

09th Friday - Bishop : His Lordship Most Rev. Dr.Kingsley Swampillai

- 02nd Friday - Rev. Fr. S. Mariathan (Seeman)
Rev. Fr. Antonipillai Thevivasantharasa OMI
- 03rd Saturday - Rev. Fr. Siluvairasa Arul Sutharson OMI
- 06th Tuesday - Rev. Fr. M. Ladislaus
- 11th Sunday - Rev. Fr. V. Emil Elilraj
- 17th Saturday - Rev. Fr. S. Nevins Yogaraj Peries
- 18th Sunday - Rev. Fr. Mariathas Selvaratnam OMI
- 19th Monday - Rev. Fr. L. Surenthiran Ravel
- 23rd Friday - Rev. Fr. Jeyanthan OMI
- 30th Friday - Rev. Fr. M. Soosaipillai
- 31st Saturday - Rev. Fr. Thevasahayam Jesupalan OMI

Happy Birthday



13th Wednesday - BISHOP: HIS LORDSHIP MOST REV. DR. RAYAPPU JOSEPH (Priestly 1967)

- 17th Sunday - Late Rev. Fr. N. Packiaranjith
- 18th Monday - Rev. Fr. Harshana Hemanth SDB
- 19th Tuesday - Rev. Fr. Paul Kachipilly SDB
- 20th Wednesday - Rev. Fr. Xavier Croos Anthony
- 21st Thursday - Rev. Fr. Mariathas Selvaratnam OMI
- 27th Wednesday - Rev. Fr. Pushparayer Daniel SDB
- 30th Saturday - Rev. Fr. Pitchai Joseph Victor SJ
Rev. Fr. Christopher Godwin CR

O R D I N A T I O N A R Y



Happy Feast Day

- 03rd Sunday - Rev. Fr. Xavier Croos Anthony
Rev. Fr. Reginold Francis Xavier
Rev. Fr. Francis M' De Gaulle
- 08th Friday - Rev. Fr. Pangras Alan Nirmalathas. CR
- 25th Monday - Rev. Fr. Thevasahayam Jesupalan OMI
- 26th Monday - Rev. Fr. Stephan Rajah Sebamalai



Fountain of Grace : Contd..from Page 05.

The creator said, "All right." and he gave her back. But three days later, the man came back again and said, "Lord, I don't know-I just can't explain it, but after all my experiences with this creature, I've come to the conclusion that she causes me more trouble than pleasure. I pray thee, take her back again! I can't live with her!"

The creator replied, "You can't live without her either!" And he turned his back to the man and continued his work. The man the man said in desperation, "what shall I do? I can't live with her and I can't live without her!"

Walter Trobisch

Happiness and saints

A little boy was shown through many churches by his mother and told that all the figures in the stained glass windows were saints. When someone asked him what a saint was he said in his childish simplicity, "A saint is something the light shines through." And how true that is: saints are brightening, warming, cheering beautifying everything they touch.

Bruno Hagspiel



Sharing

Diocese of Mannar - Bishop's House Pattim, Mannar, Sri Lanka. Tel: +94 23 2222 710, Fax: +94 23 2222 709, E-mail: sharingmannar@gmail.com.

Heavenly Father, May our Christmas season be A time of reconciliation and peace, May the love of Christ be with us Ma His Peace surround us. May our Christmas be a time Of healing, giving and sharing May Your spirit be with us As we share and care in Jesus' blessed birth, Amen!

December, 2017



Our churches should be for service, not supermarkets
Holy Father Says

Pope Francis , suggested watchfulness, service and gratuitousness as three attitudes that can help us keep clean the temple of the Holy Spirit. He made the exhortation in his homily at the morning Mass in the chapel of the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta residence.

The Pope was reflecting on the first reading from the Book of the Maccabees where Judas and his brothers were re-consecrating the temple desecrated by the pagans, and the Gospel reading where Jesus was driving out merchants from the temple, that was transformed into a den of thieves.

More on Pg.. 07



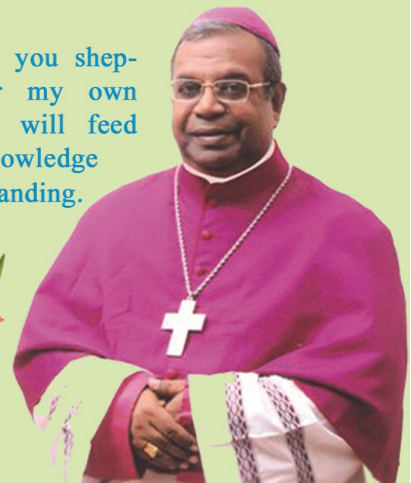
Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee !

May the Glory of Jesus lighten up your life and you feel the love and compassion of God, on this special day of your Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee! Be Happy and stay blessed

Happy Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee

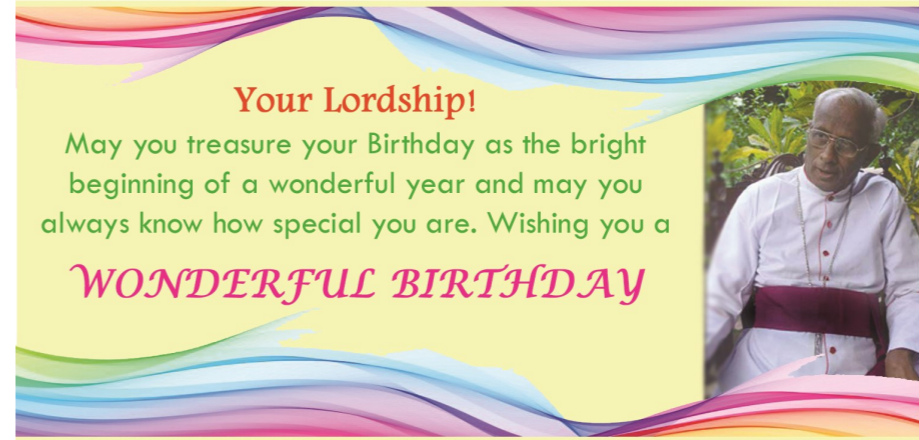
Congratulations!

I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. Jer.3:15



I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD. Jer.23:4

Your beloved Lordship we congratulate you with whole heartedly. We hope and pray that our Lord Jesus makes you source and strength of our Diocese.



Your Lordship!

May you treasure your Birthday as the bright beginning of a wonderful year and may you always know how special you are. Wishing you a

WONDERFUL BIRTHDAY



Latest Medjugorje Message, December 2, 2017 - Apparitions to Mirjana

"Dear children, I turn to you as your mother, the mother of the just, the mother of those who love and suffer, the mother of those who are holy. My children, you too can be holy - this depends on you. Those who are holy are those who immeasurably love the Heavenly Father, those who love Him above all. Therefore, my children, always strive to be better. If you strive to be good you can be holy even though you may not think so of yourselves. If you think that you are good, you are not humble, and arrogance distances you from holiness. In this peaceless world full of threats, your hands, apostles of my love, should be extended in prayer and mercy.



More on Pg.. 07



Our Shepherd Shares

Message of the Bishop – for December 2017



Dear Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

Let us rejoice over the newly appointed Most Rev. Dr. Fidelis Lionel Emmanuel Fernando, who has been an answer to our prayers. We shall cry out as they do in Rome, “Habemus Episcopumi”!

We thank him for having accepted this pastoral load and pray that he may guide and direct the flock to greener pastures.

Welcome your Excellency to this Diocese of Mannar which is soaked with the blood of martyrs and glittering with the shrine of Our Lady of Madhu.

There will be a fitting reception to His Excellency Bishop Emmanuel on the 30th of December, by the Clergy, Religious and lay faithful of the Diocese of Mannar who have been praying earnestly for a permanent Shepherd for them. Let us thank God and the Holy Father Pope Francis who have paid heed to their prayers. Let me conclude with the thought of St. Paul to the Romans: “The church” attracts” when it lives in communion since the disciples of Jesus will be recognized if they love one another as He loved them (Rom. 12/4-13).

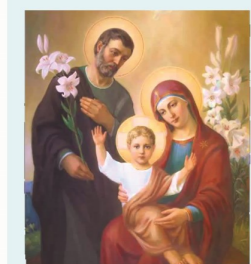
I must appreciate the unity and understanding shown by the clergy and the lay faithful at the annual Diocesan Pastoral Council held on 17th and 18th of November 2017. I am glad that the next year will be an year of the Laity, recalling the attention and their need of service in the missions as understood and practiced by St. Joseph Vaz and in particular considering the thrust given by the Vatican Council towards the Lay Faithful of Christ, “Christi Fideles Laici”

It is time for me to say good bye to the people (the Priests, Religious and the laity) of Mannar. You have shown me your love and care whenever and wherever I met you. I do carry fond memories of your ardent faith in the Lord and your strong devotion to Our Lady of Madhu. May the good Lord bless you and your families with His Grace and Compassion and Mary our Mother intercede for you.

Yours sincerely



Most. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Swampillai,
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Mannar



Feast of the Holy Family on 31st of December

We wish them God's blessing and thank them for their ministry in our Diocese.

*The blessing of the Lord makes rich,
and he adds no sorrow with it.*

Prov. 10:22



Contd..from Page 01.

Temple of God – our heart

The Pope pointed out that the most important temple of God is our heart, where the Holy Spirit dwells.

The Holy Father asked whether we keep watch over this interior temple, and are careful about what happens in the heart, who comes in and who goes out, the feelings, the ideas... “Do we talk to the Holy Spirit and listen to Him?” the Pope asked and urged all to keep watch over what happens within.

The Pope then explained how this temple can be safeguarded and cared for through service. The Pope urged Christians to examine their conscience, whether they come forward to help, to clothe and console those in need. In this regard, he recalled St. John Chrysostom reprimanding those who were making many offerings to decorate the church but were not caring for the needy saying, “This is not good. First service, then decoration.” “Purifying the temple means caring for others, the Pope said, adding, “ when we come forward to serve, to help, we resemble Jesus who is inside us.”

The Pope then spoke about how gratuitousness, the third attitude, helps in keeping the temple clean. He wondered, “How many times we sadly enter a temple – a parish, a bishop’s house and so on, not knowing whether we are in the house of God or in a supermarket.” “There we have business, including the price list for the sacraments – nothing is free!” But the Pope argued that God saved us freely, without making us pay.

God's providence

In this regard, he asked whether money is needed to maintain building, priests and so on... And the Pope answered, “You give freely and God will do the rest.” “God will provide what is lacking,” the Pope said wishing our churches be “churches of service, free churches.”

Some Advent wreath traditions also include a fifth white “Christ” candle, symbolizing purity, that is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas day. Many circular wreaths can incorporate a white candle by adding a pillar candle to the wreath centre.

COLOR: Violet is a liturgical colour that is used to signify a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice and is used during Advent and Lent. Advent, also called “little Lent,” is the season where we spiritually wait in our “darkness” with hopeful expectation for our promised redemption, just as the whole world did before Christ’s birth, and just as the whole world does now as we eagerly await his promised return.

Traditionally, each of the four Advent candles have a deeper meaning

- **The 1st Sunday** of Advent symbolizes Hope with the “Prophet’s Candle” reminding us that Jesus is coming.

All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever.
AMEN.

- **The 2nd Sunday** of Advent symbolizes Faith with the “Bethlehem Candle” reminding us of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem.

God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
AMEN.

- **The 3rd Sunday** of Advent symbolizes Joy with the “Shepherd’s Candle” reminding us of the Joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus.

Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
AMEN.

- **The 4th Sunday** of Advent symbolizes Peace with the “Angel’s Candle” reminding us of the message of the angels: “Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men.”

Father, all-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
AMEN.

Bishop Emma! A Simple and Humble Shepherd as I see him

- by Fr. Thamil Nesan

It was in the year 1990! Exactly 27 years ago I met Fr. Emmanuel Fernando who was popularly known as 'Fr. Emma' in the National Seminary, Ampitiya, Kandy. I was all alone sent to National Seminary from Mannar diocese by then Bishop of Mannar His Lordship Thomas Saundranayagam, to pursue my philosophy in January 1990.

Why was he sent alone to the National Seminary is a reasonable question any one will ask. It was in a painful and dreadful situation I had to go to the National seminary.

When I was doing my Pre – Philosophy in 1989 at St. Francis Xavier's Major Seminary, Colombuthurai, Jaffna I was arrested and severely tortured by the Indian Army who was then known as IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Forces). With me a few more students from my class were arrested and later released. I was the main suspect according to the IPKF and they used water torture and electric shock to get the truth thinking I was one of the LTTE supporters. I was made naked and tied with a tree through out a night in the camp. It was one of the dark periods in the history of St. Francis Xavier's Major Seminary! After the terrible five days of custody I was released with shaved head with some conditions.

During this fearful events my Bishop with all the other Bishops was in Rome for their 'Ad Limina' visit. After arriving from Rome Bishop Tom heard my terrible story and kept me in the diocese for some months then he decided to send me to the National Seminary.

It was in this sad, terrified background as a thin, fearful young seminarian I stepped into the National Seminary in 1990. As I went there first I was taken to the Rector, Fr. Joe De Mel, a tall - fat gentleman Priest, who speaks Australian English. As he welcomed me he told me with the smile, "Don't worry, there is no IPKF in Kandy". Then I was taken to another important person in the seminary. He is none other than Fr. Emmanuel Fernando, the Vice Rector. As Bishop Tom told him what had happened to me, he didn't inquire me anything but told me tenderly, "Nesan, no need to worry about anything. I am here to look after you". As he told in the beginning he was very keen in looking after me in every need during my two years of philosophy in the National seminary. He made sure that I was happy there. No wonder he took extra care in my case as I was the most affected seminarian both physically and mentally due to the severe torture. If I begin to narrate each and every incidents how he helped me, this article will become a book.

When I have been in charge of various commissions in the diocese, he was also a President and Vice Presidents for various National commissions. So I have had chances of meeting him in Colombo very often. When I had opportunity to chat with him he will inquire about the plight of the war affected people. He was very concerned about the suffering people.

Six months back I had a chance of traveling with him from Colombo to Rathnepura in his car for an 'Inter Religious' meeting. While going and returning we had lengthy chat. I had lots of questions to ask him concerning the church, Arch diocese etc. Of course with much patients he was answering me tirelessly.

Very recently we had a long conversation of the health condition of Bishop Emeritus His Lordship Rayappu Joseph, as well as about the appointment of a new Bishop for Mannar diocese not knowing the will of God that he himself would be appointed as a new Bishop of Mannar!

Let us welcome Bishop Emma among our midst as a God given gift to our diocese. He is well known for his simplicity and humility. He is very approachable and an attentive listener. Coming from a very strong Catholic family he is very faithful to our mother the Church. As Mannar diocese is a new mission field for him, let's extend our fullest support and co operations to him in all his endeavors in our beloved diocese. May the eternal shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, guide him in his new mission and vision..

When I left the seminary after my Philosophy in 1992 Fr. Emma became the Rector of the National Seminary.

Our Rector Fr. Joe De Mel was a kind Priest but brothers were very scared of him. Yet we were very free with Fr. Emma as he was very kind, approachable, and helpful. Though he was a kind hearted person, with regard to discipline he was very strict. Being a Vice Rector he was expected to see the time table was being kept carefully. He would be always in move in the Seminary. So we didn't know when, where and how Fr. Emma would appear! Being a short man he will be seen anywhere at anytime to catch the brothers who violate the rules and regulations. So we were keen to make sure where is Fr. Emma and tried to dodge him.

Once we are caught there is no other way but to apologize. If we so we're sure definitely we will be pardoned without any grudges or revenge...!

When I was to be ordained as a priest I had to sent a letter of thanks to him along with the invitation Card. He replied me with the beautiful letter of encouragement for my priestly life.

After I became a Priest I was constantly in touch with him. In the year 2011 when the great news came through media that he was appointed as one of the Auxiliary Bishops of Colombo, I called and wished him over the phone. Then he said jokingly, "For many years it has been told that I am going to be a Bishop, but now only it has become a reality".

The History of Christmas Trees



The evergreen fir tree has traditionally been used to celebrate winter festivals (pagan and Christian) for thousands of years. Pagans used branches of it to decorate their homes during the winter solstice, as it made them think of the spring to come. The Romans used Fir Trees to decorate their temples at the festival of Saturnalia. Christians use it as a sign of everlasting life with God.

Nobody is really sure when Fir trees were first used as Christmas trees. It probably began about 1000 years ago in Northern Europe. Many early Christmas Trees seem to have been hung upside down from the ceiling using chains (hung from chandeliers/lighting hooks).

Other early Christmas Trees, across many parts of northern Europe, were cherry or hawthorn plants (or a branch of the plant) that were put into pots and brought inside so they would hopefully flower at Christmas time. If you couldn't afford a real plant, people made pyramids of woods and they were decorated to look like a tree with paper, apples and candles. Sometimes they were carried around from house to house, rather than being displayed in a home.

It's possible that the wooden pyramid trees were meant to be like Paradise Trees. These were used in medieval German Mystery or Miracle Plays that were acted out in front of Churches on Christmas Eve. In early church calendars of saints, 24th December was Adam and Eve's day. The Paradise Tree represented the Garden of Eden. It was often paraded around the town before the play started, as a way of advertising the play. The plays told Bible stories to people who could not read.

The first documented use of a tree at Christmas and New Year celebrations is argued between the cities of Tallinn in Estonia and Riga in Latvia! Both claim that they had the first trees; Tallinn in 1441 and Riga in 1510. Both trees were put up by the 'Brotherhood of Blackheads' which was an association of local unmarried merchants, ship owners, and foreigners in Livonia (what is now Estonia and Latvia).

Little is known about either tree apart from that they were put in the town square, were dance around by the Brotherhood of Blackheads and were then set on fire. This is like the custom of the Yule Log. The word used for the 'tree' could also mean a mast or pole, tree might have been like a 'Paradise Tree' or a tree-shaped wooden candelabra rather than a 'real' tree.

In the town square of Riga, the capital of Latvia, there is a plaque which is engraved with "The First New Year's Tree in Riga in 1510", in eight languages. You can find out more about the Riga Tree from this website: www.firstchristmastree.com

A picture from Germany in 1521 which shows a tree being paraded through the streets with a man riding a horse behind it. The man is dressed a bishop, possibly representing St. Nicholas.

In 1584, the historian Balthasar Russow wrote about a tradition, in Riga, of a decorated fir tree in the market square where the young men "went with a flock of maidens and women, first sang and danced there and then set the tree aflame". There's a record of a small tree in Bremen, Germany from 1570. It is described as a tree decorated with "apples, nuts, dates, pretzels and paper flowers". It was displayed in a 'guild-house' (the meeting place for a society of business men in the city).

The first person to bring a Christmas Tree into a house, in the way we know it today, may have been the 16th century German preacher Martin Luther. A story is told that, one night before Christmas, he was walking through the forest and looked up to see the stars shining through the tree branches. It was so beautiful, that he went home and told his children that it reminded him of Jesus, who left the stars of heaven to come to earth at Christmas. Some people say this is the same tree as the 'Riga' tree, but it isn't! The Riga tree originally took place a few decades earlier.

The custom of having Christmas trees could well have travelled along the Baltic sea, from Latvia to Germany. In the 1400s and 1500s, the countries which are now Germany and Latvia were then part of two larger empires which were neighbors. Another story says that St. Boniface of Crediton (a village in Devon, UK) left England and travelled to Germany to preach to the pagan German tribes and convert them to Christianity. He is said to have come across a group of pagans about to sacrifice a young boy while worshipping an oak tree. In anger, and to stop the sacrifice, St. Boniface is said to have cut down the oak tree and, to his amazement, a young fir tree sprang up from the roots of the oak tree. St. Boniface took this as a sign of the Christian faith and his followers decorated the tree with candles so that St. Boniface could preach to the pagans at night. There is another legend, from Germany, about how the Christmas Tree came into being, it goes:

Once on a cold Christmas Eve night, a forester and his family were in their cottage gathered round the fire to keep warm. Suddenly there was a knock on the door. When the forester opened the door, he found a poor little boy standing on the door step, lost and alone. The forester welcomed him into his house and the family fed and washed him and put him to bed in the youngest sons own bed (he had to share with his brother that night!). The next morning, Christmas Morning, the family were woken up by a choir of angels, and the poor little boy had turned into Jesus, the Christ Child. The Christ Child went into the front garden of the cottage and broke a branch off a Fir tree and gave it to the family as a present to say thank you for looking after him. So ever since then, people have remembered that night by bringing a Christmas Tree into their homes!



In Germany, the first Christmas Trees were decorated with edible things, such as gingerbread and gold covered apples. Then glass makers made special small ornaments similar to some of the decorations used today. In 1605 an unknown German wrote: "At Christmas they set up fir trees in the parlours of Strasbourg and hang thereon roses cut out of many-colored paper, apples, wafers, gold foil, sweets, etc."

At first, a figure of the Baby Jesus was put on the top of the tree. Over time it changed to an angel/fairy that told the shepherds about Jesus, or a star like the Wise Men saw.

The first Christmas Trees came to Britain sometime in the 1830s. They became very popular in 1841, when Prince Albert (Queen Victoria's German husband) had a Christmas Tree set up in Windsor Castle. In 1848, drawing of "The Queen's Christmas tree at Windsor Castle" was published in the Illustrated London News. The drawing was republished in Godey's

Lady's Book, Philadelphia in December 1850 (but they removed the Queen's crown and Prince Albert's moustache to make it look 'American!').

The publication of the drawing helped Christmas Trees become popular in the UK and USA.

In Victorian times, the tree would have been decorated with candles to represent stars. In many parts of Europe, candles are still used to decorate Christmas trees.

Pope's message for 2018 World Day of Peace

Pope Francis' message for the celebration of the 2018 World Day of Peace was released on the 24th of November during a press conference at the Holy See Press Office.

The message entitled Migrants and Refugees: Men and Women in search of Peace is divided into six sections with the first offering heartfelt good wishes for peace and inviting people of good will to embrace those fleeing war, hunger and persecution.

Peace points

Contained in the 4th section of the message under the theme, "four mileposts for action", the Pope points out what is needed in order for migrants and refugees to find the peace they seek is a strategy combining four actions: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating.

Four mileposts for action

Offering asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and victims of human trafficking an opportunity to find the peace they seek requires a strategy combining four actions: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating.[12]

01. "Welcoming" calls for expanding legal pathways for entry and no longer pushing migrants and displaced people towards countries where they face persecution and violence. It also demands balancing our concerns about national security with concern for fundamental human rights. Scripture reminds us: "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." [13]

02. "Protecting" has to do with our duty to recognize and defend the inviolable dignity of those who flee real dangers in search of asylum and security, and to prevent their being exploited. I think in particular of women and children who find themselves in situations that expose them to risks and abuses that can even amount to enslavement. God does not discriminate: "The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the orphan and the widow." [14]



03. "Promoting" entails supporting the integral human development of migrants and refugees. Among many possible means of doing so, I would stress the importance of ensuring access to all levels of education for children and young people. This will enable them not only to cultivate and realize their potential, but also

better equip them to encounter others and to foster a spirit of dialogue rather than rejection or confrontation. The Bible teaches that God "loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt." [15]

04. "Integrating", lastly, means allowing refugees and migrants to participate fully in the life of the society that welcomes them, as part of a process of mutual enrichment and fruitful cooperation in service of the integral human development of the local community. Saint Paul expresses it in these words: "You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people." [16]



Latest Medjugorje Message, December 2, 2017 - Apparitions to Mirjana

Contd..from Page 01.

And to me, my children, give the gift of the rosary, the roses which I love so much. My roses are your prayers pronounced with the heart and not only recited with the lips. My roses are your acts of prayer, faith and love. When my Son was little, he said to me that my children would be numerous and that they would bring me many roses. I did not comprehend Him. Now I know that you are those children who are bringing me roses when, above all, you love my Son, when you pray with the heart, when you help the poorest.

Those are my roses. That is the faith which makes everything in life be done through love, not knowing arrogance, and always ready to forgive; never judging, always striving to understand one's brother. Therefore, apostles of my love, pray for those who do not know how to love, for those who do not love you, for those who have done evil to you, for those who have not come to know the love of my Son. My children, I ask this of you because, remember, to pray means to love and to forgive. Thank you. "

Bishop's Diary - for December

- December 04th : - Feast of St. Francis Xavier and Feast of Major Seminary Columbuturai, Jaffna.
: - Meeting of Council of Priests (Senate) at 9.30 am.
: - Exhuming of 15 graves of former Priests from the Cemetery to be buried in the new space granted for Priests and Religious. It is being done with the approval of the U.C. of Mannar and from the Court Order.
- December 05th : - Meeting of the Religious Sisters of Mary Immaculate, Pesalai at 9.00 am
- December 07th : - Oli Vizha at Sithi Vinayakar Hindu College at 9.30 am.
- December 08th – 10th : - Visit to Trincomalee
- December 13th : - Feast of St. Lucia at Pallimunai at 6.30 am
: - Valvuthayam meeting at 10.00 am
: - Golden Jubilee of Priesthood of His Lordship Bishop Emeritus Rayappu Joseph at 11.00 am
: - Reception Committee meeting after lunch. Thereafter meeting the G.A.
- December 15th : - Elders Day at 9.30 am
- December 16th : - Diocesan Christmas get-together.
: - National State Festival of Christmas from 2.30 - 5.30pm at Trincomalee.
- December 17th : - Youth Meeting and Christmas gathering at Manthai Church.
- December 20th : - Prize-giving of Joseph Vaz contest for year 9 – 12
- December 21st - 23rd : - To Colombo
- December 24th : - Christmas Midnight Mass at Cathedral, Mannar
- December 30th : - Installation ceremony of **Most Rev. Dr. Fidelis Lionel Emmanuel Fernando** as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Mannar.
: - Feast of the Holy Family.

Wish you all a very Happy Christmas as you start a new era in your Ministry. God Bless you all.

Fountain of Grace

Using a Nice Word

When I asked a friend the secret of his popularity, he attributed it to one particular word. "Years ago," he said, "upon hearing a statement with which I disagreed, I used to say 'nonsense', and people began to avoid me like a plague. Now I substitute 'amazing' for 'nonsense' and my phone keeps ringing and my list to friends continues to grow."

Capper's Weekly

Man and Woman

In India they tell this legend about the creation of man and woman. When he had finished creating man, the creator realised that he had used up all the concrete elements. There was nothing solid, nothing compact on hand, left over to create the woman.

After thinking for a long time, the creator took... the roundness of the moon, the flexibility of a clinging vine and the trembling of the grass, the slenderness of a reed, the blossoming of flowers, the lightness of leaves and the serenity of the rays of sunshine, the tears of the clouds and the instability of the wind, the fearfulness of a rabbit and the vanity of a peacock, the softness of a bird's breast and the hardness of a diamond, the sweetness of honey and the cruelty of a tiger the burning of fire and the coldness of snow, the talkativeness of a magpie and the singing of a nightingale, the falseness of a crane and the faithfulness of a mother lion.

Mixing all these non-solid elements together, the creator created woman and gave her to the man.

After one week, the man came back and said, "Lord the creature that you have given to me makes my life unhappy. She talks without ceasing and torments me intolerably, so that I have no rest. She insists that I pay attention to her all the time and so my hours are wasted. She cries about every little thing and leads an idle life. I have come to give her back to you, because I can't live with her."

The creator said, "All right." and he took her back. After a week had passed, the man came back to the creator and said, "Lord, my life is so empty since I gave that creature back to you. I always think of her- how she danced and sang, how she looked at me out of the corner of her eye, how she chatted with me and then snuggled close to me. She was so beautiful to look at and so soft to touch. I liked so much to hear her laugh. Please give her back to me."

[More on Pg.. 08](#)