



# MISSIONARIES OF THE POOR

Newsletter Autumn 2017

*Learning  
to Love*





# From the Founder's Desk

*The Very Rev. Fr. Richard Ho Lung, MOP*

## *L*earning to Love

**Brother Alphonse** told me, "I keep on learning what the meaning of love is." He smiled and shook his head, "I'll never learn enough about loving, Father."

Then he related how many people come to Good Shepherd, and to all our centers. The overall in charge of the centers, Brother Louima told me, "We receive as many as 25 calls per day to take in more homeless and destitute people." Our home at Good Shepherd on Tower Street is packed with homeless men. Everyday there are calls, and, in addition, there are those who come to have their wounds bound, to receive a little food, or to use the toilet and showers.

When I asked Brother Alphonse two days ago, what happened and why he looked so upset, just returning home from Good Shepherd, "Mr. Alexander Goodison finally died." He sat down and related the story of Alexander's stay at our center the past year and a half. Alexander had come to Good Shepherd asking, "Please dress the wounds on my feet. They are running with pus." Though in distress he smiled. Alexander had 2 crutches for support because he could not walk or move without them. When Brother told him he could not take him in because the Good Shepherd was packed, he broke into tears. His clothes were tattered, the wounds on his feet smelled terribly, his body had scratches and sores.

When Brother Alphonse looked at the man, his heart was moved and beckoned, "Take him! Take him!" But the reality of the situation of over 70 homeless men was overwhelming. "What do I do? This man will die in the streets. Dogs will lick his sores. People will laugh at him. Children might even stone him." Brother Alphonse went to the chapel and prayed.





He decided he would take one step at a time. When he removed the bandages from Alexander's feet, he realized it was beyond him, the wounds were large, deep and raw. He sent Alexander to the hospital, convinced that both feet might have to be amputated. All this time Brother Alphonse kept praying while working, "Should I take him in? Where would he sleep? What about medical care? What about food? What about a wheelchair? Can we manage him? When he comes from the hospital, where will he go? He has no home. He sleeps among mad men, street men, along King Street."

After 3 hours at the hospital, Alexander called Brother Alphonse to pick him up. "Where will you go?" Alexander said to him, "You can do with me what you will. A little card board at Good Shepherd will be fine for me."

Brother Alphonse knows the rules, he cannot overcrowd our home. When he came back to Good Shepherd, Alexander begged to stay just one night. Brother Alphonse said yes, but he has to sleep on a mattress on the ground. Alexander lighted up. Brother asked, "What is wrong with you? Why all these wounds and sores?" Alexander explained he had sepsis, excessive fluids in his stomach, the doctors could not do very much about it. He might have to go often to the hospital; Brother Alphonse wondered how he would manage.



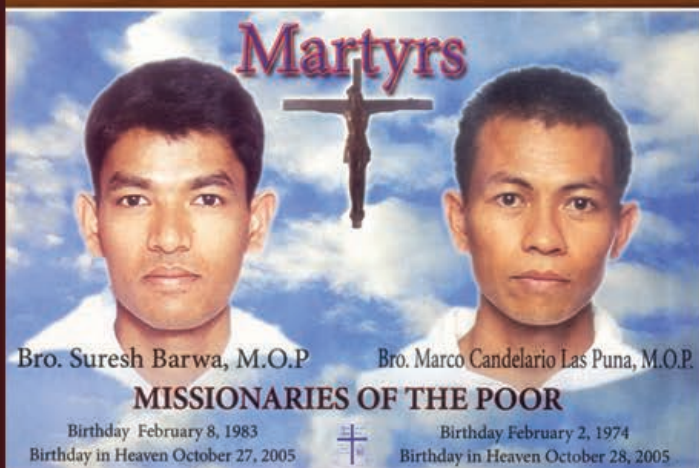
One day added to another. Alexander proved to be a very joyful man. He prayed each day with the Brothers, he sang revivals with the other homeless, he wheeled around in his wheelchair, he fed the other men who could not feed themselves, he brought the incontinent to the toilet, he bathed them, and he dried them.

Alexander was filled with the Spirit. He laughed a lot, told stories, played dominoes. "You Brothers are really my family. These other poor men are my brothers, now I really have a home." Alexander died 2 days ago. All the homeless residents said they would miss him. On the days when he was in great pain when he would stay at the center, he refused to complain. He used to take others to the hospital for their appointments and wait for them. He moved around and wiped the walls and tables and even tried to sweep the floor.

Brother Alphonse told me "Alexander always counted others more important than himself. I would ask him, why do you do all that, Alexander? He would reply, "because of Jesus." One of the residents named Donovan said, "No one will ever take the place of that man, he was a saintly man. I keep learning how to love, Father. I must always find space in my heart to love one more person."

The UWI hospital called to Alexander to have surgery just a week ago. He died before the surgery. Brother Alphonse wiped away his tears. He said to me "I really loved that man."





## MOP MARTYRS

*Celebrating the 12th year of Martyrdom of Brother Marco (Philippines) and Brother Suresh (India) - MOP Novices*

*by Brother Raul Lorena, MOP*

*"MODERN MAN LISTENS more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses," Pope Paul IV. I can't help but to think of our proto-martyrs, Br. Suresh Barwa and Br. Marco Laspuña. Their lives become a living witness for us religious Brothers and Sisters - learning to love God and his own people every day.*

Twelve years have passed, and we remember the heroic deaths of our beloved Brothers Suresh and Marco. Their deaths have not been in vain. They have consummated their call to the spirituality of the Missionaries of the Poor, "To be in union with Christ on the Cross as we give joyful service to the least of our brothers and sisters." These young men could have been successful in the secular world, to grab the opportunities that the temporal world offers: power, popularity and pleasure. Yet they chose the pearl of great price. These Brothers became my mentors. They taught me the true meaning of love. They came to Jamaica to feed the poor and administer to the sick. They gave all they had and asked nothing in return. Their lives were committed solely for what they believed was God's will. Br. Suresh's poem which the Brothers made into song, *"The Grain of Wheat,"* becomes real: *"Unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it shall bear no fruits, there'll be no life. Jesus has prophesized, we all will die like him, we'll share the cross, we'll share in the pain..."* Also, Br. Marco's inspirational thought during his meditation while gazing at the Blessed Sacrament: *"Lord let us be eucharist for others, to be broken and shared."* Their works and legacy of love prove that MOP is worth dying for.

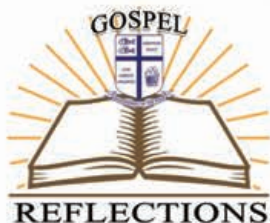
Doing small things with great love. God never asked them to save the world, just to touch one life at a time, and in so doing they fulfilled the ministry to which they were appointed. Even though at times we find life burdensome and work becomes a routine, this love gives us hope to move on in life. As the first letter of St. Peter reminds us, *"There is a cause for rejoicing here. You may for a time have to suffer the distress of many trials, but this is so that your faith, which is more precious than the passing splendour of fire tried gold, may by its genuineness lead to praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ appears...."* 1 Pt 1: 6-9.



In the light of this, *"The blood of these martyrs is the seed of Christendom."* Violence and hatred are rampant and yet the message of love has triumphed through the death of Br. Suresh and Br. Marco. Our MOP community will continue to spread the mission of Christ throughout the whole world, knowing that we have two powerful advocates who intercede for us in the Lord's presence.

*Br. Suresh and Br. Marco... pray for us.*



**Mark 1:15-20**

## JOYFUL SERVICE WITH CHRIST ON THE CROSS

Brother Alphonse Mutembei, MOP

"THE TIME IS FULFILLED, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). I have been reflecting on this scripture passage, and indeed, the Kingdom of God is among us! As Missionaries of the Poor, our purpose is to fulfill Christ's desire to be present in the world and to be Christ for others.

Most of our Brothers spend their days at the centers for our homeless. Whenever I go to each apostolate, I learn something new especially at Good Shepherd Home where I work. It is so amazing to see Brothers from different races, cultures and nations, serving one another and the poor.

Moreover, we have volunteers and friends who work with us every day from Jamaica and overseas. They also participate in our prayer and community life. Having heard their testimonies, I realize how Christ is so pleased when our efforts and theirs are combined in restoring the humanity and dignity of the poor. We are grateful and privileged to have them as partners in our ministries.

We also have some among our residents who are very generous. They help us in feeding, cleaning, washing and other domestic tasks. They are motivated by the Brothers' hard labor. Whenever they see a Brother working, they come around and give a hand.

We imitate the Divine Master who came down on earth for the sake of the less fortunate. Jesus said in the gospel of Luke 4:18-21b, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed..... today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

We and the residents have witnessed many miracles and we have not stopped thanking and praising God. I am convinced that God's will is done whenever we accept one another despite our frailty. God has established his kingdom among us and He will perfect it in us when we reach heaven. We always encourage pilgrims to spread the good news, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Luke 7:22).







## A Vacationer's Testimony

By **Charles K. Park**  
Korean Martyrs Catholic Center  
Orange County, California USA

**When my wife** mentioned going to Jamaica on a mission trip, it roused my interest. "What?" I asked. "They give you room and board and take you out daily on guided tours?! You get to meet and have fun with the locals and eat local food?!"

It sounded like going on a cruise or flying into one of Montego Bay's all-inclusive resorts. I was ready for our summer vacation!

Of course the reality hits you when you first step into a MOP center. You are hit with the smells of humanity at its most basic.

But soon enough you forget the smells because the residents and Brothers are so welcoming and happy. You also quickly get to work, hard work, especially for a vacationer like me.

To be honest though, the hard part was not in the cleaning, the feeding, the clothing, or the grooming of the residents.

The physical discomforts are wiped away by the happiness of the residents and Brothers. Their smiles give you the energy to work so that boredom and tiredness don't have a chance to sprout.

You do your best and soon enough, it is time to go back to the monastery, take a cold shower, wash your clothes, have prayers, dinner, fellowship, and get ready for the next day.

"Then what's so hard about it?" you ask. The hard work is the healing of the soul. Not the souls of the residents or Brothers because I am sure their souls and intentions are pure. No, it was my soul that needed repairing.

Father Hayden said in his homily: "You are not here of your own choosing. You are here because God chose you to be here." I think God sent me here, not so much to help others but to heal my soul.

We volunteers may come from the richest country in the world. We may look carefree and happy, but our spirits are spoiled, our souls are hurting.





As for me, I have always been afflicted with a restless mind and heart. And while I enjoy the comforts of middle class American life, it is not without a good deal of spiritual emptiness, an emptiness all too common where I come from.

There is so much waste, so much materialism - all of which deny your spiritual freedom and fullness. Though America has many fine qualities, as Pope Francis says, it is also a "throwaway society." We discard into landfills and oceans countless manufactured objects. Often that society also throws away people it considers useless onto the streets, into jails, or back to their native countries.

While I came here spiritually hungry, I go home spiritually full. God fed me the most vital of nutrients and healed my soul. He fed me joy, happiness, good food and fellowship with you all and with all the people I met. He fed me most of all by the presence of Jesus Christ in each resident.

When I clothed and shaved the men and boys, I clothed and shaved Jesus. When I served food, sometimes over beds, over wheelchairs, and between seizures, I fed Jesus. When I massaged and tickled the residents, I touched and tickled Jesus. I actually heard him laugh! When I was kidding around with the children, I became Jesus's child. When I reclined next to an AIDS patient and heard his story and played dominoes with them, my friend was Jesus.

I lived cleanly and righteously. I worked hard, followed a holy routine, ate healthily. I did not drink wine or beer. I did not watch TV. I prayed, sang and meditated at least three times a day. I shared a positive attitude and good words with everyone. I was happy.

So, for me, this was no ordinary cruise or vacation. Coming to Missionaries of the Poor in downtown Kingston was much more valuable than any Carnival Cruise or all-inclusive resort.

Lord, thank you for this gift, for the Brothers and Sisters of the Missionaries of the Poor, for our group, and for Father Eugene in permitting me to join them, accepting me as one of their own.

Most of all, I thank the beautiful residents of the Missionaries of the Poor for showing me Jesus.

Amen.



## Give and receive Love!

**By Arlene Dadia Torres**  
New Jersey, USA

**MY DAUGHTERS AND I** first visited Kingston, Jamaica after we heard a teenager's witness in church nine years ago. My purpose for the trip was to expose my children to the poorest of the poor. I wanted them to realize how lucky they are here in America.

The first center we visited was Beatitudes Home, where, for the first time, my daughters saw mentally and physically challenged children on the floor and on wheelchairs. My oldest daughter cried for at least 20 minutes at the door until a young boy came to her and raised his hands asking to be held. When she carried the boy, she stopped crying and played with the children.

My youngest daughter was behind her sister, her eyes caught by Omar's happy dance. My daughter could not understand how Omar could dance when his feet were bent backwards. The Brothers told us the sad story of Omar and his abusive father who disfigured him so he can beg for money.



My children learned to love these children who give unconditional love! Their sparkling eyes looked at you with big warm smiles. It was as if God was looking at us waiting for our response. My daughters' outlook in life changed forever!

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As for me, when the Brothers asked for my help as a nurse, I felt I didn't have enough materials to do what I needed to do. But then I realized all they really needed was love and care, attention and human touch!

When I encountered the residents at the centers and the patients at the MOP clinic, I could not help but see their need for love, care and treatment: my love for them and care for their wounds just flourished.

For the last nine years, the MOP Brothers have taught me and my children how to give and receive love. Initially, I could not understand how the Brothers so joyfully care for the poorest, the mentally and physically challenged children, abandoned men and women 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Only until I personally experienced the lives of the MOP Brothers that I understood and felt what it means to receive love and give love. Learning to love the poor gives such warm feelings that I cannot really explain it. I feel full of the fire of the Holy Spirit. Giving love with the great reward of a smile and a hug is more than enough.

Arlene and Jen with the MOP Brothers at Sacred Heart Monastery



## HOW CAN YOU HELP

### 1. Give Financially

You can join us in serving the poor by making a one-time donation, or monthly, quarterly or yearly. As you consider your gift, keep in mind the words of Sacred Scripture: "Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord delivers him in the day of trouble" Psalm 41:1.

### 2. Send and Drop off Supplies

Many basic supplies are always needed in the mission; chief of which are food, medicines and toiletries. We are also in great need of supplies for the many school children that come to us for help and those we sponsor.

### 3. Volunteer

There are many ways that you can participate in the ministry of the Missionaries of the Poor. Many men and women visit our mission and work along-side our Brothers in daily care for the poor. Others help organize events and contribute their professional knowledge and expertise. If you think you have the time or some skills you wish to share, come and use them for the good and well-being of the poor in our mission.



*"Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord delivers him on the day of trouble." Ps.41:1*

### Upcoming Event:

**Fall Laity Retreat : October 19 - October 22, 2017**

[www.missionariesofthepoor.org](http://www.missionariesofthepoor.org)

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