



Archdiocese of Bangalore

CIRCULAR



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No. 10A

MARCH 2019

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Faithful,

Peace of Christ!

1. HOLY FATHER'S LENTEN MESSAGE

We are already in the Lenten season, which beckons us to conversion and repentance. The Holy Father, Pope Francis has enlightening words to accompany us in this Season with his meaningful interpretation of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Attached please find the text of the message.

2. THE VOICE OF THE SHEPHERDS

The Karnataka Bishops have considered it opportune to call the attention of the faithful of Karnataka over the 4 important issues before us:

- i. Attacks and killing of CRPF Personnel
- ii. The Holy Season of Lent
- iii. The Forthcoming General Election
- iv. The Educational Ministry

Please go through these well-thought out and forceful messages from the Shepherds.

3. CAST YOUR VOTES

The election commission of India has announced the schedule of elections to the coming Lok Sabha Election 2019. Karnataka will be having elections in 2 phases on 18th April & 23rd April. As 18th April is Maundy Thursday, a holy day for Christians, I have appealed to the Chief Election Officer to consider our plea to postpone or pre-pone the elections to another date. This is also necessitated as many of our schools and institutions, with some in Church campuses are designated as places with election booths and entry to such places may be restricted even to the Christians.

As for the present, let everyone keep attempting to get their name included (Form-6) by visiting their respective Electoral Registration Officer/Revenue Officer, BBMP / Asst. Commissioner, Sub-Division in District or Asst. Electoral Registration / Asst. Revenue Officer, BBMP / Tahsildar Office, Taluks.

The poll dates for Karnataka overlap with 5 days of continuous holidays. May it not be an excuse to miss the election. Please request the people to cast their vote conscientiously, to secular candidates, who have the reputation to uphold the tenets of the constitution. Neither money nor incentives should entice the people to cast their votes.

We have had sufficient trainings in Paalanaa Bhavana for those who wished to be trained at web-checking of voting cards. The Religious are especially requested to call all on 18th April, the election day, who will be moving to places outside Bangalore to return to their places to cast their votes, if their election cards are registered Bangalore. Similarly we appeal to all the people from Bangalore, who may be working/holidaying outside to return to Bangalore on voting day to cast their precious vote.

4. KANNADA LECTIONARIES AVAILABLE IN THE CURIA OFFICE

The Kannada Lectionary (Vol. I) is available for sale. You can procure it immediately for Rs. 1250/- for those who have ordered at pre-publication rate. It is well brought out by the Regional Liturgical Commission headed by its Secretary, Rev. Fr. J.B. Xavier

of Mysore Diocese along with Fr. Gilbert Aranha of Mysore. Though late, I wish to place on record our appreciation for their dedicated effort of publishing the Lectionary which is indispensable for the liturgical celebration in Kannada. The Lectionary was printed at Brilliant Printers, Bangalore. I recommend every Church and Religious Institution to buy a copy. The other two volumes of the Lectionaries in Kannada will be ready in the later part of the year.

5. PRO-LIFE DAY IN THE ARCHDIOCESE : 25TH MARCH 2019: FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD

Further to my explanation about the importance of this day in the last circular, the Family Commission of the Archdiocese of Bangalore is celebrating the Pro-Life Day with display of banners, placards on Pro-Life themes as also prayer service leading up to the Eucharist at 6.00 p.m., in St. Francis Xavier Cathedral on 25th March 2019. After the Eucharist, the Family Commission and other Pro-Life groups in the Archdiocese will felicitate families who have four or more than 4 children. Such couples in the Parishes may kindly give the details to Fr. Sunny Richard John, Mob: 9164235987, E-mail: sunnyrichard2018@gmail.com; or Mr. Joseph, Mob: 9886127322, E-mail: jsathyaraj@gmail.com by 22nd March 2019.

With best wishes and God's blessings,

Yours in Christ,



✠ Peter Machado
Archbishop of Bangalore

POPE'S MESSAGE FOR LENT 2019

“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” (Rom 8:19)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Each year, through Mother Church, God “gives us this joyful season when we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed... as we recall the great events that gave us new life in Christ” (*Preface of Lent I*). We can thus journey from Easter to Easter towards the fulfilment of the salvation we have already received as a result of Christ’s paschal mystery – “for in hope we were saved” (*Rom 8:24*). This mystery of salvation, already at work in us during our earthly lives, is a dynamic process that also embraces history and all of creation. As Saint Paul says, “the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” (*Rom 8:19*). In this perspective, I would like to offer a few reflections to accompany our journey of conversion this coming Lent.

1. THE REDEMPTION OF CREATION

The celebration of the Paschal Triduum of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection, the culmination of the liturgical year, calls us yearly to undertake a journey of preparation, in the knowledge that our being conformed to Christ (cf. *Rom 8:29*) is a priceless gift of God’s mercy.

When we live as children of God, redeemed, led by the Holy Spirit (cf. *Rom 8:14*) and capable of acknowledging and obeying God’s law, beginning with the law written on our hearts and in nature, *we also benefit creation* by cooperating in its redemption. That is why Saint Paul says that creation eagerly longs for the revelation of the children of God; in other words, that all those who enjoy the grace of Jesus’ paschal mystery may experience its fulfilment in the redemption of the human body itself. When the love of Christ transfigures the lives of the saints in spirit, body and soul, they

give praise to God. Through prayer, contemplation and art, they also include other creatures in that praise, as we see admirably expressed in the “Canticle of the Creatures” by Saint Francis of Assisi (cf. *Laudato Si’*, 87). Yet in this world, the harmony generated by redemption is constantly threatened by the negative power of sin and death.

2. THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF SIN

Indeed, when we fail to live as children of God, we often behave in a destructive way towards our neighbours and other creatures – and ourselves as well – since we begin to think more or less consciously that we can use them as we will. Intemperance then takes the upper hand: we start to live a life that exceeds those limits imposed by our human condition and nature itself. We yield to those untrammelled desires that the Book of Wisdom sees as typical of the ungodly, those who act without thought for God or hope for the future (cf. 2:1-11). Unless we tend constantly towards Easter, towards the horizon of the Resurrection, the mentality expressed in the slogans “*I want it all and I want it now!*” and “*Too much is never enough*”, gains the upper hand.

The root of all evil, as we know, is sin, which from its first appearance has disrupted our communion with God, with others and with creation itself, to which we are linked in a particular way by our body. This rupture of communion with God likewise undermines our harmonious relationship with the environment in which we are called to live, so that the garden has become a wilderness (cf. *Gen* 3:17-18). Sin leads man to consider himself the god of creation, to see himself as its absolute master and to use it, not for the purpose willed by the Creator but for his own interests, to the detriment of other creatures.

Once God’s law, the law of love, is forsaken, then the law of the strong over the weak takes over. The sin that lurks in the human heart (cf. *Mk* 7:20-23) takes the shape of greed and unbridled pursuit of comfort, lack of concern for the good of others and even of oneself. It leads to the exploitation of creation, both persons and the

environment, due to that insatiable covetousness which sees every desire as a right and sooner or later destroys all those in its grip.

3. THE HEALING POWER OF REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

Creation urgently needs the revelation of the children of God, who have been made “a new creation”. For “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17). Indeed, by virtue of their being revealed, *creation itself can celebrate a Pasch*, opening itself to a new heaven and a new earth (cf. Rev 21:1). The path to Easter demands that we renew our faces and hearts as Christians through repentance, conversion and forgiveness, so as to live fully the abundant grace of the paschal mystery.

This “eager longing”, this expectation of all creation, will be fulfilled in the revelation of the children of God, that is, when Christians and all people enter decisively into the “travail” that conversion entails. All creation is called, with us, to go forth “from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom 8:21). Lent is a sacramental sign of this conversion. It invites Christians to embody the paschal mystery more deeply and concretely in their personal, family and social lives, above all by fasting, prayer and almsgiving.

Fasting, that is, learning to change our attitude towards others and all of creation, turning away from the temptation to “devour” everything to satisfy our voracity and being ready to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness of our hearts. *Prayer*, which teaches us to abandon idolatry and the self-sufficiency of our ego, and to acknowledge our need of the Lord and his mercy. *Almsgiving*, whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future that does not belong to us. And thus to rediscover the joy of God’s plan for creation and for each of us, which is to love him, our brothers and sisters, and the entire world, and to find in this love our true happiness.

Dear brothers and sisters, the “lenten” period of forty days spent by the Son of God in the *desert* of creation had the goal of making it once more that *garden* of communion with God that it was before original sin (cf. *Mk* 1:12-13; *Is* 51:3). May our Lent this year be a journey along that same path, bringing the hope of Christ also to creation, so that it may be “set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God” (*Rom* 8:21). Let us not allow this season of grace to pass in vain! Let us ask God to help us set out on a path of true conversion. Let us leave behind our selfishness and self-absorption, and turn to Jesus’ Pasch. Let us stand beside our brothers and sisters in need, sharing our spiritual and material goods with them. In this way, by concretely welcoming Christ’s victory over sin and death into our lives, we will also radiate its transforming power to all of creation.

From the Vatican, 4 October 2018,

Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi

FRANCIS

KARNATAKA REGION CATHOLIC BISHOPS' COUNCIL

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The Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Karnataka

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Faithful,

We, the Bishops of the Karnataka Region, are very happy to send you our Greetings and this Pastoral Letter!

1. ATTACKS AND KILLINGS OF THE CRPF PERSONNEL

The recent brutal, beastly and barbaric attack on the CRPF in Kashmir has stunned all of us. We are indeed proud of and are grateful to these courageous Heroes who made the supreme sacrifice so that the rest of us, their fellow citizens, may be safe and secure.

At this hour of pain and anguish, we the Catholics of the Karnataka Region and all people of good will wish to stand by the bereaved families in their unbearable agony and irreparable loss. We offer them our deepest condolences and strengthen them with our prayers.

At the same time, we, all of us the children of Mother India, should forget all our differences of ideology, faith, caste and class, and be prepared to stand as one solid wall of defiance and defence against all forces of hatred, division and violence everywhere, without succumbing to any natural reactions of rage, revenge and retaliation, and instead, calmly and rationally garner

all our energies as a Nation to combat against any evil forces that weaken our common brotherhood and national unity.

In spite of the bitterness and anger that naturally fill our hearts in the face of this horrible crime against humanity, let us delve deep into the rich resources of our faith to hope and pray for true and lasting peace on this sub-continent and all over the world, recalling to mind the immortal teachings of the Father of the Nation.

We were informed that many of our parishes and institutions in our dioceses had organized condolence meetings, interreligious prayers and patriotic programmes. Perhaps, many such peaceful demonstrations and prayerful meetings can be held to manifest publicly our solidarity and sympathies.

2. THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT

Once again, Lent is here, a time of preparation for Easter, when we are called to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and express inner healing and spiritual transformation.

Lent is a time of grace; of conversion and change; of renewal and re-dedication. This is precisely what we need at this hour. We live in a world where there is so much progress in all fields accompanied also by so much chaos and confusion, particularly in the moral, spiritual, social, economic and political spheres. Therefore, we need to use Lent to counteract the forces of darkness and destruction through prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

These forces of darkness manipulate human emotions in order to enslave others, especially the young and lead them astray. They also offer instant gratification and easy solutions to perennial problems by providing false sources of happiness so that we are mesmerized by momentary pleasures, and mistaking them for true happiness! Drugs, alcohol, digital media, superficial and selfish relationships, etc. are leading our youth away from Christian Principles and the Gospel Values. Ultimately, it is greed, lust and pride that are the three basic roots of evil within us and in the world outside of us.

Very often, we prefer our own desolation rather than the comfort found in his word and the sacraments. All this leads to violence against anyone whom we think as a threat to our own self-interest, self-love and self-will: the unborn child, the elderly and infirm, the migrant, the alien among us, or our neighbour who does not live up to our expectations.

Even Creation becomes a silently suffering victim to human greed and the consequent cooling of charity. As Pope Francis points out in *Laudato Si*, the earth is poisoned by refuse, discarded out of carelessness or for self-interest. The seas, themselves polluted, engulf the remains of countless shipwrecked victims of forced migration. The heavens, which in God's plan, were created to sing his praises, are rent by engines raining down implements of death.

Again, as Pope Francis states in *Evangelii Gaudium*, love can also grow cold in our own communities, as manifested in our selfishness and spiritual sloth, pessimism, the temptation to self-absorption, constant warring among ourselves, and the worldly mentality that makes us concerned only for worldly wealth, worldly pleasures and worldly fame. There are false prophets, who, in peddling things that have no real value, rob people of all that is most precious: dignity, freedom and the ability to love. They appeal to our vanity, our trust in appearances, but in the end they only make us interiorly empty, sad and devoid of hope.

In order to counteract these evil forces, the spirituality of Lent extolls the merits of prayer, almsgiving and fasting. Prayer makes us grow more into the likeness of God who is infinite love and compassion. Fasting is also a form of prayer. It is the embodiment of a heart hungry and thirsty for God, and being satiated by God in prayer, becomes supremely free of all earthly attachments and is generous in giving of oneself to the needy neighbour.

Lent makes us more sensitive to various forms of violence inflicted on our fellow human beings. When a person doesn't have enough to eat, that's a form of violence. Where there's exclusion and inequality, that's a form of violence. When there's no respect for the

dignity of the person, that's violence. When human lives are held to be of less value than that of beasts, it is violence. When people are discriminated against on the basis of religion, language, caste or gender, then it is a form of violence. When helpless, innocent citizens are told to leave the country just because they do not subscribe to a particular ideology, do not sing particular songs, do not shout particular slogans or do not avoid particular food items, then that is a form of violence. But there is a form of violence we voluntarily take upon ourselves for a sacred purpose. That is penance! Many of us traditionally look at Lent as a penitential season and doing penance is one of the ancient traditions of Lent. It reflects the Christian's desire to spend 40 days fasting in imitation of Jesus, who fasted in the desert. It also has historical roots in the time when public sinners were required to do public penance during Lent, only to be readmitted to Church at the Easter Vigil.

However, penance was not always the central focus of Lent. In ancient times, Lent was also a time to prepare catechumens for baptism at the Easter Vigil. Another wonderful practice is the daily Scripture readings during Lenten fasting and prayer, and reflecting on forgiveness and reconciliation, on commitment and charity, on justice and love. They are the original catechism of the Catholic Church. Listening to these readings is a perfect way to spend Lent and also to prepare for Easter.

3. THE FORTHCOMING GENERAL ELECTIONS

Easter comes this year when the country will be thick in the battle of the ballot. It is a battle for the future of India! If our faith has to bear the fruits of reconciliation, justice and peace, then, each one of us, the disciple of Christ, unmindful of status in life, should fulfil the duty of citizenship by exercising the right to vote responsibly, judiciously and with discernment. It is particularly incumbent on our priests and religious to ensure that every eligible voter is registered and motivated to exercise the right to vote. Lent would be the ideal time for us to educate and motivate the voters for a responsible exercise of their patriotic duty.

Such conscious awareness and intentional actions are very important today as we are going to elect committed and dedicated parliamentarians to serve our Country. What kind of India we will be bequeathing to the future generations will very much depend on the outcome of this battle. We need to choose our representatives who will commit themselves to the agenda of development, good governance, job creation, controlling prices and inflation, and building a nation of Mahatma Gandhi's dreams and Tagore's prayer, namely, *where the mind is without fear, the head is held high and knowledge is free*. We need our leaders to prevent tendencies to target the minority communities, indulge in unrestrained hate speeches, instigate communal provocation, incite communal riots and pursue the policy of communal polarization of the polity. We need to elect only those who will uphold secularism, revere icons of the Nation and systematically imbibe and inculcate Constitutional values. We need Parliamentarians in whose hands our country will be safe and who will never let India bow its head to any divisive power on earth.

Therefore, we need to decisively join the battle of saving the Nation from these perils. We need to uphold true patriotism and nationalism. Exercising our right to vote is one of the most effective weapons in this war. Let us, therefore, wake up before it is too late! May our country be once again become a haven of peace where the mind is without fear and the head is held high, and people are not divided by narrow walls of class, caste, creed, culture, community and country. May the new fire that will be blessed at the Easter Vigil be the fire of freedom, justice, peace and truth for our country.

In order to make this possible, all of us Christians need to take up the Lenten journey with enthusiasm, sustained by almsgiving, fasting and prayer, knowing that, even if, at times, the flame of charity seems to die in our own hearts, God constantly gives us a chance to begin anew to bring in change within and outside. May our hearts be ever more ardent in faith, hope and love!

4. EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY

All people seek truth. In particular all the baptised are in need of an education that fosters their maturity both as human beings and as children of God. “This education should be suitable to the particular destiny of the individuals, adapted to their ability, sex and should be conducive to fraternal relations in order to promote true unity and peace in the world” (*Declaration on Christian Education No. 2*).

Our educational institutions are centers of ‘Good News’ for all, especially the poor and the marginalized. The empowerment and liberation of every human being, especially the poor and the marginalized through holistic education centered on Gospel values, such as love, compassion and justice, leading to the transformation of self and society. Let us not forget that promotion of the integral growth of each person in his/her uniqueness should be our primary Goal.

Therefore, we, the Bishops of the Region, very earnestly appeal to all our educational Institutions, especially run by the Religious and the Lay persons in our dioceses, should revitalize the Education Ministry, and strive to go all out to impart quality education to our children and youth.

It is indeed commendable that the Religious are doing various ministries in all our Dioceses, especially their active involvement in the Educational Apostolate. We request them:

1. To follow the Norms and Directives of the Diocesan Board of Education.
2. To open more institutions in rural areas.
3. To seek permission to start Educational Institution where the diocese or another Religious Congregation doesn't have its Institution in the close vicinity.
4. To give admissions to our Catholic Students, and also give fee concession and other assistance to the deserving cases.

5. To give certain percentage of Fee Concession to all the Catholic Students on overall annual fees (such as Admission, Re-admission and others). Their Fee structures should not be too high, but fairly nominal.
6. To provide job opportunities to the local Catholics.
7. To make Annual Contributions to the Diocesan Board of Education to reach out assistance to poor students in rural areas.
8. To strive to promote local language, culture and heritage.
9. To give top priority to Faith Formation (Catechism), Moral Science and Value Education. And to organize regular First Friday Masses, Retreats and Orientation Programmes for the Catholic staff and students.
10. To invest personnel and resources for evangelization in the Parish/ Diocese.
11. To avail themselves of the Minority Scholarships and other benefits.
12. To establish a Corpus Fund/Educational Fund to help the poor and the meritorious students.

We earnestly hope that the above guidelines will be followed for the promotion of the Educational Apostolate in our dioceses and for the uplift of the underprivileged children and youth.

We also take this opportunity to thank all our dear priests, religious men and women, and the lay faithful for the good work they are doing in our dioceses, and we look forward to their continued service and cooperation. On our part, we assure them of our encouragement and support in all their pastoral initiatives. Let us work together for the extension of God's Kingdom in our Karnataka Region, and in our respective dioceses in particular.

May Mary, Our dearest Mother, the Queen of Peace, intercede for all of us so that our region and country may rise triumphant over the forces of darkness, destruction and death, which seek to dilute,

decimate and destroy all that is good and beautiful in our state and country.

May I request you to make known the content of this Pastoral Letter to all your parishioners, and the members of your communities and institutions.

This Pastoral Letter was officially released on 21st February, 2019 at the Annual Bishops' Meeting held in Bengaluru.

Wishing all of you for the Holy Season of Lent and Easter, and imparting God's abundant blessings upon all of you,

Yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Dr. Peter Machado

Metropolitan Archbishop of Bangalore

and

President - KRCBC
