



Vincentian India



News Bulletin of the Vincentian Family in India

Volume : 09

(For Private circulation among members only)

January - March - 2014

MESSAGE

Easter is the most important feast found in the Christian calendar. The Easter story is at the heart of Christianity from the very beginning of its existence. The first Christian communities were very faithful in assembling together on the first day of the week to celebrate the day of Lord (Acts 20: 7). It is the first feast ever introduced in the Church. The very existence of the Church is because of the Resurrection. Without Resurrection, our Christian faith would have been just a hopeful thinking, no better than secular philosophies and fanatical religions. The seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke wrote: "Our Saviour's Resurrection is truly of great importance in Christianity, so great that His being or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it ". St. Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit taught to the Christian communities at Corinth that without Christ's Resurrection, our salvation could not have been possible (1 Corinthians 15). He also believed that a person could not be saved without believing in Christ's Resurrection: "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved" (Romans 10:9). The content of the kerygma presented by the Apostles was nothing other than the resurrection of Christ (Acts 4: 33). For Christians, Resurrection brings peace (Jn 19: 19), joy (Lk 24: 32) and above all hope (Jn 11: 25). In his second encyclical letter 'Spe Salvi, Pope Benedict XVI highlights that we cannot exist without hope (Rom 8: 24).

While wishing you all Happy Easter, I wish to share with you a few reflections on hope:

1. **Hope – the value of every person:** Looking at 2 Corinthians 5:14, St. Paul says Christ died for all, indicating that every human being has value, whether black, white, rich or poor, high cast or low cast, young or old, man or woman. The Easter message is a radical declaration of how God sees every person and, yes, we experience this personally in terms of our own faith. It also pinpoints our worldview in the context of mission and life.
2. **Hope in pain:** The Easter story presents a glimpse of God's broken heart, the physical suffering of Jesus demonstrating that he understands what it is to feel physical and emotional pain. The Resurrection is a promise of hope that one day our sorrow will turn to joy.
3. **Hope at Easter:** The Easter story is the culmination of God's restoration of human beings to the possibility and potential of friendship with God. It can be argued that God's redemptive plan is all about the restoration of friendship and relationship. So we can describe the possibility of friendship, but also the problem: why isn't that friendship automatic? It is our selfishness—living for ourselves—that separates us from God's love and friendship. Easter is the story about 'how that is dealt with'.
4. **Hope – the power to change:** 2 Corinthians 5:15 points out to us that a huge problem in our society today is that we live for ourselves. The challenge of the Christian message—the wonder of Easter—is that: Christ died so that we no longer live for ourselves, we live for something bigger. We also recognize that selfishness is destroying our world, whether at government levels or at

personal levels. We may lose hope. The Easter story gives us an answer. Christ died that we might no longer live for ourselves. He gives us a new focus as we live for him and for his principles. As we take on that new focus, it will help us not to be as selfish; not to live for ourselves as, perhaps, we have done and, in this way, we will all make the world a better place.

In the seventeenth century, the French society had many people who were without hope. St. Vincent de Paul convinced of this fact, committed himself to realize the mystery of Easter, especially that of hope in the lives of all those who were deprived of it. He tried to restore the value and dignity of every person. It is this hope that made him to accept all types of pain as well as the ability to understand the pain of others, and subsequently worked for its alleviation. The hope at Easter molded him to deepen his relationship and friendship with God and the poor. It is this hope that made him bring out a drastic change in the Church and in the society, especially among the poor.

Christ has died and has risen once for all, and for everyone. He has opened a way for Hope. But the power of Hope, and the Hope of the Passover from slavery of evil to the freedom of goodness, must be accomplished in every age, in our concrete existence, in our everyday lives. Let St. Vincent's wisdom inspire us to free ourselves of the burdens and temptations of this world, so that we, too, may be ready to give hope to all, especially to the weakest and the neediest during this season of Easter.

Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil, CM
National Coordinator, VFI

NEWS – NATION



Participants in the 8th Annual Gathering of the Vincentian Family in India held at Marymatha Provincial House of the Vincentian Congregation, Angamaly

1. General Body Meeting at Mary Matha Province, Angamaly:

The Eighth General Body meeting was held at Mary Matha Provincial House of Vincentian Congregation in Angamaly (Kerala) from 22 to 23 February 2014. 52 members from 12 various branches of the VFI participated in the input sessions as well as for the General Body Meeting. St. Vincent, the Icon of New Evangelization,” was the theme of the input session. Rev. Dr. Augustine Vallooran VC, the director of the Divine Retreat Centre, Chalakuday was the resource person. In his talks he highlighted two dimensions of Evangelization: Proclamation (Kerygma) and Service to the Poor (Diaconia). St. Vincent would call these dimensions as: Mission and charity. Dr. Vallooran presented St. Vincent de Paul as an apostle of Charity and a prophet of new Evangelization. Indeed the workshop was an eye opener for a number of participants from the various branches of the Vincentian family as they deepened and refreshed their concept on New Evangelization as well as the contributions of St. Vincent to the Church and the society especially for the poor. In order to be an authentic Vincentian as well as to implement the concept of New Evangelization, the members proposed a few suggestions such as: a personal transformation of each member thereby become a true witness, good networking, better collaboration among the various branches for the empowerment of the poor, implementation of the strategies of systemic change, etc.

The following day was the business day. In the evaluation, all the participants expressed their appreciation and satisfaction of the steady growth of VFI. There were representations from eleven branches such as from Congregation of the Mission, Vincentian Congregation, Daughters of Charity, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (Manathavady), Sisters Ministers of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Sisters of the Destitute, Society of St. Vincent

de Paul, Association of Miraculous Medal, Vincentian Marian Youth and Fiat Missionaries of St. Vincent de Paul. In the said meeting, the special message of Very Rev. Fr. Gregory G. Gay was read out. He encouraged the members to promote and implement ‘systemic change’ projects. All of the participants unanimously agreed to strengthen the systemic change and woman empowerment commissions of VFI. There was also a special emphasis on strengthening the regional, zonal and local units.

The Vincentian Family in India is immensely grateful to the Mary Matha Province of Vincentian Congregation especially Fr. Paul Puthuva VC, the Provincial, his team members and Fr. James Chelapurath V.C., the Regional Coordinator of Kerala for having hosted the General Body Meeting at Angamaly. It is the Mary Matha Province sponsored food, lodging, outing and stationary items for all the participants. The Vincentian Family in India is also grateful to the local organizing team headed by Rev. Fr. Davis Arackal VC for all the physical arrangements and for making the programme a great event.

2. National Systemic Change Commission

The systemic change commission had a series of meetings. The following are the plans of the commission:

- a. Net working and tie up with international commission for systemic change.
- b. To update ourselves with the status and functioning of the international commission.
- c. Disseminating the subject
- d. A model systemic change project by VFI.
- e. A permanent source / device to address the problems of natural calamities / disasters

3. National Commission for Women Empowerment

In view of strengthening the commission, the General Body has nominated two more members. They are: Sr. Philo SCV and Sr. Sukesini Diga DC.

4. Annual Formation Programme at Bangalore

The annual Vincentian Formation Programme will be held from May 1-5, 2014 at St. Vincent's Seminary Hallehalli, Bangalore. The theme of the programme is: "Social Dimensions of Vincentian Charism".

The topics and the resources persons are as follows:

1. Social Teachings of the Bible : Bishop Simon Kaipuram CM
2. St. Vincent and the poor of his time: Sr. Rose Chirayil DC

3. Social Teachings of the Church: Sr. Roselyn SCN
4. Relevance of Vincent's Outlook on service of the poor today: Rev. Fr. Mathew Vattakuzhiyil VC
5. Vincentian Quiz: Sr. Maria DC

The registration fee will be minimum Rs. 1500. The contact person is Sr. Maria Kallorthottiyil DC and her mobile number is 09036727598.

Venerable Joseph Triest Fr. Peter

Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary (SCJM sisters) and the Congregation of the Brothers of Charity



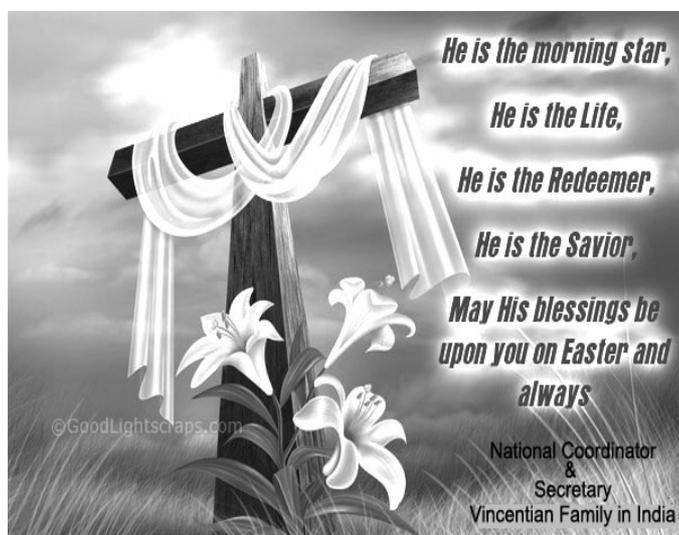
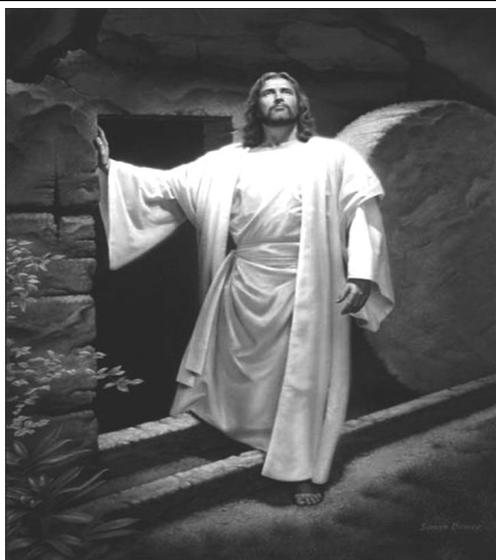
Venerable Fr. Peter Joseph Triest was born in Brussels on 31st August 1760 in a well-to-do Flemish family. He first attended the Jesuit school in Brussels and went on from there to the Latin School in Geel. Subsequently he followed a two-year philosophy course at Louvain University. Dur-

ing his free time he visited the poor and used all his pocket money to help them. At the age of 22 he began his studies for the priesthood at the Seminary in Malines and was ordained priest in 1786.

He began his ministry in Malines and the surrounding district. In 1797 he was appointed parish priest of St. Peter's, Renaix. It was then that Fr. Triest refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Republic and decided to go into hiding in order to help his parishioners in their spiritual needs. After the signing of the Concordat in 1802, Triest could openly take over the parish of St. Martin in Renaix but his stay there was short-lived. A year later he was transferred to

Lovendegem, where he would start his life's work. He was moved by the poverty and misery of the people around him, especially the plight of children during the French revolution. Hence, he gathered together a small group of young women to work for the care and education of the most needy.

In 1803 he laid the foundation of his first Congregation- the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary. In 1806 he was appointed as member of the Poor Relief Committee in Ghent. It was in that function that his pastoral inspiration started to really grow. He devoted practically all his time to the elderly, the poor, the mentally ill, and to foundlings or, in other words, to those in whom society did not seem to take any interest. In 1807 he founded the Congregation of the **Brothers of Charity.** The Brothers' duties consisted primarily in nursing the impoverished elderly and mental patients. In 1825 he founded the **Brothers of St John of God** who had to nurse the poor in their homes (this Congregation is no more). One year before he died, in 1835, he founded the **Sisters of the Childhood of Jesus** who had to look after foundlings



Reflections on the crosses of St.Louise de Marillac that made her a great saint.



Crosses and sufferings play a vital role in the life of every single human being, however great or small he or she may be. At one time or other in our life too, we might have been visited by some or other crosses. Great saints like Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac too were not spared from these ordeals.

St.Louise de Marillac's life itself begins with one such great cross or suffering which carried much repercussion in her later years of life. It was that she was born as the illegitimate daughter of Luis de Marillac, administrator in the Royal Court of Paris and owner of a large estate. Luis de Marillac the father of little Louise loved her dearly and he said of her once that she was his consolation.

While she was an infant her mother died and her father re-married. Then another ordeal awaited little Louise-her step mother would not accept the natural daughter of Luis and so she had to be sent to the Dominican convent where her aunt was a nun and there she received all her education and even she was trained in holiness at that early age.

Another great suffering Louise was to face at the age of 13 was the demise of her beloved father who loved her dearly. From the earliest years, Louise was attracted to prayer and contemplative life. But after her father's demise, her uncle and family persuaded her to marry a noble young man – Antony le Grass.

All through the years of her life God was guiding her in an extra ordinary way, through the way of the cross, unlike others. The old saying "Heaven writes straight on crooked lines" was very aptly seen in the life of Louise. After 12 years of her married life, again she was to encounter another ordeal – the sickness and death of her beloved husband Antony le Grass who loved her not only as a husband, but also as a father and a mother whose love she was deprived of.

At this juncture, her mind was filled with fears and doubts. The remaining few years were called the "Dark Night" of her soul. It was at that time in the year 1625 after the death of her husband; Louise meets Vincent de Paul, her future guide and director. It was God who brought Vincent to guide Louise in order to prepare her for the fulfillment of God's divine plan on her regard.

In the year 1617 Vincent had established the "Confraternities of Charity" which lately came to be known as the "Ladies of Charity" who are actively working for the poor in several parishes even today. Vincent found Louise a woman endowed with exceptional qualities of head and heart, capable of transforming herself into a Vincentian Leader he was looking for, to collaborate with him in his future Charitable Endeavors.

In and through all the traumatic experiences of her childhood and youth, her life was marked by the fleeting happiness and suffering that was never far away. Louise de Marillac was purified by her sufferings like gold in the furnace. It was her sufferings, the crosses that drew her more and more closer to God and to the poor. Through her patient endurance of all the crosses and suffering the Lord made her pleasing to Him.

In her life time, Louise de Marillac never sought to put herself forward. Her prayer was that she must be hidden in God, desiring to serve Him without seeking any recognition from others and contenting that God sees what she was trying to become.

God took such a delight in the soul of Louise and allowed her to be canonized in 1934 by Pope Pius XI and Pope John XXIII declared her patron of all Christian social workers on February 11th 1960.

Let us thank and praise the Lord for giving us such a great saint as the collaborator of St.Vincent and pray through her intercession that imitating her virtues and love for suffering, we too become great apostles of charity towards the poor and needy and the suffering mass of our time and to accept and carry the crosses that God allows in our lives too with patient endurance.

Sr.Anne.Muttathil.DC
Bangalore

A REQUEST

Congregations and Associations are requested to send news/articles/projects/photos/success stories for publication in **Vinfamindia**

Bro. V. Rajeswara Rao
Editor

Printed and published by Rev.Fr.Francis Puthenthayil,CM, National Coordinator, VFI

Editor: V.RAJESWARA RAO, National Secretary, VFI, Cell : 09440165220 Sub Editor: I.PRAKASHAM, Member, VFI

Printed at : Raja Kishore Offset Printers, Vizianagaram - 535 001, Ph : 08922-225826