THEME: “***Faith and Charity”***

**APRIL - 2021**

**PROCEDURE OF THE PRAYER SERVICE**

* Entrance hymn
* Introduction
* Bible reading
* Reflection
* Missionary to imitate
	+ His early life
	+ Ministry
	+ His characteristics
* Intercession
* Concluding prayer
* Final hymn

**ENTRANCE HYMN**

**Have thine own way Lord… (Pray Sing: Hymn No: 457)**

**INTRODUCTION**

Greetings dear friends in Christ Jesus, I warmly welcome you all for this missionary animation prayer service. We have come here again on this great day where we celebrate the galore of God’s mercy for all of us. Let us introspect, as God’s children do we reflect the mercy we receive from our Father unto the people whom we encounter in our day today life. Our faith in the living Christ ought to be extended to the people in need through our works of charity. Hence let us be inspired by the statement of St. Thomas “My Lord, My God” and live a renewed life in this season of Easter with the grace of the Resurrected Lord.

**BIBLE READING**: **JOHN 20: 19-31**

**REFLECTION:**

In today’s gospel we see St. Thomas confirming his faith in the Risen Lord through his exclamation “My Lord, My God”. Let us reflect on the life of late Bro. Xavier Singaraj who was the personification of faith to many around him and took it a step further with his works of charity. St. James says “What does it profit, my brethren if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can faith save him? So faith by itself if it has no works is dead.

Bro. Xavier Singaraj’s life manifested two virtues very vividly in his Salesian vocation. Wherever he was assigned, these two virtues always stood out. He was a man of deep faith and a great devotee of Our Lady Help of Christians. He made sure that those whom he met would be strengthened in their faith and devotion to Our Lady. Another outstanding virtue which he practiced was Charity. His love for the poor was well known. His charity knew no bounds. It was while he was in St.Thomas Hospital, Chetpet, N.A. Dist. that one day a poor student came to meet him in the hospital for help. In the process of giving him monetary help Bro. Xavier Singaraj passed away. What better manifestation can we give of his heart of charity? Truly his life was a simple manifestation of a life of Faith and Charity. Let us manifest our faith in the Risen Lord through our acts of charity.

**MISSIONARY FOR IMITATION**



**BRO. XAVIER SINGARAJ (1922-1978)**

Birthday: 16-02-1922 Nagapattinam

First Profession: 06-12-1944 Tirupattur

Died: 15-04-1978 Chetpet

**EARLY LIFE**

Xavier was born at Nagapattinam on 16-02-1922. His parents were Augustine and Salath Mary. He was baptized in the parish Church dedicated to St. Francis Xavier. It is alleged that St. Francis Xavier took shelter in the ancestral home of Xavier Singaraj when a group of Muslims tried to kill the foreign preacher of the Catholic Faith. When his pursuers had gone, Francis Xavier asked for a drink of water and then left. This incident explains the deep attachment of the family to St. Francis Xavier and his name.

In December 1922, when little Xavier was barely 10 months old, his parents went on a pilgrimage to Goa. During the voyage the baby fell seriously ill. Expecting the worst, the grief-stricken parents even got a small coffin ready. On landing in Goa they rushed to the church of St. Francis and laid the inert little body on the floor near the Grotto and prayed. After some time the baby started smiling and playing about.

Later, Xavier joined the community of Sacred Heart Brothers of Palayamkottai, but returned after a month and was admitted in St. Joseph's High School where he bagged numerous prizes for good conduct. In 1942, Xavier wanted to join the seminary, but his father was firm and refused permission for anything of the sort. The youngster, who never before had opposed his parents' wishes, was equally stubborn and uttered these memorable words, which were reported by his brother, "Nobody can prevent me from going to the Seminary. To go there, I do not need your permission. I have done my duty of informing you. Goodbye! I am leaving immediately".

At first he went to Vellore and from there later he was sent to the novitiate at Tirupattur in the beginning of December 1943. He received the Coadjutor's medal from the hands of Archbishop Louis Mathias and made the religious profession on 6 December 1944. Xavier was a peace-loving and good natured person and never had any quarrel with anybody. He always gave in to others, in order to preserve a fraternal and friendly relationship with all. During the weekly walks he always did some little apostolate in his own way, talking to poor boys and saying a few consoling words to the poor people he met on the way.

**MINISTRY**

Most of his life, Brother Xavier worked as a 'factotum': in charge of the kitchen and doing all sorts of other humble and silent service in the communities to which his superiors sent him. For nine years, from 1946 to 1955, he worked at Don Bosco Vellore and for ten years he was in different communities in Madras: St. Mary's, St. Bede's, St. Joseph's. For three years he was at Tirupattur Salesian House and for two at Bangalore Kristu Jyoti College. From 1970 to 1974 Brother Xavier worked in Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee. In 1972 he was chosen to represent the province at the beatification of Don Michael Rua in Rome and on that occasion he spent three months in Italy. On his return to India he was sent to St. Bede's Madras in 1975 and remained there till his death.

During the last years of his life he was troubled by high blood pressure and diabetes. In April 1978, he had a medical check-up in St. Thomas Hospital Chetpet and apparently his health did not cause any concern. But on 15 April, he died all of a sudden. His funeral took place the next day at Tirupattur.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF BRO. XAVIER SINGARAJ (1922-1978)**

**1. Apostolic Minded:** On Sundays he took great care to see that all the domestic staff of the house had ample opportunity to frequent the sacraments. Every evening he would gather them before a picture or statue of our Blessed Mother and recite the rosary with them and give them the traditional good-night talk. He would plead with the superiors to improve their working conditions.

**2. Attachment to Don Bosco and the Congregation:** Brother Xavier was deeply attached to his vocation. He had the greatest confidence in his rector, whom he considered the representative of Don Bosco.

**3. Devotion to Our Lady:** Even as a youngster at home he loved to decorate the picture of Our Lady. While at St. Bede's he went every Saturday to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Health at Besantnagar.

**4. Hard Work:** In spite of the advice of his superiors to take it easy because of his delicate health, he would not stop his relentless activity. He did everything with a spirit of sacrifice, for the love of God and thus sanctified his hidden and humble life.

**INTERCESSIONS**

**R**/- **Lord, be merciful to us.**

1. For the Pope, Bishops, clergy and religious that as leaders in the Church they may put into practice the words of Jesus, “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy, we pray. **R†**
2. For those who doubt about matters concerning faith, that their doubts may not lead to laxity or abandonment of faith but through prayer and reflection they may return to an ever-deeper faith, we pray. **R†**
3. For the poor and economically backward classes of people, that the believing community may come to their assistance as the early Christian did, we pray. **R†**
4. That the peace which the risen Christ offers us may dwell in our hearts, homes, parishes, and the world at large, we pray. **R†**
5. For all of us here present that the celebration of the Divine Mercy Sunday may strengthen our resolve to be merciful towards our brothers and sisters, we pray. **R†**

**CONCLUDING PRAYER**

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion - inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**FINAL HYMN**

**To Follow the Lord … (Pray Sing: Hymn No: 410)**