

"The peace that the supremacy of law brings..."

Cardinal George Pell was, once, Australia's Catholic Archbishop- the Prince of the Australian Church, if you like. He was promoted as Cardinal and called to Vatican. He served as number three in the Vatican administration and in charge of finances. The Prince of the Vatican, if you like. The breaking news about him today (Saturday, 29th June) here in Australia, has sent shock waves through the Vatican in Rome. By deflection, it sends a message, to us Sri Lankans, down our spine.

Australian (Victorian) police investigations conducted over two years have had to bring the Cardinal to face Court in Melbourne at the end of July over allegations of multiple child sexual attacks by him while he had been serving in the diocese here in Ballarat.

Of course, being charged does not mean anyone is guilty. The purpose of court proceedings is to professionally examine the charges on the basis of due process. I hope the Cardinal will get every chance to prove his innocence. I am sorry for the personal plight of this venerable looking aged dignity. On the other hand, this isn't the issue I raise here.

What the 'Supremacy of Law,' Means

On the contrary, I relate this hot story today to illustrate in concrete terms what it means to have nobody above the law. Here, is a most eminently regarded man on the top of Australian and Vatican elite. Cardinal George Pell is indeed next in the line of cardinals who may be picked to be Pope at the next opportunity. His appointment had been a great honour to this country. He enjoys the respect of the whole governing elite herein Australia. Politicians didn't dare to intervene with police investigations. The police cannot be meddled about by political leaders here. And this is the result. A clinical operation.

Although I don't like to see anyone having to go through pain of mind, I have to be happy to realise that I live in a country (Australia) where nobody is above the law.

Our Police and Gnanassara

The dramatic Sri Lanka contrast is the case of the rowdy and riotous monk Gnanassara and his BBS goons who go about hate attacks on the Muslim community-burning mosques and torching shops. Police in Sri Lanka have gone on record to state that, "arresting a Buddhist monk, is no easy deal." Why should that be? I must apologise here for associating Gnanassara with Cardinal Pell. They are poles apart as human beings-at least for now. Right now, George Pell enjoys generous social repute. In contrast, most Sri Lankans seem to be ambivalent with regard to their specimen. The reason for this is the automatic honour bestowed on whoever wears a robe. Our Asgiriya Mahanayake took objection for anyone addressing the bloke as simply "Gnanassara." It is bizarre. Are we to call this man who disgraces the religion and the Sanga and who publicly incites racial hatred, "Venerable"? Are we to genuflect before a rascal like this who has equated

himself to one of the lowest behaving laymen. One's status is one's doing and it should not be preserved by the costume one dons. Cardinal George Pell is not protected by his very high position in the religious rung. He can be protected only by the law of the land.

It is all so funny in Sri Lanka!

Sri Lanka's Era of The Almighty Man We have the Pell story to offer as another lesson to our people over there in Sri Lanka. Life is peaceful when the law is free to bring alleged offenders to book. In turn, defendants are offered their opportunity to prove their innocents. We call that "due process."

senting journalists were either killed in broad daylight or sent missing under his watch. The white van and the door-knock had many tremble. Pedestrians on the road had to rush to the nearest wall and turn their backs with arms raised up when a government VVIP was passing through in his privileged luxury vehicle. During discussions with the President, MPs of his government wouldn't raise their hands up in protest even if a dengue mosquito bit them. I still keep the image of the murder of Lasantha Wickrematunge. I still keep the image of our heroic war soldier, Army Commander General Sarath Fonseka thrown to jail and in jumpers, eating



Making Sense
Shyamon Jayasinghe

ment to the Constitution that would have kept him in the post for lifetime; and then to be succeeded by a son or sibling. Saman Deyyo saved our land! He was more powerful than the Deyya in the South Indian Kovil.

The Peace that the Supremacy of Law Brings

In this part of the world where I live, so-

WHEN NONE IS ABOVE THE LAW: THE UNEXPECTED LESSON OF CARDINAL GEORGE PELL



Until a few years back, we had a constitution that gave total immunity to "His Excellency the President." All presidents with the exception of poor old DB Wijetunge abused that "above-the-law," privilege. The ten years of Mahinda Rajapakse had been the worst. Palpable abuse of presidential privilege was the norm over those ten years. His government even went to the extent of virtually taking over the Attorney General, the Auditor General, the Police, and, above all, the Chief Justice, who was the bastion of justice and freedom for our people. Bathed with arrogance and impunity and an ego-sense of overarching power, the then President just went on the rampage and trampled the freedom of people. Dis-

from a tin plate. LTTE bomb shrapnel still inside his body. I keep the image of the Chief Justice, Shirani Bandaranaike, illegally impeached and asked to go home because she defied the Divineguma Bill of the powerful sibling.

That was the era of the Almighty Man. It was also the era of this man's siblings and kids. One kid gave constant vent to his neurotic fascination for car races so much that he held races in the sacred area at Kandy.

Overtaken by hubris, delusional self-confidence and a false sense of self-righteousness the then President brought in the infamous 18th Amend-

cial and political peace is predicated on the doctrine of the Rule of Law. Individuals get about their business knowing fully well that the police will act and that judiciary will follow to restrain offenders. I may be stating a situation rather idealistically. On the other hand, we know Australia is near that.

It is important for us to occasionally think of those dark times if only for the reason we will not allow that to be repeated again. The lesson of the Vatican Cardinal should reinforce our resolve to keep the law supreme. I am praying for the abolition of the Executive Presidency

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