

VOX NOSTRA

Vol IV

February 2016

No. 02

1. HOLY SEASON OF LENT

Catholics all over the world will enter into the holy season of Lent on 10 February this year in a spirit of prayer, penance, fasting and sacrifice to unite themselves with the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ who, through His suffering and death, wrought our salvation and through His resurrection has promised us eternal life. In the words of Pope Francis, “Lent is a time of renewal for the whole Church, for each communities and every believer. Above all it is a “time of grace” (2 *Cor* 6:2). God does not ask of us anything that he himself has not first given us. “We love because he first has loved us” (1 *Jn* 4:19). He is not aloof from us. Each one of us has a place in his heart”.

The holy season of Lent therefore invites all of us to enter into the spirit with which Christ suffered for us, died on the Cross and has risen. It also invites us to spend this season in a spirit of prayer, penance, fasting and sacrifice so that by our own inner purification and liberation from evil and sinfulness, we may be able to obtain and experience the mercy of God. I hereby request all of you dear Rev. Fathers to announce to your parishioners about the significance of Lent and the spirit behind this holy season. Devotion of the Way of the Cross during Lent is there in all our parishes. Let this be a grace-filled opportunity to meditate on the mystery of the Cross and Salvation. Its shorter form is also undertaken in many parishes everyday either before or after the daily Mass during Lent which I appreciate very much and encourage so that this holy season of Lent may become for all of us a sure means of grace and holiness.

While Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of penance to be marked by fasting and abstinence from the eating of meat, all Fridays of Lent may also be treated accordingly. It is my prayerful hope that this Lent will prove spiritually fruitful for each one of us.

2. HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

During my pastoral visit of all parishes, I had noted with appreciation that some parishes have already established Holy Childhood Association and wherever it did not exist, I had requested Parish Priests to begin in all earnestness. This is now with a request to please establish this Association in those parishes which have still to start so that the wish of the Holy Father Pope Francis is truly translated into a reality. Booklet is available with our *Divya Jyothi* for further information as to the objectives, establishment and promotion of this Association.

3. ANNUAL SHRINE FEAST OF ST LAWRENCE AT KARKAL-ATTUR

The feast of St Lawrence which this year began on 24 January: Confraternity Sunday, got solemnly concluded on 29 January 2016 with a morning Mass followed by charity distribution and meals to the poor and the needy of our society. The additional infrastructural facilities around the campus and space truly made the festive celebrations more attractive, grand and rewarding. Every year we see a steady increase in the number of pilgrims and devotees flocking to the Shrine of St Lawrence with such devotion and fervour. Over 40 holy Masses were celebrated in different languages during the festive days in which the participation of the pilgrims was very encouraging, prayerful and devotional. St Lawrence who is a powerful intercessor before God continues to invite people of all walks of life and faith to himself especially to the sacrament of confession so that believers might feel and obtain the mercy of God besides His blessings and favours. Words fail me to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the wonderful team

spirit and work put in during the entire duration of the festive celebration and its grand success. I hereby express my heartfelt thanks to the Rector of the Shrine V. Rev. Fr George D'Souza, Parish Priest Rev. Fr Alphonsus D'Lima and Assistant Parish Priest Rev. Fr Vijay Joyson D'Souza of Attur Shrine and Church for untiringly playing the hosts of the celebrations, all five Deans and the Clergy: diocesan and religious of Udupi Diocese for all out help whether at the confessional, Shrine proper, stalls, liturgical celebrations and as in-charge of various portfolios for the smooth conduct and organization of the Feast with a proud feeling: "This is our Shrine and so our Feast".

I am happy to say that this impression was very much vivid and felt on all days of the Shrine Feast. I express my sincere thanks especially to Priests and Religious from the Diocese of Mangalore and others from the neighboring Dioceses of Belthangady, Shimoga and Chikmagalur for their confessional ministry and in the celebration of the liturgy. Thanks are also due to Rev. Deacons (Diocesan and Religious) for their week-long diaconal ministry, Seminarians for their special attendance and assistance at the Shrine proper, religious Sisters for their generous service at the stalls, sacristy and dining hall. My appreciation goes to those who took leadership being in-charge of the liturgy, confessional ministry, choir/singing, mass offerings, security, announcements, food, media and publicity, ushering in dignitaries, Shrine proper, various official stalls of the parish and the Diocese. The Catholic Sabha members of the Attur Parish and Karkal Deanery as always have played a dedicated role and given committed and tireless service before and on all days of the annual Shrine Feast and throughout the year too. I remain grateful to all of them. I request the Rev. Rector to communicate my thanks and appreciation for their noble and generous service and contribution in the success of the Shrine Feast. The various Choir Groups and Altar Servers from different parishes too deserve my words of appreciation and thanks which I express and extend

wholeheartedly. May St Lawrence the wonder-worker continue to obtain blessings and favours for all of us and for pilgrims and devotees who continually knock at the Shrine and throughout the year with tremendous faith, trust, hope and devotion and above all for God's mercy, grace and blessings through his powerful intercession. Thanks and God bless you all.

4. HOLY YEAR OF MERCY

His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay and President of CCBI has issued a Circular for the Holy Year of Mercy dt. 07 October 2015. I have made the text of this Circular available to you as annexure on page 8. I request you to go through it and then explain highlights from the Circular to your parishioners so that all of us may be able not only to understand how merciful God our Father is but also experience Him as one during the Holy year of Mercy.

5. SEMINAR FOR DIOCESAN PRIESTS

You are aware that our Holy Father Pope Francis has already promulgated his Encyclical Letter: *Laudato Si*, on 24 May 2015. This Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father is a clarion call to all on earth to protect and preserve God-given planet of ours with utmost respect and diligence and not to further manipulate, damage or destroy it creating thereby ecological imbalance which is already seen and felt by all with a lot of worry and anxiety for our own life and that of our planet. It is indeed a matter of great concern for all of us to preserve, protect and save our planet.

A seminar has been planned for all diocesan priests at the Bishop's House in Udipi on 29 February 2016 from 09.30 am to 05.00 pm on the study of *Laudato Si* Encyclical Letter. I hereby invite all our diocesan clergy to make it a point to attend this important and very informative Seminar.

6. ANNUAL STATISTICS

In the *Vox Nostra* of January 2016, I had requested Parish Priests and Heads of Religious Communities of men and women to submit filled-in annual statistical forms to this office by 31 January 2016. There are still some who have yet to respond to my request and as a result there is unnecessary delay in my compliance in submitting it to the Holy See. I request those who have not yet submitted the annual statistical form to submit it latest by 15 February 2016.

7. MEETING OF VICE-PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES OF PPC

As informed already, there will be a meeting of all Vice-Presidents and Secretaries of the PPC of all Parishes, here in the Bishop's House on Sunday, 21 February, 2016 from 2.30 pm to .5.00 pm. While I invite them to attend this meeting without fail, I hereby request Parish Priests to inform your respective Vice- Presidents and Secretaries of PPC about my invitation to them. Thank you.

8. LENTEN CAMPAIGN

As every year during Lent, *SAMPADA* our Diocesan Social Development Commission has come forward to collect funds for medical care as a continuation of last year's campaign for this deserving purpose since there are too many requests from the poor and needy patients for medical care and treatment more than we can handle. The Commission will distribute lucky-dip coupons to every Parish before lent so that these in turn are distributed among your parishioners to

raise funds for this noble and deserving cause. I hereby request you dear Fathers to patronize this Lenten Campaign by making announcement to your parishioners and promoting it through distribution of these coupons.

9. CLERICAL APPOINTMENTS

1. Rev. Fr John Mendonca as Priest-in-charge of St Antony Sub-Station of Basrur Parish at Kandlur w.e.f.26-01-2016 till further orders with residence at St Antony Shrine, Kerekatte.
2. V.Rev. Fr Valerian Menezes (Diocese of Mangalore) as Judicial Vicar of Udupi Diocesan Ecclesiastical Tribunal w.e.f. 01-02-2016

I thank you once again for your prayers, support, cooperation and constructive role played during the annual shrine feast of St Lawrence and give the credit of its appreciation and success to each and every one of you: Diocesan Clergy, Religious Men and Women and Lay Faithful. I take this occasion to wish you all a fruitful and grace-filled holy Lenten season and invoke God's plentiful blessings on all of you.

+ 

Gerald Lobo

Bishop of Udupi

Annexure

The Holy Year of Mercy Conference of Catholic Bishops of India

Circular for the Holy Year of Mercy
December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016

To

All the Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Religious, Catechists and lay faithful of Latin Catholic Church in India.

Your Eminence, Your Grace, Your Excellency,

Greetings of Peace and Joy in the Lord Jesus Christ, the living face of the Father's Mercy.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis has announced an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy which will begin on December 8, 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and conclude on November 20, 2016, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe. The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy was declared with the Bull of Indiction, 'Misericordiae Vultus' (MV) of April 11, 2015.

The motto of the Holy Year of Mercy, "Merciful like the Father," (Lk. 6:36) serves as an invitation to follow the example of the compassionate Father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive and give love and forgiveness without measure. We wish to live this Jubilee Year in the light of the Lord's words: "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). The Holy Year of Mercy is a call to the Church to refashion herself as a body not for judgment or condemnation but for pardon and merciful love. It is an occasion and an opportunity for us to deepen our faith and transform our Church into a more compassionate and merciful instrument.

The Holy Father, Pope Francis has suggested numerous ways of experiencing and practicing Mercy in Misericordiae Vultus. Keeping in mind those practical ways the Executive Committee of the CCBI requested that we give some guidelines, which the Indian Church could consider in all the pastoral initiatives at different levels: regional, diocesan and parish in the year of Mercy.

Organising Committee: “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life” (MV10). Thus, under the guidance of the Bishop all the Commissions of the diocese, could come together to form an Organising Committee that would initiate, lead and co-ordinate the initiatives of the Year of Mercy, both, at the Diocesan and Parish levels.

Opening of the Holy Door of Mercy: “On the same Sunday, (the third Sunday of Advent, December 13, 2015) I (Pope Francis) will announce that in every local Church at the Cathedral – the Mother Church of the faithful in any particular area or alternatively at the co-cathedral or another church of special significance, a Door of Mercy will be opened for the duration of the Holy Year” (MV 3). At the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop a similar door may be opened at any Shrine. It would be particularly appropriate if the National Shrines and Basilicas are chosen for this.

Closing of the Holy Door of Mercy: On November 20, 2016, the day of the closing of the Holy Year of Mercy, all the doors designated as Holy Doors of Mercy will be solemnly closed (MV 5).

Corporal Works of Mercy: “Jesus introduces us to these works of Mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these corporal works of Mercy: i) to feed the hungry, ii) give drink to the thirsty, iii) clothe the naked, iv) welcome the stranger, v) heal the sick, vi) visit the imprisoned and vii) bury the dead.”(MV15). If we can motivate every baptized person to do “One Small Act of Mercy Daily” it will bring about a mercy revolution in India.

Spiritual Works of Mercy: “And let us not forget the spiritual works of Mercy: i) to counsel the doubtful, ii) instruct the ignorant, iii) admonish sinners, iv) comfort the afflicted, v) forgive offences, vi) bear patiently those who do us ill and vii) pray for the living and the dead” (MV 15). We are recommended to form Missionary Disciples (MD) (Evangeli Gaudium 120) who can exercise the above spiritual works and motivate others to do the same.”

Pilgrimage: “The Practice of Pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this

life” (MV 14). “May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion, by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God’s Mercy” (MV14).

We are invited to announce some Pilgrimages where people can have the opportunity to enter the Holy Door and encounter God’s Mercy and obtain an Indulgence. These Pilgrim Centres for this Holy Year ought to have teams to help the pilgrims experience Mercy and conversion through faith.

Lent 2016: “The season of Lent during this Jubilee Year should also be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God’s Mercy” (MV 16). Lent 2016 should be considered with new fervour and more reading and meditation of the Sacred Scriptures should be promoted.

“In order to be capable of Mercy, therefore, we must first of all dispose ourselves to listen to the Word of God” (MV13). All the baptized could be recommended to have a ‘Personal Bible’ and ‘Personal Prayerful Bible Reading Time’ especially in the forthcoming season of Lent. “How many pages of Sacred Scriptures are appropriate for meditation during the weeks of Lent to help us rediscover the merciful Face of the Father!” (MV 17).

Regular Confession Initiatives: “Let us place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the centre once more in such a way that it will enable people to touch the grandeur of God’s Mercy with their own hand” (MV 17). We need trained confessors who would be available to lead the penitents to experience Divine Mercy. Special motivational recollections for priests on the theme of ‘God’s Mercy and the Sacrament of Reconciliation’ could be conducted. We can invite also Confessors from outside the diocese especially during the season of Lent.

Missionaries of Mercy: “During this Holy Year I (Pope Francis) intend to send out Missionaries of Mercy” (MV 18). They will be persuasive preachers of Mercy. “I ask my brother Bishops to invite and welcome these Missionaries of Mercy” (MV 18). From every Diocese some priests can be recommended by the Local Ordinaries to the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization and

can be registered as Missionaries of Mercy for this Holy Year. Some dioceses have already done so.

24 Hours for the Lord: “The initiative of 24 Hours for the Lord to be celebrated on the Friday and Saturday preceding the Fourth week of Lent, should be implemented in every diocese” (MV 17) March 4 and 5, 2016 can be marked as the days of intense prayer in every Diocese, Parish, Religious House, Institution and Mission Station in India. There can be an organized 24 Hours of chain prayer involving different groups which could be nominated, motivated and trained.

Mercy Outreaches: “May we reach out to them (wounded and hurt) and support them so that they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship and our fraternity” (MV 15). As members of the Body of Christ, we are called upon to respond with deep compassion and mercy to all our brothers and sisters who have feel hurt in some way by any member of the Church or by any minister of the Church.

There is an urgent need to identify ‘Agents of Reconciliation’ who will take the initiative to reach out to those who feel wounded by the ministers and the members of our own community. There can be a ‘Team of Agents of Reconciliation’ well trained for peace making, outreach, and special Healing Services.

Divine Mercy Devotion: “Our Prayer also extends to the Saints and blessed ones who made Divine Mercy their mission in life. I am especially thinking of the great apostle of Divine Mercy, Saint Faustina Kowalska” (MV 24). During this year of Divine Mercy we can concentrate and promote the devotion to Divine Mercy through the recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet and litany. We can also make our people aware of the Messages on Divine Mercy revealed to Saint Faustina Kowalska. Moreover we can celebrate the Divine Mercy Sunday, which follows the Sunday after Easter, April 3, 2016, with greater solemnity.

Catechesis on Jubilee Year of Mercy: An in-depth awareness of the Jubilee year of Mercy is essential to celebrate the year meaningfully and fruitfully. Special conferences on Mercy can be organized systematically by having selected resource persons reaching out to

different places and groups throughout the year. These selected personnel would need to explain the meaning of the Year of Mercy, Door of Mercy, Indulgence, Sacrament of Reconciliation, and other works of Mercy recommended by the Church in *Misericordiae Vultus*. They can be also encouraged to write articles and books on Mercy of God and the Jubilee year of Mercy. The Special programmes in this Year of Mercy, conducted at Suvarta Kendra, Panchmari, National Centre for New Evangelization could be utilized.

Dissemination of the Message of Mercy: The diocesan and regional task force for the Year of Mercy can create and manage a website wherein the events, resources, information, links, samples, short films, documentaries and support programmes can be uploaded for a speedy awareness and co-ordination, use of social media is also very effective.

The main focus and aim of this Jubilee Year is to live out in our daily lives the Mercy which the Father constantly extends to all of us and to introduce everyone to the great mystery of God's Mercy. (MV 25).

Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy: In order to have a fruitful experience of the programmes of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, we urge everyone to pray regularly the prayer for the Year of Mercy prepared by the Holy Father, Pope Francis. We encourage all of you to take initiatives based on these guidelines to celebrate the Year of Mercy meaningfully in our country.

Our Mother Mary, Mother of Mercy, was the first herald of Mercy in the house of Elizabeth, at the Marriage at Cana, under the Cross at Calvary and in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost. May our Mother of Mercy intercede for each one of us especially during this year. We wish you all a fruitful Holy Year of Mercy.

Given from the Secretariat of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India on October 7 on the Feast of Our Lady of Rosary, in the Year of Our Lord 2015.

+ Oswald Cardinal Gracias

President, Conference of Catholic Bishops of India and
Archbishop of Bombay

SCC Training Programs in Feb. 2016

- 01 Udupi Deanery SCC Committee meeting.
- 04 Kallianpur deanery SCC Committee meeting.
- 08 Shirva Deanery SCC Committee meeting & VAT Training.
- 12 Kundapur Deanery SCC Committee meeting & VAT Training
- 14 Ward Samithi Training- Belman
- 17 SCC Directors National meeting at Nagpur.

- Fr Harold Pereira

Family Commission Programs in Feb. 2016

- 07 Family Day - Piusnagar 7.00 – 10.30
- 14 Marriage Encounter Program - (0 – 5 yrs. married couples)
8.30 – 5.00
- 17 Marriage Enrichment Program – Pamboor Parish 2.30 to 5.30
- 21 Marriage Encounter Program - (6 – 15 years married couples)
8.30 – 5.00
- 28 Diocese level Couples for Christ get together 8.30 – 1.30

- Leslie Arouza

NOTE FROM THE PARISH PRIEST, UDYAVARA

Dear Rev. Fathers/Sisters,

I am happy to inform you about the inauguration and blessing of the new Church dedicated to St Francis Xavier in Udyavara which will take place on Thursday, 28.04.2016 at 09.00 am. This is my invitation to you in advance with a request to please make a note of this date in your Dairy and take part in the celebrations. Formal invitation will follow.

-Rev.Fr Roque D'Souza