

*Dear Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,*

Greetings from Bishop's House, Balasore!

### **I. The Month of October**

The month of October has double importance in the Liturgical Calendar of the Catholic Church.

**1)** October is known as the **Mission Month**. We begin the month with the celebration of the feast of St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897), commonly known as the 'Little Flower'. In 1927 Pope Pius XI declared St. Therese the Patroness of the Missions. Having never left the cloister, she was given this title alongside her co-patron the great St. Francis Xavier, who travelled to many lands as a missionary. In naming St. Therese as the Patroness of the Missions, Pope Pius XI recognized the absolute necessity of prayer and contemplative life for those active in the mission fields after her example. St. Therese was a spiritual master of the contemplative life. She considered her call and the call of her fellow sisters to be the spiritual mother of the missions and missionaries. Some are called to go into the mission fields while others follow Christ into the mission fields, while never leaving home. There are some who follow the example of St. Francis Xavier and others the example of St. Therese of Lisieux; both are called to the mission, the mission of saving souls.

By now Fr. Roy, the Diocesan Director of Pontifical Mission Organizations, has already distributed to the parishes the materials to be used during the Sundays of the Mission month. It begins with October 7 as the Sunday of 'Missionary Children', followed by Second Sunday (Oct. 14) as the Sunday of the 'Missionary Youth', Third Sunday (Oct 21) as the Sunday of 'Missionary Associations and Movements', culminating on the Fourth Sunday (Oct 28) the 'Mission Sunday'.

I request all the Parish Priests to give the Mission Month due seriousness and ensure that the faithful become aware of their own role as missionaries by means of their prayers and providing material assistance for the continuation of missionary activities in the Church.

**2)** The month of October is also the month of the **Holy Rosary**. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October we celebrate feast day of Our Lady of the Rosary. This feast began as the feast of Our Lady of Victory, instituted in 1571 after a Christian military victory in the Battle of Lepanto, Italy. In 1573, this feast day was renamed Our Lady of the Rosary by Pope Gregory XIII, and in 1716, Our Lady of the Rosary was celebrated as a feast of the universal Church for the first time.

However, recitation of the Rosary was nothing new by 1716. It may have had early medieval monastic origins. Instead of praying the full 150 Psalms of the Bible in a cycle, as monks did at the time (and some still do), lay people were encouraged to substitute the Psalms with 150 Rosary beads, with the prayers that we are used to. While they recited these prayers, the people meditated on the events (mysteries) of the life of Jesus. Thus, the Rosary is a valuable instrument of prayer and meditation, as well as a powerful means of teaching the truths of the Christian faith. **Parish Priests are requested to announce this to the faithful.**

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, with whose feast we begin the month of October, once wrote that she was drawn especially to Mary, not so much because she is the Queen of heaven, but because she is our mother. This October and always, while reciting the Holy Rosary let us, with St. Thérèse among all the saints, rejoice that we are children of so great a mother.

## II. SCC CONVENTION

The regional convention of the Small Christian Communities will be held at Rourkela Cathedral premises from the 5<sup>th</sup> till the 7<sup>th</sup> of this month. Around 40 participants from our Diocese (laity, clergy, religious and 2 bishops) will represent the Diocese at the convention, which is intended to boost the movement in the six Dioceses of our Region. More than two thousand participants are expected at Rourkela for the event.

Formation of SCC - Small Christian Communities (known also as Basic Christian/Ecclesial Communities) is seen today as the 'new way of being the Church'. It is in fact going back to the old and the original way of being the Church. In the Acts of the Apostles 2:42 we read: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' instruction and the communal life, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." The SCC in the parishes are proving to be good centres for Christian formation and missionary outreach. These are groups of Christians/parishners who, at the level of the family or in a similarly restricted setting, come together for prayer, Scripture reading, catechesis, and discussion on human and ecclesial problems with a view to a common commitment. These small communities or units are a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization, and a solid starting point for a new society based on 'civilization of love.'

"These communities decentralize and organize the parish community, to which they always remain united". "Because the Church is communion, the new 'basic communities', if they truly live in unity with the Church, are a true expression of communion and a means of construction of a more profound communion. They are thus the cause for great hope for the life of the Church" (Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 51). These communities are:

- Approved and encouraged by the Catholic Church.
- Biblically based.
- Historically proven to be a leaven for world evangelization and Church renewal.

Some parishes in our Diocese have the SCC. With the impetus that the Church in India gives to the formation of the SCC in the parishes, and with the positive results emerging and

witnessed in the Dioceses where the SCC are active, I would like to encourage the Parish Priests to revitalize the SCC where they exist, and to encourage formation of new ones. We hope to have a core team of SCC animators in our Diocese under the leadership of Fr. J. Antony, who is presently the secretary for the SCC commission.

### **III. FORTHCOMING RETREATS / SEMINARS**

- Balasore Clergy Retreat at Bandel from the 15<sup>th</sup> till 19<sup>th</sup> of October
- Retreat for laity in Odiya at KC Pur: 21<sup>st</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October
- Seminar on Marriage & Canon Law for Parish Priests and those interested on 29<sup>th</sup> October, at Pastoral Centre, Kuruda (Organized by the Commission for Clergy). We plan to begin the seminar on 28<sup>th</sup> afternoon. More information will be given later.
- Seminar for 'Couples for Christ', Oct. 30-31, Pastoral Centre, Kuruda
- Retreat for laity in Santali at Kusudia: 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> November

### **IV. MASS INTENTIONS**

In the last meeting of the Bishops of Odisha it has been decided that from the month of October the Mass intentions will be charged Rs. 70/-, instead of the current Rs. 50/-. Those concerned are requested to announce this increment in the parishes and institutions.

### **V. MY PROGRAMME**

#### **October**

04-06	Rourkela	SCC Convention
13	Balasore	Meeting of the School Principals
15-19	Bandel	Annual Retreat
20	Bhubaneswar	Religious Profession, St. Joseph Sisters
22-26	Kuruda	Retreat for Sambalpur Clergy
28-29	Kuruda	Seminar on Marriage & Canon Law

#### **November**

02	Mitrapur	Mass on All Souls Day
05-10	Tabor, Mumbai	Retreat for VC Fathers
12-15	Hyderabad	Renewal Programme for Holy Spirit Fathers
18	Jhatioda	Jubilee Mass
25	Balasore	Christ the King; Jubilee
27	Berhampur	Feast of the Queen of the Missions
30 – Dec. 2	Jatni – Gopalpur	OCBC meetings

With regards and Blessings

+Simon Kaipuram, C.M.  
Bishop of Balasore