting in Divine Providence, responding relevantly to the signs of the times, with compassionate love.

In each era what has kept, the flames of the hearth blazing are the powerful inspiration of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. In all our needs, we have run to her for help. Just as the icon portrays Jesus turning to His Mother in the face of the cross. While being her faithful daughters, we do all within our power to lead others to her as well.

We lift our minds and hearts in gratitude to Almighty God for all the blessings He has lavished on us and our congregation, since the inception.

*Sr. Rose Fernando. P.H.*



## Gifts from Sri Lanka to His Holiness



*"The Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka at Tewatte, whose 75th anniversary of consecration falls this year, remains a covenant of God with her pilgrim people in this part of the world which should serve as a symbol of God's perennial pact with all humanity that seeks with all their strength the path to true peace" the Holy Father said.*



# The Migrant Sri Lankan Community with His Holiness





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



## The Mystery of Purgatory

In the Book of Job of the Old Testament it is stated, "Eventually God revealed to him, that it is not for man to know the reason for God's plan, but simply to accept God's wisdom and to submit himself to His Providence"

Almost everyone has someone near and dear to them who are in need of prayer to lessen their stay in purgatory. They are anxiously and patiently awaiting our intervention on - their behalf to assist them enter heaven and enjoy the beatific vision of God with His angels and saints glorifying Him.

This is what every soul in purgatory is longing for it is therefore our duty to help them reach their goal. We are also aware that there are souls who are abandoned. They too need our prayers. Scripture says, "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead." Hence it is a charitable act to remember them.

St. Augustine in his '*Confessions*,' says, his mother, St. Monica had requested him in her last moments of life to remember her during the holy sacrifice of the Mass. We should do the same to our dear departed ones. Unfailingly and lovingly.

BEN COREA

## "In the land of the Dutch, Dutch, Dutch"

Referene to the article on the "Dutch Burgher Community - A Legacy of the Dutch" published in the 'Messenger' dated January 26, may I add the following to complete the picture.

1.) The Roman-Dutch Law, now in vogue, in our Judicial System is an equally important legacy of the Dutch.

2) The Dutch Breudher, equivalent to our Christmas Cake together with the Dutch Edam Ball Cheese is now a delicacy.

3) Our Sinhala and Hindu New Year is never complete without "KOKIS" introduced by the Dutch.

4) Words such as Ispirithala, Isthoppuwa, *Tharappuwa* and *Bamma*, are essentially Dutch in origin.

Roggy Corera  
Kundasale

## Sixty Diamond Years in law

Ms. Rosmary de Fonseka recently completed 60 years (diamond jubilee) of practice as an Attorney-at-Law and continues to work as a lawyer.

A long time parishioner of St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya and now at Sacred Heart Church, Rajagiriya, Rosemary has also served as Honorary Consul for Spain

She is well known for offering her services pro bono to those who cannot afford professional fees.

Her friends and clients recently felicitated her on reaching this milestone which was preceded by a Thanksgiving Mass.

Anton Peiris  
Colombo 4

## Appreciation

## Ordination of new priest to the Diocese of Ratnapura

The Ordination of Rev. Deacon Anushka Fernando will take place on February 27, 2014. He was born on August 10, 1982 in Kurana and is the son of Mr. Cashian Fernando and Mrs. Philomen Perera. He completed his primary education at St. Anne's Vidyalaya, Kurana and secondary studies at Loyola College, Negombo.



In 1998 he entered the Franciscan (TOR) Juniorate in Negombo. In 2000 he joined the Minor Seminary of Immaculate Heart of Mary in Kegalle. In 2003 he entered the 'Daham Sevana' Seminary in Kalutara, and then completed his Philosophical and Theological studies at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka Ampitiya, Kandy.

As a major Seminarian he served in the parishes of Balangoda, Rakwana, Embilipitiya and in the Intergral English Academy at Bulutota in Sooriyakanda.

As a deacon he served in the parishes of Thalankuda in the Batticaloa Diocese and Bulathkohupitiya in the Ratnapura diocese. He will be ordained by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura at 9.30 am at Risen Christ Church, Kadolkelle, Negombo by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera, OSB, Bishop of Ratnapura.

He will celebrate his first Holy Eucharist at St. Anne's Church, Kurana on March 2, at 8.00 a.m.

Rev. Fr. Ayal Fernando

## Final Farewell: Eymard de S Wijeyeratne

Our daughters join me to recall the memory of my dear husband Eymard, a loving, devoted and caring husband to me, and an equally loving, caring and devoted father to Devika, Indira and Kisani. He was our life, our treasure, our future, joy and pride. Now he is no longer physically alive among us, the bright light of our lives has been lost. He was so dear to us and so noble a person, that writing this tribute of appreciation is very painful. "Eymard, you were a cut above all others, showing greatness of character."



We started the day attending Holy Mass and partaking of the Eucharist. We had a precious married life together for 52 years. He was gentle to one and all and his priority was family after God. A hero to his five adorable adult grand children and an open-hearted father-in-law to his 3 sons-in-law. Eymard tells me, "Dorinda, do you know my problem is that I have no problems."

Educated at St. Peter's College, Colombo he passed the Senior School Certificate in 1951 with a distinction in Greek and entered the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. At the final examination in an Arts Degree (Special) Course in 1958 offering the subject of Philosophy, he obtained a Second Class Upper Division. He commenced his career in government service. He then joined Shell's Sri Lanka operations and subsequently served at the newly formed Ceylon Petroleum Corporation. He ended his working career at Qatar General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC) in Doha, Qatar as a Senior Research Economist.

His abilities and interests varied. He was a visiting lecturer at the Aquinas University College in Philosophy and Mathematical Logic, and lectured in Economic Analysis and Quantitative Techniques at CIMA, Sri Lanka Branch for students sitting the ICMA, UK examinations. He also lectured at the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA), the subject covered being English. Music was another favourite of his, especially classical music. He was a member of the Philharmonic Choir under the leadership of the late Lyle Godridge. Thereafter he was the President of the Choir for over 15 years. Humble and unassuming though he was, you were aware of the wealth of knowledge that was within him. Eymard had a God given talent to put pen to paper with a high degree of clarity and precision, with a masterly command of the usage of the English language.

A loyal son of the Holy Mother the Church, he was courageous enough to make the hierarchy and the clergy aware of the short comings and areas that needed change. He was outspoken and did not hesitate to call a spade a spade. Many misunderstood him. It is said that a prophet is without honour in his own country. Those who understood him in his writings called him "A Prophet of our times"; "Seeker of the truth"; "A proud son of Sri Lanka"; "A well read intellectual writer."

God Our father wanted him to live forever with Him. We through our tears have graciously offered him back to the Lord.

"Eymard, you have fought the good fight, you have finished the race and kept the faith. May the Son of God accept you into His warm embrace."

Dorinda de S. Wijeyeratne

## Miracle hands of a surgeon

Music is my life. It is also my vocation. I started my career as a musician in 1984, singing at various hotels and night clubs. I also have the ability to play a few musical instruments equally well. When situation demands I also take part as a vocalist. Teaching music is also a part of my career.

About 3 1/2 years ago I felt that the left lobe of my neck was slightly swollen. Doctors diagnosed it as an inflammation of the Thyroid Gland. I was made to understand by friends and relatives that doing a lobectomy was risky as I might lose my voice too. As a result I sought treatment from various doctors who assured me complete cure. I took treatment from them. Some turned out to be quacks who gave



Former General Surgeon at Polonnaruwa Hospital  
Dr. Gamini Abeysinghe

me various concoctions but was of no avail. I felt so petrified, dejected and desolate.

It was at that time Mr. Basil Wickramasooriya who is a pharmacologist came to my life. This special person took an interest in my condition and

after a few tests was able to diagnose my problem.

With him on September 26, I met this blessed and hallowed person by the name of Dr. Gamini Abeysinghe surgeon par excellence. I was made to understand that this is not a serious operation anymore. After giving his words of encouragement he asked me to admit myself on December 8 to the Polonnaruwa Hospital.

In the early hours of the 8th I boarded a bus to Kaduruwela with the help of Mr. Amith Shantha and entered Polonnaruwa Hospital.

The strong mental frame necessary to undergo a serious operation of



this nature was created by the surgeon and I entered the operating theater without any fear and on the December 9. I was operated by a team of doctors led by Dr. Gamini Abeysinghe. It lasted 2 1/2 hours and I was told when I gained consciousness that it was a total success. I thanked Dr. Gamini profusely and he advised me to remain

silent for some time.

The recuperative care given by doctors Dharshana, Namal and Muditha should be admired and I was discharged from the hospital on the 11th.

Many people asked me why I entered Polonnaruwa Hospital when there is a good hospital in Kurunegala. It may be divine providence that led me to an able surgeon late Dr. Gamini Abeysinghe and the Polonnaruwa Hospital. Health Minister Hon. Maithripala Sirisena should be commended for making Polonnaruwa Hospital a best equipped Hospital with an equally good staff.

Concluding this

letter I must write a few lines about Dr. Abeysinghe. I found him to be an extremely pleasant person who showers his patients with kind words and encouragement. It was a very pleasant sight to see him accompanied by his medical students going from bed to bed talking to patients.

I must also thank Mr. Milan, Kamal, Amith Shantha, Mrs. Shriya and Siriya for their excellent service. The medical students who visited me at ward 20 also deserve a special word of thanks,

May the Good Lord bless them all!

Chandana Fernando  
Kurunegala



# A LETTER TO MARY



Dear Mother Divine,

I am writing to you like I pray with great trust, deep respect and love, knowing that you are very dear and near and infinitely attentive. Filled by this Marian Year overflowing with grace, we would like to follow your example of meditating on these events in our hearts and praise the Lord.

We are sure, if we follow you we will not stray. If we contemplate about you, we will discover the Saviour. Loving you will make us love Jesus who will spread to us the joy of God.

So encourage us to follow the road that you first followed. Help us to tread the Marian path which unites everything with love. For you are our hope and our strength.

May this year be a Magnificent adventure

of people going forward with you, keeping God's Commandments and following the Lamb wherever He may.

We would like to take time, to meditate on your call, to live the Gospel as much as possible and to do what Jesus tells us to do.

We thank Our Lord for giving you as our mother. You are our precious, sacred treasure from Jesus.

Intercede, Dear Mother, so that this Marian Year which is consecrated to you brings special blessings for us and helps us to recognise the presence of Jesus, Our Saviour as we live from day to day.

Your Obedient daughter,  
Irene Costa

## Mother Mary and Jesus Today .....

For Marian Year.....  
A Reflection based on Mary's visitation to Elizabeth

Luke 1:39-45



Blessed are you among women

"And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry,

"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

And why is this granted me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?"

### Reflection for Life

Faithfully speaking Mother Mary in her pregnancy never failed to visit her kinswoman in order to show her willingness that she too was with Elizabeth. In other words Mary while carrying Jesus in her womb witnessed that she is the authentic agent for God's presence. In that incident, we could carefully grasp certain hidden characteristics from the life of Mary.

1. Helping
2. Hearing
3. Hoping

### Today's Reflection

1. Do I help willingly without being asked when the need arises?
2. Do I expect admiration from others?
3. Do I hope to change for the better for God?

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

## Taking care of the God given Creation

At the beginning God created the sun, moon, stars, trees, rivers, animals etc. But God was not satisfied because He wanted someone to look after what He had created. So He thought of making man. Man was created in God's own image and likeness. Man was told to look after what God had created. Even though man was created and given all these treasures to look after, man felt very lonely and bored.

God thought about this and then the woman was created. Both man and woman lived happily and God too was pleased. But then, God had told them not to eat the fruit of the 'Forbidden Tree' and the devil tempted the woman and both Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. They were then chased away from the garden because they had committed Sin.

This creation given to us is a God-given gift which we must take care of and protect. So if we love God, we must love Nature and protect it.



Kavin Gandadhara  
Class 10  
Christ the King, Sunday School

## FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is defined in millions of ways and is one of the most important things in our life. It is a relationship that has many dimensions and styles. Friendship may be between two or more and there is no comparison of age, gender geography, creed, race or nationality. Friendship is a very valuable thing for the youth as well as the elders.

Many people will say, "You won't amount to anything," or "You won't make it," "You won't succeed," etc. However, these people forget the heroes standing behind them. The brave warriors, peace makers and freedom fighters. These heroes hold our lives together when we feel we are falling apart. They will be with us no matter who or what we are and what we do.

A friend is a person

you can tell all your secrets and who would listen to you, A true friend is a person who listens, trusts, loves and shares with us.

Personally, I have developed a strong relationship with one of my friends called Anjalika. This took a couple of years to build up and we have had our moments. Anjalika has turned out to be like one of my sisters. There have been fights and rough times but we have managed to overcome them. I know that she is the shoulder that I can cry on. I have more than two or more true friends in my Sunday School. Just as the earth needs the sun to light up its surface we need friends and family, in our life.

Tharani Anne Fernando  
G. 10,

English Medium  
Pannipitya Christ the King -





## Young World

### De Mazenod welcomes new students



Grade one students of De Mazenod College, Kandana were welcomed by the Principal, Rev. Bro. Bertram Perera, Primary Staff and Students. at a ceremony held at the School Grounds.  
*Anton Jayasariya*

### Prefects' Investiture at St. Lawrence's Convent, Colombo 6



The Prefects' Investiture Ceremony of St. Lawrence Convent, took place recently with Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela, General Manager of Catholic Private Schools and the Archdiocesan Director of Education, as the Chief Guest. Forty six students were appointed as Senior Prefects, 15 students as Primary Prefects and 47 students were appointed as School Leaders for the year 2014.

### "Gunadam Kumara" of St. Sebastian's College, Kandana



Rev. Fr. Placidus De Silva, Rector of Aquinas University College, Colombo is seen printing a sash on a young Sebastianite Sashika Ishan, who was selected as "Gunadam Kumara", at the Primary Section, prize giving of St. Sebastian's College, Kandana.  
*Text: Anton Jayasariya  
Pic: A. J. A. Abayanayaka*

### St. Joseph's College, Wattala Athletic Meet



St. Joseph's College, Wattala held its Athletic Meet recently, with Attorney-at-Law and distinguished Old Boy of the School, Eraj De Silva, as the Chief Guest.

Addressing the students, Mr. Eraj de Silva spoke of the progress the School had made since the time he was a student of the School.

"When I observe the progress of the School I can be proud of it," he said. He commended the dedication and the personal supervision of the Rector, Rev. Fr. Ranjith Andradi.

In his address, Rev. Fr. Andradi said that during his tenure as Rector, he had given priority to build lives and character formation of children rather than developing buildings. He advised the children to carry the values inculcated in them by the School and be law-abiding citizens and a light to others.

Fr. Andradi also appreciated the services of the Deputy Principal, Rev. Fr. Kamal Kumara and the staff of School.

*Padmini Nanayakkara*

### Sports Meet at Pamunugama Gonsalves College



The Sports Meet of Pamunugama Gonsalves College, was held recently with Rev. Fr. Gratian Happuarchchi of the Ratnapura Diocese as the Chief Guest.

*Benjamin Kirihetti*

### Programme on Editorial writing for children

Children from six churches in the Pannipitiya Parish underwent a programme on Journalism and Editorial writing, which was held at Christ the King Hall, Pannipitiya under the guidance of Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Tyrone Perera.

The programme was conducted by Mr. Kumara Nayanajith of the *Gnanarthapradeepaya*.

*Manoj Nanayakkara*

### First Holy Communion at Godella Parish



Sixteen children from Dankotuwa Daham Pasala in the Parish of Godella, received their First Holy Communion recently. The first communicants are seen with the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Morris Anderson and Rev. Fr. Danushka Fernando Asst. Parish Priest.

*Gerard Fernando*



# Should there be an International Inquiry into the allegations of violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law?

## Current Affairs

The demand by the Bishops of Mannar and Jaffna that there should be an International inquiry into the allegations of violations of the Humanitarian Laws during the last phase of the war has come in for criticism from many quarters. But is the demand wrong since the Government has failed to pursue such an investigation against the military when even the Government appointed LLRC has said they should be investigated.

The LLRC recommends investigations of alleged violations of International Human Law, including incidents of attacks on civilians (9.9 and 9.37a), disappearances of persons after they surrendered or were arrested (9.23), and the credibility of the Channel 4 video that showed summary execution of civilians (9.39). But the National Action Plan (NAP), drawn up by the Government ignores or glosses over these recommendations. Rather than provide for an independent mechanism to implement accountability recommendations of the LLRC, the NAP redefines those initiatives as "ongoing" internal investigations, assigning them to the Ministry of Defense (MoD).

The Universal Church was largely responsible for the formulation and development of the International Humanitarian Law as applicable during a war or conflict. The

Government keeps saying that the Armed Forces carried out a humanitarian operation and did not violate the International Humanitarian Law during the last phase of the war. But can the Government overlook the need to investigate the allegations as pointed out by the LLRC Report. For the Churches and Christians in general the International Humanitarian Law is moral imperative in addition to it being a legal requirement under both the law of the land as well as the International Law. The Bishops' Conference opposed an International Inquiry but not a domestic inquiry. But the Government has lost all credibility for it has failed to implement undertakings on matters of human rights.

If the world community recognises this body of law as applicable during th time of war or civil conflict then the International Community conflict and the UN which expresses the will of such community cannot overlook the need to investigate any allegations of violations of such laws and fix accountability in the event that these allegations are prima facie credible enough to justify a formal inquiry.

There cannot be impunity for violations of the International Humanitarian Law. It is true that some powerful countries have had allegations against their troops too. But such States have not denied the need to inquire into them. Certainly all those against whom such allegations have been made have not been held accountable on the ground of lack of evidence

Navi Pillay, the UN official who visited the country not so long ago expressed serious concern about the prevalence of impunity in our country. Such impunity undermines the fabric of societies and is detrimental to any lasting solution to the ethnic problem. So it is necessary that States must adopt necessary measures for combating impunity in compliance with global standards. Has the Government taken credible actions to inquire into the several crimes of journalists, human rights workers and civilians in the country? The murder of Lasantha Wickrematunge is still unresolved. Ekneligoda's disappearance has not been resolved.

The UN has taken the position that "all actors in violations of the International Humanitarian Law will be held to account for their failure to abide by international human rights and humanitarian law."

It is inevitable that where Governments have failed to ensure accountability,

the international community would take an active role, by establishing ad hoc tribunals, fact-finding missions and other mechanisms. In this context the Northern Bishops can hardly be faulted for making the same demand, when the Government

## VIEW POINT

has failed to establish a credible investigation. Sinhala nationalists brand the demand of the Northern Provincial Council as an attempt to create a separate State. The Churches have an obligation to use their leverage to oppose non-compliance and hence an obligation to demand a credible investigation locally in the first instance failing which to demand an international investigation. Those who interpret such demand as a step towards secession and the creation of Eelam are seeking to demonize the Northern Provincial Council and the Bishops of the North.

The LLRC recommends "Finding a Political Solution" (9.185); "Establishing a power-Sharing Mechanism" (9.235); and "Making General Progress on Devolution" (9.236). Effectuated stakeholders, including the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), seek expanded powers for local government, including police powers, and fiscal decentraliza-

tion. It also seeks greater minority and cultural rights, including expanded use of the Tamil language in local administration. Property rights are also a priority for the TNA.

The GSL and the TNA started talks in January 2011. Over 12 months, 18 meetings have been held. The TNA tabled a number of detailed and specific proposals, to which the GSL did not respond. Government representatives did not attend the last 3 scheduled meetings. The last, round was in February 2011. Political dialogue is stalled. So the issue of violations of the humanitarian is during the last phase of the war has come up since the matter is before the United Nations Human Rights Council. One could hardly expect the Bishops to keep silent when the Church is morally bound to uphold the International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law which she herself formulated and developed over the centuries.

"Ven. Maduluwawe Thero is supposed to have stated thus Sri Lanka is a part of the international community, we have to abide by international norms, and if there is a call for an international investigation of events in the country I have no problem in agreeing. If we have nothing to hide then we can go before an international investigation and vindicate ourselves."

**Catholic Messenger  
Political Analyst**





**Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: You have the message of eternal life.**  
(1 Sam 3:9)

**LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR A**  
**16th Feb. - 23rd 2014**

**Sun: Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
Sir15:16-21; 1Cor. 2:6-10; Mt.5:17-37

**Mon:** Jas. 1:1-11; Mtk. 8:11-13

**Tue:** Jas.1: 12-18; Mk. 8: 14-21

**Wed:** Jas. 1: 19-27; Mk. 8:22-26

**Thu:** Jas. 2: 1-9; Mk. 8:27-33

**Fri:** Memorial of St. Peter Damian Bishop and Doctor  
Jas. :14-24,16; Mk. 8:34-9:1

**Sat:** Feast of Chair of St. Peter, The Apostle  
1 Pet 5:1-4; Mt. 16:13-19

**Sun: Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
Lev. 9:1,2,17,18; 1 Cor.3:16-23;  
Mt. 5:38-48

**PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**Response: Oh Lord! Hear us we pray, Oh Lord! Give us your Love.**

Heavenly Father, many are the seekers of truth and wisdom in our society. But to a few are revealed how God acts through situations and through persons by His Holy Spirit. Help us O Holy Spirit to meditate on the First and the Second Readings and to lead others to discover the wisdom of the Lord. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Oh Lord! Hear us we pray, Oh Lord! Give us your Love.**

Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the Gospel message. We pray for those who mislead others in teaching falsehood; caution us whenever we are about to use abusive language against our neighbour; may the law of love settle all our disputes with one another, remove lust from our hearts and help us whenever we are accused falsely! Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Oh Lord! Hear us we pray, Oh Lord! Give us your Love.**

Heavenly Father, give us the courage to change what we can, the serenity to accept what we can't at least momentarily and the spirit-inspired wisdom to know the difference. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Oh Lord! Hear us we pray, Oh Lord! Give us your Love.**

Bishop Javier Echevarria, the Prelate of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, made a brief visit to Sri Lanka on January 15-18 to have a firsthand view of the incipient apostolic works of Christian formation being carried out by the Prelature in Colombo.

The Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, warmly welcomed the Prelate at Katunayake airport and invited him for lunch at the Archbishop's House the following day after his arrival. The Cardinal was also pleased to give him a tour of the site and structures presently under construction of the future



# Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**First Reading:**  
**Sir. 15: 15-20**

God through Sirach points out two ways by which we could choose either God or the world. The choice is ours. Here we are advised to act out of true wisdom. This implies that we choose God and gain eternal life.

**Second Reading:**  
**1 Cor. 2: 6-10**

St. Paul writes to the Corinthian community advising them to act through God's wisdom. This wisdom is hidden, but those who are faithful will benefit by observing God's laws and commands revealed through the Spirit.

**Gospel: Mt. 5: 17-37**

Jesus tells His disciples to avoid sin. Therefore he demands purity of heart and not mere external observance of the law.

**Reflection**

Today's Readings invite us to live a higher form of life avoiding all forms of sin. We are advised to listen to the Spirit and act through God's wisdom by avoiding sinful thoughts.

We have therefore to start with the mind where thoughts are formed and then turn into action. Though the Commandments mean this, they are not precisely stated. Therefore Jesus had to interpret the Commandments. That was why he said that He had come not to abolish the law but to perfect it. It is now up to us to choose between God and the world. If we give in to human wisdom then we are choosing the world, but

if we yield into the Spirit and through the Spirit to the wisdom of God, then we choose God and will be rewarded with eternal life. These are clear in today's Readings.

In the First Reading the author Sirach formulates two ways through which we could act when it comes to living our faith. He says, "He has put before you fire and water; stretch out your hand for whichever you wish. Before man is laid life and death, whichever he chooses will be given to him. "God's wisdom is great. He has not commanded anybody to be ungodly and neither has He given anyone permission to sin. Therefore if we are moved by the wisdom of God then we are safe and are through."

The Second Reading too reminds us of the importance of placing all our trust and hope in the wisdom of God rather than on human wisdom. This wisdom of God is hidden but we could discover it with the help of the Spirit. It is said, "That no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him." God reveals these to us through the Spirit for the Spirit searches everything, even the depth of God. Therefore let us be faithful to the Lord and listen to the Spirit, so that the Spirit would guide us.

This wisdom of God and the Spirit is for us to live a life worthy of God. It is not just a matter of trying to be faithful to the Commandments to the letter and be satisfied about



it. But it should be above that. It is not just a matter of avoiding sinful action, but sin should be eradicated from our very hearts. Sin is not mere only action. It begins in our hearts as thought. Therefore we need to eradicate it at the very place it begins. Therefore Jesus had to interpret it. Therefore it is quite clear that Jesus is not trying to abolish the law. He is not even reducing the spirit of it, but He is interpreting it in the right manner. Therefore He is trying to perfect it. It should be so; for all those who love Him, will keep His commandments. And they will keep these both to the letter and to the Spirit.

**Aid Story**

A master asked his servant to clean his office. The servant cleaned it but there was a cobweb in the corner. The master saw it and reproached him. The following day a cobweb

was there again and the boy was reprimanded. The servant removed it again, but it reappeared, when the master chided him again the servant said. "I have already removed the cobweb three times." The master replied. "What you must do is not just remove the cobweb but also kill the spider."

The same thing happens to the sinner who confesses but again does not avoid the occasion and so falls again.

**Aid Story 2**

An Israelite accused an European saying, "You Europeans carried away everything from us. Religion, the Church, the Bible, the leadership of the Church, the Ten Commandments...etc."

The European answered. "We took everything from you all right, but as for the Ten Commandments we took it alright but we never kept it."

*Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos*

Benedict XVI Theological Institute at Bolawalana, Negombo, where they prayed together for the service to the Church that the institute will be able to offer.

It has been almost two years ago now since the apostolic works of Opus Dei began in Sri Lanka upon the invitation of Cardinal Ranjith. Two priests



(Contd. on Pg. 15)

**Prelate's visit ...**

**Contd. from Pg. 4**

and some lay men and women arrived towards the end of 2011 to establish two centres in Colombo. They are carrying out apostolic activities, as well, in the districts of Ja-ela and Negombo.

Bishop Echevarria met with faithful of Opus Dei and friends in the two centres of the Prelature at Rosemead Place and Torrington Avenue, respectively.

## Jesus - Bemoaned

*Emotions*

*Suffering*

*Bleeding*

*Painful*

*Burdened*

*A cross*

*In weight*

*Falls, bruiced*

*Nailed, naked*

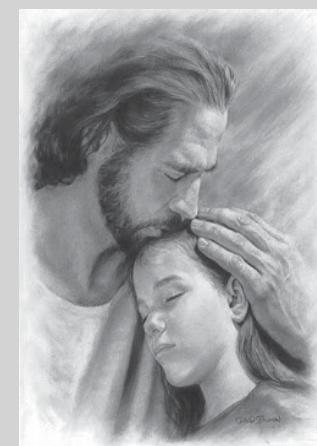
*Humiliated*

*Beg forgiveness*

*Our sins*

*We expiate*

*Until then*



*Miran Perera*



# English with Fun and Entertainment

**Dear Readers,**

In our 19th lesson we learnt some inspirational quotes, proverbs and also had the lesson 1 of our professional English level 1.

In this lesson let's learn some brain teasers, proverbs, some foreign expressions, prepositional phrases, phrasal verbs, delicate shades of meaning of some words and read a story for pleasure. This lesson is suitable for General English

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

**With Best Regards!**

*NJ*

**Task 1 : Brain teasers**

- (i) If folk is spelled Folk how do you spell the white of an egg?
- (ii) There is an ancient invention still used in some parts of the world today that allows people to see through walls. What is it?
- (iii) What always sleeps with its shoes on?
- (iv) What animal is always moaning?
- (v) What bank never has any money?

**Task 2 : Learn the proverbs with their meaning**

Proverb	Meaning
1. "Discretion is the greater part of valour."	Sometimes it's important to know when to give up and run away, instead of always acting brave and maybe getting hurt.
2. "The early bird catches the worm."	You should wake up and start work early if you want to succeed.
3. "Never look a gift horse in the mouth."	If someone offers you a gift, don't question it.
4. "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer."	If you have an enemy, pretend to be friends with them instead of openly fighting with them. That way you can watch them carefully and figure out what they're planning.
5. "You can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs."	When you try to do something great, you'll probably make a few people annoyed or angry. Don't worry about those people; just focus on the good results.
6. "You can't always get what you want."	Don't whine and complain if you don't get what you wanted.
7. "Beggars can't be choosers."	If you're asking for a favour from someone else, you have to take whatever they give you.

**Task 3: 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	f. 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 !	

**Task 4: Phrase Prepositions Fill in the blanks with the prepositional phrases given**

**according to, along with, by way of, by means of, because of, by the side of, as to, in case of, in course of, in search of,**

- 1. I have done the work ..... your instructions.
- 2. He went on a long tour ..... his friend.
- 3. Kalu Banda said nothing ..... retaliation.
- 4. Kona climbed the rock ..... a rope.
- 5. Kona did not leave the forest ..... his old hermit.
- 6. He sat down ..... of his master.
- 7. Kona did not know ..... who he was.
- 8. Pull the wire ..... of an emergency
- 9. He realized his mistake ..... time
- 10. Kona went into the forest ..... honey and venison

**Task 5: Underline the correct word within brackets similar to the meaning expressed by the phrasal verb**

- 1. The plane **took off** at 6.00 a.m. (started/stopped/landed)
- 2. Shirani **takes after** her mother. (resembles/ disapproves/argues)
- 3. Cats do not **take to** water (like, dislike, drink)
- 4. He has **taken to** drinking (stopped/started/liked)
- 5. We are all **taken up** with his kindness. (attracted by, disappointed disliked)

**Task 6: Study the delicate shades of words similar in meaning to the words given**

- 1. **big** large immense vast great gigantic huge great enormous massive mammoth
- 2. **small** -minor, unimportant trivial slight insignificant lesser trifling negligible slender
- 3. **beautiful**; lovely attractive good-looking gorgeous stunning striking handsome fine
- 4. **tall**; high big lanky lofty elevated soaring towering raised important eminent
- 5. **altruistic** unselfish humane selfless philanthropic noble self-sacrificing caring humanitarian
- 6. **brave** courageous, valiant, heroic, bold, daring, fearless audacious dauntless
- 7. **capable** accomplished, talented, proficient, skilled, gifted, clever, dexterous, exceptional
- 8. **destructive** unhelpful damaging critical negative disparaging, harsh, vicious detrimental
- 9. **efficient** well organized, effectual, effective competent resourceful proficient capable skilled
- 10. **famous** well known famed, celebrated renowned eminent proficient illustrious legendary extravagant significant

**Task 7: Reading stories for pleasure. Read the story and tell what you would do if you were Akbar, the great Mogul Emperor.**

**Emperor and his Courtier**

Akbar, the Great Mogul Emperor of India, had a very intelligent courtier. His name was Raja Birbal. One day Akbar boasted that he could please any person in his empire. Hearing this Raja Birbal started laughing.

Then Emperor Akbar said, 'Birbal, why do you laugh mockingly? Am I not able to give my subjects anything they wish to have?'

"I'll tel you why I laughed" Birbal said. "Can you prove that you are able to give any person what he wishes to have? I am sure you can't please even a little child."

"I don't understand what you mean. Don't you know that I'm the Emperor of India?" "It's true that you are a very powerful ruler. But that does not mean you can please everybody."

"Birbal you have to prove that I am wrong? Then I'll accept what you say." In reply Birbal told the emperor that he would come to the palace in a cradle the following day. "Let's see how you are going to please me then" he said. Akbar agreed.

The following day Birbal's men brought him to the palace in a cradle. Birbal was lying in the cradle and sucking his thumb. When he saw the emperor he began to cry. Akbar wanted to know why he was crying. Birbal told that he wanted to drink some fresh milk off a cow. So the emperor got him some milk. When Birbal had finished drinking it, he began to cry again.

"What do you want now" asked Akbar "Put the milk back into the cow." said Birbal and began to cry louder. The Emperor then realized that he could not please everyone.

**Answers - Task 1** (i) White (ii) Window (iii) A Horse (iv) A WHINEoceros! (v) The riverbank **Task 3** 1 -b 2-c 3-e 4-a 5-h 6-d 7-f 8-1 9-9 10- 1 **Task 4** - answers are in order of the prepositions given in the list **Task 5** - Answer - 1-started 2-resembles 3-like 4-started 5-attracted

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*Compiled by Noel Jayamanne*



# QUIZ - On Catholic Themes

(.... from last week)

## QUESTIONS

### 1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

#### *Patron Saints*

711. Who is the patron saint of scholars and students?
712. Television workers have a patron saint. Who is she?
713. Who is the patron saint of theologians?
714. Who is the patron saint of politicians?
715. Moral theologians have a special patron, Who is he?
716. Who is the patron saint of workers?
717. Who is the patron saint of teachers?
718. Of which country is St. John the Baptist the patron?
719. Of which country is St. Nicholas the patron?
720. Who is the patron saint of Peru?
721. Of which country is St. Francis Assis a patron?
722. Whose patron is St. Dismas?
723. Of which country is St. Casimir the patron?
724. Who is the patron saint of messengers?
725. Who is the patron saint of librarians?
726. Who is the patron saint of popes?
727. Who is the patron saint of first communicants?
728. Who is the patron saint of France?
729. Who is the patron saint of athletes?
730. Who is the patron saint of journalists and writers?
731. Who are the patron saints of India?
732. Who is the patron of the city of Mumbai?

(contd next week.....)

## ANSWERS

### I. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

#### *Patron Saints*

711. St. Thomas Aquinas.
712. St. Clare of Assisi.
713. St. Augustine.
714. St. Thomas More.
715. St. Alphonsus de Liguori.
716. St. Joseph.
717. St. John Baptist de la Salle
718. Canada.
719. Greece.
720. St. Rose of Lima.
721. Italy.
722. Prisoners.
723. Poland.
724. St. Gabriel.
725. St. Jerome.
726. St. Peter, Apostle.
727. St. Tarcisius.
728. St. Joan of Arc.
729. St. Sebastian.
730. St. Francis de Sales.
731. St. Francis Xavier and St. Thomas the Apostle.
732. St. Gonzalo Garcia.

Courtesy: Clare Ukken fsp

## A Meeting at the River

A group of young men was meeting by a river. During their usual horse-play, one of the men fell into the water. Immediately, this fellow began to thrash around and it became obvious that he could not swim.

Another member of the group, a strong swimmer, stood by and watched as his friend fought to stay afloat and alive. Those on shore began to shout at the one who was a good swimmer and demanded that he jump into the water and save his friend.

However, he waited a few more seconds. Once the drowning man stopped his wild struggle, his friend dived in and pulled him to safety.

When the rescue was over, the rescuer explained why he had waited to save the drowning man: "If I had jumped in earlier, he would have been too strong for me and possibly both of us would have drowned. Only by waiting until he was too exhausted to try to save himself could I save him."

There are times when our self-effort can prevent us from being saved. This is especially true concerning our spiritual salvation.

There is only one way to be saved and rescued from a sure death, and that is by stopping all human efforts and crying out to the Lord Jesus Christ for His forgiveness and mercy.

The more a person seeks to devise ways of saving himself, the deeper he will sink into fear and disillusionment. Salvation is a gift, not the result of our good works. It is a gift that is given graciously by God, who loves us with an eternal love. Truly, there is no greater gift we can receive!

#### **Do you feel as though you are drowning and want to give up?**

Call out to Jesus and He will save you. Praise to the Lord Jesus Christ who died so that we may experience eternal life.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank You for the free gift

of eternal life with You. I acknowledge that You are the only One who can save me and change my heart. Teach me to follow You, that You may be glorified in me. I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**"I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life"**  
(John 6:47).

