Editorial - Deadly ‘Scuffle'

The shooting to death by the police of a sixteen year old boy on the West Demerara is the latest controversial incident of shooting by members of the security forces which has evoked widespread protests and condemnation from groups and individuals.

The almost immediate promise by the police that there will be a 'professional investigation' are both timely and responsible. However after this initial response from the police we wonder just what will follow. Too long and too often have there been complaints about police shootings and fatal incidents which the authorities have chosen to virtually ignore. Too long has the law relating to the holding of inquests been bypassed. Too often have the authorities appeared to have resorted to some kind of 'cover up'.

Reports of a force operating within the Force, of groups functioning independently of the normal police organization have served to heighten concern of the public here in Guyana and even in some quarters internationally.

The US State Department's Human Rights report released in March stated that bluntly that "the security forces committed unlawful killings."

Just a last month a number of countries including the United Kingdom and Canada called for an independent inquiry into alleged phantom gang killings. These calls were made as Guyana's human rights record was examined by United Nations Human Rights Council in the context of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) which was held in Geneva, Switzerland.
The government's utterly ridiculous response is the police must first establish the facts before a determination is made about whether there will be an inquiry. In many of these cases of unlawful killings it is the police who stand accused. How therefore can it be the function of the police to judge whether in any particular case of shooting the police have acted within their rights?

It is rather for the Coroner to decide whether the police involved have been guilty of murder or have acted in justifiable self defence.

The number of cases mentioned of possible misconduct by members of the security forces in recent years are more than enough to cause great alarm especially when disciplinary action is not announced. Christians are very strong in their belief that the right to life is sacred. Even one shooting by members of the security forces which is not in self defence is a matter for concern.

Citizens will be re-assured if they know that in every fatal shooting by the security forces the person responsible will have to account for his or her action to a magistrate.

The soldier or police officer, for their part will be encouraged to exercise more caution when they know their action will come under the scrutiny of a Coroner.

We are fully confident that this is the wish of the vast majority of Guyanese people. We are also convinced that only such inquests can give some measure of satisfaction with the authorities to grieving relatives and friends.

Some services, patients return to Mercy Hospital

The Emergency Room at St Joseph’s Mercy Hospital is back in operation, all of the doctors have been relocated back in the compound all of the patients who were staying in other medical institutions have returned to the hospital. Work is continuing apace to have the operating theatres back in operation shortly.

These are some of the developments which have taken place since an early morning fire on May 10 last razed one of the main buildings in the compound causing losses estimated at over $600 million.

Those areas which were not seriously affected by the blaze continue to function normally namely the information technology, admin, ECG, MRI and X-Ray departments, laboratories, the pharmacy, and the cafeteria along with the in-patient wards and rooms.

Meanwhile arrangements with regard to replacing the burnt out building are said to be at a pre-planning stage. On May 29 the management of the hospital held an all day retreat where participants discussed what they would like to see in a new building. Participants were asked to put forward ideas for a structure that will last well into the 21st century and not one that could be outdated in a few years. The ideas and suggestions are now being put together to see what the group has come up with. Their proposal will also have to be vetted by a
hospital architect to ensure that all that is needed is included. At the same time the hospital officials will decide on what they will eventually be able to afford.

While the officials have been turning their attention to what resources they can tap into, some individuals and have been taking the initiative to go to the institution to make donations. There have also been promises from overseas for equipment when they are in a position to receive them.

As many persons have requested the hospital has established two bank accounts to receive donations from companies and individuals who would like to contribute to the rebuilding effort. Information on the fire, details on these bank accounts and how anyone can help can be found on the website; www.sjmh.org.gy

FEAR NOT - Viewpoint  By V. Parvatan

"Fear is often preceded by astonishment, and is so far akin to it, that both lead to the senses of sight and hearing being instantly aroused. In both cases the eyes and mouth are widely opened, and the eyebrows raised. The frightened man at first stands like a statue motionless and breathless, or crouches down as if instinctively to escape observation. The heart beats quickly and violently, so that it palpitates or knocks against the ribs… That the skin is much affected under the sense of great fear, we see in the marvelous manner in which perspiration immediately exudes from it… The hairs also on the skin stand erect; and the superficial muscles shiver. In connection with the disturbed action of the heart, the breathing is hurried. The salivary glands act imperfectly; the mouth becomes dry, and is often opened and shut……"

Charles Darwin

The many events taking place in our world including brutal killings, kidnapping, rape, the spread of disease and the many incurable diseases, deaths in the streets, robberies and murders, unemployment and related economic problems and natural disasters often stimulate Fear.

In fact, some persons may contend that fear engulfs us and it is a daily struggle to repel fear which robs us of our peace-of-mind. Many thoughts are expressed about fear.

William Shakespeare in recognising that the average person fears death stated…

"Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come".

Francis Quarles an English author wrote:

"Fear nothing but what thine industry may prevent, and be confident of nothing but what fortune cannot defeat."
It is no less folly to fear what cannot be avoided than to be secure when there is a possibility of preventing…"

We all experience fear at sometime which destroys our joy. Robs us of our happiness and replaces it with insecurity. There are some writers who see fear not only in its destructive form but having some relevance. **Blaise Pascal** stated:

"There is a virtuous fear which is the effect of faith, and a vicious fear which is the product of doubt and distrust. The former leads to hope as relying on God, in whom we believe; the latter inclines to despair, as not relying upon God…. Persons of the one character fear to lose God; those of the other character fear to find him".

Religious teachers see Fear and Faith directly opposed. They contend that when there is faith in Almighty God and trust in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ there is not accommodation for fear. They see fear as a torment emanating from evil forces which must be suppressed.

Many of us in our personal lives will know how we benefited from Prayers and trust in Almighty God. While facing difficulties a quiet prayer gives us calm and confidence to move on. This is well captured in the Holy Bible as stated in: **Ephesians 6:13-18**

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints..."

**GOD BE WITH YOU.**

**Individualistic Morality is not Enough**

By Mike James

In the landmark 1971 Pastoral Letter “Justice and Peace in a New Caribbean” quoted in last week’s article, the bishops of the Antilles Episcopal Conference, echoing the consistent teaching of the Church over the centuries in faithful witness to its founder Jesus Christ declared:

“... the work of the Church cannot be confined to the sacristy or the sanctuary. On the contrary it is the Church’s vocation “to be present in the heart of the world by proclaiming the Good News to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, and joy to the afflicted. (Luke 4:16-22) Christ clearly proclaimed that this was his own mission. It must therefore also be the mission of the Church He founded.”
And the question was asked, If Social Justice is such an important aspect of the following of Christ, why does the Church need to keep on repeating “It is imperative that no one, out of indifference to the course of events or because of inertia, would indulge in a merely individualistic morality (Vatican Council II, Church in the Modern World (Art 30).

We cannot deny that an individualistic morality does have its attractions. True, it stresses that each of us as individuals is fully responsible for our own actions before God and that in itself is no easy task. Individual sexual morality, for example, is a constant and major challenge.

Maintaining my virginity until marriage or for life if I decide to not marry, total fidelity to my husband or wife even if the other is not faithful or becomes indifferent or even abusive, commitment to living a celibate life should a marriage disintegrate beyond repair, resisting any temptation to enter into any other relationship following divorce, full acceptance of responsibility for any children I have inside or outside marriage with total refusal to pressure a partner to have an abortion, refusal to enter into any kind of homosexual relationship however much I may be tempted.

On the other hand, there are advantages to “indulging in a merely individualistic morality”. If I can, by prayer and effort, live up to those individual moral norms, surely I can feel comfortable that I am pleasing to God. Individualist morality enables me to make a clear distinction between those who are good and those who are not. And this applies not only to sexual morality. If because of my hard work, I can make a good life for myself and my family, what obligation do I have to those who because of laziness and lack of ambition make a mess of their lives, end up in poverty, crime, drug addiction? Did Jesus in the parable not condemn the servant who instead of using his talent given him by his master so as to double its value, instead put in a hole in the ground and did nothing to improve what God had given him? His talent was taken away from him and given to the other who had doubled his talents to ten.

Individualistic morality requires hard, dedicated work, resistance to temptation, but it enables me to measure clearly if I am pleasing or not to God.

**Inspiring ceremonies at Malgre Tout**

By Michael Kishore

After the beautiful and very special events of the crowing of Our Lady with the lusty singing of such memorable and heart-warming hymns as "Let us Mingle Together..." and 'Bring Flowers of the Rarest...’ and Mothers' Day as well as the wonderful celebration of the very great Feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost - the parishioners at Malgre Tout were once honoured with the presence of Fr. Steve Patterson, S.J. on Trinity Sunday. Father's visit was most welcome and heartening as he was away for quite sometime seeking medical attention.
On the occasion of the Crowning of Mary Fr Dermot Preston, S.J. in a moving homily eloquently referred to Her great humility in accepting the will of God and the need for us to try and emulate Her.

In an inspiring sermon on the Feast of the Ascension Fr. Anil asserted among other things that 'at the Feast of the Ascension we celebrate Jesus' return to the Father'. He further declared that 'the Ascension is about our destiny' and that 'we are destined to be with God in a union which cannot be destroyed by death…'

He stressed that 'the Ascension is about an ending and a beginning and that 'on this day Christ's personal ministry on earth ended but the operation of the Holy Spirit in us His followers continued…'

On the Feast of Pentecost Minister of the Eucharist Brother Danny emphasized the power of the Holy Spirit in transforming lives.

In addition on Trinity Sunday Fr. Steve Patterson, S.J. declared that 'the Trinity is about a divine relationship' and that 'if God is a God of love He cannot be one…..' In a succinct manner Fr Steve also traced the origin of the doctrine.

Meanwhile on the most important occasion of Corpus Christi, Ministers of the Eucharist Maureen and Danny Persaud conducted a very good service and Brother Danny in a spirited sharing said that 'Today's Feast is a reminder that we are the Body…' and that 'together we must work for love and peace'.

Fittingly the service ended with the congregation singing with great gusto the lovely hymn "Give Thanks to the Lord…."

**PETER’S PENCE COLLECTION**

In his latest encyclical, Pope benedict XVI reminds the faithful that “God's love... gives us the courage to continue seeking and working for the benefit of all” (Caritas in Veritate, no. 78). The Peter’s Pence Collection gives parishioners in Guyana a chance to unite in solidarity with the Holy Father, the faithful worldwide, and those most in need of charitable love. The Holy See uses the Collection proceeds to provide emergency assistance and aid to the most disadvantaged around the world. Please be generous in the Collection and, in doing so, cast the love of Christ upon the world.

**Fr Patterson now in charge of liturgy**

Fr. Stephen Patterson, S.J. has assumed responsibility for Liturgy in the Pastoral Area. A schedule of meetings with Parish Liturgy Committees will be circulated shortly. In the meantime, for consultation on any liturgical matter, please feel free to contact Fr. Stephen through the Pastoral Area Secretariat.
CATHOLIC TEACHERS MEETING

The Guyana Catholic Teachers Association would hold their June meeting at Marian Academy on Thursday June 17th at 17:00hrs. Please note that all final arrangements for the 21st Biennial Conference to the nature loving island of Dominica would be finalized at this meeting. All members are asked to attend

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:-

Catholic Standard much appreciated

Dear Editor,

I refer to Mr Suseran’s letter of 4th June, 2010. I strongly disagree with most of his remarks. His suggestion that the Catholic Standard at the moment is in a “dark abyss” is highly questionable. If he really read the paper in five minutes then he didn’t read it properly.

The editorial and viewpoints are good. The Sunday Scripture page is very helpful to those who can’t get to Mass. The Family page is interesting except for the occasional off-colour joke which slips in under “Spiritual Titbits” and the children’s page encourages children to look forward to reading the Standard. Some letters are interesting, especially the short ones, and I do miss Fr. Church’s “All Sorts” column.

I agree that our newspaper can be improved. Some years ago a writer asked that letters relating to Faith and Morals should be answered, and I myself wrote suggesting a Question and Answer Column. No action was taken.

Please do not increase the size, as Mr. Suseran suggests. Even international papers like the Guardian Weekly have reduced the size but not the content. We need more pages and more features. It is unfair to compare our paper with the Kaieteur News. Compare it with newspapers from other religious bodies. We are not the News of the World. We should encourage more writers by inviting comments on particular topics.

O’DONNA ALLSOPP

Praise good fathers on their special day

Dear Editor,

Why is FATHER'S DAY so mis-understood in Guyana in more recent years? Why is there so much male bashing going on in Guyana in recent years? I now invite you to spend the next two minutes to read the following.

… ’June is Bustin' out all Over' are lyrics from one of the popular songs in the Rogers and Hammerstein musical, "CAROUSEL" ... it is the story which highlights the plight of a Father who commits a crime in order to
provide for his FAMILY...and dies in the effort. Also from the American cinema, is the movie "SOUNDER" in which a Father goes to jail after being convicted in a court of law for stealing food to feed his family. Some months later, after being released, he returns to his Family who welcomes him back with loving open arms.

The above is not mentioned for or in support of Fathers committing crimes in order to put bread on the table for their families. Crime for any reason is wrong, and must not be condoned. I related the above, to point out that there are Fathers, who, if pushed to the edge, would consider and steal, to provide for their families. Good men, doing bad things, not because they want to be bad, but because bad circumstances pushed them over the edge, and they fall. They made a bad choice. They did the WRONG thing.

Since Father's Day 2009, I have had the unhappy experience of sitting in the office of a powerful and very wealthy Guyanese "Bossman", and heard him speaking to a group of his employees - men over 40 years of age - in the most vulgar and disrespectful way, using the vilest language at the top of his voice, admonishing them for whatever he considered was their failing. His voice carried throughout the outer office to the hearing of all the other staffers, who included many females. That went on for well over fifteen minutes.

Why did those men stand sheepishly and accept such humiliation, I wondered. Why did they not walk out. "Fiah de wok", as we Guyanese would say. It didn't take long for me to realise that those men, are probably FATHERS, who had to endure such humiliation, so that they can earn and support their Families.

It also dawned on me, that those men, or some of them, are probably also members of churches, and that on FATHER'S DAY 2010, they will probably sit in a church, and hear their pastor pound the pulpit, and admonish them with the damning words, "YOU MEN. YOU MUST STEP UP TO THE PLATE. BE MEN. LOOK AFTER YOUR CHILDREN." A double whammy, if you will, because they ARE looking after their children - at a high price. How sad.

From research, I have found out that Father's Day is all about honouring and lifting up the GOOD FATHERS in society. There are so many good fathers in Guyana. I sincerely hope and pray that Guyanese Pastors and other influential individuals will totally ignore the bad fathers on FATHER'S DAY 2010. That is NOT their day. It is the day specially set aside for the GOOD Fathers.

Pastors ought to do what is right and proper. They should on Father's Day, thank God for the Good fathers we are blessed with and let those good men know how much they are appreciated for what they are doing, to set a good example to all the others who are failing. There are 51 Sundays on which remarks can be addressed to and about the bad fathers, if need be. There is just ONE Sunday in each year set aside to honour the good Fathers.

Social workers, pastors and others who have the privilege of speaking to large audiences and the power to influence, must recognise the POSITIVES within the Guyana society. Stop condemning all and sundry. IT IS WRONG. Let us do the right thing. Make FATHER'S DAY 2010, a happy day for all our good fathers. Many will be seated in church, along with their wives and children. Let them leave church on Father's day and return home proud as a peacock and walking on cloud nine, rejuvenated, and ready to face all the challenges being a good father in this modern world entails. That might probably be a lesson. An encouragement to the delinquent fathers to change their evil ways. Think on that. Francis Quamina Farrier, BA, MS.