



Ash
Wednesday

22nd Feb 2012

Messenger

YEAR OF THE
WORD OF GOD

The Lord has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives.

Lk 4:18

"Registered in the Department of Posts of Sri Lanka under No. QD / 11/ News / 2012"

Sunday 19th Feb 2012 Vol 143 No 08 16 Pages Rs: 20.00 Registered as a newspaper

Church pastoral care embraces the fisher community in crisis



Pic. by :Cecil Danicious

In the face of the fuel price hike, the Church did not abandon the fishermen in the coastal belt.

The clergy, the religious and the laity, in these fisheries areas worked together to uphold their rights for a peaceful protest against the price-hike.

The priests from

the Negombo deanery together with Very. Rev. Fr. Patrick Perera, Episcopal Vicar for the Northern Region of the Archdiocese and Fisheries Coordinator for the Region Rev. Fr. Lester Nonis were also present.

Fisheries Minister Rajitha Senarathna had given an undertaking to the

fishermen to take up their cause with the government and give some relief to them.

Meanwhile families and children of the six kidnapped Sri Lankan fishermen send their supplications to the Almighty for the release of their loved ones from the clutches of those who were holding them to ransom.

The six fishermen who had left Negombo harbour six months ago were reported to have been abducted by Somali pirates as they had been fishing in international waters.

The pirates have asked for a ransom of US\$ 6 million to release the fishermen.



Two new shepherds to guide the flocks in Colombo

The Archdiocese of Colombo rejoices in receiving two vibrant Auxiliary Bishops, when the Episcopal Consecration of His Lordship Bishop Emmanuel Fernando and His Lordship Bishop Maxwell Silva, was held on 11th February 2012, at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Colombo.

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo presided as the Principal Consecrator, together with His Excellency Archbishop Joseph Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka and His Lordship Bishop Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar Diocese as the Co-Consecrators.

(Archdiocese website)

Claretians in Sri Lanka take a step forward



February 2, 2012, Feast Day of the Presentation of the Lord will be registered in the annals of the Claretian Congregation in Sri Lanka as a day to be remembered as the Sri Lankan Claretian Mission was raised to the status of Dependent Delegation in the Province of Germany.

The Eucharistic celebration marking the beginning of this historical event was presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka His Excellency Joseph Spiteri.

Among the celebrants and distinguished guests present were the General Prefect of Formation Fr. Mathew Vattamattam CMF and the Provincial Superior of Germany Fr. Stefan Wolf CMF. The new government of the Dependent Delegation of Sri Lanka consists of Fr.

Joy Mariaratnam CMF (Delegate Superior), Fr. Sathesh Saverimuthu CMF (Econome) and Fr. T. L. Rohan Dominic CMF (Consultor).

This year also marks the twentieth anniversary of the first foundation of the Congregation in Sri Lanka. At present there are 38 professed members in the delegation which includes 24 priests and 3 deacons. There are also 30 postulants in different stages of initial formation.



MADHU FEASTS

Parishioners of Mutwal and Pamunugama will have their annual pilgrimages to the Madhu Shrine on 10th and 15th March, respectively.
Rev. Fr. S.Emilianuspillai, Administrator.
Contact: 077 555 84 62



Kachchativu - the Sacred meeting point of Indians and Sri Lankans

The annual feast of St. Anthony's Church, Kachchativu will be held this year on 4th March, 2012, Sunday, with Festive High Mass and the miraculous statue of St. Anthony taken in procession. Vespers will take place on 3rd March, Saturday.

St. Anthony's Church, Kachchativu was established in 1905 and the Shrine has been considered sacred and miraculous by the majority Catholic fisher community who live here. St. Anthony's Church, Kachchativu which belongs to the Parish of Delft, has become a major meeting point for both Indian and Sri Lankan Catholics and also pilgrims of other religions



who come for the festival.

Although India ceded the tiny Island in 1974, hordes of Indian pilgrims continued to make an annual trip to St. Anthony's feast in Kachchativu.

The Parish Priest of Delft Rev. Fr. Amal Raj invites devotees from both India and Sri Lanka to take part in the Church feast.

New Director General for 'L' Osservatore Romano'



Fr. Pellini, centre, to his left, his predecessor Fr. Migliasso

Fr. Sergio Pellini of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, was appointed by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State, as new Director General of the Vatican Press and L'Osservatore Romano.

The staff of the Vatican newspaper greeted him at the paper's offices on Via del Pellegrino, with his predecessor, Fr. Pietro Migliasso, also a Salesian.

'L'Osservatore Romano' awarded the Bravo Prize Winning by telling the truth

Every year for the past 40 years, the Bravo Prize has recognized and promoted the loftiest mission of serving human dignity, through social communications. A vocation that the media fulfills "as a bridge between the public and the truth."

For this reason all media sectors are eligible for a Bravo Prize. This year on 24 January in Madrid, the Bravo Prize for the press was awarded to L'Osservatore Romano for its efforts in communications over 150 years.

"The newspaper seeks to show friendship with brotherly relationship and through language," Prof. Giovanni Maria Vian, Editor-in-Chief, said, expressing his gratitude. Based on a universal dimension in the cultural debate, in ecumenical attention, in building auspicious relations between religions and with non-believers, this mission is enhanced by the dissemination of the paper's content on its website

(www.osservatoreromano.va).

Lenten Message of Rev Fr George Sigamoney, National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC

"Austerity - a measure of personal and spiritual discipline"

The Season of Lent is a call to follow Christ's austerities.

Austerity is the necessary first step towards attaining blessedness. It is a measure of personal and spiritual discipline, in appearance, manner and attitude. Austerity is a conscious effort toward a modest and unassuming lifestyle.

Lent is also a season that reminds us of Jesus' words: "Let those who would follow me deny themselves." Jesus tells those who want to come after him to deny themselves. This means that they are to forsake their worldly desires and ambitions. The "I want," "I will" and "I shall" need to be denied. It's a total self-denial. It's saying NO to self and saying YES to God. It is saying NO to selfish interests and earthly securities. Each one of us is called to totally crucify himself to the world and its ways and yield to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over him.

Archbishop Oscar Romero

has said: "The only violence we have preached is the violence of love which left Christ nailed to the cross, the violence that we must each do to ourselves to overcome our selfishness. We must kill in our hearts the outburst of greed, of avarice, of conceit, of arrogance. This is what must be killed, this is the violence that must be done, so that out of it a new person may arise, the only one who can build a new civilization, a civilization of love."

These words remind us of our own past history and invite us to awaken to our Christian responsibility. The 30 years of war in this country only gave us hatred, violence and revenge. By this, we were pushed back from the values we had held sacred - understanding, love, tolerance, compassion, humanness, holiness and personal sanctity. The victory of war has reigned supreme in recent years, with some emerging victors and leaving others defeated, deprived and margin-

alized. For the victor, peace means the preservation of the position of power he has secured. For the vanquished, it means resigning himself to the position left to him. It is easier for the victor, than for the vanquished, to advocate peace. The universal truth is that in war, whichever side may call itself the victor, there are no winners, but all are losers.

Yet, in Christ, we are all one, even the victor and the vanquished. It is in a gesture of forgiveness and reconciliation that this unity is achieved. If reconciliation is to be real and permanent, then it must lead people to boundless self-sacrifice. This beautiful season of Lent invites all of us to reconcile with God and with our brothers and sisters. It calls for a new heart and it calls us to put aside our differences and our inequalities.

May true reconciliation lead us all toward true unity!

Lenten Recollection 2012

Lenten Recollection for priests working in Parishes and Institutions in the Eastern Region of the Archdiocese will be held from Monday, 19th March 2012 at 6.00 p.m. and concludes with lunch on the following day, at the Retreat House, Tawatata.

Preacher: Rev. Fr. Henry Silva

Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle
Episcopal Vicar for Eastern Region

THE DEATH OF THE MESSIAH

A Certificate Course in Biblical Studies

An in-depth course in Biblical Studies in English conducted by Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi, S.S.L. Rome, Dean, Faculty of Theology, Aquinas University College and organized by St. Lawrence's Church, Wellawatte, commenced their inaugural sessions at St. Lawrence's Church Parish Hall on 12th February, 2012.

This short Scripture Course conducted free-of-charge will continue for 9 Sundays from 12th February concluding on 4th April 2012 from 5.00 p.m to 6.00 p.m.

Please pass on this message to all your dear and near ones. Bring a Holy Bible, Pen and a note book. Registration open at the venue from 4 p.m. May God Bless You!

(Basil Mel)

Kotte bids farewell to its Shepherd



St. Thomas' Church, Kotte bid farewell to His Lordship Very Rev. Fr. Maxwell Silva, former Rector of St. Thomas' College, Kotte, presently consecrated as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Colombo.

Bishop Maxwell Silva celebrated his farewell Eucharistic celebration together with Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle, Parish Priest of St. Thomas' Kotte and Episcopal Vicar for the Eastern Region of the Archdiocese and Rev. Fr. Amila Vanderwal, Assistant Parish Priest, on Sunday 15th January 2012 at 6.30 a.m. which was the usual morning Mass popularly known as 'Fr. Maxi's Mass'. During the entire period of his assignment in Kotte, Bishop Maxwell has been celebrating the 6.30 a.m. Mass almost every Sunday.

In his farewell address to the flock of Kotte Bishop Maxwell said that his ministry in Kotte was by far the most fruitful one as a priest for over 30 years, which was studded with precious memories that he would carry with him all his life. He said that he felt very much at home with the parish community of Kotte and therefore St. Thomas' Kotte, both College and Church, would always have a special place in his heart.

He noted that the colour of his

official coat of arms is the colour of the College flag.

Bishop Maxwell Silva has consented to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to the candidates at St. Thomas' Church, Kotte, as his first occasion of officiating at administering this Sacrament in his capacity as an Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

His Lordship also laid the foundation for the extension of the Mission House of the Kotte Church, on the invitation of Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle.

The Kotte Parish community presented to him as a farewell memento, a mega best wishes card depicting some of the salient moments of his ministry in Kotte and a gift in appreciation of his inspiring ministry at Kotte. Incidentally,

St. Thomas' Church Kotte in keeping with its historical importance as the cradle of Christianity in Sri Lanka, has turned out to be the cradle of Episcopal Vicars, Bishops and a Cardinal in recent times This includes four Episcopal Vicars, two Bishops and a Cardinal, namely, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith who once served on the staff of St. Thomas' College, Kotte.

(Pic: Asiri Warnakulasuriya,
Text: Trevor Ludowyke, Kotte Corr.)

Blood Donation Campaign

To mark the first anniversary of St. Theresa's Youth Society in Katana West, which belongs to the Kandawela parish, a blood donation campaign has been organised for Sunday, 11th March from 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. at St. Theresa's Daham Hall, under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Sarath Tirimanne, Parish Priest of Kandawela.

(Cecil Danicius)

Due period to apply for houses during Madhu Feasts

SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

1st January	-	Feast of the Mary Mother of God
2nd February	-	Presentation of the Lord
10th March	-	Feast celebrated by Mutwal Parish
15th March	-	Feast celebrated by Pammunugama Parishioners

HOLY WEEK:

1st May	-	Feast celebrated by Waikkala Parishioners
21st May	-	Feast celebrated by Negombo Deanery
2nd July	-	Feast of Our Lady of Madhu
15th August	-	Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
8th September	-	Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
1st October	-	Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary
8th December	-	Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

For all the above feasts celebrated at Madhu Church the following instructions are forwarded. Please note the due period given below for the applications to receive houses. This will be strictly observed.

Feast	Due Period to Apply for Houses
1st January	November 1st - Nov. 30th
2nd February	December 1st - Dec. 30th
15th March	January 1st - Jan. 31st

HOLY WEEK:

1st May	February 1st - Feb. 29th
21st May	February 1st - Feb. 29th
2nd July	March 1st - May 15
15th August	May 1st - June 30th
8th September	July 15th - July 30th
1st October	July 15th - July 30th
8th December	October 1st - Oct. 30th

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N.B.: 133rd Anniversary of the Association of the Tenth March Madhu Lenten Festival
Please contact: Mervyn Abeynayake, President,
Tel: 5652918, 071-6929643, 2381107

Lenten Message from the Chairman, Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development, Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera

"A period of deep reflection on our lives"



The Chairman of the Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development, Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera has stated that Lent is a time which calls for deep reflection into the life of each Christian.

Full Text follows:

The Lenten theme chosen by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka for the year 2012 is 'Unity Through Reconciliation'.

There is no doubt that this theme has been chosen taking the signs of the times into close consideration and based on a matter very dear to the hearts and minds of all Christians and all other people of goodwill.

As Christians we are now entering into a period

of the Liturgical Year which not only calls us to repentance and amendments but also to deep reflection on our own lives.

We may see smiling faces all around us and people greeting each other, but if the smiles are not rooted in repentance, then we cannot expect to have true unity. In a process of reconciliation, there is no place for the past. The past is only to provide experience for the future. Indeed, the past has to be buried through repentance.

There are many wounded hearts all around us and we must make sure that these hearts do not continue to be wounded. Instead, what the country needs today is the kind of unity that will bring about healing through genuine repentance.

By unity we do not mean a society free of conflict but rather a society in the environment of which all people can enjoy freedom, and experience love and compassion.

At the very beginning of the Season of Lent, the Prophet Joel invites us not to tear our garments but to tear out our hearts and minds through repentance. Our

compassionate Lord who is always ready to forgive is waiting in this season for repentant hearts to turn to Him (Joel 2:13). Certainly, tearing out our minds is a difficult task. It is even unpleasant and painful due to our frail human nature. Yet, its fruits are invaluable. And true repentance demands it.

To forgive is easy. To forget is difficult. Yet, we have to go through this experience and witness this reality in our lives if we are to rise to a true Easter. This is the real beginning of unity, even though the process to achieve it is a long and hard one.

Harmonious coexistence, goodwill and social progress can be built not by those who utter empty words but only by a community whose actions stand out as a shining example that speaks louder than words. That is the spring from which true unity flows.

Therefore, in this season of grace let us not confine ourselves to its mere rituals. Let us build a close and deep relationship with Our Lord, experience a deep change in our inner lives and dedicate ourselves to the service of our brethren so that we could share with the Lord the real experience of Easter.

Missionary Childhood Sunday at Battaramulla Parish



His Eminence - then Rev. Fr. Malcom Ranjith presiding over the first Anniversary Meeting along with Rev. Fr. Victor and animator Antoinette Colombage (March 1988)

The Silver Jubilee of Missionary Childhood was celebrated at Fatima Church Battaramulla on Sunday 29th January with the National Director of Holy Childhood Association, Rev. Fr. Reginald Saparamadu as the chief celebrant together with Rev. Fr. Kithsiri Tirimanne, Parish Priest of Battaramulla,

assisting him.

In his homily based on "Let the little children come to me. Do not hinder them." (Mark 10: 14) Rev. Fr. Saparamadu explained in detail the objectives of the Holy Childhood Association. Encouraging healthy contributions from donors for this worthy cause, he

described in detail how funds received by the Association were very thoughtfully distributed to various institutions connected with the upbringing and spiritual development of children, mainly orphans. Awards were presented to child-members of the Association after Mass by Fr. Saparamadu.

The Parish history of Battaramulla records that the Holy Childhood Association was inaugurated in the Parish with Rev. Fr. Victory Jayamanne as the Parish Priest as far back as 1987. The chief celebrant at its first Anniversary was none other than the present Cardinal His Eminence the Archbishop of Colombo, who was then as Rev. Fr. Malcom Ranjith, the founder National Director of the Holy Childhood Association. Through coincidence



Rev. Fr. Saparamadu distributing awards to children with Rev. Fr. Thirimanne.

Rev. Fr. Victor Jayamanne who inaugurated the Association as the first Parish Priest and Rev. Fr. Kithsiri Tirimanne the incumbent Parish Priest who reviewed the Association at Battaramulla, celebrating its Silver Jubilee, also happen to be batchmates.

As was not only the children who needed learning, but also the par-

ents, hence the parents were also given an hour's lecture on solving psychological problems involved with the upbringing of children, by Dr. N. Kumaranayake, psychiatrist of the Kiribathgoda Base Hospital.

Neville Anthony Perera

Peter Pillai Memorial Lecture

Rev. Fr. Peter Pillai Memorial Lecture on "Fr. Peter Pillai, the Educator" to be delivered by Rev. Fr. Mervyn Fernando Ph.D., the Founder - President of SUBODHI Institute of Integral Education at 11 am on Friday the 24th of February 2012, at the Cardinal Cooray Auditorium at Aquinas College of Higher Studies.

All are welcome.

Katana Our Lady of Lourdes feast, today

Annual feast of Our Lady of Lourdes at Katana will be held today, The Festive Mass at 7.30 a.m. will be officiated by Rev. Fr. Amila Gomes, Deacon of Katana and Parish Priest of Halpe.

(C. Danicius)

101-year-old parishioner of Dalugama Church, called to eternal rest

W. Francis Perera a former Catholic village Headman from Nungamugoda Kelaniya passed away at the age of 101 years.

He was the Charter President of Government and local Government Pensioners' Association, Kelaniya and later served as the patron.

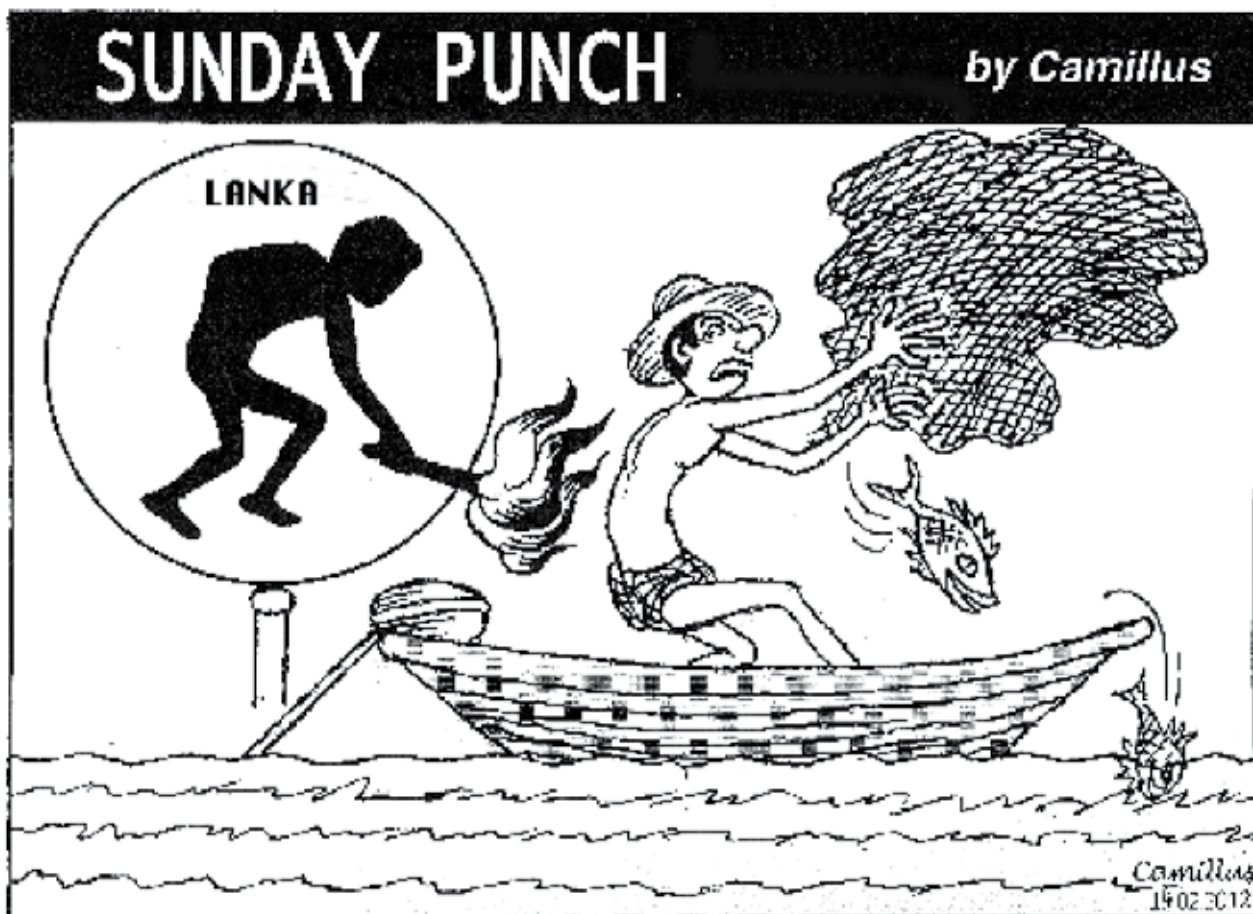
The funeral took place at the Roman Catholic cemetery, Dalugama. The religious service was conducted at St. Francis de Sales Church by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Jude Sharman.

"Mr. Francis Perera as senior Catholic of the area has reached this milestone with the blessings of God," said Fr. Jude.

"Mr. Perera died 3



days after the annual feast of Dalugama Church. I heard this sad news when I was thinking of removing the flower arrangements and the red carpet. Finally I decided to keep those things still the body of Mr. Francis Perera arrived at the church. I think it is great honour for him, "Rev. Fr. Jude Sharman said. *(Nimal Perera)*



THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
Messenger
SINCE 1869

EDITORIAL

19 February 2012

People have the right to criticize the government

The People's right to constructively criticize any government of the day has to be recognized by democratic governments.

Is it unpatriotic to criticize the government? Is it right to brand those who constructively criticize any government as traitors? People have the right to criticize government policy and government needs to be open and democratic in its policy-making, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said recently in an online chat with netizens. "I always think that people have the right to know what the government is thinking and doing, and voice their criticism of government policy," Wen said in the Internet forum jointly hosted by the central government website (<http://english.gov.cn>) and the Xinhua News Agency website (<http://www.chinaview.cn>).

Patriotism is devotion to the country, not only to the government. Democratic government in particular, was established, so that the people have a voice in what goes on. If the government was left on its own, then it would be ripe for corruption. This being the case, criticizing the government can even be patriotic, provided it is for the benefit of the country. Patriotism is devotion to the country, not the government. It is patriotic to be concerned with the welfare of the country and nation, and criticism of the government may be in the nation's best interests. The government represents the people it governs. It works for them and serves them. If it is not doing so then it is not serving the nation. A corrupt government is a threat to the nation, and where the government is wrong the people of that nation have a patriotic duty to criticize it.

People don't have to agree with the policies of the government in order to love their country. In fact it is the responsibility of the citizens to keep elected officials accountable for their acts and the policies they establish by criticizing the country when things are going wrong. Being patriotic means loving your country, not blindly agreeing with everything that happens. If the government is failing to live up to the things that contribute to the welfare of the nation, criticizing it and helping to work for change is the most patriotic thing one can do. This is what Jesus Christ and John the Baptist and so many saints did. They stood up for the right and for the truth. Truth cannot emerge where there is no freedom. For thousands of years, philosophers have told us that if we are to live our lives at their best, we should seek truth, beauty, and goodness. Of course, each of these qualities has raised thorny issues and provoked ongoing arguments. That people have carried on such arguments, rather than surrendering themselves to their raw appetites and animal instincts, may be counted a valuable thing in itself.

Patriotism means that the people should love their country, not only to the government but patriotism does not mean that the people should love their government leaders, particularly if they are not honest or truthful. The basis of democracy is that the people choose the leaders and the leaders do the bidding of the people. When this is not the case, the people have the right to criticize and to demand action or change. It is one's patriotic duty to keep a close eye on government and speak up when they see a problem.

We must waken from our sleepy complacency in the face of corruption and the violations of human rights and the Rule of Law. There cannot be one rule or law for the people and another for those in power. All should be equally subject to the law. But our democratic institutions like the independent Judiciary, the apolitical functioning of government machinery including the police and the Attorney General's Department have been undermined. To restore the Rule of Law the independence of these democratic institutions must be restored to the status quo prior to the enactment of the 18th Amendment.

The President's call to Nation to Implement the LLRC Recommendations

Jehan Perera

At the Independence Day celebrations President Mahinda Rajapaksa made many inspirational statements. These could be regarded as statements of government policy that will charter the future course of the country. In particular, the President's pronouncement on the LLRC Report was an encouraging sign of commitment to addressing the issues arising out of the past decades of conflict and war. The report was tabled in Parliament in December of last year and has received much international attention. In his speech to the nation, the President pointed out that the "Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission has stated that all are responsible for this problem. All those who act according to their conscience should take heed of this statement. Therefore, we have already started implementing what was in the Commission Report."

The President's willingness to bring the issue of the LLRC to the fore in his widely televised address to the nation and in the presence of the diplomatic community indicates that he is prepared to take a lead in building people's support for the reforms that are required. This is heartening and requires the support of the opposition political parties, civil society and the international community.

The bigger challenge for the government will not be in convincing the Sri Lankan people who are ready to believe in the President's promises. The people will surely look to the future with optimism due to their faith in the government's ability to deliver on what it promises, as it did in defeating the LTTE. The government also had to deal with international pressures upon it. The most serious pressure comes from the vexed issue of human rights violations that

took place in the course of the last phase of the war. Once again the government has to face the international human rights community at the Geneva sessions of the UN's Human Rights Council in March this year. On several occasions the government promised the international community that the report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission would take care of this problem.

The LLRC made a large number of recommendations based on its findings which were far reaching and extensive. These included investigating specific incidents of human rights violations, including the authenticity of the Channel 4 video broadcast in the UK which showed scenes of battlefield executions. The recommendations also include instituting reforms in governance such as ensuring that the police and public service become independent of political interference and that a political solution is found to Tamil grievances. The LLRC even gave the broad contours of this political solution through the improvement of the existing Provincial Council system of devolution, and supplementing it with power sharing at the centre and more grassroots level decentralization.

The LLRC also has recommendations that are simple and easy to implement if the government has the political will to do so. These include having the national anthem sung in both Sinhala and Tamil languages and remembering all victims of the war at national events. In Recommendation 9.277, the LLRC stated that. "The practice of the National Anthem being sung simultaneously in two languages to the same tune must be maintained and supported." In its final Recommendation 9.285, it stated that it "strongly recommends that a separate event be set apart on the National

Day to express solidarity and empathy with all victims of the tragic conflict and pledge our collective commitment to ensure that there should never be such bloodletting in the country again."

The ideal occasion for the government to have shown its intention of implementing the LLRC recommendations would have been at the Independence Day celebration itself. There was a giant audience of both Sri Lankans and diplomats from around the world watching the event live on their television sets and in person at the site of the event itself. The government could have got the national anthem to be sung in both the Sinhala and Tamil languages. This would have sent a ver- speaking people of Sri Lanka who amount to about a quarter of its population that they were being treated equally and with respect on Independence Day. The government could also have made a gesture of remembering all victims of the war on that occasion and eased their sorrow even as they watched the nation rise again.

However, despite the President's commitment to the LLRC Report the national anthem was sung in Sinhala only as it has on previous occasions. When the President did refer to those who had lost their lives in the three decade war, he remembered only the patriots who sacrificed their lives, not all the victims of the tragic conflict as recommended by the LLRC. It is unfortunate that the opportunity presented by Independence Day to show the nation and the International Community that the government had already begun to implement the LLRC recommendations was not taken. Another opportunity must be found sooner rather than later to demonstrate to the nation and to the International Community that deeds will follow words.

Let's Be Persistent

O! Mother of Christ, ever virgin, when we
Urged for your intercession, you
Readily came forward to save our

Little country from the dangers of war
Although at the verge of destruction
Devouts were so hopeful that
You are watchful over our safety

Our sins would have been many
Forgiveness for us all Blessed.

Lady, your pleadings never fail to meet
At times of necessity
Nothing is left unheard
Knowing your kindness and power
All of us are at your feet, to follow your example.



Malcolm Fernando

St. Philip Neri's Church, Pettah, celebrates her 150th Jubilee Year

In 1853, Rt. Rev. Joseph Mary Bravi, OSB the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo had asked the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, for a "beautiful plan of a Church that would take up very little ground, but be very simple and with lots of doors and windows."

On receipt of these plans, the foundation stone was laid by the same prelate in 1858. The Church was blessed by the Vicar General Matteo Gaetano on February 23, 1862. The cost of the building had been 4000 pounds. The Church measured 186 ft. by 45 ft. and had a capacity to seat 600. The Church was probably one of the biggest landmarks in Colombo at that time, noted for its magnificent Corinthian front which resembled that of St. John Lateran in Rome.

In early times, the Pettah was a fashionable section of the city, inhabited by prominent families.

After the Dutch built the Fort area, the central business area of Colombo, the Pettah turned into a bazaar, crowded with hundreds of street hawkers and merchants of all kinds.

It was here then, in 1956, that the Blessed Sacrament Community from Australia began their Eucharistic mission in what was their first foundation in Asia, at the invitation of the then Colombo Archbishop, Thomas Cardinal Cooray, OMI.

In his personal reflections, Rev. Father Kevin Gallagher sss, one of the founding

members of the SSS community, recalls that each day they had a generous quantity of men praying in the Church. "Many of these were Tamils or Bharatas from South India, merchants or workers, who ran textile shops and other businesses in Pettah. Every morning they attended Mass, and in the evening they gathered for their common evening prayer, rosary and benediction."

Father Kevin continues, "irrespective of what personal religious persuasion the people professed, we were struck by their innate 'spiritu-

St. Philip Neri's has become a haven of spirituality, peace and tranquility, known to people throughout the island.

ality'. Unaffected by the culture of the West which advocated making a living, these people made a life. Uncluttered by material possessions these people found inner space for prayer and contemplation. These people knew how to be still and know God." He concludes, "this, I believe is why our work blossomed so successfully from the beginning."

Notable among those who aspired to this way of life in those early days and who persevered, were Frs. Kevin Gallagher, Lawrence Sullivan and Bro. Michael Abelpil-

lai. Also, the late Frs. Patrick Fitzgerald, Alfred Alexander and Bro. Geoffrey Campbell. The Blessed Sacrament Community grew from strength to strength and now counts close to 40 in Sri Lanka.

St. Philip Neri's has become a haven of spirituality, peace and tranquility, known to people throughout the island. In the words of Father Justin Perera, "The arrival of this Community in our country was providential in a very deep and divine way. The Holy Spirit has been at work and is still at work. May the Spirit continue to be at work through these sons of St. Peter Julian Eymard,

these men of the Eucharist. God bless and reward them as only God can."

It is against this backdrop that the present Administrator of St. Philip Neri's Church, Pettah, Father Justin Chawkan, sss will, on February 19th, shepherd the Blessed Sacrament Community and worshippers to a triumphant commemoration of a glorious 150 years of this Eucharistic Shrine with the opening of a chapel to the founder of the Blessed Sacrament Community - St. Peter Julian Eymard. The Festive Mass preceded by Evening Prayer, will be presided over by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Co-

lombo. It is an opportunity then for all of us who worship at this Shrine, although we belong to different parishes, to come together and thank God, for the many blessings we have experienced, especially for the Eucharistic graces received through the celebrations of the Eucharist, Eucharistic prayers before the Exposition of the Holy Eucharist, and other ministries connected to the Holy Eucharist. We pray for continued grace and God's blessings on the Blessed Sacrament Community at Pettah and elsewhere, in order that they may continue to discharge their Eucharistic ministries to the fullest.

Anthea Peris Flambert



When a bishop chirps

Deep down even aspirations are quick prayers with a few syllables, or we could even define them as tweets *ante litteram*. Why can't the same thing be done with comments on Scripture? Bishop Herve Giraud of Soissons, one of the oldest cities of the Piccardy region of France, and President of the Council for Communications of the French Bishops' Conference, asked himself this question and thus began sending messages on the web no longer than 140 characters.

Amid the chirping of social networks, his *micromelies* (*micro-homilies*) have attracted the attention of the press, but the news is less strange than it might seem at first glance: A priest's most urgent task is to proclaim the Gospel. "Nothing is more important than this," the Bishop of Soissons Laon Saint Quentin reiterated to *Le Monde*, which recently dedicated an article to him in the Christmas issue.

The Word of God should be popularized *opportune et importune* (*eukairos akairos*), as can be read in II Timothy 4:2. For this reason, to embark on what Giraud, a mathematics professor before he was ordained a priest, calls (*arène numérique*) is one way of following the Apostle's advice literally. The digital pulpit works. Messages sent by @mgrgiraud on Twitter (already used as a didactic tool in many French schools) are read and sent again by other Internet-users among the followers is Cardinal President of the Pontifical Council for Culture (@CardRavasi) - in an endless chain of tweets: We need to allow God to surprise us an 1:46 *Peut-il sortir de là quelque chose*

de bon? Dieu surprend mon attente en se laissant trouver là où je ne l'attends pas) and always contemplate the essential (*Il nous fout peu de mots pour ex primer l'essentiel, il nous fout tous les mots pour le rendre réel: from the Avenir de la poésie by Paul Eluard*).

Above all we should not be afraid of the faithful's questions; responding is part of the vocation of a priest and, especially, of a bishop: *Fe trouve spirituel de la part de l'Église d'avoir donné à la crose des évêques la forme d'un point d'interrogation* Édouard Herriot wrote, which was quoted in a message sent by Mons. Herve Giraud, convinced that a "reborn" life (*Ressuscités avec le Christ* is his episcopal motto) should leave traces of the present.

Even in the digital square that which matters is *De la présence, seulement de la présence*. Only through this idea St Augustine and St Jerome can return as key words (or hashtags as they are called in Twitter) in the cultural life of the 21st century, as they were anonymous

Bible glossators in the Middle Ages.

This comparison with the exegetes of the Middle Ages is illuminating. A similar concern for education, more than artistic or literary, that favours the understanding of Sacred Scripture and of the Church Fathers, also motivated Charlemagne's minister of culture, Alcuin of York (735- 804), to mention only one of the many possible examples.

In the prefatory letter to a commentary on the Psalms written for his friend Arno of Salzburg (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Epistle IV, 243, p. 388) the author speaks of his text as an *enchiridion, id est manualement librum*, a concise and manageable work compiled, drawing on the treaties of the Fathers, selecting brief passages and connecting them to others, summarizing and simplifying. Alcuin was not interested in creating an "original" work, according to the modern meaning of the term, rather in giving Arno and his students a useful tool, quick to transcribe and easy to disseminate on the large web which at that time was composed of the *senptoria* of monasteries, closely connected by a tight network of correspondence.

Even in the eighth century of the Christian era, one tried not to overload a friend's mailbox with bulky messages, all you need to do is substitute "email" and "inbox" for "library" and "manuscripts" and the concept is more or less the same.

(Silvia Guidi -

Courtesy: L'Osservatore Romano)





Marriage in the Original Covenant The Original Blessing: A Two-Fold Mission



Continued next week)

(Courtesy: Marriage Together in Christ - Catholic Truth Society)

God blessed the union of Adam and Eve with the original nuptial blessing (Gn 1:26-31). He commanded them to be fruitful, to multiply, and to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gn 1:28). They and their descendants were to exercise dominion in his name over all of creation, extending his covenant and his presence to all creatures. Their dual mission to procreate and to govern the world was a mission to continue the work of the Creator, whose love is the source and the purpose of all that exists.

been discerned, although less clearly; through a reflection on human nature itself. That is why even in pagan cultures, many ancient matrimonial rites did seek to capture something of the sense of this dual mission. They also perceived that the unity of each married couple was the foundation of the unity of society. Marriage became a way for them to forge alliances among families, peoples and clans.

Marriage is the original community

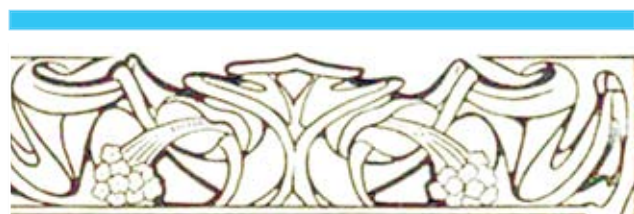
Although this dual mission was revealed to the first man and woman by God, it could also have

The original nuptial blessing, with its commands to "be fruitful and multiply," and to "exercise dominion" over all of the

earth, was a gift, as well as a mission to be fulfilled. Every human community is founded on the sense that it has its own unique mission, which is always connected in some way to the good that the community is seeking, its common good. Marriage is the original community, and the first, dual mission (to procreate, and to exercise responsible dominion over creation), contained in the original nuptial blessing, was God's wedding gift to

the first married couple. Each facet of this dual mission implies both the unity and the fertility of the couple as two inseparable dimensions the married Vocation, founded in the nuptial blessing. Throughout the Old Testament, these two dimensions of union and fertility (the unitive and procreative dimensions) were also seen to have their own sacred character. To the Old Testament people of God these dimensions

both represented and participated in the spousal covenant-relationship that existed between God and Israel. Just as this covenant gave life to the people of God, so the marriage covenant would also give life to the new members of that people. The blessing of God on the marriage of Adam and Eve enabled them and their descendants to remain faithful to Him and to each other, and to carry out their mission on earth.



Abhor the abominable abortion

Illegal abortion is rampant and increasing at a rate so alarming that it poses an indelible folly which is an irreparable blotch on humanity

This moral decay in society in truth depicts that man is in the throes of destruction So, let's find solutions in the light of our faith to curb this deliberate wanton assassination

What a disgrace for a nation - called "Damma Deepa"

Which boasts of a 20 century old cultural - heritage

To expose to the world at large A record of 3 lakhs of abortions a year

Let's highlight the moral and spiritual values To make them aware of impending dangers - of abortion

May all and sundry be thoroughly conscious of the unpleasant consequences of mortal sin

Abortion maybe an act performed willy-nilly But it is an unpardonable culpable homicide So, let man implore Lord's Divine Mercy To evade the wrath of Almighty

Sent by: Leonard Wijesiri



By Sirohmi Gunsekera

Valentine is Love

"Who says that 'Valentine's Day' is restricted to lovers?" asked Piyum.

"Well, that is the history. There was a Christian Priest called Valentine who secretly married young couples even though the Roman Emperor had forbidden it, saying that young soldiers should go to war and not make love. Father Valentine was martyred for the work he did and so the legend grew that he was the Patron Saint of Lovers," explained Niluka.

"Well, I would like to broaden the concept to include everyone who loves someone," said Piyum.

"That sounds much nicer. Otherwise, there

are so many people out there who do not have a lover and they would obviously feel cheated on Valentine's Day!" said Niluka. "So now there is no need to feel left out. But you must think of doing something special for the one you love. If you don't have a boyfriend, you could give your mother some roses as a token of love. Or if you don't have money, you could make a card with glitter glue and write a loving message." suggested Piyum.

"I am going to give some Sweetheart Chocolates to my best friend. I know that she will value the thought and tuck into the chocolates," said Niluka.

"What about the little boy next door? You could give him a rosette with a hug and a kiss and say 'Happy Valentine.' I am sure that he would welcome the gesture," said Piyum. "I know a lonely old gentleman and I would like to brighten up his day by visiting him on 'Valentine's Day.' I will take him some flowers from our garden," said Niluka.

"Even if you don't have anyone to love right now, you must be having memories of how your father cuddled you when you were small. Just think about that and always remember that Jesus loves you no matter what. So no Christian is ever alone," observed Piyum.

Trends in the Contemporary

The views expressed in this article are of great relevance not only to Sociologists but also for our pastoral reorientation. The author suggests that the family is adjusting itself to modern conditions and the communication revolution? And thanks to these, the family remains a most important social structure even beyond the limits of the single unit nuclear family.

In the literature of the analysis of the type of family structure that is predominant in modern society two strands seem detectable. One is that of non-biased sociological inquiry which seeks to analyze, on the basis of available empirical studies, the changes taking place within the family as society has changed in many Western countries, or is changing in developing countries, from an agricultural to an industrial pattern. The weakness of many conclusions stems from the fewness of the studies undertaken by skilled investigators and from the fact that even these studies suffer from the absence of time - and generation - of historical depth.

The studies, as which shall see, conclude that there is not as much family isolation as is needed for the hypothesis that the nuclear family, strictly defined, is characteristic of modern industrial society but can say nothing as to whether there is more, is clearly established.

How beneficial to society it would be if the Christmas celebration is dedicated to the liberation of the child from our hard-hearted selfishness. The daily papers give us - stark documentation on what is happening to some children in our society. We remain unmoved.



Love and joy and peace which are the real fruits of the Christmas celebration cannot be tasted as long as the values mentioned above are not esteemed

and assimilated into our personal and social life. The Christ-child born amidst poverty of a humble virgin points to the sacredness of birth as a joyful mystery.

How beneficial to society it would be if the Christmas celebration is dedicated to the liberation of the child from our hard-hearted selfishness. The daily papers give us stark documentation on what is happening to some children in our society. We remain unmoved. Our hearts do not quiver with compassion at the sight of the suffering of the innocent. May be, we do not really understand the sacredness of the child; may be we do not believe in Christmas. The Christ-child is not recognized within selfish enjoyment.

Fr. Paul Caspersz sj
(Extracted from Quest 1969)

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



Sunday school teacher asked the kids "Where is Jesus" Betty replied, "in heaven sister." - Tommy said, "Jesus is in the bathroom." "Please elaborate Tommy," said the teacher

"Well every morning," said Tommy. "When my mom is in the bathroom, my Dad bangs on the door yelling, "Jesus Christ are you still there."

Rev. Fr. Fracid Anthony Fernando OMI

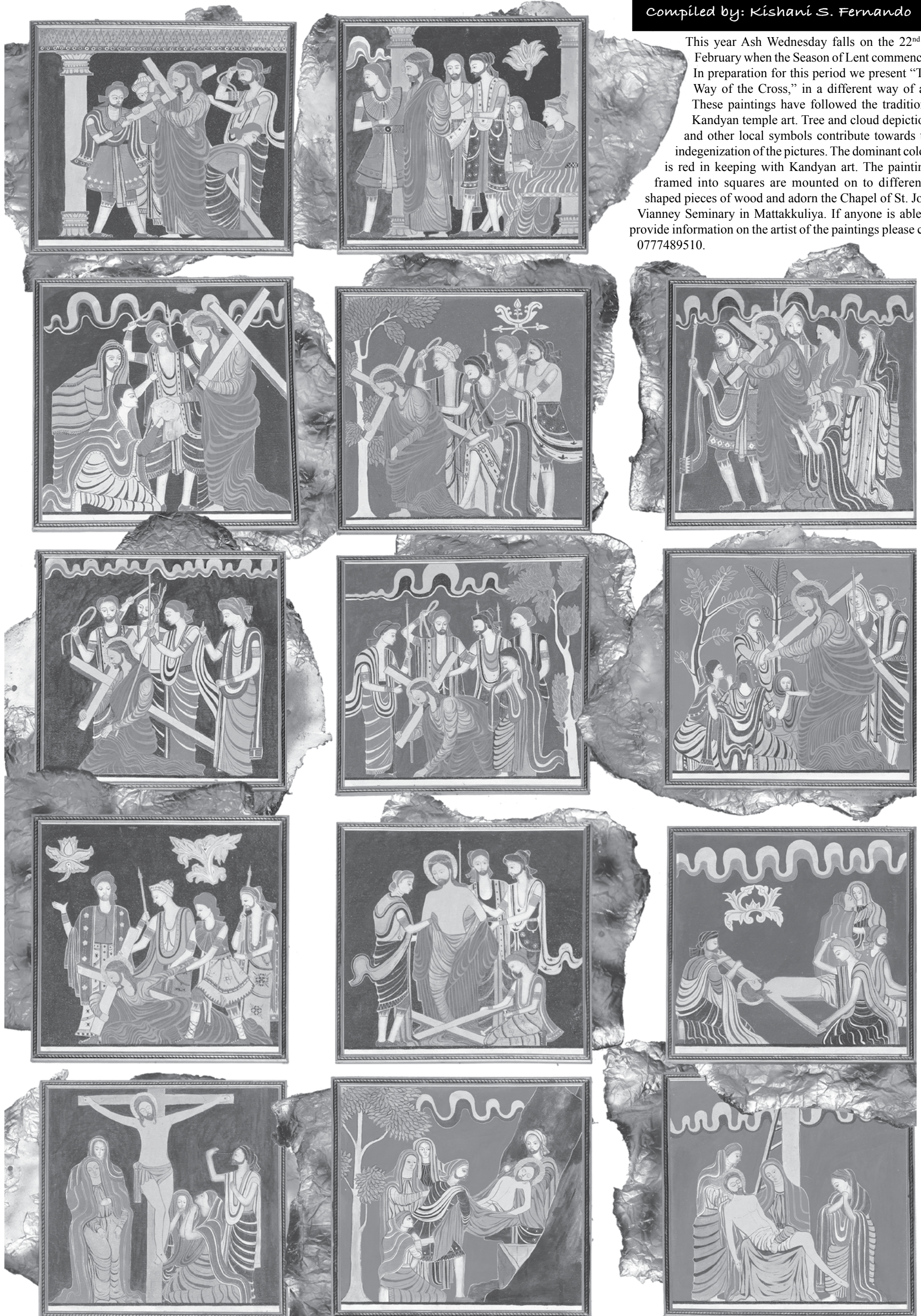
Lent: In indigenized art

Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps. (Luke 9:23)



Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

This year Ash Wednesday falls on the 22nd of February when the Season of Lent commences. In preparation for this period we present "The Way of the Cross," in a different way of art. These paintings have followed the traditional Kandyan temple art. Tree and cloud depictions and other local symbols contribute towards the indigenization of the pictures. The dominant colour is red in keeping with Kandyan art. The paintings framed into squares are mounted on to differently shaped pieces of wood and adorn the Chapel of St. John Vianney Seminary in Mattakkuliya. If anyone is able to provide information on the artist of the paintings please call 0777489510.

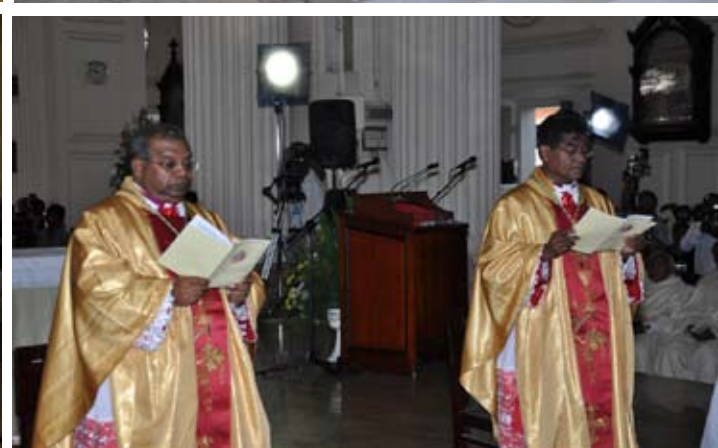


Rt. Rev. Dr. ... Rt. Rev. ... Episco... thro...

Pic: T...



The newly consecrated...
welcome at the Arc...
Ranjith, Archbishops...
and the Papal Nuncio...
were present on this...



Dr. Emmanuel Fernando and Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva Episcopal Consecration through the lenses

Sunil Fernando / Roshan Pradeep



ed Auxiliary Bishops of Colombo were given a rousing
bishop's House. His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal
Emeriti, Nicholas Marcus Fernando, Oswald Gomis
and a large gathering of priests of the Archdiocese
occasion.



Ash Wednesday, Dustification and the End of the World

Prof. Anton Meemana

Dustification of the Creation

Ash Wednesday, the first day of the Lent, is not a day for misery and self-pity, but a day for deep repentance and radical conversion. Ash Wednesday is ready to take away our ashen faces. Ash Wednesday is a day of aspiration, assistance, assurance and ascent towards spiritual magnanimity. Humans are earthly creatures through and through and our destiny is organically and necessarily tied up with the health and happiness of the earth. We are not flying creatures such as eagles, crows, hawks, parrots and mocking birds. This fantasy about space travels and colonizing other planets is a very comforting illusion and can at best become an escape from our earthly, clayish, ashy, soily, dusty and fleshy reality. Even if we develop the technological capability to settle down in another planet, what guarantee would we have that we are not going to destroy it the way we have plundered, raped and devastated the mother earth?

What is fundamentally and very urgently required of us is transformation of our consciousness and our daily lifestyles, not so much space exploration for exploitative enterprises. Earth is our second skin without which human life is absolutely impossible. Our malnourished and anorexic perspective on dust is gathering dust and it is high time to dust it off. The one who cherishes the earth cherishes the universe entire. By the same token, the one who destroys the earth destroys the universe entire. The enemies of the earth are the enemies of God and the friends of the earth are friends of God too.

Sanctification of the Dust

Dusts sing of a presence that is sacred, divine and holy and that hymn is the essence its luminosity. The whole dusty earth is an enchanted kingdom. Dusts contain the splendour of God and reflect the Glory of God.

God's creativity and originality is ever active, flows and flares forth in and through dusts and ashes. His creative energy pulsates in dust. There is no such a thing as cosmic energy apart from divine energy. God is the fountain of cosmic energy. No energy can give birth to itself. No energy can create itself out of nothing. There is a Creator of all energy. This prodigious cosmic creativity, this mind-blowing and mind-boggling cosmic energy is never arbitrary or auto-generated. Cosmic energy is borrowed-energy from God. Matter has a mysterious and a metaphysical dimension. Dustification is part and parcel of divine justification. There is no sanctification of the human person without dustification.

Evolution is dust becoming alive, vibrant and reflectively conscious. Earth is a living and pulsating organism. Divine incarnation is sanctification of dust and dustification of the Sacred. Dusts possess a psychic inwardness and a multifaceted consciousness received from and given by its Creator. The evolving and expanding universe is a celebratory event, a glorious reality. The earth is becoming increasingly alive, giggling and pulsating. So can we become as alive, bubbling, pulsating, dazzling and sparkling as our good friend earth or as exuberant, jubilant, festive and radiant as the universe which is made of dust? Human beings are made of star dust.

Dusts are divine particles, sacred building blocks, divine miracles. And divine miracles are marks of Divine love.

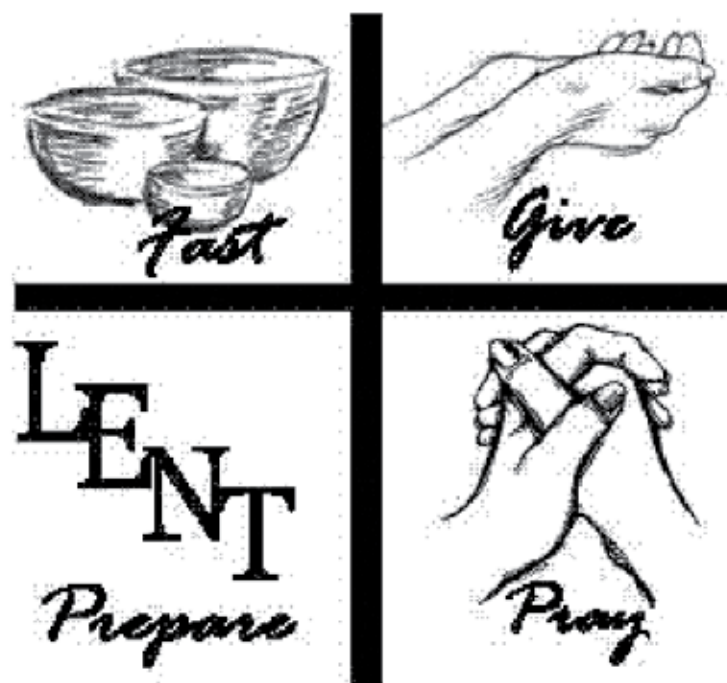
Ashes are divine embers, sacred blazers and holy sparks. Adorability of dust is its sacredness. There is only one way to become truly hu-



man, that is, in and through infinite humility. Humility is another name for humanity for both have the same root in Latin (humus=soil). Humans are creatures of humus. The way to heaven is a dusty path.

Ash Wednesday and Cosmology

The rich symbolism of Ash Wednesday liturgy facilitates our spiritual and moral transformation and transcendence, our constant going beyond, our endless revolutionary continuity; that is, personal transformation through existential breakthroughs, spiritual outbursts and intellectu-



al paradigm shifts. Ash Wednesday is the liturgical reenactment of cosmology. Every good liturgy has a cosmic dimension and a cosmological meaning.

Spirituality is never a flight from earth but an authentic celebration of our earthiness, our organic connection to the earth, our bio-chemical-psycho-spiritual connectivity to the earth. In that sense, the real term for spirituality is earthuality (Thomas Berry).

Spirit is the very depth, the very interiority of matter, of dust, of soil, of clay and of ashes. Escape from dust is escape from God and equally escape from earth is escape from our true destiny. Eternal life is facilitated in and through earthly realities.

There is no creativity without earthly connectivity. Sacred dust, holy soil, divine ashes, and mysterious clay are our family members.

(Contd. on Pg. 15)

Book Review

Therese Motha's many fans will be happy to hear that she has brought out what might be called a sequel to her very popular book, "Of Cabbages and Things" published in 2001. That work comprised a collection of the weekly column she wrote for the old "Lanka Woman" for about 12 years. "Of Cabbages and Things" - Volume 2, contains a compilation of her column which has appeared - and still appears - in the magazine section of the 'Daily Mirror' every Tuesday. On the cover of her book, Therese modestly describes her

writings as "Being Random Jottings in Diary Form of a Very Ordinary Housewife." But as her readers know full well, she is far from being an "ordinary" housewife. Therese is a culinary expert. Her 'Random Jottings' cover 89 pages of extraordinary information that every housewife will covet.

Quick recipes for easy-to-make but inviting dishes, helpful household hints, useful cookery tips, snippets of general information and little nuggets of wisdom worth thinking about, culled from books and magazines, Not only

does she have an easy style, her jottings are compact and to the point and may be read at a glance.

If, like me, you are fond of dried sprats (Halmasso) you will jump at an innovative suggestion for frying them. Deep fry dried sprats, she writes, but don't make them too dark. Drain. Make tamarind sauce. Into pan, pour tamarind water, add ginger and garlic smashed, and salt. Also add some cut onions and chillie pieces or powder and cook for a few minutes. Add fried sprats and mix. That's it and I can't wait to try it!

She gives a recipe for Naan that looks easy,

for Breadcrumbs Vaddai that is a "quickie", for a potato, tomato, onion and capsicum (combined) curry that sounds very tempting, a pasta stir fry picked up from her son-in-law who has also published a cookery book. My eye fell on a quick topping for a cake, where you simply mix together brown sugar and chopped cashew nuts and sprinkle over the top of an unbaked cake. When baked as usual, Therese says it will come out of the oven "already frosted and good to eat."

These are just a few that engaged my attention.

Among the many

helpful tit-bits of information she provides is one which says that researchers have found that all legumes such as beans and peas, chick peas and green gram, are rich in soluble fibre, potassium, calcium, magnesium and foliate, and all help to lower cholesterol and are heart-healthy to eat. They recommend eating legumes four times a week. Then there's a cough remedy she picked off the Internet: Mix a teaspoon of bee's honey with cinnamon powder and just lick it. She adds that she tried it and it worked.

Every column concludes with a memorable quote. One which caught

my attention because of its relevance for us all, despite its having been spoken by Franklin D. Roosevelt over 60 years ago, is: "Today we are faced with the pre-eminent fact that, if we are to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships, the ability of people of all kinds, to live together and work together in the same world, in peace".

Therese's book is a mine of information that seems, to me, indispensable as a handy compendium on our kitchen bookshelves. I am delighted to place this second volume alongside my well-thumbed copy of her first

Appreciation Mrs. Irene Beatrice Cooray 100th Birth Anniversary

My mother the late Mrs. Irene Beatrice Cooray of "Clarence House" 33, Uswatta Circular Road, Moratuwa died on the 9th September 1985, after she returned from Matara having attended the annual church feast. Her one hundredth birth anniversary fell on 9th February 2012.

Her parents were the late Balapuwaduge John Thomas Mendis and late Tantulage Julianna Mendis (Nee Fernando). She was born in Moratuwa, "Priya Medura" Moratuwella Moratuwa 100 years ago. She had two sisters Helen and Janet and one brother Austin. She was married to the late Mr. Mannamarakkalage Joseph Michael Cooray and they had four sons late Clarence, late Rex, Felix and Chrys. They were devoted Roman Catholics and were parishioners of St. Sebastian's Church, Moratuwa and were engaged in church activities. She was the first President of the Legion of Mary English Presidium and Ladies of Charity.

We are certain that she is enjoying the eternal bliss of heaven safe in the arms of Jesus.

Dear Mummy we give thanks to God Almighty for all what you have done with love, affection and dedication for us. You are always in our prayers.

May you rest in peace.

M. Felix V. Cooray

Dengue epidemic in the country

As there is a severe dengue epidemic spreading in the Negombo electorate and in the Western Province, I take this opportunity to thank all the Medical institutions, the governing local authorities and also the parish priests of all churches for arranging special cleaning and prevention programmes.

I think it is time for us as Christians walking in the spirit of Christ, to go one step further and to return to our Lord as stated in the Holy scriptures; [Deuteronomy 4:29-31: But if from there you seek the Lord your God you will find him, if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things have, happened to you, then in the latter day you will return to the Lord your God and obey him. For the Lord your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath.]

My Lord, God is waiting for people on earth to come to him and is waiting for intercessors as stated in the book of Ez. 22:30-31 to wipe out this dengue epidemic. It is time for us to glorify our Lord and for the people of other religions to experience his supreme power.

I have prepared a prayer in Sinhalese for this, and humbly request thee to take it up with the higher authorities of the Church for a quick solution.

I pray to Almighty God, to release the wisdom of the Holy Spirit for the implementation of this essential work, in the Mighty name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

G.L.V. Dissanayake

In appreciation of a faithful, diligent and dedicated Religious Sister

Rev. Sister Bernadette Perera was born at Talawila, Marawila. She joined Salvatorian Sisters in 1967 at St. Anne's Nursing Home, Marawila.

She served as a Novice directress for some years at Ampitiya. After that she served as the Regional Treasurer in the Congregation.

Therafter she was actively engaged in different missions in pastoral work; Kurunegala, Katugastota, Mabile, Ambanpola and Hewadiwala. The people appreciated her loving service wherever she worked. She had a special concern for the poor.

When the Salvatorian Mission was been established in Kerala, Sister Bernadette helped in the formation of young aspirants there.

She was very faithful, diligent and dedicated religious and served for 43 long years in the Congregation.

In the last days of her sickness, Sister Bernadette was in the Provincial House, Kurunegala.

While several Sisters were around her bed-side praying for her, the Lord called her to eternal home on the 03rd February 2012.

May she rest in peace.

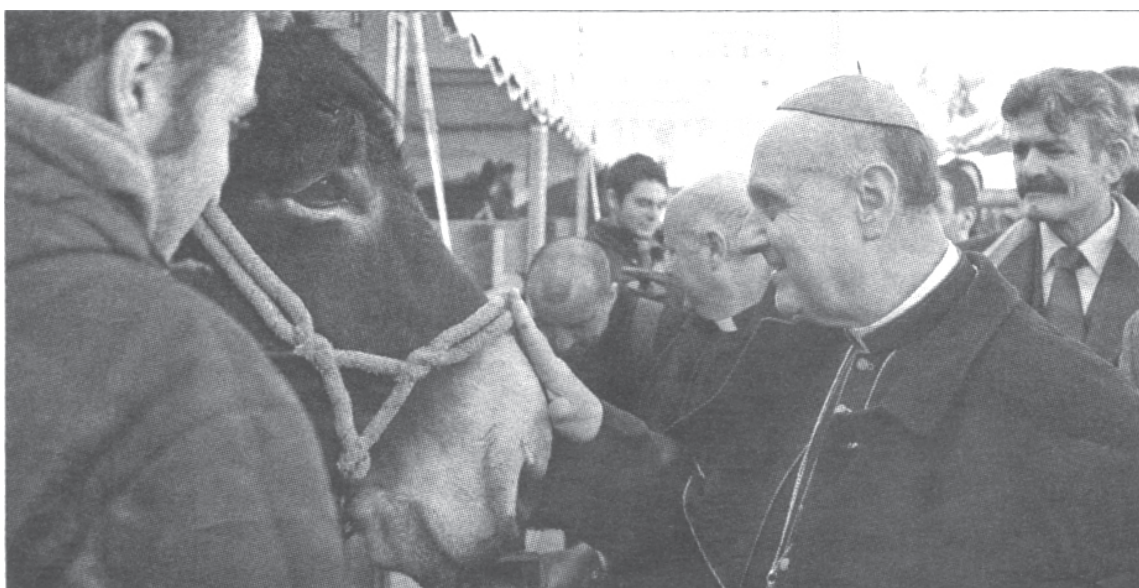
You will be always in our loving memory.



Rev. Sr. Bernadette Perera

Cardinal Comastri on the Feast of St. Anthony

The blessing of the animals



Cardinal Angelo Comastri, Archpriest of the Papal Basilica of St. Peter, celebrated Mass in the Vatican Basilica. The liturgical memorial of St. Anthony Abbot. Numerous breeders - including many Romans with their pets - from all over Italy came to celebrate the holy Patron of animals. After the Eucharistic celebration the Cardinal blessed the animals - horses, donkeys, cattle, sheep, goats, rabbits and chickens, as well as cats and dogs - in a small "farm" set up for the occasion in Pius XII Square.

Loving Salvatorian Sisters

Loving Shepherd

Faithful to the Lord, your loving Shepherd
In your priesthood you've remained
Doing always God's Holy Will,
Ever ready to give yourself wholly
Loving and caring all those given
In your charge as your flock
Since the day you became a Priest of God

Ever stainless Mother Mary bless you
May she be your guiding star
Mother and advocate may she be
At your side ever remaining
Never failing you in your needs
Until her Son's entrusted task of Shepherding
Ends in His appointed time and way
Led by her and her beloved Son

Sr.M.Calistra A.C

BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN LIFE



"Christianity is not a religion of the book as in other religions. Christianity is a religion of a person-Jesus Christ"

There is no other book that is widely read and translated as the Bible. It has been translated fully or in part into 2508 languages. It was the first book to be printed in Gutenberg in 1454. It is said that throughout the world 47 copies of the Bible are sold every minute of the day.

'Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single deposit of the Word of God.' We as Roman Catholics are called upon to show 'equal feelings of devotion and reverence' to both Scriptures and the Tradition (cf DV 9-10). Bible, the written Word of God is a fundamental source and guide for Christian life. Our approach to the Bible is very important. Christianity is not a religion of the book as in other religions. Christianity is a religion of a person - Jesus Christ. Our spirituality depends on our relationship to him. Our spirituality is a growth in the life with Jesus Christ. Bible is a major source to help us in this growth. The whole Bible revolves around this fact. The fact is that from the beginning the Bible prepares the People of God for the 'Coming of the Messiah' (OT) and speaks of the fulfillment of the OT in Jesus Christ and how the New People of God the Church was born (NT). Jesus Christ is the focal point of the whole bible.

BIBLE CONTAINS SALVIFIC TRUTHS

Throughout the history people took the Bible to mean so many things, such as science book, etc., and the world faced the consequences. Today we have come to the proper understanding that the Bible contains all that God wanted to be written down for the salvation of his people (cf. 2 Tim 3, 14-17; DV 11). All that are said in the Bible need not agree with modern scientific discoveries, logical accuracy and plain historical facts. Whatever is said in the Bible has a salvific truth behind, intended by God through the biblical author.

What is important is not to find out the accuracy of the details but to ask what God wanted his people to understand at that time and what He wants me to understand today.

AN ANCIENT BOOK FOR THE MODERN MAN

What we have in the Bible is what took place 2000 to 4000 years or more ago. How can this ancient book that has been in wider circulation and used by so many be valid today? Are not the things said there outdated? The times have changed; the context is different the way we look at is no more the same. So many books and programmes are being updated regularly -

but not the Bible. Modern scholarship throws light to understand better the Biblical texts; helps us to have more background material to understand the ancient events, yet we have not exhausted the salvific truths behind the Bible. The salvific truths revealed by God never change, they are valid for all times.

GOD'S MESSAGE IS FOR ALL TIME

God never changes (cf. Heb 1:12; 13:8) He is beyond time and space. His revelation is valid forever. When he speaks he speaks to His people of all ages. But as human beings we cannot grasp what he reveals totally. We are conditioned by time and space and our view of things. That is why the Bible is valid forever (cf. VD 86). The way we understand the reality, changes. God revealed the truths of salvation to the people of their time in their context, language and the level of understanding (cf. Mt. 19,8). Therefore, we need to get to the salvific message through the details that surround it.

Moreover the human nature as such never changes. God speaks to human beings to save them. Man has been man since creation. His fundamental nature has not changed and will not change. Since God speaks to human beings of all times we speak of the Bible as the living

Word of God. The Word is ever fresh to all people of all ages.

BOOK OF LIFE

The main purpose of the Bible is to make us live the Word to be saved. It is not a book merely to be worshipped, adored or argued with. It is the book of life for the believer. If one wants to be saved that person needs to live the message of the Bible. This is possible only in entering into a living relationship with the Word - Jesus Christ. We give a special place to the Bible because it enhances us to enter into this relationship.

In Jer. 15:16; Ez 2:8 - 3:3 and Rev 10:8-10 God calls the recipient not merely to take the Word but to eat it. It tastes sweet in the mouth. But the truth revealed is not always sweet, at times bitter in the stomach. Whatever the case be the Word must take flesh in us; It should become part and parcel of my life. I need to experience it before I proclaim it.

The Word is bitter because on the one side it points to my sinfulness and on the other it reveals one of the most beautiful biblical truths. The truth is that it calls for suffering - it is participation in the 'Passion of God' for humanity. God so loved the world that he gave His only Son (cf. Jn 3:16). Jesus so loved us that he gave his life as ransom to save us. When the Word becomes our life, suffering for God and our brothers and sisters become a loving reality. The saints are good examples of this truth.

The Word if we

By Rev. Fr. Aivin Peter Fernando

receive it into our life creates us anew and it invites us to be in it and compels us to respond to its call - to be doers of the Word (cf. Jas. 1:18-25; 1Pet. 1:23-2-2; Rom. 2:13; Mt. 7:24ff). Mary becomes the model in this process (cf. LK 11:28)

'LECTION DIVINA', A WAY TO INTERIORIZE THE SCRIPTURES

The prayerful reading is fundamental for the spiritual growth of every Christian. *Lectio Divina* is an ancient, yet meaningful method used in the Church for this purpose. The post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation-*Vebum Domini* proposes a four step fundamental procedure of *Lectio Divina*. *lection, meditation, oratio and contemplatio*.

It proposes the questions we need to keep at the back of our minds as we enter into these four steps: For *lection*- 'what does the biblical text say in itself?', *for medtatio* - 'what does the biblical text say to us?', *for oratio* - what do we say to the Lord in response to his word?' and *for contemplation* - what conversion of mind, heart and life is the Lord asking of us?

Then the document adds to say that this process is not compete until it arrives at *action*-the action of the believer to be a sacrament to the world (cf. VD 87). once again Mary our Mother is the model who kept the ord in the heart and acted uoon (cf. Lk. 2:19-51 VD 124).

This is not merely an individualistic way of reading the Bible. The

Bible has to be read in the community of the Church. The word came to the community, founded the Church, came in to existence in the Church, sustains the Church and is interpreted in the context of the Church (cf. VD 86)

CONCLUSION

'Ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ' (*ignorantia Scripturarum ignorantia Christ est*) says St. Jerome. To know Christ Scripture is a must. Therefore, each Christian must possess a Bible, which guides his life. He must read it. He must follow the *Lectio Divina*. He must celebrate the Word in the Liturgy. Liturgy becomes meaningful when the person listens to the Word of God. To identify Christ in the Sacraments, to encounter him one should listen to the Word. That is why the first part of all the Sacraments is the Liturgy of the Word. Emmaus Journey is an example for this (cf. LK 24.). The Word helps us to recognize the Lord in the Sacrament. If our Liturgy is 'meaningless' it is because the celebration of Word is weak. Since the Bible leads us to God we give special place of reverence to it.

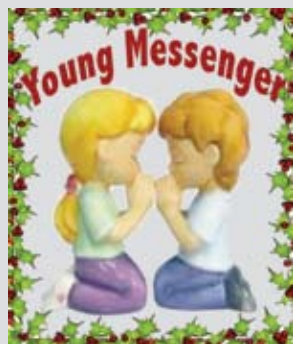
The modern world needs to see God. It yearns to experience the divine. We can become sacraments of the divine power in the world if the Word becomes the centre of our lives. If so we can participate in the experience of John, which makes our joy complete: We heard the Word, experienced the Word and testify to the Word (cf. 1 Jn. 1:1-4)

New Gym for Holy Cross College, Kalutara



A new gym was declared open by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi, at Holy Cross College, Kalutara on the day of the Sports Meet.

Picture shows, the Rector, Rev. Fr. Camillus Fernando and Bishop Andradi inspecting the gym which was donated by the 95 group.



Origin and History of Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the onset of the period of Lent, the 40-day period of fasting and abstinence. It is also known as the 'Day of Ashes'. It is so called because on that day at church the faithful have their foreheads marked with ashes in the shape of a cross.

The name 'Day of Ashes' comes from "*Dies Cinerum*" in the Roman Missal and is found in the earliest existing copies of the Gregorian Sacramentary. The concept originated by the Roman Catholics somewhere in the 6th century. Though the exact origin of the day is not clear, the custom of marking the head with ashes on this Day is said to have originated during the papacy of Gregory the Great (590 - 604)

In the Old Testament ashes were found to have been used for two purposes: As a sign of humility and mortality; and as a sign of sorrow and repentance of sin. The Christian connotation for ashes in the liturgy of Ash Wednesday has also been taken from this Old Testament biblical custom. Receiving ashes on the head as a reminder of mortality and a sign of sorrow for sin was a practice of the Anglo - Saxon church in the 10th century. It was made universal throughout the Western Church at the Synod of Benevento in 1091.

Originally the use of ashes to be a token of penance was matter of private devotion. Later it became part of the official rite for reconciling public penitents. In this context, ashes on the penitent served as a motive for fellow Christians to pray for the returning sinner and to feel sympathy for him. Still later, the use of ashes passed into its present rite of beginning the penitential season of Lent on Ash Wednesday.

There can be no doubt that the custom of distributing the ashes to all the faithful arose from a devotional imitation of the practice observed in the case of

public penitents. But this devotional usage, the reception of a sacramental which is full of the symbolism of penance (cf. the *cor contritum quasi cinis* of the "*Dies Irae*") is of earlier date than was formerly supposed. It is mentioned as of general observance for both clerics and faithful in the Synod of Beneventum, 1091 (Mansi, XX, 739), but nearly a hundred years earlier than the Anglo - Saxon homilist / Elfric assumes that it applies to all classes of men.

Putting a 'cross' mark on the forehead was in imitation of the spiritual mark or seal that is put on a Christian in baptism. This is when the newly born Christian is delivered from slavery to sin and the devil, and made a slave of righteousness and Christ (Rom. 6:3-18).

"To a greater extent than in the past, faith is now being subjected to a series of questions arising from a changed mentality which, especially today, limits the field of rational certainties to that of scientific and technological discoveries," Pope Benedict observed.

"Nevertheless, the Church has never been afraid of demonstrating that there cannot be any conflict between faith and genuine science, because both, albeit via different routes, tend towards the truth."

The Pope said it would be a matter "of decisive importance" for Catholics to look back on the history of their faith during the 2012-2013 year, to gain an understanding of how the Church continues Christ's mission of redemption.

"In him who died and rose again for our salvation," he said, "the examples of faith that have marked these two thousand years of our salvation history are brought into the fullness of light."

Pope Benedict has asked the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to draw up more specific



Ash Wednesday falls this year on February 22

on how to "live this Year of Faith in the most effective and appropriate ways, at the service of belief and evangelization."

He cited the words of the Virgin Mary's cousin Elizabeth, on the occasion of their visitation before Christ's birth, as he asked Catholics to "entrust this time of grace to the Mother of God, proclaimed 'blessed

Applications are called for the posts of clerk and computer typist in a Catholic institution in Colombo. Applications should be sent through the Catholic Press No Q11N4684, C/o, Colombo Catholic Press, Colombo 8.

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What it says in the Readings

The Word was made flesh and lived among us; to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God. (Jn. 1: 14.12)

LITURGICAL - CALENDAR YEAR B 19th Feb. - 26th Feb. 2012

Sun: SEVENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Is. 43:18-19,21-22,24-25, 2 Cor. 1: 18-22, Mk. 2: 1-12

Mon: Jm. 3: 13-18, Mk. 9: 14-29

Tue: Memorial of St. Peter Damien, Bishop & Doctor
Jm 4: 1-10, Mk. 9: 30-37

Wed: Ash Wednesday

Joel 2: 12-18,2 Cor. 5: 20-6,2, Mt. 6: 1-6,16-18

Thu: Memorial of St. Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr

Deut. 30: 15-20,Lk. 9: 22-25

Fri: Is. 58:1-9, Mt. 9: 14-15

Sat: Is. 58:9-14,Lk. 5: 27-32

Sun: FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Gen. 9: 8-15, 1 Pt. 3: 18-22, Mk. 1: 12-15

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, enlighten us to feel your healing power in our daily life situations.

For all the disciples of Jesus: That having experienced his forgiveness in their own lives they may set an example for the world in forgiving those who offend them. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, enlighten us to feel your healing power in our daily life situations.

For all those in positions of power: That they may be gentle and merciful in the exercise of their authority. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, enlighten us to feel your healing power in our daily life situations.

For all those who are handicapped in body or mind and for those who through sin are crippled in spirit: That the Lord may bring them hope. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, enlighten us to feel your healing power in our daily life situations.

The cripple, once cured, carried his own bed away. That we may be able to accept responsibility for our own sins, and carry our own burdens instead of placing them on others. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, enlighten us to feel your healing power in our daily life situations.

Ash Wednesday.....

Contd. from Pg. 9

Repentance and True Life

Repentance is increasingly becoming conscious of all inauthenticity, pretensions, superficiality and vanity and the deepest longing and yearning for personal integrity. Personal authenticity is the fruit of true conversion (metanoia), true turning around (perigoge). Repentance is at the service of life. Unrepented people are not truly alive or free. They do not live but merely exist like emotional terrorists, existential zombies and psychic vampires. Ongoing repentance keeps purifying, assaying and magnifying one's zest for authentic life. Repentance is personal but never private. The fruits of one's ongoing repentance is always communal, social, global and planetary. Unrepented life is an empty life, a wasted life, a useless life, a confused life. It is a life which has not been lived properly. The glory, majesty and grandeur of God is human person becoming fully, burstingly, explodingly and gigglingly alive, kicking and kissing.

The one who repents loves life and appreciates the preciousness and giftedness of it. We cherish life to the extent we repent of our sinful and selfish tendencies. God understands everything and therefore forgives everything. The problem is not with God but with us; that is, most of us cannot forgive ourselves enough, love ourselves enough, cannot accept and appreciate ourselves enough and hence tend to attribute all our

First Reading

Is. 43:18-19, 21-22, 24b-25

The Lord speaks of a new life in which people will give praise to the Lord and live a perfect life. They should forget their past sinful life and the Lord too would blot out everything.

Second Reading. 2 Cor. 1; 18-22

St. Paul speaks of the Lord as a yes and not a yes and no. Therefore he wants the Corinthian community to be of one stand in faith. As everything has come to us from the Lord, we too should give everything to the Lord.

Gospel. Mk. 2: 1-12

The story of the curing of the paralytic who was lowered to the Lord from the roof is presented to us. As they showed so much faith in the Lord. He is all out to cure or even to forgive the sins.

Reflection

In today's readings the Lord reminds us that we as his followers should have a deep, true and a total attachment and faith in Him. All those who are in sin should change their lives and begin a new life, a life that is totally dedicated to the Lord. And this dedication should be total and full. We should not be shaky in our faith. It should be steady and firm. It should be simply a yes, for the Lord. It was a yes and not a yes and a no. upon those who proclaim a steady and a perfect faith the Lord is ready not just only to cure. He is ready even to forgive sins and bring about salvation.

In the first reading the Lord through the prophet reminds

the people about the need to give up sinfulness, forget the past and to begin a new life. He promises a new way of life that would effect in them. He also accepts the fact that He as the Lord should on His part forgive and blot out the sins of His faithful.

In the second reading St Paul wants the Corinthian community to be of one faith. And it should be a stern faith that we should have towards the Lord for it is through Him that we got everything. Therefore we too should give everything of ours to the Lord.

In the Gospel we see the deep and strong faith the paralytic and the group expressed. Their deep faith made the Lord perform the miracle of cure upon the paralytic. He also wanted to teach them a lesson. Some of the Jews thought that sickness was a result of man's sins, their parent's sins or even sins of their ancestors. He was all out to cure the paralytic, but he also wanted to show the Pharisees that if it was a result of his sins that he had the power to forgive his sins. If it was the sins of the parents or even for that matter sins of his ancestors he wanted to show that he had the power to forgive. This is because of the deep, strong, firm, one and total faith they showed.

Therefore the Lord too wants us to have a true, strong, and a total dedication and a faith in Him.

Aid Story.

The great Japanese General Nobunaga decided to attack even though he had only one soldier to the enemy of ten. He was

sure he would win but his soldiers were full of doubt. On the way to the battle field they stopped at a Shinto shrine. After praying in the shrine Nobunaga came out and said, 'I shall now toss a coin. If it is heads we shall win. If tails, we shall lose. Destiny will now reveal her hand.' He too tossed the coin. It was heads. The soldiers were so eager to fight. They put their heart and soul to the battle. As a result they won the war easily. The next day an assistant said to Nobunaga. "No one can change the hand of destiny." "Quite right," said Nobunaga, showing him the doubled coin that was heads both sides.

Aid Story 2

The Catholic school teacher looked out at her room full of students and saw little Jonnie who appeared ready to burst into tears. Compassion goes with the territory, so the young teacher asked little Jonnie what was wrong.

"It's my grandfather," Jonnie blurted out as he dissolved into sobs. "He is gone away forever."

Ever ready to console, the teacher gently said to the student, "All of us are sorry to hear that, Jonnie. But I am sure your grandfather is in a better place now."

Deciding to bring a little religious education into the conversation, the teacher asked the rest of the class, "Does anyone know where Jonnie's grandfather is now?"

"Yes I do." Replied one of the other students. "He is in prison!"

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

miseries to God. God's forgiveness is always there, eternally and perpetually available to us to respond to.

The one who cannot forgive oneself condemns oneself. It is never God who condemns us but we ourselves. Self-condemnation leads to self-destruction and we are pretty good at it. Forgiveness is the life-blood of life. The one who responds to God's forgiveness redeems oneself and thereby becomes a blessing to others. Interiorly unscrutinised life is not worth living. The surgery of one's soul (Mahatma Gandhi) is at the service of the social.

Christification of the Universe

Part of Christ's holiness was his earthiness, his down to earthness. Christification cannot be separated from planetisation of sanctity. When Christ will dwell, rest, relax and repose in your heart, you too will feel truly rested, relaxed and reposed. Real human rest comes from resting in Christ. Real relaxation stems from relaxing in Christ Jesus. Christ is the masseur par excellence. His is the real massage parlour. Our authentic self is a mirror of Christ.

Ash Wednesday reminds us of the most realistic perspective on life. Ash Wednesday is the celebration of our earthiness, dustiness, soilness, clayness, fleshness, ashiness and the liberation it facilitates towards Easter. There is no resurrection without immersing ourselves in our dusty human reality.

The End of the World and our True Destiny

Lack of faith in a transcendent God leads to possessive knowledge. Wisdom cannot be possessed but only received gratuitously. To possess something is to lose it. The libidinal desire to own, to possess, to take hold of something is to give up the way of wisdom, the way of endless openness. True wisdom is a vision, an ever-growing and widening vision, not a private possession.

Speculation about the end of the world is a

betrayal of Christian message. Such a preoccupation is the slipping away of the day-to-day historical living. Our business is to live each day joyfully and faithfully without apocalyptic anxiety. Unnecessary anxiety is anti-Christian. By living fully we prepare ourselves for any apocalyptic eventuality.

Even if God decides to end the universe today, those who have attained eternal life will remain in that state forever. Nothing will be taken from them; nothing will be lost to them. Even after the end of the world, the eternal life continues.

Whatever graces they may have been granted will never be lost to them. Eternal life is a permanent reality and nothing can jeopardize or jettison it, not even the end of the world.

The end of the world is not the end of God's love, creativity, compassion and mercy. The end of the world would be an act of his unrestricted, unconditional, unreserved love. Both the beginning as well as the end of the universe is a work of Divine love. God is never malicious, merciless, ruthless, heartless, cruel or mischievous.

The end of the world is insignificant in comparison to the love of God. Absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God. Not even the end of the universe can separate us from it. The universe has a beginning as well as an end. But its end is not like any other end we know of.

The shape of the future to come cannot be known exactly. This massive lust, gnostic libido, cognitive concupiscence for certitude is symptomatic of false prophets and futurists. Wise person lives by faith in a God whose presence is ever active in history.

Futurism is false knowledge. Wisdom comes from doubt, anxiety, questioning, "the waiting, the periods of aridity and dullness, guilt and despondency, contrition and repentance, forsakenness and hope against hope, the silent stirrings of love and grace." (Eric Voegelin)

Ash Wednesday reminds us that the way to heaven is a dusty and a sweaty path.