



Dear Co-missionaries,

It is the season of Lent. Forty days given by the Church to prepare ourselves by sacrificing through prayer, alms giving and fasting for the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter. Sacrifice is a word not much talked about today. Yet it is a reality in our world today. Parents go out of their way to sacrifice for the good of their children. With rising prices, people need to make sacrifices by cutting cost to make ends meet. I can speak without hesitation of the many sacrifices our missionaries have to make in their mission posts due to the poor economic situations they find themselves and the political strifes they encounter in bringing the good news to the people they serve. In Madagascar where I served as a missionary there is a proverb that says, "Ao anaty ny mangirifiry dia misy mamy". Translated, "in suffering there is sweetness." In our Christian belief we cannot experience the resurrection without death to oneself. Christ himself manifested this by his death on the cross on Calvary and his resurrection from the tomb on the third day.

As we continue our Lenten journey, let us make a sacrifice by donating a mass intention. The missionaries will then celebrate a mass with your specific intention. Our sacrifice becomes a concrete penitential action for our own spiritual good and also for the good of the missionaries that we support. God bless you for your sacrifice, love and support of our missionaries in the mission lands.

*In Jesus Morais, MS*



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## A Call To Sacrifice



On February 14 of this year most people will be celebrating Valentine's Day and sending greeting cards of love to family and friends. It is also a day to remind us of our call as Christians to love one another as Christ has commanded us to do. On this day the Church begins the season of Lent. As the priest places the ashes on our heads he declares: "Repent and believe the good news."



We take more time for prayer, making acts of penance and giving of alms for the poor and needy. This leads us to open our hearts and to follow the Lord more closely.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has time and again stated that our Church is a missionary Church. This command was given by Jesus himself to his Apostles: "Go forth to all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The Catholic Church has continued this mission from the time of the apostles to this very day. It has not been without resistance, persecution and martyrdom over the ages. Yet the Church continues to evangelize and build up the Christian Communities even if it may be confronted by opposition.

In this season of Lent, we, as co-missionaries, could make a sacrifice and offer this period of repentance for our religious brothers and sisters facing persecution, imprisonment, martyrdom and civil unrest for having the courage to stand up and denounce the injustices inflicted upon the people they are sent to serve.

Currently, there are four mission countries that are suffering. Two are challenged with social injustice and the other two are faced with civil unrest due to poverty.

### **MYANMAR and INDIA: CHALLENGED WITH SOCIAL INJUSTICE**

Our fathers, brothers and sisters working in the country of Myanmar (former Burma) are under military rule that recently took over complete control of the country from a democratically elected government by a military coup.

This government looks upon the church with suspicion which makes for an unstable relationship between church and state.





# A Call To Sacrifice



As of today one La Salette Burmese priest was imprisoned for supporting those who speak out regarding the injustice they are experiencing in their country. I quote a letter from the Regional Superior



of Burma, Fr. William Phyo Wai, regarding his present situation: "Father Patrick is still in jail... Upon request of lawyers helping with his case, I have already got the recommendation and request letter from Cardinal Charles Bo and sent it to Generals in Naypyidaw. According to the lawyers it would take some time. I hope and pray it will help him out." The Regional Superior continues, "In the country, war between military and armed groups is

intensified day by day. Since the military is losing both its camps and soldiers every day, the military is trying to get people by force." There is also an update from the Regional Secretary, Fr. Brian Joseph, stating: Fr. Patrick is detained in Aye Thar Yar police station jail. In that police station, there are the faithful who bring him food daily. He is in good health... So, please continuously include him in your prayers."

As for India, the news states there is religious persecution for Catholics, Protestants and Evangelicals in the northern part of the country instigated by radical Hindus who have them arrested and even killed. I have been informed by the La Salette missionaries from India that in most state schools they are prohibited to teach the Christian religion. Also in

certain states of India anti-conversion laws have been put into place to prevent Hindus' from converting to another religion.



## HAITI and MOZAMBIQUE: FACING CIVIL UNREST DUE TO POVERTY

The La Salette mission in Haiti is served by three La Salette missionaries from the Island of Madagascar. The mission of Haiti has both good and sad news concerning our missionaries working there. The good news is that they have opened two parishes with a



Church and School. Last October, four Haitian men took their first vows as La Salette missionaries with the hope of establishing a La Salette Haitian community in the future.

The sad news is due to the extreme poverty on the island, armed gangs have taken control of most of the country. Here is the current situation: Travel has become dangerous because of the constant road blocks encountered; religious priests and sisters have been kidnapped for ransom; the Sisters of St. Francis de Sales serving from Madagascar had their mission ransacked and all the food supplies used for the school canteen stolen; a religious sister from France who worked with the street children for over twenty years was murdered on the street while going to serve the children.



In Mozambique the La Salette Missionaries from Brazil and Angola have taken over a mission post, Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Mieze, offered to them by the Bishop of the Diocese of Pemba, in Cabo Delgado. Due to the civil war in the rural area, the Bishop called them to relocate to a more



secure area near to the seat of the Diocese. At the present time the fathers and brothers are safe but are heart broken by having to leave behind the people they had been sent to serve.

We thank God that our La Salette missionaries up to now have remained unharmed. We continue to ask our heavenly Mother, Our Lady of La Salette, to protect them.

At the beginning of this newsletter I have asked all of us who love and support the missions to offer this season of Lent for our La Salette missionaries where it is difficult to bring the good news of salvation to God's people. May we heed the call of our Mother Mary at La Salette: "BE NOT AFRAID". Be not afraid to make a sacrifice for our missionaries by offering up these forty days. Your prayers and sacrifice will help them endure and over-come the challenges met daily.

Have a faith filled Lenten season.

*Fr. Joseph Morais, MS.*



The La Salette Mission Center supports over 20 mission countries and chose to bring light to the chal-

lenges faced in Myanmar, India, Haiti, and Mozambique. Support our missionaries, make a sacrifice and donate a mass intention. Mail donations to Salette Mission Center at 4650 S. Broadway, St. Louis, MO 63111 or visit [www.lsmc.org](http://www.lsmc.org) and click donate. Make a note on your donation, "Mass Intentions Feb 2024". Thank you!

