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Fr. Antony/St Mary's EASTER LETTER – 2009

Dear loving friends and Benefactor,

Easter Greetings from Fr. Antony Xavier and all the students, staff of all our Schools, Colleges and other Institutions. Here all of us keep good health and we pray and hope that you are all doing fine.

I received several letters from the sponsors of the children and other benefactors. There are **many sad news** which I immediately replied and consoled with them and pray for those who are not with us on earth, but are enjoying the beatific vision of our Blessed Lord and our Blessed Mother in Heaven. We have also received letters **full of good news**. We rejoice with them and congratulate them and pray God that He keeps them in the same mood.

There are some other benefactors who are new, though they are not supporting any child have contributed from their mite (need) for our institutions. My heart goes out to many of you who are not rich and yet you are so generous to send 10 or 15 Dollars a month to support your sponsored child. I come to know about your financial status through your letters to your sponsored child / children.

Here is a letter dated March 2, 2009 that a great benefactor is writing to us, "Her brother suffers of cancer of the throat". What is more painful to me, is **that benefactor writes, "I am trying to raise money to help with his medical bills** and still more she writes, "she rides her bike most of the time, in spite of the weather surrounded by snow and cold. I do not have a car. But I am not sorry".

Where else can I find this type of generosity? I am writing to this benefactor, "if she can support herself and her brother, that is enough. May I request her not to help us, because she may be generous, but it is hurting to know that she is giving much more than the widow's mite in the Holy Gospel. What a generous lady she is in spite of her pains, aches and suffering even poverty, she is generous to help a child 15 dollars a month!! May God give her consolation, be with her to support her and lead her in his close love! May the blessed Risen Lord Jesus bless her and help her brother recover as soon as possible. This is our prayer for her and her brother. Believe me, when such letters come, I read them to the children during the Mass and we all cry and **pray to God that these great mighty benefactors should be blessed by the Lord** and that he should now stand by them through his blessing all the days of their suffering and tears.

I am also writing about some other people, who have also written to their children sharing; "I have little money", but still I am sending 10 dollar to sponsor my child and in this season of Easter, I am sending 10 Dollars more that my child might buy 2 warm clothes. I read out this letter to the children and tell them their (benefactors) condition seems to be even worse than some of ours and yet they are so generous. **Because they are Christians** and because they are reading the Bible and because they want to follow the Lord's, example they are **sacrificing themselves** to help us. I ask the children "please pray every day and every time, you come to the church for prayer, for Rosary, for Mass and for all the other spiritual duties. Even during the day whisper a small prayer for these generous and loving benefactors". You may believe me, when I say; I read these types of letters, I go to the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, recite my breviary and cry to the Lord to bless these great souls who are so generous to help us in spite of their poverty.

Many of the sponsoring benefactors send some **extra money** during **Christmas, Easter,** or for the **birthday** of their sponsored child. A good majority of them ask me what was bought and given to the sponsored child or children. **Please remember the following lines always;** As soon as your extra money reach us, I call the particular child or children and I ask them just after the Mass, what he/she is badly in need of at this time. And I tell them that your sponsor has sent so many dollars for your Birthday or Christmas or Easter. What do you want me to buy for you? **invariably** they ask me to **buy** for them **a new set of uniform for the school**. They need some **money** for **school supplies** or to buy a book or to buy some other utensils that they are badly in need at that time of the money arriving for them. Then we buy them what they need and give them and they are happy. This really is helpful to them in the need and it also satisfies me and the staff, because what is the use of giving them something they do not need or would not wish to have? Some **benefactors send some things**. I am not against it. However, some of them are **lost** on the transit, some of them reach, but often times they are **smashed or broken to pieces** etc and in the terms of price, they have to spend quite a lot of money in U.S.A. and spend time to pack them and also for the postal stamp. But pitiably some times their wish can not be carried out, because what they send do not reach us or reach us but in bad shape which could not be used. **Please remember this paragraph** When you send some extra money for the children, the money is always spent for what they need. I do not ever spend a single cent of the poor children's money for our use.

May I humbly request you, not all, but a very very very few, say 3 or 4 benefactors a year send their **cheque for Help The Helpless here to me.** **Please remember we do not have an account in the name of Help the Helpless in India**. When you do not have that account, you cannot deposit the money in the bank in India. I think 1 or 2 benefactors send cheque for $10 or $5 in the **name of Fr. Antony Xavier in India**. I cannot deposit it also, because I do not have an account in the name of Fr. Antony Xavier. So I would beg you to remember to send all the cheques to the Help the Helpless in Minnesota. The Treasurer of the Help the Helpless, Mr. Joe Foht and Mrs. Kay Foht are so very conscious and pure that they do not retain or take away or spend even one cent for anything else. But they transfer the money immediately through the bank by wire to our bank in India and here too we have the tax exemption. So you can see how easily and how quickly and how safely all your money reach here. Thus your support or extra money is immediately transferred to India through the Banks and spent for the specific purposes.

Last year and this year has been a bad one **economically** for the mighty **country of U.S.A.** I really feel so bad for this great big country. At the same time, I feel bad, why should this country (U.S.A.) give billions and trillions of dollars to those people in other countries that are against Christians and the U.S.A.. It appears that the politicians have not learned any lessons of who are their friends. Let us pray for this generous country and also for all the Christian countries.

Some of our sponsors write to us, saying send a new picture of my child and send update. We have decided to send a picture of the child in the months of June or July, or August. Please be so kind as to not ask for updates and wait for the ones coming in summer. Please imagine how much we have grown and how much work have been multiplied and please consider my age 71. I am still working almost 18 hours a day and I become tired. The Lord has blessed me with a little better health now. If He maintains me at this state, I will continue and do my best to satisfy the children and the sponsors.

Those who are able to give us the email can expect reply, if it is really urgent as immediately as possible. But those who have not provided us with email address please give us your telephone number and what is your time zone that is New York time, Minnesota time or California time. I will call you and give reply to your letter or bear with us for sometimes to send reply by postal mail. Sometime some letters may not require reply. But whenever it is sad news or that needs immediate attention we do reply through the postal mail, if no email or telephone number is given. I request the **grandmas and grandpas** who do not have the facility of **e-mail or telephone number not to worry about it** and some write regretfully saying that they are not able to write often. I request you please do not worry about it. We do not expect you to take pains and spend money and write to us. We are so very grateful and pray that God bless you with good health and long life.

This is also an important matter. I request our Benefactors and sponsors to understand me that our children are **special children.** I mean they were unwanted or abandoned or really in bad health condition or no where to go.

Whenever I find such ones on the streets or begging anywhere etc. I bring them and admit them in our schools and make them study. Fortunately because of **our full attention to their health,** food and all other fundamental requirements, they become healthy and joyful. However some of the children are admitted with serious or even with terminal illnesses and they are not able to be cured in spite of our all efforts. So when you hear a particular child died, please do not mistake us as if we did not care about them. We are giving them the best care possible. I know how much you love the sponsored children. So also I love them the most as the Mothers at home love their sick children more and give preference to them. I too love them and give as much attention as possible and I offer my Holy Mass always with them and for them and I love to say Mass as they sing during the Mass and other times as Rosaries, stations of the cross etc.

Our teaching staff from beginning of our schools work hard and get the 100% successful results and maintain the first rank in the state of Tamil Nadu. Especially the school for the Physically Handicapped not only pass 100% in the final Government public exams, but also 75% of them score such high marks as are able to be selected by counseling to pursue their further study freely which are **job oriented** like teacher training etc. Thus our schools stand first in the whole of our Tamil Nadu State; that is why the government appreciates us very much and when we ask for some permission they are ready to help us. So also our colleges stand first by securing 100% pass in both Master of Education and Bachelor of Education. Only in the teacher-training department some how every year one girl fails out of 100 and it is a disgrace for us. So I warned the principal and every professor to take almost care to see that they all get the best of the result as our other colleges and schools.

At present time, the 12th grade children are writing their exam. They will be over on the 20th March and on the 25th March the government public exam will start for the 10th grade children. The exam for the children from L.K.G up to 9th grades will be somewhere in the beginning of April and they would be over by 15th April. 11th grade alone will be over little earlier and they will all go for vacation from the 15th of April and they will be returning to the schools on the first week of June.

Mr. Ken Egide of Arizona, U.S.A. arrived at our schools and colleges on 29th October and stayed with us till November 14th, 2008. He visited our school and colleges and was enjoying here rather than going out to many places. I took him only one day to the National Shrine of Lady of Good Health at Velankanni. He also visited a Chapel in some other Diocese far away from our college. Since that Bishop is my friend, I took him there, he was happy to see the Chapel which Mr. Egide built and the people who are the beneficiaries of his Chapel very happy to receive him and **Mr. Egide** in turn was happy to see them. His stay was a sweet one, He is a very good and sweet guest to move with and about, pious, daily communicant. **We welcome him all the time and we thank him very very much for all that he is to our school**.

On November 5th 2008, the whole of India celebrates the **Teachers Day**. On that day, the District Collector and District Development Rural Officer had a grand celebration at the district headquarters for all the physically handicapped. They distributed prizes to our 10th and 12th grade children, because they all pass (100%) every year. They praised our schools and also they congratulated the 2 Principals of the Schools for the Physically Handicapped and the School for the Deaf-Mute.

On November 8th 2008, **my older brother died**. He was 73.

On November 12th and 13th, we had honor of **receiving the Bishop of Kumbakonam and the Bishop of Tuticorin** and the latter one being my classmate.The Bishop of Tuticorin stayed 2 days with Fr. Antony in the college. He is a great intellectual a good and Holy Bishop and an able administrator. He loves our schools and colleges and has deep respect for Fr. Antony. He visits us often and offers Mass for us.

On November 14th, the celebration of the **school Childrens' day was celebrated** in our schools. The administration distributed candies for all the children. 15th of November, sports were conducted at the district head quarters for all the physically Handicapped and Deaf Mute school children and our schools children won many many awards.

From November 26th 2008 till December 2nd 2008, we had an **unexpected storm**; its **name is "NISHA"** and flooded badly. We had to host about a thousand people in the colleges and about a thousand people in the schools. The schools were declared closed, because of the flood. From then on we had to help many many children in many places including in our schools.

The 3rd December is the **feast of St. Francis Xavier**, the patron of mission world. He being the patron saint of Fr. Antony Xavier, the schools and colleges celebrate it in a grand scale. 35 Priests and the Bishop of kumbakonam all concelebrated the Holy Mass. The celebration was on 4th December because on 3rd December, the many parishes in our dioceses celebrate the feast of St. Francis Xavier. The December 3rd is also, "**The World Disabled Day.** This is declared by UNO. That too was celebrated on the same day. Grand dinner was served to all the school children and all the staff and guests. The children enjoyed a lot. They performed many dances and little dramas.

On 10th December 2008, the **whole state celebrated the disabled day and sports were conducted** in the stadium of Anna University in Chennai. Our students participated and they won the First, Second and Third prizes. The Minister for the Disabled, the Honorable Minister Mrs. Geetha Jeevan and the State great people all appreciated our schools for winning all the first, second and third prizes.

On 24th December 2008 night, the **Christmas celebration** started and the Mass was grand. Children received cakes, a special dinner and they were all very very joyful.

On 31st of December 2008, **we distributed** to each and every child of our two special schools, the **school uniform and a dinner** also was given. This is done by me.

The **children's Parents' day** was celebrated on 7th January 2009 in a grand scale. There was exchange of views between the staff and the parents of the children. On the 8th January 2009, again the same meeting continued and good opinion and suggestions were collected and they were implemented.

On the 4th February 2009, our **Bishop distributed the certificates** for the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), 100 teachers and for the Master of Education (M.Ed.), 25 new professors. They were so very glad to pass 100%. The Bishop gave also the graduation address and was very happy to see that not only our schools, but also the colleges score the highest percent 100% of results. And he was happy to see that our colleges send out every year 200 new teachers, 25 new professors to work in various schools and colleges respectively and some of them even go out to foreign countries to work and they earn a good amount. There is a great demand for Mathematics and English Professors and Teachers.

Time to time **our children are freely checked by different specialist Doctors**. On 9th February 2009, we conducted a Medical Camp, special eye Doctors (Ophthalmologist), special Doctors for diabetes, special Doctors for teeth, special Doctors for calcium and other diseases participated and they diagnosed that some of our children have diabetes, some have deficiency in calcium, some have short sight and long sight and some have defects in their teeth etc etc. That was a great help to all our children. On 10th February, Diabetic specialist doctors, pressure (BP) doctors, Doctors for Cholesterol, for teeth etc conducted the free camp again. They also checked the staff besides the children. This too helped a lot. Now **we feel the urgency of having a hospital of our own** where doctors will participate and take care of our children every day. And the specialist's camps could be conducted more often in that Hospital.

On 11th February 2009, the **fire department authorities** where invited and they **gave practical training how to escape when fire accident happens** and how to save others from the fire accident, because most of their homes are Thatched Huts. All our children profited by all these training.

One of our buildings for the Deaf-Mute is being built; the first floor is completed and the second floor is going on.

On the 13th February 2009, **Mr. Terry Redding from U.S.A. arrived** in our college and he left us on 16th February 2009. He visited our schools and colleges. He was good to us and we enjoyed his company.

On the 16th February 2009, the **District education officer visited our schools** for the Physically Handicapped and the Deaf-Mute and then he also had a special attention to make the physically handicapped school into integrated school where the normal children also could have permission to study up to the 12th grade. At this time, the regular and normal children have permission to study in this school only up to the 8th grade. If the permission is granted, the strength of the school will increase very quickly and it will become a very big school. Then we will have to build the required building next year.

On 20th February, we had the **Annual day of all schools**; the chief guest was Inspector of Matriculation schools and the Taluk head who is called Thasildar. The parents of the children also participated and all the celebrations were grand.

On 24th February 2009, we had seven **special speakers to bring awareness** among our college students how to make use of their right of freedom to improve their lives.

This letter has been long but some sponsor benefactors want to know all the details so I tried my best to give a more detailed account between Christmas and Easter. I will write next time between Easter and June that will not been too long as the children have been gone for summer vacation. Though the colleges will continue to function, they will be busy with exams and government inspections and also internal examination commissions. Again you will receive a letter describing what all happened between June and Christmas letter. In this letter I will give you the detailed accounts of what happens over here. Thus you will be receiving 3 letters every year. In June or July, you will also receive a picture of your adopted child and an update.

We are happy to welcome our guests. All our guests are happy, when they visit their children or as the time allows I try my best to help them visit some places and so on. All our guests so far have been happy to see all our children being healthy and joyous. Please visit us if you are able and Contact Mr. Joe or Kay Foht at our Help the helpless office for travel assistance.

Please continue to pray for us. We never fail a day to pray for you and will continue to do so to express our love and gratitude for all that you are to us. Our special gratitude to our benefactors, volunteers and the never failing trustees, the hard working treasurers Mr. Joe Foht family, David Huizel Family and the Secretary Mr. David Krause, the President Fr. Altier and the Vice President Dr. Terence Coyne.

Thank you one and all our love and prayers for you all.

Yours in Jesus,

Fr. Antony Xavier Savarimuthu and all the staff and students of all our Institutions and workers.

To all our Benefactors and Friends of Help the Helpless/St. Mary's,

Please accept our gratitude and thanks for all that you do for the children of St. Mary's and know that we pray for you and your loved ones daily.
Through the resurrection of his only Son Jesus, God has granted us healing. May you celebrate the joy of his resurrection this Easter season and may your hearts be filled with joy always.

Yours in Christ

Fr. Altier, The board, and volunteer staff of Help the Helpless