

Coastal Delegates prepare for Lethem Assembly



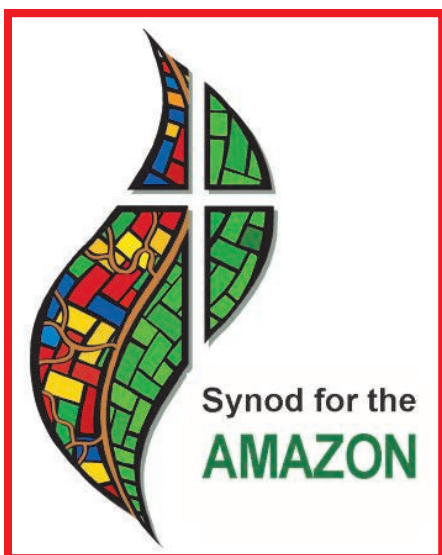
Participants of the Coastal Pre-Synodal Assembly listen to Major General (rtd.) Joe Singh (centre) as he gives his presentation, Saturday September 22nd, St. Paul's Pastoral Centre. (Photo: Catholic Media Initiatives)

Representatives from across the Coast of Guyana gathered at St. Paul's Pastoral Centre, Vryheid's Lust, E.C.D. last weekend (Saturday 22nd - Sunday 23rd September) for the Coastal Pre-Synodal Assembly, part of the third phase of preparations for the Synod on the Amazon.

One hundred and twenty-eight people participated, comprised of representatives from each of the ten Coastal Clusters (*Bartica, Berbice, Central Georgetown, East Bank, East Coast, Linden, New Amsterdam, North Georgetown, South Georgetown, West Bank*), members of the Clergy & Religious, and volunteers. The gathering was organised by the Pre-Synodal Assembly Co-ordinating Team and the Diocesan Stewardship Council, with volunteers from Policy Forum Guyana, Laudato Si Guyana and the Marian Academy assisting with the Assembly process.

In October 2017 Pope Francis announced the Synod on the Amazon, which will take place in October 2019. The Pope has asked that the Dioceses in the Amazon Region (of which Guyana

is part) participate as fully as possible. The theme of the Synod is: **Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology**. The Vatican have requested that 45 Pre-Synodal Assemblies be held across the nine countries of the Amazon Region. Guyana will hold one of these, which will be held in **St. Ignatius, Lethem on November 28th-29th**. The aim of this Pre-Synodal Assembly will be to bring together representatives from across the Diocese to reflect on the preparatory document for the



Synod and its questionnaire and submit an official response in the name of the Church in Guyana.

To give everyone in the Diocese the opportunity to be involved in the process, the **Pre-Synodal Assembly** in Lethem is preceded by three levels of gatherings (with representatives of each phase proceeding to the next phases): **Community** and **Cluster Gatherings** (which have already taken place) and several **Regional Gatherings** (of which the Coastal Pre-Synodal Assembly is one).

The Assembly began at 9:00am on Saturday September 22nd with the Morning Prayer, and the Synod Prayer, after which Bishop Francis Alleyne OSB gave an overview of the process of preparing for the Synod, which uses the "**See, Discern, Act**" method.

This was followed by the presentation '**The Multidimensional Interconnectedness of Amazonia: The example of Guyana**' by Major General (rtd.) Joe Singh, which was based on Pope Francis' encyclical **Laudato Si'** and the preparatory document for the Synod on the Amazon.

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Bishop's Engagements

Saturday September 29th

11:00hrs – Travel to St. Lucia to conduct Clergy Retreat

Monday October 1st to Friday October 5th
Clergy Retreat

Saturday October 6th
Return to Guyana

Sunday October 7th
Mass - Central Cluster



✠ Francis Alleyne OSB

CATHOLIC STANDARD

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The Rosary for peace of mind and heart

tempt the man. The senior devil rebukes him explaining that method has long been established. Let's try this method he explains, let's create so much noise that men and women can no longer hear the voice of God in their lives.

We will make the whole universe a noise in the end.

It seems that this story is prophetic. In this sophisticated modern world that is filled with so much noise can you hear the voice of God in your life?

It is time to withdraw from all the noise in your life and the world for

some moments of silence, which praying the rosary gives.

The Rosary has simple and soothing prayers, both mentally and spiritually.

By praying the rosary we can ponder many aspects of Jesus and his life in a relatively brief period of time.

With so many people's hearts and minds suffering with depression, despair and hopelessness, the rosary gives us the splendour of radiant hope.

Leon Jeetlall

EDITORIAL

Independence or interdependence?

In modern marriage, there seems to be so much emphasis on independence, and yet, the foundation of a Catholic marriage is interdependence, which in many ways, is a reflection of our dependence on God. This can be seen in the concept of mutuality, which in marriage and family therapy is defined as showing empathy, support and like-mindedness with our spouse. The concept of mutuality may be seen as the fulfillment of the concept of "shalom" in the Jewish tradition.

Shalom, for our Jewish brothers and sisters, is the incidence of placing the needs of others ahead of our own and providing peace, or a sense of well-being, for others. It is the belief that unless we provide a sense of peace for family, friends and acquaintances, we will not have it, either. It is only when we provide for the sustenance and security of another that we ourselves receive it in return. In other words, we will not experience shalom when we know our spouse does not have it, as well.

In this sense, modern marriage is much more concerned with interdependence than independence. As the Second Vatican Council document "Gaudium et Spes" contends, marriage partners are to "become conscious of their unity and experience it more and more deeply from day to day." In a modern, Christian marriage, spouses are to bring each other to holiness through the spirit of Christ. The purpose of one's entire married life is to bring glory to God through faith, hope and charity. If children are borne of that union, the spouses are to raise them to be the living presence of Christ in the world.

In our increasingly individualistic yet constantly overly-connected world, the idea of bringing family members to greater holiness through the sacrament of marriage seems often not only foreign to us, but also counter-cultural. America's first colonists were very individualistic. They were known as hearty, rugged people who could fend for themselves and persevere, no matter the trials they faced, all on their own accord. And yet, as the documents of the Second Vatican Council demonstrate, such independence and ruggedness are not the vision of marriage at all. Rather, it is an enterprise in which one spouse leans on the other for support and sustenance, providing for their well-being in return, which creates a relationship of interdependence.

Dear Editor,

Please allow me to begin my short letter with a story that is not biblical. There were two devils, a senior devil and a junior devil who were planning a procedure for wining a soul away from God for Satan.

The junior devil at one point is trying to think of all kinds of exotic ways to

Clapping during Mass

Dear Editor,

Last Sunday morning I went to the 7:30 am Mass at Brickdam where the children sang and one child sang the meditation hymn. To my astonishment, the congregation started clapping at the end of the song.

Now what is the meaning of meditation after Communion? It is a time for silent prayer through words or hymns or an inspirational song. It is not a concert.

I am surprised that the priest allowed this sort of thing to take place. I am quite sure if he reads this letter he would try to justify the act.

Welcome and farewell are done before and after the Mass even congratulations are done then, not at a time of meditation. Where is the reverence? Does it fly through the door? We have enough on our plates, let's not add more.

Parishioner

Indian bishop refused bail in nun rape case



NEW DELHI: An Indian bishop accused of raping a nun was refused bail Saturday, and ordered to remain in police custody to face questioning in a case that has triggered outrage among the clergy.

Bishop Franco Mulakkal was arrested in southern Kerala state on Friday after Pope Francis relieved him from duty over the scandal that has sparked days of angry protests by clergy over police inaction.

Mulakkal, who heads the Roman Catholic diocese of Jalandhar in the northern state of Punjab, is accused

of raping the nun 13 times between 2014 and 2016.

The nun first accused Mulakkal in June but police only started formal questioning this month as fury over the case mounted.

Police asked for more time on Saturday to question the 52-year-old, who has denied the accusations.

In its submission to the court in Kerala, police said Mulakkal had illegally confined the victim in a guesthouse and subjected her "to rape and unnatural sex 13 times in the same room," the Times of India newspaper reported.

Mulakkal has called the scandal a conspiracy by those opposed to the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholics Bishops' Conference of India has said Mulakkal's arrest was a "sad moment for all of us".

The bishop's case has occupied the pages of Indian newspapers for days. The episode came to the fore following a demonstration organized by five sisters of the religious who reported the rape. Now one of them, Sr. Lucy Kalappura of the diocese of Mananthavady, in the

district of Wayanad, complains that she has been removed from her duties, including teaching catechism to the children of the 10th class.

The sister claims that the hierarchies of the parish in which she works, St. Mary's Church, together with the mother superior of the congregation, have decided to suspend all her pastoral activities, including the distribution of the Eucharist, the teaching of the Bible and the participation in prayers.

According to Sr. Lucy, this is in retaliation for participating in protests against the bishop. The parish instead declares that the nun was removed following the complaints of the faithful, "who disapprove of her recent criticism of the Church on social media and have informed the parish priest, Fr. Stephen Kottakkal. The faithful also had problems with the way she teaches faith and is involved in baptism activities. Sister Lucy was only informed by her superior of the people's sentiment. No restrictions have been imposed on her, either as a Catholic or as a nun". ❖

In this, the concept of interdependence creates not neediness, but rather a durable, well-supported society in which all members learn to give and take, so that ideally, everyone is provided for. Such a vision creates a bond of connection and love that permeates not only the marriage relationship, but also the entire framework of the family, thereby strengthening the unity and security experienced by each individual. This, then, is the foundation of a strong and resilient society: marriage relationships marked by interdependence and mutuality.

Such interdependence is not without its difficulties, for couples must overcome the hurts and frustrations often created by years of misunderstanding and negativity. A sense of trust must be formed and supported through the risk of leaning on each other and finding the other trustworthy. As "Gaudium et Spes" reminds us, such an attempt to develop a relationship of trust can only be attained through "unflinching effort under the help of grace."

By *Kate Soucheray* ❖

Pope Francis urges reconciliation in message to Church in China

(CNA/EWTN News) Pope Francis sent a message Wednesday to encourage Chinese Catholics to work toward reconciliation and communion with one another following a deal between the Vatican and China on the appointment of bishops.

Francis said the message, published Sept. 26, is a few of his reflections on the just-signed agreement as well as "spiritual pastoral" input for the new phase about to be embarked upon.

Because for the Church, he wrote, the provisional agreement between the Holy See and China is as much about the "spiritual calling" of the Church in that country as it is about promoting respect for human values in and outside of China.

Now Chinese Catholics can begin the process of restoring full communion, healing the wounds of the past, and proclaiming the Gospel, he said.

The pope's message to Chinese Catholics came just a few days after the signing in Beijing of a provisional agreement between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China on how to appoint Catholic bishops.

The Sept. 22 announcement of the deal did not give details, but in a press conference on a flight to Rome Tuesday night, Francis said it provides for a

dialogue about eventual bishop candidates, though they will ultimately be appointed by him.

At the same time, the Holy See announced the pope's decision to recognize seven illicitly ordained Chinese bishops, who had been appointed by the government without papal mandate.

This means for the first time all the bishops of China are in communion with Rome, after years of division between the "underground" Catholic Church in China and the government-backed Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association.

In his letter, Francis emphasized that though the Church in the country had to go clandestine out of concern for preserving the Catholic community from the control of the State, this "is not a normal part of the life of the Church."

Recognizing that the deal had provoked different reactions and concern for the future of the Catholic communities in China, he said he is aware of the "flurry of thoughts and opinions" which may have caused "a certain confusion."

He noted that some Chinese Catholics may be feeling abandoned by the Holy See, questioning "the value of

their sufferings endured out of fidelity to the Successor of Peter," while others may have hopeful expectation for the outcomes of the agreement.

Pope Francis acknowledged that the provisional agreement has its limits but expressed hope in the fact that for the first time, "the stable elements of cooperation" are set up so that the State authorities and Church authorities can provide good shepherds for the Catholic community.

The agreement is just an instrument, not a solution to all of the existing problems, he said, and "it will prove ineffective and unproductive, unless it is accompanied by a deep commitment to renewing personal attitudes and ecclesial forms of conduct."

No Christian can be excluded from the task of offering gestures of reconciliation and communion and of working to build a society which respects the dignity of every person, he said.

He asked the leaders of the People's Republic of China to continue to dialogue with trust, courage, and foresightedness, so that China and the Apostolic See "will be able to act more positively for the orderly and harmonious growth of the Catholic community in China." ❖

Upcoming Events

Saturday September 29th

St Pius X Fair

All are invited to the St. Pius X Annual Parish Fair on Saturday, September 29th from 2-7pm on the Parish Grounds, West La Penitence.

Come and enjoy the Delicious Food, Fantastic Games & Fabulous Music.

Tickets: \$100.

St Joseph Mercy Hospital's Health & Wellness Experience

All are invited to St Joseph Mercy Hospital's Health & Wellness Experience on September 29th from 9:00 -18:00 hrs at the St Joseph Mercy Hospital Compound.

Activities include:

- BMI Calculations
- Blood Pressure Testing
- Blood Glucose and Blood Group Analysis
- Lamaze Class
- BSL Interactive Demonstration
- Fitness Demonstrations. ❖



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under the heading "Upcoming Events" or call 226-2192.

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A Christian Perspective on Social Issues



Cyber socialism:
the more private life is, the more public it has become

By GHK Lall

It is a peculiar world now lived. The irony is that where there was no such thing as privacy laws not too long ago, and now that there are very protective ones, the more public people's lives seem to be. It is almost as if every action, no matter how insignificant or irrelevant (or human) runs the risk of being blown up for universal scrutiny and outrage. Blink the wrong way and trouble comes. Two recent funeral services jammed home the microscopic examinations of the new cyber tyranny.

First, there was the church celebration for that great one, Aretha Franklin. A heady tribute filled with respect for a departed queen. But

what would life be these days without the cyber sleuths, who emerge from the concealed swamp whenever there is a gathering; any kind of gathering is sure to draw out the electronic mob in thumb-tapping, furious frenzies. There was a problem with Ariana Grande's dress: too short, too much skin. And that it was inappropriate for church. I agree; but does this have to rise to the level of public discourse? When the Ms. Grandes of the world fail to observe required etiquette, they are guilty of personal lapses best left alone. Or, at best, the cautionary corrective whispers of before from family and friends. This is what we have done when confronted with similar circumstances, whether by others or ourselves, in the past. Whether the heels or hem were too high, or some merry fellow floated spiritedly at precarious heights at wake or in chapel this was how these things were treated - privately. I have seen all of this at Irish wakes and local ones, too; they make for a "good send-off" of many a beloved. My problem is that nowadays, fleeting distaste or amused observation have transformed into public verbal daggers unsheathed from behind the veil of social media. How about a

quiet word, a gentle reprimand? In private....

Next in the firing line was former president Clinton. According to the social media sentinels, he was "checking out" Senorita Grande. He would have had to be a statue to be unmoved. Given Mr. Clinton's history and enemies, one has to be thankful that the cyber espionage agents did not accuse him of worse. Here is my question: why these unrestrained inferences and haste to judge? That there is adultery of the eye, if not heart? How many ordinary citizens can truthfully say that they have attended a funeral (or other life event) and their eye was not arrested by a flash of fashion that brought pause? I mean hypocrisy and overblown scrutiny are being taken to inhuman lengths. Try as one might, and with a nod to artificial intelligence, humans are breathing living organisms with emotions and visions and warm blood. They see and sense and react. It is simply the way of the flesh; if such attention becomes offensive and invasive now that is another thing altogether. God help the senior clergyman, who was in charge of Dame Aretha's proceedings. His perceived crime: his arm was too tight, too high on Ms. Grande's upper anatomy. Where does this stop?

The churchman said it best: the church is about love; and he was busy greeting and hugging and loving scores if not hundreds. It had to be a blur, and when one considers the exuberant

style of Black American worship, then what was his sin? In a fast moving, emotion-packed outpouring scene, this man is called for lack of perfect positioning and to be robotic, if not flawless in his conduct. This was free-flowing homage to an iconic, much loved figure. There was power and passion there and it showed.

More of this cyber madness seeped into the funeral service for Senator John McCain, another respected figure. Members of the president's family attended to pay their respects, and it rises to a social felony. Why has common courtesy and decency fled and caustic commentary (for the sake of saying anything) become the order of the day? That individuals manifesting independence or humanity are pilloried and declared fit to be hauled before the World Court of Justice? This is not just appalling; it is eye-opening.

Clearly, many patrolling the social media universe live narrow existences, with little regard for time and place. Or for that old cautionary note: silence is golden. They have to put finger to keyboard and prove how alert and correct they are, how lacking in appreciation for the nuances of life. Whatever happened to innocence, normal human response, and no particular motive? As said earlier, the more private life is, the more public it has become, with anyone and everyone fair game. I hope that our young social media inhabitants respect this: there is a time to speak; and a time to leave alone. ❖

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

49 Years of Prayers and Thanksgiving in Guyana

Guest Speaker



Fr. Anthony Abraham
St Thomas, BVI



Speakers

Monsignor Terrence Montrose
Fr John Packiaraj SJ
Fr Keith Hardless
Fr Carl Philadelphia
Bishop Francis Alleyne OSB

Saturday 20th October

- Prayers for Special Needs
- Burning of Letters to the Lord
- Sacrament of Reconciliation

Tuesday 25th October

- Closing with Holy Mass
- His Lordship Bishop Francis Alleyne OSB

Theme: "WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD"

(1 COR 10:31)

Novena to the Holy Spirit

*Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception,
Brickdam, Georgetown*

Monday 15th to Tuesday 23rd October, 2018

6:00 pm Daily

Come! Bring your Family and Friends

PILGRIMAGE TO FATIMA/LOURDES



It is a good thing to get to know and understand our faith through visits to historical sites around the world. To this end, an invitation is extended to journey with us on a pilgrimage to **PORTUGAL/SPAIN/France**. In Portugal we will visit the site at **Fatima**, considered to be a journey to the altar of the world, where in 1917 Our Blessed Mother, Mary appeared to the local children and the "miracle of the sun" happened. We will celebrate Mass in the Basilica of Our Lady, followed by a visit to the House of Lucia and the House of Francis and Jacinta. There will be other stops along the

way as we journey to Lourdes via the Pyrenees Mountains (Spain)

We will visit the site at **Lourdes** where 14-year-old Bernadette reportedly experienced 18 visions of the Virgin Mary, and walk in the footsteps of St Bernadette. Join your prayers with those of pilgrims from around the world as you pray for the sick, drink water from the miraculous spring or submerge yourself in the healing baths.

We leave Lourdes and travel to Paris where we will visit Nevers (St Bernadette's incorrupt body), Lisieux (St Therese), St Catherine Laboure and St Vincent de Paul (incorrupt bodies), have dinner at the Eiffel Tower one evening.

We will conclude our journey in Holland where we will stay for 2 nights and then home via Suriname.

It is hoped to visit from **August 1st to 18th, 2019.**

You may indicate your interest to Sis Cheryl Douglas on 616-2503 or Sis Joylyn Jafferally on 684-5992 so that timely plans can be initiated. ❖

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Sunday Scripture

September 30th - Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

FIRST READING

Numbers 11:25-29

Are you jealous on my account? If only the whole people of the Lord were prophets.

The Lord came down in the Cloud. He spoke with Moses, but took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on these seventy elders. When the spirit came on them they prophesied, but not again.

Two men had stayed back in the camp; one was called Eldad and the other Medad. The spirit came down on them; though they had not gone to the Tent, their names were enrolled among the rest. These began to prophesy in the camp. The young man ran to tell this to Moses, 'Look,' he said 'Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.' Then said Joshua the son of Nun, who had served Moses from his youth, 'My Lord Moses, stop them!' Moses answered him, 'Are you jealous on my account? If only the whole people of the Lord were prophets, and the Lord gave his Spirit to them all!'

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 18

Resp.: The precepts of the Lord gladden the heart.

1. The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple.

Response

2. The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just.

Response

3. So in them your servant finds instruction; great reward is in their keeping.

But who can detect all his errors? From hidden faults acquit me.

Response

4. From presumption restrain your servant and let it not rule me.

Then shall I be blameless, clean from grave sin.

Response

SECOND READING

James 5:1-6

Your wealth is all rotting.

An answer for the rich. Start crying, weep for the miseries that are coming to you. Your wealth is all rotting, your clothes are all eaten up by moths. All your gold and your silver are corroding away, and the same corrosion will be your own sentence, and eat into your body. It was a burning fire that you



Mark 9:40

Whoever is not
against us is for us

stored up as your treasure for the last days. Labourers mowed your fields, and you cheated them – listen to the wages that you kept back, calling out; realise that the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. On earth you have had a life of comfort and luxury; in the time of slaughter you went on eating to your heart's content. It was you who condemned the innocent and killed them; they offered you no resistance.

GOSPEL

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Anyone who is not against us is for us. If your hand should cause you to sin, cut it off.

John said to Jesus, 'Master, we saw a man who is not one of us casting out devils in your name; and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him.' But Jesus said, 'You must not stop him: no one who works a miracle in my name is likely to speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us.'

'If anyone gives you a cup of water to drink just because you belong to Christ, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.'

'But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith, would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone round his neck. And if your hand should cause you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life crippled, than to have two hands and go to hell, into the fire that cannot be put out. And if your foot should cause you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life lame, than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye should cause you to sin, tear it out; it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell where their worm does not die nor their fire go out.' ❖



By: The Diocesan Stewardship
Council of Guyana

Our Gospel passage and the Second Reading from the letter of St. James urge us to examine our lives for anything that is keeping us from loving God above all else.

Jesus says, "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off... If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out."

St. James warns, "Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries. Your wealth has rotted away, your clothes have become moth-eaten, your gold and silver have

corroded, and that corrosion will be a testimony against you."

The urgency of our need to detach from all that is not God is clear. When we hold onto possessions too tightly, they come to possess us. The "stuff" can easily become the focus of our energy and attention. Attachment to material things slowly and steadily corrupts.

The spiritual discipline of tithing — or stewardship of treasure — can help us with this. Tithing leads us to let go of unhealthy attachment to material

things and leads us to attach instead to God, relying on Him as our true source of security and happiness. We come to understand that all that we have is a gift from our loving Father and we use it to bless others and glorify Him.

Amazingly, we actually enjoy material gifts, and all other gifts, more as a result because we realize where they really came from and are using them as God intended. What wonderful freedom there is in living this way! ❖

[<http://www.catholicsteward.com/blog/>]

Gospel Reflection



By Fr. Michael Barrow SJ

A couple who never go to Mass want to have their baby baptized. Should I baptize the child? At the beginning of the baptism service the celebrant addresses the parents: "In asking to have your child baptized you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbour." How can they train him in the practice of the faith if they don't go to church? On the other hand, notice it doesn't say keeping God's commandments by coming to Mass, but by loving God and our neighbour. What is the criterion for being accepted into the family of Christ?

In this Sunday's gospel the apostles see someone who is not one of Christ's disciples casting out demons in his name. The apostles tell the man to stop, because they feel it's wrong for an outsider to be using Christ's power to do miracles. Were they right? Can anyone who is not a Catholic or Christian, someone who never goes to church, belong to Christ?

When the apostle John reported it to Jesus, his reaction was that they should not stop him. "Anyone who is not against us is for us." How do you decide who is against Christ? Jesus makes it clear, "Anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who has faith in me." We naturally consider belonging to Christ to mean being baptized and part of the Church. But Judas Iscariot was baptized and a member of the church, whereas the man casting out devils in Jesus' name was not. To belong to Christ, it is not enough to go to Mass and say one's prayers. More important is actively to love God and our neighbour. ❖

Religious Education teachers celebrate their special day



By: Joshua Van-Sluytman

Each year, the Catholic Church designates the third Sunday in September as "Catechetical Sunday" — It is a day for the diocese and parishes to focus on recognizing, honouring and sometimes commissioning Catechists for their important role of handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel.

This year's theme is *"Enlisting Witnesses for Jesus Christ."*

As a catechist, you are responding to a serious call to share the precious gift of faith with others, even as you deepen your own faith. This call may have reached you through your parish priest, the head of religious education in your parish, or through your role as a Catholic school teacher. But you must know that this calling ultimately comes from God whose Holy Spirit inspires and guides you.

The Catechetical Department of the Diocese of Georgetown observed Catechetical Sunday with a day of retreat for Catechists at the Marian Academy on Sunday September 16th.

Over 100 men and women who serve in the ministry of Religious Education with children and adults, from Georgetown, West Demerara, the East Coast and East Bank came together for the occasion.

The event began with welcoming remarks by Head of the Catechetical Department Mrs. Angie Sukhai. Mrs. Sukhai said that the third Sunday in September each year is dedicated to Catechists, and thanked them for accepting the invitation to attend the retreat and encouraged them to keep up the work they carry out in moulding the young generation.

In his address to those gathered, Chief Catechist Bishop Francis Alleyne OSB said our Gospels and the content of our faith tradition are something we can get very excited about. He said that the content, the richness, is immense and it for us to absorb that and bring that to our young people. He further encouraged them to keep up the good work and thanked them for saying yes to the task of teaching our young Catholics.

The Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) is a University initiative to offer adult religious education and faith formation anytime and anywhere via the internet. The local Coordinator of the VLCFF, Mr. Phelan Ramdatt shared on the courses offered especially to Catechists and encouraged those who had not done any to do so.

For more information of the VLCFF course visit their website at <https://vlcff.udayton.edu/>.

Jesuit Parish priest of the East Bank Cluster Fr. Britto Arockiam shared on the Gospel of the day by asking those gathered to ponder upon the questions, 'Who do you say Jesus is?' and on the theme of this year Catechetical Sunday, "Enlisting Witnesses for Jesus Christ."

Mrs. Shianne Latchmansingh gave a presentation on Lesson Planning/preparation for Catechists. The day ended with Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Britto Arockiam, SJ.

Parishioner of the Holy Spirit R.C church and member of the Catechetical advisory board Ms. Mrytlyn Richards said the third Sunday of September each year is a day set aside for Catechists to come together for a day of reflection to gather together so that they can share their joys and challenges with each other. Ms. Richards described the day as one of celebration and thanksgiving. She further noted that being a Catechist is a vocation and it must be something you want to do, despite the challenges you just have to keep holding on. She also noted that a Catechist's job is never done, you may not see the effects in your child right away, but as time goes by you will notice that change you would have made in a child's life, she said. ❖



Mercy Hospital recognizes, awards 22 employees



As part of its 73rd anniversary activities, the Saint Joseph Mercy Hospital on Monday September 24th last, formally recognized and awarded employees who have reached years-of-service milestones. One was singled out for 45 years of service which is more than half of the age of the institution itself.

“Whenever I look at 45 years of service I see love, I see hope, I see dedication and commitment”, said Chief Executive Officer, Colonel (Retired) Enoch Gaskin, MSM. “The recipients of awards have exemplified the spirit and values of Mercy and are ambassadors of the quality of medical services offered at Mercy Hospital”, he said.

On Monday, 22 employees who collectively have given almost 300 years of service were recognized with certificates, trophies, plaques and cash. These were presented by the CEO and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Mrs. Deborah Ramsay. Later the employees will receive pins marking their years of service.

In brief remarks Ms. Shellan Isaacs, the awardee

with the most years of service, 45, said that it was not always easy going at Mercy Hospital however she noted that even with hundreds of years of service between them many were still willing to continue. She said that Mercy had an outstanding reputation for high quality and performance. She thanked her colleagues for remaining and encouraged them to keep the flag flying.

Mercy Sister Catherine Glyn-Williams was given a special award for her contribution to the School of Nursing and to nursing education.

In giving the closing remarks, Mission Leader, Ms. Pat Liverpool, pointed out that the ceremony was taking place on the anniversary of what is known Mercy Day, that day in 1827 when the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy opened her first ‘House of Mercy’. Ms Liverpool said she felt sure that when Catherine McAuley opened that first house dedicated to the care of the poor and sick she did not envisage that they would spread all around the world. She noted that staying and keeping at one’s task call for faith and perseverance, virtues which Catherine exemplified. ❖

The Victoria Regia Choir

By Joshua Van-Sluytman

St. Augustine once said “those who sing pray twice” and that is also what those in this group of young vibrant voices are doing.

The Victoria Regia Choir was formed in December 2017 by Mrs. Grace Lee. It is made up of youths between the ages of 12 to 21 years.

Their first performance as the Victoria Regia Choir was for the

Caribbean Jesuits Annual General Meeting in January 2018.

The choir was formed when it was realized that many of the parishes outside of Georgetown do not have permanent choirs or musicians. As such, after speaking with the Shepherd of the Diocese, the group began singing at Sts. Peter and Paul church on the East Bank.

They also sang at Our Lady of Confidence Church site in La

Parfaite Harmonie on the West Bank in January. They visited Silver Hills on the Linden Highway to sing for their feast day; to Our Lady of the Assumption Church, Hague Village, West Bank and St. Pius X for their feast days. Msgr Jarvis’ 35th anniversary Mass was also graced by their presence.

They also joined their voices with others from various parishes for Fr. Carl Philadelphia’s ordination and for the Sacred Heart Parish feast day Mass. At times they also entertain the elderly.

This group of young people goes wherever they are called to glorify the Lord with their voices, all at their own expense.

For further information on the choir please call:

- Mrs. Grace Lee (Choir Director): 646-6920
- Mrs. Graziella Jailall (Choir Coordinator) 629-2123
- Mr. Joshua Van Sluytman (Administrator) 661-3457. ❖



Journeying with the Word of God

Your word is
a lamp unto my feet,
a light unto my path.
Psalm 119:105



MAKING THE WORD OF GOD YOUR OWN

Step 1: Look at today’s Readings prayerfully.

1st Reading: Joshua resents the fact that the gift of prophecy is given to many others besides Moses but Moses himself welcomes it.

2nd Reading: James strongly condemns wealth especially when it is obtained by exploiting the weak.

Gospel: Jesus gives us a good lesson on tolerance and on avoiding scandal and the occasions of sin.

Step 2: Applying the values of the Readings to your daily life.

1. Jesus points out that being one of his followers is not a personal privilege to be guarded jealously but a call to serve God’s people. How can you concretely put this into practice?
2. Can you think of people who, though not openly Christian, lead lives that indicate that God’s Spirit is at work in them?
3. Jesus strongly condemns those who are bad examples in the community. What do you think you need to do in your life to be a light shining in the darkness of the lives of others?
4. St James is suggesting that we will be judged, not by the wealth we have, but by how we got it and how we use it. Do you think he is condemning wealth in itself?

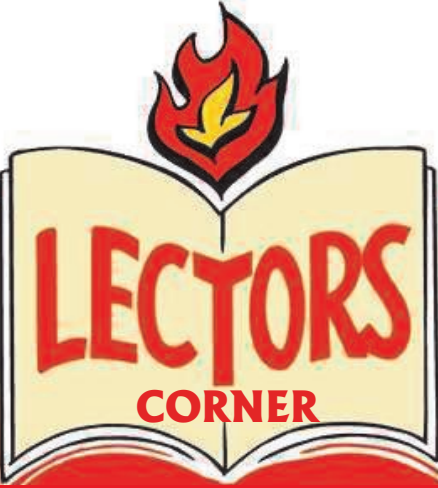
Step 3: Accepting the message of God’s Word in your life of faith.

Jesus is clear that we must look seriously at the situations in our lives that cause us to sin and the need to cut them away. We must avoid all cause for serious sin. He warns against something just as serious - being a cause for sin in others, especially in the weak and defenseless. We must take Jesus’ warning seriously.

Step 4: Something to think & pray about

1. What are the little “cups of water” you offer every day to those in need without even thinking of repayment? Can you tell why you do these acts of kindness?
2. There is evil residing in us as much as there is good there. What, in your opinion, are the things you need to cut away from your life so that you may avoid serious sin?
3. Pray that you will develop tolerance for others regardless of their religion or race or station in life. ❖

[From: *Journeying with the Word of God*, The Religious Education Department, Diocese of Georgetown, Guyana]

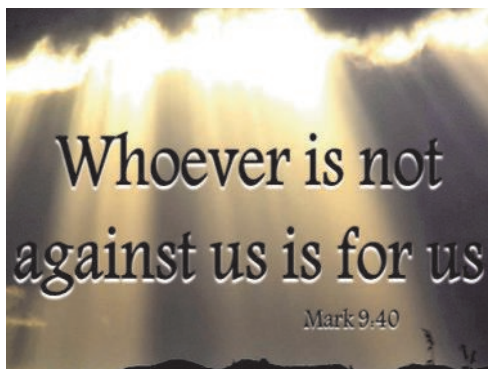


**LECTORS
CORNER**

**Proclaiming the
Word of God**

*Speak, Lord, your servant
is listening: you have the
message of eternal life*

**Sept. 30th: Twenty Sixth
Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)**



**"Anyone who is not against us, is
for us. If your hand should cause
you to sin, cut it off."**

There is a peculiar type of pettiness that will not allow someone to do what others do (even if - or perhaps especially if - they are good at it) because they aren't part of the group, or club, or circle. Unless you wear the uniform, the badge or tie, you can't share in the work. When this is applied to doing good or following the Lord, it seems even more petty than ever: if someone does a good thing, does it matter that she or he is not a Catholic? The words of the Lord, "Anyone who is not against us is for us," should be taken to heart this Sunday. Let us recognise anyone who helps the poor, serves peace and justice, does what the Lord Jesus wants as our co-worker, whatever the 'label' they work under.

Notes for Readers

First Reading: Numbers 11:25-29.

We delve into the Old Testament for another example of the small-mindedness we find in the Gospel today: here a couple called Eldad and Medad are caught prophesying in the camp, despite the fact that they were not there "when the spirit came down". A quick read through will lead

us to imagine the indignation of the young man and of Joshua when they tell Moses - they are almost like little children 'telling teacher'! It is important that people grasp the context of this reading, which is given in the first paragraph: here is described the Spirit coming down on the seventy, so that they can prophesy. Also emphasise that Eldad and Medad are elsewhere when this happens. The next section, where the youth and Joshua complain to Moses is very easy to read - put a little colour into your voice when you read their indignant statements to Moses. All this is a prelude to the important part of the reading, where Moses (like Jesus in the Gospel) rebukes this small-mindedness - "If only..." are wonderful words, expressing Moses' desire that all could share in the gift of prophecy. Let your voice rise in tone and enthusiasm at the end. Then pause a second before "This is the Word of the Lord."

Second Reading: James 5:1-6

Saint James has been 'firing from the hip' for the last few weeks, but here he really lets himself go! This is a brilliant piece of rhetoric, where we can clearly see the man who passionately believes in justice pouring out his detestation of those who cheat their workers and see life as a chance to make money. It starts with wonderful abruptness: "An answer for the rich. Start crying." As a reader, you simply cannot allow this to be read in a bland or flat tone: that would not be faithful to the passion of James's words. The same goes for the whole reading. These words demand passion in the reading - the same passion that was in their writing. This reading is definitely one to practice out loud, so that you can get all the emphasis the author has put into these stirring words.



**Oct. 7th: Twenty-Seventh
Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)**



**"What God has united, man must
not divide."**

Today we tackle the issue of marriage and divorce; Jesus is asked an awkward question about the legality of divorce. He lays down very clearly that what God intends for marriage is what is found in Genesis (where the "two become one" for all time) rather

than the dispensation granted through Moses (permitting a writ of divorce) which was an exception, not the rule. Here it is clear that Jesus abrogates this Old Testament procedure - a point emphasised when the disciples press him further on this issue on getting back home. While it is important for us to be sensitive and understanding towards those whose marriages have gone awry, we must be careful to let the teachings of the Lord speak for themselves.

Notes for Readers

First Reading: Genesis 2:18-24.

As often happens on a Sunday, when Jesus quotes from the Old Testament in the Gospel, we hear the same passage in the first reading. In an age when it is all too easy to be negative about the mystery of marriage, this reading recalls the great wonder which is marriage, as it tries to explain what is so special, so blessed, about man and woman becoming one. It is a poetic illustration of the search for the perfect partner, and the joy at finding one. The reading is a story, with a short poem and a final line of explanation. So tell the story first. It can be helpful to imagine telling the story to a group of children beginning in your mind "Once upon a time..." The story builds up the dilemma: no suitable companion for man could be found - what was to be done? When the Lord God finds a solution, the reader should allow the man's joy to pour forth. Remember this is poetry, which is trying to do is express (in a particular way) the joy and perfection of a human couple united in marriage.

**Second Reading: Hebrews
2:19-11**

We leave behind the impassioned outpourings of Saint James, and turn to the Letter to the Hebrews for our second reading for the next seven weeks. This letter, not written by Saint Paul but by an unknown author, takes as its central theme the transition from Judaism to Christianity, showing how the latter, in the person of Jesus, has superseded the former. A great deal of the letter focuses on the person of Jesus, as the High Priest of the New Covenant, and what he does. So it is today: we hear of Jesus suffering and submitting to death, sharing everything that we are, so that we could be his brothers and sisters, and so bring us into glory. This is a complex and compact reading: these three sentences are packed with ideas - not a single word is redundant. Spend a while reading, in order to understand what the writer is trying to say - that God, through Jesus, has enabled us to share in glory and salvation. ❖

[From: Office for Liturgy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford <http://www.salfordliturgy.org.uk/>]



Synod for the
AMAZON

Prayer for the Synod for the Amazon

*All-powerful God, you are present
in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your
creatures.*

*You embrace with your tenderness
all that exists.*

*Pour out upon us the power of
your love, that we may protect life
and beauty*

*Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no
one.*

*O God of the poor, help us to
rescue the abandoned*

*and forgotten of this earth, so
precious in your eyes.*

*Bring healing to our lives, that we
may protect the world*

*and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not
pollution and destruction.*

*Touch the hearts of those who look
only for gain*

*at the expense of the poor and the
earth*

*Teach us to discover the worth of
each thing,*

*to be filled with awe and contem-
plation,*

*to recognize that we are
profoundly united with every
creature as we journey towards
your infinite light.*

*Bless your Church which is here in
Guyana*

*that we may listen attentively to
the cry of the earth and the cry of
the poor.*

*Bless our Holy Father Pope Francis
Our own Bishop Francis*

*And all the bishops of the Amazon,
That together we may prepare well
for the coming Synod ❖*



Against Us or For Us?

Dear Boys and Girls,

The early followers of Jesus belonged to what they thought was a very special club - and it was. There were only twelve in that first group that followed Jesus. They felt very good about being part of Jesus' team. In Jesus' name they healed sick people and taught them about the Kingdom of God. One day the disciples saw someone who was not a member of their group doing good things in Jesus' name. You would think they would be happy to see other people doing good things, but were they? No, they told them to stop what they were doing because they were not a part of their special group.

The disciples thought Jesus would be pleased by their actions, so they went and told him what they had done. To their surprise, Jesus was not pleased. "Don't stop people who are doing good things in my name" Jesus said. "No one who is doing good things in my name will then turn around and say bad things about me. Anyone who is not against us is for us."

It is good to belong to a group, but it is especially good to be a part of the family of God. The family of God is very large and there are many different groups who make up that family. Whenever we see anyone who is doing good in Jesus' name, we should not be jealous. We should rejoice and be glad because "If they aren't against us, they are for us."

Heavenly Father, we are thankful to be part of your family. Help us to be rejoice and be glad when we see other members of your family doing good things. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. ❖



Jesus warns:

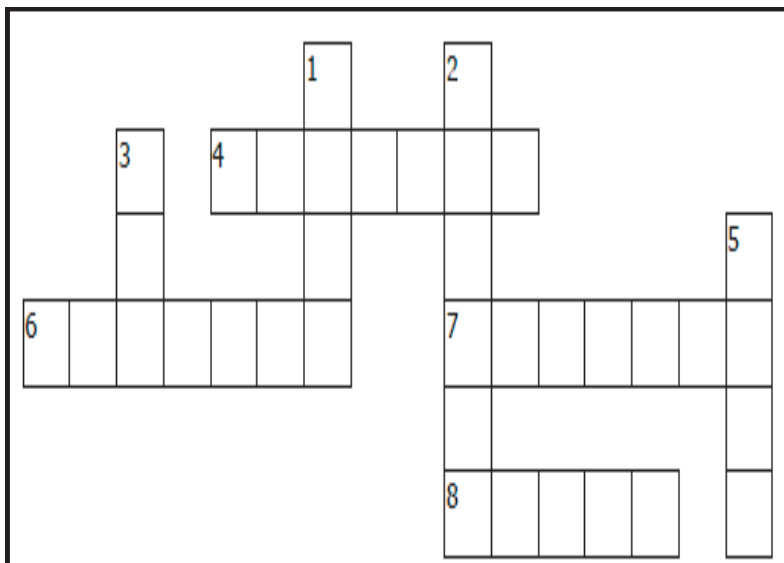
DO WHAT IS GOOD

Draw a picture of someone doing a good deed.



AVOID EVIL

Draw a picture of someone doing a bad deed — something that God doesn't want.



ACROSS

- 4. A person who gives instruction to other people
- 6. A wonderful and supernatural act of God
- 7. To be opposed to someone or something
- 8. An evil spirit

DOWN

- 1. The word by which a person is known; John, for example
- 2. A prize given for good behavior
- 3. To be in favor of someone or something
- 5. To bring an activity to an end

REWARD	DEMON	FOR	AGAINST
STOP	MIRACLE	NAME	TEACHER

S	T	S	N	I	A	G	A	S	S
L	A	W	O	R	L	A	E	L	E
I	I	S	B	A	E	M	L	L	S
V	N	V	M	R	T	T	C	E	E
E	S	E	E	A	E	A	A	H	R
D	R	A	W	E	R	T	T	W	T
E	K	E	N	I	V	I	S	I	S
I	C	E	M	M	A	L	B	A	A
V	E	R	I	F	A	W	O	R	M
E	N	O	T	S	L	L	I	M	E

- MASTER
- DEVILS
- WATER
- REWARD
- MIRACLE
- NECK
- HELL
- OBSTACLE
- MILLSTONE
- LAME
- FAITH
- WORM



It is rare that we learn much about the laws of the countries we visit, yet having such knowledge could help prevent us from getting ourselves into sticky situations while travelling to other countries. What's more, if they're as odd as the strange laws listed below, they're bound to give us a good chuckle, too. Keep reading to discover 8 of the weirdest prohibitions from around the world, that we found on the internet. Apparently, these outdated laws have never been repealed, but are no longer enforced in most of those Countries.

1. *It is forbidden to rescue drowning people in China.*

An ancient Chinese law prohibits citizens from rescuing people who are drowning. It was originally connected with oriental philosophy, which states that interfering with somebody's destiny is immoral. Sceptics, however, believe that it is just the Chinese government's way of regulating population growth.

2. *Kissing at train stations is illegal in France.*

This law first showed up in France in 1910, at a time when trains often ended up being delayed by amorous couples who couldn't bear the pain of parting. Consequently, kissing on platforms was banned and couples had to go to special 'kissing zones' if they wanted to share a moment of tenderness.

3. *It is illegal to touch a whale in the United Kingdom.*

In the UK, all whales, dolphins and other sea mammals within a radius of three miles of the border are said to belong to the Queen herself. This makes it illegal to touch British whales, no matter how good your intentions really are.

4. *It's a crime to feed pigeons in Venice, Italy.*

While we might view pigeons as our friends, officials in Venice view them as their mortal enemies due to the damage they cause when soiling monuments and statues from the sky. If you get caught feeding them, you

Foreign Laws Too Weird For Words...



By Chris & Noelma Lam

may end up having to pay a hefty fine!

5. *It's illegal to step on money in Thailand.*

If we're planning to visit Thailand, then we really should watch where we're walking at all times. This is because it is illegal to step on bills or coins that bear the portraits of venerable Thai citizens since it is considered to be a highly disrespectful act.

6. *Forgetting our wife's birthday is illegal in Samoa.*

Here's a bit of bad news for all the forgetful husbands out there: If we forget our wife's birthday while in Samoa, we can get into a lot of trouble. As a penalty, we will need to pay a hefty fine, which will go directly into our wife's hands!

7. *Keep our tattoos in plain sight in Japan.*

While not technically illegal, there is a great stigma in Japan against people who have tattoos as they tend to be associated with members of criminal gangs, like the infamous Yakuza. If we have visible tattoos in Japan, it will be a lot harder to get a decent job, and we may be refused entry to gyms, hotels, hot springs or public baths.

8. *It's illegal to eat biscuits on Christmas Day in the United Kingdom.*

In 1644, Oliver Cromwell banned the celebration of Christmas in the United Kingdom because he believed it had

become an immoral event. He specifically banned quite a number of holiday traditions, including eating biscuits and sweet rolls on Christmas Day. The law still stands today, although nobody really pays any attention to it.

Now here are a few more tidbits to add to our article last week:

Vagaries of English Language! Enjoy!!!

* Wonder why the word funeral starts with FUN?

* Why isn't a Fireman called a Waterman?

* How come Lipstick doesn't do what it says?

* If money doesn't grow on trees, how come Banks have Branches?

* If a Vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a Humanitarian eat?

* How do you get off a non-stop Flight?

* Why do we put cups in the dishwasher and the dishes in the Cupboard?

* Why do doctors 'practice' medicine? Are they having practice at the cost of the patients?

* Why is it called 'Rush Hour' when traffic moves at its slowest then?

* How come Noses run and Feet smell?

* Why do they call it a TV 'set' when there is only one?

* What are you vacating when you go on a vacation?

We can never find the answers, can we? So just enjoy the pun and fun of the English language!!

* Six great confusions still unresolved

1. At a movie theatre, which arm rest is yours?

2. In the word scent, is "S" silent or "C"?

3. If people evolve from monkeys, why are monkeys still around?

4. Why is there a 'D' in 'fridge', but not in 'refrigerator'?

5. Who knew what time it was when the first clock was made?

6. If pro and con are opposites, wouldn't the opposite of progress be...congress?❖

Pope's Intentions

October Monthly Intention:

The Mission of Religious

That consecrated religious men and women may bestir themselves, and be present among the poor, the marginalised, and those who have no voice.❖

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Mind Puzzler Corner

Our Last Brain Teaser was:

With pointed fangs I sit and wait, with piercing force I serve out fate. Grabbing bloodless victims, proclaiming my might; physically joining with a single bite. What am I?

Answer: A stapler.

This Week's Brain Teaser:

I can be long, or I can be short. I can be grown, and I can be bought. I can be painted, or left bare. I can be cut round or square. What am I?

Look for the Answer next week

TitBits

-- **This Week's Reflection:**

Can we see God? Of course we cannot see God. And there are many times when we do not even feel his presence. But in the daily uncertainties of life, amid the dangers all around, and in our most pressing hour, God is always standing by to help. He can see us safely through our storms and trials. God Bless You! Have a Great Week!

-- **This Week's Bible Question:**

In the system of Sacrifice, what bird was normally offered?

-- **This Week's Teaser:**

What do people spend a lot of money on every year but never want to use?

-- **Today's Bible Verse:**

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so. - Proverbs 3: 27

-- **Today's Marriage Tip:**

See your spouse as the most precious gift you will ever receive. Do not underestimate God's ability to send you the spouse who will help you grow spiritually and personally.

-- **Humour:**

Little Johnny and his dad had just returned from the neighbour's home and he excitedly told his mom: "They have two little boy kittens and three girl kittens."

"How did you know" Asked mom. "Daddy picked them up and looked

underneath." He replied. "I think it's written on the bottoms."

-- **This Week's Truism:**

Believe, but don't trust every word you hear.

-- **Clever Word Play**

The batteries were given out free of charge.

-- **We Often Wonder:**

Why women can't put on mascara with their mouth closed?

-- **Answer to Bible Question:**

A dove or pigeon. - see Leviticus 1:14 If the offering to the Lord is a burnt offering of birds, he is to offer a dove or young pigeon.

-- **Answer to Teaser:**

Insurance.❖

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Coastal Delegates prepare for Lethem Assembly (From Front Page)

Bishop Sydney Charles dies at 92



An Open Space discussion at the Assembly (Photo: Catholic Media Initiatives)



Retired Bishop Sydney Charles passed on Tuesday September 4 in Grenada following an extended illness. The well-liked former Bishop of Grenada was born in Trinidad 92 years ago. He served as Bishop in Grenada from 1974 until 2002, at which time he was succeeded by the late Bishop Vincent Darius.

Roman Catholic bishop Emeritus Sydney Anicetus Charles, 92, died on Tuesday September 4, at the General Hospital, St George's, Grenada following an extended illness.

Bishop Charles was born in St Joseph, Trinidad, on April 17, 1926 and ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain on March 7, 1954.

He became the third bishop of St George's-in-Grenada, having been consecrated bishop on January 26, 1975.

He also served as vicar general and administrator of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception until Pope Paul VI called him to serve as bishop in Grenada.

Vicar General of the St George's diocese Fr Carl Haynes said, "Bishop Charles' deep love of people, gentle manner and sense of humour saw new beginnings for the church in Grenada, especially with the young people for whom he had a special love.

In an interview with the Grenada Informer at his 90th birthday Bishop Charles said that there were many major challenges in his episcopate.

Events were said to have overtaken him with the coming to power in 1979 of the New Jewel Movement led by Maurice Bishop. He maintained dialogue and relied on the support of the clergy and laity for which he is eternally grateful. He also recalled several projects and ministries which were started during his episcopate as he highlighted the cooperation of the diocese. One of these is the New Life Organization (NEWLO) with the advice of Fr. Gerard Pantin of Servol in Port-of-Spain. This ministry was in an effort to absorb most of the young people, particularly Catholics who were displaced as a result of the abandonment of the People's Revolutionary Army and the People's Militia. NEWLO has grown leaps and bounds beyond that for which it was initially set up.

He also mentioned the Engaged Encounter whereby couples planning to get married or are in a steady relationship spend a weekend together in retreat before taking the final step.

May he rest in peace.

His funeral takes place on September 28 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Grenada. ❖

The remainder of the day was spent exploring issues of importance identified by participants, using the 'Open Space' method, which was facilitated by members Policy Forum Guyana (PFG).

Two short videos were shown, one explaining the Open Space concept and the other 'The Story of Solutions' which explored *more vs. better*.

Participants were asked to identify issues of importance, which then formed the Agenda. They then took part in the discussions of the issues, with seven groups being formed, with three rounds of discussion each; participants being encouraged to move about in a 'marketplace of ideas'.

At the end of the discussion rounds, the recommendations from each group and round were summarized, and participants then identified the major priorities emerging from the discussions. The two main priorities which emerged set the agenda for the next day's Open Space discussions.

Before the day ended at 4:30pm, persons were invited to speak on any issues of importance which had been identified in their Parish/Cluster gatherings which had not been covered in the day's proceedings.

Sunday began with mass at 8:00am celebrated by Bishop Francis, which was followed by a presentation by the *Laudato Si Guyana* group (LSG). The presentation began with LSG member Gabriella Mohammed performing, in Creolese, her poem "Dear Coastlanders" which was intended to challenge listeners. LSG member Br. Joel Thompson SJ then presented 'New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology', stressing 'Care for our Common Home' and ended with encouraging everyone to read *Laudato Si'*.

The *Open Space* then continued, with participants using *SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)* on the recommendations emerging out of the two major issues identified the previous day:-

Issue A: "Changing the mentality of the way people think".

Recommendation: "The propagation of Family Life influenced by values that encourage openness, collective thought and a sense of Service that can bring about a change in Society."

Issue B: "A Society where violent behaviours are overshadowing our Community"

Recommendation: "Education is key: be assertive firsthand in discipline, teach anger management, refrain from hypocrisy and be open to learning".

The gathering was divided into two groups, with one applying SWOT analysis to Recommendation A, and the other to Recommendation B. The results were then posted on a screen. In round 2 the groups switched topics, did the analysis and gave further results.

After lunch, participants gave their thoughts on the gathering. Several spoke of how useful the Assembly was to them, especially in being a catalyst for positive action in parishes, and that the momentum should be kept going. The large numbers of young people and men participating was commended.

At the final session, Fr. Paul Martin SJ, the head of the Pre-Synodal Assembly Co-ordinating Team, noted that the conversation needed to be carried forward in preparing for the Pre-Synodal Assembly in Lethem, which itself is in preparation for the Synod on the Amazon in October next year, where Bishop Francis will represent the Church in Guyana. Fr. Paul spoke of Guyana's place in the Amazon and our unique contribution.

In order to identify persons who will represent the Coastal Communities at the Pre-Synodal Assembly in Lethem in November, it was agreed that there will be a second gathering on **Saturday October 20th** to discuss the Preparatory Document for the Synod.

The assembly ended with the Synod Prayer. (N.F.C.) ❖

Emerald Jubilee for Marian Academy!

Saint of the Week



Students release yellow, blue and white balloons into the sky

By Ms. Rondha Lam Singh

It began in humble quarters with just 227 students in Nursery, four Primary and two Secondary levels. A committee led by Sr. Jaqueline DaSilva with Miss Roxana Kawal's dream of the days when Catholic education would return to Guyanese classrooms. Under the stewardship of the Order of St Ursula and carrying on the lineage of Ursuline nuns in the classrooms of Guyana, Marian Academy opened its doors to all Guyanese children on 14th September, 1998. Coming of age, little Marian Academy has now joined the ranks of premiere educational institutions in Guyana boasting classes from Nursery all the way to Sixth form and ranking consistently in national and regional examinations. To celebrate this milestone a week of celebrations lauded its Emerald Jubilee. Past students, former staff, parents and other well wishers joined the current batch of staff and students at various events in celebration of this historical occasion.

These celebrations began with a Poetry Competition. In the last school term, students were encouraged to create pieces about their school. Preliminary judging in June 2018 selected finalists for the finals on September 11th, 2018. Before judges Mosa Telford, Stephen Ting A kee and former student Gabrielle Mohamed and a large audience of parents and their peers, the finalists recited their poems on things Marian. Winners emerged in multiple categories and were awarded certificates and medals for their efforts.

A second event saw the past students facing off the current students in the Marian Academy

Quiz on all things Marian on September 13, 2018. Organized by the past students association, MAPSA, questions ranged from who were the first longest serving staff to knowledge of where the foundation stone was located. Much to the chagrin of the current students, the past students made a clean sweep of all the prizes.

The highlight of this week of celebrations was the opening of the Time Capsule buried in the 2009 school year near the foundation stone. On September 14th 2018, after remarks from the Principal, Director of the Board of Governors and the PTA President among others, the time capsule was opened and its contents revealed. Dreams, big and small, for this school emerged. Memorabilia and speeches from the 10th anniversary celebrations had withstood the elements and now stood testament to the longevity of the dreams for Marian Academy. A second capsule has since been buried to be revealed on the occasion of its 30th birthday. Later that evening, among a throng of well wishers, the Marian Academy family celebrated with a dinner and award ceremony. Long-serving members of the academic, administrative and ancillary staff, Board of Directors and parents received plaques and pins to honour their commitment to seeing Marian Academy prosper.

On September 15th 2018, 35 teams registered for the first-ever Scavenger Hunt. The hunt list, comprised of 30 items ranging from who was the Best CSEC student 2018 to an adult dressed in the school's PE uniform, saw teams emerging from vehicles to loud laughter from spectators and

teams scurrying to complete the task in the allotted 2 hours. The Maharaj family emerged victorious with over 400 points to secure the trophy and medals awarded for the hunt.

Sunday September 16th led us to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for the celebration of Mass led by Bishop Francis Alleyne, OSB. With lusty singing from the school choir and a combined Choir of Sacred Heart Church and Marian Academy, staff, students, past students and other well-wishers joined in the celebrations of thanksgiving for a school that has continued to grow and cement itself as a force to be reckoned with in the educational sphere of Guyana.

One final activity was the basketball game between the past players and the current players of the school teams. Preliminary rounds saw two past students teams face off against the current Senior basketball team and a guest team from Queen's College. The Past Students team emerged victorious before a large turnout of parents and students. They received their trophies from Principal, Sr. Marie Harper, OSU.

Looking back to its humble beginnings, the growth of this school is undeniable. From rented buildings to its own state of the art building equipped for more than 26 subjects and boasting a large number of co-curricular activities, Marian Academy has come of age. Reminiscing on this growth of the school, Principal Sr. Marie leaves us with these words: "We give thanks for everything and take time to review, renew and innovate in the light of wisdom". ❖



October 1st: St. Thérèse of Lisieux

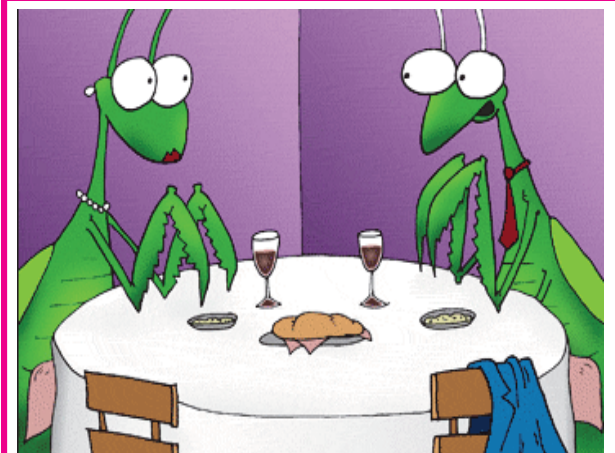
"I prefer the monotony of obscure sacrifice to all ecstasies. To pick up a pin for love can convert a soul." These are the words of Thérèse of Lisieux, a Carmelite nun called the "Little Flower," who lived a cloistered life of obscurity in the convent of Lisieux, France. And her preference for hidden sacrifice did indeed convert souls. Few saints of God are more popular than this young nun. Her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, is read and loved throughout the world. Thérèse Martin entered the convent at the age of 15 and died in 1897 at the age of 24. She was canonized in 1925, and two years later she and St. Francis Xavier were declared co-patrons of the missions.

Life in a Carmelite convent is indeed uneventful and consists mainly of prayer and hard domestic work. But Thérèse possessed that holy insight that redeems the time, however dull that time may be. She saw in quiet suffering redemptive suffering, suffering that was indeed her apostolate. Thérèse said she came to the Carmel convent "to save souls and pray for priests." And shortly before she died from tuberculosis, she wrote: "I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth."

On October 19th, 1997, Pope John Paul II proclaimed her a Doctor of the Church, the third woman to be so recognized, in light of her holiness and the influence on the Church of her teaching on spirituality.

Thérèse of Lisieux is one of the patron saints of the missions, not because she ever went anywhere, but because of her special love of the missions, and the prayers and letters she gave in support of missionaries. This is a reminder to all of us who feel we can do nothing, that it is the little things that keep God's kingdom growing. ❖ [americancatholic.org & catholic.org]

On the Lighter Side



What me? ... Oh no, I'm done praying... I thought you were still praying!