



CRI MANIPUR

Poumai Colony, Chingmeirong – PO, Heingang - PS,
Imphal East – 795010

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Date: Tuesday, 03 February 2026

Dear Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters of CRI Manipur,

Greetings of peace and joy to you all as we celebrate *The World Day of Consecrated Life* today!

The Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life sent a letter reaching out to consecrated men and women “in every part of the world, in the places where you live and carry out your mission”.

Signed by the Prefect, Sr. Simona Brambilla; Pro-Prefect, Cardinal Ángel F. Card. Artime; and Secretary of the Dicastery, Sr. Tiziana Merletti, the message begins by expressing their gratitude for fidelity to the Gospel and the gift of consecrated life that women and men have given. “A life sometimes marked by trials, but always lived as a sign of hope”, as the letter describes.

In his message, the Holy Father reflects on charism, governance, and communion as essential pillars of consecrated and apostolic life. He reminds religious that their charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit given “to revive [the Church’s] life and energize her mission,” providing each Institute with a clear and recognizable identity. In a rapidly changing world, he insists that “today more than ever, it is necessary to know who we are if we want to dialogue authentically with society.” Fidelity to the charism does not mean preserving it statically, but allowing it to become “a vital force that flows creatively and freely,” constantly re-expressed in dialogue with new social and cultural contexts, so that it may be handed on as a living legacy to future generations.

The Holy Father further emphasizes that authentic governance must be rooted in communion and service. Authority, he says, is an ecclesial ministry meant to guide religious toward “a conscious, free and responsible fidelity in following Christ,” with community discernment as the privileged space for shared decision-making. He encourages Institutes not to fear renewal, noting that “the collective search for your own style in the exercise of authority opens up paths” that strengthen participation and mission. Finally, he calls religious to deepen communion within their spiritual families, recalling that “unity in baptismal dignity and the diversity of vocations are not opposed to one another.” Entrusting this journey to Mary, Star of the Morning, he reassures all that the Lord continues to surprise, renew, and make his Church young in hope.

Let me share with you some thoughts about the beginning of Christian faith in Manipur, where we live and work. Before the Church in Manipur found her visible strength, she was first carried in silence—in the prayers of missionaries, in the courage of catechists, and in the openness of hearts longing for truth. The arrival of the Gospel in this land in 1894 through William Pettigrew (1869–1943) was a Scottish Christian missionary and is widely regarded as the pioneer of modern Christianity in Manipur, especially among the Tangkhul Naga people, reminds us that God’s Kingdom often begins humbly, almost unnoticed. What was sown then was not merely a new belief system, but a seed of hope that would one day grow into a living community of faith. The early years were marked by resistance and hardship, yet the Word found soil where it was least expected, teaching us that grace works patiently and persistently, beyond human calculations.



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As the years unfolded, the Catholic Church slowly took root, especially after independence, through the devoted presence of priests and religious who dared to believe that Manipur was part of God’s dream for the Church. Many Congregations that arrived in the mid-twentieth century, became instruments in the hands of the Spirit, making the Gospel tangible through education, youth accompaniment, hostels and boardings, village visits, dispensaries, and parish life. These were not merely institutions; they were second homes where young lives were shaped, dignity was restored, and faith was quietly nurtured. The formation of parishes and mission stations in villages and hills reminds us that the Church grows when she walks with the people, listens to their stories, and breaks the Word in their language and culture. Indeed, many of our early missionaries truly carried, “the smell of the sheep.”

A particularly grace-filled milestone was the emergence of local vocations. When sons and daughters of this soil responded to the Lord’s call, the Church in Manipur began to speak with her own voice. This was a sign that the Gospel had moved from being received to being owned, from being taught to being lived. The faith was no longer something brought from outside, but something beating from within. These vocations continue to remind us religious today that our mission is fulfilled not when we are remembered, but when others are empowered to carry the flame forward.

Long before formal structures were fully established, the Church in Manipur was already becoming a home of compassion and reconciliation. In a land marked by complexity and suffering, the Church learned to stand with the poor, educate the young, heal wounds, and build bridges. This identity, shaped more by fidelity than by visibility, invites us to rediscover the heart of our consecration: to be signs of God’s nearness, even when the work is slow and the fruits unseen.

As we look back on these milestones, we are not merely remembering history; we are discerning a call. The same Spirit who guided the Church then continues to breathe today, inviting us to renewed trust. Like those who walked before us, we too are called to sow—often in silence, often with uncertainty—believing that God will give the growth. May this remembrance deepen our gratitude, renew our commitment, and help us walk this month with humble faith, rooted hope, and generous love, for the Church and people of Manipur.

Information

- Feb 02 - *The World Day of Consecrated Life* (Candle procession before the mass)
- Feb 03 - Blessing of the throat on the feast day of St Blaise
- Feb 06 - Priestly Ordination Anniversary of Archbishop Emeritus Dominic Lumon
- Feb 11 - World Day of the Sick, Recollection for Clergy at 5.30 pm
- Feb 18 - Ash Wednesday

With fraternal regards,
Yours sincerely in Jesus Christ our master and teacher,


Fr. Benny James SDB
President, CRI Manipur