

PRAYER | **SOLIDARITY** | MISSION

MARCH 2023

'WE  
NEED TO  
**LISTEN**  
TO JESUS'

POPE FRANCIS

**A CCBI**  
INITIATIVE TO ASSIST  
THE CHURCH IN RURAL INDIA

**+** **communio**

# Telling the Story of Jesus in Our Context

## **His Eminence Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle** Pro-Prefect, Dicastery for Evangelization



*Inaugural talk of His Eminence Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle  
at the 34th Plenary Assembly of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India  
on 24 January 2023, Bangalore, India*

Human life is unimaginable without stories. Our cultures in Asia rest on epics, on stories and storytelling. Life has a structure, which is narrative. And if life has a narrative structure, why would mission not have the same? For mission is our life!

Firstly, good stories are based on human experience. While the story of someone who has heard about something could be worth listening to, the story of someone who was there during the event is more credible. When we tell the story of Jesus, one question that we need to ask ourselves is, "Is this based on our experience? How have I experienced Jesus?"

The second point is that stories reveal personal identity. If I tell my story, I also tell the story of my time or historical moment. It is always the person and his or her time that are contained in the story. No story of a person can be complete without the story of other persons, events and contexts. When we tell our stories of Jesus, we will be revealing, who we are. We will be revealing our times and how Jesus has shaped our identity in our times.

Thirdly, stories are dynamic and are open to retelling. There are many different ways of telling the same story. In fact, they say that we do not tell the same story twice in the same manner. Storytelling is influenced by the changes in our experience. When your context changes you see a past experience in a new light, opening new meaning. And so the story of Jesus and our understanding of that story can be retold a countless number of times. Our present context and experiences may bring new insights into the story of Jesus. Conversely the story of Jesus shed light on our changing contexts.



## Telling the Story of Jesus in Our Context



Fourth, stories form communities. The story of Jesus is at the heart of a community, a community of his brothers and sisters. We ask ourselves how much of the story of Jesus binds our Christian community. Do we allow the power of the story of Jesus, as we tell it over and over again to bind us as one community? What narrative provides the foundation of our community. We hope it is the story of Jesus. That is why the Eucharistic narrative, where we recall how Jesus turned the night of betrayal into a night of the gift of self, needs to be recounted daily and regularly to form a community that can transform bitter nights of betrayal in our lives and society into the gift of self.

Finally, stories can be suppressed, Jesus himself, who was the great storyteller of God's Kingdom was silenced by those who could not stand his story of God's reign. But God the father picked up the story. Jesus risen from the dead and the new story begins for humanity. let us tell the story of Jesus again and again in the context of India.



# The Story of Jesus: *Told and Retold*

## **A GLANCE THROUGH THE STATEMENT OF THE CCBI 34TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY**



Since centuries, millions have been attracted to Jesus Christ and His salvific message and have become His followers. And it is through them that the story of Jesus is told and retold. This year, during the 34th Plenary Assembly, members of the CCBI reflected on the theme 'Telling the Story of Jesus in our Context: The Synodal Way.'

The bonds of communion between Church members and their zeal to bear witness are fostered, when the story of Christ and the Gospel is shared in Basic Ecclesial Communities, parishes, and families. The faith life is nourished and sustained.

But in present times, where the faith life of prayer, mission and solidarity are threatened by the likes of consumeristic lifestyles, fear due to growing hate on Christians in several States, and discrimination and marginalization, the story of Jesus needs to be told even more authentically and courageously. It is the need of the hour to continue to focus on catechising families, strengthening bonds in communities and expressing solidarity with those in need.

This is made possible through Christ, the Head of the Church. This is made possible through the body of the Church, priests, religious and lay members. Standing firm on the teachings of Christ and following the Synodal Way, in the midst of ups and downs, lights and shadows, successes and struggles, we the Church must continue to bear witness to the story of love, justice and human fraternity, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

As the Holy Father exhorts us through his Lenten message, 'may we, during this season of Lent, fully accept the invite to ascend high into the company of Jesus. May we open our hearts to listen to Him by frequenting the Sacrament of Mass and studying the Scriptures daily. And may we open ourselves to hearing His voice through those around us, especially the needy; which is indispensable in the method and style of a synodal Church.'

I pray my brothers and sisters, may the Holy Spirit empower you this Lent to be strengthened in your faith, courage and imitation to tell, retell and live the story of the Gospel.

**Rev. Fr. Vignan Das**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, COMMUNIO



# TESTIMONY...

## For I have plans for you, says the Lord - Jeremiah 29:11



Being an average student in school to not being regular to church and having no friends I started struggling with my life and relationships at a very early age. There were sad and bad days but my Lord has given me enough reasons to smile each day.

The beautiful journey of Knowing Jesus started in the year 2018 at a Youth Event named "Magis" organized by the Society of Jesus at Loyola College, Chennai. I remember that I always used to introspect, what special talents God has actually bestowed upon me? I never was a good singer nor a dancer or even an artist, well finally I got the answer that **LEADERSHIP is one of the rarest and the greatest qualities and the Lord has truly bestowed it upon me and gave a purpose to my life.**



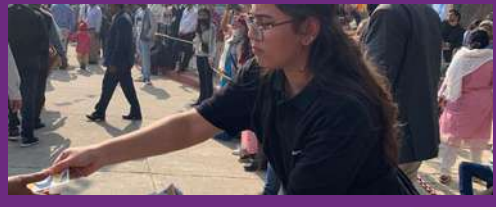
After this event I slowly and gradually started participating in Church & Youth Activities and taking small initiatives at my local place. My leadership skills and abilities was first identified by my then Diocesan Youth Director Fr. Vijay Baretto who asked me to go for ICYM Regional Elections. At the regional elections I was unanimously elected as the Regional President and also appointed to represent our region at the National level in turn being a part of the National Executive Committee, ICYM all by God's grace.

I aligned my mission & vision for the youth ministry to the motto of Indian Catholic Youth Movement (ICYM) which is To Lead, To Serve and To Shine. There were so many obstacles and difficulties in my journey of leading & serving the Youth Ministry, but I always focused and meditated on the very bible verse which says **"No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it."** (1 Corinthians 10:13)

The year 2020 has brought a major change in our lives as the whole world was hit by the Pandemic and in the beginning, it was difficult to adapt. But slowly and gradually the threat had become an opportunity for me and my team wherein we possibly reached out to many young people and spread the Lord's word and work through our various initiatives with the help of social media. The three C's that helped me in this journey was Commitment, Creativity and Continuity.



# TESTIMONY...



I ended my term proudly in the year 2022 at the age of 23 but my responsibilities towards the youth ministry have not yet ended. The only mission I have is to do small things with great love and if through by my efforts I can inspire and influence few youths to come back to church in a way fulfilling my vision to see Youth Leading the Church as in words of His Holiness Pope Francis that *“Young People Are Now and the Future of the Church.”*

Currently I'm rendering my services as a Volunteer for Communio and as the Project Manager of G India which is an environmental protection initiative/project by The Indian Catholic Youth Movement (ICYM). The project which focuses on three areas: (i) Plantation, (iii) Conservation, and (iii) Awareness inspired the encyclical letter *Laudato Si (“Praised Be”)* by His Holiness Pope Francis.

I really would like to take a moment and thank all the people who've been part of this beautiful journey. Let us all grow and glow in the Love of Christ.

**Ms. Divya Sarkar**

Volunteer for Communio, CCBI  
Project Manager of G India



## In Giving we Receive!

Collaborate and join the missionary works of the Church in India by your generous contribution.



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# COMMUNIO



## **ICYM DECIDES TO NETWORK WITH AND TO PROMOTE COMMUNIO, THROUGH THEIR DIOCESAN AND REGIONAL UNITS THROUGHOUT INDIA.**

The National Youth Leaders Training Programme was held at Don Bosco Technical Institute, Okhla, New Delhi from 3rd to 5th March 2023. 60 Youth leaders from 11 Regions of the CCBI attended the three-day training programme.

At the inaugural Holy Mass, Archbishop Anil Couto, Secretary General, CCBI and the Archbishop of Delhi, exhorted the leaders to commit themselves to serve the society and the Church with an unconditional spirit. He highlighted the divine wisdom, which is operating in each individual, and requested the young leaders to follow the divine wisdom which comes from the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Chetan Machado, Executive Secretary, CCBI Commission for Youth said, that “the training programme was conducted in an atmosphere of spiritual discernment which was unfolded through Holy Mass, Eucharistic adoration, way of the cross, meditation and orientation talks.” He also said, “ICYM has decided to network with and to promote Communio throughout India.”



# ONGOING PROJECT

## CONSTRUCTION OF ST. JOHN PARISH CHURCH

Khawzawl | Diocese of Aizawl, Mizoram

Khawzawl parish is situated in rural area and the people are not well off like town parishes. **The parishioners have been contributing every month for the construction of the church Fund** and the work is going on but very slow due to lack of finance.



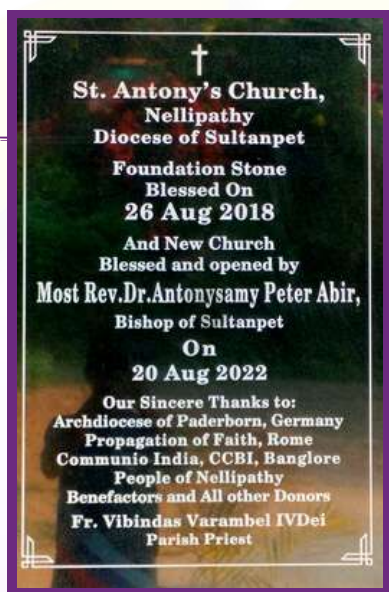
# COMPLETED PROJECT

## CONSTRUCTION ST. ANTONY'S CHURCH, NELLIPATHY

With God's Grace, hard work of the priest, parishioners and contribution of the various benefactors and Communio, we have completed the construction work. The beautiful church was blessed and inaugurated by our Bishop Most Rev. Dr. Antonysamy Peter Abir.

Yours in Christ

Fr. Jabamalai Lorance L  
Communio Director,  
Diocese of Sultanpet.



<https://linktr.ee/communioIndia>



Communio   
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