



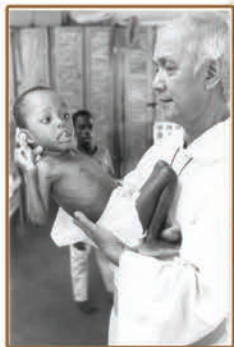
# MISSIONARIES OF THE POOR

Christmas Newsletter 2017

## Joy of Salvation







## *From the Founder's Desk*

Dear Friends, Blessings!

Here comes Christmas! Renewing, refreshing, and fulfilling the dreams of every man and woman. At this time kindness flows, goodness flows, loving and serving flow from the earth and the hearts of everyone



Let us then joyfully celebrate the coming of our salvation and redemption. I want so much to be forgiven the debts I owe to God: all my weaknesses, my sins, and my wrongs. I want so much to give to the poor the kindness of God who is so abundant in giving us even His own Son – the One begotten Son; and the promise of salvation. I want to give to my friends who given me all that I cherish, this ability to serve the brotherhood, the poor, and, you the beloved people of God and friends of the poor.





At this point in time, Jesus is born to us to be our brother. He has risen from the earth. He was born of a virgin. And justice looked down from heaven when we believe in Him, and, live and move and have our being in Him then we are justified not by ourselves but by God.

Truth has passed on from heaven to earth in the flesh of Mary. Here it is; the child, the man, the works of God, the kingdom of God, the forgiveness of God, the promise of eternal life. Imagine! We are loved by God unconditionally! He just come to us, sinners, the poor, the stewards of the earth, kings, donkeys (who I identify with) sheep, cows.

And you! Embrace the Child, love Him, serve Him, work with Him, be His brother or sister, and, His everlasting friend, from now to eternity.

With the brothers and the poor we sing and shout  
***"A Happy and Holy Christmas  
and a Blessed New Year!"***



*When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly  
with great joy. (Matthew 2:10)*



# *Beauty and Joy*

by **Deepa Sebastian**  
Birmingham, AL., USA

**My name is Deepa Sebastian**, from Birmingham, AL. On July 4th, my children (Nicky (18), Rosie (15) and I travelled to Jamaica to work with the Missionaries of the Poor. In early May as we were waiting a word from Fr. Henry regarding our volunteer application, my prayer was that if it was God's will for us to go to Jamaica, then let it be done. Little did we know what a blessing the Lord had in store for us during the week we spent with the MOP.



*A volunteer listening to an elderly man's life story at Faith Centre*

We stayed in Jesus the Redeemer monastery and quickly settled into what I call "the routine of the bells". What a blessing it was to order our day, beginning always with prayer, then fellowship at breakfast, followed by work at the centers, then return to the monastery for prayer and fellowship. What quickly became clear to us was that everything that the Brothers did were centered in prayer, praise and worship to God. It was obvious from the start that the work of the MOP will be impossible without Christ. In fact, as one of the Brothers related, it is His love that fills and animates them in the joyful service they provide to the poor.





My children and I agree that the highlight of our trip was meeting all of the wonderful Brothers, all were exceptional in different ways. I will relate some of the enduring lessons we learned from them. At one center, Brother Moses explained to my children that when they serve the poor they need to think of it as if they were serving their mother and father. Another Brother spoke about how all the Brothers had left their homes and families in various countries to join the MOP had found a family of their own, sharing various cuisines, a love of sports, etc. I don't think I could have explained any better to my children that we are not just Americans, but that we are part of a global family, united in the love of Christ, with a responsibility to care for and share with each other. We listened as a Brother related what a gift the poor are to us. Our society teaches us that poverty is failure. Yet, Christ who came in poverty, and His Church teach that "the spirit of poverty and charity is the glory and witness of the Church of Christ." It wasn't until we came to Jamaica that we were able to witness the truth of this teaching. I learned that we should not pity the poor, but instead cherish them, and show them the mercy, compassion and love that Christ showed to us.

We met so many wonderful men and women at the centers, many of whom had a kind word for us, and we were overwhelmed by their graciousness. Our trip culminated in the beautiful Sunday mass at Bethlehem chapel. As I sat next to 2 children, I reflected on the week we'd spent in Jamaica. I watched as the children participated in the service and my heart was filled as I watched them joyfully singing and dancing the "Roll Over the Ocean". Two words struck me then: beauty and joy. God loves Jamaica that is clear from the presence of the beauty and joy of its people. God loves Jamaica abundantly, and that is clear from the presence of the Brothers in their midst. God has sent His faithful servants to minister to them. So thank you Brothers, for your joy and your service, and the many invaluable lessons you have shared with us. God bless and strengthen you in your vocation, and may He lead many more Brothers and Sisters to His service in the MOP.





**Reflecting upon my experiences** on this mission trip a phrase really stuck out to me: "give until it hurts." This phrase embodies the idea that love requires sacrifice. It is not always easy to love, and in fact, it is often true that love hurts. Take, for example, His birth on the poor stable and His death upon the cross. His love does not even in His nativity but He continue to live and even embraced death itself for our sake. The road to Calvary was too immensely painful to be aptly described by words, but Christ continued to suffer out of pure self-giving love for us. He poured out his blood, his sweat, his tears, and ultimately his life. As Christians, we are called to pick up our crosses and follow Jesus. In doing so, we are called to pour out our very own hearts to our brothers and sisters in Christ. This act of total self-giving until it hurts fit into my experiences working with the Missionaries of the Poor on countless occasions such as the soreness in my arms after visiting Bethlehem Home and holding children for countless hours or the pangs of heartbreak that tore into my heart when I had to say goodbye to the people whom my soul was so drawn to. Yet, this pain and sacrifice was evident of a higher power at work—the power of God's love. It was amazing to pray with the Brothers and Sisters every morning and immerse ourselves in God's love only to transfer that love to the Jamaican people. In drawing an example from Jesus' agape love, I learned that to love another means to give your entirety to them in the same way that Christ gave himself totally on the manger and on the cross.

**Merry Christmas!**

**-Jenna Thelen, 21, Michigan, USA**



*A resident and a volunteer happily dancing together at Lord's Place*

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy*

*which will be for all the people;*

*-Luke 2:10*





Fr. Ho Lung visited our parish over 30 years ago. He asked for our help with the needs of the Brothers and their residents and invited us to come to Jamaica to help out anytime. We have enjoyed watching the Missionaries of the Poor grow through their newsletters since then. But it wasn't until 2015, and my 4 children were grown, that I actually started traveling to Jamaica. Hoping to use my therapy skills with the residents, God's Spirit has also led me to teach some of the brothers how to make ice-cream for their residents' baptisms! There have been faces to clean, bodies to clothe, arms and legs to lotion, nails to clip, mouths to feed, and Musicals and Concerts to enjoy. I have served food at the National Arena and worked at the medical clinic. Getting to know the residents, the Brothers, Sisters and other volunteers has been very inspirational. Back home, we have become involved in packing the containers Canadian Food for Children ship throughout the world. As a result, the joy and fulfilment in my life has greatly increased. May God continue to richly bless the Missionaries of the Poor and all their works!

Merry Christmas everyone!  
- Lu Johnston, Canada



For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be  
on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince  
of Peace.  
-Isaiah 9:6





## **CHRISTMAS IN OUR HEARTS**

**This gracefilled-season, join us in making Christmas come alive among our least brothers and sisters across the globe. Make donations, send gift items or work along-side with our Brothers and Sisters. Truly, the joy and happiness of this season be always in your heart. Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!**



**To all our Friends and benefactors,**

**May God bless you  
and your entire family  
with the love and  
peace of Christ now  
and on the coming  
new year.**

## **MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**&**

## **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



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