

VOX NOSTRA

Vol IX

JANUARY 2021

No. I

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

1. SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

We celebrate the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, on January 1. The celebration reminds us that the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, is also our Heavenly Mother. In 1970, Pope Paul VI instituted the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. In his encyclical on devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Marialis Cultus*, he wrote, “This celebration, assigned to Jan. 1 in conformity with the ancient liturgy of the city of Rome, is meant to commemorate the part played by Mary in this mystery of salvation. It is meant also to exalt the singular dignity which this mystery brings to the holy Mother

... through whom we were found worthy ... to receive the Author of life.” The solemnity shows the relationship of Jesus to Mary. It is a perfect example of how we should venerate Mary under all of her titles and is a good foundation for our understanding of Mary’s place in Christology. The Church places the feast of this solemnity on the first day of the New Year to emphasize the importance of Mary’s role in the life of Christ and the Church. As we begin the new year with this solemnity, let us entrust ourselves to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

2. NEW YEAR 2021

We are at the threshold of the New Year 2021. After a tumultuous year 2020, which kept us inside our presbyteries and communities due to the corona virus, we hope the New Year brings us hope of a new and renewed world. While I wish you a grace-filled New Year, I pray that the New Year brings you joy and peace, health and happiness in your personal lives as well as in your ministry in

the 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.

3. 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. In his message for the 54th World Day of Peace, Pope Francis offers the Church's social doctrine as a "compass" to foster a culture of care for peace in the world. He appeals to the international community and every individual to foster a "culture of care" by advancing on the "path of fraternity, justice and peace among individuals, communities, peoples and nations." He states without ambiguity: "There can be no peace without a culture of care."

4. WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

We observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from January 18 to 25. These dates were proposed by Servant of God, Fr Paul Wattson, SA, founder of the Society of the Atonement, who initiated observance of the first "Church Unity Octave" in 1908, to cover the original days of the feasts of the Chair of St Peter (Jan. 18) and the Conversion of St Paul (Jan. 25), and therefore has a symbolic significance.

The theme for the 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is "Abide in My Love... You Shall Bear Much Fruit." It was discerned by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland and finds its origins in the Gospel of John (cf. John 15:5-9). I hereby exhort the Commission for Ecumenism to celebrate this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity together with non-catholic Christian brethren in your parishes. The resource material for prayer and reflection for the entire week is available in English at <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/settimana-dipreghieraperlunita/en.html>

4. YEAR OF ST JOSEPH

Pope Francis announced a special year dedicated to St Joseph starting from 8 December 2020 until 8 December 2021, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St Joseph as the Patron of the Universal Church, as well as the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. In a new Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows. He wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.” During the year, the faithful will have the opportunity to commit themselves “with prayer and good works, to obtain, with the help of St Joseph, head of the heavenly Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that besiege the contemporary world today.”

The Apostolic Penitentiary also issued a decree granting special indulgences for the duration of the special year to celebrate the anniversary and “to perpetuate the entrustment of the whole Church to the powerful patronage of the Custodian of Jesus I request the parish priests to inform the faithful about this special year, print the Prayer and give to all families in the parish, exhort the faithful to gain the plenary indulgences observing the conditions specified in the Decree.

5. TRAINING ON REVISED PASTORAL PLAN 2025

The revised pastoral plan-Mission 2025 was inaugurated on December 25 at Milagres Cathedral and comes into effect from 1 January 2021. The training on the revised pastoral plan has been organized in January 2021 The Parish Priest, Assistant,

of Religious Houses, Vice President, Secretary of Parish Pastoral Council, Coordinator of 18 Commissions and the Conveners of each of the 18 commissions are expected to participate in this training on the revised pastoral plan.

6. SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Pope Francis instituted ‘The Sunday of the Word of God’ to be held every year on the third Sunday of Ordinary Time, with the Apostolic Letter in the form of a Motu Proprio “Aperuit illis” issued on 30 September 2019. This year the **Sunday of the Word of God** falls on **24 January 2021**. The Congregation for the Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued a note on 17 December 2020 issuing certain guidelines for the celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God. Through the Commission for Bible, I exhort every parish priest to celebrate this day meaningfully with appropriate programmes to instill the taste for the Word of God among the faithful.

7. ST LAWRENCE SHRINE BASILICA FEAST

The annual feast of St Lawrence Shrine Basilica will be held from 18 to 28 January 2021 with **five masses** daily with the theme “**We are Brothers and Sisters**” (Fratelli Tutti). Due to Covid-19 protocol we cannot accommodate many people at a mass and therefore for the benefit of the faithful the festal masses will begin on 18 January. Kindly inform your parishioners to attend the masses at the Shrine from 18th 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 the premises of the Shrine will be sent to you soon by the Rector of the Shrine, V. Rev. Fr George D’Souza. Please oblige the Rector of the Shrine if your services are requested by him at the Shrine during the feast.

8. BLESSING OF PRESBYTERY AT MANIPAL

The inauguration and blessing of the presbytery at Christ Church, Manipal was held on Sunday, 28 December 2020. The project started by the former Parish Priest, Rev. Fr Francis Lewis, was completed by the present Parish Priest, Rev. Fr Frederick D’Souza, with the cooperation of the Parish Finance Council, Parish Pastoral

Council, generous donors and the faithful of Manipal Parish. I congratulate Rev. Fr Frederick D’Souza, Asst Fr Rolwin Fernandes and the parishioners for gathering necessary funds and completing the construction of the much-needed Presbytery.

9. PASTORAL LETTER

Having completed five fruitful years of its implementation, the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, Mission 2025 has now been revisited, reviewed and reworked and having received the approval of the Diocesan Senate, I have promulgated the revised Pastoral Plan, Mission 2025. It comes into effect on 01.01.2021, on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God and will serve for a further five-year term. In order to further emphasize our mission of evangelization in the changed context due to the pandemic and mass media as highlighted by our beloved Holy Father Pope Francis in his recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, I have issued a Pastoral Letter titled: *Parish, an Evangelizing Community* with an appeal to transform the parish communities into evangelizing communities by proposing therein a *Plan of Action* which is meant to be incorporated into the objectives of the 20 Commissions of the revised Pastoral Plan 2021-25, seriously and faithfully. This Pastoral Letter is dated 01 January 2021 and a copy of the same will be made available to you soon. Having gone through the Pastoral Letter, please bring its message and Plan of Action to the attention of your parishioners along with the revised Pastoral Plan 2021-25 objectives of 20 Commissions for their implementation.

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ 

✠ Gerald I. Lobo

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF ORDINATION

Rev. Fr Lawrence Rodrigues, : 02-01-2021
St Juze VazHome, Jeppu

Rev. Fr Charles Lewis, Parish Priest, : 05-01-2021
Christ King Church, Trasi

Congratulations and Best Wishes Dear Rev. Fathers

INTENTION OF POPE FRANCIS FOR JANUARY 2021

Human Fraternity

May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.

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