

The MESSENGER of KOLKATA

The spirit of the Lord is on me because the Lord dedicated me by the unction. He sent me to announce the good news to the humble, to cure those who are heart-broken, to proclaim to the captives their delivery, to prisoners their liberation.
Isaïe, 61-1

Editorial of Brother Francis Mary

THE PRAYER CALLS THE HOLY SPIRIT

Dear Friends,

"The Spirit is renewed but never repeats". This assertion is for us a call and a comfort when the situations change without stop.

A SPIRIT which "STRIPS" The Poor people uproot us by expressing their need often in a urgent way. What a requirement when we built a very beautiful project for a child and when within a few seconds, everything collapses! The thirst of the street attracts him, fascinates him and tears him away from the reason: everything then has to be begun again. It is so since 13 years! The Poor people propel us non-stop in this passage from a well organize reality to the reality of the Poor today.

A Spirit which gives us the Vision of the Father : This passage which we live constantly plunges us into the Vision of the Father. Releasing our own vision, we discover that the Lord is always ready to restart, to forgive and finally to renew his more and more deep Love for each of us, In each of us. It is there that is situated the strength of Holy Spirit: Spirit of Life which strengthens us by giving us the VISION OF the FATHER...

The Prayer calls the Holy Spirit because it is it which repositions us in this reality of the Father. Without the prayer we could not hold on. As the smile of the children it is our daily vitamin which propels us to Love always more.

The Poor people understand it well : when they pray we have the impression to see them already in the sky... totally concentrated in a personal relation to God.

In Assise during the interreligious meetings our Pope Francis recalled that the life of Francis of Assise was Prayer. During his meeting with the Sultan, this one had well noticed that Francis was inhabited by the prayer, so much to tell him simply before offering him some presents: "pray for me so that God shows me the way which I have to follow"

Then let us move forward in this way of Love and life. That the holy Spirit renews us by communicating us the Vision of the Father.

Brother Francis Mary P.C.

As every year, the last quarter of 2016 was dedicated to the mission of testimony with schools and communities of Europe. It was the opportunity for meetings always very intense with young people and with parishioners. Many gestures of sharing were set up to follow these privileged moments, the members of the mission are very touched by all the actions and the shown attentions. This time of fast and Easter is often the moment chosen to implement them, that is why the Pilgrims of Charity take particularly advantage of the same time to express their gratitude to all.

The mission of December, in France, this year also turned to the help the "homeless" of which Brother Francis noticed the very strong increase in the streets of the capital and also the increasing number of very young people wandering.

At the end of December, Brother Francis finally joined his "children" of Calcutta to prepare and share with them the joy of Christmas.

A first mail arrived on December 20th:

" Hello Friends",

This morning we worked in a wonderful way in 2 teams, one at the railway station, the other one in the slums where so many poor people waited for care. The day before Akash and myself, empty hands, dedicated the day, to bring our smile to the Poor people of the railway station and the hospital... Demonstrating that our first mission is to deliver Love...

The return of Chandan making now full-time team with the P.C. is a blessing... Tomorrow it is the arrival of the younger brothers *(EDITOR'S NOTE: two young people from Orissa postulating for the brotherhood)*

On Monday Brother Godwin (ex MC) and his friend arrive as additional help for some time.

Charles and Sandra carry out an extraordinary work in the service of the children and of the administration ... Their common sense and their realism are gold! They are providential to help us level the difficulties bound to the recent monetary changes. The demonetization of the 500 and 1000-rupee notes created a big mess: not a single ATM was opened for 3 days, in the only one which I found, the maximum withdrawal was 2000 Rupees a day ...

In January a picnic will gather us to Bandel, place of Marian apparition.

Jack, Bapi, Akash and Debu get ready for the baptism, they will make their entry in catechumenate, this path of a new life with Jesus, on February 2nd.

The departure of Nasim towards a more compatible future with its family life is in the course of negotiation.

Good evening .

Brother Francis Mary P.C.

Very fast the preparations for Christmas led the apartment to a joyful atmosphere as the mail of December 24th shows it...



Hello Friends,

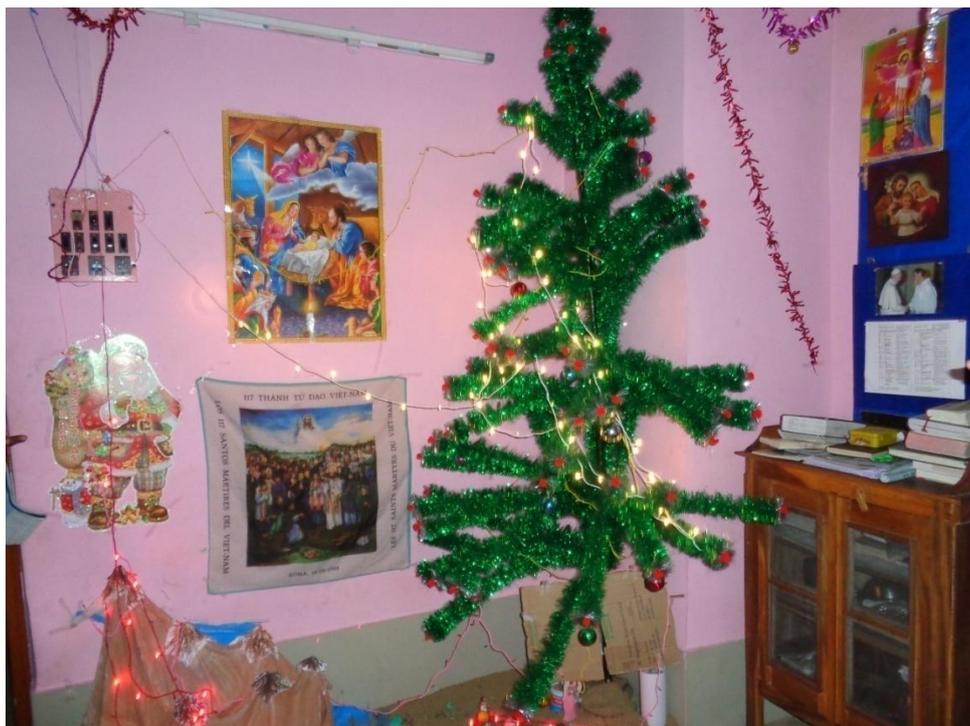
This evening the team celebrate Christmas...

On the agenda

Akash, at the stove with Rohan, prepare a great meal with the beef!

Meal followed by the delivery of presents in shoes naturally with the song " Santa's little helper " the presents of the

godfathers and godmothers are handed this evening.



Scoop of the week : The wolves which threatened to expel us became lambs and now they allow us to use the terrace. Every evening we pray the rosary in Oriya / Bengalese / Italian and in English there... That's it the Universal Church!!!

(The acceptance of the comings and goings of children of the railway station is not always simple and a time of observation by the neighbourhood was necessary so that the fears calm down)

Our mission develops well, even if sometimes we have difficulty following all our projects because of the multiplication of the care and the numerous transport of the sick to the hospital.

The small 15-year-old unknown boy always survives in a corridor... He has only a name: " the unknown of the stretcher 12 ". He is left to die, we sometimes are asked to take him with us but of another side the steps with the police are puzzling: a constable even answered me : *Let him die here, it will be simpler and more safe for you..* Because today to take a dying to admit him in any center so that he can die there as a man has only a name: **KIDNAPPING!**

Akash and William showed the patience of a saint to make admit to the governmental hospital a young boy Raju, discovered in the slum, the right hand seriously burned by electrocution, it tooked them 4 hours!!!

During this time Chandan and me, we returned to Baruipur to watch our land. Occasionally we also met bishop Lobo then Ashok, Anglican bishop of Calcutta. The latter is going to bring us a precious support in the training program for 2017.

The everyday life also brings joys



Shumbu (*blue shirt in the middle*) made a real conversion at present and seems to stabilize in the center of apprenticeship de Raipur.

Michel's next coming, his godfather, in this capital of Chattisgarh, delights him.



Delipp seems too to enter a phase of internal cure....

Yesterday the first interview with the director of the detoxification center took place well. On Tuesdays 17/1, in the presence of our volunteers, he will go to this center to be admitted in it...

Our missionary team consists from now of Chandan who came back from his studies to work with us and for whom we have big projects, Akash, Babu, and your servant.

Chandan assures guard's responsibility and fills his role marvelously.

Two young brothers also arrived: Rohan on December 22nd and this morning William. Here they are to the left of Akash.



The new government makes life hard to NGO (NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION) and shows itself unfavourable to the Christians and to the Muslims. In front of this reality, the necessity of reorganizing our Indian office was vital. We thus held a general assembly with Madan, our accountant, and Charles and Sandra, the guardians of the home, and Chandan. It is imperative to protect the mission by structuring carefully the administrative side of the status of " Charitable trust " from which we benefit since a few years.

On January 16th, day of celebration, it is the arrival of two very faithful volunteers: Michel and Chantal. They are going to accompany us during 15 days. All the children were gathered at the convent of Loretto this afternoon to welcome them.



From the next day, with Michel, Rohan, Chandan and Babu, we went to accompany Dilip to the centre of detoxification of Antala. On the platform, we handed him the present of his godmother. Delipp begins the path of a difficult cure after 15 years of excess... He is going to follow a treatment of 20 days to begin; his determination filled us with confidence and with admiration.



Firoz, begin a training of 6 months alternately to Hope Café to become a cook, He was bored a lot at school in spite of his skills and he seems very motivated by this new project



Sunil becomes our cook two evenings in the week

With Michel we went to RAIPUR where the Centre " Seva Niketan " develops and improves: 94 boys and girls are welcomed there because a "Feminine" branch held by Sisters was created. It is an organization (NGO)(NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION), dedicated to the very poor children with an handicap, welcomed to propose them a training validated by the government. They have the choice between Welding, Computing, Canework of chair, joiner's workshop, sewing, etc.



We also had Dr Monika's visit which passes 6 months of the year in Calcutta in a medical foundation which she created for the mothers and the children. (In the centre of the photo) Hardly gone down from the plane with her team, she made us the joy to share our breakfast, in spite of late hour and cooled cheese omelettes. But the atmosphere was brotherly and joyful!



January 26th, Great picnic at the edge of the Ganges, in Bandel: place of Marian apparition



January 31st: Arrival of Vincent,

Young French volunteer, friend de Florent and former boy scout. He will share our life during 2 months! A present of Divine Providence.

Yesterday he even danced, signs of a first Baptism in India.

Vincent's testimony (Volunteer for two months)

"On training in the field of the Design of Humanitarian Projects and Fireman Volunteer, I discovered the association two years ago by means of 4 friends who realized a mission with the Pilgrims of Charity. During my search for internship, I quickly thought again about them and they allowed me to create a link with Brother Francis. We then found an agreement for the realization of this project.

I like travelling and have already had the opportunity to visit various countries, I was not thus really worried as for my adaptation in India. I however have to recognize that this dumping looks not at all like my previous experiences. India is a country which upsets the habits and our 5 senses. At once committed in the missions of the association, I did not openly have time to dither and it allowed me to integrate fast and to find my place. The various missions which are given to me, all very varied allow me to develop some of my skills by returning a real service to the Pilgrims of Charity.

What an experience to being able to visit and serve the Poor people directly on their place of Life! Neither without judgment, nor any hierarchical relation: A true and reliable relation. Happy to be able to bring them my help, in particular medical, I am surprised with what I was able to receive in return. Strength of character, determination, joy of life, we have definitely many things to learn from each others.

If I could give a piece of advice to the future volunteers, it would be to leave for India by putting aside all their cultural and behavioral habits to be able to live on the inside their commitment. It is not simple at first, but to force itself allows to have a better feeling, to understand better, and thus to live better. "

February 1st : Visit in the families of Akash and Bapi... Great meetings, great bathing and great meal!



February 2nd :

During a simple, beautiful and moving celebration our Friends Jack, Debu, Bapi and Akash make their entry in catéchuménat, marking officially the beginning of their step towards Baptism. The celebration took place in a small church of the city centre of Calcutta.



A very beautiful piece of news, in front of the development of our mission, Sukhi joined our team!!!

Chantal and Michel, As every year our 2 voluntary friends realized with our younger brothers an absolutely wonderful work... They will tell you. They also allowed us to complete our book of incredible adventures: Acrobatics, tasting of potatoes balls, financial adventures also.



Michel's testimony

Michel tells the most deeply moving memory of this new stay in Calcutta:

Early in the morning, before starting our daily tour of care, I was together with Chantal on the immense esplanade of the railway station of Sealdah.

This esplanade is use as a parking for the police vans and for all kind of means of transportation: taxis, rickshaw (motorcycle taxis), handcarts. Throughout the facade of the railway station and among the vehicles under which they take refuge in case of bad weather, the homeless live, directly on the ground, multiple families: men, women, hundreds of children and sometimes old men.

Chantal being occupied by the daily distribution of candies, I paced up and down around our point of meeting, looking forward to Francis and for the health care team, when suddenly, in the middle of the crowd of the travellers, an old man lengthened on a bad blanket reached out to me. In front of his extreme thinness and his dark and hollow eyes I thought that he was hungry and I ran in a shop inside the station to buy a little food ...

Having knelt down to hand him the food which I had found, he pushes it aside with a tired gesture... then, his look making more and more begging he holds out again his hand ... I seize it with a very great emotion, a link of affection was established, looking at his beautiful suddenly calmed face pulls me towards the Afterlife: it is the face of the Christ that I contemplate, it is His hand which is in mine and I pray.

Among the travellers, who enter and go out of the railway station, some gathered and look silently. Big tears flow on my face, they are not tears of sadness but emotion, an intense emotion.

Answering the prayer that I send to him every morning, God made me the Grace to be "his instrument" having to bring to this man in the last hours of his life all the comfort that only the Divine Love can give by the intense warmth which he communicates. My companions arrived on the scene take a photo, then, Francis brings his blessing by applying to the body of the old man the Saints oil of the sick before he is taken care by the members of his family living as him homeless in the surroundings.

Our day is only beginning; we have to think of the children and the sick who wait for us on the platforms of the railway station or in the surrounding slum. Our timetable is never very stiff, it is flexible enough to allow us to deal with unforeseen events which frequently appear on our road; it is thus with delay that we shall begin our tour. Three hours later we are back; passing in the neighbourhood of our starting point to join the nearby hospital for a visit to the sick. One of the people having taken care of the dying comes in front of me, telling me " he died there hardly 3 minutes back " I can pay my respect in the presence of the body, and pray by caressing for the last time his hands and face.

Once back in France, by looking at the photos taken during my stay, I recognize him, appearing by chance on one of them; we had thus already met days preceding our last meeting without I particularly noticed it. He, undoubtedly, had observed us and, afterward, had recognized the rosary and its Cross which we wear around the neck.

I am convinced that it is the reason why he wanted that I held his hand for his passage towards the Afterlife!.... "



The memory of our brief meeting will remain eternally engraved in me because never I shall forget the face and its hand stretched. The exchange of Love which became established between us is immortal.

Some Impressions of India seen by a visiting French Friend ...

(...)If I compare with two previous journeys in 1980 and 1994, I found India quite a lot changed, for the better as for the worse. For the better, it seems to me that the most striking poverty decreased (or then is less visible than before?) and that a rather important middle class developed. According to what I read in the press there is (at least in some part of the society) an awareness of the rights of the women and the children, the respect for animals and for conservation of the nature. For the worse, it is the desire of wild consumption and the stunning development of the "car" while infrastructures and cities do not support it. In Delhi in particular there are improbable traffic jams and dramatic pollution which floods a part of the city in a fog which pricks eyes. I suppose that in Calcutta it is not better?(...). Jose

Days crossed fast, till the beginning of April, with a lot of medical care to give and of numerous activities with the children and at the hospital with sick.

Then the Holy Week came. The Maundy Thursday was ardently celebrated in the home as well as the party of Easter.



**To Each of you, to your families and Friends I send this message:
Do not be afraid of being seized by the Poor people!**

Brother Francis Mary P.C.

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Treasurer of the association

(Donation, fiscal receipts)

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