

VOX NOSTRA

Vol V

JANUARY 2017

No. I

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

1. FEAST OF MOTHER OF GOD/NEW YEAR 2017

By the time, this *Vox Nostra* is in your hands, you would have already begun the New Year 2017 by celebrating the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, which calls us for a celebration of Mary's motherhood of Jesus. The title 'Mother of God' is a western derivation from the Greek Theotokos, which means 'God-bearer'. This title was given to Mary at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. On this day, we are reminded of the role played by the Blessed Virgin in the plan of our salvation. Through the Holy Spirit, God the Father prepared Mary to be the dwelling place where His Son could dwell among us. Christ's birth was made possible by Mary's *fiat*: "Be it done to me according to thy word". Addressing Mary as 'Mother of God' is the highest honour we can give to her. While I wish you a happy New Year, I pray that the New Year brings joy and peace, health and vigour in your personal life as well as in your ministry in parishes and institutions. I entrust you and your apostolate to the care and protection of the Mother of God. May she intercede for all of us with her son Jesus to accompany us in our journey through the New Year 2017.

2. WORLD PEACE DAY

January 1 is observed as the World Day of Peace in the universal Church and in India the same is kept up on 30 January as the Day of Peace. '**Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace**' is the title of the message given by Pope Francis for the 50th World Day of Peace. Let us earnestly pray to God, our heavenly Father, who sent his only Son to humanity as the Prince of Peace.

3. YEAR OF LECTIO DIVINA 2017

You have been already informed that the year 2017 will be celebrated as the **YEAR OF LECTIO DIVINA 2017** in Udupi Diocese. I have given a circular in this regard on 8 December 2016 and I exhort you to read it in full to your parishioners as per the instructions. As authorized by me, our diocesan Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, Divya Jyothi, has prepared a handbook with creative, concrete and practical action plan for the celebration of the year in our diocese. I exhort all the parish priests to support Divya Jyothi and implement the action plan in all earnestness in your parish. There is a growing thirst for the Word of God among our faithful and they go to any extent to satiate this thirst and sometimes they are misled and misguided by wrong interpretations of the Word of God. Hence, let us make use of this opportunity to instil a taste for the word of God among our faithful. As per the action plan, decide in your parish which book of Bible the parishioners will start with, exhort them to read a Chapter every day and keep on encouraging them constantly throughout the year. If necessary, organize sufficient trainings at parish and ward levels and see that the theme '**Lectio Divina In Every House In Every Family**' is actualized in all the families of our diocese.

4. PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY OCTAVE

Jesus prayed for unity saying: "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn 17:20-23). This year the prayer for Christian Unity will be held from 18 to 25 January with theme: "**Reconciliation – The Love of Christ Compels Us**" (cf. 2 Cor 5:14-20). Besides praying for Christian Unity, wherever possible, I request that common prayer services may be held along with groups of other Christian denominations so that it gives Christians

an annual opportunity to continue their quest for the unity they already share in Christ. You may contact the diocesan Director of the Commission for Ecumenism for source material for organizing this Octave. It is also available in English in http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/weeks-prayer-doc/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20160531_week-prayer-2017_en.html

5. ECUMENISM SUNDAY

22 January 2016, Sunday during the Prayer for Christian Unity Octave, is the Ecumenism Sunday for the Church in India. While the CCBI Commission for Ecumenism has provided material for the Liturgy to facilitate the active participation of the faithful in the parishes and religious communities, this is an appeal to all of you not only to keep up with Ecumenism Sunday but also celebrate it in a befitting manner so that the mission of Jesus Christ may be realized in and through our incessant prayers for unity.

6. ANNUAL FEAST OF ST LAWRENCE BASILICA AT KARKAL-ATTUR

Preparations are in full swing to celebrate the annual Feast of St Lawrence Basilica at Attur from 22 to 26 January 2017 with the traditional solemnity and devotion with the theme: **Be My Witnesses**. While the Parish Church will celebrate Confraternity Sunday on 22 January, the festive celebrations of the Shrine will commence on the same day. Last year a large number of pilgrims flocked to the Shrine for reconciliation, peace, prayers, favours and blessings. This year the number would certainly increase due to the elevation of the shrine to the status of a Minor Basilica.

What is heartening and consoling to note is the desire of the Catholic faithful to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation with great faith and sense of repentance, which is unique at Attur. Even though nearly 300 priests opt to hear confessions during the days of the Shrine festivities, their availability during the nights of Tuesday and Wednesday, being peak hours of visits from pilgrims, falls drastically short. Now

that we begin the festive celebrations from 22 January itself, even for 22 January, Sunday night onwards, we need to provide sufficient number of priests for confessional facility. Hence, I appeal to all our priests to make themselves available for confessions, especially during the peak hours and nights, when the presence of people is large and need of confessors is more. This is our Diocesan Shrine, so very important, revered and held in such high esteem by people of all faiths and walks of life. Hence it should be a matter of great pride for all of us to provide the best spiritual care and facility to them which can be done only by us, priests.

While I extend to all of you dear Fathers, your dear parishioners, Religious Men and Women and members of your Communities a cordial invitation to the Attur Basilica Feast, I request you Rev. Fathers, Diocesan and Religious, to make it a point to make yourself available to hear confessions not only when a time and day is allotted to you but also when there is a rush and great need. Deanery wise time schedule will be prepared and communicated to you through your respective Deans. Please cooperate wholeheartedly and generously. Happy Feast of St Lawrence Basilica to all of you!

7. CCBI MEETING

The 29th Plenary Assembly of the CCBI will be held in Bhopal from 31 January to 8 February 2017. The Conference will deliberate on the theme of **Family** with special focus on the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* given by Pope Francis on 19 March 2016. Let us keep all the participants in our prayers and pray for fruitful deliberations during this meeting so that the Church in India may benefit significantly in her apostolate towards family - the domestic Church.

8. LETTER FROM MLA J. R. LOBO

I have received a Communication from Mr J.R. Lobo, MLA Mangalore South and Chairman, Committee on Welfare of Backward

Classes and Minorities dated 10.12.2016 which has been printed on page 19 of this *Vox Nostra* for your kind information and if necessary, action. If any Parish Church in this Diocese lacks burial ground (cemetery) of its own, then application may be given to this Committee as per this Communication by submitting necessary documentation as expressed therein. Hence, please take note of this Communication and act accordingly if necessary.

9. PARISH STATUTORY BODIES

Several Parishes have already held elections to offices to statutory bodies as per the Constitution made effective from 01 November 2016 and have provided details of such election minutes and list of names for my approval for which I thank you dear Rev. Fathers for your response and prompt action. Those of you who have still to complete the process of holding elections are hereby requested to do so without any delay so that the new statutory bodies start functioning from January 2017.

Those of you Rev. Parish Priests who haven't sent information as indicated in the Constitution on pages 89 and 90 while sending the list of names of the newly constituted PPC and PFC for approval, I hereby request you to please do so (two copies) without delay. So that I may be able to correspond with/contact the Vice-Presidents, Secretaries, Commissions' Sainyiojaks (coordinators) of Parish PPCs and Sanchaalaks (Conveners) of 18 PPC Commissions, I request you to send their details of names, addresses in English and telephone numbers (landline if any and cell number). Thanks in anticipation.

10. ANNUAL STATISTICS

The annual statistical returns for the year 2016 are to be submitted before 31 January 2017 in the prescribed formats that have been enclosed herewith. I earnestly request the Diocesan priests and Superiors of Religious Communities to submit the filled in forms well in time to enable me to forward them to the Secretariat of State in Rome.

11. CONGRATULATIONS

I am happy to inform you that the newly constructed Church dedicated to St Francis Xavier at Udyavara has been declared the ***Best Public Building in the District of Udupi*** - for the year 2016 by the Association of Consulting Civil Engineers (ACCE – India) through its wing in Mangalore on 20 December 2016 at a ceremony held in the Milagres Centenary Hall, Mangalore. I hereby offer my heartfelt congratulations to the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr Roque D'Souza, PFC and PPC members, and Parishioners of Udyavara Parish and the Architect Yogishchandra, Engineers Dany Pinto and Gopal Bhat, and Contractor Marcel Rodrigues for their contribution to the praiseworthy award.

12. INAUGURATION AND BLESSING:

a. MILAGRES CATHEDRAL

The Platinum Jubilee celebration of Milagres Cathedral, Kallianpur building was held on 12 December 2016. To mark the occasion, the façade of the Cathedral was renovated by installing a huge statue of Our Lady of Miracles and was inaugurated and blessed by me on the same day in the presence of the priests and the parishioners of Milagres Cathedral. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Rector, V. Rev. Fr Stany Lobo, assistants Fr Anil Prakash Castelino and Fr Rolwin Aranha and the parishioners for working unitedly and shouldering the responsibility of the celebrations. As you know, this Cathedral has the seat of the Bishop and serves as the central Church of the diocese and hence it should remain very dear to all the priests and the faithful in the diocese.

b. CARMEL CONVENT, GANGOLLI

The newly constructed Convent at Gangolli was inaugurated by V. Rev. Sr Carmel Rita, AC, Provincial Superior of the Apostolic Carmel, blessed by V. Rev. Fr Anil D'Souza and the beautiful Chapel was consecrated by me on 17 December 2017. On this joyous occasion, I congratulate the Superior, Sr Julie Anne, AC and the sisters of Carmel Convent Community and wish them well, thanking

them for their apostolate, especially in the educational ministry through their institutions, and also for their dedicated service at Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Church, Gangolli.

c. ST PETER'S CHURCH, PETHRI

The renovated St Peter's Church at Pethri was inaugurated and blessed on 20 December 2016. There was an urgent need to reconstruct the portico since it was dilapidated. The parishioners, under the able leadership of Parish Priest, Rev. Fr Canute Barboza, took up the responsibility to construct a suitable portico and alongside renovated the entire Church, which now is attractive and conducive for prayer and worship. I congratulate Rev. Fr Canute Barboza and all the parishioners for coming together and working enthusiastically towards realizing this project in all earnestness.

d. HOLY FAMILY CHURCH, BRAHMAVAR

The newly constructed Holy Family Church in Brahmavar was inaugurated and blessed on 28 December 2016 in the presence of a large number of priests and faithful. The construction of this beautiful Church of God was completed in a short time, thanks to the untiring efforts of the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr Antony Vas, OFM Cap. and the whole-hearted cooperation and collaboration by the Parish Finance and Pastoral Councils, supportive parishioners, generous benefactors and the people of good will who contributed their mite towards the building of the Church. The new Church is spacious, conducive to liturgy and prayers, and stands as a striking centre of Christian presence beside the National Highway 66. I hereby express my sincere thanks and offer my congratulations to Rev. Fr Antony Vas and the parishioners for working hard and with commitment towards realizing their dream.

Yours in Christ

+ 

+ Gerald I. Lobo

CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY UDUPI (CESU)

A one day training Programme for all the Correspondents and heads of High Schools, PU Colleges and degree Colleges will be held on Monday, 16th Jan 2017 at the Conference Hall adjacent to CESU office. The following topics will be dealt with by the Resource persons:

1. POCSO Act (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) 2012
2. CBCI Child Protection, Policy and Procedures
3. Matters relating to New Education Policy
4. Qualities of a good teacher/administrator
5. Matters relating to PF, ESI, Juvenile Justice etc.....

Resource Persons: Team from KRCE (Karnataka Regional Commission for Education)

The Correspondents and heads of the Institutions are requested to attend this training Programme

Fr Lawrence D'Souza
Secretary

DIVYA JYOTHI (DBCLC)

PROGRAMS IN JANUARY 2017

Jan 7 - Diocesan Exam in Catechism and Value Education Exam for VII & X Std. The schools should collect question papers on 6 Jan 2016 before 1.00 pm

Jan 8 - Liturgical Seminar, Kanajar

Jan 15 - Evaluation of Diocesan Exam

Jan 22-26 - Attur Shrine Feast Liturgy Animation

Fr Stephen D'Souza
Director

YOUTH COMMISSION

NYC- ICYM

National Youth Convention (NYC) is a four-day mega event held once every three years in any one of the fourteen ecclesiastical Regions of India. It is a gathering of Christian young leaders along with their animators organized to provide a platform for them to encourage and equip the youth to be *the Church* both at the local and at the global level as well. It is also aimed at strengthening them in their faith in Jesus Christ through faith experience gained from testimonies, opportunities provided to develop and utilize God-given talents, from firsthand knowledge of other cultures, traditions by interacting with the youth hailing from these backgrounds and being friends to each other so that they are able to freely share, interact and live together – all these activities solely aimed to promote unity among them, enkindle love for Christ, live for Him and for the Church.

The NYC 2017 will be held in St Joseph's Engineering College at Vamanjoor, Mangalore from 18 to 21 January 2017 with the theme: *Touched by Jesus Walking His Way*, with the thrust: *Youth to youth evangelization, Youth Empowerment, Media Advocacy and Socio-Political Leadership*. A peace rally will be held on 22 January 2017 and a public function thereafter. 76 youth and animators from our Diocese will participate in the NYC.

I express my sincere thanks to all our Parish Priests, Assistant Parish Priests, the Youth and their animators and parishioners for hosting the NYC cross in a solemn, devout and meaningful way in their respective parishes praying for the success of the upcoming event. The manner in which the NYC cross was received and handed over by our parishes was highly appreciated. I remain grateful to you all.

Days In Diocese: The just four year old Diocese of Udupi is proud indeed to be the host for an event called *Days In Dioceses* (DID) from 14 to 18 January 2017 for the first time ever. **DID** are three (03)

days set aside during which the youth from various dioceses of India will visit parishes in the diocese of Udupi. The purpose is to provide a unique opportunity to the Catholic youth for firsthand experience of knowing and studying the culture, tradition, and spirituality of the people of this Diocese by living with some families who are known for their spirit of hospitality, generosity and communal harmony. At the same time, they will be able to know for themselves a little more about the way the parishes of this Local Church function pastorally, evangelically, socially, educationally and culturally so that each one of them could in turn share these firsthand experiences with their counterparts back home and in their respective parish communities. 16 parishes have come forward to be the host for the DID programme which will be conducted from 14 to 17 January, 2017 in our diocese. The DID pilgrimage will take place at St Lawrence Basilica at Attur, Karkal on 17 January 2017 during which the youth will participate in the Eucharistic celebration at 11.00 am to be presided over by our Bishop the Most Rev. Gerald Isaac Lobo. I request all Priests to concelebrate at this pilgrimage Mass.

Fr Edwin D'Souza
Director
