

The Compassionate Pastor

December 2020

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No. 2



THE TOMB OF SERVANT OF GOD

Treasuring fondly the blessed inspiration and memory of our Founder Mgr RFC Mascarenhas perpetuated at Bendur, Mangalore, his mortal remains transferred from its original place in the nave of the church to a newly erected tomb on the right side extended wing are open for public veneration.



MGR RAYMOND MEMORIAL MUSEUM

The memorial Museum of Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas renders honour and homage to him by preserving the artifacts such as his priestly vestments, clothing, furniture, photographs and writings. This cottage was his residence during his retired years. One experiences a close proximity to this holy priest while watching the exhibits, particularly the easy chair, sitting on which he looked at the chapel and communed with God when his movements were restricted. From this cottage came his forceful writings, compositions and translations. Indeed, it is a simple but an awe inspiring place.



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:

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THE COMPASSIONATE PASTOR

December 2020

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CONTENTS

	Page No.
1. Message: Most Rev Dr Peter Paul Saldanha Bishop of Mangalore	2
2. Message: Sr M Rose Celine BS	3
3. Editorial : Sr M Lillis BS	6
4. Servant of God Raymond F C Mascarenhas has Lit the Lamp Let's keep the Fire Aflame - Sr Dr Dona Sanctis BS	9
5. Homily Preached by - V Rev Fr Vincent Monteiro	16
6. Reflection on the Marian Spirituality of SD Raymond Mascarenhas in the Light of St Louis de Marie Grignon Montfort - Rev Fr Peter Mascarenhas SMM	19
7. Raymond - An Inspiration For Our Sanctification - Sr Shalet D'Souza	33
8. Interview with Sr Theresine BS - Sr Celine Vas BS	38
9. Favours Received	42
10. About the Contributors	43
11. Diamond Death Anniversary of the Servant of God Mgr RFC Mascarenhas - Sr Lourdes BS	47
12. In the Footprints of the Founder's Mission - Sr Arpan BS	50
12. 60th Death Anniversary Celebrated with Migrants at Yamuna Bank - Sr Dr Preeti Margaret BS	52

MESSAGE



DIOCESE OF MANGALORE

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Dated

05.12.2020

Dear Sr Lillis B.S.,

I am glad to know that you are bringing out *The Compassionate Pastor* booklet on the occasion of the 60th death anniversary of Msgr Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas, the Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Mangalore, to give a glimpse of his admirable life. With much respect and admiration for him, I am pleased to pen a few thoughts and pay tribute to him.

The Servant of God was a man of deep faith. He saw an opportunity in every difficulty he faced during his pastoral ministry. As a young priest, when he was in Udyavar parish, he reached out to people who were affected by the cholera pandemic. Aware of the rampant illiteracy and to mitigate this evil, he wrote *Poylem Pustak* to teach people how to read and write. Later he worked for women empowerment and for minority rights on behalf of Catholics, especially in the educational department.

Msgr Mascarenhas was an efficient troubleshooter. The diocesan authorities sent him to different parishes to solve the issues and restore peace. He was successful in imparting impartial judgments and restoring peace and harmony. With exceptional and outstanding courage, he met all the challenges, trusting in the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God is being pursued in the Vatican. May it move faster and may the Diocese of Mangalore rejoice at having a Saint from this soil.

I appreciate the excellent work you have been doing in promoting the Cause and making Msgr Mascarenhas known to the public through *The Compassionate Pastor*.

✠ Peter Paul Saldanha
Bishop of Mangalore

Message



On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Death Anniversary of the Servant of God Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas, it is heartening to note that the fame and name of the Servant of God is spreading far and wide. Favours received through his powerful intercession have been acknowledged with much joy and gratitude. I am an eyewitness to the many pilgrims who have been visiting 'Mgr Raymond Memorial', with great faith to intercede for their needs.

The driving force that captured the Servant of God Mgr Raymond in all his plans and projects was the contemplation of the mystery of the Incarnation. He chalked out his priestly life from day one to be a Compassionate Pastor and serve the needy and the poor with a dream and a vision for the Church in India and this enabled him to look far ahead into the future.

His deep faith in God and filial trust in our Blessed Mother was the secret of his success in all his undertakings. He imbibed self-discipline from his mother and a strong will, determination and compassion towards the poor from his father. It was the Jesuit training at St Joseph's Seminary, Mangalore with its high ideals of generosity in the service of our Lord, supported by the exemplary persons with a supernatural outlook that impressed him to be a man of God. Optimistic Fr Raymond saw an opportunity in every crisis, accepted the challenges with dauntless courage and promptly responded to the signs of the times.

Fr Raymond was a beacon of hope to the hopeless in his priestly ministry. In the context of COVID-19 today he becomes our model for a courageous and prophetic action. In May 1902 the town of Mangalore was infected with plague. Like a father, a 'doctor' and a compassionate pastor he

visited the sick of the parish and also prevailed upon the sisters to visit the families in their place of ministry. Inspired by his example Bethany's response to the crisis of COVID-19 pandemic has been very empathetic. The entire Congregation responded promptly through our committed band of sisters in pastoral, social, medical and educational apostolates with the assistance of collaborators, volunteers and people of good will. The infrastructure and personnel of our social work centres, health clinics and the educational institutions was freely made available for reaching out and emergency programmes in 56 social work centres in 24 states of our country and in Italy and Africa as well.

The stupendous contribution that Fr Raymond FC Mascarenhas made towards the cause of education was starting of an indigenous teaching order. He was a defender of the minority educational rights. As a member of the District Education Council of South Kanara he helped in preparing a Memorandum for presentation to the Chief Minister of Madras Presidency on behalf of the Catholic Association of South Kanara and was the chief spokesman of the deputation that met the Chief Minister, Dr Subbaroyan. The result of the representation was the Government Order of 1929 which may be called the 'Magna Carta' of Catholic Schools.

Today the National Education Policy 2020 is all set to pave the way for a new education system in our country. While appreciating the positive aspects of the policy it is apprehended that concepts of 'education for all' and 'education for social change' pioneered by India's first visionary PM Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and our first Educational Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad will be affected by the NEP. At this juncture managements of educational institutions, those involved in the mission of education, teachers and parents are called to collaborate and network with all progressive educators and organizations to check the excessive push for corporatization at the cost of the poor and place alternate, progressive, inclusive and forward-looking education pedagogy for all.

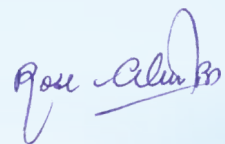
Fr Founder not only focused on the literary side of education but also on the industrial side. He started St Martha's Industrial School in 1921

at Bethany, Bendur, Mangalore. He got government recognition for this school and opened its portals to hundreds of girls and women who were uneducated or had no means of pursuing high school education to make them self-reliant. Motivated by his creative way of responding to people's needs and the stress laid on vocationalisation of education which we also find in NEP, Bethany has been imparting job-oriented education for 100 girls and training 1000 youth under the banner of 'Bethany Champions' to aspire towards leadership in civil and political arena.

The task of Christian educators is to refresh and to deepen the spirituality with Christian vision, so that the challenges ahead will be faced with proper discernment, resilience and grit. Timely and proper planning needs to be done to empower the stakeholders, to keep up the diversity and unity given in the Constitutions, to reach out the marginalized, to train the teachers, to make education more relevant to the changing times and in tune with Gospel values.

SD Raymond faced the dark clouds, the struggles, obstacles the lack of resources and uncertainties with heroism, in fostering the growth of Bethany and fulfilling the mission of the Church, remaining anchored in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. May he be a constant inspiration and guide to us in accepting the new challenges created by COVID-19, in the changing socio-political scenario of today with Christian faith and hope.

I would like to appreciate the rich contribution of the members of the editorial board, the priests, religious and lay persons, their generosity and creativity in contributing relevant write-ups to make known the holiness of the life of the Servant of God and the mission of Bethany more and more. Let us pray that he may be very soon declared Venerable, Blessed and then a Saint in the Church.



Sr Rose Celine, BS
Superior General



Editorial

Reflecting on the Diamond Death Anniversary of the Servant of God

I joined Bethany Congregation in the year 1966, six years after the death of Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas, the founder of Bethany. The gloom and the pain that shadowed Bethany at the demise of Father Founder in December 1960 were just fading away. What I witnessed in Bethany at that time was the power of resurrection reflected in the vivacity of Bethany, mushrooming of vocations in the Congregation, invitations coming from different ecclesiastical authorities to open convents, young sisters moving out to Northern and North Eastern areas as missionaries in great numbers, opening of numerous educational institutions and other developmental activities especially in the remote villages of the country. It was the fulfillment of the dictum of Jesus who said, "Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn. 12: 24). Monsignor Raymond was the grain of wheat that the Divine Planter permitted to fall into the earth and die, now bearing abundant fruit diffusing the aroma of his sanctity spreading even across the oceans. With the opening of the Roman Phase of the Cause of the Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God in Rome, and obtaining the decree of Juridical validity of the Diocesan Phase on 21 December 2020, our hearts kindle with hope to see this man of God raised to the honours of the altar.

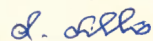
As I went through the articles of this issue, I was fascinated to read a news item titled: 'Celebration of 60th Death Anniversary at Yamuna bank'. A community of four Bethany Sisters found a new way of celebrating the 60th Death Anniversary of the Servant of God amidst the migrants from Bihar and UP residing at Yamuna bank in the outskirts of Delhi, by conducting various skill development activities for the poor children and women, the favourites of Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas. Sr Preethi Margaret, the Superior told me, "Mgr Raymond, our Founder had a vision for the poor people. Being a spiritual daughter of this great priest, I too am captured by his vision to uplift the poor especially the women and the children." This simple celebration at Yamuna river bank, marking the Death Anniversary of the Servant of God on the eve of Christmas amidst the migrants, awakened me to the fact that Jesus too was a migrant.

The theme of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees - 2020 viz. "Forced like Jesus Christ to flee" selected by Pope Francis awaken our consciences to the flight of over 41 million migrants and refugees in the world.

I would like to underscore that the family of the Servant of God too had the same flight of Jesus, the migrant. The Foreword of Jerome A Saldanha M.L.C. to the booklet *The Geneology of Paul Mascarenhas* by F X Mascarenhas. states, "The Mascarenhas family had this painful but noble share in the awful tragedy of our forefathers, by the captivity in Seringapatam, in which they remained loyal to their faith like most of their companions. Only one male member of the family, Paul, who had been taken a mere child, but having lost his parents during captivity returned strong in faith kept up by his parents and other exiles and survivors, took a prominent part in the revival of the community's fortune to which reference is made by honorable Mr Harris in 1820." Servant of God Mgr Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas, the Founder of Bethany Congregation and the former Vicar General of the Diocese of Mangalore whose great grandfather was the above mentioned Paul Mascarenhas took a leading role in the revival of the Catholic Community of South Canara that faced set back in the aftermath of the captivity. The translation of the New Testament into Konkani after 400 years of the arrival of Christianity in South Canara, his creative pastoral activities in the parishes and the founding of Bethany, an indigenous Congregation, chiefly for the education and faith formation of girls in the villages shines out among them.

Let the celebration of the 60th Death Anniversary of the Servant of God Raymond, propel us to creative actions in favour of migrants, trafficked, victims of pandemic, farmers, jobless and voiceless, imitating the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas who was RADICAL, FEARLESS AND COMMITTED.

I profusely thank all those who have contributed articles to this issue of *The Compassionate Pastor*. I place on record my deep appreciation to the editorial board in bringing out this issue. The messages of Most Rev Dr Peter Paul Saldanha, the Bishop of Mangalore and Sr Rose Celine BS, the Superior General are apt for this occasion. I thank them for taking time to give us a valuable message. I pray Christmas and New Year blessings on all of you.



Sr M Lillis, BS
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SERVANT OF GOD RAYMOND F C MASCARENHAS HAS LIT THE LAMP LET'S KEEP THE FIRE AFLAME

- Sr Dona Sanctis BS

Introduction

"I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (Jn 8: 12). The text points out to Jesus' divinity and the purpose of his coming into this world. In saying this, Jesus emphasises that he is the source of spiritual light. Jesus is not speaking of 'physical' light but the light of His Truth, the light of His Presence, the light of His Word, the light of Eternal Life. In the Bible, light has always been a symbol of presence, holiness, knowledge, wisdom, grace, hope, and of God's revelation. By contrast, darkness has been associated with evil, sin and despair. Given our human limitations, we strive to grasp the totality of this mystery. We believe in this truth and therefore, it is our constant endeavour to seek this light and to live in this light. In most religions, 'light' symbolically means the presence of the Divine.

In his Will and Testament, the Servant of God Mgr Raymond had expressed his desire to be buried at the foot of the grotto of the Mother House of Bethany in the tomb which was especially prepared by him. However, this desire was not fulfilled as the parishioners of St Sebastian Church, Bendur wanted their founder parish priest to be buried in the parish church itself.



During the process of the renovation of the flooring of St Sebastian Church, Bendur, the tomb of Servant of God, Raymond F C Mascarenhas was also opened, with the official permission of Most Rev Basil S D'Souza, the Bishop of Mangalore on 09 November 1987. The Bishop and a few officials of the Congregation were present on this

occasion. A small portion of the mortal remains was handed over to the Superior General at her request which was enclosed in an urn of

non-corrosive metal, after chemical treatment. The same was placed in the vault constructed for the purpose in the open place in front of the then Bethany Generalate. *"He has lit the lamp, let's keep the fire aflame"* are the touching words carved on the limestone of the vault.

These words in several ways sum up the life story of our Founder Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas who lived a life of holiness, in grace and hope in a manner pleasing to God. Later, in 1996 on the occasion of the Platinum Jubilee of the Congregation the mortal remains were shifted to the Founder's cottage and were placed honourably in the house where SD Raymond Mascarenhas spent the last years of his life. Unto this day, it is preserved in this place and many come to pray to him asking him to intercede for them. The symbolic presence of our Founder inspires us to live his ideals in our everyday life.

From all eternity our loving God in his wonderful plan chose Mgr RFC Mascarenhas to light the lamp. In order to light a lamp, a person should necessarily have the oil so that the light that is lit continues to burn day and night and is never extinguished. Therefore, I would like to reflect with you on two significant sources from where SD Raymond Mascarenhas received the light of Christ, kept it burning and invited us to keep it aflame: (i) light that emanated from the Holy Eucharist; (ii) light that he received from the Holy Scripture; (iii) how these sources enabled him to be a compassionate pastor. Lighting the lamp is a life-long process, for the light that was lit needed to be preserved from all storms of life. Our innermost desire too is to receive the light of Christ. These reflections could guide us on our pilgrimage in this world as our life unfolds occasions for constant discernment between good and less good, light and darkness, truth and falsehood.

Light that emanated from the Holy Eucharist

The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is central to Christian life as *Lumen Gentium* (LG 11) states: "Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life." The Eucharist was central to SD Raymond's life, for he believed in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. He treasured deeply the celebration of the Holy Eucharist which he celebrated everyday with great unction. He not only spent time with the Eucharistic Lord, but the manner in which he celebrated the

Eucharist encouraged many people to come to the Eucharistic Lord. His favourite ejaculatory prayer was "O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine; all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine." He prayed this prayer from his heart with deep desire, respect, and devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist. It awakened in him a sense of awe and wonder of the holy presence of our Risen Saviour in the Eucharist.

The Sisters of the Bethany Congregation that Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas founded were greatly edified by his love towards the Eucharistic Lord. Late Mother Gemma, the fifth Superior General of the Congregation tells us that when asked what drew him to the Eucharistic Lord, he replied:

...The only unchangeable, unfailing friend, companion, co-worker who gives me courage, help, strength in my work is Jesus Christ who is present in the Blessed Sacrament. He is the only solace when I am afflicted, courage when I am discouraged, friend and companion when I am lonely, abandoned by others. I have to give you love of Christ and teach you in the mission to witness Christ by your ideal life. If I should give you love, first I should have this love and therefore I go to the Blessed Sacrament. I should be a cistern of God's love if I am to give this love to others by various channels. Unless I love, my apostolate will be but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal...¹

SD Raymond Mascarenhas has therefore passed on to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, the responsibility of spreading the Eucharistic devotion. One of the significant methods he suggested was to have the perpetual adoration in Bethany. Mother Gemma gives more details about Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas' passionate love for the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament:

...Our founder was a passionate lover of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The same devotion he tried to inculcate in his spiritual daughters in his exhortations and especially by his example. For this reason, he started the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Bethany. And at any cost he wanted his sisters unceasingly to adore Jesus in the Sacred Host and this practice continued for a couple of years or so. Due to unavoidable circumstances the night adoration had to be given up after some time but there was a desire

¹ Mother Gemma BS, *Memories on R F C Mascarenhas*, dated 23.07.2002.

in his heart that this practice should be resumed in Bethany when it would be favourable. Even on the eve of his death, when his senses were failing him, he desired to see the Superior General...When she arrived, he made her understand the great desire that was burning in his heart - "Perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Bethany." When the Superior General assured him that it would be taken care of, he was at peace until he passed away on 23 December 1960 in his residence...²

The perpetual adoration that SD Raymond Mascarenhas introduced on 28 October 1935, revealed his great faith, love and trust in Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The sermon that he preached in Konkani on the Eucharist on the closing day of the First Diocesan Eucharistic Congress on 29 December 1938 proves his ardent devotion to the Holy Eucharist. He emphasized that "...Eucharist is a great Sacrament and as great as God Himself – all powerful, Almighty, all perfect, Creator of Heaven and Earth, the One who was, who is, and who will be, for ever more, Truth itself, Immortal. ...Not only God holds the world in his hands, but works 'another miracle' of giving Almighty God into our hands..."³

In the first book of the Constitutions that SD Raymond Mascarenhas himself wrote, states thus: "Let them value most highly the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Their whole life should be, as it were, a perpetual preparation for receiving it, so that their hearts might become pure and lovely resting place for our Lord, and at the same time, a continual thanksgiving for such a favour.⁴ He would say, "When we receive Holy Communion let us think of the greatness of the favour bestowed upon us. Our Lord gives himself to each one of us as if there were no one else in the world outside of him and me."⁵

Making a frequent and fervent visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was the practice in Bethany Congregation right from the initial stage of formation. He trained the Sisters of the Congregation never to leave the house or return to it without first paying a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Later in his advanced years, when the Servant of God was confined to bed and was unable to move to the Chapel,

² Mother Gemma BS, *Memories on R F C Mascarenhas*, dated 23.07.2002.

³ Souvenir of the First Diocesan Eucharistic Congress, 29 Dec, 1938, 139, (Kodialbail Press, Mangalore, 1938)

⁴ R F C Mascarenhas, *First Constitutions*, Rule No 132.

⁵ Sr Violette BS, *Unless the Seed Die*, (Bethany Publications, Mangalore, 1985), 69.

he positioned himself on the verandah of his house in such a way that he could see the tabernacle light of the main Chapel of the Bethany Mother House and pray. Such was his innermost desire to be in communion with the Eucharistic Lord. This gesture of his has been an inspiration to all who have witnessed it and later communicated to the younger generation. Presently, fourteen sisters from seven provinces in rotation volunteer for Prayer Ministry, for twelve months drawing down blessings on the Church, Congregation, and the world. The long-cherished dream of our Father Founder of having perpetual adoration in Bethany is thus being fulfilled joyfully.

Light that he received from the Holy Scripture

The Psalmist exclaims: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" [Ps 119: 105]. Spiritually speaking, apart from God we normally walk in the dark. As we come to trust in Jesus and follow in his footsteps our path ahead becomes clearer and we learn from the scriptures how we should live and treat others. God's word is the light that shines on our pathway. The daily reflection on the Word of God helps us to stay pure and grow in faith. SD Raymond Mascarenhas would surely have prayed along with the Psalmist in times of his problems and troubles thus: "O send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling" [Psalm 43: 3].

Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas contemplated on the Gospel mystery of the Annunciation and the Incarnation, which motivated him to empty himself in the service of humanity after the example of Jesus and His Blessed Mother. His obsessive desire was to preach the Gospel to the poor. He responded to this desire creatively and concretely in the given situation. To make a mention of it - the work of translating the New Testament into Konkani, the exhortations centred on the Word of God, Gospel scenes painted on the walls of the chapel in the Mother House of Bethany - the crucifixion, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the Holy Family of Nazareth, Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene after Resurrection, Jesus at Simon the Pharisee's House, with appropriate Scriptural quotations inscribed below the paintings - these memorable scenes thus provide the viewer with the possibility of visualising some of the Gospel scenes and at the same time, reading the Word of God.

Meditation on the Word of God was at the centre of his priestly ministry. Guided by the Word of God he was well disposed to make a right choice in life. He realized how God's Word could illumine the path of his life. The inspiration from the Holy Scripture enabled him to have firm faith and fortitude to stand for truth and justice. He was convinced that if his sisters keep God's Word directing along the way of their life, they will not stumble because they will see what the light reveals on the path ahead of them.

Light that guided him to be a Compassionate Pastor

Sr Violette BS writes: "Monsignor Mascarenhas was a man of God. His priestly ministry was an overflow of his own inner spirit of love and dedication to Jesus Christ who had called him to work in his vineyard."⁶ The compassionate pastor Mgr RFC Mascarenhas was conscious of his mission as a priest - to be available with zest to the pastoral needs of the people entrusted to his care. Throughout his 60 years of priestly life and despite great risk to his own health, he tangibly shared the compassionate and unconditional love of Jesus with the poor and the needy, the sick and the suffering. He served the parishioners with great zeal, attending to their pastoral needs and also financial needs walking through the difficult terrain. The poor had a special place in his life and he gave generously to the poor, sacrificing his own needs. He aimed at eradicating poverty through literacy and providing opportunities for education to the less privileged in society.

When advancing years restricted his movements, he devoted himself to desk work wherein he could share his insights and inspirations. His missionary initiatives, educational enterprise, pastoral endeavours and literary contributions are matchless and praiseworthy. He would say in total surrender to God's will trusting in Divine Providence "When you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless servants; we have done only what we ought to have done'" [Lk 17:10]!

Throughout his life he did all he could, to bring Jesus to the people through word and example. The Sisters of Bethany Congregation inspired by their Founder, for one hundred years now, have been involving themselves in pastoral, educational, social,

⁶ Sr Violette D'Souza BS, *Unless the Seed Die*, Bethany Publications, 1985, 68.

medical and other activities as per the signs of the times. In their apostolic activities great emphasis is laid on the empowerment of the poor and the marginalized irrespective of gender and religion with special emphasis on compassion. The committed service of the Sisters of Bethany is a testimony to their contribution to witness to God's steadfast love and providential care for His people. After the example of the Founder, compassion is to be the hallmark of Bethany Sisters in all their apostolic activities.

Conclusion

The lamp lit by the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas, the Founder of Bethany signifies his life, lived in the presence of God and how he responded to the grace of God during his life on earth. The spark that penetrated illumined him to respond to the context of his time positively. In spite of darkness, conflicts, and numerous challenges around him, the light of Christ within him never diminished. The charisma he was gifted with, the spirituality that he lived has been passed on to the Bethany Congregation he founded and to the Church at large.

We are pilgrims in this world. We live and walk amidst pitfalls, mountains and valleys, rocks, and thorny paths; we often stumble and fall. These challenges are part of our life. The question we all need to ask ourselves today is what exactly provides us with the right direction and shows the path towards the life which God has ordained for each one of us. The legacy that SD Raymond left behind has indeed been a treasure to be cherished and nourished, that is, to be guided by the light of Christ. His Eucharist- centred life, passion for the Word of God, and love for the poor as a compassionate pastor stand out as examples for all to emulate. He is remembered today for his pastoral zeal and commitment with compassion. Therefore, we can say confidently that he has left a legacy to us and to the generations to come to keep this light aflame. By presenting the life of holy and significant people, we too are encouraged to enrich our life and the life of others.



HOMILY PREACHED AT ST SEBASTIAN CHURCH BENDUR ON 20 DECEMBER 2020 BY V REV FR VINCENT MONTEIRO

My dear brothers and sisters,



All of us have our own identity in this world. A person's identity is shaped by many different aspects. Family, culture, friends, personal interests and surrounding environments are all factors that tend to help shape a person's identity. A son's identity is defined in terms of his parents. Identity continues to develop through the life span in terms of experience and status and responsibilities one fulfills in the course of time. St Mother Theresa is identified as the mother of the destitutes. St John Paul II is identified as the Pope of the Peoples. We see in the Second Book of Samuel (II Sam 7: 1-17) David a shepherd boy of small stature after he is anointed acquires a new identity as a great king. No one refers to him as a shepherd boy anymore. David accepted the vocation that was conferred on him, lived according to the will of God in all humility and gained his identity as the servant of God. In the reading that we just heard we understand that David wanted to build a "house," or a temple, for God because David lived in a house of cedar, while the ark of God lived in a tent. That is, David's dwelling was stable, permanent and secure, while the ark — the symbol of God's presence — was housed in an impermanent and relatively flimsy construction. In other words David wanted to give God the highest identity by placing him in a temple of grandeur. But God who is beyond any identity told David through Prophet Nathan that He as the Lord of Creation and King of all kingdoms on earth would not be confined in a temple. Instead God declares that He will make a new kind of house for David. This is not a dwelling of cedar, but a dynasty; God will establish a kingdom that will always be ruled by a descendant of David (Promise of a Saviour from the lineage of David). God's lavish graciousness was bestowed on David where God made it abundantly clear that in addition to all that God had done for David, God will continue to do more. God gave three promises for the future, two for David, and one for Israel. God promised to "make for [David] a great name" (7:9) and give him "rest from all [his] enemies" (7:11). To Israel,

God promises to “appoint a place” and “plant them, so that they may live in their own place,” where they will not be disturbed, nor afflicted by evildoers (7:10). God does not want an identity; but man his servant can search and know God’s identity. By giving an identity to David, God will reveal who He is. This is the greatness of God. A temple or a church is not God’s requisite. Our total commitment as His servant is what is important for Him.

A Catechism teacher gave a piece of paper to each child in the class and asked them to draw/present their image of God. Everyone sees God differently and yet in a beautiful way. One child drew a magnificent father with a long beard as the Lord of creation. Another one drew an image of a God who is holding the whole world in the palm of His hand. But Simon drew a simple heart and showed it to the teacher. The teacher was awfully interested in Simon’s concept of God. The boy said that God lives in the heart where there is love because God is Love.

In the Gospel (Lk 1: 26-38) we see that the angel Gabriel greeted Mary as ‘Full of Grace’. Mary though puzzled by this greeting took courage to converse with the angel. God had chosen her and kept her sinless in view of the Son of God who was to take birth in her womb. She responded ‘Behold the Handmaid of the Lord’. As soon as she responded as the servant of God He made His dwelling in her heart, in her pure heart. Her response is irrevocable and total. God comes to dwell in a pure heart and a humble heart.

Just as God chose David and Mary He has chosen each one of us. If we have a place in our heart to the same God we too can become his handmaids or servants. Like David who was given a mission to rule Israel in truth and justice and to please Him alone and like Mary who was entrusted to be the Mother of God and to accompany Jesus to bring salvation to mankind and thus become our Mother too we too are given a mission. We are given a mission to know His will, accept all the joys and sorrows of life which will be possible if we have a place for Him in our hearts. God not only chose David, Mary and a priest or a religious Sister but He chooses every one of us. He has written our names on the palm of His hand. We have to discern our particular mission, be it in the family or society as a priest, as a man, as a layman or woman. If God lives in our hearts we are able to realize the will of God.

As we recall the 60th Death Anniversary of the Servant of God Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas who is the first parish priest of St

Sebastian Church and the Founder of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany we reflect and see how he did the will of God and what was his mission. God chose him, anointed him as a priest of God and was given a mission according to the plan of God. He rendered his service with a pure heart. He conversed with God with a pure heart and understood the depth of His mission. He offered himself to God the Father in his service facing all the challenges as a parish priest and all the obstacles in fulfillment of his plans. Like Mary who discerned the will of God he too conversed with God and lived like a servant. Let us pray that He may have the honours of the Altar, that we be filled with grace to know our mission and fulfill it while we live here on earth.

(English translation of the homily preached in Konkani)

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Managing Editor

REFLECTION ON THE MARIAN SPIRITUALITY OF SD RAYMOND MASCARENHAS IN THE LIGHT OF ST LOUIS DE MARIE GRIGNION MONTFORT

- Rev Fr Peter Mascarenhas SMM

Introduction

“Christianity is the only religion that needs a Mother,” says the great theologian Karl Rahner. The reason for saying this is that Christianity is not just a religion but the Person of Jesus Christ, God’s incarnate Son. For this humanisation of God’s Son, a Mother was needed to give him human nature. Hence, the importance of Mary in the history of salvation, in the mystery of Christ, in the mystery of the Church and in the life of a believer. So she is an inspiration to all of us in our consecration as we live our mission. As we all share the spirit and Charism of Mary our Mother we reflect on the two stalwart Sons of the Blessed Virgin Mary in this article: S D Raymond, the first Parish Priest of Bendur Mangalore and the Founder of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany and St Louis de Montfort, the Founder of three Montfortian (Congregations) families, paved the way for many to draw strength and support to live their ardent commitment to her Son Jesus, through Mary our Blessed Mother.

SD Raymond as well as St Louis Marie had their humble beginnings and they reflect the profound role, life and mission of Mary as worthy instruments of the Lord. Though the context and the time is different but the address to the people of God, people in faith, hope and love of the Lord and our Blessed Mother are significant to our times. They come to us through their personal love, and devotion and reflection on Mary. I have made efforts to bring out their sincere commitment to Christ through Mary, love for Mary through the spiritual exercises and their extensive reading and grasping the role of Trinity and basically in their personal search for wisdom incarnate that is Christ Jesus.

As we go through the life and brief writings of S D Raymond, like *A Few Minutes with Mary on Saturdays*, *Imitation of Mary*, *Conferences* on Marian devotion, *Letters to the Sisters of the Congregation*, his request to the Holy See to honour Mary through

special celebration of Masses, his love for the Word of God and devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes so on... help us to see his sincere effort to know and love and make her known through his life and through the members of his Congregation. One needs to admire and aspire to do great things for the Lord through his Mother. On the other hand, "The Apostle of Mary" and Father of the Big Rosary, Louis de Montfort is known and loved by all from the time immemorial as a true Son of Mary. His three writings, "*True devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, The Secret of the Rosary, The Secret of Mary, Hymns, Book of Sermons*" bear witness to the fact that he found the Secret, that is "Mary" in his birth, life and death. Keeping this in mind I highlight a few reflections on this devout Sons of Mary and ardent followers of Christ.

S D Raymond and his Love for Mary

One who contemplates Mary becomes like her. Because we love Mary, we strive to imitate her virtue of purity which is compared to the peak of Himalaya Mountain, the lather of Sea water, the shining stars, the diamond dew on the Lilly and the love which takes both inspiring.¹ He erected Bethany in the Heart of Mary. He was the ardent devotee of Mother Mary that he encouraged the Bethany Sisters cultivate a tender devotion to Mary and to make it manifest through their practices of church approved devotions: the devotion to the holy Rosary, the Angelus, the Litany of Loreto to praise her under her different titles, Novenas to prepare for her feast days and the every Saturday devotions as outlined by him in his last will and testament. He asked the Sisters to sing our Lady's Anthem in the morning and the *Magnificat* in the evening and that they read from *A Few Minutes with Mary on Saturdays* at a convenient time.

S D Raymond was moved by the spirit of our Blessed Mother, expressed his love for her through daily spiritual exercises and devotions. His love for her made him to propagate devotions towards her within the Congregation. One of the sisters of the Congregation enumerates the Marian traditions he introduced:

"...He introduced the practice of short reflections about Mary on Saturdays entitled *A few minutes with Mary on Saturdays*. He introduced the First Saturday devotions to the Immaculate Heart of

¹ RFC Mascarenhas, *Moryecha Payankade Ek Ghadibhar* (A Moment at the Feet of Mary) St Aloysious Press, Mangalore, 1954, P.2

Mary. He encouraged the sisters to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Immaculate Conception with Mass at the grotto in the morning (with proper permission) and Rosary, candlelight procession with the singing of the litany in the evening. He installed in the chapel the seven stations depicting Our Lady's seven sorrows, and encouraged us to pray those stations as also the Stabat Mater. He encouraged the sisters to take 'Mary' or some derivative of it as one of their religious names..."²

As indicated above, he proposed that the name of 'Mary' be prefixed to the religious name of every sister as a special mark of their love to the Blessed Mother. After the Congregation was officially recognised by Rome as a Religious Institute in 1932, the sixteen novices of the first group underwent the Novitiate in 1932-1933, as canonically prescribed. He named them after her appellations which were taken mainly from the different invocations to the Mother of God in the Litany of Loreto.³ To another batch of sisters he gave the names after the important mysteries related to Mary's life or attributes like Ancilla, Annunciata, Purifica, Auxilia, etc. He named also a few of the convents after Mary, like Lourdes Convent, Fatima Convent, Presentation Convent, Ave Maria Convent, etc. All these point to one thing – Mgr Raymond wanted the sisters to make Mary an integral part of their spiritual journey. He knew that her maternal presence in their journey would make a difference in the living out of their commitment to her Son, Jesus.

All the mysteries related to the life of Mary were dear to him but he had a special love to Our Lady of Dolours. One of the sisters explains the reason for the commencement of his love to the Mother of Sorrows:

"...He had many sufferings to undergo owing to the criticism from his own brother priests who did not like his idea of starting a new Congregation; also the ecclesiastical authorities of the Diocese were against him, still he was calm and sedate. His only trust was in our Blessed Mother and Eucharistic Lord. It was at this time that the Founder began in Bethany the devotion to our Lady of Sorrows. She was his strength..."⁴

² Violette D'Souza BS, *Memories on RFC Mascarenhas*, dated 04.03.2000.

³ These were sisters Pia, Dulcise, Clemence, Potence, Fidelis, Aurea, Aurora, Stella, Concilia, Succursa, Amica, Columba, Pulchra, Speciosa, Electa, and Victoria.

⁴ Gemma BS, *Memories on R F C Mascarenhas*, dated 23.07.2002.

“The deep love that S D Raymond had for Our Lady of Lourdes is displayed in his writings: “Our Lady of Lourdes who on the Annunciation day, 25 March manifested herself as being ‘The Immaculate Conception’ and whose last farewell visit to Bernadette occurred on the day on which the first four Sisters had the happiness to enter together their new life, viz., the feast of Our Lady of Mt Carmel, 16 July, will be the object of special love and veneration in the Congregation.”⁵

Mgr Raymond desired and loved that ‘Bethany’ be allowed to celebrate Mass in all convent chapels on four feasts of our Blessed Mother as a mark of special love towards her. The following letter expands the point:

“...On account of the particular devotion which Bethany cultivates towards our Blessed Lady, whom she honours and invokes under the title of Queen Mother of Bethany and in gratitude for the many favours which incessantly and sensibly too she receives from her, to have the privilege of (3) saying the Mass in all the Chapels of the Bethany Convents in this or other Dioceses, of

1. *B.M.V. de Bono Consilio* 26 April
2. *B.M.V. Auxilium Christianorum* 24 May
3. *B.M.V. Reginae Apostolorum-Sabbato infra octavam Ascensionis*
4. *B.M.V. Omnium Gratiarum Mediatricis* 31 May ...”⁶

For S D Raymond, Marian devotions were not meaningless rituals but genuine expressions of his sincere love for his Blessed Mother. They manifested his strong desire to imitate her who surrendered to God’s will from Nazareth to Calvary. Most tenderly he called her my Queen, my Mother, my Life, my Sweetness and my Hope and invoked her Queen Mother of Bethany. Mary had become part of his life while on earth, and he wanted her to become part of his heavenly life as well. In life he tried to imitate her and in death he desired to be buried at her feet. He wrote:

“...My last desire and wish is to be buried in the grave which during life I have prepared for myself at the foot of the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Bethany... If, for any reason, I may not be buried

⁵ Memoranda of the Congregation of “The Handmaids of the Lord,” 2 (Cf. To You My Daughters p. 18)

⁶ Letter, R F C Mascarenhas to a Priest (unknown), dated 23.03.1953.

in this my chosen place, I pray those in power to see that at the earliest opportunity my remains are transferred to this grave at the feet of our Blessed Mother of Lourdes in Bethany, that under the shadow of the Queen Mother of Bethany and my own most dear Mother, I may await my resurrection..."⁷

Devotion to Mary

For S D Raymond, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary meant getting closer and closer to Christ by knowing and loving him more and more with each passing day. He used to often encourage the members to have great devotion to our Blessed Mother, "because the more you have it the more closely you grow towards her Son Jesus. When you feel weary of life's problems let us pick up the holy rosary and pray it immediately." He was deeply devoted to making her known and loved by all. All her feasts, the months of May and October specially dedicated to her, and Saturdays were celebrated with befitting honour. Her Mass, "*Salve Sancta Parens*", was his favourite Mass and the Litany of Loreto one of his favourite devotions, which explains why the religious names of so many Bethany Sisters re-echo a title of our Lady! It was his custom to commence any new project, open any institution, or decide any weighty matter on a feast of our Lady, or at least on a Saturday, a day dedicated to her.⁸

Devotion to Mary consists in the imitation of her life and her virtues, in offering ourselves to Mary and through her to Jesus, in having unbounded confidence in her. It consists in confidence in her intercession, confidence in her heart, and confidence in her intercessory prayer, says S D Raymond.⁹ He was born on a Saturday, a day traditionally dedicated to our Blessed Mother and this had a great influence throughout his life. Devotion to Mary was next to the breath of S D Raymond. It was not merely devotion but a filial affection towards her. His tender devotion and confidence in her prompted him to surrender to her maternal care the 'first four' members of the newly started Bethany Congregation and then later to consecrate the 'new project' namely, the foundation of 'Bethany' to her maternal protection. He chose her as its first patroness. He chose the mystery of the Annunciation as the principal feast for his

⁷ R F C Mascarenhas, *Last Wish expressed by R F C Mascarenhas with regard to his burial*, dated 02.03.1942.

⁸ Sister M Violette D'Souza, *Unless the Seed Die*, Bethany Publications, 1985, p. 71.

⁹ Sr Miriam BS, *A Treasury of Pearls*, ATC, Bangaluru, 2018, p 23.

Congregation and gave Mary's *fiat* as the motto and inspiration to the sisters in their ongoing surrender to God. Later as a parish priest, he tried his best to foster devotion among his parishioners to our Blessed Mother. The following extract is a proof of the same;

"... Being desirous of promoting and spreading devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary among the boys of my schools in particular and the Parish in general, I humbly beg Your Lordship to be pleased to erect canonically a Sodality of the B.V. Mary, under the Primary Title of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Secondary Title of St Francis Xavier, for boys, in the Parish Church of St Sebastian, Bendur...I have provisionally established such a Sodality, in June 1923; since to commencement regular weekly meetings have been held and other pious practices followed. The number of boys who have joined the Sodality is 55. The Sodality is very popular and promises to be a success and great power for good in the Parish..."¹⁰

'As Mary loves children of Bethany, let us bear with our neighbours all the inconveniences of our daily contact with them. Ask Mother Mary to come to your aid and adorn you with her own virtues before you receive her Son Jesus into your heart. Devotion to Mary is not hollow but solid; it should not be only external without inner essence with only external notes but it should consist in purifying the soul, going against evil and filled with virtues.'¹¹

While educating the sisters to foster true devotion to our Blessed Mother, he emphasised:

"Our devotion to Mary must be genuine, and consist in the imitation of her life and virtues. Who can doubt that she followed as closely as possible the footsteps of Christ, her Son? She lived in constant communion with Him. She shared with Him the life of poverty. She also excelled in chastity. Day by day, her heart enlarged with confidence in her God. Her prayer was constant and persevering. She had all those virtues, which disposed her to pray. Her humility was profound. She was the highest personage, but she concealed her gifts under the veil of silence. Her zeal for the glory of God was most ardent. She most fervently desired that all be saved. By her example, she preached very eloquently. She suffered next in intensity

¹⁰ Letter, R F C Mascarenhas, Paul Perini SJ (Bishop) dated, 15.01.1924.

¹¹ S D Raymond FC Mascarenhas, *A Few Minutes with Mary*, St Aloysius Press, Mangalore, 1954, p. 21.

to our Blessed Lord. Let our devotion to our Mother be solid, an imitation of her life..."¹²

It is impossible to have devotion to our Blessed Mother without loving our Lord more. So often he emphasised the true spirit of the union of the Mother with her Son, so one is able to deepen the faith and trust in the Lord and our Blessed Mother.

Devotion to the Scapular and Holy Rosary

Mary's Scapular and Rosary are our little tokens of our love for her. We must love Mary sincerely with solid love, a love that will always stand and bring about greater harvest of holiness. He loved the Scapular of our Lady. Mary received us as her children when we received the Scapular. We must love the Scapular... Religious should always have that Scapular about them and rejoice that we are Mary's and that Mary is ours.¹³

As St John Paul II writes

"Rosary is a prayer of great significance, destined to bring forth harvest of holiness...with Rosary Christian people sits at the school of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depth of his love. Through Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as through from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer."¹⁴

S D Raymond cherished praying the Rosary and considered it his weapon to battle against obstacles, whether material or spiritual. It had become for him a habit, so much so, that he would count the distance between two places with the number of Rosaries prayed. He encouraged also the sisters to pray the Rosary, especially those who owing to insufficient education could not attend Scripture classes. He explained to them its mysteries; these reflections provided material to meditate on the life, death and resurrection of our Lord. He set the fifteen mysteries into Konkani verse. The purpose of doing this was that they could learn the mysteries and honour Mary by singing her praises. He would say, "Rosary is the most beautiful devotion. Pray it lovingly. Let us say it well with meaning, tenderness and affection. Let us consider this as our daily homage to Mary...let us

¹² Sr Bertha BS, *From the Lips of the Founder*, 1996, p.199.

¹³ Sr Bertha BS, *From the Lips of the Founder*, 1996, p 20.

¹⁴ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Marie*, On the Most Holy Rosary, St Paul's, Mumbai, 2002, pp 3-4.

be fond of the Rosary. Let us salute her with the Angel Gabriel, 'Hail Mary, full of grace'.¹⁵ In the conferences he gave to the sisters we come across many filial instructions and guidelines which encourage them to come closer to Mary through pious practices in their daily life.

'We must please Mary by not committing sin. If we really love Mary, our first duty is to keep her in our hearts pure and holy. The larger will be our share of grace, if we be attached to Mary. ...Mary is a mother who will never turn her face from us, never fail to comfort and love us.'¹⁶

Learn from our Mother to bear grief calmly and even cheerfully, with peaceful resignation to the will of God, who, even in His chastisement for sin is kind and merciful. So we make an offering of ourselves to Jesus through the hands of our Immaculate Mother.

The Role of Mary in the light of St Montfort

We are at the heart of Montfort's Marian doctrine. Mary's function in the Incarnation implies a twofold dynamic, the Trinity freely pouring grace into her soul and Mary's faithful response. "It is not possible to express, on the one hand, the ineffable communications of the Blessed Trinity to this most fair creature, and, on the other hand, the fidelity with which she corresponded with the graces of her Creator (Lk 11:28)."¹⁷ Montfort presents the basic and the most important plan of God in the history of salvation through the figure and role of Mary. This is primarily her 'call' which led to her 'response'. Hence Mary's presence in the history of salvation remains fully actual and every believer must remember that "all those who have found grace before God have found it only through her. Only through her will those who follow find grace with God."¹⁸

When Montfort will ask for Missionaries for his Company, he will do so by reiterating the same principle: "Remember to give your Mother this new company so that you may renew all things through her and bring the era of grace to a close through Mary just as you began it through her."¹⁹ In other words for Montfort the path is very

¹⁵ Sr Bertha BS, *From the Lips of the Founder*, p 20.

¹⁶ Sr Bertha BS, *From the Lips of the Founder*, p 22

¹⁷ LEW 105.

¹⁸ TD 44.

¹⁹ *Prayer for Missionaries* 6. St Louis de Montfort, God Alone, The Collected Writings of St Louis Marie de Montfort, Montfort publications, New York, 1987. (All writings of Montfort are quoted from this book)

**Unfolding of the Projects of
50th Death Anniversary of S D Raymond F C Mascarenhas**



**Bethany Institute of Resource Development
Umsning, Meghalaya**



**Bethany Santhwana Destitute Home
Karakundu, Kannur Dist, Kerala**

**Unfolding of the Projects of
50th Death Anniversary of S D Raymond F C Mascarenhas**



**Dr OHM INDO German Hospital Extension
Chittapur, North Karnataka**



**Karunalaya Centre for Women
Karnal, Haryana**

**Unfolding of the Projects of
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**Rosa Mystica Ayurveda Clinic
Gurpur, Kinnikambla**



**Karunamatha Holistic Centre
Gadenahally, North Karnataka**

RAYMOND RAYS-SPECIAL BULLETIN

As a Tribute of Love to the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas, St Raymond High School Vamanjoor brought out a special issue of *Raymond Rays*. The bulletin is the brainchild of Mr Richard Alvares, the former headmaster of St Raymond High School, Vamanjoor, Mangalore



RAYMOND RAYS

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LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE



Special Edition: December 23, 2020

A TRIBUTE TO SERVANT OF GOD MGR. R. F. C MASCARENHAS

(FOUNDER: CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF THE LITTLE FLOWER OF BETHANY)



60th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

DECEMBER 23, 2020

clear; the unique role of Mary in entering into the profound mystery of the Incarnation, the Second Person of the Trinity. It is in and through her, one can belong totally to Christ.²⁰ She is the worthy Mother and Associate to God the Redeemer. We need to gratefully acknowledge the immeasurable graces granted to her by the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, to which she totally surrenders herself by her loving and unique consent.

Mary's Consent²¹

Mary's divinely willed role in salvation history is expressed in her consent to bring forth the Eternal Wisdom. Mary is the woman of faith who in the name of humanity consents to the inbreaking of God's Wisdom into the foolishness of this world. Simply put, it is through her *Yes*, her *fiat*, that the redemptive Incarnation becomes a reality. Eternal Incarnate Wisdom became incarnate and perfect man from the moment of Mary's consent, "a consent that the Blessed Trinity... waited for."²² Montfort explains this consent of Mary in various categories as he saw it as an essential element in the whole history of salvation. This consent of Mary is the link between the role of the Mother of God and that of the Companion of the Redeemer, and therefore between divine maternity and spiritual maternity.

The consent of Mary to the redemptive Incarnation is, first of all necessary because of God's plan. Montfort forcefully teaches, "the Eternal Incarnate Wisdom, desired to become man in her, provided that she gives her consent."²³ Her 'yes' is therefore, necessary in God's plan as seen from above. Mary's 'yes' is an essential part of the Incarnation: the life, death and Resurrection of our Lord, the sending of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Sacraments, everything that concerns the history of salvation. For Montfort, the objective and therefore subjective redemption is governed, and is enclosed by the identical antiphon of Mary's *fiat* in the Incarnation and to the victorious Cross.²⁴

²⁰ Cf. *TD* 121.

²¹ Peter Mascarenhas, *Montfort an Apostle of Mary*, To Jesus Through Mary, Montfort Marian Centre, Bangalore, (April-June) 2016, pp 3-10. (text is quoted from this article).

²² "... notwithstanding her desire to be lowly, Mary wholeheartedly gave the angel that priceless consent which the Blessed Trinity, all the angels and the whole world awaited for so many centuries. Humbling herself before her Creator she said "Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Let it be done to me according to your word." *LEW* 107.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *TD* 18, Cf. *TD* 260; *FC* 4.

Mary's consent is efficacious, i.e. salvific. It is a consent willed by God to the redemptive Incarnation, a loving surrender given in the name of the universe for the salvation of the humankind. "It is in this mystery that Jesus, together with Mary... chose all the elect."²⁵ Montfort stresses the importance of the salvific nature of the consent of Mary: "It was through Mary that the salvation of the world was begun."²⁶ Her consent is directed towards the salvation of humankind as Christ is the Saviour of the world.

It is a representative consent i.e. given by Mary as the corporate personality of this humanity, or as Montfort speaks of this universe, yearning for salvation. Mary found grace before God, "for herself and for every man in particular,"²⁷ "for the whole human race."²⁸ The Church as we understand from the Vatican Council II, exists in Christ as a sacrament, sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.²⁹

Finally, this consent of Mary is eternal. This is the succession of the various phases of the history of salvation. As all gifts are given in virtue of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, so too all gifts are also given in virtue of Mary's corporate consent to the Redeemer. Forever Jesus remains the fruit of her womb, the fruit of her faith.³⁰ Mary is forever the 'yes' of humanity and by this yes, associate of the Redeemer in all the works of grace.³¹ She is the symbol of the Church, open fully to the capital grace of Christ. Karl Rahner writes:

*"The absolutely unique Yes of the consent of the Blessed Virgin, which cooperated in determining the whole history of the world, is not a mere happening that has disappeared in the void of the past... She still utters her eternal Amen, her eternal Fiat, Let it be so, let it be done, to all that God willed, to the whole great ordered plan of redemption, in which we all find place, built up on the foundation which is Christ."*³²

The consent of this woman, that is her 'faith' is always kept in mind by Montfort as the essential and necessary element in the

²⁵ TD248.

²⁶ TD 49.

²⁷ SM 7.

²⁸ SM 56; LEW 203.

²⁹ Cf. LG 1, 56, 61, 68.

³⁰ Cf. LEW 205

³¹ Cf. TD 36, 74.

³² K RAHNER, *Mary, Mother of the Lord: Theological Meditations*, New York, 1964, pp.100-101.

history of salvation that is accomplished in our personal and community life in the Church.

Mary - Mother and Queen

Reading through *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* one can enter into the very mind of the author. He was convinced that the very qualities of our Lady are those of a Mother towards her children: "She is good, she is tender, she has nothing austere or forbidding about her, nothing too sublime or too brilliant....She is so charitable that she rejects none of those who ask her intercession, no matter how great sinners they may have been..."³³ Montfort has a special litany to express the spiritual maternity of Mary as a Mother.³⁴

For Montfort, Mary's spiritual maternity is not an adoptive maternity, but as stressed by Gaffney in similar lines that Mary gave us birth³⁵: "No one but Mary has had the power to conceive and give birth to the Eternal Wisdom and no one else has now the power to incarnate Him, as it were, in the predestinate, by the operation of the Holy Spirit."³⁶ This is an expression of the basic purpose of Mary's Motherhood, to cooperate in our spiritual birth, as Montfort puts it: "O Blessed Virgin Mary, you give all of us life, in giving us the fruit of life."³⁷ "Note that Mary is not only the Mother of Jesus, Head of the elect, but is also Mother of all his members. Hence she conceives them, bears them in her womb and brings them forth to the glory of heaven through the graces of God which she imparts to them."³⁸ This element is stressed greatly because it is seen as a necessary consequence of the fact that Mary is the mother of the Head of the mystical Body. One and the same Mother does not give to the Head without the members.³⁹

For Montfort, Mary's maternity is real and dynamic, intent on giving us to the Holy Spirit, who alone can "bring forth and fashion

³³ TD 85.

³⁴ I cite here a few titles which he used for Mary: Our mother (TD 84), My good Mother (*Cantiques de Montfort*, p. 158), My Sweetness (TD 144), My true Mother (TD 201), Mother of the predestinate (TD 188), Mother of Gifts (*Cantiques de Montfort*, p. 175.), Mother of grace (SM 8), My dear and well-beloved Mother, Echoing the Fathers, Mary is also the Mother of the Living (SM 22), Mother of fair love (SM 215), Mother of Christians (*Cantiques de Montfort*, p. 139), Mother of the Members (LEW 213).

³⁵ Cf. P GAFFNEY, *Le rôle de Marie dans l'histoire du salut*, in *Montfort, un maître spirituel*, p. 198. LEW 203.

³⁷ *Cantiques de Montfort*, p. 30.

³⁸ LEW 213; TD 32; Cf. SM 12.

³⁹ This argument is also used by the magisterium, for example; Pius XII, in *Mystici Corporis Christi* in AAS 35 (1943), 247- 248.

the children of God,⁴⁰ but always through his faithful and inseparable spouse. Therefore we are 'children' of Mary, we are enclosed in her womb,⁴¹ while waiting to come to light in the same way in which Jesus lives in Mary and wants to depend on her.

Besides being our Mother, Mary is Queen of all hearts:

"Mary has received from God a far reaching dominion over the souls of the elect. Otherwise she could not make her dwelling-place in them as God the Father has ordered her to do, and she could not conceive them, nourish them, and bring them forth to eternal life as their mother... unless she had received from the Almighty rights and authority over their souls... Mary is the Queen of heaven and earth by grace as Jesus is king by nature and by conquest.... So we may call her, as saints do, Queen of all hearts."⁴²

Mary's approach is maternal, one of love within the hearts of people, to influence them to surrender all to the overshadowing Spirit, so that Christ may be formed in them to the glory of the Father. Her maternal Queenship connotes authority as vast as that of her Son, though in Montfort's Marian doctrine everything is subordinated to Christ.

Conclusion

St Louis Marie was born and raised in the baroque age, the extravagant, Maximalist period of the seventeenth century Europe. He followed most of the Marian authors of his time. It was an age that witnessed the explosion of the Marian thesis, distinct tracts of Mary, of fervid expressions of devotions of the Mother of God, such as the slavery of Mary and other devotions. He spent most of priestly life preaching and teaching in Western France. He dwelt on the principle that through Mary God had initiated the work of Redemption through her cooperation, so he would continue and finish that work by means of her: "It was through the Blessed Virgin Mary that Jesus Christ came into the world, and it is also through her that He will reign in the world."

On the other hand S D Raymond a holy priest of the Diocese of Mangalore made all out effort to spread devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary through his love and devotion by being a parish priest

⁴⁰ *PM* 15; *Cantique* 141:2; *Cf. TD* 37.

⁴¹ *Cf. TD* 33; *LEW* 213; *SM* 14; *Cantique* 159:12.

⁴² *TD* 37-38; *Cf. TD* 28.

and Founder of the religious Congregation with zeal and enthusiasm. He began as a seminarian to love Mary through pious devotions and felt that more and more people in their day-to-day life seek the intercessory role of Mary, and cultivated a sense respect and reverence to the Mother of God. He always acknowledged that the Immaculate Mother of God is the ladder to ascend the summit of contemplation of the attributes of God. We must love Mary sincerely with solid love, a love that will always stand together with her Son. We should always wear the Scapular and rejoice that we are Mary's and Mary is ours. Let us draw inspiration and live our vocation under the mantle of Mary our Mother.

Love and devotion to Mary are the two intertwined elements in the life of a devotee. They have led the stalwarts to be docile to God's will in their life. Mary is the servant of the Lord. Mary's (consent) "Fiat" is not for a day. It expresses her fundamental and permanent attitude, which defines herself as God's servant. Her "Fiat" (Let it be done) committed her, personally, to active acceptance of service; it went beyond the personal engagement. It is this very attitude of Mary (love and devotion) which the two stalwarts practised in their lives. From their humble beginnings, one comes to know that, from their life flowed a stream of sorrow and repentance, of love and devotion, of heroism and the spirit of sacrifice. And by imitating the mother of Jesus, they kept intact faith, firm hope and sincere love for others.

Their devotion to the Eucharist is a profound one. Their devotion toward the most holy Virgin, and at the same time their honour to the only-begotten Son in the Eucharist, teaches us that whatever honour and praise are bestowed on the Mother are also redound to the Son. And it is because of him, people still know and honour Mary today. The history of religious life the holy founders and foundresses were all inflamed with love of Mary. So also with the life of the two holy men; all that they undertook and did, they did in the name and for the love of Mary. They believed that our love of Mary brings us closer to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Rosary and Magnificat: In Mary we find the power of the *Magnificat* and the receptivity of the *fiat*, both words of strength and courage, both bespeaking receptivity and humility. The stalwarts have been honoured for their devotion to Mary. Mary, through her

humility in her *Magnificat* fittingly summed up all the praises of God of the people. For what God had always done for his people he had now done pre-eminently for Mary. He had, indeed, exalted the humble. It is this humble attitude of the stalwarts which has won God's favour for them in their life. Always the Rosary was in their hands and the *Magnificat* was on their lips.

The Faith of Mary: 'Mary's faith surpassed that of all men and all angels. She saw Jesus lying on straw, and her faith told her that he was the all powerful One. She saw that he spoke not a word, yet she believed that he was the eternal Wisdom itself.' She is the mother of the Redeemer, spouse of the third Person of the Trinity.

Mary is the Mother and Queen of every Christian family and particularly the poor; for this reason we have recourse to her and beg her help. We are called to choose her daily as our Mother and Queen. We can be sure that a Mother and Queen will not fail to stay close to her children and guard the Church. This was the trust with which these two stalwarts SD RFC Mascarenhas and St Louis Montfort entrusted themselves to the Lord, the Church and mission of the Lord and remained faithful. They are a source of inspiration and strength for all of us on our pilgrimage of faith.



MGR RAYMOND –AN INSPIRATION FOR OUR SANCTIFICATION

- Sr Shalet D'Souza

"Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48).

The dogmatic constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, gives the universal call to holiness in the Church. The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and every one of His disciples of every condition. It is evident that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbour.

Clerics who are called by the Lord for the various ministerial offices are bound to bring their hearts and minds by constant prayer, burning love, unmerited recollection and accomplish all the works for the glory and honour of God.

The holiness is fostered in a special way by celibates or virgins by the observance of the evangelical counsels. They are called to devote themselves to God alone with an undivided heart.

Married couples are called to attain holiness by their faithful love for each other, by accepting children as God's gift and rearing them with Christian faith and evangelical virtues.

Every year December 23rd reminds us of our beloved Founder's departure from the world; indeed his birthday in heaven! Even though he has left us for a better life, his spirit has been with us, constantly guiding us. It takes great pleasure to see his powerful intercession for us in the past six decades; a tiny sapling of Bethany planted by Mgr Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas, tended by the flowing waters of grace and fortified by trials and tribulations is climbing the 100th step. In the Post-Centenary year Bethany has to go back to the roots and seek out how she can live in the world without being contaminated by the worldliness. I wish to cull out, in this article, four means proposed by the Servant of God Monsignor RFC Mascarenhas to live a life of sanctification.

1. We are called to do the will God :

"Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12: 50).

It is very much evident from the life and teachings of Jesus that we are all called to do the will of the Father. For He Himself said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (Jn 4: 34).

Father Founder explains that the meaning of God's will in religious life consists in 'saving not only yourself but sanctifying yourself as the spouse of our Lord. God's will is that as you be very near to him in this world, but you must also be very near to him in Heaven and for this you must be very holy.' Holiness can be attained by doing the holy Will of God in all things. Perfection does not consist in fasting and mortification if they are not according to the Will of God. Therefore the one rule of sanctity is doing God's will.

The will of God is revealed to us by his Commandments more especially by our Rule Book. It enumerates the duties towards Jesus and my relations towards those of his house, his other spouses. I must consider that the rule book has been written by my spouse and written for me. Fidelity to this, will train my whole soul, body and all its parts; they will ravish my heart. They will show him that you are his bride, zealous for his house and thinking only of him.

For Father Mascarenhas, 'the will of God' was a concrete reality. Before any undertaking, he would spend hours and days praying to discern the 'good pleasure of God and the Blessed Mother.' He spent his lonely time of retirement discerning the will of God despite all types of inconveniences, thus, drank the bitter chalice of suffering as the divine will of his creator. We who are the loving children of Mary need to accept the challenging times with right discernment and live in conformity to God's will.

2. We are called to do everything to please God:

Am I seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ (Gal 1:10).

Inspired by the life of Little Flower, whose motto was 'to please God alone,' Father Founder would instruct the sisters to do everything only to please Jesus. Once he addressed his sisters as follows: "What great things did Therese do? No great things as the world estimates as greatness, but just the commonplace things that any religious does. But she did them with a love that was not commonplace. She arose at the first sound of the bell, even when it was cold. She prayed, took her meals and went to recreation just as religious do

everywhere..." Founder desired that we need to have many 'Little Flowers' in our communities who would have holy ambition and generous love that lifted St Therese.

A few tips Father Founder proposes to please God are:

1. During the day to raise our mind and heart to God;
2. Several times a day through ejaculatory prayers to experience the presence of God;
3. To offer our little amusements, play, study and work to God.

These are the great means of sanctifying ourselves. Let everything we do, be an occasion of uniting ourselves with God and loving Him. In the garden of religious life all of us are destined to blossom as flowers of holiness varying indeed in beauty according to God's transforming grace but still all flowers of genuine sanctity.

3. We are called to lead a life of prayer:

"In the morning, long before dawn, He got up and left the house and went off to a lonely place and prayed there" (Mk 1:35).

Jesus longed to converse with His Father in solitude and in close intimacy. The prayer life of Jesus has become a model for many followers of Jesus. Father Founder too walked in the footsteps of Jesus the Master and taught his spiritual daughters the importance of prayer by word and example.

He instructed the sisters to sit at the feet of Jesus like Mary of Bethany in deep silence and be the first one to enter the chapel and to catch the first smile of our Lord. Citing the instruction given by Jesus in Sermon on the Mount about prayer, Founder would say, "when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father in secret..." (Mt 6: 6); enter your room leaving behind all worldly distractions; shut the door, keep recollected and pray to God." We don't need appointments to speak to God. Let us speak to God in faith. Prayer made with humility, simplicity and love, will obtain this pure love of God, as no other means will obtain.

If we pray well, there is no fear of tepidity or of habitual sin and consequently the loss of vocation. It safeguards us from all evil. It is prayer that will conquer our weak nature. Let our first thought be to call upon Jesus and Mary. Pray during times of aridity with great efforts.

In order to live a supernatural life we need supernatural grace, strength and help. It can be obtained only through prayer. Every action of a religious is an act of prayer. But if an act should be an act of prayer it should be good in itself. It should be done under obedience and the intention should be renewed at least every morning.

In this challenging world, world of comforts, technology and temptations we have to realize our vulnerability and come before the Blessed Sacrament on bended knees. Let us never forget to burn as the 'sanctuary lamp' and grow deeper in our spousal relationship with our Beloved Lord.

4. We are called to be attached to Jesus and be detached from the world:

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt 6: 21).

Attachment to Christ is the secret of detachment from the world. Every spiritual person emphasizes on the virtue of detachment in order to possess Jesus as the treasure in our hearts. Father Founder lived a simple life-style; his rectories, presbyteries, furniture, clothing and food habits spoke volumes to the visitors of his value of detachment. He would instruct the sisters "As you grow in love, you desire to sacrifice something daily for Jesus and to do all your actions in a way to please Him". Once we make Jesus the treasure of life, renouncing anything contrary to it would become a spontaneous act. Based on the knowledge available during those days he would advise sisters occasionally on the vainness of the world and greatness of God.

"The world has nothing good; it is deceitful. In God alone, there is true good. The world makes me unhappy, but God makes me happy in His service. The world has forgotten, and despised Jesus Christ, my spouse, my master. Shall I then love the world? I need to guard against my natural affection. I will not let my thoughts run on creatures but on God alone and on my neighbour in God. I shall love him by doing everything for His love and seeking him alone in all things."

How relevant are these words of our Founder even to our present times! As the media is creeping into our personal life, many a time there is a tendency to make gadgets a valuable, inseparable treasure. Very seldom do we realize that we are moving away from the focus

of our religious life, i.e. making Jesus the centre of our life; instead we seek natural affection from creatures.

Conclusion:

All the faithful of Christ are invited to strive for holiness and perfection according to their own proper state. Let neither the use of the things of this world nor attachment to riches, which is against the spirit of evangelical poverty, hinder us in our quest for perfect love. The basic catechism learnt in childhood clearly states God's purpose in creating human beings: God created us to know, love, serve Him and to be with Him forever in Heaven. From the inception of the Church, she has been inviting men and women to sanctify themselves in their respective state of life. In recent years Pope Francis has simplified the concept of holiness and made it a possible reality, not only for the religious but also for laity alike. The beatification of Carlo Acutis, has paved a way for the youth to sanctification in this digital era. With hope may our journey of faith, amidst the dark cloud of Covid -19 pandemic, find meaning to our existence and may Bethany Congregation in this centenary year produce many holy women of God and for God.

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INTERVIEW WITH SR THERESINE BS - FOND MEMORIES WITH SD RAYMOND FC MASCARENHAS, OUR FOUNDER

- Sr Celine Vas BS

(Sr Theresine hails from Kerala. She had a very long association with the Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas. She has served the Congregation as the Principal of Teacher Training Institute, as Local Superior, Regional Superior, General Councillor and a Formator. She also has been preaching retreats on the life and spirituality of St Therese)

Sr Celine : Sr Theresine, you had the privilege of being in Bethany at a very young age and seeing the founder and dealing with him. What was your experience?

Sr Theresine : It all happened providentially I had come with my priest uncle to see Mangalore, but God's plan was different. Instead of going back after seeing Mangalore, I decided to stay here, study and become a religious. I already had a desire to be one. The Founder accepted me at that tender age and let me stay with the candidates but separately. He received me with the words "this child is now on ours." He was already 72 then.

Sr Celine : What was the Founder's attitude towards children?

Sr Theresine : He loved the children very tenderly. He sought their welfare and their all-round development. He refused nothing needed for their health, education and moral growth. He made necessary arrangement of personnel and materials by putting us under the care of loving persons. He gave us opportunities for relaxation during the holidays sending us to a villa on the sea shore (Bonus Pastor) or at Rosa Mystica, a campus perched on a hill across Gurgur with its salubrious air and the fruit trees the Founder himself had planted. We did really enjoy the fruits of this garden.

Sr Celine : What lessons have you learnt from your acquaintance with the Founder?

Sr Theresine : I have learnt many a lesson from his life. In the first place his tender devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and his trust in God in all difficulties. It was a soul-lifting sight to see him rapt in ecstasy seated before the Blessed Sacrament. Whatever be

the work load he might have had, the time for the Lord would not be sacrificed. Even at a stage when he could not walk up to the chapel he would be seated at his cottage door where through the window he could see the tabernacle light, a signal of the Eucharistic Lord's presence. As for his trust in God in difficult moments there was a time when a particular portion of the Bethany building, a beautiful structure had to be demolished on account of a dispute between Bethany and the parishioners of Bendur. While it was being carried out, the Founder a 75 year old man with Rosary in his hand and tears in his eyes watched every stone that came down. At this juncture one of the sisters namely Sr Leonie approached Father who at once told her, "Pray my child for strength and courage to accept God's will."

Sr Celine : What do you know about his devotion to Mother Mary?

Sr Theresine : His devotion to the Blessed Mother of God was also tender and he loved to call Mary as he would call his own mother '*Mai*' in his mother tongue and taught me to do so whenever I took spiritual guidance from him or go to him in my difficulties. He would tell me to seek her help in all things and finally he would quote to me the nursery rhyme 'dance little baby, dance up high, never mind baby, mama is nigh', which means 'Go about your life without fear. Mama Mary will not allow you to fall.' This was his attitude towards the Mother of God. I have something to quote from what I heard from an eye witness. Sr Louise had this to say to me: "Fr Founder was seen very often praying before the Grotto of our Blessed Mother. One day the statue which was with folded hands was seen by the sisters with open hands when they returned from the school in the evening. They asked the Superior General and others what it meant but no one would say anything about it as in those days such things were kept secret. After one or two days again when they returned from school, they found the statue in its normal position but the hands were not fully joined." But the little gap was wider than as it can be seen at present because as a child when I came to Bethany I have seen it so. In all his doubts and troubles he would run to Mary and entrust all his works to her as he did with the first four on the Founding Day of the Congregation. If somebody approached him for something he would say, "Let us see what our Blessed Mother would say." He would erect statues of our Blessed Mother in public places where people could see and pray. He would compose hymns

in her honour and put up wordings or verses from there. For instance on the wall of the Bethany Mother House chapel facing the road he had erected a statue of Mother Mary and inscribed the words '*Amchi Mai mun dakai, amca mogan vagai, dev bhiranthin vadai, Jezu sersin pavai*' (Show yourself a Mother to us, take us forward with love, make us all God-fearing, lead us to your Son, Jesus).

Sr Celine : In your opinion is Bethany fulfilling the dream of our Founder? What more is expected of Bethany to the Church?

Sr Theresine : The Founder's compassionate heart had a call and the dream of his heart was to cater to the spiritual, moral, social and psychological needs of the last, least and the lost of the society. So he gave us a mandate to work for the development of the poor and the lowly. This he did according to the needs of his time through Bethany in India. In 1956 when he visited Rome, standing in St Peter's Basilica, he spoke prophetically 'God willing Bethany will one day be International. Like the Little Flower his favourite saint he desired to go and preach the Gospel all over the world. He wanted through Bethany to bring the compassionate love of God to every person especially the needy. He acted according to the signs of the times and today Bethany is faced with greater challenges like, to fight the evil of human trafficking which could be considered a sort of modern slave trade so also meeting the needs of the migrants and now of the COVID -19 stricken people. Bethany has been trying to be faithful to the Founder's teaching and trying to do it not only in India but also in Europe and Africa. But we can't be complacent that we are doing enough. We must find better ways and means to reach out to the people in the peripheries. Another dream of the Founder, much more his death bed desire was the perpetual adoration in Bethany, that the sisters be strengthened by the spirit of prayer and personal attachment to Jesus and for his mission in India and the world at large. This has come to the realization in preparation for the centenary of the Congregation.

Sr Celine : I hear that Fr Founder had special love towards the Keralites as they were coming from faraway places. What do you say?

Sr Theresine : Yes. Indeed. The girls from Kerala were given special attention by the Founder and the sisters, which helped them to adjust to the new culture. He told the sisters in-charge to see to their special needs like oil bath. He asked one of the first group of

Keralites what they wanted, and a spontaneous reply came from them "bananas." The next day the candidates were called to the Founder's cottage and a big cluster of bananas awaited them. And all ate them to their hearts content. I have a personal experience as a young girl. I was growing thin and weak and Father Founder observed it. He called the sister in-charge of us and gave her a tin of ovaltin and asked her to add it in the milk and serve me every day. At that age this act I took it for granted but as a grown up person when I looked back on this event my heart fills with gratitude for the kindness of his tender paternal heart.

Sr Celine : I have heard that he loved the poor. What was your experience?

Sr Theresine : Fr Founder was taking care of a poor boy keeping him at his residence and educated him with the intention that he would become a priest but the boy did not come up to his expectation in studies and proved to be a failure. Father was not discouraged. He then taught him a trade so that he could settle in life and earn his living. When people criticized him for wasting his money on such a boy he told him one day in Konkani, '*kon yeklo boro jalyar thachi pat poleyeth*' which means 'if any one thrives he can look after himself.' Simon Rasquinha of Mangalore who established Simon and Co, is another person whom Fr Founder helped to develop his talents and start a trade.

Sr Celine : Is there any other inspiration that you would like to share?

Sr Theresine : There are umpteen things that I would like to say about him. But one of the facts I would like to stress is that he guided me in the way of obedience. When I was a postulant and had been to his cottage for spiritual guidance he gave me a plantain which I refused to take from him. I was in the first stage of religious life, not supposed to eat anything out of time or out of place. But he understood me and told me "Now take this plantain and eat it and afterwards go and tell your directress." He could have said 'I am the Founder, you can take anything from me'. But he guided me as to how to go about in obedience and openness.

Sr Celine : Thank you Sr Theresine. You are indeed privileged to have met him and trained by him. Thank you very much for responding to my questions.

FAVOURS RECEIVED

HEALING OF BONE LIGAMENT TEAR

I was suffering from bone ligament tear for about six months. As I had acute pain in my right foot, I went to several doctors. An X-ray was taken on 7 November 2018. Seeing the reports the doctors advised me to take complete rest as I used to limp while walking. Again on 26 February 2019, the x-ray showed that I needed to undergo surgery. I did not want to go for it. I earnestly and with much faith prayed to God through the intercession of our Founder. Meanwhile I had gone for the homeopathic treatment for a few months. Then the report was sent to a doctor at Fr Muller's Hospital, Mangalore. The doctor told me that the surgery is not necessary. I attribute my healing to RFC Mascarenhas' intercession. Since two years I have no pain and I am able to walk freely. Praise the Lord.

Sr Benita Gratia, BS

Mother of Mecry Convent, Gadenahalli

FAITH IN GOD CAN MOVE THE MOUNTAINS

I along with my sister and her family are indeed grateful to the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas for interceding to Jesus, for the good health of Warren Fred D'Souza, my nephew around 11 years back. He was suffering from severe intestinal problem when he was a three month old baby. It was a matter of life and death.

Today with the intercession of RFC Mascarenhas and blessings he is a healthy child studying in Class VII at Gonzaga School, Mangalore.

It was our faith in you that you would definitely intercede to God for Warren that he was healed.

Praise and thank you Lord.

Saritha Saldahna

Mangalore

GIFT OF A CHILD

I thank God and our Founder for answering my prayer. My sister-in-law delivered a baby boy through the intercession of the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas.

May God be glorified.

Sr Loila Juliana,BS

Bethany Convent, Umsning

HEALING THROUGH DIVINE INTERVENTION

I had unexpected bleeding in July 2020 and was undergoing tests and treatment. I turned to the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas to plead on my behalf to our heavenly Father to heal me. I am fully recovered. There have been no such incidents ever since for which I am grateful.

Praise the Lord!

Mrs Mary D'Souza

Camp, Belgaum

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Sr M Dona Sanctis BS



Sr M Dona Sanctis BS belongs to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Mangalore. She did her BTh from Vidyajyoti College of Theology, New Delhi. She has a doctorate in Theology from Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands. She has worked in the fields of education and formation. At present she is the Postulator in Rome for the Cause of the Canonization of the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas.

Rev Fr Peter Mascarenhas



Fr Peter Mascarenhas smm, hails from Bantwal, in the Diocese of Mangalore. He was ordained a priest in the Society of Montfort Missionaries in India on 10 Nov. 1990. He completed his Master's in Philosophy at Dharmaram Vidya Keshtram, Bangalore; obtained Licentiate in Theology from KUL, Leuven, Belgium, and Master's in Religious Studies, KUL, Leuven, Belgium. He was the Regional Superior of the Montfort Missionaries in India, was a Lecturer in the Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand; is a Formator, a Preacher and takes up teaching in different Institutes in the country and abroad; is the Director of Marian Centre, Bangalore, who directs, seminars and courses on Marian Studies and Summer Programmes. He is also the Editor of *Jesus Through Mary*, A Quarterly Marian Magazine.

Sr M Shalet D'Souza BS



Sr M Shalet D'Souza BS is a member of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Theology from St Joseph's Inter-diocesan Seminary, Mangalore, MA in Holistic Spirituality from Mysore University and Diploma in Formator's course at Institute for Formators in India, Bangalore. She has been a formator for the past 12 years. At present she is the Novice Directress at Rosa Mystica Novitiate, Gurpur, Mangalore.

Sr M Arpan BS



Sr Arpan BS is a member of the Northern Province of the Bethany Congregation, is a social activist by profession and a post graduate in Social Work. She has spent several years in the service of the poor and the marginalized in Northern India; was a provincial councillor and social work coordinator of the Province for four years. She has led the network of women religious – AMRAT Talitha Kum India, The International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons for three years in the capacity of a President. Presently she serves as India Coordinator of Arise foundation, London based (UK) Anti-Slavery Funding organization which supports the Frontline works of the Religious Sisters in many countries.

Sr Celine Vas



Sr Celine Vas, has a doctorate in Philosophy (Journalism and Mass Communications) from Mangalore University. She has taught Journalism for UG and PG students at St Aloysius College, Mangalore for a couple of years. She was the Principal of St Raymond's College, Vamanjoor and a formator for a number of years.



**60 years ago - a few pioneering members of Bethany
praying at the tomb of the Servant of God in
Sebastian Church, Bendur, Mangalore, in front of the main altar**



**On the Occasion of the Exhumation, Identification and
Transfer of the Mortal Remains of the Servant of God 16.12.2013**



**A Tribute of Love on the Occasion of the
60th Death Anniversary of the Servant of God**



Flowering of the Charism and Spirituality of the SD Raymond F C Mascarenhas in and through Bethany

Bethany Centenary Memorial Housing Project

Father Mascarenhas was very solicitous of the people especially who had no houses to live in. He visited the sick and the sorrowing in their homes, in good and bad weather, in rain and in sunshine. He was especially concerned about the poor farmers living along the river-side whose huts got washed away during the monsoons. In his compassion he tried to help them in every way.

In his memory, Bethany Congregation took up a project of constructing 100 houses for the poor all over India on the occasion of the Centenary of the Congregation. Here are four of the houses that are built.



Diamond Death Anniversary of the Servant of God Raymond FC Mascarenhas

On this auspicious morning of 20 December 2020 memory of the past 60 years was revived of the homegoing of the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas, former Vicar General of the Diocese of Mangalore, founder parish priest of St Sebastian Church Bendur and the Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Mangalore.



Very Rev Fr Vincent Monteiro, the parish priest along with Fr Walter D' Mello, Fr Alwyn Serrao, Fr Ashwin Crasta, Fr Nelson Peris, Fr Melwin Pinto SJ and Fr Sujay Daniel SJ, arrived at the altar to the melodious singing by the choir at the clicking of the clock. Sr Anna Maria in her introduction highlighted the coincidence that in the centenary year of Bethany Congregation the diamond death year of the Servant of God, who led his faith journey building the parish family takes place.

Rev Fr Vincent, the main celebrant in his homily expounded the Word of God as follows: David the shepherd boy was called to be the king whose mission was to rule according to God's will. Virgin Mary the young girl was called to be the Mother of God and bring Jesus the Saviour to the world. The Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas was similarly called from his birth to be a priest of God. He with a pure heart tried to do God's will. He founded the Bethany Congregation which he didn't know would spread throughout the world today.

Offerings such as rice, ingredients, wheat flour, fruits, etc of daily use were brought to the altar in thanksgiving and praying God to bless the work of our hands.





Sr Jyoti, former Superior General proposed vote of thanks at the end of the Mass and the choir initiated the prayer that the Servant of God may be raised to the honours of the altar before long. Thereafter Sr Rose Celine, Superior General of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany and V Rev Fr Vincent Monteiro, the main celebrant laid wreathes on the tomb of the Servant of God. Others strew flower petals in respect to the Servant of God.

Cake was distributed to all the participants after the celebration.

Sr Lourdes BS

In the Footprints of the Founder's Mission

- Sr Arpan BS

As Bethany unfolds the story of God's accompaniment of 100 years, it was felt that the committed efforts of the sisters who brave the perils to bring new life and light to the enslaved brothers and sisters of our time, be accredited in order to leave behind a trail for the future generation to follow. Sr Shanthi Priya BS the General Councillor and the General Coordinator for the Socio - Medical Apostolate of the Congregation took up this stupendous task of documenting the challenging enterprises of the Bethany Sisters through her book *Bethany in the Frontier Mission* which was released on 3 December 2020, by Most Rev Gerald Isaac Lobo, Bishop of Udupi Diocese and the Chairman of Regional Justice, Peace and Development Commission of Karnataka and in the presence of the esteemed guests very specially Sr Rose Celine, Superior General of the Congregation and Mr Harold D'Souza a member of the White House Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, USA. On this same occasion another book named *Academic Performance of Adolescents in Relation to their Self - Esteem and Social Support* by Dr Sr Jessy Maria, BS too was released.



The Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas, the Founder of Bethany, laboured for God and His Kingdom with a vision "Have the Gospel Preached to the poor". He was obsessed with the idea of incarnating himself like his Master and Saviour Jesus amidst the people of his time. In his undying zeal and undaunted courage he stalked the unbeaten paths to venture into unconventional

ingenuities which were unthought-of or no one dared to plunge into. While he rooted himself into the Indian cultural conditions he was keen on reading the signs of the times and acclimatizing himself to the existing realities. He did not leave any stone unturned or let go of any opportunity that would ease the pain of the less privileged brothers and sisters around him. He has left a legacy for his spiritual daughters (Bethany Sisters) to emulate and make Bethany relevant constantly being in touch with the suffering humanity and reach out to those on the margins of the society at all times in all circumstances and at any cost.

Walking on the trajectories of the Founder, Bethany through the General Chapters over the years has been directing the Congregation to dive beyond the surface, gawp beyond the apparent, and ponder deep into the realisms of our time while centering on the Founder's Vision and Charism. The XVI General Chapter of 2016, in view of the Centenary of the Congregation and in response to the call of the universal Church evolved the priorities for Bethany to venture into frontier mission - the contemporary dehumanizing issues of human trafficking and unsafe migration.

Modern Slavery has victimized 40.3 million people across the globe as per the Global Slavery Index 2016 and of these 18.3 million are in India alone. This brought Bethany to fathom the urgency of the problem that knocked at our doors. Since then Sisters all over the Congregation in India, Italy and Mauritania have been actively engaged into addressing the issue of the migrants (internal and cross border), rescuing the victims of trafficking, creating mass awareness, running shelter homes, reintegration of the rehabilitated victims of slavery, repatriation of the victims, and protecting the vulnerable who are an easy prey to this heinous crime.

Bethany in her efforts to tread the pathways of the Founder has been partnering with Global networks like Arise Foundation, London, Caritas Italy, Caritas Mauritania, Manos Unidas, Spain, MISEREOR, Germany and Talitha Kum International, Italy.

May the never-ending zeal of our Founder continue to keep the fervour of Bethany burning in order to be relevantly rooted and to go beyond the centenary? May Bethany grow, flower and bear fruit in plenty.

60th Death Anniversary Celebrated with Migrants at Yamuna Bank

The Bethany Convent Community, Burari, Delhi, along with Bethany Lay Associates organized a five day long programme in preparation to observe the 60th



death anniversary of their Founder the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas, who passionately loved the poor and the downtrodden and spent himself for their development especially the girl children.

The Sisters brought the children of migrants of Yamuna bank, South Delhi to their campus for 5 days intensive and educative programme. The aim of this programme was to create interest and to motivate them to pursue studies, and enable them to discover their role/ place in the society.

They were taught (physical) exercises, rhymes, poems, drawings and narrated success stories which triggered off their attention. Motivational talks- sessions and games were conducted. Their parents especially mothers



were involved in this process. Simple meals were served so that they stayed the whole day. The end result was that the parents understood the value of education and vowed to send their children to good schools.

On the 23rd December the 60th death anniversary of the Founder 150 migrants from the Yamuna bank were served meals. The BLA members generously shared their resources. The sisters experienced a joy of kindling hope in the innocent and ignorant migrants.

Sr Dr Preeti Margaret BS

A Tribute of Love on the Occasion of the 60th Death anniversary of Servant of God Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas



In a simple ceremony on Thursday, 31 December 2020, a colourful calendar on the Servant of God Raymond FC Mascarenhas was brought out by Prof Edmund Frank, Chairman Sylvester Tressy Frank Foundation and was released to mark his 60th death anniversary, by Rev Fr Vincent Monteiro, Parish Priest of St Sebastian Church, Bendur, Mangalore. An eminent alumnus of St Aloysius Institutions, Mangalore, Raymond was the only student who passed with a 1st Class from St Aloysius High School in the Matriculation Examination in the year 1890. Trained and groomed by the Jesuit Fathers in the St Joseph Seminary, Mangalore he was ordained priest by the bishop of Mangalore Diocese, Bishop Cavadeni SJ on 4 March 1900 at the Rosario Cathedral, Mangalore. Fr Raymond Mascarenhas was appointed the 1st Parish Priest of the newly formed Bendur Parish in the year 1914 and went on to found the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany on 16 July 1921. He was appointed the Vicar General of the Mangalore Diocese in the year 1931. He received the honour of Domestic Prelate from Pope Pius XII on 20 June 1955. Mgr Raymond went to his eternal rest on 23 December 1960 in his humble cottage at the Bethany Generalate Compound in Bendur, Mangalore.

Prof Edmund Frank



BETHANY CENTENARY CALENDAR RELEASED

This calendar that depicts the life and mission of Bethany Sisters was released on 3 December 2020, on the occasion of the Enlarged Council Meeting, by Sr Rose Celine BS, the Superior General. The administrative team of the whole Congregation was present on this occasion.

This calendar is a fitting tribute to the great visionary SD Raymond Mascarenhas who lived radically the teachings of Jesus Christ and loved the people as Jesus loved. The Bethany Sisters who are serving in 26 states of India and abroad translate his vision into action. The Calendar Committee under the Northern Province and Media Committee consisted of Sr Grace Maria, coordinator, Sr Helima, Sr Reena D' Souza and Sr Diana Serrao.