



PRISON VOICE

April 2022

Vol. XIX

Issue 04

NATIONAL MONTHLY

₹40/-

Servant of the servants of God





Hygiene Kits Distribution to Hyderabad Jails



PMI Delhi Volunteers Visiting Indian Social Institute (ISI), New Delhi



PMI Volunteers Celebrating Hosana in Aluva Subjail



PMI Volunteers Conducting Way of the Cross in Sundargarh Prison



PMI Volunteers Distributing Indoor Games Materials to Mangalore Prison



PMI Volunteers Donating Dental Chair with X-Ray Facilities to Thane Central Prison



PMI Volunteers Organizing Seminar on Prison Ministry India



PMI Volunteers Training Program Participants Visiting Bangalore Central Prison

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PRISON VOICE

NATIONAL MONTHLY

THEN HE SAID,
"JESUS, REMEMBER
ME WHEN YOU
COME INTO YOUR
KINGDOM." JESUS
ANSWERED HIM,
"I TELL YOU THE
TRUTH, TODAY
YOU WILL BE
WITH ME IN
PARADISE."
LUKE 23:42-43



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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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EASTER: THE LIGHT OF HOPE

I wish all the readers of *Prison Voice* a happy, grace-filled, and blessed Easter. As we celebrate the festival of Easter, we re-examine and reconsider our routine practices and renew our hope for our lives. Easter Sunday is a very significant day. The empty tomb reveals Jesus' resurrection as he had said at the tomb of Lazarus "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live" (Jn 11: 25). As we explore the tombs of our souls and seek to remove fear, anxiety, bitterness, and shame, the same power that brought Jesus back to life will also bring us back to the fullness of life. Fear turns to confidence. Anxiety is replaced by faith. Bitterness is transformed by forgiveness. Shame is defeated by redemption. The message of Easter is all about positivity and optimism. Jesus said, 'Come and follow me. Follow me and I will show you how to love others and love yourself. Follow me and I will show you how to repent and how to forgive yourself and forgive others. Follow me to learn how to turn things around and to begin again to navigate the storms of life and the storms of death. Follow me to find purpose, your purpose, and God's purpose for you.' He taught us the way and showed us the way. By following it faithfully we find new life. We apply this to our prison ministry as well. It is our bounden duty to reform, integrate and renew the lives of our brethren behind the bars by teaching them the values of Jesus through our witness and edifying life.

"Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison" (Heb 13/3). During this Easter, let us share God's love and His message of hope with our brothers and sisters behind the bars. Many men and women behind bars may know that you remember them and that we never forget them. There are so many prisoners who are starving for



Sr Amala DC
Chief Editor

hope and held captive by their sins. This is why there is no better place to share the Easter story than prisons, where brethren behind the bars are waiting to hear about the freedom they can experience because Christ paid the penalty for their crimes on the Cross. The price that Jesus paid on the cross is very tangible for those in prison. Although they are serving time in a prison for their guilt and sin, the message of Easter is the best news they would ever hear. Easter is a time to rejoice over this fact and to share the Gospel with others so that they might know the joy and freedom that awaits them. Let us pray that hearts will awaken to God's redeeming love and that prisoners will find new purpose and new life in Jesus as they learn about the gift of forgiveness. Draw close to Jesus and He will draw close to you. Through the power of God's word, we can continue to work for His greater glory. Dear Volunteers, in everything we do, we are dependent on God and on your prayers and support.

Let us earnestly work for our brethren who have lost their hope, their families and their dreams. Share generously with the have-nots, give hope to the hopeless, and joy and happiness to their lives by releasing and transforming people in bondage, sponsoring a child, donating a brick, and settling them in a decent form of life. Everything is possible with your generous support. Once again wish you all the joy of Easter with its hope for everyone. May you all have a joyous celebration with your families as well as with prisoners!

SEARCH FOR MEANING OF LIFE AND SUFFERING



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

Introduction

As we celebrate Jesus' victory over his passion and death, I thought of illustrating the concept of the meaning of suffering in life and its significance in the life of prisoners' reformation and reintegration. Jesus defeated passion and death and rose again to life so that the incarcerated are called to win over their present suffering and agony with faith, hope and love. Viktor Frankl found meaning and purpose in his sufferings in his life in the concentration camps, and developed the renowned theory of Logotherapy. Similarly, prisoners who are in a similar situation of hopelessness, sadness and pessimism shall find their purpose in life and meaning for their incarceration. The secret of the success story of Viktor Frankl was that unlike others he could find meaning for his suffering amidst the Auschwitz tragedies and tribulations. It's the duty of PMI volunteers to lead our brethren behind bars from pessimism to optimism, hopelessness to hope, purposelessness to purposefulness and from irresponsibility to responsibility.

Viktor Frankl's Life in Concentration Camps

Viktor Emil Frankl (1905-1997) was an Austrian neurologist, psychiatrist, philosopher, author, and Holocaust survivor. He was the founder of logotherapy, a school of psychotherapy that describes the search for life's meaning as the central human motivational force. His famous book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, tells the story of how he

survived the Holocaust by finding personal meaning in his experience, which gave him the will to live through it. In 1942, just nine months after his marriage, Frankl and his family were sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. His father died there of starvation and pneumonia. In 1944, Frankl and the surviving members of his family were transported to Auschwitz, where his mother and brother were murdered in the gas chambers. His wife died later of typhus in Bergen-Belsen. Frankl spent three years in four concentration camps.

Logotherapy – Meaning of Life

While struggling to survive in the Nazi camp, drawing from his experiences as well as observations, he developed the theory of logotherapy which claimed that through a search for meaning in life, individuals can endure and overcome suffering. Logotherapy is a scientifically based school of psychotherapy, based on the belief that the search for meaning even amidst misery can constitute a potential solution to human suffering. Meaning can be found by creating a work, loving someone, or adopting a modified attitude toward inevitable suffering. Logotherapy, a part of existential and humanistic



SEARCH FOR MEANING OF LIFE

psychological theories, is used today for a variety of purposes, including addiction, pain and guilt, anxiety, grief, and depression. It was recognized as the third school of Viennese Psychotherapy; the first school was created by Sigmund Freud, and the second by Alfred Adler. In his *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl concludes that the difference between those who had lived and those who had died came down to one thing: Meaning, an insight he came to early in life.

Meaninglessness Vs Criminal Behaviour

Frankl pointed to research indicating a strong relationship between “meaninglessness” and criminal behaviours, addictions and depression. Without meaning, people fill the void with hedonistic pleasures, power, materialism, hatred, boredom, or neurotic obsessions and compulsions. Some may also strive for Supra-meaning, the ultimate meaning in life, a spiritual kind of meaning that depends solely on a greater power outside of personal or external control.

Three Ways to Meaning in Life

Frankl developed logotherapy basing his finding on philosophical and psychological concepts, particularly the desire to find meaning in life and free will. He identified three main ways of realizing meaning in life: by making a difference in the world, by having particular experiences, or by adopting particular attitudes. The primary techniques offered by logotherapy and existential analysis are: Paradoxical intention: clients learn to overcome obsessions or anxieties by self-distancing and humorous exaggeration. De-reflection: drawing the client's attention away from their symptoms, as hyper-


reflection can lead to inaction. Socratic dialogue and attitude modification: asking questions designed to help a client find and pursue self-defined meaning in life. His acknowledgement of meaning as a central motivational force and factor in mental health is his lasting contribution to the field of psychology. It provided the foundational principles for the emerging field of positive psychology.

Resilience

Frankl noticed that in the camps, those who found meaning even in the most horrendous circumstances were far more resilient to suffering than those who did not. “Everything can be taken from a man but one thing,” Frankl wrote in *Man's Search for Meaning*, “the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.” Logotherapy developed in the context of extreme suffering, depression and sadness which proves that life can be meaningful and fulfilling even in spite of the harshest circumstances. On the other hand, he also warns against the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures because of its tendency to distract people from their search for meaning in life.

Responsibility

Frankl sees our ability to respond to life and to be responsible to life as a major factor in finding meaning and, therefore, fulfilment in life. In fact, he viewed responsibility to be the “essence of existence”. He believed that humans were not simply the product of heredity and environment and that they had the ability to make decisions and take responsibility for their own lives. This “third element” of decision is what Frankl believed made education so important; he felt that education must be education towards the



ability to make decisions, take responsibility and then become free to be the person you decide to be. Frankl gives the example of two suicidal inmates he encountered. Like many others in the camps, these two men were hopeless and thought that there was nothing more to expect from life, nothing to live for. In both cases, it was a question of getting them to realize that life was still expecting something from them; something in the future was expected of them. For one man, it was his young child, who was then living in a foreign country. For the other, a scientist, it was a series of books that he needed to finish. This uniqueness and singleness which distinguishes each individual and gives meaning to his existence has a bearing on creative work as much as it does on human love. When the impossibility of replacing a person is realized, it allows the responsibility which a man has for his existence and its continuance to appear in all its magnitude. A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He who knows the “why” for his existence will be able to bear almost any “how.”

Conclusion

Viktor Frankl wrote that what man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for some goal worthy of him. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost, but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him. Jesus’ life, death and resurrection teach the same. He had a purpose in life and to accomplish it he was even ready to undergo crucifixion. The moment you set the goal of your life, crystal clear about your mission, you begin to live eternally.

PRISON MINISTRY

**The little brothers two dreams;
Dreams of the love bomb,
The great love bomb that blasts,
Blasts that bomb on Calvary!**

**The blasted love bomb on the Cross,
Shed blood and water -
Washed the sinner, purified
Jesus, my Lord the great king.**

**The thief who recognizes,
the sinless criminal
The criminal proclaims to the world
Jesus, the sinless man, an innocent,
Jesus, the redeemer of the world.**

**Oh! The confession of the sinner,
What a wonderful transformation,
Powerful proclamation of the Saviour
The glorious gain of Paradise.**

**A loving, liberating ministry
Foundation of a life-giving ministry
Heaven gaining, wonderful, precious
Our Prison Ministry.**

- Sr Merceline SMMI

EMPTY TOMB TO EMPTY PRISONS! EASTER WITH THE INCARCERATED



Sr Lini Sheeja MSC

Jesus who had overcome temptations has triumphed over death. Death could not hold our Saviour. Jesus who healed the blind and the deaf during His earthly ministry has healed the whole world through His resurrection. Jesus, the head of the body, the Church: the beginning, the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:18) has overcome the power of this world through His resurrection. The fallen, broken humanity received life in abundance by the arrival of the Saviour. Easter is nothing, but new life! Easter is nothing, but the empty tomb! Easter is nothing but empty prisons for PMI volunteers! God came out of the closed tomb to restore, renew and recreate. Jesus restored sight for the man born blind and He restored the universe once again through His resurrection. This article invites every PMI volunteer to have a life-goal to journey from the empty tomb to empty prisons.

Jesus' Tomb – A Part of History

Jesus came to the world through the womb of Mother Mary and went to the tomb of the earth for the salvation of the world. Jesus who accepted the widow's mite was sent as an offering to the womb of the earth. Burial is an act of interring the dead in a burial pit of a cemetery. The same pit is later dug up to inter other dead bodies. And the cycle goes

on. But, something unimaginable happened in the burial of Jesus. The tomb of Jesus was all new – never was anyone buried in it before nor will anyone be buried in it again.

Jesus perhaps may not have met many righteous persons during his trial. But, before being lowered into the tomb, Jesus saw a noble soul, Joseph of Arimathea. He was a man of pure heart, so he wrapped the body of Jesus with a white cloth and reverentially placed it in the tomb. Hanging on the cross, Jesus had said, 'All is accomplished.' And true to his words, his life had come to an end on earth.

Closed Tomb and Closed Walls

The tomb held Jesus for three days but prisons hold our brethren for days, weeks, months and years. "On the third day He rose again," is the profession of our faith. From the moment our brother/sister is thrown behind bars they eagerly wait for the day to come out of the closed walls. Jesus was in a closed tomb and our brethren too are between closed walls. The family members do experience this closed tomb while their loved one is within the closed walls. Our brethren partake in this closed tomb experience as they go through it patiently, silently and with hope.



Empty Tomb and Empty Prisons

The closed tomb was emptied with the resurrection of Jesus. Dear Prison Ministry India volunteers, your very presence in this world with the power of the Holy Spirit can empty the prisons. Let your goals go beyond rehabilitating prisoners to emptying prisons. Jesus emptied the tomb of Lazarus by raising him from the dead. When the Apostles were in a locked room for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood amidst them and said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21). We the prison ministry volunteers are anointed by this Spirit and gifted with power and strength to empty the prisons in course of time. Let us pay heed to the voice of Pope Francis to go into the peripheries. If each of us can reach out to the peripheries, to the slums, to the poorest of the poor, we can witness empty prisons soon. Let us open rehabilitation centres for the prisoners' children, so that tomorrow their future will be brightened. Let us open many rehabilitation centres for released men/women, so that they don't go back to prisons.

Empty Prisons – PMI Life's Goal

On this feast day, let our life's goal be to empty prisons! Let our life's goal be a love filled and a crime freed world. Let us intensify our prayers, sanctify ourselves and purify the world with every holy deed of ours. "The biggest disease today is not leprosy or



FROM EMPTY TOMB TO EMPTY PRISONS

tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted", exclaimed St Mother Teresa, the Saint of the Gutter. Let us go into the peripheries and cure the biggest disease of being unwanted. Let our brethren behind bars and their families feel that they are not alone. Let our vulnerable brother/sister feel they have someone to care for them. Let us wipe out the disease of unwanted-ness and hatred! Let our world experience oneness for which our God came down. Jesus embraced the tomb and we too will have to embrace it one day. Meanwhile here on earth, let us embrace the world with courage; let us embrace humanity with compassion.

Feast of Empty Tomb

Let us join hands for the release, renewal, rehabilitation and redemption of prisoners. May their world be a world of life from a world of killing, a world of happiness from a world of pain, a world of keys from a world of locks, a world of freedom from a world of walls, a world of sharing from a world of stealing, a world of hope from a world of despair, a world of forgiveness from a world of revenge, a world of service from a world of authority, a world of love from a world of hatred, a world of providence from a world of anxiety. Let our life's goal be to see empty prisons as we celebrate the feast of the empty tomb of Jesus today. Easter Blessings!

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



Church on Capital Punishment


Br Pradeep Anthony L OFM

On 2nd August 2018, the revised Catholic Catechism teaches that Capital Punishment as “an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person” and deeming it “inadmissible” in all cases. The Church teaches that death penalty as unnecessary. Usually under the pretext of protecting innocent people the death penalty is implemented however, times, facts, experiences, and above all the Word of God reveal that death penalty is indeed unnecessary, inadmissible. Bible says that God desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1Tim 2:4). Therefore, any exclusion of human life is not part of God’s plan.

Church on Human Dignity

The document of Vatican II ‘Gaudium Et Spes’ strongly insist to consider every neighbor as another self, necessary to live with dignity. The Catholic Church teaches that a wholistic community is formed when fundamental human rights are protected and human dignity is uplifted. The church teaches that every human being has an innate dignity as he or she is the image of God, therefore, no bad act can make this dignity cease (Gen 1:26). Human life is considered as sacred as God gave the life of His only Son for the salvation of all (Jn 3:16). The Church derives from the heart of scriptures, these living values.

Bishop Conference of New Zealand in 1997, drew conclusion that all of us are



united in common humanity, in the image of God therefore, called to live in active love. Pope Francis in his book “Joy of the Gospel’ describes every human person as the object of God’s infinite tenderness and God is present in their lives. The Church has in-fact written many encyclicals in order to uplift the dignity of the human being like *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, *Quadragesimo Anno* by Pope Pius XII in 1931, *Mater et Magistra* by Pope John XXIII in 1961, *Pacem in Terris* by Pope John XXIII in 1963, *Gaudium et Spes* by Vatican II council in 1965, *Populorum Progressio* by Pope Paul VI in 1967, *Octogesima Adveniens* by Pope Paul VI in 1971, *Laborem Exercens* by Pope John Paul II in 1981, *Sollicitudo Re Socialis* by Pope John Paul II in 1987, *Centesimus Annus* by Pope John Paul II in 1991, *Caritas in Veritate* by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009, *Laudato Sii* by Pope Francis in 2009. All these encyclicals addresses the issues concerning human labour, human freedom, human dignity, human rights, human development, wholistic development of human being, political role of human, human charity and also about human responsibility. No wonder why philosopher Gariel Marcel calls “Man is a Mystery,” as no one can comprehend fully human being and there is always more to understand.

Experiences of the Times

The foundation stone laid by Christ (Mt 16:18), grew very strong politically, judicially and religiously till the medieval times. The church had grown fruitfully since it followed the teachings of Christ. As Jesus died on the cross for the whole humanity likewise his followers and imitators did (Lk



23:46). St. Stephen (Acts 7:60), St Peter, St Paul and many of the apostles died for the faith (Recorded in the traditions). Later many persecuted Christians gave their lives for the love of Christ, from 1st century to 4th century. Tertulian, rightly said “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity,” hence the Church’s foundation stone was laying her life for her friend (Jn 15:13), Church had the truth, way and life by loving to greatest possible way (Jn 14:6). This made Constantine the great, to get converted to Christianity and made the state religion to Christianity. Therefore, Church had known that hatred cannot be extinguished by hate. A way to universal brotherhood has been the path then by St. Francis of Assisi and now by Pope Francis. Ironically, still war continues in the 21st century. The advancement in technology and modern science didn’t stop the war between Ukraine and Russia. Still human hearts are the victims of the power, dominion, money, hatred, revenge and clutches of the enemy. May God reign in our hearts and times.

Facts

Death penalty is the distorted path of justice, often poor and low-class people get death penalty. From the record gathered in the year 2021 by Amnesty International, 144 countries have abolished death penalty however, about 55 countries who are still having the Judiciary to execute death penalty. The various methods that are used to kill people are **beheading, electrocution, hanging, lethal injection and shooting**. China is having the highest numbers to his credit for execution it is about 483 besides multiple deaths claimed by their citizens

CHURCH ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

and other sources. After China it is in Iran, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia 88 percentage of death penalty is executed. Sometimes the executed people are under the age of 18.

In the world of morality, there needs the discernment to know between wrong and right. The country which allows death penalty is in fact acting against the human life, the right to life has been discarded however, still from public poll roughly about 65 percentage of people justify death sentences and 35 percentage take the stance against death sentence. To those who are standing for justification of death penalty I would share my experience. After doing my 3 years of philosophy one of the most important things that I understood is our ‘**perception**’ should be right before we act.

Death Penalty is a wrong perception as it erases all the possibility of human life itself. If one person makes mistake, elimination of that person is a faulty logic. As evil cannot be won by evil or hate by hate, revenge by revenge but rather love. Let us always implore to our Lord to take inspiration, example from his life, if there had been any other better way to eliminate evil, he would have shown it to us. Hence, let us love like our Lord not by excluding life but including the entire humanity. As the Church has gone back to its roots by defining death penalty as inadmissible and unnecessary in all circumstances, let us also give our solidarity along with the Church to take the stance with the Church.





Prison oh Prison

Sr Vandana SCC

Why you exist, why you exist
You are fearful, you are scary
You are dangerous, you are arrogant
You are harmful, you are shameful
Why you exist, why you exist?

Even You took my Lord to yourself
The innocent the truthful
The Son of God, The lamb of God
The creator, the protector
The saviour, of the world
What crime has He done to you?

He served, he only healed
He made lame to walk
He made blind to see
He made deaf to hear
He made paralysed to walk
He made dead to rise.

My master is still there oh prison
Behind your bars in dark cells
to be understood, to be cared
To be consoled, to be loved
To be forgiven, to be accepted
To be empowered, to be enlightened.

You take them to reform, remould
But you know they are broken
They are rejected, they are separated
They are condemned, they are abandoned
They are lost, they are ignored
They are humiliated, they are dejected.

Can you change, can you change
Can you leave the innocent free?
Can you stop your arrogance?
Can you give just judgement?
Can you give them redemption?
Can you lead them to freedom?



Prison Ministry India

Sr Sherly OSB

Introduction

Prison Ministry India has a noble task to be completed in the life of the brethren behind the bars. Prison Ministry is ministry of Jesus himself. Today Jesus is searching vehemently for the people to come in forefront to serve his people in need. He needs our hands, heart, mind, body and will to be extended to those who are captives, helpless and no one to reach out. Those who are behind the bars are not someone who supposed to be look down. But to be redeemed, sanctified, reintegrated and reformed. Today Jesus wants us to keep open our eyes and ears to the supplication of many those who cry to Him. They are not to be excluded and to be included in the company of Jesus. In order to work and bring back our brethren from the clutches of bondage Prison Ministry India takes the lead to train the volunteers to become warriors of Jesus armed with the weapon of prayer and other ascetical practices. Because it is only through prayer that we can save the souls. Taking Jesus as a role model in prayer and searching out the lost sheep PMI march towards its goal to search, serve and to save the lost.

Origin

Prison Ministry India has its beginning in the year 1981 on Dec 8th in St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kerala. It was the fruits of a vision shared between Fr. Vargheese Karipperiy and Fr Francis Kodiyan. “Let us be love bomb, not to be exploded but to heal the broken hearted” became the

motto of their dream. The seed that was sown into their hearts were well guided by Fr. Mathew Elapanickal and later by Fr. Thomas Vellimanthodom. In 1982 Aug 28th the first prayer group was started to nurture the seed and to make the plant grow. “Do not be anxious about anything but everything in prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Phil 4:6) Fortified with the weapon of prayer, fasting and other ascetical practices they spend their time to know the will of God and to gain strength. The call of Fr Vargheese Karipperiy and Fr Francis Kodiyan was a call within the call.

Jesus Fraternity

In 1983 on March 11th Fr. Francis Kodiyan went to Elijah Ashram at Niravilpuzha to spent time in prayer just as Jesus spent his time in prayer to speak to his heavenly Father. While praying he had a God experience and he could hear a sound whispering in his ears saying “why don’t you work for the conversion of the sinners”? As a result of this prayer and on the basis of various prison visits a new prayer group was formed on Jan 29th 1986 and named as Jesus Fraternity. Enlightened by this message they took up all Kerala prison pilgrimage to equip them with wider knowledge and to carry ahead their dream to the direct direction. They conducted art and literary competitions, for the prisoners and the first magazine ‘pulari’ was made and by collecting the drawings, poems and stories ‘Thadavarasangeetham’ (Prison Melody) was made. Step by step its roots and branches in different forms. There was the birth of home for the prisoner’s children, rehabilitation centres for men and women etc.

National Convention


In 1994 July 3rd the first National Convention took place in Bengaluru with a new name 'Prison Ministry India'. Fr. Vargheese Karippery was elected as the first National Coordinator. In 1995 on Jan 1st the blessing of first national office in a farm house at Hoskur was inaugurated. And in 1995 On Jan 26th the PMI was registered under Societies Registration Act No. ER375/95.

Ministries

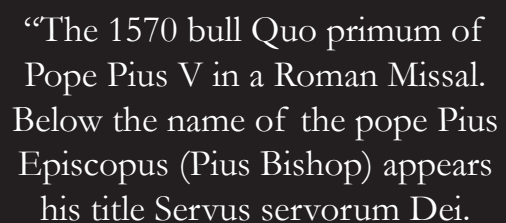
Through cultural programmes, competitions, skill training programmes, counselling and by imparting Word of God and celebrating Holy Eucharist along with our brethren behind the bars brought about wholesome change in the life of the prisoners. There are many brothers and sisters who are behind the bars hopelessly, helplessly, fearfully, living with revengeful attitude, hatred, brokenness and anger. They have become almost 'unwanted' by their own families, friends, relatives and neighbourhood. There is no one to love, understand, accept, encourage, listen and care for. They are thrown in to the darkest pitch of the world. Mercilessly they are dealt with, abusive the language they hear, coarseness is the behaviour they are met with, loneliness is their hallmark and they are scorned by the people outside.

Conclusion

Today under the umbrella of PMI which has spread its branches across the country reaches out thousands and thousands of people in various ways using the methodology of reaching out, release, rehabilitate, reconcile,



repentance, reformation, re-integration and redemption. Strengthened by the word of God, anointed with the love of Jesus and his compassion, with a mantra thank you Jesus on their lips and taking the mode of begging and blessing as a life style, carrying maximum inconvenience as convenience and a bank with Divine providence, getting to a mode of action to search, serve and save the lost PMI march ahead to redeem and bring transformation in their lives. Making visit to the families of the victim, taking care of their children, construct houses, helping their children to educate and to provide them with job opportunities are the commendable work PMI does to recognize them and to accommodate them back to the society with dignity. PMI envisages and envisions the preciousness of every person as God's precious child. There is no one is beyond redemption. Jesus on the cross offered 'paradise' as the good thief repented and transformed his life on the cross. All are 'uncut diamonds' and by giving them word of God, leading them through counselling and being with them without a judgemental attitude, leading them to forgive and forget PMI transforms their lives into a new creation.



“The 1570 bull Quo primum of Pope Pius V in a Roman Missal. Below the name of the pope Pius Episcopus (Pius Bishop) appears his title Servus servorum Dei.



Indian Expat who Touched many Lives in Dubai Returns Home after 32 Years

Sajila Saseendran¹

Prameela Nadkarni

Community volunteers have showered praise and thanks on an Indian woman who left the UAE last night after silently working for patients and prisoners in Dubai since 2003. Keralite Prameela Menon-Nadkarni, who was raised in Mumbai, had flown into Dubai in April 1989 after her marriage with her Maharashtrian husband Pankaj Nadkarni. She has had a vibrant social life here and she has been widely known for running a popular indoor cricket club *In Sportz* with her brother, and for being the World Indoor Cricket Federation's representative in the UAE. However, most people are not aware of another face of Prameela—that of a social worker who has made a difference to the lives of umpteen number of patients and prisoners here.

Valley of Love

It was in 2003 that Prameela stepped into the world of social service through the community volunteering group Valley of Love. One of its volunteers, Manoj Nair, told her about some female patients in Rashid Hospital that she forayed into volunteering. “He said the male volunteers, who used to visit the male patients with no support, also found some female patients

who would feel more comfortable if there was any female volunteer to talk to them,” Prameela recollected. Inspired by his invitation, Prameela started visiting the hospital to talk to female patients with no family members around. “One case would lead to another. My interest in social service grew as I met more and more women who found some comfort when I visited them.” Consoling them during their difficult times or offering them mental support by counselling them was not just what she did. With required permissions, Prameela would also get them meals cooked by herself when some patients expressed their wish to have homemade food. When she saw how happy they were to have homely food, she made it a regular affair. “I made it a ritual. I would carry 20 meals to the hospital every Friday.” She said she used to consult the nurses about the patients’ dietary requirements so that she would not end up serving the wrong foods. In this way, female patients with no support got help from her for over six years.

From Patients to Prisoners

During one of her regular rounds in the hospital, Prameela said she once chanced upon a woman from Kerala who was accused in a case of her two daughters’ stabbing. “Unfortunately, her older daughter aged three died, while the younger one survived. I was really shocked. Then I started talking to her to know about her background,” recollected Prameela. When the woman was shifted to jail, Prameela visited her there along with another volunteer, Elizabeth Kuruville. When the Keralite woman’s case

¹ Courtesy to Sajila Saseendran, Safari, February 05, 2021.



TOUCHED MANY LIVES IN DUBAI

was taken up with the jail authorities, she was given psychiatric treatment for 40 days. Prameela said she was still in touch with the woman who went back home after serving a 12-year sentence. “Elizabeth and I started going to the prison to meet the ladies every Saturday till a few years ago. Later, the visit was rescheduled to Tuesdays.” The duo had been visiting the prison until the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country last year. Helping an Iranian girl whose father had met with an accident, another Pakistani woman whose father had collapsed with high blood pressure and funding the children of an Indian woman who was in jail for prostitution are just a few examples of how Prameela has touched the lives of women in distress.

Priceless Service

When the Nadkarnis decided to head back home on Thursday after Pankaj’s retirement, volunteers with Vally of Love remembered how Prameela’s priceless service to the expat community would be missed. C.P Mathew, founder of VoL, said: “I cannot count the number of cases she was able to help with, especially when it came to repatriation of young children and mothers, in cases of birth registration etc. She was always there to give hope and a better life for these babies.” Mathew said Prameela was tireless and dedicated with her visits to the jail. “It is going to be a challenge for Elizabeth to find another partner like Prameela. She was truly one of those silent and tireless workers, committed to social work in the UAE.” Elizabeth, who described Prameela

as her closest friend in the UAE, said social work was much easier for her as she could always discuss cases with Prameela. “I will dearly miss her valuable support here. Rest assured, this charitable world will not miss her as she will continue to help the needy wherever she lives.”

Joseph Bobby, another social worker recollected how Prameela supported the needy women even financially. Prameela Nadkarni with other social workers Pam Gouri, Elizabeth Kuruvila and Titch Robinson Image Credit: Supplied “After repatriation of many cases, we always struggled to help them to adapt in their countries without a source of income. Prameela would invariably help.” Another senior volunteer, Garth Mitchell, said many lives had been positively impacted by Prameela’s social deeds and commitment. “We will miss the smile and heart of an angel. Quiet and unassuming angels like Prameela are what make Dubai unique,” he said.

Prameela brought in that soft, motherly touch in our social work. Whenever finance was an issue, she solved it by digging into her own pocket. Prameela said her social work had actually changed her perspective about life. “I became non-judgemental and more compassionate and empathetic. I accept the fact that we are human beings and we do things depending on our circumstances and state of mind.” “My husband and two daughters have been very supportive in my social work. Since I used to discuss the cases with them, they have also become very compassionate people.




Colosseum, 2nd Largest ever in the World

Adv KK Paulose

His Holiness Pope Francis has condemned the burning of people in open field of Ukraine by Russia through 'fire bombs' and he called to stop the flowing river of blood and tears as it resulting death, destruction and misery. Our Holy Father was indicating that we Christians should not involve in quietism and apocalyptic eschatology as we have to react against war by anyone, especially the kind of deadly war Russians meddling with- Thus 'His Excellency our Pope Francis has made the strongest exhortation ever with reference to the cold-blooded killings of thousands with deadly weapons of war in open field, encircled all over, from land sky and sea, by Russian President Putin in Ukraine. In fact, it was a Colosseum, 2nd and largest in the world created his military aids and committed the cruelest war-crime in open, threatening, otherwise world war, keeping the entire world witness and butchered thousands, destroyed part of civilization itself, resulting exodus - the most cruel chapter in the annals of war histories ever.

The laity expects our holy bishops to join our Holy pope in condemning the terrible war against the Russian aggrandizement of war to expand their 'earthly kingdom' by killing and destroying people. As Abraham Lincoln said the wolf swallowing poor sheep while the shepherds, try to drive the wolf



from the sheep's throat. Since every one's right to a fair trial in an independent justice system is under serious threat, when the rule of law is blatantly attacked in war fields, no Christian can keep quiet and so our Holy Pope, responded strongly. Unless we follow that step, the world around us may not get a proper message about us, that we are one and the same in the God, in the Holy Spirit and with the Global church.

The end of rule of law is the reign of the arbitrary. While tolerance and civility were at the core of our civilization process, such foul play with tooth and nail, we have to check, a clear message of our Holy Father. As per Art. 22 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights when it is guarantee, that everyone, as a member of society, has at his right to social security, the brutal killings and bombardments in Ukraine have to be condemned by us in single voice with our Excellency, our Holy Pope. When Rule of Law refused for the existence of a nation by a rival country, how to fight them. The end of rule of law is the reign of the arbitrary and the sign of a return to authoritarian regimes. Behind such attack, there is an ideological fight.

Wherefore, I pray, all the holy bishops and our Rev fathers and sisters all over the world, including PMI, may be pleased to condemn the war along with the laity to express solidarity in thought, expression and belief with our Holy Pope. Fiat justitia ruat caelum.




Fr Claude Pardis: A Priest for the Homeless

Br Pradeep Anthony L OFM

When St Mother Theresa received the Nobel Peace Prize, she rightly acknowledged in her speech that those who suffer from hunger know the pain of others who suffer the same. Something similar is the story of Fr. Claude Pardis. Our God is not a God of indifference but rather He is one who suffers with humanity. He suffered in the cruelest way possible in the hands of human beings yet he had a great compassionate heart towards them. Humans at the present age are often guilty of the sin of ‘indifference,’ perhaps because they haven’t felt the pain of the other. Indifference is the sin of the present epoch, on which Pope Francis remarks saying: ‘Indifference is opposed to God’s love.’ He frequently reminds people to say no to the culture of indifference. He also said: “Omission is also a great sin where the poor are concerned” and it is called “**indifference.**” Fr Claude Pardis stands as an ideal model to fight against the sin of indifference with his compassionate heart.

From Meaninglessness to Meaningfulness



Fr. Pardis narrates his own story. He grew up in the region of Gaspé, and then worked as a nurse for many years at Cowansville. Later, when he reached the city of Montreal, he couldn’t find a job for many years. He became a street dweller, where he himself got addicted to alcohol, cocaine and crack, and even wanted to take his life. Just like St. Francis of Assisi to whom a crucifix from



a dilapidated Church spoke saying: ‘Go and repair my church,’ similarly Fr Claude Pardis in his despair, prayed to God on his knees saying, “Either you take my life or give meaning to it”. Ever since he witnessed Christ in an old Church, he wanted to become ‘a man of the Church.’ He not only found meaning for his life, he also gave meaning to life for many. And one of the notable ones was his co-worker Kevin Cardin, who was an addict and alcoholic. Fr. Pardis has been assisting several people from addictions, and serving the needy since then. A frequent saying of his is: ‘The people who are outside are locked outside.’ His way of welcoming is very peculiar and unique as he understands the mind of street dwellers. He says, “street dwellers don’t like to be under the strain of a fixed time table; they feel free outside and therefore, his team gives them the basic essentials and spends time with them. Fr Claude received his inspiration from the Gospel passage Mt 25:35-40, in which Jesus associates himself with the naked, the hungry and thirsty, the prisoners, strangers and the homeless.

Notre Dame de la Rue

In 2013, Fr Claude Pardis founded Notre Dame-de la Rue which means Our Lady of the Street. It is a home started for the homeless, with the support received from Archbishop Christian Lepine. Many times in a week, Fr. Pardis, his co-worker Kevin Cardin, and a handful of volunteers go to the streets, taking the Gospel to the periphery by their lives. They pray, distribute food and provide clothing to the needy. Fr. Pardis’ team also goes around in the night, looking for men and women spending their night on the streets. Most of them are either from professional families or who have become



victims of drug addiction. Fr. Pardis' team reaches out to many street dwellers at all seasons; in winter they meet the street dwellers at the underground and in summer at the park. Their goal is to bring meaning in the lives of street dwellers, so that they will do better in their lives. Fr. Pardis administers the sacraments, celebrates the Eucharist, presides over funeral services and gives spiritual assistance to the faithful. He is frequently asked to hear confessions, as he is easily accessible to people. He hears it in parks, drug houses and in brothels; he is able to do it as he calls the street his parish. Presently both la Reine des Bières started by a model and an entrepreneur, Noémie Charest, and Notre-Dame de la Rue founded by Fr. Pardis, have come together to work towards the wellbeing of street dwellers. They are served 40 meals a week, reminding the world that no matter what our social background and our origin may be, when it comes to human conditions, all are in need of food, water, shelter and a need of being wanted by an intimate companion.

Inspiration to Many

Fr. Claude Pardis' life is a real inspiration for many alcoholics, drug-addicts and people who have suicidal tendencies as he himself had come out of these self-destructive tendencies and became a priest at Quebec in Montreal city. He remarks: "The street brought me to the Church and the Church in the end brought me back to the street." In his solidarity with the homeless he very often sleeps on the street with the homeless. By doing this he brings out the harsh reality of the suffering people to the world. In 2017 the media reported that Fr. Pardis, a local priest, slept on the street for more than



FR CLAUDE PARDIS

three weeks to make Montrealers help out the needy.

Fr. Pardis uplifts human dignity by introspecting over these questions with the street dwellers. He asks them these questions: "What is your real hunger?", "What does life mean to you?", and "What does the dignity of human life mean to you?". Fr. Pardis has discovered that people's hunger is primarily to be someone to another person and to be loved by another person. One of the volunteers acknowledges that when you learn someone's name, and call the person by his or her name, you are restoring back the dignity of that individual. This act of his gave him the title 'street priest' and besides he is well recognized all around the place.

As Van Thau says: "You will be a worthy leader if you do not distance yourself from people, but mingle with them and risk yourself for their sake." Similarly, Fr. Pardis becomes an ideal model for many of us. Fr. Pardis responds to the call of Pope Francis to the clergy for the lack of spirituality among the poor. Fr. Pardis has brought spirituality to a greater extent among the poor. Fr. Pardis says everyone needs spirituality. He seemed to have identified every human being as a spiritual, physical, emotional, social, rational, wholistic and mystical being. He finds the street dwellers have lost trust in the social NGO's who run homes for the homeless as their approach doesn't satisfy all the dimensions of the human person. Thus, with conviction and determination Fr. Claude utters: "On the street is where I want to be, until I die."




Home of Christ is Home of Love

**Sr Mary Monica Rose and Mary
Magdeleena SND**

When we were small, I am sure we all came across the words house and home and by and by we even try to differentiate these two. I came to understand the deeper meaning of Home when I reached Kolbe Home – Bangalore on 7th of March 2022. Just visualize a paralyzed human person, have hands but can't use! What a pain the person must be going through and what use of those hands, when relied on other pair? In the same way, when you have parents and a house to live still you live unsheltered, what use of the house and what love is that of the parents? The cruellest punishment for a child could be to stay away from his/ or her parents and it could be even worse when a child lives away from his/ her own house.

But here is something very unique I experienced. For various reasons and helplessness children of different parents live here and mostly the children of the inmates of different prisons stay here. Yet this house is called a home and not a hostel or an orphan age – why? It's because – the head of this home is Jesus, the one who came to give good news to the poor and liberty to the captives. The other reason according to me that makes this house a home is the Gospel – the passage where Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners-accepts them as brothers and sisters. This is what exactly I witnessed in Kolbe Home. The released prisoners are first of all are helped to release from the prison and are accepted and more over dine at the same table as one family. This put me speechless. This not only shows the height of humanity but also a deep understanding of spirituality.



This act can be done by the people who have encountered Christ and yes – people in Kolbe Home encounter Christ in these Prisoners.

Freedom not only from behind the bars but freedom from within is what people receive here. No one is born criminal; situations make them one. But core of every human is goodness and love. There is another thing that triggered my spirituality - the murderers, criminals, rapist burglars they have harmed the society but do they need to get their reward of what they have done? As I pondered upon it, I could only recall the words of Pope Francis when he was asked about the gay marriage he said” who am I to judge them?” I feel people of this category have already received their reward of hatredness from their own family and the victim's family as well – now what they need is love, mercy and acceptance and who are we to judge them?

Jesus was kind, full of love and mercy and as radical follower of Jesus I need to be Christ like -merciful and love filled. It was a time for me to ask myself that how do I respond when innocent lives are lost? Many times, I too by my silence and non-violence or indifference join hands with the scribes and pharisees and shout Crucify Him. After this experience in Kolbe Home - my heart shouts louder not to judge anyone by my words and even by my thoughts, and I shall in no way be a reason for the struggle or suffering for any innocent. I thank the Almighty for giving me this grace filled experience in Kolbe Home and my SND Congregation for this great opportunity and the PMI family for helping me to encounter Christ in a unique way. My prayers and best wished to Rev. Father Francis Kodyan who started this great mission to save souls and for the PMI staff for their wonderful service to the Lord, and pray for many more volunteers and benefactors to come forward for this noble cause.




Christological Foundations of Prison Ministry

Br S Michael SHJ

Jesus' Sufferings

“Then they laid hands on him and arrested him” (Mk 14:46). After his arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus was brought before the High Priest, Caiaphas, and all other chief priests, elders and scribes. It was here that the first physical agony of Jesus was exposed. He was in a state of loneliness because one of his own disciples had betrayed him and another denied knowing him. His only hope was his beloved Father for whom he took up this great agony in order to save humanity. Of course, it was not Jesus' will to undergo such physical trauma but he obeyed the will of his Father. They also spat on him, spitting on someone being the lowest form of disgrace to a person, but Jesus accepted everything for us. Jesus was treated as a prisoner in the journey to Calvary.

The Son of God who came from his heavenly dwelling place to dwell among us, emptied himself, took the form of a slave and gave his own life for sinners in order to give them life in abundance. The compassionate Saviour who went about doing good was treated with scorn, jeered at and mocked. Jesus was able to accept those disgraceful sufferings for the sake of bringing about salvation for the so-called sinners. Jesus accepted everything for our salvation, even though he was treated as a prisoner. There are many prisoners, who are being ill-treated, oppressed, abused, and tormented in prison. Let us consider



prisoners as human beings created in the image and likeness of God. Only in this way we can help them to restore their dignity and make them know that they are God's children. We should have the attitude of our Lord towards sinners. A prisoner is in dire need of great sympathy and understanding. Consider the feelings of a prisoner; sometimes he/she could be an innocent victim as our Lord Jesus was, one who was an innocent victim in front of the cunning Pharisees, elders and the High-priest. Our mission is not to show others anything but it comes from our love for the least, lost and last of the society, as our Lord Jesus worked for them till his last breath, being a so-called convict.

Personal Psalm

Dear delightful Holy Crucified Jesus,
I thank you from the bottom of my heart
for all your unconditional love, care,
protection and blessings
that you have granted me and my
congregation.

Crucified Jesus, I strongly acknowledge that
I and my congregation cannot live
without your compassionate hands.

Thank you, Crucified Jesus, for the gift of
my vocation to Brotherhood life.
It is you who helped me to overcome
all my struggles and worldly desires.
Therefore, I am still living in the
Congregation

Thank you, Crucified Jesus, for your
blessings and support.

Thank you, Crucified Jesus, for your
forgiveness of my sins.
I was frequently unaware of your presence.
Now, with tears in my eyes, I plead with
you:

CHRISTOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Crucified Jesus, strengthen me and provide me the grace to face the challenges ahead, all of my troubles and struggles in everyday life

You are my companion in my lowliness,
my guide in all my endeavours,
and my mother and father in my suffering,
Crucified Jesus.

Throughout my life, I need your presence.

Crucified Jesus, always be with me and make me your humble servant.

As a result, everywhere I am placed,
In your garden, I can bear a lot of fruits.

Make me an efficient instrument
to serve mankind with unselfish love,
Crucified Jesus.

Finally, my Lord, be with me in all of my
successes
and disappointments,
for I find greater strength in your name.

I put my total trust in you.
Lead me to the light, to progress,
and to the fullness of life.

Amen.

Who can Participate in Synodal Process?

Everyone who has been baptised is particularly asked to participate in the Synodal Process; no one should be excluded from expressing their thoughts and experiences in order to assist the Church in her synodal journey for what is **good and true**. This is especially true for the most vulnerable elements of society, such as prisoners and those on the margins. “Doing good “with love, justice and solidarity are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day” and it requires patience, prayer and hope” Pope Francis

Kolbe Home Children

Immaculata Rebello

I believe, the children of prisoners can climb up the ladder of success with the help of education, together with motivation. The prisoners’ children under our care should be motivated more and more with examples of great personalities who have come from rags to riches, till it gets deeply rooted in their minds. Along with talks on motivation and education, there should be talent search among the children. They should be shown videos of how boys and girls have proved themselves to be diamonds through sheer hard work, fighting against all odds. They should be encouraged to live better lives than that of their parents. They should never ever be made to feel guilty for their parents’ mistakes. They should be strongly motivated to give their best, be it in any field of their life. Any field of their liking must be encouraged. Only then Prison Ministry India can think that something has been achieved and have got that diamond polished. Every child has a talent. It is hidden under charcoal. With prayer and committed work on behalf of the Prison Ministry, that charcoal can turn into diamond. Any philanthropist will sponsor the children’s education. Each and every step of a child’s life should be monitored. The motivator should be a committed person. Children should get different kind of motivators over the years and their progress should be closely monitored by a committed Prison Minister. At any cost, child molesters should never be entertained and strict disciplinary action should be taken in this regard. The child should be regularly counselled. The child who has done well must be made to motivate the younger children in a brotherly manner. Mediocre success should not be the end goal. The children’s progress must be exploited to the highest potential. Side by side they must be taught small skills like plumbing, electrician’s work and minor repairs in the house according to need, so as to avoid bringing such people from outside



Search, Serve and Save the Lost

Sr Sherly OSB

Seek the will of God
Listen His cry for His people
Be a shepherd and tend them
To embrace new life in Jesus

March ahead to be with our brethren
In love, concern, support and care
Energize, motivate and strengthen
All for our Divine Master

Pour out optimism with a positive outlook
Adorn with values of our Lord and Master
Anoint their hearts to forgive and forget
And liberate them to a new horizon

Be a love Bomb in the confined walls
Love to be exploded in our brethren
Let our love conquer their minds
To be happy and find strength

Let them proclaim Jesus and instil hope
To transform and transcend their lives
Oh! Jesus in you they find refuge
The creator of heaven and earth

Launch into the deepest sea
To treasure out the pearls
Renewed and recycled
They become Ambassadors of Christ

Jesus is born in our brethren again
They are found and redeemed
Repented, reintegrated and rejuvenated
They resemble Jesus in them.




Imprisoned Innocent Archie Williams 36 Years behind Bars

Sr Lini Sheeja MSC

“When somebody inflicts evil on you, it’s all about how we let it affect us mentally. If you harbour evil, it can destroy you. That’s a scientific fact, right there. I never harboured evil — even when I knew that the people that put me in prison knew that I was innocent. And I’m talking about from the top to the bottom, they knew. But I never allowed the evil spirit of it to live in my heart. I always say life is how we feel it. My dream is to pursue a career as a boxing coach and singer”, utters strongly Mr Archie Williams, an innocent prisoner who was imprisoned for 36 long years for a crime he didn’t commit. Archie Williams hails from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, United States. On 9 December 1982, a 30-year-old woman was raped and stabbed in her Baton Rouge home in Louisiana by an unknown black male. On the 4 January 1983, a 22-year-old black male named Archie Williams was arrested as the culprit, a crime he knew nothing about. He knew he was innocent and didn’t commit any crime but as a poor black kid, he didn’t have the economic ability to fight the state of Louisiana.

Innocent Man Convicted

During his trial it was discovered that fingerprints found at the crime scene was not his own, Williams also had 3 witnesses that came forward to testify that Williams was



at home sleeping when the crime occurred and the victim herself wasn’t able to identify Williams as the culprit but succumbed after intense pressure by the police. The victims neighbour also said the culprit was taller than Williams. Even with all these facts proving that Williams was innocent, the state of Louisiana convicted Williams of the crime on April 21, 1983. He was sentenced to life imprisonment without a possibility of parole to a prison called “Angola,” the Bloodiest Prison in the United States. A 22-year-old black male who committed no crime was sent to life imprisonment to a jail made for “Beasts” because the state wanted someone to pay for the crime.

Dreamer behind Bars

Days turned into weeks, weeks into months, months into years and years into decades with no help in sight. In prison, Williams watched America’s Got Talent all the time. He would visualize himself being there. Williams was 22 years old at that time. He never up; what sustained him over the three decades of his wrongful imprisonment was first and foremost his family, and also singing and boxing. While at Angola, he coached the best boxing team in the prison’s history, winning numerous Louisiana state titles. He also comes from a family of singers. When he felt knocked down in prison, he would pray and sing to the Lord and that was how he got peace in prison. He led music ministrations in the prison church singing and praising God. There is a documentary of Williams, “A Decade behind Bars: Return to the Farm.”

“I don’t know that it can be explained, but all it’s all about faith in God,” Williams says, when asked how he kept going through the fear and darkness of his time as a wrongly incarcerated man at Louisiana State Penitentiary, an infamously brutal prison sometimes referred to as the Alcatraz of the South. “My faith has always been with God, all my life,” he adds. “I have faith that God will guide me through whatever storm. I just trust”, continued Williams from the dark cells of prisons. This is God experience. “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.” Isaiah 43:2 is a lived experience in the life of this innocent prisoner who held the innocent condemned God so closely. In prison, he never allowed the evil spirit of being wrongly convicted live in his heart.

Innocent Project for Innocent Williams

A friend told Williams about the “Innocence Project,” an organization that helps people wrongly convicted fight for their freedom. He first wrote to them for help in 1995 when he was 35 years and had already spent 13 years in jail for a crime he never committed. They took up his case and together with his legal team fought for Archie Williams. The Innocence Project fought for him for decades to get access to evidence that could prove that he was innocent. It took Innocence Project 24 years to get the judge to allow

them search FBI’s finger print database and within 1hr of granting them the permission, they matched the prints found on the crime scene to a man named, Stephen Forbes; a man known to have committed many sexual assaults. Archie Williams was finally freed on March 21, 2019 after spending Thirty-Six (36) in prison for a crime he didn’t commit. He went in a 22-year-old and came out a 58-year-old man.

Freed Dreamer

Williams didn’t sit down and cry over his wasted years, he decided to make something out of his life. On April 10, 2019, less than three weeks after his exoneration, Williams boarded a flight to Atlanta, Georgia to the National Innocence Network Conference where he and his family (his aunt, sisters and nieces) met over 200 other exonerated men and women and hundreds of other people working at innocence organizations throughout the country. It was overwhelming for Williams to take the stage with 41 other people who had been exonerated in the last year. Collectively they had served 1,003 years of wrongful imprisonment. When he took the stage, he sang with his sister, Shelia, A Change Is Gonna Come. He firmly believed the words of that song. ‘Change is going to come collectively; we can make a real difference’.

In 8 months’ time, on November 2019, he sang at the world-famous Apollo theatre in Harlem and made it through 3 rounds



36 YEARS BEHIND BARS

of their singing competition. He later flew to Los Angeles to audition for “America’s Got Talent” where he shared his story, sang and made it to the finals of AGT but didn’t win. In another few months, along with his skill-ful voice, his amazing personality was on full display in May 2020 for an audience of 8.7 million people watching the TV show America’s Got Talent. After producer Simon Cowell asked him to share a little about himself, Williams shocked the crowd when he answered: “I was just incarcerated for thirty-seven years for somebody else’s crime.”

Innocence Project

The leading causes of wrongful convictions include eyewitness misidentification, false confessions, unreliable jailhouse informants, inadequate defense counsel, police and prosecutorial misconduct, and racial bias in the criminal justice system. The Innocence Project is committed to freeing the staggering number of innocent people like Archie who have been incarcerated, as well as reforming the criminal justice system to prevent future injustice. Williams’ story inspired Simon Cowell to become an “Innocence Ambassador” to help other wrongfully convicted people throughout the U.S.

Simon Cowell, English entrepreneur, recording executive, and television producer and who is widely recognized for his work as a judge on talent shows such as

‘American Idol,’ ‘The X Factor’ and ‘Pop Idol’ said, “Archie’s performance is probably the single most important one in the history of America’s Got Talent. What happened to Archie is tragic. While Archie’s voice is extraordinary, unfortunately his experience of being sent to prison for a crime he didn’t commit is much more common than most people realize. There are thousands of innocent people in jails and prisons. I’m honoured to become an Ambassador for the Innocence Project and want to do what I can to help more people like Archie.”

Prayer for Innocent Prisoners from Prison Ministry India

Jesus, the innocent God, we pray for all our innocent brethren behind the bars. Heal their wounds and take control of their mind and will. Be their comfort as they suffer condemnation and unwarranted allegations. Give them your grace to carry the cross that is placed on their shoulders. Awaken the repentance and restore hope in them. Jesus, heal their scars as they are the victims of injustice. Grant courage and forgiveness to their families and heal their inner wounds. Jesus, you being the innocent God stood at the judgmental seat awaiting for the judgment. Give wisdom and discernment to lawmakers and to those who judge. Instill prudence and patience in those who guard. Make PMI volunteers bearers of your light amidst the dark cells of prisons. May our innocent brethren know that they are not alone!




PMI Burning Bush Spiritual Banquet

Sr S Amala DC

The Burning Bush Spiritual Banquet was held on 4 March 2022 together with the Memorial Holy Mass for PMI Volunteer John Misquitta. Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, the PMI national coordinator presided over the Holy Mass. In his introductory talk he welcomed PMI volunteers. John Misquitta was a man of prayer and an active intercessor of PMI's Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the incarcerated worldwide. He prayed day and night for the reformation, reintegration, and redemption of prisoners all over the world. He was a frequent visitor to Kalyan and other prisons in Mumbai. He also was an active member of Death Row Commandos and many other PMI initiatives like the Burning bush spiritual banquet. He appreciated and thanked all PMI volunteers, especially the DRC for praying for John Misquitta and conveyed his condolences to the Misquitta family.

Memorial Homily

Fr Wilfred Fernandez, PMI central regional coordinator, in his homily said that spirituality is reflected in one's personality. John Misquitta was a great collaborator who worked in the vineyard of the Prison Ministry. In the Diocese of Pune and in Mumbai Unit, he was part of the Prison Ministry executive team. He was part of the legal aid team and was head of the PMI Kalyan unit. He had great passion and commitment to PMI. He took everything as a challenge and did it very easily. His



jovial nature was outstanding. He attracted many through his joviality along with his commitment and sense of responsibility. There are people who are only entertainers but John was more than that. He went through suffering but never made it known to anyone. He suffered silently and patiently. The gospel of today speaks about Jesus' fasting. Spiritual fasting is to deny our body some of its physical needs so that the focus is turned from the physical to the spiritual. The faith dimension leads into the realm of God and the journey of faith. John's life reflected all these as he lived his faith truly. Those who worked with him and those who experienced him living with faith are many among us. Fasting doesn't weaken us but it strengthens us. Refraining from eating is our spiritual discipline to tame our body in order to transcend and concentrate on obtaining something higher. Fasting from things that destroy our soul, such as sin, anger, pride, selfishness, idolatry, negative thoughts, evils, etc, make our heart, mind, and soul from being pure and holy. We are sure that as we pray John is marching towards eternal life. He thanked God for his PMI Bombay unit, Maharashtra unit, and above all the National unit at large. And he will certainly continue to intercede for us.

Memorial Message

Fr Glasten Gonsalves, the PMI Mumbai unit coordinator recalled a few memories of John Misquitta. About 8 years ago, John was told to head the PMI Kalyan, when the earlier head, Sr Dhanam was transferred to Delhi. He was told by Sr. Dhanam, "Don't be afraid, you have the backing of the Almighty". He obeyed her and took up that



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PM unit as a challenge. When felt down, in the ministry, he basked in the bosom of the Creator and witnessed that HE had not let him down. He was able to motivate others to work in the Ministry. Death is not the end of everything because death is also the beginning of a new life in the Lord. To summarize his whole life, John's Commitment was to the core, responsible to the end whistle, grateful to the heart, generous to empty himself, and jovial as a child. One of the recent cases that he took over which all the members of the PM Mumbai unit will remember is about one of the young boys arrested and put in Kalyan Prison. His mother pleaded a non-Catholic case. I told John about this case and asked him whether he would like to intervene in it. John, without saying or thinking so much, said, "Yes, Father, send me the details. Give me the mother's number. I'll follow up the case." John went to nail this entire case, where even nights he made into days. He went out of his way to see this case through and this kind of commitment comes through prayer. His heart was always moved by prayer and I could see that he was always led by the Spirit.

Today, Prison Ministry, Mumbai, will miss him, because he was a warrior. I am sure no one can replace what he has done for us and we will always miss him. The generosity of John cannot be counted. John would never meet anybody empty-handed. Fr Francis mentioned that he would always have a

box in his hand. He would always have something for anybody in need. It was not so much about giving, but emptying himself. He always emptied himself for the sake of Prison Ministry, for the sake of a family, and also worked tirelessly for the other Ministries in which he was involved in the Archdiocese of Mumbai. He was part of the IMFE, the SSC committee, the Parish SSC group and John would go for any work that was assigned to him, or asked by the Lord. He was led by the Holy Spirit. Today, I'm sure his loss cannot be counted. No doubt, we will all miss him. He never complained or spoke about pain, but suffered silently. We will miss you John and though you're no longer with us, your Spirit moves amidst us, to inspire us to carry out the good work you have begun and left.

Burning Bush Talk

Dr Br Paul Raj SG mainly spoke about Spirituality. Spirituality has to do with our experience of God and 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,



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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, 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. Br. Paul Raj’s reflection entered on the significance of Lenten spirituality in prisoners’ reformation and opening 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 precisely this.

The very basic nature of these six ministries: Food, drink, hospitality, clothing, nursing care, and visitation, cannot all of them be done by PMI at the same time. But we know that every person has the potential to provide these kinds of help 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 the 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 the 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 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 the unknown.

Eucharistic Adoration

Eucharistic adoration was led by Mrs Jeniffer James and the DRC group. Mrs Lili Vaz sung the hymn ‘Tantum Ergo’ and Fr Francis gave the final Eucharistic blessing.





Pope Francis Celebrates Mass of the Lord's Supper at Prison near Rome

Courtesy to Vatican News

Pope Francis presides over the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday at a new penitentiary complex in the port city of Civitavecchia, north of Rome, where he washed the feet of 12 inmates.

By Vatican News staff reporter

Pope Francis presided over the Holy Thursday liturgy In Coena Domini or "Mass of the Lord's Supper," which commemorates the institution of the Holy Eucharist, with inmates housed at the new penitentiary complex of Civitavecchia, a port city north of Rome.

He arrived just before 4 pm and was welcomed by the prison authorities, who took him to the institution's Chapel where he celebrated the Mass. The celebration took place with some of the inmates, security personnel, prison staff, and authorities, including Italy's Minister of Justice.

Service and humility

The Director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni, said in statement that Pope Francis gave a homily where he spoke about the sign of the washing of the feet, part of the liturgy in this celebration, as something seen as "a strange thing" in this world, when we read in the Gospels about "Jesus washing the feet of the traitor, the one who betrayed him."

The Pope added that, "Jesus teaches us this, simply, that you must wash each other's feet ... we serve one another, without expecting a return: how beautiful it would be if it

were possible to do this every day and to all people."

God always forgives!

The Pope went on to say that serving is Jesus saying "friend" to the one who betrayed him, waiting for him until the end, forgiving everything: "God forgives everything and God always forgives! It is we who tire of asking for forgiveness."

Each one of us," the Pope said, "will have something that has been in our hearts for a long time, but we ask Jesus for forgiveness". And he recalled "there is the Lord who judges, but it is (what may seem) a strange judgement: the Lord judges and forgives."

The Pope concluded by exhorting people to follow this example, with "the desire to serve and forgive each other".

Washing of 12 inmates' feet

Following his homily, Pope Francis carried out the traditional gesture of Jesus at the Last Supper, when He washed the feet of His Disciples as a sign of His love reflecting the importance of service and humility.

The Pope washed the feet of 12 inmates, men and women, including people of various ages and nationalities.

At the end of the Mass, the prison director thanked the Holy Father, and offered him a print of the ancient port of Civitavecchia, as well as a selection of products from the vegetable garden managed by the inmates and some works made by staff and inmates.

The Press Office statement concluded noting that, after the celebration, the Pope went to a room where he briefly greeted about fifty people representing the inmates, officers and staff of the prison. He returned to the Casa Santa Marta shortly afterwards.



**PMI Volunteers Training Program
Participants Visiting Open Prison**



**PMI volunteers Visiting
Cheralapalli Central Prison**



**PMI Volunteers Visiting
Prisons in MP**



**Women's Day Celebration at
Sambalpur Prison**



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



**Women's Day Celebration in
Berhampur jail**



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



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



Women's Day Celebration in Shimoga Prison



Inauguration of PMI Volunteers Training Program



Releasing of the Book on Charles de Foucauld



Participants for PMI Volunteers Training Program



PMI Volunteers Training Program Participants with Certificates