



SANDESH

Indian Montfortian Communication

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From the Desk of the Provincial

A person who is a saint will teach many things from his / her life. Often we think of a Saint as a special person, holy, perfect, the one who has a heroic virtue, or one who can work miracles, etc. A person who is imperfect but takes seriously the path of perfection, follows the path of mortification to reach sanctification. The words of Cardinal Newman are very inspiring: "If you ask me what you are to do to be perfect, I say, first do not lie in bed beyond the time of rising; give your first thoughts to God; make a good visit to the Blessed Sacrament; say the Angelus devoutly; eat and drink to God's glory; say the Rosary well; be recollected; keep out bad thoughts; make your evening meditation well; examine yourself daily; go to bed in good time, and you are already perfect." These thoughts simply say that if anyone leads a simple way of life to its full, one can become a perfect being.

In 1Cor 1:30 Paul writes about this aspect: The saints are those who are identified with Jesus Christ by faith, and they are given the status of "holy" before God.

The life of a saint always teaches us that we are vulnerable. Though many times they know that they are wounded and yet they love people, love them at any cost. The saints can realize and teach the same to us, that forgiveness and reconciliation are two different matters. While forgiveness, for them, is the grace and a gift of God, on the other hand, reconciliation requires a change of heart. The saints have shown us the path of reconciliation and forgiveness to become perfect beings. They set an example of moving from words to deeds.

We are entering into a new Liturgical year and the season of Advent. Advent is a time of preparation, recalling the hope surrendering Christ's first coming and looking forward to His second coming. During this time, our journey of faith continues more intensely away from the bondage of worldliness. The primary focus of Advent season is the comings of Jesus, past, present, and future – at the first Christmas, during this holy season, and at the end of our lives or the Second Coming. The Saints, who walked the talk, become great models for us to walk our talk in this Advent season. Advent is a time to prepare ourselves to welcome the Child Jesus in all His vulnerability into our lives and to see Christ in all those entrusted to us in their most vulnerable moments. When we do that, we would have walked in the footsteps of the saints in preparing ourselves for Christ, and it is a journey that will not disappoint any of us.

Our Founder, St. Montfort, shows us Blessed Virgin as the perfect model Saint to imitate: "The greatest saints, those richest in grace and virtue will be the most assiduous in praying to the Most Blessed Virgin, looking up to her as the perfect model to imitate and as a powerful helper to assist them." I wish you all a very holy season of Advent!

Fr. J. Joseph, SMM
Provincial Superior
Vice-Province of India

SAINT OF THE 21ST CENTURY:

St. Carlo Acutis - The Web Missionary



“Truly Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.” (Lk:28)

1. Son of Andrea and Antoniana from Milan, Italy, who had travelled to London for the purpose of business. He was born in London, on May 3rd, 1991.
2. Parish Priests, Teachers, Classmates, and Security Guards remarked to his mother that he “was a very special son”.
3. He never missed his daily appointment with the Holy Mass and the Rosary. He spoke of the Eucharist Adoration: “if we get in front of the sun, we get suntans...but when we get in front of Jesus in the Eucharist, we become Saints”. He was convinced that he would not grow old. “I will die young”. Therefore, he filled his days: with teaching Catechism, feeding the poor at the Caritas Cafeteria, and spending time with children of the Oratory.
4. He was fascinated by the Marian apparitions at Lourdes and Fatima. His main aim: has to be the Infinite and not the Finite. The Infinite is our Homeland.
5. He took St. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles as his inspiration model, who committed to bring the Gospel to every corner of the globe to the point of Martyrdom. Carlo

says: “All people are born as Originals, but many die as Photocopies”.

6. Attending a presentation on Little Eucharistic Miracles in 2002, he was fascinated by what he learnt about the Eucharist. Since then he decided to show to the world, the Miracle of the True Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. He placed his Computer knowledge at the service of others and used it to help his friends. He took him two years to organize Exhibitions on the Holy Eucharist.
7. He befriended everybody - gatekeepers, janitors, domestic servants that worked in the neighbourhood, who were often non - European with Muslim and Hindu backgrounds.
8. One such Domestic worker was Rajesh, a Hindu Brahmin, whom he befriended and who was converted to Christianity. Rajesh says: “I was a baptized Christian, because Carlo affected me with his profound faith, his charity, and his purity.”

POPE’S ENCYCLICAL ON SOLIDARITY AND FRATERNITY

Fratelli Tutti - Pilgrims Without Borders

On the 3rd of October, on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, released the third encyclical letter of his papacy entitled “Fratelli Tutti” - on Fraternity and Social Friendship. In this time of social distancing, the Holy Father reminds us that we ought to love our brothers and sisters as much when they are far away as we are with them.

This ENCYCLICAL was inspired by the Abu Dhabi Declaration’s, “Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together” that seeks to encourage stronger relationships between people to promote

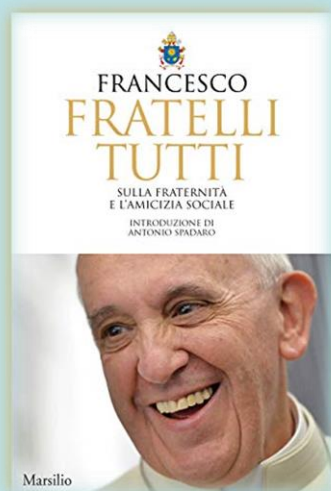
coexistence among peoples and to confront extremism and its negative impacts. (Document signed by His Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al Azhar Dr. Ahmed At-Tayyeb, on 4 February 2019).

Fratelli Tutti says: "we, the believers of the different religions, know that our witness to God benefits our societies" and, "We Christians ask that, in those countries where we are a minority, we be guaranteed freedom, even as we ourselves promote that freedom for non-Christians in places where they are a minority"[26]

The Good Samaritan

Pope Francis offers a reflection on Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan as a "ray of light in the midst of what we are experiencing" (56). The Holy Father senses: That the natural love we experience for our family members should be consciously extended to those who are strangers to us. This call to care for strangers must be expressed both personally, case by case, and communally, united as a family. Each new day should be seen as an opportunity to "include, integrate, and lift up the fallen" rather than be an opportunity "for own power plays" (77).

What Does the Encyclical Teach Us?



1. Makes us aware of global problems that call for global actions, sounding the alarm against a "culture of walls" that favors the proliferation of organized crime, fueled by fear and loneliness (see Par

27-28).

2. We all, are co-responsible in creating a society that is able to include, integrate and lift up those who have fallen or are suffering (see Par 77). It exhorts Christians to recognize Christ in the face of every excluded person (see Par 85).

3. The spiritual stature of a person's life is measured by love, which always "takes first place" and leads us to seek better for the life of the other, far from all selfishness (Par 92-93).

4. The sense of solidarity and of fraternity begin within the family, which are to be safeguarded and respected in their "primary and vital mission of education" (Par 114).

5. The right to live with dignity cannot be denied to anyone, and since rights have no borders, no one can remain excluded, regardless of where they are born (see Par 121)

6. To open humanitarian corridors; to assure lodging, security, and essential services; to offer opportunities for employment and training; to favour family reunification; to protect minors; to guarantee religious freedom.

7. What is needed above all is global governance, an international collaboration... on behalf of the supportive development of all peoples (see Par 129-132).

8. To promote, "A better kind of politics", which represents valuable forms of charity ... placed at the service of the common good (see Para 180) and recognizes the importance of people, available for discussion and dialogue.

9. The task of politics, moreover, is to find a solution to all that attacks fundamental human rights, such as social exclusion; the marketing of organs, tissues, weapons, and drugs; sexual

exploitation; slave labour; terrorism, and organized crime.

10. Life must enter into the “art of encounter” with everyone, even with the world’s peripheries and with original peoples, because “each of us can learn something from others. No one is useless.

11. To forgive does not mean to forget, but to renounce the destructive power of evil and the desire for revenge.

12. Vehemently reaffirm: “Never again war!” With the money invested in weapons, the Pope suggests instead, the establishment of a global fund for the elimination of hunger (see Para 255-262).

13. In the name of human fraternity, dialogue be adopted as the way, common cooperation as conduct, and mutual knowledge as method and standard (see Para 285).

THE MONTFORTIAN TODAY - FRATELLI WITHOUT BORDERS



In the Acts of
General
Chapter
2017,
Superior
General Fr.
Luiz Augusto
Stefani, S.M.M

noted in his introduction, “It is enough to read some of Montfort’s Canticles or the Prayer for Missionaries to grasp how Father de Montfort was a man always on the move, a missionary who knew no borders. He was a priest who let himself be driven by the force of the Holy Spirit to evangelize the people.

The Montfortian is a “pilgrim without borders”, who looks with love - as a father and a mother

- on children, adolescents, and the most vulnerable persons in this world. He will be incapable of hurting them because he will see in each one of them the face of Saints Francesco and Jacinta, the little shepherds recently canonized by Pope Francis in Fatima. The Montfortian of today, a “pilgrim without borders” is a prophetic sign of fraternity in this world wounded by, inequality and indifference. He feels united, a member of a community, capable of moving from words to action.

FR. SANTINO BREMBILLA in 2005 in his Letter to members of the Congregation, noted that: “a true experience of communion in the community requires:

1. Authentic and true personal relationships:

To avoid falling into an ideology which would exclude others,

to avoid falling into a moralism which would sit in judgment of others,

to avoid falling into use of power which would crush others,

to avoid falling into the temptation of money which would divide us from each other,

to avoid falling into the temptation of the self-centered “I” which would dominate the place of others.

2. A capacity for silence and for listening:

To be open to life, the suffering, the path of every confrere. None of us is the “owner” of life and grace, neither young nor old, neither the West nor any other group. Everyone has his richness, and being attentive to this allows us to have the experience of giving and receiving in order to grow together....

3. The courage to speak and the courage to question:

The community is a place of participation, of sharing. We must not fear differences, because what is different is a contribution to the quest.

In the community, everyone must see himself as a co-responsible and necessary contributor to the search for ways and means to be an "apostolic body" of brothers who live for the primacy of the Kingdom.

CONCLUSION

In the first weeks when Coronavirus was unleashed on an unsuspecting worldwide population, one political leader kept saying, "we are in this together." "We are in this together" means raising up to be our best selves and being "the Good Samaritan" to one another. Fratelli tutti is about the plural pronouns: "we," "our," and "us," NOT "I," "me," "mine" and "my" pronouns. We are in this together, all on our common home - BROTHERS, PILGRIMS WITHOUT BORDERS.

Fr. Anthony Pereira SMM

MY MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE IN BETHAMCHERLA (KURNOOL) MISSION

It was on the 18th of November 2019, I reached this Mission station. It's now a year into it. In the course of my travels from Kurupam to Bangalore and again to Bethamcherla, I have made my life happy and peaceful, and thank God for his graciousness. As I stepped inside the churchyard, I dedicated myself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, established in the year 1976 by Mill Hill Missionaries. This Parish Mission was entrusted by the Diocese of Kurnool to the Montfort Fathers in 1996. I work with Fr Varaprasad SMM, the Parish Priest of Bethamcherla, a good human being with

humor, a person everyone knows, and a priest the parishioners love. This parish station consists of Seven substations, Six Chapels, Eight Catechists, and a Religious Convent-cum-School Campus managed and administered by the Sisters of St Anne's Bangalore.

During worship, people stay in the church comfortably for two to three hours - Men, women, girls, boys, youth, children all assemble once a month in communion as a Parish for worship. In the beginning, a young man from the Parish would help me in getting familiarize with parishioners, villages, and the surroundings. This mission set the rudder for both my spiritual and academic paths as I shared my skills and time in the nearby school, the parish, and community activities.

I have been able to recognize my individual potential in different spheres. The virtue of generosity has allowed me to become fully human in everything that I do. I make all efforts to understand and make myself understood. People are very hospitable, warm-hearted, generous, and religious too. I learnt to be patient, to plan, and to adapt myself, using the lessons and skills taught in my training - to study and pray, work, and play.

Today in the present circumstances of Covid-19 more than ever, I am convinced of my call to be a witness with-in and with-out, as I am exposed to the community from dawn to dusk during the lockdown period. In the community, my efforts are always appreciated and encouraged, either in its cooking or cleaning, gardening or prayer, or the reflections I share during every day Holy Mass at the Convent or the house-visit that I make in the evening. During COVID-19, no church activities, no academics, no travel, no faithful's walk inside the church, but these shutdowns don't stop us from working and praying in the campus.

On the day of religious festivities of different Faiths, both Hindus and Muslim brethren, we were invited by our neighbours to be part of their celebration - Ganesh Chaturthi, Krishna Janmashtami, and the sacred month of Ramadan. Some of them even provided the meals to us. During these days I am in constant contact with my elderly parents in Chennai, strengthening them with courage and making them happy by conveying about my safety. Our God is a God of surprise and reveals Himself in a thousand ways to those who open to His presence and action in the world.

These two years of my mission training affected my life in a much more positive way than any of the other experiences. It affected my ability to set and follow through on goals in my daily duties and responsibilities. I learned to be a better tutor as well as a community leader, rubbing shoulders with co-workers and people in-charge. I acknowledge that, as a missionary in training, I carry home a wealth of knowledge, experience, firm faith in God, and increased knowledge of self and of the teachings of Christ, an improvement in communication skills, an increase in confidence, and an overwhelming love for the people with whom I served.

- Bro. Allan SMM

MY EXPERIENCE DURING COVID ISOLATION

Every experience has something to teach us or something that we have to learn from it, whether it is in our ministry, at home, in our responsibility, or life and death matters. With the arrival of the great Pandemic into this world, we, all of us have



an unforgettable experience. It made us think that life is more important than money, possessions, and properties. It made us turn to God in prayer with humility for all our survival. It has brought to our senses that we are not the owners of this universe but mere passing beings in this world. Great was the experience of humanity that it cannot forget the year 2020. This year was both a blessing and a difficult time for me. Blessing, to have Bible Convention conducted from 29th Feb 2020 -1st Mar 2020 very successfully at KD Jola parish in Srikakulam Diocese. It was a wonderful joy that was soon forgotten with the arrival of the Pandemic.

The world remembers the struggles of humanity due to Covid-19 and specially those tested positive and lost their lives, but for me, it was an experience of God's love. As I was with the people involved, this pandemic had taken me away from the people and left alone for something else. It was a great battle I had in ICU for nine days at St. Joseph's Hospital, Vizag. I lost my hope to survive as I had great breathing struggles and my eyes were with tears and had a lot of fear, anxiety, and worries whether I will see again my family, my community, and my parish, where I am right now. I had sleepless nights because of the breathing problem and a great number of people offered Masses and prayers for my good health. This allows me to say that if we trust in the Lord, we can see the wonders of the Lord through various means in our lives. It strengthened my faith, my prayer life, and to see the work of the Lord in my life. If I am what I am today, it's purely because of God's countless blessings and prayers of many. Therefore, thanking God and everyone who prayed for me, I say, "Stay Home and Stay Safe."

-Fr. Ravi Thappeta, SMM

DEEPAWALI - FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Deepavali is the feast of all the Indians; in particular, it is celebrated in a profound way by Hindu brethren. The Deepavali festival is the festival of the whole Country. It is celebrated in every nook and corner. Thus, this festival also creates a sense of oneness among the people. It becomes a symbol of unity. India has been celebrating this feast for ages. Indians consider it both historical and religious. It is one of the biggest feasts of Hindus, just as Christians have the Easter celebration.

The meaning of the word Deepavali or Diwali:

It is the festival of lights: *deepa* means "light" and *avali* means "a row" to become "a row of lights." The clay *diyas* (lamps) are used mostly according to tradition. Deepavali is marked by four days of celebration, which literally illuminates the country with its brilliance and dazzles, people with its joy. Deepavali symbolizes the spiritual "victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance" Deepavali falls on either in the month of October or November - KARTHIK, according to Hindu CALENDAR.

On the day of Deepavali, there are hectic activities all over the country. People call and invite their nearest ones. At this festival, sweets are made and distributed among friends and relatives. People indulge in fun and frolic on the day of Deepavali. Young and the old, high and low, wear new clothes on this day. Children and teenagers are dressed in their most glittering and dazzling dresses.

Spiritual Significance of the Light or Deepa

Deepa or light by nature is altruistic, it doesn't have second thought whether to give light to

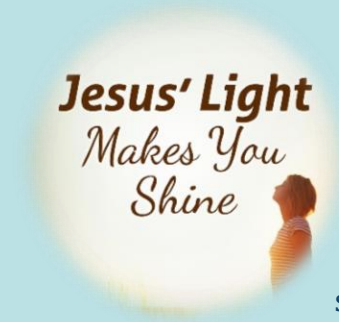
this or that person, to the rich or poor, to the low or high, it shines for everyone equally. As we celebrate the feast of Light, everybody imitates the nature of altruistic light. Light dispels the darkness; where there is light there is

life in fullness. Each one of us has been given the light, a spark within us, for Christians it is given at Baptism. The feast of Deepavali or light should ignite us to carry out that light and shine to become light for the other as Jesus said "you are the light of the World" {Mt 5:14}.

Give and forgive: It is common practice that people forgive and forget the wrongs done by others during Deepavali. There is an air of freedom, festivity, and friendliness everywhere.

Unite and unify: Deepavali is a unifying event, and it can soften even the hardest of hearts. It is a time when people mingle about in joy and embrace one another. Those with keen inner spiritual ears will clearly hear the voice of the sages, "O children of God unite, and love all." The vibrations produced by the greetings of love, which fill the atmosphere, are powerful. When the heart has considerably hardened, only a continuous celebration of Deepavali can rekindle the urgent need of turning away from the ruinous path of hatred.

Like in other religious scriptures and traditions, the Bible is full of metaphors of light and darkness. Starting right from the very beginning, the first recorded act of God in the creation of the heavens and earth was to say "Let there be light," and separate the light from the darkness. Light is a metaphor for God's



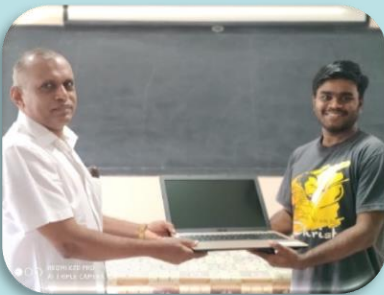
own character. "God is light; in him, there is no darkness at all." He is pure, beautiful, and the source of knowledge and truth. Not only is light an expression of God's character, but it also symbolizes the word of God in its forms, particularly in its written form. The author of the Bible's longest psalm expresses it this way: "your word is a lamp to my feet, and light unto my path." It is through the word that we learn to distinguish good and evil, wisdom and folly, reality and illusion, falsehood and truth. Let the light of Christ enlighten every one of us during this festival to be a light to others.

- Fr. Prakash SMM

NEWS AND VIEWS

FORMATION:

Maria Bhavan: Theologians received new Laptops on the 5th of November for their academic purposes with the help of some generous donors. We thank Mr. Deepak and his family for the generosity shown towards the priesthood in the Church. We thank also other donors, Mr. Rayappa, Mr. Prakash and Mr. Joshy for their generous contribution.



The Novitiate community on October 31st 2020, had a privileged pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Health Shrine at Harihara, Karnataka. Our Lady in Harihara is known for her endowment of special powers to bring in miraculous healings in the



lives of countless believers who implore her assistance. We were accompanied by our Frs. Roshan, Michael S., and Fr. Melwin (a Diocesan Priest).

Montfort Nivas: The Pre-novices were introduced to Carnatic vocal singing in-order to help them improve their voice, and sing better. A crash-course was organized on Computer Basics at Idaya college, Kumbakonam by Rev. Sr. Yougin Amala FIHM, the Principal of the College. Our brothers made use of the class and learned the basics of the computer for the first time. The community is provided 3 Desktops for skill development by



the Province. The Pre-novitiate community went on a pilgrimage to St. Antony's Shrine, Veerakurichi in the dioceses of Thanjavur. We spent the day in prayer and concluded with the Eucharistic celebration.

Guru Mandir: Postulants who were stranded at home during COVID-19, arrived in Guru Mandir, Mysore for their formative process. The newcomers too who were in different communities also have arrived. The Vice-Province and Gurumandir community warmly welcome all the students, especially our new candidates. We request all in the Province to pray for their intentions.

Hirekerur: The six new candidates who were residing in Hirekerur community under the guidance of Fr. Prakash, received instructions and



training in Grammar, prayer, music, singing, liturgy, good manners and the brief life of Montfort. Now they are marching towards Gurumandir, Mysore for further formation.

MISSION:

Kurupam: St. Montfort Community (School) situated at Kurupam in Vizianagaram District, has a unique blend of mission - of Education, Formation and Evangelization. Our presence in the vicinity is a gospel witness by itself. Taking advantage of the God-given opportunity, we do guide the youth, to work towards an effective future. St. Montfort community is steadily progressing, in the spirit and zeal of the holy founder St. Louis Marie de Montfort.

Dindigul: Fr. Sebastian with all his hard work



built up a new presbytery in the mission and ready to welcome the confreres. Fr. Prabhakar will be

joining Fr. Sebastian in the mission to reach out to him in his pastoral ministry, till the end of March 2021. We wish all God's blessings to both of them for their mission work.

Preaching Ministry: Fr. Reni Joseph preached a retreat to CMI priests in Mysore. Fr. David Joseph preached a retreat in St. Anne's Church, Mysore in collaboration with Br. Joseph, a lay preacher. Fr. Deepak preached a nine days Novena at Christ the King Church, Malleswaram, Bangalore. We congratulate them and wish them God's blessing for future ministry.

Arrival of Fr. Norbert Lobo:

Fr. Norbert is back from Goa, and presently residing in Maria Bhavan. A very warm welcome to him. He will be moving to Guru Mandir, the place of his appointment, in the coming days. We all wish him good health. We thank his family members very specially for all their generosity and care towards him during his stay in Goa. May God bless them.

OBITUARY

On the 26th of October, **Mr. Jaffrey Braganza**, a family member of Fr. Anthony Pereira passed away due to a heart attack. **Mr. Robin D'Souza**, aged 27 the son of the cousin sister of Fr. Deepak expired on the 9th of November. We wish heartfelt condolences to both the confreres and their bereaved family members.

In Memoriam: The month of November invites us to recall the memories of our dearly departed confreres. The Vice-Province requests every individual mission, community, and confreres to pray and offer Holy Masses for their departed souls.

Birthdays: December

Fr. Peter M - 06	Fr. Balashowri - 25
Fr. Michael KJ - 06	Fr. Prem kumar -28
Fr. Johnson - 13	Fr. Michael M. -30
Fr. Bala Raju - 23	Fr. Deepak -30

January

Fr. Peter S. -06	Fr. John Marie -31
Fr. Rayappa J. -20	

