



PROVINCE OF SOUTH ASIA

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 2016

Reflection

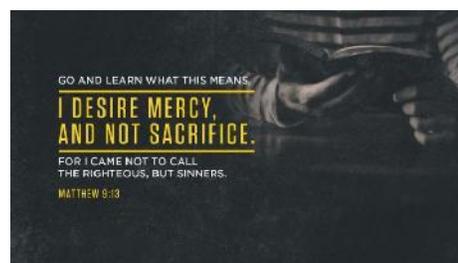
On Wednesday February 10th worldwide the Church begins the holy season of Lent. This year I wish to focus our attention on the Lenten message of Pope Francis, entitled "I desire mercy and not sacrifice. The works of mercy on the road of the Jubilee"

The Pope stresses the importance of practicing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in our lives, and deplores the attitude and actions of arrogant, powerful and wealthy people who refuse to open the doors of their hearts to serve our Merciful God and His people who are poor in terms of material goods.

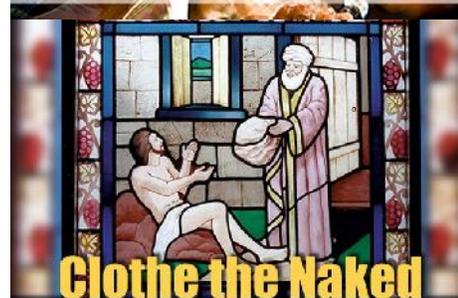
The Pope's Lenten message is divided into three parts, focusing on mercy seen in the light of the Word of God, insistence on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as outlined in our Catholic Tradition, and the relationship between Lent and the observance of this Jubilee Year of Divine Mercy.

The first part examines the theme of mercy in the Scriptures. During Lent, the Church has always encouraged us to seek greater nourishment from the Word of God. We are invited to explore the theme of mercy through the pages of the Bible and the witness of prophets. These do not simply repeat that God is merciful, but rather clearly call us His children to be merciful, too, practicing greater love and care for everyone around us, especially children, the poor and the helpless."

The second key point of the Pope's Message: our need to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, part of the treasury of our Christian tradition. During Lent the Pope is asking and inviting all of us to feel a need to be nurtured by the Word of God and at the same time to have our hearts be attentive to those who are suffering and perform works of mercy for them. In Pope Francis's words, "At times we tend to



Give drink to the thirst



Clothe the Naked



think that faith can be reduced to participating in the sacraments and practicing various forms of prayer, and we overlook the needs of the men, women and children in our lives, especially the poorest. In neglecting this practical aspect of our faith, sooner or later our spiritual life becomes sterile and insipid. When we show mercy to others and accept it from them our faith becomes a joyful and contagious experience, enriching and stimulating.”

Finally, the third part of the Pope’s Message focuses on the Jubilee Year of Mercy. “The Paschal mystery,” writes the pope, “is the heart of the liturgical year, and this Lent is precisely at the heart of the Jubilee. The powerful time of this Jubilee is linked to our Lenten observance, greatly promoting and enriching our efforts to convert our hearts and achieve spiritual growth in our own lives and the life of our Church throughout the world.

This gives rise to the prophetic proposal of the Jubilee Year and Lent that each of us review our own path in life and listen attentively to the cry of the poor, of Christ knocking on the door of our heart, longing for us to open it, and in welcoming Him, experiencing authentic life.

The Pope is inviting and urging each of us this Lent to witness to God’s Merciful Love and Compassion, especially to people who are suffering and the poor. “In this way,” he says, “this Jubilee Year of Mercy will not just be an occasion marked on our calendars, but one during which God is calling us to recognize His presence in the poor and the suffering, listening to them and caring for their needs.”



India (Brothers Saul and Chinna)

The Festival of Pongal: Celebrating Prosperity

Pongal is one of the most popular harvest festivals in South India, a traditional occasion for giving thanks to nature and celebrating the life cycles that bless us with grain. This is also a time for reconciliation and building peace, with people coming together in a spirit of affection and understanding. On the 10th of January the Festival of Pongal was celebrated by our **Rainbow Family** with common customs and traditions. On the 13th of January our children and staff in P.U. and Mangamanuthu Schools expressed their unity and cohesiveness by cooking the special Pongal rice and sharing it with one another.





Events in February

- **Tuesday, the 2nd:** The Community Leaders will organize a program in each Community thanking God for His invitation to become a laborer in His vineyard. Let us pray for faithfulness and perseverance in our vocation as Marist Brothers.
- **Friday, the 5th:** Master Dom, an Australian volunteer will return to Australia after a month's happy and useful immersion in Mangamanuthu. As all of us have enjoyed his company he too expresses his gratitude and pleasure for getting the opportunity to share an experience which was mutually beneficial to all.
- **Saturday a.m. on the 6th:** The Finance Commission will hold its regular meeting at the Trichi House.
- **Saturday p.m. on the 6th:** All the Brothers will assemble in the Trichi Community to celebrate the conclusion of the Year of Consecrated Life with a prayer service. This will be followed by a family meal.
- **Sunday, the 7th:** The Bishop is holding a meeting for all the religious at the Bishop's House. In Trichi CRI will celebrate Consecrated Life with a workshop which will be conducted by Brother Jesudoss on the theme "What would the Church be without you and me?"
- **Sunday, the 14th:** Rainbow Family get-together in Marcellin Community Hall at Trichi.
- **Saturday and Sunday, the 20th & 21st:** Brothers Recollection will be at "Poondi Matha Retreat House." The theme of the recollection is "Identity and the Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church". Father Kulandaraj, the Rector will be the facilitator and Brother Saul will prepare the necessary material in advance.
- **Monday, the 22nd:** Brothers Albert and Antonysamy will renew their vows at the Poondi Matha Church. Let us keep these Brothers in our prayers.

Pakistan (Brothers Kamran and Sunil)

Christian Boys Association

At Friday's regular meeting on January 8th Brothers Sunil and Kamran along with the Christian teachers and the children had the pleasure of welcoming Brother Shanthi Liyanage, the Provincial of South Asia, who traveled all the way from Sri Lanka to be our special guest. The programme started with the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. The theme of the day: "Believe in yourself." Two motivational video clips were presented to inspire the

children. One, how little birds persevere in building their nests amidst obstacles from nature and people, and the other, how a man who loses both legs from a mountain climbing accident does not give up and reaches the top using artificial limbs. This was followed by two questions: “Do you believe in yourself?” and “What is your strength?” – This was to be discussed in pairs. Later a partner of each pair shared the answers with the main group. The meeting was concluded with some resolutions. Brother Shanthi expressed his appreciation and admiration for our weekly gathering and wished us God’s blessings for its success and satisfactory outcomes. With the departure of our special guest we proceeded with a simple meal followed by games. It was another wonderful day on our calendar of events.



Events in February

- **Monday 8th**: Pre-Board exam begins for Classes Nine and Ten
- **Saturday 13th**: First Holy Communion

Note: Sports Day and Primary English Day have been cancelled due to security concerns.

Sri Lanka

New Provincial for the Province of South Asia

Excerpt from a letter to the Brothers in South Asia, sent by Brother Emili, our Superior General: “...Brothers, I am writing to inform you that after studying the results of the consultation carried out in the Province, the General Council has appointed **Br Benterege Mervyn Percy Rohana PERERA** as **Provincial of South Asia** for a first term of three years. Br Mervyn will begin his mandate at the Provincial Chapter in **August 2016.**”



We congratulate Bro. Mervyn and wish him God’s abundant blessings for joy and success in his new responsibility.

Events in February

- **Wednesday, the 3rd**: Sports Meet, St. Joseph’s Nugegoda at the Buddhadasa Grounds in Baththaramulla. Chief Guest: Brigadier P. J. Gamage
- **Thursday, the 4th**: Community Leaders Meeting. Father Reid Shelton Fernando, S.J will be the facilitator. The topic of the day will be “Jesus the Good Shepherd and we the leaders in the Year of Mercy”
- **Saturday, the 13th**: Sports Meet, MSC Thimbirigaskatuwa at the Maris Stella Grounds with Mrs. Sriyani Kulawansa as the Chief Guest
- **Monday, the 22nd**: Bursars Meeting in Sri Lanka will be held at the Marcellin Nivesa Negombo

- **Saturday, the 27th:** Sports day, Primary MSC Negombo will be held at the College Grounds

Birthdays February and March

Happy Birthday

February	March
01 st Ranjith Perera (94) 71 8582475	08 th , Linus Fernando (94) 77 1475584
02 nd Clinton Perera (94) 77 6199525	09 th , Zubair Yaqub (92) 3327534947
10 th Benedict Wijesooriya (94) 77 1941089	11 th , John Peter (91) 9789559351
11 th Gregory Appuhamy (94) 71 4309536	19 th , Joseph Fonseka (94) 72 1280076
16 th Arockiasamy A. (91) 9003585575	23 rd , Younas Kamran (94) 77 1196412
17 th Canisio Willrich (94) 76569015	26 th , Sandalal Alwis (94) 77 9331673
24 th Devasisri Fernando (63) 9088217922	
26 th Alex Arockiyasamy (91) 9735150029	

Prayers requested for:

- School Communities in Pakistan asking for God’s protection
- The repose of the soul of Mr. Callistus Perera, dearly beloved brother of Brother Clinton Perera
- Our sick and elderly Brothers and Bro. Paul Bhatti’s mother

Accepting compassion (Zen inspiration)

‘How can we purify the world?’ asked a disciple.

Ibn al-Husayn replied: “There was once a Sheik in Damascus called Abu Musa al-Qumasi. Everyone respected him because of his wisdom, but no one knew for certain that he was a good man.



One evening, the house where the Sheik and his wife lived collapsed, apparently because of some fault in the construction. The neighbors began desperately digging through the rubble. At one point, they managed to find the Sheik’s wife. She said: “Don’t bother about me. Save my husband first, he was sitting more or less over there.”

The neighbors shifted to the rubble in the place she had indicated and found the Sheik. He said: “Don’t worry about me. Save my wife first, she was lying more or less over there.” When people act as that couple did, they are purifying the whole world.

May God Bless you!

Bro. Shanthi Liyanage

Bro. Shanthi Liyanage, FMS
Provincial, South Asia.