



## **PRESIDENT’S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” John 1.14 NIV

Dear Beloved members of the large family of NCCI,

There cannot be a more relevant Bible verse for Christmas this year than John 1.14, where our great yearning is met by the assurance of the Word of God. The reason is obvious. We live in a world torn apart by the attack of the great pandemic. COVID-19 is not just a serious health hazard only. It is a plague which has affected our courage, mental peace, family life, economy, spiritual life, educational system, job security and future planning in all areas of life. We are suffering for almost 10 months now because of the devastating pandemic taking away the lives of many and leaving many disabled. The whole world is running around looking for the discovery of vaccine as well as for other ways of escaping from the pandemic. If someone who has the power and courage can come and live with us to heal us, comfort us and restore us, that is what we require urgently. The word of God says, that in the birth of Jesus, that is accomplished fully. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He is very much present among us as Immanuel, “God with us.”

**I am happy to note that the NCCI secretariat took up the challenges of COVID-19** and organized many programmes and activities through Webinars, Zoom meetings and other virtual techniques. Churches accompanying Distressed Migrants to Life, Church and Women during COVID-19, Six Webinars of “We the people:”, deliberation on our Constitution, Pastoral Care During COVID-19, Sustainable Environment, Affirming Human Rights and intercepting Human

Trafficking, 70 years of Dalit Discrimination, Interfaith Dialogue for gender equity, and COVID-19 and LGBTQI people are some of them. I congratulate the secretariat for their commendable work. It is encouraging to see that churches are getting used to the virtual techniques and participating in all church related activities through them.



**10<sup>th</sup> December is Human Rights Day.** It endorses the justice principle that all human beings regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, have equal status and rights. 2020 theme of Human Rights Day observance is, “Recover Better - Stand Up for Human Rights”. This is an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of human rights in healing and re-building the world which is torn apart by the attack of COVID-19. The UN has declared 2021 as the “International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development”.

**In spite of the limitations of COVID-19, we will observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** from the 18th to the 25th January 2021. This year’s material has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grand champ in Switzerland. The theme is, “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit” (John 15:1-17). The Grand champ sisters are inviting churches across the world to enter into their tradition of prayer and silence. I request all NCCI churches to cooperate with other denominations in their locality to organize ecumenical worship on all 8 days. We will observe Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> January as NCCI Sunday and support NCCI with our special offertory.

**This year Christmas is going to be much different** from the many Christmas seasons we have celebrated in the past. We have to give importance to the basics of Christmas and forego many elaborate celebrations. I have shared the following suggestions with my own Church, the Church of North India, and my Diocese, the CNI Diocese of Jabalpur:

- 1. Rediscover the real meaning of Christmas.** The basics of Christmas is about celebrating the advent of Christ. It means ‘coming’ of the savior of the world. His coming brought us hope, peace and joy. No Corona virus can take away the hope, peace and joy of this great event. We have to reassure ourselves that God in Jesus has forgiven our sins and redeemed us.
- 2. Observe Christmas in a simple way.** Spend the Christmas evening with your family and have a simple meal sitting around lighted candle. Do not spend more than you require. Let the decorations and trees in your churches be modest.



**3. Share Christmas joy with those who cannot afford.** Let us focus our attention on the less privileged people around us. Let us share food packets and clothes with them in this cold season. The spirit of Christmas is also about love and serving. When we reach out to help others, it will reduce our pain and frustration and bring peace and joy in our heart. That kind of sacrifice is the true spirit of Christmas, and God truly honors such lives. May this Christmas make a difference in our life!

**Year 2020 has been a year that we do not want to remember again** because of the trauma through which all of us passed. Yet, we want to thank God for being with us while we walked through the valley of the shadow of death. The COVID-19 account may not be closed in our lives for some more months. We have to continue living with it taking care of others and ourselves. May God bless you with his accompaniment in all your life situations during the New Year.

**Wishing you a Blessed Christmas and a New Year of great Healing and Hope.**

The Most Rev. Dr. P. C. Singh  
President, NCCI

*2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2020*