



# BISHOP'S CIRCULAR LETTER



BP/CL5/2020 September 28, 2020

Dear Priests/Brothers/Sisters & Lay Faithful in the Diocese:

## World Mission Sunday on 18<sup>th</sup> October

The World Mission Day 2020 will be celebrated this year at the universal level on Sunday, 18 October 2020. In this year marked by the suffering and challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the missionary journey of the whole Church continues in light of the words found in the account of the calling of the prophet Isaiah: "Here am I, send me" (6:8). Pope Francis says that we are called to respond with joyful commitment. With the present scenario of Covid-19, our Holy Father has set the realistic scope of this year's World Mission Day celebration as follows: "We are indeed frightened, disoriented and afraid. Pain and death make us experience our human frailty, but at the same time remind us of our deep desire for life and liberation from evil. In this context, the call to mission, the invitation to step out of ourselves for love of God and neighbour presents itself as an opportunity for sharing, service and intercessory prayer. The mission that God entrusts to each one of us leads us from fear and introspection to renewed realization that we find ourselves precisely when we give ourselves to others." [The Holy Father's Message is attached to this Circular].

## Mission Sunday Collection

Each year during the mission month, we take up a special collection through an envelope which is given to all the faithful. This offering will be sent to the PMS Office Bengaluru. I am once again looking forward to your generous contribution towards the Universal Solidarity Fund. I request you all to pray for the universal church and be generous in your giving, in spite of the present financial crunch. Please note that every Religious community and Institution will send their contribution directly to the Administrator Fr. Shaiju, CSC. All Collections must reach the Administrator's Office by the end of November so that it can be sent to the PMS Bengaluru.

## Vatican urges Catholics to Return to Sunday Worship

The Vatican has issued a letter to the world's Bishops

urging the resumption of public Sunday Masses, stressing that "it is necessary and urgent to return to the normality of Christian life." The letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences is titled "Let us return to the Eucharist with joy." The "community dimension" of Christian worship is essential, and constitutes "a fundamental trait of Christian life," says Cardinal Sarah the Prefect of the Congregation. He says according to Jesus's teaching that "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." During coronavirus lockdowns, many countries made a distinction between "essential" and "non-essential" activities, often judging public worship as belonging to the latter category, something the Cardinal suggests was a mistake.

The Bishops should act firmly to ensure "that the participation of the faithful in the celebration of the Eucharist is not downgraded by the public authorities to a 'gathering,' and is not considered as comparable or even subordinate to forms of recreational assemblies," he writes. Cardinal Sarah also stresses that online streaming is no substitute for public worship as a community since "no transmission is equivalent to personal participation or can replace it. Indeed, these transmissions, by themselves, risk distancing us from a personal and intimate encounter with the incarnate God who gave himself to us not in a virtual way, but really, saying: 'Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.' "This physical contact with the Lord is vital, indispensable, and irreplaceable."

As soon as possible, the Cardinal urges, "it is necessary to return to the Eucharist with a purified heart, with a renewed amazement, with an increased desire to meet the Lord, to be with him, to receive him in order to bring him to the brothers with the witness of a life full of faith, of love and hope. We cannot live as Christians without the banquet of the Eucharist, the Lord's table to which we are invited as children and brothers to receive the Risen Christ himself, present in body, blood, soul and divinity in that Bread of heaven that sustains us in joys and labors of the earthly pilgrimage," he asserts.

The Cardinal also notes that "proper attention to hygiene and safety rules must not lead to the sterilization of gestures and rites, or to spreading, even unconsciously, fear and insecurity in the faithful." In this regard, "liturgical norms are not matters on which civil authorities can legislate, but only the competent ecclesiastical authorities," he insists.

## INFORMATION

### 1. [Next Clergy Meet Deanery wise](#)

Please note that there will be no Clergy Meeting at Agartala in October. Instead there will be Deanery wise Meetings under the direction of the newly appointed Vicars Forane (VF). Kumarghat Deanery will meet on 5<sup>th</sup> October; Moharpara Deanery on 6<sup>th</sup> October; Depacherra Deanery on 7<sup>th</sup> October; and Agartala Deanery on 8<sup>th</sup> October. Kindly look out for communication from your respective VF and join in the Meeting in your respective Deanery.

### 2. [Feast of our Lady of the Rosary](#)

On October 7, the Catholic Church celebrates the yearly feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Known for several centuries by the alternate title of "Our Lady of Victory," the feast day takes place in honor of a 16th century naval victory which Pope St. Pius V attributed to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was invoked through a campaign to pray the Rosary throughout Europe. The month of October is often referred to as the month of the Rosary. Let us use this month to pray the Rosary each day in our Families and Institutions. In a special way let us pray to Mother Mary for protection for our world from the deadly Covid-19 pandemic.

### 3. [Programs in the run-up for the Jubilee](#)

Fr. Shaji, CSC, the Jubilee Committee Convener, has been doing his best in planning programs, some of which are rescheduled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Fr. Shaji informs us that:

- i. The [Silver Jubilee Candle](#) blessed by Bishop Lumen is given to each Parish and is to be taken to every mondoli/motha of each Parish in the month of October. PPs are requested to organize at the Parish level Rosary recitation and have the holy Mass. They must explain the theme "Celebrate with Gratitude and Renew with Hope" and pray the Jubilee prayer after the Mass.
- ii. The Diocese Level Retreat will be held in 5 Zones: Kathalcherra, Ambassa, Bodhjungnagar, Khumwllwng and Depacherra. Dates will be announced later, most probably in February 2021.

### 4. [New Education Policy](#)

The New Education Policy has been promulgated by the Government recently. The simplified version, mentioning the salient features has been in circulation for everyone to study and familiarize oneself. Many of us have also been attending Google meet Webinars and Conferences. I am sure that certain amount of knowledge has been obtained. Every Priest and Religious in charge of Schools or assisting in them must attentively read and grasp the crux of the matter of the original text.

It will be a poor show of the leader, not to have read the original text and argue and make wrong conclusions by reading only secondary information.

### 5. [Catholic Laity of Tripura](#)

The Catholic Laity of Tripura (CLT) Office Bearers along with their new Advisor Fr. Sunny, SDB, have not been able to organize any programs this year, including the ADPC Meet, due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Annual Eucharistic Procession this year has also been postponed.

### 6. [Let me conclude](#) with some excerpts from the catechesis on the current pandemic in the light of the Church's social doctrine which Pope Francis gave at his weekly General Audience on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020. He said "contemplating and caring are two attitudes that show the way to correct and rebalance our relationship as human beings with creation."

- [Care for each other](#) - The Pope stressed that in order to come through this pandemic it is necessary to "to look after and care for each other." "We must support those who care for the weakest, the sick and the elderly," he said, because they "play a vital role in today's society, even if they often do not receive the recognition and remuneration they deserve." This care, Pope Francis went on to say "must also address our common home. All forms of life are interconnected and our health depends on that of the ecosystems that God created and entrusted to us to care for."

- [Contemplation best antidote](#) - "The best antidote against the misuse of our common home is contemplation," said the Pope. He added, that without contemplation "it is easy to fall prey to an unbalanced and superb anthropocentrism, which gives excessive importance to our role as human beings, positioning us as absolute rulers of all other creatures." Pope Francis went on to say, "A distorted interpretation of biblical texts on creation has contributed to this misinterpretation, which leads to the exploitation of the earth to the point of suffocating it. We believe that we are at the centre, claiming to occupy God's place; and so we ruin the harmony of His design. We become predators, forgetting our vocation as custodians of life."

- [Our mission is to care for our common home](#) - The earth needs to be worked, so as to live, the Pope noted, but it must not be exploited. Instead, our mission is to care for our common home. "Our poorest brothers and mother earth lament for the damage and injustice we have caused, and demand we take another course." Therefore, the Pope underlined, it is important to recover the contemplative dimension. When we do this, Pope

Francis explained, people discover the intrinsic value of things given to them by God. Speaking in off the cuff remarks, the Pope said that those who do not know how to contemplate nature and creation, do not know how to contemplate people in all their richness. And those who exploit nature, end up exploiting people and treating them like slaves. “Those who know how to contemplate will more easily set to work to change what produces degradation and damage to health. They will strive to educate and promote new production and consumption habits, to contribute to a new model of economic growth that guarantees respect for our common home.”

- **"Guardians" of creation** - Those who follow the path of contemplation and caring, emphasized the Pope, “become 'guardians' of our common home, guardians of life and hope.” This is needed in order to preserve and protect our common home for future generations. In particular, he mentioned the indigenous peoples, to whom, he said, “we all owe a debt of gratitude.” But the Pope also spoke of “those movements, associations, popular groups, which are committed to protecting their territory with its natural and cultural values. These social realities are not always appreciated, and at times they are even obstructed; but in reality they contribute to a peaceful revolution, the 'revolution of care’”. Concluding his catechesis, the Pope stressed that everyone has a role to play in caring for creation. “Each one of us can and must be a 'guardian of the common home', capable of praising God for His creatures, and of contemplating and protecting them.” <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-09/>



Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro, CSCD

### MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR WORLD MISSION DAY 2020 Here am I, send me (Is 6:8)



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I wish to express my gratitude to God for the commitment with which the Church throughout the world carried out the Extraordinary Missionary Month last October. I am convinced that it stimulated missionary conversion in many communities on the path indicated by the theme: “Baptized and Sent: the Church of Christ on Mission in the World”.

In this year marked by the suffering and challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the missionary journey of the whole Church continues in light of the words found in the account of the calling of the prophet Isaiah: “Here am I, send me” (6:8). This is the ever new response to the Lord’s question: “Whom shall I send?” (ibid.). This invitation from God’s merciful heart challenges both the Church and humanity as a whole in the current world crisis. “Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying 'We are perishing' (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this” (**Meditation in Saint Peter's Square, 27 March 2020**). We are indeed frightened, disoriented and afraid. Pain and death make us experience our human frailty, but at the same time remind us of our deep desire for life and liberation from evil. In this context, the call to mission, the invitation to step out of ourselves for love of God and neighbour presents itself as an opportunity for sharing, service and intercessory prayer. The mission that God entrusts to each one of us leads us from fear and introspection to a renewed realization that we find ourselves precisely when we give ourselves to others.

In the sacrifice of the cross, where the mission of Jesus is fully accomplished (cf. Jn 19:28-30), God shows us that his love is for each and every one of us (cf. Jn 19:26-27). He asks us to be personally willing to be sent, because he himself is Love, love that is always “on mission”, always reaching out in order to give life. Out of his love for us, God the Father sent his Son Jesus (cf. Jn 3:16). Jesus is the Father’s Missionary: his life and ministry reveal his total obedience to the Father’s will (cf. Jn 4:34; 6:38; 8:12-30;

Heb 10:5-10). Jesus, crucified and risen for us, draws us in turn into his mission of love, and with his Spirit which enlivens the Church, he makes us his disciples and sends us on a mission to the world and to its peoples.

“The mission, the 'Church on the move', is not a programme, an enterprise to be carried out by sheer force of will. It is Christ who makes the Church go out of herself. In the mission of evangelization, you move because the Holy Spirit pushes you, and carries you” (Senza di Lui non possiamo fare nulla: Essere missionari oggi nel mondo. Una conversazione con Gianni Valente, Libreria Editrice Vaticana: San Paolo, 2019, 16-17). God always loves us first and with this love comes to us and calls us. Our personal vocation comes from the fact that we are sons and daughters of God in the Church, his family, brothers and sisters in that love that Jesus has shown us. All, however, have a human dignity founded on the divine invitation to be children of God and to become, in the sacrament of Baptism and in the freedom of faith, what they have always been in the heart of God.

Life itself, as a gift freely received, is implicitly an invitation to this gift of self: it is a seed which, in the baptized, will blossom as a response of love in marriage or in virginity for the kingdom of God. Human life is born of the love of God, grows in love and tends towards love. No one is excluded from the love of God, and in the holy sacrifice of Jesus his Son on the cross, God conquered sin and death (cf. Rom 8:31-39). For God, even sin becomes a challenge to respond with even greater love (cf. Mt 5:38-48; Lk 22:33-34). In the Paschal Mystery, divine mercy heals our wounded humanity and is poured out upon the whole universe. The Church, the universal sacrament of God's love for the world, continues the mission of Jesus in history and sends us everywhere so that, through our witness of faith and the proclamation of the Gospel, God may continue to manifest his love and in this way touch and transform hearts, minds, bodies, societies and cultures in every place and time.

Mission is a free and conscious response to God's call. Yet we discern this call only when we have a personal relationship of love with Jesus present in his Church. Let us ask ourselves: are we prepared to welcome the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to listen to the call to mission, whether in our life as married couples or as consecrated persons or those called to the ordained ministry, and in all the everyday events of life? Are we willing to be sent forth at any time or place to witness to our faith in God the merciful Father, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation in Jesus

Christ, to share the divine life of the Holy Spirit by building up the Church? Are we, like Mary, the Mother of Jesus, ready to be completely at the service of God's will (cf. Lk 1:38)? This interior openness is essential if we are to say to God: “Here am I, Lord, send me” (cf. Is 6:8). And this, not in the abstract, but in this chapter of the life of the Church and of history.

Understanding what God is saying to us at this time of pandemic also represents a challenge for the Church's mission. Illness, suffering, fear and isolation challenge us. The poverty of those who die alone, the abandoned, those who have lost their jobs and income, the homeless and those who lack food challenge us. Being forced to observe social distancing and to stay at home invites us to rediscover that we need social relationships as well as our communal relationship with God. Far from increasing mistrust and indifference, this situation should make us even more attentive to our way of relating to others. And prayer, in which God touches and moves our hearts, should make us ever more open to the need of our brothers and sisters for dignity and freedom, as well as our responsibility to care for all creation. The impossibility of gathering as a Church to celebrate the Eucharist has led us to share the experience of the many Christian communities that cannot celebrate Mass every Sunday. In all of this, God's question: “Whom shall I send?” is addressed once more to us and awaits a generous and convincing response: “Here am I, send me!” (Is 6:8). God continues to look for those whom he can send forth into the world and to the nations to bear witness to his love, his deliverance from sin and death, his liberation from evil (cf. Mt 9:35-38; Lk 10:1-12).

The celebration of World Mission Day is also an occasion for reaffirming how prayer, reflection and the material help of your offerings are so many opportunities to participate actively in the mission of Jesus in his Church. The charity expressed in the collections that take place during the liturgical celebrations of the third Sunday of October is aimed at supporting the missionary work carried out in my name by the Pontifical Mission Societies, in order to meet the spiritual and material needs of peoples and Churches throughout the world, for the salvation of all.

May the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of Evangelization and Comforter of the Afflicted, Missionary disciple of her Son Jesus, continue to intercede for us and sustain us.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 31 May 2020, Solemnity of Pentecost  
*Franciscus*