



# PRISON VOICE

March 2022

Vol. XIX

Issue 03

NATIONAL MONTHLY

₹40/-

**I Thirst**





**Ash Wednesday Celebration in Jharsuguda Prison**



**Burning Bush Spiritual Banquet**



**Computer Room Inauguration, Mankurd Children's Home**



**PMI National Office Team Visiting Special Subjail KGF**



**PMI Pioneers at Snehakudeeram with Fr George Kuttickal MCBS**



**PMI Volunteers Convening Dental Camp at Children's Home, Mankurd**



**PMI Volunteers Distributing Books and Book Shelves to Sundargarh Prison**



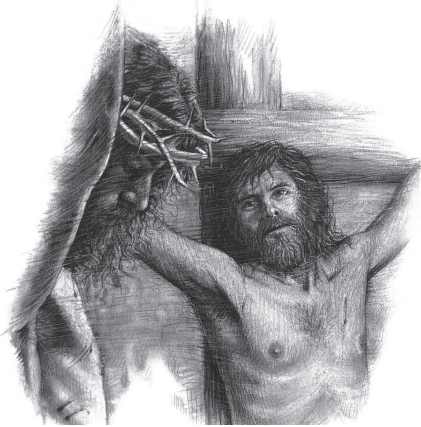
**PMI Volunteers Distributing Clothes to Birsa Munda Jail**

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## PRISON VOICE

NATIONAL MONTHLY



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remember me  
when You  
come into Your  
Kingdom!”*

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### Are You Willing?

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

80% of the children of  
prisoners are potential  
criminals unless somebody  
takes care of them.

Prison Ministry India has  
begun a scheme to  
educate 1000  
children of prisoners:  
Kindly contribute

Rs. 5,000/- for the education  
of a child.

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## SOCIAL DIMENSION OF LENT

### Penance

As we began the lenten season with the sign of the cross, let us now ask ourselves whether we are conscious of our nothingness and of our sinfulness. Lent is a time of penance and renewal. Do we ask for the grace of forgiveness for our sins? Are we renewing ourselves through our participation in the sacrifice of Christ? We know that penance forms an essential part of our Christian way of perfection. Penance for us, primarily means that we leave aside our selfishness, our pettiness, our lack of love and concern for others. Penance means the renewal of the divine life received in baptism by tearing away from us our sinful old self. It means that in the power of God's grace, we earnestly endeavor to accept and live God's Lordship over ourselves, our families and communities. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that as our sins, having a social dimension, so also our penance, our turning to God, must also be socially oriented by turning to our brothers and sisters. "During Lent, penance should not be only internal and individual, but also external and social" (SC 110). Let us, therefore, seriously think of our social obligations, our love and concern towards our brethren behind bars, towards the poor, oppressed and the abandoned and our love and support to our Ukraine brethren, too, through our prayers and fasting. All our private and family penances, especially our greater consistence in prayer during this season, must also be given a sacramental character by our well-considered and sincere acceptance of the sacrament of penance.

### Pope Francis' Lenten Message

Let's profoundly reflect upon Pope Francis' Lenten Message 2022. Lent is a favourable



**Sr Amala DC**  
Chief Editor

time for personal and community renewal, as it leads to the Pascal Mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Let us never grow tired of doing good for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all" (Gal 6:9-10). Lent is certainly such an opportune time. All too often in our lives, greed, pride and the desire to possess, accumulate and consume have the upper hand. Lent invites us to a change in mindset, so that life's beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sowing and sharing goodness. The Pope says that by sowing and reaping, by making good use of the present time, we can sow seeds of goodness. The real harvest is a life full of good deeds and radiated light that carries the fragrance of Christ to the world.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has left the people there homeless, hungry, scared, lost, terrified and totally helpless. Let us lift them up into Jesus' caring and loving arms, pleading for Mercy for our brethren in Ukraine and to keep them safe from the shelling and bombing. Let's collectively pray for this war to stop and that God's mercy and peace may prevail. Lent is the time of our conversion and the renewal of God's life in us. Only then, can we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection. It is by entering more deeply and fully into these mysteries of Christ that we realize in ourselves the graces of this great feast at the end of Lent.



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## **LENT WITH POSITIVE THINKING**

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### **Positive Thinking**

Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* inspired millions with his heartfelt prescription for enjoying a more fulfilling life. This phenomenal bestseller is a practical, direct-action application of spiritual techniques to overcome defeat and win confidence, success and joy. Peale's famous formula of faith and optimism shall be the hallmark of PMI volunteers during Lent. Positive thinking and sharing positive experiences have great impacts in prison ministry. In order that our ministry be productive, we need to be optimistic and develop good vibes. For a positive thinker sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible. Besides helping improve our mental health and general wellness, positive thinking helps boost our confidence and improves relationships with other people. As Gautama Buddha writes, we become what we think and what we think we become.

### **Ways to Be a Positive Thinker**

One way to develop positive thinking is to associate with positive people who carry good attitudes, and who will keep encouraging us even when we fail. Vincent Peale recommends ten rules for overcoming inadequacy attitudes, learning to practice faith and becoming positive. They are: 1) Picture yourself succeeding, 2) Think a positive thought to drown out a negative thought, 3) Minimize obstacles, 4) Do not attempt to copy others, 5) Repeat "If God be for us, who can be against us?" ten times



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

every day, 6) Work with a counsellor, 7) Repeat "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" ten times every day, 8) Develop a strong self-respect, 9) Affirm that you are in God's hands, 10) Believe that you receive power from God. Let's develop the habit of thinking positively and sharing optimistic and inspiring thoughts.

### **Gossiping**

The opposite of 'Positive Thinking' is engaging in gossiping or speaking negatively, or casual conversation about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true. The habit of negative sharing and spreading rumours about others is not only destructive but also a dangerous disease. Pope Francis recommends avoiding gossiping especially during Lent. He says that the devil is the biggest gossiper who divides the Church with his lies. Gossip is a plague worse than Covid19. PMI volunteers shall never engage in gossiping. Instead let's share positive and inspiring news and information about others. Pessimism leads to weakness, optimism to power. We shall be experts in turning negative thoughts and situations into positive.

### How to Communicate

Pope Saint Gregory the Great (590-604) was a great communicator and wanted pastors of souls to be effective communicators. He affirms that there are four ways of communicating: “Every communication can take place in four ways: aut mala male, aut bona bene, aut mala bene, aut bona male” (ComJb V, 23, 5). **Mala male**, occurs when evil (mala) is presented without being condemned or when it is even endorsed, and this is certainly bad communication. **Bona bene**, occurs when good things (bona) are communicated in the right way (bene), that is, approving them and inciting others to good. **Mala bene**, means that one can communicate even things that are bad in themselves (mala), as long as one does so by disapproving of them, and this is good. **Bona male** happens when the content of the communication is good in itself (bona), but is presented in a way that puts it in a bad light, ridiculing or devaluing it, and this is bad. Let’s examine how and what we communicate. Let our communication be **Bona bene**. The moment we replace negative thoughts with positive ones, we will begin to experience positive results.

### Mary Magdalene

The story of Mary Magdalene gives us a typical example of how the practice of “Positive Thinking”, the habit of gossiping and the art of communication affect one’s life. On Easter morning, Jesus told Mary to go and tell the apostles that he had risen. “Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, ‘I have seen the Lord!’ Then she gave them his message” (Jn 20:18). Thus, she became the Apostle to the Apostles. But Mary Magdalene has

been frequently identified as a prostitute, a sinner who was cured of *seven demons*. It is speculated, that she was possibly the wife of Jesus, if you believe Dan Brown, the author of the provocative novel, *The Da Vinci Code*. All those depictions of her in paintings as a harlot, an adulterous woman, a sinner – with a mournful pose and repentant gaze – is it true? The answer is ‘No.’ For 1,400 years she has had a bad reputation. The Gospel reading for Mary Magdalene’s feast on July 22 used to be the story of the repentant sinful woman. Recently, things got a little better and positive. In 1969, the readings for her feast day were changed to the story of her encounter with the Risen Jesus and her commission to “go and tell the disciples” (John 20:1-2, 11-18). This is a typical transition from negative thinking to positive thinking and from pessimistic communication to optimistic.

### Conclusion

The reputation of Mary Magdalene has been distorted for more than 1,400 years. That’s a long time to wait until you can straighten things out. You and I don’t have that much time, so be careful. When you hear a rumour or sniff some gossip, it may feel cool to be in the in-crowd, to have that secret guilty pleasure in being part of those “who know.” But think positive again. How would you feel about being on the other side of that? The problem with gossip is that it lives a long time after you say it. Hence better not to engage in it. Instead, be positive and communicate positively. For positive thinking and communication is a challenge, the need of the time and a virtue to be practised during Lent. Let’s strive to fill the world around us with optimism, dreams, visions and plans for the release, reformation, rehabilitation, reintegration and redemption of prisoners. Be mindful. Be grateful. Be positive. Be true. Be kind.



# ***No INMATE SHOULD EVER BE DEPRIVED OF HOPE***

## ***POPE FRANCIS<sup>1</sup>***

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### **Redeem Prisoners**

Pope Francis issued a plea on behalf of prison inmates on 16 January 2022, saying they should never be deprived of hope and always be given the opportunity to redeem themselves. In remarks at his weekly public audience at the Vatican, Holy Father told the faithful that “we risk being imprisoned in a justice that doesn’t allow one to easily get up back again and confuses redemption with punishment. For this, I want to recall today in a particular way our brothers and our sisters who are in prison. It’s right that those who have made a mistake pay for their mistake, but it’s even more right that those who have done wrong should be able to redeem themselves from their mistake. There can’t be sentences without windows of hope”.

### **Be a Window of Hope**

Pope Francis didn’t cite the prison policies or justice systems of any particular countries as problematic. Catholic teaching holds that the death penalty has no justification in modern society. During his papacy, Pope Francis has called for attention to the needs of communities on society’s margins, including prison populations, to be a priority. “Let’s think of our incarcerated brothers and sisters, and let’s think about the tenderness of God for them and pray



for them so that they may find a window of hope, a way out toward a better life,” he said in concluding his remarks.

### **Overcrowding**


Italy’s justice minister, while briefing lawmakers in Parliament on criminal justice reform, decried overcrowding in the country’s prisons, describing it as the most serious of all the problems plaguing the penal system. Justice Minister Marta Cartabia said Italy’s prisons were 14% overcrowded. “It’s a condition that aggravates the relationships among inmates and which makes the work of prison personnel, often victims of aggression, even more difficult,” she said. “Overcrowding means greater difficulty in guaranteeing security and greater difficulty in proposing activities that facilitate paths to rehabilitation.”

### **Alternatives to Prison**

Cartabia said reforms were under way to allow for sentences that provide alternatives to prison. But she noted that 69,000 persons are already serving their sentences outside prison walls, compared to some 54,000 inmates in Italy’s criminal justice system. Cartabia and Italian Premier Mario Draghi promised reforms last year after they visited a prison in southern Italy where dozens of officers were under investigation for allegedly beating, kicking and punching prisoners during unrest provoked by the coronavirus pandemic. An Italian newspaper published surveillance video of the officers assaulting inmates, including a prisoner in a wheelchair who was hit on the back with a baton.

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<sup>1</sup> Curtsey to Frances D’Emilio, Associated Press



# **SIGNIFICANCE OF LENTEN SPIRITUALITY IN PRISONERS' REFORMATION**

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**Dr Paul Raj SG**

## **What is Spirituality?**

Spirituality has to do with our experiencing of God and with the transformation of our consciousness and our lives as an outcome of that experience. Since God is available in principle to everyone, spirituality is not exclusively Christian. Christian Spirituality is the expression of Christian discipleship. Christian discipleship can be understood better if we understand what spirituality is. "For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit". (Rom 8, 5) The awareness of who we are and what we are called to become, and to direct our lives accordingly, in response to God's grace within us is what spirituality is all about. There are many factors that influence the Spirituality of PMI. One thing is sure that the PMI spirituality is not a Spirituality of **Flight from the World**. In the initial period of Christian history, the best way to imitate Jesus was to die like him. To be a martyr meant to be fully conformed to the crucified Lord. But once persecution ended and there was no opportunity for martyrdom, Christians looked for a substitute. Thus, religious life was born. I would like to reflect on FOUR simple areas of life in my reflection today. They are:



## **Open Ourselves to Hurting People**

Jesus opened Himself up to a painful death, to bring eternal salvation to the whole hurting world. (The PMI Mission is this). The spiritual season of Lent has come to revolve around the theme of "conversion." Christian conversion is a slow process of becoming transformed into the perfect image and likeness of God, in and through his beloved son, Jesus Christ. Thomas Merton describes the Lenten process of conversion and transformation as he cites the Gospel of St. John: "every dead branch will be purged, while every good branch will be pruned so as to bring forth more fruit (Jn 15:1)." He also suggests that while fasting and self-denial are vital expressions of Lenten spirituality, what matters most is the fruit of those practices, our faithful and Spirit-empowered efforts to share the fullness of God's life and love in our broken world. Gandhi's principle of non-violence by inflicting violence on oneself is relevant here.

## **Focus on Hope during Lent**

Too often I let myself get discouraged by all the needs in the world. Pope Francis reminded us in his Lenten Message 2021: "To experience Lent in hope entails growing in the realization that, in Jesus Christ, we are witnesses of new times, in which God is 'making all things new' (cf. Rev 21:1-6). It means receiving the hope of Christ, who gave his life on the cross and was raised by God on the third day. Jer 29:11: "I alone know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to give you hope and a future". Those of us facing





difficult situations today can take comfort in Jeremiah 29:11 knowing that it is not a promise to immediately rescue us from hardship or suffering, but rather a promise that **God has a plan for our lives** and regardless of our current situation, He can work through it to prosper us and give us a hope. The people of Israel were asking for immediate rescue from the sufferings that they were experiencing, and Jeremiah had a huge responsibility to tell them the truth about God's promise. He was also tasked to rebuke a very huge lie that the false prophet Hananiah circulated, which was not a very easy task to do. The verse 29:11 was his message, inspired by God's guidance, to tell the people that God's response is not an immediate answer, rather, that God has a plan to prosper His people amidst hardships and that God has a promise for the future of His people. What can we learn from this? God has a plan for us to prosper and hope for our future. We should not give up. We may be experiencing different situations such as the pandemic or crises of various kinds or a difficult political situation; but this verse tells us that these things are in passing and God has a plan.

**New Hope**

There's only one certainty in PMI future: the life of prisoners is about to change. "You can't stop change any more than you can stop the sun from setting." As you go about in your Prison ministry, you will meet **new** challenges, you will explore new ministries, and you will discover new ways of being an ambassador. You may feel some fear as you experience the shape of the future

ahead. But remember this: "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." Fear also can lead to hopelessness! You must face your fear and its various manifestations with prayer and trust in the Lord. Understanding suffering in all its deeper dimensions, the role of the Church in the Easter mystery of Christ is: Rom 8:17: "Only if we suffer with him, we will be glorified with him".

**Embracing Lent can be Challenging**

You need hope and a new hope to embrace Lent. Our path ahead is not an easy one. Our path ahead includes the unseen and unexpected potholes, unpleasant experiences, and unfavourable odds. But you have been well trained under the unfailing and powerful protection and intercession of Our Bl. Mother. You will be reminded of this often during this Lenten season. For you PMI ministers, the Cross has become an integral part of your PMI spirituality. It calls on each of you to "learn how even the Cross can be borne as a gift." Our world is also filled with wonders, new technologies, creativity, and great imagination and challenges. We need training and knowledge too, to face them.

**Possibilities for Reformation are Boundless**

As a part of your Lenten spirituality, make it a point to learn more about a particular social issue (immigration, human trafficking, racism, the prisoners' plight, Indian legal

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<sup>1</sup> Fr Leon Cruz SDB is Director of Don Bosco Youth Services, Mumbai and a Missionary of Mercy.





## PRISONERS REFORMATION

system, child poverty or child trafficking etc). Pray for somebody: Be mindful of the words of philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who said, “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle.” Read the Works of compassion as Jesus describes them in Matthew 25:31-46. Each one can put this teaching into practice and choose an act of service we can perform throughout Lent.

### **Possibilities for Compassionate Ministry are Boundless**

Jesus identifies God as his Father and declares the humanitarian emphasis (vv. 35 and 36)—feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and prisoners - these make for the outcome of a disciple’s commitment to Christ. (vv. 35-36). These six deeds of compassion are not exhaustive. Each meets a specific need of a particular needy person. There are other needs too. PMI cannot feed the entire world. A kind word or listening ear can help a person in despair. The possibilities for mercy are boundless, just as human needs are boundless.

The very basic nature of these six ministries: Food, drink, hospitality, clothing, nursing care, and visitation. PMI cannot be doing all of these at the same time. But we know that every person has the potential to provide these kinds of helps or mercies. One need not be a nurse to help a sick person. One need not be ordained to visit a prisoner in jail or do prison ministry. PMI is one of the ministries where all the Baptized Christians are called to one vocation: that is vocation

to do prison ministry. All are equal, all are treated with equal respect and dignity. Only the services they render may be different. This Lenten spirituality in Prisoners’ reformation can help a PMI volunteer to ask himself or herself: One important element in renewing my sense of call, the passion and the sense of connectedness I bring to my PMI mission is by asking the following questions:

1. *What am I doing that PMI would like me to do more of?*
2. *What am I doing that PMI would like me to do less of?*
3. *What am I not doing that PMI would like me to start doing?*

### **PMI is needed for the Church and for the World**

You have been part of PMI community in which you are proud to continue and contribute. You have created enriching experiences for Prisoners, their families, their children in schools, in parishes, and in education for life. You have provided services in our country and in the Church through visits, accompaniment, teaching, researching, counselling, and training in life skills and advocacy. I have seen your compassion and your dedication to improving our Church and our world through PMI. The message is that endless possibilities are now open to you. A good soul once said, “Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.” I hope, you as PMI go to that somewhere. I hope you find that something. I hope PMI chooses to move forward with into the unknown but where the Spirit is leading you to.

## Lent – Season of Reparations for Redemption!

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**Sr Lini Sheeja MSC**

Sanjan's (name changed) mother taught me the greatest lesson of crying out to God on behalf of someone for his sins. Sanjan served prison for 21 years for committing a murder. He was a notorious boy who wanted freedom and enjoy life with his friends. He hailed from a traditional Catholic family in Tamilnadu. With his so-called friends, he got involved in a heinous murder. He was pronounced guilty and convicted as a murderer. The sentence was a 21 year long rigorous imprisonment. Sanjan felt disappointed and dejected. But not Sanjan's mother! When he completed his sentence in prison, we the Prison Ministry India volunteers took him to his mother and she welcomed us very happily and thanked us for bringing her son safely. She was uncontrollable at the arrival of her son. Sanjan's father had died while he was serving the prison term. Mother was staying with her elder son and family. Sanjan as a renewed person embraced his mother with tears of joy. Mother served us a cup of tea and went back to the kitchen. She then returned holding a small packet in her hand. She opened it and we saw sand and small stones mixed in it.

### **Mother's Tears**

When we asked her about it she said, "My son left me 21 years ago. When I heard about his arrest, I was heart-broken. But I didn't give up. I knew my God who formed Sanjan in my womb will bring him back. For the past 21 years I had spread this mud on

the floor every morning at 4am and knelt down on it for an hour with arm stretched and prayed for the return of my son. Today my son has returned as a renewed person", she continued shedding tears of joy. "Thank you, Sisters, for accompanying my son". When I saw her knees, I could not control my tears. She had waited for her son as the father of the Prodigal Son had waited!

### **St Monica's Tears**

St Monica prayed for her son Augustine for 17 years before his conversion. After 17 years of resistance, Augustine was converted to Christianity under the wise instruction of St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. Monica prayed for her wayward son from the time he was a young boy and even as he grew up and turned to pagan religions. Her unceasing prayers and tears were rewarded and Augustine became a great man of God. He became a renowned theologian, a prolific writer, and rhetorician. He became Father of the Church and Doctor of the Church.

### **Moses' Tears**

Moses returned from Mount Sinai with the precious tablets of the Law in his hands. But the people had become impatient waiting for him, and had fashioned a golden calf to worship. When Moses returned, sheer chaos broke out. Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." In despair



## LENT – A SEASON OF REPARATION

and anger, Moses turned to God and prayed to forgive his people's sins. Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin, if not, please blot me out of the book that you have written" (Exodus 32:15-34).

### St Therese of Child Jesus' Tears

Henri Pranzini born in 1856 was a notorious and brutal criminal. He was a trafficker, gambler, lady-killer and triple murderer. He was sentenced to death. From reports Therese came to know that Pranzini was impenitent and was sure of his eternal damnation. To avert that "irreparable calamity" she decided to employ "all the spiritual means" she could think of. She stormed Heaven for a man many thought was beyond redemption: "Everything led to the belief that he would die impenitent. I wanted at all costs to keep him from falling into hell. The day after his execution, Therese read in the paper that when he was about to put his head into the device, "he turned, took hold of the crucifix the priest was holding out to him, and kissed the sacred wounds three times! Then he received his merciful sentence".

### Jesus' Tears

Jesus pleaded to His Father, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). When Jesus was crucified, he uttered these words for those who had crucified him. He asked his Father for forgiveness for those who asked for his murder. Jesus died on the cross to redeem fallen humanity. He was sacrificed for the

sins of humanity. Jesus' death on the Cross was the greatest sacrifice to restore the relationship that was broken. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"(Mk 10:45).

### Prison Ministry India Volunteers' Tears

The Season of Lent is a journey with God who sacrificed His life on the Cross for the redemption of fallen humanity. The God who redeemed us through His passion and death continues to redeem us even today. Although prisons are filled with hard-core criminals, terrorists, rapists, hired-killers, thieves, grace too flows there in abundance. Who can stop the flow of the mercy of God? We, the PMI family, have witnessed the redemption of thousands of souls in our journey with the rejected ones behind bars. Sanjan's mother knelt on the sand mixed with stones for 21 long years and prayed for her son. St Monica prayed for her son for 17 long years. Moses cried out to God for his people's sins who were entrusted to his care. St Therese of Child Jesus did all possible sacrifices for one lost soul, Henri Pranzini. Jesus cried out to God, to Abba Father, for all our sins. What about us?

The season of Lent invites every PMI volunteer to kneel before the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier with outstretched arms to plead for the sins of each of the brethren behind bars. 24 hours Eucharistic Adoration named Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated, the perfect initiative of Fr Francis Kodyan MCBS, PMI national coordinator, brings fruits in abundance as PMI volunteers across the country come together to plead before God by offering Holy Mass, reading the Word of God, praying the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, the Stations of the Cross and so on.



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## **Do the Dead Walk? My Experiences with Death Row Prisoners**

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**Sr Adele Korah SCCG**

### **Deadmen Walking**

No one can imagine a dead man walking! It may sound strange for those who never had an opportunity to accompany the brethren who are convicted to Capital punishment. They spend every minute, day after day in great distress. They are dragging themselves behind the bars, confined to the four walls of a cell. They appear stupefied by the unexpected order they received from the court, as if they received a blow on the head. Only those who have listened to their woes, heard their sighs unheard by anyone, can understand the state they are in, as they spend days languishing behind the bars. Though externally they appear alive, yet they are walking like corpse with woe-begone faces, heavy hearts, lamenting over their wretched state. They are those prisoners who are, convicted to Capital punishment and are confined to the four walls of a prison cell. Capital punishment or the death penalty is a legal process by which a person is put to death by the State as punishment for a capital crime. It is given in the rarest of rare criminal cases. Absence of persons dear to their hearts who could have shared their heartaches and anguish, aggravate their woes leading them to despair, having no one with whom they can share their inner agony. As per the Statistics it is painful to know the truth that 156 prisoners have committed suicide in the year 2020.

### **Death Row Prisoners**

From 2004 onwards I had the opportunity to walk with several brethren during the painful years of their life in prison. Some of them when they were undertrial have expressed their anxiety about the judgment that would be given to them at the end of their trials. They suffer going through nightmares and sleepless nights. I remember a prisoner when he was in military training, had kidnapped a young girl and offered her to his friends who raped her, killed her and escaped from the place. Unfortunately, the military man was caught by the police while his friends could never be traced. The man who couldn't escape was the only son of his widowed mother and was languishing in prison after getting the death sentence. His mother had approached me pleading to forward a mercy petition to the President which I did on her behalf. There might be many who go through this type of painful ordeal.

### **Desolation and Consolation**

Prisoners sentenced to death spend their days in utter desolation. I recall the occasion once when I was called by the Superintendent of the Central Prison, Bangalore, requesting me to go without delay to the ladies' section and spend some time with a lady prisoner who was convicted to Capital punishment as she was found guilty of having murdered six women. When I entered the small prison cell in the ladies' section of the Central Jail, I found the lady prisoner in a desperate state, beating her head on the wall of the prison cell. I found her in despair and in distress. After seeing me sitting beside her, she calmed down and started telling me that she was innocent and that she was accused and



## DO THE DEAD WALK?

arrested with a false case and was brought to the prison. Without asking any inquisitive question, I felt that what she needed was just a silent and patient listening to her pain and sorrow at the desperate situation she was in. I gave her a patient and compassionate listening without enquiring or judging her whether it was true or not. Though she spoke to me in this strain the report reveals the facts based on the investigations made regarding her crime.

### Serial Killer

In her wicked plan to become wealthy, she would approach women in distress and offer her assistance to perform Mandala Puja which she promised would solve all their problems. But before accompanying them to the temple she would request the women to wear their precious dress and all their jewels. She would take them to temples in the outskirts that they were unfamiliar with. There she managed to murder them very tactfully. She said that the movies she watched had taught her about Cyanide and its use as a poison. She devised a brilliant murderous idea to become rich in a matter of days. She used to take the women for Puja and ask them to close their eyes and she would pretend to pray after that. The women had no idea that it would be their last. Then she would serve them with Cyanide laced water as “Holy water”. That was how she would end the Puja. She was India’s first convicted female who was found responsible for the murder of six women in the State of Karnataka. As it was one of the rarest of rare cases, she was sentenced to Capital punishment.




### Sadananda’s Tactics

Another death row prisoner whom I met years ago in the prison was Sadananda (name changed) who appeared quite calm and composed. He was kept in solitary confinement in the prison. He spoke to me for a long time quoting from scriptures of different religions including the Holy Bible. I was told by other brethren that he was a death row prisoner. He had very tactfully succeeded in getting rid of his beautiful wife for unknown reasons. But the cunning plan he made to get rid of his wife whom he hated for unknown reason was very strange. He managed to put his wife to sleep in deep slumber with the help of heavy drugs. When he found out that she had lost her senses, and after having ascertained the fact that no sound or touch would wake her up, he managed to lower her body closed up in an airtight box in to a rather deep pit dug under the concrete floor in his own house. After a period of time, his daughter who could not get in touch with her by phone, grew anxious and found that her mother was missing. The daughter was working abroad and in no way she could get in touch with her mother.

### Love Dares to Break All Block

With a firm determination to trace out the whereabouts of her mother, she came home and asked her father and enquired among her relatives and neighbors. She was unable to accept the sudden disappearance of her mother. After a series of enquiry, she decided to make a thorough inspection of all the nooks and corners of her house. Sadananda had owned many apartments and villas in different countries too. But her love



and attachment to her mother prompted her to fight tooth and nail engaging in vigorous combat, using all her resources to reach her target. She felt suspicious of the appearance of a specific area on the floor of her house, and succeeded in digging a particular portion of the floor in their house with the assistance of the police. She successfully discovered the remnants of her mother's corpse under a slab. Police officers handled the next step. Sadananda was imprisoned and court cases went on for years ending in declaring him guilty and convicted for Capital punishment. Several years passed. Sadananda managed to get his death sentence reduced to Life imprisonment at Hindalga jail.

### **Hindalga Jail**

All the prisoners who are sentenced to Capital punishment in Karnataka are shifted to the Hindalga jail at Belgaum as it is the only prison in the State of Karnataka which has the facility for hanging those on the death row. There are 46 death sentence convicts at Hindalga jail. Two of them were released recently by the High court of Karnataka, twelve death row convicts including Cyanide Mallika were given Life imprisonment that is, Life unto death within the prison. Out of those 46 convicts, plea of nine for Mercy petition are pending with the President of India and appeals of 36 convicts are pending in the High court of Karnataka. In India, three cases are pending in the Supreme Court. Currently there are around 404 prisoners on death row with Uttar Pradesh leading. Though Capital Punishment is a legal course of action, with eye brows raised, we ask the question, why do we kill people who kill others only to show that killing people is wrong?



## **Ash Wednesday Celebration in Sundargarh Prison**

**Sr Mercyan**

“Let us not grow tired of doing good in active charity towards our neighbours. During this Lent, may we practice almsgiving by giving joyfully (2 Cor. 9:7). God who “supplies seed to the sower and bread for food” (2 Cor. 9:10) enables each of us not only to have food to eat but also to be generous in doing good to others.” Lenten Message of Pope Francis, 2022

PMI Jharsuguda Unit representatives consisting of Sr Mercyan, Sr Lalita, along with Fr. Christopher SVD, Fr. Sunil CAP visited Sundargarh District Jail. We conducted a one-hour long prayer service which was followed by the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. Both the Fathers spoke about the importance of the grace-filled season of Lent, forgiveness and the unconditional love of God. Nearly 450 inmates had assembled for this prayer meeting. Among them 150 were Catholics. They were all marked with the sign of the Cross on their forehead with the blessed ashes. Further, every inmate was given a copy of the booklet of the Way of the Cross. All Catholics made their confession. May this season of grace, fill everyone's heart with God's love and compassion.



# **Burning Bush Spiritual Banquet And World Day for Consecrated Life Report**

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**Br Pradeep Anthony L OFM**

## **Eucharistic Celebration**

The online meeting of Burning Bush Spiritual Banquet was held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 5:30 to 08.00PM. The theme was on 'World Day for Consecrated Life.' The program began with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr Benny Pachanal CRSP and concelebrated by Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS and Fr Jaison Puthenpurakkal MST. Mrs Lili P Vaz led the Choir. Fr Francis in his introduction mentioned that the Mass was especially offered for 6.5 lakh Religious, and 4.4 lakh priests all over the world, as well as for the religious and priests who are persecuted like St John De Britto such as Fr Joseph Tran from Vietnam who was recently martyred while hearing confession. Fr Francis welcomed Fr Benny Pachanal, CRSP, the assistant National coordinator and state coordinator of Karnataka.

## **Homily**

Fr Benny in his homily reminded us of the importance of recognizing and moving ahead in our daily lives by the grace of God following the example of Simeon and Anna. He pointed out the example of the two persons from the Gospel, Simeon and



Anna, who had the quality of living their life prompted by grace. Simeon and Anna were righteous, devout and filled with the Holy Spirit. Fr Benny took the example of Mother Mary and St. Joseph who followed the customs and traditions of those times. Mary had said yes to God's plans by discarding her own plans and Joseph in his silence had willingly submitted to God's will. Sr Amala DC, the national secretary of PMI, thanked Fr Benny Pachanal.

## **Fr Joseph Ivel Mendanha CSSR**

Sr Amala welcomed Fr Joseph Ivel Mendanha CSSR. Fr Ivel began his talk by recalling to mind the Vicar of Christ, Pope Francis' homily of 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2022. He said that the two elderly people, Simeon and Anna, had recognized God and both felt that God had fulfilled His promise. The significance of this was not the Presentation but rather the Visitation. During earlier times the temple was a special place for the people, home to God, as Solomon had built it because God had visited his temple. The shocking scandal, an unimaginable Visitation for all was that 'The King of Glory,' 'The Lord of Armies,' 'God,' was coming not on carpets, but rather in a vulnerable, fragile and weak child, carried in the hands of teenage parents. And they had offered a cheaper offering for which nobody would care to give a second glance at them. The Gospel of Luke being a Spirit filled Gospel, Simeon declares 'this is the salvation of God,' let your servant go in peace.' He also tells Mother Mary, 'a sword will pierce your heart.' This prophecy reveals that it is not through palaces, power, majesty or glory but through the Cross that redemption is achieved.





## Functions of Religious Life

The two functions of Religious Life are first, 'Innovatory Function of Consecrated Life' and secondly 'Corrective Role of Religious life.' The first function is especially relevant to PMI. Prison ministry has itself the elements of religious life. Fr. Ivel took the notion given by 'Vita Consecrata' that reiterates that the general call to the religious is radicality and totality in following Christ. Religious life should provide a clear link to Christ in following him since the religious take the voluntary vow to show themselves as the radar to Christ. After Vatican II, there is a call to go back to the Gospel and live the core values of the Gospel by reaching to the periphery. It implies that whatsoever we do to the least of the brethren is done to Christ. 'PMI has this core element, an outreach to prisoners by living the Gospel.' The entire Church is called to live this value. We should be aware that the poor are not a category, an idea, not a subject of discussion, but rather the poor are real persons who are longing for compassion and understanding.

On 'Corrective Role of Religious Life,' Fr Ivel said that large-scale institutions make us to compromise or water down our values of the Gospel. During the earlier days of the Church, personalities like Anthony of Egypt, Pachomius and Benedict stood for the Gospel values. Like in earlier times, later saints like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic, St. Alphons de Liguori, St. Ignatius of Loyola gave 'Shock Therapy,' to awaken the Church from its 'Dormant State' to true living of the Gospel. The call of the religious in the present times is precisely to awaken the Church from its 'Deep State of Anaesthesia' to 'The Life of the Gospel.' Br



## BURNING BUSH

Pradeep Anthony L OFM, thanked Fr Ival Mendanha by summarizing what he had spoken.

### Eucharistic Adoration

The Eucharistic Adoration was led by St Joseph Spiritual Bank under the leadership of Sr Lini Sheeja MSC, the former national secretary of PMI. She reflected on the call of Abraham, who left Ur and went to Canaan and became a blessing for many nations. We are all called to leave our family and kindred. Though the call is a command, yet there is a choice and a decision involved to it. Insecurity is the specific characteristic of the Call. Faith is the personal commitment to God; PMI volunteers are called to journey with God in faith. Faith makes us see the ordinary as extraordinary. It invites us to be like a child by seeing everything with awe and wonder. She said that we should see the 40 years of PMI service as the voice of God telling prisoners, 'You are not alone,' 'God is with you,' 'Hope in God.' Many volunteers help for the education of prisoner's children. If we don't care for the poor, they might find themselves in one of the brothel houses in Cambodia. Sr Lini spoke of a woman aged 25 with three children, who lost her husband and was crying for her daily meager meal. Similarly, there are 1000 voices crying out for their daily basic needs. Amber and Joshi played an apt song: "I the Lord of Sea and Sky." Mrs Goretti Martins thanked Sr Lini and her group. The February Burning Bush Spiritual Banquet concluded with the solemn Eucharistic blessing by Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS accompanied by the singing of 'Tantum Ergo' by Mrs Lili.



# John Misquitta Intercedes Now from Heaven

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**Sr Shanti Pulickal SCC**

Death is a reality. We see or hear about it almost every day. But when it happens to our dear ones, it becomes not only a painful experience but a heavy loss too. We miss them and their valuable contribution to our lives. This was my feeling when I heard about the sudden demise of Mr John Misquitta, one of my close friends in prison ministry.

## Hospitality

My association with him was short but deep and enriching. I had gone to Karjet for the Central Regional Conference of PMI arranged by Sr Diana CTC the previous Central Regional coordinator. My train was only up to Kalyan and John had been waiting for me at the railway station from 1 to 3 am on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018, not impatient at the delay of the train but rejoicing that he could say more rosaries for prisoners. The next day he took me to visit Sr Diana and Bishop Allwyn D'Silva our PMI chairperson. He had hired a vehicle and met all the expenses but his simplicity was such that he went back home by public transport.

## Generosity

I would have forgotten all about John, had it not been for the WhatsApp messages and the photos he sent regularly showing the various types of activities in jail where he was one of the active PMI volunteers. Some of the activities involved a lot of expenses. I had asked him once, "How do you raise fund for all these". His answer was simple. "We share the expenses among us. We do not ask any one for it". I marveled at their generosity! Little did I know that a lion's share was from John himself.



## Intercessor

My admiration for him grew when I happened to meet him at the online Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated of PMI. My time was from 9-10AM along with Mrs Fatima and it was continued by Bro. John Joseph. Once, when Bro John had to go elsewhere, he requested my help. But to my surprise I found John Misquitta at the other end. No one had asked him but he volunteered to pray. He told me that he did not limit himself to any time slot but prayed for hours whenever he was free. Soon he was lost in prayer and his face, looking so heavenly is still so vivid in my mind.

## The Lost and Found

He had shared with me about his family; how he lost his wife at an early age and the difficulty he had in raising his two children. I did not know that he was away from the Church for 20 years. It could have been due to the difficulty of being reconciled to the loss of his wife. But finally, when he turned back to God it was like the conversion experience of St Paul.

## Prayer in Heaven

We miss you John. The whole PMI family misses you. But we know that you are continuing your Intercessory prayers from heaven. May the Lord lead you from glory to glory and may your prayers for prisoners and the PMI group become more and more powerful to make us realize the vision of Release, Renewal, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Redemption of prisoners.

I am grateful to Sr Diana and other PMI volunteers. She had almost compelled me to attend the meeting. Had it not been for her encouragement I would not have attended the meeting nor met John and many other PMI friends. Everything has a plan and purpose because it is always within the plan of God!



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## **Fr Gregory Boyle SJ Champion of Change**

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**Sr Lini Sheeja MSC**

There wasn't school. It was around 9 and was a warm evening. Betito was playing with his cousin. There were two gang members standing in front of a dumpster, smoking cigarettes when a van came in with two gang members with heavy weapons. They saw the two gang members who began to open fire. But Betito didn't move because he hesitated for just a second. Suddenly a very large bullet entered his side, travelled through his body and left. The doctor who attended to him told Fr Greg Boyle later that the sheer force of this travelling through his body, the sheer reverberation of it had rendered him paralyzed from the waist down though it had never even touched his spine. Fr Gregory went to the hospital and sat there with Betito's grandmother. But an hour into the time that he was in the intensive care unit, he could see through the glass, a team of doctors and nurses run in there and pound his chest, begging and pleading with his heart to cooperate. It just wouldn't budge and he died.

Now, Betito was precocious and smart and he was 12 years old and he was the real deal. But, two days later, Fr Greg knew who the 2 guys were in the van and it was excruciating for him not to be able to hate them. Because, he knew them, he knew their stories, the terror and the torture that had darkened their lives. He knew all that had happened to them and he knew that they also were the real deal. They just hadn't found their way to

a safe haven where healing happens. Things had happened to them that had darkened their lives forever until they found relief; the sanctuary, a safe haven where healing could happen! One has to heal before one can have hope. How can we move from being separate and superior to be connected and compassionate? This is the challenge to every reader by Fr Gregory Boyle, the hero of this article 'Champion of Change'.

### **Childhood and Qualification**

Fr Gregory Joseph Boyle was born in 19 May 1954 (age 67 years), in Los Angeles, California, United States and is one of eight siblings born to Kathleen and Bernie Boyle (both now deceased). He attended Loyola High School and, upon graduating in 1972, entered the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). Boyle was ordained a priest in 1984. He holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy and English from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, a master's degree in English from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree from the Weston School of Theology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a Master of Sacred Theology degree from the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, California.

### **Early Career**

At the conclusion of his theology studies, Boyle spent a year living and working with Christian base communities in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Upon his return in 1986, he was appointed pastor of Dolores Mission Church, a Jesuit parish in the Boyle Heights neighbourhood of East Los Angeles that was then the poorest Catholic Church in the city. At the time, the church sat



## CHAMPION OF CHANGE

between two large public housing projects and amid the territories of numerous gangs. He has worked in various locations in the U.S. and abroad, but is best known for his service as pastor of Dolores Mission in the Boyle Heights, a neighbourhood of Los Angeles and for his creation of Homeboy Industries.

### Homeboy Industries

Homeboy Industries, the world's largest gang-intervention and rehabilitation program began in 1988 as a job training program (called Jobs for a Future) out of Dolores Mission Parish in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, California, USA. It was created by Fr Greg Boyle to offer an alternative to gang life for high-risk youth, who were living in the city (Los Angeles) with the highest concentration of gang activity in the country. In those early days, Fr Boyle found sympathetic businesses that agreed to hire recovering gang members. In 1992, an abandoned warehouse was converted into the first business, Homeboy Bakery, to create more opportunities for employment. The Bakery started off producing tortillas and eventually received a contract for baking bread. Eventually more businesses were added, and in 2001, Homeboy Industries became independent and non-profit. *"Nothing stops a bullet like a job"* is the guiding principle.

The program is intended to assist high-risk youth, former gang members and the recently incarcerated with a variety of free programs, such as mental health counselling, legal services, tattoo removal, curriculum and

education classes, work-readiness training and employment services. A distinctive aspect of Homeboy Industries is its structure of a multifaceted social enterprise and social business. This helps young people who were former gang members and former inmates to have an opportunity to acquire job skills and seek employment in a safe, supportive environment. Among the businesses are the Homeboy Bakery, Homegirl Cafe & Catering, Homeboy/Girl Merchandise, Homeboy Farmers Markets, Homeboy Diner at City Hall, Homeboy Silkscreen & Embroidery, Homeboy Grocery, and Homeboy Cafe & Bakery in the American Airlines terminal at Los Angeles International Airport.

### Champion of Change

In 2014, American President Obama named Father Boyle a Champion of Change. He received the University of Notre Dame's 2017 Laetare Medal, the oldest honour given to American Catholics. Currently, he serves as a committee member of California Governor Gavin Newsom's Economic and Job Recovery Task Force as a response to COVID-19. In 2010 Boyle published *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, in 2017 *Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship* and in 2021 *The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness*.

### Champion's Message

We stand with the disposable, so that the day will come when we stop throwing people away and we stand with those whose dignity has been denied. We stand with those whose burdens are more than they can bear. We stand with the poor, the powerless and the voiceless and make those voices heard. Let us move from being *separated to being connected* and *superior to compassionate*.

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## Lent – A Time to Fall in Love with our Redeemer

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**Nancy Misquith**

To be a Christian and properly serve God, you must live “by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Mt4:4). Lent is the main penitential season on the Liturgical Calendar of the Church. The observance of Lent is related to the celebration of Easter. The Word ‘Lent’ is derived from the Middle English word ‘Lenten’ meaning springtime. There is Biblical support for doing penance, both in the Old and New Testaments. In the early years, Lent was a period of intense Spiritual and Liturgical preparation for catechumens before they were baptized for Easter. Many members of the Community imitated this time of preparation with the catechumenate. Once Christianity became widespread, and most people were baptized as infants, Lent lost the connection to the preparation of catechumens. Instead, the themes of repentance and fasting became dominant. Vatican II restored the Order of catechumens. Since then, most adult converts to Catholicism are baptized at Easter Vigil, which takes place after sundown on Holy Saturday. As a result, the ancient Baptismal meaning of Lent is once again becoming important.

Lent is a time of Prayer, Fasting/Abstinence and Almsgiving. We do this to help us grow closer to Christ. The season of Lent is here and I am sure we are all wanting to partake in the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ. The 3 Pillars of Lent – Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving, are expressions of the fundamental purpose of Lent - to turn to God in conversion of heart. When it comes to choosing what to give up for Lent, most people tend to choose something that is either too easy or too difficult. For example, if you decide to give up eating tomatoes but if the fact is you don't like tomatoes, then it does not mean anything. Giving up or letting go of things for Lent, should not be based on a personal whim. Our act should be of letting ourselves go out of our comfort zone and making it an offering to

God for our personal purification. So, we must choose something very significant and relevant to us.

### **Prayer**

Throughout the season of Lent, we are invited to deepen our Prayer Life. Yes, we need to make a habit of daily prayer, setting aside time each day to share our hopes, joys, fears and frustrations with God.

Suggestions for Prayer Time:

1. Early in the morning when our home is still quiet.
2. While commuting to work.
3. At office, during lunch break while our colleagues opt for gym and games.
4. During the daily family rosary. In case you've found it old fashioned and stopped it, you may begin again.
5. Visiting the Throne of Grace where Jesus longs to meet you 24x7 in the Blessed Sacrament.
6. Interceding for every other person who may not be as blessed as you are. There could be many conversions by your prayers.
7. Attending a silent Retreat all by yourself on any holiday can get you to closer in your relationship with God.

### **Fasting/Abstinence**

Lent has traditionally been the season where we give up some sweets or our favourite item of food, ice-creams etc. in order to focus on the Supreme Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. This does not mean much. Fasting & Abstaining from our physical wants and desires is much needed for our own spiritual and physical purification. In doing so, we can channelize our



## LOVE WITH OUR REDEEMER

pangs of physical hunger to our hunger for the Lord Himself.

### **Almsgiving**

Charitable giving is an ancient practice; Almsgiving was normative long before the time of Jesus. The Lenten call to Almsgiving is making the needs of other people, our very own. One of the central lessons of Jesus' Cross is Compassion; the heavy burdens we carry help us to alleviate the suffering in others. From my personal experience, I have observed that during Lenten season we make a sacrifice and live on vegetarian food and avoid non-vegetarian. We also fast on certain days in the week. At the end of Lent, we observe we have saved a substantial sum of money. This amount can be given to the Prison Ministry, that is doing the enormous work of Evangelisation. Almsgiving may not be just in cash. It would also be of immense help in serving the poor, needy and the downtrodden, to fight for social just causes, visiting aged homes, aged and sick priests, orphanages, special children and so much more.

### **Guidelines for Lenten Sacrifice**

**Snooze Button:** Fight the urge to hit the snooze button and get up from bed when the alarm rings.

**Distraction:** Things that distract you for doing your work, studies, household chores or duties; just get rid of them. It could be music, television, aimless gallivanting with friends, movies etc.

**Snacking:** We love to snack even when we're not hungry, as it has become a habit. Giving it up and sticking to our designated mealtime will be healthy, saving of money and a wise move.

**Excessive Online Shopping:** We are in the digital age where online shopping has become a craze and is easily accessible. We buy unnecessary stuff even when we don't require it. This is a sheer waste of money. Sometimes we do not like what we bought and let it lie in our wardrobes for years. Due to the big amounts that we have spent over the products, we don't wish to be a Generous Giver. We can make an

effort to give them to someone who may be glad to have it.

**Social Media:** We all know that we just end up spending hours scrolling down through our feeds and putting off so many other important jobs that can fill our day. Some of us are addicted to online games. These are a waste of time. Instead, we could tutor some student who needs coaching during exams.

**Complaining:** Sometimes, we complain about worthless things that really do not make sense to complain about. Let us examine ourselves and do not let the Complainer mode get the better of us.

**Bitterness:** Just like Complaining, there are moments in our life that we can catch ourselves being bitter about something or someone that didn't turn out to our way of liking. This Lent, try eliminating this feeling of bitterness in you, or if you think of it, offer it to the Lord.

**Resenting doing Household Chores:** Chores get in our way of the long list of our daily job, duties, school etc. Hence, we tend to resent doing chores. This Lent, let us do our Chores without resentment but with love and dignity.

**Impatience:** We all have those moments of impatience around the corner. If you have these impatient bursts regularly, offer it up to the Lord.

**Excuses:** We are quick to give excuses for things we don't want/like to do. This can block our way to living our life as God's Image and Likeness. It is time to stop giving these excuses and face things head on, this Lenten Season. Any other weaknesses or bad habits that we have, are worth offering to Jesus during this Holy Season of Lent.

May these small difficulties and discomforts in our lives help us remember Jesus' tremendous Love for us. May we learn to say a firm **NO** to our own Will but say **YES** to God's Will in these little ways. May we learn to deny ourselves, pick up our cross daily and walk the path of Jesus. The sacrificial practices of Lent prepare and purify us in Body, Mind and Spirit for the Passion of our Lord Jesus. May this beautiful springtime bring to all of us God's Glory, Love, Peace, Hope and Joy.



## Are We Ready for the Flight?

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Lt Col Jennifer James


“Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now - and never to be equaled again. The unfolding of events around us should not surprise us for the reason that 1000’s of years ahead ‘It is Written’. The only question that these days one may be tempted to find out is whether we are in the ‘end-times’ or ‘last-hour’. Regarding the end-times we read vividly in Mt 24, Mk 13 and Lk 21; the same account by all three gospel writers. Apostle John had seen it coming too - 1 John 2:18 “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come”. This is how we know it is the last hour. If 2000 years ago it was the last hour, how close or how far are we now from it? Hence this brings us to the preeminent query - Am I ready for the flight which Jesus Himself spoke about?

### What is this Flight?

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever” (1 Thess 4: 13-18).

### What Kind of Days Will these Be?

“At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and



many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold” (Mt 24, 10-11). But mark this: “There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3,1-3).


### What God’s Children Ought Be Doing While Awaiting His Return?

Matthew 24, Mark 13 & Luke 21 all three gospel writers resonate exactly what Jesus Christ proclaimed unto them.

1. Watch out that no one deceives you.
2. Be on your guard, be alert.
3. The gospel must be preached to all nations (Greek for nations is ‘ethnos’ meaning race, gentiles, people living together).
4. Stand firm to the end.
5. Let not The Son of Man find you sleeping.

### Paul’s Echo in His Letters

- (i) 1 Thessalonians 4: It is God’s will that you should be sanctified...
- (ii) 1 Thessalonians 5: let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober.
- (iii) 2 Timothy 3: you have known the Holy Scriptures, so that the servant of



God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- (iv) 2 Timothy 4: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.
- (v) 2 Timothy 2: Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.
- (vi) 2 Thess 2: So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

### **Concluding Remark: Who Enters the Kingdom of God?**

- (i) John 3: Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.”
- (ii) Matthew 7: **True and False Disciples** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Let us be children of light doing the will of The Father. Just as David sings in Psalm 32, let us too. “You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance”.



## **Prayer to End Death Penalty**

Merciful Father, we ask your blessing on all we do to build a culture of life. Hear our prayers for those impacted by the death penalty. We pray for all people, that their lives and dignity as children of a loving God may be respected and protected in all stages and circumstances. We pray for victims of violence and their families, that they may experience our love and support and find comfort in your compassion and in the promise of eternal life. We pray for those on death row, that their lives may be spared, that the innocent may be freed and that the guilty may come to acknowledge their faults and seek reconciliation with you.

We pray for the families of those who are facing execution, that they may be comforted by your love and compassion. We pray for civic leaders, that they may commit themselves to respecting every human life and ending the use of the death penalty. Compassionate Father, give us wisdom and hearts filled with your love. Guide us as we work to end the use of the death penalty and to build a society that truly chooses life in all situations. We ask this Father through your Son Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen

### **Death Row Prisoners in India**

The number of prisoners on death row at the end of 2021 stood at 488, the highest in 17 years, according to the Death Penalty in India Report. “2021 saw the highest number of prisoners on death row at the end of the year since 2016 at 488, an increase of nearly 21% from 2020.






## PMI National Convention 2022

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**Fr Maverick Fernandes, Director – Caritas Goa**

The yeomen service rendered to the sisters and brothers in the prisons by volunteers of Prison Ministry India is commendable. In actuality, it is only continuing the mandate of Jesus Christ that ‘anything done for the least is done for him’. Since 1997 Prison Ministry India (Goa Unit) is operative. It first began as an initiative of the CRI and then the Archdiocese appointed Sr. Mary Jane as the first Coordinator in October 1997. A significant person in this journey was Sr Mary Jane SFN whose tireless service towards the prisoners led to a phenomenal growth of the Ministry. PMI (Goa Unit) is involved in serving the least, lost and last of our brethren behind bars. Through various activities conducted within and outside Prison, the Ministry has been working towards the Release, Reformation and Rehabilitation of Inmates. This year Prison Ministry India (Goa Unit) celebrates twenty-five years of valuable services in the prisons of Goa. Today PMI-Goa comprises of more than 50 volunteers including Religious and Laity whose visits have brought much hope, joy and comfort to around 500 inmates lodged in the Modern Central Jail, Colvale.

Prison Ministry India, every four years, organises the National Convention. At the National level Convention, it was decided that every State should organise a State level Convention every two years. In October 2021. Goa organised the State level Con-



vention. Incidentally, Goa belongs to the Central Region of PMI and is selected, in its Silver Jubilee year, to host the 13th National Convention from the 15th -18th November, 2022 which will be held at the St Joseph Vaz Spiritual Renewal Centre, Old Goa. Approximately 600 PMI volunteers from different states of India will comprise the delegates of the Convention. The purpose of a National level Convention is to come together to reflect on the issues and concerns of the Ministry and deliberate on the future course of action. “He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners... release the oppressed” (Lk. 4: 18), the opening manifesto of Jesus social ministry forms the motivation and the goal of the ministry. Our life assessment will be measured on the basis of “I was in prison and you visited me”. The volunteers offer their time and energy to work for the reformation of the prisoners. The various activities carried out in and out of the prison is possible because of our silent partners who support us in numerous ways.

We look forward to your continued support and generous contribution towards the Ministry. Our volunteers will be visiting Parishes in Goa for your generous financial support. Your donation can accrue the tax benefit under the Sec80G of the IT Act. You may donate to our Savings Account in Panaji Branch of Union Bank of India, Caritas-Goa, Ac. No. 520101219449356, IFSC Code UBIN0902594. Let us collectively work towards the freedom of the children of God.



# **PRAYER FOR PMI VOLUNTEERS' TRAINING PROGRAM**



**26 March to 9 April 2022, Bangalore**

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Lord Our Loving Father, we praise and worship you together with Jesus Christ who taught us to visit the incarcerated. Merciful Father, give us the grace to see your face in our brethren behind the bars; help us to remember them as though we were in prison with them (Heb 13:3); bless us to hear the groans of the prisoners and to set free those who are doomed to die (Ps 102,20).

Beloved Father, we entrust into your compassionate hands the PMI Volunteers Training Program to be held in Bangalore from 26 March to 9 April 2022. Anoint the PMI national team with the fruits, gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit to convene the training program for the greater glory of God. Let this course motivate the participants to recommit themselves to reach-out, release, rehabilitate, reintegrate and redeem our brethren behind the bars. Sanctify the speakers, organizers, conference hall, places of accommodation, vehicles and journeys with your precious blood and deliver us from all sorts of dangers and tactics of the evil spirits. Let the course revive the prison ministry, illumine PMI volunteers to find your ways and means to redeem our brethren behind the bars. May the course deepen our God experience, strengthen our fraternity, reinforce our solidarity with the lost and promote our communion with the Church.

Merciful Father, have mercy on our incarcerated brethren, anoint them with repentance and reformation, bless their family members and prison staff that they may be kind, gentle and understanding towards those under their care; sanctify and strengthen the victims that they may reconcile with those who offended them. Bless our benefactors and all those who work hard for the fruitfulness of the program. Mary, Mother of Jesus, pray for the reintegration and redemption of our brethren behind the bars. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

Mother Mary, pray for us; St Maximilian Kolbe, pray for us;

Venerable Francis Xavier Van Thuan, pray for us

Prison Ministry India, 52 Thomas Layout, Carmelaram PO, Bangalore 560035

Tel 9447710488; Email – [nationalpmi2015@gmail.com](mailto:nationalpmi2015@gmail.com); [www.prisonministryindia.org](http://www.prisonministryindia.org)



**PMI VOLUNTEERS TRAINING PROGRAM**  
**Search, Serve and Save the Lost**  
**26 March to 9 April 2022**

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23 February 2022

PMINO/041/2022

Dear PMI Volunteers,  
Prayerful greetings from PMI National Office, Bengaluru!

Hope you gracefully and courageously combatted the Covid19 pandemic. We pray for you and entrust you in the safe hands of Jesus who came to seek and save the lost. We are glad to announce that the PMI Volunteers Residential Training Program 2022 will commence on 26th March and will conclude on 9th April. This will be held at our newly constructed RRDC building, Carmelaram, Bengaluru. The PMI National Office Annex also will be ready to accommodate you. Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva, PMI Chairman will inaugurate the program. This training program is free of cost but don't forget to bring the copper coins of the widow. Your application shall be supported by the recommendation either of the state or diocesan PMI coordinator.

Those who would like to participate in the Volunteers Training Program are kindly requested to register their names with Sr Amala DC, PMI National Secretary (9486604887, nationalpmi2015@gmail.com, amalasr@gmail.com) before 20th March 2022. Only the first 40 registrations will be considered. Please fill up the application form and forward it to Sr Amala.

Thanks very much for your valuable cooperation, and please pray for the success of the course.

With most warm welcome, and prayerful best wishes,

Yours in Jesus who asked us to visit prisoners,

Fr Francis Kodyian MCBS  
PMI National Coordinator

Sr Amala DC  
PMI National Secretary

# Fasting and Prayer Days in Preparation for the PMI National Convention 2022

No	STF	Coordinator	Telephone	Prayer Days
177	Abducted People's Releasers (APR)	Mrs Rosily Varghese	9850001438	28 March 2022
178	Anointed Prisoners' Consolers (APC)	Sr Jancy Chakiath	8281164603	29 March 2022
179	Anticorruption and Antibribery Warriors (AAW)	Mr Walter Kample	8407986268	30 March 2022
180	Antidrug Trafficking Warriors (ATW)	Fr Sebastian Vechookarottu	9605887708	31 March 2022
181	Antifascist Prisoners Reformers (APR)	Miss Anumol	8792883824	1 April 2022
182	Antihuman Trafficking Brigadiers (ATB)	Mr Ashok Kumar	7600041045	2 April 2022
182	Blackmailing Prisoners Reformers (BPR)	Sr Beena SDB	8078818239	3 April 2022
183	Burglars Transformers (BT)	Sr Shiny SDS	9902342608	4 April 2022
184	Cybercrime Prisoners Redeemers (CPR)	Sr Philo Kuzhikkatt SABS	9446070912	5 April 2022
185	Dacoits Redeemers (DR)	Mrs Rebecca Pinto	9673910327	6 April 2022
186	Death Row Commandos (DRC)	Lt Col Jennifer James	9566219181	7 April 2022
187	Espionage Prisoners Reformers (EPR)	Mrs Nancy Misquith	9028587537	8 April 2022
188	Foreign Prisoners' Expatriation (FPE)	Mr Jesu Raja	9840040562	9 April 2022
189	Gangsters Reformers (GR)	Sr Gracy SJL	8129140602	10 April 2022
190	Genocide Prisoners Redeemers (GPR)	Dr Rosily Thomas	9833677173	11 April 2022
191	Hackers Transformers (HT)	Mrs Fay Mckinley	9833283792	12 April 2022
192	Hired-Killers Liberating Squadron (HLS)	Fr Alexander Kureekkattil CMF	9447002779	13 April 2022
193	Hooligans Reformers (HR)	Mrs Vinia J Britto	9822148798	14 April 2022
194	Innocent Prisoners' Redeemers (IPR)	Sr Lini Sheeja MSC	9880022209	15 April 2022
195	Juvenile Delinquents Reformers (JDR)	Br Pradeep Anthony OFM	6362217558	16 April 2022
196	Lynchers Reformers (LR)	Sr Udaya CIC	7397555230	17 April 2022
197	Mafia Redeemers (MR)	Fr Dion Isaac	9949158988	18 April 2022
198	Military Prisoners Reformers (MPR)	Mrs Latha Appachan	9320048032	19 April 2022
199	Murderers Transformers (MT)	Sr Jolly Sebastian SAB	8660118147	20 April 2022
200	Paedophiles Reformers (PR)	Mrs Eunice S Fernandes	9049413234	21 April 2022
201	Pirates Transformers (PT)	Sr Celia UMI	9945716052	22 April 2022
202	Political Prisoners Transformers (PPT)	Mr Raymond Osta	9431646362	23 April 2022
203	Prisoners' Children Educators PCE)	Mrs Veera Pinto	9902553851	24 April 2022
204	Prison Police Reformers (PPR)	Sr Anisha SD	8281063290	25 April 2022
205	Psychiatric Prisoners Comforters (PPC)	Mr Antony Jacob	9422308023	26 April 2022
206	Prisoners' Releasing Squad (PRS)	Sr Adele Korah Mr Antony Jacob	9606634230 8073323455	27 April 2022
207	Purgatory Souls' Redeemers (PRS)	Sr Lini Sheeja MSC	9880022209	28 April 2022
208	Serial-Killers Reformers (SR)	Sr Fulmani LDFX	9638454172	29 April 2022
209	Sex Offenders Healers (SOH)	Sr Jobina Varghese UFS	8132807248	30 April 2022
210	Sick Prisoners Healers (SPH)	Sr Shiji SCSC	8435009885	1 May 2022
211	Smugglers Transformers (ST)	Sr Dollin Maria FCC	8281380563	2 May 2022
212	Terrorists Saving Squad (TSS)	Fr Michael Francis	7775051762	3 May 2022
213	Undertrial Prisoners Releasers (UPR)	Prof Edmond Frank	7975369402	4 May 2022
214	Victims Redeemers (VR)	Mr Rajendra Dushing	9423450207	5 May 2022
215	War-crime Prisoners Reformers (WPR)	Mr Justine Kottaram	9449047364	6 May 2022



**PMI Volunteers Distributing Clothes to Mysore Prisoners**



**PMI Volunteers Donating Blankets to Meerut Prisoners**



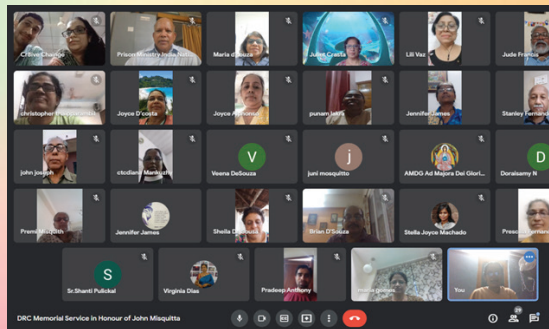
**PMI Volunteers Donating Moral Science Books to Jashpur Prisoners**



**PMI Volunteers Teaching How to Assemble LED Bulbs to Jharsugda Prisoners**



**Antidrug Trafficking Warriors Meet**



**PMI Death Row Commandoes Meet**



**PMI Volunteers with Bilaspur Prison Staff**



**Seminar on Prison Ministry by PMI Irinjalakuda Unit**



**Women's Day Celebration in Bellary Prison**



**Women's Day Celebration in Gulbarga Prison**



**Women's Day celebration, Ambikapur Prison**



**Women's Day Celebration, Attakulangara Prison**



**Women's Day Celebration, Bhopal**



**Women's Day Celebration, Bilaspur Prison**



**Women's Day Celebration, Buxar Prison**



**Women's Day celebration, Jharsuguda Prison**