

# Com.mission 28

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COMMISSION 28

Newsletter of Northeast India

# *From the Secretary's Desk...*



Dear Friends,

The enthusiastic participation of 54 religious personnel gathered at the Diocesan Social Forum, at Kharguli, Guwahati during the meeting organized by the Commission for Proclamation gave a clear message: Evangelization and proclamation of the Gospel are not outdated as one would often think in this fast moving world obsessed with many other matters which are seen as more vital. These were men and women who were secretaries for evangelization in the 15 Dioceses of Northeast India, and in the various provinces of the religious congregations working in the region.

The input sessions and the discussions during the two days which focused on the present situation of the Church and its activities in the Northeast with regard to strengthening and spreading the faith were lively and practical. Coming together as a team was itself a manifestation of the eagerness of the Church to carry out the command of the Lord. Communion in Mission is achievable and in a situation where the Church is challenged on so many fronts, it is irreplaceable. It is the Master calling us to dream big and be part of His plan for the wonderful people of Northeast. Setting aside petty differences, sacrificing personal comforts, we are all asked to follow the Divine Master in His search for souls.

As we enter the beautiful season of Lent, the call to conversion grows louder. The invitation to a personal experience of the Lord is extended to each one. The command to make His word known to all comes ringing distinctly in our ears. Let this season of love and sacrifice enable us to reach the goals He has set before us.

*Lent* IS A TIME TO  
GROW  
CLOSER TO JESUS

*Fr. Joseph Palamthattel SDB (Sunny)*

Secretary

# Bishop's Message



Greetings to you all from the Diocese of Jowai,

I am very happy to see that this E-newsletter has been actualized and news about evangelization and proclamation across NE is being shared to encourage and strengthened each other.

Proclaiming the Gospel is an innate duty of every baptized Catholic. We are baptized to proclaim the message of Christ to the world. We live to proclaim Christ not to proclaim ourselves as many would do. There are many people who have not known the Gospel; and so it is the duty of each one of us to bring the Good news to them. There are also many Catholics who have been baptized yet still do not really know who Christ is. Therefore, we need to proclaim Christ both to the people who has not known him and to the Catholics who has become cold in faith and to those nominal Catholics.

The church will grow and continue to exist only if we continue to proclaim. If we stop proclaiming Christ then the church will also stop growing. So let us make use of every opportunity and various means to proclaim Christ to the world. Let us live a life that is worthy of proclaiming and sharing.

*May God bless our land.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Lyngdoh'.

**+ Most Rev. Victor Lyngdoh, DD**  
Bishop of Jowai



# A Brief History of the Diocese of Jowai



Jowai was the political and commercial Centre of Jaïntia Hills since the British rule in India. From former times the Jaïntia Hills did not belong to the territory of the Khasi Hills and were not also under the Khasi kings. They had their own administration under the Jaïntia kings who resided in a town called Jaïntiapur in Surma valley. The British captured Jaïntia Hills in 1835 and collected regular taxes like land tax and property tax. In 1860 the property tax was changed into House tax. Again in the same year the British introduced the income tax and taxes on fish and on trees. People revolted against that tax in 1862. Their superiority in arms enabled the British to control the Jaïntia people in 1863 after 15 months of fighting.

The Jaïntia Hills are situated in the east of the Khasi Hills. It is divided into 12 independent Elakas under 12 chieftains. The people share common heritage with the Khasi people like the customs, family tradition and religion. They differ in dialect, dress and land system. The British left the organization of their tribal life to the Dolois – the native chieftains. The Dolois are helped by the villages Headmen and Village committees. They are very much democratic in their organization.

The first contact with the Christian missionaries was in 1891 when a delegation from Raliang went to the Administrator Apostolic in Shillong walking for 15 hours. They made an earnest request for the missionaries to visit them so that they could learn about the Catholic religion. The Mission Superior went to Raliang on December 2, 1892 and reached Raliang on the following day. 30 people received baptism on this first visit. With that zeal of the people the Mission Superior decided to open a mission station there with Fr. John Gruchot SDS and Fr. Thaddeus Hoffmann SDS as the first residential missionaries. From then on the number of baptisms continued to increase from time to time. In 5 years time the number of Catholics in Raliang went up to 150. By 1896 the Salvatorian Sisters joined the Salvatorian priests at Raliang. In December 24, 1900 the first church dedicated to the Immaculate Conception in Raliang – today in Madankynsaw - was blessed by the Administrator Apostolic of the Mission. In 1901 a mission station was opened at Lamin in extreme south of Jaïntia Hills. Fr. Marcus SDS was the first priest of this station. In 1900 Thangraïñ village welcomed the Catholic Church. In 1911 the Sub-station of Nangbah was started, and towards the end of the year it was separated from Raliang, and became an independent mission Centre. By 1914 the number of Catholics in Jaïntia Hills was 255, catechumens 70, three elementary schools, three Catechists and three catholic communities. The German Salvatorian missionaries were given farewell on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1915 as they were expelled from India by the British Government.

In 1922 the Assam mission was taken up by the Salesians of Don Bosco, and they reached on January 12, 1922 under the leadership of Fr L. Mathias who became the first bishop of Shillong in 1934. They continued the mission centre at Raliang and started a new one in Jowai in 1923. They suppressed Lamin and Nongbah due to paucity of personnel. Jaiñtia Hills remained with these two centres, Jowai and Raliang until 1976. As it was under Shillong, the development was concentrated in Khasi Hills alone. Even after Independence the Government too neglected the Jaiñtia Hills. Since 1970 the people demanded a bifurcation of Shillong Archdiocese for developments' sake. It was materialized only in 2006 when Pope Benedict XVI erected the Jowai Diocese on January 28, 2006 and appointed Fr. Vincent Kympat, as its First bishop. He was ordained bishop by Nuncio Most Rev. Pedro Lopez Quintana on April 2, 2006 in Shillong, Bishop Kympat took possession of the Diocese on April 3, 2006. At the time of taking possession there were 10 parishes. Out of a total population of 295,229, 65,095 were Catholic. There were 17 Diocesan priests, 25 religious priests, 5 religious brothers and 126 religious women in the newly established diocese of Jowai.

The Construction of the Bishop's House was completed and blessed on March 22, 2009 in the presence of thousands of people, priests, religious and five bishops. However, after nearly six years of moving forward the Diocese was deeply shocked when on the fateful afternoon of July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 it suddenly lost its Beloved Pastor who Pioneered in bringing about much change in Jaiñtia Hills; Most Rev. Vincent Kympat had a massive heart attack and quietly went to his creator without a word to anyone in the Bishop's House. Thousands and thousands of people flocked to the Bishop's House to pay their last homage and farewell to this great missionary before his mortal remains were laid down in the Cathedral of St. Theresa of Lisieux in Jowai. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, 2011, Rev. Fr. Hilarius Lamare the Vicar General of Shillong Archdiocese was elected and installed as the Diocesan Administrator of the Diocese. On the 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2014 Most Rev. Thomas Menampampil, SDB, DD came to Jowai Diocese to be its Apostolic Administrator.

On 15<sup>th</sup> October 2016 Holy Father Pope Francis appointed bishop of Nongstoin Most. Rev. Victor Lyngdoh as the Bishop of Jowai Diocese. Bishop Victor remains its bishop till today.

At present the Diocese of Jowai has 17 Parishes and 26 convents, one Retreat Centre and two men Institutions including one Technical School, a College and a Diocesan Seminary at Ummulong. The Catholic population amounts to 108,586. The number of diocesan priests are 19, religious priests 36, religious brothers 5 and religious women 126.



# Missionary of the Month

## BISHOP VINCENT KYMPAT: A TRUE SHEPHERD AND A GREAT MISSIONARY

By: Rev. Fr. Polycarpus Shylla

### Introduction

We hear our elders pose this question to youngsters: “what do you want to become when you grow up?” As students or children often the answer is, “I want to be a teacher”, “I want to be a doctor” or “I want to be policeman”, etc. Coming from different walks of life, children or youngsters must have been influenced by the very personality of that person who touches the life of the child, who because of their noble deeds and hard work inspired the child. Moreover for example reading the success stories of such personalities will leave an indelible imprint on the minds and hearts of the kids, inspiring them to follow their footsteps.

Bishop Vincent Kympat, right from his younger days came across such great and inspiring personalities in the persons of Fr. R. Dossi, Fr. Tony, Fr. H. Elias, Fr. V. Albera, Fr. Elias Tome, Fr. Henry Fantin, etc. They inspired and influenced him a lot in actualizing his long cherished dream of becoming a priest who would in turn serve the people of God and the Gospel in Jowai Diocese as its first Bishop.

### A Brief History

John Nongtdu and Ambrosia Kympat were the parents of Bishop Vincent Kympat born in Moosutong on 17 December 1946. He was the youngest of their five children. He was baptized by Rev. Fr. R. Dossi sdb. In 1950, they moved from Moosutong to Tluh for better living. He was brought up in Catholic Faith by his own maternal uncle Martin Kympat who was the Head Catechist of Jowai Parish at that time.

In 1957, Fr. Tony (M.A. Tochnoci sdb) called young Vincent Kympat to Jowai for studies and he was given admission in St. Mary Mazzarello till 1958. In 1959 Vincent Kympat went back home and continued his studies at Sutnga. Despite being away from hostel, young Vincent was a man who loved the Eucharist and whenever opportunities come he received the Eucharist devotedly (those times the priest came to the village very rarely due to the distance from the mission station to the villages and lack of transportation and also the vast area to be covered by the priest in the mission).

In 1964, his uncle Martin Kympat took Vincent to Raliang. Seeing the fervent desire of Vincent to become a priest Fr. Elias Tome sdb took him to Khahnar for touring along with him and to different villages. Touring villages doubled his desire and flamed his ardent desire to become a priest where he could see and experience personally the urgent need of the mission.

Through the inspiration of many priests like Fr. V. Albera sdb, Fr. Elias Tome sdb and his own uncle Martin Kympat his desire to become a priest increased. In the year 1964 he entered St. Paul Seminary, Upper Shillong.

After having completed his Pre-University in 1969 from St. Paul he was sent for Philosophical Studies in Madras (Chennai). In 1971 he was sent to Tura for Practical Training. Despite his regular duties as a regent brother and 38 periods of teaching in a week in Don Bosco school Tura, he still found time to compose hymns in Garo language and compiled them in “**DEMITTELE RINGANIRANG**”. He also rendered them in musical notation for better usage.



Rt. Rev. Vincent Kympat

From 1973 to 1976 he was at Sacred Heart Seminary Poonamallee, Tamil Nadu for theology and was ordained a priest on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1977 in Khliehriat Parish by Most Rev. Hubert D'Rosario, Archbishop of Shillong-Guwahati.

### **His Missions as a Priest**

**1. Marbisu Parish:** After Ordination, he was sent as Asst. Parish Priest in Marbisu in 1977 and later as its Parish Priest in the year 1978. Besides touring the villages and conducting family visits he was also the Director of Catechetical Training Center and the Director of Junior Teachers Training Center. At the time of his taking up the parish, Marbisu Parish had only 29 rupees in Bank Account. He faced many challenges there but faced them courageously and took the challenge to make the parish a self-sufficient Parish. In reality before leaving Marbisu in 1983 the parish could stand on its own feet, thanks to the cooperation and collaboration the faithful rendered to Fr Kympat's efforts.

**2. Jowai Parish (Asst. PP, 1983-1985):** While still in Jowai, he founded the “**Tome Wyrta Blai**” (an association for the purpose of the spreading the Gospel). This association was started in commemoration of and following the footsteps of Rev. Fr. Elias Tome who was known as the 'Apostle of Ri Pnar' (Jaintia People). Fr Kympat also solemnised the Feast Day of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and made it a popular devotion during which pilgrimages to the Shrine of St. Theresa in Jowai is done annually with great devotion.

**3. Rome (1985-1988):** On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1985 he was sent to Rome for higher studies. While in Rome he also served in few parishes of US (New York), Germany, and Italy. His thesis was “Catechesis in the Milieu of the Khasi People (1988).

**4. Jowai Parish (1988-1993):** On his return from Rome he was appointed Parish Priest of Jowai Parish and served the parish till his appointment as Rector of Christ King College, Shillong in 1993.

**5. Christ King College:** As Rector of Christ King College, he also held the post of the secretary of the Catechetical Commission and the Consultor of the Archdiocese of Shillong.

**6. Laban:** He was then appointed Asst. Parish Priest of Laban Parish from 1996-2005. At that time he was also a chairman of the Archdiocese Faith Commission Formation Centre, professor and visiting professor in UCC, Oriens Theological College and Sacred Heart College Shillong.

**7. Rympei ki Paidbah (Director of Faith Formation Commission):** In August 2005, he was sent to Rympei ki Paidbah as Director of Faith Formation Commission; here he showed his great enthusiasm in building faith in the communities through Small Christian Communities (SCCs). He dedicated his whole time in strengthening communities through Gospel sharing.

**8. Bishop of Jowai:** On 28<sup>th</sup> January 2006, Pope Benedict XVI created two new Dioceses in Meghalaya bifurcating Shillong Archdiocese into two more dioceses, i.e. Jowai Diocese and Nongstoin Diocese. Fr. Vincent Kympat was appointed the first Bishop of Jowai Diocese and ordained its Bishop on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2006 by Most Rev. Pedro Lopez Quintana, Apostolic Nuncio to India.

As Bishop, Most Rev. Vincent Kympat served the young diocese of Jowai only five years and three months. The Lord called him to Himself on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2011. His mortal remains were laid to rest on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011.

### **A Man of Vision and Mission**

As a shepherd of the young diocese he was a farsighted man; a man of vision and mission. His entire episcopate was focused on strengthening the faithful and the society at large. He dedicated most of his time in the villages preaching the Gospel and strengthening their faith. His great interest in faith formation of the people



vibrated in his veins where his entire episcopate was whole heartedly dedicated for SCCs. As a man of vision he envisioned that through SCCs the Gospel could be actualized in families and communities.

As a man of vision, he foresaw the need of bringing development to the diocese and of catering to the need of the entire district of Jaiñtia Hills. The developmental work of the Diocese was formed and named as Jaiñtia Hills Development Society (JHDS). Through this society, many programmes were launched which served not only the Catholics but also the whole of Jaiñtia Hills District especially sectors like health, education, etc. In a span of five years and three months Bishop Vincent opened 2 Parishes, 8 Convents and also a Retreat Centre and an Apostolic School. He also had a plan for a College and a hospital.

### **A Great Missionary**

The lives of the German missionaries and others with whom he associated with right from his childhood days and as young seminarian and even as priest taught him a great lesson in life. Their total and selfless dedication for the great cause of the Gospel in the then Archdiocese of Shillong and in the entire North East India strengthened him and energized him to follow their footsteps.

As an assistant priest of Marbisu Parish he tirelessly preached the Gospel, spending time in touring the villages and celebrating the sacraments for the people of God. Later as the Parish Priest of Marbisu he really worked hard for the cause of the Gospel. By the grace of God, he brought up the parish together with the faithful to the level of self-sufficiency and he always encouraged people to stand on their own feet.

While in Jowai Parish as Assistant Parish Priest and later as its Parish Priest, he followed the similar strategy in parish administration. No one could stop his zeal for the Gospel. He organized and formed an association known as '**Tome WyrtaBlai**'. This was an association where people of good will worked tirelessly for the cause of the Gospel. He went from village to village preaching Christ to everyone. He was a man of God and was loved by all.

Even as Rector of Christ King College (the Philosophate of Shillong Archdiocese), on Saturdays and Sundays and during holidays he would not rest and relax but rather take few brothers with him and go to different villages teaching catechism and preaching the Gospel and preparing them for the Eucharist and other Sacraments. The various inconveniences related to transportation and other means of communications could not stop his missionary spirit.

“And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer 3:15). This passage from Jeremiah was fulfilled when on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2006 when Pope Benedict XVI appointed Fr. Vincent Kympat as the first Bishop of the newly created diocese of Jowai.

As the shepherd of Jowai Diocese, Bishop Vincent Kympat was given greater responsibility in taking care of the people of God entrusted to his care. He strenuously worked hard and took caring of the people spiritually, socially and materially. Very often the answer he gave when someone asked him about taking rest or a nap for a while after attending so many meetings and planning for the pastoral activities of the diocese was “I will rest in the Lord, it is He (Christ) who strengthens me to do His mission”. This statement really indicates the ardent desire he had to fulfil Christ's mission.

One could rightly say that Bishop Vincent Kympat was a touring Bishop. He toured the entire diocese; visiting not only the presbytery or convents but all the villages of the diocese. He was ready to forgo all his personal comforts and become one with the poor, marginalized and backward section of the community. He spent days in the villages all alone by himself, teaching and catechizing. He would eat whatever was available and always cherish the sweet memory of the goodness of the people. He was a man who adapted with the situation and saw that no his visits caused no extra inconveniences to the people.

On one occasion, when one boy during Christmas season, gave a Christmas greeting card to Bishop Vincent and Bishop Vincent asked him how much it cost him to buy that greeting card, the boy said, “it cost only Rs. 20 Bishop”. The Bishop asked again, “Why can't you give that Rs. 20 to your poor friend?” Innocently the boy



replied, "I have another one for him", Bishop Vincent took Rs. 20 from his pocket and gave it to that boy and said now you have Rs. 40 and you can buy some sweets for the poor children and you can truly celebrate Christmas with them".

On another occasion, when during the *Ad Lamina* (Bishop's official visit to Vatican to present their credential and obedience to the Pope) after reaching Rome Bishop Vincent had to borrow a pair of shoes from one of the priests from Jowai Diocese who was doing his doctorate there because Bishop Vincent did not have even a pair of shoes. This is recorded in the chronicle of Marbisu Parish that he wrote himself, "I have many poor people in my parish who does not have even a good meal a day and who bear the cold of the winter; therefore I decided not to wear shoes anymore as a sign of becoming one with them and as penance for the mission". This is an act of great humility. He was a humble servant of God who did not hanker after name and fame.

His greatness is seen and very much appreciated by many people in different walks of life. He was a friend to all and loved by all. He was a person who could mingle easily with all. Cultures, Religiosity, Faith and customs posed no barriers in front of him. He worked hard for ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue both at the grass root levels and at higher levels. Moreover the missionary spirit of Bishop Vincent Kympatis very much seen especially in the formation of Small Christian Communities (SCCs). His conviction and dedication for the growth of the diocese is through Small Christian Communities. His entire life as priest and especially as Bishop is centred and focused on proclamation of the Gospel. He really lived his motto "...Build My Church" (Mt 16:18), to the end and for the sake of the Gospel he would even sacrifice his sleep. on the day prior to his death i.e. on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2011, he had, as usual, so many assignments to attend to; in the morning of that fateful day he had a meeting with the SCCs co-ordinators of the diocese and another meeting was to be had in the afternoon with for the ICYM members. He could not actualize the second because by that time his Master had already called him to receive the crown of life.

## Conclusion

By way of conclusion I would say that there are so many good things that can be written about the greatness of Bishop Vincent Kympat, but the best of all was his missionary zeal. He was a Missionary in one's own land. He faithfully kept to the end the command of his Master, "go and proclaim the Good News".



As Lent is the time for greater love, listen to Jesus' thirst... 'Repent and believe' Jesus tells us. What are we to repent? Our indifference, our hardness of heart. What are we to believe? Jesus thirsts even now, in your heart and in the poor -- He knows your weakness. He wants only your love, wants only the chance to love you.

— Mother Teresa —

AZ QUOTES



Lent comes providentially to reawaken us, to shake us from our lethargy.

— Pope Francis —

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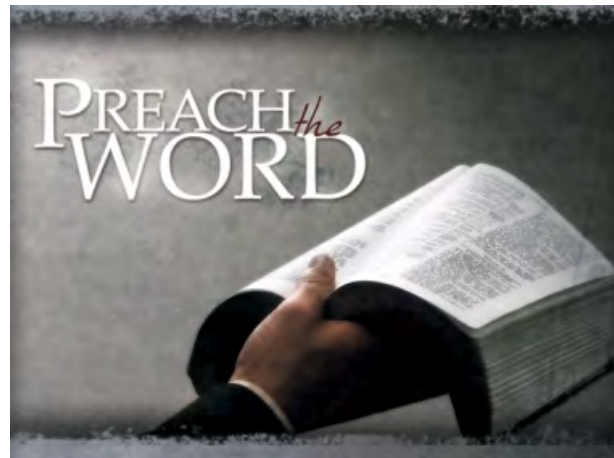
# ***Apostle Paul considers the Word indispensable in and for Proclamation***

***Jose Varickasseril, SDB***



Paul and Timothy were co-workers for a long time. Paul had inducted him as a coworker during his Second Missionary Journey (Acts 16:1-5). Timothy humbly played the second fiddle, contributing immensely to the effectiveness of his mentor's apostolic endeavours. Paul had enviable praises to shower on Timothy. He would say, "I have no one like him [Timothy]" (Phil 2:19-24). Eventually Timothy was appointed the leader of the community at Ephesus. Paul continued to help him with his advice and numerous exhortations. They are presented to us in the two letters – 1, 2 Timothy.

Among the pieces of advice that Paul gave to Timothy, we have one which is particularly significant. Paul told him, "Preach the Word, be urgent in rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in coming when people will not endure they will accumulate for themselves (2 Tim 4:2).



This above command to preach the section in the same letter. Paul had nature of the Word. He had written and profitable for teaching, for in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17).

season and out of season, convince, patience and in teaching. For the time is sound teaching, but having itching ears teachers to suit their own likings "

Word should be linked to the previous indicated to Timothy the purpose and saying, "All scripture is inspired by God reproof, for correction, and for training

Down the centuries the Church has indicated the importance of using the Word as the point of departure and arrival in evangelization and catechesis. This was further underscored in the Catechism of the Catholic Church which was promulgated by John Paul II on 11 October 1992. The Catechism contains more than 1300 scriptural references to make effective the transmitting of faith. The content of our proclamation will be empty and void if the Word of God is not abundant therein!





# Remembering a Pastor

*Fr. Paul Vadakumpadan SDB*

Archbishop Hubert Rosario died on 31 August 1994, exactly twenty five years ago. As president of the Northeast Regional Bishops' conference, Archbishop Hubert provided a vision to the local Church. His dynamic leadership was, indeed, a blessing of God at a crucial period in the history of the Church in this part of the country. It was the period of prolific growth. This period saw the formation of five new dioceses in the region: Tura, Kohima, Imphal, Diphu and Guwahati. He responded creatively and courageously to the needs of a growing Church. He preached the Good News and lived according to what he preached. He was known for his life of austerity and hard work. At the numerous ordination ceremonies that he presided during his twenty-five years of Episcopal ministry, he pronounced the words of the liturgy: 'Believe what you read. Teach what you believe. Practise what you teach.' That, indeed, was also his programme of life.



As a new priest, I was appointed assistant parish priest in Cherrapunjee in the Archdiocese of Shillong. He immediately asked me to come and meet him. He listened attentively as I narrated a short bio-data of mine. He encouraged and blessed me. Although I was just a newly ordained priest, going to take up my first assignment, I counted for him. Everyone counts and everyone must be counted. That is certainly an important consideration in building up a pastoral team. The Archbishop knew that and practised it.

I accompanied him on several mission tours. Despite his age (at the time over sixty) and the hilly terrain, I could see the long distances he had to cover on foot did not cause him any trouble. On one occasion, we had to climb down a valley, about two hours on foot and climb back the same the following day, with the sun against us. He seemed to enjoy it all like a youngster. When we reached the bottom of the valley, he sat down on a rock. His legs were shivering. Smilingly he told me, "mysterium tremendum".

As we follow the path he has traced for us, faithful to a rich tradition and committed to the realization of his Gospel based vision, our prayer is the same as the one that he himself often uttered, "Thy Kingdom come." That was the goal of his life. That ought to be the goal of every disciple committed to the proclamation of the Gospel.

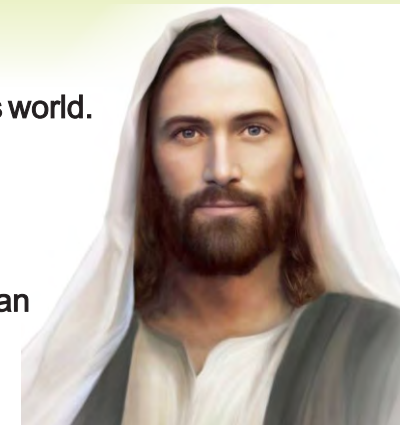


# INITIAL PROCLAMATION IN PRACTICE

JESUS can forgive us our sins, and can lead us to eternal life. Nay, he can even make us taste that life eternal already in this world.

This is the briefest summary of what we have said so far.

If “how to help people to be attracted by Jesus”— is the core or centre of Initial Proclamation, I must confess that it is not an easy task in today's fast moving highly attractive world.



I was in Kerala last month. Kerala is fast developing. The educational hub of India, Kerala's richest possession are the young people: progressive, knowledgeable, competent and ready to venture out to any corner of the world. They are attracted by almost everything. They are busy. Associations of different kinds are active ... round the clock. In the midst of all this, how to make Jesus attractive to them is a big challenge. This is becoming the picture nearly everywhere and anywhere in the world. It is only a matter of time...

Has Jesus any place in the busy market place, in discussions where there is no end to the agenda, in flourishing educational institutions wherein results are A+ and much more, and in certain situations where there is so much time still left before dispersing? If we have no time for Jesus [not only in far-away Kerala, but for that matter, even anywhere near home in the North East], we need to STOP and see how we can invite or bring in JESUS to give “eternal value” to all what we are doing!

How to do it? – is not the most important question at this moment, but “WHY”? Why Jesus for me is important, why Jesus for my friend is important, why “Jesus” at all is important! St. Paul can be one of our answers. We shall leave that and other examples for the next time we meet. In the meantime, may I have the courage to exhort you [my dear and affectionate readers] to go through chapter 3 of Paul's letter to the Philippians -especially verses 1-15]. All may read: Christians or others of any religious affiliation... or better still, even those who have no religious feelings at all!

Till then, our loving God's Peace be with you all.

*(To be continued...)*

Fr. Joseph Puthenpurakal SDB

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# We Think Of You Every Day

The other day, Fr. Francis T.J. Sdb received a phone call from Mary Wangpan, a blind girl from Mintong. "I have been appointed as the 2nd catechist in the parish. Father Francis I have only heard about you, thank you so much for teaching me my language. Whenever I hear the Word of God read to me in Wancho now, I always think of you and thank God for you. I know by heart all the hymns and prayers that you wrote. I have been appointed as 2nd catechist because of you. We the Wanchos can never forget you. When are you coming back to our parish?"

Fr. Francis Thottathimyalil Sdb, fondly known as T.J. was the one to write "The first ever Wancho Grammar" and "Rangting Lam" (Way to Heaven- A prayer book and a Hymn book) in 2006. He worked among the Wanchos of then Tirap district, and now Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh for 6 years from 2004-2008.

Fr. Francis has several "First Evers" to his credit. In 1989 he reached Tamenglong district in Manipur and preached his first sermon in Rongmei Language in 6 months which was a difficult tonal language like Vietnamese. He launched into the study of Rongmei firmly convinced that one can truly pray only when one understands it in one's mother tongue. His conviction helped him overcome many difficulties with determination and grit.

He mastered the language so well that after working among the Rongmeis for five years. He went on to write "The First ever Rongmei Grammar" "The First ever Rongmei-Anglo , Anglo-Rongmei Dictionary" in 1993. In his dictionary, the orthography was simple, marking the tones with serial numbers. He had composed many hymns and prayers and had translated into Rongmei, the Malayalam book of prayers and hymns for the dead "Marichavarude orma," (The memory of the Dead) He later on translated "The Holy Week" ("Inthanmei Cheiguan") and "Intangmakmei Buk chanei") (The 7 missing books of the OT) almost single handedly in 2003. His contribution to Rongmei literature is not yet over.

After his stint among the Rongmei of Manipur, he was posted to the land of his dreams, the land of the Rising sun- Arunachal in 1995. On the 2nd of February on the feast of Presentation, Fr. Francis was sent as a light to the Gentiles of Arunachal Pradesh. He quickly learned Nyishi, wrote :Tugungpui (translation of the gospels), Jubilee Yale (A hymn cum prayer book) Déribo Hapta (Holy Week liturgy). He was the first priest to take residence among the people of West Arunachal. The Palin parish covered, the now 3 districts

of Papum pare, Kara Dadi and Kurum Kumey. Each administrative circle had a different dialect and still , he was able to unify the language through a process of selective filtering. He left the Nyishi apostolate after 7 long years. Presently he is heading the Nyishi Bible translation team in the diocese of Itanagar.

In 2004, he reached Mintong among the Wanchos of the East Arunachal Pradesh. In Nagaland they are known as the Khonyiaks , about which Fr.Thomas VattothSdb has done much Anthropological research. In a matter of four years, the “AmaikiaKa:ho” (Good News-Gospels) was published, followed by a prayer cum Hymn book known as “Rangting Lam” (way to heaven) which people lapped it up. Mary who was blind knows the entire book by heart. He then translated the “Hochau Hat-tham”(Holy Week). The liturgy was vernacular when Fr. Francis T.J. Sdb left for Maram, in Manipur as Rector and Principal of Don Bosco Hr. Secondary School. After finishing his term he went back to Longding to complete the whole of the New Testament in Wancho “AmaikiaKa:ho in 20015.

His Going to Mebo among the Adis in 2015, he learned Adi and wrote a Hymn book and prayer book known as “Teyongke Bédang”(Way to heaven) He is the first non-Adi to have written more than 150 hymns and the liturgical prayers which makes his contribution unique. Presently he is writing the Adi grammar.

“I believe that the Word of God can be understood best in one's own mother tongue and true evangelization is evangelization of cultures. The hegemony of a monoculture portends ill for the indigenous languages in India. I have written in five languages, of which some may be significant and path breaking, but I am convinced that “when a language dies a unique way of looking at the world dies”, says Fr. Francis.

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Fr. Joseph Pulinthanth SDB



It is one of the blessings – or curses! – of great people to have legends woven around them. St Patrick was one such larger-than-life figure and it is very difficult to separate the facts from the myths in his remarkable life. While the apocryphal dimension may not be true in itself, it does point to a certain perceived greatness in the man and his achievements.

In Patrick's case, truth often does seem to ring louder than fiction, and paradox rears its head again and again in his life. It is remarkable that this hero of the Irish, was in born in Britain, Ireland's traditional enemy. It is equally remarkable that the teenaged Patrick first reached Ireland as a slave, captured from his home in western England by Irish raiders and went on to give the Irish people a taste of true freedom! British birth and slavery - on neither count is Patrick a very likely candidate for fame and a warm place in the hearts of the Irish people! But famous he is, and deeply loved in Ireland. Our question then, is why?

We can only guess how the young slave felt as he herded sheep on a cold hillside in the north of Ireland. From his few and brief writings, he seems to have cultivated a habit of praying. He writes: "The love of God and his fear grew in me more and more, as did the faith, and my soul was alive, so that, in a single day, I have said as many as a hundred prayers and in the night, nearly the same. I prayed in the woods and on the mountain, even before dawn. I felt no hurt from the snow or ice or rain."

There are echoes of Israelite captivity in Patrick's circumstances. His deep longing for freedom was matched by a deep faith in God who turns tragedy into good news, whether in Egypt or on Calvary or on the slopes of a bleak Irish mountain. As happens over and over in Scripture, Patrick had his share of dreams. In one such, he learnt that a ship was waiting to ferry him home to





England and he knew it was time to escape from his master. But the joy of being among his own people was short-lived. His memories of Ireland haunted him and gave birth to yet another dream.

This dream was even more extraordinary. Patrick describes it in his memoir: "I saw a man coming, as it were from Ireland. His name was Victoricus, and he carried many letters, and he gave me one of them. I read the heading: 'The Voice of the Irish.' As I began the letter, I imagined in that moment that I heard the voice of those very people who were near the wood of Foclut, which is beside the western sea-and they cried out, as with one voice: 'We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come and walk among us.'"

Patrick's response to this dream or vision was to pursue a path to priesthood. Upon being ordained he made his way back to Ireland where he settled in a place called Slane, not far from the kingly seat of Tara. It was here that Patrick as priest and later as Bishop, sowed the seeds of Christianity. And history records that it was a fruitful planting beyond any missionary's wildest dreams. All that was in the 5th century and subsequent centuries bear testimony to how the Irish took to the faith and carried it around the world.

St Paul speaks of his fear that 'having preached to others, I myself become a castaway.' I suspect that Paul's stark warning is currently more than appropriate for my native Ireland. For a plethora of convoluted reasons, my countrymen stand in need of a new evangelization. For too long, wealth on the one hand and clericalism on the other, pulled or pushed the Irish back to heathenism. Oh for another Patrick!

The ruins of churches and monasteries across the land are mutely eloquent of a time when the faith was in the air that people breathed. One dares to conceive new dreams of an age when they will ring again with song and worship for a Trinitarian God.

Speaking of Trinity reminds one inevitably of the shamrock, that trefoil national plant of Ireland, which Patrick is supposed to have used in his catechesis on the Trinity – three leaves, one stem. Maybe he did, maybe he didn't. The myth remains and today the Shamrock features inevitably in all that is Irish.

There is another Patrician myth about which there is no need for 'maybe' – that of his having banished snakes from Ireland. For reasons that are physical, not mystical, there never were reptiles in Ireland. The credit goes to geography, not to Patrick for this state of affairs.

And so, returning to the real Patrick and the real Ireland, we dare to pray that perhaps this year when the Irish celebrate St Patrick and his memory on 17th March (Patrick died on 17th March 461), God will get a chance to reach some hearts in or through or in spite of the orgy of jingoism and worldly celebrations. May the trickle of pilgrims who visit Patrick's supposed tomb in the Irish Cathedral of Downpatrick, swell once more to a torrent and sweep the Irish back to a newer and deeper faith.

Strangely, the dream that drew Patrick back to Ireland is a clear echo of an equally significant dream that appears in Acts 16:9 where Paul hears

the call of the people of Macedonia, begging him to come over and walk again among them. We stand in awe at the fruits of both these dreams. What was it, we wonder, that kept both Paul and Patrick going in the hard times they lived through? The answer was trust in God. Paul describes it one way, Patrick in another. In Patrick's case his trust in God gave rise to a poem called now the breastplate of St Patrick. It goes like this: "Christ be within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ inquired, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger."

Because of Patrick I am a missionary, living in exile these past 50+ years. Currently I am playing with the idea that perhaps I or others should head for Ireland as God's instrument for a revival of the old faith in the land of my birth.

Fr. Kevin Ward,  
Nongstoin, Meghalaya

## **Quotation:**      *The Missionary's Model*

28. Like his model, the Lord Jesus, the good missionary burns with charity, and he numbers even the most abandoned unbelievers among God's children, redeemed like everyone else with the ransom of the divine blood. Their lowly difference does not exasperate him; their immorality does not dishearten him. His bearing toward them is neither scornful nor fastidious; his treatment of them is neither harsh nor rough. Instead, he makes use of all the arts of Christian kindness to attract them to himself, so that he may eventually lead them into the arms of Christ, into the embrace of the Good Shepherd. He makes it a custom to ponder the thought expressed in Holy Scripture: "Thy kindly influence, Lord, Thy gracious influence is all about us. At the first false step, none is so ready to rebuke us, to remind and warn us of our error, bidding us come back and renew our loyalty to Thee... With such power at Thy disposal, a lenient judge Thou provest thyself, riding us with a light rein, and keeping Thy terrors in reserve" (Wisdom 12:1-2, 18). What obstacle can arise, what annoyance or danger exists that could deter this emissary of Jesus Christ from fulfilling the task he has begun? There is none. This man, who has attained great favor with God by his free choice of the lofty work he has taken upon himself, will cheerfully endure whatever adversity or hardship befalls him. Toil, scorn, want, hunger, even a dreadful death - he will gladly accept them all, as long as there remains a slight chance that he can free even one soul from the jaws of hell.

29. The missionary who is motivated and inspired by the example of Christ Our Lord and of the Apostles can go out confidently to his ministry. But he must recognize that the basis of his confidence rests entirely on God. As We have said before, this whole work is a divine work. Only God can enter men's hearts and illumine their minds with the radiance of truth; only God can enkindle their wills with the spark of virtue; only God can give them the strength to pursue the truth and do the good they have seen. The emissary will spend himself in vain unless his Lord helps him as he works. Yet he has every reason to go bravely on with the task allotted to him, for he can rely on divine grace that grace which is never withheld from the man who asks for it.

*(Maximum Illud)*



# Statement by the 31 Plenary Assembly of CCBI: *The Joy of the Gospel*

XXXI PLENARY ASSEMBLY,

THEME: 'THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL', January 7 – 14, 2019,  
Joe Animation Centre, Chingleput, Tamil Nadu

## A MESSAGE

### Introduction

We, 133 bishops of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), assembled at the Joe Animation Centre, Chingleput, Tamil Nadu, from January 7 to 14, 2019, for our 31st Plenary Assembly to reflect upon, pray, discern and respond to the theme: 'The Joy of the Gospel'. This theme — which is the title of Pope Francis' Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG) — urges us to reflect more deeply on the demands of Christian discipleship.



Impelled by Jesus' promise: "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11), we go forth to joyfully and enthusiastically proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

### Our Joys and Hopes

We see so much that fills us with joy, consolation and hope. The fidelity, fervour and enthusiasm of so many Christians, lay groups and associations in different parts of India to make Christ known, loved and followed is truly exemplary and encouraging. The heroic witness to the faith of our Christian brothers and sisters — even to the extent of laying down their life for Christ, as seen in places like Kandhamal and elsewhere — is a sublime testimony of courage and sacrifice. The silent witness of so many lay faithful, consecrated persons and priests who live their Christian commitment by walking the path of love, service and sacrifice is truly the effect of an outpouring of grace, expressed so beautifully by Pope Francis in 'Gaudete et Exsultate – Rejoice and be glad' on the call to holiness in today's world.

We see the urgent need to further strengthen our faith, and we hope to continue extending our loving service to all people — in particular, the Dalits, tribals, women, migrants and refugees — so as to remove all traces of injustice, exploitation and oppression in our society and in the Church.

## Challenges to Sharing the Joy of the Gospel

Many challenges, both internal and external, confront us in our mission. Among the internal ones is the need for: (a) a continuous spiritual renewal of bishops, priests, consecrated and lay faithful to inspire us to more joyfully proclaim the Good News; (b) to instill in ourselves a confidence to overcome any fear generated by some incidents of opposition and violence; (c) to find means to reveal more effectively the 'merciful face' of Jesus; (d) to go forth to the peripheries, instead of seeking security in institutions; (e) to take more decisive measures for promoting the welfare of Christians who suffer from various forms of discrimination.

Some external challenges confronting the Church are: (a) communal forces that threaten to deny some communities their religious identity and rights; (b) economic policies that favour the rich and adversely affect the 'poor'; (c) media sensationalism and the spread of fake news.

## Our Foundations: The Word of God and Church Teachings

God's Word moves us to preach the Good News. Saint Paul exhorts us: "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus .... I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent, whether the time is favourable or unfavourable" (2 Tim 4:1-2). Every baptized person is obliged to joyfully preach, practise and propagate the Gospel in all circumstances.

The Church's call is to be the seed, servant and sacrament of the Kingdom of God, announcing through her words, works and witness the "fullness of life" offered by Christ (Jn 10:10). This is clearly articulated in the documents of Vatican Council II (1962-65) such as *Ad Gentes*. Thereafter, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI (1975), *Redemptoris Missio* of Pope John Paul II (1990) and other documents have provided the impetus to proclaim the Good News with new ardour, methods and expressions.

Pope Francis reminds us of the personal call for mission. Each of us not only 'has' a mission but also 'is' a mission: "I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world" (EG, 273).



Keeping in mind this call to us, we pledge to continue striving to be joyful and selfless shepherds according to the heart of Christ. All our ministries will be effective only if they spring out of a personal and loving relationship with Jesus Christ strengthened through a life of daily prayer and contemplation.

#### **We therefore make an ardent appeal:**

- to all our Faithful: You are “temples of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19) called to be everyday “saints next door” (Gaudete et Exsultate, 6-9). Make the world a better place with your love for God, overflowing into selfless deeds for justice, peace, harmony and care of God’s creation.
- to Christian Families: Your vocation is to be the “Domestic Church” — called to be holy and happy. Always bear the Good News at home, in the neighbourhood, in places of study and work, ever seeking to go forth and widen ‘family circles’ by loving and serving all.
- to the Youth: You are the hope of the Church and Society! Stay creative in mind, loving at heart, loyal to the Church and lively in your steps to joyfully follow the ways of Our Lord Jesus, so that the freshness and appeal of the Good News may shine forth brightly in your words and deeds.
- to the Clergy and the Religious: You represent the person of Christ in the Church and in the World! Strive to be selfless missionary disciples, shunning every form of clericalism and careerism so as to be faithful to your vocation – active in the Spirit, effectively revealing the merciful and joyful face of God to all people, especially the poorest of the poor.
- In all our ministries—especially pastoral care, education, healthcare and social action — let us constantly seek to announce the Joy of the Gospel to all, so that God’s Kingdom may blossom in our world today.

#### **Conclusion**

Christ assures us: “I am with you till the end of the age” (Mt 28:20). Encouraged by this promise, we can say anew and aloud: “I can do all things in Him who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). In her Magnificat, Mary, our blessed Mother, wonderfully expresses the joyful trust and unconditional surrender of a disciple of Christ.



Invoking God's blessings upon each of you, our dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, let us echo Mary's song: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour!" (Lk 1:46-47).

May Mary, the Star of the New Evangelization, and Joseph, her chaste Spouse, guide us as we generously and joyfully bear and 'be' the Good News to all people.



**His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias**  
President, Conference of Catholic Bishops of India

**Most Rev. George Antonysamy**  
Vice President, CCBI

**Most Rev. Anil Joseph Thomas Couto**  
Secretary General, CCBI



# News from Dioceses

## Seminar cum Meeting at Guwahati



In many ways it was a historic meeting. Designated members from fourteen of the fifteen dioceses of the Region took part in the seminar cum meeting on evangelization organized by the Regional Commission for Proclamation of the North East Bishops' Conference at NDSF Kharguli, 19th to 20th February 2019. In addition, representatives from religious congregations - mainly those in charge of the mission sector, also enthusiastically participated in the meeting. Archbishop John Moolachira of Guwahati encouraged the assembly with his presence on both days and presided over the celebration of the Eucharist on the second day. Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menamparampil SDB in his acclaimed scholarly paper summarized what the North east India needs today and how we as leaders should achieve. Fr. Jose Varickasseril SDB, professor of Sacred Scripture, Sacred Heart College Shillong and a missionary with a truly pastoral heart, gave presentation that well combined scriptural insights and practical pastoral insights. Fr. Johny Eapen SDB, a dynamic scripture lover and missionary, spoke of the challenges to evangelization today.

The discussion in groups and in the general assembly brought the urgent requirements of the church in NE India to the forefront. Fr. James and Mr. Suji Thomas, the National President and Secretary of the Little Flower Mission League who had come all the way from Kerala described the activities of the League in the past many decades and the assembly was overawed by its many achievements in the missionary formation of children and the numerous vocations it gave to the Church. The Chairman, Bishop George Palliparambil SDB of Miao enthusiastically took part in all proceedings of the two day program and also presided over the Eucharistic celebration on the first day.



The final action plan focused on strengthening the faith of the Catholic family with a view to making it truly missionary in nature. To achieve this objective, a great deal of emphasis was laid on regular and planned pastoral visits to families with the Word of God and prayer by everyone especially trained laity. The action plan also accorded utmost importance to village communities in remote areas where priests reach only seldom. As part of the preparation for the Extraordinary Missionary Month - October 2019, it was decided to reach out to all those who have strayed away from the church and to bring them back. All the families would be visited and all irregular marriages would be rectified by the end of the year, which is declared as the year of Evangelization in the region.



# News from Dioceses

Inspired by the example of the Mission League, it was decided that all existing children's organizations in the region like Holy Childhood, Young Apostles for Christ, the Little Flower League etc. would be animated to give them a missionary orientation. Sisters of Mary Immaculate would coordinate this work with the one the Bishop would appoint for this purpose in every Diocese.

Coming together as members of the same team, the diocesan secretaries and the religious personnel decided upon ways to collaborate and network at the parish and the diocese levels in the work of evangelization which is the primary and only activity of the Church. The participants were extremely happy and positive about the meeting and wished that the church in Northeast India begins a new glorious chapter in bringing the love of God to people.



We are grateful to all the Bishops and Provincials who made the meeting possible by sending members to participate in it.

Fr. Joseph Palamthattel SDB (*Secretary*)

## The meeting of the Regional Directors of PMO at Bangalore 26th – 27th February 2019



Regional Directors & Executive Secretaries Meeting



Regional Directors & Executive Secretaries of CCBI



## OCTOBER 2019: AN EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH

During the *Angelus* Prayer on World Mission Sunday, October 22, 2017, Pope Francis publicly announced to the whole Church his intention to designate an Extraordinary Missionary Month for October 2019 (**EMM OCT 2019**) to celebrate the 100th anniversary Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*. On the same day, the Holy Father sent a letter to Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) and President of the Supreme Council of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS). He entrusted him with «the work of preparing for this event, especially by raising awareness among the particular Churches, the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and among associations, movements, communities, and other ecclesial bodies».

In order to reignite the baptismal awareness of the People of God in relation to the mission of the Church, Pope Francis provided the following theme for the Extraordinary Missionary Month: **“Baptized and sent: the Church of Christ on mission in the world”**. In fact, reawakening an awareness of the *missio ad gentes*, and reinvigorating the responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel with new enthusiasm, are themes that combine the pastoral concern of Pope Benedict XV in *Maximum Illud* with the missionary vitality expressed by Pope Francis in

*Evangelii Gaudium*: «missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church's activity» (EG 15).

It is about placing «the mission of Jesus at the heart of the Church, making it the criterion for measuring the effectiveness of her structures, the results of her labours, the fruitfulness of her ministers, and the joy they awaken. For without joy, we attract no one». (Meeting with CELAM Executive Committee, Bogotá, 7 September 2017).

The commitment to personal and communal conversion to Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and alive in his Church, will renew the ardour and passion for witnessing to the world the Gospel of life and Paschal joy (cf. Lk 24:46-49) through proclamation and Christian living.

**There are four dimensions**, specified by the Pope, to live more intensely the journey of preparation for and implementation of the Extraordinary Missionary Month - October 2019:

1. A personal encounter with Jesus Christ living in his Church: in the Eucharist, in the Word of God, and in personal and communal prayer.
2. Testimony: missionary saints, martyrs, and confessors of the faith as an expression of the Church scattered throughout the world.
3. Missionary formation: biblical, catechetical, spiritual, and theological.
4. Missionary charity.

## PROPAGANDA FIDE AND THE PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES

The Missionary Dicastery of the Holy See, once known as *Propaganda Fide* (Propagation of the Faith) was founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV for promoting, coordinating, and directing the work of evangelization and missionary cooperation in the Church. In 1967, the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, reaffirming the validity of its apostolic service, renamed the Dicastery the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP). The concrete effectiveness of Christian faith expressed through active charity makes all of the baptized responsible for supporting and helping the Pope in his mission as Universal Shepherd. Prayer, self-sacrifice, missionary vocations, and material help continues the age-old commitment of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS), which were born in the 19th and 20th centuries out of a deep concern for the missions of both laity and clergy alike. Together, the CEP and the PMS are revitalizing their «efforts to collect and distribute material aid in the light of our mission and the formation that it requires, so that missionary integrity, awareness, and responsibility can once again be part of the ordinary life of the entire holy and faithful People of God». (Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to the National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies, 1 June 2018). «The four Societies – Propagation of the Faith (PSPF), St. Peter the Apostle (PSSPA), Missionary Childhood (MCA), and the Mis-



sionary Union (PMU) – have the common purpose of fostering a universal missionary spirit among the People of God» (*Redemptoris Missio* 84).

PSPF, founded by the venerable Pauline Marie Jaricot in Lyon, France, in 1822, continues to promote prayer and self-sacrifice among the faithful, encouraging the offering of material aid for the mission, asking the Lord to call men and women who would consecrate their lives for the *missio ad gentes*.

MCA was officially founded in Paris in 1843 by Most Rev. Charles Auguste de Forbin-Janson, the then Bishop of Nancy (France), and engages children throughout the world in helping their peers in faith and charity through prayer and sharing according to its motto: children helping children.

PSSPA, founded by Jeanne and Stéphanie Bigard in 1889 in Caen (France), animates and coordinates missionary collaboration through the offering of prayer and material aid for the formation of future priests, aspirants to consecrated life, and for their formators in young Churches in missionary lands.

PMU, inspired by Blessed Paolo Manna, a missionary priest of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, was approved by Pope Benedict XV in 1916. Considered to be the soul of the other three Mission Societies its aim is to provoke a passion for mission in the Church, to contribute to the formation of missionaries, and to stimulate missionary cooperation within Christian communities. It also aims at being the praying and tangible part of the activity of evangelization.

## YEAR 2022: ANNIVERSARIES OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

A number of significant anniversaries will be celebrated in 2022: **400 years** since the foundation of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, **200 years** since the creation of the Missionary Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and **100 years** since the first three Mission Societies (PSPF, MCA, PSSPA) received their pontifical and universal designation. These anniversaries may be providential in offering the whole Church one more opportunity to keep its missionary baptismal awareness alive and effective. If the crisis of the mission is a crisis of faith, the maturity of the Church's faith is courageously expressed in her mission to attract everyone and everything to Christ. The upcoming Extraordinary Missionary Month might, in fact, promise to be the beginning of an adventure of faith, prayer, reflection, and charity that doesn't end in October 2019, but may culminate in suitable forms of enthusiastic and renewed commitment for the *missio ad gentes* as the motor and paradigm for Church's entire life and missionary nature.

Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples  
Pontifical Mission Societies



**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST  
ON MISSION IN THE WORLD**

EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH  
October 2019



# Com.mission 28



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