

SMART

National Monthly for Christian Leadership

OCTOBER 2019 Vol. 10 | No. 10 | ₹ 15

# COMPANION

INDIA

## **COVER STORY**

**Bl. Mariam Thresia:  
A Revolutionary**

## **SPECIAL FEATURE**

**Prison Ministry India:  
An Extraordinary Mission**

## **MONTH'S SPECIAL**

**Arresting the Trend of  
Fraudulent Arrests**

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Christians,  
Wake Up Now!!!**



**Mariam Thresia:  
Another Saint from India**



Sr Lini Sheeja MSC  
Chief Editor  
Prison Voice Magazine



# PRISON MINISTRY INDIA

## AN EXTRA ORDINARY MISSION

### Introduction

“Formerly the world was my God and now the God is my world”, said a prisoner. The death of Jesus on Calvary was an explosion of a super dynamic Love Bomb. The person who dropped the love bomb was broken into pieces but millions regained life. If Jesus is a Super Dynamic Love Bomb, everyone can become a dynamic love bomb, not to kill but to heal the broken-hearts. Every volunteer of Prison Ministry India becomes a love bomb to explode and to emit rays of hope, love and life to the prisoners. PMI serves 4,33,003 prisoners in 1412 prisons i.e., 732 sub jails, 394 district jails, 137 central jails, 64 open jails, 42 special jails, 20 women jails, 20 borstal schools and 3 other jails. There were 1,35,683 convicts, 2,93,058 undertrial prisoners, 2,089 detainees, 18,498 female prisoners, 1942 children and 6,370 foreign prisoners in India as per the

**“Be a love Bomb! Let it be exploded not to kill but to heal the broken hearts.”**

NCRB report on 30 December 2016.

### Birth of Jesus Fraternity

In order to continue the redeeming mission of the Father God and Son Jesus, the Holy Spirit prepared two seminarians Bro Francis Kodyan MCBS and Bro Varghese Karipperu at St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary,

Kottayam, Kerala. “Be a love Bomb! Let it be exploded not to kill but to heal the broken hearts” was the seed of Prison Ministry India. On 8 December 1981, the Holy Spirit anointed them in the phone cabin of St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary during a conversation and blessed them to be close friends. Their friendship was deepened with the Eucharistic adoration during siestas at the Malankara chapel and weekly visits to the peripheries of Kottayam. The Holy Spirit inspired them to begin a prayer group in their batch and assisted them to visit Kottayam prison, which in the course of time led them to the All-Kerala Prison Pilgrimage. On 8 September 1989, the Kerala Catholic Bishops’ Council welcomed this ministry under its Justice, Peace and Development Commission and appointed Fr. Francis Kodyan at the Pastoral Orientation Centre to seek, serve and save the lost.



**Fr. Francis Kodiyan MCBS and Fr. Varghese Karippery, Founding Fathers of PMI**

### **Birth of Prison Ministry India**

To extend the horizon of prison ministry from the boundaries of Kerala to other Indian states was an ardent prayer of the Jesus Fraternity members. As a result of their prayer, the Jesus Fraternity executive committee, with the consent of Mar Joseph Kundukulam, the Archbishop of Thrissur, appointed Father Varghese Karippery to launch the national level prison ministry residing at Snehashramam, Vettukad, Kerala. On 13-14 August 1994, Father Karippery convened the first national gathering of Jesus Fraternity at Christian Workers' Centre, Bangalore. At this gathering, the new name, Prison Ministry India, was recommended to maintain a secular nature. Bidding goodbye to Snehashramam, Father Karippery reached Bangalore on January 1, 1995. Sr. Clara from the Holy Cross

Congregation, together with Mr Kolanda, the driver picked him up from the railway station. They went to Jacob's Farmhouse at Huskur, where Father Karippery launched the national office in a cowshed, like how Jesus' earthly mission began in a manger. On 19 April 1995, Father Karippery shifted the centre from Huskur to a lepers' rehabilitation centre at Sumanahalli. On 26 July 1995, Father Karippery registered PMI under the Society Registration Act at Ernakulam, with the assistance of Mr P.C. Varghese, a chartered accountant. On 24 August 2000, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) recognized Prison Ministry India and welcomed it to work under its Justice, Peace and Development Commission.

### **Principles of PMI**

PMI works with, are the rejected, dejected and broken beings. No wonder if they become

hard heartened and harsh due to their life experience. They are the ones with low self-esteem for they consider themselves as unwanted. We experience many a times disappointments and our patience will be always on test. In all the ministries you are paid but in this ministry the other way around. At this juncture to be an effective instrument in the hands of God, we follow and hold the following basic principles.

1. Prayer our Power House
2. Inconvenience our convenience
3. God's Providence our bank
4. Begging our life style

### **Services inside the Prison**

Our services inside the prisons are (a) Personal counselling and moral instructions (b) Letter writing for personal concern and healing the broken hearts (c) Setting-up of a good library for mental growth (d) Job-oriented training programs inside the prison (e) Providing recre-



ational and vocational training facilities (f) Conducting literary, arts and sports competitions (g) Preparing the prisoners to write university exams (h) Conducting medical camps (i) Providing legal aid (j) arranging spiritual discourses.

### Services outside the Prison

Our work does not end inside the prison but also covers extensively the life of a prisoner including his/her family after their release. As we know a prisoner is branded as a criminal irrespective of their being guilty or not in committing a crime. Society and sometimes their own families neither are nor not ready to accept them. This will fuel further the criminal components in their character. Here PMI intervenes in their lives by giving them hope in life. This is particularly done by PMI through its different rehabilitation centres. They are (a) Counselling and moral instructions in rehabilitation centres (b) Family contacts through volunteers (c) Family readjustment (d) Treatment to the sick (f) Reconciliation of prisoners with victims and their families (g) Helping the children of the prisoners in their education (h) Giving guarantee for the released prisoners at the police station (i) Marriage settlement (j) Vocational training and job settlement (k) Conducting awareness programmes for the general public (l) Printing literature like books, magazines etc.

### Rehabilitation Centres

Won't you give me a chance to renew my life? I really wanted to change my life, but I couldn't; won't you help me? I want to live a good life, but when I'm released nobody may believe me, neither will people accept me; probably the police will again catch me under the provision of

suspicion. Could you arrange a place where I can stay at least for six months so that I may not be caught again by the police? My family has abandoned me, society considers me as criminal. If you don't help me who else in this world will help me? When I'm released nobody will dare to give me a job. Would you please find a job for me? For these questions of our brethren behind the bars we have started many rehabilitation for the released prisoners of both men and women. There are Kolbe Homes for the children of prisoners and PMI runs 30 rehabilitation centres.


### Role of Prison Ministry India

Outside is the world of those who can go wherever they want, the world of those who are able to choose the people they want to meet. Outside is also the world of interpersonal relationships, the world of families, jobs and leisure. The scene is totally different inside the prisons. The freedom to move is severely restricted. Inside is the world of world of limited contact, administratively regulated visiting times, and forced togetherness of people who otherwise would have never dreamt of sharing their living space. Most of the prisoners because of their hardship, loneliness and despair not only feel deserted by people, do also feel abandoned by God. Here comes our PMI Volunteers who carry the ray of light and hope to the people in darkness. God's unconditional love and mercy is carried by our Volunteers who expect nothing in return except the redemption of souls. The law can imprison people but it cannot give love and hope to incarcerated brethren behind the bars.

The law gives the life sentence but in reality it becomes a death sentence for inmates in prison. In

this context the release, renewal, rehabilitation and redemption works of Prison Ministry India is very essential, to give love and hope to these unfortunate children of god to come out of the prison with a renewed life looking forward for a bright future. During the last 38 years, Prison Ministry India has done yeoman service in this aspect and many have embraced a normal life. It was possible only because of thousands of dedicated volunteers. Since its inception, the growth of Prison Ministry India was steady and fast. There are unit, state, regional and national level activities inside prisons and outside prisons.

### Conclusion

Zachaeus was a sinner. He was a tax collector. When Jesus encountered him, He said that He would have dinner with him. We do not see Jesus making a long speech at his home, but the loving presence of Jesus transformed him. He immediately showed a sign of repentance. He declared loudly, "Master, if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I'll pay back four times as much". Yes friends, our loving presence with our brethren behind the bars will substantially transform them and bring them back to the God who created with love and care. Let us continue to extend our hands and hearts to the wounded and broken beings of our society by being for the last, least and the lost. As we celebrate the silver jubilee of our national service my heartfelt appreciation to all the 7000 volunteers who dedicate their time and energy in this more demanding and less rewarding work. Today these volunteers have become love bomb to heal the broken humanity. Hats off to you the volunteers of PMI and long live the PMI. 



# BANK ON US



Experience Next Generation Banking

Toll Free (India): 1800-102-9408, 1800-425-1809 (BSNL),  
Email: [customercare@sib.co.in](mailto:customercare@sib.co.in), CIN: L65191KL1929PLC001017

[www.southindianbank.com](http://www.southindianbank.com) | [f /thesouthindianbank](https://www.facebook.com/thesouthindianbank)