

COMMUNIO SUNDAY 2021

NOVEMBER 28, 2021 (FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT)



 **Communio**

Assist Communio to help our Missionaries



INTRODUCTION

The first Sunday of Advent is Communio Sunday. This year Communio Sunday falls on 28 November, 2021. It's the one Sunday in the year when the entire Latin Church in India comes together to support the Church's mission in our country. And every single donation from Communio Sunday goes to support churches, hospitals, schools and vocations in the areas where the Church is new, young or poor.

This is our opportunity and privilege to show love and solidarity to our Church family. Through our prayers, we support missionaries everywhere in spreading the Good News. And by donating, we respond to Christ's call to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

Communio brings the Church together in compassion and communion. Together, we provide mission dioceses with the essential support they need to become self-sufficient. Communio works with local bishops, churches and missionary congregations, to distribute resources and funds fairly, on the basis of need.



COMMUNIO SUNDAY CIRCULAR

November 28, 2021 (First Sunday of Advent)

“Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13: 34)

**To All Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Religious,
Catechists and Lay Faithful of the Latin Catholic Church in India**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

1. We are at the threshold of the Season of Advent, a time that renews our hope as we reflect on the great mystery of the Incarnation. Despite the clouds of anguish and pain left behind by the Covid-19 pandemic, the feast of Christmas brightens up our life with that divine joy and peace that this world cannot give us. Our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed to us the power of love and not love for power. The Church, in her communion, invites the whole world to this path of new life in Christ. Today, as we

celebrate *Communio* Sunday, may we become all the more aware of our identity and mission in this world.

2. In a few days time we will conclude the Year of St. Joseph. Pope Francis, when listing out, in '*Patris Corde*,' the characteristics of the fatherly heart of St. Joseph, describes Joseph as the 'creatively courageous father.' The Holy Father defines 'creative courage' as an 'important element that emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties.' He cites Lk. 5: 17-26 as a clear example of the way 'creative courage' was shown by the friends of the paralytic, who lowered him from the roof, in order to bring him to Jesus. Creative courage joins hands, invents a strategy and executes it. And, as a result, the endangered humanity is renewed and restored to life. Does *Communio* Sunday invite us to show the same 'creative courage' in the way we love and care for each other in the communion of the Church?

3. *Communio* is an initiative of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) since 2018, to assist all our Dioceses and Religious Congregations working in rural and mission areas in their pastoral ministry. Its scope is: (i) to build a culture of sharing among our own people in order to express solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need; (ii) to encourage our faithful to pray and to support the missions and the missionaries and to promote vocations to consecrated life; (iii) to inspire our lay faithful to volunteer to work in mission areas and (iv) to envisage the formation of our faithful as missionary disciples, as proposed by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Through *Communio* we synergize, pray and act.

4. *Communio* aims at lending a helping hand financially to the many needs of the Church in India, such as construction of churches, supporting the formation of Priests and Religious, training catechists, etc.

5. Let us celebrate the *Communio* Sunday with a meaningful participation in the Eucharistic celebration, where the importance

of the occasion is beautifully reflected in the day's second reading (1 Thess 3: 12 - 4: 2). St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians in the context of the imminent Parousia, prays that 'the Lord make them increase and abound in love for one another and for all.' We are also reminded thereby to extend our love for one another.

6. The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India takes this occasion to thank you for your magnanimity and generosity. We wish that God 'who has begun the good work in you will bring it completion at the day of Jesus Christ' (Phil 1: 6), whose first coming we are preparing to celebrate, and whose second coming we await in unceasing hope.

May Our Blessed Virgin Mary, the Star of the New Evangelization, and Saint Joseph, the Patron of the Universal Church, intercede for us.

CCBI General Secretariat

November 1, 2021, Solemnity of All Saints.

+ Filipe Neri Ferrão

President, CCBI

Archbishop of Goa and Daman

+ George Antonysamy

Vice President, CCBI

Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore

+ Anil Joseph Thomas Couto

Secretary General, CCBI

Archbishop of Delhi

It is recommended that this Circular be read and its contents explained on *Communio* Sunday (November 28, 2021) in all the parishes, religious communities and institutions of the 132 dioceses of the Latin Catholic Church in India.



FIVE WAYS TO CELEBRATE COMMUNIO SUNDAY

1. Pray: Celebrate Holy Mass for the missionaries in India and pray for our missions and missionaries. Add special prayers of the faithful. Encourage every family to pray, at least today, for our missionaries.

2. Educate: Read the Communio Sunday Circular to the faithful or explain its contents. Make your congregation aware about the missionary activities of the Latin Church in India. Educate your faithful about what is happening in mission dioceses.

3. Solidarity: Express solidarity with our brothers and sisters where the Church is new, young and poor. Build a culture of sharing and take a special offering to support and assist our missionaries. Encourage everyone to contribute as all our contributions, big or small, would be of great help for the missionary work of the Church in India.

4. Encourage: Encourage missionary vocations and inspire our faithful to become missionary disciples. We believe that every

baptized Christian is a missionary. Motivate our faithful to participate in the mission of the Church, wherever they live.

5. Celebrate: Celebrate Communion Sunday in parishes with various events, like meetings, missionary shows, exhibitions, competitions, etc. Invite some missionaries and listen to their witnesses. Honour families or parents who gave their members or children for the missionary work of the Church as priests, religious or and lay missionaries.

Homiletical Notes

During the Homily on Communion Sunday, the contents of the Communion Sunday Circular, especially the three objectives of Communion, are to be explained to the faithful, in order to: (i) build a culture of sharing so as to express solidarity with our needy brothers and sisters in the country; (ii) encourage our faithful to pray and help the missions and the missionaries and to promote missionary vocations, and (iii) inspire our lay faithful to work in mission areas as lay missionaries.

First Sunday of Advent

First Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

Gospel: Luke 21:25-28-34-36]

Theme: 'To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul'

(cf. Ps 25, today's Responsorial Psalm)

During Advent we lift up our souls to the Lord at three levels: (a) in thanksgiving and gladness at His first coming as Emmanuel – God with us; (b) in hope and preparedness at His second coming as the Son of Man on the clouds; and (c) in compassion and love, as we encounter Him everyday amidst us in the Word of God, in the Sacraments and in all our brothers and sisters.

The Book of Jeremiah records the tidings of doom and hope. In today's First Reading Jeremiah gives us a message of hope that



God will fulfil His promise. In justice God sent the people of Israel in exile, and now, in mercy He redeems them. In the fulfilment of the promise, God's justice becomes God's tender love and mercy. Jerusalem gets a new name – 'The Lord Our Justice.' The justice of the kings had failed them. Now, God's justice liberates them.

In the Second Reading, St. Paul, writing to the Church at Thessalonica, which eagerly awaited the Parousia (the Second Coming), blesses them that God may 'make them increase and abound in love for one another and for all.' And this love has 'to strengthen their hearts.' When love abounds in God, it is bound to multiply; such love gives strength to the weary hearts.

The Gospel Reading has an apocalyptic overtone as it describes the transformation in the celestial bodies at the advent of the Son of Man. The second part of the gospel is an exhortation to the hearers not to be drowsy from 'dissipation, drunkenness and anxieties of daily life.' Inviting his audience 'to be vigilant,' Jesus exhorts them to pray.

Hence, today, we lift up our souls to the Lord, awaiting his tender love and mercy, abounding in fraternal love, and in vigilance and prayer. The soul that lifts itself to the Lord turns towards others in love here and now. As we lift up our souls and receive the gifts from God, let us share the same with one another.

Prayers of the Faithful

Celebrant: On this Communion Sunday, “we cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard!” We remember Jesus’ call to go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel. We ask God’s blessings that, through our self-giving and speaking about our faith, the “Good News” of Jesus may be proclaimed to all nations and peoples.

Lector: For an increase in our own missionary spirit, that we may be fervent in our faith and in experiencing the power of God’s love, for we cannot help but proclaim and share with the entire world what we have seen and heard. For an increase in missionary charity, that our spiritual and financial sacrifices may help the message and the love of our Lord to be made known to the ends of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Lector: For the Holy Father, Pope Francis, the first missionary of the Church, and for all missionaries and Church leaders, that God may give them the wisdom and courage they need as they lead the Church during this pandemic; watch over them and keep them faithful to their vocation; teach them to recognize and interpret the signs of the times; strengthen them with the gifts of the Spirit and help them to serve the people entrusted to their care, especially the poor and the lowly. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Lector: For every sick person to be healed and for the storm of the pandemic to subside, that we may learn never to leave anyone alone when they are facing the onslaught of evil, and that care be guaranteed for everyone, particularly in the poorest countries. For those who are ill or who live in spiritual loneliness, especially as they recover from the pandemic, that they may unite their sufferings with the Crucified Christ for the redemption of the world. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.



Lector: For the leaders of the nations, that they may be committed to justice for all peoples and dedicated to building a world in peace. We surrender to God our world which is bruised with war, violence, injustice, economic problems, unemployment and poverty; we ask that our world may be healed and that our hearts and minds be strengthened in hope. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Lector: For all the departed souls, especially of the missionaries who laid their lives for the mission of the Church and for the deceased persons who do not have others to remember them; for all members of our families who have departed from us and who gifted us with their gentle care, wisdom and support. We ask that the Lord may pardon their sins and give them eternal rest. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: God our Father, You have blessed us with the gift of faith. Increase our faith and give us the courage to speak about it and share it to the ends of the earth as we answer our baptismal call to take part in the worldwide mission of Jesus. We ask this through Your Son, Jesus, Redeemer of the World, who lives and reigns with You for ever and ever.

All: Amen

Parish Announcements

In the Week before Communio Sunday: Next Sunday we will celebrate Communio Sunday. The Church in India invites all of us to support mission dioceses, where priests, religious and lay leaders serve the most vulnerable communities. Please keep in your prayers the appeal of the Church in India for the missions and be generous in coming Sunday's collection for Communio.

On Communio Sunday: Today is Communio Sunday. We celebrate this day by remembering our baptismal call to bring the Gospel to all. The collection taken today for the Communio supports the work and witness of the mission dioceses in our country, as it provides for priests, religious and lay leaders who offer the Lord's mercy and concrete help to the most vulnerable communities in the missions. Thank you for your generosity.

In the Week after Communio Sunday: Thank you for your generous response to the collection for the Communio last week on Communio Sunday. Our parish raised an amount of _____ (insert amount). You may stay connected the year round to the Church's missions, continuing the commitment of Communio Sunday by networking with the Communio Secretariat.





Communio

Assist Communio to help our Missionaries



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