

Rt. Rev. JOHN KATTRUKUDIYIL, D.D.
Bishop of Itanagar



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Itanagar, 30 June, 2009

Your Lordship,

Greetings from the Diocese of Itanagar!

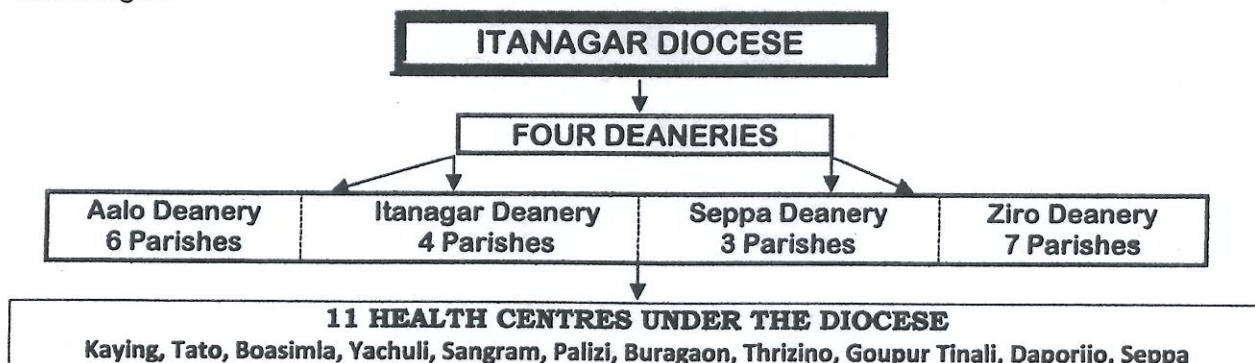
I am writing this letter to seek your permission to **preach in some of your parishes in summer 2010**, to raise funds for our various apostolic accomplishments in the Diocese of Itanagar.

1. Historical data of the Diocese of Itanagar

The territory of the Diocese of Itanagar falls in the State of Arunachal Pradesh. The Indian Government did not want the people of this state that shares a common border with Christians. So it made a rule that prohibited Christian missionaries from entering this state to preach the Gospel. However, the people of Itanagar and the surrounding areas were attracted to Christianity. They left their hills in large numbers and came down to visit the churches in the neighbouring state of Assam. There they were baptized. After baptism they returned to their hills and preached the Gospel to the other members of their tribes. Inspired by the preaching of these new Christians more and more people visited the churches in Assam and were converted to Christianity. When their number increased, the Christians demanded from the government that the missionaries be allowed to enter their state. Thus about ten years ago the first missionaries began to reside in Itanagar. And now Arunachal Pradesh, which was once a forbidden Land for the missionaries has two dioceses. The Diocese of Itanagar in western Arunachal Pradesh has close to 100,000 Catholics. Most of the Catholics were baptized by missionaries who were able to make only occasional visits to this hilly region. Quite a number were baptized by lay catechists. Sustained pastoral work through resident missionaries could be initiated only in the last ten years. In spite of that the communities showed sufficient vitality and Rome decided to erect these dioceses. Now it is the task of the Bishop and his team to organize the pastoral work in this area that is considered the most promising mission field in Asia today.

2. Organizational Information

Taking into consideration the vast area under Itanagar Diocese and the great distance involved between Diocesan Head Quarters and the Parish Centres, the Bishop decided to divide the diocese into 4 Deaneries for effective administration and coordination. Thus Itanagar, Seppa, Ziro and Aalo deaneries we emerged.



At present 68 Priests, 8 Brothers and 112 Sisters are working in 20 Parishes, 15 Substations and 26 Convents. Evangelization, Catechesis, Education, Medical services including caring for the ailing, aged and orphans and other developmental activities are the various apostolate carried out under the

Diocese. The normal structure of a mission centre consist of a presbytery, the Parish Church, a Convent, a boarding each for boys and girls, a school and a dispensary.

2. PRESENT SITUATION OF THE PEOPLE

Economically, the people are poor. Agriculture is the main source of their livelihood. In their agricultural practices, they are entirely dependent on the rain. People have very hard times as it is not a steady source of income.

Educationally, they are very backward. Literacy rate is very low. Government educational institutions exist only on papers. Having lived in a culture of day-to-day subsistence, people cannot reconcile with the years of education that make them wait before they can earn something. It will take a few years to get literacy rate rise to a satisfactory level.

Health care facilities are very meager. Even the existing facilities do not function properly. People are often badly affected by all types of diseases. Malaria, Tuberculosis, Dysentery, Diarrhea, Cholera, Anemia and respiratory diseases are some of the most prevalent of the disease here. Child mortality due to these diseases, lack of immunization and malnutrition are other health hazards. The doctors and nurses refuse to stay in the interior primary health centres in rural areas due to lack of facilities. In this context, the Catholic Church has established rural health centres run by a trained Religious Sisters.

3. CHURCH ACTIVITIES

A. Catechesis: Faith Formation is the focus of the Diocese. We organize regular faith related programmes and functions to enliven the faith of the people. The villages being so many and far flung, it is a very difficult task for priests to visit the catholic communities often. It is here that the Sisters and catechists assist us by their constant presence among the people preserving and strengthening the faith of the flock by being with them and living with them.

b. Education: Diocese caters to the Educational requirements of the area through a net work of 25 schools. These schools are situated mostly in rural areas and small townships.

C. Health care: Health care is another area of vital importance in our ministry. Besides administering medicines to the sick that flock to our dispensary, the Sisters and the health workers tour the villages regularly monitoring the health of the people. Of all the activities carried out by us, this is the most revealing of our care for the people.

4. PRESENT NEED

We need Health Centres to provide **Health care** to the people especially in remote areas. Death tolls are ever on the increase due to lack of medical care especially in the rural areas. We need to establish more health centres and make our services available for the poor people who are scattered in distant hills. The existing health centres too has to be provided with more facilities. There are trained Religious women to take care of the health centres.

5. OUR REQUEST

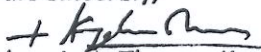
Taking into consideration about the poor health conditions of the people of these hills we request your assistance for establishing three Primary Health Centres at Koloriang, Tuting and Siyum. The project includes the construction of a small building with four rooms to admit and treat patients for sicknesses like Malaria, Tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases which are rampant in the state. We are having few health centres already functioning very well in rural areas. Each structure would cost about US\$ 25,000. I do hope to realize these requirements with your kind cooperation.

6. OUR MISSION COORDINATOR

I have a mission coordinator in the United States. He is Fr. Joy Alookaran. Please find his address given below. He will get in touch with your office to coordinate our mission preaching.

Thanking you and with prayerful wishes,

Yours Sincerely,


Bishop John Thomas Kattrukudiyil
Bishop of Itanagar Diocese.

Address of the mission coordinator

Rev.Fr. Joy Alookaran
Church of St. Sebastian
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