

DIOCESE OF MYSORE



Bishop's House, # 2939, Mother Theresa Road, P. B. No. 12
Mysuru - 570 001

Circular No. 01/2018

Date : 01-01-2018

Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

1. MARY - MOTHER OF GOD & NEW YEAR GREETINGS :

The solemnity of Mary - Mother of God is one of the four dogmas in our Catholic Church. She is Mother of Jesus Christ who is both divine and human. This celebration echoes, "through Mary to Jesus", and this celebration is befitting on the first day of the new year seeking her maternal blessings for the whole year.

As the year 2017 has ended. It is a time to look both ways to the past year and to the year ahead of us. We reflect on: how good God has been to us this past one year and we look to the New Year with hope - a life yet to be lived. It is true that we cannot live our past again, but we have many lessons learnt in the previous year that can help us in the future that lies ahead.

As we begin this New Year 2018, let us pray that the good Lord will grant Peace and Prosperity in our country and make each and every one of us a beacon of blessings to each other.

2. PASTORAL PLAN FOR THE DIOCESE OF MYSORE :

We are in the process of evolving and adopting a comprehensive Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Mysore for which already two teams under the Vicar General and the Episcopal Vicar are visiting the parishes and the Institutions to gather data. Once the outline is finalized the clergy, religious and the faithful will be involved in drafting the pastoral plan.

To begin with, let us give priority to the faith formation in the Diocese. Hence, let us dedicate this Year - 2018 as a YEAR OF CATECHESIS. We have already started in our diocese a series of one day seminars/workshops for those who teach catechism in schools and parishes. Let us give importance to the on-going catechesis to all people - from the little children to the grown-ups. During this year, let us concentrate on catechesis - going beyond mere information about the teachings of the Church, but lay emphasis on the application of catechesis in our day to day life - to build communities of faith in our families, parishes and institutions. The catechetical commission will give you more information on this. We the priests, religious and laity get involved totally in Catechetical ministry throughout our Diocese, especially during this Year-2018. Let us help each other in faith formation to grow well personally in accordance to the sacred scriptures and the magisterium.

3. YOUNG CLERGY MEET :

As announced in the previous clergy conference, the diocesan clergy who have not completed five years of ordination will have an ongoing priestly formation in Bishop's House, Mysuru on 10th and 11th of January 2018. The meeting begins at 10.00 am on 10th and ends at 4.00 pm on 11th Jan 2018. This meeting will be interesting and enriching for priestly ministry. I request all the diocesan priests who have not completed five years of ordination to attend the same without fail.

4. WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS & REFUGEES :

The world day of Migrants & Refugees will be celebrated on 14th January 2018. The theme for this year is "Welcoming, Protecting, Promoting and Integrating Migrants and Refugees. Please find the message of the Holy Father Pope Francis on world day of Migrants & Refugees in the annexure - 1 of this circular.

N.B : The local Church has the responsibility to cater the pastoral, liturgical and spiritual needs of the migrant residents in the locality. In today's context, as promoted by the Church, the parish priests and the religious have a special role to play in taking care of them, even to the extent of having mass centres.

5. CHRISTIAN UNITY OCTAVE & ECUMENISM SUNDAY :

The theme for the year 2018 - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is "Your Right Hand, O Lord, Glorious in Power," is taken from the book of Exodus 15:6. The resources for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have been prepared by the churches of the Caribbean by an ecumenical team of women and men. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has an eight days period of prayer called the Christian Unity Octave. Every Christian's prayer and work goes together in seeking to bring about Christian Unity.

On 21st January 2018 is Ecumenism Sunday in India. It will be nice, if every parish can organize short programs in parish and institutions level. I request all the faithful to take part in the ecumenical service and pray together for the unity of our Christian brothers and sisters. Unless we Christians are united in the given scenario, we will not be able to face the forthcoming challenges that are on our way. Let us treat the brothers and sisters of every Christian sect and denomination with love and affection. Let us have dialogue with them and be united in spirit of Christ.

For the matter of liturgical celebration, please go to this link: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/weeks-prayer-doc/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20170613_week-prayer-2018_en.html

6. REPUBLIC DAY :

As we celebrate the Republic Day of our nation on January 26th, let us thank God for the gift of our nation, the noble men and women of our country in the past. Let us ask for the grace of God, to be inspired and walk in their footsteps towards building a nation based on true human values.

On the Republic Day of our nation, our Constitution came into effect which assures all citizens of the country for Socio-economic and political justice, liberty of thought, expression of faith and worship. While our country is blessed with rich religious and socio-cultural heritage as the "land of peace and prosperity," the prevailing situation of hatred and violence is disheartening. May Christ our Lord, be an inspiration and strength to live up to our

Christian values. Let us pray that good leaders emerge among us to safeguard the Constitution and the freedom of country.

7. WORLD PEACE DAY :

Every year, 1st of January is observed as World Peace Day. In India the same is observed on 30th of January since it is the Martyr's Day. It is the anniversary of the assassination of the Father of our Nation - Mahatma Gandhi. Every year we have a public function at St. Joseph's Cathedral to commemorate the great sacrifice of the Father of our Nation to get freedom for our country and pray for world peace. Let us be ambassadors of peace in our families and communities and bring Christian joy in the life of others.

Please find the message of the Holy Father Pope Francis on world day of Peace in the annexure - 2 of this circular. The theme of this year's world peace day is: Migrants and Refugees: Men and Women in search of Peace.

8. CCBI MEETING :

The next CBCI Plenary Assembly will be held at St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences (St. John's), Bengaluru, from 1st to 9th February, 2018. Please keep the bishops in your prayers for the success of the assembly.

9. WORLD DAY OF THE SICK :

Every year, the World Day of the Sick is celebrated on the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes. It is a special time of prayer, sharing and offering one's own sufferings to the Lord. Let us remember all the sick people, specially those who are poor and not able to afford for medical treatment, and pray for them. Let us not forget to share towards the poor and needy.

Please find the message of the Holy Father Pope Francis on world day of Sick in the annexure - 3 of this circular.

N.B: Let us visit the sick often and pray for their recovery. While administering the Communion to the sick, let us make sure the family members participate in the prayer reverently.

10. LENT

Ash Wednesday heralds the onset of the Holy Season of Lent - a time of 40 days of penance and conversion of life in preparation for the greatest feast of Easter. The smearing of ashes on the forehead is a practice that goes back to the 8th century and reminds us that we are just mortals - "dust and ashes."

During Lent, we make special effort to "be at peace with one another" as exhorted by Jesus (Mk 9:50) and exhorted by Saint Paul "As much as possible, and to the utmost of your ability, be at peace with everyone" (Rom 12:18) and "try to grow perfect; encourage one another; have a common mind and live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you" (2 Cor 13:11).

The observance of Lent includes praying, fasting and abstinence: sacrifices, acts of self-control, works of charity, and so on. All these should lead us to return to the Lord. Lent is a time of homecoming to God, who invites us: "come back to me with all your heart." Lent a time of conversion and change of heart from one's own selfishness. The holy season of Lent must be a time of great introspection, evaluating one's attitudes, priorities in life, our relationships with our fellow humans, and above all with God.

Let us be united in prayer and acts of mercy during this holy season. I wish you all a very fruitful Lenten season.

11. CYCLONE OCKHI :

Cyclone Ockhi, the first tropical storm of the season, over the districts in South Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Lakshadweep started on 30th November 2017, has taken many lives. It was an unprecedented calamity, which claimed several lives and caused a widespread damage to properties. It has also dismantled the daily life completely. The Indian Navy and the Coast guards have launched full-fledged rescue operations and saved many lives. Unfortunate that still many fishermen from Kerala & South Tamil Nadu are missing and did not return home. The people of this area have lost everything. They have lost their male family members, and only women and children are remaining in the houses. Some of them have lost their fishing boats and nets. The most affected areas are from Trivandrum Diocese.

It is our solidarity and social responsibility to help the victim's families. Let us specially pray the affected ones and also come forward to help the grief stricken families with financial contributions and support. In view of this, let us have a special collection on 14-02-2018 - Ash Wednesday during the Holy Mass in every parish. The Institutions and the religious communities are also requested to extend the support for the cause. As we begin the Lenten season with Ash Wednesday, it will be an apt day to make this collection for this specific purpose so that the total collection can be sent to the Archdiocese of Trivandrum to help the deserving families for housing and purchase of boats. Please make efforts to announce about this special collection couple of weeks ahead of the Ash Wednesday and request the people to contribute generously. We expect the collection to reach us through the below given bank details by end of February 2018. Let us express our Christian charity with the affected people of Ockhi.

Name of the Account : Bishop and Procurator

Account Number : 052405300001227

IFSC : SIBL0000524

12. LITURGICAL CELEBRATION :

In our Christian life, liturgical celebrations bring us grace of God. To make this celebration as a Divine experience the liturgical animator plays a major role. The Parish Priest and the Superiors of Religious Communities have a special responsibility as animators of liturgical celebrations in their communities to maintain the spirit and the decorum with proper arrangements, preparation and practice. All liturgical norms to be followed in accordance with the Roman Liturgical Calendar and GIRM. The liturgical texts like kyrie, gloria, santus, acclamation, pater noster and agnus dei found in the Roman Missal are to be literally used even for singing, without altering. Of course, responsorial psalms cannot be replaced with any other hymns for any occasion. It is better to have good co-ordination between the parish priests and religious communities with regard to the arrangements for liturgical celebrations to make our liturgy vibrant and God experiencing one to foster the faith of people.

13. ST. PHILOMENA'S AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE :

I am glad to inform that the UGC team visited St. Philomena's Autonomous College for assessment and have noticed good performance and facilities in the Institution and have extended the autonomous status under UGC Scheme up to 2022. I congratulate the Episcopal Vicar, Rector, Principal and staff for their hard work and contribution towards the welfare of the institution.

14. REMINDERS :

a) Vocation Camp

As informed earlier, there will be one day special vocation camps for the boys studying in 7th 8th 9th & 10th Std and PUC to motivate and prepare them in advance to join Seminary. The following dates and places are marked for the same. I request all the Rev. Fathers to co-operate in sending the boys to the special vocation camp on the stipulated date and place without fail and to recommend the best students to the Diocese on priority.

Date	Deanery	Place
07/01/2018	Mysuru	Catholic Centre
21/01/2018	Kollegal	Hanur School
28/01/2018	Chamarajnagar	St. Paul's School
04/02/2018	Mandya	St. Joseph's Church
11/02/2018	Kodagu	Madikeri Church
18/02/2018	Hunsur	H. D. Kote Church

b) Annual Statistics

Every Year each Diocese has to send the Annual Statistics to Vatican by the last week of January. Hence I request you to make arrangements to prepare the forms (A-J) and send them by 15th of January 2018 in two copies to the Chancellor, Bishop's House, Mysuru.

15. BIRTH DAYS :

The following priests of our Diocese have their Birthdays during the months of January and February. Our Prayerful wishes to them.

JANUARY

- 01 - Rev. Fr. Roxan Thomas Baros & Rev. Fr. Vijay Kumar
- 02 - Rev. Fr. Benedict J. R. Gomes
- 04 - Rev. Fr. J. Anthonappa
- 09 - Rev. Fr. Prashanth Kumar
- 12 - Rev. Fr. Vijeth Martin
- 13 - Rev. Fr. Stephen Joseph
- 15 - Rev. Fr. M. Christopher
- 16 - Rev. Fr. Charles Noronha
- 18 - Rev. Fr. John Peter Rego & Rev. Fr. Roni Ravi Kumar
- 21 - Rev. Fr. Vincent D'Souza & Rev. Fr. Christopher Sagayaraj
- 23 - Rev. Fr. Tenny Kurian

FEBRUARY

- 02 - Rev. Fr. Cyril D'Souza
- 08 - Rev. Fr. Denis D'Souza
- 11 - Rev. Fr. Alfred John Mendonca
- 12 - Rev. Fr. Jebamalai Muthu
- 14 - Rev. Fr. Valentine R. Kumar
- 15 - Rev. Fr. John G. D'Cunha
- 16 - Rev. Fr. Xavier Thangaraj (Sandanapalya PP)
- 20 - Rev. Fr. Joseph D'Mello
- 22 - Rev. Fr. L. Santiago
- 27 - Bishop K. A. William (*Birthday & Episcopal Ordination Day*)

We also wish a happy birthday to all the Religious fathers, brothers and sisters who celebrate their birthdays in the month of January and February.

16. NACROLOGY :

We fondly remember the Mysore Diocesan Priests on their death anniversary during the month of January and February. With gratitude we pray for the departed for their service.

JANUARY

- 03-01-2012 Fr. Felix J. Tauro
09-01-1970 Fr. Cornelius Lobo
10-01-1987 Fr. Albert Gonsalves
18-01-1970 Fr. Ignatius H. Lobo
27-01-1964 Bishop Rene Feuga

FEBRUARY

- 14-02-2015 Fr. Michael Gonsalvez
16-02-2000 Fr. Joseph Jaunet
18-02-2000 Fr. Peter Penven
23-02-1979 Fr. Freeman Joseph
28-02-1999 Fr. F. Michael

We also pray for the departed souls of religious priests, brothers and sisters on their death anniversary in the month of January and February for their service in our Diocese.

17. BLESSINGS & INAUGURATIONS :

a)Chamarajnagar : On 28th December 2017, the Congregation of the Salesian Sisters of Mary Immaculate (SMMI) celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of St. Joseph's Convent at Chamaranagar. I congratulate the sisters for their service.

b)Odakapallam : The Silver Jubilee celebration of Sacred Heart Parish at Odakapallam was celebrated on 29th December 2017. I congratulate Rev. Fr. Christopher Claret and his collaborators for organizing the jubilee celebrations.

18. BISHOP'S ENGAGEMENTS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2018 :

January - 2018

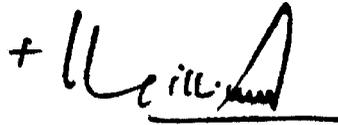
- 1st- Foundation Stone for the New Church: Maradiyur.
2nd - First Profession: Mary Mediatrix Convent Mysore, Kesare.
3rd - Teresian PU College : Mysuru.
4th - Priestly Ordination: P. G. Palya.

- 5th - School Building Blessing and School Day : H. D. Kote
- 6th - First Holy Communion: St. Joseph's Church,
Jayalakshmipuram. Mysuru.
- 7th - Vocation camp for Boys of Mysore deanery : Catholic
Centre - Bannimantap,
- Festive Mass of Infant Jesus: Pushpashram, Mysuru
- 10th - 11th - Junior Clergy Meeting (5 Years Priests) :
Bishop's House, Mysuru
- 11th - Christ School day : Pandavapura.
- 13th - Holy Mass : Teresian Convent (CSST), Mysuru
- Confirmation : Balanagara.
- 14th - Parish Silver Jubilee : K. R. Pet,
- Infant Jesus Festive Mass Syro-Malabar Cathedral : Hinkal.
- 15th - Holy Mass: Pushpashram, Mysuru.
- 19th - School day: Maria Polis, Mysore.
- 20th - Visit to Mariapura.
- 21st - Holy Mass : Cathedral.
- 22nd - Festive Mass : Jampanahalli.
- 23rd - Festive Mass : St. Lawrence Shrine, Karkala.
- 24th - School Day : Maradiyur.
- 25th - Thanksgiving Mass : CTS Convent, Kesare.
- 28th - Confirmation : Mysore South.
- Parish Feast : Holy Family Church, Hinkal.
- 29th - St. Joseph's Nursing College: Caping Ceremony
- Festive Mass: SVD Seminary.
- 30th - Blessing of School Building: Kedamulluru
- World Peace Day: Cathedral.
- 31st - Parish Feast: Shanthipura.

February - 2018

- 1st - First Profession: SSS Convent Marianagar, Mysuru

- 2nd - CBCI Plenary Meeting : Bengaluru.
- 11th - First Holy Communion : Cathedral.
- Inauguration of Renovated Church : Pollibetta.
- 14th - Ash Wednesday Mass : Cathedral.
- 18th - Legion of Mary Retreat Mass: Catholic Centre .
- 19th - Diaconate Ordination: MSFS Seminary, Bengaluru.
- 20th- 22nd - Board Meeting: St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary,
Bengaluru.
- 26th - Graduation Day : Holy Cross Nursing School, Kamagere
- 27th - Gathering of all Priests and Religious : St. Philomena's
Indoor Stadium, Mysuru.



† **Most Rev. Dr. K. A. William**
Bishop of Mysore

ANNEXURE - 1

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 104th WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES : 14th January 2018

**Theme : “Welcoming, protecting, promoting and
integrating migrants and refugees”**

Dear brothers and sisters!

“You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:34).

Throughout the first years of my pontificate, I have repeatedly expressed my particular concern for the lamentable situation of many migrants and refugees fleeing from war, persecution, natural disasters and poverty. This situation is undoubtedly a “sign of the times” which I have tried to interpret, with the help of the Holy Spirit, ever since my visit to Lampedusa on 8th July 2013. When I instituted the new Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, I wanted a particular section – under my personal direction for the time being – to express the Church’s concern for migrants, displaced people, refugees and victims of human trafficking.

Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age (Matthew 25:35-43). The Lord entrusts to the Church’s motherly love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future. This solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return. This is a great responsibility, which the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities.

In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that “our shared response

may be articulated by four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate”.

Considering the current situation, welcoming means, above all, offering broader options for migrants and refugees to enter destination countries safely and legally. This calls for a concrete commitment to increase and simplify the process for granting humanitarian visas and for reunifying families. At the same time, I hope that a greater number of countries will adopt private and community sponsorship programmes, and open humanitarian corridors for particularly vulnerable refugees. Furthermore, special temporary visas should be granted to people fleeing conflicts in neighbouring countries. Collective and arbitrary expulsions of migrants and refugees are not suitable solutions, particularly where people are returned to countries which cannot guarantee respect for human dignity and fundamental rights. Once again, I want to emphasise the importance of offering migrants and refugees adequate and dignified initial accommodation. “More widespread programmes of welcome, already initiated in different places, seem to favour a personal encounter and allow for greater quality of service and increased guarantees of success”. The principle of the centrality of the human person, firmly stated by my beloved Predecessor, Benedict XVI, obliges us to always prioritise personal safety over national security. It is necessary, therefore, to ensure that agents in charge of border control are properly trained. The situation of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees requires that they be guaranteed personal safety and access to basic services. For the sake of the fundamental dignity of every human person, we must strive to find alternative solutions to detention for those who enter a country without authorisation.

The second verb – protecting – may be understood as a series of steps intended to defend the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees, independent of their legal status. Such protection begins in the country of origin, and consists in offering reliable and verified information before departure, and in providing safety from illegal recruitment practices. This must be ongoing, as far as possible, in the country of migration, guaranteeing them adequate consular

assistance, the right to personally retain their identity documents at all times, fair access to justice, the possibility of opening a personal bank account, and a minimum sufficient to live on. When duly recognised and valued, the potential and skills of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are a true resource for the communities that welcome them. This is why I hope that, in countries of arrival, migrants may be offered freedom of movement, work opportunities, and access to means of communication, out of respect for their dignity. For those who decide to return to their homeland, I want to emphasise the need to develop social and professional reintegration programmes. The International Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a universal legal basis for the protection of underage migrants. They must be spared any form of detention related to migratory status, and must be guaranteed regular access to primary and secondary education. Equally, when they come of age they must be guaranteed the right to remain and to enjoy the possibility of continuing their studies. Temporary custody or foster programmes should be provided for unaccompanied minors and minors separated from their families. The universal right to a nationality should be recognised and duly certified for all children at birth. The statelessness which migrants and refugees sometimes fall into can easily be avoided with the adoption of “nationality legislation that is in conformity with the fundamental principles of international law”. Migratory status should not limit access to national healthcare and pension plans, nor affect the transfer of their contributions if repatriated.

Promoting essentially means a determined effort to ensure that all migrants and refugees – as well as the communities which welcome them – are empowered to achieve their potential as human beings, in all the dimensions which constitute the humanity intended by the Creator. Among these, we must recognize the true value of the religious dimension, ensuring to all foreigners in any country the freedom of religious belief and practice. Many migrants and refugees have abilities which must be appropriately recognised and valued. Since “work, by its nature, is meant to unite peoples”, I encourage a determined effort to promote the social and professional inclusion of migrants and refugees,

guaranteeing for all – including those seeking asylum – the possibility of employment, language instruction and active citizenship, together with sufficient information provided in their mother tongue. In the case of underage migrants, their involvement in labour must be regulated to prevent exploitation and risks to their normal growth and development. In 2006, Benedict XVI highlighted how, in the context of migration, the family is “a place and resource of the culture of life and a factor for the integration of values”. The family’s integrity must always be promoted, supporting family reunifications – including grandparents, grandchildren and siblings – independent of financial requirements. Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities must be granted greater assistance and support. While I recognize the praiseworthy efforts, thus far, of many countries, in terms of international cooperation and humanitarian aid, I hope that the offering of this assistance will take into account the needs (such as medical and social assistance, as well as education) of developing countries which receive a significant influx of migrants and refugees. I also hope that local communities which are vulnerable and facing material hardship, will be included among aid beneficiaries.

The final verb – integrating – concerns the opportunities for intercultural enrichment brought about by the presence of migrants and refugees. Integration is not “an assimilation that leads migrants to suppress or to forget their own cultural identity. Rather, contact with others leads to discovering their ‘secret’, to being open to them in order to welcome their valid aspects and thus contribute to knowing each one better. This is a lengthy process that aims to shape societies and cultures, making them more and more a reflection of the multi-faceted gifts of God to human beings”. This process can be accelerated by granting citizenship free of financial or linguistic requirements, and by offering the possibility of special legalisation to migrants who can claim a long period of residence in the country of arrival. I reiterate the need to foster a culture of encounter in every way possible – by increasing opportunities for intercultural exchange, documenting and disseminating best practices of integration, and developing programmes to prepare local communities for integration

processes. I wish to stress the special case of people forced to abandon their country of arrival due to a humanitarian crisis. These people must be ensured adequate assistance for repatriation and effective reintegration programmes in their home countries.

In line with her pastoral tradition, the Church is ready to commit herself to realising all the initiatives proposed above. Yet in order to achieve the desired outcome, the contribution of political communities and civil societies is indispensable, each according to their own responsibilities.

At the United Nations Summit held in New York on 19 September 2016, world leaders clearly expressed their desire to take decisive action in support of migrants and refugees to save their lives and protect their rights, sharing this responsibility on a global level. To this end, the states committed themselves to drafting and approving, before the end of 2018, two Global Compacts, one for refugees and the other for migrants.

Dear brothers and sisters, in light of these processes currently underway, the coming months offer a unique opportunity to advocate and support the concrete actions which I have described with four verbs. I invite you, therefore, to use every occasion to share this message with all political and social actors involved (or who seek to be involved) in the process which will lead to the approval of the two Global Compacts.

Today, 15th August, we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. The Holy Mother of God herself experienced the hardship of exile (Matthew 2:13-15), lovingly accompanied her Son's journey to Calvary, and now shares eternally his glory. To her maternal intercession we entrust the hopes of all the world's migrants and refugees and the aspirations of the communities which welcome them, so that, responding to the Lord's supreme commandment, we may all learn to love the other, the stranger, as ourselves.

- Pope Francis

ANNEXURE - 2

MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE, 1st January 2018

***Theme : Migrants and Refugees :
Men and Women in search of Peace***

I. HEARTFELT GOOD WISHES FOR PEACE :

Peace to all people and to all nations on earth! Peace, which the angels proclaimed to the shepherds on Christmas night, is a profound aspiration for everyone, for each individual and all peoples, and especially for those who most keenly suffer its absence. Among these whom I constantly keep in my thoughts and prayers, I would once again mention the over 250 million migrants worldwide, of whom 22.5 million are refugees. Pope Benedict XVI, my beloved predecessor, spoke of them as "men and women, children, young and elderly people, who are searching for somewhere to live in peace." In order to find that peace, they are willing to risk their lives on a journey that is often long and perilous, to endure hardships and suffering, and to encounter fences and walls built to keep them far from their goal.

In a spirit of compassion, let us embrace all those fleeing from war and hunger, or forced by discrimination, persecution, poverty and environmental degradation to leave their homelands.

We know that it is not enough to open our hearts to the suffering of others. Much more remains to be done before our brothers and sisters can once again live peacefully in a safe home. Welcoming others requires concrete commitment, a network of assistance and goodwill, vigilant and sympathetic attention, the responsible management of new and complex situations that at times compound numerous existing problems, to say nothing of resources, which are always limited. By practising the virtue of prudence, government leaders should take practical measures to welcome, promote, protect, integrate and, "within the limits allowed by a correct understanding of the common good, to permit [them] to become part of a new society." Leaders have a clear responsibility towards their own communities, whose legitimate rights and harmonious development they must ensure, lest they

become like the rash builder who miscalculated and failed to complete the tower he had begun to construct.

II. WHY SO MANY REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS? :

As he looked to the Great Jubilee marking the passage of two thousand years since the proclamation of peace by the angels in Bethlehem, Saint John Paul II pointed to the increased numbers of displaced persons as one of the consequences of the "endless and horrifying sequence of wars, conflicts, genocides and ethnic cleansings" that had characterized the twentieth century. To this date, the new century has registered no real breakthrough: armed conflicts and other forms of organized violence continue to trigger the movement of peoples within national borders and beyond.

Yet people migrate for other reasons as well, principally because they "desire a better life, and not infrequently try to leave behind the 'hopelessness' of an unpromising future." They set out to join their families or to seek professional or educational opportunities, for those who cannot enjoy these rights do not live in peace. Furthermore, as I noted in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, there has been "a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation".

Most people migrate through regular channels. Some, however, take different routes, mainly out of desperation, when their own countries offer neither safety nor opportunity, and every legal pathway appears impractical, blocked or too slow.

Many destination countries have seen the spread of rhetoric decrying the risks posed to national security or the high cost of welcoming new arrivals, and by doing so demeans the human dignity due to all as sons and daughters of God. Those who, for what may be political reasons, foment fear of migrants instead of building peace are sowing violence, racial discrimination and xenophobia, which are matters of great concern for all those concerned for the safety of every human being.

All indicators available to the international community suggest that global migration will continue for the future. Some consider this a threat. For my part, I ask you to view it with confidence as an opportunity to build peace.

III. WITH A CONTEMPLATIVE GAZE :

The wisdom of faith fosters a contemplative gaze that recognizes that all of us "belong to one family, migrants and the local populations that welcome them, and all have the same right to enjoy the goods of the earth, whose destination is universal, as the social doctrine of the Church teaches. It is here that solidarity and sharing are founded." These words evoke the biblical image of the new Jerusalem. The book of the prophet Isaiah (chapter 60) and that of Revelation (Chapter 21) describe the city with its gates always open to people of every nation, who marvel at it and fill it with riches. Peace is the sovereign that guides it and justice the principle that governs coexistence within it.

We must also turn this contemplative gaze to the cities where we live, "a gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their houses, in their streets and squares, fostering solidarity, fraternity, and the desire for goodness, truth and justice" - in other words, fulfilling the promise of peace.

When we turn that gaze to migrants and refugees, we discover that they do not arrive empty-handed. They bring their courage, skills, energy and aspirations, as well as the treasures of their own cultures; and in this way, they enrich the lives of the nations that receive them. We also come to see the creativity, tenacity and spirit of sacrifice of the countless individuals, families and communities around the world who open their doors and hearts to migrants and refugees, even where resources are scarce.

A contemplative gaze should also guide the discernment of those responsible for the public good, and encourage them to pursue policies of welcome, "within the limits allowed by a correct understanding of the common good" - bearing in mind, that is, the needs of all members of the human family and the welfare of each.

Those who see things in this way will be able to recognize the seeds of peace that are already sprouting and nurture their growth. Our cities, often divided and polarized by conflicts regarding the presence of migrants and refugees, will thus turn into workshops of peace.

IV. FOUR MILEPOSTS FOR ACTION :

Offering asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and victims of human trafficking an opportunity to find the peace they seek requires a strategy combining four actions: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating.

"Welcoming" calls for expanding legal pathways for entry and no longer pushing migrants and displaced people towards countries where they face persecution and violence. It also demands balancing our concerns about national security with concern for fundamental human rights. Scripture reminds us: "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

"Protecting" has to do with our duty to recognize and defend the inviolable dignity of those who flee real dangers in search of asylum and security, and to prevent their being exploited. I think in particular of women and children who find themselves in situations that expose them to risks and abuses that can even amount to enslavement. God does not discriminate: "The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the orphan and the widow."

"Promoting" entails supporting the integral human development of migrants and refugees. Among many possible means of doing so, I would stress the importance of ensuring access to all levels of education for children and young people. This will enable them not only to cultivate and realize their potential, but also better equip them to encounter others and to foster a spirit of dialogue rather than rejection or confrontation. The Bible teaches that God "loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt."

"Integrating", lastly, means allowing refugees and migrants to participate fully in the life of the society that welcomes them, as part of a process of mutual enrichment and fruitful cooperation in service of the integral human development of the local community. Saint Paul expresses it in these words: "You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people."

V. A PROPOSAL FOR TWO INTERNATIONAL COMPACTS :

It is my heartfelt hope this spirit will guide the process that in the course of 2018 will lead the United Nations to draft and approve two Global Compacts, one for safe, orderly and regular migration and the other for refugees. As shared agreements at a global level, these compacts will provide a framework for policy proposals and practical measures. For this reason, they need to be inspired by compassion, foresight and courage, so as to take advantage of every opportunity to advance the peace-building process. Only in this way can the realism required of international politics avoid surrendering to cynicism and to the globalization of indifference.

Dialogue and coordination are a necessity and a specific duty for the international community. Beyond national borders, higher numbers of refugees may be welcomed - or better welcomed - also by less wealthy countries, if international cooperation guarantees them the necessary funding.

The Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has published a set of twenty action points that provide concrete leads for implementing these four verbs in public policy and in the attitudes and activities of Christian communities. The aim of this and other contributions is to express the interest of the Catholic Church in the process leading to the adoption of the two U.N. Global Compacts. This interest is the sign of a more general pastoral concern that goes back to very origins of Church and has continued in her many works up to the present time.

VI. FOR OUR COMMON HOME :

Let us draw inspiration from the words of Saint John Paul II: "If the 'dream' of a peaceful world is shared by all, if the refugees' and migrants' contribution is properly evaluated, then humanity can become more and more a universal family and our earth a true 'common home'." Throughout history, many have believed in this "dream", and their achievements are a testament to the fact that it is no mere utopia.

Among these, we remember Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini in

this year that marks the hundredth anniversary of her death. On this thirteenth day of November, many ecclesial communities celebrate her memory. This remarkable woman, who devoted her life to the service of migrants and became their patron saint, taught us to welcome, protect, promote and integrate our brothers and sisters. Through her intercession, may the Lord enable all of us to experience that "a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

- Pope Francis

ANNEXURE - 3

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH WORLD DAY OF THE SICK :

11th February 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Church's service to the sick and those who care for them must continue with renewed vigour, in fidelity to the Lord's command (cf. Lk 9:2-6; Mt 10:1-8; Mk 6:7-13) and following the eloquent example of her Founder and Master.

The theme for this year's Day of the Sick is provided by the words that Jesus spoke from the Cross to Mary, his Mother, and to John: "Woman, behold your son ... Behold your mother. And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (Jn 19:26-27).

1. The Lord's words brilliantly illuminate the mystery of the Cross, which does not represent a hopeless tragedy, but rather the place where Jesus manifests his glory and shows his love to the end. That love in turn was to become the basis and rule for the Christian community and the life of each disciple.

Before all else, Jesus' words are the source of Mary's maternal vocation for all humanity. Mary was to be, in particular, the Mother of her Son's disciples, caring for them and their journey through life. As we know, a mother's care for her son or daughter includes both the material and spiritual dimensions of their upbringing.

The unspeakable pain of the Cross pierces Mary's soul (cf. Lk 2:35), but does not paralyze her. Quite the opposite. As

the Lord's Mother, a new path of self-giving opens up before her. On the Cross, Jesus showed his concern for the Church and all humanity, and Mary is called to share in that same concern. In describing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Acts of the Apostles show that Mary began to carry out this role in the earliest community of the Church. A role that never ceases.

2. John, the beloved disciple, is a figure of the Church, the messianic people. He must acknowledge Mary as his Mother. In doing so, he is called to take her into his home, to see in her the model of all discipleship, and to contemplate the maternal vocation that Jesus entrusted to her, with all that it entails: a loving Mother who gives birth to children capable of loving as Jesus commands. That is why Mary's maternal vocation to care for her children is entrusted to John and to the Church as a whole. The entire community of disciples is included in Mary's maternal vocation.
3. John, as a disciple who shared everything with Jesus, knows that the Master wants to lead all people to an encounter with the Father. He can testify to the fact that Jesus met many people suffering from spiritual sickness due to pride (cf. Jn 8:31-39) and from physical ailments (cf. Jn 5:6). He bestowed mercy and forgiveness upon all, and healed the sick as a sign of the abundant life of the Kingdom, where every tear will be wiped away. Like Mary, the disciples are called to care for one another, but not only that. They know that Jesus' heart is open to all and excludes no one. The Gospel of the Kingdom must be proclaimed to all, and the charity of Christians must be directed to all, simply because they are persons, children of God.
4. The Church's maternal vocation to the needy and to the sick has found concrete expression throughout the two thousand years of her history in an impressive series of initiatives on behalf of the sick. This history of dedication must not be forgotten. It continues to the present day throughout the world. In countries where adequate public health care systems exist, the work of Catholic religious congregations and

dioceses and their hospitals is aimed not only at providing quality medical care, but also at putting the human person at the centre of the healing process, while carrying out scientific research with full respect for life and for Christian moral values. In countries where health care systems are inadequate or non-existent, the Church seeks to do what she can to improve health, eliminate infant mortality and combat widespread disease. Everywhere she tries to provide care, even when she is not in a position to offer a cure. The image of the Church as a "field hospital" that welcomes all those wounded by life is a very concrete reality, for in some parts of the world, missionary and diocesan hospitals are the only institutions providing necessary care to the population.

5. The memory of this long history of service to the sick is cause for rejoicing on the part of the Christian community, and especially those presently engaged in this ministry. Yet we must look to the past above all to let it enrich us. We should learn the lesson it teaches us about the self-sacrificing generosity of many founders of institutes in the service of the infirm, the creativity, prompted by charity, of many initiatives undertaken over the centuries, and the commitment to scientific research as a means of offering innovative and reliable treatments to the sick. This legacy of the past helps us to build a better future, for example, by shielding Catholic hospitals from the business mentality that is seeking worldwide to turn health care into a profit-making enterprise, which ends up discarding the poor. Wise organization and charity demand that the sick person be respected in his or her dignity, and constantly kept at the centre of the therapeutic process. This should likewise be the approach of Christians who work in public structures; through their service, they too are called to bear convincing witness to the Gospel.
6. Jesus bestowed upon the Church his healing power: "These signs will accompany those who believe... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover (Mk 16:17-18). In the Acts

of the Apostles, we read accounts of the healings worked by Peter (cf. Acts 3:4-8) and Paul (cf. Acts 14:8-11). The Church's mission is a response to Jesus' gift, for she knows that she must bring to the sick the Lord's own gaze, full of tenderness and compassion. Health care ministry will always be a necessary and fundamental task, to be carried out with renewed enthusiasm by all, from parish communities to the most largest healthcare institutions. We cannot forget the tender love and perseverance of many families in caring for their chronically sick or severely disabled children, parents and relatives. The care given within families is an extraordinary witness of love for the human person; it needs to be fittingly acknowledged and supported by suitable policies. Doctors and nurses, priests, consecrated men and women, volunteers, families and all those who care for the sick, take part in this ecclesial mission. It is a shared responsibility that enriches the value of the daily service given by each.

7. To Mary, Mother of tender love, we wish to entrust all those who are ill in body and soul, that she may sustain them in hope. We ask her also to help us to be welcoming to our sick brothers and sisters. The Church knows that she requires a special grace to live up to her evangelical task of serving the sick. May our prayers to the Mother of God see us united in an incessant plea that every member of the Church may live with love the vocation to serve life and health. May the Virgin Mary intercede for this Twenty-sixth World Day of the Sick; may she help the sick to experience their suffering in communion with the Lord Jesus; and may she support all those who care for them. To all, the sick, to healthcare workers and to volunteers, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

- Pope Francis

Wishing you all
A
Bright New Year - 2018
&
God's Blessings.
