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Messenger

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Colombo Regional Pilgrimage to Madhu

As yet another event in the 'Year of Faith', His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith initiates a Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Madhu from May 24 to 26. The theme of the pilgrimage is "Pilgrimage of Faith with Mother Mary."

At a meeting on Monday, May 20 at the Archbishop's House, presided over by His Eminence, the final programme was discussed in detail with the deans of the six deaneries, the preachers and the co-ordinators.

Based on the above theme there will be several sessions conducted by Rev. Fr. Francis Senanayake in Sinhala, Rev. Fr. Stanny Anthony OMI in Tamil and Rev. Fr. Justin Chawkan sss in English. Sessions will be conducted for different age groups by Diocesan co-ordinators of apostolates such as Family by Rev. Fr. Julian Patrick, Youth by Rev. Fr.



Freddie Shanthikumar and Children by Rev. Fr. Kithsiri. His Eminence will preside over the liturgical celebrations; Holy Mass and the candlelit procession, together with His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar. The Administrator of the Shrine Rev. Fr. Emilianuspillai has made arrangements for a special blessing with the Statue of Our



Lady of Madhu after the Festive High Mass. The Department of Railway has deployed two special trains to Madhu, one starting from Aluthgama and the other from Mount Lavinia. The department has taken a keen interest in organising this event since it is after 24 years that they are operating on this newly constructed track.

Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Fernandopulle, E.V. Colombo South Region

"Lord, your faith is for me, for us"

Thousands of people from all parts of the country took part in the annual all night rally at the Shri Prasansaramaya in Ragama to mark the feast of Pentecost the birthday of the Church - last Saturday, May 18. The Rally was organised by the *Kitudana Pupuduwa* (Catholic Revival Movement) and the theme for this year was "Lord, your faith is for me, for us," (adapted from Hebrews 12:2). The chief guest and the main speaker was His



Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo. The Cardinal said that like Moses, our faces also would glow with God's glory when we are filled with the power and light of trusting faith in the promises and the unfailing love of God.

A message was also given by His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi, the Bishop of Anuradhapura, and Secretary General of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Sri Lanka.

The talk on the theme for the year was given by Ranjana Kaviratne who was appointed last Saturday (18) as the lay leader of the *Kitudana Pupuduwa*.

The Rally ended with Holy Mass concelebrated by several priests led by Rev. Fr. Oscar Abeyratne, founder leader of the *Kitudana Pupuduwa*.

During the past 42 years, tens of thousands of people have been led into a deep and growing relationship with the Risen Lord, through the mission of Fr. Oscar.

The sermon at the Holy Mass was given by Rev. Fr. Gromik Cooray who had his initiation at the *Kitudana Pupuduwa* before going to the National Seminary.

Books on the Holy Spirit-led life and Mission of Fr. Oscar and the theme sermons given by him at the Annual Pentecost rallies, were presented to his Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith and other clergy.

Pic: Cecil Danisius

Synchronized Holy Hour on June 2, 2013 (Sunday)

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith requests all the parishes of the Archdiocese to join the Holy Father on the **June 2, at 8:30 p.m. (Sri Lankan time)** for the ceremony in Rome, by celebrating an hour of Eucharistic Adoration. Those who organise Eucharistic processions on the same day may be exempted from it, or may shorten or adjust them in a way that the Holy Hour may be celebrated as the conclusion of the Eucharistic Procession.



Rev. Fr. Indrajith Perera
Archdiocesan Coordinator for Liturgy

Colombo Catholic Press Mobile Book Sale at Dehiwela Parish



The Colombo Catholic Press will conduct a mobile book sale at St. Mary's Church, Dehiwela, on Sunday June 2, after morning Mass.

Pope Francis calls for ethical financial and economic reform

In one of his most outspoken comments since his election two months ago, Pope Francis has called for worldwide "financial reform along ethical lines" which would curb the "tyranny" of "markets and financial speculation."

Addressing new Vatican ambassadors from Krygyzstan, Botswana, Luxembourg, Antigua and Barbuda the Pope suggested that modern man had a pathological rela-

tionship with money in that he accepted its power "over ourselves and society."

"The financial crisis which we are experiencing makes us forget that its ultimate origin is to be found in a profound human crisis... We have created new idols. The worship of the Golden Calf of old (*Exodus 32*) has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is

faceless and lacking any truly human goal."

Just three days after his election in March, in an audience with the world's media, Pope Francis had spoken of his wish that the Catholic Church be a "church of the poor, a church for the poor."

He took up that theme again, arguing that the majority of world's population lived in "situations of insecurity" in which a "minority" get richer

whilst the "majority" get poorer.

"This imbalance results from ideologies which uphold the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation, and thus deny the right of control to states, which are themselves charged with providing for the common good."

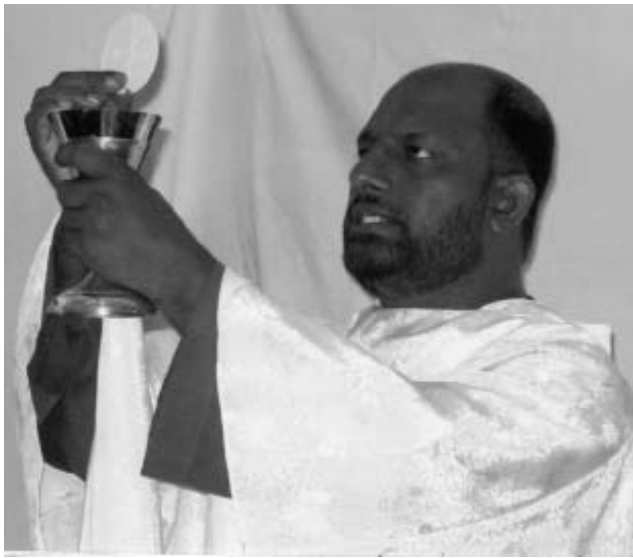
Pope Francis suggested that today's world had seen the instigation of a "throw-away culture" in which "human beings

themselves are nowadays considered as consumer goods."

Calling for a "return to person-centred ethics in the world of finance and economics," he urged those in power to be "truly at the service of the common good of their peoples." In this context he said, the Pope had the duty, in Christ's name, to remind the rich to help the poor, to respect them and to promote them.

VATICAN CITY

1000th Rosary



The Rosary Group of Tewatte Rd., Ragama, celebrated the 1000th recitation of the Holy Rosary with a Thanksgiving Mass officiated by Rev. Fr. Peter OFM, at the home of Mrs. Rita Lawrence on May 1.

This pious and meritorious act, pioneered by some of our members, as far back as June 11, 1994 has stood the test of time and has united the hearts and minds of those in 22 homes.

Pushpam Paul

Shrines for St. Anthony and St. Sebastian at Elakanda Junction



Laying of foundation stones for the new way-side shrines for St. Anthony and St. Sebastian at Elakanda Junction, Hendala was held under the patronage of Episcopal Vicar of Ja-ela Region, Very Rev. Fr. Shanthi Kumar Welivita recently. Picture shows the Dean of Wattala Deanery and Parish Priest of Nayakakanda Rev. Fr. Mahendra Goonathilaka, Parish Priest of Palliyawatta Rev. Fr. Felix Mallawarachchi, Parish Priest of Balagala Rev. Fr. Jude Raj Fernando, Parish Priest of Kerawalapitiya, Rev. Fr. Roshan Prasad, Chief incumbent of Ashokarama Temple, Balagala Ven. Batagalle Panyakitti Thero and OIC Wattala Police Indika Lokuhetti, after the blessing of the stones.

Nimal Perera

Church Feasts

Our Lady of the Poor, Sirigampola

The Annual Feast of the Church of Our Lady of the Poor, Sirigampola (in Chilaw Diocese) will be celebrated on Sunday May 26, 2013. The Chief Celebrant at the Festive Mass will be Very Rev. Fr. Peter Charles Fernando, Vicar General of the Chilaw Diocese.

Church of Our Lady of Compassion

The 124th Annual Feast of the Church of Our Lady of Compassion, Bandarawatte (in Seeduwa Parish) will be celebrated on Sunday May 26, 2013. The 125th Jubilee Year will also be proclaimed on this occasion. The Chief Celebrant at the Festive Mass will be Very Rev. Fr. Patrick Perera, Archdiocesan Episcopal Vicar (Northern Region), Rev. Fr. Basil Wickremasinghe, Parish Priest of Wattala will preside at the Vespers Service on the previous day.

Ainslie Joseph

Book of Gospels

In the article by Mr. Miran Perera titled "Importance of Lectors and a national catechesis" published in the "Messenger" dated April 28, 2013, the third paragraph should have read "...holding the Book of Gospels aloft by a deacon," and not "... holding the Lectionary aloft."

Prize Giving of St. Thomas' Catholic International College - Seeduwa



Annual Prize Giving of St. Thomas' Catholic International School, Seeduwa (STIC) was held recently. Rev. Fr. Kennedy Perera, Rector delivering the Annual Report for the Academic Year 2011-2012, gave an extensive report of the College Curriculum and the performance of students.

The commitment of the teachers was a special feature highlighted in the

Report. Chief Guest Mr. Ranjan Gomez said that the success of the School was due to the deep commitment of the Rector, staff and the parents of the School. Very Rev. Fr. Ranjith Madurawela General Manager, Catholic Schools commended the students and staff of the College for its success in a very short period of time.

Text: Charith Srimal Fernando Pic by:

De La Salle Day celebrations and 25 Years of Excellence



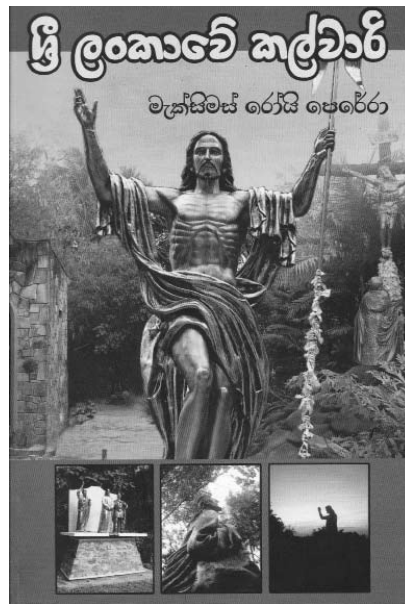
The feast of Patron Saint John Baptist De La Salle was celebrated at St. Benedict's College on Thursday, May 16, 2013 with Holy Mass at St. Lucia's Cathedral, followed by an assembly and fe-

licitation ceremony at the College in honour of Rev. Bro. Director Janaka Fonseka and Mr. Lal Silva. Rev. Bro. Director, spoke about the celebration of 25 years since receiving his first vows and further-

ing the De La Salle mission throughout his life, while Mr. Lal Silva who is a member of the tutorial staff also celebrated 25 years of teaching at St. Benedict's College.

Ashen Savinda Senaratna

Our Lady of Refuge, Adaikalamatha, Eelaithu



Among the number of churches that have grottos dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, the Calvary at Our Lady of Refuge Church, Adaikalamatha, Eelaithu, in the Jaffna Diocese, attracts thousands of devotees.

This is one of the earliest churches built during the time of the Portuguese.

The Church was reconstructed by Fr. Lobo and later was used as a pro-Cathe-

dral by Bishop Bettachini. St. Patrick's College, Jaffna had its cradle in the compound of this church.

The new Church that stands today was completed in 1928 and was consecrated to Rev. Fr. H. Perusal.

Today the church attracts a large gathering of devotees and accommodation and other facilities are provided to meet their needs.

The Awards Ceremony of Integral Education Centre, Ampitiya

The awards ceremony of the Integral Education Centre, Ampitiya was held on April 28, 2013 on a grand scale at the National Seminary, Kandy.

The Integral Education Centre provides the study of a preliminary English Course to the students within the vicinity. This course is conducted by the Rev. Brothers of the National Seminary, Kandy under the meticulous guidance of Rev. Fr. William Evans, the Moderator of the Integral Centre and the Vice Rector of the Seminary.

The five-month English Course includes the study of Grammar, Speech, Composition and Comprehension in the English language. This year forty-one students who successfully completed the course were awarded certificates.

The award ceremony was graced by Very Rev. Fr. Raveen Perera, the Director of the Philosophate where he emphasised on the importance of the English language in his address.

The Entertainment Programme on this occasion included songs, dancing, speeches, poems and drama solely performed by the students themselves, which added much colour to the programme.

The audience which consisted of Rev. Fathers, Rev. Brothers and the parents of the students highly appreciated the programme, while offering their heartiest accolades for the progress of this pastoral endeavour.

Bro. Chanaka Dilan

Bishop Maxwell Silva presides at Confirmation Service at Thibbatugoda



His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva presided at the Confirmation Service at St. Isidore's Church, Thibbatugoda recently, where two hundred and five children received the Sacrament of Confirmation

D. Cletus Anthony



Church in the World



Feast of Mother Mary in Florence, Italy

The annual feast of Mother Mary in Florence was celebrated on Pentecost Sunday, on a grand scale.

Msgr. Neville Joe Perera presided at Holy Mass with Rev. Fr. Samantha Perera and Rev. Fr. Stephano, the Diocesan Director for Migrants in Florence. Ven. Dodandeniye Nandasiri of the Buddhist

Association in Florence and representatives from all the other associations participated on the occasion.

Msgr. Neville Joe Perera in his message to the gathering said, "Even though as migrants we are far away from our children, from our beloved husbands and wives, we should live a Christian life ac-

ording to the Sacred teachings. The Holy Spirit will bless you and guide you to live a true Christian life."

Due thanks go to Rev. Fr. Samantha Perera and the Catholic community of Florence for organising the event.

(Priyadarshika Perera - Secretary)

Easter baptisms have high adult contingent in China

Hebei is a major province for the Church in China. Several of its priests have noticed that more and more stressed-out city dwellers, desperate for some meaning in their lives, are finding their way to the Church there.

The latest figures from the Hebei-based Faith Institute of Cultural Studies seem to support that impression. This Easter, Hebei Province welcomed a healthy total of 3,647 people for baptism.

Xingtai and Handan dioceses, both in Hebei, recorded the highest baptism figures of all the 101 dioceses in the nationwide survey.

Significantly, of the total 16,748 baptisms that took place in China this Easter, 70 per cent are of adults, which bears out the priests' observation about city dwellers looking for meaning and truth.

The nature of the survey itself was significant too. It is the sixth of its kind conducted annually by the institute since 2007, but the first to focus only on baptisms on Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.

Courtesy: Examiner

Struggle for power in Church is sin

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Careerism and a drive to seek power in the Church are sins as old as the Church itself, Pope Francis told a group of employees from Vatican Radio and from the Vatican's office for pilgrims and tourists.

Commenting on the day's Gospel passage Mark 9:30-37, the Pope said that while Jesus is talking about his upcoming passion and death, the disciples are arguing over who is the greatest among them.

"The struggle for power in the Church isn't something recent," Pope Francis said in his homily at the Mass May 21 in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae.



Such struggles "should not exist," because Jesus' whole life and death teach his followers that

greatness is measured by humility and service.

"He lowered himself to the point of death,

death on a cross, for us, to serve us, to save us," the Pope said. "In the Church, there is no other path for moving forward."

Courageous prayer leads to miracles, Pope reflects

Pope Francis encouraged bold prayer and faithful trust in God during his homily at Mass at Casa Santa Marta in the Vatican.

"A courageous prayer, is what struggles to achieve a miracle," the Bishop of Rome said. "Not prayers of courtesy: 'Ah, I will pray for you,' I say an Our Father, a Hail Mary and then I forget."

Rather, he said, "strong prayer is needed. Humble and strong prayer that enables Jesus to carry out the miracle."

At Pentecost vigil, Pope shares personal stories of his faith



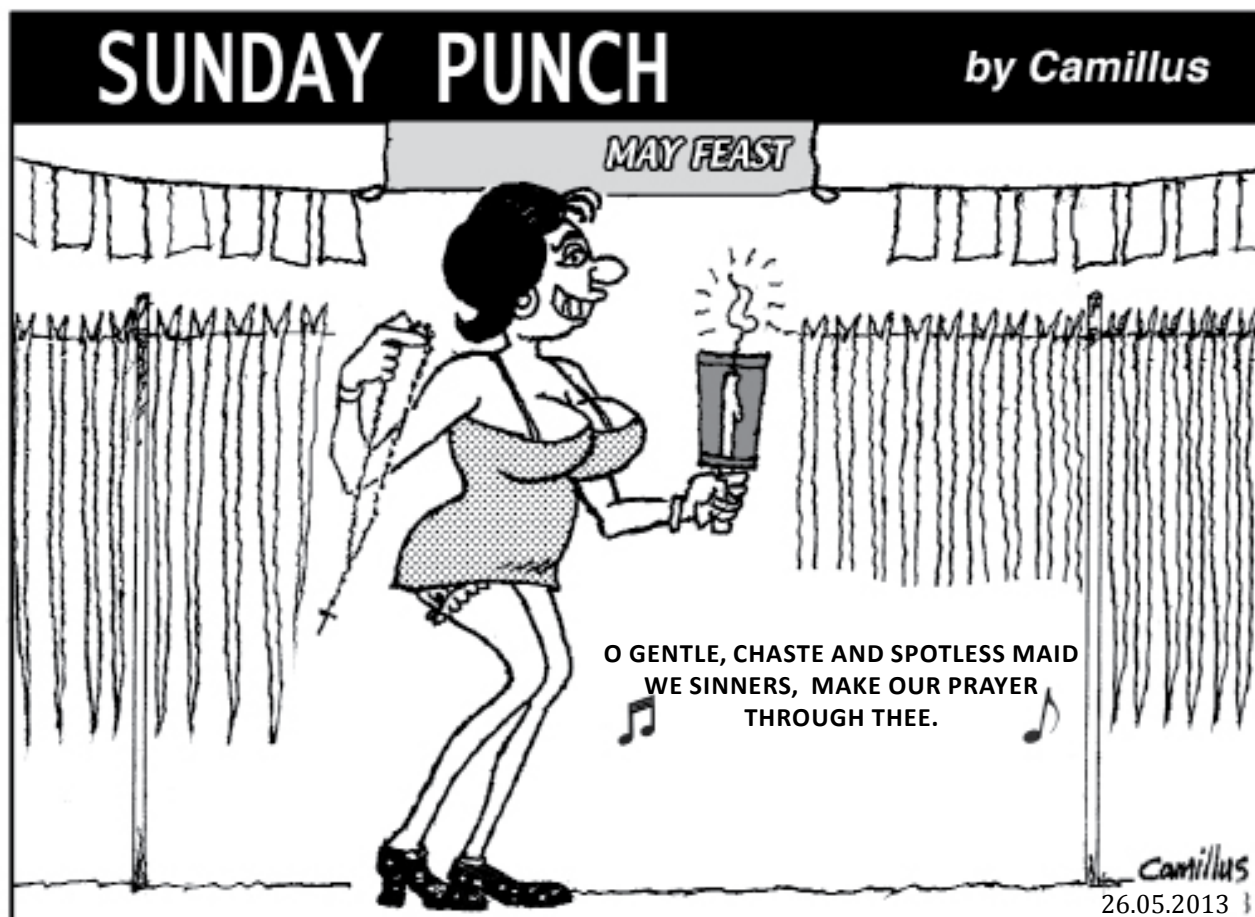
VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- With humour and passion, Pope Francis shared highlights of his personal faith journey and explained some key points of his teaching to an enthusiastic crowd of representatives from Catholic lay movements.

Celebrating a vigil on the eve of Pentecost with an estimated 200,000 people singing, chanting and waving their groups' banners, Pope Francis focused on the importance of parents and grandparents educating their children in the faith, the knowledge that God wants a relationship with each person, the importance of caring for the poor and the need to pray for people who are denied religious freedom.

Without using a prepared text, the Pope responded to questions presented to him prior to the May 18 event.

Pope Francis, who often talks about the beauty of God's mercy and the sacrament of confession, told the crowd about one confession that he said changed his life.

"It was Sept. 21, 1953. I was almost 17 years old," he said. In Argentina, it was the first day of spring. He said he felt the need to go to confession.



The Descent of the Holy Spirit amongst us

Pentecost is an extremely important and special time for all of us. It is the birthday of the Church, as initiated through the descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and Our Lady in the Upper Room. Pentecost, in Greek means 50 days, reflecting the period between Easter Sunday and the descent of the Holy Spirit, or "parakletos", the advocate, Whom Christ had mentioned to his disciples.

This important feast of Pentecost, though very much a Christian celebration, is not reserved exclusively to Christians. God came in the form of man to redeem all humanity, not just the Jews, or the Greeks, or the Phoenicians but all of humankind. He created all of us in His image and He loves each and every one of us with an undying love. For these reasons, it is His desire to love and redeem all people of the world, even if they practice another faith.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) clearly states that all humanity is within God's salvific plan of redemption. Similar to Saint Paul's persistent and continuous debate with the Council of Jerusalem (headed by Saint James) for several years that Christ died for the gentiles too (and not just the Jews), Pentecost represents an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all humanity, not just Christians.

If we take a cross-section of any society on earth, we find that as many as Christians there are non-Christians too. In our current world population of approximately six billion, only a sixth is Catholic, and about a quarter are Christian (including the Protestants). Does that mean over four billion people are unredeemed? Absolutely not! God's most Holy Spirit pours out on every single person in mysterious ways that we cannot understand. We, as Catholics, must learn to celebrate the love and redemption of God with every person we know, be they Catholic, Buddhist, Anglican, Muslim, Hindu or atheist. It is by our love and firm belief in Christ that others will be evangelised.

A journalist once asked the late Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta how she went about converting the many Hindus and Muslims in her neighbourhood. She replied, "I try not to convert any of them. All I tell them is to try and be the best Muslim or Hindu they could ever aspire to be."

On the actual occasion of Pentecost over 2,000 years ago (as described by Saint Luke in the Acts of the Apostles) there were people from many different cultures and tribes present in the Upper Room who spoke different languages. But with the baptism of God's spirit on them (as tongues of fire) they were able to understand each other and praise God with a singular and harmonious voice. God created a world with a rich and varied tapestry of people, not just a boring, uniform race. His love transcends all human understanding and barriers. For that reason, you, as Catholics must reach to your fellow human beings, regardless of religion, race, culture, social standing or other, and share Christ's love with them. As Jesus said in the Gospel of Saint John, "Love one another as I have loved you."

We live in a country where Christianity is not the major religion. We need to appreciate those of other faiths (such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and so on) and be loving and understanding of them as we are with those of our own faith; for they too are God's much-loved children. As a great saint once said, "every person has the imprint of God in their soul".

Given that the beautiful period and feasts of Easter and Pentecost have now concluded for the year, we must gather all we learnt from these spiritually intense experiences and apply them for the long (six month) period of the ordinary calendar of the Church. The coming months, till advent, is a wonderful time to live out the many spiritual fruits we have gained in these recent days.

And, as Saint Luke clearly states, we must open our hearts to receive the power of the Holy Spirit and go to all corners of the world to proclaim the Good News of God's love for all of us, each and every one of us.

*"On this day, O beautiful Mother,
On this day we bring thee our love.
Near thee, Madonna, fondly we
hover,
Trusting thy gentle care to prove."*

For Catholics of a certain generation, these words represent the best of childhood memories: May crowning, Rosary processions, girls in white dresses, and petals strewn as far as the eye could see. For others, it represents the worst of sugary-sweet hymnody: A devotional life divorced from the liturgy of the Church and traditional forms of Marian devotion void of ecumenical sensibility.

For me, it represents neither. My memories are drawn not to elementary school, but to a local nursing home—Bishop Drumm Retirement Centre. I remember going there as a kid to take my grandma to Holy Mass and always seeing Sr. Edith, as old as any of the residents, still pounding away at the organ as best as she could. Her repertoire was limited by age and arthritis, so you could almost bet that at least once each week you would get a rousing rendition of "On This Day." It did not matter whether it was Tuesday of the fourth week of the year or the second Saturday of Easter. I was not even aware that it was a May-crowning hymn until I entered the novitiate for the Dominicans; then again, before that time I am not sure I understood exactly what May crowning was.

You see, I am what the media call a millennial—a term used to describe people born between 1982 and 2004. In the Church, we are often recognised as the "JPII generation" because we only knew one pope until the election of Benedict XVI. More important, we were the first generation born so far after the Second Vatican Council that not only do we lack personal memory of life before the Council—many of our parents do too. Most of us grew up without the cultural supports and devotional practices the previous generation recognised as an integral part of their spirituality. It confuses people, then, why Catholics of my generation have such a strong interest in the traditional, liturgical, and devotional life of the Church.

Some explain our interest as a kind of great restoration; others look at it (in horror) as the way in which youth, especially young priests, are trying to turn back the clock. I would like to suggest that, in general, this is not the case and that the temporary decline and ultimate resurgence of Marian devotion in the years since Vatican II is in fact one of the best examples that the Council's reform is really working.

The Golden Age of Mariology

The years immediately prior to Vatican II were, in some ways, a kind of golden age of Mariology (the theological study of Mary). As late as 1950, Pope Pius XII used his extraordinary power

to solemnly declare the dogma of Mary's assumption, body and soul, into heaven. Less than a hundred years before that, Pope Pius IX made a similar declaration concerning the Immaculate Conception. Mariology was all the rage; one only needs to skim the Catholic theological-library catalogues of the day to see the sheer volume of literature—popular and academic—being produced about the Virgin.

On a much broader level, the so-called Leonine prayers (prayed immediately after low Mass) were mostly prayers to Mary. They were first presented for the protection of the Holy See and ultimately for the conversion of Russia. And the presence of religious communities in most every parish with a school ensured that virtually everyone was engaged with the Rosary.

Lumen Gentium

No matter how you shake it, Marian devotion was hugely popular in academic settings and regular parish life just before Vatican II. She was so popular that one of the first and greatest debates the Council tackled was where to "locate" its teaching on Mary. Some of the bishops thought the council should devote one document entirely to Mary; others thought a Mariology section placed in some of the other documents might be more pragmatic. In the end, the eighth and final chapter of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, 1964) is devoted to the Council's Marian teaching. In so doing, the Council situated Mary right where she belongs: At the heart of the Church.

Lumen Gentium articulates the Church's Marian doctrine in light of her unique role in the economy of salvation. Although Mary, like us, is human and in need of being saved (an important clarification in addressing Protestant concerns over the immaculate conception), she also is uniquely prepared by God from the first moment of her existence—in perfect freedom—to offer her *fiat* ("May it be done unto me according to your word," Luke 1:38). This great act of obedience to the will of God in no way exemplifies passiveness or submissiveness; rather, it is an active participation in God's plan of salvation for her and for the world. Therefore, Mary can actually be recognized as a "cause of salvation"—not because she is a semidivine being who represents the feminine aspect of God, but because she was fully human, fully alive, and fully engaged in her relationship with God (56).

Her role is altogether



unique because of her relationship with Christ. At the same time, she is a model of authentic Christian discipleship and a sign of hope for believers. What she is now is what we all hope to be.

The two great Marian dogmas—the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption—are ultimately rooted in this idea. In the Immaculate Conception we see God's providence at work in a unique way in Mary's life and are reminded of the unique and particular ways in which God prepares us for our special work in the world. In the Assumption, we see Mary now as we one day hope to be: Body and soul, in perfect union in heaven.

Marialis Cultus

Despite the Council's forceful and elegant Marian teaching, the years immediately after Vatican II were marked by a decline in devotion to Our Lady, especially in the United States. A number of factors contributed to this. A renewed emphasis on the liturgy often led to the neglect or even outright rejection of devotional life in some quarters. A lot of energy was stirring around the ecumenical movement. To make dialogue with their Protestant brothers and sisters easier and to make the Church more attractive, Catholics emphasized Mary less.

Finally, with the rise of twentieth-century feminism, in some circles Mary became either a sign of oppressive patriarchy (emphasising her submissive posture toward God's will) or a mascot for modern matriarchy (turning her into a symbol of the divine feminine). In either case, traditional formulations, expressions, and devotions were judged inadequate.

Pope Paul VI recognised this decline early and decided to head it off at the theological pass. In his apostolic exhortation *For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Marialis Cultus)*, promulgated on the Feast of the Presentation in 1974, he notes the decline and confusion already evident within the

(Contd. on Pg. 5)

Our Family Rosary



By the late Bishop Frank Marcus Fernando

(The translation of a chapter from His Lordship's book "Satahan Samaruwa")

Eight days before the news was released to the Press and Radio, I had been confidentially informed of my appointment as Bishop - Auxiliary to Cardinal Cooray. There had been rumours for some time and so I had to take extra precautions and use my ingenuity so as not to give the least room for suspicion while I did some shopping and made immediate preparations before the official announcement. For example, being asked to have some photographs ready, I went in a taxi rather than in the Seminary Van (I was Rector then) to the studio. The girl at the Counter was known to me.

"Father, what are these photographs for?"
"For publication".
"Where."

"When people write articles to newspapers, the Editors ask for photographs too..."
"Oh, I see".

I remember too the day on which His Eminence Cardinal Cooray first broke the news to me. I was taking the Catechism Class of the Senior Form boys when a messenger from the Archbishop's House walked into the classroom and

informed me that His Eminence wanted to see me that evening. It was unusual — and the boys were not slow to notice it. "Rector-Bishop" one boy muttered mischievously. "Bishop Bishop" answered the others. "Nonsense! Pope!" I replied and continued with the class. I knew that the boys were watching me very closely. I knew too that my priest companions at the Seminary would come to hear from the boys about my visit to Cardinal Cooray and I wanted to forestall any conclusions and put them off the scent. I purposely broached the topic while taking tea with the 'Fathers.

"You know, today His Eminence sent for me and the boys said it was about my being appointed a Bishop. I kept up the joke and smiled ambiguously when they said it."

"And they really swallowed it?" one priest asked. "I think so."

None of the Fathers spoke about it anymore. They smiled condescendingly when the boys told them about my visit to the Archbishop. I still do not know who was fooling whom.

I had been informed that the news would be officially out at 6.30 p.m. on July 24, 1965. We had the Seminary Sports Meet that day, and I was too busy to think of anything



else. Towards 6.30 p.m. His Eminence walked into the Seminary, The news was out. The telephone began to ring ceaselessly.

What I have so far related is the lighter part of what I have to say. That night, with a couple of my priest friends I went to see my parents. They had already got the news. My sister told me what had happened.

His Eminence had telephoned to Sea Street Church, Negombo, asking a person there to convey to my parents the news of the appointment. A messenger had been sent. When he went home he found the doors shut, the family Rosary was being recited. The messenger, being in a hurry to return, had knocked and given the message to my father. He had received the announcement with great joy and thanked the messenger. Then he had announced the

news to others, adding "Let us recite the rest of the Rosary and the other prayers in thanksgiving." And so it had been done.

The family Rosary was recited daily at home from the time I could remember. 7.30 p.m. was Rosary time, if an interesting Radio programme was to be on at the time, we would anticipate the Rosary or say it soon after. My father did not like visitors coming during that time. If some one did come, he had to stay till the Rosary was over; or, my father would speak to him alone in the verandah while others recited the Rosary. Usually he rejoined in the prayers pretty soon. I have no idea how he got rid of the visitors.

After the Rosary and Litany my father announced the various intentions, and we said the Pater, Ave and Gloria.

During these prayers he used to stretch out his hands in front of him in a gesture of supplication. I remember being amused at it as a boy. Years later I learned that stretching out hands while praying was an ancient gesture, besides being a very natural one. A famous painting of antiquity in the catacombs shows a man praying with hands outstretched. The custom has returned now: In some places all the faithful raise their hands at the Pater recited during Holy Mass.

When we were boys, as soon as prayers were over, we went near the statue. My father would place his hand on the statue of the Sacred Heart and on the picture of St. Anthony and then place his hand on the head of each one of us. If the smallest member of the family was sleeping, my father would, "carry the blessing" to that member. Besides the family Rosary, my father used to recite many more decades, walking in the garden, in the dark, all by himself. Then he would come for dinner, sometimes putting the Rosary round his neck.

Years passed. My father was eighty years old. He had been bedridden for some time — but there was no immediate danger of death. Suddenly one morning his health took a turn for the worse. The doctor was called. The priest came and gave 'Extreme Unction'.

Contd. on Pg. 9

Reformed Renewed

Contd. from Pg. 4

first decade after the Council and seeks to re-situate the Church's Marian devotion in light of the best insights of Vatican II.

First, he emphasises the liturgical life of the Church and insists that devotions, both ancient and modern, must be used in harmony with and in deference to the Church's liturgical life. Furthermore, he points out that many of the conciliar reforms of the liturgy, especially those concerning the calendar and the newly introduced Eucharistic prayers, were designed to give a more fulsome liturgical expression to the Church's collective veneration of the Blessed Virgin. He proposes that the Church adopt Mary as a kind of model for her liturgical life—Mary is ever attentive to Christ, follows Him everywhere, and leans on His word. She also presents herself in a posture of readiness: Having been nourished by the contemplation of the divine mysteries, she is always prepared to serve her brothers and sisters—especially the poor, whom her Son loves most.

Marialis Cultus emphasises the scriptural roots and warrants for the Church's practice to urge contemporary Christians to revise, expand, and engage even classical devotions like the Rosary in a way informed by contemporary biblical scholarship. It also points out that Mary can be a great tool in ecumenical dialogue, not least of all because the

Orthodox Churches share our love of the Virgin.

Finally, the Pope reminds us that Marian teaching is always fundamentally about Christ. He even provides a sort of spiritual litmus test: "Indeed every authentic development of Christian worship is necessarily followed by a fitting increase of veneration for the Mother of the Lord" (Introduction). In other words, if Marian devotion is authentic, it will always lead us closer to Christ; if love for Christ is authentic, it will always increase our love of and devotion to His mother.

John Paul II's Devotion to Mary

John Paul II's pontificate was marked by a fervent and deeply emotional devotion to Our Lady, whom he called the "Star of the New Evangelization," especially with reference to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

But people probably best remember his addition of the Luminous Mysteries (also known as the Mysteries of Light) to the Rosary in 2002. This decision is telling. It reflects the early development of the Rosary, which included praying over a host of mysteries in the life of Christ and, at times, no clear mysteries at all. At the same time, by "adding" the possibility of praying over these new mysteries, John Paul II modeled the very method called for by Paul VI.

The mysteries John Paul II offered are deeply rooted in Scripture and

yet are very much alive in the heart of the Church. Weddings baptisms, preaching, the transfiguration, and the Holy Eucharist are essential parts of who we are and what we do as Christians. In adding the Luminous Mysteries, John Paul II reaffirmed the fundamentally ecclesial nature of the Rosary and its integral relationship with the rest of the life of the Church, especially the sacraments. This was one reason John Paul II encouraged praying the Rosary before the Blessed Sacrament.

John Paul II's devotion extended beyond practicality or traditionalism; it also made a valuable contribution to Mariology as a discipline. His 1987 encyclical *On the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life of the Pilgrim Church (Redemptoris Mater)* synthesizes much of what had been written before. In large part it is a meditation on the Scriptures, but the Holy Father also highlights the eschatological character of Mary's vocation in the life of the Church. She is the "new Eve," who through her Son becomes the Mother of all the living. She is the one prophesied in the Law and the Prophets as the mother of the Redeemer. She is "the first 'disciple' of her Son" (20) and our fellow disciple, which is precisely the context in which her role as mediator and intercessor must be understood.

Our Past, Our Present, Our Future

Mary reminds us who we are and where we have come from while

pointing to where we are going and what we are capable of becoming. She is as we would hope to be, and she helps us realise our hope by her constant intercession and maternal care.

Most important, Mary is our Mother because she is first our sister. She can show us how to cooperate in salvation because she first needed to be saved herself, but she models this salvation with a kind of distinction and precision because of the particular way in which God chose to apply those graces to her. She intercedes for us so we might recognise those particular graces as they come to us, and she attends to us on our journey of faith just as she attended to her Son, Jesus.

So whether or not your parish has a May crowning this year, try to at least to stir up the sentiment, informed anew by fifty years of prayer, teaching, and living in a new relationship with Our Lady.

And if you can spare it, bring a flower or two—even if only in your heart—to the Lady's altar, just as our new Holy Father did on his first full day as pope.

And maybe, just maybe, let your heart ring out the rest of the song:

*In vain the flow'rs of love we bring,
In vain sweet music's note we sing,
If contrite heart and lowly prayer,
Guide not our gifts to thy bright sphere.*

(Courtesy: Liguorian Magazine)



St. Perigrine Sarana Medura

Hope for Cancer Patients

Two decades ago Rev Fr. Quintus Fernando, then Parish Priest of Madampe Parish, saw the deed to build a Church in the village of Ratnagiriya where about 20 Catholic families lived. He legally obtained land from the government and started saying Holy Mass in a temporary building. Within a short period, due to the attitude of a small group of people signs of religious disharmony were brewing up and the then Bishop of Chilaw advised the priest

not to continue his mission at the premises. The Catholic families were left with no church of their own, but a Catholic couple owning land in the village came forward and offered a plot of land from their estate to build a church and the priest and the villagers started building a permanent small church. This Church was dedicated to Saint Perigrine, the Patron Saint of cancer patients. As time went on many devotees came to pray at this Church and the need arose

to enlarge the Church and the premises. Once again the same couple provided the land needed.

This is the only Church dedicated to St. Perigrine in Sri Lanka today and has become a popular shrine. Many are those who have got cured of their cancers and other illnesses through the intercession of St. Perigrine. The Annual Feast of St. Perigrine is celebrated on the 1st of May. Every Saturday at 5.00 pm, Holy Mass is celebrated and on the



rana Medura" has now been built and donated. This premises provides comfortable facilities even for the sick to stay overnight.

first Saturday of the month at 4.00 pm a Prayer Session and a Healing Service

followed by Holy Mass is conducted seeking the intercession of St. Perigrine for the cure of cancers and other illnesses.

There are many devotees who come on pilgrimage to the Church and even spend nights in prayer even though the facilities have not been sufficient. A new pilgrim's rest named "St. Perigrine Sa-

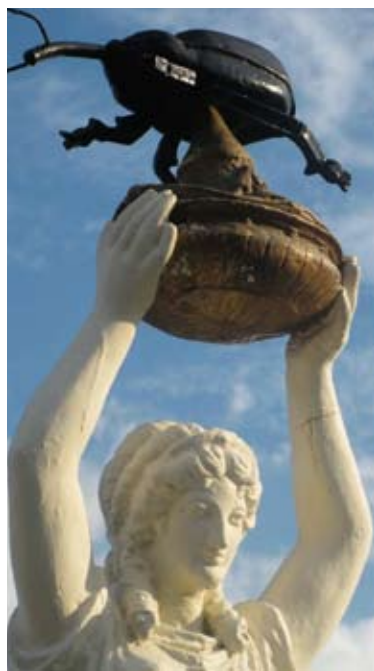
On June 1, 2013 at 3.00 pm the Bishop of Chilaw, Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis will bless and dedicate the Sarana Medura to the devotees. The First Saturday Prayer session and the Healing Service will follow.

Those who wish to avail of the facilities at Sarana Medura may contact Rev. Fr Sisira Kumara, Parish Priest (0715739331, 0322247616), M. Tissera (0777280650) or (Mrs) P. Tissera (0718616583) for assistance. One may communicate via mtissera@slt.lk or Premanie.tissera@yahoo.com.

Route to the Church: On the Colombo - Chilaw Main Road turn Right at Madampe Petrol Station, travel 10 km towards Kuliyapitiya. At Dummalasuriya Hatharamanhandiya (just before the Town Centre) turn Left and travel 5 km. Those who travel from Kuliyapitiya / Kurunegala travel along Kuliyapitiya Madampe Road and turn Right at Hatharamanhandiya after Dummalasuriya Town and travel 5 km.

Parish Priest Madampe

Are you sailing into rough weather in life?



Many a time, you feel life flows smoothly like a tranquil river. You feel quite happy and contented. Everything goes very well with you. You have nothing to grumble about. Then suddenly, everything falls apart. God sends down a big thunderstorm into your life and you break down. If your life is full of problems, God is sending you a message through those problems. Maybe you are walking in the wrong direction. Maybe you are forgetting God and God wants to get your attention. That is God's

about killing Christians. One day, while he was traveling on his

horseback, God struck him by sending a flash of lightning and blinded him. Then God showed him the correct path to follow. Thereafter, St. Paul became one of the greatest theologians of the Church whose epistles we follow as guidelines for true Christian living.

There is a monument built in Alabama, USA in 1919. This is dedicated to the 'boll weevil,' a swarm of insects, which destroyed the cotton crop in Alabama. Planting cotton was their main livelihood. But when the weevil attacked, they had to turn to other crops. The people started growing different crops which brought them a much higher income thereby making their lives very prosperous. They built a monument in memory of the boll weevil which was instrumental in bringing them prosperity.

Similarly, challenges come our way in our lives. Do we grumble and not seek remedies or alternatives. Do we consider challenges as stepping stones to make ourselves better personalities? Do we lead a humdrum and monotonous life? Do we fear to change? Within each one of us, there is a sleeping hero. Wake him up and let him lead you through the rough patches of life. Most of the time, we live a cloistered life, as if in a shell, playing safe and not reaching towards others.

The beauty of life does not depend on how successfully we manage our own affairs, but on how happy others are, because of us.

Thoughts that haunt me



plan for you. You meet with an accident. You continuously fall sick. Your father who supported you loses his job. Someone very close to you dies or you have a problem you do not like to tell anyone. But God is your father who knows you inside out. Have you bothered to offload your 'mental baggage' in front of him?

St. Paul, the great saint, prior to his conversion, went

'Marys' in the New Testament

Evangelists talk about five distinct women with the name Mary in the New Testament. Some biblical scholars trace seven. Mary, Maria or Mariam was a very common name in Palestine, during the time of Christ. The name Mary is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Mariam or Miriam which means 'wise woman' or 'lady.' We are all aware of Mary the Mother of Jesus. The Catholic Church has devoted a whole month, May, as the month dedicated to Our Blessed Virgin Mary.

All the four Gospels refer to Mary as the Mother of Jesus. Matthew in his genealogy refers to her as the wife of Joseph (Matthew 1:16) but later says that her son was conceived before she got married to Joseph. "When His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with

child from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18). According to the Gospel of John, Mary, the Mother of Jesus followed her Son even to Calvary and stood by Him beside the cross (John 19:26).

The second Mary who is mentioned in the gospels is Mary Magdalene. Luke introduces Mary Magdalene as the woman "from whom seven demons have gone out" (Luke 8:2). She may have been a prostitute who was forgiven by Jesus and who ministered to Him with so many other women, whom Luke says, "Were cured of evil spirits and infirmities" (Luke: 8:2-3). He mentions the names of some of the women who served Jesus throughout His ministry. Joanna and Susanna were two of them. They followed Jesus with the twelve disciples.

Mary Magdalene was one of the women who



went to anoint the body of Jesus after His burial and it was she who had the privilege of first witnessing the resurrected Lord. In fact it was she who gave the news of the Resurrection to the disciples. John's Gospel says that Mary Magdalene could not understand

the disappearance of Christ from the tomb. She was weeping thinking that the Jews have stolen the body of Jesus. She saw two angels dressed in white who asked her why she was weeping.

When she turned back she saw Jesus but did not know it was Jesus. Then Jesus spoke to her, and asked why she was weeping. Then she asked Him



thinking it was the gardener "Sir, if you carried Him away, tell me where you laid Him, and I will take Him" (John 20:15). Jesus called her, "Mary" and at that moment she recognised Him and she addressed Him as "Rabbouni," which in Hebrew means "Teacher."

The third Mary is the sister of Lazarus and Martha of Bethany. According to John 12 she is the one who anointed the feet of Jesus with an expensive "perfume made of pure nard" when He was dining in Bethany. This led to the rebuke of Judas, the betrayer, who commented that this perfume should have been sold for three hundred dinari and given

to the poor. She was the target of not only the complaint of Judas but also of her sister Martha that she was not helping her to serve Him when He visited them at their home in Bethany (Luke 10:38-42).

The fourth Mary mentioned in the New Testament (John 19:25) is Mary the wife of Clopas who is listed as one of the four women standing by the cross.

The fifth Mary is the mother of James and Joseph, who is mentioned in four places in the New Testament. Matthew 27:55-56 and Mark 15:40 mention her as one of the four women standing by the cross. Mark 16:1 and Luke 24:10 say that she together with Mary Magdalene and Salome went to the tomb of Jesus on the day of the Resurrection with spices in order to anoint the body of Jesus.



Art & Architecture in Liturgy

Compiled by: Kishani S. Fernando



India. The evangelization of India goes back to the Apostle Saint Thomas, whose memory is celebrated at Mount Saint Thomas (Tamil Nadu), with Our Lady of Hope. The first Marian Shrine of India is the Church of Our Lady of Kuravilangad in Kerala which was built in 105 A.D one hundred years before Constantine declared Christianity as the official religion in the Roman Empire. It is believed that Mother Mary's first appearance in the

world, was in Kuravilangad where Our Lady appeared to a few children who were tending their flock. Our Lady asked them to build a church at the place from where a miraculous perpetual spring sprouted, a spring which exists even today. Next came the Church of Elangulam, dating from 417 AD. After that Marian shrines have multiplied. The date that India became independent from Britain August 15, 1947 coincided with the feast of the Assumption of Mary, and this is how Indian Catholics came to proclaim Mary "Our Lady of India" in January 1950. Among the other Marian shrines of India are; Our Lady of



Bandra attributed to the 16th century (Basilica of Our Lady of the Mount) located near the city of Bombay, Our Lady of Good Voyage Bandel dating back to 1599 situated 40 km from Calcutta and the Shrine of Our Lady of Health in Vailankanni.

Japan. The First Evangelization of Japan

One in Three and Three in One

The fundamental dogma, on which everything in Christianity is based, is that of the Blessed Trinity in whose name all Christians are baptized. The feast of the Blessed Trinity needs to be understood and celebrated as a prolongation of the Mysteries of Christ and as the solemn

expression of our faith in this triune life of the Divine Persons, to which we have been given access by Baptism and by the Redemption won for us by Christ. Only in heaven shall we properly understand what it means, in union with Christ, to share as sons in the very life of God.

The feast of the Blessed Trinity was introduced in the ninth century and was only inserted in the general calendar of the Church in the fourteenth century by Pope John XXII. But the cultus of the Trinity is, of course, to be found throughout the Liturgy. Constantly the Church causes us to praise and adore the thrice-holy God who has so shown His mercy towards us and has given us to share in His life.

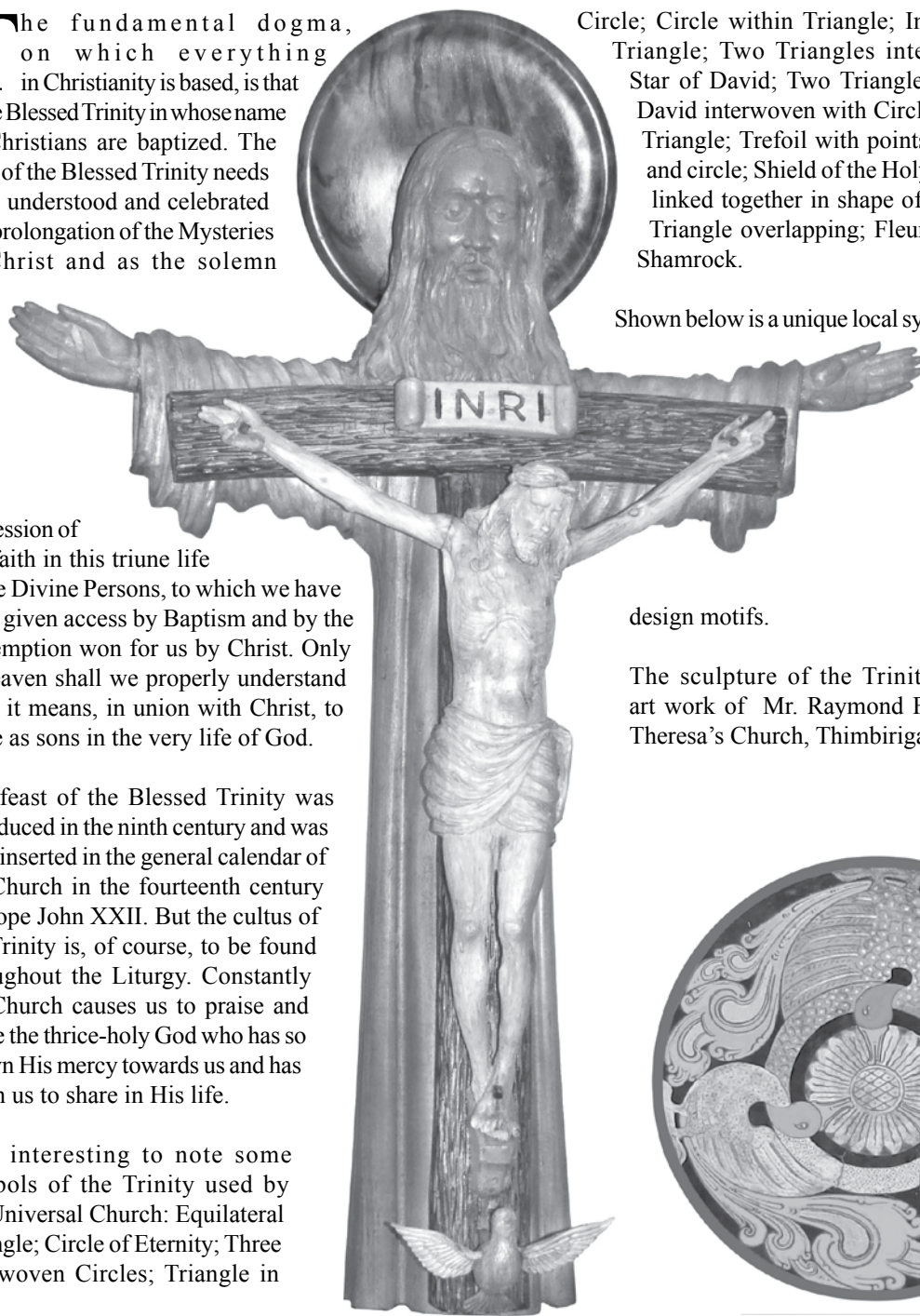
It is interesting to note some symbols of the Trinity used by the Universal Church: Equilateral Triangle; Circle of Eternity; Three interwoven Circles; Triangle in

Circle; Circle within Triangle; Interwoven Circle and Triangle; Two Triangles interwoven in shape of Star of David; Two Triangles in shape of Star of David interwoven with Circle; Trefoil; Trefoil and Triangle; Trefoil with points; Triquetra; Triquetra and circle; Shield of the Holy Trinity; Three Fishes linked together in shape of a triangle; Cross and Triangle overlapping; Fleur de Lys; St. Patrick's Shamrock.

Shown below is a unique local symbol used to depict the Trinity found in the Anglican Cathedral, Kurunegala. The symbol depicting three mythical birds entwined and sharing in one lotus flower is based on local cultural themes and

design motifs.

The sculpture of the Trinity shown here is the art work of Mr. Raymond Fernando and is at St. Theresa's Church, Thimbirigasyaya.



Mary fills the world Month of May Devotion Part 4

The first of this series to mark the Month of May devotion appeared on May 05, and continued on May 12, and May 19 with the final appearing today on May 26. The objective of this series was to show how the devotion to Mother Mary has filled the world regardless of differences in race and language. The study was based on postage stamps issued by various countries. At this point it must be mentioned that this study was but a brief reference. It is lacking in many aspects like the exact dimensions of the stamps, colors etc. The countries and stamps showcased on this page were randomly selected from a wide selection honoring Marian shrines, Marian devotions and Christmas. An important aspect revealed during this study was the existence of a very large and impressive collection of stamps issued under the various titles of Mary. It is hoped that a more thorough study on this amazing subject of 'Marian stamps of the world' will be attempted in the future.

began with Saint Francis Xavier, who arrived in Japan in 1549. He stayed there for just two years, long enough to sow the Word. A few decades later, the Catholic Church had become strong throughout the land, counting 150,000 faithful Christians out of a population of about 20 million, with the support of the mighty Oda Nobunaga, the first "unifying ruler" of the country. But Nobunaga's successor expelled the missionaries and organized persecution. In 1614, Christianity was entirely prohibited. After several periods of persecution religious freedom was established, in 1889. Marian shrines in Japan include: Maria Cathedral established on Otome-toge Pass (*path of the Virgin*) in 1851 was once the place where Christians were martyred in Tsuwano (near Hiroshima); Saint Mary's Cathedral Fusiyama - on the slopes of Mount Fuji; the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Nichinan; Our Lady of Lourdes in Tama-no-ura (Nagasaki); Church of Mary Help of Christians Beppu; Saint Mary's Cathedral Osaka; Akita and the Lady of All Nations.

Vietnam. Evangelization here began late in the sixteenth century. There was a great persecution (1798-1801) and many Christians took refuge in the jungle near Quang Tri,



60 km from Hue. They suffered from hunger and thirst and prepared themselves for martyrdom. The reassurance that the Virgin Mary brought to them in their distress is the origin of the Shrine of La Vang in Ho Chi Minh City. Christians are now a little less than 7% of the population. Celso Le-Van-De a Vietnamese painter and Roman Catholic (who was in charge of Asian Arts at the International Exhibition of the Catholic Press at Vatican in 1936) depicted the Virgin Mary in a spiritual way, with simplicity and tenderness. Another Shrine of fame was the Bao-Ha Shrine.

Catechism of the Church

The Sacraments of Christian Initiation

1212 The sacraments of Christians initiation - Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist - lay the foundations of every Christian life. "The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity."

The Sacrament of Confirmation

1285 Baptism, the Eucharist and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, (the baptized) are more perfectly bound to the church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."

The Signs and the Rite of Confirmation

1293 In treating the rite of Confirmation, it is fitting to consider the sign of anointing and what it signifies and imprints: A spiritual seal.

Anointing, in Biblical and other ancient symbolism, is rich in meaning: oil is a sign of abundance and joy; it cleanses (anointing before and after a bath) and limbers (the anointing of athletes and wrestlers); oil is a sign of healing, since it is soothing to bruises and wounds; and it makes radiant with beauty, health and strength.

1294 Anointing with oil has all these meanings in the sacramental life. The pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of catechumens signifies cleansing and strengthening; the anointing of the sick expresses healing and comfort. The post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in Confirmation and ordination is the sign of consecration. By

Confirmation Christians, that is, those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off "the aroma of Christ."

1295 By this anointing the confirmand receives the "mark" the seal of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object. Hence soldiers were marked with their leader's seal and slaves with their master's. A seal authenticates a juridical act or document and occasionally makes it secret.

1296 Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father's seal. Christians are also marked with a seal: "It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us

1299 In the Roman Rite the bishop extends his hands over the whole group of the confirmands. Since the time of the apostles this gesture has signified the gift of the Spirit. The bishop invokes the outpouring of the Spirit in these words: All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.



and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial.

The celebration of Confirmation

1297 The consecration of the sacred chrism is an important action that precedes the celebration of Confirmation, but is in a certain way a part of it. It is the bishop who, in the course of the Chrism Mass of Holy Thursday, consecrates the sacred chrism for his whole diocese.

1298 When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, as is the case in the Roman Rite, the Liturgy of Confirmation begins with the renewal of baptismal promises and the profession of faith by the confirmands. This clearly shows that Confirmation follows Baptism. When adults are baptized, they immediately receive Confirmation and participate in the Eucharist.

1300 The essential rite of the sacrament follows. In the Latin rite, "the sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: *'Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti'* [Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit]." In the Churches, after a prayer of epiclesis the more significant parts of the body are anointed with myron: forehead, eyes, nose, ears, lips, breast, back, hands and feet. Each anointing is accompanied by the formula: "The seal of the gift that is the Holy Spirit."

1301 The sign of peace that concludes the rite of the sacrament signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all the faithful.

The Effects of Confirmation

1302 It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of

Pentecost.

1303 From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

- * it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";
- * it unites us more firmly to Christ;
- * it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;
- * it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;
- * it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross:

Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear in God's presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts.

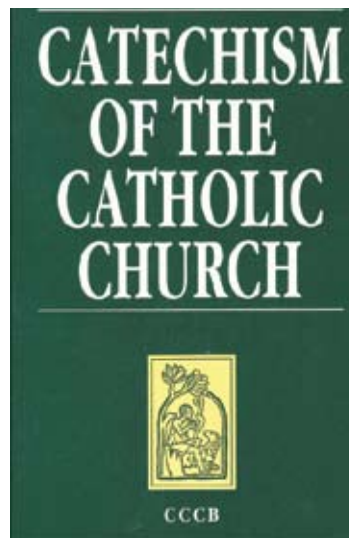
1304 Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the "character," which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.

1305 This "character" perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and "the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially (*quasi ex officio*)."

IV Who Can Receive this Sacrament?

1306 Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Since Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that "the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time," for without Confirmation and Eucharist Baptism is certainly valid and efficacious, but Christian initiation remains incomplete.

1307 The Latin tradition gives "the age of discretion" as the reference point for receiving Confirmation. But in danger of death children should be confirmed even if they have not yet attained the age of discretion.



1308 Although Confirmation is sometimes called the "sacrament of Christian maturity," we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need "ratification" to become effective. St. Thomas reminds us of this:

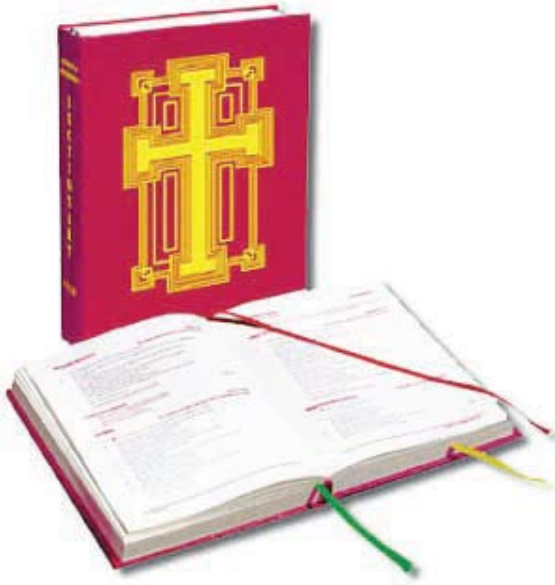
Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood man can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of Wisdom says: "For old age is not honoured for length of time, or measured by number of years." Many children through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood.

1309 Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit - his actions, his gifts, and his biddings - in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands.

1310 To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.

1311 Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a sponsor. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents.

Guidelines for Lectors



Introduction

1. There is a close bond between our breathing and speaking or reading. Genesis 2:7, "Yahweh God fashioned man out of dust from the soil. Then He breathed into his nostrils, the breath of life, and thus man became a living being." Breath is life. The lector's breath and the congregation's breath have to become one. "The love-breathing Word" (St. Thomas Aquinas). This Word must always breathe this love so that those who do receive the word becomes doers of the Word and not just hearers, they become lovers in their turn and not just people who are loved. God's Word touches, embraces and leads them unto Him.
2. The Spirit inspired the Scriptures. It is present and speaks through them. It breathes in, it also breathes out. Inner movement of God leads us from silence to solitude.
3. The vocation to be a lector is a gift. Not everyone is called to the Ministry of Lectors.
4. The basic requirement for a lector is faith. A reasonably pleasant speaking voice, a good moral character and a pleasant dress. The voice has to be clear, audible and intelligent.

Remote preparation

5. The Lector and the Scripture must

meet.

6. The Lector has to prepare the text at least 4 days before the Sunday Mass, merely looking over the reading in the sacristy is never enough. A spiritual and technical preparation is necessary.
7. In preparation read slowly, think, meditate and pray the text. One needs to engage in this exercise daily for about 15 minutes. The Lector has to be immersed in the reading.
8. At home mental reading has to be followed by vocal reading.

Immediate Preparation

9. Arrive at least 10 minutes before Mass and have a look at the Lectionary. Recognise the correct text, and see that the ribbon/marker is on the right page.
10. The Reading is not to be proclaimed from the leaflet but from the lectionary.
11. After the Collect Prayer by the priest, start moving reverently towards the ambo. Bow before the Altar and approach the ambo.
12. Relax, hands resting on the lectionary or praying posture. Be pleasant, be humble.
13. Be sure that you are close to the microphone not too far, not too close.
14. Do not tap or blow into the microphone. Before Mass the P. A. system has to be checked by someone.
15. Before the Reading try not to clear your throat or polish your glasses. This is not the time. No high heeled shoes or hair spread out. Be modest and nice in every way.

The Proclamation

16. Look at the congregation and say: "A Reading from..." and have a pause.

17. Begin the Reading. Reading is a prayerful proclamation and not a performance.
18. Open your lips, says scripture and let God's Word be heard. It is for you to open. It is for Him to be heard. God speaks through the lector's voice.
19. While reading be mindful of pitch, pace phrasing, and listen to your voice as projected from the speaker.
20. The text has to be read slowly, attentively, reflectively and lovingly.
21. The Word is meant to rise from the sacred page to the readers' lips; from there to swing out into the Church to be heard by attentive ears. Faith grows when the word is proclaimed and listened to.
22. A good reading of the scripture gives back that experience of God to the people in our time.
23. While reading, the lector has to maintain eye contact with the congregation.
24. The reader must engage the whole assembly. The engaging will take place if you have prayed the text. By your reading may the faithful develop a warm and living love for the Scripture.
25. Do not be too dramatic. A middle ground between uninvolved reading and amateur theatrics is recommended.
26. At the end, after a pause say, "The Word of the Lord." Leave the lectern, bow down before the Altar and leave reverently.
27. The Responsorial Psalm could be proclaimed by another. Your response is said only once, at the beginning. The peoples' response could be sung. The verses are also to be chanted, it should be very very clear.
28. The Cantor should sing the gospel acclamation.

Some Other Remarks

29. It is not necessary to say the theme of the Reading. "First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading, Gospel Acclamation, please stand, etc". By now the congregation should know what is happen-



30. For the Prayer of the Faithful, the reader has to come after the creed, and leave the ambo only after the priest's concluding prayer.
31. Be open for constructive correction. Once in a while get someone to critique your reading.
32. The same voice that proclaims the Word of God should not be involved in gossip and back-biting. Never let evil talk pass your lips. Say only the good things men need to hear things that will really help them (Eph 4:29). "Let the Word of Christ, rich as it is, dwell in you" (Col 3:16).
33. Why this passion for perfection? Stradivarius, a famous violin maker replied, "God needs violins to take His music to the world, and if my violins are defective what would happen to God's music?"
34. Through you, God's living Word continues to be proclaimed to His people, to the young and the old, the troubled, hopeless, sad and happy, "May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may worthily proclaim His Holy Word.

Compiled by: Rev. Fr. Ignatius L. Varnakulasingham
National Director - Liturgy

Our Family ...

Contd. from Pg. 5

The same evening he died, surrounded by five of his children. It was the October 5, — feast of the Holy Rosary.

According to an old custom, when a parent of a priest dies, his hands were tied with the kerchief which had been used to tie the hands of the priest soon after the anointing with holy oil at the Ordination. My father's hands were tied with the kerchief that had been used at the priestly Ordination of my younger brother. My own kerchief had been used exactly two years ago when my mother died. She had preserved the two scarves carefully for that purpose and had left specific instructions.

In millions of Catholic homes all over the world, the family Rosary is being recited daily. Except perhaps the frequent reception of Holy Communion as a family I can hardly think of any other spiritual exercise as powerful as the Family Rosary to call down God's blessings on a family and keep its members united. Surely the family that prays together stays together.

Just as the metal chain holds the beads together, the Family Rosary holds the family members together. No amount of providing what the family materially wants, and no amount of tact in family affairs can equal the marvellous results brought about by daily recitation of the family Rosary.



We must remember that the Rosary is part and parcel of Catholic life in Ceylon. Father Joseph Vaz, the Apostle of Ceylon, when travelling in disguise during persecution recognised the families of Christians by the attitude of the latter to the Rosary. The

Christians recognised the Rosary hanging around the neck of this "beggar" and in that recognition, Fr. Vaz recognised the Christians. In our own times, among other things, Madhu reminds us constantly of the Holy Rosary. Indeed, the Holy Rosary is part of our Christian heritage.

I like to add an epilogue here. About a month after my father died, an old lady, who was well known to me, casually asked me one day, in the course of a conversation:

"Do you feel any special pains in your body these days" ?
"Never felt better" I replied.

"That is strange," she continued. "When a parent's body begins to disintegrate, the children feel a pain. Blood calls unto blood. . ."

To me it sounded a strange theory. But this much I can say. To the Christian, death is not the end of everything. It is only a change. As the beautiful preface of the Mass for the Dead states, "To those who believe in you Lord, life is changed, it is not taken away. And when this mortal habitation is dissolved an eternal habitation is prepared."

We may not be able to help the bodies of our loved ones in the grave. But certainly we can do a great deal to help their souls when they are suffering in the purifying flames of purgatory. Sometimes these souls make us know that they need our help. The Rosary is a ready means to help them. And let us not forget that those souls can help us mightily.

(Courtesy: Novena News - October, 1974
All Saints' Church - Borella)

The day my grandmother left us

On that sad night that my Grandmother died there were no stars in the sky. It was also that day that my cousin brother Shevon came from Australia to see my Grandmother. My Grandmother died a happy death after some of her favourite relatives had visited her.



On the night she died the doctor came to see her because she was not feeling too well. He advised her to go to hospital. She came down the stairs with great difficulty because she was a grandmother of 82. She walked very slowly to the front door where the doctor's car was waiting. On the way she stopped by the prayer meeting hall (where my Grandmother had her prayer meetings), she said a small prayer for about three seconds and went very slowly to the car. As the car drove off she waved a weak goodbye. I did not think that I would not see her again. I was not able to go to hospital with her. She was accompanied by my father, my loku ammi, and my cousin Shevon.

I was reading a

book when the sad news arrived – the way she died was very puzzling. For when she got to hospital she told my father not to let the doctors do anything to her. It was almost as if she knew she was going to die. As she was admitted to the hospital she was laid on the bed and her heart just stopped and she died. When the news arrived at our home you should have seen me cry. The maid cried, my mother cried and my cousin sister Imeshi also cried. There was a great sadness passing through the house.

When my father came back from hospital it was late and I had fallen asleep because I had tired myself from crying. When I woke up in the morning to my great surprise my other cousin brother Dushan had come from Aus-

tralia. With my two cousin brothers and my cousin sister I was a bit happy but still very sad because I had lost the person I loved. I took my grandmother's cushion which she used to take around with her and which still smelt of her favourite powder. The rest of the day my mother was planning the funeral. Lot of people helped to arrange the house. The TV was moved away and lots of chairs were arranged in rows inside the house. When my grandmother was brought in the coffin it was almost like she was alive but in a deep sleep. She was dressed in a blue saree and pearl necklace.

During the funeral days I asked God to give me a teeny-weeny sign that my grandmother was in a happy place. But God gave us a humongous sign. The flowers in the garden which my grandmother had always tended and loved, started blooming and blooming with no end. The zinnias that were her favourite bloomed in pinks and reds. There were other blue flowers yellow, red, orange and the white peri-

winkles. And a new flower bloomed in our garden a St. Joseph's Lily. There were two flowers on one stalk which I think was a message to say that my grandmother was happy and reunited with my grandfather. My grandfather had died many many years ago even before I was born.

I know my grandmother is looking after me from heaven. I know she can hear my prayers to cure me from my wheeze, for I was even able to take part in my school sports meet without falling ill.

Oh how I miss my grandmother. I can still see her standing in her balcony looking down at her beautiful garden. I thank my grandmother for all she did for me for the care and love she showed me. For the prayers she taught me and the Bible stories she read for me. May she rest in peace and may God bless her forever. My grandmother's name is Stella Swaris. It is three months since her death. And I will always miss her.

Devumini Senaya Fernando
8 years

Pricila Rajapakse A generous heart

Pricila Rajapakse passed away on February 12, 2013 after a prolonged illness. She was laid to rest amidst a large gathering of family and friends on a sunny evening at Madampitiya cemetery on February 15. She was born on December 23, 1947 in Moratuwa and had her secondary education at St. Sebastian's Girls' School, Moratuwa. She excelled in education and sports and was a member of netball team and an Athlete.

Pricila was an active trade unionist who fought for the legitimate rights of workers. She got married to her first cousin, Ranil Rajapakse who was a dramatist conferred the 'Kalabushana' Award, for his stunning performance as Lord Jesus Christ in the passion play for 35 long years.

Pricila and were blessed with three sons who were educated at St. Peter College, Bambalapitiya. They are now well discipline distinguished old Peterites. Like the mother they too are good sportsmen. Pricila's elder son Sanjey played for the College first eleven cricket team, and was winner of the Most Popular School Boy Cricketer in 1995 while being the vice captain. Her second son Manju Rajapakse was also a member of the first eleven cricket team of St. Peter's College. The third son Anju is an executive officer at Sri Lanka Insurance Ltd, Vauxhall Street, Colombo. He too was a member of first eleven soccer team at St. Peter's College.

Pricila undoubtedly would have been a proud mother. She was a devout Catholic, and a parishioner of St. John the Baptist Church, Colombo. She was very generous and considerate to those who came to her for assistance. Her short life was well lived in the service of the people. Pricila's demise is an irreparable loss not only for her family but also to those who knew her. May her husband and family have the courage to move forward.

We extend our heart felt condolences to her beloved husband Ranil, sons Sanjeya, Manju, Anju and daughter in law Sivanthi,

May the turf lie gently over Pricila Rajapakse.

J. Betram Fernando

Cultivate without Hate A Testimony

Birth, Life and Death are a predetermined course of events. They are not just mean products of evolution, or something abstract. They are much more sensible and adoptable in any given situation and circumstance

This is what always made me wonder about life. I began to ponder, is there more to life than this? As much as I wanted to and liked, I could not easily think of any dependable source of information and knowledge. I tried reading many books, surprisingly, none of them carried any ideas or suggestive practical ways and means as a derivative, nor were there any meaningful or sensible suggestions, to follow as alternatives.

Let me invite your attention, to an alarming personal experience that still lingers and remains, bearing testimony. I once lived,

a rather conservative lifestyle. I was then able to know the actual facts of life, as they were so reliable. With bearing to certain events of my life, I was impressed and thereby inspired to go in search of the absolute truth, of motivations and power, unseen and unknown, changing my life completely from selfishness, to selflessness. It was no doubt so pertinent, for community living with togetherness.

Help and share unprejudiced. Do not count the cost. Expect nothing in return.

In this so down to earth context of reality, there should never be conflicts or confrontations, nor any that I have envisaged so far. Amazingly and incredibly, we can make the universe to be far away from desolation and destruction.

Francis

Letters to the Editor



Catholic Messenger's Self-betrayal

In its editorial on May 12, 2013, the Colombo based Catholic weekly, The 'Messenger' advises the Tamil Diaspora to give up the Tamil cause. Although it may appear, at least for a sector of its readers, reasonable, after a close reading most would realize how biased the write up is.

Why the advice is only to the Diaspora Tamils and not to anyone who would think as the Diaspora Tamils locally? Does the editor affirm the 'FACT' that any different opinion from anyone locally-who is in the reach of the government-can be easily tackled (suppressed/punished...) militarily or violently.

Does not the editor realise that by the very fact that the 'claim for Eelam' (reasonably or unreasonably) is audible abroad and not locally may be an index for freedom of expression in the country?

Is that the reason why whenever the freedom of media in Sri Lanka is being threatened by the government itself the *Messenger* or the Church media keeps silent or speak a 'diplomatic' language to have a smooth run with the government at the cost of the very Gospel values?

Is not it a self betrayal of the Catholic Church to speak and advice and to blame the extremities proTamils abroad for the silence kept when LITE committed crimes (in the past) against humanity, while the *Messenger* does the same when such crimes caused (even at present) by the powers in authority?

An unbiased statistic study on how the *Messenger* behaves whenever the crimes against humanity (irrespective of race and language ...) or crimes against media and opinions would help us to know the Truth -that would make us free.

It is a must for the *Messenger* to be a 'Catholic' and a 'Christian' weekly to keep Jesus in mind when engaging in this noble mission of bringing the Truth to the people.

S. Paul Jaffna

Pentecost

*Pentecost brings us peace,
Eternal peace that will never cease.*

No need to worry, for we are blest

The Holy Spirit

will be our guest

Everyday

Call on Him with love

On you He'll descend

from above.

Spirit of the Father and the Son

Third Person of the Trinity, Holy One.

Emilda S. Douglas



Beloved Sr. Vijaya

*You're no more
Here with us physically,
Disturbs me with a pain
Unusual*

*Your Unique voice,
Tone concerned,
Echoes in me
Leaving anguish*

*Laughter specific, Cross my mind
Whispering reality
Played you, the Role of a Sister Big
Touching Us
With interest genuine*

Rev. Sr. Preethi A.C

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Responses to Questions on the Holy Mass

Q: Is the Priest supposed to invite us to exchange the sign of peace at every Mass? Should he come down to the congregation to exchange it with us?

A: Among the reforms of the Holy Mass after Vatican II, the restoration of the sign of peace was one that drew a lot of attention and some heated debate! One obvious reason was that it asked congregations to engage other persons around them at the very time when they customarily would be praying silently before receiving communion (as they watched the priest receive communion). The sign of peace, despite its name, caused no little upheaval!

As to whether the priest should come down to the congregation, there is frankly no fixed rule. The Missal states that the priest "gives the sign of peace to the deacon or minister." In the document *The Sign of Peace* the value of having the people exchange this gesture with each other is upheld, with the caution that if the clergy try to "reach out and touch" everyone, or even the majority of the assembly, then this could come across as heavily weighted in favour of a clerical imposition. On the other hand, the same statement suggests that if the priest avoids any contact with persons other than the ministers, then this could be perceived to be a sign of clericalism. The document suggests, therefore, that the priest should exchange it with some members of the congregation. It is hard for me to try to establish a rule of thumb here because of the many variations among churches and worship spaces. I would generally tend to want to exchange the peace with some of the liturgical ministers and some of the people in the first row of chairs or pews.

Q: What parts of the Holy Mass should be sung?

A: *Acclamations.* These are the Alleluia before the gospel and those in the Eucharistic Prayer ("Holy, Holy, Holy," Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen and the Doxology to the Lord's Prayer). The rationale here is that these Sung Acclamations are intrinsic to the Holy Mass and that music underlines their importance. This is especially true of the acclamations that are intrinsic to the Eucharistic prayer (see my response to question 58).

Processions. The entrance (formerly called the introit) and the communion songs are important to accompany the ritual actions of movement during the Mass itself.

Responsorial Psalm. This is the sung response (almost always from the Psalms) to the First Reading. Singing helps to draw out the meaning of the psalm as it relates to this particular Reading.

Ordinary Chants. In the former missal we used the terms "ordinary" and "proper chants," were those that changed because of the feast of season. In the present terminology, "ordinary chants" refer to the Lord have mercy, Glory to God, Lord's Prayer, Lamb of God and Profession of Faith. Even here, there is a kind of hierarchy, since the Lamb of God (which accompanies the action of breaking the bread and pouring the consecrated wine) receives greater emphasis than the profession of faith (the recitation of which stands on its own as a liturgical "action"). You will notice a lot of variety here since not every Mass includes a sung "Lord have mercy" (since other forms of

the penitential rite may be used) and the "Glory to God" is not part of the daily Mass structure (except for special feasts).

Supplementary Songs. These are regarded as less important, one reason for which is that there are no fixed texts for these parts of the Mass. These are the offertory song, the Psalm after communion and the recessional.

Q I was taught that the "Real Presence" was the Eucharist, but today I keep hearing about Christ being present in other things like the Scripture, the Assembly and the Priest. Can you clarify this for me?

A: You are quite right about what you were taught: That the Eucharist contains the "Real Presence" of Christ. But what you are hearing today about Christ being present in many ways is also true.

Q: Can someone receive communion more than once in a day? Under what conditions?

A: The traditional discipline of the Church has been that one can receive the Eucharist only once per day. This teaching was reiterated in 1973 in a Vatican document "on facilitating reception of communion in certain circumstances" (the Latin title is *Immensae Caritatis*). However, in addition to reiterating the once-per-day norm, the document goes on to state certain circumstances when a person may receive communion more than once a day. In general, the instruction is that one may receive more than once at a Mass for special circumstances, and that one may not receive more than once simply for devotional reasons.

One may receive more than once a day on the following occasions: At ritual Masses, that is, when a sacrament is celebrated (baptism, confirmation, ordination and so forth); at a Mass for the consecration of a church or altar; at a Mass for the dead (funeral, anniversary and so forth); on the occasion of a bishop's or a major superior's visitation; at a Mass marking a special spiritual congress, meeting, or pilgrimage; and, finally, family members and friends at a Mass when Viaticum is administered to a dying person.

Responses to
101 Questions
on the MASS



Kevin W. Irwin

What it says in the Readings

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, the God who is,
who was, and is to come.

(Acts. 1:8)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR YEAR C 26th May - 2nd June 2013

Sun: Trinity Sunday

Prov. 8:22-31; Rom. 5:1-5;
Jn. 16:12-15

Mon: Sir 17:20-28; Mk.10:17-27

Tue: Sir 35:1-15; Mk.10:28-31

Wed: Sir 36:1-2a,5-6,13-19; Mk.10:32-45

Thu: Sir 42:15-26; Mt.10:46-52

Fri: **Feast of Visitation of the Blessed
Virgin Mary**

Zeph 3:3, 14-18 or Rom 12:9-16;
Lk. 1: 39-56

Sat: Memorials of St. Justin, Martyr

Sir 51:17-27; Mk. 11: 27-33

Sun: **Feast of Corpus Christi**

Gen. 14:18-20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-26;
Lk. 9:11-17

FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

First Reading. Prov. 8: 22-31

Here wisdom is personified and it is from God and has been there from the beginning. It has been there even before the earth was created. He has been beside when everything in relation to creation took place.

Second Reading. Rom. 5: 1-5

Taking Christ as an example. St. Paul is ready to undergo suffering for the glory of God. For he says, "We are justified by faith, we have peace with God through Our Lord Jesus Christ." This is poured to us through the Holy Spirit.

Gospel. Jn. 16: 12-15

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will guide us to all truth which was revealed by the Lord. He will glorify God and Jesus Christ.

Aid Story

The Holy Trinity decided to go on a vacation. The Son proposes to go to San Francisco. But the Father finds that place too liberal minded. So the Father proposes to go to Jerusalem. "I can't go on vacation there!" says the Son. "That's where I got killed."

An argument breaks out, and the Holy Spirit walks out. "If you cannot come up with something when I come back, we're not going anywhere!"

An hour later the Holy Spirit walks back into the room, and the Father and the Son excitedly say they want to go to Rome. "ROME?" says the Holy Spirit. "Great Idea I've never been there before."

Rev. Fr. Ciswan De Croos

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For all Christians: That they may be united in praising and honouring the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For all the human family: That, recognizing their common Father, they may see one another as brothers and sisters, and treat one another accordingly. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

For all those who are searching for an unknown God: That the light of Christ may help them to discover the Father. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

That we may see God as a God of love who is always near us, inspiring us to love one another. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

We have just left the pinnacle season of the church year. One almost needs time to catch one's breath. It almost seems anticlimatic to go from the festive whites and golds of Easter, the red of Pentecost, to the simplicity of green with instant abruptness- But move we must. Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi give us two opportunities to slowly ease into the ripened green of summer Ordinary Time. We are not, however, to assume that the Easter season is extended for two more weeks. Ordinary Time has definitely begun. The liturgical colour of these two solemnities is white, even though Ordinary Time has returned. The profound nature of the two feasts, God's sacramental expression of love, calls for highlighted attention.



Trinity Sunday is one of the four solemnities of the Lord during Ordinary Time. Since these feasts are dependent upon the celebration of Easter, they are called movable solemnities of Ordinary Time. The solemnities are Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, Sacred Heart, and Christ the King.

Adolf Adam calls them feasts of devotion and feasts of ideas. As feasts of devotion they are expressions of piety born in response to an internal or external trial. As idea feasts, each one extols a particular truth or specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. By stressing these truths or mysteries, the Church hoped to renew and strengthen the faith of God's people.

The Arian controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries gave rise to a strong emphasis on and devotion to the Trinity in Spain and Gaul. Arius, a priest in Alexandria who died in 336, denied the divinity of Christ. As a result, faith in God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the equality of the three Divine Persons was threatened. The Councils of Nicea and Constantinople (381) condemned the heresy and formulated the Nicene Creed, the profession of faith recited at every Sunday Mass.

The heresy had an impact on Catholic faith and life. Preaching sought to strengthen faith in the Church's doctrine regarding the Trinity. The first preface of the Trinity found its way into the liturgy in the 400s as this feast was born out of controversy. The modern preface of the Trinity appeared during the eighth century. By 800 the Mass of the Trinity was celebrated as a votive mass for Sundays. All Sunday liturgies became more

Trinitarian in focus. By the year 1000, the Feast of the Trinity was celebrated on the Sunday after Pentecost in Frankish and Gallic monasteries. The feast reminds the faithful of what it means when we refer to the Father, Son, and Spirit: We believe in three Divine Persons in one God.

In 1077 Pope Alexander challenged a special feast devoted to just the Trinity. The Pope's contention was that Trinity is remembered and celebrated every Sunday, even every day. One hundred years later, Alexander III said the same thing. However, the feast continued to exist. John XXII made it an official feast during the exile in Avignon in

tract dogma that seems unrelated to our everyday lives. The overall context for approaching this feast, then, is best found in the following exhortation: "The feast is only a feast if we follow the lead of the assigned scriptures and acclaim a God of love, not dissect an arcane theological treatise."

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity is celebrated on the first Sunday after Pentecost. In the Byzantine rite it is celebrated on Pentecost Sunday. The liturgy for Trinity Sunday has assigned to it three different readings and responsorial psalms for the three-year cycle.

because every liturgy professes the glory of God who, through a history of salvation, redeems the world through Christ and the Spirit. "The Trinitarian character of the Christian liturgy is to be sought and located in the fact that the liturgy by definition, is the ritual celebration of the events of the economy of redemption and as such is the celebration of the mystery of God." Thus, one might summarize the doctrine of the Trinity by stating that it is, in essence, the doctrine of God. Doctrine on the Trinity expresses what it means that God entered human history and saved the world through Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. God willed that all creation be saved. In theological terms this is referred to as the economy of salvation. The incarnation of Christ is the revelation of God, the sacrament of God in our midst, "The visible icon of the invisible God." The Holy Spirit makes us participants in the divine life by restoring human beings in the image and likeness of God (God's intention at the creation of the world). The Spirit transforms us into the image of Jesus Christ by restoring our divine nature. Both the theology of God's plan of salvation for the world and the triune nature of God are considered part of one reality. God, through Christ and the Spirit, gives God's own self to human beings in love—a gratuitous act of selfless love. The goal and fulfillment of God's plan for the salvation of the world are realized in perfect union with God for all eternity—"the eschatological glorification of God."

Every liturgy is Trinitarian and not necessarily because it always refers to the three Divine Persons. Rather, it is because every liturgy professes the Glory of God who, through a history of salvation, redeems the world through Christ and the Spirit. "The Trinitarian character of the Christian liturgy is to be sought and located in the fact that the liturgy by definition, is the ritual celebration of the events of the economy of redemption and as such is the celebration of the mystery of God." Thus, one might summarise the doctrine of the Trinity by stating that it is, in essence, the doctrine of God.

1334. Adam suggests that the placement of this feast on the Sunday after Pentecost served as a mirror to reflect back on the mystery of salvation just culminated with the celebration of Pentecost.

The feast celebrates a lofty, ab-

Cycles A and C draw from John's gospel and Cycle B chooses Matthew to speak to us of the implications of this feast.

Every liturgy is Trinitarian and not necessarily because it always refers to the three Divine Persons. Rather, it is

Open Letter to Priests by Young Catholics

Dear Fathers,

We are writing this letter to you today as we have some things we want to say to you. Some things are easier to say than others, but here you go.

Before that, though a HUGE Thank You. Thank you for having the courage to say yes to your countercultural vocation. We are forever grateful and will never be able to repay you. We are also grateful for your energy and enthusiasm you have for us as young Catholics. There are few people that value us for who we are and encourage us toward greatness and holiness as you do.

But as you are well aware, times are tough for our generation of Catholics. Numbers of weekly Holy Mass attendees are small these days. Some studies show that only 10% of young adults in their twenties are attending Holy Mass regularly. This is very concerning, to say the least.

With that, there are some things we want to share with you. You may know this already as some of you are from our generation. But we want to share any way, just in case you don't know.

First, we love orthodoxy. We're hungry for the truth. We're hungry for sane logic, common sense and Jesus Christ.

A huge number of us love the traditions of the Church that our parents and grandparents didn't like so much. You know why? Because practices that are distinctly Catholic help us stand out in a world that is obsessed with mediocrity, 'fitting in' and being 'normal.'

The practices that make us distinctly Catholic - like frequent confession, adoration, the Rosary, and even the regular use of incense at Mass - in a mysterious way, these things help build up our identity as Catholics in the world. While you may think there's too much of it, we think there is far too little.

Second, prayer is tough for us. The world we grew up in is a world unlike anything you can ever imagine. We don't remember a time without the Internet in our homes. Our attention spans are embarrassingly short, and silence is almost non-existent in our day-to-day lives.

We never learned how to just sit and 'waste time' with God. Pray with us. Offer more times for adoration. Teach us the Prayers of the Church, like the Liturgy of the Hours, Adoration, and the countless Novenas. We are thirsty for this stuff, and truly desire to make our parishes, houses of prayer.

Third, we need help dealing with porn, sex, and relationships. The culture

of death is here, and although we know Christ is triumphant in the end, it's winning in a lot of our lives right now. We need help, and we need it fast.

More than confession, we need more resources and support to combat the slavery of porn. Let us be honest here: A majority of guys in our generation are hooked on it. It's not enough to tell us in confession that we need to pray more, use more blockers, or do something nice for somebody else as a penance. Those are great, but the problem is still getting worse.

What we need are people in our lives who will help us fight it. It's embarrassing to ask for help, or to talk about this outside of the confessional, so please start organizing programs, groups, and mobilizing men and women who are steadfast to engage our generation for mentorship and spiritual direction. If you don't, who will?

Fourth, don't be afraid to teach and preach NFP. The Church's teaching about sex and sexuality is good news. A recent study showed that a majority of Catholic women still don't agree with the Church about certain aspects of the teaching on artificial contraception. However, those same women are open to hearing why the Church teaches what

she does. We're used to hearing about sex, but from all the wrong sources. The Church's wisdom is saving grace, and we want more of it.

Fifth, preach more about Jesus, and that he is alive. So many of us went to Catholic schools, but so few of us realize that Jesus is actually, really alive.

This is concerning, because this is why we are Christians. This basic fact about our faith is not known. Given the fact that most Catholics learn about God from the ten minute homily, which we often leave more to be desired in terms of content, we can see why.

Lastly, we need more opportunities for the Sacraments in general. It's difficult for anybody of any generation to make the 3:30 pm confession time on Saturday afternoon, especially for those of us who have two jobs and a young family to take care of. Appointments are great too, but having at least one more opportunity once in a while would be ideal.

We know, you're busy too. But if the Sacraments actually are what we say they are, then they need to be more widely available. The world is quenching us, and we're thirsty for the Fountain of Life!

Ryan Eggenberger / Sept 2012

*Courtesy: Among Ourselves
Diocese of Kandy*

Feast of St. Joseph and College Day Celebrations at Wattala



St. Joseph's College, Wattala recently celebrated College Day and the feast of St. Joseph patron saint of the College, simultaneously. The chief celebrant on the occasion was Archbishop Emeritus Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis.

Addressing the gathering Rev. Dr. Gomis said, "In the Bible, St. Luke has stated: Baby Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man in Nazareth under the guidance of Mother Mary and Joseph. Hence being students of this college, you also should get educated in wisdom and knowledge yourself. As students you are indeed fortunate to be educated in this school. By your good behavior, kind words and the mutual understanding of others you should be an enlightenment to society."

Speaking further, His Grace emphasized "Disciplined and law abiding

persons are declining in the community. This has made an impact in the increase of crimes. Therefore our expectations are to produce not only well educated academics, but also students filled with good values."

After Holy Mass, Archbishop Emeritus declared open the Computer Resources Centre and the well equipped Laboratory.

Rector of the College, Rev. Fr. Ranjith Andradi while thanking His Grace, also acknowledged the contribution and assistance provided by Deputy Principal Rev. Fr. Kamal Kumara, the tutorial staff, non academic staff and parents. The parish priest of Nayakakanda, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunathilaka and Rev. Fr. Prasanna Rohan, the parish priest of Enderamulla were among the dignitaries.

Padminie Nanayakkara

JUNIOR ATHLETIC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2013



Bridgetine, Amanthi Silva has always excelled in Athletics from her young age.

At the Junior National Championships of 2013, she was placed first in the Shot Putt event in the Under 20 age group.

She was also placed first in the Discuss Throw event in the Under 20 age group, thus establishing a 'New Junior Overall' meet record.

We congratulate Amanthi on her achievement and wish her all success in the future.

Sr. Shermila

Aluth Avurudu at St. Mary's Pre-School, Welivita



Children of St. Mary's Pre-School, Welivita celebrated Sinhala and Hindu New Year recently at the Church premises.

The chief guest was Rev. Fr. Jayalath Balagalla and guests of honour were Rev. Fr. Roshan and Rev. Bro. Surag.

Picture shows some parents playing the 'Rabana' while the children sing the 'Raban Pada'

Principal of the Nursery, Rev. Sr. Mari Sumudu Ratnayake and Pre-School teachers are also in the picture.

Joe Paaris

University of Sri Lanka Colombo Region New Year Festival - 2013



The Catholic Students' Movement of the Sri Lanka University - Colombo Region showcased their unity recently on a platform of festivities celebrating the Sinhala and Tamil New Year on May 1st

at the Colombo University grounds. Undergraduates from Universities of Colombo, Jayawardenapura, Kelaniya and Moratuwa together with the Medical Faculties of Colombo and Ragama, gathered with their comrades of diverse cultural backgrounds in a show of togetherness and equal enthusiasm. The festival was a combination of fun activities, treats and games which made the event very colourful.

C.S.M.

MAN WITH A MISSION

THE STORY OF PAUL

Courtesy :
Ceylon Bible Society Publications

(.... from last week)

WHEN THEY ARRIVED IN ANTIOCH...
AGAIN AND AGAIN OUR MESSAGE WAS REJECTED BY THE JEWS, BUT MANY GENTILES BELIEVED.

GOD HAS NOW OPENED THE WAY FOR GENTILES TO BELIEVE.

SOMETIME LATER...
WE'VE HEARD REPORTS BACK IN JUDEA THAT YOU GENTILE CHRISTIANS ARE NOT OBSERVING OUR LAW.

YOU SIMPLY CANNOT BE SAVED UNLESS YOU TOO ARE CIRCUMCISED AS THE LAW OF MOSES REQUIRES!!

NOW THIS GOOD NEWS TELLS HOW GOD PUTS US RIGHT WITH HIMSELF, BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES.

BELIEVING IN CHRIST PUTS US RIGHT WITH GOD. IT'S NOT BY DOING WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES.

ORDER, PLEASE. LISTEN TO ME, MY BROTHERS!

BUT WE CAN'T JUST IGNORE THE LAW!!

I AGREE?

YOU'RE INSISTING ON CIRCUMCISION? HOW DARE YOU TELL ME WHAT THE LAW SAYS!!

YOU'RE JUST HERE TO FIND FAULT WITH US! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

BROTHERS? PLEASE!!

AFTER THE MEN LEFT...
YOU AND PAUL SHOULD GO AND SEE THE APOSTLES IN JERUSALEM BEFORE THIS ISSUE DIVIDES THE CHURCH.

MANAEN AND I WILL COME WITH YOU, AND TITUS SHOULD ALSO COME AS A GENTILE BELIEVER.

SO A DELEGATION FROM ANTIOCH WAS SENT TO JERUSALEM.

THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET AMOS AGREE WITH WHAT BARNABAS AND PAUL HAVE SAID.

WHAT I PROPOSE IS THIS: WE SHOULD NOT TROUBLE THE GENTILES WHO ARE TURNING TO GOD. INSTEAD, WE SHOULD WRITE A LETTER LISTING FOUR THINGS WHICH THEY MUST NOT DO:

1. EATING FOOD THAT HAS BEEN OFFERED TO IDOLS.
2. SEXUAL IMMORALITY.
3. EATING MEAT FROM STRANGLEF ANIMALS.
4. EATING BLOOD.

AMOS 9:12 (LXX)

THE REST OF MANKIND WILL COME TO ME, ALL THE GENTILES WHOM I HAVE CALLED TO BE MY OWN.

AT A STOPPING PLACE ALONG THE WAY...
WE'LL REPORT TO THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS IN JERUSALEM WHAT GOD HAS BEEN DOING AMONG THE GENTILES. AND TITUS HERE IS A GOOD EXAMPLE.

WHEN THEY REACHED JERUSALEM...
BARNABAS? IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

THAT'S WHY I SAY IT'S THROUGH OUR FAITH IN CHRIST THAT WE ARE PUT RIGHT WITH GOD. IT IS NOT BY DOING WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES.

HOW ARE YOU, PAUL? WE'RE ANXIOUS TO HEAR WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY.

SO A LETTER WAS WRITTEN, AND MESSENGERS WERE CHOSEN TO CARRY THE LETTER.

WE, THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS...

THANKS, SILAS, FOR SUPPORTING OUR POSITION.

I THINK YOU WOULD BE A GOOD MAN TO COME ALONG WITH THE LETTER.

WE'LL HAVE TO LET THE WHOLE CHURCH DECIDE.

SILAS WAS ONE OF TWO MESSENGERS WHO WERE CHOSEN AND WERE SENT OFF TO ANTIOCH WITH PAUL AND BARNABAS.

THE NEXT DAY...
FELLOW CHRISTIANS, WE HAVE CALLED YOU ALL TOGETHER THIS MORNING SO THAT WE MAY HEAR FROM OUR BROTHERS, BARNABAS AND PAUL, WHO HAVE JUST ARRIVED FROM ANTIOCH.

WE HAVE ALL HEARD REPORTS ABOUT THEIR RECENT TRIP INTO GENTILE TERRITORY, PREACHING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS.

WE HAVE HEARD THAT THESE MEN HAVE BEEN PREACHING TO GENTILES AND BRINGING THEM INTO THE CHURCH WITHOUT REGARD TO OUR LAW.

THAT'S RIGHT! WE CANNOT ALLOW THIS. ALL GENTILES MUST FIRST BE CIRCUMCISED AND TOLD TO OBEY THE LAW OF MOSES.

WHEN THEY REACHED ANTIOCH, THE LETTER WAS READ TO THE BELIEVERS.

...YOU WILL DO WELL IF YOU TAKE CARE NOT TO DO THESE THINGS. WE SEND YOU OUR BEST WISHES.

THIS IS GREAT NEWS!

THEY'RE FINALLY ACCEPTING US AS WE ARE!

AFTER A LONG DISCUSSION...
ALRIGHT! NOW LET'S HEAR WHAT PETER HAS TO SAY.

THANK YOU, JAMES. MY BROTHERS, YOU KNOW HOW GOD ONCE SENT ME TO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS TO THE GENTILES, AND YOU KNOW THAT THEY HEARD AND BELIEVED.

WE SHOULD NOT BURDEN THEM WITH DETAILS OF THE LAW WHICH NEITHER WE NOR OUR ANCESTORS COULD BEAR, NOR WE BELIEVE AND ARE SAVED BY WHAT THE LORD JESUS HAS DONE FOR US, AND SO ARE THEY.

ALRIGHT! IT'S TIME WE HEARD DIRECTLY FROM BARNABAS AND PAUL. BARNABAS, IT'S YOUR TURN TO SPEAK. AND THEN PAUL WILL GIVE HIS REPORT.

ALL THE BELIEVERS IN ANTIOCH WERE ENCOURAGED BY THE LETTER. THE MESSENGERS FROM JERUSALEM STAYED ON IN ANTIOCH FOR SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE RETURNING. PAUL AND BARNABAS REMAINED THERE TO TEACH AND PREACH THE GOOD NEWS.

AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS...
LET'S GO BACK AND VISIT THE CHRISTIANS IN GALATIA. I'M ANXIOUS TO KNOW HOW THEY'RE DOING.

GOOD IDEA! AND I THINK WE SHOULD TAKE JOHN MARK WITH US AGAIN!

NOT ABSOLUTELY NOT! WE CANNOT RISK IT AGAIN. THIS WORK IS TOO IMPORTANT TO ME.

BUT HE REALLY NEEDS ANOTHER CHANCE. HE'S A GOOD MAN, PAUL, AND HE CAN BE A LOT OF HELP TO US.

WHAT? THAT FELLOW WHO DESERTED US BEFORE?

DON'T YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME TOO?!

MY BROTHERS, I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN FOR THE LAW. BUT GOD HAS BEEN WORKING MIRACLES AND WONDERS THROUGH US AMONG THE GENTILES.

MY BROTHERS IN CHRIST, I HAVE EXPLAINED TO YOU BEFORE HOW THE GOSPEL WHICH I PREACH WAS REVEALED TO ME DIRECTLY BY JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF.

AND YOUR LEADERS HERE-- JAMES, PETER, AND JOHN-- HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT GOD HAS GIVEN ME THE TASK OF PREACHING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE GENTILES.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN LYSTRA, A MAN LAME FROM BIRTH WAS HEALED BECAUSE HE BELIEVED. AND WHEN BROTHER PAUL WAS STONED AND LEFT FOR DEAD, THE LORD RESTORED HIM THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF GENTILE BELIEVERS.

AFTER A BITTER ARGUMENT, BARNABAS WENT ONE WAY...
WE'LL SPEND SOME TIME WITH MY PEOPLE IN CYPRUS, MARK. THERE'S MORE WORK TO BE DONE THERE.

... AND PAUL WENT ANOTHER WAY.

LET'S GO!

IT'S A FOUR-DAY JOURNEY TO MY HOME IN TARSUS, SILAS, BUT I WANT TO STOP ALONG THE WAY AND SEE SOME OF MY FIRST CONVERTS. IT'S BEEN SEVERAL YEARS.

(contd next week....)

Stories from the Bible

Samson



The third in a series of popular Bible stories with Scriptures taken from Today's Version of the Bible.

(Exodus 1:9 - 2:10)

Let us look at the story of Samson. God related to Samson's mother that Samson was going to be a very special person (That his hair should not be cut).

The Lord blessed Samson. He grew up to be a strong person.

Samson killed a lion that tried to attack him.

One day Samson tied torches of fire to the tails of three hundred foxes and sent them to the wheat fields, belonging to the enemy.

Samson's enemies tied him with strong ropes. But he was able to break them with the strength given by God.

He went to the city of Gaza and there he rested in a house.

At midnight he removed the door posts of the city gates and carried them to the top of a mountain.

Samson told his wife Delilah the secret of his strength. He told her that his hair had never been cut.

His hair was cut while he was asleep. Then he was caught by his enemies. They pulled his eyes out and chained him. But his hair started to grow again.

Samson was taken to the Great Hall of the temple. For the people to see him and rejoice over his capture. He was tied to the two main pillars of this great hall in the temple.

Samson asked God to allow him to honour God just once more. In the name of Jesus, Samson broke the central pillars.

The building fell killing all who were gathered there.

The Birth of Samson

(Judges 13 : 2-5)

At that time there was a man named Manoah from the town of Zorah. He was a member of the tribe of Dan. His wife had never been able to have children. The LORD'S angel appeared to her and said, "You have never been able to have children, but you will soon be pregnant and have a son. Be sure not to drink any wine or beer, or eat any forbidden food, and after your son is born, you must never cut his hair, because from the day of his birth he

will be dedicated to God as a Nazirite. He will begin the work of rescuing Israel from the Philistines."

(Judges 13 : 24-25)

The woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson. The child grew and the LORD blessed him. And the LORD'S power began to strengthen him while he was between Zorah and Eshtaol in the camp of Dan.

Samson and the Lion

(Judges 14 : 5-6)

So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother. As they



were going through the vineyards there, he heard a young lion roaring. Suddenly the power of the LORD made Samson strong, and he tore the lion apart with his bare hands, as if it were a young goat. But he did not tell his parents what he had done.

Samson and the Foxes

(Judges 15 : 4-8)

So he went and caught three hundred foxes. Two at a time, he tied their tails together and put torches in the knots. Then he set fire to the torches and turned the foxes loose in the Philistine wheatfields. In this way he burnt up not only the wheat that had been harvested but also the wheat that was still standing. The olive orchards were also burnt. When the Philistines asked who

had done this, they learnt that Samson had done it because his father-in-law, a man from Timnah, had given Samson's wife to a friend of Samson's. So the Philistines went and burnt the woman to death and burnt down her father's house. Samson told them, "So this is how you act! I swear that I won't stop until I pay you back!" He attacked them fiercely and killed many of them. Then he went and stayed in the cave in the cliff at Etam.

Samson went to the city of Gaza

(Judges 16 : 1a, 2-3)

One day Samson went to the Philistine city of Gaza. The people of Gaza found out that Samson was there, so they surrounded the place and waited for him all night long at the city gate. They were quiet all night, thinking to themselves, "We'll wait until daybreak, and then we'll kill him." But Samson stayed in bed only until midnight. Then he got up and took hold of the city gate and pulled it up - doors, posts, lock, and all. He put them on his shoulders and carried them all the way to the top of the hill overlooking Hebron.

Samson and Delilah

(Judges 16:4-22)

After this, Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who lived in Sorek Valley. The five Philistine kings went to her and said, "Trick Samson into telling you why he is so strong and how we can overpower him, tie him up, and make him helpless. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver."

So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me what makes you so strong. If someone wanted to tie you up and make you helpless, how could he do it?"

Samson answered, "If they tie me up with seven new bowstrings that are not dried out, I'll be as weak as anybody else."

So the Philistine kings brought Delilah seven new bowstrings that were not dried out, and she tied Samson up. She had some men waiting in another room, so she shouted, "Samson! The Philistines are coming!" But he snapped the bowstrings just as thread breaks when fire touches it. So they still did not know the secret of his strength.

Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you've been making a fool of me and not telling me the truth. Please tell me how someone could tie you up." He answered, "If they tie me with new ropes that have never been used, I'll be as weak as anybody else."

So Delilah got some new ropes and tied him up. Then she shouted, "Samson! The Philistines are coming!" The men were waiting in another room. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like thread.

Delilah said to Samson "You're still making a fool of me and not telling me the truth. Tell me how someone could tie you up."

He answered, "If you weave my seven locks of hair into a loom, and make it tight with a peg, I'll be as weak as anybody else."

Delilah then lulled him to sleep, took his seven locks of hair, and wove them into the loom. She made it tight with a peg and shouted, "Samson! The Philistines are coming!" But he woke up and pulled his hair loose from the loom.

So she said to him, "How can you say you love me, when you don't mean it? You've made a fool of me three times, and you still haven't told me what makes you so strong." She kept on asking him, day after day. He got so sick and tired of her nagging him about it that he finally told her the truth.

"My hair has never been cut," He said. "I have been dedicated to God as a Nazirite from the time I was born. If my hair were cut, I would lose my strength and be as weak as anybody else." When Delilah realised that he had told her the truth, she sent a message to the Philistine kings and said "Come back once more. He has told me the truth.

Then they came and brought the money with them. Delilah lulled Samson to sleep in her lap and then called a man, who cut off Samson's seven locks of hair. Then she began to torment him, for he had lost his strength. Then she shouted, "Samson! The Philistines are coming!" He woke up and thought, "I'll get loose and go free, as always." He did not know that the LORD had left him. The Philistines captured him. And put his eyes out. They took him to Gaza, chained him with bronze chains, and put him to work grinding at the mill in the prison. But his hair started growing again.

Samson in the temple of Dagon

(Judges 16:23a, 25-30)

The Philistine kings met together to celebrate and offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They were enjoying themselves, and so they said, "Call Samson, and let's make him entertain us!" When they brought Samson out of the prison, they made him entertain them and made him stand between the pillars. When the people saw him, they sang praise to their god: "Our god has, given us victory over our enemy, who devastated our land and killed so many of us!" Samson said to the boy who was leading him by the hand, "Let me touch the pillars that hold up the building. I want to lean on them.

The building was crowded with men and women. All five Philistine kings were there, and there were about three thousand men and woman on the roof, watching Samson entertain them."

Then Samson prayed, "Sovereign LORD please, remember me; please, God give me my strength just once more, so that with this one blow I can get even with the Philistines for putting out my two eyes." So Samson took hold of the two middle pillars holding up the building. Putting one hand on each pillar, he pushed against them and shouted, "Let me die with the Philistines!" He pushed with all his might, and the building fell down on the five kings and everyone else. Samson killed more people at his death than he had killed during his life.

Courtesy : Ceylon Bible Society Publications

QUIZ

On Catholic Themes

(..... from last week)

QUESTIONS

1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

The Holy Trinity

50. What is the mystery of the three persons in one God called?
51. What do we mean by a "Mystery of Faith"?
52. Who are the three Persons of the Holy Trinity?
53. What is meant by the "Incarnation"?
54. How was the Son of God made man?
55. Why did God the Son become man?
56. What does the name "Jesus" signify?
57. What does the title "Christ" signify?
58. Why do we say that Jesus Christ is true God?
59. Why do we say that Jesus Christ is true man?
60. Who is the mother of Jesus?
61. Why do we say that Mary is the Mother of God?
62. Who is the Father of Jesus?
63. What is the relationship between Jesus and St Joseph?
64. Who is the Holy Spirit?
65. The Holy Spirit is addressed by many different titles. Mention three such titles.
66. What are the symbols of the Holy Spirit? Mention three.

(contd next week.....)

courtesy : Clare Uikhen fsp

66. Water, Fire, Dove.
65. The Paraclete, the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth.
64. The Third Person of the Holy Trinity.
63. St Joseph is the guardian or foster father of Jesus.
62. God is the Father of Jesus, Jesus Christ is the Son of God by nature, not by adoption.
61. She truly became the mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb.
60. Mary.
59. Jesus Christ is true man because he came down from heaven for our salvation; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He is like us in all things except sin.
58. Jesus Christ is true God because he is the true and only Son of God and as Son he is equal to the Father.
57. The title "Christ" means the same as Messiah, and signifies "Anointed".
56. The name "Jesus" signifies "Yahweh saves".
55. God the Father sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. Jesus came to save us by reconciling us with God, that we might know God's love.
54. The Son of God was conceived and made man by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
53. By the "Incarnation" is meant that the Son of God was made man, the Word becoming "flesh".
52. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
51. By a "mystery of faith" we mean a truth which is hidden in God and which can never be known unless they are revealed by God.
50. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity. The Trinity is a mystery of Faith. Trinity is a combination of two words meaning three and unity.

The Holy Trinity

1. THE CHURCH AND CHURCH TEACHINGS

ANSWERS

What is the Catholic Church?

Many people are puzzled by the idea of the Church. They may believe in God, and have faith in Jesus, and study the bible, and pray, and try to lead good lives. But they don't understand why we need a Church. It seems unnecessary. It seems like something that gets in the way of our relationship with God. And the Catholic Church, above all, can be a source of confusion or even of scandal. It is a large institution with a complicated history that insists on making great claims for itself. To many people these claims seem absurd. They ask themselves: "What has the Catholic Church got to do with Jesus Christ? What has this Church got to do with me and with my personal faith?"

We can't talk about the Church without talking about God, and about His plans for us. Two thousand years ago God sent His only Son to us so that we could find peace with Him and with each other, and share

in His Divine Life. Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, who was born in Bethlehem, is the eternal Son of God. He became a human being like us, while remaining truly and completely divine. He came into the world that had been created through Him. He lived among us, He taught and healed and forgave, He suffered and died and was raised to life again. Jesus Christ is the way of God; He is the truth about God and about ourselves; He is God's own life lived among us. He is the beginning and end of all our deepest longings and hopes, and of all the other things that we never dared to hope for. This is the mystery of Incarnation: Jesus Christ is truly God and truly human; He is God with us.

Many people wonder what it would have been like to know Jesus two thousand years ago, to walk with Him, follow Him, listen to Him, touch Him - God Himself living with us. What is incredible is that

we can be this close to Him as his first followers were. He did not leave us alone. Through the Church all the good things that He revealed to those who knew Him are still given to us today. Through the Church, Jesus Christ is still present in the world right now, God truly with us, just as surely and completely as He was two thousand years ago.

The mystery of the Church only makes sense because of the mystery of the Incarnation. We are creatures of flesh and blood, and God chose to reveal Himself through the flesh and blood of Jesus. God respects the fact that we are physical beings, instead of trying to bypass it. He does not pretend we are spirits or angels. He uses visible, material things - people, places, objects - to tell us about deeper spiritual things. God continues to use human beings to be the sign of His presence in the world, the means by which we can be

united with Him and with each other.

Jesus did not leave an idea or a plan or a book or a letter about Himself. He left a group of people, His Church, who would be His life and His body. This Church was united, visibly united - it was not just a hidden unity of feeling or hope. This Church was catholic, that is, universal - it was the means by which all people would come to know Him. He chose twelve apostles to make disciples of all nations. He told them to hand on all that they had received from Him, to hand on His revelation. He promised that He would give His Holy Spirit to the apostles - the Spirit of God; God's power and truth, God himself. He sent them out with this Spirit to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom - to baptize and to teach, to forgive sins and to unite all people. This Spirit would guide them

and lead them into all truth.

The apostles and their successors would be continuing witnesses to Christ. They would speak in His name; whoever listened to them would be listening to Christ, whoever rejected them would be rejecting Christ. In this way the whole Church, led by the apostles, would be the continuing presence of Jesus Christ in the world. The Church spread out from Jerusalem; it lived, prayed, suffered, thought and wrote; it handed on the living Word of God that had been given to it.

The Church that He founded continues to be His living presence in the world, to be the one body that He has formed - teaching in His name, forgiving in His name, giving new life in His name and uniting in His name.

Excerpts from
Rev. Fr. Stephen Wang
Courtesy: Catholic Truth Society