

**ARCHDIOCESE OF IMPHAL - INDIA**  
**(Message for the 2021 Mission appeal)**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, fraternal greeting from + Dominic Lumon, Archbishop of Imphal, India. I take this opportunity to thank Most Rev. Ronald W Gainer, the bishop of Harrisburg diocese for inviting our mission diocese to participate in the 2021 Missionary Cooperative Plan. As in the past years I am not able to send my missionary priests to visit your parish for this important mission appeal due to covid travel restrictions. Please consider this letter as my personal appeal.

We are a mission diocese located on the Indo-Myanmar border. It has a population of over 3.2 million from 34 Mongolian tribes. Each tribe has its own dialect, culture, music and dance. They are basically simple farmers, produce just enough things from the sloppy terranes for their sustenance. With these meager incomes they hardly have any saving for the education of their children, basic health care and for other amenities needed for a decent living.

Evangelization work in the diocese started in 1952 by Italian missionaries and the first baptism was conducted in a village called Hundung near Myanmar border. On later stage missionaries from South India joined the missionary work. As of now we have nearly 100,000 Catholics in 45 parishes and 5 mission centers. **Our diocese suffered the worst persecution and challenges between 1990 -2001 period when six of our young missionaries were murdered by anti-Christian organizations.** It was a major setback for the missionary movements, yet it did not discourage the morale of our missionaries in their zeal for spreading the message of the gospel. Today the church is growing and almost 2000 new members are added to the Church every year. **As the saying goes, the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church and Christianity grew up with persecutions and challenges. My diocese is an example for that.**

I am very proud to say that our diocese is also blessed with several local vocations to priesthood and religious life. In a total of 167 priests, 112 are tribal priests and there are already 245 local sisters from my diocese belonging to 10 different religious groups. They are the products of our pioneer missionaries who labored tirelessly for the growth of the Church against all challenges. Every year we have five to six priestly ordinations. As a result, each year we open one or two new parishes in our diocese.

Even though our diocese made huge progress in evangelization work, we are not financially self-sufficient and as such we are not in a position to provide the parishes with the much-needed infrastructure facilities. In 2014 we had opened a new parish in Kamjong village bordering Myanmar. Unfortunately, due to shortage of fund until now, we were not able to build a small Church for this growing community.

Though our people are generally poor, they are very hardworking and generous in providing locally available materials like boulders, stone chips and labor for the construction. When it comes to hard cash, they are very helpless.

As you know when my people come for Sunday masses, they bring items like, pumpkins, potatoes, squash, eggs, and chickens etc. as Sunday offerings for the church. Therefore, we totally depend on the generosity of our friends and benefactors when it comes to providing financial help for the much-needed facilities in parishes we open.

Our participation in 2021 Missionary Cooperative plan will be able to realize the dream of the newly formed parish community of Kamjong village. Temporarily they gather for Sunday worship in a small shed which is in a very bad shape and needed to be replaced with a permanent structure. Therefore, we deeply appreciate your generous donation and prayers for the construction of a small church for the Catholic Community of Kamjong village in the archdiocese of Imphal.

Your participation in our mission work reminds us that we are one with the universal Church and every baptized person is a missionary. As such your participation is very critical for the missionary work in our diocese and elsewhere in the world.

In the Scripture we read that St. Paul asked the Gentile Churches to take up a collection to support the Church in Jerusalem. Now I am asking you to reach out to your brothers and sisters who are living over 8000 miles away from you in the archdiocese of Imphal. I am confident that your generous support and prayers can make a huge difference in the missionary efforts of our diocese.

Once again, I offer you my sincere prayers and blessing upon each and everyone of your parish community.

With fraternal prayers and blessings,

Most Rev. Dominic Lumon, D.D.  
Archbishop of Imphal, India.

## Archdiocese of Imphal, India (Missionary Cooperative Plan – 2021)

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The Mission archdiocese of Imphal was erected in 1980 covering the entire state of Manipur, is located on the Indi-Myanmar border in the Northeast India. It has a population of over 3.2 million from 34 indigenous tribes of Mongolian origin. Each tribe has its own dialect, music and dance. 60% of the population is Hindus while 40% belong to number of Christian denominations. **The first Catholic community in Manipur was pioneered by Mr. Dominic Shomi from Hundung village near Indo-Myanmar border. He and 350 others were baptized and received into Catholic Church on Feb 11, 1952 by an Italian missionary Rev. A. Ravalico, SDB. Few years later Mr. Dominic Shomi was assassinated in 1967 by an anti-Catholic group for bearing witness to the true Church.** Thereafter, the Church in Manipur witnessed a phenomenal growth in terms of number and vocations to Priesthood and Religious life. As of 2001, the Catholic population has grown over to 100,000 in 45 parishes and 5 mission centers. **However, the Church in Manipur suffered its worst persecution when 6 (six) of our young missionary priests were murdered between 1990-2001 period by anti-Christians groups.** Despite these huge setbacks and challenges, evangelization work is moving forward with greater zeal and determination. Currently our diocese is blessed with 115 local priests and 350 Religious nuns from 34 tribes.

Taking advantage of the local vocations, we are opening one or two new parishes every year in remote areas of the diocese primarily to initiate evangelization work among non-Christians and foster faith among the existing Catholic communities. Our communities live in small houses perched on mountains and support themselves with the meager income they get from the most rudimentary form of farming called “Jhum” (slashing and burning of forest for cultivation).

Being a mission diocese, we are not able to generate the much-needed fund to provide infrastructure in parishes that are opened every year. Though our tribal communities are poor, they are very hardworking and generous in providing locally available building materials like boulders timber, stone chips and labor for construction works. Your participation in the 2021 Missionary Cooperative Plan will help our diocese to realize the dream of this newly formed catholic community in Kamjong village. Temporarily they gather for Sunday worship in a small shed which needs to be replaced with a permanent church building. Therefore, we kindly request you to participate in this small project by your generous support and prayers. Please also keep our diocese and missionaries in your valuable prayers. You are assured of our love and prayers.



(St. Peter's Catholic Church, Kamjong)

(St. Joseph's Church, Chingjaroi Khunou)

ARCHDIOCESE OF IMPHAL- VIDEO LINK

<https://youtu.be/hA3Wo7m3n5o>