

VOX NOSTRA

Vol VI

JANUARY 2018

No. I

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

1. SOLEMNITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD / NEW YEAR 2018

We begin the new year 2018 with the celebration of the feast of the Mother of God. We find the mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Word and the Divine Motherhood of Mary summed up in a few words: *The Virgin's great privilege is precisely to be Mother of the Son who is God.* The most logical and proper place for this Marian feast is, therefore, eight days after Christmas. Indeed, in the night of Bethlehem, when “she gave birth to her first-born son” (Lk 2:7), the prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled. “The virgin shall be with child and bear a son”, Isaiah had foretold (7:14); “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son”, the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary (Lk 1:31); and again, an angel of the Lord, the Evangelist Matthew recounts, appeared to Joseph in a dream to reassure him and said: “Do not fear to take Mary for your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son” (Mt 1:20-21). The titles ‘Mother of God’ and ‘Blessed Virgin’, are the oldest on which all the other titles with which Our Lady was venerated are based, and it continues to be invoked from generation to generation in the Church.

While I wish you a **grace-filled 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. 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 2018.

2. WORLD DAY OF PEACE

January 1, every year, is observed as the **World Day of Peace** in the universal Church which is observed on January 30 in India. The message of Pope Francis for the 51st World Day of Peace titled ‘Migrants and refugees: men and women in search of peace’ is divided into six sections with the first offering heartfelt good wishes for peace and inviting people of good will to embrace those fleeing war, hunger and persecution. The message also poses the question, “why so many migrants and refugees?” Pope Francis answers this by considering the many conflicts forcing people to leave their homelands. He also notes the desire for a better life. He points out what is needed for migrants and refugees to find the peace they seek: a strategy combining four actions: **welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating.**

3. THEME FOR THE YEAR 2018

We are already informed that we continue with the same theme of the Word of God for the new calendar year 2018. The theme is envisioned as: **ದೆವಾಚ್ಯಾ ಉತ್ರಾಚ್ಯಾ ಬಳಾನ್ ಆಮ್ಚಿಂ ಕ್ರಿಸ್ತಿ ಕುಟ್ಮಾಂ ಪೋಷಿತ್ ಕರ್ಯಾಂ (Let’s nourish our Christian Families by the Word of God).** While I appreciate the seriousness with which the Biblical Apostolate has been carried out in different parishes in the Year of Lectio Divina 2017 through training programmes on Lectio Divina, Bible Sunday celebrations and other creative programmes, I wish to remind that it was only a small step in the enormous Biblical Apostolate. So I urge you to plan and organize relevant, fruitful and effective programmes in the Year 2018 so that the children, youth and adults in our parishes are sufficiently nourished by the Word of God in their Christian life. I request the parish clergy to see that all families in the parishes are given a copy of the Lectio Divina Calendar 2018 supplied by Divya Jyothi and motivate the parishioners to read a chapter of the Bible daily.

4. WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2018

On 14 January 2018, the Church celebrates 104th **World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018.**

5. PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY OCTAVE

Jesus prayed for unity: “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: **Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power (Ex 15:6)**. Besides praying for Christian Unity, wherever possible, I request that common prayer services may be held along with the 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 the source material for organizing this Octave. It is also available in English at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/weeks-prayer-doc/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20170613_week-prayer-2018_en.html

6. ECUMENISM SUNDAY

21 January 2018, 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.

7. ANNUAL FEAST OF ST LAWRENCE BASILICA

Preparations are in full swing to celebrate the annual Feast of St Lawrence Basilica at Attur from 21 to 25 January 2018 with the traditional solemnity and devotion with the theme: **Blessed are those who have regard for the weak (Psalm 41:1)**. While the Parish Church will celebrate Confraternity Sunday on 21 January, the festive celebrations of the Shrine will commence on the same day. Since the Shrine has been raised to the status of the Basilica, we see a steady rise

in the number of pilgrims flocking to the Shrine for reconciliation, peace, prayers, favours and blessings. What is heartening and consoling to note is the desire of the Catholic faithful to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation with great faith and a sense of repentance, which are 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, the peak hours of the pilgrims, falls drastically short. Now that we begin the festive celebrations from 21 January itself, even for 21 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 the need of confessors is more. This is our Diocesan Shrine, revered and held in such high esteem by the 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. Please cooperate wholeheartedly and generously. Happy Feast of St Lawrence Basilica to all of you!

8. DEDICATION OF RENOVATED CHURCH IN PAMBOOR

The renovated Holy Cross Church at Pamboor was blessed and dedicated by me on 18 December 2017 in the presence of a large number of priests and faithful. The renovation and construction of this beautiful Church was completed in a short time, thanks to the untiring efforts of the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr Paul Rego 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. I hereby express my sincere thanks and offer my congratulations

to Rev. Fr Paul Rego and the parishioners for working hard, with commitment, towards realizing their dream.

Yours in Christ,

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+ **Gerald I. Lobo**
Bishop of Udupi

COMMUNICATION FROM PASTORAL COMMISSIONS

1. DIVYA JYOTHI

- 06/1/2018 - Diocesan Exam in Catechism and Value Education
Exam for VII & X Std. The schools should collect
question papers on 5 Jan 2018 before 1.00 pm
- 14/1/2018 Liturgy Practice, Karkal -Attur
- 21-25/1/2018 Karkal-Attur Basilica Feast Liturgy Animation

Rev. Fr Stephen D'Souza
Director

2. COMMISSION FOR YOUTH

- 13/01/2018 YSM Convention – Janapadotsav, Udupi

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