

VOX NOSTRA

Vol XII

JANUARY 2024

No. 1

Dear Rev. Fathers, Rev. Deacons, Brothers and Sisters,

1. SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

We begin the new calendar year with the celebration of the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. The Octave of Christmas falls on New Year's Day. Given the fact that the pagans used to celebrate this day through dissolute activities and superstition, the ancient Church helped believers begin the new year with a "new spirit" through the practice of days of fasting and penance. In 431, during the Council of Ephesus that concluded on 22 June, the dogma of faith regarding "Mary's divine motherhood" was declared. Thus, in 1931, on the Council's 15th centenary, Pope Pius XI established the liturgical feast that we already find celebrated in the 7th century. It is a day laden with meaning and contains many messages: the Octave of Christmas recalls the day Jesus was circumcised and given His name, it is the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, and it is also the day on which the World Day of Peace is celebrated (established by Pope Saint Paul VI in 1968). There truly are many messages to be received on this first day of the year. We are invited to learn from the Virgin Mary to "keep" the Word in our hearts, and to ask ourselves what the Lord Jesus wants to say to us as the days go by, knowing that God's blessing always accompanies us. As we celebrate this solemnity, let us entrust ourselves and our ministry during the New Year into her care and seek her patronage in our mission.

2. WORLD DAY OF PEACE

The Church observes January 1 as the World Day of Peace and invites us to pray specially for peace in the world. The Church in India observes it on January 30. "Artificial Intelligence and Peace" is the

theme of the message of Pope Francis for the 57th World Day of Peace. The remarkable advances made in the field of artificial intelligence are having a rapidly increasing impact on human activity, personal and social life, politics and the economy. Therefore, Pope Francis calls for an open dialogue on the meaning of these new technologies, endowed with disruptive possibilities and ambivalent effects. He recalls the need to be vigilant and to work so that a logic of violence and discrimination does not take root in the production and use of such devices, at the expense of the most fragile and excluded: injustice and inequalities fuel conflicts and antagonisms. The urgent need to orient the concept and use of artificial intelligence in a responsible way, so that it may be at the service of humanity and the protection of our common home, requires that ethical reflection be extended to the sphere of education and law. The protection of the dignity of the person, and concern for a fraternity effectively open to the entire human family, are indispensable conditions for technological development to help contribute to the promotion of justice and peace in the world.

3. NEW YEAR - 2024

We have stepped into the New Year 2024 with joy and happiness. As individuals and as a diocese, we have received numerous blessings during the past year through the benevolence of God. We raise our hearts in gratitude to God for protecting us during the year 2023. Every New Year offers us numerous opportunities for our individual growth and for carrying out our ministry with renewed zeal. While I wish you a grace-filled New Year, I pray that the New Year brings you joy, peace, health and happiness in your lives. May Mother Mary, the patroness of our Diocese, intercede for all of us with her son, Jesus, to accompany us on our journey through the New Year.

4. YEAR OF PRAYER – 2024

After the year devoted to reflecting on the documents and studying the fruits of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Francis has proposed that 2024 should be marked as a year dedicated to prayer. In preparation for the Jubilee 2025, dioceses are invited to promote

initiatives to remind people of the centrality of both individual prayer and community prayer. The same will be observed in the Diocese of Udupi too. While the focus of the year 2024 will be to create a conducive atmosphere of prayer in our families, parishes and religious communities, we need to also allot sufficient time to reflect and study the four constitutions of Second Vatican Council in continuation of the Year of Council 2023 in our preparation for Jubilee 2025. Therefore, the following study sessions are separately organised for priests and women religious in this year. Kindly mark these dates in your calendars and attend the seminars without fail. The participation in these seminars is obligatory as it also forms part of ongoing formation in the Diocese.

Seminar for Priests (Part of ongoing formation) at Anugraha

- 1. 28 February 2024 *Gaudium et spes*
- 2. 21 March 2024 *Dei Verbum*
- 3. 12 June 2024 Day of Prayer for Priests
- 4. 14 Aug 2024 *Sacrosanctum Concilium*
- 5. 09 October 2024 *Lumen gentium*

Seminar for Women Religious at Anugraha

- 1. 08 March 2024 *Dei Verbum*
- 2. 10 March 2024 *Gaudium et spes*
- 3. 07 July 2024 Day of Prayer for Religious
- 4. 31 October 2024 *Lumen gentium*
- 5. 16 September 2024 *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

5. WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

We observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from January 18 to 25. The theme for the 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is: **“You shall love the Lord your God...and your neighbour as yourself (Lk 10:27)**. I hereby exhort the Commission for Ecumenism to celebrate this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity along with non-Catholic Christian brethren in your parishes by organizing ecumenical prayer services and gatherings. The resource material for prayer and reflection for the entire week is available in

English at <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/settimana-di-preghiera-per-l-unita/semaine-de-priere-pour-l-unite-des-chretiens-2024/anglais.html>

6. ECUMENISM SUNDAY

21 January 2024, Sunday during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, is the Ecumenism Sunday for the Church in India. I appeal to all of you to not only celebrate the Ecumenism Sunday by inserting the prayers for Christian unity during the prayers of the faithful but also to celebrate it in a befitting manner in association with the members of the other Churches and denominations so that the mission of Jesus Christ may be realized in and through our incessant prayers for unity.

7. SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Pope Francis instituted the ‘Sunday of the Word of God’ to be celebrated every year on the third Sunday of Ordinary Time. This year the **Sunday of the Word of God** falls on **21 January 2024**. I exhort every parish priest to celebrate this day meaningfully in association with the Bible Commission with appropriate programmes to instil a taste for the Word of God among the faithful as a source of support in their Christian living. In order to spiritually nourish ourselves with the Word of God, I exhort all priests and the religious to devote sufficient time daily to read and meditatively reflect on the Word of God.

8. ST LAWRENCE SHRINE/ BASILICA FEAST

The annual feast of St Lawrence Shrine/ Basilica will be celebrated for six days from 21 to 26 January 2024, on the theme: “**Ask and you shall receive**” (Mt 7:7). The Shrine Management Committee has met twice and has made adequate arrangements for the smooth movement of the devotees in the premises of the Shrine and also for catering to their spiritual needs during the feast. Kindly inform your parishioners to attend the masses at the Shrine from 21 January itself without waiting for the last days of the feast. More information and guidelines to be followed by the faithful during the feast at the Basilica and in the premises of the Shrine will be sent to you by the Rector of

the Shrine, V. Rev. Fr Alban D’Souza. I request all the diocesan and religious priests in the Diocese to render your generous service at the confessionals during the feast and help the faithful to experience forgiveness and mercy from God in this holy place. Each deanery has been allocated a day during the feast for confessional ministry. In addition to these assigned days, I request all priests to make themselves available for Confessional ministry on other days too so that we can impart the mercy and forgiveness of God to all Catholics who make to approach the Sacrament of Confession during this annual Shrine Feast.

22/01/2024	Monday	Udupi Deanery
23/01/2024	Tuesday	Shirva Deanery
24/01/2024	Wednesday	Kallianpur Deanery
25/01/2024	Thursday	Kundapur Deanery
26/01/2024	Friday	Karkal Deanery

9. NEW DECLARATION : *FIDUCIA SUPPLICANS* - ON THE PASTORAL MEANING OF BLESSINGS

The new Declaration, *Fiducia Supplicans*, issued on 18 December 2023 by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and approved by Pope Francis reminds us that each one of us is in need of God’s blessings, healing, compassion, and mercy. To seek a blessing from a priest is to acknowledge the need for God in one’s life and the desire to grow stronger in a relationship with God. The Declaration does not change the Church’s teaching on marriage as a union of one man and one woman in lifelong fidelity and openness to children; nor is it a step toward the ratification of same-sex unions nor a compromise of the Church’s teaching on these irregular relationships. It is a document on the nature of blessings and the pastoral use of giving informal, spontaneous blessings to individuals seeking to experience God’s healing love and grace in their lives. To quote the document directly, the DDF sums up its declaration thusly: “... following the authoritative teaching of Pope Francis , this Dicastery finally wishes to recall that ‘the root of Christian meekness’ is ‘the ability to feel blessed and the ability to bless. This world needs blessings, and we can give blessings and receive blessings.

The Father loves us, and the only thing that remains for us is the joy of blessing him, and the joy of thanking him, and of learning from him to bless.’ [Catechesis on Prayer: The Blessing (2 December 2020)] In this way, every brother and every sister will be able to feel that, in the Church, they are always pilgrims, always beggars, always loved, and, despite everything, always blessed.” (FS #45)

10. ANNUAL BUDGET 2024-25

The present financial year will come to an end on 31 March 2024. As per the statutes of the Parish Finance Council given for Udupi Diocese, kindly get your Annual Budget for 2024-25 ready and submit it to me by 28 February 2024, after placing the same before the PFC of your respective parishes, having been approved by it. Do consider this as an important compliance obligation in the administration of the parish and see that the data in the new budget matches with the audited report of 2022-23 and also reflects the right financial situation of the parish with adequate provision for the pastoral activities planned for the financial year 2024-25.

11. BIBLE EXHIBITION 2023 – THANKS

We congratulate and appreciate the Bible Commission, the Commission for Proclamation and Evangelization and the Catholic Charismatic Movement for organising Bible Exhibition 2023 for three-days at Anugraha from 01 to 03 December 2023. The exhibition was meticulously and creatively planned and executed under the leadership of Rev. Fr Cyril Lobo and Rev. Fr Vincent Robert Crasta with the support of members of the Commissions and volunteers from different parishes. A word of thanks too to all parish priests and catechism

teachers for encouraging the children to prepare paintings and models and also organising the visit of the Catechism children from their parish. It was a visual treat to go through various Bibles, paintings and the models and cause for joyful memories. The exhibition was visited by large number of priests, religious men and women, the lay faithful especially the children. Everyone had a word of appreciation for the organisers for their creativity and systematic organisation of the exhibition.

12. IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER IN 2024

I. Annual Clergy Retreat

14 - 19 July 2024

II. Council of Priests' Meeting at Anugraha

1. 20 February 2024
2. 29 May 2024
3. 28 August 2024
4. 30 October 2024

III. Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting at Anugraha

1. 12 March 2024
2. 17 June 2024
3. 17 October 2024

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ 

+ **Gerald Isaac Lobo**

ACTION PLAN FOR THE YEAR OF PRAYER 2024

The Jubilee 2025 Committee formed by the Council of Priests in the meeting held on 30 November 2023 met thrice and discussed the suggestions given by the Council of Priests under the leadership of Msgr Ferdinand Gonsalves and has drawn up the following Action Plan which has been approved by the Diocesan Bishop to be implemented at various levels in the Diocese of Udupi.

JUBILEE 2025 COMMITTEE

V. Rev. Msgr Ferdinand Gonsalves, Vicar General (Convener)
Rev. Fr Sunil D'Silva, Sasthan
Rev. Thomas Roshan D'Souza, Gangolli
Fr Rolwin Fernandes, Barkur

ACTION PLAN FOR THE YEAR OF PRAYER 2024

1. PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS

1.1 At the Diocesan Level

- Obligatory participation in the study sessions on the constitutions of Vatican II.
- Participation in the 'A Day of Prayer' organised by the Diocese

1.2 At the Deanery Level

- Learning guided meditation methods
- Organising 'A Day with the Lord' at any of the Diocesan Shrines.
- Two recollections on prayer related themes in all Deaneries
- Study of Vatican II documents during monthly meetings

2. FOR THE LAITY: ADULTS

2.1 At the Diocesan Level

- Study of the constitutions of Vatican II organised by Diocese at Anugraha:

25 February 2024	<i>Dei Verbum</i>
17 March 2024	<i>Lumen gentium</i>
16 June 2024	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>
18 August 2024	<i>Gaudium et spes</i>

2.2 At the Deanery Level

- Organising Bible Convention in each of the five deaneries by well-known Retreat preachers.
- Reviving Charismatic Prayer/Intercessory Prayer Groups

2.3 At the Parish Level

- A day of prayer using different prayer methods
- Conducting ward wise adoration for one day before the Blessed Sacrament
- Organising guided form of meditation on certain themes of prayer for the associations of the parish
- Integrating Prayer of the Church with the Mass on Sundays
- Organising pilgrimage to Shrines/Basilica
- Building at least one house for the poor by 2025
- Solemn praying of the Evening Prayer (Breviary) on the eve of the solemnity of:

The Annunciation of the Lord
The Ascension of the Lord
Pentecost

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
The the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
St Thomas
The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

3. FOR THE YOUTH

3.1 At the Diocesan Level

- Organising a Gospel Band for a full day
- Organising a separate day of prayer for ICYM and YCS members

3.2 At the Deanery Level

- Arranging half a day of prayer for youth
- Meditation for youth in any diocesan Shrines/Anugraha
- Study on the constitutions of Vatican II during deanery conventions

3.3 At the Parish Level

- Conducting *Taize* form of worship
- Arranging half a day of prayer for youth

4. FOR THE CHILDREN AT THE PARISH LEVEL

- Parishwise Retreat for children
- Methods of prayer for children to be taught during summer camps
- Talks on Prayer, Liturgy, Church, Eucharist during Dasara holiday camps

PLATINUM BIRTHDAY

Rev. Fr Frederick D'Souza, Parish Priest
St Francis Xavier Church, Mudarangadi (Kenha) 19/01/2024

CONGRATULATIONS DEAR REV. FATHER AD MULTOS ANNOS

FAMILY COMMISSION PROGRAMS IN JANUARY 2024

06 & 07 Jan	Marriage Preparation Course
16 to 19 Jan	KRCBC Regional Secretaries' Meet, Bangalore
26 Jan	Missionary Families of Christ - Diocese level meet

Mr Leslie Arouza
Director

OBITUARY

Mr Ivan Ignatius Francis D'Souza (70 yrs), Br/o Rev. Fr Anil D'Souza, Parish Priest, Perampally, passed away on 15 December 2023 and the funeral was held on 21 December 2023 at Australia.

Mr Ignatius D'Souza (70 yrs), F/o Rev. Fr Stephen D'Souza, Bangalore, passed away on 20 December 2023 and the funeral was held on 21 December 2023 at Our Lady of Health Church, Shirva.

May God grant them eternal rest
Our heartfelt condolences dear Rev. Fathers

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