NEWSLETTER

Province of Sri Lanka / Pakistan

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Message from the Province Leader

Dear Sisters and Partners in Mission,

I am happy to begin this message quoting from the homily given by Pope Francis on 1st January at the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God.

“The New Year begins under the sign of the Holy Mother of God, under the sign of the Mother. A mother’s gaze is the path to rebirth and growth. We need mothers, women who look at the world not to exploit it, but so that it can have life”

“At the beginning of the New Year, then, let us place ourselves under the protection of this woman, the Mother of God, who is also our mother. May she help us to keep and ponder all things, unafraid of trials and with the joyful certainty that the Lord is faithful and can transform every cross into a resurrection,”

This invitation well resonates with our desire as a Province and as a Congregation.

Our Constitutions states very clearly our services towards women in Article 6: “Our specific orientation is to girls and women whose condition in life cries out for the healing and salvation which Jesus alone can bring”

"How much violence is directed against women? Enough! To hurt a woman is to insult God, who from a woman took on our humanity," the Pope continues referring to the Christian belief that Jesus was the Son of God. “Look at the world not to exploit it but so that it can have life. Women who, seeing with the heart, can combine dreams and aspirations with concrete reality…”

We are all aware that locally and globally we live in uncertainty and in a difficult time due to the pandemic. Many are afraid of the future and are burdened with economic crisis, social and personal problems, ecological crisis and all types of injustices.

We have set directions and initiated a path as Sisters and Partners in Mission to address these issues through our Congregational Chapter Theme, **“Drawn by love, and Passionate for Justice”.**

The call from the Congregational Chapter is to offer the best of ourselves with a new vision crossing boundaries.

In what way do I, we, need to radically transform ourselves to offer the best of ourselves to God and to all humanity?

Am I aware of the **“extraordinary suffering of our humanity”** and find creative and effective ways to work together to eliminate it?

As Pope Francis says in order to accomplish this we need to extinguish the fire of hatred within our own selves towards one another in our Communities, towards the Province, the Country and the World at large. Peace, demands concrete actions. It is built by being attentive to the least, by promoting justice, with the courage to forgive.

In order that this New Year be fruitful, let us stay focused, develop a positive attitude and be passionate with our dreams.

“This is a New Year – a new beginning, and things will change. “Whatever the New Year holds in store, let’s be together, united, one in heart and mind”

Sr. Maryanne Perera
Province Leader

I FELT THAT I HAD WITNESSED A MIRACLE...



Getting on the train, nervous and excited was the teenager whom we call Tom. Nervous and excited – but why? – you will soon see why.

He told him that he had just been released from reform school, where he had spent three years for robbery and other crimes. He realized how wrong he had been and he just wanted a second chance to say sorry. He felt sorry – extremely sorry - for letting his family down, and he hoped that they would forgive him. They had never visited him or written to him during the three years but he did realize that neither of his parents could write, and that they were too poor to be able to come to the reformatory which was a long distance from their home. He wanted so much to be able to go home, but he wanted to make sure that he was welcome. He wrote to his parents and asked them to give him a sign. His home was just beside the railway track and they had an old apple tree at the end of the garden. If they wanted him back, all they had to do was to put a white ribbon on the apple tree. If he was not welcome home, they were to put nothing on the tree and he would just pass on to some town where he knew nobody and no one knew him.

As the train was close to home, he was so nervous that he could not look and he asked his new found friend to look for him. After a while, the man caught Tom by the shoulder with joy on his face and said, “Just take a look!” Tom looked and saw the old apple tree and it was wearing not just one ribbon but a whole host of ribbons. Tears ran down Tom’s face and the bitterness and anger of the years washed away. The other man said later, “I felt that I had witnessed a miracle.”

This is an invitation to each of us from Tom’s parents.

Let us step forward to offer mercy and compassion.

This will be a sign to the new born baby and reminding us the readers – ‘the Lord is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works’.

Sr. Cecilia Anthonipillai

Beatitudes of Reconciliation

Blessed are those who are willing to enter into the process of being healed,

for they will become healers.

Blessed are those who recognize their own inner violence,
for they will come to know non-violence.

Blessed are those who can forgive self,
for they will become forgivers.

Blessed are those who are willing to let go of selfishness and self-centeredness,
for they will become a healing presence.

Blessed are those who listen with compassion,
for they will become compassionate.

Blessed are those who are willing to enter into conflict,
for they will find resolution .

Blessed are those who know their interdependence with all of creation,
for they will become unifiers.

Blessed are those who live a contemplative life stance,
for they will find God in all things.

Blessed are those who strive to live these beatitudes,
for they will be reconcilers.

Sr. Cecilia Anthonipillai

The Lady in blue



The lady in blue
her eyes ever so true
Her smile is heart-warming
Her heart is always loving
the beauty she has is unimaginable
But the beauty within her is ever greater
She is humble as well as powerful
she is kind and so merciful

Her skin is soft and dark, and the stars upon it twinkle even brighter than the ones in the sky. The crown upon her head placed by God, the moon below her crushes the devil, the Son behind gives her power as she Unites us to one another.

Sheranya Silva
8 S2 St. Bridget's Convent

Minutes can save lives…

A Stroke occurs as a result of sudden disturbance of the blood supply to a particular area of the brain resulting in death or damage of the brain nerve cells. Over 85% of strokes are due to a blockage of a blood vessel and the balance 15% due to rupture of a blood vessel. Stroke is the third leading cause of hospital deaths and leading cause of adult-onset disability worldwide.

We must recognize ~~of~~ stroke symptoms and the need for immediate treatment, because the permanent damage could be completed 'within hours'. The best way to remember sudden signs of a stroke is "**FAST**" **FAST** which means,

F stand for **FACE Drooping**

A stand for **ARM weakness**

S stand for **SPEECH difficulty**

T stand for **TIME to take immediate action, even if the symptoms resolve**.



If there are these symptoms above, we must rush to the nearest hospital, not to the family doctor. The patient should be treated in a hospital equipped with a CT scanner as this helps to identify the type of stroke and initiate treatment promptly.

Stroke can be prevented by following 10 simple steps to control the risk factors. They are;

- Know your blood pressure and control it.
- Do moderate exercise for 20 – 30 minutes at least 5 times a week
- Eat a healthy balanced diet rich in fresh vegetables and fruit and low in processed foods
- Know your blood cholesterol level and control it.
- Maintain a healthy weight with a normal body mass index and waist circumference
- Know your blood glucose level and control diabetes
- Identify and treat irregular heart rhythm known as Atrial Fibrillation
- Manage stress and depression
- Stop smoking and avoid smoky environments
- Reduce alcohol intake

Learn how to recognize a stroke using the simple "FAST" method. Every second and every minute counts as "Time is brain!"

Article from the Daily Mirror

"Everyone's talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God's creation." (Laudato si)

The entire universe is challenged by COVID 19 and every one faces uncertainty in life. The Women face many hardships in life. From time to time there are many changes taking place in the environment. Often human activities contribute towards natural disasters and other environmental pollution. Our responsibility is to empower each other so that we will be able to protect the environment. In four of our religious communities the sisters have started home gardening using organic fertilizer. This has paved the way for women in the village to begin their own home gardens and have vegetables for their daily usage. This is a support for them as many of the families are facing financial issues due to COVID 19. We see women in the villages have increased their interest in home gardening. The North Central Province of Sri Lanka has a dry climate and less water facilities for cultivation. Cultivating aloe vera is one of the health friendly and income generating activities. The sisters have selected women who are from Anuradhapura who belong to the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. They are selected from ten families and given financial support to begin the aloe vera cultivation. Aloe vera is one of the plants that suits any climate. Thereby the women will be able to improve their financial condition through this cultivation. In the future due to the COVID 19 pandemic people might face unexpected health issues and other problems in life. Aloe vera releases oxygen to the environment. This also is useful to maintain a good health condition. We hope to motivate students to use aloe vera drinks rather than other soft drinks that contain artificial flavors. We have planned to conduct motivational programmes at different levels to inspire women and children to use environmental and health friendly products. This will help to reduce so many non-communicable diseases in society. We are invited to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Our wish is that women and girls live happily in a healthy environment.



Sr. Chrishanthi Basil

An Awareness Programme for Parents



On the 6th of November the parents of St. Sebastian's Balika Maha Vidyalaya were given the opportunity to participate in an awareness programme based on Family Life. "Sonduru Kedella"; an educational and awareness programme conducted by Mr. Mahinda Namal. Due to the prevailing pandemic situation only a limited number of parents were able to participate. This programme provided the parents with the opportunity to look back into their family lives and be educated on how they could be more loving, caring and responsible carrying out their duties with committed and dedication. The programme included musical entertainment, with songs performed by two of our talented students, which made the parents ponder about the role they play in the lives of children, awakening memories of their life experiences. The music was provided by two parents and an invitee to add colour to this event. The Ja-ela branch of Aviva Insurance Company sponsored the programme. Touched by the talents of the students, the manager of the Insurance Company presented them gifts. The programme was an eye opener for many parents. They were very grateful for organising this sort of event as they rarely get a chance to sit awhile and ponder on their lives apart from enjoying live music. This programme undoubtedly gave them a chance to focus on their present life styles and be more loving and caring parents providing their children a better educational environment at home in the future thus paving the way for better tomorrow.

Sr. Mary Shyamalie Fernando

Online Learning Space Creating Progress

"Let us learn to skillfully draw good out of what would otherwise cause us harm."
Mary Euphrasia Pelletier

The Covid-19 pandemic outbreak forced many schools and colleges to remain closed temporarily. This has severely impacted the education ecosystem in Sri Lanka. Over the last year or so students have been confined to their homes due to lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed by the government. Covid 19 has created a tremendous impact on learning patterns as well as unmourns psychological symptoms in students and parents. It can be seen as a hidden blessing to identify the creative thoughts and hidden talents of children and way to join a busy family schedule into a very compressed home environment. Rapid development in technology has made distance education possible, increasing one's ability to use a computer or phone connected to a network that offers the possibility to learn from anywhere, anytime, in any rhythm, with any means. Online learning can be termed as a tool that can make the teaching–learning process more student-centered, more innovative, and even more flexible.

The education also involves, the distinct but complementary aspect of the school's religious dimension of liturgy and prayer life of the school community. The pandemic has created quality family time moving with the guidance of the Heavenly Father. The Feast of the Scared Heart of Jesus was celebrated with guidance and support of the students and parents. Children were able to show their love and affection towards religion and come on a virtual platform to offer their prayers.

In the month of May, it's common for parishes to have a daily recitation of the Rosary during the month, and many erect a special May altar with a statue or picture of Mary as a reminder of Mary's month. These possessions are normally held inside or outside the Parish. Additionally, it's a long-standing tradition to crown the statue of Mother Mary during May – a custom known as May Crowning. The 'unique task' has become hard in the present situation. However, Collegiate Schools Prefects' Union organized a tremendous virtual programme to honour and continue the tradition of the month of May. The 'Little Shepherding's gathered in front of their computers, smart phone screens with the rosary to offer their respect to Mother Mary for her maternal care and protection.

Creativity and art are a gift from God. Creativity is an inherent part of learning too. Whenever we try something new, there is an element of creativity involved. There are different levels of creativity, and creativity develops with both time and experience. For this reason, the principals and the staff arranged many social work programmes to move the children's mind away from stress in this situation. They organized an Art Workshop to train and support the primary students to bring out visual images on paper in a myriad of coloures. It paved a way for most of the students to identify what their true talent is.

"When we empower girls hungry for education, we cultivate women who are emboldened to effect change within their communities and globally." – Meghan Mercale –
Catholic schooling has indicated a large impact in the changing role of women for centuries. There is evidence of remarkable commitment to the full development of girls in a global society. Similarly, all Catholic Girls' schools have also contributed powerfully to the personal and educational patriarchal society. The Girl Child Programme was introduced to the whole school despite religion, race and the age of the child. It was embodied with speeches, essays, and many other activities. Videos reflected the quality of the performance of the students. The children managed to express their view on different topics especially on how this pandemic affected their life and what new experiences they had in the concept of 'school classroom' freely and knowledgeably.

Furthermore, the pandemic has taught us the wisdom in the African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child, and in the Chinese proverb that a child's life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark. We've realized just how much we need each other. As a result, the Sheperdian family created an impact on each and every child and created unforgettable memories of virtual learning which made them feel special in being a guiding angel to them. That's what truly matters.

Miss Sanduni Akalanka – Good Shepherd Convent Kotahena

Virtual Experiences of the Lawrencian's

We as a Catholic School always believe that our main objective is to educate our students to be groomed with wisdom and knowledge to bear witness to the Word of God, build faith communities, celebrate through worship, and serve others in the future. It is also the goal of our school to assist parents/guardians to bring out to society youngsters, who are well educated and capable of taking productive leadership.

During the year 2021 in spite of the schools being closed due to the pandemic we were committed to academic excellence, fostering the intellectual development of our children and organizing programmes in keeping with our goal.

During this time, the students had to be handled intelligently and with understanding, so that nothing but the best is achieved and make them grow to the fullest potential that lies within them while making sure that this isolation may not affect these young children mentally and physically.

In order to obtain academic excellence during the time of lockdown virtual classes were held according to a specially prepared time table through Google Meet. Time tables were prepared paying special attention to the fact that some families do not have multiple devices for more than one child to attend virtual classes simultaneously. The teachers were guided carefully by the Principal and a few resource personnel to accomplish this task to the best of our ability.

A Home Based Second Term Assessment was conducted during the months of July and August where parents were requested to act as invigilators for their children with the main objective of making both parents and teachers aware of the effectiveness of online classes. All answer scripts were directed to the respective subject teachers for correction. A special report sheet indicating the marks obtained together with the corrected answer scripts were then handed over to the parents during the Month of October.

Other than completing the subject syllabi, the children were motivated to participate in competitions giving them the opportunity to express their views through debates, open discussions, oratory, drama, song, and art at Sectional Level. These activities were intended to help the students grow in personality in spite of being home bound. We submitted 82 Performance Videos for the British Lanka Virtual Speech Festival 2021.

"International Day of the Girl Child" Competitions – We encouraged and forwarded digital posters created by our students for the Poster Competition and also forwarded Video Speeches for the Speech Competition. Our congratulations go out to Diandra Lewis for winning the 1st place in the Digital Poster Competition in the Senior Category.

DTECH Debate Competition – Inter House Online Debate Competition was organized by the Board of Prefects 2021. Speak to Lead – Online Speech Competition for Grades 6,7 & 8 were organized by the Board of Prefects 2021.

With the aim of developing the leadership skills of our students, a two-day Leadership Seminar was conducted by Rev. Fr. Randil Fernando for the Prefects of 2021. The Prefects' Investiture was held on March 25th.

The Prefects were guided and given equal opportunities to participate in Leadership Development Programmes that were conducted virtually. Many opportunities were given to the Board of Prefects to organize various virtual programmes in order to build leadership skills during this time of lockdown. We thus realised that even though the prefects were home bound their leadership qualities have grown immensely.

We place on record and congratulate one of our students in grade 11, Amanda Nugara for being selected to the Organizing Committee of the "International Day of the Girl Child". This also gave a special opportunity for the young girls to develop their leadership qualities.

We understand that God had empowered us to make a difference in our lives in many ways. Religion we believe is an integral part of education; hence we devoted considerable time and energy to give the students a deep spiritual and moral formation even though the school has been closed for more than 8 months during this year.

Sr. Dilrukshi Koskandawalagedara

The tasks successfully completed amidst of Global Pandemic

The year 2021 dawned with uncertainty due to the global pandemic. The grace of our Shepherd God and the constant intercession of our Holy Mother has helped us to carry out our mission on a positive pathway filled with strength, courage and motivation.

Inspired by our motto 'In Thy Light' the administration and the academic staff upheld the teaching charism. I would like to place before you the tasks successfully completed in the academic and non-academic fields.

Regular online lessons were conducted through a Learning Management System, covering all subjects. In the Secondary Section the Main subjects and Basket subjects were taught in alternate weeks. Terme end Evaluation was successfully carried out virtually and physically following the Covid 19 health guidelines. The term end evaluation for O/L and A/L classes was carried out successfully making it a 'great exam experience'. Workshops were conducted for Grade 5 Scholarship candidates on a virtual platform by the members of the staff. Virtual educational tours and exhibitions for art and craft were held to break the monotony of formal learning and enhance creativity among students, especially in the Primary grades.

Non-Academic

A webinar was organized on "Mental Health" with few guest speakers to help students overcome the adverse mental health effects due to the Pandemic. Counselling sessions were conducted grade wise by the counselling unit of the school, for both students and parents.

Students took part in Literary competitions organized by the Negombo Educational Zone.

The Board Prefects organized a talent competition "Voyage" – a showcase of talent for the students with aesthetic skills this was appraised by many.

The Girl Guides virtual camp was held for 3 days which was coloured by a virtual camp fire ceremony.

Children's Day on the 1st of October was celebrated virtually, organized by the teachers in a colourful manner. Students enjoyed presenting their skills and talents.

Teachers' Day was celebrated on the 6th of October virtually. The Ave Marian family joined in a Eucharistic celebration telecast live via school YouTube channel. The celebrant was by Rev. Fr. Gihan Gunathilake of Faith Animation Mission. This was followed by some class events. Some of our teachers and students actively participated in the Girl Child Programme organized by the Good Shepherd congregation.

Christion values and devotions

The school is 'a strong arm in inculcating Christian values among students.

To mark the Josephian Year, St. Joseph's Feast was celebrated on the 19th of March in the school auditorium.

The Primary section of the school conducted May novenas via zoom. The Rosary, Litany and a reflection by a priest was carried on daily.

St. Mary Euphrasia's birthday was celebrated virtually in July, sharing video clips, hymns and prayers.

The feast Sacred Heart of Jesus was celebrated in the month of June. Novenas were held throughout the month.

In the month of October students joined with their family in reciting the rosary which was conducted virtually by the Primary teachers.

On the 2nd of November Alms giving of dry rations were distributed among the 'less fortunate'.

A virtual retreat was held for the First Holy Communicants preparing to receive the sacrament and their parents by Rev. Fr. Priyashantha and Rev. Fr. Shelton Dias respectively.

The school has never failed to show their sympathy and empathy towards the needy and desperate. We have supported spiritually and financially those teachers, students and supporting staff who were badly affected by the Pandemic. We have taken necessary measures to be lenient on the fees payments for those who have faced the economic crisis.

It is with humble pride we mention that our school was able to support the congregation to purchase medical equipment in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. We were able to initiate in building the Covid Centre in Bolawalana which is a blessing to many.

We thank the Lord for His abundant blessings on our Alma Mater and look forward for his graces to walk ahead. His guidance and protection will never let fear decide our future.

Ave Maria Convent - Negombo

A Year in Review… St. Bridget's Primary School

2021 has proven to be an unprecedented year, changing our way of living whilst dealing with a myriad of challenges, yet our Primary school team 'left no stone unturned' in providing the finest experience to our students in providing a total education. The resurgence of COVID-19 resulted in island wide school closures as a means to curtail the spread.

In order to achieve a smoother transition to an online learning environment, the academic staff received an extensive training and subsequently teaching was undertaken remotely on digital platforms from the 1st of February. Special seminars were conducted for the students of grade 5 every Thursday as preparation for the scholarship examination. We aspired to raise the bar in every field, be it academic, extracurricular, sports, discipline or attitudes. The efforts taken to conduct extracurricular activities such as, Little Friends, orchestra, chess, choir, tennis, athletics and badminton have been very successful. In addition to the high-risk factor to physical health, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected our state of mind. Motivational sessions were conducted online for the staff members and their families by inspirational guest speakers every first Saturday of the month.



Keeping up with tradition, the Catholic students of each class honoured Our Blessed Mother during the month of May, by means of special Marian devotions. Students were encouraged to set up May altars and participate in a prayer service on the 31st of May, during which a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary was crowned. In the month of June, consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was also done virtually. Students, of respective grades, clad in white, participated in fervent prayer.

An art exhibition under the theme 'Different Strokes 2021' was held for the students of grades 3, 4 & 5. It was indeed an honour to have Rev. Sr. Rohini Mendis, Rev. Sr. Alexandra Mendis and Rev. Sr. Jeewani Martinas joining this glamorous virtual event as our Chief Guests.

On the 1st of October, in view of International Children's Day, each class conducted a prayer service inviting a priest to lift up their spirits. This was followed by another session devoted to fun and frolic organized by the respective class teacher. On the 6th of October, A Teachers' Day prayer service, followed by entertainment items were organized by the prefects. The students of each class too had arranged a series of performances to delight and appreciate their teachers.

On the 23rd of October, a motivating leadership development programme was held for the prefects. The keynote address was delivered by Rev. Fr. Randil Fernando. This undeniably prompted our prefects to equip themselves with the skills needed, to be able to formulate and implement effective leadership strategies in their school career. In celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child, speech competitions were held for the students of grades 3, 4 and 5. With the easing of travel restrictions, school recommenced for the Primary Section on the 25th of October subject to adherence of health guidelines. Rev. Fr. Asitha Hettiarachchi conducted a session for the members of the staff which certainly kindled a renewed enthusiasm for this profession. The long overdue Prefects investiture ceremony was held in the Primary School Hall on the 5th of November. In compliance with social distancing requirements, the participants at this event were limited.

The faith Animation Team spared no effort to conduct preparatory classes every Wednesday for the first communicants, so that they receive the Lord into their hearts while being in a state of grace. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was administered to the present grade 4 students on the 23rd of November. Because of restrictions on social gatherings, three First Holy Communion Masses were held on the 26th and 27th of November.

In anticipation of ending the year on a brighter note, The Primary Choir of St. Bridget's Convent endeavours to proclaim Christ's birth through music; virtually. Although we live in anomalous times, the message of Christmas still resonates strongly throughout our school community.

We look forward to yet another fruitful year ahead!

Ms. Amreeta Perera & Ms. Shenuri Thomas

The Year of 2021 of St. Bridget's Covent

The academic year for the New Year began on the 25th of January, 2021. The schools were reopened with new hope with favorable Covid 19 statistics in many parts of Sri Lanka. The students were allowed to get back to school in limited groups and the academic activities were carried on physically with no interruption.

St. Bridget's Convent recorded another milestone in its history on the 25th of March. The new building was dedicated to St. John Eudes. The opening ceremony was simple and meaningful, adhering to health guidelines.

The island wide lockdown and the sudden closure of schools once again limited all planned activities in the school calendar to virtual space only.

While conducting the lessons according to a well-planned timetable, the teachers worked hard to make sure that the online sessions and exams are conducted in a way that would continue to keep the students engaged in the sessions actively.

During the period of lockdown, renewal programmes for both students and teachers were conducted with the spiritual guidance of the Rev. Fathers of the Faith Animation Team. The school choir conducted a special Easter Programme spreading the vibes of new hope among the school family. The feast days of the Crowning of our Lady as well as the Sacred Heart were also celebrated virtually in order to continue the tradition.

The feast of St. Mary Euphrasia was celebrated virtually on the 31st of July and the students and teachers gained a wonderful spiritual experience while learning about the selfless, dedicated life story of the foundress of the congregation of the sisters of the Good Shepherd.

Along with these spiritual activities, the preparatory classes for the students who are to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation were also conducted.

In the month of October, in view of International Children's Day, a virtual concert was organized giving the students an opportunity of showcasing their talents in a truly creative manner. The support rendered by the parents as well as the teachers in organizing this event is much appreciated. On the same day, the Teachers' Day programme was also conducted in appreciation to the teachers for their dedication and hard work especially during this challenging period in time.

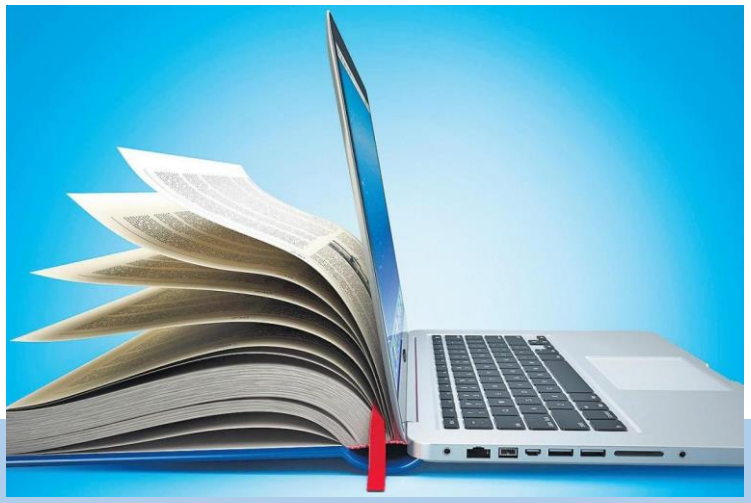
The school rendered its fullest support towards the preparation and celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child which was held on the 11th of October with the active participation of the students and teachers.

The Prefects' Investiture Ceremony which is usually held along with the School Day Celebration in the month of February had to be postponed, owing to the prevailing situation. It was held on the 12th of November with a simple ceremony and limited number of participants.

The Holy Rosary was recited virtually as a part of our spiritual activities throughout the year.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of Mary our Mother has helped, the Principal, staff and students of St. Bridget's Convent, to make the academic year faith filled and meaningful.

Mrs. Augusta Anthonymuththu - St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo 7



INTERMEDIATE COVID CENTRE FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD SRI LANKA

“Uphold each other in Love " (SME)



The COVID 19 pandemic unlike other viruses has had disastrous effects on the whole world. We are all aware that the frontline medical professionals do their best to protect people. This critical situation urged some of our sisters to volunteer their generous services to save the lives of our sisters, children and adults in our institutions, putting themselves at risk.

Here I would like to share the journey we have embarked on in caring for the covid positive patients in our Province.

It is Dr. Raphael Fernando, the visiting physician to our elderly sisters who sounded the alarm of the upcoming pandemic crisis and motivated the sisters to be prepared to face the challenge with hope and courage. It was his idea that paved the way to have a separate place for the Good Shepherd Sisters to care for our covid positive patients. It was no easy task. Many unfamiliar, unexpected realities had to be handled: finding a suitable place, finance, providing facilities, training nurses and care givers, handling fears and anxiety, etc.

The moment this proposal was made by the Province Leadership Team many sisters in the province, offered their services to navigate the project with passion, courage and generosity. Each person contributed to this massive task in big and small ways. During the 2nd and, 3rd waves of the pandemic the country was in crisis, and as a province we too were affected by the pandemic. The building adjoining the ‘Serene Pastures’, Retreat House, Bolawalana was officially dedicated on the 6th of August, 2021 to this service. It was a little effort because the house could accommodate only four patients. But by the 23rd of August, the number of patients kept increasing and we had to occupy the whole building of ‘Serene Pastures’.

The next step was the registration with the Health Ministry. On the 25th of August, we succeeded in getting it approved and the house was named the 'INTERMEDIATE COVID CENTRE FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD SRI LANKA. Nearly twenty sisters were treated at the ICC, Bolawalana. This branched out also to other places like Child Development Centers and the Elders Homes which were affected by the pandemic. They were also given medical support from this centre. We also received the necessary assistance from the Health Care Ministry to uplift the lives of our loved participants in the mission.

As St. Euphrasia rightfully said: *"Uphold each other in Love"* at times, we were able to be doctors, nurses, mothers, sisters and friends to our sisters by assuring them that we are one family and they are precious to us.

Words of gratitude from the sisters who received treatment at the ICC, Bolawalana...

“The decisions you made and your quick responses at this time were a great support to us”.

“I was vulnerable during my sickness, but your love, concern, care, thoughtfulness, and your words of consolation strengthened me. It is only because of all of you I recovered soon. Within this isolation, I felt connected”.

“Thank you so much for every act you did for us. Words are insufficient to thank you for the incredible service you rendered”.

“Your dedicated service shows how loving you are. I appreciate your help and concern towards us”.

Sr. M. Sithumini Fernando



The Invincible Girl Children of the Good Shepherd Schools in the Sri Lanka/ Pakistan Province



The Invincible girl children of the Good Shepherd schools in the Sri Lanka/ Pakistan Province, commemorated The International Day of the Girl Child (IDG) on the 11th of October, 2021.

Every year, the UNICEF selects a theme for the Day of the Girl Child focusing on finding solutions for the most relevant and current issues faced by girls, worldwide. The theme unique to this year's commemoration of IDG is "Digital Generation Our Generation".

Taking up the challenge of adapting to the new normal alongside the pandemic, girls from 7 private Good Shepherd schools in Sri Lanka, namely ; St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo 7, Ave Maria Convent, Negambo, St. Lawrence's Convent, Colombo 6, Good Shepherd Convent, Kandy, Good Shepherd Convent, Kotahena, Good Shepherd Convent, Panadura and St. Thomas' Girls' College, Matale, conducted an effective and informative online forum on the 11th of October, celebrating The International Day of the Girl Child - 2021 under the immense support and guidance of Rev. Sr. Alexandra Mendis and Rev. Sr. Siriya Pushpam Saverin the link Counselors of Education, along with Rev. Sr. Sujani Fernando and Rev. Sr. Sudarika Fernando.

The programme was conducted via Zoom involving over 200 participants including Rev. Sisters from the Sri Lanka/ Pakistan Province (From schools, Montessori's, Good Shepherd child development centers and other Good Shepherd institutes), teachers from all Good Shepherd institutes, up to 30 students from each Good Shepherd school and girls from the Good Shepherd child development centers. The Session was also live streamed on YouTube for an audience of over 1000 viewers.

The honourable presence of Ms. Onalie De Silva Ariyabandu at the programme left us with a sense of enlightenment. Acknowledging the questions put forward by the girls in the forum, Ms. Onalie during her segment of the session discussed current affairs related to the use of the digital platform by girls and women.

The rest of the programme consisted of fun performances and important presentations signifying the value of the precious girl child, and discussions of further projects to be carried out for IDG 2021 in the Good Shepherd Sri Lanka/ Pakistan Province.

For a successful conclusion of the virtual forum, the Organizing Committee for IDG 2021 in the Sri Lanka/ Pakistan Province convey their heartfelt thanks to the Province leader, Rev. Sr. Maryanne and the whole Good Shepherd family which we are all proud and happy to be a part of. Digital revolution? Not without girls!

Together, let's bridge the digital gender divide to accelerate change.

Ms. Kavya Bandaranayake
Co-Representative of the Sri Lanka/ Pakistan Province of the Organizing Committee of Good Shepherd Asia Pacific





Joy to the world!

When they saw the Star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy! (Mt 2:10)

The Christmas celebration of our loving children of Negombo Ave Maria House of Children was celebrated on the 30th of November 2021, with the participation of the principal and teachers, following strictly the health guidelines prevailing in the country. It comprised of dances, carol singing and Christmas dramas which helped us to commemorate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was nice to see all the happy and bright smiles on each and every child in our preschool. We are grateful to all our parents who were always supportive to us to make this event a success. The success of the events of the day will no doubt make it 'A Day to remember'.

Teachers of Ave Maria House of Children - Negombo





අනාගතය දකින්නට වෙර දරන්නී

අපි වවමු රට නගමු සංකල්පය කවරදාටත් වඩා අද ආන්දෝළනාත්මකව සිරිලක් මවගේ දු දරුවන්ගේ දෙසවනට වැටී ඇත. එය යථාර්තයක් කරන්නට වෙර දරන පිරිස් බොහෝය. වසර දහසක් පුරා මේ සරු සාර පොළොව ස්වයංපෝෂිත කළ අපගේ මුතුන්මිත්තන් හා එක්වන ගෙවිලියකි. දෙවිඳුන් දුන් සුවය ශක්තිය අශීර්වාදයක් කරගත් ඇය නිරතුරු යාච්ඤාවෙන් දෙවිඳුන් හා ඒකාත්මික වෙමින් දහම් දැනුමෙන් බාල මහළු වැඩිහිටි සැමගේ අධ්‍යාත්මය අස්වද්දන්නට වෙහෙස දරණ අතරේ අප පුන්‍ය භූමිය වගාබිමක් කරන්නට අමතක නොකරන්නීය. වත්තෙ ඵලදායී පැලයක් හිටවන්න යන ඔවදන ඇයට හමුවන සැම කෙනෙකුටම දෙමින් මුඩු බිම් ගොවි බිම් කරන්නට වචනයෙන් ක්‍රියාවෙන් එතුමිය නිරතුරු වෙහෙස දරයි. සිනහමුසු මුහුණින් ගොවි බිම වටා යන ඇය මලක් ඵලයක් දුටු විට අත්විඳින සතුට නිරාමිසය . ඔබගේ දෑත් දෙපා මනස සේම ශාරීරික සුවය දෙවිඳු වරමින් තව තවත් නිරෝගී වි බලසම්පන්න වේවායි අප පතන්නේ වෙන කවරෙකටවත් නොව ඔබටයි ආදර එළිසබෙත් මාරි සොයුරියේ. ඔබට ජේසු පිහිටයි.



වැලිවේරිය පවිදි භවුල

60 වැනි ස්වර්ණ පැවිදි දිවියට සුභ පැතුම්

දේව පුත්‍රයාගේ සෑමවිටම පූර්ණ අවධානයට යොමු වුයේ පියාණන් වහන්සේගේ කැමැත්ත ඉටු කිරීමත් , උන්වහන්සේ එතුමන්ට භාර දුන් කාර්යය සපුරාලීමත්ය.ඒ හෙයින් උන්වහන්සේ එක්තරා දිනයකදී උන්වහන්සේ ඉමහත් ලෙස ආදරය කළ ගරු. මේරි ටෙක්ලා පැවිදි සොයුරියට උන්වහන්සේ සදහා සරණ බැඳුමකින් බැඳෙන්නට ආරාධනා කළේය.

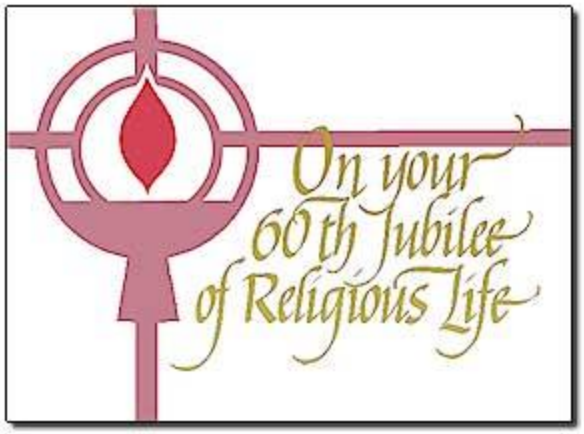
ඒ මීට අවුරුදු 60 කට පෙරය. ඇත්තෙන්ම එවකට මිට වඩා කැපවීමට අපහසු ගැඹුරු අනුස්මරණිය ජීවිතයකි පැවිදි දිවිය. මා එලෙස කියනුයේ ඇගේ වැඩිමහල් සොහොයුරියන් ලැබූ පුහුණුවත් , එවකට ගත කළ පැවිදි දිවියත් ගැනය. ඇත්තෙන්ම ඔවුන් පුදුමාකාර ලෙසින් , කීකරුකමිනුත් , දිළිඳු කමිනුත් , ජ්වලිත කමිනුත් , කැප වී ජීවත් වී අප හට ආදර්ශයක් දුන්නේය.

ඒ වගේම ඔවුන්ගේ පැවිදි දිවිය දෙස බලා , ඔවුන් පසු පස්සේ පැමිණි අයගෙන් අපගේ පැවිදි පංතිය පිරී ඉතිරි ගියාය. එලෙසින් පැවිදි දිවියේ ආදර්ශමත් කැපවුන උදාර සේවයක් ගත කරමින් , 60 වැනි ස්වර්ණ ජයන්තිය සමරනු ලැබූ ගරු. ටෙක්ලා සොහොයුරියනි, ඔබ

- ආත්මයන් ශුද්ධවත් කිරීම සදහා වෙහෙස වෙමින්ද,
- නැති වූ ආත්මයන් සොයා යමින්ද ,
- දෙවිදුන්ට ආත්මයන් දිනා දෙමින්ද
- ශාරීරිකව ආත්මිකව ඔවුන් පෝෂණය කරමින්ද ,
- පව්කරුවන්ට කමාවේ හස්තය දිගු කරමින්ද
- බාලයාගේ සිට මහල්ලා දක්වා තමන්ට නියම වූ සියල්ල සතුටු සිතින් ඉටු කරමින්,

සැමගේ ජීවිතය ස්වර්ගය සහ මිහිතලය යා කරන්නාවූ පාලමක්ද වූවාය.

එම උතුම් ජීවිතයේ භාග්‍ය වෙනුවෙන්, සිය මානුෂික සිතුම් පැතුම් , ආශාවන් සහ මානුෂික ආදර හැගුම් , ත්‍යාජ කර සිය පූර්ණ කාලයද , මුළු ශක්තින්ද තමන් ඉතිරි නොකරගෙන උන්වහන්සේගේ කැමැත්ත පරිදි තම පැවිදි දිවියේ 60 වැනි ස්වර්ණමය දිවිය සමරන ගරු මේරි. ටෙක්ලා සොහොයුරියට මුළු හදවතින්ම සුභාශිංසනය කරමින් , තවත් කාලයක් ශාරීරිකව , ආත්මිකව දිවි ගෙවන්නට වරම් පතන්නේ ,



ගරු . සුසිලා කන්‍යා සොහොයුරිය
සමගින් වැලිහේන පැවිදි හවුල.

සානුකම්පිත දයා සේවය

“මා රැකවරණය සමිඳා වේ. මට හිඟයක් නොමැතේ. නිල් තණ බිම් මත රඳවන්නේ සමිඳු එඬේරා වේ.”

කොරෝනා වසංගතයේ ආක්‍රමණය නිසා දෙවසරක පමණ කාලයක් අප මිසම් වල හා අප දූත සේවාවන්ගේ යම් පසුබැසීමක් පැවතියද යම් ආකාරයකින් ජනතාව හා සම්බන්ධ වීමට පැවිදි සොහොයුරියන් ලෙස අප භාග්‍ය ලද්දෙමු. එලෙසම සෑම මොහොතකම තමනට හැකි සේ අපගේ අවැසියාවන් සපුරාලීමටද ගිහි සැදැහැවත් ජනතාව ක්‍රියා කල බවද සතුටින් ප්‍රකාශ කරමු.

දේවස්ථානයේ දිව්‍ය පූජාව පැවැත්වීමට අවසර නොතිබුන කාලය තුල අධ්‍යාත්මික පිපාසය තුළ දෙව්මැදුරට හා කන්‍යාරාමයට පැමිණෙන සැදැහැවතුන් සඳහා ඕනෑම මොහොතක නිසි සූදානමකින් පසුව දිව්‍ය සත්ප්‍රසාද වහන්සේ ලබා දීමට කටයුතු කිරීම තුළ දිව්‍ය සත්ප්‍රසාදීය පේසු වෙතට ජනතාව ලඟා කරවීමට ලැබීම අප ලත් මහත් වරප්‍රසාදයකි. එලෙසම දේවස්ථානයට පැමිණිය නොහැකි වයස් ගත හා රෝගී ජනතාවට නිවෙස් කරා ගොස් දිව්‍ය සත්ප්‍රසාද වහන්සේ දානය කරමින් ඔවුනට ඇහුම්කන් දීමට හා ශක්තිමත් කිරීමටද අපට මෙම කාලය තුළ අවස්ථාව ලැබිණි.

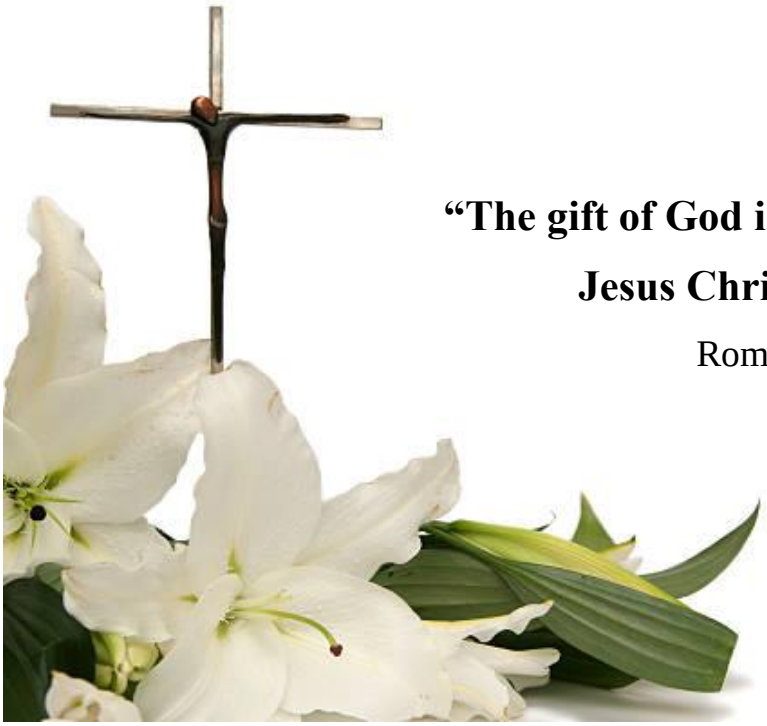
විශේෂාකාරයෙන් කතෝලික දහම වැළඳ ගැනීම සඳහා එනම් වැඩිහිටි ප්‍රසාද ස්නාපනය සඳහා අප වෙත පැමිණෙන අන්‍යාගාමික වැඩිහිටියන් පහළොස් දෙනෙකු සඳහා කිතු දහම ඉගැන්වීම තුළ ප්‍රසාද ස්නාපනය ලබා දීමටද කටයුතු කළ අතර, එයින් පමණක් නොනැවතී ඔවුන්ගේ හා පවුල්වල දුක වේදනාවන්ට සංවේදී වෙමින්, ප්‍රශ්න අභියෝග සඳහා උපදෙස් ලබා දීමටත්, යාච්ඤා කිරීමටත් අපි යොමු වීමු. ඔවුන්ද නොකඩවා අප සොහොයුරියන් හා සබඳතාවය පවත්වා ගැනීමට යොමු වීම තුළ අප සේවය තවදුරටත් ඔවුනට ලබාදීමට හැකියාව ලදිමු.

කොරෝනා වෛරසයට සෘජුවම මුහුණ දුන් ජනතාව සමඟ දුරකථනයෙන් සම්බන්ධ වෙමින් ඔවුනට සවන් දෙමින්, යාච්ඤාව තුළ ශක්තිමත් කළ අතර අපට හැකි ලෙස අප සතු දේ ද්‍රව්‍යමය ලෙසින් බෙදා ගැනීමට ද කටයුතු කිරීමට අපට හැකියාව ලදිමු. කොරෝනා වසංගතය නිසා ජීවිකාව අහිමි වූ පවුල් සමඟින්ද අපට හැකි සෑම අයුරින්ම ඔවුන්ගේ දුක වේදනාව බෙදා ගැනීමටද අපි යොමු වීමු. අපගේ පෙර පාසලේ දරු දැරියන් හතලිහකගෙන් යුත් පවුල් වල අය සමඟ නොකඩවා සබඳතාවය පවත්වා ගැනීමද තාක්ෂණය ඔස්සේ දිගටම ගුරුතුමියන් සමඟින් අධ්‍යාපනය ලබාදීමටද ක්‍රියා කළෙමු. එලෙසම ද්‍රව්‍යමය ලෙසින් ඉමහත් දේ කළ නොහැකි වුවද ඔවුනට සංවේදී වෙමින් මානසිකව හා අධ්‍යාත්මිකව ඔවුන් ගොඩනැංවීමට ලැබීමද ආශීර්වාදයක් සේ මෙහිලා සඳහන් කරමු.

හැකි සෑම අවස්ථාවකම අවමංගල්‍යයන් සඳහා නිවෙස් වලට ගොස් යාච්ඤා කර ශෝකය බෙදා ගැනීමට යොමු වූ අතර මෙම කාලය තුළ නිවෙස් බැහැදැකීමට නොහැකි වුවද දේවස්ථානයට පැමිණෙන හා මඟ තොටෙහි හමුවන අය සමඟද, කන්‍යාරාමයට අප හමුවන පිණිස එන කිතුනු /නොකිතුනු සැදැහැවතුන්ටද වචනයකින් හෝ සිනහවකින් හෝ සංග්‍රහ කරමින් සබඳතාවය ගොඩ නගා ගැනීමටද අපට හැකිවිය.

මෙම වසර පුරාවට දූත සේවාවක් ලෙස ඉමහත් දෙයක් කළ නොහැකි වුවද මෙම මිසම තුළ අප සිටීම තුළ යුග්‍රේසියා තුමියගේ ස්ප්‍රිතුව හා යහපත් එඬේරික චරිනාකම් හා සානුකම්පිත ප්‍රේමය මෙම මිසමේ කිතුනු හා නොකිතුනු ජනතාව සමඟ බෙදා ගනිමින් පිය දෙවිඳුන් වෙතට මිසම් වාසී ජනතාව ළඟා කරවීම බටගම යහපත් එඬේරික සොහොයුරියන් ලෙස අපගේ පරම අභිලාශය බවද සතුටින් ප්‍රකාශ කරමු.





“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 6:23

<u>October 2021 to January 2022</u>

Sr. Mary Eudoxie Hamy - 29. 10. 2021 (94 Years)

Sr. Mary Lucy Murugesu - 14. 12. 2021 (95 Years)

<u>Departed family members October 2021 to January 2022</u>

Sr. Freeda’s - Brother

Sr. Navamony’s - Brother

Sr. Susila Marian’s - Mother

Sr. Mangalika’s - Mother

Sr. Niranjani’s (TP) - Father

Sr. Jacintha Maria’s - Sister

Sr. Yvonne’s – Sister

Sr. Vianney’s - Sister