The Art of Forgiveness
Christmas Celebration at Nari Bandi Niketan, Sambalpur.

Republic Day Celebration, Subjail Bagli.

Christmas Celebration, Central Jail, Bhopal.

Christmas Celebration, Central Prison, Indore

Christmas Celebration, Kolbe Home, Bangalore.

Christmas Celebration, Mysore Central Prison.

Dress Designing and Tailoring Course, Central Prison Nasik.

Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil’s Visit to Kolbe Home.
PMI Counselling Training Program, Kerala.

PMI Guntur Diocesan Gathering.

PMI Founders Visiting John Thomas Kottukappally

PMI Housing Project – House Blessing of Lilly Malar, Bangalore.

PMI Kurnool Diocesan Gathering.

PMI Opens Dental Clinic in Byculla Jail.

PMI Vijayawada Diocesan Gathering.
“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tested by the devil” (Lk 4, 1-2).

Are You Willing?
“Help a Prisoner’s Child Prevent a Potential Criminal”
80% of the children of prisoners are potential criminals unless somebody takes care of them. Prison Ministry India has begun a scheme to educate 1000 children of prisoners: Kindly contribute Rs. 5,000/- for the education of a child.

BANK DETAILS:
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PMI VOLUNTEERS TRAINING PROGRAM
Search, Serve And Save The Lost
11 To 24 April 2023

25 January 2023

PMINO/031/2023

Dear PMI Volunteers,

Prayerful greetings from PMI National Office, Bengaluru!

We are glad to announce that the PMI Volunteers Residential Training Program 2023 will commence on 11th April and will conclude on 24th April. This will be held at our RRDC building, Carmelaram, Bengaluru. Most Rev Jose Pulickal, PMI Chairperson will inaugurate the program. Those who wish to participate in this training program are invited to register their names with a registration fee of Rs 1000/-. Food and accommodation are free of cost. Your application shall be supported by the recommendation the PMI state or diocesan coordinator.

Those who would like to participate in the Volunteers Training Program are kindly requested to register their names with Sr Amala DC, PMI National Secretary (9486604887, nationalpmi2015@gmail.com) before 25th February 2023. Only the first 40 registrations will be considered. Please fill up the application form and forward it to Sr Amala together with registration fees.

Thanks very much for your valuable cooperation, and please pray for the fruitfulness of the training program.

With most warm welcome, and prayerful best wishes,

Yours in Jesus who came to seek and save the Lost,

Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS
PMI National Coordinator

Sr Amala DC
PMI National Secretary
Consecrated Life

We celebrated the world day of Consecrated Life on 2nd February 2023. It was in 1997 that Pope Saint John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for men and women in consecrated life. This celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord and is also known as Candlemas day. On this day candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples. Pope Francis affirmed that the mission of consecrated men and women is enriched by the unique charisms of their communities including our prison ministry, in addition to the fundamental gift they have received. He prayed that the Virgin Mary would obtain for consecrated men and women the grace to bring the light of Christ’s love to all people. He also entrusted them to Mary “Salus Populi Romani,” the title of a Byzantine Marian Icon housed in the Basilica of St Mary Major. He concluded by saying, “Let a song of thanksgiving rise from our lips and from our hearts, today and always, because Jesus has bent over our littleness and has given us the grace to follow him in the various forms of consecrated life, despite our littleness”. PMI wishes God’s abundant blessings and protection to all the consecrated people in our family.

Budget 2023 and Prisoners’ Welfare

On 26 November 2022 President Droupadi Murmu’s speech and suggestion about the decongestion of jails and helping the poor prisoners in them, has brought immediate impact on prisons through the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

On February 1, 2023 while presenting the Budget in parliament, she said that the government would provide financial support to poor prisoners who are unable to afford penalties and bail amounts. “A focus on larger issues such as promoting bail on personal bonds, expediting trials, considering that the period of detention of prisoners confined for 3 to 5 years, has nearly doubled from 2010 to 2021, and placing effective checks on arbitrary and unnecessary arrests is required, it’s time that we look at the bigger picture, find the causation links for prison overcrowding and deteriorating prison conditions as well as answer these questions: what is the purpose of imprisonment, is there adequate focus on rehabilitation and for how long should one be incarcerated pending conviction?”

Let us continue to pray for the implementation of this assurance given in the budget. This is the impact of the prayer and the work of 41 years of PMI founders and collaborators who decided to release and rehabilitate prisoners in order to offer them a dignified life. From our part let us take lots of initiatives to release and rehabilitate prisoners in our rehabilitation centers, and to support the prisoners’ families who struggle to bring up their children. Let our passion and mission to support prisoners, their families and children continue in a fruitful manner. May Mary our Mother intercede through her Son Jesus to bless all the efforts of PMI volunteers all over India!
The Art of Forgiveness

Lent

Lent reminds us of Jesus’ 40 days fasting in the wilderness, the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. During this penitential season we focus on repentance, forgiveness and charitable works. In Orthodox traditions, the last day before Lent is Forgiveness Sunday. This day’s evening service concludes with a ceremony in which members kneel before one another and ask for forgiveness. In Catholic tradition people participate in retreats and receive the sacrament of reconciliation and absolution from their sins. On the first day of Lent all participate in the rite of imposing ashes. The Priest marks the sign of the cross in black soot on the penitent’s forehead, saying, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” The ashes, prepared by burning the palm leaves blessed on the previous year’s Palm Sunday, recalls the ancient penitential tradition of covering one’s head with ashes and wearing sackcloth.

Nelson Mandela

Anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela who served as the first president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 spent 27 years in prison. He was isolated in terrible conditions. After being released in 1990, he could have stayed angry at those who had wrongfully imprisoned him. Instead, he chose to forgive them and accept what happened. By releasing that hurt and focusing on a brighter future, he was able to achieve true freedom. One of the attributes of transformational leaders is their ability to shift feelings such as anger, frustration and blame into something positive. Like Nelson Mandela, by practicing forgiveness, we can fuel trust and respect, thereby increasing our team’s performance. Holding on to unproductive emotions can deplete our energy and inhibit us from making wise decisions and performing at our best.

Art of Forgiveness

Jesus was a man of forgiveness. He taught us the art of forgiveness. On the cross he forgave his persecutors, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23,34). In the Our Father Jesus taught us that it is obligatory that we forgive others so that our sins be forgiven. “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”. Forgiveness is not about condoning other people’s hurtful behaviour. It is about developing compassion and accepting others for being imperfect, while at the same time honouring our boundaries and protecting ourselves. It’s about knowing that blaming others will never solve the problem or lead to inner peace. “How many times should I forgive my brother or sister?” Peter asks Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, “As many as seven times?” Jesus’ reply is often cited as the ultimate instruction for Christian forgiveness: “Not seven times, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.”
7 Step Process of Forgiveness

Jon Negroni illustrates a 7 step process of forgiveness which begins with acknowledgement, followed by consideration, acceptance, determination, repair, learning and finally reaching the stage of forgiveness. Frederic Luskin, director of the Stanford Forgiveness Project at Stanford University, affirms that anyone can improve their forgiveness skills and likens the process to mastering a sport: “If you practice forgiveness, you get better at it. And professionals can teach you skills that help you do it even better.”

Forgiveness an Expression of Profound Love

If we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive. There is no love without forgiveness, and there is no forgiveness without love. We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. Kemi Sogunle, a certified professional coach, international speaker and multi-award-winning author, asserts that without forgiveness and love, you will live with resentment, bitterness, malice and strife which result in more pain. You can never love without forgiving. Forgiveness deepens your ability to love and frees you from pain. St John Paul II stated that forgiveness is above all a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against natural instinct to pay back evil with evil.

Forgiveness of Sins

The Gospel of Luke narrates a truly revealing incident in Jesus’ life (Luke 5:17-26). Jesus was teaching inside a house. Some men carried a paralyzed man. Jesus told the paralytic: “Your sins are forgiven.” Some scribes and Pharisees were scandalized. “How can he presume to forgive sins? Only God can forgive sins!” Jesus turned to them and said: “To show you that I have the power to forgive sins on earth in the name of God, see what I am doing now!” He told the paralyzed man: “Stand up. Take up the litter and go home!” That is what the man did. Being able to forgive sins in God’s name is indeed extraordinary. After resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven” (John 20:21-23).

Lent is an invitation to love and love leads to forgiveness which is a journey consisting of self-examination, penitence, apology, and confession. During this Lent as PMI volunteers, let’s intensify our love for prisoners by praying for them, visiting them and forgiving them. Our intensified love and prayer would enable them to receive the grace of forgiveness. Let’s also pray for our volunteers that before they go to visit prisoners they may receive the sacrament of reconciliation, absolution of sins and the grace of forgiveness.
Pope Addresses Staff of the “Regina Coeli” Correctional Facility in Rome on February 7, 2019.

I am pleased to meet you and I greet you all cordially, starting from the chaplain, Fr. Vittorio Trani, and the director, Dr. Silvana Servi, whom I thank for their words. You represent the working community that places itself at the service of the detainees in the Roman “Regina Coeli” Prison. guards, administrative personnel, doctors, educators, chaplains and volunteers, accompanied by your family members. I express to each one of you my acknowledgement and that of the Church for your work alongside the detainees: this requires inner strength, perseverance and awareness of the specific mission to which you are called. And another thing. It takes prayer every day, that the Lord may give you good sense: good sense in the different situations in which you will find yourselves.

The prison is a place of pain in the dual sense of punishment and suffering, and has a great need for attention and humanity. It is a place where all, Penitentiary Police, chaplains, educators and volunteers, are called to perform the difficult task of tending to the wounds of those who, on account of the errors they have made, find themselves deprived of their personal freedom. It is well known that good collaboration between the different prison services provides an action of great support in the re-education of detainees. However, due to a lack of personnel and chronic overcrowding, this painstaking and delicate work risks being in part in vain. Workplace stress caused by pressing shifts and often distance from families are factors that weigh down a job that already involves a certain psychological burden. Therefore, professional figures such as yours need personal balance and valid motivations, continually renewed; indeed, you are called not only to guarantee the protection, order and security of the institute, but also very often to bind the wounds of men and women you meet on a daily basis in their sections.

No-one may condemn another for the errors he has committed, nor inflict suffering that offends human dignity. Prisons need to be increasingly humanized, and it is painful instead to hear that very often they are considered to be places of violence and illegality, where human evil rages. At the same time, we must not forget that many detainees are poor people, without points of reference, they have no security, they have no family, they have no means to defend their own rights, they are marginalized and abandoned
to their destiny. For society, detainees are uncomfortable individuals, they are rejects, a burden. This is painful, but the collective subconscious leads us there.

But experience shows that prison, with the help of prison workers, can truly become a place of redemption, of resurrection and of change of life; and everything is possible through paths of faith, work and professional formation, but above all with spiritual closeness and compassion, following the example of the Good Samaritan, who stooped to care for his wounded brother. This attitude of closeness, that finds its root in Christ’s love, may favour in many detainees the trust, awareness and certainty of being loved. In addition, a punishment, any punishment, must not be closed; it must always have “the window open” to hope, on the part of both the prison and of each person. Everyone must always have the hope of partial rehabilitation. Let us think of those serving life sentences, even for them: “With my work in prison”. Give, do work… Always the hope of rehabilitation. A penalty without hope is useless, it does not help, it provokes in the heart feelings of rancor, very often of revenge, and the person leaves worse than when they entered. No. It is always necessary to ensure that there is hope and to help to see beyond the window, hoping in rehabilitation. I know that you work hard, looking to this future to rehabilitate each one of those who are in prison.

I encourage you to carry out your important work with sentiments of harmony and unity. Altogether, Directorate, Penitentiary Police, Chaplains, educational sector, volunteers and external community are called to march in a single direction, to help
raise up and nurture in hope those who, unfortunately, have fallen into the trap of evil. For my part, I accompany you with my affection, which is sincere. I have great closeness to prisoners and those who work in prisons. My affection and my prayer, that you may be able to contribute, with your work, to ensuring that prison, a place of pain and suffering, may also be a laboratory of humanity and hope. In the other diocese [Buenos Aires], I often went to the prison; and now every fortnight, on Sunday, I make a telephone call to a group of prisoners in a prison I visited frequently. I am close. And I have always had a sensation when entering a prison: “Why them and not me?” This thought has done me great good. Why them and not me? I could have been there, and instead no, the Lord gave me a grace that my sins and my shortcomings were forgiven and not seen, I don’t know. But that question helps greatly: why them and not me? I heartily bless all of you and your loved ones, and I ask you, please, to pray for me, as I am in need. Thank you!
Cardinal George Pell: 
A Suffering Servant of Christ

Dr Jaison Kunnel MCBS

His Eminence Cardinal George Pell, Prefect emeritus of the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy, a suffering servant who was unjustly hunted by false sexual allegations, has gone to the abode of God on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at 09:00 pm in Rome at the age of 81. April 7, 2020, was a day of good news for the global Catholic Church, especially the Australian Catholic Church, the day when their former spiritual leader Cardinal Pell was acquitted after a 404-day prison stay.

Who was Cardinal George Pell

George Pell was born in Ballarat, a town in Victoria State, to an English-born Anglican father, George Arthur, and a devout Catholic mother of Irish descent Margaret Lillian Pell on June 8, 1941. He was ordained a priest on December 16, 1966. Pell was made an auxiliary bishop of Melbourne in 1987 and nine years later became Archbishop of the same, where he served until being appointed Archbishop of Sydney in 2001. The Australian Archbishop was made a cardinal by Pope John Paul II in October 2003. When Pope Francis created the new Secretariat for the Economy to lead efforts at reforming Vatican’s financial affairs in 2014, he saw none other than Cardinal Pell in this position. A towering personality of the Church, Pell tried to reform the economic affairs of the Vatican until he took leave on June 29, 2017. He was also a member of the advisory committee of Pope Francis during the period from 2013 to 2018. Pell left Rome for Australia to defend his innocence of sexual abuse charges in 2017. After 404 days in prison, he was finally acquitted in 2020.

How Cardinal Pell Ended up in Jail

In 1996 a former choirboy later testified that Pell molested him and a friend that December inside St. Patrick’s Cathedral. The choirboy died of a heroin overdose at age 31 on April 8, 2014, without alleging the crime and having told his mother he had not been abused. In the same year, Victoria state police established a task force to investigate how religious and other non-governmental organizations handled accusations of abuse. The surviving choirboy gave his first statement to detectives outlining criminal allegations against Pell in 2015. The Australian detectives went to Rome and questioned Pell in the middle of October 2016, and Pell heard details of the choirboy’s allegations for the first time. Pell denied the accusations and took leave of absence to return to Australia to prove his innocence. On July 26, 2017, Pell made his first court appearance on charges that he sexually abused multiple children in Victoria State decades earlier and vowed to fight the allegations. On May 1, 2018, a magistrate committed Pell to stand trial in 2018. He pleaded not guilty to all the charges. A judge separated the charges into two
trials; the first dating to his tenure as Melbourne archbishop and the other when he was a young priest in Ballarat in the 1970s. A jury unanimously convicted Pell on all charges in the Melbourne case on December 11, 2018. In February 2019 a suppression order forbidding the publication of any details about the trial was lifted. Prosecutors abandoned the prosecution on the Ballarat charges. On March 13, 2019, a judge announced that Pell was sentenced to six years in prison on five sex abuse convictions and must serve three years and eight months before he would be eligible for parole; then, on August 21, 2019, Victoria State Court of Appeal ruled 2-1 to uphold the convictions. The Cardinal had experienced prison stay in HM jail in Bourbon, the southwestern province of Melbourne. Then on April 7, 2020, the High Court’s seven judges unanimously agreed to dismiss all convictions, and Pell was released from prison.

Redemptive Suffering

Soon after his release from prison, Cardinal George Pell wrote an Easter message anchoring on suffering, which brings redemption. His Easter message was published by The Australian on April 10, 2020. He wrote: “it is a mystery; all suffering, but especially the massive number of deaths through plagues and wars. But Christians can cope with suffering better than the atheists can explain the beauty and happiness of life.” The cardinal acknowledged his detention in his message, writing, “I have just spent 13 months in jail for a crime I didn’t commit; one disappointment after another. I knew God was with me, but I didn’t know what He was up to, although I realised He had left all of us free. But with every blow, it was a consolation to know I could offer it to God for some good purpose like turning the mass of suffering into spiritual energy.” “The only Son of God did not have an easy run and suffered more than his share. However, Jesus redeemed us, and we can redeem our suffering by joining it to His and offering it to God,” Pell added. Then he mentioned the secularized world’s temptation, which finds no meaning in suffering, so he wrote candidly: “Too often the irreligious want to eliminate the cause of suffering through abortion, euthanasia, or exclude it from sight, leaving our loved ones unvisited in nursing homes. Christians see Christ in everyone who suffers - victims, the sick, the elderly - and are obliged to help.”

In an online guided retreat for the Australian Catholic Students’ Association group on the 5th and 6th of June 2020, Cardinal George Pell said that his Christian faith helped him persevere through his time in prison and offered advice on overcoming grief and stress situations. The cardinal said his 13 months in prison were “difficult and unpleasant” but not the worst possible form of suffering. As reported by The Catholic Weekly, his time in prison reinforced the truth of the Christian view of redemptive suffering: “I’m still teaching the same Christian message, “And I’m here simply to say that it works. Not in the sense that I was acquitted, but
that this Christian teaching helped me to survive.”

**Prison Journal**

Cardinal Pell noted down his prison experiences while he was in prison in Melbourne. These notes were released in 2020 under the title Prison Journal, Vol. 1: The Cardinal Makes his Appeal, a collection of the Cardinal’s daily diary between 27 February and 13 July 2019. In an interview with Vatican News, Cardinal elucidated why he wrote a diary of 13 months imprisonment? “I thought it might be helpful for those who are in difficulty, for those who are going through a time of suffering, like I was. Then I thought that keeping a diary would be of some interest from a historical point of view because there weren’t many cardinals who had the experience of prison. But then also because I had discovered that many prisoners had dedicated themselves to writing, starting - in the Catholic sphere - with St Paul. Writing when you are in prison is good therapy.”

The Cardinal speaks about how prayer helped him overcome the humiliation and discomfort of prison: “Faith and prayer were fundamental; they helped me to completely change the perspective during those days of detention. Today I tell everyone, using an English expression, that in prison, I have had confirmation that “the Christian package works.” Cardinal Pell prayed for the accused every day in prison, blessed them, and forgave them.” He saw prison stay as “a prolonged meditation.” This is what the Cardinal wrote about the people who accused him in the public statement he made after his release from prison “I have no enmity with those who accused me. I don’t want to increase the pain and anguish many feel for my acquittal. Of course, they are hurt and bored. Truth is the only foundation for long-term healing; the truth is the only foundation of justice because justice is truth for all.”

I would like to pen down these lines with a prayer that Cardinal Pell wrote on Saturday, 6 April 2019: “For faith only sees what is, and Hope sees what will be. Charity only loves what is, and Hope loves what will be. God our Father, help us always to be people of Christian Hope even when, humanly speaking, the situation seems hopeless. May we always believe in the Resurrection as well as the crucifixion and be sustained by the promise of eternal life with you, your Son, and the life-giving Spirit.”
“One of the most common questions I receive is; how hard was it to get through prison? It was not very hard; but the hardest thing for me was being homeless. When all your friends are gone, your families are not around and all you have is drug addiction, a needle that goes in your arm, drugs that take away your feeling that you’ve been running for years, that was hard. Feeling hopeless was hard; full of guilt, full of shame, depressed to the point of committing suicide was hard”, said Tony Hoffman, who journeyed from Prison to Olympics, from drug-addict to a professional speaker. Ricky, a resident of Punjab, India, died of a drug overdose. He was only 25. According to his mother, Lakshmi Devi, Ricky started substance abuse when he was in school. He was hooked on cough syrups and substance injections initially and later turned to heroin. He wanted to quit and asked his mother for help for his drug abuse, but it was already too late and he succumbed.

Sad Statistics

As for the World Drug Report 2019, 35 million people worldwide suffer from drug use disorders while only 1 in 7 people receive treatment. Globally, 11 million people injected drugs in 2017, of whom 1.4 million live with HIV and 5.6 million with hepatitis C. The national survey of 2019 also showed that about 2.8% of Indians aged 10-75 years (3.1 crore individuals) were using cannabis as bhang, ganja and charas. In India, cannabis, heroin and opium are the most commonly used drugs but there is an increasing prevalence of methamphetamine too. The number of users who inject drugs has also gone up substantially. There are one million heroin users registered in India according to a UN report, but unofficial estimates suggest 5 million is a truer figure. But what is alarming is the number of suicides due to drug abuse and alcohol addiction has more than doubled in the last decade in India. In the year 2010, 3,343 cases of suicides were reported, and the number increased to 7,860 suicides in 2019.

Lack of Parental Guidance

Can lack of parental guidance lead to drug addiction? I came across a family few months back, where the second son was a drug addict. They were three boys at home and parents were involved in their business and focused on more and more money making. Munish (name changed) got addicted to drugs at age 13 and parents were completely unaware of it. It was on a fateful day; Munish came and asked for Rs. 1000/- from his father and father denied to give the amount.
Munish out of his temperance, lost his control, took the knife and threatened father. He started screaming and yelling demanding for money. Whole family shook at once. It’s only at that moment they found out that this son of theirs was addicted to something and things were beyond their control. As parents, are you busy in making money and building houses? Let us not forget the fact that our responsibility is not to build houses, but to build our children and our families. So many children are going astray in our families as they lack guidance. All that the children require from their parents is love, care and guidance.

What Happened Next?

Drugs damage us and our families. Drugs damage our brains. It damages our surroundings. Munish was taken to rehabilitation centre and was treated. After few months when he was discharged, he had gone to his relatives’ house and said that he is in need of some finance assistance as his mother met with an accident and need to be treated immediately. He was unaware of the fact that his relatives were aware of him. Munish was again taken to the rehabilitation centre and was treated. There are so many Munish around us who need to be identified and helped. It was the complete peer influence that had made Munish what he is today. Later, I came to know, it was almost 10 children from Munish’ class were addicted to drugs. It’s right time for the institutions, families and the society to open their eyes and put an end to this virus. Drug addiction is more than a Coronavirus that it spreads so fast amidst children and youth.

Drug Addiction and Physical Effects

Chronic substance use is a risk factor for the following illnesses: disorders that affect decision-making, heart disease including high blood pressure, Psychosis, reduced immune function, stomach issues, respiratory problems, liver damage kidney disease, rapid heart rate, sweating and weight gain or loss.

Drug Addiction and Psychological Effects

The mental illnesses strongly associated with drug addiction are: depression, anxiety, shame and guilt. They undergo mood swings, excessive worrying, restlessness and agitation, tension, situations of hopelessness, loss of interest, sleep disturbances, irritability and suicidal ideation.

Drug Addiction and Damages to the Loved Ones

Few months back, a friend of mine from UK called me and started to cry. She said that her only son is addicted to drugs and things are beyond control. She has two daughters and he is the only son. A few days back she thought of ending her life but thinking of her two daughters she could not proceed with it. She lost her husband a few years ago and had placed her hopes in her only son but things turned out as the worst. People who struggle with addiction are not the only ones who feel the impact. The effects of
active addiction stretch out far beyond the person using substances. Immediate family members are much affected when their loved one has a drug or alcohol problem. Whether it’s a child, parent, or spouse, addiction alters the lives of anyone who loves the person. Drug addiction not only affects the substance abuser but also affects families. The family members have to face social consequences, mental stress and are put under a huge financial burden. This affects the entire family and often members end up helpless or depressed. One can imagine the plights of the families if the breadwinner is a drug addict! Will the family be able to come up in life? Will not the society look down on the family? How will the children be treated in their surroundings?

Drug Addiction: A Death Sentence

How many families are broken today? How many mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, wives and husbands are in tears? Brokenness is carried on as the increase of drug addiction is growing daily. These drug addicts can become violent at any time and can become threat to oneself, family and society. A few months, a woman called me and asked me to pray for her son. She said in tears rolling down, “I sent my son to study to the college in Bangalore. I gave all that he asked for. I wanted him to become best. Each time he asked for money, I had sent it, thinking my only son should not starve. But, little I was aware; all the money that I transferred to his account was spent on drugs. Today, my only son is injecting drugs to his body. I’m going through the hell of days”. Addiction is the cage that one lives in and recovery is a battle. It’s a daily battle and one needs to keep fighting. Addiction is a kind of death sentence one can give to oneself. Death sentence is not only given to oneself by his/her addiction, but also given to the families and one’s close circle. Addiction is a war that one is battling with.

Reach-out in Service

When I was working in Child-line, I came across hundreds of street children who were addicted to drugs. Sometimes when we are speaking to them, they show the drugs and would say to us, “Sister, we are in heaven. The drugs give us an experience beyond our imagination. It helps us to forget everything”. BOSCO in Bangalore has many rehabilitation centres wherein these boys do come from the streets and stay. We Christians need to reach out to these vulnerable ones who need our guidance and the way forward. We can make them new beings and make them dreamers like Tony Hoffman and they will be the great witnesses in our broken world.
Father Wilson Rodrigues who was earlier the Diocesan Coordinator for Prison Ministry India at Nashik, and has since been the Parish Priest of St Anne’s Church Dhule of Nashik Diocese, celebrated Christmas with the inmates of Dhule District Jail.

Fr Wilson along with the Sisters and some parishioners visited the District Jail, Dhule, at Christmas and celebrated it with the prison inmates and the jail authorities with great joy. Prayers and carols were conducted by Fr Wilson supported by the parishioners and the Sisters. After the prayer service, cake was distributed to all the prison inmates. Plants and saplings were planted in the prison premises which was received with much gratitude by the Superintendent of the Jail.
Christmas Celebration, Central Prison, Nashik Road

Walter Kamble

After much perseverance, the prison authorities gave us permission to celebrate Christmas on 25th December 2022 in the Central Prison, Nashik Road, both in the Men’s Cell as well as in the Women Cell. It was a great joy for all of us, especially when we were able to celebrate Christmas after 3 years with our prison inmate brothers. However, only two men and two women were allowed to enter the prison. Father Nolasco Gomes, the Parish Priest of St Anne’s Cathedral and Walter Kamble went to the Men’s cell and Sr. Juliet and Sr Kosu were allowed to go to the Women’s cell.

In the Men’s Cell, Father Nolasco and one inmate priest concelebrated the Mass. We could see the immense joy of Father Johnson who was able to celebrate Christmas. He expressed that this was the greatest gift he received on Christmas. We had requested the Jail Authorities to allow him to concelebrate at the Mass. We had taken an extra set of vestments for him. Before the Mass Mr. Walter Kamble welcomed all present, conducted a prayer service and prayed with the brethren behind the bars in which all of us experienced the joy and peace of Christ. They were very happy after the prayer service. He sang some carols for the inmates who responded with great joy. After the Mass, a cake baked in the prison itself, was distributed amongst the prison inmates.

In the Women’s Cell, Sr. Juliet and Sr Kosu prayed and sang carols with the women inmates. They were surprised to see that some of the women inmates could sing carols so beautifully. On this occasion, warm clothes, shoes, winter lotion, blankets were given to the children in the Women’s Cell and then cake was distributed to all the children and the women inmates.
PMI Housing Project
Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS

Prison Ministry India launched its housing project for the released and reformed prisoners during its ruby jubilee celebrations in 2021. It was known as Donate a Brick and Construct a House. We outreach to many families whose one or both parents were incarcerated, released and reformed. PMI assisted them to realize their dream to have a house. By the grace of God, we could help 32 families and the project is extended to PMI golden jubilee that is to take place in 2031. We praise and thank God for providing us generous benefactors and take this opportunity to thank and appreciate all those who collaborated with this program for the most neglected and rejected of our society. We have assisted 19 people in Kerala, 8 families in Karnataka, 2 in Andhra Pradesh, one each in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. “Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured” (Heb 13,3).

Karnataka

Savitha
Savitha was at Jeevodaya more than ten years. Her husband died recently. Jeevodaya sisters recommended her. She purchased a plot of land near Bennarghatta. Her house construction was done under the care of Jeevodaya Sisters. PMI provided her Rs 4 lakhs. On 15 September 2021 Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, PMI national coordinator blessed the house.

Padma
Padma and her husband were just released from Bangalore prison. They have no house and wanted to have one. Sr Clara from Jeevodaya recommended them. PMI provided three lakhs. Construction of their house is going on.

Mary Vennila
Mary Vennila in South Bangalore wanted to construct her house and approached Sr Clara. Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, PMI National coordinator supervised the construction. PMI provided Rs 3 lakhs and Fr Jose Thannippara MST, PMI Delhi state coordinator blessed the house on 16 October 2022.

Gayatri
Gayatri in Bangalore was without a house. Sr Clara in Jeevodaya recommended her. PMI provided Rs 1 Lakh and construction commenced. We need to pay her 2 more lakhs.

Lakshmi
Lakshmi in Bangalore has two children but no house. Jeevodaya sisters recommended her. PMI gave Rs 1 lakh and construction commenced. We need to pay her 2 lakhs more.
**Lilly Malar**
Lilly Malar in Bangalore has two sons but no house. Jeevodaya sisters recommended her. PMI provided Rs 3.5 lakhs and the construction has been completed. On the same plot of land they constructed four houses for their brothers and sisters. On 22 January 2023 Fr Francis Kodiyan blessed all the four houses.

**Gayatri, Malur**
Gayatri in Malur has no house and her son and her brother’s children are with us at Kolbe Home, Bangalore. Recently the Government gave them a plot of land and began to construct her house. PMI gave her Rs 1.5 lakhs and has yet to give her 1.5 lakhs more.

**Govindaraj**
Mr Michael Nornha, PMI Karnataka state secretary recommended Govindaraj to assist him completing the construction of his house. PMI gave Rs 60,000/- which he had asked for.

**Santhosh Nayak**
Sr Shanti Pulickal from Holy Cross congregation recommended Mr Santhosh Nayak, a released prisoner from Berhampur. He was in Berhampur Prison for 8 years and belongs to Berhampur diocese. PMI forwarded Rs three lakhs and the construction of his house is going on.

**Andhra Pradesh**
Sasirekha’s son is with us in Kolbe Home. She was at Jeevodaya and her house in Karnul. On 1st August 2021 she purchased a plot of land in her village. PMI gave her Rs 50,000/-. Andhra Pradesh PMI volunteers have assured her that they will complete the construction of her house.

**Rayavarapu Shankar**
Shankar and Shyamala near Vishakapatnam have 2 girl children. They have no house to stay in. They were recommended by Sr Mary James, PMI volunteer in Vishakapatnam. They want to purchase an old house and renovate it. The total cost is 1.5 lakhs. Sr Mary James, the volunteers in Vishakapatnam and PMI National Office, contributed the needed amount and the renovation of the house is going on.
Tamil Nadu

Bindhu Kuzhumbil

Bindhu was at Karunyashram, Ernakulam, a home for released women prisoners under the leadership of the SABS Sisters who also arranged her marriage. She has two boys. One is differently abled. The Husband died. As she had no house, the Parish purchased 10 cents of land for her. PMI gave her one lakh on 10th October 2022.

Telangana

Siva

Sr Leena Kattukkaran FMM of happy memory helped Siva while he was in the juvenile home. Fr Joseph Sellas OMI one of the pioneers in prison ministry in Kadappa diocese recommended him. Fr Antony O de M also knew this boy. They will purchase land for him to construct a house and PMI will help him with Rs 3 lakhs. Your prayers will be appreciated.

Madhya Pradesh

Mrs Savitha Halke

Mrs Savitha Halke in Bhopal had no house. PMI MP State provided Rs 3 lakhs for her house construction. Congratulations to FCC Bhopal Provincial, Sr Sophia Thomas and Sr Olive D’Souza PSOL who were in the forefront of this mission.

Conclusion

The PMI housing project launched in connection with the PMI Ruby Jubilee has become a grand success. 33 families now have the joy of having a house of their own which was their long-cherished dream. Let’s praise and thank God for the marvellous works that the PMI has been doing by the grace of God on behalf of prisoners. Let’s also thank and appreciate all those who collaborated in this venture. With this confidence let’s march ahead to PMI Golden Jubilee by providing more homes to released prisoners.
Psychiatric Prisoners

Br Pradeep Anthony L OFM

Psychiatric Prisoners Worldwide

Weill Cornell Medicine, a medical school, creates a sense of awareness that many prisoners were already having mental illness before committing a crime. Therefore, many specialists are assigned for restoring the health of the innocent people. The recent report by American Psychological Association claims that they have improved in using a variety of strategies, psychologists in correctional centers. The World Health Organization states the psychiatric problems in prisons exist all over the world. The reasons for each country vary, on one hand with lots of complications and on the other hand, the common reason could be social distancing and not giving any hope for the prisoners’ future.

Psychiatric Prisoners in India

Though, there are countless number of psychiatric prisoners found in Indian prisons unfortunately, National Crime Records Bureau fails to report it. As this problem seems to be very big for the Indian Government, perhaps it explains why there is no particular panel to take up this huge responsibility in the Indian Prison System. According to the report of Indian Journal of Psychiatry of 2022, as there are several prisoners suffering from unsound mind, denial of their care is violation of their fundamental rights. “It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.” Says Nelson Mandela. This statement still holds true to the present situation of the world. According to the report of Indian Journal of Psychiatry of 2013, prisoners suffered from Schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorders, but mostly many are affected by neurotic disorders and in the state of depression. Many of them in this category also have a history of drug abuse in their past.

Lancet Psychiatry has established its analysis on the tendency to commit suicide by prisoners. In men prisoners it is three times higher and in women prisoners it is nine times higher compared to the general population. According to the 2021 National Crime Records Bureau analysis the reason for their suicide is mainly because of restriction of social visits and life term sentence. It’s a surprising fact to know from Psychology Today, that in India therapists encounter uncountable number of inhumane abuses of inmates in prison but they remain silent instead of creating more humane conditions inside the prison. Torture is the common phenomenon that every prisoner would have faced when one is taken into police custody. Torture may include being hung by wires, forced to drink urine, placed on a slab of ice, having a leg broken and so on. These kinds
of spiteful moments would create an irreparable scar in one’s life, eventually creating a psychological problem in their personality.

**Psychiatric Prisoners in Bangalore**

The Bangalore prison mental health study with the support of National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore, and with the collaboration of the Government of Karnataka and the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority on prison inmates of central jail, Bangalore, it was noticed that in place of 2100 capacity of prisoners there were more than 5200 prisoners, showing the prevalence of prison overcrowding. The conditions of the prison only led the prisoners from bad to worse, from loneliness to depression, from smoking 9 cigarettes a day to 45; about 86 percentages of 720 prisoners were tested positive with either of these following drugs namely, cannabis, cocaine, opioids, amphetamines, barbiturates, and benzodiazepines.

**Prison Ministry India**

Knowing the needs of these kinds of people in prison, PMI has launched a special task force to address this particular matter. The name of the special task force is ‘Psychiatric Prisoners Comforters.’ The task of this special task force is to pray for them, visit these prisoners in particular and do the possible monetary or spiritual aid for these individuals. The causes of psychiatric problems are innumerable at prisons. Like alienation from society, non-acceptance of their family members, stigma given by the society on the prisoners, guilty conscience of the prisoner, irreconcilable situation between victim and the convict, Innocent Prisoners coming in contact with real convicts, under-trial prisoners going to the stage of depression because of a long period of despair, exposure to bad habits by their peer inmates in the prison, abuses or fights that take place within the prison. One of these reasons is sufficient for anyone to disassociate himself or herself from the real situation of their lives. Thus, PMI tries to acknowledge that, in every central prison there is a group of psychiatric prisoners who need our special care and prayer.

**Treating Psychiatric Prisoners**

Prisoners, who are once treated and taken care of, can live as responsible persons in society. It should be noted that not only prisoners but even prison staff members could be affected due to mental problems of the prisoners. Sometimes, both prisoners and prison staffs are in need of treatment. If only they are treated, there is a chance to reduce the pattern of recidivism among them. It also reduces the expenses incurred by the government on prisoners, as it spends about seven thousand crores on prisoners. Thus, there is sure the need to take a call for a reformative approach than a punitive one by the structure. This will eventually uplift the dignity of the prisoners, for otherwise as Mahatma Gandhi said, ‘eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind,’ will become a reality.
Health Deterioration

Cardinal Joseph Zen has been hospitalized in Hong Kong after his health deteriorated upon returning from Benedict XVI’s funeral in Rome. The 91-year-old cardinal wrote on his blog on January 31 that he is receiving treatment in the hospital after experiencing difficulty breathing. Zen said that the doctors have already conducted many examinations and ruled out that he does not have a bacterial infection in his lungs as he experienced in 2016 when he was hospitalized for three weeks. “You have not heard from me as I have been staying in the hospital. Please rest assured, Hong Kong’s most senior doctors are taking care of me,” he wrote. The former bishop of Hong Kong revealed that he had already been experiencing some health difficulties before he received permission from a Hong Kong court to travel to Rome for the January 5 funeral of Benedict XVI. Despite having inflammation in his shoulders, an aching back, and numbness in his hands, Zen said that he felt that he “could not give up the opportunity” to be present at the funeral.

Pope Benedict’s Funeral

“The funeral of Pope Benedict was very important to me; and like a miracle, God allowed me to go to Rome to attend: The court approved, the police let me get back my passport; the airline just had a flight so that I could catch the funeral in time, therefore, I felt that I couldn’t give up this opportunity and decided to go,” he said. “When I went to Rome, I felt that I represented the whole of Hong Kong and the whole of China, expressing our respect and love to Pope Benedict XVI.” After his four-day trip to Rome, the cardinal spent 10 days resting in Hong Kong, but his health unexpectedly continued to deteriorate, worsening on the first day of Lunar New Year, Jan. 22.

Prison Ministry

Zen shared the update on his health in a blog post titled “Letter to Inmates.” The retired cardinal has dedicated his time over the past 10 years to prison ministry in Hong Kong and has baptized several prisoners. “Do not forget that we will never be separated in prayer,” he wrote to the inmates. “I will continue to pray for you, and please remember me in your prayers.”
“Father Guz spent the last period of his life as a real martyr and I think that we should pray not for his soul, but in order to obtain his help”, said Don Borowczyk, fellow prisoner of Blessed Innocency Guz at Sachsenhausen. Sachsenhausen was a German Nazi concentration camp in Oranienburg, Germany which mainly held political prisoners throughout World War II. Józef Wojciech Guz was born on 18 March, 1890, in Lemberg, Austria (present-day Poland). After attending the primary school and the gymnasium in his hometown, he entered the Franciscan order. On 25 August 1908, he put on the Franciscan habit, receiving the name Innocency. On 26 August 1909 he pronounced his temporary vows in Leopoli and began to study philosophy and theology in Krakow. He was ordained priest on 2 June 1914 on the eve of the First World War.

Meeting with St Maximillian Kolbe

He ministered in various parishes and communities and practised his sacred ministry at Hanaczów, Czyłki, Halicz, Warsaw, Leopoli and Radomsko. His longest stay was in Grodno where he met St Maximilian Kolbe, another saint from prison and the patron saint of Prison Ministry India. It was from there Kolbe published the Rycerz Niepokalanek - Knight of the Immaculata - in the years 1922-1927. In the years 1933-1936 he stayed in Niepokalanów, where he practised the ministry of a confessor for the numerous brothers of that seminary; moreover, he was the Assistant teacher of the seminarians and choir-master in the missionary minor seminary.

Arrest and Imprisonment

On 21 March 1940, he was arrested by the Soviet authorities and shut up in the prison of Grodno, from which he succeeded to escape. Crossing the Russian-German frontier, he was captured by the Germans and taken at first to the prison of Suwalki and then on 20 April he was taken to the prison of Dzialdowo. On 8 May, he was transported to the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen, near Oranienburg.

Inhuman Tortures and Death

“On 29 May, all the priests and the Jews were put together and for one week they
were subjected to inhumane exercises. Fr Innocenty had several fractures. On 6 June 1940, when his group moved to the place of work, he wasn’t able to keep in step with the others because his leg was so swollen. For this reason he was taken out of the group and, together with Don Czapczyk of Warsaw, he was beaten up, kicked and compelled to reach the group. The guard of the dormitory, Fritz, took both of them to the bathroom and began to throw cold water at them. After a while, he pushed the priest into a basin full of water, he poked a rubber hose in his mouth and killed him in that way. At the point of death, Fr Innocenty spoke to the friend who was beside him: ‘I go to the Immaculata. You remain here and do what you have to do.” This was reported by a priest, Don Stanislaw Borowczyk.

**Beatification**

Martyr Fr Józef Innocenty Guz was beatified on 13 June 1999 by St Pope John Paul II at Warsaw, Poland. His feast day is celebrated on 6 June. “The Church of Christ has been founded by shedding His own blood, not that of others; by enduring outrage, not by inflicting it. Persecutions have made it grow; martyrdoms have crowned it”, said St Jerome. Blessed Innocenty Guz too is one of the instruments for the growth of the Church.

**Conclusion**

Every martyr has something to teach us. They brought light to the world from the dark cells of prisons. They never gave up. No imprisonment, torture, kicking, beatings, cold water or a rubber hose could stop Blessed Innocenty from giving his life for the Lord. Fr Innocenty endured everything for the Lord and died for Him. As his name states, Blessed Innocenty, an innocent prisoner, was tortured and killed in 1940. Even today, there are many innocent prisoners who continue to be the victims of injustice. We encounter many innocent prisoners even in 2023. Let us lift these innocent prisoners through the Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated to the innocent God who was condemned to death for no fault of his and work towards their release. Let us be backbones to their families as these innocent ones suffer behind bars.
A Biblical Formula for Forgiveness

Ron Rolheisser, OMI

Nothing is as important as forgiveness. It is the key to happiness and the most important spiritual imperative in our lives. We need to forgive, to make peace with the hurts and injustices we have suffered so as not to die angry and bitter. Before we die, we need to forgive others, ourselves, and God, for what happened to us in this life. But, that isn’t easy to do; indeed, sometimes it is impossible to do. That needs to be said because today there is a lot of well-intended literature around, in every kind of circle, which gives the impression that forgiveness is simply a question of willing it and moving on. Let it go and move on!

It doesn’t work that way, as we all know. Wounds to the soul take time, a long time, to heal, and the process is excruciatingly slow, something that cannot be rushed. Indeed, the trauma from an emotional wound often affects our physical health. Healing takes time. In looking at the question of healing and forgiveness, we can get a long-neglected, valuable insight from the Jewish and Christian spirituality of the Sabbath. Keeping the Sabbath holy isn’t just about honouring a certain day of the week; it’s also a formula for forgiveness. Here’s how it works.

The theology and spirituality of Sabbath teach us that God created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh day, the Sabbath. Moreover, not only did God rest on the Sabbath, God declared this a day of rest for everyone forever, and with that God set up a certain rhythm for our lives. That rhythm is supposed to work this way:

- **We work for six days, then rest for one day.**
- **We work for seven times seven years, forty-nine years, then have a jubilee where the world itself goes on sabbatical.**
- **We work for seven years, then rest for one year (a sabbatical).**
- **We work for a lifetime, then enjoy an eternity of sabbatical.**

Now, that rhythm is also intended as the rhythm for how we move towards forgiveness:

- **We can hold a mini-grudge of seven days, but then we need to give it up.**
- **We can hold a major grudge for seven years, but then we need to give it up. (The “statute of limitations” is based on this.)**
- **We can hold a massive soul-searing wound for forty-nine years, but then we need to give it up.**
- **We can hold a massive soul-shattering wound until our deathbed, but then we need to give it up.**

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This highlights something which is too often absent in therapeutic and spiritual circles today, namely, that we need time to be able to forgive, and that the length of time needed is contingent upon the depth of the hurt. Thus, for example:

- When we are slighted by a colleague at a meeting, we need a little time to sulk about that injustice, but normally a few days can help put it into perspective and enable us to let it go.

- When we are coldly terminated at a job by an unfair employer, seven days or seven weeks will often not be enough time for us to put this into a larger perspective, to let it go, and to forgive. Seven years is a more realistic timeframe. (Note that the “statute of limitations” vis-a-vis this biblical insight.)

- There are traumas we suffer which leave far deeper wounds than those left by an unfair employer who treated us unfairly. There are wounds we suffer from abuse, neglect, and years of injustice that need more than seven years to process. It may take forty-nine years, half a century, to make peace with the fact that we were bullied as children or were emotionally or sexually abused in our youth.

- There are wounds so deep and traumatic that it is only on our deathbeds that we can make peace with the fact that they happened to us, let them go, and forgive the person or persons responsible for them.

- Finally, there can be wounds that are too deep, too disempowering, and too painful to ever process in this life. For them, thankfully we have the merciful healing embrace of God after death.

The ability to forgive is more contingent upon grace than upon willpower. To err is human, but to forgive is divine. This little slogan contains a deeper truth than is immediately evident. What makes forgiveness so difficult, existentially impossible at times, is not primarily that our egos are bruised and wounded. Rather, the real difficulty is that a wound to the soul works the same as a wound to the body; it strips us of our strength. This is particularly true for those soul-searing and soul-shattering traumas that take forty-nine years or a lifetime to heal, or sometimes can never be healed in this lifetime. Wounds of this kind radically disempower us, particularly towards the person who did this to us, making it very difficult for us to forgive.
GOD CALLS FOR CONVERSION: METANOIA

Fr Allam Sagar Manoj Kumar

Well, why do we breathe? We have to take in fresh air and get rid of bad air; we have to take in new power and get rid of our old weaknesses. Just as a battery sometimes runs down and needs to be charged, so we have to be renewed in spiritual vigor. Our Blessed Lord said: “Without me you can do nothing” (Jn.15:5). Yes, we can eat and drink, and we can sin, but we cannot do anything toward our supernatural merit and heaven without him.

God, in his great mercy, has instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation by which the sins committed after baptism may be remitted. No human being would ever have thought of this Sacrament of Reconciliation, for it is something like a resurrection; we rise after we are dead. It is a journey back to God. It enables us to get rid of infections before they become chronic diseases and epidemics. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the inflowing of God’s mercy, an opportunity for the increase of the grace of Calvary. It is a medicine for the soul, the healing of our wounds, a homecoming, an undoing of the past; an opportunity to get a fresh start in life, another bath, a kind of secondary baptism.

Through this Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus revealed to us God as a loving and merciful Father, who is ever merciful to us, His prodigal sons and daughters in this precious season of Lent. He awaits our conversion. True conversion is not a mere feeling of sorrow or guilt over the past, but rather a radical change in one’s way of life. It has to be reflected in our new way of life.

Jesus speaks to us of three better ways of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. He instructs us that almsgiving should not be an act for popularity, but rather an act of love and charity. In our sinful nature, we love things and use people. But the one, who gives alms, loves people and uses the God given gift of money to help the poor and needy, something that is pleasing to God. Prayer should not be a hypocritical act. It is meant to express our love and gratitude to God, our Lord and Master, as well as to seek his help in our needs, and forgiveness for our failures. Similarly, fasting for us is not a spiritual gymnastic, nor a performance. According to the Fathers of the Church it means, sparing to share to show that we care for those who are less privileged than we are, as what we do for them.
will be the only thing that matters in God’s sight. These acts of penance should translate into action our real conversion of heart and change of attitudes.

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the Good news of God, and stated: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the Good news” (Mk. 1:14-15). This call to conversion announces the solemn opening of Lent. Participants are marked with ashes, and with a reminder, “Repent, and believe in the Good news”. Believing in the Kingdom of God and working for it actively is the task of every disciple. It is a personal invitation to accept our deviations, failures and turn to God. Church gives us Sacrament of Reconciliation, a powerful tool, to return to God and have a right relationship with merciful God.

For forty days, the example of Jesus fasting and praying in the desert is imitated. It is time to center our attention on conversion. During Lent, the expectation is to examine our lives and, through the practice of prayer, fasting, and works of charity, seeks to conform our lives to Christ. For some, this conversion will be a turning from sin to grace. For others, it will be a gracious turning towards the mystery of God in Christ. Whatever the pattern chosen by a particular person for an observance of Lent, we still need to pray earnestly that our observance of this Lenten season will make us worthy of Christ’s sacrifice for the conversion of whole humanity.
God Experience

Jesus had a profound love relationship with God the Father. The gospels give us many peak God experiences of Jesus: Jesus’ prayer experience in the river Jordan during his baptism (Lk 4), His prayer on Mount Tabor (Lk 9), His prayer at Gethsemane and on the cross. PMI is basically a prayer group and all its members shall be praying persons. The most powerful and important prayer for us Catholics is the Eucharistic celebration. Saint John Paul II in his apostolic letter Mane Nobiscum Domine recommends four significant spiritual practices: Eucharistic celebration, Eucharistic communion, Eucharistic Adoration and Eucharistic contemplation. PMI volunteers are expected to be daily communicants and Eucharistic adorers.

Holy Spirit Experience

PMI volunteers are to be led by the Holy Spirit. Moses was led by the Spirit; Christ was led by the Holy Spirit. Likewise, we shall be filled with the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit and shall be led by the spirit.

Fraternity Experience

The communion between Father God, the Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit is always a great challenge and inspiration to us. The same communion can be found between Jesus and his disciples. Early Christians were one in heart and

Searching, Serving and Saving the Lost Experience

Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Lk 19,10). In the synagogue of Nazareth, reading out from the book of Isaiah, Jesus proclaimed that he came to set liberty to the captives. Even on the cross Jesus saved the good thief telling him, “Today you will be with me in paradise” (Lk 23,43). In the same way, PMI volunteers are called to search, serve and save the lost, such as prisoners and prostitutes.

Divine Providence Experience

What did Jesus say regarding the place to celebrate the feast of Passover? What did Jesus do when he was asked to pay the tax? What may be required to experience Divine providence? It is
absence of bank balance. PMI bank is the Bank of Divine Providence. We absolutely trust in the Lord and in His Providence.

**Inconvenience Experience**

Jesus was born in a manger and died on the cross. Without asceticism there is no mysticism and fruitful ministry. Every group shall organize chain fasting and chain prayer. Mortifications and small sacrifices for the renewal of prisoners are significant.

**Mendicant Experience**

Jesus begged the Samaritan woman, “Give me a drink”. Begging requires humility and humility will lead you to heaven. PMI lifestyle is begging and PMI mode of fund raising is begging. Not only on Prison Ministry Sunday do we beg, we do so for the realization of all our projects as well. Begging demands from us humility; it makes us humble.

**Power of the Name of Jesus**

Peter and John were going to the temple and there they saw a beggar begging. Peter said, “I do not have silver and gold; what I have I give you, in the name of Jesus get up and walk” (Acts 3). PMI Power lies in the name of Jesus. That’s why our mantra is “Thank you Jesus”. With the name of Jesus, we can do wonders and even impossible things.

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**Nari Bandi Niketan, Jharuguda: Christmas Celebration**

St Mercyan SU

Prison Ministry India Jharsuguda unit celebrated Christmas and New Year with the inmates of Nari Bandi Nikethan, Jharsuguda. Deputy Inspector General Smt Anusuya Jena was the Chief guest. Superintendent Madam Mrs Runibala and other officials of the Jail, including Sr Hermana SCGR, Sr Meena HM, Sr Elizabeth, Sr Lavina, Fr Pratap Ekka SDB and Don Bosco Brothers were present for the celebration. Don Bosco Brothers presented a one-hour cultural program to entertain the gathering, including mime through which they showed how the touch of God can bring transformation in one’s own life.

The inmates and staff joined in the dancing and games. Christmas and New year messages were given by Sr Meena, Sr Hermana and Fr Pratap and Smt Anusuya. The Superintendent thanked the PMI for their timely visit, constructive interaction, and motivational talk, which help the inmates to keep the flames of hope alive. Every inmate received the cake, fruits, and articles of daily use. We wind up the program having a festive meal together with inmates, officials, staff and PMI volunteers. We thank Fr Linus SDB for preparing and sending the brothers to present the program. We are grateful to all the religious congregations for their generous contribution to this noble ministry. Let us continue to be a healing balm in this broken world.
Consider Altering Prisoner’s Bail Conditions
Supreme Court Tells Courts

Noting that a number of undertrial prisoners are in jail even after granted bail, the Supreme Court has asked courts concerned to consider modifying the conditions imposed if the bonds were not furnished within a month. Issuing a slew of directions, a top court bench said one of the reasons that delay the release of an accused or a convict is the insistence upon a local surety and suggested that in such cases, the courts may not impose the condition of local surety.

“In cases were the under-trail or convict requests that he can furnish bail bonds or sureties once released, then in an appropriate case, the court may consider granting temporary bail for a specified period to the accused so that he can furnish bail bonds or sureties” the bench Said.

“If the bail bonds are not furnished within one month from the date of grant bail, the concerned court may suo motu take up the case and consider whether the conditions of bail require modifications or relaxations,” it said.

The SC also directed that a court granting bail to an undertrial prisoner or a convict would be required to e-mail a soft copy of the order to the prisoner through the jail superintendent on the same day or the next day.

Bhopal Central Jail: Christmas Celebration
Bro Sunnyalal Avarappatu MMB

Prison Ministry India Bhopal unit celebrated Christmas and New Year in the cultural hall of Central Jail Bhopal. Sr Catherine CHF, Principal of Holy Family Senior Secondary School Shantinagar was the chief guest. Deputy Superintendent, warden and other jail officials including Fr Joseph, Fr George, Sr Tessy, Sr Anitha, Sr Amala and Bro Sunnyalal were present for the program. Holy Family School children presented one-hour cultural program to entertain the gathering. Holy Family School provided 2500 apples for the prison inmates on the occasion. We continue Tailoring Training program for women inmates, basic computer training and spoken English class in the Central Jail.

We thank Archbishop Sebastian Durairaj, Fr Joseph and diocesan team for their great support and guidance for this noble ministry. We also thank Sr Catherine CHF, principal of Holy Family senior secondary school, Shanti Nagar and Holy Family Sisters who took initiative to present one-hour cultural program with School children to entertain the prisoners. We are grateful to Sr Sherly OSB, Sr Anitha PSOL, Sr Tessy FCC, Sr Flory OSF, Fr George CMI and Fr Joseph PMI state executive members and all PMI volunteers for their great service and contribution to prison ministry. May good Lord bless you abundantly to carry on the mission and shower graces and blessings upon you throughout this new year.
SOUTH SUDAN’S PRESIDENT PARDONS
71 PRISON INMATES 1

LINDA BORDONI

Sudan’s President Salva Kiir pardons 71 inmates who were serving different sentences. The act of clemency comes during Pope Francis’ pilgrimage of peace to the east African nation. In a decree read on the state-owned South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation, the nation’s President, Salva Kiir Mayardit pardoned 36 inmates on death row and 35 inmates who failed to pay compensations or fines. He reportedly ordered prison authorities to execute the order accordingly. No reasons were given by the Head of State for the pardon, but the act of clemency comes following his meeting earlier in the day with Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland Rev Iain Greenshields, at the start of their Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace that takes place from 3 to 5 February.

Papal Request for Clemency

In December, in the run-up to Christmas, Pope Francis sent a letter to the world’s heads of state asking them to pardon prisoners. In his invitation to make a “gesture of clemency” he invited world leaders to grant leniency to “those of our brothers and sisters deprived of their liberty whom they deem fit to benefit from such a measure, so that this time marked by tensions, injustices, and conflicts may be opened to the grace that comes from the Lord.”

Dewas Jail - New year Celebrations
Fr Shinoj Joseph SVD

Prison Ministry India Indore unit celebrated New Year with prisoners in Dewas Jail. We distributed warm clothes to 425 prisoners (400 men and 25 women) on this occasion. The Jail superintendent Himani Ji, the assistant superintendent Anil Dube ji, Jail wardens and other officials of the Jail were present for the program. We thank Bishop Chacko for his continuous support and guidance for the ministry. Special thanks to Fr Cheriyan, Sr Nisha FSMA and Sr Flavia FSMA who took initiative to organize this program and for sponsoring the warm clothes and sweets with help of the children at St Mary’s Convent School Dewas. Thank you for your continuous support towards the ministry.

Republic Day Celebration, Vaythiri Jail.

PMI Visit to Bagli Prison.

PMI Visit to Kannur Prison.

PMI Visit to District Jail, Trivandrum.

Christmas Celebration, Observation Home, KGF

Christmas Celebration, Observation Home, Mumbai
PMI Visit to Palakkad District jail.

PMI Visit to Repal Prison

PMII Visit to Special Subjail, Trivandrum.

Christmas Celebration, Lateri Jail

Releasing Innocent Prisoners PMI Gwalior Team.

Republic Day Celebration at Sagar Central Jail.

Republic Day Celebration Meerut Prison.

Republic Day Celebration, Aluva Jail.
PMI Family Picnic, Bangalore.

PMI Nellore Diocesan Gathering.

PMI Visit to Trivandrum District Jail.

Handing over Snehashramam, Vettukad to Claretian Fathers.

Trafficked Women Redeemers in Action.