

"Gleaned from the classics"
By Johannus

Tacitum vivit sub pectore vulnus
(from Cicero)
The dormant wound yet lives within the heart

Messenger

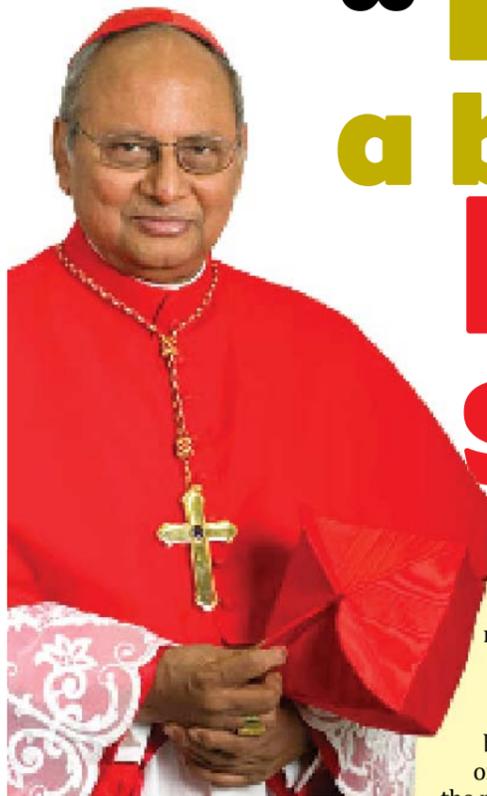


THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD
20th May 2012

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His Eminence at Aquinas University College:



"The Bible, a beautiful love story"

His Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith giving his Reflections at the inauguration of the third in the series of Short Courses on Biblical Studies, conducted by the Faculty of Theology of Aquinas University College recently, said that the Bible is not something written by a visionary and dropped from the sky for someone to discover, but a faith journey of a people, the people of Israel who experienced tremendous love on the part of God.

"It is," His Eminence told the packed Cardinal Cooray Auditorium, - "a beautiful

love story between man and God." For over a 100 years, he said researchers have been studying the origins of this text but the more you study the more questions and puzzles you will meet. "You will never be able to understand it completely. You know that," His Eminence reminded the audience.

The Cardinal was giving his Reflections on "The Resurrection of the Messiah," which is the third in the series of Biblical Studies conducted every Thursday, at Aquinas University College. His Eminence was welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Director, Biblical Commission, Rev. Fr. Don Anton Saman Hettiarachchi.

The Resurrection, His Eminence observed, was a tremendous experience for the

Apostles. "Otherwise these people, who lost their faith and ran away from the cross, hid themselves in terrible fear, what happened to them, suddenly?"

They experienced this tremendous powerful presence of Jesus in the church, the young church. Their faith was enlightened and they were ready to die for it," he said.

His Eminence also noted that some people say there are many accounts of stories of how Jesus appeared to the apostles afterwards and they are not alike. If this was true the stories in one gospel will be equal to the stories found in the other gospel.

Stating that this argument was not valid, His Eminence explained that the stories are not alike shows that it is authentic. "The fact that it was not nicely drafted and

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His Lordship, Maxwell Silva graces Prize-Giving of All Saints' BMV, Borella



The prize-giving of All Saints' Balika Maha Vidyalaya, was held on 2nd May 2012, at the school premises.

This event was held mainly to encourage the students of their capabilities. Prizes were awarded for the students who had displayed special talents and skills in studies and extra curricular activities. Special attention was drawn to the students who had exceptional skills.

His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Granville Silva graced the occasion as the

chief guest. In his speech he enlightened the students about the "Importance of English" He also distributed some of the awards to the students who were qualified for the University entrance and who obtained best results at the G.C.E, O/L and G.C.E, A/L examinations.

Additional Zonal Director of Education Colombo, Jayantha Nanayakkara, Parish Priest of All Saints' Church, Borella, Rev. Fr. Felician Ranjith Perera, Archdiocesan Director of

PG 3 >>>

Peterites walk for the Glory of God



The entire Peterite Family was involved in a walk with a difference on Sunday, 13th May 2012. Down through the ages man has walked for name, fame, glory, prestige and power but the Peterites chose to walk for a holy purpose, they walked for God!

The day began with a Thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration concelebrated by the Rector, Rev. Fr. Travis Gabriel, the Peterite Priest Community and other Old Boy Peterite Priests.

The Peterite Family

including the Rev. Fathers, Rev. Sisters, Tutorial staff, non - academic staff, students from Grade One to the Advanced Level, Old Boys, Parents and well wishers walked the streets of Colombo for one purpose, to collect funds to renovate and refurbish the College Chapel, which is the main source of power and energy for their daily lives and all that is undertaken and achieved at St. Peter's.

The Walk, which coincided with the 90th Anniversary

PG 3 >>>

Get a preview of the Rome concert

All is set with the 92-member choral contingent before they embark on their tour to Rome.

Thus the combined choir of St. Joseph's College, Colombo, Ave Maria Convent, Negombo, Good Shepherd Convent, Kotahena and Maris Stella College, Negombo, will present a preview

of their Rome concert here in Sri Lanka today, Sunday, 20th May 2012 at 6 p.m. at St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10.

The Concert will include classical and semi-classical compositions in Sinhala, Tamil, English, Latin, Italian and Hebrew languages. It will feature the best of Mozart, Verdi, Handel

and Allegri.

The combined choir, all members of Sri Lanka Pueri Cantores, will sing at the Pontifical Mass at St. Peter's Basilica on June 2, 2012. The next day they will be at a Mass presided over by our Cardinal at 5.30 p.m. and thereafter present the choral concert titled Sogni Romani (Roman Dreams).

On 6th June they will participate in the Papal General Audience where they will perform briefly.

All those keen to get a foretaste of our singers' performance in Rome well set to capture the hearts of the Italian audience could well be captivated here in Colombo.

The Concert is free. Francis D'Almeida



'I have sent them into the world'

Jn: 17: 11-19

Appointments

Rev. Fr. Anton Jayananda - Parish Priest -
St. Mary's Church, Mattakkuliya

Rev. Fr. Dilren Peiris - Assistant Parish Priest -
St. Sebastian's Church, Katuwapitiya

Rev. Fr. Manokumar Nagarathnam -
Director, Tamil Catechetics

Rev. Fr. Ananda Fernandopulle -
Director, Tamil Youth Apostolate

DEANS

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos
Dean of Colombo North
Parish Priest
St. Lucia's Cathedral,
Kotahena, Colombo 13

Rev. Fr. Felician Ranjith Perera,
Dean of Colombo Centre,
Parish Priest,
All Saints Church, Borella,
Colombo 08.

Rev. Fr. Marcus Ferdinandesz
Dean of Colombo South
Parish Priest
St. Mary's Church,
Dehiwala

Rev. Fr. Edmund Tilakeratne
Dean of Kotte
Parish Priest
St. Joseph's Church,
High Level Road, Nugegoda

Rev. Fr. Noel Stephen Nonis
Dean of Gampaha
Administrator
St. Jude's Shrine,
Indigolla, Gampaha

Rev. Fr. Gyom Nonis
Dean of Gurubewila
Parish Priest
Our Lady of Sorrows' Church
Kaluaggala, Hanwella

Rev. Fr. Maurice Namal
Dean of Kalutara
St. Philip Neri's Church,
Kalamulla, Kalutara

Rev. Fr. Srilal Fonseka
Dean of Kandana
Parish Priest
St. Anne's Church,
Weligampitiya, Ja-ela

Rev. Fr. Amila Gomes
Dean of Katana
Parish Priest
St. Francis Xavier's Church
Halpe, Katana.

Rev. Fr. Bertram Ranjith,
Dean of Moratuwa
Parish Priest,
St. Sebastian's Church,
Moratuwa.

Rev. Fr. Christopher Julius,
Dean of Negombo
Parish Priest,
St. Anthony's Church,
Dalupotha, Negombo.

Rev. Fr. Ruwandana Mendis
Dean of Negombo East
Parish Priest
Our Lady of Lourdes' Church,
Kimbulapitiya.

Rev. Fr. Jude Sharman Fernando,
Dean of Ragama
Parish Priest,
St. Francis De Sales Church,
Dalugama, Kelaniya.

Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilake,
Dean of Wattala
Parish Priest,
St. Mary's Church,
Nayakakanda, Wattala.

Rev. Fr. Gregory Jayantha Fernando,
Dean of Tudella
Parish Priest,
Our Lady of Sorrows' Church,
Ja-ela.

New parish of Nagoda

The new parish of Nagoda in Kalutara will be officially announced by Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle, Episcopal Vicar, (Colombo South, Region) today, May 20th Sunday.

Rev. Fr. Nirmal Malaka Silva will assume duties as the new Parish Priest.

Three churches from the Matugama Parish will fall into the new demarcation of the Nagoda Parish. Three churches are from Sapugahawatte, Kethena and Pallegoda, Church.

Kumara Nayanaajith

Legion of Mary - ACIES Function

The ACIES function of the Kandana Curia was held recently at the Church of Our Lady of Purification, Nayakakanda, Hendala.

The Consecration to Mary which is obligatory to all Legionaries is made annually with fervour and solemnity. Literally, they were purified as they renewed their promise of fidelity in a packed Church comprising young and veteran Legionaries. The renewal was preceded by the Holy Rosary.

Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunathilaka preached an edifying sermon on the theme

"The Paschal mystery in relation to Our Blessed Mother." It was really a Lenten reflection coinciding with Palm Sunday.

Legionaries attached to the Colombo Comitium and the Kandana Curia graced the occasion. After the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament the total consecration composed by St. Louis Marie de Montfort was recited in unison followed by the Concluding Prayers. A followed with refreshments served.

Nimal Perera

In appreciation of Service rendered to the OBA

Four senior members were felicitated for the services rendered to the OBA, at the 67th AGM of St. Anthony's College Wattala OBA, held recently at the College Hall.

Mr. Victor Rodrigo, Mr. Tom Wickramaratne, Mr. Godfrey Dabare and Mr. T.M. Packeer. All were presented with mementos and the OBA tie by the Principal Rev. Fr. Mal Fernando, Provincial of the La Sallian Brothers Rev. Bro. Denzil Perera and Old Boy Priest, Rev. Fr. Jude Peiries.

This event was organized by the President of the OBA Ranjan de Silva along with General Secretary Mr. John Emmanuel and the Executive Committee.

Clarence Leonard

Day and night dansala at Katana



Rev. Fr. Amila Gomes, Parish Priest of Halpe and Dean of Katana was the chief guest at the Vesak day night dansala, held in Katana.

Fr. Amila who blessed the food is seen giving a plate of rice to a little child. The dansala was organized by the Katana, Andimulla Samagi Samja Seva Sangamaya.

Cecil Danicius

National Christian Literary Festival 2012 - National Competition

16th June 2012 (Saturday)

Venue: St. Joseph's College, Maradana

Competition commencing time: 8.30 a.m.

Event: Group Singing (Sinhala, Tamil and English)

Age Groups: Grade 5,6,7, Grade 8,9,10, Grade 11,12,13

17th June 2012 (Sunday)

Venue: St. Joseph's College, Maradana

Competition commencing time: 8.30 a.m.

Event: Essay Writing and Speech (Sinhala, Tamil and English)

Age Groups: Grade 5,6,7, Grade 8,9,10, Grade 11,12,13

Winners of 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in Diocesan level Competitions in the above mentioned events are eligible for the National Competition and conditions and details of the competition are available with the Directors of Catechetical and National Christian Council. All competitors are requested to be present on time (8.30 am) at St. Joseph's College on Competition days.

A.R. Gunawardena

Director - Department of Christian Religious Affairs

His Lordship...

Contd. from Pg. 1

and General Manager of Catholic Schools Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawala, were present as the special invitees.

The Vice Principal Anne Wijethunga delivered the welcome speech and the Principal, Rev. Sr. Anne Christine presented the Progress Report.

According to the agenda some items were presented by the students on the stage.

Peterites walk.....

Contd. from Pg. 1

of the College was a resounding success. Clad in "Walk" T-Shirts, Caps and other memorabilia, the Peterites made their love and loyalty for their Alma Mater vibrant and visible as they paraded along the walk route from Wellawatte to Bambalapitiya, while an helicopter with the College Flag circled the sky, Navy boats sent up Blue, White and Gold balloons from the canal and elephants also added to the majesty of the occasion. An "After-Walk" entertainment in the form of a Mini-Carnival at the College Grounds provided much fun and enjoyment for everybody.

Old Boys from St. Joseph's College, Colombo 10, St. Benedict's College, Kotahena, St. Anthony's College, Kandy, Past Pupils of Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya also joined in the Walk to show their solidarity with the Peterites.

The Peterite Walk 2012 was a joint effort of the College Authorities, the Staff, the Old Boys Union, the Parent-Teacher Association, the Welfare Society and the Students. The Walk was co-ordinated by Rev. Fr. Chaminda Wanigasena. (I.Mel)

The presence of the past pupils who were selected to the universities and to the College of Education added colour to the function. Miss. Anne Kumudika who was the Head Prefect, the western band leader, President of the Commerce Union and students who obtained four A's at the G.C.E (A/L) 2005 addressed the students to motivate them.

Finally the event concluded with the National Anthem.

All Saints' BMV - Media Unit

Fatima Church celebrates the N'year



The National New Year was celebrated on a grand scale at Fatima Church, Battaramulla on Sunday 29th April. Here a group of boys are seen engaged in the Bun-eating race.

(Neville Perera)

Vesak Dansala by Ekamuttu Youth Society



Ekamuttu Youth Society of Katana organised a Vesak Dansala for the first time in Katana, Kalwarippuwa.

The chief invitees for the Dansala were Rev. Fr. Kennedy Perera, Principal, St. Thomas' International School and Resident Priest of St. Joseph's Church, Kalwarippuwa and Ven. Mahahanupitiye Sasana Siri Tissa Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Dissagewatte Sisila Temple.

Text & pci. Cecil Danicius

Parish Priests assume duties at new Parishes of Kerawalapitiya and Balagala



Episcopal Vicar, Very Rev. Fr. Shantikumar Weliwita, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatillake, Parish Priest St. Mary's Church, Nayakakanda, Rev. Fr. H.D. Anthony and Rev. Fr. Gregory Jayantha.

Picture (left), Rev. Fr. Roshan Prasad who assumed duties as Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Church, Kerawalapitiya is seen being accompanied by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatillake and Rev. Fr. Nirmal Malaka Silva.

(Text & Pic. Nimal Perera)

Two new parish priests appointed to the newly established parishes of Kerawalapitiya and Balagala, assumed duties last Sunday (13), in the new parishes. The parishes were demarcated under the Archdiocesan Pastoral Outreach Programme.

Rev. Fr. Jude Raj Perera, (Picture Right) who took office as Parish Priest of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Balagala is seen being accompanied to the Church by



25th Anniversary of Caritas Kurunegala

Janasetha Caritas Kurunegala celebrated the 25th Anniversary of its founding (1987) on 19th April 2012.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera Chairman of Caritas Sri Lanka, SEDEC and the Bishop of Kurunegala was the Chief Celebrant at the Eucharistic Service, held at the Janasetha Centre to mark this historic event.

Bishop Emeritus of Kurunegala, His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Peiris was the Guest of Honour on this occasion.

Religious leaders and Government Officials of the area and some staff members of the National Centre were among those who attended the



Anniversary celebrations, which were arranged under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Ajith Rohan Fernando, Director of Janasetha. **Ainslie Joseph**

The Bible...

Contd. on Pg. 1

prepared so that you could fool some people. It is exactly how they heard and they put it down."

Drawing attention to Acts 4:10-12, where St. Peter says, "There is salvation in no one else other than Jesus Christ," His Eminence questioned how a man who earlier denied knowing Christ could say salvation is only through Jesus Christ? "That change happened because they experienced the powerful presence of the Risen Lord in their midst.

His Eminence noted that some students of the Bible have shown that

a little bit of the Resurrection was already shown at the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (Mt.17:1-8), witnessed by Peter, James and John. It was, he said a premonition of what was to come. So much so that Peter says, "Master how good it is that we are here, shall we make three tents, one for you one for Moses and one for Elijah."

Stating that he came not as the Archbishop of Colombo but as a student of theology, His Eminence said in conclusion, "Never doubt, never underestimate the power of the Word of God. It is

the faith of the Church. It is this dialogue between the Word of God and life."

Answering a question from a participant why Christ cried out, "My God! My God! Why have thou forsaken me," His Eminence noted thus:

"That is the height of Jesus assuming human nature - the highest climax where Jesus feels that his obedience to the Father is difficult and painful. That breaking of his life on the cross is the experience of the highest point of self-renunciation, where He says, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken

me?" ("Eloi Eloi lama sabachthani?") That's the shout of a man. With all its ups and downs, Christ assumed human nature. He did not sin but he assumed it, fully.

Therefore the brokenness and the weakness of human life was experienced on the cross to the utmost point. What we call in Sinhala the 'asaranakama'. He feels helpless on the cross. That is what the Lord assumed unto himself the burden of sin and death and so when he hung on the cross he shouts, the shout of humanity."

(Faculty of Theology)



Church in the World

Spanish bishop says dogs get more charity than the unborn

Bishop Xavier Novell of Solsona, Spain said that locals pay rapt attention to mistreatment of animals yet remain silent before the massive number of abortions that take place in the country.

In a pastoral letter issued on May 6, Bishop Novell noted an incident several weeks ago when a dog was shot by a Catalan official. The reaction in the media was resounding and immediate, "with calls for resignations and even legal action," he said.

"I couldn't resist posing a question: When the chilling figures on the number of abortions in Catalonia are published each year, how is it that everyone is silent? Do not the lives of thousands of unborn children eliminated with impunity have value?"

"Could it be true that animals have just as many or more rights than persons? What's going on in this country?" the bishop asked.

"It must be said clearly and very firmly that abortion is a crime, one of the most terrible and abominable of humanity," the bishop emphasized.

"It is the murder of the most defenseless, of one's own offspring. We have to say this without fear."

Rome's first-ever March for Life

Nearly 7,000 pro-life advocates marched from Rome's Colosseum to St. Peter's Square on Sunday for the City's inaugural March for Life.

The march was officially the second annual Italian national March for Life. The 2011 event was held in northern city of Desenzano, on Lake Garda. This year's initiative officially brought together 150 associations and a colourful mix of all ages and nationalities.

23-year old seminarian Garrett Nelson of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, Montana was on hand with a group of peers from Rome's Pontifical North American College. For him, it was like the March for had an extra quality.

"It's been on a more universal level," said Nelson. "You see the world coming together to defend the dignity of human life and how important that is. It's really exciting to see the young and the youth movement of the Church growing up and defending the dignity of human life."

Pope calls on Catholics to take part in new Renaissance

Pope Benedict XVI went to the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance to call upon every Catholic to once again play a full part in renewing today's culture.

"Be ferment in society, be present as Christians, be active and coherent," said the Pope during morning Mass in the town of Arezzo in the region of Tuscany.

"The whole Church is sent out into the world to preach the Gospel and salvation. But it is always God's initiative; he calls us to different ministries, so that each one plays his proper role for the common good."

Pope Benedict was making a one day visit to the Tuscan towns of Arezzo, La Verna and Sansepolcro. In Arezzo he offered Mass in a local park before a congregation numbering in the tens of thousands.

The Pope noted that the area was the birthplace of "great Renaissance personalities" such as the poet Petrarch and painter and architect Varasi.

WHERE IS JESUS AFTER HIS ASCENSION?

Tune into "Catholic Half Hour" on Sunday 20th May at 8.00 p.m. over the English National Service of SLBC (Radio Sri Lanka) on 96.5 MHz for a meaningful Reflection on the Ascension of Christ and its implications for the Church, presented by Catholic broadcaster, Trevor Ludowyke.

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY OF SRI LANKA
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 SINCE 1948

EDITORIAL

20 May 2012

Cultural Religio-Nationalism versus Political Religio-Nationalism

Religion has a role to play in the forming of nationalism in different countries. Buddhism as a religious and cultural legacy has influenced the nationalism of the majority community in Sri Lanka. Our leaders have fashioned their concept of the nation based on our pre-colonial history where the Sinhalese kings had to fight invaders from India to maintain their kingdoms intact. These were not ethnic wars of Tamils versus Sinhalese but dynastic conflicts-wars of invasion and plunder so characteristic of the by-gone ages. Nationalism however is a modern concept which arose after the revolutions in transport made possible a centralized exercise of power for the first time in history. Previously devolution of power was to Kings and Dukes subject to the annual payment of tribute to the Emperor or the Chief King. This was the norm all over the world. When British colonialism came to an end they handed over power to our leaders who represented different ethnic and religious communities.

Whatever ideas and ideology are useful to mankind have never disappeared completely. So when Buddhism disappeared from India it found a safe haven in Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese Buddhists came to believe in a prophetic role for them as the protectors of Buddhism. Nothing wrong in such a prophetic vision. We Christians believe in the Second Coming of Jesus and the ushering in of the Kingdom of God on earth. But human beings have this fascination with prophecy that they want to themselves bring it about. But such prophecies are not to be ushered in not through violence but through love. Buddhism is a noble religion which treats all human beings as equal and extends love or kindness not only to all human beings but to all animals well. So those who champion Sinhala Buddhist nationalism politically, cannot ignore the all-encompassing 'karuna' or kindness to all human beings taught by the Buddha and cannot in the name of his religion, discriminate or harass those who are non-Buddhists even on the basis of any prophetic vision. They cannot deny them the rights recognized by all civilized peoples of the world and incorporated in the United Nations' Declarations. Extremists whether belonging to the clergy or the laity cannot in the name of Buddha's religion, peddle the form of jingoism we see and hear in public platforms or the press.

Nor are these attitudes consistent with the Buddhist political philosophy based on Buddhist texts. Buddhism is a universal religion and says Professor Nandasena Ratnapala, "The democratic ideal in Buddhist democracy was that of the universal monarch - the *Cakkavati Dhammika Dhammaraja*." The norms of such a ruler are in Buddhist texts which Presidents or Kings should follow to be called a Buddhist ruler. The Norm involves respect for all life, non-possession of things which does not belong to oneself, adherence to the truth and so on. The ruler should perform his/her duties utilizing the political power given to him/her by the people and consult the people at all times. Such a leader will endear himself/herself to his people.

It is one thing for the Sinhalese Buddhists to regard themselves as the true inheritors of the country but it cannot be deduced from this view that other ethnic or religious minorities have no right to the country but could only live here because of the graciousness of the Sinhala Buddhists. This view runs counter to the modern recognition of the rights of human beings - the right to freedom of religion and for equal rights for all irrespective of ethnic or religious differences and without discrimination.

During the May Day celebrations in Jaffna the TNA Leader was holding the national flag along with the UNP Leader. This is an expression of the willingness of the Tamil leaders to be part of the single nation in the country. But it is up to the Sinhala Buddhist majority to reciprocate by recognizing their rights as human beings provided for in the UN Declaration. Devolution of power does not mean or envisage the setting up of a separate state. The Indian experience is that the recognition of linguistic rights led to the decline of the secessionist demand in several parts of India. We should recognize that there is no other way to allow people to transact business in their own language except through devolution of power. The talk of three languages is empty rhetoric and is neither economical nor practical. It has been espoused in rhetoric for decades but there has been no implementation. In political religio-nationalism, religion becomes associated with politics, and national identity becomes bound up with political power. The religious ideal of service tends to become corrupted when prophetic visions are made political reality.

We should reject political forms of religio-nationalism in favour of cultural forms that support dialogue and the search for common truths in diverse communities.

Implement the LLRC Report for Good Governance

Democracy is practically non-existent in a political autocracy in whatever democratic name it may chose to call itself and no autocracy has been benevolent to the people. Winds of political change began to blow with the Arab Spring following the lead from North Africa challenging autocratic governance with the people signaling with telling effect that enough is enough. Very close to us in Indian body politic frustrated people came out in threatening numbers on a spontaneous uprising through a Satyagraha Campaign galvanizing the Giant Nation against political corruption. The Indian Government had to succumb to peoples demand, unprecedentedly, for a participatory democracy through a Bill which will establish Independent bodies called Lokpals in each State that will hear public complaints of vice and corruption against political leaders.

At home the very sovereignty and unity of the Nation was under siege for 30 years threatened by fierce terrorism fighting for an ethnic division until defeated three years ago. Let us not forget that Sinhala youth rose in bloody rebellion twice against the Government of the day in 1971 and 1988 over dissatisfactions that needed to be addressed. Serious issues still prevail in our country. President Mahinda Rajapaksa stating that in the interest of public welfare and to learn lessons from recent history to ensure that there will be no recurrence of any internecine conflict in the future appointed a Commission of Inquiry in November 2010 naming it as Lessons Learnt Reconciliation Commission (LLRC).

He appointed eight eminently recognized civil society persons to the Commission Panel expressing great trust and confidence in their prudence, ability, independence and fidelity to inquire and report. They were mandated to inquire and report on matters that may have taken place from 21st February 2002 to 19th My 2009. Among directives related to the war the Panel was also asked to report on Institutional, Administrative and Legislative measures needed to prevent any recurrence and to promote National Unity and Reconciliation among all communities. Appreciably what the country is yearning for. But doubts on the 'bona fides' were expressed in some quarters both within and without, perceiving that the Commission in fact was appointed by the Government to offset an imminent call for an International War Crimes Tribunal in Sri Lanka due to government inaction and in fact a time buying gimmick. The tough stand of the International community is being construed by some mainly of the ruling party to be an interference of the internal affairs of the country and an infringement of our sovereignty which in fact is our own seeking. Some believe it is a great blessing in disguise for the people of the country. Sovereignty of the country is sovereignty of the people which is inalienable and entrusted by them to their representatives for a privileged duty of good governance for a period of time. A government muddled in bad governance has no moral right to hide behind hysterical incitement of the people prostituting the word sovereignty against well-meaning external intervention. It must be reminded that Sri Lanka by virtue of choosing to be a member country of the UN foregoes a certain degree of sovereignty inviting intervention to make wrongs right.

The Government post-war action was shallow and slow paced in effectively winning the hearts and minds of the depressed Tamil people, the victims of war which imperative if satisfactorily addressed could have moderated International involvement. This factor along with appalling Human Rights and Law and Order situation, the increasing arrogance and impunity of the

governing political machinery, an inept foreign policy to the point of antagonizing western nations, a mind set of not wanting to cave into outside pressure and under estimating the clout of the pro-LTTE Tamil Diaspora internationally aided by Government's own inability to counter them effectively were contributing factors to the position we are in internationally. The situation created by the government's perhaps purposeful indifference provided space and opportunity for international sirens.

LLRC Commission in its wisdom had identified glaring features of bad governance and the imperatives of good governance in its report. The Commission holds the view that minority grievances stem from deficiencies in the system of State Administration and lack of good governance that affects all citizens of the country. And that a rueful political culture makes general public powerless to a point of becoming dependent on politicians blessings to obtain even a minor public service. The Commission also has noted that the long arm of the law had not reached those with political patronage as politicians operate on the fringes of the law with a politicized police service, and believes that the Government should ensure that the law is fairly and independently applied in all cases. Have also reported that there is high level of political interference regarding appointment and transfers of public officers largely politically motivated something very anti thesis of democracy. LLRC points out that freedom of expression and right to information are universally regarded as basic human rights and obstacles and denials of same will seriously undermine the process of Reconciliation and the Rule of Law in the country. The Commission reports that a sustainable process of reconciliation requires an environment that respects, promotes and protects people's right to freely engage in observing their religious faith. Adding that militant religious extremism will jeopardize national reconciliation. Recommends Inter-Faith Reconciliation and Peace Committees at District and Provincial level for inter-faith harmony. The Commission has pointedly noted that onerous administrative burdens placed on certain religions and religious education failing to take very significant factors into consideration meaning it amounts to discrimination and violation of rights.

The country needs a new beginning and a straight way forward as a Nation through national unity which can be achieved through purposeful reconciliation. To promote oneness and a common identity in a undivided country and actual democratic empowerment of the people. In effect the LLRC Report has opened the doors and corridors for reconciliation and peace in the country. The Commission has dealt in depth on compulsory issues of good governance and other root causes for the conflict. LLRC recommends speedy establishment of Independent Commissions such as independent Judicial Commission, Public Service Commission, Elections Commission and Police Commission for good governance and democracy. All this are in line with the 17th Amendment to the Constitution which the current Administration nullified by its 18th Amendment for politicization of governance. The international community has expressed satisfaction and believes the recommendations should and could be implemented under a defined road map within a reasonable short period of time if seriously committed to do so. The ball now is firmly in President Rajapaksa's court to show genuine desire to usher democracy for good governance by implementing the recommendations of his own trusted child the LLRC.

John Amarantunga
 Chief Opposition Whip
 Parliament of Sri Lanka

The Ascension

The triumphal return of Jesus to His Heavenly Father

The divine plan for the redemption of mankind from its sins was set in motion when the Angel Gabriel appeared to a very virtuous young lady by the name of Mary and announced to her that she had been chosen to be the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God who would come into the world to redeem His people from their sins. Mary bowed to the Holy will and accepted the assignment saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it done unto me according to Thy word." The work of redemption culminated thirty three years later when Jesus who was dying on Calvary's blood stained cross proclaimed to the world that His mission was accomplished. "Consumatum Est - It is finished" (John 19:30).

Three days later on Easter Sunday our Blessed Lord rose from the dead (*Ressurexit sicut dixit*). (He has rise as he said)

For the next forty days before He returned to the Father on completion of His mission He was busily engaged in finalising His plans for the establishment of the Church on earth.

Firstly He had to convince His disciples and a select group of faithful followers that He had indeed risen from the dead. As St. Paul wrote in later years - if Christ had not risen from the dead our faith would have been in vain. When the Risen Lord first appeared to His disciples they thought that He was a ghost but when He showed them His hands and His feet and the wound on His side which was caused by the lance of a Roman soldier and also when He broke bread with them they were convinced that He was the Risen Saviour. Disbelief turned to belief. This belief in the Resurrection was to cause them their lives as what happened to young Stephen the first martyr.

Jesus had to prepare His disciples who had moved closely with Him during the three years of His public mission, except during the few days of His passion to carry on with their lives without His divine presence when He ascended into heaven. When He had spoken of His suffering and death they had been greatly troubled and He had to comfort them.

He said to them "Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come back and take you to be with me that you may also be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." And He added - "If you love me you will obey what

I command and I will ask the Father to give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." (John 14: 1-18)

He promised them that when He was gone the Holy Spirit would descend on them and transform their lives dramatically and give them the courage and strength to go out into the world and preach the Gospel. The disciples believed the words of their Lord and Master.

The Power to Forgive Sins

On Resurrection evening when the disciples were together behind locked doors for fear of the Jews Jesus stood in their midst and said "Peace be with you. As the Father had sent me I am sending you. Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins they will be forgiven: if you do not forgive them they are not forgiven." This power was passed on from generation to generation to the priests ordained by God.

The Establishment of the Church of God

During these forty days before the Ascension Jesus had to put the final touches to His plans for the establishment of His Church. Readers may recall that when He had gathered with his disciples before his passion in the northern town of Caesarea Phillipi. He had posed to them a loaded question. He had asked them "Who do you say that I am?" Without consulting the others Peter had boldly replied.

"Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16) Jesus had always been impressed by the innate leadership qualities of this humble fisherman and of his sincere love and loyalty to the Master and He replied: "Blessed art thou Simon son of Jona It is not flesh and blood, it is my Father in heaven who has revealed this to thee" And He added - "And I tell this in my turn that thou art Peter and it is upon this rock that I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven And whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven Matthew 16:17-19)

Although Peter was conscious of the authority vested in him, he fouled it all when in a moment of fear and cowardice he denied any knowledge of Jesus on Good Friday morning in the courtyard of the Chief Priest's house saying, "I know not the Man." Peter repented immediately



afterwards and went out and wept bitterly.

The compassionate Lord did not hold this against Peter, because He knew that in his heart of hearts Peter loved Him. It was however necessary for the execution of His plan for the establishment of His Church that Peter should reaffirm his love for the Lord and earn his re-instatement.

This happened to the post resurrection breakfast meeting on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Peter had gone fishing with some of the other disciples. After breakfast Jesus had asked Peter -

"Simon, son of John dost thou care for me more than these others? When Peter replied "Yes Lord thou knowest well that I love thee" Jesus had said "Feed my lambs."

And again a second time Jesus asked him the same question and Peter came out with the same answer. Jesus told him "Feed my shearlings" Then Jesus asked him a third question "Simon son of John dost thou love me?" Peter was deeply moved when he was asked a third time and he replied "Lord Thou knowest all things. Thou canst tell that I love Thee." With these affirmations of love the Lord had re-instated Peter as the head of his Church (John 21: 15-19).

assurance. Despite the vicissitudes of time how well the Catholic Church has fulfilled it!

The Ascension

Everything had been finalised and it was time for Jesus to return to the Heavenly Father. When the disciples had gathered with Him for the last time in Jerusalem He had spoken to them and warned them to stay in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit. Then they had walked to the brow of a hill in Bethany on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Jesus stood there and was blessing them when He was raised up above the mountains into the clouds until He disappeared. The disciples were looking on in wonderment when two angels appeared to them and told them "Men of Galilee why do you stand looking up to heaven. This Jesus who has been taken up from you unto heaven will come again from heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed there until the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Ten days later the Holy Spirit descended on them. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.

These once timid fisherman now became fearless missionaries who would take the Christian message across the world regardless of the consequences.

Walter Rupesinghe

Let's glorify Mary through the Rosary

The faithful and grace filled month of May undoubtedly enthralls all to edify themselves and intensify their pious practice of expressing their fervent devotion to Mary

Rosary the traditional Marian prayer is a priceless token of the love of Mary Which enhances the desire to pray the Rosary to keep their families stay together.

Dear Mother, as we pray heed to your request make many a time and oft in your apparitions we pray the holy Rosary meditatively to implore your grace unceasingly

Although reciting the Rosary seems a vocal prayer indeed it is a great mental prayer since we meditate on the mysteries of the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Dear friends in Christ, more than ever today man faces an avalanche of misery So, make the most of this month of the Rosary to reach a turning point in life's way.

Leonard Wijesiri



A doctor was called one evening for an urgent surgery. He answered the call, changed his clothes, reached hospital in minutes and went directly to the surgery block. He found the boy's father waiting in the hall for him. Seeing him, the dad yelled: "Why did you take all this time to come? Don't you know that my son's life is in danger? Don't you have any sense of responsibility?"

The doctor smiled and said: "I am sorry, I wasn't in the hospital and I came as fast as I could after receiving the call and now I wish you'd calm down so that I can do my work."

"Calm down? What if your son was

in this room right now, would you calm down? If your own son dies now what will you do?" said the father angrily. The doctor smiled again and replied:

"I will say what Job said in the Holy Bible: "From dust we came and to dust we return, blessed be the name of God." Doctors cannot prolong lives. Go and pray for your son, we will do our best by God's grace."

"Giving advice when we're not concerned is so easy," murmured the father.

The surgery took some hours after which the doctor went out happy, "Thank goodness! Your son is saved!" And without waiting for the father's reply he carried on his way running. "If you have any questions, ask the nurse!!"

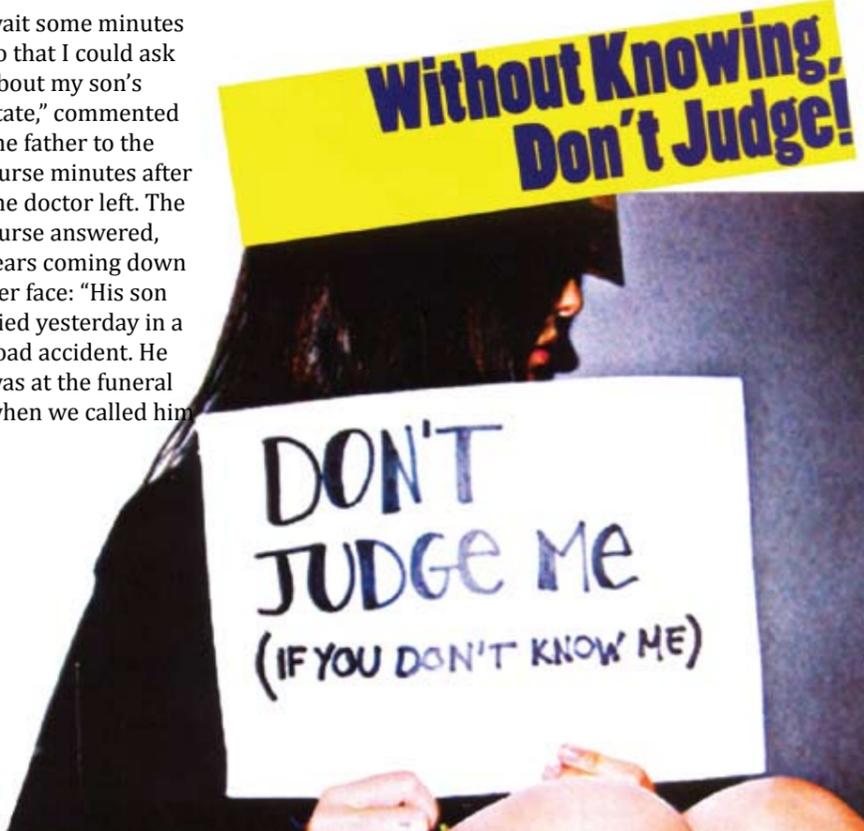
"Why is he so arrogant? He couldn't

wait some minutes so that I could ask about my son's state," commented the father to the nurse minutes after the doctor left. The nurse answered, tears coming down her face: "His son died yesterday in a road accident. He was at the funeral when we called him

for your son's surgery. And now that he saved your son's life, he left

quickly so as to finish his son's burial!"

How often we've



Could the person be rushing to the hospital because he's just heard his father's had a heart attack, or his wife has delivered, or that someone he loves is in grave danger? After all not everybody drives like a maniac unless there's a reason to be in a hurry.

Have we judged a friend wrong when he or she was not attentive to our conversation, when they could have been mulling over some problem they are facing at home; maybe a father who came home drunk last night, or a mother who has suddenly been detected with an illness?

Like that father of the child in the story, let us not judge too harshly, there is always a reason someone behaves the way he or she is behaving and we need to start giving room for such reasons, which if we only knew would make us ashamed of how we judged them.

So, without knowing, don't judge!
(Courtesy: Teenage Today)

Are you in the hunt for others' faults?

As human beings we have an inborn tendency to search for other peoples' faults as if they were pearls of great price. We exhibit this inclination from a very young age. Small children rarely take the blame for themselves for any wrongdoing. If a child knocks himself against a chair and starts to cry, the mother pacifies him by finding fault with the chair and hitting the chair. Teenagers are no better in admitting their faults. In the classroom, when a group of students is upto mischief, they do not normally come forward admitting the wrongdoing. In the case of a serious breach of discipline, there are times when the whole class is subjected to punishment until the offenders are identified.

Think of the first sin our first parents committed, the sin of disobedience. When God asks Adam why he ate from the forbidden tree, Adam puts the blame on Eve and says it's Eve who misled him. What was Eve's reply? The serpent enticed her to eat. So we find each transferring the blame on the other.

We read in the bible, when the woman who was caught in adultery was brought before Christ, and when the people insisted that she should be stoned to death according to the law, Christ puts forward a surprising suggestion. He tells the people, "Let the person who is without sin throw the first stone." What follows is that all the people start leaving the scene.

In 2005, a poem titled "Coloured" written by an anonymous African boy was nominated for the 'Best poem-2005' award. It was about the white people labelling non-whites as coloureds. They think that the coloureds are an inferior race.

COLOURED

When I born, I black
When I grow up, I black
When I go in sun, I black
When I scared, I black
When I sick, I black
And when I die, I still black.

You white fella
When you born, you pink
When you grow up, you white
When you go in sun, you red
When you cold, you blue
When you scared, you yellow

When you sick, you green
And when you die, you grey.
And you calling me COLOURED??

"Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you: because God will judge you in the same way you judge others, and He will apply to you the same rules you apply to others." (Mt 7:1-3)

Ananda Perera



seen a bike or car trying to overtake us, somebody trying to push his way ahead and we've blocked his way, or muttered how arrogant and uncivil the person is. Have you ever wondered whether you've been harsh in your judgement?

MOTHER – MY DEAREST



By Sirohmi Gunsekera

Mother Mary

"We look to a mother for warmth and understanding. That is why our tenderest thoughts are those of Mother Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. No wonder there are so many Catholics who have a special devotion to her," observed Michelle.

"I know. There are some Catholics who feel that God, the Father is a distant figure to be revered from afar. Thus they find it easier to cosy up to Saint Mary as a Mother Figure and confide all their problems to her," commented Jit.

"But they must not forget that she is but an intermediary and that it is God - the Father, the Son and The Holy Spirit who form the one true God, said Michelle.

"The Gospel shows Saint Mary's humility. She cries out in "The Magnificat" that "My soul does magnify the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour ... All generations shall call me Blessed!" repeated Jit.

"The popular 'Hail Mary' starts with the words of "The Annunciation" by Angel Gabriel to Mary; "Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with Thee. Blessed art thou among women." Mary, being a simple soul, was troubled by this greeting and wondered what it could mean. If only all men and women could be as humble as Mary was, the world would be a better place," continued Jessica, who had joined in the discussion.

"Father Lucian Dep once came to our school to conduct a retreat and he taught us a shortened form of "The Hail Mary". It goes like this: "Remember, Mother, you can't say you can't because you are His Mother, and you won't say you won't because you are My Mother." Isn't that both short and sweet?" said Michelle.

"Yes. It sounds good," commented Jit and Jessica together.

It's only a mother who would know the pangs of labour and anxiety, As she brings forth her new babe amidst much agony. But the joy is so great when she sets eye on her new born, With love and care she cuddles the babe to keep it cozy and warm.

Many a restless night she would spend to keep her babe well fed, She'd dare not slumber for fear of her little treasure falling off the bed! As the little child crawls and struggles to take its first footsteps, Imagine what joy and pride would spring forth from mother's tender breast.

Years roll by, the Milk of human kindness was Mother's valuable gift, She taught me God's love, compassion and humility never to drift. Her loving words of advice have made me the person I am today, The ladder of success I've reached, with her guidance along the way.

Her beautiful hands still do wonders with her intelligent creativity, Her sharp eyes never miss a speck, they still twinkle mischievously. Her inner beauty is as pretty as it always used to be, Mothers remain the "prettiest of all" in their children's memory.

Mother of mine, as you reach the vintage years of life, With love and gratitude I'll do all I can to be at your side.

Thank you Mummy (Amma) for all you've done, you sure did give the very best, You are and will always be MY MOTHER - MY DEAREST!!!

Ms. Antonette De Cruze©
Sacred Heart Church,
Rajagiriya

TAKE TIME FOR A MINUTE OF HUMOUR - SMILE!



Quoting the film "My fair lady" Miss Swarna told the eighth grade students of Kandy Convent, "The Rain in Spain stays mainly in the plains."

"But Miss", said a foreign student. "Did you not know that planes in Spain never fey into the rain.."

Rev. Fr. Fraccid Anthony Fernando OMI



Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando

Nearly a century and a half before Lourdes and two centuries before Fatima, the shrine of Livramento is recorded as a place where many miracles took place, a popular place of pilgrimage in Portuguese Lanka, says Rev. Dr. W.L.A. Don Peter, who did extensive research on the subject.

The Shrine at Livramento

The locality where this ancient shrine stood has been traced to Narahenpita, to the present Jawatte cemetery. We learn from historic records that the locality where the shrine was located was called Narapeti which is thought to be a Portuguese rendering of Narahenpita. In Narahenpitiya even today there is an area known as Livramento. It is presumed the popularity of the Shrine gave its name to the area. Livramento has been translated as 'delivery' and 'release'. And the Shrine was dedicated to *Nossa Senhora de Livramento* or Our Lady of Deliverance.

Further history records that at Narapeti was a 'ermida' (a church or chapel in a secluded spot) built by the Augustinian Fathers in which was a 'miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin Mary' and a 'well' by the side of the Church reputed for its healing waters. It is also recorded that with the Dutch take over of Colombo in 1656, the Church came under persecution and the image was smuggled to Goa by some devotees.

In his study of this shrine, Fr. Don Peter makes reference to a voluminous Portuguese work titled '*Santuário Mariano*' on the history of Marian shrines throughout the world published in Lisbon compiled by the Augustinian, Agostinho de Santa Maria in 1720. Volume 8 of this work records 'Marian Shrines in Asia and Africa'. Here the author gives an account of an 'ermida' of Our Lady of Deliverance at 'Marapety (Narapeti), about half a league from Colombo'.

Fr. Don Peter notes that de Santa Maria in his work refers to a chronicle by Fr. Faustino de Graca possibly used in compiling *Santuário Mariano*. The chronicle translated reads as 'The desert lands planted, watered and harvested by the Congregation of the Sons of St. Augustine in the East Indies'. According to Fr. Don Peter the importance of this work is that de Graca was born and bred in Goa and died in the very monastery that the image brought from Ceylon was being venerated. As such he was writing from first hand information. We quote from the chronicle of de Graca which would have been compiled before 1713:

"The ermida of Narapeti was dedicated to Our Lady of Deliverance (*Nossa Senhora do Livramento*). It was a place of great devotion and pilgrimage for both natives and foreigners. The image of Our Lady was miraculous and never was the ermida without pilgrims. After the loss of the island of Ceylon, the said image was taken to Goa, and is now kept in a chapel in the monastery of Our Lady of Grace at Goa, and every year the Provincials celebrate its feast."

In the same work it describes the image as being three spans in height and holding the Child Jesus in its arms.

Augustinian records complement Fr. Queyroz, the Portuguese historian, who was writing much earlier in time speaks of this shrine being half a league to the South of Colombo and within gunshot to the East of the former city of Cota (Kotte).

History records that here at the Shrine, was a well, to which people flocked to obtain cures. The practice continued into the Dutch period and pious folk visited the shrine regardless of the proscriptions of the Dutch.

After the Portuguese surrendered to the Dutch in 1656 little evidence of the Church remained. Fr. Don Peter quotes an Indian Oratorian in Sri Lanka, Manuel de Miranda writing half a century after the Portuguese were overthrown, who refers to a ruined wall of the church and the continuing use of the water of the well, despite orders and penalties of the Dutch East India Company, against its use.

In the British Period, reference to the pious belief in the possibility of cures by the use of water at the old shrine and well, is made in J. Cordiner's "A Description of Ceylon" (Vol.I, Pg. 56), published in 1807. We quote Cordiner's description of this 'very curious well' as he found it. "The perpendicular descent into the well is of a square form cut out of solid rock, to the depth of thirty feet, after which

Healing waters and a miraculous image



her death the image was passed to her nephew, who was advised in a dream to hand the image over to a pious lady in Colombo Constanca de Silva who kept it in her house and venerated it with great devotion.

The image referred to above is presumed not to be the original image of the Shrine, since there are reliable historic sources stating that the original image was taken to Goa.

The last known reference to the original image of the Shrine has been traced to 1817, in a work compiled on the history of the Augustinians in the East by Mancel da Ave Maria. Here it was recorded that the image was still being venerated in Goa in the monastery of *Nossa Senhora da Graca* of Goa. He says that in the monastery two images are venerated each in its own chapel. One is that of Our Lady of Deliverance which is in the Chapel of the Very Reverend Provincials, who celebrate its feast each year with great pomp, and daily recites its litany since 1688. And most importantly for us he goes on to record that the said image belonged to the ermida of Narapeti which they had in the Island of Ceylon and was a place of great devotion and pilgrimage for both natives and foreigners; and thus after the loss of the island the image was brought to Goa and placed in the afore mentioned chapel of the Provincials.

It is clear to us then that the original image was in Goa venerated in the *Nossa Senhora da Graca* of Goa till at least 1817, The miraculous qualities of the image were such that we see that it was given prime place in the chief house / provincial house of the Augustinian Order.

Today this monastery in Goa lies in ruin and nothing is known of the miraculous image.

The locality of the Shrine today

In Sri Lanka the present Livramento cemetery in Jawatte has an old well now partly filled up. All indications point to the fact that this was the well of the shrine. If so it was here that the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance stood in the time of the Portuguese.

Excavations at this site was commenced in 2001 by the Archeological Department on the initiation of Rev. Fr. Felician Perera then the Rector of St. Peter's College, Bambalapitiya and now the editor of the Catholic Messenger. The excavations revealed a subterranean slanting passage with steps (23 in all cut into the laterite (kabok) soil formation leading downwards to a landing, square in shape with the well cut in solid rock contracted into circular form. The water, though muddy, appeared fresh. Further 123 currency coins of the Dutch, British and the Portuguese period were found along the steps leading to and on the landing of the well.

The tradition behind the Livramento Church

The origin of the Shrine according to tradition recorded by Rev. Fr. Charles Collin is as follows: A Portuguese family lived close to where the shrine later came up. The master of this family went every morning to work in the Fort where he held a government position and returned home in the evening after work. Everyday at noon a little servant girl brought his lunch from home. It happened one day on the way to the Fort with her master's lunch, the girl stumbled and rolled on the ground and the master's lunch was scattered on the ground. Seeing what had happened she burst into tears not daring to go to the Fort empty handed or return home to her mistress. Seated on a trunk of a tree and burying her head in her hands she sobbed and implored the Mother of God to deliver her from this misery. Thereon upon lifting her eyes she was surprised to find the dishes in perfect order. Falling on her knees she thanked the good Mother for delivering her from her distress and with the lunch basket on her head went her way towards the Fort. Arriving there she placed the dishes on her master's table. Having tasted them he exclaimed "who prepared my lunch today?" The servant girl a little frightened replied "My mistress Sir." Said the man: "It is impossible! My wife has never prepared meals like this." Returning home that evening the husband questioned the wife: "Who prepared my lunch today?" "I did as usual," the wife replied surprised at the question. "No my dear", said the husband. "Howsoever clever you are, you cannot cook such dishes. All my life I have not tasted anything so delicious". Finally the little servant girl was called and pressed to answer, and with joy they learnt that the Mother of God herself had been responsible for the exquisite viands. It was in memory of this miracle, it is said that the Church was built and dedicated to Our Lady of Deliverance.

the well is contracted into a circular form, and is at the top of the water surrounded by sand. A subterranean slanting passage with steps hollowed out of the rock, leads down to this place, where a person can taste the water by taking it up with his hand. The top of the well is inaccessible, and not discoverable on account of thickets of shrubs which hang over it." Speaking of its waters he says that the water is of a superior quality; and is celebrated, together with the soil, which surrounds it, for the possession of many virtues.

Thus it is evident that the site was considered sacred and interest in its miraculous waters survived for another century or so after the Church was reduced to ruins and the Shrine abandoned. It is also said that Livramento seems to have been a place where during the Dutch period the Catholics of Colombo secretly met the priest for their spiritual ministrations.

The Present Image

According to Fr. Don Peter, a wooden image unearthed from this site is now kept at St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya and this is presumed to be a replica of the original image taken to Goa.

Manuel de Miranda explains how the present image of Our Lady of Livramento was found. Accordingly some years after the arrival of the Dutch, the Virgin appeared to a Sinhalese Christian in a dream, and instructed him to dig at a spot not far from where the Shrine of Livramento had stood. The man found there a box containing some images among which was one of Our Lady of Deliverance. It was carved in wood. On its head was a gold crown and it had earrings studded with pearls. The man kept it in his house and venerated it in secret. Some years later he moved to Galle and when he died having no children he entrusted the image to his sister, who promptly sold the crown and ear rings for her gain. On

BOOK REVIEW

A Rabbi Looks At The Last Days

Rabbi Jonathan Bernis, in this book "A Rabbi looks at the last days" looks at the end of times from a Messianic point of view

Though, he grew up in a traditional Jewish family, he had no desire to serve God with his life. He had a head for business and big money.

His life took a new direction when he had read the Holy Bible- a Christian Book, he thought would have no connection at all to what he had learned in the Synagogue as a child. Finding references to Abraham, Moses, David and other Jewish heroes in the Bible, he became convinced that Jesus was not the God of the Gentiles, as he had been told, but was infact the Messiah of Israel. (Yeshua Ha-Mashiach in Hebrew).

He sensed that God was calling on his life to take the Good News to the Jewish People. He obtained degrees in theology, Jewish studies and early Christianity. His priority now is to reach out to the Jewish People because he under-

stood that the Gospel is to be preached first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

Correcting the general belief among many Christians that God is finished with the Jews, he says, absolutely not true. He quotes the scripture verse, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the Land that I swore to give to your forefathers, I will never break my covenant with you." (Judges:2)

And he remembers the old saying: "God said it, I believe it, and that He always will. He will not break His promise. Writing on the world hatred for the Jews, he believes that is the work of Satan. Satan has hated the children of Israel, using hundreds of men and women over the years and centuries to attack them. The very first attempt to destroy the Jews is found in the second Book of Exodus. (After the birth of Jesus, likewise King Herod gave orders to kill all boys in Bethlehem who were 2-years-old)). We know, Jesus was not among them. You know the

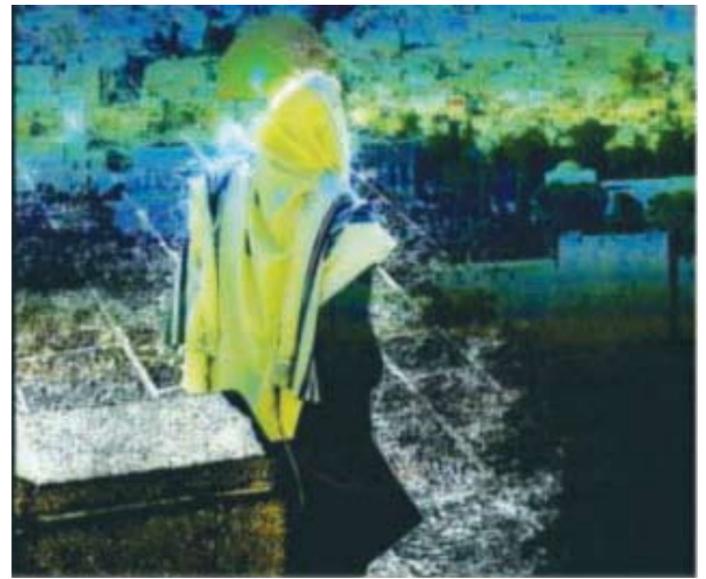
story.

Anti-semitism did not begin with Adolph Hitler and end with him. It is still on the rise. As individuals and as a people the Jews continue to suffer in various forms. To walk in and around Jerusalem is to walk over a sea of human blood. Jerusalem has been besieged more than 50 times, conquered 36 times and destroyed 10 times.

Today, 3000 years after the reign of King David, a majority of the world's population still believe that Jerusalem is the most important City in the world.

1. The City has no strategic military importance.
2. Jerusalem is not an important sea port. (or a sea port at all)
3. The City does not sit on an important trade route.
4. The surrounding countryside is not full of important natural resources (like oil)

One possible reason, says Rabbi Jonathan, is that Jerusalem is important to God and to His plan for the Last Days. Sa-



tan is doing everything possible within His power to keep the City out of Jewish hands. But he will always fail because God is in control.

During the six days war in 1967, Israel took the Old City which had been in Jordanian hands, and Jerusalem became united once again. Now Israel and Jerusalem are back in Jewish hands. God is calling the Jewish People back to their Home and to their Land.

He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over His flock like a Shepherd. The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel are not lost. God Knows where they are and He is bringing them together along with the dispersed of Judah since the Temple was destroyed in AD 70.

The return of the Jews to the Holy Land is clear undeniable sign that the Last Days of earth is near.

Bryan Landsberger

Catholic Catechism

How is the Sacrament of Baptism Celebrated?

Christian Initiation

1229 From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: Proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion.

1230 This initiation has varied greatly through the centuries according to circumstances, centuries of the Church, Christian initiation saw considerable development. Along period of *catechumenate* included a series of preparatory rites, which were liturgical landmarks along the path of catechumenal preparation and culminated in the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

1231 Where infant Baptism has become the form in which this sacrament is usually celebrated, it has become a single act encapsulating the preparatory stages of Christian initiation in a very abridged way. By its very nature infant Baptism requires a *post-baptismal catechumenate*. Not only is there a need for instruction after Baptism, but also for the necessary flowering of baptismal grace in personal growth. The *catechism* has its proper place here.

1232 The Second Vatican Council restored for the Latin Church "the catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps." The rites for these stages are to be found in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*. The Council also gives permission that: "In mission countries, in addition to what is furnished by the Christian tradition, those elements of initiation rites may be admitted which are already in use among some peoples insofar as they can be adapted to the Christian ritual.

1233 Today in all the rites, Latin and Eastern, the Christian initiation of adults begins with their entry into the catechumenate and reaches its culmination in a single celebration of the three sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. In the Eastern rites the Christian initiation of infants also begins with Baptism followed immediately by confirmation and the Eucharist, while in the Roman rite it is followed by years of catechesis before being completed later by Confirmation and the Eucharist, the summit of their Christian initiation.

The mystagogy of the celebration

1234 The meaning and grace of the sacrament of Baptism are clearly seen in the rites of its celebration. By following the gestures and words of this celebration with attentive participation, the faithful are initiated into the riches this sacrament signifies and actually brings about in each newly baptized person.

1235 *The Sign of the Cross*, on the threshold of the celebration, marks with the imprint of Christ the one who is going to belong to him and signifies the grace of the redemption Christ won for us by his cross.

1236 *The Proclamation of the Word of God* enlightens the candidates and the assembly with the revealed truth and elicits the response of faith, which is inseparable from Baptism. Indeed Baptism is "the sacrament of faith" in a particular way, since it is the sacramental entry into the life of faith.

1237 Since Baptism signifies liberation from sin and from its instigator the devil, one or more exorcisms are pronounced over the candidate. The celebrant then anoints him with the oil of catechumens, or lays his hands on him, and he explicitly renounces Satan. Thus prepared, he is able to *confess the faith of the Church*, to which he will be "entrusted" by Baptism.

1238 *The baptismal water* is consecrated by a prayer of epiclesis (either at this moment or at the Easter Vigil). The Church asks God that through his Son the power of the Holy Spirit may be sent upon the water, so that those who will be baptized in it may be "born of water and Spirit."

1239 The *essential rite* of the sacrament follows: *Baptism* properly speaking. It signifies and actually brings about death to sin and entry into the life of the Most Holy Trinity through configuration to the Paschal mystery of Christ. Baptism is performed in the most expressive way by triple immersion in the baptismal water. However, from ancient times it has also been able to be conferred by pouring the water three times over the candidate's head.

1240 In the Latin Church this triple infusion is accompanied by the minister's words: "N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." In the Eastern liturgies the catechumen turns toward the East and the priest says: "The servant of God,

N., is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." At the invocation of each person of the Most Holy Trinity, the priest immerses the candidate in the water and raises him up again.

1241 *The Anointing with Sacred Chrism*, perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop, signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has become a Christian, that is, one "anointed" by the Holy Spirit, incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet and king.

1242 In the liturgy of the Eastern Churches, the post-baptismal anointing is the sacrament of Chrismation (Confirmation). In the Roman liturgy the post-baptismal anointing announces a second anointing with sacred chrism to be conferred later by the bishop - Confirmation, which will as it were "confirm" and complete the baptismal anointing.

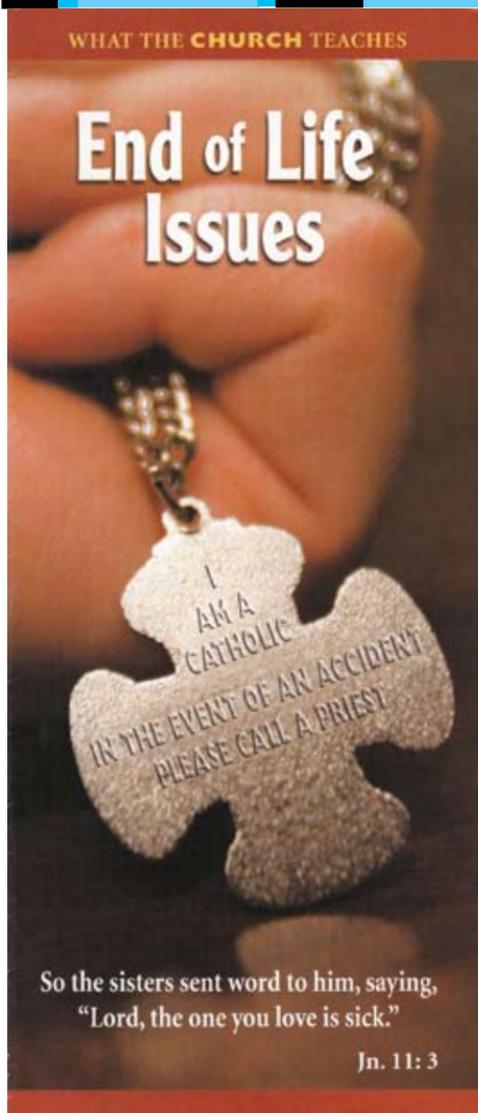
1243 *The White Garment* symbolizes that the person baptized has "put on Christ," has risen with Christ. The *candle*, lit from the Easter candle, signifies that Christ has enlightened the neophyte. In him the baptized are "the light of the world."

The newly baptized is now, in the only Son, a child of God entitled to say the prayer of the children of God: "Our Father."

1244 *First Holy Communion*. Having become a child of God clothed with the wedding garment, the neophyte is admitted "to the marriage supper of the Lamb" and receives the food of the new life, the body and blood of Christ. The Eastern Churches maintain a lively awareness of the unity of Christian initiation by giving Holy Communion to all the newly baptized and confirmed, even little children, recalling the Lord's words: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them." The Latin Church, which reserves admission to Holy Communion to those who have attained the age of reason, expresses the orientation of Baptism to the Eucharist by having the newly baptized child brought to the altar for the praying of the Our Father.

1245 *The Solemn Blessing* concludes the celebration of Baptism. At the Baptism of newborns the blessing of the mother occupies a special place.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church)



What does the Church teach about the end of life?

First, because God is the author of all life, directly putting anyone to death is morally unacceptable. It "constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator" (CCC, 2277). Ending life, even for the best of motives, is always wrong.

Second, the Church teaches that life in all its stages is sacred. In fact, according to the Catechism, "Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect" (CCC, 2276).

Third, human beings — regardless of their age, illness, social station, or abilities — are never to be considered less than fully human. Speaking to participants in an international congress, Pope John Paul II explained: "Even our brothers and sisters who find themselves in the clinical condition of a 'vegetative state' retain their human dignity in all its fullness. The loving gaze of God the Father continues to fall upon them, acknowledging them as his sons and daughters, especially in need of help" (John Paul II, Address, March 20, 2004).

Finally, the Church does not say that life must be prolonged at all costs. Patients or their rightfully designated authorities may refuse "over-zealous" treatments that are "burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome" [CCC, 2278]. In short, only "ordinary means" of prolonging life are morally required in the case of illness and imminent death.

What does the Church mean by "ordinary means?"

"Ordinary means" refer to "the normal care due to the sick person," including those remedies "that seem necessary or useful" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on Euthanasia, 1980, part IV). The sick are to be kept clean, warm, and protected from infection and pain as far as possible. They are to be given nutrition and hydration, even when these are provided by artificial means (cf. John Paul II, Address, March 20, 2004, No. 4; Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers, Charter for Health Care Workers, 1995, No. 120). These "ordinary means" should be distinguished from medical treatments that are overly burdensome, risky, or painful when compared to the reasonable benefit they might offer. Practically, this means that a procedure that is experimental, offers little hope of success, or is too much to bear is not obligatory.

For example, a 93-year-old grandmother who is partially paralyzed by a stroke is diagnosed with breast cancer. She may decide that the risks of a mastectomy coupled with chemotherapy are more than she is willing to endure. For her,

the treatment would constitute "extraordinary means." On the other hand, for a 33-year-old mother in otherwise good health, such an operation may be merely the "ordinary" means of dealing with her cancer.

Why shouldn't I rely on medical professionals alone to make these decisions?

Medicine is an art as much as a science. Medical professionals can provide their best guesses as to the outcome of an illness, but ultimately God determines the length and span of our days. After gathering all the medical facts, it is helpful to have the advice of a priest or moral counselor to determine not only what may be considered extraordinary treatment in your particular case.

Often, people who are gravely ill become either depressed or panicky and may have a hard time making rational decisions. While physicians can provide options, a priest or moral theologian can help you and your family make the right decisions.

Why is euthanasia wrong?

Sometimes, in a misguided attempt to alleviate suffering, people believe that euthanasia, the direct ending of life, is an act of mercy. But according to the teachings of the Church, euthanasia is a "murderous act" and is always forbidden. However, a distinction must be made between euthanasia and permitting natural death. Euthanasia is "an action or an omission which of itself or by intention causes death, in order that all suffering in this way may be eliminated" (Declaration on Euthanasia, part II). It is a deliberate action (e.g. an overdose) or an omission that seeks to end the life. Permitting natural death, on the other hand, means that a person's life is allowed to take its natural course — which, for all of us, ultimately ends in death.

Special consideration must be given to painkillers that could hasten death. The Church teaches that the use of painkillers "can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged" (CCC, 2279).

I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live. Deut. 30:19

In any event, the normal care owed to a sick person must be continued. Food and fluids normally should be provided. Pope John Paul II says these are "a natural means of preserving life, not a medical act" and their deliberate withdrawal constitutes murder. "Death by starvation or dehydration is, in fact, the only possible outcome as a result of their withdrawal. In this sense it ends up becoming, if done knowingly and willingly, true and proper euthanasia by omission" (John Paul II, Address, March 20, 2004).

The value of suffering

In following the example of Our Lord, the Church has always considered care for the sick and dying an essential part of its ministry. As the American Bishops explain in their Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, Catholics are "to see Christian love as the animating principle of health care; to see healing and compas-



sion as a continuation of Christ's mission; to see suffering as a participation in the redemptive power of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection; and to see death, transformed by the resurrection, as an opportunity for a final act of communion with Christ" (General Introduction to Fourth Edition, 2001).

Accepting the suffering that comes with illness, old age, and the process of dying can, in the words of the Catechism, "make a person more mature, helping him discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him. By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering: It can henceforth configure us to him and unite us with his redemptive Passion" (CCC, 1501, 1505).

What should I do?

What should you do so that others will know your wishes if you are incapacitated and dependent upon them to make decisions for you?

According to the Patient Self-Determination Act of 1990, all hospitals and medical care facilities must provide written information about the right to accept or refuse medical treatment and the right to a "Living Will," and/or how to designate "Durable Power of Attorney."

"Durable Power of Attorney" grants authority to a person you designate, who understands your moral considerations and wishes, to act as a proxy if you are unable to speak for yourself. A "Living Will" is a signed legal document spelling out what medical treatment and procedures you want or do not want to have done if you become incompetent.

You need to be sure before you sign a "Living Will" that it does not contain actions contrary to Catholic teaching, such as allowing euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide. In addition, it should state that you want a priest called to celebrate the Sacrament of Anointing if you are seriously ill. You should keep a copy of your "Living Will" in a safe place and distribute copies to your doctor and family members.

Since individual state laws vary, check with your state to see what is legal and necessary. Many dioceses have "Catholic Living Wills" on their websites that you can download and fill out. Without such advance directives, others may make decisions that do not correspond either to your wishes or to Church teaching.



The Beginning of Life

As Catholics we are called to affirm that death is not the end of life, but the beginning. As Pope John Paul II said in his 1999 Letter to the Elderly (No. 2): "But if the life of each of us is limited and fragile, we are consoled by the thought that, by virtue of our spiritual souls, we will survive beyond death itself. Moreover, faith opens us to a 'hope that does not disappoint' (cf. Rom. 5:5), placing us before the perspective of the final resurrection."

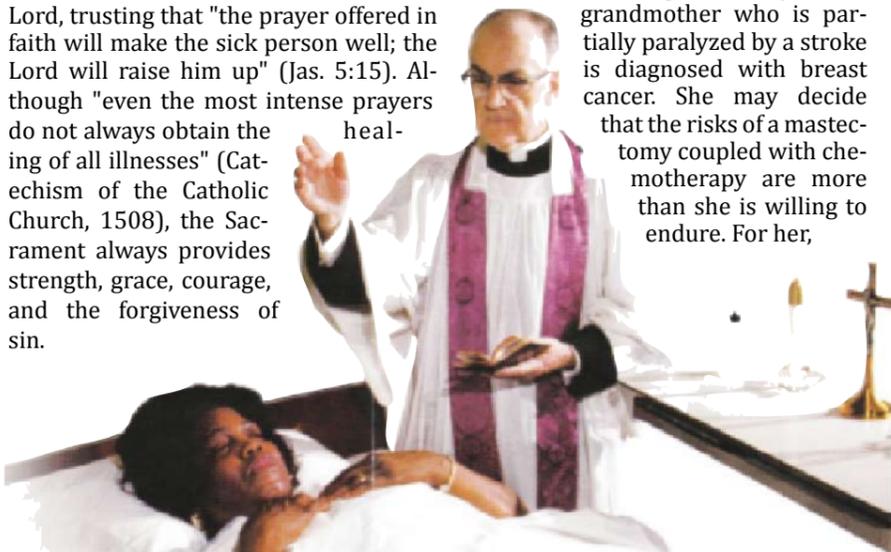
The End of Life

The Catholic Church teaches that all life, from conception to natural death, is sacred. However, modern medical advances have made end of life issues increasingly difficult to sort out. What is the difference between letting a person die and practicing euthanasia? Can Catholics have "living wills?" How much treatment must be provided to the sick and dying? This pamphlet gives an overview of these and other important moral issues surrounding life and death.

Why should I turn to the Church when a loved one is facing an end of life decision?

Since such decisions are often made in times of great stress, talking to a priest can help you and your family understand Church directives, assuring that whatever choices are made are both compassionate and morally ethical.

Moreover, the Church offers not only the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist to help those who are sick or dying, but also provides the special graces of the Sacrament of Anointing. The Sacrament of Anointing fulfills the directives expressed in the Letter of James to pray over those who are sick, to anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, trusting that "the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up" (Jas. 5:15). Although "even the most intense prayers do not always obtain the healing of all illnesses" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1508), the Sacrament always provides strength, grace, courage, and the forgiveness of sin.



APPRECIATION

When I think of the recent demise of Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando of the Chilaw Diocese, the well-known lines of the poet Thomas Grey comes to mind, "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness in the desert air". These lines are somewhat apt when considering the life of Fr. Emmanuel. He was a man of multi faceted talents. Firstly and primarily a man of God, a recognized pedagogue, an accomplished musician and instrumentalist, a successful innovator, a far seeing agriculturist, a Doctor of Spiritual Theology (magna laude) and a committed



social worker. His life was like that of a fragrant flower that blossomed far from the maddening crowd. Most of his priestly life was spent in under developed rural areas and his life was like a beacon of light in an unawakened village.

Fr. Emmanuel had his secondary education at St. Mary's College, Chi-

law and from his youthful days he was a talented vocalist, a boy soprano. In those early days before St. Anne's Talawila got its new look, Fr. Emmanuel then popularly known as 'Mani' sang solo at the annual festival the evocative theme hymn 'Santhanam Maniyanae' the strains of which got imprinted in the minds of the devotees.

With maturity he excelled in his music capability and was the music master in his time at the Seminary. The violin was his boon companion, his favourite instrument. He carried the love of music to all the parishes where he worked and taught and

trained Church choirs. To him the celebration of the Eucharist was incomplete unless accompanied by good choral music.

He was a scholar, mastered Latin and learnt his Tamil in the Jaffna Diocese. When he was Rector at the Seminary in Marawila he made a memorable introduction to Latin through the Sinhala medium. This brought him plaudits from Dr. Malasekera as such a thing had not happened before.

In all the parishes he worked in, he introduced agricultural pursuits. He is credited with turning the golden sands of Talawila to green

fields of onion. In the parish of Irabadagama within the Diocese of Chilaw and in the churches at Hetirippuwa, Thambakanda and Muthugalayagama he started poultry farming. At that time these parishes had no attained star-class status and these were pioneering by Fr. Emmanuel. When he was the Parish priest at Talawila he had to tend to the parishioners of 8 churches - Norochcholai - Ethukale, Palakuda, Kellepal-liya, Kurinjampitiya and Kandekulliya. He was indeed a true missionary walking in the footsteps of the great itinerant Blessed Joseph Vaz.

He had his exposure to foreign countries. He spent two years preparing for his Doctorate at the Gregorian University in Rome and then at Putnam Lake in the U.S.A. He was also the recipient of an agricultural scholarship from Israel which enabled him to visit the Holy Land. Fr. Emmanuel was a strict adherent to Church Liturgy over which he was a bold exponent. Truly Fr. Emmanuel was a self effacing worker in the hinterland of the country away from the publicity and footlights of the city. Fr. Emmanuel has run his race and completed the work allotted to him and has undoubtedly earned his Heavenly Award.

Merle E. Dalpathado

Letters to the Editor:

Unchristian wedding practices

Almost all Catholics including some priests are under the wrong impression that the first bell at the Wedding Mass is rung to honour the bride. I too was under that wrong impression upto my 83rd-year until Very Revd. Fr. Francis Nicholas Senanayake explained to me the purpose for which the first bell was rung in the ancient days. This wrong impression in the people may be instrumental for enhancing pride and unchristian practices such as conducting the bride on the Red Carpet, sprinkling flowers on the couple inside the Church etc. in some weddings, with hardly any regards for Christ in the Eucharist - thus giving Christ the second place in the Church.

Red Carpet in a church may be spread only for Corpus Christi procession. (Red Carpet is a honour normally accorded to visiting Heads of States).

Although any Catholic entering a church even for a casual visit will genuflect to Jesus in the Eucharist, no bride or a bridegroom cares to genuflect when they enter the Church to receive a life-long gift of a sacrament from God. It is a matter for great regret to see the parents of present day brides, bridesmaids and flower girls, permitting their children to be dressed so indecently, bringing disgrace on the Catholic Church.

Another reason for deterioration of church ceremonies is the solemnization of marriages by priests who are either friends or relations of families of the bride or bridegroom, who adopt an obliging attitude for the wishes of the families of the bride and bridegroom.

Our church weddings are full of worldly pomp and ceremony with very little spirituality, modesty and humility and full of extravagances. The First Bell does not seem to serve any purpose other than creating pride in the Bride.

As the need for First Bell ceased to exist long long time ago, I kindly request you to submit my suggestion in my article, for dispensing with the ringing of the first bell to Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka, for due consideration as a first step for restoring the dignity of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Ivan Ranasinghe

Raphael Alphonsus

He served as best as he could

The voice of our beloved Vice-Principal Mr. Alphonsus of St. Charles' Maha Vidyalayam was silenced on April 8th Easter Sunday, the day of the Risen Lord. Having attended the Eucharistic celebration and at peace with the Lord at the banquet returned home with his loved ones to share the Joys of Easter; but it was not so. Instead he responded to the call of His Divine Master, whom he has followed throughout, till his demise on Easter Sunday.

A gentleman by birth and a man of God, he attained heights through hard work and sheer efforts. Having completed his Senior School Certificate examination securing good results he was offered a teaching post at St. Anthony's College, Wattala. His career commenced in 1956 in the noble profession and structured a period of unblemished service till 1985 at St. Anthony's.

A graduate in Science from the University of Madras he spared no pains in shaping many an Antonian. Thirty years of service is no easy task. To his credit, Antonians of Wattala are serving in various parts of the Globe and here in Sri Lanka as religious, teach-

President St. Anthony's Wattala OBA

Mr. John Emmanuel was unanimously elected of President of the St. Anthony's College, Wattala OBA 2012-2013 at the 67th AGM held at the College Hall recently.

He succeeds Mr. Ranjan de Silva who completed 03 consecutive years as the President.

Mr. John has served as the General Secretary of the OBA since 2009. He represented the College at Cricket, soccer and athletics in early 60's and also represented the Colombo Tea Traders' Association



in 1977 to participate in the duel between Colombo Tea Traders' Association Vs. Cochin Tea Traders' Association in their Annual Sports Tournament in Cochin, India.

(Clarence Leonard)

ers, Doctors, engineers, accountants, lawyers and politicians. In every sense

of the term, he devoted the best part of his life to the services at St. Antony's.

In recognition of his devoted and dedicated services he was appointed as Principal of the Tamil Section. He served as best as he could in this capacity and delivered the goods to the utmost satisfaction of his superiors and authorities. Having done so, he set his eyes to serve in his home town, Jaffna. The Director of Education, Jaffna at that time knew him so well and also his abilities and capabilities availed him a place in one of the leading Institution in Jaffna. However he politely declined and humbly requested the Director to post him at St. Charles Maha Vidyalayam, Jaffna to which the Director reluctantly agreed. I happen to be the Principal at that time.

As Vice-Principal a heavy burden was put on him which lessened my pressure, as this period of time was a period of unrest and uncertainties due to the troubled situation that prevailed at that time. As Vice-Principal he left no stone unturned to take the school forward and in a way he was a contended man when he stepped down on his retirement. Personally as members of the Charles family, we bow down with a debt of gratitude, love and affection. To his loving wife Mrs. Alphonsus and his only child Anne, who is walking in her father's footsteps, our deepest and innermost sympathies.

At their moment of sorrow, we pray that their dear departed husband and parent rests in peace in the bosom of the Lord.

Lazarus Gunanayagam

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENT

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From your sons, daughters, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grand children and other loving family members.

(R12N0667)

Wonders of the Mass

I was inspired to write about a precious little booklet titled "The Wonders of the Mass" by Father Paul O' Sullivan, which gave an entire new meaning to my life. I learnt among other truths that "Mass is the same as the sacrifice of Calvary. It has the same infinite value of Calvary and brings down on men the same priceless graces."

"I am the Bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry. He who believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6: 35.

Having read this valued booklet way back in

1995, I was thirsty to attend as many Masses as possible even during week days. I also received the Holy Eucharist with renewed fervour.

In this booklet, Fr. Sullivan tells us of the immense benefits of the Holy Mass, the countless miracles that have taken place during Holy Mass besides which the severe punishments that befell Catholics who deliberately missed attending Mass. Father Sullivan further states that "by the Mass we offer to God the greatest praise, the greatest glory He could possibly de-

sire," and that "we can do nothing better for the conversion of sinners than offer them the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."

As an ordinary Catholic, I deeply desired others like myself to benefit by reading this booklet. The late Raymond and Priyanthi who owned the St. Paul's Bookshop in Moratuwa made it possible for me to fulfil my desire since the price of a booklet was a mere Rs. 10/- only.

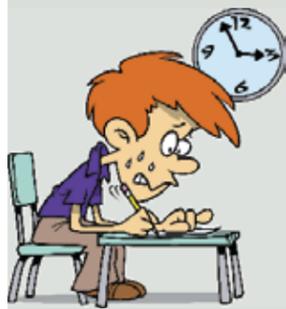
It is my view that if the value and true meaning of the Holy Mass is imparted to Catholics, many will attend

Sunday Mass not as an obligation, but (instead, will do so out of pure love and gratitude to our eternal priest and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Further they will make every effort to attend Holy Mass during the week too. More over, Catholics will not leave our beloved Church founded by Jesus Himself and refrain from joining man-made churches.

"I was the vine and you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in him will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me." John 15: 5.

Yvonne Amarasekera

Be prepared to attack exams



Time flies swiftly. Even though, man is so advanced in Science and Technology he is unable to control 'time' according to his wishes. As a result, within another three months the students, who sit for the forthcoming Advanced Level examination, must be ready.

This examination is a crucial point in the lives of the students who face it, because the exam can decide their entire future. When the exams come closer many students get excited and panic. Similarly, some students may all of a sudden fall sick due to excessive fear, anxiety, pressure and stress. This occurs particularly when they are not thoroughly prepared for the task in advance.

Hence, I think this article will be extremely

helpful to those who prepare for examinations, irrespective of age.

"Exam is an inevitable evil." If we study something, we cannot escape from facing exams, because exam is the only instrument by which a student's memory power or in other words how much a student has assimilated in the mind can be evaluated. Though, facing exams may bring us unpleasant experiences, examinations are essential for human beings.

Students may ask a question as to how is it possible for them to write within three hours or within any limited time, whatever they have learnt within a considerable period of time.

That is the nature of exams and nobody can help. But, if we follow a method in studying we can finish the exam victoriously. First we have to think about the methods that we utilise when studying or preparing for exams. Thus this evaluation will help us to find out whether our methods

are helpful or not. If they are not helpful for us we can amend them and go for new methods.

The person, who prepares for exams must be balanced intellectually, physically and mentally. In the meantime, the participant ought to do certain things before, during and after the exam as given below.

Before :-

- i) Mode of the exam: Oral exam Written exam
- ii) Keep the syllabus of each subject ready.
- iii) Arrange short notes.
- iv) Plan time-table according to the days that remain. (Do not count revision days and examination days with this)
- v) Get few past papers and answer them on your own.
- vi) Have group discussions among friends, if at all possible.

During:-

- i) Arrange the stationery that you should take to the Examination Hall (Avoid taking any

- unnecessary thing into the Hall)
- ii) Read the question paper from top to bottom carefully, and select questions that you think you can answer well.
- iii) Write clearly.
- iv) Do not ever use red pen.
- v) Use the outline method.
- vi) At the end, check whether you have written your Index number, name if necessary and page numbers.

After

If you feel that you could not do well do not regret but focus on the other subjects which are remaining.

In general, from the beginning to the end you must be relaxed. Eat well, play some games, do breathing exercises, sleep at least six hours, above all pray to your God. Always think that "I can and I will." I wish you all to do well in your exams!

*Bro. Shanaka Gayan,
St. Xavier's Seminary,
Jaffna.*

ADVERTISEMENTS

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Managed By The Catholic De La Salle Brothers-

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FOR CHILDREN**

Born Between 1st Feb 2010 to 31st Jan 2011
Parents call over with your child for an

INTERVIEW

On
Saturday 26th May 2012
or
Sunday 27th May 2012

Both days from 9.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon

Please bring your
Child's Birth Certificate
and

Someone to attend to the child
While the parents are at the interview
130, De La Salle Street, Mutuwal, Colombo 15.
Tel : 2529729

**Rev. Bro. Nimal Gurusinghe, Fsc.
Director.**

(N0513)

VACANCY - POST OF MATRON

The Kotahena Shepheridian Home for Elders (KOSHE) situated at Mabile, has a vacancy for a Night Matron, who should be a mature lady with suitable experience in dealing with geriatrics. Applications should be forwarded on or before 27th. May 2012 to

**Mrs. Christobel Saverimuttu,
Chairperson KOSHE, 290, D.R.
Wijewardena Mawatha, Colombo 10.**

(N0515)

AWAIT SRI LANKAN SCHOOLS COMBINED CHOIRS



92 Singers from
St. Joseph's College - Colombo, Good Shepherd Convent - Kotahena
Ave Maria Convent - Negombo, Maris Stella College - Negombo
(Members of Puere Cantores Sri Lanka)

PROGRAMME

2ND JUNE 2012

Eucharistic Celebration at St. Peter's Basilica

Presided over by

HIS EMINENCE MALCOLM CARDINAL RANJITH

at 11.00 a.m.

3RD JUNE 2012

Eucharistic celebration at the Basilica of

Twelve Holy Apostles - Rome

Presided over by

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith at 5.30 p.m.

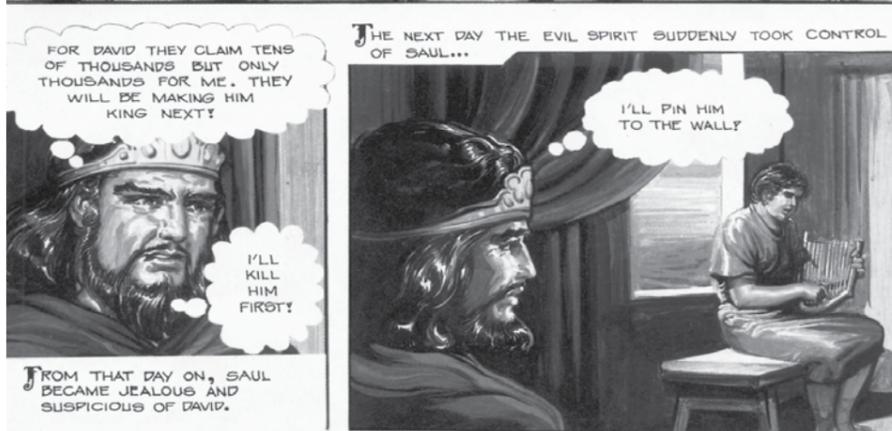
Exotic Choral concert at the Basilica of

Twelve Apostles at 7.00 p.m.

6TH JUNE 2012

Presentation at the Papal General Audience - 10.00 a.m.

All are welcome to enjoy these incomparable events



(Next week)

What it says in the Readings

Go make disciples of all the nations, I am with you always, yes, to the end of time.

(Mk. 28:19-20)

Sts Peter and Dionysia - May 15 Martyrs (A.D.)

In the Decian persecution the blood of the Christians flowed at Lampsacus, a city of Asia Minor (Turkey). St Peter was the first to be led before the Proconsul and condemned to die for the name of Christ. Young though he was, he went joyfully to his torments. He was bound to a wheel by iron chains. His bones thus broken, he raised his eyes to heaven and, with a smiling countenance, exclaimed: "I give you thanks, O Lord Jesus Christ, because you have given me patience, and made me victorious over the tyrant!" The Proconsul, seeing that torture availed little ordered Peter beheaded.

A little later, in the same city, the virgin Dionysia gained the crown which an apostle named Nichomachus lost and his story may teach that those who lose Christ rather than suffer for him lose all. With the strength that was left in him, he had cried out, "I never was a Christian! I sacrifice to the gods!" Set free he did offer sacrifice to the gods. But soon he was possessed of the devil and got into a fit and died.

"O wretched man!" wailed Dionysia, "why have you feared a little suffering and chosen eternal pain instead?" As a result she was soon seized and led away to horrible outrage, but her guardian angel appeared and stood by her side, protecting the spouse of Christ. She escaped from the prison but the desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ was so strong in her that she threw herself upon the bodies of the martyrs, crying: "I would fain die with you on earth, that I may live with you in heaven!" And Christ, who is the crown of virgins and the strength of martyrs, granted her, her heart's desire.

Reflection: "This world and that to come are two enemies. We cannot therefore be friends to both, but we must resolve which we would forsake and which we would enjoy" (St Clement).

St. Simon Stock - May 16

This native of Kent, England (born at Ayelsford), received his nickname, "Simon of the Stock" from the legend that at the age of 12 he started living as a hermit in the hollow of a great oak tree and continued to do so for 63 years! He was known as an itinerant preacher, until he joined the Carmelite Order in 1240 soon after its introduction into England, driven out of Jerusalem by the Moslems.



In 1247 he was elected 6th General of the Order at whose spread he laboured with much zeal and success despite his advanced age. Houses were opened for the training of young Carmelites in the great University cities of the time, viz., Cambridge, Oxford, Paris and Bologna; the rule of the Order was also modified so as to make the former hermits into mendicant friars. An ancient Carmelite tradition relates that Our Lady appeared to St Simon on 16 July 1251, and presented him with the Brown Scapular to which she attached the well known privilege, i.e., "This shall be the privilege for you and for all Carmelites, that anyone dying in this habit, shall be saved." Thus to him is ascribed the spread of the scapular devotion.

Simon Stock died on 16 May 1265 at Bordeaux. Though newer formally canonized, his relics have long been venerated as those of a saint in the Cathedral at Bordeaux and in the Carmelite Monastery at Aylesford, England.

Reflection: "From the first till the last, every grace has passed and will pass through Mary. Just as she prayed to the Holy Spirit to come upon the apostles, she will do for all till the end of the world" (Blessed James Alberione).

The Feast of the Ascension

Theme: *Risen Christ is Lord of all created things.*

1st Reading:
Acts 1: 1-11

This reading gives us three essential aspects of the feast of the Ascension namely (1) The Risen Lord has completed the mission entrusted to him by the Father. (2) He entrusts to his disciples with the mission of preaching the Gospel to the whole world. (3) He enters the heavenly realm indicating that he stands above all creation although, by his Incarnation, he has become part of creation.

Reflection.

Today is Ascension Sunday wherein we celebrate the feast of our Lord's Ascension into heaven. In the history of our salvation we see God who out of His Mercy tries to save us. As these did not work out He sent His own Son in order to save us. In the Incarnation His only son took flesh and was born into this world. Here He prepared Himself for His great salvific mission. He was obedient to the religious laws of the time and also to God. During His life here on earth He set out to preach, teach and perform miracles in the name of God. Thereby gathering many disciples. At the end He was put to death. Having died on the Cross God raised Him on the third day. After His Resurrection Jesus appeared to his Apostles to convince them of His divinity and gave them the final instructions prior to ascending into heaven. He ascended into heaven to

2nd Reading:
Ephesians 1: 17-23

Jesus, risen from the dead, has become Lord of all creation. Although St. Paul does not explain this to the Ephesians, it has to be understood in terms of Incarnation and the Resurrection of Jesus. Jesus, through his Incarnation became part of creation which is doomed to die, but by his Resurrection, he lives for ever. Thus he stands above all created things. This is what is meant by "God has put everything under his feet."

Gospel:
Mark 16: 15-20

In order to continue with the mission entrusted to Jesus by the Father, Jesus himself gives his disciples the mission of preaching the Gospel to the whole world. He symbolically assures them of protection from all dangers, at the same time, promising them to be with them till the end of time.

Reflection:

We who are incorporated into the Body of Christ through our Baptism, have the duty of continuing with the mission

of bearing witness to the values of the Gospel in the environment we live in.

Has the Risen Lord become Lord of our lives? This fact becomes evident from the type of Christian life we live in the world.

Are we prepared to go through challenges and opposition by living the Gospel values in a world that teaches us a set values which are diametrically opposed to the teachings of Jesus?

Rev. Fr. Henry Silva



be seated at the right hand of the Father. It is this same Jesus who would judge the living and the dead later

The Ascension of our Lord gives many insights into our faith life.

It proves that there is a life beyond to which we are all called. The only way to reach it is through Christ. Those who accept Christ's words and keep His commandments will attain life everlasting.

It reminds us also that we ought to prepare ourselves to face the day of the Lord which will be at the end of time. To face this day we ought to preach the Good News and become witness of

the Gospel, everywhere. This is to be done by our good example, by our words and deeds and also by prayer.

Aid story.

One afternoon in the little Spanish town, a priest accompanied by a child, took Holy Viaticum to an old painter. The dying man took his last communion with great devotion, and afterward, as if to express his thanks for the visit, took a piece of coal from the incense burner and on the wall drew a beautiful picture of Christ. The little boy watched the old painter with astonishment and asked him how he managed to make such a fine sketch so fast, without even seen a picture of Him. "to be prepared to make a really a good sketch of Jesus, it is necessary to carry it alive in your heart. My boy do it that way, and you will be able to picture Jesus, if not in colours, at least in deeds."

Aid Story 2.

A story is told of a wealthy man who died and went to heaven and was interviewed by St. Peter. At the conclusion St. Peter reached out and pointed to a beautiful mansion nearby. "You may be interested to know that is your butler's home," he said. "Well," the newcomer smiled in pleasant anticipation, "If that is his home, I can hardly wait to see what mine will be like."

Indicating a tiny cottage in the distance, St. Peter murmured, "That hut over there is yours."

"But I can't live in that!" was the outraged answer.

"I am sorry, but you will have to," was the reply. "It's the best that I could do with the material you sent ahead while you were alive. We can only build here on the foundation you prepare while you are on earth."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR B 20th May - 27th May 2012

SUN: THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Act. 1: 1-11, Eph. 1: 17-23 or Eph. 4: 1-13, Mk. 16: 15-20

Mon: Memorial of SS Christopher Magallanes, Priest and Companions, Martyrs

Act. 19: 1-8, Jn. 16: 29-33

Tue: Memorial of St. Rita of Cascia, Religious

Acts. 20: 17-27, Jn. 17: 1-11

Wed: Act. 20: 28-38, Jn. 17: 11-19

Thu: Act. 22: 30; 23, 6-11, Jn. 17: 20-26

Fri: Memorials of St. Bede the Venerable, Priest & Doctor, St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi,

Act. 25: 13-21, Jn. 21: 15-19

Sat: Memorial of St. Philip Neri, Priest

Act. 28:16-20,30-31, Jn. 21: 20-25

Sun: PENTECOST SUNDAY

Gen. 11: 1-9 or Ex. 19: 3-8, 16-20, Rom. 8: 22-27, Jn. 7: 37-39

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response : Lord, hear us in your love.

For all who follow Jesus: That they may rise above the sins that enslave them. We pray in faith.

Response: Lord, hear us in your love.

For the human family: That people may rise above their prejudices and see the world as their common home and all people as their brothers and sisters. We pray in faith.

Response: Lord, hear us in your love.

For those who cannot see beyond the narrow horizons of this materialistic world: That they may hear the voice of Christ calling them to eternal life and an everlasting kingdom. We pray in faith.

Response: Lord, hear us in your love.

That all our displaced people who are suffering due to cruel war in our country may receive all their needs and be comforted. We pray in faith.

Response: Lord, hear us in your love.