



PRISON VOICE

December 2022

Vol. XIX

Issue 12

NATIONAL MONTHLY

₹40/-

Incarnation for the Incarcerated





Bishop Vincent Samuel's Visit to Snehashramam, Trivandrum



Carom Board Distribution to Udupi Jail



Eye Camp and Spectacles Distribution to Mangalore Prison



PMI Prayer Meeting, Lashkar, MP



PMI Volunteers Visiting Children's Home, Bangalore



PMI Volunteers Visiting Observation Home, Bangalore



Visit to District jail, Trivandrum



PMI Delhi Team Visiting Archbishop of Delhi



Medical Camp at Joherganj Subjail



Medical Camp, Observation Home, Pune



Meeting with Subjail Superintendents, Madras Myalpure and Chengalpattu



Visit to Kunjalamood Special Subjail



Visit to Shimoga Prison



Visit to Thevancode Jail



PMI National Convention Goa

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PRISON VOICE

NATIONAL MONTHLY



*“To you is born
this day in the
city of David a
Savior, who is
the Messiah, the
Lord” (Lk 2,11)*

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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.

BANK DETAILS:

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Branch : Sarjapur Road
A/C No : 0416053000001419
IFSC Code : SIBL0000518

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For Volunteer not-for-Profit Organizations Pope Francis' December Prayer Intention

The world needs volunteers and organizations committed to seeking the common good. Yes, this is a word that many today would like to erase: “commitment.” And the world needs volunteers who commit to the common good. Being a volunteer who helps others is a choice that makes us free; it opens us to other people’s needs—to the demands of justice, to the defense of the poor, to the care of creation. It means being artisans of mercy: with our hands, with our eyes, with an attentive ear, with our closeness. And being a volunteer means working with the people you serve. Not just for the people, but with the people. Working with the people. The work of volunteer not-for-profit organizations is much more effective when they collaborate with each other and with governments. By working together, however few resources they have, they do their best and make the miracle of the multiplication of hope a reality. We have a great need to multiply hope! Let us pray that volunteer non-profit and human development organizations may find people willing to commit themselves to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths of international cooperation.

Taking Care of the Brethren Behind Bars is Like Loving the Child Jesus



Bishop Jose Pulickal

On 1st December 2022 I received a letter from the CBCI Secretariat informing me that I am appointed Chairperson of Prison Ministry India Desk of the Justice, Peace and Development Commission. I could not participate in the 35th plenary assembly of the Catholic Bishops Conference held in Bangalore recently, as I was taking rest after an operation due to a fracture on my hip. In fact, when I received this appointment order I myself was like an imprisoned person in the bishop's house due to my inability to move and travel around. With all my limitations, I gladly see the will of God in taking up this responsibility. I love and like prison ministry as I have experienced its fruitfulness from its inception at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam. I fondly remember those seminary days with Bro Varghese Karipperry and Bro Francis Kodyan fully immersed and involved in prison ministry, serving the lost sheep stranded in Kerala prisons. Gratefully I recall my service at Sneathramam, the first PMI rehabilitation centre for released men prisoners in Thrissur, Kerala.

As I take up this new task, I am reminded of Pope St John XXIII's visit to Regina Coeli Prison in Rome on St Stephen's Day in 1958. Speaking to the prisoners, Pope John told them, "Now you need to rebuild your lives and you need to do one thing: eliminate the word 'despair,' and prepare yourselves to spend your lives doing good, because this is also the Father's house and you are also sons of God." When Pope John visited the prison's ward for those serving life sentences, the inmates dropped to their knees – a scene so powerful, and so

imprinted on the imagination of the world, that it's depicted on St John XXIII's Vatican monument. The inmates gave him a missal with a white leather cover, which from then on, the Pope would use every day during his private Mass celebration. After blessing the inmates, Pope John was asked to visit the various sections of the prison. His meeting with a murderer who was down on his knees waiting for him was particularly touching. The man had tears in his eyes and would not look up. The young man was unable to speak, he simply sobbed. The prisoner asked him: "Does what you said apply even to me? I have so much sin in me. Can there be forgiveness for me too?" St John XXIII, who was visibly moved, did not say anything, but just bent over and embraced him.

During this Christmas season like St John XXIII let's embrace our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters languishing behind bars. Let's love them and take care of them first of all by praying, and if possible, by visiting and doing whatever is possible for their integral human development. Taking care of prisoners is like loving the child Jesus. For Jesus said, "I was in prison and you visited me" (Mt 25,36). I wish all the PMI volunteers abundant blessings of the child Jesus in the manger who came to seek and save the lost (Lk 19,10) and request your earnest prayers for me to fulfil the newly entrusted task to feed the lost sheep for the greater glory of God.

Incarnation for the Incarcerated

13th PMI National Convention

First and foremost, I praise and thank God for the fruitfulness of the 13th PMI National Convention held at St Joseph Vaz Spiritual Renewal Centre, Old Goa, from 15-19 November 2022 with the theme, *Reform to Reintegrate*. Secondly, I place on record our indebtedness to each and every one of you for your valuable prayer, sacrifices, financial assistance and close collaboration with the various committees of the convention. May the Child Jesus in the manger abundantly bless all of you all throughout the New Year!

Bishop Allwyn D'Silva

Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva, the second chairperson of Prison Ministry India, who led us meritoriously, and motivated, inspired and showed us new ways and means to courageously march ahead after the pandemic with the spiritual trends of the third millennium, has been transferred to a separate commission of the CBCI. He has been newly appointed as the CBCI chairperson of the Ecology commission. At this juncture, on behalf of Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, the PMI National Coordinator and all the PMI volunteers, I express our immense gratitude and the highest appreciation to him for his great service to PMI. We shall continue to pray for him and for the fruitfulness of the new task entrusted to him.

Bishop Jose Pulickal

His Excellency Mar Jose Pulickal, the bishop of Kanjirappally, is the new chairman of Prison Ministry India. I welcome him most cordially and assure him of our prayers and spiritual support. He is well familiar with

EDITOR'S VIEW



Sr Amala DC
Chief Editor


the history, spirituality and methodology of PMI as he has been actively involved in this ministry from its inception at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam. Dear Bishop Jose, Hearty welcome to PMI.

Incarnation for the Incarcerated

The ultimate goal of Jesus' incarnation was to seek and save the lost (Lk 19,10) such as the incarcerated and those who live in the peripheries and fringes. During this Advent and Christmas season, let's go in haste together with Mary to the peripheries of our cities and villages in search of Jesus languishing in prisons, streets, brothels and so on. By our prayer and fasting let's strengthen our volunteers who visit prisons with Christmas programs. Our lives shall be a witness to God's love and salvation; they must show that Jesus Christ has truly been born and that His birth is a reality that has transformed us. Let's live the vision and mission of Prison Ministry India by bearing witness to our savior's birth to our brethren behind the bars.

Happy New Year

The current year 2022 was really a grace-filled and blessed year. Let's gratefully praise and thank God for all the blessings of 2022 and welcome the New Year 2023 with much hope and trust in the Lord. I wish all of you a Blessed Christmas and a prosperous new year.



Snehadeepam - lamp of love - a home for the rehabilitation and reformation of children with behavioural problems and criminal tendencies – is the brainchild of Fr Jose Pulickal. Out of the overflow of his selfless love for the lost, the least, and the last, his whole family – father, mother and only son decided to donate their whole ancestral property with the residence for the integral human development of these children. The running of the whole project was entrusted with the Sisters of Holy Spirit (SHSp). On 3 July 1994 Mar Mathew Vattakuzhy, the former Bishop of Kanjirappally blessed Snehadeepam and Sheela Thomas the then collector of Kottayam inaugurated it.

Literary Contribution

Bishop Mar Jose Pulickal as written many books. His Master's Degree thesis based on the Jesus Fraternity and Prison Ministry India Movement entitled *Jesus the Dynamic Way: Pilgrim Dynamics of Jesus Community* is a must-read book by PMI volunteers. His book named *Snehavispodanathinte Divya Spandanangal* in Malayalam Divine Heartbeats of Love Explosion is a masterpiece on Snehashramam, the first rehabilitation centre of PMI for released men prisoners at Thrissur, Kerala. His other books are *Dynamics of Jesus Community: Towards the Discipleship in Lucan Theology*, *Hrudayanilathe Mazhapythu* (Malayalam), *Puzhayude Hrudayampole* (Malayalam), and *Pilgrim Perspectives of Eastern Ecclesiology*.

Shepherd of Kanjirappally

In 2015 the Syro-Malabar Synod elected Fr Jose Pulickal as the Auxiliary Bishop of Kanjirappally Diocese. On 12 January 2016 Pope Francis confirmed this appointment. His Episcopal consecration took place on February 4, 2016 at St Dominic's Cathedral, Kanjirappally. His Eminence George Cardinal Alenchery, the Major Archbishop of the Syromalabar Church and Mar Mathew Arackal, the Bishop of Kanjirappally presented the bishop-elect



AN APOSTLE OF PMI

with the insignia of Episcopacy. On 15 January 2020 Pope Francis appointed him as the bishop of Kanjirappally and his Episcopal enthronement took place on 3 February 2020. "Salt of the Earth, and the Light of the World" is his motto.

JPDC Chairman of KCBC

In 2020 Mar Jose Pulickal was appointed as the chairman of the Commission for Justice, Peace and Development of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Conference under which comes the activities of Jesus Fraternity/ Prison Ministry India. As the JPDC Chairman he has been striving his level best to reawaken the original spirit of Jesus Fraternity among its volunteers.

JPDC Member of CBCI

The 35th plenary assembly of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) appointed Mar Jose Pulickal member of the Justice, Peace and Development Commission. Most Rev Gerald Isaac Lobo, bishop of Udupi is its president and Most Rev Jaya Rao Polimera, bishop of Eluru is its another member.

Prison Ministry India Chairperson

The 35th plenary assembly of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India appointed Mar Jose Pulickal convenor of Prison Ministry India desk under its Justice, Peace and Development commission. He is the third chairperson of PMI. Most Rev Peter Remigius was the first chairperson (2000-2018) and Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva was the second chairperson (2018-2022). Let us intensely pray for our new Chairperson so that he be filled with the fruits, gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit to fulfil his entrusted task for the greater glory of God and for the renewal, reintegration and redemption of our brethren behind bars.




THE SEVEN WONDERS OF PMI HYDERABAD UNIT

Maria Regina

While the world was pulling down all its shutters due to the Covid pandemic, the Telangana unit of Prison Ministry India bearing the regional name Vimochana, was dreaming to fly high to overcome the winds of hurdles to reach out to the prisoners behind bars. It was unimaginable as we were denied entry for the past six years, in spite of the tireless noble efforts by our Late Legend Sr. Leena Kattukaren FMM. But is there anything impossible for the power of prayer? With our teams' prayers and monthly Eucharistic Celebrations, under the leadership of Fr. Dion Isaac the Telangana State Coordinator, and Fr Mettu Johannes Reddy the Hyderabad Unit Coordinator, miracles started happening one after the other! Thanks to our National Coordinator and the National prayer warriors and task forces, we are able to present here the seven wonders that happened at Hyderabad.

Wonder No. 1

The Lord answered our prayers by giving us an idea through our Ex-Officio Mr M.D Vincent to distribute Hygiene kits. Fr Dion Isaac, Mrs Brigith, Miss Regina and Mr MD Vincent approached the DIG Sri Murali Babu Garu who was very kind enough to take our appeal letter to the IG and efficiently manage to get us the required permission to distribute Hygiene kits in all jails. We managed to distribute Hygiene kits to girls juvenile jail [50] boys Juvenile Jail [100] Chenchelagud Womens Jail [300], Chenchela Guda men's Jail [1600] Cherla



Pally Central jail [2400] and Cherlapally Open Air Jail [200]. Though it was a semi entry only as we were permitted up to the main gate/superintendent's office only, it was a breakthrough in the six-year-old silence and the long standing "No" to touch the prison gates.

Wonder No. 2


At the second place, with the approval of our two coordinators and executive body, our ex-officio could rope in the three-time Nandi award winner, actor, writer, poet, Director, producer and a spiritual celebrity, Sri. Thankella Bharani garu to give a talk to the prisoners. After a prolonged discussion, the popular actor accepted it, stunning everybody, to come over to give a talk on the subject "Crime-free Life" purely on a friendly basis only.

Wonder No.3

Again our Executive members approached the DIG requesting him to permit a motivational talk in all the four Major prisons. The DIG was more than happy to give instant oral permission and later a written permission too, to give motivational talk in all jails. This time apart from the speaker, four members from Vimochana were permitted to enter the prisons. We Praise and thank God for this wonder in the current journey of Telangana unit of PMI.

Wonder No.4

Since the celebrity actor Mr T Bharani could spare only one day for us, that is 14th August, we arranged the visits to all the 4 jails on the same day; morning 9 to 12 two jails at Chenchelaguda and two jails at Cherlapalli from 2pm to 5 pm. Then the DIG asked



us where we were going to have lunch. Our State Coordinator Fr. Dion answered that we will have it at a Parish close to Cherlapaaly. Then the DIG was so kind to us that he invited us to be his guests and have an official lunch in the Superintendent's Office at Chrenchelaguda Jail. Oh my God! It was a mighty Royal lunch which the Lord arranged for us, as stated in the Scriptures that he would arrange a banquet!!

Wonder No.5

Finally Mr Bharani came exactly by 9 am and he interacted with the big gathering of thrilled prisoners on the subject, 'kroda, lobha, moha, mada macharyalu' which affect each and every person. He added: "It is a matter of controlling them, and not allowing them to rule over us. How do we do so? Believe me, any number of speeches by people like me or world-famous orators like Swamy Vivekananda won't bring any change of heart in you. If you really want an internal change, then you have to silently meditate. Make a journey calmly into yourself internally. Then, you will discover a methodology for yourself to control all your emotions, evil habits and evil actions etc." So, thus though we didn't play the role of speaking directly to the prisoners, the latter got a good message. The huge gathering of prisoners got the message of the Lord through the celebrity to mend their ways in a most effective manner.

Wonder No.6

The Prison authorities, including all the Superintendents and other Jailors, along with the DIG were not only present but honored and felicitated our State and unit coordinators with shawls and bouquets




THE SEVEN WONDERS

in both men's and women's Jail. They also presented gifts to all the seven members of Vimochana. From our side we too felicitated the authorities and distributed sweets to all the inmates.

Wonder No.7

After the second meeting at the Women's Central jail, the DIG, Most Respected Murali Babu Garu said, "Look at Vimochana, a Christian organization, inviting a Hindu to speak to you all! That is a great example of real National Integration! This is what we need! When you all go out, forget all the differences and live unitedly as one Nation! These amazing words coming from our Most Respected DIG Murali Babu Garu, in favor of Vimochana was the best wonder of the Lord to the humble PMI. What more do we need except praise and thanks to the Lord God Almighty! This reminds us of the golden words of Dr Anil D'Almeida SJ, "There is an urgent need to promote "friendship" among the different religious traditions of the nation... Friendship among religions will lead to the welfare of all beings [sarva dharma sakhya sarva jiva sukham]. Rabindranath Tagore in his poem prayed aloud for the nation by stating, "Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls... Let my country awake" Let this dream come true and may our nation be awakened and enlightened, breaking all boundaries of hatred and grow in Bandhuta among religions, which is the way forward for our Nation, for mutual enrichment." All glory be to our Loving Master Jesus Christ the Savior of all. Amen.




**PRISON MINISTRY INDIA
URGES GOVERNMENT AND
CHURCH TO EASE THE
SUFFERING OF PRISONERS AND
THEIR FAMILIES**

Anto Akkara

The 13th convention of the Prison Ministry India (PMI) which drew unprecedented participation of over 450 delegates have urged the government and the church to adopt concrete measures to ease the hardship of those behind bars, their families and rehabilitation of the released. “Incarceration must give every opportunity for prisoners to accept their own guilt, acknowledge their need for repentance and reformation. It is the duty of the government to make sure that prisoners enjoy the fundamental and basic human rights,” said the ‘Mission Statement’ of the PMI convention held at St Joseph Vaz Renewal Centre in Goa during Nov 15-19. Pinpointing ‘serious problems to be remedied’ PMI urged the government to take “immediate action” to end overcrowding, corruption, delay in trial, neglect of health and hygiene, and address the large percentage of undertrials in prisons.


The PMI also emphasized the need for steps like facilitating “visits by Spouses and Family Members, Classification of Prisoners, Adequate and Qualified Prison Staff, Scientific, Systematic and Regular Training of Prison Staff... including special consideration to women prisoners especially the pregnant and mothers with children.” Quoting Pope Francis, the PMI that has over 8,000 volunteers working in over 1300



jails across India challenged the church with the question: “If these brothers and sisters have already paid for the evil committed, why is a new social punishment put on their shoulders by rejection and indifference?”

While targeting to increase the number of volunteers by 5,000, the PMI urged the bishops, dioceses and parishes “to launch many more schemes for released prisoners such as employment, housing, healthcare, marriage, shelter homes and homes for prisoners’ children.” “Serving prisoners is serving suffering Christ. Pope has shown the path for us,” Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao, Patriarch of Goa, said in his presidential address to the assembly on Nov 16, setting tone for the delegates to put before the assembly their aspirations and hurdles they face in their unique service to those behind bars and their families. Calling for reintegrating released prisoners into the society, Cardinal Ferrao pointed out how Pope Francis went to jail and kissed the feet of the prisoners on Holy Thursday. “It is an unforgettable lesson in courage and Christian compassion. We have the duty to reach out to those behind bars,” exhorted Cardinal Ferrao.

Bishop Alwyn D’Silva, chairperson of CBCI desk for the Prison Ministry India reminded the convention the challenges lying before them: 1,306 jails in the country are ‘over-crowded with an occupancy rate of 130%’ and “for every ten prisoners, only two have been convicted” (with the rest being undertrials). “Let us not forget that repentance and reconciliation are acts of grace and spiritual warfare for overcoming our worldly challenges and struggles,” reminded bishop D’Silva calling



For strengthening the Masses, Eucharistic adorations, intercessory prayers, rosaries and Divine Mercy chaplets for fruitfulness of our PMI ventures.”

As part of that, PMI has started 24-hour ‘intercessory invocation’ for those languishing in jails and their family members from its headquarters in Bangalore. “Prison Ministry is not just social service. It is rooted in prayer and divine intervention,” noted Father Francis Kodiyan MCBS who co-founded the Prison Ministry India with Fr Varghese Kariperry in 1981 when they were in the Vadavathoor seminary at Kottayam in Kerala.

While PMI now runs 20 rehabilitation centres for released prisoners and homes for children of prisoners, PMI assembly decided to get 5,000 new volunteers to boost its service in states with less volunteers and also provide for rehabilitation of released prisoners with financial support. Apart from that, the Goa assembly has decided to open 10 new homes for released prisoners and 10 special homes for trafficked girls and provide 5,000 scholarships for children of prisoners according to their needs.

“She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.”

(Lk 2,7).



PMI Andhra Pradesh: Report

Fr Pasala Lahasthaya

Introduction

The basic reason of putting a criminal behind bars is for correctional purpose so that he/she can reintegrate and rehabilitate with society after the completion of sentence. A person commits a crime basically for four reasons: lack of stable economic condition, unstable family relations, lack of stable legal employment and addiction. A person will only commit a crime if more than one of the above-mentioned reasons is there which compel the person to commit the crime. We, the State Coordinator, Diocesan Coordinators, Animators, volunteers, well-wishers and benefactors, are constantly in contact with prisoners and victims and their families for making a better society. It is really wonderful to acknowledge with gratitude the support of the bishops, priests, sisters, brothers, lay persons and congregations, other organizations and institutions of the church to PMI. We may not be able to do big things in prisons but we hope we can help the prisoners to continue their lives meaningfully in the prisons. We have received the empathy of all the people whom we have met during our prison ministry journey in order to put together the bits and pieces of the lives of the incarcerated prisoners. Every prisoner, even those who are condemned to death, has his or her human right to live. Let us also accomplish our duty of being ministers of the Love of God to the people behind the bars.

Hand Book of Prison Department: The Government of Andhra Pradesh printed and distributed the *Hand Book* of Prison Department-2022. We could get one copy of the *Hand Book* to have the latest information and knowledge of prisons and officials; their names and mobile numbers. *Cherasala Swaram:* *Cherasala Swaram* is a digital magazine initiated by the AP State Coordinator, approved by Most Rev. Dr. Anthony Poola, Archbishop of Hyderabad then Bishop of Kurnool, Chairman – Bishop of PMI and TCBC. This was intended to be a monthly but now it is being run according to the current financial status. This digital magazine was appreciated by the Bishops, Priests, Religious, Lay Faithful and the Prison Department.

Burning Bush – Eucharistic Adorations: On All First Fridays, the AP State Coordinator participated online the Burning Bush – Eucharistic Adorations with great piety and devotion. These Eucharistic Adorations are being conducted from PMI National Office by Rev. Fr. Francis Kodyan, co-founder cum national coordinator. **Holy Rosary:** The AP State coordinator requested all the diocesan coordinators, local coordinators and volunteers to offer Personal or Family Rosary daily throughout the month of May for the Prisoners and Released prisoners, for their conversion to enable them forgive their offenders.

Prison Ministry Sunday: Prison Ministry Sunday was celebrated on 14th August 2022 in Andhra Pradesh State. The Mass - sheets were distributed about the Preferential Option for the Prisoners and Released Prisoners. **Online Programs and Meetings:** Most of the online programs and Meetings, Book – Release, Ex-Prisoners Experience, recollections, online PMI retreats are attended and participated actively and dynamically by the AP State Coordinator, conducted from the PMI National Office by the initiatives of Fr. Francis Kodyan, co-founder cum national coordinator. **Monthly Meetings:** In fact, all the dioceses in Andhra Pradesh State had regular monthly meetings comprising of Prison Area Parish Priests, religious and volunteers, to invigorate and encourage one another. **WhatsApp:** We use WhatsApp to motivate coordinators, animators, volunteers, and update them for ease of Coordination in the state. On this basis we created WhatsApp group under the title: Andhra Prison Ministry. Through which we shared news, views, updates, etc. We forward about forthcoming programs one month ahead, well in advance.

Provision Distribution: After identifying Prisoners' families and released prisoners' families, the Diocesan Coordinators distributed provisions and medical kits with the local contributions. The Prisoners' families and released prisoners' families expressed their gratitude for the help received. **Weekly Rosary:** Diocesan coordinators in their respective dioceses along with the local coordinators, religious, volunteers and well-wishers conduct weekly Rosary for the good of the Prisoners and their families. This weekly Rosary is keeping them united and strengthened to pray the Rosary together. **Monthly Adorations:** Diocesan Coordinators conduct Monthly Adorations in their respective dioceses. During Eucharistic

adorations, Local coordinators, religious, volunteers and well-wishers by themselves sing, preach, intercede, etc. Monthly Adorations keep them praying for Prisoners, released prisoners, prison officials and their families. **Meet of Deputy Secretary:** Being the State Coordinator, I met twice the TCBC Deputy Secretary in the month of June and July regarding the PMI-AP Registration of Documents, Bifurcation of the Bank Balance of the combined account of PMI of AP & TS and about the arrears of AP – PMI. **Pilgrimage to Prisons:** As part of my European Pilgrimage, I visited the Prisons of St. Maximilian Kolbe in Poland, St. Peter the Apostle, St. Paul the Apostle in Rome and various prisons of saints in Europe. It was a cherishing and moving moment when I visited the prison and the tomb of each saint. **Intention of the Pope:** The Intention of the Pope for the Month of September 2022 has been communicated and shared with the members, volunteers, animators, well-wishers, coordinators and the faithful to pray for the Abolition of Death Penalty in every country.

AP State - Executive Committee

State Coordinator	Fr Pasala Lahastraya	Kurnool	9849734425
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Secretary	Mrs Yeruva Jospinamma	Guntur	7207121387
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Executive Member	Mr G. Ravi	Visakhapatnam	9573573065
Executive Member	Mrs Meesala Swarnalatha	Visakhapatnam	8096090539
Executive Member	Sr Jakkula Rekha Priya	Vijayawada	7013388196
Moderator	Mr Korukonda Ashok	Vijayawada	7600041045

AP State - Diocesan Coordinators

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	Sr. Mary Kommareddy JMJ	9963397075
Kadapa	Fr. J. Sudhakar O'dem	9182179695
Kurnool	Fr. S. Bhaskar	8074109286



PMI AP REPORT

Nellore	Fr. Ch. Bhaskar	670819798
Srikakulam	Fr. P. Jaipaul	9494755618
Vijayawada	Fr. Pasala Thomas	9849044585
Visakhapatnam	Fr. Y. Jacob MSFS	7382481526

Challenges

Because of the diplomacy of the central government and the present scenario, entry into the prisons have become vague and impossible. Still Under the mask of various variants of Corona virus, entries into Andhra Prisons have been completely blocked. The Prison Department of Andhra Pradesh Government is laying scrupulous and meticulous rules and varying them from time to time. Prison Ministry – Inside Prisons is unwelcome by the Prison Department of Andhra Pradesh. For lack of annual budgets and financial resources, continuation of *Cherasala Swaram* and activities have become vague and difficult.

Humble Requests

Request for the Allotment of PMI Office with all infrastructure for its activities. Request for Appointment of the District Coordinators to be in touch with District Prison Officials like Superintendent of Prisons (SP), Deputy Superintendent of Prisons (DSP), etc. Prison Department of Andhra Pradesh Government seems to give permission district wise and Prison Area wise but not for the Entire State. Request for Appointment of Cathedral, Co-cathedral Parish Priests, School Correspondents and Principals to be / could be Diocesan or District Coordinators because Pious Associations like Vincent de Paul, Legion of Mary, Sodality, Youth and Teachers to be volunteers and local benefactors. Request for Appointment of Prison Area Parish Priests (PAP) to be Local Coordinators (LC) for the smooth running of the ministry and to be in touch with Local Prison Officials like Jailers, Sub-Jailers, and so on. Parish Priests in the Prison Area could be Local Coordinators. And also, Local Area Parish Priests (PAP) could make faithful catechists to be volunteers. Request Diocesan CRI-Units for Prison Pilgrimages at least three times in a year like Christmas, Holy Week and Prison Sunday, etc. Request for freedom to all the diocesan / district coordinators to raise local contributions from Parishes, religious, educational institutions, etc. Request for the collection in all Parishes, institutions and shrines on Prison Sunday or any other Sunday according to the convenience of the Parish Priests and Rectors. Request to send Prison Sunday Collections: 25% to National Office, 25% to State/Regional Office and 50% to the Diocesan Coordinator for the Smooth running of Prison Ministry.

Blessed Alicja Maria Jadwiga Kotowska: A Soldier of the Lord



Sr Lini Sheeja MSC

“I desire to live and die for Christ, loving Him above all, since He is the highest Love, Lord God and above all” are the inspiring words of Blessed Alicja whose life, arrest, imprisonment and execution are portrayed in this article. Alicja Jadwiga Kotowska who was martyred at the age of 39, was a Polish religious sister and head of the Resurrectionist convent in Wejherowo between 1934 and 1939. She is a martyr killed by the Germans in 1939 in the Mass murders in Piaśnica. Blessed Alice was born in Warsaw on November 20, 1899 as the second of eight children of Jan Kotowski and Zofia (Barka) Kotowska. The family was a devout Roman Catholic and Jan was an organist. Nuns in Warsaw educated our saint.

Solace to the Wounded Soldiers

After the outbreak of the war in 1918 she became a member of the Organized Polish Army where she found occasions to give of herself for the good of her Country. It was during that year that she began studies in medicine at the University of Warsaw. With the restoration of Polish independence in 1919, Kotowska, a nursing student, served her new country proudly. As a Red Cross nurse she used her knowledge to bring solace to the wounded soldiers during the invasion of the Bolsheviks in 1920. For her dedication she was awarded the medal of “Poland Restored.”

A Soldier in God’s Vineyard

In 1922 before completing her medical studies, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Resurrection. In her request for acceptance, she wrote: “I desire to live and die for Christ, for He is the Greatest Love, Lord, God and my All.” Kotowska joined the Congregation of the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord at Kety, near Bielsko, in 1922. She had met some Resurrection Sisters while she was in nursing school. Kotowska, during her third year of nursing school, became Sister Alicja. She made her first vows in 1924, returned to Warsaw, studied mathematics and natural sciences at the university, made her perpetual vows (1928), and defended her Master’s thesis in chemistry (1929).

Longing for Suffering

Kotowska worked as a teacher and a nurse for most of the rest of her life. She taught chemistry in Zoliborz, was a school nurse, and eventually administered the school. In 1934, Kotowska became the director of a girls’ boarding school in Wejherowo. She did this well, and won recognition for doing so. And it was at this time she noted a significant reflection, “I have not yet experienced the happiness of suffering for God. ... The only thing worthy in life is Suffering for the love of God! I know



BLESSED ALICJA MARIA

even this desire is a grace. I know that I myself fear suffering and at all costs want to avoid it, but I believe in the power of Jesus. I believe that He Himself merited the necessary power for us. I believe that He wants this from me". She spent hours together before the Blessed Sacrament and promoted Eucharistic devotion among both her fellow nuns and her students. Sr Alicja made herself loved by her sisters and all wanted to be close to her for her humility, sympathy and dedication to others.

Arrest of Sr Alicja

On 24 October 1939, two Gestapo soldiers came to the convent of the Sisters in Wejherowo with orders to arrest Sister Alicja. She had been warned a few days previously about the possibility of arrest. She could have escaped but did not do so because she would not save herself at the cost of being an instrument of suffering for others. She did not want to leave the sisters in the local community of which she was the superior. As soon as she was arrested, she knew that she had been betrayed by the school custodian. The last words which the sisters heard at the time of her arrest, were the evangelical words of forgiveness: *I forgive Francis for everything.*

Life as Prisoner

She was taken to the prison in Wejherowo, and for several days people tried to release her. But helpless! In the prison, she just asked for her favourite cross and holding it tightly she often prayed her rosary for a long time. On 11 November 1939, trucks

drove into the prison yard. A considerable group of prisoners were dragged out of the cells and among them was Sr Alicja. Then by pushing them, they were forced into the trucks. Sr Alicja was the last to enter into the trucks. Sr Alicja, putting her arm around a group of frightened Jewish children who were in the deportation group, encouraged them telling, "Don't be afraid, God is waiting for us in heaven".

Execution

She was most likely shot on the same day on national day of the republic of Poland in the forest of Piasnica, 10 kilometres from Wejherowo, during a great execution in which 314 victims were killed. In 1944, most of the bodies were dug up and burned by the Germans. Sr Alicja's body was never to be found. Only after the war had ended, in Piasnica, in tomb number seven, a large black rosary was found. This was the very rosary that Sr Alicja had held tightly in her hands during her imprisonment. This was the only belonging of Sr Alicja ever found.

One more Saint from Prison

Pope Pius XII, hearing the death of Sr Alicja said, "You have a martyr. This is a great glory and consolation for the Congregation. Can there be any greater happiness than to lay down your life for the faith, for the Church and for Christ the Lord?" Blessed Alicja's beatification came 100 years after her birth and sixty years after her martyrdom. Their liturgical feast day is 12 June, as the 108 martyrs were beatified on 13 June 1999 by Pope John Paul II in Warsaw, Poland.




End the Death Penalty: Choose Life

Dominique Greiner¹

The World Day Against the Death Penalty has been held each year on October 10 for the last two decades. It is meant to encourage and strengthen the commitment of those who are fighting for the end of capital punishment in countries where the death penalty is still legal. It also meant to help raise awareness among political leaders and in public opinion about the deplorable conditions in which people are held in prison while awaiting execution. This year's 20th World Day specifically highlights the link between the death penalty and torture. "The torture and ill-treatment experienced during the long death penalty journey is recurrent and varied," notes the latest issue of *Humains*, the French-language magazine of the Action of Christians Against Torture and the Death Penalty (ACAT). The periodical then lists these various ways people on death row suffer cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment: "Physical and psychological torture during interrogation to coerce confessions; death row syndrome, which occurs while awaiting the verdict and execution date, contributing to a person's psychological decline; harsh living conditions on death row; the anguish of anticipating execution once the date has been set; methods of execution and the suffering experienced by relatives.

"The report that this "Christian magazine for human rights" devotes to the death



penalty and torture includes a beautiful meditation by Anne Faisandier, a Protestant theologian and pastor in the southern French city of Marseilles. "The death penalty pronounced on a person makes him or her a dead man walking on borrowed time, instead of a living person in the making," she emphasizes. In light of what Jesus underwent, she seriously questions "this incredible power that a human society assumes in taking someone's life". It is a power that deprives the one condemned to die from being able to respond to God's call by making the choice for life (Deuteronomy, 30, 19-20). These words shed light on Pope Francis' decision in the summer of 2018 to reformulate Church's official teaching on the death penalty.

Article 2267 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that 'the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person', and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide". Making a commitment to abolish the death penalty is thus an act of hope. First of all, the hope that even the worst criminals are able to make amends and choose life. But also that we can all find a way to forgive and show empathy even towards our executioners.

**"Glory to God in the highest
heaven, and on earth peace
among those whom he favors!"**

(Lk 2,14).

¹ Courtesy to: <https://international.la-croix.com/news/editorials/end-the-death-penalty-choose-life/16718>



PRISON MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS FIND COMMON LANGUAGE WITH THOSE BEHIND BARS¹

Tom Hoffarth

Detention Ministry


They are known as chaplains. They are not the priests, deacons, or women religious who typically administer sacraments to the incarcerated. Instead, they are the laymen and laywomen who make up the Archdiocese of Los Angeles' Office of Restorative Justice's volunteer network across Southern California. Some visit inmates in jails and prisons, while others dedicate their time to ministering to the relatives they've left behind. Still others offer what the program calls "help, hope and healing" to those affected by crime. Originally known as the Detention Ministry, the office has refocused its methods since its founding almost 50 years ago, emphasizing the power of listening, accountability and transformation through a variety of self-reflection programs. This is a cathartic process to share a common language with those behind bars, forging a communal feeling as they work together to find Christ's healing strength.

Bob Slater

Bob Slater, 72, thrived as a worker's compensation personal injury attorney in the San Fernando Valley for nearly 50 years, a practice that saw his office handling as many as 500 cases at one point. His wife, Clorinda,

was a cradle Catholic and native of Peru who had come to the U.S. some 40 years ago to study marine biology. After raising their three children, she eventually went back to school to become a legal interpreter. They have been married for 38 years and now have two grandchildren. Born to Jewish parents in New York but never feeling spiritually connected, Bob decided to go through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults about 25 years ago. Then, five years ago, his faith was put to the test. In 2017, an Orange County district attorney included Bob in a sweeping insurance fraud indictment. A felony conspiracy charge linked him with nine other lawyers in a scheme to pay for referrals, violating a section of the labour code. "It knocked my breath out," Bob told Angelus News, the online news outlet of the Los Angeles Archdiocese. "It was devastating." Bob maintains he was unaware that he was doing anything illegal. Yet in April 2021, Bob was convicted on 22 counts. Nine months later came his sentencing hearing. Character witnesses included Father Jarlath Cunnane, then the pastor at Our Lady of Grace Parish. The district attorney asked for a 10-year prison sentence. His appellate attorney asked for probation. "I was expecting to go to prison, because I knew, as a lawyer, the DA was going to make an example out of me," said Bob. "But somehow, it was a miracle that the judge only gave me probation." With that came 500 hours of community service and six months of home detention. While the case is on appeal, Bob had his license suspended. His lawyer asked the judge if Bob could begin doing community service

¹ *Catholic News Update Asia*, Vol: XVI - Issue: 036 – September 13, 2022



offering to work in the archdiocese's Office of Restorative Justice. The judge agreed.

Prison Outreach

The Slaters knew about the office through a fellow parishioner who made annual parish donation appeals for the ministry. "I had heard his stories and said to myself: This guy trudges off to prison with Bibles? Who does this?" said Bob. "We always feel sorry for those who are poor or homeless, but as far as prisoners - they are the 'least of us,' right?" For now, Bob is not allowed to go into jails for personal visits while his case is pending. So he has begun helping to develop programs to help inmates. Clorinda's prison outreach, meanwhile, has begun with online training sessions and obtaining necessary clearance to begin ministering to female inmates. Bob realizes every day how close he could have become one of the inmates that other chaplains were coming to visit. "I still believe in our justice system," Bob said. "I read their letters - I'm in jail for something I didn't do. I understand that. I think of that all the time." Martin Baeza Martinez, 57, volunteered for 11 years as a chaplain at the Pitchess Detention Center's North Facility in Castaic before accepting a full-time position three years ago with the archdiocesan Office of Restorative Justice. A parishioner with his wife, Rosa, at St. John Eudes Church in Chatsworth, Martin emigrated from Mexico in 1984 and was navigating a successful high-level manufacturing job. Soon, he careened through alcoholism, drugs, an extramarital affair and getting laid off from his job. One morning he wandered down the street from his house and saw a group of men going into the restaurant. As he approached the



COMMON LANGUAGE BEHIND BARS

door, he missed a step and stumbled, so he was now down on his knees. He looked up to see the men sitting around a table.

Alcoholics Anonymous

Martin had literally stumbled into an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. "I looked up and said, Lord, if this is where you are sending me, I surrender," he said, and stayed at the meeting. Gonzalo De Vivero, who was at that gathering, works with the archdiocesan Office of Restorative Justice. He became Martin's AA sponsor and eventually pointed him to volunteering with the prison ministry. "I remember I said in Spanish, 'Esta loco!'" ("He's crazy!") said Martin, who had been trying to avoid jail and once had a DUI at a time he was trying to kill himself and end his pain. Soon, he was at the North County Correctional Facility, facing a ward of some of the toughest prison inmates in the state. "I'll tell you, I was scared at first, but when I entered, the volunteers were welcoming," said Martin. Martin spoke with gratitude recounting the mended relationships with his wife, Rosa, and his two adult daughters. He has returned as the Spanish music coordinator at his parish. He and Rosa serve on the international board as Spanish-language coordinators for the marriage healing Retrouvaille program. Rosa is also involved in answering letters from inmates through the "Finding the Way in Jail" program. Martin continues his trips four days a week to the Castaic facility with other volunteers.



Reform to Reintegrate

Fr Alexander Ekka, SJ

13th PMI National Convention

More than 600 volunteers including office bearers, laity, priests and nuns from all over India participated in the 13th national convention scheduled from 15-19 November, 2022 at St. Joseph Vaz Spiritual Renewal Center, Old Goa under the theme **“Reform to Reintegrate”**. Most Rev Allwyn D’Silva, PMI chairperson, Fr Francis Kodyan, PMI national coordinator, His Eminence Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrao, Archbishop of Goa and Daman, honorable Desmond D’Costa, former district judge and member of Human Right Commission, Goa, Most Rev Gerald Almeida, president JPD commission CBCI, Most Rev Peter Remigius, PMI former chairperson, Sr Adele SCCG, Fr Alexander Kureekkattil, CMF, Sr Inigo Joachim SSA, former superior general, Mr Anto Akkara, freelance journalist, Fr Pious D’Souza, Sr Lucy Kurian, Fr Anil Joel Prasad, Dr Antony Sebastian O.Pream, Prof Ravi Varma, former advocate general, Karnataka, Fr Maverick Fernandes, director, Caritas graced the occasion as resource persons.

Morning prayer, night prayer, adoration, Holy Eucharist, keynote address, cultural programs, prize distribution, book release, state report reading, group discussion, panel discussions, question-answers, regional meeting, general body meetings, vision and mission statement were all meticulously arranged in which participants actively participated. The convention was like PMI

family gathering where members shared their success stories, joys and sorrows, challenges, opportunities, mutual support, dreams for the PMI mission. Common of the volunteers of all the states were: 1) concern for the prisoners and their families; 2) release of inmates; 3) rehabilitation of the released prisoners and their families; 4) counseling of the inmates and their family members; 5) education of children of the inmates; and 6) value education for the prevention of crime and anti-social elements.

Under the theme of **“Reform to Reintegrate”** participants decided to take up counseling, rehabilitation, reformation, reintegration as tools to bring about renewal, meaning in life, hope, optimism, self-esteem, forgiveness, repentance, reconciliation, liberation, motivational change, attitudinal change, transformation in the life of inmates, individuals, volunteers and government and non-government officials. Delicious tongue savoring Goan menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner, cruise evening, sightseeing were the unforgettable memories of the convention for all the participants to cherish. It is to be noted that PMI started in the year 1981 and was officially recognized and incorporated under the Justice, Peace and Development Commission by CBCI on August 24, 2000 and till date PMI has 8000 volunteers serving 1306 prisons with 25 rehabilitation centers. PMI has been structurally divided into 4 Regions with different States coming under these Regions. Its Biblical basis is “I was in prison and you visited me.” (Mt 25, 36).



THE CRIB: A PORTRAYAL OF THE INCARNATION

Br Pradeep Anthony L OFM

Francis Assisi's First Crib

The historical account we have of St Francis' nativity scene comes from the biography of *The Life of St. Francis of Assisi* by St Bonaventure. St Francis of Assisi, has been credited with enacting the first scene of the nativity in 1223 at Greccio. St Bonaventure remarks in his writings that St Francis made the memory of the birth of Jesus Christ come alive dramatically in the minds of all the people. This scene was the outcome of his deep devotion to the incarnation. He obtained permission from Pope Honorius III during that time to have this enacted. St Francis made ready a manger; he brought there hay, an ox and an ass. The people around were called together and nature sang praises to God. St Francis was filled with joy and love for the Lord and started looking at the Crib. Solemn Masses were celebrated over the manger and St Francis chanted the Holy Gospel. Then he preached to the people gathered, called the Baby Jesus the child of Bethlehem. Many people acknowledged to have seen St Francis embracing Baby Jesus with both his hands. John of Greccio, an ex-army man, was a witness to this miracle. St Francis' life itself was undeniably a life of inspiration for many not only then but even now. After this incident many revived their sluggish faith to real faith in Christ. It was claimed that even the hay at the manger was instrumental in curing many people's diseases.



God's Unsurpassable Love

For St Francis of Assisi the birth of Christ was an incomprehensible event in history. The humility of God was shown in his incarnation. The mystery of the incarnation of God becoming man is a marvelous revelation of God about his love for humankind. In John 1:14 it is mentioned, "The Word became flesh and lived among us". Perhaps this mystery urged St Francis to take up the adventure of seeking God in a more adventurous manner. He used to take up fasting and prayer from 1st November to 24th December and in fact in the 3rd chapter of the Later Rule of St. Francis there is an invitation given for all the Franciscans to take up this fasting and prayer voluntarily. The cry of St Francis once upon a time around the city that "Love is not loved," still fits into the context in which we live presently. It is very much ironical that people love only the gifts, but forget their Giver who with His abundance of love bestows upon the human race everything, including His only Son (Jn 3:16).

Know your God

Rejection of God has been happening since the days of creation. The first parents wanted to become God but without God, they considered themselves more than what they were, but they were really not knowing what they were doing as seen in the prayer of Jesus at the Cross. (Gen 3:4-5, Lk 23:34)

The theme of the national convention was to 'reform to reintegrate,' calling us to have the right concept of God. As the saying goes: "As we believe, we act." Therefore, let us know the God in whom we believe. Our



THE CRIB


God didn't come to condemn but rather to save sinners. He accompanied with them, became their friend, servant, master, teacher, and the King who dies for his people. It is He who trusts, respects, honours, and loves us rather than merely expecting these things from His subjects.

Love Your God

The more we know our God, the more we'll start loving Him with all our strength, soul, heart and mind eventually. Because in the process we'll come to know that He first loved us (1Jn 4:19). The concept of God shouldn't instill fear in us but rather love. The more we know about God we will long to be with him. Christmas is such a trans-historical, indescribable event that shook the world. God came to the world and chose to take birth in a humble stable. Our God is a God of humility, love, understanding, compassion and peace. He knows our weakness, though we leave Him, He doesn't leave us in seeking us and affirming His love every moment of our lives.

Serve Your God

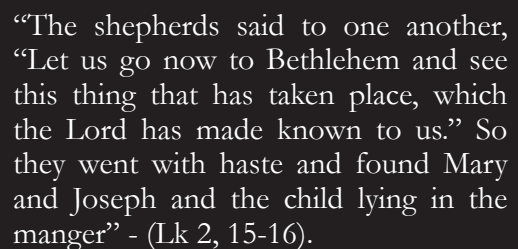
As it is said, faith is the response to revelation. When the apostles and disciples of Jesus came to know Christ, they started loving him and then went on to serving him by following His footsteps and proclaiming the Good News to the entire world as he commanded. We can see in the Acts of the Apostles 4:20: "for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." We can also read in the First letter of



John 1:4: "we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." This is what should happen to each and every Christian. The event of Christmas especially should create a deep urge in us that we should say along with St Paul: "Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel" (1Cor 9:16).

PMI's Task during Christmas

The task of PMI has been not to condemn prisoners for their evil doings but rather to save them from the clutches of the enemy. On 8th December 1981 the concept of the love bomb emerged between Br Varghese and Br Francis and we have seen them both living it in reality even as Priests. As Christmas is approaching, it is the task of PMI to give birth to Christ in all the prisons that we are visiting, or about to visit. It is indeed true that Jesus Christ is the real love bomb and role model to the entire PMI volunteers. Taking and giving Christ to the prisoners could be the ultimate task that is ahead of us in this advent season. When Jesus is born in every prison, he will eventually save the prisoners within them. May Jesus be born in each of our hearts! Wish you all a **joyful Christmas** and a **Prosperous New Year** ahead.



"The shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger" - (Lk 2, 15-16).

GANGA

MD Vincent

It was 11 am. Just then Allukas showroom lifted its shutters. Only one or two staff were present as more are yet to come. A cute young lady entered Allukas Jewelry shop. As the staff displayed variety of ornaments in front of that young customer, she suddenly pulled out a can and sprayed the liquid all over the staff face and they collapsed. She quickly collected maximum gold and escaped before the staff became conscious. On receipt of the complaint, the crime branch allotted a special lady investigation officer by name Paavani to hunt and track down that young thief. In her relentless search, inspector Paavani detected that the young thief lives in a slum near Charminar and her name is Ganga. One fine morning, Paavani entered the slum, parked her jeep in front of Ganga's hut. She called her to come to Police station. But Ganga refused and abused very badly inspector Paavani. As Ganga was not at all cooperating, the embarrassed inspector grabbed Ganga's hair, pushed and pulled her through the street into the van kicking and beating her black and blue.

The heavily bashed Ganga felt humiliated and insulted in front of her co-slum dwellers and shouted at Paavani yelling "You brutal lady, you ashamed me in front of my own people. I will stab you one day and take out your kidneys to through to birds and dogs." After her release from the Jail, Ganga steals one more time while inspector Paavani nabs her again facing with same set of abusive language from Ganga. Inspector beats her

and Ganga threatens to stab her. This was going on repeatedly year after year.

One day as Inspector Paavani was watching local news on a channel, she finds a story on Ganga who is distributing free tea to all small and poor foot path venders at Charminar roads. Paavni gets alerted, rushes to Charminar, grabs Ganga and questions her what this new drama is all about. Ganga narrates how she got transformed herself from being a notorious thief to a humble social worker. She explains, "when I was in prison some volunteers visited us. They are not our relatives or known friends. I asked them what makes them to visit us? The volunteers explained that they belong to 41-year-old National NGO called Prison Ministry India which is committed to the welfare of prisoners." I asked them why they are committed to prisoners' welfare". They answered. "Jesus told that whenever we visit prisoners you visited me. We see Christ in you. That's why we take pleasure in visiting you. They further described, how Jesus went out of the way to reach the sinners and unwanted, ascertaining that just as the sick need a doctor, not the healthy so also Jesus cares sinners like a good shepherd. Law is for man and man is not for law. If you give a glass of water to the least it is like you have given n it to me." They communicated so many good tidings to us that changed my heart and mind to give up stealing and take up social work."

The astonished Inspector Paavani enquired further, "Alright, its good that you changed your life. But how do you mange free tea to hundreds of small scale poor vender? What made you to do so?" "I noticed that these poor venders come at about 10 am in the morning and work till late night without

having any food at all. If they sell their items then they will have something to eat otherwise they starve. Hence few friends of us approached corporate business magnets around Charminar and asked for their financial support to give free tea to small and poor vendors. They admired the idea and they are supporting us.” “Fine” breathing deeply Inspector Paavani asked Ganaga, “Then how about your living? How are you managing the day-to-day maintenance?” Ganga smiled and said, “I get regular part time work in the big shops here around Charminar. That way there is no problem for my living.” Before leaving the place, inspector Paavani shook hands with Ganga and said “I am glad that you transformed your life to lead a crimeless life. I wish many follow you. Keep it up”.

That was Sunday morning. The newspapers flashed the headlines that inspector Pavani was badly ill and she needs a kidney donor. Having read this, Ganga rushed to the hospital. Luckily her kidney matched with inspector Pavani’s group. The transplantation of kidney was successful. Having recovered, inspector Paavani thanked Ganga and wondered how she could make such a great sacrifice of donating her kidney. Pavani said “You actually intend to cut my kidney! But how come you agreed to cut your own kidney and give it to me who once treated you so badly?!”

Ganga with a bright face told, “PMI volunteers told us that we have to forgive and forget. They told us to become love bombs, not to kill but to heal. If your enemy is hungry feed him. If he is thirsty give him

something to drink. Do not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Suppose I am sick, won’t you do similar sacrifice for me Madam?” Ganga asked. “No Ganga. I am not as broad minded as you. But seeing your remarkable exemplary life, may be slowly I too will reach your standards. Pray for me Ganga. Let the Lord of Love transform me also”. Ganga knelt down and prayed as tears rolled down her cheek. “Jesus’ plan called for action, and how He expressed it predicted its success. He didn’t say ‘you might be my witnesses’, or ‘you could be my witnesses’, or even ‘you should be my witnesses’. Instead He said, ‘you will be my witnesses’”. Swindoll Charles

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.... He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own,^[c] and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son,^[d] full of grace and truth” (Jn 1, 1-14).



Stories of Released Ukrainian Women Make Blood Run Cold¹

Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk

After Ukrainian women were released in a prisoner swap with Russia, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church said their stories “simply break the heart, make the blood run cold in your veins.” “This war will go down in history as one in which Russia uses sexual violence as a weapon against Ukraine,” said Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych. On Oct. 17, more than 100 Ukrainian women were released from Russian captivity. Andriy Yermak, head of the Ukrainian Presidential Office, said it was the first female-only exchange, and he called it “especially emotional and truly special.” “Mothers and daughters, whose relatives were waiting for them, were held captive,” Yermak said. On Oct. 18, Archbishop Shevchuk thanked God that the women were able to return to their families. “Let us wrap these women together today with our attention, love and prayer, and warm them up with our national warmth,” he said.

Speaking of the latest military attacks on Ukraine, the archbishop also reflected on a separate Russian weapon: sexual violence against Ukrainian women and families. He said in conditions of war, families found themselves in a sea of violence and malice that destroys a person. “This war will go down in history as one in which Russia uses violence against the intimate sphere of a person as a weapon against Ukraine” he said, citing statistics about rapes and pregnancies resulting from rape. It is impossible to imagine how much this violence against the intimate sphere of a person hurts the Ukrainian family, the dignity of men and women, destroys what the Lord God created for love.



Integral Human Development of Prisoners

Sr Sherly Kidangan

What a gorgeous thought
Integral human development
It touches all spheres of human life
Social, political, economical, cultural,
spiritual

Life is a challenge towards integral growth
Motivation and aim in life are significant
To accomplish greater heights in its
richness
Dignity and honour in abundance

Everyone is born to seek fulfillment
Common goal of every human being
Adversity as a growth to opportunity
Not to deviate from honest living

Life is an art to live in love
To be integrated in one's own life
Life in prison makes life hard
Correctional education swerve life situation

Ensure constructive relationships
Cultivate self-esteem and morale
Adapt cognitive behavioral programs
Counseling and psychological treatment

Remedial, moral, spiritual and sport-based
approach
Refresh the mind and bring forth new
oomph
Skill training and educational programs
Widen the horizon of their stance in life



INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Leading busy life in prison
Creating work experiences with planning
Reduce depression, frustration and
loneliness
Foster willingness and self-support


Give them respect and dignity with love
Affirmative regard between
prisoner and staff
Create an environment to lead law abiding
life
Reform, restructure and recuperate them

Engrave in their hearts to regain the
courage
To reintegrate themselves in to the society
Generate self-support employment
opportunities
To build up life in the main stream of
society

Life is a wholesome one to maintain
It's the higher state of perfection and
individual growth
To bring forth sustainability and security
And to realign the values of life

Rehabilitation is the sign of times
Those whom society rejects and families
liability
Nowhere to go and none to acknowledge
Never make them crazy again

Post release and supervision
Is a matter of great concern today
Nevertheless they tend to become
Prey to tantrums of the society



Become a bridge between prisoner and
family

Acceptance, care, forgiveness and love
Dissolves completely the past grudges
And recreate life anew with new insight
and from past learning.

Enhance mental strength and support
Instill passion to restructure life
Shape their hearts to be positive and alter
the way of thinking
Confront life with all its beauty

“Let the same mind be in you that was[a] in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2, 6-11).



DEATH RATHER THAN SIN

Blessed Teresa Bracco

Sr Lini Sheeja MSC


Teresa Bracco was born on 24 February 1924 and died at the age 20, on 28 August 1944. She was an Italian Catholic from Savona and was killed during World War II after refusing to submit to the sexual aggression of a Nazi soldier. Bracco was from a humble background, born to modest farmers and tilled in the fields and was passionate in attending daily mass. Bracco was beatified in 1998 on the occasion of Pope John Paul II's visit to Turin. Her beatification was approved after it was proven that she was killed in the defence of her virginity as a Christian.

Humble Background

Teresa Bracco was born in Dego, in Savona, in 1924 as the sixth of seven children to farmers Giacomo Bracco and Anna Pera. Her two brothers died within a week of each other. Her siblings were: Giovanni, who died in 1927 from typhus, Luigi, who died in 1927 from typhus, Giuseppina, Maria, Adele and Anna who was born in 1928; the birth of her sister Anna was one of profound happiness for her parents though her father would have preferred a male in order to take possession of the farm when he would be older. Bracco received her baptism in 1924 and was named in honour of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

Death Rather than Sin

In the evenings they had their family rosary and her father presided over the recitation of the rosary. Bracco was a devotee of



the Blessed Mother and she often recited several rosaries as she did her chores around the house. The formation she received at home was strengthened by the catechesis given by an exceptional parish priest, Fr Natale Olivieri, who gave her many religious books to read but, most importantly, she was inspired by his holy life as he was a holy priest.

Eucharistic Lord: Her Strength

At school, Teresa's teachers marvelled at her exemplary conduct. As a young girl and throughout her adolescence she was often found in Church with her eyes fixed on the tabernacle, immobile and almost ecstatic in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Bracco often stared at the Eucharist in times of Eucharistic Adoration, or in the tabernacle, in deep contemplation in order to draw strength from it. She received her First Communion in the spring of 1931 and received her Confirmation on 2 October 1933. She spared no sacrifice to nourish her love for Christ in the Eucharist, rising early in the morning and walking over a kilometre to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion. She spent the rest of her day in work and prayer, fingering her rosary when her tasks allowed it.

In 1933 she saw an image of Saint Dominic Savio in the "Bollettino Salesiano" with the late saint's motto: "Death rather than sin" and upon seeing it she exclaimed: "That applies to me too!" and that made her to die than give way to sin. She cut out the image and then pasted it onto a card before hanging it over her bed and it remained a prized possession for her. She then began to read about his life and also liked to read the



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“External Maxims” that Saint Alphonsus Maria de’ Liguori published and those of Saint Vincenzo Strambi. She also cultivated devotions to Saint Agnes of Rome and her town’s patron Saint Julia of Corscia as well as Saint Cecilia and Saint Lucia.

Modest in Thoughts and Actions

In her adolescence she was noted for her modest speech and for her modest dress and was known to be timid and meek. Bracco disliked makeup and she remained modest both in her actions and thoughts. She instinctively fled from trivial conversations. She lived like another Teresa as her patron saint was Teresa.

Living and Dying as Holy

In 1943, World War II, which had been raging in Europe and the Pacific, came in full fury to the village of Santa Giulia. After Italy’s surrender to the Allies in 1943, the German Army occupied Italy. Heroes of the Holocaust: Italy and many Italians, called partisans, armed themselves to resist the German invaders. As the fighting between the partisans and the German soldiers continued into the next year, Teresa and the villagers carried on as best they could. In May 1944, when she was twenty years old, Teresa lost her father. Giacomo Bracco died, leaving his wife and five daughters to tend the farm amid all the unrest.

On July 24, 1944, a partisan group attacked the German troops. Believing the partisans were hiding in Santa Giulia, the Germans began destroying farms in the area. On

28 August 1944 Bracco attended morning Mass at 7:00am and then went to work in the fields with her two sisters Anna and Adele when the three heard gunshots all of a sudden. At 9:00am partisans on the run warned them not to return to their home because the German soldiers were fast approaching and would pose a significant danger to the women though she wanted to return to help her mother hide and to take several possessions with her including a photograph of her late father. German soldiers took the villagers of Santa Giulia as prisoners. As the soldiers marched their prisoners along, Teresa and her sisters were separated from the main group. Teresa’s sisters were later reunited with their families, but Teresa never returned.

At 3:00pm the soldiers arrived and she hid behind a rock but was soon discovered. The Nazis kidnapped several other women in addition to Bracco. In the procession of those taken prisoner she met her cousin Enrichetta Ferrera and her infant. Ferrera gave her child to Bracco for a brief moment but Bracco handed the child back when it began to wail and anger the soldiers.

One soldier took Bracco into the woods to rape her and she tried in vain to run to find help but was caught. She resisted the savage aggression with all her might, but the enraged soldier who throttled her until she choked. He shot her twice with his revolver and to vent his rage, crushed part of her skull with his boot. Teresa had fulfilled her intention: “I would rather be killed than give in”. Father Natele searched the woods and discovered her remains on 30 August alongside Bracco’s sister. It was found that

the murdered Bracco was on her back with her hands crossed over her chest, a bullet went through one hand and was lodged in her upper chest and there was a pale mark on her throat in addition to bruises on her face and bite marks across her arms and chest. Doctor Scorza was summoned to confirm the death and examine what had occurred. Her funeral was celebrated on 31 August.

St John Paul II

St John Paul II beatified her in a visit to Turin in 1998 on May 24, and pointed to her as a powerful example of faithfulness. In his homily John Paul II then lifted her up as an inspiration to all young people. "That courageous stance was the logical consequence of a firm desire to remain faithful to Christ, in accordance with the

intention she had several times expressed. When she learned what had happened to other young women in that time of turmoil and violence, she exclaimed without hesitation: "I would rather die than be violated!" What a significant Gospel witness for the young generations who are approaching the third millennium! What a message of hope for those who are striving to run counter to the spirit of the world! To young people in particular, I hold up this young woman whom the Church is proclaiming Blessed today so that they may learn from her clear faith, witnessed to in daily commitment, moral consistency without compromises and the courage of sacrificing even life if necessary, in order not to betray the values that give it meaning." She stands with St. Maria Goretti as a patron of rape victims.



With Immense Gratitude and Highest Appreciation

“Thou Art All Fair, O Mary!”




Fr Allam Sagar Manoj Kumar

A feast called the Conception of Mary arose in the Eastern Church in the seventh century. It came to the West in the eighth century. In the eleventh century it received its present name, the Immaculate Conception. In the eighteenth century it became a feast of the universal Church. In 1854 Pius IX gave the infallible statement: “The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.” It took a long time for this doctrine to develop. While many Fathers and Doctors of the Church considered Mary the greatest and holiest of the saints, they often had difficulty in seeing Mary as sinless either at her conception or throughout her life. This is one of the Church teachings that arose more from the piety of the faithful than from the insights of brilliant theologians. Even such champions of Mary as Bernard and Thomas Aquinas could not see theological justification for this teaching.

Two Franciscans, William of Ware and Blessed John Duns Scotus, helped develop the theology. They point out that Mary’s Immaculate Conception enhances Jesus’ redemptive work. Other members of the human race are cleansed from original sin after birth. In Mary, Jesus’ work was so powerful as to prevent original sin at the outset. In Luke 1:28 the Angel Gabriel, speaking on God’s behalf, addresses Mary as “Full of Grace” or “Highly Favoured”.

In that context this phrase means that Mary is receiving all the special divine help necessary for the task ahead. However, the Church grows in understanding with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit led the Church, especially non-theologians, to the insight that Mary had to be the most perfect work of God next to the Incarnation. Or rather, Mary’s intimate association with the Incarnation called for the special involvement of God in Mary’s whole life. The logic of piety helped God’s people to believe that Mary was full of grace and free of sin from the first moment of her existence. Moreover, this great privilege of Mary is the highlight of all that God has done in Jesus. Rightly understood, the incomparable holiness of Mary shows forth the incomparable goodness of God.

Mary gave to the world the Life that renews all things, and she was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role. “It is no wonder, then, that the usage prevailed among the holy Fathers whereby they called the mother of God entirely holy and free from all stain of sin, fashioned by the Holy Spirit into a kind of new substance and new creature. Adorned from the first instant of her conception with the splendors of an entirely unique holiness, the Virgin of Nazareth is, on God’s command, greeted by an angel messenger as ‘Full of Grace’



(Luke 1:28). To the heavenly messenger she replies: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word' (Luke 1:38; LG 56)

On the other hand, we need to understand clearly that St. Ann conceived Mary, not by the power of the Holy Spirit as Jesus was conceived, but by normal means. However, when she was conceived in her mother's womb, Mary was without the stain of original sin. This was a special grace granted by God. Truly, this was what God had willed for all mankind, as it was with Adam and Eve, who were also without sin. However, sin entered the world when Adam and Eve fell from grace and because of that, we are born with the stain of their sin. Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, is also the Saviour of His mother. He saved her from sin before she was born, at the moment of her conception in St. Ann's womb. In doing so, He also prepared her womb for His Presence. Jesus, who made all things (Jn 1:2), created His own mother, creating her perfectly pure and sinless. He later, under the power of the Holy Spirit, dwelled in that flawless womb under her Immaculate Heart. To prepare her for her role as mother of the Saviour, "Mary was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role" (LG 56)

On this day, we celebrate first of all the moment when Almighty God, in a vision telescoping the ages, showed Mary both to our first parents and to the demon, as the Virgin Mother of the future divine Redeemer, the Woman destined to crush the proud head of the serpent. This episode is narrated in the first book of Scripture, Genesis chapter 3. We find Her again in the last canonical prophecy of the Bible, the Apocalypse or Revelation of Saint John the Apostle, as the "Woman clothed with the



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

sun, having on Her head a crown of twelve stars." In this beautiful vision She is also identified with the persecuted Apostolic Church, obliged to flee into the "desert", and as the Mother of a great Head of that Church, destined to govern the flock of the latter times in the final combat, who like that flock is Her own Child (Rev. 12). Mary, like Her Son, is at the beginning and the end of all God's intentions, an integral part of His designs for the Redemption of the human race.

Since by eternal decree She was exempted from all stain of original sin from the first moment of Her Creation, and was endowed with the richest treasures of grace and sanctity, it is fitting that we honour Her glorious prerogatives by this special feast of the Immaculate Conception. We should join in Spirit with the Blessed in heaven and rejoice with our dear Mother, not only for Her own sake, but for ours, Her children, for we are partakers of Her glory and happiness. "The treasures of the mother are the heritage of the children," said by Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. We also celebrate at the same time the ever-memorable day, the 8th of December of 1854, which raised the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady from a pious belief to the dignity of a dogma of the infallible Church, causing a great and universal joy among the faithful. The Holy See had already permitted the feast day from the time of Sixtus IV, by his papal bull *Cum Praecelsa* (1477), formally allowing its celebration for all dioceses desiring it. In 1854, the ancient faith of the people in their Mother was exalted. Let us wholeheartedly repeat these words applied by the Church to the Blessed Virgin: **"Thou art all fair, O Mary!"**

Prison Voice

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