



PRISON VOICE

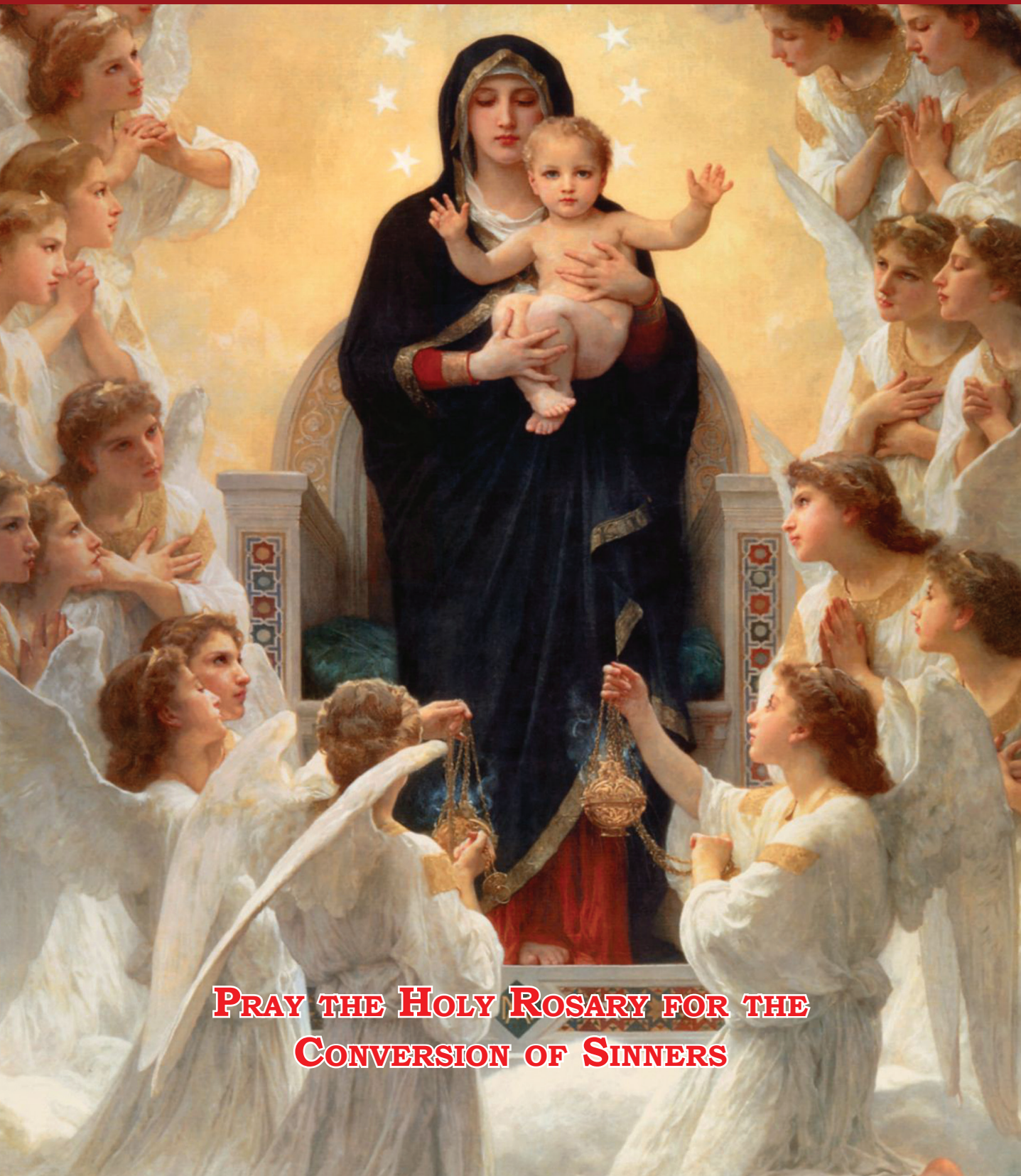
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NATIONAL MONTHLY

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**PRAY THE HOLY ROSARY FOR THE
CONVERSION OF SINNERS**



PMI Pune Unit Builds a House for a Released Prisoner in Collaboration with Fr Suresh of Nasik and Bishop Lourdes Daniel



National Office Distributes Provisions to Kolbe Home Children



Fr Wilfred Fernandes and Mr Antony Jacob Visited the Open Prison, Pune and Donated a Canon Printer.

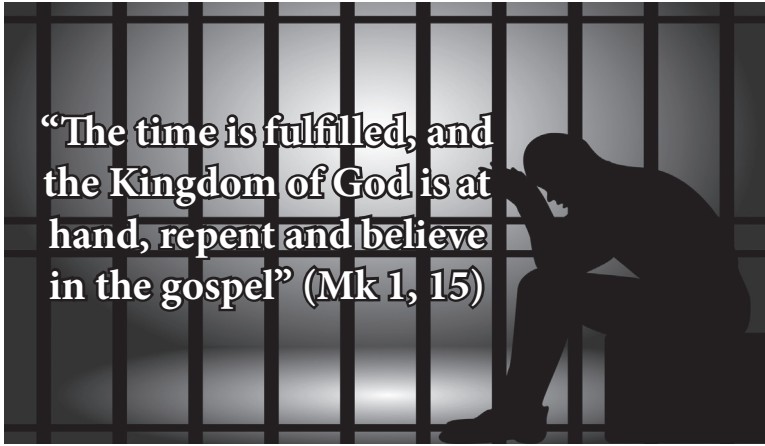
PMI National Office Team Visiting Echo Special Home for Juveniles, Bengaluru.

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PRISON VOICE

NATIONAL MONTHLY



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Are You Willing?

“Help a Prisoner's Child Prevent a Potential Criminal”

80% of the children of prisoners are potential criminals unless somebody takes care of them. Prison Ministry India has begun a scheme to educate 1000 children of prisoners: Kindly contribute Rs. 5,000/- for the education of a child.

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MOTHER MARY'S MESSAGE FOR CONVERSION



Sr Rosily SCC
Chief Editor

The month of September is dedicated to Mother Mary. We celebrate two very important feasts of Our Lady this month; the first is the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 8 September. On 15 September, we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, which comes from a devotion to the deep suffering she endured in her earthly life, often depicted as seven swords piercing her Immaculate Heart. Throughout history, there have been many Marian apparitions and signs which do not contradict the content of faith, and must therefore have their focus in the core of Christ's proclamation: Father's love which leads men and women to conversion and bestows the grace required to abandon oneself to him with filial devotion. Our Lady had appeared to many persons in many places from 50 AD onwards. All these apparitions had a purpose and a message to the people of God, that is, turn away from sin and convert.

Our Lady of Lourdes

The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared in 1858 in Lourdes, France to 14-year old Bernadette Soubirous while she was gathering firewood with her sister and a friend. The climax of this revelation was the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary. On 18 January 1860, the local bishop declared, "The Virgin Mary did appear indeed to Bernadette Soubirous." In 1863, Bernadette Soubirous related that the apparition asked for prayer and penitence for the conversion of sinners.

Our Lady of La Salette

Our Lady of La Salette is a Marian apparition reported by two children, Maximin Giraud and Mélanie Calvat, and occurred at La Salette-Fallavaux, France, in 1846. On 19 September 1851, the local bishop formally approved the public devotion. The message of the visionaries of La Salette focused on the conversion of all humanity to Christ. The

"Beautiful Lady" of La Salette implores all people who would listen to "be reconciled to God." This conversion requires daily prayer and frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist.

Blessed Virgin Mary, who appeared at Lourdes, La Salette, Guadalupe, Fatima, Gietrzwald and the more than seventeen other places recalls and reminds us of the most important message of Jesus – Repentance. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1:15). Jesus categorically said that he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance (Lk 5:32). Through her apparitions, Mother Mary continues the mission of Jesus – repentance and redemption. Anchoring on the teachings and mission of Jesus and Mary, Prison Ministry India continues the same task of leading the brethren behind the bars to repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, reformation, rehabilitation, reintegration and redemption. We do this through our daily spiritual exercises, especially our active participation in the Most Holy Eucharist and Eucharistic Adoration, devotional recitation of the Holy Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet. Our small but loving sacrifices, mortifications and ascetical practices will certainly accelerate the process of conversion of sinners, especially the conversion of hardcore prisoners. Mother Mary reminds us that man's future is in God, and that we are active and responsible partners in creating that future. Mother of the Church, enlighten the people of God along the paths of faith, hope, and love! Enlighten especially the people whose consecration and entrustment are to be done by us that you are awaiting. Help us to live in the truth of the consecration of Christ for the entire human family in the modern world.

PMI Mission: Conversion of Sinners

Introduction

Sin of Adam and Eve brought forth the promise of redemption and redeemer; “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen 3, 14-15). Seeking mankind’s contrition, repentance, reconciliation, conversion and redemption God the merciful Father sent patriarchs, kings, judges, prophets, leaders and finally sent His own Son Jesus Christ. “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe” (Heb 1, 1-3). For God does not want the death of the wicked but that they turn from their ways and live (Ezk 33,11). This is why He sent Jonah to preach to the Ninevites and called Saul, one of the greatest Christian persecutors, to become St Paul to preach the good news to the gentiles. Prison Ministry India continues this redemptive saga of Father God – the conversion of sinners - specifically prisoners in the twenty-first century. This article introspects the saga of God’s redeeming mission through Jesus, Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Faustina and Prison Ministry India.

Jesus’ Redeeming Mission

Jesus began his mission preaching repentance and inviting to believe in the Gospel: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mk 1,15). In His teachings Jesus highlighted the significance of repentance: “There is

From National Coordinator’s Desk



Rev Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS
National Coordinator & Secretary to CBCI
for Prison Ministry India

rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Lk 15, 8-10). Forgiving the good thief on the cross even in the last-minute Jesus redeemed him saying, “Today you will be with me in paradise” (Lk 23,43).

Blessed Virgin Mary’s Call for Conversion

Mother Mary throughout the past centuries has incessantly been continuing this redeeming mission of Jesus. Wherever and whenever appeared she asked to pray for the conversion of sinners. This was very powerful in her Fatima apparition where she appeared to three shepherd children, Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Jacinta and Francisco Marto, six times in 1917. On June 13, 1917, Our Lady said to the children “Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say this prayer many times: O Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary”. Mother Mary encouraged the children to pray the Rosary every day and taught them to recite this prayer after each decade of the Rosary: “O my Jesus, forgive us, save us from the fire of hell. Lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need”. PMI volunteers make use of this spiritual weapon



From National Coordinator's Desk

by reciting as many rosaries as possible for the fruitfulness of our redeeming mission of saving prisoners' souls.

Faustina Kowalska's Divine Mercy Mission

In the twentieth century Jesus called a Polish nun Faustina Kowalska of the Blessed Sacrament (1905-1938) to continue this redeeming mission. Her apparitions of Jesus Christ inspired the Roman Catholic devotion to the Divine Mercy for the conversion of sinners and the rescue of souls in purgatory. PMI volunteers are expected to recite every day at 3PM the divine mercy prayer for the conversion of prisoners, particularly for the reformation and redemption of released prisoners in PMI rehabilitation centres.

PMI Mission for the Conversion of Sinners

Following the same mission of Jesus, Mother Mary and Faustina, PMI tirelessly endeavors for the conversion of sinners specifically prisoners. Its root can be found in one of my spiritual experiences that took place in 1983. During this summer holidays God revealed to me my call within the call, my personal vocation: the call to dedicate my life for the conversion of sinners. On 9th March 1983 I went to the Elijah Ashram, Niravilpuzha in the diocese of Mananthawady, to pray alone for a week, a personal retreat. Fr Valerian and Brother Stanley welcomed me. The Ashram was an estate of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) located in a remote village. It was a marvellous estate with hills, valleys and brooks filled with coconut, pepper, coffee and cardamom plantations. Amid this beauty was a small Ashram with a tiny Chapel. There, in the chapel, sitting by the side of the Blessed Sacrament from morning to evening I read the Bible and

prayed silently looking at the Eucharistic Jesus.

On the evening of Friday 11th March 1983, a fasting day as usual, I was in the Chapel with the Bible in my hand and was praying. The sun was setting. The sanctuary lamp was burning. From a profound communion with the Lord, there emerged a great challenge, an inner call, a great God experience within me, "Why can't you dedicate your life to the conversion of sinners? In the Catholic Church, there have been many who worked for so many special groups of people. But only a few spent their lives for the conversion of sinners. Why don't you dedicate your life to the cause of sinners"? Knowing that I am a great sinner I asked, "How can I do this myself being a great sinner"? The answer was instantaneous, "I always call sinners to repentance; I always call the weak to be my apostles". This call within my call was so powerful that it continues to inspire me even today to search, serve and save the lost sheep of Jesus.

Conclusion

Mother Mary's birth on 8 September and Saint Mother Teresa's feast on 5th September remind us of PMI's most important mission – the conversion of sinners. Let us rededicate ourselves for this ultimate mission of Jesus by daily participating in the Holy Mass, reciting rosary and the divine mercy chaplet. I conclude this message with the words of Maria Graf Suter, a twentieth century Swiss mystic. She wrote in her book entitled, *Revelation of Divine Love*: "Pour torrents of graces and Your Love, oh my Jesus, over all Your enemies. Oh my Jesus, have mercy on them because you don't desire the death of the sinner. Your mercy is without limits. Give to all of them the grace of conversion, like you gave it to Saul. May they recognize you as the only and true God".

CONVERSION OF HENRI PRANZINI

Henri Pranzini

Henri Pranzini an Italian-origin born in Alexandria in 1856 was a notorious and brutal criminal. He was tall, dynamic and charming and was a life-long petty thief who took advantage of vulnerable women in nineteenth century France, a vice that eventually led him to capital punishment. In this article we focus on his last-minute conversion thanks to the intense prayer of St Therese of Lisieux.

Triple-Murder

On the morning of 17 March 1887, the bodies of Marie Regnault, a prominent Parisian woman, her servant, Annette Gremeret, and the servant's daughter, Marie, were all found in an apartment. The *New York Times* reported the terrible scene: "Regnault was found on the floor of her chamber dead, her throat cut and her body terribly mutilated. Lying near the door leading from the chamber to the drawing room was the dead body of Annette, whose throat had also been cut, and in her bed in another apartment was little Marie. Her head almost severed from her body by the murderer's knife". The motive was robbery, lucrative jewellery. Within days he was caught. Though he argued his innocence, signs of his guilt were everywhere, and the evidence mounted. In July, a jury took only two hours to convict him of the triple-murder, and he was condemned to die in August.



Sr Hilaria Kodiyan SSPC

Therese Martin

Pranzini's crime would have likely been forgotten, had it not been for an extraordinary French teenager. Therese Martin, later to become St Therese of Lisieux, was just 14 at the time, but she felt compelled to intervene. From reports Therese came to know that Pranzini was impenitent and was sure of his eternal damnation. To avert that "irreparable calamity" she decided to employ "all the spiritual means" she could think of. As she recounts in her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, she stormed Heaven for a man many thought beyond redemption: "Everything led to the belief that he would die impenitent. I wanted at all costs to keep him from falling into hell, and to succeed I employed all means imaginable, feeling that of myself I could do nothing".

Conversion Method

The most important weapon Therese Martin made use for the conversion of Pranzini was the Holy Mass. "I offered to God all the infinite merits of Our Lord and the treasures of the Holy Church" for his salvation. She began a battle – a warfare – for the soul of a murderer. She offered her daily



Death Row Conversion

Holy Mass for the repentance of Pranzini. As his fate approached, Therese increased her prayers and asked her sisters to join in her mission which continued until he was brought before the guillotine on August 31. The next day, Therese read in the paper that when he was about to put his head into the device, “he turned, took hold of the crucifix the priest was holding out to him, and kissed the sacred wounds three times! Then his soul went to receive the merciful sentence of him who declares that in heaven there will be more joy over one sinner who does penance than over ninety-nine who have no need of repentance! (Lk 15: 7).”

“The day after his execution I hastily opened the paper and what did I see? Tears betrayed my emotion; I was obliged to run out of the room. Pranzini had mounted the scaffold without confessing or receiving absolution, and turned round, seized the crucifix which the Priest was offering to him, and kissed Our Lord’s Sacred Wounds three times. I had obtained the sign I asked for, and to me it was especially sweet. Was it not when I saw the Precious Blood flowing from the Wounds of Jesus that the thirst for souls first took possession of me? My prayer was granted to the letter.”

Mon Premier Enfant

Pranzini was Therese’ first saved child. Look at her prayer “My God, I am quite sure that you will pardon this unhappy Pranzini. I should still think so if he did not confess his sins or give any sign of sorrow, because I have such confidence in your unbounded Mercy; but this is my first sinner, and therefore I beg for just one sign

of repentance to reassure me.” “The lips of my ‘first child’ were pressed to the Divine Wounds: what a sweet response. My desire to save souls increased each day after this wonderful grace.” Therese was convinced her prayers had helped save the forsaken Pranzini from damnation. He became for her “mon premier enfant- my first child” and the experience strengthened her conviction to become a Carmelite nun, and intercede for others in desperate need of God’s love.

The Little Way

This is “The Little Way” of St Therese of Lisieux which Saint Mother Teresa also followed: to do everything as an act of love for God, to offer all the little (and big) hardships of life for the conversion of sinners. Imagine St Therese arriving in heaven after her death at the age of twenty-four. Who do you think was the first person to meet her? Her mother Zélie? Her father Louis? Perhaps the first person to meet her on her arrival in heaven was a man with a big smile on his face who could hardly wait to thank her for the role her prayers and sacrifices played in getting him there a murderer named Pranzini.

Repentance

The most important factor in prison ministry is to lead the convicts to repentance and reconciliation so as to be received in the kingdom of God. Although Pranzini brutally murdered two women and a little girl, a heinous crime that Therese in no way condoned, she did not condemn the man himself. Rather, in the spirit of the Gospel, she prayed for his conversion. Therese found it within her heart to be willing to forgive his terrible crime.



Wolves Turn Lambs Finding God Behind the Bars in El Salvador

Sr Rosily SCC

San Francisco Gotera Prison

San Francisco Gotera prison in El Salvador, located about 166km east of the capital San Salvador, is a notorious, overcrowded courtyard correctional institution. Brutal ‘mara’ street gangs and chronic poverty have given El Salvador the moniker of being one of the most murderous countries on the planet. However, the growth of evangelical Christianity behind the bars is giving gangsters a way to break the spiral of violence. Members of the Torre Fuerte (Strong Tower) church work inside this prison. Nearly all of the inmates are members of rival gangs including the infamous MS-13. The prison has 1,600 inmates housed in a facility designed to hold 200.

Pastor Manuel Rivera

Convicted murderer Manuel Rivera’s transformation happened behind the bars, when, battered by years of running from police and enemy gangs, unable to see his son, he turned to prayer. When God appeared in a dream, prophesying Rivera would have his own flock, he decided to become a pastor. He is now half-way through an eight-year sentence for criminal association. Pastor Manuel Rivera, Head of the Torre Fuerte evangelical church, an ex-hitman from the powerful Barrio 18 gang, speaks to rows of men with spidery black tattoos on their arms, necks and faces, delivering the message of salvation. “We



Prisoners’ Conversion

used to say that the gang was our family, but God took the blindfold off our eyes,” says Rivera, 36, dressed like the other inmates in a white t-shirt, shorts and plastic sandals. Some weep silently while he reads from a black bible. Others sing hymns, clapping and waving their arms enthusiastically. By embracing religion, these men can leave their gangs without retaliation. But if they do not show real devotion, their former gang-mates may kill them, fearing they will join other gangs and become enemies.

Bible Study

In 2015, a small Bible study was initiated in the prison. A pastor who had been saved from gang life visited the prison and started sharing the Gospel. In the beginning, only a few attended the studies, but as they began sharing the good news of God’s saving grace, more and more accepted Christ. The inmates were almost entirely active gang members. Today the majority of the inmates are finding redemption through Jesus Christ. Instead of hailing themselves out as fearsome gang members – despite their tattoos – now they present themselves as “sheep.” The gang was their family, but God took the blindfold off their eyes. In this prison, calm arrived, thanks to the Bible and the pastors that have achieved several miracles. Something that was unthinkable before their conversion has happened: gangs live together in the same place.

Prison Transformation

Thanks to the impact of the Bible study, now the majority of the approximately 1,500 inmates want to find redemption. “It



Prisoners' Conversion

is possible to rehabilitate those in the MS-13 or other gangs”, says Security Minister Mauricio Ramirez, dismissing criticisms that the government should do more. Luis Alfredo Alvarado Hernandez had been a gang member since he was thirteen. God showed him in his dreams that there were a heaven and hell, prompting him to leave this life for the love of his children. Outside the relative tranquillity of the prison, danger permeates. Despite crime falling from a record high in 2015, at 60 per 100,000 inhabitants, the murder rate is still one of the highest worldwide.

Within the prison, prisoners treat each other with respect. Murderers living among murderers in an overcrowded prison is a recipe for disaster. But there is no disaster currently since Jesus Christ has come into the prison and the Holy Spirit has transformed these “vilest of sinners” into saints. The deadliest gang members found God behind the bars, exchanging violence for the love taught in the Bible. A man with a gunshot wound on his face stands two rows in front of another who is missing an ear. A man standing in the front row with six bullet wounds is praising Jesus Christ in song while another nearby raises his arms in worship, exposing his severed hand. Two years ago, the prison was almost entirely home to active gang members. Nowadays, most of the inmates want to find redemption, says prison director Oscar Benavides.

Mara Salvatrucha - MS 13

Transformations also take place among notorious gangs. For instance, the Mara Salvatrucha, a notorious cross-border crime

group also known as MS-13, founded by Salvadorans in Los Angeles in the 1980s is undergoing unbelievable renewal. President Donald Trump has blamed MS-13 and illegal immigration from Central America as a major source of violence in the United States. The transformations taking place in this prison among the cruellest gang members prove that it is possible to rehabilitate those in the Mara Salvatrucha or other gangs.

Rodolfo Cornejo

Rodolfo Cornejo, 34, with intricate black tattoos circling his neck, started praying and growing cucumbers when he entered the prison on a 12-year sentence for carrying firearms because he wanted to leave the rough life that had isolated him from his kids. “People on the outside don’t trust us very much: they think we can’t change. But yes, we can show them.” Former members of the Barrio 18 gang take part in a carpentry workshop at the Torre Fuerte church inside the prison.

Church Support

Church provides shelter for prisoners who have been released to help them transition back into society, overcome the stigma of their past, and earn a living. Much like the Apostle Paul might have thought, a former gang member still in prison emphasised, “Although we are imprisoned, we feel free, when Christ opens our heart, there is no turning back”. Praise God for extending His marvellous grace to all the world, by giving His Son to pay the penalty for our sins, each of which is worthy of death.

Fr George Kuttickal MCBS: An Insightful PMI Warrior

Introduction

God, in His infinite mercy, has allowed man to participate in his work of creation through various channels. Fr George Kuttickal was used by the Lord as one such channel of mercy and compassion through the ministries of Jesus Fraternity and Friends and Birds of the Air (FBA). Fr George firmly believed that man was created to be a steward of the earth and that his work was a profound continuation of God's compassionate love. When Fr Francis Kodiyan and Fr Varghese Karippery began prison ministry at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam, Fr George was doing his MTh studies at the same seminary and was an active member of their prayer group called Jesus Fraternity. He was one of the spiritual animators of the first prayer group which paved the way to the great Prison Ministry India movement conveying the forgiving and merciful love of God to the lost, the unwanted and discarded of society.

Founding FBA

Fr George's habit was to spend long hours before the Blessed Sacrament in Eucharistic adoration. The Lord opened his eyes and ears to the cries of the mentally disturbed orphans and abandoned children wandering the streets. He wished to bring them to mainstream of society by showering them with love and affection. This prophet, chosen by God, later founded the Friends and Birds of the Air (FBA), a rehabilitation and evangelisation ministry for the marginalised in society. He also founded two religious communities for serving the abandoned ones in the street, namely

PMI Warrior



Fr Mathew Thundathil MCBS

Sons of Eucharistic Covenant (SEC) and Daughters of Eucharistic Covenant (DEC).

Contributions to Prison Ministry

The PMI members were able to see prisoners as God's children and not thieves or robbers. They had an intense thirst to proclaim the Good News of Jesus in the Manger to all the prisoners irrespective of their religion. Whenever Fr George met prisoners, he embraced them with true love and kissed their feet showing God's love for them. His love could be compared to that of the merciful love of the father when the prodigal son returned to the father's house in the parable quoted by Jesus in the Gospel. This act of compassionate love transformed many prisoners who shed tears of repentance and became renewed persons. They changed their lives for the better after coming out of prison.

Not a Visit but a Pilgrimage

For Fr George, the visit to jails was a pilgrimage. Not a simple pilgrimage but a pilgrimage to share the merciful love of God. Before the jail visits, the members of the Fraternity (3 priests and 8 brothers) prepared themselves through prayer, chain-fasting, self-sanctification and various other mortifications. They were always in prayer while travelling and also during their long waits in front of the jail to seek permission to see the prisoners. Even during the

many difficult circumstances that they faced on their visits to the jail, they would courageously use prayer as their weapon to overcome barriers. Fr George always strengthened and induced them to pray in faith during such times of struggle. The gospel verses, “Nothing will be impossible with God” (Lk 1:37) strengthened them in all such situations.

Spiritual Weapons

Fr George believed that the most powerful spiritual weapons/funds of a renewed evangelisation were Prayer Fund, Suffering Fund, Penance Fund and Self-Sanctification Fund. He also believed that the four funds, of the victorious, suffering and militant churches, offered together with the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, was a great source of divine power for speeding up the evangelisation of the world providing lasting fruits. The below-mentioned funds were powerfully used by the Jail Ministry for all their pilgrimages across Kerala.

1. Prayer Fund: Jesus spent 40 days of prayer in the desert before starting his public ministry of evangelisation. Even during his three years of public ministry, Jesus started his day with solitary talks with his Heavenly Father and ended with prayerful nights on the mountain. Whenever Fr George planned his ministry visits, he would always start with a holy hour spent before the Holy Eucharist accompanied by Holy Mass and the prayers of the Church and ended his day with another sacred hour before the Eucharistic Lord.

2. Suffering Fund: It is the passion and death of our Lord Jesus that has redeemed the world from sin and eternal death. Over

the centuries, the sufferings of the martyrs and the saints offered in the name of Jesus have continued to transform humanity. The suffering fund is collected by uniting all our sufferings with the sufferings of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

3. Penance Fund: Jesus started his public ministry only after 40 days of fasting and prayer in the Judean desert. All the great Christian mystics, throughout the centuries, liberated human souls by their penances. The Church always encourages her faithful sons and daughters to fast, abstain and take up other such acts of penance for self-sanctification, especially for the conversion of poor sinners.

4. Self-Sanctification Fund: In the Gospel of John, Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father with the words “And for their sake, I sanctify myself, so that they may also be sanctified in truth” (Jn 17:19). The grace of self-sanctification flows out from the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary and it is an infinite source of sanctification for persons, their families, the Catholic Church and the whole world.

Characteristics of Snehashramam

1) An ashram community owns nothing other than God: “God is my chosen portion and my cup” (Ps. 16:5). Even the land of the ashram should be one that is given for use alone and not as a possession. 2) An ashram community should be able to truly and sincerely pray, “Give us this day our daily bread”, which meant sharing food with the people who are hungry rather than amassing it for tomorrow’s luxury. 3) An ashram community is in incessant divine worship and prayer, proclaiming throughout the day, “Our total dependence is on God Almighty only.” 4) An ashram community resembles



PMI Warrior

a *Thumba poovu* (Leuca Indica – one of the smallest flowers), where the least, the last and the lost of society become co-pilgrims in the search for God.

After one year of incessant contemplative prayer at Thrikkunnappuzha, Fr George came to the ‘Snehashramam’ at Vettukad as the spiritual father. He involved the neighbouring families and made them the guardians taking care of the prisoners and their families. Although there was initial resistance from them, he could convince them that they were also God’s children. Gradually, they started to visit ‘Snehashramam’ and started to love its members. The members of the fraternity relied totally on God’s providence to become the Covenantal Eucharistic presence and to identify themselves with the poor Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth. They lived the “poverty and insecurity of Christ” (Mt.6:25-34) and find security, joy and contentment only in the Holy Eucharist (Jn 6:35; Ps 23:1). This total dependence on God liberated their hearts from all anxieties and the Eucharist became their only possession. It made them fully available for the service of the poorest of the poor. When the number of visitors to Snehashramam increased, Fr George conducted a one-day prayer program which slowly evolved into a five-day retreat program. Through the prayers and retreats, Snehashramam gained a new life and anointing of the Holy Spirit and the members of Snehashramam became new persons. God allowed them to forget their past life of sin and begin a new life in communion with Jesus.

Insights to PMI Volunteers

“I was in prison and you visited Me” (Mt 25:36). To visit and serve Jesus in prison through prison ministry is a wonderful work

of the Holy Spirit who started this ministry through two seminarians. “The Almighty has done great things for me; Holy is His name” (Lk 1:49). When the members of Jesus Fraternity prepared themselves spiritually, before visiting the jails, they saw miraculous conversions of prisoners. Fr George had a wonderful dream that if there was a dedicated religious congregation for those coming out from jails, with the nature and charism of Jesus Fraternity, they could reach beyond boundaries to save these souls. They would also be able to rescue families of prisoners. In a family when one of the parents is in jail, there are chances that the other members would be insulted by society. Hence, there is a possibility that their children too would fall into wrong company if they are not given proper education and guidance. It is imperative that these families should be saved from the clutches of the evil one.

Conclusion

During his 40 years of priestly life, Fr George was always faithful and committed to God and the MCBS religious community. He always chose the will of God in his daily life and was highly appreciated by religious and lay faithful alike. He showed the world that we must live the Gospel which is the true witnessing of our Lord Jesus. He lived for the upliftment of the poor and firmly believed that the church can be renewed through these ministries for the poor. The focus of the ministries founded by Fr George can be summed up from the following verse in the first book of Samuel. “He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour” (1 Sam 2:8).



**Let Our Sufferings
be an Offering**

Introduction

Human history is a story of battle between good and evil, how evil dominions seek to destroy while the God of Heaven seeks to save. This is the purpose of the Covenants, the ultimate establishment of the Catholic Faith. Jesus seeks to heal and save through His Sacraments. Jesus said to the Servant of God, Sr Josefa Menendez, “My Heart takes comfort in forgiving. I have no greater desire, no greater joy, than when I can pardon a soul.” Jesus also said to St. Faustina, “Let the greatest sinners place their trust in My mercy. They have the right before others to trust in the abyss of My mercy. Souls that make an appeal to My mercy delight Me. To such souls I grant even more graces than they ask.” Jesus bestows His abundant mercy to everyone who turns, even in the last moment as He forgave a sinner from the Cross. No one is born criminal; it is the circumstances that make one so. Researchers have found some psychological reasons such as, exploitation, injustice, disturbed childhood, etc. that pushed people to become criminal. This article runs through the conversion of James S Hughes, a death row prisoner and the role of PMI volunteers in redeeming the souls from death row.

James Hughes – Far Away from God

James S Hughes was convicted of murdering a police officer in Warren County. James had killed a sheriff’s deputy who tried to arrest him for incest. Hughes impregnated his daughter, Annabelle, and sexually abused his other daughter, Esther. He was also convicted of rape, robbery, violence, and assault. Hughes was scheduled to die on the electric chair 19 May 1944. James Hughes was a white man whom Father O’Leary, the prison Chaplain, would speak about him saying, “This man



Sr Lini Sheeja MSC

was the filthiest, most immoral person I had ever come across. His hatred for God and for everything spiritual defied description.”

Claude Newman and James Hughes

Claude Newman was the fellow prisoner, death row inmate, who was executed just 3 months before the execution of James Hughes. Claude Newman was supposed to be executed on 20 January 1944, but the Governor had given two weeks of reprieve for which he sobbed and became broken hearted, for Claude wanted to go to his Heavenly Mother. Understanding the struggles of Claude, Fr O’Leary, the prison Chaplain, who assisted in Claude’s journey with his Heavenly Mother, had a sudden inspiration and reminded Claude of a fellow prisoner, James Samuel Hughes, a white prisoner similarly on death row, who hated Claude intensely. James had led a horribly immoral life, he was a raised Catholic, but now he was a reprobate, and rejected God and all things Christian. Father O’Leary then said “Maybe Our Blessed Mother wants you to offer this denial of being with Her for his conversion. Why don’t you offer to God every moment that you are separated from your heavenly Mother for this prisoner, so that he will not be separated from God for all eternity.”

Claude Sacrifices Himself for a Fellow Prisoner

Claude thought for a moment, and then agreed, and he asked Father O’Leary to teach him the words to make the offering. Father O’Leary complied, and he later testified that from that moment on the only two people on earth who knew about this personal offering were Claude and himself, because it was a private matter between God, the Blessed Mother, Claude and



Death Row Conversion

himself. A few hours later Fr O'Leary came once again to visit Claude, and Claude said to the priest, "James hated me before, but Oh Father, how he hates me now!" To encourage him the good priest said, "Well, perhaps that's a good sign. Two weeks later, Claude was finally put to death by the electric chair on February 4, 1944

The Conversion of Prisoner James Hughes (1944)

Three months after Claude's execution, on May 19, 1944, the white man named James Hughes - the who Claude had offered his sacrifice for, was to be executed. He would not allow a priest or any clergyman in his cell. Just before his execution, the county doctor pleaded with him to at least kneel down and say the "Our Father" before the sheriff would come for him. The prisoner spat in the doctor's face. When he was strapped into the electric chair, the sheriff said to him, "If you have something to say, say it now." The condemned man started to blaspheme. All of a sudden he stopped speaking, and his eyes became fixed on the corner of the room, and his face turned to one of absolute horror. Suddenly he screamed in terror - a horrible scream that shocked everyone present. Turning to the sheriff, he then said, "Sheriff, get me a priest!" Now, Father O'Leary had been in the room because Mississippi law at that time required a clergyman to be present at executions.

The priest, however, had hidden himself behind some reporters because the condemned man had threatened to curse God if he saw a clergyman. Upon calling for a priest, Father O'Leary immediately went to the condemned man. The room was cleared of everyone else, and the priest heard the man's confession. The man said he had been a Catholic, but turned away from his religion when he was 18 because of his immoral life. He confessed all of his sins with deep repentance and intense fervor. Moments before his death, Hughes expressed faith in Christ, too. The newspaper following his execution said that he "looked calmly up at

the few present and said in clear-cut tones, 'I'm not afraid to confess the Lord Jesus Christ here tonight before man. May He have mercy on my soul, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost'".

Father, What Made Him Change His Mind?

While everyone was returning to the room, the sheriff asked the priest, "Father, what made him change his mind?" "I don't know" said Father O'Leary, "I didn't ask him." The sheriff said, "Well, I will never sleep tonight if I don't ask him." The Sheriff went to the condemned man and asked, "Son, what changed your mind?" The prisoner responded, "Remember that black man Claude - the one whom I hated so much? Well he's standing there, over in that corner. And behind him with one hand on each shoulder is the Blessed Virgin Mary. And Claude said to me, 'I offered my death in union with Christ on the Cross for your salvation. She has obtained for you this gift of seeing your place in Hell if you do not repent.' I have been shown my place in Hell, and that's why I screamed."

Conclusion

James Hughes was executed as scheduled, but the heavenly appearance of our Blessed Mother with Claude Newman and the subsequent vision of hell had instantly converted his soul in the last moments of his life. With the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Father O'Leary had taught Claude to unite himself with the suffering of Jesus by offering his own sufferings to Him, just as we the PMI volunteers can do for our brethren behind the bars. Claude's suffering helped to pay the price for James' remarkable last minute conversion and repentance. Therefore we must never underestimate the value of our suffering joined with that of Jesus Christ's, and also the power and loving intercession of Our Blessed Mother in heaven. Let all our sufferings be an offering for the death row prisoners all over the world.



Jesus Prayer

Since its very conception in 1981 PMI has been using the traditional *Jesus Prayer* - “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of Living God, have mercy on me a sinner”. This prayer is rooted in *Philokalia*, a collection of prayers used by the desert spiritual masters of mystical hesychast tradition compiled by Nicodemus the Hagiorite and Macarius of Corinth from the monastery of Vatopedi, Mount Athos.

History

We find the history of this prayer in the book *The Way of a Pilgrim* and in its second volume *The Pilgrim Continues the Way*. These books narrate the journey of a Russian mendicant pilgrim. The pilgrim travels to the Holy Land reading and meditating the holy Bible. While he was meditating on the bible teaching: “Pray constantly” (1 Thess 5,17) he doubted whether pray incessantly is possible or not. To clear his doubt, he was taught the practice of ceaseless inner prayer and communion with God.

Biblical Foundation

Jesus Prayer is rooted in Lk 18,13: “The tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner’”.

Power of the Name of Jesus

This prayer proves the power of the name of Jesus. “It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:10-12).

How to Do This Prayer

PMI volunteers have been using this prayer with breath regulations. We can also use this with our heartbeat. Through this prayer we beg the mercy of God to come upon all the sinners. Before we begin the prayer “Lord Jesus Son of Living God, have mercy on me a sinner”, we keep silence for some minutes and come to the presence of God. We come to the awareness that God is present in the atmosphere around us. We imagine that when we breathe, through the breath God comes within us and as breath spreads to all parts of the body we are being filled with the presence of God.

We are aware now that God’s presence is not only around us but also within us especially within our heart. With this consciousness, we recite first half of the *Jesus Prayer* that is “Lord Jesus Son of Living God” together with the inhaling of the breath. We recite the second half of the prayer that is “have mercy on me a sinner” together with the exhaling of the breath. After doing it hundred times or unto when we feel a very personal contact with Jesus, we leave Jesus prayer and immerse in personal dialogue with Jesus or in internal silence enjoying the presence of God in mystical union.

Fruitfulness of the Prayer

We taught *Jesus Prayer* to many prisoners. By practicing *Jesus Prayer* prisoners enjoyed the freedom within prison barriers. Many prisoners wrote that through *Jesus Prayer* they could sleep well. When we do prison pilgrimage PMI volunteers always recite *Jesus Prayer* on the way and offer them to those whom we visit. Through the constant practice of this prayer as Saint James wrote we “draw near to God”, (James 4, 8) and as Saint Paul said we become “God’s fellow workers” (1 Cor 3, 9) and slowly we grow in holiness. This will lead us to deeper union with the Lord opening our heart to God to reside within us. Remember the path to holiness is prayer. The ultimate aim of unceasing prayer, is union with God, that is, theosis – Aham Brahmasmi.

Magnanimity in the Times of Covid-19

Ms Teena Antony

An issue that has been troubling me for a while, and particularly during this time has been on how to deal with my domestic help(s). I grew up reading the Bible and studying Catechism, and one of the lessons that were instilled in me was to treat others in a manner in which I would want to be treated myself. Hence, when I grew up and was given the opportunity to have a household over which I had a modicum of control, I was in a conundrum. How do I treat the domestic help? Would I allow them to sit at the dining table with me while having tea? Would they be allowed to sit in the relatively good chairs to watch TV, when they were stay-in help? Do they eat the same food as us? How many hours of free time do they get? And more...

Some of these, I found answers to, some I am still struggling with. What I realised a bit later on was, how most of us Indians treat our domestic help is an extension of the caste relations that existed from time immemorial. While Christianity does not profess to follow a caste system, the caste-entrenched lives of Indians have marked people belonging to all religion. Until a few years ago, or even now, we ask our domestic help to use the rear entrance. The same family, if they move to a Western country, will not dare to ask the same of the maid (if they have one) there. Why do they have to use the rear entrance? They are humans like us, whom God has asked us to treat as our sisters and brothers. We eat the food prepared by them, we use utensils cleaned by them, we give our children to be

taken care of by them, but they are not fit enough to use the front entrance? Imagine being invited to your superior's house and entering by the rear entrance and being fed a different food from the rest of the people, after everyone has fed in a different room. Why do we not see the inherent double standards in this?

The more immediate reason for the writing of this article was, of course, the economic condition of many of our household helps. I have had 2-3 new people coming in and asking for jobs in the past couple of weeks. They had all been dismissed from their jobs. Many of them are the sole earners in the family, and many have spouses who have been laid off from their trades. At the beginning of the lockdown in March, the Prime Minister had asked us to take care of those that we could. Big gestures are fine – giving to an orphanage, giving staples to a poor family and so on. However, we also need to think about the people who used to make our lives easy before the lockdown. They may be getting rice, wheat, oil, clothes, etc. from somewhere or the other. These are needed. But money is important. Someone may need to buy medication, pay off a debt, remit their child's fees, buy a bulb, or a sanitary pad. Very few are going to use the money to buy alcohol or waste it on unnecessary goods. Now, even if someone did waste money on unnecessary goods, sometimes a bit of lavishness is needed to keep one's sanity in these times. The amount of money we waste on hiring an auto, instead of taking a bus, buying a particular brand of mobile phone or laptop instead of a generic brand – think of all the ways we “waste” money.

Whenever possible, those of us who can afford it, please pay the domestic help(s) in full or half. Treat them as equal human beings whenever possible. They may not be as rich as us, may not be educated, may not be intelligent. But they are still people, the same people of whom Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me” (Mt 25: 40). The Prison Ministry often uses this quote to refer to the people behind the bars, and I think we should be able to extend it to our sisters and brothers living amongst us now.

There is also a gender dimension to the problem. In India, studies point that women are often the ones whose income goes into the nurturing of the family, especially among the lower classes. But, among the middle classes, it is assumed that the man of the family is the wage earner and women spend their money on frivolous things. There are power dynamics at play within families like within institutions. A bit of financial freedom makes for a slightly more level ground. Most of the domestic help in our country are women. Their money goes into helping pay the rent, get the groceries for the month, get a little something extra for the kids to keep them happy. It may feel like we are paying them without any work being done. But in the long run, we are contributing to their well-being and helping the least. Remember the story of Lazar and the rich man? The sin of the rich man was one of omission; of not doing enough for Lazar. Here we are being given a chance to help someone, a family. We should take this opportunity to increase our bank balance in heaven by emptying a bit of our earthly bank balance.

PRAYER FOR PMI ONLINE RETREAT

13-19 September 2020

“Lord sent forth His Word and healed them and delivered from their destructions” (Ps 107,20)

Lord our loving Father, we thank and glorify you for the divine providence and heavenly protection of PMI volunteers all over India. Merciful Father, we entrust the PMI online retreat – preachers, participants, organizers, sessions, arrangements and equipments into your safe divine hands. Lord Jesus, you invited the apostles to come away with you to a lonely place to rest a while for their sanctification and empowerment. Bless us O Lord to be the lamb of the world, to be the salt of the earth, to be the light of the world, to be the ransom for many, to be the stone rejected, to be the body broken, and to be the blood shed. Anoint us O Lord, with the power of the Holy Spirit and renew us to commit ourselves to search, serve and save the lost. O Holy Spirit, fill us with your fruits, gifts and charisms, let sinners be converted, the sick be healed, the consecrated be renewed, the faithful be strengthened and souls in purgatory be liberated. Shower your deliverance power and lead us to release, reform, rehabilitate, reintegrate and redeem our brethren behind the bars. O Blessed Mary Mother of Our Lord Jesus, mediatrix of sinners, pray for the salvation of the lost and for the reawakening of our chairman, founders, coordinators and the entire PMI family. The saints who suffered and glorified the Lord in prison St John the Baptist, St Paul, St Maximillian Kolbe and all the saints and angels intercede for the anointment and sanctification of all the retreatants. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Our Father in Heaven
Hail Mary
Glory be to the Father

Diocesan Coordinators' Online Training Program 2020 APPRAISAL

Rev Dr John Ponnore

Many kudos to the organisers of PMI State/diocesan Coordinators' online training program. The training program was graced by the insightful and biblical output of Most Rev Dr Allwyn D'Silva, the chairman of PMI, who gave a solid and simple foundation for the volunteers to serve the prisoners.

The participants of this training program were really privileged and blessed because it had both the founding fathers of PMI, expertise from different parts of the country, and resource persons who were highly competent and experienced. The participants of this training program were also favoured and blessed because we had the grace of listening to Rev Fr Brian Gowans, the president of the International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care (ICPPC).

Can we think of this training program without Rev Dr Francis Kodyan MCBS? In fact, he was the brain, the heart, and the backbone of this training program. His spirit-filled vision and mission made this training program highly effective and useful. This program had the fortune of having experienced, committed and competent people from various walks of life including ex-prisoners turned Good Samaritans as resource persons. The presence of Rev Sr Adele, Rev Sr Lini, Mr Reni George, Mr Jesuraj, Rev Fr Wilfred, Rev Sr Lima and many others sharing their experiences opened up new vistas and avenues in the hearts of the trainees of PMI.

The trainees were able to witness the systematic and organised growth of PMI under the outpouring of the Holy Spirit

that marked a spiritual revolution in the Indian Church. The bomb of love that was shaped in the Jesus Fraternity at the St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor about 40 years ago seems to be exploding multilaterally in the Indian Church; not killing, but releasing, renewing and rehabilitating broken lives and families.

Let me present two suggestions:

It would be highly pastoral and catechetical to involve parishes in this venture both for the spiritual growth of the parishioners as well as for the church's mission of evangelisation. It would be more practical and effective to have smaller regions instead of large regions comprising of many states. Why not follow the 14 regions of the CBCI in this regard? The modus operandi of the PMI will show the way ahead for evangelisation in India. Perhaps one of the reasons for the failure of evangelisation in India is the lack of profound prayer. Strongly rooted in prayer, evangelisation may be more effective.

Before I conclude, let me say something personal: for me, this was a retreat too. There were plenty of personal reflections that went through me during the training. The seriousness of prayer and fasting, and exigency of the mission of Christ were re-focused in the concrete mission of PMI.

In sum, this was indeed a comprehensive, well-organised, thorough training which had the perfect blend of theory, practice, testimony, spirituality, legal aspects and counselling skills. Finally, hearty congratulations to Most Rev Dr Allwyn D'Silva, the PMI Chairman, for his guidance, Rev Dr Francis Kodyan MCBS, the PMI national coordinator, the experienced resource persons, support staff – both former & present at the national office and to all the faithful participants for successfully and effectively organising and participating in the event.

Diocesan Directors' Online Training Program 2-17 August 2020



Rowena Luis

Preliminary Session - 2 August 2020

The PMI Diocesan Directors' Online Training program began with the preliminary session began at 4 p.m. on Sunday 2nd August. Fr Francis Kodiyan and Sr Lima welcomed the participants. Fr Francis Kodiyan addressed the participants and gave general instructions.

Inaugural Session - 3 August 2020

Sr Lima, the programme coordinator, presented the day's programme for the inaugural session. The prayer was led by Sr Kokila. Fr Francis extended a warm welcome. Most Rev Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, the PMI Chairman, inaugurated the training program. Fr Varghese Karipperry, the cofounder congratulated all the dynamic participants. Fr Francis Kodiyan led the self-introduction session inviting each participant to introduce himself. Fr Pravin Fernandez, PMI Mizoram State Coordinator, proposed a vote of thanks.

PMI: General Introduction - 4 August 2020

Fr Francis Kodiyan introduced Prison Ministry India in general. He dwelt at length upon various aspects of PMI and how it is founded upon the words of Lord Jesus quoting Lk 19:10 and Jn 15:13. Sr Lini Sheeja MSC presented the topic Prison Ministry: to Regain the Lost. She started with a message that prison ministry is an opportunity and

a blessing. It is founded on 5C's viz. Christ, conviction, concern, commitment and courage.

PMI Biblical Foundations - 5 August 2020

Most Rev Dr Allwyn D'Silva shared his thoughts on the Biblical Foundations of Prison Ministry India: 1) All people can be redeemed. 2) Healing takes place in creating relationships and not by just speaking to people. Therefore, it is good to plan for a relationship founded upon prayer. 3) PMI volunteers are called to be ministers of service and not to dominate. 4) Those enslaved by evil can be set free from prison. This must be a firm belief and thus our aim must be to ensure that prisoners don't go back to crime once freed. 5) The transforming power of Jesus must be shared. Volunteers themselves need transformation in order to be agents of transformation.

PMI: Historical Introspection

Fr Varghese Karipperry, the cofounder of Prison Ministry India, and the first national coordinator, shared thoughts on Prison Ministry India: A historical Introspection. Jesus himself was imprisoned. History of the world, could be read as the history of apparently failed people. History makers are 'MAD'. Make a Desire, Make a Dream, Make a Decision, Make a Difference. He explained in depth the 3R Theory. a) Release: not outside the prisons, but an emotional, mental release within the prison. b) Renewal: a mental resetting with new values in Rehabilitation centres. c) Rehabilitate: in society with jobs, marriage and social life etc.

PMI Spirituality - 6 August 2020

Fr Francis Kodiyan presented his paper on PMI spirituality. To renew the world,

one must renew oneself and must become conscious of God and one's purpose of life. We must pray for the conversion of sinners; remain active at home and convents, ashrams, parishes and monasteries, and let them become prayer towers. The signs of PMI spirituality are enhancement in God experience, enhancement in Divine Providence, doubling of faith, joy of unity and fraternity, enhancement in optimism and stamina, greater satisfaction in searching, saving and serving the lost, the least, the last, undertaking adventurous deeds for the Lord, growth of the number of reformed prisoners, joy in inconvenience rather than convenience.

Types of Prisons and Prisoners

Sister Clara Directress of Jeevodaya Ashram shared on the topic 'Types of Prisons and Prisoners.' She explained the different kinds of prisons are, Central Jail, District Jail, Sub Jail, Women's Jail, Borstal Jail, Open Jail, Special Jail etc. India's under trial population has a disproportionate number of Muslims, Dalits and Adivasis, illiterate and locked up for more than a year.

ICCPPC - 7 August 2020

Fr Brian Gowans, the president of International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care (ICCPPC) illustrated the activities of ICCPPC. The nature of our work is to accompany prisoners. In the Philippines some years ago, he was shown a painting of the face of Christ with the crown of thorns and behind prison bars, with the regular verse from Mt 25 when I was in prison you visited me. He bought it and brought it home and only then realized that it was verse 43 when I was in prison, you DID NOT VISIT me. Those 3 words, made a complete change in him realizing that this is the expectation unmet in prisoners. So even though they may be in a building

surrounded by many, educators, chaplains and officials they may still be alone. We can still be present with them and not be seen. You may say "I want to take Jesus to them", that makes my heart sink, because in reality Jesus is already there. We don't take Jesus there, but we discover Jesus there. "It is not the healthy but the sick who need the doctor."

Prisoners Reformation - 8 August 2020

Mr Reni George and Mr Alex shared their reformatory experiences and the different stages of their transformation in life.

Prisoners' Rights and Prison Laws - 10 August 2020

Fr PD Matthew SJ, the first Catholic Priest in India to become a lawyer, is an inspirational speaker who empowered thousands through his work of legal aid. He had an opportunity to stay with a tribal group of bonded labourers in the district of Bharuch in Gujarat. The interaction with them helped him to realize the way, they were oppressed by powerful elements in their society and their cries for human rights and justice challenged him, as a priest, to respond to them in an effective way.

PMI Inside and Outside the Prison - 11 August 2020

Sr Adele Korah has been instrumental in the release of more than 500 prisoners. Sr Adele spoke about her amazing work in the prisons. She shared with us the years of her experience and knowledge and spoke about her insights and ideas. Fr Benny Pachanal, the National Assistant Coordinator in his presentation spoke about the different aspects of the work of Prison Ministry outside the prisons such as



Report

rehabilitation centres, homes for prisoners' children, educational assistance, research & documentation, volunteers training, legal cells, counselling, reconciliation and forgiveness, reconciliation with families etc.

PMI Rehabilitation Centres - 12 August 2020

Jeevodaya: Sr Fidelis gave a captivating recount of the activities of Jeevodaya, a home away from home for the unwanted women ostracised by society, caught up in the mesh of immoral trafficking, flesh trade etc. She passionately described the service rendered by Jeevodaya to its inmates by way of medical treatment, counselling, skill training, education, spiritual renewal etc.

Kolbe Home: Sr Gertrude began by stating that Kolbe Home is a heavenly haven for the children of the imprisoned; children from impoverished families, broken families etc. Kolbe home tries to develop human virtues and also provide the missing family environment by celebrating everyone's birthdays, festivals etc.

Van Thuan Home: Fr George Kalassery VC., Director of Van Thuvan Home said that Van Thuvan Home was for released prisoners and that the moving force behind RRDC was the gospel of Mathew chapter 25:36. He described the activities of the Home which is a jubilee gift of the PMI and the involvement of Fr. Francis Kodyan, our national coordinator, in the establishment of it. He concluded exhorting all to be "love bombs"

Snehashramam: Sr Beena Thekkkan, directress of Snehashramam, said the Snehashramam is the home away from home for released women prisoners. It tries to give the inmates a deep experience of God's

infinite love. It is an asylum for unwanted women, women trapped in brothels, flesh trade and those abandoned by their own families. It is there, for any woman in mortal danger. So far 554 women have enjoyed the solace of Snehashramam.

PMI: State Level Ministry - 13 August 2020

Fr Shaji Stephen, the PMI Kerala state coordinator shared at length about the working of Prison Ministry right from its inception to its steady progress over the years to the present day. He explained in detail the unit level, zonal level, diocesan level, seminary level and state level administration of PMI. He illustrated the rights and duties of the coordinators, secretaries, treasures and so on.

PMI: Diocesan Level Ministry

Mrs Veera Pinto, the secretary of PMI Bangalore Diocese gave a good presentation on the working of the PMI Diocesan level unit. With a well prepared PPT and detailed charts she presented the functioning of the diocesan PMI unit. They work in many different prisons and children's homes as well as in the medical side. They also have a year planner with programmes decided at the beginning of the year.

PMI: Parish Level Ministry

Fr Wilfred Fernandez, the Central regional coordinator presented the PMI Parish unit model. The Kolbe Knights of Poona have successfully set up 2 well-functioning parish units and with a clear understanding of the benefits of parish units to PMI, they are launching ahead with many other parishes and religious homes too. Father Wilfred explained the structure and functioning of a PMI Parish Unit, its commissioning and involvement in the diocese.



PMI: Seminary Level Ministry

Fr Joseph Mackolil, the first KCBC appointed director of Jesus Fraternity spoke about the importance of PMI during seminary formation. Inculcating the PMI spirituality from the seminary formation stage is of vital importance. Prayer services and activities flowing from them were highlighted.

Counselling Skills - 14 August 2020

Sr Lima CJ, the PMI Volunteers Training Program Coordinator spoke on Counselling Skills. She poured out all her knowledge and expertise in delivering her talk on the various body positions and what they communicate during counselling. She said what must be avoided and what is permitted and also gave the various steps in counselling.

PMI: Special Task Force Angels

Fr Francis Kodiyan introduced the extremely innovative idea of the PMI Special Task Force Angels. Just as any country has a STF to look after the needs of the territory, PMI too has created a unique STF Angels: DRC - Death Row Commandoes, TSS - Terrorists Saving Squad, MR - Mafia Redeemers, ATB - Antihuman Trafficking Brigadiers, SKR - Serial Killer Reformers, HSS - Habituals Saving Squadron, and WPL – War Prisoners' Liberators.

Prisoners' Reformation Trajectory - 15 August, 2020

Fr Francis Kodiyan presented the topic on Prisoners' Reformation Trajectory. Through PPT he explained the different stages of reformation such as self-acceptance, self-transformation, self-actualisation and self-transcendence. He illustrated the prisoners' reformation trajectory into four phases such as preformative, formative, performative and performative.

PMI Regional Coordinators

Fr Wilfred Fernandes, the PMI Central Regional Coordinator shared his view with PPT. Sr Jobina spoke on North East Regional Co-ordination and Sr Lini explained the Sothern and Northern regional coordination.

Examination and Valedictory Ceremony - 17 August, 2020

Fr Francis conducted the exam. There was much excitement about the exam in which 50 questions were to be answered. The Valedictory function began with a prayer led by Mrs Rowena Luis. Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, PMI National Coordinator welcomed all the esteemed guests and the participants and the staff to the online ceremony. The Online Training Program Appraisal was beautifully presented by Fr John Ponnore. Most Rev Dr Allwyn D'silva, PMI Chairman delivered the Presidential address. The valedictory message was read out by Fr Dr Jervis D'souza, CBCI Deputy Secretary. Bishop Allwyn released the Souvenir of the first batch of PMI Diocesan coordinators and Fr Jervis released the PMI quarterly on Reformation and Rehabilitation called Reformative Explorations. Mr Daryl released the Collage and Fr Suresh from Kohima released the new copy of Prison Voice. Bishop Allwyn handed the certificates to every member with a special blessing. Fr Rajendrakumar, PMI Interim Secretary, proposed a vote of thanks, Sr Rosily chanted the Prayer for Prisoners and Sr Lima prayed the Angelus. The group dispersed with added vigour and determination to persevere in the service of the Lord through the glorious activities of PMI.



It's Always Possible

Kiran Bedi

Fr Rajendrakumar

Title & Author

It's Always Possible authored by Dr Kiran Bedi depicts the transformation of Tihar Jail, the largest jail in Asia-Pacific. It illustrates the determination of Kiran Bedi in uniting the staff and other stakeholders to work towards the common goal of transformation of Tihar with the aid of NGOs and educational institutions. Dr Kiran Bedi, the first woman officer to become the Inspector General (IG) of Prisons, used her unique and exclusive 3C approach – “Correction through a Collective and Community-based approach” to change Tihar Prison to Tihar Ashram. Through this book, Kiran Bedi proves that Impossible means, It's always possible.

Structure

This book is divided into four sections. The first part tells us about Dr Kiran Bedi's first day in Tihar Prison. It provides a detailed account of the condition of the prisoners and prison system: the misery of prisoners, the power circles in prisons, the rampant corruption inside prisons, the food provided in prison, lack of cleanliness and the scarcity of drinking water. The second part speaks about the changes made by Dr Bedi and how she managed her corrupted staff and changed all of them while getting full support from everyone in the prison for the changes she introduced in the jail system. The third part is a visual section which includes diagrams, cartoons and such to drive home the changes and the results.

The fourth part details how long it took for the system to change. The central point is about the Prison Act of 1894 being finally replaced by that of Prison Act 1999.

The Tihar Transformation

When Dr Kiran Bedi took charge of the Tihar prison in 1993, it housed around 8000 prisoners although it was built for 2500, 90% of whom were undertrials. The prison was chockful of corruption, filthy and neglected by officials. Prisoners received less than minimal nutrition and clothing and basic rights were ignored. Within two years this prison was transformed with education classes and self-sustaining industries; prison officers began to work with self-esteem and confidence. Her first action was to go into this hell-hole of a prison and to see for her-self. She was energetic and tireless, constantly going from wing to wing, speaking directly with prisoners to see that the reforms she instituted were carried out. Everything would yield to energetic hard work, persistence, and application, and decisions and actions were based on ethical principles and building respect, and human dignity. Dr Bedi won hundreds of outside supporters with her belief in the work she was doing and soon volunteer doctors, lawyers, teachers, chefs, writers, and child-carers were regular visitors as were representatives of the media.

Vipassana Meditation

Perhaps the most amazing section in the book is the story of the introduction of Vipassana, a traditional meditation practice, in prison. It helped a person rid herself/himself of 'corrosive emotions.' Its effect was so transformative for many of those participants, resulting in the seeking of forgiveness, changes in violent attitudes and behaviour, and a sense of wellbeing.

St Teresa of Calcutta Award for the Best PMI Unit St Maximillian Kolbe Award for the Best PMI Rehabilitation Centre Venerable Van Thuan Award for the Best Reformed Prisoner

Saint Teresa of Kolkata Award

On 5 September, the Catholic Church commemorates Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata (1910 – 1997), the foundress of the Missionaries of Charity. She had a special interest in prison ministry and came to the PMI Second National Convention held in Delhi on 22 September 1995 without special invitation. Fr Varghese Karippery, the first PMI National Coordinator welcomed her. In her inaugural address, she highlighted that to serve our brethren behind the bars was something beautiful done for God. Prison ministry, a gift of God, is very close to the heart of Jesus and we will be able to do this divine ministry fruitfully with the mediation of Mother Mary. In 1990, before taking charge of the assistant directorship of Jesus Fraternity at the Pastoral Orientation Centre, Kochi, I visited Kolkata and spent two weeks with Mother Teresa visiting all her institutions and learning her methodology and spirituality in redeeming the lost, least and the last. To honour and commemorate Saint Teresa of Kolkata, PMI is introducing an award for the best PMI Unit.

Saint Maximillian Kolbe Award

Saint Maximillian Kolbe (1894-1941), the patron of PMI, was a Polish Catholic Priest and Conventual Franciscan Friar who volunteered to die in the place of a coprisoner in the death camp of Auschwitz, Poland during World War II. In 2015, PMI launched Kolbe Home in Bengaluru to take care of prisoners' children and in 2017, PMI commenced another Kolbe Home in Chennai to rehabilitate released male prisoners. To honour and to commemorate him more relevantly, PMI is introducing an

award for the best PMI rehabilitation centre/ Home for prisoners' children.

Venerable Van Thuan Award

Venerable Francis Xavier Cardinal Van Thuan (1928-2002) was detained by the Communist government of Vietnam in solitary confinement for 13 years. In prison, he wrote two books: The Road of Hope and Prayers of Hope. On 21 November 1988, when Thuan was released, he was appointed President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. On 16 September 2007, the Catholic Church began the beatification process for Thuan. On 8 November 2019, when I visited the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development to present a paper on the Initiatives and Contributions of PMI in the international conference held at the Vatican for worldwide prison chaplains, His Eminence Peter Cardinal Turkson, gave me the relic of Venerable Thuan. On 29 February 2020, PMI launched the Van Thuan Home for the rehabilitation and reintegration of released male prisoners in Bengaluru. To commemorate him in a better way, PMI is introducing an award for the best reformed, rehabilitated and reintegrated prisoner.

Sponsors for Awards

These awards consist of a certificate and cash prize of Rs. 25000/- that will be bestowed every fourth year during the PMI National Convention. The PMI national executive core team will select the award-winning unit, centre and reformed prisoner taking into consideration the norms, rules and regulations. PMI will be delighted to welcome sponsorship for these awards from our eminent well-wishers.

THE REAWAKENING, 13-19 September 2020
Awake and Arise, Christ will Shine on You (Eph 5,14)

PROGRAM

Intercessory Prayer

Mrs Rowen Luis & Team Mumbai
 Mr Chackappan, Bengaluru
 Fr George Kalassery VC
 Sr Rosily SCC
 Mr Chackappan
 Mr Raghu & Team
 Mrs Sunitha

Chain Fasting Prayer

Counselling

Healing & Inner Healing

Choir

13 September Sunday 2020

0600PM

Praise and Worship

Fr George Kalassery VC

0615

Rosary

Sr Rosily SCC

0645

General Introduction

Fr Francis Kodyian MCBS

14 September Monday 2020

1000

Praise and Worship

Fr George Kalassery VC

1015

Eucharistic Celebration

Most Rev Peter Machado

1100

Talk on God's Love

Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva

1800

Divine Mercy Prayer

Sr Gertrude SCS

1815

Talk on Jesus' Love

Fr Varghese Karippery

1900

Eucharistic Adoration

Jeevodaya Team

15 September Tuesday 2020

1000

Praise and Worship

Fr George Kalassery VC

1015

Eucharistic Celebration

Fr Francis Kodyian MCBS

1100

Talk on the Holy Spirit

Fr Wilfred Fernandes

1800

Divine Mercy Prayer

Sr Jovana SCS

1815

Talk on Most Holy Eucharist

Most Rev Tony Neeleankavil

1900

Eucharistic Adoration

Kolbe Home

16 September Wednesday 2020

1000

Praise and Worship

Fr Rajendran

1015

Eucharistic Celebration

Fr George Kalassery VC

1100

Talk on PMI Virtues

Sr Inigo SSA

1800

Divine Mercy Prayer

Sr Rosily SCC

1815

Talk on PMI Mother Mary

Justice Kurian Joseph

1900

Eucharistic Adoration

Premodaya

17 September Thursday 2020

1000

Praise and Worship

Fr George Kalassery VC

1015

Eucharistic Celebration

Fr Rajendran

1100

Talk on PMI Mission

Fr Alexander Kureekkattil

1800

Divine Mercy Prayer

Sr Clara HCM

1815

Talk on PMI Vocation

Fr Sebastian Vadakumpadan

1900

Eucharistic Adoration

Van Thuan Home

18 September Friday 2020

1000

Praise and Worship

Fr Rajendran

1015

Eucharistic Celebration

Fr Benny Pachanal CRSP

1100

Talk on Sin and Repentance

Fr Sebastian Theckanath

1800

Divine Mercy Prayer

Sr Adele Korah SCCG

1815

Talk on Confession

Rev Dr John Ponnore

1900

Eucharistic Adoration

Healing Team

19 September Saturday 2020

1000

Praise and Worship

Fr George Kalassery VC

1015

Talk on PMI Spiritual Life

Fr Francis Kodyian MCBS

1100

Talk on Renewed Life

Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva

1800

Divine Mercy Prayer

Sr Lini Sheeja MSC

1815

Adoration and Inner Healing

Inner Healing Team

1900

Eucharistic Celebration

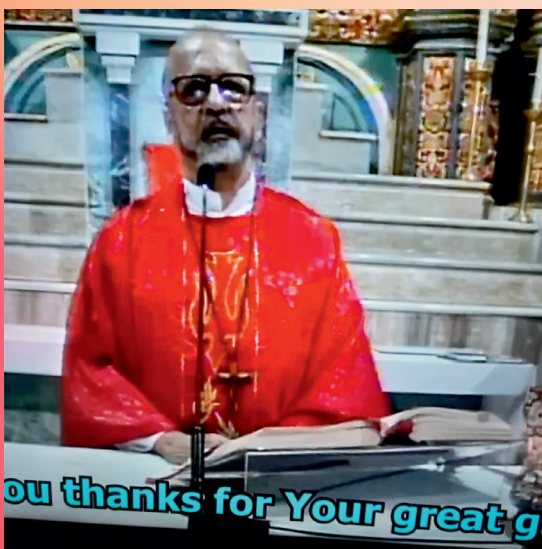
Fr Francis Kodyian MCBS



PMI State / Diocesan Coordinators' Online Training Program 2020



Hearty Congratulations to Fr Binoy CMF and Fr Shaji Stephen for Constructing a New House for a Prisoner's Family



Most Rev Dr Allwyn D'Silva, the PMI Chairman Celebrates St Maximilian Kolbe Feast on 9th August 2020.



For nothing is impossible with God.

**PMI State/Diocesan Coordinators
Online Training Program**

SOUVENIR



Prison Ministry India

PMI STATE AND DIOCESAN COORDINATORS TRAINING PROGRAM (Faculty Members and Participants)

(Bangalore - August 2020)



Collage of PMI State/Diocesan Coordinators' Online Training Program