



# Sanmaargi

— to shepherd HIS flock —

MDB 02/2022

MYSORE DIOCESAN BULLETIN

MARCH & APRIL 2022



**Rend your hearts and not your clothing.  
Return to the Lord, your God,  
for HE is gracious and merciful**

**Joel 2:13**

**#3845, M2, Nelson Mandela Road  
RAJAMAARGA, Near Highway Circle  
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# HOLY FATHER'S INTENTION

## MARCH 2022

### *For a Christian response to bioethical challenges*



We pray for Christians facing new bioethical challenges; may they continue to defend the dignity of all human life with prayer and action.

## APRIL 2022

### *For health care workers*

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.



**Blessing & Inauguration of SANMAARGI-The New Diocesan Bishop's House**



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**SHEPHERD'S VOICE**



**Dear & Rev. Fathers/Brothers/Sisters/Laity,**

**Greetings from Bishop William, Mysore.**

*Let us listen, let us discuss in groups, but above all let us pay close attention to that which the Spirit has to speak to us – Pope Francis on Synodality.*

We are entering into the holy season of Lent - a season of prayer, penance and reconciliation with the Lord and our fellow brothers and sisters. This season reminds us of the 40 days of fasting and prayer of our Lord in the desert : *He fasted forty days and forty nights (Mt. 4:2).* Our Saviour was **led by the Holy Spirit** says the Holy Scriptures. We are invited to listen to the Holy Spirit, very specially in this most holy season. It is also the time of preparation to celebrate the paschal mysteries of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Redeemer.

St. Joseph, the chaste spouse of Blessed Virgin Mary is the icon of responsible parenthood, for as the “foster father” of Christ our Lord, **led by the Holy Spirit**, he has taken every possible step to bring up Christ in the best way possible. It was into the custody of St. Joseph that God entrusted the mysteries of the salvation of mankind, that is, His Incarnate Son and the Blessed Virgin Mother of God (cf. Collect to Mass of St. Joseph). The entire plan of Redemption is founded on the mystery of the Incarnation. He was very attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in his life. Thus could understand the Divine Plan of God at every step of his life. The solemnity of St. Joseph, the husband of Blessed Virgin Mary, is an invitation to each of us to renew our belongingness to the mission entrusted to us, to become more and more responsible in whatever is entrusted to us, always paying close attention to what the Spirit has to disclose to us.

The Annunciation, as much as or even more so than Christmas, represents Christ's incarnation. When Mary signalled to Gabriel her acceptance of God's Will, Christ was conceived in her womb through ***the power of the Holy Spirit***. While most of the fathers of the Church say that Mary's *fiat* was essential to God's plan of salvation, God foresaw Mary's acceptance of His Will from all eternity. Mary, the Mother of our Saviour constantly remained in ***communion with the Holy Spirit*** that she never went astray from the Divine Plan. May the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the birth of our Lord enkindle us to be ***filled with the Holy Spirit*** and to renew our "yes" to the call that we have received - be it cleric, religious or being the lay faithful.

The Paschal Triduum is a single liturgical celebration that spans three days. It begins on the Maundy Thursday before Easter and ends the evening of Easter Sunday. This is the culmination of the holy season of lent. After the holy preparation of forty days, we enter into the celebration of the redemptive passion of the Lord. We commemorate His Passion, Death and the Resurrection. May we live - out the victory that Christ our Saviour bought for us with his Precious Blood, and make sincere efforts not to become slaves to sin. Let us be ***led by the Holy Spirit*** to experience the Lord's passion, death and resurrection.

The feast of the Divine Mercy comes as the manifestation of the unconditional love of God. The prodigal Father sent His only Son in love, and Christ the Only begotten Son of the eternal Father gave his life on the cross; and to conclude the sacrificial offering, he shed even the last drop of his Precious Blood and water, and thus poured-out the abundance of love and mercy. May this feast of the Divine Mercy be an occasion for us to listen to the ***promptings of the Holy Spirit*** and live out the same Mercy that we have been experiencing in our lives.

Let us constantly live in ***the anointing of the Holy Spirit*** – our God of life and love

With God's blessings

†**Bishop William**  
Diocese of Mysore

## IMPORTANT EVENTS

### HONOURING OF THE MERITORIOUS CATHOLIC STUDENTS

On 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022, Mysore Diocesan Education Society (MDES) organised the annual program of honouring the meritorious Catholic students. This year too, due to Covid restrictions, it could not be held with physical presence, instead it was held on the virtual platform and the live streaming of the program was done by the MDES from the Auditorium of St. Philomena's Autonomous College, Mysuru. It is a means to encourage our Catholic students to do well in their studies. We thank Rev. Fr. Vijay Kumar, the secretary of MDES and his team for the same.

### CANCER DAY CELEBRATION & OUR SUPPORT

The Organization for the Development of People (ODP) in collaboration with St. Joseph's Hospital and St Philomena's College, celebrated the "World Cancer Day" on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at St. Philomena's College Auditorium, Mysuru. The theme of this year's World Cancer Day is *Close the Care Gap*. The



theme is all about raising awareness of the equity gap that affects almost everyone. The main goal of this program is to educate the community on the basics of cancer and its treatment, and thus promote a cancer aware society. Dr. Vijayakumar M. - Oncologist, Bharath Cancer Hospital and Institute of Oncology, Mysuru gave inputs on the reasons of getting cancer, various types of cancer, and precautionary measures. We thank Rev. Frs. Alex Prashanth Sequeira, Manoj Manuel D'Souza and Bernard Prakash and their team for the collaboration. As per the request, some have given contribution towards Cancer Camp – a Charity to Cancer patients, specially the gifts to the Bishop for Christmas, his Birthday, etc., which goes towards the support of the Cancer patients. We thank all those who contributed generously for this noble cause.



In the recent times, several are affected with Cancer sickness. Often, on the Charity day in the Diocese, we meet one or two Cancer patients who approach us seeking financial assistance for their treatment. The poor and needy suffer most due to lack of funds. During the Diocesan Finance Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022, it is decided that we raise special collection annually from the parishes, institutions and religious communities on the feast day of *Our Lady of Good Health on 8<sup>th</sup> September* towards the financial support for the treatment of the Cancer patients. This is towards a special cause. Hence, I request all the Parish Priests / Rectors to send the festive mass collection of 8<sup>th</sup> September from this year onwards to the Diocesan office for the purpose mentioned above. Of course, the collections during the Novena Holy Masses and special donations received before 8<sup>th</sup> September will surely support the parishes towards the expenses of the celebration of the feast and special donations received in the parishes. I request the institutions and religious communities too, in the Diocese, to contribute for the same generously. The institutions of the diocese and religious can give awareness about the Cancer sickness to the students and staff, and also raise special collections towards the same annually, on 4<sup>th</sup> February - the Cancer day. Prior announcements and sincere effort from our part in the parishes and institutions will surely make the poor cancer patients benefit more financially for their treatment.

## REPORTING OF DIOCESAN COMMISSIONS

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022, the reporting session of all the diocesan Commissions was held in the conference hall of Sanmaargi, the Diocesan new Bishop's House, Bannimantap, Mysuru. The secretaries of all the diocesan commissions presented their reports



and future plans for the pastoral growth of the diocese. Most Rev. Dr. K. Antony William encouraged the secretaries of various commissions with his valuable suggestions and guidelines. We thank all the Secretaries and Rev. Fr. Joseph Marie J, the co-ordinator of the Diocesan Commissions for the same.

## BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY OF EPISCOPATE

I take this opportunity to thank each one of you for your valuable prayers and wishes sent by cards / emails / message on the occasion of my birthday and the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Episcopal Ordination on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Do continue to pray that the Good Lord may lead me to shepherd the flock entrusted to my care. May God bless you all for your co-operation and co-ordination for the good of the Diocese. My Episcopal Motto: *Given up for you* from the Consecration words of the Holy Eucharist (Lk. 22:19) means a lot for me and my ministry for the Church.

## LENTEN MESSAGE

We begin the holy season of lent with the Ash Wednesday. The ashes with which we are smeared on this day, remind us of the fact that we are from dust and to the dust we shall return. But it is also a call to return to the Lord and to meditate upon the holy passion of the Lord. The season of Lent as a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's



resurrection at Easter is an opportunity for us to undertake the practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving as a means to sanctification personal and share with others what we have. The three pillars of Lent - prayer, fasting and almsgiving are not meant to be undertaken simply to fulfil the "rules" of Lent. Prayer, from the heart; fasting from those things that interfere in strengthening a relationship with God; and almsgiving with compassion for those in need will make the Lenten journey a fruitful period of renewal. Let us not forget that the devotions like stations of the Cross, meditation on the five wounds of Christ and the last seven words of Jesus will benefit us spiritually. Please find the Lenten message of Pope Francis in the **Annexure 01** of this bulletin. The Karnataka Region Catholic Bishops' Council (KRCBC) has also given the Lenten message to all in the region. You will find this text in **Annexure -2**.

## WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

Every year on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, we celebrate the International Women's Day. The theme for this year's International Women's Day is: "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow". recognizing the contribution of women, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation and the response to build a more sustainable future for all. Let the celebration of the International Women's Day be an occasion to bring awareness to all those who try to suppress, harass and abuse women, so that they may respect women with dignity. Thus, we create a society of equality with equity.



## PRAY FOR PEACE

As we are aware of the war between Russia and Ukraine, which is disturbing the peace of several neighboring countries, and has raised concern in the whole world; let us pray for peace in these countries. Let us have a day of Prayer with fasting on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022 in this regard. May the Lord of Peace grant peace & harmony in the world at large.



## ST. JOSEPH - THE CHASTE SPOUSE OF MOTHER MARY

St. Joseph was chosen to be the foster father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the head of the Holy Family. To this divine election, St. Joseph responded with unconditional generosity. Pope Paul VI describes his response in the following way:



*way: [Joseph's] fatherhood is expressed concretely in his having made his life a service, a sacrifice to the mystery of the Incarnation and to the redemptive mission connected with it; in having used the legal authority, which was his, over the Holy Family in order to make a total gift of self, of his life and work;*



*in having turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of self, an oblation of his heart and all his abilities into love placed at the service of the Messiah growing up in his house (Paul VI, Discourse, March 19, 1966; in RC, 8). May St. Joseph the chaste spouse of Blessed Virgin Mary be an inspiration and blessing to all of us in exercising our responsibility.*

## **ANNUNCIATION OF INCARNATION OF OUR LORD**

The Feast of the Annunciation celebrates God's entrance into the human world through Jesus and Mary's willingness to accept God's command. The Feast of the Annunciation represents the coming of hope to the world. The birth of Jesus Christ was a symbol of the restoration of the broken relationship between God and us. The *fiat* of Blessed Virgin Mary became the first step in the realisation of the Divine plan of Salvation. May the faithful Mother intercede for us, so that we too may remain faithful to our Christian and ministerial vocation.



## **BISHOP THOMAS A. VAZHAPILLY**

Most Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Vazhapilly, the Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Mysore celebrates the anniversary of his Episcopal Ordination on 25<sup>th</sup> March and his birthday on 11<sup>th</sup> April. He has served our Diocese as the Bishop for 14 years and though he is retired from the active ministry in 2017, he is still rendering his valuable service in whatever way possible. At this juncture, as we wish him Congratulations and Happy Birthday, we pray that the Almighty God bless him with good health of body and peace of mind. *Ad multos annos*, your Excellency.





## **HOLY WEEK**

The Holy Week - as the name goes, is the most holy of all the weeks of the year for us Christians. Let us make the best use of the Holy Week to ponder over the sacrificial love of God and attempt to return to him with all our heart.



- ◆ **Palm Sunday :** We begin the Holy Week - with Palm Sunday or the Sunday of our Lord's Passion. Jesus travelled to Jerusalem knowing that this journey would end in His sacrificial death on the cross for the sins of all mankind. With the triumphant entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, He begins His march towards Calvary. As we begin seriously to meditate upon the passion of Christ, may we make use of the days of the Holy Week to prepare ourselves ardently well to celebrate the joy of the Easter, especially with good confession. *Please note, that the collections during the Holy Mass on Palm Sunday are to be sent to the diocese for the purpose of Communio India Sunday to CCBI.*


- ◆ **Maundy Thursday:** On this day, we have a call to practice sacrificial sharing and self-giving love. Let us imitate the self-giving model of Jesus who shares with us his own Body and Blood and enriches us with his Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist. It is by sharing our blessings-our talents, time, health and wealth-with others that we become true disciples of Christ and obey his new commandment: *Love one another as I have loved you* (Jn 13:34). On this day, we commemorate the Last Supper of our Lord in which he instituted two great sacraments, namely - the Holy Eucharist and the Sacred Orders. It is a special day to remember and pray for our priests, that they may imbibe the qualities of the eternal Good Shepherd. *Kindly note that the collections during the Holy Mass on Maundy Thursday are to be sent to the diocese towards the fund to care for the elderly and sick priests of our diocese.*


- ◆ **Good Friday:** On Good Friday, we commemorate the death of Jesus on the cross. When we prayerfully meditate before the crucifix, we can see and begin to understand the ultimate result of sin. Our sins crucified our loving Lord. And our sins continue to cause him to suffer.

On this Good Friday, let us embrace the Holy Cross and venerate it with great affection, and love and carry our daily crosses - to deny our very selves as we surrender to God's will. *Please note that the collections during the Good Friday service have to be sent to the diocese towards the "Hunger and disease" funds.*



## EASTER

Easter is a feast which gives us hope and encouragement in this world of pain, sorrows, and tears. It reminds us that life is worth living. It is our belief in the Real Presence of the Risen Jesus in our souls, in His Church, in the Blessed Sacrament, and in Heaven that gives meaning to our personal, as well as to our common prayers. Our trust in the all-pervading presence of the Risen Lord gives us strength to fight against temptations and provides freedom from unnecessary worries and fears. Let us rejoice and be glad on our Lord's Resurrection which brings us so many graces and blessings. We have been cleansed from our sins with a renewed hope and have a deepened faith which will serve as our armour against evil forces. Let us faithfully renew our baptismal promises and make sincere efforts to live the same in our day today life.



## DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Our Lord Jesus has given us comforting words of mercy. He wants to lavishly shower mercy and love upon his children. Jesus revealed his message of Mercy to St. Faustina - a devoted nun from Poland. He revealed this message to her so that she may pass it on to the world:



*Souls that make an appeal to my mercy delight me. To such souls I grant even more graces than they ask. No soul that has called upon my mercy has*

*ever been disappointed. I will show my great compassion.* Divine Mercy is hope wrapped up in a loving God, ever ready to embrace us and forgive even our gravest sins. May the feast of the Divine Mercy be an opportunity to each one of us to forgive those whom we have not forgiven and re-establish the broken relationships.

## **THE SYNOD : DISSEMINATION & CONSULTATION**



As you all are aware, the Synodal process is in full swing in our diocese with the guidance of the CCBI under the leadership of the Executive Committee and the Deanery Committees in the diocese. In the month of January 2022, once again the Executive committee along with the Bishop visited all the nine deaneries of the diocese and held the dissemination sessions of the Synod, explaining the 10 themes to be discussed and the questions to be attended to by the participants in various levels. It was indeed a fruitful effort, that it has helped all the parish clergy and the animators of the parishes to help all the people to participate actively in the consultation process of the synod. I request all the Priests of the diocese, religious and laity to co-operate and be part of this synodal Church by a life of communion and participation for the mission of our Church.

I am happy to inform you that Mr. Louis Pius Menezes, Mr. P. J. Joy and Mr. Wilston Gonsalves of St. Anne's Parish, in Virajpet, Coorg have composed a Synod song under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Madalai Muthu – the parish priest. This Synod song along with the lyrics will be forwarded to you through Whatsapp and e-mail.

## BLESSINGS & INAUGURATIONS

### ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

New building for St. Joseph's College for Women at Rammanahalli was blessed by Most Rev. Dr. K. Antony William – the Bishop of Mysore and Inaugurated by Prof. G. Hemanth Kumar – Vice Chancellor of the University of Mysore in the presence of Most Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Vazhapilly – Bishop Emeritus, priests, religious, staff and students on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022. The Degree college for women was established in 2016 at Sathagalli and was functioning in the present St. Joseph's PU College for women, Sathagalli. As the number of students steadily increased, the need to have a separate, dedicated building for the degree students arose. As a result, the new building for “St. Joseph's College for Women” is constructed at Rammanahalli. I thank Rev. Fr. Vijay Kumar - the MDES Secretary and his team for the hard work and co-operation in putting up this new College building.



### SANMAARGI, THE NEW DIOCESAN BISHOP'S HOUSE

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022, Sanmaargi – the New Bishop's House at Bannimantap, Mysore was blessed and inaugurated in the presence of Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, limited number of Religious and Laity. It was a simple, but a meaningful event. My heart felt thanks to the guests of the day. I also thank the organizing committee who meticulously planned and programmed the function. Each of the individual priests and their team of religious sisters along with the laity did well in their responsibility. My special thanks to all of them. I take this opportunity to thank the donor agencies: Propaganda Fide – Rome, MEP Fathers – France, Archdiocese of Cologne – Germany and other Indigenous donors. Special thanks to Rev. Fathers, the Architect, Engineers, and other collaborators of various departments for their quality work. As informed earlier, it looks big and beautiful externally due to the requirement of the heritage architecture in the Rajamaarga by the Mysore City Corporation. The Diocese of Mysore for past 81 years managed only with the purchased old house which was later either added and altered more than once. This old building, though look good externally is weak and costs lots for regular maintenance. Sanmaargi is an asset to the diocese of Mysore for the years to come. All are welcome to this abode of the diocesan administration.



# Sanmaargi

— to shepherd HIS flock —

The New Diocesan Bishop's House

**Inauguration & Blessing-31-01 2022**

*Deus Grätias*



## INFORMATION

### **SANMAARGI :**

**The office of the Diocesan Administration is already shifted to Sanmaargi - the new Bishop's House in Bannimantap, Mysuru. Kindly note the following :**

**The contact landline phone number of Sanmaargi will be the same as of the old Bishop's House: 0821-2443545, 2430145. You may contact the Bishop's Secretary through these numbers to seek appointments for meeting the diocesan curia members including the Bishop or for any emergency. It will be good, if prior appointments are sought to know the availability of the concerned in their offices to avoid waste of time or missing them when you arrive in Sanmaargi. We are happy to be available and meet you, if we are informed in advance.**

- The Bishop will be available on the following days between 9-30 a.m. to 12-00 noon, with prior appointments:

<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Diocesan Clergy</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Charity Day - for the poor &amp; needy</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>No Transaction Day - No visitors</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Religious Priests, Brothers and Sisters</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Laity</b>

- All Sundays and Mondays are the days of the Bishop for the pastoral visits and other programmes outstation.
- As the campus is big, you are requested to co-operate with the Security Personnel and the Receptionist as you enter Sanmaargi premises and the building.
- The office timings will be from 9-00 a.m to 5-00 p.m from Monday to Friday and 9-00 a.m to 4-00 p.m on Saturdays, except on the declared holidays.
- The offices of the Diocesan Curia, PRO & Manager, Diocesan Auditors and Engineers are in the same venue of Sanmaargi for your service.

- The postal address of the new Bishop's House is  
 SANMAARGI  
 Mysore Diocesan Bishop's House  
 # 3845/M2, Rajamaarga, Nelson Mandela Road  
 Near Highway Circle, Bannimantap 'C' Layout, Mysuru – 570 015

## **LITURGICAL ARTICLES (HOST PARTICLES & SACRAMENTAL WINE)**

The stall which was in the old Bishop's House is already shifted to Aaradhana Liturgical Centre in the Cathedral Campus to facilitate and make the liturgical things available to you from 6-00 a.m to 8-00 p.m every day, except on the declared holidays. This arrangement is made to benefit everyone. Hence, you may visit Aaradhana Liturgical Centre for Host particles, Sacramental Wine, Candles, Address Stickers and other liturgical books. However, please contact the Chancellor as usual for the formats of the Spiritual Annual Returns (Statistics) and dispensation forms in Sanmaargi.



For your kind information:

- The Mysore Diocesan Society is the legal license holder for the procurement and distribution of the Sacramental Wine.
- An outlet facility to distribute the Sacramental Wine is made available at Cathedral premises with the necessary special permission obtained from the State Excise Office.
- We are responsible to the Excise Department to follow their stipulated guidelines and maintain the documents strictly.
- There will be a monthly inspection by the officials of the department.
- The receiver of the Sacramental Wine has to sign in the register without fail.
- It is better that the priests and religious purchase the Sacramental Wine directly. In case the Sacristans are sent for the same, a letter of authorization in the letter head with the parish /convent seal is a must.

- No wine will be sold in Aaradhana Liturgical Centre to the laity to offer during the Holy Mass, due to the scarcity of the same. They can always be encouraged to offer other useful articles to the parish.
  - Only one Sacramental Wine bottle will be available for each parish / convent per month, as in the past.
- Please co-operate with regard to the above.

## **MEDICAL EXPENSES**

As informed earlier, the diocesan clergy of the self-sufficient parishes and institutions have to avail the usual and regular medical expenses from their respective parishes / institutions. Those priests under government pension will manage the same from the benefit of the pension.



The non-self-sufficient parishes and institutions can approach the Financial Administrator for the same. The insurance facility will take care of the expenses when hospitalized. However, before hospitalization for any medical treatment, the diocesan clergy are requested to inform the Financial Administrator without fail, as he has to inform the same to the insurance company immediately. Please co-operate.

## **UFS PROVINCIAL**

The Ursuline Franciscan Sisters (UFS) in their provincial chapter held in December 2021-January 2022, have re-elected Rev. Sr. Lilly Fernandes as the Provincial Superior for the Mysore province with a new team of councilors. We congratulate them and wish all the best in their responsibilities.



## FDM PROVINCIAL

Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy (FDM) in their provincial chapter held in January 2022, have elected Rev. Sr. Margaret as their Provincial Superior along with the new team of councilors. We congratulate them and wish all the best in their responsibilities.



## CLERGY CONFERENCE

The next clergy conference will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at Satyaniketan (Catholic Centre), Mysuru. Rev. Fr. George Vincent Lobo, the Regional Secretary for the Commission for Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC), which was earlier known as Small Christian Communities (SCC) will animate the clergy conference. The conference will begin at 10-00 a.m and on the same day in the evening we shall have the penitential service. I request all the priests of the diocese including the religious priests to make the best use of the opportunity to prepare well for the meaningful celebration of Easter.

## CHRISM MASS - 2022

Annually Chrism Mass day is very important in the life and ministry of every cleric in the Diocese. It is a time to express the solidarity with each other. All the priests in the diocese share the fraternity with the Bishop and other clergy. In our Diocese, we shall have the celebration of the Chrism Mass on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 7-00 a.m in St. Joseph's Cathedral, Mysuru. Kindly participate and pray for all the priests of our Diocese.





## **APPOINTMENTS / TRANSFERS**

### **Regional Secretary:**

Rev. Fr. Roxan Thomas Baros is appointed as the Regional Secretary for the Karnataka Regional Commission for Health. While thanking him for accepting this additional responsibility for the universal church, we wish him all the best in the new assignment.



### **Mariapura:**

Rev. Fr. Victor CM is appointed as the new Parish Priest of St. Mary's Church, Mariapura in Kollegal taluk. While thanking Rev. Fr. David Periyannayagam CM for his service in this parish for past few years, we welcome the new parish priest and wish him all the best in the new responsibility.

### **Mandya:**

Rev. Fr. Madhanu Kranthi Kumar, TOR is appointed as the new Assistant Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Church, Mandya. While thanking the outgoing Asst. Priest Rev. Fr. Raju TOR, we welcome the new Asst. Priest and wish him all the best in his new responsibility.

### **Martalli:**

Rev. Fr. Albert Joseph HGN is serving as Asst. Parish Priest in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Martalli. We welcome him and wish him all the best in his ministry.

### **Spiritual Directors:**

The following priests are appointed as the new Spiritual Directors for the following Pious Associations.

**Legion of Mary – Rev. Fr. Mohan Vincent SMM**

**Vincent de Paul Society – Rev. Fr. Estheppan Thomas CM**

While thanking the outgoing Spiritual Directors – Fr. Madalai Muthu SMM, Fr. Peter CM and Fr. Rahul SAC for their service to the Pious Associations in the Diocese, we welcome the new spiritual directors and wish them all the best in the new assignments.

## SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL ACTIVITIES : COVID -19

Covid-19 has brought in a totally new way of living. Its effects are seen on many levels, such as - social, economic, psychological, and religious fronts. This pandemic unlike many other epidemics of recent past has upset the world totally in all aspects. It has torn down the life of the

humanity and has brought-in misery. People have moved on from fear, anger, and withdrawal to hopelessness, apathy, and resignation not only on psychological terms but also on spiritual activities and expressions.\



As the regular liturgical celebrations, especially the Holy Masses could not be celebrated in the churches, as a provisionary solution to the situation, the celebration of the Holy Mass on the virtual platforms were introduced. The online participation of the Holy Mass can never replace the real participation in the Holy Mass, being physically present in the church.

The Holy Mass is a community celebration and becomes meaningless without the assembly of the faithful. Thanks be to God, that the situation is improving and the deadly Corona virus seems to be vanishing or losing its power. The life is gradually returning to normalcy. People are getting used to Covid-19 or are learning to live with it.

However, it is saddening to see that some of the faithful still think that the online participation in the Holy Mass can replace the real participation in the Holy Mass even now. At this juncture, I would like to request all the Parish Priests, the Religious, Catechism Teachers and specially the parents to educate and encourage the faithful, specially the Youth and Children on the necessity to participate in the Holy Mass in the Parish churches being physically present. Let our usual Catechism classes, other spiritual and pastoral activities resume in all the parishes, of course following the

precautionary measures of using masks and sanitizers, until we receive further information from the government. Let us wish and pray that the pandemic vanishes and life returns to normality completely at the earliest. We need to put more efforts to bring back the people to our churches, its activities and the life of faith.

## **BIBLE COURSES**

The Word of God is the light to our steps, and according to St. Jerome, “ignorance of the Scripture is ignorance of Christ himself”.

**Kannada:** The Karnataka Regional Bible Commission is organizing a 20 months correspondence Bible course in Kannada. Those interested may enroll your names paying just ₹300/- to: Secretary – Commission for Bible, Karnataka Regional Pastoral Centre, KROSS Building, 58/6, 2nd Cross, Wheeler Road, Da Costa Layout, Bengaluru 560 084. Every month a booklet of notes on each book of the Holy Bible will be sent to your postal address to help you study the Holy Bible better. I congratulate Rev. Fr. Vijayaraj Jaunet and his team for this initiative, and wish all success.

**English:** The National Biblical Catechetical & Liturgical Center (NBCLC) is organizing a correspondence Bible course containing 15 lessons in English. This course is focusing only on the four gospels and a Diploma Certificate will be given by NBCLC at the successful completion of the course. Those interested may enroll your names paying just ₹1000/- to: The Director, BCC Secretariat, Post Bag #8426, Hutchins Road, 2nd Cross, Bengaluru 560 084. Those who are enrolled will get 15 booklets of notes prepared by expert Catholic Scholars of our country. While congratulating Rev. Dr. A. John Baptist, the Director of NBCLC and his team, we wish all the best for this initiative.



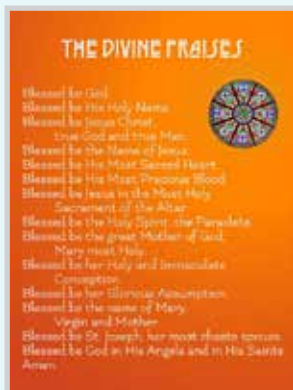
## CLOTHE BANK

Adorers of the Blood of Christ (ASC) sisters are organising a Clothe Bank by which they are trying to collect both used (if in good condition, washed & ironed) and unused clothes. Kids, ladies and gents wear are accepted. The purpose of this clothe bank is to sell for low price to the poor and raise funds to help in the education of poor children and to support the HIV/AIDS affected families and widows. Those who are willing to help them are requested to send the clothes to : Navodaya, Aradhana Convent, Srirampura, Ring Road Junction, Mysuru or contact them on 9449272181 / 0821-2361343.



## RECITATION OF DIVINE PRAISES

We all know that the Church had the long standing practice of reciting the Divine praises immediately after the benediction, before the reposition of the Blessed Sacrament. It is still continued in many parts of the world, including Italy. Neither the Holy See, nor the Episcopal Conference of India has officially given any directives to stop the practice of the recitation of the Divine praises. It is only due to some vague information the recitation of the same is stopped in our churches. Therefore, it is apt that we restart the recitation of the Divine praises soon after the benediction, as has been the tradition in the Church.



## MINISTRY OF CATECHIST

With a new Apostolic Letter *Antiquum ministerium*, Pope Francis establishes the lay ministry of catechist intending to respond to an urgent need for the evangelisation of the modern world to be undertaken in a “secular”



manner, avoiding clericalization. The Holy Father institutes the lay ministry of catechist for: *fidelity to the past and responsibility for the present are necessary conditions for the Church to carry out her mission in the world.* For more information kindly refer to **Annexure 03**.

## SYMPOSIUM ON THE THEOLOGY OF PRIESTHOOD

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Bishops, organized a three days (17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022) symposium on the theology of Priesthood with the France-based Research and Anthropology Center for Vocations. The inaugural address of the Holy Father is very personal and relevant to our times. Pope Francis' message was organized around four forms of "closeness" that he said were "decisive" in the life of a priest: closeness to God, closeness to the bishop, closeness to other priests, and closeness to people. I recommend that all the priests read this message. The message of the Holy Father on the theology of priesthood is in **Annexure 04** of this bulletin.

## TRANSFERS – 2022

All those priests who are due for transfer this year, are requested to be ready with all the required registers, and documents including the Auditing of accounts, specially of the Minority Funds received. A format will be sent, which has to be filled-in and also followed by those priests on transfer for smooth and easy transition and effective handing over / take charge of the parish / institutions. Please co-operate.

## AUDITING

Hope all the parishes and institutions have completed the accounting, auditing and submission of the same to the Registrar of the Societies and the Department of the Income Tax for the financial year 2020-21. Please keep ready the accounts along with the supporting documents like books of accounts, updated pass sheets, original bills etc., for the auditing for the year 2021-22. The auditing of the same will begin by 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2022. Timely attention in this regard will help us to complete the audit and submit the same to the concerned department.





## **GRANTS FROM MINORITY DEPARTMENT**

We in Karnataka are blessed with the financial support of the state government through the department of Minorities to take up projects like repairs of Churches, constructions of community hall and compound walls. Good many priests and religious have utilized well the funds of the project for the good of the people. There are few, who have to give more attention in this regard. The auditing and reporting of the proper utilization of funds is very important. Hence, I request those who are due to documentation of the implementation of the projects of the past and the present to attend seriously & immediately without fail. Let not the registered society or the members of the same, including the President (Bishop of Mysore) be affected by one's negligence. Please take this request with utmost importance.

## **EARMARKED COLLECTIONS**

As we are coming to an end of the financial year by next month, all are reminded to send the stipulated collections/contributions to the Financial Administrator at the earliest. Let us avoid last minute transactions. While thanking you all for sending the collections in time for specific purposes, I request those who have not sent the same, to send them without delay. The list of the annual contributions are found in the Ordo. Please find enclosed the details of the earmarked collections received for the period from January - February 2022 in **Annexure 05**.



**BIRTHDAYS:**

The following priests of our Diocese have their Birthdays during the months of March and April. Our prayerful wishes to them.

<b>MARCH</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Mob. No.</b>
12	Rev. Fr. Jacob Kollanoor	9448264629
19	Rev. Fr. Vijay Raj Jaunet	8880053329
22	Rev. Fr. Joseph Rodrigues	9480381421 / 8904215119
25	Rev. Fr. Angelo Pais	9448217209 / 9901965694
28	Rev. Fr. Joseph S. D.	9900115100
30	Rev. Fr. Anthonappa C.	9945652534

<b>APRIL</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Mob. No.</b>
1	Rev. Fr. Gilbert Edward Aranha	9945548655
4	Rev. Fr. John Louis	7760650393
4	Rev. Fr. Vincent T.	9743508908
4	Rev. Fr. V. Julian, HGN	9176816271
5	Rev. Fr. John Bosco	8088940062
10	Rev. Fr. Chinnappa I.	8095082606
10	Rev. Fr. Madalai Muthu	9448037928
10	Rev. Fr. Mariyaraj George, MSFS	9481869457
11	Most Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Vazhapilly	9611108395
11	Rev. Fr. Joseph G.	9880903994
22	Rev. Fr. Rayappa M.	9620549272 / 9535331804
22	Rev. Fr. Rohan A	9844255956 / 6360798377
25	Rev. Fr. Stanislaus Manickam	7760185771



*We also wish a happy birthday to all the religious fathers, brothers and sisters who celebrate their birthdays in the months of March and April.*

## NECROLOGY :

We fondly remember the Mysore Diocesan Priests on their death anniversary during the months of March and April. With gratitude we pray for the departed for their service.

### March

03.03.2001	Rev. Fr. Gregorious Madapilly
03.03.2020	Rev. Fr. William Albuquerque
17.03.1993	Most Rev. Dr. Francis Michaelappa
17.03.1979	Rev. Fr. Devaraj Nicholas
19.03.1968	Rev. Fr. Louis D'Hendecourt
20.03.1997	Rev. Fr. Thomas Thadickal
21.03.1964	Rev. Fr. Lazaro Gustave
22.03.1999	Rev. Fr. Jacob Thadickal
22.03.1991	Rev. Fr. Utheriam V.S.
28.03.1973	Rev. Fr. Anthony H. Noronha

### April

01.04.2012	Rev. Fr. Valerian G. Tauro
12.04.2021	Rev. Fr. Joannes P.
13.04.2016	Rev. Fr. Rajakannu
15.04.1987	Rev. Fr. Charles Chervier
18.04.2004	Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Roy
18.04.1993	Rev. Fr. John V.C.
18.04.2021	Rev. Fr. John Francis Teixeira
19.04.1977	Rev. Fr. Lapous Yves
19.04.2020	Rev. Fr. Benedict J. R. Gomes
21.04.2010	Rev. Fr. Joseph Saldanha
26.04.1956	Rev. Fr. J. B. Hedde
27.04.2008	Rev. Fr. John Manthadam
28.04.1991	Rev. Fr. J. Beaudemont



*We also pray for the departed souls of religious priests, brothers and sisters on their death anniversary in the months of March and April for their service in our diocese.*

**WHATSAPP MESSAGES FROM THE DIOCESE****(January – February 2022)****Date: 08/01/2022**

Dear & Rev. Father,

Due to Covid restrictions, the diocesan marriage preparation course did not take place as usual. Hence, the same will be conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2022 (Mon & Tue) at Catholic Centre in Kannada language.

Kindly send those who need the Marriage preparation course on above dates.

Bishop's House  
Mysuru.

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**Date : 09/01/2022**

Dear & Rev. Father/ Brother / Sister/Laity,

Mr. Baptist Monis aged 89 years, beloved brother of Bishop Cyprian Monis of Asonsal, passed away today (09-01-2022) at 6-30 a.m. in St. Joseph's Hospital, Mysuru due to prolonged illness. The funeral Mass and the burial service will be held tomorrow (10-01-2022) in Dornalli. Our heartfelt Condolences to Bishop Cyprian and the bereaved family members. May his soul rest in peace.

Bishop's house  
Mysuru.

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**Date : 29/01/2022**

As you are aware that the Blessing and Inauguration of the new Bishop's House "Sanmaargi" will be held on the Monday, the 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 2022 at No.3845 M2, Nelson Mandela Road, Raajamaarga, Near Highway Circle, Bannimantap'C' Layout, Mysore – 570 015.

Please note the following:

\*We shall follow the SOP norms of Covid19.

\*Please be present at the venue by 09-30 a.m.

\*Those who self-drive the vehicle are requested to park the vehicle in the grounds of St. Joseph's School of AC Sisters (opp. to Sanmaargi).

\*The parking for the vehicles with drivers are arranged at St. Philomena's College Campus, Bannimantap, Mysore. The drivers are requested to be in the College Campus only. Lunch is arranged for all the drivers at St. Philomena's College Campus.

Looking forward to meeting you on Monday - 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 2022 at 09.30 a.m.

Organisers

Bishop's House

Mysore.

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**Date : 03/02/2022**

Dear Rev. Fathers/ Brothers/Sisters and Laity,

Rev. Sr. Olive CSST, aged 83 years, of Christ the King Convent passed away today at 3-10 a.m. due to Covid-19. Her mortal remains will be cremated. A requiem mass with the ashes will be held at Christ the King Convent, Mysore at 4 p.m. May her soul rest in peace.

Kindly pray for the repose of her soul. We also convey our Heartfelt Condolence to the bereaved ones.

Bishop's House

Mysuru.

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**Date : 05/02/2022**

Dear & Rev. Fathers/Sisters/Brothers/Laity,

Next Sunday - on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022, we celebrate the Holy Childhood Sunday.



Herewith, we are forwarding the Liturgical text for the celebration of the Holy Childhood in our Parishes/ Religious Communities/ Institutions. Kindly translate the same into vernacular languages and make use of the text for liturgy.

A gentle reminder, to make announcement so that the faithful may contribute generously towards the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood through the diocese.

Please co-operate.

Bishop's House

Mysuru

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**Date : 18/02/2022**

Dear & Rev. Father's, Brothers, Sisters & Laity,

Rev. Sr. James, aged 45 years of Satya Seva Congregation passed away today (18/02/2022) at 6-00 p.m in Bengaluru due to Cancer. The funeral Mass followed by the burial service will be at 3-00 p.m tomorrow (19/02/2022) at Mariapura in Kollegal. Our heartfelt condolence to the Sisters of Satya Seva and her bereaved family members. May her soul rest in peace.

Sanmaargi

Mysuru

## ANNEXURE - 01



### LENTEN MESSAGE

***“Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all” (Gal 6:9-10)***

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent is a favourable time for personal and community renewal, as it leads us to the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For our Lenten journey in 2022, we will do well to reflect on Saint Paul’s exhortation to the Galatians: “Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity (*kairós*), let us do good to all” (*Gal 6:9-10*).

### SOWING AND REAPING

In these words, the Apostle evokes the image of sowing and reaping, so dear to Jesus (cf. Mt 13). Saint Paul speaks to us of a *kairós*: an opportune time for sowing goodness in view of a future harvest. What is this “opportune time” for us? Lent is certainly such an opportune time, but so is our entire existence, of which Lent is in some way an image.<sup>1</sup> All too often in our lives, greed, pride and the desire to possess, accumulate and consume have the upper hand, as we see from the story of the foolish man in the Gospel parable, who thought his life was safe and secure because of the abundant grain and goods he had stored in his barns (cf. Lk 12:16-21). Lent invites us to conversion, to a change in mindset, so that life’s truth and beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sowing and sharing goodness.

The first to sow is God himself, who with great generosity “continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 54). During Lent we are called to respond to God’s gift by accepting his word, which is “living

<sup>1</sup>Cf. SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Serm.* 243, 9,8; 270, 3; *En. in Ps.* 110, 1.

and active" (Heb 4:12). Regular listening to the word of God makes us open and docile to his working (cf. Jas 1:21) and bears fruit in our lives. This brings us great joy, yet even more, it summons us to become God's co-workers (cf. 1 Cor 3:9). By making good use of the present time (cf. Eph 5:16), we too can sow seeds of goodness. This call to sow goodness should not be seen as a burden but a grace, whereby the Creator wishes us to be actively united with his own bountiful goodness.

What about the harvest? Do we not sow seeds in order to reap a harvest? Of course! Saint Paul points to the close relationship between sowing and reaping when he says: "Anyone who sows sparsely will reap sparsely as well, and anyone who sows generously will reap generously as well" (2 Cor 9:6). But what kind of harvest are we talking about? A first fruit of the goodness we sow appears in ourselves and our daily lives, even in our little acts of kindness. In God, no act of love, no matter how small, and no "generous effort" will ever be lost (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 279). Just as we recognize a tree by its fruits (cf. Mt 7:16, 20), so a life full of good deeds radiates light (cf. Mt 5:14-16) and carries the fragrance of Christ to the world (cf. 2 Cor 2:15). Serving God in freedom from sin brings forth fruits of sanctification for the salvation of all (cf. Rom 6:22).

In truth, we see only a small portion of the fruits of what we sow, since, according to the Gospel proverb, "one sows, while another reaps" (Jn 4:37). When we sow for the benefit of others, we share in God's own benevolent love: "it is truly noble to place our hope in the hidden power of the seeds of goodness we sow, and thus to initiate processes whose fruits will be reaped by others" (Fratelli Tutti, 196). Sowing goodness for the benefit of others frees us from narrow self-interest, infuses our actions with gratuitousness, and makes us part of the magnificent horizon of God's benevolent plan.

The word of God broadens and elevates our vision: it tells us that the real harvest is eschatological, the harvest of the last, undying day. The mature fruit of our lives and actions is "fruit for eternal life" (Jn 4:36), our "treasure in heaven" (Lk 12:33; 18:22). Jesus himself uses the image of the seed that dies in the ground in order to bear fruit as a symbol of the mystery of his death and resurrection (cf. Jn 12:24); while Saint Paul uses the same image to speak of the resurrection of our bodies: "What is sown is perishable, but what is raised is imperishable; what is sown is contemptible but what is raised is glorious; what is sown is weak, but what is raised is powerful; what is sown

is a natural body, and what is raised is a spiritual body" (1 Cor 15:42-44). The hope of resurrection is the great light that the risen Christ brings to the world, for "if our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are of all people the most pitiable. In fact, however, Christ has been raised from the dead, as the first-fruits

of all who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:19-20). Those who are intimately united to him in love "by dying a death like his" (Rom 6:5) will also be united to his resurrection for eternal life (cf. Jn 5:29). "Then the upright will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Mt 13:43).

### **"LET US NOT GROW TIRED OF DOING GOOD"**

Christ's resurrection enlivens earthly hopes with the "great hope" of eternal life, planting the seed of salvation in our present time (cf. BENEDICT XVI, Spe Salvi, 3; 7). Bitter disappointment at shattered dreams, deep concern for the challenges ahead and discouragement at the poverty of our resources, can make us tempted to seek refuge in self-centredness and indifference to the suffering of others. Indeed, even our best resources have their limitations: "Youths grow tired and weary, the young stumble and fall" (Is 40:30). Yet God "gives strength to the weary, he strengthens the powerless... Those who hope in the Lord will regain their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles; though they run they will not grow weary, though they walk they will never tire" (Is 40:29, 31). The Lenten season calls us to place our faith and hope in the Lord (cf. 1 Pet 1:21), since only if we fix our gaze on the risen Christ (cf. Heb 12:2) will we be able to respond to the Apostle's appeal, "Let us never grow tired of doing good" (Gal 6:9).

*Let us not grow tired of praying.* Jesus taught us to "pray always without becoming weary" (Lk 18:1). We need to pray because we need God. Thinking that we need nothing other than ourselves is a dangerous illusion. If the pandemic has heightened the awareness of our own personal and social fragility, may this Lent allow us to experience the consolation provided by faith in God, without whom we cannot stand firm (cf. Is 7:9). No one attains salvation alone, since we are all in the same boat, amid the storms of history;<sup>2</sup> and certainly no one reaches salvation without God, for only the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ triumphs over the dark waters of death. Faith does not spare us life's burdens and tribulations, but it does allow us to face them in union with God in Christ, with the great hope that does not disappoint, whose pledge is the love that God has poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 5:1-5).

*Let us not grow tired of uprooting evil from our lives.* May the corporal fasting to which Lent calls us fortify our spirit for the battle against sin. Let us not grow tired of asking for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, knowing that God never tires of forgiving.<sup>3</sup> *Let us not grow tired of fighting against concupiscence*, that weakness which induces to selfishness and all evil, and finds in the course of history a variety of ways to lure men and women into sin (cf. Fratelli Tutti, 166). One of these is addiction to the digital media, which impoverishes human relationships. Lent is a propitious time to resist these temptations and to cultivate instead a more integral form of human communication (ibid., 43) made up of "authentic encounters" (ibid., 50), face-to-face and in person.

*Let us not grow tired of doing good in active charity towards our neighbours.* During this Lent, may we practise almsgiving by giving joyfully (cf. 2 Cor 9:7). God who “supplies seed to the sower and bread for food” (2 Cor 9:10) enables each of us not only to have food to eat, but also to be generous in doing good to others. While it is true that we have our entire life to sow goodness, let us take special advantage of this Lenten season to care for those close to us and to reach out to our brothers and sisters who lie wounded along the path of life (cf. Lk 10:25-37). Lent is a favourable time to seek out – and not to avoid – those in need; to reach out – and not to ignore – those who need a sympathetic ear and a good word; to visit – and not to abandon – those who are lonely. Let us put into practice our call to do good to all, and take time to love the poor and needy, those abandoned and rejected, those discriminated against and marginalized (cf. Fratelli Tutti, 193).

### **“IF WE DO NOT GIVE UP, WE SHALL REAP OUR HARVEST IN DUE TIME”**

Each year during Lent we are reminded that “goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day” (ibid., 11). Let us ask God to give us the patient perseverance of the farmer (cf. Jas 5:7), and to persevere in doing good, one step at a time. If we fall, let us stretch out our hand to the Father, who always lifts us up. If we are lost, if we are misled by the enticements of the evil one, let us not hesitate to return to God, who “is generous in forgiving” (Is 55:7). In this season of conversion, sustained by God’s grace and by the communion of the Church, let us not grow tired of doing good. The soil is prepared by fasting, watered by prayer and enriched by charity. Let us believe firmly that “if we do not give up, we shall reap our harvest in due time” and that, with the gift of perseverance, we shall obtain what was promised (cf. Heb 10:36), for our salvation and the salvation of others (cf. 1 Tim 4:16). By cultivating fraternal love towards everyone, we are united to Christ, who gave his life for our sake (cf. 2 Cor 5:14-15), and we are granted a foretaste of the joy of the kingdom of heaven, when God will be “all in all” (1 Cor 15:28).

May the Virgin Mary, who bore the Saviour in her womb and “pondered all these things in her heart” (Lk 2:19), obtain for us the gift of patience. May she accompany us with her maternal presence, so that this season of conversion may bring forth fruits of eternal salvation.

**ANNEXURE - 02****LENTEN MESSAGE - KRCBC****KARNATAKA REGION  
CATHOLIC BISHOPS' COUNCIL**

President : **Most Rev. Peter Machado**  
Metropolitan Archbishop of Bangalore

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**Karnataka Region Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter**

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, and the People of God,

*Greetings of Peace to all of you!*

**Introduction:** With the observance of Ash Wednesday on 02 March, we will be beginning our Lenten pilgrimage of personal and community renewal, as we move to its culmination in the celebration of the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the Holy Week. On this occasion, which Pope Francis calls a 'kairos' moment, I, on behalf of all the Catholic Bishops of Karnataka, would like to address these few words to you to encourage and support you in your own Lenten pilgrimage of prayer, penance and charity.

**1. The Papal Message:** Indeed, as we begin this sacred journey, we can do no better than follow the call of the Holy Father to reflect on St Paul's exhortation to the Galatians: *"Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity (kairós), let us do good to all"* (Gal. 6:9-10).

In his inspiring message for lent this year, Pope Francis invites us to **conversion**, to a change in mindset, so that life's truth and beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sharing, and not so much in self-interest as in self-sacrifice. There is a right time to sow and a right time to reap, the 'kairos' moment. Lent is certainly such a kairos moment, a moment of special grace. Most often in our lives, the desire for greed, lust and pride; the desire to possess, accumulate and consume; the desire to use and abuse people for our own selfish gratification; the desire to dominate, dictate and disempower seem to influence our choices and decisions. But the Lord shows us another way, that of sowing goodness for the benefit of others which frees us from the narrow self-interest, infuses our actions with gratuitousness, and makes us part



of God's benevolent plan, and brings us to life without end. The word of God tells us that the real harvest is eschatological, the harvest of the last, undying day. The mature fruit of our lives and actions is "fruit for eternal life" (Jn 4:36). If we now sow goodness, love, peace and joy, then, we will surely reap an abundance of peace, joy, love and goodness on the last day. That is our unalloyed hope born of unflinching faith.

**It is for this reason that the Pope exhorts us not to grow tired of doing good.** It is true that bitter disappointment at shattered dreams, deep concern for the challenges ahead and discouragement at the poverty of our resources, can make us tempted to seek refuge in self-centeredness and indifference to the suffering of others. But let us not lose hope. Let us not be weary in doing good works: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Let us not grow tired of praying. We need to pray because we need God. No one attains salvation without God, and the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ tells us that even though the seed has to first fall to the ground and die, still, that is not the end of the story, but it soon brings forth abundant fruit. The light of the resurrection triumphs over the darkness of death. This is our faith. Faith does not spare us life's burdens and tribulations, but it does allow us to face them in union with God in Christ, with the great hope that does not disappoint, whose pledge is the love that God has poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:1-5).

**Therefore, the Holy Father assures us in the words of St. Paul, that if we do not give up, we shall reap our harvest in due time.** Each year, during Lent, we are reminded that "goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day". Let us ask God to give us the patient perseverance of the farmer (Jas. 5:7), in order to persevere in doing good, one step at a time. If we fall, let us stretch out our hand to the Father, who always lifts us up, as He did Peter. In this season of conversion, sustained by God's grace and by the communion of the Church, let us not grow tired of doing good. Let us keep on sowing. The soil is prepared by fasting, watered by prayer and enriched by charity. Let us believe firmly that "if we do not give up, we shall reap our harvest in due time" and that, with the gift of perseverance, we shall obtain what was promised (Heb. 10:36), for our salvation and the salvation of others (1 Tim. 4:16). By cultivating fraternal love towards everyone, we are united to Christ, and we are granted a foretaste of the joy of the kingdom of heaven, when God will be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

Let us, therefore, take these words of the Holy Father to our hearts as we walk the path to Calvary during this Lent with the sure hope of the resurrection.

**2. The Synodal Process:** As you know, the world-wide Church, under the leadership of Pope Francis, is walking the Synodal way, listening to one another and listening to the Spirit. The Contact Persons in all the dioceses, together with the Synodal Regional Coordinator, are doing an excellent work in this Consultation Process, and have created the necessary platforms to get the opinions of the people on their faith experience, the challenges they meet with in practising and bearing witness to it, and to collate the proposals and the practical solutions they make, which revolve around the Synodal Theme: *Communion, Participation and Mission*. We, therefore, request all of you to actively participate in this consultation process and to extend your full support and cooperation in making your diocesan report very pointed, pertinent and practical. The contact persons are requested to send the Diocesan Reports to the Synodal Regional Coordinator according to the format sent by the National Coordinating Committee. We firmly hope that some concrete proposals would emerge from these consultation processes for the welfare and growth of the Regional and the Universal Church.

**3. The Revised Regional Pastoral Plan:** Let us thank God for the fact that the Church in Karnataka is vibrant in its pastoral ministry as the Regional Pastoral Plan serves as a guiding star for all the dioceses to orient their pastoral ministries according to the Gospel values and the teachings of the Church. This Pastoral Plan is periodically revised once in three years and we are happy that the sixth edition of the Revised Pastoral Plan has just been released and sent to all the dioceses. We wish that all the Priests, the Religious and the Lay faithful study this Regional Pastoral Plan and incorporate the action plans in their own Diocesan Pastoral Plans; and, in the case of the Religious Congregations, in their various ministries. Our wish is that it has to be implemented at the parish level so that total renewal is experienced by the faithful who, in turn, become vibrant witnesses to Christ.

**4. Participation in Liturgy:** It was indeed unfortunate but unavoidable that, during the past two years due to Covid and Omicron pandemics, many of us lost the privilege of physically participating in the congregational Worship, and were confined to on-line participation on Social Media. Now that the Covid restrictions have been lifted and the physical participation in the worship services is permitted, we urge you to make every effort to go to your parish churches and mission centres to participate in the Sunday and weekday Masses, even as you, for your own safety and that of others, strictly follow the Covid protocols which are still in place.

**5. Faith Formation:** Needless to say, the future of our parishes, dioceses and the Universal Church is our children and youth. Due to Covid, they were deprived of



faith formation classes because they could not be physically present, though, thankfully, some parishes were conducting online classes. Still, many of our people seem to have forgotten their basic prayers and the fundamental Christian teachings. So, if we don't take the trouble to resume the physical Faith Formation Classes for our children and youth, there is every possibility that our churches would soon be empty, and all of us will be held responsible for it before God. Therefore, we earnestly appeal to all the parish priests and heads of institutions to start the offline Faith Formation Classes for our children and youth, and also to see that they come, at least, for the Sunday Masses.

**6. The Anti-Conversion Bill:** Karnataka is witnessing an exponential increase in harassment of and hate speech against Christians and Muslims. There seem to be clandestine factories manufacturing hate propaganda, devising devious strategies and instigating provocative incidents just to spread the communal virus everywhere, by creating artificial crises of dress, diet and dating. One such glaring attempt to hound, humiliate and harass us is the Anti-Conversion Bill, which is, in fact, not at all necessary as there are sufficient provisions and safeguards in the Constitution of India that clearly says: *All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion* (Art. 25/1). The claims that forceful and fraudulent methods are used for conversions are all false. Even then, there are about 12 sections in the IPC under which persons indulging in force or fraud can be prosecuted. This legislation is discriminatory. Though it purports to apply to all religions, in actual fact, it will be used as one more weapon against the minorities, as it is being done in the eight states that have passed the bill so far, where it is applied only to Christians, and that too on fake charges, trumped up allegations and deliberately manufactured incidents.

In Karnataka too this legislation will increase violent attacks on Christians, who are already, even without the Bill, are daily facing violent attacks from the vigilante groups. Our statues and Stations of the Cross have been destroyed and the sacred places violated. In 2021 alone 39 attacks were reported, 9 of them in November-December. Once the bill is passed, it will be a sort of license for the vigilante groups to make illegitimate inquiries on their own and harass the Christians. There is an increase in the violent incidents and hate speeches in Karnataka against Christians. There were a number of incidents of vandalism and attacks on Christians and the churches and schools at Christmas time. Unfortunately, even as the hate speeches targeting the Christians and the Muslims are increasing, the rulers, even at the highest level, seem to be either supinely silent or tacitly condoning or even actively conniving, while at the same time making empty noises of assurances of support and protection in order to deceive and

delude us. Their deafening silence in the face of this avalanche of hate is indeed shocking. Even the highest among the rulers, who otherwise created the impression of being decent now, unfortunately, seem to be obsessed with the need to be in the good books of their ideological well-spring by fair means or foul, just to be able to retain their shaky positions in the pecking order.

We have made enough representations to the Government. We have also made our stand very clear against this Anti-Conversion Bill through the press and the electronic media. Surprisingly, everything seems to have been a vain cry into a tone deaf ear. Now, therefore, only God is our refuge. God will not abandon us. Let God inspire those who are trying to usurp our fundamental rights to honour our privileges and to pave the way for our peaceful and fearless living in our region. Therefore, let us re-double our prayers and storm heaven together by firmly believing that Prayer alone can convince and convert those who hate us. Prayer alone will impel us to pray together with the Crucified Saviour saying, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"*. Please continue to pray especially during the Holy Season of Lent that this Bill is not passed, and that our churches and institutions are not harassed, hounded and harmed by the anti-Christian groups and organizations.

### **7. Appeal to pray for Peace in Ukraine**

The recent geopolitical developments and aggression against Ukraine will inevitably bring suffering and death on innocent children, women and men of the country. We are also greatly pained to know that many are displaced and stranded there, including many Indians. It is made known that, as the Russian attack on Ukraine continues, countless Indian students and professionals remain stuck in the intensifying military crisis feel they are being left to fend for themselves. While praying for their immediate evacuation and safe return, let us also earnestly and urgently lift up our prayers for all the people of Ukraine, imploring God that peace and justice may be restored in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel reflected in the words of Saint Paul: "For Christ is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Ephesians 2:14).

As we prepare ourselves to enter the prayerful time of Holy and Great Lent, a time of humility and repentance, we fervently and sincerely urge a change of heart, calling upon all parties and all people to refrain from further aggression, and instead to pursue de-escalation and the restoration of peace through dialogue and mutual respect.

Pope Francis announced 2 March as day of prayer and fasting for Ukraine. His Holiness said his heart aches over the situation in Ukraine and announced a "Day

of Fasting for Peace" on Ash Wednesday and invited everyone to make 2 March, a Day of Fasting for Peace. "I encourage believers in a special way to dedicate themselves intensely to prayer and fasting on that day. May the Queen of Peace preserve the world from the madness of war," the Pope said.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, heeding the call of the Holy Father, let us together as one family of God, walk the Way of the Cross along with Christ in His passion and death, listening to one another and to the Spirit, renewing our liturgical life, reclaiming our faith, re-kindling our hope and re-energizing our love for all, including those who hate us so much, knowing that Calvary is not the end, but after Calvary comes the new life and joy of the resurrection. The Lord will surely bring an abundance of good out of the unmitigated evil that assails us from all sides.

May we wish all of you a Grace-filled Lent and a Blessed Easter, and invoke God's abundant blessings upon you and your families, and members of your communities and institutions!

*This Pastoral Letter was issued, on behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Karnataka, on Saturday, regional 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2022.*



**+ Most Rev. Dr. Peter Machado**  
**Metropolitan Archbishop of Bangalore,**  
**and**

**President – Karnataka Region Catholic Bishops' Council**

## ANNEXURE - 03



### **“MOTU PROPRIO-ANTIQUUM MINISTERIUM”**

**By Pope Francis**

### **Instituting the Ministry of Catechist**

The ministry of Catechist in the Church is an ancient one. Theologians commonly hold that the first examples are already present in the writings of the New Testament. The service of catechesis may be traced back to those “teachers” mentioned by the Apostle in writing to the community of Corinth: “Some people God has designated in the Church to be, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work mighty deeds? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way” (1 Cor 12:28-31).

Saint Luke begins his Gospel by stating: “I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received” (Lk 1:3-4). The evangelist seems to be well aware that his writings offer a specific form of instruction that can give firm assurance to those already baptized. The Apostle Paul, for his part, tells the Galatians that: “one who is being instructed in the word should share all good things with his instructor” (Gal 6:6). As is evident, this text provides yet another detail; it speaks of the communion of life as a sign of the fruitfulness of an authentic catechesis.

1. From the beginning, the Christian community was characterized by many different forms of ministry carried out by men and women who, obedient to the working of the Holy Spirit, devoted their lives to the building up of the Church. At times, the charisms that the Spirit constantly pours out on the baptized took on a visible and tangible form of immediate service to the Christian community, one recognized as an indispensable diakonia for the community. The Apostle Paul authoritatively attests to this when he states that “there are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the



same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes" (1 Cor 12:4-11).

Within the broader charismatic tradition of the New Testament, then, we can see that certain baptized persons exercised the ministry of transmitting in a more organic and stable form related to different situations in life the teaching of the apostles and evangelists (cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 8). The Church wished to acknowledge this service as a concrete expression of a personal charism that contributed greatly to the exercise of her mission of evangelization. This glance at the life of the first Christian communities engaged in the spread of the Gospel also encourages the Church in our day to appreciate possible new ways for her to remain faithful to the word of the Lord so that his Gospel can be preached to every creature.

2. The history of evangelization over the past two millennia clearly shows the effectiveness of the mission of catechists. Bishops, priests and deacons, together with many men and women in the consecrated life, devoted their lives to catechetical instruction so that the faith might be an effective support for the life of every human being. Some of them also gathered around themselves others of their brothers and sisters sharing the same charism, and founded religious orders wholly dedicated to catechesis.

Nor can we forget the countless lay men and women who directly took part in the spread of the Gospel through catechetical instruction. Men and women of deep faith, authentic witnesses of holiness, who in some cases were also founders of Churches and eventually died as martyrs. In our own day too, many competent and dedicated catechists are community leaders in various parts of the world and carry out a mission invaluable for the transmission and growth of the faith. The long line of blessed, saints and martyrs who were catechists has significantly advanced the Church's mission and deserves to be recognized, for it represents a rich resource not only for catechesis but also for the entire history of Christian spirituality.

3. Beginning with the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the Church has come to a renewed appreciation of the importance of lay involvement in the work of

evangelization. The Council Fathers repeatedly emphasized the great need for the lay faithful to be engaged directly, in the various ways their charism can be expressed, in the “plantatio Ecclesiae” and the development of the Christian community. “Worthy of praise too is that army of catechists, both men and women, to whom missionary work among the nations is so indebted, who imbued with an apostolic spirit make an outstanding and absolutely necessary contribution to the spread of the faith and the Church by their great work. In our days, when there are so few clerics to evangelize such great multitudes and to carry out the pastoral ministry, the role of catechists is of the highest importance” (cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity *Ad Gentes*, 17).

Along with the important teaching of the Council, mention should be made of the constant interest of the Popes, the Synod of Bishops, the Episcopal Conferences and individual Bishops who, in recent decades have contributed to a significant renewal of catechesis. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, the General Catechetical Directory, the General Directory for Catechesis and the recent Directory for Catechesis, as well as the many national, regional and diocesan Catechisms, have confirmed the centrality of a catechesis that gives priority to the education and ongoing formation of believers.

4. Without prejudice to the Bishop’s mission as the primary catechist in his Diocese, one which he shares with his presbyterate, or to the particular responsibility of parents for the Christian formation of their children (cf. CIC can. 774 §2; CCEO can. 618), recognition should be given to those lay men and women who feel called by virtue of their baptism to cooperate in the work of catechesis (cf. CIC can. 225; CCEO cans. 401 and 406). This presence is all the more urgently needed today as a result of our increasing awareness of the need for evangelization in the contemporary world (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 163-168), and the rise of a globalized culture (cf. Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 100, 138). This requires genuine interaction with young people, to say nothing of the need for creative methodologies and resources capable of adapting the proclamation of the Gospel to the missionary transformation that the Church has undertaken. Fidelity to the past and responsibility for the present are necessary conditions for the Church to carry out her mission in the world.

Awakening personal enthusiasm on the part of all the baptized and reviving the awareness of their call to carry out a proper mission in the community demands attentiveness to the voice of the Spirit, who is unfailingly present and fruitful (cf. CIC can. 774 §1; CCEO can. 617). Today, too, the Spirit is calling men and women to set out and encounter all those who are waiting to discover the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Christian faith. It is the task of pastors to support

them in this process and to enrich the life of the Christian community through the recognition of lay ministries capable of contributing to the transformation of society through the “penetration of Christian values into the social, political and economic sectors” (Evangelii Gaudium, 102).

5. The lay apostolate is unquestionably “secular”. It requires that the laity “seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will” (cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 31). In their daily life, interwoven with family and social relationships, the laity come to realize that they “are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth” (ibid., 33). We do well to remember, however, that in addition to this apostolate, “the laity can be called in different ways to more immediate cooperation in the apostolate of the hierarchy, like those men and women who helped the apostle Paul in the Gospel, working hard in the Lord” (ibid.).

The role played by catechists is one specific form of service among others within the Christian community. Catechists are called first to be expert in the pastoral service of transmitting the faith as it develops through its different stages from the initial proclamation of the kerygma to the instruction that presents our new life in Christ and prepares for the sacraments of Christian initiation, and then to the ongoing formation that can allow each person to give an accounting of the hope within them (cf. 1 Pet 3:15). At the same time, every catechist must be a witness to the faith, a teacher and mystagogue, a companion and pedagogue, who teaches for the Church. Only through prayer, study, and direct participation in the life of the community can they grow in this identity and the integrity and responsibility that it entails (cf. Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 113).

6. With great foresight, Saint Paul VI issued the Apostolic Letter *Ministeria Quaedam* with the intention not only of adapting the ministries of Lector and Acolyte to changed historical circumstances (cf. Apostolic Letter *Spiritus Domini*), but also of encouraging Episcopal

Conferences to promote other ministries, including that of Catechist. “In addition to the ministries common to the entire Latin Church, nothing prevents Episcopal Conferences from asking the Apostolic See for the institution of others, which for particular reasons, they consider necessary or very useful in their own region. Among these are, for example, the offices of Porter, Exorcist and Catechist.” The same pressing invitation is found in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*; in calling for a discernment of the present needs of the Christian community in faithful continuity with its origins, the Pope encouraged the development of new

forms of ministry for a renewed pastoral activity. "Such ministries, apparently new but closely tied up with the Church's living experience down the centuries, such as that of catechists... are valuable for the establishment, life, and growth of the Church, and for her capacity to influence her surroundings and to reach those who are remote from her" (SAINT PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 73). To be sure, "there has been a growing awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church. We can indeed count on many lay persons, although still not nearly enough, who have a deeply-rooted sense of community and great fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis and the celebration of the faith" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 102). It follows that the reception of a lay ministry such as that of Catechist will emphasize even more the missionary commitment proper to every baptized person, a commitment that must however be carried out in a fully "secular" manner, avoiding any form of clericalization.

7. This ministry has a definite vocational aspect, as evidenced by the Rite of Institution, and consequently calls for due discernment on the part of the Bishop. It is in fact a stable form of service rendered to the local Church in accordance with pastoral needs identified by the local Ordinary, yet one carried out as a work of the laity, as demanded by the very nature of the ministry. It is fitting that those called to the instituted ministry of Catechist be men and women of deep faith and human maturity, active participants in the life of the Christian community, capable of welcoming others, being generous and living a life of fraternal communion. They should also receive suitable biblical, theological, pastoral and pedagogical formation to be competent communicators of the truth of the faith and they should have some prior experience of catechesis (cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, 14; CIC can. 231 §1; CCEO can. 409 §1). It is essential that they be faithful co-workers with priests and deacons, prepared to exercise their ministry wherever it may prove necessary, and motivated by true apostolic enthusiasm. Therefore, after having taken all things into consideration, and by apostolic authority I establish the lay ministry of Catechist. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments will soon publish the Rite of Institution of the lay ministry of Catechist.

8. I invite the Episcopal Conferences to render effective the ministry of Catechist, determining the necessary process of formation and the normative criteria for admission to this ministry and devising the most appropriate forms for the service which these men and women will be called to exercise in conformity with the content of this Apostolic Letter.

9. The Synods of the Oriental Churches or the Assemblies of Hierarchs may adopt what is established here for their respective Churches *sui iuris*, in accordance with their particular law.

10. Bishops should make every effort to comply with the exhortation of the Council Fathers: “Pastors... know that they were not established by Christ to undertake by themselves the entire saving mission of the Church to the world. They appreciate, rather, that it is their exalted task to shepherd the faithful and at the same time acknowledge their ministries and charisms so that all in their separate ways, but of one mind, may cooperate in the common task” (Lumen Gentium, 30). May the discernment of the gifts that the Holy Spirit never fails to grant to the Church sustain their efforts to make the lay ministry of Catechist effective for the growth of their communities. I order that what has been laid down by this Apostolic Letter issued “*Motu Proprio*” have firm and stable effect, anything to the contrary notwithstanding, even if worthy of special mention, and that it be promulgated by publication in *L’Osservatore Romano*, taking effect that same day, and published thereafter in the official commentary of the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. Given in Rome, at Saint John Lateran, on the tenth day of May in the year 2021, the liturgical memorial of Saint John of Avila, Priest and Doctor of the Church, the ninth of my Pontificate.

Franciscus

## **ANNEXURE - 04**



**The Holy See**

# **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE PRIESTHOOD**

**PAUL VI AUDIENCE HALL 17 FEBRUARY 2022**

**[MULTIMEDIA]**

Dear brothers, good day!

I am grateful to have the opportunity to share with you this reflection on some things that the Lord has gradually helped me to realize over the

more than fifty years of my priesthood. In this grateful remembrance, I wish to include all those priests who, by their life and witness, showed me from my earliest years what it means to reflect the face of the Good Shepherd. In thinking about what to share concerning the life of the priest today, I concluded that the best thing is to speak of the witness I have received from so many priests over the years. What I now offer is the fruit of my thoughts about them, and my recognition and appreciation of what it was that distinguished them and gave them singular strength, joy and hope in their pastoral mission.

At the same time, I should also speak of those brother priests whom I have had to accompany because they had lost the flame of their first love and their ministry had become barren, repetitive and almost meaningless. There are different times and situations in the life of every priest. I personally have passed through a variety of times and situations and, in “ruminating” on the movements of the Spirit, I have come to realize that in some of those situations, which included moments of trial, difficulty and desolation, somehow there always remained a sense of peace in my life. I realize we can talk and speculate endlessly on the priesthood, but today I want to share with you this “little album”, so that today’s priests, wherever they find themselves, can experience the peace and fruitfulness that the Spirit desires to bestow. It may be that these reflections are the

“swan song” of my own priestly life, but I can assure you that they are the fruit of my own experience. I am speaking about what I have experienced, not any theory.

The times we are living in require us not only to experience change, but to accept it in the realization that ours is a time of epochal change – I have said this many times. If we had any doubts about this, Covid has made it amply evident: indeed, the outbreak of the virus cannot be restricted to a question of medicine and health care; it is much more than a cold.

We can respond in many different ways to the challenge of change. The problem is that while many actions and attitudes can be helpful and good, not all of them have the flavour of the Gospel. Here is the crux of the matter: discerning whether changes and actions have the flavor of the Gospel or not. For example, seeking established ways of doing things, very often anchored in the past, that “guarantee” a sort of protection from



risks, sheltering us in the world or a society that no longer exists (if it ever did), as if this determined order could quell the conflicts that history sets before us. That is the crisis of going backwards in order to find shelter.

Another attitude might be that of exaggerated optimism – “Everything will be all right” – moving too far forward without discernment and without taking necessary decisions. This optimism ends up ignoring the pain involved in this transformation and failing to accept the tensions, complexities and ambiguities of the present time, “consecrating” the latest novelty as the ultimate reality and thereby dismissing the wisdom of the years.

Both are a kind of flight. They are the response of the mercenary who sees the wolf coming and runs away: either towards the past or towards the future. Neither can lead to mature solutions. The concrete reality of the present time is where we must stay, there in today’s concrete reality.

I prefer the response born of a trusting acceptance of reality, anchored in the wise and living Tradition of the Church, which enables us to put out into the deep without fear. At this moment of history, I feel that Jesus is once more inviting us to “put out into the deep” (cf. Lk 5:4) trusting that he is the Lord of history and that, with his guidance, we will discern the direction to take. Our salvation is not “aseptic”, the product of a laboratory or a disembodied spiritualism: this is always the temptation of gnosticism, one that is contemporary, that is current. Discerning the will of God means learning to view realities with the Lord’s own eyes. It means not evading the realities that our people are experiencing, or anxiously seeking a quick and quiet exit provided by the ideology of the moment or prefabricated answers. Neither of these is capable of dealing with the more difficult and even dark moments of our history. These two paths would lead us to deny “our history as a Church, which is glorious precisely because it is a history of sacrifice, of hopes and daily struggles, of lives spent in service and fidelity to work” (Evangelii Gaudium, 96).

These challenges are also affecting the lives of priests; a symptom of this is the vocations crisis experienced by our communities in a number of places. Often, however, this is due to the absence within communities of a contagious apostolic zeal, with the result that they lack enthusiasm and attractiveness: communities, for example, that function and are

well-organized yet without enthusiasm, where everything is in place yet without the fire of the Spirit. Where there is life and fervour, and a desire to bring Christ to others, genuine vocations spring up. Even in parishes whose priests are not particularly engaged and joyful, the active and fraternal life of the community can awaken a desire to consecrate one's life entirely to God and to the preaching of the Gospel. This is especially the case if that community prays insistently for vocations and has the courage to propose to its young people a path of special consecration. When we fall into functionalism or pastoral organization – if this becomes the only thing – that does not attract at all. Instead, when the priest or the community has a Christian baptismal fervor, this attracts new vocations.

The life of a priest is above all the salvation history of one baptized person. Cardinal Ouellet has spoken of the distinction between the ministerial priesthood and the baptismal priesthood. At times we forget about baptism, and the priest then becomes a functionary, and the danger of functionalism sets in. We should never forget that each particular vocation, including that of Holy Orders, is a completion of baptism. It is always a great temptation to live a priesthood without baptism – and there are some priests “without baptism” – in other words, forgetting that our

primary vocation is to holiness. To be holy means to conform ourselves to Jesus, letting our hearts thrill with his same sentiments (cf. Phil 2:15). Only when we strive to love others as Jesus does, do we make God visible and fulfil our vocation to holiness. Quite rightly, Saint John Paul II reminded us that, “the priest, like every other member of the Church, ought to grow in the awareness that he himself is continually in need of being evangelized” (PastoresDabo Vobis, [25 March 1992], 26). And when you say to some Bishops or priests that they need to be evangelized, they don't understand. This happens, this is a tragedy nowadays.

Each specific vocation must be submitted to this kind of discernment. Our vocation is before all else a response to the One who loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19). This is the source of our hope, for even amid crises, the Lord never ceases to love us and to call us. Each of us can testify to this: one day the Lord found us, where we were and as we were, in uncertain circumstances or complex family situations. I like to re-read Ezekiel 16 and at times see myself: the Lord found me there, he found me in that state, and he led me forward. Yet this did not discourage him from using

each of us to write the history of salvation. So it was from the beginning – we can think of Peter, Paul and Matthew, just to name a few. Jesus did not choose them because they were perfect, but because he was concretely committed to each of them. In looking at his own humanity, his own history, his own personality, each of us should ask, not if responding to a vocation is agreeable or not, but whether, in conscience, that vocation brings to light within us the potential for Love that we received on the day of our baptism.

In these changing times, many questions have to be faced and many temptations will arise. In these remarks, I will simply speak about what I consider decisive for the life of a priest today. Saint Paul tells us that, “in Christ, the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph 2:21). Growing in a well-ordered way means growing in harmony, and growth in harmony is something only the Holy Spirit can bring about, for as Saint Basil says so beautifully, “He himself is harmony” (“Ipse harmoniaest”) [Treatise on the Holy Spirit, No. 38]. Every structure, to keep standing, needs solid foundations. For this reason, I would like to speak of the attitudes that sustain us as priests. You have heard of these attitudes already, but I will repeat them once more. I will refer to those four pillars of our priestly life as “four forms of closeness”, since they imitate God’s own “style”, which is essentially that of closeness (cf. Deut 4:7). God defines himself this way to his people: “For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as I am to you?”. God’s style is closeness, a special, compassionate and tender closeness. These are three words that define the life of a priest, and of a Christian as well, because they are taken precisely from God’s style: closeness, compassion and tenderness.

I have mentioned these in the past, but today I would like to discuss them more fully because, more than recipes or theories, priests need concrete tools for exercising their ministry, their mission and their daily activity. Saint Paul exhorted Timothy to rekindle the gift of God that he had received through the laying on of his hands: a spirit not of fear, but of strength, love and self-discipline (cf. 2 Tim 1:6-7). I am convinced that these four pillars, these four “forms of closeness” that I will speak of now can help us in a practical, concrete and hope-filled way to rekindle the gift and the fruitfulness that were once promised to us, to keep that gift alive.

First of all, closeness to God. Four forms of closeness, the first of which is closeness to God.

## **CLOSENESS TO GOD**

First closeness to God, that is, to the Lord of closeness. “I am the vine, you are the branches.” These words occur when John’s Gospel speaks about “remaining”. “Those who abide in me, and I in them, bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (Jn 15:5-7).

A priest is called above all to cultivate this closeness, this intimacy with God, and from this relationship, he will be able to draw all the strength needed for his ministry. Our relationship with God is, so to speak, what “grafts” us to him and makes us fruitful. Without a meaningful relationship with the Lord, our ministry will prove fruitless. Closeness to Jesus and daily contact with his word, enables us to measure our life against his, learning not to be scandalized by whatever befalls us and protecting ourselves from “stumbling blocks”. Like the Master, you will experience joy, wedding feasts, miracles and healings, multiplications of loaves and repose, moments of praise. But you will also experience ingratitude, rejection, doubt and solitude, to the point of crying out: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46).

Closeness to Jesus makes us unafraid of those times – not because we rely on our own strength but because we look to him, cling to him and cry out: “Lord, keep me from falling into temptation! Make me realize that I am experiencing a critical moment in my life and that you are with me, to test my faith and my love” (C.M. MARTINI, *Perseverance in Trials. Reflections on Job*,

Collegeville, 1996). This closeness to God can sometimes take the form of a struggle: a struggle with the Lord, especially in those moments when his absence is most felt in our own lives and in the lives of the persons entrusted to us. A struggle that lasts through the night, and in the midst of which we ask his blessing (cf. Gen 32:25-7), which will be a source of life for many. At times this is a struggle. A priest who works here in the Curia – he is young and has a difficult job, keeping track of things, said to me that he returned home tired, but he took a little rest in front of Our Lady with his rosary in hand before going to bed. This Curial official, this Vatican employee, needed that closeness. To be sure, sometimes people

in the Curia are much criticized, but I can also say and bear witness that there truly are saints in the Curia.

Many crises in the priesthood originate precisely in a poor life of prayer, a lack of intimacy with the Lord, the reduction of the spiritual life to mere religious practice. I want to point this out even in formation: the spiritual life is one thing, religious practice is another. "How is your spiritual life going?" "Good, good. I make my meditation in the morning, I pray the rosary, I pray the breviary and all the rest. I'm doing everything. No, this is religious practice. But how is your spiritual life going? I can think of important moments of my own life, where closeness to the Lord proved decisive in sustaining me, sustaining me in dark moments. The intimacy born of prayer, the spiritual life, concrete closeness to God through listening to his word, the celebration of the Eucharist, the silence of adoration, entrustment to Mary, the wise accompaniment of a guide and the sacrament of Reconciliation... Without these concrete "forms of closeness", a priest is merely a weary hireling who has none of the benefits of the Lord's friends. In my former diocese, I liked to ask priests: "Tell me," – they told me about all their work – "Tell me, how do you go to bed?" They did not understand. "Yes, yes, at night, how do you go to bed?" "I come home tired, I have a bite to eat and I go to bed, but before bed, a little television." "Ah, good! But you don't stop before the Lord, at least to tell him good night?" This is the problem. A lack of closeness. Being tired from work is normal, going to rest and watching television are legitimate, but without the Lord, without this closeness? Praying the rosary, praying the breviary, but without intimacy with the Lord. Feeling no need to say to the Lord, "Goodbye, until tomorrow, many thanks!" These are little acts that reveal the attitude of a priestly soul.

All too often, for example, in the life of priests, prayer is practiced only as a duty; we forget that friendship and love do not come from following rules, but are a fundamental choice of the heart. The priest who prays remains, ultimately, a Christian who has come to appreciate fully the gift received at baptism. A priest who prays is a son who constantly remembers that he is such, and that he has a Father who loves him deeply. A priest who prays is a son who keeps close to the Lord.

None of this is easy, however, unless we are accustomed to find moments of silence throughout our day and to set aside the activism of Martha in

order to learn the quiet contemplation of Mary. We find it hard to give up that activism – and very often activism can be an escape – because once we stop running around, what we immediately feel is not peace but a kind of emptiness; and in order to keep from feeling that, we are unwilling to slow down. Work is a distraction, in order not to enter into desolation. Yet desolation is a little point of encounter with God. Once we accept the desolation that is born of silence, fast from our activities and words, and find the courage to take a sincere look at ourselves, everything takes on a light and peace no longer based on our own strengths and abilities. We need to learn to let the Lord bring his work to fulfilment in each of us and to “prune” all that is unfruitful, barren or unworthy of our calling. Perseverance in prayer is more than simply remaining faithful to its practice: it means not running away in those times when prayer draws us into the desert. The way of the desert is the way that leads to intimacy with God, provided we do not run away or find ways to avoid this encounter. In the desert “I will speak tenderly to her”, says the Lord to his people through the words of the prophet Hosea (Hos 2:14).

This is something that a priest must ask himself: if he is able to let himself be led into the desert. Spiritual guides who accompany priests have to understand and help them and pose this question: are you able to let yourself be drawn into the desert? Or do you go right away to the oasis of television or something else?

Closeness with God enables the priest to touch the hurt in our hearts, which, if embraced, disarms us even to the point of making possible an encounter. The prayer that, like fire, stirs up our priestly life is the plea of a contrite and humble heart, which, as the Scripture tells us, the Lord does not disdain (cf. Ps 51:17). “They call and the Lord hears and rescues them from their distress. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; those whose spirit is crushed he will save” (Ps 34:17-18).

A priest needs to have a heart sufficiently “enlarged” to expand and embrace the pain of the people entrusted to his care while, at the same time, like a sentinel, being able to proclaim the dawning of God’s grace revealed in that very pain. Embracing, accepting and showing his own impoverishment in closeness to the Lord is the best means to learn gradually how to embrace the neediness and pain that he encounters daily in his ministry, and thus to be conformed ever more closely to the heart of



Christ. That, in turn, will prepare the priest for another kind of closeness: closeness to the people of God. In closeness to God, the priest grows in closeness to his people; and conversely, in closeness to his people, he experiences closeness to his Lord. And this closeness to God – this gets my attention – is the first task of Bishops, for when the Apostles “invented” deacons, Peter explained their role and said: “But we” – the Bishops – “will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (cf. Acts 6:4). In other words, the first task of a Bishop is to pray; and a priest must take this up as well: to pray.

In the words of Saint John the Baptist, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn 3:30). Intimacy with God makes all this possible, for in prayer we realize that we are great in his eyes, and so, for priests close to the Lord, it is easy to become small in the eyes of the world. There, in that closeness, we no longer fear to be configured to the crucified Jesus, as is demanded of us in the Rite of Priestly Ordination. This is very beautiful yet we often forget it.

Let us turn now to the second form of closeness, which will be briefer than the first.

### **CLOSENESS TO THE BISHOP**

This second form of closeness has long been interpreted in a one-sided way. As Church, all too often, even today, our view of obedience is far from the sense of the Gospel. Obedience is not a disciplinary attribute but the deepest sign of the bonds uniting us in communion. To obey, in this case obeying the Bishop, means to learn how to listen, to remember that no one “owns” God’s will, which must be understood only through discernment. Obedience is thus attentive listening to the will of God, which is discerned precisely in a bond, a relationship with others. Such an attitude of attentive listening makes us come to realize that none of us is the beginning and the end of life, but that each of us must necessarily interact with others. The “internal logic” of closeness – in this case with the Bishop, but with others too – enables us to conquer all temptations to closedmindedness, self-justification and living our lives as “bachelors”. When priests close themselves off, they end up as “bachelors”, with all the quirks of “bachelors” and this is not good. Instead, this closeness invites us to listen to others, in order to find the way that leads to truth and life.

The Bishop is not a school superintendent or supervisor; he is a father and must show this closeness. The Bishop must try to behave this way because otherwise he pushes his priests away, or he comes near only to the ambitious ones. The Bishop, whoever he may be, remains for each priest and for every particular Church a bond that helps discern the will of God. Yet we should not forget that the Bishop himself can be a means for this discernment only if he is himself attentive to the lives of his priests and of the holy people of God entrusted to his care. As I wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, “we need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart that makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders. Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God’s love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives” (No. 171).

Not by chance does evil, in order to destroy the fruitfulness of the Church’s work, seek to undermine the bonds that establish and preserve us in unity. To defend the bonds of a priest with his particular Church, with the Institute to which he belongs, and with his Bishop, makes priestly life trustworthy and sure. To defend the bonds. Obedience is the fundamental decision to accept what is asked of us, and to do so as a concrete sign of that universal sacrament of salvation which is the Church. Obedience can also be discussion, attentive listening, and in some cases tension, but not a rupture. This necessarily demands that priests pray for their bishops and feel free to express their opinions with respect, courage and sincerity. It likewise demands that bishops demonstrate humility, an ability to listen, to be self-critical, and to let themselves be helped. If we can preserve this bond, we will advance securely on our way.

I think this is enough about closeness to the Bishop.

## **CLOSENESS TO OTHER PRIESTS**

The third form of closeness. Closeness to God, closeness to the Bishop and closeness to other priests. It is precisely on the basis of communion with the Bishop that a third form of closeness emerges, the closeness of fraternity. Jesus is present wherever there are brothers and sisters who

love one another: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Mt 18:20). Fraternity, like obedience, cannot be a moral imposition from without. Fraternity means choosing deliberately to pursue holiness together with others, and not by oneself. As an African proverb, which you know well, says: “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go with others”. Sometimes it seems that the Church is slow, and that is true. Yet I like to think of it as the slowness of those who have chosen to walk in fraternity. Also accompanying those who are least, but always in fraternity.

The signs of fraternity are those of love. Saint Paul, in the First Letter to the Corinthians (Chapter 13), has left us a clear “roadmap” of love and, in a certain sense, has pointed out the goal of fraternity. Before all else, to learn patience, the ability to feel responsible for others, to bear their burdens, to suffer in some way with them. The opposite of patience is indifference, the distance we create with others, so as not to get involved in their lives. Many priests experience the drama of solitude, of loneliness. We can feel undeserving of patience or consideration. Indeed, it can appear that from others we can expect only judgment, not goodness or kindness. Others seem unable to rejoice in the good things happening in our lives, or we ourselves seem unable to rejoice when we see good things happening in the lives of others. This inability to rejoice in the good of others – and I want to emphasize this – is envy which is very present in our circles; it is an obstacle to the pedagogy of love, not merely a sin to be confessed. Sin is the end result, it comes from an attitude of envy. Envy is very present in priestly communities. God’s word tells us that it is a destructive attitude: through the envy of the devil, sin entered the world (cf. Wis 2:24). Envy is the door for destruction. We have to speak clearly about this: envy exists in our presbyterates. It is not that everyone is envious, no, but the temptation to envy is there at hand. We need to be attentive, for from envy comes gossip.

In order to feel part of the community or “group”, there is no need to put on masks to make ourselves more attractive to others. We have no need, in other words, to be boastful, much less to be inflated or, worse yet, to be arrogant or rude, lacking respect for our neighbor. There are also clerical forms of bullying. If there is one thing a priest can boast about, it is the Lord’s mercy. For conscious of his own sinfulness, weakness and limitations, he knows from experience that where sin abounds, love

abounds all the more (cf. Rom 5:20). This is the first and most reassuring message that he brings. A priest who keeps this in mind is not, and cannot be, envious.

Fraternal love does not insist on its own way, or yield to anger or resentment, as if my brother or neighbour had somehow cheated me of something. When I encounter the meanness of others, I choose not to harbour a grudge, to make that my sole basis of judgment, even perhaps to the point of rejoicing over evil in the case of those who have caused me suffering. True love rejoices in

the truth and considers it a grave sin to offend truth and the dignity of our brothers and sisters through slander, detraction and gossip. These originate in envy, to the point even of slander in order to get a position. And this is very sad. When we ask for information in order to appoint someone a Bishop, many times we receive information poisoned by envy. This is a sickness of our presbyterates. Many of you are formators in seminaries; you should bear this in mind.

We should never, on the other hand, allow fraternal love to be considered utopian, much less a trite phrase useful for awakening warm feelings or stilling disagreements. No! All of us know how difficult it can be to live in community, or in a presbyterate – a saint once said that community life was his penance – yet how difficult it is to live alongside those we have chosen to call our brothers and sisters. Fraternal love, provided we do not make it saccharine, redefine it or diminish it, is the “great prophecy” that we are called to embody in today’s throwaway society. I like to think of fraternal love as a “gymnasium of the spirit”, where we daily take stock of our progress and check the temperature of our spiritual life. Today the prophecy of fraternity has not faded, but it does need heralds, men and women who, while conscious of their own limitations and challenges, let themselves be touched, challenged and moved by the words of the Lord: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35).

Fraternal love, for priests, cannot be restricted to a small group, but finds expression in pastoral charity (cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 23), which inspires us to live that love concretely as mission. We can say that we love only if we learn to express love in the way that Saint Paul describes. Only the

one who seeks to love remains secure. Those who live with the syndrome of Cain, convinced that they are incapable of loving others because they themselves feel unloved and unappreciated, end up living always as restless wanderers, never feeling quite at home, and precisely for this reason all the more exposed to evil: hurting themselves and hurting others. This is why love among priests has the role of safeguarding, of safeguarding each other mutually.

I would also add that when priestly fraternity, closeness among priests, thrives and bonds of true friendship exist, it likewise becomes possible to experience with greater serenity the life of celibacy. Celibacy is a gift that the Latin Church preserves, yet it is a gift that, to be lived as a means of sanctification, calls for healthy relationships, relationships of true esteem and true goodness that are deeply rooted in Christ. Without friends and without prayer, celibacy can become an unbearable burden and a counter-witness to the very beauty of the priesthood. We come now to the fourth and last form of closeness, closeness to the holy People of God. We would do well to read *Lumen Gentium*, number 8 and number 12.

## **CLOSENESS TO PEOPLE**

I have often emphasized how our relationship with the holy People of God is for each of us not a duty but a grace: "Loving others is a spiritual force drawing us to union with God" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 272). For this reason, the proper place of every priest is in the midst of people, in close relationship to others. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, I stressed that "to be evangelizers of souls, we need to develop a spiritual taste for being close to people's lives and to discover that this is itself a source of greater joy. Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people. When we stand before Jesus crucified, we see the depth of his love which exalts and sustains us, but at the same time, unless we are blind, we begin to realize that Jesus' gaze, burning with love, expands to embrace all his faithful people. We realize once more that he wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people. Jesus wants to make use of priests to draw closer to the holy faithful People of God. He takes us from the midst of his people and he sends us to his people; without the sense of belonging we cannot understand our deepest identity" (No. 268). Priestly identity cannot be understood without this belonging to the holy faithful People of God.

I am convinced that, for a renewed understanding of the identity of the priesthood, it is important nowadays to be closely involved in people's real lives, to live alongside them, without escape routes. "Sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length. Yet Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others. He hopes that we will stop looking for those personal or communal niches which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune and instead enter into the reality of other people's lives and know the power of tenderness. Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated and we experience intensely what it is to be a people, to be part of a people" (ibid., 270). "A people" is not a logical category, no; it is a mythic category. To understand this we must approach it as we approach a mythic category.

Closeness to the People of God, a closeness that, enriched by those three other forms of closeness, invites and indeed demands that we imitate the Lord's own "style". That style is one of closeness, compassion and tenderness, in which we act not as judges, but as Good Samaritans who acknowledge the wounds of our people, their silent sufferings, the self-denial and sacrifices made by so many fathers and mothers to support their families. Who acknowledge, too, the effects of violence, corruption and indifference that, in their wake, seek to stifle all hope. A style of closeness that allows us to pour balm upon wounds and to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord (cf. Is 61:2). It is imperative to remember that the People of God are hoping to find shepherds in the style of Jesus. Not "clerical functionaries" or "professionals of the sacred" – let's recall that period in France, the time of the Curé of Ars: he was a curate, but there was also "monsieur l'abbé", a clerical functionary. Today, too, people are asking us to be shepherds of the people and not "professionals of the sacred", shepherds filled with compassion and concern. Men of courage, ready to draw near to those in pain and lend a helping hand. Contemplative men, whose closeness to people enables them to proclaim before the wounds of our world the power of the Resurrection even now at work.

One of the distinctive marks of this, our society of "networks", is people's growing sense of being "orphaned", a current phenomenon. Though connected to everybody and everything, we lack the feeling of belonging, which is something more than mere connectivity. The closeness of a pastor makes it possible to gather a community and foster the growth of



that sense of belonging. For we belong to God's holy and faithful people, which is called to be a sign of the breaking of the kingdom of heaven into the here and now of history. If their shepherd strays or withdraws, the sheep will scatter and be at the mercy of any and every wolf.

This sense of belonging will in turn prove an antidote to the distortion of vocation that happens whenever we forget that the priestly life is owed to others – to the Lord and to the persons he has entrusted to us. Forgetting this is at the root of clericalism – what Cardinal Ouellet spoke of – and its consequences. Clericalism is a distortion, as is one of its signs, rigidity. Clericalism is a distortion because it is based not on closeness but on distance. This is strange: not closeness, but the opposite. When I think of clericalism, I also think of the clericalization of the laity: the creation of a small élite around the priest who end up betraying their own essential mission (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 44), the mission of the laity. Many lay persons are clericalized: “I belong to that association, we are there in the parish...”. The lay clericalized “elect” is a great temptation. Let us remember that “my mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an ‘extra’ or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my priestly being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 273).

I would like to relate this closeness to the people of God with closeness to God, since the prayer of a shepherd is nurtured and becomes incarnate in the heart of God's people. When he prays, a pastor bears the marks of the sorrows and joys of his people, which he presents in silence to the Lord, to be anointed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Such is the hope of every shepherd who trustingly and tirelessly works so that the Lord may bless his people.

Saint Ignatius teaches that “it is not knowing much but realizing and relishing things interiorly that contents and satisfies the soul” (*Spiritual Exercises*, Annotations, 2, 4). Bishops and priests would do well to ask, “How am I practicing these forms of closeness? How am I living these four aspects that intersect and shape my priestly heart, enabling me to deal with the tensions and imbalances that we experience daily?” Those four forms of closeness are good training for “playing on an open field”, where

the priest is called to be present without fear or rigidity, without reducing or impoverishing his mission.

A priestly heart knows about closeness, because his primary form of closeness is with the Lord.

May Christ visit his priests in their prayer, in their Bishop, in their brother priests and in their people. May he upset our routine, disrupt our lives and disquiet us – as at the time of our first love – and lead us to employ all our talents and abilities to ensure that our people may have life and life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10). The forms of closeness that the Lord demands – closeness with God, closeness with the Bishop, closeness among us priests and closeness with the holy faithful People of God – are not an added burden: they are a gift that he gives to keep our vocation alive and fruitful. If we are tempted to get caught up in interminable speeches, discussions about the theology of the priesthood or theories about what the priesthood should be, the Lord for his part simply looks upon us with tenderness and compassion. He shows priests the signposts that point the way to appreciating and rekindling their missionary zeal: closeness that is compassionate and tender, closeness to God, to the Bishop, to brother priests and to the people entrusted to their care. A closeness in the “style” of God himself, who is ever close to us, with compassion and tender love.

Thank you for your closeness and patience, thank you, thank you very much! I wish all of you well in your work. I am going to the library because I have many appointments this morning. Please pray for me and I will pray for you. I wish you all good work!

## Annexure - 05

### EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM 01.01.2022 TO 24.02.2022

PARISHES	Cancer Campaign	Second Sunday Collection	Holy Childhood Collection	Communio Sunday	Christmas Collection	St. Peter the Apostle Collection	St. Peter's Pence Collection	Girl Child Day	Hunger & Disease	Holy Land Maint.
St. Francis Xavier's Church, Hunsur		13,807.00		630.00	2,712.00	1,750.00			8,400.00	
Infant Jesus Church, Nanjangud		20,000.00								
Our Lady of Presentation Church, Mariamangalam		4,490.00	1,400.00		2,250.00	1,200.00	1,300.00		2,500.00	
St. Peter's Church, Bogadi		19,039.00			9,752.00		3,906.00			
Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Church, Kudlur		3,651.00	300.00	999.00	1,650.00	300.00			2,000.00	
Immaculate Conception Church, Ganjam		7,270.00			3,020.00				6,090.00	
St. Joseph's Church, Siddapur		10,699.00								
Holy Cross Church, Belwadi		3,020.00								
Sacred Heart Church, Kodugane		2,345.00			3,331.00					
Infant Jesus Church, Pushpagiri		18,480.00			10,052.00	1,500.00	2,500.00		6,220.00	
Our Lady of Good Health Church, Hanur		7,000.00		1,000.00	3,650.00	1,000.00	1,000.00		1,000.00	
Infant Jesus Church, Udayanagar		2,100.00		450.00		480.00	400.00		1,200.00	
Our Lady of Good Health Church, Gundlupet		3,000.00			2,000.00					
St. Joseph's Church, Mandya		17,186.00			5,360.00		4,736.00		2,278.00	
Good Shepherd Church, Anagalladoddi		1,350.00	1,500.00	4,000.00	1,500.00	835.00	727.00			
St. Michael's Church, Medikeri		18,000.00			20,240.00					
Holy Family Church, Kudige				6,060.00						
St. Anthony's Church, Cowdali			3,649.00		2,300.00					
St. Mathias Church, Malevali		10,265.00		3,110.00	6,052.00		1,960.00		5,960.00	
St. Mary's Church, H. D. Kote		14,530.00			4,835.00					
Our Lady of Veankant Church, J. P. Nagar				10,220.00	4,520.00	2,000.00	2,000.00		18,730.00	
Arogya Mathe Church, Hulikere			4,065.00							
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Church, Srirampura		8,680.00	18,882.00		8,538.00					

PARISHES	Cancer Campaign	Second Sunday Collection	Holy Childhood Collection	Communio Sunday	Christmas Collection	St. Peter the Apostle Collection	St. Peter's Pence Collection	Girl Child Day	Hunger & Disease	Holy Land Maint
St. Mary's Church, Pertyapatna		1,500.00	800.00	2,000.00	1,800.00					
Nirmala Mathe Church, Kurta		210.00	9,050.00		7,585.00				6,120.00	
Infant Jesus Mission Station, Yathagadanahalli		14,715.00		850.00	1,000.00	900.00	900.00	700.00	2,000.00	900.00
Infant Jesus Church, K. R. Pet	700.00		1,050.00		11,860.00				23,930.00	
St. Theresa's Church, Mysore South		37,440.00	40,060.00			3,000.00	2,000.00			
St. Paul's Church, Chamarajanagar			3,620.00			1,000.00	1,000.00		2,290.00	
St. Mary's Seminary, Mysore			1,600.00	1,260.00	2,100.00	2,000.00	2,000.00		3,500.00	
Holy Rosary Church, Hatthole			1,000.00		3,842.00					
Our Lady of Fathima Church, Sulvaadi										
<b>RELIGIOUS</b>										
	Communio Sunday	Holy Child Hood	Hunger & Disease	Cancer Campaign	St. Peter's Pence					
Maria Kripa, Bogadi		2,000.00								
Carmel Convent, Mandya	5,000.00									

N.B.: There are a few bank remittances without details. We are not able to trace and issue necessary receipts. We request them to contact the diocesan office with the details of transfer and obtain necessary receipts for the remittances made.



జోతగూడి మున్నడేయువ ధర్మసభగారి  
మువ్వేళ్ళకే | నాథునికే | సువాకా సేవ

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

## Dissemination of Synodal Process in the deanery level



**Our Lady of Lourds Deanery**



**St. Francis Assisi Deanery**



**St. Antony's Basilica Deanery**



**St. Joseph's Deanery**



**St. Paul's Deanery**



**St. Philimena's & St. Theresa's Deanery**



**St. Michael's & St. Anne's Deanery**



## *Be guided by the Holy Spirit*

"Let us listen, let us discuss in groups,  
but above all let us pay close attention  
to that which the Spirit has to speak to us."

Pope Francis