



# PRISON VOICE

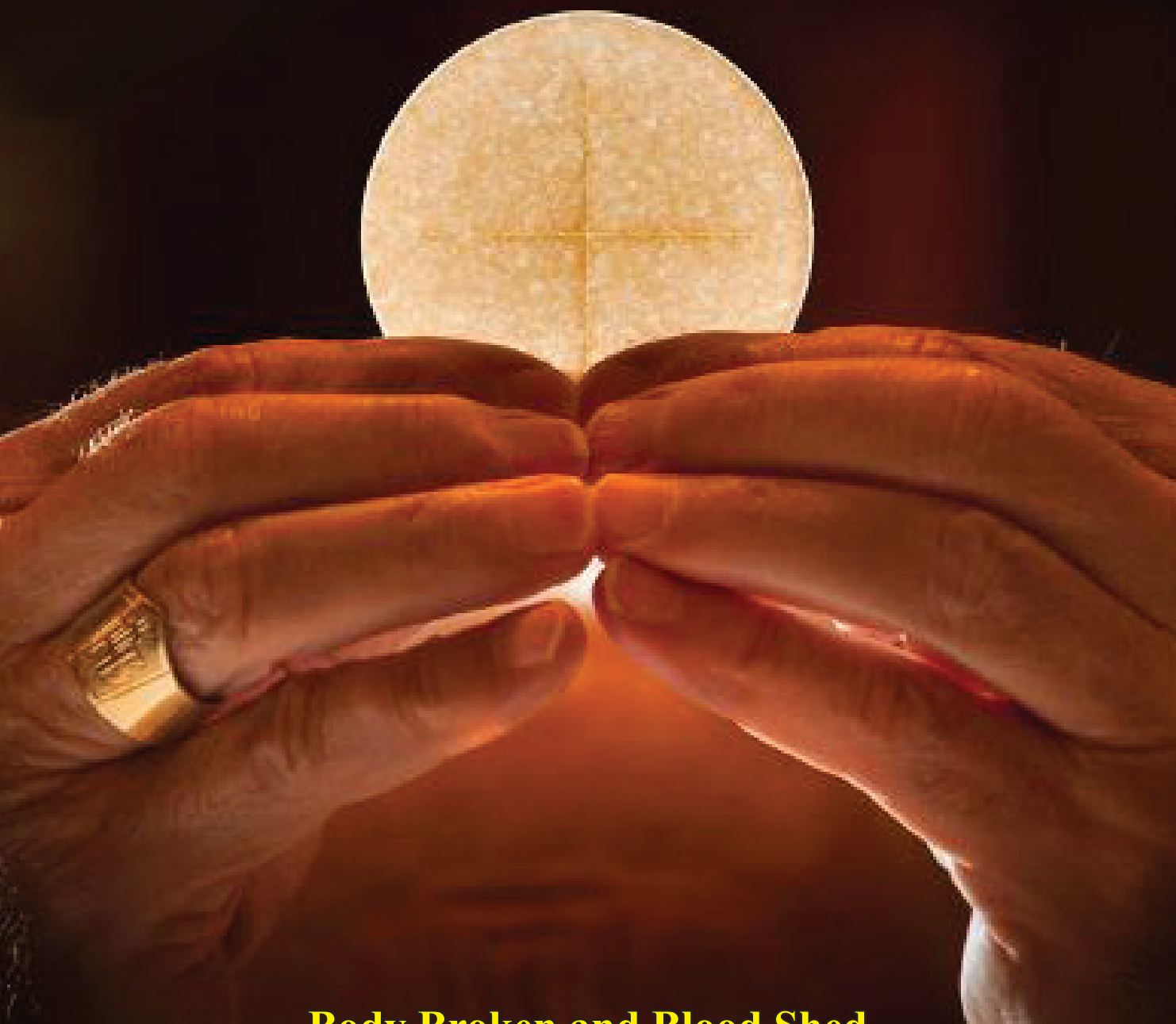
June 2023

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Issue 6

NATIONAL MONTHLY

₹40/-



**Body Broken and Blood Shed**





**Birthday Blessings to Archbishop Peter Machado.**



**Citizens of Alappuzha Honouring PMI Volunteer Jomon.**



**Damaged Roof of Kolbe Home Patan.**



**Cooler Distribution by PMI Gwalior Volunteers.**



**Farewell to Sr Basil.**

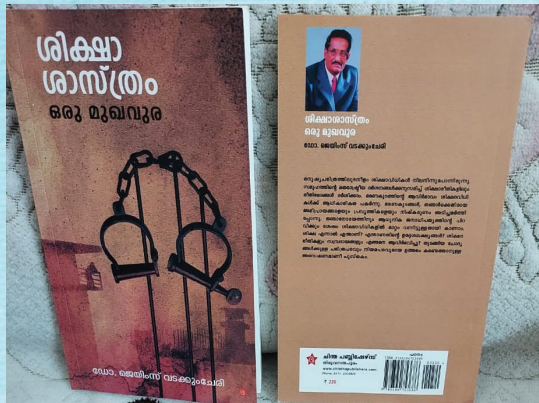


**Fr Wilfred Fernandes Handing over Leadership of PMI Poona to Mr Anthony Jacob.**



**Farewell to Sr Clara.**





**Hearty Congratulations to Dr James Vadakumcherry.**



**Mothers' Day Celebration, Baroda Central Jail.**



**Kolbe Boys Visiting Krishnagiri Dam Garden.**



**Kolbe Boys Visiting Krishnagiri Dam.**



**PMI Kottayam Zonal Gathering.**





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## PRISON VOICE

NATIONAL MONTHLY



I am the living bread which has come down from Heaven, says the Lord.

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

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### Are You Willing?

**"Help a Prisoner's Child  
Prevent a Potential  
Criminal"**

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

**Prison Ministry India has  
begun a scheme to  
educate 1000  
children of prisoners:  
Kindly contribute  
Rs. 5,000/- for the  
education of a child.**

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## POPE'S JUNE PRAYER INTENTION: ABOLITION OF TORTURE<sup>1</sup>



Pope Francis condemns not only the most violent forms of torture, but also those that are “more sophisticated, such as degrading someone, dulling the senses, or mass detentions in inhumane conditions.” Horrified that it is currently still practiced, the Pope calls on the international community to “commit itself concretely to abolish torture, guaranteeing support to victims and their families.” How is it possible that the human capacity for cruelty is so huge?” The Holy Father’s new prayer intention for June, which is entrusted to the entire Catholic Church through the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network, is an appeal for the abolition of torture in all of its forms throughout the world.

### History, Past and Present

“Torture is not past history”, explains Pope Francis in the video. “Unfortunately, it’s part of our history today.” In the words accompanying his prayer intention, he also underlines that, in addition to “extremely

violent forms of torture, “other more sophisticated” methods are used in the world today, “such as degrading someone, dulling the senses, or mass detentions in conditions so inhumane that they take away the dignity of the person.” The timing of his condemnation of the practice, and the prayer intention itself, is not accidental. This upcoming 26th of June is the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, for it was on this date in 1987 that the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment went into effect. The convention was ratified by 162 countries after its adoption in 1984.

### Ecce Homo (Behold the Man)

Images of prisoners in inhumane conditions – tied to a chair, hooded, hands bound – open the Pope Video this month, which reconstructs places and current practices of torture in various parts of the world. Buckets containing rags, cords,

<sup>1</sup> Zenit May 31, 2023.



batteries, pliers, hammers, machetes.... This disturbing inventory of an imaginary torture chamber accompanies Pope Francis's words, in order to emphasize that whoever tries to reduce a person to a "thing" loses his or her own humanity first of all. This is what also happened to those who tortured Jesus, when they scourged him, beat him, mocked him. Jesus experienced torture during his Passion, and died bearing the signs of that torture: the wounds of the thorns and the whips, the bruises from the punches, the welts of the ropes that bound his wrists. The video contains closeups of the image of the Ecce homo in the shrine of Mesoraca with this same name, located in Crotona, Italy. These images are impressive because of how real they are.

### **A Prohibited Practice that Remains in the Shadows of International Law**

Torture is a practice dating back to antiquity. In the 18th and 19th centuries, western countries officially abolished its official use through the judicial system. Today, it is entirely prohibited by international law. Nevertheless, it continues to be practiced in many countries. Since 1981, the United Nations Fund for Victims of Torture has assisted an average of 50,000 victims of torture each year, in countries in every corner of the globe. Of course, torture tends to occur in conflict zones. Such is the case with Russia's aggression against Ukraine, where there have been reports of acts of torture perpetrated by Russian soldiers against Ukrainian military and civilians. In addition, and in part due to the advent of new technologies, the use of certain non-physical forms of torture, such as psychological torture, has increased. Moreover, aggravating the issue is the persistent lack of accountability for torture

and ill-treatment on a global scale, partly caused by systemic denial, the obstruction and the deliberate evasion of responsibility on the part of public authorities which makes it difficult to document and estimate the number of victims.

### **Pope Francis's Appeal**

This, then, is the Pope's appeal to the entire international community, that it "commit itself concretely to abolish torture, guaranteeing support to victims and their families." Pope Francis, in a discourse given in 2014, had already pointed out that "these abuses can only be stopped with the firm commitment of the international community to recognize [...] the dignity of the human person above everything else."

### **Jesus Christ, Tortured and Crucified**

Father Frédéric Fornos S.J., International Director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, commented on this intention: "No matter what the reasons are, torture can never be justified. Pope Francis has said this clearly many times. For example: 'Torturing a person is a mortal sin! Christian communities must commit themselves to helping victims of torture' (Tweet from 26 June 2018). For Christians, Jesus Christ is the face of God. Throughout history, he has drawn near to all victims of torture through his own Passion. Because of this, as Pope Francis says in *Fratelli tutti*: 'Every act of violence committed against a human being is a wound in humanity's flesh' (FT 227). This month of prayer and action for the abolition of every form of torture, whether of detainees, prisoners, or abducted persons, is also an appeal to guarantee the 'support of the victims and their families.'"



# The Body and Blood of Christ

## Eucharistic Celebration

The institution of the Eucharist which we celebrate on 'Maundy Thursday' took place during the Passover meal. The Jews used to celebrate this festival for over 1300 years till the time of Jesus. Jesus as a good Jew, on the night before his death, celebrated the Passover meal but gave a new meaning to it. The roasted paschal lamb, the unleavened bread, and the wine served at the table were considered as signs of blessings, victory, and joy. The last supper was well planned and organized in a well-furnished upper room which perhaps belonged to one of the friends or disciples of Jesus. During the Passover meal, every head of the family takes bread, blesses it, lifts and offers it, and then breaks it into pieces and passes them on to the family members to eat. Jesus as the head of the family of his disciples sat at the head of the table, took bread, blessed and offered it to his Father and broke it, and distributed the pieces to his disciples. Before passing on the pieces of bread to the disciples sitting on either side of the table Jesus said: "this is my body, take and eat." The Bread was changed into the body of Jesus Christ and, similarly wine into his blood. Further Jesus told his disciples: "Do this in memory of me". Now the apostles are thereby empowered to celebrate the Eucharist, to keep the memory of the paschal mystery, to make present the body and blood of their master till the end of times. PMI volunteers are recommended to participate daily in this Eucharistic celebration, which is the most powerful source of grace and spiritual energy.

## Eucharistic Adoration

In instituting the Holy Eucharist our Lord dramatized for us His word of total liberation addressed to us once and for all. He showed

## EDITOR'S VIEW



**Sr Amala DC**  
Chief Editor



us how, in communion with Him, we can live His life and join Him in His work of total restoration. In the Holy Eucharist the Good Shepherd continues His work of saving and gathering His scattered people in today's world. He knows His own, and His own knows Him. They listen to Him as He calls each one by name, and leads them out to the fresh pastures of eternal life on the Cross and continues every day to break the Bread of His life which is He Himself. He who laid down His life on the Cross continues every day to break the Bread of His life on the Cross for all those who approach Him in loving self-commitment. We are enabled thus to grow into the likeness of the Good Shepherd and to build up the onefold where all share the same life as well as his total self-offering, sharing, thanksgiving, and love. Let us actively participate in the Eucharistic adoration and Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated to liberate and redeem our brethren behind bars. Eucharistic adoration is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. "I look at him and he looks at me": this is what a St John Maria Vianney used to say while praying before the tabernacle. This focus on Jesus is a renunciation of self. His gaze purifies our heart; the light of the countenance of Jesus illumines the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth and his compassion for all men. Eucharistic adoration turns our gaze on the mysteries of the life of Christ. (CCC, 2715).



# The Eucharistic Flame

## Eucharistic Millennium

One of the main goals of the Second Vatican Council was to renew the Church. The Council Fathers found that the practical means to realise this goal was renewal of the liturgy. That is why they first discussed and formulated the constitution on the Sacred Liturgy - Sacrosanctum Concilium promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 4th December 1963. In preparation for the great jubilee of 2000 Pope St John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation Tertio Millennio Adveniente (1994 November 10) declared that the third millennium will extraordinarily be Eucharistic. In 2003 during the Rosary Year Pope St John Paul II added the Mystery of Light and introduced the institution of the Holy Eucharist in it. In 2004 in the Year of the Eucharist he published the encyclical Ecclesia de Eucharistia and the apostolic letter Mane Nobis cum Domine as well as Redemptionis Sacramentum. The theme of the Synod of Bishops in 2004 was the "Eucharist source and summit of Christian Life" which produced the Apostolic Letter Sacramentum Caritatis. Thinking along with the Church, Prison Ministry India also believes that the Most Holy Eucharist is the root, source, summit and force of PMI. This article reveals the significant historical developments of PMI rooted in the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist.

## From the Eucharist to the Periphery

In 1981 by the providence of God Bro Varghese, Karipperry and I took a very significant decision to spend everyday half an hour in prayer during siesta before the Blessed Sacrament. Every day after lunch



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

and recreation when others would go for siesta we went to the Malankara chapel of St Thomas Apostolic Seminary and prayed gazing at the Eucharistic Lord. Through this common, silent prayer at the foot of the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist we learned the theory behind the love explosion. This mystical union with the Holy Eucharist was the foundation of a friendship that in turn became the corner stone of the Prison Ministry India. After many months of regular prayer before the Most Holy Eucharist we were inspired and empowered to go out to the peripheries of Kottayam to see the face of Eucharistic Jesus among the marginalised, the downtrodden and the people at the fringes. It was after one such visit to Abhaya Bhavan - an old-age home run by Mother Teresa's sisters at Kanjikuzhy that we first noticed the board Kottayam Sub Jail and wanted to visit it.

## From the Eucharist to Sinners

In 1983 during summer holidays I went for a personal retreat which revealed my call within the call, my personal vocation, and which became one of the crucial events in the history of the Prison Ministry India. On 9th March 1983 I went to the Elijah Ashram, Niravilpuzha in the diocese of Mananthawady, to pray alone for a week. Fr



Valerian and Brother Stanley welcomed me. The Ashram was an estate of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) located in a village where there was not even electricity. But it was a marvellous estate with hills, valleys and brooks filled with coconut, pepper, coffee and cardamom plantations. Amid this beauty was a small Ashram with a tiny Chapel. There, in the chapel, sitting beside the Blessed Sacrament from morning till evening I read the Bible and prayed silently looking at the Eucharistic Jesus. On the evening of Friday 11th March 1983, a fasting day as usual, I was in the Chapel with the POC Malayalam Bible in my hand and was praying. The sun was setting. The sanctuary lamp was burning. From a profound communion with the Lord, there emerged a great challenge, an inner call, a great God experience within me, "Why can't you dedicate your life to the conversion of sinners? In the Catholic Church, there have been many who worked for so many special groups of people. But very few spent their lives for the conversion of sinners. Why don't you dedicate your life to the cause of sinners"? I knew well that I myself was a great sinner. So, I asked, "How can I do this myself being a great sinner"? The answer was instantaneous, "I always call sinners to repentance; I always call the weak to be my apostles". This call within a call was so powerful that it has been continuing to inspire me to search, serve and save the lost sheep of Jesus.

### **From the Eucharist to Special Task Forces**

On 12 December 2019, I was waiting at the gate number 5 of Tihar Prison to celebrate Christmas with the prisoners. While prayerfully waiting, a police bus came

near and many police personnel came out of it together with some prisoners chained on their legs, necks, hands and waist. I was frightened. But soon I understood that they were some hardcore terrorists and within me there sprouted the powerful message "PMI is called to seek and save them too". There lies the inception of PMI Special Task Forces (STF). On 22 December 2019 Sr Adele Korah, Sr Rose Alexander, Sr Lini Sheeja MSC and I went to Aradhanankunju at Carmelaram, Bangalore, a contemplative community, where there is perpetual Eucharistic adoration. After spending some hours in Eucharistic contemplation and adoration, we launched the PMI Special Task Force Ministry for the reintegration and redemption of hardcore criminals like terrorists, serial killers, hired killers, mafia dons and so on.

### **Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated**

To commemorate PMI Ruby Jubilee Celebration and to extend our ministry for the redemption of worldwide prisoners PMI launched Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated. This is an online Eucharistic adoration for the reformation and reparation of crimes committed by prisoners. It's a half an hour slot in which we pray for the reformation of prisoners in five countries. Next half an hour will be prayed by another group. This manifests the redeeming power of the Most Holy Eucharist. "O Sacrament most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine".

### **Eucharistic Celebration, Contemplation and Adoration**

What are the practical means used to be



energised by the Holy Eucharist? Pope John Paul II through his apostolic letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine* recommended three excellent Catholic practices to be empowered by the Holy Eucharist. They are Eucharistic Celebration, Eucharistic contemplation and Eucharistic adoration. The constitution on the sacred liturgy in its paragraph number 10 affirms the importance of the Eucharistic celebration: "Liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic endeavour is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the Sacrifice and to eat the Lord's Supper" (SC 10). *Redemptionis Sacramentum* underlined the significance of daily Eucharistic celebration: "No Christian community is built up unless it is rooted in and hinges upon the celebration of the most Holy Eucharist" (RS 162).

### **The Eucharistic Flame**

The Eucharist is like the burning bush towards which Moses was attracted: "The angel of the LORD appeared to him in

flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire, it did not burn up" (Ex 3, 2). Eucharistic Flame is like The Living Flame of Love by St John of the Cross which speaks about the love of the Holy Spirit: "How gently and lovingly you wake in my heart, where in secret you dwell alone; and in your sweet breathing, filled with good and glory, how tenderly You swell my heart with love". Elizabeth Kindlemann in her book *The Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary* reiterates that the Eucharistic Flame dealt with the power of the sign of the cross and the loveliness and graciousness of the immaculate heart. The Eucharistic flame is nothing but the love of the sacred heart of Jesus himself and the love of Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Eucharistic flame of love is a powerful source and force of grace. This flame of love blinds Satan, sanctifies and saves souls. Like Elijah in the cave of Mount Horeb we are called to become this flame of love to search, serve and save the lost: "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty" (1 Kgs 19, 14).





## **12 JAILED INDIAN PASTORS, 9 OTHERS GET BAIL<sup>1</sup>**

The embattled Christian community in a north Indian state has heaved a collective sigh of relief after 12 jailed pastors and nine other faithful were granted bail in a case involving the alleged violation of stringent anti-conversion law. “It is a major victory for us,” said Dinanath Jaiswal, a social activist who is helping the Christians with the legal cases filed against them in Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state. Pastors Vijay Masih and Ajay Samuel, who got bail from the Allahabad High Court this week, the top court in India’s largest state, had spent more than six months in jail after they were charged with violating provisions of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021.

There are at least 33 pastors and believers languishing in different jails in 12 districts in Uttar Pradesh, where Christians account for a mere 0.18 of its 200 million population. “Definitely, it is a matter of great joy and pride as our 12 brothers are out on bail,” Jaiswal told UCA News on May 26. “Now, our effort will be to release the 21 others, including pastors and believers, languishing in different jails for no fault of theirs.” He said all the Christians arrested in the state were “victims of misuse of the state’s anti-conversion law.” “The constitution guarantees freedom to follow a religion, but when Christians exercise their constitutional right it is falsely branded as an anti-conversion activity and they are arrested,” Jaiswal added.

The anti-conversion law makes it clear that no person shall convert or attempt to

convert, either directly or otherwise, any other person from one religion to another by use or practice of misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage, nor shall any person abet, convince or conspire such conversion. The law has a provision of imprisoning the violators for up to 10 years and the imposition of a maximum fine of Rs 50,000 (US\$690). “Christians partially face targeted attacks from right-wing Hindu organizations who take advantage of this law, branding our prayer services and even family gatherings as mass conversion events,” observed a Church leader who preferred not to be named. He said it was easy for anyone to target a Christian prayer gathering or a donation or gift to a non-Christian as a case of religious conversion.

“In case of a religious conversion, the complaint should come from either those converted or from their close family members, but in all these cases our people are in jail despite not a single complaint from the converted or their families,” he said.

Often police register cases after pro-Hindu activists lodged complaints, he said. “This seems to be the strategy to harass Christians in false cases,” the Church leader said. Eleven states in India have enacted an anti-conversion law, but not a single conversion case has led to a conviction in a court of law. Human rights groups have challenged their constitutional validity in India’s top court. Since India’s Supreme Court has not stayed their implementation, the anti-conversion laws remain in force in the 11 states.

<sup>1</sup> UCA News 26 May 2023.



# PMI Kerala: 22<sup>nd</sup> State Conference Report

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## The Beginning

Jesus Fraternity which is approved by KCBC under Justice, Peace and Development Commission conducted its 22nd State Conference and celebrated its 42nd anniversary on 27-29 April 2023 at Vimalagiri Cathedral, Kottayam. The first day began with a prayer meeting conducted by the Kottayam zonal members at 7:30am which was followed by registration. After breakfast all gathered at the Cathedral church by 10 am for Eucharistic adoration led by Fr. Sebastian Perunnillam. This was followed by the thanksgiving Holy Mass in Syro Malabar rite. Fr. Martin Thattil, the Kerala state Director was the main celebrant and Fr. John Vadakkal CST delivered the homily.

## Fr Alexander Kureekkattil CMF

Fr Alexander Kureekkattil, the Director of Snehasramam, Vettukkad spoke about the need for renewal of ourselves before renewing prisoners. To create something new, we have to be silent or blank. To renew ourselves we have to discover and recognize ourselves and we have to be one with God to do His will. He reminded us that each one of us is called to be the broken bread and prison ministry is the ministry of 'Breaking up of this Bread'.

## Fr Joseph Mackolil

Fr. Joseph Makolil, the first state director of Jesus Fraternity shared about the source and history of Jesus Fraternity. He spoke about the major spiritual pillars of Jesus Fraternity



**Sr Shiny Zacharias SMMP**

such as 1) Prayer Life, 2) Fraternal Care, 3). Begging Ministry, 4) Abandonment to the providence of God, and 5) Inconvenience being our convenience.

## Inaugural Session

Sri. G. Padmakumar, the Honorable first-class Judicial Magistrate, Pala, presided over the meeting. His Excellency Bishop, Mar Jose Pulickal, PMI Chairman inaugurated the conference. Fr. Martin Thattil PMI Kerala State coordinator welcomed the distinguished guests. The state report was presented by Sr. Shiny SMMP, the state secretary. Bishop Jose Pulickal in his inaugural address stated that the focus of our ministry is Jesus Himself. We try to continue His ministry. The spirituality of the ministry comes from our relation with God. Jesus Fraternity itself was formed in a prayer group of some seminarists in Kottayam Seminary. The heart of our ministry is understood to be 'Prayer'. We enter the prison by overcoming several difficulties and we approach prisoners as we see in them the face of Christ. We must give to them the merciful love of Jesus. The Honorable Magistrate said that if anyone is arrested for a crime, before sending him to jail, he would advise him, explaining all the consequences of his fault thus trying to



avoid sending him to jail. Felicitations were delivered by Rev. Fr. Thomas Vazhakkala CMI, Thrissur Zonal Director, Sr. Linta CHF, Palakkad zonal secretary and Mr. David Chacko, National Executive Member. Fr. Sebastian Perunnillam, Kottayam Zonal Director, proposed a vote of thanks.

### **Mar Jose Pulickal**

His Excellency Mar Jose Pulickal quoting Lk.4,18 stated that we are to continue the ministry of Jesus. Jesus Himself was the face of mercy of his Heavenly Father. His entire ministry was the ministry of divine mercy. We are in the prisons not to do mere social work but the work of Christ, the merciful actions of the Lord. If we do that with maternal care it would be more effective. Mr Ummachen, Alapuzha and Mr Denny Thomas Aluva shared about their unceasing attempts and hardships to save a man who was accused of a family murder and was sentenced to death. They expressed their immense joy when he was released from death penalty. As he was in jail for the last 21 years, they expressed the hope that he would soon be released.

### **Fr Varghese Kariperry**

Fr. Varghese Kariperry, the cofounder of PMI maintained that our ministry must be other oriented and shall be based on the philosophy of caring love. We have to search for possibilities even if a mountain is standing against us. We have to go to the prisoners' family and console them. We must accept sacrifices with joy and every sacrifice must be done with love. We have to focus on new missions such as 1) Home Mission - going to the victims' and prisoners' family; 2) Rapid Action Plan - when any new crime

cases come in the news paper, take a note of it and try to contact and pray for them; 3) Faith Dimension - like chain prayer, fasting, prepaid thanksgiving. He inspired us to pray one lakh Rosaries to get general permission. His words of appreciation encouraged the volunteers so much.

### **Zonal Reports**

After supper everyone gathered to hear the zonal reports of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Kottayam and Ernakulam. This session was moderated by Fr. George Kalassery VC. By 10:15 pm we went to bed after Thanksgiving prayer.

### **Praise and Worship**

The second day began with adoration and rosary. Fr Sebastian Perunilam led the praise and worship. Fr John Areekal celebrated the Holy Mass in Malankara rite. The homily was delivered by Fr. Jose Kidangayil.

### **Fr Sebastian Poovathinkal**

Fr. Sebastian Poovathinkal led the first session of Anointing of the Holy Spirit and deliverance. Through our ministry we are building up the Church. If somebody gets a little consolation through my sacrifice I consider that my vocation. Our volunteers must start in the church. Spirituality should not be a pretention. The Gospel must reform me. It should be the text book of our ministry. We have to share the gospel values with the prisoners so that they may be redeemed.

### **Fr Dr Arun Kalamattathil**

Fr Dr Arun Kalamattathil spoke on the integral human development of prisoners



and their pastoral care. He challenged us to find out the meaning of doing the ministry. He asked us the reason why we do this ministry? What would we get out of it? We do jail ministry thinking and knowing that the person who is in prison has his own dignity. Each human being has his/her own dignity - the dignity of human life. Even if the prisoner has lost his freedom to live in society due to his wrong action, he has his own dignity. The Church is doing charitable activities due to justice only. Justice is the basic principle of our entire ministry. We have to do our jail visit with much preparation and prayer as then only our visit will have the desired effect. We go to visit a prisoner because his father and my father is the same God. We must also teach them about Conscience which is the voice heard from within.

### **Zonal Discussion and Action Plan**

Fr. Martin gave some thoughts for zonal discussion and to make an action plan for the years to come. 1) We are all aware of the prayer pillars of Jesus Fraternity. How is it to be maintained in the Zone? How are Unit Prayer, Zonal Prayer, Chain Prayer, Jericho Prayer and Night vigil conducted or how do we plan them. 2) Suggest other activities that can be implemented in the prisons by Jesus Fraternity. Eg. Training programmes like tailoring, paper bag, candles and soap making etc. 3) How can we reach unto the families of prisoners and take care of them especially their children with a sense of preventing and protecting them from the world of crimes? 4) How can we take care of the victims' family who are undergoing great loss of life and wealth etc? 5) How can we render special care towards women

prisoners? 6) What do we plan to follow up the Ex-prisoners? 7) Plan to visit our snehasramas at least once in a year in small groups and interact with the inmates. 8) How can we help Snehasramams financially? 9) Can we do something to release the prisoners? Eg. Prepare the relatives to move for bail. Help them financially. Avail the service of efficient advocates etc, 10) Categories of prisoners were allotted for each zone for their special intercessory prayers. Trivandrum Zone – death row prisoners. Kollam zone – all murders. Kottayam Zone - MDMA addicted, Ernakulam Zone - Drugs and alcoholic addicts. Thrissur Zone - permanent thieves and pick-pockets. Palakkad Zone - those who are involved in POCSO cases. Kozhikode zone - gangsters. Kannur zone - Innocent prisoners. After lunch there was the presentation of zonal reports. Thrissur, Palakkad, Kozhikode and Kannur submitted their reports. This was moderated by Fr. Jose Kidangayil CMF, Ernakulam zonal Director.

### **Mr Thomas OJ**

Mr. Thomas O.J., the welfare officer of Ernakulam District Jail shared his ideas on the possibilities of PMI in the current situation of prisons. He stated that the numbers of narcotic and POCSO cases are increasing drastically in these days. Almost all the jails are therefore overcrowded. He pointed out that PMI needs to focus on the reintegration of released prisoners.

### **Most Rev Dr Sebastian Thekkathucharil**

The third day was begun with morning prayers at 6am followed by Solemn Holy Mass in Latin rite by His Excellency Most Rev



Dr Sebastian Thekkathucharil, the Bishop of Vijayapuram Diocese. He appreciated the work of PMI in his homily. Fr. Martin Thattil thanked the Bishop for his prayers and presence and for the generosity he showed towards the state conference to be held at Vijayapuram, Vimalagiri Cathedral.

### Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS

Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, the cofounder and National Director of PMI appreciated the activities of Jesus Fraternity in Kerala and encouraged the volunteers to do it with more enthusiasm and in the original spirit. He presented Pope Francis as our model who frequently visits jails and washes the feet of prisoners on Maundy Thursday. In 2017 Pope Francis renamed the Pontifical council for justice, peace and development into the Dicastery for promoting integral human development which includes the fostering of prisoners' integral human development. He pointed out the urgency as well as ways and means for the renewal, rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners.

### Concluding Session

The PMI Kerala state executive election was convoked at 9:30am. This was followed by Fr. Joy Cheradiyil's sharing of his life experiences. The concluding session was presided over by Fr. Francis Kodiyan MCBS. The keynote address was delivered by His Excellency Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, bishop of Palai. Quoting the miracle at Cana from the Gospel he explained the realm of conversion. As the water was changed to real wine, our lives also have to be changed. It is just like the transubstantiation of bread and wine at the Eucharist. Our presence should help the prisoners to undergo

transformation which is real conversion. As consecrated people we are wearing the dress code of heaven. It should lift up our thoughts to heaven. The tears of the repentant are more valuable than anything in heaven. Fr. James Parannolil welcomed the gathering. Mr. Georgekutty T D the probation officer of Wayanad Dt. and Mr. George Chacko the welfare officer of Kottayam District jail and Mr. Denny Thomas, PMI state executive member, spoke words of felicitations. Certificates of Merit for those who had successfully completed the Counselling Psychology Course were distributed by Mar Joseph Kallarangatt. Fr. Martin Thattil proposed a vote of thanks.

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## Anima Christi

### St Ignatius of Loyola

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O Good Jesus, hear me.

Within your wounds hide me.

Permit me not to be separated from you.

From the wicked foe, defend me.

At the hour of my death, call me

and bid me come to you

That with your saints I may praise you

For ever and ever. Amen.



## More the Hardships, more the Graces!

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Ordinary people arrive at extraordinary end through many hardships, struggles and difficulties. Hardships assure us of a bright future. It tells us to walk patiently in our life's journey by placing our trust in God. A friend of mine from Goa called me a few days back and was describing the hardships she was going through in her work place. After having listened to her, I understood that she was innocently suffering for no fault of hers. I knew that she needed to embrace it as God's will and walk silently. I asked her, "Can there be an Easter Sunday without a Good Friday? To reach Easter Sunday one needs to go through Good Friday. Good Friday paves the path for Easter Sunday. Embrace these dark moments and the hardships you are enduring with joy and you will be able to see the graces lying in store for you. More the hardships, more the graces! This incident stirred me to pen down this article under this inspiring title, "More the Hardships, more the Graces!"

### No One is Exempted!

Why do I suffer so much? Why this dark side in my life? These are the type of questions we ask today from the different walks of our lives. Are we questioning God asking "Why?" Dear friends, if we ask God 'why?' God could ask us 'why not?' We see in our world some rich and some poor.



**Sr Lini Sheeja MSC**

Some are educated and some illiterate; some travelling in BMWs and some riding bicycles. Everyone's journey is unique. But none of us are exempted from one thing here in this world, namely: hardships, difficulties and sufferings. Again I say, none of us are exempted from hardships. A few months back a friend of mine from Chennai called me and said, "Sister, please pray for our family. We have everything. We had given the best opportunities to our children. We had a happy life when they were small children. But then my Son got addicted to drugs a few months back and we are now going through lots of hardships at the moment. This is a story from a well-to-do family. The family members started to come together to pray and gave more importance to their spiritual life. More the hardships, more the blessings!"

### Blessings in Store!

We see so many poor families struggling to feed their children three times. We see families struggling hard to educate their children. They face financial hardships. Their environment is not safe. They are made to battle in their life to provide daily livelihood to their children. But we are astonished to see that those families are blessed in their later days as the children grow up. More the hardships, more the blessings!



## Ordinary to Extra-Ordinary

Ordinary people are made extra-ordinary only through challenges, hardships, difficulties and so on. There is no learning taking place when everything goes well in our lives. But, when we are faced with challenges, we learn much to become great personalities in our future life. I used to reflect on the TV Serials which most women watch daily. What happens there? If we notice, the endings of the episodes come always at a thrilling point in the story, so that we wait for the next day's episode. When everything goes smoothly in our lives, we may fail to value life. When everything goes well in our lives, we tend to forget God. But when we face challenges and hardships, we value life and cry out to God.

## Graces from Coronavirus Pandemic

The recent Coronavirus pandemic has taught all of us to come down on our knees. In 2020 all our dreams and aspirations were shattered when we were hit by this tiny virus. The whole world was shaken! But in all these we learned to cry out to Him in tears. All those who were busy, all those who were on their feet from morning till evening had the time to sit together to pray. The lockdown made the families come together for family prayer. More the hardships, more the graces!

## More the Bitterness, more the Graces!

All those who are close to us may move away from us when we are in difficulties. Why this, we may wonder. There is an answer that God wants to give us. More the

hardships, more the grace! The more you are isolated, the more you receive grace. During the lockdown in 2020-21, when we were isolated from the world, when we were restricted in our movements, we stretched our hands in prayer. When we are faced with trials and hardships, let us never run away from it; rather let us embrace it and walk together with Our Blessed Mother as she walked to Calvary silently. We all are travellers journeying in a boat and God is at the engine side. He knows clearly the routes to lead us. The anchor is in His hands, He knows both when to stop and when to start.

## Be Purified and Sanctified

When God wants to bless us, when He wants to take control of us, when He wants to be with us forever, we may all have to go through crisis, desperation, isolation and difficult moments. We shall not give up or quit during these times. We have to go through certain crisis points in life, for through these moments of crisis God is purifying us and making us sanctified. More the hardships, more the graces!

## Job's Faith in God: More the Hardships, more the Graces!

The more difficulties I had, the more I experienced God's graces pouring lavishly upon me. The more we go through hardships, trials, misunderstandings, difficulties, bitterness, crisis, dilemma and frustration, let us believe that more graces are poured on us. At times we may also have to suffer innocently. Dear friends, in those moments let us stand together with Jesus at



the judgement seat. Job represents innocent suffering in the Holy Bible. In the book of Job, God presents Job as his righteous and faithful servant, but Satan challenged God's judgment. Satan believed Job was loyal to God only because God blessed and protected him. Satan is confident that Job will turn his back on God if God stops protecting him. But after the loss of everything Job believed it worthwhile and he still proclaimed: "Though God slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15). He was declaring his complete trust in his God. He later proclaimed: "I know that my Redeemer lives and He shall stand at last on the earth" (Job 19:25). More the hardships, more the graces!

### **Innocent Prisoners' Sufferings**

Over 300,000 people are jailed in Indian prisons without being found guilty via the court system. The numbers of actual convicts are lesser than the people who are thrown behind bars without trial. There are nearly 21 million criminal cases pending for ten years, 300,000 cases pending for twenty years, and 54,886 cases pending for more than thirty years. In 2017, without any given conviction, 77,000 people were imprisoned in India for more than one year, whilst 4,876 people were forsaken there for more than five years. According to a recent survey, an estimated 10,000 persons are wrongly convicted of serious crimes each year. Far too often, criminals go scot-free and innocent people, many a time Dalits, tribals, the illiterate, the mentally challenged, are made scapegoats instead.

### **Suffering not in Vain**

Jesus' followers were attacked by bears, leopards, and wild boars. Women were stripped to face a rabid heifer. A little girl named Agatha was stretched on a rack to be torn with iron hooks, burned with torches, and whipped. Quiteria was beheaded, she and her siblings being condemned by their own parents. Margaret Clitherow was blindfolded, stripped, bound, and laid on sharp rocks. A door from her own house was laid above her over which heavy weights were placed till she was crushed to death. Young and pure Agnes was stripped naked and dragged through the streets to a brothel. Neither wild animals nor the sword nor brothel houses nor sharp rocks nor heated arrows could make them step back. Tortured, but they were innocent! Executed, but they committed no crime. The poor and weak prisoners of our society suffer behind bars for years together as they are fragile. Every innocent prisoner who suffers behind bars has a message to tell us. No suffering goes in vain. Let us embrace the crosses as Jesus our God embraced it with love. So many saints embraced humiliations, torture and sufferings. Are we ready, as they were, for surrender of the human to the divine?

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh "

(Jn 5,51).



# Praying as a Christian

Ron Rolheiser OMI<sup>1</sup>

There are four distinct kinds of Christian prayer: There is Incarnational prayer, Mystical prayer, Affective prayer, and Priestly prayer. What are these? How are they different from each other?

## Incarnational Prayer

St. Paul invites us to “pray always”. How is this possible? We can’t always be praying – or can we? What Paul is inviting us to do is what Jesus asks of us when he tells us to “read the signs of the times”. In asking this, Jesus is not suggesting we read every political, social, or economic analysis we can find. Rather, he is inviting us to look for the finger of God in every event in our lives. My parents’ generation called this being attuned to “divine providence”, that is, looking at every event in our lives and the major events of our world, and asking ourselves: “What is God saying in this event?” One must be careful in doing this. God doesn’t cause accidents, sickness, heartbreak, wars, famine, earthquakes, global warming, or pandemics; neither does God cause lottery wins or our favorite sports team to win a championship, but God speaks through them. We pray incarnationally when we pick up that voice.

## Mystical Prayer

Praying mystically is not a question of having extraordinary spiritual experiences – visions, raptures, ecstasies. Mysticism is not about these things. Mystical experience

is simply being touched by God in a way that is deeper than what we can grasp and understand in our intellect and imagination, a knowing beyond head and heart. Mystical knowing works this way: Your head tells you what you think is wise to do; your heart tells you what you want to do; and your mystical center tells you what you have to do. For example, C.S. Lewis, in describing his conversion experience, tells us that the first time he knelt down and acknowledged Christ, he didn’t do it with enthusiasm. Rather, in his famous words, he knelt down “as the most reluctant convert in the history of Christendom.” What compelled him to do that? His words: “God’s harshness is kinder than human gentleness, and God’s compulsion is our liberation.” We pray mystically whenever we hear and listen to the most compelling voice of all inside us, the one that tells us where God and duty call us.

## Affective Prayer

All devotional prayers (adoration of Christ, litanies, rosaries, prayers asking for the intercession of Mary or a saint, and the like) are ultimately affective prayer, as are all forms of meditation and contemplation. They all have the same intentionality. What is that? In the Gospel of John, the first words out of Jesus’ mouth are a question.

<sup>1</sup><https://ronrolheiser.com/en/>



People are looking at him in curiosity, and he asks them, “What are you looking for?” That question remains throughout the rest of the gospel as an undergirding. A lot of things are happening on the surface, but underneath, there remains always the one nagging, restless question: “What are you looking for?” Jesus answers that question explicitly at the end of the gospel, on the morning of the resurrection. Mary of Magdala comes looking for him, carrying spices with which to embalm his dead body. Jesus meets her, but she does not recognize him. He then repeats the question with which he had opened the gospel: “What are you looking for?” and gives us its real answer. He pronounces her name in love: “Mary”. In doing this, he reveals what she and every one of us are forever looking for, namely, God’s voice, one-to-one, speaking unconditional love, lovingly saying our name. At the end of the day, that’s what we all are looking for, to hear God pronounce our name in love. All devotional prayer, whether it be for ourselves, for others, or for the world, has this as its ultimate aim.

## Priestly Prayer

Priestly prayer is the prayer of Christ through the church for the world. The Christian belief is that Christ is still gathering us together around his word and the Eucharist. And we believe that whenever we come together, in a church or elsewhere, to gather around the scriptures or to celebrate the Eucharist, we are entering into that prayer. This is generally called liturgical prayer; this kind of prayer is Christ’s prayer, not our own. Moreover, it’s not a prayer first of all for ourselves or even for the church, but one for the world – “My flesh is food for the life of the world”. We pray liturgically, priestly prayer, whenever we gather to celebrate the scriptures, the Eucharist, or any sacrament. As well we pray in this way when, in the community or privately, we pray what is called the Liturgy of the Hours or the Divine Office (Lauds and Vespers). We are asked to pray regularly for the world in this way by virtue of the priesthood conferred on us in our baptism. A mature, spiritually healthy Christian prays in these four ways, and it can be helpful to distinguish clearly among these kinds of prayers so as to be praying always and praying with Christ.

## Laws Of Success -

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| The greatest mistake  | – Giving up              |
| The greatest crippler | – Fear                   |
| The greatest handicap | – Ego                    |
| The most potent force | – Positive               |
| The greatest thought  | – God                    |
| The greatest victory  | – Victory over the self. |



# Prison Ministry India and Spiritual Formation of Seminarians

## Introduction

Jesus began His earthly mission by reading from the book of Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives” (Lk 4, 18-19). Going to the tax booth of Mathew, Jesus declared that he had come to call not the righteous but sinners (Mk 2,17). Visiting the family of Zacchaeus, Jesus highlighted the uniqueness of his mission by stating that he came to seek and save the lost (Lk 19,10). Jesus illustrated the significance of visiting prisoners in his portrayal of the last judgement, “I was in prison you visited me” (Mt 25, 36). Prison Ministry India, born in a seminary and brought up by the encouragement of seminary professors, is a militia to regain the lost; it continues the significant mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost by reaching out to prisons, releasing, reforming, rehabilitating, reintegrating and redeeming them.

## Jesus Fraternity/ Prison Ministry India

On 8th December 1981, Bro Varghese Karipperry from Thrissur Archdiocese and Bro Francis Kodiyan from MCBS during their friendly conversation in the telephone cabin at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam decided to become love bombs to heal the broken-hearted. We formed a prayer group known as Jesus Fraternity and began to visit the peripheries of Kottayam such as slums, beggars’ colony, old-age homes, orphanages and prison. In 1986 the



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

Jesus Fraternity prayer group members set forth for an All-Kerala Prison Pilgrimage which brought forth innumerable blessings. We experienced great joy in seeking and saving the lost: “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep” (Lk 15, 1-7). Recognising the positive impact of this ministry on seminary formation Kerala Catholic Bishops Conference asked us to begin this group in other major seminaries. Today more than 20 major seminaries have Prison Ministry India prayer groups. Fr Jose Valiamangalam MST from Ruhalya Major seminary, Ujjain serves as the PMI director for major seminaries.

## Ecclesiastical Recognition

The Kerala Catholic Bishops Conference (KCBC) recognised Jesus Fraternity on 8th September 1989 under its justice, peace and development commission. On 24th August 2000 Prison Ministry India was officially approved by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI).

## Reach out and Release

Jesus’ style of action was to go out to the peripheries and reach out to the lost, the



least, and the last (Mt 9,35). Following the footprints of Jesus, PMI volunteers go out to the peripheries in search of the lost to places like prisons, rescue homes, juvenile homes, observation homes and so on. PMI organises various ministries for prisoners such as celebrating sacraments to Catholic prisoners, conducting moral instructions, organizing cultural programs, arranging counselling, setting-up libraries, establishing vocational training facilities, steering literary, arts and sports competitions, preparing prisoners to write school and university exams, establishing rehabilitation centres for released prisoners, launching homes for prisoners' children and so on.

### **Enhancing Seminarians' Spiritual Formation**

Formation is an organic, life-long, and holistic process involving right thinking, right behaviors, and right feelings of individuals and communities. Christian spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ for the glory of God and for the wellbeing of neighbours (II Cor 3:17-18). Prison Ministry India is basically a prayer group. Seminarians gather together once a week to pray for the renewal, rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. We prepare ourselves for the prison visit with chain prayer and fasting. For the financial assistance and for the transformation of brethren behind bars we trust absolutely in the Lord. We do the ministry with maximum inconvenience embracing voluntarily personal sacrifices, mortifications and penances. We do this ministry trusting fully in divine providence. This pastoral, spiritual, social and personal encounters and experiences with

prisoners, their families and the victims assist seminarians to have profound God experiences, divine providence experiences, faith experiences, inconvenience experiences, exposure experiences and above all prayer experiences that would enhance their priestly vocation and empower their spirituality and personality.

These rich spiritual experiences enhance seminarians' personal conviction in priestly and religious vocation and deep-rooted friendship with Jesus. Many who thought of the meaninglessness of seminary life and wanted to leave the seminary could continue their seminary formation and became priests and serve as excellent priests now. Through prison ministry we felt that our lives have meaning; we were convinced that we could do something for the lost; we experienced that the Lord is with us and does wonders through us. These experiences strengthened our vocations. Our involvement in prison ministry gave ample occasions to discern, decide and do many things for the brethren behind bars. These opportunities for discernment, decision making, and doing good for others transformed us into better, mature, confident and fruitful priests.

### **Pastores Dabo Vobis**

Involvement of seminarians in prison pastoral care accelerates the principal foundations of priestly formation such as human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral as explained in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* by St John Paul II. Prison ministry assists seminarians to grow in human formation by developing a solid moral character, to become men of communion, to manifest affective maturity, to be respectful towards every person and to



be confident leaders. Involvement in prison ministry enhances their spiritual formation as they grow in their relationship with Christ through prayer and contemplation. Overwhelmed by the love of God we share His merciful compassion to the incarcerated. Very Rev Fr Joseph Koikakudy of happy memory, our rector at St Thomas Apostolic seminary, allowed us to do prison ministry only if we scored above 70% marks in all exams. This encouraged us to study well and enhanced our intellectual formation. The exposure programs we enjoyed at St Thomas apostolic seminary provided us enough opportunities for pastoral, apostolic and spiritual formation.

### PMI Spirituality

Mercy towards the incarcerated forms the identity kit of PMI. Like the good shepherd who carries the lost sheep on his shoulder, we take care of prisoners by reaching out, releasing, reforming, reconciling, rehabilitating, reintegrating, and redeeming them. Pope Francis in his Letter for the 160th anniversary of the death of Saint John Marie Vianney wrote that it is precisely mercy the “exquisite quality” of the priest that configures him to Christ the Good Shepherd. PMI follows the lifestyle of St Peter who said to the beggar at the beautiful gate of the temple, “I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk” (Acts 3, 1-11). We do wonders for the incarcerated such as rehabilitation centres and homes for prisoners’ children and do impossible and unbelievable things such as transformation of hardcore criminals like terrorists, hired and serial killers, mafia dons and so on with absolute trust in the Lord.

### Conclusion

Prison ministry assists seminarians to accomplish the goals of spiritual formation, namely: to empower, guide, and challenge them to deepen their relationship with the Lord, to discern their gifts of service in the community, to accept their call to ministry in the Church and the world, to establish attitudes, habits, and practices in the spiritual life that will continue after ordination. Prison ministry also provides a healthy dialogue with religions, denominations, cultures and the poor which would certainly assist seminarians to develop the contextual, continental and Indian theological insights and concepts. Let me conclude with Pope Benedict XVI’s words in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, “The Church’s spiritual tradition, basing itself on Christ’s own words (cf. Mt 25:36), has designated the visiting of prisoners as one of the corporal works of mercy. Prisoners have a particular need to be visited personally by the Lord in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Taking up the recommendation of the Synod, I ask Dioceses to do whatever is possible to ensure that sufficient pastoral resources are invested in the spiritual care of prisoners” (SC 59).

prisoners such as houses for released prisoners, scholarships for prisoners’ children, employment schemes for reformed prisoners, releasing prisoners with financial assistance and establishing Kolbe homes for prisoners’ children and Van Thuan Homes for released prisoners.



# The Nun who was Jailed more than 40 Times <sup>1</sup>

Fr Joe Antony SJ

Who would have imagined that an 82-year-old nun would do something like this? She was frail and tiny, weighing just 47 kg. In the early morning hours of 28 July 2012 Sr. Megan Rice and her two colleagues managed to cut barbed wire fences and enter what is called the Y-12 nuclear weapons production complex in Tennessee, U.S. It was here that the United States had stored all the depleted uranium stock, transported from Kazakhstan, after the fall of the Soviet Union. The nuclear weapons there were capable of destroying the world ten times over. The three anti-nuclear activists spray-painted the walls with antinuclear slogans, lit candles, prayed and sang, waiting to be arrested.

They had carried in their backpacks some bread, candles, four white roses, a copy of the Bible, a hammer and a statement that accused the U.S. government of harbouring weapons of mass destruction. When the first security guard arrived, Sr. Megan offered him some home-baked bread.

All the three were arrested, jailed and sentenced to almost three years in prison. In her testimony at the court, Megan said “I regret I didn’t do this 70 years ago.” Megan Rice was born on 31 January 1930 in New York. She was the youngest of three girls in a Catholic family of Irish descent. Her father

was an obstetrician-gynaecologist who taught at New York University and treated patients at several hospitals. Her mother had a Ph.D. in history and her doctoral dissertation was on Catholic attitudes to slavery. Both her parents were active in the Catholic Worker movement and considered Dorothy Day a good friend.

At the age of 18 Megan joined the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus (SCHJ) and taught for more than 40 years in Nigeria and Ghana. From her childhood, Megan cared for the poor and believed that all people of good will should join hands to fight all forms of social injustice. Looking at everything from the point of view of the poor, she understood how the weapons industry and war brought immense suffering to the poor. It was no wonder that she was drawn to anti-war and antinuclear movements. Starting from the 1980s Megan became increasingly involved in the anti-war movement. She participated in protests against a variety of American military actions, and military sites that stored nuclear weapons. Although their protests were always peaceful, she was arrested nearly forty times for acts of civil disobedience.

But their activism that often looked futile was sustained by hope and optimism. Like the two biblical prophets – Isaiah and Micah

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<sup>1</sup> Magnet June 2023.



– they hoped war would disappear from the earth, that swords and spears would be turned into plowshares (ploughshares) and pruning hooks; and one nation would no longer raise its hand against another nation. Megan and those of the Plowshare movement’ believed that their peaceful, nonviolent protests would provoke people to think, dig deeper into the usual platitudes, and understand that their governments depend on arms merchants and war mongers. They hoped that what they did would eventually lead governments to give up weapons and invest in peace.

The writings of Dorothy Day, who is on her way to becoming a saint, taught Megan to see the exorbitant cost of nuclear weapons as theft from the poor around the world, hungering for food, shelter, medicine and education. Her protests were part of a broader struggle for racial and economic justice. Her time in prison made her see the atrocious conditions and inadequate health care inside the prison. She saw that the most number of women prisoners were black women who got caught up in a web of poverty and petty crime. She became a teacher to them and launched a prayer circle and book club for them. Sr. Megan Rice died of congestive heart failure on 10 October 2021 at the age of 91. People who have been inspired by her life have featured her in their books and films.

In 2017, Pope Francis declared that the possession or use of nuclear weapons

was “to be firmly condemned.” Then the Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons came into force. The International Campaign to Abolish nuclear weapons won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. But we know that our world is still filled with thousands of nuclear weapons. The life-long struggle of Sr. Megan Rice and other activists keeps reminding everyone that nuclear weapons don’t just threaten the entire planet; but they further impoverish the poor and wreck social, racial and economic justice.

## **Thank You Lord** **Sr Shiny Zacharias SMMP**

I thank you Lord for saving my soul from  
sins of this world.

This world of sins that I so detest and puts  
me to the tests

I once was a baby on my knees and you  
were at my side

All the mess I now confess there’s no way  
to hide.

Now I am a boy who thinks he is tough and  
has no place to go and all roads seem so  
rough oh God! How you came into my life ....

I will never know!

I am a man who can understand my wife.

As now you came into my life to wash my  
sins and cleanse my soul

So I thank you Lord once again for sending  
your son; your only son Lord Jesus Christ  
to pay for all my sins and made me whole.



# When To Be Silent

Sr Arockiamary DMI

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1. Be silent - in the heat of anger - (Prov 14:17)
  2. Be silent - when you don't have all the facts - (Prov 18:13)
  3. Be silent - when you haven't verified the story - (Deut 17:6)
  4. Be silent - if your words will offend a weaker person - (1 Cor 8:11)
  5. Be silent - when it is time to listen - (Prov 13:1)
  6. Be silent - when you are tempted to make light of holy things - (Eccl 5:2)
  7. Be silent - when you are tempted to joke about sin - (Prov 14:9)
  8. Be silent - if you would be ashamed of your words later - (Prov 8:8)
  9. Be silent - if your words would convey the wrong impression - (Prov 17:27)
  10. Be silent - if the issue is none of your business - (Prov 14:10)
  11. Be silent - when you are tempted to tell an outright lie - (Prov 4:24)
  12. Be silent - if your words will damage someone else's reputation - (Prov 16:27)
  13. Be silent - if your words will damage a friendship - (Prov 16:28)
  14. Be silent - when you are feeling critical - (James 3:9)
  15. Be silent - if you can't say it without screaming - (Prov 25:28)
  16. Be silent - if your words will be a poor reflection of the Lord or your friends and family - (1 Pt 2:21-23)
  17. Be silent - if you may have to eat your words later - (Prov 18:21)
  18. Be silent - if you have already said it more than one time - (Prov 19:13)
  19. Be silent - when you are tempted to flatter a wicked person - (Prov 24:24)
  20. Be silent - when you are supposed to be working instead - (Prov 14:23)
- “Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles” - (Prov 21:23). “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10)



# **I Don't Just Want but Must Become a Saint!**

## **Blessed Natalia Tulasiewicz**

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**Sr Lini Sheeja MSC**

“As lay woman/man, if you feel the call to encounter God behind prison walls, get up, get ready, walk and stoop through the prison gates! Our God who was born in a manger, died on a cross is waiting for your loving visit”. “I have the courage to become a saint. Only holiness is the fullest form of love, and so I don't just want but must become a saint” said Blessed Natalia Tulasiewicz who was a Polish teacher in Poznan and a leader in the Catholic lay apostolate. She was killed in a gas chamber at the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp. Blessed Tulasiewicz was beatified in 1999 as one of the 108 Martyrs of World War II.

### **Early Life**

Natalia was born on 9 April 1906 in Rzeszów (south-eastern Poland) the second of six children of Adam and Natalia Amalia née Bromnik. Her father worked as a tax clerk and mother as home-maker. They were a loving and patriotic family. Although Natalia was small and physically frail, she had a lively intelligence and was very affectionate. In 1915, her father was moved to Kraków on business and the whole family moved with him. Natalia did her schooling at St Andrew's School of the Poor Clare Sisters, and later at the Private

Gymnasium for Women, from which she moved to the state secondary school after three years. In 1921 her father got better work and so the family moved to Poznan (west Poland), where Natalia attended the Private Gymnasium of the Ursulines. At the same time she learned to play the violin at the Conservatory. Unfortunately, she soon had to stop playing the violin as a result of a surgery on the enlarged lymphatic glands on her neck.

### **Family Tragedy**

She graduated from the Ursuline school with a very good secondary school certificate. In 1926 she began to study Polish philology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. From the beginning she was extremely active in the academic life and was involved in social and literary activities. A year later, the Tulasiewicz family went into mourning, as a result of the death of Maryla, Natalia's oldest sister who died at the age of 22 from tuberculosis. Natalia tried to comfort her family, especially her father, who had diabetes due to a nervous disposition. Natalia and her sister were also diagnosed with tuberculosis. Natalia had already had several surgeries and so interrupted her



studies and worked as a teacher in the school of the Nazarene sisters.

### **Realization of Eternity**

Her young cousin was a drug addict and died at a very young age when Natalia was only sixteen-year-old girl. This incident made her to realize that “No earthly good will fill a soul. Our soul longs for something more beautiful and that’s God, beyond which we do not long for anything”. Answering the question “why live?” she outlined the aim of her life’s mission: “to do good to others”

### **Jesus: The Beloved**

Natalia took care of her spiritual life. Almost every day she attended Mass and received Holy Communion. She celebrated monthly retreat days and sometimes went for longer retreats. She had the custom of performing night adorations in the Church. God was her most important love, her most beloved friend and she called him Beloved. She had got to know the Ursuline sisters well and their way of life. But, she didn’t want to become a religious; she wanted to remain as a lay woman and be the beloved of God. She wanted completely and exclusively to live for God. It was very important to her to work for God. At first she thought she would do this as a married woman. In 1927, when she was 21, she became engaged and remained engaged for seven years. Unfortunately, her fiancé was an atheist and a communist, and so Natalia ended their relationship in 1934.

### **Carrying Christ Everywhere**

She wanted to speak about God to everyone and everywhere. “I want to carry Christ, who took my heart for living for himself, I want to carry Him to all the people I meet on the streets, in the tram, in offices, in shops, in restaurants, cinemas, theatres, everywhere! And if I feel a special artistic trait towards theatrical and film art, then the joy I derive from it, the joy given to me in advance, should be transformed into such values that they can be given to the people I meet in my life”. On August 18, 1943 she went voluntarily to Hamburg, Germany to share in forced labour. Physically weak, strong in spirit, after many hours of daily, hard physical work, she performed her service, often during alarms and bombings. She worked in a factory and secretly taught about religion and German to her fellow workers. She organized prayers and singing.

### **Arrest and Imprisonment**

Sadly, the Germans discovered her activities. They arrested Natalia in April 1944. She was sent to jail in Hannover and then Cologne. She was tortured and beaten so badly, that she bled from the scars of her old surgery. But despite her pain, she prayed and adored God every night. She never betrayed her fellow conspirators, and she wrote that she did not feel humiliated by the Germans: she felt supported by God, and wrote that the ill treatment meted out to her did not make her give up; instead it taught her to



be modest and happy. In September 1944, she was sent to Ravensbrück Concentration Camp for Women. There she continued her mission by caring for her fellow prisoners, teaching them and having weekly literary meetings. Already suffering again from her lungs, Natalia was sure she would die, but she did not despair, for she believed that her death would be God's will and therefore bring about good.

### Death in a Gas Chamber

Of course there were no priests in this women's camp. Natalia herself led a religious service on Palm Sunday, 1945. But during the week she became so weak and sick. On Good Friday 1945, she climbed up a stool in the barracks and spoke to the prisoners on the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. Two days later, on Easter Sunday, 31 March, she was killed in a gas chamber and then her body was burnt. The concentration camp was liberated two days later.

### Prison Ministry

I admire this young Blessed Natalia Tulasiewicz's courage. What was it that made her to remain so firm in her decision? It's just her pure love for God whom she encountered in her life. As I was penning down this article, I think about each lay woman/man involved in Prison Ministry India. Setting aside all their daily activities, they stand hours together in-front of the prison gates to get permission to enter. We thank all PMI lay volunteers who render their services for the men/women behind bars and their families. What motivates you

to do this? I'm convinced, it's your pure love for God that takes you through the prison gates and you encounter our God within prison walls. Blessed Natalia was one of the only two lay women among the 108 Martyrs of World War II, beatified on 13 June 1999 by Pope John Paul II. As lay women/men, if you feel the call to encounter God behind prison walls, get up, get ready, walk and stoop through the prison gates! Our God who was born in a manger, died on a cross is waiting for your loving visit.

## Human Life

Sr Carmina

Human life beautiful creation of God  
Lived in freedom and glory  
We become slaves of our mind  
With the clutches of life situation.

Why me is the question that I ask  
When life throws at me it's tougher side  
Where I am to hide myself is the thought  
But life has its plan to sail the boat in the troubled water.

Life has given opportunity to grow into a human with emotions  
To live for the other human  
To come out of my clutches and set myself free  
Oh how good is God who works wonders.

Let me be free to set others free  
Let me be love to lead others into love  
Let me be light to brighten others path  
Let me be way to guide others to God.



# Meaning of Life

Crisda Rodriguez

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World's most famous fashion designer and writer, Crisda Rodriguez, wrote this article before she passed away from cancer:

1. I had the world's most expensive car brand in my garage but now I'm traveling in a wheelchair.
2. My house is full of all kinds of designers clothing, shoes and valuables. But my body is wrapped in a small sheet of cloth provided by the hospital.
3. There is enough money in the bank. But now I'm not benefiting from that money.
4. My house is like a palace but I'm lying in a double size bed in a hospital.
5. I can go from five-star hotel to another five-star hotel. But now I'm spending time moving from lab to lab in hospital.
6. I signed hundreds of people. Doctor's note today is my signature.
7. I had seven jewelleries to decorate my hair - now I don't have hair on my head.
8. With a private jet, I can fly wherever I want. But now I need two people's help to get to the hospital patio.
9. Although there are many foods, but my diet has two tablets a day and a few drops of salt at night.
10. This house, this car, this jet, this furniture, so many bank accounts, so much reputation and fame, none of them are useful.
11. None of all valuables could give me relief.

The real meaning of life is about knowing our Savior JESUS CHRIST, serving Him is the best thing that we can do. JESUS is the answer for everything. He alone can satisfy our life”.





## Reaching Out to Those Behind Bars: Prison Ministry Becomes 'Vibrant Movement' Across India's Catholic Church



Anto Akkara <sup>1</sup>

Initiated by a pair of seminarians more than 40 years ago, Prison Ministry India is now a nationwide effort, with more than 8,000 volunteers serving inmates in 1,300 jails. A casual talk between two seminarians about visiting prisons, while on phone-attending duty four decades ago, has flourished into a massive network recognized by the Indian Church. Nearly 500 hundred delegates engaged in reaching out to prisoners and their families across India attended the recent 13th general assembly of Prison Ministry India (PMI). PMI's leadership

includes a special office of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), guided by a chaplain bishop.

"Glad to share that the prison ministry has become vibrant movement in the Church," said Father Francis Kodiyan, PMI's national coordinator, welcoming the delegates to the Nov.16-19 convention in Goa. Father Kodiyan, a priest of the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, initiated the prison ministry with Father Varghese Karipperry of the Archdiocese of



National Catholic Register December 13, 2022.



Thrissur when they were in the Kottayam seminary in 1981. It was there, at Kottayam in Kerala, that they began their visits to jails.

With more than 8,000 registered volunteers — including priests, nuns and laypeople — the prison ministry has grown exponentially since then. Its teams now fan out to 1,300 prisons across the country, housing more than 600,000 prisoners, counseling the inmates and facilitating and supporting the education of the children of those behind bars. Along with that, PMI runs occupational programs for inmates as well as 20 homes for children of prisoners and another 20 homes for the rehabilitation of released prisoners. Father Kariperry, co-founder and first national coordinator of the movement, recounted to the Register how it evolved from weekly jail visits from Kottayam seminary to other seminaries and recognition by the Kerala Catholic Bishops Council in 1989 and CBCI in 1994.

Of the nearly 1,200 ex-prisoners who stayed at the Snehashram (Home of Love) — the first prisoner-rehabilitation center set up at Thrissur — at least half of them are “now leading normal family lives,” Father Kariperry said. “Serving prisoners is serving suffering Christ,” Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao, patriarch of Goa, said in his Nov. 16 presidential address to the assembly, setting the tone for the assembly proceedings. “The Pope has shown the path for us.” Calling for reintegrating prisoners into society after their release, Cardinal Ferrao pointed out how Pope Francis went to jail and kissed the feet of the prisoners on Holy Thursday.

“It is an unforgettable lesson in courage and Christian compassion. We have the duty to reach out to those behind bars,” Cardinal Ferrao exhorted.

### Transformed by Love

“It was this kissing of the feet that changed my life,” Vethalam Babu, a native of the Christian heartland of Kerala with a record of dozens of criminal convictions, including homicide stemming from street fights, testified at the assembly. After repeated visits to the “drunkard, drug addict and rowdy” Babu, Catholic couple Jolly Varghese and his wife, Nimmy, took him in 2000 to noted preacher and social worker Father George Kuttickal, founder of the movement Aakasa Paravakal (Friends of Birds of AIR), which cares for social outcasts.

“When the saintly Father knelt and kissed my feet saying, ‘I see Jesus in you,’ it melted me. That [act] transformed me and changed my life,” the 67-year-old Babu told the Register. Soon, Babu’s house in the slums became a center for Rosary prayers, and his misbehaving friends also started attending the prayer gathering. “I ensured that the prayer gathering continued for long, and all had a simple dinner, without anyone going to liquor shops to throw away their daily earnings,” recounted Babu, who is now known as “Eeso” (Jesus) Babu, partly in recognition of his long beard as well as his Christian discipleship.

His three-decade-long association with



the prison ministry has been a “spiritually enriching experience” for Walter Kamble, a government railway officer who heads the ministry in his Nasik Diocese near Mumbai. “Jail officials cautioned us not to approach a hardened prisoner,” Kamble told the Register about one inmate who was transformed by his encounters. “But he was so touched with our regular visits, he came a Christian and now leads a happy life as a preacher.”

### **The Contribution of Nuns**

“Prison ministry is a most compelling ministry, and prisoners treat us like angels,” Sister of St. Anne Inigo Joachim, who is engaged in visiting New Delhi’s Tihar Jail, the most crowded prison in the country, with more than 12,000 inmates, told last month’s conference. When she was superior general of the Sisters of St. Anne in Chennai, Sister Inigo had heard inspiring testimonies of nuns who volunteered for prison ministry. “So, my term ended; I opted for prison ministry and moved to Delhi in 2002,” the nun, who was a “special invitee” to the 1994 Synod of Bishops, told the Register.

“Incarceration must give every opportunity for prisoners to accept their own guilt and acknowledge their need for repentance and reformation. It is the duty of the government to make sure that prisoners enjoy the fundamental and basic human rights,” said the mission statement of the PMI convention. Pinpointing “serious problems to be remedied,” PMI urged the government to take “immediate action” to end overcrowding, corruption, delay in trial,

neglect of health and hygiene, and address the large percentage of undertrials [pre-trial detainment] in prisons.”

“Let us not forget that repentance and reconciliation are acts of grace and spiritual warfare for overcoming our worldly challenges and struggles,” said Bishop Alwyn D’Silva, chairman of CBCI’s office for prison ministry. The bishop, who also serves as PMI’s chairman, called for strengthening the Masses, Eucharistic adorations, intercessory prayers, Rosaries and Divine Mercy Chaplets that are offered “for the fruitfulness of our PMI ventures.” In fact, the PMI assembly has started 24-hour “intercessory invocation,” for those languishing in jails and their family members, from its headquarters in Bangalore. “Our ministry is not just social service. It is rooted in prayer and divine intervention,” Father Kodiyan told the Register.

### **More Help Needed**

“Prison ministry in our region is not easy. We lack volunteers, finance and transport,” Ursuline Franciscan Sister Jobina, regional prison ministry coordinator for northeast India, told the assembly. Hence, PMI has resolved to increase the number of volunteers by 5,000 and urged India’s bishops “to launch many more initiatives for released prisoners, such as employment, housing, health care, marriage, shelter homes and homes for prisoners’ children.”

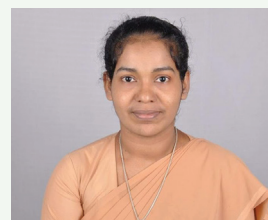


## Afshin Javid's Encounter with Jesus in Prison

“The God who forgave me, Jesus who redeemed me from the clutches of my sins, can also set you free from the clutches of your sins” says Afshin Javid, a former Hezbollah (an Islamic Militant Group) soldier who encountered Jesus while he was caught and put in jail in Malaysia. Afshin was born in 1972 in southern Iran in a city called Abadan. His earliest childhood memories were of the Islamic revolution in 1979. As a 15 year-old he crossed the desert walking into Pakistan and witnessed the poverty in Pakistan. He wanted to involve himself into more of Islamic works and so he joined Hezbollah and served as a soldier with them for 2 years in Pakistan. From 1990-1992 he spent time in Bangladesh as a missionary while waiting to move to Canada.

### Incarceration

Afshin moved to Malaysia, but was caught by Malaysian police because of his illegal passport. He was put in Jail and he taught Islam in jail, telling co-prisoners of what they must do and what their duties towards Allah were. In prison, he did his routine every day, prayed obviously five times a day with the intention of spending more time with God. Apart from these intensive prayers five times he also spent more time at the end of the day in prayers and recited many more extra prayers. He had the habit of reading the Quran, page to page once every 10 days. There are many words in the Quran repeated continually which had no meaning, but are the secrets of the Quran. One night, as he was meditating on these



**Sr Lini Sheeja MSC**

words, a spirit entered his room that was much more powerful than he could handle or overcome. He was filled with fear and so he tried using words from the Quran and prayed in the name of Allah.

### Encountering Jesus in the Dark Cell

But nothing helped Afshin at that moment. He was totally desperate and felt like something was choking him. He felt like he was dying in the cell. He cried out to the heavens and he heard a clear voice saying, Bring the name of Jesus. He didn't give a second thought. Afshin Javid says in his words, if someone is drowning and sees a rope, he would never question about the colour of the rope, but rather he will just grab the rope. So he said, “Jesus, if you are truth, show me yourself”. And to this day, he cannot comprehend why he said these words at that moment instead of saying, “Jesus, help me”. Before he could finish saying Jesus, if you are the truth, show me yourself, everything was back to normal.

### Not Conversion, but Confusion

This was not Afshin's conversion, but rather the beginning of confusion. Why would Jesus help a Muslim, was his question. All his life, he had done his best to be a good Muslim, he did everything in the ways of Allah and even to be a martyr for Allah. He didn't find answer for two weeks of why Jesus came to help him. And finally, he decided to fast and pray and ask God to



reveal His ways to him. He sat down in the prison cell and prayed for hours together! But, did he find an answer? He found no answer even after two weeks. The greatest sin one can commit in Islam which is unforgivable is doubting Allah, doubting his teaching. He did this now. But, suddenly a bright light filled his room and he covered his head in his arms and cried out asking Allah to forgive him.

### **Afshin Javid in His Words**

Afshin Javid testifies in his words, “As I was crying out to the Lord asking me to forgive me, I felt the touch of someone on my shoulders and saying to me I forgive you. The very instant those words were spoken, I physically felt forgiven and I couldn’t understand. Who is this God, saying to me I forgive you and I feel forgiven? With much perplexity when I asked, who are you? I heard the voice saying, I am the way, the truth and the life. The moment I heard these words, I understood it as something special, but I had no idea what those words meant and had no clue who this God was! I asked Him, what’s your name and I heard the answer, Jesus Christ the living God. The moment Jesus spoke these words; I just fell on my face to the ground weeping in His presence. I just wept and wept!

### **Send me O Lord!**

I was taught in my religion to kill in the way of Allah, but today I hear from Jesus to love in the way of Jesus, to forgive in the way of Jesus. Jesus revealed to me that God is all about forgiveness and love. After weeping for two hours in the prison cell, I stood at Jesus’ feet. Jesus asked me to look up and the moment I looked up, I saw people from all different generations, nationalities and backgrounds. Every single person I saw,

I could see every single wrong they have done and I said to Jesus, God, I live among all these people, all sinners, I am a sinner. Jesus made me to realize how easily I am being forgiven by Him and He conveyed a powerful message to me that He is a God who forgives every sinner the way He forgave me. He asked me, who will convey this message of my forgiveness to the people? I said, Send me O Lord! And Jesus said, Go! That’s how I became a Christian.

### **Jesus, the Provider**

I asked Jesus to give me a Bible and in the jail someone from the other section walked up to me, giving a book to me saying, Take it! This is what you asked for! I was shaken up at once. The man who gave me the Bible was an Indian and I spoke Urdu and Hindi with him. When he gave it me, I knew it was the Bible! I said to the Lord, Lord, last night I asked for the Bible and this morning you send it for me. You are a mighty God. You are a provider that you provide so quickly.

### **Jesus: A God of Love and Forgiveness**

I don’t expect anybody to become a Christian because of my testimony; my testimony is only good for me. I only want people to know that the Almighty God who is all able, who is searching for all seeking hearts and who loves all humanity with all His strength and power is Jesus. If you are reading my testimony, I only want you to know, the God who forgave me, Jesus who redeemed me from the clutches of my sins and assured me that I can be in heaven with Him, can also assure you of the same and make you taste the same forgiveness and love. May glory be to Him today and forever! Afshin Javid is the founding member of I AM Thirsty Ministries in Vancouver.



# The ways Prison Ministry promotes church growth



BY WENDY  
PEREIRA

Prison ministry offers unique vital opportunities for personal spiritual growth because volunteers personally get involved even immersed in the gospel basics witnessing Bible teaching counseling worship and encouragement. And when the church members catch fire for the Lord it won't be long before the church grows.

I never shared my faith with anyone until I got involved with Prison Ministry. Prison work taught me the true meaning of forgiveness, repentance and restoration. My prayer life has a new lease on life due to jail ministry.

These comments from the recent prison ministry volunteer's captures some of the joys and spiritual excitement of this strategically important church ministry. Prison ministry offers unique vital opportunities for personal spiritual growth because volunteers personally get

involved even immersed in the gospel basics witnessing Bible teaching counseling worship and encouragement. And when the church members catch fire for the Lord it won't be long before the church grows.

Let's explore some core impacts Prison Ministry can have on the local churches

Prison Ministry is the largest harvest field.

There are a more than a hundred inmates genuinely seeking change, stability and love in their lives. Many inmates acknowledge that coming to prison was the best

thing that ever happened to them, because they encountered Christ.

Prison Ministry wonderfulness for revitalizing the spiritual lives of volunteers.

There is nothing like sharing the gospel to open ears, teaching the word to the thirsty minds and praying for people with broken hearts to rev up one's spiritual life and commitment. And the newfound spiritual enthusiasm of a prison volunteers is infectious. Quickly spreading throughout his/ her Sunday school class and network.

Prison Ministry Breathes new



life into Church evangelism and outreach programs.

Unfortunately, many evangelism and visitation programs are stillborn or impotent because charged-up church members have so few genuine opportunities to share their faith and see God reap the harvest. Doors are shut in their face, invitations rejected and the same prospect cards endlessly recycled. In Prison ministry by contrast, spiritually hungry inmates come to the Christian volunteer often in bountiful numbers and all under the careful supervision and organization of the authorities.

Prison Minister enhances worship.

Many Prison volunteers received a renewed vision for worship while attending church services behind the walls. When repentant Christians of all colour, creed, religion meet together to express their love for Christ and joy in being spiritual brothers things happen. Prison worship is never characterized by stale routine or manufactured emotion- inmates definitely see themselves as God's chosen people, not God's frozen people.

Prison Ministry gets church Members off the pews and outside church walls.

Christians of all backgrounds, educational level and varieties of spiritual gifts participate in prison/ jail ministry. Men and women young and old all have a place

## Prison ministry teaches deep spiritual lessons such as how to forgive, how to restore and how to really pray reminding that God does the working in Prison ministry.

chosen by God to serve. And prison work is never far away.

Prison ministry teaches deep spiritual lessons such as how to forgive, how to restore and how to really pray reminding that God does the working in Prison ministry. It also teaches very practical lessons about listening, patience and cross cultural communication and theological diversity among Christians.

### The Dos of Prison Ministry

Do remember that inmates are human beings just like everyone else. The only difference between us and inmates is that we didn't get caught for our crimes.

Do team up with at least one another person preferably a group of volunteers. In approaching prison Ministry, Christians are to

be commended when they work together and thus pray with a common spirit and mind.

Do show love and respect for all inmates including those who want nothing to do with religion and those who may not give you a kind of reception,

Do invite and mentor other church members to share in your prison ministry blessings. Sometimes a personalized invitation to get involved is the only thing keeping a church member from participating in Prison Ministry.

Do expect to make a real difference in the lives of prison inmates even if you are not an experienced soul winner or veteran prayer warrior soul. God equips all Christians to carry on his essential work,

Above all prison ministry is a shower of blessing for all those involved. You can experience the wonder and joy of leading people to Christ and seeing them start their lives over in ways productive to society and pleasing to God. You see prayers answered in timely and miraculous ways strengthening your personal life. You experience complete dependence on God for ministry success after realizing that nothing lasting happens in prison through purely human effort and striving. You come to understand deep down inside the awful nature and consequences of sin and the unique role of Christ in creating new creatures. Prison ministry shows us why indeed we are all brothers and sisters united in Christ.

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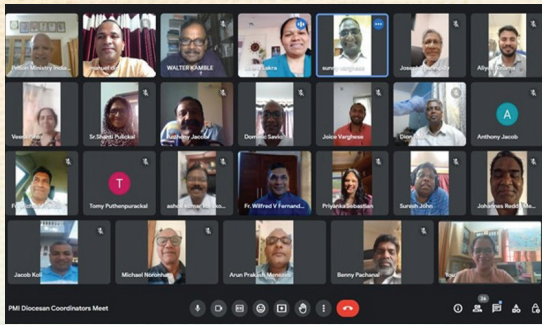
### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

She is a graduate from Military College, Pune University. Masters in Journalism n Mass Communication from symbiosis international college Pune. Sub editor with Times of India Mumbai. Deputy director for communication nformation with health and family welfare Directorate of Health Services. Regular casual announcer with All India Radio, Panjim.

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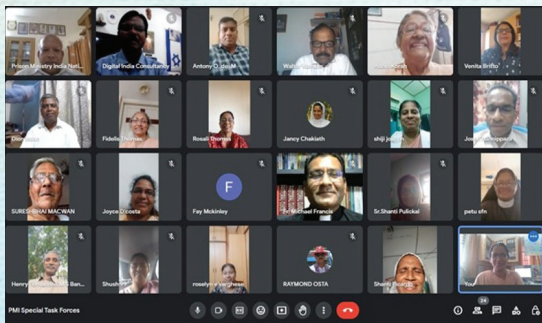




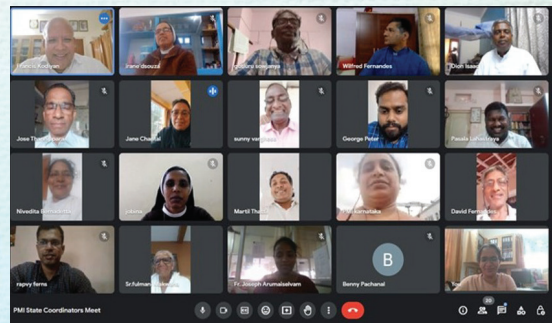
**PMI Diocesan Coordinators Meet.**



**Hearty Welcome to  
Fr Ronald Richard, Chennai.**



**PMI Special Task Force Meet.**



**PMI State Coordinators' Meet.**



**Seminar for Prisoners' Children,  
PMI, Kerala.**



**PMI Summer Camp, Kochi.**



**PMI Volunteers Visiting  
Siliguri Special Correctional Home.**



**PMI Volunteers' Visit to  
Central Jail, Baroda.**





**PMI Volunteers' Visit to Simla Prison.**



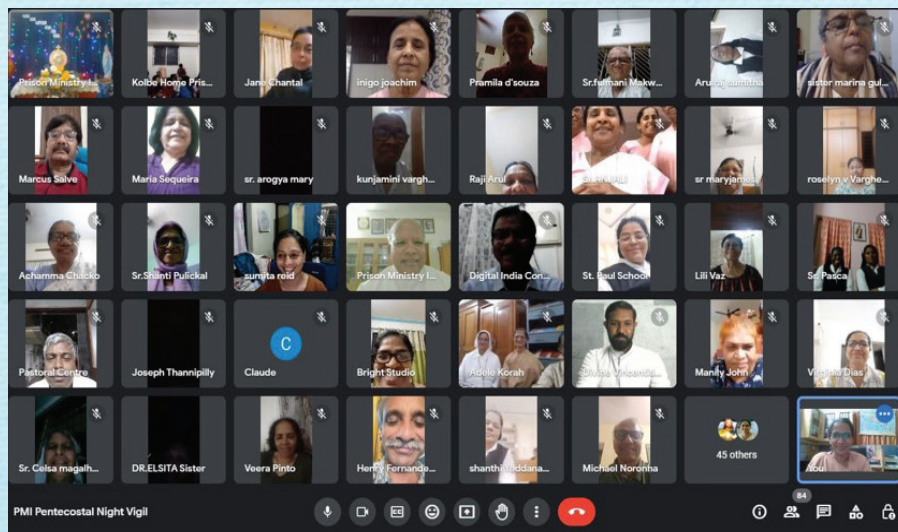
**PMI Participation in UNODC.**



**Prisoners' Children Gathering, PMI Kerala.**



**PMI Volunteers' Visit to Special Sub Jail KGF.**



**PMI Pentecostal Night Vigil.**





**Silver Jubilee wishes to  
Sr Therese Maschiranhass.**



**PMI Housing Project for  
Santhosh, Odisha.**



**Hearty Congratulations to  
Jovana SCS for her  
Final Profession.**



**Farewell to Ernakulam  
Sub Jail Superintendent.**



**Welcome to Adilabad Missionaries.**



**Welcome to Sr. Marceline SCS to  
Kolbe Home.**