



MISSIONARIES OF THE POOR

VIA *The Way of the Cross* CRUCIS



From the Founder's Desk

Very Rev. Fr. Richard Ho Lung, MOP

Be Like Christ!

To all Pastors and Christians,

I am amazed that at 77 years I am being called to purification of so many sins and weaknesses. I am also amazed that after so many years life is an unending struggle. "Be like Christ"; "Bow down and worship Him", "Honor Him", "Be more generous", "Give! Give! Give! Give!" "Be obedient", "constant repentance is being required", "Be careful of pride", "Put on the mind of Christ". "Have you hung on the cross like Jesus for your sins?" "Repentance! Repentance! Repentance!"

So the call to repentance never ends. I am imperfect as long as I live in this human flesh. "Even now," declares the LORD, "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate"(Joel 2:12-13a). We have hearts that want to love, that want to be pure but we are trapped within ourselves with our wayward hearts wondering like lost sheep here and there. I know all this and have struggled with all this. I am sure that all of us do.

All this violence! All this sensuousness! This diabolic music! This is not Jamaica! Where is the love of God and love of one another once so strong in Jamaica? Why so much secular materialism, this lawless pursuit of the pleasure of this world? Where is the joy and happiness so indigenous to Jamaica?

The Cross! The Cross! He never stops reminding us. That image burns imprinted in our souls- Jesus crucified on the cross for you and for me. It is in the hearts of all Christians, indeed of all men! The cross is sweet, it is not bitter. It provides us with a time to cleanse our souls and receives God's mercy and His love.



He was despised and forsaken by men.
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face,
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
-Isaiah 53:3

We represent the people, we who are priests, pastors and representatives of the church. We make offerings of prayers and petitions before the Lord for the community for we are also sinners. Yes, we call everyone to repentance but recognize that we too are sinners and should also be repentant.

But like Christ, we must not condemn anyone as Christ says, "Whoever is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone at her"(John 8: 7). As we approach the altar in Lenten season let us not be weary of self- examination, and let us call out for God's mercy. "Lord have mercy on us. Christ have mercy on us. Lord have mercy on us."

Missionaries of Love who *SERVE THE POOR*

- Br. Ronel Katigbak, MOP

We really are missionaries of Love who serve the poor.

It was about nine o'clock in the evening, we were just about to begin our daily night prayers when suddenly the phone rang. It was our volunteer staff in Bethlehem Home, her voice sounded nervous and confused. She said, "Brother emergency, emergency Sean is dying, we have to carry him to the hospital!" Though tired and exhausted from the whole day's work in our apostolates, I had to rush down to Bethlehem. While inside the car, I began to ponder and think about those kids in our care at Bethlehem Home, mentally and physically impaired, helpless, rejected, cast aside by the society, unloved by their own parents, totally and completely dependent on the Brothers and our generous staff and volunteers from Jamaica and abroad. But they are the most loving and beautiful kids I have ever seen in my life. Yes, the work is very demanding and back breaking at from bathing, feeding, cleaning them when they mess up, sweeping, mopping, giving medicines. These works go on from morning till evening every single day.

I think about those elderly women in Jacob's Well, some of them senile, others mentally retarded, some bed ridden, abandoned by their own family members, their own brothers and sisters, their own sons and daughters.

I think about those elderly men in Faith Center Home and Good Shepherd Home, who long for companionship, for love.

I remember the scripture passage when Jesus says, "my heart is move with pity for them." As I bring all this to prayer, I come to realize, they have no one but me and the Brothers. We have to be strong for them and we cannot sustain it without the loving grace from God.



"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" (Isaiah 58: 7)

Upon reaching Bethlehem Home, we were ushered by Ms. Brown to the crib of Sean, a seven-year old boy with cerebral palsy, epilepsy and heart problems. He was there lying, weak, immobile, roasting with fever and exhausted by serious seizure attacks. We immediately rushed him to Bustamante Hospital where he was attended by the doctors and nurses. The Brothers and I waited until everything was sorted out then we proceeded to our monastery to get some sleep. It was about 2 o'clock in the morning.

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Love means sacrifice. Our life as Missionaries of the Poor is caught up in a circle of love not without pain, struggle, sometimes disappointment but in all this we choose to love and be the heart of Jesus in this hostile world.

Saint Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthians, *"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful. It is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hope all things, and endures all things."*

You must come to us and volunteer with us. You will have the most wonderful spiritual experience.



We are a Family In Christ!

by Br. John Paul Dayandayan, MOP

In this modern world, the most basic unit of society - the family - is disturbingly endangered, strongly misused, and politically the most misunderstood word next to love. As the world advances in the fields of science, business, law and politics, the value and respect for family life declines. This is the irony of progress. T.S. Eliot rightly said that we are "... in an age which advances progressively backward."

The Missionaries of the Poor seek to uphold the respect and value of family life by being a true family to everyone, especially to those who need the love and mercy of Christ. This reminded me of Patricia.

Patricia came to us. She had HIV-AIDS. She had a six-year-old son. Her *babyfather* (the father of the child) left her the same night the neighbours started throwing stones at their house because they found out that she was sick. She and her son sought refuge at her mother's in the countryside. But when the illness progressed that made Patricia bedridden, her mother (at age 75) could no longer take care of her, and Patricia's relatives refused to care for her.

The Brothers took her in at the Lord's Place, a home where we take care of abandoned persons with HIV-AIDS. The Brothers attended to her needs immediately: one bathed and fed her chicken soup, another Brother dressed her bedsores and gave her medicines, while another cleaned the space she was to occupy.

I asked Patricia a week before her passing: "Patricia, what do you want?" She spoke so softly, struggling to push the air out of her mouth, "I want forgiveness from God ... I want to see my son and my mother."

"Do you want to be baptised and receive the love, mercy and forgiveness of Christ?" She said, with a faint smile, "Yes, I do, Brother." I baptised her on her deathbed that same day. Brother Nowell arranged for her son and mother to see her. Upon seeing her mother and son two days after baptism, Patricia told the Brothers: "Thank you, Brothers. Thank you for being my family. You will always be in my heart." Patricia slept with her God.

Like Patricia, we belong to the same spiritual family, the family of God. This family embraces everyone, regardless of health, wealth, religion or race. It supersedes our biological family. The biological family should imitate the virtues of the spiritual family: love, care, concern, forgiveness and generosity. In this family of God, one does not seek the best for oneself, but seeks only the best for the other: the weakest, the most vulnerable, the least. In them we will find Christ. This is what Christ did. This is what we need to do as Christians, as children of God. For Christ said in Matthew 25:40 - "*Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.*"

Let us do our part as Christians to promote, as well as defend, family values for all.





• VOLUNTEER'S CORNER

Partaking in the *Joyful Service* with *Christ on the Cross*!

Rev. Fr. Michael Johnstone
Walsingham, Norfolk, UK



Nursing student from Emory University, Atlanta
assisting a resident at Faith Centre

It was January 2013 when I began working with MOP. It was a totally new experience: new and unfamiliar surroundings, routines, and faces. But once caught, no way was I ever going to miss an opportunity to volunteer over and over again!

Nothing unfamiliar now! The MOP spirit of 'Joyful Service with Christ on the Cross' under the banner of 'Our Lady Cause of our Joy' has so bitten into my spirit that the agony is waiting for each January to return to the now familiar and joyous routine.

The Prayer of the Church is celebrated regularly throughout the day: at 5:45 a.m., at noon, at 5:00, and at 9:00 p.m. What a joy - especially for me, a priest, who in normal circumstances prays these 'Hours' alone - to have them shared along with joyful chant and Caribbean song.

Breakfast is had with the gang of other volunteers - many of whom come as regularly and at the same time as my little group from England, and are now old friends - together always with new and other joyful and often youthful faces. After which we await our honorable guide Br Elijah to allot us our 'Centre' for the day, with the usual bits of haggling for each trying to visit the one they haven't yet been to, or the one they most enjoy!

But does it ever matter? Whichever Centre we visit we are still received with enormous smiles and hugs of welcome - especially if we are allotted Jacob's Well, where the ladies have permanently fixed grins and ever-open arms! Or Bethlehem's deformed, abandoned infants -

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who are still the most adorable of all. Or Faith Centre, where Jessie will meet you and tell you exactly what to do and where to find everything; and dear Jacob with his lop-sided smile waiting to greet you as though a long-lost bosom pal. Or the other ladies at Lord's Place, whose actions are seldom predictable, but always joyous and excitable - even if you are likely to have your specs knocked off your nose in their exuberance! And the cheerful gaggle of men, especially Mr. Donnelly, at Good Shepherd where you are constantly asked your name. And now in addition, the quiet efficiency of Holy Innocents with the wonderful sever-smiling Sisters calmly going about their business with those at either end of their earthly life - babyhood or oldest-age.

Midday prayer followed by lunch with the Brothers, gives one a chance to re-create with them, to find out about them and their countries of origin. Cheerful, ever-friendly, so young, so dedicated and so devout. Then a quieter afternoon of relaxation, chatting, possibly dominoes, and mugs of cold water. Until 3:30 for our return to Jesus Redeemer monastery-residence shared with senior Brothers.

All is now so familiar; the day so threaded through with wonderment at the love and joy shown by the residents; the devotion and self-denial of the Brothers; the underpinning of all by faith and prayer; and the clear direction of their lives of "Joyful Service with Christ on the Cross," that one can't help but be moved in the same direction oneself.

And so the day draws to an end with Evening Prayer, Rosary, Supper and Night Prayer - and a joyful, fulfilled feeling of readiness to collapse into bed as soon as possible!



Time to leave draws near - and you feel pulled away from what is most real, to another 'unreal life' - with the packing and goodbyes, and journey to the airport; carrying away with you a prayer for the Brothers, thanksgiving for their devotion, their self-sacrifice; and for the residents whose lives are enlarged by the care and love given them.

"LENT: The liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert in fasting and prayer (540, 1095, 1438)."

- Catechism of the Catholic Church



Carry your *Cross* with a Joyful Heart

by Sr. Joanne Belmonte, MOP

How does one carry one's own cross with a joyful heart? Some find it impossible to carry their cross. Some don't really understand what it means, and suffer even more for it.

Indeed, it is true that in carrying your cross, there will be struggles, at times challenges, but with Jesus it will bring you to a place that no words can describe in the long, winding journey of life.

For me to carry my cross joyfully is to bring me closer to Christ who carried His, and accepted all its indescribable pain for my sins. In carrying His cross, He had a purpose, a reason, and so I too must have a purpose and a reason. To follow Jesus is the road to meaning and happiness in life. In carrying my crosses, I have understood better what Jesus did for me.



In 2013, I broke my wrist and it was not healing, so they put 3 pins in it. In putting them in I felt no pain, I was fast asleep. But in pulling them out I was wide awake, feeling every single pull. At His crucifixion, Jesus was completely awake and felt every hateful, horrible gash on his body and soul, yet he endured that painful cross for love of me. The pain I felt on my wrist was a tiny fraction of what He felt. When I realize how much God loves me, to sacrifice His only Son for me, my heart just overflows with love for Him, that I too want to do something with my life to please Him.

And so I strive to carry the cross of my life as a religious Sister, serving my fellow Sisters and the poor, not grudgingly, but willingly, and that brings me joy: I can carry my cross with a joyful heart.

Enclosed is my gift of _____ in support of the
works of the Missionaries of the Poor.

Name _____ Phone/Cell _____

Address _____

Email: _____ Date _____



MISSIONARIES OF THE POOR, JAMAICA
P.O. Box 8525
3 North Street, Kingston C.S.O.
(876)-948-0280/(876)-967-0341
E-mail: mopja@missionariesofthepoor.org

MISSIONARIES OF THE POOR, USA
P.O. Box 29893, Atlanta GA 30359
(404)-248-1197
E-mail: mopusaoffice@missionariesofthepoor.org

MISSIONARIES OF THE POOR, CANADA
P.O. Box 20070 Southbrook PO
Maple, Ontario L6A 4K0, Canada
(905)-940-2606
E-mail: mopcanada@gmail.com