An Appeal from the Archbishop to curb the spread of Dengue

Given the number of increasing casualties and the people affected by dengue, I am making a very special appeal to all my priests in the Archdiocese of Colombo to please spend time on Sunday the 22nd of January 2017 as a special day of prayer and activity to help curtail the spread of this decease among our people.

I would very much encourage them to organize voluntary cleaning programmes of their respective Churches, Schools and Institute premises and the surroundings as well as the area within and outside their houses, removing all factors that may contribute to the breeding of dengue carrying deadly mosquitoes.

I appeal very specially to the youth to spearhead this programme in the neighbourhoods and the surroundings on that particular day. I myself will be taking part in this campaign personally at St. Lucia’s Cathedral, Kotahena on the same day. It would be taking part in this campaign personally at St. Lucia’s Cathedral, Kotahena on the same day. It would also be significant if the Fathers could speak to the religious leaders of the other communities and get them to join this campaign.

Let us help Sri Lanka and rid itself of the menace of dengue.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith
Archbishop of Colombo

We wish our Hindu brethren a Very Prosperous and Happy Thai Pongal
Christian Faith is a gift from the God

The Christian faith is a gift we received from the God. We should share this faith with each other. It will help us to strengthen our faith more and more, said His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera, Bishop of Ratnapura after the blessing of the newly built Church of St. Jude at the Hathbewa Estate of Rambukkana Parish recently.

This Church will serve around 15 families who live in the Hathbewa Estate. Building of the new church was initiated by Rev. Fr. Roshan Tissera, Parish Priest, St. Aloysius Church, Rambukkana.

Very Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando, Vicar General of Ratnapura, Rev. Fr. Eric Madurawala and the Chief Incumbent of the Kalatuwawo Temple were also present.

Asuntha Bandara Jayamanne

Nativity Play at Andiambalama Parish

The annual Christmas festival of Andiambalama parish was held recently at the open air theatre of the Andiambalama Church. The chief guest was Rev. Fr. Milinda Wickremasinghe of the Salatian Mission.


Pic. T. Sunil Fernando

Crib on a cart

A crib built on a cart by the altar servers society of the Parish Church of Andiambalama Parish. Rev. Fr. Thusitha Pradeep, Parish Priest, Bopitiya put it of Nagoda, Kalutara respectively.

Pic. S.K.J. Kurera

Caritas Sri Lanka gains START Network membership

The 50th Annual Cursillo Convention of the Sri Lanka Cursillo Movement will be held on Sunday January 29th from 8 am onwards at St. Peter’s College, Colombo 4. As this year has been dedicated to the beloved Apostle of our motherland Saint Joseph Vaz by the Bishop’s Conference of Sri Lanka, the theme chosen for reflection is “Be Holy and Fervent Missionaries like St. Joseph Vaz”

His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Pierre Nguyen Van Tot, Apostolic Nuncio will grace the occasion as Chief Guest. Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy and Episcopal Patron of the Movement will deliver the keynote address.

Dry rations to Needy

Satha and Christine Rajanayagam, the Directors of Menhandy, the School for Children with special needs receive the Merit Award under the Micro category at the excellence awards 2016 organised by the National Chamber of Commerce, Sri Lanka at the Hilton Hotel, Colombo recently.

Rev. Fr. Ruban Lesley, Parish Priest, St. Anthony’s Church, Liyanagemulla hands over dry rations to a needy during Christmas. The event was organised by the Vincent de Paul Society of Liyanagemulla.

Rev. Fr. Gayan Dinusha, Assistant Parish Priest, Bopitiya distribute dry rations to a member of “Sanasa” of Nugege founded by the late Rev. Fr. Leenus Silva, Parish Priest, Bopitiya 75 years ago.

Pic. S.K.J. Kurera

Donation of school books

The Old Boys’ Union of Delatura School has donated school books to 800 school children of the area for the 14th consecutive year. The donation was sponsored by the Lions Club of Delatura, Tuduella.

Pic. Anton Jayasuriya

A raffle draw

A raffle draw was held at the Kalutara Nagoda Church premises in aid of construction of the mission house, after the Christmas Mass.

The 1st prize, 32” TV was won by C.R. Kumarasinghe of Thalangama, Battaramulla. The 2nd prize Zigo tablet and 3rd prize, a gas cooker were won by Anne Vanderput of Nagoda, Kalutara and Rev. Fr. Morris Namas of Hapugoda respectively.

Shereen Kottegoda

Holy Mass for the sick

The death donation and Welfare Society of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Nattandiya organized a Holy Mass for the sick of the Parish recently in appreciation of their services rendered to the Church. The Holy Mass was presided by Rev. Fr. Julian Hyacinth assisted by deacon Sheran Kamantha.

S.F.

Donation from ROSARIANS

The Rosarian Convention situated at Duwana, Kochchikade has been closed permanently. Kindly divert all the letters and printed matter to Rosarian Monastery, Tewatta, Ragama. Tel: 011-2958552

Rt. Rev. Dr. Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith

Apostolic Nuncio

Notice for ROSARIANS

Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith Archbishop’s House, Borella, Colombo 08, Sri Lanka

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Cursillo Convention 2017

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Creation theology

The Department of Theology of Aquinas University College, Colombo 08 will commence a new Short Course on Thursday, January 19, 2017 on the above theme. The Course will span for 11 consecutive Thursdays from 4.00pm – 6.15pm at the Diamond Jubilee Building, Aquinas University College.

For further details, Contact: Sr. Mary Kathleen: 2694012/5; 4616311/8689; ext.229
Justice Weeramantry: God's priceless gift

Justice Christy Gregory Weeramantry, one of the world’s most eminent jurists and one of the most outstanding Catholics of recent decades, passed away on January 5, after more than half a century of sincere, selfless and sacrificial service to his country and to the international community.

Justice Weeramantry was an extraordinary creative genius but that was blended with the noblest virtues of meekness, humility and a simple, silent grace of the Lord who justly would have heard His inaccessibility to all people and especially the poor and the marginalised. Often he appeared free of charge for poor litigants insisting that every issue for him was not just a case but a cause. He also believed and observed the Biblical principle that justice without mercy is tyranny. Justice Weeramantry besides his judicial service in Sri Lanka and the world, wrote more than 30 books on topics ranging from inter-religious dialogue and environmental protection to the danger of even possessing nuclear weapons.

At a Thanksgiving Mass held at St Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya last Saturday night, the Archbishops of Colombo, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith paid a glowing tribute to Justice Weeramantry as one of the most outstanding personalities of our times. Rev Fr. Noel Dias, who heads the Catholic Lawyers' Guild gave the homily in which he described Justice Weeramantry as God’s priceless gift to Sri Lanka and the international community. Now we were returning that gift to God and Fr. Noel Dias said he hoped Justice Weeramantry would now intercede to bring about his noble vision of justice and peace in Sri Lanka and in the world community.

Fr. Noel also referred to how Justice Weeramantry followed the principle of St Teresa of Calcutta - the hallowed precepts that God wants us to be faithful, not successful.

During the past few months after a surgical operation Justice Weeramantry is known to have suffered physically and psychologically, so much so he could not complete the last book he was writing on the teachings of Christ and the need for us to do what the Lord tells us to do. Fr. Dias summed it up by saying, “The mountain top is glorious but we spiritually grow mainly in the valley”.

After serving with grace and wisdom as a judge of the Supreme Court from 1965 to 1972, Justice Weeramantry was invited to Australia’s well-known Monash University and offered a prestigious post as Professor of Law. He shared his rare wisdom and prudence freely with law students from all over the world. In recognition the United Nations in 1990 appointed him judge of the International Court of Justice in the Hague. He gave some historic judgments including a dissenting judgment where he ruled that even the possession of nuclear weapons was illegal.

In another famous dissenting judgment in the Gabiikovo-Nagymaros Dam case before the ICJ, Justice Weeramantry gave the international community a wonderful portrait of Sri Lanka’s ancient environmental wisdom and irrigation marvels. The Gabiikovo-Nagymaros Dam is a large barrage project on the Danube. It was initiated by the Budapest Treaty of September 16, 1977 between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The project was aimed at preventing catastrophic floods, improving river navigability and producing clean electricity.

Only a part of the project has been finished in Slovakia (the successor State of Czechoslovakia), under the name Gabiikova Dam, because Hungary first suspended then tried to terminate the project due to environmental and economic concerns. Slovakia proceeded with an alternative solution, called ‘Variant C’, which involved diverting the Danube, the border river. These caused a still unresolved international dispute between Slovakia and Hungary. Both parties turned to the ICJ for a ruling.

Justice Weeramantry in his dissenting ruling said there are some principles of traditional legal systems that can be woven into the fabric of modern environmental law. They are specially pertinent to the concept of sustainable development which was well recognised in those systems. I wish to refer to a system with which I am especially familiar, which also happens to have specifically articulated these two needs – development and environmental protection – in its ancient literature. I refer to the ancient irrigation-based civilisation of Sri Lanka. It is a system which, while recognising the need for development and vigorously implementing schemes to this end, at the same time specifically articulated the need for environmental protection and ensured that the technology it employed paid due regard to environmental considerations. This concern for the environment was reflected not only in its literature and its technology, but also in its legal system, for the felling of certain forests was prohibited, game sanctuaries were established, and royal edicts decreed that the natural resource of water was to be used to the last drop without any wastage.

Justice Weeramantry as the trumpet sound and you stood before the judgment seat of the Lord you would have heard words, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Matthew 25: 34).

Taking a Sabbatical

By Francis Madiwela

The New Year has just begun. It is not too late to think about a New Year resolution. New Year resolutions are not just limited to dynamic or active determinations. Some of us want to spend more time with the family, want to lose 20 kg this year, determine to join in daily family prayers and to have at least one meal a day with the family. These are some examples of positive and practical resolutions that some of us have made for the year 2017.

I would ask you to take a sabbatical. The word sabbatical is defined as “one year hiatus in the carrier of an individual often dedicated to reflection, writing or travelling extensively for research. It is a paid vacation away from work.” In this busy and highly strung society we should get out of this hectic life style and devote some time for reflection, prayer and planning for the future. This is an ancient concept that we are forgetting or neglecting to adopt in our lives for our own personal renewal.

Jewish and Christian cultures deeply believed in the necessity for a day of rest from hard work. The Book of Exodus speaks about the Sabbath, “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath devoted to the Lord your God. You should not do any work on that day” (Exodus 20:28). The need for rest, reflection and prayer is obligated in the Ten Commandments itself. God Himself practised what He preached in the first creation story of the Book of Genesis, “On the seventh day God finished the work that He was doing. He rested from all work” (Genesis 2.2).

Even in other cultural and religious traditions of the world they recommened days of rest for prayer, reflection and planning for the future. The custom of Uposatha is still observed in the rituals of Theravada Buddhism. Calculated according to the phases of the moon the Buddhist devotee observes these days as times of reflection and prayer. Poya day is one of these Uposatha days.

The Cherokee Tribe was a Red Indian tribe that lived in the North Eastern part of the American Continent and had a flourishing culture. Their religious traditions were very similar to the Buddhist religious days. The Chinese culture too followed the lunar calendar like the Buddhists and their days of prayer coincided with the Buddhist religious days.

Today’s workaholic corporate culture too advocates rest days to revitalise one’s energy. An automobile cannot take you to places without regular services and replenishing its energy sources. A worker, manager or an executive in the corporate world cannot function without breaks for rest, reflection and re-charging.

“you designate a period every single week for some serious personal renewal. Time spent recharging your batteries is never a waste of time but a necessary aspect of any peak performance routine... Time spent in genuine recreation makes you a stronger, smarter and better leader” (from “Leadership Wisdom” by Robin Sharma). It is obvious that the psychologists as well as the corporate pundits believe there should be a time for rest, personal reflection, prayer, meditation and planning. A few hours spent in the Church, temple or the mosque or with nature or God is not a waste of time but a time for rejuvenation. It is time spent profitably for personal renewal, recharging and stress-free life.
Church in the Modern World

‘Pakistan’s Christians are Champions of Mercy’

With 450,000 Catholic faithful in the Catholic Archdiocese of Lahore, Pakistan is the largest. It is headed by a Franciscan Friar, Archbishop Franco Maria Ricci of Lahore. That city was the site of suicide bomber’s attack last Easter Sunday which killed 78 people and wounded more than 300 people - the majority of them Christians. The Archbishop recently spoke with international Catholic Charity Aid to the Church in Need.

What is the present situation in Lahore? It appears to be a little better. Security at sites of religious celebrations has been improved. People are cheerful and motivated. But at the same time people were a little frightened because, as happened last Easter we know that we could well be attacked during the Christmas season.

What is the importance of the Christians of Pakistan for the Church and for the rest of the world? We are a very tiny minority - just 2 percent out of 190 million people - yet our Church is very much alive. Most Christians are very poor, but we are very rich in faith. The faithful are really interested in the Word of God and there are very committed lay catechists, who are helping young people and married couples to live their faith with fervor. The Year of Mercy was a very special time. The Christians of Pakistan are champions of mercy. One day, after Holy Mass, a couple told me that my homily on mercy and pardon had helped them greatly; they had lost a son in the attack in the Gulsan Iqbal Park on Easter Sunday 2016 - but they had forgiven the suicide bomber.

What is your assessment of the year 2016? The terrorist attack was a tragedy, but the people are getting back on their feet. The Year of Mercy has been a great blessing for the whole Church and especially for the Church in Pakistan. We celebrated many encounters of dialogue between the religions. We give thanks to the Pope for this Year of Mercy and for the prayers and help of so many who have reminded us that we in Pakistan are not alone.

How are the relations with faiths? Interfaith dialogue is very important, especially with Islam. I am very proud of the good relations we have with the leaders of other religions. We celebrate each other’s major feasts. But in order for there to be genuine dialogue it is important that our young people are well instructed in the Word of God. It is also important that there is unity among Christians. It is important to teach the Bible to the young people - not so that they know it by heart, but that they put its teachings into practice through love of neighbour.

What are the principal needs of the Church in Pakistan? Education is very important to us. We especially want to make it possible for young Christians to go to college, which is difficult, because it is expensive and many of our families are very poor. We also need to rebuild and repair churches and mission stations. We need to renovate our seminary. We have many vocations!
Fever with rash

Fever with a rash is common and a worrying problem, especially to the parents when their child gets it. Among the lesser well-informed families and till recently, even among the educated, fever with a rash is equal to measles. At the moment among the educated, the city dwellers and the better informed persons, the question is – is this dengue?

Measles

This infection is hardly seen after effective vaccination programme, but sporadic cases may occur and even a mild epidemic was seen in the recent past. Measles is hardly seen after effective vaccination programme. It is still a problem in some parts of South East Asia and Africa. About five million deaths per year with children under 12 months been worst affected. It is spread by droplets from nose and mouth and the child is infective only from four days before to two days after the onset of the rash. Before the rash appears there is a severe cough, runny nose and purple red coloured inner eye lids.

The confirmatory diagnostic sign is the ‘Koplik spots’. They are greyish white patches like ‘coconut dust’ found on inner aspect of the mouth wall close to the second molar tooth. The rash appears on the fourth day of fever, starting in the face and spreading to the rest of the body. It fades in about a week but leaves behind a brownish stain. The most feared complication is infection of the brain in one in thousand to one in five thousand cases. The outlook in this is poor. Measles also worsens the nutritional status of the child, complicates with pneumonia and ear infection and can activate a latent TB focus. There is no specific treatment. The immunity is life long so that one cannot get measles twice.

Rubella (German measles)

It is a milder disease. Spread by droplets. It is a mild disease in children under five years. There is malaise and fever with mild redness of eyes, the glands behind the neck are enlarged. Within seven days the rash appears first in the forehead and spreading to the body. The rash is pinkish red with small patches. It lasts a few days. Serious complications are rare. The most serious complication is that it can affect the foetus if pregnant woman is infected. The woman is infective before the first day of fever as red patches to an observant person. In a matter of hours the red patches progress to characteristic vesicles like soap bubbles which break even on gentle touch. The rash is more evident in the trunk than in the limbs. It is a mild illness in children but more severe in adolescents, and can be debilitating in adults and life threatening in the elderly.

Complications include pneumonia which is life threatening in the elderly. Brain can get affected in one in thousand cases in the form of imbalance. Women in pregnancy are prone to severe infection and also the risk of foetus getting affected with structural damage to the foetus. If the pregnant mother gets chickenpox one week on either side of delivery the new born can get the infection which is life threatening. Breast feeding is not done till the mother is noninfectious.

Chicken Pox (Varicella)

Varicella zoster virus causes two distinct diseases, varicella (Chicken Pox) and herpes zoster (shingles). The primary infection is Chicken Pox. It usually occurs in childhood though any aged person can get infected. Chicken Pox rarely occurs twice in the same individual. Virus enters the body through nasal secretions. It can spread from fresh skin lesions by direct contact or airborne transmission. The period of infectivity is from three days before the onset of the rash until six days after the skin lesions are all at the crusting stage. Following recovery from chicken pox the virus may remain dormant in the spinal cord and nerve ganglia. Reactivation of infection then results in shingles.

14 to 21 days after exposure to the virus a brief prodromal illness of fever headache and malaise heralds the eruption of chicken pox. The rash can be seen on the first day of fever as red patches to an observant person. In a matter of hours the red patches progress to characteristic vesicles like soap bubbles which break even on gentle touch. The rash is more evident in the trunk than in the limbs. It is a mild illness in children but more severe in adolescents, and can be debilitating in adults and life threatening in the elderly.

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Shingles

This arises from the reactivation of the virus that was lying dormant in the nerve ganglia. It may occur at all ages but is most common in the elderly, producing skin lesions similar to chickenpox although classically they are on one side of the body restricted to the area supplied by a nerve. The onset of the rash is usually preceded by severe pain in the area of the skin supplied by the nerve indicating the nerve affected. Virus is disseminated from the fresh vesicles and may cause chickenpox in susceptible persons. The commonest complication of shingles is severe pain in the area supplied by the nerve.

There is an anti viral drug now available for the treatment of chickenpox and shingles.

Hand Foot and Mouth disease

It is caused by Cocksackie virus. There are tender blisters in the mouth and tongue, palps and soles associated with fever. Less often the buttocks and legs are affected by the rash.

Herpes virus infection

The infection produces painful blister in the lips and the mouth. Another variant of the virus can produce blisters in the genital orifice in females when baby during delivery can get affected and cause infection in the brain. In these instances the baby is delivered by Caesarean section.

Epstein Barr virus infection

This causes glandular fever. Produces red bleeding patches in the palate and a transient pinkish rash on the skin. Ingestion of the antibiotic amoxicillin typically precipitates a rash in this infection.

Kawasaki disease

This is a very serious illness affecting children aged 6 months to four years, where the heart can get seriously affected. The skin manifestations are red swollen palms and soles followed by peeling of the lips and the finger ends. Glands too are enlarged.

Dengue fever

The first day or two there will be pinkish discoloration of the palms and soles and the face more easily seen in fair persons. On the third day onwards bleeding red patches are seen especially those going into dengue hemorrhagic phase.

Chikungunya virus infection

Also spread by the same mosquito carrying the dengue virus. The pinkish rash appears on the first day it is an other break bone fever with severe bone and muscle pain, headache, sore throat, inability to face light are other features. One can end up with a chronic arthritis. Medications: Finally a very common cause of fever with a rash are - medications. Drugs taken for a fever or without a fever often produce a rash. Some of these rashes can have serious sequelae. Amongst the drugs are antibiotics, sulfur drugs oral contraceptives and for that matter most drugs can produce adverse effects manifested in the skin.

The final message is doing not take drugs unnecessarily and without guidance from a well informed doctor. Remember diseases are often caused by drugs and doctors. You can add diet and dirt to fill some of the balance causes of disease.

Josephian takes...

Master Vindula Perera was placed 2nd in the Island in the Commerce Stream. He was the Choir Leader as well as a Prefect of the College. He was also involved in many Curricular and Extra Curricular activities whilst doing his studies.

Out of 300 students who sat the examination 227 are eligible to apply for University admission. Thanks for this should also go the respective teachers.

The Golden Flame

A pastor at a parish in Cuba observed a man offer a large lighted candle at the altar in the church. The man was barefooted. The pastor immediately approached him and placed some money in his hand. “Jesus has accepted your candle,” he assured him, “and He is returning this money for you to buy shoes.”

The man whispered apologetically, “I cannot accept the money. Father, I have offered Jesus not the candle but its tiny golden tongue - the flickering flame. I want it to express all that is in my heart, for which I cannot find the appropriate words.”
“In Jesus’ Name, Our Salvation”

Rev. Fr. Daniel Icatlo

“In Jesus’ Name is our Salvation.” This phrase is taken from the baptismal formula. Recognizing Jesus’ name, the candidate proclaims the supreme authority of Jesus Christ, the one who has saved us and to whom we entrust our whole being and our whole life. It is a profession of faith. Knowing the name of someone creates the possibility of address or invitation. In the Bible, when someone said, “Jesus,” it was a matter of recognizing Jesus as the one who saves us or who has the power to save us.

Jesus’ name is therefore something of great importance, something sacred. And if the Lord Jesus, with the Holy Spirit, came to us in Christ, it was precisely to bring us His name. In other words, God has chosen to enter our world in the person of Jesus, the Christ, because only in Jesus are we able to know what we are. Only in Jesus can we know the meaning of the word “I am” and the meaning of God’s name, “Je-sus,” pronounced “Iahweh.”

Jesus is the revelation of God, the revelation of the most perfect love. Jesus is love lived out to fullness, and in the person of Jesus, God reveals a new name: the holy name of Jesus.

Self-Maintenance or Self-Abandonment

The Magi represent a kind of self-maintenance. They are seeking something new, but they are not willing to give up the things they possess. They are not willing to make the necessary sacrifices to embrace the newness of Christ. On the other hand, the Magi who entered the stable and honored Jesus were willing to make sacrifices. They were open to something new.

The Passion of Jesus

The Passion of Jesus is the realization of the suffering of God. It is the manifestation of God’s love for humanity. Jesus’ suffering is the rejection of God’s love. It is the rejection of the love of the Father. Jesus’ suffering is the embodiment of the love of God for humanity.

The Resurrection of Jesus

The Resurrection of Jesus is the realization of the victory of God. It is the manifestation of God’s power. Jesus’ resurrection is the demonstration of God’s power. It is the demonstration of the power of God to overcome death.

The Ascension of Jesus

The Ascension of Jesus is the realization of the exaltation of God. It is the manifestation of God’s glory. Jesus’ ascension is the embodiment of the glory of God. It is the embodiment of the glory of God in the person of Jesus.

The Name of Jesus

The name of Jesus is the name of the Saviour. It is the name of the One who saves. The name of Jesus is the name of the One who has power over death.

The Name of Jesus is a name of love. It is a name that conveys the love of God. It is a name that conveys the love of Jesus. It is a name that conveys the love of God and Jesus. It is a name that conveys the love of God and Jesus to us.

The Name of Jesus is a name of power. It is a name that conveys the power of God. It is a name that conveys the power of Jesus. It is a name that conveys the power of God and Jesus. It is a name that conveys the power of God and Jesus to us.

The Name of Jesus is a name of victory. It is a name that conveys the victory of God. It is a name that conveys the victory of Jesus. It is a name that conveys the victory of God and Jesus. It is a name that conveys the victory of God and Jesus to us.

The Name of Jesus is a name of salvation. It is a name that conveys the salvation of God. It is a name that conveys the salvation of Jesus. It is a name that conveys the salvation of God and Jesus. It is a name that conveys the salvation of God and Jesus to us.
Evangelization of the Family: Bringing Sanctity to the Home

By: Rev. Fr. Leopold Ratnasekera O.M.I.

Pope Francis to parents: Teach the children the faith by example

T he family is the sanctuary of life and love as well as the school of charity, where one finds the wise use of freedom. It is also the primary setting for socialization, since it is where we first learn to relate to others, to listen and share, to be patient and understanding. The spiritual love that parents share with their spouses lays the foundations of the future family, which is the best and the most imposing witness to the mystery of life. Being the school of humanity it offers the best milieu and education for the parents to foster life and for the children to learn the first lessons of what it means to be human. Christian families will provide in particular, the unique opportunity for experiencing God and his love, when they live up to their vocation as believers and Disciples of Christ in this hallowed domestic setting.

Family prayer will sustain the Spiritual atmosphere

Their common and shared faith coupled with the life given to the participation in the holy sacraments of the Church and family prayer will contribute immensely in preserving and sustaining the spiritual atmosphere needed for a life of holiness to be led by all: husbands and wives reflecting the spousal love Christ has for the Church, shepherding the children together to help their parents becoming a sign of the hallowed fatherhood of God, who is the source of life and its final destiny. Thus a truly devoted and God-fearing family would already on this earth enjoy the fruitfulness of the heavenly basilica where God will be all in all. In short, the family’s living space would turn into what the Second Vatican Council calls the “Domestic Church”, the Church at home with meandering channels of grace, unity and peace that will characterize a holy and faith-filled family. Family life is thus a reflection of the Trinity of Love and unity, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the Trinity is the primary spiritual community and God’s family. Pope Francis says that “the “joy of love expressed by families is also the joy of the Church”.

The spirit of forgiveness and tolerance

These ideals can be achieved only if the Spirit acts as the soul that animates the hearts and minds of the spouses, parents and children. In the power of the Spirit they will harvest the spiritual Charisms, gifts and blessings that God showers over its members. The spirit of forgiveness and tolerance would come easily to such a family environment. Disciplines, rules and laws will ensure the harmony and peace within its ranks. Children will be counted as blessings from the God of love and their sincere, genuine love for one another would be the fruit of the love that they have for their Father. Those who will for them. It is a sad thing to see families gathered in prayer, together at table for their family meal and experiencing their spirit of unity and bonding together as one households. There will be the extension of the Eucharistic table that they frequent while attending Mass, thus putting into action the challenge of each Eucharist that sends them forth to live what they believe and celebrate. That is what the apostolic exhortation written by Pope Benedict XVI following the Synod on the Eucharist establishes on the nature and challenge of the Holy Mass we attend every Sunday as a parish community. For, the parish is in the ultimate analysis a community of communities: families that are its constituent parts and living cells. Families faithful to the Sunday Eucharist contribute immensely to make the Church in increasing the Mystical Body of Christ. It highlights how the saintly Pope Pius XII of revered memory visualized the Church, the community of believers viz: living cells that are part of the Mystical Body of Christ, taking the queue from the biblical teaching of St. Paul in his letters to the Ephesians and Colossians.

In an age of secularization where the spirit of materialism, individualism and hedonism reign supreme, the world needs the pervasive witness of good family life that incarnates itself in spouses, parents and children. Much of the traditionals and of understanding marriage and family that have been dear to us, are beginning to be on the wane. The secularizing trends keep sweeping over modern culture, robbing these values of their permanent and perennial value. In our day, it has taken two recent Bishop’s Synods to courageously confront the present-day serious problems and daunting challenges affecting the domestic front.

Increasing the family's capacity and temptation to divorce

The ever-increasing tendency and temptation to divorce, sometimes on flimsy grounds, the alarming ignorance of parents in planning their families in ways consonant with Christian discipline and the inability of some who fail in good parenting and care for their children are destructive factors that ruin the sanctity of marriage and deprecate the dignity of family life. They militate against the Church as Pope Francis proposes in order that families may maintain the atmosphere to ensure the stability needed for true joy, solace and comfort that is the dream of all households. The role of the young mother is often being affected by reason of employment to manage the financial demands of life. When infants and growing children need the presence, warmth, affection and guidance of their parents, it is found either impracticable or impossible due to external constraints that take them away from home and the domestic atmosphere. Nurseries and child-care centers, however competent and efficient they are, they cannot ever fully replace the love and care that children experience from their tiny-tots and growing children in terms of love, real parental care and solicitude.

The pressures that are brought to bear on the young to rob them of the courage and hope they need to enter valiantly into marriage. During this Christmas-week audience, Pope Francis congratulated a group of newly-weds who came desiring his blessing, for their courage in their decision to be spouses. “Is it not the case that love is a gift and that it is a eucharistic gift? And the faith is light: in the way that the Church shows in the sacrament of marriage, the two become one body, the Church teaches, but it is not always possible that the two will be one in practice. In this regard, Pope Francis says, “You get the light of Christ, you get the word, you get the gift of life’ he said Jan. 8, “But faith is also to trust God, and God is love. You will teach them, with your example, with your life.”

Pope St. John Paul II started the custom for the Pope to baptize babies in the chapel of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which was starting in the Basilica at the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. The Baptism of the Lord is typically celebrated by the Church on the Sunday following Jan. 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, unless in a particular country the Epiphany is celebrated on Jan. 7 or 8, as it is in the US. In that instance the Baptism of the Lord is then celebrated the following Monday. In his homily Pope said faith “must be lived,” a journey that must be walked and which must give “witness.” And the faith is light: in the baptismal ceremony you will be given a light that will shine in the world as it is in the US. In that reason the Feast of Baptism, in those days, was called ‘illumina- tion,’ because faith illu- minates the heart, makes things seen with a different light,” he said. During the liturgy, in which the Pope baptized 165 boys and 13 girls, some of the infants started to cry. Francis then commended the “conversus” which was starting in the chapel, saying that he likes to think that Jesus’ first sermon was to cry while in the stable in Bethlehem. He also assured mothers not to worry about nursing their children if they needed to be baptized. “It does not hurt so ‘without fear, with total normality’ just as Mary was nurse to Jesus.”

In asking for Baptism, “you asked for the faith,”

January 15, 2017

Mesenger

(Contd on Pg. 10)
Happy Feast Day St. Joseph Vaz

Christopher Vaz, the father of St. Joseph Vaz had a prophetic dream on the birth of his third child. He saw a star rising in the sky during noon time. Thereafter on the baptism of the infant, Christopher Vaz wrote about the happy events in his home and concluded in his diary: "One day he will become a great man." It is said that, he was tall thin and good looking and his skin was of chocolate colour. He was the brightest and the holiest in the family of six siblings and was affectionately called by his mother as 'My Little Saint'. He was a model student. St. Joseph Vaz later was known as the 'Star of Goa' and the Friday boy since he was born and christened and died on a Friday. Portrait at right by Mr. Tony Hopman.
“Child Migrants, the Vulnerable and the Voiceless”

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me” ( Mk 9:37; cf. Mt 18:5; Lk 9:48; Jn 13:20). With these words, the Evangelists remind the Christian community of Jesus’ teaching, which has a timeless and challenging meaning. This phrase traces the true path which leads to God; it begins with the smallest and, through the grace of our Saviour, it grows into the practice of welcoming others. To be welcoming is a necessary condition for making this journey a concrete reality: God made himself one of us. In Jesus God became a child, and the openness of faith to God, which nourishes hope, is expressed in loving proximity to the smallest and weakest. Charity, faith and hope are all actively present in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, as we have rediscovered during the recent Extraordinary Jubilee.

But the Evangelists reflect also on the responsibility of one who works against mercy: “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin: it is better for him to have a great millstone fastened to his neck and be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Mt 18:6; cf. Mk 9:42; Lk 17:2). How can we ignore this severe warning when we see the exploitation carried out by unscrupulous people? Such exploitation harms young girls and boys who are led into prostitution or into the mire of pornography; who are enslaved as child labourers or soldiers; who are caught up in drug trafficking and other forms of criminality; who are forced to flee from conflict and persecution, risking isolation and abandonment.

For this reason, on the occasion of the annual World Day of Migrants and Refugees, I feel compelled to draw attention to the reality of child migration, especially the ones who are alone. In doing so I ask everyone to take care of the young, who in a threefold way are defenceless: they are children, they are foreigners, and they have no means to protect themselves. I ask everyone to help those who, for various reasons, are forced to live far from their homeland and are separated from their families.

Migration today is not a phenomenon limited to some areas of the planet. It affects all continents and is growing into a tragic situation of global proportions. Not only does this concern those looking for dignified work or better living conditions, but also men and women, the elderly and children, who are forced to leave their homes in the hope of finding safety, peace and security. Children are the first among those to pay the heavy toll of emigration, almost always caused by violence, poverty, environmental conditions, as well as the negative aspects of globalization. The unrestrained competition for quick and easy profit brings with it the cultivation of perverse scourges such as child trafficking, the exploitation and abuse of minors and generally depriving of the rights intrinsic to childhood.

We are sojourners, a migrant people. Our destiny is not here. The world is only a passage. Abraham was taken out of his roots and was asked to move to place ‘where God would show’. People of Israel were on a forty year long journey to the Promised Land. The incarnation manifests even God as a migrant. The Holy Family of Nazareth had to migrate for safety of the child Jesus.

To be welcoming is a necessary condition for making this journey a concrete reality: God made himself one of us. In Jesus God became a child and openness of faith to God which nourishes hope is expressed in loving proximity to the smallest and weakest. Charity, faith and hope are all actively present in the spiritual and temporal works of mercy as we have experienced in the recently concluded Jubilee Year of Mercy. All of us are strangers to the world in a deeper sense. We find our existence here on earth possible thanks to the love of God who created us; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me. With these words, the Evangelists remind the Christian community of Jesus’ teaching, which both inspires and is expressed in loving proximity to the smallest and weakest. The incarnation manifests even God as a migrant. The Holy Family of Nazareth had to migrate for safety of the child Jesus.

To be welcoming is a necessary condition for making this journey a concrete reality: God made himself one of us. In Jesus God became a child and openness of faith to God which nourishes hope is expressed in loving proximity to the smallest and weakest. Charity, faith and hope are all actively present in the spiritual and temporal works of mercy as we have experienced in the recently concluded Jubilee Year of Mercy. All of us are strangers to the world in a deeper sense. We find our existence here on earth possible thanks to the love of God who created us; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me. With these words, the Evangelists remind the Christian community of Jesus’ teaching, which both inspires and is expressed in loving proximity to the smallest and weakest. The incarnation manifests even God as a migrant. The Holy Family of Nazareth had to migrate for safety of the child Jesus.

We pray that political and civil authorities give a prayerful thought to find together new pastoral strategies to help migrant people both abroad and here, and also in the school, where children can be brought the families together and to strengthen their communion networks capable of assuring timely and exchanging information they reinforce fraternal bonds and the education of host countries, together with the pressure created by social media are some of the factors today that make migrants vulnerable and voiceless.

It is the duty of every Christian to welcome life and realize the dignity of each human person. Every possible measure should be employed to guarantee the protection and safety of migrants and refugees in a special way the children. Government and the non-governmental organizations already commit to protect migrants need accolades and I wish, while exchanging information they reinforce fraternal communion networks capable of assuring timely and specific intervention. As a local church we have to give a prayerful thought to find together new pastoral strategies to help migrant people both abroad and here to bring the families together and to strengthen their bonds and the education of their children.

We pray that political and civil authorities would ensure safety and better and equal opportunities to all, given their status. Let us sojourn with sojourners literally and metaphorically knowing all of us are a pilgrim people journeying towards the heavenly Jerusalem and entrust all migrants, the families and their children to the protection of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Chairman, Catholic National Commission for Migrants, Health, Tourism & Prisons
The Faith, began under a ‘Palu Tree’ in Mahagalamuwa
How the inhabitants of Mahagalamuwa identify themselves with their ancestors in preserving their Catholic faith

By M. Noelita Bastiyanpillai

The present inhabitants of Mahagalamuwa, bear the surname ‘Rajawanni Una-lage’. Tradition says that this name was given to them by a king of Kandy of that period, because their ancestors protected some Sinhala Catholics, who came to the Vanni, during the time of religious persecution.

They, Mahagalamuawans, claim that they are the descendants who distinctly indentify themselves, with their ancestors, who lived at Joseph Vaz Pura (then just a jungle) during the untried and dedicated religious services of Father Joseph Vaz, during the Dutch period in Ceylon.

They still do practice or carry on some of the religious practices they learned from their ancestors.

Who are these ancestors?

According to tradition, they are Ayodhians from India, who migrated to South India and later to Sri Lanka. They have been converted to Roman Catholicism by Saint Francis Xavier in India.

This community of Ayodhians came to Sri Lanka and tried to settle down at Keerimalai in Jaffna. Keerimalai, being a sacred place for Hindus, they were chased away from there. They then settled in Batticaloa. However, after sometime they left Batticaloa and settled in Kallipitiya in Puttalam, which was a port, used for business. In the year 1667, after the capture of Kallipitiya by the Dutch they made their way to Kandy, after hearing that the King of Kandy, RajaSinghe II gave freedom to Catholics.

On their way, divine providence led them to Galgamuwa. Here they found a paradise with a glimmering water tank close by, to supply water for cultivation. What more did they want? They put up their homes here and gathered under the massive ‘Palu Tree’, for community prayer services. At present, this quiet peaceful block of land, has become a holy spot dedicated to Saint Joseph Vaz which is now known as “Joseph Vaz Pura”.

‘Sammanasu Swami’ - the Angel Priest

In the year 1647, Fr. Joseph Vaz fulfilled his dream of coming to Sri Lanka. He offloaded in Mannar. In the disguise of a beggar facing illness and hunger, he and his companion walked barefoot to Jaffna, found a home in Sillaiila. Living in hiding, going about seeking Catholics, in disguise, working in secret, and begging for food, was his untried mission. Under the Dutch Government, Catholic persecution in Jaffna, began in the year 1609. The Catholics of Sillaiila, helped Fr. Joseph Vaz and his companion John, to escape to the Vanni area. Father Vaz travelled to Kallipitiya, Puttalam and found about a thousand Catholics who were looked after by Jesuit priests. Here in Kallipitiya, Fr. Vaz met a tradesman who invited him to Kandy.

It was on his Vanni missionary work up and down Puttalam and Kandy, that Fr. Joseph Vaz welcomed by Ayodhian settlers in Galgamuwa forest. He attended to their spiritual need, offered Holy Mass and administered the Sacraments. To them Fr. Vaz was a messenger of God. They called him ‘Sammanasu Swami’ meaning an Angelic Priest.

Palu Tree and Miracle

Today the cross is enshrined in a cement case with a glass front and preserved under the Palu Tree. The Tree and soil at the root are protected by a parapet wall going around and the branches are balanced by pillars. The soil is considered sacred and believed to have curative power. Pilgrims use it as protection for their vegetation and believe it to give a plentiful harvest.

Recently our church Annavi was bitten by a cobra. We all know how poisonous it can be. Yet, the only medicine used was the sacred soil and the water from the church well. The soil was soaked in water and rubbed down the body of the patient. The same was given to the patient to drink as a medicine. All this was done with deep faith and prayer, repeating the ‘Creed’ and the ‘Lord’s Prayer’. By His grace the life of the Annavi was saved.

St. Anthony and St. Sebastian

The story goes that there was an infectious disease that took away the lives of many children in the village. So the elders decided to recite the Holy Rosary in the church and take the statues of Our Lady, St. Anthony and St. Sebastian around the village with the usual prayer and hymns recited. After the procession when the statues were put back, the sword of St. Sebastian was found missing. That night, an elderly person of the village told a dream that the sword was pinned on to the Mathurai Tree. On hearing people rushed there and were amazed to find the sword as was told. The sword was brought back and pinned on St. Sebastian. This was said to show that the village will have no more illnesses and death – a sign of faith of our ancestors.

Some forgotten practices done in faith by this race of people in Galgamuwa

Procession to the Cemetery: It seems that on Easter Monday, the Catholics of Galgamuwa, carried the statue of the resurrected Christ, to the cemetery and conducted a prayer service to the Risen Lord. They would then burn candles and place flowers, over the graves of their loved ones. This custom depicts the strength of faith they had on the resurrection of Christ. It is said that this is a forgotten practice now.

Punishment for unmarried mothers: Unmarried girls who bear children were punished. On a Sunday during Holy Mass, they were asked to kneel down in the centre of the church, with a burning candle in their hand. This was done, whether the priest was there or not. As on days when there was no priest for Mass, the Annoi conducted Sunday Prayer Service and the congregation was present. Imagine what the present generation will feel, if they are made to go through such punishment in public.

Forgotten Wedding Ceremony: At weddings, the groom wore the Verti, Salva and Thalapa. A canopy was held over the couple’s head and a floor carpet spread along the way. Milk was given at the gate of the house. These are now all forgotten practices.

Community practices that take place now

Almsgiving: After every Easter, the Parish gives an almsgiving in the church garden with contributions like cash, rice, coconut and vegetables coming from the community. In those days wild boar was a favourite item. This was before the guns were confiscated by the government.

Almsgiving after harvest: The Galgamuwa tank supplies water for cultivation, both in the Perum Pokam and Siru Pokam seasons i.e. Yala and Maha. In the month of October, an almsgiving takes place as a mark of thanksgiving to Our Lady for the love, care and protection. Milk rice served to all who come. In the month of November, an almsgiving takes place in every house, in remembrance of our dear departed souls.

The writer collected these facts about traditional religious functions that took place in our village from those in the village. Definitely, these practices take root from our ancestors and now carried down from generation to generation.

Mahagalamuwa is the only Catholic Tamil village of about 150 families in the district of Kurunegala. We live in peace and harmony, with our Sinhala Buddhist neighbours.

(Contd from Pg. 7)

Pope Francis ...

Pope Francis reminded the parents. “The Church gives the faith to your children through Baptism, and you have the task to make it grow, preserve it, and it becomes a testimony to all the others. This is the meaning of this ceremony.”

Concluding, he noted how the task for parents of growing and guarding the faith in their children is a ‘testimony for all of us: even for us clergy, priests, bishops, everyone.’
Jesus Teaches Us
How to Pray

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites! They love to stand up and pray in the houses of worship and on the street corners, so that everyone will see them. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. But when you pray, go to your room, close the door; and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you.” Matthew 6:5-8, 14-15

The Merciful Young Man

One day a beggar was walking on the road. He was begging. Suddenly a dog came up and bit him. The beggar fell on the road in pain.

Many people saw him fall on the road but no one helped him. A young man saw him. He knelt before him, helped him up, and said, “We too must be merciful and help people in need.”

St. Hillary of Poitiers

Feast day: January 13

God’s Eyewitness News

“I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.” John 1:14 (NJV)

Find and circle the words boxed below.

Jesus of Nazareth, Son of the living God, Lord of the glory, the King of the Jews.

1. Luke
2. True. The disciple cut off his ear. (Mt 26:51)
3. True. (Mk 15:27)
4. Latin, Greek and Aramaic.
5. They wanted the notice to say, “This man claimed to be the King of the Jews”.

Questions

Kids Ask

A new addition to our page based on the above will be published weekly beginning today. Please make sure to get your copy of the “Messenger.”

Q: If God gives us everything we ask for. How is it that we don’t have everything?

A: God does not give us everything we ask for. He gives us everything we need, when we need it. Sometimes we want things that could hurt us, such as when a baby wants to play with fire. God knows what can hurt us, so he does not give us those things because He loves us, God only gives what is good for us.
SECRET THOUGHTS

During the centuries the Church has always highlighted the importance of venerating Mary because of her unique role in salvation history.

JOHN WAS a neighbour of mine, a cultural Catholic who rarely darkened the door of our parish church. Had he ever done so, he joked, he might be zapped by a thunderbolt from heaven. By his own admission, John had lived the life of the wild rover. Yet he was devoted to his family and his voluntary work with young people kept many of them off the streets. On this manner dissolved any disagreement I might have with John on matters of doctrine and faith.

It was a cancer diagnosis that had brought John to his knees. Initially, he responded well to chemotherapy and found hope from the sacraments of healing that I was privileged to minister. A miracle seemed sure to be on the cards. Months later, however, the cancer returned with a vengeance. “What will I do now?” he asked. I had no reply except that he continue to put his trust in God and his medical team. A few weeks later, John called from his sickbed to say that he had found a new source of strength, by simply praying with an image of Our Lady of Fatima. Before his family and friends, John continued to fight the good fight. Privately, he told me that this new devo- tion was helping to ease his fears. John died peacefully a few days later, and I was called to his deathbed. His family had gathered round and I led the Rosary.

One year has begun, the society remains the same. It is a concept. People have considered as good as evil, as holy and money as spirituality, human values are being diminished. Selfishness is more prominent. There are so many people like Judas who are betraying the prayer traditionally used in the centuries at the significant Marian shrines including Guadalupe (1531), Lourdes (1858), Knock (1879) and Fatima (1917). In all these places, the revelations were directed to the poorest and most vulnerable members of society.

Common thread
Mercy is a common thread running through the references to Mary in the Gospels. The Magnificat, Mary’s song of praise at the opening of Luke, is a manifesto of divine compassion for the lowly and the dispossessed (1:46–56). It is notable that the first visitors to the Madonna and Child were shepherds, one of the lowliest classes in first century Israel (Luke 2:8–17). Her role as a source of encouragement for those on the margins has continued through the centuries at the significant Marian shrines including Guadalupe, Lourdes, Knock and Fatima. In all these places, the revelations were directed to the poorest and most vulnerable members of society.

At the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Simeon praised God that a sword would pierce her soul, “so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare” (Luke 2:35). Simeon’s prophecy was fulfilled when Mary stood by her Son as he was dying (John 19:25–27). That worst nightmare of any mother, earned her the ability to empathise with the most painful ‘secret thoughts’ of suffering people everywhere.

The one we pray for receives God’s grace and our very prayers for others are answered with its devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. Before his family and friends, John continued to fight the good fight. Privately, he told me that this new devotion was helping to ease his fears. John died peacefully a few days later, and I was called to his deathbed. His family had gathered round and I led the Rosary.

New Year, new hopes and new dreams

Another new year has begun. Basically, people wish each other for the New Year and all expect nothing. This year, however, people are saying that they will change their lives when the New Year begins. A new year is like a new book which has 365 pages. So it would be better if we start writing well from the beginning of the year. Are we ready for the New Year?

Even though a new year has begun, the society remains the same. It is a concept. People have considered bad as good, evil as holy and money as spirituality, human values are being diminished. Selfishness is more prominent. There are so many people like Judas who are betraying and killing people just for the money. There are so many people like Herod who kill innocent infants through abortion in many parts of the world. There are so many people like Herodias who wants power and money. There are so many people like Pilate who do not know what the truth is. There are so many people like Zaccchaeus who act violently always. If the society is like this, how can we think about new hopes and new dreams? But thinking about all expectations, we should try our best to change this society. Our hope and dream should be ‘Changing the society’. Changing the society is not an easy task. But that does not mean that we should shut our mouth and wait until someone

Dr. Claudio Umesh does it. We should unite and do everything together. We cannot change the society alone but we can do it with everybody. Everybody should unite together. We should inculcate good values in the hearts of children and adults as well, because the secular world has a big influence on people. Therefore let us ask the guidance of our Heavenly Father so that we all will be able to do something for the good of our society. As we celebrate the New Year, let us start to change this society from the beginning of the year. That should be our hope and dream.

May the Glorious Blessings of our Heavenly Father, Eternal Love of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you all always throughout this new year. Wish you all a blessed New Year.

To seek God’s blessings, first, we need to be a blessing to others. To help others we need resources, the resources we need is a heart of char- ity and love. Rest will follow.

When we pray for others, our prayers reach heaven and works in two ways. The one we pray for receives God’s grace and our very prayers for others fall afresh on us as blessings. Faith is power. When we are empowered by faith everywhere around us becomes strongholds of spirituality.

Sunset is a reminder that it is not the end of light but the promise of a new light and a new beginning. Hope is the Blessed Assurance that God is only a prayer away. You can get angry with God. But don’t let God get angry with you. That will be lawful.

Don’t expect God to wave the magic wand. He has placed it in our hands.

Dawn is a reminder that it is not the end of darkness but the promise of a new dawn and a new beginning.

Dr. Claudio Umesh

New Year, new hopes and new dreams

In the century prior to the Second Vatican Council, the Church had highlighted the importance of venerating Mary because of her unique role in salvation history. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception (1854), affirmed that Mary was preserved from Original Sin. The dogma of the Assumption (1950), teaches that, at the mo- ment of her death, Mary’s body did not share our mortal fate. These definitions of long-standing traditions had the effect of putting Mary on a pedestal of honor that seemed to set her apart from the rest of humanity.

The Council, by contrast, focussed Mary’s role with in the Church as a model for all the followers of Jesus. This is consistent with the portrayal of Mary in the Gospels among the disciples (Mark 3:31; Acts 1:14). In the Magnificat, Mary calls attention to God, not her - self, for the ‘mirvuls’ that God has worked (Luke 1:49).

(Courtesy: Messenger of St. Anthony)

LIGHT FOR LIFE

To seek God’s blessings, first, we need to be a blessing to others.

To help others we need resources, the resources we need is a heart of charity and love. Rest will follow.

When we pray for others, our prayers reach heaven and works in two ways. The one we pray for receives God’s grace and our very prayers for others fall afresh on us as blessings.

Faith is power. When we are empowered by faith everywhere around us becomes strongholds of spirituality.

Sunset is a reminder that it is not the end of light but the promise of a new light and a new beginning.

Hope is the Blessed Assurance that God is only a prayer away.

You can get angry with God. But don’t let God get angry with you. That will be lawful.

Don’t expect God to wave the magic wand. He has placed it in our hands.

What comes out depends on how we waive it.

Don’t cry for things that you don’t have. It will only blur your vision on the countless blessings you already have.

Happiness does not depend on what we have. It depends on what we have freely and generously given.

The road to success is directed by the milestones of positive thoughts.

When we labour for God, His remuneration is His Grace.

The treasures of power and ability are hidden within us. It is up to us to unearth it.

What a treasure that is when we find it.

Be creative. Create happiness in and around you.

The purity of heart is the beacon light that draws the peace of heaven to the depths of our soul.

By Arundhati Gunawardena
Teaching is a Vocation: It is far more than a Job

By Shantha Dias Gunaratne

Tuition has become a fashion, an honour and a menace. Tuition masters are the heroes and heroines of children. Our nation and parents allocate a lot of their resources for children and for their schools and again parents are burdened with heavy expenses on tuitions. Many children today do not have time to play or engage in arts, cultural and religious activities. Many children have become sick and are just living machines. The education has become a competition – a technique to out beat a competitor or another child and not to help building a holistic person. Most of them have knowledge but without values. You can have a glimpse of this if you observe carefully; the behaviour of most of the children today. Those who are in authority and the politicians have taken all these for a ride.

Jesus cannot be just ordinary people. It is because, they should be guided by the Holy Spirit. Hence, we should see and experience some differences in Christians lives. The majority of Christians are not different from others in their dispositions. This is the reality today. No difference can be seen in education in most of Christian and non-Christian schools today.

Christians are to imitate Jesus. Jesus lived an extra-ordinary life. Hence, Christians cannot have an ordinary life; their lives should be different. These differences should be there in the lives of priests and nuns who manage schools and Christian teachers who teach in schools too. Hence, Christian teachers are not just ordinary teachers. They have a responsibility same as any other teachers and are called for a special vocation. They are given a special task on top of their ordinary responsibilities. They are called to be another Jesus in the minds of children; an extra-ordinary task. That’s why we call them Christian teachers. I personally believe that if we do not guide our children properly it is an unforgivable sin because children belongs to God. We are just the custodians. They are members of the Church and are the future of the Church. If anyone does not help them to grow that means they do not help the Church to grow thus; destroying the future of the Church. Isn’t this an unforgivable sin?

How many teachers, can claim that their children do not require tuition?

The challenge of teachers today is to teach children in the school so that they do not need to go for tuition and class in groups. The teachers assumes a “No Tuition Required Teacher” (NTRT). The challenge of priests and nuns who manage schools is to make sure that teaching in the school is enough so that the school becomes “No Tuition Required School” (NTRS). This is the challenge of the Christian schools today and this is one of the main challenges of the Church too. Make yourself a NTRT and your school a NTRS and just imagine what a difference that makes.

Jesus - The disaffected

Unhappy
Tortured
Burdened
As authority
Left Betrayed
Jesus coped
Many consolled
Pacified

In affection
Leaves the Lord
Now contended
Many others
Emulate
As serenity
Leaves affected

Miran Perera

Follow the bells... if you're blind
Guide your friends... if you're kind

There were two beautiful horses in a field, by the wayside. They looked alike and their amicable manner of behaviour proved they were very good friends. From a distance, it was a pleasant scene for the passers-by.

But if somebody stopped to get a closer look he would notice something quite amazing... You know what?

One horse was blind!

His owner was so good he had made the other horse available for the blind horse throughout the day to keep company.

Also he had made a good home for him.

There was a bell hung around the neck of the horse with eyesight.

From the sound of that bell, the blind horse knew where his friend was.

The blind horse listened to the bell and followed him. He knew that he was safe when his friend was close by.

The horse with the bell was always checking on the blind horse, and at nightfall they slowly walked back to the shelter of the barn. On their way home the horse with a bell stopped occasionally and turned around to check whether his companion was safely following him. The blind horse followed him trusting that he will not be led astray by his friend.

What a friendship!

Don’t you think that we too play the roles of these two horses interchangeably? We may not be available round the clock for our friends. But of course we certainly can be helpful and caring enough to find out how they are, console them when they are sad and be of some help when they are in need.

We can advise them, and be a guiding light in their dark hours of despair and of course when they are faced with temptations. Bad friends can lead the others to sin and misery, but good friends will warn you, advice you and even force you to avoid wrong and sinful actions. That’s what friends are for.

On the other hand, when we fall into problematic situations or temptations, we must be humble enough to listen to the ‘bells’ of our good friends. A friend could be a priest, a parent, a relation, your classmate, a religious, an elderly person, a teacher or any person who sincerely wishes to help you to avoid evil and do well in life.

Like the owner of these two horses, God does not abandon us just because we are not perfect or because we have problems or challenges. He watches over us and even brings others into our lives to help us.

Sometimes like the blind horse we have to be guided by those whom God has placed in our lives.

Other times we have to be the guiding horse, helping others to find their way.

We may not always see our friends, but we know they are always there.

So be a good friend to anyone, because everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.

Your ‘bell’ might save them from hell, and lead them to safety.

Michael Angelo Fernando
**First Reading.** Is. 49:3. 5-6. 

Through prophet Isaiah God promises the Israelites that He would free them from exile; freedom not only from the bondage of Babylon but also the messianic freedom; viz, freedom from the sin of idolatry.

**Second Reading.** 1 Cor 1: 1-3.

St. Paul greets the Corinthian Church in a glorified spirit and urges them to turn away from all their sinful activities.

**Gospel.** Jn. 1: 29-34.

John the Baptist proclaims, that Jesus is the Messiah. He has seen the sign that was promised, namely the descent of the Spirit on Jesus as a dove to show that He is truly the Messiah.

**Reflection.**

Today’s readings show the importance of listening to God’s message spoken through His messengers. At one time these messengers were prophets. At the time of Christ it was John the Baptist, after Christ, it is His Apostles, today the Bishops and priests or even Christ like messengers. God’s message is spoken to us in messianic terms. And its purpose is to sanctify and enlighten all nations. We could also see the messianic promises and their fulfillment in the birth of Jesus Christ; thus bringing to light that Jesus is the Messiah, the one about whom all prophets spoke as Saviour and the one about whom all people were awaiting.

The first reading relates to the Babylonian Exile. The people were in a desperate situation and the prophetic message gives them hope. And this hope is about their freedom. But the prophet does not stop at the promise of freedom from their exile but goes on to speak about the Messiah, as the light of the nations.

This promise of the Messiah gives them hope and encouragement for the future. It is the post Christian era. It also gives the purpose for the coming of the Messiah. It is the mission bestowed upon the Baptist and wishes to convert them. Hence he is the one who lives a faithful life in Jesus Christ our Lord. The letter is addressed to the church at Corinth, in which at that time; abuse and sin abounded, therefore it is addressed to them and that they may turn away from their sinfulness; and fall into the category of saints, the sanctified. Therefore the messianic message for us is that we turn away from our sinful deeds and sanctify ourselves for the greater glory of God.

In the Gospel John the Baptist proclaims that Jesus is the one that they were waiting for and that He is the Messiah, the Son of God. This was in fulfillment of all the promises that were made through the prophets. And those were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

**Aid Story.**

A priest noticed a bunch of mischievous youngsters around a mongrel. “What are you doing, my beloved children?” asked with fatherly concern. “Exchanging lies,” said one of the boys. “The church tower tells the biggest lie gets the dog.” “My God!” exclaimed the minister. “Why when I was of your age I never thought of uttering a lie.” “You win,” shouted theurchins in one voice. “The dog is yours, Minister.”

**By Rev. Fr. Don Anton Samanetti Heritachchi**

1. Last Sunday we were in Bethlehem with Jesus, the Wisdom Incarnate, when He manifested to the wisdom from the East, across the Jordan. This Sunday we are once again, comes to be manifested by John the Baptist in Bethany, across the Jordan.

2. We see how John the Baptist, “sent from God” (1,6), reveals Jesus to the Jews by word and deed. He baptizes people “that he might be made known to Israel” (He). Then, openly testifies to Jesus as “the Lamb of God” and “the Son of God” – the titles, predicated of Jesus in the Early Church. When Jerusalem interrogated him “Who are you?” (1,27), he did not claim himself to be the Messiah and the Israelites, in utter humility, the Messiah, “Behold…” He, furthermore, identifies Jesus as the permanent Bearer of the Holy Spirit. “I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain (meno’ in Greek Text to mean ‘to remain, stay, abide, dwell’) upon him.”

3. From this Gospel scene, we now move on to the Early Christianity. The non-Christian followers of John the Baptist try to exalt him at the expense of Jesus. They do not want to object to the Baptist, but come to follow him (As recorded in 1,22-26). The sacred writer of the Fourth Gospel opposes these aggrandizements of the Baptist and wishes to convert them. Hence he shows from the very words and deeds of John the Baptist that Jesus is the only Messiah. He shows the stark difference between Jesus and the Baptist and the subordinate role of the latter: “He was not the light, but came to testify to the light” (1,8); “The one who is subordinate role of the latter: “He was not the light, but came to testify to the light” (1,8); “The one who is subordinate role of the latter: “He was not the light, but came to testify to the light” (1,8); “The one who is subordinate role of the latter: “He was not the light, but came to testify to the light” (1,8).

4. Thus we see how John the Baptist and the writer of the Fourth Gospel testify to the same truth concerning Messiah. Jesus is the Lamb of God. He is the suffering servant of the Lord, whom He formed as His servant from the womb in order to save both Israel and nations (Isaiah 49), and who is led like a lamb to the slaughter as a sin offering, to give His life as an offering for the sin of his people (Isaiah 53). In the Aramaic of the day, ‘taltah’ meant ‘lamb’ and ‘servant.’ Hence Jesus is both Lamb and Servant of God, the precise model of the Suffering Servant of God, depicted in the Oracles of Isaiah. He is also the pre-existent Son of God and permanent Bearer of the Holy Spirit. This truth is told at a time, when some thought the Baptist to be the Messiah.

5. The history has suffered much from false messianic claims and Jesus claimants, who are numerous. They have been claimed, either by themselves or by their followers, in some way to be the reincarnation of Jesus or the Second Coming of Christ.

6. All these messianic or Jesus pretenders who made themselves to be the worshipers of Jesus, who were accused personally from ‘messiah complex’ (also known as ‘Christ complex’ or ‘savior complex’). It is a state of mind in which an individual holds a belief that he or she is, or is destined to become a savior. The symptoms of this mental disorder closely resemble those found in individuals suffering from ‘grandiose delusions of grandeur’, those who wrongly hold themselves at an extraordinarily high status in their mind. This form of delusional belief is most often seen in patients suffering from bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

7. The writer of the Fourth Gospel used his pen in order to perpetuate the truth concerning Jesus. Preachers preached this truth. Martyrs gave their life to this truth. Today we need to propagate this truth by word and deed, as John the Baptist once did.

**ATTENTION TO CERTAIN LITURGICAL ABBERRATIONS**

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL), at its plenary session, held on the 16th and 17th of November 2016, instructed me to bring the following matters to the kind notice of those who are responsible for the preparation of the liturgical celebrations in their respective parishes or institutions.

1. In keeping with the General Instructions of the Roman Missal, it is liturgically more correct that the introduction to the Holy Mass, if given by a lay person, should be done before the celebrant begins the Holy Mass with the sign of the Cross. It is done by the celebrant himself (or a concelebrant,) it should be done after the initial greeting and before the penitential act. (GIRM No. 31) Moreover, the introduction should be short and should introduce the faithful to the celebration of the day. (GIRM No. 50) It should not sound like another homily. The homily has its own place after the reading of the Gospel.

2. The prayers of the faithful should be brief; they should be devotionally chanted or recited with the response in such a way that each intercession is clearly understood by the faithful. They should never be sung in a poetico-cated form as being done in certain places.

3. There should be no repetition of the same intercessions in the prayer of the faithful, especially at bi-lingual or trilingual celebrations. It is recommended that they are limited to five intercessions in the order, proposed in the General Instructions of the Roman Missal. (GIRM No.70)

4. The CBCSL prohibits the use of drone cameras at the liturgical celebrations, especially at the wedding ceremonies, as they can distract the participants and disturb the celebration. The Parish Priests are kindly advised to inform the faithful about it.

5. The Church announcements, on Sundays and Feast Days, should be brief and should be made after the post communion prayer; (that is, after the closure of the communion rite).

6. The responsorial psalm, sung or recited, after the 1’st reading, should not exceed a composition of a private individual.

7. The responsorial psalm, sung or recited, after the 1’st reading of the Mass, is an integral part of the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word. (GIRM No.61) Therefore, it should be a psalm or a canticle from the Bible, and should not be a composition of a private individual.
1. On this Solemnity of St. Joseph Vaz, Apostle of Sri Lanka, we listen to the last portion of the Longer Ending of Mark. This Longer Ending is a canonical part of the Gospel according to the Codex Sinaiticus. It is a compendium or a resume of the Resurrection Appearances narrated in the other canonical Gospels. Its vocabulary and style indicates that it was written by someone other than Mark during the Apostolic Times.

2. In the story, the disciples are commissioned as ‘Apostles’ – as those who are sent by the Lord. Those, who have just been upbraided for their lack of faith and hardness of heart, are now entrusted with preaching the Gospel. Is it not startling? It is both startling and encouraging.

3. The disciples are instructed to proclaim the Gospel to all – Jews and Gentiles alike, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.” They are to evangelize all; the gospel is for all. The Gospel of Jesus knows no geographical boundaries. It knows no social taboos and no colour or creed. It is rather the patrimony of all humanity.

It was this universalistic thinking that guided St. Joseph Vaz always. He wanted to serve the Gospel so definitely that he became a diocesan priest in 1676. Without being confined to the geographical entity of Goa, he wanted to serve the Sri Lankan Church on the verge of sinking. Hence he became a missionary of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. Having reached our shores as a co-sole in 1687, he walked far and wide in the Island spreading the true Gospel of Jesus, once preached by the Lord. It was and remains a task of immense period and most difficult. It was, after all, tarnished and tormented by Calvinism in the Dutch period.

It was on the feast day of St. Matthew, 21st September 1687, that Fr. Devagio realized his vocation to be a priest. At the age of 21, he entered the diocesan Inmaculada Concepcion seminary in Villa Devoto. But he had had a dream to be a missionary to Japan! Hence he persevered and after a year, having been attracted by their missionary spirit. He wanted to be a missionary priest – like the Jesuit St. Francis Xavier, the patron of missionaries. Hence the story of St. Joseph Vaz has not ended!

4. Do the disciples obey the Risen Lord? Yes, they do: “But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.” Further the Lord, ascended and enthroned “at the right hand of God”, does not abandon His disciples. He continues to work. He renews them and gives them courage. He cooperates with their endeavours. He confirms the Message of His disciples and puts it more forcefully into effect through signs. The signs also show that His power and life are now given into the hands of the disciples. Hence this power manifests wider as they are now going into “the whole world” and “to every creature.”

St. Joseph Vaz too preached the Gospel. He did it at a time when Calcutta had taken deep roots in the hearts of the people. It was also a time when Calvinism had been flooded into the hearts of the Catholics, evangelized once-upon-a-time by the Portuguese missionaries. Hence the Lord confirmed the Message of the Gospel Fr. Vaz preached through accompanying signs.

When Fr. Vaz landed in Jaffna, he was much exhausted and fell sick. But God looked after him through the faithful, unwavering Catholic priest. Hence Fr. Vaz was arrested at Weuda as a Portuguese spy and subsequently imprisoned in Kandy. But God moved the heart of the Kandy Kingdom and thus, Fr. Vaz was free to serve in Kandy. He secretly served the faithful living under the Dutch as well. The colonial masters tried their best to get hold of Fr. Vaz, this illegal trespasser. But God, the Lord of history, secured him. During the small flask epidemic in Kandy, he took the risk of contagion and served the sick when everyone else left the city. God, the Lord of nature, opened the sky for him in time of adversity to help him overcome the severe drought. This was how the Lord confirmed the Gospel which our Saint prayed in adverse times.

5. What was the end-result of the missionary tours of St. Joseph Vaz? When the people of Judah were in Babylonian captivity, the Lord sent Second Isaiah. Through His Prophet, He breathed hope to the desperate hearts and promised that “a new heart and a new spirit will be given to them.” Under the guidance of St. Joseph Vaz, in the whole of Sri Lanka, the people who have been left in this state of desolation are being restored to the land of their origin and to the freedom of faith. Freedom was restored.

6. In this Year of St. Joseph Vaz, designated by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference in Sri Lanka from the 16th of January, 2017 to the 16th of January, 2018 let us renew our commitment to serve this Pope of the poor and the sick, this pope, who is our pope and our Lord.

Contd. from Pg. 9

Message of His Holiness... How should we respond to this reality? We are aware that the phenomenon of migration is not unrelated to salvation history, but rather a part of that history. One of God’s-commandments is that you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Deut 10:19). This phenomenon constitutes a sign of the times, that access to authentic development can be guaranteed not only through material and moral psychological agression, which almost always lead inelible scars.

It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to deal with the needs of migrants and refugees, the needs of their parents, the good of the whole international community to eliminate the causes that drive people to leave their countries. Furthermore, far-sighted perspectives are called for, capable of offering adequate programmes for areas struck by the worst injustices, in order that access to authentic development can be guaran-

teed for all. This development should promote the good of all peoples, who are part of the same human family.

Lastly, I wish to address a word to you, who walk alongside migrant children and young people: they need your precious help. The Church too needs you and supports you in the generous service you offer. Do not tire of courageously living the Gospel, which calls you to recognize and welcome the Lord Jesus among the smallest and most vulnerable.

I entrust all child migrants, their families, their communities, and you who are close to them, to the protection of the Holy Family of Nazareth, may they watch over and accompany each one on their journey. With my prayers, I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing.

Rev. Fr. Don Antonio Sanniti Hettiarachchi

From the Vatican, 8 September 2016

FRANCIS

Liturgical Calendar Year A

15th Jan. - 22nd Jan. 2017

Sun: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Is. 49:3-5, 6; 1 Cor. 1:1-3; Jas. 1:24-31
Mon: Feast of St. Joseph Vaz
Is. 52:7-10; Acts 20:17-18,28-32
Tue: Memorial of St. Anthony, Abbott
Heb. 11:1-10
Wed: Heb. 7:1-3,15-17; Mk. 3:1-6
Thu: Heb. 7:25-8:6; Mk. 3:7-12
Fri: Memorial of St. Fabian, Pope & Martyr
Heb. 8-13; Mk. 3:13-19
Sat: Memorial of St. Agnes, Virgin & Martyr
Heb. 9:2-3, 11-12
Sun: Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Is. 8:23b-9:1; 1 Cor. 1:10-13,17; Mt. 4:12-23 or (12-17)

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15-20)
Notice: of Action for an Order of Court to Remove Remains in the graves and their monuments in a stretch of Land in General Cemetery, Borella Kanatte.

Application under Cemeteries and Burial Grounds Ordinance (Cap. 231 of the Legislative Enactments of Ceylon).

In the matter of an application under Section 14 of the Cemeteries and Burial Grounds Ordinance (Cap. 231 of the Legislative Enactments of Ceylon)

Case No. DCE 0001/16

Petitioner

Colombo Municipal Council

Municipal Commissioner

V.K.A.Anura

Case No. DCE 0001/16

Cemeteries and Burial Grounds Ordinance (Cap. 231 of the

In the matter of an application under Section 14 of the Cemeteries and Burial Grounds Ordinance. The said remains and their monuments after removal by the Petitioner, will be deposited in some other place in the General Cemetery Kanatta itself.

Any Person interested in this is hereby required to appear before this Court (No.09) on 30th, 01 day of January 2017 at 9.00 Clock in the forenoon and show cause, if any, why the Application of the Petitioner should not be allowed.

On this 27 day of December, 2016

In the District Court of Colombo

First Schedule - List of granted Burials

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Second Schedule

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Third Schedule

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Joseph Vaz: A mission of a suffering servant of the Suffering Lord

By Roggy Corera
National Joseph Vaz Secretariat

L
ike many Saints in the Catholic Church, life was never a bed of roses for St. Joseph Vaz. On the contrary, it certainly was a "Bed of Thorns." Right from the very beginning, suffering - both physical and mental - were part and parcel of his life. As a schoolboy, he had helped his mother with the daily household chores, once he was back from school. This he did while most of friends were at play and this would have had some effect on him, since a boy of that age is always prone to play.

Traumas

As he grew up, he requested permission from his parish priest to have the church doors open at sunset, so that he could go in and pray. This was politely refused, after which he was forced by circumstances to go to church, around midnight and pray from the steps leading to the closed doors of the church. Here too, he would have been mentally worried.

Once ordained as a priest, he sought permission from his superior to enter Ceylon. This too was turned down. His fellow priests in the Oratory in Goa had stated, that on many occasions while praying in the chapel late at night, they have heard him weeping and begging of the Lord to send him to Ceylon to minister to the persecuted Catholics in the Island. Later, while in Kannara (Mangalore) he was led up the Mudippu Hill to be killed. When he sensed death, he knelt on solid rock and pleaded with the Lord to spare his life, not for the love to himself, but for ministering to the persecuted Catholics in Ceylon. These incidents would have certainly enhanced his mental trauma.

From Kannara, he went further south to Cochin and stayed awhile with the Jesuit Fathers. While here, he was almost on the point of having disciplinary action taken against him by his Superiors in Goa, for some of his actions, which had been misunderstood. Fortunately for him, the Jesuit Fathers came to his rescue and reported to Goa that they had seen him in ecstasy on several occasions, while in deep prayer, after which no action was taken against him. Again, they reached Jaffna under cover of darkness. Thus, commenced his Ministry in the North. Very soon this reached the ears of the Dutch and as a result a handsome reward was on offer for his arrest.

In broad daylight he would parade the streets, always under disguise since none could spot him. On one occasion he pierced a cordon of Dutch soldiers who lay waiting for him under the guise of a fish monger. On another occasion, he carried a box of bread on his head, parading as a baker and beneath the loves of bread, carefully concealed, was the Bread of Life, which he would distribute to the faithful after nightfall, who would be waiting for him. We can just imagine the amount of tension and the agony he went through under such circumstances. All this culminated in the Christmas night assault on the faithful gathered at a house in Sillalai by marauding Dutch soldiers. However, in the commotion that followed Fr. Vaz disappeared from human sight as the Lord led him to safety southwards, into the Vanni jungles (early 1690).

A journey on foot (barefooted) through the Vanni jungles was sometime unheard of. He may have gone without food and water for days, until perhaps by Divine Providence, he was led to Madhu, where existed a Catholic population without a priest. Fatigue would have certainly overtaken him on reaching Madhu. Here then, were the foundations established for the future "Sammanasie Swamy."

Arrest

Subsequently, he was arrested at the We-ula checkpoint suspected of being a Portuguese spy. It is recorded that Kandy welcomed him with a garland of chains, since he was dragged to the Royal Palace in chains as though he was a criminal and imprisoned at Bogambara for two years. This would certainly have added fuel to his already tortured mind. Once, released from prison, he traversed the length and breadth of the Island, foregoing meals at stipulated times and also foregoing sleep at nights.

He barely slept for two hours at night and that too on a mat on the floor. During the small pox epidemic in Kandy in 1696, he tended to the abandoned victims in the Udawatkekelle (forest). He would carry the corpses of these victims on his shoulders and bury them in graves he himself had dug with the help of a couple of gallant volunteers. Subsequently, while in Puttalam, he received the sad news that his chapel in Kandy, built of straw, had been set on fire, this would have certainly cost him great pain of mind.

The suffering he underwent told on his health. As the years passed by, he grew weaker and weaker. In this backdrop he ventured out on a missionary errand to Kottiyar in January 1709, only to be carried back to Kandy shortly afterwards. Approaching Kandy, he fell from the Palanquin and injured his right ear which caused him untold pain and suffering for two long years which ultimately, brought about his death in January 1711.

In his last letter written to his spiritual father he had this to say. My head is weak owing to the pains and heaviness on the right side, where I had or still have the wound in the ear."

All in all, his was a "Mission of suffering" - a suffering he emulated from His Lord and Master whom Isaiah prophesied as the "Suffering Servant."