



Most Rev. OSWALD J. LEWIS
Bishop of Jaipur

BISHOP'S HOUSE
Ghat Gate, JAIPUR-302003
Rajasthan
Ph.: 0141-2600743

Date.....

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To,

The Clergy, Religious and Laity
Catholic Diocese of Jaipur

Letter of the Holy Father to the Bishops of India (October 9, 2017)

Dear Fathers, Sisters and Laity,

Cordial greetings in the Holy Name of Jesus.

By now most of you are aware of the letter of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to the Bishops of India, dated October 9, 2017. Through this letter Pope conveys, "I have therefore authorized the Congregation for the Oriental Churches to provide for the pastoral care of the Syro- Malabar faithful throughout India by the erection of two Eparchies and by the extension of the boundaries of the two already in existence."

However the most important point in No. 8 of the Holy Father's letter is, "there is no need for concern; the Church's life should not be disrupted by such a provision. Indeed it must not be negatively interpreted as imposing upon a faithful a requirement to leave the communities which have welcomed them, sometimes for many generations, and to which they have contributed in various ways." Later in the same paragraph the Holy Father states that while a member of the Syro Malabar faithful is a member of the Syro Malabar parish where he or she is domiciled "at the same time he or she can remain fully involved in the life and activities of the parish of the Latin Church." No dispensation is required from the law currently in force for the faithful to practice their faith serenely, and they may do this with the pastoral care of either Latin or Syro Malabar pastors.

At the meeting of the Latin Metropolitan Archbishops on November 9, 2017 in Mumbai, Cardinal Oswald Gracias had explained in reference to Pope Francis' letter and provisions made for Delhi- Faridabad dioceses that the Syro Malabar and Syro Malankara laity can receive all the Sacraments from the Latin Church (Confirmation, First Communion, Marriage etc.). Regarding Baptism, the wording of the Letter indicates that they can receive Baptism in the Latin Church, but they would, of course, belong to the Syro Malabar Church even though baptized in the Latin Church by a Latin Priest.

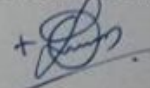
Down the centuries and in the recent past for the last 40-50 years, the Catholics in Rajasthan, irrespective of their rites were taken care of their spiritual pastoral and material needs by the Latin Church, Ajmer and Jaipur Dioceses. Neither the Syro Malabar nor Syro Malankara rite paid any attention to the needs of the faithful. The Jaipur Diocese for the past 13 years has taken pastoral care through the administration of the Sacraments; through regular family visits and provided education to children, youth; financial help to the poor and needy; formation of the laity, youth and women.

Presently the Catholic Diocese of Jaipur has Latin, Syro Malabar and Syro Malankara Catholics. As mentioned above all those who wish continue and remain in Latin rite are welcome to do so. The Parish Priests are requested not to force any one neither to remain nor to leave. Let the faithful decide what they want to choose. Anybody forcing the laity either way goes against the mind of the Holy Father, Pope Francis.

This letter should be read out in all the Churches on two consecutive Sundays

May God Bless you all

Yours in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Oswald Lewis', with a small cross symbol to its left.

(+Oswald Lewis)