

# VOX NOSTRA

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**Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters:**

## **1. ADVENT**

From Sunday, 29 November 2015, the Catholic Church all over the world begins the holy season of Advent which will culminate in the joyful celebration of the solemnity of the Nativity of our Lord. Advent marks the time of spiritual preparation for Christmas. The two-fold meaning of Advent comprises a look back at the first coming of our Lord as the Babe of Bethlehem and a look forward to the second coming of our Lord in glory. The season reminds us to be ever prepared for His coming into our lives.

Pope Francis says, “For the great human family, it is necessary to renew always the common horizon toward which we are journeying: the horizon of hope. This is the horizon that makes a good journey.” He adds: “Advent that we begin again today returns us to the horizon of hope, a hope that does not disappoint because it is founded on the Word of God. A hope that does not disappoint, simply because the Lord never disappoints. He is faithful.” The time of Advent that the Church celebrates in preparation for Christmas, is “a new journey of the people of God with Jesus Christ, our Shepherd, who guides us in history towards the completion of the Kingdom of God”.

As we look forward with hope, let us prepare ourselves spiritually to celebrate the joyful mystery of Christmas, a celebration of peace, love and joy.

I earnestly appeal to you, dear Fathers, to make this holy season of Advent a period of grace and blessings for your parishioners by inviting each of them to reflect on the beauty of Advent and prepare themselves, through the sacrament of reconciliation, to experience the peace and joy of the Lord. I wish all of you a happy and holy season of Advent.

## **2. DIOCESAN EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION**

The third Diocesan Eucharistic Procession took place on 22 November 2015 on the solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. It was held in the campus of the Mother of Sorrows Church, Udupi, in which a large gathering of the faithful participated with great enthusiasm and devotion. The Eucharistic celebration at 4.00 p.m. followed by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Eucharistic Procession, Sermon and Benediction were well-participated. The public demonstration of our love for Jesus in the most Holy Eucharist was, indeed, an occasion of grace and blessings to all of us. May our Eucharistic Lord keep the Church in Udupi ever united and faithful.

This annual event of the Eucharistic procession which coincided with the Confraternity Sunday of Udupi Church was meticulously planned and efficiently organized by the parishioners of the Mother of Sorrows Church under the able leadership of V. Rev. Fr Fred Mascarenhas, the Parish Priest, and Rev. Fr Royson Fernandes, the Asst Parish Priest, along with the priests of the Udupi Deanery. While the success of this celebration mainly go to the clergy of the Udupi Church, Deanery and Lay faithful, I am aware of the constructive role played by several others from other parishes, far and near, be they priests or laity, to whom I remain grateful. I express my heartfelt gratitude to V. Rev. Fr Fred Mascarenhas for shouldering this responsibility and thank his Team for the collaboration. May the Eucharistic Lord bless you with His abundant blessings and choicest graces. Thanks to everyone who cooperated in making the event meaningful and memorable.

## **3. DALIT LIBERATION SUNDAY**

Every year, in the month of December, adjacent to the Human Rights Day (December 10), the Catholic Church in India, along with reformative Churches (National Council of Churches in India - NCCI), celebrates Dalit Liberation Sunday. This year 13 December 2015 will be celebrated as the Dalit Liberation Sunday with the theme: “Climate, Caste and Care for the Earth”. The day shows our solidarity with the brothers and sisters of Dalit origin who are not only economically poor but are denied their political and social rights. I request you to

conscientize your parishioners regarding the Dalit Liberation Sunday and show our solidarity with our Dalit brethren.

#### **4. THE JUBILEE OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

It is the desire of our Holy Father Pope Francis that the Jubilee of Families be celebrated on 27 December 2015 on the feast of the Holy Family. He desires that this celebration be eminently spiritual and local. Special Mass/ liturgical celebration may be organized for families locally. It is, therefore, recommended to celebrate the Jubilee of the Family as the Family Day in each parish.

Keeping in mind the inauguration of the Year of Mercy, the day may be celebrated with the families with an appropriate rite. The manner of its celebration at the parish level is left to your discretion, dear Rev. Fathers. Please consult the website of the Pontifical Council for the family: [www.family.va](http://www.family.va). Every family being the domestic church, the backbone of our society, the promoter and dispenser of Catholic faith, needs to be given its due prominence with a meaningful celebration of the Family Day on 27 December.

#### **5. JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY**

The Holy Father Pope Francis has announced an extraordinary **Jubilee Year of Mercy** at St Peter's Basilica, Rome, on 13 March 2015. This Jubilee will be celebrated from 8 December 2015, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, to 20 November 2016, the solemnity

of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. A special feature of this Holy Year is the fact that it will be celebrated not only in Rome, but also in all the dioceses of the world. The Pope has already published the *Misericordiae Vultus* (MV) Bull to guide all of us to celebrate this special year of grace meaningfully.

In his early discourses and, especially in this document, Pope Francis indicates the salient features and phases of the Jubilee of Mercy. The opening ceremony coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council: "The Church feels a great need to keep this event alive. With the Council, the Church entered a new phase of her history. The Council Fathers strongly perceived, as a true breath of the Holy Spirit, a need to talk about God to men and women of their

time in a more accessible way. The walls which too long had made the Church a kind of fortress were torn down and the time had come to proclaim the Gospel in a new way” (MV No. 4).

Pope Francis resumes the teaching of St John XXIII, who spoke of the ‘medicine of Mercy’, and of Pope Paul VI who identified the spirituality of Vatican II with that of the Samaritan. Firstly, the motto, ‘*Merciful like the Father*’, the meaning of pilgrimage and the need for forgiveness.

The Pope wishes that this Jubilee of Mercy should be a true moment of encounter with the mercy of God and a living experience of the closeness and tenderness of the Father for all of us. The grace of the Jubilee will be a genuine experience of God’s mercy which comes to meet each person in the Face of the Father who welcomes and forgives, forgetting completely the sin committed, provided each one of us shows signs of a deep desire for true conversion. It is important that this moment be linked, first and foremost, to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist with a reflection on mercy, accompanying these celebrations with the profession of faith and prayer for the Holy Father and his intentions for the good of the Church and the entire world.

The Holy Father has asked the Church to rediscover the richness encompassed by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy during this holy year. “The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the Witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us. The commitment to live by mercy is to obtain the grace of complete and exhaustive forgiveness by the power of the love of the Father who excludes no one”.

In our diocese the **Jubilee Year of Mercy** will be **inaugurated** by me with a solemn opening of the **Jubilee Door in the Milagres Cathedral** on 13 December 2015 at 8.00 a.m. and in St Lawrence Church/ Shrine at Attur-Karkal at 4.00 p.m. Both these holy events of the opening of the Jubilee Door of Mercy will be followed by solemn Eucharistic celebrations. I exhort all the priests, religious and lay faithful to participate in the inaugural ceremony of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, wherever it is convenient to you, and thereby celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy by renewing your faith in the God who is the fountain of unceasing love, compassion, mercy, forgiveness and healing.

I request you to announce to your parishioners about this holy event of the opening of the Jubilee Door and the Eucharistic celebration on 13 December 2015.

May the Jubilee Year be a time of special grace to all of us to renew our devotion to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and work for reconciliation in our families, neighbourhoods, parishes, and places of work.

## **6. PRAYER FOR THE YEAR OF MERCY AND SERMONS (HOMILIES)**

The Liturgical Commission *Divya Jyothi* of our Diocese has come out with a printed text of the Prayer for Divine Mercy to be recited by all families during the Jubilee Year, the cost of which per copy/card is Re.1. A booklet on sermons, quite handy, explaining various themes with reference to Divine Mercy to be preached every month during the Jubilee year too is available in our Liturgical Centre at a cost of Rs 50/- per copy. I request you, dear Fathers, to provide the Mercy Prayer card to every family of your parish with an appeal to recite it every day, preferably after the recitation of the family rosary and also to make use of the booklet of homilies for preaching a sermon on Divine Mercy every month.

## **7. PASTORAL LETTER OF THE KARNATAKA REGIONAL BISHOPS (KRCBC)**

The Karnataka Region Catholic Bishops' Council has issued a Pastoral Letter to all the Priests, Religious and Lay Faithful in the Region on 21 November 2015. The text of the Pastoral Letter is provided herewith as annexure on page 7. May I request you to kindly go through it for your information and communication to your parishioners. Let us join hands with the Bishops of Karnataka to pray for our Region: its dedicated priests, religious and lay faithful so that the Jubilee Year of Mercy will be able to bring us all together as we proclaim our faith and baptism in Jesus Christ, and heal the wounds due to divisions, dissent and desecration. The Pastoral Letter presents a genuine concern and appeal to a change of attitude, heart and conversion.

## **8. CHRISTMAS GREETINGS**

We look forward to the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ to celebrate its peace, joy, love and happiness - eternal gifts of the Heavenly

Father so very lovingly lavished upon us through His own beloved Son in whom He is well pleased ( Mk 1:11). Christmas is a sacred historical event of God's eternal love for all of us made tangible in the person of Jesus. It fills us all with a joyful spirit, so rare and unique, so wonderful and indispensable, so that every year, everywhere, there is newness in the Christmas celebration filling us with the marvellous hope that God continues to love us as Emmanuel forever. May this feast of the Incarnation of Our Lord on 25 December fill us with His choicest blessings and gifts of peace, love and joy so that the Year of Mercy leads us to Him and through Him to the Merciful Father.

I wish you, dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters a very happy Christmas, invoking plentiful blessings of the Divine Babe of Bethlehem. May Christmas peace remain with you and continue to bless you and your parishioners in your mission and ministry.

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**Gerald I. Lobo**

*Bishop of Udupi*



A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS  
&  
A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2016 TO ALL  
OF YOU!

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