

12th September 2013

My dear Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Faithful,

1. Bishop meets Pope Francis:

On 9th August, I had the honour to concelebrate with the new Holy Father Pope Francis in his private Chapel in the Vatican. After the Eucharistic Celebration, I had the joyous occasion to meet the Holy Father. I offered him the greetings from the entire Diocese of Balasore and the assurance of our prayers for him. The Holy Father thanked for our prayers and requested us to continue praying for him. The Holy Father Pope Francis imparted his blessing to all of you. Please continue praying for the Holy Father.

2. Prayer for peace in Syria:

Pope Francis is requesting our special prayers for peace in Syria where much conflict is prevailing. There were also many deaths in Syria. Let us continue praying for the restoration of peace in that area.

3. New Bishop for Sambalpur Diocese:

On 26th July the announcement was made that the Holy Father Pope Francis appointed Fr. Niranjan Sual Singh of the clergy of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar as the Bishop of Sambalpur Diocese. The Bishop-elect was born in Kottama parish in 1961 and was ordained priest in 1991. He holds a doctorate in Theology from the Pontifical Urban University in Rome and is presently a Professor of Systematic Theology at Khristo Jyoti Mohavidyaloyo Regional Theologate of Sason, Samblapur. He succeeds Bishop Lucas Kerketta SVD, whose resignation from the pastoral care of the Diocese of Sambalpur was accepted by the Holy Father. The Episcopal Ordination of the Bishop-elect of Sambalpur, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Niranjan Sual Singh will be held on 28th September at Sambalpur. We extend our congratulations to the new Bishop and wish him great success in his Episcopal ministries.

4. New Bishop of Rourkela Diocese:

On 26th July the announcement was made that the Holy Father Pope Francis appointed Fr. Kishore Kumar Kujur of the clergy of Sambalpur Diocese as the Bishop of Rourkela Diocese. The Bishop-elect was born in 1964 in Gaibira parish and was ordained priest in 1993. He holds a doctorate in Sacred Scripture and is presently a Professor of Sacred Scripture at Khristo Jyoti Mohavidyaloyo Regional Theologate of Sason, Sambalpur. Rourkela Diocese has been lying vacant following the transfer of Archbishop John Barwa SVD to the Archdiocese of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar in 2011. The Episcopal Ordination of the Bishop-elect of Rourkela, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Kishore Kumar Kujur will be held on 29th September at Rourkela. We extend our congratulations to the new Bishop and wish him great success in his Episcopal ministries.

5. Mission Sunday – 20th October:

We celebrate this year, the Year of Faith, the World Mission Day (Mission Sunday) on 20th October. It unites the entire Church as a missionary family. Participation in the World Mission Sunday is an important expression of Missionary Cooperation of all the Catholics worldwide – those who donate and those who receive-that we share a missionary vocation. It is an occasion to be united with Catholics worldwide in prayer, friendship and solidarity. We share in the work of missionaries and the young churches as they too share their faith and give life, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. It would be nice that as fruit of the Mission Sunday, every parish take a new and concrete step towards becoming a more evangelizing community. I hereby instruct all of you to take necessary steps for contributing generously to the annual Mission Sunday collection. May the Lord reward you for it.

I am giving you here below extracts from the Message of Pope Francis for the World Mission Day for this year:

1. Faith is God's precious gift, which opens our mind to know and love him. He wants to enter into relationship with us and allow us to participate in his own life in order to make our life more meaningful, better and more beautiful. Faith is a gift that one cannot keep to oneself, but it is to be shared. If we want to keep it only to ourselves, we will become isolated, sterile and sick Christians. The proclamation of the Gospel is part of being disciples of Christ and it is a constant commitment that animates the whole life of the Church. The missionary outreach is a clear sign of the maturity of an ecclesial community.
2. The Year of Faith, motivates the entire Church towards a renewed awareness of its presence in the contemporary world and its mission among peoples and nations. The Vatican Council emphasized in a special way how the missionary task: that of broadening the boundaries of faith, belongs to every baptized person and all Christian communities since "the people of God lives in communities, especially in dioceses and parishes, and becomes somehow visible in them, it is up to these to witness Christ before the nations" (Ad Gentes, 37).
3. The work of evangelization often finds obstacles, not only externally, but also from within the ecclesial community. Sometimes there is lack of fervour, joy, courage and hope in proclaiming the Message of Christ to all and in helping the people of our time to an encounter with him.
4. I would like to encourage all, to become bearers of the good news of Christ and I am grateful especially to missionaries, to the priests, men and women religious and lay faithful – more and more numerous – who by accepting the Lord's call, leave their homeland to serve the Gospel in different lands and cultures. I cordially bless missionaries and all those who accompany and support this fundamental commitment of the Church to proclaim the Gospel to all corners of the earth, and we, ministers and missionaries of the Gospel, will experience "the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing".

6. Retreat at Krishnachandrapur:

During this Year of Faith, a common renewal Retreat for the people of different parishes will be held at Krishnachandrapur from 14th to 19th October, 2013. The Parish Priests are instructed to pass this information to your parishioners and encourage them to attend this Retreat which will be of great help for their spiritual renewal. The Diocesan Faith Formation Team has already given you relevant informations on this matter. Let us pray for the success of this Retreat.

7. Priests' Retreat:

The annual Retreat of the diocesan priests will be held at the Retreat Centre at Bandel, West Bengal, from 30th September to 4th October, 2013. Fr. Subash Anand from the Diocese of Udaipur will be the Preacher of the Retreat. All the diocesan priests are instructed to attend this Retreat at Bandel. You are requested to pray for the Priests specially during this Retreat time.

8. Appointment:

Fr. Kuriakose Kadavil - Diocesan Director for the Pontifical Mission Organisations

Devotedly yours in Christ,

**Thomas Thiruthalil, C.M.
Bishop of Balasore**

Bishop's Programme:

September 2013

17	- Jagadalpur	- Episcopal Ordination of Rev. Msgr. Joseph Kollampampil, CMI, Bishop of Jagadalpur
19	- Raipur	- Installation of Most Rev. Victor Henry Thakur, Archbishop of Raipur
24	- Balasore	- Diocesan Consultors Meeting
28	- Sambalpur	- Episcopal Ordination of Rev. Msgr. Niranjan Sual Singh, Bishop of Sambalpur
29	- Rourkela	- Episcopal Ordination of Rev. Msgr. Kishore Kumar Kujur, Bishop of Rourkela
30-4 October	- Bandel, W.B.	- Annual Retreat

October 2013

10-11	- Bhubaneswar	- Meeting of the Social Services Regional Forum
12-14	- Cuttack	- Seminar for the Catechists of Odisha Region
20	- Balasore	- Mission Sunday
