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NEWSLETTER OF CAMILLIANS- INDIA

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# Encountering God's tenderness



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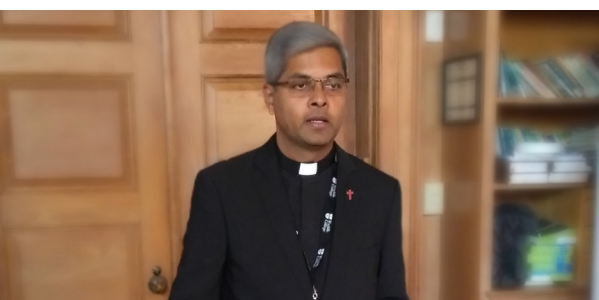
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**Cover photo:** *L'Osservatore Romano*  
**Design & Layout:** Chennattu Siby MI



**Baby Ellickal MI**  
Provincial

## THE LABRADOR SPAR

**W**e have all heard of the giant redwood trees of California. They only grow in groves. Each tree's roots extend and grasp the roots of the surrounding trees, forming a strong, interconnecting network that serves to nourish and sustain all of them equally. These trees are able to stand tall and majestic, in wind and storm, because of the firm grip of the interlocking roots below. The redwood trees and their invisible, interlocking roots are symbolic of the spirit of unity and support religious experience in their communities. You are not alone and never will be alone on your chosen path to Christ.

Living in community implies relationships. It means relating to one another as true brothers and putting into practice what Jesus taught us: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34). In an age of exaggerated individualism, community life is truly a prophetic sign. By living together, even at great cost, religious are able to bear striking witness to the Trinitarian mystery of self-emptying love.

St. Basil goes on to say that one must be prepared for conflict in community. Difference in personality and vision, ambition and worse, these are the things to be expected in any community. No one has a right to expect a perfect community, just as no one has a right to expect perfection in any individual human being. To accept imperfection but to be prepared to see beyond it -to be open eyed-is certainly the first requisite for living in constant close contact with others.

William Barclay speaks of a kind of crystal or precious stone, the Labrador Spar. It is very special. When you pick it up and look at it, at first, it looks very dull. But then if you start turning it around in your hand, rub it a little between your fingers, it begins to sparkle; it becomes brilliant and beautiful. We human beings are like that. At first sight people may appear rather dull, unlovely. But as we get to know each other more and more, as we get done things together, work together and begin to understand one another more deeply, we realize the truth that behind the dull faced, everyone is beautiful, brilliant.



## LETTER FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Fr. Leo Pessini MI

Dear Camillian Confreres, Health and peace!

I would like to take this opportunity to update you once again on my current state of health three months after my last letter.

After my recent examinations and tests (PET scanning, haemochrome, electrocardiogram etc.), on February 2019 I had a meeting with the oncologist (La Sapienza University – the Umberto hospital of Rome) who is following my case. An overall assessment was made of the bio-molecular therapy that I had received during the period November 2018 to January 2019.

In my previous letter of 26 October 2018, I told you that specifically at that time I was awaiting molecular genomic therapy. I received many emails, visits, telephone calls and calls and messages on WhatsApp: 'how are you?' 'is the treatment working?' 'are you in pain?' 'can I do something?' 'does the treatment cost a lot?'

It is evident that in people's imaginations this illness is never associated with good news and nearly always there is the risk that one will face up to it with fatalism, as an experience dense with suffering and without relief that within a short time will lead to death. This is the reason why I feel the need to offer you a general updating on my current state of health and to give you an honest account of the truth of the clinical data. I am alive and I feel very well!

By the grace of God, the clinical news during this initial period of treatment, these first three months, has been very good and encouraging. The medical assessment showed that there has been 'excellent progress' and that 'developments have been extremely positive'. As such, the therapy with bio-molecular treatment will remain the same for the next three months, then, at the beginning of June, I will have new diagnostic tests (at the 'Gemelli' hospital, Rome) and a new assessment of my condition with the oncologist.

The recommendation that I have received from the health-care personnel is to continue to organise a normal life: to address normal things without stress and when I am travelling always to

carry the prescribed treatment with me. The biological therapy is without doubt very expensive: 23,000 euros paid by the Italian National Health Service; as a result, the Order does not have to meet this expenditure. My Italian citizenship has notably facilitated the health-care and bureaucratic pathway that I have followed.

Five months have passed (3 September 2018) since the beginning of this 'voyage in the desert' (as I described it in my letter of 26 October 2018) with my admission to the 'Mother Giuseppina Vannini' Hospital of the Daughters of Saint Camillus in Rome: I stayed in hospital for 73 days (for 47 days to begin with and then for 26 days the second time). Since December of last year, I have remained at the generalate house, seeking to follow a light work programme, taking my treatment regularly, and following the indications as regards rest and diet.

Obviously, I have undergone a necessary and significant loss of body weight. This produced important benefits for the therapeutic process. But it is not only the body that undergoes changes. At the same time, the interior world of people, its psycho-social and spiritual dimensions, experiences changes. We should engage in this silent voyage with humility 'in order to reinvent the existential and spiritual personal dimension' in this Garden of Gethsemane, looking with all of our strength and real risk of moving into depression or giving way to pessimism, seeing ourselves as being abandoned by God, isolating ourselves or not speaking!

We men have not received the vocation to be unhappy, even though, at times, we are challenged by adverse states of health in illness! This is my deep belief.

I am grateful to the Lord for the wonderful gift of life and the possibility and the grace of being able to go on living! I thank my confreres for their solidarity, for their fraternal nearness, and for the constant prayers of intercession for the return of my health. It is truly curious to realise that even the simplest and most banal actions that we normally engage in when we are in

a good state of health, for example, taking two steps or going up five or six steps...are now seen as a great achievement!

This voyage in the desert has been, and still is, marked by some dramatic moments of kenosis (lack of physical energy, detachment from oneself and from things, the 'dark night' of the soul – St. John of the Cross) but fortunately also by precious moments of Kairos (the Grace of God). These are achieved with improved physical wellbeing, the discovery of important spiritual values, and modest daily events that fill my heart with joy, peace of mind and hope. Authentic 'miracles' that at times are invisible or imperceptible!

I confess that during this 'existential' voyage one becomes very sensitive, like a 'high definition radar' and our own spiritual values change and emerge with great force! I also changed the 'form' of 'Our Father'. After invoking the sanctification of His name, the coming of His kingdom, and the carrying out of His will...I allowed myself to pray as follows: 'give us today our daily health.' It is no accident that our divine Teacher and Shepherd in the Gospel stated that when we are in need we must ask, knock with faith, and our prayers will be heard (cf. Mt 7:7; Lk 11:9).

When we return to the prayer of 'Hail Mary', in its last part we call on Our Lady to pray for us sinners 'now and at the hour of our death', this nearness the words 'now' and 'death' of that phrase seemed to be rather singular and difficult to understand! I confess that it made me a little troubled, specifically at that very special situation of my life. This phrase, which at one time I said as a simple mental exercise without a particular personal existential resonance...now, in those critical times of illness, this same expression of prayer ran the risk of becoming a terrible threat and I perceived it as a lance that painfully entered my wounds, without any anaesthetic!

We cannot forget that with every invocation of 'Hail Mary' when we recite the Rosary, we remind ourselves that we are dust, made of clay, frail and mortal... Of great comfort to me, as one person who visited me suggested, was that extraordinary artistic masterpiece of Michelangelo, 'Pietà': Mary on Calvary who receives on her maternal lap her dead Son who has been taken down from the cross! If we cultivate the certainty of faith that we are always in the womb of the Virgin Mary we have nothing to fear, not even the ending of our earthly life. What a great challenge for our faith, do you not think? But will we be ready? The truth is simply that we would like never to live that hour! We avoid it and we deny it!

The existential voyage of kenosis in the desert (cf. Phil 2:8) also brought our precious moments of Kairos expressed in concrete facts: being and living at home ('home sweet home') in my community with my confreres. In addition, I have been living a 'second novitiate', accompanied and supported by numerous readings and meditations, moments of writing and personal, individual and community moments, moments of adoration and of prayer. This has greatly sustained me and has offered me the feeling of being a 'sick Camillian', of being useful, and not a 'use and throw away' person who complains and is dissatisfied with everything and everyone. In this sense, amongst the various activities that I have engaged in, I have read and studied no

**“ We live together, simply putting up with each other, not loving each other and not respecting each other with our cultural differences and diversities. We have a great need for conversion! ”**

less than fifteen books connected with spirituality, religious life, theology, ministry and Camillian spirituality and Christian ethical and bioethical values.

I have convened six meetings of the General Consulta (including the preparations for the next General Chapter of May 2020 and the imminent inter-Congregational meeting of 10-14 March 2019 made up of all the charismatic expressions of the Camillian charism).

In addition, I have followed the preparations for the imminent meeting of the major superiors of the Order which will be held in Rome on 14-18 March 2019. I have supervised two PhD theses in bioethics and I have prepared a book which specifically in the immediate future will be distributed to the whole Order: 'Global Bioethics at a Time of Uncertainty, Perplexity and Hope'.

Amongst the many expressions of solidarity that I have received through telephone calls, letters, notes and messages on WhatsApp, someone reminded me that 'God come to us in a form that is often invisible and imperceptible, during moments of need He reveals Himself in many different faces'. There are the dear friends of one's life whose smiles and company are special and precious. They are the presence of Jesus himself who takes on various identities and names...they are health-care professionals who take care of us, they are our relatives, friends and the tender and fraternal nearness of our confreres of faith. How true that Biblical statement is: who finds a friend, finds a treasure. This fact reminded me of a supervisor of CPE in the United States of America who declared: 'friends share the rubbish of life'. As frail human beings, we need this care.... With real friends we share the rubbish of life, in full freedom and safety. With colleagues and with acquaintances...often our relationships remain at the surface of things and events, and we talk about the TV news, the radio and newspapers, without any personal involvement, cultivating a hypocritical neutrality, nothing that is Christian. (cf. the attitude of Pilate who washed his hands!). Unfortunately, it is not rare to find these sad situations in our religious communities. We live together, simply putting up with each other, not loving each other and not respecting each other with our cultural differences and diversities. We have a great need for conversion!

To emphasise the outstanding value of peaceful human co-existence, I would like to point out the great value that the recent visit of my sister Bernadette (on behalf of the whole of my family as well) had for me: she spent the period of Christmas, the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year, with me in Rome for fifteen days. For some time I had planned to spend this period with my family in San Paolo (Brazil) but because of circumstances they came to me. what great blessing that was!

I would also like to remember the visit of my dear friend,



a Brazilian diocesan priest, a former post-doctoral student of mine, who was recently appointed the Auxiliary Bishop of Niteroi (Rio de Janeiro), Dom Luis Antonio Ricci. Through them as well, God took care of me! Monsignor Ricci stayed with me and with us in our Camillian community of the church of St. Mary Magdalene for fifteen days. together we engaged in an authentic spiritual pilgrimage to places that preserve the memory of Saint Camillus, thanking God for the gift of life and praying for the gift of health. We visited the town where Saint Camillus was born, Bucchianico, and the places connected with his conversion, San Giovanni Rotondo and Manfredonia. To give a date, that was on February 2, and we celebrated that event with the Camillian community of Macchia di Monte Sant'Angelo and with the faithful of that town.

On February 1, we celebrated the Eucharist in the famous and historic sanctuary of St. Michael the Archangel in Monte Sant'Angelo (fourth century AD), imploring the protection of the fighting Archangel who according to our Christian tradition defeats every form of evil. We are aware that there are many illnesses that are caused by 'evil'! In the contemporary world, it is no longer enough to be good, truthful, sensitive, supportive and generous. We have to protect ourselves against the evil that exists in our houses as well, amongst our own ranks of religious: there is nothing more effective than placing ourselves under the powerful intercession of St. Michael the Archangel who defeats every kind of evil.

Last October, Pope Francis invited all the Catholics of the world to entrust the Church to the protection of St. Michael the Archangel, specifically in order to defend the Church against evil. In the context of that celebration of the Eucharist, I also received the sacrament of the anointing of the sick from Bishop Msgr. Luis A. Ricci. This was an authentic bracing and corroborating experience!

To end this letter, I apologise if I have been prolix or too detailed in this communication: I have felt the need to share with you some fragments of what happened, and is happening, at the level of my human and spiritual experience, beyond a formal clinical updating on my state of health.

Usually ordinary people think that we religious, because of our choices of faith, never feel 'naked' in front of life, in front of other people and even in front of God! What a mistake that is! Our frail humanity always needs special attention; it always needs treatment to achieve integral health, for the salvation of our whole selves!

With a deep sense of gratitude for the (expressed or silent) human and spiritual solidarity that you have shown towards me, I send you my greetings, trusting in the care of my life and health offered by skilled healthcare workers and in the intercession of Mary, Our Lady of Health and Saint Camillus.

Fraternally,  
Rome, 6 February 2019.

## Meeting of the major superiors and delegates

### Camillian prophecy today

**Evangelical radicalism is not exclusive to religious; it is required of everyone. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way", Says Pope Francis.**

A meeting of the major superiors and the delegates of the Order of the Ministers of the Infirm was held in Rome from 14th to 17th March 2019. The theme of the meeting was: "What is Camillian Prophecy Today? Between the Past...the Present...and the Future. Prophecy...between the Samaritan Woman and the Samaritan".

Addressing the gathering, the Superior General Fr. Leocir Pessini said that the subject of prophecy was of great contemporary relevance and always posed new challenges for the consecrated life today. Referring to the invitation of Pope Francis to the General Superiors, he emphasized the prophetic



characteristic of consecrated life. Pope had said, "evangelical radicalism is not exclusive to religious; it is required of everyone. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way."

The meeting consisted of group discussions and sharing based on various questions regarding our past, present and future. With an objective of looking at the past with gratitude, the members of the gathering reflected upon three fundamental elements such as values, realities and challenges, that

were prophetic signs during their particular historical epochs and which continue to have resonance in our contemporary lives. Reflections were also made on how to live the present with passion and to embrace the future with hope, identifying strategies for the Order for the next six-year period with regard to formation, community life, ministry and pastoral care. This was in line with preparing for the forthcoming General Chapter that will begin on May 2, 2020 in Milan.

## COVER STORY

# Tenderness of God

## Listen to the sufferings of humanity: Pope Francis tells Camillians



Pope Francis greets the Camillian Family. Photo credit: L'Osservatore Romano

Pope Francis has invited the Camillians to listen to one another, to the Holy Spirit, and "to the many forms of suffering and poverty of humanity today." Pope was speaking during a private audience to the Camillian Charismatic Family in Vatican on March 18, 2019.

Pope Francis emphasized that listening is the key to sharing the charism of assisting the sick and the poor. "In this way", Pope said, "you will shine with ever-new light, and many young people from all over the world will feel drawn to it, and join you in continuing to bear witness to the tenderness of God". Referring to the Camillian charism he said, "When sickness comes and upsets our lives, we need a brother or sister beside us", someone who is "compassionate and

competent, and who consoles and supports us".

The Pope praised the Members of the Camillian Charismatic Family for living their mission "in an exemplary way" by "assisting the sick, especially the poorest, in their bodily and spiritual needs, and teaching others the best way to serve them, for the benefit of the Church and of humanity". He said that all charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are meant to be shared with others. He continued, "Over the years, you have endeavoured to incarnate your charism faithfully, translating it into a multiplicity of apostolic works and pastoral service for the benefit of suffering humanity throughout the world".

The Pope said that the original mission and charism of Saint





Pope Francis with the Camillian family. Photo credit: L'Osservatore Romano

**“ The two women’s congregations that arose in the 19th century and the secular institutes founded in the last century have given completeness to the expression of the charism of mercy towards the sick, enriching it with the markedly feminine qualities of love and care.**

Camillus is today reflected in a “charismatic family”, composed of religious, secular consecrated persons and laity. “At the centre remains the original charism, as a perennial source of light and inspiration, which is understood and embodied dynamically in different forms”. The Pope reminded Camillians how Saint Camillus de Lellis asked his first religious communities to serve the sick “with the affection that a loving mother usually has for her only sick child”. He pointed out that the two women’s congregations that arose in the 19th century and the secular institutes founded in the last century “have given completeness to the expression of the charism of mercy towards the sick, enriching it with the markedly feminine qualities of love and care”.

On the occasion of the papal audience, the Superior General of the Camillians Fr. Leocir Pessini, in his address to the Pope,



Pope Francis with the Provincial. Photo credit: L'Osservatore Romano

acknowledged that the messages of the Pope for the Year of Consecrated Life (2015) and for the great Jubilee of Mercy (2015-2016). He said that Camillians have been led by gentle persuasion to be more united and to look with ever greater creativity for new pathways of cooperation and spiritual and ministerial growth. He continued: “Through this ‘being together’ we have sought to value certain objectives: our ongoing formation, the creation of a providential opportunity to know each other, the celebration of our faith, and the study of concrete projects to journey, work and support each other together”.

Fr. Pessini pointed out that Camillians are “animated by a passion for an effective evangelisation of the world of health through care for sick people in order to continue to be witnesses to the concern and mercy of God, above all in the fringes of the world, and to continue to support and make better the Samaritan healing of those who wounded, frail and tired”.

Camillian Charismatic Family members, constitute eight expressions of the Camillian charism. The Family consists of: The Order of the Ministers of the Infirm (Camillians); The Daughters of St. Camillus; The women ministers of the sick of St. Camillus; The Handmaidens of the Incarnation; The Women Missionaries of the Sick – Christ our Hope; Stella Maris; Kamillianischen Schwestern – the Camillian Sisters; and the Lay Camillian Family.

The theme of the meeting was: What is Camillian Prophecy Today? Between the Past...the Present...and the Future. Prophecy...between the Samaritan Woman and the Samaritan.



## CADIS Emergency Fund 25 Campaign

By Aristelo Miranda MI

**On May 25, 2019, once again we will be celebrating the feast of the Camillian Martyrs of Charity. On this day we are encouraged to remember, to celebrate and to imitate the authentic witnessing to the merciful love of Christ in an accurate, relevant and meaningful way before the sick and most vulnerable. As a sign of our witnessing and fidelity to our charism of mercy, CADIS has responded to six emergency appeals in Asia beginning at the second half of 2018.**

**B**etween 1994 and 2013, the record shows a total of 6,873 natural disasters worldwide, which claimed 1.35 million lives or almost 68,000 lives on average each year. In addition, 218 million people were affected by natural disasters on average per annum during this 20-year period. On average, more than three times as many people died per disaster in low-income countries (332 deaths) than in high-income nations (105 deaths). This disproportionate burden of the impact of natural disasters in lower-income countries than in high-income countries is a gross situation of injustice. (Cf. Reliefweb). The high incidence of suffering is borne by the poorest of the poor. Here, the fourth vow of the Camillian is challenged and called forth.

The 25 symbolizes the date of the feast of the Martyrs of Charity and the birth of St. Camillus de Lellis. This will help us to remind ourselves of this significant event in the history of the Order. Your participation is much more important than the amount you want to contribute because we believe that you can truly make a difference in the lives of these persons affected by disasters. Join us and help us to mobilize others.

### Mechanics of the campaign

1. Each Camillian religious is encouraged to participate this campaign by contributing at least USD 25.00 every year to the CADIS emergency fund.
2. The \$25 can be collected from your allowance, a donation from friends, benefactors, relatives, family members, extra dollars after your travels abroad, coins that you might have kept in a bottle, etc.
- a. If your ministry is in a parish, then you may organize a special collection for the emergency fund every May 25.

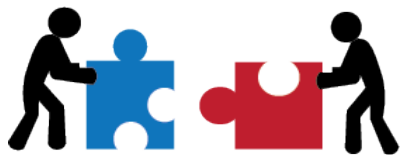
- b. If your ministry is in a hospital, then you may organize a special collection during your masses or organize a fundraising activity with the personnel.
- c. If your ministry is in the administration of a hospital or nursing home, then you may organize a fundraising activity with your personnel, patients, and residents.
- d. If your ministry is in the formation, then you may mobilize your seminarians to organize a fundraising activity.
- e. If your ministry is in the school/university then you can mobilize activity in the campus, get students involve and inform them of the thousand ways of participating this initiative.
3. All collection will be submitted to the Provincial or Delegation office. If the respective Province or Delegation has an existing CADIS or CTF organization, then the collection will be distributed in this manner: 50% (CADIS International) and 50% (CADIS/CTF national).
4. All collection will be submitted to the office on or before July 14, the feast of St. Camillus. Then the economo will forward it to CADIS International.

### What can the \$25 usd do?

1. The \$25 can help fund the travel and logistic support of the CADIS staff to organize a quick emergency response when a disaster occurs.
2. The \$25 can buy the basic needs (food, water, and medicines) of the people affected by the disaster at least during the first month of the disaster.
3. The \$25 can support the travel expenses of the medical team to be dispatched during an emergency.
4. The \$25 can give access to a communication line for those who are affected by disasters.



# Building Homes of Love and Unity



By Eanthumkal Bobin MI & Madhu MI

Annual General Gathering and fraternity day was held on 2nd and 3rd February at Upasana, St. Camillus Study House, Bengaluru. The theme of the gathering was “Building Homes of Love, Joy and Unity”. The gathering began with a prayer led by Anickattuvalil Teji and Eanthumkal Bobin. After the prayer, there was the election of secretary for the gathering. Three names were proposed: Vellachira Johnson, Nakkuzhikkatt Jofree and Bobin. And Bobin was elected the secretary for the gathering. There was also a voting for the moderators for the gathering and five names were proposed: In-chodikkaran Joy, Johnson, Pattathil Lijo, Mathew Perumpil and Madhu. Madhu and Joy were elected moderators. Moderators and secretary together functioned as the drafting committee.

After the lighting of the lamp, Eronimoose William introduced the speaker for the first session, Dr. Kurian Kachapilly CMI. Quoting many articles about community life from the Camillian Constitution, he spoke about community life and its challenges in the current world. The second session was engaged by Dr. Olinda Timms. She spoke in detail about the orientation on catholic ethical and healthcare directives for India. She also explained about professional-patient relationship, beginning of life, care for dying, forming new partnerships and collaboration.

Baby Ellickal presented the state of the St. Camillus Province, India. He made a discourse on how to build homes of love and unity. He highlighted the importance of vocation promotion, formation, formation of formators, ongoing formation, social media influence, professional training, camillian charism, future

of the province, the current ministries, collaborative ministry, mission, and financial administration. He also brought certain concrete proposals and strategic plans for the reflections in the group.

There were discussions in groups, and secretaries of each group presented to the assembly the summary of the discussions. Bijoy Kuliraniyil presented the report of financial administration. He presented the financial status of the province, including challenges and future plans.

The Holy Eucharistic celebration was presided by Mathew Perumpil as he celebrated his silver jubilee of his ordination. Ellickal Baby appreciated him for his great service and commitment in the Order. During the felicitation and cultural evening, novices and other confreres performed many items of entertainment.

The fraternity day (February 3) began with morning prayer and the holy Eucharist presided by Vellachira Johnson. After the various entertainment activities, there was a session on healthy living and exercise. Dr.Gladson spoke about the importance of health and personal physical care. He taught some stretching exercises.

Concluding of general gathering began with an evaluation of the whole event. After the remarks given by Baby Ellickal, a recapping of the program was done by Bacil through a video presentation.



Participants of the general gathering

## A man of intense passion for God and humanity...

By Thomas Kidangan \*

The Indian province felicitated Perumpil Mathew, as he celebrates the silver jubilee of his priestly ordination. The provincial Baby Ellickal acknowledged the services that Mathew rendered to the Province, during his term as Provincial Delegate and appreciated him for his great service and commitment in the Order.

He said, “Fr. Mathew is a man of commitment.....a person who has a strong sense of responsibility, a person of an intense passion for others, an intense passion for God and humanity.....a person who is multi-talented, multi-faceted and multi gifted; he is a person who loves his religious vocation and values his religious consecration and thus he lives out his life meaningfully, credibly and authentically without any compromise”.

After the Eucharistic celebration, there was felicitation and cultural evening. Biju Kizhukkarakkatt, the master of the ceremony, presented the service history



The Provincial felicitates Fr. Mathew Perumpil on his Sacerdotal silver jubilee

of Fr. Mathew. The gathering gave him sacerdotal jubilee wishes. The Provincial honored him with a shawl and a memento. During the felicitation ceremony, Joy Inchodikkaran shared his experience with Mathew Perumpil. During

the cultural evening, novices performed a skit and dance. Some confreres also participated in the entertainment programme.

*\*Thomas Kidangan is a temporary professed member of the Indian province.*

## Formators’ meeting held

By Biju Ilenjikkal MI

A meeting of the formators of the province was held at Upasana, Bengaluru on March 4-5, 2019.

During the meeting, annual reports of the candidates, regents, novices and the temporary professed were presented at the meeting by respective formators. Suggestions were made by the provincial regarding the correct usage of terms in the written reports.

After the presentations of the reports, common discussions and sharing were held. One of the concerns raised was the pressing need to prepare more confreres for formation, which in fact, was not feasible at the

moment. The Provincial shared his thoughts on formation, formators and the writing of reports. He also spoke about the role model of formators. “Formation means what a formator does, what a formator says and what a formator is”, he noted. He mentioned about the plan of shifting novitiate to Upasana, and on the North East mission. He informed that Patrick Nayak is trying to complete all the legal formalities.

Pattathil Lijo explained the program of temporary professed members and philosophers during holidays. He informed that they would help for the vocation promotion activities after the holidays.





## Celebrating the healing mercy of God

By Mathew Perumpil, MI

**The theme of this year's celebration was "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give" (Mt 10, 8) to emphasize the dimension of gratuity, especially towards the poorest and excluded, including sick people, in light of the experience of St. Teresa of Calcutta**

The Celebration of the World day of the Sick, instituted by Pope Saint John Paul II is a special moment for the Camillians in the World to join the Universal Church celebrating the healing mercy of God, especially given to us as a mandate through our Charism of serving the sick. This year Camillians in India were overjoyed to celebrate the event in our mother land in the City of Joy where Mother Teresa, the modern day St. Camillus became an icon of charity to the sick. The Holy Father Pope Francis took a special interest to ask Indian Bishop's Conference and the Archdiocese of Calcutta to host the event which is celebrated on February 11th, the Feast of our Lady of Lourdes.

As the Secretary of the CBCI Health Office it was my privilege and honour to organize the event in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Calcutta. The celebration brought all health care ministries of Church in India along with representatives of Asian countries and Vatican officials. The Vatican team was led by Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery of Integral Human Development. His Eminence Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, Archbishop of Dhaka was the Special Envoy of the Holy Father. The theme of this year's celebration was "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give" (Mt 10, 8), to emphasize the dimension of gratuity, especially towards the poorest and excluded, including sick people, in light of the experience of St. Teresa of Calcutta.



Camillian participants in the celebration of the World Day of Sick in Kolkata

The event was celebrated in three days. On the first day we reflected and studied on the mandate of the Church to continue the healing mission of Jesus in the world today. The highlight of the day was the various ways Church in India was involved in caring for the sick, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised sick. Various models were presented. Bro. Madhu presented the story of Camillians in India in caring for the HIV infected adults and children for the past two decades with his own personal journey of Camillian vocation and charism. The Second day we visited various care centres in Kolkata including Mother Teresa homes for the poor and abandoned sick. Arnaldo Pangrazzi MI gave an inspiring session to the Bishops and leaders of Catholic healthcare in Asia

and invited them to organize the health care mission of the Church in a serious manner starting from their dioceses. The third day was the World Day of the Sick which we celebrated in the acclaimed Shrine of our Lady of Bandel. The Solemn Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Cardinal Patrick Rosario, the Special Envoy of Holy Father. Celebration of the Anointing of the Sick was integrated in the Eucharist.

The XXVIIth World Day of the Sick also brought together Camillians in Asia. Aris Miranda MI, the General Councilor for Ministry and representing Philippines, Fr. Rocho and his confreres from Thailand and Camillians from India reminded the Asian World our leading role in the Healing ministry of the Church.

## MINISTRY

## Snehasadan conferred Sandesha Award 2019

By Teji Anickattuvayalil MI

The prestigious Sandesha Award was conferred to Snehasadan, Mangaluru, in a ceremony held on Tuesday, 22 January 2019 at 5.30 pm at Sandesha Premises, with Rev Dr Henry D Souza, Bishop of Ballari diocese and president of Sandesha Foundation, presiding over the function, and Rev Dr Peter Paul Saldanha, Bishop of Mangaluru Diocese and trustee of Sandesha Foundation, as the guest of honour. Other dignitaries on the dais were: renowned Kannada writer, Na D'Souza, and Roy Castelino, former president of Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy, and Trustee of Sandesha.

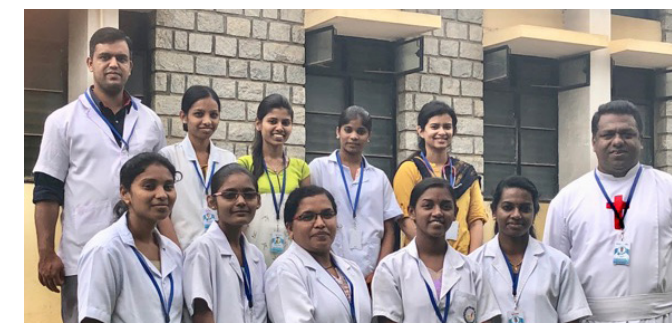
In his welcome address, the director of Sandesha Foundation Fr. Nelson Prakash D'Almeida, said, "SANDESHA was born on November 26, 1991, with the main goal of fostering a value-based society by promoting universal values of love and harmony among people of different faiths, customs and traditions. This temple of arts believes that at a deeper level there is true unity in all arts and they inspire communion of all.

Sandesha Special Recognition Award founded by Founder Trustees of Sandesha Foundation is given to Snehasadan, HIV/AIDS care and rehabilitation Centre, Mangaluru. Teji Anickattuvayalil MI, Director, was presented with an honorary trophy, certificate, citation, shawl, fruit bowl and honorarium of Rs 25000. The citation of Snehasadan was read by writer Daya Victor Lobo, Mangaluru. Shiju Joseph MI, Administrator of Snehasadan and a few of the staff were present for the entire function.

Snehasadan, by now have treated 3500 patients from all walks of life. Now, there are 38 Children and 12 Adults who are under the care at Centre and many out-patients in the extended support continue to receive the care. We at Snehasadan feel that the people of Mangaluru has embraced us and our mission, as the Jury has selected us and recognized our service for this Karnataka State Level award.

## Snehadaan enters a new phase

Snehadaan has entered a new phase of its mission which is palliative care, enabling the centre to admit more patients and engaging ourselves in an effective manner. Snehadaan is offering its service in the area of medical care, nursing care, counselling care, physiotherapy, nutritional care, spiritual care, geriatric care, and palliative care. It has the capacity of admitting 50 inmates. There is a resident doctor and visiting doctors from St. John's hospital. Dr. Rakesh visits the patients on every Tuesday. We have a nursing team with care givers and other supportive staff. New palliative care program is to make the centre self-sufficient, so that we could be of more effective ministers of sick. We have moved from exclusive care of HIV to care for everyone who needs healthcare. There are still requests from HIV patients for counselling, OPD consultation and short term admission. And snehadaan is open to it as it is moving towards the need of the time without compromising care for the sick and the poor.



## Ashwini's story

By Joy Inchody MI

Camillian Ministry to the Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) received international attention as one of our girls participated in the Jerusalem Marathon 10K event. Ashwini is under Camillian care ever since she lost her parents at a young age, in 2009. Although she struggled with her health and studies, running regularly and exercising consistently helped her to regain her health and confidence in life. After completing her 10th, Ashwini began to work in our care centre for the multiple challenged children in Medchal. She is currently writing her 12th exam and is very happy and proud to be the first girl under our care to participate in an International Running event. A great testimony of Camillian mission to the sick to bring them back to healthy and confident lives.





By Benny Chengalikkavil MI

It was on December 1, 2018 that we officially moved out of the CHAI campus to our own campus which we initially named as ST. CAMILLUS GRAMAM. But regarding this name, there was an objection from the village and the villagers started calling our center as Ashram, hence comes the change of name and it is now ST. CAMILLUS ASHRAM.

There are different ministry endeavors under St. Camillus Ashram. They are:

**DAIVALAYAM:** This is a home for children (boys) with multiple disabilities, which is the new initiative of St. Camillus Province. The home has the facility to accommodate 30 children and as of now we have 18 children. Most of these children are with multiple disabilities and out of these six are blind along with mental and physical disability. All the children are referred through Child Welfare Committee. Some children go to a special school run by St. Ann's sisters. Most of these children are dependent and they need 24x7 care. It is a challenging camillian ministry.

**SAN CAMILLO OCCUPATIONAL REHABILITATION CENTRE:** This is where we have plastic molding machine and it is aimed at rehabilitating the poor and orphans by providing them job. There are 10 people working here, some of whom are from the village and some are HIV infected. It also generates some income for the activities of St. Camillus Ashram.

**SNEHAKIRAN** is a destitute home for the health compromised. We hope to continue our ministry to HIV/AIDS through this house which is yet to be actualized. It will also accommodate the destitute whose health is compromised due to various reasons.

St. Camillus Ashram has a campus measuring nearly 3 acres and DAIVALAYAM, SAN CAMILLO OCCUPATIONAL REHABILITATION CENTRE, SNEHAKIRAN and ST. CAMILLUS HOME which is the community house are all situated in the same campus. ASHRAM means is a spiritual hermitage or a monastery in Indian religions. So the St. Camillus Ashram is a spiritual hermitage of care for the sick and poor in this new state of India, Telangana.



## A year at Snehatheeram

By Biju Kizhukkarakkatt MI

As usual Snehatheeram has been actively involved in its ministry through its varied branches of service such as the care and support centre, NANMA, Lay Camillian Family and Sneha Counselling Centre.

### Snehatheeram: The care and support centre

The year 2018 witnessed an increased inflow of patients. We have had more than 30 new admissions, 6 deaths and 18 patients were discharged. It includes mainly HIV positives, 2 cancer patients and 3 TB patients and 1 diabetic.

Then the floods hit us on August 15, 2018. We had to evacuate ourselves in search of a safer place. We had 7 in-patients under our care as the water came in. On return we lost one of them as she succumbed to her AIDS induced disease aggravated by the trauma suffered from the flood.

After the floods, Snehatheeram helped the flood-hit people around the institution to rebuild. Our team went around cleaning up places, distributed essential medicine and food materials, and supplied 140 food kits to the families who were part of the residents' association at Snehatheeram's locality.

### Nanma: St. Camillus Out-reach Care

Nanma is an outreach ministry initiative of Snehatheeram, St. Camillus Care Home. The program was kick-started in 2014, to reach out to the most neglected and/or most needy sick with special preference for the PLHIV. Through Nanma we aim at reaching out to the sick - wherever they are - the preferential compassion of Christ for them.

### Nanma Activity Report - 2018

Activity	Frequency
House visit & counselling	225
Medical support	324
Food kit distribution	170
Ambulance service	23
Auto service	15
Car service	10
Blood donors	65
Blood recipients	48
Hair donation camp	14
Hair donors	1280
Wig recipients	22
Educational support	29
Support for house construction	2
Wheel chair	3
Water bed	2
Help for wedding	3
Fan for kidney patient	1
Stove	1
Self welfare programmes	2



Hair donation camp held at Snehatheeram, Aluva



The activities of Nanma are not limited to HIV patients alone but it is extended to all the persons who require our help. The staff of Snehatheeram render their help to HIV patients, cancer patients and other sick people who are in need. They visit their homes and give counselling, medical help, connect them to doctors and health workers and coordinate the care. When they are in need of physical care and there aren't anyone to do that, they are shifted to Snehatheeram and in-patient treatment is given to them.

#### The Lay Camillian Family:

The Lay Camillian family has been very active in Snehatheeram. Currently it has a membership of fifty. LCF engages in activities like hospital visits every Sunday and on special request, counselling, home visit of patients and *annadaanam* (providing food for people living on street) to name a few.

#### Sneha Counselling centre:

SCC is a new venture of Snehatheeram and it began its service on 11th August 2017, when it was blessed and dedicated to the mental wellbeing of people at large by the Provincial during his pastoral visitation to Snehatheeram. Ever since, it has catered to the wellbeing of individuals and families. Currently, it offers an average of 20 hours of individual therapy and 7 hours of couple/family therapy per month and has clientele from all walks of life.

#### Awards received

The Nanma program has been recognized recently through an award. Ms. Zeenath Ashraf, the field-officer of Nanma was recently awarded the Prof. Vyrelil Karunakara Menon Memorial Award by Thripunithura-based Abhayam. The Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council, Amala Hospital in Thrissur and the Elamkunnappuzha grama panchayat have also feted her. Apart from this, various articles on the service of Snehatheeram has appeared in few dailies published in Kerala from time to time.



Snehatheeram-Nanma programme receives an award

#### Services rendered by LCF in 2018

Service	Frequency
Hospital visits	57 times
House visit	50 houses
Ambulance service	66
Food supply	48 times/225 packets each
By-stander service	3
Medical aid	80 people
Help for lab test and scanning	15 people
Blood donation	5
Service during flood	20 families

## Falling in love with God

By Sunil Pattakudilil MI

**The annual retreat has made a difference in our understanding of God's infinite love for us and all his creation.**



Participants of annual retreat with the retreat guide

The second batch annual retreat was held on a hill station named Sirumalai in Tamil Nadu, from 13th to 18th January, 2019. Fr. Shaji, a Capuchin priest has led us through prayers during those days, and to fall more deeply in love with God. Twelve Camillian religious participated in the retreat.

This retreat was truly a unique experience for us. We have certainly gained a more personal relationship with Jesus through the highly personal style of the guided reflections. The resources were consistently rich and insightful, and reading and reflecting on them offered frequent points of connection with themes in our lives. This has been a very enlightening and enriching experience for us. The retreat provided us with a way to look for Jesus in a more personal way, and that has made a tremendous difference in how we view life and the type of person we want to be. It has made a difference in our understanding of God's infinite love for us and all his creation. We have received many graces of understanding through scripture readings and applying the Word to our everyday life. It certainly has enabled our relationship with Christ to grow deeper.

#### ARTICLE

## Cultural competency for effective spiritual care

**IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion** provided a platform to display SCT's mode of health promotion of HIV infected children and highlight contributions made by Camillians in India to a global audience.

By Antony Kunnel MI

The Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand (HPF) in association with the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) hosted the 23rd World Conference on Health Promotion in Rotorua, New Zealand, from 7 - 11 April 2019.

The World Conference on Health Promotion is an annual event showcasing speakers from across the globe. The World Conferences on Health Promotion are the most significant occasions that bring together those dedicated to health promotion from across the globe. For newcomers and old timers alike, these meetings every three years define the "state of the art" in health promotion practice, research, and theory. For the past 30 years, health promotion has developed a comprehensive, relevant knowledge base and successful strategies to address a broad range of determinants of health. Based on the knowledge and experience gained through decades of action, the 23rd IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion invited health promoters of all horizons (researchers, practitioners and decision makers) and their partners from all relevant sectors to explore how health promotion contributes to health and wellbeing. It also represents a unique platform to showcase organization's innovation and excellence in health promotion to a global audience.

At this year's conference held in New Zealand, there was a strong focus on Waiora: Promoting Planetary Health and Sustainable Development. It is based on the traditional Maori concept of



Antony Kunnel during the conference held in New Zealand

'Waiora'. Maori are the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, New Zealand. Translated literally as 'healing and healthy waters', Waiora refers to the interconnectedness of our physical and spiritual worlds with our environment. As a theme, Waiora reflects the dependence of our own health on that of our planet, and recognises the major global challenge of balancing ongoing development with environmental stewardship.

#### Camillian Contribution to Health Promotion

Camillians (Sneha Charitable Trust) in India has carried out momentous Health Promotion activities and coordinates care ad support of orphan vulnerable children. The World Conference on Health Promotion in New Zealand provided

a platform to display SCT's mode of health promotion of HIV infected children and highlight contributions made by Camillians in India to a global audience.

I presented a poster paper titled; Uplifting Spiritual Health: Understanding Cultural Competency for Effective Spiritual Care of HIV infected Children- a Field Study Report. The paper illustrates the need for culturally competent spiritual care of children with HIV infection as each child comes from a different family background, a particular religious upbringing and a unique set of life experiences. This paper will orient primarily professional spiritual caregivers to be open to the spirituality of "others" for when illness interrupts the life of a child with Human



Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection, the process of spiritual growth may be accelerated or it may be diminished. Hence, it is inevitable to provide culturally competent care.

This paper illustrates contextually integrated and culturally competent spiritual care practices in the community dealing with the spiritual needs of children with life-threatening and life-limiting conditions. Highlighting spiritual care components employed in Snehasadan and Sneha Care Home for children living with HIV, the paper uncovers a synthesis of a powerful plan of Culturally Competent spiritual development strategies of helping HIV infected children develop spiritually.

### Background/Objectives

- To demonstrate the contextually incorporated best practice of Culturally Competent Spiritual Care with HIV infected children in a multi-cultural/faith context.
- To understand how children conceptualise spirituality and their experiences that emerge while dealing with HIV infection and its treatment.
- To enumerate how Culturally Competent team of Snehasadan and Sneha Care Home nurture and ignite

the flame of Children's Spirituality.

### Methods

- Author analysed the Culturally Competent spiritual activities and programmes in two of its HIV infected Children Care Homes. (Sneha Care Home- Bangalore, India and Snehasadan- Mangalore, India).
- Thematically reviewed related literature and explored the place of spirituality in the HIV infected children.
- Presents case study examples of Culturally Competent spirituality related activities specific to Snehasadan and Sneha Care Home.
- The paper examines 'how' the awakening of spiritual spark in each infected child has nurtured children spirituality.
- Finally, author confirms those Culturally Competent spirituality related activities in Snehasadan and Sneha Care Home as fostering and igniting spiritual sparks.

### Results

- Snehasadan and Sneha Care Home envisage that igniting the flame of our Children's spirituality can support and nurture our children and their future.
- Culturally Competent Interventions to spiritual development have been found

to improve health outcomes of children and to keep the flame of spirituality lit.

- The paper affirms the type of Culturally Competent environment vital for children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
- The paper proposes appropriate Culturally Competent context the health care providers must create for children infected with HIV to help them recover wholeness.

### Discussion

The paper in nutshell discusses Culturally Competent Strategies that see the child as part of a family network, not as an isolated patient. It guarantees to see the spiritual health to be considered as an important element of health. Therefore, Cultural Competence defined as the ability of providers and organizations to effectively deliver health care services that meet the social, cultural, and linguistic needs of patients, can help improve health outcomes and quality of care, and can contribute to the elimination of racial and ethnic health disparities. In order to increase the cultural competence of the health care delivery system, health professionals must be taught how to provide services in a culturally competent manner.

## At the Altar of Mercy

**St. Camillus Province rejoices over the priestly ordination of Christopher, the first Camillian from Jharkhand**

By Sojan Koonanickal MI

Christopher Surin was ordained a priest, on 17th February, 2019 at Nitya Sahayak Matha Church, Kemtatoli, Basia, in the Diocese of Gumla. The Bishop of Gumla, Rev. Dr. Paul Lakra, presided over the celebrations and the Provincial Baby Ellickal MI along with Lijo Pattathil MI were the concelebrants. Parish Priest Fr. Pedro, other diocesan priests and many Camillian priests joined the Holy Eucharistic celebration. The parish witnessed an inflow of people from different parts of the society. For St. Camillus Province, India, it was yet another flower bloomed and is ready to witness the merciful love of Christ. The Province is enjoying its first fruit from Jharkhand, in the person of Fr. Christopher Surin. He celebrated his First Holy Mass in Salegutu village in the presence of the Provincial and many other priests.



## VID University exposure/ exchange program with SCT

By Jaison Narikuzhy MI



Sneha Charitable Trust was indeed privileged to host students from VID University, Norway in Snehadaan and Snehasadan. Sr. Benedetta, Head of Nursing Department, contacted Baby Ellickal MI who welcomed the idea of exchange program from the university. Later Sr. Benedetta and Mr. Lasse, the Supervisor visited the centres in India and exchanged ideas with the Provincial and the team.

The University was content about the charitable works done by Camillians in India through Sneha Charitable Trust and entered into Memorandum of Understanding with the administration for three years. And so they sent their final year nursing students for internship in the beginning of January; four of them in Snehadaan and three students in Snehasadan. They will continue to send their final year BSC Nursing students to India in our centres for the coming years. They will stay in our centres and practice nursing with our patients. They will also choose Snehagram for internship in the next year.

Students who came to Snehadaan were Joachim, Chris, Veronica and Mariam. They were very much involved in the nursing care of the inmates. They also guided the staff regarding hygiene and health. Some awareness classes were organized for the inmates too. Staff were given directions regarding the patient care. They expressed their gratitude to us for this fantastic opportunity to be here in our centres. Johanne, Embla and Eira were in Snehasadan, Mangalore, for seven weeks. They were involved mostly in the care of children. They could involve and interact with the children. They trained the children regarding discipline, health and hygiene. Classes and workshops were organized for the staff too.

## Meeting of the economic commission held


By Bijoy Kuliraniyil MI

The economic commission gathered to discuss and scrutinize the proposed budgets of the communities of St. Camillus Province for the year 2019-20 on 7th and 8th March 2019. All the members, namely, Joy Inchodikaran, Lijo Pattathil, Shiju Kureyakattil and Bijoy Kuliraniyil attended the meeting. The committee scrutinized the budgets of the communities and recommended the same for further discussion and approval of the Provincial and his Council. The commission also proposed certain policies for the better financial management of the communities of the Province, which will soon be made available for the reference of the communities. The commission also discussed the better utilization of our existing facilities and ways and means to reduce the financial burden on the Province. The commission also encourages each member of the Province to actively be involved in the fundraising campaign to sustain our ministry and formation. It also lauded the confreres abroad and in the formation communities and ministry centres who worked hard to raise large sum of funds in support of the various projects of the Province.

### NEWS BRIEF.....

- Tharappel Russel Jacob has left for Ireland for a new mission on January 31, 2019. He will work as a chaplain as well as pursue his doctoral studies in psychology.
- The Provincial Baby Ellickal MI, along with a few camillian confreres visited the community of the Sisters of the Ministers of the Infirm in Ranchi on February 18, 2019. The visit was in view of establishing collaboration with the Sisters in our ministry.
- Aristelo Miranda MI, the General Consultor, made his pastoral visit to St. Camillus province from 6 to 12 February, 2019.





“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning”. (Lam. 3: 22-23)

Photo: Chennattu Siby MI