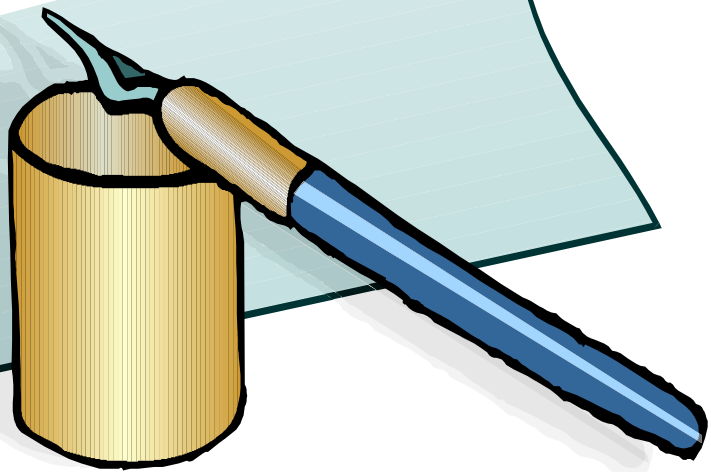


**“Combined Charities”**

# **Newsletter**

**December 2016**



I wonder how many of us remember the old adage “time flies when you are having a good time”. This, I think many of us will consider in all reality to be so very far from the truth that it is tragic more than being funny! It is so because: time today is literally & simply flying at so a great a speed that hours they appears to evaporate like minutes! So let’s not waste even a precious second, let alone a day, or a week or a month! In a very short space of time we will be celebrating that great event in our Christian calendar, **CHRIST**mas when we recall the Birth of our Saviour, whom GOD our Heavenly Father sent to save the world from all its SINS! What are we doing to make sure that in the passage of our time, we are doing things we want to do instead of watching idly as the days go by? As we prepare for Christmas during this period of Advent, do our plans include those outside our circle of family & friends? Is it our intention to share some of our Blessings with those who do not have anything to cheer about or the means to celebrate? Opportunities to give to the poor do not only come from Combined Charities but through other charitable organisations such as the VOC, St Vincent de Paul Societies, Uniting Care & so very many others. Please do give some consideration to the poor & the helpless in your plans for Christmas. The other equally important modern day failing, is to forget what these celebrations are all about as thousands upon thousands of persons still refer to this time as “Holidays” whilst others refer to it as X-mas, but why oh why, do they do that?

It is time for some soul searching & an honest appraisal of our role in the very complex field of charity based not so much the wider spectrum of what we achieve; but how we can remain functional within the minefield of rules regulations applying to very basic, simple & small scale genuine charities such as ours. My experiences with the Victorian Department of Justice, The Registrar for ABN & The Australian Taxation Office have been **harrowing** & that would be putting it mildly! As a consequence I have made an extremely reluctant decision that we cannot continue to function as we have in the past 4 or 5 years & will revert to what we did the previous 6 or more years ago. Firstly, we did not put out a Newsletter nor did we hold a luncheon [we stopped after May 2015], & this may well have been our last attempt to raise funds to help Fr Dilan Perera OMI in his mission to help provide Homes for the poorest families in Sri Lanka. We will continue to accept any/all donations to help us with our bi-annual remittances to SUROL, St Vincent’s Boys Home, and The Home for the Aged, The Children of Joys Home & Sr Alex at The Sacred Heart Convent: funds permitting. At best, I will send out a reminder around the time these funds are due to be sent, as it is not a pleasant task to ask for donations no matter how worthy the cause & this is said for some very good reasons.

Nothing would have been possible if not for the support of a few very special persons & the extreme generosity of our many acquired supporters. We give ‘THANKS’ to you & to you & to you! Some of our achievements will serve as a lasting testament to your generosity & I remain in grateful acknowledgement to you!

**An extract from my address for ‘St. Doms Care’ Annual Appeal.**

I have only just returned from an enforced short visit to the Philippines where I had the opportunity to witness the harsh realities of what it meant being born in a poor country. This scenario I am afraid is not only the claim of “Poor Filipino’s”, this ugly poverty is rampant in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Africa’s & so many other countries. it affects not just adults but also children in the millions. What has all this to do with me is a fair question. I am reminded that in many different passages of the Gospel’s, we are often called to “share our blessings”, to be “the good Samaritan”, to clothe the naked & feed the hungry” & so on!

Today, St Dom’s care is making a special appeal to help us help the poor. Please take up the opportunity not only to assist us but also yourself.

**In so doing, you won’t have to ask ‘but Lord, when did I see you hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, naked or sick’? Please remember that opportunities are like sunrises, if you wait too long or look the other way, you may miss them!**

**MY WISH FOR YOU “MAY HAPPINESS COME TO YOU THROUGH DOORS YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU LEFT OPEN”.**

*Russel Nathanielsz*



<i>Peace -</i>	<i>Goodwill</i>	<i>Joy</i>
<i>Happiness</i>	<i>Love</i>	<i>Jesus</i>
<i>Charity</i>	<i>Blessings</i>	<i>Forgiveness</i>
<i>Hope</i>	<i>Health</i>	<i>Repentance</i>
<i>Christ Jesus</i>	<i>Our Blessed</i>	<i>Saviour!</i>



*Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King:*

*Peace on earth and mercy mild, GOD and sinners reconciled!*

*Silent Night! Holy Night! Christ the Saviour is born!*

*As we indulge in our usual scramble preparing for the festivities, we should remember what Christmas is truly all about & not forget:*

### **"THE REASON FOR THE SEASON".**

*May the Peace of the Infant Jesus prevail in your hearts & that of your family & loved ones! May His Blessings bring you Health & Happiness in the New Year! Give hope to those who despair, bring light to those who live in darkness & may the Holy Spirit be your Beacon to guide your days!*

*Happy Christmas & Best wishes for the New Year!  
From  
Combined Charities & all our many grateful Beneficiaries*



**From a state of ugliness & utter disrepair!**



**Through many acts of generosity, restored to splendour worthy of a House of GOD!**



### Preparing for the celebrations of the parish Feast



The restoration work undertaken by Fr Dilan Perera OMI, demonstrate the wide ranging concerns of the true servant of GOD that he has turned out to be. He accepted the most daunting task of being the Director/Supervisor of a run-down dilapidated establishment that was a home for some 30 resident juvenile delinquents, a technical school that catered to an additional 40 or so juveniles and residential quarters for old or infirm priests who were either retired, semi-retired or in poor health. If refurbishing the Chapel, the dormitories, the kitchen, the class rooms, the Computer lab, the bathroom & toilets were not challenging enough he undertook to provide a place for the elderly to live out their lives. So he set upon building a home to accommodate some 30 elderly & give them clean, comfortable surroundings & is cared for, offering them a dignity that they perhaps would not have known.

For those who have come to know this Man of God, there is more work to be done & so he embarked on restoring the St Vincent's Church at Maggona & thanks to the generosity of his many loyal supporters has been able to restore this House of GOD to a splendour that is befitting a Church that was built in 1934, over 80 years ago! All this has been achieved in the short space of a year & is in addition to the 62 homes that he has been responsible to provide needy families with the help of very many persons from different walks of life including Jeremy, Arthur & The Dream Team.

Dear Lord, we thank you for Fr Dilan & for his many well-wishers. May his work continue to be for Your Greater Glory and fulfilment of the hope of the impoverished who receive the Blessings of those who share theirs! Amen

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In the latest despatch from Fr Dilan, we are advised that approval of the plans for the Home for Madurangi Fernando's Family have not yet been granted. Work will commence as soon as this is received.

Meanwhile the following is our current financial position:

Total cost for the Home:	Rs 591,000	
Total received to date	Rs 380,225	Balance needed Rs 210,355 (approx \$ 2,000)

Christmas donations amount needed \$ 1,200 + \$2,000 = Total \$3,200

Funds currently in hand \$ 650, which is a shortfall of \$ 2,550

## The BBC's Geeta Pandey samples the treats at "Amma Canteen" in Chennai (Madras).



The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalithaa's "Amma Canteens", which serve cheap meals to hundreds of thousands of people daily, have become immensely popular with the poor and the middle classes.

It's just a few minutes after noon on a hot summer day as I join the queue of lunch-goers at the Amma canteen in Pallavaram town, just outside the state capital, Chennai.

The menu today includes hot sambhar rice (rice cooked with lentils and spices) and curd rice (rice cooked in yogurt with curry leaves). The former is selling for five rupees (seven cents; five pence) a plate while the latter costs just three rupees

a fraction of what the dishes would cost in any other restaurant.

I'm famished so I buy a plate of each and move to one of the tables in the centre of the room to eat. If you're after a fine dining experience, this place is not for you. The heat and the humidity can be a bother and the sambhar rice is a bit too spicy for my north Indian palate. But my fellow diners, men and women, who include poor daily wage labourers, housemaids, college students, and middle-class office workers, are not complaining. The portions are big and most describe the food as "delicious". Lakshmi, who works in the neighbourhood as a housemaid, is a regular at this canteen. "Earlier, my employers would give me leftovers, but now I come here for breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. For less than 20 rupees, I can eat three meals here," she tells me. "This food is really good. I like all the dishes. My stomach's full and I'm happy," she says, patting her belly.

### What's on the Menu?

**Breakfast** (served from 7am to 10am) - idli (steamed rice cakes) for one rupee or pongal rice (rice cooked with lentils and peppercorn) for five rupees

**Lunch** (served from 12 noon to 3pm) - sambhar rice (rice cooked with lentils and spices) or lemon rice or curry leaf rice for five rupees each and curd rice (rice cooked in yogurt with curry leaves) for three rupees

**Dinner** (served from 5pm to 7:30pm) - two rotis with daal (handmade bread with lentil soup) for three rupees.

Raju, a construction worker from Punjab, was introduced to the canteen by his co-workers. "I earn 400 rupees a day. Before these canteens came up, I used to spend at least 150 rupees on food per day. Now I spend only 20 rupees a day," he says. The canteens were first started in 2013 in Chennai by Ms Jayalithaa, who is popularly called amma (mother) - hence the name Amma canteen - with the aim to provide subsidised meals to the public.

Today, there are more than 300 such eateries in the state - at least half of them in Chennai alone. They serve simple breakfast, lunch and dinner every day of the week. "The food is prepared hygienically, it's very well made and it's tasty," says CR Saraswathi, spokeswoman for Ms Jayalithaa's All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) party.

"Our chief minister started these canteens to provide good, cheap food to the people. It has also generated employment for thousands of women. The canteens are run by women who cook, clean and serve."

At the canteen, I come across S Shweta and S Pavitra - two young women who work as salesgirls in a telephone showroom nearby. This is their first visit to an amma canteen and to mark the occasion, they are taking a selfie with their plates of rice. The photograph, they tell me, will be uploaded on their Facebook accounts.

"This is a great initiative. Where else can poor people eat a full meal for five rupees? We support amma," says Ms Shweta. As the popular saying goes, the way to a man's - and presumably also a woman's - heart is through the stomach and Ms Jayalithaa knows it well.



## News from SUROL



The achievements of two children who are being supported for their educational needs give us a feeling of great joy & pride. We are happy at being able to assist them further their education, so that they in turn can help their parents when they gain employment.

We are pleased to note that Dilsha Banu Rifaideen of Batticaloa was able to obtain 9 A's at the GCE level examination while Tharshika Tharamarasa from Jaffna received 7 A's & 2 C's at the same exam. They have both decided to continue their studies in preparation for the GCE "A" levels in 2018.

We are most grateful to their sponsors who have supported them over the years and will continue to do so until they complete their education.

## House Visits:



Sr Shanthini has been visiting the families of Leprosy affected persons [LAP's] being supported by SUROL regularly & we owe her a deep debt of gratitude for the commitment with which this task is carried out almost monthly. Reports of these visits to look into the welfare of these families are sent to us regularly.

She has visited the following areas: Minneriya – Medirigiriya – Nawangaraya – Hingurakgoda – Unagahawehera - Laxangama – Palugasdamana - & Kohambadamana while also identifying a new person in Samagipura. Unfortunately we are unable to help this person due to lack of funds, as even donations have dropped this year, perhaps due to the economic situation in the Country.

Our Field Coordinator Saman Raveesha visited 7 families of disabled Leprosy Affected Persons in Badulla, Bandarawela and Kandy, and reports as follows – E Kiribanda has been paralysed since 2001 and is being looked after by his son, who cannot find permanent employment because his father is bedridden. There is a request for a Wheel Chair with a commode to facilitate toileting, the cost of which is approximately - Rs.25, 000/-.



S Selvarani of Passara, Badulla is unmarried and lives with her mother. Both legs have been amputated. She and her mother live on the income from a small boutique earning about Rs.75/- per day. This self-help project should be encouraged by upgrading for a better return. She too has asked for a Wheel Chair with a Commode at a cost of Rs.25, 000/-.

P M Gunatillake is disabled with ulcers on both legs, which prevents him from doing any work to support the family, as can be seen from the photograph. He needs a wheel chair to move around, the approximate cost of which is - Rs.20, 000.

**SHADES OF HOPE!** An Exhibition of Paintings:







It was indeed a great act of Love that prompted a band of four young Artists to give Hope to disabled people affected by Leprosy, when they decided to display their talents at an Art Exhibition styled “Shades of Hope” on the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> June at the Lionel Wendt Art Gallery and donate part of the proceeds to a worthy cause. SUROL was the beneficiary of this wonderful act of charity to uplift & rehabilitate our sisters & brothers afflicted by this dreaded disease. These beautiful young ladies Hajara Asad Ali, Shari Jauryawardhana, Sandali Pathirana & Anoushka de Silva had over 100 exhibits on display, each bringing out their passion for painting in different forms. They produced a wonderful array of works which made a very successful exhibition attracting the public in large numbers to the Lionel Wendt over that weekend.

We express our gratitude to all of them for their generous donation of Rs 100,000/-. This will help brighten the lives of many of our patients scattered throughout the island.

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**A Driver Picks up an Old Lady and Experiences a Ride He'll Never Forget.**

*“We may not all live holy lives, but we live in a world alive with holy moments” -Kent Nerburn*

I often hear wise, elderly people say that time will come when all the things that used to be so important won't be as important anymore and that only the simple pleasures in life matter. Someday we'll learn how to value friends over

schedules and love over material things.

It's also sad to think that one day, we too will grow old and witness the ones we love die one by one. “It's only a matter of who goes first”, some jokingly say. But for those who are left alone, I can only imagine how sad life might now be for them, especially when they had to give up things that meant so much and all that's left to them are memories. Imagine the lives of the elderly living in nursing homes...



Kent Nerburn was once a cab driver who roamed New York City during nighttime. He's used to hearing people's confessions as soon as they climb into his taxi.

But he was somehow enlightened about a powerful yet sad truth when he took an elderly woman as his last passenger one late night in August.

Nerburn arrived at the address where he was asked to pick up a passenger. He honked the horn and waited for the passenger to come out.

When no one did, he thought whether he'd just leave or continue waiting in the cab. But he chose to park his car and knock on the apartment's door instead.

Nerburn heard a sound from behind the closed door. It was like something heavy was being dragged on the floor. He then heard a frail voice answer, "Just a minute."

When the door opened, he saw an old woman who looked like she just came out of a 1940's movie. He guessed she was maybe in her 80's or 90's. The old woman was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil. The sound he heard came from the small, nylon suitcase she was dragging.



He scanned the apartment where the old lady came from. It looked like the place had been neglected for years. All the furniture was covered with white linen and cardboard boxes with glassware and photos were stacked in one corner. There was nothing left hanging on the walls. He carried the old woman's luggage and assisted her into the cab. All the while, she kept on thanking him for his kind gesture. "It's nothing... I just treat my passengers the way I would want my mother to be treated", he said. "You're such a good boy", the old lady replied.

The elderly woman then gave him an address but asked to drive her through downtown instead. Puzzled by the longer route she preferred he said, "It's not the shortest way."

"Oh, I don't mind. I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice", said the old lady. Nerburn looked at his passenger through the rear mirror and noticed how the old lady's eyes glistened. And in a very soft voice she added.

"I don't have any family left. And the doctor says I don't have very long to live." He quietly reached over the meter and shut it off. Then he asked her where she wanted to go.



**For the next two hours, they just drove through the city.** She showed him places that meant dearly to her including where she used to work as an elevator operator and where she and her husband lived after they got married. The old lady also took him to the ballroom where she used to dance, but the place is now converted into a furniture shop.



There were moments when she'd ask him to pull over to a curb or in front of a building, but she'd just sit in silence, staring into the darkness.

At the first hint of sunlight the old woman said, "I'm tired. Let's go now."

He finally took her to the address she'd given him. It was a low building that resembled a convalescent home. He saw two orderlies in front as if they were already expecting her. They went up to them as soon as he pulled over. He got out and opened the trunk to get her luggage and saw that the

old lady now sat on a wheelchair.

“How much do I owe you?” she asked as she reached into her purse.

“Nothing”, he replied. The old lady insisted, saying how he has to make a living. But Nerburn just said, “There are other passengers.” “You gave an old woman a little moment of joy,” the old woman said. “Thank you.”

Without thinking, he bent down and gave the frail lady a tight hug. He then stood up and squeezed her hand before he turned his back and walked back towards the taxi.



She, on the other hand, was wheeled inside the hospice where she'd spend the remaining days of her life.

Nerburn did not take any other passenger during his shift. He drove aimlessly while contemplating on what could have happened if he chose to drive away that night? Or what if she had gotten an impatient driver?

It was a short bitter-sweet encounter that he'll never forget- one that made him realise what's important in life.

#### A COMMENT

*"I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."*

*Etienne de Grellet*

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#### **A just & deserved tribute:**

No doubt, most of you would perhaps have recently attended a luncheon or dinner dance organised by someone or some group to support the many expatriate Sri Lankan associations or charities. They claim that the yardstick for the success of such events are measured by “The Music, The Food & The Ambience”, which seems logical enough. Right now, I want to acknowledge the immense contribution made to the hundreds of fund raising events that take place in Melbourne & the dedication to their skills made by our Sri Lankan Caterers.

For many years now we have been associated with a very personable & humane person amongst this group of dedicated “Caterers” for want of a better word, for they truly do more than cater, they pamper & provide us with an extravagant demonstration of their culinary skills. I would without much fear of contradiction acknowledge Sandra & Millon de Kauwe whom we also know as Jolly Jays as one of those who are leaders in this field.

Whilst I single them out, I hasten to acknowledge the contribution of the very many more who continue to meet the needs & high expectations thrust upon them!



**Time for a laugh:**

**On a Septic Tank Truck:** “Yesterdays meals on wheels”! **At an Optometrist’s Office:** “If you don’t see what you’re looking for, you have come to the right place”! **On a Plumber’s truck:** “We repair what your husband fixed”. **Outside a Muffler Shop:** “No appointment necessary. We hear you coming”. **In a Restaurant window:** Don’t stand there feeling hungry: come in and get fed up”. **In the front yard of a Funeral Home:** “Drive carefully. We’ll wait”.

I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury. Groucho Marx

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. Mark Twain

My wife has a slight impediment in her speech. Every now & then she stops to breathe.

Jimmy Durante

My luck is so bad that if I bought a cemetery, people would stop dying. Rodney Dangerfield

I never hated a man enough to give his diamonds back. Zsa Zsa Gabor

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; & to have the two as close together as possible. George Burns

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**An article to help dispel the concerns & myths on Cholesterol. As always please consult with your Doctor....**

Understanding cholesterol There are very confusing articles written by ‘no names’ and sent to undisclosed recipients via emails. There is an email circulating beginning para states: *“How much money have you wasted on Cholesterol reducing drugs and how much money have you spent on idiot doctors who believe drug peddlers and keep telling you that cholesterol is BAD for you?”* Cholesterol is a waxy sticky substance found in all parts of the body. It is crucial to the normal functioning of all cells. 80% of the cholesterol is manufactured in the liver from saturated fats consumed in food. Approximately, about 20% of the required cholesterol is from the food you consume. No medical personal will tell you that cholesterol is bad: it is necessary for metabolic activities in the body, manufacture of hormones among others. Every cell in your body requires cholesterol for its functions and certain organs of the body are saturated with cholesterol like the brain and the liver. What the medical profession is concerned is the excess cholesterol (hyperlipidaemia) that gets into your blood stream and that needs control through diets and medications. Another paragraph in the same email states; *“It now turns out that it is actually good for you and that your metabolism can’t function properly without it. You have been killing yourself by taking statins prescribed by your doctor who has been blindly following the pied piper FDA of the USA. These Doctors don’t keep up with the news and are STILL prescribing statins just because your test report shows high levels”* Doctors do not prescribe statins as the first line of medication to lower your cholesterol numbers in the blood. The doctors will preliminarily advice you to start on a low saturated fat, and low sugar diet, with daily exercise like walking for an hour. After three months if the cholesterol numbers are high then your doctor will recommend you to go on a course of statin and repeat blood test for lipids in every 6 months. Excess cholesterol in the blood is not the only devil that leads to thickening of arteries, but there are other risk factors such as-obesity, consuming high saturated and Tran’s fat diets, diabetes, lack of exercise, among others. This is the reason why 60% of those who get heart attacks have lower cholesterol numbers. Statins are recommended under the following situations: • If you have had a heart attack or that you have a high chance of getting a heart attack within the next ten years, especially due to familial and genetic factors, • If your cholesterol (LDL-C) is over 190mg/dl needs to be treated with statin therapy. • Adult’s -40-75 years of age with LDL-C 70-190mg/dl without clinical atherosclerotic cardio-vascular disease (ASCVD) or diabetes should be treated with moderate to high intensity statin therapy. • Adults with diabetes and an LDL-C 70-189 mg/dl should be treated with

moderate-intensity statin therapy. Statins have become unpopular because of its side effects. If you have side effects with one brand of statin your doctor may change to another or he may reduce the dose or advice you to take it in the morning instead of in the night. Some are advised to take every third day. Another para in the same email states: *“You have been killing yourself by taking statins prescribed by your doctor who has been blindly following the pied piper FDA of the USA. These Doctors don't keep up with the news and are STILL prescribing statins just because your test report shows high levels. It seems that these high levels actually mean that your liver is performing perfectly. What a scam. 40 years' worth of pills paid for, for a lie.”* My final advice is please, always listen to your doctor's medical advice and avoid taking these articles written by lay people seriously.

Good advice by Dr Harold Gunatileke

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Now, where was I? Ah yes, what? I know I want to do something with this article; if only I can remember what?

**Nature of the mind to forget, nature of man to worry:**

**Absentminded! Perfectly normal until...**

By Lionel Wijesiri



Getting worried about your memory? You've lost your car keys again, your spectacles have disappeared into oblivion, and you walked around the parking lot for half an hour the other day, before you could remember where you parked your car. Something on the tip of your tongue, but you can't get it out?

“Don't fret. You are perfectly normal,” says psychologist Gordon H. Bower of Stanford University: “It is the nature of the mind to forget - and the nature of man to worry about his forgetfulness.”

Actually, you have a colossal memory. In a few cubic inches your brain stores much more information than can be stored in a huge computer installation. One researcher calculates the brain's storage capacity at one quadrillion bits of information - that's a million times a billion. It isn't surprising that we occasionally forget; it is a wonder that we are able to store and retrieve so much.

Memory is an awesome process that has long fascinated inquiring minds. Only recently, however, has there been a concentrated effort to define measure and work out its mechanics. Neuroanatomists, psychologists, molecular biologists, bio chemists and others are involved.

#### **Absentmindedness**

Today, we live in a hectic world, in which all of us have too many things going on at once, and the minute details of our day-to-day lives are easily forgotten. Most often, the frustrating problem of absentmindedness is to blame, and to solve it, you simply need to clean out the clutter in your life that is causing lapses in memory.

The basis of absentmindedness is a failure between memory and attention. Usually, when you are being absentminded, your conscious processing is focused on something other than the task at hand. In simple words, you are thinking about something else.

I know of a cellist, who got into a cab at a hotel where he performed, and put his expensive cello in the trunk. When he arrived at his destination, he paid the cabbie, got out, and walked off, leaving his cello in the trunk. In this situation, it's a failure of attention at the time when memory retrieval is necessary.

Someone who is 'paying attention' is aware of their environment and is recording memories about what they see and hear. If someone's attention is focussed inward, while travelling in the cab, he may have focussed fully on the next night's presentation in his inner thought process, while having very little recollection of the external environment he passed by.

For most of us, it's not an expensive cello we need to give attention to, it's the little things that usually cost a lot less, but, may be equally important to everyday life.

### **Alzheimer's disease**

Absentmindedness is something closer to a personality trait; most likely, an absentminded person would say he or she has been that way their whole life, constantly trying to juggle tasks, and inevitably, some tasks get forgotten. But, as we age and tend to get busier, that trait seems more pronounced as we deal with increasingly hectic schedules.

Absentmindedness is nothing to worry about, much. What we do need to worry is when absentmindedness does interfere with our ability to function on a daily basis. Then, it's a sign that something beyond a busy schedule or lack of attention to detail may be to blame.

For instance, the individual who misplaces his keys, doesn't know they are lost, and then forgets what they are for, that's a much different level of impairment. In addition to the forgetfulness, other things can happen. There are difficulties with speech, problem-solving, and planning. There are changes in the ability to write, or to comprehend instructions. That may be the first signs of Alzheimer's disease. At this point, a trip to the doctor's office for further evaluation and treatment is needed.

### **Memory loss**

Memory loss is one of the main worries - and irritations - of ageing. Why the loss? Perhaps one reason is -that after age 35, something like 100,000 brain neurons perish each day, never to be replaced. The ageing person's biggest trouble is retrieving stored knowledge, searching out some fact in the dark recesses of the mental attic. Though they have difficulty with recent events, many insist they recall the distant past with crystal clarity. Psychologists are dubious. Mostly, they believe, memories of long ago are kept fresh by frequent recall.

Studies suggest that the failure of short-term memory in the elderly may trace, in part, to lack of oxygen. Because of hardening arteries or a poorly pumping heart, sufficient oxygen does not get to the brain. A recent study reports that 13 patients (average age: 68) spent two 90-minute sessions a day, for two weeks, breathing pure oxygen under pressure. Scores on short-term-memory tests shot up. Moreover, the subjects appeared to hold these gains for considerable periods after oxygen treatment stopped.

### **Solutions**

For general absentmindedness, there are easy solutions that can help solve this frustrating problem.

\*Simplify your life. Don't be overwhelmed by too many things at once, and take tasks one at a time.

\*Get proper rest and nutrition so you are in a well-rested frame of mind.

\*Keep to a schedule. People who stick to a schedule are less absentminded than people who don't.

\*Get plenty of exercise, both physical and mental. Challenge the brain in new and creative ways throughout life. Read and join a good library, learn to play chess, or do some voluntary work.

\*Be methodical. Keep items that you use every day in the same place all the time. If you are rigid about it, you will always find them in their spots when you go looking for them.

\*Make effective use of reminders, like sticky notes. If you are IT savvy, use Google Calendar or mobile phone diary app.

Above all, be mentally active, by reading, observing, and learning. The brain responds to exercise. Memory fall-off is far less in the intelligent, mentally active person than in others.

*(Lionel Wijesiri is a retired corporate Director counting three decades of senior management experience. He is now an independent management consultant and a free-lance journalist. You may read his other stories in <https://www.facebook.com/lawije/>)*



### **Peace - Shalom**

It matters little in what language we offer this greeting; for at the end of the day it conveys a wish for you to feel a serenity that will quieten your heart, your mind, yourself & indeed your soul!

It can also convey a desire to be reconciled if there is a need to be & at Peace too with our Heavenly Father!

In Luke's Gospel [10: 1-12 17-20] Christ despatched 72 Disciples ahead of him & instructed them to offer this greeting on their arrival: "PEACE ON THIS HOUSEHOLD"!

This greeting, so seemingly innocuous & innocent, contained a very strong message through its simplicity!

For those who refused to accept this greeting, then indeed the Peace of Hope, that of Salvation & Reconciliation offered by JESUS would return & rest on those very disciples! Here too we are again presented with an example of the possible rejection of the Messiah who came into this world to offer SALVATION!

Our world today is no different to that of Christ's time on earth over 2000 years ago, hatred, animosity, deception, promiscuousness, intolerance, misunderstanding and all the other sinful ways are still prevailing in a very sad & disturbed society. We don't have to look too far to see families, friends, neighbours who are torn apart by a simple misunderstanding, mistrust, a minor dispute or with no real or valid reason or fault for such animosity!

I wonder what would these Disciples find or how would their greeting be received if they entered into our life today? Would their greeting of PEACE rest on us or would it be returned to rest on them, as Jesus said to them could happen before he sent them on their mission? Perhaps our life style; though not full of evil is not quite as Christ would like us to live. Maybe we intend to live a more worthy life but are not prepared to do so just yet.

Then off course, there are those on whom the Peace Christ offers will rest upon us as we live a life trying our utmost to honour GOD's commandments and in fulfilment of His wish that we love GOD and then our

Neighbour as much as ourselves! We spend our lives doing works of mercy through our love for GOD and our neighbour trying to fulfil their faith filled hopes and extending Christ's PEACE and LOVE!

**[Leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.](#)** Matthew [5:24]

**Today, there is so strong a need for us all to take that courageous first step towards reconciliation with CHRIST by restoring relationships & mending fences that have been broken. Maybe it is time that we came to terms with the obligation we have to share with others that we have & is in excess of our needs.**

**We don't have to go or look too far as there are heaps of opportunities and many organisations involved in charitable works who could always do with a contribution so that they then can give a bit more!**

### **A Prayer for Peace**

Dear God our Heavenly Father, all praise and thanksgiving be forever yours for your many Blessings and the gift of Jesus Christ your son who gave his life for our salvation!

As I look around and go about my daily life, I see an abundance of evil, anger, suffering and hardships with people moving bereft of love or caring or with troubled minds and heavy hearts.

I pray to you Lord, for your merciful compassion. I pray that all those carrying a burden they find too hard to bear turn to you for your comfort, your strength your loving guidance & that those of us who can, help them fulfil their Hope by sharing our resources.

Lord please fill all our hearts with the Peace and Love of your Beloved Son our Holy Saviour  
Jesus Christ! AMEN

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## **ALVIN AND HIS HANDLER WIN PRESTIGIOUS AWARD – A Humane interest story!**

By Quintus de Zilwa



Lance Corporal Navarathne has worked with ALVIN a dog of Belgium Malinois breed (aged 7+ years) in demining an area of approximately 73,340 sq. meters in the North and East of Sri Lanka since December 2011.

They have just been awarded the US-based Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) Team of the year 2016. Their work together has so far discovered 20 propeller grenades, 48 grenades, 137 Anti-personnel Mines, 18 detonators and 243 ammunitions and other explosive remnants of the war.. Their work has enabled 1945 displaced people of 415

families return to their original places of residence. Dog Alvin has a sharp sense of smell and is of high intelligence. Alvin and Navarathne have been invited to the award ceremony to be held in Washington DC.

Members of the Australia Sri Lanka Medical Aid Team (AuSLMAT) have visited the Army hospital and made donations of artificial limbs.

**"I am not only a pacifist but a militant pacifist. I am willing to fight for peace. Nothing will end war unless the people themselves refuse to go to war"**

**ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879-1955)**

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In memoriam -

Ronald Fredrick William Nathanielsz was born on 3rd November, 1935 the first of 7, to Phyllis & Elmo Nathanielsz in Colombo - Ceylon



He was educated at Wesley College - Colombo & due to circumstances beyond his control was compelled to seek employment at an early age instead of furthering his education at university. Ronnie, as he was known, obtained employment at the State Mortgage Bank & whilst serving the bank, he was also featured as an announcer in both the Commercial & National Services of Radio Ceylon.

Whilst all this was going on, Ronnie's talent brought him more opportunities & soon established a splendid routine rendering a perfect impersonation of a man with a unique voice "Al Jolson"! He soon found himself working for one of Ceylon's foremost "Showman" Donovan Andree compering many of the shows & cabaret acts at the 'Greenhouse' & 'Orchid Room'. In this period of being involved in a thriving entertainment industry in the little isle of Ceylon, he worked with such greats as Harold Seniviratne, Adrian Ferdinands, Chris Greet, Tommy Perera, Rosemary & Frankie Ferrer, Percy Bartholameusz, Malcolm de Kauwe, Vernon Corea, Livy Wijemanne, Ronnie Campbell & many others whose names elude my memories of events from my early childhood.

Enter a young & pretty Filipino Nursing Sister Remigia {Nina} Abrenica who was doing a short stint at Colombo's General Hospital. It wasn't long before Ronnie realised he had finally met his "Soul Mate" & without losing much time, they were married & had Cleonie followed by Elizabeth two adorable daughters.

It was now time to seek greener pastures & join the exodus from Ceylon that was gathering momentum at the time with many of the populace heading to other parts of the world. So, what was Ceylon's loss became the Philippines gain as Ronnie diligently set about building up his reputation as a proficient and reliable journalist & sports caster. After more than a decade of dedicated loyal service to the Country, the late President Ferdinand Marcos by special decree bestowed Citizenship of the Philippines on Ronnie in recognition of his love of the Nation he had adopted as his home.

This was not the only field of Ronnie's activities for as the years went on Nina brought a son and heir who was named Clifford after his father's very dear friend the late Clifford Foenander. The family soon welcomed a little bundle of joy named Geraldine who no doubt brought much happiness to her parents & siblings.

Over the years Ronnie continued his high standard of reporting which entailed many overseas trips to bring first hand reporting to a nation whose people were extremely sports minded & loved their heroes including this man known as Ronnie Nathanielsz.



In the late 70's or very early 80's Ronnie found a new love named Amelia & together they parented Richard & Rachael who like all Ronnie's children adored their beloved Father.

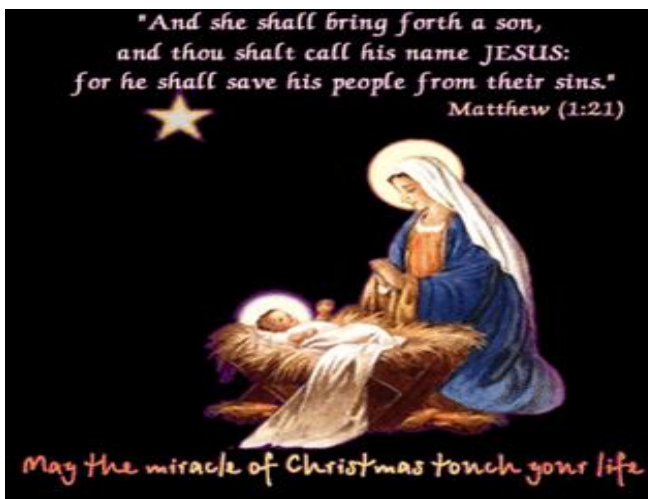
Ronnie reached heights he would never have dreamed of serving the Country & its people whom he loved until he took his last breath in the Mills Peninsula Hospital in Burlingame, San Francisco, at 10.00am on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2016. Fittingly, he was surrounded by the entourage of his very loving family as Ronnie gave up his earthly life & left for Eternal Glory in the presence of our Lord!

Throughout all of this, R F W Nathanielsz never denied his heritage and returned to the Island that once was home. He visited the College that provided him with a sound education, and the other institutions that provided him with the experience & the character that would in turn serve him & help achieve the many accolades that were well and truly earned but, above all, rightfully deserved.

Eternal Rest grant unto the Holy Soul of Ronnie Nathanielsz & the Holy Souls of all the Faithfull departed through the Mercy of God, Rest in Peace. Amen!

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*Wishing you the peace & joys of Christmas throughout  
2017!*



*And so it came to pass that over  
two thousand years ago, "GOD"  
our Heavenly Father sent His  
Angel to proclaim to Mary that she  
will give Birth to "The Son of Man"*

**Any Donation to Combined charities**

**Deposits to Commonwealth Bank of Australia – Combined Charities  
BSB 063620. Account number 10762066**

**or**

**Cheques made payable to "Combined Charities" & mailed c/- 37 Katunga Crescent,  
Broadmeadows 3047.**

"Combined Charities" is a totally Non-Profit charity run by volunteers, & every cent of your donated money goes directly to the coordinators of the registered charities in Sri Lanka mentioned in this newsletter.

NB. Your donations are **not** tax deductible.