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**Circular No. 04/2014**

**10<sup>th</sup> April, 2014**

*Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,*

As the Season of Lent is drawing near to its end, it is time to look back at the spiritual gains we made by means of the three pillars of the season – fasting, prayer and almsgiving. It is also time now to look forward to the culmination of the season – the Christ Event – comprising the mysteries of Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. I wish all of you a fruitful and meaningful celebration of these great mysteries of our faith.

### **1. My Trip to Poonthoppu, Kerala**

I had been invited by the family members of late Msgr. Jacob Vadakeveetil, C.M. to a memorial service in connection with his 20<sup>th</sup> death anniversary. The Mass and the prayers were offered in his home parish church at Poonthoppu where his remains are interned, in the outskirts of Alleppey, Kerala. In the house where Monsignor spent his last days, the family has dedicated a room in his memory with pictures and photographs preserved from his early days. The memorial service concluded with a meal shared by the members of the family.

### **2. Meeting of the Parish Priests and Heads of Religious Communities**

The Faith Formation Team of the Diocese had convened a gathering of the Parish Priests and heads of religious communities of the diocese on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil, C.M. from Gopalpur moderated the general sessions. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together and plan for the revitalization of parish life, especially in the context of the Jubilee Year of the Diocese. The result of the discussions and deliberations of the day is given out with this circular. The norms for the formation of Parish Pastoral Council in English and Oriya translation will be given later.

### **3. Retreat at KC Pur**

The four-day charismatic retreat organized by the Faith- Formation Team of the Diocese and held at KC Pur was a success going by the number of people who attended it and by their enthusiastic response. Around 900 people participated in the retreat conducted by a group named 'Towards Jesus' from Indore, M.P. The team consisted of 17 persons, of which were two priests and two nuns, and all of them young and enthusiastic in the field of music and retreat preaching.

It has been felt that retreats in Santhali and Ho languages in the respective areas could also invite good participation.

#### **4. SCC Seminar**

A two-day seminar on Small Christian Communities was held at Deepthi Bhavan, Pastoral Centre, Kuruda. The resource persons were Fr. Sarto and Sr. Rosita SCCG from the Diocese of Asansol and Fr. Joe Diaz SVD from Burla, Sambalpur. Nearly 35 Fathers and Sisters participated in the seminar. The seminar has given an impetus to the participants to start SCC groups in their respective parishes. SCC programme is a well tried and tested one and has yielded good results in re-vitalizing parish life throughout many dioceses across India. We hope for the same in our diocese too.

#### **5. St. Mary's School, Anandapur**

As per the proposal which had been made earlier, we have formally initiated the process of starting a school at Anandapur in Keonjhar Dist. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2014 Fr. Anil Ferdinand, the Parish Priest of Anandapur, had prepared the ground for a meeting of the local leaders with the Diocesan team. The proposed school, under the stewardship of Fr. Efrem Lakra, is now in its initial stages; we hope to have better contact and relation with the people of the area by means of the school, something very much needed for the Anandapur mission.

#### **6. My Visit to Baghdofa**

Since my Episcopal Ordination I had been invited to celebrate Holy Mass in many parishes of the Diocese. Among my visits the one to Baghdofa was a memorable one. For one thing, that was where I had the opportunity of conferring the Sacrament of Confirmation for the first time. I was impressed by the expression of faith by the people on that day on which they also celebrated the *Ba'* festival (involving flowers of sal trees). Fr. Jyoti Prakash Lakra deserves praise for his dynamic and charismatic leadership to the community over there and the instructions given to the people in the journey of their Christian faith.

#### **7. Congratulations!**

Sr. Ann Mary DBS of St. Thomas Convent School, Balasore, informs that five students from that school have secured 4<sup>th</sup> ranks in the international level in both Science and English in a test named 'International Olympiad 2014'. Congratulations to the students, Sr. Ann Mary and the Staff of the School.

#### **8. Restarting 'Preparatory Course' at Vikas Sadan**

I am giving below a note sent to me by Fr.V.L. Chacko, from Vikas Sadan.

"To improve the quality of the studies, Vikas Sadan was conducting a one-year Preparatory Course from the starting of this centre in 2006, before the students are admitted to +2 first year Science. Due to various reasons we had stopped the Preparatory Course for the last two years and because of this the percentage of result and the quality of studies are going down. So, we have decided to restart the Preparatory Course once again from the next academic year 2013-14. Those students who are interested in +2 Science studies, but do not have first division marks in Class - X are recommended to attend this one year course if they want to study in Vikas Sadan. The total expense for the one-year course is Rs/- 18,000.00. Those

students who are recommended by the Parish Priests will be given a concession of Rs/- 12,000.00 and they have to pay only Rs/- 6,000.00 in a year. Any students who are interested in higher studies are welcome to join this one-year course even if they are not interested in +2 Science studies. All the Parish Priests are requested to encourage the poor students, specially the Catholic students, for admission to Vikas Sadan”.

### **9. Fr. Bijeesh Completes Degree in Master of Theology**

Fr. Bijeesh Chacko had been pursuing his higher studies in Biblical Theology in St. Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore. He defended his M.Th. paper on 25<sup>th</sup> March under the guidance of the renowned Biblical Professor Fr. Lucien Legrand. The paper is titled, “Stilling of the Storm as an Epiphany?: An Exegetical Study on Mark 4:35-41”. I congratulate Fr. Bijeesh on the accomplishment of his task and wish him all the best in his ministry in the Diocese.

### **10. Retreat for the Youth and Vocation Camp at K.C.Pur**

A three-day retreat beginning in the evening of 27<sup>th</sup> and concluding on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April, followed by a day of Vocation Camp on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2014 is planned by the Diocesan Commission for the Pontifical Mission Organizations. Parish Priests are requested to contact Fr. Kuriakose Kadavil in this regard.

### **11. Appointments / Transfers**

1. Fr. Jose Aresseril	Secretary cum Treasurer, Bishop's House
2. Fr. Isaac Puthenangady	Parish Priest, Jaleswar
3. Fr. J. Antony	Parish Priest, Baghmora
4. Fr. Paul Kidangan	Rector, Deepti Bhavan Minor Seminary, Kuruda
5. Fr. Laurance Thalikulam	Parish Priest, Barbil
6. Fr. Sangram Murmu	Cathedral Parish Priest and Vicar General, Balasore
7. Fr. Baiju Mulakkal	Ministerr, Bishop's House & Assistant, Cathedral Parish
8. Fr. George Plackyil	Deepti Bhavan Minor Seminary, Kuruda
9. Fr. Lijo Nirappel	Assistant at BSSS, Balasore & Assistant, Cathedral Parish
10. Fr. Eric Soreng	Assistant, Jaleswar
11. Fr. Efremlakra	Principal, St.Mary's School, Anandapur
12. Fr. Bijeesh C.V	St. Mary's School, Raghunathpur, Bariapda
13. Bro. Binay Kerketta	Regent, Utkal Vani, Balasore
14. Bro. Renjit Xess	Regent, K.C.Pur
15. Bro. Sunil Minz	Regent, Baghmora
16. Bro. Wilson Kerketta	Regent, Keonjhar

These Appointments / Transfers will be completed by the end of May 2014.

My sincere thanks to the Fathers for the service they rendered in their respective places before they take up their new assignments. Thanks also for accepting the ministry entrusted to them in the new places.

I had announced the appointment of Fr. Sangram Murmu as the Vicar General of the Diocese during the meeting of the Parish Priests on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March. He had been the VG for over years and I sincerely thank him for accepting the re-appointment.

I want to place on record my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Fr. Isaac Puthenangady for the service he rendered to the diocese as Secretary cum Treasurer for the last 16 years – from 1998 till today. All the clergy and religious of the diocese have experienced his friendly manner, efficiency and timely help in matters related to finance. However, as he himself expressed, it is time to move on and find satisfaction in other areas of priestly ministry. I thank him for his promise of future assistance in land and finance related matters of the diocese. In the name of the clergy and religious of the diocese I wish Fr. Isaac a very fruitful pastoral ministry.

I also wish Fr. Joseph Aresseril all the best as he has taken up this important assignment of being the Secretary cum Treasurer of the Diocese from the beginning of the current financial year. I request all the clergy and religious of the Diocese to cooperate with Fr. Jose so that he may carry out his duties in the most fitting manner.

### **12. Fr. James Theikanath C.M. Passes Away**

Fr. James Theikanath, C.M. (74), a priest and a zealous missionary belonging to the North Indian Province of the C.M., passed away on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2014. He had been suffering from ‘Progressive Dementia’ for a few years and was residing at St. Vincent’s Priests’ Home in Gopalpur. He had done his Licentiate in Moral Theology in Rome and was a visiting professor of that topic at Khristo Jyoti, Sason. Mostly his missionary life was spent in the diocese of Berhampur, as well as in Fiji Islands and Tanzania. May he Rest in Peace.

### **13. Prayers for Sr. Teresina SABS**

Sr. Teresina SABS is an experienced person in the ministry of healing. For sometime now she had retired from active ministry and had volunteered to serve at our Adoration Chapel. Recently she had been detected with cancer which has affected her vital internal organs. She has undergone a 9-hour long surgery in Lakeshore Hospital in Ernakulam, Kerala. There seems to be some hope for her recovery; let us continue to pray for Sr. Teresina so that she would experience a healing touch from the Divine Healer Himself.

### **14. Bishop’s Programme**

#### **APRIL 2014**

01	- Balasore	- SCC Seminar
05	- KC Pur	- St. Mary’s School Anniversary
06	- Kusudia	- Parish Visit & Sunday Liturgy
	- Jaleswar	- Parish Visit & Sunday Liturgy
10	- Balasore	- Clergy Recollection & Chrism Mass
13	- Balasore	- Palm Sunday
14	- KC Pur	- Diocesan CRI Recollection
17-20	- Balasore	- Easter Triduum
20	- Garhdeulia	- Easter morning Mass
21-22	- Bhubaneswar	- Regional Bishops’ Meeting
23-5 <sup>th</sup> May	- Chennai, Kerala & Bangalore	

## **MAY 2014**

6	- Balasore	- Silver Jubilee of Sr. Roderick, M.C.
7	- Balasore	- First Profession, CMC Convent
10	- KC Pur	
11	- Rangiam	- Parish Visit & Sunday Liturgy; Conclusion of the Silver Jubilee of Fr. Varghese
12-13	- Gopalpur-on-sea	
16-24	- Berhampur, Chennai & Mysore	
25	- Anandapur	- Parish Visit, Sunday Liturgy, Confirmation
31	- Karanjia	- Feast of the Visitation Sisters
	- Sarat	- H. Mass, First Communion, Confirmation

### **15. Easter Message: RESURRECTION AND THE AMAZING CHANGES!**

Easter, commemorating the Resurrection of Jesus, is the oldest and most important festival of the Christian Church, and held (in the Latin Church) between 21 March and 25 April, on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the northern spring equinox.

One might ask: how did 12 followers of Jesus - fishermen, tax collectors, and other ordinary people – multiply to such an extent that 2000 years later, one out of every three people on the planet identifies as Christian? How is it that there are more books written about Jesus than about any other subject in the world, when he himself did not write anything down except, of course, something on the ground? Jesus never composed a song, but there is more music about him than any other subject. Jesus never drew any pictures or did any sculpture, but more art has been made about Jesus than any other subject in history. Jesus never travelled more than 200 km. from where he was born, and yet today, we can find followers of Jesus in every nook and corner of the planet.

The answer to all these questions and puzzles is just one thing: The Resurrection! If someone thought of splitting our calendar into B.C. and A.D., it was not due to the birth of Christ, but due to his Resurrection! The Resurrection is the culmination of the ‘Good News’ of Jesus. In Luke 4:18 Jesus had announced as part of his missionary manifesto that ‘he had been anointed and sent to bring Good News to the poor’. What follows in the same verse are the changes to be brought about in the life of the various categories of poor - release to the captives, sight to the blind, freedom to the oppressed, to name a few. If the Good News of Jesus consisted of defeating some inimical powers that keep people bound, then the defeat of death would be its culmination. "O death, where is your victory"?, asked St. Paul in 1 Cor 15:55, in a chapter which speaks of the importance of faith in the Resurrection of Jesus.

So what is Resurrection and how do we understand it? It is an event which, even though historical, does not fit into our categories of our thought guided, as they are, within framework of space and time. Our minds and imaginations are too small and so we try to fit the Resurrection into conventional categories we are familiar with. It is like trying to empty the water of the sea into a bottle. Even the apostles and disciples of Jesus and the first Christians weren't prepared for it initially; yet they tried to describe something completely

new and unexpected for which they had no adequate language. The women who went to the tomb saw the stone removed from before the tomb; yet when they drew near and they did not find the Lord's body. It is an event which left them perplexed.

For Pope Francis, the answer to the question regarding the meaning of the event is found in the question asked by the angels to the women, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; but has risen" (Lk 24:5-6). It is not that Jesus has simply returned to life and re-entered our history. He is no more part of ordinary history; by means of his Resurrection he has shown us a new way of being always present. He does not belong to the past anymore, nor to any place. He belongs to the present. He *is*. Has he not said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am"? (John 8:58), and to the disciples before his ascension, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age?" (Mt 28:20).

The belief that the Lord was with his disciples gave them hope and filled them with joy (Lk 24:52). Now the Risen Lord lives with us and within us. Resurrection is all about the continued divine presence in the world by means of His Spirit (Acts 1:8, Eph 1:19-20), no more bound by the parameters of space and time. The awareness of that should bring about a change for the better in our own lives. The change has already taken place in an amazing manner in the lives of the early Christians due to which Christianity has made all the difference in the world.

**WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY AND BLESSD EASTER!**

+Simon Kaipuram, C.M.  
Bishop of Balasore