



**FRATRES ORDINIS PRÆDICATORUM  
CURIA GENERALITIA**

Rome, 4 November, 2009  
Feast of St. Charles Borromeo

**To fr. Joseph Karukayil, Prior Provincial and all brothers of the Province of India,  
specially to those in Nagpur at St. Charles Seminary**

My dear brothers,

Greetings from Rome! I had a great desire to be present in Nagpur, India for the Golden Jubilee celebrations. But due to our regular November Plenary Session of the General Council, I cannot come personally. I have delegated Brother Prakash Lohale OP, Socius for Apostolic Life to represent me and the curia and excused him from the first week of our meetings. I am very thankful to Fr. Dominic Mendonca OP, Rector of St. Charles Seminary and his staff for inviting me. From the bottom of my heart I extend my congratulations to the Prior Provincial Joseph Karukayil and all the brethren of the Indian province.

It is a great joy for the Order to celebrate 50 years of Dominican presence in India. It is a time to pay tribute to our great missionaries who came all the way from Ireland to take the responsibility of running St. Charles Seminary in order to form future priests. These brothers started the mission of St. Dominic in the land of India with the specific apostolate of teaching and preaching the word of God. This was done with great zeal. The flame of truth which was lit by the missionaries for 50 years is now a great fire that illumines India today. Therefore we are grateful to God for sending these friars who have sown the seed of truth in this fertile land. And we are also grateful to our brothers from India who continue this same mission with the same great enthusiasm and zeal.

“It was in Nagpur where the Order was re-founded by the Province of Ireland. There is an interesting story told of how the Irish Dominicans landed there. One fine morning Rev. Fr. Michael Brown the then Master of the Order was looking at the atlas of the world and wondering how the Order has spread far and near. Suddenly his eyes fell on the Indian sub-continent and he felt a sense of regret that the Order is still not founded in that part of the world. Suddenly, as if on cue, Most Rt. Rev. Eugene D’Souza, then Archbishop of Nagpur, knocked on his door. The archbishop was looking for some English speaking Dominicans to run the diocesan seminary in Nagpur. Though a diocesan seminary, it was caring for the priestly formation of the seminarians from all of north India. Fr. Michael Brown took this as a clear sign from God, and decided to send the Irish Dominicans to India, That was how in 1959 the four Irish Dominicans landed in Nagpur to take charge of St. Charles’ Seminary and the formations of its seminarians. Initially the friars were busy with the formation of the seminarians but in 1967 a house of formation of the Order known as the House of St. Dominic was completed in Nagpur.

St. Charles' is a huge seminary boasting of over 300 students coming from over 42 dioceses in India, mostly north India, and religious societies and congregations. St. Charles has a good reputation among the church hierarchy thanks to the pioneering work of the Irish Dominicans a task being carried out by the Indian brethren today. The seminary remains one of the main apostolic activities of the Indian province." (Excerpt from "The Report of the Master's Visit to India" IDI )

As we celebrate the Golden Jubilee (1959 – 2009) of the arrival of our Irish brethren to St. Charles' Seminary, our hearts are filled with gratitude and joy for all the blessings you have received from God through the selfless service of our brethren from Ireland and the support of the Irish Province. We gratefully remember Most Rev. Michael Brown, the Master of the Order at the time, who responded positively to the invitation of Archbishop Eugene D'Souza of Nagpur. Fr. Reginald Harrington, the then Provincial of the Irish Province courageously made the decision to send the first group of brethren - Frs. Mannes Cussen, Ephraem McCarthy, Thomas Ryan, and Hugh Marquess - who generously took up the challenge to take charge of St. Charles' Seminary.

We also remember the other 21 brothers (Frs. Jerome Toner, Thomas McNerney, Kilian Dwyer, Cyprian Candon, Anthony Manly, Paul Bowe, Sean Cunningham, Simon Roche, Bede McGregor, Joseph Cambel, Pius MacGrath, Anthony Morris, Mathew Brown, Ephraem McCarthy, Noel Molloy, Louis Hughes, Maurice Fearon, Peter Kirke, David Tohill, Gearoid Manning, and Malachy O'Dwyer) who selflessly responded to the needs of the mission in India in working for the formation of the seminarians and building the Dominican Order in India over the years. We thank our Irish brothers who are still working in India viz. Frs. Noel Molloy, David Tohill and Malachy O'Dwyer. We appreciate and admire their sacrifice and service for the Church of India. Other of these great Dominicans continue to help us from Heaven in the spirit of our Holy Father St. Dominic.

We specially thank Fr. Pat Lucey OP, Prior Provincial and Fr. Maurice Fearon OP who are present among you today for this celebration. We joyfully acknowledge all that the Irish Dominicans are still doing for the Church in India and for your Province. May their zeal and enthusiasm inspire you to work selflessly in fulfilling the mission of the Order. They join you in thanking God who has filled you with so many blessings and gifts. Therefore we appreciate their presence and support for the Province of India.

We must not forget the first Dominican friar Nicholas of Pistoia who arrived in India 1291. The next name history gives us is that of Jordan of Severac of *Catelan* author of the book *MIRABILIA DESCRIPTA – THE WONDERS OF THE EAST*. We also remember gratefully the hundreds of Portuguese Dominicans who worked till 1835 when all religious communities were suppressed in Portuguese territories.

In today's materialistic and commercialized world there are many challenges for us as friars preachers. We have to see how our ministries and our apostolate can be more fruitful and effective. From the cultural point of view you have your roots in a very religious society enabling you to be ready to go to the frontiers, like the apostles. I am pleased to know that you have brothers now working as missionaries in South Africa, the Caribbean Islands, Italy and other parts of Europe. My hope is that soon you will begin your first mission in Zambia with the vicariate of South Africa. This will be an apt venture in honour of these golden jubilee celebrations. My predecessor Father Damian Byrne OP would often say we can measure the dynamism and goodness of a Province through the mission outreach it has.

I take this opportunity to wish each one of you, especially Fr. Dominic and all our brethren who are associated with the mission of St. Charles' Seminary, a very happy Feast of St. Charles Borromeo, the Patron of St. Charles' Seminary! May he intercede for you in your work and mission at St.Charles' Seminary.

May almighty God bless you all in St. Dominic and St. Catherine,

fr. Carlos A. Azpiroz Costa OP  
Master of the Order

*Prot. n. 46/09/921 PO*