



PRISON VOICE

March 2020

Vol. XVII

Issue 7

NATIONAL MONTHLY

₹20/-

Rehabilitation Centers Hope for the Hopeless





Seminar on Human Trafficking, RRDC, Bengaluru



Women's Day Celebration Yerwada, Pune



PMI Volunteers Visiting Jail Industries Showroom, Pune



Silver Jubilee of Jeevodaya Bengaluru



Resourse Persons on Human Trafficking Seminar, Bengaluru



International Women's Day Bijnor District Jail



KAIROS- Woman's Day Celebration, Pazhayangadi, Kerala

Contents



PRISON VOICE

NATIONAL MONTHLY



Editor's View.....	04
National Coordinator's Desk.....	05
H-CAT [™] "Holistic Change Agent Team":	07
We Accept Them as They Are!	08
Remember Women	09
Asha Kiran Shelter Home.....	10
From the PMI Office	12
A Transformed Soul	13
RC - A Place of Love	14
Marie Poussepin's Girls' Home	15
Snehashramam	16
Human Trafficking	17
Running the Good Race	19
State Executive Body Meeting.....	20
Women: The Backbone of Family and Society	22
We Trust the Almighty	24
Oh Woman: You are a Miracle	25
RRDC Yearly Program	26

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:

A/c Name : Prison Ministry India
Bank : South Indian Bank
Branch : Koramangala
A/C No : 0416053000001419
IFSC Code : SIBL0000416

Patron

Most Rev Dr Allwyn D'Silva

Managing Editor

Rev Dr Francis Kодиан MCBS

Chief Editor

Sr Lini Sheeja MSC

Editorial Board

Fr G J Anthonysamy

Fr Wilfred Fernandes

Fr David MSC

Sr Jobina UFS

Magazine Staff

Mr Jesu Raja

Sr Regina SOM

Sr Jane SJC

Ms Teena Antony, PhD

Br Alphonse Velankanni OFM

Br John Antony CMF

Circulation Managers

Fr George Kalassery VC

Fr Stanly MSC

Graphics and Layout

Dinto Tom K T

Printing

Sevasadan Printing Press

Koramangala, Bengaluru

Prison Ministry India

52, Thomas Layout

Sarjapur Road

Carmelaram

Bangalore-560 035

Karnataka, India

☎ 09447710488

9880022209

Email

prisonvoice123@gmail.com

nationalpmi2015@gmail.com

pmi2005@rediffmail.com

Website

www.prisonministryindia.org

By Being Empowered We Reach Out!

The brethren behind the bars ask for meaning in their lives and the Rehabilitation Centres provide meaning in their lives as they seek redemption. Jesus came to redeem the lost and the PMI joins hand with Jesus in the redemption of the souls as the volunteers extend their services to rehabilitation centres. The goal of the 8 'R' theory of rehabilitation centres is redemption. To release a prisoner is to set him/her free physically and emotionally. It is an ongoing process through which we give them hope in life. Continuous negative experiences make a person lose hope in life and the rehabilitation centres are the hope for the hopeless.

The PMI has rehabilitation centres for released men/women prisoners and children of prisoners. I remember Mrs Kavitha (name changed), a convicted prisoner whose child is with us in our rehabilitation centre, marvelling at the development her son was showing, excelling in studies and the amount of exposure the child was provided with, "I wouldn't have been able to provide these many opportunities that my son is now receiving; he has become a smart child. Thank you, Fathers and Sisters, for all your services to my child."

The wounded people, our brethren behind the bars, they need strong will power and our centres provide them with that. From our centres, we place them in jobs that enable them to earn their livelihood and to stand on their feet. The family that abandoned them comes in search of them after they



Sr Lini Sheeja MSC
Chief Editor

reach a particular status. Before coming to the rehabilitation centres, they feel that their suffering is the worst and no one else would have suffered like them. But while at the rehabilitation centre, they realize that their difficulties and sufferings are nothing as they listen to each other. They are empowered in our centres and able to reach out to the needy that suffer more than them. The inmates from our centres, in turn, become a blessing for suffering humanity.

A released prisoner comes to the centre with a lot of anger, revenge and rejection. They are helped with the mental resetting by motivating him/her to cultivate a positive attitude towards life. Our centres are homes with tremendous blessings as everyone feels that they are wanted and accepted. I remember a woman saying to me, "When I was in prison none of my family members came to visit me. It was the sisters from Prison Ministry India that took the effort to get me released and placed me in Jeevodaya, Bangalore. The sisters here take care of me as their daughter and I lack nothing. It is the first time that I have felt that I'm wanted and precious." Lots of creative work therapies are conducted in our centres to counteract destructive tendencies. Our centres help them to develop self-confidence as they become wonders in society.

Dialogue with the Lost, the Least and the Last

“Dialogue: The Path to Truth and Charity” was the theme of the 34th Plenary Assembly of the Catholics Bishops Conference of India held at St John’s National Academy of Health Sciences, Bengaluru from 13-19 February 2020. Bishops from 175 Ecclesiastical jurisdictions participated, deliberated, discerned and decided matters related to dialogue with the poor, culture, religion, nature and the unborn. The Catholic Church in India, with 20 million faithful, 200 bishops, 60,000 priests, and 90,000 consecrated people, runs not only over 54,000 educational institutions and 20,000 hospitals but also tens and thousands of charitable institutions for released prisoners, prisoners’ children, alcoholics, drug addicts, beggars, street children, lepers, AIDS victims, refugees, migrants, orphans, differently-abled, mental patients and so on. Church’s pastoral, educational, healthcare, and charitable institutions are in the process of fruitful and constant dialogue with the people of God irrespective of caste and creed.

Dialogue with the Least, the Lost and the Last

Imitating the lifestyle of Jesus, who came to seek and save the lost, the Catholic Church has fruitfully been dialoguing with the least, the lost and the last such as prisoners, prostitutes, beggars, mental patients, drug addicts, alcoholics, street children, trafficked victims, migrants, refugees, and

From National Coordinator’s Desk



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

so on. Thousands of Catholic priests, religious nuns and brothers, and laity are involved in this dialogue and ministry for the marginalised and the most neglected and rejected of society. The Church has a well-structured system to administer and take care of the needs of those who live in the peripheries.

Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

The Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development headed by His Eminence Peter Cardinal Turkson is in relentless discourse with the least, the lost and the last. This dicastery guides and animates the universal church in dialoguing with and ministering prisoners, refugees, migrants and the like.

Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC)

The Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference (FABC) has an office to dialogue with those who do not come to the Church such as prisoners, prostitutes, migrants, refugees and so on. Most Rev Yvon



From National Coordinator's Desk

Ambroise, Bishop Emeritus of Tuticorin is the FABC Chairman of the Office for Human Development (OHD). Fr Joseph Philip Gonsalves from the Archdiocese of Mumbai is its executive secretary.

Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI)

The Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) headed by His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias has an office to dialogue with the marginalised, the neglected and rejected of the society. The CBCI Office for Justice, Peace and Development is chaired by Most Rev Gerald Almeida, Bishop of Jabalpur and assisted by Most Rev Gerald Isaac Lobo, Bishop of Udupi and Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva, the Auxiliary Bishop of Mumbai. Its executive secretary is Fr Stephen Fernandes from the Archdiocese of Mumbai.

Desk for Prison Ministry India

The CBCI Office for the Justice, Peace and Development has a desk for Prison Ministry India and its convener is Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva, the Auxiliary Bishop of Mumbai and its executive secretary is Fr Francis Kodyan from the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (MCBS). PMI, with 4 regional coordinators, 28 state coordinators, 175 diocesan directors, 950 unit coordinators and 7000 volunteers, dialogues with 4.5 lakhs prisoners in 1412 prisons. It is the task of the PMI volunteers to outreach these prisoners and their families, to release, reform, lead them to repentance, reconciliation, rehabilitation and thereby to reintegrate them into mainstream society.



Regional Offices for Prison Ministry

Every Regional Catholic Bishops Conference has a bishop as chairman for Prison Ministry India and a priest in charge as state/regional PMI coordinator, with a state secretary and treasurer to guide and animate the ministry in the region.

PMI Diocesan Directors

Besides PMI unit coordinators, secretaries and treasurers, every diocese is expected to have a priest as director of the prison ministry to dialogue with prisoners and their families in the diocese. When there are many Catholic dioceses in a region all the diocesan directors join together and do the ministry and dialogue.

Parish Priest

At the grassroots level, it is the duty of the parish priest to dialogue with the lost sheep in the parish. He, in collaboration with pious associations such as Vincent de Paul Society or Fathers' or Mothers' Union, search and serve prisoners and their families in the parish.

Conclusion

You are welcome to dialogue with the most neglected of society and join hands with the Catholic Church in her attempt to reform, rehabilitate and reintegrate the lost, the least and the last. You can begin with prayer and fasting like St Therese of Lisieux and gradually join the nearby PMI prayer group to visit prisons and thereby endeavour to liberate and redeem them.

H-CAT™ “Holistic Change Agent Team”

Our rehabilitation centres are to become H-Cat™ Centres. Gone are the days when we thought parents could change the children, teachers could change the students, leaders could change the people. We have to admit to the fact that children are not listening to parents, students are not listening to teachers and people are not listening to leaders. All our educational institutions, houses and society at large face this problem. Students and young minds are not heeding authority. Then whom do they listen to and obey? They are listening to their peers.

Only a neighbour can change a neighbour

Only a friend can change a friend

Only a teacher can change a teacher

Only a student can change a student.

So, we have to focus on their peers. It is not the question of students alone, it is in all the realms of our lives whether a priest, nun, family man or woman where it is quite easy to accept correction from a priest to a priest, sister to a sister and husband to a wife and vice versa. What is the basic nature of all these relationships between a student to a student or a neighbour to a neighbour? It is a friendly relationship, brotherly relationship or sisterly relationship. This is the focus of our rehabilitation centres. You may be the authority in the house but you have to develop a brotherly or sisterly relationship. Otherwise, they may not change or you would be unable to mould them. You have to be an agent of change.

Rehabilitation Centers - A Grace



Fr Sebastian Vadakumpadan
Director, Bharata Mata School of Legal Studies

Rehabilitation centres are the places where you have to be careful about your attitude because you don't know when you are going to see the change in them, who is going to change them, at what time you will be able to change them, when you are going to change them, how you are going to change them. Everything is a mystery in rehabilitation centres. Fr Joy was the director of a second-stage rehabilitation centre in Kerala. While he was at the centre, there was a man there who used to go out for a job. Even after being guided and moulded for two years at two different centres, he had started drinking alcohol while on the job without the knowledge of the director. He was not changing his character. One day, while he was lying senseless on the road due to heavy drinking, the director saw him and carried him to the centre on his shoulders. The next day onwards, he stopped drinking because he was moved by the fact that the priest had not left him on the road but had carried him, forgiving him his bad behaviour. That caused him to turn over a new leaf. He could not drink anymore.

We do not know when we can change another. It is only our attitude of brotherly or sisterly care that we can maintain.

Working with a rehabilitation centre, I feel each is the foundation of love and wellspring of life to those that come with broken-hearts. The Lord used dedicated people to share his healing love to them. Rehabilitation centres work like ATM; any time energy is spent on those who are there, day or night.

When they initially come to Jeevodaya, they are disappointed, sad and lonely. We accept them as they are. Whether they are criminal or trafficked, we receive them as our own. They need love, affection, encouragement and acceptance. When we accept them, they perform well and they have an identity in their life.

“Life is not primarily a quest for power as Alfred Adler taught, but a quest for meaning”, said Viktor E. Frankl. The great task for any person is to find meaning in his or her life and I feel that in Jeevodaya, the people have found meaning in life.

One of the girls came at night with someone from an NGO. I know the nuns were waiting for her till one o'clock. Then there are sleepless nights being with inmates when they are sick. We worry about them, take them to hospital, accompany them on court meetings, meet their parents, reconcile the girls with them, educate them and settle them in marriage. They are guided to lead a peaceful life. Their personalities are developed and they are rehabilitated within society.

Sr Liz Maria HCM
Jeevodaya, Bengaluru

**“WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET ...BUT WE MAKE
A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE” - WINSTON CHURCHILL.**

I have been associated with the Prison Ministry India family for the past 10 years. This journey has been a great learning experience, eye-opener and transformation.

Though I have been engaged in visiting orphanages, prisons and destitute homes, Premodaya, Bengaluru has been very close to my heart. Let me quickly describe the home. This is a very sophisticated and well-maintained place. The children here are so loving and very affectionate. I personally know them by their names and they are so closely connected to me. The sisters who manage this home have inculcated great discipline and moral values which portray in their behaviour.

It is an honour to mention that my family and I celebrate Christmas with these little ones. We have seen their transition so beautifully with virtue and acquiring the required talents. During the celebration, the children perform dances, sing songs and enact skits with moral values. The sisters encourage and motivate them to be bold and enhance their public speaking skills. This is very important for young girls in today's generation as they need to grow up to face society boldly. The children in the home are very focused on their studies and have great vision. The least that we can do is to encourage them to fulfil their dreams.

Mrs Fathima
Prison Ministry India, Bangalore

Remember Women

Remember, women, you were born. Life giver, miracle creator, magic maker.
You were born with the heart of a thousand mothers, open and fearless and sweet.
You were born with the fire of queen and conquerors; warriors blood you bleed.
You were born with the wisdom of sages, no wound, can you not heal.
You were born the teller of your own tale, before none should you kneel.
You were born with an immeasurable soul, reaching out past infinity.
You were born to desire with passion, abandon, and to name your own destiny.
Remember, women, remember, you are more than you can see.
Remember, women, remember, you are loved endlessly.
Remember, women, your power and grace, the depth of your deep-sea heart.
Never forget, you women divine, as you have been from the start.

Sr Jenny UFS
St Michael Convent
Shanthinagar, Hubballi.

Note to Prison Voice Contributors

We thank all the contributors for your inputs to *Prison Voice*. We would like to bring to your notice a few things that would make the publishing of your articles a seamless process:

- a) Send your articles, letters, comments to: **prisonvoice123@gmail.com**
- b) Take pictures with a camera or phone, not with the Whatsapp and send them via email with full resolution. WhatsApp images will not be considered for printing.
- c) Write your articles in English (India). This Option is available in MS-Word in the Review tab under Languages.
- d) The magazine needs to follow a uniform script and style, so any stylish fonts or bold font that you use may not be reproduced in the printed article.

Sr Lini Sheeja MSC
Chief Editor

Asha Kiran Shelter Home



Sr Julia George
Directress, Ashakiran - Jharkhand

The Asha Kiran Shelter Home is situated on Ranchi Chaibasaroad, Khunti District in Jharkhand. This Home is meant for the rehabilitation of girls, who are victims of human trafficking, child labour, rape and other forms of social violence. The Shelter Home is managed by Ranchi Ursuline Society and is a registered body.

The Ursuline Sisters started working against Human Trafficking in 2001. Sr Gemma Toppo OSU, a lawyer by profession pioneered this work. Asha Kiran Shelter Home was inaugurated in 2009. This project was made possible through the generosity of Rotary Menon, Belgium. The Home provides a spacious and hygienic place, a home-away-from-home for children in distress. The Home is well-equipped and has qualified staff to take care of the needs of the inmates. Adjacent to the Home is a school run by the Ursuline Sisters from class I to VIII for the formal education of the inmates. After Class VIII, they are sent to Ursuline Girls' High School, Khunti at a distance of 10 km from the Home. Bus facility is provided. Presently the inmates after class VIII are admitted to the nearby Kasturba School.

Socio-economic Background

Jharkhand is one of the most backward states in India in the field of literacy, education, development, job opportunity, etc. Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar in 2000 to develop the state. 27% of the

state's population are tribal people. 40% of the mineral mined in India is found in Jharkhand. It is also the most exploited state. Tribal groups have been exploited by the rich for many years. Missionaries have contributed much towards the education, medical and socio-economic development of the tribal people in the state.

Most of the tribal people live below the poverty line. Agriculture is their main occupation. The success of agriculture depends on the monsoon. There is no proper system for irrigation. They have small landholdings and the meagre produce from the land is not enough for their sustainability. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of socio-economic development and job opportunities are the causes of migration. For 6 months, the people work in their fields and for 6 months they migrate to other states in search of work, leaving the children at home. These children are always at risk. Jharkhand is also a state which provides cheap domestic labour. There are many agents, who provide adolescent and young women for domestic labour in metro cities. Eventually, they end up in brothels and unsafe places. The tribal girls are attracted to city life as their villages lack basic amenities.

The Emotional Problems

Currently the trafficked, rape cases, child labourers, etc. are rescued by anti-human trafficking units, NGOs and CWC, who in turn hand over the victims to Asha Kiran. The children would have gone through trauma and need help. The atmosphere at Asha Kiran is very congenial and they are helped through counselling, individual accompaniment, love and care. They are helped to understand that they are the architects of their future and their future is not to be determined by their past painful experiences.

In due course, they learn how to change their scars into stars. They are provided with skill training programs like computer applications, cutting & tailoring, embroidery & knitting besides formal education. The children are provided with a balanced diet. In a nutshell, everything they need to build up positive image and self-esteem is done. It is a very challenging task, but at the same time, a very rewarding one as we are building the life of marginalized children. We work in collaboration with the police, CWC and like-minded NGOs.

Daily Routine

They get up at 5.30 am and get ready and study till 7.15 am. Then they have their breakfast and school is from 8.00 am to 2.15 pm. Lunch is provided at 12.30 pm. From 3.00 to 4.00 pm is personal study followed by tea. From 4.30 to 5.30 pm it is games. At 6.00 pm prayer, followed by study. Dinner is at 7.30 pm. They study till 9.30 pm and then go to bed.

Visit to Nirbhaya's Family

Sr Winifred, Delhi

Let us keep knocking at the door of Jesus with faith. She was friendly and very happy to welcome us. But we could see the pain within her.

Nirbhaya's parents' house is located at XXX Apartment in Delhi. Whenever we go to our parish church, our eyes fall on their flat and we are reminded of the gruesome rape and murder of Nirbhaya. Though we had frequently visited her mother and prayed for God's blessings, this time after the Order of Execution of those 4 men was passed, it was with mixed feelings that we decided to visit her house.

Inspired by Fr Francis, the national coordinator of PMI and mandated by the Archbishop of Delhi, we made this special visit to Mrs X's house on 10 March 2020. As Sr Inigo was familiar with the family members, she coordinated this special visit. After an intense session of prayer and faith, we met her. Contrary to our expectation, she was very friendly and welcoming. She shared her struggle, pain and agony and her long battle in the last eight years.

We were dumbfounded to break through and just listened to her in silence. In the end, she invited us to pray in front of her beloved daughter's picture.

We prayed for God's mercy and forgiveness to flow through her heart. We said our farewells to the tear-filled Mrs X. Let us continue to intercede for God's intervention in this matter.

Statement and Ownership and Other Particulars about Prison Voice

Place of Publication	:	Bangalore
Periodicity of its publication	:	Monthly
Printer's Name	:	Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS
Nationality	:	Indian
Address	:	Prison Ministry India P. B No. 3410, Koramangala Venkatapura, Bangalore - 560 034
Publisher's Name	:	Same as above
Nationality	:	Same as above
Address	:	Same as above
Chief Editor's Name	:	Sr Lini Sheeja MSC
Nationality	:	Indian
Address	:	Prison Ministry India 52 Thomas Layout, Sarjapura Road Carmelaram, Bangalore - 560 035 Karnataka
Name and address of the Individual who owns the newspaper And partners or shareholdings more than one percent of the total capital	:	Prison Ministry India 52, Thomas Layout Sarjapura Road, Carmelaram Bangalore – 560 035, Karnataka

I, Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: 20 March 2020

A Transformed Soul

Here you will read the real story of a young man who came to Snehashramam, Vettukkad, one of the first rehabilitation centres started by Jesus Fraternity. Snehashramam has completed 25 years of its noble service to humanity and opened a new horizon for hundreds of young released men prisoners. There are many heart-warming stories of these brethren of ours. Rehabilitation centres are a real blessing to society. Let us join our hands and strengthen the wonderful service the centres are rendering.

He began his story very frankly. He said, "My name is Ashish Tom. I'm the second son among the three children of my parents, who are coolie workers. Our livelihood relied on the meagre income from my parents' hard work. From my childhood onwards, I had the habit of interfering in others' affairs because I was always sincere and helpful to those whom I liked. To the extend, this attitude led me to a wrong path. Finally, I ended up in the world of crime and was confined within the four walls of a jail cell".

Maybe, here begins this man's turning point in life. He continued, "On 4 September 1996, my family, however, was able to ensure my release and for two months I

Rehabilitation Centers - A Blessing



Fr Sebastian Thekkanath
Former National Coordinator, PMI

lived a free life. On my mother's request, I attended a retreat, confessed all my sins to God and experienced the forgiving love of God. On 13 December 1996, I came to Snehashramam, Vettukkad and shared with the Father Director everything about me".

Then he elaborated on his life at Snehashramam. He admitted, "In the beginning, life at the rehabilitation centre was very hard for me, that is, I found it very difficult to adjust to the lifestyle. But the love and care of the fathers and sisters completely transformed me. I acknowledged my past life and was determined to lead a normal life! After six months, cherishing the experience at Snehashramam, I proceeded to the second-stage rehabilitation centre to continue my reformed life. Here, all of us live happily, praying and working together. I pray to God for all those who accompanied me on this new life. I know that I, the sinner and weakling, am always in your prayers."

RC - A Place of Love

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.” - Isaiah 55:8

When Sr Mariam had to return to Kannur after serving the Lord diligently for almost 19 years by heading Snehashram in Manvila, Thiruvananthapuram, I honestly thought it was the end of my association with the Ashram. Sr Mariam had been a loving mother to all, an angel in disguise who had executed without fail all her duties – be it at the Ashram itself, among the jail inmates, or when it came to visiting the families of those in prison – with tremendous love and commitment to our Lord.

The reason why I thought along such lines had at that point of time made sense to me. Sr Beena who had come in the place of Sr Mariam seemed so young and naïve. Would this ever-smiling young nun be able to handle and lead the various types of inmates who kept landing at the Ashram, I wondered. More than that, how would such a young, inexperienced nun be able to manage the more important facet of the Ashram’s primary duty i.e. render service to our brethren who are in prison, I asked myself.

It has long been a tradition at the Ashram to hold a meeting on the first Saturday of every month. In the very next meeting with Sr Beena at the helm, I openly asserted that since Sr Mariam was no longer there, I was ending my association with all the activities of Snehashram as well as that of the jail ministry. But the Lord said to him, “Pay no attention to how tall and handsome he is. I have rejected him because I do not judge as people judge. They look at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart.” - 1 Samuel 16:7.



Mrs Thulasi Annie Thomas

Jesus Fraternity Volunteer, Snehashramam, Kerala

Today, I wholeheartedly admit my shame and mistake in harbouring such a foolish opinion and I humbly ask pardon for the same. Because since then, my Lord has given me countless opportunities to not just serve by the side of reverend Sr. Beena but to open my eyes to her humble and total commitment to what has been bestowed on her by her superiors in the Lord. Numerous are the occasions where I have had the honour and blessing to visit along with Sr. Beena various jails, the jailed inmates, or the homes of those who were in prison. She has been a constant source of tender love and care to not just all who come in contact with her, but also to a frail person like me, full of shortcomings. Great Indeed is the glory of Our Lord!

It is not just mine but all of our heartfelt prayers that the Good Lord continues to bless Sr Beena and guide her to do even more work of charity to glorify the Almighty. I humbly take this opportunity to declare with full confidence in the Lord that Snehashram, its inmates, the jail ministry and all those associated with it have been placed in the able hands of Sr. Beena by the Lord Himself. Praise the Lord!

As it is rightly said:

“This was done by the Lord; what a wonderful sight it is!” – Psalm 118:23

Marie Poussepin's Girls' Home

The cry of the poor is the call of God. Harkening to this, the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation, with the help and inspiration received from the Prison Ministry India, Jharkhand unit, started the Marie Poussepin's Girls' Home on 7 April 2017, in Vidhyapathi Nagar, Kanke Road, Ranchito educate socially excluded children of prisoners in Jharkhand. It was not an accident that the home for these girls was named after Marie Poussepin; the founder of the Dominican sisters. It was because she started this apostolic congregation in view of the education and development of the underprivileged and disadvantaged in society, especially girls in France in 1696. It is only incidental that it is engaged in the same kind of activities in over 37 countries worldwide.

With divine intervention, help from different quarters and some hardwork, we were able to gather 8 deserving girls to this home from 4 districts of Jharkhand. They come from varied backgrounds like having either both parents in prison or one parent in prison and the other not alive or similar. Whatever the background, they all have one thing in common – the scars inflicted by society for reasons not theirs. So, we make them feel at home and feel accepted in their brokenness.

While they were being admitted to a Christian minority institution in Ranchi, many of them failed the entrance test miserably. It was on the assurance given to the school by their local guardian, the directress of Marie Poussepin's Girls' Home, that they were granted admission. But God's ways are inscrutable (Rom

RC - A Place of Transformation



Sr Jini OP

Directress, Marie Poussepin's Girls Home

11:33). Many of them hold the first rank in their respective classes now. Some have represented the school in quiz and inter-school sports competitions. These changes did not happen overnight but through their hard work and the dedication of the nuns.

Our Home has been blessed with the gracious visits of Prison Ministry India Jharkhand unit chairman, Rt. Rev. Anand Jojo, Bishop of Hazaribagh, general councillors, provincials, Jharkhand unit members and the national coordinator and team. They also performed prayer dance for the Jharkhand state-level training on 31 August 2019. On 12 November 2019, Family Day was celebrated with the families of the children. On this occasion, we were able to distribute some money to each family to start an income-generation project.

Though Marie Poussepin's Girls' Home is a home away from home, the nuns do visit their homes and have first-hand knowledge of the family background of each girl. The girls visit their families at least twice a year and all the family members of the girls are called for a get-together at Marie Poussepin's Girls' Home at least once a year. With God's grace and generous support of the people and encouragement from all the well-wishers, Marie Poussepin's Girls' Home continues to change the destiny of a few of the most excluded children of society.

Snehashramam

*“When I was in prison you visited me” -
(Mt 25:36b)*

“I have nothing else to lose except my physical organs and mind.” These are the words of Vishnu Srikumar, an inmate of Snehashramam, who arrived recently. He was a drug addict, deserted by his family and friends. He was caught while selling drugs. When he was in jail, he came to know about Snehashramam. Once he finished his term, he came here. Now he wants to live decently, build his hope and confidence to face the world once again, but differently.

On 15 May 2019, the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (SCJ) undertook a new ministry. This ministry was all about the renewal and rehabilitation of ex-prisoners. The centre is known as Snehashramam (House of Love); the people who come here are ex-prisoners or released prisoners. Snehashramam aims to renew and rehabilitate the inmates and send them on to mainstream society with confidence.

We have taken up this ministry from the Kerala Catholic Bishops Conference (KCBC). This ministry was started on 1 October 1991. The ministry aspires to give a second chance to people who were once named as criminals. This ministry gives the message that sinners need to be changed, to tell them that we are there with them; we are here to help them make their life better. As we know, people go to jail due to various reasons and sometimes, they are



Fr Sunil Issac Roman, SCJ
Director, Snehashramam

caught on mere suspicion. When they are in prison, they ask the question, “Where do I go next?” They think that when they go out, people will be looking at them with suspicion. Even their own dear ones look at them differently. Sometimes, family members do not want them back in their families. Even society names them wrongdoers. They may have the feeling that there is nobody for them; even getting a job is a question mark. They raise the question, “Who is there to help us?” The answer to this question is Snehashramam.

The people who come here are people who have been rejected, in pain, have wounds and regrets from past lives. Snehashramam receives them and tells them that we are here to help them. We provide a family atmosphere for the inmates. Snehashramam tries to heal the wounds with forgiving love. The slogan of Snehashramam is prayer and work (Ora et Labora).

The priests here try their best to help these men. There is a time table to follow. The main tools we use for these men are prayer, sharing and work. The men here get enough time to share their feelings and to pray. We believe that prayer can help them change their lives. At the same time, we are well-aware of the fact that the men who

are here are mentally disturbed, wounded; they even carry grudges and feelings of revenge from the past. They need powerful and constant help (counselling) from skilled men, especially people specialized in psychology. Sometimes during the day, they become very sad and sit alone, they are worried about their families and the future. Sometimes they get angry. The priests here in Snehashramam at present believe that a person trained in human psychology is vital for the community.

We also do our best to contact the families of these men and try to reconcile them with

the families. We encourage family members to come and visit them and spend time with them. It is also part of the Snehashramam agenda to visit families of these men and have a dialogue with the families regarding their future.

We hope that with the help of prayer and counselling we can do something for these men to reform their lives. In this way, we can practice our Christian Spirituality as “Prophets of Love, Servants of Reconciliation.”

Human Trafficking

- Ms Teena Antony

The one-day seminar held at RRDC Bengaluru by the Prison Ministry India on 29 February 2020 was not just informative, it was also an eye-opener regarding certain aspects of human trafficking to a layperson and probably some of the experienced PMI volunteers too. The topic was divided into three sections and three research persons spoke at length about each aspect of this topic. For the purpose of getting a comprehensive idea about human trafficking, I will not be delving into the details of the talk given by each of the resource persons, rather I will be giving an overview of certain aspects of the seminar.

Human trafficking is a 150 billion rupees industry. However, less than 1000 cases are reported and/or resolved every year in India.

We tend to think of trafficking as happening at an international or interstate level, but oftentimes it happens inter-district and intra-district too. There are various kinds of trafficking or reasons for trafficking. A few of these are:

- Sexual exploitation
- Street begging
- Forced military service
- Harvesting of organs
- Forced labour (domestic servitude, fisheries, construction work, etc.)

One of the resource persons was part of an organisation called Talitha Kum. This is an international network against trafficking in persons. With representation in 92 countries, it was started in 2009 as a network for consecrated persons who were already working in the field. Most of the volunteers



Report

are nuns who work against trafficking and for helping the victims. One of the aspects of their work is the prevention of trafficking through awareness generation which is done through education and community awareness programmes.

There are a few factors that lead to or enable human trafficking to take place. These are:

- Poverty
- Gender bias
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Social and religious practices
- Natural calamities
- Lack of awareness
- Outdated and/or complicated laws
- Weak enforcement of existing laws

Trafficking is categorised as a heinous offence. Therefore, it can be investigated only by an officer of the inspector level or higher. Since the networks involved in trafficking are well-organised and dangerous, the resource persons cautioned all the attendees that care should be taken when reporting a case of trafficking. They themselves (and the police) do weeks and months of undercover surveillance before busting a known trafficking ring. Even for the children found begging on the streets, their handlers would be in the vicinity. So, if there is any kind of suspicious activity or situation, the best course of action would be to dial '100' and the authorities would take it

from there. The resource persons, including the nun from Talitha Kum, mentioned that rescue and further rehabilitation are processes that require planning, preparation, care and back up. A certain amount of emotional distance, strength and courage are required with the drive to follow up on rescue and reintegration programmes for those that would want to enter the field of anti-human trafficking.

The resource persons also mentioned a few instances where they had been on-site when the rescue was being done in collaboration with the police. The trafficked women and children would be hidden in the ceiling, behind false walls, flooring, commodes, etc. Though they are trained to look for these, it would still be a challenge to find the hiding places. The places where trafficked people are kept are not always in special houses. At times they are housed in normal PGs with other students or working women who would not have any idea that their roommate is a forced escort, forced sex worker, etc. The term "forced" is important here, since these people are forced into these kinds of situations and work. In Bengaluru, for example, trafficked people have been rescued from all over the city including in a location quite close to the PMI national office.

The seminar made one aware of the lacuna in the field of anti-human trafficking. If any of the readers are interested in providing help towards this, please contact the National Prison Ministry India, Bengaluru office.

Running the Good Race

The chill winter morning of 9th February 2020 saw about 2000 enthusiastic children, youth and adults, all heading towards Yerwada's Don Bosco School and College grounds for the PMI Pune's Half Marathon 2nd Edition. The energy on the grounds was exhilarating and excitement-filled. The Zumba warm-ups and lively music had everyone energised and dancing to the beat. Everyone was here for the cause and everyone was here for themselves!

Mr Dhanraj Pillai, former Captain of the Indian hockey team flagged off the first group of 21K runners at 6am, followed by Fr Michael Bansode SDB, Rector and parish priest of Sacred Heart Church, Yerwada, who flagged off the 10K run shortly thereafter. At 7am, Mr Dhanajirao Choudhari, retired D.I.G flagged off the 5K run and by 7.30am Fr Andrew Fernandes SJ, Provincial of Pune Jesuit Province flagged off the 3K run full of enthusiastic school children who could not wait to get started!

"The best part about this year's event is that the route took thousands running outside Yerawada Central Jail. This year's route



Mrs Amira
Volunteer, PMI Pune

was extremely difficult to manage because of the proximity of the airport and related traffic in the early hours of the morning. The participation of hundreds of children and educating them about the cause will no doubt create a sympathetic relationship between the common people and the prisoners" said Ajay Desai, founder of Blue Brigade, the running partner for the event for two consecutive years.



It was indeed inspiring to see the young and old, men and women, all take to the streets of Yerwada, running with joy and enthusiasm for the rehabilitation of prisoners. "It was a wonderful experience, running for this noble and charitable cause. It taught us the value of freedom and how we should be grateful towards God", remarked an exhausted yet excited Breanna Manoj Jiviam, a 4th standard student from St Joseph's High school,

Half Marathon - A Report

Pashan, after completing the 3K run with her friends.

Back at the grounds, Ann Thomas and her team from Nucleus Fitness were ready with stretching and cool-down exercises for all the exhausted runners. Everyone then headed to the replenishing breakfast tables organized for the participants. “It was a sumptuous breakfast fit for a king,” commented a Senior couple who walked the 3K distance. “It was a thrilling experience to be among the children, teens, adults and a few seniors who were all excited to be a part of this run. We were happy to contribute towards this worthy cause and support the PMI in their ministry,” they added.

The grand finale included a few words of encouragement and support from the Chief Guest Dhanraj Pillai, followed by the awards ceremony. Parag Dongre, winner of 2nd prize (21 K Veteran - Male category) had this to say, “Perfect weather for a run and excellent route support by the Blue Brigade

group. What made this event close to my heart was the great social cause linked to it. The icing on the cake was, of course, the super show post-run by the angels of Don



Bosco school. I’m definitely coming back next year!”

A special thanks go out to the Bishop of the Diocese of Pune, Most Rev Thomas Dabre, all the parish priests and the principals of the various schools & colleges, for their overwhelming support. Prison Ministry is also appreciative of the unstinting support from Blue Brigade for the 2nd consecutive year, for having a good understanding of the cause and the spirit of the PMI Pune Half Marathon. An event of this magnitude can only be successful with the support of sponsors, partners and the dedicated teamwork of all the Prison Ministry volunteers.

Fr Wilfred V Fernandes, Director of PMI Pune Diocese wrapping up this 2nd edition of PMI Pune’s Half Marathon said that the driving force for this great and inspiring event can be found in our Holy Bible, “We can do all things through Christ which strengthens us” (Phil 4:13).



State Executive Body Meeting

The Maharashtra State Executive Body Meeting was held on Friday 18 October 2019 at Sarvodaya, Goregaon and those present were Bishop Allwyn, Frs Francis, Wilfred, Glasten, Jacob, Jobin, Joby, Manuel, Melwin, Saby Michael, Sr Shanti, Mr Walter, Mr Rajendra, Ms Margaret and Ms Rowena.

The meeting began with a prayer by Sr Shanti and Rowena. The points on the agenda were then taken up. Fr Wilfred thanked Bishop Allwyn, Fr Francis & Fr Glasten for their assistance and everyone who had come from different dioceses. He encouraged all the members to continue to work in each diocese/parish and to work together as a family.

Bishop Allwyn welcomed everyone and pointed out the process of choosing Fr Francis as the national coordinator and the positive results already being seen. He also thanked Fr Wilfred, our state coordinator, as well as our central region coordinator for all their work. Fr Jacob led the group in the next session of personal introductions. Fr Francis then took over the proceedings regarding setting up of the Maharashtra state office premises as well as the upcoming Rehabilitation Home project. He reiterated that we were not a 'social work group' but a 'spiritual ministry' body. And therefore:

- The state office must have an Adoration Centre and every unit must have their regional prayer groups set up.
- We must have intercessory groups attached to every functioning jail or children's home



Mrs Rowena Luis
State Secretary PMI Maharashtra

Fr Francis asked to have a list of the Executive Body members as follows:

1. Ex-officio.
2. Unit representatives.
3. Nominated members.

Each coordinator shared their present position of work and challenges including those from Aurangabad, Vasai, Sindhudurg, Chanda, Nashik, Mumbai, Nagpur, and Pune. The next meeting would be held in Sindhudurg. The suggested dates are 13 January, to be present in the evening and to begin the meeting on 14th the next morning and end by 4pm.

Fr Wilfred appreciated all the efforts of the various coordinators and urged them to take stock of their jails and homes and their unique situations. He cautioned them "Don't try to ape another." On the contrary, identify one's own needs, find one's resources and take up concrete plans. Build teams for all jails. Rowena reiterated Fr Wilfred's point of view and said that instead of competing with other teams, we must try to raise the bar in our own diocese/units.

Fr Saby expressed a note of appreciation to Fr Wilfred. Mr Walter concluded with a vote of thanks on behalf of all the members. The meeting ended at lunch.

Women: The Backbone of Family and Society

It is said that we feel the importance of something only when its absence brings about serious consequences. Then we search for the cause and try to find some solution. We have the example of global warming and climate change due to our interference with the laws of Nature. Similarly, today humanity is regretting the lack of contribution women could have made if they had not been sidelined in society. Frantic efforts are being made all over the world to restore the dignity of women and empower them so that they could give their best for the all-round growth of society. Celebration of women's day is one such attempt.

We read in Ps 69, "The Lord listens to those in need and does not forget his people in prisons". Women, locked up behind the bars too have their dignity, and they too must be empowered to be agents of change even in the jail. Creating this awareness and showing our solidarity with the female prisoners in their silent suffering, was our purpose in celebrating the "International Women's Day" in the Central Jail at Berhampur on 8 March 2020. As we entered the female section of the jail, the convicted ones who were familiar with us came running and embraced us. They laughed, shouted for joy and even cried. Our very presence was empowering them. Society may ignore them but not the PMI volunteers.

As many of them are illiterate we had decided to start the programme with a few team building-fun games. The first game was the "Caterpillar challenge". They had to walk on newspapers joined in the form



Sr Shanti Pulickal SCC
Berhampur Unit Coordinator

of a chain and push it back with their hands raised. Very few showed interest; one complained of leg pain, another had a headache and so on. Years of loneliness and rejection had made many of them lethargic and depressed. We cajoled those whom we knew well to participate and as they began to walk they got interested. They had to walk quickly as a team on the newspapers while at the same time had to be careful not to tear the fragile paper. Slowly, their concentration moved from their woes and worries to the present challenge and they were excited. It had a contagious effect! Slowly all of them got up. Since we had prepared more paper chains, all had the chance to play.

The ice was broken! They entered a different world and wanted more such games. The next game was the bursting of balloons. They had to protect their own balloons and at the same time break the balloons of others. The sound of the bursting balloons was mingled with their hearty laughter and clapping of hands. It made them realize that life is not a bed of roses. Others will try to break them, oppress and suppress them but the successful ones are those who go forward despite obstacles. They were eager for more games and we were prepared. We made them walk with an empty paper cup on their heads. As their speed increased the cups began to fall one by one and they

laughed. Ups and downs are part of life but that should not deter us from achieving our goals. As we sat down for a friendly chat, the conversation turned out to be on the games, how it helped in releasing their tensions and what they had learned from it. They were able to bring out many points from their personal experiences.

One of them said, "Even the walls of prisons or any other walls in life will not prevent us from being empowered women. The jailor was with us all through and spoke about the important role of women in building up a home and the society as well. Finally, we put to them the question suggested by our

bishop, "How would a home be if there are no women"? The unanimous answer was, "It will break and each one will go one's own way because only a woman can keep a family united. Women are the backbones of the family and in turn, backbones of the society and that of the world.

We distributed oranges and toilet articles for each one of them. Then we sang a bhajan which they repeated and surrendered themselves and their families into the hands of the Mighty God who can empower, release, renew and transform them.

Reaching out to the Incarcerated Women on their Special Day

- Anthony Jacob, PMI Pune

This year for Women's day, Prison Ministry India's Pune team organised a special visit to the Women's Open Jail in Yerwada. Ursuline Sisters Diana and Jyotika accompanied by a team of doctors led by Dr Sania Siddiqui, Founder of Humjoli Foundation conducted a Seminar for the inmates on topics of Menstruation and Menopause, covering various aspects of hygiene, health, myths and tips. It was an informative session that was well received by the authorities and the inmates.

Assisting a Released Prisoner By Libby Nicholas

Sharda (name withheld) waited anxiously as her release day approached. It was 20 years since she was incarcerated for murder and entered into the Women's Jail of Yerwada. For years, she has been told when to eat, what to wear, and where to go. Now suddenly she will have to make decisions



on her own. Many questions were running through her head...she felt overwhelmed!

Aware of her concerns, the Prison Authorities contacted Mr Anthony Jacob of Prison Ministry India's Pune office to assist with her rehabilitation. So earlier last week, Sharda was released into the gentle and caring hands of PMI Pune's female volunteers. PMI Pune had arranged for her employment with one of our benefactors in the hospitality industry. They will provide Sharada employment plus board and lodge. Thanks to their benevolence, Sharda now had hope and a new home...a chance for a new beginning. Through PMI Pune's efforts, Scripture was fulfilled, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom 12: 21



We Trust the Almighty

I.P. SARTO
Burdwan

A group of priests, nuns and youth from the Sacred Heart Church, Burdwan of Asansol diocese visited the District Correctional Home on 19 December 2019, with the Christmas message of love, peace, justice, freedom and consolation. Mr Naveen Kujur, the superintendent of Burdwan District Correctional Home welcomed the nuns, priests and youth.

The Christmas gathering began with a prayer dance by the inmates of the jail. Fr I P Sarto, the Vicar General of Asansol diocese gave the Christmas message of liberation, hope and comfort. He prayed for the inmates to get justice and freedom soon. Fr Sarto assured the inmates that they and the police staff would be remembered during the Christmas Mass in all the churches in the diocese.

The youth of Sacred Heart Parish, Burdwan presented a play on the birth of Jesus; it was followed by Christmas Carol singing and Christmas wishes by the Missionaries of Charity, Congregation of Jesus and Sisters of St Annes, Chennai Sisters and priests.

Then the inmates of the Correctional Home exhibited their creativity and talents

through the presentation of an inspiring dance drama on the environment, a prayer dance set to a Malayalam song and a Christmas poem. It was a joyful experience for all. It helped everyone to be attuned with positive encouragement to accept and live optimistically by trusting the Almighty power of God, through Jesus Christ.

Sr Jane, MC gave the Christmas message of God's love for each one of us. We need to trust him and come to him with humility in our hearts, she said. It was followed by a Christmas dance performed by the priests, nuns and youth. Fr Martin Behera, the parish priest concluded the programme with a thanksgiving prayer. The MC Sisters also provided cakes and sweets to the 1,100 inmates within the Correctional Home.

The Apostolic Carmel Sisters, Alexia and Srija from Kolkata visit them regularly for a self-employed income generation programme for the women inside the Correctional Home, Burdwan. The inmates, with assistance from AC Sisters, staged a cultural evening on 26 January 2020 to entertain visitors. They also sold all the materials prepared by them to the public.



Women's Day : Guwahati

**OH WOMAN : YOU ARE A
MIRACLE**

Women's Day was celebrated in the women's section of the Central Jail Guwahati on 8 March 2020 in commemoration of International Women's Day. The celebration began with a prayer service and a welcome address. The programme continued with an input session given by Dr Theresa



Sr Jobina UFS
PMI North East Regional Coordinator

Biswas, Laboratory Director, Consultant biochemist, on the topic of 'Importance of Women in Society and Awareness on Health and Hygiene'. After that, there was a cultural programme performed by the students of various institutions. Thereafter prizes for various competitions were distributed to the winners as well as clothes and refreshments were given to the inmates as an act of charity. We express our sincere thanks to all our well-wishers who contributed generously to make the day a success.





RRDC Yearly Program

Reformative, Research and Documentation Center (RRDC)

Thanks Very Much for Your Valuable Spiritual and Financial Cooperation in
Completing the RRDC Construction.

You Are Most Welcome to the PMI Training Programs.

May 2020

03-04 National Executive Meeting
04-18 Fulltimers' Course
25-31 Training Program for PMI
Rehabilitation Center Staff Members

June 2020

08-14 State Coordinators, Secretaries and
Treasurers Meet

July 2020

06-11 Diocesan Directors Meet

August 2020

17-23 Unit Coordinators Meet

September 2020

07-13 Unit Secretaries and Treasures Meet

October 2020

05-11 Karnataka State PMI Volunteers
Meet

November 2020

16-19 Pioneers Meet

December 2020

07-13 Goa PMI Volunteers Meet

January 2021

04-10 Maharashtra PMI Volunteers Meet

February 2021

08-14 Tamilnadu PMI Volunteers Meet

March 2021

08-14 Andhra - Telangana PMI Volunteers
Meet

April 2021

05-11 MP PMI Volunteers Meet

"The Son of Man Came to Seek and Save the Lost" Lk 19,10

RSVP: Prison Ministry India, 52 Thomas Layout, Sarjapur Road,
Carmelaram Bengaluru - 560 035;

Tel 9447710488; 7012937731; Email: frandiyana@live.in

www.prisonministryindia.org



**Jeevodaya - A Gift of God
Book Release, Bengaluru**



**Rev Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS
Presenting PMI Report at 34th
CBCI Plenary Assembly**



**Blessing of Van Thuan Home
Carmelaram, Bengaluru**



**Sound of Silence Book Release
Bengaluru**



**Women's Day Celebration
Central Jail Berhampur, Odisha**



**Symposium on Death Penalty
Paalana Bhavan, Bengaluru**



34th CBCI Plenary Assembly, St Johns Medical College



PRISON MINISTRY INDIA

52 Thomas Layout, Sarjapura Road, Carmelaram
Bengaluru - 560 035, Karnataka, India
94477 10488, 98800 22209

2020 FULL TIMERS/VOLUNTEERS COURSE

Venue

RRDC

Prison Ministry India

Carmelaram, Bengaluru - 560 035

Date & Time

4th May 2020 (3 pm)

to

18th May 2020 (10 am)

- The last date for submitting the applications is on 05 April 2020.
- Who can apply? - Priests, Sisters, Brothers, Lay people, new and regular volunteers who are willing to extend their compassion and care towards the brethren behind the bars.
- Registration Fee: Rs. 5,000/-

Rev Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS

National Coordinator

Sr Lini Sheeja MSC

National Secretary

Fr George Kalassery VC

RRDC Director

**Email : nationalpmi2015@gmail.com / pmi2005@rediffmail.com
www.prisonministryindia.org**