



ABOUT US

News Bulletin of the Diocese of Ratnapura

Volume:18 Issue: 02 April - June 2018

*He is Risen
Alleluia.
Happy Easter!*





The Closing Ceremony of the Life Education Program.

The Closing ceremony of Life Education program and English Course was held under the patronage of His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera, on the 24th of February 2018 at St. Anthony's Church, Hemingford



The Awarding Ceremony of the Nursery Teachers' Diploma Course.

This Ceremony was held under the auspices of Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera on 5th of March 2018 at the Pastoral Centre, Avissawella. Mrs.. Maria Groll and Little Star Friends of Austria also took part at this event



Bishop's Message



Per Crucem Ad Lucem Through the Cross to the light



Dear Rev Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

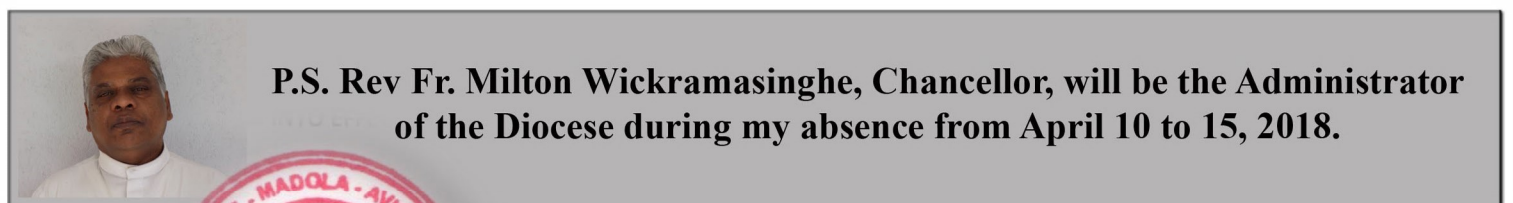
“CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED; ALLELUIA”

We have entered into the holy and joyous season of Easter, commemorating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. As clearly recorded in the gospels, Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday the first day of the week. Thus Sunday became the Christian day of worship. Further, the apparitions of the Risen Christ, after His Resurrection, to Mary Magdalene, His disciples and the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, took place, as specifically mentioned by the Evangelists, on Sunday the first day of the week. Thus, by His apparitions, Jesus proved to them that He is no longer dead, but living.

Therefore, it is obligatory on all of us, the clergy, religious and laity, to spend Sunday as a sacred day of worship for our sanctification, proclaiming not the dead Christ, but the living Christ. It is also recorded by St Luke, describing the Christ's appearance to the two disciples at Emmaus, that at the Breaking of Bread “their eyes were open and they recognized Him” (Luke 24, 31). Therefore it becomes clear that we experience the Resurrected Christ and His Presence at the Breaking of Bread, which means the Holy Eucharist. Hence the Church considers the participation at the Holy Eucharist on Sunday as obligatory on all Catholics. We as the clergy have to urge our people about the need and importance of attending Holy Mass on Sunday at least at the churches where it is regularly celebrated. Sunday Eucharist is nothing other than the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ by the shepherd and the flock.

As we celebrate this year as the Year of the Family, Easter should have a very special significance for our Diocese of Ratnapura. I wish that the Resurrection of Christ from death to life penetrate into our families in a powerful manner, so that they may rise from sadness to joy, from injury to healing, from division to unity, breakdown to renewal, from conflict to peace, and, above all, from sin to grace.

With the above-stated message, let me share with all of you my sentiments of joy during these sacred days of Easter, and prayerfully wish that the experience of the love, joy, peace, power and grace of the Resurrected Lord be always with you..



P.S. Rev Fr. Milton Wickramasinghe, Chancellor, will be the Administrator of the Diocese during my absence from April 10 to 15, 2018.



**+ Cletus C. Perera OSB
Bishop of Ratnapura**

Bishop's Diary

April 1:	Easter Sunday Mass at the Home for Elders, Kegalle.
April 2 – 4:	At Bulutota.
April 10 – 15:	In Israel with Neo-catechumanates.
April 16:	Awarding Ceremony at the English Academy at Bulutota.
April 17:	Meeting of the Catholic National Commission for Liturgy and Culture, in Colombo.
April 24 – 26:	Catholic Bishops' Conference Meeting in Kandy.
April 28:	Opening Service of Marriage Encounter Programme at Yatiyantota.



Pastoral Transfers and Appointments 2018

Rev. Fr. Charles Degaulle: Parish Priest, St. Mary's Church, Belihuloya

Rev. Fr. Piyal Fernando: Parish Priest, St. Francis Xavier's Church, Gurugalla

Rev. Fr. Gration Hapuarchchi: Parish Priest, St. Anthony's Church, Keerapathdeniya

Rev. Fr. Bastian Pillai: Parish Priest, St. Anne's Church, Kahawatta

Rev. Fr. Nishantha Rohan: Pro - tem Parish Priest, St. Lazarus' Church, Uthuwankanda

Rev. Fr. Reginald Nonis: Assistant at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Kudagama

Rev. Fr. Sampath Presad: Assistant at St. Mary's Church, Kegalle

Rev. Fr. Maria Joy: Assistant at Sts. Peter and Paul's Cathedral, Ratnapurra

Rev. Fr. P. Romesh: Coordinator, Plantation Sector Apostolate

Rev. Fr. Noel Rowel: On Sebatival Leave

Rev. Fr. Anushka Fernando: Pro-tem Director of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre

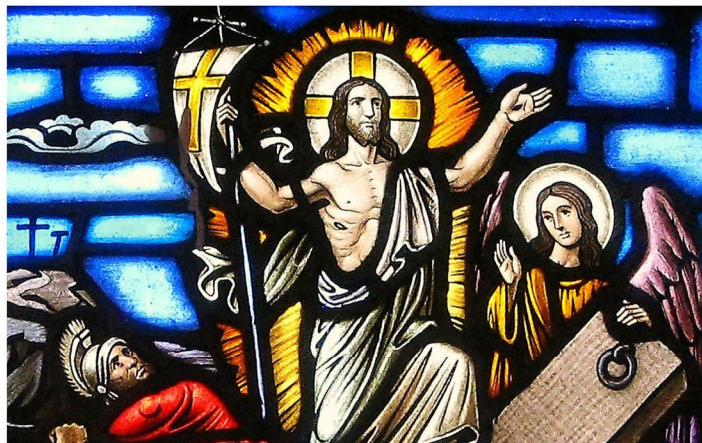
Rev. Fr. Anton Maurice: On Higher Studies, overseas

(All the transfers and appointments will come into effect the 2nd July 2018)



RESURRECTION !

What Does it Mean to Us ?



Easter Sunday is Celebrated by Christians in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ two days after Good Friday, the day of His crucifixion. According to the Christian religious belief, the resurrection of Christ is that ,after being put to death,Jesus rose again from the dead. The resurrection story appears in more than five locations in the Bible. Jesus Himself foretells his death and resurrection several times in the four Gospels. We, as Christians view the resurrection of Jesus as part of the plan of salvation and redemption by atonement for man's sin BUT what does this word really mean to us?

How often do we contemplate over this? Do we reflect on this word at least on the day we celebrate Easter ? Is it merely an act of Jesus rising from the dead?

Let me quote from John 12: 24 “ Truly, I tell you, unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” . Can there be a better quote which would help us ponder over the word “resurrection” ? Each one of us are called to fall to the earth and die in order to produce much fruit. It's clear that there is no resurrection without death. Therefore we, Christians are called to under go suffering, to bear our own crosses and die in Christ so that we may be blessed with a New Life in Christ.

We abstain from many things during the season of lent but surely with utmost difficulty. Some of us even have the habit of crossing out the dates in the calender to feel that the 40 days are passing soon . We eagerly wait to come out of those 40 days and then get back to our routine life with the same habits which are paused for a while as the Church demands it during the season of lent. If we look deep into ourselves we may understand the bitter truth that, we are NOT ready to transform. We are NOT ready to kill our wrong doings in order to turn a new leaf. Then what are we trying to do or show by celebrating Easter? Another day given by church for merry making? Of course it is a celebration ! Jesus is the only man who rose from the dead. We, as His followers have the right to celebrate this great victory. Victory over Evil. Victory which brought us salvation. But won't this celebration look better or sound better if we celebrate our own resurrection along with Jesus'? How about celebrating our victory over our own sins and wrong doings?

How happy are we to see those little sprouts in our own gardens? How happy would heaven be to see us sprouting with a transformed life?

A New Life ! A New Start !

Easter Blessings to All !

Mrs. Augusta Emilini,
A teacher of St Bridget Convent

Pongal celebration



On 21 January 2018, for the first time in the history of the Maliboda Parish, Pongal celebration was organized at Kolping Centre, Deraniyagala. More than 700 catholic people participated in it. This overwhelming participation is a sign of acknowledgment of our service. There was a Pongal rice preparing competition among the 11 (Anbiyams) Basic Christian Communities (BCC). Every BCC enthusiastically took part in it and built natural huts for preparing Pongal rice in 11 allotted places.

Rev.Fr. Dexter Gray, Provincial was the chief celebrant of the Tamil cultural mass. Children from Maliboda village organized a cultural parade to welcome the Celebrants for the Eucharistic celebration that highlighted Tamil culture and tradition. The mass was divided into four parts in order to integrate with four days of Pongal celebrations. Tamil folk songs were sung throughout the Eucharistic celebration. It was a meaningful and spiritually up lifting for the estate people, which was applauded by the people.

After the Mass, cultural programs were performed by the catechism students and staff members, in which they could exhibit their cultural talents and skills. Fr James Suresh, the Parish priest, in his inaugural address emphasized that Pongal is a harvest festival recognizing universality and dignity of human laborers. He appreciated the parishioners for transcending the barriers of race, culture, language and religion. Rev.Fr, Dexter Gray, Provincial, Fr Benedict (Beny), Fr Mourice, Director, Pastoral centre Ratnapura Diocese, Frs Richard, George, and Leonard were the special invitees. They distributed the prizes to the BCC families for their active participation and securing high marks in the rice preparing competition.

On 11.02.2018, A One-day orientation program was organized for the catechism Teachers. Fr Mourice conducted the sessions on leadership and personality development. Sr. Udayaseeli took class on different methods of teaching catechism to the students. Fr James Suresh, took a course on synoptic gospels. There were 20 participants who devoutly took part in it. Thanks to Sr.Amirtha HC, the coordinator of the Maliboda-Deraniyaagala parish, for organizing it effectively.

Rev. Fr. James Suresh
The Parish Priest of Maliboda

“VOCATION SUNDAY 2018”

“Vocation Sunday 2018”

22nd April 2018

Theme: *“To be Shepherds with the Smell of Sheep”*

We appreciate with enormous joy the wholehearted cooperation extended for the success of the **“Vocation Sunday 2017”**.

This year too, with a lot of trust and confidence we appeal to all the Parish Priests, Heads of Institutions and Apostolates to organise **“Vocation Sunday”** Liturgy, Holy Rosary, other Spiritual Activities and programmes for the children of the Sunday Schools to motivate and promote vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life.

Whilst thanking you for the unstinting generosity extended last year, we kindly request you this year too, to deposit the **“Sunday Collection/Contribution”** collected, with the Procurator General to support the Seminaries of Ampitiya, Jaffna and Kalutara.

We rely and count on you for a successful celebration of
“Vocation Sunday 2018”!

Revd Fr Expeditus Jayakody,
Rector - National Seminary, Ampitiya &
The Organising Committee

Laying the foundation stone for the Proposed Parish Hall Building

Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chadraisri Perera, the Bishop of Ratnapura laid the foundation stone for the proposed Parish Hall Building of St. Anne's Church, Ruwanwella on the 29th of March 2018. This Parish Hall building is going to be constructed under the guidance and supervision of Rev. Fr. Clifford Shervin, the Parish Priest of Ruwanwella. We are really grateful to all the donors who are contributing for this project.



St. Joseph Vaz Feast of Ath Oya

St. Joseph Vaz Feast of Ath Oya was celebrated on the 11th of February 2018 under the patronage of His lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus C. Perera.





What is the origin of the sign of the cross?

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus
Sancti. Amen

The sign of the cross is a beautiful gesture which reminds the faithful of both the cross of salvation while invoking the Holy Trinity. Technically, the sign of the cross is a sacramental, a sacred sign instituted by the Church which prepares a person to receive grace and which sanctifies a moment or circumstance. Along this thought, this gesture has been used since the earliest times of the Church to begin and to conclude prayer and the Mass.

The early Church Fathers attested to the use of the sign of the cross. Tertullian (d. c. 250) described the commonness of the sign of the cross: "In all our travels and movements, in all our coming in and going out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, in sitting down, whatever employment occupies us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross" (De corona, 30).

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386) in his Catechetical Lectures stated, "Let us then not be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the cross our seal, made with boldness by our fingers on our brow and in everything; over the bread we eat and the cups we drink, in our comings and in our goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we awake; when we are traveling, and when we are at rest" (Catecheses, 13). Gradually, about the ninth century, the sign of the cross was incorporated in different acts of the Mass, such as the three-fold signing of the forehead, lips, and heart at the reading of the gospel or the blessing and signing of the bread and wine to be offered.

The earliest formalized way of making the sign of the cross appeared about the 400s, during the Monophysite heresy which denied the two natures in the divine person of Christ and thereby the unity of the Holy Trinity. The sign of the cross was made from forehead to chest, and then from right shoulder to left shoulder with the right hand. The thumb, forefinger, and middle fingers were held together to symbolize the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Moreover, these fingers were held in such a way that they represented the Greek abbreviation I X C (Jesus Christus Soter, Jesus Christ Savior): the straight forefinger representing the I; the middle finger crossed with the thumb, the X; and the bent middle finger, the C. The ring finger and "pinky" finger were bent downward against the palm, and symbolize the unity of the human nature and divine nature, and the human will and divine will in the person of Christ. This practice was universal for the whole Church until about the twelfth century, but continues to be the practice for the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches.

An instruction of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) evidences the traditional practice but also indicates a shift in the Latin Rite practice of the Catholic Church: "The sign of the cross is made with three fingers, because the signing is done together with the invocation of the Trinity. ... This is how it is done: from above to below, and from the right to the left, because Christ descended from the heavens to the earth, and from the Jews (right) He passed to the Gentiles (left)." While noting the custom of making the cross from the right to the left shoulder was for both the western and eastern Churches, Pope Innocent continued, "Others, however, make the sign of the cross from the left to the right, because from misery (left) we must cross over to glory (right), just as Christ crossed over from death to life, and from Hades to Paradise. [Some priests] do it this way so that they and the people will be signing themselves in the same way. You can easily verify this—picture the priest facing the people for the blessing—when we make the sign of the cross over the people, it is from left to right...." Therefore, about this time, the faithful began to imitate the priest imparting the blessing, going from the left shoulder to the right shoulder with an open hand. Eventually, this practice became the custom for the Western Church.

In the classic work, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite* by Adrian Fortescue and J. B. O'Connell, the sign of the cross is made as follows: "Place the left hand extended under the breast. Hold the right hand extended also. At the word Patris [Father] raise it and touch the forehead; at Filii [Son] touch the breast at a sufficient distance down, but above the left hand; at Spiritus Sancti [Holy Spirit] touch the left and right shoulders; at Amen join the hands if they are to be joined." Although this practice may have evolved from the original and still current practice of Eastern Rite, it nevertheless has been the standing custom for the Latin Rite Church for centuries.

No matter how one technically makes the sign of the cross, the gesture should be made consciously and devoutly. The individual must be mindful of the Holy Trinity, that central dogma that makes Christians "Christians." Also, the individual must remember that the cross is the sign of our salvation: Jesus Christ, true God who became true man, offered the perfect sacrifice for our redemption from sin on the altar of the cross. This simple yet profound act makes each person mindful of the great love of God for us, a love that is stronger than death and promises everlasting life. The sign of the cross should be made with purpose and precision, not hastily or carelessly.

Pope calls leaders to service, repeats opposition to death penalty



Celebrating the traditional Holy Thursday foot-washing ritual at a Roman men's prison, Pope Francis said that if, throughout history, kings, emperors and world leaders had followed Jesus in his attitude to serve those they led, "many wars would not have happened."

"Those who lead, must serve," Francis said during his homily in the Holy Thursday ceremony, which this year took place in Rome's Regina Coeli prison.

Francis also used the occasion of the prison visit to reiterate his opposition to the death penalty and life imprisonment, even without using those phrases directly.

"There is no just punishment - just! - that doesn't leave open hope. A punishment that's not open to hope is not Christian, it's not human!" he said in impromptu farewell remarks.

On the subject of leadership as service, Francis said that in Jesus' times, roads were made of dirt, so slaves would wash the feet of those arriving to a home.

Washing feet, Francis said, "was the work of a slave, but it was a service. A service performed by slaves. And Jesus wanted to perform this service to give us an example of how we have to serve one another."

Those who lead, those who are bosses, the pontiff insisted, must learn how to serve, because it's a key element of leadership.

"Let's think throughout history. If so many kings, emperors, heads of state, had understood this commandment of Jesus, instead of giving orders, being cruel, had behaved like this, how many wars would not have happened," Francis said.

"There are people who don't facilitate [real service], who are superfluous, hateful, who wish us evil," Francis said. "These, we must serve even more. There are people who suffer, who are discarded from society, at least for a period of time, and Jesus goes there, to tell them 'You are important for me.' And Jesus comes to serve us."

Jesus, the pontiff continued, "risks himself for each one of us." His name, Francis said, is "Jesus, not Pontius Pilate. He doesn't know how to wash his hands. He only knows how to risk [himself for us]."

Christ "never abandons us. He never tires of forgiving us. He loves us so much," he said, delivering his homily off the cuff.

Francis's words came as he was celebrating the Last Supper Mass in Regina Coeli, Rome's best-known men's prison. It was originally a Carmelite convent, and was used during the fascist era to house political prisoners. Today, it can house up to 900 inmates.

Among other things, it holds the record of being the first prison in modern times to be visited by a pope: John XXIII did so in 1958, during his first months as the successor of Peter. Since then, it was also visited by Pope Paul VI in 1964 and by John Paul II in 2000.

Catholic Joke

A priest and a bus driver both died and went to Heaven at the same time. They get to the pearly gates where Pope St. Peter greets them. He motions to the priest, and they both hop in a jeep and go out the back door. There are about 50 acres of rolling hills with a little cottage on the knoll.

St. Peter turns to the priest and says "This will be yours for eternity. A perfect little cottage, right next to lovely pond, a lush little garden, and a library full of books." The priest says, "Thank you so much. This I shall enjoy!" St. Peter drops off the priest, goes back to the pearly gates and motions to the bus driver.

They hop in a stretch limo and go out the front door. There are about 500 acres of land, with mountains and lakes and rivers. There is a huge 200-room castle on one of the mountains, and a wishing well that makes wishes come true. St. Peter says "This will be yours for eternity. You can live in that castle with servants to wait on you hand and foot, and you can have everything you want."

The bus driver looks at St. Peter and says "Well, now, don't think I'm not grateful, but why am I getting so much more than the priest?" St. Peter just laughs and says "You brought more souls to Heaven! When the priest preached, everyone fell asleep. When you drove your bus, people prayed!"

Diocesan Penitential Service at Thanjanthenna

The Diocesan Penitential Service and the way of the cross were conducted for the Sinhala Speaking community of the Diocese on the 17th of March 2018 at St. Mary's Shrine, Thanjenthenna. Balangoda



Lenten Retreat for Catechists

The Lenten Retreat was held for the Catechists on the 02nd and 03rd of March 2018 at St. Anne's Shrine, Thalawila. This Event was organized by rev. Fr. Anton Maurice, The Catechetical Director of the Diocese.



The Confirmation Service at St. Anthony's Church, Keerapathdeniya

The confirmation service was held on the 27th of January 2018 at St. Anthony's Church, Keerapathdeniya and this service was presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera, the Bishop of Ratnapura.



Passion play at Galaboda.

The passion play and the way of the Cross were conducted for the Tamil Speaking Community of the Diocese on the 10th of March 2018 at St. Francis Xavier's Church, Galaboda. This Lenten Program was organized by Rev. Fr. Romesh, the parish Priest of Galaboda.



The inauguration ceremony of Carmelite Monastery at Kegalle.

The inauguration ceremony of Carmelite Monastery at Kegalle was held under the patronage of his Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus C. Perera on the 17th of February 2018 at Kegalle. The house for the monastery was donated by Dr. Silvia, a parishioner of Kegalle

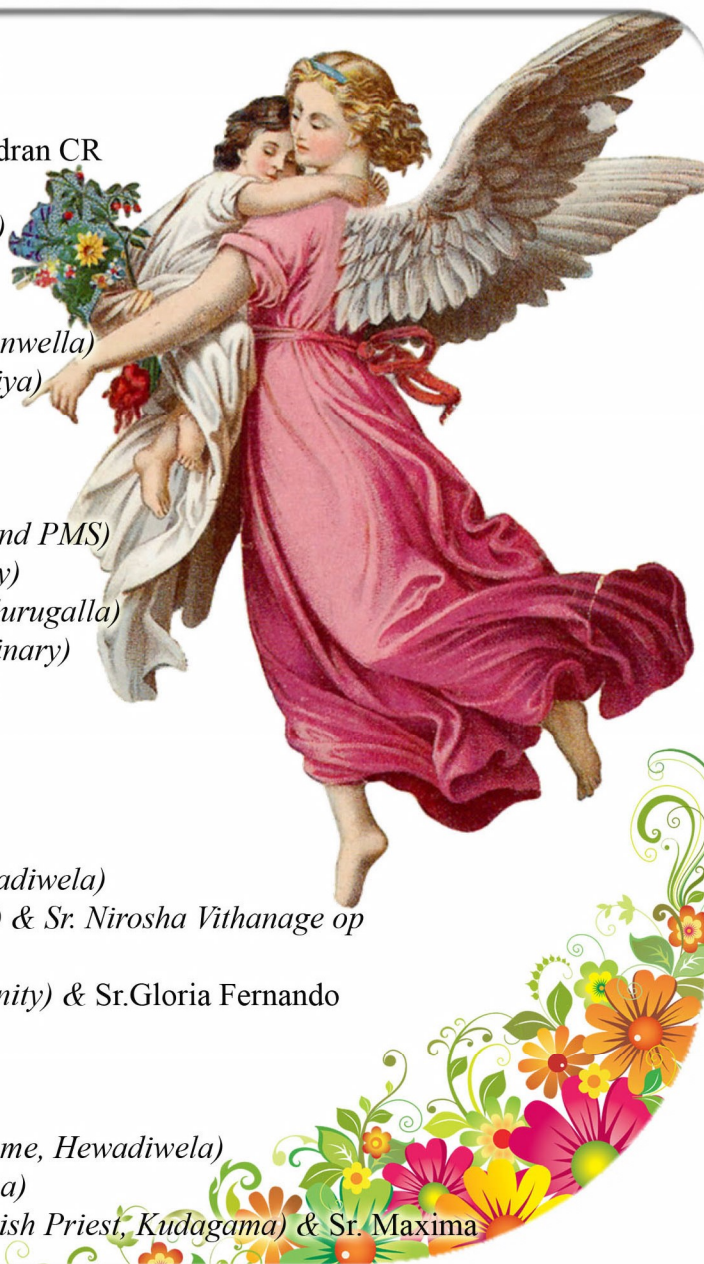


Birthdays in the months of April - June

April 01: Fr. Savariyar OCD (*Kegalle Community*)
April 02: Sr. Prasangika (*Ratnapura Community*)
April 07: Frs. Damian Fernando, Jude OSB, Balendran CR
April 09: Bro. Sanchana (*National Seminary*)
April 11: Sr. Adline Perera (*Gurugalla Community*)
April 18: Sr. Remoshini (*Kahawatta Community*)
April 22: Sr. Naomie (*Ratnapura Community*)
April 24: Fr. Shervin Cliffrd (*Parish Priest, Ruwanwella*)
April 29: Fr. Sujith Lesly (*Parish Priest, Embilipitiya*)

May 01: Fr. Nirishan Vaz (*Higher studies, Rome*)
May 05: Sr. Rose Marina (*Ratnapura Community*)
May 08: Fr. Gabriel Nicholas (*Director for Youth and PMS*)
May 09: Sr. Gowsala (*Keerapathdeniya Community*)
May 12: Fr. Gratian Hapuarachi (*Parish Priest, Gurugalla*)
May 13: Fr. Sanjeewa Peiris (*Rector of Minor Seminary*)
May 17: Fr. Ayal Indika (*Parish Priest, Dehiowita*)
May 20: Sr. Nipuni (*Kegalle Community*)
May 20: Sr. Nirmala (*Home for Elders, Kegalle*)
May 27: Sr. Anuhia (*Yatyanthota Community*)

June 02: Fr. Sergius Fernando (*Parish Priest, Hewadiwela*)
June 06: Sr. Scholastica (*Home for Elders, Kegalle*) & Sr. Nirosha Vithanage op
June 15: Sr. Virginia (*Kegalle Community*)
June 16: Sr. Neeta Fernando (*Embilipitiya Community*) & Sr. Gloria Fernando
June 18: Sr. Veronica (*Yatyanthota Community*)
June 20: Sr. Edel (*Kegalle Community*)
June 21: Sr. Rubina (*Kahawatta Community*)
June 24: Fr. Lixon Paul RCG (*Director of Boys Home, Hewadiwela*)
June 26: Fr. Paul Fernando (*Parish Priest, Rakwana*)
June 30: Fr. Shane Wickramasinghe (*Assistant Parish Priest, Kudagama*) & Sr. Maxima



Ordination Anniversaries in the months of April - June

April 15: Frs. Jude Amila and Niroshan Vaz
May 06: Fr. Shane Wickramasinghe (*Assistant Parish Priest, Kudagama*)
May 09: Fr. Maria Joy (*Assistant Parish Priest, Balangoda*)
May 10: Fr. Sanjeewa Peiris (*Rector of Minor Seminary*)
May 17: Fr. Suranga, Romesh and Maurice
May 21: Fr. Sampath and Reginold

Feast Days

April 26: Patronal feast of Our Bishop
April 27: Sr. Devpema (*Balangoda Home*)
May 07: Sr. Nimesha (*Balangoda Convent*)
May 13: Sr. Fatima (*Balangoda Home*)





Holy Chrism Mass

Holy Chrism Mass was celebrated on the 27th of March 2018 at St. Theresa's Church, Dehigahapitiya. And this mas was presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera.



“Surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia!” Beatus Pascha

H A P P Y E A S T E R

CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION

EASTER BLESSINGS AND BEST WISHES FROM ICSBC
(INTERACT CLUB OF ST. BRIDGET'S CONVENT, COLOMBO 07)

HE IS NOT HERE
FOR HE HAS RISEN!





Prof. Brien Holden
A LIFETIME
OF VISION
1942-2015

Vision for Everyone... Everywhere

At Brien Holden Vision Institute,
we believe that sight is a fundamental right
for everyone, everywhere.

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- පූර්ණ ඇස් පරීක්ෂාව (Complete Eye Examination)
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(Directing to Free Cataract Operations)
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(Diabetic Retinopathy)
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(Eye Pressure / Glaucoma)

OUR CHILDREN'S
VISION

විවෘතව තබන වේලාව

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දුරකථන - 035 2267052

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නො. 38, කෙලින් විදිය, යටියන්නොව.
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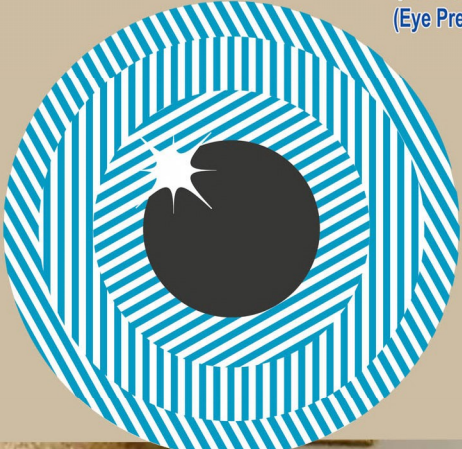
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නො. 731, මීගමුව පාර, මාබෝල, වත්තල.
දුරකථන - 0112 982 360 / 0112 982 350



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SAMSUNG