

VOX NOSTRA

Vol. XIII

JANUARY 2025

No. 1

Dear Rev. Fathers, Deacons, Brothers and Sisters,

1. SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

We begin the new calendar year by celebrating the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. The Octave of Christmas falls on New Year's Day. The divine motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary was promulgated as a Marian dogma in the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431. The day is set aside to reflect on Mary's role as a model of faith and obedience to God's will. It also emphasizes the importance of Jesus's birth and his nature as both divine and human.

In his Apostolic Letter, *Marialis Cultus*, Pope Paul VI explained: "This celebration, placed on January 1 ... 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." It is likewise a fitting occasion for renewing adoration of the newborn prince of peace, for listening once more to the glad tidings of the angels (cf. Lk. 2:14), and for imploring from God, through the queen of peace, the supreme gift of peace." So, as we enter the new year, let us ask Mary, Mother of God, to bless us through the gift of Jesus so that He can guide us through the difficult paths of the future and let us prayerfully celebrate this day through prayer and reflection.

After consultation in the last Council of Priests' meeting and with my approval of it, the New Year collection of 2025 is earmarked towards the Diocesan Medical Fund. Therefore, the collection may please be sent to the Procurator, Diocese of Udupi through a cheque drawn in favour of **Udupi Diocese Charitable Trust**.

2. 58TH WORLD DAY OF PEACE

The Church observes January 1 as the World Day of Peace and invites us to pray especially for peace in the world. The Church in India observes it on January 30. For the World Day of Peace, the Holy Father addresses a message of good wishes and hope to heads of state and government, heads of international organizations, leaders of different religions and every person of goodwill.

Hope, which also characterizes the Jubilee Year, is the preponderant theme of the message for the 58th World Day of Peace message titled **“Forgive us our trespasses: grant us your peace.”** Pope Francis invites us to look at the many challenges that severely endanger the survival of humanity and creation with a heart full of hope. To do this, it is necessary to rely on God’s mercy. By His forgiving our debts, we will rediscover ourselves as children of the Father, and therefore all brothers and sisters, united on the path of peace. More concretely, Pope Francis recommends three actions that can truly mark a path of peace: the forgiveness of the international debt; the abolition of the death penalty; and the establishment of a World Fund that will definitively eliminate hunger.

3. NEW YEAR 2025

We have stepped into the new year 2025 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 2024. 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.

4. JUBILEE 2025

We have entered the Jubilee Year 2025 after spiritual preparation of two years with the Year of the Council in 2023 and Year of Prayer in

2024. The Jubilee Year officially began on Christmas Eve as Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica. At the Diocesan level, the Jubilee Year was launched on Sunday, 29 December 2024 during the mass at 08.00 am at Milagres Cathedral. Along with Milagres Cathedral, St Lawrence Shrine/Basilica, Karkal-Attur, St Antony Shrine, Kerekatte, and Vailankanni Shrine, Kalmady has been designated as the place of holy door for the Jubilee year in the Diocese. The theme for the Jubilee, "Pilgrims of Hope" reminds us that even in challenging times, renewal and reconciliation are always possible. It invites all the faithful to embrace hope, seek forgiveness, and work toward a world united in peace and compassion.

Based on the directives by the Holy See and the CCBI Committee for Jubilee 2025, and after having discussions in the meetings of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Council of Priests, an elaborate plan for the jubilee year has been chalked out for the Diocese and has been shared with you already. Again, I earnestly urge every parish priest and person in charge of commissions and associations to implement this plan for the jubilee year at the parish, deanery, and diocesan levels and make the Jubilee Year truly a year of grace and blessing for the faithful in the Diocese.

5. WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

We observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from **January 18 to 25**. The year 2025 marks the 1,700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea, near Constantinople in 325 AD. This commemoration provides a unique opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the common faith of Christians, as expressed in the Nicene Creed.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 offers an invitation to draw on this shared heritage and to enter more deeply into the faith that unites all Christians. In order to pray together for unity among churches throughout the year, the prayers and reflections for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 were prepared by the brothers and sisters of the monastic community of Bose in northern Italy. The resources

are jointly published by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches.

The guiding biblical text for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 comes from John 11:17-27. The theme for the week, **“Do you believe this?”** (v. 26), takes its cue from the dialogue between Jesus and Martha when Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany following the death of their brother Lazarus.

I hereby exhort the Commission for Ecumenism to celebrate this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity along with non-Catholic brethren in your parishes by organizing ecumenical prayer services and gatherings. The resource material for prayer and reflection for the entire week, available in English, has already been shared in the Chancery WhatsApp group.

6. ECUMENISM SUNDAY

19 January 2025, Sunday during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, is the Ecumenism Sunday for the Church in India. As per the diocesan plan for Jubilee 2025, the day is designated as Jubilee of Christian Unity. I appeal to all of you to not only celebrate 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 non-Catholic Churches and denominations so that the mission of Jesus Christ may be realized in and through our incessant prayers for unity.

7. SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

This year the Sunday of the Word of God falls on 26 January 2025. As per the diocesan plan for Jubilee 2025, the day is designated as Jubilee of the Word of God. The motto chosen by the Holy Father for the Sunday of the Word of God 2025 is a verse from Psalm 119, **“I hope in your Word”**. It is a cry of hope: humans, in a moment of anguish, tribulation, and confusion, cry out to God and put all their hope in him. I exhort every parish priest to celebrate this day meaningfully in association with the Commission for Bible with appropriate programs

to instill a taste for the Word of God among the faithful as a source of support in their Christian living. 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.

8. ST LAWRENCE SHRINE/BASILICA FEAST

The annual feast of St Lawrence Shrine/Basilica will be celebrated for five days from 26 to 30 January 2025, on the theme: **“Hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5)**. 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 26 January itself. More information and guidelines to be followed by the faithful during the feast at the Basilica and on the premises of the Shrine will be sent to you by the Rector of the Shrine, V. Rev. Fr Alban D’Souza. All priests are welcome to concelebrate at any masses during the feast and join the festive celebrations.

9. NEW COUNCIL OF PRIESTS (SENATE)

The term of the present Council of Priests concludes on 31 December 2024. I sincerely thank all the members of this Council for your active participation and wise contributions during the meetings. The new Council of Priests will commence its term on 01 January 2025, serving for a period of three years (2025-2027). I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the members of the new Council of Priests. As members of the Senate, I am confident that your expertise, insights, and pastoral experience will immensely contribute to the overall growth and well-being of the diocese and will greatly assist me in effectively shepherding our diocese.

President: Most Rev. Gerald Isaac Lobo

Members

Ex-Officio Members

1. Msgr Ferdinand Gonsalves – Vicar General; Vicar Forane, Kallianpur Deanery; Pastoral Commission Coordinator.
2. V. Rev. Fr Roshan Menezes OFM Cap – Episcopal Vicar for Religious
3. V. Rev. Fr (Dr) Roshan D’Souza – Judicial Vicar and Chancellor
4. V. Rev. Fr (Dr) Leslie C. D’Souza - Vicar Forane, Shirva Deanery
5. V. Rev. Fr Charles Menezes - Vicar Forane, Udupi Deanery
6. V. Rev. Fr Paul Rego - Vicar Forane, Kundapur Deanery
7. V. Rev. Fr Alban D’Souza - Vicar Forane, Karkal Deanery
8. Rev. Fr Vincent Crasta – Director, Pastoral Institute

Elected Members

9. Rev. Fr Joseph Machado – Kallianpur Deanery
10. Rev. Fr Jerald D’Mello – Shirva Deanery
11. Rev. Fr Anil D’Souza – Udupi Deanery
12. Rev. Fr Thomas Roshan D’Souza – Kundapur Deanery
13. Rev. Fr John Walter Mendonca - Karkal Deanery
14. Rev. Fr Rolwyn Fernandes – Assistant Priest
15. Rev. Fr Jithesh Castelino – Assistant Priest
16. Rev. Fr Wilson D’Souza – Pastoral Commissions
17. Rev. Fr (Dr) Alphonsus D’Lima – Diocesan Retired Priest
18. Rev. Fr John Fernandes OFM Cap - Religious Priest
19. Rev. Fr Rajesh Pasanna CSC – Religious Priest
20. Rev. Fr Arvind Severes SDB – Religious Priest

Nominated Members

21. Rev. Fr Edwin D’Souza
22. Rev. Fr (Dr) Prakash Anil Castelino

10. CLERICAL APPOINTMENT

Rev. Fr Anil Rodrigues has been appointed as the Assistant Priest of Our Lady of Health Church, Shirva, w.e.f. 06 December 2024. Rev Fr Anil Rodrigues, a newly ordained priest belonging to the Diocese of Karwar, has been deputed for the priestly ministry in the Diocese of Udupi. I welcome and wish him fruitful ministry.

11. 36TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF CCBI

The 36th Plenary Assembly of the CCBI will be held from 28 January to 4 February 2025 at the Xavier Institute of Management University campus in the Archdiocese of Cuttack- Bhubaneswar. More than 170 Bishops are expected to gather to reflect on the theme “Discerning Synodal Pathways for Mission.” This theme calls for a deep reflection on the synodal process, in view of invigorating the mission of the Church in India. The Bishops will spend eight days in prayer, reflection, and discernment, in view of revitalizing the Church in India to embrace a more synodal and missionary identity. Let us pray for the fruitfulness of this Plenary Assembly of the CCBI. Our valuable prayers will certainly help the Church in our country bear much fruit under the guidance of its Bishops who gathered in the Plenary Assembly, will chalk out future programs and action plans for a more Synodal Church in India.

12. DATES OF PASTORAL VISITS

In *Vox Nostra*-July 2024 issue (page 4), I had asked the parish priests of Shirva and Karkal deaneries to fix the dates of my pastoral visit to the parishes in these two deaneries from January 2025. I also reminded you about it during the meeting of deanery priests. However, so far only a few parish priests have finalized the dates in consultation with me. Hence, once again, I remind you to come and meet me personally before 26 January 2025 and finalize the dates of pastoral visits to your parish.

13. ACTION PLAN FOR 2025 BASED ON PASTORAL PLAN

We have launched the new Pastoral Plan for the Diocese: Journeying Towards a Synodal Church: Mission 2030 on the eve of the new year during the mass of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. The pastoral plan can be effectively implemented with a clear action plan for each calendar year. Hence, I kindly request the Parish priests to prepare an action plan for the year 2025 by incorporating at least two activities based on the objectives of each pastoral commission. The format of the action plan has been provided on pages 117-127 in the published pastoral plan. Kindly submit the yearly action plan to my office by 30 January 2025.

14. IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER IN 2025

I. Annual Clergy Retreat: 13-18 July 2025

II. Council of Priests' Meeting at Anugraha

11 February 2025

24 June 2025

28 October 2025

III. Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting at Anugraha

12 March 2025

23 July 2025

07 October 2025

15. DARPAN ID FOR TRUSTS

As per Amended PMLA Rules, Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue) vide Notification S.O. 1074(E), dated March 7, 2023, in the exercise of the powers conferred by Section 73 of the Prevention of Money-laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 (15 of 2003), has amended the Prevention of Money-laundering (Maintenance of Records) Rules, 2005 and accordingly: "Non-profit organization" now means "any entity or organization, constituted for religious or charitable purposes referred to in clause (15) of section 2 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961), that is registered as a trust or a society under the Societies Registration

Act, 1860 (21 of 1860) or any similar State legislation or a Company registered under the section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013 (18 of 2013)."

Although many of our Trusts of parishes are not registered, since the banks insist on Darpan ID, it is advisable and prudent to obtain it. Therefore, I urge all parish priests to register and obtain a Darpan ID for the Trust of your parish. The trust deeds of the parishes have to be looked into to confirm who the trustees are. Only their details are to be used. The bishop, Vicar General and the Financial Administrator (except for a few parishes) are only the authors of the trust and not the trustees in charge of day-to-day management. Hence their PAN and other details are not required. Kindly consult your auditor and do the needful to obtain the Darpan ID.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ 

+ **Gerald Isaac Lobo**

TWIN JUBILEE OF BISHOP GERALD LOBO

Dear Rev. Parish Priests,

Greetings of peace and joy to you.

As communicated earlier, we will be celebrating the 75th Birthday and the 25th Episcopal Ordination Day of our beloved Bishop, Most Rev. Dr Gerald Isaac Lobo, on 09th February 2025. The Thanksgiving Mass will be offered by our Beloved Bishop at 04:00pm at Milagres

Cathedral, Kallianpur. This is a momentous occasion for our Diocese, and we earnestly request you to encourage your parishioners to participate in this significant Jubilee Celebration. We warmly invite you and your parishioners to join us for the Thanksgiving Mass, followed by a short felicitation programme. We profusely appreciate your generosity and support in making this event a success.

Thanks and God Bless You,

Yours in Christ,

Very Rev. Msgr. Ferdinand Gonsalves
(Chairman, Twin Jubilee Committee)

Very Rev. Fr (Dr) Roshan D'Souza
(Secretary, Twin Jubilee Committee)

ECOLOGY COMMISSION

The Ecology Commission of the Diocese, in collaboration with Sampada Udupi, is organizing a year-long competition titled **“Laudato Si’ Save the Mother Earth Competition 2025”** to commemorate Pope Francis’ encyclical “Laudato Si’.” This competition will be conducted over 12 months, with a new topic announced each month. Participants are required to undertake activities at their respective locations and submit reports to Sampada Udupi in the form of photographs or videos.

The competition will be held under three categories: 1. Laudato Si’ Family; 2. Laudato Si’ Ward and 3. Laudato Si’ Institution. To

participate, individuals/institutions must register with Sampada Udupi. For registration and inquiries, please contact: **9448158852, 9141031670** Handbills have been dispatched to Parish Priests and Parish Ecology Commission leaders. We kindly request Parish Priests to publicize the competition in their parishes, encouraging families to participate actively.

Rev. Fr Reginald Pinto

Director

OBITUARY

Mrs Matilda Barboza (80 yrs), M/o Rev. Fr Canute Barboza, Parish Priest, St Dominic Church, Miyar passed away on Tuesday, 03 December 2024. The funeral mass and rite was held at St Dominic Church, Miyar on 05 December 2024. We pray that God may grant her eternal rest. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Rev. Fr Canute Barboza and the family members.

Published at **Bishop's House, Udupi - 576 101**

Email: **voxnostraeditor@gmail.com**

Editor: **Rev. Fr Stephen D'Souza**

(For private circulation only)