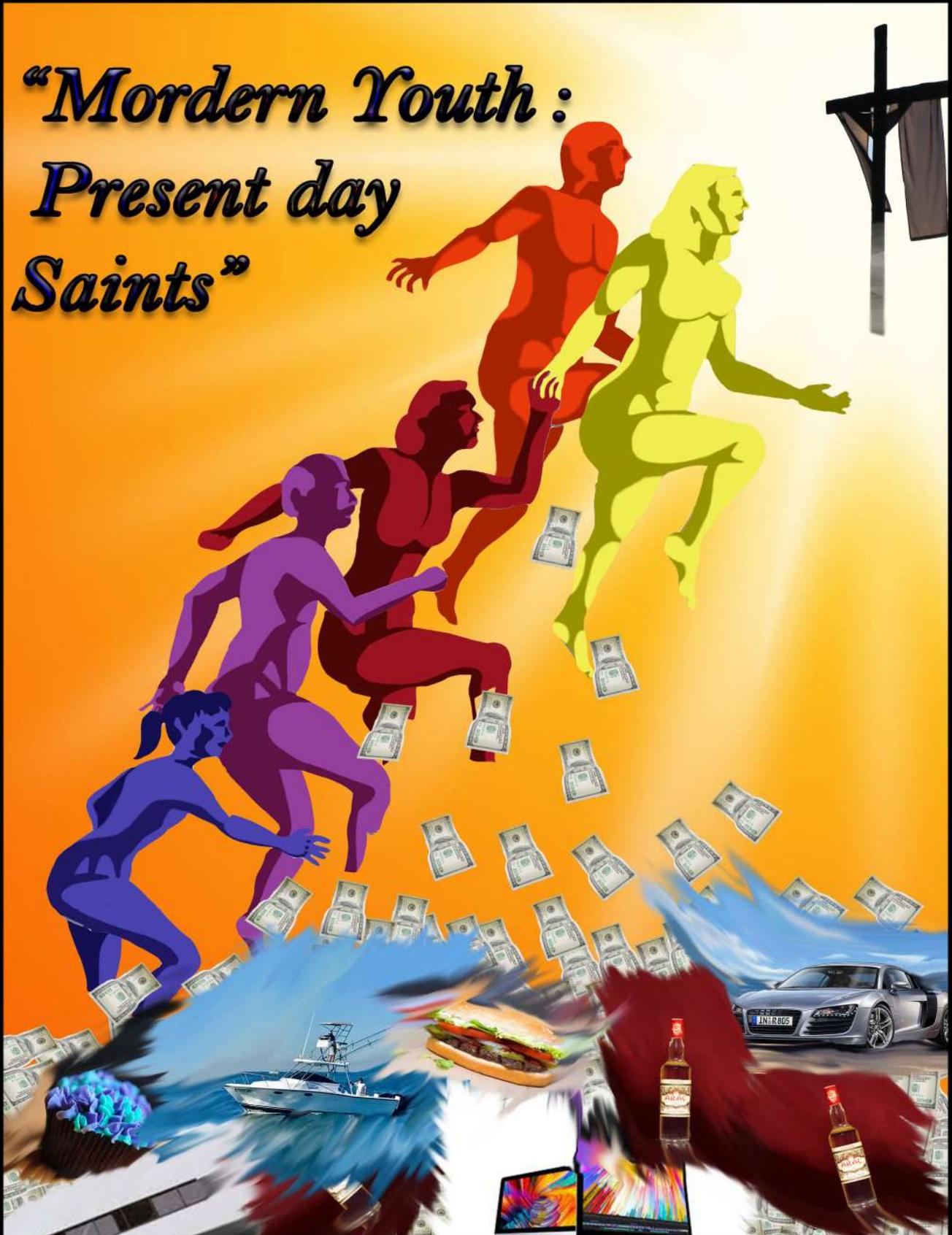


EXCELSIOR

*“Mordern Youth :
Present day
Saints”*





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EDITORIAL

NIROD NILUKSHA, EDITOR

It is with great pleasure I write this message as the Chief Editor to the 'Excelsior' our biennial English magazine.

In our endeavour to make this world a global village, the English language plays an important role as a link language. Today, English has become the formal language in many fields of activity and professions. We seminarians are requested to use English in our daily conversations and it is a great opportunity we have received here in the seminary to improve our conversation in English. I feel that fluency in the English language will help our seminarians to achieve some growth in their intellectual formation.

The seminary English Literary Association is a place where we come out and display our talents and capabilities. Also, it has given us seminarians all the opportunities to reach that desired goal in life. This was a great task bestowed on me and my team.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions made by all the students to make this a success. Through this magazine we hope we have impressed the minds and hearts of its readers. English Day and this publication will be an unforgettable milestone in my journey towards priesthood and which has also been much food for thought for me.

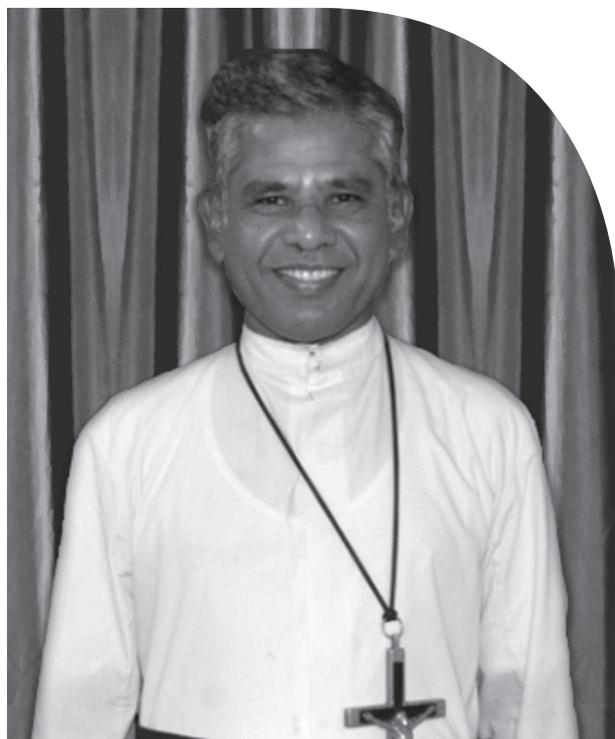
Finally, I would like to thank all who dedicated themselves in publishing of 'Excelsior' for the year 2019.





FROM FR. PROVINCIAL'S DESK

VERY REV. FR. IRWIN H. MORAIS OMI



every possible effort to learn their English well. It is also very clear that without the knowledge of English we will not be able to benefit from the developments of science and communications.

It is not a secret that, without the knowledge of English today, a person cannot come up in life and carrier, even though a person has other qualifications.

Therefore, I believe, that our students in the seminary will make use of every opportunity to be well versed in this international language.

May god bless you all.

My dear students,

It is with great pleasure that I write these few lines, for "EXCELSIOR" the magazine published by the English literary association of our minor seminary. I am really happy; the seminary has resumed the English day after some years.

The English day gives the students an opportunity to organize various activities in English. This will help the students to know more English and better English. In today's society knowledge of English plays an important role. It is not a secret that, without the knowledge of English today, a person cannot come up in life and carrier, even though a person has other qualifications.

My hope is that seminary will commit herself more and more to impart in the students, a good knowledge of English though it is a difficult task, and at the same time the students will make



FROM RECTOR'S DESK

REV. FR. S. ANDRIAS A. FERNANDO OMI

I am happy indeed to pen down these few lines on the occasion of our English Day through this magazine "Excelsior."

English is an International Language which plays an important role in our lives. The English Language helps us to communicate with nearly all the people around the world. The Oblate Congregation is a missionary congregation that serves in many parts of the world. Therefore it is very essential to an Oblate Seminarian to master this international language. Through fortnightly English Literary association and through various other creative activities the seminarians are provided with opportunities to develop their language skills and "Excelsior" provides them with an opportunity to improve and display their writing skills.



Open wide the doors of your life! May your time and space be filled with meaningful relationships, real people, with whom to share your authentic and concentrate experiences of daily life.

"Modern youth: Present day Saints" is the theme of this day's celebration. Filled with the love of Christ, young people are called to be witnesses of the Gospel wherever they find themselves, by the way they live. While addressing the youth gathered in Panama for World Youth Day, 2018 Pope Francis had this to say "Do not allow the spark of youth to be extinguished in the darkness of a closed room in which the only window to the outside world is a computer and smart

phone. Open wide the doors of your life! May your time and space be filled with meaningful relationships, real people, with whom to share your authentic and concentrate experiences of daily life." This is the path towards holiness and sainthood in our daily lives.

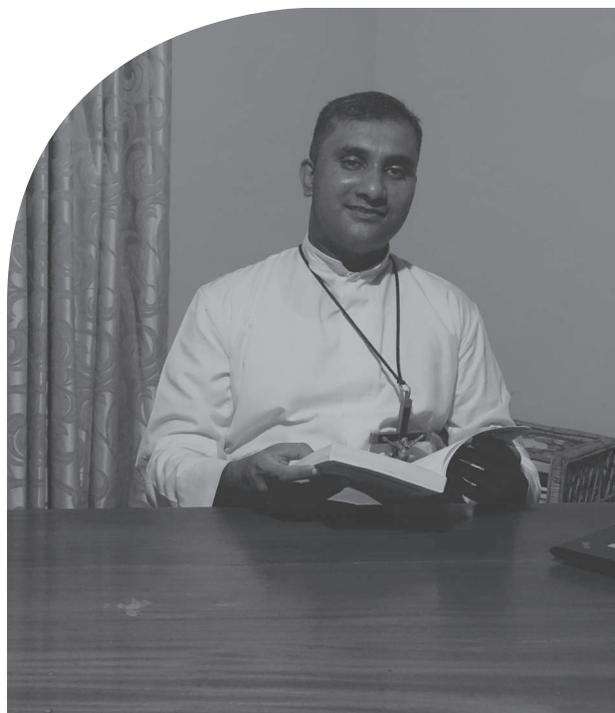
Congratulations to the editor, his team and the writers for their untiring efforts for making this magazine a reality. I also wish to extend my sincere thanks to the moderators of Senior and Junior English Literary Association.

May your journey be "ever upward" Excelsior!



FROM SENIOR ANIMATOR'S DESK

REV. FR. SHIVANTHA WAAS OMI



Excelsior is the motto of the state of New York. It is a poem, a book, a musical, the name of some newspapers and journals. It is the name of bands of musicians, of soccer clubs, of schools, companies, hotels and restaurants. It is the name of many towns and districts in different countries. It is used widely so because the world appreciates the desire "to go higher"; for the word "EXCELSIOR means "ever higher" in its original Latin from where English has borrowed the word. It is also the name of our magazine.

Excelsior became famous with a poem written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

*The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!*

*In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
Excelsior!*

*"O stay", the maiden said, "and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!"
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!*

*There in the twilight cold and grey,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
Excelsior!*

Longfellow writes of the slight margin between bravery and stupidity. The young man bearing a banner with the word "Excelsior" walks towards a high goal in the Alpine mountains, ignoring the beauty, love, serenity, warmth found in the

*Our hope is that listening
to the voice of the world
around, our young men may
become sensitive to the
needs of the OTHER. Our
hope is that this effort of
ours through the literary
associations, may bear
fruit in the vineyard of
the Lord in the morrow.*



*We too cry "Excelsior",
but with a different tone.
We say "excelsior!" for
what is produced at St.
Joseph's Juniorate should
not be mere academic
excellence, success and
efficiency, but a set
of young men who can
appreciate beauty, who can
listen to the hearts.*

village homes he passes. Ignoring the world around and its beauty the young man runs after too high a goal. The end is a man "lifeless, but beautiful, he lay" DEAD.

The world today runs after excellence, to climb ever higher. It exalts the cult of efficiency, fitness and success, ignoring all that is beautiful, ignoring everything that is lovable and what touches the heart. Yet, the result is a generation of young men and women who have excelled in many fields, and yet are selfish, senseless and disoriented.

We too cry "Excelsior", but with a different tone. We say "excelsior!" for what is produced at St. Joseph's Juniorate should not be mere academic excellence, success and efficiency, but a set of young men who can appreciate beauty, who can listen to the hearts. Our hope is that listening to the voice of the world around, our young men may become sensitive to the needs of the OTHER. Our hope is that this effort of ours through the literary associations, may bear fruit in the vineyard of the Lord in the morrow. Thus, creating saints who love to read, listen, sing, write, dance and enjoy the beauty of all that is created by God and man. Let EXCELSIOR be our aim. Men who excel in different fields, but never losing the heart that speaks.



FROM JUNIOR ANIMATOR'S DESK

REV. FR. DHANUSHKA FERNANDO OMI



effective manner starting from this stage of life. I believe this would be an excellent forum in which juniorists can exhibit their language ability. No doubt, this is teamwork. It involves good leadership, extensive learning, sacrifices and hard work. Let me thank all of them for their genuine commitment.

Youth is more than simply a period of time; it is a state of mind. That is why an institution as ancient as the Church can experience renewal and a return to youth at different points in her age-old history.

It is with much joy I would say 'Modern youth: present-day saints' which stands as the theme of our Magazine Excelcior for the year 2019 is an attempt to remind all of us that we are young and we are called to live our youth to the fullest.

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Christus Vivit" of the Holy Father Francis to young people, states "Youth is more than simply a period of time; it is a state of mind. That is why an institution as ancient as the Church can experience renewal and a return to youth at different points in her age-old history." We, the Oblate Juniorate community, too feel the pulse and experience the energy of the youth. The young blood keeps them ever renewed. We believe that it can be channeled and be of great use for sound and wholesome growth.

This magazine intends to create opportunities to improve the writing skills creatively and to excel in the use of the English language in an

When Christ first called His Apostles, He did so internally and externally. Internally He prepared them by grace to desire something more. Internally He cultivated that longing until the time in which He would encounter them externally. There is no other explanation for the immediacy of their response, to drop their nets and follow Him for three years they lived in His company. It was the first seminary. St. Joseph Oblate Seminary is at Christ's service. The pattern of Christ's action is the same. Young men come to us who have been altered interiorly by grace, moved externally by the support of the Church, and seek to live in His company. They seek to be friends of Christ by His election.

The formation given to the juniorists here comprises of spiritual, intellectual, and psychosocial dimensions. As our beloved Founder St. Eugene de Mazenod once said,



that ‘we ought to be good human beings, then Christians, and finally saints’. Once that is done the Holy Institute of OMI Congregation is graced with Oblates to serve the people of God. As a team of formators, the Rector and the staff members continuously take pain in observing, correcting and directing our precious students towards their goal.

The formation community of Juniorate is called upon to accompany the juniorists in their formative journey preparing themselves to be more and more efficient and effective missionaries “Who would leave nothing undared” (Preface to CCRR), in their mission ahead.

May the Lord of the harvest make them equal to the task!



TEACHER'S MESSAGE

MRS. FARZANA JABEER



It is with great pleasure that I pen this message to the magazine Excelsior on the occasion of the English literary day 2019 of St. Joseph's Seminary.

Having joined the seminary in 1992, I have been a keen observer of the activities and events up until today. I would sincerely say that the boys when they undertake a task for various events do it so well that they always leave me astound.

So the revival of this magazine gives a great opportunity to them to develop their creative skills and publish their literary contribution which in turn it greatly encourages or rekindles further interest in enhancing their skills.

The modern youth need to be challenged to play an all-encompassing role of leading society to live with morals and values. A disciplined, modest and purposeful living, a broad outlook,

interpersonal and effective communication skills, both oral and written no doubt paves the way to the dynamic role a youth is called to play today. I am sure the boys will take up such role under the able guidance of the reverend fathers and teachers and will be worthy of emulation by

The priesthood in the boy is just as powerful as the priesthood in the man when exercised in righteousness.

all in society.

I wish you dear boys all success in your journey.

"The priesthood in the boy is just as powerful as the priesthood in the man when exercised in righteousness"

- Elder Tad R. Callister -



SENIOR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

NISAL SACHINTHA PIGERA

At the very outset of this message I would ask you, 'Who would cry when you die.' With how many people did you associate, while roaming in this earthly dwelling. What will you leave for the next generation which will follow you? What is the heritage you are going to leave before you breathe your last? Days become weeks, weeks become months, months become years, and all will cease to exist. Don't you have to decide about your life, before life decides on you? I will never forget something which my parents told me. **"My dear son, when you were born, you were crying but the whole world was full of joy. So try to live a life which makes others happy. Then when you die, whole world would cry, but you can go on that journey happily"**

We cannot understand what the life is during this short time period of living. We can send a man to the moon easily, but it is a problem today to speak with the neighbour who is at our next door. The cause for all these is our poor spirituality and lack of creativity found in the modern man. If you don't love the world, you cannot be creative. If you don't love the beauty of the trees, why do you draw trees? If you don't love the singing of a bird, why do you sing? If you don't love the sweet melody of the wind that flows through the trees, why do you play the violin? A person who in a deep relationship with the creator is the one who can be creative. This creativity is also the only way to be religious. We have been created into the image and likeness of God, the Creator. Being creative is the way to become truly human and to join and take part in God's inner life. This is the only way to true happiness. Being creative is to be closely knitted to artistic and aesthetic activity. If art was a kingdom, the queen of that kingdom would be literature. Literature is a gift of God which leads man to wisdom through the gratification



which he receives through it. I send my wishes to **Excelsior**, knowing well that this too is a gift of God which he had given to us to excel in all what we do. We can't measure one's creativity and literary talents merely by a monetary value. There is nothing equal to that. The dictum of the great writer Maxim Gorky would crystalize my opinion.

"Keep loving books and they will make your life easy. In the midst of confusing thoughts, feelings, and events, books will guide you to choose the way as a friend. It will teach you first the self-respect and how to respect the other. It will fill your heart with compassion. The books deserve the credit for all the good that possess. I was convinced of the fact that I am thankful to the books than to human beings from my younger age. I continue to love books. For me every book is a miracle. I cannot speak of a book without been immersed in deep feelings and joyful enthusiasm. You may consider it a joke but the success is certain."

May God Bless You All !



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

CHAMIKA KRISHMAL RAJARATNE, SECRETARY OF SENIOR ELA

It's with great pleasure that I present the annual report of the English Literary Association for the year 2019. Reflecting on the Apostolic Exhortation "Christus Vivit" written by Pope Francis, after the Synod of Bishops on Youth and considering the fact that the Archdiocese of Colombo has declared this year as "The Year of the Youth" we decided that this year's theme for our English day be "Modern Youth; Present Day Saints."

As we seminarians celebrate English Day, it is appropriate that we reminisce on our performance for the year 2019. Last year we conducted meetings of the English Literary Association twice a month for both junior and senior students separately under the able guidance of Rev. Fr. Dhanushka Fernando and Rev. Fr. Shivantha Waas respectively.

The following activities were carried out at these meetings:

- ✘ *Group singing to enhance vocal talents of the seminarians.*
- ✘ *Presentation of an appreciation of a literary text or a poem to increase literary skills.*
- ✘ *Impromptu speeches to improve on pronunciation and effective speech of the seminarians.*
- ✘ *A book review of any English story book to encourage the seminarians to read books.*
- ✘ *A game to enrich their creativity and for entertainment.*

Presenting our talents in areas viz., speech, singing, drama, creative and essay writing, dictation and hand writing and other competitions were organized in view of "English Day".

After months of hard work, our efforts finally came to fruition in the publication of the magazine titled 'Excelsior' comprising articles, short stories, poetry and many other skills.

The success of the performance lies entirely in the hard work and commitment of our Reverend Fathers, Teachers and the seminarians. I therefore, take this opportunity to thank Rev. Fr. Dhanushka Fernando and Rev. Fr. Shivantha Waas for their valuable advice and guidance and to all other Priests of the staff for their encouragement and co-operation.

Last but not least I gratefully acknowledge the support of all the Juniorists without which this success couldn't have been achieved.



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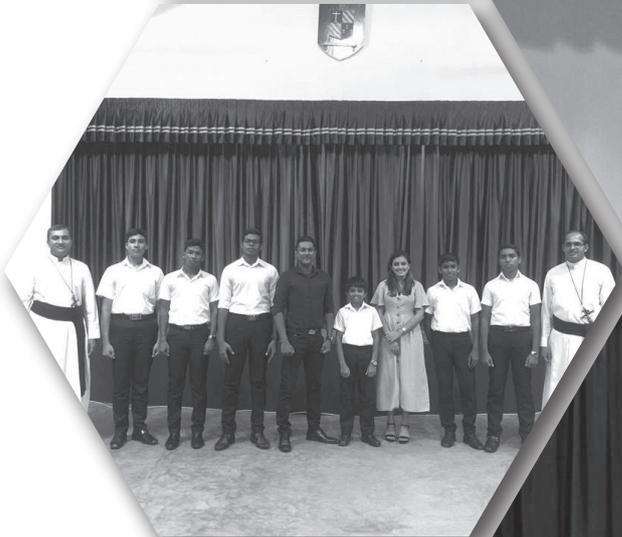
Hon. Treasurer

Master Dilshan Maximus

Editor

Master Nisal Sadeepa

Winners of the Competitions





WINNERS OF THE LITERARY COMPETITIONS - 2019

SENIOR CATEGORY

Essay Competition

1 st Place	-	Nisal Sachintha
2 nd Place	-	Keerthi Sandaruwan
3 rd Place	-	Chamika Krishmal Sheron Chrishan

Speech Competition

1 st Place	-	Dinumika Mazenod
2 nd Place	-	Avishka Niluminda
3 rd Place	-	Nisal Sachintha

Singing Competition

1 st Place	-	Navod Sanjana
2 nd Place	-	Shehan Maduwantha
3 rd Place	-	Dinumika Mazenod

Hand Writing Competition

1 st Place	-	Chamika Krishmal
2 nd Place	-	Avishka Niluminda
3 rd Place	-	Jude Prasad

Spelling Competition

1 st Place	-	Chamika Krishmal
2 nd Place	-	Keerthi Sandaruwan
3 rd Place	-	Sheron Chrishan Asala Cooray

Drama Competition

1 st Place	-	Nisal Sachintha
2 nd Place	-	Sheron Chrishan
3 rd Place	-	Chamika Shenal

Poem Competition

1 st Place	-	Chamika Krishmal
2 nd Place	-	Shehan Maduwantha
3 rd Place	-	Joshuwa Salamon





JUNIOR CATEGORY

Essay Competition

1 st Place	-	Udara Deshan
2 nd Place	-	Sithum Tharaka Chathumadura Salgado
3 rd Place	-	Thushan Ameesha

Speech Competition

1 st Place	-	Dilshan Maximus
2 nd Place	-	Kavindu Dulanjaya
3 rd Place	-	Thushan Ameesha

Singing Competition

1 st Place	-	Anushka Ranik
2 nd Place	-	Andy Eral
3 rd Place	-	Deneth Shohen

Hand Writing Competition

1 st Place	-	Chathumadura Salgado
2 nd Place	-	Sandeepa Harshana
3 rd Place	-	Jude Krishan

Spelling Competition

1 st Place	-	Senura Praveen Kavindu Dulanjaya
2 nd Place	-	Sandeepa Harshana
3 rd Place	-	Fleming Ranasinghe

Drama Competition

1 st Place	-	Sandeepa Harshana
2 nd Place	-	Thushan Ameesha
3 rd Place	-	Sithum Tharaka

Poem Competition

1 st Place	-	Jeson Nithisha
2 nd Place	-	Anushka Ranik
3 rd Place	-	Chathumadura Salgado



“We need saints who wear jeans and sneakers, listen to modern music and hang out with friends, we need saints who go to the movies, we need saints who put God in the first place, but let go of their power”

These are the very words of His Holiness Pope Francis. Saints are not the people who lived very silently. Most of the young saints were full of mischief as an English proverb says “Every saint has a sinful past.” Holy mother the church invites us also to be saints by practising the Word of God. Let us therefore try to obey the church.



‘St. Sebastian of Milano’ is the best example for this topic. He is a young saint. He was a good soldier of Diocletian’s army. His native place was Narbornem city in Italy. He was not a silent guy. He gave commands to the army. He was fighting with others and was killing them during the period of war. When he was a child, he played with his friends who were called Pulvius, Corvirnu, and Prankasi. He also had a girl friend who was called Fabiyola. One of his friends, Corvirnu betrayed Sebastian being a Christian to the Emperor. He was angry, when he heard this and ordered him to be killed by shooting arrows at him. But he managed to save his life and finally went to see the Emperor face to face. Then the Emperor ordered him to be martyred.

My opinion is that, if we can continue to listen to the Word of God and practise in our daily life. We can continue playing, fashioning, watching movies, listening to songs, hanging out with friends, because God asks us to come to him as we are. We have to offer him our own lives, our own pure hearts. We do not need to sacrifice our lives to be a saints but we have only to lead a daily sacrificial life. We do not need to judge others but we have to be an example. If we can do our best as youth, God will reward us in our lives.

Let us therefore try to change our quality of life and draw the line from our past sinful lifestyle and try to become holy saints one day.

By Nisal Sachintha Piger, Post A/L

Essay competition, First Place





MODERN YOUTH SHOULD

REALIZE THE VALUE OF THIS STAGE OF THEIR LIVES

Our life's journey started when we were in the womb of our mother. When we were born into this world we passed several stages in our life. First we were infants, then toddlers, teenagers, youth and adults. The most important period of life is youth. It is very enjoyable and also vulnerable. Youth is the most active and powerful period in a person's life especially between the ages of 15 to 25 years.

In this period of life, we have to face many changes in different ways. The three main changes are: physical, mental and spiritual. We accumulate knowledge in this period of life more than education. Physically, our body will grow and mentally our thoughts and ideals will change, spiritually we may grow or, otherwise we may fail. Like a tree which flourishes with water, manure and fertile soil, modern youth can become useful citizens through the advice of elders and learn from their experiences.

There are so many changes in this stage of life. Because of these changes youth are creative, active and cheerful. These changes can help us to mould our future. It is in this period of our lives that we lay the foundation to our future.

The youth of today should be very attentive as the power of evil seems to be more controlling than the power of good. They should be careful of themselves and not be prone to modern temptations viz., addiction to technology, drugs and negative habits. There are harmful effects in these temptations that make us inactive, selfish, aggressive, ill-natured and disrespectful to others, especially to elders. Youth should also be sensitive to the environment and nature.

By being mentally and spiritually healthy we can move away from all these obstacles. The Right use of technology is very important. One should consciously avoid the occasions of sin. If we are spiritually healthy we also can be the person who has built his house on a huge rock.

Modern youth is the future of the country and they have to take the whole world into their hands and make it a better place for future generations. So, modern youth should realise the value and use of this period of their lives without being carried away by modern temptations.

Let's get together and use this period of life to make it a better tomorrow.

By Sithum Tharaka, Grade 11



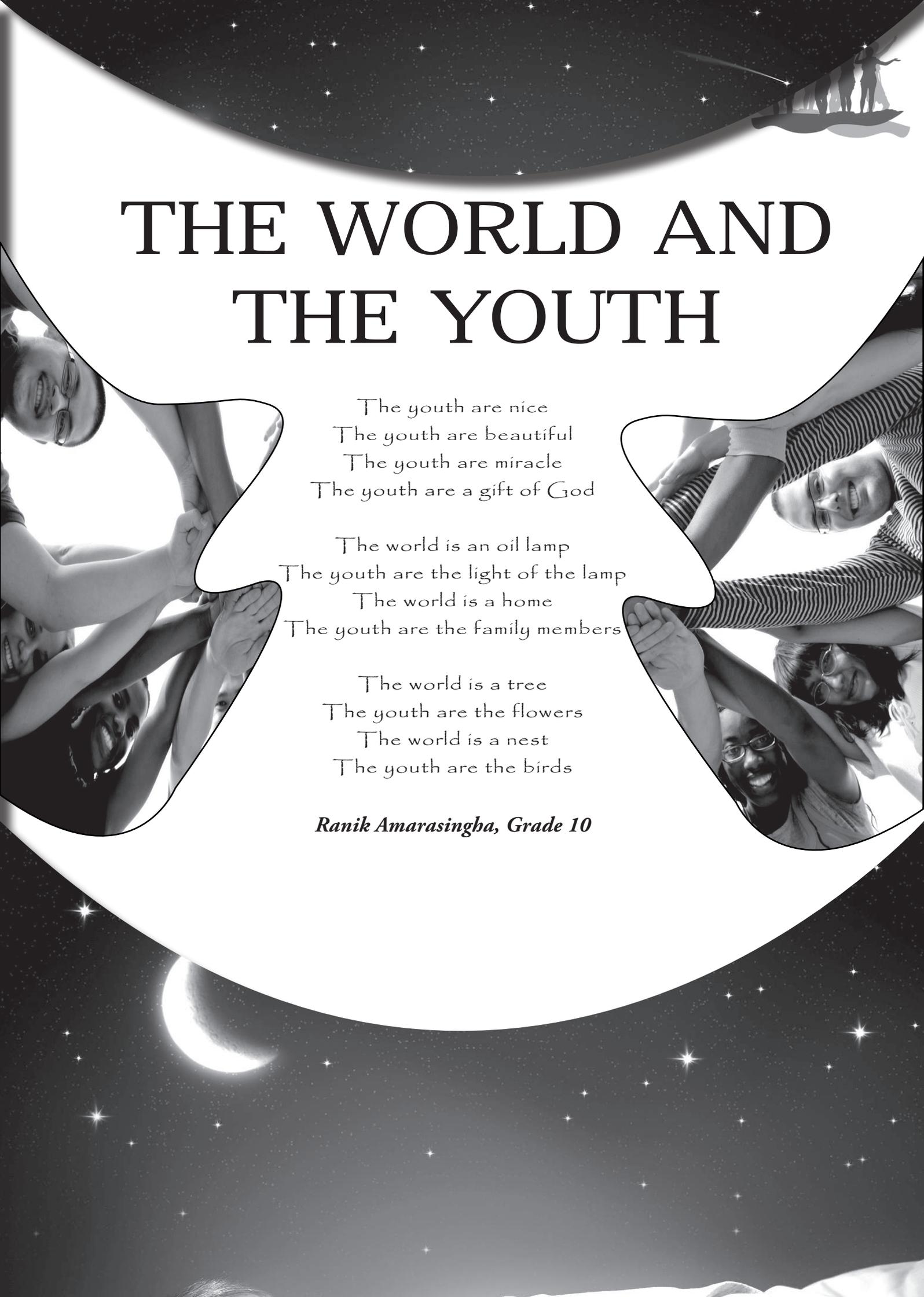
The tree

I saw a tree
with fruits
Roots spread around the place
then its fixed very strong
Many leaves were green colour
but others were old colour
when winter comes the tree looks happy

The tree is youth
Saints are the fruits of youth
Roots are the society
because of that they are different from monkeys
Green colour leaves are very useful
and old colour leaves are very useless
The winter is heaven

We are the parts of the tree
We want to be a fruit one day
We should pray and work hard
to become a green colour leaf
Then roots will be strong and large
But if we work not like saints
We will not meet the winter one day
Then we become just a monkey

By Jeson Perera, Grade 11



THE WORLD AND THE YOUTH

The youth are nice
The youth are beautiful
The youth are miracle
The youth are a gift of God

The world is an oil lamp
The youth are the light of the lamp
The world is a home
The youth are the family members

The world is a tree
The youth are the flowers
The world is a nest
The youth are the birds

Ranik Amarasingha, Grade 10



SOCIETY

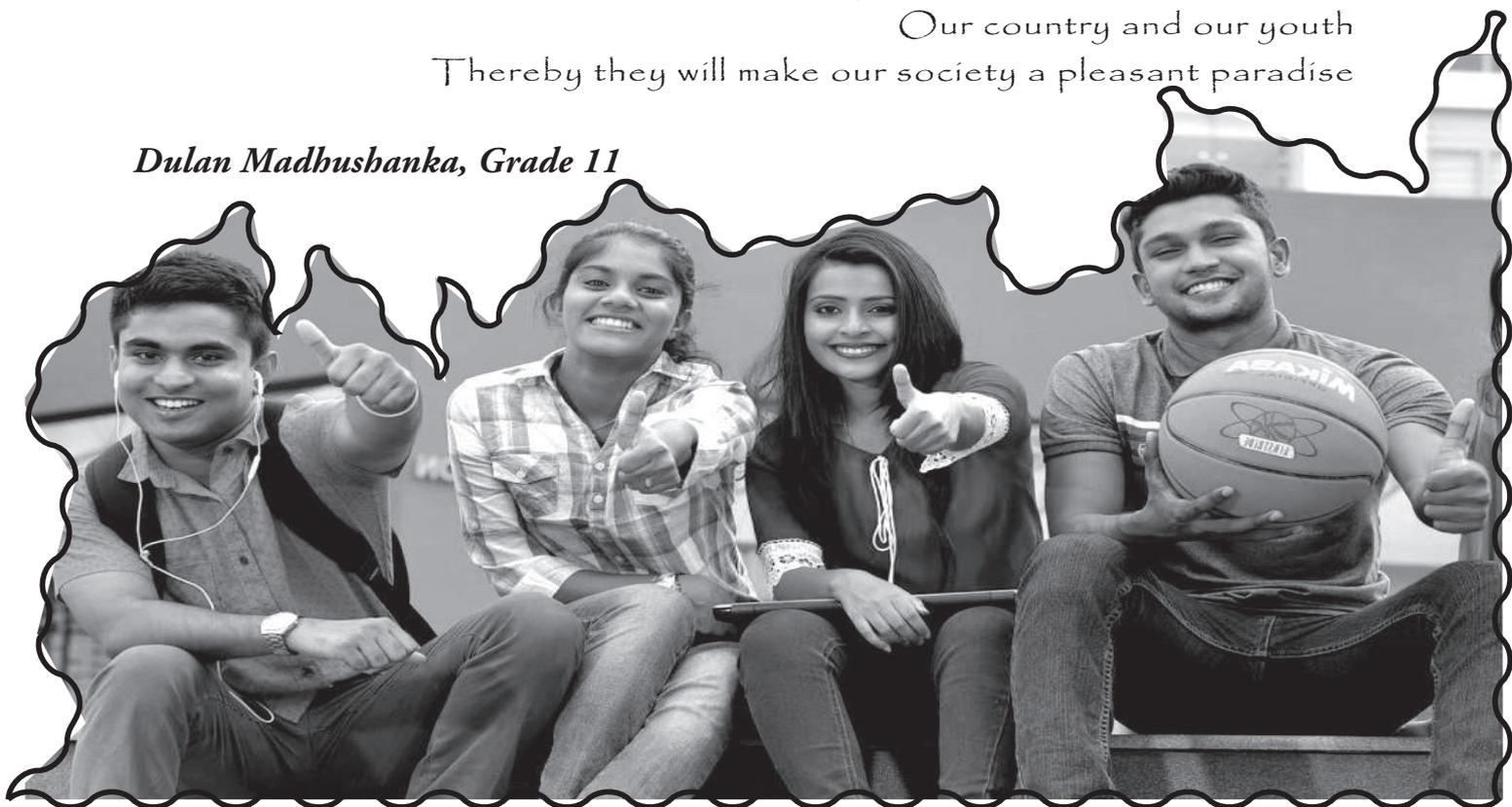
We are the society
There was a family
When I went there
They served me very well
And they asked me
Every time the door is always open for me
It was a once, twice, but not thrice

Earlier humans smile with me by heart
Now they smile only by mouth
Then tomorrow they will not see even my face

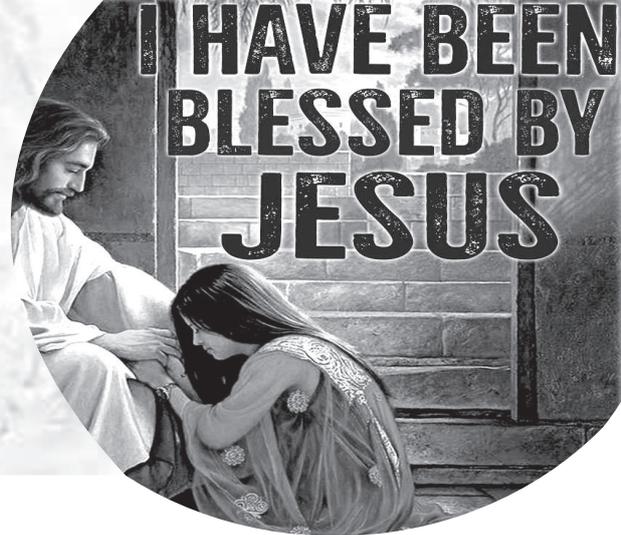
But we call them human beings
Also some can make a difference
We call them youth
They can do something better than others

If they preserve society
It means they preserve our tradition, our life
Our country and our youth
Thereby they will make our society a pleasant paradise

Dulan Madhushanka, Grade 11



THE LORD SAID TO ME, "I CHOSE YOU BEFORE I GAVE YOUR LIFE, AND BEFORE YOU WERE BORN I SELECTED YOU TO BE A PROPHET TO THE NATIONS"
(JERAMIAH 1:4-5)



It is before our birth that God made His selection of people to His service, yet we are on a journey searching for our vocation. God calls us for different vocations, such as, Doctor, Engineer, Teacher, good Parents... hence, vocation means not only priestly or religious life. It is significant that many of them who were selected were not the strong and mighty, but weak and vulnerable people. God's love transformed them. The Holy Bible witnesses to that. The weak and the sinners become saints. It is all because of God's unconditional love.

In my childhood and up to now I saw only one dream. It is to be a priest. Before I came to the seminary I was searching for so many things in my life. While I was searching, I realised what my vocation is. So, one day I got a call from God through an application which

innocent expectation. But I did not get any reply. I did not give it up. I started to find ways to realise my dream. Then I explained my dream to my parents but they did not feel happy about it. With unwavering hope I went to Nugegoda with my grandparent's help but we did not know where it is located. Because those days we did not have smartphones to find the place like now. We looked for this place the whole day but we did not find the place. Finally, I saw a lady who had a cross on the necklace she was wearing. I know she is not important to you but she was the one who gave correct directions to me. I thought that was a miracle because of my unwavering hope.

Explore the world, and make your decision prudently, make it your own dream and follow it.

The saints too were human beings who struggled to lead a holy life. Some were sinners, but their love and faith in God helped them to fight the battle against all evil. In my seminary life, I am facing many challenges and struggles, yet, I try to face them strongly holding the hand of my Lord.

"Saint is a one who tries" therefore, go forward in hope and find your vocation, and live it to the full.

Chamika Shenal, Post O/L

Saint is a person who strives

I received from a priest. Then, I gave up everything that is mine and I started my journey to find my way. I applied to St. Joseph's OMI Seminary with my

TODAY'S YOUTH & THEIR

SPIRITUALITY

According

to the google dictionary "Spirituality is the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things." According to the Oxford dictionary "Spirituality is connected with the human spirit, rather than the body or physical things." Unfortunately, there is no single, widely agreed definition for the concept. Spirituality can never be taught by anyone. The only teacher is our soul. We have to grow from the inside to become spiritual.

People thought that religion and spirituality are the same things. No, it is not. They are different. Sometimes religion can cause divisions, as in caste, nationality and race. But spirituality can only bring peace among men. We can't see spirituality but we can feel it. Spirituality helps man to live in this world successfully and it help us to find inners peace and contentment. Spirituality makes us see the bright side of life and see the good in others and keep faith in humanity.

Today's youth struggle to find the purpose of their lives. They are going in a destructive way. The Holy bible says "The destructive way is very easy to follow." It is very evident in today's society. Youth are becoming a liability for society. Because, they have lost the spiritual sense and values it brings into life. Youth are addicted to many things. Such as, life killing drugs, negative use of mobile phones, immoral life, dishonesty, disrespecting elders, disobedience, etc....

Spirituality can help us to think about living in the present. Spirituality helps us to control ourselves and manage time. Spirituality can help us to feel true love. If we are spiritually mature we can experience God in a better way. As an example we can take the bombing incident of 21st April 2019, Easter Sunday. Unfortunately the suicide bombers were youth. They haven't followed their religion with a mature spirituality. All religions are against killing human beings and even themselves. These youth are brain washed by some who don't have a proper religion. Without a sound spirituality they can't find the real meaning of life. If we are spiritually good we can be a good friend to others and we never need to devalue our friendship. Because it speaks to us about true love.

As we are youth, we have to improve in our spirituality. Firstly, before improving our spirituality each one of us has to ask ourselves 'who am I?' If we find the answer to that question we are beginning to mature in spirituality. Youth think, that they are not successful persons. But they forget



Spirituality can help us to think about living in the present. Spirituality helps us to control ourselves and manage time. Spirituality can help us to feel true love.

one thing. We battle with millions of sperms and enter the mother's womb. That is our first success. God chose us to be a human for a reason. Our birth is not an accident. It is preplanned by God. We can find the purpose of our life by deepening our spirituality. Spirituality is within us. We can find ourselves by being mindful of spirituality. That means spirituality is a part and parcel of our lives. We can feel our spirituality by doing meditation, yoga, etc.... If we improve our spirituality we can understand who God is. According to Buddhism mindfulness helps us to grow in spirituality. As human beings all of us are interconnected with our neighbours, through our God, with nature. So if we build a good relationship with them we can improve in our spirituality.

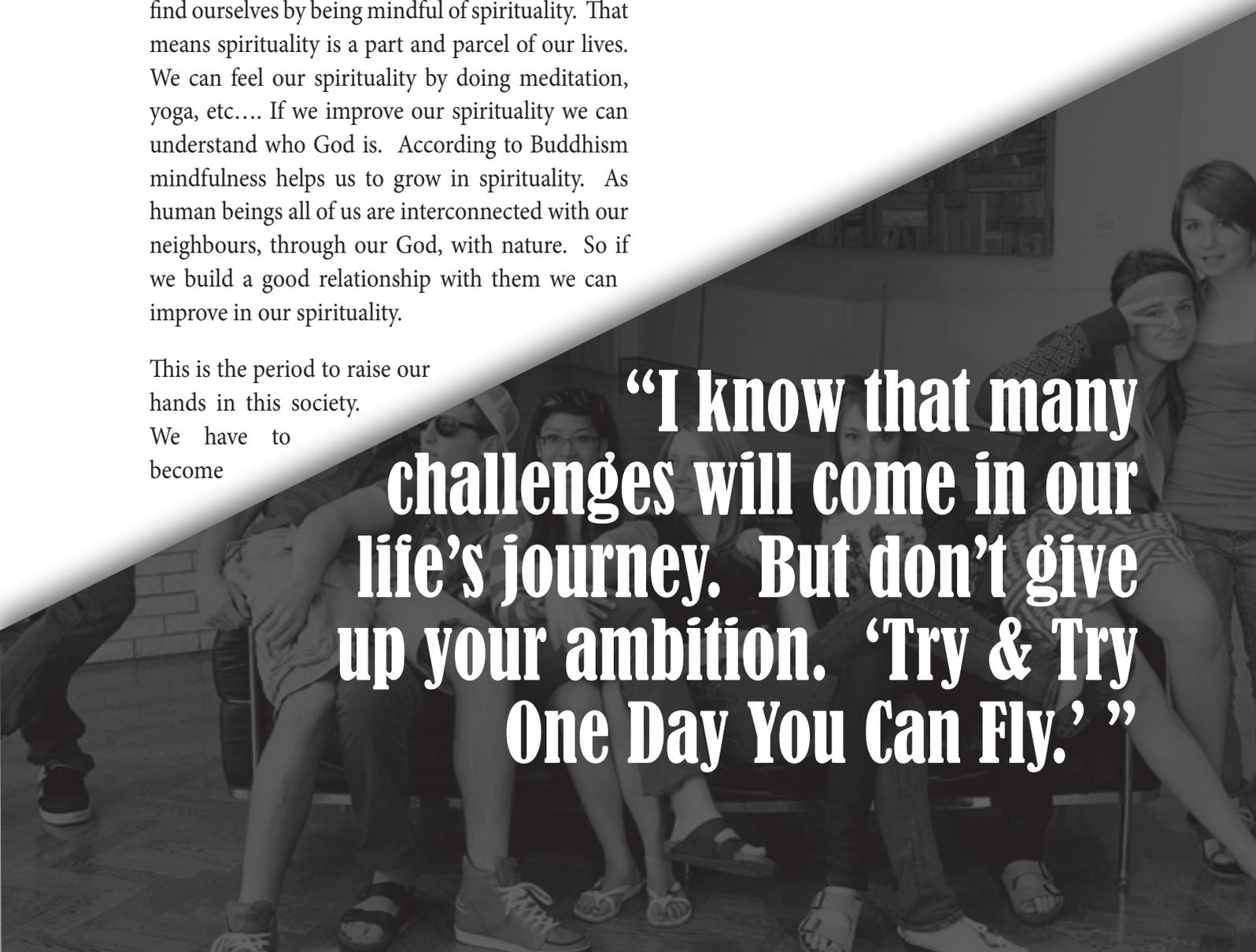
This is the period to raise our hands in this society. We have to become

assets. As our knowledge of accounts teaches us if any profits come, liability will decrease and assets will increase. In the same manner, we have to have God as our profit. Then we can be assets to this society easily. If we have a good spirituality we can be closer to God and can enjoy His love. Develop spirituality and be good youth of this generation. Feel God's love and work hard to achieve our purpose of our lives in a good way by deepening our spirituality. I know that many challenges will come in our life's journey. But don't give up your ambition. 'Try & Try One Day You Can Fly.'

Remember this "WE ARE THE FUTURE."

By T. A. Joy, Post O/L

"I know that many challenges will come in our life's journey. But don't give up your ambition. 'Try & Try One Day You Can Fly.' "





ON WHAT SOIL ARE WE TO FALL?

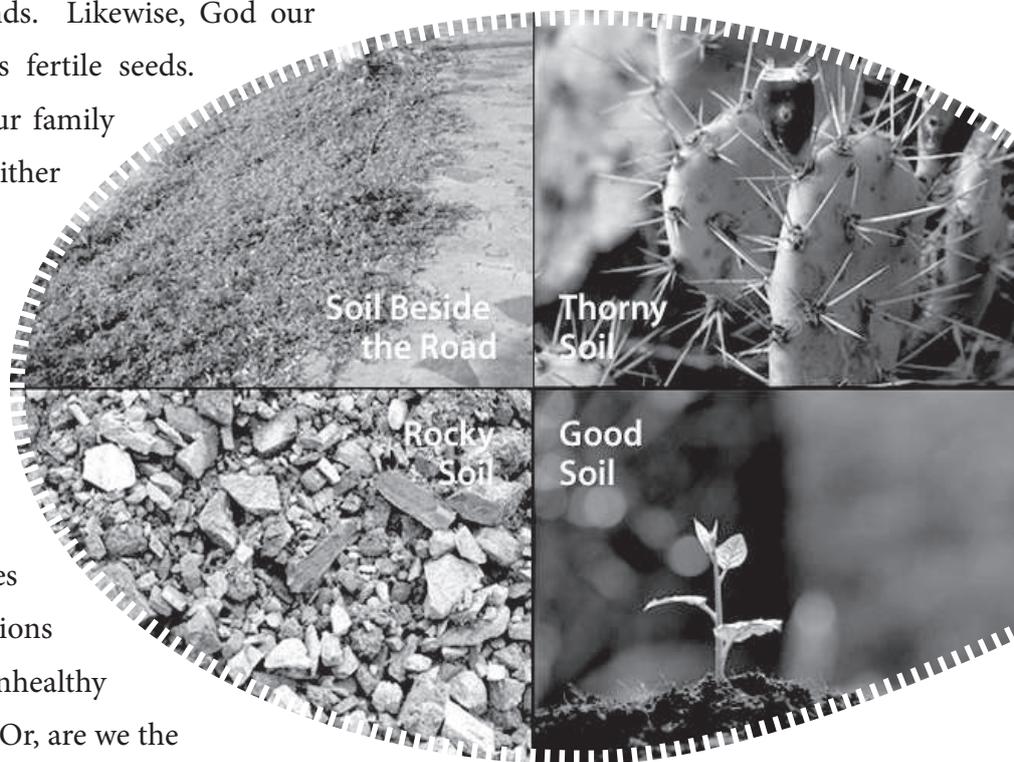
The sower is a good man. He selected good seeds and the fertile land to sow. But when he sowed the seed, fell on different grounds. Likewise, God our creator sent us to the world as fertile seeds.

The environment, society and our family background influence us to be either good seeds or bad seeds.

In the present context of the world and our society, evil is over-powering good. Are you a seed that falls on the road where birds instantly satisfy their hunger? Do we allow ourselves to be a prey of worldly possessions and temptations such as unhealthy competitions, wrong ambitions? Or, are we the seeds that fell on the rocks? If we do not have a spiritual

life, good values, respect for our lives, God's call will not blossom in our lives, for there is no space for it to be rooted. We will be like the seeds which fell among the rocks. If we give power to others and allow them to manipulate us, the evil around us will not allow the good within us to immerge.

In the modern world it is very big challenge for a person to live a good life. To prove ourselves, first of all that person should be able to say "No" to evil. In the same way we should build up a strong faith and close relationship with God. At the same time, we should allow our "farmer" to enrich our soil by his Holy Sacraments and Word of God. Then we, the youth will be able to be efficient harvesters in the kingdom of God.



Priyamantha Fernando, Post O/L



I HAD NOTHING BUT EVERYTHING

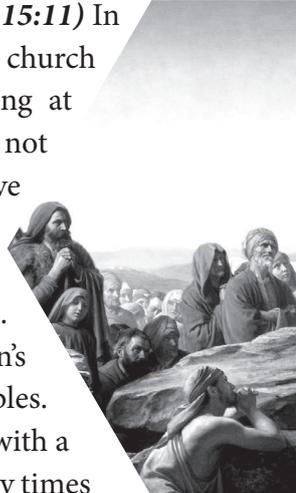
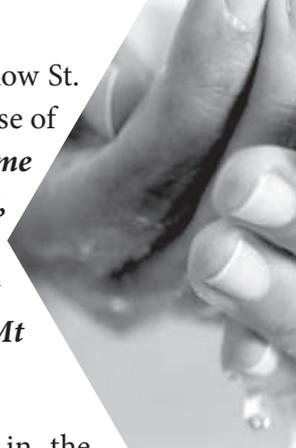
I had nothing
When I compared myself
With their rich lives
And they had got nothing to say
That they are in need of
They had their meal on a large table
It was like a meal of a king
But every day I was given their left food
And I ate it on my half broken silver plate
They slept in a luxurious place
But I slept in a room
That was called the lumber room...

I wanted to see
Where they were
I started my journey
To find them out
Then I happened to stop my car
As somebody came across
He was like a beggar, I felt
That I knew him
I questioned him who he was
Before he answered, I could know that
He is the one for whom I worked
When I asked what happened he said
"Sir I thought that I had everything. But I had
only money. And my wife had not loved me,
but for my money."
So I felt "I have everything"

By Keerthi Sandaruwan, Grade 12



Purity of Heart

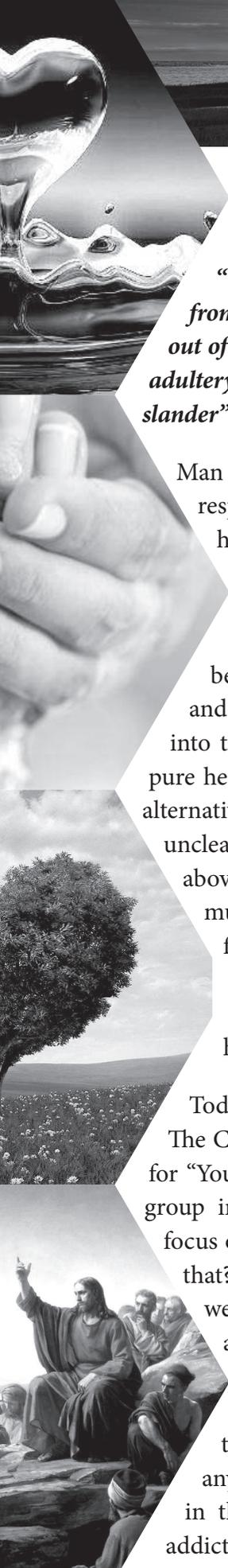


The Earth is a wonderful place. Everything is included in it, we have it, you have it and we all enjoy them. There is a continual struggle between purity and impurity. Impurity can destroy, perish and bring sarcasm to life in the world and we cannot bear that and what opposes it is purity.

When we speak about purity, what comes immediately to our mind is cleanliness. Purity can be understood in two ways: one is the physical or outward purity and, the other is spiritual or inward purity. The outward purity is very much spoken of by people. The society considers that if something has been cleaned outwardly it is cleaned inwardly as well. The body of man always gets dirty. When it is dirty, he cleans it as he realizes that others may not accept him. So, man bothers over the outward purity or cleanliness. They feel embarrassed when they are dirty. Man used to stay clean from the beginning of time. We know that there are many traditions in the world regarding cleanliness. Each one has tried to fit into their own tradition. In many cases they are forced to follow traditions as is told in their religion. Generally, most of the people in the world follow their religion in order to be a good person in the world. When traditions set boundaries, often people respect its demarcations. At a general audience, His Holiness Pope John Paul II spoke about ritual ablutions. He mentioned about purity and how purity connects with tradition. In his address he presented the fact how traditions stand influential in outward purity than inward cleanliness.

Here we would like to be reminded how St. Matthew presented the issue in the case of Jesus. *Then Pharisees and Scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat". (Mt 15:1-2)*

It is a recurring remark not only in the New Testament but also the teaching of the Old Testament as well. The Old Testament always presents events in its own traditional context. Even though the Old Testament is full of law and tradition, the New Testament takes a different direction with the birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught others that internal purity is more important than external purity throughout his life. For an example let's notice what Jesus said, *"Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth defiles a man."* (Mt 15:11) In fact, Jesus is trying to challenge the church hierarchy with a new way of looking at reality. He wanted to teach the people not to depend on external things, but to live according to the directions of one's conscience. That's why Jesus gave the most prominent place to the heart. He especially exemplified the way man's heart should build through the parables. Jesus wanted man to build up his life with a pure heart. That's why he focused many times on the purity of intention.



“What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart and this defiles a man for out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness and slander” (Mt; 15:18-19)

Man is a unique being. He is free and is responsible for the choices he makes. If he makes a good choice, he feels good. Similarly, if he does something wrong, he feels guilty. Therefore, the heart of the person is very sensitive, and it can be easily manipulated both positively and negatively with the feelings that enters into the heart. Because he has not made a pure heart, he tries to gratify himself in some alternative ways. Sometimes it may be in an unclean way. The negative actions mentioned above can defile man. As we mentioned, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness and slander are almost connected with the feelings of a man. It destroys man's life fully and may have detrimental repercussions.

Today's society can be an example for that. The Catholic Church has dedicated this year for "Youth" as the youth is the most powerful group in the world. Why does the church focus only on youth? Is there any reason for that? These are some of the questions that we should look into. Modern youth play a remarkable part in society. Being a remarkable group, their influence on society matters immensely. It seems they do not value the concept of purity any more. As a result, most of them are in the dark. Today's modern youth are addicted to drugs, theft, murder, false witness,

slander, pornography, fornication. Actually when we talk about these things it connects with moral sense. Because the young generation has given a significant place for their emotions, these emotions have started to control the young boys and girls. The purity which has to be in them is no more. But then, according to Jesus' teaching we can work for this purity within ourselves. It was like this that St. Augustine was a great person who brought out the purity of his life when he was still deeply glued to impurity. St. Augustine was a person who was addicted to fornication. He was a womaniser. His mother, St. Monica, always cried and prayed for the conversion of St. Augustine. Though St. Augustine was impure, as a result of his mother's prayers and tears he was changed and purity enlightened his life. This life story is a perfect example for our modern youth.

“Those who live according to flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit” (Rom 8:5)

Then why can't we change? Jesus has blessed us in every way. If we try to change our thoughts, Jesus will definitely help us to move from impurity to purity. That's why purity of heart which Christ spoke in the Sermon on the Mountain is realised precisely in life according to the spirit.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”(Mt 5:8)

Avishka Niluminda and Shehan Maduwantha, Post O/L



Family Bonds & Youth

A child born into this world sees the light of the world through the nurturing and nourishment received through his parents and family. This child who is nourished by his parents, in turn, becomes a person who nourishes others. As the branch that abides in the vine bears fruit, similarly this child who is connected to his family bears fruit. If the branch is not connected to the vine it cannot bear fruit by itself. In the same way a child connected to the family bears much fruit.

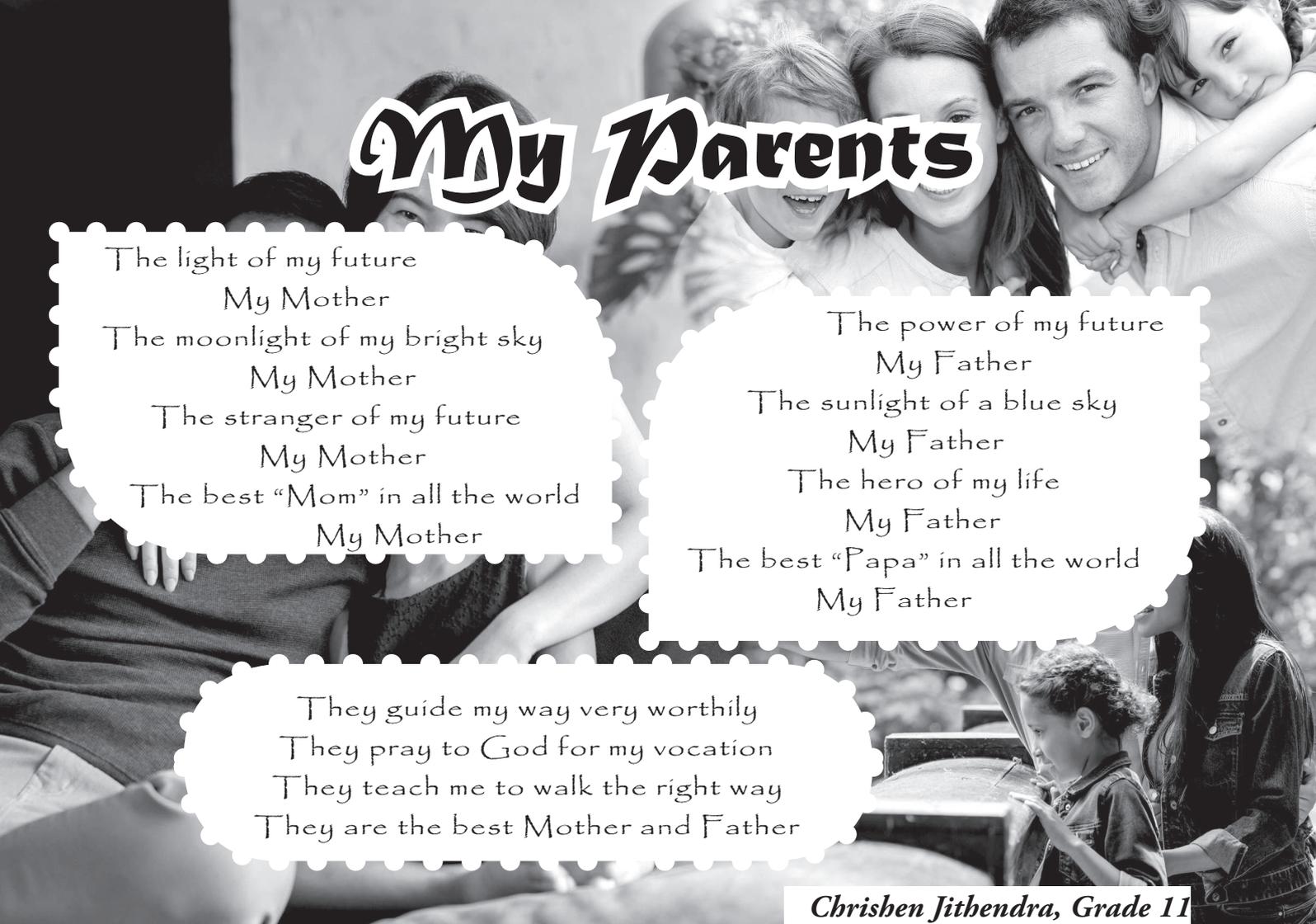
God is the vine and we are the branches. A branch that is connected to the main tree bears fruit and we too gain nourishment by being united to God through prayer. In the current context, youth are not connected to their families. Their lives have become weary and pale due to lack of nourishment which they should inevitably draw from their own biological families. Without bonding to their families, youth are disoriented, and thereby lead a selfish and self-centred life.

Pruning is essential for vine to bear fruit. Similarly, a person needs to be pruned to bear much fruit. As the branches that do not bear fruit needs pruning, a person needs pruning in

his life to bear fruit. Unhealthy attitudes and habits, immoral behaviour, and addictions in life needs pruning for better results. A pruned vine creeper looks ugly but it is necessary to bear good fruit. In the same way one needs to face the harsh realities of life and face challenges that are being repeated. One is able to face these challenges and hardships when one is firmly connected to one's family like a branch that is connected to the vine, and when supported by parents and siblings. "Family is a home" for youth, it is in which members relate to each other interdependently in their day to day activities. A home demands that everyone works together. Family helps its members to interiorise values of life e.g., patience, sharing and forgiveness.

A ship that sails through a stormy sea can be sunk. In the same way a youth who sails along the sea of life can be drowned due to challenges and hardships of life if he is not united to his family. It is only the family that comes to rescue when its members are in need. Friends may depart, it is the family that stands by you. Therefore, as a branch abides in the vine one must abide in the family.

By Sonal Samith, Post O/L



My Parents

The light of my future
My Mother
The moonlight of my bright sky
My Mother
The stranger of my future
My Mother
The best "Mom" in all the world
My Mother

The power of my future
My Father
The sunlight of a blue sky
My Father
The hero of my life
My Father
The best "Papa" in all the world
My Father

They guide my way very worthily
They pray to God for my vocation
They teach me to walk the right way
They are the best Mother and Father

Chrishen Jithendra, Grade 11

The voice of the youth

Youth...
Who are they...?
For whom are they...?

For what they are...?
Do we allow youth to destroy themselves...?
What can we do for them...?

Youth are important to us...
Because, they are the future of the earth...

D. J. A. Shamel, Grade 10



Music is

Passing the stages of evolution human kind has reached high standards in which he enjoys his life today. Even though he has come so far he has been living very close to nature because he is part of it. Therefore, music also has been part and parcel of human culture. Because music came to the world before human beings. However, as a result of creativity which people have in their lives they tried to use the music in nature and give meaning to it, the sounds of water flowing in the rivers, the chirping of birds and the blowing of the wind and many other sounds produced by nature were enhanced and made use of in musical scores.

They tried to enjoy this music with the clap of their own hands and to listen to some sounds which arise from the environment. But how long has man come until the present day with music? The homosapians believed that music helped them to control their behavior, it was proved by history. Music like a big ship which is sailing in the sea, has improved and advanced with technology. How can we make clear the concept of music? What are the values which are produced by music in human race? How has it become a universal language? How can we enter into the artful life making use



of this music? I would begin this discussion with a famous song in Sinhala.

හන්තානෙට පායන සඳු Hanthaneta payana sada
ලස්සනයි ද කියන්න Lissanaida kiyanna
මා නොදකින ඒ පුරාණයා Ma nodakina a purahada
බබට හැකි ද දකින්න.... Obata hakida dakinna

With these words we are going to enter into a deep experience. It was written by one of the most popular song writer, Dhammika Bundara and sung by Amarasiri Peries. What do you think when you listen to this song? The story behind this song is the passionate love between a boy and a girl. It speaks about a true lover who is ready to sacrifice their relationship so that she

will be free to go upwards in the social ladder. This piece of music opens our hearts to a deeper reality and a meaning which words cannot express. He has turned that experience into an amazing

song. When we listen to that song, do we experience love? It is a secret. However, I tried to make use of this song because I wanted to express that music is the greatest medium to communicate all the secrets and emotions in the world.

The values of music almost touch our feelings. Why am I saying that? When we are in a state



an Ocean

of sadness or anger, if we listen to music, it helps console our feelings and bring happiness and even help us recover from sicknesses. Quotations from the Holy Bible especially the Old Testament has been made of very creatively. For e.g., the book of Psalms the Song of Songs can be considered as a great musical composition. According to these two books music is a weapon which helps us to convert our hearts towards God and it opens doors for that. What are the purposes of music? We need music to express our feelings be it joy, love, sadness or anger. We can communicate our state of mind through music. If, however good or bad a human being you are, music will change your whole life style. Music helps us to have a good sleep as it is a form of relaxation. Music is a simple weapon which guides man to build up a good relationship with other. And, it also is said that animals too, communicate with other animals through music. How does music become a universal language? All religions use music as a method to route their religious principals and in the same manner helps the disciples to follow their God. For some people music is their profession and truly live in music to be a famous personality in this world and develop a new culture and meaning. How do we taste music in our life and how do we sense the real meaning in it,? let's consider another song

Muhudu ralle osse oruwak pada yanvo
 Nilwalala osse gavi gavi yanowo
 Atha diyaba soyala ivakaramin yanavo
 Atha matha balla api malu bala enawo

This is one of the most emotional and beautiful songs. Its taste depends on how we listen to and understand it. We can find the real meaning expressed through the words by literary understanding the technique of that song by recognizing it properly. This song has been written on the life style of a fisherman. “නවී වලල්ල” is a word which describes the sea. This whole song describes how fishermen survive in the seas and their fishing techniques. Music is a universal language and if we consider the affects of music created, we find that it effects young boys and girls. On the other hand, from the view point of music, youth are no longer on the right track, they are moving towards destruction. They do not know the real meaning of music, what the advantages are of being with music. Because of these reasons music becomes a challenge to the youth. So, I invite you to acquire and understand the real meaning of music and improve your knowledge and be a positive personality in this universe.

ඉහුදු රිල්ල බස්සේ බරැවක් පඳු යනවෝ
 නවීවලල්ල බස්සේ ගෙඩි ගෙඩි යනවෝ
 අපා දියඹ සොයලා ඉවකභවින් යනවෝ
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Importance of knowing Languages

Language is the medium which is used by human beings to communicate with one another. According to the archaeological information, it has been revealed that man from the very beginning, had persistently tried to communicate through a language of their own. The three main languages spoken in Sri Lanka are Sinhala, Tamil and English. If we talk about languages and how they affect our lives, we can express it in two ways. One is to speak about the advantages of knowing languages and the other is the disadvantages of not knowing languages.

First of all, if we talk about the advantages of knowing languages, we see that helps a person to enter into another culture. Because when he enters into that culture, he familiarizes himself with that culture and the lives of the people who speak in that particular language. This also helps him to live peacefully with the people of that culture. Therefore, the desire to know and learn a language is very important. When we engage in a job, we may have to know languages because we may have to interrelate with persons who speak different languages. In the same manner when travelling to another country, it is necessary to know other languages which may help us communicate

with the people with whom we live.

But, if we don't know any language, what would happen? It would be strenuous for us as we can't communicate with others, it would affect our relationship. In addition, we can make use of these examples, viz., the bombings on Easter Sunday, ethnic clashes etc. Do we realise the main reason for these problems? It is because we didn't communicate with each other as we are unable to speak each other's language.

Languages

The world was created by God for man so that he would develop and relate with all peoples. So, in a bid to build a peaceful world, let's learn other languages and acknowledge each other's cultures and customs.

By Theekshana Kavinda, Post O/L

Communication



HAVE YOU GOT YOURSELF TUNED TO HIS VOICE

If I'm to compare all vocations to the stars in the night sky, the vocation to priesthood is rare and very special. Because the person who receives that kind of vocation is chosen by God, not a few months or not a few years ago. Really that person is chosen even before he was formed in the womb. (cf. Jer. 1/5). Our God does not consider any weakness of the person to call him for priesthood. Jesus just tells us 'Come as you are.' We may not be holy people but if God chose us we do not need to be afraid of anything. Because God makes those whom he calls qualified to do his mission. Isaiah 43:2 says 'When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, the flames will not set you ablaze.' Having this promise in mind we can fulfil God's plan without any fear. We are supposed to be united in prayer with the one who has called us. When we pray to God, we can build up a good relationship with him and also He strengthens us in our weaknesses. Psalms 121:7 says that

Lord will keep

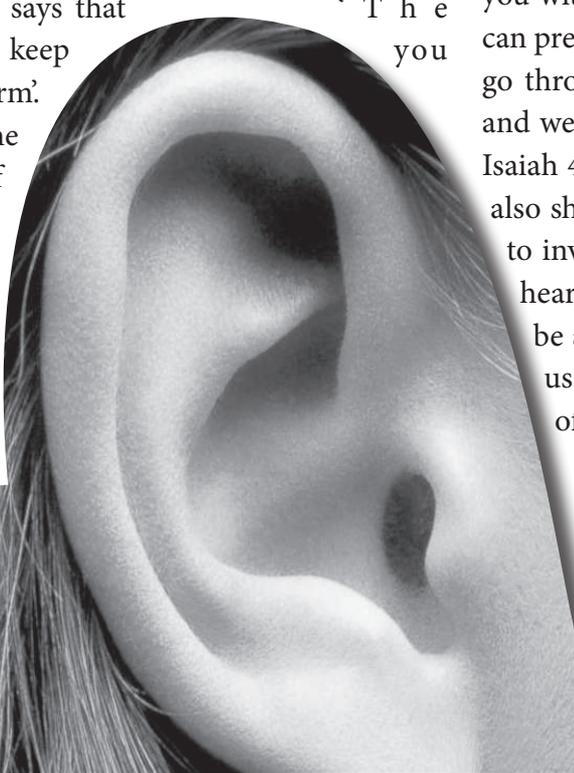
And in the letter of James 5:16 tells us 'The prayer of a righteous man is

'The Lord will keep you

powerful and effective.' So a person who is thinking of becoming a priest has to pray. Because he will be like a well-watered garden. That means he could nourish people by spreading the good news which he had already heard.

There are two ways of receiving the vocation to priesthood. Some people are attracted to it because of the physical appearances and some people like to work for others without caring for themselves. Anyway, after entering to the seminary, most people change their mind due to various reasons. That means after going through a period of discernment, they dedicate their whole life to work for others. Someone can think we are weak to do this mission but we can't do anything by our own strength. God will help us to do everything. Isaiah 51:16 says 'I have put my words in your mouth, and covered you with the shadow of my hand' therefore we can prepare ourselves to go through the fire and go through the lions. We will not be harmed and we will be protected by the power of God. Isaiah 44:21 says 'I will not forget you' then we also should not forget God. Thus I would like to invite all my readers not to get late. If you hear the voice of God, come join us. Do not be afraid of anything because God is with us. "From this on I will make you fishers of men" is what Jesus told.

By Imalka Fernando, Post O/L





Since it is divine grace that elevates a man through the laying on-of hands, to be a priest. It is clear that priesthood, unlike any other vocation is open to men. Even the use of the term “vocation” can be misleading, since the level of this vocation is not as any other. It is very important since, priesthood unites all the callings to which man may and may not accept as just one.

According to the rite of ordination, the priest is specially ordained to “stand in innocence before God’s holy altar, to proclaim the Gospel of His truth, to offer unto Him spiritual gifts and sacrifices, and to baptize in the name of the Holy Spirit. These words are an indication that it is when the priest presides at the celebration of the holy Eucharist, the fullness of his priesthood and his responsibility are both realized and made evident.

The priesthood is a calling or a life, not simply a profession among many that man might choose. This means that the priest has been called by God and given the gift of God, that is, the grace to accomplish His work.

This divine call in a soul is a gift of God, the Lord of the harvest

who calls labourers to serve and follow him by becoming another Christ.

Pope Benedict spoke about what people expect of their priests. He said that people do not expect priests to be experts in everything but be experts in spiritual life. So a good candidate for priesthood should attend Mass, pray

frequently, receive the sacrament of reconciliation, serve others and grow spiritually.

Jesus moulds us the way He wants us to be and qualifies us. I feel personally that God is expecting me to be more than an ordinary person. I always feel that I have a call from God.



POWERFUL FOR A LIKE



My birth itself was a significant turning point in my life. I was born as a very weak baby and the doctors predicted that I would survive only for a few days.

But the following day I had miraculously survived.

I gradually realised the purpose of my survival. It is because God wanted me to be His own. My heart always guided me to see this incident as a symbol of my vocation.

My parents had many dreams for my future. When I was eight years old, I once again heard His calling through a



INVITATION

SINNER

ME

priest who preached on priesthood, on National Vocations Sunday. Hence, I decided to search about my priestly vocation.

However, my parents didn't encourage my idea. They thought that I might forget the idea of becoming a priest as time passes, but it was not so. At the same time, shifting house due to a problem was another stepping stone to fulfil my dream. Our new house was just in front of the church, thus, it enabled me to get closer to God. As an altar server, I was able to build up a deep

relationship with the Lord. I was determined to be a priest. It became my preoccupation. My whole life, evolved around becoming a priest. I started searching for a religious congregation.

Eight months before entering the seminary I had a dream which moved me away from my ambition. It



dominated all my thoughts and decisions. I started believing that I do not have a vocation and am just pretending. The influence discouraged me to pray, I was not interested in life which made me very unhappy. Gradually once again my suppressed desire of becoming a priest and being closer to God started emerging in me. I realized that true happiness is only in God. I wanted to be

rid of all negative thoughts and rebuild the relationship with my Father.

As the first step, I rearranged my room in a way that I could spend more time with the Lord in prayer. I was able to build up a strong relationship with God through this incident.

My other obstacle to fulfil my dream was my studies. Although I was an average student, I studied hard and was worried whether I could get through the seminary entrance test. Yet, God was kind enough to get me through from the first hurdle of entering the junior seminary.

My loving Lord opened the door for my dream on 15th January 2017. I know this is only the first step and there are many more steps to climb until I fulfil my dream of priesthood.

I know I have a 'Way of the Cross' for I consider the cross as an encounter against my selfish desires, the invitation to let go my sinfulness.

I firmly believe that one day, the Lord will make me, this weak human being, another Christ.

Supun Marius, Post O/L

Art of Death

I knew a simple man
who walked dozens of miles through his life's journey
And was not interested.

He had no children, so he begged and survived.
His fellow beggars Andrew and Gibson,
were lost after three days after their arrival.

And were found dead.....no..... killed,
from two different places, at the bank of the river,
and inside a cave.

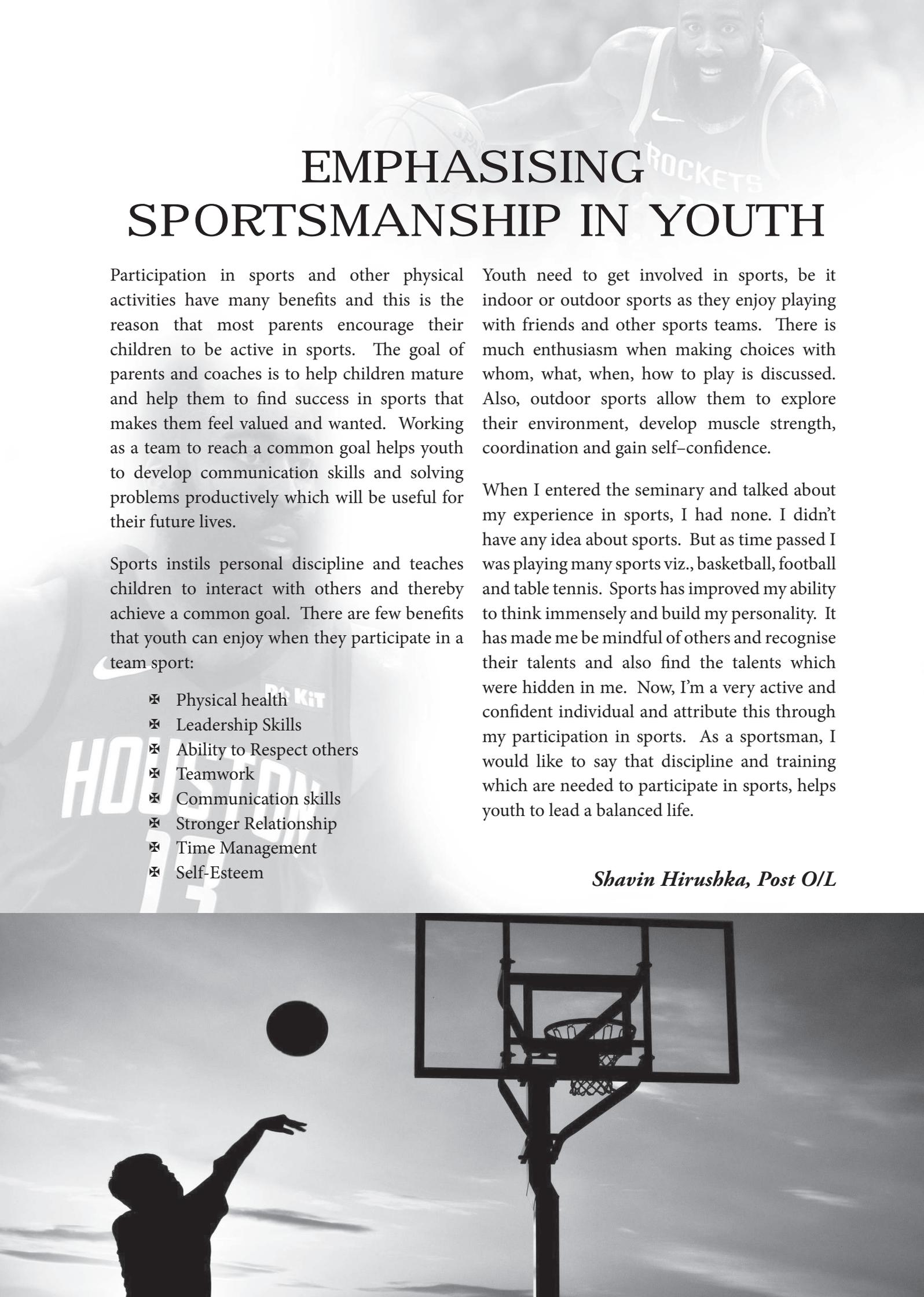
Third was the last
A woman, quite old
owner of a room, given for rent
the roomsuch a mysterious room.
Smells bad, untidy and looked unpleasant.
The walls full of crawls
But it did give the terror of mysterious crimes.

The beggar confessed
his act of revenge
For the love that deceived him
'how the love became hatred', people
asked from themselves....

A beautiful young woman in a cemetery,
Worshiping her dead husband,
who was killed recently, brutally.
It was the second criminal case.
Yet the criminal lives freely.
Who would be the next prey? people prayed,
telling; not them

First, the two beggars
Young man, woman.....
It was an act of revenge
It was obvious by the drawings on the wall
And a shirt and a trouser that the beggar wore
Hanged as if suicided
Yet the criminal lives freely
Pray that it would be the end
No more killing
no more hiding

By Chrishmal Rajaratne, Grade 12



EMPHASISING SPORTSMANSHIP IN YOUTH

Participation in sports and other physical activities have many benefits and this is the reason that most parents encourage their children to be active in sports. The goal of parents and coaches is to help children mature and help them to find success in sports that makes them feel valued and wanted. Working as a team to reach a common goal helps youth to develop communication skills and solving problems productively which will be useful for their future lives.

Sports instils personal discipline and teaches children to interact with others and thereby achieve a common goal. There are few benefits that youth can enjoy when they participate in a team sport:

- ✘ Physical health
- ✘ Leadership Skills
- ✘ Ability to Respect others
- ✘ Teamwork
- ✘ Communication skills
- ✘ Stronger Relationship
- ✘ Time Management
- ✘ Self-Esteem

Youth need to get involved in sports, be it indoor or outdoor sports as they enjoy playing with friends and other sports teams. There is much enthusiasm when making choices with whom, what, when, how to play is discussed. Also, outdoor sports allow them to explore their environment, develop muscle strength, coordination and gain self-confidence.

When I entered the seminary and talked about my experience in sports, I had none. I didn't have any idea about sports. But as time passed I was playing many sports viz., basketball, football and table tennis. Sports has improved my ability to think immensely and build my personality. It has made me be mindful of others and recognise their talents and also find the talents which were hidden in me. Now, I'm a very active and confident individual and attribute this through my participation in sports. As a sportsman, I would like to say that discipline and training which are needed to participate in sports, helps youth to lead a balanced life.

Shavin Hirushka, Post O/L



FASHIONABLE YOUTH: MODERN DAY SAINTS

Youth is a valuable gift from God. It is the time to have fun. We enjoy with our boyfriends as well as girlfriends. Sometimes they may enjoy in a good manner or even bad.

Nowadays, youth are known as fashionable youth. Because most of the young boys & girls like to be more fashionable, more enjoyable, more beautiful or handsome & more famous in the country or if possible in the world. Most of them like to wear jeans especially patch jeans, sneakers & nice smart watches and own the latest smart phones. Especially young girls like to wear half naked dresses to attract boys. They also like to listen to music & hang out with friends. Some of them like to straighten their hair or do some coloring or special styles to their hair. And the worst is becoming addicted to alcohol & tobacco. This also starts with their desire to be fashionable to show that they too can do these things. They try to exaggerate and share on social media like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Viber etc. what they do and even what they eat. They do these things to show off.

Being fashionable, our young boys and girls might change their lives into a disgusting one. But we must also know that without living with them we cannot know about them, their lives, their desires, attitudes, dreams and especially goodness hidden within their hearts. Therefore, we have to live together with them to understand them. But we see how our politicians just speak and give false promises saying that they would stop the use and the selling of drugs. They want to introduce severe punishment. But the leaders are hardly worried about telling the youngsters what they could do to overcome these challenges. Instead the leaders give bad examples to the younger generation.

The youth are curious to know what they are going through. If they are not properly directed, and educated they could be misled. They might

do wrong deeds like watching pornography and other means of attaining sexual pleasure. Especially nowadays same sex marriage and abortion have become a fashion among our youth. The youth are lobbying to get these approved by the government. Because of that, starting with Ireland, many governments have legalized same sex marriage and abortion. Marriage among youth also has become a fashion, because marriage has become only a ceremony to show the world that they had a big party. Nowadays, marriage has become just a day's celebration. The idea that married life is a lifelong commitment is lost among the youth. Therefore, they like to live a free life.

Every dark cloud has a silver lining. We find that there are a few youngsters who give prominence to God. They remain with their bad friend, and yet they pray and work for the conversion of their friends even when the bad friends try to lead them astray. Spiritually good youngsters help them to understand the value of their lives by giving them, especially through their example, the values of the kingdom of heaven. They may not be able to stop the friends who do evil, at once. If they are good friends, they will definitely be able to convert them slowly. They need to be an example in their day to day life. Even though they are spiritually good, they also can be fashionable and enjoy life. When the good friends enjoy life and live fashionably, they can help those who live bad lives easily. Because they can be closer to them by being like them. Then those friends might even share their problems. Jesus invites us not to become sad, but to be enjoyable and fashionable while being an example to others. They can help their bad friends to change their hearts and minds by telling them the value of life. They are the ones who can become modern day saints as Pope Francis tells us.

Sheron Fernando, Grade 13



Bloom Where You Are Planted

Life is too short but seems to be long,
we are enjoying without knowing the purpose,
never thinking negative, we laugh,
never thinking positive we cry.

As my Mother always said,
I wanted to awake from slumber,
which doesn't allow me to,
experience the reality.

So I didn't cry where I had to laugh.

I didn't laugh where I had to cry.

I took both into my hands,
and I put them into my pocket;
thinking that I may carry them,
for ever and ever.

Then my Mother said,
I can see a change in you,
but I don't know what it is.

Nobody came even close to me,
as I was a "Touch-me-not"
difficulties seem to never end,
but I bloomed even through the thorns,
and when the moon appeared,
saying good bye to all the struggles of the day,
I became a "Queen of the night"
by spreading my love as it spreads its fragrance from petals.

As my Father too said,
I can see a change in you,
but I don't know what it is.



Vimukthi Angelo, Grade 12

Falling Tears of a Clean Heart

Even though I'm not a queen,
Even not wealthy enough,
My wish was very simple.
It was to see your face.

My house filled with your voice,
And my heart rejoiced a lot
I felt that the whole world is near me,
When you're with me.

Even though you grew up,
Even though you will forget me,
I'm waiting for a day to come,
Where we would meet again.

All these are because of
My love for you,
My son....

Kavindu Dulanjaya Perera, Grade 11

The Night of Mom's Love

I hear through the desert
A mother is singing a lullaby
I see a shadow of a couple through starlight
With your sweet baby Mary are you going to Egypt this frosty night?
Is it called night of Mom's love.
Mary bring us also through this desert,
in our dark moment to
your loving son.

Sandeepa Fernando, Grade 12

The Blind Youth

Sunshine came to her before the sunrise
Her alarm crowed while the cock was sleeping
She dressed herself before the light dresses the world
Took a French leave while the men were dreaming to leave
The sun looked as it does usually
Her mother went to greet her as she does usually
Knocked at the door with thousands of hope
But the window was opened with some clothes tied to it
The darkness was booked by her love
To protect her, she thought even more than them
Her blind eyes thought the world is him
Has gone with him to search for a better next
The room was arranged comfortably by the love
Where she was going to see the world
Love was killed by the love at once

The parents acted and the police too
But it was too late for them both
The only thing which I can say to you is
The night white pillow was better
Than that which was painted red by that little couple

Nisal Sachintha Pigera, Post A/L

When the sun rises
People are walking
Some are going to work
Some, to school

At this moment
I'm in bed
And I'm dreaming
About my friend

My friend's name is Flet
He is very fat
When I am asleep
He throws water onto me like a pet
And I awake angrily

My mother comes to me
And gives me a cup of tea
And I drink it enjoyably

By Chathumadura Salgado, Grade 11

Are We Doing Politics

Sri Lanka was an island that great kings built their glorious kingdoms. Subsequently, some of our country leaders learnt the system of governance which prevailed at that time. We had a glorious past but now the situation is sinking into an abyss. As such, people have begun to



blame leaders and politicians. But there is nothing wrong in politics. The leaders who are in power should take responsibility of the situation which has arisen in the country. Due to these problems, we have to question ourselves 'who is responsible for this?'

We cannot point a finger against leaders assuming that they are responsible. Responsibility is shared equally among us. The citizen has a right to select the leaders. Those leaders are opportunists. They are waiting for a prey to grab it. But unfortunately our citizens don't realise this and misunderstand

the actions of these leaders who are thirsty for power and money under the pretence of being concerned of the people. Do they genuinely open their ears to the desperate cry of people? We should think about this. Today, most politicians don't have the required educational qualifications and are unable to grasp and handle responsibility. It has been proved that they do not have the minimum knowledge of their ministry. Where is justice? We should be prudent when electing leaders. These leaders are only concerned of their happiness and absolutely insensitive to the needs of the people and that of the country.

Considering the evolved situation, the question how this has come to be such a dirty business has ignited in the hearts of genuine people. Nevertheless, people cannot pretend to be ignorant of their own contribution. The people in our country respect political leaders as genuine leaders who commit themselves to raise our motherland to its heights. Therefore, our people help them expecting nothing in return. But, our power craving cunning leaders make use of the generosity of the people for their good and personal gain, like a lion hunting a deer when the opportune time comes. Leaders spend their money in favour of the people who come to work for them, while some people go to leaders asking favours even at the expense of their convictions. Lately, this blindness imperceptibly covered man

Right as Sri Lankans?

specifically their pure hearts and minds. They don't see the blemish of those cunning leaders. Therefore, they don't have enough courage to rise against injustice. Finally, man becomes a puppet who bow their heads for the master's every deed, be it good or bad.

Because of their selfish motive, leaders who had some fear to move forward gathered momentum gradually and bravely and started to satisfy their hunger for power. Therefore, we cannot point a finger saying that leaders are responsible for all that is happening as partially, the responsibility is ours. Both sides have to acknowledge what they have done and we must stand strong to rebuild our motherland as our glorious kings had done.

Politics is not something simple that you and I can get a fuller understanding easily. It is a deep rooted subject with considerable weightage. Therefore, we cannot say we are doing politics right. According to my view, definitely, humans are political beings. Their actions are politically motivated and it may be knowingly or unknowingly. This is the sense of politics which is within them. Therefore, you don't need to follow what previous generations did. Party politics is not the answer. We need people who can change this vicious circle. We need people who think beyond tradition and who can act with political foresight. Today, the youth of our country are qualified to take on this battle. Listen to them and allow them to move ahead. They just need proper guidance.



By Dinumika Mazenod , Post O/L

PROBLEMS FACED BY MODERN YOUTH

This year is dedicated to youth in the Archdiocese of Colombo. Our theme for this year too is “Modern youth: present day saints.” It is because during this period of time, a person’s life is very important for him or for her. Youth can be defined as the time period between eighteen to thirty years of age. Even though this time period is very important, they face a lot of challenges.

There are so many problems faced by the youth today. One of the main issues faced by the youth today is addiction to drugs and alcohol. These are sold even in schools today. Even the elders encourage the youth to get addicted to this. Not only boys but also girls are getting addicted to drugs and alcohol today. They are wasting parent’s money and their life too.

The word “Sex” has become something which interests our youth of today. They think that they can get much pleasure from that. From younger days they search about it. But they search in wrong places. They even get used to watching pornography which are freely available on the internet.



Another problem faced by the modern youth is the use of social media. They do not know how to use it and therefore, they waste a lot of time. Because of social media they break their normal relationships and friendships.

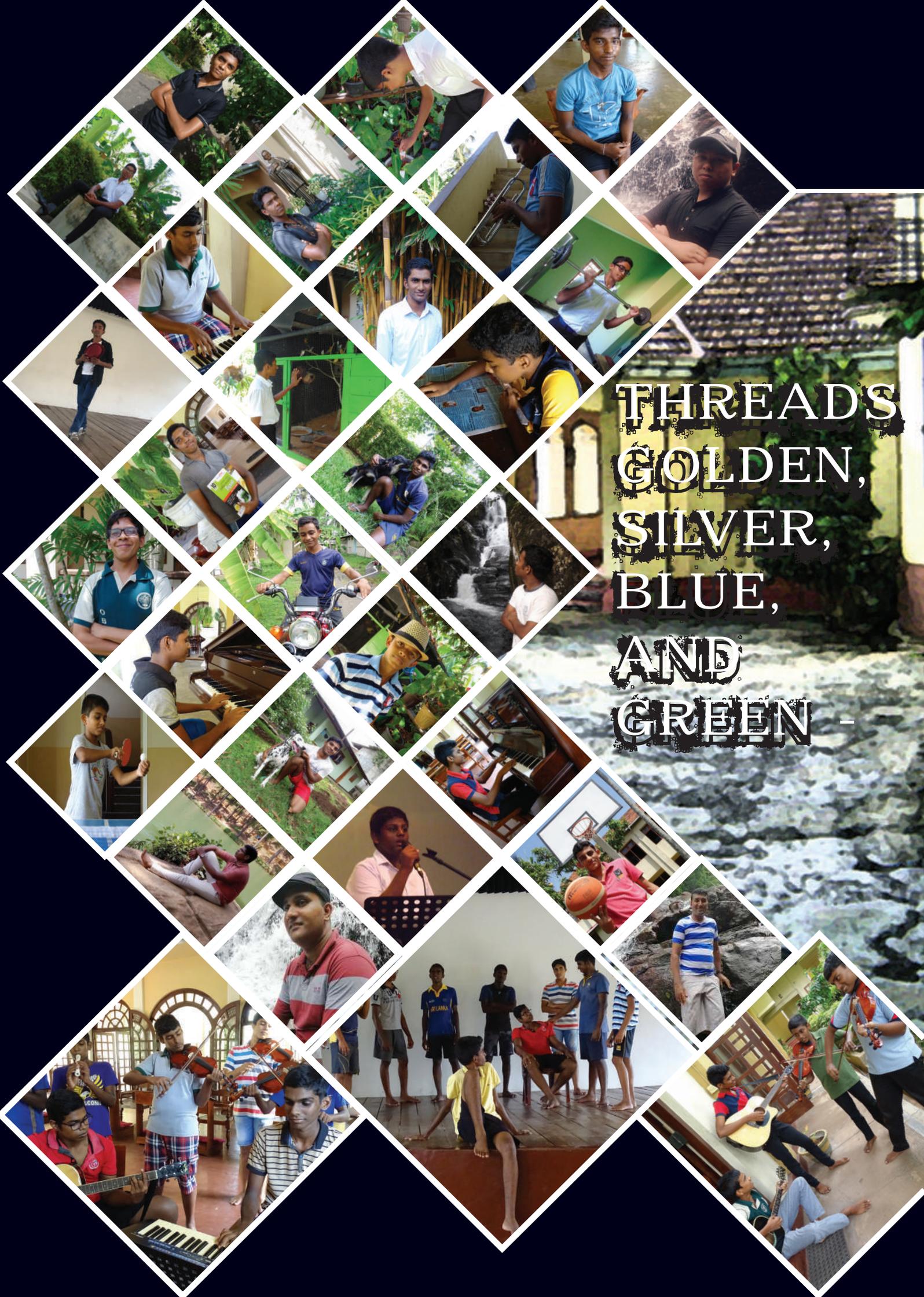
We must help our young men and women to come out from all these problems. If we can protect our youth, we protect our future. Therefore, let us all stand together for a better future.



*By Udara Fernando, Grade 10
Essay competition, First Place*



1st Row - Deneth, Shaveen, Praboda, Chamika, Chrishen, Maduwantha, Dulanjaya, Nisal, Benjamin, Vimukthi, Imalka, Sandeepa, Asala, Kavindu, Fleming, Priyamantha, Ishantha, Nirod, Sheron
 2nd Row - Praveen, Tharaka, Niluminda, Nimsara, Theekshana, Keerthi, Jude, Andy, Shamel, Navod, Joy, Lakshan, Dilukshan, Krishmal, Mazenod, Joshuwa, Dinelka, Supun
 3rd Row - Jude, Sithum, Udith, Dilshan, Sonal, Nisal, Shehan, Dulan, Jeson, Udara, Ameesha, Chathumadura, Ashen, Harshana
 Seated Row - Fr. Dhanushka, Fr. Gunanayagam, Fr. Andrias, Fr. Shiwantha, Fr. Anton



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GOLDEN,
SILVER,
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AND
GREEN -**



MODERN YOUTH: PRESENT DAY SAINTS

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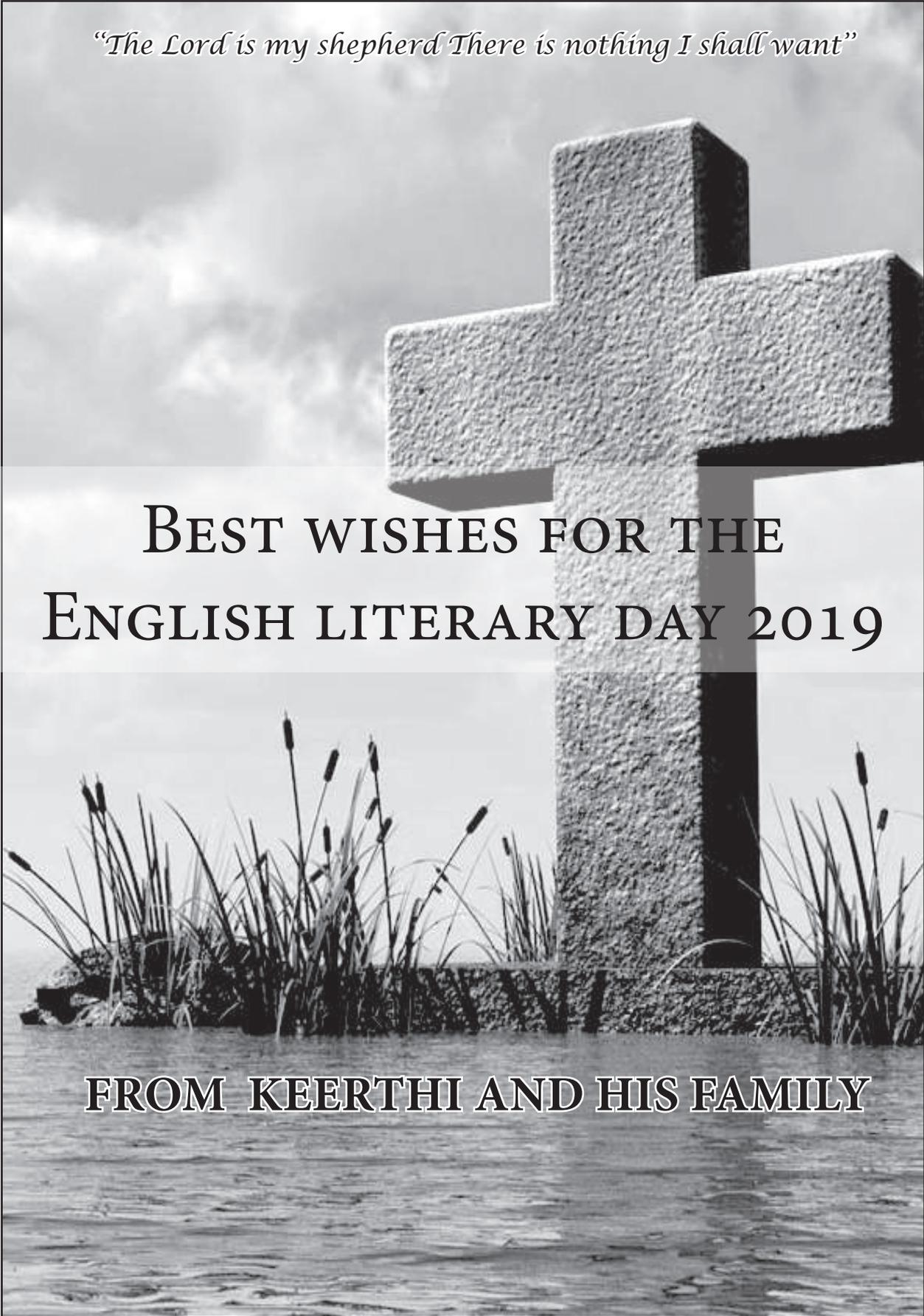
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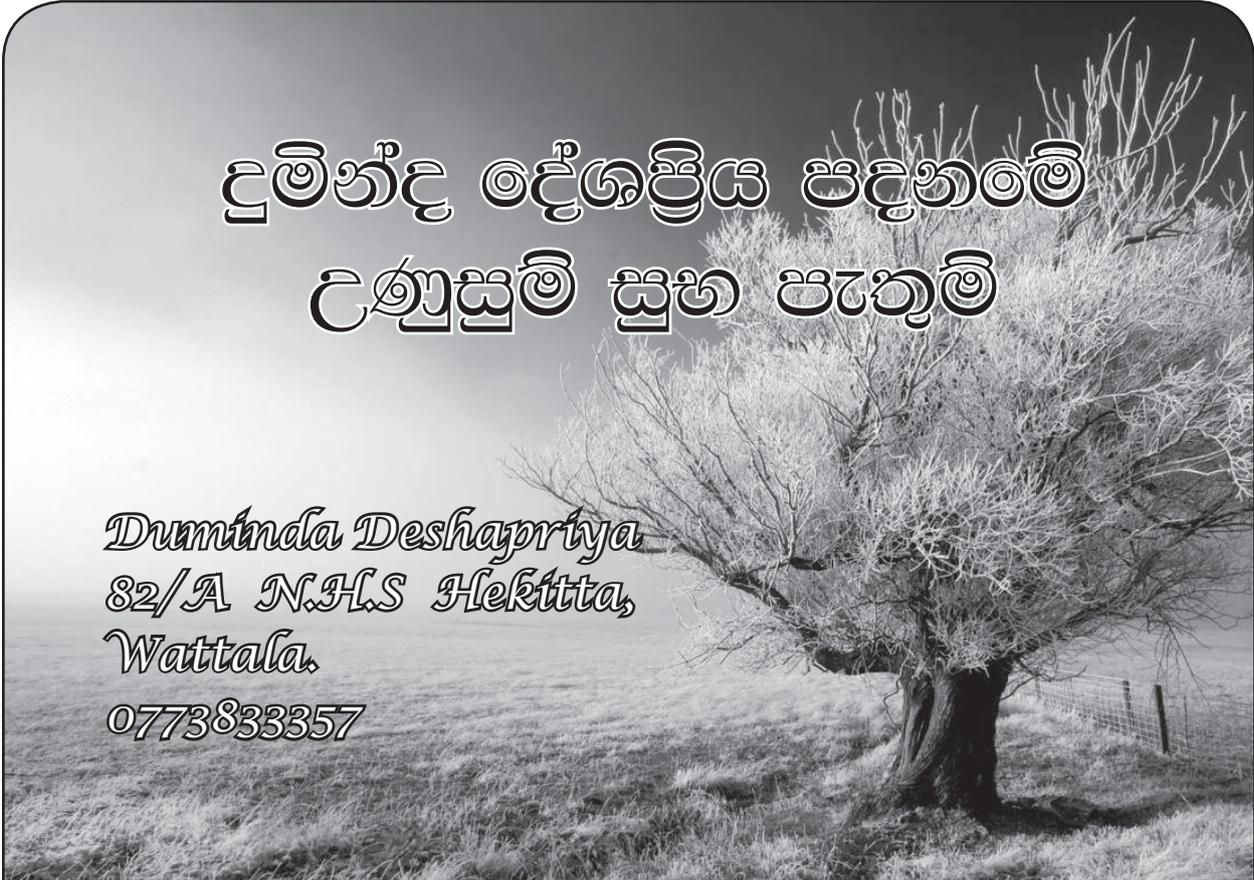


"The Lord is my shepherd There is nothing I shall want"



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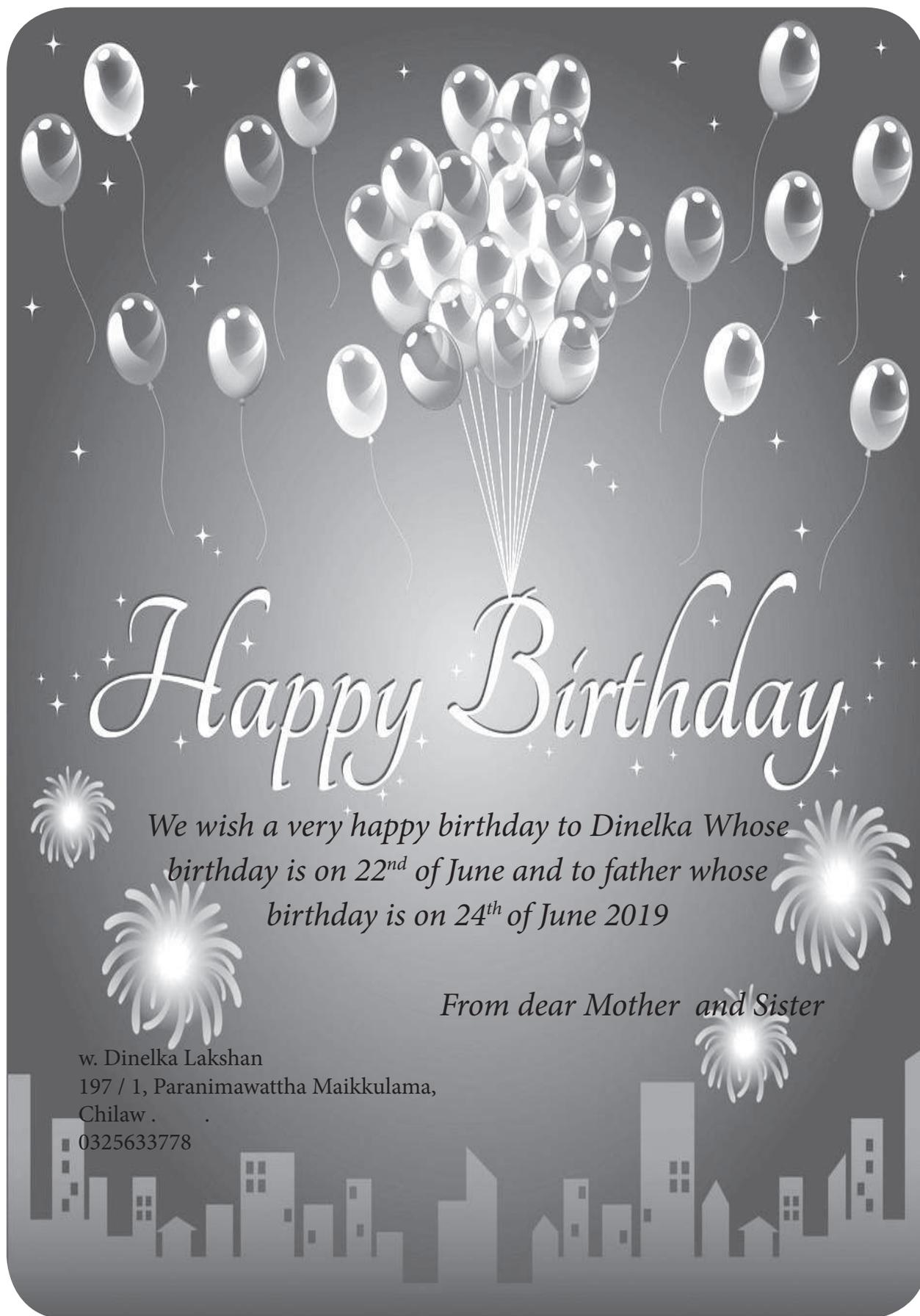
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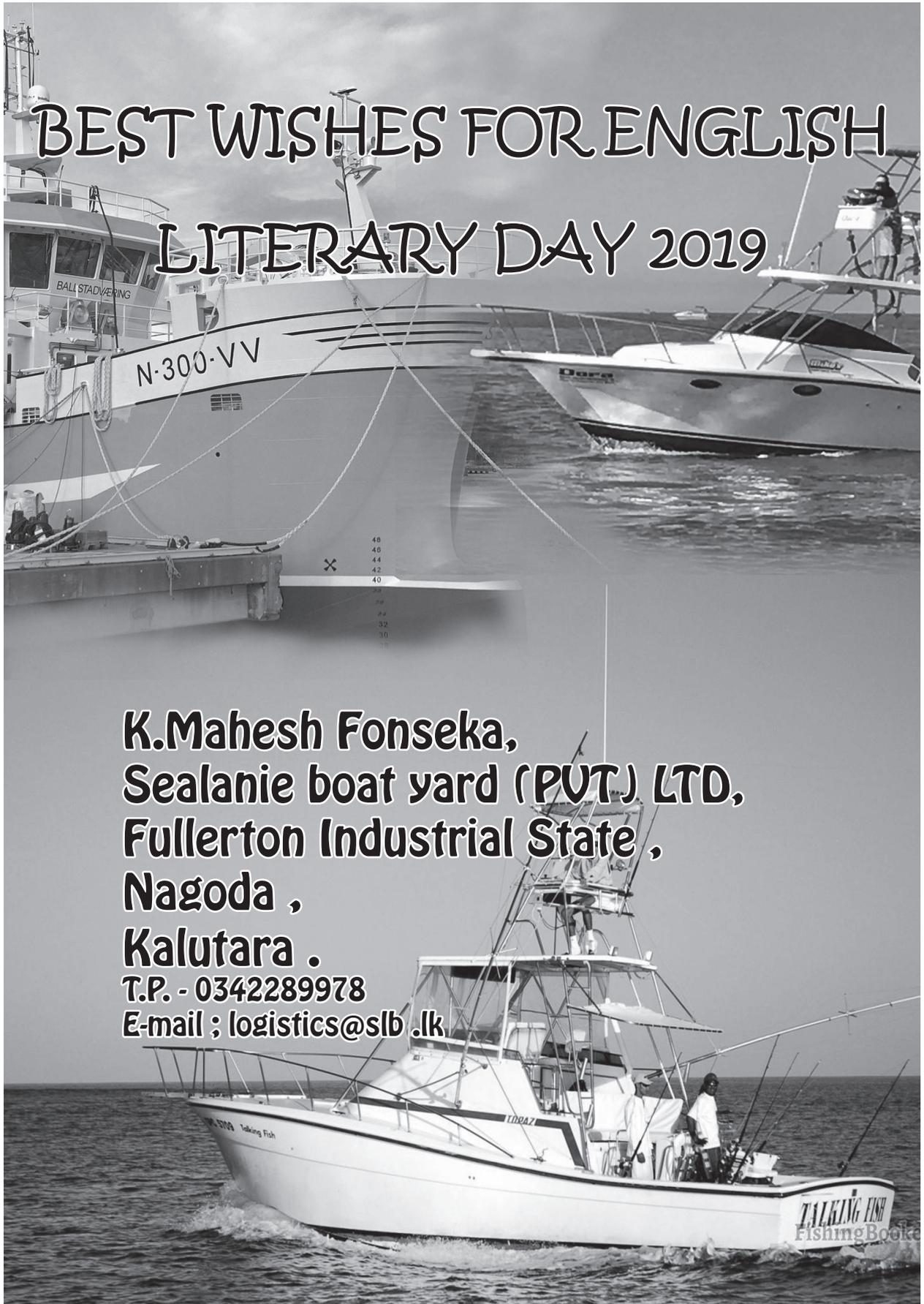
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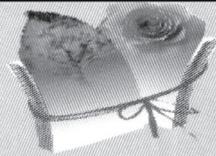
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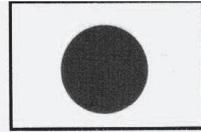
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පුෂ්පා ස්වර්ණකාන්ති උත්තරේඛ



තමාලි ජයසිංහ මතුගම



පීවත්ති ලක්මාල් හොරණ



දමුත් හෙට්ටිආරච්චි මතුගම



ප්‍රසා කුමාරි කළුතර



ඩණ්ඩාර ජයසුන්දර දොඩන්ගොඩ



ගෞර් අජසරා පානදුර



රුමීරු කරන් කළුතර



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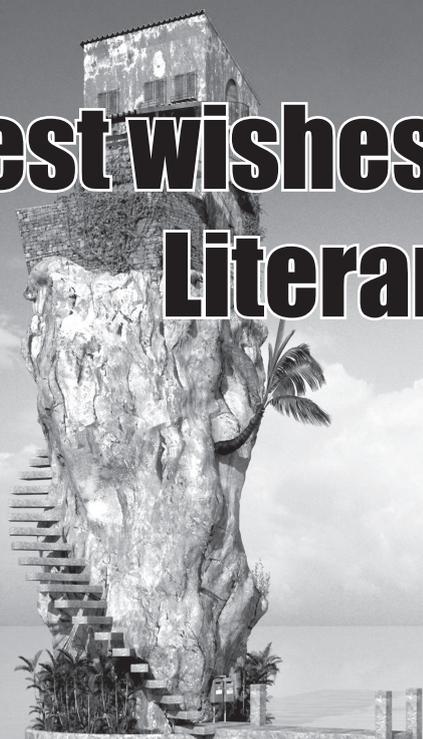
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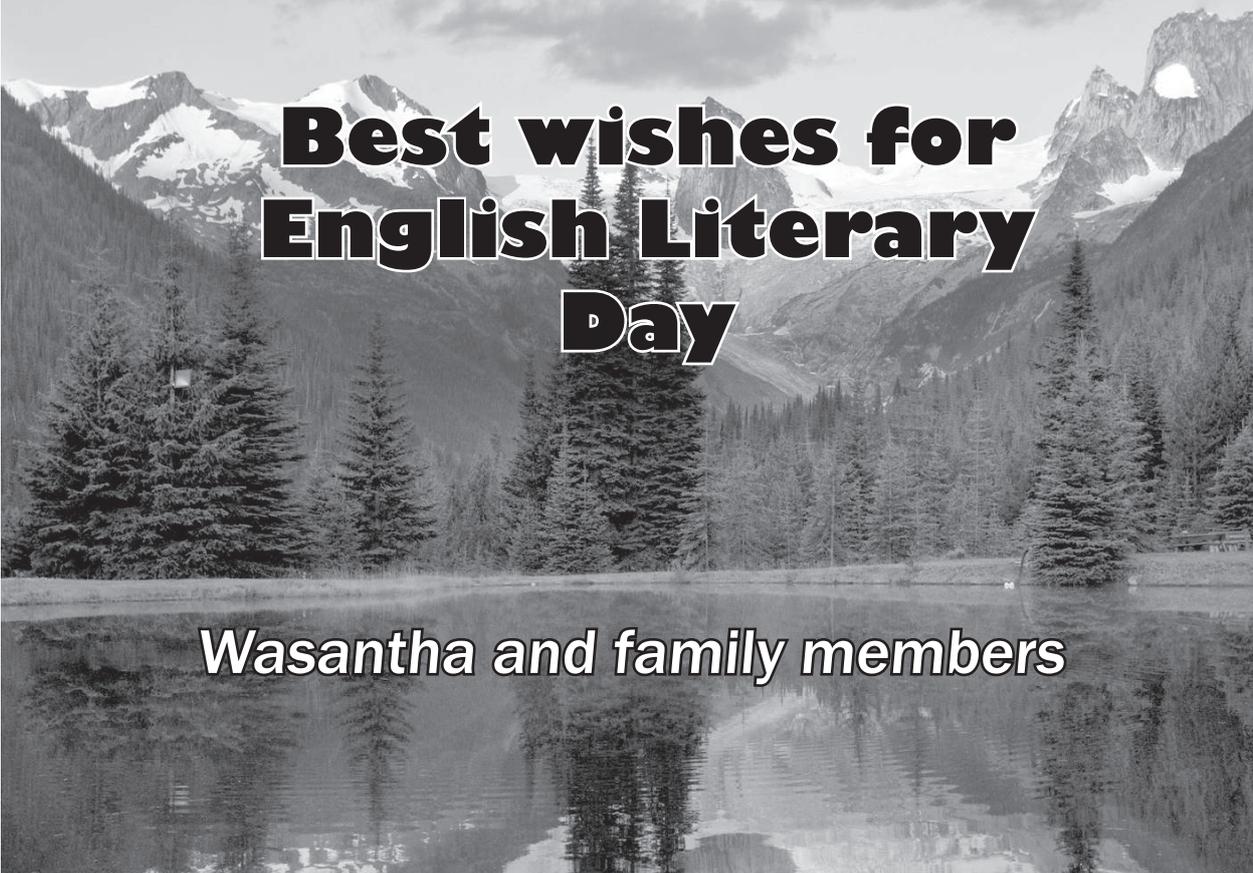
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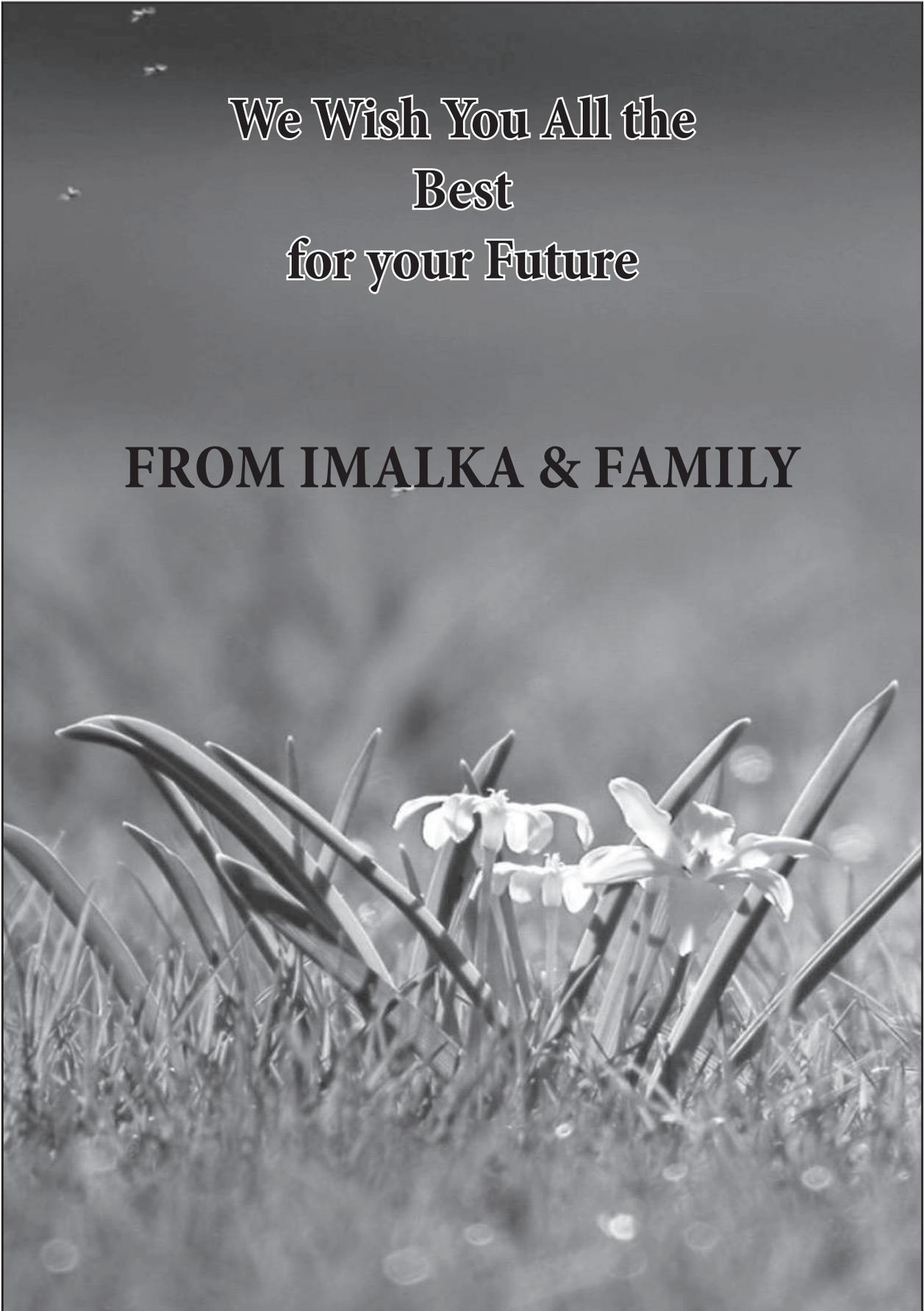
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for your Future

FROM IMALKA & FAMILY





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This is to thank

all the

Seminarians

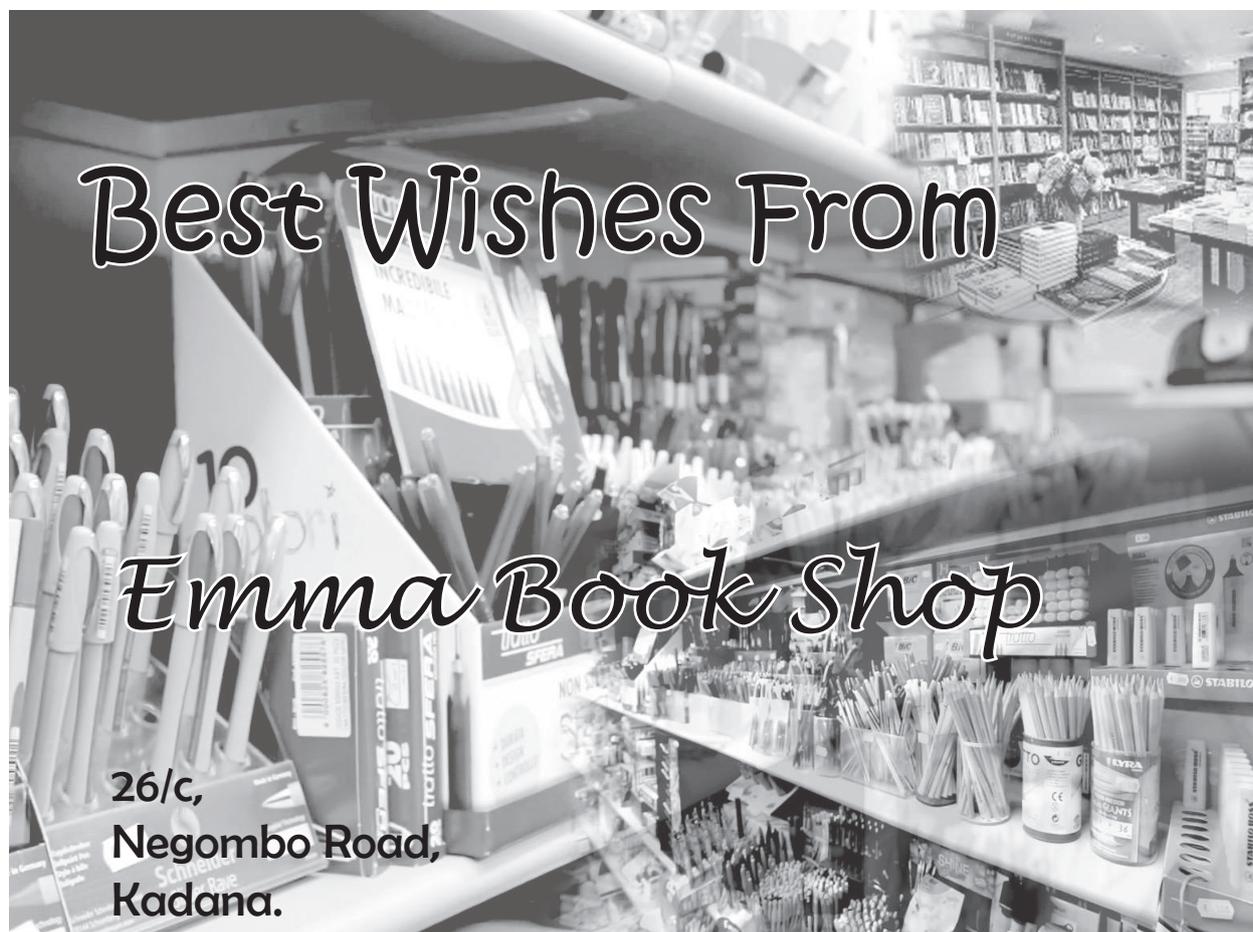


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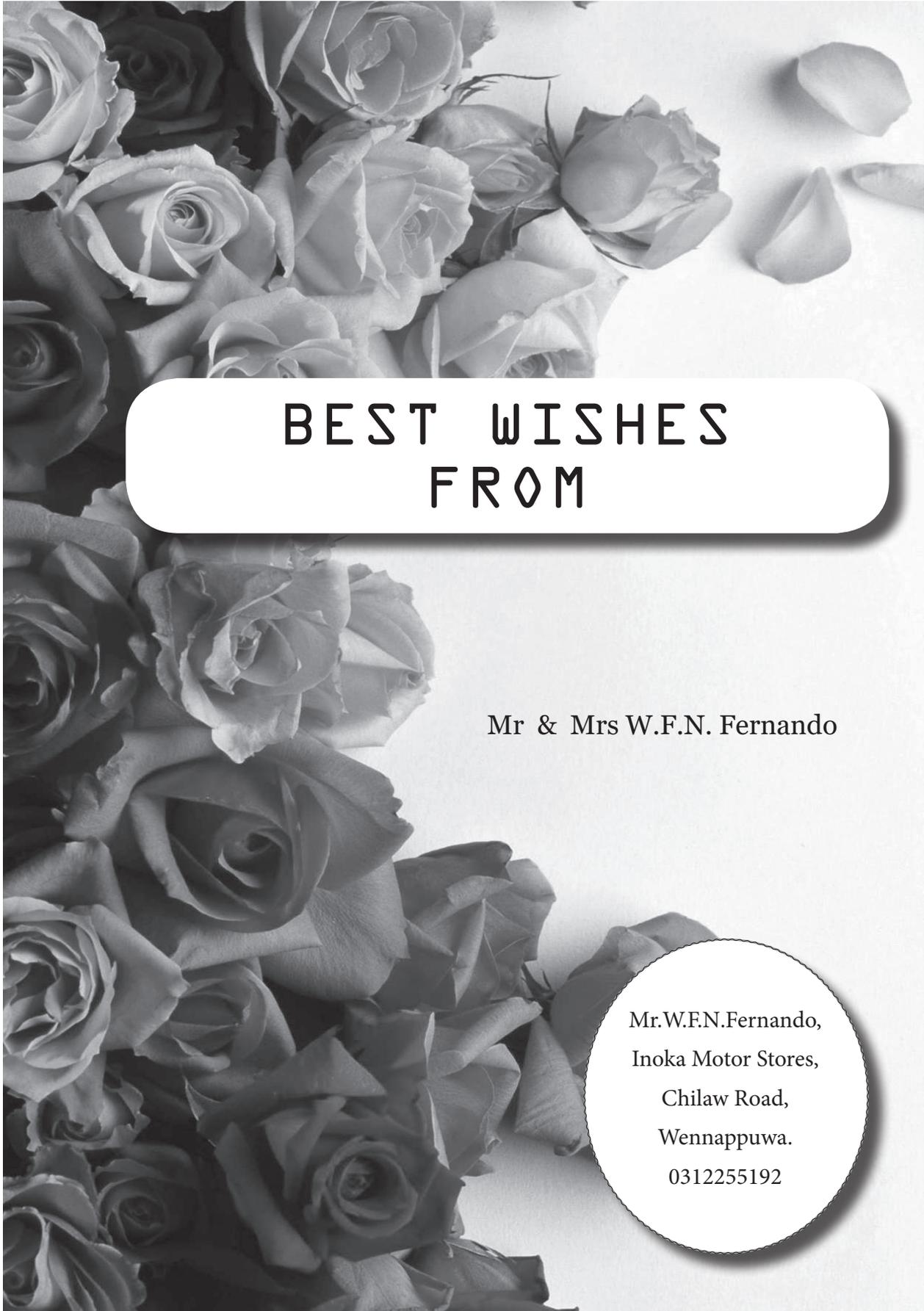
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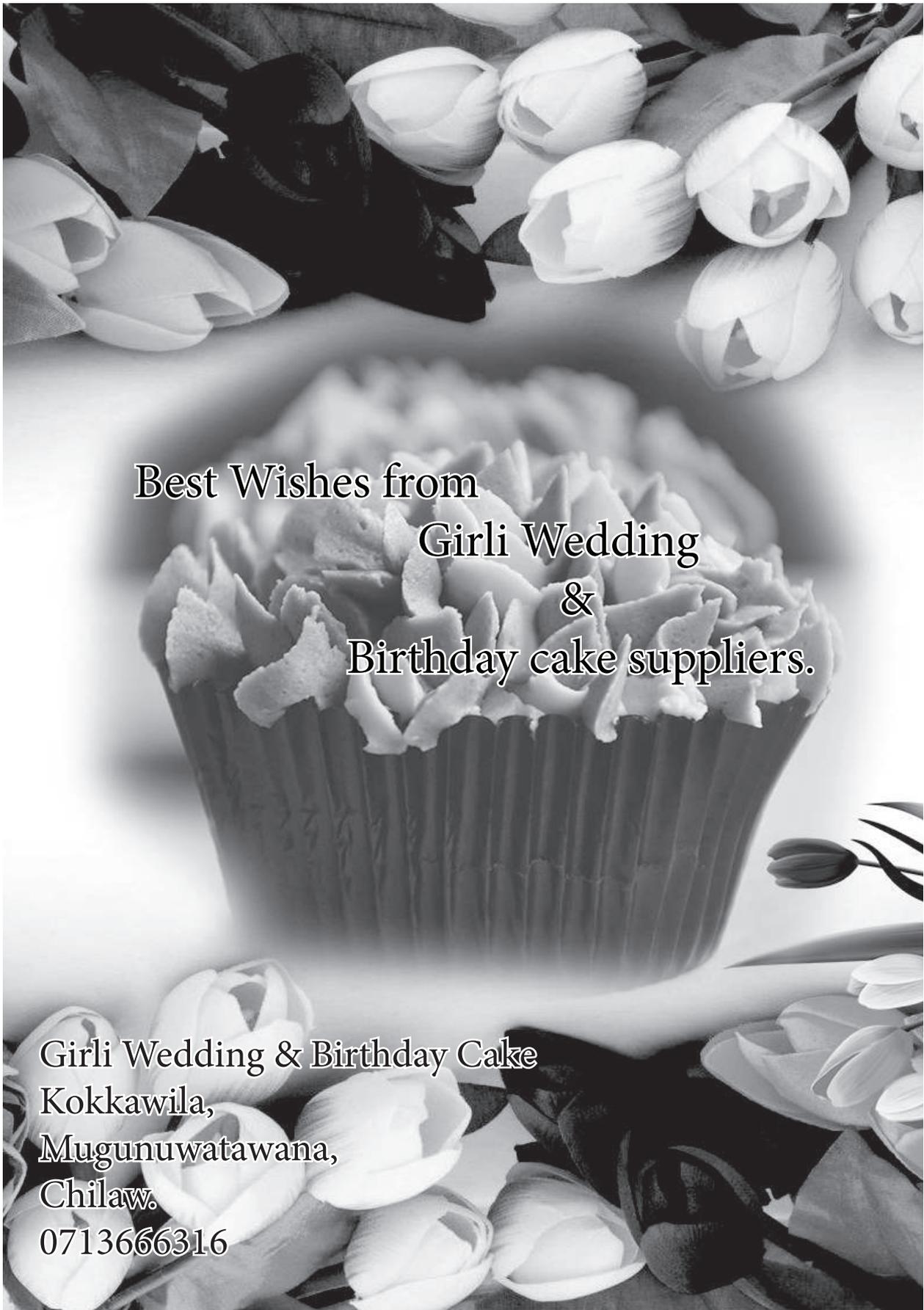
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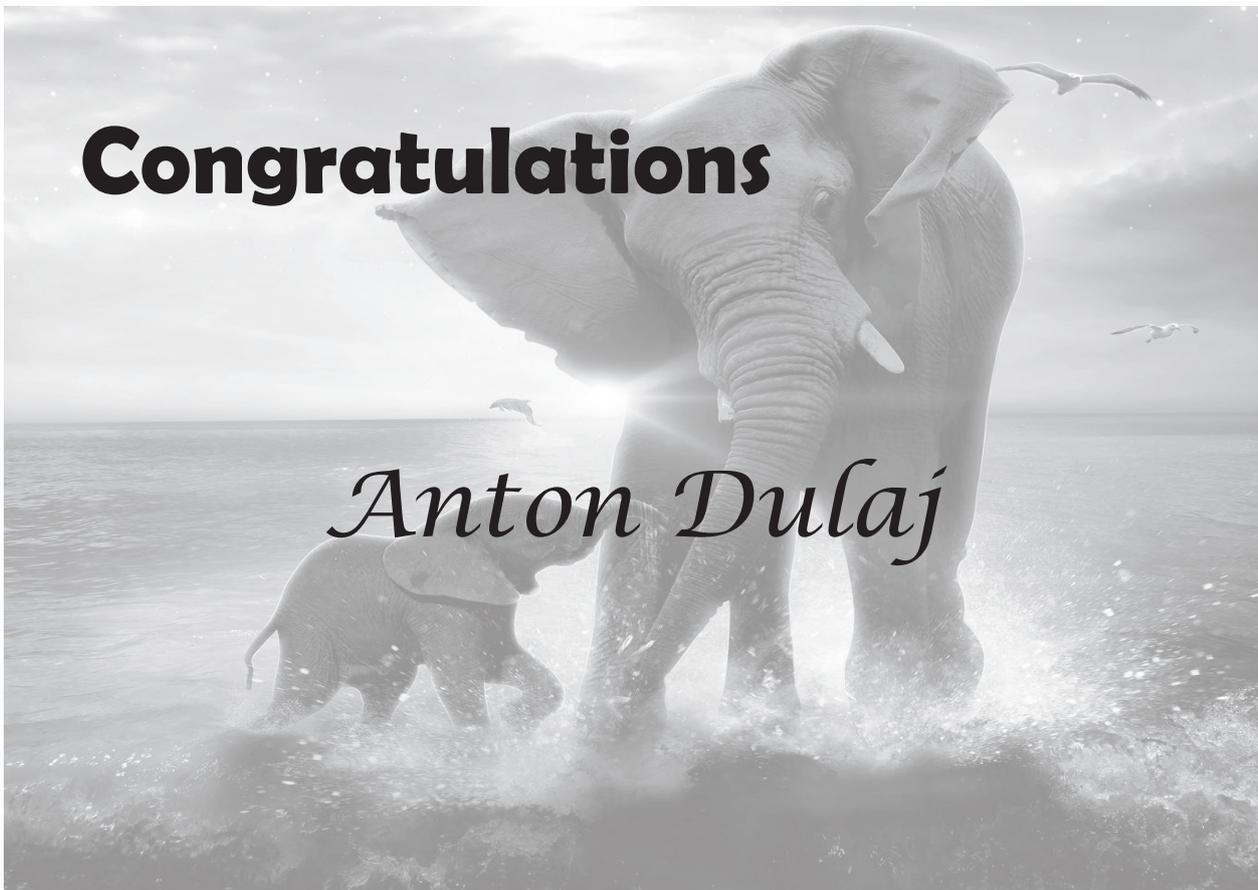
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Sewwandi and family



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Ishantha and Family



With Best Complements from

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Family*

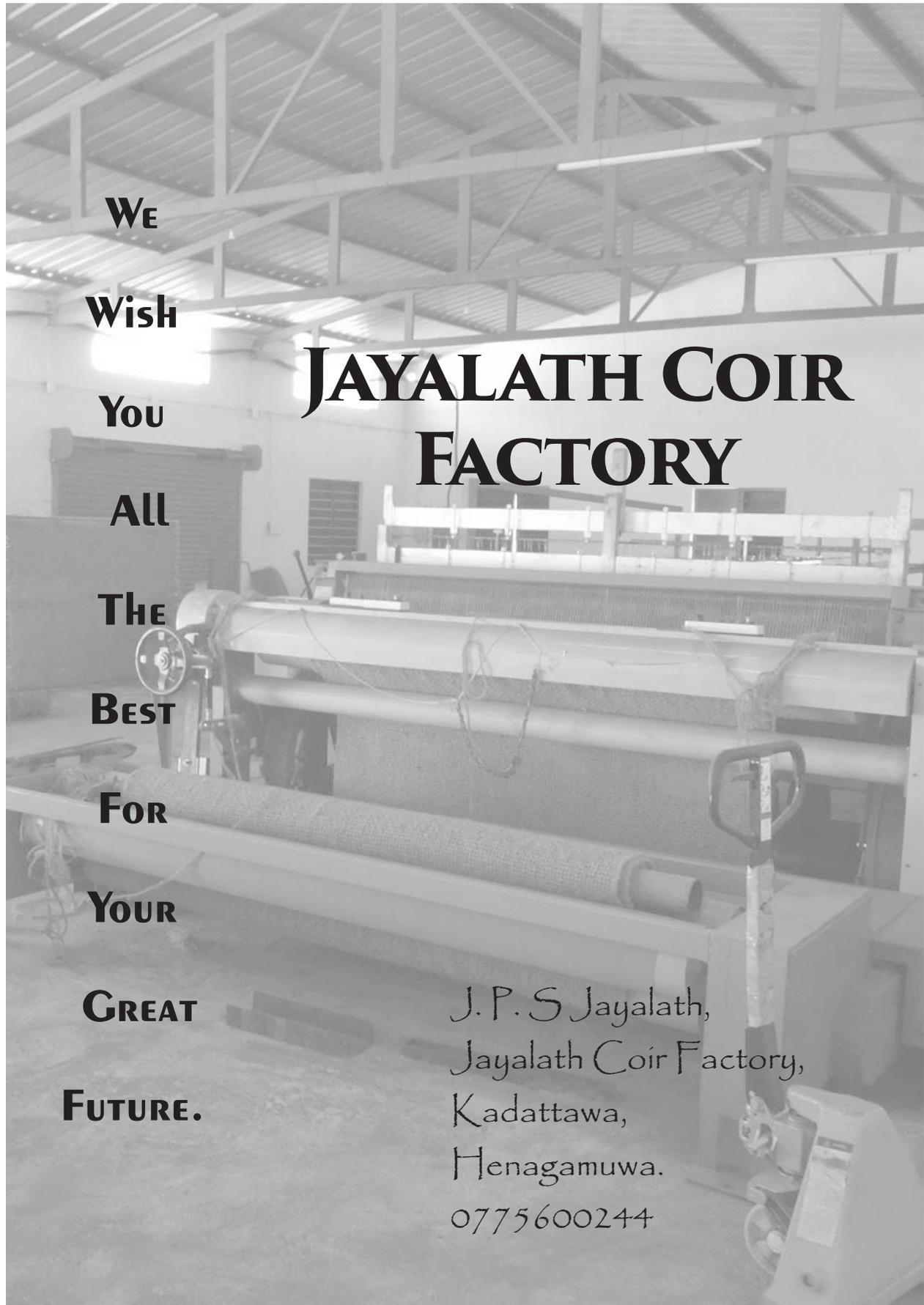
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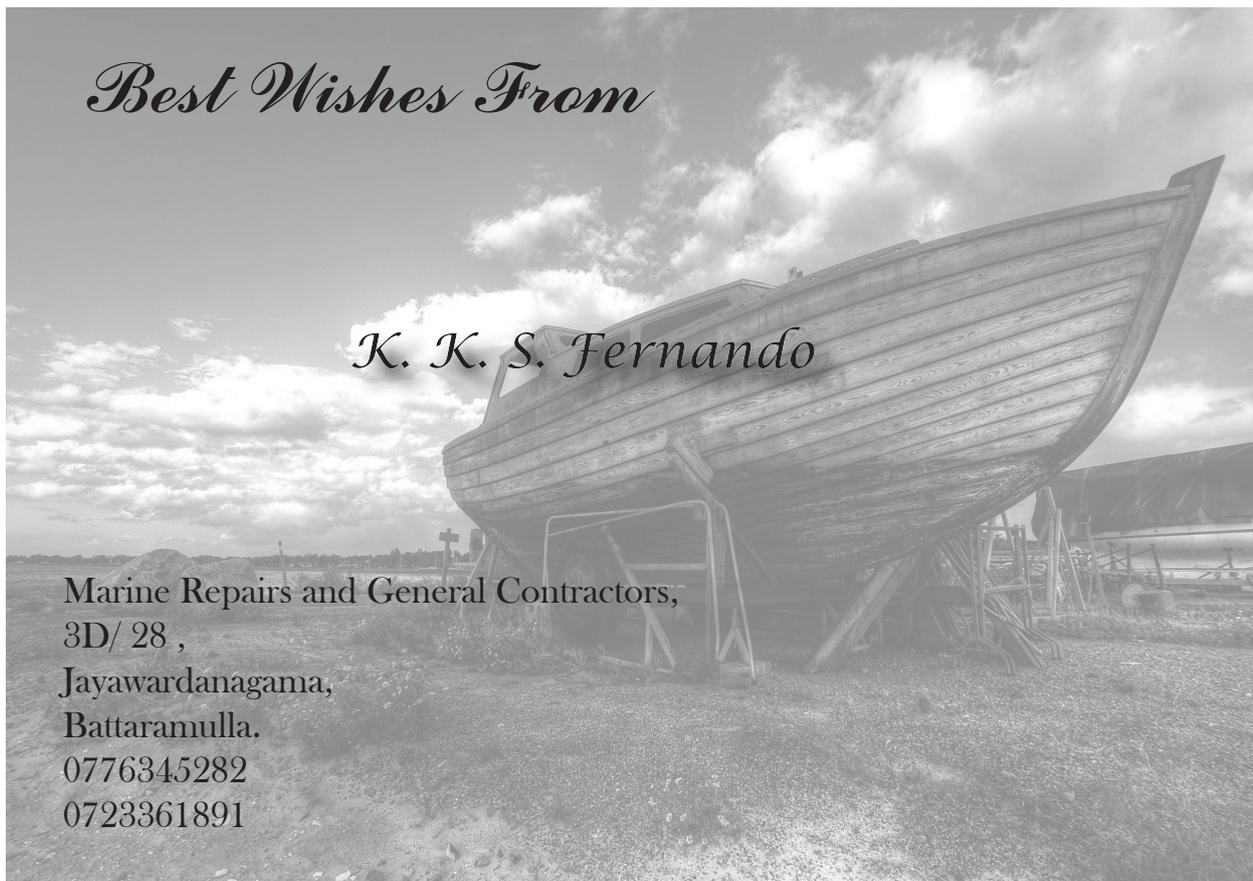
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සුභ පැමිණි !

කේ විරෝන් පෙරේරා,
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23/1,
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Avishka and family



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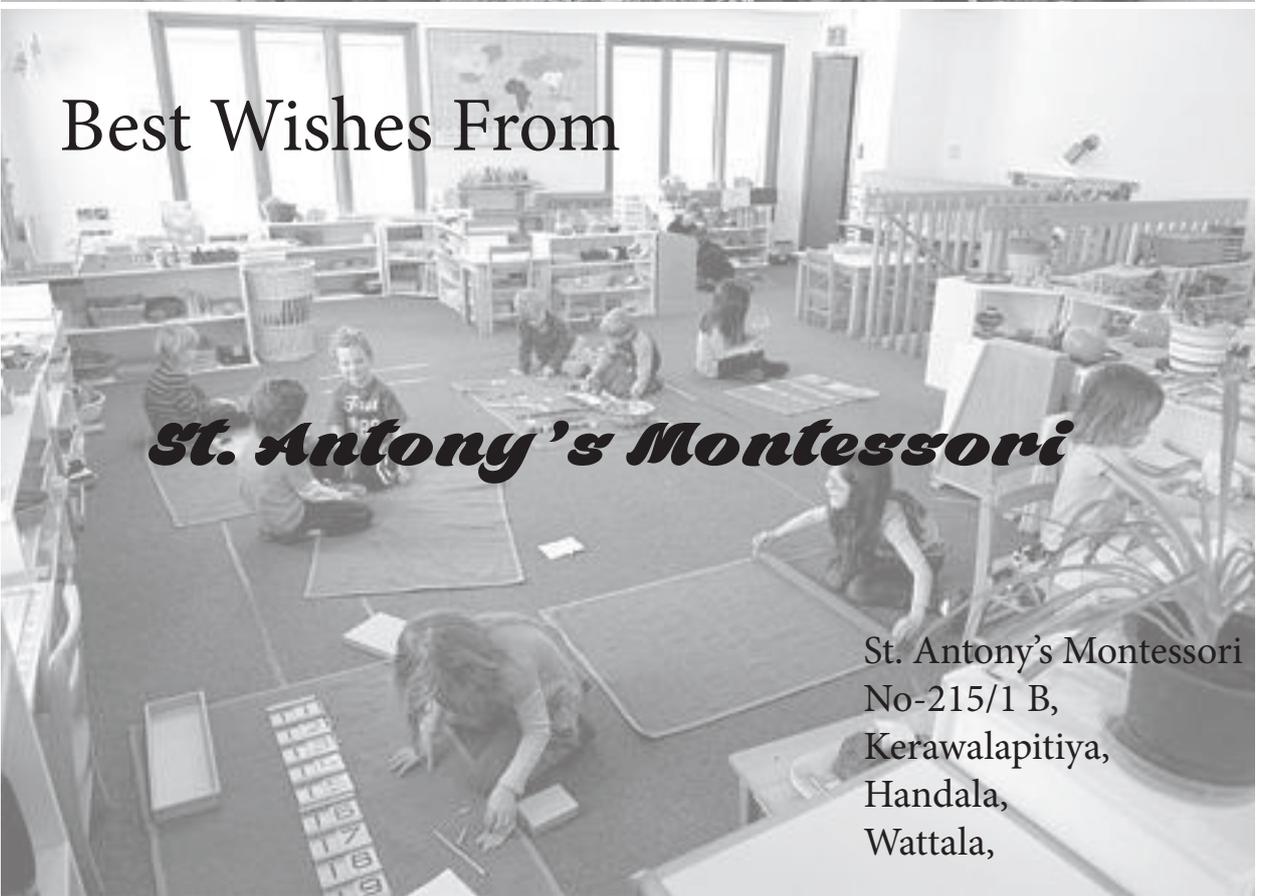


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පියුම් මල් පැල වහාන,
193/B,
පමුණුගම.
0776386103



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සුභ පැතුම්**

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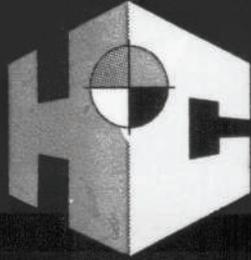
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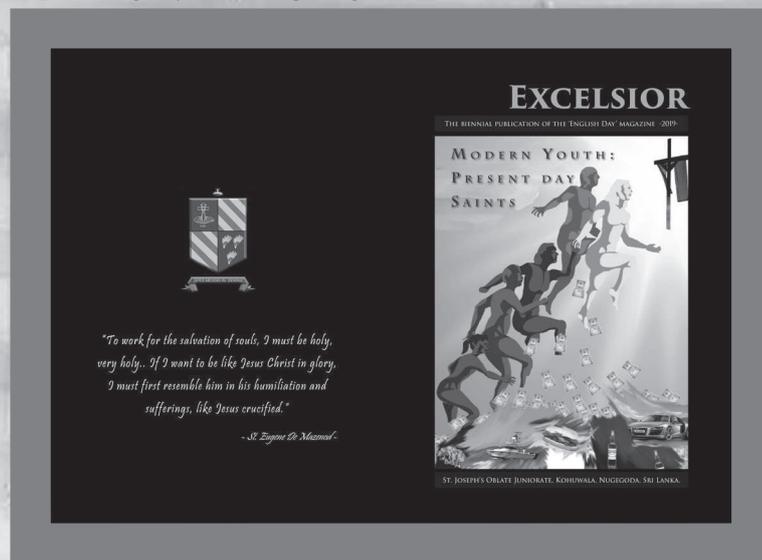


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Dinumika Mazonod
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THANK YOU

'Thank you' two little words but how they cheer people up? After all, it is to be grateful to somebody for what he is, and for what he has been. So let me take this opportunity on behalf of the 'Excelsior' team members to say a 'Big Thanks' to all those who have contributed in the way possible to improve the quality of the biennial magazine of the Oblate Juniorate. Very special thanks goes to Rev. Fr. Dhanushka Fernando OMI the Junior animator and the priest in charge of Excelsior Magazine, Rev. Fr. Shivantha Waas OMI the senior animator of ELA, Rev. Fr. Rector and other Fathers for the initiative taken to publish this biennial magazine of the Oblate Juniorate. It is my duty to thank the tutorial staff of the seminary who helped us sacrificing their valuable time in making this publication a success. A Special word of thanks is extended to my dear colleagues for the beautiful articles given. It is with much gratitude we remember Rev. Fr. Merl Mendis OMI, Rev. Fr. Lucian OMI and Mrs. Loretta de Mel who helped us in proofreading. Rev. Deacon Assisi OMI, masters Nisal and Mazenod deserve our special thanks for the pleasing layout designing.



THANK YOU AND MAY GOD
BLESS YOU.