

Norochcholai and the Church

The Catholics of this country would be shocked and stunned by the letter of Rev. Fr. Ivan Petersz in *The Island* of September 20 on the above subject. From the time the Church marshalled its senseless opposition to the coal power plant, this Reverend was in the forefront of the campaign, instigating people to protest, organising protest marches, organising prayer campaigns, planting trees to celebrate victories and attending TV talk shows, not with any worthwhile ideas to contribute, but with a handbill containing a letter of the President suspending the project. No priest, no other Bishop other than the Bishop of Chilaw was allowed to utter a word on the project and the Catholic press was totally muzzled to publish any article in support of the project.

Having done all these, he is now trying to project himself as a 'very concerned citizen who loves this country' now indulging in 'prayerful contemplation on the project'.

What really is the reason for this volte-face? The Reverend has come out with the truth, and

this is what his tongue says, 'Let me share a few thoughts about this problem ... and of course help the leaders though late to take a decision before the whole thing crashes and the blame comes over to the church'. Ah! there lies the rub – the blame coming over to the church.

Having relentlessly pursued a most unscientific and short-sighted policy of opposition to the coal power project, the Reverend now fears the wrath of the people of this country suffering under eight hour power cuts. It has taken the Reverend about five years to prayerfully contemplate and realise that the project is 'for the common man and that even God will bless it because it is for the common man'. Please do not try to soothe us by the glib talk of your smooth tongue.

Finally, let us ask you to do what you as a priest have asked us to do when we commit sin. Please say, 'mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa'.

**Bernard Pinto,
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