

The Compassionate Pastor

July 2021

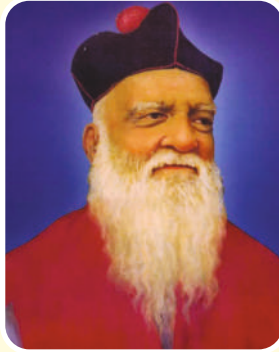
Vol 14

No.1



Bethany Centenary Eucharistic Celebration held at Bethany Mother House Chapel Built by Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas





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:

Office of the Cause of Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas,
Bethany Convent, Bendur, Mangalore 575002, D.K.
Ph: 0824-2211806; Email: rfcmas@gmail.com

New Website: www.mgrrfcmascarenhas.com



The Holy Father Francis

cordially imparts the requested

Apostolic Blessing

to the Superior General Sr. Rose Celine Fernandes BS
and all the Sisters of the Congregation of the

Little Flower of Bethany Bangalore,

Karnataka, India

on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of its Foundation

and through the intercession of the Virgin Mary

invokes an abundance of divine graces

Parish of St. Sebastian, Bendur, Mangalore - July 16, 2021

Ex Audibus Vaticano, die 07.07.2021

Card. Giovanni D'Ercole

Abbas, monasterii, S. Mariae





APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE
IN INDIA
N. 5021/21

50-C, NITI MARG, CHANAKYAPURI
NEW DELHI - 110 021

1 July 2021

Reverend Sister,

I am pleased to convey to you the following message, received from the Secretary of State of His Holiness:

*Sister M Rose Celine, BS
Superior General
Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany
Mangaluru*

His Holiness Pope Francis was pleased to learn that on 16 July 2021 the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany will celebrate the centenary of their foundation, and he sends good wishes and the assurance of his prayers for the happy occasion. He joins the Sisters in giving thanks to Almighty God for the blessings received during the past hundred years and trusts that this anniversary will be the occasion of renewed fidelity to the founding charism of the Congregation, expressed in generous service to the poor and those in need. He is likewise confident that by drawing strength from the Eucharistic presence of Jesus Christ and by bearing joyful witness to their religious consecration, the Sisters will contribute ever more effectively to the building up of the Church in faith, hope and love. Commending all the members of the Congregation to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, His Holiness cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of strength and peace in the Lord.

*Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State*

I reiterate the felicitation greetings and join with the entire Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany in joyful celebration for the Centenary Celebration of your foundation.

Yours sincerely in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli
Apostolic Nuncio

Rev. Sr. Rose Celine, B.S.
Superior General
Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany
Mangalore

A Loving Tribute to our
dear Founder Servant of God
Raymond F C Mascarenhas
and to our Founding Members

* Mother Martha

* Sr Clare

* Sr Lourdes

* Sr Gertrude



Bethany is a work which I have done through good report and evil report, through warm appreciation and through severe criticism. I never thought that I would do it.

*Fr Founder - Servant of God Raymond F C
Mascarenhas*

THE COMPASSIONATE PASTOR

July 2021

EDITORIAL BOARD

CONTENTS

Page No.

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- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Editorial : Sr M Lillis BS | 2 |
| 2. Message from His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias | 4 |
| 3. Homily of His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias | 6 |
| 4. Homily of Dr Peter Paul Saldanha Bishop of Mangalore | 10 |
| 5. Glimpses of Bethany Centenary Celebration | 14 |
| 6. Bethany Centenary Symposium on Servant of God Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas | 28 |
| 7. Presidential Address of Dr Peter Paul Saldanha Bishop of Mangalore | 30 |
| 8. Speech of Sr Rose Celine BS Superior General | 33 |
| 9. RFC Mascarenhas - A Compassionate Pastor - Rev Fr J B Saldanha | 38 |
| 10. Servant of God Raymond FC Mascarenhas as a Founder of Bethany Congregation - Sr Lillis BS | 49 |
| 11. Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas, an Educator with a Cause - Stephen Quadros Permude | 56 |
| 12. Monsignor Raymond Mascarenhas - A Good Samaritan Revisited - Rev Fr Joseph Martis | 60 |
| 13. Servant of God Raymond F C Mascarenhas - A Beacon of Hope for Our Times - Sr Surekha Lobo BS | 71 |
| 14. Mgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas and the 'First Four' Sowed in Tears We reap with shouts of Joy - Sr Rose Margaret BS | 79 |
| 15. Favour Received | 84 |
| 16. About the Contributors | 85 |



Editorial

Celebrating Hundred Years of the Fruition of Mgr Raymond's Apostolic Vision

The seed of Bethany sown by the Servant of God Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas on 16 July 1921, has like a proverbial mustard seed, grown into a mighty tree over the past 100 years. The simple in-house celebration of this event, though shaded by Covid 19 restrictions, was indeed a celebration of the fruition of the apostolic vision of Servant of God Raymond FC Mascarenhas, the visionary founder of the Congregation. Great oaks grow from little acorns. I cannot claim that Bethany is sturdy as an oak but certainly it is growing strong. In the words of Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas, "The tree of Bethany in God's providence has been "A Tree planted by running waters, "waters of sorrow and affliction, which all along have nurtured it. It has been the Planter's privilege to be a "Sign which shall be contradicted. "Bethany is called to be a sign of contradiction, to be prophetic in action by practicing the values of Christ.

Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas who courageously and creatively responded to the Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*, (1919) that emphasised the formation of local clergy for the effectiveness of mission, became the first and only indigenous diocesan priest from the state of Karnataka to start an indigenous religious Congregation for women, thus revamping the mission of evangelising and thereby giving a new impetus to the Gospel. Having indigenous traits, Bethany could vibrate with the heartbeats of the people especially the poor, as Bethany was, is, and will be of the poor and for the poor.²

Following the Charism and Spirituality of Servant of God Raymond F C Mascarenhas, Bethany, during the past Century has striven to take unbeaten paths leading to the heart of the poor in the remote villages of India, and to eight other counties with a message of compassion through bountiful grace of God. How true indeed has been the words of admiration of the late Bishop Leonard Joseph Raymond of the diocese of Allahabad who wrote to Mgr Raymond

¹ *Twin Jubilee Souvenir*, Mangalore, 1950, 89

² *Ibid*, 49

Mascarenhas on 6 February 1950, “Not your diocese alone, but the whole Church of India, and particularly the Indian Bishops and priests, are proud of what you have done, and regard you as one of the outstanding priests of the generation. Few of us who have laboured for the church in this country, can parallel your achievements, particularly those which will live after you, your translation of the Scriptures and the Congregation of Nuns you have founded.”³ As we have stepped into the post centenary era, we strive to recapture the vision of the Servant of God, to be a leaven in the society in the context of today.

The clarion call of Pope Francis today is to be a Good Samaritan to every one wherever we are, '*Fratelli Tutti*'- brothers and sisters for all. To be a Good Samaritan is to assist people confronted with challenges, such as corruption, problem of migration, unemployment, human right violation, water crisis, illiteracy, skewed sex ratio and the moral degradation. These surge for sure, from socio-economic and political milieu, but deep down are the results of the lack of rootedness in the Word of God. The mission to ameliorate human wellness is the call that 'we' together can achieve; thus, I seek the good wishes and prayers of all the readers of *The Compassionate Pastor*.

The words of blessings and messages, from Holy Father Pope Francis, His Grace Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, the Apostolic Nuncio His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias and the homily of Most Rev Dr Peter Paul Saldanha, the Bishop of Mangalore as well as the Centenary speech of Sr Rose Celine, BS, Superior General of the Congregation, on the occasion of the Centenary celebration of Bethany, have rejuvenated our spirit to march forward with the message of *Fratelli Tutti*.

I deeply appreciate the contributors Rev Dr Joseph Martis, Dr Sr Surekha BS, Rev Dr J B Saldanha, Professor Stephen Quadros, the speakers of the Symposium and Dr Sr Mariette BS, the Modertor of the symposium, for expounding the various facets of the personality and spirituality of Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas, with their profound knowledge, reflection and historical facts. I extend my special thanks and prayers to all the members of the Editorial Team for their unique contribution towards embellishing *The Compassionate Pastor*.

Sr M Lillis BS
Chief Editor

³ D' Souza Violette, *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 58



Message from His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias

My warmest greetings to the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany known to most of us as Bethany Sisters. You are celebrating the Centenary of the foundation of your Institute today. I regret very much that I am not able to be present in Bethany, Bendur, Mangalore for the celebration. The Corona virus and the consequent restrictions besides other factors have made it not possible for my physical presence. I sincerely regret this; because I was looking forward to felicitating your Congregation in person.

My dear Sisters and friends, a hundred years is indeed a big landmark and worthy of great festivity. Bishop Peter Paul Saldanha has just celebrated the solemn centenary Eucharist. Last evening with the participation of a few of your Sisters I offered the Thanksgiving Mass in my Cathedral over here. There is much that we have to thank God for; the inspiration to Monsignor Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas to found this new religious Institute and the work and the witness of your Sisters for a hundred years. The faith was planted well by the pioneer missionaries, God fearing and Christ centred families, flowered in the rich soil of Mangalore. Monsignor Mascarenhas sensed the spurring of the Spirit in the hearts of not a few to dedicate themselves fully to the Lord, and to offer them the possibility of dedicated discipleship in community, Monsignor Mascarenhas began with four teachers from his parish. And a hundred years ago today Mother Martha, Sr Clare, Sr Lourdes, Sr Gertrude got together and began catering for the needs of the Church, the needs of the community and the needs of the society. The spirit moved others to join the group and the movement, its activity and its spirit spread all over Mangalore and in the neighbouring dioceses of Mangalore, Calicut, Goa, Bangalore, Mysore and Pune. In 1962 you ventured to enter into the North East. In 1970 you began a house in Rome. 50 years ago today your Congregation became a pontifical institute. The centenary of your Congregation is a very apt occasion to thank God for all the blessings that you have received, for all the good done to you and through you to so many people, people of other faiths.

My dear Sisters, my dear friends you have shown the compassionate face of Jesus to many through your institute. I have had the joy, the personal joy of visiting your convents both in the Archdiocese of Bombay and the Archdiocese of Agra. The Corona virus pandemic also I know given you further avenues of service. And so Sisters as you begin the second century of the history of your institute we pray that God will continue to bless you with many and good vocations. We pray that your institute will continue to flourish with a spirit filled apostolate. We pray that you are witnessing through your life, and your work will be even more effective. At this moment we remember



with fond affection your Founder Monsignor Raymond FC Mascarenhas. We pray that the charism he was inspired to give to your institute continues to shine with even more brilliance and relevance today. We pray that his sanctity may be recognised and God willing he be soon raised to the altars. Congratulations to Sr Rose Celine, Provincials, all the members and friends of Bethany Sisters. God bless each one of you. You have done so well for hundred years. Now race ahead. Bring glory to God and build his Kingdom. God bless each one of you. Congratulations!





Homily of His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias on 15 July 2021 during the Eucharistic Celebration at Holy Name Cathedral, Mumbai

My dear Sr Rose Celine, Superior General of the Bethany Sisters, my dear former Generals Sr Wilberta, Sr Jyoti, my dear Provincial Sisters, my dear members of the Congregation the Bethany Sisters, my dear friends, friends of Bethany, associates of Bethany and all brothers and sisters in Jesus,

Today is a great occasion for all of us, for me too as I am associated with Bethany a bit in Mumbai, Archdiocese of Bombay and my previous Archdiocese of Agra too for they were there. And I have seen the good work. And so we stood in the occasion to give thanks to God for all the good work done, for a hundred years of this Congregation since it was founded. The readings of today's Mass which we just heard are so very appropriate for this occasion. St Paul speaks the necessity of prayer, thanksgiving and that will bring peace in our hearts. The gospel passage is particularly appropriate because it speaks without mentioning the name 'Bethany'. It speaks all about Bethany. Because Jesus comes to this house in Bethany where live Martha, Mary and Lazarus and they have a meal over here. This passage we have heard so very often. I think to understand this passage we must know the context. It is reported by the other evangelists also. Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem; His last visit to Jerusalem. His apostles think that it is a little foolish to go over there, because there is so much hostility towards Him. But Jesus was single mindedly going to Jerusalem. And there he would face His enemies; he would be taken to trial. Jesus knew what was waiting for Him when He went. He saw the agony in the garden. He saw His own crucifixion. It was an agony for Him. You can imagine the mental strain, anxiety and confusion. This was the will of the Father; but so painful. And so Jesus in these

circumstances wants a little peace, rest and to be alone by Himself at Bethany. Martha is so excited; Martha, Mary and Lazarus love Jesus so very, very much. Martha's first preoccupation is Jesus' physical needs. What a wonderful occasion for her! I am sure this family, the holy family of Bethany also knew that there is lots of danger for Jesus although they did not foresee exactly what Jesus saw. But they knew that there was danger. And for Martha it was important. She was concerned of giving Him lavish meal, a well prepared, well laid out, to make Him as happy as possible. That was her desire.

Mary also loved Jesus so much. She was so excited. She wanted to talk to Him, just to listen to Him, to open her heart to Him and Jesus, a protagonist in this scene all worried wanting peace. Martha did what she thought was best; Mary did what she thought was best. But Jesus needed peace. That's why His answer to Martha, 'you are worried about many things. One thing is necessary.' What was necessary for Jesus - to have peace; what was necessary for Jesus - to have the consolation of the people who loved Him; to have, to know, that He was doing the will of the Father; to have the interior peace. It reminds me, all of us that we all want to be kind, each one of us. Very often in our kindness we do things what we think is good for people. Not what they really want. What really is doing good to them, is our conception, just like Martha. Martha was very well intentioned; she exhausted herself washing the pots, pans and plates and cooking the meal, with various dishes, being a fishing village – possibly fish. That was her preoccupation. But Jesus was not interested in the meal. He wanted peace. Mary was also with the best of intentions kept Him company which was also solace. Possibly Jesus only wanted to be alone and silence more than people talking to Him.

The home of Bethany was a home where there was peace, where Jesus experienced love, where He saw unity, where God was present; where Spirit was present. Inspired by the Holy Spirit your founder Monsignor Mascarenhas gave the name 'Bethany'; inspired to try to make of the Congregation 'Bethany' and also to make the members of the Congregation instruments to make Bethany present; not only in the convent but also wherever they have their apostolate. Your apostolate – spiritual, pastoral, educational, medical, social in different parts of the country are all meant really to recreate that atmosphere of Bethany where the Holy Spirit is present, where God is present. God has blessed you with many vocations. Today you have 1400 members spread over 63 dioceses all over the country – 50 in India and 13 abroad - really making a big difference in the lives of people. As St Paul says in the second reading which we heard, 'It's time to thank God; thank God for all that He has

done. My dear Sisters, I have seen the good that you have achieved in my own Archdiocese and in the Archdiocese of Agra is through the gift of the Holy Spirit, guidance of the Holy Spirit. God is really blessing you continuously. The blessings you brought to people are through God's blessings on you. So it's a time to thank God; A thanksgiving Eucharist to God for all the good done. I invite you to remember at this moment to think of all your past superiors. Your present Superior General is the tenth Superior General. So all the others have moved out before her and have continuously watered this plant, nurtured this plant which is known so very much. At that time when Monsignor Mascarenhas started the Congregation, it was an attempt – He started with four teachers of his own school in a parish of Bendur where he was. It was an attempt to give a possibility of young girls being called to serve Jesus in a community, to give them the possibility of an apostolate; guided for an apostolate. All this was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit without doubt. So we pray for him. And we pray that one day soon he be raised to the altars. We pray for all the Sisters in different communities. Religious life has got its own challenges. You know that much more than I do. Community life, the apostolate, the spiritual life, relationships – all this got to be tackled as God wants it to be with the light of the Holy Spirit, generosity of mind, always as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today as we thank God we pray for good vocations, for more vocations. We pray that the Lord and the Spirit inspires you to see which is the path you should tread in the future. We are in the midst of a pandemic. The pandemic has forced even this Mass to be digital, online rather than physical. The world is transformed. And yet the Holy Spirit is telling us something through this pandemic. The Holy Spirit is telling the religious what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ in this pandemic. We must be open, open to the Spirit, open to God's will, open to what God wants of us.

My dear Sisters, my dear friends, Pope Francis has reminded us over and over again that we will never go back to the past normal; our apostolate will have to be changed. We are still in the process of discerning; you and I and all of us. But we need to keep our hearts and minds open. Let us then pray. Let us pray to St Martha who is also the saint. She had done many good things. If she had not cooked the meal Jesus would have had to go hungry. She was necessary also. But Mary was also necessary. Pray to St Martha, St Mary to teach us how to be disciples of Jesus and to teach you, how your Congregation could make of many places Bethanys – where there is faith; this family had the faith; they recognized in Jesus the presence of God, the divinity, this family had hope – even when their brother was dead, Jesus came; they didn't know what would happen

but they went and opened the grave. This family had love – That's why Jesus found comfort in this family. Go my dear Sisters; create in the different places of your apostolate oasis of faith, hope and love; create in the different places that you go families which are homes of disciples of Jesus; continue your work. May God bless you; May God continue to give you good vocations; may you *Crescat, Florescat, Fructuescat*; may you grow, may you flower, and may you bear much fruit. God bless you.



Bethany Sisters from Panvel and Bombay with Cardinal Oswald Gracias after the Mass at the Holy Name Cathedral, Bombay



Homily of Dr Peter Paul Saldanha Bishop of Mangalore at the Closing Centenary Celebrations of Bethany

My dear Sisters and brothers in Christ,

When we utter the name of Martin Luther King the great champion of the human rights – it comes to our mind the famous speech that he gave and a call in fact to exercise that freedom which the blacks had got for hundred years but they have not experienced it. And he used the words again and again “I have a dream, I have a dream”. A hundred years ago our forefathers had signed the Deed of Declaration that there would be liberation and after hundred years the Negro is not yet free. And he mentions a hundred years ago what had happened and thereafter how the unwillingness of the human beings have kept the suppressed class still exploited and suppressed. But then he was not a pessimist. He said, “I have a dream that one day the children of the white and children of the black will walk hand in hand and will sit at the table of the Lord.” I have a dream. I think God also had a dream and he does have a dream. But our God never sleeps. Therefore he does not dream in the night. 'Our God is always awake' says the psalm 121. He watches our every step. St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians reveals to us, 'What is that dream of God' – to unite all things in Christ, to recapitulate, to restore, to find meaning in everything in heaven

and on earth, visible and invisible, everything will be united in Christ. Ephesians 1:10 is the key word there and that is the great plan of God. And now in order to realize this dream of God he draws people into this plan. He draws simple fragile human beings into this dream and invests in them his grace, his power and thus brings to fruition that which he had in mind even before the foundation of the world. What is the purpose? For the praise of his glorious grace. Eph 1:6, 12, 14. Thrice St Paul would express this purpose. 'for the praise of his glorious grace.' That we become the praise, and we become the thanks not merely that we give praise and we give thanks. but we ourselves becomes the praise and thanks in the presence of the Lord.

Mary was one such who was drawn into the circle of God, to be the Mother of God; and a human being who is fragile as anybody could be is chosen by God to do that great task of bringing to birth the Word who is responsible for the creation of everything visible and invisible. 'Nothing was created without Him' says the prologue of John. And Mary gave the consent, the nuptial consent; the wedding consent when the angel Gabriel came to her. 'Hail, Rejoice, O fully favoured one! Fully graced one!' The Lord is with you. And Mary responded to that special greeting which was never uttered in the history of humanity. 'Hail full of Grace' was never uttered for the other person. Fully graced. No stain of sin whatsoever – whether original or personal. Fully graced. And Mary accepted that greeting. When the angel explained to her, finally 'this is the plan of God'; that the child born of her would be called the Son of God. Mary continuously responded not on that day of the Annunciation but also every day of her life till the day of the final, another nuptial 'yes' at the foot of the Cross when her Son, the same Word made flesh hanging on the tree in between heaven and earth, who said, 'Woman, behold your Son.' And she consented with another nod perhaps she couldn't say 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to your Word. It was not required to utter that way with explicit words. But she did consent. And John took her to his home; not only to his home, into his life.

And we have another person drawn into the same plan of God – Fr Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas as a parish priest of Bendur – to unite all things in Christ. God gives a share of that project. Not the total project to human beings; a portion of that project, so that one does not repeat the other project. That portion has to be taken care of by that person and induct many more to carry forward the beacon of light. And Fr Raymond Mascarenhas whom we dearly call Monsignor RFC Mascarenhas. He perceived that he has received a call within a call; within a call i.e., he was a priest of the diocese; but then he has received a call within a call – to be the Founder of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany. Just four people -

together with him - eight feet that walked initially and you know the story - how it has all come about. A hundred years ago, on 16 July 1921 he unfolded it and he laid bare this little, great plan. It is little because it is his portion. It is great because it is sharing in the very plan of God. And he laid it at the foot of Our Lady of Mount of Carmel. A mountain as we said in the Collect- that mountain, the most beautiful mountain – Jesus Christ Himself – that Mount Carmel became a hallmark – a sign of his commitment. Mary of the Annunciation was taken as the patroness and as the process of the beatification of St Therese of Child Jesus was already begun and she was a great inspiration for the mission - he took her too as the second patron and thereafter instead of calling the Congregation, perhaps I believe that the Sisters of the Little Flower of Therese of Child Jesus or Little Flower of Lisieux, called it Bethany, gathering the support of two more saints: Mary and Martha. And then there was St Joseph. Very interesting to know – how that he was looking for a place to found Bethany; searching for place to buy one – and during that time and specially on the 16 March 1921- somebody puts on sale, a little portion – some half acre and a little newly built house. He says 'wow, this is the place, where I should begin my task. Immediately, on 19 March they enter the house. On St Joseph's intercession and Mother Mary's protection Bethany has come to realize that it is the crowning jewel of the mission of Monsignor Mascarenhas.

Today my dear brothers and sisters, this heaven though invisible enters into our life invisibly and moves us, urges us, spurs us to do great things – a unique mission that is given to us and it helps us to dedicate ourselves. What was the situation that helped Mascarenhas? He saw the situation of the girls, the poor girls, the village girls, the women and he said, 'I must attend to this need of empowering them, encouraging them, bringing them up. He saw the need, he acted on it and he invoked God's grace and we have seen his missionary zeal manifested in different forms. Above all his childlike trust and abandonment to the will of God has made Bethany what it is. Therefore, this is again is symbolized by the words of Mary, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' a hundred years ago. From then on it is resounding from thousands of mouths, everyday, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord'. Mary had one name i.e., Miriam, means 'the bitter sea' or 'beloved of God.' Her life was bitter. But also she was beloved. But then angel gave her another name – 'Highly favoured one.' 'Fully graced one.' '*Charito mene.*' But Mary gave herself a third name. i.e., 'the handmaid of the Lord,' 'The servant of the Lord.' And she maintained that particular name by living by it. And I believe the Sisters who joined Monsignor Mascarenhas continually keep up to this great disposition of Mary as the

part of their own daily life.

Suffering is another thing that comes in the story of Bethany. Jesus himself showed that suffering and persecution is a part of the project of God. One who denies suffering is called satan. Satan rejects suffering. Satan shows shortcuts to avoid suffering. Jesus called Peter, 'get behind me satan' when he wanted Jesus to get away from suffering and the cross. Bethany's story is studded with so many gems or kisses of suffering. Sufferings are a sign of God's love for us. Without suffering we would not be strengthened. Bethany could not be strong without suffering. And that which gives spiritual meaning is in fact who as a spiritual teacher comes in the life of Bethany and for that matter for the whole Church.

Today we need to rededicate ourselves to the Lord and this after hundred years to see the hand of God guiding, protecting and therefore as Isaiah sang the greatness of the Lord, the hymn of thanksgiving should rise up in our hearts thanking God for the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany. May God help you, help us that the Church may benefit from all the good things you do.



GLIMPSES OF BETHANY CENTENARY CELEBRATION HELD ON 16-7-2021

It was a significant day on Friday, July 16 for the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany. Bethany was founded on July 16, 1921, at Bendur, Mangaluru, by the Servant of God, RFC Mascarenhas, the founder parish priest, St Sebastian Church, Bendur, Mangaluru with the four spirit-filled daring pioneers namely Mother Martha, Sr Clare, Sr Lourdes and Sr Gertrude from Mangaluru. At present, the Congregation is blessed with 1,388 members in 190 communities, has extended its branches to 63 dioceses in nine countries and 26 states in India proclaiming God's compassionate love.





The celebration commenced with a 'Thanksgiving Eucharist' at 9.30 am in the Bethany Mother House Chapel, Bendur, Mangaluru, Karnataka, India, officiated by Most Rev Dr Peter Paul Saldanha, the bishop of Mangalore. Fr Paul Melwyn OFM Cap., the Episcopal Vicar for religious, Fr Vincent Monteiro, the Parish Priest, St Sebastian Church, Bendur, and Fr Praveen Martis SJ, Principal, St Aloysius College concelebrated.



**Mass Introduction -
Sr Shanthi Priya BS**



I Reading - Sr Lillita BS



Psalm - Sr Daisy Britto BS

Sr Cleopha, the Administrator read out the Papal Blessing, and a message from Pope Francis communicated through his representative from the apostolic nunciature in India, New Delhi. The Bishop gave a stirring message that the founder, RFC Mascarenhas was drawn to the plan of God and Bethany he founded went through great sufferings. Thus he invited the Sisters to re-dedicate their lives to the Lord as Bethany completes its 100 years.





Vote of Thanks Proposed - Sr Lillis BS

Sr Lillis, the Asst Superior general proposed the vote of thanks. The choir enhanced the devotion by their soul-lifting singing. The Eucharistic celebration was followed by the relay of the documentary 'On Wings of Love,' on the life of the Founder and the Congregation. A short meaningful programme followed in Mgr Raymond Memorial Hall. The centenary symphony was sung melodiously by the Bethany choir.





II Reading -
Sr Shubha BS



Prayer of the Faithful -
Sr Veronica BS



Prayer of the Faithful -
Sr Anitha Shanthy BS





The Choir with Superior General and Council



In the felicitation message to Sr Rose Celine, the Superior General, Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Archbishop of Mumbai archdiocese and the President of the Conference of the Bishops of India spoke highly about the contribution of the founder and the pioneers, who he said, 'got together, catered to the needs of the Church, to the needs of the community and the needs of society. The spirit moved others to join the group. You have shown the compassionate face of Jesus to many through your Institutes.' He also prayed that the sanctity of the founder be recognised and God willing he soon is raised to the honours of the altar.





Dr Sr Mariette, the General Councillor welcomed the gathering.

Delivering the centenary message Sr Rose Celine, the Superior General, reminiscing, she gratefully recalled the wonders God has done in the life of the founder, the pioneers, the members of the Congregation through the support of spiritual mentors, benefactors, collaborators and the civil society for a century.



Looking forward towards the second century she said, "The doors of our institutions, social and health centres are kept open for the homeless. The Spirit of God anointed us to move to the peripheries and stretch out our hands to the vulnerable sections of the society.... we will strive to grow, flower and perennially bear abundant fruit...We will build human communities in the spirit of 'Fratelli Tutti' of Pope Francis to build human fraternity. We will keep our vision clear; with a compassionate heart empower the poor by combating the oppressive systems in all our endeavours."



Fr Paul Melwyn OFM Cap congratulated Bethany Sisters for the spiritual leadership of 100 years. He acknowledged the contribution of Bethany Sisters in his personal life as a student of Bethany.

And now we know... RFC and Bethany, a book authored by James D'Souza, a close associate and the admirer of the Founder SD Raymond was released by Fr Vincent Monteiro.

Sr Christine Noronha introduced the book and the author.



Release of the book, *And Now, We All Know... RFC and Bethany*



Sr Medela, the senior-most member and Sr Lillis, the postulator of the Cause of the founder who worked for 11 years were honoured. Honouring of the former Superiors General Sr Jyoti and Sr Wilberta was done by Sr Rose Celine, honouring of Sr Rose Celine, the serving Superior General by Bishop Peter Paul Saldanha. The centenary souvenir to keep the centenary memories alive was introduced by Sr Assumpta, the chief editor of the centenary and was released by the Bishop.







In his presidential speech, Bishop Peter Paul Saldanha congratulated Sr Rose Celine and the Sisters for the achievements of 100 years of Bethany.

Sr Rose Celine recognised the great support received from the bishops of Mangaluru, the Mother Diocese of Bethany, beginning with Bishop Paul Perini, SJ and various other Bishops of the diocese.



Sr Cicilia Mendonca, the Provincial Superior of Mangaluru Province voiced the gratitude of Bethany to the dignitaries and to all present.

The year 2021 is very significant to Bethany Sisters as it has completed the 100 remarkable years of empowering girl children, and women by providing value-based, socially relevant and meaningful education, uplift of the poor and the marginalised and providing healthcare in rural areas to the disadvantaged people. In the social sector, 142 Sisters with the help of 350 collaborators in the 56 centres serve with great commitment for the all-around development of 1,50,000 women, 1,13,000 children, 1,56,000 youth as well as the uplift of the rural communities irrespective of religion and caste. The pandemic of Covid-19 evoked a compassionate response from the Sisters helping thousands of migrants in their distress across India.

Bethany stepped into the second centenary with a new hope to continue the vision and mission of the founder with greater vigour and zeal, empowering the girl children, women and rural poor and building harmonious healthy communities.

Sr Rose Celine BS, the Superior General concluded her Centenary message praying for the honours of the altar for the founder, Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas.





Junior Sisters depicting the first four Sisters and the Founder



Centenary Greeting Song



**Sr Roshel & Sr Eulalia
Compered the Programme**



Bethany Centenary Symposium on Servant of God Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas

Bethany Centenary Symposium on the Servant of God, Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas was held on the occasion of the centenary of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany through a Zoom meeting on July 6 at 6.00 pm.

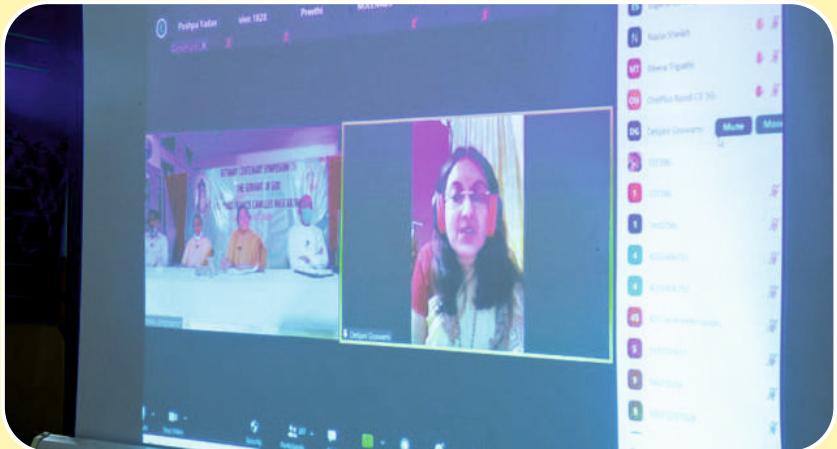
The eminent speakers on this occasion were Fr Dr J B Saldanha, parish priest of Bejai church who gave his valuable message on the topic 'Mgr RFC Mascarenhas the compassionate pastor'. He said that the compassionate love of God has been reflected in his life in various ways bringing solace to the downtrodden, the marginalized women and the girl children in particular and he is remembered for his pastoral zeal and commitment.



Sr Lillis, the assistant superior general at Bethany spoke on the topic 'Mgr RFC Mascarenhas the founder of Bethany'. She said when the servant of God observed during his pastoral visits, young and ordinary girls leaving the diocese for want of opportunity to become religious, he conceived the idea of Bethany to give them an opportunity to serve the Lord. Hence, Bethany embraced all those who the Lord invited irrespective of language or education.

Professor Stephen Quadros, an associate professor in his message mentioned that the founder was a champion of education. Mgr Mascarenhas was an educationist of his time and visualized education as a means to give life and transform the ignorant, especially the poor and the marginalized.

Dr Sr Mariette, the general councillor was the moderator of the symposium who introduced and welcomed the resource persons. The viewers of all over the world had the opportunity to interact with the speakers of the day. The symposium concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Sr Lisa BS.





Presidential Address of Bishop Peter Paul Saldanha at the Closing of Bethany Centenary Celebration

Dear Sr Rose Celine, the Superior General, Sr Lillis the Vice Superior General, Sr Jyoti, Fr Vincent Monteiro the parish priest, Fr Paul Melwyn the Episcopal Vicar, the General Councillors, the Provincials, and all the brothers and Sisters, I expressed my joys and congratulations already at the end of the Mass. However on this occasion I would like to speak a few words of appreciation and congratulations.

First of all for an institute to have hundred years is certainly a great achievement. Bringing people together, making them to live together, work together and be productive is not a small thing. We all have adhoc committies, get the work done through them and we just get separated. But for a Congregation which is united under one cause, one mission has been kept together by the Lord Himself by choosing Monsignor RFC Mascarenhas as the Founder, as the inspirer and as the one who has given inner strength, of inspiration and certainly God's grace has been at work.

I read once a statement which is certainly true and that says, 'God by loving one loves everyone'. e.g., He loved Monsignor Mascarenhas and through him He loves everyone. The reason for God to choose one, is it is His own plan like He chose Abraham and through him all the families in the world are blessed. Why Abraham and why not others? We can't understand God's designs. But that's how He does it. He chooses one and makes His love known as well as

felt amidst us. Monsignor Raymond certainly is one such whom God loved in a special way and through him we all have benefitted. He saw the agonies and the difficulties of the girls of his time; of the rural women, of the poor girls and He said, "I must do something." He could not keep quiet or brush aside nor look other side but launched and started finding people who could join with him and vibrate with him. And he found certainly those four young teachers and thereafter we know the story. The illumination of one person! How it benefits the whole humanity! It's very unique even in the history of the Church. One person gets the illumination from within and many more are drawn into it. Think of Pope John the XXIII. In his eighties – one day when he saw – after the two world wars – the church and the whole society was battered, destroyed having no hope whatsoever. Crestfallen. And that time he asks as an eighty year old man – what can the Church do for the whole world at large? What is the role of the Church? And he says at a particular moment – just it came like a flash – the words 'Council, Council, Council' and he called the II Vatican Council announcing it on the 25 of January at the closure of prayer for the unity of Christians at St Paul's Basilica outside the walls. One man's inspiration and now we have passed decades from the council which concluded on the feast of the Immaculate Conception – on 8 December 1965 and we have seen the changes in the Church. Inspiration of one man and so many are drawn into that magnetic field and we cannot escape its effects.

Something similar has happened here in Mangalore and the Church is benefitting, the society is benefitting from the inspiration; that he has brought the minds and hearts together despite many dissents; despite many painful experiences – the history of which many of you certainly know. But then God writes straight on crooked lines, as we know, his mysterious plans are being realized and therefore Monsignor Mascarenhas' sainthood or his holiness is also connected with those painful moments as I made a little reference at the end of the homily. The receptivity of this one man – that idea of Bethany; and that one idea has become a reality today and it has walked hundred years – training many a teachers, many children, giving religious education, teaching catechism, doing pastoral work, attending to the ward prayer meetings, visiting the sick, visiting the

families, building up the families, counselling the people and the families where our family members have found a ready shoulder to put their head on and weep over their difficulties and ailments. And now, as I remember the words of the great Gamalial who said, 'if this is the work of God, it will remain. He said it with regard to the work of the Apostles. And it is so also of Bethany; if it is the work of God it will remain. It will remain certainly till God wants.

The Bethany is spreading the sweet aroma of Christ, the sweet perfume or the smell of Christ in the young minds and hearts and it is becoming a light; a city built on a hill; certainly a treasure among us. Monsignor himself, during his 50, the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood said, 'among all the mission work that I have done – education ministry, building of the churches at Udyavar, at Agrar, at Bendur – the crown jewel is certainly Bethany.' And that he admitted publicly and I gratefully acknowledge. And that Bethany's educational ministry has been certainly a great mission that is being done. I am also certainly a great beneficiary as Fr Paul Melwyn said. I am lucky to have my primary teachers till today who taught me English, mathematics, who taught me Hindi and also who took care of me in my childhood – the Mother of Mercy Convent at Kirem which has been always my second spot after my family – after the Church I would go there and I can't forget some of the Sisters there Sr Dulceline, Sr Imelda and many more Sisters who have helped and some of you are here. I don't want to name my teachers. They are there. Sometimes they call me and I bow my head in great reverence to them. If I learnt something of the values certainly they have a share in my life.

So thank you dear Sisters for what you have been to us in the diocese of Mangalore in the other 63 dioceses or in the whole Church and in the different continents. May God bless you. May God strengthen you to carry forward this mission in different newer ways in these challenging times and may you inspire many more, both priests and Sisters, young and old, men and women; that dedicating one's life to God is a most beautiful thing. May you be a blessing. God's blessings and Congratulations!



**Speech of Sr Rose Celine BS Superior
General at the Closing of Bethany Centenary
Celebration of the Congregation on 16 July 2021**

A warm welcome to you all of you to this solemn yet simple celebration.

Most Rev Bishop Peter Paul Saldanha, Bishop of Mangalore Diocese, Rev Fr Vincent Monteiro, Parish Priest of St Sebastian Church, Bendur, Rev Fr Melwyn Paul D'Souza, Episcopal Vicar for Religious, Mangalore Diocese, My dear sisters and all our well wishers,

I wish all of you a Joyful and Grace-filled Centenary Celebration of Bethany Congregation! We are here just a hundred, physically present for the Centenary Celebration of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Mangalore. Given normal circumstances we would have had ten times a hundred. But this pandemic seems to have restrained us from having a large number. However, a hundred times a hundred or more will be listening to this message from different parts of the world, near and far; far out from Sahara desert in Africa, Vatican City, the mid-ranges of Himalayas and the shores of Kanyakumari, from the hills and plains.

Today, on this historical day, I find no better words than 'Magnificat' of Mother Mary, Queen Mother of Bethany. My heart joyfully acclaim: "My soul magnifies the Lord...My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour...For He who is mighty has done great things for me" (Lk 1:46,49).

Gratefully we remember the mysterious ways in which God has led Bethany and our revered Founder SD Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas, a prophet, mystic and a compassionate pastor in the service of the Church and humanity.

Rev Fr Raymond the Founder parish priest of Bendur contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus founded an indigenous Congregation in this parish with a band of 4 Catholic teachers for the purpose of imparting Catholic Education, sound religious instruction and offer opportunities for the young girls who were desirous of dedicating themselves to God and the service of His people. Though the doubts were raised 'Will Bethany survive', God proved that it is His handiwork brought to fruition through human instrumentality. This entailed a daring spirit amidst hardships, uncertainties, loneliness and sufferings. I salute this farsighted visionary and zealous missionary who is now a servant of God RFC Mascarenhas.

The saintly and brave Pioneers Mother Martha, Sr Clare, Sr Lourdes and Sr Gertrude leaped into the unknown and walked the rugged path till the end, with heroic faith and with meagre resources. They blazed a trail and all those who followed them with trusting surrender have left behind a rich legacy of their passionate love for God and compassionate service to the downtrodden. If not for their unconditional surrender - 'fiat' in the spirit of Mother Mary, the principal patroness of our institute, we would not be here today celebrating this Centenary! We applaud them. May they enjoy eternal bliss and intercede for us.

I gratefully acknowledge the dedication of our elderly sisters as we recall the fascinating stories of their heroic faith, hope and love of one hundred years. Very true, their tears, struggles and suffering have served as a rich soil in which Bethany is rooted, flowered and has borne fruit. Our first-generation sisters have faded away into the twilight, and a few sisters who are still with us, illuminate us with the radiance of their joyful living. They show us the way.

We remember that our Superiors General, Provincial Superiors, Regional and Delegation Superiors, Local Superiors, Procurators and heads of various ministries - in formation, pastoral, educational, social and medical fields have guided and accompanied

the Sisters. Their commendable service is of paramount importance. How can I thank you dear Sisters, who after the example of our patronesses have lived Bethany's charism and spirituality and added to its vitality and relevance through your consecrated life and participation in the mission of the Church with all its opportunities and threats, joys and consolations? You are the Bethany today. A million thanks to each one of you. In the words of our Founder, I say "You are the joy and crown of Bethany".

Bethany is a confluence of many cultures and languages. Trusting in the credibility of Bethany, many of you have chosen to become members of Bethany family from different corners and cultures of our country and also from Tanzania, have become members of our Congregation. We appreciate your daring 'Yes'.

As I reminisce the growth and expansion of Bethany, my heart is filled with immense joy and gratitude for the blessings of our ecclesiastical authorities, spiritual assistance of priests and collaboration of religious. From its very inception, Bethany born in Mangalore has been spiritually accompanied by the Jesuits and the Carmelite fathers in Mangalore and Apostolic Carmel Sisters through their quality education. We have experienced the good will and encouragement from civil authorities and society in our new initiatives. A million thanks to you.

A hundred years of love and laughter, joys and sorrows, success and failures and in the words of our Founder times of 'warm appreciation and bitter criticism' - in such moments we have felt the unfailing support of our families, friends, well-wishers, benefactors, collaborators, stakeholders and Bethany Lay Associates all over the globe. Thanks to all of you!

Your participation in our life and mission has led Bethany to an amazing growth, flowering and yielding fruit in 3 continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, in 9 countries, 63 dioceses in 189 communities, 1378 Sisters 62 novices and nearly 200 affiliates at different stages of formation. This marvellous progress keeps us humble before the providential care of our God, making us the apostolic arm of the Universal Church.

Ten years ago, we opened the Pre-Centenary decade with the theme 'Open Wide the Door; Let Him Enter Now'. Inspired by the

missionary zeal of St Therese of Child Jesus, we continue to venture into far-flung villages of Asia and Africa. To drink from the source of our Charism and Spirituality, many spiritual and motivational programmes were organised.

- Perpetual Adoration was re-introduced on 16 July 2018 as per the Last Will and Testament of our Founder offering prayers and intercession for the needs of the Church and the world.
- Collectively and individually Sisters made efforts with great enthusiasm to provide 100 plus modest houses, to the needy.
- About 2500 Bethany Champions from among the youth were motivated for leadership.
- A hundred girls were provided with vocational and professional skills.
- Today, nearly 200 communities of the Congregation feeding a hundred poor in each place doubles my joy of sharing the banquet with those whom the Lord wants.
- As per the mandate of the XVI General Chapter, the frontier ministries of anti-human trafficking and care for the migrants has been our focus in our service. Being attentive to the signs of the times, the victims of the pandemic COVID-19 were reached out on a mega scale.

I recount on the benevolence of God that the Diocesan phase of the inquiry of the Servant of God Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas that was initiated in June 2008 by Bishop Emeritus Aloysius Paul D'Souza of the diocese of Mangalore was happily concluded by Bishop Peter Paul Saldanha on 17 July 2019. Thanks to our Bishops, all the Priests, Sr Lillis, the former postulator and Sr Dona, the Roman postulator, all the commissions for the Cause, and the witnesses of the Cause for their valuable contribution. Mangalore Diocese has a special place in the heart of Bethany. Thank you very much.

Looking beyond the horizon Bethany stepping into the post-centenary, I am aware that we are blessed with an abundance of spiritual energy and human and material resources. At the same time, we are pushed from all sides with corrupt and unjust structures.

Amidst conflicting claims, I am assured of the words from prophet Jeremiah in 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare, plans to give you hope and a future."

We ensure that the flow of compassion continues in every sphere of our life and ministries reaching out to especially the weak and the marginalised. We will through spiritual empowerment, tap the human potential and develop the human resources. We will promote human communities in the spirit of 'Fratelli Tutti' of Pope Francis to build human fraternity. On this auspicious occasion we earnestly pray, to raise SD Raymond FC Mascarenhas to the honours of the Altar. On our journey of discipleship, we will strive to grow, flower and perennially bear abundant fruit.

May God bless us all with the wholeness, holiness and fullness of life in Jesus. Seeking blessings from Mary our mother, I bow in surrender, 'Behold Thy handmaid'.



RFC Mascarenhas - A Compassionate Pastor

Rev Fr J B Saldanha

**Theme Expounded During the Bethany Centenary
Symposium on the Servant of God
Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas,
on 6 July 2021 at Mangalore**

Introduction

Heartily congratulations to the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Mangalore, who are celebrating the Centenary of the Foundation of the Congregation. I am happy to be a part of this Bethany Centenary Symposium through Zoom meet. Technology has brought us together to draw inspiration from the life of Servant of God Monsignor Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas (hereafter mentioned as Msgr Mascarenhas).

The topic given to me is, 'Msgr RFC Mascarenhas – A Compassionate Pastor.' As we have limited time, I shall focus on just a few important aspects of his pastoral ministry, specifically in parishes where Msgr Mascarenhas radiated the compassionate love of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

1 Understanding the Notion Compassion

Compassion means having concern towards those who suffer misfortunes. It embodies a tangible expression of love for those who are suffering. Compassion is all about recognizing the suffering of others and plunging into action.

In the Bible, compassion refers to kindness and sympathy. The Bible presents us God who has compassion for His people. It speaks of a Saviour God who suffers for humanity. The same God of the Christians invites his people to lead a life of compassion and relate to everyone compassionately. Hence, compassion comprises of patience, kindness, perseverance, warmth and resolve. In contemporary language it includes all components of altruism.

2 Who is a Pastor?

The term priest refers to an authorised person who leads the sacred rituals or administers religious rites whereas the term pastor has a broader connotation. It refers to an ordained leader of a Christian community. The scope of a pastor's mission goes beyond the cultic role. A pastor has a threefold mission as priest, prophet and servant. Along with the cultic role, he reads and interprets the signs of the times and while ministering the God's people he takes the role of a servant leader. Msgr Mascarenhas' ministry as pastor included all these three aspects of *tria munera*, namely teaching, sanctifying and governing.

3 Priestly Ordination and Early Pastoral Ministry

Bishop Abundius Cavadini SJ, the Bishop of Mangalore ordained Msgr Mascarenhas on Saturday, 4 March 1900 at Rosario Cathedral, Mangalore.

On 11 March 1900 he celebrated his thanksgiving Mass in his home parish, Our Lady of Milagres and in his home parish he was appointed to serve as assistant parish priest. His core ministry was spiritual and he attended to the needs of the faithful in a diligent manner.

But in the same year, Msgr Mascarenhas was asked to go to Milagres parish, Kallianpur where he served with great zeal and enthusiasm.

While he began serving over there, the bishop gave him yet another temporary assignment to serve in the parish of Our Lady of Remedies, Kirem where the parish priest was away on vacation.

It is very enthralling to note that his first three appointments were in the parishes dedicated to our Blessed Mother. I believe he learnt the spirit of compassion from the Blessed Mother and it became his life force.

In all these three parishes of his early ministry he made it a point to visit his flock entrusted to his care on a daily basis. It was nothing but relating to people at the grassroots level and trying to

understand their woes and worries. Whatever way possible, he helped them and when impossible to satisfy their basic needs he lifted them up to God in prayer. In all these three parishes compassion, sympathy and empathy were the hallmarks of his priestly ministry. If Msgr Mascarenhas could do this at a very young age, I believe we can even inspire young priests and religious to imbibe this spirit of compassion.

4 A Compassionate Pastor in Udyavar Parish

Msgr Mascarenhas had hardly completed three years of pastoral ministry; seeing his ability and pastoral zeal, the Bishop appointed him the parish priest of St Francis Xavier Church, Udyavar in 1903. The community at Udyavar had pecuniary challenges. Heavy rains and continuous floods had caused damage to the cultivable land. In the bargain people had hardly anything to eat.

Without giving into weariness, he made himself available for their spiritual, pastoral, social and economic improvement. Msgr Mascarenhas not only visited them but also stayed with them to help, especially when they were stuck with natural calamities.

At Udyavar Msgr Mascarenhas very strongly believed in the providence of God. Providence never failed him. Despite all odds he was able to build a house of God and a residence to the clergy. Much more than that in Msgr Mascarenhas something unique was seen. There the people saw him as a praying priest, a priest who lived for the poor and the downtrodden, a priest immersed in prayer, a priest lost in contemplation while celebrating the Eucharist. Most importantly he was able to connect the life of the people to the altar of the Eucharist. Just like St Francis Xavier, the patron of Udyavar parish, he was able to enkindle the fire of Christ's love in the hearts of his flock.

5 A Compassionate Pastor in Agrar Parish

From 1910 to 1914 he served the Most Holy Saviour parish, Agrar, a rural parish with a large Catholic community. With agricultural resources, they were managing well. Skilfully, Msgr Mascarenhas

used the available human resources to build a strong faith community. The strengthening of the faithful later bore much fruit which is witnessed in large number of vocations to priestly and religious life. In addition, he also foreknew that this community would grow far and wide. He bought land in different places for the expansion of church activities and as of now three parishes have been carved out of Agrar parish.

6 A Compassionate Pastor in Bendur Parish

On 23 August 1914 Msgr Mascarenhas was sent to Bendur. Faith formation was foundational in the pastoral ministry of Msgr Mascarenhas. When he was appointed as parish priest his primary task was not of building the monumental church but building the faith of the people. "One of the first to commence at Bendur Parish was the Altar Boys' Sodality and catechism classes for children followed by basic schooling which was not easily available in those times."¹

He constantly visited the people to know their struggles and challenges. He realized education of young adults was the need of the hour. He also learnt that girls were not educated; instead stayed home until their marriage. He was moved with to the plight of the less fortunate, especially girls. Msgr Mascarenhas started a parochial school in 1916 which became the cradle of literacy for the poor children. It met the educational needs of the people in the locality and also a footstool to impart Catholic education.

Those days Bendur was not an affluent parish. In fact, they did not even have a proper church for worship. When Msgr Mascarenhas started the work of building the church, the poor parishioners contributed their mite and people of good will came forward to support. Making it possible to build a house of God during the First World War was only possible to a holy man who trusted in the providence of God.

¹ Ivan Saldanha, Servant of God – Msgr Raymond the Pioneer Pastor of Bendur, in *The Compassionate Pastor* 1/2 2009 19-28, 24

7 Spiritual Strengths of the Compassionate Pastor Msgr Mascarenhas

A) Msgr RFC Mascarenhas a Man of Prayer

- a. People in the parishes he served, perceived him as a man of prayer.
- b. He spent long hours in front of Blessed Sacrament. He contemplated the face of Christ in the Mystery of the Eucharist. In his life he has taken up humanitarian projects. He was involved in building projects. But never lacked time to be with the Lord. In fact, we see a wonderful blend of Mary and Martha of the gospel in Msgr RFC Mascarenhas.
- c. He faced the challenges of his life with faith and prayer. That is why he even desired to make 'Bethany' a house of prayer.

B) Passion for the Word of God

- a. He quenched the thirst of people who desired to hear the Word of God in local language.
- b. Biblical narrations are so beautifully depicted on the walls of Bethany Mother House chapel painted by the great artist Francis de Gama. For example, the ceiling depicts the scene of the Annunciation, on the left side one can find the depiction of Calvary with the title 'Love is crucified', on the right side Mary of Magdela meeting the risen Jesus with the conversation 'Maria-Rabboni', raising of Lazarus, Holy Family etc. give us an intuition to the personality of Msgr Mascarenhas. Love and compassion could be seen everywhere in these paintings.

C) Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

- a. Msgr Mascarenhas was formed under the Jesuits both at St Aloysius and later at St Joseph's Seminary. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was very much promoted by the Jesuits.

- b. He promoted the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus among the founding members of Bethany. The tenderness of the compassionate Heart of Jesus fascinated him. "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28).

D) Love for Blessed Virgin Mary

- a. Msgr Mascarenhas 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 Mary. He encouraged the sisters to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Immaculate Conception.
- b. Msgr Mascarenhas 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."
- c. It must be noted that for Msgr Mascarenhas, 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.

8 Virtuous Life of SD RFC Mascarenhas

- a. Msgr Mascarenhas' faith was remarkable. Even in such crucial moments he never lost sight of God, rather increased his trust and confidence in the Lord and Blessed Mother and considered it as a period of purification. In one of his reports to Bishop Paul Perini SJ he writes, "Bethany completes six years of existence. It has been a year of crosses, cross of illness, of hospitalization, cross of poverty."² Believe me, his faith life was put to the test several times but never did he allow himself to be downcast.
- b. Msgr Mascarenhas had deep trust in God. In trials and

² Third Report, R. F. C. Mascarenhas to Paul Perini SJ (Bishop), dated 16.07.1927.

difficulties he turned to God with deep faith. As a man of deep faith and great trust, he turned to God in everything. Divine providence never failed him. His trust in divine providence was clearly visible when he visited people at Udyavar to build the house of God.

- c. Msgr Mascarenhas was full of hope in his life. He believed that God would never abandon him rather he would listen to his prayers and provide for the needs of everyone. His life was filled with different kinds of pains and sufferings. He accepted all troubles and sufferings with serenity and exhibited hope amidst conflict. Whenever the sisters approached him in moments of crisis, his hopeful reply was, "I know I am a poor economic risk, so I don't ask you to take my word. But trust in the Lord who has worked miracles for people less generous than you are. On my part, I will tell our Blessed Mother that you have 'no wine' and I know she will do something to get her Son to come to your aid."
- d. Msgr Mascarenhas was a just man. He respected the rights of others and raised voice when they were violated. He was fair in his dealings with others and expected the same from others too. He defended the cause of women who were deprived of their rights and privileges. When it came to the issue of justice, he spared none. He was relentless until justice was meted out to him and to others.
- e. Msgr Mascarenhas was a man of self-discipline and renunciation. He led a simple life-style marked with austerity. He had nothing extravagant among his belongings. When he left on transfer to Agrar from Udyavar, one of his friends pointed out that he owned only an old umbrella, crumpled hat and faded soutane. Msgr Mascarenhas was seen as a man of meagre needs. He was a man of detachment. Family concerns were secondary to him. Even his cottage, furniture, wardrobe in Bethany only what was absolutely needed and

necessary.

- f. Msgr Mascarenhas stood by his flock as a courageous leader. He exhibited extraordinary courage in difficult moments. While establishing various communities he faced various kinds of challenges from different types of people. He stood by his sisters with great courage in trying circumstances.
- g. Msgr Mascarenhas as a priest knew his flock very well. He visited his parishioners especially the poor who lived in small huts walking long distances on uneven paths and fields or riding his bicycle through the muddy ways and attending to their needs. He laboured with commitment among the people entrusted to his care. He was pained by the plight of uneducated girls and women and reached out to them by opening schools.
- h. Msgr Mascarenhas was a true shepherd who cared for his flock without expecting anything in return. His total commitment and selflessness towards his parishioners did not go unnoticed. For example in 1914 when he landed at Bendur it was filled with rocks and shrubs. The church was a little thatched hut. Out of this poor material he carved the parish community.
- I. He was a faithful son of the Church. Any mission assigned to him, he accepted willingly without complaining of anything. His only desire was to promote the values of God's kingdom such as justice, peace and love.
- j. Msgr Mascarenhas was content and happy with his priestly vocation and mission. He zealously promoted vocations, especially inspiring many women to dedicate their lives to God and His people.
- k. Establishment of Bethany convents in different places for him was reaching out the helpless in their needs. He taught the sisters to make a blend of the proclamation of the Word

³ M Lillis BS (Sr), Biographical Sketch of the Servant of God Msgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas, in The Compassionate Pastor 1/1 (2008), 9-13, 13.

⁴ Lillis BS (Sr), Biographical Sketch of the Servant of God Msgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas, 13.

and reaching out the needy, just as Jesus did.

9 A Few Thoughts for Pondering

- a. In 1949, for the first time in the history of the diocese of Mangalore, the four gospels were translated into Konkani. Thereafter in 1952 he completed the translation of New Testament and again in 1954 he completed five books of the Old Testament.³ This shows his desire to make known the Word of God to simple people who were thirsting for living springs of water. Here, I would like to make a specific mention of Sr Jyoti BS, the former Superior General of Bethany Congregation. Once, when she visited the Leuven University campus in Belgium, she was enquiring about specific biblical course. She repeated the same while she visited St Joseph's Seminary, Jeppu, when I was a faculty member. The point I would like to make is that Sr Jyoti wanted to relive the vision of Msgr Mascarenhas in the Bethany Congregation. After 100 years of the existence, anything concretely being achieved in proclaiming the Gospel? I humbly request the Bethany major superiors to give a serious thought to this vision of Msgr Mascarenhas.
- b. In every parish he served, Msgr Mascarenhas enthused people to follow the fiat of Mary. Later, in 1946 during the Silver Jubilee of Bethany Congregation Msgr Mascarenhas consecrated the Bethany Congregation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Then on a regular basis the sisters espoused ejaculation *Ecce Ancilla Domini* and they called her 'Queen Mother of Bethany' seeking her intercession all the time.⁴ His love for Mary is also seen in the celebration of the feasts of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Annunciation, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Lady of Fatima and Our Lady of Sorrows. It was not merely the celebration of Marian feasts but rather his desire that every sister of his Congregation and for that

⁵ Mariette BS (Sr), 'A Caring Pastor: Compassion at the Core' in *The Compassionate Pastor*, 1/1 (2008)

matter every follower of Jesus must become a radical disciple of Christ Jesus. I am of the opinion that radical discipleship like that of Mary is very much missing among priests and sisters in the contemporary context.

- c. Msgr Mascarenhas had great devotion to the young saints of his times. For example, he took St Therese of Lisieux as second patroness of the Congregation. The life of a contemporary saint made a prodigious impact on the young sisters those days. I am of the opinion that our formators have failed to inspire young candidates to priesthood and religious life through the influence of saints of our times. For example, what is the impact of Mother Teresa on the formators and the formees? How much do we know about Blessed Carlo Acutis and his devotion to the Eucharist? Do we take Divine Mercy chaplet seriously? I am of the opinion that we need to inculcate deep devotion to the contemporary saints and devotions promoted to our times by the Church.
- d. In his pastoral ministry people perceived Msgr Mascarenhas as "a praying pastor, a caring pastor, a serving pastor, a sacrificing pastor, and a simple pastor, [a poor pastor] who lived for the poor."⁵ People need role models. Until and unless we are able to provide role models for younger generation, they will not be fascinated to embrace religious or priestly life.
- e. As a pastor, compassion was at the core of his pastoral ministry. Compassion speaks of suffering with the people or emptying oneself in reaching out the less fortunate. It is not mere sympathy or feeling pity but empathy meaning to say identifying with suffering humanity by plunging into action. We find umpteen testimonies of people telling us how Msgr Mascarenhas related to simple poor people. Just to mention an example, Msgr Mascarenhas gave jobs to simple uneducated women in the vicinity of Bendur such as washing clothes, milking the cows, work in the loom etc. He uplifted them from their misery and taught them the dignity of labour.

He arranged for the education of their children. For him, it was the process of kenosis under the example of his master Jesus Christ. The Church doesn't require anymore armchair philosophers much less dictators. We need community leaders who walk the path shown by Msgr Mascarenhas, who uplifted people from every kind of sorrow, pain and suffering.

- f. As opined by James D'Souza, "Triggered by the awareness of suffering people, compassion propels a person into action on their behalf by offering all possible comfort, healing or empowerment within the confines of a particular situation. Reaching out in compassion enables to understand others with deep empathy without condemnation. It moves a person into constructive action to alleviate their suffering."⁶ Being sensitive to the needs of the suffering humanity is the need of the hour in our country for which we need to be prophetic. There are more than 1,00,000 priests and religious in India. If we rise to the occasion no one can stop us from being effective instruments of the Lord just like Msgr Mascarenhas.



⁶ James D'Souza, 'The Compassionate Pastor', in *The Compassionate Pastor* 1/2 (2009) 33-34, 33.

Servant of God Raymond FC Mascarenhas as a Founder of Bethany Congregation

Sr Lillis BS

**Topic Presented on the Occasion of Bethany
Centenary Symposium on the Servant of God,
Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas, on 6 July
2021 at Mangalore**

My dear Sr Mariette, the moderator of the symposium, Rev Fr J B Saldanha and Mr Stephen Quadros, the speakers, and the participants of the Symposium,

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, life in abundance" (Jn 10:10). Servant of God Raymond FC Mascarenhas, the Founder of Bethany Congregation was a close follower of Jesus. His whole life of compassionate love and service illustrates how he provided opportunities for fullness of life to various categories of people, especially, to more than 2175 Bethany Sisters ever since the foundation of Bethany and through them to the people at large

Bethany- The Magnum Opus of Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas

It is said that, of all the works done by Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas, Bethany was the *Mgnum Opus*¹ - which means, the best work among all his achievements.

While standing at the threshold of the Centenary of our Congregation, Bethany, which occurs on July 16, 1921, I feel greatly indebted to this great spiritual visionary, our Founder, Servant of God Raymond FC Mascarenhas. The tiny seed of Bethany tree that he had planted in Mangalore in 1921 has now spread to 26 states of India. In addition to that it has put forth branches to Nepal, Rome, Italy, Germany, France, North West Africa and East Africa having 1443 members including the novices, pre-novices and 118 candidates hailing from all over India and Tanzania under 189 communities. We

¹ Greetings of A L Pinto (Retired Deputy collector), to Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas, *The Twin Jubilee Souvenir*, 1950, Bethany Generalate, 26

attribute this growth of Bethany to the mercy of God and the blessings of the Ecclesiastical authorities who gave opportunities for Bethany to live its Charism. In addition to that I would consider that the growth of Bethany resulted from the prophetic response of our dear Founder to the call of God.

Mgr Raymond, the compassionate pastor, looked at the society through the eyes of God. While being a pastor in various parishes, he listened to the cry of the less privileged poor Catholic girls and women of South Canara who wanted to become religious but had no opportunity for it.² Though some of these women were elementary or higher elementary trained teachers, they could not get admission to religious life in the existing Congregations in Mangalore owing to their economic condition and lack of a matriculation certificate. At that juncture he also detected the struggles of the missionaries in the villages in running schools without committed teachers. Mgr Raymond responded to the Lord who was asking him to start a religious institute for these less privileged girls who would later as religious would be helpers to the missionaries in the parishes for educational as well as pastoral activities. His Lordship, Bishop Perini, with whom the Servant of God had shared his inspiration in 1920 encouraged Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas, to carry on his plans step by step in a simple manner. Mgr Raymond launched into this mission trusting in the Lord.³

The Historic Event of Founding Bethany

That historic event of founding Bethany took place on 16 July 1921, on the feast day of Mount Carmel. Fr RFC Mascarenhas, who was then the Parish priest of St Sebastian Church, Bendur, along with his assistant, Fr Sylvester Menezes received four Higher Elementary trained teachers who were named later as Sr Martha, Sr Clare, Sr Lourdes and Sr Gertrude. Three of them were from the parish of Bendur and Mother Martha from the parish of Rosario Cathedral. While their parents were shedding tears, Mgr RFC Mascarenhas,

² Cf Fr RFC Mascarenhas, *First Report on Bethany* to Paul Perini SJ (Bishop), 1925, 1, 2

³ Cf *Ibid*, 1,2,3

Kneeling before the statue of Mother Mary, entrusted these four in the loving arms of Mother Mary and prayed, "Oh Blessed Mother, protect these children whom you have entrusted to me in all confidence, for the extension of your Son's Kingdom."⁴ Bethany provided a great opportunity for all those who wanted to become religious irrespective of their economic condition or educational qualification.⁵

Will Bethany Survive?

After the birth of Bethany, the next question raised by some of the onlookers was "Will Bethany Survive.?" Some said, "This venture is too poor to last."⁶ At that time no one could believe that a religious Congregation could be started with the local girls from the native soil, by an ordinary diocesan priest.

As the world is experiencing today, the repercussions of the pandemic Covid 19, the periods of Bethany's birth and growth were badly affected by the First and the Second World Wars. There was economic recession, and shortage of food. Sufferings due to lack of resources, poverty, ill health, death, and criticism of people became part of Bethany's growth process.⁷ Bethany had no foreign support. It had to maintain itself with the toil of daily life. However, undaunted faith and childlike confidence of Father Mascarenhas in Jesus and Mother Mary helped him to stand firm amidst criticism and sufferings and to do all that he could to provide for Bethany

Formation of the Sisters – the Top Priority of Fr Raymond Mascarenhas

As the person responsible for the infant Congregation, formation of the sisters became his top priority.⁸ The patronesses Fr Mascarenhas presented to Bethany as models for emulation were all ordinary women saints whose life Bethany could easily emulate.⁹ The first patroness of Bethany was Mother Mary in the mystery of the

⁴ Cf Theresine and Esuria BS, *The First Four*, 2016, 59

⁵ Cf Fr RFC Mascarenhas, *Report on Bethany*, to Dr Paul Perini SJ, 1927, 4

⁶ D'Souza Violet, BS, *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 36

⁷ D'Souza Violet, *The Vine That He Planted*, 1989 72

⁸ *Ibid*, 18-25, 39-41

⁹ *Report on Bethany* by RFC 1934, 8

Incarnation and the Annunciation. Mgr Mascarenhas desired that each Bethany Sister had to be a handmaid of the Lord like Mary, the Mother of Jesus. He taught them to repeat the motto: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" before each and every activity. The second patroness he gave to the Sisters was St Therese of Lisieux, a saint of twentieth century in whom Mgr Raymond found sisterly support. Mgr Raymond advised the sisters to follow her missionary spirit and the Little Way of total trust in the Lord. By giving the name 'Bethany', the Founder wanted Bethany Sisters to combine prayer and action, to be compassionate and hospitable and to open the door of Bethany to all those who are in need. Founder wanted the sisters to be friends and disciples of Jesus. The official title that Founder gave to the Congregation was, *The Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany*. Founder wanted Eucharistic Lord to be the centre of the life of Sisters. On October 28, 1935, the Founder introduced day and night adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Bethany Mother House believing that it would provide them with additional strength to carry on the apostolic activities.¹⁰ He exhorted the sisters to do any service only for the glory of God and not for any other motive.

With the strenuous efforts of Fr Founder, Bethany received legal status in the Church within eleven years. Bishop Victor Fernandes, the then Bishop presented to Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas, the decree of Canonical erection on his feast day namely 28 July 1932.¹¹ It was a great milestone in the history of the Congregation.

Founder Taught Bethany Self-reliance

Ever since its foundation, the membership of Bethany increased steadily. Finance was a great problem. Making the best use of the crisis situation, the Founder taught Bethany to stand on its own feet through hard work. Bethany started various entrepreneurship such as weaving, bouquet making, diary, bread making, farming etc to make both ends meet.¹²

¹⁰ D'Souza Violette, *The Vine That He Planted*, 1989, 57, 58

¹¹ *Ibid*, 33

¹² *Report on Bethany*, 1934, 11

Opposed to the capitalistic attitude, Mgr Mascarenhas taught the sisters the dignity of manual labour referring to the Holy Family of Nazareth.¹³ Simplicity in life style according to the standard of the ordinary people was supposed to be the characteristic of Bethany. He insisted that sisters learned various hand crafts and music which later would be useful to teach the children and women in their apostolate. He provided opportunities for the same. In spite of financial crisis he sought ways and means of getting help to send sisters for higher studies to Rome and USA. All the sisters who joined the Congregation were educated according to their capacities and aptitude

Relationship of Founder with Bethany Sisters

Looking at the aspect of the relationship of Mgr Raymond with the sisters, one will agree that he was a real father to them. The numerous spiritual letters that he used to write to the sisters in the mission communities underscore his love and concern for them. Mgr Raymond fostered community spirit among the sisters. There was also very cordial relationship between the founder and the sisters of which Fr Thomas Pazhyaparambil from Kerala wrote: "The relations between the father and children were so beautifully cordial. The benign founder went about full of fun and frolic, kindness, sympathy and encouragement. Underlying all this, one could note a thoroughly dynamic soul, full of earnestness, resourcefulness, initiative and inspiration. Every activity in Bethany was stamped with the charity impress. ..."¹⁴ Inspired by the relationship existed Fr Thomas sent the first set of Malayalees from Southern part of Kerala. It is to be noted that Founder had a special love for the candidates coming from other states which helped them to adjust faster.

A short extract from the greeting of Bethany to Founder on the occasion of his twin Jubilee Souvenir spotlight the bond of relationship existed between the Founder and the sisters. It stated that the Founder had become to them what Jesus was to Martha and Mary in Bethany. In this speech they also exalt his qualities saying,

¹³ Constitutions of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Part III, 164

¹⁴ Fr Thomas Pazhayaparambil, to Twin Jubilee Souvenir, Mangalore, 1950, 23

“You are our father, meek and humble, so kind, affable, accessible, patient, forgiving, and forgetting so that we are able to approach you as children and feel that you are all in all to us.”¹⁵

Collaborative Leadership of Mgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas

In building up Bethany, Mgr Raymond Mascarenhas, our founder tapped the resources of various people and institutions. For example, for the spiritual formation of sisters, he sought the assistance of the Jesuit priests from St Joseph Seminary, Mangalore and St Aloysius College, and also of (OCD) Carmelite priests from Alwaye and Carmel Hill Kulshekar and for education, he sent the sisters to the Institutions of Apostolic Carmel, and for apostolic activities help came from the Ecclesiastical authorities, diocesan priests, other religious, and lay well-wishers.

Having spelt out the purpose of founding the Congregation as Catholic Education, the Founder had to find opportunities for the sisters to live their Charism. Mgr Raymond, the founder considered it a blessings of God when invitations came from the Bishops of Mangalore, Calicut, Poona, Patriarchate of Goa, and Mysore to send Bethany Sisters to serve in their dioceses especially the remote mission areas particularly, in the field of education, medical and pastoral care.¹⁶

With a view to give quality formation for the girl, Mgr Raymond, with due permission from the Bishops, established a few Schools under the Bethany Educational Society in different parts of Karnataka and attached to them boarding houses, orphanages and vocational training centers for the uplift of the poor.¹⁷ Vocations came in great number to Bethany from the parishes, especially schools, boardig houses and orphanages. It is worth noting that four of our Superiors General had their high school education in Bethany schools.

All the apostolic ventures of the Servant of God were intermixed with crosses such as misunderstanding, financial crisis,

¹⁵ Sisters of Bethany, *Twin Jubilee Souvenir*, Mangalore, 1950, 88

¹⁶ D'Souza Violette, *The Vine That He Planted...*1989 53,54,55,56,78-84,85

¹⁷ Jessy Rita, BS, *The Ripples*, 2006, 65,97,117, 118, 121

sickness of the sisters, the departure of the sisters etc. But Mgr Raymond, the founder who considered this period of suffering as being on Calvary consoled himself saying, "It may be Calvary; Jesus and the Blessed Mother are with me. I am content to be where they are."¹⁸ On 23 December 1960 Mgr Raymond, our Founder, left for his eternal home while his beloved daughters of Bethany were around him praying for him along with Mgr MFC Castelino.¹⁹ Though In his Last Will and Testament written on 28 March 1942, Founder had expressed his desire to be buried at the foot of the grotto at Bethany Mother House,²⁰ as per the desire of the parishioners he was buried in Sebastian Church Bendur, where he was the first parish priest and the builder of the Church.

After his death Bethany experienced abundant blessings and growth. In his absence, Bethany recaptured his charism and vision all the more. Enkindled with the Founder's spirituality and vision, Bethany marched out to North²¹ and North-Eastern²² part of the county and now reaching out even to the Sahara desert in North West Africa²³ bringing fullness of life for all specially the children and women. It is a feather in the cap of the Diocese of Mangalore that Bethany emerged from the soil of Mangalore is carrying on the mission of bringing fullness of life to the world at large.

As we march into the post centenary year, we pray that the apostolic vision of Mg Raymond Mascarenhas becomes a guiding light not only to Bethany Sisters, but also to the universal Church. We Bethanyites as a family, recommit ourselves, acknowledging our failures to be true witnesses of Christ's compassionate love. May, Mary our Mother, whom we address as 'Queen Mother of Bethany' be our guide in our faith journey. Let us pray that the Servant of God be raised to the honours of the altar.

¹⁸ D'Souza Violette, *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 85-94

¹⁹ D'Souza Violette, *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 104,105

²⁰ *Ibid*, 119

²¹ D'Souza Violette, *The Vine That He Planted...*1989, 124-127

²² *Ibid* 128-133

²³ *Charis 1970-2005*, Delegation Abroad, 101

Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas, an Educator with a Cause

Stephen Quadros Permude

**Lecture Delivered on the Occasion of Bethany Centenary
Symposium on the Servant of God, Raymond Francis
Camillus Mascarenhas, on 6 July 2021 at Mangalore**

As I began to dive deep into the life and educational mission of Monsignor RFC Mascarenhas, my convictions and thoughts on the subject at hand prompted me to start off with the following series of questions that flashed my mind.

1. What were the credentials of Monsignor R F C Mascarenhas in the field of Education?
2. Was he an academician?
3. Was he a pioneer in the field of learning and letters?
4. Was he a teacher with excellence?
5. Was he a personae literare hominem?

After glancing at his lifelong endeavors and accomplishments, I was convinced beyond all reasonable doubts that we can definitely call him an amalgamation of all these qualities, but it would be more apt to call him a compassionate pastor who made use of all the then known educational tools with an intention of empowering the marginalized and building a strong and healthy social order driven by the values of justice and harmony.

'Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final end as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life' (Canon 795 – Code of Canon Law).

In keeping with this spirit, Monsignor Mascarenhas, a renowned educationist of his times, visualized education as a means

of giving life and transforming the ignorant, especially the poor and the girls. His pastoral zeal and commitment only pushed him to achieve the greater goals in this arena.

Being a multifaceted personality, he was also a scholarly individual himself, who stood first in all his academic pursuits. He was a prolific writer with profound knowledge of many languages, an eloquent speaker, a linguist, a courageous leader and a benevolent person. Having realized the plight of those deprived of the light of learning he was instrumental in starting the Bethany Educational Society. Many schools were started under the aegis of this. Realizing the importance of education in making the person self-reliant, he initiated schools in many villages. Socio Economic progress achieved by the people of Coastal Karnataka gives witness to the prophetic visualization Monsignor RFC Mascarenhas had on the significance and effectiveness of education as a tool to transform India. In this context, we can safely state that his call for 'Transformative Education for the Fullness of Life' has been extremely relevant and effective.

In 1917, he sent a detailed representation to the Holy Father Benedict XV seeking his intervention for providing education to the locals.¹ In the same dispatch he also referred to the negligence shown by the European clergy in educating the natives.

In 1927, Monsignor Mascarenhas brought out the sad story of the Canara districts, especially in the field of education in a subsequent representation to the then Madras Government.² When Hon'ble Sri Subba Rao, the then Chief Minister of Madras visited Mangalore in 1928, he along with Shri M S Shreshta waited upon him and presented an appeal seeking state funding for education of the natives of Canara. These consistent appeals bore fruit, and in the year 1929, an order was passed by the then Madras Government sanctioning grant for opening schools in Canara.³

¹ Memorandum sent to Pope Benedict XV in 1917.

² Mascarenhas, FC, (Rev), et al. 'The Memorial of Catholic Association of South Kanara, Mangalore, 19 March 1927, *The Catholic Educational Review* Easter 1927, 126-130.

³ 'The address of CASK to Rt Rev Mgr RFC Mascarenhas', *Mangalore*, April 1941, 178-184

When the Simon Commission visited Madras in 1929, Monsignor was one of the very few selected to testify to the Commission and made the best use of this opportunity to stress upon the need of state spending for the education of Coastal Karnataka.⁴

Monsignor Mascarenhas was the President of the CASK (Catholic Association of South Canara). He worked very hard to financially support both schools and the students. Considering his zeal in the field of education he was made the member of the District Education Board of the then South Canara. During this time, he started demanding provisions for the vernacular schooling both in Tulu as well as in Konkani. To realize this dream, he himself started writing simple text books in these languages. He was instrumental in starting many of the District Board Schools and imparting quality education in the nooks and corners of this district.

It is interesting to note that the people of the city of Mangalore elected Monsignor R F C Mascarenhas to the Mangalore Municipal Council from 1923 to 1929. A visionary and zealot that he was he spent this tenure making Mangalore an Educated City and involved himself in making Mangaloreans highly educated and adequately employed. He personally sponsored and supervised the founding of St Margaret Mary's School, Bendur, St Sebastian School Bendur, and St Joseph's School Kankanady. When schooling was the prerogative of the rich and the elite, he strived hard to make it accessible to the marginalized and the voiceless, especially to the girls from economically deprived families.

Reading the signs of the times, he worked hard to give Transformative Education for Fullness of Life for all, especially the poor and the girl children. He started the Bethany Educational Society, which today manages 278 quality educational institutions. Besides he catalyzed the establishment of the Mangalore Diocesan Catholic Board of Education in the year 1932 and led this body as its Vice President for nine years from 1932 to 1941 and secretary from 1932 to 1936. Started with the aim of Education for Advancement,

⁴ M S Shresta, 'Our Deputation to Simon Commission' *Mangalore*, (CASK), March 1929, 166-170

today it has grown to manage more than 200 educational institutes under its aegis. Both these bodies have so far shaped the life of millions of people irrespective of their caste, creed, sex and religion giving preferential option to the voiceless. If not for these bodies, undoubtedly things would have been different for the life of our nation.

If we can identify four prominent aspects of the brand of education that Msgr Raymond Mascarenhas promoted, they would be:

- 1) Education for harmonious relationships leading to just society
- 2) Education for Peace and harmony
- 3) Education for Empowerment of the marginalized, especially girls and
- 4) Education for Excellence

Monsignor R F C Mascarenhas was truly a visionary. He envisaged the challenges of the present and the future and realized the urgent need of empowering the illiterate women. Therefore he started several Skill Development Centers. In 1922, he started St Martha's Industrial School wherein skill based courses like weaving and other domestic life skills were imparted. He encouraged creating employability among the convents. This vision of self-reliance among the poor through self-employment has gone a long way in making our society economically strong.

Another important aspect of his academic zeal can be seen in the literary works he has produced. From translation of the Gospels to the works on teaching Konkani he has authored a variety of books. Though these books are written in a simple language, they are infused with deep reflections. His translations are regularly referred to and utilized even to this day.

Monsignor R F C Mascarenhas has been generally perceived as an effective religious personality. But it is high time that we start considering his yeomen service in the field of education, literature and academics. This will be a fitting tribute and a just reward to one of the great educationists of Coastal Karnataka.

Monsignor Raymond Mascarenhas – A Good Samaritan Revisited

Rev Fr Joseph Martis

The Story of the Good Samaritan is old as well as new; known yet exciting; fictional as well as real; far removed yet very proximate. The Good Samaritan resurges time and again. He reincarnates in different epochs, persons, events, happenings. In simple words, the Good Samaritan never dies.

The Good Samaritan parable became a lime light story in the recent encyclical of Pope Francis namely, *Fratelli Tutti*.¹ Now this papal document consecrates one full chapter on Good Samaritan. The Chapter is titled as "A Stranger on the Road". The Holy Father is culling out the stirring and inspiring aspects of this distinguished person. The Pope emphasizes that, in an unhealthy society that turns its back on suffering and "illiterate" in caring for the frail and vulnerable (F.T. 64-65), we are all called – just like the Good Samaritan – to become neighbours to others (F.T. 81). We all, in fact, are co-responsible in creating a society that is able to include, integrate and lift up those who have fallen or are suffering (F.T. 77). Love builds bridges and "we were made for love" (F.T. 88), the Pope adds, particularly exhorting Christians to recognize Christ in the face of every excluded person (F.T. 85).² This encyclical is an invitation for the entire humanity to be like the Good Samaritan. Time and again history demonstrates that there have been such Good Samaritans and one such is the Servant of God, Monsignor Raymond Mascarenhas the founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany. In this short essay, I wish to explore on the biblical person of Good Samaritan, and enlighten the reasons why and how Monsignor Raymond is worthy of the Title, 'The Good Samaritan'.

Why the Good Samaritan is 'Good'

Although it may sound obvious, nevertheless the question

¹ *Fratelli Tutti (All Brothers)* is the third encyclical of Pope Francis, subtitled "on fraternity and social friendship." The document was signed on 3 October 2020

² Isabella Piro, "Fratelli Tutti": Short Summary of Pope Francis's Social Encyclical

still holds good is to know why and what makes the Good Samaritan 'good'. Why has he become an iconic figure and his name has been inserted in all languages and cultures. Four actions of this notable man deserve him the caption 'Good'.

He Stopped

The first act the Good Samaritan did was, "he stopped." He was enface of an unrehearsed, disastrous and appalling situation; he saw a man wounded, battered, attacked, crying for help; an abandoned stranger. Several questions certainly would have wriggled in his mind: Who is this man; what has happened to him; should I really do something as I do not know him; will there be a risk for me if I help him; is this man acting or actually wounded. Moreover, this Samaritan was busy with his work; he had his day's plan and time table. In all likelihood, there have been several people who have passed this path and why is it that they have not stopped and helped him. Indeed, the situation and the circumstance give room for more and more doubts and questions. There is substantial matter for excuses - not to stop. But this man stopped. The word 'stopped' here goes beyond a mere physical halt, but a mental preparedness, an insight for self-outgoing, He stopped for he realized that this situation required an immediate attention, an imminent response. This was not a time for a speculative rumination, not a time for skeptical calculations. This man on the road needs a reply, a response. History of humanity has examples of many men and women who have stopped in such similar situations. Nelson Mandela stopped when he saw the apartheid and dedicated his life to dismantling racism. Abraham Lincoln stopped when he saw the black Americans were denied of their fundamental rights. Mahatma Gandhi stopped when he saw the low caste people were not given their human dignity and basic rights. Monsignor Raymond constitutes another tall figure in the ladder of such precious heroes. Monsignor Raymond also stops; he stops, for he finds that on the path of humanity, several people were robbed of human dignity, human self-esteem, and fundamental privileges. He stopped when he saw that the poor and very specially the economically less fortunate girls of his time were denied the basic necessities of human persons. He too like the Good Samaritan had series of questions: Is it possible to do this, where will I get money

and the sources, who will support me, moreover what about my regular work and ministry as a priest...He could have gone along the current like anybody else unruffled, ignoring about these issues, but he stopped. It is really moving to learn the socio-economic situation which Monsignor witnessed during his time. Sr M Esperie explains so candidly in her book, *Bethany My Joy and My Crown*. She elucidates saying: "The ordinary girls of his time were not highly educated... in these days there were no educational facilities for the poor in rural Mangalore..."³ "She also strongly observes that this state of affairs was not only the fate of poor girls but also of so many people. She confesses the story of Mr Simon Rasquinha and his household. But for the financial assistance extended by Monsignor, they would have been in total ruins."⁴ Monsignor Raymond often times chose to pass through the road to Jericho and every time he passed, he met wounded people of various types, robbed, deprived, rejected, forbidden And every time he saw them, he halted, he stopped. When he was appointed at Bendur as Parish Priest in 1914, it was almost like passing through the road to Jericho. Bendur was like a god forsaken deserted place; a barren haunted place. There was just a tent (Govoll) here. But Monsignor Raymond was quick to react, quick to attend to this lamentable situation. Because he stopped and attended to the situation, the outcome was as Sr Esperie remarks: "Seventeen years later when he was transferred the people of Bendur told him these dry bones where you landed have not only have come to life but to the fullness of life, now it is shining like a bride."⁵ At every place he went, he would stop first to see who is wounded or what is wounded. At Udyawar, he found the place was wounded for there was no proper church for worship, thus he said, 'I must build a house for God so that people can worship.' At Agrar, he stopped to see the wounded people for they were in want of everything, and he began to meet even the daily necessities of the people.⁶ The very first action of the Good Samaritan 'to stop' constitutes the starting point or the dawn of any change, genesis of new life, onset of a fantastic discovery that the other person in need is my

³ Esperie, M (Sr). *Bethany, My Joy and My Crown*, Mangalore: Bethany Publications, 2003, 13-14.

⁴ Esperie, *Bethany, My Joy and My Crown*, 15.

⁵ Esperie, *Bethany, My Joy, and My Crown*, 35.

⁶ D'Souza, Violette. (Sr). *Unless the Seed Die*, Mangalore: Bethany Publications, 1985, 16-17.

brother/sister/neighbour. People who stop are, "the ones who don't make excuses. If it's broken, they fix it; if it's wrong they make it right" (Anonymous).

Pope Francis has expressed this human gesture in various terms and expressions but the best ones I found was when he said in a message for people finding excuses for not answering God's call to share in his mission in a particular way. He said: "Do not wait to begin living out your vocation. The joy of the Gospel, which makes us open to encountering God and our brothers and sisters, does not abide our slowness and our sloth. It will not fill our hearts if we keep standing by the window with the excuse of waiting for the right time, without accepting this very day the risk of making a decision. Vocation is today! The Christian mission is now!"⁷ "On the 55th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Francis stated: "The Lord continues to call us to follow him, and we shouldn't wait to be perfect in order to answer with our generous 'yes.' We don't have to be fearful of our limitations and sins, but instead, should open our hearts to the voice of the Lord. We are called to listen to that voice, to discern our personal mission in the Church and the world, and at last to live it in the today that God gives us."⁸

He Approached

The second reason, why this Samaritan was good is because he 'approached' the wounded man. The approach of this Samaritan was a movement of love and empathy. He does not approach the wounded person neither with prejudices, nor with curiosity. He does not approach this wounded miserable creature with contempt, he approaches the man with total courage, risk and compassion. He does not count the cost, he simply moves forward. This movement includes physical, social and spiritual dimensions. While approaching the wounded person, the Samaritan had only one intention, how shall I help this man, how shall I alleviate his sufferings and pain. In reality, the life of great people and very specially persons like Mother Teresa manifests such approaches. Mother Teresa also set her foot on the road to Jericho and she saw children, women, old people, mentally challenged, abandoned, thrown in the public places, neglected. She

⁷ Message of Pope Francis, given at Vatican, 4 December 2017

⁸ Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the 2018 World Day of Vocations, 3 December 2017

also stopped, and sans delay, or hesitation, she moved towards them. She did not think of their caste, creed, religion, or any external tag. Humanity is the biggest way to reach the divinity was her conviction. Approach persons in need, without prejudice or hubris, but only to serve the penurious and alleviate the sorrow of the wounded persons is the only logic that makes sense here. Monsignor Raymond is another stalwart of his time who approached people. Approached the poor, needy, deprived, disadvantaged, women, children, elderly, without any prior judgments, any ulterior motive, but only to serve. As Sister Violette notes: "While a Pastor at Udyawar, he visited the sick and the sorrowing in their homes, in good and bad weather, rain and sunshine...Epidemics of small fox and cholera were common and many fell victims to these terrible diseases... Fr Mascarenhas was a Father and doctor to them. Many a time even in the middle of the night there would be a knock on his door and response would always be an unhesitating 'Yes, I will be there'..."⁹ This pure and sublime intention makes this priest a Good Samaritan.

He Nursed

The third reason why this Samaritan was good was because he nursed the wounded man, cared for him, bandaged his wounds. The merciful gestures showed by this Samaritan are gigantic for more than one reason. He was a Samaritan and now touching a Jew is a reality pretty much impossible in the existing social norms and restrictions. For a Samaritan was considered as lower in dignity and esteem in comparison with the Jews. Thus the reasons for restraining from doing such humane act are more than sufficient to withdraw from the scene. Moreover, there is the fear that he himself might be a victim of other robbers passing that way or, the possibility that he might be accused himself of this robbery. Furthermore, he himself is neither a nurse nor a doctor for the job. Alas we could multiply the reasons for the refusal of such a service. But this Samaritan does not come up with such real or fictitious excuses, he does not bother, he does not worry, the only thing that occupies his mind is the fact that he has to assist, that he has to go out of the way, that he has to prepare for any risk in order to protect this wounded and save him. Once again, human history does have people of this sort. People who

⁹ Sr Violette, *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 17-18

have bandaged the social, psychological, and spiritual wounds; bandaged the abandoned people, shown unusual hospitality to the socially ostracized, psychologically terrified, politically banished. It takes courage to answer such a call. I can't but recall the meaningful hymn we often sing: It takes courage to answer a call, it takes courage to give your all..." It took courage for Monsignor Raymond to bandage the wounds of various types of people he had encountered. His love and concern for the marginalized, people in abject poverty was overwhelming. Sr Violette describes scores of incidents where this love was translated into action. First of all, he loved the poor by becoming himself poor. He was born to a financially comfortable family. However "he made himself poor in order to identify with the people Jesus loved. Poverty he said, is the "first class ticket to the heart of our Lord."¹⁰In his pastoral ministry, he would travel on foot or by bicycle. Often times, silently he paid rent of families who were ready to be evicted by their landlords. Sometimes, he would use his influence with a friend to find work for the poor people ... he would pay the School fees and if possible open a School in the remote villages.... To the sick, he would have a father's heart and nurse them through his sisters and also launch steps to start small infirmaries...¹¹ He did encounter people wounded physically and hence he called his sisters to take care of the sick and the old. He did encounter people wounded socially through social injustice, he did encounter people spiritually wounded; he did come across people wounded in their entire self. To nurse the wounded was a primary objective he had while founding the Bethany Congregation, and true to his dreams the Bethany Sisters have been nursing the wounds of people in distress for the last 100 years. For the century long, the Bethany Sisters have been bandaging the wounds by pouring the ointment of love, care, empathy, there by assisting people in their ignoble situation.

Took to the Inn

The fourth reason why this Samaritan was good because he took this wounded Jew to the Inn. The Samaritan sans doubt is extraordinary. He is not satisfied with the minimum, or just for the sake of a duty or obligation. He manifests an attitude of super

¹⁰ Sr Violette, *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 74

¹¹ Sr Violette, *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 74-75, Refer also, Payyapilly, Geo (Fr) & Sr Mary, Benedict B.S., *Fullness of life*, Mangalore: Bethany Publications, 2003, 102-105

abundance. He was busy as anybody else, or perhaps more than others for he had a project fixed while he was on a journey; he had done the basics of humanity of giving the First Aid. In common parlance, he had shown his part of humanity by not abandoning or going on the other side of the path as was done by the Priest and Levite. He was generous, bold, outgoing, concerned. This could have been enough to gain the title 'Good'. But this man is different, he is unusual, he carries the man to the Inn, to the caring centre. His humanity goes beyond all calculations, minimums, or just for the sake. His humanity has no limits. He is ready for anything; a humanity beyond measure. Monsignor Raymond, had similar intuition; he was a priest, not satisfied just with doing his duty, doing what he was supposed to do. His priesthood was not even doing or going a few inches beyond his duty, but Raymond was a person, a priest of superabundance. Whichever parish he went, he was seeing the needs of the parish beyond the just duties. He saw that he had to go beyond the regular or stipulated chores. Hence he would go for long term plans, projects so that humanity beyond the present times may benefit and reap the fruits. As a result, the schools and parishes he served, were places for not just the present but also for the future generations. Like the Good Samaritan, he did take so many people to the Inn. He took the children to the Inn of knowledge, very specially the poor girl children; the initial candidates who had joined from the village background to the Inn of enlightenment. He took to the Inn of health for people who were sick, people who had no means to reach a hospital or get some medical assistance. To the Inn of comfort to people in the villages rocked by pain, loneliness, lacking basic needs and necessities, people caught in social evils such as alcoholism. To the Inn of solace to the pioneering Bethany Sisters when they were lost, pessimistic about their future, or sometimes caught up in economic constraints. To the Inn of humanity and social dignity, to people abused and beaten by social injustice. To the Inn of spiritual comfort, to people looking for God experience; waiting for the presence of God in their midst, thirsting for God in their day to day life. To the Inn of hope, to people and also sisters finding themselves in hopeless predicaments, hope in times of famine and pestilence,

hope in times of World War II, hope in times of political unrest in the country, hope in times of misery of all sorts.¹² Sr Esperie summarizes in her simple words, the Inn's the Founder had taken to so many people in her book, *Bethany My Joy and My Crown*, in the chapter, titled, "Our First Ventures."¹³ In reality, the church is a sort of Inn, where people of all kinds, castes and creeds, colours and classes, are given a shelter, given a home to be cared for; to be nursed. The Church has existed for this mission, taking the wounded, marginalized, the outcastes, and the torn apart persons to the Inn of comfort, reassurance, relief. This social dimension of the churches' mission is strongly spelt out in the Second Vatican Councils' document, 'Church in the Modern World.' The document in one of its statements summarizes the mind of the Church, saying: "Faced with a world today where so many people are suffering from want, the Council asks individuals and governments to remember the saying of the Fathers: "Feed the people dying of hunger, because if you do not feed them you are killing them," and it urges them according to their ability to share and dispose of their goods to help others, above all by giving them aid which will enable them to help and develop themselves."[*\(Gaudium et Spes- The Church in the Modern World –No. 69\)*](#). The Church also speaks of the need to foster the dignity of the person as a sine qua non element of humanity. "A just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person. The person represents the ultimate end of society. The social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person... not the other way around."[*\(Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, No. 132\)*](#).

He Returned

The final reason why this Samaritan was good, because - He returned. He said: "Take care of him, I will come and pay whatever is to be paid." This Samaritan by now had crossed all human frontiers of bounty and goodness. He had manifested the exuberance of divine qualities flowing in his veins. He is going to come back, the following day to see the welfare of this stranger; he is going to pay the extra amount. In other words, he takes on himself the total responsibility of

¹² Payyapilly, Geo (Fr) & Sr Mary, Benedict B.S., *Fullness of life*, Mangalore: Bethany Publications, 2003, 106-108.

¹³ Sr Esperie, *Bethany, My Joy and My Crown*, 2003, 72-74.

the recovery of this Jewish stranger. He had crossed all boundaries of human reason; his logic is absolutely different; he is outstanding in his goodness. This quality of this Samaritan is unusual to any human scale. With the fourth step of taking the stranger to the Inn, this Samaritan had already done the best, but this Good Samaritan is not gladdened with this, he goes further, he outstrips all human imagination. Thus this Samaritan is good. This 'good' is better than the best. This quality of this Samaritan is visible in our God. He comes back again and again to see if the wounded humanity is taken care. He came through the prophets, he came through his saving events and finally he came through his only Son (John, 3:16). And this Son loved the battered humans so much that not only did He pay the price through his life but He comes again and again, through men and women, through the Church to see if anything extra has to be paid. This divine quality obvious in the Good Samaritan was also plain to a great extent in the Servant of God Monsignor Raymond. He did come back, to see if the good works he had started were moving forward, he did come back to see if the mission onset was moving ahead. He continued to take the full responsibility of all the good works. He paid the 'extra' as a Priest, Founder, Vicar General, and a Missionary. Time and again, he would visit all the mission stations where he had sowed the seeds of faith and good works. He would take all the pain to travel even in conditions which were harsh, such as poor health, bad transport system, economic constrains, negative remarks, sour criticisms, rejections, loneliness, calumnies, failures and impasses. He was for sure that it was the work of God and nothing could prevent him. He was burning with the spirit of St Paul who said: "Nothing is able to come between us and the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom, 8:39). For Monsignor Raymond, the 'extra to be paid' also came in situations such as, forgiving his incessant critics, swallowing cutting remarks and disproportionate denigrations, accepting joyfully severe moments of loneliness and desertion.¹⁴

¹⁴ Sr Violette, "Testing Times" in *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 85-90.

Think global, act local

The Good Samaritan story demonstrates that this unusual Samaritan was surely aware of the general principles of a good life, good deeds, and good ethics. But when occasion needed him, he was quick to act; he translates all his learning into the local situation. He becomes actual, real, and man of the hour. This idea of being the person of the hour was the vital force of the mission of Monsignor Raymond. Great ideas, general principles are translated into the local situation. He becomes a man for the time. He assists in the most needed hour of human life in his environment. He responds locally the universal call given by Pope Benedict XV in his Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, (1919) wherein the Holy Father invites the bishops to foster apostolic zeal among the Catholics in the mission countries, to give formation to the native clergy according to the aspirations and traditions of each country. Responding to this call, Monsignor Raymond becomes a sort of pioneer to launch this vision of the Pope in his native diocese. We could see the initiatives taken by him in the field of translating the liturgical texts into the local Konkani language, composing hymns in the local language, translating Bible in Konkani, and fostering many other initiatives to bolster the local church.¹⁵

The Road More Travelled

The road to Jericho according to the biblical writers is the road, connecting Jerusalem and Jericho, is about 17 miles long and notoriously dangerous. In those 17 miles, it drops 3,600 feet. It's steep and it descends sharply, with lots of rocky valleys and passes. Until the fifth century, it was called the red or bloody way, and in the 19th century people still paid safety money to local sheiks before they travelled on it.

For us, the contemporary Jericho road is the place where crime is on the rise, loneliness is endemic, food poverty is on the increase, racism, fundamentalism and hate crime is widespread and people are sleeping on the streets. The Jericho road is any place where there is violence; it is any place where there is oppression, or where people are robbed of their dignity, love, food or freedom. Unfortunately this is the road more travelled today. In our context, it almost looks like all the roads have some semblance of Jericho road.

¹⁵ Payyapally, *Fullness of Life*, 100-101.

There is almost no choice but to traverse this road. The political ambiance in which we live is flooded with false promises and cruel means to attain power at any cost; the economic markets are dominated by unethical business wars; the social life is corroded with foul ideologies... the list could go on. Even the so called smooth roads, the happy roads, the joyful roads – family life, religious life, are turning out to be Jericho roads. The man of today has to pass through these roads; moreover it is long. These long, dangerous and frightening roads have become unavoidable, inescapable. Human progress – if you can call it progress at all - has deprived man of his humanity, humanness, dignity, Today we need to transform the Jericho road; we need to make the Jericho road safer for humanity to travel.

The Bethany Congregation with hundred years of mission journey has been a saga of being Good Samaritans wherever they have been. They have traversed the Road to Jericho in most of their ministries. They have witnessed the wounded people left out in myriad ways. Wounded physically and hence they embarked into the mission of health care, wounded socially hence they launched the ministry of education and social development, wounded spiritually and hence they spearheaded the ministry of pastoral care and faith education. They have also felt the compulsion that this Jericho road needs to be transformed so that people passing this road could travel without fear and distress thus they have been organizing programs for social change and transformation. As the curtains of first century are falling, the mission in the second century demands that the Good Samaritan revisits not only to assist the robbed, fallen, wounded persons but also and much more to transform this Jericho Road into a road to Damascus where we are transformed and are able to transform others. A road where humanity is blinded to all sorts of wickedness and malice and open to new life, joy, and happiness This I believe is the vision of this Good Samaritan, the Servant of God, Monsignor Raymond.

Servant of God Raymond F C Mascarenhas - A Beacon of Hope for Our Times

Sr Surekha Lobo BS

"... for we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7).

What was our reaction to the Pandemic wave that has annihilated more than 3 million people worldwide and battered the global economy because of lockdowns and other restrictions to slow its spread? Did we feel helpless when millions of innocent women and men had to lay down their lives at the altar of Covid-19 Pandemic in India and worldwide? Have we not become indifferent when the nearly 100s of migrant workers and refugees, had to flee from pillar to post place to place, and are feared dead on account of the Pandemic lockdown? How about the devastating effects of Covid-19 which we are painfully aware of how many of our loved ones, friends, community and family members are still struggling in the hospitals, and at home or in some cases have gone to their eternal abode? Were they the saddest moments in our life, such that they knit us together with deep emotional and spiritual ties drawing our attention anew to the new crisis called Corona Virus?

I am writing this article at a time when India is fighting against the second wave of Covid-19 Pandemic which has hit India very badly. The notices of lockdown, cessations of the transport systems, banning people from coming out of their homes and going for work, and the harassment meted out to the public in various ways, hampered the very livelihood of the poor and the marginalized in particular. Cyclone 'Yaas' is the second cyclonic storm to hit the country within a week after 'Tauktae' barrelling into its western coast, causing death and destruction. Covid -19 Pandemic is an unprecedented health crisis for the human race today is the most significant context we find ourselves today is the global pandemic which is ravaging the entire world.

In the light of this background, SD Raymond becomes our

model and inspiration for a prophetic action. The life response of SD Raymond has inspired hundreds of Bethany Sisters in their life and mission as religious and also the people of his time as well as the students of today who look up to him as a role model, a man of God and source of inspiration. As we celebrate 100 years, an event of an institution, it is obvious that we note how this tiny seed which was sown by Servant of God, Mgr Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas has branched out in 189 places all over India, Nepal, Tanzania, West Africa, Italy, Rome, Germany and France. Moreover, it is really an important occasion to me and to move forward towards the centenary celebration of Bethany – the Crowning Glory of Servant of God, Mgr RFC Mascarenhas – it's a time to commemorate the choices SD Raymond made which has brought us the centenary year. I would like to reflect on the following traits as the core characteristics of the Servant of God Mgr RFC Mascarenhas (1875 -1960), the founder of Bethany. The article will conclude demonstrating a definitive way forward to post centenary times for the full growing, blooming, and bearings of fruits in abundance.

SD Raymond – A Beacon of Hope

SD Raymond lived at the beginning of the 20th century as a priest of the diocese of Mangalore. Right from the beginning his innate personality began to blossom; he excelled in firmness of character, spirit of generosity, compassion and love for the poor. His father contributed greatly to Raymond's daring spirit and courage to venture into the new and the unknown. Right from the beginning his innate personality began to blossom; he excelled in firmness of character, spirit of generosity, compassion and love for the poor. His father contributed greatly to Raymond's daring spirit and courage to venture into the new and the unknown. Speaking about his mother's influence it is said that it was from his mother that he inherited certain characteristics he was known for such as a well-disciplined firmness, a measured appreciation for life, and extreme tenaciousness.¹ It was

¹ D'Souza Violette, B.S. *Unless the Seed Die - A Brief Sketch of Monsignor RFC Mascarenhas*, (Mangalore: Codialbail Press 1985), 8.

from his mother he imbibed a sense of compassion, being humble and simple in his life style and a disciplined approach to life. Raymond was known for his keen intellect, rare talent and outstanding performance. His teachers, professors, and classmates held him in high esteem for his lofty ideals, his unfailing joviality, his sincerity and his openness. He lived up to this ideal till the end desiring to make something happen, to change the way things were, to create something that no one else has ever shaped before.

1. At the Choice of the Standard of Christ

While schooling at the St Aloysius College, Mangalore, (of Jesuits) one evening, just as he returned from school, he overheard a lady visitor remarking to his mother: "This son of yours can be an instrument either for a great deal of good or a great deal of evil." Raymond is said to have declared his firm resolution, "Why should I be an instrument of evil? I would rather go about doing good." The best decision is to take the path that will benefit you most in the end after it's all said and done and that is the road less travelled by. The core of his vision is making a choice in life. It is Ignatian: and negating the standard of Satan which is meant to inspire all committed women and men to participate in the prophetic role of Jesus.

2. At the Choice the Less Travelled Road

Choosing the less-travelled road means following a path that is not followed by the majority of people in our situation. Raymond was formed and chosen to make an option for God and his people at crucial times, in the context of the Church in Mangalore in the early 20th century. It has shown also the core of his vision as making a choice in life, choices that would prepare him to be a channel of God's compassionate love for the poor and the marginalized especially to the girl child.

All through our lives, we are confronted with choices, and because we cannot lead parallel existences, really, no matter which road we choose makes a difference. But to choose the less popular road says something about one's spirit of adventure, the willingness

to take a chance, the ability to think for oneself and not be a follower, openness to a different kind of life than people expect of us or that we expect of ourselves. We feel the vision of Mgr Raymond is the choice he made. Therefore, prophetic action lies in the choice one makes. That choice brings in problems. So, a woman or a man of God must be able to face them effectively.

3. At the Choice of the Disciple of Christ

Being called to be a true disciple of Christ, SD Raymond was totally united to Christ with Him who inspired him to continue his mission and ministry. He moved from a self-centred dream for himself - a dream about honour and riches and about being famous and important to a much bigger dream, his new dream was no longer centred on himself but on God, and the plan God had for him. He identified himself with the person, message and mission of Christ and was obsessed with the evangelical urge to have the Gospel preached to the poor and to make the whole Christian world become conscious of its apostolic call. According to him, everyone must be an apostle and must fulfill one's apostolic task in one's own field in so far as one is able. He "consumed himself in the service of God and man/woman."² His consuming zeal for Christ and for his kingdom was so great that no hurdles prevented him from moving ahead. It was his zeal that prompted him to start the Bethany Congregation which is considered as the magnum opus the crowning glory of Mgr Raymond's achievements.

SD Raymond was able to think 'outside the box,' who could share vision effectively and who could inspire and encourage others to be a disciple of Christ. He bore everything bravely with full trust in the Lord. Passion for the proclamation of the Good News to the poor was his passion in life and mission.

4. At the Choice of the Eucharist

The Eucharist was central to SD Raymond for he believed in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. SD Raymond rightly

² Fr GLR Miranda, 'My Reminiscences', 4.08.1976

responds to the late Mother Gemma, the fifth Superior General:

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 for Christ and teach you in the mission to witness Christ by your ideal life...³

Therefore, one of the important approaches that SD Raymond suggested was to have the perpetual adoration in Bethany.⁴ "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 The long cherished desire of our Founder SD Raymond is fulfilled on 16 July 2018 when the fourteen sisters formally stepped into the Adoration Chapel after the Eucharistic celebration to commence the Perpetual Adoration. Indeed it was a red letter day in the annals of Bethany history.

5. At the Choice of the Gospel Mysteries

The driving force that captured SD Raymond in his plans and dreams was the Contemplation of the Gospel mysteries. From his life and mission, was a saga of relentless search to make the Gospel relevant by embracing the poor and the downtrodden. While in his personal life he did this to his utmost capacity yet limited to a geographical area, by founding the Congregation, he broke the barriers of time and space. Such a task was not without challenges, misunderstanding and discouragements. But SD Raymond was passionate about his mission because, that mission was inspired and spirited by his vision of God in Jesus. He contemplated on the Gospel mystery of the Annunciation and the Incarnation, which prompted him to be at the service of humanity. "Led by the Spirit, and with full

³ Mother Gemma BS, Memories of RFC Mascarenhas, dated 23.07.2002.

⁴ Accordingly, the perpetual adoration was introduced in Bethany on 28 October 1935. Making a frequent visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was the practice in Bethany Congregation right from the initial stage of formation.

⁵ Violette B.S, *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 69

option for God and his people at crucial times, in the context of the Church in Mangalore in the early 20th century. It has shown also the core of his vision as making a choice in life, choices that would prepare him to be a channel of God's grace, presence and compassionate love for the poor and the marginalized especially for the girl child after the example of Jesus. Driven by the desire to reach the unreachable, as in the case of SD Raymond, I would like to offer a twofold vision as a way forward for every Bethany Sister to become a good human and a woman of faith:

To Be Rooted in the Trinity and in Creative Fidelity to Our Charism

It is to integrate prayer and activity and foster attitude of handmaid thus discerning the will of God in faith and surrender in all the events of life. To be a transformed, 'fiat' filled Sister who will in turn be a prophetic witness in her community and in her given field. An urgent need is to renew the interior life and to seek deeper union with Christ, which liberates and transforms us constantly and makes us anew. Such deeper encounters will prepare the consecrated ones to be in solidarity with suffering people and do whatever one can to alleviate their suffering. It is to spend quality time in the presence of God so as to be grounded in the Christ of the Incarnation and immersed in the realities, seeing in these realities sacraments of God's love working in the world. Hence, to be integrated, they ought to be faithful to their daily personal prayer, daily Eucharist, spiritual direction, some regular silence and solitude, and whatever other devotional practices helps them be good women of prayer and discernment. Therefore, to be rooted in Christ is to be committed to Jesus' message and mission.

To Be Bounded by Eucharistic Love and Lived in Common Mission. It's in the community that members grow into maturity and find their true identity and vice versa. When the members are not united with each other in the Lord, the individuals are in conflict with those of the community. What does creation of community mean? Creation of communities of love is to offer and approach of love that is

trust in our Blessed Mother, he meditated on the Gospels to find models of loving service. Chief among them was the mystery of the Incarnation and the Annunciation” (Const. Chapter Two: Charism and the Vision of our Founder, p 161). The God he encountered through Jesus Christ in the Gospels is primarily a God of compassion.⁶ Motivated by the inexhaustible mystery of God's total immersion in human history, Mgr Raymond immersed himself into his context and allowed himself to be affected by what he saw and heard. This resulted in birth of the Bethany Congregation. The more he reflected on this mystery, the clearer it became to him that this was the most appropriate model both for his own life and for the new religious congregation he was founding.⁷ He was drawn to the response of Mary given in the mystery of the Annunciation and desired that his daughters reproduce in their life the fiat of Mary and take Mary in the mystery of the Annunciation as their inspiration and motto in life. The more he meditated on God's compassionate love for the poor, the more it became clear to him that his mission was to imitate Jesus, who was compassionate to the poor, the dejected, especially women. He further envisioned the mission of the Institute in a manner that reflected God's compassionate care for the poor and the marginalized. He dared to take the unbeaten path, on behalf of the peripheries. Compassion continues to be a hallmark of Bethany Sisters. Hence, it is important that we celebrate the achievements of the past 100 years. The legacy that he left behind has indeed been a monument to be treasured in the hearts of the old and young. If its past stands as testimony to God's gift that has progressively brought to fruition, the future is about moving forward with renewed dedication.

Way Forward: Our Vision

From what has been explored we may summarize that life and mission of SD Raymond continues to be a beacon of hope in today's hopeless situation. SD Raymond was formed and chosen to make an

⁶Violette, B.S, *Unless the Seed Die*, 1985, 115

⁷Violette, B.S. *Unless the Seed Die*,1985, 114

practical and prophetic (through mutual love and care). This life centred on God and self-giving to others is clearly counter-cultural. Wake up the world! Be witness of a different way of acting, of living! It is this witness to which we are called today (Pope Francis). We are called to be bounded by love and lived in common mission.

Conclusion: The incarnation is always a call to follow Jesus in his solidarity with humankind, expressed concretely through his consistent and progressive identification with the poor. Jesus' incarnation is inclusive of all human beings irrespective of race, historical conditions or genders. "What you do to the least of my brothers and sisters," Jesus can truly say, "you do to me" (Mt 25: 40). The vision that Fr Raymond saw, had a far reaching impact. What he saw, he projected into the future and saw a Religious Congregation which would do exactly what he intended to do. The tiny mustard seed sprouted and never ceased to grow up into a mighty tree. Hundred years ago, Bethany had made an option to enter the history and share her life of the people of God. To be relevant is to be able to read the signs of the times, that is to develop a vision in mission - to respond to the new challenges of Covid-19 Pandemic issues - to care of the migrants and the Covid victims.



Mgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas and the 'First Four'
Sowed in Tears
We Reap with Shouts of Joy

Sr Rose Margaret BS

Introduction:

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Ps 126:5).

As I was contemplating on the above psalm, the present scenario of the protesting farmers at Delhi borders caught my attention. Shocked by the humiliating treatment meted out to thousands of our innocent farmers of Punjab, Haryana, UP, Rajasthan and other parts of our country who were protesting against the Farm laws peacefully, became the victims of blockade, tear gas, water cannons, lathi charge amidst the rain and cold wave sweeping the parts of north India, denying the entry into New Delhi, their rightful National Capital, the place of their choice to assemble, by deploying steel barricades and barbed wires and employing Para-military and police forces.

In my reflections I saw painfully the farmers in our next door on the road from November 2020 in their helpless and desperate condition, each day either a farmer dying or ending up one's life. In this inhuman, cruel and terrorizing situation the Psalm 126:5 knocked my mind and made me reflect why the farmers who sowed their seed in joy to maintain food security of our country for the past 40 years should reap in tears? Why should the government give a big blow to the Green Revolutionaries of our country? When will they go back to their places rejoicing? Will they and their children have a future and reap with joy what they have sown by their hard labour? The situation looks like the Government is taking bread out of the mouths of their children; and in such times many bitter tears are actually shed over it daily.

In this dismal and wretched state of affairs, Founder's deep love for the poor farmers at Udyavar, DK raced in my mind. As a spiritual, compassionate and prophetic Pastor he brought sunshine to the lives of the sick and the grief-stricken poor farmers living along the riverbank. During Monsoon season when their huts got washed away he was there to ease their tension and help them to the extent of appealing for help when as he lacked funds to provide them with food and shelter. In 1920s when many people of his parish became victims of widespread pandemic of small-pox and Cholera, our Founder brought comfort and solace to their lives as a compassionate father and a kind-hearted doctor. In the wake of the farmers protest I pondered: If our founder was alive today there is no doubt that he would have gone all the way with them in a big way and paved the way for reaping their labour of love with joy and gladness.

Simultaneously, the Psalm 126, the song of accents, evoked in me hopeful sentiments to view the present distress of the farmers with an optimistic outlook, to look beyond the present to the future, to a greater fulfillment that this problem will not last forever; it is not the end by any means, but only a means to the end. "In due season, they shall reap with joy"(cf Galatians 6:9). and "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away"(Rev 21:4).

These beautiful and meaningful reflections from of our present day context derived from the Text of Wisdom Literature (Ps 126) are apt to reminiscence, as the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Mangalore celebrates the 100 years of their long, laborious and audacious journey of sowing with faith and hope and reaping with love and gratitude.

Fr Founder Sowed the Seed of Bethany: Fr Raymond FC Mascarenhas, sowed the seed of Bethany with a happy note when Bishop Paul Perini SJ, saw the hand of God in the plan presented to him by Fr Raymond and gave him a smile of encouragement saying, 'Act, if you have an inspiration to do so, making use of the opportunities you

have." (*Unless the Seed Die*, Sr M Violette D'Souza p 29) The seed fell on the native Indian soil on a fallow ground, a road less travelled by on 16 July 1921. The 'First Four' too were well prepared to leap into the new and unknown venture amidst uncertainties, fears, and anxieties with strong faith, leaving everything in the hands of God and their Founder.

They nurtured the Seed with tears: The Founder, Raymond FC Mascarenhas and the 'First Four' –Sr Martha, Sr Clare, Sr Lourdes, and Sr Gertrude and the Sisters who came after them nurtured the seed of the Gospel with utmost care, sown in the replica of the House of Bethany of the Gospel fame where Jesus was a friend and a welcomed guest. "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (Jn 12:24). The sprouting years of the seed were the mixture of sorrow and joy; poverty and prosperity, repute and disrepute, appreciation and criticism- as Founder says "I carried on the work of founding Bethany in warm appreciation and bitter criticism." His constant prayer was "All for Jesus, Man of Sorrows, through Mary, Mother of Sorrows, for Bethany, close to Calvary and Gethsemane."

The strength of his noble character, endurance in bitter suffering, complete detachment and total surrender was remarkable: In his sufferings he never blamed anybody nor complained but recourse to God in prayer and allowed the seed to take its time for growth and bear fruit. He would remind the sisters saying, 'Through suffering and love, you will be Bethany's crown and joy.' For the Founder sowing meant living the word of God, planting the seeds of the Charism and Bethany Spirituality with abundance of Christ's love, and reaching out to people in compassion and love after the model of Jesus the lover of Bethany.

In the process of growth and development of Bethany, the question raised by the people haunted his mind off and on: "The child is born, will it survive? This venture is too poor at last; Father Mascarehas' sisters will die when he dies.' Sowing in tears! Suffering

and sacrifices, trials and tribulations, lack of resources, poverty, ill health and criticism became Bethany's growing process. Sowing in tears! But it did not deter Fr Raymond's strong resolve to nourish it with unfailing hope and trust and give his life for it relying on God's power. He sacrificed dearly to keep the very lamp of the Gospel alight in desperate times. Sowing in tears! With tenacity he would say, "Bethany, which to me is the child of so many sorrows and sacrifices and for which I have to live at all and for which I would readily die and those in it with me would suffer for it". Sowing in tears!

We reap with shouts of Joy: "Whoever has will be given more, and they will have abundance" (Mt 13:12). This has been the success story of Bethany over the years. In the past 10 decades Bethany Sisters have labored with generous commitment to their religious life in the vineyard of the Lord, living the charism and spirit of our Founder, the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas.

"Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop-a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" (Mt 13:8). The joy of reaping will be in proportion to the sorrow of sowing. It's a natural phenomenon that the seed sown in anxiety and sorrow is reaped with immense joy; Eventually the seed took roots and sprouted, in a deep and fertile soil as it was sown in the heart of the one who treasured the Word of God throughout his life.

Jesus the Lord and Master, the lover of the Bethany, has made fruitful the work of our hands and guided our journey of 100 years. As we celebrate the centenary of the Congregation, now is the time for us to reap the harvest and collect diligently and joyfully the fruits of our labour.!

Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor" (Jn 4:35-38).

The Psalm 126 leads us to reflect on the good work that Christ has already accomplished in our salvation. It's a time of Spiritual growth and maturity to gather the harvest of numerous blessings and graces. Thoughts of God's magnanimity fill us with gratitude and joy.

We envision Bethany anew: "Behold I make all things new" (Rev 21:50). Today as we stand on the threshold of the Post Centenary year we are called upon to leave the old ways which are comfortable, familiar, and secure and embrace new ways which are unfamiliar, difficult, challenging, with new strength of the spirit, Patient vigilance, without fear, incorporating God's ways into my life and grow in religious commitment and the spirit of Bethany. Christ has begun his good work in us. But how desperately, we need Him to carry it on and to complete it. To live a purposeful life let us open the doors of our heart to fresh and new opportunities for creative action and renewed evangelical enthusiasm, proclaiming the Joy of the Gospel-for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7). Let Mary, Queen and Mother of Bethany, Woman of the new wine, help us to go forward in obedience to the newness of the Spirit, nourish in us in faith, hope and love, make us docile to God's grace and diligent in doing what Christ tells us (cf Jn 2:5) as we proceed on our journey towards the kingdom of God (cf New Wine in the New Wine Skins).

"Let us remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm, and look forward to the future with confidence."Pope John Paul II. So Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary (Galatians 6:9). God calls us to persevere in sowing in tears, so that we might reap with shouts of joy. May Bethany produce healthy fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) thus bringing a wind of change in our lives in the years to come. Step by step, our gracious and faithful God is making it clear to us that we still need to look beyond the present to the future, to a greater fulfillment. Let us fix our eyes on our living God, the Lord of the harvest, walk by faith and not by sight and hope that the best is yet to come.

FAVOUR RECEIVED

Heart Block Cleared

I am Michael Baptist from Chickmagalur, one of the devotees of the Servant of God Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas. I was suffering from a major heart block since 10 years. The doctors were of the opinion that operation was risky due to y junction blockage. Having learnt about Servant of God Raymond from Sr Lilitta, Sr Bonita and Sr Jeevan and having visited Mgr Raymond Memorial at Bethany, Bendur, I started praying through his intercession daily.

Last week when I went for a check up to Narayana Hridayalaya, Bangalore, to the great surprise of the doctors and to my surprise, the reports showed that the block was cleared. I am grateful to God for this miraculous healing which I attribute to the intercession of Servant of God Raymond.

Michael Baptist
Chickmagalur

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The Roman Phase of the Cause of the Beatification and Canonization is in Progress in Rome. Sr M Rose Celine BS, the Superior General has appointed Sr Dona Sanctis the Roman Postulator.

Donations will be gratefully accepted to meet the expenses of the process of Beatification and Canonization sent to the following addresses:

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Cause of Msgr Raymond FC Mascarenhas.
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Mangalore - 575 002. Karnataka, India.

We invite you to share the favours received for possible inclusion in this bulletin.

Managing Editor

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



Rev Fr John Baptist Saldanha

Rev Dr John Baptist Saldanha hails from Bantwal and was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Mangalore on 10 May 1990.

He is well qualified with a diploma in counselling, B SC in Library Science, MA in Sociology, MA in Biomedical ethics and PhD in Dogmatic Theology from Leuven University, Belgium. He is a born leader with ability to lead and make a difference in whatever he does.

Since 2001 Fr JB Saldanha was a Professor at St Joseph's Seminary, Jeppu, Mangalore, simultaneously playing many roles. He was a creative writer and an associate editor of Joskiran, a Journal of Religion and Thought. He is the author of several books, delving into religion and Indian culture in modern contexts. He was the Head of the Chair in Christianity at Mangalore University and Secretary of the Senate of Priests. In addition, he has laboured for 8 years as the Convener of the Historical Commission for the Cause of the Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God RFC Mascarenhas.

He is a vibrant priest of Mangalore Diocese, full of fervour and passion for his flock. A caring pastor, and a good orator. In Pope Francis' words he smells the sheep of his flock. From 2013 he served St Sebastian Church, Permannur for seven years like a good Samaritan endearing himself with his pro faithful programmes, committed service and selfless love. Currently he is the Parish Priest of St Xavier Church, Bejai, Mangalore.

Sr Lillis BS



Sr Lillis the Asst superior General of the Congregation of the sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany is a noted educationist who served as a dedicated teacher and principal of CBSE schools in Punjab. During her tenures as the Provincial Superior of North East and Southern Provinces she also held the post of a Corporate Manager. While serving as an assistant

superior general of the Congregation for three terms she also served as the Vice President of Bethany Educational Society and contributed a great share in framing Bethany Educational vision, core values and pedagogy.

She is the Editor of *The Compassionate Pastor* from its inception in 2008. Having completed her studies in Rome under Congregation for the Cause of Saints, STUDIUM, she served as the Postulator for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Raymond F C Mascarenhas, for twelve years until the Diocesan Phase was completed.

Stephen Quadros



Stephen Quadros Permude is an Associate Professor of History at Govt First Grade College for Women Puttur, Recipient of Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Akademy awards for three of his books; he has also bagged Danti Memorial Award for his services to Kannada literature. He has compiled the First (Kannada script) English-Konkani Dictionary in 2007.

In 2014 his magnum opus 'English – Kannada – Konkani -Three Language Dictionary was published. He has authored more than 100 text books of History for various Universities. His translations of Vachana Literature and other classical works are well received. He has also translated the Constitution of India onto Konkani.

He has also served as the Secretary Diocesan Pastoral Council of the diocese of Mangalore and President of the CLCs India. Professor Stephen is sought after for training programmes for youth in career guidance and teachers in effective teaching.

Rev Fr Joseph Martis



Rev Dr Joseph Martis is the former Rector of Inter diocesan Seminary, after the completion of his office he continues to be the Professor of Philosophy, Mangalore. Dr Joseph Martis has a Master's degree as well as a doctorate in Philosophy from Institute Catholique, Paris. Phenomenology and Mystical Philosophy are the areas of his specialization. Dr

Joseph Martis is a visiting faculty in several seminaries and houses of formation. He has published several articles on philosophical topics.

He is actively involved in the formation work as well as pastoral activities. Dr Joseph Martis is also a member of college of consulters of Mangalore Diocese. He is an eloquent preacher. He is also known for his lectures in several other national institutes.

The services of Fr Joseph Martis as an editorial consultant as well as the editorial team of the Compassionate Pastor is commendable.



Sr M Surekha Lobo BS

Sr Surekha Lobo a Bethany Sister for North-East Province, is a theologian trained in both Pastoral Management and Systematic Theology. She has done her Bachelor's degree in Philosophy at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram Pontifical Athenaeum of Philosophy and Theology, Bangalore; Bachelor's degree in Theology at Vidyajyoti College, Delhi. She completed her Master's in Management and Pastoral Theology and Doctorate in Theology from Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth (JDV), Pune. She taught Christian Leadership for the Department of Pastoral Management at JDV Pune, for 3 years where she served an associate professor as well as the Moderator of the Centre for Women's Studies, Pune, for 2 years. She was a visiting professor to Mater Dei, Institute for Women's Theology, Goa and Morning Star Seminary, Barrackpore, Kolkata, India. She has worked in the fields of formation and education. Currently she is appointed as the Councillor to the Provincial Superior of Silchar Province (Assam), Provincial Secretary and the Province Co-ordinator for Formation.



Sr Rose Margaret BS

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

The Relevance of the Vision of Mgr RFC Mascarenhas today

“The main feature of the work of Servant of God Raymond Mascarenhas had been the economic uplift of the poor. For this did Father Mascarenhas establish his Congregation of Bethany Sisters and they, poor themselves, toil ever for the happiness and uplift of those as poor and poorer. Miss Gonsalves M.A; L. T (From the Twin Jubilee Souvenir, 1950)



Sr Lancia who celebrated the Golden Jubilee of her Religious Profession is just one among the hundreds of sisters who are working in the remotest areas of the Continents of Asia, Africa and Europe for the poor in the fields of pastoral, educational and social ministries. “I have spent myself for God in service. May all be happy and be healthy is my prayer” says Sr Lancia, a nurse.

Sharing Centenary Joy with Pope Francis A Privilege of Bethany in Italy and Germany

