



THY KINGDOM COME (Mt. 6:10)
DIOCESE OF CHANDA (CHANDRAPUR)

Phone : (07172) 240537, 241068 (P.)



Bishop's Home
Ballarpur P.O. - 442 701
Chandrapur Dist., M.S.
India.
E-mail : bishopchanda@gmail.com

Prot. No. 059/2026

Ephrem Nariculam
Bishop, Diocese of Chanda
E-mail : bishopephremnariculam@gmail.com
Mob. No. 9130702331 (Idea)
9423261891 (BSNL)

11/04/2026

PASTORAL LETTER
ON CREED
CHURCH IS ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC And APOSTOLIC

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and dear my People,

Thy Kingdom Come!
Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The Nicene Creed categorically states that the Church is *One, Holy, Catholic* and *Apostolic*. These describe the essential marks of the Church and they articulate the fundamental nature of the Church established by Christ. "You are Peter and on this rock I build my Church" (Mt. 16:18). "I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 16:19). No evil forces stand against the Church (Mt. 16:18). We shall be proud Christians for God has made us worthy to be the members of this Church. By the sacrament of holy baptism, we have also the right to inherit the heavenly kingdom. 'I go to prepare a place for you' (Jn. 14:3) and 'today you will be with me in paradise' (Lk. 23:43) are Jesus' explicit assurances of our inheritance of God's Kingdom. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 5:3).

Church is **ONE** means that she is fundamentally single and united Body of Christ. This unity is rooted in the mystery of the Trinity - the unity of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit - and is fulfilled by Christ's prayer that Christians "may all be one" (Jn. 17:21). The mark of the Church being 'One' is expressed through one faith and one baptism (Eph. 4:4-6), common worship and single structure of leadership (apostolic succession), despite the existence of divisions among Christians, which are seen as wounds on this unity. This oneness of the Church is very well explained by St. Paul (1 Cor. 12:12-31): Christ is the head and we are all its members. Each body part is identical and has various functions to foster the unity of the single body. Every body-part under the command of Christ, the Head, smoothly functions for the whole body. The command of Christ is "to love one another" (Jn. 13:34) and "by your love they will know that you are my disciples" (Jn. 13:35).

The Church is **HOLY** means that she is set apart for God's purposes and is the means by which God's life is transmitted to the world. The Church's holiness derives from Christ himself, who sanctified her and gave her the means of grace - the sacraments. While Church's origin and mission are holy, its individual members may be sinful and are called to pursue holiness

constantly. "Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). Thus, by participation in the holiness of God the Father, through the reception of the sacraments, prayer, almsgiving, practice of penance, acts of charity, divine Word, etc., each Christian is called to transformation, to live up to her mission to be "salt and light" (Cf. Mt. 5:13-14). The intense prayer of Jesus for the disciples is that they may be sanctified in truth as Jesus himself is holy (Jn. 17:19). Likewise, each Christian is called to be holy inherently as well as in every action. Church, as holy, is a lampstand to witness to the whole world and invite everyone to follow the suit (Mt. 5:14).

The Church as **CATHOLIC**, by word and in spirit, means that she is universal and all-embracing. Bearing the mark of being Catholic, Christ is fully present in the Church and she is commissioned to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world, across all races, nations, and cultures (Cf. Mt. 28:19-20, Jn. 10:16, Acts 1:8, Gal. 3:28, Eph. 2:14, Col. 3:11, Rev. 7:9). The universality allows for a multitude of liturgical expressions and traditions (diversity) united around one faith (unity). The Church is for all people without any exclusion. The universality of Christ and the Church are complementary. Christ, as the sole mediator between God and the humankind (1 Tim. 2:5), the Church becomes the sacrament of salvation. Thus, the Church is the visible sign of invisible grace of God for the redemption of the whole humankind. Through the sacramentality of the Church, the prayer of Jesus 'one shepherd and one sheepfold' (Jn. 10:16) is achieved.

The **APOSTOLIC** nature of the Church points to the fact that the Church is founded on the Apostles (Mt. 16:18) and continues this work even today in the world. Christ entrusted the Apostles with the mission in the world, to be continued through the 'twelve' (Mt. 28:19-20, Mk. 16:15, Mt. 10:5-8, Lk.10:1-2, Acts 1:8). As St. Augustine reminds us, apostolic succession is one of the characteristic marks for discerning the genuine Church. Thus, the Church is Apostolic in three ways: (1) It was and remains built on the foundation of the Apostles (Eph. 2:20). (2) It preserves and hand over the teaching of the Apostles to the future generations (II Thes. 2:15). (3) It continues to be guided by the successors of the Apostles (the bishops) through the tradition of Apostolic Succession. These three marks are inseparably linked and describe the reality of the Church's identity and ongoing mission in the world established by Jesus Christ. There have been fractions and divisions in the Church, yet these characteristic traits unite the Church to continue the universal mission in the world. The chair of St. Peter, to whom Jesus gave authority in heaven and on earth (Mt. 16:18-19) is the visible foundation and sign of unity for the Christian community on earth (Cf. Mt. 16:8, 19, Jn. 21:15-17). Head of the Church, Peter and successors (the Popes) serve as the visible head and tangible point of reference for communion. Without a visible and definitive authority, the fundamental truths of the faith could be fragmented by individual interpretations.

In this year of the Creed, when we reflect the various tenets and dogmas of the Creed, we shall make great efforts to deepen our faith and commit ourselves earnestly to the recitation of the Creed and live it faithfully in our daily life. God bless everyone of us.

Yours devotedly in Christ,



†Ephrem Nariculam
Bishop, Diocese of Chanda

NB: Kindly explain to our people in local languages the four characteristic traits of the Church as articulated in the Nicene Creed and their practical application in our daily life and their witness value in living our faith.