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Bishop Speaks...

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Faithful,



If I do not Proclaim?

Jesus' Mandate!

“Woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel”(1Cor 9:16)! This is how, as a disciple of Christ, Paul sees his life and mission. In the line of Peter (Acts 4) and Stephen (Acts 6) Paul gave life to the mission-mandate of Jesus: “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation(Mk 16:15).In the beginning of the Church itself this mandate was understood as proclaiming and bearing witness to repentance and forgiveness of sins (Lk 24: 47-48) and to give baptism to them in order to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19). Even in our times the belief is that the Church, a pilgrim on earth, is necessary for salvation (*Lumen Gentium 14,1*). However, the same Ecumenical Council believed that those who, through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or the Church but lead a good life, are not excluded from salvation (*LG 16*).

Here comes the emphasis of the intrinsic nature of the Church on evangelization and the duty of all the baptised to proclaim the Gospel (*Evangelii Gaudium, 14.4*). Nevertheless, in the conflicting situations of multi-religious context of Asia, fierce anti-Christian political and social uprising, increasing menace created by anti-ecology, displacement of migrants, religious fundamentalism and over-drawn secularism all over the world, we are at the crossroads of how to live the mission-mandate of Jesus *ad gentes* meaningfully.

Missio Ad Gentes!!

Pope Francis declared that this October is the Extraordinary Missionary Month (*Baptised and Sent: the Church of Christ on mission in the World*) to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter: *Maximum Illud* (30 November 1919). In the present context of the world, Pope Francis intends mainly to renew the faith and missionary commitment of the entire Church. He mentions in this letter about the missionary formation/consciousness which motivates us to “preach to all the world” (*ad gentes*). This was the concern, all through the centuries, of Apostolic fathers, western missionaries to Asia and Africa; Pope Benedict XV's main concern also was the same. This is directed to '*Propagation of Faith*,' resulting in baptizing the believers and establishing Christian communities. However, in the changing situation of the world today Pope Francis underlines also the following: a personal encounter with Jesus Christ living in the Church, missionary witness and missionary charity, thus he leads us to both re/new evangelization of the faithful and a new paradigm shift in living Jesus' mission-mandate.

Ad Inter-gentes!

No doubt, 'proclamation to all the people' (*ad gentes*), the original mandate of Jesus, is the source and strength of our missionary witness in a constantly changing world. Accordingly, *mission to the nations* is to be carried out in today's context, especially in the suffocation of “anti-s” in a disturbed society, as *mission among the nations* (*ad inter-gentes*), remembering that we 'are permanently in a state of



mission'(EG 25). Francis of Assisi, Fr. Damien of Molokai, recently Mother Teresa and many other missionaries proclaimed Jesus Christ with a Good News of love, mercy and forgiveness to those who do not know Jesus(*ad extra*); motivated and strengthened the faithful in their faith-commitment to go ahead with a new vigour (*ad intra*).

A broader understanding of mission '*among the people*' leads us to be among/with any individual or group of non-Christians or even anti-Christians as 'the light of the world' and 'the salt of the earth' with a heart for dialogue and understanding. Here there is no boundary of region, language or ethnic/caste group; all are God's children and all need God's love and mercy. No vocal proclamation, but humanitarian service becomes the medium of mission 'among the nations.' As Pope Francis insists any type of service to society, be it social, medical or educational- is the mode of evangelization. Here conversion of heart, as Mother Teresa said, and not necessarily membership of the Church, is the goal of Christian mission.

Respecting other religions, honouring their traditions and cultures and having an on-going encounter with their way of life our mission is enriched and tension is not only eased out, but harmony is cherished. Inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism are the effective tools of this mission *ad inter-gentes*. Working for justice, peace and joy (cf. Rom 14:17), trying to uplift the poor and the oppressed, the migrants, displaced people and victim of sexual abuse in the conflicting and selfish society should be the core concern of every baptised person, a true missionary '*among the people*'.

Misio Ad Vitam

Pope Francis invites every Christian believer to be a missionary by life. He calls it 'proclamation by attraction' which can be termed as proclamation by witness (*FABC, 2004*). Justice John Michael D'Cunha, on 27 September 2014 in the Karnataka High Court, convicted Ms. Jayalalithaa, the then Chief Minister of Tamilnadu in her 18-year-old disproportionate asset case. This made a tremendous impact in the world at large and his Christian witness to justice was deeply etched into the hearts of the people. Likewise, the Kandhamal (Odisha, North India) victims/martyrs in 2008 are the Christians who proclaimed Jesus by attraction/witness; they are effective preachers by life.

Doing my daily duties in the family, work place, market place, or politics without any selfish motive, but bearing in mind that I am a disciple of Christ is a mission 'by attraction.' This is in line with what Paul urged the Roman Christians "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (12:1). Much more than 'door to door' preaching or proclamation in public platform or media, a silent life of justice and love in society brings abundant fruit of an effective mission by life (*missio ad vitam*).

Ad Limina Visit



It is a year-long custom in the Catholic Church that every Bishop, once in five years, visits the Pope and the four major basilicas of Rome (*St. Peter's, St. Paul's, St. John's and Mary Maggiore*) in order to be revived by the 'light of the Apostles.' That is why this visit is called: *Ad Limina Apostolorum*. Pope Francis invited all the bishops of India in the month of September-October this year. The south Indian bishops of Kerala, Karnataka, Telengana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Pondicherry, numbering 55, were invited to have this from 12-18 September 2019.



During these days we had three important programs: i. Visit to the Holy Father which was on 17th September. During this visit the Holy Father spoke about the concerns of the Indian Church and he encouraged us to bear witness to Jesus very patiently so that our faith is drawn to the non-Christians by 'attraction.' ii. We had visited all the major

basilicas and celebrated the Holy Mass; iii. We had also visited all the Roman Dicasteries (Congregations) and had inter-acted with them basing on our missionary activities and concerns. This 'ad limina' visit was very useful to rejuvenate our pastoral ministry in our respective dioceses. On Sunday 15 September we, the Latin Bishops of Kerala, celebrated Mass with the Kerala Catholics in the Basilica of St. John the Baptist, Rome.

Rosary Month!

As you all know that October is the month devoted to Our Lady of Rosary. You are exhorted to instruct the faithful about the importance of daily Rosary and also to have the Rosary devotion daily in the parish and BCC level.

Extraordinary Missionary Month!

Pope Francis has declared this month as the Extraordinary Missionary Month. There are three important aspects which the Pope has underlined in his apostolic letter. i) We have to bear life-witness to our faith so that the non-Christians are attracted towards Jesus. ii) We have to make special prayer for those involved in missionary apostolate all over the world. iii) Make special efforts to raise financial support for the missionary cause. All the parish priests are expected to inform this to our faithful and to be generous in their missionary activities. I would like to appreciate all the priests and religious and the faithful of the Diocese for their generosity shown last year towards this mission cause.

Gratitude & Thanks!



I take this opportunity to thank very sincerely Rev. Fr. Jabamalai Lorange, the diocesan Financial Administrator who is handing over his charge to Rev. Fr. Antony Sagayanathan. Fr. Lorange did his job very efficiently and minutely and worked very strenuously to set up the details of the finance-management from the beginning of this Diocese. Also, his hard work is very much appreciated with regard to organizing the documents of the Diocesan properties and for the constructions of various infra-structures in our diocese. I wholeheartedly thank him, both on my behalf and on behalf of the Diocese, for his hard and sincere service in the last five years. I wish and pray a successful ministry as the parish priest of our Cathedral and as the Vicar Forene of Palakkad Vicariate.

Hearty Welcome!



Rev. Fr. Sgayanathan



Rev. Deacon Nelson Joy Antony

I am happy to welcome Rev. Fr. Vimal Arokiaraj and Rev. Fr. Antony Sagayanathan who completed their higher studies in Rome successfully in Canon Law and Mission Theology respectively. Fr. Vimal as the chancellor & Judicial Vicar, along with some other assignments, and Fr. Sgayanathan as the diocesan Financial Administrator, along with some other assignments, will begin their ministry in the second week of October. I too welcome Rev. Deacon Nelson Joy Antony who has completed his theology course in Carmelgiri seminary, Aluva and he will be the secretary to the Bishop. All of them will reside in the bishop's house. I wish each one of them God's blessings and success in their mission in our diocese.



Rev. Fr. Vimal Arokiaraj

+

+ **Antonysamy Peter Abir**
Bishop of Sultanpet

Bishop's Appointments

Date	Time	Programme	Place
01	06.00 pm	Annual Feast Mass	Kanakankalam
06	08.45 am	Annual Feast Mass	Eurmaikaranur
	05.00 pm	Mass in New Basilica	Karumathanpatty
13-14		Annual Feast Mass	Tambaram (Chennai)
21-25		Annual Retreat	Seerapalayam
27	10.30 am	Annual Feast Mass	Mukkali
28-29		Archdiocesan Synod	Pondicherry

From Vicar General Desk

Annual Retreat!

This is to remind all our Diocesan priests about the annual retreat to be held at Seerapalyam retreat centre from **21st to 25th October 2019**. All are expected to be at 10 am at the venue of the retreat on Monday 21st October and it will be over by lunch on 25th October.

Rev. Msgr. A. S. Madalaimuthu,
Vicar General

From the Procurator's Desk

Some Reminders

Parish Audit report (2018-19) is ready in the procure office. Please pay Audit Fee, Annual Contribution, pending Mass Intentions and pending special collection if any.

Reminder of the special collections to be remitted for October will be Mission Sunday. I request the parish priests to encourage and motivate your parishioners to make mission Sunday collection, maximum possible, like last year.

Mission Sunday Calendar, Cover and posters are available in the procure office. Please collect it soon.

Medical Help

In the month of September 2019 we distributed medical help of Rs. 10000/- to parishioners of Kullarayanpalayam (1 x 5000) and Erumaikaranur (1 x 5000).

Thanks!

In this juncture, I sincerely thank my beloved Bishop, Vicar General and all beloved brother priests of the diocese for your support to me last five years to do my responsibility as much as possible. I request you to give the same to my successor Rev. Fr. Antony Sagayanathan. I too welcome and wish him all success in his new assignment.

Rev. Fr. Lorange L.,
Financial Administrator

Bible Sunday

Bible Sunday was celebrated in all the parishes of the diocese on 22nd September. There was a solemn Bible procession, well decorated in the church with WORD OF GOD. Catechism children enacted various bible skits. It was heart-touching and enriching to the faithful of the parishes. I congratulated all the parish priests, assistant parish priests for motivating the parishioners.



Fr. Antony OCD
Secretary, Bible Commission

Family Commission

The next Marriage Preparation Classes in Tamil will be held on 19-20 October 2019 at Sorapara.

Rev. Fr. Jesudas,
Secretary, Family Commission (Tamil)

BIRTH DAY

10 Fr. A. Stanley Stephan

12 Fr. X. Vincent, Msfs

15 Fr. George Kadapurathuthayil OCD

16 Fr. Thomas Mooleparambil Msfs

27 Fr. Sandyagu OFM (Cap)

*S.N.L wish you
a Happy Birth Day*

FEAST DAY

04 Fr. Francis Thotankara OCD

S.N.L wish you a Happy Feast Day

ORDINATION DAY

31 Fr. Joy Kuzhinjalil Msfs

S.N.L wish you a Happy Ordination Day