

## Are You Willing?

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

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

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

### BANK DETAILS

A/c Name : Prison Ministry India  
Bank : South Indian Bank  
Branch : Sarjapura Road  
A/c No : 0416053000001419  
IFSC Code : SIBL0000518

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# REFORMATIVE EXPLORATIONS

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

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Volume 8 01 January 2022 Number 1



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## **PRISON MINISTRY INDIA: RUBY JUBILEE REVIEW**

**Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS**

Prison Ministry India has completed glorious forty years of serving the lost and the incarcerated. We celebrated the Ruby Jubilee by offering a thanksgiving Holy Mass and realizing the Ruby Jubilee projects such as 4 new Kolbe Homes, 40 houses for released prisoners, 40 special task forces, 400 scholarships to prisoners' children, releasing 400 prisoners and so on. As we move on from Ruby to Golden jubilee, I am reminded of the Divine interventions that strengthened us to march ahead through the history of PMI.

### **BE A LOVE BOMB**

It was 8 September 1981. I was a first-year philosophy student at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam, Kerala. Varghese and I were attending the phone calls that came to the seminary. Sitting in the telephone cabin, we discussed about the atomic bomb. Varghese told me that what we needed was an 'L bomb' or the love bomb. In response I told him that it was true the world needed a love bomb but Jesus had already exploded it on Calvary. Varghese added that when the atom bombs exploded in Hiroshima and Nagasaki thousands were killed, and because of its radiation thousands became blind, deaf, and lame. I retorted that on the contrary because of Jesus' love bomb explosion on Calvary, i.e., his

crucifixion, millions were able to rise from the dead and come to new life. While we continued talking, we experienced a deep ideological agreement and a profound inner unity much like that of the early Christians who were with “one mind and one heart” (Acts 4, 32). Then and there we decided to become love bombs not to kill but to heal the broken hearted.

### **CONVERSION OF SINNERS**

In 1983 I went to the Elijah Ashram, Niravilpuzha in the Wayanad district of Kerala to pray alone for a week. It was a marvelous estate with hills, valleys and brooks filled with coconut, pepper, coffee and cardamom plantations. There, in the chapel, sitting close to the Blessed Sacrament from morning till evening I read the Bible and prayed silently looking at the Eucharistic Jesus. On the evening of Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 1983, from a profound communion with the Lord, there emerged a great challenge, an inner call, a great God experience within asking me, “Why can’t you dedicate your life to the conversion of sinners?” The life force and divine energy to dedicate my life for the incarcerated came from this God experience.

### **KOTTAYAM SUB JAIL**

On 13 June 1985 we visited Abhaya Bhavan of the MC Sisters. On our way back we noticed the Kottayam Sub Jail and felt inclined to visit the prisoners inside. We asked the prison guards about the possibility. The guards told us to submit a written application to the superintendent. But when we submitted the application, it was denied outright. This denial was painful but we were determined to visit it at any cost. While we were returning to the seminary with that decisive plan and reflecting on how to make this prison visit possible, I noticed a board that read Prison Fellowship India, near

Kalathippady. I turned to Varghese and said, “It might be something related to prison. Why don’t we go there next Thursday and see what it is”? Next Thursday on 20 June 1985 we went to the office of Prison Fellowship India. Mr John Kurian welcomed us. We shared with him our desire to visit the prison. On the following Thursday we visited the Kottayam prison together with them for the first time. That was a great beginning.

### **DIVINE PROVIDENCE**

In 1986 we had been working hard to prepare for the All-Kerala Prison Pilgrimage. Annual exams were at hand. One thing was worrying us very much. Money! We did not have sufficient money for the journey, food and accommodation. Once, while I was studying, one of my friends came and told me, “The Postman is searching for you; there is a money order for you”. Wondering who might be sending money to me, I ran to the postman. Unbelievable! The postman gave me two hundred rupees. There was a message on the money order coupon, “For your prison apostolate, a friend from Oman”. Overwhelmed with the joy of Divine Providence, I ran to my friends and shared this wonderful divine experience with them. Divine Providence has been a never-ending presence and it continues so even today.

### **ALAPPATT FASHION JEWELRY**

It was then 28 April 1991. There were only two more days left for giving the advance amount for acquiring the land for Snehashramam, Thrissur. We were in need of fifty thousand rupees. On that evening I went to Alappatt Fashion Jewelry at Mahatma Gandhi Road, Ernakulam. Mr Jose and Mr Manu owned this jewelry shop. Giving them the recommendation letter from Mar Joseph Kundukulam, I told them that we



needed urgently fifty thousand rupees. Immediately Mr Jose gave me a packet containing fifty thousand rupees. “Oh God of PMI! what an act of providence!”. This was the genesis of PMI Rehabilitation centers.

## ICCPPC

I was attending the Ninth World Congress of the International Catholic Commission of Prison Pastoral Care (ICCPPC) held in Warsaw, Poland from 7-12 September 1996 at the Metropolitan Seminary. After my sharing regarding the high-rate success of reformation and reintegration of prisoners in India many expressed unbelief and dismay and asked for proof, statistics and written documents. This awakened in me the need for a research centre and a research magazine. The result was RRDC and *Reformative Explorations* we launched in 2003.

## VAN THUAN HOME

On 8 November 2019 the Vatican dicastery for the Integral Human Development invited me to present a paper on the *Initiatives and Contributions of Prison Ministry India* to the participants of an international conference for worldwide prison chaplains. During this conference His Eminence Peter Cardinal Turkson, the president of the dicastery gave me a precious gift – the relic of Venerable Francis Xavier Cardinal Van Thuan who was in solitary confinement for 13 years in Vietnam. While placing this relic in the PMI national office chapel I was inspired to establish Van Thuan Home – a rehabilitation centre for released men prisoners in Bangalore.

## SPECIAL TASK FORCES

On 12 December 2019, I was waiting at the inner gate of

Tihar Prison number 5 to celebrate Christmas with the prisoners. While I was waiting in prayer, a police bus came near to us and many police personnel came out of it carrying special guns together with some prisoners chained on their legs, hands and waist. I felt frightened. But soon I understood that they were some hardcore criminals like terrorists or serial killers and within me there sprout the powerful message “PMI is called to seek and save them too”. I shared this mission with PMI volunteers in Bangalore and decided to launch PMI special task forces. On 22 December 2019, together with Sr Adele Korah, Sr Rose Alexander and Sr Lini Sheeja MSC we went to Aradhanankunju at Carmelaram, Bengaluru, a contemplative community who have perpetual Eucharistic adoration. After spending many hours in Eucharistic contemplation and adoration, we launched the PMI Special Task Forces.

### **INCESSANT INTERCESSORY INVOCATION FOR THE INCARCERATED**

In September 2020 Mrs Rowena Luis former PMI Maharashtra state secretary invited me to give a message to their intercessory prayer group members. In Dongri, Mumbai PMI volunteers pray daily for half an hour interceding for the reformation of prisoners and for the fruitfulness of PMI volunteers’ endeavors. This was the initiative of Mrs Rowena Luis and can be followed by every PMI unit. During my message I was inspired to launch the Incessant Intercessory Online Invocation for the Incarcerated for the reformation of worldwide prisoners. I consulted about this with our Chairman Most Rev Allwyn D’Silva and he was glad to give the green signal. Mr Daryl Gandhi came forward to sponsor the zoom payments and he himself arranged everything for the online intercessory prayer.

## CONCLUSION

The past forty years of PMI have been filled with amazing experiences of divine providence and whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Let's hope and trust that the next four decades of PMI will also be filled with incredible interventions and inspirations of divine providence with its marvelous care and protection.

## IMAGINING PRISON ABOLITION, REIMAGINING REFORMS

Saranga Ugalmugle, Ancy Susan George,  
Manu Sharma, Akshay Thorat,  
Sumit Kumar Ganguly & VNS Meenakshi

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Despite the challenges posed due to the COVID 19 pandemic, we were able to engage with various stakeholders for our project. To begin with, we would like to thank Sukanya Shantha and Baljeet Kaur for speaking with us before our field engagement commenced. It is through them that we managed to identify and connect with various stakeholders for our project. We are inspired by all the organizations and individuals who have worked for the rights of prisoners. We thank representatives from Prison Ministry India, Detention Solidarity Network, Quill Foundation, Project 39 A, Justice Initiative, and Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

We thank the human rights defenders, Sr. Adv. Mihir Desai, Adv. Vijay Hiremath, Adv. Sahana Manjesh, K.R. Raja and our batchmate Adv. Robin Christopher. Their dedication to fighting for justice is inspiring. We are grateful to former prison official Radhakant Saxena. Despite his ailing condition, his enthusiastic and encouraging conversation on persistently pushing for reforms was motivating. We would also like to convey our gratitude to the researchers and academicians -

Prof. Murali Karnam, Prof. Vijay Raghvan, Shailza Sharma, Saumya Dadoo, Shailesh Kumar, and Prof. Pratiksha Baxi. Their understanding and analysis of the prison system, the criminal justice system, and its links with the relation between the state and citizens, were insightful and enriching.

We are deeply grateful to Waqar, Paiman, and Zakir (names changed) for agreeing to speak with us. Their resilience and courage to survive through their wrongful incarceration, and commitment to speak for others wrongfully incarcerated are inspiring. We are thankful to Martha (name changed) for sharing her experience in a women's prison and her perspective on a world without prisons. We would also like to thank Sahba Husain, who shared her experience as a family member of a prisoner. She also provided her insights as a researcher and an activist.

Most importantly, we would like to convey our heartfelt gratitude to our project supervisor, Dr. Shrimoyee Ghosh, for her critical engagement with our project, constant guidance, and encouragement. Lastly, we thank the Law and Policy Hub coordinators Dr. Champaka Rajagopal and Meena P. for their support.

## **ABSTRACT**

It is difficult to imagine contemporary society without crime and hence without prisons. Prison abolitionist movement in the West challenges this truism. It recognises that prisons form a pervasive hegemonic form of punishment in a society where fear and anxiety about 'crime' is constructed by the state - which diverts our attention from structural issues and social circumstances which lead to these 'crimes'. Prisons become a way for the state and society to shed their responsibility in creating conditions of a more equitable and just life for all.

This research attempts to build a case for prison abolition in the Indian context. It challenges the inevitability and permanence attached to state incarceration as a vital part of the criminal justice system. The study asks, despite numerous proposed prison reforms, why do prisons mirror-overcrowding; over-representation of people from socially and economically disadvantaged communities; appalling medical health facilities; et. al? It examines the deep-rooted systemic issues which plague the prison system in India and how the prison system perpetuates discrimination and oppression of certain communities, based on caste, class or religion and takes an aggravated form in a systematic level.

The study begins with ‘Understanding Prison Abolition’ where it explores the conceptual basis of the abolitionist argument. Drawing from arguments of abolitionists and the field research interviews, the research provides a framework for an abolitionist perspective. It then examines the ‘modern prison system and its structured violence.’ This part initially looks at the colonial origin and continuity of prisons in India. It then examines the structural issues that plague Indian prisons. Herein, the analysis relies on data from government and non-governmental organisations to highlight the demographic representations in the prisons and how space, bodies, and minds of the prisoners are controlled. It also relies on various interviews conducted during the fieldwork to substantiate the structural issues of prisons and highlight the experiences of those incarcerated. The study asks whether crime is prevented through mere incarceration of “criminals” or whether efforts for a just and equitable society lie outside of prisons. The study then proceeds towards ‘Reimagining reforms’ in which it brings out the relations between reforms and abolitionist perspectives, not being exclusive of each other. Thereafter the report suggests particular interventions that

an abolitionist perspective enables. The study finds that the challenges to the prison system are not a mere issue with a malfunction of the system, but a result of an inherently coercive structure that functions on control and marginalization.

## INTRODUCTION

The NCRB Prison Statistics of India (PSI) Report, 2019 reflects overcrowding in prisons as the number of prisoners was 118.5% of the prison capacity, the highest since 2010.<sup>1</sup> The India Justice Report (IJR) suggests that 19 out of 36 states and union territories in India had an occupancy rate above 100%.<sup>2</sup> Though the government data of 2020 has not been released yet, news reports suggest that there was an increase in prison population during the pandemic.<sup>3</sup> To reduce this problem of overcrowding, the Indian government plans to build more prisons. The central government plans to spend 1800 crores on 199 new prisons while different state governments are also taking similar measures.<sup>4</sup> The purpose behind the said proposal is “to counter rising criminal activities and radicalization of inmates due to overcrowding in jails.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kawoosa, V.M. (2020, September 09). Prison overcrowding in 2019 highest in 10 years. *The Hindustan Times*, India News. Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/prison-overcrowding-in-2019-highest-in-10-years/story-Mm8VGVG0J12zFvqC9rRFZJ.html>

<sup>2</sup> Raghavan, V. Prisons and the pandemic: the panopticon plays out. *J. Soc. Econ. Dev.* (2020). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40847-020-00127-9>.

<sup>3</sup> Bokil, A., Sonavane, K., Bej, S. (2020, November 02). Push for repopulation of prisons during a pandemic is reckless. *The Indian Express*, Opinion column. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/coronavirus-jail-inmates-parole-6912890/>.

<sup>4</sup> Indo-Asian News Service (2019, September 18). Centre To Spend 1,800 Crore On 199 New Prisons Across Country. *NDTV*. Retrieved from <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/centre-to-spend-rs-1-800-crore-on-199-new-prisons-across-country-2102657>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*.

We started our research by identifying these challenges to the prison system in India. Despite various proposed reforms, why do we still see - overcrowding; over-representation of people from socially and economically disadvantaged communities; shameful medical health facilities; et. al? This is when we encountered the question posed by Angela Davis in her book - ‘Are prisons obsolete?’<sup>6</sup> Through her analysis from an abolitionist perspective, we were inspired to ‘imagine prison abolition; reimagine reforms.’ The abolitionist perspective pushed us to look into the modern prison system’s foundations and further contextualize it with the Indian prison system.

Through this research, we ask whether building more prisons addresses the issues of structural violence<sup>7</sup> in society? We argue that building new prisons to incarcerate citizens is a perpetuation of the existing system which allows the state to increasingly criminalise, penalise and incarcerate its citizens. We seek to question the inevitability and permanence attached to state incarceration as a vital part of the criminal justice system.

## CHAPTERISATION

In Part I of the report - ‘Understanding Prison Abolition’ - we explore the conceptual basis of the abolitionist argument.

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<sup>6</sup> Davis, A. Seven Stories Press, New York. (2003). Are Prisons Obsolete? Retrieved from [https://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Angela-Davis-Are\\_Prisons\\_Obsolete.pdf](https://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Angela-Davis-Are_Prisons_Obsolete.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> “Structural violence refers to a form of violence wherein social structures or social institutions harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. Although less visible, it is by far the most lethal form of violence, through causing excess deaths—deaths that would not occur in more equal societies.” See for clarification: Lee, B. (2019) ‘Violence: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Causes, Consequences and Cures. ‘DOI:10.1002/9781119240716 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781119240716.ch7>



This part will help the reader understand the challenge posed to the pervasiveness and inevitability of prisons as a form of punishment. Drawing from arguments of abolitionists and our interviewees, we provide a framework for an abolitionist perspective. Part II of the report is ‘Modern prison system and its structured violence.’ This part initially looks at the colonial origin and continuity of prisons in India. It then examines the structural issues that plague Indian prisons. Herein, our analysis relies on data from the government and various organisations to highlight the demographic representations in the prisons and how the space, bodies, and minds of the prisoners are controlled. We have relied on various interviews conducted during the fieldwork to substantiate the structural issues of prisons and highlight experiences of those incarcerated. We ask if crimes are prevented through mere incarceration of “criminals” or whether efforts for a just and equitable society lie outside of prisons. Part III - ‘Reimagining reforms’ - This is the concluding part of the report. The first half brings out the relations between reforms and abolitionist perspectives, not being exclusive of each other. The second half includes particular interventions that an abolitionist perspective enables.

## **METHOD AND PARTICIPANTS**

Our research primarily relied on online interviews, given the possibility of pandemic restrictions. In over a month-long ‘field’ work in March 2021, we interviewed 20 participants who had either worked with prisoners, or experienced prison, or were academically engaged with the issues of incarceration.

The virtual mode of conducting ‘field’ research limited as well as expanded our research possibilities. Though the constraints of the pandemic limited our ability to visit prisons, to our benefit - it also expanded our geographical reach within

and outside the country.<sup>8</sup> We also realised that virtual interface limits the scope of building interpersonal trust, which often becomes crucial in interviews of sensitive nature.

Our primary research was through interviews that were qualitative and semi-structured. We interviewed one retired prison official<sup>9</sup> and five lawyers - human rights defenders and defence lawyers<sup>10</sup>, one of whom has exclusively raised issues related to prisoners in courts<sup>11</sup>. We also interviewed two

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<sup>8</sup> One of our interviewees was placed in Singapore and another was placed in the United Kingdom.

<sup>9</sup> Radhakant Saxena is the retired Inspector General of Prisons of Rajasthan. He is an Honorary Consultant of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI). He drafted the Rajasthan Prisoners Open Air Camp Rules, 1972 which was the first of its kind. He was the Director of the All India Committee on Jail Reforms (1980-83) headed by Justice A.N. Mulla.

<sup>10</sup> Adv Mihir Desai is a human rights lawyer who works in the cases of custodial death, mass murder and riots, wrongful incarcerations, fake encounter, freedom of speech etc. He is a senior counsel practicing in Bombay High Court. He also undertook cases of political activists and cases of state excesses in the form of mass disappearances and deaths and genocide probes. Desai is a co-founder of the Indian People Tribunal (IPT) and Human Rights Law Network (HRLN) and is a former Director of the India Center for Human Rights and Law.

\* Adv. Sahana Manjesh began litigating in Delhi in 2013 and practiced there for five years. She was associated with Project 39-A and represented people on death row. She was also a part of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative as a consultant for the Prison Reforms Programme. She co-founded 'Kranti' which was an initiative that aimed at mobilizing politically conscious students across the country. Currently, she practices in Mumbai and is also an independent researcher.

\* Adv. Vijay Hiremath is a lawyer and human rights activist based in Mumbai. He was the Senior Legal Officer of Lawyers Collective besides being the Assistant Director of India Centre of Human Rights and Law.

\* Adv. Robin Christopher J has been practicing in Bangalore and neighbouring districts since 2012. He has worked with prisoners in Bangalore, Tumkur and Shimoga prisons in Karnataka. Currently he is pursuing LL.M from Azim Premji university, Bangalore.

<sup>11</sup> K.R Raja is a psychiatrist and lawyer who is currently pursuing his LL.M currently from NALSAR, Hyderabad. He is the co-founder of Global Network for Equality. He has worked as a Psychiatric Social Worker in Palayamkottai Central Prison. He is skilled with psychiatric social work to redress problems among different sections of people such as people with HIV/AIDS and psychiatric illness, destitute, intellectually challenged children, abandoned elderly citizens, victims of organ trafficking and prisoners and their children. He has also filed various writs in relation to prison reform.

academicians,<sup>12</sup> independent researchers,<sup>13</sup> and representatives of 6 NGOs working on rights of prisoners<sup>14</sup> To understand

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<sup>12</sup> Dr. Murali Karnam - who has been researching on issues of human rights and Indian penal system. He has done his PhD on the history of prison reforms in India. He has published 3 Manuals on conditions of prisons in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka. He has extensively researched the history of the penal system and published a number of articles on prison practices in national journals for the past 20 years and worked for 6 years with CHRI. Prof. Murali has also been appointed as amicus by courts in matters related to prisons.

\* Shailesh Kumar - who is a Commonwealth Scholar working at the School of Law, Birkbeck College, University of London, as a Ph.D. candidate. His Ph.D. research is an empirical study of the operation of legal reforms intended to be brought by the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. He earned his M.Phil from JNU, New Delhi, India, as a Junior Research Fellow (funded by the UGC), his LL.M. from NALSAR, Hyderabad, India, and his B.A. LL.B. (Hons.) from CNLU, Patna, India. He has contributed the chapter 'Thinking Beyond Penal Reform in India: Questioning the Logic of Colonial Punishments' in the book *The Routledge International Handbook of Penal Abolition*.

<sup>13</sup> Detention Solidarity Network (DetSolNet) is an online space to critically engage with the structures and experiences of detention that constitute the carceral state in India. DetSolNet, with its focus on the lives of individuals and communities affected by detention, serves as both a repository of resources and a site of active reflection and learning. We interviewed Saumya Dadoo and Shailza Sharma. Saumya Dadoo is the founding editor of Detention Solidarity Network. She is an independent researcher with interests in prisons, colonial history, and gender and sexuality. She has worked at research and advocacy organisations like the Centre for Law and Policy Research and Majlis Legal Centre. Saumya is an incoming doctoral student at MESAAS, Columbia University. Shailza Sharma is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Politics at University of Exeter. She is a qualified lawyer based in Delhi and Chandigarh. Her academic interests include political resistance, social movements, women and resistance, and prisons and prison memoirs.

<sup>14</sup> Justice Initiative is a not for profit organization incorporated in November 2020. The organization has been working to build peer groups of released prisoners and psycho- social and economic wellbeing of released women prisoners in Karnataka. We interviewed Cecilia Davies and Siddharth Sangameswaran. Cecilia Davies is the co- Director of Justice Initiative in Bangalore. She comes from a social work and law background. She has done a Master's in social work with specialization in Criminology and Correctional Administration from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She has been working with prisons, particularly in Karnataka, for the last five years. Siddharth Sangameswaran is the co- Director of Justice Initiative in Bangalore. He is also studying law at the postgraduate level from the University of London.

\* Quill Foundation is an autonomous institution engaging in research and advocacy in India. Quill's core work revolves around pertinent issues of human rights, justice, and equity, faced by the underprivileged sections of the people of India,

the lived experience of prisoners we interviewed released prisoners<sup>15</sup> - 3 males and 1 female, and a family member of a

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especially Adivasis, Dalits, Muslims, women, sexual minorities and differently-abled persons. We interviewed Madhur Bhartiya and Sharib Ali. Madhur Bhartiya is an advocate and researcher at Quill Foundation, New Delhi. In her work with Quill she is looking at the database on terror prosecution cases, which is one of the flagship projects of quill foundation. She is also involved with the innocence network and citizens against hate. Sharib Ali is the co-founder of Quill Foundation, Innocence Network, India and Citizens Against Hate. He coordinates the research at Quill foundation.

- \* Project 39A is inspired by Article 39-A of the Indian Constitution, a provision that furthers the intertwined values of equal justice and equal opportunity by removing economic and social barriers. These are constitutional values of immense importance given the manner in which multiple disparities intersect to exclude vast sections of our society from effectively accessing justice. Using empirical research to re-examine practices and policies in the criminal justice system, Project 39A aims to trigger new conversations on legal aid, torture, forensics, mental health in prisons, and the death penalty. We interviewed Maitreyi Misra and Baljeet Kaur. Maitreyi Misra heads Project 39A's work on mental health and criminal justice along with leading the death penalty mitigation team. Baljeet Kaur works as an associate in the mitigation team with Project 39A. Before joining Project 39A in 2019, she worked with the Quill Foundation- Centre for Research and Advocacy based in New Delhi. She has engaged on the issues of social movements and its criminalisation, and rights of prisoners.
- \* Prison Ministry India is an organization based in Bangalore and having centres across India, which aims at reconciliation and rehabilitation of prisoners and their children.
- \* Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an international NGO that works for the practical realisation of human rights throughout the Commonwealth. It is headquartered in New-Delhi, India, with offices in London, UK, and Accra, Ghana. We interviewed Madhurima Dhanuka, who is the Programme Head of Prison Reforms at Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.
- <sup>15</sup> Waqar (name changed) was wrongfully incarcerated for 13 years and he is now working on prison reforms.
- \* Paiman (name changed) is a released prisoner who was wrongfully imprisoned in a blast case. After 14 years of litigation, the High Court dismissed his case.
- \* Zakir (name changed) and his brother were wrongfully accused in a bomb blast case and later in train blasts cases across the country. They were convicted by the TADA Court. Zakir spent 14 years in prison while his brother spent 23 years. The story of wrongful incarceration of these two brothers tells us about systemic failure and how our courts continue to accept confessions in police custody as evidence.
- \* Ms. Martha (name changed) is a released prisoner in Bangalore. She is currently working with an organisation that works for released prisoners.

prisoner<sup>16</sup>. The released prisoners belonged to religious minorities - all of whom were educated and belonged to middle class economic backgrounds. We identified these former prisoners through the organisations we interviewed. Our secondary research includes a brief analysis of the existing literature on the history of the prison system in India, the situation of prisons in the post-independence period, the impact of caste, class, and religion in incarceration, and on prison abolition to understand historical and theoretical underpinnings of the prison system in India, and the prison abolition movement in the West.

Despite the over-representation of socially and economically impoverished castes and communities in the prisons, we were unable to interview prisoners belonging to such castes and communities. To elaborate on this issue, we have relied on our interviews, reports of government, organisations, news reports as well as literature tracing the historical targeting of socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Further, the field interviews do not include prosecution lawyers and victims due to time and accessibility constraints. We acknowledge that these could be considered as potential limitations of our project. We, however, feel that our research is relevant and valid because the research seeks to examine the inevitability of prisons and the inherent structural violence it perpetuates.

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<sup>16</sup> Sahba Husain is an independent researcher and women's rights activist. She is also a family member of one of the undertrial prisoners charged under UAPA. For the last two decades, she has travelled extensively in Jammu and Kashmir, documenting the social consequences of armed conflict, mass violence and militarization on individuals, families and communities, with a special focus on women. Her earlier research focused on problems of working women in the organized and unorganized sectors in several states of India and on the impact of development policies on women's social, political and economic status.

## PART I: UNDERSTANDING PRISON ABOLITION

Foucault explains how the “carceral continuum” in the form of prisons symbolises modern society. He argues that in place of corporal punishments, imprisonment was used to deprive criminals of their liberty. This shift from corporal punishments to incarceration indicated a transition from absolute power (monarchical sovereignty) to a democratic society. With the uprising of reformists, corporal punishment was questioned to shift focus from retribution to social control - in form of discipline and surveillance of criminals. Foucault condemns this surveillance and discipline in modern prisons as “no less repressive than the corporal punishment of the old regime.”<sup>17</sup> The prison system in India is also the result of a shift from corporal punishments to adopt more modern, civilised forms of punishment. But can imprisonment be referred to as a civilised form of punishment in India in the light of systemic problems it is plagued with? An abolitionist perspective helps us to critically examine imprisonment as a form of punishment with its foundational concerns that have raised the carceral system that we have today.<sup>18</sup>

Explaining what prison abolition looks like, late Rose Braz, abolitionist leader and co-founder of Critical Resistance, says that it means putting in place

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<sup>17</sup> Gibson, M. “Global Perspectives on the Birth of Prison” *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 4 (October 2011): 1041- 1042.

<sup>18</sup> "Prison abolition is at its core an ideological and political organizing project that seeks to not only tear down existing prisons and jails, but to create an equitable society which addresses the core problems that lead to incarceration, thereby rendering imprisonment — itself a form of punitive torture — obsolete.....They seek to end the criminalization and persecution of marginalized communities, particularly those living in poverty." See Kelly, K. (2019, December 26). What the Prison-Abolition Movement Wants. The *teenVogue*, Politics. Retrieved from <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/what-is-prison-abolition-movement>.

“the things that would reduce incidents of harm at the front end and address harm in a non-punitive manner when harm does occur. Abolition means that harm will occur far less often and, when harm does occur, we address the causes of that harm rather than rely on the failed solutions of punishment. Thus, abolition is taking a harm reductionist approach to our society’s problems.”<sup>19</sup>

How does one start a conversation on prison abolition? Braz emphasises that “a prerequisite to seeking any social change is the naming of it.” She says, “In other words, even though the goal we seek may be far away, unless we name it and fight for it today, it will never come.”<sup>20</sup> Drawing from the Critical Resistance Movement in the West, an abolitionist conversation in India may begin with bringing out the flaws of the current prison system we have here.

Davis says “prison is considered so “natural” that it is extremely hard to imagine life without it.”<sup>21</sup> Focussing on ‘Why prisons?’, David Scott brings out different reasons for the existence of prisons, namely, it being an inevitable response to crime, preventing and deterring offenders, protecting the

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<sup>19</sup> Bennett, H. (2008, July 11). Organizing to Abolish the Prison-Industrial Complex | Dissident Voice. Dissident Voice | a Radical Newsletter in the Struggle for Peace and Social Justice. Retrieved from <https://dissidentvoice.org/2008/07/organizing-to-abolish-the-prison-industrial-complex/> (Accessed 20 June, 2021).

Critical Resistance is a US-based organization that aims at building an international movement against prison industrial complex by “challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe.” It rather purports that food, shelter and freedom are what make society secure. It fights against inequality and powerlessness. See <http://criticalresistance.org/about/>

<sup>20</sup> Berger, D., Kaba, M., Stein, D.(2017, August). What Abolitionists Do. *Jacobinmag*, United States/Politics. Retrieved from <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/08/prison-abolition-reform-mass-incarceration>.

<sup>21</sup> *Supra* note 6, pp. 10.

public, etc.<sup>22</sup> However do prisons help in these aforementioned purposes? One of our respondents, Adv. Robin Christopher stated,

“you need to accept that the crime is not outside of you. It is inside of you and part of us. If somebody commits a crime, we need to say okay, you’ve made some mistake, something is wrong with society. That should be the approach. We don’t have this approach and that is a problem. Any amount of reforms we bring, I don’t think that changes anything.”

Emphasising on the fallacy of pinning the blame of offence on the offender alone and trying to reform them, one of our interviewees, Cecilia Davies stated:

“the term reformation by itself is a very skewed kind of an idea because when you are laying the onus on an individual and saying that the whole fault of everything that has happened, vis-a-vis that incident, lies exclusively with that individual and it is only he or she that needs to be reformed, I think we are fooling ourselves. Because there is a collective responsibility to an offense at different levels.”

Instead of relying on the current system of policing and imprisonment, Braz states that abolition aims at “creating sustainable, healthy communities empowered to create safety and rooted in accountability.”<sup>23</sup> This pushes us to identify what the prison system in India is, and what it is good for.

In one of our early meetings, we were confronted with the question of how does this prison abolitionist perspective that

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<sup>22</sup> Scott, D. (2013). *Why prison?* Cambridge University Press. (pp.10- 15)

<sup>23</sup> *Supra* note 18



originated in the West apply to the context of Indian prisons? Speaking on what we can learn from the American abolitionist movement, Shailza Sharma, a researcher with DSN said, “the most important thing we learn is to imagine. So imagine a movement or a movement for south Asia ...and that means to ask critical questions about caste hierarchy. That means to ask questions about why there is over-representation of Muslims, tribals in prisons, hierarchies of caste and class in prisons”. Davis explains the import of the carceral system from colonial powers and its systemic racial continuity and slavery in the US prisons.<sup>24</sup> Prisons in India are a relic of colonial rule which continue the systemic oppression of colonial times that targeted and segregated prisoners based on their caste and class and has been a symbol of state control, fear and coercion to control the behaviour of the society.<sup>25</sup> One of our interviewees, Prof. Murali Karnam stated:

“We are part of a particular kind of political order - a state, social arrangement. We have a subtle sense of social arrangement in which there are so many kinds of inequalities - privileged, underprivileged. Only some people have power, a lot of people don't have it. And you can ensure that kind of social arrangement is only

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<sup>24</sup> The argument of prison abolition by Davis rests heavily on addressing the systemic problems of prison. Davis asks us to examine “whether a system that was intimately related to a particular set of historical circumstances that prevailed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can lay absolute claim on the twenty-first century.”

Emphasising on the historical connections, she notes “If we are already persuaded that racism should not be allowed to define the planet's future and if we can successfully argue that prisons are racist institutions, this may lead us to take seriously the prospect of declaring prisons obsolete.” See *Supra* note 6, pp - 25, 43.

<sup>25</sup> Arnold, D. (1994). ‘The Colonial Prison: Power, Knowledge and Penology in Nineteenth-Century India.’ *Subaltern studies VIII : essays in honour of Ranajit Guha* / Edited by David Arnold, David Hardiman. New Delhi. Oxford University Press, pp. 148-184.

based on coercion. And that coercion is instilled in our understanding. That fear is a primary drive, but not your ability to cooperate and coexist with others. That is the deep linkage between the simple-looking prison and it's organically linked with our entrenched belief and existing system.”

Why an abolitionist perspective towards prison merits attention is the fact that prison is a world in itself where the discrimination and oppression of certain communities, based on caste, class or religion; takes an aggravated form in a systematic level. These challenges to prisons will be discussed in the next Part of the report, beginning with the nature of colonial continuity in the Indian prison system.

## **PART II: MODERN PRISON SYSTEM AND ITS STRUCTURED VIOLENCE**

Having understood the abolitionist framework in the previous part, this part of the report will focus on our learnings and reflections from the fieldwork and research. We engage with the questions of origins of the modern prison system in India, colonial continuity in post-independence India and the various structural concerns of the current prison system. The purpose of Part II is to examine the deep-rooted systemic issues which plague the prison system in India. We use these reflections to build an abolitionist argument in the Indian context.

### **TRACING THE COLONIAL LINKS**

The modern prison system in India can be traced to its origin in colonial rule. We see colonial continuity in practices as well as in the laws of independent India. Tracing this, historian David Arnold<sup>26</sup> shows us how modern Indian prisons were a

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

product of colonial preoccupation with maintenance of 'law and order' as well as 'extraction revenue'. He highlights how prisoners were exploited as labour for manual and later industrial production.<sup>27</sup> Prof. Karnam, who has a specialisation in prison labour, spoke about the colonial states' labour extraction from prisoners. This practice, he said, has however changed in independent India as 'cheap labour' is easily outside prisons.

Further referring to the penal system in independent India, Prof. Karnam stated that "the criminal justice system we have adopted the colonial laws in toto. Because the criminal justice system is a colonial vestige...it was always interested in controlling people on the margins."<sup>28</sup> Likewise, the Prison Acts passed by the then Government of India in 1870 and 1894 continues to form the basis of prison administration in Post-Independence India. The Acts emphasises on punishment rather than reforms.<sup>29</sup>

The 'criminal class' and the 'labouring poor' were incarcerated during colonial rule with specific targeting and differential

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, pp.177.

Also, Prof. Karnam reiterated this point by stating that, "During the British period, Indian prisons produced 200 kinds of goods because they were all supplying shoes, handmade paper, socks, tents, military equipment, salt pepper... Everything was produced by Indian prisoners..."

<sup>28</sup> Prof Vijay Raghvan also highlighted this by pointing out how Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Evidence Act, Prison Act et al are all a 'colonial contribution'.

<sup>29</sup> Pachauri, S.K. (1994, Vol 55). History of Prison Administration in India in the 19th Century: Human Rights in Retrospect. Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 1994.

Also, Prof Raghvan highlighted in his interview with the Criminal Justice Project (CJP) team - "So when 95% of the country is still following the 1894 act. There are some provisions in the Act which talk about whipping, solitary confinement, reduction of diet as a punishment. - Even though the court has struck down some of the provisions, the Act has not yet been amended. "

treatment of prisoners based on their social and economic locations.<sup>30</sup> The caste practices ubiquitous in the Indian subcontinent are patently evinced in the texts of Prison Manuals as well as within the actual prison practices even in Independent India. Despite various attempts of reforming these unconstitutional practices, the labour segregation in the prisons is done based on the caste-based division.<sup>31</sup>

The formation of modern prison administration, its inherent structure, the related set of historical circumstances that existed during the colonial period and continuity in the post-colonial state needs examination in contemporary context. Prof. Karnam aptly addressed the problem that colonial continuity poses in limiting imaginative possibilities for change - “the existing prison system’s state of affairs is deeply organically linked with the existing political order, without changing the one you can’t change the other. So in this system (informed by colonial ‘intoxication’), you can’t come up with alternatives.”

## STRUCTURED VIOLENCE

### SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY IMPOVERISHED COMMUNITIES

Abolitionist framework enables us to identify structural targeting of certain communities through incarceration. Prisons are filled with people from impoverished social backgrounds. The coercive state is known for historically targeting certain castes and communities - SCs, STs and OBCs - by criminalising and disenfranchising them.<sup>32</sup> In particular,

<sup>30</sup> *Supra* note 25, pp.165-176.

<sup>31</sup> Shantha, S (10 Dec 2020) ‘From segregation to Labour, Manu’s caste law governs Indian prison system’. The Wire. Retrieved from <https://thewire.in/caste/india-prisons-caste-labour-segregation>.

<sup>32</sup> National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 2019. Retrieved from <https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/PSI-2019-27-08-2020.pdf>.

the over representation of these castes in prisons reflects the casteist underpinning of the carceral state. Not only do they suffer the stigma of criminalisation, the incarceration leads to broken families. Prof. Karnam highlighted the social dislocation of the socially and economically impoverished individuals - as their marriages break up given the prolonged incarceration. He suggested that ownership of property often remains the 'only safeguard to ensure your social relations remain intact.'

While the prisons under the colonial rule perpetuated casteist discrimination by allocating labour in the prison based on 'customary occupations', the post-colonial Indian state continues the said practice.<sup>33</sup> The archaic Prison Manuals in certain states suggest that work is allocated purely on caste-based occupations. Despite various attempts of reforming these unconstitutional practices, the labour segregation in the prisons is done based on the caste-based division.<sup>34</sup> Though most of our interviews suggested that work is allocated based on the 'work they did in the past' or the 'families they belong to', Davies conceded that 'manual scavenging' is done by certain scheduled castes, much like situations outside prisons. Curiously, when asked about structural oppression of the vulnerable castes which are over-represented in the prisons, many interviewees could not or did not make very direct connections of casteist underpinnings of the Indian prison

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<sup>33</sup> The barber, washerman and sweeper castes were 'expected to perform their customary occupations' in the prisons while for the benefit of the high caste prisoners work on treadmill was proposed. See *Supra* note 25. The Prison Discipline Committee of 1836 acknowledges the importance of caste particularly in its discussion on prison labour. Also see The Prison Discipline Committee (1838), Committee on Prison Discipline, *Report of the Committee on Prison Discipline to the Viceroy of India*, pp. 106 - 110. Retrieved from [http://jail.mp.gov.in/sites/default/files/Report\\_of\\_the\\_Committee\\_on\\_Prison\\_Discipline%201838.pdf](http://jail.mp.gov.in/sites/default/files/Report_of_the_Committee_on_Prison_Discipline%201838.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> *Supra* note 30.

system.<sup>35</sup> Though, like Adv. Manjesh, a human rights lawyer, pointed out - “The fact that we don’t talk about caste, we don’t know how to make that link.” There is thus a need to visible the systemic criminalisation and incarceration of certain castes.

The perpetuation of caste and class discrimination within the carceral system is arguably an extension of the discrimination these communities face within the Indian society at large. Acknowledging this correlation begs the question whether prisons are an easy way out of addressing the societal inequalities that afflict our society?

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN PRISONS

Much like caste and class discrimination of the Indian society is reflected in the prisons, patriarchy too governs the carceral system. The intersectional perspective helps us identify how within prisons, the minority groups face added discrimination and often have lesser access to resources than the others. Scholar Barbara Owen while discussing intersectional inequality in women’s imprisonment states “Women’s lived experiences while locked up, we assert, reflect the multiple and cumulative disadvantages that condition their pathways to prison and continue to shape their choices and chances in the total institution of the prison.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Speaking on caste blindness Deshpande (2013) says that “As a modern republic, India felt duty-bound to “abolish” caste, and this led the State to pursue the conflicting policies of social justice and caste-blindness. As a consequence, the privileged upper castes are enabled to think of themselves as “casteless”, while the disprivileged lower castes are forced to intensify their caste identities. This asymmetrical division has truncated the effective meaning of caste to lower caste, thus leaving the upper castes free to monopolise the “general category” by posing as casteless citizens.” See Deshpande, S. (2013). Caste and Castelessness: Towards a Biography of the ‘General Category’. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(15), 32-39. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23527121>.

<sup>36</sup> Owen, B. et al., (2017). “Intersectional Inequality and Women’s Imprisonment.” *In Search of Safety: Confronting Inequality in Women’s Imprisonment*, University of California

## WOMEN

Davies, while speaking of abandonment faced by women in conflict with law stated that

“In our cultural context, they (society) consider (it to be) excessive dishonor when the woman does something amiss, which makes it doubly triply difficult for a woman to go back to the place where the incident happened, or back to her hometown. And there are too many strong, negative cultural associations that work against a woman who has come in conflict with the law.”

On issues of social isolation faced by women prisoners, Martha, who spent her sentence in a women’s prison reiterated that “most prisoners do not have contact with families.”

The *Women and Child Development report*, 2018, highlights infrastructural inadequacies in the prison which do not cater to specific needs of women prisoners.<sup>37</sup> Infrastructure issues are a major concern as the educational and vocational facilities are largely absent in most of the prisons<sup>38</sup>. Madhurima Dhanuka from CHRI, talked about the small percentage of women prisoners in India (5%) and how that discourages setting up separate women’s prisons in every district. As a result, she said that the State just “allocates a certain part or certain wards in prisons as women prisons or women

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Press, Oakland, California, pp. 1–18. Retrieved from [www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1jd949x.4](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1jd949x.4).

<sup>37</sup> Women do not have access to appropriate healthcare facilities especially during pregnancy. There are inadequate toilets, sanitation, and menstrual products. For more information see Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of India. (2018, June). *Women in Prisons India*. Retrieved from <https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Prison%20Report%20Compiled.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

enclosures. So then naturally what happens is if you have a small enclosure, then the enclosure does not have access to everything.”

## TRANSGENDER PERSONS

While women at least have a separate space in prisons enclosures, transgender people are not even recognised as a separate category worthy of independent space with a few exceptions like that of Kerala.<sup>39</sup> As a result, to determine whether to put them in male or female wards, transgender people are subjected to dehumanising body scrutiny at their arrival to prisons. Journalist, Sukanya Shantha, in her article on transgender persons in Indian prisons, highlights experience of five transgender women placed in male prisons. The article states that “They were made to stand in a queue with their legs and hands wide open. The guards made them squat several times and a body cavity search was forced upon them.” The article quotes Kiran, one such transgender prisoner, who said, “That is when I actually understood what it means to submit your body to the state.”<sup>40</sup>

The lack of recognition of trans identity by the states leads to their discriminatory and inhuman treatment.<sup>41</sup> The focus on gender binaries harms the recognition of gender as a

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<sup>39</sup> Balakrishnan, R. (2015, October 13). Special blocks for transgender community in Kerala prisons. *Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/special-blocks-for-transgender-community-in-kerala-prisons/articleshow/49322439.cms>.

<sup>40</sup> Shantha, S. (2021, February 11). Misgendering, Sexual Violence, Harassment: What it Is to Be a Transgender Person in an Indian Prison. *The Wire*. Retrieved from <https://thewire.in/lgbtqia/transgender-prisoners-india>.

<sup>41</sup> NALSA v. Union of India, AIR 2014 SC 1863.

“Non-recognition of the identity of Hijras, a TG community, as a third gender, denies them the right of equality before the law and equal protection of law guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution and violates the rights guaranteed to them under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.”



psychological space and identity spectrum.<sup>42</sup> The caste, class and religious location of transgender people who are at the lowest strata of intersections often face issues like hypervisibility in the society as well as in the prisons<sup>43</sup> Saumya Dadoo, a researcher working with DSN stated “you have to kind of queer the whole system and rethink the system from root up” by “reading the gender classifications from the bottom.”

## HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality is often misconstrued as a mental illness.<sup>44</sup> This wrongful assumption plays out in the prison system as well. We learnt through various interviews that they are prescribed with antidepressants to desexualise romantic and sexual minorities and repress sexual desires. Prison rights activist, KR Raja, while talking about the sexual desire of an inmate, quoted a prison official who said “put them (inmates who expressed sexual desires) into the psychiatric ward. They should never think about the sexual aspect hereafter.” Raja added, “So they (psychiatrists) started the new medication. They gave too many medicines.” He further added that homosexual people are met with the same kind of treatment.

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<sup>42</sup> Faucette, A. (2014, vol 437). *The gay agenda: Claiming Space, Identity, and Justice*, pp. 73-88 (refer chapter 4 Fucking the Binary for Social Change: Our Radically Queer Agenda).

<sup>43</sup> Ganesan, D., Dadoo, S. (2020). Confinement at the Margins: Preliminary Notes on Transgender Prisoners in India, 13 NUJS L. Rev. 3. Retrieved from <http://nujslawreview.org/2020/09/10/confinement-at-the-margins-preliminary-notes-on-transgender-prisoners-in-india/>

\* The law has criminalised the basic means of income for some of the ostracized transgender communities which are sex work and begging, respectively.

<sup>44</sup> Paiman stated that, “Homosexual people who were caught (in sexual act) they (prison officials) usually hit them. They take action against them and sometimes as punishment their pardon is reduced. Some people whose parole and furlough are also removed.” More research and corroboration could not be done due to field constraints.

There are also reports about how male rape is prevalent in many Indian prisons.<sup>45</sup> The erasure of homosexuality through desexualising and the forced experiences of sodomy depict how the prison institution instills and propagates institutionalised homophobia.

## TORTURE AND LIFE INSIDE PRISONS

“In Urdu there is a word called *kaido-band*. Meaning kept in confinement within confinement. In my 9 years I was dealing with this. Didn’t have much space even in prison.” - Waqar (who spent almost 9 years inside prisons)

Prison is a world in itself wherein what happens hardly permeates through its fortifications. This was affirmed by the released prisoners whom we interviewed when they spoke about their experience inside prison. Waqar, talked about being kept in ‘anda cell’. He explained about the misery in the isolated space, saying, “When I was in the anda cell, I’d keep my food near the toilet and ghongha (small insects) would come out and I’d have to remove it before eating. You don’t have an option to go out and eat in the restaurants so you have to eat.”

Stating that he was tortured in two stages, police custody and jail, Waqar said - “no one can see within the walls of prison. You can be tortured, killed and no one will ever know. Stories

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<sup>45</sup> I.A.N.S. (2015, June 11). Rapes in Tihar: Silence is the key. *Business- Standard*. [https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/rapes-in-tihar-silence-is-the-key-115071100833\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/rapes-in-tihar-silence-is-the-key-115071100833_1.html)

Also see Human Rights Law Network. (2018, April 26). *Rape is not supposed to be a part of the penalty: On rapes and sexual abuse in Indian prisons*. Medium. <https://medium.com/@hrln/rape-is-not-supposed-to-a-part-of-the-penalty-on-rapes-and-sexual-abuse-in-indian-prisons-698b919f7429>

Also see Supra note 39 on transgender people in prisons being raped and sexually harassed.

can be made and nothing can be verified or seen.”<sup>46</sup> Paiman, who spent more than four years in prison, also spoke about being tortured. He said that “when they (Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) arrested me in 2006, I was tortured for 4 days. Beaten up with a belt and mental torture. I was in police custody for 12 days.” He also spoke of how the ATS harassed his wife,

“My wife was pregnant at that time. I got to know that ATS went to my place and tried to take my wife to custody too. The team pressured her saying “we’ll interrogate you also.” My wife said she won’t go there without me. That’s when they stopped harassing her. I was depressed so I never complained that they tortured me... Fear stopped me from speaking up. I thought they will torture me.”

Zakir, who was wrongfully incarcerated for fourteen years, said “When we (he and his brother) were in police custody, we were physically tortured and after we were sent to judicial custody, we were mentally tortured... By the time my brother was released (after twenty-three years), he had become so thin because of physical and mental torture.” Torture is one among many other struggles prisoners face in prisons.<sup>47</sup> What

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<sup>46</sup> Mahaprashasta, A. A. (2017, May 20). Interview: Of Torture, Impunity and the False Charges on Abdul Wahid Shaikh. *The Wire*, Law. Retrieved from <https://thewire.in/law/abdul-wahid-shaikh-acquitted-interview>.

<sup>47</sup> In our field interviews, the released prisoners talked about getting insects and worms in prison food. There is an excess amount of asafetida in the food that has resulted in causing acidity and intestine issues in prisoners. The barracks are overcrowded to triple their capacities and hygiene conditions are extremely poor since each barrack has one toilet and one sink with 3 taps for more than 60 people. Zakir while talking of the overcrowding problem said that, “There was a time when almost every inmate in the barrack developed an itching infection due to unhygienic conditions because we used to sleep close to each other.” For more information on prison conditions see Kulkarni, P. (2019, March 15). ‘Take Out The Insects From Your Food And Eat It’: Women Political Prisoners Recount Jail Horror Stories. *Feminism In India*. Retrieved from

needs to be acknowledged is how, directly or indirectly, illegal means are used within prison, be it in treatment of prisoners or acquiring access within prisons.<sup>48</sup> From his experience with the prison system, Adv. Christopher said “if you think that illegality happens only outside, it’s not true. That (prison) is like another system which is systematically made for all kinds of abuses to happen.” This indicates how having laws protecting rights of prisoners does not guarantee protection and how reforms suggested over many decades have not moved much beyond suggestions. Martha, a former prisoner, suggested that “There should not be any prisons, separation from family is the biggest punishment. Focus should be on reducing crimes instead of punishment.” These voices from our interview underlined the insight that an abolitionist perspective enables us to continuously reduce our reliance on prisons and take, what Braz calls - a ‘harm reductionist’ approach.<sup>49</sup>

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<https://feminisminindia.com/2019/03/15/women-political-prisoners-jail-horror/>.

Also see Deol, T. (2020, June 23). ‘350 inmates in 6 rooms, only 3 toilets’: Letter describes Gautam Navlakha’s jail in Raigad. *The Print*. Retrieved from <https://theprint.in/india/350-inmates-in-6-rooms-only-3-toilets-letter-describes-gautam-navlakhas-jail-in-raigad/446552/>

<sup>48</sup> Through the interviews we learnt that money plays an important role in the prison system. To get things done you need to bribe the authorities at every step. Released prisoners stated that if you need anything in prisons ranging from basic needs to meeting family, you need to bribe the officials to get it done. People with more money usually have more facilities as compared to those who do not. Interviewee Adv Christopher stated that to meet prisoners it is a difficult task, and you have to bribe every level of authority to meet them. So the system is corrupt for insiders as well as outsiders. In our interview with Justice Initiative they mentioned that the lower prison staff is so underpaid that corruption is inevitable. Zakir mentioned “There is corruption in the admission barracks, if you bribe them with whatever amount which is fixed, then you are not made to work there.” KR Raja while talking about medical access said that people who can bribe officials get access to hospitals.

<sup>49</sup> *Supra* note 18.

## IGNORED HEALTH OF THE INCARCERATED

Incarceration creates a category of ‘criminal’ class who are callously discriminated against by the state and society alike. The indifference is so entrenched that we refuse them basic rights of life, health and dignity. Both national and international standards of right to health are completely disregarded concerning prisoners.<sup>50</sup> These standards clearly state that prisoners are entitled to healthcare facilities. From this perspective, prisoners’ right to healthcare is not a secondary right or diminished with respect to that accorded to the general population. When the State takes away a person’s liberty then the State must look after them and provide them with treatment that may be necessary.<sup>51</sup>

However, in our interviews we found that prisoners are treated as second class citizens and they do not have access to good healthcare. There are fundamental problems like unavailability of doctors and the shortage of general medicines, and heavy reliance on generic drugs without diagnosing the problem.<sup>52</sup> Those who were accused in terror-

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<sup>50</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 16 December 1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 993, p. 3, Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36c0.html>.

Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that “the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”. This applies to every human being. Therefore, prisoners also have the right to good health and are also entitled to a decent degree of healthcare. Further, Principle 9 of The United Nations (1990) Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners states that “Prisoners shall have access to the health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation”.

<sup>51</sup> See Gatherer, A., Jürgens, R., Moeller, L., Nikogosian, H., & Stöver, H. (2007). *Health in Prisons: A WHO Guide to the Essentials in Prison Health* (A EURO Publication) (1st ed.). World Health Organization.

<sup>52</sup> Dr. P.V. Varavara Rao v. National Investigation Agency, Criminal Appeal no.52 of 2021(Criminal Appeal LDVC no. 143 of 2020), Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction, at the High Court of Judicature at Bombay.

related cases were far more discriminated against as far as healthcare is concerned.<sup>53</sup> They were denied healthcare facilities where even some doctors refused to treat them. The COVID 19 pandemic exposed that ‘jails are notorious incubators and amplifiers of infectious diseases.’<sup>54</sup> The prisons in India have turned into epicentres of the pandemic.<sup>55 56</sup>

Much like issues of physical health, prisoners’ mental health concerns are completely ignored.<sup>57</sup> The prisons are closed and isolating spaces where many suffer from depression. One of the released prisoners, Waqar shared that, “I suffered from

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In Varavara Rao’s bail application, he highlighted that the prison’s facilities did not meet mandatory requirements under Maharashtra Prison Hospital (Amendment) Rules, 2015. He submitted that there were only three Ayurvedic practitioners. There were no nursing staff, no pharmacists, no compounders, no lab technicians and no medical specialists to attend the inmates at Taloja Central Prison Hospital.

<sup>53</sup> One of the released prisoners stated in the interview that “If we went for health issues officers used to say ‘you did a blast. you want to go to hospital and all?’. They discriminated and treated us like anti nationals.” It has also come up in our other released prisoner interviews who were incarcerated for political offences.

<sup>54</sup> Kauffman K (2020). Why Jails Are Key to ‘Flattening the Curve’ of Coronavirus, *The Appeal*, March 13, 2020. [https://theappeal.org/jails-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-flattening-curve/?fbclid=IwAR1K9cf0ardpNwIfxtzjLlegqusQ4L\\_ZpY1MEuagMfcinqstzMi5aGKnCQ](https://theappeal.org/jails-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-flattening-curve/?fbclid=IwAR1K9cf0ardpNwIfxtzjLlegqusQ4L_ZpY1MEuagMfcinqstzMi5aGKnCQ)

<sup>55</sup> Ranjan, A. [@adityaranjan\_\_]. (2021, April 21). India’s prisons are turning into the epicentre of the pandemic. In this thread, I have collated the news reports for COVID-19 infections among inmates and prison staff. Twitter. [https://twitter.com/adityaranjan\\_\\_/status/1384854035526733825?s=20](https://twitter.com/adityaranjan__/status/1384854035526733825?s=20).

<sup>56</sup> There are recent examples like cases of Varavara Rao, the 81-year-old poet-activist who has been incarcerated since 2018 in the Koregaon-Bhima case. Despite severe and prolonged illness, he was denied bail initially and was granted the same only in March 2021. Pr Stan Swamy, the 84-year-old tribal rights activist who was also jailed since 2018 under the anti-terror law in the Koregaon-Bhima case and died in judicial custody in 2021. Nileena M.S. (2021, June 22). Amid pandemic, India’s political prisoners struggle with failing health in unequipped jails. *The Caravan*. Retrieved from <https://caravanmagazine.in/politics/amid-pandemic-india-political-prisoners-struggle-with-failing-health-inequipped-jails>.

<sup>57</sup> The number of mental health experts like psychologists and psychiatrists that indulge in working with prisons is not enough. Further, there is a lack of intervention by the State to counter these issues. Prison Statistics India, a report published by the NCRB states that from 2015 to 2019 that there is an increase in prison suicides from 77 to 116 or 51%.

depression. I made a request and was taken to a civil hospital and received medication but it was because I had a court order. There were many among the 3000 in jail who were depressed and had no access to counselling.” Zakir, recounting his time as wrongfully imprisoned prisoner, stated that:

“Depression is a mental illness and you never know what is going inside a prisoner’s mind. Doctors would provide us medicines for fever, flu or cold but no mental health professional was provided by the prison. Sometimes we would hear that a certain prisoner has gone mad and was taken to a mental hospital (this happened in Hyderabad). Since we were fighting a long battle and there were also some family emergencies and there was a very slight chance of getting bail, we knew that we were depressed. Another reason for our depression was that we were not allotted any work so we were free for a major part of the day.”<sup>58</sup>

The extreme form of isolation led to further mental health concerns. Incarceration as a form of punishment thus dehumanises prisoners given its inherent apathy to their physical and mental wellbeing.

### **PANDEMIC - FOCUS ON CRIME CONTROL OVER PUBLIC HEALTH**

The COVID 19 pandemic exposed the neglect of healthcare facilities for prisoners as well as the much-criticised problem of overcrowding in Indian prisons. The indiscriminate arrests

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<sup>58</sup> He further shared his experience, where he spoke about how badly he was treated along with those who were charged with TADA (now repealed). He did not get good healthcare facilities until the State Human Rights Commission intervened. He along with others were not allowed to attend any program or vocational training. This isolation and discrimination had a toll on both their physical as well as mental health.

for minor offences under laws meant to control pandemic<sup>59</sup> - effectively led to criminalisation of poverty as migrant workers and those struggling to get ration were arrested for flouting lockdown rules. The Supreme Court's guidelines to decongest prisons have suffered a setback because of this. The laws to control the pandemic became an instrument to fill in the prisons. Prof. Karnam stated the rate of incarceration in the prison has increased during the pandemic. He added that for state and society there are "two dangers - pandemic and crime, and the society decided we can put up with the pandemic but not with crime."

Adv. Christopher stated that the pandemic has allowed people to be released if they are not accused of any heinous offence.<sup>60</sup> However, he also said that, if anyone is accused of an offence during the pandemic, the challenge was in the bail process. There have also been several reports of custodial torture and even custodial deaths of the lockdown violators.<sup>61</sup> The state used the guise of lockdown to use its coercive hand to control a humanitarian crisis. Prof. Vijay Raghvan highlighted how the "the issue of the danger the pandemic poses to custodial

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<sup>59</sup> Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and the Disaster Management Act, 2005

<sup>60</sup> Press Trust of India (PTI). (2021, June 20). Medha Patkar Moves SC Seeking Immediate Release of Prisoners Above 70 Years. *The Wire*. Retrieved from <https://thewire.in/law/medha-patkar-moves-sc-seeking-immediate-release-of-prisoners-above-70-years>.

\* The High Powered Committee (HPC) constituted by the Maharashtra Government in its resolution dated 10 May 2020 noted that there were 1,340 prisoners above the age of 60 in the state who were at higher risk to Covid-19 and it recommended that they should be considered for release. See *Supra* note 54. | Recently, social activist Medha Patkar had moved the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Centre and all States and Union territories to formulate a uniform mechanism for the release of prisoners above 70 years of age stating that HPCs of some states have taken steps regarding that.

<sup>61</sup> Staff, S. (2020, August 10). Thoothukudi custodial deaths: Accused police officer dies of coronavirus. *Scroll.In*. Retrieved from <https://scroll.in/latest/969918/thoothukudi-custodial-deaths-accused-police-officer-dies-of-coronavirus>.



populations has been discussed more from a law and order than a public health perspective.”<sup>62</sup> This raises the same concern - whether a state and judiciary which is preoccupied with ‘crime control’ and maintenance of ‘law and order’, can be trusted with care of its prisoners?

### UNDERTRIALS - PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CONVICTION

In Part I of the report we saw how prisons are seen as an inevitable response to crime in society. However, if law and order is maintained by punishing ‘criminals’, should those not convicted of any crime be languishing in prisons? If the criminal justice system presumes innocence until proven otherwise, what is the carceral state doing by incarcerating undertrials? Indian jails overflow with undertrials who are mostly from poor and marginalised communities.<sup>63</sup> This high number of undertrial prisoners adds a lot of pressure to the existing Indian prison system in terms of infrastructure, man management, facilities that are provided inside, etc. More pertinently, it affects the life and rights of undertrial prisoners in India.

There are many factors that affect their release from prisons. One factor is that almost 27% of inmates are illiterate, and

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<sup>62</sup> *Supra* note 2.

\* The HPC set up by the Supreme Court, which sought to decongest prisons during pandemic - decided to release prisoners based on ‘the purported seriousness of the offence rather than prisoners’ vulnerability to infection.

\* Also see Gurman, S., Elinson, Z. (2020, April 14) Coronavirus-driven prisoner releases spur debate over public health versus public safety, *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/prisoner-release-orders-spur-debate-pitting-public-health-against-public-safety-11586862003>

<sup>63</sup> As per the NCRB report of 2019, out of all the inmates in jail, a stunning 69% of the inmates were undertrial prisoners whereas approximately 30% inmates were convicts and the rest were detenues. This picture becomes even more bleak when you look at another statistics from the same report, 70% of the total number of undertrial inmates belong to the SC, ST, OBC or Muslim community. Report Available at - <https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/PSI-2019-27-08-2020.pdf>.

almost 41% of them have studied below 10th standard.<sup>64</sup> As most of the undertrials are socially and economically marginalised they are either unaware of their legal rights or even if they are able to secure legal aid services - they are unable to secure bail due to lack of surety and funds to pay for the bail amount. In addition, the hesitancy of the judiciary in granting bails, has also contributed to the massive undertrial population. We see a shift from the rule of 'bail not jail' to a norm of 'jail not bail'.<sup>65</sup>

Though the higher judiciary has passed various judgements on reducing prison population and improving conditions of prisons, not much has changed on ground.<sup>66</sup> One of our

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<sup>64</sup> Radhakrishnan, V., Sen, S. (2020, September 19). Data | 70% prisoners in India are undertrials. *The Hindu*, Data. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-70-prisoners-in-india-are-undertrials/article32569643.ece>.

<sup>65</sup> According to Adv Christopher, there are a number of reasons for this behavior by the judiciary, one of them being the high number of pendency cases. "Now this high number of pendency in cases is mostly because of the inability to secure the presence of the accused person (69% as per the NCRB report of 2019). So now part of the problem is that in order to secure the presence of the accused, there is a general tendency by judges to send the accused directly to jail rather than give bail in order to secure their presence and reduce the pendency of cases in courts which again inadvertently impacts the rights of the undertrial prisoners." Also see: Shah C (2020) Lower courts need to grant bails to reduce pendency in courts, avoid overcrowding in prisons, say experts, *Hindustan Times*, Mumbai news. Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/lower-courts-need-to-grant-bails-to-reduce-pendency-in-courts-avoid-overcrowding-in-prisons-say-experts/story-1KJk8vkDUvKcsrxgnhp2AJ.html>

<sup>66</sup> Sharma, D. (2018, August). SC order on pertinent issues in prisons: Under Trial Review Committees, Women Prisoners and Board of Visitors. *SSConline.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.sconline.com/blog/post/2018/08/06/sc-order-on-the-pertinent-issues-under-trial-review-committees-women-prisoners-and-board-of-visitors/>

\* One such case was- *In Re Inhuman Conditions in 1382 Prisons*, 2018 SCC Online SC 821- where the Supreme Court constituted a committee to look into the implementation of prison reforms. It sought to look into implementation of various issues including Model Prison Manuals as well as Undertrial Review Committee.

Also see Press Trust of India (PTI). (2018, September 25). SC constitutes a three-member committee to look into aspects of jail reforms. *Outlook India*, Outlook news scroll. Retrieved from <https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/sc-constitutes-threemember-committee-to-look-into-aspects-of-jail-reforms/1390442>.

interviewees, Sr. Adv. Mihir Desai believed that “implementation of judgments shall bring drastic improvement.” While the implementation of the proposed reforms is a minimum essential, we are compelled to ask why there hasn’t been any urgency in reducing prison population by release of undertrials? Speaking of the role of prisons, Sr. Adv. Desai pointed out “the object of prison has always been to marginalize those who are considered to be criminals in the eyes of law, or suspected criminals in the eyes of law - and keep them away from what is considered to be the mainstream society.” It is this punitive approach of the system that we seek to question.

## PART III : REIMAGINING REFORMS

### REFORMS

Drawing from the sections above, the conditions of prison reflect the absolute apathy towards prisoners’ life and dignity. While the dismal prison conditions have attracted attention of society and state to an extent, the attempts at reforming them have not been particularly effective because challenges in prisons are a reflection of the social inequalities and prejudices in the society. In India, various reforms have been recommended to improve the condition of prisons. The Justice A.N. Mulla Committee in 1983 recommended that lodging of undertrials in jail should be reduced to bare minimum and they should be kept separate from the convicted prisoners.<sup>67</sup> The Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer Committee, which was appointed in 1987 to undertake a study on the situation of women prisoners in India, recommended the induction of

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<sup>67</sup> The Justice A.N. Mulla Committee (1983), Report of the All India Committee on Jail Reforms, *Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India*. Retrieved from <https://www.mha.gov.in/MHA1/PrisonReforms/report.html>

more women in the police force in view of their special role in tackling women and child offenders.<sup>68</sup> The National Policy on Prison Reforms and Correctional Administration under the chairmanship of Dr. Kiran Bedi, in 2007, had recommended to provide in law new alternatives to imprisonment and specially ensure that the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 is effectively implemented throughout the country.<sup>69</sup> These reforms, among others,<sup>70</sup> have been on the table for long but findings of our research do not reflect requisite adoption of such reforms. The challenges of the prison system are not an issue with a malfunctioning of the system, but a result of an inherently coercive structure which functions on control and marginalisation.

Abolitionist work takes steps towards ‘non-reformist’ reforms that challenge the oppressive system of incarceration and simultaneously bring to light the “system’s inability to solve the crisis it creates.”<sup>71</sup> Though the prison abolition movement imagines a world without prisons while highlighting the problems of the system, it also takes measures to reduce the power of systemic oppression. Following are some of the reforms within the existing system which were suggested by interviewees as minimum steps towards prison abolition:

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<sup>68</sup> *Prisons in India, An overview of Reforms and Current Situation*, pp. 31-53. Retrieved from <https://home.rajasthan.gov.in/content/dam/pdf/StaffCorner/Training-Material/Useful-Presentations-And-Videos/Overview%20of%20prisons%20in%20India.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> Available at: <https://bprd.nic.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/file/5261991522-Part%20I.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> The Model Prison Manual 2016 was formulated by the Bureau of Police Research and Development under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The new manual is a detailed document comprising 32 chapters that deal with custodial management, medical care, education of prisoners, vocational training and skill development programmes, legal aid, welfare of prisoners, after care and rehabilitation, Board of Visitors and prison computerisation. Available at <https://bprd.nic.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/file/5230647148-Model%20Prison%20Manual.pdf>. Also see *Supra* note 66.

<sup>71</sup> *Supra* note 19.

- Voting rights - Dhanuka, from CHRI, said prisoner's voting rights can help get attention to the conditions of prisons and create responsibility as prisoners would be four to five crore people's constituency.
- Open prisons- Having experience in the oppressive prison system, Mohammed, Shaikh, Khan and Martha expressed how open prisons are better than the existing closed prisons as it would allow inmates to be with their family, connected to the outside world and reduces the risk of adverse mental health. All the interviewees affirmed the need for open prisons.
- Grant of bail - Adv. Vijay Hiremath noted that cash bail is a flawed system that needs to be substituted with alternatives, for example regular reporting. Sr. Adv. Desai also stated that "The entire notion of bail not jail is not being adhered to by the judiciary...In India it (trial) takes so long that one must give bail." He remarks how non-bailable offences are a major reason for overcrowding and indicates the need to focus on making non- bailable offences bailable as far as possible.
- Use of Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 - Prof. Raghvan pointed out that Probations of Offenders Act, 1958 is a "wonderful piece of legislation which can be used... but there is no awareness about the law." This is reiterated by Sr. Adv. Desai who said that the Act is barely used but has a lot of potential. Researcher, Shailesh Kumar, in our interview, brought to notice how many are eligible for probation but are still inside prison because there is a lack of attention to it.

- Prison condition and access - Reiterating the overcrowding problem in Indian prisons, Sr. Adv. Desai stated “Prison is so overcrowded and congested it is very tough to go to prison... And this embargo of only relatives to be allowed to meet is very restricted (though doctors lawyers journalists can meet, the process is not easy). The waiting periods are long. This process needs to be eased out and meeting prisoners should be made easy.” Emphasising on the importance of reforming prisoners through social interaction, IG (Prisons) R.K. Saxena (Retd.) said, “By keeping the people in total isolation, you cannot socialise them. Either you will have to send the offenders to the open society or you will have to bring the open society to prison and then promote interaction.” He suggested open prisons as a way forward.

While this is not an exhaustive list of possible reforms, these are some of the proposed reforms by the interviewees. These among other reforms also need attention because an abolitionist perspective does take into consideration the existing conditions of crime and society. Reforms and an abolitionist goal are not mutually exclusive. As Sr. Adv. Desai said, “While fighting for prison abolition, I can also think of reform on the side.”

## HOW WE SEEK TO INTERVENE

Prisons form a pervasive hegemonic form of punishment in a society where fear and anxiety about ‘crime’ is constructed by the state - which diverts our attention from structural issues and social circumstances which lead to these ‘crimes’. Prisons become a way for the state and society to shed their responsibility in creating conditions of a more equitable and

just life for all. Through an abolitionist lens, we deconstruct the binaries of victims and perpetrators by acknowledging collective responsibility towards justice. Further, by recognising that the system targets socio-economic impoverished communities, we believe that questions of caste and class are important in the analysis of prisons in India. We also challenge the punitive mindset of the society which is indifferent to the sufferings of those incarcerated. More concretely, we question the role of the state in controlling various aspects of human life through the criminal justice system. The primary step towards the abolition of prisons in India is to start a conversation. Through this project, the abolitionist conversation has already begun among the researchers of this project. This conversation was further extended and deepened during our field engagement with 25 more persons.

While conversations challenging the institution of prison are important, more concretely, we seek ‘de-legalisation’ in our hyper-legal state. For the aspects which continue to remain under the legal ambit, we seek decriminalization. For the aspects which continue to be considered ‘criminal’, we seek depenalisation and de-institutionalization.<sup>72</sup> This perspective originates with a critique of the relationship between the state and its people. As a policy demand, we call for a moratorium

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<sup>72</sup> Curiously, these recommendations were also given by the J. Mulla Committee on Jail Reforms. See *Supra* note 64.

\* Justice Mulla Committee Report of the All India Committee on Jail Reforms (1980-83) - “12. The Union and State Governments should conduct a qualitative and quantitative analysis of legislation, etc., to examine possibilities of delegalsing certain areas of human and social behaviour and take necessary action in this regard. 13. Serious thought should be given to policies of decriminalisation, depenalisation and deinstitutionalization at the legislative level”

on building new prisons.<sup>73</sup> This would simultaneously also require us to think of alternatives to incarceration as a response to crime.

The abolitionist perspective also emphasises the need to focus on victim rehabilitation, something which has not received much attention under the criminal justice system in India. Researcher, Kumar, pointed out that justice is not about punishing the offender. It is a much broader concept. The system focuses more on punishing the offender than restoring the well-being of victims. He said the focus needs to shift to the needs of the victims. Sharma, from DSN, pointed out the need to create resources and perspectives in South Asia to push the abolitionist movement. In India, particularly, we see how the prison system is patriarchal and how it is over-represented by socially and economically precarious castes and communities. However, caste, feminist and other movements representing the oppressed in the society, also tend to be carceral in their approach to justice. We seek to engage with this conundrum. If it is established that the criminal legal system by design perpetuates violence on the marginalized communities, an abolitionist conversation could perhaps be started with these movements.

We conclude with a statement by Prof. Karnam:

“My firm belief is that prison as a phenomenon is seriously linked with our understanding of what are our stakes in the existing political and social orders. The more we develop our stakes in the political and social

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<sup>73</sup> Baljeet from Project 39A says, “the solution to the overcrowding problem (in prisons) should never be that you make more prisons...So if you have an abolitionist lens, you realize that you (need to) put lesser people inside.”



order the more we tend to legitimise the prison. So we will have to take a much deeper stand about the nature of the political order we are part of, and the nature of the social arrangements that we are enjoying our privileges. Otherwise, unless we are giving up our stakes in the existing political order or social order, we are not giving up the prison system. I think this is the overall framework within which one has to see prison abolition.”

## **WALKING WITH THE ‘LEFT-OUTS’ AN INCLUSIVE SYNODAL JOURNEY WITH THE PRISONERS**

**Beschi Jeyaraj<sup>74</sup>**

With the solemn Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome on 10<sup>th</sup> October, Pope Francis kicked off a two-year long process in preparation for the 2023 synod of Bishops. The theme of this remarkable event boils around a ‘Synodal Church’ accentuating more on Communion, Participation and Mission in the Catholic Church. Across the globe various dioceses are launching avalanche of initiatives to include their people of God in the synodal journey registering their voices and listening to them apart from mere hearing. The prime purpose of this Synod is not to produce more documents. Rather, it is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be, to make people’s hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength to our hands for our common mission (see. Preparatory Documents, 32). Thus the objective of this Synodal Process is not only a series of exercises that start and stop, and that represent tokenism but rather a journey of growing authentically towards the

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communion and mission that God calls the Church to live out in the third millennium.

This synodal process is, moreover, intended to ensue on three important phases namely, listening phase that lasts till April 2022, continental phase that will run from September 2022 to March 2023, and subsequently final universal phase with Synod prober that will ultimately culminate in the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in the Vatican in October 2023. During these phases various representatives of the ministries and sections of the people are invited to walk together, meeting and listening to one another for a synodal Church. In an attempt to listen to people, the ministers involved in Prison ministry are encouraged to walk together with the prisoners leaving none behind. It is imperative that we include the prisoners also in the process, because they are most left-outs in the perusal of Catholic Church as that of the society. They are indeed alienated, vilified, victimised, discriminated, and pushed to the peripheries. In the society do they neither have vote banks to determine the trajectory of politics nor form any union to claim their rights. They are most left out, least bothered and thinly cared in the society. Along with transgenders and sexual minorities, the prisoners also face discriminatory, derogatory and ignominious remarks in their daily life. The synod is a blissful occasion to include the excluded in the synodal process.

As stipulated by Pope Francis, this synod results in building a church that is “more listening, yet more serving, a humble and a Church where all belong to in communion”. This synod wants to reinvigorate the sense among the people of God that synodality is not so much an event or a slogan but a

lifestyle of the Catholic Church. It is not only a gift but a task also to alleviate the illness affected in the Catholic Church in form of clericalism, discrimination, absence of minor protection, xenophobic attitudes towards the migrants, inadequate concern for environmental crisis and so on. The synodal journey also must be a camaraderie with the prisoners, which could bolster to the synod.

### **HOW TO JOURNEY WITH?**

Journeying together is wonderful experience. The very word synod also implies journeying together. The word 'synod' comes from Greek roots that convey "a road walked with others, a shared way." In other words, synod is a journeying together. A translated write up of Italian poet Gio Evan is an eye-opener to us. It vouchsafes the significance of any Journey. It goes like this. "Try to journey, otherwise you may become racist, and you may end up believing that your skin is the only one to be right, that your language is the most romantic and that you were the first to be the first. Journey, because if you don't journey then your thoughts won't be strengthened, won't get filled with ideas. Your dreams will be born with fragile legs and then you end up believing in tv-shows, and in those who invent enemies that fit perfectly with your nightmares to make you live in terror. Journey, because journey teaches to say good morning to everyone regardless of which sun we come from. Journey, because journey teaches to say goodnight to everyone regardless of the darkness that we carry inside Journey, because Journeying teaches to resist, not to depend, to accept others, not just for who they are but also for what they can never be. To know what we are capable of, to feel part of a family beyond borders, beyond traditions and culture. Journeying teaches us to be beyond. Journey,

otherwise you end up believing that you are made only for a panorama and instead inside you there are wonderful landscapes still to visit”.

The extraordinaire synod enjoins us to walk together with the most left outs of the society, and include the excluded, namely the Prisoners. Journeying together with the prisoners should be an encountering, repairing, functioning, serving and praying one as well. The synodal journey, hopefully not missing in action, could preferably choose listening over hearing in relationship, inclusion over integration in dealing, subjectification over objectification in pedagogical paradigms, sincere journey over tokenism in praxis during time of synodal journey with the prisoners. Here are few suggestions.

### **1. LISTENING OVER HEARING IN RELATIONSHIP**

The synod must provide a platform to listen to the prisoners and their kith and kins. Their tiny voices are to be heard with an undivided attention. The synod of Bishops could be a springboard to the unheard voices to be heard. It should not soundproof the hearts nor remain barricaded in our certainties all thorough the synodal journey. The synod must disarm the hearts that are filled with ignominious prejudice over the prisoners. Only open listening serves that.

Hearing and listening are not one and same. We hear a lot in our day-to-day life. We hear music, news, interestingly gossips, stories, cries and joys. Noises are part of our life, though they are reverberating bit louder. They are inevitable despite annoying and obnoxious. But listening is not as same as hearing. Hearing can remain non affective or nonchalant but listening is not. Hearing can take place impersonally, but listening does not. Hearing can be a leisure affair, but listening is rather a serious enterprise. Good listening leads to definite

action. It leads to be sided with the affected. It leads to take solidarity with those whom we listen to. Yahweh listened to the cries of the Israelites in Egypt, which led him to side with the *anavim* (Ex 6, 5-8).

When we listen to the prisoners, they may have host of stories like lack of equal delivery of food, inhospitable and unhygienic living abodes, state brutality and apathy of power structures and so on. They may have slew of ineffable stories that hurt their human dignity. The anthropologist Martha Nussbaum suggests a diverse list of ten vital capabilities for human dignity, namely bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination, thought to emotions, practical reason, affliction, relations with other species, play and control over one's environment, without which a human being remains anencephalic or in permanent vegetive state. Do the prisoners not lack those things? Are the prisoners and the families not subordinated literally to surveillance, inspection, discrimination, assessment and containment even after the time of incarceration? Don't they have the stories of lynching, legitimated brutalisation, criminalisation or justified maltreatment? Are they not subjected to discrimination, biased ideas and social ostracization? These kinds of stories must be listened to in our synodal journey with the prisoners. The pastors should not be afraid to listen to the flocks entrusted to them as well as nor are they afraid to tell the universal Church what they have gathered from them.

### **JESUS' MODEL**

The synod must ensure that the Catholic Church render a compassionate, non-pre-judgemental, unoffending, non-partial listening following the footstep of its master Jesus Christ who never stonewalled any cries of the people. In the miracles of

stories, it is obvious that Jesus had a unique way of healing people. During the time of Jesus, many had performed miracles, among whom Honi the Circle drawer and Hanina ben Dosa were prominent as recorded in the works of Josephus. They utilised some ancient ritual formulas. The rituals would have supposedly included incantations, symbolic actions, the use of certain substances and the invocation of the name of the ancient and wise men of God like Solomon to whom the ritual was supposed to have been revealed. But Jesus' actions were distinct from others. The peculiarity of Jesus is distinguished in touch, dialogue, expressing compassion and forgiveness of whole body and mind. Above all, his work of miracles was verbalised in table fellowship. Much like a good physician, Jesus invariably does ask the sick, diseased, or injured person what they want or need (interview), assess the problem (diagnosis), and commence with the process of healing (practice), most often sending forth the healed person with a teaching, usually including strong admonitions to avoid sinful behaviour in the future (so to say in medicinal terms - prognosis and prescription.). John Dominc Crosson would say, "miracles and parables, healing and eating were calculated to force individuals into unmediated physical and spiritual contact with God and unmediated physical and spiritual contact with one another."

## **2. INCLUSION RATHER THAN INTEGRATION IN DEALING**

The conventional mechanism to treat and deal with the prisoners is either separation from the society during incarceration or reintegration into the society after the period of punishments. But they must be included rather than integrated in the society after serving time of punishment in jail. The synod must guarantee their inclusion in the society and in the Church as well. After the process of reintegration,

the prisoners and their family still suffer isolation from deep-seated prejudice of the society. They could feel aloof even though they are in the society. Therefore, they must be included. They must feel that they possess a place in the society and the Church. They must feel “the Church is for me, where I can experience the sense of belonging, where I’m invited irrespective of the any track record I hold, where I have a role to play or something to contribute, the Church of Jesus is the Church of people like me”. Our vocational trainings and education may help them to integrate in the society, but they are insufficient to make them feel included.

Let us take the parable of ‘prodigal son’ (Lk 15: 11-31). The lost son returns to the father with the intension of integration, in other words in search of job to meet both ends meet. But the merciful father includes him in his life and house. If the father intended to integrate his son who ditched him, he might have given him job or food. He includes his son in his household. Another story depicts Jesus’ ministry of inclusion, the conversion story of Zacchaeus (Lk 19: 1-10). On his last leg of his Journey to Jerusalem, he encounters Zacchaeus whom he loves as he is, but not left as he is.

### **3. SUBJECTIFICATION OVER OBJECTIFICATION IN PEDAGOGICAL PARADIGMS**

To begin with, let me clarify the term Subjectification. Subjectification is a prodigy of German pedagogical model, which principally denotes the notion that in any pedagogy the human being is put in the centre not the subject we learn. In the context of prison ministry in terms of synodal journey, the prisoners are subjects or protagonists occupying the central place. They are at the centre of the educational and didactical process to gain autonomy, maturation and identity. **It is not**



**what one learns but who learns is important in this approach.** The terminology ‘subjectification’ implies a process of socio-anthropological and religious maturation of human person, in our case the prisoners, with both individual and community experience to gain autonomy, independence and self-awareness, being able to make own choices and decisions. In this process the prisoners are empowered to make independent decisions and competence to argue. This model is adapted in most of the European universities to teach, educate, counsel, evaluate, develop and innovate. But Indian cleric-centred Church lags far behind. There is no point of tiptoeing around it, it is writ large.

It would not be amiss to argue that the genesis of this synod is to decentralise the power to the laity. In the wake of Amazon Synod in 2019 and Synodal Journey of German Church (*synodaler Weg*) that was followed by Laity resurgence especially the women under the banner of Maria 2.0., the Pope Francis inaugurated a worldwide Synod of Bishops. In broader context of universal Church, the Synod is intended to relook the power bestowed on the clerics by virtue of anointment, to mitigate the sexual assault on the minors and women and to ensure retributive justice to the victims. In Indian context, the synod of Bishops is intended to address the unsolvable and deep-rooted issues like clericalism in name of religious indoctrination, entitlement and impunity of hierarchy, participation of laity who are infantilized into obedience, gender justice in ecclesial milieu and eradication of insidious presence of caste in Indian Church. In this process the laity should occupy the central place not the clergy. That is right mode of subjectification.

Let us look at the situation in India in this respect. Who speaks about synod? Who shares stage with Bishops during

inauguration? who writes in the theological journals? who convenes the meetings? who prepares the reports? Is not the same clerics? Is it not oxymoron? Is this act a piecemeal action? Is it not something illogical? Is it not an alibi to say that the laity does not come forward? Likewise, in the prison ministry ambit, the prisoners as Subjects must decide what they want, not the facilitating ministers like us.

In the Johannine Gospel we read that the task of messiah is to gather people. (Jn 4 :36). In original text it is given *óôíÜãäé êãñðxí* (*synagei karpon*) which means 'to gather harvest'. Though it denotes gathering of the harvests, some translations especially Tamil translation opts the translation 'to gather people'. It is right to say that the prime ministry of the pastors is to gather people not gather from the people.

#### 4. SINCERE JOURNEY OVER MERE TOKENISM IN PRAXIS

The world is ruled by social media, which is entrenched in every fabric of the society. In this social-mediatized society, image building, posting any mugshot to win likes and complimentary comments in social media platform have become a new normal. Like politics, the Church is no exception to fall prey to tokenism. Some are satisfied by taking photos of an event and posting in Facebook or twitter. Their job is over, they think. We have inaugurated the threshold of the synod of Bishops. Well and good. But it is not what is expected of from the Catholic Church. The ships in harbour are safe, but it is not what ships are built for. What can be done both in prison ministry and in Catholic Church of India?

#### FEW SUGGESTIONS TO CONCLUDE

- Let's ferret out a mechanism to make a just Church that treats its member equally. Let the Catholic

Church establish equal rights in the Church and check whether only a few sections of the group enjoy special rights. Let the Synod encourage the Indian Church to avoid monochromic approach.

- Too much hoarding of power to one member or one section of the community leads to misuse of power. Let the synod see to that power is shared and percolated though the Church even to the invisible member of the Church. Let us create some strategies for encouraging the laity to more participate. At least the possibilities enshrined in Code of Canon Law could be looked into.
- Let the Synod ensure that the prisoners, who are left outs and excluded, may find a visible presence in Catholic church.
- Let the Catholic Church respectful, serving, collectively responsible, diverse, relational and relevant to the society and environment.

## **DR KUNJUMON CHACKO – HERALD OF INDIAN PRISON MINISTRY**

**John Thomas Kottukappally**

Dr. Kunjumon Chacko, Founder Chairman of Prison Fellowship India, was born in Areeparamb, near Kottayam, Kerala, India, as the first among six sons of Evangelist Mr. K.K. Chacko and Mrs. Thankamma Chacko, on March 6, 1941.<sup>75</sup> His parents were very conservative Evangelical Brethren Christians, a denomination which hold unshakable faith in God and unflinching belief in the Bible, as the infallible Word of God, the fallen nature of humans, the finished work of Jesus Christ for salvation of humans and in salvation by faith alone. Dr. Chacko imbibed the Biblical Protestant ethics of hard and systematic work, faithful tithing, frugal lifestyle and fidelity in family. Dr. Kunjumon Chacko did his schooling in M.D.L.P School, Pampady, Government School Areeparamb and college education in C.M.S College, Kottayam, Waltair University and Calcutta Business School. He also holds a Doctorate from Hindustan Bible College and Seminary, Chennai. He started working at the age of eighteen and rose step by step to become an executive, in a well-known Calcutta based Industrial House. In 1966, Dr. Kujumon Chacko married Jane (Jainamma), daughter of Rev. K.G.

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<sup>75</sup> Chacko, Dr. Kujumon, *Heartbeats, A Journey Through My Life*, Autobiography, Malayalam, PF India, Kottayam, 2014.

Kurian, a renowned Bible expositor, preacher and evangelist. Biju the first son of the couple was born in 1968 and the second son Binny in 1970.

### **THE CALL FROM ABOVE**

In 1972, while working at the Vizagapatnam Port, Dr. Kunjumon Chacko was invited, by the prison Superintendent to give the Christmas message to prisoners in the Waltair Central Prison. There were 1800 prisoners and 200 staff members in that prison. As Dr. Chacko was leaving the meeting one young prisoner - Ramalu - came forward and said “Thank you sir for coming and sharing the Christmas story” which he was hearing for the first time. Ramalu committed his life to Jesus Christ. Dr. Chacko returned home with a heavy heart. He could not forget the crowd of people who listened to him very patiently in a disciplined manner. The seed of a mission to prisoners was sown in his mind. Dr. Chacko and his wife Jane visited the Waltair prison regularly and later the institution for juvenile delinquents sharing the message of new life in Jesus Christ.

The call from above and the need of the situation made Dr. Kunjumon Chacko leave his business career to commit himself totally to serve God in the prisoner community, in the name of the Risen Christ. It was no easy decision. He could not see any visible financial support to maintain his family. There would be expected and unexpected ministry expenses. The job in the business house was a comfortable cushion to depend on. It took eight months of struggle and prayer before he resigned.

The first thing Dr. Kunjumon Chacko did was to meet Mr. P. Gopala Menon, then Inspector General of Prison of Kerala State. The I.G. Prison gave permission to visit four sub jails

of Kerala to give moral instructions to prisoners as an experiment. For three month the mission field was only the four sub jails. There was wonderful co-operation from the officers and staff. Prisoners did enjoy the programs. Mr. Gopala Menon later issued an order permitting Dr. Chacko to visit all prisons and jails of Kerala to give moral instruction to prisoners. From 1974 to 1981, Dr. Chacko visited the prisons faithfully. The mission at that time was known as Jail Evangelism Fellowship.

When Mr. N. Subramanian, a devote religious person became I.G. Prison, the ministry took a very positive turn. Mr. Subramanian realized the spiritual and religious needs of the prisoners and was fully satisfied with the strategies used and the results obtained by Dr. Kujumon Chacko and his ministry. Mr. Subramanian gave an endorsement certificate, which Dr. Chacko could produce before I.G. Prison of other States. Dr. Chacko approached the officials of other States. The first to respond was Mr. Radhkent Saxena, I.G.P for the State of Rajasthan. The work started in Rajasthan in 1981, after a meeting with the I.G. in Jaipur, along Mr. M.A. Thomas, who had established a Ministry in Kota, Rajasthan. After few years, doors opened in Andhra Pradesh, where Mr. MAS Khan IPS; DGP was pleased to receive the mission, seeing the effectiveness of several prison chaplains, already working there.

By then Dr. Chacko was travelling and visiting all the thirty-six prisons and jails of Kerala once a month. As the work was very hard, Dr. Chacko recruited Volunteers, from Churches close to the jails. They visited the jails and carried on the programs. It became necessary to conduct Volunteers Training Programs and the first of its kind in India was held at India Bible Society, when Rev. Thomas Mathew was the

Auxiliary Secretary. Volunteers needed literature to give to prisoners. Dr. Kunjumon Chacko then wrote a booklet in Malayalam titled “*I Was in Rigorous Imprisonment*”. Since Kerala’s prison population was about 9,500, he needed 10,000 copies, which would cost Rs.750/-; but, he had only Rs.36/- . As India Every Home Crusade (IEHC) had a printing press, Chacko approached its head Mr. C. George, who read the manuscript, took the Rs.36/- and after three weeks gave Dr. Chacko the 10,000 booklets.

### THE CALL FROM ABROAD

In 1979, Dr. Kujumon Chacko was privileged to visit the Moody Bible Institute (MBI), Chicago, where he was interviewed by Mr. Paul Murphin on the Moody TV. Mr. Howard Whaley of MBI gave Chacko a letter of introduction to Mr. Gordon D. Loux, President of Prison Fellowship, USA. Chacko met Loux and Mr. Charles Colson, Founder Chairman of Prison Fellowship International in Washington. Dr. Chacko was given opportunity at PF USA’s volunteer training seminar on three occasions. Around that time Prison Fellowship International was formed and India was accepted as a charter member. In 1983, Dr. Chacko was appointed Regional Director for Central Asia and Middle East and could visit prisons and meet prison officials in most of the countries in the Middle East and Central Asia. It was indeed a great exposure to prison administration, welfare, correction and rehabilitation efforts in these countries. Chacko also got opportunities to meet Christians from diverse traditions that enriched his Christian life. For the next five years Dr. Chacko worked with Mr. Charles Colson, Gordon Loux and Ron Nikkel in the global arena. In 1988, Dr. Chacko resigned his position as Regional Director for Central Asia and Middle East, to work full time for the development of Prison Fellowship India.

The Lord gave him success in the endeavour to reach PF India to all the States in India.

### **THE CALL FROM ARABIA**

By divine providence, Dr. Kujumon Chacko happened to meet Dr. Ibrahim Alwaji, Deputy Minister Interior, Saudi Arabia, at the UN Crime Congress at Milan, Italy. Dr. Alwaji invited Dr. Chacko to Saudi Arabia to share with his prison and police officers the Mission and Vision of Prison Fellowship India. Dr. Chacko spent one month in Riyadh. Jeddah and Alkobar. He also taught at the Arab Security and Correction Centre, Riyadh. Later on, he visited other Islamic countries in the Middle East.

### **THE CALL FROM CATHOLIC CHURCH**

In 1985, two seminarians, Rev. Varghese Karipperry and Rev. Francis Kodiyan MCBS, from the St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, Kottayam visited the PF India office. That was followed by an invitation to give an awareness talk about Prison Ministry at the Seminary. Dr. Kujumon Chacko and team included Mr. John Thomas Kottukapally, well known Catholic Businessman and Evangelist, who was then board member of Prison Fellowship India and who was representing India in the PF International Board. The talk at the Seminary was followed by several hours of training sessions and visits to all the thirty-six prisons and jails of Kerala. Jesus Fraternity, the prison ministry of Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council resulted from this mission. It grew to become the Prison Ministry India under the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. The Catholic Prison Ministry now has more than 8,000 Volunteers, Chapters in practically all States of India and innumerable Rehabilitation Centres.



## THE CALL FROM PRECIOUS CHILDREN

Two million Indian children do not see their first birthday, one million are trafficked across Asia every year, one in four Indian girls are sexually abused before the age of four, five million children aged 5 to 18 have ended up prostitutes, fifty-nine million children have never been to school and a hundred million are child labourers, working 12 to 15 hours, eking out less than Rs 5 a day.<sup>76</sup> Statistics indicate that 70% of the children of prisoners and those of crime victims turn to criminal activities.<sup>77</sup> In 1987, Prison Fellowship India established the Precious Children's Home to care for these unfortunate little ones victimized by crime and crisis and nurture them into responsible citizens.<sup>78</sup> Initially, there were seven children. The staff would use love, acceptance and counselling to tackle the troubled children. PF India went on to establish Precious Children's Homes and Rehabilitation Centres in Bangalore, Vijayawada and Mumbai. In 2010, the Home in Kottayam expanded to become Precious Children International Village, at Areeparambu, Kottayam, set in 3.5 acres of land, surrounded by trees and plants, with five dormitories, a large canteen, sufficient bathrooms and open areas.<sup>79</sup> The International Village had 54 boys and 64 girls. About twelve of them had lost their parents in the anti-Christian riots in Kandhamal, Orissa, in 2008. Few were from Northeast India, orphaned by tribal clashes. The Maharashtra Children's Home was set up under leadership of Shaji

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<sup>76</sup> Sebastian, Shevlin, Children of an absent god, *New Indian Express*, 20th March 2010, Updated: 16th May 2012

<sup>77</sup> PF India, "*Precious Children*", Brochure, Kottayam, India, 2005.

<sup>78</sup> Chacko, Dr. Kujumon, *Precious Children*, Jubilee Publication, PF India, Kottayam, 2004

<sup>79</sup> Sebastian, Shevlin, "Children of an absent god", *New Indian Express*, 20th March 2010, Updated: 16th May 2012

Varghese with two counsellors and 100 children under the age of 13, which grew to 300 children by 2016.<sup>80</sup> Unfortunately, the operations of most of the Children's Homes have come to a grinding halt, with the new draconian rules of the Government, which permits only children from the same District being admitted to every Home.

### THE CALL TO DIVERSE MINISTRIES

In addition to being the Chairman of Prison Fellowship India, Dr. Kunjumon Chacko is Chairman of India Vision, the India Baptist Convention and India Baptist Theological Seminary. He holds special recognition from Kerala Christian Cultural Forum, Houston and the Leonard Buck International Leadership Award from Prison Fellowship International. His evangelism booklet for prisoners, *'Here is Freedom'* has been translated into seven foreign languages and has been used by several PF National ministries. He has authored more than 28 books on Prison Ministry, Family Values, Time Management and so on. Dr. Kunjumon Chacko has been conferred with the Best Author Award by the Kerala Christian Literary Committee. He has visited more than fifty-one countries as consultant, resource person and speaker on prison ministry, prison reforms, prisoner rehabilitation, leadership, and time management.

The greatest blessing of Dr. Kunjumon Chacko is the undivided support of his wife Jainamma and two sons Biju and Binny. They stood by him even though, Chacko was hardly home for than 10 days a month during 1975 to 2005. He was also blessed in having Dr BVR Rao serving in Vijayawada, Reny George in Bangalore, and others at the head office and

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<sup>80</sup> Sharma,Varda, "A new bond for prisoners' families, The Hindu, December 13, 2016

other locations. During the years of 1985 to 2005 several training seminars and overseas travels were undertaken. Prison Fellowship India is a member of the International Prison Chaplains Association. PF International Best Ministry Award was awarded twice to PF India. Delegation from Philippines, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, USA, Canada, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Myanmar have been trained in the International Institute of Correctional Management conducted by PF India.

Dr. Kunjumon Chacko continues to be Chairman of Prison Fellowship India and lives in Kottayam, Kerala with his wife Jainamma. He has two sons Biju Chacko and Binny Chacko and four grandchildren. Biju Chacko lives in USA and is a minister associated with Billy Graham Ministries. Binny Chacko works in Abu Dhabi and is the Vice-Chairman of Prison Fellowship India.

## BLESSED JAN FRANCISZEK MACHA

Fr Jaison Dominic MST

### INTRODUCTION

“The testimony that John Francis Macha, blessed today, gave to Jesus in the history of the Church in Upper Silesia, constitutes a card of truly heroic faith and love”<sup>81</sup> observed Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on the occasion of Beatification of blessed Macha. Blessed Jan Franciszek Macha (18 January 1914 - 3 December 1942) was a Polish Roman Catholic priest. He is one of many Polish martyrs – who include priests, bishops, nuns, and laypeople – who bore witness to Christian martyrs amidst the horrors of German-occupied Poland. He was a diocesan priest. Martyr, he lived again, in the darkness of an unjust imprisonment, he found in God the strength and meekness to face the difficult Calvary of persecution, killed in 1942. In this article we look at the life and works, the activities and aftermaths, charity and persecutions and courageous and vicarious suffering and death of Blessed Macha.

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<sup>81</sup> ‘Father Jan Franciszek Macha proclaimed blessed in the Cathedral of Christ the King in Katowice’ Retrieved December 11, 2021 from the website: <https://www.gamingdeputy.com>

## BIRTH

Jan Franciszek Macha was born in Chorzow Stary in Upper Silesia on January 18, 1914, as the first child of ironworker Pawel and his wife Anna.<sup>82</sup> They had six children, two of them died in their younger age. Jan Macha was known to his family and friends as 'Hanik', a Polonized diminutive form of his German name (Johann).<sup>83</sup> His two sisters were Roza and Maria and his brother was Piotr. As a young man, Macha was active in the scouting movement and Poland's Catholic Youth Association. He was good in playing violin and piano, and was interested in amateur theatre productions.<sup>84</sup> Above all, he was an amazing handball player. His team, Azoty Chorzow, participated in Poland's National Championship twice, winning a silver medal once and bronze another time.

## EDUCATION

He did his schooling in his hometown from 1921. Upon completing high school, Jan revealed to his family that he above all dreamed of becoming a priest. He applied to the Silesian Major Seminary, but was rejected because there were more applicants than the seminary could accommodate. Thus, he studied law at Krakow's time-honoured Jagiellonian University. After one year, in 1934 he succeeded getting an admission in the Silesian Theological College and commenced his ecclesial studies. He became known among his fellow seminarians for his deep devotion for his empathetic traits that made him noble. On 1 May 1938, Macha was

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<sup>82</sup> Catholicsanits.info. 'Blessed Jan Franciszek Macha' retrieved on 12 December 2021 from the website: <https://catholicsaints.info>

<sup>83</sup> Wikipedia, 'Jan Franciszek Macha' retrieved on December 11, 2021 from the website: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan\\_Franciszek\\_Macha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Franciszek_Macha)

<sup>84</sup> 'Catholic Priest who was Executed by the Nazis is Beatified in Poland Blessed Jan Franciszek Macha' Retrieved December 11, 2021 from the website: <http://www.catholicnews-world.com>

elevated to the diaconate at a Mass held in Katowice. He received his ordination from Bishop Stanislaw Adamski in Katowice on 25 June 1939 and celebrated his first Mass in the Saint Mary Magdalene parish church in his hometown on 27 June 1939. He was appointed as a joint vicar for the Saint Joseph parish in Ruda Slaska from 1 September 1939 onwards. It was the time that the Nazi forces invaded Poland. During the ordination Mass upon which Macha received the sacrament of holy orders, Bishop Stanislaw Adamski expressed this growing sense of doom: "Dark clouds are gathering in the sky of our lives. Priests must be ready to give their lives for their sheep, just like their Master. A stole bearing the likeness of the cross should remind you that you have decided to be ready to completely sacrifice yourselves in the service of God and neighbour."<sup>85</sup>

## POLITICAL SCENARIO

Chorzow in industrial Upper Silesia, the place where Jan Macha was born, is a historical borderland between Poland and Germany<sup>86</sup>. Many of the inhabitants of Chorzow, whom are of mixed Polish and German ancestry, speak a unique dialect with many German loanwords. In fact, this was the very reason, the influences of these two cultures, Jan Macha was called Hanik, a Polonized diminutive form of his German name (Johann). Macha was four years old. The Polish independence was restored after the conclusion of the First World War. The status of Upper Silesia was a major point of dispute. Just at the end of the War, in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, a survey on whether the region should

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<sup>85</sup> Mazurczak, Filip. 'He's either a saint or an idiot; The remarkable witness of Fr. Jan Franciszek Macha'; Catholic world Report, retrieved on December 11, 2021 from the website: <https://www.catholicworldreport.com>

<sup>86</sup> Ibid,

belong to Poland or Germany was held in 1919. A large majority voted for Germany, due to the fact that more than two hundred thousand Germans from outside the region travelled to participate in the poll.

In 1921, even if the poles remained still valid, under the leadership of Wojciech Korfanty, one of Poland's greatest national heroes of the twentieth century, the Third Silesian Uprising broke out. At last, the League of Nations decided to split Silesia among ethnic lines; Katowice, Chorzow, and Ruda Slaska, the parish where the young Father Macha would later work, were given to Poland.

### **GERMEN INVASION OF POLAND**

As a German nationalist, Hitler was very furious at the weakening of Germany after the World War I and it increased his fury to Poland as the large part of its wealth was spent at the expense of a resurrected Polish state. He could never accommodate the Treaty of Versailles by the League of Nations.<sup>87</sup> And thus, one of the grounds for the 1939 German invasion of Poland was the suspicion of mistreatment and discrimination of the German minority in border regions like Upper Silesia and Pomerania.<sup>88</sup>

After the invasion, Upper Silesia was directly annexed by the state of Reich; Eventually, the persecution began on its Polish and Jewish populations. Among the annexed territories was the town of Oswiecim, which would later become famous by its German name: Auschwitz. As the result of the persecution from the part of Germany, there also arose the Polish resistance movements which were considered as the largest underground

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid,

<sup>88</sup> Ibid,

resistance movement if the entire Europe is taken into consideration.<sup>89</sup> They really owe for saving many Jewish lives in the Holocaust than any other Western Allied organization or government. It was comprised of many secret smaller groups that arose spontaneously during the German — and Soviet — occupation.

### **SOCIAL ACTION OF MACHA**

Around the time of the invasion of Poland, the recent ordinand Jan Macha was assigned to St. Joseph's parish in Ruda Slaska. As in the custom of Poland, he was visiting the houses of parishioners in the Christmas season. It was a very transformative experience for the young priest, visiting his flock during the 1939-1940 winter season. He saw that the breadwinner was absent in many families (many Silesian men were deported to concentration camps, imprisoned, or compelled to perform slave labor), which made them destitute. These scenes transformed him.

Already as a law student, Macha was active in charitable organizations and activities.<sup>90</sup> Father Macha co-founded one such group, the Polish Armed Organization, at the outbreak of World War II shortly after he was ordained. He organized a network of volunteers to bring material assistance above all to widows and orphans in his parish. He recruited Catholic Action activists, older altar boys, and scouts. They established publishing houses and distributed leaflets that disseminated intelligence to the Polish resisters. His network is said to have consisted of four thousand volunteers. Many German men in

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid,

<sup>90</sup> S. Michal. (November 11, 2021). 'The Life and Work of Blessed Jan Macha Will Remain a Testimony to The Truth' Retrieved December 11, 2021 from the website: <https://polanddaily24.com>



Silesia were recruited into the Polish army and their families also suffered just like that of the Polish. Father Macha did not think twice about helping them. He provided assistance and comfort to those who lost loved ones in the fighting, tending to their physical and spiritual needs.

### **ILLEGAL CHARITY ACCUSED**

Charitable works were strictly forbidden in occupied Poland other than some, strictly monitored by German Government. More than this, Fr Macha worked with the Polish boy scouts, who had been incorporated into the illegal armed resistance. So, in early months of 1940, the political police force of the Nazi Government (Gestapo) summoned him to interrogate him about his activities and released him; and then on they kept him under observation.<sup>91</sup>

Macha was arrested on 5 September 1941 in a Gestapo raid at a train station in Katowice and was incarcerated in Myslowice until 13 November 1941.<sup>92</sup> During this imprisonment, he was interrogated many times. He was and covered with humiliations and tortures in these interrogations and would often plead to God to forgive his persecutors for their actions. He was never discouraged and dejected but rather encouraged and strengthened his fellow prisoners who were with him that they would be spiritually and psychologically robust.

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<sup>91</sup> 'Jan Franciszek Macha' retrieved on December 13, 2021 from the website: <https://www.wikiwand.com/en>

<sup>92</sup> Coppen, Luke. (November 20, 2021). 'Catholic priest guillotined by Nazis is beatified in Poland' Retrieved December 13, 2021 from the website: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com>

## LETTERS OF MACHA

Macha sent many letters from the prison and he was allowed only to write in German. Macha sent his first letter to his relatives on 18 September 1941. He wrote letters to his friends and relatives till he was moved to a prison on Mikolowska Street in Katowice in June 1942 (Soon after he reached there, he was sentenced to death on 17 July 1942). In one of the letters he wrote, “these months of my imprisonment are teaching me a lot; they locked me up and made me understand that life has meaning only if it is lived with God and for God”.<sup>93</sup> “I am dying with a clear conscience. I lived briefly, but I believe that I achieved my goal,” the soon-to-be martyred priest wrote in a letter he managed to be delivered to his parents.<sup>94</sup> In the letters he wrote, he often asked for prayer in order to draw strength to resist and not give in.

The Church also intervened and sent petitions to let him free that Fr Macha was the first priest in the diocese condemned to death, the youngest priest of the diocese, and this sentence may discourage the people for whom he would die. In this period, he wrote in his own hand a prayer of love to Christ which he placed in his breviary: “I give myself all to Him with my whole person”.<sup>95</sup> In the last letter from the prison just before his execution, he wrote:<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Wyszynska, Maria Stefania. (March 06, 2020). ‘Blessed John Francis Macha Priest and martyr’ Retrieved December 11, 2021 from the website: <http://www.santiebeati.it/dettaglio/97976>

<sup>94</sup> Moyski, Martina (December 2, 2019). ‘Pope Recognizes Martyrdom of Polish Priest Guillotined by Nazis’ Retrieved December 11, 2021 from the website: <https://www.churchmilitant.com>

<sup>95</sup> Wyszynska, Maria Stefania. (March 06, 2020). ‘Blessed John Francis Macha Priest and martyr’ Retrieved December 11, 2021 from the website: <http://www.santiebeati.it/dettaglio/97976>

<sup>96</sup> *ibid*

Dear parents and brothers, praise be to Jesus Christ! This is my last letter, my death sentence will be carried out in 4 hours. When you receive and read this letter, I will no longer be among the living. I leave you with God ... Forgive me for everything! Soon I will stand before the Almighty Judge, and then he will judge me. I hope he will welcome me with him. I die with a clear conscience. I have lived for a short time but I think I have reached the purpose of my life. I would have liked to work for Him again, but I was not given this opportunity. Do not despair: everything will be fine. Without a tree, the wood will remain the same wood, without a swallow, spring will still come, without a man the world will not fall ... Thank you for everything! Get my things from here. I don't have much time left. See you where the Most High is! I wish that a tombstone with my name was placed in the cemetery, so that those who stop can say a prayer for the rest of my soul. Pray for your Hanik.

## EXECUTION

The execution of Fr Macho was very sudden. Only a few hours before his death Father Macha became aware that he would not have a funeral, nor a burial with a grave. He requested for prayers for his soul, and he implored a quiet place where people could pray for the rest of his soul. He made his last confession to the priest Joachim Beslera during the night preceding his execution and also wrote a farewell letter to his relatives. He also wrote a small note that said: "Priest Jan Macha executed on 2 December 1942" despite the fact he was executed at 12:15am on 3 December at the guillotine (a machine with a heavy blade sliding vertically in grooves, used for beheading people).<sup>97</sup> It is believed that

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<sup>97</sup> ibid

his remains were cremated since his remains were never recovered. His relatives asked for his remains for a proper burial but the Nazis refused this.

The German Political soldiers (SS), knowing that the family wanted to celebrate the funeral Mass even without the presence of the body, gave the order to the parish priest to celebrate the Holy Mass without the bier, only with two candles in the centre of the church, without organist (it must be said that the funeral in the Polish tradition it is a religious “solemnity” in which the sound of the organ and the singing never fail) and without the church being illuminated, despite being crowded with people. They might have considered it as the last ‘punishment’ to the martyr and his bereaved family and friends.

## BEATIFICATION

The beatification process opened on 2 October 2013 after the Congregation for the Causes of Saints issued the official *nihil obstat* (no objections to the cause) decree and titled Macha as a Servant of God. The diocesan process was launched on 24 November 2013 in Katowice archdiocese. Having done all the procedures for beatification, Pope Francis approved the cause (venerated) on 28 November 2019 with a confirmation that the Polish priest was killed *in odium fidei*, or “in hatred of the faith”.<sup>98</sup> The beatification was celebrated on 20 November 2021. The feast is celebrated on 2nd December. The present postulator for the cause is Father Damian Bednarski. “His life and work will remain an unforgettable historical testimony of the truth, a moving story about the criminal face of the German occupation in Poland,

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<sup>98</sup> Jan Franciszek Macha’ Retrieved December 12, 2021 from the website: <https://peoplepill.com>

but also to an even greater extent – about a deeply human, Christian – and patriotic attitude of his and similar Polish clergymen, conspirators, scouts and social activists of that time. ‘Time’ - reads a fragment of President Andrzej Duda’s letter to the beatification ceremony.<sup>99</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Saints in the history are courageous in practising virtues. Father Macho was the exemplary example for this. He not only preached the Gospel in season and out of season, but rather lived and died for it. He believed that the Gospel is for all. Like St Kolbe, he also followed the words of Jesus “there is no love greater than giving life”. He becomes a martyr, who lived a courageous and virtuous life and who died a brave and fruitful death. He was an inspiration for the living and illustration for the vicarious suffering of Christ. Let him be an encouragement and intercession for all who suffer for justice and all who are accused groundless and innocent prisoners who are undergoing the same vicarious suffering of Jesus.

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<sup>99</sup> POLISH NEWS. (December 11, 2021). ‘Father Jan Franciszek Macha proclaimed blessed in the Cathedral of Christ the King in Katowice’ Retrieved December 13, 2021 from the website: <https://polishnews.co.uk>

## **PAPAL VISITS TO PRISONS: A HISTORICAL INTROSPECTION**

**Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS**

Salvation history is a saga of betrayals, arrests, trials, punishments, incarcerations, deaths as well as an anthology of forgiveness, repentance, reconciliation, reparation, reformation, reintegration and redemption. Jesus Christ our saviour himself was sentenced unjustly and was crucified mercilessly. Jesus himself commenced prison ministry by assuring paradise to the good thief on the cross. This unique salvific mission of Jesus to redeem the lost has faithfully been continued by his ambassadors on earth the holy popes and their representatives the prison chaplains. This article briefly reviews the mission of Popes in visiting prisons and redeeming prisoners in the history of the Catholic Church.

### **JESUS OF NAZARETH**

Jesus of Nazareth was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, tried and convicted of blasphemy. The Jewish leaders claimed Jesus was guilty of blasphemy because he allegedly said he was the son of God and that he and God were one and the same. He was convicted of a death sentence on grounds of treason against Caesar and was incarcerated. The prescribed method of execution for a non-Roman convicted of that crime was crucifixion (Mt 26-27; Mk 15; Lk 22-23; Jn 18-19).

## ST PETER

The first pope St Peter was incarcerated in Mamertine Prison in Rome. Peter was put into prison by King Herod, but the night before his trial an angel appeared to him, and told him to leave. Peter's chains fell off, and he followed the angel out of prison, thinking it was a vision (Acts 12, 3–19). Pope Pontian (died 235), the 18<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome who was elected in 230, deported to Sardinia five years later and sentenced to forced labour in a mine. Pope Silvestre (285-335) had the prison turned into a church.

## POPE PIUS VI AND OTHERS

Pius VI (1742-1823) was exiled and died in captivity. Napoleon put him in prison in February 1798 and he died the following August in the fortress of Valence with the words “Lord, forgive them,” on his lips. Records prove a number of papal visits to prisons. They were an opportunity to improve prisoners’ living conditions. Both Innocent X (in 1650) and Clement XI (in 1704) paid surprise, secret visits to the construction sites of Rome’s Carceri Nuove (New Prisons) in Via Giulia and the San Michele correctional facility in Porta Portese. In 1824 and then in 1827, Leo XII paid two visits to inmates: the first was to the Carceri Nuove in Via Giulia and the second was to the children’s prison in Via del Gonfalone. Pius IX paid a pastoral visit to inmates, visiting political prisoners in Rome’s urban detention facilities and then, on 26 October 1868 he paid another visit to the newly inaugurated prison of Civitavecchia<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> Cfr. *Vatican Insider* 5 May 2015.

## POPE PIUS XII

Pius XII, during the Christmas of 1951, had dedicated a radio address to prisoners worldwide, expressing his sympathy for their plight: “Aware as we are of the fragility and immeasurable weakness that often wears the human spirit down to death, we understand the sad tragedy that may have taken you unawares and swept you up, through an unfortunate combination of circumstances that can’t always be blamed on your own free will... And just as in Heaven, there is greater rejoicing for every sinner who repents, so on Earth every honest man must kneel before those who may have fallen, perhaps in a moment of confusion, and have nevertheless been able to struggle to redeem themselves and rise up once more.”

## SAINT JOHN XXIII

As recounted by Pope John’s private secretary, Monsignor Louis Capovilla – who was later made a cardinal, and who died in 2016 – Pope John said a few days before that first Christmas as Pope, “Listen, Father Loris, my mother taught me that for the holidays we must not only go to Mass, but we must also do works of mercy.” When Capovilla asked what he had in mind, Pope John replied that he wanted to go to the Bambino Gesù, a papally-sponsored pediatric hospital, on Christmas Day, and the next day he wanted to visit Regina Coeli, Rome’s best-known men’s prison.

Speaking to the prisoners, Pope John told them, “Now you need to rebuild your lives and you need to do one thing: eliminate the word ‘despair,’ and prepare yourselves to spend your lives doing good, because this is also the Father’s house and you are also sons of God.” When Pope John visited the prison’s ward for those serving life sentences, the inmates



dropped to their knees – a scene so powerful, and so imprinted on the imagination of the world at the time, that it's depicted on John XXIII's Vatican monument. The first papal visit to a prison ever filmed was John XXIII's historic visit to this Regina Coeli prison on St Stephen's Day in 1958. "I am Joseph, your brother", John XXIII said. The inmates gave him a missal with a white leather cover, which from then on, the Pope would use every day during his private Mass celebration. After blessing the inmates, John XXIII asked to visit the various sections of the prison. His meeting with a murderer who was down on his knees waiting for him was particularly touching. The man had tears in his eyes and would not look up. The young man was unable to speak, he simply sobbed. The prisoner asked him: "Does what you said apply even to me? I have so much sin in me. Can there be forgiveness for me too?" John XXIII, who was visibly moved, did not say anything, but bent over and embraced him.

## **POPE PAUL VI**

Paul VI visited the Regina Coeli prison, Rome on 9 April 1964. He broke down in tears while addressing them. The Pope told the prisoners: "You are worthy of being loved, helped and saved." He urged them not to give up hope and warned; "You can commit only one sin here - yielding to despair. Remove this bond from your souls, this true imprisonment and let your hearts expand instead and find reasons for hope once again, even in your present situation of constraint where physical, external freedom has been taken from you... It is Christ's voice that invites you to be good, to start over, to restart your lives and rise up.' The Pope celebrated mass in a central guard area where blocks of cells converge. Most of the inmates were permitted to leave their cells. Before the rite, one prisoner read an address to the Pontiff, thanking him

for the visit. The spokesman for the prisoners gave the Pope gifts manufactured in their workshops. The Pope administered communion to almost 500 men in an intensely emotional atmosphere<sup>101</sup>. Paul VI wrote a prayer specially for prisoners that read: 'Lord, you allowed yourself to be put to death in that manner in order to save your executioners, to save all of us sinners. And also to save me? If this is so, Lord, it means that one may be good at heart even though the condemnation of the courts of men weighs on one's shoulders.' From that year on, the Pope sent a present to each and every one of the inmates of Regina Coeli and Rebibbia prisons a pack of sweets and a religious image with his greetings.

## SAINT JOHN PAUL II

John Paul II, who was almost killed by the gunshots inflicted by Mehmet Ali Agca on 13 May 1981 in St Peter's Square, crossed the threshold of Rebibbia prison on 27 December 1983 to meet his attacker alone in his cell. The two sat down opposite to each other. For a moment Wojtyla put a hand on Ali's knee. Then the two of them lowered their heads and began to talk in whispers. Agca, who had already been forgiven by the Pope after the attack, had more to say. Wojtyla bent over with his hand on his forehead, almost brushing against Ali's head. As he left the cell, the pope said: 'I spoke to him as if he were my brother, a brother I have forgiven and who has all my trust. What we said to each other remains between us'<sup>102</sup>. In 2000, the year of the Great Jubilee, John Paul II visited Regina Coeli. He celebrated Holy Mass in Regina Coeli's 'rotunda', the same place where his predecessors had said Mass. The pope wore vestments sown by the inmates, he

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<sup>101</sup> Curtsey to New York Times

<sup>102</sup> Cfr. *Vatican Insider* 5 May 2015.

said Mass on an olive-wood altar made by a prison guard and was given a plaster crucifix made by a group of Albanian inmates. On that occasion, two prisoners put on white vestments to serve the pope as altar boys. One of them, 44-year-old Gianfranco Cottarelli, was given the duty of holding the Pope's crucifix-shaped papal staff with trembling hands.

### **POPE BENEDICT XVI**

Benedict XVI visited prisons a couple of times: on 18 March 2007 he went Rome's Casal del Marmo prison for minors to celebrate Holy Mass. On 18 December 2011 he chatted with inmates at Rome's Rebibbia Prison, in what was one of the most important and moving meetings of his pontificate. Benedict XVI spoke about overcrowding and decay in prisons, adding: "Anyone can fall, but that God wants everyone to come to him, and we must cooperate in the spirit of brotherhood and awareness of our own fragility, so that they can truly rise again and move forward with dignity ... and also find joy in life. And if we recognize this plan, God is with us, and even the dark passages have their meaning ... in order to help us become more ourselves, more the children of God. May the Lord help you, and we are close to you."

### **POPE FRANCIS**

It has become the custom for Pope Francis to visit a detention centre on Holy Thursday, part of his longstanding emphasis on ministering to prisoners and giving them rehabilitation and hope. The Pope washes and kisses their feet irrespective of their gender and religion. Visiting the imprisoned is an act of mercy that has implications for all Christians and not just those involved in prison ministry, Pope Francis said. On November 8, 2019 speaking to participants at an international meeting of national and regional directors of Catholic prison

ministries, Pope Francis urged greater efforts to reform prison systems, address the root causes of crime and ensure acceptance and reintegration once a person completes his or her sentence. The whole church in fidelity to the mission received from Christ is called to show the most vulnerable people the mercy of God. We will be judged on this.

## CONCLUSION

The second half of 20<sup>th</sup> and the first half of 21<sup>st</sup> centuries witnessed how much the Popes took care in expressing their love and concern for prisoners. Though all throughout the church history there had been attempts by Popes to visit prisoners it has become very effective, powerful and a custom with the papacy of John XXIII. Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis profoundly conveyed the unconditional and forgiving love of Jesus to prisoners. They have given us the model and inspiration how we need to take care of prisoners. It's our duty to continue their legacy by outreaching the neighboring prisons to convey the forgiving love of Jesus and thereby to release, reform, rehabilitate, reintegrate and redeem them. For Jesus said, "I was in prison, you visited me" (Mt 25, 36).

## **MAKE SOMEONE SMILE IN PRISON**

**Fr Sebastian Vadakumpadan**

This is my vision. Little from my side, little help, little sacrifice, little adjustment, little hardship, little care, little time for others, little by little; this is my whole life. This is what I was trying to do with my life in prison ministry. Jesus tells us to love our neighbor rather than the whole world. You may not be able to see the entire world. You don't know the end of everything and the lives of everyone. You may not clothe everyone and feed all the hungry people. You cannot quench the thirst of everyone but you can do something for someone next to you. You make a difference to that one though you may not be able to transform the whole world. If hundreds of people think in this way, it may not take much time to build a better world. If everybody cleans the path in front of his house, the whole of India would be clean and tidy. Jesus went in search of one Zacchaeus and he was the only one that Jesus could save on that day. We often leave the one and go for the ninety-nine. Finally, we are able to touch none. On another occasion an entire mob pressed against Jesus but the power of healing went out from him to a woman of untold shame at that time. God asks us, where is the one, not the whole world. The question of God to Cain was, "where is your brother?" The same question is to be answered to God as we face him at the end.

There was a 45-year-old man of a little unsound mind in my parish. He was regular to the parish Mass. Now he had become a cause of great trouble of which he was not aware. He was not able to return home once he had gone outside. He didn't know his own house. His mother was worried. Many times, she would go in search of him. It was a great pain for a mother to understand the truth and to face the situation of her son. He was not able to return home. He was regular to the parish mass for the last few years. But now he went no more to church. The daily big 'Amen' coming as a response to my prayers in the daily masses was no more to be heard. It gives me pain when I celebrate the holy mass every day. There are many in the prisons who don't know their way back home. The reasons are many but not at all of them are physical like the case of the man of that house. Something is to be done in your ministry for someone in prison for them to return home. We may not be able to reach out to the 478600 prisoners in 1350 prisons of India but somebody is waiting for your love and care somewhere. You can be the icon of hope, a sigh of relief in their lives. They may not get a chance of participating in the Mass in prisons but your presence on Sunday makes them understand that the day is Sunday, a day they used to go for Mass or for someone who is not a Christian, a religious day. I recall the request of a prisoner on Sunday in a prison for prayer support so that he might be accepted at home as he would be going the next day on his parole. Positive prayer is the culture of the church. Positive thinking can change you into keeping a positive attitude in your life but positive prayer will transform others. Prison ministry volunteers believe strongly in prayer for others, the chain adoration, the chain rosary and chain fasting. We treasure it as the culture and pulse of our movement.

As I was attending an international conference in Thailand, there were two mothers in it: one was the mother of the victim and the other of the offender of a murder case. Both were in tears as they shared their experience. One lost her son forever. The hope of the family was taken away. The other mother suffered the shame from the family members and society. None of them would come home, receive no visitors and both were fully forsaken by the society. They felt like leaving the locality. Personal identity that normally is a credit to anyone had become here a burden. She bore the son for ten months but now pregnant with the shame of the son for the remainder of life. Both were profusely crying and hugged each other. We too were in tears watching their expressions with deep regret in our hearts. It was a terrible reality to be faced by both the parties of the crime, whether one is on the victim's side or the offender's side.

We misunderstand that life to mean activities and programs. Life is more than that. How can I understand the following expressions of my life such as: a silent prayer, a silent expectation, a little whisper from my heart, a little waiting, a little mortification, the sacrifice of removing a piece of waste paper from the veranda to cast it into the dust bin, to bear fruit for the conversion of a soul? All these are not trumpeting of our lives but silent actions which are unnoticed but work wonders. St. Theresa of the Child Jesus had a prayer of this sort for Pranzini, who had taken the lives of three people at one stretch. It bore fruit at the time of this hard-core criminal's execution. He embraced the cross and received the mercy of God from a priest. A silent prayer, the little mortifications, the positive prayer of the saint offered for others and her wish to be a missionary had made the saint into the patron of missionaries without going on any expedition with the gospel.

Life does not often consist in many activities and programs but rather becomes active even more in prayer.

You may not be a full-time volunteer but can become an effective volunteer. I prefer to be an effective volunteer and that is the mission of prison ministry. You may be a hidden volunteer but an effective volunteer. Let the big walls of prison be bullet proof but not prayer proof. Your prayer can break the bullet proof thick wall. Your prayer breaks the bulletproof hardcore lives for whom the society and family have lost hope. Prisoners must feel that they are wanted still because someone is coming in search of them. He finds solace by telling himself that “there is still someone who asks about my health and family; even though my own family doesn’t want me;” The society doesn’t expect him again at home. The hope of even his own daughter may be dim. It was a heartbreaking experience once to hear the words of a prisoner, “my daughter does not want my presence even for her marriage though my special parole is sanctioned and I made all the last moment preparations to be out for the marriage of my daughter”. He was broken by those words of her daughter. When the attitude of people is like this, your visit to the prison matters a lot in their lives. No one does anything without expecting anything in return in the prison but they feel and appreciate the sincere love you give without expecting anything in return. We must go not only once but many times to see them. We must not forget their names and must keep their aspirations alive. It is very much important to keep their hopes and aspirations alive. There is no one in the prison to ask them in their lives, “When are you coming out of prison?” You may not value the joy of being outside if you have not been in prison at any time. You may not feel the value of friendship, the value of food, and the value of being in your own little space and so on. Here everything is common. They may not belong to anyone amidst



thousands of prisoners. They are surrounded by many but no one belongs to them. Their wish has no value in the prison.

My advice to the volunteers is to be the hope. Hope is not something that blocks you but opens your horizons. Hope makes you sky big with stars shining. So make them dream of their future. Be love. Love doesn't have barriers of language, religion or nation. It is a cross border matter. Love can wait. Love can suffer. Love can ignore the things of the past. Love can take risks. Only love can take risks. Love has no fear.

“Gun cannot change a prisoner but you can change; you go with love and concern and that makes them changed persons”; these are the words of Mr. Gaud, the home minister of Andhra Pradesh. This is the concept of Jesus’ “Love your neighbor”. You can change someone only when you become their neighbor. One day a child asked his parents, Is God a parent or a grown up? The Parents asked the child, “why are you asking this?” The child replied, “Parents can forgive and forget but grown-ups cannot do so and I want God to be parent.” We have grown-ups but not neighbors. Grownups cannot often understand us and our feelings. Grownups cannot forgive us. Grownups want to punish us. A neighbor can understand our needs. They don't bother their own business. They don't bother about your weight but they carry you. They will shell out their money. They'll give even a little extra for your future expenses. They don't see the past of the persons. Those who see the past cannot help anyone. No prisoner is free from the past of heinous crimes. The call is to be a neighbor who stops the journey when others don't want to stop.

You are not alone in your journey. Our Mission is always with another. You are not alone in your suffering. Mother Mary had Elizabeth and Elizabeth had Mary to console each other.

Many stopped the journey of prison ministry because you don't support them. They felt that they were alone. Jesus sent the disciples two by two to support each other. That is the style of God's ministry. Prison ministry is not an exception to it. We are not alone in our prayer. Our united prayer shall overcome the heap of shame and agony inside the prisoners to a better world with myriads of hope. They remember not because you gave them money but that you stood with them. Once it happened that a prison fight arose in Luringancho prison. Many were killed and others got injured. To overcome the situation, the bishop of that diocese went and did the needful. Many were taken to the hospital and others were supported to calm the turmoil. Many rounds of discussions took place. Finally, after a week, there was a peace settlement. They wanted to hand over the guns and weapons. They didn't want to hand them over to anyone else but to the bishop. The prisoners wanted his lordship because he stood with them in their situation of commotion. It is not your money rather yourself who should stand with them in their hopelessness, helplessness and lovelessness. Our presence is very much important for them. They value us because we are with them. You shall not pass this way again. You shall not meet these people again. Whatever help you can do for them is to be done now and by you alone. The year of Jubilee is the work of many; some are very effective in their ministry yet are silent. I extend my sincere congratulations to each volunteer for being part of this great mission of Jesus.

**YOSHIE SHIRATORI**  
**THE MAN THAT NO PRISON COULD HOLD**

**Sr Lini Sheeja MSC**

**YOSHIE SHIRATORI**

Shiratori Yoshie, (1907–1979) was a Japanese national born in Aomori Prefecture. He is famous for having escaped four times from several different prisons, which made him an anti-hero in Japanese culture. Shiratori worked in a tofu shop initially and later worked as a fisherman to catch crabs for Russia. After changing jobs several times and finding little success, he turned to gambling and stealing to make a living.

**AOMORI PRISON ESCAPE**

Shiratori was first imprisoned at Aomori prison in 1936. He was forced to confess to a murder he did not commit. Falsely imprisoned in Aomori Prison, he was beaten and tortured every night by prison guards. Yoshie thought of escaping from the prison but it wasn't easy to do so. He kept record of everyday patrol time of guards which always had a gap of 15 minutes. During that time, he would pull out a metal wire which he got from the bathhouse and started to pick the lock. He somehow managed to succeed in it. But there were more locks ahead. However, after studying the guards' routine for months, he escaped by picking the lock of his cell with the metal wire that was wrapped around the bucket provided for bathing.

### **AKITA PRISON ESCAPE**

Three days later he was caught again stealing supplies from a hospital. He was back to Aomori. He was sentenced to life imprisonment for his escape. In 1942, he was transferred to Akita jail in Akita City. The guards would force him to do manual labor and made him sleep on the concrete floor during winters. He was kept in a confined room whose ceiling was very high and the wall was made slippery so that no one could climb to the one window up above. They also handcuffed Shiratori all the time. On the stormy night of June, one of the guards on patrol duty looked inside the Shiratori's cell and was shocked to see the cell empty. Yoshie Shiratori had escaped again. What people did not know about him was that he was an expert lock picker. He freed himself from the handcuffs. He climbed up the slippery wall and made it to the window. The window had a wooden cover from outside and was rusty. Every night he would climb the wall, try to move the rusty window and make it lose. On the night of June 15, it was raining heavily and he chose that day to escape so that no one could hear his footsteps because of the storm.

### **ABASHIRI PRISON ESCAPE**

Three months later on September 18th, the head guard Kobayashi heard a knock on his door. To his surprise it was Yoshie Shiratori. He let him in, fed him and listened to everything he had to say. Shiratori said he didn't mind staying in the prison but the amount of abuse he faced was the only reason for escaping. He wanted to file a lawsuit on Japanese Prisons for corruption and the abuse they had done to him. He wanted Kobayashi's help to testify against the prison as he was the only one who treated Shiratori with respect. While Yoshie was in the toilet, Kobayashi called the police. He was back again in jail.

This time he was sentenced to 3 more years of life imprisonment and was sent to the northern part of Japan where the weather always remained cold. He was now in Abashiri Jail. Kept in summer clothes in harsh winter made his body weak. He was handcuffed with iron rings which required two metal specialists to open. The food served there was rice, miso soup and soya sauce. The windows were made so small a person could not pass through it. Yoshie always made sure to save some miso soup. He poured the miso soup on the window nut bolts and his iron handcuffs. The salt amount in miso soup oxidizes the iron material thus rusting them and weakening it. After 6 months finally the nut bolts started to drop off and the window could now be broken. One of the expertises of Yoshie was that he could dislocate his joints whichever way he wanted. He then dislocated himself to get out of the small window. For 2 years Yoshie had isolated himself in a cave and hunted animals to survive. He came out of the cave after 2 years and while passing through a Tomato farm, he plucked a tomato and ate it. The farmer saw this and attacked him. In the process of self-defense, he killed the farmer. He was arrested again.

### **SAPPORO PRISON ESCAPE**

This time he was given death sentence and was sent to Sapporo Prison in 1947. The Americans came to know about his abilities to escape jail. He was kept under 24 hour surveillance with 6 guards always watching him. Yoshie always looked at the ceiling thinking of a plan to escape again. That's what the guards thought. But Yoshie had already begun his escape by digging below the futon he used to sleep on. One day he overslept and guards kept on asking him to get up. When he did not wake, they went inside the jail only to find the wooden slates. Yoshie had escaped again. He ran off

and sat on a bench nearby. A police officer sat beside him and started a conversation. The police man did not know who Yoshie Shiratori was. The police man offered him a cigarette. In Japan, cigarette was one of the costly items and seeing this gesture from the police man he cried. He confessed who he was. He was arrested and taken to court. Judges considered his plea after the number of times he had escaped. They acknowledged his lawsuit against the prison abuse and his death sentence was revoked and reduced to 20 years. He was treated well inside the prison. In 1961 he was finally a free man who had spent 25 years of his life escaping from prison.

#### **JAPANESE PRISONS REFORM SYSTEM**

After Shiratori's death, Japanese prison systems were reformed which were due to the daring escapes of Shiratori. The police officers behaved well with the convicts and with all the prisoners. Japan has worked to reform the prison system since the Meiji Era, which meant escapes have become rarer, and by the mid-1970s, the annual number of escapees have dwindled to just a single digit.

## **MY LIFE IS MY FAITH IN GOD - STORY OF AN IRANIAN MOTHER**

**Sr Fidelis HCM**

This is the real experience of an Iranian mother who went through persecution valiantly and kept her faith in Jesus even in the midst of her terrible suffering. Rachel is just one of the Iranian mothers, who were tortured for their faith. Rachel kept herself close to the Heart of Jesus in the midst of her terrible sufferings. She kept her faith in Jesus in her pilgrimage to follow the Way. “God stands by us when we are down. He encourages us when we think of quitting and He guides us when things seem confusing”. A mother’s heart breaks when she thinks of the sufferings of her children. She understands every pain the child goes through. “God so loved the world that He gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life” (Jn3,16).

### **RACHEL AND KIMIYA**

Rachel held her daughter Kimya to her heart tightly as she heard the knock on the door of her house. When the sound of the knock went on, Kimya got scared and looked at her mother with fear. Rachel couldn’t do anything but pray. The day she most feared had now come, she thought... She was helping the Christians to conduct prayer groups in secret. It was prohibited in Iran. Somehow the police came to know about it and were searching for her. Since she didn’t open the

door, after a long knock, the police went off. Both the mother and the daughter were a bit consoled. However, how long could they hide themselves? This time Rachel escaped arrest. But the day of her arrest was not far.

## **UNDERGROUND CHURCH IN IRAN**

My faith in Jesus brought me to the church of a family. From then onwards, in all my dreams of life, I experienced the presence of Jesus who gave me life. I was filled with love of God in my loneliness. In this awareness of the love of Jesus, everything else became mere nothing, as St Paul exclaimed even in all the hardships and persecution. “I want to love and adore God, nothing else matters for me,” said Rachel. For about two years she continued to go to the church of the family. My husband also followed the Way - Jesus. They were blessed with the birth of a baby girl and their life of faith continued in hidden places with lot of uncertainties and with much fear. They could be arrested at any moment. As the days went by, the number of people in the church started increasing and her husband and she took the leadership of the group. To become a leader of a Christian prayer group in Iran is a very dangerous position as if you are inviting death for yourself. Once they were caught the leaders will be the terrible sufferers rather than the faithful. She was not afraid of anything even though they were living with the danger of cruel death in front of them. But there was some feeling deep in her heart that ‘God will protect them’.

They firmly believed that God was taking care of them. They were very cautious and careful in their communications, using only public phone for this purpose. “Be cautious like the serpent and innocent as doves”. Their daughter Kimya and a few other children were the lucky ones of the Catholic parents who got the opportunity to learn catechism and they were



blessed with the understanding that they should not communicate this to their friends of other faiths, says Rachel. When the secret police came for the first time, they escaped. But now the second time they acted very cunningly and took Rachel away when her husband had gone to leave her daughter at the school.

### **THE NOTORIOUS IVIN JAIL IN IRAN**

They kept Rachel in solitary confinement and she started crying. She was worried about her daughter thinking what will happen to her since she had not revealed anything about her arrest to her. Rachel started questioning within her why God had abandoned her, what is the meaning of her call to follow Him and why He was not coming to rescue her and her daughter. She began doubting God and did not even speak to God for the first few days. She could not trust Him anymore and was slipping away deep into the darkness of disappointment. She stopped praying. The prison officials questioned her on and off ridiculing and insulting her and even beating. She lost 13 kg of her body weight within two weeks and you can imagine the pain and agony she went through.

### **WHERE WERE YOU GOD?**

One day after long hours of questioning using foul words and torturing, she slept that night. During her sleep she heard a Bible verse “He was in the world. The world was created through Him. But the world did not know Him” (Jn 1,10). This was a turning point in her life. Though she was frightened in the beginning, after this dream she regained courage and started praying and experiencing that God was accompanying her where ever she moved. From then on, she never felt alone, even in her solitary confinement. But this doesn’t mean that

life in the jail was easy. It makes her shudder when she thinks of how she spent those days in the jail. It was only prayer that strengthened her to face all anxieties and fear about her daughter. She was in constant touch with God surrendering her daughter to Him and suffered everything silently for Christ's sake. After two weeks the prison officials gave her permission to call her daughter and as soon as she heard her voice she began to weep. When Rachel realized that she was not keeping well, her pain increased but mustering courage she comforted her and told her that she should always be with her father and that she would be back soon. Rachel got bail after one month of being in the prison and could join her family. Her daughter was feeling very insecure and she told her that she should never leave her. Rachel knew that being in Iran she could never give that affirmation to her as there was the possibility of her husband being caught too. Hence they decided to quit Iran.

### **IN YOUR TIME**

Even though Rachel was aware of the fact that if they flee from Iran, they would only be able to save their life and their faith in God, because wherever they reach, they would not receive any benefits of the place and would be given only the benefits of refugees. In the midst of her sufferings in the jail, she learned to believe and trust in God. Now she wants to speak more about God's love to Kimya and read the Bible with her. Rachel reminiscences: "Now Kimya has grown a bit more and has learned to play guitar and she sings beautifully with it. Kimya sings, I raise myself into your hands, I drink your love, I wash my sins with your precious blood, I keep all my fears, pain and anxieties on your shoulders; I place all my hopes and expectations at your feet, keeping myself away from the confusing world, I offer myself to you". This is her

favourite song. Surrendering everything in the hands of God they live as refugees in a country (which she does not want to reveal for security reasons) hoping that God will take care of them and lead them forward in His own way and in his time. “In your time, Lord, you make all things beautiful. Lord, please show me every day, as you’re teaching me your way. That you do just what you say, in your time”.

## PRISON MINISTRY INDIA: DIRECTORY

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners” (Mk 2,17). Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Lk 19,10) and Prison Ministry India volunteers continue this mission of searching, serving and saving the lost. Since 1981 hundreds of PMI volunteers reach out to 1350 prisons in India under the able leadership of national, regional, state, diocesan, zonal, seminary and unit coordinators endeavoring hard to release, reform, reform, rehabilitate, reintegrate and redeem our incarcerated brethren. PMI rehabilitation centres welcome our brethren behind bars and provide them opportunities for their reformation and facilitate their reintegration and redemption. Recently PMI introduced Special Task Forces to focus our attention on the reformation and reintegration of hardcore prisoners such as terrorists, serial killers, hired killers, mafia dons and so on. With the launching of Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated PMI extended her ministry to prisoners worldwide.

For the effective coordination and communication of prison ministry volunteers all over India easy access to their names, numbers, emails and addresses is needed. Fr Jaison Puthenpurakkal MST who has recently been appointed as the Director of Reformatory Research and Documentation Centre (RRDC) has taken strenuous effort to compile the first PMI

Directory. I extend my hearty congratulations and highest appreciation to him who tirelessly toiled day and night to complete this directory. I also thank and appreciate Sr Amala DC, PMI national secretary and Bro Pradeep Antony OFM who insistently collaborated with this venture. Let this directory be a model for the regional and state PMI units to prepare their directory with the names and addresses of their volunteers. I take this opportunity to thank and appreciate all PMI volunteers who regularly visit prisons in India. May Lord Jesus who said “I was in prison and you visited me” (Mt 25, 36) bless us with His eternal bliss.

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8 December 2021

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10	Ballari	Fr Ponnu Swamy Parish Priest Infant Jesus Church Behind Raghavendra Talkies Bellari 583104	Mobile: 9901856493 Email: fr.ponnuswamy@gmail.com
11	Belagavi	Sr Lavina BS Gratia Plena Convent Santibastwad Post Belagavi – 590018 Karnataka	Mobile: 8861087421 Email: laveenagrace@yahoo.com
12	Belthangady	Sr Lilly Thomas SH SH Convent Iduvally, Hossur NH Olekkatte Sigga Post, Soraba Taluk Shimoga District 577434	Email: srlillythomassh@gmail.com
13	Bengaluru	Fr Clement Deep Prison Ministry- Bangalore Unit coordinator 5, Nandi Durga Road Jayamahal Extension Benson Town, Bangalore-46	Mobile: 9880750545

14	Chikk-mangaluru	Mr Pradeep Rebello Honeycomb Estate Kuduvalli Post Chikmagalur - 577133	Mobile: 9448428274 Email: pradeep.rebello@yahoo.com
15	Kalaburgi	Sr Reena D'Souza Deepalaya Paradise Residency 1-867/65/S.F.4, MSK Mill Road, Venkadesh Nagar, Glb 585102	Mobile: 9481208578 Email: dsreena@gmail.com
16	Karwara	Fr Michael Pinto KDDC Bishop's House Karwar – 581302 (UK) Karnataka	Mobile: 9480674917
17	Mandya	Fr Josekutty Kalayil Santhome, P.B.No.42 Engineering College Road Mandya Dt.571401 Karnataka	Mobile: 8885432507
18	Mangaluru	Mr Jerome P Lobo Lobo View, Guddenthota Patel House, Kankanady Post Mangalore - 575002	Mobile: 9845138660 Email: jeromelobo660@gmail.com
19	Mysuru	Sr Joyce Fernandes CSST Superior St Joseph's Convent, Mandya, Karnataka Adv Michael Noronha 494 Maria Krupa, North Park Avaneue, 7th Cross, Roopa Nagar, Bogadi Post Mysore - 570026	Mobile: 9663451298 Email: srjoycecssat@gmail.com Mobile: 9449048547

20	Putturu	Fr John Kunnathettu	
21	Sivamogga	Sr Helen Moras-SCB St Charles Convent, New Town, Bhadravathi Shimoga Dt 577301	Mobile: 8970859472 Email: helenmoras @gmail.com
22	Udupi	Mr Rosario D'Souza R/O Mandavi Court Annexe Opp. Udupi Court Court Road, Udupi City Udupi Dt, Karnataka	Mobile: 9448915044 Email: rosariodsouza100 @gmail.com

### 1.3 Kerala & Lakshadweep

**State Coordinator – Fr Shaji Stephen O de  
M - 9995577738**

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25	Calicut	Fr Jaison Kalathiparambil	Mobile: 8606890088
26	Changanassery	Fr Sebastian Puthussery	Mobile: 9747923012
27	Cochin	Fr Sunny Attapparambil	

28	Ernakulam-Angamali	Fr Sebastian Thekkanath Director, SARATHI Azhakam P.O 683577 Karayaparambu Maniyamkuzhi	Mobile: 9871829833
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30	Irinjalakuda	Fr Jaison	Mobile: 8848542295
31	Kanji-rappally	Fr Sebastian Perunilam Divyakarunya Nagar, Thampalakkadu – 686506 Kottayam District, Kerala, India.	Mobile: 7025665214 Email: penuelashram @gmail.com
32	Kannur	Fr Shaiju Peter	Mobile: 9947662709
33	Kollam	Fr John Paul Director Jesus Fraternity Pastoral Centre Near Bishop's House, Tangasseri, Kollam	Mobile: 7034294821 Email: charlezjp @gmail.com
34	Kothamangalam	Fr Varghese Paramel Director Prison Ministry of Kothamangalam Diocese Nestt. Muvattupuzha-686661	Mobile: 8547848309
35	Kottappuram	Fr Alex Elanjikal Francis Assisi Minor Seminary Madathumpady P.O. Paravoor, Thrissur – 680733	Mobile: 9744698744

36	Kottayam	Fr Jinu Avanikunnel Mariagiri Englisdh Medium School, Peerumed P.O. Idukki - 685531	Mobile: 8281537657
37	Mananthawady	Fr Shaji Muthedath St Mary's Church Vythiri P.O 673579 Mananthavady, Kerala	Mobile: 9446816883
38	Mavelikara	Fr Mathew Kuzhuvila Amalagiri Catholic Bishop's House Punnamood, Alappuzha Dt Mavelikara-690101	Mobile: 9446188690
39	Muvattupuzha	Fr Joseph Thazhathel	Mobile: 9747952633
40	Neyyattinkara	Fr Rahul B Anto Neyyattinkara Integral Development Society Logos Pastoral Centre Neyyattinkara	Mobile: 9562772262 Email: rahubanto @gmail.com
41	Pala	Fr Vincent Moongamakkal Director Jesus Fraternity Adarrr Centre Pala, Kottayam District Kerala - 686575	Mobile: 9447661326 Email: vincentmoon gamakalachen @gmail.com
42	Palakkad	Fr Martin Thattil St Peter's Church Nellippara P.O, Palakkad 678581	Mobile: 9447964663
43	Pathanamthitta	Fr Mathew Pezhumotil St Mary's Karunya Bhavan Vallappara P.O., Konni Pathanamthitta - 689691	Mobile: 9539370719

44	Punalur	Fr Christudas Punaloor Social Service Society, Punaloor 691305 Kollam Dist.	Mobile: 9496013031
45	Thalassery	Fr Joseph Kolluthappally St Mary's Church Poinachi, Thekkil P.O. - 671541 Kasaragod District Kerala	Mobile: 9895769130 /9400062850 Email: poinachi stmaryschurch @gmail.com
46	Thama- rassery	Fr Thomas (Sai) Parankulangara Karuna Centre Vrindavan Colony Chevayur, Calicut 673017	Mobile: 9544285018
47	Thiruvalla	Fr Joseph Narimattom	Mobile: 9446443749
48	Trivandrum	Fr Paul G St Joseph's Church Kochuveli, Trivandrum, Kerala	Mobile: 9447029438/ 8301089438
49	Trivandrum Malanka	Fr John Areekal St Joseph's Catholic Church Kuravankonam Kowdiar P.O. - 695003 Kerala	Mobile: 9447022347 Email: johnareekal @gmail.com
50	Thrissur	Fr Thomas Vazhakkala Devamatha Provincial House Patturaickal, Thrissur - 22	Mobile: 9447021144
51	Verapoly	Fr Jomon George	Mobile: 8606907343

52	Vijaya-puram	Fr Thomas Pazhurakattil Director, DCMS PP. St Joseph's Church Podimattom, Parathodu P.O. Kanjirappally 686512	Mobile: 9497021935 Website: www. podimattam retreat.org
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## 1.4 Telangana

### State Coordinator – Fr Dion Isaac - 9949158988

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57	Warangal	TB Jose Sebastian Philip Lazarus	Mobile: 9390100711



## 1.5 Tamilnadu & Puducherry

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## 2. Central Region

**Central Regional Coordinator – Fr Wilfred Fernandes  
– 9822066675**

### 2.1 Bihar

**State Coordinator – Fr Arogyaswamy - 9572098335**

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81	Buxar	Fr. Arogyaswamy G PMI State Coordinator Sewa Dham Bishop's House Nayee Bazar, Buxar P.O Bihar- 802 101	Mobile: 9470834281/ 7903679707 Email: gotluruswamy@yahoo.co.in
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## 2.2 Chhattisgarh

### State Coordinator - Fr Alexander Ekka SJ - 9685858115

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87	Jashpur	Fr Sergius Kindo Catholic Ashram Jaria P.O. Jashpur Dist 496 331	Mobile: 7748960428 Email: kindosergius1971 @gmail.com
88	Raigarh	Sr Jwala C T C Shalini Nivas Boirdadar Raigarh 496 001	Mobile: 9406035409 Email: srjwalactc @gmail.com
89	Raipur	Fr. Alexander Ekka S.J. Xavier Institute of Social Action (XISA) Vidhan Sabha Road Amaseoni Post – GSITI Via – MCF, Raipur	Mobile: 8959215469/ 96858 58115 Email: ekka.alexander @yahoo.com

### 2.3 Goa, Daman and Diu

**State Coordinator - Mr David Fernandes – 9922701071**

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### 2.4 Gujarat

**State Coordinator - Sr Fulmani LDSFX – 8999889922,  
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92	Baroda	Sr Fulmani LDSFX Pushpavihar Convent St. Xavier's School Road, Gamdi, Anand – 380001 Gujarat	Mobile: 8999889922 Email: sr.fulmani@ gmail.com
93	Gandhi- nagar	Fr Dominic Savio	Mobile: 9428269903

### 2.5 Jharkhand

**State Coordinator - Sr Nivedita SSH - 9801008342,  
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95	Dumka	Fr Vernard S J	Mobile: 9430774150
96	Gumla	Fr Cyprian	Mobile: 8340536169
97	Hazaribagh	Sr Jyothi FCC	Mobile: 9973189167
98	Jamshedpur	Sr Usha DHC	Mobile: 8340590016
99	Khunti	Sr Alice OSU	Mobile: 6270700440
100	Ranchi	Sr Julia George OSU Ursuline Convent Ranchi -834001, Jharkhand	Mobile: 7903243808
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## 2.6 Madhya Pradesh

**State Coordinator – Bro Sunnlyal Avarappattu MMB – 9425004097**

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104	Indore	Fr Clarence SVD	Mobile: 9425058037
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## 2.7 Maharashtra, Dadar and Nagar Haveli

**State Coordinator – Fr Wilfred Fernandes - 9822066675**

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## 2.8 Odisha

**State Coordinator - Fr Timothy Victor Pinto SVD – 8088255840**

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125	Rayagoda	Fr Ranjan Sabhapathi OCD	Mobile: 6370955751
126	Rourkela	Fr Stephen Barla 8895299068	Mobile:
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129	Bagdogra	Fr Felix Pinto	Mobile: 9932033549

130	Baruipur	Fr Soumin	Mobile: 7890331745
131	Calcutta	Sr Mary Lobo	Mobile: 9775488416
132	Darjeeling	Sr Jane	Mobile: 7076217553
133	Krishna-nagar	Sr Anna Maria	Mobile: 9475926141
134	Port Blair	Sr Flora	Mobile: 9475920942
135	Raiganj	Fr Marcus Mardi  Fr Sanjit Kullu	Mobile: 9933574391 Mobile: 7703844058

### 3. PMI North Region

**North Regional Coordinator - Fr George Peter Kachirayil MST - 7999855315**

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**State Coordinator – Fr George Peter Kachirayil - 7999855315**

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### 3.3 Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh

**State Coordinator – Fr Antony Peppin - 9419143382**

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### 3.4 Punjab

**State Coordinator – Fr Sijith - 7837949331**

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**State Coordinator – Fr Norbert SVD - 9460333970**

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### 3.6 Uttar Pradesh

**State Coordinator – Jesu Amrtham - 9412200908**

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### 3.7 Uttarakhand

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## 4. North East Coordinators

**North East PMI Regional Coordinator – Sr Jobina UFS  
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**State Coordinator – Sr Rosin Mulayolickal - 7629851288**

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## PMI Special Task Forces

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2.	Anointed Prisoners' Consolers (APC)	Sr Jancy Chakiath MPV Venerini Convent Cheruvannur, Feroke, Calicut, Kerala, 673631	8281164603
3.	Anticorruption and Antibribery Warriors (AAW)	Mr Walter Kamble Flat No. 11, Nandchaya Housing Society, Lokmanya Nagar, Bytco Factory Road, Nashik Road – 422101, Nashik, Maharashtra	8407986268
4.	Anti-Drug Trafficking Warriors (ATW)	Fr Sebastian Vechookarottu Pastoral Centre Kanjirappally, Kottayam District, Kerala-686507	9605887708

5.	Antifascist Prisoners Reformers (APR)	Miss Anumol 001, Saranya Brundavan 9 <sup>th</sup> Main, A Block AECS Layout, Opposite Ananda Nilaya Apartments Kundalahalli, Bangalore, Karnataka	8792883824
6.	Antihuman Trafficking Brigadiers (ATB)	Mr Ashok Kumar Korukonda SIRI Home Apartment - 403, Varalakshmi Puram 4 <sup>th</sup> line Kanuru, Vijayawada, A.P., 520007	7600041045
7.	Blackmailing Prisoners Reformers (BPR)	Sr Beena SDP Snehashramam, Monvila, Kulathoor P.O. - 695583 Trivandrum, Kerala	8078818239
8.	Burglars Transformers (BT)	Sr Shiney SDS Sisters of the Divine Saviour, Deepasadan, Pulluvila PO Thiruvananthapuram Kerala 695526	9902342608
9.	Cybercrime Prisoners Redeemers (CPR)	Sr Philo Kuzhikkatt SABS Aradhana Bhavan Devagiri P.O., Kozhikode - 673008 Kerala	9446070912
10.	Dacoits Redeemers (DR)	Mrs Rebecca Pinto A1, 702, Oxford Classics Wanwadi, Pune-411040, MS. Email: <b>rebeccapinto12</b> <b>@yahoo.co.in</b>	9673910327

11.	Death Row Commandos (DRC)	Lt Col Jennifer James No.69 Buckingham Road Karayan, Chavadi, Poonamalle Chennai - 600056	9566219181
12.	Espionage Prisoners Reformers (EPR)	Mrs Nancy Misquith A/202, Natasha Enclave Kondhwa, Pune 411048 Maharashtra Email: <b>nan25misquith@gmail.com</b>	9028587537
13.	Foreign Prisoners' Expatriation (FPE)	Mr A Jesu Raja A4, Ananthi Apartments Plot No.20, Second Street, Sri Ranganathan Nagar, Agaram Main Road Opposite to Bharat University, Selaiyur, Chennai 600073	9840040562 9840040462
14.	Gangsters Reformers (GR)	Sr Gracy SJL Sisters of St Joseph of Lyon, Fontbonne Convent Karthikapuram P.O Kannur Dist. 670571 Kerala, India E-mail: <b>gracy13464@gmail.com</b>	8129140602
15.	Genocide Prisoners Redeemers (GPR)	Dr Rosily Thomas 203 Sunrose Vrishi Complex Holy Cross Rd, I.C. Colony Borivali West Mumbai-400103, MS	9833677173

16.	Hackers Transformers (HT)	Ms Fay McKinley D-701, Ideal Tower Deluxe, N.H. School Road, Mira Road(e), Thane-401107M.S.	9833283792
17.	Hired-Killers Liberating Squadron (HLS)	Fr Alexander Kureekkattil CMF Pratheeksha Bhavan Kaduthuruthy 686604 KottayamKerala	9447002779
18.	Hooligans Reformers (HR)	Mrs Vinita J. Britto G-903, Daffodils, Magarpatta City, Hadapsar, Pune – 411028, M.S.	9822148798
19.	Innocent Prisoners' Redeemers (IPR)	Sr Lini Sheeja MSC MSC Sisters Snehalaya, 9, 7 <sup>th</sup> Cross 3 <sup>rd</sup> Block, Koramangala Bangalore-560034 <b>linimsc@gmail.com</b> <b>sheejalini60@gmail.com</b>	9880022209 6362294920
20.	Juvenile Delinquents Reformers (JDR)	Br Pradeep Anthony OFM 52, Thomas Layout Sarjapur Road Carmalaram, 560035 Bangalore, Karnataka Email: <b>pradeep3cr@ gmail.com</b>	6362217558
21.	Lynchers Reformers (LR)	Sr Udaya CIC Sisters of John the Baptist Old Madras Road Indira Nagar – 560038 Bangalore, Karnataka	7397555230

22.	Mafia Redeemers (MR)	Fr Dion Isaac Pastoral Centre Director, Gunfoundry, Hyderabad Telangana - 500001	9949158988
23.	Military Prisoners Reformers (MPR)	Mrs Latha Appachan Building no 2-B, 403 Green Valley HSG SOC Saki Vihar Complex Sakinaka, Next to Savoy Suites, Maharashtra 400072	9320048032
24.	Murderers Transformers (MT)	Sr Jolly Sebastian SAB Navajeevan Health Centre OPP KPTCL, MB Road, Kolar 563101	8660118147
25.	Paedophiles Reformers (PR)	Mrs Eunice S. Fernandes Manoj Apartment, 25 B, Flat No. 3, Kasturba Housing Society Tingre Nagar Road, Dighi Camp, Pune Maharashtra - 411015	9049413234
26.	Pirates Transformers (PT)	Sr Celia UMI Ursuline Convent 26 <sup>th</sup> Davis Road St Thomas Town Bangalore-84, Karnataka	9945716052
27.	Political Prisoners Transformers (PPT)	Mr Raymond Osta Rd.No.1, House No.39 Church Road Opposite Kedar Kunj Apartment, First Floor New Patliputra Colony Patna, Bihar-800013	9431646362

28.	Prisoners' Children Educators (PCE)	Mrs Veera Pinto Flat No.103, Nisarga Gateway, Crown Orchid Chandapura, Hosur Road	9902553851
29.	Prison Police Reformers (PPR)	Sr Anisha SD SD Convent Kayakkunnu, Panamaram Mananthavady Wayanad-670721	8281063290
30.	Psychiatric Prisoners Comforters (PPC)	Mr Antony Jacob E 201 Dayanand Garden Co-op, Hsg. Society, Behind Taty Tope Society, Wanwadi, Pune -411040, M.S.	020- 26815560 020- 49359404 9422308023
31.	Prisoners' Releasing Squad (PRS)	Sr Adele Korah SCCG Sisters of Charity Prem Sadan Convent Chikka Kammanahalli Gottigere Post Bangalore-560 083 Email: <b>adelekorah@gmail.com</b>  Mr Antony Jacob E 201 Dayanand Garden Co-op Hsg. Society Behind Taty Tope Society, Wanwadi Pune - 411040, M.S.	9606634230 8073323455       9422308023 020- 26815560 020- 49359404

32.	Purgatory Souls' Redeemers (PSR)	Sr Lini Sheeja MSC Sacred Heart Convent SV No 330/D, N: 1; Ward No 11, Near Fire Station, Kurugodu P.O. Ballai Road, Karnataka Ballari – 583 116 Email: <b>linimsc@gmail.com</b>	9880022209
33.	Serial-Killers Reformers (SR)	Sr Fulmani LDFX State Coordinator PMI Pushpavihar Convent St. Xavier's School Road Gamdi Anand-380001 Gujarat	9638454172
34.	Sex Offenders Healers (SOH)	Sr Jobina Varghese UFS Prison Ministry India 6 <sup>th</sup> Mile, VIP Road Chandra Kantha Bye Lane Chachal, Khanapara P.O Guwahati-781022, Assam	8132807248
35.	Sick Prisoners Healers (SPH)	Sr Shiji Joseph SCS Holy Cross Hospital Kunkuri P O - 496225 Jashpur District Chhattishgarh	8435009885
36.	Smugglers Transformers (ST)	Sr Dollin Maria FCC Clarapuram SH Provincial House Nazrath Road, Azad Lane Aluva 683101, Ernakulam	8281380563



37.	Terrorists Saving Squad (TSS)	Fr Michael Francis Bishop's House Cantonment, Aurangabad-431002 Maharashtra	7775051762
38.	Undertrial Prisoners' Releasers (UPR)	Prof. Edmond Frank G4, Vishwas Crown Near Cochin Bakery Kankanady, Mangalore -575002 <b>edmundfrank14@gmail.com</b>	7975369402
39.	Victims Redeemers (VR)	Mr Rajendra Dushing "ANUGRAHA" D-9/10, Plot No. 13/16, MIDC Area Uttaranagri Balaji Nagri Brijwadi Aurangabad 431007 Maharashtra, India Email: <b>rajendradushing@gmail.com</b>	9423450207
40.	War-crime Prisoners Reformers (WPR)	Mr Justine Kottaram G4, Block-3, R.K Apartments, Hoysala Nagar, T.C. Palaya Main Road, Ramamurthy Nagar, Bangalore- 560016	9449047364

## PMI Rehabilitation Centres

### Rehabilitation Centres for Men

No	Rehabilitation Centre	Coordinator	Established	Telephone
1.	Snehashramam Vettukad P O Thrissur 680014 Kerala	Fr Sunil Issac SCJ Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	1 October 1991	7558914919
2.	Shantinivas Pathadipalam Changampuzha- nagar PO Edappally 682033 Ernakulam Kerala	Fr Jose Kidangayil CMF Claretian Congregation	6 August 1995	9447133145
3.	Snehatheeram Market Road YMCA, Alleppey Kerala – 688001	Fr Johnson Puthenveetil	9 January 2010	9497220737
4.	Kolbe Home K G Kandigai Tirutanni 631205 Chennai Tamil Nadu	Fr Thomas SDM Society of St Eugene De Mazenod	13 August 2016	8940803689
5.	Van Thuan Home 52 Thomas Lyt Sarjapur Road Carmalaram, Bangalore - 35 Karnataka	Fr Francis Kodiyar MCBS National Coordinator Prison Ministry India	15 July 2020	9447710488

## PMI Rehabilitation Centres for Women

6.	Snehashramam Monvila Kulathoor P O Trivandrum Kerala - 695583	Sr Beena SdP Sisters of the Poor of St Catherine of Sienna	11 October 1992	8078818239
7.	Jeevodaya Ashram Daddakannalli Janatha Colony Carmalaram PO Bangalore 560035 Karnataka	Sr Clara HCM Holy Cross Congregation	22 January 1995	8028439926

## PMI Homes for Prisoners' Children - Boys

8.	Snehadeepam Inchiyani PO Parathodu, Kanjirappally Kottayam Kerala - 686512	Sr Beena Shsp Sisters of the Holy Spirit Congregation	3 July 1994	9495645386 9447933675
9.	Kolbe Home 52 Thomas Lyt Sarjapur Road Carmalaram Bangalore-560035 Karnataka	Sr Basil SCS Sathya Seva Catechist Sisters C/o PMI National Office	15 December 2015	8296304931
10.	St Anthony Home, S. No.51, Phanaswadi Village, Kankavli Taluk, Sindhudurg Maharashtra	Fr Wilfred Fernandes	8 September 2021	9822066675 9823277956

## PMI Homes for Prisoners' Children - Girls

11.	Asha Sadan Assisi Convent School, B.H.E.L Colony, Sector 17, U.P Noida - 201301	Sr Celine FCC Franciscan Clarist Congregation	3 May 1994	9958431060
12.	Karunyashram Thoppil Thrikkakkara PO Kochi 682021 Ernakulam, Kerala	Sr Anne Maria SABSSisters of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	8 January 1999	04842 - 425270 9567236040
13.	Premodaya St Francis Xavier's Cathedral, St John's Church Road, Bangalore-560005 Karnataka	Sr Vyakula Mary Sisters of St Anne's	10 July 2001	7411907325
14.	Jeevan Jyothi St Joseph's Convent Anavilasam PO Idukki-685535 Kerala	Sr Jinat Augustinian Congregation	20 June 2006	6238433108
15.	Ashakiran Shelter Home Giarappa PO 835210, T.T.C Fudi Khunti (Dt), Jharkhand	Sr Jonita Dungdung UST Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk Ranchi Province	9 August 2009	9162050594 7258847527

16.	Marie Pushpan's Home Dominican Sisters of the Presentation, Upper Vidyapathi Nagar, Kanke Road, (Opp. To Transformer) Ranchi - 834008 Jharkand	Sr Punam Lakra OP Order of Dominicans	7 April 2017	120 77091 71343
17.	Kolbe Home Catholic Church PB. No.3, Dungripura- Mandotri, Patan District Gujarat 384265	Sr Vidya SMMI	20 November 2021	6356478519

## PMI Major Seminary Units

No	Seminary Units	Coordinator	Telephone
1	St. Joseph Pontifical Seminary Mangalapuzha P.B. No.1, Aluva Kerala, India – 683102	Fr Sinto Chittilapally	8304872267
2	Carmelgiri Seminary Aluva, Kerala 683 102	Fr Rajesh	8592990891
3	Jeevalaya Seminary Gottigere P.O. Bengalore 560083	Fr Thomas Paul	9846058333
4	Morning Star College Barrackpore - Barasat Road Sewli, Telenipara P.O. Kolkata – 700121 WB, India	Fr George	6003728861
5	St Thomas, Kottayam Vadavathoor Kottayam, Kerala 686010	Fr Rijo Mynattiparambil	9645659321
6	Good Shepherd Major Seminary Kunnoth, Kiliyanthara P.O. Kannur 670706, Kerala	Fr Nellickal	8547407101

7	St Ephrem's Theological College Ephrem Nagar P.B.No 26, Satna – 485001, M.P.	Fr Joji Puliampallil	6264877577
8	Ruhalaya Major Seminary P.B.No.4, Agar Road Ujjain City P.O Ujjain 456006, M.P.	Fr Jose Valiamangalam	9158073627
9	Oriens Theological College, Mawlai, Shillong - 793008 Meghalaya, India	Fr Kuriakose	9466050933
10	Marymatha Major Seminary P. B. No.7, Mannuthy, Thrissur - 680 651	Fr Frijo Parackal	8848021760
11	St Mary's Malankara Major Seminary Mar Ivanios Vidyannagar, Nalanchira, Trivandrum, Kerala, India -695 015	Fr Malayattil	9447893732
12	Ashta Major Seminary MP	Fr Thomas, Rector	7089488559

## Prison Ministry India

### Assistant National Coordinators

1995-1996	Fr Michael Kuminiyil MST Kirchengemeinde St Nikolaus Pfarrer-Schmid-StraBe 16 88524, Sauggart-Uttenweiler Germany	0049-1724840557 <b>tkummany@ gmail.com</b>
1996-1997	Fr Theophin MMB	Called for Eternal Life on 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2013
1997-1998	Rev Fr Sebastian Theckanath Director, SARATHI Azhakam P.O 683577 Karayaparambu, Maniyamkuzhi	9871829833
2000-2001	Fr Paschal Herald Cuthina Cp Passion Jyothir Bhavan Carmalaram Post, Bangalore-35 Karnataka	9901296126 <b>marcel48passion @gmail.com</b>
2001-2004	Rev Fr Josekutty Kalayil MST Santhome, P.B.No.42 Engineering College Road Mandya Dt.571401, Karnataka	9632015530/ 8885432507 <b>frjosekutty@ rediffmail.com</b>
2004-2005	Fr MJ Thomas Manakuzhyil OFM Assissibhavan, Chipplithode Adivaram P.O., Kozhikode Dt Kerala – 673586	9605352616 <b>manakuzyofm@ gmail.com</b>
2005-2008	Fr JL Savari Nayagam HGN Anugraja Institute of Social Science, Nochiodaipatty Dindigul - 624 003, Tamilnadu M Sc. Psychology ( Counselling & Psychtherapy)	88614 91743



2008-2010	Br Edwin Kuttickal MMB Vicar General MMB Vidya Bhavan, East Fort, Thrissur-680005	9188306369/ 9447814369
2011-2013	Fr Biju Mathew Souriamthottiyil MI Religiosos Camilos Sant Pere Mes Baix, 33Barcelona – 08003	+34 617643149
2013-2015	Fr Sathishkumar HGN St Mary's Church, Yapalaguda Komarambheem Dt. Adilabad, India 504001	
2015-2016	Fr Joseph Plackal OCD San Joe Ashram Panampilly Nagar Potta P.O. 680722 Thrissur, Kerala	9447485291 <b>plackaljoseph@ gmail.com</b>
2016-2017	Fr Gnana Dhinakaran Director, Saranalayam, 89, South Balapackianagar Tirunelveli-627001	9715065585 <b>dhinagar06@ gmail.com</b>
2016-2017	Fr Arogyaraj HGN	
2017-2018	Fr Edwin Raj Parish Priest St Antony's Church, Agarakattu Tenkasi – 627852, T. N	9677852515
2017-2018	Fr Vara Prasad Mundlapati St Joseph's RCM Church Porumamilla (Mandal) Tekurpet 516505 Cudappa, A.P	7013371795

2018-2019	Fr Baskaran Lenus MSC Sacred Heart Seminary Kanjoor Post, Kalady via Ernakulam Dt Kerala – 683575	9886297760
2019-2020	Fr Stanly Lourdu John MSC Assistant Parish Priest St Joseph's Church Briand Square, Chamrajpet Bangalore 560002	9677012500
2020-	Fr Benny Pachanal CRSP Barnabite Fathers Horrohalli Road Hoskur Post – 99, Bangalore	7411280074 <b>ptbenny@ yahoo.com</b>

## Prison Ministry India National Secretaries

1995-1996	Sr Fidelis HCM Jeevodaya Ashram Doddakannalli, Janatha Colony Carmalaram PO Bangalore 560035, Karnataka	9620423463
1996-1997	Sr Jemma DHM Premankur St Pius Campus Aarey Road, Goregaon E, Mumbai 400063	8291622988
1997-1999	Sr Lithishia SH SH Covent Kuruvinal Puliyannoor P.O Pala 686573	9846052393 04822205821

1997-1999	Sr Agricola FCC	Called to Eternal Life
1999-2000	Sr Jis Rose SS	Left
2000-2001	Sr Teresina CSJB Sisters of St John the Baptist Via Auralia, Circumvallazione Cornelia-65, Rome-00165, Italy	0039 3392502880
2000-2001	Sr Rosamma Michael OSSR Sisters of Redemption Kondayapalam, A.K. Nagar P.O. 524004 Nellore, A.P.	8985266058 <b>redemption sistersnellore@ gmail.com</b>
2001-2002	Sr Andrews Kuzhivelil SJC	Called to Eternal Life
2002-2008	Sr Johnsi HSM Shanthi Nikethan, Shanthi Nagar Mondemkhallu-535534 Vijayanagaram Dt., A.P.	9491176861
2008-2009	Sr Keerthana CMC Shanthi Dham Co. Catholic Church Yessiahpallam, Rallamettupally Adilabad Dis. 504219	6300308917 8106407597
2009-2011	Sr Jemma DHM Premankur, St Pius Campus Aarey Road, Goregaon E, Mumbai 400063	8291622988
2011-2013	Sr Ancy Kanjirakombil SCSC Holycross Institute Hennur Bangalore Main Road Kothanur P.O., Gubbi Cross Bangalore 560077	80828465394 08028465331 <b>hckothanur@ gmail.com</b>

2013-2016	Sr Maria DC Daughters of Charity St Vincent's House 5, Banaswadi Road Cooke Town 560005 Bangalore, Karnataka	9510825522
2016-2018	Sr Diana CTC KRLCBC Secretariat Carmelgiri U C College P.O. Aluva 683102	8971654138
2018-2020	Sr Lini Sheeja MSC Sacred Heart Convent SV No 330/D, N: 1; Ward No 11 Near Fire Station, Kurugodu PO Ballrai Road Ballari – 583 116 Karnataka	9880022209 <b>linimsc@ gmail.com</b>
2020-	Sr Amala DC Prison Ministry India 52 Thomas Layout, Sarjapur Road Carmelaram, Bangalore-560 035 Karnataka	9486604887/ 8971787629 <b>amalasr@ gmail.com</b>

## Prison Ministry India: Milestones

### 1980-1989

- 1981 Dec 8      Conceptual Conversation on Love Bomb between Bro Varghese Karippery and Bro Francis Kodiyan MCBS at St Thomas Ap Seminary, Kottayam, Kerala.
- 1982 Aug 28      First Prayer Group Gathering under the Guidance of Fr Mathew Elapanickal at St Thomas Ap Seminary, Kottayam, Kerala.
- 1983 Mar 11      God Experience of Bro Francis Kodiyan at Elijah Ashram, Niravilpuzha and the Invitation to Dedicate his Life for the Conversion of Sinners.
- 1985 Jul 18      First Visit to Kottayam District Prison.
- 1985 Oct 21      Dr Kunjumon Chacko and Team from Prison Fellowship India Share their Experiences with Seminarians of St Thomas Apostolic Seminary.
- 1985 Dec 23      New Prayer Group in Preparation for All Kerala Prison Pilgrimage under the Directorship of Fr Thomas Vellilamthadam.
- 1986 Jan 29      The Name *Jesus Fraternity*.
- 1986 Mar 1-31      First All Kerala Prison Pilgrimage.
- 1987 Aug 15      First All Kerala Art and Literary Competition for Prisoners.
- 1987 Oct 9      First Magazine *Pulari* (Dawn) for Prisoners.
- 1988 Aug 15      *Thadavarayile Sangheetham* (Prison Melody) - Collection of Prisoners' Drawings, Poems and Short Stories.

1989 Sep 8 KCBC Recognizes Jesus Fraternity under its Justice, Peace and Development Commission and Appointed Fr Joseph Mackolil as its Director.

## 1990-1999

1990 Jun 01 Jesus Fraternity Office at KCBC Headquarters, POC, Kochi, Kerala.

1990 Jul 01 Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS took charge as the Assistant Director of Jesus Fraternity and Staff Member at Pastoral Orientation Center, Palarivattom, Kerala.

1991 Oct 01 Blessing of the First Rehabilitation Centre for Released Men Prisoners at Vettukad, Thrissur, Kerala.

1991 Nov 01 Launching of *The Echo*, Jesus Fraternity News Bulletin from Jesus Fraternity Office, POC, Kerala.

1992 Oct 11 Blessing of First Rehabilitation Centre for Released Women Prisoners, Monvila, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

1994 Feb 16 Blessing of Ashadeepam, a Home for Released Women Prisoners by St John the Baptist Sisters, Thrissur, Kerala.

1994 Jul 03 Blessing of *Snehadeepam*, a Home for Prisoners' Children by Holy Spirit Sisters, Inchiany, Kanjirapally, Kerala.

1994 Aug 13-15 First National Convention, Bangalore, took the Name *Prison Ministry India* and elected Fr Varghese Kariperry as the First National Coordinator.

- 1995 Jan 01      Blessing of PMI National Office in a Farmhouse at Huskur, Bangalore.
- 1995 Jan 22      Blessing of Jeevodaya – A Home for Released Women Prisoners under the Holy Cross Sisters, Bengaluru.
- 1995 Jul 26      Registration of PMI under Societies Registration Act No. ER 375.
- 1995 Aug 6      Blessing of Shanti Nivas, the Second Stage of Rehabilitation for Released Men Prisoners by Claretian Missionaries at Edappally, Kerala.
- 1995 Sep 24      The Second National Convention of PMI at ‘Navintha’, Delhi inaugurated by St Mother Teresa and Presided over by Archbishop Alan de Lastic.
- 1995 Oct 07-09   Fr Francis Kodiyan the PMI Cofounder Participated in the International Conference of Catholic Prison Chaplains, Warsaw, Poland.
- 1996 Feb 22      Shifting of National Office to Koramangala, Bengaluru.
- 1997 May 03      Blessing of Asha Sadan, a home for Prisoners’ Girl Children by Franciscan Clarist Sisters, Noida, Delhi.
- 1997 Oct 24-26   The Third National Convention at DBCLC, Trissur, Kerala.
- 1998 Dec 04-06   The Fourth National Convention at Mumbai and Fr Sebastian Theckanath was Elected as the 2nd National Co-coordinator.

- 1998 Dec 20 Blessing of Nirmal Bhavan, a Home for Released Juvenile Home Boys by the Malabar Missionary Brothers at Thrissur, Kerala.
- 1999 Jan 08 Blessing of Karunyashramam, a Home for Released Women Prisoners by Sisters of the Adoration the Blessed Sacrament (SABS), Edappally, Kerala.
- 1999 Nov 12-14 The Fifth National Convention in Calcutta.

## **2000-2009**

- 2001 Jun 01 Premodaya Home for Convicts' Children by St Anne's Sisters of Chennai, Bengaluru.
- 2001 Jun 06 Blessing of Arunima, A Home for Prisoners' Children by Sisters of St Anne at Puteuput, Chennai, Tamilnadu.
- 2000 Jun 11 Blessing of Snehanivas, a Home for Prisoners' Children by the Sisters of St Elizabeth at Aluva, Kerala.
- 2000 Aug 24 PMI was Officially Recognized by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) under its Justice, Peace and Development Commission and Most Rev Peter Remigius became the First PMI Chairman.
- 2000 Oct 25-27 Sixth National Convention at Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.
- 2002 Feb 12 Fr Sebastian Vadakumpadan Took Charge as the Third National Coordinator.
- 2002 May 04 Inauguration of Prison Quarters' Ministry Adjacent to Central Prison Bengaluru.



- 2002 Oct 13-15 Seventh National Convention at Santhome Community Center, Chennai.
- 2002 Nov 03 PMI Received the Spirit of Assisi National Award by the Franciscan Centre for Peace and Dialogue, Karukutty, Kerala.
- 2003 May 13 Inauguration of the Reformative Research and Documentation Centre (RRDC) in a Rented Building at Thrissur, Kerala and Launching of *Reformative Explorations: A Crimino-Psychological and Socio-Spiritual Journal*.
- 2003 Jul 18 Inauguration of the North Regional Office and Appointment of Fr Joseph Kavalakkat VC as the First North Regional Coordinator.
- 2003 Aug 17 CBCI Decision to Celebrate Prison Ministry Sunday on every Second Sunday of August.
- 2004 Mar 27-28 All India Coordinators Meet, Delhi.
- 2004 Oct 10 Blessing of Karunalayam, a Home for Prisoners' Children by Augustinian Sisters (OSA) Punalur, Kerala.
- 2004 Nov 12-15 The Eighth National Convention at Bhopal, M.P.
- 2004 Dec 20 Launching of Prison Voice, the PMI National Monthly.
- 2005 Jun 01 Introduced Full Timers' Ministry.
- 2005 Jul 23 Launching the Mission for the Welfare of Indian Nationals in Foreign Prisons, Releasing of PMI Flag and PMI Anthem.
- 2007 May 30 Fr Josekutty Kalayil MST Took Charge as the Fourth National Coordinator.

- 2007 Nov 8-11 The Nineth National Convention, Mysore
- 2008 Jul 25 PMI National Delegates Met Pratibha Patil, the President of India and submitted the Memorandum to Abolish Capital Punishment in India.
- 2009 Jan 24-29 Fr Josekutty Kalayil MST, the PMI National Coordinator Participated in the ICCPPC International Plenary Meeting at Budapest, Hungary.
- 2009 Sep 03 Blessing of the Newly Purchased PMI National Office at Carmelaram, Bengaluru.

## **2010-2019**

- 2010 Oct 11-14 The Tenth National Convention and Silver Jubilee Celebration at St Thomas Ap Seminary, Kottayam, Kerala.
- 2011 May 21 Fr Sebastian Vadakumpadan was Reappointed as the PMI National Coordinator.
- 2011 Aug 30 Fr Sebastian Vadakumpadan was elected as the Asian Delegate of the International Commission for Prison Pastoral Care during the International Conference held in Cameroon.
- 2011 Nov 15-17 National Gathering of all the PMI Coordinators at Archbishop's House, Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- 2015 Dec 15 Blessing of Kolbe Home for Prisoners' Children, Bengaluru.
- 2017 April 07 Marie Pushpan's Girls Home for Prisoners' Children by Dominican Sisters, Ranchi, Jharkhand.

- 2017 Aug 15 Blessing of Kolbe Home for Released Prisoners, Chennai, Tamilnadu.
- 2017 Nov 01 Purchasing of Karjat Land, Maharashtra.
- 2018 Feb 02-09 Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva, the Auxiliary Bishop of Mumbai, Took Charge as the Second Chairman of PMI.
- 2018 Oct 23-26 12<sup>th</sup> National Convention, Guwahati.
- 2019 Jun 01 Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS Took Charge as the 5<sup>th</sup> National Coordinator.
- 2019 Nov 7-8 Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, the PMI National Coordinator presented a Paper on The Initiatives and Contributions of Prison Ministry India in the International Conference on Prison Pastoral Care Convened by the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.
- 2019 Nov 19 PMI National Level Silver Jubilee Celebration, Bengaluru and Relaunching of *Reformative Explorations*, A Quarterly for Prisoners' Reformation and Rehabilitation.
- 2019 Nov 20 Blessing of Reformative Research and Documentation Centre (RRDC), Bengaluru.
- 2019 Dec 22 Fr Francis Kodiyan Launched PMI Special Task Forces

## 2020-2029

- 2020 Feb 1-4 Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS Participated in the FABC Preparatory Meeting Held in Cambodia.
- 2020 Feb 12-19 Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS Presented PMI Report to the CBCI Plenary

	Assembly at St John's Medical College.
2020 Jul 15	Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva Blessed Van Thuan Home for Released Men Prisoners, Bengaluru.
2020 Jul 15	Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva Blessed PMI Documentation Centre, Bengaluru.
2020 Jul 15	Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva Blessed PMI Volunteers' Training Centre, Bengaluru
2020 Sep 13	Launched PMI Online Retreat
2020 Oct 02	Fr Varghese Karipperry Inaugurated PMI Burning Bush Spiritual Banquet
2020 Oct 09	Launched Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated Worldwide.
2020 Dec 09	Most Rev Peter Machado Consecrated the RRDC Chapel and Blessed the Hall.
2020 Dec 09	Mar Sebastian Adayanthrath Launched Ruby Jubilee Projects such as 4 New Kolbe Homes, 40 Houses for Released Prisoners, 40 PMI Special Task Forces, 400 Scholarships to Prisoners' Children, 400 Releasing Prisoners
2021 Sep 14	Blessing of St Antony's Home for Prisoners' Children at Kankavli, Sindhudurg, Maharashtra.
2021 Nov 20	Blessing of Kolbe Home for Girls, Patan, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
2021 Dec 8-10	PMI Ruby Jubilee Concluding Celebrations, Bangalore
2021 Dec 9	Blessing of Ruby Jubilee Memorial Annex to PMI National Office, Bangalore.

## **Reformative Research and Documentation Centre (RRDC)**

Reformative Research and Documentation Center (RRDC) an initiative of Prison Ministry India was formally inaugurated on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2003 at Anchery, Thrissur by Most Rev Peter Remigius, PMI Chairman. Rev Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS was its first its director. The primary goals of RRDC are to conduct, promote and publish scientific studies on prisoners' release, reformation, reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reintegration as well as to work for prison reforms. Other important objectives are promotion of reformation related researches; PMI volunteers' training programs; documentation center; publication of books and periodicals like Reformative Explorations, Prison Voice etc.; online reformative guidance for prisoners, prostitutes, street children, drug addicts, hired killers; providing awards to those who make extra ordinary contribution in the field of prisoners' reformation and rehabilitation; studies on reformed prisoners and rehabilitation centers; organizing university level courses on reformation, rehabilitation and psycho spiritual as well as its crimino-social aspects; establishing statistics, surveys and libraries related to prisoners reformation and prison reforms and convening national and international conferences on reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. The present director of Reformative Research and Documentation Centre is Fr Jaison Puthenpurakkal MST. For further information contact:

The Director, RRDC

No. 52 Thomas Lay Out, Sarjapur Road

Carmalaram, Bangalore – 560035

Bangalore, Karnataka

Mobile: 6282942257 Email: jsn.joseph@gmail.com

## PMI Publications

### First Decade of PMI 1980-1989

1. First Brochure with the Picture of St John Paul II visiting Rabibbia Prison Rome, going to the cell of Mehmet Ali Agca and catching hold of his hands saying “I forgive You”, Jesus Fraternity Publications, Kottayam 1986.
2. First Booklet with songs and prayers for the first All Kerala Prison Pilgrimage, Jesus Fraternity Publications, Kottayam 1986.
3. *Pulari – The Dawn*, quarterly (Malayalam), Jesus Fraternity Publications, Kottayam 1987.
4. *Thadavarayile Sangheetham – Prison Melody* (Malayalam) Jesus Fraternity Publications, Kottayam 1987.
5. Karippery, Varghese, *Camp Kalikal - Group Dynamics* (Malayalam) Jesus Fraternity Publications Kottayam 1988.

### Second Decade of PMI 1990-1999

6. *The Echo – Quarterly*, Jesus Fraternity Publications, Kochi 1991.
7. *The Echo Souvenir*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 1995.
8. Kodiyan, Francis, *Religious Conversion Trajectory*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 1998.
9. Kodiyan, Francis, *Conversion Trajectory of Charles de Foucauld*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 1998.
10. Karippery, Varghese – Latika, *Prisoners our Own Brethren*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 1998.

### Third Decade of PMI 2000-2009

11. Karippery, Varghese, *Star of Hope in Dark Cells*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2000.
12. Kodiyan, Francis, *Saga of Divine Providence: The History of Jesus Fraternity and Prison Ministry India*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2000.
13. Karippery, Varghese, *Mochanayatra* (Malayalam), PMI Publications, Bangalore 2000.
14. *PMI 6<sup>th</sup> National Convention Souvenir*, PMI Publications, Bangalore – 2000.
15. Karippery, Varghese, *Aantharika Saukyathinte Suvarnna Thakkol* (Malayalam), PMI Publications, Bangalore 2000.
16. Pazhukaran, Latika, *Jewels in the Dustbin*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2001.
17. Kodiyan, Francis, *My Lord and My God. The Ecclesial Identity of the Syromalabar Church*, Kalyan Diocese 2002.
18. *Reformative Explorations: A Psycho-Spiritual and Crimino-Social Quarterly on Reformation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration*, PMI Publications, Thrissur 2005.
19. Kochupurackal, Sebastian, *O Sweet Suffering*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2003.
20. Pulickal, Jose, *Jesus the Dynamic Way: Towards the Ministry for the Least, the Last and the Lost*, Claretian Publications, Bangalore 2004.
21. Theckanath, Sebastian, *Beyond the Iron Bars*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2004.
22. Teresia, Joyce, *The Sparkling Diamond*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2005.
23. George, Jemma, *Let Prison Walls Fall*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2005.

24. *PMI National Level Ministry 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Souvenir*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2005.
25. Vadakumpadan, Sebastian, *Prison Ministry India: Volunteers' Guide*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2006.
26. *Vimochanam* (Malayalam) Jesus Fraternity Publications, Kochi 2006.
27. Kodiyan, Francis, *Rainbow: Theological Foundations of Prison Ministry India*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2007.
28. *PMI 7<sup>th</sup> National Convention Souvenir*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2007.
29. Kodiyan, Francis, (Ed), *The Eucharist: An Antidote to Death Culture*, Sanathana Publications Thamarassery 2007.
30. Vadakumpadan, Sebastian, *Prison Ministry India: Volunteers Handbook*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2007.
31. *PMI 9<sup>th</sup> National Convention Souvenir*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2007.
32. Vadakumpadan, Sebastian, *The Justice that Heals not that Kills*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2008.
33. Vadakumpadan, Sebastian, *Create Homes Not Cells*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2008.
34. Vadakumpadan, Sebastian, *Undertrials in Criminal justice System of India*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2009.

#### **Fourth Decade of PMI 2010-2019**

35. Vadakumpadan, Sebastian, *I Read Not Books but Prisoners*, PMI Publications Bangalore 2010.
36. George, Jemma, *Can Any Good Come from Prisons*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2010.
37. *PMI 10<sup>th</sup> National Convention Souvenir*, Jesus Fraternity Publications, Kottayam 2010.



38. Karipperry, Varghese, *Nalla Idayante Vazhitharayilude*, (Malayalam) Sarathi Publications Angamaly 2013.
39. *Prison Voice*, Monthly, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2014.
40. *PMI 11 National Convention Souvenir*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2014.
41. Vadakumpadan, Sebastian, *Best Practices of Prison Ministry India*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2015.
42. *PMI Karnataka 5<sup>th</sup> State Convention Souvenir*, PMI Publications, Mysore 2016.
43. *Snehashramam Trivandrum Silver Jubilee Souvenir*, Jesus Fraternity Publications, Trivandrum 2017.
44. Kodiyan, Francis, *Love Bomb: Prisoners' Reformation Trajectory*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2018.
45. Karipperry, Varghese, *Prabhatha Bhakshanam Vachanathilude* (Malayalam), Santi Samaj, Thrissur 2018.
46. Theckanath, Sebastian, *Petals of Life*, Cochin 2018.
47. *PMI 12 National Convention Souvenir*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2018.
48. Kodiyan, Francis, *The Lost: An Eightfold Path for Prisoners' Reformation*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2019.
49. *PMI National Office Silver Jubilee Souvenir*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2019.

### **Fifth Decade of PMI 2020-2029**

50. Fidelis, *Jeevodaya – A Gift of God: Glimpses of 25 Years*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2020.
51. Sheeja, Lini, *Sound of Silence; Way of the Cross*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2020.
52. Kodiyan, Francis, *Warriors of Prison Ministry India*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2020.

53. Sheeja, Lini, *Redeemed Prisoner*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2021.
54. Kodiyan, Francis, *Prison Ministry Sunday – Pastoral Letters*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2021.
55. Kodiyan, Francis, *Popes to Prisoners*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2021.
56. Sheeja, Lini, *Prison Ministry – The Dreamers’ Mission*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2021.
57. Kodiyan, Francis, *Prisoners’ Reformation and Reintegration*, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2021.
58. PMI Directory, PMI Publications, Bangalore 2021.

## **PMI Departed Souls**

### **Let's Pray for the Repose of Their Souls**

1. Mar Joseph Kundukulam
2. Most Rev Alan D'Lastic
3. Fr Joseph Koikakudy
4. Fr Thomas Vellilamthadom
5. Fr George Kuttickal MCBS
6. Fr Joseph Kavalakkatt VC
7. Fr Paul Akkara CMI
8. Fr Cyriac Kollamparambil CMF
9. Fr Antony Raj, Chenna
10. Fr Sadanand CMI
11. Fr Gregory Naik
12. Fr Athiruban
13. Fr Joseph Pauvath
14. Fr Zacharias Pathalil SVD
15. Br Theophin MMB
16. Sr Leena Kattukaran FMM
17. Sr Noella SJC
18. Sr Rosakutty Kottaram FMM
19. Sr Mary Jane SFN
20. Sr Carmelita SSAM
21. Sr Marina SJC
22. Sr Albin FCC
23. Sr Carmel FCC
24. Sr Zaveria Alphonso SSA
25. Sr Agricola FCC
26. Sr Mary Francoise
27. Sr Sabina
28. Sr Lourdes SD
29. Sr Jemma DHM
30. Mrs Pushpavalli
31. Mrs Margaret

32. Mrs Agnes
33. Mrs Merlin Merlon
34. Mrs Gupta
35. Mrs Anastasia Fernandes
36. Mrs Nimmy Dennis
37. Mrs Anna Mary
38. Mrs Babtista Mary
39. Mrs Arul Mary
40. Mrs Loretta Gonsalves
41. Mrs Angela Lobo
42. Mrs Marie Lobo
43. Mr Joseph, Sivagangai
44. Adv Joseph David
45. Mr Gabriel John, Delhi
46. Mr Joaquim Vaz
47. Mr Sanjeev Siriskar
48. Mr Civile Rosario
49. Mr Augustine
50. Mr Ambrose
51. Mr Joseph Pereira
52. Mr Praveen
53. Mr Sumith Kumar
54. Mr James Mendoza
55. Mr Finton Antao
56. Mr Sushil Dube
57. Souls of Prisoners
58. Souls in Purgatory
59. Souls of our Families
60. Souls of our Communities
61. Souls of PMI

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace, Amen.**

## **PMI RUBY JUBILEE CONCLUDING CELEBRATIONS 8-10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021**

**Report  
Sr Amala DC**

### **RECOLLECTION DAY**

The Ruby Jubilee of Prison Ministry India was celebrated with great enthusiasm and exuberance on 8-10 December 2021 at Ivy Rosa Resort adjacent to PMI National office, Bangalore. The light which Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS and Fr Varghese Kariperry had lit on 8 December 1981 continues to illumine millions. PMI Ruby Jubilee Concluding Celebrations began with the Eucharistic adoration at 5PM. This was an opportunity to introspect on the glorious achievements of PMI in the past 40 years. Sr Fidelis devoutly led this adoration in which all participants praised and thanked God for the unfailing mercy and love of the Eucharistic Lord and asked forgiveness for the unfaithfulness in the past 40 years.

### **RECOLLECTION**

Fr Varghese Kariperry enlightened everybody by his inspiring message on the genesis of Prison Ministry at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary in 1981 and its development and growth into various Indian states. He recalled how the Lord miraculously led PMI on eagle's wings. The solemn inaugural Holy Eucharist was presided over by Most Rev Bishop Allwyn

D'Silva, PMI Chairman. PMI Founder Fathers and other priests concelebrated. Fr Wilfred Fernades, the PMI Central regional coordinator, delivered the holily. Immediately after a sumptuous dinner, the scintillating cultural program emceed by Fr Michael Francis began. This included some of the foot-tapping dances from different rehabilitation centers, Jeevodaya-girls, FSM-Aspirants and Kolbe Home boys. The whole assembly wished Sr Amala DC, PMI National secretary festal greetings. Sr Adele Korah presented the power point highlighting the important events in the last four decades in the history of PMI. Mr & Mrs Jolly and Nimmy, Founder Directors of Jesus Friends shared their life experiences in redeeming the lost on the streets and hired killers. The entire cultural program was anchored by Sr Jobina UFS, PMI North East Regional Coordinator. The program came to an end with vote of thanks proposed by Sr Clara and concluding prayer by Fr Thomas Erambil from Arunachal Pradesh.

### **THANKSGIVING DAY**

The day of thanksgiving began on 9<sup>th</sup> December at 7am with the morning prayer led by Lt Col Jenifer James. At 9am thanksgiving Holy Mass was solemnized by Most Rev Bishop Allwyn D'Silva. Founder Fathers, former national coordinators, and other priests concelebrated. PMI national executive members, state coordinators, Special task force coordinators, rehabilitation centres directors and directresses, Seminary unit coordinators and other distinguished delegates from different walks of life from across India participated in the thanksgiving Holy Mass.

### **JUBILEE GATHERING**

The emcee for the public meeting was Mrs Ivy Immanuel. The chief guests namely, Most Rev Bishop Allwyn D'Silva,

Rev Fr Varghese Karippery, Rev Fr Francis Kodiyan, Rev Fr Benny Pachanal, Rev Fr Sebastian Vadakumpadan, Rev Fr Sebastian Thekkanath, Rev Fr Josekutty Kalayil, Sr Fidelis HCM, Sr Amala DC, Mrs. Veera Pinto were invited to the dais and all of them were honoured with shawls and Mementos by Fr Francis. Bishop Allwyn honored Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS. Fr Benny Pachanal, PMI assistant national coordinator gave an apt introduction on the genesis of PMI. Sr Amala DC invoked God's blessings by singing a hymn to the Holy Spirit. Rev Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS made everyone feel comfortable and infused in them the right spirit of enthusiasm by a loving and spirited welcome address.

In his presidential address, Most Rev Bishop Allwyn said that we have to live with a different reality. We live in a digital world. We will have to think how to communicate, how to reach out, how to have meetings in a digital world. How to really communicate what is worth and how to effectively communicate what we are doing. We will be able to meet often to think on the national level of planning and to think in a different way. In prison ministry, we will have to think of new ways of how to deal with this new reality. Another reality is fake news. A lot of fake news is going from one end to the other end. How do we deal with this as members of the prison ministry? The whole reality is changing. What will be the new normal in the future? We must congratulate Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, for during this pandemic, he and his team have thought of new ways. I would like to congratulate him and the staff for continuing with our prison ministry. Many organizations and many groups have failed. They have been inactive. But he has been taking the Prison Ministry India forward.

Bishop Allwyn distributed prizes to the winners of quiz competition - Sr Lini Sheeja MSC, Sr Siyamala and Lt Col Jennifer James. Honorariums were given to Sr Adele Korah, Mr & Mrs Jolly Nimmy founder directors of Jesus' Friends, and Br Mathew Albin, founder director of Shanthi Bhavan. Felicitations were delivered by Rev Fr Varghese Karipperry PMI Co-founder, Fr Sebastian Vadakumpadan, Fr Sebastian Thekkanath, Fr Josekutty Kalayil MST, the former PMI national coordinators and Sr Fidelis. Most Rev Bishop Allwyn D'Silva released the books - *Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Reintegration* edited by Rev Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, *Prison Ministry: The Dreamers' Mission* by Sr Lini Sheeja MSC, *Ruby Jubilee Souvenir*, *PMI Directory* and *PMI Calendar 2022*. Sr Amala DC, PMI national secretary proposed vote of thanks. Meeting came to an end with a concluding prayer and Angelus by Mrs Veera Pinto, the PMI Bangalore unit secretary.

### **KOLBE HOME VISIT**

After lunch at 2PM all participants visited Kolbe home, Van Thuan Home, RRDC, chapel for PMI Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated, and PMI Volunteers Training and Documentation Center. Sr Basil and Fr Jaison Puthenpurakkal MST explained the diverse activities of Kolbe home and RRDC through power point presentation.

### **NATIONAL OFFICE ANNEX BLESSING**

At 3PM all participants came to PMI national office at 52 Thomas Layout, Carmelaram, Bangalore to take part in the blessing ceremony of the newly constructed Annex. Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva blessed the annex in the presence of the PMI founders, former national coordinators, regional coordinators, national executive members, state coordinators and so on. Bishop Allwyn D'Silva appreciated Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS



the PMI national coordinator and his team for raising fund for the construction and thereby making the jubilee celebrations meaningful and relevant. After the blessing PMI publication books and calendars were distributed to the participants.

### **PMI SYNODALITY**

At 5PM the PMY Synodality meeting began with a prayer led by Fr Pasala Lahasthaya. Words of welcome were accorded by Fr Francis, who also opined that as PMI Volunteers, we have to shoulder a responsibility to convey the voice of prisoners to the synod. To hear the groans of prisoners and to set free those who are doomed to die, to hear the voice of those condemned to death. He also shared his experience at Tihar Jail where there are prisoners languishing behinds the bars without trial even after 12 years because of their inability to pay heavy fees for lawyers. Bishop Allwyn began his talk on synodality explaining the logo of the synod shown by PowerPoint presentation. There is a large tree with full of wisdom and light which represents the cross of Christ. The Church is full of vitality and it carries the Eucharist which is always in the centre of all celebrations and shines like the sun. The open hand suggests the wings of the Holy Spirit. Synodality means working together and walking together. There is no hierarchy, the bishop and the sisters are in the middle. The journey is led by the children and the youth and a disabled person in the wheel chair. Bishops and nuns are not in front of them but among them. Walking together is listening. He ended by saying that the synod is not a program, it is the process but as church it needs its mission. We need to listen and discern and there shall be communion, participation and mission. Sate coordinators, PMI Special Task Forces coordinators, directresses of homes for prisoners' children,

and seminary unit coordinators shared their views on syondality. Fr Dion Isaac, PMI Telangana State Coordinator gave the concluding remarks. Sr Fidelis proposed vote of thanks and Sr Anisha SD led the concluding prayer.

At 7PM Sr Jolly from Kollar prayerfully led the Eucharistic adoration. This was followed by supper and colourful cultural program. Fr Glasten from Mumbai anchored the program. We had the fabulous performance of dances by Augustinian novices, Charity Sisters' aspirants, CRI brothers and Sisters and a melodious song by Mr Raymond Osta, Patna. Br Mathew Albin shared his life experiences and how he led Shanti Bhavan for beggars and mental patients in the last 27 years depending on divine providence. Lt Col Jenifer James proposed vote of thanks. The program concluded with PMI National Anthem led by Mr Rajendra from Aurangabad and final blessing was given by Fr Wilfred Fernandes from Pune.

### **THE DAY TO DREAM ON GOLDEN JUBILEE**

On 10<sup>th</sup> morning, we had the solemn Eucharistic celebration by Bishop Allwyn along with the Founder Fathers - Fr Francis and Fr Varghese and all other fathers. Fr Dion Isaac delivered the homily. After the Mass Sr Lini Sheeja MSC presented the power point on our journey from Ruby to golden jubilee. She explained the golden jubilee projects for the next ten years.

### **NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETING**

After the breakfast at 0930 PMI national executive meeting was held under the chairmanship of Most Rev Allwyn D'Silva. With lunch, the Ruby Jubilee celebrations came to a memorable end. Glory, honor, praise and thanksgiving to Lord Almighty.

## **PRISONER'S REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION**

**PMI Publications, Bangalore 2021  
Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS**

This book, named “*Prisoner's Rehabilitation and Reintegration*” by Rev Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS (Ed.) narrates the saga of PMI struggle in rehabilitating and reintegrating the lost sheep entangled in 1350 prisons of India, in 292 pages. The book is attractive in outlook. At first sight it gives the view of a studied and scholarly presentation of matters with accuracy, precision and clarity of thought. But there is an attractive taunting force taking us beyond where we step in at the outset to the pages of the book.

The author is the co-founder of Jesus Fraternity and Prison Ministry India (PMI), and the present national coordinator to PMI as well as the CBCI secretary to PMI. He secured his Doctorate in Spiritual theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. He has 13 books to his name and numerous articles in different research magazines. He is the chief editor of *Reformative Explorations* - A Psycho-spiritual and criminological quarterly.

The book provides answers to the various questions on the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners basing on sociological, spiritual, psychological and criminological aspects. This is a book written by a victorious warrior on the

rehabilitation and reintegration of the brothers and sisters behind bars as well as hardcore criminals. It explains how going after the model of 'Jesus, the finder of lost sheep', PMI leadership as well as volunteers search and save the lost sheep and reform them through their visits, prayers and the various rehabilitation centers across the country. This book is published on the occasion of the Ruby Jubilee, a year of thanksgiving for leading and strengthening the hands of many in these forty years.

'Prisoners' Rehabilitation and reintegration' begins with the "Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Participants in the International Meeting for Regional and National Responsible persons for Prison Pastoral Care," given on 8 November 2019. The message of Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, the CBCI Chairman to Prison Ministry India follows. The forward to this book is illustrated by Rev Sr Amala DC, the national secretary to Prison Ministry India, taking all the aspects of the contents of the book.

There are twenty-two articles in the book. The first two articles are clearly taking the thrust of the book, and both are authored by the editor himself. The first chapter of the book "Prisoners' Reformation and Reintegration Trajectory" deals with the concept of the transformation and reformation of the people who are accused and the author redefines different stages of the accused spiritually and psychologically. He deals with differently on Remand, Past Sins and Failures, Deconversion, broken families, Release, awareness of sin, contrition and reconciliation, forgiving love, reformation, self-actualization and self-transcendence, and the approaches such as self-esteem Vs inferiority Complex, Forgiveness Vs Revenge, Humanization Vs dehumanization, Laterization Vs Victimization, Hero Vs Servant, Virtue Vs Crime, Humility

Vs Pride, hope Vs Despair, Optimism Vs Pessimism, Present Vs Past, Hard work Vs Laziness, Spiritual Life Vs Material Life etc. This chapter also deals with how rehabilitation happens in the life of a person through attitudinal change and personality change.

The second chapter of the book deals with the history of the PMI, its divine beginning, the process of its growth, rehabilitation processes, need of spiritual empowerment and explains how prayer works as the power bank. It gives an opening to the other chapters ahead. In short, the first and second chapters explain the theological and spiritual base for the rehabilitating and reintegrating works undertaken by various centers of PMI.

The remaining twenty articles are on different rehabilitation centers which are associated with PMI, from the pens of those who work at the very grass root level. They all speak of the providence of God and how the ministry began and moves ahead. The main contributors to the book, except the editor are: Sr Anisha SD, Sr Latika Pazhakaran, Sr Lalita Puthuppally, Fr Biju Elambassery CMF, Sr Reji John SHC, Sr Rosmi & Sr Grace Mary SHSp, Sr Libin SABs, Fr Toms Kalapurackal MTh, John Thomas Kottukapally, Sr Mangal Shaharao SCC, Rev Fr Stanly Lourdu John MSC, Rev Sr Jini Joseph OP, Sr Celine FCC, A Jesu Raja, Ummachan P Chakkupurackal, Rev Fr Antony Sebastian O.Prem, Sr Julia, Fr Dominic Savio and Amira Peter.

These articles inform us about the reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners among men, women, girl and boy children, youth etc. and how they occur in course of time. These have the smell and taste of hard work and have experienced the fruition of their mission. As a whole, reading

these articles would provide us answers on the modality of work done by PMI substantially, with the experience of the past, with the vision of the present and the dreams of tomorrow.

**Fr Jaison Dominic MST**

**THE 5 SECOND RULE: TRANSFORM YOUR  
LIFE, WORK, AND CONFIDENCE WITH  
EVERYDAY COURAGE**

**Savio Republic Publishers 2017,  
248, ISBN-10: 9781682612385  
Mel Robbins**

Mel (Melanie) Robbins is an American lawyer, television host, motivational speaker, and one of the most-booked speakers in the world. *The 5 Second Rule: Transform Your Life, Work, and Confidence with Everyday Courage* explains the simple way of the 5 second rule and how to overcome self-doubt and live a more fulfilling life. The book revolves around the central concept of courage, and the author begins with a short note on Everyday Courage:

“Courage is the ability to do things that feel difficult, scary, or uncertain. It isn’t reserved for just a chosen few. Courage is a birth right. It’s inside all of us. And it’s waiting for you to discover it. One moment of courage can change your day. One day can change your life. And one life can change the world. That’s the true power of courage; it reveals you, the greatest version of you. Discover your courage and you will be capable of accomplishing and experiencing anything you dream about. Yes, even changing the world.”

This book consists of five parts and seventeen Chapters. In the first part, *The 5 Second Rule*, Mel Robbins narrates the true

story of the 5 Second Rule: what it is, why it works, and how it has transformed people's lives worldwide. The 5 Second Rule says the moment we have an instinct to act on a goal, we must count backward 5-4-3-2-1 and physically move, or our brain will stop us. This Rule strengthens our belief that we can control our fate because we prove it to ourselves one push at a time. The author says every phase of our life and career will require a different us. Using the Rule, we will become the person we are meant to become in this next phase of life.

*The 5 Second Rule* is a simple, research-backed metacognition tool that creates immediate and lasting behaviour change. Mel Robbins shows the difference between "Just Do It" and the 5 Second Rule. According to her, "Just Do It" is a concept - it is what we need to do; on the other hand, the *5 Second Rule* is a tool - it is how we make ourselves do it. The Five-Second creates a Window of Opportunity for Everyone. There is a window for everyone between the moment we have an instinct to change and our mind killing that instinct. While our minds start working against us in nanoseconds, the barrage of thoughts and excuses does not seem to kick into full force and stop us for a few seconds. The five-second window seems to work for everyone. The first part ends with the quote: If you have the courage to start, you have the courage to succeed.

In the second part, *The Power of Courage*, Mel Robbins explains that courage is precisely what the 5 Second Rule gives us. Courage is a birth right. It is inside every one of us. We were born with it, and we can tap into it anytime we want. It is not a matter of confidence, education, status, personality, or profession. It is simply a matter of knowing how to find it when we need it. Furthermore, when we need it, you will probably be alone.



Part three deals with *Courage Changes Your Behavior*. The author has repeatedly said that we can always choose how we act. If we have goals to get healthier, what we need to do is usually straightforward. According to Mel Robbins, *The 5 Second Rule* is a great weapon in the fight against Procrastination. First, however, the author introduces two types of Procrastination:

### **PRODUCTIVE PROCRASTINATION**

If we work on a creative project or an innovative idea, research shows that procrastination is good and meaningful. The creative process takes time, so our minds can wander when we set a project aside for a few days or weeks. That extra time spent mental wandering gives us the ability to develop more creative, “divergent” ideas that enhance our project. Mel Robbins says that if we work on a creative project and we do not have a fixed deadline, it is not Procrastination if we let our work sit for a few weeks so we can let our mind wander. It is the creative process. As we procrastinate productively, those fresh ideas will make us work even more brilliantly.

### **DESTRUCTIVE PROCRASTINATION**

Destructive Procrastination is an entirely different concept. When we avoid the work, we need to get it done and know the negative consequences. However, unfortunately, this habit comes back to bite you in the end. For Mel Robbins Procrastination is not a form of laziness at all. Instead, it is a coping mechanism for stress. Robbins relying on the study of Dr. Timothy Pynchyl, a psychology professor at Carleton University, who has been studying Procrastination for more than 19 years, says that the main thing driving Procrastination is not avoiding work. It is avoiding stress. Procrastination is

“a subconscious desire to feel good right now,” so one can feel a little stress relief.

To tackle Procrastination, Robbins advised us to start with the *5 Second Rule* and used the same concept of Dr Pynchyl, “Just get started.” One of the most powerful ways to create new habits, according to researchers, is to “create a starting ritual.” Furthermore, for Mel Ribbons, there is no better starting ritual than the 5 Second Rule. If procrastinating is a habit, we have to replace the lousy behavior pattern with a new positive one (getting started). When we feel hesitant, do easier tasks or avoid hard work, use the Rule 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 push ourselves to start the important thing we need to do. The author says further Procrastination makes us feel like we have no control over ourselves. When we assert ourselves and just get started, we take control of the moment and our life.

Part four deals with the topic *Courage Changes Your Mind*. In the following three chapters, we learn the step-by-step approach to how you can use the *5 Second Rule* in combination with some recent research-based strategies to beat fear, *stop* worrying, manage or cure anxiety, and change the way you think. With the everyday courage gained from applying the *5 Second Rule*, we can beat fear, stop worrying, manage or cure anxiety and even change how we think.

As we act with everyday courage, our confidence grows stronger, and we can use the rule to change our mindset about many things. For example, with the rule, we can stop worrying. When we begin to worry or think something negative, try to use the 5-4-3-2-1 rule and bring our thoughts to something positive and exciting instead. The final part develops the idea that *Courage Changes Everything*. With the *5 Second Rule*, the

author says we will explore confidence and build it with acts of everyday courage. This rule helps us to believe in ourselves, our ideas, and our capabilities. This tool can also be used to find our passion. Opportunities will start to appear in the pursuit of finding our passion and the rule to help you act accordingly. It will help us push ourselves to stay exploring and lean into opportunities as they appear, and you will be shocked where it leads.

*The 5 Second Rule* introduced by the author in this book is a simple key to discovering our courage. It will help us discover the authentic self. We are already that person; we need to dig ourselves out. The rule is simple (5-4-3-2-1) but incredibly powerful. It introduces a rule that only takes 5 seconds to master, and people can use this tool to help themselves become strong. This five-second rule is a simple way to give ourselves the strength and courage to pursue our goals and dreams. This fantastic concept helps us destroy our destructive procrastination, which blocks our development. Mel Robbins may be a genius in creating this rule, but we are the one who deserves the credit if we apply this rule, stick to it and change our habits, way of thinking, eliminate self-doubt and encourage ourselves to go after the things we want.

**Dr Jaison Kunnel MCBS**

## **PRISON MINISTRY: THE DREAMERS' MISSION**

**PMI Publications, Bangalore 2021**

**Sr Lini Sheeja MSC**

“When the whole world fights for justice, a few chosen people cry out for restorative justice. When the world brawls for retributive justice, a few chosen ones beg for forgiveness. When the world wants to kill, a few chosen ones want to save. When the world closes the book of a criminal, a few chosen ones open a new chapter showing that no one is lost forever and no one is beyond redemption.” These are words aptly spoken by Justice Kurian Joseph, the former Judge, Supreme Court of India, and referred to on the back cover of the book. Yes, it is indeed the correct and appropriate quote to the mission portrayed in this book.

The author, Lini Sheeja MSC is very close to Prison Ministry India, and often she finds time to publish various articles and books on this ministry. She hails from Enayam Puthenthurai, Kanyakumari and is a member in the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC). She is an active social worker who found time and invested her talents to develop many Self Help Groups (SHGs) and worked in Childline. She served as the medico social worker at St John's Hospital, Bangalore. She was National Secretary to PMI and the chief editor of Prison Voice, a national monthly magazine. She has authored four books and has

written numerous articles in various periodicals, among which many are on Prison Ministry.

The *Dreamers' Mission* is a folio book which contains 240 inside pages, and the cover page deals with the exact picturization of the inside theme. This book begins with acknowledgements and thanks to all the supporters and contributors. There are two messages from Rev Sr Inigo SSA and Most Rev Dr Allwyn D'Silva, the CBCI Chairman of PMI. Rev Sr Inigo SSA in her message highlights the thrust of the mission of the dreamers that "they demonstrate the possibilities that exist for anyone who has the goodwill and possesses a heart filled with love for God and His people". In the Foreword, Rev Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, the PMI cofounder and present national coordinator to PMI, clearly portrays that "this book manifests her dreams for the incarcerated, love for the poor, compassion for the rejected and her courage for the voiceless". He continues to speak about the dreams of the prisoners and the Ruby Jubilee dreams of PMI.

This book is compartmentalized into four parts, namely: Prison Ministry India: Remarkable 40 Years, Insightful Journey, Insightful Ventures and Insightful Personalities. The first part deals with the past 40 years of the PMI and its growth at different dimensions. This part has twelve chapters that deal with various themes like redemption, change, repentance, understanding, encouragement and the like. These chapters depict the total philosophical concept of the PMI and its growth in 40 years.

The second part has 29 chapters. These tackle conceptual thoughts on basic selection of moral choices, the need of different levels of formation in children, standing for truth, implanting of hope, mother's care and love, the need of

forgiveness, concept of freedom, concept of justice and need of non-violence etc. At the same time this part of the book lays emphasis on the basic value of love, and explains the birth of Prison Ministry India as the outcome of the love bomb. Some of these chapters present in a picturesque manner the different types of sufferings that jail inmates are made to undergo. The last chapters of this section unwrap to us the concept of conversion of mind and heart from bad to good, good to better and from better to the best. The last obviously is the ideal for every prisoner.

The third part of the book treats about certain insightful ventures undertaken by PMI. There are five chapters in it, and it is the shortest part of the book. In these chapters, the author deals with a few task forces of PMI in detail. PMI organized forty special task forces in connection with the Ruby Jubilee. Among these, the most important ones are mentioned here, to give the taste of Special Task Forces. The first chapter deals with the Task force concerned with the release of souls in purgatory. This chapter is followed by Innocent Prisoner's Redeemers (IPR), Juvenile Delinquents Reformers (JDR) and Serial Killers' Reformers (SKR). The last chapter of this section deals with mental health care and the role of Prison Ministry India.

The fourth and last section of the book deals with insightful personalities. Here some important personalities are mentioned in connection with prison ministry. The ones mainly focused here are St Joseph Cafasso, Blessed Devasahayam Pillai, Fr Stan Swamy, Sr Helen Prejean CSJ etc. She also adds some strong examples from today's world, like Anson Thomas. Subsequently, the examples of suffering in the lives of George Cardinal Pell, Asia Bibi and Anthony Ray Hinton, are described with specific details. The author speaks towards

the end about a few success stories as well.

Going through the book *Prison Ministry: The Dreamers' Mission* gives a great thrust to the present scenario of the ministry with its challenges and fruits. In short, we can say that Rev Sr Lini Sheeja MSC found success in erecting a pointer for the dreams ahead and a milestone too for the present mission which has been a dream fulfilled in the preceding forty years.

**Fr Jaison Dominic MST**

## **GIVING GRIEF MEANING: A METHOD FOR TRANSFORMING DEEP SUFFERING INTO HEALING AND POSITIVE CHANGE**

**Mango Publications 2020, 224; ISBN: 9781642503135**

**Mel Robbins**

Lily Dulan is an American MFT (marriage and family therapist), Psychotherapist, and certified yoga teacher. She developed Eastern and Western disciplines to create a heart-centered system of healing and moving through trauma that she calls *The Name Work*. This method teaches us how to assign special meaning and qualities to the letters in names—a deceased loved one’s or our own—and create positive affirmations for the attribute signified by each letter. It is a unique self-healing method for whatever obstacles arise, a unique, new wellness tool for healing and self-discovery. After her first daughter, Kara, died at home from SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) at two months old, Lily started a foundation in her child’s memory called “The Kara Love Project”.

### **THE KARA LOVE PROJECT**

This beautiful book narrates the first-hand account of the author’s personal healing journey in three parts which develops into eighteen chapters and an A-Z dictionary of qualities to help create our own affirmations at the end. The first part



briefly narrates the loss of Lily's beloved daughter Kara to sudden infant death syndrome at the tender age of two months, which brought her to her knees. Her life was completely turned upside down by immense sadness. Lily created *The Name Work* out of a desire to make positive changes in the world and share what she had learned to help others. After she lost Kara, she spent much time in solitude. She knew she wanted to create a foundation in Kara's name, but she did not know what it would look like. Then she contacted Agape International Spiritual Center and its Founder Dr. Michael Bernard Beckwith, who had helped her in her darkest hours.

In the second part of the book she explains how this pain and sadness forced her to learn how to sit with her emotions. Lily wanted Kara's life to mean something; she had to give Kara's life meaning, and for her giving it meaning meant doing good works in her beloved child's memory and in her name. The author says there is beauty and power in our names and giving grief meaning offers the name work, which is a concrete tool that allows us to connect with our pain and suffering.

In chapter six, *The Name Work*, Lily writes: "I knew that my baby was here, and I had given her a name, so I asked myself, what Kara stands for? I created a group of qualities from the letters in her name: K is for Kindness: Let's be kind to ourselves, to others, and to the environment. A is for Alignment: We focus our attention on what is good and right in the world, no matter how dark things may seem. R is for Regeneration: We commit to a practice that allows us to feel more spacious and puts us in touch with what we truly need. A is for Action: We do things that will help others along the way. That includes knowing when to be more engaged, when to slow down, and most importantly, to move toward Tikkun Olam, the healing of the world."

In chapter seven, *Affirmations and Prayers*, Lily quotes Ernest Holmes, founder of the Science of Mind philosophy, “if we change our thinking, we can change our lives. One of the ways we can do this is to use affirmations to change our thought patterns.” For her, affirmation is a positive statement we make about our environment and ourselves. Affirmations help us move through the darkness and into a more grounded and centered space. Lily uses affirmations in every aspect of the Kara Inspired Grouping of Qualities. They are the bedrock of the Kara meditations and are woven into the tapestry of her life in good times and in bad. First, they help her activate Kindness toward herself and others. They help her see the importance of Universal Alignment, reminding her to take time to pause and regenerate. Finally, they help her when she is in action, living her day-to-day life. The essential part of the book is the use of affirmations and weeding out destructive thoughts in the garden of our consciousness and replacing those thoughts with positive, loving thoughts. However, it does not mean that we do not feel our feelings. Using the name *KARA*, Lily provides specific affirmations and related questions; some are listed below for our self-help.

### **AFFIRMATIONS FOR KINDNESS**

Following are some of the affirmations of Kindness: I treat myself with loving kindness. I am worthy. I treat my body with kindness by eating healthy foods that nourish body and soul. I’m good enough. The kindness I live is the kindness I give. The kindness of God surrounds me.

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT KINDNESS**

How can I be kinder to myself? To others? The environment? List three ways you can increase the level of kindness in your life. How and where have I been the opposite of being kind,

or unkind? Do I need to “make amends” as they say in twelve-step programs? When has someone been unkind to me? Did I play a part in it? Was my mother kind to me? My father? Siblings? What messages did they give me regarding kindness? How can I take kindness out into my community and the world?

### **AFFIRMATIONS ABOUT ALIGNMENT**

I affirm Universal Alignment. God is working for my good. I step into alignment with my healthy lifestyle. Although I may not see it, everything is happening according to Universal Alignment. Everything is in divine order.

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT ALIGNMENT**

What is it that feels out of alignment in my personal, professional, and spiritual life? Do I believe that Universal Alignment and God are good? When I’m facing grief or obstacles, how can I “act as if” the Universe is aligned, that goodness and order exist? How have I experienced Universal Alignment in my life? Are there coincidences and aha moments that I can remember? What did my early religious upbringing teach me about God and alignment?

### **AFFIRMATIONS FOR REGENERATION**

Each day I take time to pause and regenerate. My body is my temple. I treat it as such, giving myself the ability to regenerate. The cells in my body regenerate. I am healthy, whole, and my life is complete. My body is in alignment with Spirit and I am pure health. I regenerate by finding new ways to care for myself.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT REGENERATION

What are the ways I find to rest? How is my overall health? What is my diet like? Is there anything I want to change? Do I use alcohol or drugs to “take the edge off?” Would I like to change this? How much time do I spend watching TV? How about being on social media? Am I willing to try out new ways to spend my free time?

## AFFIRMATIONS ABOUT ACTION

I take time to pause before moving into action. I act according to the Divine Light within. I move with ease, grace, and dignity as I meet life’s responsibilities. My Action is my Divine purpose.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT ACTION

Which activities bring me happiness? What are my short-term goals? What do I see happening in two weeks? What are my long-term goals? What do I see happening in two months, ten months, or twenty years? How do I define success? Is Regeneration a part of my action plan? How can I make more time for it?

In the third part, especially in chapter seventeen, Other Healing Modalities, the author provides many healing modalities from both eastern and western perspectives to transform deep suffering into healing and positive change. *Giving Grief Meaning* is filled with enlightening thoughts and relatable quotes, and it gave me a lot to think about almost on every page! It is truly a great book and very inspiring and thought-provoking! I have learned so much about some of the reasons I might feel or act a certain way, but most importantly, I have learned that it is possible to change my thoughts and feelings of not being good enough, and Lily

provided many practical suggestions do so. The book offers a beautiful and precious path to healing one's heart and standing in our own light. The author shows how to hold our loved ones forever in our hearts without being trapped by a tight circle of sadness. I believe *Giving Grief Meaning* has so much potential to transform human life and help them live a more meaningful life.

**Dr Jaison Kunnel MCBS**

# REFORMATIVE EXPLORATIONS

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ON REFORMATION AND REHABILITATION

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