

The Compassionate Pastor

December 2019

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120TH ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY

04-03-2020

"It was the most wonderful day of my life."

- Fr R F C Mascarenhas



Fr R F C Mascarenhas
on the occasion of Silver Ordination Anniversary
on 4 March 1925



Prayer for the Beatification of the Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas

God our loving Father, we thank you for choosing your servant Raymond to be your faithful priest and the Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, His ardent devotion to the Eucharist, love for the Mother Church, zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel and his compassionate love especially for the poor have borne abundant fruit. Like him may we too in union with Mary, our Mother, become bearers of the Good News.

We humbly implore you Father to grant us this special request through the intercession of your beloved servant Raymond...(mention your request).

Deign O Lord, to grant your beloved servant the honours of the altar for your greater glory and the spreading of the Gospel.
Amen.

Glory be....

Imprimatur

Most Rev. A. P. D'Souza

Bishop of Mangalore

Mangalore

16.06.2008

N.B. Please report any favours or miracles received through the intercession of the Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas to:

**The Vice-Postulator, Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the
Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas, Bethany Convent, Bendur, Mangalore, D.K. 575002.**

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THE COMPASSIONATE PASTOR

December 2019

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EDITORIAL

Homelessness



"Sister, I am getting frightened, will we be sent out from India, if so, where will we go?" sobbed a fear stricken high school Muslim student before her principal. The sister eased her fears with the words of hope and assurance, saying, "don't worry my child, nothing will happen, God will protect you." Perhaps, we have never thought of such a predicament in our lives, neither did that child. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was a shocking tremor to the citizens of our country, who believe and uphold the democratic principles. The CAA endangers human right principles that are enshrined in the Indian Constitution which ensures equality amongst all communities, promotes co-existence, inspires secularism and a happy living together of all religious communities. The present chaos and uncertainty of the CAA and NRC (National Register of Citizens), has created terror and fear, anxiety and worry, spurring violence and alas creating a sense of fundamental insecurity. It is the feeling in so many of our fellow countrymen of homelessness and rootlessness.

The historical context in which Jesus was born, looked no better than our times. Political, social, economic, forces were at loggerheads. Jesus could not get a decent place to be born. The parents of Jesus were exposed to harsh and inhuman environment for a baby to be born. The King of kings and Lord of lords, had to be born in a manger. The birth of the baby Jesus announces already to the type of people He would love and live for. This is what we learn from our beloved Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas, He understood, lived and proclaimed the 'manger spirituality' all his life. He took bold and radical stand to live, work and dedicate his life for the people on the peripheries of the society, specially the outcasts, tribals, people of lower income, marginalized women and children. The Crib touched his inner self so much, as he wrote, "How much did not Joseph and Mary suffer when they were rejected a shelter which was extremely necessary for them? ...When they found a cave at last, they made for it with humility in submission to the will of God. ...What destitution were they thrown into?" (Sr Bertha, *From the Lips of the Founder* p 88).

Our Servant of God, did love to meditate on the nativity scene and draw powerful inspiration. Realizing the difficulties faced by Jesus, Mary and Joseph at the Nativity of our Blessed Lord, he said, "What a state of destitution they were thrown into! If your parents were subjected to this kind of a trial what would you not feel today?"

The 'Manger' and the realities surrounding it, such as humility, poverty, helplessness, neediness..... influenced so much our dear Father, that his life and ministry was a translation of the birth scene of the Lord. Historical records powerfully manifest the way in which Mgr Raymond reached out to help the homeless even to the extent of begging money from different persons and sources. He was truly a compassionate pastor. He almost mandated the Sisters of Bethany Congregation that he founded, to open homes for the poor and the homeless. While serving as the parish priest of Udyavar in Udupi district, he put up numerous houses for those who were affected by floods.

I strongly believe that if he was alive today, he would have been in the forefront to speak powerfully against CAA which denies basic rights to the poor and victims of social injustice. For in the sight of Monsignor Raymond, they are the faces of God and providing justice for them would be a real and genuine service to God. During his life time, our loving founder always stood for the rights of the poor and championed such causes. Pope Francis at various occasions has said that there is no justification for homelessness and Monsignor Raymond would have said likewise. As we celebrate the great feast of Christmas, let the little babe born in the manger be solace and comfort for those worried and frightened, for those homeless and uprooted that they may find a happy and joyful shelter. May all citizens of our country enjoy, peace, love, security and may our country be a happy home of love for all.



Sr M Lillis BS
Editor

THE CONTEXT THAT SHAPED MGR RAYMOND MASCARENHAS

- Rt Rev Mgr Denis Prabhu

Each and everyone of us is born and brought up not just in the physical spectrum but equally so in spirit too and largely the psyche depends much upon the family heritage, even for three or four generations along with the cultural environment in surroundings. Several books and articles have been published, symposiums and lectures conducted, dramas and plays enacted, on the life and the ministry of Rt Rev Mgr RFC Mascarenhas, Servant of God - the first among many holy Konkani Catholics. The heritage and culture in and around a family, and also the overall scenario of the village, state, and country at large, has a great role to play in the life of every person, the impact can never be calculated. A peep into the historical situation of the time of the parents of the 'Servant of God,' late Lazarus and Joanna Mascarenhas, will give the reader a fair view of the life and ministry of the Servant of God. The family of this Catholic couple lived in Shimoga town and district; they belonged to a Konkani Catholic family of pre-captivity in old Mangalore. Christianity in Mangalore and Kanara/South Kanara District in those times was strong and reinforced with deep faith.

The pre-independence scenario:

This was the reinforced background of the Mascarenhas family when they migrated from Mangalore to Shimoga, on government appointment given to Mr Lazarus Mascarenhas, under the British Government of the time. The situation in Indian subcontinent and in Mangalore and Shimoga was similar. The country was ruled by the British who commanded the subjugation of the native people. In the agriculture sector or in the white collar job sector, their loyalty was deeply servile, as was the integrity of our folks. This has seeped strongly into the genes of the Indian generally very faithful. To keep the body and soul together and live, the village folk had to work hard from the early hours of the

morning till the sunset. If they cooked, it was only rice with some vegetable. There was hardly one set of clothes to wear when the people have to go out of home and with bare minimum they were clothed while working in the fields. They depended only on the monsoons (heavy rains) and the winter. The summer was so acute, one had no option than to seek shelter from the hot sun in some available way. The weekly market or shandy, was the only time the villagers took their vegetables and wares from their cottage industries to barter or sell. We may now consider them 'poor people' but the unit of measure was incomparable in those times.

Simple living and inner peace kept them in good health, devoid of illness which would disturb wellness. If a lady was to deliver, the neighbouring ladies gave their assistance. When a child was sick, the neighbours came to the rescue. From the birth till the death it is the neighbourhood that helped each other and lived in an amicable relationship. In early years before the World War I, there were no bridges across rivers, no roads; people travelled on foot for business and social activities.

Coming to the spectrum of education in a Taluka, there was hardly a Primary School from Class I to Class IV. One who had studied up to IV was eligible to teach in such schools. After the Primary education, there was no further education in the villages. As a result when India got Independence from the British in 1947, the rate of literacy was not more than 2% in the country. As someone said in those times people worked to eat and ate to live. They did not have any kind of occupation except agriculture. Their life was down to earth and their habits were temperate. It must be noted that addiction to alcohol was not uncommon though. In spite of all this the family bonds were strong. Among Catholics there was hardly a divorce in a parish or in a village, about the present it not be expressed. If life was impossible among the married, at the most they lived separate until someone brought them together. Religion played a great role among the Christians, safeguarding the families and family life. Since Christianity dates back to 16th century, nearly 500 years ago in South Kanara, the

faithful were deep rooted in faith. The infant mortality was very high. Life expectancy during the 1940s was 40 years on an average. Due to several hundreds of subjugation of the people under Muslim reign in India and in addition 200 years of British rule, the whole country was reduced to abject poverty. If we speak about the disciplined Catholic life they had every opportunity to be educated informally by the priests, who had come as missionaries to South Kanara from Goa.

Early education system in India :

Education in India, particularly South Kanara, surveys done in the beginning of 19th century show that literacy was less than 2%. When we use the word literacy we note that it enabled the general public to affix their signature. No doubt, that educational hubs were in existence in South Kanara and elsewhere in India, due to the inspiration and efforts of Brahmins wherever they might have been, the purpose of basic education or literacy was to read, write and to recite during the Hindu ceremonies. Step by step education was prolonged and was made available generally. It is a matter of surprise to us living in the 21st century that in the city of Mangalore, the schools were named as Brahmin schools. Till the advent of European, Protestant missionaries, no student other than Brahmins, was admitted to the formal schools in Mangalore. It was very difficult for the missionaries to introduce a non-brahmin to the schools. If a non-brahmin was admitted, the brahmins withdrew. The protestants really made a big headway to cross the barriers of caste and creed in the field of education. However it took time in the 20th century to introduce formal education to females. Christian missionaries realised that the progress in India was possible only through education. Hence wherever a Cross was planted in a town or a remote village, there came up a school. In the beginning it was meant only for boys. Later on, it was extended to girls too.

Cultural background:

The village and town life of the common people was simple. Religion did not largely divide the people. There was a fellow

feeling and co-operation in most fields. In South Kanara, one would generally be fully conversant in three languages simultaneously - Konkani, Kannada and Tulu. A Catholic could not live in this district without knowing the other languages, though his/her mother tongue was Konkani. When did a child begin to learn languages other than one's mother tongue? To this question even today nobody is able to pin point. Due to human and essential interaction, co-operation and neighbourhood relations, people learnt languages of the people spoken around them. Regarding Christians there were strict prohibitions to intermingle in religious activities of other religions. But, people respected the other religions and as Christians loved their own religion. Since there were deep memories of inquisition in Goa the Christians were very careful to maintain a proper stand on things with care. However, we are proud to say that apart from religious practices people lived amicably and helped each other in need. Though much could be said and written about the various facets of life in the larger 'South Kanara', it suffices for our purpose to glance the past to understand the present.

Coming to the main issue at hand, the life and ministry of the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas, was like a mushroom who surprisingly came into history. He was the seventh child among thirteen children to his parents. It was a highly God-fearing family though they had migrated temporarily due to government civil employment, they had carried with them their religious practices of deep faith in God and the Church's teaching. They educated their children in both, faith and secular education. The Servant of God knew the joys and sorrows and the riches and poverty in the family and in the neighbourhood. He had seen face to face the hard work and probity of his parents. In all situations they knelt before the altar and prayed for God's blessings on their work and family. Our present families ought to understand well by looking at the families who had struggles as one has even today in a family.

The young boy Raymond it is evident had a pleasant way of mingling with his siblings and companions, senior and junior and adjust according to the situation for a good life. This gave him the right direction for his future mission. The providence of God, was a design and not a mere chance that he was born in a God fearing family and received a good education in spite of several odds. The sacrifice of the parents and their generosity is admirable. Their love for their children was beyond all worldly norms. It might have been the dream of the parents that their prized son should become a priest. They had many good examples of the families in Mangalore who had given their children to the priestly and religious life. The Konkani priests from Mangalore were educated both in Goa and Verapoly before any formal education in terms of priestly studies was initiated in Mangalore.

Mission advances:

His secular education as well as seminary formation was praiseworthy. His early years of priesthood as assistant and parish priest were totally pastoral. He began to know his people by name. He knew their struggles to live a good family life, raise a large family and educate their children and lead them to their future. When people were struggling to live due to a big family, he personally and without the knowledge of others helped them. He kept Jesus as his model who said, "I am the good Shepherd. . . I know my own and my own know me..." (Jn 10:11-18). This is the secret of his life why people began to love him and admire him. For any programmes that took place in and around his parish, Fr Raymond was invariably invited. His presence meant a lot to them. His word of encouragement as a person of God ordained feelings was a tonic and guide for day-to-day lives. He raised the parish of Bendur which was without a proper focus due to the distances and barren terrain transformed into a community of the faithful was to be imitated even today. The Parish Church of Bendur taken as a epicentre, the people had to come to the Church from the boundaries of Omzoor Parish in the east and the boundaries

of Milagres Parish till Maravoor in the South and the boundaries of Ullal Parish. The good shepherd Rev Fr Raymond walked the hills and dales and cycled long distances to meet and know his flock. God had given him sturdy physique of a giant size having energy to traverse from end to end of his newly carved out parish at Bendur.

Though he had many matters to work on he never neglected his flock. All these comments are written here from the first hand witnesses of his entire life by his parishioners and the priests whom he sent to the seminary and got them ordained during his tenure at Bendur. Among the note worthy who have left accounts of are : Mgr Marian F C Castelino of revered memory, Mr A R D'Souza and so on. They were full of admiration for their vicar. Mgr MFC Castelino then 76 years) used to say that a priest like Mgr RFC was yet to be born in the diocese of Mangalore. He used to repeat his sayings, his advice, his sermons, instructions, his dealings and personal contacts with the parishioners were fit to be imitated by the priests of our times. Therefore this our Servant of God, could be truly said was "a good shepherd". He toiled for his parishes wherever he had been and the climax of his pastoral zeal was in Bendur parish.

As he took up the parish he preached the sermon on the 'valley of dry bones...' (Ezk 37) and he really transformed the parish of Bendur from 1914 to 1931, by infusing in his people the spirit of God transforming the dry bones into robust and faithful parishioners. He gathered them from the four winds and made them a people worthy of God. It was said that in tears the faithful bade him farewell and reached him to Bishop's House, Kodialbail. Those who are familiar with the pastoral services he rendered to the faithful at Bendur one would not value any criticisms or light talks about the Servant of God. While at Bendur, he was known to every family be they Christians or otherwise through various matters and missions, such as social, educational, pastoral and philanthropic and so on. So much so people encouraged him to contest the elections to Municipality of Mangalore. Truly he was

elected without contest. His popularity as a good pastor had gone beyond the caste, creed and colour.

His popularity is in no way out of place or considered an exaggeration. First and foremost he was a special person, endowed with gifts of head and heart. He was quick to grasp any enigmatic situation and propose remedies to solve the difficult questions. Whenever there was any tussle between the priest and people, in the time of Bishop Perini, SJ, it was the Servant of God who was sent as a emissary and a trouble-shooter to bring the situation to normalcy. Among the general public, Christians or not, they invariably sought the presence of the Servant of God and sought his advice and prayers. When he returned from his arduous work he was on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary in hand and prayed for God's intervention. He was found to be in many committees and he was invariably made the President of the committees.

Magnum Opus:

It would take volumes to write the details on the saga of starting the Religious Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany. One would get enough information from the volumes written of the establishment of an indigenous Congregation for women and that too for the poor from the villages and those who had a desire to become nuns in the church, but could not, due to the lack of needed education. Having established the 'Bethany Congregation', Monsignor Raymond, would visit the schools he had established in the rural areas and the priests who were very familiar with him to search for vocations. He brought them to the free boardings and got them educated and weighing their true desire to become nuns, he willingly accepted them. The beginnings in the 1920s, were very hard due to lack of financial backing to run the Congregation, he relied on the Providence and history of Bethany reveals how God came to his rescue consistently.

There were many avenues in the establishment of the Congregation which were terribly difficult and had to be surmounted. On one side the priests were keen to get the sisters to their parishes to teach in the schools and to teach Catechism to the little children. On the other side of the coin, we also read in history how sisters faced serious troubles in early times which caused them to leave the place and go to some other area. This had really made Mgr Raymond F C Mascarenhas, exceedingly sad and tensed. In addition the persons who created this tension were also spreading the rumours which apparently tarnished the image of Bethany. In his writings Mgr Raymond had mentioned that the fame of the founder was intertwined with that of the Congregation. These were the moments when he suffered acutely. The First World War had just ended when the Congregation was started. But the effects of the war were rampant in the villages as well as in towns. Basic amenities were absent and even food was lacking. Mgr had to feed the many hungry stomachs in the convents, in the orphanages, and in the boardings.

Again the Second World War started. The situation was not better than the first. The Congregation was in the infant stage. As prior to First World War there was the epidemic of plague which had wiped out families and villages so also the after-effects of the Second World War was the epidemic of T B This too had wiped out entire families in and around South Kanara. People had no money to buy medicine. There were no medicines and nutritious food to sustain the children, the sick and the aged people. Hence there were deaths wide spread and unaccounted. It did not spare the bishops, priests and religious too. Whereas the eyes of the critics fell more on Bethany. I strongly believe that the heart of Mgr might have bled at the situation. He had to battle to save his sick sisters, console the parents who lost their daughters due to T B and provide better conditions for health. However he struggled to make both ends meet. I could narrate many more trials and persecutions both from within and without. I suppose a group of seniors or eye-witnesses from Bethany would do a good job by

putting down their experiences in writing. One would definitely question Providence itself whether that was the price one had to pay. The growing communities had to be guided in their ordinary governance. The people at the helm of affairs were not that fully equipped or resourceful to tide over the situation.

Hence, Mgr Raymond spent sleepless nights keeping all these bitter feelings in his mind. For him it was Providence alone and Mother Mary, the Mother of Bethany and the Little Flower, the intercessor of Bethany would come to his rescue. Indeed it did surely happen. Otherwise how could a fragile human being without material resources or any assistance from the affluent, venture at such Magnum Opus !

Providence:

In the light of the above narration, which has only basic information, Mgr R F C Mascarenhas had undergone his personal formation by fire, so to say, to receive the blessings from the hands of the benevolent LORD as well as sufferings personal and that of Bethany. He obviously derived strength and was fortified from his sufferings to withstand all the attacks on Bethany, most uncharitable criticism, and maligning his good name.

If one were to go through Fr Founder's own writings, it will be well understood. In spite of all the fourteen stations of Calvary, he traversed under the unbearable weight of cross, God protected him. It was towards the end of his life, he had to be purified still with a new load of sufferings. With a lot of respect and love for Bethany I would observe that the load also was made unbearable to the Founder by his own. He suffered misunderstanding both from within and without Bethany; he was thoroughly misunderstood, at times maligned and even reprimanded by those who should have admired this great personality. But he was truly a grain of wheat Jesus sowed in the uneven mud and made him glitter after his submission to the Lord and even this submission was understood by his critics as a defiant submission to God and human beings. I skip over many other type of sufferings he endured patiently which is also seen in the lives of the saints. Most Rev Dr

Aloysius Paul D'Souza was inspired and chosen by God to begin the process of Beatification and Canonisation of Mgr Raymond F C Mascarenhas, as the very first saintly fruit from the Mangalorean Konkani Catholic community. It took more than a decade to prepare the documents to be sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. I was privileged to be present for half a day's Closing Ceremony of the process in St Sebastian Church, Bendur, Mangalore, during which dignitaries and bishops spoke so highly about the Servant of God which made me feel that he richly deserved the praises and compliments showered upon him.

He deserves to be imitated by us. One should learn from his life experience the role of the Providence of God and the intercession of Mother Mary. The Little Flower St Therese of Lisieux continues to shower the petals of graces upon Bethany and for the honour that was done to her and would intercede that Mgr Raymond F C Mascarenhas to receive the honours of the Altar of the Universal Roman Catholic Church.

With CHRISTMAS Season here, let me take this opportunity to wish all the readers of 'The Compassionate Pastor' and the followers of our own 'Servant of God' - A JOYFUL AND BLESSED SEASON OF GOOD WILL. My special wishes of CHRISTMAS to one and all for Happiness, Health and Graces from the Divine LORD all through NEW YEAR 2020.

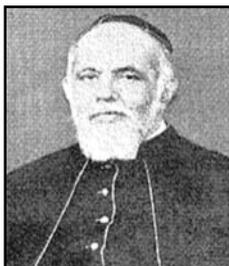


MEMORIES OF MGR RAYMOND'S CLOSE ASSOCIATES

From the letter of Fr A Lafleur, CFS, France, to Mgr Raymond – 2 March 1938

“Those who are chosen by Jesus to undertake such a divine work are invited to follow Him not only to the breaking of bread but also to the drinking of the chalice of his passion. Thus all Founders have to experience many difficulties and undergo numerous trials. Such reasons establish between our very Revered Founder and you a real spiritual relationship.”

Memory of Mgr Marian Castelino



A close friend of Mgr Raymond kept watch throughout the last hours of his life. He and the Sisters of Bethany surrendered him into the loving arms of God at 3.45 am on December 23, 1960. He was the first youth that Father Mascarenhas had directed to the Seminary from the newly created Bendur parish. He was the first priest to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice to celebrate his entry into heaven.

He recalls, “Monsignor Mascarenhas was a great man but he lived a simple life, a life of poverty and detachment. His food was quite simple. As regards his dress, I wonder if he had more than two pairs of trousers at any time. All his life at Bendur was spent in a small building, formerly a soda shop. Being quite close to the dusty road, it continually accumulated dust. One can imagine the inconvenience and nausea the pastor had to put up with for seventeen long years.”

Memory of a parishioner from Milagres Church

A prominent lay man of the Milagres parish commented: “It was a sad, sad spectacle to see this 84 or 85 year old priest going from house to house of his friends with a little bag in his hand to collect that little booklet which he had sent them. It made us respect him more than ever, because of his humble submission to what was ordered. If his great deeds in Mangalore won't make him a saint, certainly his humility should win him a crown of glory.”

MGR MASCARENHAS - FROM THE LAITY'S PERSPECTIVE

- Prof Edmund Frank

It is an occasion for Mangaloreans to be happy and honoured because the closing ceremony of the Diocesan inquiry of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the first Mangalorean Servant of God Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas concluded on 17 July 2019 at St Sebastian Church in Bendur, Mangalore. Following this the documents relating to him were submitted at the Nuncio's office in Delhi to be sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. This was the last phase to complete the formalities of the Diocesan phase which commenced in the year 2008. Coupled with this the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany is poised at stepping into a historic landmark, the Centenary of its Foundation which is all set to begin on 16 July 2020 and conclude on the same date in 2021.

Although it is not easy for anyone to capture in words and images of his life story, Mgr Raymond himself has painted it gloriously on the canvas of his life. Indeed he is a gift of Divine Providence to the Bethany Congregation in general and a glory to the diocese of Mangalore in particular. One thing becomes abundantly clear when we glance into his life story, that is, he was abundantly blessed by God and he in turn lived up to what Providence desired from him. His affable and obliging nature won for him friends and well wishers among his parishioners and elsewhere and we see donors and benefactors galore when he had projects to execute. This speaks volumes of how he could ensure the building of St Francis Xavier Church in Udyavar and St Sebastian Church in Bendur, Mangalore, both of which have withstood the test of time even a century later.

Fr Raymond is a shining example of a life of utter dedication to a noble ideal. In all vicissitudes of life he never swerved from

the straight path. In all simplicity and ardour, he loved the church from his earliest days and with singleness of purpose, he dedicated himself to her services single minded and most faithfully. Through continued and sustained effort Fr Raymond fully honed his talents, many extraordinary and placed them all at the feet of the church.

The Rector of St Aloysius College, Fr Paul Perini SJ was appointed Bishop of the Mangalore diocese in the year 1910. This was when Fr Raymond Mascarenhas was Vicar of the Most Holy Saviour Church in Agrar. Bishop Perini was quick to detect some extraordinary qualities of leadership in the young Fr Raymond and immediately drafted him to head many Committees and Commissions. No wonder when the people living in Bendur appealed to him to give them a separate parish, Bishop Perini was very happy since the request had come from the laity themselves.

It was in order then, that the Bishop appointed Fr Raymond as the first Vicar of the newly constituted Bendur parish on 19 August 1914. This cordial relationship with mutual trust between these two great men stood in good stead when Fr Raymond wanted the consent from Bishop Perini to found the Bethany Congregation. On Sunday, 23 August 1914, Fr Buzzoni SJ, the parish priest of Rosario Cathedral accompanied Fr Raymond to Bendur. They were welcomed by the people with a brass band and fire crackers. Fr Buzzoni then read out the decree of the Bendur parish and installed Fr Raymond as the parish priest. This was followed by Fr Raymond offering his first Mass in the Bendur parish.

Fr Raymond with his untiring zeal started the mammoth task of building the Bendur parish, now in its infancy. The parishioners had already started a fund collection drive for the new parish. As a zealous pastor, he worked to meet their spiritual, intellectual and even the material needs. A man of vision and foresight, he read the signs of the times and worked to meet the challenges both present and future. First thing he started was the devotion

to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the prayer apostolate through the Marian Sodality. His close rapport with the youth influenced many of them to join priestly and religious life. An eminent speaker gifted with a sharp memory, he preached with fluency and authority and people everywhere developed a liking to listen to his impressive homilies and eloquent speeches. As in his earlier parishes like Agrar and Udyavar, he received overwhelming support from the Bendur parishioners especially when building St Sebastian Church.

Fr Raymond remained a parish priest in Bendur for 17 years during which period in addition to the construction of St Sebastian Church, he established 10 schools and 9 Bethany convents in the diocese and around. The crowning glory though, in his illustrious life in Bendur was the founding of the indigenous Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany on 16 July 1921 with 4 lady teachers as pioneers. False prophets were quick to predict that the new Congregation that he founded would die with him.

Was it Providential or just coincidental that at every juncture, it was the Jesuit fathers who were the guides and mentors of Fr Raymond? His High School education was at St Aloysius, a Jesuit institution. The recommendation letter and good conduct certificate to join the seminary were issued by Fr A Cavadini SJ from St Aloysius High School. He was welcomed at the St Joseph's Seminary in Jeppu by the Jesuit Fathers. His entire training in the seminary was imparted by the Jesuits. It was again Bishop A Cavadini SJ who conferred on him the Orders of Diaconate on 1 October 1899 and also ordained him priest on 4 March 1900. Fr Raymond was appointed as the parish priest of Bendur by Bishop Perini SJ. He was also installed as the parish priest of Bendur by Fr Buzzoni SJ also a Jesuit. To write the Congregation Constitutions too, he took the assistance of a Jesuit Fr A Macry, SJ, Canon Law Lawyer on the faculty of the St Joseph's Seminary and that explains a close similarity of the Bethany spirituality and charism with those of the Jesuits. No wonder then that the educational apostolate

and upliftment of the poorest of the poor by opening for them gateways of education was beckoning Fr Raymond as he began laying the bricks for the foundation of Bethany.

The appointment of Fr Raymond as the Vicar General on 1 August 1931 by Bishop V R Fernandes, his assistant at Agrar, was an appropriate recognition of his merits. When he was called to a post of great responsibility and a position of dignity, he did not make a show of any elation at all. For the next ten years until he remained in office until 1941, Mgr Raymond had opened 3 orphanages, 9 Convents for the Bethany Sisters and 6 schools. Particular mention must be made of the love, loyalty and esteem in which he was held by people everywhere which immensely contributed to him handling successfully every endeavour he was assigned with. Very often he was deputed by the bishop as a troubleshooter to negotiate and settle amicably disputes among warring parties and families. He also had the added responsibilities of making visits to distant parishes in fulfilment of his pastoral role and duties. While some if not many would be tempted to be free from duty and responsibility, he loved duty and found pleasure and joy in it and even at times when it might go against the grain, he wouldn't shrink from it. Whatever be the post and place and task assigned to him was a place and task and post of honour and duty. He would apply himself to any task with earnestness and concentration of energy. It was this humble and unremitting toil coupled with the love and sacrifice in the discharge of duty that formed the source of his high potentiality and the secret of his remarkable efficiency.

Mgr Raymond's ability and stupendous energy to push towards perfect completion any assignment given to him or undertaken by him gives ample testimony to his hard work and fabulous knowledge. No wonder that he shone in every committee he was in.

VISITORS TO FOUNDER'S MEMORIAL

Bethany Lay Associates from Kollangana



Bethany Daughters



Visitors from Ranchi



Staff and Students of Jyoti Hr Pry School, Bangalore



Teachers from Punjab



**Brothers from St Joseph's Seminary, Jeppu, Mangalore
with Fr Boniface Pinto**



Students from Punjab



A congratulatory letter from Rome

Rome Recognises Founder's Work

Vatican City
January 7, 1950

Prot. N. 4827/49

Very Reverend and dear Father R. F. C. Mascarenhas,

I would like to take this opportunity to felicitate you on this memorable occasion of your Golden Jubilee in the Priesthood which you will celebrate with God's blessings on the 4th of March and on your 75th birthday.

Words are inadequate to express our profound appreciation for the tremendous work that you have accomplished during your fifty years in the Sacred Priesthood. Where our words fail, your endeavours, your labours on behalf of the many parishes and institutions of the Diocese of Mangalore, on behalf of the cause of Education and Catholic Literature, all will bear indelible testimony to your priestly zeal. You have left lasting monuments in the churches and schools you have built. Undoubtedly you have been an useful and intelligent instrument in the Provident Hand of God and many of His special Graces have guided you. To crown your noble work, you have founded the Congregation of the Little Flower's Sisters of Bethany, now comprising 236 members working for God and Country in four Dioceses of Western India. Your children are grateful to you after God, for the tremendous opportunity you have given them to perfect themselves and at the same time to aid others to follow in the footsteps of the Master.

This Sacred Congregation 'de Propaganda Fide' acknowledges with gratitude the work you have done for the Missions and heartily invokes Almighty God to shower you with singular blessings.

With best wishes and beseeching the Good Lord to continue to bless you and all dear to you, I am.

**Very sincerely yours in Christ,
(Sd) P. Card. Fumasoni Biondi, Prefect.**

Mgr Raymond was all along a man of prayer, a man consecrated to God and his fellow human beings. One could see him amidst his multifarious activities stealing some quality time to go before the Blessed Sacrament and spending time with the Lord. He had deep respect and genuine devotion to the Eucharist, which is at the heart of consecrated life in the church and which was emphasised by Pope St John Paul II in his Encyclical '*Ecclesia de Eucharista*' of 17 April 2003 was lived eminently by Mgr Raymond nearly a century ago. He endeared himself to all the Bethany Sisters in such a way that all of them had and have an affectionate and tender regard towards him even to this day. Even with the parishioners he showed a congenial nature and cultivated a cordial relationship with everyone who came in contact with him.

The quality of his talks and homilies on every imaginable subject baffled one's imagination. From these talks one easily understands that Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas was one of the biggest trend setters in the contemporary church history of the 20th century. Because of his scintillating and thought-provoking talks, he was invited on 29 December 1939, to give the keynote homily in Konkani on the closing day of the First Eucharistic Congress of the Diocese of Mangalore on the theme, 'What a Great Sacrament'. His encyclopaedic knowledge of the scriptures and contemporary affairs would inspire confidence and courage in the minds of the audience for resolute action. His talks and interventions at religious gatherings were highly theological and at the same time down to earth and existential.

We know that it is far more difficult to be simple than to be complicated. In all things, whether in character or demeanour, Mgr Raymond's excellence was his simplicity. He had no pretensions to any sort of superiority or greatness but had a disposition to oblige all especially those who sought his help at all hours with a sunny temperament and affability.

Life we all know has no smooth path for any of us. The very roughness of the path serves but to stimulate the climber to steadier and steadier steps until finally one reaches the path to glory. Mgr Raymond patiently traversed the rough and stormy path and successfully scaled the heights. But gradually he had to part with all the offices, the most important one being that of Vicar General on 3 March 1941. He saw the divine will in all these unexpected trials of his life and resigned to his will.

After laying down the office of the Vicar General, Mgr Raymond moved to the Bethany Mother House Campus and took up residence in a cottage which now stands right in front of the Generalate building, as Chaplain and Director of the Bethany Congregation. Some called him a social reformer. Then every reformer has to pay a price for his audacity and Mgr Raymond was no exception. In the twilight years of his life, he was misunderstood for no reason, misrepresented and viewed with suspicion. In 1958 Bishop Peres died on board the ship following a cardiac arrest on his way to Rome. As a consequence on April 30, 1958 Mgr AVD'Souza was appointed as Apostolic Administrator of the Mangalore Diocese until a new bishop was appointed. He happened to be the one whose conflict of interest with the Bethany Sisters had led to the unceremonious closing of Massabielle Convent at Bantwal on 31 May 1950.

Taking undue advantage of the fact that the Bethany Congregation was not declared of Pontifical Rite and was directly under and at the mercy of the local bishop the diocesan administrator trained his guns on Mgr Raymond making him a virtual prisoner in his own cottage, under house arrest so to say. He instructed the Bethany General to forbid the Sisters from going to him, except the one assigned for the purpose. Restrictions were also imposed on his movements and activities and most severe of all, he was stripped of all control over the management of Bethany which he had equated once to his very life. He was

branded an untouchable by his contemporaries and supporters and most of all his own religious community almost ostracised him. His dignity, status and identity, whatever one would like to call it were all put under wraps. As a fitting rebuke and true to his nature Fr Raymond did not react at all and showed happiness and joy in accepting what was dealt to him thereby making the perpetrators look stupid and helpless as if to regret their own actions.

The Administrator of the Diocese Mgr AVD'Souza was transferred to the Mysore Diocese as auxiliary to the bishop of Mysore on 31 March 1959. Bishop Raymond D'Mello assumed charge of the Mangalore Diocese as Bishop on 12 April 1959. This came as a blessing to the Bethany Sisters and Mgr Raymond as well.

Posterity now realised and acclaimed his true worth but after his death. Rightly so, his spiritual daughters too realised the stupidity of their own behaviour towards him and soon made amends. Today they have launched their Founder and Servant of God Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas, on the pathway to Beatification and Sainthood. As the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany glides into their centenary year it has the joy and contentment of being a global Congregation from an indigenously local Indian Congregation it was, during the initial decades of growth. On this special occasion let us also wish the Bethany Sisters well in their Educational, Social, Medical, Religious and Mission apostolate and pray that God continues to bless them and their work abundantly.

INCARNATION SPIRITUALITY IN THE LIFE OF RFC MASCARENHAS

- Sr Santhosh Maria BS

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).

The word ‘incarnation’ means to be made, or to become flesh; hence the Lord Jesus is referred to by many as ‘The Incarnate Word.’ The incarnation of the Son of God was absolutely necessary to make possible our salvation.

The Word of God makes it abundantly clear that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. We read in Hebrews 10:4-7, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, But, a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me to do Your will, O God.’ “

The mystery of Incarnation was one of the most favourite themes for meditation for Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas. He was overwhelmed by the meaning of Incarnation. In his homily on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress at Mangalore on 29th December 1938, he preached, “from the glory of his Father in heaven, from the throne before which the Seraphs and Angels fall prostrate saying , “Holy, Holy, Holy,” he leaps into the womb of a humble Virgin and remains hidden there. He was confined to the enclosures of a woman’s womb. From there he took another leap into a shed, on a manger among the cattle and the sheep. Then again, he took the form and life of a servant, a labourer, thereafter the name of a sinner, a wicked man, a drunkard, a rebel and a thief. His next leap was into the humiliating prison cell, then on to the disgraceful pillar and lastly to the infamous gibbet of the cross!”¹

¹ *First Eucharistic Congress Souvenir, Mangalore, 1938 p 140*

In one of his talks to the sisters on Incarnation, he highlights the madness of God in the mystery of Incarnation. He explains the mystery taking an example from the ordinary life. Call to mind, a brahmin turning an outcast in order to work among the outcasts. One would call it madness. God came into this world not to live among us like a king but to partake of our nature, to suffer humiliations and the ignominy of the death of the cross. Are the saints wrong in calling him mad? Indeed his was the height of madness.²

In fact he experienced a great inadequacy to explain the Mystery of Incarnation in mere human words especially whenever he spoke on this mystery. He would borrow the words of saints to make his points clear. On one such occasion he quotes St Mary Magdalene of Pazzi. Jesus appeared to this saint and imprinted in her heart "*Et Verbum Caro Factum Est*" (And the Word became Flesh). She felt this burning sensation in her heart and was inflamed with Divine Love.³ He ends his conference to the sisters with a challenge. 'Therefore in your prayer often dwell on the mystery of the Incarnation- the mystery of love!' Jesus was mad with love for humankind and so he assumed human nature. Is it not reasonable then that his spouses should get mad with love for him? St Augustine said, "*Were you Augustine and I your God, I would love you so much and come down from heaven for your sake.*" The Little Flower said, "*My God, in hell there is nobody who loves you, hence I will go to hell, there suffer willingly and prove my love for you; then you will find at least one person in hell loving you there.*" Imagine the simplicity of Therese and the depth of her love!⁴

Pope Francis on 8 April 2013 on the occasion of the feast of Annunciation spoke thus: "Humility is the 'golden rule'. It is precisely on the humble path, chosen by God that love and charity precede. The whole history of faith is made of humility and "speaks of humility to us all". This likewise applies to the historical event of the birth of Jesus. God lowers himself: he comes among us and

² Sr M Bertha, *From the Lips of the Founder*, 84

³ Sr M Bertha, *From the Lips of the Founder*, 84

⁴ Sr M Bertha, *From the Lips of the Founder*, 88

lowers himself and he continues to humble himself even to the Cross.

Mary, at the Annunciation, also humbles herself: she does not properly understand, but she is free: she grasps only the essential, and says 'yes'. She is humble: 'May God's will be done'. "Joseph, her betrothed, also lowers himself and takes this great responsibility upon his shoulders". Joseph also says 'yes' to the angel when in his dream the angel tells him of this truth. The attitude of Mary and Joseph shows that "to reach us, God's whole love takes the path of humility. Our God opted for the path of humility. All His love comes from this way of humility. Being humble does not mean following the road with one's eyes cast down. Humility is what God as well as Mary and Joseph teach us. 'Humility', is Jesus' humility which ends on the Cross, and this is the golden rule for Christians. There is no other path. Unless I humble myself, unless you humble yourself, you are not Christian." These words were proved true in the life of RFC. He was indeed a humble priest who grasped the depth of the virtue of humility which was revealed in the mystery of Incarnation.

He would often repeat in his sufferings and humiliations, "Bethany is close to Calvary, that is where our Lord and Blessed Mother are and I am content to be where they are." In the year 1942, he delivered a recollection talk on humility to his Sisters where he highlights this virtue. He advises, only with humility one will be able to practise the vows. "Without humility we shall never be true religious; the deeper the humility, the greater the sanctity we will acquire."⁵

RFC Mascarenhas was caught by the two aspects of Incarnation and made them as his way of life. They were poverty and humility. All through his life he was a simple priest and whatever came to him as money or gifts he would share them with the poor and the needy. He acquired land, put up new buildings, being careful not to lay financial burden on his poor parishioners. In all his undertakings his sole reliance was on God.⁶ He was always content with what he had. He lived in a small

⁵ Sr M Bertha, *From the Lips of the Founder*, 168

⁶ Sr D' Souza Violette, *Unless the Seed Die*, 16-19

cottage near the Bethany Mother House after his retirement. He did not have a phone in his cottage while many people had one in those days. He was satisfied with a radio and a typewriter for his use. He not only lived life of poverty but also loved the poor in whom he saw our Lord and saviour Jesus. He took the risk of educating the poor boys unmindful of what they turned out to be.⁷

About forty sisters died between January 1940 and November 1949, most of them in their early or middle twenties. The criticisms he faced from the public both secular and clerical was a real humiliation for him. They questioned about his credentials to begin an indigenous Congregation not having enough means to support. He made possible everything in his capacity to improve their health. The founder accepted all other problems and frustrations repeating, "All for Jesus through Mary, for Bethany."⁸

Every founder gives a Charism, which is the most touching inspiration of his life to his Congregation. RFC has given to Bethany the mystery of Annunciation and Incarnation for their life. The emptying of the Son of God and the prompt "yes" of the Blessed Virgin Mary were to be reproduced in the life of every Bethany Sister by their self emptying for the poor and the marginalized.⁹

Mgr Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas was raised to the position of the Servant of God in the year 2008. It gives us immense hope that one day he will be raised to the honours of the altar. His life as the Founder of the Congregation of Bethany reflects the life of many founders who have already become saints. At the end of his life when he was stripped of all honours bestowed for his work and deserted by his own sisters with restrictions on their visits to him, he must have felt deep sorrow within himself. Yet he suffered himself all this, with hope and never hated his beloved, his daughters. He lived a heroic life and stood for truth always. He drank the crucible of suffering till the end with great courage and hope. The strength to do so was gained by contemplating the mystery of Incarnation every day of his life.

⁷ Sr Theresine and Sr Esuria, *Reminiscences*, 28-29

⁸ Sr D' Souza Violette, *The Vine that He Planted...*, 73-74

⁹ Sr D' Souza Violette, *Unless the Seed Die*, 116-17

MGR RAYMOND FC MASCARENHAS THE OPENER OF BETHANY'S DOOR

"OPEN WIDE THE DOOR, LET HIM ENTER NOW."

- Sr Rose Margaret, BS

Introduction

Bethany, a sapling planted by the Servant of God, Mgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas, in the native soil of Bendur, Mangalore, DK on July 16, 1921 solemnly entered the Centenary Decade on July 16, 2011 with the path breaking theme: **"Open wide the door, let Him enter Now."** This



clarion call resounded so loud and clear that the Bethany doors all over India and abroad opened with alacrity. This great event that was marked under the leadership of Sr Wilberta, the then Superior General, Sr Lillis, the Assistant Superior General and the General Councillors along with the members of the Congregation at Bethany Mother House has taken a great momentum. Year after year the Congregation has taken giant strides to enter its Centenary Year 2020 –'21. Now we are almost on the threshold of the 'Centenary Door' crossing over into a fuller life and spiritual depth of freedom as the handmaid of the Lord with the power of the Risen Christ. On this historic event, it is worth reminiscing the charismatic personality of the servant of God, Mgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas as the opener of the Door of Bethany.

S D Raymond F C Mascarenhas, the opener of 'Bethany's Door'

Mgr Raymond firmly believed in the words of Jesus who said, *"So I say to you, Ask and it shall be given to you; Search and you will find; Knock and the door will be opened for you"* (Lk 11:9). Stirred by compassion towards the miserable and distressing condition of people and trusting decisively in the promises of Jesus and seeking Divine Guidance, Mgr Raymond persistently knocked on the Divine Door with faith, hope and patience. The Divine Master was waiting at the threshold of the door with countless opportunities to eliminate poverty, misery, illiteracy, exploitation of women and girl children. He was urged repeatedly to swing open the door of Bethany to those who desired to commit their lives to God and to His people who were oppressed and marginalized.

Until 1921, starting a new religious Congregation for women by a Diocesan Priest for the rural poor, women and girl children in Mangalore Diocese was an unknown and unspoken venture in the town of Mangalore. Day by day the vision for the poor and downtrodden became larger and larger and haunted Mgr Raymond's mind and strengthened his spirit. When he came face to face with his farsighted vision he endured the test of the strength of his Will and his passion for Christ.

"Know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one can shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name" (Rev 3:8). Mgr Raymond was the passionate Lover and the Messenger of the Word of God. The visit of Jesus to the Bethany of the Gospel fame became his stimulating inspiration and a powerful motivation to provide a place of love, faith, peace, hope, hospitality and friendship with Jesus. He was inspired by the way Martha, Mary and Lazarus waited for Jesus on the threshold of Bethany's door looking forward for His arrival. Welcoming and ushering Him in with open arms was their greatest joy and solace

and serving a meal was their greatest comfort and pleasure. For Jesus, Bethany was a home away from home. Jesus felt a deep affinity for all three God-centred personalities though their outlook was different yet their priority and treasure was Jesus and Jesus alone.

Moved by the divine intervention and realizing the power of God within him, Mgr Raymond turned to the Opener of the Door, the friend and lover of Bethany of the Gospel fame. *"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father"*(Rev 3:20-21). When God sees you doing your part, developing what He has given you, then He will do His part and open the door that no man can shut. Jesus assured him that He will dine with him in ongoing fellowship and intimacy when the Bethany door was opened. With this assurance and approval from the Lord and trusting in his power, Mgr Raymond opened the door of Bethany for women who desired to dedicate their life in the service of God and His church. In His Providence God provided him four lady teachers, sincere and committed and were ready to leave behind their possessions and profession and dedicate their lives courageously as pioneers, and embark into religious life as the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany on 16 July 1921.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, *"plans for your welfare and not for evil, to give you a hope and a future"*(Jer 29:11). In the initial stages of the foundation of Bethany, the threshold of the door was narrow and difficult. It was a spiritual journey, a path of spiritual growth. In its infancy, it was full of apprehensions about continuing onward. At times, the Founder had to linger on the threshold filled with difficult emotions and wondering about how to take the next step. When the violent storms assailed, he rested on *the three rocks of Bethany Spirituality*. Jesus the lover of Bethany, Mother Mary, in her mystery

of Annunciation and St Therese of Lisieux. The mystery of Annunciation and Incarnation became his obsession and the Cross of Christ his only divine stronghold. The Lord whom he loved, guided him to explore the unknown and led him across the passage beyond with His Divine Presence. He deliberately opened the door, leaving the known, safe realm behind. With the crossing of each threshold, he gained greater freedom to be the opener of Bethany's door. In trials and tribulations, in failure and success, in happiness and sorrow, he lovingly called: "Bethany, my Joy and my Crown."

On such a momentous juncture, it is worth recalling the charismatic personality of Mgr RFC Mascarenhas, the man of our times who tread the unbeaten path and carved a new trail. He has left behind the priceless and lasting spiritual heritage on which Bethany has carved the long history of 98 years successfully and faithfully. Being a man of God and a man of the Word of God his desire was that the mission of Bethany should be rooted in the Scripture. As a visionary with a definite mission and predominant passion for Christ and His kingdom, he meticulously nurtured Bethany in the Church and breathed his spirit and life into it with the '**Mission Manifesto of Jesus.**'

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19).

"I am the door, if anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9). God opens the door so that we can establish His kingdom on earth. The centenary decade is an occasion to invite Jesus, the lover of Bethany to enter the vineyard planted by our Founder, S D Raymond FC

Mascarenhas and see what grows there today! It is a time to cry out with ecstasy,

“Turn again, O Lord of hosts,

Look down from heaven and see

Visit this vine Lord that your right hand has planted” (Psalm 80:14-15).

As we are heading into the centenary year of our Congregation we are called upon to decide on the direction that we want to take and allow Jesus to explore the inner terrain of our being and take us to the passage beyond where we are now. We need to pose, focus inwardly, and take a long gaze at ourselves and our Congregation and ask, “What needed to be unlocked in us?” “What door had we opened in the past?” “Which one was shut?” “What closed door was helpful?” (Cf. *Open the Door* by Joyce Rupp) This introspection should lead us to move beyond where we are now and enter into the new realm of life and mission.

It is apt to ask ourselves the pertinent questions St Ignatius of Loyola would have us asked as we look on Christ crucified. “What have I done for Him? What am I doing for Him? What will I do for Him?” The divine call beckons every Bethany Sister to be more persuasive to make Bethany a tower of spiritual strength.

On December 18, 2015 during the Year of Mercy as Pope Francis opened the Holy Door and said, *“This is the door of the Lord, open a special Holy Door for the homeless. “Open the gates of justice. For your great mercy, will enter your house, O Lord.”* Heeding the call of Pope Francis, Bethany has launched a project during the Centenary Year to open One Hundred ‘Doors’ (Houses) to the homeless in those areas where the Sisters are working. Today Bethany has struck roots and risen like a mighty tree on the frontiers of this beautiful world, providing shelter to many in India and abroad.

May our beloved Founder, and the ones who have gone before us to their heavenly abode be found worthy to hear Jesus saying

to them, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ... (Mt 25:34-40).

Now is the appropriate time to look back and ruminate the milestones of Bethany in the past 98 years with joy and gratitude to God and realize the wonder and richness of his Divine Presence. On the First Sunday of Advent November 30, 2014, the Year of Consecrated Life, Pope Francis gave a clarion call for consecrated religious to look to the *past with gratitude*, and "to tell our story is to praise God and to thank him for all his gifts." It is when we look back at our history that that we discover the presence and action of God in our lives. Such gratitude leads us to live in the *present moment with passion and joy*, knowing that God is with us on our journey. Looking back with gratitude and living the present with passion means we will be *full of hope for the future*, knowing by faith that "nothing will be impossible with God" (Lk 1:37).

As we look to the past with gratitude, present with passion and joy, and the future of Bethany with promising hope, we commit ourselves to search, to explore and to discover the open doors — the new and fresh opportunities that God places before us to go beyond the Centenary year, meeting the challenges of modern world infusing new life and vigour, spiritual zeal and authentic love for God and His Word and let Christ into our lives.

If we have the will and determination

To mount such a peace offensive

We will unlock hitherto tightly sealed doors of hope

And bring new light into the dark chambers of pessimism.

(Martin Luther King, JR)

Mgr Raymond, the Founder of Bethany, a compassionate pastor, a man of strong character, having deep faith in God, sought

fervently the holiness pleasing to God's eye. He accepted daily the path of the 'Gospel' to be a saint for God's greater glory. *"Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master"* (Mt 25:23). These words of the Lord are befitting to the Servant of God, Mgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas, who has kept His Word, done His will, proclaimed His Name, moulded and shaped himself to be useful for His glory and ushered into the joyful future of His kingdom like a faithful and a good steward. He truly deserves to be counted among the saints and rewarded the honours of the Altar. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God face to face" (Mt 5:8).

"Let Bethany grow, Let Bethany flower, Let Bethany bear fruit."



THE COMPASSIONATE PASTOR

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Cause of the Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas
Bethany Convent, Kankanady Post
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Managing Editor

**INSPIRING SAYINGS OF
THE SERVANT OF GOD
RAYMOND F C MASCARENHAS**

“Devotion is nothing but a desire to be pleasing to God. It is only then God gives us sweetness and consolation in prayer.”

* * *

“ Only when our heart is empty, Jesus will come and commune with us.”

* * *

“Sanctity is not in feeling devotion and consolation but it consists in doing each action according to the will of God as well as we can.”

* * *

“Let us do our work for God, for eternity. What we can do may be very little. But that little we shall give to God. He will bless us abundantly.

* * *

“If we carry our cross courageously and faithfully, God will receive us in His Kingdom.”

* * *

FAVOURS RECEIVED

My daughter's father-in-law was not well. He was suffering from heart disease. His condition was serious. The doctors at Kankanady told them to take him home as he could not treat him further. He was taken to Bangalore from there. He was brought back immediately. All of us began to pray through the intercession of Fr Raymond. The next morning he began to walk, and gradually he became well. All of us thank Fr Raymond.

- Mrs Jessy

Sampaje

I was suffering from swelling on my leg and knee pain since a year. Now I am healed of the pain through the intercession of our Founder.

My niece was suffering from continuous high fever. Fever did not subside even after medication. The family prayed to God through the intercession of our Founder and she was healed.

- Sr Sherly

Wayanad

I thank Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas for helping me get my lost gold chain. As soon as I prayed to him I found my gold chain. I thank God for this favour received through Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas.

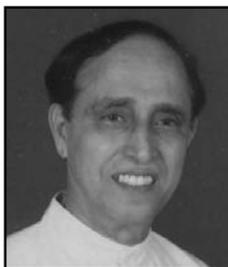
- Christine D'Souza

Bendur, Mangalore

CONTRIBUTORS

Mgr Denis Moras Prabhu

Mgr Denis Moras Prabhu, is a fervent admirer of SD Raymond FC Mascarenhas and a great supporter of his Cause for Beatification and Canonization. Ordained in 1967, Mgr Denis has served the diocese of Mangalore in various capacities such as Vicar General, Assistant Parish Priest, teacher, Parish Priest, Director of Vocations, Secretary of Catholic Board of Education (CBE), Director of Family Life Service Centre, and as Chancellor of the diocese. He was Vocation Chairman of Karnataka from 1975-1977. At present he is the chaplain at White Doves, Maroli, Kulshekar, Mangalore



Prof Edmund Frank

Prof Edmund Frank is the Founder Chairman of the STF Centenary Foundation and Social Entrepreneur. He has written 5 books on Business and Industry Management. He is Prof., Dean and Chairman of the Board of Studies PGDBM and Member of the Academic Council at St Aloysius College (Autonomous). He is a Member of the Governing Board at St Joseph Engineering College. He is an active Member of the Prison Ministry of India and St Vincent de Paul Society in Bendur. He was the only person from Karnataka to represent India in a 35 member delegation in a 5 day International Convention of Eminent World Jesuit Alumni in Ohio, United States of America in June-July 2017. He is a member of the 11 Member "Karnataka Catholic Think Tank" a Consultative Body of which the Archbishop Most Rev Dr Peter Machado is the Chairman. He is also a member of the Editorial Board of *The Compassionate Pastor*.



Sr Santhosh Maria

Sr Santosh Maria is a Bethany Sister serving in Kerala. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Theology from St Joseph's Inter-diocesan Seminary, Mangalore and Master's Degree in Biblical Studies from JDV, Pune. Sr Santosh has worked in the fields of education and formation. She was a local superior for three years. She has been taking classes for formees at various levels. She conducts retreats for Bethany Sisters and formees. Currently she is the Provincial Superior of Bethany's Southern Province, which includes the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.



Sr Rose Margaret, BS

Sr Rose Margaret is a well known Sister of Bethany, having vast experiences in the field of education, social work, and administration. Ever since she started to work for the Cause of Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas, she developed high esteem and keeps on discovering new aspects of his personality which she wishes to highlight for the benefit of readers. At present she is the Coordinator at St Theresa's School, Karnal, and assists in the formation of the candidates.





Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee Celebration of Mgr RFC Mascarenhas on 4 March 1950 and Platinum Jubilee of his birth at Bethany Convent, Bendur, Mangalore



Celebration of 60th Ordination Anniversary on 29 February 1960 at Bendur, on which occasion Mgr Raymond had a paralytic stroke during the Eucharistic Celebration and he could not continue the Mass. Hence the Superior General Sr Macrina presided over the felicitation Programme.

59th Death Anniversary Mass on 22 December 2019
Mgr RFC Mascarenhas, St Sebastian Church, Bendur

