



# SANDESH

Indian Montfortian Communication

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## From the Desk of the Provincial

For Montfortians, the month of September is a month of a triple feast. On the 8th it is the Nativity of Mary; on the 12th it is the Holy Name of Mary; on the 15th it is Our Lady of Sorrows. These feasts give a sort of Montfortian / Marian atmosphere for our reflection. We need to consider the feast of Triumph of the Cross – 14th September as something that adds to this reflection. In this regard, I read a write-up on 'Reflection on Mother Mary,' in Catholic News Update Asia. In a way, it summarizes these feasts, for all Montfortians.

*As Jesus entrusts Mother Mary to the care of John as a Mother, one immediate conclusion is that she is a UNIVERSAL MOTHER. Why was Mother Mary given over to John as his mother? Is it to RECEIVE care from her or to GIVE care to her? It looks like Jesus is telling John, "My dear man! I have chosen 12 disciples. One betrayed me and another denied me. Out of the remaining 10, I have some faith in you that you will not abandon my mother, that you will take care of her till death separates you."*

In this giving of His mother to John and, John to His mother, we see John is called to a commitment of receiving and giving. This act of Jesus, giving and receiving, has a greater meaning, who poured out his love from the Cross, shows that Jesus has received this greater love from His Father. And the same love is given to humanity. Jesus giving his mother to John is also a sign of Self-emptying. Jesus is giving His mother, the only thing that was leftover on this earth before he gave up his breath. The wooden cross becomes triumphant, because of this outpouring love of God towards humanity in and through the person of Jesus. It can be understood as reciprocal. In the act of Jesus giving his mother to John, by accepting this gift from Jesus, John honors Mary and glorifies humanity. The action of Jesus and John inspires furthermore by the words of Winston Churchill: "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

God is love (1Jn 4: 8) and that Love knows nothing but to give love. In this process of giving and receiving, the Giver becomes Receiver (God) and the receiver becomes giver (humanity). The purpose of Incarnation reaches its ultimate fulfillment on the Cross. If we take to imitating Christ who taught us how to give, we need also to recognize that he is teaching us to receive, because he knows the reality of receiving from His Father. John, by accepting Mary, he is ready to become a better giver – be a beloved disciple. Many of us will be happy receivers than givers. Desmond Tutu has this to say on receiving and giving: "The Dead Sea in the Middle East receives freshwater, but it has no outlet, so it doesn't pass the water out. It receives beautiful water from the rivers, and the water goes dank. I mean, it just goes bad. And that's why it is the Dead Sea. It receives and does not give. In the end, generosity is the best way of becoming more, more, and more joyful."

The challenge before us is, the receiver learns to be a giver and the giver learns to be a receiver. If we know to receive, we know to give. Brian Tracy's words, "Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting," may lead us to walk the path of our Blessed Mother.

Fr J Joseph SMM  
Vice-Province of India

## 1. ARTICLES

### MARY'S BIRTH AND HOLY NAME OF MARY

- Fr. Peter Swamy, SMM

The very first day of the year is dedicated to Mary, Mother of God. Through the year we celebrate the solemnities and feasts of God's mother. The mother church celebrates the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 8<sup>th</sup> of September and her Holy Name on 12 of September. In this article, we shall contemplate on God's plan, Her birth, and her Holy name.

Plan of God: God plans is to reach his people, in his simple and gentle way. One such simple and wise ways are in, choosing the persons. The great prophet Isaiah says, "Yahweh called me when I was in the womb, before my birth he had pronounced my name" (Is 49:1). "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you came to birth, I consecrated you; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jer 1:5). God chose the instruments and predestined them. God executes his plan with all wisdom which even prophets were not able to understand but in the course of time, their bitter and joyful experiences made them understand God's way of reaching people.

God's plan steps into his chosen instruments and inspires them to bring into action. The chosen instruments are made active and contemplative. The great prophets like Moses, Elijah, Elisha and well-known prophets were very active with the Word of God. Isaiah says "He made my mouth like a sharp sword; he hid me in the shadow of his hand" (Is 49:2). "The word of God is something active and alive; it cuts more incisively than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4:12). The sword in the Bible refers to the wisdom way of judging and wise way of judging. The prophets do not judge the persons but the situations and the faith of the persons. The contemplatives too judge the situations and approach the Lord God for solutions.

Mary of Nazareth too was contemplative and active by way of judging the self and execute the message according to divine inspiration. More than the active and contemplative role of Mary, we reflect on her birth, which is the plan of God.



Mary's Birth: The Bible does not speak about the birth of Mary. The "*Proto Evangelium*" written by Apostle James does speak about the birth of Mary. Joachim and Anna were married but had no children. They were God-fearing couple. Hence years after of their expectation, Joachim would go to the mountain to pray with penance. Anna was a woman of charity. After her act of charity to the poor, she would ask the poor to bless her. Their prayers, penance and charity were rewarded. "Lord God wiped their tears and rewarded them with a female child. Mary was born not of human flesh but God's intervention. God chose her from all eternity.

James continues to say that Mary's birth is compared to light. Light is understood as a sign of hope. Isaiah 9:2 "People who walked in darkness have seen a great light." Anyone who walks in darkness does not know where he/she is heading about. The light that appears becomes their hope and their destination is clear. New life begins with hope. Lumen Gentium No. 55 says that Mary the last representative of the Old Testament now becomes the first sign of hope in the New Testament.

St. Andrew of Crete says: this is the day that the Creator of the universe constructed his temple, today; the creature becomes God's dwelling place.

St. Alphonse de Liguori says: Having been destined to become the mother of eternal Word, this child was enriched with so great a grace that even at the moment of her Immaculate Conception, she succeeded all the saints and

angels in sanctity, for she was given a higher order of grace, which corresponded to her dignity as the Mother of God. She was born a great saint and her soul was the most beautiful soul that delighted God.

Marialis Cultus of Pope Paul VI, No 7 writes: Mary is the hope and the beginning of our salvation. She is the light of all Christians. He is commenting on the birth Mary, as the fulfilment God's plan. The prayer and hope of Israel was to see the redeemer soon.

St. James says: Israel was waiting for the Messiah and they would fast thrice a week, pray, promised God obedience and were charitable toward orphans and widows. God gave a child to Anna and Joachim. The birth of Mary brought in such great joy to the family but it remained as a mystery to the people.

James says: Her growth in virtues made her stronger in faith and holiness. Like the people of Israel, she too was waiting for the Messiah.

At the proper time, says St. Ambrose, Joachim and Anna gathered all the priests and the closest relatives to name the child and to thank God for the child. According to St. Ambrose, Mary at her tender age praised God and consecrated herself to serve God all the days of her life. The Priests, Scribes, Parents and the people were surprised to hear such a wonderful prayer of consecration. What is this child going to be?

According to the Theologians, Mary was brought up in an atmosphere of love for God's Word, prayer, faith, and hope. She grew in holiness and in the fear of God. "The fullness of God, says a saint, was poured into Mary, insofar as a mere creature is capable of receiving it. O Mary, the masterpiece of the Most High, miracle of Eternal Wisdom, prodigy of the Almighty, abyss of grace! I join all the saints in the belief that only the God who created you knows the height, the breadth and the depth of the grace he has conferred on you" (Love of Eternal Wisdom, No. 106).

Mary's birth was God's plan and her great love or unconquerable love made her convinced of God's presence. How do we know? "Her humility, deep as an abyss, delighted him. Her purity so otherworldly drew him down to her. He found her lively faith and her ceaseless entreaties of love so irresistible that he was lovingly conquered by her appeals of love." "So great was the love of Mary," explains St. Augustine, "that it conquered the omnipotent God" *O quantus amor illius qui vincit omnipotentem*" (LEW no. 107).

St. Louis Marie de Montfort in his "*True Devotion to Mary*" a classical book, says "The great God has a storehouse, full of riches in which he has enclosed all that is beautiful, resplendent, rare and precious, even his own Son. This immense treasure is none other than Mary" (TD no. 23).

Mary becomes a sign of freedom from slavery, freedom from misery, from suffering and the faithful expect her to say her total "Yes" to the Lord so that every mystical member may become active and alive to the plan of God. She is an exemplary person and every person who imitates her brings true freedom.

#### Holy Name of Mary:

While speaking about the birth of Mary, the divine plan can also say that he is not partial. Every child is in the plan and heart of God. Her birth brings great joy to the whole universe; hence the angels sing joyful praises to God praising and thanking him.

St. Alphonsus de Liguori invites people to invoke the name of Mary in dangerous situations and facing problematic people. Though a human person, she lives in the presence of God. Invoke her holy name and you will experience the wonder of wonders.

St. Bernard, a great mystic, the author of *Memorare* says: "O man! Who feel that in this life you are floating in the midst of dangers and temptations, if you wish not to be overwhelmed, turn not your eyes from this star, Mary. Gaze at the star, invoke her sweet name!"

St. Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373) had visited the Holy Land and she was privileged with revelations from the Blessed Virgin about the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. St. Bridget had also apparitions of Mary. In her writings, she praises Mary by invoking her name and she inspires her congregation to pronounce always the Holy name of Mary.

St. Ambrose (340-397. A.D), the Bishop of Milan, says: "Let her honeyed name like an ointment seep through the depths of my soul!"

Finally reflecting on Child in general, the child is the centre of attraction in the families, it also becomes the centre of unity. A certain Abbot Lyman said, "A child is a beam of sunlight from the Infinite and Eternal, with possibilities of virtue and vice—but as yet unstained."

Suzanne Chazin reflects differently: "A child is a seed. You water it. You care for it the best you can. And then it grows all by itself into a beautiful flower."

God the Father prepared Mary, right from her birth with a plan. She used her freedom to grow in God's presence and she surrendered herself to the plan of God. She is the virgin-servant, virgin-faithful and virgin-holy, was ready to execute the plan of God.

God the Father is not partial to consecrate the child in the womb of the mother. Every child is consecrated, helped to grow and invited to execute the plan of God. Use your freedom, make the right choice and enter into the plan of God.

### COMMUNICATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE PROVINCE

- Fr. Nashwin, SMM

To exist is to communicate. God reveals himself in communicating with us. We as human beings are in constant communication with the environment and inseparable without it. Communication does play a vital role in the transformation, growth, and development of society. Living in the contemporary world, it is important to understand

this reality in our personal lives and vocation to be transformed, to evolve according to the time, and see the change that we all expect from one another. Understanding this concept, I would like to personally express my opinion on what communication can do if it is well-practised.

The word 'Communication' is derived from the Latin word, '*Communicare*' means 'to make common', 'to share', and 'to transmit'. So, the term itself indicates communication includes more than one person. "Church is a communication", is an apt statement of Cardinal Alvery Dulles. He says that "Church is communion, and the communication is what builds up her to be in communion with others". Pope *Emeritus* Benedict XI said on 48th World Communication Day, "Communication is really about realizing that we are all human beings, children of God. The purpose of communication is not just handing over the information but to create new meaning through creative interaction". It is to unite, to bring together, to relate and to listen, etc. The unwillingness to listen to the opinions of the other is a grave fault. We need to resolve our difference through forms of dialogue which help us to grow in understanding and mutual respect.

*Communion et Progressio* (Pastoral Instruction of the Roman Catholic Church) called Jesus, the "Perfect and Model Communicator". Jesus was the perfect communicator. He communicated his message and above all, He lived his message to the fullest. He lived what He preached and He was both medium and the message.



Secondly, we are in a mediated culture. Media is a Multi-purpose medium. St. John Paul II asked, "Are Christian communicators

capable of presenting the message of Christ in an understandable, appealing, attractive and acceptable way to an audience?" Hence, the



success of communication depends very much on the power to convince and win the other and this need not be, by force or persuasion, rather understanding and co-operation from one another by being the medium and the message. We as a Vice-Province try our best in this regard, to communicate with the members and the faithful, through our Website, Newsletter, and newly-initiated YouTube channel (Montfort Media). But the question is, do all the above-mentioned platforms give true insight to spread the message of Christ within our entity and the world at large? Does it lead us forward as a Province? If not, what is required is collaboration, understanding, constructive feedback, and creative vision to move forward with positivity.

Holy Father Pope Francis on 49th World Communication Day delivered a message on the family. "Family is another womb, where we can learn to live with others, despite our differences. So, if a link is broken, the whole network collapses. Hence, adaptation with models like that of Jesus sounds very important to us: to listen to others, to forgive others, to speak respectfully with others. Without understanding all these if we try to build up a relationship in the virtual world, it will be like building castles in the air. This is what is said in the *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 37, 'It is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church authentic teaching, but it is necessary to integrate that message into the "New Culture" created by modern communication'.

Communication is all about communicating and renewing. It is the renewal of oneself, the other, and the community to which one belongs. Change is the essence of life. Let us be the change that we want to see in the world. The change that we make within the changeless nature of the Church, can impact the faithful, anywhere in the world. Let us communicate, "Communication as giving of self in Love," *Communio et Progressio*, no. 11. Let our communication start with this message.

## 2. MISSION

### PRESBYTERY OPENING – DINDIGUL MISSION

The inauguration of the New Presbytery in Anthoniyarpuram (Perumalkovilpatty), was held on the Feast day of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Beloved Most Rev. Thomas Paulsamy, Bishop of Dindigul, blessed and opened it at 7.30 am during a simple

celebration. Fr. Sebastian thanks sincerely all, for their prayers, support and



encouragement. Hearty Congratulations to dear Fr. Sebastian and the Parishioners. Fr. Robert Periyannayagam is happy to recall the days of sleeping under the staircase like Montfort. May the Blessed Mother bless all the people of PKP.

### PREACHING MISSION - VELANKANNI



Fr. Deepak Joseph, SMM was invited to preach during Novena

days in Kannada, at a well-known Shrine of Mary, Our Lady of Velankanni in South India. He was recommended by the Archdiocese of Bangalore. He felt honoured to have been given an opportunity. He cherished this Marian experience of 9 days preaching Novena and was overjoyed to have celebrated his Ministry of the Word. The Novena was telecasted on You-tube, and many devotees benefitted from it. We congratulate Fr. Deepak for being the prophet of our times, representing the Montforts, at this Marian Shrine. He returned safely, after whispering a prayer for all, that God bless us all, through Mary his Mother.

## MARIAN CELEBRATIONS

**BANGALORE:** In view of Our Lady's Birthday a Triduum was held from the 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September at Maria Bhavan. The themes were "Mary - a woman of Prayer" by Fr Selva Kumar, "Mary in today's context" by Fr Michael Sahayaraj, and "Mary - Model of Faith" by Fr Nashwin. The Feast Day Holy Mass was celebrated by Fr. Micheal Sahayaraj, as it was his Ordination Anniversary. (Maria Bhavan)

A Triduum was also celebrated at Adarsh Bhavan, Wilson Garden from 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> September, reflecting on the themes, "Mary, Solace of the Migrants", "Mary, Mother of the Church", and "Mary, Mother of Hope". (Adarsh Bhavan)

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady at St. Anthony's Church, K.P. Agrahara, Bengaluru, was celebrated symbolically through a procession of Mary within its Parish premises. The Float carrying the statue of Mary was creatively decorated. Our good wishes to Fr. Jesu and his parishioners. (K.P.Agrahara)

**SUNTIKOPPA, COORG:** The Birthday of Mary was celebrated with all precautionary measures given by the government - Thermal Fever Check-



Ups, Social Distancing and use of Face Mask and Sanitizers. About 150 to 200 faithful, participated in the daily Novena services, while there were around 500 faithful for the September 8<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

## 3. FORMATION

### NEW RECRUITS

Due to the Pandemic, the arrival of new vocations was delayed. As lockdown rules are slowly being relaxed, the Province was able to gather around 12 new recruits so far, who right now are accommodated in Hirekerur, Puthanatham, and Kurupam. Some more are still awaited. A warm welcome to those who have arrived.

### PRE-NOVICES



The Pre-Novices who were initiated at Guru Mandir left for Kumbakonam along with Fr. Madhivanan (Amal) on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September. After they arrived in Montfort Niwas the following day, the new 8 Pre- novices received their notebooks and stationery for the academic year. Two other Pre-Novices are expected to report in a few days. Our best wishes to them.

### NOVICES

The Novices who were temporarily under the guidance of Fr. Amal in Montfort Niwas, Kumbakonam, were transported to Kanathi on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September by night journey.

They arrived the following noon at Sneha Bhavan, Kanathi, safely.

The Province is grateful to Fr. Madhivanan (Amal) for his accompaniment with the Novices.





## SCHOLASTICS



On the Occasion of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14th, five Second Year Theologians

namely, Bros. Ruban, Prakash Horo, Anthony Peter, John Bosco, and Martin received their Minor Orders (Lectors & Acolytes) during the Holy Mass, in the presence of Fr. Joseph, the Provincial. We wish them God's abundant blessings and fruitful ministering.

### 4. SOCIAL APOSTOLATE - COVID RELIEF

*"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done". (Proverbs 19:17)*

Covid-19 affected the day to day life of the people. Lockdowns affected every sphere of the society from Industry to the ordinary worker. The most affected were vulnerable that included migrant labourers, waste pickers, beggars, single mothers, artisans, drivers, homeless, daily wage-earning families. People had lost their jobs.

The Congregation of the Montfort Missionaries, during the time of the Pandemic, responded to the voice of the Local Churches, to reach out to the



needy and homeless in their respective parishes, communities and surroundings. The Vice-

Province of India was supported by the General Administration in this Social concern for the Poor.

Parish Priests in their respective parishes distributed provisions (Ration Kits that included Pulses, Grains, Sugar, Spices, Oil, Laundry items, etc.) to the beneficiaries, which also included Domestic workers, Cooking staff, Drivers, the Accountant, BBMP Workers, and the poor in distress. The relief was not only for the Christians but also for the people of the other Faiths. The Relief was also distributed to families of Anugraha Children. All who received the Relief conveyed their gratefulness to the Provincial Administration, for the social contribution towards the Local Churches and the society.

The Relief was distributed in Srinivasapura, Sira, Hirekerur, Anugraha, Adarsh Bhavan, K.P. Agrahara, Meghamalai, Puthanatham, Dindugal mission, S. Pudur, Holenarsipura and Shanthi Nagar.

The Vice-Province of India is indeed very grateful to the General Administration for their generosity towards the poor.

### 5. COMMUNICATIONS

New Collaborators in the area of Communication for the Vice-Province, was sought in the person of Fr. Anthony to assist Fr. Nashwin, for updating information on Mission Activities, Formation, Health, Social Reach Out, Administration, Finance, Spirituality, Marian Centre, Obituaries, Birthdays etc. Every alternative month we will publish "SANDESH", and "Essential Matters of the Province". The Province thanks all the contributors from the various regions. Frs. Nashwin and Anthony will contact the respective Regional In-charges, Frs. Madhivanan, Ravi Thappeta, and Gnanapraksh to co-ordinate with them. The Provincial requests everyone to support and co-operate in giving the update news and report of the activities of Apostolate in the Mission, Formation, and in the Parishes.

## 6. HEALTH UPDATES

### BANGALORE

The brother of Fr. Balaraju, Mr. Avinash has been admitted in St John's Hospital due to Corona Virus. He requested for prayers. He is undergoing treatment for the same. We do keep him in our prayers.

Fr. Anthony underwent a Surgical procedure on 11th of September at Rangadore Memorial Hospital, Bangalore. He was accompanied by Fr. Mohan and Driver, Mr. Moses. He continues his Dialysis at St. John's Hospital. He is grateful for the prayers interceded by the communities for his good health.

### SHANTHINAGAR

Health updates from St. Joseph's hospital Vishakhapatnam sent to us by Fr. Dominic, reveal that our confreres Frs. Dominic, Kiran and Ravi T. were diagnosed for Covid Positive. Even some of the Mercy Sisters were affected by it. They were all under treatment and in quarantine. By God's Blessings, prayers of confreres, and the good treatment they receive there, they are improving day by day. Fr. Dominic and Fr. Kiran though discharged, are requested to quarantine themselves for 21 days. Fr. Ravi has been shifted from ICU into a ward and we have received the latest news that he too is discharged from the hospital and will be back to the community. We thank you all for your prayerful support. Fr. Vara Prasad who was in home quarantine is back to the community.

### MYSORE

FR. K. J. MICHAEL – Was admitted in St. Joseph's Hospital. His sugar was high and had breathing difficulties, therefore, was given ventilator support in ICU. He is now back to where he is taken care of. Please pray for his good health.

## 7. NEWS AND VIEWS


-Bishop ROSARIO MENEZES, thanks all confreres for prayers and wishes on his Birthday, and requests prayers for him, as well as for the Diocese of Lae.



-On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, VINNARASI, the sister of Fr. Alex SMM, met with an accident, injuring her hand. Due to some complications in breathing, pulse, occasionally fits, she fell unconscious. Therefore she was admitted at CMC Vellore, and was under Ventilator. She died the next day. Her funeral was held the next day at 10 am. Fr. Alex thanks the confreres for their condolences and prayers offered for his sister and their family.

-Mrs. AROCKIAMMAL, the Grandmother of Fr. Madalai Muthu, aged 94, expired on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2020. She lived to see her 10 Children, 40 Grandchildren, and 50 Great-Grandchildren. The Montfort family condoles her death and conveys our heartfelt sympathies to the members of the family.

## 8. BIRTHDAYS

October		November	
Fr. Richard	07	Fr. Francis B.	18
Fr. Robert P	13		
Fr. Francis X.	20		
Fr. Mohan	20		
Fr. Anthony P	24		
Fr. Alphonse	30		

