

VOX NOSTRA

Vol XI

DECEMBER 2023

No. 12

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

1. SEASON OF ADVENT

We begin the Liturgical Season of Advent on 03 December 2023. Advent starts the new Liturgical Year and can be seen as another opportunity to spiritually begin anew. There are particular themes in the Liturgy throughout Advent: a spirit of waiting, of conversion and joyful hope. The first part of the season (from the First Sunday to December 16 th) directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming. The second part of the season (from December 17th to December 24th) prepares for the celebration of the Incarnation at Christmas. It is also a time of vigilance and preparation for the coming of God among us: in anticipation of the future, at the end of time, in celebration of the past, by the Incarnation, and in recognition of the present, that at every moment, particularly in the liturgy and sacraments of the Church.

I specially urge the parish priests to organise at least a half-day retreat in parishes on a convenient day in Advent. Do organize separate confessions for children with due preparations as a group by catechizing and instilling in them an appreciation for the spiritual value of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Similarly, please organise confessions for all parishioners so that all spiritually prepare their hearts to receive Jesus during Christmas. While celebrating the liturgy during Advent, please pay utmost attention to the liturgical norms appropriate to the season, even during the celebration of weddings. Do catechize the faithful so that they are able to make distinction between the different seasons of the liturgical year and appreciate their importance in their Christian life.

2. THE FEAST OF HOLY FAMILY – DAY OF FAMILIES

The feast of the Holy Family this year will be celebrated on **Sunday, 31 December 2023**, and the Church invites us to celebrate this feast as the **Day of Families**. The Church presents the Holy Family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus as an example to emulate for all Christian families where each member of the family understands their role in the family and contributes to its growth with their warmth of love and forgiveness towards each other. The well-being of each family contributes to the well-being of the parish and in turn it greatly contributes to the comprehensive growth of the Diocese.

As pastors of the faithful, let us always strive to help, support and accompany the Catholic families through our pastoral care. In this regard, the Code of Canon Law prescribes to all parish priests: “so that he may fulfil his office of pastor diligently, the parish priest is to strive to know the faithful entrusted to his care. He is therefore to visit their families, sharing in their cares and anxieties and, in a special way, their sorrows, comforting them in the Lord. If in certain matters they are found wanting, he is prudently to correct them. He is to help the sick and especially the dying in great charity, solicitously restoring them with the sacraments and commending their souls to God. He is to be especially diligent in seeking out the poor, the suffering, the lonely, those who are exiled from their homeland, and those burdened with special difficulties. He is to strive also to ensure that spouses and parents are sustained in the fulfilment of their proper duties, and to foster the growth of Christian life in the family” (Can. 529 §1). I exhort all parish priests to celebrate the Day of Families meaningfully with the cooperation of the Family Commission.

3. CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF 2023

As per the statutes of PPC, the 20 Commissions' Coordinator of parishes should compile a consolidated report of the activities in the year 2023 of 20 commissions in the parish in prescribed format and send the same to the Diocese. I request the parish priests to remind the Coordinator of 20 Commissions in parishes to compile this report in two copies and send one to us and another to Rev. Fr Harold Pereira, Diocesan Coordinator of 20 Commissions before **20 December 2023**.

4. DIOCESAN EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION

The annual Diocesan Eucharistic Procession held on the solemnity of Christ the King, 26 November 2023, from Milagres Cathedral to Mount Rosary Church turned out to be a grand event of our devotion to our Eucharistic Lord and public manifestation of our faith in him. My profound thanks to V. Rev. Fr Valerian Mendonca, the Rector of Milagres Cathedral and the Dean of Kallianpur Deanery, and Rev. Fr Dr Roque D'Souza, Parish Priest of Mount Rosary Church, all priests and, Deanery Pastoral Council, Parish Pastoral Councils, Volunteers, and other members of Kallianpur Deanery for their leadership in the meticulous planning and implementation of this event. I remain grateful to all parish priests for contributing financially towards the expenses as a sign of unity and solidarity. I have made a note of the presence and active participation of the laity in large numbers with great joy and happiness. I request you, dear Parish Priests, to convey my appreciation and thanks to your parishioners on my behalf.

5. INAUGURATION OF PREPARATIONS FOR JUBILEE 2025

As per the call given by the universal Church and the directives by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CCBI), the inauguration of the preparations for the Jubilee 2025 was held on Sunday, 26 November 2023, after the annual Eucharistic Procession and Blessing at Mount Rosary Church by unveiling the logo of the Jubilee 2025. On the same day, the preparations for Jubilee 2025 were inaugurated by parish priests in all parishes of the Diocese. I remain grateful to all parish priests for organising the programme in a meaningful manner and introducing the parishioners in their preparations for Jubilee 2025.

6. CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

We joyfully celebrate Christmas on 25 December 2023 remembering the birth of the saviour of the world, after a fruitful preparation for this solemnity through the season of Advent. Church prescribes the Liturgical celebration of Christmas with an octave till the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. The celebration has a flavour of tradition and newness in our community, which includes preparation and sharing of Kuswar, singing of Christmas carols and visiting houses in the parish, preparing cribs at homes and the festive celebrations at the parish level with new and colourful dresses at Christmas and in the season of Christmas.

The beautiful season of Christmas reminds us of the infancy narratives from the Bible describing the birth of our Lord, his presence in swaddling clothes on the manger, the caring presence of Mary and Joseph through their faithful cooperation in the divine plan, the angelic singing of Glory to God, the visit of the magi from the East, arrival of the shepherds. It invites us to reflect on these events for a true experience of joy and peace in our hearts. Let the season of Christmas be an occasion for the faithful to experience this joy and peace through our well-prepared liturgical celebrations and for all people through meaningful Christmas celebrations through the sharing of Christmas joy.

I wish you, dear Rev. Fathers, Rev. Deacons, Rev. Sisters and all brothers and sisters in the Diocese, a blessed Christmas. Do convey my Christmas greetings to your parishioners and family members at masses on Christmas day. Let us continue to trust and grow closer to the Lord in carrying out his mission in the Church.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ 

+ **Gerald Isaac Lobo**

1. COMMISSION FOR BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES

03.12.2023 - Bible Mirror Method training at Kolalgiri 9.30 am to
12.30 pm

Rev. Fr Harold Pereira
Director

2. FAMILY COMMISSION

01 Dec Elders Day & Senior Citizens' Club Inauguration,
Moodubelle
03 Dec Elders Day- Kemmannu Parish
09 & 10 Dec Marriage Preparation Course
12 - 14 Dec CCBI Family Commission Meet Goa
23 & 24 Dec Marriage Preparation Course

Mr Leslie Arouza
Director

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(For Private circulation only)