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# REFORMATIVE EXPLORATIONS

A PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL AND CRIMINO-SOCIAL QUARTERLY ON REFORMATION AND REHABILITATION



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# REFORMATIVE EXPLORATIONS

A PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL AND CRIMINO-SOCIAL QUARTERLY  
ON REFORMATION AND REHABILITATION

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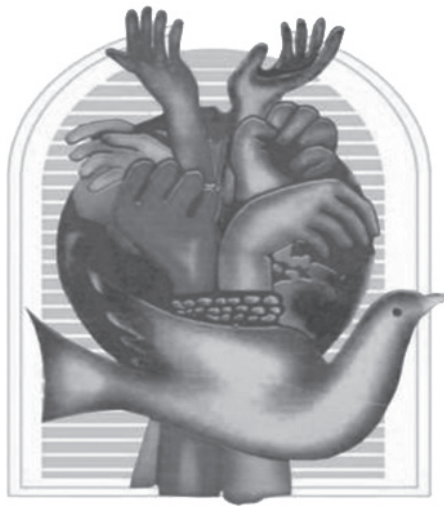
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## Sex Offenders

My 40 yearlong prison visit reveals that there is a steady and gradual rise in the number of sex offenders and convicts in the recent past. The number of prisoners related to POCSO - Protection of Children from Sexual Offences, rape, sexual abuse, sex trafficking, pornography, etc. are ever growing. Studies and researches reveal that there are 40 to 42 million prostitutes in the world. Three quarters of them are between the ages of 13 and 25, and 80% of them are female. Every year 6.6 million referrals are made to child protection agencies. A report of child abuse is made every ten seconds. Human and sex trafficking have become one of the most profitmaking and prosperous businesses worth billions. Hence, this issue of Reformative Explorations delves deep into the roots of sex offences such as pornography, sex abuse, etc.

The term sex offender refers to an individual who has committed a sex-related crime such as rape, molestation, production or distribution of child pornography, sexual assault, sexual abuse of a minor, incest, prostitution, sex trafficking, transporting a person across jurisdictions with the intent of engaging in sexual activities, sodomy or bestiality, and genital mutilation. Every country has different statutes concerning a sex crime. Any illegal act that involves illegal, forced, or coerced sexual conduct against another person is considered a sex crime. In some countries even public urination and indecent exposure come under sexual offence.

Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS introduces the PMI Special Task Force Angels. Dr Alphonse Arockiaswamy MSFS who has recently been crowned with the doctor title from Ludwig Maximillian University, Munich, Germany demonstrates how intertwined the teachings of

Pope Francis and the activities of Prison Ministry in India. Dr Mathew Illathuparambil, Director of St Mary's Institute of Technology and Science, Palakkad, outlines the undercover liaison between sexual offences and pornography. Dr Scaria Kanniyakonil, Professor of Moral Theology at Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies Vadavathoor, and Rector of St Thomas Apostolic Seminary Vadavathoor, presents a moral appraisal of the Catholic view on the sexual abuse of vulnerable people. Dr Tom Kainikkara, Dean of Studies at the John Paul II Pontifical Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences, Changanassery, illustrates how pornography destroys individuals and plays a vital role in the enhancement of sex offences. Mr Alex Romer and Miss Anandita Dulloo two young researchers in criminology and prisoners' reformation and rehabilitation outline the urban attitudes towards penal action for gender violence.

Dr Paul Raj shares his experiences with prisoners in Trichy prison and proposes his observations for the revitalization of prison ministry. Sr Lini Sheeja MSC introduces the largest prison we could imagine – the purgatory and guides us how to redeem them. Fr Mathew Thundathil MCBS highlights the contributions of Fr George Kuttickal MCBS in prison ministry. Sr Clara HCM reveals the secret of Thasim's reformation. Sr Jini Joseph OP illustrates Marie Poussepin's Girls Home for prisoners' children.

The documentation section introduces two significant reports: the paper presentation of Fr Brian Gowan, President of International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care (ICCPCC) at the International Meeting on Integral Human Development and the Catholic Prison Pastoral Care, held on 7-8 November 2019 in the Vatican and Mrs Rowena Luis's report on PMI Diocesan Coordinators' Online Training Program held on 2-17 August 2020. Dr Jaison Kunnell reviews the books of Jim Wallis, *Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus* and of Mother Teresa, *A Call to Mercy: Hearts to Love, Hands to Serve*. Fr Rajendrakumar reviews the book of Kiran Bedi, *It's Always Possible*.

## **PMI Special Task Forces**

### **Rev Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS**

#### **Duc in Altum**

Duc in Altum is a phrase used by Jesus in Luke 5:4 where Jesus instructs Simon Peter to “launch into the deep” or “put out into deep water”. The conception of Prison Ministry India (PMI) took place on 8th December 1981 at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam, India. As the Ruby Jubilee of PMI is at hand, it is the right time to launch into the deep as Jesus said to Peter. Therefore, we put our nets into deep waters by penetrating into the high security prisons to catch big sharks and whales such as terrorists, serial killers, mafia dons, death row prisoners, and so on. Following Jesus who came to seek and save the lost, PMI launches new nets for these hardcore convicts by introducing special task force angels, inspired by the words of St Paul: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens” (Phil 4,13).

#### **Special Task Forces**

We are familiar with the special task forces of the superpowers. For instance, USA’s - Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team (FAST), US Navy Seals, US Navy Development Group (DEVGRU), the Germany’s Special Services Group (SSG9), Spain’s Unidad de Operaciones Especiales (UOE), Russia’s the Alpha Group, France’s National Gendarmerie Intervention Group (GIGN), Israel’s Sayeret Matkal, the British Special Air Service known as the SAS, and India’s Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA). What is common in these special operation



forces is their rigorous training, precision in reaching out their targets and perfection in realizing their goals. PMI dreams of such special task forces to regain the staunch lost sheep dwelling in unapproachable high security prisons. PMI, who has so far been serving prisoners such as the innocents, infants, first offenders, undertrials, robbers, rapists, murderers and so on now puts its net to deep waters through introducing the special task forces for a bigger catch of terrorists, mafia dons, death row prisoners, serial killers, and habituals.

### **Conception**

On 12 December 2019, I was waiting at the inner gate of Tihar Prison number 5 to celebrate Christmas with the prisoners. While I was waiting in prayer, a police bus came near to us and many police personnel came out of it together with some prisoners chained on their legs, hands and waist. I felt frightened. But soon I understood that they were some hardcore criminals like terrorists or serial killers and within me there sprout the powerful message “PMI is called to seek and save them too”.

### **Inauguration**

On 22 December 2019, Sr Adele Korah, Sr Rose Alexander, Sr Lini Sheeja MSC and Fr Francis Kodiyan went to Aradhanankunju at Carmelaram, Bengaluru, a contemplative community who have perpetual Eucharistic adoration. After spending many hours in Eucharistic contemplation and adoration, they launched the PMI Special Task Force Angels Ministry.

### **Patroness**

St Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897), patroness of this mission, at the age of 14, became a commando of this mission by offering Holy Mass and mortifications for the repentance of Henri Pranzini, a hardcore triple murderer. This unrepentant convict thanks to St Theresa’s prayer and sacrifices, at the last moment of his death approached the priest who was

carrying the crucifix, took hold of the cross and kissed the wounds of Jesus three times, repented, and shed tears while embracing his capital punishment.

### **Death Row Commandoes (DRC)**

According to the National Crime Research Bureau 2019 statistics there are 400 people who are condemned to death in Indian prisons. There are more than 2500 condemned to death prisoners in the USA. All over the world, there are more than 20000 death row prisoners. PMI has a great role to play in their reformation and redemption. With this intention PMI launched a new mission called DRC – Death Row Commandoes. Their duty is to pray and fast for the reformation of those living in death rows. The most important spiritual weapon for this mission is the Holy Mass – the offering of the Body and blood of Jesus for their transformation. Eucharistic adoration and voluntary sacrifices will be greatly beneficial to this mission. In the course of time we will seek the possibilities to personally visit and counsel them. St Therese of Lisieux, patron of this mission, was such a commando who by offering Holy Mass and mortifications led to the repentance of Pranzini, a hardcore triple murderer. If you are ready to be part of this mission, please let us know. To begin with, please visit your neighboring contemplative communities and invite them to pray for this intention. “The Lord looked down from his holy height, from heaven the Lord looked at the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die” (Ps 102, 19). “Let the groans of the prisoners come before thee, according to thy great power preserve those doomed to die” (Ps 79, 11).

### **Terrorists Saving Squad (TSS)**

The number of terrorists and terrorist groups are on rapid growth. Every day there emerge new terrorist groups. We are familiar with Islamic State, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, Taliban and so on who do heinous crimes by

killing innocents and raping women and demolishing Christian monuments and cities. What is more alarming is that there has always been a long queue of youngsters to follow suit. PMI has a vital role to play in their salvation. We thought of forming a new squad – Terrorists Saving Squad (TSS) for their transformation and salvation. You are most welcome to join in this squad. As an initial step, please visit your nearby perpetual adoration centers and retreat centers and speak to them regarding this new PMI mission and ask them to offer their adoration and prayers for this intention. “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison (1Pt 3: 18-19). “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me” (Ps 51: 10). “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (Jam 4:7).

### **Mafia Redeemers (MR)**

There are innumerable mafia gangs who do smuggling, drug trafficking, human trafficking, hawala, money laundering, and all sorts of illegal atrocities. Jesus called us to be members of PMI to work for their spiritual transformation and salvation. PMI would like to form a special taskforce known as Mafia Redeemers to work on the transformation of mafia group. If you are interested to be part of this mission, please let me know. Please visit the nearby formation houses such as minor seminaries, major seminaries, novitiate houses, institutes for aspirants and postulants and invite them to offer their spiritual exercises for this intention. “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col 3: 5). “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing

what you would” (Gal 5: 16-17). “Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4: 22-24).

### **Antihuman Trafficking Brigadiers (ATB)**

Human Trafficking, the second largest criminal enterprise in the world, is the most barbaric crime and the postmodern slavery. Studies reveal that more than 40 million people are victims of human trafficking. Pope Francis has been giving enormous importance to the plight of millions of men, women and children who are trafficked and enslaved. On 20 January 2019 during his weekly Angelus Prayer at St Peter’s Square Pope Francis invited the faithful to pray for those responsible for human trafficking and its victims. PMI is committed to liberate the victims of human trafficking and launches a new battalion of Antihuman Trafficking Brigadiers who in collaboration with other agencies will be committed to search, serve and save human trafficked victims. “I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12: 2). “See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven” (Mat 18: 10). “I have made a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. Again, though I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ yet if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, committing no

iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right, he shall surely live” (Ezk 33: 7 & 14-16).

### **Serial Killers Reformers (SKR)**

Serial killers are typically persons who murder three or more people due to abnormal psychological drives, often sexual gratification, with the murders taking place over more than a month and including a significant period of time between them. Dr Harold Shipman (1946–2004), a British doctor, is the most prolific serial killer in modern history, who killed more than 250 people. He hung himself in his cell in 2004, a day before his 58th birthday. Watch the blockbuster movie *Se7en* about a serial murderer who contrives to kill his victims in accordance with the seven deadly sins (lust, greed, gluttony, sloth, pride, anger, and envy) or watch Oscar-winning thriller *Silence of the Lambs*. At any time, a serial killer can emerge amidst us. Let us be prepared to reform and regain them through our prayer and fasting for nothing is impossible for Jesus. “For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit 2: 11-13). “There are six things which the Lord hates, seven which are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood” (Prov 6: 16-17).

### **Habituals Saving Squadron (HSS)**

A large number of prisoners are called habituals. They are thieves, rapists, pedophiles who are addicted to these crimes and who continue to do the same and come back again and again to the prison. They are known as “Once in a prison, always in a prison” and are the toughest people to be reformed. Jesus on the cross reformed and redeemed a habitual prison-

er, the good thief. “Today you will be with me in paradise” (Lk 23:43). Anchoring on Jesus’ last-minute saving action PMI launched Habituals’ Saving Squadron (HSS) to redeem them. “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (1Cor 10: 13). “I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you, I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness” (Is 42: 7). “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness” (Gal 6:1). “Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” (Eph 6:18).

### **Hired-killers Liberating Squadron (HLS)**

Sushil, Amit, Sunil, and Ramesh had allegedly received around Rs 4 crore - Rs 1 crore each - for the murder of a gangster and his two aides by his rival. It was a high-profile contract killing planned by the gangster’s rival. Hired or Contract killing is a form of murder in which one party hires another party, often called a hitman to kill a targeted person or multiple people. It involves an illegal agreement between two or more parties in which one party agrees to kill the target in exchange for some form of payment, monetary or otherwise. The total number of US murders in 2010 was 12,996. If we assume 3.2 percent of these crimes were committed on a commercial basis, we get 416 contract hits. That sounds like a lot. A recent study on contract killings in Australia, states that over a three-year period, there were 69 contract killings and 94 attempted killings. PMI formed a squadron called Hired-killers Liberating Squadron (HLS) to liberate and redeem those entangled in contract killings.

### **Antidrug Trafficking Warriors (ATW)**

Drug trafficking is a global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws. Drug trafficking which ravishes communities, endangers businesses, strains government institutions, and drags down the wider economy, has become a huge business, bringing in a fifth of all profits from organized crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's World Drug Report 2005 estimates the size of the global illicit drug market at US\$321.6 billion in 2003 alone. Consumption of illegal drugs is widespread globally and it remains exceedingly difficult for local authorities to thwart its popularity. There is a good number of prisoners related to drug trafficking in major central prisons of metropolitan cities. Therefore, PMI formed Drug-traffickers Redeeming Wing (DRW) to liberate and redeem those involved in drug trafficking.

### **Prisoners' Releasing Team (PRT)**

PMI has a team to work for the release of prisoners. With the assistance from PMI advocates we release many prisoners by paying their security fine. Every year PMI spends lakhs of money for releasing prisoners under the leadership of Sr Adele Korah in Bangalore and Me Antony Jacob in Pune. In almost all central prisons we have PMI volunteers to take care of those prisoners who have no money and nobody to release them.

### **Prisoners' Children Educators (PCE)**

PMI has a crew to take care of the education of prisoners' children. Besides the Kolbe Home where we give free accommodation and education to prisoners' children, we help educational scholarships to more than 100 children of prisoners. We visit their homes and help them to provide their school or college fees.

## Purgatory Souls Redeemers (PSR)

Purgatory, the condition, process, or place of purification or temporary punishment in which the souls of those who die in a state of grace are made ready for heaven. “A soul stained by sin cannot present itself to God”, Says Pope Benedict XVI. “They begged him that this sin might be completely blotted out. Then, Judas, that great man, urged the people to keep away from sin, because they had seen for themselves what had happened to those men who had sinned. He also took up a collection from all his men, totaling about four pounds of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. Judas did this noble thing because he believed in the resurrection of the dead. If he had not believed that the dead would be raised, it would have been foolish and useless to pray for them” (2 Macc 12:42-44). “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved – even though only as one escaping through the flames” (1 Cor 3:11-15).

The people in hell and in heaven do not need our payers, but the people in purgatory need. The writings of the Church Fathers teach us about the value of praying for the dead and doing good deeds for the souls in purgatory. PMI volunteers are chosen by God for a noble cause to be a love bomb, “Be a love bomb, let it be exploded, not to kill but to heal the broken hearted”. They are chosen to be a love bomb, after being chosen each one of us, Jesus looked up to heaven and gave thanks to God. Jesus is grateful for our humble service and for living His ever-living words where He says, “I was in prison, you visited me” (Mt 25:36). We surrender and



offer up all our brokenness, the little sufferings that come on our way for the sanctification of all the souls in purgatory. The final act of Jesus was ‘He gave to them.’ Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me” (Lk 22:19). Remember, that our call to PMI is a pure gift of God. The same God who called me called the other PMI volunteers to render our services in all the ways that we can. The call of PMI volunteers goes further in redeeming souls from purgatory.

### **Foreign Prisoners’ Expatriation (FPE)**

There are more than 5000 foreign prisoners in Indian prisons and a good number of Indian citizens are languished in foreign prisons. PMI Foreign Prisoners’ Expatriation team works for the expatriation of foreign prisoners in Indian prisons and bring back home Indian citizens from the prisons of foreign countries.

### **Reformation Warfare**

Transformation of death-row prisoners, terrorists, mafia tycoons, human traffickers, serial killers, habituals, contract killers, drug traffickers is neither an easy task nor an impossible mission. This is a spiritual warfare, a reformation warfare, a warfare between God and Satan, good and evil, virtue and sin. “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Mt 19,26). To do this impossible mission we propose a 40 days program. First, select your preferred type of prisoner, that is, the prisoner in death-row or a mafia tycoon or a terrorist or terrorist group or human trafficking don, or a serial killer or a habitual.

40 Days Program

40 Holy Masses and Communion

40 Chapters of the Gospel: Luke and Mark

40 Creed

40 Rosaries

40 Divine Mercy Rosaries

40 Mortifications

4000 Glory be to the Father

4000 Thank you Jesus

We do what is possible from our part and then we ask the assistance of others especially those who lead profound spiritual life such as contemplatives, those who do perpetual adoration of the most Holy Eucharist, consecrated people, priests, seminarians, novices, aspirants, postulants, and intercessory prayer group members. The most important spiritual weapon for this mission is the Holy Mass – the offering of the Body and blood of Jesus for their transformation. Eucharistic contemplation, adoration and voluntary sacrifices will be greatly beneficial to this mission. In the course of time, we will seek the possibilities to personally visit and counsel them.

## Conclusion

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (Jn 3,16). Let us be part of this redeeming mission of Jesus by saving daily the lost sheep and thereby experiencing heavenly joy. “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance (Lk 16,7). PMI organizes special task forces and entrusts them to undertake the responsibilities of liberating and redeeming those who are involved in terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and other sorts of antihuman involvements and criminal activities. Let the words of St Paul to Timothy Strengthen us: “You

then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory (2 Tim 2, 1-10).

## Pope Francis' Life and Teaching: Meaning and Implications for Prison Ministry in India Dr Alphonse Arockyaswamy MSFS

Wherever and whenever Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the current Pope of the Catholic Church appears before the public, one recognizes in him a down-to-earth man who is deeply human and humane, a pastor *par excellence*, very close to the ordinary folk and an excellent teacher whose words are very concrete and imperative. His performative style of Petrine Ministry inspires and strengthens the faith and commitment of every faithful especially all those who place their trust in the providential care and commit themselves in the service of the least, last and lost. He stands as a representative of God who bent down to embrace the broken humanity, in and through the person of Christ. He stands as a great example of being a real *servus servorum* of all those who place themselves generously in the ministry of searching, serving, and saving. This article aims at drawing some inspiration and insights from his life and teachings for all those who are involved in ministry of every kind, especially all those who commit themselves in serving and accompanying the prisoners in India.

### 1. From the End of the World to the Eternal City

The memory of the traditional appearance of the new Pope on 13th March 2013 at the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica still fresh in our minds.<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis' statement - "the Cardinals had gone to the ends of the earth

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<sup>1</sup> WALL, Barbara and FAGGIOLI, Massimo (eds.), *Pope Francis – A Voice for Mercy, Justice, Love, and Care for the Earth*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll/New York 2019, 59-60.

to elect the new Pope” had given already a hint into the “biographical, pastoral and theological frame that allows us to delve with greater clarity and insight into Jorge Mario Bergoglio’s pastoral project for the Church.”<sup>2</sup> A glimpse into his life and ministry in Latin America would give us the understanding of “why he leads the way he leads”<sup>3</sup> and inspire women and men of good will who commit themselves in the service of God and humanity.

### 1.1 Jorge Mario Bergoglio: “A Man of Faith and Action”

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 17 December 1936, as the first son of an Italian immigrants, grew up in a strongly Catholic environment, guided by his grandmother Rosa Margherita Vasallo (father’s mother) in faith,<sup>4</sup> completed his graduation as a chemical technician and prepared himself to settle down in life as per the strong wish of his father. But divine plan directs him through a spiritual experience as he went for confession.<sup>5</sup> It moved him to search for Christ and discern His will for the rest of his life. He became a Jesuit formed by the Spirit as embodied in the Spiritual Exercises.<sup>6</sup> After fulfilling all the secular and ecclesiastical prerequisites he received the sacrament of ordination to priesthood on 13 December 1969. At the young age of 36 he was given the responsibility of leading the Jesuits in Argentina as the Provincial Superior.<sup>7</sup> Those were the harshest years of military

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<sup>2</sup> DORMOR, Duncan and HARRIS, Alana, *Pe Francis – Evangelii Gaudium and the Renewal of the Church*, Paulist Press, New York 2017, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. LOWNEY, Christ, *Pope Francis: Why He Leads the Way He Leads – Lessons from the First Jesuit Pope*, Loyola Press, Chicago 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. VALLELY, Paul, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, Bloomsbury, London 2013, 21-23.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. COLLINS, Michael, *Francis, Bishop of Rome: A Short Biography*, The Columba Press, Collegeville, 2013, 27.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. KAISER, Robert Blair, *Inside the Jesuits – How Pope Francis is Changing the Church and the World*, Rowman & Little Field, London 2014, 31-32; AGUILAR, Mario L., *Pope Francis: His Life and Thought*, The Lutter Worth Press, Cambridge 2014, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. VALLELY, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, 39.

dictatorship and the Dirty War in Argentina.<sup>8</sup> He had to face lot of pressures due to the complex situation of Argentinian politics and the Church. Some even criticized his style of leadership as “authoritarian.”<sup>9</sup>

From tough and challenging experiences especially during his term as Provincial he learnt life which led him not to rely too much on himself and his abilities but on God. He gained confidence because he believed in God’s mercy. That is why he openly confessed that he is a sinner: “I do not know what might be the most fitting description (of myself) ...I am a sinner.”<sup>10</sup> In this way he identified himself with any other human being who struggles against one’s own imperfections and failures. His formation according to the Ignatian Exercises seemed to have helped him conquer himself and regulate his life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment. Spiritual Exercises aim at creating a spiritual detachment from a person’s likes, dislikes, comforts, wants, needs, drives, appetites and passions. So that one may be able to discern what God’s will is for oneself.<sup>11</sup>

## **1.2 A Bishop of the Streets: “A Shepherd in Search of the Least, Last and Lost”**

After six years as Jesuit Provincial, Bergoglio became the rector of the Jesuit Colegio Maximo in Cordoba and director of the faculties of theology and philosophy. At the same time, he undertook the duties of a parish priest in the parroquia San Jose, in the newly-established diocese of San Miguel. It was here that Bergoglio discovered his pastoral vocation, and the simplicity of life that would become a hall mark of his ministry as one of the auxiliary bishops of Buenos Aires.<sup>12</sup> Buenos

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ibid., 41; AGUILAR, Pope Francis: His Life and Thought, 66-70.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. CAVADINI, John and WALLENFANG, Donald, Pope Francis and the Event of Encounter, Pickwick Publications, Eugene 2018, 4.

<sup>10</sup> LITTLE, John and MAHER, Eamon (eds.), The Francis Factor – A New Departure, The Columba Press, County Dublin 2014, 49-50.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. VALLELY, Pope Francis: Untying the Knots, 146.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. AGUILAR, Pope Francis: His Life and Thought, 83-84.

Aires is known by its nickname “the Paris of Latin America.” But it is also a city of misery. A greater section of people who live there are severely affected by deep poverty. Bergoglio grew up not far from this place and was highly aware of the great disparities existed in lifestyle generated by a modern economy. It is a city where on the one side, affluent families lived with great privileges and luxuries and the other side the poor who lived in the barrios and Shantytowns (the villas miserias/ misery dwellings). It was “plagued by high unemployment, unsanitary conditions, endemic drug addiction, and gang-related violence that rocked the ramshackle neighbourhoods.”<sup>13</sup> As an auxiliary bishop he oversaw a lower-middle-class part of the city that included villas miserias, and a number of sanctuaries and shrines that played very important role in the lives of ordinary faithful of Latin America.<sup>14</sup> Based on a study made in 2004 Michael Collins writes more about the condition of the shantytowns that “there are 640 slums in these areas of suburban Buenos Aires. About 690,000 people lived in the crowded areas, packed into 111,000 makeshift dwellings. There was no sanitation, and open sewers lined the roads. In the summer, the slums were scorching hot and in the damp winter the shelters were regularly flooded.”<sup>15</sup>

The archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Antonio Quarracino recognized the capabilities of Bergoglio and made him a co-adjutor bishop. With the death of Quarracino in 1998 Bergoglio became the archbishop of Buenos Aires.<sup>16</sup> As the shepherd of a big diocese he had the responsibility of taking care of around three million flock of whom 85 percent are Catholics.<sup>17</sup> As an influential and powerful ecclesiastical

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<sup>13</sup> MASSARO, Thomas, *Mercy in Action – The Social Teachings of Pope Francis*, Rowman & Littlefield, New York/London 2018, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. IVEREIGH, Austen, *Wounded Shepherd – Pope Francis and His Struggle to Convert the Catholic Church*, Henry Holt & Company, New York 2019, 154-155.

<sup>15</sup> COLLINS, Francis, *Bishop of Rome: A Short Biography*, 45.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. RUBIN, Sergio and AMBROGETTI, Francesca, *Pope Francis – Conversations with Jorge Bergoglio*, Penguin Group Publications, New York 2010, XXIII.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. IVEREIGH, *Wounded Shepherd – Pope Francis and His Struggle to Convert the Catholic Church*, 155.

leader,<sup>18</sup> Bergoglio had all facilities at his disposal to live a comfortable and cosy life. But his personal conviction as a missionary disciple of his Master he distanced himself from all of them. He lived a modest and austere life, sensitive to the majority of his flock who are poor.<sup>19</sup>

After becoming the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he had the privilege of shifting to the grandiose official residence. But he opted to live in a small single-bedroom apartment near to the curial offices. He went by himself to buy things in a local grocery store. He cooked his meals and rarely went out for dinner or any other events.<sup>20</sup> He walked everywhere, took the public transport in case of far distance, greeted, and got into conversation with people and became familiar with streets and neighbourhoods. He went to meet people where they were and not vice-versa. He immersed himself in the hard realities of people. He made surprising visits to parishes, homes, and schools. He urged the well-to-do parishioners of the diocese to come forward to share their resources with the needy in the shantytowns where most of the poor lived in houses made of bricks, cardboards and tins.<sup>21</sup> In one phrase we can say Bergoglio was a “a street pastor with the odour of sheep.”<sup>22</sup>

Bergoglio was very much aware of the concrete problems and challenges of his place. One of the priests of his diocese by name Fr Augusto Zampini shares about the situation of the diocese – in which ninety percent of the faithful are single or divorced. One has to learn to deal with it, he said. Bergoglio never altered his doctrinal orthodoxy on such issues. But his priority was his pastoral concern.<sup>23</sup> It is said that the residents in the

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. LITTLE and MAHER (eds.), *The Francis Factor – A New Departure*, 15.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. AGUILAR, *Pope Francis: His Life and Thought*, 35.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. COLLINS, *Francis, Bishop of Rome: A Short Biography*, 38.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. AGUILAR, *Pope Francis: His Life and Thought*, 92; COLLINS, *Francis, Bishop of Rome: A Short Biography*, 35.

<sup>22</sup> WILLEY, David, *The Promise of Francis – The Man, the Pope and the Challenge of Change*, Gallery Books, New York/London 2015, 225.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. VALLELY, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, 130.



dangerous area of Bajo Flores saw a courageous man walking down their streets, dressed in clerical black, completely unafraid of those around him especially those violent characters who were involved in criminal activities from petty theft to drug dealing. Bergoglio dared to enter where even the police were afraid of. He knew the people by name and called them by name.<sup>24</sup> According to a Villa priest during his eighteen years as bishop and archbishop Bergoglio must have spoken to at least half the people in the slum. He went around visiting, chatting, and drinking mate tea with them. He was in touch with their everyday life struggle. It is when one involves in ministry one discovers oneself. Bergoglio saw the poor not just people to be helped but rather people from whom he can learn. He believes that the poor are near to God than the rest of us.<sup>25</sup> The lifestyle and the type of ministry taken up by Prison Ministry India is adventurous and thrilling but it also involves risk and danger. It is a play in devil's court. Bergoglio can be great inspiration for all those who involved in such ministry.<sup>26</sup> The courage of Bergoglio came not from mere human strength. But from his child-like confidence, faith, and trust in the Lord. Every member of Prison Ministry India is called to be Christo-centric. Anchored in Christ, they serve the people who are lost, oppressed, and marginalised<sup>27</sup> like Bergoglio, the Universal pastor of the Church.

### 1.3 A Pastor Par Excellence: "A Call to Selfless Service"

Bergoglio's life journey from his family, seminary, university, teaching career, bishopric, being named archbishop and cardinal undoubtedly formed his definite, strong character. He appears tenacious yet calm, timid but direct and above all he stands tall as a defender of the poor. The influence of those around him, his grandmother and parents, the

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. AGUILAR, Pope Francis: His Life and Thought, 93.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. VALLELY, Pope Francis: Untying the Knots, 131.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. KODIYAN, Francis, Rainbow – Theological Foundations of Prison Ministry in India, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2007, 70.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Ibid., 65.

former archbishop of Buenos Aires and many others played an important role in making Bergoglio become one of the strongest candidates to the papacy.<sup>28</sup> Bergoglio's capability for a strong leadership came to be known clearly at different occasions: First of all, he caught the attention of the Curia in 2001 when he presided over the world wide Synod of Bishops as the chairperson in the place of the archbishop of New York who could not make it due to September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, his greater contribution in one of the landmark conferences of Latin American Bishops in 2007, namely the Fifth General Conference of the Latin America and Caribbean Episcopate (known as CELAM) in Aparecida, Brazil. He was chosen to lead the team drafting the final document known as the "Aparecida Document"<sup>30</sup> which has a tremendous impact on his first Apostolic Writing *Evangelii Gaudium*. The Aparecida Document is particularly important to understand the evangelizing vision of Francis's pontificate.<sup>31</sup>

The challenge the Catholic Church faces in the twenty-first century is "how to preach the Gospel in a world of flux."<sup>32</sup> The time is changing especially in the Western world where "old ways of passing the faith fraying and breaking as family, parish, charities and schools."<sup>33</sup> In a way the Church in Latin America came out with a solution through the Aparecida Document drafted by Bergoglio and reiterated now in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. It gives a renewed approach to evangelization. It calls for a "Pastoral and missionary conversion" on the part of the Church community.<sup>34</sup> In order to change the world first

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. ESCOBAR, Mario, *Francis: Man of Prayer*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville 2013, 41.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. COLLINS, Francis, *Bishop of Rome: A Short Biography*, 42.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. IVEREIGH, *Wounded Shepherd – Pope Francis and His Struggle to Convert the Catholic Church*, 153.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. LEE, Brian and KNOEBEL, Thomas (eds.), *Discovering Pope Francis – The Roots of Jorge Mario Bergoglio's Thinking*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville/Minn. 2019, xiii.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. IVEREIGH, *Wounded Shepherd – Pope Francis and His Struggle to Convert the Catholic Church*, 153.

of all the Church must undergo change. "For Bergoglio then and Francis now, the renewal of the Church was less a strategy and more a trustful waiting on God's directions, a missionary disposition which involved humble listening and discernment and putting Christ and the poor at the centre and the rest would follow."<sup>35</sup> This is the transformation that the Church must go through in order to bring about renewal in the life and mission of the Church.<sup>36</sup> Bergoglio believes very strongly that the Church stands in need of such a pastoral conversion which will lead to the understanding of how pastoral life is an expression of the Church's maternal profile. It means the Church has to have a new focus on mercy: "We need a church capable of rediscovering the maternal womb of mercy. Without mercy we have little chance nowadays of becoming of a world of 'wounded' persons in need of understanding, forgiveness and love."<sup>37</sup>

### **The Pope of the Peripheries: "Search, Serve and Save"**

Very recently at Sunday's Angelus the Pope reminded the Church about the central idea of his Pontificate which he has expressed right from the day one: "The Church must go out to reach all people." He said that "God always goes out, in search of us. He continually seeks out people, because He does not want anyone to be excluded from His loving plan."<sup>38</sup> And further he said that all Catholics must venture out of their comfort zones so that the message of Christ may reach all: "It means being open to horizons on life that offer hope to those stationed on the existential peripheries, who have not yet experienced, have lost, the strength and the light that comes with meeting Christ."<sup>39</sup> I am delighted to note that one

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. IVEREIGH, Austen, "Close and Concrete – Bergoglio's Evangelizing in a World in Flux", in: LEE, and KNOEBEL (eds.), *Discovering Pope Francis – The Roots of Jorge Mario Bergoglio's Thinking*, 23.

<sup>37</sup> LITTLE and MAHER (eds.), *The Francis Factor – A New Departure*, 98.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Pope Francis Explains a Central Idea of His Pontificate: The Church must Always Go Out, 1 (<https://www.romereports.com/en/2020/09/21/pope-francis-explains-a-central-idea-of-his-pontificate-the-church-must-always-go-out/> accessed on 21.09.2020)

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Ibid., 1.

of the maxims of Prison Ministry India is “search, serve and save the lost” (Lk 19, 10).

## 2.1 Missionary Discipleship: “A Call to Go forth to the Peripheries”

A lifelong pastoral experience in Latin America leads Pope Francis to envision a Church that “goes forth to the peripheries” both geographical and existential (EG 20). According to him, if the Church wants to experience renewal it must courageously reach all the peripheries that stand in need of the light of the Gospel. The clarion call of Francis places a demand on every Christian to go out of his/her comfort zones to give Christ to the world.<sup>40</sup> According to him the primary proclamation of the Christian faith must be that “Jesus Christ loves you: he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you” (EG 164).<sup>41</sup>

The salvation that Christ is, is God’s mercy, which is what Christians are called to proclaim and enact in their lives (EG 112). It follows that “being church...means proclaiming and bringing God’s salvation into our world” (EG 114). The salvation experienced in encounter with Christ – being infinitely loved by God – is the motor of the impulse for evangelization: for Francis, Christ and what he does or achieves cannot be separated (EG 264).<sup>42</sup>

“I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security” (EG, 20, 49). The primary audience of evangelization must be “the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked” (EG, 48, 186-215).<sup>43</sup> “The

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. TRAN, Anh, “The Church of Mercy and Hope – Pope Francis and the New Evangelization”, in: CAVADINI and WALLENFANG, Pope Francis and the Event of Encounter, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. DORMOR and HARRIS, Pe Francis – Evangelii Gaudium and the Renewal of the Church, 60-61.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>43</sup> TRAN, “The Church of Mercy and Hope – Pope Francis and the New Evangelization”, in: CAVADINI and WALLENFANG, Pope Francis and the Event of Encounter, 12.

Church must go forth worldwide” is one of the main themes discussed in Aparecida Document which is strongly repeated in *Evangelii Gaudium*.<sup>44</sup> Aparecida radiates and *Evangelii Gaudium* continues that “by setting out into the world as missionary disciples of Christ...the dynamics of conversion within the Church spring, a missionary conversion which becomes the official agenda for the people of God (EG 25).”<sup>45</sup>

The act of evangelization to become authentic, it must overflow to others: “We Christians are called to go out of ourselves to bring the mercy and tenderness of God to all.”<sup>46</sup> The peripheries of India would be places like prisons, brothel houses, red light districts, railway stations, bus stations, casinos, underworld centres and slums<sup>47</sup> where majority of the poor, not so poor and the innocent are led to land up there due to injustice, exploitation, caste discrimination and so on. Every member of Jesus Fraternity/Prison Ministry India must find meaning and satisfaction in this courageous ministry of encountering and accompanying the prisoners. For this is what exactly expected by the Pope and the entire Church as concrete response to the will of Christ – “when I was in prison, you visited me” (Matt. 25:37). It is a call within a call to receive this divine gift of serving another human being namely the prisoners and accompany them as they make all efforts to reintegrate themselves into their families and the mainstream of the society.<sup>48</sup> It is significant to realise that the birth and growth of Prison Ministry India took place thanks to the diverse “go to the periphery” experiences of its pioneers<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. DORMOR and HARRIS, Pe Francis – *Evangelii Gaudium* and the Renewal of the Church, 28.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. KODIYAN, Rainbow – Theological Foundations of Prison Ministry in India, 70.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Ibid., 65-67.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. KODIYAN, Francis, Love Bomb – Prisoners Reformation Trajectory, Lifeday Books, Kottayam 2018, 26-30.

## 2.2 The Power of Encounter: “A Call to Uphold Human Dignity”

Pope Francis often uses the word “encounter” in most of his speeches, written messages, and more formal magisterial documents. He urges all Catholics and people of good will to move away from a throw away culture and build a culture of encounter which begins with Christ and turns toward the other to listen, dialogue and share.<sup>50</sup> Every encounter of Jesus with people brought about change in their lives. He saw them with love and mercy, and they were healed and saved. They realized their worth and dignity. He embraced them while the society condemned and rejected them, taking away their chance to start anew. He saw their hearts while the society saw their outward appearance – as sinners and outcasts.

All the poor who came to Jesus found in him a friend, a helper, and support as he healed them of their diseases, restored their sense of dignity devastated by poverty, took away their shame and their sins, and gave them a new identity, a new image, and a new hope. Selfless love, vulnerable mission, unconditional acceptance, concrete acts of kindness, practical acts of compassion, sensitivity, and understanding of the painful condition of the poor were habitual attitudes of Jesus. He looked upon the publicans, sinners, prostitutes, criminals, immigrants, foreigners, lepers, widows, homeless and nameless children, the sick, the suffering, the possessed, among others, with eyes of mercy and even pronounced a blessing on them.<sup>51</sup>

This is what exactly meant by the culture of encounter which is a starting point for understanding the praxis of the kind of church that Francis is trying to bring about today by following the footsteps of Christ.<sup>52</sup> One of the most lasting images that captured the attention of the world was the

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. STAUDT, Jared, “Pope Francis on the Evangelization of Culture”, in: CAVADINI and WALLENFANG, *Pope Francis and the Event of Encounter*, 251.

<sup>51</sup> CHU ILO, Stan, *A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll/New York 2018, 170.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 3.

Francis' encounter with Vinicio Riva.<sup>53</sup> As Pope Francis is known for his surprises, turned deliberately to Vinicio who was sitting in a wheelchair amidst the audience. He embraced him, held him tightly and covered him with kisses.<sup>54</sup>

The profound act of the Pope revealed the heart of Christ concretely. Vinicio represents millions of people who need God's touch and healing today. People like Vinicio suffer more physical than psychological sicknesses. Because of the indifference and lack of sensitivity of the great of majority of the people, persons like Vinicio suffer isolation, alienation, and rejection. For example, in the case of prisoners who are condemned once and for all as sinners and unworthy of God's blessing. Just by embracing Vinicio the Pope manifested to the world the power of an authentic encounter. Through this simple act of love and affection the Pope showed how to lift the people who feel themselves broken and shattered.<sup>55</sup> The deliberate act of the Pope shows it is the duty the Church and the society to give back their God-given dignity.

Everything that the Pope says and does is pregnant with a strong message for the Church and the world. He constantly reminds that the mission of the Church is not to judge but to encounter people with the saving message of Christ and enkindle in them new hope and life. His whole life and ministry - starting from Buenos Aires till Rome is full of encounter, which means sometimes entering into the "messy lives" of people especially the poor and the marginalized.<sup>56</sup> This has to be done with great joy. That is why the Pope invites the Catholics to be joyful missionary disciples who are characterized by the joy of faith. They are not to look like someone who has come back from a funeral. "But rather

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<sup>53</sup> A man who suffers from the genetic disease called neurofibromatosis, a condition that has left him disfigured and covered from head to toe in noncontagious, itchy, sore-like growths, in: CHU ILO, *A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis*, 1.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 32.

they must be people who wish to share their joy with others. They point to a horizon of beauty and invite others to a delicious banquet”.<sup>57</sup> In other words,

In proclaiming the Gospel with joy that is deeply experienced, the Pope is placing an emphasis on affectivity, not just intellectual assent, orthodoxy, or clarity, in one’s intellectual grasp of the faith. Much less is the Pope pushing for any kind of moralism and sentimentalism. The stance he proposes and exemplifies reflects a joy that results from prayer and reflection that is integral. This means bringing the gospel message to life through imagination and memory and through service of others and experiences that appeal to the emotions as well as to the intelligence...The joy generated by a loving, prayerful look at reality is the result of coming to terms with the reality of pain – one’s own and that of the world – and the grasping by faith of the meaning of Christ’s resurrection.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, “the kind of church that Pope Francis wishes to bring about is tender and caring, with a humble immersion in the lives of others, and a willingness to accompany people in the chaos and woundedness of their lives. It is a church that is wholly moulded after the example of the poor man of Galilee who made himself all things for the sake of human liberation.”<sup>59</sup> The ministry to the imprisoned is one of the most relevant and concrete realization of the teachings of Pope Francis. His style of ministry and teaching can inspire every person who is willing to go out to see the face of Jesus in the murderers, robbers, and other criminals. “We are called to see the presence of Christ among prisoners, prostitutes, street children, drug addicts, beggars and so on.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> DECK, Allan Figueroa, Francis, Bishop of Rome, Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah 2016, 91.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. CHU ILO, A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis, 32.

<sup>60</sup> KODIYAN, Rainbow – Theological Foundations of Prison Ministry in India, 39.



### 1.3 A Poor and Merciful Church: “A Call to Heal and Bind up the Wounds”

The images for the Church used by Pope Francis, especially in *Evangelii Gaudium* – for example, “the Church as a field hospital, the Church of mercy, the church with open doors and so on” (EG 47-49) have a far-reaching impact on the Church community.<sup>61</sup> The very identity and mission of the Church is captured by these two terms – a poor and merciful Church. The image of the poor Church points out to the fact that its identity lies in God. It originates from God and returns to God. A poor Church depends not on the wealth and power of this world but only on God. Such a church becomes a home for all especially the poor.<sup>62</sup> The Church of Francis is not only a Church of the poor but also a Church for the Poor. Hence,

The evangelical option for the poor is not a paternalist one of do-gooders motivated by feel-good emotions and/or pity for the hapless. Rather it is one premised on a Biblical understanding of Yahweh and the anawin as hears and doers of God’s word. It is motivated by the new command of Jesus ‘to love one another as I have loved you.’ This agape, benevolent love, of Jesus privileges the least of his brothers and sisters. It is a love premised on faith.<sup>63</sup>

The mission of the Church well captured by the image of the Church as merciful. The Church is sent “to heal a broken world ravaged by injustice, falsehood, selfishness, pride and sin.”<sup>64</sup> Francis is convinced that his mission is to save people and help them experience God’s mercy. Pastor means shepherd. All those who are involved in different ministries in

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. CHU ILO, *A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis*, 42.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>63</sup> HEREDIA, Rudolf, *A Church that is Poor and for the Poor – Counter-Cultural Solidarities and Transformative Pedagogies for Catholic Faculties in India*, Jnana-Deep Vidyapeeth, Pune 2013, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. CHU ILO, *A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis*, 44.

the Church must acquire the “smell of the sheep.”<sup>65</sup> The image of Francis standing with a lamb draped on his shoulders during one Christmas at the Church of *Sant Alfonso Maria de Liguori*, in Rome, where they were re-enacting the Nativity highlights the pastoral heart of the Church. This was the way Jesus was presented in the early Roman Church as the principal visual symbol of Christianity.<sup>66</sup> The vocation of the members of a merciful church is “to be healers of wounds and menders of broken lives and societies.”<sup>67</sup> “This church is a people called to bring salvation, liberation, peace, restoration, hope and new life to all.”<sup>68</sup> Because, “the Church exists from the originating merciful love of God and thus has a mission of mediating and incarnating in history the mercy of God to wounded creation so as to help bring about the fruits of God’s reign.”<sup>69</sup> It is to be concretely realized in the ministry of reaching out to the sick, the sinners, the poor, the oppressed, the neglected, the victimized, the marginalized, the lost, the least and the last.<sup>70</sup>

In one of his interviews in 2016 Pope Francis once again expressed his thought on the mission of the Church. According to him, the church does not exist to condemn people but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God’s mercy. I often say that in order for this to happen, it is necessary to go out: to go out from the church and the parishes, to go outside and look for people where they live, where they suffer, and where they hope. I like to use the image of a field hospital to describe this “church that goes forth”; it exists where people go to receive treatment for both small and large infirmities. It is a mobile structure that offers first aid and immediate care, so that its soldiers do not die. It’s a place for urgent care, not a

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<sup>65</sup> LITTLE and MAHER (eds.), *The Francis Factor – A New Departure*, 34.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>67</sup> CHU ILO, *A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis*, 44.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>70</sup> KODIYAN, *Rainbow – Theological Foundations of Prison Ministry in India*, 68.

place to see a specialist. I hope that the Jubilee will serve to reveal the church's deeply maternal and merciful side, a church that goes forth toward those who are "wounded," who are in need of an attentive ear, understanding, forgiveness and love.<sup>71</sup>

Anything negative occurs in the world first and foremost directly victimizes the poor. Pope Francis calls on the Church to focus on these people who are wounded often by human selfishness. According to him the Church is called "to heal these wounds, to assuage them with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy and cure them...Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help."<sup>72</sup>

The teaching of the Pope calls for a turning point in the way a Christian understands people who are condemned by the society often unjustly. Before coming to final and harsh statements on people who are considered as evil, one must apply a bit of love and compassion in trying to understand the reasons that led him/her in such a situation. Here is where the Christian spirituality comes to play. Anyone who claims oneself to be a disciple of Christ must possess the great virtues of benevolent love and compassion. No human being is born a criminal. Often it is the discriminative and oppressive structures of the society which caused him to land there. Hence, searching, serving and saving the condemned by the Prison Ministry India would be one of the effective ways of concretely realizing the teaching of Pope Francis.<sup>73</sup> The focus of his ministry was always the last, least and the lost. Already as archbishop he showed his care and compassion through spontaneous and authentic gestures. He

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<sup>71</sup> FRANCIS, Pope, *The Name of God is Mercy – A Conversation with Andrea Tornielli* (trans. Oonagh Stransky), Random House, New York 2016, 52; cited by Chu Ilo in: *A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis*, 48.

<sup>72</sup> FRANCIS, Pope, *The Face of Mercy*, Bull of Indication of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, *Misericordiae vultus*, Pauline Publications-Africa, Nairobi 2015, 15; cited by Chu Ilo in: *A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis*, 231.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. KODIYAN, *Rainbow – Theological Foundations of Prison Ministry in India*, 65-69.

celebrated Mass in hospitals and nursing homes which was not so normal in his place. He made sure that on Maundy Thursdays, after the Chrism Mass in the cathedral, he went to celebrate the Last Supper and washing of the feet in a hospital, nursing home or prison. He bent down, after the example of his Master, to wash and kiss the feet of prisoners, drug addicts, people affected by HIV/AIDS, prostitutes and many who live in an inhuman and humiliating situation.<sup>74</sup>

People have the intuitive conviction that Francis is a compassionate man who spontaneously reaches out to all those who suffer from various kinds of pain. His gestures of love and compassion bring about healing and hope in their lives. He himself says that “the thing the Church needs today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness and proximity.”<sup>75</sup> He says further that a missionary heart must allow “its shoes to get soiled by the mud of street” (EG 45). He challenges all types of exclusions due to economic conditions and moral reasons. They are all in their own ways processes of dehumanization.<sup>76</sup> The concern of Pope Francis for the last, least and the lost is concretely shown by his initiative of establishing a new Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development in August 2016. The primary purpose of this dicastery can be understood from its statutes:

The Dicastery expresses the Holy Father’s care for suffering humanity, including the needy, the sick and the excluded, and pays special attention to the needs and issues of those who are forced to flee their homeland, the stateless, the marginalized, victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters, the imprisoned, the unemployed, victims of contemporary forms of slavery and torture, and others whose dignity is endangered.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. COLLINS, Francis, *Bishop of Rome: A Short Biography*, 52.

<sup>75</sup> LITTLE and MAHER (eds.), *The Francis Factor – A New Departure*, 130.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>77</sup> FRANCIS, Pope, *Statutes of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*, August 17, 2016; cited by Faggioli, Massimo in: *The Liminal Papacy of Pope Francis – Moving toward Global Catholicity*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll/New York 2020, 113.

The reformation of a society should begin with the transformation of individuals who make up that society. Lay volunteers, religious and pastors who are involved in various types of service to humanity participate in the ministry of reformation or transformation of people who stand in need of liberation and salvation – the fullness of life. Indeed, Pope Francis, a Pastor par excellence is a gift of God for the Church and the world of 21st century. His person, life and ministry is a gift as well as a task from a loving and compassionate God. Francis' teaching and pastoral methodology are highly relevant and appealing especially to the Church in India where the great majority of the poor who land up in prisons, slums and streets as victims of exploitation, rejection, marginalization and condemnation by a selfish, unjust and corrupt society like India. It is they who are first and foremost to receive the attention and service of the Church which the Pope time and again reminds the entire Church community. All the gospel virtues of compassion, love, joy, simplicity and humility lived out by Francis in concrete situations of his Petrine Ministry must inspire and move all those who are involved in the ministry of searching, serving and saving the least, last and lost.

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## **Undercover Liaison between Sexual Offences and Pornography**

**Dr Mathew Illathuparampil**

Sex is a given biological faculty, but in a cultural context, it represents many possibilities, both positive and negative. Each culture has its own ways of regulating sexual activity and maintaining its acceptability in society. But this cultural regulation can be subject to enormous changes. For example, Lilian Rubin in her book *Erotic Wars* in 1990 describes the development of sexuality in the twentieth century, based on interviews with 1,000 heterosexuals of all ages. Based on this study, she discovered a spectacular change in the way people look at sex over a period of 50 years. One remarkable transition is that sex has changed from a furtive business into a prominently everyday activity. Sex has become a topic of open conversation. But in the twenty-first century, superseding the previous era, sex has become an area of violence and injustice in many ways. It breeds crimes, unfortunately.

### **Perversity of Sexual Offences**

In the past, sexual violence took place predominantly at the margins of society, such as in war situations. Apart from it, one area of sexual offences arose from male dominance but within the moral context of the time. The patriarchal dominance of men included a right to sexual relations, but this was embedded in a totality of mutual expectations and cultural codes. Remarkably, in the past, male power was defined in terms of rights, ownership and limited obligations with respect to women. Though unacceptable now, it was a patriarchally determined equilibrium. While it was advantageous for men, it offered a certain degree of protection to women as well.



Sexual offences in the present time take place irrespective of cultural and national boundaries. They include, rape, incest, homosexuality, human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual harassment at the workplace, child pornography, paedosexual violence, etc. Sexual violence represents a ruthless rejection of female or male autonomy, an eruption of power in a context of equality. In most cases, sexual violence is a destructive reaction to the waning of female complicity.

The seriousness of sexual offences is beyond dispute. There is a growing societal indignation against it. Law regularly seems to sharpen its teeth against the offenders. It leaves no one indifferent. Dealing with sexual offences in the society is placed predominantly as a governmental responsibility. Political or administrative tools are often turned towards punitive measures which offers no sure guarantee of reducing sexual offences. One area that calls for attention in dealing with sexual offences is the purported link between sexual violations and pornography. It covers areas related to cultural sensibilities, industry, education, etc. This paper explores the veracity of the oft assumed relationship between sexual offences and pornography. The pornography industry is involved in the production and distribution of sexually explicit materials including literature, photos, audio, animation, movies, toys, and video games. Sexual innuendoes are omnipresent, in video clips, in advertising, on commercial television and on the Internet. The most popular modes of access are magazines, compact discs, digital versatile discs, and the internet. It is estimated to be a \$57 billion/year industry worldwide with its revenue being larger than the combined revenues of all the professions, even football, baseball, and basketball franchises put together.

Internet access in India has grown from 5 million in 2004 to 40 million in 2007 and continues to grow at the rate of 17% a year, according to web metrics firm. India's growth rate is the third highest in the Asia Pacific region. Alongside this, accessing pornographic material has also increased with 12% of internet websites being related to pornography,

and viewers being estimated to spend roughly 3000 to 4000 dollars per second.

### **The Pornographic Context**

The production of pornography was swept along on the waves of the sexual revolution of the 1970s in the West. It expressed many things simultaneously. It was a release from conventional morality, exploration of sexual pluriformity and the confirmation of the sexual core of the modern identity. The development of the pornography industry had to face many protests initially. Still, it persevered. Now pornography is always available everywhere, in all variants. We are a few mouse clicks away from hard-core pornography; audio sex is available by telephone at every moment of the day; softer forms of porn have become commonplace on television; and there is always the corner video shop. The growth of this industry across the globe was exponential. Its growth is related to various factors, for instance, the availability of time. As per news reports, Indians seem to be leading the world in porn consumption, reporting a 95 per cent spike in traffic to adult sites during the three-week lockdown in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic, beginning from March, 2020.

Two obvious factors are responsible for the broad dissemination of pornography: the technological revolution and the free market. To consider an example: the famed Philips's Video 2000 system in the 1980s was a failure. According to experts, the system was technically superior to all its competitors. And yet it lost the battle for the video market because hardly any pornographic videotapes were available for this system. It shows how closely intertwined are sex, market and technology.

The hidden contract between the free market and technology has made pornography an everyday matter. You no longer need to go out in search of it, you no longer need to go to any lengths to acquire it and you no longer even need to spend money on it. The free availability of pornographic material in the 1990s constituted an essential change in

the significance of pornography. Particularly the fact that it is offered on commercial television confirms its everyday status. Pornography has become a consumer good, comparable to soaps, documentaries, quizzes, sport competitions, violent films or any other sort of entertainment.

Three arguments have always played a role in the moral evaluation of pornography: propriety, dignity, and protection. According to the propriety argument, the sex drive is an intimate subject that does not belong to the public forum. Therefore, it shall not be made a public matter. In the 1920s, for example, Hollywood had prescribed exactly how long a screen kiss could last. Sex was imbued with shame and guilt; its enjoyment was a strictly private. But this argument did not last long; it failed the test counter claims. It was refuted by the reproach that it was hypocritical. Instead, during the time of the sexual revolution, pornography was hailed to be the emancipation of lust. Public sex became synonymous with the search for freedom. Pornography was projected as a form of freedom of opinion.

The argument of human dignity is strongly related to a Christian theological view of life in which sex is first and foremost associated with the ends of marriage. Accordingly, it serves the procreation of the species, and also to strengthen the marital relation between couples. Those who reject the procreative and unitive functions of sex, do not attribute any special dignity to sexuality. Therefore, they tend to view pornography as an expression of individual freedom to enjoy lust.

The argument of protection was forwarded by the women's movement in reaction to the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. They held that pornography made women easy targets of sexual offences. It is no longer heard very often, as feminists have increasingly adopted a stand against any restriction of female lust by patronizing do-gooders. Instead of asking for protection, they prefer to promote emancipation and autonomy. Now the argument is this: if free women favour pornography,

as producer or as consumer, they are perfectly entitled to do so. A line is only drawn when it comes to children.

### **Link between Pornography and Sexual Offences**

The tempestuous growth of the porn industry and the mass consumption of its products in recent decades are due to a combination of technological possibilities and commercial motives. Here we are not up to making a moral evaluation of pornography. It will range from issues related to the appeal to lust, a paradoxical argument in respect of female autonomy and the degradation of women, denial of the dignity of human person, etc.

What we are interested in is the relationship between pornography and sexual violence. Holding such a relationship can be drawn from the simple fact that at least the vast majority of porn products is violent, degrading and dehumanizing in respect of mostly women. But how to establish a relationship between the two? There are certain models to explain sexual offences. For instance, in one model, four conditions are required for sexual abuse to take place. In the first place, the person must have the will to commit sexual violence. In the second place, this person's internal inhibitions to actually put this into practice must be undermined. In the third place, his/her social inhibitions must become weak. Finally, the perpetrator must undermine, render harmless or inactive, the capacity of his/her victims to resist or to defend themselves. What one needs to verify is whether pornography can somehow affect these conditions creatively. One may hold that pornography primarily has an effect on the first three conditions: it increases the will to sexually offend a person and undermines internal and social inhibitions.

The following premises can be drawn: pornography stimulates rape fantasies; it sexualizes dominance and subordination, promotes the acceptance of interpersonal violence; trivializes sexual offences; desensitizes perpetrators in committing crimes; undermines the fear of social sanctions and rejection by contemporaries; and undermines the

resistance of women to reject degradation. An extensive discussion on these premises are required which we do not attempt here.

It is difficult to give a straightforward answer to the question as to what extent pornography is the theory and sexual offence its effect in practice. To confirm it, sexual violence would have to have increased along with the growth of the porn industry. Although this has a certain plausibility, it can never be proved on account of methodological problems and the problem of definitions. And we might well ask ourselves exactly how important this is: after all, each offence takes place in its own context of the moment.

A fundamental difference between the consumption of pornography and committing actual sexual violence is the fact that the former is a phantasmagoric affair and the latter a realistic form of delinquency. The question might well be asked as to whether violent pornographic material should not be regarded as a form of inciting and abetting sex crimes. The high stakes of this debate become very clear in the case of child pornography. In these products, any illusion about a fantasy achieved with mutual consent is absent. Child pornography is a registration of sexual abuse and rape.

Sexual delinquents often point to pornography as a trigger for their offenses. Although pornography may perhaps not lie at the root of sexual offences, it can easily serve to legitimize sexual degradation. This paradoxical state is shown in its most unmitigated form in sex with children. Child pornography is the most extreme consequence of the schizophrenic mindset of pornographic permissiveness.

## Conclusions

The well-known feminist dictum: “Pornography is the theory; rape is the practice” has raised serious academic concerns<sup>78</sup>. With respect to the role of pornography in the commission of sexual offences also, there are varying results from having only a minor role to primary involvement where child victims are involved. Briefly, the relation between consumption of pornography and sexual violence remains inconclusive. It is a popular notion that pornography influences the behaviour of Indian men more than in other cultures. In India, any discussion about sex is considered “taboo,” and most people do not have even basic sex education. Sex education provides factual information about sexuality, which counteracts the messages about sexuality presented in pornography. Without adequate sex education, it is suggested that pornography would serve to act as a “permission giving” agency by promoting wrong notions about the sexuality of women and children, thus breeding sexual violence. However, these notions are mostly not supported by evidence. As previously stated, this finding is similar to studies in European countries and the USA. It has been suggested that pornography might act as an “aphrodisiac” for males rather than a blueprint for rape<sup>79</sup>. The ability to release sexual tension by masturbation following pornography consumption might reduce the possibility of real-time sexual aggression or rape. It seems that the much-hyped causal relationship between pornography and sexual behaviour is an exaggeration<sup>80</sup>. This however does not exclude pornography from stringent moral evaluation on its own.

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<sup>78</sup> Morgan R., “Theory and Practice: Pornography and Rape,” Lederer LJ, ed., *Take Back the Night*, New York: William Morrow; 1980, 134–140.

<sup>79</sup> B. Kutchinsky, “Pornography and Rape: Theory and Practice: Evidence from crime data in four countries where pornography is easily available?” *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 14 (1991) 47–64.

<sup>80</sup> Suresh Bada Math, Biju Viswanath, Ami Sebastian Maroky, Naveen C. Kumar, Anish V. Cherian, and Maria Christine Nirmala, “Sexual Crime in India: Is it Influenced by Pornography?” *Indian J Psychol Med* 36/2 (2014 Apr-Jun): 147–152.

## **Catholic View on the Sexual Abuse of Vulnerable People: A Moral Appraisal**

**Dr Scaria Kanniyakonil**

Priests are doing fantastic service within the Church and outside the Church. A priest represents Christ, and as a prophet, he has to preach the word of God. The pastor has to bring people back to Church and prepare for the kingdom of God<sup>81</sup>. His role is that of a shepherd (Ezek 34:16)<sup>82</sup>. As such, he speaks about healing, leading the sheep and trusting the shepherd. A pastor faces a myriad of ethical challenges in life. Sexual abuse of minors is one of the moral issues in the life of a priest. It is reported that some pastors have misused women and children<sup>83</sup>. The Catholic Church is very serious about the problem of the sexual abuses of minors and vulnerable persons by clerics. Church wants to justly conduct cases regarding deacons, priests and bishops when they are alleged of the sexual abuse of minors. This indicates that the Church would like to execute justice in each case. This article describes a short view on the moral dimension of the document *Vademecum* on certain points of procedure in treating cases of sexual abuse of minors committed by clerics.

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<sup>81</sup> John Olu Adetoyese, "The Marks of a Successful Pastor," *The American Journal of Biblical Theology* 1, 1 (2018) 120.

<sup>82</sup> Deron J. Biles, ed., *Pastoral Ministry: The Ministry of a Shepherd*, Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017.

<sup>83</sup> Available online at <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/kerala-priest-fr-robin-found-guilty-raping-and-impregnating-16-yr-old-girl-96819> (accessed 28-08-2020); <https://theprint.in/india/governance/these-are-the-christian-priests-accused-of-rape-across-kerala-churches/120982/> (accessed 28-08-2020); <https://www.ndtv.com/kerala-news/kerala-catholic-priest-accused-of-sexually-abusing-boys-arrested-2065605> (accessed 28-08-2020); "Priest Accused of Abuse, at Large," *The Hindu*, September 22, 2019, 1.

## Vademecum

This document is published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) on 16 July 2020, and it is aimed mainly for Ordinaries and other personnel wanting to apply the canonical norms prevailing cases of the sexual abuse of minors by clerics<sup>84</sup>. It begins with an introduction and consists of 164 norms with nine sections. Juridical sources and practical norms are the basis of the document. From the theoretical point of view, sources are rooted in the Code of Canon Law, the Substantive Norms and procedural norms regarding delicts (crimes) reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith promulgated by the *Motu proprio Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*<sup>85</sup>, and the *Motu proprio Vos estis lux mundi* (2019).

**Sexual Offences:** The document indicates the area the sexual offences that include “sexual relations (consensual or non-consensual), physical contact for sexual gratification, exhibitionism, masturbation, the production of pornography, inducement to prostitution, conversations and propositions of a sexual nature, which can also occur through various means of communication” (*Vademecum* 1). The document highlights many sexual abnormalities. Moreover, *Vademecum* (6) elucidates that clerics or members of Institutes of Consecrated Life or Societies of Apostolic Life violate the law if they purchase, possess (even temporary) or supply pornographic images of minors under the age of 18.

**Informing the Cases:** All the cases have to report to the Ordinary or Hierarch that can be in orally in writing. It can be done by the “alleged victim, his or her guardians or other persons claiming to know the matter; it can become known to the Ordinary or Hierarch through the exercise of his duty for vigilance; it can be reported to the Ordinary or Hierarch

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<sup>84</sup> Available online at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/faith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20200716\\_vademecum-casi-abuso\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/faith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20200716_vademecum-casi-abuso_en.html) (accessed 28-08-2020).

<sup>85</sup> 2001, updated in 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI.



by the civil authorities through channels provided for by local legislation; it can be made known through the communications media (including social media); it can come to his knowledge through hearsay, or in any other adequate way” (*Vademecum*, 10).

**Preliminary Investigation, Report and Judgments:** The Ordinary or Hierarch must do the preliminary investigation that has to take place in line with the criteria and procedures by the Church (canon 1717 CIC or canon 1468 CCEO). The Hierarch must send the report of the preliminary investigation to the CDF, and CDF crafts further investigation through heads of the individual churches and send the final verdict to the Ordinary or Hierarch.

**Good Name of the Accused:** Many priests are falsely accused of sexual abuse of minors. There are different motives behind it. Probably some agents have a hidden plan to destroy the Church. Others are interested in getting finance from the accused. Grudge and jealousy are the other reasons behind it. It is a fact that abuse cases can see in all communities. However, the media is interested in issues related to clerics in the Church.

The Church has to protect the good name of the accused, alleged victims, witnesses (Canons 1717 § 2 CIC and 1468 § 2 CCEO). The case will not lead to prejudice retaliation or discrimination. Those who are in charge of preliminary investigation must be very careful about the good name of the accused. The reason is that “the right to a good name is one of the rights of the faithful upheld by canons 220 CIC and 23 CCEO” (*Vademecum* 44).

**Right of the Child:** Man has a natural desire to survive. He has a natural impulse to protect himself from death and injury<sup>86</sup>. Vatican II affirms that the right of the human being is universal and inviolable (GS 26)<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> M. Cranston, *What are Human Rights?* (London: The Bodley Head, 1973) 25.

<sup>87</sup> L. D. Chirico, “The Dignity of the Human Person: Towards an Evangelical Reading of the Theology of Personhood of Vatican II,” 249-259; 253.

*Amoris laetitia* (AL) emphasizes and protects the rights of innocent people. Pope Francis states that one cannot reduce the right of another for his/her well-being. Consequently, violating the fundamental right of others is egregious in itself (AL 139). *Vademecum* gives due attention to the victims. They are the center of the attention of the document that emphasizes the protection and promotion of the rights of the victims.

**Dignity and Equality of Person:** The image of God is the foundation of human dignity and is presented in relation to God. The *Gaudium et spes* (GS 19) states that “an outstanding cause of human dignity lies in man’s call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of his origin, man is already invited to converse with God<sup>88</sup>.” Dignity is rooted and perfected in God (GS 21). Human dignity is an inalienable anthropological trait. It is tangled with the human being’s identity as a human being. The human being is bestowed with dignity. This means that dignity is included in his mind (GS 15), in his/her moral conscience (GS 16, 41), in his/her vocation (GS 22), in his/her spiritual dimension (GS 23), and in his/her whole being and calling (GS 39). L. De Chirico argues that the whole person is marked by inherent dignity while everyone else enjoys the same equal dignity<sup>89</sup>. It is an ontological reality and not an abstract idea<sup>90</sup>.

Everybody holds their own proper and inalienable dignity (AL 155). AL states the equal dignity of man and woman. Moreover, the human body has dignity (AL 151). For this reason, one has to respect the dignity of the person (AL 152). Pope Francis asserts: “we rejoice at the good of others when we see their dignity (AL 109). However, a human person

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<sup>88</sup> All the quotations from Vatican II are taken from W. M. Abbott (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press 1966); L. D. Chirico, “The Dignity of the Human person: Towards an Evangelical Reading of the Theology of Personhood of Vatican II,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 77/3 (2005) 249-259.

<sup>89</sup> L.D. Chirico, “The Dignity of the Human Person: Towards an Evangelical Reading of the Theology of Personhood of Vatican II,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 77/3 (2005), 249-259; 253.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

loses dignity when he/she devolves to an animal nature (AL 157, 147). Do not act against the dignity of the person (AL 241). Human dignity requires every one of us to act according to the voice of conscience (AL 267). Further, one has to admire the dignity of others because the other possesses the dignity of God (AL 323).

The Church treats all parties with respect. *Vademecum* keeps children safe in the Church. According to Prof. Myriam Wijlens, a canon lawyer and member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, “the victim and the family are to be treated with respect,” ....“The one who does the investigation must offer them welcome and attentive hearing, and must offer medical, psychological, and spiritual support<sup>91</sup>.”

**Church and the State:** A myriad of civil laws do not coincide with divine positive law and natural moral law. They are the mere reverberation of utilitarianism. It is because of this tendency they deny the fundamental right of the human being as well as the dignity of the human being. However, the Church respects laws that promote virtues and values. Concerning the abuse of the minors, the Church respects the civil law. For instance, the *Vademecum* clarifies that Church has to report the abuse case to the state. It asserts that, “if at all possible, you should report this to civil authorities, even if it is not explicitly obligatory [per local civil laws],... But you have to take into consideration how to protect the persons that are involved, especially the minors that are involved<sup>92</sup>.”

**The Manifestation of Secret:** The secret is a hidden fact which may not be revealed. A pastor has to keep a myriad of confidential things that he knows about the faithful, and he has no right to tell others. Individual

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<sup>91</sup> Luis F. Card. Ladaria, “A text with contributions from local Churches that will be kept up-to-date,” available online at <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-07/ladaria-vademecum-cdf-sexual-abuse-minors-clergy.html> (accessed 30-082020).

<sup>92</sup> Ladaria, “A text with contributions from local Churches that will be kept up-to-date,” available online at <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-07/ladaria-vademecum-cdf-sexual-abuse-minors-clergy.html> (accessed 30-082020).

files should be locked and secured. There are two ethical issues related to confidentiality. First, revealing secrets is not morally justified without sufficient reason. Second, after understanding the secrets of others, there can be positive or negative attitudes towards others. The pastor has to keep in mind that there are situations when secret may be revealed: “i) if the party concerned has permitted disclosure; ii) if the matter has become sufficiently public; iii) if there is a justifying reason. A natural and promised secret may be revealed in order to avert a proportionate injury to a third person, to anybody else or the community<sup>93</sup>.”

Generally, abuse cases have no connection with confession. Abuse cases are revealed by a third party or by an abused child. *Vademecum* (14) states, “it must be pointed out that a report of a *delictum gravius* received in confession is under placed the strictest bond of the sacramental seal. A confessor who learns of a *delictum gravius* during the celebration of the sacrament should seek to convince the penitent to make that information known by other means, in order to enable the appropriate authorities to take action.”

**Justice within the Church:** Justice means rendering to each person of what is his/her due<sup>94</sup>.” It inclines the just person to give his/her due to everyone irrespective of who he/she may be<sup>95</sup>. According to CCC (1807), justice consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbour. From a subjective point of view, justice is to recognize others as a person. From an objective point of view, it constitutes the decisive criteria of morality in the intersubjective and social sphere (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 201). Justice is violated when another’s right is violated or injured. *Vademecum* clearly highlights justice within the Church.

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<sup>93</sup> Thomas Srampickal and Jogi Chirayil, *To Act Justly and deal Honestly* (Thrissur: Marymatha Publications, 2008) 308.

<sup>94</sup> D. D. Raphael, *Concepts of Justice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001) 1.

<sup>95</sup> D. D. Raphael, *Concepts of Justice*, 58.

## Conclusion

It might be concluded that *Vademecum* clearly states both the theology and canonical norms about cases related to sexual abuse of minors by clerics. The moral concept of dignity of human being, manifestations of secret, right of the vulnerable people, good name of the accused and justice are adequately articulated in the document. It substantiates that *Vademecum* elucidates the theology of human sexuality, and requires to practice virtue of chastity in the life of each and every one. In short Catholic Church not only proclaims social justice but also execute it within the Church.

## How Pornography Destroys Lives

Dr Tom Kainikkara

### 1. The Definition and History of Pornography

Many people would agree that defining pornography is difficult, but they knew it when they see it. The term *pornography* comes from the Greek word “prenemi” meaning “selling a slave” and its derivative “pronos” meaning “prostitute”. “Graphè” on the other hand, related to written material. Hence pornography can be defined as any representation for the purpose of pleasure or profit of degrading or violent sexual behaviour whether it be real or simulated. Another way of making the same point would be to define pornography as that which exploits and dehumanizes sex so that human beings are treated as things and as sex objects<sup>96</sup>.

According to Peter C. Kleponis, pornography is any image that leads to person to use another person for his or her own sexual pleasure. It is devoid of love, intimacy, relationship or responsibility. It can be highly addictive<sup>97</sup>. According to Pamela Paul, pornography is a commercialized means to sexual arousal, i.e., a product on the market for sale and consumption. This definition is based on an economic context; given that the worldwide industry is worth 97 billion dollars<sup>98</sup>. According to CCC

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<sup>96</sup> This statement is from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1984, quoted in J. Gordon Melton, *The Churches Speak on: Pornography*, Gale Research, Detroit 1989, 23.

<sup>97</sup> Peter C. Kleponis, *Integrity Restored*, Emmaus Road, Ohio 2017, 10.

<sup>98</sup> Peter C. Kleponis, *Integrity Restored*, Emmaus Road, Ohio 2017, 10. Maria C. Morrow, “Pornography and Penance”, in *Leaving and Coming Home: New Wineskins for Catholic Sexual Ethics*, David Cloutier (ed.), Cascade, Oregon 2010, 65-66; Pornography may be the ultimate capitalist enterprise: low costs, larger profit margins; a cheap labour force, readily available abroad if the home supply fails to satisfy; a broad based market with easily identifiable targets niches; multiple channels of distribution.

2354, pornography consists of removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. The past 40-50 years have seen a dramatic explosion of porn products and outlets in all over the world. Peter C. Kleponis in his book *Integrity Restored* gives a chronological growth of pornography use in the society<sup>99</sup>.

**The 1940s:** “Pinup girls” became popular during this decade. These were pictures of girls, usually on calendars, dressed in bathing suits or bikinis. During World War II, soldiers were keeping these pictures. For Americans that was the first time that they became accustomed to seeing women who were not fully clothed. And they accepted it.

**The 1950s:** Playboy magazine by Hugh Hefner was published during this decade. It was marketed as men’s lifestyle magazine instead of pornography. The magazine also happened to have photos of nude women. People accepted it and ready to accept other pornographic magazines.

**The 1960s:** This was the decade of the sexual revolution and oral contraceptives, which together made sex available to everyone. No need of marriage to have sex. Having sex at any time and with anyone became a personal right. Sex was reduced to nothing more than a recreational activity. Pornography promoted this activity and people accepted it.

**The 1970s:** Sexual revolution continued; this decade brought cable television that piped pornography into people’s homes. People began to accept sexual content on television.

**The 1980s:** This decade is where pornography addiction began to take off. VCRs (Videocassette recorders) were ready for homes. Video rental stores and videocassette libraries are opened in most towns. In the back of these stores, pornographic videos were available for rent. With this people allowed pornography to enter into everyone’s community.

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<sup>99</sup> Cfr. Peter C. Kleponis, *Integrity Restored*, 26-28.

**The 1990s:** During this decade, pornography use became more widespread as videocassettes gave way to DVDs. Phone sex became popular and the Internet was invented. Now, a person could view it any time of day or night, and the types of pornography were unlimited. Any sexual fetish could be satisfied. Porn business and profits skyrocketed and more men became addicted.

**The 2000s:** As the internet grew, more forms of pornography became available, including chat rooms, video chats, prostitution websites, and sex hookup websites. Strip clubs and pole dancing rose in popularity. In this time, no form of sex was considered deviant or taboo. This has resulted in people engaging in extremely dangerous forms of sex.

**The 2010s:** Today, there are few boundaries with pornography and sex. Love, commitment, relationship, and responsibility are no longer requirements. Sex is viewed as a personal right. Anyone who disagrees with an individual's sex life is labeled "judgmental" and "close-minded." In this context, religions, parents, spiritual leaders etc. who speak against these trends become narrow minded and conservatives. All the aberrations are justified under personal freedom and rights. There is no morality in sex any more.

Though this study is mainly based on western culture, I think chronological growth of pornography is true in most of the cultures with different periods both in Eastern and Western world.

There is an old axiom that states, "If you put a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will jump out. If you put a frog in a pot of cold water and slowly turn up the heat, it will boil to death without even knowing it." This axiom is an apt example to describe the contemporary sexual moral situation of the present society. Due to the over influence of pornography and of media, sense of respect towards woman, sense of sacredness and integrity of sexuality, awareness about moral truth are lost even among the adolescents. Pornography makes the people to use others somehow



to satisfy their sexual needs without any moral sense and respect for their dignity. Loosing moral sense and dignity of human sexuality is a kind of death of human being. In this sense we are like the frog that is boiling to death.

Discussion on porn is both risky and urgent- perhaps especially so in the churches. Whatever we say about porn may reveal things about us, we would rather keep concealed. Most of the time, we feel tongue-tied in the face of these issues. But we must deal with porn in all its complications.

## **2. The Main Issues of Pornography**

1. One of the main effects of pornography on individuals is, it promotes a deep selfishness, leading a person to turn inward and pursues only what is pleasurable. This may extend beyond sexual pursuits to life in general. The belief that happiness in life only comes from selfish pursuits rather than self-giving ultimately leads to a life of loneliness and despair, which can be seen in those who spend hours viewing pornography online. They often will give up their important responsibilities such as spending time with family and friends in order to view pornography.

2. Pornography makes human being especially woman a commodity/property to be used and furthermore portrays violence and sexual crimes. Widespread sexual violence predated widespread pornography. It is proved that more than 90 percent of rapists are addicted to pornography. There are different statistics showing that watching porn films is the main cause of most of the sexual crimes. Viewing of scenes of sexual violence correlates with increased aggression toward women. Since porn instigates sexual violence, it is a serious danger for public safety.

3. Pornography also reduces human sexuality only to human genital organs and their acts. Pornography perverts human sexuality. It makes both men and women only to walk around their bodies rather than their whole person/being. Pornography separates our body into different segments and is therefore contrary to real enjoyment and acceptance of life. The

fabulous world of interpersonal relationships, human communication and love is reduced to a means by which one human being is exploited by another. This is not an innocent distraction; it is an offence against the dignity and rights of all human persons. Hence it is not just a personal moral evil but a social evil too. It promotes a vision of sexuality that is harmful for life in society<sup>100</sup>. Pornography in all its forms contributes to a philosophy, a life-style, an attitude towards sexuality, in which another person is seen as an object, a means of fulfilling an urge or desire. It is a selfish sexuality devoid of love<sup>101</sup>.

4. Pornography use has direct connections with sins such as adultery, domestic violence, abuse of children in child pornography, and sex trafficking. It also can be implicated in contraception use and abortion, given that it promotes and even celebrates promiscuity and a view of sexuality devoid of love or openness to new life<sup>102</sup>.

5. Most of the porn films undermine man-woman relationship, project only sexual relation, and assert that people derive sexual pleasure from being hurt or hurting others. Moreover, pornography often suggests and promotes violence as a source of satisfaction and pleasure both for the victim and the aggressor. Another issue of pornography is that there is rampant ignorance about the simplest facts of female biology and this porn culture spreads strange ideas about women's sexuality in many more ways. Often, porn is lies about women.

6. Though its primary harms may be to women and children, pornography affects all of us, for it makes serious statements about our world and human life. Pornography contributes to the break-up of marriages and

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<sup>100</sup> Cfr. Letter of Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Episcopal Commission for Social Communications to CRTC Chairman, January 31, 1983.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography*, in <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/pornography/upload/Create-in-Me-a-Clean-Heart-Statement-on-Pornography.pdf> (26-07-2018).

families, the molestation of children, rape and other forms of criminal sexual conduct. The following statistics may give an idea about the influence of pornography in all the countries around the world.

### 3. Statistics

Internet pornography statistics become outdated very quickly, especially in the Internet environment where numbers change daily. These statistics have been derived from a number of different reputable sources. The main source of internet statistics that I have taken is from Family Safe Media<sup>103</sup>.

#### 3.1. General Statistics on Pornography on the Web

There are 4.2 million pornographic websites. This represents 12 per cent of all websites in the world. Every day, there are 68 million (6.8 corers) search engine requests for pornographic material. That is 25 per cent of all search engine requests. There are 100,000 websites that offer illegal child pornography. Each year 25 per cent of children who regularly use the internet encounter pornography accidentally<sup>104</sup>.

#### 3.2. Pornography Time Statistics and the Worldwide Revenues

Every second \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography; every second 28,258 Internet users are viewing pornography; every second 372 internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines; every 39 minutes, a new pornographic video is being created in the United States.

The pornography industry is larger than the revenues of the top technology companies combined: Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo!, Apple, Netflix and EarthLink. 2006 Worldwide Pornography Revenues: from 16 countries was \$97.06 Billion<sup>105</sup>.

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<sup>103</sup> Since 1998, Family Safe Media has been dedicated to providing the latest products and services that can help parents control the media in their homes.

<sup>104</sup> Statistics by Family Safe Media, in [http://www.familysafemedia.com/pornography\\_statistics.html](http://www.familysafemedia.com/pornography_statistics.html)

<sup>105</sup> Cfr. <https://www.familysafe.com/pornography-statistics/#time> (25-07-2018).

### 3.3. Internet Pornography Statistics

12 per cent of all the websites are pornographic websites and they are around 4.2 million. 420 million pornographic pages are there. Daily pornographic search engine requests are 68 million and they are 25% of total search engine requests. Internet users who view porn are 42.7%. Monthly Pornographic downloads (Peer-to-peer) are 1.5 billion and it is 35% of all downloads. Websites offering illegal child pornography are 100,000. Worldwide visitors to pornographic web sites are 72 million per month. Internet Pornography Sales may come around \$4.9 billion<sup>106</sup>.

### 3.4. Children Internet Pornography Statistics

Average age of first Internet exposure to pornography is 11 years old. Largest consumer of Internet pornography is between 35-49 age group. 80 per cent of the youth between 15-17-year-old are having multiple hard-core exposures. 90 per cent of the adolescents between 8-16-year old (most of them while doing homework) having viewed porn online<sup>107</sup>.

### 3.5. Adult Internet Pornography Statistics

20 per cent of men admit that they view pornography at work. 40 million US adults agree that they regularly visit Internet pornography websites. 47 per cent of Christians said that pornography is a major problem in the homes. 10 per cent of adults admit that they have internet sexual addiction. Roughly two-thirds (67%) of young men & one-half (49%) of young women agree that viewing pornography is acceptable. It is estimated that nearly 9 out of 10 (87%) young men and one-third (31%) of young women using pornography<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>106</sup> <https://www.familysafe.com/pornography-statistics/#anchor4> (25-07-2018).

<sup>107</sup> 42% of Internet users ages 10 to 17 said they viewed porn online in the past 12 months. But 66% of those who said they saw porn online said they weren't looking for it and saw it accidentally, according to a study by the University of New Hampshire.

<sup>108</sup> "Pornography Harms You, Your Family and Wider Society", in [https:// www.arlingtondiocese.org/documents/pornography-statistics/](https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/documents/pornography-statistics/) (25-07-2018).

### 3.6. Women and Pornography

70 per cent of women keep their cyber activities secret. 17 per cent of women are struggling with pornography addiction. 13 per cent of women admit that they view pornography at work. It is estimated that 1 in 3 visitors to adult websites are women. It is also showed in different studies that women, far more than men, are likely to act out their behaviours in real life, such as having multiple partners, casual sex, or affairs due to the use of pornography.

## 4. Problems

According to Maria C. Morrow, four actions take place in human body while using pornography: abstraction, commodification, objectification and self-objectification of the human body<sup>109</sup>.

### 4.1. Abstraction

As a commercial product, pornography's source is obscured. Pornography indicates very little about the actual human beings involved in the clip. They come from nowhere land, and the clips say nothing of how or where they were produced. Vincent Miller gives example of chicken breast for consumer abstraction<sup>110</sup>. When we buy a chicken breast to eat, it says nothing about the chicken to whom the breast was part of or the dangerous production lines on which they are produced. In pornography also same things happen, we don't think of the actual human but only their actions and organs<sup>111</sup>.

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<sup>109</sup> Maria C. Morrow, "Pornography and Penance...", 67-72.

<sup>110</sup> In his book *Consuming Religion*, Vincent Miller described the abstraction is a crucial aspect of today's consumer culture: commodities appear on the scene, as if descended from heaven, cloaked in an aura of self-evident value, saying nothing about how, where, and by whom they were produced. As the market has become ubiquitous-the means by which we satisfy most of our needs-everyday existence has become a constant exercise in taking this abstraction for granted. Our eating, clothing, shelter, labor-all confirm us in this abstraction. We nourish ourselves on food from nowhere and dress in clothes made by no one.

<sup>111</sup> Maria C. Morrow, "Pornography and Penance...", 68.

This abstraction in pornography makes more comfortable for many people who watch pornography than real woman. The real women are complicated and difficult in a way that the pornographic images of women are not. The abstracted sex of pornography is seemingly without risk for the man because there is no emotional vulnerability and thus no potential of being hurt or rejected<sup>112</sup>.

#### 4.2. Commodification

This abstraction of the human body from the human person makes commodification of the body possible. Pornography abstracts images of bodies from the people themselves, commodifying human body parts and human bodies, commodifying sexuality and the sex act itself<sup>113</sup>. The bodies of pornography represent a commercial product to be bought and sold. They are images removed from the context of the human person; they become disembodied bodies<sup>114</sup>. We have to remember that there are some things in human life which are not to be commodified and commercialized. There are some limits and boundaries to the sphere of the market in human life. Not everything in life is to be subjected to the rules of marketplace. For instance, if we commodify sexuality and the experience of becoming parents that are integral to self of human beings, we do violence to our deepest understanding of what it is to be human. According to Margaret Radin, the wrong of commodification and commercialization is that it does violence to personhood as embodied and communal selves<sup>115</sup>.

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<sup>112</sup> Maria C. Morrow, "Pornography and Penance...", 69.

<sup>113</sup> According to Cathleen Kaveny, commodification is best defined by noting some features of commodities, i.e., goods that are inserted into the stream of commerce. The three important features of commodities are: every commodity has a price; commodities are interchangeable with other goods of a similar type and quality; and their value is instrumental, not intrinsic; M. Cathleen Kaveny, "Commodifying the Polyvalent Good of Health Care" in *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 24/3 (1999) 209-212.

<sup>114</sup> Maria C. Morrow, "Pornography and Penance...", 69.

<sup>115</sup> Margaret Jane Radin, "Market-Inalienability", in *The Ethics of Reproductive Technology*, Kenneth D. Alpern (ed.), Oxford University, New York 1992, 179-180.

### 4.3. Objectification and Self-objectification

On the one hand, the viewers/consumers of pornography sexually encounter abstracted, disembodied bodies, but they are interesting precisely because the images represent real human beings but cartoon images are not arousing in the same way. On the other hand, the pornographic training in abstraction shapes the encounter with real human beings in a particular way makes them “less real” and more like the disembodied bodies. Porn viewers are likely to transfer their pornographic gaze to all women they meet, regarding them as body-objects rather than as human persons. This is the habit of objectification. In other words, viewers of pornography consume abstracted images because the images represent real human beings, but they re-conceptualize real human beings because of how they encounter and interact with pornography. Formation in abstraction is also formation in objectification<sup>116</sup>.

As men transfer their expectations of porn women onto real women, those real women are regarded not as human beings but as objects. Women are objectified in pornography means to assert that men who view pornography begin to see women as though they were something to be used as mere objects. Those who view pornography and use the depicted women for masturbatory purposes begin to see women as objects for purposes of sexual release. This exposure of men to pornography trains them to associate women primarily with sex<sup>117</sup>.

In the process of objectification of real women, “a woman is literally reduced to her body parts and sexual behaviour”. Those who view pornography frequently begin to transfer pornographic expectations to real life, finding it difficult to compartmentalize their relationships to porn women and real women<sup>118</sup>.

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<sup>116</sup> Maria C. Morrow, “Pornography and Penance...”, 69-70.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Maria C. Morrow, “Pornography and Penance...”, 71.

Moreover, as women are regarded as mere objects by the viewer of pornography, so also the pornography consumer can begin to feel like an object, attached to a computer screen, having “sex” with images of women he has never met and will never know. Mark Schwartz, the clinical director of sex addict program, explains this self-objectification as such: “A man starts to feel like a computer himself when he realizes that he is dependent on computer images to turn him on...You may be making love to your wife, but you are picturing someone else. That is not fair to the woman, and it is miserable for the man<sup>119</sup>.” The habit of self-objectification is also formed in women living in an increasingly pornified society, which demonstrates that objectification has a powerful influence beyond the people that consume pornography.

In short, pornography and pornification more broadly interpreted, serves as training that forms persons in a particular way. The concrete habits of pornography are instances of individual acts that proceed from and result in the habituated dispositions of abstraction, commodification, objectification, and self-objectification<sup>120</sup>.

## 5. Struggle for Holiness

As Thomas Aquinas explains, habits can be good or bad indicating a disposition toward the good or evil acts; those habits that are good are named virtues, whereas those that are bad are called vices. Pornography consumption forms users, and collaterally forms those around them, in habits that are central attributes of the vice of lust. With the vice of lust, the person narrowly seeks sexual pleasure and only considers the body sexually, without the broader appreciation for the person as a human being in all its complexity. The person is consumed and used as an object, even if only in the imagination. Another person becomes a means to the end of self-gratification. As a capital sin, the vice of lust ruptures

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<sup>119</sup> Maria C. Morrow, “Pornography and Penance...”, 71-72.

<sup>120</sup> Maria C. Morrow, “Pornography and Penance...”, 72.



relationships; for example, pornography usage has become a leading cause for divorce and has led to tensions in relationships and family life across nations<sup>121</sup>.

When human bodies are primarily objects for consumption, purchased contractually by an exchange of credited money, no intrinsic relationship is implied among human persons. Within the context of a marriage, the pornographic habits lead to resentment in response to the normal demands of relationship. The pornographic viewers transfer their expectations onto the world beyond the screen: women are seen only as disposable sexual objects that are easy to please and exist to please men<sup>122</sup>.

It is important to remember that pornography is not simply an individual problem but one of broadly distributed cultural practices, an adequate response must offer an embodied, social, institutionally located alternative to abstraction and objectification, by which individuals can be formed and shaped toward a different set of ends within a different narrative<sup>123</sup>.

We need to pay our attention to the multiple layers of meaning in pornography, and to the connection it has to the rest of life. The only way to cope with the many problems porn presents is by going through them, not by evading them or averting our eyes.

## 6. Solution

According to Catholic tradition, there are two ways to fight against a vice: first by practicing virtues and the second, by receiving the grace of God through sacraments especially through Sacrament of Confession. Whereas pornography objectifies and commodifies the human body, causing rupture in relationships, the sacrament of confession reconciles

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<sup>121</sup> Maria C. Morrow, "Pornography and Penance...", 72-73.

<sup>122</sup> Maria C. Morrow, "Pornography and Penance...", 73.

<sup>123</sup> Maria C. Morrow, "Pornography and Penance...", 73-74.

sinner with God and with each other, restoring the communal body and re-presenting the human body as a person. Furthermore, as a sacrament it provides God's grace, helping the person to grow in holiness<sup>124</sup>. The sacrament of reconciliation emphasizes that human beings are persons who always stand in relation to God and to others. The human body is hence not an object to be commodified, but, together with the soul, is a person in the image and likeness of God. In short, the sacrament of confession reinforces the Christian view of the human being as *imago Dei*. It aims toward virtue and the repairing of ruptured relationships among persons and with God.

### 6.1. The Sacrament of Penance

We cannot overlook the great spiritual help through the sacraments, the rivers of God's graces, that is offered to us by the Catholic faith to overcome our sinful our addictions. The following are the key elements of the Sacrament of Penance.

1. Daily examination of conscience enables the person to identify patterns of sin and struggle and hence to identify the vices at the root of these common sins.
2. In identifying inclinations toward sin in various forms, one sees how to "avoid the near occasion of sin." For one who struggle with pornography, for example, avoiding the near occasion of sin might involve not having for a period, an internet connection available in one's home, and destroying all the porn videos stored in different devices, etc.
3. In the act of contrition, the penitent expresses sorrow for having offended God due to these sins against God and against others. The absolution, meanwhile, counters self-objectification in that it presents the penitent with God's forgiveness to him as a human person, made in the image and likeness of God.

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<sup>124</sup> Maria C. MORROW, "Pornography and Penance", in *Leaving and Coming Home: New Wineskins for Catholic Sexual Ethics*, David Cloutier (ed.), Cascade, Oregon 2010, 65. (62-84).

4. The human effort involved in the examination of conscience and the rite of confession ultimately bears fruit because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

5. In a world that is increasingly pornified, the sacrament of reconciliation represents an ecclesiological aid in countering these habits. Far from abstracting human being in order to objectify them, the sacrament represents the person in the context of inescapable relationship with God and others. It does so in a formative where Christians recognize sin and failings, work to repair relationships, and grow in holiness and virtue with the grace of God received in the sacrament.

## 6.2. Ways to Assist in Protecting Family from Pornography

The following 12 ways to protect the family from pornography is collected from the official website of Catholic diocese of Arlington in the United States<sup>125</sup>.

**1. Educate Children:** Parents should teach the children the true meaning of human sexuality and educate them in chastity. Teach children about the dignity of the human person revealed through the bodies of both genders. Children should also learn the dangers of pornography and the impact it will have on how they view themselves and future relationships. Pornography teaches disrespect for the human person.

**2. Control Access:** Use a parental control software program so that you are able to monitor the family's internet activity. It works best when both parents have access to the monitoring system.

**3. Reduce the Temptation:** Keep the computer in a public place in the home such as a family room or kitchen.

**4. Practice Selective Surfing:** Choose sites that you know are safe and age-appropriate.

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<sup>125</sup> [https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/documents/12-ways-protect-family-from-pornography/\(25-0-2018\)](https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/documents/12-ways-protect-family-from-pornography/(25-0-2018)).

**5. Set Boundaries:** Establish rules concerning internet surfing including time and subject matter. Some filters allow the internet to be turned off at a certain time of night.

**6. Cultivate Virtuous Viewing:** Provide opportunities through art that assists in revealing the mystery of the human form while teaching and respecting the dignity of the entire person. Children are naturally curious about the body and sexuality. By providing an appreciation of the human form through art, parents provide a counter-measure against pornography that looks to exploit the human body.

**7. Model Appropriate Behaviour:** If something is inappropriate for teens to view on the internet, then it is probably inappropriate for parents to view as well. Have zero tolerance for lingerie magazines, sexually explicit movies, channels and language which are degrading or disrespectful. Cultivating a mutual respect for the entire person begins in the home.

8. Do not use electronic devices with internet as a babysitter.

**9. Establish Expectations:** Establish expectations concerning behaviour inside and outside the home. Children are most often introduced to pornography outside the home through school, friends, peer groups, etc. Your expectations may provide the necessary “out” for your child to say “no” when presented with objectionable material. Always reiterate that your child can come to you when they experience something which makes them feel uncomfortable.

**10. Spend Time with your Children:** There is nothing better than sitting down and talking with your children. Even during the teen years, when they seem to push you away, deep down, they need and want you involved in their lives. By establishing open communication from the start, you have sown the seeds to allow for communication in the future – even when they don’t seem to show it. Rather than always telling them “no” to internet use, fill the time with something better: family game time, family prayer time, date nights, reading a good book together.

**11. Educate Yourself:** Young people have access to pornography in many places that you would never guess. Almost all cell phones, video game systems, tablets, and electronic book readers can be used to surf pornography via the internet.

**12. Go to Confession on a regular basis as a family:** If your teen is struggling with pornography use, they may never tell you. However, it will most likely come out during Confession and the priest can assist them in their efforts to stop.

## **Conclusion**

We live in a highly sexualized culture. Sexual crimes, sexual abuse against women and children are daily events in the society. One of the main reasons of sexually broken culture in the society is pornography. Pornography is ubiquitous in almost all the society. Technology, and particularly the Internet, is now the primary gateway to accessing pornography. In this digital era, it is impossible to live without modern technology. Educating ourselves properly and others especially the children are the main solution to this pornography epidemic. Frequent confession and communion, an experienced counsellor who works with pornography addicted individuals, blocking software, monitoring software, and good friends who help grow in virtues are some practical and effective solutions to escape from a pornified culture.

## Urban Attitudes Towards Penal Action for Gender Violence

Alrex Romer and Anandita Dulloo

### Abstract

While there exist various arguments, both favoring and opposing imprisonment, the process itself is rarely the focus of these discussions. Rather the arguments tend to focus on the treatment of prisoners and what level of dignity criminals may be entitled to. It may be safely assumed that a significant part of the population does not feel that reintegration of prisoners, particularly those accused of heinous crimes are worthy of a smooth social reintegration. This study sets out to focus on whether such an attitude existed among urban youth especially in their outlook of inmates accused or convicted of gender-violence. 124 respondents across various demographics were surveyed. A majority of these respondents had never visited prison yet had firm stances on imposing stern and severe sentences on those accused of gender violence.

### Introduction

Prison systems have existed globally for centuries. Yet they were not always the most favored forms of penal action for defaulters. With the enactment of Prisons Act, 1894 the use of prisons and incarceration as the primary form of punishment was etched into the idea of Justice in India.

In 2018, out of 4,63,025 reported inmates, only 1,39,488 were convicted prisoners. Therefore, 70% of all prisoners in India are still undertrials, yet are largely subject to the same treatment as those convicted. This report highlighted the fact that among convicts too, nearly half of them are not subject to life or death sentences further adding to the number that

will rejoin society. With such a large part of inmates rejoining society, understanding the impact of imprisonment on the social and economic capabilities of inmates is a key policy issue yet an under-researched one.

In this survey, 124 respondents across various demographics were surveyed with the common element of all being urban metro dwellers of India. Respondents, aged 21 to 55, were chosen at random. Sadly, there was a general distaste towards the rehabilitation or resocialization of prisoners deeming them unfit to find social acceptance among the respondents though confusingly a similar majority understood that gender violence was a social mindset problem and not one of individual thinking. This study and the survey results are subdivided into a 3-part analysis.

Part A: Attitudes towards Abusers

Part B: Attitudes towards Sentences

Part C: Attitude towards Reintegration

### **1. Attitudes Towards Abusers**

Violence towards women has been a long-standing issue in Indian society. Its prevalence is shockingly high. The Crime in India Report 2018 showed that close to 4,00,000 cases of IPC and SLL crimes against women had been registered. The actual incidence of crime is likely to be far higher with gender-based violence often never making it to the point of criminal record and registration. It is understandable therefore that there is seething anger towards perpetrators of this crime.

It is also important to understand the sources and triggers of this crime. While the circumstances mandated by coronavirus have shown that prolonged proximity to abusers is usually a trigger, leading studies have shown that abuse stems from a mindset that is hardened through childhood abuse. Therefore, most abusers are surprisingly childhood abuse victims themselves for whom abuse seems normal.

In the survey, 69.5% of respondents felt that gender violence was the result of patriarchy and frustration. The idea that men feel entitled to a

level of power which, when not honored, leads to frustration resulting in gender violence was seen as the main reason for the prevalence of gender-based crimes. While this is true at a surface level, gender violence tends to stem from a deeper mindset. The attitude of gender abusers is that they are men with an entitlement complex empowered by a patriarchal society. When asked whether gender violence was the result of too much freedom and power allowed to men, 57.6% of respondents agreed. It is thus cemented that the urban attitude towards abusers stems largely from the opinion that society permeated the conditions necessary for abuse.

Who are these men? Is there a type? Is their abuse directed towards partners or known female family members or all women? Only 27.1% of respondents felt gender violence was caused by intimate partners. NCRB data (2018) showed that in cases of rape, 93.7% of perpetrators were known to the victim and of this over half were Family, Friends, Neighbors, Employers or other Known Persons. Perhaps, we can categorize abusers based on their background.

When asked whether gender violence tends to be higher in communities of lower-income, 39% of respondents replied in the affirmative, while a further 29.7% were uncertain but did not deny the statement. The urban attitude is therefore due to/on account of patriarchal mindsets that promote this culture of abuse have a higher incidence as we travel down the class and caste spectrum. This attitude is reinforced in the fact that Indian prisons are disproportionately full of these marginalized communities

Gender violence is a wide term covering a variety of crimes against women including rape, acid attack, abductions, physical harm to name a few. Dowry-related crimes are so prevalent that they necessitate separate reporting in the NCRB data. It is important to highlight that a large number of dowry-related crimes and abatement to suicide that classifies as gender violence are undertaken by women themselves (usually family members). So, while the most heinous of gender violence crimes may find themselves allocated to 'power-wielding' men, the majority of gender violence crimes do not fall in those categories. It is important



that we reconsider our profiling of gender violence perpetrators and thus reconsider our penal action policies.

## 2. Attitudes Towards Sentencing

With an outlook that those who commit crimes of gender violence have certain common characteristics (low-income backgrounds, males, benefits of patriarchy etc.), it is imperative to explore how we treat and confront wrongdoers and ‘criminals.’ The penal system in India largely prescribes medium and long period sentencing for convicted acts of gender violence while the death penalty is reserved for the ‘rarest of rarest’ cases<sup>126</sup>.

Imprisonment sentences for the heinous crimes of rape range from seven years to life imprisonment although life imprisonment is a misunderstood concept in India<sup>127</sup>. Sentences for problems specific to India such as Dowry death also have a prescribed punishment of imprisonment for a minimum of seven years. It must be pointed out that conviction rates in either of these crime categories are abysmally low, with conviction rates for the incidence of rape being as low as one in four cases<sup>128</sup>. It is, hence, safe to presume that there exists a certain level of dissatisfaction with the quantum of punishment awarded to perpetrators of gender violence.

The survey found that when asked whether punishing crimes of gender violence would lead to its reduction or would deter possible future offenders only 46.6% agreed. This seemed to suggest that respondents in the survey were not fully convinced that imprisonment was the solution to reducing or tackling the incidence of gender violence in the country. This was cemented when only 50% of respondents felt that men who have these freedoms curtailed along with penal action will learn the ‘wrongness’ of their ways.

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<sup>126</sup> Bachan Singh vs. State of Punjab (1980) (2 SCC 684).

<sup>127</sup> News Desk (2020): How many years is a life sentence in India? - results.amarujala.com. Retrieved 26 June 2020, from <https://results.amarujala.com/career-diary/how-many-years-is-a-life-imprisonment-in-india>.

<sup>128</sup> Sethi, Abheet Singh (2015): “3 years after Delhi rape, conviction rates same”. IndiaSpend.com. Retrieved 22 February 2017.

So, most survey respondents understood that imprisonment isn't a perfect solution to reducing crime. Yet strangely when asked whether a sentence of 7 years was sufficient for crimes of gender violence, 65.8% of respondents disagreed. Thus, it appears that the urban mindset is of the stance that while imprisonment itself may not be a solution, it is a necessary measure that must be meted out in its entire severity. This leads to Prisons becoming places of torture and human right violations far beyond what is legally allowed.

The Prison Statistics of India report shows in 2018 that of 1,39,488 convicts, 74,873 were serving a sentence of life imprisonment (54%) while 31,845 were serving a sentence of seven or more years (23%). 3 out of 4 convicts were serving long term sentences, a statistic that seems to be in line with the urban mindset that convicts ought to serve long sentences.

What is puzzling is when asked whether prisons and penal systems deter crime, only 48.8% agreed with the statement. There thus exists a paradoxical stance among the respondents, where most are uncertain or don't agree that prisons are effective in lowering or deterring crime yet believe that convicts and perhaps even accused ought to serve long sentences regardless of the fact that such sentences may not actually lead to a lowering of crime in society.

In light of this discovery, discussion surrounding the death penalty becomes prominent. Prison Statistics of India report highlights the fact that as of 31 December 2018, 402 convicts were serving a sentence of capital punishment. The death penalty is clearly not an often-resorted punishment in India. Yet among respondents of the survey, 40.5% felt that capital punishment was the only just punishment for rapists. A perverse sense of delivering harsh and controversial sentences seems to be the norm for people of urban mindsets. Given that the main purpose of prisons is to ultimately reform inmates and lower crime in society, one has to wonder whether harsh punishments for gender violence criminals lower that possibility.

### 3. Attitude Towards Reintegration

Whatever be the stance of urban or other mindsets, an undeniable fact is that a large number of prisoners will re-join the public sphere at some point. An ideal system would allow this reintegration process to be smooth hinging on the hope that these ex-inmates have 'learned a lesson' and will not only be deterred from committing further crimes themselves but will also serve as an example to their circles of what happens to law-breakers, thus lowering crime.

Attitudes about allowing prisoners to rejoin society and hold socially acceptable prisons greatly fluctuate when the type of prisoner being released is gender violence accused. 45.2% respondent of the survey believed that allowing gender violence prisoners to rejoin society was a risk. It would seem therefore that the urban mindset would prefer to allow prisoners to serve longer sentences and rejoin society as late as possible. Yet when asked about this, only 20.2% of respondents felt the longer the sentence, the more likely are prisoners to reform. Given what we have seen earlier regarding attitudes towards capital punishment, it can be safely assumed that when one is accused of gender violence, mindsets tend to favour execution over rehabilitation.

Indian prisons do focus on reform and rehabilitation programs within prisons. The PSI report is a treasure cove of details relating to rehabilitation and welfare programs for inmates ranging from education to healthcare. The funding for these programs come from the state which is ultimately funded by taxpayer money. It would be interesting therefore to know what the taxpayer attitude towards this spending was. 36.3% of respondents felt that reformation programs within prisons were largely ineffective. Furthermore, with regard to gender violence accused the notion that such inmates should be prevented from finding social acceptance was prominent in the revelation that 62.9% of respondents agreed that rapists and gender abusers should not find it easy to rejoin society so that they learn from the past<sup>129</sup>.

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<sup>129</sup> Henslin, James (2008): *Social Problems: A Down-To-Earth Approach*. Killekar, J. (2020): Institutionalizing yoga in jails to reduce recidivism rate | ORF. Retrieved 26 June 2020.

## Conclusions

The objective of this study was to analyze the attitudes of urban dwellers towards punishment systems particularly for those accused of gender violence. It is disheartening that respondents of the survey appear to subscribe to a system of harsh penal action going so far as to believe that any sentence less than capital punishment for gender violence accused may be insufficient. There seems to be ignorance or indifference to the fact that only 1 out of 4 prisoners are actually convicted of their crimes. By and large, the mindset seems to assert that reform and rehabilitation are not possible for some criminals, especially when they are wrongdoers in the gender violence department. There exists a stark disparity between the understanding of penal action and reported data. This is not surprising that the authors employed a random sample, and 94.4% of respondents had never visited a prison. It is important to highlight that most ordinary citizens have never visited a prison either, yet hold firm opinions about penal action. To prove whether gender violence accused are capable of reform requires longitudinal studies particularly after their release. However, as this is a poorly researched area in India, it is difficult to comment at this point whether the mindsets expressed in the survey conducted as part of this study are necessarily wrong. The only way one can reform this attitude is with well-researched studies that show that with the right quantum of care, and without discrimination even gender violence perpetrators are capable of reformation and rehabilitation.

*Article*

REFORMATIVE EXPLORATIONS

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**PMI Releases Souls from Purgatory****Sr Lini Sheeja MSC****Introduction**

The feast of all Saints is celebrated on 1 November and 'All Souls Day' is celebrated on 2 November. On that day all visit cemeteries to pray of their departed relatives and friends. Christian tradition says that the life after death is divided into three states: 1) Hell – place for those who rejected God, 2) Heaven – place for those who loved God and neighbor, and 3) Purgatory – place for purification. On 4 August 1999, Pope John Paul II, speaking on purgatory, said: "The term does not indicate a place, but a condition of existence. Those who, after death, exist in a state of purification are already in the love of Christ who removes from them the remnants of imperfection as "a condition of existence". In a broader sense, PMI volunteers have a greater role in rescuing souls from the prison of purgatory through their prayers and mortifications. Prison like purgatory is a place where our brethren behind the bars go through lot of suffering, a sort of purification and sanctification. The eightfold path for prisoners' transformation is: (1) Reach out (2) Repentance (3) Reconciliation (4) Reformation (5) Rehabilitation (6) Reclamation (7) Release (8) Redemption. This article highlights the role of PMI volunteers in participating in the redemptive act of Jesus by releasing souls from two prisons, the earthly prisons and the prison called purgatory. For the ultimate goal of PMI is to redeem the lost, to heal the sick, to bring back the strayed.

**Prison Ministry – A Passionate Adventure**

Prison is the place, wherein our brethren behind the bars wait with eager hope and faith for us to reach out to them. Prison Ministry is a call of love, a call of sacrifice wherein every volunteer of PMI reaches out to

see the disfigured face of the Crucified Master in our brethren behind the bars. God's heart reaches out to the suffering of His children and He has called His earnest lovers to join hands with Him to heal the broken world, the lost ones. PMI is a passionate adventure in which a group of passionate people chosen by God join hands for a noble cause. God called Moses by hearing the cry of the Israelites and the same God hearing the cry of our brethren, calls each one of us. We draw the inspiration from Jesus who said, "I've come to seek the sinners and not the righteous" (Lk 5:32). Prison Ministry volunteers are the people of fire who reach out with the divine fire.

### **Prisoners' Struggle**

The concept of the outsiders on prisoners is, 'Once in prison, always in prison'. The concept of insiders is, 'Give me one more chance' and finally the golden concept of our Master is 'One lost sheep is more important than the 99'. The beliefs of Prison Ministry India volunteers are, God hates the sin and not the sinner. God is never tired of forgiving. Every Saint has a past and every sinner has a future. One lost sheep is greater than the 99 sheep. There is no criminal beyond transformation. Our brethren behind the bars are the broken beings. They are deprived of their privacy; they are being watched all the time and they are no more important. They lose their name and fame once he/she is arrested, not only they, their families and loved ones too. The moment he/she is taken to the police custody, their hopes are shattered. They are given with maximum punishment. Others don't show any more interest in them, sometimes even the family members abandon them. Some of our brethren behind the bars have no visitors for years, which makes them lose their appetite for food and finally the life. They struggle in the night as they don't get sleep.

### **Encountering Disfigured Face of the Crucified Master Behind the Bars**

Prison Ministry India Volunteers play a vital role in reaching out in this regard to save the lost ones behind the bars. We don't wait for them to come to us, but rather we reach out to them to see the disfigured face of

the Crucified Master. “Just as there were many who were appalled at him – his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness” (Is 52:14). It is amazing to know that it is in His wounds we have life. Jesus the innocent prisoner was tortured and beaten to the core. That horrible beating brought us a great benefit. The benefit is that because of his wounds, we have a relationship with Christ. It is only because He suffered, that we can actually know him. The great hope is that when we see his face, we will become like him. The PMI volunteers are there to reach out to our brethren in humble service by knowing their plights.

The call of PMI volunteers is an inner call to plunge into darkness with deep faith that the lost ones will be saved through their prayers and sacrificial life. The following services are provided for our brethren behind the bars by PMI volunteers: prayers, personal counseling and moral instructions, help for their mental growth, job-oriented training program, providing recreational facilities and vocational training facilities, conducting literacy, arts and sports competitions, conducting medical camps, providing legal fee aid, arranging spiritual exercises and many. We redeem the lost ones from the prisons through our prayers, mortifications and constant guidance. Every prisoner is brought before the Blessed Sacrament as we sit before Him in adoration and our God of the Lost saves them from further wounds and destructions.

### **Purgatory - Biblical Background**

“Purgatory is like a purifying fire burning inside a person, a painful experience of regret for one’s sins. Purgatory is a process, not a place. A soul stained by sin cannot present itself to God”, Says Pope Benedict XVI. Purgatory, the condition, process, or place of purification or temporary punishment in which the souls of those who die in a state of grace are made ready for heaven. “They begged him that this sin might be completely blotted out. Then, Judas, that great man, urged the people to keep away from sin, because they had seen for themselves what had happened to those men who had sinned. He also took up a collection

from all his men, totaling about four pounds of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. Judas did this noble thing because he believed in the resurrection of the dead. If he had not believed that the dead would be raised, it would have been foolish and useless to pray for them” (2 Mac 12:42-44). “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved – even though only as one escaping through the flames” (1 Cor 3:11-15).

### **The Killer and the Saint: Pranzini and Therese**

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897) tells the story of Pranzini, a man who had murdered two women and a young girl and had been sentenced to death. All reports were that he was going to his death angry, bitter and unrepentant. Therese, only fourteen years at the time, committed herself to praying and offering up sacrifices for his conversion. The day after his execution she secretly read the newspaper account of his death. Here is how she wrote about it: “Pranzini had not gone to confession. He had mounted the scaffold and was preparing to place his head in the formidable opening, when suddenly seized by an inspiration, he turned, took hold of the crucifix, the priest was holding out to him and kissed the sacred wounds three times! Then his soul went to receive the merciful sentence of Him who declares that in heaven there will be more joy over one sinner who does penance than over ninety-nine just who have no need of repentance!” Young Therese called Pranzini as her “first child.” This is “The Little Way” of St. Therese which Blessed Mother Teresa also followed: to do everything as an act of love for God, to offer all the little and big hardships of life for the conversion of sinners.



## **Purgatory and Death Row Prisoners**

Purgatory comes from a Late verb meaning “to cleanse” - purge shares the same root. In Roman Catholic doctrine, souls atoned for past sins in purgatory before entering heaven. If people are stuck in purgatory, it may be because they are not qualified to go to heaven and may not be bad enough to go to hell. They may be like people sitting on death row. Or people can be stuck in purgatory because their relatives are too poor to offer mass as a special prayer.

Michael Lambrix was convicted in 1984 for murdering Aleisha Bryant and Clarence Moore, after the first jury in the case was deadlocked. It happened when he was twenty-two-years-old and he spent 35 years in prison before his execution. Being in prison, knowing that he will be executed to death, waiting for it he said, “It’s purgatory; somewhere between life and death.” For his final words, Lambrix said, “I wish to say the Lord’s Prayer.” He recited the words, ending on the line “deliver us from evil”. PMI volunteers offer their sacrificial life and prayer for both death row prisoners and souls in purgatory to elevate them to meet God face to face. We ask you to volunteer yourself in ‘Death Row Commandoes’ in PMI Special Task Force Angels to pray for the death row prisoners and the souls who are waiting to enter heaven with our prayers and sacrifices.

## **PMI Volunteers for the Souls in Purgatory**

The people in hell and in heaven do not need our payers, but the people in purgatory need. The writings of the Church Fathers teach us about the value of praying for the dead and doing good deeds for the souls in purgatory. PMI volunteers are chosen by God for a noble cause to be a love bomb, “Be a love bomb, let it be exploded, not to kill but to heal the broken hearted”. They are chosen to be a love bomb, after being chosen each one of us, Jesus looked up to heaven and gave thanks to God. Jesus is grateful for our humble service and for living His ever-living words where

He says “I was in prison, you visited me” (Mt 25:36). We surrender and offer up all our brokenness, the little sufferings that come on our way for the sanctification of all the souls in purgatory. The final act of Jesus was ‘He gave to them’. Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me” (Lk 22:19). Remember, that our call to PMI is a pure gift of God. The same God who called me called the other 8000 volunteers to render our services in all the ways that we can. The call of these 8000 volunteers goes further in redeeming souls from purgatory.

Our prayers and sacrifices will never go in vain. Jesus on the Cross redeemed a soul as he forgave his sins, “Today you will be with me in paradise” (Lk 23:43). Let us, the chosen ones, join hands with our master Jesus in redeeming the souls for Him. Then together with Jesus we would be able to say “I did not lose single one of those you have given me” (Jn 18:9). Let’s elevate the PMI to a higher level by liberating souls from purgatory and thereby having treasures of investments in the eternal city.

## My First Experience with Prison Ministry

Dr Paul Raj

### My Call to Prison Ministry

Soon after my novitiate, I was sent to St Joseph's college, Trichy to do my under graduate studies. I was 19 years old then. Prior to joining the college, something deep within me said that you should look out for doing something more than your studies. I began to scout around Trichy town for many days looking out for what is best and most needed to get involved in the society during the weekends. My companions were happy and satisfied with their regular studies, games and usual weekend entertainment. I decided that I should do something different and something more than mere entertainment. It was July 1981, one evening I went on foot looking out for some voluntary service; I was very serious about it. I went to the parish nearby and waited for meeting the parish priest to inform him that I am available for accompanying the youth in the parish and that I can start a youth movement/club in the parish. The priest took reasonably a very long time to come out of his room and some people who were waiting outside to meet him went away disappointed. It was actually my second attempt to meet him; a man who was standing outside the presbytery told us that this priest does not like to meet people on Sundays. I turned to come out of the church campus, suddenly a police van stopped in front of the church gate and four hand-cuffed prisoners were led out of the police van and were being taken to the Government hospital that was located just opposite to the church. As a young boy in my teens I saw sadness in their eyes and a sense of shame and anger on their faces. It struck me all of a sudden, why not I make an attempt to visit the prison instead of this parish priest. That was the starting point of my tryst with prison ministry.

### **My First Prison Visit**

The following Saturday, I made it a point to meet my Scholasticate superior to seek his permission; he readily not only allowed me but also encouraged me. I put on my new cassock that was given to me just three months ago for my first profession, took the bicycle and went to the Trichy Central Prison which was some 7 kms away. I saluted the prison guards though I was very frightened inside; told them that I wish to meet the chief of the prison. Because I was in cassock, the police took me inside and led me through the wooden stair case to the office of the Jail Superintendent. I saw a well-built police officer seated there; inside I was shuddering because this was the first time, I was coming face to face with a big police officer in his uniform; and a frail teenage boy in cassock meeting him all alone in his office!

Something in me spoke up, though I was basically a very shy boy then. The Superintendent asked me about the purpose of my visit. I explained to him where I come from and what I am going to study in the college and why and how I wish to offer some service. It was a miracle I would say. He agreed to my request and told me about the rules and regulations for my prison visit and cautioned me about the mandatory preliminary search, and the areas in prison to be avoided during my visit. His final advice to me was: always come for the visit in cassock and not in civil dress! Later on, I found out that the Prison superintendent was a good Protestant. It was providential!

### **Encounter with the Persons Who Look at Society Differently**

Then began my most exciting and most satisfying aspect of my life as a young religious Brother. I used to look for my Saturdays and for my visits to the prison. I used to be excited before going to the prison and invariably at the end of the day I returned as a sad boy. I am going to share now few things here which I have not shared in any forum before. My first week rendezvous in the prison was with the Naxalites. They were kept in separate block, but together. I had a free access to meet them

but always accompanied by one or two guards. Interestingly I was always given one or two guards to give me security in case something happened. Though I tried to refuse many times, they always accompanied me; but while interacting with the prisoners they always stood at a distance. My experience with the Naxalites was good in a way as I was too young for their conversations. My novitiate formation of 1970s was too naïve and it did not support me at all in my knowledge of the world and of the society. I found myself lost among the Naxalites and they even ridiculed me of my ignorance of various subjects including religion. This had deep impact on me later on and when I became a formator I made it a point to train the formees differently. In my interactions for many weeks with my Naxalite friends challenged me and sharpened my thinking and to a large extent stood by me in my discernment of my political and social ideologies.

### **Encounter with the Mentally Challenged Prisoners**

Though I was learning a lot through my interactions with the Naxalite friends, I felt very inadequate to converse with them. They had a high degree of awareness of the society and its dynamics; they were far more educated than me; far more committed to the transformation of the society than me; they were from different parts of south India and very decent and well-behaved young men. More than all I appreciated their intellectual and stimulating discussions and arguments with them. It did not last long as I was getting disinterested in discussions and they were not very personal in their sharing. With the approval of the prison superintendent, I was permitted to shift my ministry to the mentally challenged prisoners in the specially enclosed section for them. Within the prison campus, it was a separate quadrangular tiled structure with many cells. I counted about 50 inmates in all; not all of them mentally challenged. There were a few normal persons who due to political vendetta were branded as ‘abnormal or mentally deranged’ and were put along with the mentally challenged persons. It was very sad to listen to

their stories. Their living condition those days was really very pathetic. Some were moving around inside naked; I was told the reason was for fear of those men using it to hang themselves! The way food was being served for them was very primitive; all the mentally challenged prisoners despite their degree of mental health were kept in the same open area for interaction which is today considered as unhealthy and against human rights. My ministry with this mentally challenged section went on for some time. Then the Prison Superintendent himself suggested that I shift my ministry to the section which hosts prisoners on death row. They used to call it “Condemned Section” because they were all condemned to death and were waiting for their turn to go. This was the most fulfilling part of my prison ministry.

### **Ministry Among the Prisoners on Death Row**

My volunteer service included as a ‘counselor’ to seven men on death row and as a pre-release ‘instructor’ for one prisoner. I spent the two years of volunteering service sharing my little experience to teach these seven men some important life skills, such as spoken English, mercy petition writing, job interviewing, and catechesis. The most unforgettable experience included a man who, though convicted of murder, went on to start a business of his own following his release from prison. Even before going home to see his near and dear ones, he found out my address and personally came to visit me and thanked me; and also maintained a close friendship with me for some time. But today I regret for having lost contact with him and for neglecting to sustain a lasting friendship with him.

### **Personal Learnings from Prison Ministry**

1. Hundreds of men and women are caught in a destructive cycle of crime and incarceration. Without knowing God’s hope or experiencing Christ’s love, the story repeats over and over, shattering families and harming communities. But the cycle can be broken through prison voluntary service and prison visits.

2. God is raising up volunteers just an ordinary boy like me to walk alongside people inside prison on their road to renewal or repentance. I salute the Prison Ministry India founders, board members and hundreds of volunteers for their availability.
3. We have a well-organized Prison Ministry structure in India now, unlike those days of 1981. As for my knowledge no resources ever existed those days for me to use it and learn from it. No one even spoke to me about it. I was at a loss. But I burnt with passion for this mission. The church was not equipped with volunteers, with tools and resources to make a difference in the lives of prisoners, former prisoners and their families. But today things are so different. Great things can happen with partners and volunteers like many readers like you.
4. No entertainment worth the name ever existed or was provided to the prisoners those days. I remember on Saturdays they used to play some old cinema songs on the public address system in the prison in the evening for some time. There were no much-needed education and entertainment for those who were incarcerated.
5. I used to see the family members visiting the prisoners on Saturdays/Sundays. Visiting a family member in prison presented its own bundle of challenges, I realized. I used to wonder what would be the conversations between them. I saw many mothers weeping as they spoke to their loved ones inside as the grills separated them. I used to think that preparing these family members before the visits can raise the bar for positive future visitation experiences, possibly and hopefully, improved relationships among family members. I hope some programs are initiated today in these lines for those who are visiting their near and dear ones in the prisons.
6. Each Saturday after I met those my seven friends in the “condemned section” I came back to the community a sad boy. Their life stories, their social and family situations that forced them to be where they were, their current state of mind and their willingness to reconcile, forgive and

repent; all these stirred in me lots of emotions, helplessness and pain. They began to write to me regularly and keep in touch with me. All the seven presented interesting life stories that resembled a Bollywood or Tollywood box office success movies. But I realized that the prisoners who stayed connected to supportive family members and positive prison visits ended up benefiting everyone: prisoners, families, and the society. I am sure the Prison Ministry India manual will have all these. I am a layman in these things now because what I am talking is what took place almost 40 years ago.

7. Compared to the present time, visit to the prison did not have much complications those days. It was very easy to go and carry out our ministry. Things are much complicated today due to various factors. Moreover, many protestant groups in the past were in touch with many prisons and were carrying out services. But their approach was not appreciated as I was personally told by many prisoners in my ward. Things have improved for good I presume. But certainly, the prison ministry today is organized more systematically, having lots of volunteers, with much resources, tools for animation and plans for rehabilitation of prisoners, their family members and former prisoners.

8. The readers who are involved in prison ministry today will agree with me when I speak of the inner longings and the emotional turmoil the prisoners go through during their incarceration. What I could give them as a teenager was to listen to them lovingly and non-judgmentally. What did not surprise me was that all the seven of them who were on death row had developed deep love, appreciation and affection for the person of Christ. I do not know how but they have told me why. It was an eye-opener for me. Though there was not one Christian among the seven, all asked me for a copy of the Bible. The Prison Superintendent permitted me with some hesitation; and out of seven five of them were quite familiar with the Gospels. Reading the Word of God gave them consolation, courage, peace of mind, a sense of hope and purposefulness in life. It brought back meaning to their life. I realized that Bibles are



one of the ways to instill hope behind prison bars. And nothing provides hope like the living Word of God.

### **Discover the Presence of God in the Prison Campus**

Before I began prison ministry, I knew I wanted to serve those in pain and isolation. But I had never thought about prison ministry before. Prison, in general, rarely crossed my mind. Then my sighting a police van and the handcuffed prisoners walking out of the van drew me to the prison. I remember having read an incident. A young man was invited to a local juvenile detention center to participate in a drama. He played the part of a Roman soldier guarding the tomb where Jesus' body lay. This depiction of the Easter story - Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection - made an impact on the audience. When he saw their reactions, it moved him as well. Soon he felt God calling him to prison ministry.

I think more and more people should take up this ministry. This ministry requires more psychological counsellors, inspirational speakers, musicians, and performers who bring the light of the Gospel to men and women behind bars. Through these persons the prisoners might find respite from the challenges of prison life and a safe place to encounter God in Christ - many for the first time. I remember many prisoners telling me, "I've done so many wrong things in my life - made so many wrong turns". After years of incarceration they say: "But I know that God's real and His love unconditional. I want more of Jesus". This is where the words of Jesus are so true: "When I was in prison, you visited me" (Mt 25:36). I tell others that when we visit those in prison, we are visiting Christ.

## **Thasim: A Reformed and Reintegrated Prisoner**

**Sr Clara HCM**

### **Childhood**

Thasim hails from a traditionally well-to-do family. She has five siblings – two brothers and three sisters. She studied up to 5th standard in the regular school and continued her education at home in her Muslim tradition. In the villages, Muslim girls are not encouraged to study much.

### **Motherhood**

She was married off at the age 15, to a well of family. She did not have much knowledge about the world outside as she was not exposed to the realities of life. Thasim became mother of 4 children by the time she was twenty-five. Her Husband Ameer was a Business man.

### **Alcoholism**

Her family life was happy in the beginning but gradually her husband became addicted to alcohol and started having relationship with another woman. Thasim came to know about it and she tried to correct but he did not listen to her. She complained to her father and uncles and they advised him but he never paid any attention to their corrections as well and continued with the same life. The family people consoled her saying that he has enough wealth to take care of her and her children, and to let go and adjust with the situation.

### **Challenges and Struggles**

Thasim was not happy with their suggestion and told that she was willing and ready to share the wealth with others but not her husband with other women. He became so addicted that he started bringing other women

to the house. As the children were growing up and life in the family was going from bad to worse, she could not bear this situation anymore and wanted to put an end to this torture and she consulted with her house maid about it. They planned to break his leg so that he will not be able to go out and for that she made arrangement with her maid's husband to do so as they had planned. She had to pay some money to execute this plan. As she was aware of the danger in drawing money from the bank without his knowledge, she gave her gold chain to the maid.

### **The Conspiracy**

One night her maid's husband Babu came and knocked at the door. Ameer went and opened the door. Thasim and children were sleeping inside. Babu and his friend had come with covered faces and as they came inside, they tried to attack him and, in their struggle, the face mask fell down and Babu's face was disclosed. He was scared that Ameer will take action against him and in that fear, they killed Ameer. In the meantime, hearing some noise, Thasim came to look at what was happening and then seeing the body of Ameer in a pool of blood, she cried loud and they closed her mouth with their bloody hands to silence her. They then took the body and left it nearby ground. Thasim went back to the room and started crying loud and hearing the cry of the mother the elder boy who was 10 years old got up and saw his mother with blood stain on her face and enquired what had happened. She told him that she heard the cry of Ameer and two men were there who had already killed him and when she made the noise, they closed her mouth with their bloody hands and pushed her to the room. The son and mother came back to the entrance room and the body was not found there. They had carried him away.

### **Incarceration**

The boy phoned to his maternal grandfather. He came with his brother and sons and informed the police and they came to enquire. In the next morning the body was found in the park close to their house. After the legal procedures the body was brought and buried. After a few days

Thasim was taken to her father's house. She was not able to eat properly or sleep. Her mother consoled her telling that Ameen was not a good man and they will now settle her with another person as she was still young. She became very upset and told that she only killed him and she didn't want any more marriage. Hearing this, her mother fainted and fell down there; and hearing the noise, her father came to ask what happened. She repeated the same. Her father ran to his brother who had married her sister in law. They went and informed the police again, and the police came and arrested Thasim. After the legal procedures she was put in the prison. Though her parents were compassionate to her, they were scared of the uncle who had warned them that if they help her or go to see her, he would take action against them. They kept themselves away from the scene and her father, even though compassionate towards her, was unable to support her directly.

### **Prison Ministry India**

Prison Ministry India volunteers who regularly visit the prisons came in contact with Thasim and intervened in her case. One of the PMI volunteers contacted her father and discussed regarding her bail. He agreed to spend the money to bail her out but did not want to take her home. When she got bail, she was taken by the Holy Cross Sisters to Jeevodaya, the rehabilitation center for released women prisoners. None of her family people knew where she was. Whenever she had to attend the court sisters always accompanied her and made sure that she was protected. Her father had a soft corner for her and he used to contact her over the phone.

### **Reformation**

Thasim's children were under the custody of her uncle and sister-in-law. Her younger child was only 3 years old. Thasim was unable to contact them and that made her so upset and worried. She was full of anger, guilt and despair. She was not able to sleep in the night and wanted the light to be on during the night because of fear of darkness. Life in the rehabilitation center however helped her to have some changes in her

attitude. Slowly she found meaning and purpose in living her life for the sake of her children. She told that if she had met the sisters earlier, she would not have done such a mistake. The life in the rehabilitation center made her familiar with prayer and word of God; this made her realize that even though she had done a mistake she could not be a bad person forever. That was a real turning point in her life and this conviction made her hopeful.

Once she received the message that her elder son was sick and hospitalized, she wanted to go and see him. One day early morning she went to see her son accompanied by a sister. The hospital was run by the nuns and one of the nurses showed the room where the boy was but it was closed from inside. The bystander who was her uncle's son did not open the door but she managed to see him through the window. She came down and was waiting for the nuns to come and to enquire about the condition of the boy and the sickness. Meanwhile her cousin, the bystander boy came down with a knife to attack her. The sister who was with her suddenly came in between them and protected her and immediately they left the place. Her son was better after two days and was discharged.

Few months later the sisters in the center got the news that her son had passed away. The sisters took her to the hospital telling that the boy was again sick and was serious this time. By the time they reached the hospital, the body of her son was already kept in an ambulance. She was not even allowed to see the body and she started weeping so bitterly. However, through the intervention of some of the relatives she was allowed to attend the funeral. But there was threat that she will be attacked if she was going to remain in her father's house and in the night itself her father dropped her back to the rehabilitation center.

### **The Way Ahead**

Though she was deeply disturbed and distressed, with counselling and support of the sisters she could overcome the situation. The case continued and with the help of the lawyers the children were handed

over to her parents, and the younger child was given to her. Anyhow she was acquitted after two years. But she was not permitted to go back to her place because of her uncle who had taken all her belongings from the house including her car. But after a few months with the help of some known persons, the sisters went to meet her uncle to speak to him and to get her house and property back. He and her sister-in-law were so adamant and were unwilling to give back anything. Thasim found it very difficult to get along with the situation.

### **Reconciliation**

Problems are there and problems will be there in our life. But the question is how we handle them to find a solution. God works in us and through us when we are to take care of His sheep. He always guides us to take the right direction. So according to the sister's suggestion she agreed to give some property to her uncle and family and she was able to forgive them. The life she lived in the rehabilitation centre, she said encouraged and empowered her to let go of the past hurts and wounds and also helped her to reconcile with her uncle and family.

### **Reintegration**

In the course of time, Thasim joined back with her three children, could get the property back and start anew her life. Now Thasim is living happily with her family and her relatives are all happy with her. When we deal with a person with problems, we are not only dealing with that particular individual but the whole family has to be involved if we are to get the desired result. The service of the PMI volunteers always aims at total rehabilitation including the family and the whole family could be transformed. Repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation are the first phases of reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration.

**Fr George Kuttickal MCBS: An Insightful PMI Warrior****Fr Mathew Thundathil MCBS****Introduction**

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

**Vocation**

Fr George Kuttickal (1950-2017), a zealous and ascetical priest of the Missionary Congregation of Blessed Sacrament (MCBS), was a powerful instrument in the hands of the Eucharistic Lord. He was born on 11 January 1950 in the Kuttickal Puthenpurayil family at Purakkad in Alappuzha District, Kerala, India. PC Joseph and Thressiamma were his parents. When Fr George was a child, the then parish priest, Fr Geevarghese Attuvathalackal, during a Sunday homily, was explaining the letter of St Paul to Romans "But how are men to call upon Him

in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!” (Rom 10:14,15). These Bible verses touched his heart and he heard an inner voice calling him to become a priest, and without hesitation, he chose that road for the rest of his life. He was led by the Lord to join the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (MCBS) and took his first religious profession on 17th May 1970. Fr George was ordained on 15th March 1977 by Bishop Sebastian Mankuzhikkary, the Auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly.

### **Pastoral Ministry**

To train Fr George for his future apostolate, the Lord, in his amazing providence, sent him to work in the parishes of Palakkad and Thrissur Dioceses. He built up a strong communion of zealous lay apostles who were dedicated and committed to the church. He was a catalyst in building up the parish into a closely knit community.

### **Diocesan Director of Charismatic Renewal**

Having understood the extraordinary success in the parish ministry and his special charismatic grace to renew individuals, families and parishes, the then Archbishop Joseph Kundukulam appointed him as the first Diocesan Director of Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Thrissur. Blessed with the Charismatic gifts received from the Holy Spirit through the charismatic renewal, he was able to lead the Sunday school teachers, youth and the families of the Archdiocese into a Eucharistic centered life and teaching.

### **Eucharistic Retreat Ministry**

The MCBS community appointed him to the Eucharist Retreat Ministry. This allowed him to travel to different parts of India. His heart was aflame from the Eucharistic renewal experience and his inner eyes were opened



through a mystical experience from the Lord. He realized that there was a vacuum within himself due to a lack of infilling of wisdom and power from the Eucharistic Lord.

### **Higher Studies**

MCBS sent Fr George to do his post graduate theological studies at Paurastya Vidyapeetham, Kottayam. The topic selected for his research was “The Eucharistic-Ascetic-Monastic Life Blossoming from the Eucharistic Altar”. From his research study and from deep contemplation on the Eucharistic mystery, he felt a strong call from the Lord to serve those who have been convicted and put behind the bars and neglected by society.

### **Founding FBA**

One of Fr George’s habits was to spend long hours before the Blessed Sacrament in Eucharistic adoration. The Lord opened his eyes and ears to the cries of the mentally disturbed orphans and abandoned children who were wandering in streets. He wished to bring them to the main stream of the society by showering them with love and affection. This prophet, chosen by God, later founded the Friends and Birds of the Air (FBA), a rehabilitation and evangelization ministry for the marginalized in society. He also founded two religious communities for serving the abandoned ones of the street, namely Sons of Eucharistic Covenant (SEC) and Daughters of Eucharistic Covenant (DEC). Fr George was very much influenced by Pope St John Paul II (1978-2005). During this period, the world was already attracted to Eucharist centered works of mercy through St Mother Theresa of Calcutta (1910-1997). The spirituality of these saints highly influenced the life of Fr George. Pope St John Paul II, in his visit to Haiti in 1983, invited the Catholic Church to utilize the moment of kairos and to “Look to the future with commitment for a New Evangelization: One that is new in its fervour, new in its methods and new in its expressions.” This invocation for a new

evangelization echoed as a prophetic call in the mind of Fr George. He wanted to become a “New Evangelizer” in its true meaning. In the jail ministry, he proclaimed the Good News of Jesus in a humble and simple way, but in a new style, new in its fervour, methods and expressions totally enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

### **PMI Spirituality**

During the seminary life, God allowed the buds of love to bloom in the hearts of Francis Kodiyan and Varghese Karippery. The original spirituality of Jesus Fraternity was developed in a prayer group at St. Thomas Pontifical Seminary, Vadavathoor. Even as young seminarians, they whole heartedly embraced the call through prayer, penance and an earnest desire to work among the prisoners. Fr George spiritually enlightened this group. He taught them to trust in God’s providence, have a deep faith in our Lord Jesus and to always search whole heartedly to do the will of God in their everyday lives.

### **Contributions to Prison Ministry**

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

### **Not a Visit but a Pilgrimage**

For Fr George, the visit to the jails was a pilgrimage. Not a simple pilgrimage but a pilgrimage to share the merciful love of God. Prior to the

jail visits, the members of the fraternity (3 priests and 8 brothers) prepared themselves through prayer, chain-fasting, self-sanctification and various other mortifications. They were always in prayer while travelling and also during their long waits in front of the jail to seek permission to see the prisoners. Even during the many difficult circumstances faced in their visits to the jail, they would courageously use prayer as their weapon to overcome barriers. Fr George always strengthened and induced them to pray in faith during such times of struggle. The verse “with God nothing is impossible” (Lk.1:37) strengthened them through all such situations.

### **Spiritual Weapons**

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

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

2. Suffering Fund: It is the passion and death of our Lord Jesus that has redeemed the world from sin and eternal death. Over the centuries, the sufferings of the martyrs and the saints offered in the name of Jesus have continued to transform humanity. Suffering fund is collected by uniting

all our sufferings with the sufferings of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

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

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

### **Sacrificial Love**

During the initial years of the Jail Ministry, it was found that the society generally marginalized the people like prisoners, gangsters or criminals. But Fr George showed the world that there can be reconciliation even between warring factions through the following story: while travelling in a bus from Kottayam to Kadappara near Malayattoor, he noticed two groups of people ready to attack each other for some political issues. He heard Jesus saying in his heart to go there in the midst of the two groups. Immediately he got down from the bus and stood right in the middle of the two groups and asked them to kill him before they started hurting each other. This act of sacrificial love by an unknown person completely took them by surprise. Fr George took the weapons from their hands and threw it into a nearby lake and asked them to return home to their families. He said that he was able to get the strength for showing the sacrificial love of the Lord through his daily solemn Eucharistic celebration which was the center of his life. These acts of courageous love helped the Fraternity to form its vision, mission and spirituality.

## Home of Love Home - Snehashramam

During his second stint at Vadavathoor Pontifical Seminary for his M.Th. studies (1984-85), he heard a challenging inner voice from the Lord saying, “There are enough and more theses written being eaten by moths, let there be a thesis lived”. This was revealed to him during his solitary prayer and contemplation for 45 days in the famous monastic center of contemplation known as Kurisumala Ashram on the mountain of Vagamon in the district of Kottayam, Kerala. It was to start an Ashram life with a new vision and mission.

### Characteristics of Ashram Life

1) An ashram community owns nothing other than God: “God is my chosen portion and my cup” (Ps.16:5). Even the land of the ashram should be one that is given for use only and not as a possession. 2) An ashram community should be able to truly and sincerely pray “give us this day our daily bread”, which meant sharing the food with the people who are hungry rather than amassing it for tomorrow’s luxury. 3) An ashram community, in incessant divine worship and prayer, proclaims throughout the day: Our total dependence is on God Almighty only. 4) An ashram community resembles a Thumba poovu (Leuca Indica – one of the smallest flowers), where the least, the last and the lost of the society become co-pilgrims in the search for God.

Instead of writing a thesis based just upon an in-depth research and closing of study, Fr George was led by the Holy Spirit to translate into his very life-the findings of his spiritual search and his intellectual research. With the permission and blessings of MCBS Congregation and the ecclesiastical Superiors, he started living in a humble and small hut - ‘Snehashramam’, (June 1989 to May 1990) built by Mr. Pulimparambill Ramankutty in his own land in an interior poor Hindu village at Edappallythopp (Thrikkunnapuzha) in Alappuzha District. The villagers here earned their livelihood by making coir and related products.

At the hut, there was nothing of his own other than providence of God. He was divinely provided for his daily meal from the neighboring Hindu families and lived a life of incessant prayer, contemplation and *lectio divina*. He would have only two meals a day which consisted of gruel (*kanji*) and raw bitter guard. Fr George always lived with the bare minimum. Sometimes there would be no kerosene to light a lamp. Darkness, solitude and hunger beautified the richness of poverty and he was led into a deep intimacy with the Holy Trinity and was being trained to become another Eucharist for everyone, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. The neighbouring Hindu families called him ‘Snehadasachan’ (priest filled with love) and they were ready to share with him from their poor livelihood. Fr George had to walk a distance of 7km daily to the nearest chapel to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. It was from here, that the first home of the jail ministry got its name ‘Snehashramam’. There were no locked gates and doors in Snehashramam and they were divinely provided for their bread.

After one year of incessant contemplative prayer at Thrikkunnappuzha, Fr George came to the ‘Snehashramam’ at Vettukad as their spiritual father. He involved the neighbouring families and made them the guardians to take care of the prisoners and their families. Although there was initial resistance from them, he could convince them that they were also God’s children. Gradually, they started to visit ‘Snehashramam’, and started to love its members.

The members of the fraternity relied totally on God’s providence to become the Covenantal Eucharistic presence and to identify themselves with the poor Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth. They lived the “poverty and insecurity of Christ” (Mt. 6:25-34) and find security, joy and contentment only in the Holy Eucharist (Jn. 6:35; Ps. 23:1). This total dependence on God liberated their hearts from all anxieties and the Eucharist became their only possession. It made them fully available for the service of the poorest of the poor.

## Role of Laity in Prison Ministry

Even till his moment of death, Fr George deeply contemplated the koinonia of the most Blessed Trinity. He had a deep realization that ecclesia is the koinonia of priests, religious and laity. He involved lay people in his field of jail Ministry and various other ministries. While at Snehashramam, he trained lay people to be active participants of the ministry for the beggars and wandering ones of the street. Thus, the lay people became the first members of the FBA ministry. They shared their pain and tears in the initial days of the ministry along with Fr George. They conducted night vigils and sanctified themselves by prayer with penance and even climbed Malayattoor continuously for 52 Saturdays without a break for the setting up of the first ashram for the ministry. Fr George had a special gift from the Lord to bring the best out of even ordinary people who were less capable than other people.

The Mullanchal area of Vettukad in Thrissur Dt. was a centre for drunkards and criminals and even during the day, women and children feared to pass through this lonely place. But God chose this place to be the beginning for 'Snehashramam'. In the early days of 'Snehashramam' it was hard to get any visitors or supporters. When Fr George was appointed as its spiritual director, he realized that there was not much difference between 'Snehashramam' and the jail in which they were previously living. The inmates of Snehashramam experienced the same loneliness which they experienced earlier in jail. He visited the neighboring families and convinced them that the prisoners are not thieves or criminals and to treat them as their own family. His regular visits, prayer and way of life began to influence the neighboring families, and they soon became regular visitors of 'Snehashramam'. When the number of visitors increased, Fr George conducted a one-day program for prayer which slowly evolved into a five-day retreat program. Through the prayers and retreats, 'Snehashramam' got a new life and anointing of the Holy Spirit and the members of the 'Snehashramam' became new

persons. God allowed them to forget their past life of sin and begin a new life in communion with Jesus.

### **The Eucharistic Dance**

“O, Parama Divyakarunyame – O Most Holy Eucharist” is a beautiful Malayalam hymn, composed by Fr Thomas Edayal MCBS, giving tune to the Eucharistic cosmic spirituality of the founding fathers of MCBS. This hymn happened to be the song of the Eucharistic dance at Snehashramam, Vettukadu, Thrissur, Kerala in October 1992. One day Fr. George was awakened at 2 O’ clock in the moonlight morning to perform this Eucharistic cosmic dance singing the Eucharistic hymn, moving upward and downward of the hills and dales of Snehashramam. The single dance gradually developed into a group dance by 5 O’ clock attracting the volunteers and later extending to the children by 5.30 am.

The Eucharistic hymn of Very Rev Frs Mathew Alakalam and Joseph Paredom, Founders of MCBS Congregation, formed into a Eucharistic dance that transformed both “birds of the air” and their friends; the volunteers and inmates of ‘Snehashramam’. The birds of the air who were craving for cigarettes were set free of their habits of the streets.

### **Insights to PMI Volunteers**

“I was in prison and you visited Me” (Mt 25:36). According to this Word of God, to visit and serve Jesus in prison through this ministry is a wonderful work of the Holy Spirit who started this ministry through two seminarians only. The word says “The Almighty has done great things for me; Holy is His name” (Lk 1:49). When the members of Jesus fraternity prepared themselves spiritually, before visiting the jails, they saw miraculous conversions of prisoners taking place.

We too have the responsibility to encourage and strengthen this ministry. The persons coming out of jails after serving their sentence have to be given consolation and proper guidance. Society, by and large, should accept them and give them compassionate love guided by the jail ministry.



Fr George had a wonderful dream that if there is a dedicated religious congregation for those coming out from jails, with the nature and charism of Jesus Fraternity, they can reach beyond boundaries to save these souls. They will also be able to rescue families of the prisoners. In a family when one of the parents is in jail, there are chances to be insulted by society and hence there is a possibility that their children too would fall into wrong company if they are not given proper education and guidance. It is imperative that these families should be saved from the clutches of the evil one.

### **Conclusion**

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

## Marie Poussepin's Girls Home

### Sr Jini Joseph OP

#### The Yearnings

Marie Poussepin's Girls Home is an initiative of the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation in Ranchi, Jharkhand for the prisoners' girl children. This home is named after our Foundress Blessed Marie Poussepin. Our congregation was founded in 1696 in a place called Sainville, France by Blessed Marie Poussepin who was very keen to become a Dominican. The similarity between St Dominic and Blessed Marie Poussepin was that both were great visionaries who responded to the pressing needs of the times in very creative and innovative ways. In St Dominic's time, it was not very common that the friars go out and preach but he dared. In the same way during the time of Blessed Marie Poussepin, there were no apostolic women congregations. But she dared think out of box like St Dominic and ventured out to be a beacon of hope especially for people who were facing the ravages of war.

The main aim of her starting the congregation was to take care of the sick poor and to educate the girl children who were victims of war. Being true to the vision of our Mother Foundress, at present, we are engaged in different ministries in 36 countries. We came to Ranchi in 2006 and while working with Prison Ministry India, we became aware of the need to reach out to the children of the incarcerated and designed a home for them.

#### Option for Prisoners' Children

Children of prisoners are one of the most vulnerable and yet absolutely ignored categories of children. They are silent victims of incarceration.

The parental imprisonment results in lasting and serious negative effects on children. They suffer from separation, anxiety, expressed through isolating themselves, erratic behavioural patterns and sleep disorders, as well as displays of aggression and excessive anger. They experience other emotional problems, including feelings of fear, abandonment, lack of coping abilities, shame and guilt. It is coupled with increased risk of lower academic performance. Their emotional, mental and physical growth is put at stake. The absence of parents deprives the children of parental love, care, protection, guidance, and emotional as well as financial support. The concept of family is neither understood nor encountered during growth years. The imprisonment of the parents puts the children into the following risks:

### **Deprivation of Basic Necessities and Opportunities**

The family suffers huge financial loss as a result of the incarceration of a parent, often when he/she is the bread winner of the family. The cost of maintaining the household and the legal expenses associated with court matters weigh heavily on the family. The schooling of the children gets affected as the family might find it difficult to pay for fees, uniforms and books. Due to lack of resources, the standard of living is adversely affected. It also leads to malnutrition and sicknesses.

### **Danger of Secondary Victimization and Depersonalization**

Often these children are labelled and ostracised by other children in the school and society at large. The stigma stamped on the incarceration of the parents is far too much for a child to bear, especially when it happens at a tender age.

### **Deterioration of Overall Situation of a Child**

There is a high risk of children of the incarcerated parents dropping out of schools. The added responsibilities of procuring financial stability in the absence of the parents and stigma may push them out of schools. Many a time, they may be left to fend for themselves.

## **Descent into Antisocial Behaviour**

It is common knowledge that society looks at the child of a robber as a robber and it forces other children to think that for that child to be normal it is to be a robber. It is the same in most of the cases of any child whose parent is incarcerated.

## **The Beginnings**

The matter of setting up a home for such children was discussed in the meeting of PMI. Looking at how Marie Poussepin became relevant to the challenge at hand we decided to take up the challenge and present it to authorities. All present in the meeting gave the positive stroke. The proposal was presented to our provincial team as well as to the Cardinal of the archdiocese of Ranchi. After looking into the matter very seriously and prayerfully, the permission was granted to start a home for the girl children of prisoners. Meanwhile we also visited the women and children welfare department and got acquainted with the staff. The names and address of the eligible children were collected very quietly from Hotwar Prison Ranchi. Since we were keen to take the neediest among all, we short listed the names and visited their houses and chose eight of them.

Though Ranchi community of the Dominican sisters received permission from the provincial team, we had many hurdles to overcome. Our community building did not have enough space to accommodate these girls, so we had to look for a rented house. We experienced the direct intervention of the Lord, when we got a house not very far from our house at a very moderate rent. Marie Poussepin's Girls Home took/began its existence on April 7th 2017 and few months later it was affiliated to Prison Ministry India. There are eight children in the age group of 8 to 15 from different parts of Jharkhand.

## **Ethos of Marie Poussepin's Girls Home**

This home is an arrangement whereby a child lives, usually on a temporary basis, with an extended or unrelated member, as a family.

Such an arrangement ensures that the birth parents do not lose any of their parental rights or responsibilities. This arrangement shall cater to children whose one or both parents are incarcerated and are vulnerable and deprived. The aim is to eventually re-unite the child with her own family when the family circumstances improve.

### **Vision**

To provide a home away from home for the integral growth of girl/children.

### **Mission**

Foster human dignity of the vulnerable and deprived girl children and to assist them to actualize their potentialities to live a dignified life.

### **Objectives**

1. To provide immediate shelter, care and protection to girl children especially of the prisoners.
2. To provide a homely environment as these children do not have proper experiential understanding of home.
3. To provide psycho social and emotional support to make them grow as integrated and balanced children as they have gone through tremendous negligence and social stigma.
4. To provide quality education.
5. To provide healthcare, emotional security, and make their childhood and school years pleasant and memorable.
6. To provide skills and training to the children to help them face life with confidence.
7. To enable the children to participate in extracurricular activities to help them grow as future leaders by infusing confidence and courage.
8. To rehabilitate the girl children who are going through a lot of social stigma.

9. To provide legal assistance against exploitation.
10. To promote economic independence and self-reliance.

### **Features of Marie Poussepin's Girls Home**

- Eight girl children with a homely atmosphere with a care taker and two sisters is the unique feature of our girls home.
- No form of violence is used on any child.
- Children are looked after with love and equality.
- Conducive family atmosphere to nurture the interests and abilities of children.
- Children are allowed to practice their faith.
- Inculcating respect and sisterly love in children.
- Provide formal education up to class X in good Hindi medium schools.
- After completion of class X, guide the children to higher education or vocational training.
- Be in touch with competent authority and work hand in hand.
- We also collaborate with other NGOs and Religious congregations.

### **Activities**

#### **Birthday Celebrations**

We have made it a point to celebrate life in this home. Birthdays have become occasions to thank the Lord for the life in its sweetness and bitterness. It is also a time to educate the children to thank their parents and siblings.

#### **Teachers' Day**

Since the children are studying in school, we encourage them to value the teachers and take some self-made gifts for the teachers. This teaches them the joy of giving.

## **Seminars**

We call experts to give seminars on healing the psychological wounds, coping with fear, anger, loss, etc. All these children are having wounds that have scared their minds beyond comprehension. Only if the wounds are healed, they in turn will become carriers of peace and reconciliation. Or else they will breed resentment and anger.

## **Meditation Skills and Prayers**

Along with seminars for the psychological wellbeing, meditation is taught to the children so that they become competent to handle their own mind. We also teach them to respect and love the Divine. Prayers which are common to all religion/s are taught and the day starts and ends with a prayer.

## **Teaching Skills**

Since education is a vital part of their stay in the Girls home, we make sure that competent people are brought in to give tips on effective learning techniques. It has enhanced their learning capacity.

## **Remedial Classes**

We make sure that the educationally weak students are given special coaching. At times the higher-class students are able to coach the lower-class students, which create a very healthy bond among them.

## **Gardening**

Children are allocated small plots of land to cultivate plants. They do it with sheer joy and the happiness of accomplishment that glows up the face of the children when a flower plant flowers can never be measured.

## **Extracurricular Activities**

We encourage the children to take part in all or most of the extracurricular activities held in the school. They also get ample chance to in the home to showcase their talents ingrained in them. The cultural nights held in

the home allow them to give expression to what they like most, but what they may not be very good at.

### **Tours and Picnics**

We take them for picnics and outings. Their cooperative living comes to the forefront at the time of picnic. They put their best foot forward in arranging and executing them.

### **Functioning of Marie Poussepin's Girls Home**

Admission to the Girls Home will be restricted to the category of children between 5-18 years. Our criterion for the selection of the girl children is that they should be most disadvantaged prisoners' children. The children of the prisoners who are in touch with us in the prisons do get preference. They will stay in the children's home until their basic education (class X) is complete. Maximum number of children admitted to each care home during the year will not exceed eight. We aim to complete the education of these children up to Matriculation in the first phase. If there is a need, the child may be promoted to second phase of education i.e. either vocational training or higher education. This would be done in liaison with other NGOs or agencies or even PMI. Finally, the child will be rehabilitated in the community where she prefers to live. We also leave the option open for those children who or whose parents want to discontinue at/from this home.

In order to achieve the above noted objectives, we are financially supported by our province. We get legal help from priests and religious lawyers. We also avail psychological help from the state government run psychiatric hospital RINPAS. At present, those children who are with us are studying at St. Mary's Girls Middle School/ Anitha Girls High School run by the sisters of St. Anne's of Ranchi. It also fosters collaboration among different religious congregation.

### **Shoots of Hope**

We are very happy to see the changes in the attitudes and behaviours of these children. The progress made by them is fabulous and spectacular.



These children, who were denied admission at first as they failed in the entrance exam, rose to the first ranks at the end of the academic year. They are noted for their multifarious abilities and are selected for the inter school competitions. Most of them were low in their self-esteem but now they ooze out with enthusiasm and self-confidence. It is quite taxing, challenging yet a satisfying ministry as we are able to pay attention to each one's growth and see them blooming. The children are very happy as they get a lot of attention and acceptance from the neighbouring families, religious and priests and lay people who visit the home. Many of the physical and mental diseases, which they have carried from home, have vanished from many of them.

## Conclusion

In the opinion of Jeb Bush, an American Politician and Humanitarian, "Education must be viewed from the lens of providing each child with the learning environment that best meets his or her needs". We can only get the blossoming meadows, when the environment for the growth of the trees is conducive to it. The same thing happens to children when they are provided with a positive learning environment. It is human nature to work better when appreciated and valued, and the young minds can only thrive when their environment resonates that. We take every effort to provide an atmosphere conducive for the children by accepting, valuing and loving them. By employing different methods and strategies, the best in the children are brought out. We strive to accomplish the ideals we have set for ourselves in running this home. We too say with St. Paul, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been perfected, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (Phil 3:12).

**International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care (ICCPPC)  
International Meeting on Integral Human Development  
and the Catholic Prison Pastoral Care,  
7-8 November 2019, Vatican**

**Fr Brian Gowans**

Your Eminence, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

I am grateful for this opportunity to reflect with you on our shared ministry of the pastoral support for those deprived of liberty. This sits within the all-embracing mission of the Church to preach the good news of Jesus Christ, to be light and hope to the ends of the earth and the end of time. I have with me today a visual aid which I bought in a prison in the Philippines some years ago. I bought it specifically because it has our *raison d'être* written on it. The wonderful quotation from St. Matthew's Gospel 'when I was in prison you came to see'. (Mt. 25:36). At least that's what I thought it said, until I got home and looked at it more carefully and discovered that it actually said 'when I was in prison you did not visit me' (Mt. 24:43). When I let that thought sink in to my mind, I was horrified. Here was a prisoner who felt alone, abandoned and losing hope. As a chaplain I thought I had failed him. I didn't know him but I wondered how many other prisoners felt this way. How many of them were in the prisons where I ministered? After 25 years of working in prison pastoral care I could talk for ever on the subject of the social and ecclesial challenges we face today but I am limited to twenty minutes! I will speak of four areas: firstly what chaplains want; secondly what the prisons want; thirdly what the church wants; and lastly but perhaps

most importantly what prisoners want, drawing simply from my own experience and consultations.

### **What Prison Chaplains Want**

I recently met with a group of chaplains and asked them what they felt they need to function better in their ministry. Here is an example of what they said:

#### **Practical Items**

- Initial induction training-protocols, security, etc.
- A list of abbreviations and acronyms so that they understand the language of the jail
- An organizational overview of the prison and where chaplains fit in with the organizational goals e.g. reducing recidivism.
- Manipulation/conditioning training
- Prison politics
- How to work the computer!
- The ability to 'shadow' another chaplain
- To have a 'go to' person – a mentor
- A map of the prison!

#### **Organizational Practice**

- Time management
- How to work in multi-faith and multi-disciplinary teams
- How to work with prison staff
- Networking- knowing staff and their various functions
- Managing Volunteers

### **Reflective Practice**

- Knowing yourself
- Mindfulness and meditation
- Open to vulnerability
- Self-criticism
- Personal spiritual development-practicing your own faith
- Prayer Life.

### **What the Prison Wants from Their Chaplains**

Knowledge and skills practice:

- Theological and pastoral knowledge and skills
- Prison security
- Prison Rules
- Regime Awareness
- Understanding other faiths
- An ability to get things done
- Health and safety
- Information Handling
- Data protection
- Knowing boundaries
- Impartiality
- Listening skills
- Public speaking
- Putting people at ease

## **Education and Training in Chaplaincy**

- Bereavement skills
- Mental Health training
- Drug awareness
- Working with men. Women, young people-the different prison groups

## **Spiritual & Religious Assessment**

- Pastoral Skills
- Counselling Skills
- Spiritual Intelligence
- Building family relationships
- Know where to signpost – to direct prisons to the right person

## **Religious Assessment and Intervention**

- How to perform religious functions – Mass, Bible studies etc.
- The ability to pray with others rather than just for others
- Religious tradition
- Pastoral care in a religious context.
- Building community and church contacts
- Music.

## **What the Church Wants**

Pope Francis has recalled an incident which helped shape his own understanding of what pastoral ministry requires, aged 21 he was admitted to hospital with a life-threatening pleurisy. Following surgery, he believed his life was saved by a ward sister whose experience of such

cases meant she tripled the prescribed dose of penicillin. The doctor, Pope Francis stated was a good man, but ‘lived in a laboratory,’ whereas the ward sister ‘lived on the frontier and was in dialogue with it every day’ (Austen Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 2014 p49-50).

As pastors we are not secluded in a laboratory. We too live on the frontier. We serve and engage in a dialogue with people, both within and outside the prison, both within and outside the church, who are formed not only by the Gospel and Catholic teaching but as we have recognized also by our society and culture, sometimes very powerfully. In our pastoral service we encounter the complexities and awkwardness of real life and the nitty gritty. Indeed, the frontier of our culture and society can be unreceptive, hostile and even toxic, to the truth of the good news brought to those in prison. Added to this we encounter those whose lives have been broken by difficult relationships, dysfunctional families, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, poverty, broken homes, or who simply struggle to live according to the Church’s moral teaching in its different aspects. As we connect on many different fronts and at many different levels, we do so as pastors who are always both ministers of the Church and ministers to the Church. Holding these two elements together can be tricky, but it is essential. We model ourselves on the Lord Jesus who combines, in the most exemplary way, the full proclamation of the truth with the most loving and compassionate personal accompaniment.

### **Pastoral Accompaniment**

- Involves an ongoing pastoral relationship that is motivated by empathy and compassion – non judgmental
- Provides a clear welcome and never rejection
- Offers time, space and support so that a person’s (I prefer this word to prisoner) situation and what is happening in their life can begin to be shared in the light of faith.
- Manifests the willingness to walk beside others in order to help them understand themselves in relation to Christ and His Gospel.

- Requires patience and kindness
- Is underpinned by prayer

### **Pastoral Discernment**

- Presumes a process of accompaniment
- Enables consideration of the realities present in a person's life in the light of the Church's teaching about the dignity of the human person
- Promotes the conversion of life and truth
- Resists isolated individual judgements and recognizes there are no quick solutions
- May involve recourse to others for advice (e.g those who are experts in their fields. Or who exercise authority in the church or in the prison service.)

### **Pastoral Integration**

- Encourages everyone in a deepening relationship with Christ through their life of faith
- Seeks to enable involvement in the Church's life
- Whenever possible brings people into sacramental communion
- Sustains a sense of welcome and belonging in relation to the church.

### **What Prisoners Want**

All of the above! One of the most heartbreaking statements I have heard (many times) as a prison chaplain is 'Fr. Brian you are all I've got'. You might think that would make me feel ten feet tall, swell my head with pride but actually it made my heart sink. There was almost an air of desperation in the voices who said- a deep sense of loneliness. I often ask prisoner to tell me their story, suspiciously they will ask 'why'? When I say it's because I'm interested, the flood gates open and I get their life-

history. Many of the people I encounter in prison have had no one to share their story with – no one has seemed interested in them and as modern technology develops, we will soon have more virtual friend than real. Prisoners today simply want to be understood, accepted, treated with dignity and respect as is their right. They don't want anyone to walk in their shoes, that is their responsibility, but they do want someone to listen to them, to walk alongside them without blame, shame or fear. Someone who can show mercy, love and compassion. They do want to hear the truth from us but in a compassionate way.

As Pope John XXIII said at the opening of the Second Vatican Council: “now the Bride of Christ wishes to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up arms of severity. The Catholic Church as she holds high the torch of Catholic truth at this Ecumenical Council, wants to show herself a loving mother to all, patient, kind, moved by compassion and goodness towards her spiritual children” (MV4). We too as pastors must bear the ‘torch of Catholic truth’ in relation to those who are deprived of liberty, desiring to offer them ‘the medicine of mercy’ rather than ‘arms of severity’ animated by patience, kindness, compassion and goodness.



*Documentation*

REFORMATIVE EXPLORATIONS

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**PMI Diocesan Coordinators' Online Training Program****2-17 August 2020****Report****Rowena Luis****Day 1: 2 August****Preliminary Session**

The preliminary session began at 4PM on Sunday 2nd August. Fr Francis Kodiyan the PMI National coordinator welcomed the participants. He gave general instructions to the participants and then made the following observations: i) The importance of the month of August when International Justice Sunday, Prison Ministry Sunday and St Maximillian Kolbe are celebrated. ii) The importance of following correct etiquette - the do's and don'ts of online training programmes. iii) He congratulated all the participants and exhorted them to be the hands and feet of Jesus. iv) There will be an exam at the end of the training program. v) The sessions will begin at 10.00 a.m. and end at 12 noon every day. The online link will be provided at 9.30 a.m. vi) Sundays are earmarked as PMI family days, and there will be sharing time from 4 to 6 p.m. The session ended at 6.00 p.m.

**Day 2: 3 August****Inaugural Session**

Sr Lima, the programme coordinator, presented the day's programme for/ during the inaugural session. The prayer was led by group 1. Sr. Kokila, PMI Delhi State Coordinator and team began with a hymn to the Holy Spirit and read a passage from the Gospel of Matthew 25. Fr Francis

extended a warm welcome to all the officials and participants, reminding them that this is a Jesus Mission that they are called to. It's a free gift and we must equip ourselves for warfare. He congratulated our National Chairman, Most Rev Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, for his innovative ways to make the activities of PMI successful even in the lockdown period.

Bishop Allwyn thanked the staff for their commitment and said they do the work and he gets praised. He assured the participants that they would definitely learn a lot from the program. He said, "Many unfortunate ones are caught in the cycle of crime, shattering families. But you can play an important part by being an agent of transformation and reformation." He said although no one is allowed inside prisons today, one can still work with their families outside, support their children, prepare families for homecoming and so on. Sometimes people are arrested unjustly to quieten them when they become a threat to the authorities. We pray for the authorities that they may respect the right of freedom and the right to protest. He extended his congratulations to Fr. Francis who finds a home for those who don't find one. He wished the participants successful completion of the programme.

Fr Varghese Kariperry, the cofounder congratulated all the dynamic participants who are the volunteers of PMI and called them Ezekiels of the 21st century. He read from Ezek 37: 9-10, and encouraged everyone to actualise the mission of Ezekiel. Jesus too always worked among the marginalized. PMI volunteers are now the extension of Jesus who lived 2000 years ago and are called to be Apostles of Renewal. This work is a challenge to seek the lost 1 leaving the 99. In the world, 99 is greater than 1. But for Jesus the lost 1 was more important and greater than the 99. He had compassion for the lost and suffered with them. One could be saved even at the last moment like the good thief. He reminded that prayer and trust in the Lord formed the method of this mission. PMI believes in team work and not individual efforts. It is not so much the efficiency as the effectiveness of the mission that matters and effectiveness comes

from team work. Faith, prayer and sacrifice are the operating forces in the spiritual realm. He exhorted all to keep the work of the prophet Ezekiel and Jesus moving.

Fr Francis led the self-introduction session inviting each participant to introduce himself. It was a wonderful sharing session and PMI volunteers from so many states briefed on the ongoing activities in different parts of the country. It was exciting to have a great batch of participants who were not only volunteers but friends and family forever. Sr Lima introduced the course dynamics, encouraging everyone to keep themselves mentally and emotionally fit for the course. Fr Pravin Fernandez, PMI Mizoram State Coordinator, proposed a vote of thanks. He thanked God for his providence, the National team for their efforts, the chairman for inspiring us and Fr Francis for the warm welcome. He thanked Sr Lima for the interesting and informative sharing and Sr Kokila and group1 for the day's program. Sr Rosily, PMI treasurer, concluded with the closing prayer and Angelus.

### **Day 3: 4 August**

#### **General Introduction**

Fr Francis Kodiyan introduced Prison Ministry India in general. He dwelt at length upon various aspects of PMI and how it is founded upon the words of Lord Jesus and quoted Luke 19:10 and John 15:13. He referred to the Patron of PMI, St. Maximilian Kolbe, whose feast is celebrated on 14th August each year. He reminded the participants that the work of PMI was one of service and no remuneration was offered, except that given by Jesus. The other aspects Fr. Francis covered in his session were the CBCI 34 plenary assembly, CBCI justice, peace and development office, Desk for PMI etc. Among other things he spoke also about PMI lifestyle, ways to make an entry, methods, spirituality, administration, national office staff, ministries inside the prison and outside the prison, goals to be achieved viz. repentance, reconciliation, reformation, rehabilitation, reintegration etc. He introduced the magazines pertaining to PMI viz.

Prison Voice and Reformative Explorations and books such as Rainbow, Love Bomb and The Lost. He finished his session stating that the most important goal of Prison Ministry is to 'REDEEM THE LOST'.

### **Prison Ministry: To Regain the Lost**

Sr Lini Sheeja MSC, chief editor of Prison Voice presented the topic Prison Ministry: to Regain the Lost. She started with a message that prison ministry is an opportunity and a blessing and that it is a Christian calling. It is founded on 5C's viz. CHRIST, CONVICTION, CONCERN, COMMITMENT and COURAGE. The inspiration and strength are derived from Lord Jesus who said that he came to seek sinners and not the righteous. She mentioned the prominent concepts: outsiders' concept, insiders' concept and Jesus' concept. She beautifully defined the prison and said that PMI volunteers are to be 'Love Bombs'. She appreciated the selfless efforts of the founders of PMI viz. Fr Varghese Kariperry and Fr Francis Kodiyan. Sr Lini explained the services rendered by PMI, the various concepts and principles of prison ministry and also explicated the PMI Emblem. She closed the session stating the four basic principles of PMI: prayer is our strength, inconvenience is our convenience, God's Providence is our Bank, begging is our life style.

### **Day 4: 5 August**

#### **PMI Biblical Foundations**

Most Rev Dr Allwyn D'Silva, the PMI Chairman shared his thoughts on the Biblical Foundations of Prison Ministry India. He presented his talk based on the following 5 principles: 1) All people can be redeemed. Crime takes people away from God and we are not to gratify the desires of our sinful nature. At the same time, we are not to be weary of 'doing good'. We have been given an opportunity to do God's work. Each person can be redeemed through believing in the person of Christ (Rom 3:23; Gal 5:16-23; Gal 6: 9-10). 2) Healing takes place in creating relationships and not by just speaking to people. Therefore, it is good to plan for a

relationship founded upon prayer. 3) PMI volunteers are called to be ministers of service and not to dominate. Love that is translated into service projects Jesus to others. Get into the shoes of another and try to experience his feelings rather than think that we know it all. As Jesus asked Peter, he asks us, 'Do you love me?' 4) Those enslaved by evil can be set free from prison. This must be a firm belief and thus our aim must be to ensure that prisoners don't go back to crime once freed. Giving them an experience of God will help. Even skill training should be done in love. 5) The transforming power of Jesus must be shared. Volunteers themselves need transformation in order to be agents of transformation. The Lord invites us to strive for holiness. Volunteers need to spend time in unity (Mt 5: 13-16; Eph 4: 14-16; Is 32: 18). Not all prisoners are criminals. The state thinks they are criminals, and therefore we must pray for the authorities so that they may respect the freedom of citizens. He also reminded that we are all criminals only that we are not yet caught by the authorities.

### **PMI: Historical Introspection**

Fr Varghese Kariperry, the cofounder of Prison Ministry India, and the first national coordinator, shared thoughts on Prison Ministry India: A historical Introspection. He observed that unjust imprisonment was found through history. Jesus himself was imprisoned. History of the world, could be read as the history of apparently failed people. Innocent people are being trapped, imprisoned and killed. The rehabilitation methodology can be seen in the book of Philemon; a methodology of renewal, conversion and rehabilitation. Peter, John and others also underwent the same experience. This ministry started with the real providence of God on 8 December of 1981. The motto was to become a Love Bomb which explodes not for killing but to give life. Prayer and fasting were the real foundation of PMI. PMI brings love and solace to the prisoners who have lost their identity and are reduced to mere numbers. He said that prayer and fasting, with the word of God, goes into the

spiritual realm and can make history. History makers are 'MAD'. Make A Desire, Make A Dream, Make A Decision, Make A Difference. Prisoners are seen by people as social outcasts, potential menace to society and this is a stigma. From the Christian outlook, they are in the image of God. They have the possibility of renewal and growth. He explained in depth the 3R Theory. a) Release: not outside the prisons, but an emotional, mental release within the prison. B) Renewal: a mental resetting with new values in Rehabilitation centres. c) Rehabilitate: in society with jobs, marriage and social life etc.

### **Day 5: 6 August**

#### **PMI Spirituality**

Fr Francis Kodyan presented his paper on PMI spirituality. To renew the world, one must renew oneself and must become conscious of God and one's purpose of life. We must pray for the conversion of sinners, remain active at home and convents, ashrams, parishes and monasteries, and let them become prayer towers. We must preach the gospel through a peaceful life and then seek to reform prisoners through our life experiences. We must follow into the prisons like Father God who was the first one active in Prison Ministry when he gave his son to save us. Therefore, we too must have an 'outreach ministry'. He didn't stay inside but went outside in search of the Samaritan woman, Levi the tax collector, Zacchaeus, Paul the persecutor etc. Jesus Life Goal, Luke 4:17-19, proclaims release to the captives and Jesus exhorts us to visit prisoners.

Father spoke on various aspects of JF spirituality; Jesus centred spirituality, people-oriented spirituality and spirituality like that of the Good Shepherd in Psalm 23. Fr Francis spoke about the spirituality of reformation, of prisoner's, prisons, church, society and world reformation. The signs of PMI spirituality are enhancement in God experience, enhancement in Divine Providence, doubling of faith, improvement in self-confidence, Joy of unity and fraternity, enhancement in optimism and stamina, greater satisfaction in searching, saving and serving the lost,

the least, the last, undertaking adventurous deeds for the Lord, growth of the number of reformed prisoners, joy in inconvenience rather than convenience. All this must be done in compassion. He concluded the session highlighting the Prison Ministers' daily habits of daily mass, bible reading, personal prayer, intercessory prayer, rosary for prisoners, Jesus prayer on the way to prisons, spiritual reading, weekly prayer groups, friendship with prayer group members, frequent visits to prisons etc.

### **Types of Prisons and Prisoners**

The second session was taken by Sister Clara Directress of Jeevodaya Ashram. She shared on the topic 'Types of Prisons and Prisoners.' Prison is a place where prisoners are kept confined not as punishment but for correction. We must know our purpose- to transform and reform, accept their wrongdoing and lead them to repentance. In repentance there is salvation for Peter looked to Jesus and received New Life whereas Judas looked to the money bag and received death. She shared views on different types of prisons, prisoners, facilities, capacities and the work which we the PMI are doing in these different types of prisons. The different kinds of prisons are, Central Jail, District Jail, Sub Jail, Women's Jail, Borstal Jail, Open Jail, Special Jail etc. India's under trial population has a disproportionate number of Muslims, Dalits and Adivasis, illiterate and locked up for more than a year. It is estimated to be the third highest in Asia. She observed that habitual criminals and prostitutes are the most difficult to change. A new trend in crime is that of rape and addictions. In concluding she reminded the PMI volunteers to be modest in their dress and also added that in PMI we don't have any qualifications because we believe that when God calls someone, He also qualifies them.

### **Day 6: 7 August**

#### **International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care**

Fr Francis Kodiyan warmly welcomed Fr Brian Gowans, the President of the International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care

(ICCPCC) to the PMI Diocesan Directors Online Training Program. He lives in Edinburg and is the Chaplain to the Scottish Prison Service. Fr Brian thanked Fr Francis as he shared his warm memories of meeting in Delhi at a PMI National Conference, where he was impressed with the welcome, he received at the program knowing there were 6000 volunteers at that time. The enthusiasm, commitment and spirituality of the participants was a unique insight into PMI. He once again felt re-energized listening to the previous speaker (Sr. Lini who presented the Best Practices of PMI) to knowing the spirituality of PMI and with gratitude he joined the program.

## ICCPCC

In 1950 just after the II World War there were many atrocities which left people devastated and yet there was much hope among displaced prisoners, some who were political prisoners and others who were prisoners of food theft, still others as a fallout of the war and grave injustice. Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria Montini was assigned to look into the area of prison ministry. In 1963, he was appointed as Pope Paul VI. 12 priests were assigned to this group. From this humble beginning, this group has been in existence for 70 years covering 114 countries. There is a World Congress held every 4-5 years and this did not take place this year due to the Covid19 pandemic. Fr. Brian has been part of this ministry since 2000. He himself will be stepping down from his involvement as President over 10 years.

## What do we do?

The nature of our work is to accompany prisoners. In the Philippines some years ago, he was shown a painting of the face of Christ with the crown of thorns and behind prison bars, with the regular verse from Mt25 when I was in prison you visited me. He bought it and brought it home and only then realized that it was verse 43 when I was in prison, you DID NOT VISIT me. Those 3 words, made a complete change in him realizing that



this is the expectation unmet in prisoners. So even though they may be in a building surrounded by many, educators, chaplains and officials they may still be alone. We can still be present with them and not be seen. You may say “I want to take Jesus to them”, that makes my heart sink, because in reality Jesus is already there. We don’t take Jesus there, but we discover Jesus there. “It is not the healthy but the sick who need the doctor.” There is also the story of the footprints in the sand, where 2 footprints are seen and suddenly only one set, that of Jesus’s. It is at the most difficult moments when Jesus carries us. It is important to meet people where they are in their life. To be true companions and accompany them. And yet a real friend is one who challenges them. Not one who points out an error in their lives, but to see the genuine love and compassion, we discover Jesus together. We must remain non-judgmental in our prison ministry. We have only one judge who will judge us all, who is still full of mercy today. We must be true people of holiness. He took himself to a lonely place in order to pray, to spend time talking to the father and be charged with the Holy Spirit.

We need to have patience... maybe we are not fully prepared. So that prisoners can find in us a true and holy person. A prisoner once told him, “You are all I have”, that’s not a good place to be, because we cannot be with them 24x7. Be realistic of what we offer, what can be achieved. Today we see a ‘Revolving Doors’ phenomena in society and prisons. They keep coming back into prison, but they keep looking for a friendly face. After the 10th and 11th time, they want change. They need hope to be encouraged. They look for the Chaplain or someone living a different life. Don’t say to them, “I understand you, I have been there.” That’s not the life of a chaplain, you can’t use them to get help for yourself. Don’t project your problems when you go in. Should we be friends with the prisoners? Yes, but be careful. Don’t be manipulated in giving too much of information about yourself. Be careful to not offer excuses, do your best to be there. Tell the truth when needed, “I overslept” not the traffic. They will realize if you are being dishonest. Be truthful.

The greatest results in ourselves come from the fact that we are not an organization with money or which makes money, but through our many volunteers that go in. This is our strength. As an organization of 70 years we have many links with other groups such as Prison reforms etc. and some who deal with the victims of crime. Our work is with the prisoners, but victims also feel the injustice. We must give them encouragement.

We're working closely with the Crime Commission of the UN in Vienna – speaking to them about what faith groups can offer to the UN. Working with other groups on The United Nations standard minimum rules for treatment of prisoners like the human rights, took many years. 2 years ago, in South Africa, with the justice minister, when some countries were struggling to put in these ideas, it was said, 'Throw in the spirit of Mandela.' Look at Mandela rules, which took many years to formulate. The hard work must begin and it must be implemented. As president, it has taken me to prisons in the poorest and richest areas and I have seen a wide variety of how prisoners are being treated. Whatever the culture or language that divides us, we are deep down still the same, part of God's family. He created the mountains and the rivers and He also created us. Find the broken hearts in dark places searching for the light.

Do you have a favourite passage from the gospels? Or a popular passage? What surprised me most was when prisoners liked the passage of the disciples in the boat and Jesus calmed the winds and peace descended. Reflecting on it I can see why they liked this passage. The boat toss was the story of their lives and the waves and winds buffeting in their lives from society. Look at the papers and the words used to describe them. Negative words and sometimes even their own families disown them.

In our hands we must go not only with the newspaper but we have the Bible, the scriptures the word of God and what is Jesus saying to them, 'You are the light of the world, you are the salt of the earth, you are the children of God'. These are the words we need to take into the prison to share with those in the prison. Their self-esteem is low. I give them a

blank paper to write all the bad things about themselves on the left-hand side and all the good things on the right-hand side. They scribble many things on the left but nothing much on the right.

The key rule is to enable prisoners to see the good things in themselves. Thankfully, now I can recognize the good even in the most unmanageable person. Don't find it for them, help them to find it for themselves. Never let them go through prison without looking within for the hope. Encourage them to find the hope within and build on it.

The good thing about prison ministry is that we can challenge others and also ourselves to change. We are not perfect but don't take that into the prison. Don't let them play on your weaknesses. In Northern Ireland there were always troubles, difference in backgrounds between protestants and Catholics. Some prisoners could not accept Catholic pastors but being friendly with them and over a period of time they waited for Father. There can be difficulties of minority groups in prisons. Don't focus on differences but focus on what they all have in common. Let's enjoy the diverse ways but be full of compassion, love and mercy. Overcrowding is the issue in many prisons at present:

Good Accommodation for the benefit of all. Nowadays young offenders have their own room. In modern cells they have toilets and showers which can be luxuries in some countries but is a norm elsewhere. Phones are given to them due to Covid19 to keep in touch with families. In some places, hundreds of prisoners live in rooms with no ventilation nor sanitation. It only takes one prisoner to fall ill.

### **Good Food**

Making sure they are physically healthy. For their health doctors can be seen. In other places medical examination is in a yard in the open. No privacy or confidentiality. The key word is respect. Chaplains can be a good link with the families.

## Our Own Faith

Numbers are not important. Neither are we in competition with any other group. A religious one said that she found Christ in the prison and not in the convent. They can be truthful and can recognize when we are being honest. We must recognize what we have in common – the kingdom of God in a broken place. And we use the new Jerusalem to build broken lives. Be careful not to be manipulated. Be honest. Be a friend and be challenging don't be judgmental. they are sent to prison to be loved, to grow and to become good citizens. Despite the atrocities in different places I have seen much laughter. I am thankful and grateful for the time I have spent with prisoners.

### Day 7: 8 August

#### Prisoners Reformation: Mr Reni George

Fr Francis Kodiyan conducted the session on Prisoners' Reformation and Reintegration in the most innovative way by bringing reformed prisoners like Mr Reni George and Mr Alex to share their views on the process of change. Mr Reni George began with the reminder that it is a privilege to know God as Father because Jesus made us joint heirs. Our inner eyes need to be opened to see the godly things and as said in 2 Cor 5:17 we become new creations when we receive Jesus into our hearts. He was brought up in a missionary family and had a good foundation, but he became a hardcore criminal and killed his own uncle and aunty with the help of three accomplices from different countries. The murder was a heinous crime and he still feels sorrowful for it.

He said he knew everything of Christian religion but did not know Christ. Jesus, on the cross of Calvary with the criminal, is the founder of Prison Ministry. That's why this ministry is so powerful. The prisoners can be reached out in prisons but the hardcore criminals in the open world are not easily reachable. The greatest ministry is to bring the soul of the person to Christ. While in prison he was once out on parole and

set out to rob a bank, committing a crime without any guilt and he was skilled in crime. But while on the outside he encountered Jesus, and he cried, "Forgive me, I've gone too far." That was his conversion and he felt God who knew him even before he was born loves him. The power of the Holy Spirit was moving him to repentance and Jesus began to become real for him. He went back to jail, not with the money, but with a Bible. He received only abuses. But with the next 8 years in prison, he saw more than 100 prisoners converted. Transformation happens by sharing the Good News. Prison Ministry is a ministry of reconciliation. Reconcile the lost person back to the Father. For this one must give the Gospel. He observed that the greatest concern a prisoner has is about his family; how will his wife and children will manage without him. And so, Reni made a decision to help the Children of prisoners. He began 'Precious Children's Home' to look after the children of prisoners. He began in a rented house and now they have a home of their own, a home converted into a community to reach out to the children of prisoners.

### **Prisoners' Reformation: Mr Alex**

Mr Alex shared his life transformation story; another testimony that touched and moved the participants. He spoke about how he never received any love from his parents and always wanted to run away from home. He lived many days on the train from Bangalore to Madras and back. He was in jail for 13 years and during that time he experienced the love of God through PMI volunteers who visited the jail. He urged the participants in these words, "Don't go to waste your time, go only to give Jesus to the prisoners. Fast, pray and then go. Inside everyone is unhappy. Go talk to them, show them what love is and that's what God wants from you."

### **Day 8: 9 August**

#### **PMI Family Day**

The group met at 4p.m. for fellowship. Those who joined shared about themselves and their involvement in PMI as well as their experience about the training course. The sharing made us feel like an extended family.

**Day 9: 10 August****Prisoners' Rights and Prison Laws**

Fr PD Matthew SJ, the first Catholic Priest in India to become a lawyer, is an inspirational speaker who empowered thousands through his work of legal aid. He had an opportunity to stay with a tribal group of bonded labourers in the district of Bharuch in Gujarat. The interaction with them helped him to realize the way, they were oppressed by powerful elements in their society and their cries for human rights and justice challenged him, as a priest, to respond to them in an effective way. The last 30 years of experience in this service has given him a great sense of satisfaction and joy as a Jesuit lawyer. The words of Jesus 'Happy are those who hunger and thirst for justice (righteousness) and they shall be satisfied,' are being realized in his life too. He believes that legal professionals with a socio – spiritual vision and mission can become catalysts to establish a New India based on the values enshrined in the Constitution of India. He believes that a positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events and outcomes. It is a catalyst... a spark that creates extraordinary results.

Fr PD Mathew focused on the vision and mission of Prison Ministry. He stated that, as prison ministry volunteers, we are called to serve the brothers and sisters behind the bars. He further said that, they too are members of Christ and the kingdom of God. He dealt in detail on the fundamental rights of prisoners, namely, right to life and personal liberty, right to live with human dignity, right to health and medical treatment, right to speedy trial, right to free legal aid, right to Juvenile justice court, right to higher education, right to receive books and magazines inside the Jail, right to publications, right to reasonable wages for work, special rights to women prisoners, right to have female guards for female security, rights to pregnant prisoners, rights to mother prisoners, right to security of life inside the jail, right for interaction with society, right to be interviewed, right to socialize, right for facilities in prison, right to

food and water, right to have adequate accommodation, right to apply for mercy and concessional application etc.

### **Day 10: 11 August**

#### **PMI Inside the Prison**

Sr Adele Korah who recently celebrated her 80th birthday is affectionately called 'Cardinal of PMI'. She has been instrumental in the release of more than 500 prisoners. Sr Adele spoke about her amazing work in the prisons. She shared with us the years of her experience and knowledge and spoke about her insights and ideas. She proposed suggestions for the new volunteers who are to take up the baton after her. She covered all the aspects of prison work, such as, Release, Repentance, Reconciliation, Reformation, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Redemption.

#### **PMI Outside the Prison**

Fr Benny Pachanal, presently the National Assistant Coordinator in his presentation spoke about the different aspects of the work of Prison Ministry outside the prisons. Once a prisoner is released from prison there is no one to attend to their needs and this is where PMI steps in to reach out to hundreds of ex-prisoners. No one is willing to accept them and very often families too don't care for them. PMI involvement outside prisons can be seen in various concrete ways. Some of them are in rehabilitation centres, homes for prisoners' children, educational assistance, research & documentation, volunteers training, legal cells, counselling, reconciliation and forgiveness, reconciliation with families etc.

### **Day 11: 12 August**

#### **PMI Rehabilitation Centres**

##### **Jeevodaya**

Sr Fidelis gave a captivating recount of the activities of Jeevodaya, a home away from home for the unwanted women ostracized by society, caught

up in the mesh of immoral trafficking, flesh trade etc. She passionately described the service rendered by Jeevodaya to its inmates by way of medical treatment, counselling, skill training, education, spiritual renewal etc. She thanked the PMI volunteers for coming forward and exhorted all to be someone to somebody who has nobody.

### **Kolbe Home**

Sr Gertrude began by stating that Kolbe Home is a heavenly haven for the children of the imprisoned; children from impoverished families, broken families etc. Kolbe home tries to develop human virtues and also provide the missing family environment by celebrating everyone's birthdays, festivals etc. These children are occasionally taken to their parents in prison and the emotions that fill the air are heart renting. She reminded that the PMI is to serve the lost, the least and the last.

### **Van Thuan Home**

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

### **Snehashramam**

Sr Beena Thekkkan, directress of Snehashramam, said the Snehashramam is the home away from home for released women prisoners. It tries to give the inmates a deep experience of God's infinite love. It is an asylum for unwanted women, women trapped in brothels, flesh trade and those abandoned by their own families. It is there, for any woman in mortal danger. So far 554 women have enjoyed the solace of Snehashramam. She shared many pictures of the activities of Snehashramam and said that prayer and God's providence are the pillars of Snehashramam.



**Day 12: 13 August****PMI: State Level Ministry**

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

**PMI: Diocesan Level Ministry**

Mrs Veera Pinto, the secretary of PMI Bangalore Diocese gave a good presentation on the working of the PMI Diocesan level unit. With a well prepared PPT and detailed charts she presented the functioning of the diocesan PMI unit. They work in many different prisons and children's homes as well as in the medical side. They also have a year planner with programmes decided at the beginning of the year. Spiritual nourishment too is well looked after. It is a very generous and charitable unit reaching out to many in need even in the lockdown period.

**PMI: Parish Level Ministry**

Fr Wilfred Fernandez, the Central regional coordinator presented the PMI Parish unit model. With a well prepared and excellent presentation Fr Wilfred never failed to inspire. The Kolbe Knights of Poona have successfully set up 2 well-functioning parish units and with a clear understanding of the benefits of parish units to PMI, they are launching ahead with many other parishes and religious homes too. Father Wilfred explained the structure and functioning of a PMI Parish Unit, its commissioning and involvement in the diocese.

**PMI: Seminary Level Ministry**

Fr Joseph Mackolil, the first KCBC appointed director of Jesus Fraternity spoke about the importance of PMI during seminary formation.

Inculcating the PMI spirituality from the seminary formation stage is of vital importance. Prayer services and activities flowing from them were highlighted. The biblical perspective of PMI, which is the foundation for its working in seminaries, was well explained.

### **Day 13: 14 August**

#### **Counselling Skills**

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

#### **PMI Special Task Force Angels**

Fr Francis Kodiyan introduced the extremely innovative idea of the PMI Special Task Force Angels. Just as any country has a STF to look after the needs of the territory, PMI too has created a unique STF Angels. The list is as follows:.

1. DRC - Death Row Commandoes
2. TSS - Terrorists Saving Squad
3. MR - Mafia Redeemers
4. ATB - Antihuman Trafficking Brigadiers
5. SKR - Serial Killer Reformers
6. HSS - Habituals Saving Squadron
7. WPL – War Prisoners’ Liberators

### **Day 14: 15 August, 2020**

#### **Prisoners’ Reformation Trajectory**

Fr Francis Kodiyan presented the topic: Prisoners’ Reformation Trajectory’. Through PPT he explained the different stages of reformation

such as self-acceptance, self-transformation, self-actualisation and self-transcendence. He illustrated the prisoners' reformation trajectory into four phases such as preformative, formative, performative and performative.

### **PMI Regional Coordinators**

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

### **Day 15: 16 August, 2020**

#### **PMI Family Day**

The group met at 4p.m. for PMI family day. Fr. Francis asked Rowena to conduct the group discussion. We celebrated Fr Dion's birthday. Those who did not share on the previous Sunday, did their personal sharing.

### **Day 16: 17 August, 2020**

#### **Examination**

Fr Francis conducted the exam. There was much excitement about the exam in which 50 questions were to be answered. All were expected to write out their answers on a sheet of paper and send a scanned picture of it to Sr Lima.

#### **Valedictory Ceremony**

The Valedictory function began with the prayer led by Mrs Rowena Luis. Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, PMI National Coordinator welcomed all the esteemed guests and the participants and the staff to the online ceremony. He announced that Mrs Rowena Luis would be the Director of this batch, Fr Dion the Assistant and Sr Fulmani the Secretary and that they would have the responsibility of this batch. The Online Training Program Appraisal was beautifully presented by Fr John Ponnore. He extended some very valuable suggestions also.

1. The Parish Unit approach is to be the new face of PMI in the near future and that would ensure more involvement.
2. There could be smaller regions with fewer states, similar to the 14 CBCI regions.
3. Evangelisation in India is a must and can effectively happen through PMI. This ministry is rooted in prayer and can be the oxygen to pump up evangelization.

Most Rev Dr Allwyn D'silva, PMI Chairman delivered the Presidential address. He appreciated the volunteers of PMI who are not paid for their service. He reiterated that it is the love in our hearts which helps us to reach out to prisoners. The valedictory message was read out by Fr Dr Jervis D'souza, CBCI Deputy Secretary. He appreciated the various activities of Prison Ministry India. He wished the participants all success as they step out into their ministry in their respective states and cities. Bishop Allwyn released the Souvenir of the first batch of PMI Diocesan coordinators and Fr Jervis released the PMI quarterly on Reformation and Rehabilitation called Reformative Explorations. Mr Daryl released the Collage and Fr Suresh from Kohima released the new copy of Prison Voice. Bishop Allwyn handed the certificates to every member with a special blessing. Fr Rajendrakumar, PMI Interim Secretary, proposed a vote of thanks, Sr Rosily chanted the Prayer for Prisoners and Sr Lima prayed the Angelus. The group dispersed with added vigour and determination to persevere in the service of the Lord through the glorious activities of PMI.

## *Book Review*

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REFORMATIVE EXPLORATIONS

Vol. 6, No. 3, September 2020

Pages: 141--147

### **Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus**

**Jim Wallis**, Harper Collins Publishers, San Francisco 2019,

Pages 320, ISBN: 9780062914767

In *Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus*, Jim Wallis, the New York Times bestselling author and Christian activist, urges us to return to the vision of Jesus once again as the means to save us from the polarizing bitterness and dividing political strategies. It brings about how Christians have become disconnected from Jesus and need to revisit their spiritual foundations in the context of America.

This book is the result of the “Reclaiming Jesus” declaration Wallis, and other church leaders wrote in May 2018 to address America’s current crisis. Wallis points out that Christians have become disconnected from Jesus and need to revisit their spiritual foundations. For him, the most fundamental way is to reconnect to the Person of Jesus Christ. Wallis writes, “Most fundamentally, reconnecting to the person and teachings of Jesus. Christians, in other historical moments, have often remembered, rediscovered, returned, and gone back to their obedient discipleship to Jesus Christ - both personal and public - in times of crisis.” According to Wallis, the process of reconnecting is coming home.

The structure of the book deserves high appreciation. It comprises ten chapters. The chapters outline the principles and start with a Bible quote that sets the theme. In examining how we can reclaim Jesus, Wallis poses eight questions that Jesus himself asked or raised. After making the theological case for the return to Jesus himself, the author devotes entire chapters to questions of who is the neighbour (The Neighbour Question), how are we all created in the image of God (The Image

Question), how does one rediscover truth (The Truth Question), how is power understood and negotiated (The Power Question), in what ways does fear motivate us (The Fear Question), how can we make decisions about ultimate loyalties when it comes to God and Caesar (The Caesar Question), what does it take to become peacemakers (The Peacemaker Question), and how can we once again enlarge discipleship to actually following Jesus when it comes to life and life together (The Discipleship Question). By designing the content around these questions, there are handles to hold on to while swimming around in some very complex and emotional waters.

Christ is the answer to the present crisis and reclaiming Jesus is the way to solve the problems that happened through polarized politics of our time. For Wallis, Reclaiming Jesus is not merely about making more Christians as much as it is about making a Christian more genuine and redemptively human, as God made us and as Christ calls us to be. Through this book, Jim Wallis provides a path of spiritual healing and solidarity to help us heal the divide separating Americans today. Even though this book has an American context, it has a universal call and echoes a pressing reality.

In brief, *Christ in Crisis* asks Christians or believers of other faith to take serious stock of their faith as it relates to God's word. As a Catholic Priest, for me, the biggest take away of this book is the constant reminder to go back to Christ and His teachings. Dear readers, take this book as an opportunity to get into the mind of someone who thinks Christ still plays a central role in the world, society, and civilization.

**Jaison Kunnell mcbs**

**A Call to Mercy: Hearts to Love, Hands to Serve**  
**Mother Teresa, Image Books New York 2016,**  
**Pages 364, ISBN: 9780451498205**

August 26, 2020, marked the 110th birth anniversary of the great saint Mother Teresa, also known as Saint of the Gutter. She will always be remembered for her excellent work of mercy and contribution to humanity. Even though *A Call to Mercy* published in 2016, has not lost its relevance after four years.

*A Call to Mercy* is a collection of short testimonies revealing Mother Teresa's understanding of mercy and her embodiment of works of mercy. This book has been edited with an introduction by Father Brian Kolodiejchuk who served as the main promoter or postulator of Mother Teresa's cause for sainthood. Since Mother Teresa's canonization providentially took place during the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, Brian has organized in *A Call to Mercy* previously unpublished material of Mother Teresa around each of the seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy. The subtitle mentions about the main tools of Mother Teresa's ministry: Hearts to Love, Hands to Serve!

*A Call to Mercy* consists of fourteen chapters and each provides a short introduction to each work of mercy. This is followed by selections of Mother Teresa's own words, and then testimonies related to a specific work of mercy. The chapters conclude with a short reflection on the theme, and then a prayer that was used by Mother Teresa in her own spiritual life. The book features the never before published testimonials by people close to Mother Teresa as well as prayers and suggestions for putting these ideas into practice, *A Call to Mercy* is not only a lovely keepsake but a living testament to the teachings of a saint whose images are meaningful, relevant and very necessary in the 21st century.

Mother Teresa always recommended her sisters to do "small things with great love," and to see and serve Jesus in the many "distressing disguises"

of the poor. In the funeral service of Mother Teresa, Archbishop Henry D'Souza of Calcutta said: "She who chose to leave all semblances of power and fame by mixing with the poorest of the poor in the streets of Calcutta and tending to the dying as well as the afflicted has already in her lifetime become the most honoured and famous personality of our age."

As we go through page after page in this book on Mercy, we could see her radicalism of the gospel and her dedication for the cause of the poor. For Mother Teresa, holiness was attained in the profane, especially in the apostolate for the poorest of the poor. Holiness is union with God attained through contemplation in action. Holiness should not be difficult, for, in giving wholehearted and free service to the poorest of the poor, we are 24 hours with Jesus. Her legacy continues throughout the world in 133 countries by the nuns of the Missionaries of Charity.

*A Call to Mercy* actually portrays the sacred dignity of the human being, which was at the core of Mother Teresa's vision and ministry. Mother used to say "I will never tire of repeating this, what the poor need the most is not pity but love. They need to feel respect for their human dignity, which is neither less nor different from the dignity of any other human being." The basis of human dignity is the image of God in man. The merciful reflection on each chapter rejuvenates the dignity of the Poor of the Lord. *A Call to Mercy* portrays all her years of work for the poor, which precisely understands human dignity. In short, *A Call to Mercy*, as the editor Brian Kolodiejchuk reveals "People will see – or have a good idea – first hand or at least second hand about how Mother herself lived the works of mercy."

**Jaison Kunnel mcbs**



## **It's Always Possible**

**Kiran Bedi**, Himalayan Institute Allahabad 1998,  
Pages 295, ISBN: 978-0-893892586.

### **Title & Author**

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

### **Structure**

This book is divided into four sections. The first part tells us about Dr Kiran Bedi's first day in Tihar Prison. It provides a detailed account of the condition of the prisoners and prison system: the misery of prisoners, the power circles in prisons, the rampant corruption inside prisons, the food provided in prison, lack of cleanliness and the scarcity of drinking water. The second part speaks about the changes made by Dr Bedi and how she managed her corrupted staff and changed all of them while getting full support from everyone in the prison for the changes she introduced in the jail system. The third part is a visual section which includes diagrams, cartoons and such to drive home the changes and the results. The fourth part details how long it took for the system to change. The central point is about the Prison Act of 1894 being finally replaced by that of Prison Act 1999.

### **The Tihar Transformation**

When Dr Kiran Bedi took charge of the Tihar prison in 1993, it housed around 8000 prisoners although it was built for 2500, 90% of whom were undertrials. The prison was chockful of corruption, filthy and

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

### **Vipassana Meditation**

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

### **Observations**

This book really inspired, challenged and motivated me and I really believe that Impossible means possible. Dr Bedi right from the beginning motivated the staff, creating a team that is committed to a cause; she motivated the prisoners, breaking the vicious circle of corruption, identified the needs of people and realized them; she gave prison management a human touch and most importantly transformed the jail as a correction centre where a person can regain his self-esteem, learn some vocational skills and liberate himself and introspect and stay away from crime for the rest of his life. It is such a valuable book that it cannot be missed.

**Rajendrakumar**

## NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

Those who would like to contribute articles to the *Reformative Explorations* shall take care of the following aspects:

- Manuscripts of articles in two copies should be sent to the Chief Editor, “Reformative Explorations” Prison Ministry India, 52 Thomas Layout, Sarjara Road, Carmelaram PO, Bangaluru – 560 035, Karnataka, India. E-Mail: frandiyan@live.in; Only those papers, which have not been published elsewhere, will be considered for publication.
- Articles should be written within 4000-6000 words; Case studies within 2000 words; and book reviews within 600 words. Manuscripts should be typed in 1.5 space on one side of A4 size paper only, including the references.
- Articles and case studies should have the following steps: Introduction, Body and Conclusion. Body of the article should include Objectives, Hypotheses, Method, Sample, Tools, Results, Discussion and Conclusion.
- Graphs/figures, statistics, tables, etc will be highly appreciated and shall be ready for all aspects for the press.
- Quotations: in case of short quotations, they can be put within the text with inverted commas (“ ”); long quotation should be placed in intend, i.e., in single spaced paragraphs. However, all quotations, should have authors, titles of the book or magazine, years of publication and page reference.
- Footnotes should be listed at the end of the page in the following style:
- If Book: Edward Durkheim, Reformation, The Free Press, New York 1951, 122.
- If Book edited: Catherine Geertz, “Making Experience”, in Vinod W Turner – Earnest M Bruner, (Eds.), The Anthropology of Experience, University of Illinois Press, Chicago 1986, 127.
- If Journal Article: Robert Strom – Kevin McGrath, “Parental Success in Raising Physically Handicapped Children”, Journal of Instructional Psychology, 15/3, (1988) 100- 112.



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A Psycho-Spiritual and Crimino-Social  
Quarterly on Correction and Rehabilitation

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# Are You Willing?

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

*80% of prisoners’ children are potential  
criminals unless somebody takes care of  
them. Prison Ministry India has begun a  
scheme to educate 1000 children of  
prisoners:*

*Kindly contribute  
Rs. 5,000/- for the Education of a child,*

## BANK DETAILS

A/c Name	:	Prison Ministry India
Bank	:	South Indian Bank
Branch	:	Koramangala
A/c No	:	04160530000001419
IFSC Code	:	SIBL0000416