



MAY 2016



Volume 4. No 2

MARIST INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
Newsletter

**We are Easter people and
ALLELUIA is our song**



Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Editorial



Once again we have the opportunity to circulate another edition of MIC Digest. This is by courtesy of our valued contributors who have dynamically expressed their original ideas so that our valued readers might gain from what they know, think, feel and believe. For, as Rollo May wrote, “If you do not express your own original ideas, if you do not listen to your own being, then you will have betrayed yourself.” In sharing your ideas, you improve yourself. This is what Oliver Wendell Holmes meant when he says that, “A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimension.” Read them and you will never remain the same.

This edition includes topics on: Easter Guest, Sinners are also Called, Consecrated Life in Unity, A Must See place for Apostolate, The Screen Savers, and many more.

Make the best out of these captivating stories and you will have added value to your life. Whatever that is said, spoken or written always has a message. So enjoy your reading!

Br. Cyprian Gandebo

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MIC Digest Team



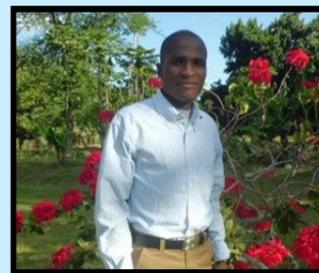
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The Easter Guest (By Betty Richard) Brother Superior's Easter Message



As I look out my window I watch the children play. I see an old man sitting on the curb looking all around... He seems to be looking for something that can't be found... I see he looks so afraid, he starts to get up but, he sits

back down....

I see he looks lost and like he hasn't seen a good meal in several days... Reaching for half of sandwich some children have thrown at him...He begins to eat the sandwich... My God, it's Easter Day! How can these children be so cruel? When at home they have a big Easter dinner cooking for them and so much food!

I watch that old man eat the sandwich! He finished it within a few seconds. He ate it as if he was starving... My heart went out to him... Our Easter dinner was just about ready... We would be eating soon. I went out to the curb, where the old man sat; he looked up at me with the most beautiful blue eyes I have ever seen...

I said, excuse me Sir, I was wondering if you would like to join my family and I, for dinner? I told him, we have way too much food... I made so much... With tears in his eyes he said, why thank you, dear... But I wouldn't bother you or your family today... It's Easter.

I told him that he was no bother at all... We have plenty of food we would never eat it all. I said, we have plenty to share. He said, my dear, I would be honoured to join you and your family. But I'll just take a seat on your porch swing... I tried to make him come inside. He said dear, I'm a little too shy. I said, I understood.

Make yourself comfortable, on the swing... I'll hurry back with your food... He said don't hurry dear, take your time..... When I returned with his plate of food... I looked and couldn't believe my eyes... He wasn't sitting on the swing....He was nowhere to be seen. He was gone.

But in his place was the most beautiful, glowing, lilies on my swing with a note... I read his note with tears streaming down my face. The note said, Happy Blessed Easter, to you my child... You are so kind. Thank you, dear... Love, **The Lord.**

By Br Lawrence Ndawala

Behind The Scenes Yet So Significant

There is no family without a kitchen, and there is no



kitchen without a cook. Often, it is said that it is an act of kindness to say thank you to each hand that helps prepare food. This is the reason why MIC Digest crew passed by our kitchen to say thanks to the powerful team and as well share from some of their experiences.

Speaking with some of them, they expressed total satisfaction, and joy in their work and collaboration in the Brother's mission. Speaking with Mr. Lucas Musempi, the current head cook, he told MIC Digest that he has worked here since 1985 in various capacities: as a laundry man when he worked with Br. Ndawala at the time when the only building was La Massionette. He was later asked to join the kitchen staff which he did and has served there till now. In the present team, those who started work with him are still there and they are over five of them. Speaking with one of the female staff, Mrs. Millicent Ochieng expressed satisfaction in her service since the past three years. She however said that because of her training she fears losing her creativity due to the fact that here we have on-menu (each day having its already set dish to be prepared) as opposed to off-menu which she had been trained to usually practice. She however, said that refresher courses will be very important for all so that they can break monotony and allow for new and creative ways of preparing food for the Brothers. It was indeed a cordial visit welcomed by the entire staff and most appreciated by the team. We promised to meet with each of them as time goes on to hear in detail from their personal view and appreciation.



By Br Ndi Deric



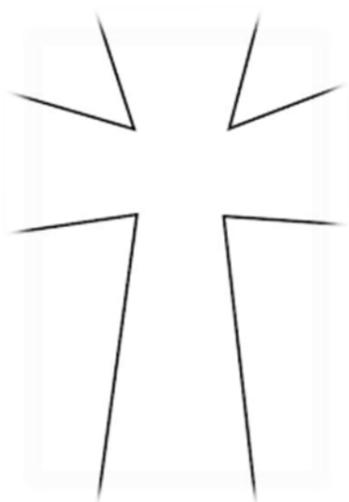
The Mission of Jesus' is consummated on the Cross of Calvary



On the Cross, Jesus cried out allowed, "It is finished" (John 19:30). What does he mean 'it is finished'? This statement is confusing. Jesus seems to suggest failure and disappointments in his mission. Rather,

the phrase suggests success or accomplishment. The phrase suggests that the work assigned to him has been accomplished. What Jesus seems to have said is that the mission he came for is accomplished or completed! The purpose for which he was sent into the world is achieved. Jesus has completed the task he was sent to do on earth. The Scripture has been fulfilled and everything has come to completion! He came to redeem the world from sin. He came to give his life as a ransom for many. Through his passion and death on the cross, he cancelled out our sins. Hence, when Jesus said 'it is finished', it means that his work of reconciling humanity to the Father is really completed. It means the gap between God and humanity created by sin has been bridged. That is, our lost or marred relationship with God has been restored.

When God created the earth, he saw that it was good (Gen 1: 1 – 25). God created a perfect and beautiful world. He intended human beings to live in harmony and in peace with one another. However, greed and selfishness destroyed our friendship and the goodness of God's creation. Sin entered into this world and destroyed the beauty of God's perfect plan for humanity. Sin crippled our relationship with God and with one another. Sin created a gulf or an abyss between humanity and God.



The passion and death of the Son of God on the Cross on Good Friday restored humanity to God's friendship. His passion and death on the Cross bridged the deep gulf between God and humanity. Hence, by his passion and death our reconciliation with God is accomplished. The mission of restoring us to God's friendship is consummated. In other words, the mission for which the Son of God came to earth has been completed and achieved. He came into this world that he might give us life and give it abundantly. He came that we might be forgiven. He came that we might receive repentance for the forgiveness of our sins. All that Jesus has brought to completion on the cross when he said, 'it is finished'. Nothing else needs to be done. His mission is accomplished.

For this reason, the Friday preceding Easter Sunday is appropriately called "Good Friday". For sure it was not a good day for Jesus neither was it a good day for his disciples. It could not have been so when he endured so much pain and agony. However, it is generally called 'Good Friday' because he endured pain and agony for the sake of humanity. He did so for love of humanity. For God so loved the world that he sent his only son to die for us while we were still sinners (Rom 5:8). God did all this for us. He did all this because he loved us. Jesus died for us even though we do not deserve it. His death has made us God's friends. Jesus has completed his task. The reason why he came as a human being has been accomplished. He came so that humanity can have forgiveness of their sins and be reconciled to God. Thus, the passion and death of Jesus offers humanity a new relationship with God.

Br. Cyprian Gandebo

A MUST SEE PLACE FOR APOSTOLATE

As part of the demands of Marist formation (FG336), the young Brothers in initial formation are to be involved in some apostolate. In this regard, some of the Brothers in the Scholasticate here in Nairobi are doing their apostolate in Kibera – a slum area.

Kibera is the biggest slum in Africa and one of the biggest in the world.

Kibera's residents represent all the major Kenyan ethnic backgrounds, with some areas being specifically dominated by people of one ethno-linguistic group. Many new residents come from rural areas with chronic underdevelopment and overpopulation issues.

Kibera is divided into villages, including Kianda, Soweto East, Gatwekera, Kisumu,

Ndogo, Lindi, LainiSaba, Silanga, Makina and Mashimoni.

The 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census reported Kibera's population as 170,070. The Kibera slum was previously thought to be one of the biggest informal urban settlements in the world and it's the largest slum in Africa with the number of people there reaching over 1 million.

Most education centres in Kibera are classified as informal, but various initiatives have been underway to add schools. Some start as baby care centres, which later develop into schools. Most are not regulated by the Government. Some of the notable schools are Olympic Primary School, one of the leading government schools in the country; Kibera Primary and also a Catholic Primary.

Ban Ki-moon has visited the settlement as UN Secretary General.

HISTORY OF OUR PARISH

Christ the King Parish began in 1974 as an outstation of St. Michael's Parish Lang'ata, by then under the pastoral care of the Guadalupe Fathers.

In 1992 Fr. Arturo Arreguin was appointed as assistant parish priest in St. Michael's Parish, and his pastoral work involved visiting the Small Christian Communities in Kibera. It soon became tiresome for him to shuttle through the large pastorate back to his residence every evening. Thus he decided to live and work in the slum (in Laini Saba), which was a sub-parish; a priest's house was built to facilitate his work.

In February 1998, Christ the King outstation was officially recognized as a parish within the Archdiocese of Nairobi. Since the number of Christians continued to increase and thus enabling the formation of more small Christian communities and different parish groups.

VISION: That we have Faith, Solidarity, Good leadership and physical development in our Parish Community.

MISSION: Through the preaching and witnessing the gospel promote unity, commitment and physical development through spiritual formation.

OBJECTIVE: To strengthen our community and support physical development through faith, unity and commitment.

The Parish is concerned with the holistic development of the community taking care of both, spiritual formation and physical and economic aspects.

The Brothers (5) here work with the youths who are passionate and filled with zeal in all that they do in the Church. Despite the fact that they are in a place that is not of good condition, they have shown great faith in God.

By Br Njini Mbuh Primus



**CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC
CHURCH - KIBERA**



THE FRUITS OF BEING FAITHFUL



Once upon a time in a certain village there was a king, who was very advanced in age. Aware of his age he realized that if he dies, he has no one to inherit his throne and he decided to adopt a son.

He launched a competition and ten boys made it to the top. The king said to them, I have one last test and whoever comes top will become my adopted son and heir to my throne.

He gave each boy a seed of corn and told them to take it home, plant and nurture it for three weeks. The ten boys took their seeds and ran home to plant.

In one home, the boy and his parents were sad when the seed failed to sprout. The boy had done everything but he “failed”.

His friends advised him to buy a seed and plant it but his God-fearing parents who had always taught him honesty refused.

The day came and the ten boys went to the palace. The other nine were “successful”.

The king went to each boy and asked: is that what came out of the seed I gave you? And each boy said, "Yes, your majesty". The king would nod and move down the line until the last boy in the line who was shaking with fear. The king asked him: "What did you do with the seed I gave you?" The boy said, "I planted it and cared for it your majesty but it failed to sprout.”

The king went to the throne with the boy and said, "I gave these boys boiled seed and a boiled seed cannot sprout”.

If the king needed one quality, it must be honesty and only this boy passed the test. We live in society where people will do anything for success. God sometimes does not give us things because he wants to teach us a lesson.

How many people out there have achieved success the wrong way? How many people send their children to expensive schools and build houses and buy expensive cars with stolen money?

How many people are occupying top positions with fake certificates? How many people are successful out there at all cost?

How many people will be crowned as KINGS in heaven for being faithful until the end? I pray that we may be faithful till the end.

Please be faithful to God no matter what life throws at you, even if life gives you ‘boiled seed’.

By Br. Twaibu Valentin

MIC Commissions - 17 New Apostles Into the Marist Mission



Marist International Centre (MIC) on Tuesday 26th April commission new members into the Marist mission. The young men who have discerned the will of God now in the way of the Marist Brothers of the Schools for seven years, were declared qualified for Mission by Br. Lawrence Ndawala, the Superior of MIC Community.

The Brothers coming from different administrative units were exalted to use all they have received at MIC for a more growing Marist Africa and most especially for the Glory of God. Speaking to the young ones, Br Lawrence thanked them for their generosity and perseverance and told them that it is actually the beginning of another new and tough journey as they will face the children in class for their very first times. He encouraged them to collaborate with one another and share their talents in order to ease and make the Marist communities lively and friendly to all. He equally stressed the importance of prayer as the only way of sustaining one’s vocation. By this, he gave each of them a gift of a daily breviary and a rosary. The Young Brothers left MIC on Friday 29th April for South Nyanza where they are doing teaching practice for three months marking the end of their studies at MIC. “Indeed all is well that ends well”; this is the wish of every young brother to finish MIC as a successful candidate for his Province and for the Marist world at large.

By Br. Ndi Deric



Kiswahili for a Vibrant Apostolate



“If you speak to us in our dialect, we will feel at home with you, but if you use a foreign language, we will look at you as foreigner and your message.” It is against such unfulfilling experiences that the student brothers at MIC who do apostolate mostly in slums requested the Superior, Br. Lawrence Ndawala, to have a special course in Kiswahili so that they could be empowered for a vibrant and fulfilling apostolate. A one-week intensive course in Kiswahili was organized for interested student brothers from Monday 25th April to Friday 29th April, with a good representation of 22 young brothers. It was intensive but enjoyable as the facilitator, Ms. Marion Bosire, a seasoned lecturer of Kiswahili at MIUC (Marist International University College), helped the learners to grab easily the key words by songs, dialogues, chats and dramatization. At the end of the week all the students were proud to say, “Mungu a ku bariki” (may God bless you) and many more words. The tradition has surely been initiated and we hope the spirit will continue.

By Br. Ndi Deric

SINNERS ARE ALSO CALLED

The story of Zachaeus in the Bible is a familiar one with a lot of lessons for every Christian.

It makes Christians aware of their mission in a world full of evil. Zachaeus was a publican, “a senior tax collector”, the Jewish leaders considered one of the thieves, he was considered impure. Anyone who associated with Zachaeus was also considered “unclean” or “impure”. Zachaeus was a black dot in the society of the clean ones. Thus, he was excluded from the banquet of the Lord, yet he wanted to see Jesus.

There were, however, some people around Jesus who prevented him from seeing Jesus; these were the ‘great people’, the ‘tall’ who surrounded Jesus and prevented the little, the short, the impure from coming into contact with the Master.

Why did the crowd and the disciples behave this way?

Possibly, it was due to a sight defect; it was as if they were wearing dark glasses: they saw everything dark.

In Zachaeus they only saw the publican, the sinner, the grasping money lender, the sinner and nothing more. They could not see anything positive or good, they rejected him; they would ever make away with him and kill him, despised him, and refused to talk to him. The sight of these tall people, the clean ones, was so defective that they detested evil even where it did not even exist; they criticized Jesus because he had gone to stay at a sinner’s house.

When Jesus reached the spot, because Zachaeus had climbed a tree, he looked up and spoke to him.

Jesus felt the irresistible need to keep company with the one who was isolated, despised, cast out

by all. No one from the crowd called Zachaeus by name; he was the ‘impure’; instead, Jesus called him by name. For Jesus, Zachaeus was a child of Abraham. With what eyes are we looking at those near us: with the eyes of Jesus or the eyes of the crowd that only sees the evil Zachaeus?

We may see people as sinful, evil and people who should be condemned but Jesus sees them as souls who are in need of his grace and salvation. Zachaeus was converted when he discovered that God loved him although he was ‘impure’, and ‘sinful’. He learnt to love God who is love. Jesus still loves to bring the lost into his kingdom, no matter what their background or previous way of life. Let us help people to come to Christ.

By Br Silas Mary



The Pharisee and the Publican
in the temple

Pictures Gallery

Community Cleaning Parade



Palm Sunday



Good Friday Stations of the Cross



When two brothers fight to death, a stranger inherits their father's estate (Kenyan Proverb)

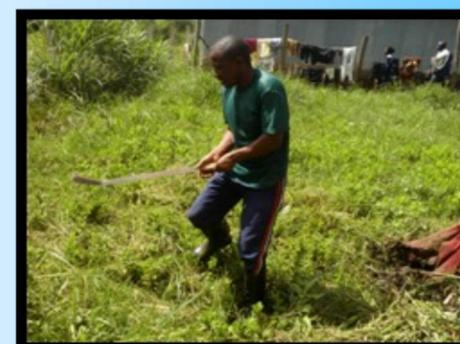
Easter Vigil



Easter Sunday



Lavalla Lenten Project



By the time the fool has learned the game, the players have dispersed (Malagache Proverb)

Consecrated Life in Unity - International Meeting, Some Reflections BY Br. Abutu Edwin fms

Introduction

Good day my dearly beloved in Christ.



The International Meeting of Consecrated Persons was convened in Vatican City, Rome from 28th January to 2nd February 2016. It took place to mark the end of the Year

of Consecrated Life and it was at the instance of the Holy Father, Pope Francis. Tagged Consecrated Life in Unity with its theme being “Consecrated Life in Communion,” it brought together about 5000 consecrated men and women from different parts of the world. Various forms such as Ordo Virginum (Order of Virgins), Cloistered Monastic Life, Religious Institutes of Apostolic Life, of Male Monastic Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Secular Institutes, New Institutes and “new forms” were well represented. It was a meeting of solidarity and fraternity, exploration and discovery and an unparalleled opportunity to share a variety of experiences from across a broad spectrum of religious and monastic traditions. It was a mosaic of beauty, a tapestry woven in love as religious men and women speaking different languages and drawn from diverse cultural and socio economic and political backgrounds yet whose hearts responded to one single call to follow the Savior interacted freely with one another. They had come to celebrate unity in communion within a diversity of calling. It was indeed a Pentecost experience. More than just a meeting, it was a pilgrimage. Like pilgrims, participants young and old were in constant movement, keeping prayer vigils, attending conferences, celebrating the Eucharist in the various churches in Rome and finding time to explore the ethereal beauty of the Eternal City. The final liturgy in the majestic Papal Basilica of St Peter’s had a tinge of the celestial. It was a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy. Presided over by Pope Francis with music supplied by the famous Sistine Choir, the atmosphere exuded indescribable joy. Pope Francis with his inimitable simplicity offered words of hope and comfort and reiterated the need for consecrated persons to celebrate their gift of consecration to the Lord. He gave wings to the hope of the thousands of consecrated persons gathered and made them feel as graceful as the majestic columns that dot the great basilica.

As speaker after speaker affirmed during the meeting, the Year of Consecrated Life was a special gift of the Pope to the Church. Among other things, it provided a unique opportunity to share the beauty of our vocation and mission and offered us a theological space to exercise and reflect on our ministry with conviction and dignity. So many insights were offered during the meetings and interactions, presentations were varied, but it is possible to tease out a few recurring themes to aid us in our Lenten journey and share too in the fruits of that gathering even if we were not physically present in Rome. My reflection will be anchored on the broad themes of Ongoing Formation, Contemplation and Community. I will conclude by examining how consecrated persons can navigate the trail of beauty and dance to the rhythms of joy.

Ongoing Formation

Fr. Thomas Klosterkamp, OMI, speaking in Room 300 of the Lateran University to Religious Institutes of Apostolic Life, Of Men’s Monastic Life and Societies of Apostolic life spoke on the serious issue of ongoing formation. What is ongoing formation? Who is responsible for ongoing formation? Why is there so little ongoing formation going on among consecrated persons? Does final profession or ordination confer on the consecrated person the status of a spiritual master or mistress as the case may be? The first thing to acknowledge is that we all need ongoing formation. Fr Thomas believes that the principal responsibility of ongoing formation lies on the shoulder of the individual consecrated person. It is my responsibility to develop myself. The cliché “self help is the best help” comes in handy here. We all need that inner motivation that galvanizes our will to take responsibility for improving our relationship with God. In this regard I do not need the bell to rouse me to pray. I do not wait to be sent for further studies to realize I must keep abreast of intellectual development through personal study. I moderate my choices not because of the fear of reprimand from any superior, but in order to maintain my vocational integrity and strengthen my Christian character. This development may be aided by other external factors, but those factors cannot replace the individual will, linked inexorably to self-discipline in the healthy management of my personal time for study, rest and relaxation in sync with my community life and work outside the community. Ongoing formation reminds the consecrated person that his or her first calling beyond the nobility of any apostolate or the eminence of any responsibility is to be the friend of God.

Our first and primary duty is to seek the face of God. The psalmist says, it is your face O Lord that I seek; hide not your face. It is only when we have beheld the face of God that we can show it to others. In recent times, ongoing formation has been linked to special programmes designed by institutes to help their members in forms of seminars, conferences, sabbaticals etc. Important though these are, they cannot substitute for individual responsibility. The kernel of ongoing formation as Fr Thomas argues is that: "Ongoing formation is not exclusively about courses and study programs. It is first about your personal and spiritual growth, about wisdom and the art of true living. In the end it is about your will for holiness, your will to be familiar with Our Lord Jesus Christ."^[1]

Contemplation

Migue Marquez Calle, OCD in one of the keynote speeches explored the contemplative dimension of the consecrated life. He argues that to be contemplative is to abandon ourselves to God. The consecrated person must not seek applause or validation. He believes that though you may receive applause from people it doesn't mean you are doing the most important thing. Contemplation requires silence. To listen to God we must listen to others. The challenge of the contemplative life is to remain in silence. *Contemplate*^[2] is a document issued by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. It invites us to explore the contemplative dimension of our calling. Every consecrated person is always in a sense a true contemplative. The pilgrimage to Rome was not just a meeting, but a pilgrimage of prayer. The various spiritual exercises undertaken during six days underscored the fact that before anything else, consecrated persons must be men and women of prayer. They hearken to the call offered in *Vita Consecrata* : "In fact the vocation of the consecrated persons to seek first the Kingdom of God is first and foremost a call to complete conversion, in self-renunciation, in order to live fully for the Lord, so that God may be all in all. Called to contemplate and bear witness to the transfigured Christ, consecrated men and women are also called to a 'transfigured' existence."^[3] This transfigured identity is what sets consecrated persons apart. Consecrated persons are not what they do, but who they are.

How tragic it becomes when a priest, brother or female religious accentuates their apostolate - of being a teacher, a retreat guide, a social worker or medical personnel to the detriment of his or her being. We are reminded that "The specific contribution of consecrated persons, both men and women, to evangelization is first of all the witness of a life given totally to God and to their brothers and sisters in imitation of the Savior, who out of love for humanity made himself a servant."^[4] Consecrated persons remain a sign of the world to come. Their relevance is not dependent on their achievements but in the total donation of their lives like their Master. Contemplation is prayer that embraces the totality of one's being. In some ways, contemplation reminds us of this wonderful saying: "Tell me how you pray, and I will tell you how you live; tell me how you live and I will tell you how you pray. Because showing me how you pray, I will learn to find the God for whom you live, and showing me how you live, I will learn to believe in the God to whom you pray". As Pope Francis reminds us, "our life speaks of prayer and prayer speaks of our life, the school of prayer is the school of life and in the school of life we progress in the school of prayer."^[5]

Community

We are made for community. In his audience with consecrated persons during the international meeting, Pope Francis presented the tripods of prophecy, proximity and hope as signposts to reflect on the consecrated life in the circumstances of our time. We live in an era of individualism when people want to do their own things, establish their own projects and metaphorically speaking draw water from their own wells. If consecrated persons who are experts in communion cannot live in communion and community then the validity and authenticity of their witness is called into question. In recommending the virtue of proximity to consecrated persons, the pope urges us to be close to those we serve. This is not just physical but also spiritual and psychological proximity. This will require sharing the joys and hopes of all people we are called to minister to. In his off-the-cuff remarks during the audience the Holy Father emphasized the need to domesticate proximity in our religious communities. He asks rhetorically, "Who is the first neighbor of a religious man or woman?" The answer he says is simple: members of his or her immediate community.

He frowned at those who were so caught up in ministering to others outside that they forget that charity begins at home. Proximity is about sensitivity. Many consecrated persons are doing great work in their apostolate busy running excellent schools or hospitals but the communities in which they live lack the spiritual oxygen that gives life. Is it possible that we are so caught up with caring for those outside that we forget those within? Are we attentive to the needs of the infirm, old, sick or bereaved who live in our communities? Pope Francis is unequivocal in asserting that the cancer of gossip is ruining many religious communities. To spread gossip is to become a terrorist who throws bombs. When we destroy the good name of others or keep silent when it is being done we are unconsciously destroying the foundation of fraternal charity on which all communities should rest. In this scenario, there are no winners, only losers. Let us beware of indifference to the other. We must become aware that community remains the ground of our lifelong formation: “through the experience of life, prayer and study all community life should first of all lead to a deeper understanding of the mystery of Christ. Good community atmosphere is the key to a successful growth in religious life”.^[6]

On the trail of beauty

A constant refrain at the International Meeting was that consecrated persons are not on the fringes of the Church. Rather they are its heart and soul. Worldwide there are about 3000 Institutes of religious men and women with about 1.5 million members. Women are eight times more than the men. Consecrated life is a mosaic and therefore we cannot be copies of each other. While every institute is called to remain faithful to the charism of its founders or foundresses, let us remember that we are all different species of flowers in God’s beautiful garden- each flower offers its fragrance and none is diminished by the scent of the other. Unity is our strength and there is enough for everyone to do. This forecloses the need for competition and unhealthy rivalry. Institutes should never be hesitant in collaborating in joint formation and joint apostolate. Acknowledging the role of consecrated men and women in the Church, Pope Francis exclaimed during his audience: “And I thank you, the consecrated, for what you do, each one with his/her charism.

And I want to stress the consecrated women, the sisters. What would the Church be if there were no sisters?”^[7] This should inspire sentiments of humility, not pride. No prize can be put on the contributions made by consecrated women to growth of the Church and expanding the frontiers of pastoral charity. Knowing this should be a source of comfort when certain ill-informed members of the clergy disparage the contributions of consecrated women or trivialize their ministry by regarding them simply as appendages whose duty is to dress the altar or wash sacred linens. As *Vita Consecrata* affirms, “What would become of the world if there were no Religious?” Beyond all superficial assessments of its usefulness, the consecrated life is important precisely in its being unbounded generosity and love, and this all the more so in a world which risks being suffocated in the whirlpool of the ephemeral.^[8]

The imperative of joy

We were reminded once again during the meeting that consecrated persons are harbingers of joy. “I want to say one word to you and this word is joy. Wherever consecrated people are, there is joy”. These are the words of our Holy Father Francis. God can fill our hearts and make us happy and there is no need to seek happiness elsewhere. We are invited to wake up the world meaning that prophecy should characterize the religious life. This involves a call to evangelical radicality. As prophets we remain on the side of the poor and disadvantaged knowing that God is on their side. We are called to radiate and spread joy. There is no better time than now to put on our dancing shoes and jump into the heart of God who is the bringer of joy.

Reference

- [1] Thomas Klosterkamp, “The serious issue of ongoing formation in Religious Institutes. Who is responsible?”, talk presented during the International Meeting of Consecrated Persons, Rome, January 30, 2016.
- [2] *Contemplate- To Consecrated men and women on the trail of Beauty*, trans. Christine Cooley, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, (Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2016).
- [3] JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (March 25, 1996), 35.
- [4] *Vita Consecrata* , 76.
- [5] Pope Francis, “Homily at mass with priests, seminarians and religious men and women in Morelia, Mexico,” February 16, 2016.
- [6] Thomas Klosterkamp, “The serious issue of ongoing formation in Religious Institutes. Who is responsible?”.
- [7] Pope Francis, Audience with Consecrated Persons, Rome, February 1, 2016.
- [8] *Vita Consecrata* , 105.

Victim of Circumstance



“Come here and I will deal with you thoroughly”, the tall, dark and round-bellied teacher boldly shouted at Tony. Tony has been a nice chap in school. He dresses decently; he is active in class and group discussions. For the past two weeks he comes late to class, exhausted and often dozing. His colleagues are concerned and some have organized themselves to go and pay him a visit at his home.

His parents are critically ill and as the first born he moves up and down looking for a solution to their problem. Tony’s siblings are school dropouts because of lack of school-fees. Nothing seems good. The teacher is becoming harsh on him. He thinks that by failing Tony he will be ranked, top teacher in the whole county. Tony is down in the dumps and his teacher never dared to enquire what Tony is going through.

One afternoon at around 4:00p.m. Tony walks to school, dejected and with shabby cloths. The teacher called him and immediately he started whipping him until he felt satisfied. But for what?

It was by love of school that Tony had come that very afternoon to school to report the sad news that his parents had passed away. After hundreds and hundreds of canings with no cries because tears had dried up, Tony reported that he had come to tell the teacher that he was from the funeral of his parents. The teacher became numb and mute. What embarrassment!

Tony was a victim of circumstance: loss of his parents and harsh treatment from his unkind teacher. Then Tony left the compound, mourning.

By Br Daniel Jariosse



WE ARE EASTER PEOPLE AND ALLELUIA IS OUR SONG



When St Augustine echoed the above words, he expressed the spiritual joy of Easter. This is the joy which results from this profound truth: Christ has risen and in Him we have also risen, passing from death to life, from the slavery of sin to the freedom of love.

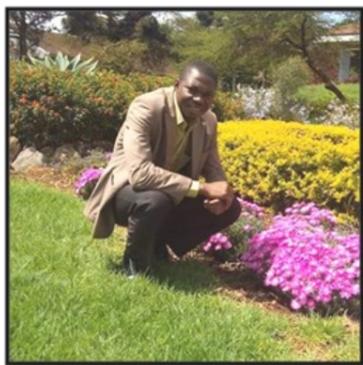
The inspiring celebration of the Sacred Triduum enables us to relive this startling mystery which found its dramatic conclusion on Calvary. The solemn Easter vigil allows us then to participate in the redeemer’s definitive triumph over death and fills our hearts with light and hope. This is the Good News which the Church proclaims and offers as a gift to all who are searching for joy and true happiness: the Joy of Easter. By the resurrection of Christ we are utterly certain that our salvation is accomplished. Through His death and Resurrection Christ has broken down the wall of enmity which sin raised up between God and humanity. We have received the forgiveness of our sins and we can now inherit eternal life. This is the reason for our joy at Easter; for this great gift of salvation, we have a reason to praise our God. Our whole life is summed up in our song “Alleluia” and with the psalmist we say: “I will bless the Lord at all times” (Ps 34:1).

A Christian cannot live without Easter. To celebrate Easter means to encounter Christ so as to rise with him to new life, seeking the things that are above, setting one’s mind on the things that are above (Col 3:1).

By Br Silas Mary



Just Imagine!



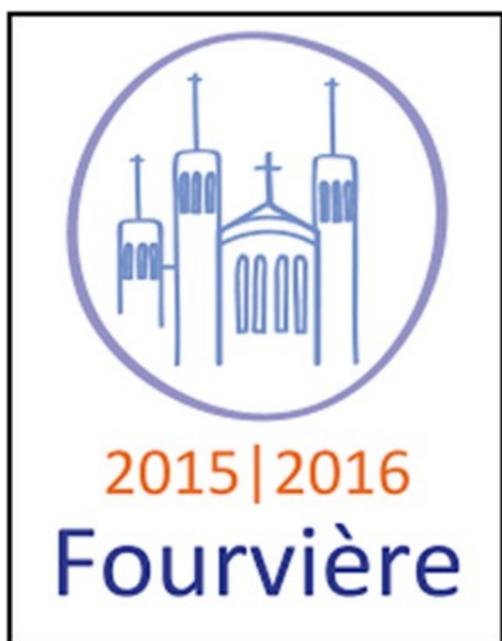
“Do not stray or else you fall” (Sirach 2:7). A Rev. Brother, after conducting a special retreat for a school, had a terrible accident. He was so afraid

and thought it may be because he did not have the permission of the Lord to lead the retreat. He sat down in prayer to discern the will of God and to repent for anything that he had done wrong. He opened the Bible to Jeremiah 12:5, “If you have raced with foot-runners and they have wearied you, how will you compete with horses? And if in a safe land you fall down, how will you fare in the thickets of the Jordan?” After reading, he got this interpretation: “Are you ready for the battle when the battle is not small? Be prepared for big battles and more crosses. Are you going to withdraw and stop going for outreach retreats?” Every powerful ministry is a threat to the Devil. So, he reacts and attacks the ministries. He is the first one to be provoked when souls are saved from his grip.

The Lord inspired the Rev. Brother to read from Sirach 2:1-2, “My child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for testing.”

It is when we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, that we get the true meaning of our crisis today.

By Br Newton-Patrick



THE SCREEN SAVER



A rich man died and immediately found his soul at the gate of heaven. The angel at the gate told him, “Now you are dead and you are here for judgment. You didn’t serve God well with all your heart, but because of all the great and good efforts you made for

humanity when you were alive, I will give you uncommon privilege. You have the chance to choose where you want to go, hell or heaven.” The rich man asked the angel to permit him to have a look at both heaven and hell before he could make a choice. The angel permitted him, so he allowed him to first view hell.

When the angel took the rich man to hell, he saw beautiful ladies wearing swimming kits, dancing and having fun with glasses of wine. Then the angel took him to see heaven, where he saw angels singing hymns and praising God. So the angel asked the rich man to make a choice. The rich man said, “I will prefer hell, it is fun and more exciting there, let me go to hell and live with the *zingambwe*.” Then the angel said, “As per your decision.”

The rich man was thrown into hell, and to his greatest surprise he found himself in the flames of fire raining upon him and demons ready to torment him forever. The rich man cried to the angel, “What happened? Where are those beautiful girls having fun that I saw here before?” The holy angel replied, “What you saw then was just a screen-saver”.

This is a joke, because “no choice or repentance after death, it is judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). But this shows how Satan deceives people with the things of this world.

Whatever you see in this world are mere screensavers; beautiful girls, handsome dudes, the fun, reputation, fancy, fashion, and fortune are empty screensavers that have nothing to profit the real you, which is your soul. Do not sell yourself to sin because of earthly pleasure and position and then find yourself in eternal pain and plague. Why would you give up eternal heavenly paradise for a passing earthly possession? Don't be a fool. Do not exchange your soul for Satan just because of screen-saving something that can't last as your soul. Don't be fooled. Your soul is the real you, your soul will last forever just as God will be forever, and just as Satan will be forever; if you surrender your life to Jesus Christ and follow Him till the end, you will last with God forever in heaven and in pleasure; but if you remain in sin or fall back into sin, you will be forever with Satan in hellfire, and in pain and agony. Do you know what! YOU HAVE THE CHOICE NOW!

By Br. Tambwe Twaibu Valentin

WHEN SERVICE BECOMES LANGUAGE



The words of the priest at the end of every Mass (the mass is ended, go and serve the Lord) are meaningful when put into practice. Apostolic Formative Activities (AFAs) at MIC are such an expression of Brothers' service to the poor around them and these are ways of giving meaning to the Word of God. These activities include teaching catechism in Schools and Parishes, visiting the sick, organizing and developing Young Christian Students movements in schools, giving a helping hand in orphanages and animating young people among others. In a world where some people still cannot read or write or both, the Marist Brothers at MIC are the open Bible for them, hence striving to portray, in as much as they can, real image of Christ for the needy people. That is why, every Sunday after Mass it has been a trend to see Brothers Julius, Clement, Silas, Godfrey, Lawrence and Jariosse haste to the bus not because they do not want to stay a little while with the Christians who come to our "little parish" (with the fraternity chapels as the outstations) but simply because others await the Gospel translated into life to be given to them in a simplest way possible. This apostolate is coordinated by the Passionist Fathers and among those who collaborate in it are the Marist Brothers, Camillian Sisters, Sisters of Notre Dame, the Passionists themselves and the Incarnate Word Sisters. And the activities include: lessons on biblical knowledge, movies, talent shows (singing and dancing) and sports. These activities equip children with some skills, knowledge and positive attitudes toward life.

While entertaining them, we help these children discover their abilities. One thing I come to believe in life is that when it comes to kids and play there is no language barrier. A warm smile is the universal kindness. And the person who is rich is the one who possesses kindness, caring, helps others when needed, gives things that money cannot buy and spends some time with those who need someone to listen to their stories.

Every person has something to offer. In these children there is a lot to learn. Having visited their homes I learnt to thank God for who I am and what I have and that the preferential option for the poor is a reality that has to be addressed to many in order to help our brothers and sisters experiencing hard times.

Helen Keller once stated, "I cried because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet". Kisima Centre for Children is no different from this reality. Children look forward to Sunday so that they can meet their marvelous companions (the Brothers and Sisters) who, apart from sharing the meal provided at the centre, they also share their talents and skills. For some, the meal taken is the first and the last for the day. Notwithstanding their challenges, these children smile because no matter what they go through, the trust that the Lord is their strength keeps them going.

This is to say that, through our little service rendered, we touched lives, we build healthy relationships, we add meaning to other peoples' lives, we become hope for the hopeless, voice for the voiceless and we overcome barriers of language. Consequently, our service becomes the language through which we reach the young people where no Kiswahili is familiar to us.

By Br Daniel Jariosse



RESPECT SAVED YOU

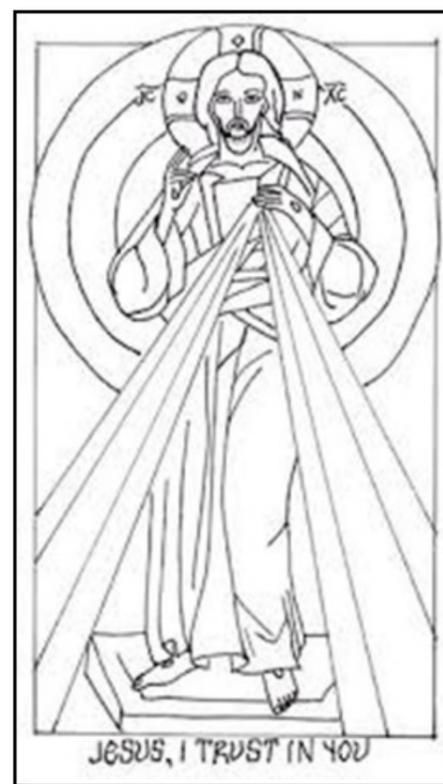


The very morning at the sun rising, a Father met his son on the corridors and asked him with respect, my son, how are you doing? What will you do today? The son answered, “Today I am occupied with my usual routines and I am not planning to add anything special.” The father asked another question; have you known that respect can save from death in your daily routines? The son’s response was No, No, No. It is not possible and it will never be possible. The son added that by the fact that I listen to you, and respect you can neither save me nor another person. The Father in a cool voice said; my son, respect gives inner peace, joy, happiness and freedom. To respect does not cost any amount of money, either time or energy. Hence, my son, respect will save you from unplanned danger. The son said this is your theory and you can remain with it. I do respect people who respect me and those who are friendly to me.

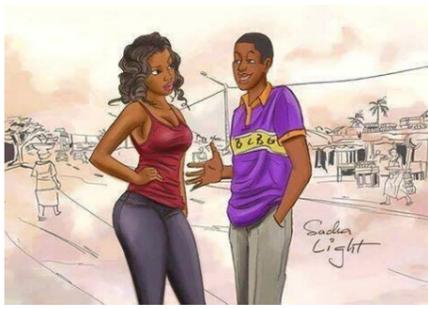
The Father was happy to hear that his son has at least some people that he respects. The father further shared with his son this experience: In our city there was man called Passy. He was working in meat commission in charge of buying and selling meat in the city. Every day in the morning and evening when he was entering and going out, he used to greet the watchman and wished him a successful day in his duties. One evening after putting all necessary things in order, he planned to go home as others were going. He accomplished all his tasks required for that day. So as he was going out he remembered that he did not arrange the meat to be sold the next day and so he went back to the cold room to do so. This cold room was set in a way that when it is closed it starts to freeze. He entered the room and closed the door and started to arrange the meat. Meanwhile, the key on the door had fallen down and slid out of the door. The man searched for it but to no avail. The more he tried to get the key, the colder the room became.. Since, he could not succeed to get he started shouting, calling out thinking that someone will still be around to assist. to his dismay, no one responded to his shouts. Because there was no way to neither disconnect electricity nor destroy the door, the man remained inside hopeless, discouraged and waited for his death.

The watchman who has not seen him and had not received his usual greetings was worried and disturbed. He wondered what must have happened to this man who usually greets him in the morning and evening. The watchman decided to look for the man and ask him why he decided to go home late today . He searched for him everywhere in the house, but he could not find him. As he was about to go back to his duty post he found the key to the cold room near the floor of the cold room and found blood stains around. He asked himself what this be? This is unusual observation. He took the keys, opened the door and found the man he was looking for in the cold room. He was about to die. He took him out and put some cloths on him. After regaining consciousness, he was surprised and suspicious to see the watchman by his side. He asked the watchman what he was doing inside the house. Then, the watchman explained the whole process which was followed with expressions of joy and happiness. The young man interjected saying: “oh! Oh! My God! This is the fruit of respect; the respect that does not have any distinction.

By Br Manirakiza Paulin



WHO KNOWS THE FUTURE



In a certain village, where I was appointed immediately after my first profession, there was a poor boy that fell in love with a rich girl. One day he decided to ask the girl to go for an outing.

The young girl looking at the boy said to him, "Look! Are you not even ashamed of telling me that? Your monthly salary is my daily expenses, should I be with you? How can you satisfy me?"

I will never love you, you are not of my level, so forget about me I'm bored of you, get engaged with someone of your level".

Somehow, the boy could not forget her so easily because he really loved her.

The boy was always praying to God so that he may focus on his life and forget about the girl. Ten years later, they met face to face in a shopping centre.

The lady said, "Hey, you! How are you? What have you become?"

I'm now a mother of a family, I'm living a happy life, I have all the necessary things that a person can need in life and by the way do you know how much is the salary of my husband?

7000 USD per month! Can you imagine?

And in addition to that he is also very smart and handsome guy".

The guy's eyes were wet with tears after hearing those words.

After a few seconds the husband arrived and before the lady could open her mouth to make the presentations, her husband exclaimed and said:

" Sir! Are you here? Wow do you know my wife! What an honor!"

After the separation, the woman asked her husband where he knew the sir and why he started giving him praise. He responded, "That is our director. A very simple man but very rich do you know his salary? He is at USD 2 million." The wife without saying a word started crying and the husband understood everything since the wife shared with him about a certain guy who was proposing to her before they got married.

Dear friends, in life situations change with time. And the invitation for us is that we may accept each other as we are, love everyone without taking into account his/ her background, social class or level.

By Br Twaibu Valentin

General Cleaning Parade

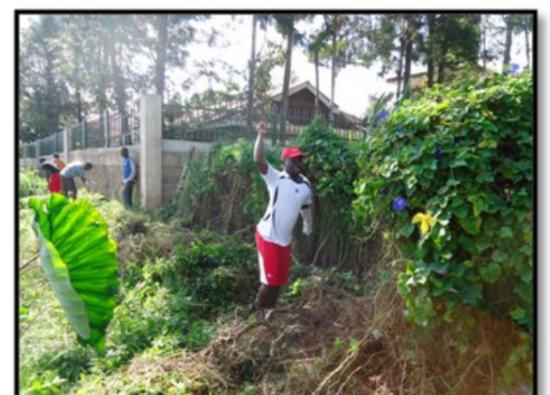


It's of great delight to bring to you this year's event of the care for the environment demonstrated at Marist International community (MIC) on the 23th of March. MIC is such a beautiful place that visitors will rarely visit without complimenting its beautifully groomed flowers, ornamental trees and hygiene.

So for the purpose of maintaining its attractiveness, hygiene and ecological importance, it is for us a duty and responsibility to be stewards: to care and maintain our environment; a mandate also contained in the Holy Scriptures and the encyclical letters of Pope Francis.

The community set up for this duty on the 23th of March which as chance will have it happens to be the solemnity of St. Joseph the worker. Thus fraternities were allotted paths, trenches and sewages to demonstrate this noble mandate of care for the environment and with cheerfulness, enthusiasm and in the same Marist spirit of love for work, a tremendous compound cleaning that kept the environment beaming in beauty and Hygiene was done. We appreciate the selfless dedication and commitment of the organizers and fraternities participation that brought forth an implementation of the global appeal for the care of our environment.

By Br Inyang Magnus



The Paradox of the 'Good' Friday!



Every year Christians all over the world commemorate Good Friday. What is 'good' about this Friday? What is significant about this Friday? In the

Christian calendar the 'Good Friday' is the Friday proceeding Easter Sunday (i.e., the day Jesus rose from the death). It is the day that Jesus underwent his passion and death on the cross. On this day, the Saviour of the world (Christ) was humiliated by his crucifixion and death on the cross (Phil 2:8). In the Roman Catholic Church, the church is literally stripped of everything – symbolizing a sense of loss. Usually, there is no Mass celebrated on this day and there is a great silence. The organ and other instruments remain silent. It is a gloomy, sorrowful, mourning and grieving day. Indeed, it is a day of desolation.

What is good about a day marked by mourning and grieving? The word 'karfreitag' in German probably comes closer to expressing what this day really means. The word 'karfreitag' means to bewail, to grieve or to mourn. Yes, this is what the Friday before Easter means – a day of desolation for the loss of the Saviour of the world. This is a day when Christ's disciples are in grief because their dreams and expectations have been shattered (Lk 24:21). How 'good' is a day marked by sadness and grief?

From a different perspective, however, goodness can perfectly be ascribed to all that happened on the Friday preceding the resurrection. Let us remember that Jesus had a mission to accomplish. This task included dying on the cross – giving up his life as a ransom for many. He came into the world to accomplish his Father's Will (Mk 10: 45).

Through sin God's original plan of creation was lost. Our merciful Father did not want us to perish but desires eternal life for us. Sin had created a gulf between humanity and God. But the merciful God had made a promise never to destroy humanity again (Is 54:9-10).

For this reason, the goodness of Good Friday is meaningful in the passion and death of Jesus. Salvation came to the world through the passion and death of Jesus. Jesus was sent into the world to redeem humanity from the shackles of the evil one and to reconcile us to God himself. Hence, Jesus died on this day to fulfil that promise and to salvage humanity. He died that we might have life. His death reunites us to God and illumines our lives from sin. Jesus accomplished this task on 'good' Friday. On this day, Jesus won forgiveness for us. He ransomed us from satan (2Cor 5:21; 1Cor 1:30). By the cross of Jesus, humanity is redeemed. By the cross of Jesus, our sins are purged, forgiven and so we are reconciled to God. Hence, the sorrow of this day is a Godly sorrow (2Cor 7:10). Good Friday always reminds us of the greatness and wonders of God's great love for humanity. It also reminds us that reconciliation between us and God was accomplished by Jesus' passion and death on the cross. On this day, Jesus offered his body and blood for our sanctification. The Bible tells us that this day should always be remembered (1Cor 11: 24-26). Therefore, the event is celebrated every year just before Easter and re-enacted daily at Mass. Hence, Good Friday is good as on this day God demonstrated His immeasurable love for humanity (Rom 5: 8-11; 1Peter 3:18).

Jesus died on 'Good' Friday in order that humanity might be saved. He died that we might be forgiven. There was no other good day enough to pay the price of our sins. Hence, this day is considered good because Jesus unlocked the gate of heaven and let us in. His precious blood on this day cleansed and saved us. And by this singular act of kindness we are reconciled and reconnected with our loving and merciful God.

By Br Cyprian Gandebo



LA VALLA LENTEN PROFFECT



Just like a hungry man who dreams about a banquet, like a poor man who thinks about wealth, like a sick man who speaks about health, so do I want to talk about La Valla Lenten Project.

"Karibuni sana kwa nyumbani

ya watoto!" This statement was echoed by Mary, the daughter of the pastor who runs the children's home. It was on 6th of January when we went to Pricilah and Angelina Chalk Foundation (Children Orphanage) in Embulbul (Ngong). We embarked on our journey at exactly 9:15a.m. The Swahili have a saying that a good day is evident in the morning. For me this saying was really apt on this day. How interesting it was to see the brothers filled with joy, enthusiasm and willingness to go and work for the children who are most in need whose parents have left this world.

We packed our working tools (slashers, rakes, etc.) in the car. No sooner had we finished packing than we boarded the car and started off for the children orphanage. Upon reaching the newly opened "Tuskys" in Ngong, we stopped and bought some commodities like: unga (25kg), a bag of rice (25kg), biscuits, washing powder (25kg), just to mention but a few. Having bought these commodities, we continued our journey to the intended destination. When we arrived, Mary said welcoming remarks, "Karibuni sana kwa nyumbani ya watoto!" We asked for the place where we could work, and without any delay she did just that.

Keeping in mind that the place is adjacent to the river, there was bush around the house and that is exactly where she showered us to slash and started immediately working. I was amazed to see Br. Raymond tirelessly working like a young man. We were all edified and followed suit. We indeed worked with one heart and one mind from the beginning till the end! Congratulation Brothers!

After working, we gathered outside and sat with the children, sharing stories. Some brothers went to unpack the clothes, food stuff, and toiletry that we had brought to offer the children. Looking at all these things, the children could not believe their eyes as it was beyond their expectation. Some speeches were made and I was filled with joy to see that everyone had put on a bright face.

The children expressed their gratitude for the gifts in song led by one of them called Emmanuel. I was personally touched and moved by the song. In this song, they said, "Love is something that should be given out and that when you give it out, it comes back to you". They continued to say that love is like a magic shilling that if you keep it in your pocket then you don't have any. But if you spend it or you give it away, it comes back to you. This message kept ringing in my ears and this made me recall the words of the French philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre, who once affirmed that genuine love is that which is given out without anticipating anything in return.

Lastly, we said good bye to the children who also responded favourably with great joy. Once again, congratulation brothers and God bless us all.

By Br Rafael Time



Notre Dame de Fourviere



For comments or suggestions, kindly write to
MIC Digest

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Designed by : MIC Newsletter Team