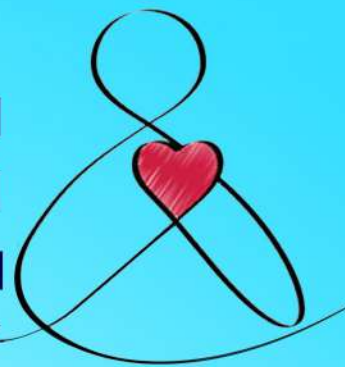


JUBILEE 2025



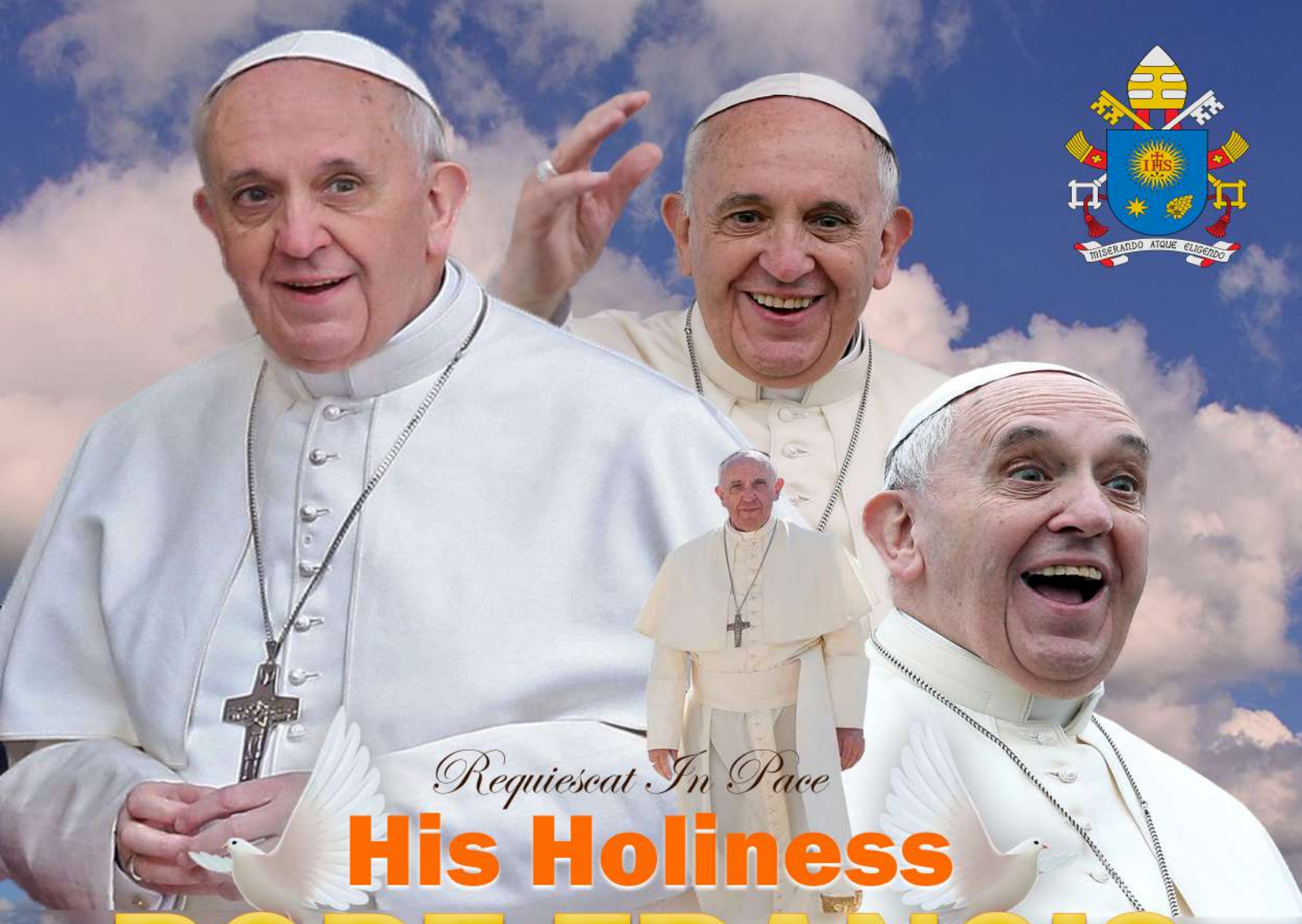
GO AND INVITE EVERYONE *to the banquet*



ORIENS ANNUAL

MAGAZINE 2024-2025





Requiescat In Pace

His Holiness POPE FRANCIS

1936 2025



WE DEDICATE THIS EDITION TO...



Rev. Fr. N. K. George



TABLE OF CONTENT

6 Academic Council

7 Student's Council

8 Editorial Board

10 Message, Archbishop of Guwahati

11 Message, Archbishop of Shillong

9 College Authorities

13 Editorial Message

12 Message, Bishop's Delegate to OTC

16 Together to our home- Pilgrims of Hope
Fr. R. R. Graviour
Augustine

14 Director's Message

15 Rector's Message

20 The cost of Invitation
Fr. Poovathumkudy
Kuriakose

23 A moment with Fr. N. K. George

26 Symposium 2024
Naveen Teja &
Sumit Tete

33 Pilgrims of Hope: A journey anchored in faith
Uday Mondal

35 Called to Proclaim in joy
Prince Paul

37 Heart of the mission is 'All'
Nershan Kolary

39 Embracing our common mission
Bibin Thekkekuttu

41 Mission is a Tireless going out
Shepou Mathias

- 42** **A missionary's mission**
Chyne Jose
- 43** **Wedding Feast: Sharing God's love to everyone**
Phawa Teimonlang
- 44** **Commitment to mission: A Catholic Perspective**
Tirkey Suleman
- 46** **Student's Photos & Domestic Staff**
- 52** **Go and Invite: To Eschatological Banquet**
Ezung Benjamin
- 53** **Invitation, to Communion & Fraternity**
Horo Martin
- 55** **Back to the Father's House: A call to the Prodigal Children**
Marboh Bester
- 57** **Mission without borders**
Minj Tribin
- 58** **Mission is always Synodal**
Khongsya Iophiyos, SDS
- 61** **The Holy Eucharist and the Mission**
Sohshang Wanphrangsnagi, MSFS
- 63** **Go and Invite: To be in Communion**
Hinge Phidalis & Kympat Brandon
- 65** **Every Christian a Missionary**
Beck Ebinius
- 67** **Go and Invite to Encounter God**
Marwein Khrawboklang
- 68** **Call to the Banquet A mission urgency**
Naskar Satyajit
- 70** **Protagonists of the Mission on the Hills: The People of God**
Malngiang Eskarius, CMF
- 71** **The Banquet of Salvation: A Table for all**
Kujur Sumit
- 75** **The 59th NITSC**
- 77** **Reminiscences**
Fr. Stanislaus Chinliankhup
- 81** **Charity from our well wishers**



ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Fr. R.R. Graviour Augustine
(President)



Fr. CHINLIANKHUP
Stanislaus



Fr. YANTHAN M.
Thungbemo



Fr. VELLATTUKARA
(K.D) Joy



Fr. KUTTAPPASSERIL
John



Fr. TERON Robinson



Fr. POOVATHUMKUDY
Kuriakose



Fr. CHANIKUZHAY Mathew



Fr. KERKETTA
Athnas, MSFS



Fr. NONGTDU
Lessmon, SDS



Fr. KALLIDICAL
Mathew, OFM Cap.



Fr. THURACKAL
Johnson, CMF



Bro. KURISINGAL
Dolwin David, CFIC



Bro. MALNGIANG
Eskarius, CMF





STUDENTS' COUNCIL

Bro. KURISINGAL
Dolwin David, CFIC
(President, Beadle,
Third Year)



Bro. MALNGIANG
Eskarius, CMF
(Secretary, Second Year)



Bro. TAITHUL Thomas
Hau Min Thang Zou, SDS
(Vice-President,
Third Year)



Bro. HAVI Winman
(Treasurer, Beadle,
Second Year)



Bro. EZUNG
Sabenthung Benjamin
(Beadle, First Year)



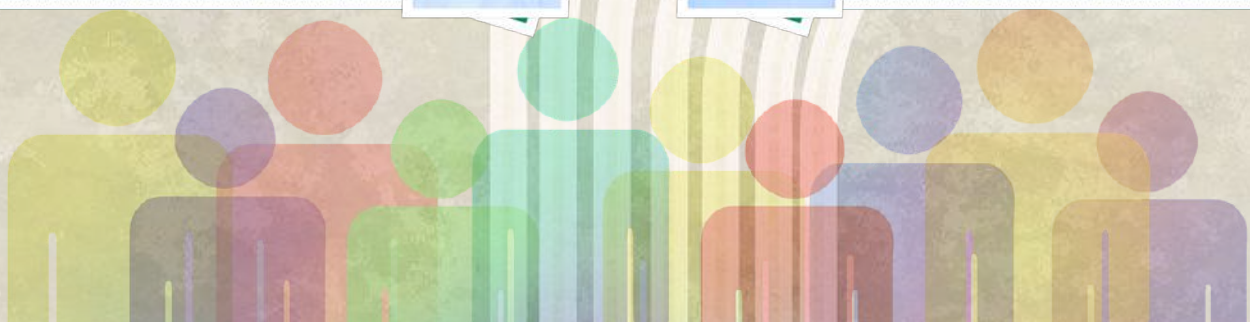
Bro. SUPHAI
Raplang, OFM Cap.
(First Year)



Bro. MARBOH Bester
(Beadle OTC,
Second Year)



Bro. MIASALHOU
Zhavirietuo, MSFS
(Second Year)





EDITORIAL BOARD

Fr. R. R. Graviour
Augustine



Fr. CHINLIANKHUP
Stanislaus



Bro. BALIAR Singh
Bibhu, CFIC



Bro. KURISINGAL
Dolwin David, CFIC



Bro. MALLAVARAPU
Bala Anvesh



Bro. HINGE
Phidalis



Bro. MALNGIANG
Eskarius, CMF



Bro. MARBOH
Bester



Bro. EZUNG
Sabenthung Benjamin



Bro. EZUNG
Ovungthung James



Bro. KHARPOR
Leonard Rangkynjai





COLLEGE AUTHORITIES

Fr. CHINLIANKHUP
Stanislaus
(Rector)



Fr. CHANIKUZH
Mathew
(Spiritual Director)



Fr. NEDUMARATHUM-
CHALLIL George
(Spiritual Director)



Fr. YANTHAN M.
Thungbemo
(Vice-Rector, Librarian)



Fr. R. R. Graviour
Augustine
(Director)



Fr. VELLATTUKARA
(K.D) Joy
(Treasurer)



Fr. KUTTAPPASSERIL
John
(Administrator)



Fr. TERON Robinson
(Director of Cultural-
Historical Centre &
Documentation Centre)



Fr. POOVATHUMKUDY
Kuriakose





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, NEIRBC

Rev. Fathers and Dear Brothers,

It gives me immense joy to extend my heartfelt greetings and blessings to the staff and students of Oriens Theological Institute as you prepare the Annual Magazine for the academic year 2024-2025. The chosen theme, “Go and Invite,” echoes the very heart of Christ’s missionary mandate and offers a powerful reminder of our call to be active participants in the mission of the Church.

Our Lord’s instruction in the Gospel, “Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled” (Lk 14:23), is a timeless invitation. It challenges us not to remain passive observers but to become zealous heralds of the Good News. In a world marked by spiritual indifference and social fragmentation, the urgency to go forth and invite others into the joy of the Gospel becomes all the more pressing.

To go is to move beyond comfort zones, beyond the familiar and the secure. It is to take the risk of faith, like the apostles who left all to follow Jesus. To invite is to offer with love and gentleness what we ourselves have received: the truth, the hope and the joy that only Christ can give.

Dear brothers in formation, this is your sacred time to prepare yourselves intellectually, spiritually and pastorally for this very mission. Use these formative years at Oriens to deepen your love for Christ and His Church. Cultivate a heart that listens, a mind that discerns and a spirit that reaches out in compassion.

As future priests and religious, remember that people today are more inclined to be drawn by witness than by words. Let your lives speak of the Gospel. Be approachable, prayerful and joyful ministers who truly reflect the face of Christ. Your invitation will be most effective when it is grounded in authenticity and love.

I commend the editors and contributors of this magazine for your efforts in making this publication a source of inspiration. May the pages of this issue reflect the light of Christ and stir in many hearts the desire to respond to His call.

With Prayers and Blessings,

+ John Moolachira
Archbishop of Guwahati





MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF SHILLONG



Rev. Fathers and Brothers,

The theme “Go and Invite” is a profound call rooted in the heart of Christ’s mission. In Luke 14:23, Jesus says, “Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled.” This divine invitation is not just a suggestion - it is a mission, a movement, a lifestyle for every disciple.

At Oriens, where the seeds of vocation are nurtured with prayer, discipline and fraternity, this theme finds rich soil. You, dear brothers, are preparing not only for priesthood but for a life of joyful invitation – inviting people to Christ, to the Church, and to the fullness of life. As future missionaries, your words, actions and witness will become the living Gospel, reaching even the forgotten corners of society.

To “go” is to move beyond comfort, to take the first step, to see others with the eye of Christ. To “invite” is to reach out in love, to listen, to welcome, and to walk with others on their journey of faith. Invitation is not mere words – it is presence, hospitality and compassion.

The world today is filled with people waiting to be noticed, loved and welcomed. Your formation is not just for yourself – it is for them. As you grow in holiness, simplicity and zeal, may you carry within you the burning desire to draw others closer to God. Be joyful missionaries of hope. Let your life itself be an invitation – gentle but bold echo of the Master’s call.

Oriens is more than a seminary – it is a launching ground for apostles. May this magazine inspire all readers to embrace this mission: to go beyond, to invite all and to fill the Master’s house with love and life.

God bless you all on this beautiful journey. I assure of you my prayers and blessings. Wishing you all a very happy Easter and may the Risen Lord will continue to bless all of you the Staff and the students at Oriens.

Yours in the Lord,

+ Victor Lyngdoh DD
Archbishop of Shillong





MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOPS' DELEGATE TO OTC

Greetings from Bishop's House Kohima!!!

It gives me great joy to extend my prayerful greetings and heartfelt congratulations to the editorial board and all those involved in the publication of the Oriens Annual Magazine for the year 2024–2025. This annual reflection and compilation of thoughts, experiences, and spiritual insights is not just a magazine, but a proof to the ongoing journey of faith and formation.

The theme chosen for this year, “Go and Invite”, echoes the very heart of Christ’s mission and the call of the Church. It is a theme rooted in the Gospel, where the Lord sends out His disciples with a simple but powerful invitation: to bring others into communion with Him. The command “Go” reminds us that our faith cannot remain confined to ourselves. It calls for movement, for stepping out, for encountering the other. And the word “Invite” expresses the heart of the Christian mission – not to impose, but to welcome; not to dominate, but to accompany.

In a world where many live in isolation, anxiety, or spiritual emptiness, the mission of inviting becomes all the more urgent. Whether we are seminarians, priests, religious, or lay faithful, we are all part of this divine mission – to invite others into the joy of the Gospel, into the life of the Church, and into a personal relationship with Christ.

Let us remember that invitation begins with witness – the witness of our lives, our compassion, our joy, and our hope. As Pope Francis constantly reminds us, evangelization flows from a heart that has first encountered Jesus. May each one of us, then, be transformed by that encounter so that we may joyfully “Go and Invite” others to the banquet of life and love.

I commend the editorial board for their dedicated efforts and pray that Oriens continues to be a source of inspiration, learning, and fraternal encouragement for all its readers.

God bless you all.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

+ James Thoppil
Bishop of Kohima, Nagaland





EDITORIAL



‘Go and Invite’ – A Call to Live the Missionary Spirit

Pope Francis, in his message for World Mission Sunday 2024, calls upon the entire Church to embody the spirit of evangelization through the theme: “Go and Invite Everyone to the banquet.” These words are not merely an encouragement to action but a profound spiritual summons to renew our missionary zeal, grounded in the heart of the Gospel. It is particularly echoed in the parable of the royal banquet (Mt 22:1–14), where the king commands, “Go therefore to the crossroads, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.”

The title of the magazine “Go and Invite” is taken from it. As Oriens Theological Institute is committed to form future missionaries, leaders and stewards of the Gospel, we recognize that this call challenges us on multiple levels academic, spiritual, and pastoral. “Go and Invite” is not an optional programme of Christian living; it is the very essence of our vocation. It compels us to step beyond our comfort zones, beyond the security of tradition or the walls of the classroom, and enter into the crossroads of today’s world, where cultures clash, hearts hunger for meaning, and many still live unaware of the joy of the Gospel.

Pope Francis reminds us that mission is an overflow of a heart touched by Christ. The Gospel is spread not through coercion or argument, but through the joyful witness of those who have encountered Jesus and now bear His light. This is where our theological formation plays a crucial role, not just in understanding doctrines, but in cultivating hearts capable of deep listening, pastoral discernment, and prophetic courage.

“Go and Invite” is also an inclusive call. Pope Francis urges the Church to reach the forgotten, the poor, the excluded. At our college, this must challenge our curricula, our out reach, and our vision. Are we forming leaders who will invite the excluded into the feast of God’s mercy? Are we preparing pastors who carry the Gospel to the peripheries not just geographically, but socially and spiritually?

Let us, therefore, embrace this message of mission and go out with boldness, animated by the Spirit, and invite everyone with hearts aflame proclaiming not ourselves, but Christ crucified and risen. Therefore, “Go and Invite” because the feast is ready, and the world is waiting.

We wish you an enjoyable reading.

Editors



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The third decade of the third millennium dawned in the midst a great global tragedy – the Covid-19 pandemic. Those of us who are able to speak about it now are the lucky ones. For we are spared by the virus even though some of us have to suffer from its after-effects.

When the globe began to feel its relief and life seemed to limp back to normalcy, came yet another devastating event, the war in Ukraine. For two years now, Ukraine has become ubiquitous in the news bulletin of every media channel. Ukraine, “the Bread Basket of Europe” is being razed to the ground by the aggressor. Families fled, the old and the invalids are left to die, the young gaze at their bleak future, children cuddle to their parents not knowing anything. Cities are destroyed to the extent even slithering creatures do not dare to coil in.

Insufficient as though it is for the suffering humanity, the hubris of Hamas and the disproportionate reaction of Israel have caused the loss of numberless lives and incalculable worth of resources. “Is it over?” is the question one likes to ask because one sees no sign of respite.

The change of leadership in a country that claims to be the most developed and powerful, having the most powerful head of the state, has not only unsettled the global community, but continues to cause uncertainty every coming day. Should we ask the question - “Is it over?” – again? Better not! But what we should not forget to ask is, “How to live our life in this time of global and national crises which can crawl and creep into us and crush us with family and personal crises?”

In these trying times for everyone in the world, what awaits us to hit our ears every day is the news of death, violence, devastation, eviction and migration. Desperate men and women who had emigrated in search of a better life and future are being deported to their country of origin. Misery is the lot of the most and luxury is the lot of a few. So heartless, cruel and unjust are the unfolding petals of time on the flower called planet earth which seems to lose its beauty and fragrance.

To these “signs of the times” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 4), the couple of words picked up from Pope Francis’ Mission Sunday Message, 2024, as the theme of this edition – “Go and Invite” (cf. Mt 22:9) – by the editorial team, deserves acclaim. When the world is building walls to prevent entry into ones boundary, or even vicinity, and expel and evict by every means the unfortunate ones, so that they would be back into their misery, we are told by the Pope not merely to be ‘touts’ but ‘hosts’ inviting the helpless to a banquet of love and fellowship.

Sadly, this powerful voice of the voiceless fell silent on the Easter Monday, 21 April 2025. Pope Francis will not be there to speak for us here anymore. But our faith fans our belief that rising with Christ immediately after Easter Sunday, his death assures us that he will speak without end before the Saviour.

To the chosen theme this year, the students of Oriens Theological Institute attempt to make theological reflections in order to elicit from themselves a positive praxis as a response. Simple as they may be, they are certainly transformative.

While congratulations are due to them for this initiative, I also wish them well in their journey they have begun to care for the unfortunate ones.

Wish you all an enjoyable reading.

Fr. R. R. Graviour Augustine
Director, Oriens Theological Institute



RECTOR'S MESSAGE



It is a great delight that the Oriens Annual Magazine 2024-2025 is all set to see the light of the day. The chosen theme, “Go and Invite” is of great relevance as it is taken from the theme proposed by the late Holy Father Pope Francis for the World Mission Message 2024, which he published on 25th February 2024. It is based on the parable of a wedding Banquet in Mathew 22: 1-14, where a King sends his servants to go and invite everyone to the banquet. The backdrop for choosing this passage is grounded on the findings incited by the synodal process, “Synod on Synodality: Communion, Participation and Mission.” Here, Pope Francis is stressing the need for us to go and invite everyone to the Lord’s banquet as the King commanded his servants to go out and to invite everyone. We can witness the Lord and fulfil our universal mission only by going out and inviting others. The invitation is aimed at encountering God and have communion with Him. The Holy Father warns the Church against the danger of ending up as “imprisoning Church which does not let the Lord out, which keeps him as ‘its own’, whereas the Lord came for mission and wants us to be missionaries” (Paragraph 1).

Going out to witness and proclaim is a worthy enterprise because we are proclaiming, “the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 36). In an alluring world that is trying to captivate and capture human hearts, Pope Francis says, “While the world sets before us the various ‘banquets’ of consumerism, selfish comfort, the accumulation of wealth and individualism, the Gospel calls everyone to the divine banquet, marked by joy, sharing, justice and fraternity in communion with God and with others” (Paragraph 2). This banquet is anticipated in the Eucharistic banquet where we are fed by God with His Word, and the Body and Blood of Christ as a foretaste of the joyful eschatological banquet. God who wants all to be saved and know the truth (1Tim 2: 4), desires that we go and invite to all peoples and nations, especially the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame (Lk 14: 21). It is a difficult task but an urgent one that, “requires the commitment of all” (Paragraph 2). The Holy Father presents Mary as our model because of her role in working miracle at the marriage feast of Cana (Jn 2: 1-12). Our humble efforts too can work miracles. However, to “Go” requires of us to leave our personal comforts, fears and preoccupations behind. And to “Invite” entails that we cultivate hospitality, care for others, sensitivity and the virtue of accommodation in our Christian life.

Fr. CHINLIANKHUP Stanislaus
Rector, Oriens Theological College



**Fr. R. R. Graviour
Augustine**

TOGETHER TO OUR HOME – PILGRIMS OF HOPE

In order to mark the 1700th anniversary of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, the International Theological Commission published a document titled, “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.” Its coincidence, in this jubilee year centred on the theme “Christ our hope,” is providential for all the faithful who are on a journey with unwavering hope towards the home of our heavenly Father. The reason for the convocation of the Council of Nicaea in 325 and its context have much to teach us who are on pilgrimage now. The pilgrimage we are on would be impossible if Christ is devoid of his divinity which Arianism, the major heresy of the early Church, dangerously spread and was countered by the Council.

We have been given the theme, “Pilgrimage of Hope,” by a well-known pilgrim, the late Pope Francis. While making the pilgrimage along with us towards the Hope, he reached it earlier leaving us all to continue our journey. His memories, however, would continue to remain inspiring us like the overshadowing presence of God over us protecting and guiding us. Let this be our assurance in our pilgrimage towards the Hope, the Risen Lord. As “Pilgrims of Hope” in this Year of Jubilee let us reflect here on ‘hope’ and ‘our pilgrimage together’ as one body, the Church.

1. HUMAN BEINGS CREATION’S CROWN

We are human beings privileged and redeemed by the death of Christ. As such we are made qualified to be with God sharing all the graces that had been lost. Every human being because of the human nature finds oneself to be above and superior to every other creature. There is a quality that makes human beings different because of the intellect and will infused into them. Virtue is more than that. It is a habitual action made so by repetition. It reinforces our intellect and will towards achieving perfect attitudes and habits (cf. CCC, 1804). In order to understand it well, we need to know the types of virtues.

1.1. Human Virtues

As human beings we have certain qualities which would be acknowledged as good by every human being on earth, even those who are in the remotest corners of the planet with no connection with outside world. These are





universal tendencies innate in human nature. These are found in every civilisation, society, culture and tradition. For example, caring for life, survival of community, feeling sympathy at the pain of the others, etc. These qualities are not acquired but naturally found in all due to the intelligence and will which God has put in every human being in every place.

1.2. Moral Virtues

Moral virtues, on the other hand, is a bit different. They are acquired habits that are built through one's effort and grace received at baptism. For example, being just, chaste, celibate, sharing food with the hungry, generously helping others, not harming and causing pain to ordinary creatures, etc. These are virtues acquired because they are done with an objective of being good and to reflect the nature of the divine towards oneself and one's neighbour and the surroundings.

1.3. Theological Virtues

Theological virtues - faith, hope and charity (love) - which Christianity speaks about, are virtues specific to Christians. They are received at baptism and grown through sacraments. These virtues have God for their origin, motive and object and they make us participate in the divine nature of God (cf. CCC, 1812). They instruct all moral virtues and make us act as God's children. They are foundations for moral acts (cf. CCC, 1813). These virtues enable a human being to give one's food to others even while oneself being hungry; and this makes one forgive one's enemies and love them because God loves them; because of these, one is even able to die for the sake of the other.

1.4. The Virtue of Hope

Hope is described as "the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit" (CCC, 1817). By this virtue we desire the Kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness (cf. CCC, 1817). It inspires our activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps us from discouragement, it sustains us during time of abandonment; it opens up our hearts in expectation of eternal happiness (cf. CCC, 1818). It takes up what the chosen people hoped for (cf. CCC, 1819).

2. HOPE IN THE SCRIPTURES

Faith, hope and charity are traditionally shown in symbols of Cross, anchor, and heart. They are worn as pendants by Christians in the neck and as bands in the wrists. Today these symbols are embroidered in vests and tattooed on parts of bodies. There is no dearth of creative depiction of these symbols by artists of different types. They tell us that these symbols serve as reminders to Christians as to in whom to hope.

2.1. Hope as Anchor

There is a bold statement about anchor and hope in the letter to the Hebrews. The author says, "We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of



the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered” (Heb 6:19-20). Though this metaphor might seem simple, it requires an explanation to understand hope in Christian tradition.

Anchor is an important part of a ship. Without it no captain of a ship will embark on a voyage if he wants to reach the destination. Even those who sail for fishing need it in an equal measure. For anchor assures a sailor his safety and security. It hooks the ship to the ground and prevents it from going adrift when dropped down. Its value is immeasurable when the ship is caught in storms and rough weathers. So too is the Hope for Christians in the sea of life.

What and who is the hope for a Christian? Scripture has much to teach us about Hope. The source of hope is God (cf. Ps 61(62):5). Vain hope is to trust in vices and riches (cf. cf. Ps 61(62):10). The Psalm again tells, “You, O Lord, are my hope” (Ps 71:5). Prophet Jeremiah would teach the people that the Lord is the hope of Israel (cf. Jer 17:13). St. Paul is clearer in his understanding of hope. He says that our God is the “God of hope” (Rom 15:13). The evangelists teach that Jesus is the Redeemer in whom the people hoped (cf. Lk 24:21). In the Acts of the Apostles, hope is presented as culminating in the resurrection of the Christ (cf. Acts 2:26; 23:6, etc.).

When God the Creator, Christ the Redeemer who won life for us for eternity and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier, becomes the hope, our life has anchor. Our life is assured of its safety to destination. It is secure from being tossed and drifted away from the destination. No Christian can be one without hope. It is impossible for a Christian to call himself one if one does not anchor oneself on to Christ, the Hope, the heaven, the risen life and all that are part of it.

2.2. Hope as Helmet

Another important biblical metaphor used for hope in the Scripture is ‘helmet’. St. Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians speaks about “a helmet, the hope of salvation” (1Thess 5:8). And in his letter to the Ephesians he says, “Take the helmet of Salvation” (Eph 6:17). Helmet today is very common. It is used by every cyclist, motorcyclist including the co-passenger. It is part of the outfit of the army, police and security personnel. In the past, its use was much limited to the soldiers who had to fight wars. Helmet boosted up their courage, assured bravery and gave protection from head injuries.

Christians are called to run in order to reach the end point which is God. They are called to be runners in the race (cf. 1 Cor 9:24). They are called to be athletes (cf. 2 Tim 4:7). They are called to win a wreath (cf. 2 Tim 4:8). In these expressions Christians are noticed as those exposed to challenges and dangers in their race towards the hope – God himself.

When God himself becomes the hope, the helmet, no weapon on earth is capable of injuring or slowing down or stopping the one who journeys. Our pilgrimage is certain of its success. We should therefore never lose and neglect hope, the anchor and helmet of our life.



3. PILGRIMAGE TOGETHER WITH OTHERS

One of the powerful questions asked in the Bible is “Where is your brother?” (Gen 4:9). God asks Cain after he had killed his brother, Abel. In response, the audacious answer of Cain, the murderer, to God was a counter question: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen 4:9).

The understanding of Christian life has been given a paradigm shift by the papacy of the late Pope Francis. While his focus on the periphery, emphasis on mercy over meticulous following of the doctrine, his open arms to include every human community, and the demystification of the Holy See from the beginning till the end of his papacy, drew the attention of all, what will remain a monumental legacy would be the synodal journey he infused into the Church in its pilgrimage to our destiny, the hope of being with God our Father.

It is a paradigm which had lost its sheen in course of the life of the Church which waited for the papacy of someone from the “end of the earth” to make it shine by practice by everyone and every rung in the ladder of the structure of the Church. Ultimately what is asked of everyone in the Church is a modified question of God, as it were, to Cain: “Are they not your brothers?” The synodal style being introduced to the Church is nothing but our response given after a change of heart: “Yes, all are brothers and sisters, and we are together on pilgrimage to Christ our Hope.”

Conclusion

Unlike other religious tradition, the beauty of the Christian mystery is the hope of resurrection. This mystery of resurrection, called by different names - life after death, glorious life, everlasting life, eternal life, etc. – is the hope of every Christian. If we hope for it, live for it and work towards it, Christ our Hope will not be a myth, but a certainty. The sum of the teachings of the Scripture on hope and their implications for us is expressed in a Psalm: “There is one thing I ask of the Lord to live in the house of the Lord” (Ps 27:4). If there is a prayer that can strengthen our hope in the Lord, it is this. For those with hope there is nothing more desirable than being with the Lord.





**Fr. Poovathumkudy
Kuriakose**

THE COST OF INVITING

Roland Rolheiser (OMI), a prolific creative writer and regular columnist, narrates a fascinating as well as an inspiring incident of an enthusiastic Pastor, who challenged his parishioners to invite the poor of the locality to their community gatherings. He genuinely believed that it would help them to share the joy of the Gospel with the needy neighbours. After much thought, consideration and discussion, the members responded positively and sprang into action without much delay. The street children, the homeless and the unemployed were the recipients of the timely new initiative. An atmosphere of satisfaction and a sense of contentment was discernible among the parishioners.

As weeks rolled by, the initial enthusiasm and fervour gradually began to fade away due to the unfolding of unforeseen and unpleasant events. The immediate cause of concern was the disappearance of many common items like cups and plates and even personal valuable belongings of individuals of the community; besides, the place of gathering and the surroundings turned out to be chaotic, messy and shabby. There was much altercation and discontentment, even mild vituperation and disapproval from many. When the volatile situation had reached at the saturation point, the concerned representatives lodged a formal complaint to the Pastor and requested him to terminate the experiment with immediate effect. Sensing the exasperation of the community, the

minister played a proactive role, by reflecting with them the

de facto situation and then gently and mildly pointed out

the undue expectation the community had placed on

the ordinary masses of people from the street. The

anticipated expectancy of exemplary behaviour

and overnight transformation of the people was

unrealistic and uncalled for. Moreover, he reminded

them the real cost of inviting the poor and the

prize they must pay for such benevolent gesture.

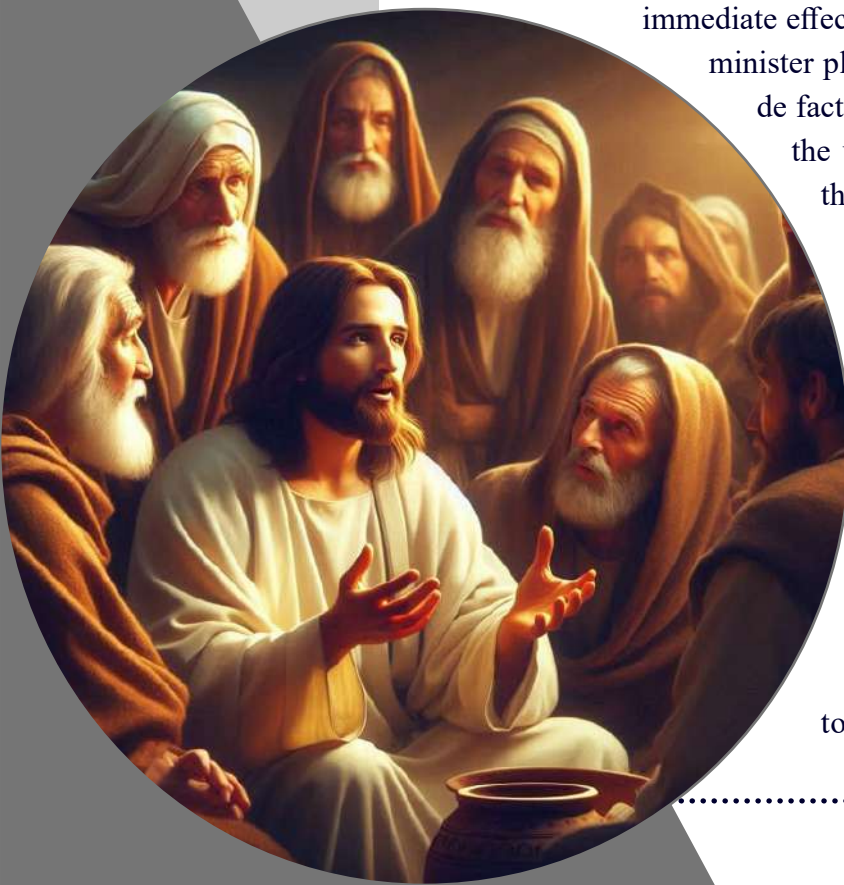
Furthermore, love is chaotic and even untidy

and one should be ready to pay the prize

(courtesy: <https://ronrolheiser.com/en/> February

17, 2025).

It was a point of learning for the community to be objective in their expectation from others,





especially from the under-privileged of the society. Even in the midst of setbacks and disappointments, one should be audacious enough to take necessary steps to reach out to the less fortunate ones to boost their sagging ego. According to Gustavo Gutiérrez, the father of Liberation Theology, being human and Christian is to make a preferential option for the poor. It is a conscious and deliberate act, which may not be reciprocated with pleasing responses. At the same time, people who live at the periphery of society need to be invited and integrated to the larger community, where they can function normally and contribute their unique share in building a just and caring society.

Invitation to Communion in Community

Pope Francis teaches us what it means to invite the poor and needy into our communities. Among the various endearing titles that he has received, “the Pope of the Poor” stands out conspicuously and distinctively, because often he has spoken on behalf of the poor and done everything within his capacity to ameliorate their pathetic situation. In the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis envisions a Church that is poor and merciful, open to sinners and the marginalized, decentralized and sacramental, and above all joyful and missionary. He dreams of a Church which functions like a field hospital in a war zone (*Amoris Laetitia* 291), ready to nurse and bandage the injured and the wounded, to bring comfort and healing to their shattered lives. He urges missionaries to step outside of their comfort zones and reach out to the poor and needy. The Pope also points out the need of moving out of the centre to reach to the peripheries (*EG* 20) in order to bring “Hope and Joy of the Gospel” into the traumatized lives of poor. The primary aim is break down the barriers that separate men and women from their fellow human beings, due to social status and try to bring them together to achieve enduring relationship and communion.

The Church is endowed with a unique mission of proclaiming God’s love and mercy to everyone, irrespective one’s creed or culture. Pope Francis very emphatically and unilaterally states: “The Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love” and “Her language and her gestures must transmit mercy, so as to touch the hearts of all people and inspire them once more to find the road that leads to the Father” (*Misericordiae Vultus* 10 & 12). The imperative is rather daunting, very demanding and equally challenging. Moreover, wherever the Church and her members live and work, they should not forget to invite the poor and the needy to their fraternal communities, which will facilitate an ongoing communion and will serve as an oasis of mercy, bringing peace and solace into their shattered lives.

The Art of Inviting and to Be Invited

Often Pope Francis takes the initiative of inviting seemingly unusual guests and at the same time he makes sure that he gets invited to their midst. On various occasions the Pope had extended cordial invitation to the poor, the homeless and the migrants to the Vatican; he undertook various schemes to reach out to them to meet some of their basic needs. It is amazing to know that he has installed showers and a barber’s service for the poor under the colonnades in St. Peter’s Square. The fear of vandalizing the impeccable look of St. Peter’s Square and the surroundings did not prevent him from such benevolent initiatives; for him, catering to the basic needs of the poor are more



important than preservation of mere testimonials. Together with the afore mentioned facilities, he also opened a hostel to provide beds for many of them at night. To augment their joy and delight in life, he invited them to join an organized visit to the Vatican Museum and to the Shroud of Turin. He too had no hesitation to spend one of his birthdays in the company of such unusual guests. What is amazing is that the Pope not only invites, but also get invited to spend quality time with the elderly and the lonely and other groups of people. On 16 January 2016, he visited a rest home for the elderly on the outskirts of Rome and interacted with the inmates freely and informally. The affable words and personal touch of the Pope brought great joy and jubilation to the lives of the elderly.

Invitation to stand at the Cross-roads and Welcome Everyone

Self-actualization, sufficiency and mastery are the buzz words of the modern times. But the Gospel does not present the picture of an upward mobility, climbing higher and higher on the social ladder, but one of going lower and lower in order to be raised up to greater heights of selfless service. Very pointedly Jesus said: The first among you should be the last and servant of all (Cf. Mk 10: 43). It is a life of service that counts more than self-sufficiency. Preferential option for the poor is the legacy of the Church and the Pope wants faithful adherence to it at all cost: “I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security” (EG 49). It is a Church that reaches out to “the peripheries” to shed the light of the Gospel (EG 20). Historical evidences show that whenever the Church was rich and powerful, she faced the temptation of diverting her attention from the true path of the Gospel proclamation; regrettably, the history of the Church is replete with such unfortunate incidents, which ultimately led to the Western schism. To avoid such future occurrences, the Church should not frantically and unnecessarily amass wealth, because the poor have something to tell and teach everyone.

Conclusion

Pope Francis envisions an inviting and welcoming Church, ready to spend time with the less-privileged ones of society. Since they are not in a position to contribute substantially, due to their financial deprivation, they should not be excluded from mainstream of the life and activities of the Church. The works of diakonia is both challenging and demanding. By inviting and opening the doors to welcome the needy, the Church gives credible witness to the love of Christ, who came to serve and not to be served.





A MOMENT WITH Fr. N.K. GEORGE



Celebrating 75 Years of Grace and Guidance: Rev. Fr. N.K. George

On this joyous occasion of Rev. Fr. N.K. George's 75th birthday, we honour the life of a man who is devoted to faith, service, and commitment. As a beloved priest, a missionary, mentor and guiding force, Fr. George has left an indelible mark on countless hearts wherever he served - parishes, educational institutions and formation houses. In this special feature of an interview with Fr. George, we the students share our heartfelt appreciation to him while reflecting on his kindness, wisdom, and the profound impact he has made on our lives. In his deep sharing, we get a glimpse of his compassion, leadership and unwavering devotion.

1) You have completed 75 years of your life and several years as a priest and What are your feelings and how do you look back at your life?

Childhood, teen age and adolescence were the best part of my life where I could enjoy freedom, love, and friendship from family, relatives and friends. Those were the years when I could look at my future with wonder, hope and expectations. The rest of my life were the days where I was engrossed to compete, perform and accomplish my ambitions with the help of God and co-workers. Looking back at my life as a priest I feel that God has been very good to me and protected me all through the journey of my priestly life with his guiding presence. He provided me with great opportunities to serve Him and the Holy Church of God under various capacities and experience the life of the Church in different parts of the world as well.

2) What inspired you to become a priest? Over the years, what has been the most fulfilling part of your priesthood?

Two factors inspired me to become a priest. 1. The exemplary life of the priests and nuns in my parish, their commitment and dedications and the support and encouragement they gave me by word to pursue a call to priesthood. 2. Priestly life of two of my cousins from paternal side and four of my uncles from maternal side. My interaction with these priests had a great influence in my life to pursue my vocation to priesthood.





The most fulfilling part of my priest hood were the several years I spent in parishes where I was directly and fully involved in pastoral ministries as parish priest in Nagaland and few years in United states as Parish Administrator and Parochial Vicar. Of course, I also enjoyed nearly fourteen years of priesthood as a formator in Seminaries and as educationist in the Diocesan College.

3) What are some of the biggest challenges you’ve faced as a priest? Have there been any moments that deeply tested your faith?

Financial nonviability of some parish or institutions where I was assigned and misunderstanding by some of the parishners. I did not experience any moment that deeply tested my faith.

4) What role do you think the Church should play today in people’s everyday lives?

The church’s role in everydaylife of the people is multifaceted, encompassing spiritual guidance, community building, and social action. It provides a framework for faith, encourages moral living and offers spiritual support through sacraments and traditions. The Church also should strive to be a force for good in society, addressing social issues and promoting charity and justice. In the words of late Pope Francis: “Church should be a field hospital” for people in the midst of their daily struggles.

5) How do you keep your spiritual life strong after so many years of service? What scripture or prayer has guided you the most in your journey?

I try to keep my spiritual life strong after many years of service in the Church by trying to be a man of prayer. By prayer I do not mean the recitation by rote of certain formulae. I mean serious, sincere, heartfelt, personal prayer. Personal prayer is not always easy. In order to avoid it we dodge and weave. I know it from experience. I go into the Church to pray, and I notice that the altar cloth is crooked, so I fix it. I settle down, and I realize that the sanctuary light has gone out, so I replace it. Then, there is a window banging because it isn’t properly closed or hooked, or a hymn book left out on a seat. It takes discipline to put all these issues on one side and say, ‘No my prime task here is to enter into a loving relationship with Christ, and everything else can wait.’ There is a hymn which begins, ‘Be still and know that I am God’. Being still is the hardest part. We are so geared to activity, to achieving, to getting job done, to being diligent.

The Scripture passage that guided me most in my spiritual journey is Luke Ch.10: 38. Jesus has gone to the house of Mary and Martha in Bethany. Mary sits at his feet and listens to him, while Martha was burdened with much serving and she gets angry with the inactivity of Mary. Doesn’t that describe the conflict that goes on inside us when we try to be still and pray? The Martha within me gets restless and says, ‘That’s enough time wasted-there are jobs to be done here.’ And tries to



pull the Mary in me out of reflection and listening, back into hard work and with measurable results. If you want your stewardship to be of lasting worth in the Church, you have to learn to be still, to listen, and to waste time with your creator and your savior.

6) What brings you the most joy at this stage of your life? How do you hope to be remembered by your parish and community?

At this stage of my life the most joy that brings to me is to acknowledge and thank God for his goodness to me for giving me good health and life. I don't hope to be remembered my parish and community in any other way except if I have been able to do any good to them.

7) What are your hopes for the future of the Church? What message would you like to leave for the seminarians and young priests?

My hopes for the future of the Catholic Church include a renewed focus on evangelization, a renewed emphasis on scripture and sacraments which can strengthen the churches foundation and spiritual life, outreach to the marginalized, a deeper commitment to social justice, and a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all. Furthermore, there is hope for the Church to embrace technology and modern communication methods to engage with a wider audience, and to address the needs of the digital age.

The only message I would like to leave for the seminarians and young priest is this: They should ask themselves, what was Jesus really like? How did the apostles perceive him? What bound them to him? The answer lies in two sentences you and I say and hear every day, rather automatically. 'This is my body, which will be given up for you.' 'This is the chalice of my blood, which will be poured out for you.' 'Given up, poured out.' This is what Christ is like. When John the Baptist sees him in the crowd, he says, 'There is the lamb of God.' The lamb is the symbol of gentle but total self-surrender. Our greatest desire should be that God's will be done and not that we get what we want, a realization that in God's will is only our real good. If God does not want me for a priest but for something else, then to continue would be madness, bringing unhappiness to me and disaster to my people. When we think of priesthood, we add the rider, 'If that is God's will.' We might find it hard to imagine ourselves doing anything else but nevertheless, we must open the whole thing to God, submitting our will to his.

Wishes from OTI Community...



BELLAMKONDA
Naveen Teja, SDS
B. Th. III Year



TETE Sumit
B. Th. III Year

SYMPOSIUM 2024

INTRODUCTION

The symposium held at Oriens Theological College from 7-9 Oct. 2024 has left behind a foot print of great academic experience. Renowned scholars and esteemed dignitaries had gathered to make presentations on topics related to trends in Christian witnessing. The contributions not only highlighted current challenges but also provided practical solutions and innovative perspectives. The insights shared are a treasure trove of wisdom for a Christian approach to engage with the world.

This gathering was a testament to the relevance of theological discourse to equip the next generation of Christian leaders with the tools to navigate the challenges of our time with wisdom, grace, and clarity. Given below are the lists of the presentations.



PRESENTATION 1- TRENDS IN CHRISTIAN WITNESSING

There are different trends throughout the history of India, starting from the early centuries, the coming of Portuguese missionaries, the coming of the Jesuits, and the Protestant missions. Christian missionary work in India began as early as the second century through existing trade routes. The arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century disrupted the harmony between Christians and Hindus, as the Synod of Diamper banned Hindu customs among St. Thomas Christians. Jesuit missionaries like Francis Xavier and Robert de Nobili were influential but made limited progress among Hindus and Muslims. Unfortunately, they were met with more of rejection than acceptance because of the binary vision they brought along. In the 19th century, Protestant missions also struggled due to their colonial associations and cultural insensitivity. Jesuit efforts in Bengal



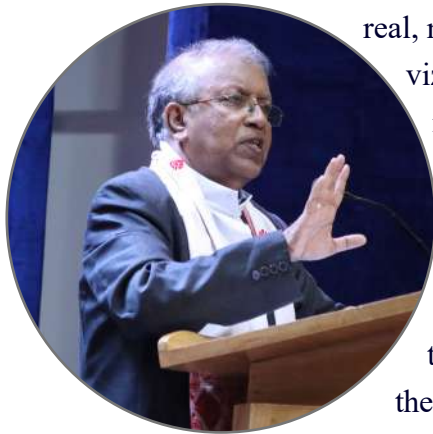


and Chota Nagpur were more successful, particularly in tribal areas, where figures like Father Constant Lievens helped restore tribal lands and protect their rights.

The trend adopted by Pope Francis who is trying “to read the signs of the time” as proposed by Vatican II. The world needs our involvement so that it can become a better place to live, and to do that we need to come out of comfort zones. The important contribution of charismatic movements in the area of evangelization is brought about Love for the Bible and invites people to the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We need to face challenges and problems as opportunities of witnessing. We need to go to the peripheries and get our hands bruised, wounded and solid to witness to Christ and the Gospel.

PRESENTATION 2- ECCLESIAL DILEMMA

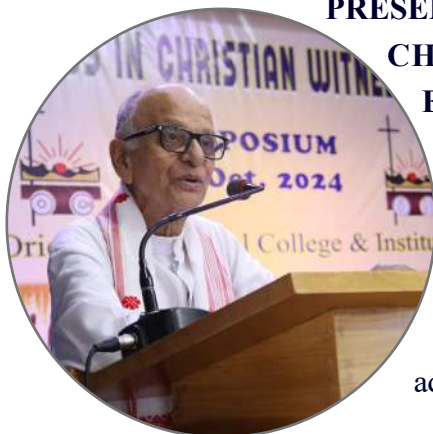
Ecclesial dilemma is defined as a state of confusion or indecision resulting from the competing alternatives that are both appealing and challenging. Dilemma is a choice of two alternatives equally unfavourable and confusing. This ecclesial dilemma is based on the experience and writings of Ralph Martin. There is a rapid and profound change in the world since Vatican II. In these times of overwhelming changes, dilemmas are



real, not imaginary. There are dilemmas in the Church in two areas, viz, Doctrinal Ambiguity and Moral Ambiguity. There is a great need for a responsible reflection on these changes. There are concerns about the Church’s engagement with social media and the ambiguity of statements made by Church leaders, particularly regarding the uniqueness of Christ for salvation. The impact of modern interpretations of faith and the confusion may arise from differing understandings within the Church community. The Church can navigate these challenges only by remaining true to its mission and message in a rapidly

changing world. Self-criticism is a must even if it hurts, so that we can know and understand ourselves and our practices better.

PRESENTATION 3- THE PRESENT SITUATION TO THE CHURCH MAKES US ASK THE QUESTION IS EVANGELIZATION A CLOSED CHAPTER?



St. Paul and missionaries in the past toiled to preach the Gospel, bringing meaning to many people especially those marginalized and left out. Pope Benedict XVI, focused heavily on doctrine. Pope Francis emphasizes more on human, pastoral approach that addresses societal issues such as the environment and



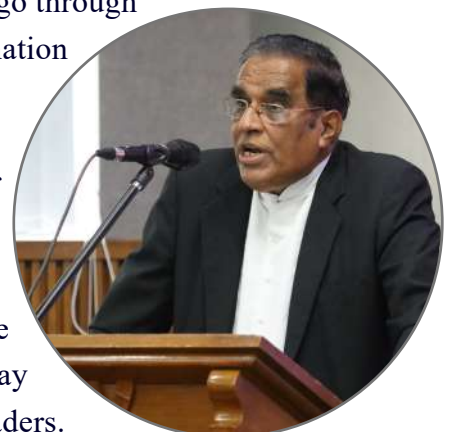
peace. This shift captures the attention of a broader audience, including those outside the Christian community. Pope Francis advocates as speaks a language that resonates with secular society, moving beyond traditional Catholic vocabulary. Pope Francis acknowledges the challenges faced by contemporary believers, describing Jesus as a stumbling block in modern society. He urges to return to Christ's teachings, emphasizing the need for peace in a world marred by conflict and consumerism. We need to go beyond our bounded circle, and open our arms to others. Pope Francis says that "We need the pleasure of Christ, not the pleasure of consumerism." Criticism of religion is prevalent everywhere. The Western world is moving towards Secularism. The sense of sacredness is diminished, though not lost. Christians are in the process of self-criticizing, not denying.



There is need for religion in the face of societal problems, people look for light, and we are that light. When there is no religion, people hunger for God, When religion is superficial, there is rejection of religion. Sometimes we deserve criticisms. They can be of much help to us. Small failure of priests is a big failure in the society. There is scope for rediscovery of values. We need to listen to other's voice. Humans long for meaning and truth; Jesus offers these. We should return to the traditional way and go to the peripheries, the forgotten and the under-privileged people. Pope Francis's approach is presented as a model for how the Church can remain relevant and impactful in today's world.

PRESENTATION 4- CHALLENGES OF FORMATION IN THE CHURCH

In Pastores Dabo Vobis, John Paul II says that formation is most challenging, most important for evangelization of humanity. Candidates of today are the pastoral leaders for tomorrow. Thus there is heavy duty for the formators in preparing future pastoral leaders. The council of Trent gave special importance given to seminary formation. Trent insisted upon formation around the bishops and the presbyters and special training. In Vatican II document Presbyterorum Ordinis a decree on ministry and life of priest issued on Dec 7 1965, set ground rules and basic guidelines for formation. A candidate must go through human spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimension of formation to become effective pastoral leaders.



There are some concerns in the Church that in spite of much training, priests lag behind very much compared to their peers outside. Sex scandals came out. Formation centers are questioned. Priests and religious are targeted. Dioceses declared bankrupt, unable to pay the debts. Failure is caused by incompetent leaders.



There is great need for rough and tough holistic training. Priesthood is not meant for people looking for semi-retirement. There is a danger of mediocrity. Mediocrity breeds sluggishness. There is a need for a paradigm shift in selection of candidates. Family is the domestic Church so the parents have a big role to play.

PRESENTATION 5- COMMUNITY DIVIDES AND SPHERES OF POLARITIES

Northeast India is blessed with diversities, and this also brings

about conflicts, groupism. North East India is home to over 200 ethnic groups, leading to complex social dynamics. In History, colonial divide and rule policy split the region. Unified identity is going against the rich diverse culture of North East India.

Ethnic groups navigate multiple identities like local,

regional, national and global often leading to conflicting loyalties and tensions.

Pre-colonial times there were Good connection for trade. Cultural exchange was equally robust, with neighbouring countries. In Colonial times it severely disrupted the network bringing down economy. Creation of artificial boundary had a lasting consequence in North East India, especially in the regional politics and ethnic politics. In the post-colonial period state of India disregarded the cultural and political aspirations of the North Eastern tribes. This fueled tensions and conflicts between central government and the region. There developed quest for autonomy of different ethnics over others like “this is our land” type of autonomous claim. Sustainable peace in NE India requires not just political agreements, but involvement of people.

In North East India the ethnicity is the primary identity and it suppresses all other identities. It is evident in every ethnic group, e.g. the Nagas among whom ethnicity takes precedence. The ethnicity is a priority over others, in all age groups, in viewing Importance of preserving traditional practices, customs and values. Language culture and ancestral land are grounds for conflicts with other ethnic groups, over resources and territory control and cultural recognition. States were created on the basis of ethnicity.

The sixth schedule districts are given autonomous councils, district councils. When some kind of injustice is done to other communities, conflicts begins. The competition for resources has intensified tensions and conflicts.

In the Case of Manipur we can see the hardening of Ethnic Identity. The current conflict shows that the other is an enemy. There is nobody who can speak about peace





in Manipur. Hardening of identity is allowing no chance for dialogue. The Christian approach here is witnessing. We are in a state of utter helplessness. Yet we have to be optimistic and we have to continue the good work, help both sides, through dialogue. Overcoming such polarities requires fostering dialogue, promoting empathy, and creating spaces for diverse perspectives to be shared in constructive ways.

PRESENTATION 6 – ENOUGH OF IMPOSITION OF IDENTITY! ISSUES OF GENDER

This theme was addressed by Sr. Helen Dantis who stressed on the various injustices that the female face in all levels be it social, political or religious. She began saying that women are an endangered species and today there is an importance of uplifting women’s dignity both within the church and society. Looking at various rape cases and other inequality are faced by women today. Being a real man does not come from dominating over women, but respecting them. She encouraged everyone to be real men.



Further she added saying that the urgent issue of women’s dignity is under threat due to sexual violence and systemic gender discrimination. There are some key factors that degrade female dignity which includes rigid gender roles and stereotypes perpetuated by patriarchy. This situations calls for collective action to reclaim women’s dignity through education, advocacy, and the dismantling of patriarchal structures. Positive responses from both men and women indicate a growing awareness and desire for change, suggesting that a united effort is essential for creating a safer and more equitable society for women.

PRESENTATION 7 – MINISTER AND MINISTRY – GOD’S LOVE BECOMING TANGIBLE

This theme was presented by Most Rev. Jose Chiralkal. He began by saying that ‘Priestly Ministry is a serving ministry. The active expression of divine love is through service and care. Through ministries acts of compassion, teaching, healing, and guidance God’s unconditional love is made visible and accessible to individuals and communities. This could manifest in feeding the hungry, comforting the grieving, or offering spiritual support. The ministry bridges the gap between the spiritual and the practical, showing that God’s love isn’t just an abstract concept but an active, transformative force in people’s lives. By embodying love through action, ministers and ministries help others experience God’s presence in their everyday struggles and joys,





reinforcing the belief that love is not just spoken but demonstrated. Therefore a priest must be available to the need of the people, visit families and most importantly visit the sick in the hospitals.

PRESENTATION 8 – *SENSUS ECCLESIAE* – A VISION FOR SYNODAL CHURCH?

This paper was presented by Fr. Stanislaus Chiliankhup in place of Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro. He began saying that hierarchy and laity should work together in order to have a vision of the Synodal Church. The theme itself represents a perspective that seeks to harmonize traditional hierarchical structure within the Catholic Church.



The formal structure of the Church hierarchy and the informal sense of the Church *sensus Ecclesiae*, are not mutually exclusive but interconnected. The *Sensus Ecclesiae*, a gift of the Holy Spirit, guides the Church in discerning what is truly of God. It plays a crucial role in decision making and leadership. A synodal Church is characterized by dialogue, participation, and communion. It involves all members in decision-making, leadership collaboration and Participation.

A synodal Church requires collaboration between the hierarchy and the laity. The laity should have a voice in decision-making, and the hierarchy should be open to listening and learning from the faithful. In a synodal Church, all members share responsibility for the life and mission of the Church. This includes a commitment to prayer, study, and service.

PRESENTATION 9 – WORD OF GOD: FOUNDATION, LAMP AND SCAFFOLDING OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Bro. Abraham Anthony began by stating that the Word is the foundation of truth. Every truth is rooted in the word of God. God became flesh in the heart of humans. He further said that the Exodus event, the first event that makes us aware of who God is? From chaos to cosmos! God creates by removing chaos and brings about cosmos. All scriptures breathed by God.



He continued saying that the Word of God serves as the foundation upon which the Christian life is built. It provides a solid and unshakeable basis for faith and understanding. The Word of God illuminates the path of the Christian. It guides believers through the darkness and uncertainties of life, providing light and direction. The Word of God acts as scaffolding, supporting and strengthening the Christian life. It provides a framework for growth and development, helping believers to build a strong and enduring faith. The Word of God nourishes the



soul, providing spiritual sustenance and vitality. Regular study and meditation on Scripture helps believers to grow in their relationship with God. The Word of God has the power to transform lives. It can change hearts, minds, and attitudes, leading to a deeper understanding of God's love and grace. The Word of God unites believers in a common bond. It creates a sense of community and belonging, fostering relationships with other Christians. The Word of God equips believers for mission. It empowers them to share the Gospel with others and to be witnesses to Christ in the world. By studying and meditating on Scripture, believers can grow in their faith, deepen their relationship with God, and fulfill their mission in the world.

CONCLUSION

The symposium has been an enriching and transformative experience for students of theology. It served as a dynamic platform that connected students with esteemed theologians and practitioners, offering invaluable insights into contemporary Christian witnessing. The diversity of topics, from the historical evolution of missions in India to modern challenges to gender equality, has deepened our understanding of theology in action. This gathering highlighted the importance of moving beyond theoretical knowledge to practical application. Moreover, the symposium tackled critical issues such as gender justice, the role of clergy in community service, and the need for holistic and rigorous formation for future leaders. It also addressed pressing socio-cultural dilemmas, like identity conflicts in Northeast India, urging students to approach such challenges with empathy and a commitment to peace-building.





PILGRIMS OF HOPE: A JOURNEY ANCHORED IN FAITH



MONDAL Uday
B. Th. II Year

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7)

In every generation, the people of God have been pilgrims, sojourners on a sacred journey toward the fullness of life in God. The phrase “Pilgrims of Hope” captures the essence of Christian existence: a journey marked not by resignation or fear, but by trust in the promise of God’s coming. It is a journey that echoes the biblical faith from Genesis to Revelation, and it is deeply resonant with the life of the Church today.

The Biblical Foundation of Hopeful Pilgrimage

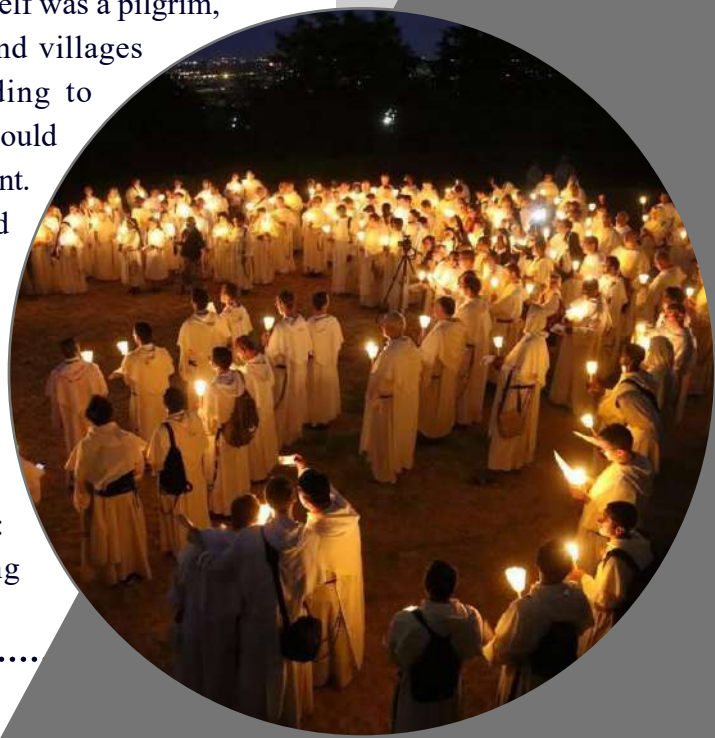
Scripture is rich with the imagery of pilgrimage. Abraham, our “father in faith” (Rom 4:16), was called to leave his homeland and go to a place that God would show him. His journey was not only geographical but also deeply spiritual, a movement from certainty into trust, from the familiar into the mysterious promise of God. Heb 11:10 reflects on Abraham’s pilgrimage, saying, “For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

Likewise, the Exodus narrative stands as a defining image of pilgrimage: Israel’s journey from slavery to freedom, from Egypt to the Promised Land. It was a path fraught with trials, yet God walked with His people, guiding them with a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Ex 13:21). This divine accompaniment assures us that we are never alone in our own pilgrimages.

The New Testament continues this motif. Jesus Himself was a pilgrim, born in a borrowed manger, journeying through towns and villages proclaiming the Kingdom of God, and finally ascending to Jerusalem - the city of destiny, where suffering and glory would meet. In Christ, the journey of all humanity finds its fulfilment. As St. Peter writes, “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable” (1 Pet 2:11-12).

Pope Francis and the Call to Hope

In announcing the Jubilee Year 2025, Pope Francis gave us the theme “Pilgrims of Hope.” He reminds the Church that this journey is not merely a metaphor but a lived vocation: “Hope is the virtue that inspires us and keeps us moving





forward, even when the road is hard and uncertain” (Address for the Jubilee Preparations, February 11, 2022). For Holy Father, hope is not simple optimism, but a deep trust in God’s mercy and faithfulness, especially amid global crises, war, ecological threats, and moral confusion.

In *EG*, Pope Francis writes: “One of the more serious temptations which stifles boldness and zeal is a defeatism which turns us into disillusioned pessimists. Nobody can go off to battle unless he is fully convinced of victory beforehand. Christian triumph is always a cross, yet a cross which is at the same time a victorious banner” (*EG*, 85). This is the hope of pilgrims - not escape from the world, but courage within it.

The Church: A Pilgrim People

The Second Vatican Council beautifully defined the Church as “the pilgrim people of God” (*LG*, 48), journeying through history toward the eschatological fulfilment in Christ. The Council affirmed that the Church, while already holy, is not yet perfect; she is always in need of purification and reform. Pilgrimage, therefore, is a symbol of the Church’s very identity—she walks with sinners and saints alike, sustained by grace.

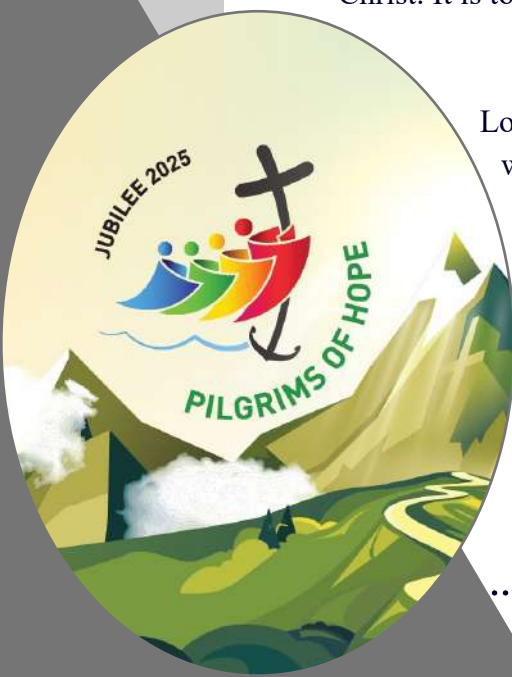
This journey is communal. The Christian is never a solitary traveller. We walk together, supporting one another in prayer, sacraments, and acts of love. The Eucharist, as *Viaticum* food for the journey which sustains us with Christ’s very presence. The saints, too, are our companions, reminding us that others have walked this road before us and now cheer us on, from the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:1).

Witnesses of Hope

In a world often clouded by pessimism and despair, Christians are called to be witnesses of hope. Our lives, marked by forgiveness, generosity, and perseverance, proclaim that God’s future is trustworthy. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in *Spe Salvi*: “The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life” (*SS*, 2). To be a pilgrim of hope, then, is not to ignore the pain of the world but to move through it with eyes fixed on Christ. It is to choose faith over fear, love over indifference and action over passivity.

Let us walk as pilgrims of hope, following in the footsteps of the Risen Lord. Let us be people who believe that, even in the darkest night, the dawn will break. With Scripture in our hearts, the Church as our companion, and Christ as our guide, we journey forward—not merely toward a destination, but toward communion with God.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Rom 15:13).





CALLED TO PROCLAIM IN JOY



**MANJALY
Prince Paul, VC**
B. Th. II Year

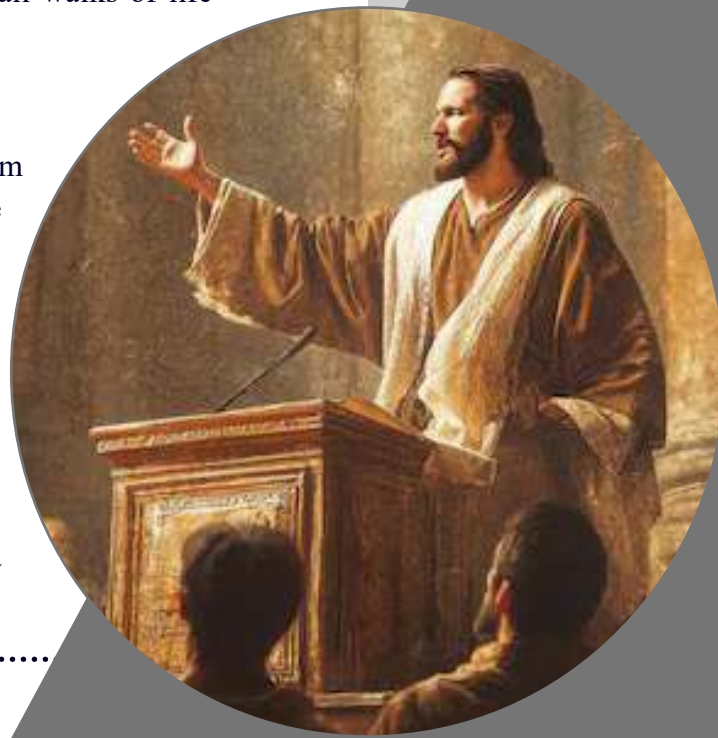
As an epilogue to the narration of the story of our redemption, Jesus calls forth his disciples just prior to his ascension apparently to express his last words. Herein he enunciates the words which become the mandate for all the faithful, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation...” (Mk 16: 15). The Gospel or the ‘good news,’ after articulating the words and deeds of Jesus that wrought our redemption, simply urges us to disseminate the very good news to the whole of creation, and the early church diligently adhered to this mandate. “Most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear” (Phil 1:14).

The preaching of the Gospel was not considered the responsibility and the monopoly of the Apostles and other leaders but it was the very duty of each Christian. That is why, the Second Vatican Council reaffirms, “Christ is the great prophet who proclaimed the kingdom of the Father both by the testimony of his life and by the power of his word. Until the full manifestation of his glory, he fulfils this prophetic office, not only by the hierarchy who teach in his name and by his power, but also by the laity. He accordingly both establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*) and the grace of the word so that the power of the Gospel may shine out in their daily family and social life.” (LG 35)

Thus, we can undoubtedly say that, “ALL ARE CALLED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL WITH JOY”. So clearly establishing this dictum, let us see some examples of this ‘ALL’ in the Gospel itself and how people from all walks of life contributed their share in the work of evangelization.

Mary, the Content Giver

Who is better than Mary to begin with, from whom begins the first proclamation of the Good News, the one who even gave herself up for enslavement to God for the sole purpose of the redemption of humanity. Being full of grace, her dedication knew no bounds even to accept being pregnant before her marriage. Her selfless act of braving the social stigma, possible ostracism, and even worse, death by stoning, is the reason for the content of the Good News: there was born a Messiah to redeem us. “Committing herself whole-heartedly... she devoted herself totally as a





handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son” (LG 56). The simple village girl became the first preacher of the Good News through her obedience and submission.

Joseph, the Provider

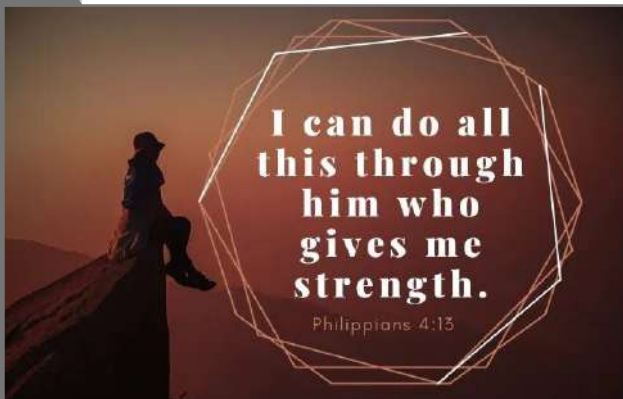
A man who never uttered any words to express his own desires, who even thought of secretly abandoning Mary, out of mercy rather than righteous judgment, instantly accepted the girl and her unborn child at the behest of the Angel, which was never his responsibility. Mary gave birth to the ‘content’ of the Gospel, but it was Joseph who wandered around to find a place in the inn for the Word to be born, who fled to Egypt to safeguard the ‘Word who became flesh’, provided for the ‘Word who bestowed His Flesh’. “St. Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood. It is precisely in this way that, as the Church’s Liturgy teaches, he “cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation” and is truly a “minister of salvation” (*Redemptoris Custos* 8).

Disciples, the Preachers

Directly called and appointed as ministers of the Word, there is no doubt about the efforts and pains they had borne for Evangelization. At the call of Jesus, many of them left their means of livelihood, their home and everything they ever possessed (Mt. 19:27) for the sake of the ministry of the Word. Their valour and dedication put their lives at stake; many were cruelly persecuted, gruesomely murdered and inhumanely tortured in the service of the Word. As St. Paul would testify that he was an apostle “... with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings and often near death... in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked” (2 Cor 11: 23, 27).

Common Man, the Experiencers

During the earthly life of Jesus, many lives were privileged to have the encounter with Christ. From Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10), to the man who was born blind (Jn 9:1-33) met in their shackles and fetters Jesus Christ, the Liberator. Once Jesus entered their lives, it was never the same again, for Christ never exited thence. Zacchaeus, witnessed to the Gospel by giving up half of his wealth for the poor, restituting fourfold for the unjust wealth he amassed, even becoming pauper in doing so. While the Man who was born blind, very rationally and boldly established the Power of Jesus before the Pharisees even unto the point of instigating them to drive him out of the synagogue. Countless examples and instances do we find in the New Testament wherein, the people who experienced Christ were in a frenzy to propagate this message of the Good News.



The Joyful Burden: The Heavenly Motivation Behind Their Dedication

Surfing through the lives of these biblical figures probes a question in our hearts. What was that driving force which vehemently prompted and urged these people to lay their wills and lives in the service of



the Gospel? For, we see that from the very moment they rolled up their sleeves for this purpose they were met with trepidation and predicaments. Mary, risked a possible stoning and questioning of her character; Joseph had to flee the country and provide for a child who was not his own and a wife, whom he never knew; Disciples were subjected to ghastly torments; Zacchaeus, lost his wealth and the Cured blind man lost the place that he had in the society. In other words, we would expect to see the most melancholic and dispirited people in these characters. Reality is very much contrary to the expectations. We do not find a grumbling group of ministers who wail over their perils but People who preach the Gospel with JOY.

The reason for this joy can be found in the Gospel itself. In the ‘Lost and Found parables’ of the Lukan Gospel, we find a very similar and peculiar response from those who were in search of the lost. They grow ecstatic and overly joyful for seemingly trivial things or person. A lost sheep in comparison to the remaining ninety-nine, one coin compared to the rest and the prodigal son comparing to the obedient and faithful son is too trifle and insignificant to be rejoiced over. But, God has entirely different perspective and vision. “...there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” (Lk 15:7) Every missionary, through his toils and hardships participates in this Heavenly Joy, which sustains, motivates and energizes each one of them. “I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church.”

HEART OF THE MISSION IS ‘ALL’



**KOLARY
Nershan**

B. Th. III Year

Every person born in this world has a mission to accomplish and it is according to his or her way of life that they choose to achieve their goal. A mission is a purpose or goal that someone or a group is dedicated to achieving. As Pope Francis states, “The mission is to share the message of Jesus Christ and invite others to experience God’s love and community.” So, it’s about including everyone and spreading hope, compassion, and faith in everyday life.

The world is always divided by differences of colour, caste, class, race, language and creed. In this context the heart of the mission is always to include everyone and the mission of the Church is to reach out to every person, regardless of their offered background, social status, or differences. That is what Jesus did in his earthly ministry. Jesus’ ministry is marked by radical inclusivity and he consistently reached out to those who were marginalized and excluded by society. The Samaritan woman at the well where Jesus her “living” water



(Jn 4:1-24), the tax collector Zacchaeus, to whom Jesus offered salvation (Lk 19:1-10), the healing of the lepers and sick (Mt 8:1-4), the healing of the servant of Roman centurion (Mt 8:5-13), and the deliverance of the daughter of a Canaanite woman from the demon (Mt 15:21-28), all emphasize the breaking of the social and religious barriers of exclusion and inclusivity of everyone. Thus, Jesus has given us example of including everyone in the mission and he has entrusted to the Church and her leader to carry out this mission in the broken world to give hope, love and faith to all.

At Baptism we are called for the mission and this mission involves going out and inviting everyone to encounter God and enter into communion with Him. The famous example given by Pope Francis about the parable of the wedding banquet in the Gospel, in it the king invites everyone, both good and bad, to the feast, and this message emphasizes that no one is excluded from God's love and the invitation to be part of His kingdom. In our mission too we may find people of different religion, social background, caste and class. It is therefore, our duty to welcome them no matter who they are and in what their state of life is.

In the mission there will be obstacles and challenges but God will always help us to do. To have inclusivity in the mission is to embody the teachings of Jesus Christ who emphasized love, compassion, and acceptance for all. So, to promote inclusivity we are to follow the example of Jesus, who reached out to everyone and included all in his ministry, going beyond the boundary of culture, caste and class and showing them the respect and welcoming them.

In order to welcome all, we need to create the environment of belongingness in spite of differences. Seeking out the lost, the marginalized, the forgotten, and welcoming them with open arms is another way of inclusivity bringing all together to experience the love of God. Working together for the betterment of the community for social, economic and spiritual support, which is an act of kindness and service and that can make people loved, cared and included. It can bring unity and experience of God in human life. They all will bring oneness and unity which the Lord prayed for.

“The heart of the mission is ‘All’ excluding no one.” It calls us to look beyond culture, social background and differences. Thus, as chosen ones, we are invited to take up the mission entrusted to us by Jesus to help everyone to feel the love, compassion of Jesus through our word, deeds and actions. And this work will only be possible when we abide in the Lord and do it for the greater glory of God.





EMBRACING OUR COMMON MISSION



THEKKEKUTTU

Bibin, MSFS

B. Th. III Year

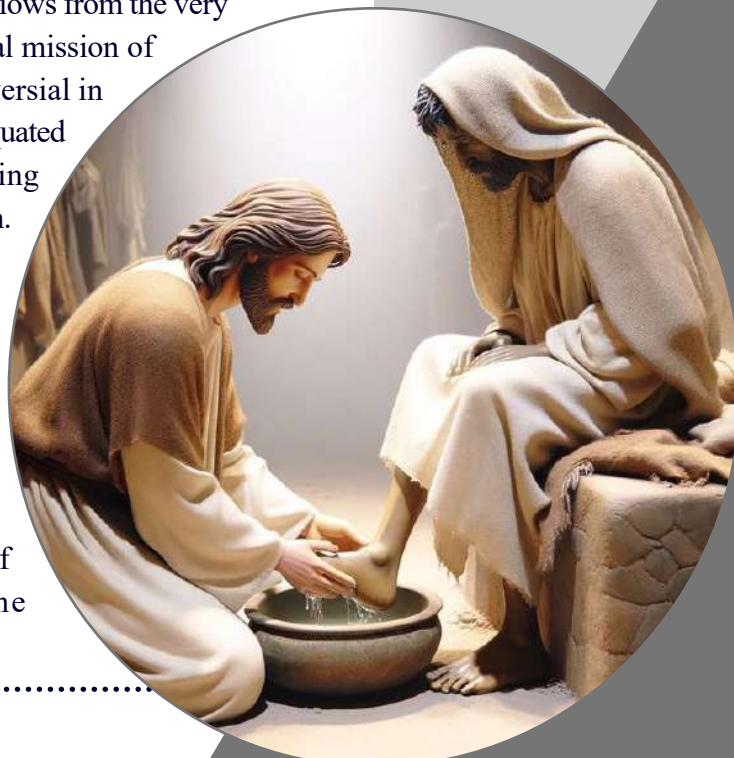
The Pope's message for this year's World Mission Day is inspired by the parable of the wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-14). The Pope's vision for a missionary evangelization is a masterpiece of transformation, where the Church emerges anew, her customs and structures reborn in the radiant light of the Gospel. He prescribes the cohesive balm of the Gospel as the remedy for the ailments of our world. Pope's heart overflows with gratitude for missionaries who have surrendered their lives to spreading the Good News, especially those who have left their homelands to evangelize in uncharted territories for the sake of love.

The Pope emphasizes the universal mission of Christ's disciples, extending the King's invitation to "everyone", excluding none. Missionary activities should share the joy of the Gospel, pointing to a horizon of beauty and inviting others to a sumptuous banquet. The parable of the banquet highlights the inclusion of all, especially the marginalized and the least of our brothers and sisters.

Observing the World Mission Sunday on 20th October 2024, Pope Francis' message resonated with a sense of urgency and purpose, amidst a backdrop of growing persecution and attacks on the Christian community. This year's theme serves as a poignant reminder of the Church's fundamental mission: to spread the Good News to every corner of India, even in the face of adversity and hostility.

The Catholic Church teaches that she is missionary by her very nature. It means that evangelization activity is something that flows from the very nature of the Church herself. Evangelization is the essential mission of the Church. The concept of evangelization may be controversial in the Indian context. Often it is looked at with suspicion and equated with proselytization. The Church in India is at the receiving end often due to the misunderstood concept of evangelization.

The Church teaches that the purpose of this evangelization is to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their spirit of Love. The Church believes that the message and content of the evangelization is the Good News, the Word made flesh. It is pointing to Jesus Christ. People who proclaim it are only instruments in the hands of God. The essence of evangelization does not change and it still is the





proclamation of Christ. The heart of its message will always be the same: the God who revealed his immense love in the crucified and risen Christ. In fidelity to the teachings of Christ, the baptized have a duty to go and proclaim Christ. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization. The source and strength of evangelization is explained as going beyond oneself and sharing what a believer has received in baptism. It is this sharing of love that makes a person fully human. A dignified and fulfilling life is attained only when we reach out to others.

Evangelization is not to be seen as an isolated individual activity, rather a communitarian activity. The mission is accepted by every single baptized Christian, but the mission is accomplished in a community. Therefore, communion and mission are interconnected. This communitarian aspect forces people to get involved in the lives of people by word and deed. An evangelizing community is supportive and stands by people at every step of the way, no matter how lengthy or difficult it may be. Pope Francis rightly uses the term ‘evangelizers smell the sheep’ to express the involvement of evangelizers in the daily lives of people. It is an invitation to imitate Christ who ‘knows his sheep.’

In a country marked by diversity, inequality, and social unrest, the Pope’s message is a clarion call to action, urging Indian Catholics to embrace their role as missionaries in a globalized world. It emphasizes the need for a collective effort to reach out to those on the periphery, to invite the marginalized, and to share the divine gift of salvation with all, regardless of their background, culture, or creed. Pope Francis’ message also underscores the universal nature of Christ’s discipleship, reminding us that every baptized Christian is commissioned to be a missionary, to witness to the Gospel, and to embody the teachings of Jesus in their daily lives. This call to mission is not reserved for the clergy or religious but is an inherent aspect of Christian identity, uniting Catholics across India in a shared purpose.

As we reflect on the Pope’s message, we are reminded that mission is not a programme or an initiative but an integral part of the Church’s DNA, pulsing through the veins of the Indian Catholic community. It is a call to communion, to community, and to shared witness, bridging the gaps between cultures, languages, and regions with the message of love. In a country where Christianity is a minority religion, the Church’s mission is a powerful force for transformation, healing, and reconciliation. From the tribal villages of Jharkhand to the slums of Delhi, from the fisherfolk communities of Kerala to the farmers of Punjab, the Church’s mission is a beacon of hope, a testament to the power of love, and a reminder of our shared humanity.

Let us heed the Pope’s call, embracing our role as missionaries in our daily lives, even in the face of adversity. Let us go forth, inviting all to the banquet, sharing the Good News, and embodying the teachings of Christ. For in doing so, we not only fulfil the Church’s mission but also become instruments of God’s love, transforming India, one heart at a time, and building a community of faith, hope, and charity that reflects the diversity and richness of our great nation.



MISSION IS A TIRELESS GOING OUT



SHEPOU Mathias
B. Th. I Year

Christian Mission is a tireless going out., to draw people to God and to give Christ through his life of sacrifice and works of charity. Mission is always alive because “Christ is alive” and the Holy Spirit is active. Mission is not a closed or a finished chapter because it is an ongoing mission of Christ until He comes again in glory. We should be credible and accountable to him as believers.

Jesus Tireless Mission: Jesus himself has taught us a beautiful and a perfect lesson for his followers in the parable of the Lost Sheep, where He leaves the ninety-nine and goes after the one that is lost, until he finds it. And when He has found it, He lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing” (Lk 15:3-5). Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He cares, shares concern and loves each one of us especially the lost and the strayed ones. The Lord never leaves us. He never gets tired and gives up on us. He searches us until he finds us and rejoices over us. He wants us to be always in his company. This is all about the tireless mission of Jesus given by His Father.

The Challenge: Christians are not to be in their comfort zone, but to go out and to reach out. One of the prominent examples we can see is the life of St. Teresa of Kolkata, who totally sacrificed and laid down her life for the rejected, unloved, broken and down trodden humanity. We too can become tireless missionaries in our situation by being present, by being kind, loving, caring, understanding, forgiving and giving our best to help in small and little ways to those who are in need. And even through our prayer for others like St. Therese of the Child Jesus did. We can become a beacon of joy and hope and consolation to others in this time of loss, pain and suffering; opening a way to experience the all-encompassing love of Jesus.

Missionaries go out to give meaning and purpose to life, to regain and restore back to Christ, where our present world has lost it. Archbishop Emeritus, Thomas Menamparampil, of Guwahati has exhorted in one of his works that we cannot stand idle and helpless today but see, think and act and take responsibility, which means we have a lot to do for the good of humanity and for the kingdom of God. Furthermore, Pope Francis stated at the World Youth Day in 2013, I want the Church to get out into the street, I want us to avoid everything that speaks of worldliness, of comfort, of clericalism, of being closed





in ourselves” (Ivereigh 45). This is a huge challenge in today’s world where we can be allergic and indifferent to mission. Nevertheless we are called to give light in the darkness and to be the witnesses of Christ. Jesus invites us today to deny our own interests and take up for the greater cause.

How far we can go out could be measured in how deep we could go into our self; how close we are with Jesus and truly being with the Lord in prayer and love. Remember, Jesus was always being with His Father in prayer in order to carry out His Mission. He trains His disciples in like manner. The sparks come only when we strike something. Realizing the infinite and bountiful goodness of God, we ought to love Him above everything else and be generous to Him and to our brothers and sisters. The Lord has done marvellous things for you and me. Can we be ungrateful and not give ourselves for His service when He needs our help badly? God’s mission is for everyone! You and I are called to go out for him today! Will we?



CHYNE Jose
Shlursing
B. Th. I Year

A MISSIONARY’S MISSION

A missionary heart, with vision wide,
Carrying hope where shadows hide.

Called to serve and to be sent,
To heal, to love, at their hearts rent.

Eyes that see the lost and lone,
Hands that reach to bring them home.

A love that does not tire or cease,
Sowing seeds of boundless peace.

A flame of faith that does not dim,
Draws all hearts back close to Him.

Called to give, to plant, to teach,
To cross the earth, to hearts beseech.
To go with courage, strong and bold,
To share Christ’s love that’s never old;

A witness bright, a life well spent,
A missionary, heaven-sent.





WEDDING FEAST: SHARING GOD'S LOVE TO EVERYONE



**PHAWA
Teimonlang**
B. Th. I Year

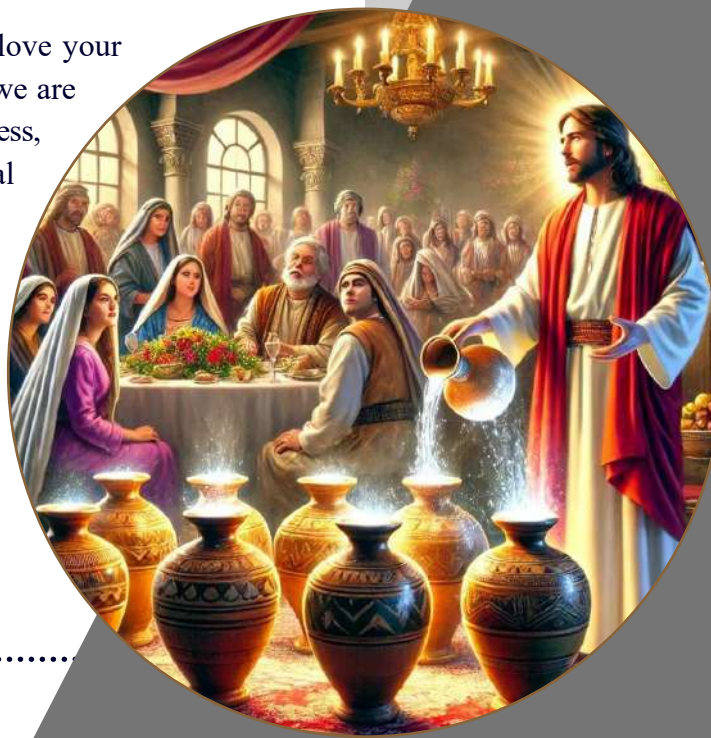
In a world that is more interconnected than ever, it is paradoxical that love often seems to be in a short supply. The world today often feels like it is lacking genuine connection, empathy and trust. People feel isolated, misunderstood or even anxious. Amidst this isolation and artificiality of human life, we are called to spread the message of God's unconditional love to everyone. We are called to love as Jesus loved, to serve as Jesus served and to welcome everyone as Jesus does to everyone.

In almost every culture, weddings are not just a celebration of two people joining in love; they are also a profound symbol of community, joy and happiness. Across time, they have come to represent more than the union of two people. They are also an opportunity to share love with family, friends and neighbours, extending an open invitation to gather, feast and share in joy.

In the Bible, weddings and feast are frequently used to illustrate God's relationship with his people. In the Gospel of Matthew 22:1-14, Jesus shares the parable of a wedding banquet, in which a king invites many guests to his son's wedding banquet. When the original invitees refuse to come, he opens the invitation to everyone, bringing people from all walks of life. This parable conveys a powerful message that God's love and invitation to the heavenly feast are open to everyone, regardless of status, background and past life. This parable emphasizes that God's kingdom is inclusive and his love is universal. We are encouraged to share this love with others, to act as a beacon of kindness, to welcome others warmly and to show hospitality without expecting anything in return.

One of the key messages of Jesus' teaching is "to love your neighbour as yourself" (Mk12:31). As followers of Christ we are called to embody love through acts of kindness, forgiveness, compassion and hospitality, mirroring the same unconditional love that God offers.

Wedding feast reminds us that God's love is something to be shared, not hoarded. A wedding is not a private affair; it is a public proclamation of love and commitment. Likewise, God's love is a gift that is meant to be shared publicly. This includes welcoming people into our homes, communities and places of worship, creating spaces where everyone feels valued and loved.





The wedding feast invites us to look beyond ourselves and extend a hand of welcome to everyone. Just as wedding guests rejoice in the couple's union, we as Christians are invited to rejoice in the love of God and to spread this joy to others.

As we celebrate weddings or any event that unites people in love and joy, may we also strive to extend our love, care, compassion, kindness and forgiveness to others, sharing in the joyous and boundless love of God.



TIRKEY Suleman
B. Th. II Year

COMMITMENT TO MISSION: A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

The Catholic Church, through its rich teachings and tradition, emphasizes that the mission of the Church is not limited to a select few but is a shared responsibility of both clergy and laity. Rooted in the teachings of Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, this mission encompasses evangelization, service, and the pursuit of justice. To fully realize this mission, it requires the wholehearted commitment of every member of the Church.

The Priest's Commitment to Mission

1. Priest as a Shepherd and Servant

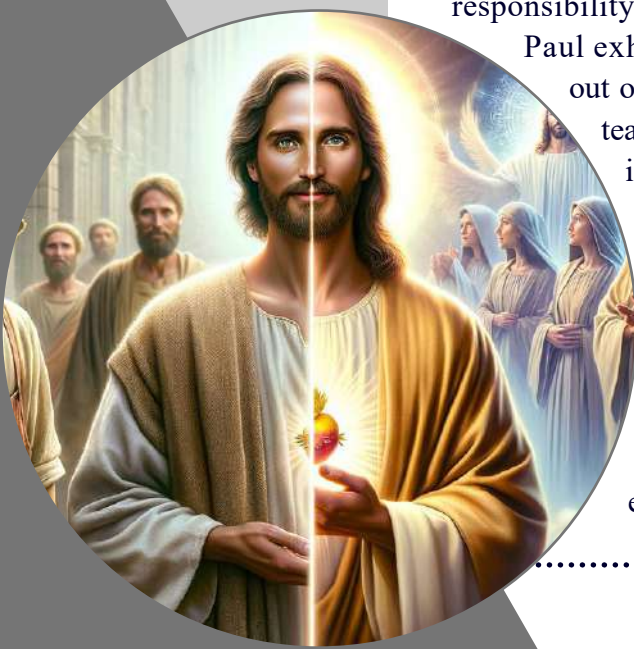
The role of the priest is intrinsically linked to the mission of Christ, who came "not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). Priests are called to embody this spirit of servant hood. Through their commitment to the sacraments, pastoral care, and preaching, they become living witnesses of Christ's presence. The Second Vatican Council's *Presbyterorum Ordinis* emphasizes that priests are to "carry out the mission of Christ, the Head and Shepherd, in communion with the bishop and other presbyters."

2. Priest as a Teacher and Evangelizer

Teaching is fundamental part of a priest's mission. This is seen in their responsibility to preach the Word of God and catechize the faithful. As St. Paul exhorts in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season," priests are called to engage in both formal and informal teaching, ensuring that the faithful are nourished spiritually and intellectually.

3. Priest as a Model of Hope and Faith

In their vocation, priests are symbols of hope, faith, and perseverance, especially in times of societal turmoil and spiritual dryness. Through their own faith journeys, they inspire others to see the Church as a beacon of hope. Their commitment to a life of prayer, simplicity, and pastoral charity serves as a tangible example of Christ's love.





The Laity's Role in the Mission

1. Participation in Evangelization

The mission of evangelization is not reserved for priests alone. The laity, through their baptism, are called to spread the Gospel in their daily lives. This is highlighted in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Pope Paul VI, which states, "The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church." Laity bring Christ into workplaces, schools, and homes, thereby extending the Church's reach beyond its physical walls.

2. Commitment through Social Action and Charity

Lay participation in social justice initiatives is a powerful form of mission. Inspired by Catholic social teaching, laity can transform the society by advocating for the marginalized, defending human dignity, and promoting peace. Initiatives such as feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and protecting the environment are concrete manifestations of their commitment.

3. Witnessing Through Family and Community Life

The family, often referred to as the domestic Church," is a vital sphere for mission. Parents and family members are called to be the primary catechists, instilling Christian values in their children and fostering a culture of faith. By living out their faith in their communities, laity become witnesses of the Gospel in everyday life.

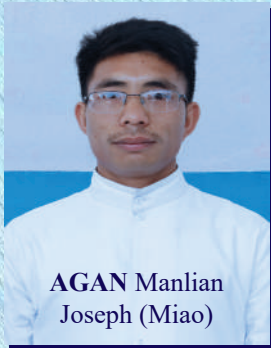
4. A United Mission: Clergy and Laity Together

The mission of the Church will thrive when both priests and laity work together. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, calls for a Church that is "missionary in all its actions." This vision requires priests and laity to collaborate in various ministries, such as parish councils, youth groups, and charitable organizations. Together, they form a dynamic force for evangelization and service.

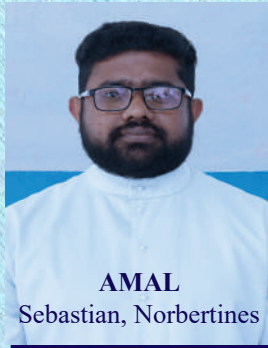
5. Strengthening Commitment through the Teachings of the Church

The Church provides various means to support the commitment of both priests and laity. The sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, nourish the faithful and provide spiritual strength. The teachings of the Magisterium offer guidance on moral and ethical living. Moreover, the example of saints and Church leaders serves as a continual reminder of the transformative power of a life dedicated to mission.

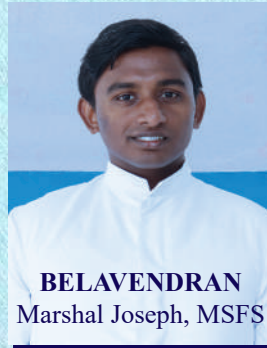
The mission of the Church is a shared endeavour that requires the commitment of all its members. Priests, through their pastoral leadership, and laity, through their engagement in the world, are both essential to this mission. Grounded in the teachings of the Church and inspired by the Gospel, their collective efforts ensure that the light of Christ reaches every corner of the world. In this way, the Church remains true to its calling as the Body of Christ, sent to bring hope, love, and salvation to all people.



AGAN Manlian
Joseph (Miao)



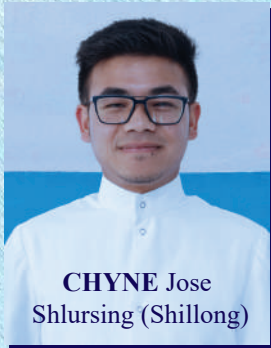
AMAL
Sebastian, Norbertines



BELAVENDRAN
Marshal Joseph, MSFS



BILLUNG
Sachin (Dibrugarh)



CHYNE Jose
Shlursing (Shillong)



DARLONG
Joseph (Agartala)



DEBBARMA
Bikash (Agartala)



DKHAR
Kitboklang (Jowai)



EZUNG Sabenthung
Benjamin (Kohima)



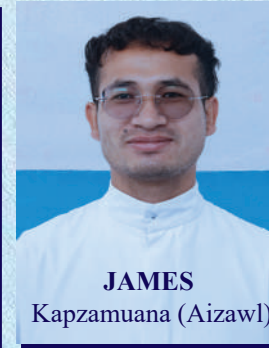
EZUNG Ovungthung
James (Kohima)



FRANCIS
Lalmuansanga (Aizawl)



HORO
Martin (Tezpur)



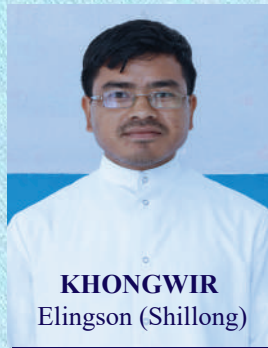
JAMES
Kapzamuana (Aizawl)



KERKETTA
Jenababa (Dibrugarh)



KHARPOR Leonard
Rangkyngjai (Shillong)



KHONGWIR
Elingson (Shillong)



KLEIN
Vincent, OFM Cap.



KUJUR
Nikhil (Ranchi)



KUJUR
Sumit (Dibrugarh)



LAMIN
John Kennedy (Jowai)



LANGI
Jostin, CMF



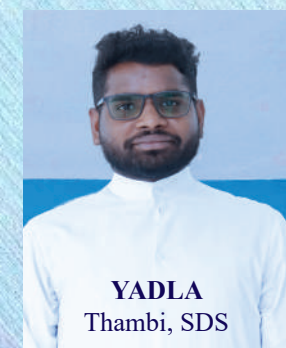
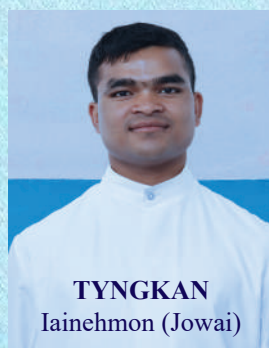
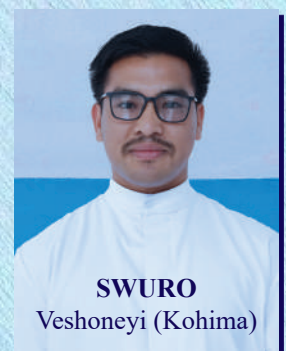
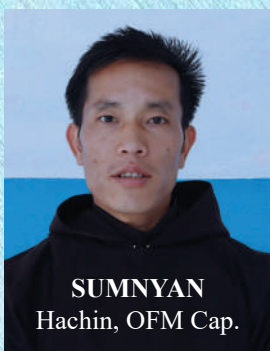
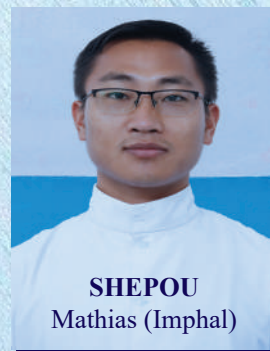
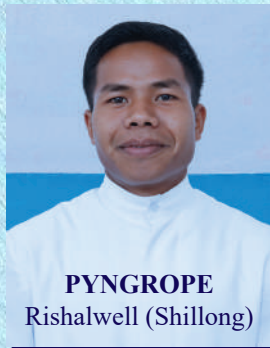
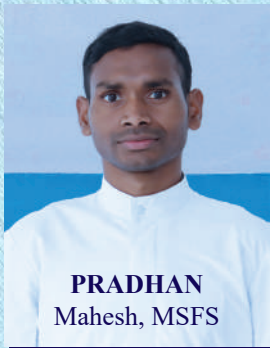
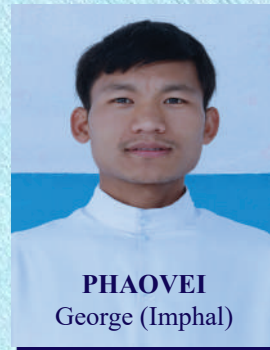
LYNGDOH
Shanborlang, CMF



MARAK
Paul (Guwahati)



MARAK Tartius
Rangsa (Guwahati)





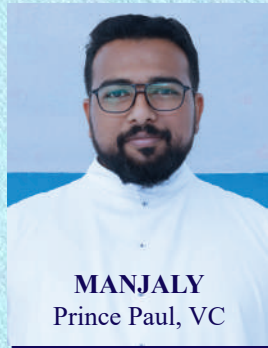
BILLUNG
Sunny (Tezpur)



EKKA
Abhay, SDS



HASDA
Patras (Krishnagar)



MANJALY
Prince Paul, VC



HAVI
Winman (Miao)



HEMBROM
Ignatius (Jalpaiguri)



HINGE
Phidalis (Jowai)



INDUWAR
Dilip (Tezpur)



KANAI
Heibormi (Jowai)



KHARMAWPHLANG
Jerry Nelson (Shillong)



KHONGJOH
Tlogi, SDS



KHONGSAI
Vincent (Imphal)



KHONGSYA
Iophiyos, SDS



KHONGTANI
Mardor (Shillong)



KHONGTANI
Pyndapborlang (Shillong)



KURBAH
Pynshngainlang (Shillong)



KYMPAT Brandon
Lionel (Jowai)



LAKRA
Fuljence, CMF



LAKRA
Reshma (Bagdogra)



LONGKO
Napon (Miao)



LYNGDOH
Firstkyson, SDS



LYNGDOH
Robestar (Jowai)



MALLAVARAPU
Bala Anvesh (Agartala)



MALNGIANG
Eskarius, CMF





BALIARSINGH
Bibhu, CFIC



BARLA
Emlus, MSFS



BECK
Ebinius (Tezpur)



BELLAMKONDA
Naveen Teja, SDS



EZUNG James
Chomithung (Kohima)



JAMES Jestin
Richard, MSFS



KAIPENG
James (Agartala)



KHARMAWPHLANG
Lekotsing (Shillong)



KOLARY
Nershan (Tezpur)



KURISINGAL
Dolwin David, CFIC



KUZHUPPIL
Tony Shaji (Idukki)



KYNDAIT
Sambha (Jowai)



MARAK Divid
Rangsa (Tura)



MASHARING
Ribansius (Shillong)



MATTEL
Jain (Idukki)



MINJ
Ateet, MSFS



MINJ
Tribin (Diphu)



RULHO Keneisalie
Dominic (Kohima)



SANGMA
John (Guwahati)



SANGMA Sylvester
Manda (Tura)



SHYLLA
Richard (Jowai)



SOHKHWAI
Siansius (Shillong)



SOHSHANG
Wanphrangnsngi, MSFS



TAITHUL Thomas Hau
Min Thang Zou, SDS



TERON
Michael (Diphu)



TETE
Sumit (Dibrugarh)



THANGMINLUN
Marcus, CMF



THEKKEKUTTU
Bibin, MSFS



TIRKEY
Simon (Dibrugarh)



UCHOI
Khakchang (Agartala)



ZHOLIA
David (Kohima)



MICHAEL
Lamin



LAMKUPAR
Dkhar



RANGDONBOR
Hoojon



Mr. DOMINIC
Rabha



RAJEN
Urang



Mrs. CILISTENA
Rabha



Mrs. Rina
Rabha



MITHUWEL
R. Marak



KOSTAN
Tirkey



KAMLESWAR
Urang



TIRKEY
Vijay



EZUNG Sabenthung Benjamin
B. Th. I Year

GO AND INVITE TO ESCHATOLOGICAL BANQUET

The *Hedonist* embraces pleasure. The *Epicurean* seeks life free from pain and suffering. The *Charvaka* focuses on physical reality. The *Moirologists* mourn as a duty. So, what makes the Christian banquet distinct from all others on earth?

For over a thousand years, the Jerusalem of *Christianus Caelestia* has welcomed rich and poor, men and women, righteous and sinners, Jews and Gentiles, and people of all races to share in a heavenly feast. This feast is open to those who forsake worldly comforts and follow Him. But are we strong enough to take up this challenge? The world celebrates power and fame, yet often overlooks true joy.

The banquet everyone desires is not one of fleeting comforts but of joy. The path to this everlasting feast is not always easy. Some seem to journey well, but their faith weakness along the way; some are called but fail to respond. Yet wise virgins persevere, reaching the eternal crown of festivity.

Pope St. John Paul II, in his writings, describes the Eucharistic Banquet as a foretaste of heaven where believers participate in the liturgy, experiencing the heavenly Jerusalem. He emphasizes the Eucharist's role in uniting us with Christ and His bride, the Church, foreshadowing the eternal banquet. The late Pope Benedict XVI, too, speaks to the eschatological dimensions of communion, highlighting its connection to the heavenly banquet. He stresses that the Eucharist is not only a memory of the past but a real encounter with Christ, joining us to the heavenly liturgy.

Similarly, Pope Francis emphasizes the Eucharist as a "Banquet of Mercy and Inclusion," where God's love and mercy flow abundantly.

He teaches that the Eucharist is not an exclusive privilege but a gift to be shared with all, especially the marginalized and oppressed. Through the Eucharist, we experience the inclusivity of God's love, which foreshadows the heavenly banquet where all are welcome.

We have all heard and reflected on the parable of Jesus, "The Wedding Banquet" (Mt 22:1-14). In this parable, the invited guests reject, mistreat, and even kill the master's herald. How often does God invite us personally, only for us to dismiss His living words? God, merciful as He is, extends a second invitation to the virtuous and the outcasts





alike. Yet, despite the multitude of guests, only those who wear the wedding garments are allowed to stay. Are we journeying straight to heaven just because we are sent to earth? Where is the spiritual purity and righteousness represented by the bridal robe? Only the wedding garments of holiness can admit us to the banquet of God's grace and salvation.

The ultimate triumph and redemption of eternal joy are portrayed in the book of (Isa 25:6-8), where eternal fellowship is shared without shame, grief, or worry. It is a feast of joy, peace, and love, celebrated in the companionship of God. How compassionate is the Lord, inviting His created beings to share His table as one family!

Today, the heavenly kingdom invites us, seeking not beauty or riches, but a heart contrite in spirit. We are placed in the furnace of this earth to be purified in His likeness, to love and serve Him. Yet, how often are we distracted, avoiding purification? God remains present even in our deepest sorrows, though our unclean souls may draw us away. God continually offers us the chance to unchain ourselves from our desires. His joy is to feast with the poor and needy, to see His created beings transformed, turning from unworthy living to a life of self-sacrifice.

God loves us, and He calls us today to an everlasting banquet, an infinite feast that no earthly experience can equal. Through His living prophets, He invites you to sing with the *Angeli et Sancti* in heaven.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION AND FRATERNITY



HORO Martin
B. Th. I Year

The Universal Mission of Christ is meant for everyone. "Go and Invite everyone to the banquet" resonates deeply with today's need for unity, fraternity, and celebration of shared humanity. God's invitation is for all people of the earth. The banquet symbolizes the kingdom of Heaven – a space of love, joy, and most importantly fellowship where all are welcomed, regardless of their background, status or shortcomings. The concept of banquet stands God's opened invitation to all to experience His love, healing, and grace not just after life but in our everyday life.

Mission as an invitation to communion illustrates that being part of the Church means participating in her mission of communion. Each Christian is a missionary and the role of Christians is to evangelize, reach out, with missionary spirit. The Church is not a fortress to protect but to a home that welcomes. Communion is not just for selected group but for all. It is a call to embrace diversity and extend God's love to everyone. In communion all are brought together as one family in Christ through the Eucharist, which is a celebration of belonging and sharing in God's grace. The mission for all requires the commitment of all.

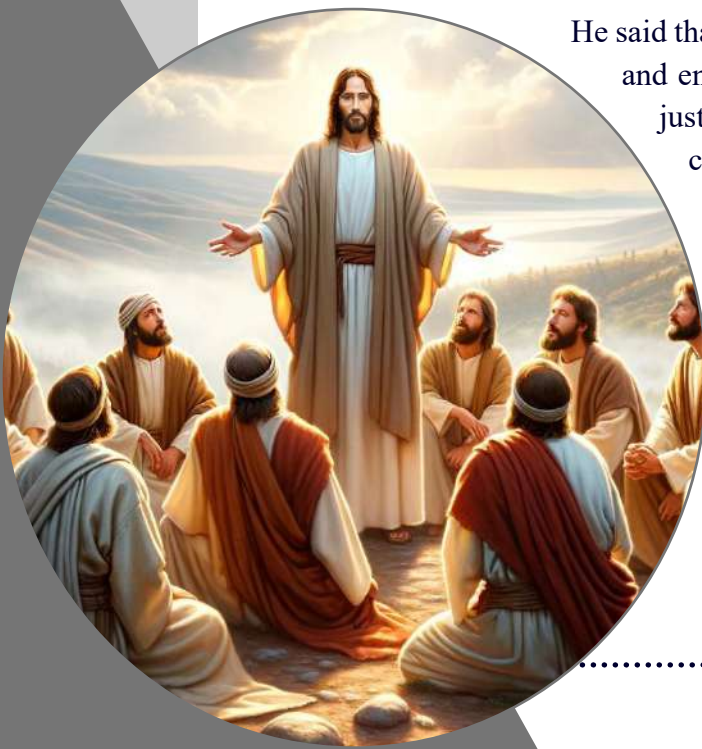


The mission in communion needs heartfelt concern for all the people. The world sets before us consumerism, selfish comfort, accumulation of wealth and individualism, but the Lord invites us for divine banquet. But, the people of gospel (Christians) should be able to defeat the fruits of evil banquets and willingly participate in bringing all the people to the Lord's banquet and be in communion.

Fraternity is needed in a fractured world where humanity faces conflicts, economic disparities, and environmental crisis. In the midst of all these Pope Francis calls for a renewed commitment to fraternity. Fraternity reminds us of the interconnectedness of humanity: "we cannot truly celebrate banquet of God while others are left hungry physically and spiritually." This calls to fraternity explore that we all are brothers and sisters, invited to share God's Love. It is a profound invitation to build bridges, celebrate diversity, and create a global family united in peace. The Pope's words inspire us to embrace the banquet of fraternity, where every person finds belonging and dignity. India, a land of spiritual richness and diversity, embodies the potential for communion and fraternity. The celebration of festivals like Diwali, Id, and Christmas across communities showcases the spirit of fraternity. These occasions are reminders that shared celebrations foster understanding and respect. The Principle of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* is from *Maha Upanisad*, which is part of the *Atharva Veda* (The world is one family or all living on the earth family) reflects a deep-seated belief in unity amidst diversity, welfare of others, fostering global solidarity and responsibility. The principle of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity and its importance. To have unity among the brothers, first, we need to have great respect which leads towards great fraternity. The encyclical letter of Pope Francis "*Fratelli Tutti*" is an Italian phrase "*All Brothers*" which emphasizes on fraternity as the common good of all, that enables us to love without borders, where people love others as brothers and sisters, even when they are unknown to each other. '*Fratelli Tutti*' calls everyone to share is marked by joy, justice and fraternity in communion with God and with others.

The minute you walk outside of your church on Sunday you're in mission territory says Robert Barron. Pope Francis said that the heart of mission is "to go and to invite".

He said that mission is a tireless effort to invite people to encounter God and enter into communion with him. Pope Francis' message is not just a reflection; it is an invitation to act. He urges individuals, communities, and nations to foster dialogue, promote peace, and serve the marginalized who are shunned by the society. The call to communion and fraternity resonates with our basic needs to be united in strength and produce fruitful goods and not just get divided because of indifference. Invitation to communion and fraternity urges us to embrace the call with all our hearts, serving God's mission with joy, enthusiasm, and with tenacity. A Christian without God's mission in his life is like a bird without wings.





BACK TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE: A CALL TO THE PRODIGAL CHILDREN



MARBOH Bester
B. Th. II Year

In Lk 15:11-32, Jesus narrates the powerful parable of the Prodigal Son a story of rebellion, repentance, and reunion. This timeless parable speaks not just to individuals but also to the Church as a whole, offering profound insights into our mission of re-evangelisation. In a world where many have drifted away from faith, the call to bring back the “prodigal children” is more urgent than ever.

The younger son in the parable represents countless individuals who, for various reasons, have distanced themselves from the Church. Some may have left due to personal wounds, spiritual dryness, or disillusionment with institutional practices. Others might be lured by the false promises of secularism, materialism, or individualism.

Yet, like the son who found himself lost and broken in a far-off land, many of these “prodigals” carry a deep yearning for the Father’s love, even if they don’t recognise it. The Church must step forward as the father in the parable, standing with open arms, ready to embrace and restore them to the family of faith.

Re-evangelisation: A Shared Mission

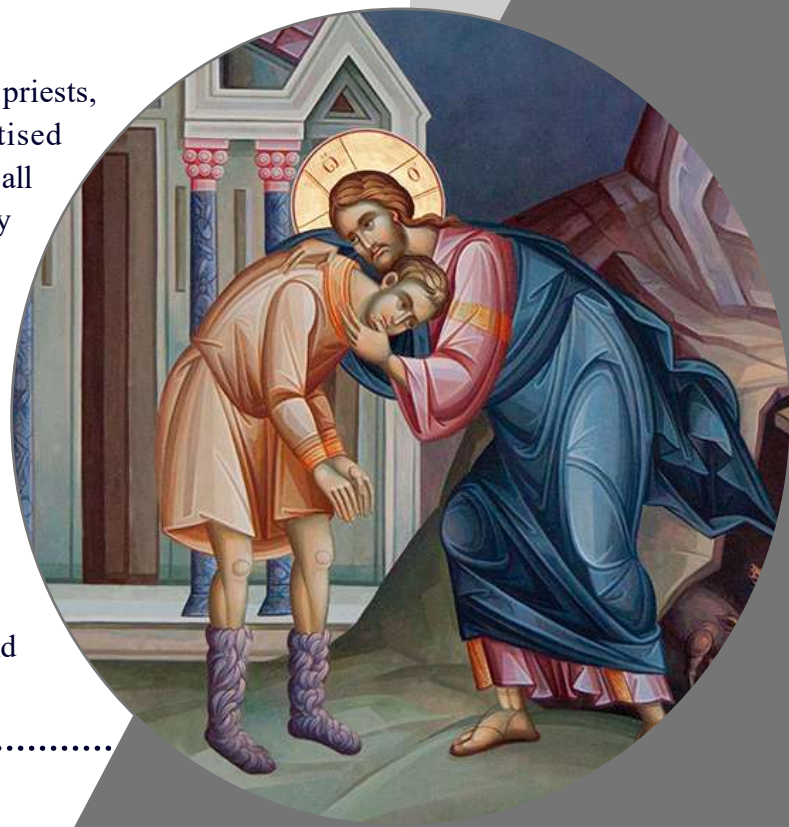
Re-evangelization is the process of reigniting the flame of faith in those who have become distant. It is also referred to as “New Evangelisation.” It emphasises the need for a renewed passion, methods, and expressions of faith to reach those on the margins of the Church.

This mission is not just the responsibility of priests, religious, or catechists; it belongs to every baptised Christian. As members of the Body of Christ, we are all called to be ambassadors of reconciliation, actively seeking out the lost and inviting them home.

Some Approaches to Invite the Prodigal Children Back

1. Reflect the Father’s Love

Just as the father in the parable ran to embrace his returning son, we must embody God’s unconditional love. Judgement or condemnation has no place in this mission. Instead, our actions, words, and attitudes should reflect compassion, patience, and forgiveness.





2. Listen

Many who have drifted from the Church carry deep wounds or unanswered questions. Take time to listen without interrupting or trying to provide solutions. By creating a space for dialogue, we show that their experiences and emotions matter.

3. Witness Through Example

Actions often speak louder than words. Living as joyful, faithful Christians – deeply committed to prayer and service – can inspire others to rediscover the beauty of a life rooted in Christ.

4. Use Modern Tools for Outreach

Social media and other digital platforms are effective tools to share messages of hope and faith. In this digital age, these tools can serve as powerful channels to reach those who are hesitant to step into the church.

5. Pray and Persevere

The journey of re-evangelisation is not always swift or straight forward. Like the father who waited patiently for his son's return, we must remain steadfast in prayer, trusting in God's timing and grace.

The Role of the Church Community

The older son in the parable reminds us of the danger of self-righteousness within the Church. As a community, we must resist the temptation to act as gatekeepers of God's mercy. Instead, let us rejoice at every soul that returns, recognising that each person is a gift to the family of faith.

Pope Francis has often described the Church as a "field hospital," a place of healing and hope where the wounded are tended to with care and compassion. For the Church to truly fulfill its mission, it must reflect the father's house – a sanctuary where love and mercy abound.

The Call to Action

All of us are called to become co-workers in God's mission of reconciliation. The prodigal children of the Church are not strangers; they are our family, friends, and neighbours. Each of us has a role to play in reaching out, welcoming, and journeying alongside them as they rediscover the love of God.

The Father's house is never complete without every child at the table. Let us rejoice with heaven for every soul that returns, and commit ourselves to being agents of grace, healing, and homecoming in the lives of those who have wandered. Together, we can rebuild the Church as a vibrant, welcoming community that mirrors the boundless love of the Father.



MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS



MINJ Tribin
B. Th. III Year

Each one of us come from different background no matter what we are, where we are, we are not responsible for the past but we are responsible for the future. The Christian mission is basically inclusive, reaching out to all people regardless of their background, culture, or location. The Bible provides a healthy foundation for the concept of a mission without borders. Jesus' great commission in Matthew 28:19-20 is a foundation of mission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." This command draws a special attention to the universal nature of the Christian mission, calling believers to reach out to all nations. The mission of the Church is not confined to a specific geographic area but extends to the entire world.

We see in the Bible that Jesus often used parables to communicate reflective truths about the Kingdom of God and the inclusivity of His mission. One such parable is the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). In this story, a Samaritan helps a wounded man, while others pass by. Jesus concludes by instructing to "go and do likewise," asserting that love and compassion should transcend ethnic and social boundaries. Another applicable parable is the Parable of the Great Banquet (Lk 14:15-24). In this parable, a man prepares a great feast and invites many guests. When the invited guests make excuses and do not come, the man extends the invitation to the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.

The Church often emphasizes the importance of missionary work through various documents. The Second Vatican Council's decree *Ad Gentes*, articulates the Church's missionary nature: "The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father" (*AG* 2). This document underscores that mission is not just one of the Church's activities but is central to its identity. Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, further elaborates on the Church's evangelizing mission: "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (*EN* 14).





Pope John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* repeats the urgency of missionary work, emphasizing that the Church must reach out to all people: “The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion... This mission is still only beginning and we must commit ourselves whole heartedly to its service” (RM 1). Pope Francis, in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, calls for a Church that is open and welcoming to all: “The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice.

An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19); and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast” (EG 24). In his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis expresses the importance of inclusivity and solidarity: “We are all in the same boat and called to work together so that there will be no more walls that separate us, no longer others, but only a single ‘we,’ encompassing all of humanity.” His teachings encourage the Church to be a welcoming community that reaches out to everyone, especially those on the margins of society.

Therefore, mission without borders is a call to embrace the universality of the Christian message. It is rooted in the teachings of Jesus, unbreakable by Church documents, and passionately advocated by Pope Francis. As Christians, we are called to go beyond our comfort zones, reach out to all people, and share the love of Christ with the world. This mission is not limited by geography, culture, or social status but a testament to the inclusive and transformative power of the Gospel. By living out this mission, we embody the essence of the Church’s identity and fulfill the great commission, ensuring that everyone is welcome in the embrace of God’s love.



MISSION IS ALWAYS SYNODAL

KHONGSYA
Iophiyos, SDS
B. Th. II Year

The term “Mission” means sending. The meaning expresses the idea of going forth from one person to others in order to bring the good news to the person intended. It has its root in the Trinitarian Mission, the visible mission of the Son sent by the Father and the invisible mission of the Holy spirit sent by the Father and the Son. Then Christ sent the apostles to different parts of the world to make disciples of all nations. They were given the mission mandate to preach the Gospel to all and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching what the Lord commanded and followed by the assurance of Christ being with them when they go for a mission (Mt 28:19-20).

The International Theological Commission describes synodality as ‘Synod’ which is an ancient and venerable Word in the Tradition of the Church, whose



meaning draws on the deepest themes of Revelation. It also means that people of God working together. Equally, it refers to the Lord Jesus, who presents Himself as “the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6) and to the fact that Christians, His followers were originally called the followers of the way’ (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14-22).

One of the dimensions of the Synod in Synodality is Mission. Our mission is to witness the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. This Synodal Process has a deep missionary dimension to it. It is intended to enable the Church to better witness to the Gospel, to all people in all walks of life. In this way, synodality is a path by which the Church can more fruitfully fulfil her mission of evangelization in the world, as a leaven at the service of the coming of God’s kingdom. The bishops and priests are called by the sacrament of Orders to share in the church’s mission. From the beginning of Christianity even laity played a very important role in missionary activities.

The church by its very nature is missionary. The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion (*RM I*). For many centuries people believed that mission is only those activities carried out by the missionaries coming from different countries going to another country proclaiming Christ especially to the pagan world. All by virtue of our baptism are called to share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. In the book of Acts 9:13-16 it was given by God to a man to be an instrument to bring the good news to the Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel, he himself will show us. Mission is not always going to the unknown place, proclaiming Christ to the pagan world. In fact, everyone knows about Christ if not about Christ but Christianity is known to all. Mission is also carried out in our domestic church i.e our house. St. Paul called the church as the house, *ecclesia* (1 Pet 2:5; 4; 17 1 Tim 3:15; Heb 10:21).

The first mission was given to Adam and Eve to care for the common home, where they were to do together. Eve was given as partner to be with Adam to care for the God’s creation, the first mission of a family (Gen 2:15ff). In the New Testament, the Church is the house of God where all are invited to share what they have without discrimination. For St. Paul mission started from the Christian community where people gather in the houses. The early Christian community came together to share bread and to pray (Acts 2: 42). In Mk 5:19, Jesus told the Gerasene Demoniac, “Go home to your people and tell them all that the Lord in his mercy has done for you” and in obedient fulfilment of his command, he went happily and began his mission at home. The Samaritan woman went to her people and neighborhood telling the people about her encounter with Jesus the living water (Jn 4: 1f). St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesian said that all are called to the works of service so that all may built Christ or have Christ in their lives (Eph 4:11-13) and to be united in doing our services (Eph 4:4-5).





The final document of the Synod speaks of the many ministries that will help built Christ in our lives such as leading community prayer, coordinating a small church community, organizing charity and helping the community grow in faith through the services rendered to the Church community (76). In the journey of doing services to the community, the laity should be allowed to have a kind of dialogue by sharing one's own creative idea in the communities, allowing lay faithful to be able to share the responsibilities in the ecclesiastical institutions, including seminaries, institutes and theological faculties, canonical processes, respecting the dignity of all and in many more areas of concern. In *EG* 3. Holy Father urges that all are invited to experience Jesus and it is the duty of all to make it happen when he said, I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord". There is a need to be able to listen as Pope Francis says "We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing" (*EG* 171). A synodal church is a church that listen to each other. In *RM* 85, the document stressed on cooperating in missionary activity not just in giving but in receiving, thus we receive through listening to each other.

The Holy Spirit plays an important role in the mission of the Church, because everything is possible but not without the Holy Spirit. The early Christian community is an example that the Pentecost is the event that brought unity in the lives of the community to go and proclaim the message of the risen Lord. Bl. Francis Jordan Says "we should especially call upon the Holy Spirit in order that, like the Apostles, we may always be of one mind and one heart in the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts, may it keep us all in unity. We are all called to the apostolate; we are called to preach the Word of God." The Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son on the Pentecost day was not only for the apostles but also for the whole community present at that time. So definitely the mission and the sending of the Spirit was given to all. The Vatican II document *Ad Gentes* says that there should be cooperation of the lay people in the Church's work of evangelization and a share in its saving mission both as a witness and living instruments (*AG* 41). Lay people are to help the Church with their gifts and help the church in every way possible, promoting peace, justice. Dialogues with non-Christians (*AG*).

In the world that we live now we see war, chaos, injustice, poverty and destruction of our common home, the cry of the poor as Pope Francis would say. In the past missionaries were going proclaiming Christ with boldness. Now there is a need of the same attitude of proclaiming with boldness but not alone but with the cooperation of the people. The church should bear in mind that "the structure of the earthly city should be founded on the Lord and directed to him." (*LG* 46). It is the right and duty of every baptized Christian right from the bishops, clergy, religious men and women to play our part in the missionary activity of the Church (canon 781-792).



THE HOLY EUCHARIST AND THE MISSION



SOHSHANG
Wanphrangngi, MSFS
B. Th. III Year

INTRODUCTION:

The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life (*Lumen Gentium*, 11). It is not only a sacred banquet in which Christ is received, but also a powerful encounter that transforms and send believers into the world as witnesses. From the very beginning of the Church's life, the celebration of the Eucharist has been deeply tied to its missionary mandate. When the faithful receive the Body and Blood of Christ, they are not called to remain idle, but to go forth and share the love, mercy, and truth they have encountered. Therefore, the Eucharist is not merely a personal devotion or communal rite but it is missionary by its very nature. There are few points below to look into:

1. THE EUCHARIST AS PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST'S MISSION

At the heart of the Eucharist lies the Paschal Mystery: the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Every time the Eucharist is celebrated, the Church proclaims and participates in this saving mystery. Jesus the one who was sent by the Father to redeem the world. He gave His life on the cross out of love for humanity. In the Eucharist, this sacrifice is made present again, and those who partake in it are united to His mission. As Jesus said during the Last Supper, "Do this in memory of me" we can see from the gospel of St. Luke 22:19. This "Memory" (*anamnesis*) is not merely recalling a past event, it is a dynamic reliving of Christ's self-giving love. To "do this" in His memory means to imitate His self-offering, not only at the altar, but in everyday life. It means becoming bread broken and wine poured out for the life of the world.

2. THE SENDING FORTH: "ITE MISSA EST"

Sending Forth or *Ite Missa Est* which comes from the Latin words. The Mass concludes with the words, "***Ite Missa Est***", often translated as "Go forth, the Mass is ended." However, the word "*Missa*" shares the same root as the word "Mission." The dismissal is a commissioning, a sending into the world. Pope Benedict XVI once said, "The People of God might be helped to understand more clearly that the Eucharist is not only a gift to be received but also a call to be shared" (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 84).





The Eucharist thus impels every believer to bring Christ into their homes, workplaces, communities, and beyond. It pushes us beyond the walls of the church into the fields of mission, whether that means acts of service, evangelization, or standing for truth and justice in the world.

3. EUCHARIST AND EVANGELIZATION

The Church's missionary activity flows directly from her Eucharistic life. As Pope St. John Paul II noted in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, "The Eucharist is the source and summit not only of the Church's life but also of her mission." A community that gathers to celebrate the Eucharist must be a community that goes out to proclaim the Gospel. In Acts 2:42-47, we see how the early Christian community gathered for the "breaking of the bread," and as a result, they shared their possessions, cared for the poor, and witnessed to Christ so powerfully that "the Lord added to their number daily." The Eucharist built them up in unity and love, and from that unity flowed mission.

4. EUCHARIST AS A CALL TO CHARITY AND JUSTICE

True participation in the Eucharist transforms how we relate to others. St. Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 that those who receive the body of Christ without recognizing the body in others, especially the poor and marginalized, bring judgment upon themselves. The Eucharist invites us to live lives of charity, reconciliation, and justice. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "The Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak" (EG 47). If we are truly nourished by Christ, we must become nourishment for others. Eucharistic spirituality demands a heart that is open to the suffering of the world and a willingness to act in love. It sends us to serve the poor, care for creation, and be peacemakers.

5. THE EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITY: A WITNESS TO THE WORLD

The Eucharist is also forming the Church into a visible sign of unity and love. Jesus prayed, "That they may all be one and that the world may believe" we can see from the gospel of St. John 17:2. Our communion with Christ in the Eucharist must lead to communion with one another. When the world sees Christians loving, serving, and forgiving each other, it becomes a powerful testimony to the presence of Christ. In this way, the Eucharistic community itself becomes missionary. It becomes a light to the nations, a city set on a hill if we read from the gospel of St. Matthew 5:14, drawing others to Christ not only by words, but by the witness of a Eucharist centered life.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion I would say that the Holy Eucharist is not only a sacrament of communion but also a sacrament of mission. It is the source of strength for the Church's evangelizing work and the pattern by which Christians are called to live like self-giving, sacrificial, and rooted in love. To celebrate the Eucharist is to receive Christ and to receive Christ is to be sent in His name. Therefore, every Eucharistic celebration must lead to missionary action. Every communicant must become a witness.



GO AND INVITE TO BE IN COMMUNION

The centrality of Christian life is to be in communion with the Lord. To be in communion with him is to share in his glory. As baptized Christians we have the duties to go out into the world and witness Christ with our life as Jesus himself sends his disciples to go out to the whole world to proclaim the Good News (cf. Mt 28:19). Through Baptism we share in the three functions of Christ, namely, Priestly, prophetic and Kingly. By nature the Church is missionary in character and therefore we are all called to be missionaries. As missionary disciples we should do mission work so with Joy, magnanimity and benevolence for these are the fruits of the Holy Spirit in us (cf. Gal 5:22) enabling us to go and invite all to be in communion with God not by pressuring, coercing or threatening, but with closeness, compassion and tenderness, and in this way reflecting God's own way of being and acting.

From the beginning God desired that all men should be saved and to come into communion with him. After the fall of the first man God continues to invite people in many and various ways through the prophets and finally through his son (cf. Heb1:1-2) who finally became flesh and dwelt among us (cf. Jn 1:1ff) in order to enter into the history of mankind in a new and definitive manner, so that, through him he might snatch men from the power of darkness and of Satan (cf. Col 1:13) (*AG* 3). This invitation was God's initiative to go and invite his chosen people through Moses to bring them back from Egypt into the promise land. In the New Testament, Jesus told the parable of the lost sheep whereby the Shepherd was concerned about the lost one and desire to bring it back. Therefore the Shepherd, without hesitant, left the ninety nine to go in search of the lost one. This communicates the attitude of God which all Christians should imbibe.

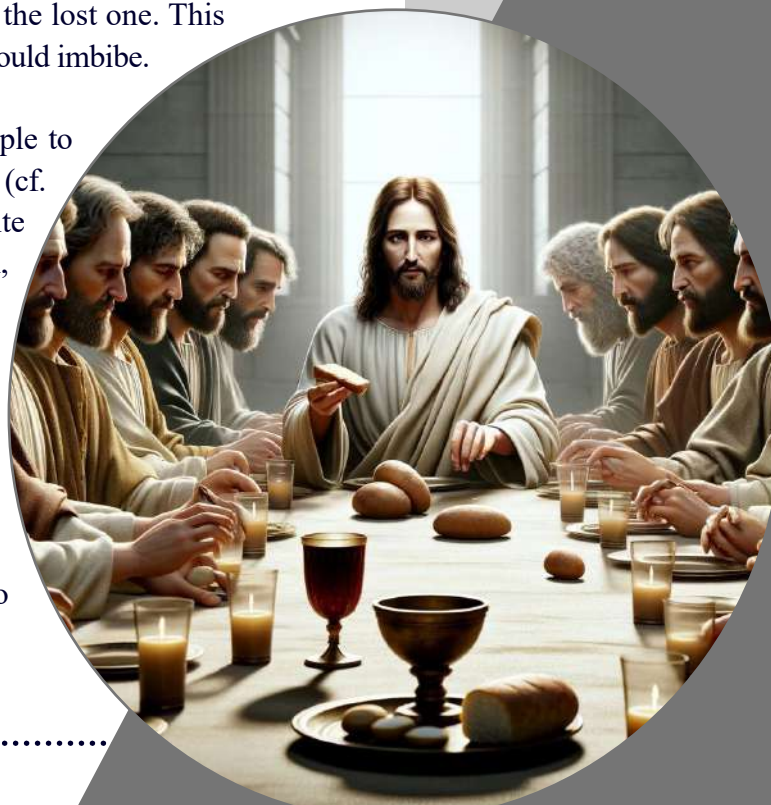
Jesus' first mission is to call and invite the people to repent of their sins to enter into communion with God (cf. Mk 1:15). Throughout his ministry he continues to invite people from all walks of life: the tax collectors, women, sinners, marginalized and many others. He called the 12 apostles to be with him and to be sent out to proclaim the message (cf. Mk 3:14) (*AG* 5). The disciples continue the mission of Jesus to call and invite people. In this, they were guided by the Holy Spirit whom Jesus himself had promised (Jn 14:17). Hence we are all invited to go and invite everyone according to the will of God who wishes that all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth (cf. 1Tim 2: 4-5).



HINGE Phidalis
B. Th. II Year



KYMPAT Brandon
B. Th. II Year





Quoting the words of His Holiness Pope Francis while conveying the message for the World Mission Sunday, 2024, he said, “Mission, we see, is a tireless going out to all men and women, in order to invite them to encounter God and enter into communion with him.” Why is it tireless? It is because the mission is large and some may refuse to enter into that invitation. Although their refusal to the invitation may be due to their ignorance of the gospel, but it is an obligation for the Church and all of us to go and invite. The hearers of the invitation need to respond in faith and love. The acceptance of the invitation will enable one to experience the salvation in Christ and it will have a transformative experience.

Moreover, the fruit for those who have accepted and encountered Christ and those who allow themselves to be saved by him are freedom from sin, sadness, inner emptiness and isolation. “With Jesus Christ, joy is always born and reborn” (EG,1). The gift of the spirit will be poured on them and he will enable them to bear the fruits (cf. Gal 5:22-23). The Spirit from then on will be the driving force which will change their mindset, mentality, thinking pattern of narrow mindset to the Christian mindset. Eventually, at the end of time we will gladly hear the words of Jesus inviting us to share in the Kingdom of God prepared for us from the foundation of the world (cf. Mt 25: 34). In other words, it is an invitation to be in communion with God which is the goal of our Christian life.

Well! The question is how can someone go and invite without he/she/himself/herself having the knowledge of Christ? How to know him? Well, to know him is through Prayer by spending time with him. As Jesus also prayed to his father showing the sign of being in communion with his Father (cf. Mt 14:23), so also, it demands of all his disciples before setting forth on their missionary journey. His Holiness Pope Francis said, “One cannot truly encounter the risen Jesus without being set on fire with enthusiasm to tell everyone about him. Therefore, the primary and principal resources of the mission are those persons who have come to know the risen Christ in the Scriptures and in the Eucharist, who carry his fire in their heart and his light in their gaze. They can bear witness to the life that never dies, even in the most difficult of situations and in the darkest of moments.” To be worthy ministers of Christ we need to be nourished by the words of Faith and good doctrine which we can draw mainly from the sacred scriptures. It also implies that one needs to be self evangelized, re-evangelized and be transformed like the Sts Peter and Paul, as in the episode about the issue between the Jews and the Gentiles (cf. Acts 10:3ff).

The Invitation, however, should be inclusive and not exclusive because the desire of God is that all should be knit together into his company as Jesus’ attitude is shown clearly in the Gospel according to St. John 10:16 which says, “I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.” This is what the Lord desires all of us to do before ascending into heaven when he gave the great commission (Mt 28:19) to go to the ends of the earth. Therefore the invitation is Universal.

The Church, as the sacrament of Christ, for her part, in fidelity to the mission she has received from the Lord, will continue to go to the ends of the earth, to set out over and over again, without ever growing weary or losing heart in the face of difficulties and obstacles to make everyone invited into one with Christ, who is the head of the Church and we his members.



EVERY CHRISTIAN A MISSIONARY



BECK Ebinus
B. Th. III Year

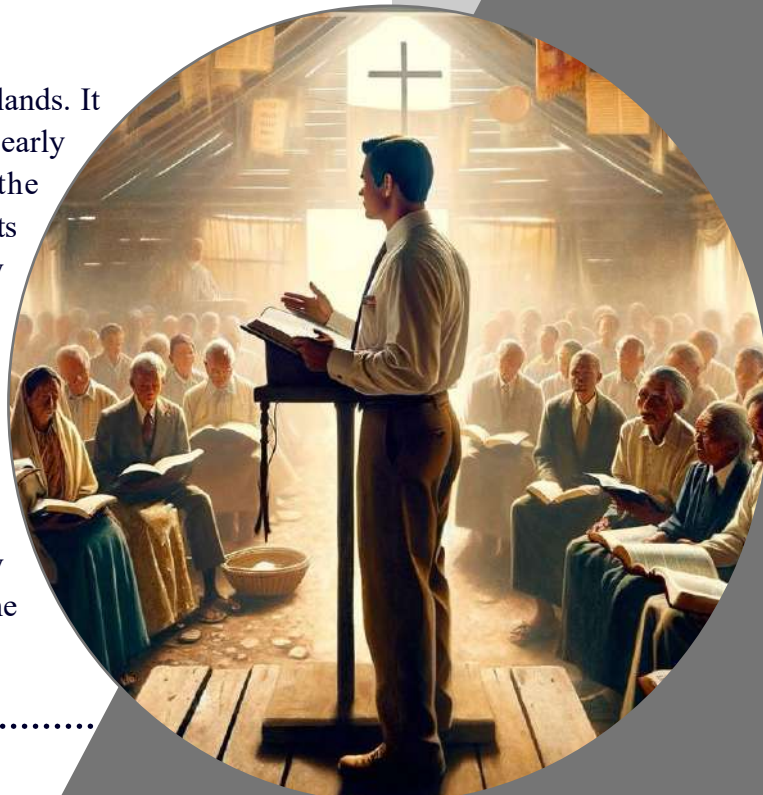
There is nothing in this world which has no beginning or end. Every substance in this world has its origin, from a grass to wood. Every mile begins with a single step; every hour begins with a second; every pyramid begins with a single stone; every story begins with a single thought; so also the mission of the Church, the mission of God. God is impartial to all the human beings. Just as He gives day and night, cold and heat equally to all, irrespective of caste and colour, so also He gives power to be a missionary regardless of rich or poor. The mission of the Church is a profound and multifaceted concept rooted deeply in the Bible. The call to be a missionary is not limited to a selected group of people who travel to distant places. Rather, it is a universal call for all Christians to witness to the Gospel wherever they are or travel to.

Jesus' final advice to His disciples is the great Commission; "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching all people to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). This command is not constrained to the apostles only, but extends to all followers of Christ. Every Christian is called to partake in spreading the Gospel and making disciples for the kingdom of God.

1 Peter 2:9 states that every Christian has a role in God's mission: "But you are chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may announce the Excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into His splendid light."

A missionary does not mean traveling to distant lands. It involves living out the Gospel in our daily living. The early Church has set a model as to how every Christian in the community can be a missionary in their own way. Acts 8:4 describes how the early believers, scattered by persecution, went about preaching the word of God as they journey along.

Acts 1:8 states, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The Spirit moulds every Christian with boldness and wisdom needed to share the Gospel efficiently wherever they went.





Every Christian is a missionary, called to participate in God's mission to redeem the world. By living our faith authentically, we can make a great impact for the kingdom of God. Let us embrace this calling with joy and commitment, knowing that we are empowered by the Holy Spirit and guided by the example of Christ.

In the Old Testament, the mission is foreshadowed through God's covenant with Israel, where the nation is called to be a light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:6). The New Testament further develops this theme, with the Acts of the Apostles documenting the early Church's missionary activities, guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

The Second Vatican Council's decree *Ad Gentes* (1965) is a cornerstone document on the Church's missionary activity. It asserts that the Church is missionary by nature, drawing its origin from the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit (*AG* 2). This document emphasizes that mission is not merely one of the Church's activities but is integral to its very essence.

Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) further elaborates on the Church's evangelizing mission, describing it as the Church's deepest identity. Paul VI stresses that evangelization is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity (*EN* 14). This document calls for a renewed commitment to evangelization, urging the faithful to bear witness to the Gospel in all aspects of life.

Redemptoris Missio (1990) reaffirms the urgency of missionary activity in the contemporary world. John Paul II highlights the need for a new evangelization, particularly in regions where the faith is waning. He emphasizes that mission is a matter of faith, an indicator of our faith in Christ and His love for humanity (*RM* 11).

Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) brings a fresh perspective to the Church's mission, focusing on the joy of the Gospel. Francis calls for a Church that goes forth, a Church that is missionary in all its activities. He emphasizes the need for pastoral conversion and a renewed missionary impulse, urging the faithful to be bold and creative in their evangelization efforts (*EG* 20-24).

Theologically, the mission of the Church is rooted in the Trinitarian nature of God. The Father sends the Son, and together they send the Holy Spirit, who empowers the Church to continue Christ's mission on earth. This Trinitarian mission reflects the inner life of God as a communion of love, which the Church is called to manifest in the world.

Therefore, the mission of the Church is a dynamic and ongoing process, deeply rooted in the biblical mandate and articulated through various Church documents. It calls for a renewed commitment to evangelization, grounded in the Trinitarian nature of God and the universal call to holiness. As the Church continues to navigate the complexities of the modern world, it must remain faithful to its missionary identity, proclaiming and living out the Gospel with joy and boldness.



GO AND INVITE TO ENCOUNTER GOD



KHRAWBOKLANG

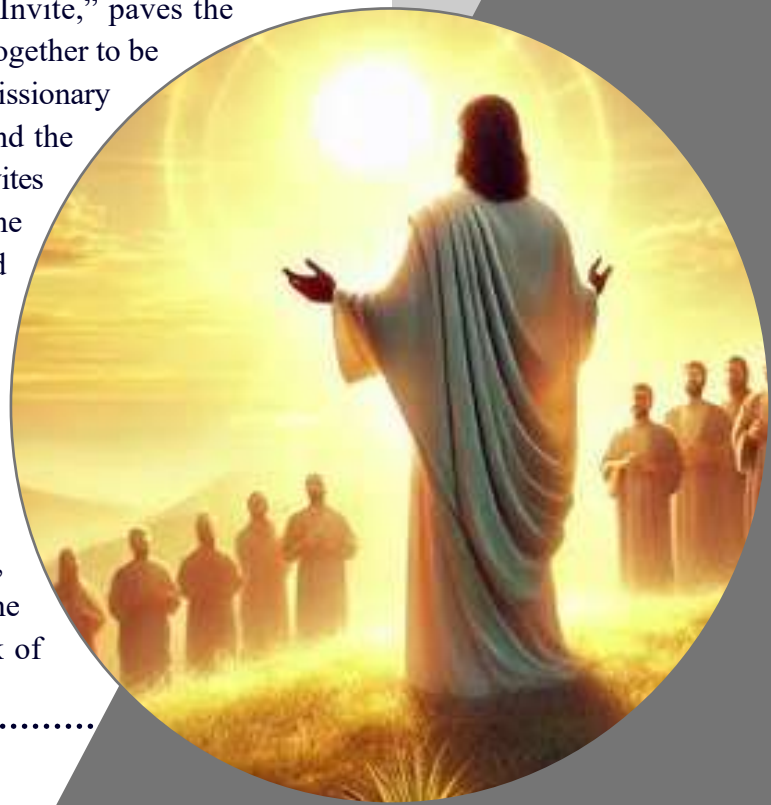
Marweñ

B. Th. II Year

We are living in a wounded and divided world. a world that is fearful to embrace one another. To start with, Pope Francis in his message for World Mission Sunday 2024 says, “Go and Invite.” It should be remembered that this message reflects on the Gospel passage of the Wedding Banquet and is linked to the Eucharistic Table. These two words, “Go and Invite, express the heart of the mission: to go out and “to invite” and be a missionary. The Church according to Vatican II is missionary by her very nature because Christ her founder is the first missionary. God the Father sent God the Son into the world to incarnate in the person of Jesus with a unique message. The message, called the “Gospel” or “Good News,” is clearly stated in Jn 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.” John clarifies the message saying, “God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him” (1 Jn 4:9). The servants are told to go and invite (Mt 22:4). We, the servants, are invited to invite others to encounter God (1 Jn 3:9). Therefore, it should be remembered that we cannot and should not keep the love we celebrate only to ourselves. Love by its very nature means to be felt and shared with everyone.

Thus, we need to remember that what the World needs is the love of God. As Christians we are invited to shine in our life. By the way we live our life people must be able to meet God and experience Him. Our life is the greatest sermon that we can ever preach. The theme, “Go and Invite,” paves the way for the entire world or the people of God to come together to be a missionary and a witness to Christ as members of the Missionary Church whose founder is Christ; the first missionary and the light of all nations. At every moment of our life the Lord invites us to be the channels of his Love. Indeed, every day the Lord knocks at the door of our heart to dine with him and to share with him (Rev 3:20).

Considering all things, I believe the theme, “Go and Invite,” remains the perennial invitation to many of us to join hands and have a deeper understanding to share the gift of light, the light of Christ, with those struggling in darkness. It calls us to a path of discovery, while we are journeying to follow Christ and become one with him by embracing our missionary calling the task of





helping others have a personal encounter with the Lord. Furthermore, the theme invites us to look around and see to whom we might be sent. We might not need to look far. It could be someone from our own family, someone we meet daily at work, a neighbour, or even a social contact online.

I personally feel that the theme, “Go and Invite,” calls us to first grow stronger in faith, become more intimate with Christ, and become holier in behaviour before we can be qualified to share our faith with others. So, let us seek God’s assistance to help us, identify those in desperate need of someone to reach out to them, have the courage to do so, and welcome others into our lives and into our communities.



NASKAR Satyajit
B. Th. II Year

CALL TO THE BANQUET A MISSION URGENCY

The busy world of today should become effective witness in order to unravel the extraordinary intervention of God in history, to save humankind from the tyranny of sin and ignominious death. Christ Jesus accomplished the act of redemption through his death and resurrection and entrusted the Church, the new community of believers, with a mission of proclaiming the Good News of salvation to people of all nationalities and cultures.

In response to Jesus’ command, committed missionary disciples went around the world, proclaiming the Gospel and establishing communities of faith. They faced hostile circumstances and encountered all kinds of social evils in mission. In spite of all impediments, they were proactive and innovative in their approach and invited people of all races to embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ and experience new life. The present Church is the result of the zealous missionary commitment of many selfless pioneers. At present the scenario has changed and the Church lacks such spirit of mission to overcome various discriminations, struggles and unwanted problems that the world faces constantly. The recurring question is: Why are we here then?

Today many lack unshakeable and steadfast allegiance to faith, due to various reasons, like numerous scientific discoveries and other developments that have changed and negatively affected human freedom and life of faith. Science and technology have in way blinded the eye of faith of individuals. The present-day younger generation of people are in the forefront of violence, hatred and pornography, mainly due to media influence, which is inevitable in many ways.

The harmful result is waning of young intelligence, cognitive ability, mental acuity, brain power, intuitive understanding, inherent wisdom, natural insight, organic intelligence, etc. Excessive and exaggerated use of media can put young life off the track of holiness, and thus making them less effective



in Christian pursuit of perfection. The Church cautions against the misuse of media, which also give birth to various sex abuse scandals and violation against women; these developments have negative impact on candidates to priesthood as well. It affects the mindset of the lay faithful too, and many of them tend to become lukewarm in their commitment to the mission of the Church.

Added to this, at times the frontier missionary workers and many catechists in the Church are called to work under sluggish, inactive and apathetic personnel; they are supposed to supervise, encourage and support financially whenever the need arises. Interacting with some of these dedicated missionaries, one comes to learn the negligence on the part of those in authority, who are entrusted the ministry of evangelization. As a result, many co-workers in the mission field become inactive and even some families abandon their faith, due to lack of pastoral care.

The survey says that the present Gospel workers (missionaries) are mainly restricted to the Church's campus or catering to the needs of Catholics only. Seemingly they have forgotten the demands of the universality of the Gospel, which is meant for people of all categories. However, the Gospel preaching must be in the words of St. Augustine, '*Bonum Publicum*' rather than '*Privation Boni*'. The Church's mission is not limited to any one culture, people or group. She is universal.

The mission of every Christian, and especially each family, is to be in communion with the Church, as they are part of the Mystical Body of Christ. While stressing the importance of the role of family in the work of mission, Pope St. Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* said: "family becomes the evangelizer of neighborhood." E. Serenelli says that family is missionary in and outside of the home. In the present multicultural society, missionaries confront multiple challenges, like separation and divorce, (Mt 19: 3-9), rise of multi-cultural urbanization, party politics and religious immaturity. Christ's Mission must care for the marginalized sections of the society, which will pave way for lay involvement, embracing cultural diversity, encouraging interfaith dialogue, and empowering local leadership. Pope Francis urges for a mission which goes beyond borders to build harmonious society. The call to universal mission as mandated by the risen Christ (Mt 28: 16-20) and his promises to keep the Church as the sacrament of salvation needs to be preserved and promoted.

This invitation TO BANQUET is a call to be the voice of God for the poor, the oppressed and to bring about justice and righteousness among the people; it should touch social as well as moral conscience, promote true religiosity and of covenantal leadership of hope and repentance. The call is to build bridges and break down the walls of division. Leadership has to be understood as an urgent responsible stewardship. Therefore, the Church today highlights the urgency of missionary work.





Missionary activity demands a specific spirituality and it is heartening to know that the world is thirsty for the message of Christ. We can say that the time has come for the Church to invest all her energies to proclaim Christ to the world. Our deeply rooted faith is the back bone of true Christianity and the Church is the agent of the same mission. Karl Barth says that the Church without mission would not be the true Church of Christ. As Jesus had a vision to preach the Gospel to everyone, today his disciples need to follow the foot-steps of their Divine Master. This supernatural virtue is infused in everyone by God, but it needs authentic human response.

It's the prime duty of all Christians to carry forward Christ's message to the entire world, irrespective of color, caste, denominations or different ethnicity. Call to discipleship is to bear witness to the Gospel of Christ before all. Therefore, they should grow in their faith to serve the Kingdom of God as true Christians, and "bear much fruits" (Jn 15: 5). All the members are called to a life of holiness and be living witness of faith and love. Thus, they are urged to exercise the apostolate within and outside the Church, in both spiritual and temporal orders. One of the concerns should be to bring back the lost sheep to the Banquet of the main stream of apostolate (Mt 18: 12-19), and make them responsible stewards of God's creation.

We all have to join hands together in a collaborative ministry and offer effective leadership of worthy imitation. The Church reminds constantly that all are missionaries by the virtue of Baptism and Confirmation and share in the Church's Mission; then they become truly Catholics, otherwise the question mark continues to remain.



**MALNGIANG
Eskarius, CMF**
B. Th. II Year

PROTAGONISTS OF THE MISSION ON THE HILLS: THE PEOPLE OF GOD

In literary terms the protagonist is the main character of the play, drama or the novel. They usually take the centre stage in the narrative and they function as the main lead in the story.

When we speak of the concept of the "people of God" many church documents give us clear ideas. In the Old Testament "people of God" refers to a community of believers and in the New Testament "people of God" is a group of people spreading from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth to proclaim the Good News. Down the ages in the Christian history, common people are known for being instrumental in the spreading of the Good News. Hence forth the legacy continues in our days to where the lay faithful are being fully involved in the work of Evangelization especially in the North-eastern part of India. However are they recognized for their great work?

Do we acknowledge and give them their due credits?



The Church in Northeast India is indeed vibrant and dynamic. The people, both the educated and the ignorant remain conform to the church norms. This is because of the catechists and the church leaders or the Rangbahbalang who toil tirelessly in the Church. The catechists and the other leaders play a crucial role in this going from pillar to post to share the message of Christ, to prepare the faithful for receiving the sacraments, and to accompany them in their spiritual journey. At times the journey seems far and tedious yet they brave all odds because of the burning zeal that they had for the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of them faced danger, risked their lives, and sacrificed their precious time to be with their friends and family for the sake of the Kingdom. No doubt their reward is and will be great in heaven.

What about the priests then? Where are they? Aren't they supposedly to be evangelizers? Yes, they are. They are there to minister the sacraments to the people prepared by the catechists and the Rangbahbalang. The priests walked on the smooth path prepared tirelessly by the catechists. Their contribution to the work of evangelization is great. What they lack is that they are not empowered to minister the sacraments. By baptism all are consecrated to be evangelizers. All have much to learn from our lay zealous faithful to be burnt with the zeal for the Lord journeying together for the growth of the Kingdom as the Synod calls us.

The Church now is a Church of Synodality. Its mission is for all the members of the church, not only to the catechist. Journeying together and accompanying one another are paramount for the growth the Kingdom of God as Pope Francis says "everything else is connected and no one is saved alone." It's a clarion call to all ministers of the Church to learn from our protagonists (the lay faithful) who help the growth and the spread of Gospel.



THE BANQUET OF SALVATION: A TABLE FOR ALL



KUJUR Sumit
B. Th. I Year

There is something extraordinary about gathering around a table and sharing a meal with loved ones, neighbours, or even strangers. It goes beyond simply satisfying hunger it is a celebration of life, love, and unity. Across cultures and faiths, sharing a table has been a powerful expression of togetherness, holding a profound spiritual meaning. Whether it is a festive harvest meal in a village or the Eucharistic table at Mass, the table becomes a sacred space where hearts connect, relationships deepen, and souls are nourished.



The Joy of Harvest Festivals

In my village, harvest time is more than a season: it is a time of gratitude, unity, and celebration. The New Rice Meal, prepared with the first grains of the harvest, is a cherished tradition where families and neighbors come together in an open field to enjoy a meal. I have fond memories of sitting under the sky, enjoying the food, and exchanging laughter. These moments were filled with stories of the past, hopes for the future, and the simple joy of being together. Ever since I joined religious life, I have missed these cherished gatherings with my family. Yet, I have been blessed with even more profound experiences of community in the mission fields where I serve. For instance, during my higher secondary studies, I participated in the Feast of Nativity in Mangalore, where families gather to honor the birth of Mary and celebrate the harvest feast. The joy and love shared during these celebrations are truly beyond words. Being welcomed into such a warm environment felt like being part of one big family. The memories of Pongal in Chennai also hold a special place in my heart. Families come together to celebrate the harvest, with colorful rangolis, delicious Pongal dishes, and lively games creating an unforgettable atmosphere. I still cherish the Pongal celebration in my community, where everyone sat together for a grand feast in front of banana leaves. It wasn't just about the food; it was about the spirit of sharing and the fun of competitions and games. These festivals remind me that sharing a table is not only about nourishment but also about cherishing relationships and celebrating life.

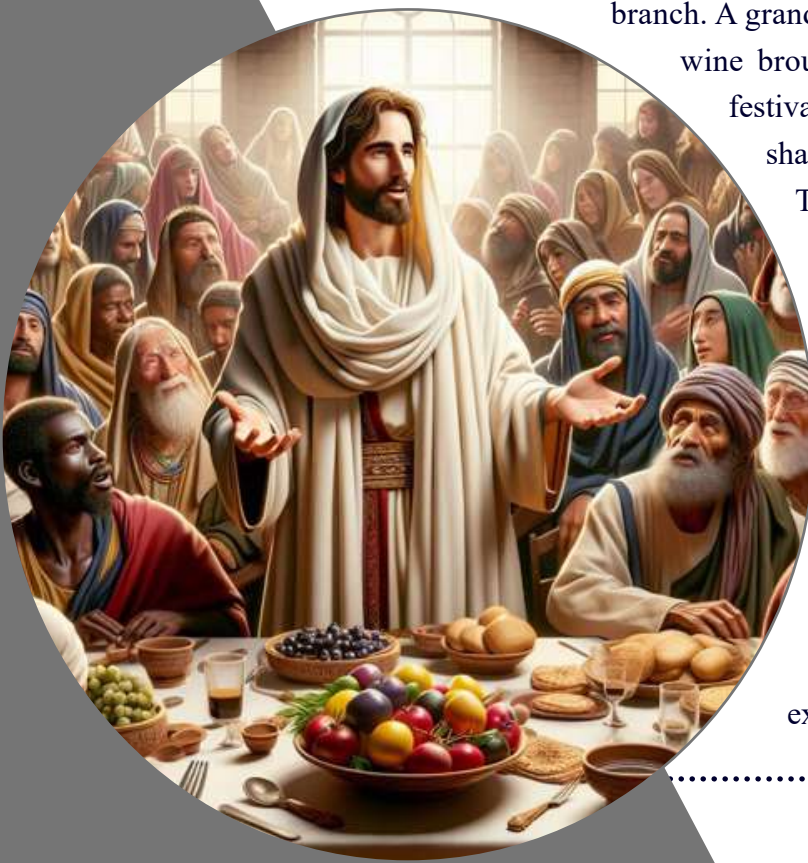
Likewise, I had the joy of experiencing the Karam Festival in Chennai during my Philosophy studies. It began with a morning Mass and a meaningful ceremony led by tribal fathers and brothers. They performed traditional rituals and shared the Karam story, explaining its significance. We gathered in a hall seating in large circle for a sumptuous meal, starting with traditional wine and snacks, followed by lively dancing around the Karam

branch. A grand dinner featuring special non-vegetarian dishes and wine brought everyone together with laughter and joy. The festival was a beautiful celebration of unity, tradition, and shared moments that strengthened the community bond.

The entire community looked forward to this day because this was the only festival in the community where traditionally made wine and non-veg were served. I could see the joy and unity in the community.

Festive Gatherings That Unite Families

In my family, meals are the centre piece of every celebration. Whether it's Christmas, Easter, or New Year, the table becomes a place of laughter, gratitude, and love. During Christmas, the joy of exchanging gifts, sharing meals, and celebrating with





loved ones creates an atmosphere of peace and happiness. Even when I celebrated Christmas away from home after joining religious life, the warmth of shared meals with friends created family spirit. It taught me that the true essence of the season lies in togetherness and love.

Weddings and birthdays are equally significant, bringing families together around a shared table. I remember the joy of weddings in my village, where relatives worked together to create a joyful celebration. The spirit of collaboration and the shared moments of happiness remain etched in my memory. Similarly, community celebrations in the village always held a special charm, and everyone looked forward to them eagerly.

The Japanese concept of *Ikigai*, which emphasizes the importance of community and purposeful living, resonates deeply with these experiences. As described in the book, a healthy and happy life thrives on connections with others, and what better way exists to build these connections than by sharing a meal?

The Table in the Life of Faith

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus often shared meals with others, and these moments were transformative. Whether dining with tax collectors or breaking bread with His disciples, Jesus used meals as an opportunity to connect, teach, and bring about change. The story of Zacchaeus comes to mind—a simple meal with Jesus led him to turn his life around.

The Eucharistic table in religious life holds even deeper significance. Saints and blessed individuals drew strength and purpose from the Eucharist, the ultimate banquet of salvation. Sharing the Eucharist unites us not only with God but also with one another, reminding us of the heavenly banquet where everyone is welcome.

During Ramzan, I have witnessed Muslim friends gather for Iftar, breaking their fast with family and friends. It is a beautiful act of love and unity, reflecting the spirit of togetherness that transcends cultural and religious boundaries. In my own community at Oriens, the dining hall during meal times resembles a banquet hall. People from diverse backgrounds and cultures come together, creating a mosaic of unity, love, and sharing. It feels like a glimpse of heaven, where every person has a place at the table.

Sharing a Table Nourishes Body and Soul

A shared meal nourishes not just the body but also the soul. Some of the most meaningful conversations I've had, have taken place over a meal. Whether it's a quiet family dinner or a

Do
Whatever
He Says

John 2:1-11



grand community celebration, the table becomes a space for connection, understanding, and healing. Sharing a table is also a gesture of welcome. In our communities, inviting someone to share a meal is an act of hospitality that says, “You are valued, and you belong.” This simple act can mend relationships, bridge differences, and build bonds of friendship.

Personal Reflections on Community Life

Living in a community, I experience the joy of shared meals daily. Moving from bell to bell,” we come together for a common mission, but it is during meal times that we truly connect. These moments remind me that life is not just about individual accomplishments but about journeying together.

The saying, “A family that prays together, eats together, stays together” holds true in every aspect of life. Whether it’s at home or in a community, the table is where we pray, laugh, and grow together.

The Banquet of Salvation

The table is a powerful image of God’s Kingdom. In the Gospel, Jesus uses parables like the mustard seed and yeast to illustrate how the Kingdom grows quietly but transforms everything it touches. Similarly, the Eucharistic table invites us to become part of this Kingdom. It is a place where God’s mercy and love are poured out, giving us the strength to grow and change. Every meal we share—whether at a harvest festival, a Christmas dinner, or a simple family gathering—is a glimpse of the heavenly banquet. It is a reminder that we are all invited to God’s table, where there is a place for everyone.

Conclusion

A table is much more than a place for food: it is a symbol of unity, love, and belonging. It is where we celebrate life’s joys, support each other in challenges, and grow closer as families and communities. Whether it is a festive occasion, a quiet family dinner, or the Eucharistic table, every shared meal is an opportunity to experience God’s love and mercy.

As we gather around our tables, let us remember that everyone deserves a place at the banquet of salvation. Let us share our food, our time, and our love, ensuring that no one is left out. For in sharing a table, we nourish not just our bodies but also our souls, building a world where unity and love prevail.

Accept one another, then,
just as Christ accepted you,
in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:7



THE 59th NORTH INDIA THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS CONFERENCE (NITSC)

The 59th North India Theological students Conference (NITSC) was held in Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, Mizoram from 22-26 October. The conference was held under the theme “Authentically Indian and Genuinely Christian – Envisioning an Inclusive Identity within the Fabric of Secularism” invited participants to reflect on their role in shaping a harmonious society that respects both faith and secular ideals. From our college 3 of us Baliarsingh Bibhu, CFIC, Marboh Bester and Miasalhau Zhavirietuo, MSFS had the privilege of participating in the conference along with the other colleges and Institutions coming from different denomination. A total no of 45 delegates and 10 faculty advisors from 17 colleges and Institutions took part in the conference.

Focussing on the theme various papers were presented. Some of the papers were, “An Inclusive Identity Within the Fabric of Secularism amidst the Problem of Migration”, “Threats of Religion to the Concepts of Secularism – Hinduism”, “Threats of Religion to the Concepts of Secularism – Islam”, “Threats of Religion to the Concepts of Secularism – Christianity”, “Understanding Indian Secularism: Scope, Prospects, and Concerns for Minorities” etc. Each paper was presented and responded by the assigned college and after each presentation and respond there were time for questions, comments or suggestions from the audience. This year we had the privileged to respond to the paper “Threats of Religion to the Concepts of Secularism – Islam” presented by Bishop’s College of Kolkata. All the presentations and responses were in fact enriching since all the participants are from various denominations and have different view of points to share on their particular topic. Each participating college presented actionable ways to make this vision a reality, fostering a genuinely inclusive identity that respects India’s pluralism.



**BALIAR Singh
Bibhu, CFIC**
B. Th. III Year



MARBOH Bester
B. Th. II Year



**MIASALHOU
Zhavirietuo, MSFS**
B. Th. II Year





The conference was a strong reminder that as Christian students, we are called to actively participate in creating a society that values both religious authenticity and secular inclusivity.

After the paper presentations were done we had two plenary sessions where the NITSC Constitution Amendment (if any needed), selection of Venue/Host for the 60th NITSC, appointment of Secretary for the 60th NITSC, election of President for 60th NITSC and selection of the Conference Theme for 60th NITSC was discussed and decided.

Besides the academic learning, there were common prayer sessions and devotional services. On the second day there was a cultural night where delegates and the hoisting college (ATC) showcased their different riches and vibrant cultural dances and songs. On the fourth day we were taken for outing to Reiek mountain. Reiek mountain a tourist spot 29 km from Aizawl. On a clear day, the plains of Bangladesh can be seen from the top of the hill. It is surrounded by thick lush green temperate trees and bushes. We had a wonderful day out on trekking to the mountain.

The NITSC conference has inspired us, as theology students, to envision an authentically Indian and genuinely Christian presence within India's secular framework. This vision challenges us to foster secular values for unity, promote religious pluralism to counter extremism, and balance religious freedom with secular governance. We are encouraged to see the Church actively contributing to interfaith harmony and social justice and to inspire Christians to engage in public service, advancing an equitable and inclusive society.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Oriens Theological Institute for this great unique opportunity. We express our thanks to Rev. Fr. Graviour Augustine, the director, Fr. Stanislaus Chinliankhup, the Rector of OTC, all the Fathers and Brothers for their help and support.





REMINISCENCES

Fr. CHINLIANKHUP Stanislaus
Rector



Oriens Theological Institute Day

The Institute Day was observed on 11 May 2024 with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist, Inter-class Volleyball Match and other items. The Main celebrant and the Chief Guest of the celebration was Rev. Dr. Mathew Kallidical, OFM Cap., the Rector of Capuchin Study House. He released the Oriens Annual Magazine 2024-2025, with the theme “Feet on the Move.” The result of the overall championship of the competitions held in the Institute was declared by Rev. Fr. Lessmon Nongtdu, SDS, the Rector of Salvatorian Study House. The Third Years stood first and the Second and the First Years got second place with equal points.



Farewell to Final Year Students

On 4 June 2024 the outgoing students of the Institute were given farewell by the Institute. Dolwin David, CFIC, gave a note of appreciation to the Final Year Students and John Nokeduzou spoke on behalf of the outgoing students. Dr. Graviour Augustine, spoke on behalf of the staff and wished the outgoing students well. Dr. Stanislaus Chinliankhup, the Rector, gifted them all with a memento each.



Ministries Diaconate Ordination

After the examinations the Third Year students went for pre-diaconate ordination retreat. On the 21st of June, 2023, the First and Second Years received the Ministries of Lector and Acolyte from Most Rev. Dr. Linus Neli, the Archbishop of Imphal. The following day on the 22nd of June, 2023, the Archbishop conferred diaconate ordination to 55 of our Third Year brothers.



The New Academic Year 2024-2025

It was inaugurated on the 1st of August, 2024. It began with the Eucharistic celebration presided by Most Rev. John Moolachira, the President of NEIRBC and Chairman of Governing Board of Oriens Theological College/Institute. He was also the Guest of Honour for the Inaugural Function, with Most Rev. Victor Lyngdoh, the Archbishop of Shillong as Chief Guest. Rev. Fr. Dr. Sunny Keemattam, SJ, the Principal of St. Xavier's College, Umoid, gave the Inaugural Lecture on the theme, "The Depth Dimension in the Intellectual Formation of the Church Leaders."



The Archbishop Hubert D' Rosario Award

The Archbishop Hubert D' Rosario Award which is usually given to the topper in the batch is given to two students from two batches due to the change in the reduction of the Degree Course from Four Years to Three Years. Fr. Shangdiar Lamkupur of Nongstoin diocese received the Award for the batch 2019-2023 and Fr. Prince Kujur of Diphu diocese got for the batch 2020-2023.



The First ever St. Jerome Award



The Oriens Theological Institute established the St. Jerome Award for the best student in Biblical studies to promote love for biblical subjects among the students. However, it was decided that if the highest scorer in biblical subjects is awarded the Archbishop Hubert d' Rosario's Award, the Award will be accorded to the second highest in the subjects. This Award was established through the initiative of Rev. Fr. Thomas Manjaly, Emeritus Professor of Oriens Theological College/Institute, a reputed biblical scholar at the national and international levels. The Award was secured by Fr. Phawa Phidalist of Jowai diocese of 2020-2023 batch.



Oriens Auditorium Renovation

The Oriens auditorium renovation is complete, featuring modern seating, upgraded AV systems, improved acoustics, and energy-efficient lighting. The enhanced space now offers better comfort, accessibility, and cutting-edge technology for events and performances.



Teachers' Day Celebration 2024

Since the Teachers' Day on the 5th of September falls on Thursday, a holiday, it was anticipated on the 4th of September during the 5th Period. The Students' Council did a remarkable job in thanking and giving memento to each Professor. Rev. Fr. Edmund Gomes Sdb, thanked the students on behalf of the Professors.



Extension Lecture on the 9th of September

As decided by the Academic Council, an extension lecture was held on the 9th of September 2024 from 5.00 pm to 6.40 pm in the Auditorium. The Speaker was Rev. Fr. Dr. Francis Vincent Anthony, Sdb, the Director of the Institute of Pastoral Theology and Director of the Inter-Faculty Commission for Research, Salesian University, Rome. The session was moderated by Rev. Fr. Dr. Johnson, Thurackal, CMF, Rector of Claret Villa. He spoke on Public Theology, which is picking up in the present theological discourses.



Symposium on 'Trends in Christian Witnessing'

The Oriens Theological Institute conducted a symposium from 7-9 October, 2024, on a pertinent topic "Trends in Christian Witnessing." There was overwhelming response from the invitees as it was held for the first time after the Pandemic Covid 19. Most Rev. Vincent Aind, D.D., Archbishop of Ranchi was the Chief Guest of the Inaugural Function. Archbishop John Moolachira, Archbishop Linus Neli, Most Rev. Thomas Menampampil, Emeritus Archbishop of Guwahati and several bishops of the northeast, provincials and religious superiors were present for the





symposium. All the participants appreciated the arrangements and the presentations. All the papers presented, along with other articles assigned to several prominent writers, will be published into a book.



Screening Face of the Faceless

On the 4th of October a movie “Face of the Faceless” was screened through the help of Fr. Dr. Jose Pallakel, MST. It was attended by all the students, including non teaching staff, at 5.30 pm, in the Auditorium. It was an inspiring movie appreciated by all.



Candidacy of the First Year Brothers

The first year brothers of Oriens Theological College received the admission to Candidacy from Most Rev. Ferdinand Dkhar, bishop of Jowai on the 20th of February, 2025. It was a simple but memorable event in which 35 brothers took resolute step towards priesthood.



Annual Games and Sports

This year, through the initiative of the Students Council, the OTI Inter-Class Games and Sports was conducted on the 28th of February, 2025. The next will be held on the 8th of May, 2025. This brought in more interaction among students and is helpful in building relationship and collaboration among the students of various formation Houses.



Annual Seminar

On the 13th of March 2025, the Annual Seminar was conducted in the Auditorium. It was guided and moderated by Rev. Fr. Graviour Augustine, the President of OTI. Four students, namely, Brothers Jain Mattel and Michael Teron of Third Year and Khrawboklang and Firstkyson Lyngdoh SDS, of Second Year, presented two documents of the Second Vatican Council, “*Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Dei Verbum*.” It was well prepared and presented and incited lots of interaction from the audience.





ANNUAL MAGAZINE 2024-2025

CONTRIBUTORS



Bibhu Baliar Singh	CFIC	Tiewdalia Shylla	Shillong
Ferdinand Kanai	Jowai	Donald K.L.	Shillong
Happy Linda Kanai	Jowai	Kynjai A. Kurbah	Shillong
Riwanka Kanai	Jowai	Ibakmen Myllemngap	Shillong
Lunga Yoobhaki Laloo	Jowai	Metilda Kshiar	Shillong
Aron Pohti	Jowai	A Wankhar	Shillong
Lumlang Pohti	Jowai	Diling Pyngrope	Shillong
Tina Lakadong	Jowai	Aiborlang Khongwir	Shillong
Edmon Dkhar	Jowai	Livingson Mawthoh	Shillong
Sanwaka Pdang	Jowai	Wanphrang Kharbikhiew	Shillong
Meris Pdang	Jowai	Madona Pyngrope	Shillong
Samuel Khonglah	Jowai	Sikhalin Pyngrope	Shillong
Saga Shullai	Jowai	K kharpor	Shillong
Deiwi paia Shylla	Jowai	Elbina Khongwir	Shillong
Telmi Shylla	Jowai	Fr. Felix Klein	Shillong
Risa Muruh	Jowai	Teranchi Sangma	Tura
Rimi Lamare	Jowai	Bless Sangma	Tura
O. Lamare	Jowai	Sylbian Sangma	Tura
R. Synjri	Jowai	Fr. Livingstone Marak	Tura
Stephanson Phawa	Jowai	Fr. Kurian	Tura
Barisha Muthoh	Jowai	Caterine M. Sangma	Tura
Rit Kharbina	Jowai	Jormon N. Sangma	Tura
Esbunmitre Nongrum	Jowai	Mary M. Sangma	Tura
Neini Wanroi Lamare	Jowai	Fr. Linus R Marak	Tura
S. Phalangi	Jowai	Walseng N Marak	Tura
Purity K.	Jowai	Parbat Hari Jamatia	Agartala
Rebecca Lamare	Jowai	Binod Uchoi	Agartala
Kitboklang Dkhar	Jowai	Fr. Anthony Balan	Agartala
Rishalang Syrti	Jowai	Zonunfela Darlong	Agartala
Christina Syrti	Jowai	Fr. Sebin	Agartala
Winterless Syiem	Shillong	Br. Milton	Agartala
Fr. Kyrshanlang Kharpuri	Shillong	Fr. David Lalthanmanja	Aizawl
Iohborlang Nongkynrih	Shillong	Fr. Samson	Imphal
Fr. Teiborlang Kharbani	Shillong	Fr. Lizo	Imphal



Mr. Ambrose Minj		Basilius Thyriang	Nongstoin
Mrs. Neethu Shiji	Kerala	Fr. Sani Sylvester	CM
Edvin David	Kerala	Bimal Tigga	MSFS
Fr. Sanjay Minj	Baruipur	Sourav	MSFS
Davis K.	Tezpur	Ajeet	MSFS
Stephen Singh	Tezpur	Mahesh	MSFS
Benjamin	Kohima	James	MSFS
Mr. Keming Lapasam And Family	Claretians	Jibrus Toppo	MSFS
Mrs. Blandina Kurbah And Family	Claretians	Bibin	MSFS
Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary		Frankie	MSFS
Convent, Dangar Balat		Wanphrangngi	MSFS
(East Khasi Hills District) Claretians		Marshal	MSFS
Bertila Marwein And Family	Claretians	Justin Richard	MSFS
Leander Mukhim &		Barla Emlus	MSFS
Elizabeth Jane Jala	Claretians	Anand	MSFS
Rose Suphai	Claretians	Fr. Amar USA	MSFS
Ritalis Suphai		Pudota Sumanth Australia	
Fr. R. R. Graviour Augustine	Kohima	Fr. Lessmon Nongtdu	SDS
Swuro Veshoneyi	Kohima	Br. Firstkyson Lyngdoh	SDS
Prince Paul M.	V C	Br. Yophius Khionsya	SDS
Br. Ridonald	OFM Cap.		
Fr. Jobin Johnson	Itanagar		



**Oriens Theological College wishes all the Jubilarians of 2000 batch,
HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS on the Silver Jubilee of your Priestly Ordination!**



ORIENS THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

Mawlai, Shillong - 793008

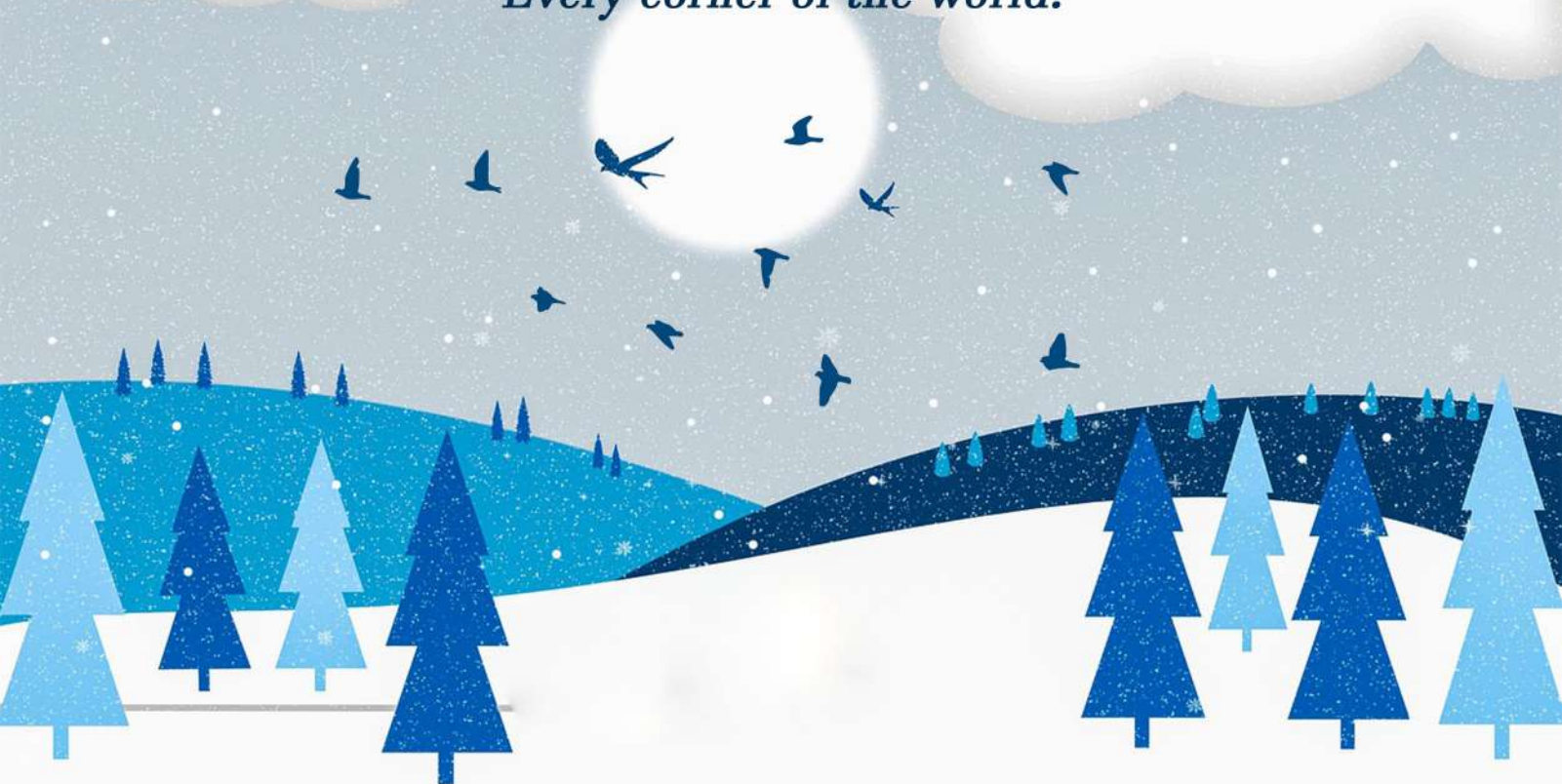
Affiliated to Urbaniana University, Rome

ORIENS, LIGHT OF THE EAST

Oh! Rising sun; Oh! Beautiful dawn
True Wisdom from above here is born
You give to all beatific light
Dispelling all the darkness of the night.

Oh! Shining star, resplendent, so tall
Mid Shillong pines, you stand and do call
You Sisters Eight, in God shall abide
To eager minds, the light of Christ provide.

*Oriens, light of the East
Share with joy, your love and peace
Spread your light to all
Every corner of the world.*



Printed and Published by Oriens Theological Institute, Shillong

Email: oriensoffice@gmail.com, deanotc@gmail.com

Layout and Design by Bro. KURISINGAL Dolwin David, CFIC

Printed at Don Bosco Press, Don Bosco Technical School, Shillong, 793 003