**FRANCISCAN MISSIONARY BROTHERS OF**

**NORTH AMERICA-NEW YORK**

St. Francis Friary, 9907 Rockaway Beach Blvd., Rockaway Park, NY 11694 Tel: 718-634-6476

I’m Bro. Victor, a Franciscan Missionary Brother from India.  I am happy to present this message as part of the Missionary Cooperative program requesting you to prayerfully consider supporting the Franciscan Mission. I belong to a congregation of religious brothers, originated in India in 1901, and have their missions in the poorest parts of the world: India, Sri Lanka, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Ghana. The primary mission of our congregation is to work among the non-Christians, bringing them to the Catholic faith and building the church.

I am a missionary for the last 36 years. I spent my best part of life in the service of God and His people. Today I want to share with you my first experience in the mission. It was in the year 1988; after completing my initial formation I was assigned to a new mission in one of the states in South India. Three of us were assigned to that mission and I was the youngest one. We had a few clusters of villages and there were no Christians at all. Every day we visit different villages. We visit every family in the village, talk to them, listen to their stories and struggles, share the gospel, and pray with them and come home in the evening. We were doing this day in and day out. After a year, I was asked to go to the city to pursue my higher studies. Once I left the mission, I did not hear anything about it until after three years I get another opportunity to visit that mission. This time to replace a missionary who wanted to go on vacation. You know what happened to that mission, you will not believe it. In a span of three years, that mission had 750 families embracing Catholic faith; from 0 to 750 Catholic families in three years. What a marvel? A couple of years later, the nuns came and started a school, and now every child in that mission gets a Catholic education. Later, the priests came and it became a parish and today it is one of the vibrant parishes in the diocese. Once the priests came, the Brothers left and moved to a new mission. This is what Franciscan Missionary Brothers do the world over; helping people to know Jesus and making them members of the Catholic Church.

The main task of the missionaries today continues to be the proclamation of the Gospel and the establishment of viable Catholic communities. The Brothers primarily work among the non-Christians preaching the Gospel and bringing them to the Catholic fold.   Other ministries include education, children’s homes, and orphanages, primary health care centers, providing potable water, and working with rural women for their empowerment. We are also ministering to people with leprosy and the victims of the “AIDS” epidemic. We are in need of prayers and material help to carry on these ministries. We request you to be generous because the coronavirus pandemic has financially affected our congregation and increased the need for additional funds. Your generosity will help us to prepare missionaries, provide support to lay missionaries, and take the gospel to the non-Christians and to build Catholic communities. Thank you in advance for your prayers and financial assistance.