

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
PRESBYTERIUM OF KANDY

AMONG

May 2024 VOL 82
www.kandydiocese.net Est. 1886

OURSELVES



Happy Episcopal Anniversary

Your Lordship
We, the Presbyterium of
Kandy wish you God's
choicest blessings and are in
turn asking for yours.



41
YEARS



MAY 21

Happy Birthday

Your Lordship,

We thank the Lord on this grace-filled day
for giving us a Shepherd after His own
heart to reflect his light on the hill kingdom
of Kandy

Ad Multos annos



May 21

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AMONG OURSELVES

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Cover Story

Our Lady of FATIMA, Portugal

Between May 13 and October 13, 1917, three Portuguese children—Francisco and Jacinta Marto and their cousin Lucia dos Santos—received apparitions of Our Lady at Cova da Iria near Fatima, a city 110 miles north of Lisbon. Mary asked the children to pray the rosary for world peace, for the end of World War I, for sinners, and for the conversion of Russia.

Mary gave the children three secrets. Following the deaths of Francisco and Jacinta in 1919 and 1920 respectively, Lucia revealed the first secret in 1927. It concerned devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The second secret was a vision of hell. When Lucia grew up she became a Carmelite nun and died in 2005 at the age of 97.

The feast of Our Lady of Fatima was approved by the local bishop in 1930; it was added to the Church's worldwide calendar in 2002.





From the Bishop



My dear Rev. Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

Month of May brings to mind the importance of Our Blessed Mother in the life of the Church. Our people take part in the May Novenas with great devotion. It is our pastoral duty as Priests and Religious to promote Marian Devotion in our communities. Mary is the Mother of the Church and the Mother of our families. We should remind the people of the importance of the Family Rosary particularly during this month.

We need to pray constantly for the country that is destabilized both economically and politically. The people go through severe hardships to cope with daily life. We should be continually conscious of the poor and the needy and be of assistance to sustain their daily life.

I am thankful to the Fathers for your presence at the Chrism Mass held last month. The priestly promises were renewed during the Mass. Needless to say that the most important thing in our Mission is the effort we make to develop our own spirituality. All our efforts will be futile if we don't reflect the merciful face of Christ to the flock through our own lives. This should be the starting point of Mission.

A peaceful demonstration with a prayer service was done in all the Parishes on 21st April to commemorate the victims of the Easter attack. This solidarity was also portrayed by the demonstration done at Kandy town organized by the Human Rights Apostolate. I am thankful to Fr Nandana Manatunga, the Director for organizing this event and for all the Fathers, Religious and the faithful for their participation being in solidarity in search for justice.

We had Confirmation Service last month at St. Therese Church, Peradeniya. I am thankful to Fr. Leslie Perera, the Parish Priest for preparing the candidates.

The newly built church of St. Francis of Assisi at Kowlehena was blessed opened last month with the participation of Priests, Religious and a large number of lay faithful. My thanks to Fr. Dosmin Raj, the Parish Priest, parishioners and all the benefactors in realizing this valuable project.

Another newly built church dedicated to Our Lady of the Immaculate conception at Galaha in the Parish of Hewaheta was blessed opened last month. My thanks to Fr. Satkunarajah, the Parish Priest, parishioners and all the benefactors for building up this new place of worship.

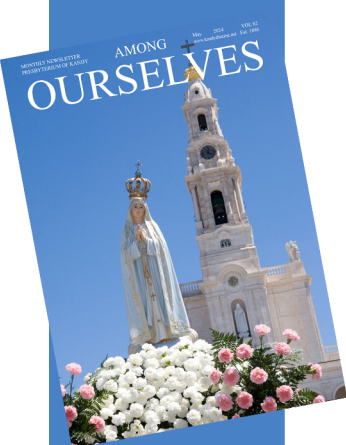
I was happy to participate in the Annual Prize Giving Ceremony of Our Lady's Primary, School, Nuwara Eliya. We appreciate the commitment of Sr. Priyangani Fonseka RGS, the Principal to uplift the quality of education and for organizing this event successfully.

Another newly built church dedicated to St. Joseph Vaz was blessed opened last month at Aluthwewa in the Parish of Wahacotte. My thanks to Fr. Soosainathan OSB, the Parish Priest, Fr. Wasana Mendis OSB, the Priest-In-Charge of Galewela and the Assistant Parish Priest, the people of Aluthwewa and the benefactors for constructing this new church.

The Priestly ordination of Bro. Upul Ruwan and Bro. Paul Anthony will be held on 16th of this month at St. Anthony's Cathedral, Kandy. Let us keep them in our prayers as they prepare for the day of anointing.

Asking the Lord to bless you,
Yours Devotedly in the Lord,

Bishop Valence Mendis
Bishop of Kandy





LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER

POPE FRANCIS

TO PARISH PRIESTS
[02 MAY 2024]



Dear Brother Priests,

The International Meeting “Parish Priests for the Synod”, and the dialogue with all of you who have taken part, provide me with the opportunity to pray for the parish priests the world over. To all of you, I address these words with great affection.

It is so obvious as to sound almost banal, but that does not make it less true: the Church could not go on without your dedication and your pastoral service. So before all else, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the generous work that you do each day, sowing seeds of the Gospel in every kind of soil (cf. Mk 4:1-25).

As you have experienced in these days of sharing, the parishes in which you carry out your ministry vary widely, from those on the outskirts of great cities – as I know personally from Buenos Aires – to those in sparsely populated areas that are the size of vast provinces. They range from those in town centres in many European countries, where ancient basilicas house dwindling and aging communities, to those where celebrations are held beneath the branches of great trees and the songs of birds mix with the voices of small children.

Parish priests are well aware of this, since they know from within the life of God’s People their joys and hardships, their resources and their needs. For this reason, a synodal Church needs its parish priests. Without priests, we will never be able to learn how to walk together and to set out on the path of synodality, “the path which God expects of the Church of the third millennium”.

We will never become a synodal and missionary Church unless parish communities are distinguished by the sharing of all the baptized in the one mission of proclaiming the Gospel. If parishes are not synodal and missionary, neither will the Church be. The Synthesis Report of the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops is very clear in this regard. Parishes, beginning with their structures and the organization of parish life, are called to think of themselves “primarily as being of service to the mission that the faithful carry out in society, in family life and the workplace, without concentrating exclusively on their own activities and their organizational needs” (8.1). Parish communities increasingly need to become places from which the baptized set out as missionary disciples and to which they return, full of joy, in order to share the wonders worked by the Lord through their witness (cf. Lk 10:17).

As pastors, we are called to accompany in this process the communities that we serve, and at the same time to commit ourselves with prayer, discernment and apostolic zeal in ensuring that our ministry is suited to the needs of a synodal and missionary Church. This challenge is set before the Pope, the bishops and the Roman Curia, and it is also set before you, as parish priests. The Lord who has called us and consecrated us asks us today to listen to the voice of his Spirit and to advance in the direction that he points out to us. Of one thing we can be sure: he will never leave us without his grace. Along the way, we will discover how to set our ministry free from the things that wear us down and rediscover its most authentic core, the proclamation of God’s word and the gathering of the community for the breaking of bread.

I encourage you, then, to accept this, the Lord’s call to be, as parish priests, builders of a synodal and missionary Church and to devote yourselves enthusiastically to achieving this goal. To this end, I would like to offer three suggestions that can help to inspire your lifestyle and activity as pastors.

1. I ask you first ***to live out your specific ministerial charism in ever greater service*** to the varied gifts that the Spirit sows in the People of God. It is urgent to “discover with faith, the many and varied charismatic gifts of the laity, be they of a humble or more exalted form” (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 9), which are indispensable for evangelizing any number of human situations and contexts. I am convinced that in this way you will bring to light many hidden treasures and feel less alone in the demanding task of evangelization. You will experience the joy of being true fathers, who do not dominate others but rather bring out in them, men and women alike, great and precious possibilities.

2. With all my heart, I suggest that you ***learn to practise the art of communal discernment***, employing for this purpose the method of “conversation in the Spirit”, which has proved so helpful in the synodal journey and in the proceedings of the synodal Assembly itself. I am certain that you will reap from it many good fruits, not only in structures of communion such as parish councils, but in many other fields as well. As the Synthesis Report makes clear, discernment is a key element in the pastoral activity of a synodal Church: “It is important that the practice of discernment be exercised also in pastoral settings, in a way adapted to differing contexts, in order to illumine the concreteness of ecclesial life. This will help to recognize better the charisms present within the community, to distribute wisely different responsibilities and ministries, and to plan in the light of the Spirit pastoral projects that go beyond the mere programming of activities” (2.1).

3. Finally, I would like to urge you ***to base everything you do in a spirit of sharing and fraternity among yourselves and with your bishops***. This is something that emerged forcefully from the International Conference for the Permanent Formation of Priests, on the theme, “Fan into Flame the Gift of God that You Possess” (2 Tim 1:6), which took place last February here in Rome, with over 800 bishops, priests, lay and consecrated men and women, engaged in this area and representing some 18 countries. We cannot be authentic fathers unless we are first sons and brothers. And we cannot foster communion and participation in the communities entrusted to our care unless, before all else, we live out those realities among ourselves. I am quite aware that, amid the constant call of our pastoral responsibilities, this commitment may seem burdensome, even a waste of time, but the opposite is true: indeed, only in this way will we be credible and our activity not end up scattering what others have already gathered.

It is not only the synodal and missionary Church that needs parish priests, but also the ongoing process of the 2021-2024 Synod, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission”, as we look forward to the Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which will take place in the coming month of October. In order to prepare for it, we need to hear your voice.

For this reason, I invite those who have taken part in the International Meeting “Parish Priests for the Synod” to be missionaries of synodality, among yourselves and, once you return home, with your fellow parish priests. I ask you to encourage reflection, with a synodal and missionary mindset, on the renewal of the ministry of parish priests, and enable the General Secretariat of the Synod to gather your distinctive contributions in view of the preparation of the Instrumentum Laboris. The purpose of the present International Meeting was to listen to parish priests, but that cannot finish today: we need to continue to hear from you.

Dear brothers, I am at your side in this process, in which I myself am taking part. I bless all of you from the heart, and in turn, I need to feel your closeness and the support of your prayers. Let us entrust ourselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary Hodegetria, Our Lady of the Way. She shows us the way; she leads us to Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 2 May 2024

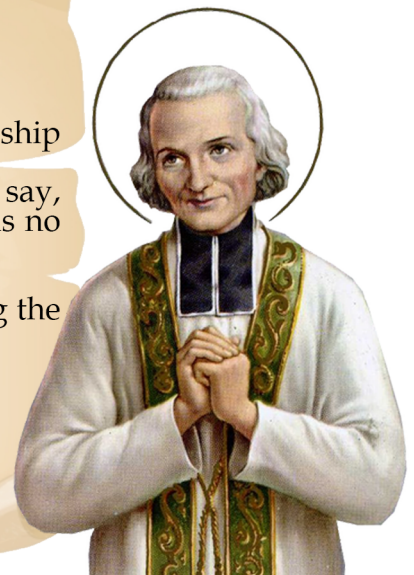
FRANCIS

**THE PRIEST IS NOT A PRIEST FOR HIMSELF;
HE DOES NOT GIVE HIMSELF ABSOLUTION;
HE DOES NOT ADMINISTER THE SACRAMENTS TO HIMSELF.
HE IS NOT FOR HIMSELF, HE IS FOR YOU.**

After God, the priest is everything.
Leave a parish twenty years without priests; they will worship beasts.
If the missionary Father and I were to go away, you would say,
“What can we do in this church? there is no Mass; Our Lord is no longer there: we may as well pray at home.”

When people wish to destroy religion, they begin by attacking the priest,
because where there is no longer any priest
there is no sacrifice,
and where there is no longer any sacrifice
there is no religion.

- St. John Mary Vianney (Patron of Priests)



HOMILY OF POPE ST JOHN PAUL II

CONCLUSION OF THE MARIAN MONTH

31 May 1979

1: With this greeting, the elderly Elizabeth exalts her young kinswoman Mary, who has come, humble and modest, to help her. Under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, the mother of the Baptist is the first in the history of the Church to begin to proclaim the marvels that God has brought about in the girl from Nazareth, and sees fully realized in Mary the bliss of faith, because she has believed there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

At the close of the Marian month, in this splendid Roman evening, at this place which reminds us of the Lourdes grotto, we must reflect, beloved Sisters and Brothers, on what was the fundamental interior attitude of the Blessed Virgin with regard to God: her faith. Mary believed! She believed in the Lord's words, transmitted to her by the Angel Gabriel; at the Annunciation, her pure heart, already given entirely to God from her childhood, dilated in the generous and unconditional "Fiat" with which she agreed to become the Mother of the Messiah and Son of God. From that moment, taking her place more and more deeply in God's plan, she will let herself be led by the hand by mysterious Providence and for her whole life, rooted in faith, she will follow her Son spiritually, becoming his first and perfect "disciple" and carry-out in everyday life the requirements involved in following Jesus according to his own words: "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:27).

Thus Mary will advance throughout her life in her "pilgrimage of faith" (cf. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 58), while her beloved Son, misunderstood, slandered, condemned, crucified, will mark out for her, day after day, a painful way, the necessary premise for that glorification, sung in the "Magnificat": "all generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1:48). But first Mary, too, will have to go up to Calvary to be present, in sorrow, at the death of her Jesus.

2. Today's feast of the Visitation presents to us another aspect of Mary's inner life: her attitude of humble service and disinterested love for those in need. She has just heard from the Angel Gabriel of the state of her kinswoman Elizabeth, and at once she sets out for the hills "in haste" to reach a city of Judah, the present-day "Ain Karem". The meeting of the two Mothers is also the meeting between the Forerunner and the Messiah, who, through his Mother, begins to operate salvation by making John the Baptist leap with joy when still in his mother's womb.

"No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us... And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (1 Jn 4:12.21), St John the evangelist will say. But who, better than Mary, had put this message into practice? And who, if not Jesus, whom she bore in her womb, urged her, stimulated her, inspired her to this continual attitude of generous service and disinterested love of others? "The Son of man came not to be served but to serve" (Mt 20:28), Jesus will say to his disciples; but his Mother had already carried out perfectly this attitude of her Son.

Let us listen again to the famous comment, full of spiritual unction, that St Ambrose makes on Mary's journey: "Joyful to carry out her desire, delicate in her duty, thoughtful in her joy, she hastened to the hills. Where, if not to the summits, was she, who was already full of God, to aspire with solicitous care? The grace of the Holy Spirit does not know obstacles which delay action" (*Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, II, 19; CCL 14, p. 39). And if we reflect with particular attention on the passage of the Letter to the Romans, which we have just listened to, we realize that there emerges from it an effective image of the behaviour of the Blessed Virgin, for our edification: her charity knew no insincerity; she loved others deeply; fervent in spirit, she served the Lord; joyful in hope; strong in tribulation, persevering in prayer; solicitous for the needs of brothers (cf. Rom 12:9-13).

3. "Joyful in hope": the atmosphere that pervades the evangelical episode of the Visitation is joy: the mystery of the Visitation is a mystery of joy. John the Baptist exults with joy in the womb of St Elizabeth; the latter, rejoicing in the gift of motherhood, bursts out into blessings of the Lord; Mary pours forth the "Magnificat", a hymn overflowing with Messianic joy. But what is the mysterious, hidden source of this joy? It is Jesus, whom Mary has already conceived thanks to the Holy Spirit, and who is already beginning to defeat what is the root of fear, anguish and sadness: sin, the most humiliating slavery for man.



Oh Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church, look upon us mercifully at this hour!

Virgo Fidelis, Faithful Virgin, pray for us! Teach us to believe as you believed! Make our faith in God, in Christ, in the Church, always be limpid, serene, courageous, strong and generous. Mater Amabilis, Mother worthy of love! Mater pulchrae dilectionis, Mother of fair love, pray for us! Teach us to love God and our brothers, as you loved them: make our love for others always be patient, kindly, respectful.

Causa nostrae laetitiae, Cause of our joy, pray for us! Teach us to be able to grasp, in faith, the paradox of Christian joy, which springs up and blooms from sorrow, renunciation, union with your crucified Son: make our joy always be genuine and full, in order to be able to communicate it to all!
Amen!

5 YEARS



NO JUSTICE FOR

VICTIMS OF

Easter Sunday Attack



A COMMEMORATIVE EVENT HELD IN KANDY

Organized by the Diocesan Human Rights Apostolate

On the 21 April 2024, a large number of Priests, Religious, Brothers from the National Seminary and different congregations and lay faithful from the Catholic and other mainline churches along with the survivors and families of victims of the Easter attack from the Central Province marched in silence from the Good Shepherd Convent Kandy to George E De Silva Park with posters and banners.

A prayer service to commemorate the victims of the Easter attack of 2019 was then held at the George E De Silva Park. As the procession reached the George E De Silva Park, all those who were gathered and the bystanders had the opportunity to listen to a recording of the Homily delivered by His Emminance Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith at Kochchikade in the same morning.

Fr. Nandana Manatunga, the Director of the Human Rights Office of the Kandy Diocese, introducing the event said that this protest is to Voice for Justice as a part of our journey in accompanying and supporting all survivors and families of the 2019 Easter Attack: in particular the 26 victims and survivors from the Central Province.

Further Fr. Nandana emphasised that accompanying is not only protest but providing legal representation in court, psychological assistance for mental wellbeing and social assistance with regular meetings. Fr. Nandana also referred to the former President Maithreepala Sirisena's statements made to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) which was given to the Malikanda Magistrate courts regarding the Easter Attacks of 2019 and emphasized that everyone, especially the survivors and families of the victims have the Right to know what the former president claims to know. Fr. Nandana also questioned how the senior police officers who were implicated in the Easter attack were being promoted instead of being indicted in court.

A scripture passage from the book of Isiah was read by Rev. Sr. Thilini RGS followed by reflections made by Rt. Rev. Dr. Kumara Illagasinghe, the former Anglican Bishop of Kurunegala and Rev. Fr Christy Paul, formator of the National Seminary.

Bishop Kumara, delivering his reflections in Sinhala, emphasized the importance of remembrance, quoting the words of Jesus 'Do this in Memory of me' and said that it could contribute to healing. "Forgiveness and repentance are both important, otherwise criminals will go free. Among Ourselves May, 2024

Apology and accepting what happened is necessary, however hiding facts using powers is a criminal act and a violation of rights as Survivors and victim's families have lost so much and many are still suffering emotionally and physically".

Fr. Christy Paul delivering his reflection in Tamil said God had told Cain that his murdered brother Abel's blood cries out to him from the ground according to the book of Genesis in the Bible. He said the blood of the innocents always cry out to God for Justice and that this gathering is also to cry out for the innocent blood of brothers and sisters who were brutally killed on Easter Sunday in 2019, five years ago.

Muslim Clergy also addressed the gathering in Sinhala and Tamil and said that Justice should be done to the Victims and survivors and their families of the Easter attack of 2019 without further delay and it should not become a political tool for the upcoming elections. The prayer service was accompanied by Hymns in Sinhala & Tamil and the event concluded with participants laying flowers and lighting candles near a special cross.

An article from the Diocesan Human Rights Apostolate (Please see page 12 for photos)





DOMINICUS

05- SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

CCC 2746-2751: Christ's prayer at the Last Supper
CCC 214, 218-221, 231, 257, 733, 2331, 2577: God is love
CCC 1789, 1822-1829, 2067, 2069: love of God and neighbor fulfills the Commandments
CCC 2347, 2709: friendship with Christ

09- THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

CCC 659-672, 697, 792, 965, 2795: the Ascension

12- SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

CCC 2746-2751: Christ's prayer at the Last Supper
CCC 2614, 2741: Jesus prays for us
CCC 611, 2812, 2821: Jesus' prayer sanctifies us, especially in the Eucharist

19- THE SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST

CCC 696, 726, 731-732, 737-741, 830, 1076, 1287, 2623: Pentecost
CCC 599, 597, 674, 715: apostolic witness on Pentecost
CCC 1152, 1226, 1302, 1556: the mystery of Pentecost continues in the Church
CCC 767, 775, 798, 796, 813, 1097, 1108-1109: the Church, communion in the Spirit

26- THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

CCC 202, 232-260, 684, 732: the mystery of the Trinity
CCC 249, 813, 950, 1077-1109, 2845: the Trinity in the Church and her liturgy
CCC 2655, 2664-2672: the Trinity and prayer
CCC 2205: the family as an image of the Trinity

THINGS TO REMEMBER AND ONE THING TO NEVER FORGET.....

Your presence is a present to the world.

You are unique and one of a kind,

Your life can be what you want it to be.

Take the days just one at a time.

Count your blessing, not your troubles.

You'll make it through whatever comes along.

Within you are so many answers.

Understand, have courage, be strong.

Don't put limits on yourself.

So many dreams are waiting to be realized.

Decisions are too important to leave to chance.

Reach for your peak, your goal, and your prize

Remember that a little love goes a long way.

Remember that a lot...goes forever.

Remember that friendship is a wise investment.

Life's Treasures are people... together

Realize that it's never too late.

Do ordinary things in extraordinary ways.

Have health, hope and happiness

Take the time to wish upon a star.

And don't ever forget..

For even a day..

HOW SPECIAL YOU ARE!

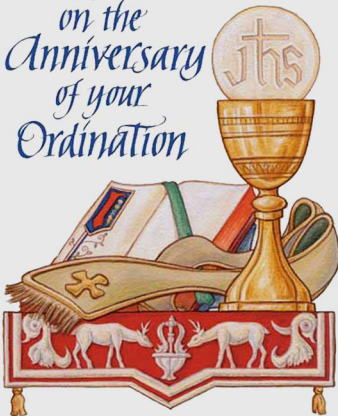
DAYS TO REMEMBER

Birthdays

- 06 - Rev. Fr. Tharindu Devshan
- 07 - Rev. Fr. Xavier B. Douglas
- 10 - Rev. Fr. Leonard Wijeratne
- 21 - Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis
- 27 - Rev. Fr. Shehan Thulakshana

Ordination Anniversaries

BLESSINGS
on the
Anniversary
of your
Ordination



- 21 - Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando
(Episcopal Ordination)
- 22 - Rev. Fr. Roshan Dilrukshan
 - Rev. Fr. Jayanath Perera
 - Rev. Fr. Anton Gavaskar
- 28 - Rev. Fr. Y. Satkunarajah

Deaths



- 06 - Rev. Fr. Kingsley Silva
 - Rev. Fr. Placidus Fernando, OSB
- 09 - Rev. Fr. Raphael Satoli, OSB
 - Rev. Fr. Columnbun Macay, OSB
- 10 - Rev. Fr. J. Caspersz, OSB
- 16 - Rt. Rev. Dr. Paul Perera
- 22 - Ret. Rev. Dr. Bede Beckmayer, OSB
- 24 - Rev. Fr. A. Pancrazi, OSB
- 28 - Rt. Rev. Dr. Leo Nanayakkara, OSB



A newly built church in Koylehena dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi was blessed opened on 06th April, 2024 by His Lordship with Priests and a large number of faithful.



A newly built church dedicated to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception was blessed opened by His Lordship on 07th April, 2024 at Galaha in the Parish of Hewaheta



The annual Prize giving was held at Our Lady's Primary School, Nuwara Eliya on 25th April, 2025



A newly built church dedicated to St. Joseph Vaz was blessed opened at Aluthwewa in the Parish of Wahakotte.



O/L Preparatory Seminar was conducted for the Children of Matale Deanery



A media programme was held in Hatton for the Nuwara Eliya Vicariate



A demonstrative event was held in Kandy town in commemoration of the Easter Bomb attack with the participation of Priests, Religious, Seminarians, other Religious leaders and lay people.