

# MISSION AD GENTES

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## **A KISS OF JESUS!**

Every year, the 11<sup>th</sup> of February reminds me of Lourdes: that little place in France. For many of us who have been there, Lourdes often comes back to our minds as a place of prayer and compassionate love for the sick and suffering. Close encounters with suffering in our own lives and in the lives of other people seem to become beacons of human maturing and growth.

Human beings fully alive - in the words of Irenaeus - attract the poor and suffering in a way that often draws multitudes. The readings in the gospel of Mark these days draw our attention to the crowds of sick people trying to touch Jesus, "...and all those who touched Him were cured" (Mark 6: 56). The wise monks of Thailand often remind us in their TV talks that compassion is the essence of human maturity and the prerequisite for peace of mind and soul. When one, like Jesus, reaches that perfect state of compassionate love, a healing energy begins to flow out of one's heart and renews hope, faith and love in everyone they touch.

When I reread the writings of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, I am often struck by expressions or reflections that went unnoticed when I read them for the first time. This was the case with the following quote, "Suffering is but a kiss of Jesus!" (Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta). Men and women of God do not only bring about the healing touch of a miracle or the needed consolation in times of stress, they actually lead us to that close encounter with suffering where we learn to become fully alive, fully human, fully a man and woman of God! The suffering person embraces us, touches us with their kiss of suffering: innocence, patience, humility and the compassion of the person who has discovered the art of suffering with love. When I speak of close encounters with suffering, one experience comes to my mind.

In 1996, I visited Bouake in Ivory Coast where we have a Marist community and school. During my visit, I was introduced to a lay person who only had primary school education. He was married with three children and earned his living by repairing car tyres in a small town. One day, he heard that invitation from the gospel, "Come follow me!" He discussed with his wife the concrete meaning of these words and they eventually came to the



*To All The  
Dioceses  
Of The World*

## A KISS OF JESUS

conclusion that it was a call to take care of the many mentally ill persons who were wandering around, sleeping in the streets of Bouake. With the help of his wife and children, he invited some of them to sleep around his hut, under roofs made of dry grass tied to wooden sticks that were taken from the forest around Bouake. The Brothers soon helped by providing blankets and little by little, many poor and rich people in Bouake and beyond began to help.

At the time of my visit, there were several hundreds of these needy people living in simple but well organized houses and huts. They were provided with basic needs such as food, shelter and a hygienic living condition. What caught my attention was the tender relationship between these people and the founder. Many would run to him and he would gently embrace them. The helpers were picking up the tender touch of the founder and one could easily observe his infectious spirit.

As I prayed this morning - on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes - I thought of all of us, Brothers and Lay Missionaries in AMAG. It is obvious that the places where we live and work bring us constantly in touch with human suffering and poverty. During my visits to your communities and apostolic projects, I was often moved by the innocence, gentleness, humility and patience of the many children and youth you are trying to help. Their suffering embraces us with that gentle touch - the kiss of Jesus!

Good reading to all!  
Brother Luis.

## Korea

### **Seeds of the Kingdom** By Hoan Castro

*"We are mysteries, even to ourselves. We so easily become unsettled, disturbed by anxieties or attachments of unknown origin that threaten to knock us off balance. Yesterday's certainties become today's doubts, as we wonder what tomorrow will bring." ~ Mark Neilsen*

A farmer went out to sow his seed. Some sprang up quickly, some took a while to bear fruit, others never grew. In our life, sometimes we expect to see the plant grow and taste their fruits but that does not always happen. I remember a story about some seeds that were discovered in one of the ancient Egyptian tombs. These seeds had been there for



hundreds and thousands of years. Nobody thought that they would grow but a group of scientists took some of them and planted them in a conducive environment - good soil, water and sunlight. And the miracle occurred! Those seeds had kept within them the energy to produce life and so they grew and bore fruits. This miracle doesn't only occur

in the seeds but also within us when the charisma of Marcellin finds a conducive environment to grow.

Last December, I was in Seoul and had the opportunity to witness the strength and energy hidden in the seeds of the Marist charisma, which was sown in Korea in September 1971. The years passed quickly and it seemed as if nothing was happening, the seeds were not growing. But now, after 40 years, I was able to witness the growth – the seeds are finally starting to bear fruits.

In the place where the Brothers are working, I could see the faces of young people singing and dancing, playing and studying. They are part of the group of children and adolescents who attend the educational centre for youth every day. It was surprising to see the Brothers, who were postulants and novices years ago, directing these activities.

I was reminded of Ad Gentes and how the Brothers in each community are putting much effort in sowing hope and spreading the seeds of Marist charisma in new soils. Would we be able to see the fruit of this work? I don't know, but I believe that our effort will bear fruit and I am sure all the Brothers in the AMAG Sector share my belief. One day, the seeds that we are sowing today will produce fruit, one day the dreams of today will be the realities of tomorrow.

*“What the future holds for Marist Brothers is hidden in the mind of God as it was for Marcellin Champagnat. The lesson for us is clear: what is important – and what should be the motivating power of our attitudes and actions in the years ahead of us – is not the things we fear. It is the thing we know most surely and most securely cling to in faith and hope: our God, the God of Marcellin Champagnat, is a faithful and loving God.”*

*~ Circular - Sowers of Hope, Charles Howard*

## Happy Birthday!

- 12/3 Jose Grande
- 15/3 Pietro Codato
- 30/3 Bartholomew Malangmei
- 5/4 Ventura Perez
- 5/4 Gilbert Dakora
- 21/4 Evelyn Kow
- 24/4 Rafael Alvarez



*May*

**The Lord bless you and keep you!**

*May*

**The Lord let his face shine upon you and be gracious to you!**

*May*

**The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!**

**(Numbers 6: 24 - 26)**

## Christmas at the Talit Community and Hostel

By Bartholomew Malangmei

We, the brothers of the Talit community and the boys in our hostel had a joyful Christmas celebration on 22 December 2012. Together with our boys, we put in a lot of effort in preparing for our Christmas celebration. Our hard work paid off and we celebrated with joy and peace.

Two or three days before the main celebration, we went caroling with the boys around Talit village and at religious communities in the Burdwan area. The boys also presented a drama on how the birth of Jesus affects our daily life situations, how helping one another during times of difficulties can bring joy and happiness.

On 22 December, we had the Christmas Eucharistic celebration at 5:30 p.m. Fr Sarto from the Pastoral Centre in Chetana was the main celebrant. All our students and some special guests - including the children who are affected by HIV as well as some nuns and priests, joined us in celebrating this great event as one family.



After the Eucharistic celebration, Br Alex carried the baby Jesus to the new crib, which was made by the Brothers and the boys. It was placed outside of the building so that everyone could come and honour the Saviour. There were tribal singing as well as dancing and the house was decorated with colourful lights.

The blessing of the beautiful crib by Fr Sarto was followed by entertainment such as cultural performances. On behalf of our community and the boys, Br Alex welcomed

our guests – priests, nuns and lay people. The night's celebration included the boys' drama on the birth



## West Bengal

of Jesus, the presentation of gifts to our guests, the exchange of gifts and the singing of Christmas carols. Also, thanks to the kindness of some Australian donors, all the boys of our hostels received new school uniforms, which they will be using for the next two years. We concluded our Christmas celebration with a cake cutting ceremony and dinner.

### **My Christmas** By Jose Maria

***“In your presence there is fullness of joy, in your right hand is pleasures for evermore.” (Psalm 16: 11b)***



This year, I felt the coming of God sooner compared to the other years. We celebrated Christmas with the Santali boys of our hostel in the evening of 22 December, before they went home to their villages. They finished their scholar course at the beginning of December and spent two weeks preparing the crib, decorating the house, practising Christmas carols, drama, dances and etc. The Brothers prepared our Christmas programme meticulously: the mass, the blessing of the crib, the boys' performance, the gifts and the special supper.

This celebration was for me a significant moment of special intensity, especially watching their faces of joy, surprise and amazement. The gospel says that the simple will inherit the earth (Mathew 5: 5) and the kingdom of God belongs to those with a child's soul (Luke 18: 16). Only children are able to identify themselves with “the Child God”, only they can live the divine mystery of the humility of the cradle in Bethlehem.

I was very happy today, seeing their happiness, their spirit of celebration, the spontaneity of their humble hearts without any bonds and fears, enjoying every instance and detail of this special Christmas time. Christmas celebration with our boys was the most intense and special moment. God, I thank you for their presence as they help me to see you and to live the fullness of the divine joy. This is the true spirit of Christmas: to enjoy the salvation of God among the poor.



## Cambodia

고별사 / 밝은 하늘  
2012-08-16 (목)

세상과 하직하기 전  
그대는  
꼭 할 일이 있으니

이른 새벽  
동이 떠오르는 하늘에  
작별인사 했는가

한 낮의 따가운  
햇볕 한 줌에  
감사인사 전했는가

나무 그늘 아래  
살뜰히 불어오는 바람에게  
고맙다는 말 남겼는가

황혼이 내리는 저녁  
호숫가 소나무에게  
사랑한다고 고백했는가

어느 것도 답할 수 없거든  
세상에 남아 숙제 다 하고 떠나도  
늦지 않소

Farewell Speech / Bright Sky  
16-08-2012  
By Ignatius In

Before departing this world  
there are things  
you must attend

In the early morning  
to the sky in which the sun is rising  
have you said goodbye

In the heat of the day  
to a cup of sunshine  
have you expressed gratitude

Under the shade of a tree  
to the gentle breeze  
have you said thanks

At eventide in which the sun is downing  
to the pine tree in the lake  
have you confessed I love you

If you can't answer yes to any of these,  
remain in the world and finish your homework  
And then though you depart, it's not late

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