PROF. KOJI TAKAKURA’S VISIT TO CARITAS SRI LANKA-SEDEC

Prof. Takamura, an Environmental Engineer from Japan, widely known as the inventor of the well-known Takakura composting methodology made a courtesy call to SEDEC on 18th May 2018.

SEDEC made use of the Takakura composting methodology in its Solid Waste Management programme (SWM) and introduced the composting method as a solution to the bio-degradable waste.

A large gathering of invitees, including 4 Diocesan Priests from Chilaw, Colombo, Jaffna and Ratnapura, Dioceses and National Centre Staff participated in the half-day session.

Delivering a lecture, Prof. Takakura illustrated how the Japanese evolved in adopting the aspects of Solid Waste Management 60 years ago.

Prof. Takakura has initiated the Takakura Composting methodology in Surabaya, Indonesia, especially aiming at the urban household settings. One of the distinctive features of the methodology is that the ingredients for making the seed compost should be found from the nearby vicinity, making the methodology a viable and easy activity. He says even the fermenting solutions should be made using the locally available food ingredients of fruits, vegetables etc.

After the main lecture, a practical session was conducted by Prof. Takakura to demonstrate his methodology while answering to numerous queries from the audience about the making and use of Takakura composting method. At the session, officers namely, Mr. Sajith Silva and Ms. Nilani Tissera from Caritas Sri Lanka made two presentations on the implementation of the Caritas-led Solid Waste Management programme and of the project activities related to the sustainable agriculture respectively.

Cont. to pg. 4

AWARENESS PROGRAMME AGAINST THE LEGALIZATION OF ABORTION IN SRI LANKA

Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC organized an awareness programme on 23rd of April 2018, against the government’s attempts to bring amendments to the present bill on abortion. The programme was organized under the leadership of His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, participated by several Bishops, Heads of Congregations, priests and nuns, medical practitioners and activists to discuss possible ways to oppose and present alternatives to the proposed legalization. The stance of the Catholic Church is that the church vehemently condemns abortions under any reasons or circumstances.

Welcoming the participants, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke emphasized the impending dangers if abortion is legalized in Sri Lanka. He added that the church is in the strongest view of opposing the legalization of abortion and if we are united in our opinion together with Catholic Doctors’ Guild, the Church could send a strong message to the communities.

The chairperson of the event, Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi OMI, Consultant on moral theology and Cannon Law sharing his views stated Christianity is about receiving life and safeguarding it, letting it grow and allowing it to bear fruit for oneself and for others. He also touched aspects pertaining to the science of death.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando, the Bishop of Mannar, described the viewpoint of the church using Bible references and Papal pronouncements. He said that the Catholic Church affirms that human person is endowed with a spiritual and immortal soul, and is “the

Cont. to pg. 3
CARITAS SRI LANKA INITIATES ACTION ON CONFLICT PREVENTION

One of the common social issues identified by many Diocesan (DC) Directors of Caritas Sri Lanka network is the problem of drugs, alcohol and tobacco addiction in the different communities which hamper the community empowerment, peace & reconciliation process.

Cognizant of this, Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC (CSL) organized two workshops on “Education & Awareness on Drug/Alcohol Abuse for Conflict Prevention and Removing Obstacles to Community Peace and Harmony” – one in Batticaloa on 25th April for 65 participants and the second at Ratnapura on 27th April 2018 for 45 participants. This was part of the project titled “People Moving toward Reconciliation” supported by CAFOD, England.

The workshops were conducted by Mr. Freddie Jayawardena, Programme Manager of CSL.

In Batticaloa, an input session was held by Mr. A. Khalith, a representative of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board, explaining the available services under their office.

In Ratnapura, Ven. Kuppiawatte Bodhananda Thero, Director, Mituru-Mithuro Drug Treatment & Rehabilitation Programme explained how by strengthening the unity within the family could help to curb the negative effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco in the communities.

THANKS GIVING HOLY MASS

Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC organized a special Thanksgiving Holy Mass on 5th of May 2018 at the SEDEC Chapel, in appreciation for the blessings bestowed to the Food Security Project named “Substantiation of Community Institutions for Sustainable Agriculture to Ensure Food Security”.

The project which started on 1st of January 2013 came to a fruitful closure on 31st of December 2017, while reaching out to 6,216 farmer families during its 5 year project implementation period.

The Thanksgiving Mass celebrated by Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka thanked the Lord for guiding the project into an impactful closure which witnessed numerous success stories from the farmer families. He also thanked the former Diocesan Directors for their part in initiating actions on this project and commended everyone present including the staff of Anuradhapura, Batticaloa and Kurnunegala Dioceses, stating that their presence at the Holy ceremony is a fine example to show their commitment to the Food Security Project. Rev. Fr. Jamika Perera, Director of Caritas Kurunegala, Janasetha was also present at the occasion.

The project was a support from Caritas Norway and NORAD.

WORKSHOP ON CI EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS AND TOOLKIT

Caritas Internationalis (CI) in coordination with Caritas Asia organized a Training Programme on the CI Emergency Protocols & CI toolkit in Bangkok, Thailand from 23rd to 25th May 2018. The programme focused on the 3 pillars of the Caritas Emergency Response Framework which are mainly Coordination, Resource Mobilization using the CI appeal mechanism and the Sectorial & Accountability working groups.

K. Vareeswaran, Progamme Consultant to Disaster Risk Management Unit (DRM) of Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC participated in the workshop which was attended by 33 representatives from several Asian countries. The programme was facilitated by Ms. Irene Broz, Emergency Response Coordinator, Caritas Internationalis.
A three-day training to build the capacities of Diocesan Coordinators and Programme Volunteers working in the fields of reconciliation, peace building, conflict transformation, and inter-religious harmony was held at Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC from 21st – 23rd March 2018.

The main facilitator of the training was Equitas - International Centre for Human Rights Education, in collaboration with Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC in view of its 50th Jubilee Celebration. The training was conducted in Sinhala Medium by Mr. Sajeed Ahamed, National Coordinator of Equitas Sri Lanka and Ms. Sivagnanam Sharmiladharshini, Attorney-at-Law and Executive Director, Center for Humanitarian and Integrated Development.

This workshop aimed at building the capacities of the participants especially in the conflict mitigation strategies that incorporate a human rights-based approach. In addition, a user-friendly guide book titled, 'A human rights-based approach to mitigating conflict', was distributed among the participants to refer to much more in-depth information about the human rights approaches and analysis.

A panel discussion was also held on the second day of the three-day workshop with Mr. Nimal Punchihewa- Member of the Human Rights Commission and Mr. J. K. Rajapakshe- Director of ONUR (Office for National Unity & Reconciliation). The platform opened space for vibrant discussions on Human rights issues, government initiatives on reconciliation and the role of civil society organizations to support the government in the reconciliation process.

A group of 62 participants, including a few Diocesan Directors, Programme Coordinators, Volunteers and National Centre staff benefited from the training programme.

Awareness Programme against the Legalization of Abortion in Sri Lanka... Cont. from pg. 1

only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake.' (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1703).

According to the Didache 2.2, the first century document of the Teachings of the Twelve Apostles, you shall not kill the fetus by abortion or destroy the infant already born. He also reminded of the movie, 'Silent Scream' narrated by Dr. Bernard Nathanson who performed 75,000 abortions, and later turned a staunch anti-abortion campaigner.

Dr. Maxi Fernando, past president of the Catholic Doctors’ Guild narrated scientific facts, and talked about on the lines, 'The views of doctors and their colleagues; past and the current' with the aid of a powerful presentation.

As per statistics there are 355,000 births in a year and 365,000 abortions take place exceeding the number of births. Results of a survey shows that 70% of the Catholic doctors said ‘Yes’ for abortion while only 30% said ‘No’. Dr. Maxi says, a few Catholic doctors are also involved in criminal abortions.

Dr. Romanie Fernando speaking on the topic, 'A Catholic Gynecologist view on abortion' referred to various scriptures concerning birth and Termination of Pregnancy (TOP), the present day term for abortion.

His Eminence, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith opened the forum for discussion by commenting about a news article published recently regarding adoption of dogs. He suggested adopting children instead of dogs, referring to the Christian values and obligations towards the sustenance of human life. His Eminence insisted that Catholics cannot go any other way rather than objecting abortion. Referring to Pope Francis’ stance on abortion His Eminence said no church leader can condone abortion. Parish priests should take more responsibility and preach about abortion in their sermons, he said.
**VISIT OF CARITAS TRENTO REPRESENTATIVE AT SEDEC**

Mr. Said Bazeghi, International Programme Incharge, Caritas Trento, Italy visited SEDEC on 4th of June 2018. He was accompanied by Mr. Beppe Pedron, South Asia Regional Coordinator for Caritas Italiana. Caritas Trento is a diocesan Caritas Organization in Italy, which will partly fund an environmental project in Sri Lanka with the objective of creating healthy living atmosphere and environment sensitive communities. The proposed project will be implemented in the Diocese of Colombo. Caritas Italiana will be the other funding partner which will work in collaboration with Caritas Trento.

The new project envisages as a follow up programme to the Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC led Solid Waste Management Programme, initiated by SEDEC at the aftermath of the Meetotamulla Garbage Dump Landslide.

During the visit, Mr. Said had discussions with Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka and Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ramanayaka, Director of Caritas Colombo - Seth Sarana and the Programme Staff of both the National Centre SEDEC and Seth Sarana. Mr. Said was given a brief overview of the Caritas Solid Waste Management Programme and how its implementation was carried out.

After the discussion, he was taken on a field tour to St. Joseph’s College-Grandpass, planned Paper Recycling Centre at Mithuru Sevana – Mattakkuliya and met the community group members in Pamunuwila, Kelaniya in the Diocese of Colombo.

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**BACKGROUND**

At the aftermath of the Meethotamulla garbage dump disaster, every Sri Lankan was in a bit of shock and shame. Newspapers and Television programmes summed up and analyzed the disaster from different perspectives and stimulated a new wave of thinking into the way as to how we should live our life responsibly.

The disaster has opened the eyes of every Sri Lankan to start thinking of the management of waste seriously and instead of pointing the finger at others, the situation persuaded the government and as well as the citizens both alike, to carry out their legitimate and social responsibilities for the betterment of the nation.

In this context, Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC, the social arm of the Catholic Church perceiving the pulse and beat of the changing Sri Lanka social milieu, started an educational awareness programme to discuss about impacts of the garbage problem, segregation and recycling of plastics. SEDEC also introduced the famous 3R method to influence people to reduce waste generation at the generation point. As an effective solution to the kitchen waste, the Takakura compost methodology had also been introduced.

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**REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED FRIEND AND BROTHER MARK MCDONNEL.**

Although he was an elderly gentleman, all of us affectionately called him MARK. Anyone who steps into SEDEC office, receives the usual greeting and cordial welcome and sees the smiling face of Mark. Being such a polite and humble person, he was ever ready to answer calls and reply with his gentle voice saying “May I help you?”

There was never an occasion when Mark was in a bad mood or expressed anger. He always used to join others in making friendly jokes and whenever his other colleagues play jokes on him, he had the understanding and pleasantness to accept them with a smile. Many of us when time permitted used to talk to him at the Reception Desk, Mark used to tell stories and also share his experience working overseas in previous other places.

Mark was a person who was satisfied with what he got and always thanked God for the Blessings received. He set an example to all of us at SEDEC. Living in a place quite interior from the main roads, he never complained about his travel difficulties and rarely took a day off from work.

**Dear Mark,** we know that it would be hard to emulate your gentle and humble personality, but you will always be remembered for the affection shown to all of us at SEDEC.

May you enjoy eternal peace and joy in the Lord’s vineyard!