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**WISHING YOU  
A FRUITFUL  
MINISTRY**

**"Proclaim the word; be persistent  
whether the time is favorable or  
unfavorable" 2 Tim 4:2**

# CONTENTS

## TABLE OF



Message: Archbishop of Guwahati	5
Message: Archbishop of Shillong	6
Director's Message.	7
Rector's Message .	10
Message: Fr. Athnas Kerketta MSFS	11
Hope: The Song of Every Pilgrim Bro. Sumit Kujur	17
Beacon of Hope: Bro. Chinnaiah	19
With Mary, We Are Pilgrims of Hope: Bro. Milton & Bro. Joseph D.	20
Radiating Hope of the Poor: Bro. Libin Augustin	22
NITSC	24
Dream for a Better World: Bro. Baselius Thyriani	28
Let Your Light Shine and Be a Living Hope: Bro. Uday Mondal	30
Beacon of Hope: The Radiance That Guides	31
Lanterns of Hope: Bro. Ioannis Wanniang	32

Invitation to Rejuvenate Hope in the Hustle and Bustle of Life: Fr. Kuriakose	33
Beacon of Hope: Bro. Marak Joseph	35
From Dreams to Destiny: Hope Lives Among the Youthful Heart – Bro. Satyajit Naskar	36
Sports as a Means of Hope: Bro. Donboklang L. Marshillong	39
From Ashes to Dawn: Bro. James Touthang	41
Family Intimacy: Bro. Miasalhou Zhavirietuo MSFS	42
Pope Francis: A Beacon of Hope: Bro. Iophiyos Khongsya	44
Youth as the Vessels of Hope: Bro. Sangma Kornelius	46
Charity as Beacon of Hope: Bro. Ridonal Nongsiang OFM Cap	48
Failures Taught Me to Rise: Bro. Ioannis Wanniang	50
A Journey Rooted in Hope: Bro. Thambi Yadla SDS	52
Being a Christian is a Journey of Hope and Grace: Bro. Firstkyson Lyngdoh SDS	55
Hope Ignites the Darkness of the Heart: Bro. Comeback Pdang	58
Visualizing the Shape of the Church in NE India by 2033: Dr. Roy Anthony Parackal SDB	60
From Gratitude to New Hope	72
Residential Staff	73
Students' Photos and Domestic Staff	74
Reminiscences: Fr. Stanislaus Chinliankhup	81
Art Speaks When Words Are Unable to Explain	84
Charity from our well wishers	86





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April 1, 2026

## MESSAGE

*In a world often overshadowed by uncertainty, conflict, and despair, the call to become beacons of hope is more urgent than ever. Hope is not merely an emotion or wishful thinking; it is a deep conviction rooted in faith, a light that refuses to be extinguished even in the darkest moments.*

*As followers of Christ, we are invited to carry this light within us and to radiate it through our words, actions, and witness. Jesus Himself proclaimed good news to the poor, freedom to the captives, and sight to the blind. His life is the perfect example of hope made visible—a hope that heals, restores, and transforms.*

*The theme "Beacons of Hope" challenges each one of us—students, staff, and all who are part of the noble Oriens Theological Institute—to become instruments of that divine light. In our theological pursuit, we are not only called to deepen our knowledge but also to become living signs of hope in our communities. Through compassion, service, integrity, and unwavering faith, we can illuminate the lives of others.*

*Let this annual magazine of Oriens Theological Institute be a reflection of that hope—expressed through thoughtful reflection, creativity, and a shared commitment to truth and goodness. May every page inspire us to trust in God's providence and to shine as lights in the world courageously.*

*May the Lord bless all your efforts and make you true beacons of hope for the Church and society.*

*Yours in Christ,*

**John Moolachira**



**John Moolachira**  
**Archbishop of Guwahati**





## ARCHDIOCESE OF SHILLONG

*"With God all things are possible"*

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE  
Shillong - 793 003  
Meghalaya, India

**Most Rev.**

*Victor Lyngdoh, D.D.*

### **Message for Oriens Annual Magazine 2025—2026**

*In a world often clouded by uncertainty, division, and restlessness, the human heart continues to search for light—something steady, something enduring, something true. It is in this context that the theme "Beacons of Hope" shines with profound meaning and relevance. A beacon does not remove the darkness; rather, it stands firm within it, guiding, inspiring and assuring that light is always present. This is the noble mission entrusted to every member of the Oriens Theological Institute.*

*The Oriens Annual Magazine 2025—2026 is not merely a collection of writings; it is a living testimony of hope expressed through creativity, reflection and faith. Each article, poem and thought captured in these pages reflects the inner journey of students and staff who dare to believe that hope is not an illusion but a transforming power. Through this platform, voices are given space to speak, minds are encouraged to think deeply and hearts are inspired to see beyond the ordinary.*

*Hope is born when we encounter truth, nurtured when we live in love and strengthened when we serve others selflessly. As members of a theological institute, you are called not only to study hope but to become its bearers. Your words must echo the cries of the people, your reflections must touch the realities of life and your insights must illuminate paths where many feel lost. In doing so, you become true beacons—radiating light in families, communities and the wider society.*

*This magazine is also a celebration of collaboration. It beautifully brings together the talents and efforts of both staff and students, highlighting the richness of shared vision and unity in purpose. In a time where individualism often prevails, such collective creativity reminds us that hope grows stronger when we journey together. Each contribution, no matter how small, becomes a spark that adds to the greater light.*

*Moreover, "Beacons of Hope" challenges us to reflect deeply on your responsibility in today's world. Are you the sources of encouragement to others? Do your words build or break? Do your lives inspire faith, courage, and resilience? True hope is not passive; it is active, courageous and contagious. It dares to stand up against despair, to speak truth amidst confusion and to love even when it is difficult. As you turn these pages, may you not only appreciate the creativity and wisdom shared but also feel inspired to become living witnesses of hope. Let this magazine be more than a publication—let it be a movement, a mission and a reminder that each one of us is called to shine.*

*May Oriens continue to form minds that think critically, hearts that love deeply and lives that radiate hope. And may every reader, writer and contributor carry forward this light, becoming true Beacons of Hope in a world that needs it more than ever*

+Victor Lyngdoh DD  
Archbishop of Shillong

April 10, 2026





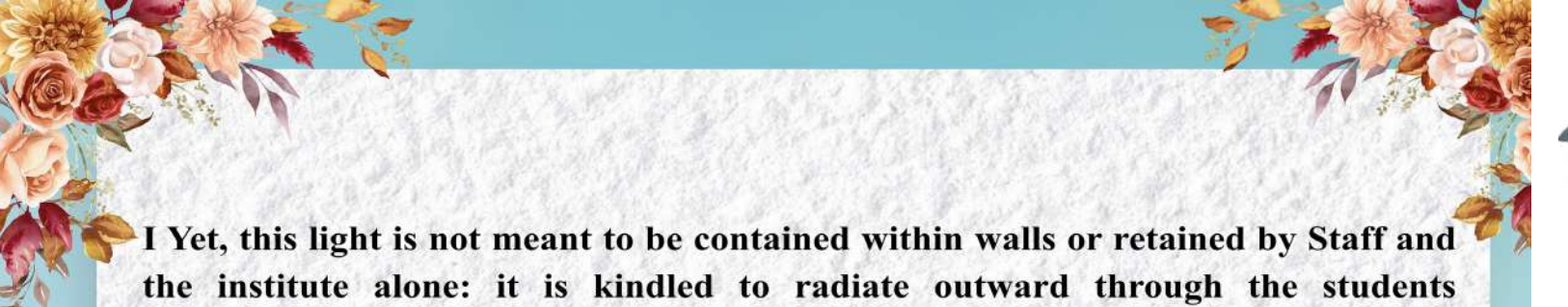
## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*“Always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have.” This was how St. Peter advised the first Christians to meet the difficult times in which they lived (1 Peter 3:15). And he added that they should do it “with courtesy and respect.” How would we reply today if asked to explain the hope we have within us? Do we have hope within us? Are we ready to give an account of it to others?*

*Truly, when we are able to give a convincing account to the people around, we become the Beacons of Hope.*

*In the Gospel of John, we are introduced to a powerful truth: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not over it” (John 1:4-5). What a comforting promise! In a world often overshadowed by chaos and despair, we have the assurance that the light of Christ dispels darkness. This light is our hope and the hope is Jesus Christ himself. By coming into the world, Christ brought with him something totally new: an encounter with the Lord of all lords; an encounter with the living God and an encounter with a hope that is stronger than death. From him flows the light that ignites our lives to become the Beacon of Hope and builders of the kingdom.*

*The Oriens Institute mirrors this divine pattern, standing as a beacon of hope through its nurturing of faith, integral formation, and generous service. Through its rigorous spiritual and intellectual training, the institute prepares the students for a solid and luminous priesthood. The well-rooted theological formation grounded in Scripture and doctrine dispels intellectual and existential darkness, filling students with wisdom that connects the histories of peoples and cultures. The staff and professors who belong to this institute discover their mission by carrying on their shoulders the long history of faith, wisdom and the suffering of all times. They walk the present and hold the future steadily guiding it forward. Together the staff and the institute become the Beacon of Hope equipped to evangelize a world groping in the shadows of wars, violence and moral decline.*



**I Yet, this light is not meant to be contained within walls or retained by Staff and the institute alone: it is kindled to radiate outward through the students themselves. To this end Oriens institute prepares its students teaching them to humble in their relations with others, to be vigilant in the face of world's temptations, to be submissive to God rather than disobedient, to be strong in faith and to persevere despite suffering and persecutions (1 Peter 5: 5-14). The human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation equips them to become a beacon of hope through which they will impart a hope of life and forgiveness for the people who will be entrusted to their pastoral care; a hope of holiness and apostolic fruitfulness for themselves and for all the Church; a hope of openness to faith and to the encounter with God for those who support them in their quest for the truth; a hope of peace and comfort for the suffering and for those wounded by life.**

**Finally, Oriens Institute reflecting the light of Christ summons every Christian to sell hope which is not easy amid cynicism, persecution, sarcasm and pessimism. In his first encyclical Pope Benedict XVI clearly depicts the transformative power of Christian hope rooted in Romans 5:5: "The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life" (Spe Salvi, 2). "Christian hope comes primarily from the fact that he/she knows that the Lord is working with him/her in the world, continuing in his Body which is the Church—and, through the Church, in the whole of mankind - the Redemption which was accomplished on the Cross and which bursts forth in victory on the morning of the Resurrection."**

**This is the promise and it is ours for the taking. However, we need dedication and courage to accept it. We need generosity to pass it on to others. We need a courageous 'Yes' to become the beacons of hope today more than ever.**

**I conclude with the saying of Pedro Arrupe, the 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus:**

**"We shall become bearers of hope only when, we not only possess the truth that saves, but, like Christ, our lives are such that show the way to that truth and inspire others to follow it."**

**Fr. Teron Robinson  
Director, Oriens Theological Institute**





## EDITORIAL

Pope Leo XIV, in his message in June 2025 to the young people in Chicago and the world over, exhorted the young people calling them to be “Beacons of Hope.” He emphasized this theme encouraging the building of community and sharing of God’s love. The Church today looks to the young people to be the beacons of hope.

Together with Pope Leo XIV, we have chosen this theme for this edition of the Annual Magazine to remind ourselves that we are the “Beacons of Hope” for the Church. The Church has placed her hope on us to continue what Christ has entrusted to the Church and his Apostles, the mission to build his community and to share his love.

Hope is 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. In Romans 5:5 St. Paul tells us, “Hope does not disappoint because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” We all have received the love of Christ and this love should be a sign of hope for us and for others as well.

Christian hope unfolds from the beginning of Jesus’ preaching in the proclamation of the beatitudes. The beatitudes raise our hope toward heaven as the new Promised Land; they trace the path that leads through the trials that await the disciples of Jesus. But through the merits of Jesus Christ and of his Passion, God keeps us in the “hope that does not disappoint.” Hope is the “sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.” Hope is also a weapon that protects us in the struggle of salvation: “Let us put on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.” It affords us joy even under trial: “Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation.” Hope is nourished in prayer, especially in the “Our Father,” and then it is expressly lived in our lives.

During the Jubilee year, we were called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experienced hardships of any kind. Today, we are still called to be beacons of hope for ourselves, for our brethren, for the Church, and for the world at large. As “Beacons of Hope” let us be agents of change in the world by embracing God’s love and peace.

We wish you an enjoyable reading.

Lit - s

# Rector's Message



I am happy to learn that the Students Council of Oriens Theological Institute is working hard to bring out the 12th Edition of Oriens Annual Magazine 2025-26, reflecting on the theme "Beacons of Hope". The theme evokes vivid image that inspires trains of thoughts in various aspects of life. First of all, it immediately reminds us of our motto, "To Give Light" and urges us to take seriously the vision and mission of our institute. As we are living in a challenging world where many people are weight down by the burdens of life, everyone is hungering for a ray of hope to light up their hearts and minds. As such, our theme is both inspiring and relevant for our time.

The demand of modern-day professions is creating cut-throat competition and mad race for success. This in turn is leading to loneliness, emptiness and meaninglessness among people. The digital world is causing distraction to many children, youth and adults alike, and it is unable to substitute human longing for divine peace which only God can provide. The pleasures offered by material progress and technological development are unable to nurture the deep longing of human soul. As such, all are consciously or unconsciously in search of 'beacons of hope' that will enlighten them and light up their lives.

In this regard, Jesus promises to give us a new life that gives light, which shines in the darkness, and which the darkness cannot overpower it (Jn 1: 4-5). This new life comes to us through faith in him. It means that, Jesus is the light, and to become beacons of hope, we need a life connected to Jesus, the light of the world (Jn 8: 12). To the degree we are connected to Jesus, to that extend will we be 'beacons of hope' to the world. The saints of the Church are not the exceptionally talented people. Rather, they are ordinary Christians who are closely related to Jesus. They do not perform great things but simply allow God to shine in and through them. The lives of the saints exhibit the life of Jesus that spread love, mercy, care and forgiveness. Therefore, to be beacons of hope, we need to draw near to Jesus and spread the same aroma of love, mercy, care and forgiveness in our broken world of darkness. Hope in human heart can be reenkindled by showing love, mercy, care and forgiveness to people who are drowning in the darkness of their own failures, shortcomings and sins. For theologians in particular, it is urgent to discover the dept of God's love expressed in Jesus who shed his blood to wash away the sins of the world and gave hope to the needy people groping in darkness. This discovery will enable us to give the light of faith to others and empower us to become beacons of hope.

Therefore, in short, no matter in what state of life we are placed in the society or in the Church, we need to do what we can to draw closer to Jesus, our light. In this way, we could become beacons of hope to the people around us. I am hope and pray that our reflections on becoming 'beacons of hope' will enlighten us and help us to understand the depth of God's love revealed in Jesus, which alone gives hope even in the shadow of death and promises resurrection to all who believe in Jesus.

**Fr. CHINLIANKHUP Stanislaus**  
**Rector, Oriens Theological College**

# MESSAGE

**Fr. KERKETTA Athnas MSFS**



## **Oriens theological Institute- “Beacon of hope”**

**The phrase ‘beacon of hope’ is the combination of two words: beacon and hope.**

**In this phrase, ‘beacon’ symbolizes guidance, light and direction. It is something that stands out and leads the way. ‘Hope’ is the emotional aspect of the phrase, representing optimism, possibility and anticipation. Thus ‘beacon of hope’ acts as a guiding light in times of darkness or difficulty, symbolizing something or someone that offers hope and encouragement when it is most needed.**

**Beacon of hope is a metaphor often found in literature and public speeches to inspire and motivate. A person in a challenging time might have ‘beacon of hope’ in a friend’s support and encouragement. Therefore the phrase is used in various contexts to describe a person, an idea, an event that provide hope and guidance. For an example, ‘a doctor working in a crisis zone can be called a beacon of hope for the community’; ‘a leader who inspires change during hardship is often described as beacon of hope’.**

**Thus, a beacon of hope is a metaphorical expression referring to a person, thing, or idea that provides inspiration, guidance, or optimism to others — especially during difficult or dark moments. It has got two key aspects: Beacon literally refers to a light or signal used to guide people (like a lighthouse), so metaphorically it means something that illuminates a path forward; and hope refers to a positive expectation or desire for a better outcome. Together the phrase means: A source of light, inspiration, or encouragement that gives people reason to believe things will improve. It is commonly used in speeches, literature, news, and everyday conversation to describe anything that uplifts people’s spirits or shows a way forward through adversity.**

**For a believer in Christ, Jesus Himself is the ‘beacon of hope’. It is a metaphorical expression which is derived from the Biblical imagery of light, guidance and salvation. Jesus himself declares, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). Prophet Isaiah describes him as ‘light of the nations’ (cf. 42:6).**

**In the Bible, believers are instructed to be visible example of faith as ‘city on a hill’ and as ‘a lamp on the stand’ (cf. Matthew 5:14-16). Psalm 119:105 states, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”. Thus, Word of God is a guide at a time of uncertainty and darkness.**

**Jesus is identified and described as the light of the world and the light of life, primarily in the Gospel of John. They are, like: Divine identity (John 8:12); Spiritual illumination (John 1:4-5); Mission to save (John 12:46); Believers as reflectors (Matthew 5:14-16); God’s Nature (1 John 1:5); and Eternal Light (Revelation 21:23 and 22:5).**

**In the Bible, Jesus is described as our hope (1 Timothy 1:1); the blessed hope (Titus 2:13), and the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). This hope is defined not as a vague wish, but as a living hope secured through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3).**

Further, Hebrews 6:19-20: Describes this hope as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering the Presence behind the veil where Jesus serves as High Priest. Romans 15:13: Prays that the God of hope fills believers with joy and peace, causing them to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 1:3: states that God has begotten believers to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Titus 2:13: identifies Jesus Christ as the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior. In Luke 2:30-32: Simeon recognizes the infant Jesus as God's salvation and a light for revelation to the Gentiles.

The scripture also speaks of 'Love' of Jesus.

The Bible does not explicitly state 'Jesus as Love' but Jesus demonstrates the ultimate love of God. The biblical references are: John 3:16, 1 John 4:9-10, Roman 5:8, John 15:13, and 15:9-10. Further, He is the incarnate embodiment of God's goodness and loving kindness, serving as the ultimate model of how believers treat others. This concept is rooted in scriptures like Titus 3:4, which identifies Jesus as the appearance of God's kindness, and John 1:14, which states that God's goodness became human in Him. The different aspects of Jesus' kindness such as unconditional compassion, love of enemies, severe kindness and self-sacrifice are found in the scripture.

Finally, the believers in Christ are called to emulate Christlike kindness by being intentional, gentle, and merciful, reflecting the character of God through their actions toward everyone, including those who are difficult or ungrateful. In Christian teaching, being a "beacon of hope" involves embodying love, kindness, and perseverance to offer tangible encouragement to those in need, reflecting the transformative power of Christ (Philippians 2:14-15; 1 John 3:17-18). It is a beautiful metaphor that can add depth and inspiration to our life.



# BEACONS *of* HOPE

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## Hope: The Song of Every Pilgrim Bro. Sumit Kujur

“Once you choose hope, anything is possible.”  
– Christopher Reeve

Every life is a pilgrimage, a long walk of faith and discovery. My own journey is one that stretches from cradle to cross has been guided by a single melody: hope. It has carried me through laughter and loneliness, success and failure, calling and confusion. And through it all, I’ve come to believe that hope is not a destination, but the song that sustains every pilgrim on the road.

My earliest lessons were learned not in a classroom, but at home. My family was my first school, where I discovered the meaning of love, patience, and faith. As the proverb says, “Charity begins at home.” My parents were my first teachers who shaped my conscience through example rather than command. They taught me that life’s value lies not in what we have, but in how we give.

From that humble beginning, I stepped into the world of education. My village school was small, but my dreams were large. “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” Those first steps into learning filled my young heart with curiosity. The dusty playgrounds and chalk-stained hands became symbols of joy. The teachers who guided me sowed the first seeds of hope that would one day grow into a vocation.

Hostel life came next a test of independence and endurance. Being away from home, I learned the meaning of friendship, responsibility, and faith. “It takes a village to raise a child.” The long nights of study, the laughter in the corridors, and even the tears of homesickness taught me resilience. High school deepened that lesson. Challenges came like waves, but each one prepared me for a greater tide. As another saying reminds us, “Smooth seas do not make skilful sailors.”

My time at Don Bosco School, Dibrugarh opened my heart to service. Surrounded by men of faith and discipline, I felt a gentle call stirring within. I began to sense that my life was meant for something more than ambition, it was meant for purpose. The Jesuit way of life, with its call to serve “for the greater glory of God,” began to shape my horizon.

The journey continued at Phesama in Nagaland, where silence and prayer became my companions. As they say “Still waters run deep.” In that quietness, I discovered the depth of God’s presence. Then came Mangalore, St. Aloysius College, a world of ideas and energy. College life widened my mind, but also tested my values and Vocation. “To err is human; to forgive, divine.” Like the prodigal son, I lost my way for a while, but grace

found me again. My return was not a defeat; it was a renewal of purpose.

It was during that time that the dream to fly abroad took root. The world beckoned, full of promise. I felt like “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” But God had other plans. Returning to the Pre-Novitiate in Nagaland became my “Jonah experience” a lesson in obedience. I learned that we can run from our calling, but never from our purpose. God’s plans, I realized, always find us, even when we stray.

The Novitiate at Mawshoroh in Meghalaya was a sacred season. Life there was simple, quiet, and profound. We know “Patience is a virtue.” In those days of reflection and prayer, I came to see that holiness isn’t about perfection it’s about perseverance. Later, at the Juniorate in Kolkata, I encountered the beauty of diversity. The city taught me that “Variety is the spice of life.” Each culture, each person, reflected a unique face of God.

Bangalore was another turning point. At St. Joseph’s College, I discovered freedom and responsibility walking hand in hand. “Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.” The city’s energy inspired me to think deeper, live fuller, and question more. My regency in Dawagree, Garo Hills, brought me back to simplicity. Teaching young children reminded me that “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Their smiles were living proof that hope can be taught by example.

Philosophy studies at Loyola College in Chennai opened my eyes to the beauty of questioning. “Knowledge is power.” I learned that to think deeply is also to live deeply. Later, at Palizi in Arunachal Pradesh, I spent my days running between classrooms and hostels, learning to give more than I received. “Lit-

tle drops of water make the mighty ocean.” Each small act of teaching and kindness became a ripple of grace.

The pandemic years brought unexpected turns. In Bishnupur, Manipur, I learned flexibility and gratitude in uncertainty. “When one door closes, another opens.” Soon after, in Karimnagar, Hyderabad, I continued my B.Ed studies an adventure of discovery, resilience, and faith. Those were years of learning not just from books, but from life itself.

For six months, I served quietly in Jalaphet, Jowai. “Bloom where you are planted.” That period taught me that no work is too small if done with love. Later, I discerned a new path leaving the Jesuit society to join the Diocese of Dibrugarh. “Change is the only constant.” Though difficult, this transition reminded me that God’s call is not a straight road but a living conversation.

My regency at St. Xavier’s, Duliajan, renewed my joy in mentoring young minds. “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” Working with hostel students, I saw hope come alive daily in their laughter, questions, and dreams. Now, at Oriens Theological College, where I study theology in preparation for priesthood, I find myself at the crossroads of reflection and mission. “Practice makes perfect.” Each day of study and prayer is another step toward the life of service I once only dreamed of.

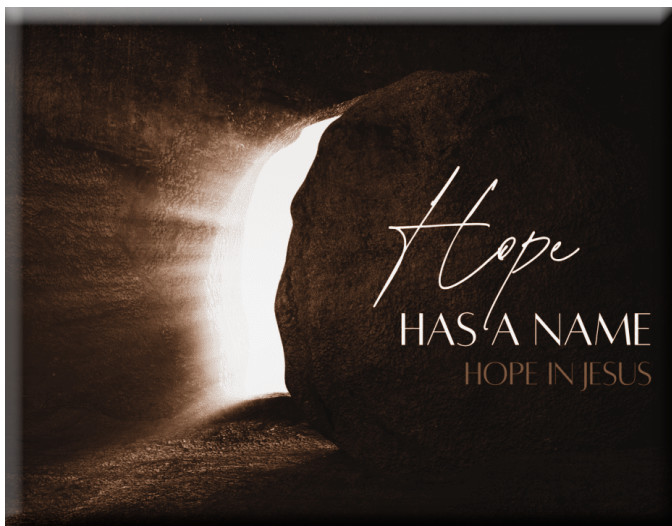
As I stand in my second year of theology, awaiting the grace of Diaconate ordination, I look back and see that every stage, each joy, each struggle has been a verse in the same song. “Hope for the best, prepare for the worst, and take what comes.” My journey has not been without detours, but hope

has always found a way to rise.

From cradle to cross, I have learned that hope is more than a feeling, it is a way of walking, a rhythm of the soul. It sings through every season, reminding me that even when the road bends, the destination is certain. And so, my pilgrim song continues, ever guided by faith, carried by hope, and crowned by love.

In truth, my story is not mine alone. Every person is a pilgrim, walking their own road between dreams and doubts, faith and fear. Each of us carries a song within, sometimes quiet, sometimes trembling, but always alive. Hope is that song. It gives courage to parents raising families, to students chasing dreams, to the weary finding strength to begin again. From cradle to cross, we are all sustained by the same melody: the belief that tomorrow can be brighter, and that even in the darkest hour, a small light still burns within.

- Br. Sumit Kujur



## Beacon of Hope

Bro. Chinnaiah

When tempests roar and shadows fall,  
A Light still burns beyond it all;  
Upon the shore, the faithful gleam,  
A beacon shining through each dream.

The sailor lost in raging sea,  
Beholds the glow and bends the knee;  
So too the soul in sin's dark night,  
Finds Jesus Christ — the saving Light.

The blind now see, the mute can sing,  
The poor now walk with heaven's King;  
The broken heart, once cold and sore,  
Finds healing words: "Go, sin no more."

A woman wept by Jacob's well,  
Where mercy's voice her shame did quell;  
She ran to tell what love had done—  
Her darkness met the morning sun.

The rich man found his wealth was vain,  
Till Christ brought joy that gold can't gain;  
The cross became his crown of grace,  
Where heaven smiled upon his face.

When life seems lost, when hope grows dim,  
Our weary hearts still cling to Him;  
For every tear and thorn we bear,  
The Light of Christ is shining there.

We suffer now, yet still believe,  
That brighter dawns we shall receive;  
Through pain we learn, through loss we see,  
How strong God's love can truly be.

O Christ, our Light through darkest hour,  
You guide the weak by grace and power;  
Till all the storms of night shall cease—  
Your beacon leads us home in peace.



## With Mary, we are Pilgrim of Hope

Uchai Milton & Darlong Joseph

Every Christians is a pilgrim. We come to understand this truth deeply from the day of our baptism until the moment we meet God face to face, our life is a journey of faith. On this road of pilgrimage, Hope is our only compass. Pope

Francis in *Fratelli tutti* captures this beautifully when he says, “Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that makes life more beautiful and worthwhile” (FT 55). In our pilgrimage of hope, we learned to look Mary as the Mother of God, a shining star, model of faith and a companion on our journey. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that in the Most Holy Virgin, the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle (LG 65). With Mary walking beside us, we can journey towards God with confidence to the promise of eternal life.

Mary the first Pilgrim of Faith and Hope

What strikes us most about Mary is that she was the first pilgrim of faith and hope. Pope John Paul II in *Redemptoris Mater* describes that the whole life of Mary as a “pilgrimage of faith” (RM 2). Her journey began at Annunciation, when she said “yes” (Lk 1:38) to the invitation of God through angel Gabriel to be the mother of Jesus Christ. And immediately, she set out “in haste” to visit Elizabeth (Lk 1:39). She became the first person to carry Jesus in pilgrimage hidden in her womb. This reminds us that every Christian pilgrimage is first and foremost about carrying Christ into the lives of others. We understand that Christian’s hope as the confident assurance of God’s promises (Heb 11:1). Mary lived this hope most deeply at the foot of the cross where all seemed to be lost. The Church venerates her as *Mater Spei* (Mother of hope).

Mary as star of the pilgrimage

The Church has long invoked Mary as the “star of the sea” (*Stella Maris*) as

a guidance of the faithful to Christ. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* describes Mary as “the mother of the living gospel” (EG 287). She is the one who accompanies us with tenderness and helps us to be ingrained in the joy of Christ. In *Marialis Cultus*, St Paul VI emphasizes that devotion to Mary should always lead us to Christ and inspire us to live the Gospel more fully (MC 25). Just as the magi followed the star which led them to Bethlehem, Mary is the star that points toward her son, the true light of the world. In our pilgrimage, her presence reminds us that we are never abandoned, though darkness surrounds us.

#### Mary walking with the Pilgrim People of God (Church)

The second Vatican council teaches that the Church is “a pilgrim people” moving toward the heavenly homeland. She shines forth as a sign of true hope and solace to the pilgrim people of God (LG 48, 68). Her motherhood continues to nurture the hope of faithful, just as Jesus entrusted John to Mary at the foot of the cross (Jn 19:26-27). Today, the pilgrim Church is beset by wars, poverty and cultural challenges; yet, she stands as a source of encouragement. Pope Francis rightly said, “A Marian dimension of the life of a disciple helps us grow in hope” (CV 48). We have found this to be profoundly true in our own life.

#### Mary as Mother of Hope in Today’s World

In the broken, fractured world, hope is a precarious reality. The cries of refugees, the wounds of violence, the despair of the youth and the emptiness of consumerist culture challenge us. Pope Benedict XVI in *Spe Salvi* reiterate that hope transforms even suffering, “the one who

has hope lives differently, he is given a new life” (SS 2). The life of Mary gives us a perfect example. At the wedding in Cana (Jn 2:1-11), she recognized the need of the couple and asked Jesus to do something. This shows us how Christian hope is expressed in solidarity with others in noticing and responding to the needs around us.

#### Walking with Mary on the Pilgrimage of Life

Pilgrimage is a deeply human and Christian experience. Every believer is a pilgrim from baptism to eternal life and Mary walks with us as a companion. Pope Francis in *Gaudete et Exsultate* calls holiness is a journey lived day by day (GE 1). Across the world, there are Marian shrines like Lourdes, Fatima, Guadalupe and in India Velankanni. These sacred places remind us that Mary walks with her children strengthening our hope and faith.

We conclude by saying that to walk with Mary is to walk in hope and faith. She has shown us how to live in hope by trusting God’s plan and living for others in love. The words of Vatican II echoes in our heart, “The Mother of Jesus, in the glory which she possesses in body and soul in heaven, is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. In the meantime, she shines forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come (LG 68). To go on pilgrimage means to step out of ourselves to encounter God. With Mary, therefore, we continue our pilgrimage of hope boldly, joyfully and faithfully until we reach our eternal homeland. We don’t walk alone. None of us do. Mary walks with us all.



## RADIATING HOPE OF THE POOR

Bro. Libin Augustin

### Blessed are You, the Poor in Spirit

Once, a beggar visited a mighty king. The king was deep in prayer, asking God for wealth and victory. When he turned to the beggar and asked, “What can I do for you?” the beggar replied, “How can you give me anything, O King, when you yourself are begging before God?” This simple scene unmasks the illusion of wealth. Scripture reminds us that true richness lies not in possession but in trust; like the poor widow whose two small coins won God’s gaze. The Gospel does not glorify misery but sanctifies dependence on God, the soul’s poverty that invites divine abundance. A Zen master once said, “Austerity is not about what we possess, but how we hold what we possess.” True poverty is inner freedom, the heart that clings to nothing but God. Jesus loved the rich young man, yet he went away sorrowful, unable to let go.

Modern research confirms this paradox: material wealth seldom brings peace. The poor often display deeper compassion, gratitude, and faith. Their hope glows amid hardship. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2546) teaches, “True joy does not come from riches, but from trusting God.” Pope Benedict XVI wrote, “To be poor in spirit means to look to God alone for security.” Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Teresa of Calcutta lived this truth, seeing poverty not as misery but as freedom and communion with Christ. “The greatest poverty,” said Teresa, “is being unloved.” Thus, poverty of spirit is radiant hope, a grace that transforms suffering into love.

### Blessed are You, Poor

If Matthew reveals the inner “poverty of spirit,” Luke celebrates “the poor” themselves, those who hunger and weep yet possess the Kingdom. The Church has always seen them not as objects of pity but as bearers of divine presence. From the Acts of the Apostles, “There was not a needy person among them” (Acts 4:34). When Saint Lawrence presented the poor to the emperor, he declared, “Here are the treasures of the Church.” This “preferential option for the poor” remains at the heart to Catholic teaching. Saint John Paul II called it “a special form of primacy in Christian charity,” and Pope Francis affirms, “Without the poor, the Gospel cannot be understood.” Christ became poor so that through His poverty we might be rich (2 Cor 8:9). In every poor person, the Church meets Christ Himself.

The world measures wealth; God measures love. The poor remind us that life’s greatest treasure is the heart that sees. As Pope Benedict wrote in *Deus Caritas Est*: “The Christian’s program - the Good Samaritan’s program - is the heart that sees.” Saint Teresa of Calcutta said, “The

poor are great people. They can teach us many beautiful things.” Their silent endurance becomes a living psalm of hope. When the Church touches their wounds, she touches Christ’s. The poor evangelize us to rely on grace. Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Damian of Molokai, and Saint Teresa of Calcutta lived this mission. Evangelization without compassion is hollow, and compassion without justice is incomplete. Every Eucharist sends us forth with Christ’s command: “You give them something to eat” (Mk 6:37). The poor are not just recipients of hope but they are its bearers. Their faith illumines darkness. Pope Francis says, “The poor save us, for they enable us to encounter the face of Jesus Christ.” In them shines the same light that radiated from Bethlehem’s manger: “Blessed are you, poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God.”

## Hope Is Jesus

When human hopes fade, Christ remains; the dawn breaking the world’s darkest night. In Him, poverty becomes promise and suffering becomes seed. To speak of hope apart from Jesus is to speak of light apart from the sun. The poor grasp this mystery deeply, clinging to the Crucified and Risen Lord. Pope Benedict XVI in *Spe Salvi* wrote: “The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been given a new life.” In Bethlehem, Hope was wrapped in rags; on Calvary, Hope hung between two thieves. In every hungry child and forgotten soul, that same Hope still breathes. When the Church bends over the wounds of the poor, she meets her crucified Lord. Saint Oscar Romero said, “Christ is in the poor, Christ suffers in the poor, Christ liberates through the poor.” Every mother’s prayer in a slum, every farmer’s faith, every sister’s gentle care - these are lamps of divine hope. They may have little, yet they possess everything, for they have

Christ. Hope multiplies when shared and transforms when lived. Born from Christ’s pierced side, the Church must bring heaven’s fragrance into the world’s wounds. Every act of mercy becomes a small Bethlehem where Christ is born anew. Saint John Paul II urged, “Put out into the deep! Trust the Word of Christ, for He is the Lord of history.” The final word belongs not to suffering but to glory. Every tear will be wiped away, every hungry filled with the Bread of Life. Hope is the melody carrying creation toward its harmony in God. The poor remind us that true hope lies not in gold or power but in the pierced hands of Jesus. To radiate hope for the poor is to radiate Christ Himself, the Smile of God upon a weeping world, and the Light in darkness, the Love that stoops low to lift us all.



# EKKLESIA IN THE AGE OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD: REDEFINING WORSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND MISSION



Marboh Bester, III Year  
Malngiang Eskarius, III Year  
Dkhar Kitboklang, II Year

## Introduction

Christian self-understanding has always been shaped by the notion of ekklesia, a people called together by God and sent forth into the world. From its biblical origins to its historical expressions, the Church has existed as a gathered community sustained by worship, fellowship, and mission. At the same time, the Church has continually engaged changing cultural and technological contexts, interpreting them in light of its foundational faith in the incarnate Word.

The emergence of digital culture represents one of the most significant contextual shifts in recent history. The internet, social media, and increasingly artificial intelligence have transformed patterns of communication,

identity formation, and social interaction. Religion has not remained untouched by these developments. Concepts such as “digital religion,” “networked faith,” and “online spirituality” have entered scholarly discourse which reflects the growing presence of religious practice in virtual spaces.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation dramatically. With physical gatherings restricted, churches worldwide turned to livestreamed liturgies, online prayer groups, and digital pastoral initiatives. While these adaptations demonstrated ecclesial creativity and resilience, they also exposed underlying tensions concerning the nature of worship, the meaning of community, and the integrity of mission.

## Ekklesia as Communion and Mission

The term ekklesia originates from the Greek expression ek (out of) and kaleo (to call)

meaning “those who are called out,” corresponding to the Hebrew *qāhāl*. This linguistic background shows that the Church is fundamentally an assembly convened by God, not a voluntary association formed by human initiative. Ecclesial identity is therefore relational and participatory, rooted in divine calling rather than institutional function.

Theologically, as John Zizioulas articulates, the Church is not simply an institution but a way of being, a way of relating, which reflects the very life of the Trinity itself. Thus, the Church exists as a mode of relational existence rather than a mere structure. Such communion, however, is inherently dynamic and outward-oriented. The Spirit who gathers the Church also sends it into the world. Communion and mission thus form an indivisible unity within ecclesial life.

This unity is articulated in the theological concept of *Missio Dei*. Mission is not primarily an activity undertaken by the Church but participation in God’s salvific action throughout history. From the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all nations (Gen 12:3), through Israel’s vocation as a priestly people (Ex 19:6), to Christ’s commissioning of the disciples (Mt 28:19-20), Scripture consistently portrays God’s people as instruments of divine mission. As the Johannine Jesus declares, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21). Consequently, mission belongs to the very being of the Church rather than constituting a secondary task.

### The Apostolic Community as Ecclesial Paradigm

The Acts of the Apostles provides a paradigmatic vision of *ekklesia* as both communion and mission. The early Christian community is characterized by devotion to apostolic teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42). These practices fostered a deeply relational and sacramental life

that naturally overflowed into witness and service.

Notably, the missionary effectiveness of the Church in Acts does not arise from strategic planning but from the credibility of its communal life. Mutual sharing, hospitality, and joyful worship rendered the Gospel visible and attractive, such that “day by day the Lord added to their number” (Acts 2:47). This model provides a central ecclesiological insight: authentic mission emerges from authentic communion. Any contemporary reimagining of ecclesial life, digital or otherwise must therefore safeguard the intrinsic link between community and witness.

### Digital Culture and the Rise of Individualism

Modern digital culture has intensified longstanding tendencies toward individualism within Western and globalized societies. Consumer logic, personalized media, and algorithm-driven platforms increasingly shape identity around preference and choice. In religious contexts, this has often resulted in the privatization of faith and the fragmentation of communal belonging, that often results in the slogan ‘I am spiritual but not religious.’

Sociological analyses describe this phenomenon as “expressive individualism,” wherein personal fulfilment supersedes shared norms and communal responsibility. Within Christianity, this manifests in selective participation, ecclesial consumerism, and a preference for individualized spirituality over communal discipleship. Digital platforms can inadvertently reinforce these patterns by enabling believers to engage religious content without sustained commitment to a concrete community.

The pandemic-induced shift to online worship brought both benefits and challenges to the fore. While digital mediation enabled

continuity of worship and pastoral care, it also revealed the limits of virtual ecclesial life. Many believers experienced a profound sense of loss in the absence of physical gathering, sacramental participation, and embodied fellowship. These experiences reaffirmed that the communal identity of the Church cannot be fully realized through virtual means alone.

### Worship and Sacramentality in Virtual Contexts

Christian worship (*leitourgia*) stands at the center of ecclesial life as the primary expression of communion with God and with one another. Historically, worship has been an embodied, multisensory act involving ritual gestures, shared space, and sacramental symbols. Digital mediation challenges this understanding by relocating worship into virtual environments.

From a pneumatological perspective, the Church is constituted by the Spirit rather than confined to a physical location. Online worship can therefore be understood as a genuine expression of prayer and shared intention, particularly for those unable to participate physically. However, Christianity remains an irreducibly incarnational faith. The Word became flesh, and divine grace is mediated through material reality.

This tension is most evident in sacramental theology. Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, involve bodily participation and communal presence. The Eucharistic celebration signifies unity through shared participation in the one bread and one cup (cf. 1 Cor 10:16-17). Attempts to replicate sacramental actions virtually risk undermining their communal and incarnational character. Consequently, most ecclesial traditions maintain that while prayer and reflection may occur online, sacramental celebrations require physical gathering.

### Community and Mission in the Digital Sphere

Digital platforms have nonetheless enabled new forms of ecclesial community. Online prayer groups, pastoral networks, and transnational faith communities provide support and belonging beyond geographical constraints. In contexts marked by migration, marginalization, or isolation, such digital communities can function as vital expressions of *koinonia*.

At the same time, the Church's missionary vocation encounters new frontiers in digital culture. Contemporary popes have described the world of digital communication as a "new Areopagus," a public space where the Gospel must be proclaimed and embodied. Digital technologies allow for unprecedented reach, intercultural dialogue, and creative evangelization.

Yet mission cannot be reduced to content dissemination or digital visibility. Christian witness is ultimately relational and embodied, requiring lived discipleship within concrete communities. Digital mission must therefore be integrated with offline ecclesial life, ensuring that virtual engagement leads toward deeper communion rather than substituting for it.

### Toward an Integrated Ecclesiology for the Digital Age

An authentic ecclesiology for the digital age requires a balanced and discerning approach. The Church must rediscover its identity as communion rooted in Christ while engaging digital culture pastorally and prophetically. Digital spaces should be recognized as legitimate arenas for accompaniment, dialogue, and witness, particularly for those on the margins of ecclesial life.

At the same time, the Church is called to

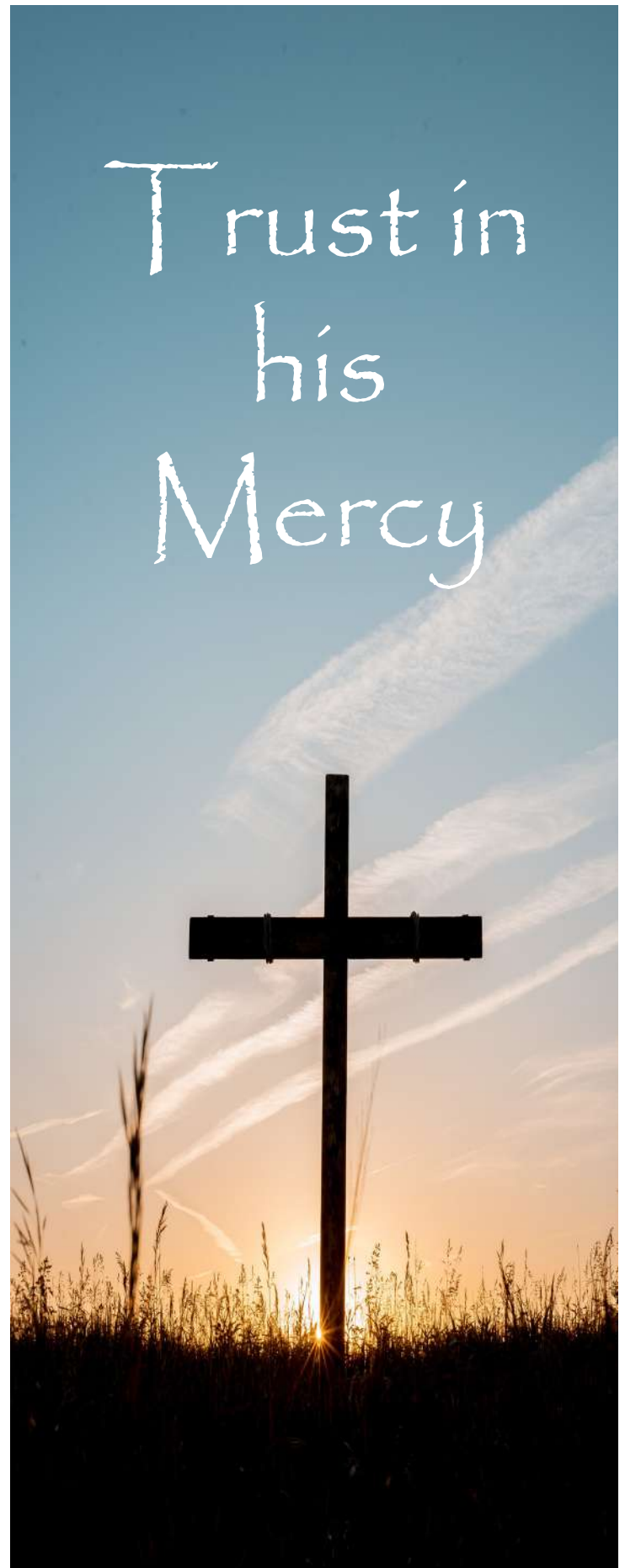
critique the distortions of digital culture, including consumerism, disinformation, and the commodification of truth. Ethical engagement with technology, guided by principles of human dignity, justice, and the common good, is essential.

Crucially, the Church must reclaim the community dimension of faith. Digital participation should foster, not diminish, the desire for embodied worship and sacramental life. An incarnational digital presence marked by authenticity, empathy, and responsibility can help integrate online and offline expressions of ecclesial life.

### Conclusion

The virtual world has brought the Church to a critical moment of ecclesiological discernment. Digital technologies have reshaped worship, community, and mission in ways that are both promising and problematic. While virtual platforms offer new opportunities for accessibility and evangelization, they cannot replace the incarnational, sacramental, and communal core of ekklesia.

A theologically grounded response requires neither rejection nor uncritical acceptance of digital culture, but a discerning integration rooted in Scripture and Tradition. By embracing digital tools responsibly while remaining faithful to its identity as a community of communion and mission, the Church can continue to serve humanity and bear credible witness to the Gospel in a rapidly changing world.





## DREAM FOR A BETTER WORLD

### Baselius Thyriang

When we look at the world today, it is easy to be overwhelmed by the noise of conflict, division, and indifference. Nations rise against nations, families are broken by mistrust, and hearts grow cold in the face of suffering. Yet, deep within the human soul lies a longing, a sacred dream for a world renewed by love, peace, and justice. My dream for a better world is not built upon the fleeting promises of wealth or power, but upon the enduring truth of the Gospel: that the Kingdom of God begins here and now, in the hearts of those who love as Christ loved.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). This single beatitude captures the heart of my dream. I dream of a world where peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, mercy, and reconciliation. It is a peace born

from forgiveness and mutual respect one that transcends differences of race, culture, or religion. Such peace, however, cannot come from political systems alone. It must begin in the human heart, where Christ Himself desires to reign.

A better world is not simply an ideal; it is a call a mission entrusted to each of us. Every Christian, by virtue of baptism, is called to be a builder of this new world. Pope Francis, in *Fratelli Tutti*, reminds us that “we are called to dream, then, as a single human family... as children of the same earth.” This vision is profoundly pastoral: The Church must not stand apart from the struggles of the world but walk alongside humanity, healing wounds and offering hope. My dream is that the Church continues to be a “field hospital,” as the Holy Father beautifully says where the broken find

compassion and the lost rediscover purpose.

But what does this dream look like in practice? It begins with small, simple acts of love. In a world obsessed with success and self-promotion, choosing humility becomes revolutionary. When we extend a hand to the poor, listen to the lonely, or forgive those who have hurt us, we become co-creators with God in the work of renewal. The Gospel of Matthew reminds us that whatever we do “to the least of these” (Mt 25:40), we do to Christ Himself. A better world, therefore, is not an abstract concept but a daily commitment to love concretely and courageously.

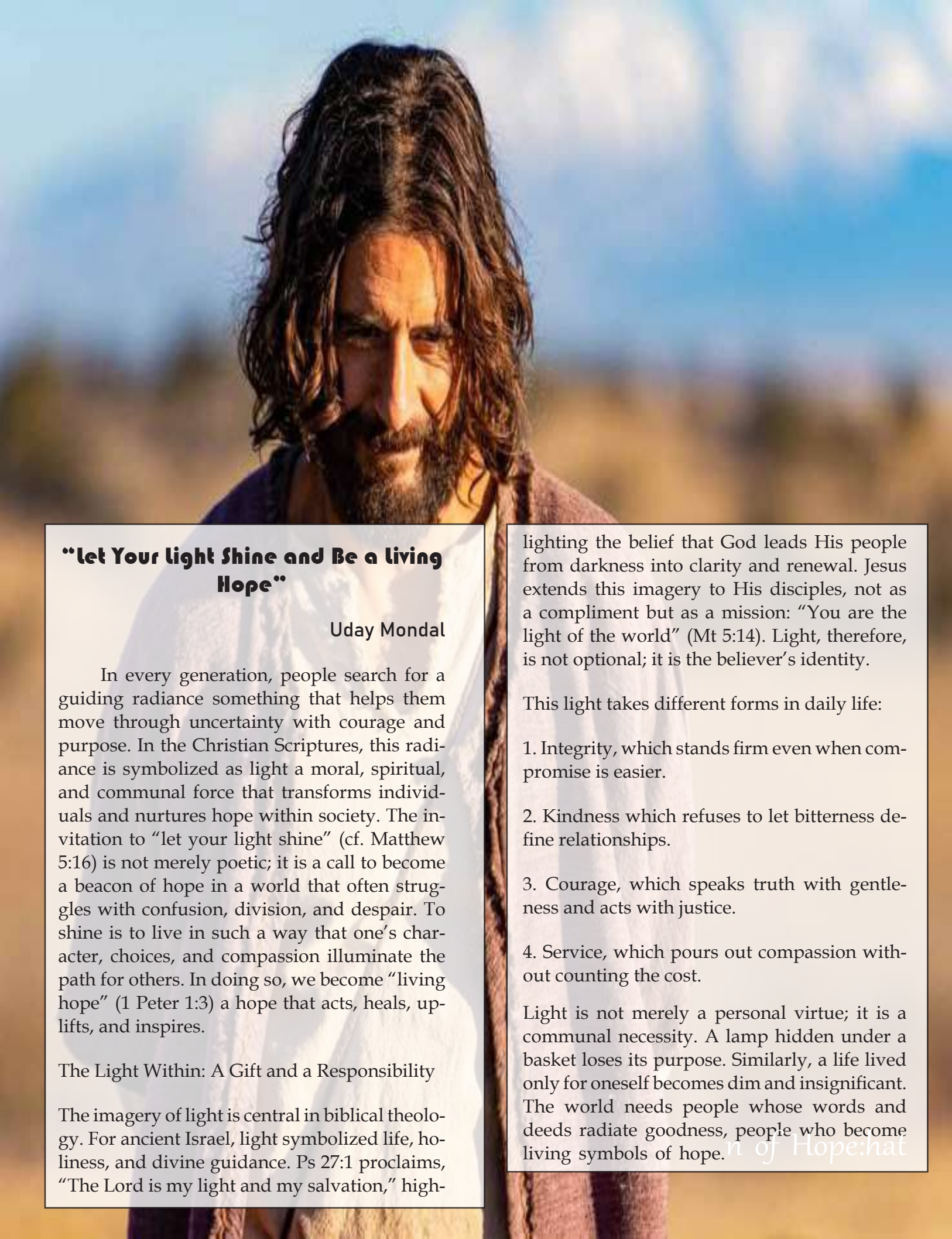
Pastorally speaking, this dream calls for communities of faith that mirror the early Church where believers shared everything in common, prayed together, and cared for one another (Acts 2:42-47). Imagine parishes that are not just places of worship but centres of encounter where the Eucharist nourishes a spirituality of communion that spills out into acts of service. Imagine families that become domestic churches, schools of love, forgiveness, and prayer. In such spaces, the dream of a better world takes flesh and becomes credible.

However, dreaming of a better world also means confronting the painful realities that prevent it. Inequality, environmental destruction, and moral indifference are not merely social issues; they are spiritual crises. The Book of Genesis teaches us that God entrusted creation to human stewardship, not exploitation. Thus, my dream includes a renewed reverence for the earth our common home where we rediscover the Creator through the beauty of His works. Caring for creation is not only ecological responsibility; it is an act of worship and gratitude.

At the heart of this dream is hope. Saint Paul writes, “Hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (Romans 5:5). Hope is the virtue that sustains us when the world seems dark. It keeps us from despair and reminds us that even the smallest act of goodness can bear enduring fruit. From a pastoral perspective, the Church’s mission is to rekindle this hope to remind people that, despite everything, God is still at work in history, transforming pain into purpose and chaos into creation.

My dream for a better world, then, is deeply rooted in faith: a faith that believes love is stronger than hatred, light stronger than darkness, and life stronger than death. It is the dream of the Kingdom of God a world reconciled, redeemed, and renewed in Christ. As Christians, we are not passive dreamers but active participants in this divine vision. Through prayer, service, and witness, we are invited to become signs of hope in a weary world. May this dream not remain a wishful thought, but a living mission so that through us, the light of Christ may shine ever more brightly upon the face of the earth.





## **“let Your light Shine and Be a living Hope”**

Uday Mondal

In every generation, people search for a guiding radiance something that helps them move through uncertainty with courage and purpose. In the Christian Scriptures, this radiance is symbolized as light a moral, spiritual, and communal force that transforms individuals and nurtures hope within society. The invitation to “let your light shine” (cf. Matthew 5:16) is not merely poetic; it is a call to become a beacon of hope in a world that often struggles with confusion, division, and despair. To shine is to live in such a way that one’s character, choices, and compassion illuminate the path for others. In doing so, we become “living hope” (1 Peter 1:3) a hope that acts, heals, uplifts, and inspires.

### The Light Within: A Gift and a Responsibility

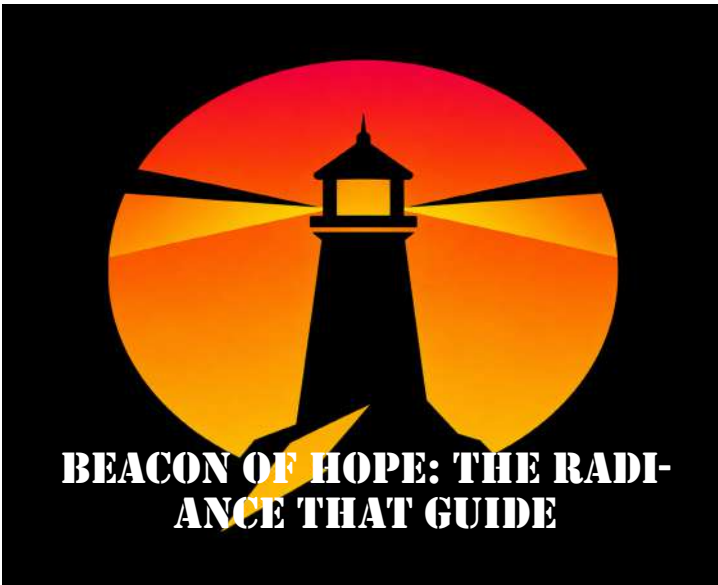
The imagery of light is central in biblical theology. For ancient Israel, light symbolized life, holiness, and divine guidance. Ps 27:1 proclaims, “The Lord is my light and my salvation,” high-

lighting the belief that God leads His people from darkness into clarity and renewal. Jesus extends this imagery to His disciples, not as a compliment but as a mission: “You are the light of the world” (Mt 5:14). Light, therefore, is not optional; it is the believer’s identity.

This light takes different forms in daily life:

1. Integrity, which stands firm even when compromise is easier.
2. Kindness which refuses to let bitterness define relationships.
3. Courage, which speaks truth with gentleness and acts with justice.
4. Service, which pours out compassion without counting the cost.

Light is not merely a personal virtue; it is a communal necessity. A lamp hidden under a basket loses its purpose. Similarly, a life lived only for oneself becomes dim and insignificant. The world needs people whose words and deeds radiate goodness, people who become living symbols of hope.



A beacon is not an ornamental light; it is a navigational tool. It warns, protects, and guides. Throughout the history, during storms at sea or dark nights, sailors depended on beacons to keep them from danger and direct them toward safe shores. In the same way, societies depend on people who carry moral and spiritual luminosity.

To be a beacon of hope means:

To stand firm when others tremble. Hope is not naive optimism, it is the conviction that goodness has a future. To radiate compassion amid suffering. Hope grows where humanity is practiced generously. A beacon does not move, but it causes others to move. One hopeful life can awaken the courage of many.

The Christian idea of “living hope” emphasizes that hope is dynamic. It breathes, grows, acts, and sustains.

It is not a distant concept but a lived reality. When people encounter someone who embodies perseverance, integrity, and love, they experience hope not as an idea but as a presence.

Lighting the Corners of Our Campus and Society

### 1. Shine through Academic Honesty.

Integrity elevates the entire learning environment. When students commit to honest work, they contribute to a culture where excellence is real and meaningful.

### 2. Shine through Respectful Dialogue.

Campuses are places of diverse opinions and vibrant debates. Light shines when discussions are conducted with respect, openness, and humility, when the goal is understanding, not defeating the other.

### 3. Shine through Service and Solidarity.

Volunteering, mentoring, tutoring, or supporting peers during difficult times embodies the essence of living hope. When you help someone rise, your light becomes their strength.

### 4. Shine through Creativity and Innovation.

Art, research, music, literature, technology, these are powerful expressions of the human spirit. When used ethically and imaginatively, they illuminate society and open new paths for progress.

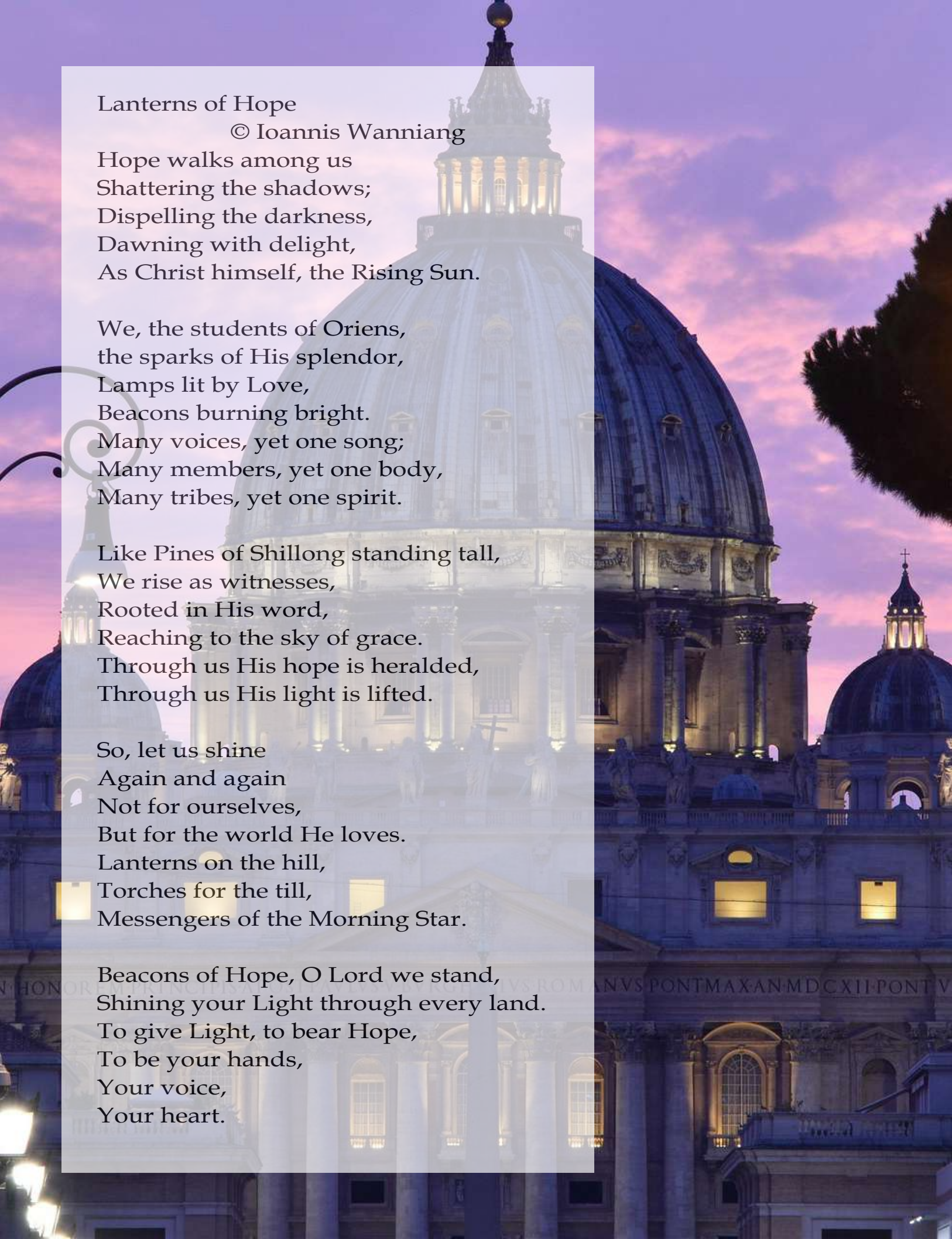
### 5. Shine through Personal Growth.

To be light is also to confront your own darkness- your fears, doubts, and limitations. Growth is not instant; it is a disciplined journey. But each step forward becomes a spark for others.

Application: Being a light does not require extraordinary talent or dramatic achievements. It begins with small, consistent acts: Speak truth kindly. Listen attentively. Encourage someone silently struggling. Stand up for fairness.

### Conclusion

In a world yearning for clarity and comfort, the call to “let your light shine and be a living hope” is both urgent and beautiful. Each individual carries a unique radiance gifts, passions, and perspectives capable of transforming communities. When we allow this inner light to shine freely, we become beacons that guide others through their storms. And in doing so, we not only brighten the world but also discover our deepest purpose: to live as reflections of divine hope, shaping a future where humanity thrives in compassion, truth, and peace.



## Lanterns of Hope

© Ioannis Wanniang

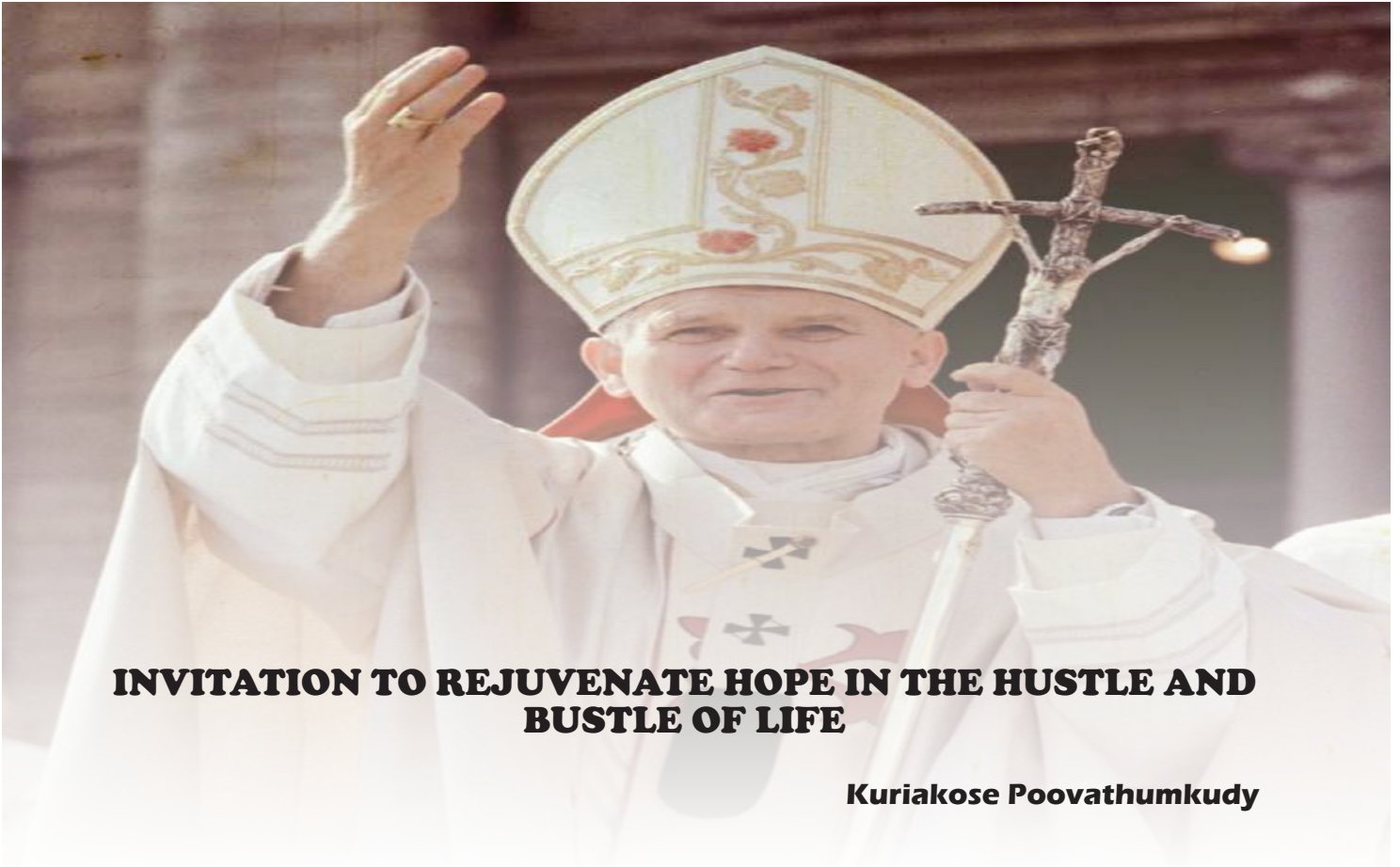
Hope walks among us  
Shattering the shadows;  
Dispelling the darkness,  
Dawning with delight,  
As Christ himself, the Rising Sun.

We, the students of Oriens,  
the sparks of His splendor,  
Lamps lit by Love,  
Beacons burning bright.  
Many voices, yet one song;  
Many members, yet one body,  
Many tribes, yet one spirit.

Like Pines of Shillong standing tall,  
We rise as witnesses,  
Rooted in His word,  
Reaching to the sky of grace.  
Through us His hope is heralded,  
Through us His light is lifted.

So, let us shine  
Again and again  
Not for ourselves,  
But for the world He loves.  
Lanterns on the hill,  
Torches for the till,  
Messengers of the Morning Star.

Beacons of Hope, O Lord we stand,  
Shining your Light through every land.  
To give Light, to bear Hope,  
To be your hands,  
Your voice,  
Your heart.



## **INVITATION TO REJUVENATE HOPE IN THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF LIFE**

**Kuriakose Poovathumkudy**

### Introduction:

Living in a so-called hurly-burly society, we witness conspicuous contradictions and incredible incongruities on a daily basis. The glaring discordancy can have profound impact on life and often tends to blur the vision of enduring hope. At the close vicinity of booming mega high-tech cities, there are conspicuously visible shacks and shanties of the poor and the underprivileged. In many countries affluence and prosperity coexist with utter poverty and downright destitution, where people frantically fight for a crumb of bread to satisfy their daily hunger. In spite of instant digital euphoria, many experience deep loneliness, painful seclusion and total abandonment. Added to these litanies of anguishing woes, there is also growing strife and struggle, turbulent political unrest and

distressful intolerance at the national and international levels. The use of “drone-missile” has become normal and it has hastened the frequency of bombarding (presumed) enemy targets; surprisingly, such destructive actions have almost gained tacit approval from the mute public; carpet bombing and annihilation of important life-saving installations have become daily occurrence in many war-torn countries. Such overwhelming and perturbing recurrent incidences can cloud the minds of ordinary people with a sense of despair and distress, robbing their expectant hope of a prosperous and serene future.

**Generating Enduring Hope:** During his ministry, Jesus had to face rough and tough situations in the socio-cultural and religious milieu of the people of the time. His ministry was essentially person-oriented, which aimed

at transformation of individuals as well as communities from within. He did not wipe away or overthrow glaring inequalities or fragilities of human vulnerability, but met the people in their brokenness and enthused them to be life giving fountains, by instilling enduring courage to pin their hope on the ever-abiding love of their Heavenly Father. In short, by sharing in their pain and ambiguities of life, he sowed the seeds of hope to dream of a day when people would “beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isa 2:4). It symbolizes converting weapons of mass destruction into farming tools and deliberately ending fighting to focus on building. It is a powerful image of shifting from destruction to construction, for all are called to be co-creators with God. Thus, Jesus had invited the people of his time to discover the silver lining of hope in the distinct horizon of human life, even in seemingly utter contradictions, encircled by uncertainty and volatility.

The Church as an Emissary of Hope: Before the peace deal was reached between Israel and the members of the Hamas Organization, Rev. Gabriel Romanelli, parish priest of the Holy Family Church in Gaza Strip, spoke to Vatican Media about the difficult humanitarian situation in the place and expressed his worst apprehension that soon the people might lose hope for the future (L'Osservatore Romano - June 2025, 24). When hope is shattered, there is nothing to hold on to keep afloat in the inundated sea of despair. Today the Church is endowed with the same mission of Jesus and she is called to inculcate the great virtue of hope among people, especially the anguished and distressed. Today's world requires hope more than anything else to march forward with courage for its survival. In what way the Church

can champion the cause of initiating a mediatory role to promote peace mission among various combatant groups to restore expectant hope among the people?

Jesus ignited a ray of hope in the lives of many shattered and ostracised members of the Jewish community. To the adulterous woman he showed immeasurable compassion (Jn 8:3-11), and conveyed similar messages of hope to the sick, the lepers (Mk 1:40-45) and the blind (Lk 18:35-43), the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12) and people possessed with evil spirits (Mt 8:16). Thus, his consoling words gave hope to the hopeless and the days ahead. There is no doubt that hope is such a gracious energy that any darkened areas of the life can be lit and illuminated to behold the graciousness of all-loving and caring God. The Church is entrusted with the same ministry of Jesus of restoring hope in her children in various vicissitudes of life.

Need of the Gospel of Hope: Today more than anything else, people are in need of the “Gospel of Hope.” In the midst of much destruction, tension and turmoil all around, people can easily succumb to the temptation of endorsing the axiomatic saying, *Homo hominis lupus* (man is a wolf to man) to their vulnerable lives. The ‘Gospel of Hope’ can transform the same fear and paranoia into *homo hominis frater* (man is a brother to man). Pope Francis had dreamt of global fraternity and social friendship and shared his dreams in the most celebrated Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (2020). While people from different walks of life have expressed their apprehension and reservation in building universal fraternity, Pope Francis firmly believed and earnestly exhorted people of all cultures and languages to pursue the path of hope to promote human brotherliness (FT 29).

He firmly believed that hope does not disappoint anyone (Rom 5:5). The 'Vatican Foundation of Fratelli Tutti' has set in motion and many organizations and individuals of diverse nationalities and faith traditions have come forward and joined hands to build a world of human fraternity to restore hope among people of all cultures and languages. The protagonists of such movement have the ability to hope against hope in all their initiatives and undertakings.

Embracing a Spirituality of Hope: Together with the 'Gospel of Hope,' we need a fervent 'Spirituality of Hope' to cherish dreams of a hope-filled future. Many biblical personalities like Abraham, Moses and other prophets had hoped against hope, and they were not disappointed. Zachariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna and many other sons and daughters of Abraham firmly believed in the 'Expected Messiah' and they were not disillusioned. These faith-tested luminaries serve as examples to cherish hope even in desperate and distressed situations. Instead of being incarcerated and enslaved in one's loss and imaginary woes, the challenge is to develop a spirit-filled life of hope, which will help to strengthen one's resolve to face uncertainties with valour. As the Church prepares for the Extraordinary Jubilee Year 2033, what is required is a robust "Spirituality of Hope" in today's blustery atmosphere of turbulent world order. It will enable the faithful to anchor their life in the Lord of Hope, who is the everlasting rock (Ps 18:2).

Conclusion - A Witness of Hope: We have a powerful example of a 'Witness of Hope' in the person of Pope St. John Paul II, who had gone through personal tragedies of great magnitude as well as of untold sufferings. He lost his beloved mother at a

tender age of eight and the only sibling at twelve. During the Nazi invasion of Poland, many of his close friends and associates were brutally massacred and were eliminated unceremoniously. Even as the leader of the Catholic Church, there was a deliberate attempt on his life in Rome at St. Peter's Square (13 May 1981). Towards the end of his life journey, he suffered many years of nagging Parkinson's disease. In spite of all these enduring ordeals, he could smile and say: Look to the future with hope and set out with renewed vigour every day (Spiritual Life, July-August 2025, 5). A true witness of Hope of worthy imitation!



## BEACON OF HOPE

Marak Raksam Joseph

*A shining light through trials deep,  
 God's promise holds when shadows creep.  
 From humble birth to cross on high,  
 His love lives on it cannot die.  
 His mercy flows through hearts in pain,  
 His grace brings healing once again.  
 The risen Christ, our faithful guide,  
 Leads every soul from dark to light.  
 In prayer we stand, in faith we grow,  
 Our trust renewed in skies that glow.  
 With hope we walk, our journey run,  
 Till heaven's dawn reveals the Son.*



## *From Dreams to Destiny: Hope Lives Among The Youthful Heart*

Satyajit Naskar

Young minds are lost and muzzled by the media algorithm moving as a walking dead, following the glaring social instruction, repudiating youthfulness of living, and soaked in small glittering screen rather than life actor axiom of destiny. Our games became Video games, our lifestyle delivered at the door, our art posted for to like share and subscribe. No one wait for summer to throw stone to pluck stone fruits. Streets are filled with smoke, schools are busy with exams, academic years are to appease the certificate, and students with AI. No ratiocinated ideas are read, air is evacuated and went to a gas chamber (oxygen slender), and water have hidden in bottle and our life span is measures on some piece of paper. Then where is our young mind to cue the melancholy and

rejuvenate the old by innovating the new fruition. You and me must wit and agile to embalm our wounds and accept that we have also a dream which consequently construct a positive portion.

An old man on his death bed asked me that “what human dreams for?” I couldn’t answer him immediately but quietly I begun to experiment to find out the answer. I found multiple answers like does human dreams to live? Or does human is still in search of its destiny over the dreams? Human dreams must be recognize first, which could be the initial stage of one, who has an idea of living as a person to fulfill his or her life’s purpose. First of all do we know to dream for a destiny, better even best? Eleanor Roosevelt is a Human rights activist in 1948 says that “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Many of us still do not have a notion that our Destiny is not a matter of chance; but

it is a matter of choice. Jesus always emphasized on his destiny, the Kingdom of God a prepared home, which has to be written by our own hand, where the paper is our character and pen is our works. "The best way to predict your future is to create it," Said by Abraham Lincoln. We must have the ability to see a vision of our destiny with someone who created us and keep us existing. The role of present generations of young have to come out to see the vision before it is too late otherwise an old men dreams to have a dream (Acts 2:17).

"The secret of our religion lies not in theories but in practice. To be good and do good, that is the whole of religion" Swami Vivekananda. Everyone has to take up one idea of God, that one idea is our life, think of it, dream of it and live on that idea. Let the brain muscles, nerves every part of your body is full of that idea and just leave other idea alone. This is the way to success.

If we are therefore, we must confide our inflection and woe, with Jesus who continues to welcome, accompany and show us how to find our dreams and ways for living. He takes initiatives before us just we need to cooperate. It is rightly said that there are no substitute for hard work and there is no shortcut to Success. Our success is with God. We are born in Vain if we don't realize God in this very life. Therefore we must be prospective rather keeping prejudice, disconcerted and build the palace with dreams rather than remaining in a hut of ignorance of worldly. It is better to live in the world but be not worldly. If someone has already given up dreaming must resume it with the help of Christ, who said "Come to be me, and I will make you fishers of man (Mk 1:16, Mt4:19). Jesus is usher of disconcerted who by his Living light and granary find recreate our

goal, according to our interest to prop and enhance the apathetic mind with pledge the fanatic dream which was undiluted. Lets evaluate our current form of living and concretize our life motto rather than bewildering.

Now a day young mind is confused to choose good and healthy because of extreme relaying on the supermarket. Which decide what one has to see, how to live, what to eat and what to wear, even manipulate human cognitive to think. We have sold our thinking, behaving and living to the projected world. Where everyone is spoon fed rather than rather than digging and searching for a fine pearls of destiny in God. Life became jigsaw, where a milkman has to go door to door to sell his milk on the other hand an open shop has a line of customer. Our books are sold besides the footpath but shows have a place. Our mother is old enough to die but her bequeath is well appreciated. Powerful chastise the weaker and applier is under GST. We have many orators but no lucid love to reach to the heart. How can we say life is worth living? How can we dream and live new in ferocity?

A boat a maybe in water but water should not be in the boat. An aspirant may live in the world but the world should not leave within him. Therefore we must live in the world but be not worldly. I Old Testament dreams are a medium of Divine Communication, used to guide and reveals future events. Not all dreams are from God. We have to understand the vision and dreams of all kinds as God spoke to Jacob, Joseph, pharaoh, Pilates wife.

In present scenario a dreamer has considers as a mental challenge on every dreams are impossible carried. No matter some kind of lose hearted, broken dreams are overloaded the burden of many young

so even old, such broker dream may not come to few but still people live to dream die without fulfilling it.

It is a window which has to open to get fresh air (GOD). One need a courage to open it and see the how a light of the Sun (Christ) touch the heart of the old and mold it with new hope for to fulfill the roasted rusted and faded life. Someone might protest that, “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2). The implication here is that God used to speak through dreams, but that God doesn’t speak that way any longer now that God has spoken through Jesus. Some people would add that God definitely doesn’t speak that way now that we have the Bible—even though this is clearly not what the Bible is saying here.

Our initial side is dream and the climax is destiny with God and our trust on God produces our character and our character can support our destiny. We must know how pure is our dream is it comes from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit from God or it is just a series of thought, imagination, cognitive occurring during sleep. It should not be a just a visionary creation of the imagination but rather having a strong desired goal or Purpose and something that fully satisfies ones wise.





## *Sports as the Means of Hope*

**Donboklang Lyngdoh Marshilong**

Sports is a universal language that transcends race, culture, and belief, reflecting humanity's struggles, dreams, and triumphs. Beyond competition, it stands as a beacon of hope, symbolizing perseverance amid adversity, unity amid division, and renewal amid despair. Sport becomes a beacon of hope through three interconnected dimensions: personal, social, and global, showing why hope endures even in difficult times.

### 1. The Personal Dimension: Hope through Perseverance.

At its most personal level, every athlete's journey begins with limitations, fatigue, failure, or self-doubt but within

these challenges lays the seed of hope: the conviction that effort can convert potential into achievement. When a runner trains daily for a race or a child repeatedly kicks a ball to perfect its aim, they practice active hope, believing that every effort today will yield growth tomorrow.

Unlike passive optimism, this hope is active, grounded in experience and goal-setting. Sport teaches perseverance and setbacks are not defeats but opportunities to learn and improve. Failure becomes a teacher, guiding individuals toward resilience and renewed motivation. Athletes discover that effort, even when painful, is never meaningless. This lesson extends beyond the field, offering people enduring psychological strength to face life's hardships. Thus, on a personal level, sport fosters hope by teaching perseverance, resilience, and the belief in progress.

## 2. The Social Dimension: Hope through Unity and Renewal.

Sports influence extends far beyond individuals; it becomes a powerful social force that unites communities. This unity is more than emotional; it is rooted in shared purpose and moral values such as fairness, teamwork, and perseverance. History provides vivid examples of sport's healing power. South Africa's 1995 Rugby World Cup victory under Nelson Mandela's leadership stands as a symbol of reconciliation after apartheid. Mandela's gesture of wearing the jersey of a mostly white team, turned sport into a national bridge between divided races, proving that it can carry the weight of unity and forgiveness. Sport also provides moral education. Through teamwork and fair play, young people learn discipline, respect, and empathy. Opponents become partners in the shared pursuit of excellence. These lessons extend beyond sport into social life, strengthening communities through cooperation and ethical behaviour. Thus, the social dimension of sport reveals how it renews collective morale, nurtures shared values, and models the harmony that sustains society.

## 3. The Global Dimension: Hope as a Universal Language

On the global stage, sport acts as a force of unity in a world divided by politics, conflict, and inequality. Events such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup turn borders into bridges, showing nations not as rivals but as participants in a shared human story. These gatherings embody a vision of peaceful coexistence an achievable, rational demonstration of harmony through competition.

The Olympics more represent this universal hope. Founded on ideals of fair play

and friendship, they remind the world of humanity's potential for unity. When athletes march together under their national flags, they affirm that diversity need not divide. The Paralympic Games deepen this message, showing how athletes with disabilities redefine possibility and prove that hope can transcend physical limitation. Their achievements transform admiration into conviction that human spirit can overcome difficult circumstance.

Furthermore, sports have become a platform for equality and social change. When women, minorities, or smaller nations triumph in global competitions, their victories symbolize the breaking of barriers and the realization of long-held ideals of justice. These moments of triumph send a powerful message that progress is not only possible but happening. Through such acts, sports extend hope to those who feel unseen, affirming the universal truth that every person has the capacity for greatness.

## 4. The Paradox: When Hope Is Tested.

Despite its uplifting power, a sport is not immune to corruption, scandals, and commercialization. These flaws test its moral integrity and challenge its role as a source of hope. Yet, the very fact that people continue to demand honesty and fairness from sports shows that hope still lives within it and remain deeply valued. For sports to continue serving as a source of hope, it must remain anchored in equality and respect. When opportunities are open to all-regardless of wealth, background, or ability, sports fulfils its highest moral purpose. True hope thrives only where fairness is preserved, where competition remains pure, and where effort is valued above all else.

## 5. Conclusion:

Ultimately, Sports remains one of humanity's greatest symbols of hope, reflecting life's struggle, persistence, and renewal. It teaches that defeat is never final and every ending holds the promise of a new beginning. By transforming effort into meaning and competition into unity, sports show that hope is active, disciplined, and shared. Across personal, social, and global levels, it inspires perseverance, unity, and faith, continuing to guide humanity through challenges toward a brighter, more hopeful tomorrow.



### FROM ASHES TO DAWN

By James Touthang

Fallen into the valley of the dead  
Leaves of old habits gather, wet with dread.  
The ashes of my former, fragile trust,  
Proclaiming, "You are but broken, fading dust!  
The burden of the world, and all my choice,  
Had silenced every whisper of my voice.  
I stared into the darkness, stark and deep,  
Where earthly treasures could no longer  
keep their promise.  
All the striving, rich and vain,  
left behind the cold, grey wreck of pain.  
This is the grave, the place where all must  
cease,

The utter lack of comfort and of peace.  
But in that deepest dark, Scripture woke,  
The solemn, saving word that Christ spoke.  
I saw the splintered wood, the crimson stain,  
The Suffering Servant bearing all my pain.  
He took my ashes, not to seal my fate,  
But as the offering at Redemption's gate.  
For He came not to scold the soul that moans.  
But to bestow a crown for tangled thorns.  
My low point was His altar, set alight,  
A final death redeemed by glorious might.  
He turned the cursed dust to hallowed ground,  
Where saving grace and life could now be  
found.  
The tomb is empty! Lo, the stone is rolled!  
The promise of the Morning, new and bold.  
The deep despair is shattered, and the gloom  
turned,  
Turned to light that bursts beyond the tomb.  
The sun ascends—the Son of Righteousness—  
Whose love is boundless, and whose mercies  
bless.  
I cast my rags aside, no longer bound,  
My garment is the praise that will resound.  
From ashes of my failure, sin, and loss,  
I rise in victory, held by the Cross.  
The new beginning is eternal, vast,





**FAMILY INTIMACY: THE BOND THAT  
REFLECTS GOD'S LOVE AND BRINGS  
HOPE TO THE WORLD**

**Miasalhou Zhavirietuo MSFS**

Hope is often imagined in public gestures or heroic acts, yet its deepest expression is found in the ordinary rhythms of family life. In children's laughter, parents' guidance and the shared intimacy of a simple meal, the mystery of hope takes flesh. The family, though hidden from public acclaim, is the first place where divine love is revealed, nurtured and sustained.

In a world that celebrates individual autonomy over communion, the family re-

mains a sacred space where faith and hope endure. Despite economic hardship, emotional distance and constant technological distractions, the family uniquely restores meaning, coherence and moral stability to society. The Church calls the family "the domestic Church," where God's love becomes visible, tangible and transformative.

From creation, God intended humans to live in relationship: "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gen 2:18). Within marriage and family, God's relational nature is mirrored. The Second Vatican Council calls the family "the first and vital cell of society," where love forgives, suffers, hopes, and endures. Daily acts of patience, humility and compassion embody theological truths that shape hearts and transform communities.

Pope Francis, in *Amoris Laetitia*, affirms that "the family is the image of God, who is a communion of persons." Every act of tenderness, every word of reconciliation, participates in the life of the Trinity. Families that persevere in fidelity and affection, despite imperfections, reflect the divine covenant between Christ and His Church. In this way, the family is both a private refuge and a public witness—a visible sign of God's mercy and a beacon of hope.

True intimacy in the family goes beyond emotional closeness. Rooted in faith, patience, and sacrificial forgiveness, it is where children first learn to trust, serve, forgive and hope. St. John Paul II describes the family as "the first school of the social virtues that every society needs." Societal renewal begins not in public institutions but around the family table, where gratitude is learned, faith practiced and love becomes a daily habit.

Shared meals remind believers that hope is sustained through communion-human and divine-and every act of sharing mirrors the mystery of the altar.

During my ministry, I visited a family enduring hardship. The father, a daily wage labourer, lost his livelihood; the mother sewed clothes to support their children's education. Despite scarcity, their unity stood out. Each evening, they prayed the Rosary, thanked God, and shared their humble meal with gratitude. The father tutored his children, the mother encouraged quietly and the children responded with love and care. Their home, poor in resources but rich in grace, became a living icon of faith, love and hope. In their fidelity, I glimpsed the "radiant beauty of covenantal love" that reflects Christ.

Children raised in such families carry these virtues into the world. Witnessing forgiveness, patience and self-giving love, they become witnesses to the Gospel in schools, workplaces, and communities. Every family is both a seedbed of virtue and a prophetic sign that holiness is attainable in ordinary life.

The Holy Family of Nazareth stands as the archetype of this vocation. Though living in simplicity and exile, Jesus, Mary and Joseph trusted divine providence. Pope Francis, in *Patris Corde*, portrays St. Joseph as "a tender and loving father" who embraced uncertainty with faith and courage. The Holy Family shows that holiness is not the fruit of extraordinary deeds, but of daily fidelity to love. When Christian families imitate their humility, prayer and perseverance, they become "the domestic Church," where parents are the first heralds of faith.

In a world marked by fragmentation, loneliness and moral fatigue, such families

radiate hope. Their unity amid struggle proclaims that love is stronger than despair and that God's grace dwells among His people. Pope Francis reminds us that "the family is not a problem; it is first and foremost an opportunity." Compassion, respect and generosity cultivated in the home make society more humane and just.

Ultimately, family intimacy sustains temporal hope and anticipates the eternal communion to which humanity is called. The faithfulness of spouses and constancy of parental love become sacraments of union between God and His people. Families who pray, forgive and serve foreshadow the heavenly community where love is all in all.

As we reflect on "Beacons of Hope," we see families not as perfect institutions but as sanctuaries where God dwells. Each act of love-a prayer, listening or forgiving embrace - participates in God's redemptive mission. Homes that foster communion and mercy reveal divine love renewing the world.

May every home be a small Nazareth, where faith is nurtured, love endures and hope shines. Families living in unity and mercy reflect the face of God-a communion of persons whose love conquers darkness. Guided by the Holy Family, may our homes remain steadfast beacons of hope for generations to come.



# POPE FRANCIS: A BEACON OF HOPE

Iophiyos Khongsya



Pope Francis was born on Dec. 17th, 1936 in Buenos Aires. His baptism name was Jorge Mario Bergoglio and His father was a railway worker who immigrated to Argentina from Italy, and his mother was a housewife of Italian origin. Bergoglio had four siblings. After his secondary schooling as a chemical technician, he joined the seminary in 1958 at the age of 22. He was ordained a priest on Dec. 13th 1969. In 1973 he made the perpetual vow in the society of Jesus and in the same year he was elected a Provincial of Argentina. Made an auxiliary bishop of the Buenos Aires on 1992, and in 1997 became as the Archdiocese' Coadjutor Archbishop and the following year he succeeded as the Archbishop. In 2001 he was made a Cardinal. Following the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI on Feb. 28th Pope Francis was elected to the Papacy on March 13th 2013 and left for his heavenly

abode on 21st April 2025.

“Pope Francis As Beacon of Hope” is the title of this short article. In fact Pope Francis left us during the Jubilee Year of Hope which was initiated by him. “Hope is not optimism; it is not the ability to look at the bright side of things and move forward” were the very words of the Holy Father given on 29th October 2013, the first year of his Pontificate. For Pope Francis Hope gives way to life, but at times it often remains invisible and hidden to human life. He also has said that hope is a gift from God and a task that must be cultivated by all Christians. Thus in ways he was really a beacon of hope during his pontificate to all the people of the World not just Catholics.

“Hope is 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). The Holy Father further says that the world needs hope, just as it greatly needs patience, a virtue that journeys hand-in-hand with hope. Pope Francis is widely regarded as a beacon of hope through his emphasis on mercy, humility, social justice, and care for the vulnerable. His leadership style characterized by walking with the marginalized, focusing on the peripheries, and promoting dialogue and synodality has inspired many to adopt a more inclusive and mission-driven approach in faith, charity, and community life. He began his pontificate with a vision for the church to return with hope to the Father who is merciful. "The Lord never tires of forgiveness. It is we who tire of asking for forgiveness," are the very words of Pope Francis and remind us of the need of hope for our journey to eternal life.

Taking the name of St. Francis for his Pontificate, he has shifted the idea of the Church as a whole. It marks the shift in emphasising simplicity, compassion and solidarity with the marginalised. His often visits to hospitals and prisons, washing the feet of the prisoners shows his commitment to serve the marginalised. He was a hope for the suffering, showing them the compassion of the Lord and reminding the people that he was call to serve the hopeless. His deep love for the poor, commitment to peace, messenger of God's compassion, mercy have inspired many people from all over the world. He encouraged everyone in the Church that hope should be incarnated not just proclaimed. He often called the Church as "a Church on the move," a Church that moves to the peripheries.

Pope Francis is known not only as the leader of the Universal Church but as the

shepherd of the young. He walked alongside of the young people in their journey, encouraged them to dream, listened to their problem and invited the whole church to listen to their ideas with regard to the Church. He encouraged them to bring change to the world and reminded them always to present God to all. For Pope Francis, the church should sow the seed of hope in the hearts of the people of God. The Church should welcome everyone whether they are homeless, refugees, or marginalised. The Church should be like a field hospital to heal everyone who enters. He reminded us that Christian hope is greater than any situation because it is grounded in God and not in man.

Walking alone across the empty St. Peter's Square, he prayed the Holy Rosary during the dark days of the Covid 19. In spite of heavy rain he delivered "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and the world), and blessed everyone giving hope and in solidarity with the whole humanity. This event was a visual reminder for all that the world needed the most is hope.

To conclude, it is good to remind the very words of Pope Francis: "Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit. The sun does not shine on itself, and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other." (Pope Francis 1936-2025)





## *Youth as the Vessels of Hope: To Build a More Humane and Fraternal World*

**Sangma Kornelius**

Across the globe today, humanity is crying out for peace. The war between Russia and Ukraine continues to take innocent lives, displacing millions and tearing apart families. In the Middle East, the conflict between Israel and Gaza has turned cities into ashes and children into orphans. Even in India, the violent clashes in Manipur have divided communities that once lived side by side in harmony. These painful realities reveal a world where hatred often overpowers compassion and division overshadows unity. In the midst of such suffering, a question arises: Where is hope for the future? The answer lies in the hands and hearts of the youth who can change the world.

The young people of today are called to become vessels of hope, bringing light into darkness, healing into wounds, and peace into conflict. Late Pope Francis reminded the youth: “You are the now of God”,

meaning that youth are not merely the future but they are the present instruments of God’s action in the world. Their energy, creativity, courage and open heart to dialogue can help to build a more humane and fraternal world that is rooted in love, justice, and solidarity. Youth are the agents of transformation. Across the globe, young people have stood up against war, inequality, and injustice. They organize peace marches, run social campaigns, and raise awareness through digital platforms.

Late Pope Francis, in *Christus Vivit* (2019), encourages youth: “Christ is alive, and He wants youth to be alive!” implying that their faith and energy are meant to make the world alive with compassion and peace. Hope of the people is the daily effort of young hearts working to make a difference. In war-torn places like Ukraine or Gaza, many youth volunteers and hu-

manitarian groups are helping victims with food, shelter, and education. Their small acts of mercy are rays of hope shining through destruction. In India, young people from different faiths have joined peace movements in Manipur, showing that love and unity are stronger than hatred and violence.

A humane world is one where people care for one another, value life, and protect the dignity of every person. Sadly, today's world often values power and profit more than people. Wars destroy unity of families and the society and the poor remain voiceless. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) reminds us that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Humanity grows when we see one another not as enemies or competitors but as brothers and sisters.

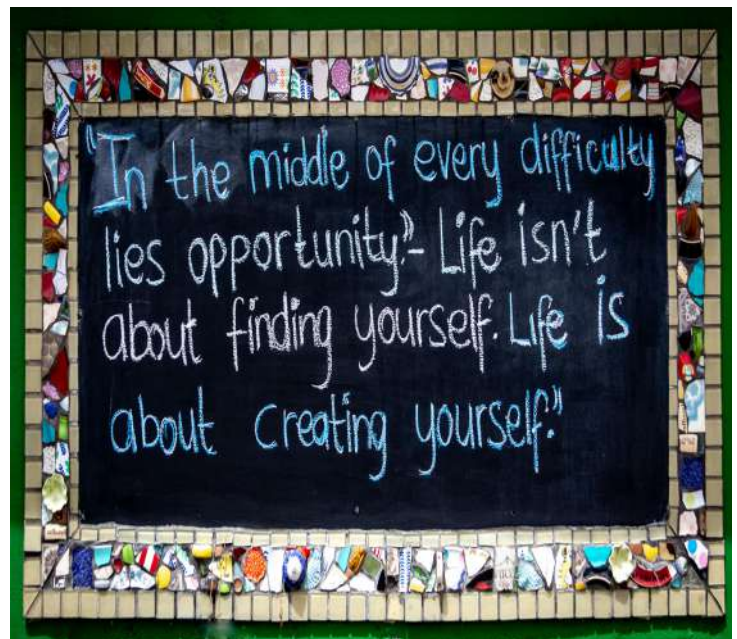
A fraternal world is one where unity and peace replace hatred and division. Late Pope Francis, in *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), urges the world to live in fraternity "as brothers and sisters all." This call is especially meaningful in a time when war, communal tension, and racism divide people. Youth have the power to build bridges of friendship across religions, cultures, and nations. By engaging in peace-building, social work, and dialogue, they can make fraternity a living reality. Such actions prove that fraternity begins in the hearts of the young. When youth choose dialogue over hate, they reflect Christ's words: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Service is the true expression of hope. As Mother Teresa said, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." Young people who dedicate time to serve others bring humanity back to life. Faith strengthens this mission. It reminds the youth that every person, even an adversary, is a child of God.

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (2004) teaches that faith must inspire social action rooted in justice and peace. Through faith and service, youth can transform society not by power, but by love.

In a world wounded by war and division the youth are called to rise as vessels of hope. Their voices can challenge hatred, their hands can heal, and their hearts can unite. As St. Paul writes, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). The young generation has the power to build a world where humanity and fraternity triumph over violence and greed. The task is not easy, but the promise is divine: when youth live for truth, peace, and love, they become the living hope of the world the builders of a new humanity rooted in justice, compassion, and brotherhood.

So, dear young people, the future of humanity rests in our hands. Let us be the vessels of hope who bring light to darkness and peace to a wounded world. Let our faith guide our actions, our love heals divisions, and our courage will inspire others to build a world of justice, unity, and compassion.



## CHARITY AS BEACON OF HOPE

### Ridonal Nongsiang OFM Cap

During a natural disaster in a small village, many people fled in fear but a young doctor, however, stayed behind at the local clinic even though it meant risking his own safety. For three days he treated injured villagers with almost no rest, as he was stitching wounds, giving water, comforting children, and praying with the dying. When asked later why he stayed, he answered, “My patients were afraid. I could not leave them alone. Love demanded that I remain.” Many survivors later said, “We lived because he stayed. He was hope for us when everything else was falling apart.”

This story tells us that true Charity is not conditional but a sacrificial act. It goes beyond duty and chooses love over fear. It becomes a beacon of hope in extreme suffering. Charity, or the genuine love of God and neighbor, shines as a powerful force capable of restoring faith in humanity. It is not merely almsgiving or performing good deeds but the very heart of the Gospel and the essence of God’s being. Scripture affirms, “God is love” (1 John 4:8), and those who live in love make God present in the world. Pope Leo XIV rightly asserts that “Charity has the power to change reality; it is a genuine force for change in history.”

In classical Latin charity means a costly love and deep esteem. It is the very love God has for humanity and the love to which believers are called. Thus, charity in the Christian tradition equals *agápē*, the highest form of divine love. The Catholic Church teaches that charity is the greatest of the theological virtues by which we love God above all things for His own sake and love our neighbor as ourselves for love of Him (CCC 1822). It is therefore not simply human kindness but a supernatural virtue coming from God and directing us



back to Him. It moves believers to act lovingly toward God and neighbor and finds its supreme model in Jesus Christ, whose self-giving love on the cross reveals divine charity in its fullness.

In a world wounded by violence, corruption, inequality, war, and ecological crisis many people experience loneliness and despair even doubt that goodness still exists. In such situation any act of mercy reveals God's presence in this broken world. Concrete charitable act such as feeding the hungry, forgiving enemies, defending the oppressed can become visible signs that God is still active in human history. True charity radiates the light of God and breaks through darkness. When caregivers attend to the sick, when teachers patiently guide children, when people forgive and reconcile, hope becomes tangible. Charity tells the suffering and marginalized, "You are not forgotten — you are loved." St. Paul confirms this inseparable link: "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things" (1 Cor 13:7). Love sustains hope when all else fails. True charity uplifts the poor and recognizes the divine image in every person. Pope Leo XIV says, "Love for the Lord, then, is one with love for the poor for it is in the poor, God continues to speak to us." Hence, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and visiting the imprisoned are not merely social acts but signs of God's Kingdom breaking into the world. Charity assures the poor of their worth and inspires the powerful to use their resources justly. St. John Paul II teaches in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (49) that charity remains necessary even in a just society; justice structures relationships, but charity touches hearts and personalizes human interaction.

Charity also heals relationships and builds peace where relationships are broken. It restores communion through forgiveness, dialogue, and justice. And forgiveness

is one of the purest forms of charity. It frees both the giver and the receiver. It opens the way to new beginnings. Acts of compassion and service build bridges across social divides and foster peace. As Jesus proclaimed, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Mt 5:9). Peace rooted in charity allows hope to flourish. Pope Francis observes in *Fratelli Tutti* (183) that charity has a universal dynamism capable of building a new world because it is not sterile but transformative.

Therefore, charity is not optional especially for Christians; it is essential to her identity and mission. The Church exists to manifest Christ's love, and works of mercy make her credible in the world. Charity becomes the most convincing form of evangelization because love speaks universally. Early pagans admired Christians saying, "See how they love one another!" The Church must continue to shine with this witness if she is to remain a source of hope. Charity transforms not only society but also the giver. It frees the heart from selfishness, fills it with peace, and makes one a co-worker of God's saving work. Each act of love radiates outward, touching families, communities, and ultimately the world. Wherever authentic love is lived either in homes, parishes, hospitals, refugee camps, or classrooms there hope is reborn. Charity assures us that God has not abandoned humanity but continues His work through every heart that loves. As St. Paul concludes, "The greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13). When lived in truth and justice, charity becomes the brightest beacon of hope guiding humanity toward God's Kingdom.





## **FAILURES THAT TAUGHT ME TO RISE**

Bro İoannis Wanniang

In my life I have experienced a lot of failures that make me think and go forward. Life is not always about victories or applause, sometimes, it is about how we rise after falling. I still remember the first time I failed in Chemistry. It might sound like a small thing to some, but for me, it was a storm. Throughout my school years, I had never failed in any subject. I thought I was doing everything right until that one day the result shattered my confidence. Seeing that red mark beside my name made me feel like I had disappointed myself and everyone around me. But that failure became a turning point. It taught me to pause and reflect, to ask myself, “What went wrong?” instead of blaming circumstances or luck I realized I had been studying without real understanding. That failure humbled me and taught me discipline, patience and self-awareness. It became my first re-

minder that sometimes falling is not the end; it is an invitation to rise higher and stronger.

I have always been a quiet person, silent observer, not as talkative or expressive as others. In group discussion or social gathering, I often felt invisible. I was rejected at times, ignored at others. People saw my silence as weakness and slowly I began to believe it too. Loneliness crept in like a shadow, whispering that I was not good enough. But one day, while reading Scripture, I came across a verse that changed everything: “The Lord gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless... those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles.” (Isa 40:29-31). This verse lit a spark in me; a beacon of hope. It reminded me that my strength does not come from how loud or impressive I am, but from the quiet trust I place in the Lord. I realized that silence can also be strength that even in solitude; God is present shaping me for something greater. It taught me that strength does not always roar, sometimes it stands still and waits upon God. Being silent does not mean being weak; it means being thoughtful. Rejection no longer hurts me as deeply because I knew my worth was not decided by others’ opinions but by the one who created me. That hope helped me to rise above my insecurities and see that each of us has a unique light even the quiet ones. From that moment, self-acceptance replaced self-doubt and faith became the source of renewal.

Failure is a stepping stone to success. Failure is not a full stop but a comma in the sentence of life that makes us think and pushes us forward with new strength. It shows us who we truly are and what we are capable of becoming. Failure and rejection, though unpleasant, serve a powerful purpose. They let us grow and change. Every failure shape us into who we are today: more aware, more patient

and more hopeful. Every failure has a message hidden within it, a lesson that leads us closer to success, closer to God and closer to becoming our truest selves. Without failure, lessons remain shallow, without loss, hope loses meaning. Thus, through struggle comes strength. Through pain comes purpose. Those who face defeat and still move forward carry within them a light that never goes out. This light, this hope, becomes a beacon not only for themselves but for others who walk the same difficult path. Success is not defined by never falling, but by the courage to rise every time we fall. Success gained without struggle is like a tree without deep roots: it may stand tall for a while but it will not withstand the storm. The success of great inventors, writers, musicians, and leaders often began with failures. What made them remarkable was not their talent alone but their courage to keep moving forward when others would have given up. Failure builds the inner foundation upon which true success rests. To rise after falling is something to declare that defeat is never final. Thus, failure becomes not an obstacle but a stepping stone, a solid place to stand before leaping higher. Every fall leaves behind a footprint of wisdom, marking the path toward maturity. When hope is kept alive through failure then success become not just a destination but a testimony that light emerge from darkness and that those who stumble can still soar.

So, to anyone who feels like giving up because of failure, remember this: every failure is a hidden blessing. Every fall is an opportunity to rise higher. Hold on to hope, trust in God and let your life become a beacon that lights the path for others. Because in the end, it is not perfection that inspires the world, but it is the story of how we fall and still rise again.





## A JOURNEY ROOTED IN HOPE

Thambi Yadla SDS

### INTRODUCTION

In an age marked by uncertainty, conflict, and rapid change, hope remains the virtue that sustains Christians and gives them courage to move forward. The Church teaches that hope is not mere optimism, but a theological virtue grounded in God's promises. As the Catechism states, "Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the Kingdom of heaven and eternal life, placing our trust in Christ's promises" (CCC 1817).

For the people of North-East India, a region rich in cultural beauty, yet challenged by tensions, unemployment, and social fragmentation, Christian hope offers both strength and a vision for renewal. This article presents hope as a journey: rooted in Scripture, shaped by Church teaching, and expressed in concrete acts of service, healing, and resilience.

### 1. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF HOPE

Christian hope has its foundation in the mystery of the Incarnation and Resurrection. God enters human history in Jesus Christ, transforming despair into new life. St. Paul calls Christ "our hope" (1 Tim 1:1), reminding us that hope is not an idea but a person. Pope Benedict XVI, in *Spe Salvi*, states that "man is redeemed by love" (SS 26). The Cross, therefore, becomes the profound sign that God's love prevails even in suffering and apparent defeat. Hope is both God's gift and the believer's responsibility. The Holy Spirit pours hope into our hearts (Rom 5:5), inviting trust and perseverance.

### 2. THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY OF HOPE

According to *Lumen Gentium*, the Church is “the universal sacrament of salvation” (LG 48), a visible sign of God’s saving presence in history. Through preaching, sacraments, and works of charity, the Church becomes a beacon that directs humanity toward the Kingdom.

In North-East India home to many tribes, languages, and religions the Church’s witness as a community of hope is especially significant. Each Eucharist becomes an encounter with hope, assuring believers that Christ accompanies them even in hardship. Pope Francis invites the Church to radiate “the joy of the Gospel” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 1). When hope is lived authentically, it becomes contagious, inspiring communities to trust God’s promise for a better future.

### 3. HOPE AS TRANSFORMATION AND HEALING

Hope is not passive waiting but active engagement in God’s redemptive work. In regions where poverty, ethnic divisions, corruption, and violence have left deep scars, hope becomes a force of healing. The Church’s social teaching insists that hope must lead to justice, peace, and reconciliation.

For North-East India, hope means confronting addictions, unemployment, ecological degradation, and social conflicts with courage and faith. Hope urges Christians to be peacemakers, bridge-builders, and defenders of human dignity.

### 4. PRACTICAL EXPRESSIONS OF HOPE IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

#### A. Promoting Integral Human Development

In light of *Gaudium et Spes*, which re-

minds us that the joys and hopes of the people are also those of the Church, parishes can nurture small Christian communities that accompany families and youth. Through education, skill training, and pastoral support, the Church can empower women, youth, and marginalized tribes, making hope visible in everyday life.

#### B. Interreligious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue

North-East India’s rich cultural and religious diversity calls for dialogue and cooperation. Inspired by *Nostra Aetate*, the Church can foster understanding through cultural sharing, peace initiatives, and collaborative action for the common good. True hope seeks harmony rooted in mutual respect.

#### C. Ecological Hope: Caring for Creation

Following *Laudato Si’*, the ecological wounds of the region deforestation, erosion, and mining demand a hopeful ecological response. Tree-planting, environmental awareness programs, and sustainable farming can become practical signs of hope for future generations.

#### D. Youth and Vocational Formation

Youth are the carriers of hope. In a region where unemployment and frustration often push young people toward migration or addiction, the Church must offer formation that builds character and leadership. Education rooted in integrity, creativity, and service can transform despair into purpose and direction.

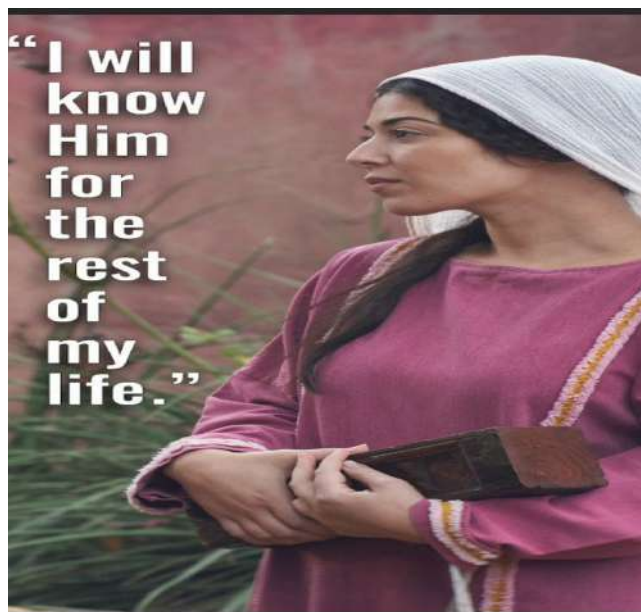
### 5. ESCHATOLOGICAL HOPE

Christian hope ultimately looks beyond earthly struggles to the fullness of life in

God’s Kingdom. Spe Salvi teaches that we have been given “trustworthy hope” (SS 1). This hope gives meaning to suffering and encourages believers to live each day with joyful expectation. Hope enables the faithful in North-East India to endure trials, forgive past wrongs, and rebuild broken communities. It transforms pain into perseverance and waiting into faithful witness.

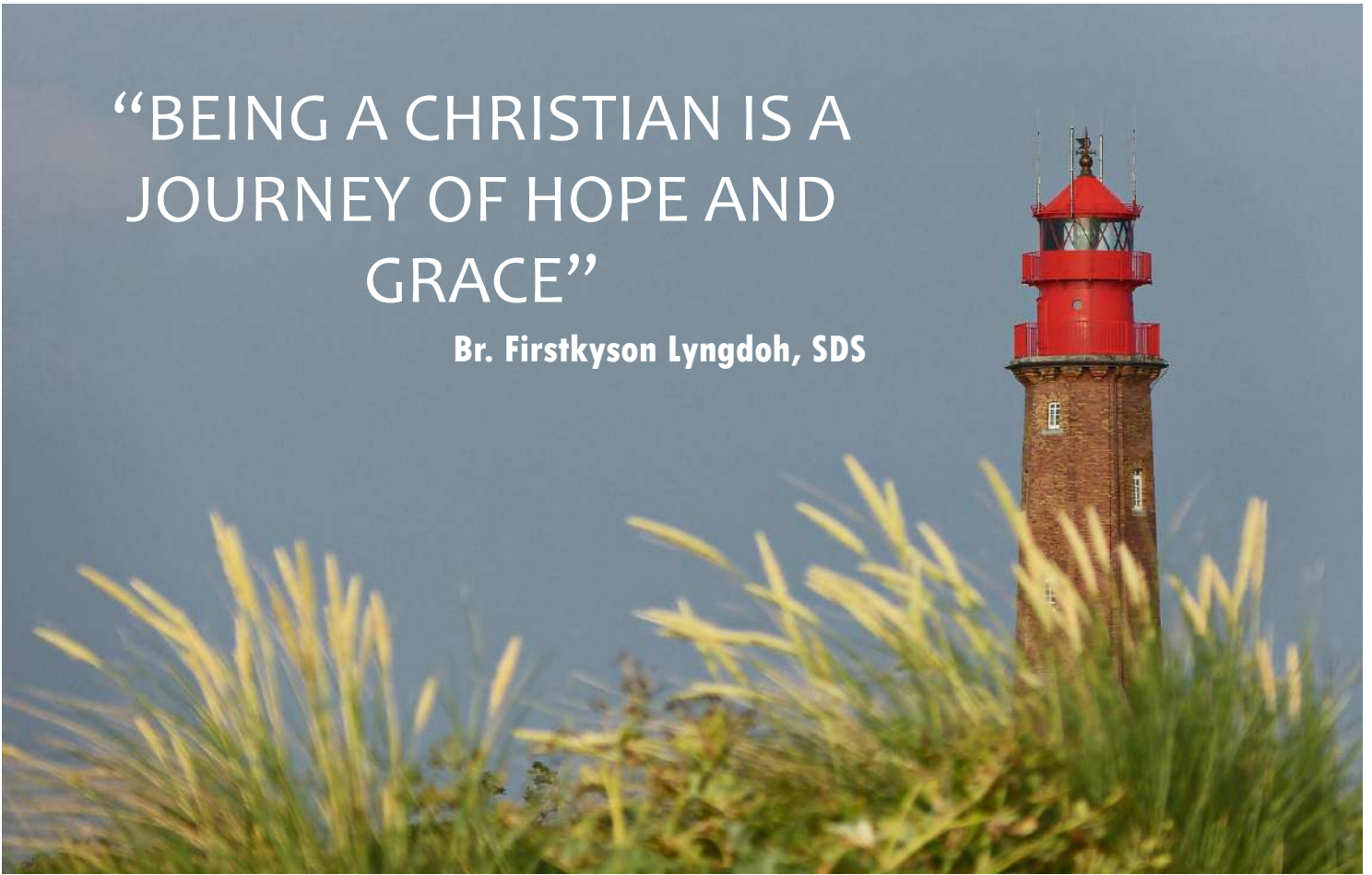
## CONCLUSION

A journey rooted in hope is a journey rooted in Christ. It belongs to those who believe that love is stronger than death and that every act of faith contributes to the building of God’s Kingdom. For the Church in North-East India, this means becoming a living sign of hope a community that listens, heals, and uplifts. When believers walk together with their eyes fixed on Christ, they become radiant witnesses to the truth that spes non confundit—“hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5).



# “BEING A CHRISTIAN IS A JOURNEY OF HOPE AND GRACE”

Br. Firstkyson Lyngdoh, SDS



## Introduction

Christian life is a dynamic, lifelong pilgrimage toward union with God. Within the Catholic tradition, this journey is defined and sustained by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which gifts the soul with grace and orients it toward its ultimate purpose through the theological virtues. The assertion that “Being a Christian is a journey of hope and grace” is, therefore, a theological axiom, capturing the twin dynamics of God’s unmerited assistance (grace) and the human response of confident expectation (hope). The entire Catholic understanding of salvation, from initial justification to final glorification, is predicated upon these two indispensable, intertwined realities.

Grace: The Undeserved Foundation of the Journey

Grace is the foundational reality that makes the Christian journey possible. Defined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) as “favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life” (CCC 1996), grace is fundamentally God’s self-gift. It bridges the infinite chasm between the creature and the Creator, initiating and sustaining the soul’s relationship with God.

This favour from God operates primarily through two modes. First, sanctifying grace is a stable, supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God and act by His love. It is conferred in Baptism, initiating the journey of faith and effecting justification. Justification is not merely a legal declaration of righteousness, but an inner re-

newal of the human being—a true transformation that cleanses sin and infuses holiness. Second, actual graces are God’s momentary interventions—the nudges, illuminations, and movements that guide us in specific acts throughout our daily lives.

The Christian journey is not achieved through individual, autonomous effort. Rather, it necessitates collaboration with God. Every good work, every step taken on the pilgrimage, is simultaneously the free action of the human person and the fruit of God’s grace working within them. Grace is thus the atmospheric condition of the Christian journey, the vital, supernatural air that allows the soul to breathe, move, and grow toward its final destination. Without this continuous, unmerited gift, the journey would cease, doomed to the futility of purely human effort against the weight of sin.

#### Hope: The Confident Gaze toward the End

If grace is the strength given for the pilgrimage, hope is the compass and the destination itself. Hope is the second of the three theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity) and is defined as the 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).

Hope is fundamentally an anchor for the soul in the face of suffering, temptation, and the awareness of human failure. This virtue is acutely necessary because the journey is not one of smooth ascent; it traverses difficult terrain. The Christian pilgrim must contend with both the wounds of Original Sin and the pressures of the secular world. It is hope that prevents despair, which is the loss of trust in God’s

mercy and power, and simultaneously guards against presumption, which is the belief that one can achieve salvation without the necessary grace or repentance.

The object of Christian hope is the Beatific Vision, the full, direct, and everlasting contemplation of God in heaven. This transcendent goal infuses the daily, mundane struggles of the pilgrim with ultimate significance. Hope transforms hardship into endurance and discipline, knowing that “this momentary light affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor 4:17). It is a virtue of active expectation, one that compels Christians to live in a manner consistent with their future inheritance, constantly looking forward to the fulfilment of the divine promises while remaining diligent in their present responsibilities.

#### The Sacraments: Fountains of Grace and Sustenance for Hope

The Catholic Church, as the “universal sacrament of salvation,” mediates God’s grace through the seven sacraments, which act as tangible, efficacious signs that nourish both hope and grace throughout the journey. The sacraments ensure that the pilgrimage is not solitary or unsupported.

The Eucharist stands as the “source and summit of the Christian life” (CCC 1324). It is the constant infusion of sanctifying grace, renewing the covenant and offering the faithful the very Body and Blood of Christ. Receiving the Eucharist is the primary sustenance for the pilgrim, guaranteeing the presence of Christ and strengthening the soul to persevere. In this sacrament, hope is made concrete: the faithful receive a ‘pledge of future glory’ sustaining their confidence in the

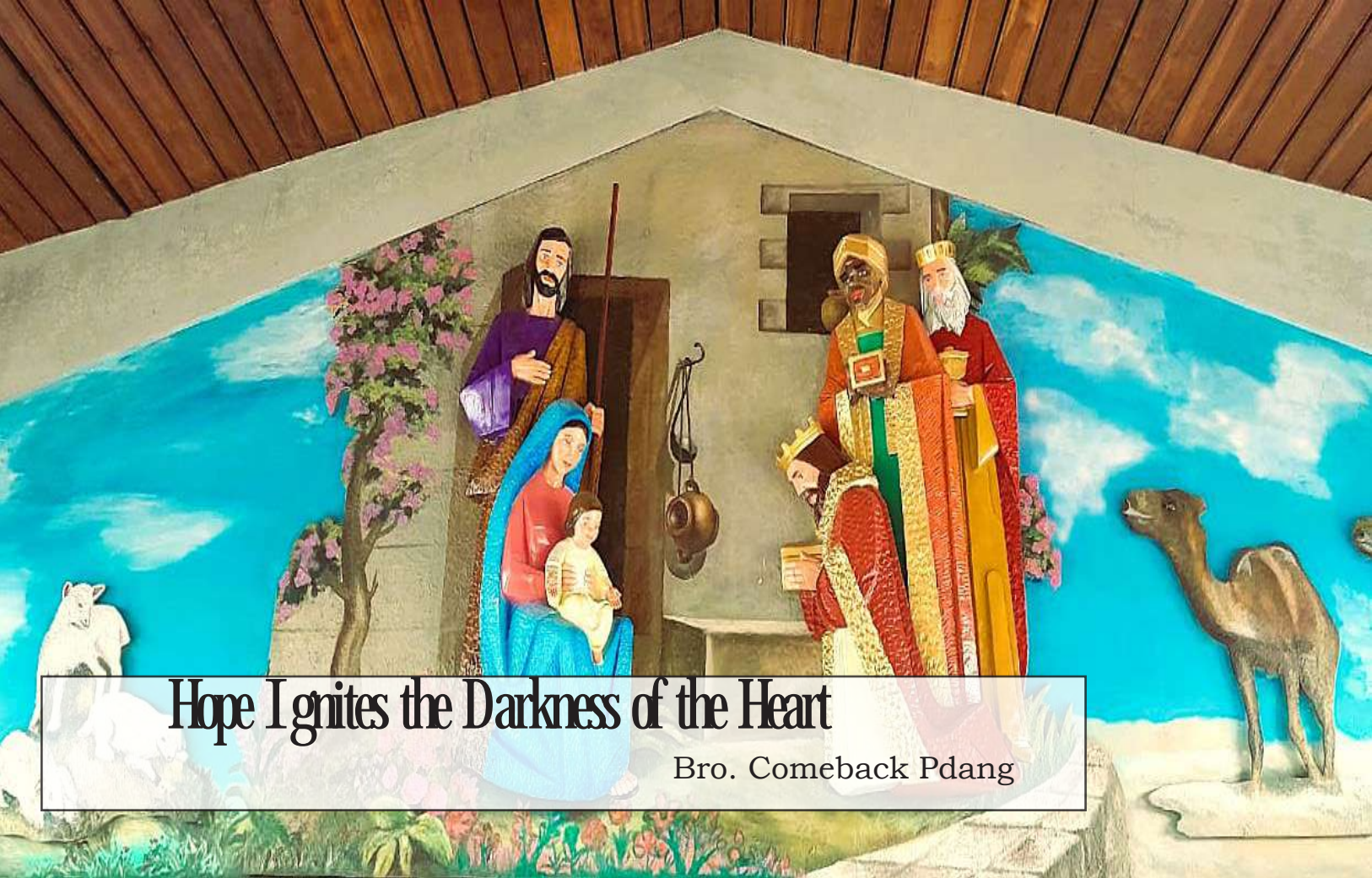
promise of heaven.

Similarly, the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is the divine mechanism for restoring grace lost through sin. It is the assurance that when the pilgrim stumbles and falls, the journey is not over. The absolution granted in this sacrament is a profound act of divine mercy, re-infusing the soul with sanctifying grace and renewing the confidence of hope. This ritualized act of forgiveness reinforces the theological principle that God's grace is always greater than human failure.

### Conclusion

The Christian life, viewed through the lens of Catholic theology, is an arduous but ultimately triumphant pilgrimage. It begins, proceeds, and ends not by human merit, but by the entirely unmerited, freely given presence of God—His grace. This journey is given meaning, perseverance, and direction by the confident, unwavering trust in God's promises—hope. These two virtues work in constant harmony, ensuring that the pilgrim is adequately equipped with the supernatural power needed for the ascent and remains resolutely fixed on the glorious destination: eternal life in Christ. The journey of grace and hope culminates in the perfect vision of God, where hope yields to possession, and grace achieves its perfection in charity.





## Hope Ignites the Darkness of the Heart

Bro. Comeback Pdang

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:5

When Irene lost her job and her father fell seriously ill, her faith began to fade. Each day felt longer than the one before, and her prayers seemed to echo into emptiness. One evening, as she sat alone in the chapel, she noticed the sanctuary lamp glowing faintly before the tabernacle. The flame was small - almost invisible - yet it never went out.

She sat quietly, watching that gentle light, and something stirred within her soul. She realized that her faith, though fragile, was still alive. Like that flame, it only needed care to keep burning. With tears in her eyes, she whispered, “Lord, I still trust You.” In that moment, peace returned - not because her problems disappeared, but because hope had been re-kindled.

Hope: The Light that Strengthens the Soul

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” - Hebrews 6:19

Every heart faces moments of darkness - times when we feel lost, broken, or forgotten. Yet within that same heart, God plants a spark called hope. It is not loud or dramatic; it is quiet, steady, and alive. Hope is the faith that refuses to die, the flame that refuses to be extinguished. It tells us that even when we cannot see the way forward, God is still guiding our steps.

Hope is not mere optimism or wishful thinking. It is the confident trust that God’s promises will be fulfilled. Saint Paul reminds us: “Hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (Romans 5:5). Christian hope looks be-

yond sorrow and sees the cross not as an end, but as the beginning of new life.

### The Cross: Source of True Hope

The Cross stands at the center of our faith - the place where despair meets redemption. When Jesus hung upon the Cross, surrounded by darkness, it seemed that all was lost. Yet in that very moment, salvation was unfolding. The Resurrection proved once and for all that no darkness is final. The tomb that once held death became the doorway to life.

That is the essence of Christian hope: the conviction that God can bring victory even from what appears to be defeat. The same light that burst from the empty tomb still burns in the hearts of all who believe.

### The Light Within

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” - John 1:5

Hope is the light of Christ that lives within us. It may flicker during moments of fear or doubt, but it never goes out - because it is God’s own flame. Saint Teresa of Ávila beautifully wrote: “Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you, all things are passing; God never changes.” Her words remind us that Christian hope is not built on circumstances, but on God’s unchanging love.

To live with hope is to trust that God is working, even when His plan remains unseen. It is to walk through valleys with courage, knowing the Shepherd leads us. Hope transforms sorrow into strength, endurance into joy, and waiting into worship.

### Hope in Action

Hope does not ask us to sit still. It calls us to live, serve, and love with courage. Saint Paul exhorts: “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer” (Romans 12:12). Every small act of faith - every prayer, every act of forgiveness, and every moment of love - becomes a living witness to hope.

Pope Benedict XVI once wrote, “The one who has hope lives differently.” Indeed, those who hope in Christ walk with peace even through trials, because they know the end of the story - and the end is victory in God.

### Hope in Christ Alone

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles.” - Isaiah 40:31

Hope renews us daily. It lifts our hearts when burdens grow heavy and teaches us that every cross leads to resurrection. Hope is not a vague feeling; it is a person - Jesus Christ Himself. He is the Light that no darkness can overcome, the Strength that sustains the weary, and the Promise that never fails.

So when fear surrounds you and faith feels weak, remember the flame in the chapel - small, steady, and unbroken. God’s light still burns within you. Let His hope ignite the darkness of your heart until it shines with His everlasting glory.

“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.” - Romans 15:13

## VISUALIZING THE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH IN NORTH EAST INDIA BY 2033

Dr. Roy Anthony Parackal, SDB

The Catholic Church in NE India has covered today a journey of 135 years since its humble beginning with the arrival in Shillong of the four German Salvatorian Missionaries with Fr. Otto Hopfenmuller as the leader of the team way back on 27 Feb 1890. The growth of the Catholic Church in this region once called “Assam” today NE India, has been prodigious! This fact has gained for the region the recognition of being one of the most flourishing of all missions in the world. One wonders if such growth has happened in any other part of the world. Within just a span of 135 years the church has grown so much that it is divided into 15 dioceses spread out in more than 572 parishes! Let us have a quick look at some of the present data about these 15 dioceses of our region.

Arch Dio- cese/ Diocese	Estd in	Parishes: Present sta- tus	Diocesan Priests: Pres- ent status	Present Cath Population	% of to- tal Pop- ulation
Shillong	1934	42	65	3,46,060	28.1
Dibrugarh	1951	38	82	1,35,903	1.8
Tezpur	1964	35	71	1,92,992	2.3
Tura	1973	47	53	3,40,175	27.7
Kohima	1973	57	91	62,329	2.5
Imphal	1979	51+13qp	111	1,04,257	3.7
Diphu	1983	30	36	70,386	5.6
Guwahati	1992	46	46	58,420	.6
Agartala	1996	24	7	49,942	1.2
Aizawl	1996	32	33	39,687	.8
Bongaigaon	2000	45	45	73,079	.8
Itanagar	2005	52	27	86,800	11.1
Miao	2005	31	35	98,445	19.5
Jowai	2006	18	19	1,14,000	25.6
Nongstoin	2006	24	23	1,74,072	28.2

Religious working in NE India			
Group	No. of congre- gations	No of commu- nities	Members
Men Clerical religious	38	425	1821
Women Reli- gious	120	991	5593
Brothers’ Congrega- tions	8	40	152

Total of Religious	166	1456	7566
Total of Diocesan priests & Religious (men + Women)	8,356		

- Total Population of NE India - 47 million
- Total Catholic Population of NE India - 2.15 million
- Total % of Catholic Population - 4.6%
- Total Christian population of NE India - 7 million (15%)

Some of the reasons for the prodigious success of evangelization in NE India

### 1. The passion of the Missionaries

The passion of the missionaries, both men and women, and the courageous, enthusiastic leadership of those in authority. Top-most priority was for preaching, baptizing, growth of the Church. The pioneers left the shores of Europe with just one passion: “bring the whole of Assam to the feet of Jesus, the King.” This same passion continued to burn in the hearts of many generations of missionaries. The pride of the missionaries consisted in the number of baptisms administered, growing number of the faithful who received the Eucharist, settled marriages etc. This zeal reflected the deep faith and passionate love of the missionaries for Jesus. There was a type of a missionary mysticism in the air. This unquenchable missionary spirit produced men and women of great caliber, real heroes.

The missionary audacity that marked the missionaries enabled them to cope with all types of obstacles. The missionaries adopted a spartan type of life. No sacrifice was considered too much. Formation in loco contributed to the transmitting of the missionary zeal to the younger generations. Experience of life in the missions even during the period of formation fanned into flame the zeal of the candidates and gave them a real taste of the life that awaited them. It also served as an early immersion into the various cultures of the region, a good chance to pick up the local language.

### 2. Openness of the Indigenous tribal people to the Gospel

The tribal communities which were in a period of transition and searching for a new identity in a world which was fast changing, found a welcoming new home in the Catholic

Church. The new faith gave them a sense of belonging to a bigger family. The indigenous faiths in quite a few corners of this wonderful mission served to open the hearts of the people to the message of the Gospel. The seeds of the Gospel present in the indigenous cultures served as a great preparation for the great harvest. As the great missionary Fr. Sylvanus Sngi would often affirm at the time of the arrival of the Catholic missionaries the indigenous faiths had reached a stage where these could not survive and hold their adherents together due to the dying out of the generations of capable priests, knowledgeable in their respective religion, and capable of establishing the link with the divine. In their search for an alternative, the Catholic faith held a special appeal to the tribals who were casteless, egalitarian and democratic.

### 3. Contribution of Catechists & Other lay collaborators

The missionaries found their best collaborators in the Catechists and the leaders of the village communities in the work of evangelization. These have played a major role in the growth of the Church in this region. Often they were the ones who made the first contacts with new villages, new families. And they were the ones, who even with their limited capacity, nurtured the life of the communities.

### 4. Investment of the Church in Education

One of the major causes for the spectacular growth of the Church in this region, has been the huge investment of the Church in the area of education: primary, higher, technical. This happy trend continues to the present day: suffices to see the life of every parish and mission centre and take stock of the educational institutions in each one of them. While all educational institutions are of utmost importance, it is good to highlight the fact that the church in this region can boast of two Universities: St. Joseph's University (Kohima Diocese) and Assam Don Bosco University (SDBs).

### 5. Investment of the Church in Health Care

Something similar can be said about the investment of the Church as a whole in the area of providing health care. Many dioceses in the region manage full fledged hospitals. Dispensaries are not lacking in most of the parishes, particularly where groups of Sisters are present. The Church's contribution in this area of service has been admirable.

Diocese	Name of the Hospital	Management
Shillong	Nazareth, Shillong	Holy Cross Sisters
Nongstoin	Holy Cross Health Centre, Mairang	Holy Cross Sisters

	St. Joseph's Hospital, Nongstoin	Sisters of St. Joseph Chennai
Tura	Holy Cross Hospital	Holy Cross Sisters
Bongaigaon	St. Augustine's Hospital	Augustinian Sisters
Guwahati	St. John's Hospital	Sisters of Maria Bambina
Diphu	Catholic Hospital	Hospitalar Sisters of Mercy
Tezpur	Catholic Hospital, Borgang	Sisters of the Sacred Heart
D i b r u - garrh	VG Hospital	Sisters of Maria Bambina
Itanagar		
Miao	Krick & Bourry Memorial Hospital	Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Kohima	Catholic Hospital Chu- moukedima	Medical Sisters of St Joseph
Imphal	CMC Hospital	Sacred Heart Congregation
Mizoram		
Agartala	St. Joseph's Hospital	Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy

## 6. Contribution of Missionaries to the local languages

The missionaries appreciated whatever was good in the indigenous people and their cultures, and made themselves one with the people they served, overcoming every sense of inferior-superior, insider-outsider. And this always endeared the missionaries to the indigenous people. Added to that appreciation of the local cultures, Missionaries in the region contributed immensely to the proliferation of literature in the local languages (biblical, catechetical, devotional and secular). To be just to history, I place on record the significant contributions of Msgr Bars, Fr. Paviotti, Fr. Balavoine, Fr. Bucceri, Fr. Costa, Fr. Del Col, Fr. Bacchiarello, Fr. Larrea, Fr. Dal Zovo, Fr. EO Mathew, Fr. UV Jose, Fr. TJ Francis, Fr. KA Thomas, Fr. CT Lukose, Fr. Joseph Pulinthanath, Fr. Narimattom. It is absolutely to the credit of these missionaries from outside the region, that they learned the local languages to perfection to be able to contribute substantially to the same. And their contributions have been treasured by the society at large.

## 7. Nurturing native Vocations

Yet another happy trend in the life of the Church in NE which again has contributed significantly to its growth is the attention paid by the pioneers to nurturing priestly and religious vocations almost from the inception of the Church in this region. Besides the other

many institutions (Diocesan/Congregational) certainly Oriens Theological College and Sacred Heart Theological College deserve special mention. Today it is a matter of great pride for the region that the Bishops of 8 out of the 15 dioceses are natives coming from the tribal communities not to say anything about the leadership of various religious congregations both of men and of women. One feels proud to realize that some areas of NE are becoming vocation-bowls for the rest of the country. It makes one so proud to see that our region has grown mature enough to send its sons and daughters to missions outside our country.

#### 8. Educational Qualification of leaders

The NE region has a large number of priests and religious who are well qualified both in religious and secular sciences who can offer effective leadership. Along with this we also have our educated and qualified laity, capable of taking up various tasks in society.

#### 9. Generosity of Over-seas aid giving agencies

Due credit must be given also to the foreign funding agencies like Propaganda Fide, Misereor, Missio, Kirche in Not, Manos Unidas, and many others, who understanding the needs of a nascent Church, generously provided financially for the building up of the needed structures: Schools, hostels, hospitals, dispensaries, Churches etc. Certainly, the generosity of the individual benefactors from all over Europe, particularly from Italy, deserve a special mention for their generous financial contribution to the various works in this great mission.

#### Present day Situations causing preoccupationw

##### 1. The threat from the RSS, Sangh Parivar and other such radical groups

Today we notice a reawakening in many of the tribal religions. In this context Christianity is projected as a foreign religion. The mainland-Hindutva groups, in their effort to stem the tide of conversion among the tribal groups, make an all-out effort to convince the tribals that their indigenous faith is actually a shade of Hinduism! The RSS and the Sangh Parivar have a hidden agenda for the entire North East. Their subtle and silent inroads into the Christian communities are a cause of concern. They will take on the Church some day! Isolated action here and there is no more enough. The North Eastern Church needs to stand united with the rest of the Church in India. As of now there is no such visible solidarity. Each diocese seems to think only of itself. We need enlightened, courageous and energetic Church leadership in this area of concern. Some Church leaders do not seem to be aware of the seriousness of the matter and take it lightly and some others do not seem to perceive the problem at all.

## 2. Complacency – lethargy among the present day missionaries

With a total Catholic population of 4.6% only in NE India, can we afford to become complacent and just sit back to glory in the laurels of a past generation? If that sense of urgency is not created at the sight of the 96% that is not Catholic yet, nothing will. Seeing our churches almost full to capacity for the Sundays and Feast days Masses, we could often be deceived into a false illusion that the whole region has finally been brought to the faith! There is nothing farther away from the truth than this illusion! We still remain a drop in the ocean. Just four out of a hundred are Catholic! And observing the present trend, we seem to have passed the age of mass baptisms. Today they come in trickles! And much of the numerical growth of the Church is accounted for by the birth of children of the Catholic families. And even in this area, the idea of micro-family is catching up!

On the basis of some pseudo arguments, some in the field claim “let us not evangelize, let us not baptize. Let us just consolidate our present position!” Even the work of strengthening and consolidating the present communities does not seem to receive sufficient attention, seen by the gradual reduction in the number of people who regularly attend the Sunday Mass. That kind of complacency, that invasion of a life of comfort, a basking in the glory of an era that is no more ours, only give rise to lethargy, inertia, torpor in the life of the missionaries. Obviously, there is a waning in missionary zeal and missionary reach out.

## 3. A waning in missionary zeal caused by a collapse of spiritual life

Mission is a matter of faith! We have in the arena of the NE Missions great achievers! But we seem to be losing out in the count of truly men/women of God, spiritual men/women. Prayer life on the whole is an area of absolute concern for a sizeable group of priests and religious. Cardinal Robert Sarah notes “Without prayer, the priest wears and empties himself out and quickly becomes a machine that makes a lot of useless noise.” Today the first need is for men who are passionate about Christ, burning with his fire, consumed by the zeal for souls. And such men and women are tempered in the furnace of long hours of intimacy with the Lord.

Let me quote a few lines from St. John Paul’s *Redemptoris Missio*. “A missionary is really such only if he commits himself to the way of holiness” (90). “The Church’s missionary spirituality is a journey towards holiness. The renewed impulse to the mission ad gentes demands holy missionaries. [...] What is needed is the encouragement of a new “ardour for holiness” among missionaries and throughout the Christian community” (90). “The missionary must be a “contemplative in action”. He finds answers to problems in the light

of God's word and in personal and community prayer. My contact with representatives of the non-Christian spiritual traditions, particularly those of Asia, has confirmed me in the view that the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation. Unless the missionary is a contemplative he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way" (91).

#### 4. Tribalism

Tribalism, inter-tribal conflicts, tribal-non tribal conflict tarnish the image of the Church in NE India. Even among priests and religious this white ant is eating up quite a bit of energy which should have been channelled to real evangelization. Unfortunately, even the most educated and highly qualified people with wide exposure to the rest of the world seem to be incapable of rising above the malaise of tribalism and ethnocentrism. Too many decisions which affect the life of the Church in the region seem to be directly or indirectly affected by tribalism. With so much work still to be done can an area like NE close its doors to any group willing to come in and work for the Kingdom? We are just 4.6% of the total population of the region. We seem to be lacking evangelical wisdom, succumbing to modes of socio-political thinking which are in no way evangelical. There is no room for competition, and much less for mutual exclusion. Misplaced priorities and unhealthy competition sow only seeds of division and confusion even among the laity.

The mission will flourish once more when every missionary feels welcomed and wanted; everyone's contribution is acknowledged and appreciated, when there will be no difference between citizens and aliens. Everyone is a much-wanted partner in the common mission of the growth of the Church. Individual charisms of each group need to be respected. All have to join hands together once more, put away the masks and in sincerity work for nothing but the spread of the kingdom, mutually helping each other. Keeping away workers interested in investing resources and personnel in the missionary enterprise of the Church in the region is a dangerous trend. The region needs to cultivate an "inclusive" mentality. And in this case, the Bishops and heads of religious institutions have a major role to play.

#### 5. Unwarranted, growing animosity between diocesan and religious clergy

There is a growing suspicion, animosity, antagonism, often hidden, between the diocesan clergy and religious. It would be absolutely wrong to point finger at any one group or any one individual. We need also to accept facts and perceptions which have been part of our history. Obviously neither the religious nor the diocesan clergy as religious and as diocesan clergy desire such a devastating situation. But when the malaise is wide enough to be noticed even from the outside, the region needs to pay serious attention to it. Sweeping the issue under the carpet would only help to keep the flame burning, at the expense of the mission! Everyone has in some way or other been affected by his own history, or the history

of the group to which one owes allegiance. Unfortunately, we cannot go back in history, but we can always correct the present and move along evangelical paths in the future. In our petty quarrels which we manage to blow into the size of mountains, we need to remember that we are working in the same mission of spreading the Church. We are bonded together by bonds which go far deeper than the colour of our skins or the shape and colour of our habits. As noted in the above section the mentality of exclusion, monopoly, groupism on which so ever side is fratricidal! It is having destructive effects on the growth of the Church in our region. Those holding positions of responsibility on both sides of the line need once more to play their proper role of shepherds of the flock, and in no way be dividers of the flock. Having personal friends across the line is not just enough! Coming together for common celebrations is only a starting point. What is required is a correction of the prevalent (fortunately not universal) unhealthy mentality and ushering in of a really new era of mutual acceptance, appreciation, acknowledgement, let us say it in one word “mutual love”. I do not universalize this malaise, but I would say it has gone far enough to require urgent attention from the side of all who love the missions of NE India. Let us have a Church where no group has any hidden agenda. Our only common agenda is the Kingdom of God! And for the realization of this agenda we are ready to join hands with everyone.

#### 6. The growing gap between the missionaries and the people they serve

The Church in our region owes its growth in a big way to the nearness of the shepherds to the sheep. The shepherds really having the smell of the sheep very often played multiple roles: teacher, doctor, employment bureau, lawyer, counsellor, etc. Today in many corners of our region the gap between the missionary and the people seems to be widening. With ease of transport systems, and reduction in the size of parishes, in far too many areas the much productive mode of staying over-night in the villages and visiting the families (Catholic/non-Catholic) seems to be on the way out, with obvious negative effects in the relationship. How many of us were picked up by some missionary on some such stay-overs and directed in our vocational journeys? Less of institutionalism and more of Jesus the good shepherd!

#### 7. Greater need to project a more human face of the Church

The Church in NE today needs a visible and attractive human face. Leaders at all levels and every missionary for that matter, need to become good human beings with an extra dose of compassion, kindness, generosity, honesty, justice, politeness etc. They need to strip themselves of that pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, revengefulness which seem to be corroding the lives of quite a few, making them prey to clericalism.

#### 8. Lowering in the work culture of missionaries

The level of work culture seems to be drastically declining among priests and religious! Complacency is leading us to embrace more and more a life of ease and comfort. While appreciating the efforts of quite a few to pick up new languages at the first appointment, we realize that so much more can be done. There are difficult actual situations in the mission areas. But difficulties are not insurmountable where there is zeal.

Many priests and religious don't seem to believe in such values as frugality, asceticism, work, temperance, mortification, fasting, control of senses, ability to live in conditions of privations and want, discipline etc. A Church that does not value ascetical spirit among its followers will soon lose its supernatural orientation.

#### 9. A lowering in the cultural and intellectual quality of missionaries

There seems to be an alarming decline in the cultural and intellectual quality of the clergy and religious. Even outside the formation set ups a resistance to learning and an accommodation to minimalism in this regard is visible. The Church in NE needs to courageously revamp and reorganise the formation programmes. Priests and ministers need a high level of competence in all fields today, particularly theological and philosophical. The region needs to produce eminent men and women qualified in this area. A spirituality that is not deeply rooted in solid doctrine can tend to become just a type of spiritualism, bordering on superstition! Our region seems to be going through a shortage of capable, spiritual, yet enlightened leadership.

#### 10. Superficial penetration of Gospel values

NE region which is considered by the rest of the country as a predominantly Christian region, does not seem to have a good Christian image. Christian values do not seem to be lived out in the daily life of the people: arson, corruption, looting, killing etc are on the increase. In situations of crisis and conflict, there usually is a great collapse of the Gospel values. Probity in socio-political life seems to be eminently absent. Certain so-called majority Christian states are topping the list of the most corrupt states in the country!

#### 11. Lack of transparency & synodality

Probity is demanded from the laity and the lay leaders. The lay people point a finger at the clergy and religious at the lack of transparency, authoritarianism, lack of true synodality. We seem to be happy to be synodal in matters which are advantageous to us; but in quite a few more important matters, we can be high handed in the mode of operation. Unjustifiable "clericalism" has made its inroads into the life style of too many religious and priests. We need to envisage a Church that is honest, just and truthful. There seems to be a growing craze among religious and clergy to amass wealth using even means that

are unethical. Accountability and transparency not only for those in the lower rungs of the ladder of authority but equally applicable to those in the higher rungs.

## 12. Lack of sufficient attention to Family apostolate

Living out of the Gospel values in the Catholic families does not seem to have received its due attention from those responsible. The increase in divorce, young couples living together without proper marriage, children suffering from psychological upsets due to lack of experience of the love in a well knit together family are counter productive.

Young people becoming victims of Satanism, occultism, age old pagan practices even if not in big numbers should really shock us. We can never come to saying “what can I do? It is their personal choice!” That surely would not be shepherding the flock. Whatever the cost, even if it be that these same people spit on our face, we need to bring them back, using means not only human, but more divine. As St Augustine so beautifully says in his writing on the shepherds of the Church, the mere fact that these choose to walk away from the Church is reason enough for us shepherds to go after them and bring them back!

## 13. Dangers of Social Media

Social media has its obvious advantages and the ministers cannot afford to be strangers to this new areopagus. We need to be familiar with the development in this area. It should be turned into an instrument for evangelization. We also need to qualify men and women in this field so that they can give quality service.

But like every other follower of Christ, the same ministers who warn the sheep about the evil effects of all kinds of addictions, need to pay attention to the same themselves. Pornography is designed to put off the flame! It will kill the missionary flame and even contribute to turn the messengers of the good news into predators! Allowing the AI to replace personal reflection and research will only impoverish the person.

## 14. The Church “of the Poor” and “for the Poor”

The Church in our region has grown also due to its investment in the area of uplifting the poor. These “poor” still form a good portion of the Catholic population of the region. The Church in NE will lose its relevance when the poor are ignored or in any way kept out of our campuses. The charitable face of the Church should shine out and should effectively address the actual needs of the poor. Quite a few of our educational institutions are beyond the reach of the “poor”. There is even a growing feeling that some forms of apostolate are designed to “collect” money. Without lowering standards required to remain relevant, this issue needs to be sorted out.

## 15. Secularization of the religious mentality

Religious superiors and Church leaders are putting on progressively the image of “efficient administrators” to the neglect of the spiritual dimension. It is not at all rare that when someone has certain problems, as any one at any stage can have, it is not to those in authority that they look up to, and not in their fellowship that they find solace and direction. A kind of spiritual worldliness, a spiritual poverty is pervading us all, and among us also those in positions of leadership. The priestly and religious mentality is progressively becoming secular and worldly. There may be some truth in what Cardinal Robert Sarah affirms: “We have come to a point where priests and consecrated religious live in a way that is sheer worldliness.” “In the world, but not of the world!” We need to be aware of the invasion of the world into the priestly and religious spheres. The primacy of the spiritual needs to be established and strengthened, otherwise we turn out to be just an NGO like many others.

## 16. Call for greater catechesis of the people

We note with gratitude to God the fact that our churches are still full to a very great extent, most probably more than in any other region in the world at large. But even with this very positive element, one would dare to say that much more needs to be done to help our people live a truly “Eucharist centered life!” Today with sizeable Catholic populations, often spread out in vast areas, the greatest challenge of the present mission is solid catechesis of the baptized. It is going to be the challenge of the century! Faith is a gift of God. The simple yet strong allegiance of our simple people particularly in the peripheries of our parishes is nothing short of a miracle. But that generation of those “simple but absolutely loyal and fervent” Catholics is becoming something of the past. Solid catechesis need to prepare our people to meet the challenges of a world of AI.

## Conclusion

Though there is and there should be a sense of apprehension in looking at the future, pressing upon us urgent action, we need to affirm the basic fact: the Church belongs to the Lord. She is His bride: loved and cared for by Him.

What is needed also for the Church in NE India is not more institutional reforms. We do not correct a bad book by changing the binding or the papers. The writing itself needs to be corrected courageously. Pope Francis speaking to the Bishops of Korea on 14 August 2014 called the Bishops to be guardians of memory and guardians of hope. Being guardians of memory means to find our original inspirations once more, to return to the source of the river, to drink deeply from the delights of this beautiful fountain of life, and to draw from them the spiritual resources to confront with vision and determination the hopes, the

promise and challenges of the future. We want to revisit the heroism, the generosity, the commitment, and the missionaries of our predecessors in this beautiful land and make it our own. Being guardians of hope would imply simply that we keep alive our pilgrim status. We are on a journey of which Jesus is the goal. Present trends do not make us hopeless. Instead they urge us to a greater purification and commitment. The pilgrim needs to keep the goal ever in mind and not get lost in the distractions on the way, however attractive they may seem to be. Beautiful words of St. Paul “Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:13-14).

Let me conclude with very powerful words of Bishop Stephen Ferrando to his Sisters, way back in 1969, but perfectly applicable to us priests and future priests: “The innermost strength of the Congregation (Church) is within your soul. The beauty and greatness of our Congregation (region) is within you. You belong to Jesus. You must live for Him, in order to bring souls to Him.”



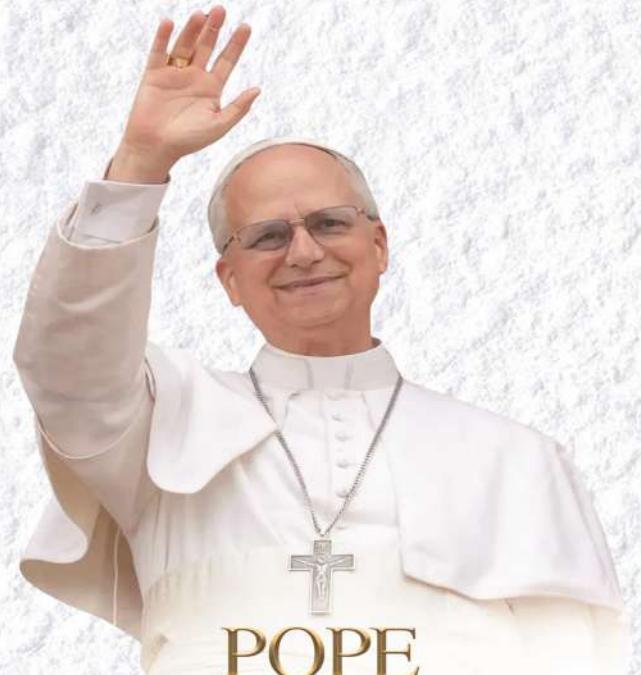
# From Gratitude to New Hope



**POPE  
FRANCIS**

With gratitude, the Church bids farewell to Pope Francis, whose papacy was marked by humility, mercy, and love for all, especially the poor and forgotten. His inspiring leadership touched hearts across the world.

Now, with hope and prayer, we welcome Pope Leo XIV as the new Shepherd of the Catholic Church. As he begins his sacred mission, may God guide him with wisdom and strength to lead the faithful in unity and peace.



**POPE  
LEO XIV**

**THANK YOU, POPE FRANCIS.  
WELCOME, POPE LEO XIV.**



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Stanislaus  
Rector**



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Spiritual Director**



**Fr. CHANIKUZHAY  
Mathew  
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(K.D.) Joy  
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**Fr. JYRWA  
Cosmos  
Administrator**



**Fr. POOVATHUMKUDY  
Kuriakose  
Professor**



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**BILLUNG**  
Sunny  
Tezpur



**EKKA**  
Abhay  
SDS



**HASDA**  
Patras  
Krishnagar



**HAVI**  
Winman  
Miao



**HINGE**  
Phidalis  
Jowai



**INDUWAR**  
Dilip  
Tezpur



**KANAI**  
Heibormi  
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**KHARMAWPHLANG**  
Jerry Nelson  
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**KHONGJOH**  
Tlogi  
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**KHONGSAI**  
Vincent Thangkolal  
Imphal



**KHONGSYA**  
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**KHONGTANI**  
Pyndapborlang  
Shillong



**KURBAH**  
Pynshngainlang  
Shillong



**KYMPAT**  
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Jowai



**LAKRA**  
Fuljence  
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**LAKRA**  
Reshma  
Bagdogra



**LONGKO**  
NAPONG  
Miao



**LYNGDOH**  
Firskyson  
SDS



**LYNGDOH**  
Robestar  
Jowai



**MALLAVARAPU**  
Bala Anvesh  
Agartala



**MALNGIANG**  
Eskarius  
CMF



**MARAK**  
Nathaniel Rechil  
Tura



**MARBOH**  
Bester  
Jowai



**MARWEIN**  
Khrawboklang  
Shillong



**MIASALHOU**  
Zavirieto  
MSFS

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**MONDAL**  
Uday  
Baruiapur



**MYRCHIANG**  
Daialammi  
Jowai



**NAZARY**  
Thomas  
Guwahati



**NASKAR**  
Satyajit  
Baruipur



**NONGSIANG**  
Ridonal  
OFM Cap



**PALITHARAYAL**  
Antony  
Idukki



**PANI**  
Tapon  
OFM Cap



**PDE**  
Richard Banjop  
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**PHAWA**  
Lukas  
Jowai



**PUDOTA**  
Chinnaiah  
Agartala



**SAWKMIE**  
Frankie John  
MSFS



**SUMER**  
Medilut  
Jowai



**TAPPO**  
Jibrus  
MSFS



**THYRNIANG**  
Baselius  
Nongstoin



**TIGGA**  
Bimal  
MSFS



**TIKHIR**  
Khumtang  
Kohima



**TIRKEY**  
David  
OFM Cap



**TIRKEY**  
Suleman  
Guwahati



**Topno**  
Saurav  
MSFS



**WANNIANG**  
Ioannis  
Nongstoin



**MANJALY**  
Prince Paul  
VC



**SECOND YEARS**



**AGAN**  
Manliam Joseph  
Miao



**AMAL**  
Sebastian  
Norbetines



**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**  
Ovunghung James  
Kohima



**FRANCIS**  
Lalmuansanga  
Aizawl



**HORO**  
Martin  
Tezpur



**JAMES**  
Kapzamuana  
Aizawl



**KERKETTA**  
Jenebaba  
Dibrugarh



**KHARPOR**  
Leonard Rangkyngjai  
Shillong



**KHONGWIR**  
Elingson  
Shillong



**KLEIN**  
Vincent  
OFM



**KUJUR**  
Nikhil  
Ranchi



**KUJUR**  
Sumit  
Dibrugarh



**LAMIN**  
John Kennedy  
Jowai



**LANGI**  
Jostin  
CMF



**LYNGDOH**  
Shanborlang  
CMF



**MARAK**  
Paul  
Guwahati



**MARAK**  
Tartius Rangsa  
Guwahati



**MEYASE**  
Kevikolie  
Kohima



**SECOND YEARS**



**NONGKYNRIH**  
Kebius  
SDS



**PDANG**  
Comeback  
Jowai



**PHAOVEI**  
George  
Imphal



**PRADHAN**  
Mahesh  
MSFS



**PYNGROPE**  
Rishalwell  
Shillong



**RYNTATHIANG**  
Francis  
Shillong



**SANGMA**  
Kornelius  
Tura



**SANGMA**  
Mangsang Pilberth  
Tura



**SANGMA**  
Wilwal Doppo  
Tura



**SAWIAN**  
Raplang  
OFM



**SHEPOU**  
Mathias  
Imphal



**SINGH**  
Augustine  
Tezpur



**SUMNYAN**  
Hachin  
OFM



**SUPHAI**  
Paulus  
CMF



**SUPHAI**  
Raplang  
OFM



**SURIN**  
Rahul  
SDS



**SWURO**  
Veshoneyi  
Kohima



**SYRTI**  
Richard  
Jowai



**THUBRU**  
Sakheus  
Jowai



**TYNGKAN**  
Iainehmon  
Jowai



**UCHAI**  
Milton  
Agartala



**YADLA**  
Tambi  
SDS



**FIRST YEARS**



**SANGMA**  
Thomas T  
Tura



**PHAWA**  
Jhanmiki  
CMF



**SYNGKLI**  
Joni  
CMF



**MARAK**  
Joseph  
CMF



**VALLABARAJU**  
Joking  
MMS



**BARLA**  
Prashant  
MSFS



**DSEPSA**  
Dennis  
MSFS



**INDUWAR**  
Junason  
MSFS



**JOSEPH**  
Joyvinny  
MSFS



**LIBIN**  
Augustine  
MSFS



**MYRMAN**  
Simon  
MSFS



**NGAOSILOU**  
S. Luckyson  
MSFS



**REIVEI**  
Abraham S. Adam  
MSFS



**TADA**  
Michael  
MSFS



**TIRKEY**  
Amrit  
MSFS



**TOLY**  
John  
MSFS



**VATTAMATTATHIL**  
Febin Sebi  
MSFS



**LALTHAKIMA**  
Benjamin  
OCD



**MARDI**  
Emmanuel  
OCD



**LYNGDOH MARSHILLONG**  
Donboklang  
OFM Cap



**MARAK**  
Ira R  
OFM Cap



**KONGTHAH**  
Herbertstone  
OFM Cap



**LYNGDOH MAWPHLANG**  
Arbinson  
OFM Cap



**SHANGDIAR**  
Banteilang  
OFM Cap



**RANI**  
Kitborlang  
OFM Cap



**FIRST YEARS**



**VANLALZAUVA**  
Dominic  
Aizawl



**LALHRIATPUIA**  
Denzil  
Aizawl



**AKKA**  
Jit  
Dibrugarh



**TIRKEY**  
Romius  
Dibrugarh



**SELUNG**  
Kothang Anthony  
Imphal



**THANGVANGKHUOL**  
James  
Imphal



**KAHORGAM**  
Benjamin  
Imphal



**TOUTHANG**  
James  
Imphal



**SHIVEIO**  
L.S John  
Imphal



**SHANKHIL**  
Philip Lamkang  
Itanagar



**GANGMEI**  
Gaiguangthui  
Itanagar



**XALXO**  
Vijay  
Jalpaiguri



**TUDU**  
Michael  
Krishnagar



**EKKA**  
Patras  
Krishnagar



**MYLLIEM**  
Malcolm  
Nongstoin



**WAHLANG**  
Resto  
Nongstoin



**TANGSON**  
Banteiskhem  
Shillong



**KURKALANG**  
Cornelius  
Shillong



**CHALLAM**  
Damewan  
Shillong



**NONGKHLAW**  
Reckysius  
Shillong



**WARBAH**  
Rolan  
Shillong



**MYNSONG**  
Teiborlang  
Shillong



**HUJON**  
Wanlambok  
Shillong



**KERKETTA**  
Amrit  
Tezpur



**TUDU**  
David  
Tezpur

FIRST YEARS



**UMSONG**  
Alexis  
SDS



**BONGRUNG**  
Tharson  
Diphu



**EKKA**  
Jeevit  
Diphu



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**LAMKUPAR**  
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Reservius



**RINA**  
Rabha



**CILISTENA**  
Rabha



**MARAK**  
Mitheul



**RAJEN**  
Urang



**KAMLESWAR**  
Urang



**SAMUEL**



**KOSTAN**  
Tirkey



**PARKASH**  
Dhan



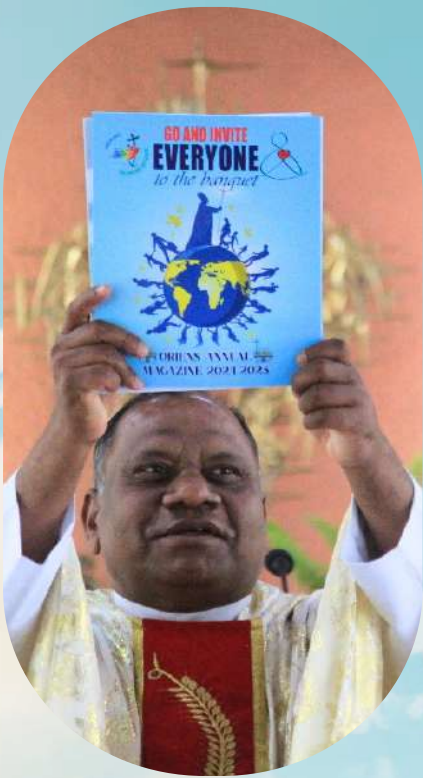
**DOMINIC**  
Rabha



**PILATUS**  
Kindo



**AJIT**  
Sangma



# REMINISCENCES

Fr. CHINLIANKHUP

Stanislaus (RECTOR)





15th May 2025 Institute Day in OTI.

The Main Celebrant was Rev. Fr. Athanas MSFS at 8:30 am, the Magazine was released on the Theme “Go and Invite”. OTI had Quiz and Cultural Performance. The Annual Competition Champion goes to the II Years, Second Champion By I Years, third Champion by III Years.

1 August 2025 Inauguration of the New Academic Year 2025-2026 on Friday, August, 2025.

At 8:30 Am:

Most Rev. Victor Lyngdoh Archbishop of Shillong presided over the inaugural Eucharistic Celebration and the Chief Guest of the Inaugural Function.

Sr. Dr. Cecilia Dsouza, SSPS gave the Inaugural Lecture on the theme, “TOWARDS A GREATER ECOLOGICAL COMMUNION A Critical Dialogue between Rosemary Radford Reuther and the Church’s Magisterium.”

Soon after the function, all the students gathered in their respective class rooms to elect their respective class beadles and representatives.



5th September 2025 OTI held a Teachers’ day celebration in the fifth hour.

In the evening the Bishops had a general body meeting from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. This was followed by a short Cultural Program where Most Rev. Paul Mattakat, the Bishop of Diphu, addressed the OTC community on behalf of all the Bishops. The visit of the Bishops ended with a fellowship meal.

The OTC Staffs and Brothers had a Pilgrimage Journey to Sacred Heart Shrine – Nongmensong Parish.

The Journey begins at 8:00 am from Oriens with a prayer led by Fr. Chani Matthew in the main Chapel. On a way we stopped at Pynthorumkhrah Parish’s Cemetery, made a short prayer for all the souls led by Fr. Cosmos. After reached the shrine, we had refreshment, followed with a procession from the Grotto to the main Chapel for a mass, welcome and blessed – it was presided by Fr. Paschal the Parish Priest of Nongmensong.

We moved to Pope’s John II memorial place – where he celebrated his mass for the entire North east India in the



Golfinkin1986 at Shillong.

After the Pilgrimage, we reached back to OTC Chapel with a concluding prayer and final Blessings by Fr. N.K George.



16th October 2025 Annual Lecture – 2025, Theme: “Visualizing the shape of the Church in Northeast India by 2033”. By Rev. Dr. Fr. Roy Anthony P. SDB. Moderator was Rev. Dr. Fr. Athnas Kerketta MSFS.

Bro. Sabenthung Benjamin Ezung of II Year B.Th. was also given a prize for winning the Essay competition on, “The role of religion in fostering a responsible public discourse” conducted by St. Paul Seminary Tiruchirappalli -Tamil Nadu.

25th October 2025 The First Day of the Concert was for Fathers, Sisters from various Formation Houses in Shillong.

A Play by Oriens Theological College Brothers, from Opera “Blood and Blessing” written by Rev. Fr. Graviour Augustine. Adapted and edited by Rev. Fr. Pau Thungbemo Yanthan, OTC Vice Rector. Venue was in Archbishop Hubert Rosario Hall.

Blood and Blessing was based on the Martyrdom of Father Nicholas Michael Krick and Augustin Etienne Bourry.



26th October 2025 The Second Day of the Concert was for the Oratory People from various centers in Shillong.

A Play by Oriens Theological College Brothers, from Opera “Blood and Blessing” written by Rev. Fr. Graviour Augustine. Adapted and edited by Rev. Fr. Pau Thungbemo Yanthan, OTC Vice Rector. Venue was in Archbishop Hubert Rosario Hall.

Blood and Blessing was based on the Martyrdom of Father Nicholas Michael Krick and Augustin Etienne Bourry.



26th February 2026 First years – Admission to the Rite of Candidacy by Most Rev. Benny Varghese Bishop of Itanagar.



# “Art speaks where words are unable to explain”



**Artist: Ovungthung C. Ezung James  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Year)**

**Style: Realism**

**Inspiration: Even when broken, hope grows through action—like a seed becoming shelter—and grace flows when we choose to grow.**



**Artist: Ovungthung C. Ezung James  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Year)**

**Style: Idealism**

**Inspiration: “Express of Beauty in Suffering Pure Woman”**





**Artist: Nongkhlaw Reckysisus (1<sup>st</sup> Year)**  
**Style: Idealism with touches of Realism**  
**Inspiration: "Surrounded by His presence, I find a peace that the world cannot give and a hope that never fades."**



**Artist: Anthony Selung Kothang (1<sup>st</sup> Year)**  
**Style: Expressionism**  
**Inspiration: "In the darkest moments, I hold on to hope and rise, trusting the light will return."**



**Artist: Anthony Selung Kothang (1<sup>st</sup> Year)**  
**Style: Realism**  
**Inspiration: "I nurture small beginnings, trusting they will grow into light and life."**





**We deeply thank  
all our Benefactors  
and Supporters for  
walking this  
journey with us.  
Your Presence with  
us have been a  
guiding light for us.**



# ANNUAL MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTORS



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Goldensia Shadap	Jowai		



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Achow Tayang	Miao		

