

# FOUNDATION DAY

A SHORT MESSAGE OF MAJOR SUPERIOR



## BORN OF THE IMMACULATE HEART

**Dear Brothers,**

Before writing these lines, I read the Telegraph today covering extensively the sad demise of Fr. Stan Samy SJ under custody and many upright voices praising his courageous and prophetic stance for the welfare of the tribals of Jharkhand, braving unjust and intimidating attempts from the state to stifle his voice. He will ever remain for us an icon of audacious and holy missionary outreach to the marginalized, smelling the sheep in compassionate love.

On July 16 we will celebrate the 171st anniversary of the foundation of our Congregation. Our Founder St. Anthony Mary Claret attributes the origin of our congregation to the immaculate Heart of Mary, a heart which could hold God, humans and the creation together in one embrace of loving service in her “Amen” of total obedience. As sons of her heart, we all share in her supreme quality of remaining connected to the realities around us in our hearts in true godliness and righteousness. Our being as missionaries itself is a reflection of divine passion for the well-being of humans in particular the marginalized and the outcast and the entire creation. It is definitely sharing in the vocation of our Mother, which was manifested in her visit in haste to the hill country to help her struggling cousin Elizabeth, soon after receiving her call to be the mother of Jesus. Today, the entire humanity stands helpless and hopeless due to the devastating effect of COVID-19 on our health, economy, education and so on. People are very fearful of the upcoming third wave. Our democratic rights and freedom as Indians guaranteed by our constitution are denied and trampled down upon.

What does God expect of us at this time and in our context? God has given us a missionary mother who accompanies us like a gentle breeze in difficult times strengthening our failing wills and energizing our weak hearts to embrace the suffering humanity and the creation in compassionate love. In one of his last instructions to the congregation our Founder has compared the missionary sons to her many arms who would embrace both the good so that they may persevere in grace and the bad that they may be converted (Cf. Auto. P. 153).



This brings to our mind the image of goddess Durga with many hands, but in our case, each hand is one of us and so we really feel blessed to be part of our Mother. The theme of the ensuing general chapter is "To be Rooted and Audacious". Since our congregation has originated from the Immaculate Heart, we need to be rooted in it which will transform us as audacious missionaries like Fr. Stan Samy.

In the delegation level gathering we had in preparation for the general chapter, it was remarked by a lay man that the Claretians do not promote piety to the Heart of Mary. It should be an eye opener to all of us. We need to introspect how deep is our filial love for our Mother and how consciously we work as her missionary sons and servants. Our missions will bear a lot of fruits if we consciously seek her loving presence close to us. For our Founder she was a constant presence along with Jesus, a mighty power by which he was able to achieve marvelous accomplishments in the mission field. While referring to degradation of Christian values and social ethos in his time he says, "Ah, my Mother, I cannot still my voice on such occasions. No, I shall not be silent, even if I knew it meant that I should be cut to pieces. I shall shout, cry out, lift up my voice to heaven and earth to remedy so great an evil. I shall not be silent, and when my voice is hoarse or mute from all my crying, I shall lift up my hands to heaven, make my hair stand on end, and stamp my feet upon the ground to make up for my lack of speech" (Aut. 159). This missionary restlessness expressed by our founder is what we all should inherit from him to be effective in our apostolate which we find in the life and death of Fr. Stan Samy. If we are rooted in the heart of our Mummy, we will all be like our Founder in every respect. May our Mother help each of us to grow in zeal and total commitment.



"He desires mightily and strives by all means possible to set the whole world on fire with God's love."

## Happy Foundation Day!

Your brother  
Fr. V. Lawrence, CMF  
(Major Superior)

