



LA CARTA

February 2023

February 1, 2023

Dear Brothers,

During this month of February, one of the key moments that we focus upon is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord which takes place on February 2nd. This celebration traditionally is the day where candles are blessed, symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world.

On this coming February 2nd, I will participate in a concelebrated Mass sponsored by the Dicastery of Consecrated life and presided by João Cardinal Braz de Aviz. Normally the Holy Father presides over the Mass but during this time he will be away for his apostolic visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. Let us be united with the Pope for the success and safety of his visit. The Holy Father wishes us all to meditate on the Mission which is the very light and fulfillment of our vocations, not only as religious but as Christians. The reason why we are Christian is the basic tenet of the mission. Pope Francis said this at the beginning of his synodal journey on October 9, 2021. Mission leads us to the fullness of our vocation to the Christian life. It gives us the opportunity to return to God's style that is "closeness, compassion, and tenderness" which is expressed in words, presence, and bonds of friendships. We cannot separate ourselves from life; it is necessary for someone to care for "the frailties and poverties of our time, healing and wounds and healing broken hearts with the balm of God." Pope Francis stresses that Mission is the oxygen of our Christian life, without it, we die of suffocation or inability to breathe that will not allow us to live.

In our recent USG meeting, our Holy Father challenged every religious congregation and Order to integrate the laity. He said, at one point that we will die out and our Charism will be picked up by the laity in the Church. **The workings of the Holy Spirit are not reduced nor particularly limited to our Charism so as to be the exclusively domain of a few heads and hands of some religious.** Many religious Orders today die due to their closedness, lack of collaboration and fear of self reference. Therefore, even in the chapters of the Order, he encourages us to integrate the wisdom of the laity to get a balanced perspective on the way we must live among the people of God in this walk of life. The synodal Church is a Church that truly serves, evangelizes, and points to the ultimate walk of life to Jesus.



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My brothers, for me this insight from the Holy Father is like a beautiful light, comparable to a radiant sun that shines and enlightens our religious life. The concept of light is a good image one can reflect upon during this month of the consecrated life. We can ponder upon how we may best live out our lives as faithful religious. The concept of light invites us to address some challenging questions that I thought we could ask ourselves. First, do we as CRMs ask persistently the help of the Holy Spirit to guide our hearts, rekindle our missionary zeal, focus on the work of evangelization and work towards the integral development of God's people? Do we bring Christ, who is alive, to the human condition we find ourselves in? Have we truly encountered Christ in our ministry and recognized Him in the people we serve and meet? Am I willing to share my life with others who may be different from me due to their race, language, culture, and tradition? Is my nationality, tribe, language, and all other forms of differences an obstacle to completing the work of the Risen Christ in our ministry? Lastly, is the person of Jesus Christ before the resurrection and after an exciting encounter of my daily life?

We are living vessels of the mission. What people must see is not our person, but Christ whom they seek in us. They seek Christ who is in harmony with his brothers in the community of religious like us. They seek Christ who is happy to partake supper and drink wine with his apostles. They seek Christ who performs the miracle of the multiplication of bread. They seek Christ who comforts and heals the sick. They seek Christ who raised Lazarus. They seek Christ who gives meaning and new life, either through sacraments or sacramentals of our daily life. They seek the most merciful, gentle, joyful, and SMILING CHRIST. They seek Christ who is always ready to forgive, understand and love and NOT a Christ who finds faults and condemns those who have erred. They seek Christ who is among us and is really present in our midst. This is the great mission that is before us, a light that may shine on top of the mountain so as to guide our people. May we always remember the Lord's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor where Jesus was seen to radiate, and his face shone like the sun as he talked with Moses and Elijah (cf: Mt 17:2-3). May we look upon the Eucharist, the Lord Jesus Christ, truly present whom we adore and encounter who gives meaning to our life. Brothers, in union with our Church, and smelling too like the sheep, let us together heed the call of Pope Francis to prepare for the synodal journey. Let there be a wide opening of our doors, our hearts, and our ears to let new life flow in and through us. If we do not do this, we will eventually die of suffocation, which is the lack of good air that comes from the Spirit.



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Please pray for our newly opened ministry in Great Britain. Fr. Mathew and Fr. Shinto Varghese are already there to help and assist the Eparchy of the Syro-Malabar Bishop. Let us continue to pray for our intention to be in Strasbourg, France where I had also sent the letter for the possibility of building another religious community in that city. I am heading to visit our brothers in the UK to see their situation sometime this month of February. I also hope to attend upcoming ordinations in Goma, DRC this March. I also wish to attend the ordinations in India and the Philippines in the succeeding months. I ask for your prayers that the Lord may continue to guide and give me sound health and body.

During this month of February, I invite you to think about this. Please pray that our local CRM communities will mirror the light of Christ to one another and to the world. Pray for an increase in vocations and never lose hope. The Scriptures state that Christ will make all things new (cf: 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:15).

Father Ted Kalan, crm

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