

VOX NOSTRA

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No. 1

Dear Rev. Fathers, 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. 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 January 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 of the Church. 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. NEW YEAR - 2023

We have stepped into the New Year 2023 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 2022. 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.

The universal Church reflects on the theme of synodality, and prepares for the final phase of Synod 2021-24. In order to realize the goal of the synod for a synodal Church, the focus of our Diocese would be to recognize, appreciate and promote the contribution of the lay faithful in carrying forward the mission of Christ in the local Church. Let us keep this focus in mind while planning and implementing the pastoral activities in our parishes.

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**. The pope's message for the 2023 World Day of Peace, the 56th celebration, is entitled 'Dialogue between generations, education, and work: tools for building lasting peace.' The Holy Father's message opens with a quotation from the First Letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians: "Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (5:1-2). Thus, the Pope recalls that the Apostle Paul encouraged the Thessalonian community to remain steadfast. Likewise, he says, "when tragic events seem to overwhelm our lives, we are called to keep our hearts open to hope and trust in God, who makes himself present, accompanies us with tenderness, sustains us in our weariness, and, above all, guides our path."

4. WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

We observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from January 18 to 25. The theme for the 2023 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is: **“Do good; seek justice” (Isaiah 1: 17)**. 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/en/settimana-di-preghiera-per-l-unita/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-20230/fr.html>

5. ECUMENISM SUNDAY

22 January 2023, 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.

6. 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 **22 January 2023**. I exhort every parish priest to celebrate this day meaningfully in association with the Biblical 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.

7. ST LAWRENCE SHRINE/ BASILICA FEAST

The annual feast of St Lawrence Shrine/ Basilica will be celebrated from 22 to 26 January 2023, on the theme: **“You shall be my witnesses.”** 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 22 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:

22/01/2023	Sunday	Karkal Deanery
23/01/2023	Monday	Udupi Deanery
24/01/2023	Tuesday	Shirva Deanery
25/01/2023	Wednesday	Kallianpur Deanery
26/01/2023	Thursday	Kundapur Deanery

8. BLESSING OF PRESBYTERYAT KALATHUR

The newly built presbytery at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Church, Kalathur, was inaugurated and blessed on Saturday, 17 December 2022. I congratulate and wholeheartedly thank Rev. Fr Francis Lewis, Parish Priest, the members of Parish Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council, and parishioners for taking initiative and completing this much-needed project within a short span of time. I also offer my thanks to all who generously contributed towards this project.

9. APOSTOLIC LETTER ‘TOTUM AMORIS EST’

On the 400th anniversary of the death of the Saint Francis de Sales, on 28 December 2022, Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Letter entitled ‘**Totum amoris est**’ (‘Everything pertains to Love’), in which he recalls how the Doctor of the Church was able to help people seek God in charity, joy and freedom in an era of great changes. A fine “interpreter” of his time, who in a new way had “a thirst for God,” and was an “extraordinary director of souls,” capable of helping people seek the Lord in their hearts and find Him in charity: This is how Pope Francis describes St Francis de Sales in the new Apostolic Letter. The Pope highlights that the great vocation of this French saint, who was born in the castle of Sales, in Savoy, on 21 August 1567, and died in Lyon on 28 December 1622, was that of asking himself “in every situation in life where the greatest love is to be found.” Let us all read this apostolic letter and also be spiritually enriched by reflecting on it.

10. IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER IN 2023

20 February 2023	– Council of Priests Meeting
22 March 2023	– Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting 25
May 2023	– Council of Priests Meeting
29 June 2023	– Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting 16-
21 July 2023	– Annual Clergy Retreat
28 September 2023	– Council of Priests Meeting
24 October 2023	– Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting 30
November 2023	– Council of Priests Meeting

11. DEATH AND FUNERAL OF POPE EMERITUS BENEDICT XVI (1927-2022)

On 31 December 2022, as we were preparing to bid farewell to the year 2022 and to welcome the new year 2023, we received the

sad news of the passing away of His Holiness Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI at 9:34 am in the *Mater Ecclesiae* Monastery in the Vatican.

During his papacy, the Diocese of Udupi was erected on 16.07.2012 and the Most Rev. Gerald Isaac Lobo, thus far Bishop of Shimoga, was appointed as the first Bishop of Udupi. Therefore, we fondly remember His Holiness for this gift of the new Diocese of Udupi. The Bishop, Clergy, Religious and the lay faithful Diocese of Udupi mourn the death of Benedict XVI and pray that God may God grant eternal peace and joy to the noble soul of Benedict XVI.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis will preside over the Funeral Mass of the Pope Emeritus on Thursday, 5th January 2023, at 09.30 am (02.00 pm IST) in St. Peter's Square, Vatican. Hence, I request the parish priests **to toll the bells thrice** on that day in all parishes. As per the communication of CCBI, the Church in India will mourn this sad demise for a week.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI – A Biography

Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) was born on 16 April 1927 in Marktl am Inn, Germany. His father, a police officer, came from a traditional family of farmers from Lower Bavaria. He spent his adolescent years in Traunstein, a small town on the Austrian border.

Joseph's days of youth were far from easy. His faith and family upbringing prepared him for the harsh experience of the problems connected with the Nazi regime; he even remembers seeing his parish priest being beaten by Nazis before celebrating Holy Mass, and was well aware of the fiercely hostile atmosphere to the Catholic Church that existed in Germany at the time. Towards the end of World War II, Joseph was enrolled in the auxiliary anti-aircraft service.

From 1946 to 1951, he studied philosophy and theology at the University of Munich and at the higher school in Freising. Together with his brother Georg, he was ordained a priest on 29 June 1951 in the Cathedral at Freising. In 1953 Fr Ratzinger obtained a doctorate in theology with a thesis entitled: "The People and House of God in St

Augustine's doctrine of the Church". Four years later, he qualified as a university professor. He then taught dogma and fundamental theology at the higher school of philosophy and theology of Freising; then in Bonn from 1959 to 1969; in Münster from 1963 to 1966; and in Tübingen from 1966 to 1969. Beginning in 1969, he was a professor of dogmatic theology and of the history of dogma at the University of Regensburg, where he eventually became Dean and Vice-Rector.

From 1962 to 1965 he was present during all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council as a chief theological advisor to the Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Josef Frings. Fr Ratzinger's important and useful experience as a priest and an "expert" at the Second Vatican Council was immensely valuable and fundamental to his life. He lived out this experience as confirmation of his own vocation, which he defined as "theological".

On 24 March 1977, Pope Paul VI appointed him Archbishop of München und Freising (Munich and Freising). He was ordained a Bishop on 28 May that same year and was the first diocesan priest in 80 years to take on the pastoral governance of this large Bavarian Diocese. He chose as his episcopal motto: "Fellow Worker in the Truth" (cf. 3 Jn 1: 8). He was created and proclaimed Cardinal by Pope Paul VI in the Consistory of 27 June 1977, of the Titles of the Suburbicarian Church of Velletri-Segni (5 April 1993) and Suburbicarian Church of Ostia (30 November 2002). On 25 November 1981 he was appointed by Pope John Paul II as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He also became President of the Biblical Commission and of the Pontifical International Theological Commission. On 15 February 1982, he resigned his pastoral office as Archbishop of Munich and Freising.

His role as President of the Commission for Drafting the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the six years of intense work (1986-92) behind its preparation are one of his many outstanding achievements. On 6 November 1998, he was appointed Vice-Dean of the College of Cardinals; on 30 November 2002, the Holy Father approved his election, by the order of Cardinal Bishops, as Dean of the College of Cardinals.

Until his election to the Chair of Peter Cardinal Ratzinger was a Member of the Council of the Second Section of the Secretariat of State; of the Congregations: for the Oriental Churches, for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, for Bishops, for the Evangelization of Peoples, for Catholic Education, as well as for the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America and the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei.

As Dean of the College of Cardinals he presided at Holy Mass in St Peter's Square for the funeral of Pope John Paul II on 8 April 2005. On 19 April, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected the 265th Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, selecting the name Benedict XVI.

His papacy testifies to both a scholarly churchman, having extensively studied theology and philosophy, and pastoral sensitivity. His encyclicals—one on hope, *Spe Salvi* (On Christian Hope), and two others on love, *Deus Caritas Est* (God Is Love) and *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth)—speak simply of profound truths. He attended the first World Youth Day in Germany just months after his election. On February 28, 2013, Pope Benedict announced his resignation, becoming the first pope in almost 600 years to resign from the papacy.

A prayer for the soul of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Father, eternal shepherd,
hear the prayers of your people for your servant Benedict, who governed
your Church with love.

In your mercy, bring him with the flock once entrusted to his care to the
reward you have promised your faithful servants.

May he who faithfully administered the mysteries of your forgiveness and
love on earth,
rejoice with you for ever in heaven.

In your wise and loving care,
you made your servant teacher of all your Church. He did the work of

Christ on earth.

May your Son welcome him into eternal glory.

May your servant whom you appointed high priest of your flock be counted now among the priests in the life of your kingdom.

Give your servant the reward of eternal happiness and let your mercy win for us the gift of your life and love.

We entrust your servant to your mercy with faith and confidence. In the human family he was an instrument of your peace and love.

May he rejoice in those gifts for ever with your saints. Amen

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ 

+ **Gerald Isaac Lobo**

GOLDEN BIRTHDAY

Rev. Fr Vishal Lobo, Parish Priest, Kanajar - 21-01-2023

Congratulations and Best Wishes Dear Rev. Father

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