



News Letter

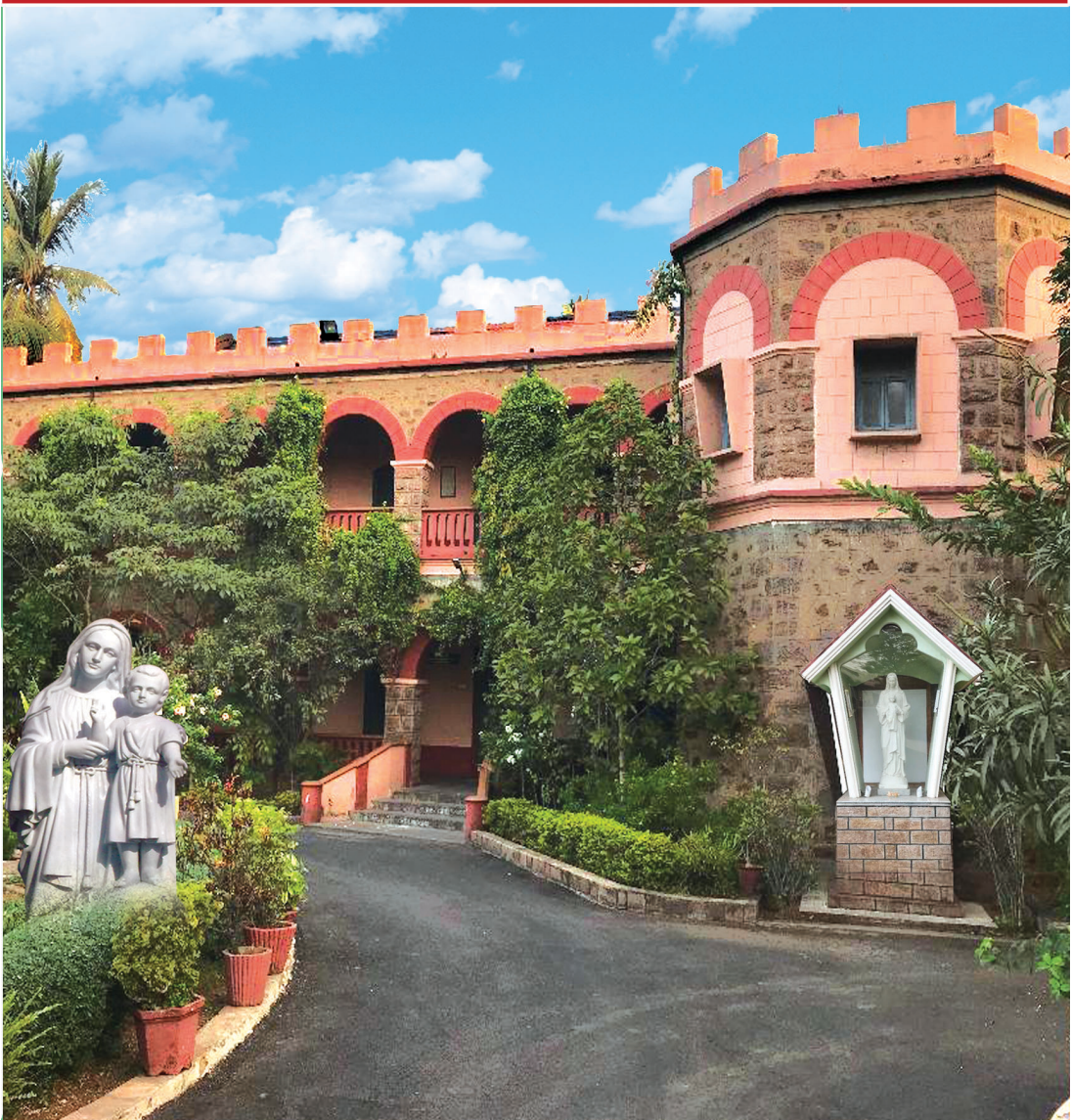
**ARCHDIOECESIS
OF
VISAKHAPATNAM**



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The Pastor Speaks

Lenten Journey as the disciples of Jesus.....



Introduction:

In continuation of the previous month's message on discipleship, "More of disciples than mere worshippers of Jesus Christ," let us continue our reflection of being the disciples of Jesus Christ. It is in understanding and following the teachings of Jesus, Our Lord and Master, that we become true disciples of Jesus. There is something unique and different about the ways Jesus Christ teaches which are rather radical and therefore not easy to accept them. It is difficult to order one's life according to the radical way Jesus wants His followers to be and to do. In the Lenten Season, the spring time of grace, it is good to see some of the radical principles, values and attitudes that Jesus Christ proposes to those who want to follow or who are called to follow Him. Jesus wants of his followers/disciples to see life and to live life in certain way with certain attitudes.

1. Let us read reflectively the very first set of teachings, widely known as "beatitudes," placed before his disciples (Mt 5: 3-10).

I consider, Jesus Christ is saying, that those one's life is to be considered "blessed" or "happy" or "as favoured" one i) when one is poor, that is, economically poor and socially marginalized, simple, without much glamour, without being recognized or considered as important by others; ii) when one mourns and cries for a variety of reasons, due to pain, to due deprivation or maltreatment, or due to helplessness and hopelessness in the life situations; iii) when one is meek and humble, without self assertion and without given importance, iv) when one is passionate in pursuing and promoting righteousness, one is restless and uncomfortable about matters of justice and peace; v) when one is merciful, compassionate and kind in one's dealings and relationships with other human beings; vi) when one is pure in heart, clean and plain, no ulterior motives in dealing with other persons or situations, no malice and no self-interests, etc vii) when one is a peacemaker in the situations of

conflict and rivalries, a mediator of peace, a lover and promoter of peace; when one takes initiatives to establish peace by facilitating the process of resolving the conflicts or quarrels; viii) when one is persecuted and put to suffering by fellow human beings because one makes option to be righteous and uphold justice. The disciples and followers of Jesus Christ are invited to see what he is teaching and order his or her life that way showing thereby that one is serious about following and promoting the “the way of Jesus, their master and Lord!” Shall we look at our life in Lenten Season as to where we are in relation to these ideals, the “beatitudes,” taught by Our Lord Jesus? It is important aspect of our Christian life as Disciples of Christ for Christian life is not only for avoiding sin and repentance for the sins committed. It is about living positively according to the vision and priorities our Lord teaches giving evidence to our discipleship!

2. **“For, I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mathew 5:20).** This is one declaration clear and simple that Our Lord makes after speaking about being salt and light of the world. This means as his disciples there is a different quality of living distinct from that of the Pharisees of the day. Genuine living is what is called for. What is manifested on the outside of us and should be the manifestation of what is actually in the inside of us. Let our good works be seen and let them give glory to God. In these good works done selflessly are visible signs of being light and salt, the light coming from the lamp cannot be hidden unless some obstacle is put or salt cannot but be salty in taste. It is in being and living this that we give evidence to what we are and what we believe. The meaning of the call of the Lord to be light and salt in the world is as the disciples of Jesus Christ the goodness, kindness, compassion and concern should go forth into the experience of other human beings where one lives and shares life with them. As light and salt the disciples of Jesus have something to offer for the benefit of life of those around him or her. A burning lamp cannot but give light and salt cannot but add to the taste of food. The disciples need not or should not be like the Pharisees who project something outside but

are actually different than what they appear outside. Instead of responding to life freely and as the situation demands, a Pharisee would be more legalistic and impersonal, law is more important than love, following customs and traditions are more important than to be sensitive and concerned about the true meaning and purpose of those customs and traditions!

3. **“If you remember that your brother or sister has something against leave your offering there before the altar and go, first be reconciled to your brother or sister... (Mathew 5: 23).** This is one teaching of the Lord that demands a lot of courage and strength from anyone who wants to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Jesus teaches about true worship not a formal routine type of worship, “Worship in spirit and in truth.” This is one area of our life, which is rather radical and demanding from us who are and who want to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Our worship and all that we do as expressions of our faith and devotion have to be evaluated with the values of our Master and Lord who teaches us about how we should live in relation to others. Forgiveness is the generosity of one’s heart and it does not come without deliberate considerations of others who are like us frail and fallible. Others do indulge in speaking, in doing things, or in their behaviour that offends us and hurts us, and even does damage to our personal life. Sometimes we too indulge in such ways of speaking or behaving towards others, very negative and judgmental, condemning, and even destroying their peace of mind. What the Lord is asking of us his disciples that we show generosity in forgiving others and in making sincere efforts to reconcile and relate to them in spite of their offences against you. Our love relationship with our God of love will be deficient and incomplete without this forgiveness and reconciliation. It is at times rather difficult, humanly speaking, to reconcile and relate with some persons, as we cannot easily forget what they have said or done. But, Our Lord is saying, as his disciples we cannot be an unforgiving person but should be one who is able to “forgive seventy times seven.” It does not come naturally, it has to be cultivated! Not easy but not impossible, “go and reconcile... then come and offer your

gifts...” In the Lenten season shall we not look into ourselves and see where and how we are in this regard!

4. **Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you...” (Mt 6: 33).** Our Lord is speaking about our dependence on God who provides what we need. Worry and anxiety are in the lives of every average human being and most often the worry and anxiety are about the daily needs, “how best can I satisfy my needs?” In searching for ways and means to meet our needs we realize that there is uncertainty about achieving the goal of meeting my needs. When we do not get what want and as we want, in spite of all the efforts and hard work, worry and anxiety will be there. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are asked to trust Divine Providence and entrust our life into His hands, believing that He will take care of my needs. “Cast your cares upon the Lord,” says the psalmist. In this Lenten Season as disciples of Jesus Christ, we have to see how calm and tranquil we are because of our faith and hope in the Divine Providence. Seeking God’s reign and His righteousness should be the main goal and about what we need. God will show the ways and means. Trusting in the Providence of God does not mean to stop making efforts. It is about the attitude of saying, “I want to be sure and certain” about getting what I want what i need!
5. **“When you do to one of these least brothers of mine, you did to me.... when you did not do to one of the least of these ones, you did not do to me” (Mt 25: 40, 45).** One of the important aspects of our life is that we live with other human beings. It is in our relationship with other brothers and sisters, especially with the poor and the needy, our discipleship of Jesus Christ is manifested. One can be indifferent and least bothered about those that are in need like the “rich man” in the parable who did not care to see Lazarus and one can also be generous and compassionate like the Samaritan who stopped and saw the wounded man whom he helped! None of us will be fully like the “rich man in the parable” nor can we any one of us totally be like the “Good Samaritan”, who out of the way to assist and care for the neighbour. This is because we

have the inbuilt capacity and disposition “to love, to be concerned, to be merciful, to empathize with fellow human beings and have the instinct to respond to those in need! But, in this digital age and in the global culture that prevails everywhere, individualism is one of the consequences which is leading to indifference to fellow human beings, especially the poor, the sick and suffering. Overly concerned with one’s progress and development, makes people blind and deaf to the suffering humanity. This teaching of our Lord is indicating that there is the “sin by omission” which equally deserves condemnation and punishment as in the case of “sin by commission.” In this Lenten season, it is good to see as disciples of Jesus Christ if we are responding to those in need. Of course, it is within our possibilities but that should not be the excuse for not “seeing” and “hearing” the poor and the needy!

Concluding with the words taken from the gospel according to Matthew 7:13-14 . ***“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy[a] that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.***

+ *Prakash M.*

† **Prakash Mallavarapu**
Archbishop of Visakhapatnam



LET US PRAY

For Holy Father’s Monthly Prayer Intention



Evangélization:

That Christian Communities, especially those who are persecuted, feel that they are close to Christ and have their rights respected.

ENGAGEMENTS

MARCH 2019

- 8th Visit to Srikakulam
- 9th Blessing of Kusumuru Village Church, Uttaravalli Parish, at 10.30 a.m.
- 10th Bible Sabha, Nallarai Guda Parish, Srikakulam, at 10.00a.m.
- 13th Annual Feast Day, Yanam Parish, Mass at 5.00 p.m.
- 14th - 15th Governing Body Meeting, St. John's Medical College, Bangalore
- 17th Feast of St. Joseph, Waltair Parish, Mass at 6.00 p.m.
- 18th Visit to Srikakulam
- 19th Feast Day Mass, Bobbili Parish at 10.30 a.m.
Feast Day Mass, S. Kota, 6.00 p.m.
- 21st - 22nd CHAI Board Meeting, Hyderabad
- 26th Visit to Srikakulam
- 27th Blessing of Itlamamidipalli Village Church, Bobbili at 5.00 p.m.
- 28th Blessing of Gunnathotavalasa Village Church, Bobbili at 10.00 a.m.
- 30th Divya Vani Board Meeting, Hyderabad

APRIL 2019

- 6th Siluvagiri Feast, Vengapuram Parish, Mass at 10.30 a.m.
- 10th Jeevagiri Feast, Hamsavaram Parish, Mass at 10.30 a.m.
- 11th Chrism Mass, Srikakulam Diocese, Mass at 5.30 p.m.
- 13th Penitential Padha Yatra, Maharanipeta to Gnanapuaram, at 3.00 p.m.
- 14th Palm Sunday, Vizianagaram Parish, Mass at 7.00 a.m.
- 17th Recollection for Pastoral Clergy 9.30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. Chrism Mass, St. Peter's Cathedral, Gnanapuaram, at 5.45 p.m.
- 18th Maundy Thursday : Mass in St. Anthony's Church, at 6.30 p.m.
- 19th Good Friday : Way of the Cross, at Rakshana Giri, at 6.00 a.m.
Friday Ceremonies, at Lourdumatha Church, at 3.00 p.m.
- 20th Holy Saturday : Vigil Mass in St. Peter's Cathedral, Gnanapuram at 11.00 p.m.
- 21st Easter Sunday : Morning Mass at St. Joseph's Hospital, at 7.00 a.m.
Draksharama Parish, Mass at 5.30 p.m.
- 24th Silver Jubilee of Fr. P. Prabhakar, Bhimili Seminary, Mass at 10.00 a.m.
- 25th Diocesan Level Vocation Camp at Pastoral Centre, Mass at 6.00 p.m.
- 26th Divine Mercy Feast, Ramachandrapuram, Mass at 11.00 a.m.
- 27th Blessing of Prayer Hall, Yesupuram Divine Mercy Centre, 5.30 p.m.
- 28th Sunday of Divine Mercy, Yesupuram Divine Mercy Centre, Mass at 11.00 a.m.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. In this month of March, the deans should arrange the monthly recollection at the deanery level. It is a reminder that the deanery level recollection should be attended by all the priests who are in the pastoral ministry in the deanery. Other priests, at least superior of the community should be present.
2. Those priests who would like to avail the services of our major seminarians during the summer months should approach Fr. Joseph Prabhakar, Rector of Minor Seminary and in charge of the seminarians in the Archdiocese. Please approach him soon in order that he makes the required arrangements.
3. Our Children and youth are writing final examinations during the months of March to May. Let us accompany with our prayers. May our children and youth perform well so that the next stage of their education or chances for employment will be bright. Let us pray for all our Catholic schools that there may be good results and that our schools may still be known for excellence in education and in all round formation. There is so much competition today from the corporate schools but our Catholic schools cannot be run in that way and yet should have good name in the public. Results in the public exams and preparation for the next stage of education seem to be attraction of the corporate schools!
4. By the time this News Letter of March reaches you, the Lenten Season would have commenced already. Our people observe the Holy Season of Lent with great fervour and devotion. The pastoral clergy and their collaborators like catechists and the religious nuns should accompany the faithful in this Season of Grace. Availability is one area the priests should take care, especially for the sacrament of confession. We do realize that the number of faithful coming for confession is on decline and if added to that the priests are not creating sufficient time for the faithful to make confession, the sacrament may be even neglected! Second thing I want to appeal is that let us with the faithful in their devotions and prayers, inspire the faithful by ourselves observing the Holy Season of Lent with fervour and devotion. We wish everyone a fruitful Season of Lent for a renewed joy in the Risen Lord!
5. Contributions towards the Lenten Campaign against Hunger and Disease: In the season of Lent, the faithful should be

encouraged to contribute towards this fund. 50% of the collection is shared with Caritas, India and rest is shared by VDSSS and archdiocese to help the poor. Please tell the faithful about the cause and ask them to be generous. The collection should be sent the Procurator's office at the end of the Lenten Season and Easter celebrations.

6. Annual Returns: There are still considerable number of parishes that have not submitted the Annual Returns forms. Delay in this matter invites reminders from Rome. All those parish priests and superiors of the Religious Communities should respond to this reminder at the earliest possible. Your cooperation will help us to send the letters on time!
7. Rakshanagirit Mahostavam in Gnanapuram: The Annual Feast at Rakshanagiri this year will be on The Second Sunday of May, that is, May 12th, 2019. All the priests and religious should mark their calendars and announce the same to all our Catholics in the parishes. Last year the celebration and the participation of the faithful were good but mostly the faithful in Gnanapuram and some city parishes. This year, we want more faithful to be at the celebrations from all the deaneries. All the parish priests should encourage the faithful to be present for the Rakshanagiri Feast. Even on the novena days, the faithful from the city parishes should be encouraged to come and enjoy the blessings of the Lord! Under the leadership of Fr. Ch. Raja Kumar all the committees will be sharing different responsibilities. I want all the parish priests and superiors to extend the best cooperation possible! ***ALL THE VISAKHAPATNAM CITY DEANERY PARISHES WILL NOT HAVE EVENING MASS ON 12TH MAY. PARISH PRIESTS SHOULD MARK THEIR CALENDARS, NO EVENING MASS ON 12TH MAY!***
8. All those parishes which come under Vizagapatam Diocesan Cooperation Pvt. Ltd. should get ready with account books at end of the month of March. Kindly prepare the books to submit for auditing in April, taking care of the opening balances on April 1st 2018, the 1st day of the financial year 2018-19. Bank transactions should also be updated and submitted along with the account books including fixed, if any.



† Prakash Mallavarapu
Archbishop of Visakhapatnam

2019 LENTEN MESSAGE

OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

***“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 “Canticum 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.

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Apostolic journey of his Holiness Pope Francis to the United Arab Emirates

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS

Tuesday, 5 February 2019

Blessed: this is the word with which Jesus begins his preaching in Matthew’s Gospel. And it is the refrain he repeats today, as if to fix in our hearts, more than anything, an essential message: if you are

with Jesus, if you love to listen to his word as the disciples of that time did, if you try to live out this word every day, then you are blessed. Not you will be blessed, but you are blessed; this is the first truth we know about the Christian life. It is not simply a list of external prescriptions to fulfil or a set of teachings to know. The Christian life, first and foremost, is not this; rather, it is the knowledge that, in Jesus, we are the Father's beloved children. The Christian life means living out the joy of this blessedness, wanting to live life as a love story, the story of God's faithful love, he who never abandons us and wishes to be in communion with us always. This is the reason for our joy, a joy that no one in the world and no circumstance in our lives can take from us. It is a joy that gives peace also in the midst of pain, a joy that already makes us participate in that eternal happiness which awaits us. Dear brothers and sisters, in the joy of meeting you, this is the word I have come to say to you: blessed!

Even as Jesus calls his own disciples blessed, we are yet struck by the reasons for the individual Beatitudes. We see in them an overturning of that popular thinking, according to which it is the rich and the powerful who are blessed, those who are successful and acclaimed by the crowds. For Jesus, on the other hand, blessed are the poor, the meek, those who remain just even at the cost of appearing in a bad light, those who are persecuted. Who is correct here: Jesus or the world? To understand this, let us look at how Jesus lived: poor in respect to things, but wealthy in love; he healed so many lives, but did not spare his own. He came to serve and not to be served; he taught us that greatness is not found in having but rather in giving. Just and meek, he did not offer resistance, but allowed himself to be condemned unjustly. In this way Jesus brought God's love into the world. Only in this way did he defeat death, sin, fear and even worldliness: only by the power of divine love. Let us together ask here today for the grace of rediscovering the attraction of following Jesus, of imitating him, of not seeking anyone else but him and his humble love. For here is the meaning of our life: in communion with him and in our love for others. Do you believe in this? I have also come to say thank you for the way in which you live the Gospel we heard. People say that the difference between the written Gospel and the lived Gospel is the same difference between written music and performed music. You who are here know the Gospel's tune and you follow its rhythm with enthusiasm. You are a choir composed of numerous nations, languages and rites; a diversity that the Holy Spirit loves and wants to harmonize

ever more, in order to make a symphony. This joyful polyphony of faith is a witness that you give everyone and that builds up the Church. It struck me what Bishop Hinder once said: that he not only feels himself to be your shepherd, but that you, by your example, are often shepherds to him. Thank you for that!

To live the life of the blessed and following the way of Jesus does not, however, mean always being cheerful. Someone who is afflicted, who suffers injustice, who does everything he can to be a peacemaker, knows what it means to suffer. It is most certainly not easy for you to live far from home, missing the affection of your loved ones, and perhaps also feeling uncertainty about the future. But the Lord is faithful and does not abandon his people. A story from the life of Saint Anthony the Abbot, the great founder of monasticism in the desert, may be helpful to us. He left everything for the Lord and found himself in the desert. There, for a time, he was immersed in a bitter spiritual struggle that gave him no peace; he was assaulted by doubts and darkness, and even by temptation to give in to nostalgia and regrets about his earlier life. But then, after all this torment the Lord consoled him, and Saint Anthony asked him: "Where were you? Why did you not appear before to free me from my suffering? Where were you?" But then he clearly heard Jesus' answer: "I was here, Anthony" (Saint Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, 10). The Lord is close. It can happen that, when faced with fresh sorrow or a difficult period, we think we are alone, even after all the time we have spent with the Lord. But in those moments, where he might not intervene immediately, he walks at our side. And if we continue to go forward, he will open up a new way for us; for the Lord specializes in doing new things; he can even open paths in the desert (cf. Is 43:19).

Dear brothers and sisters, I want to tell you that living out the Beatitudes does not require dramatic gestures. Look at Jesus: he left nothing written, built nothing imposing. And when he told us how to live, he did not ask us to build great works or draw attention to ourselves with extraordinary gestures. He asked us to produce just one work of art, possible for everyone: our own life. The Beatitudes are thus a roadmap for our life: they do not require superhuman actions, but rather the imitation of Jesus in our everyday life. They invite us to keep our hearts pure, to practice meekness and justice despite everything, to be merciful to all, to live affliction in union with God. This is the holiness of daily life, one that has no need of miracles or of extraordinary signs. The Beatitudes are not

for supermen, but for those who face up to the challenges and trials of each day. Those who live out the Beatitudes according to Jesus are able to cleanse the world. They are like a tree that even in the wasteland absorbs polluted air each day and gives back oxygen. It is my hope that you will be like this, rooted in Christ, in Jesus and ready to do good to those around you. May your communities be oases of peace.

Finally, I would like to consider for a moment two of the Beatitudes. First: "Blessed are the meek" (Mt 5:5). Those who attack or overpower others are not blessed, but rather those that uphold Jesus' way of acting, he who saved us, and who was meek even towards his accusers. I like to quote Saint Francis, when he gave his brothers instructions about approaching the Saracens and non-Christians. He wrote: "Let them not get into arguments or disagreements, but be subject to every human creature out of love for God, and let them profess that they are Christians" (Regula Non Bullata, XVI). Neither arguments nor disagreements - and this also applies to priests - neither arguments nor disagreements: at that time, as many people were setting out, heavily armed, Saint Francis pointed out that Christians set out armed only with their humble faith and concrete love. Meekness is important: if we live in the world according to the ways of God, we will become channels of his presence; otherwise, we will not bear fruit.

Second: "Blessed are the peacemakers" (v. 9). The Christian promotes peace, starting with the community where he or she lives. In the Book of Revelation, among the communities that Jesus himself addresses, there is one, namely Philadelphia, that I think bears a likeness to you. It is a Church which, unlike almost all the others, the Lord does not reproach for anything. Indeed, that Church kept Jesus' word without renouncing his name and persevered, went forward, even in the midst of difficulties. There is also a significant detail: the name Philadelphia means brotherly love. Fraternal love. Thus a Church which perseveres in Jesus' word and fraternal love is pleasing to the Lord and bears fruit. I ask for you the grace to preserve peace, unity, to take care of each other, with that beautiful fraternity in which there are no first or second class Christians.

May Jesus, who calls you blessed, give you the grace to go forward without becoming discouraged, abounding in love "to one another and to all" (1 Thess 3:12).

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PASTORAL CENTER NEWS

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE

Marriage Preparation Course for the Vizianagaram deanery youth, those who are aspiring to get married in near future, will be conducted on 3rd and 4th March 2019 at Vizianagaram Parish Church Campus. May I request the priests of the deanery parishes to take a special care and send the youth.

REGENTS RECOLLECTION

For all the regent brothers bi-monthly recollection will be conducted at Santhi Sadana Educational Complex, R. V. Nagar, on 13th March 2019. May I request the priests in charge to send them for a day of recollection.

CATECHISM AND MORAL SCIENCE BOOKS

Moral Science and Catechism Books for both media are available at Pastoral centre office for class 1st to 10th published by St. Paul's, Mumbai. Those of you like to have for your school or parish can contact pastoral centre office (9701713124).

VILLAGE CAMP SISTERS

Three groups of Camping sisters (St. Joseph of Annecy, St. Ann's Luzern and Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate) for helping in our parishes for Pastoral care are available. Those of you the parish priests like to have their services can approach the pastoral centre office.

ANNUAL SUMMER VOCATION CAMP

Vocation Camp in our Archdiocese will be on 24th evening 5 pm to 26th 3 pm. (Candidates should arrive by 24th at 5 pm), April 2019, at our pastoral Centre, Visakhapatnam. May I request the parish priests and sisters to encourage both boys and girls, those have the aptitude to serve the Lord and His Church in its mission of saving souls, and only those who have the minimum qualification, i.e SSC. Details of

the program will be published in the coming month. (Religious Congregations vocation promoters please inform early of your coming and you will be given audience with the students on 26th from 10 am).

ANNUAL CATECHISM EXAM FOR ELDERS

Annual Catechism exam papers for catechists, teachers and others for this year are already published and given to you on our recollection day last month. These papers are also published in this month Rakshanagiri Magazine, kindly announce and help your parish people. Last date to submit the answer book will be 15th April 2019.

Fr. Ch. Mariadas

Pastoral Centre Director

ANNUAL PILGRIM FEAST - OUR LADY OF SORROWS

The Annual Pilgrim Feast at Quasquicentennial Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows, Kondadabalu was celebrated in all its Sacred Passion as usual on the first Sunday of February 3rd, 2019. More than one



lakh devotees visited the Shrine and paid their obeisance to the Revered Mother of Sorrows treasured in the Sanctuary. The Pontifical Concelebrated Eucharistic Celebration was led by His Grace Most Rev.

Dr. Mallavarapu Prakash, our Dear Archbishop. In his homily, His Grace stressed the need for emulating the qualities of the Holy Mother of God in all the families. His grace advised the devotees that all the families should be strengthened by the power of the Word of God as mother Mary observed to meditate the word of God in all her important situations of life that helped her to be strong in her faith. Every mother in this world is facing lot of sorrows in the form of difficulties, pains, mental stress, ailments, family problems, misunderstandings, persecutions by the family members etc... we see Mary, the mother of sorrows in our earthly mothers. We need to pray for our mothers more... By respecting them in all the ways possible is the great sign of our reverence that we show to our mother Mary. Before the mass His Grace has inaugurated the newly

constructed DYANASHRAMAM campus of the grotto and blessed it for the faithful to pray.

Prior to the Solemnity, the 19th episode of the annual event of Papa Patchyathapa Maha Padayatra was held on 2nd February 2019. Most. Rev. Dr. Prakash Mallavarapu the Archbishop, Fr. Ch. Rajkumar the Parish Priest of Gnanapuram flagged off the Spiritual Marathon around 7:30 a.m. imparting the Blessings on the faithful gathered for the purpose in the forecourts of St. Peter's Cathedral. Simultaneously pilgrims from Steel Plant, Gajuwaka, Malkapuram, Saligrampuram, Kailasapuram, Seethammadhara, Maharanipeta, Chinna Waltair, Butchirajupalem, Narava, L. Kota, S. Kota, Vepada, Chodavaram, Madugula and from other places too organized the annual event which was originated in the year 2000 A.D. by the then Bishop, His Grace Most Rev. Dr. K. Mariadas. It was quite edifying to the flocks the faithful when their pastors viz. Frs. S. Balashowry, Ch. Mariadas (Pastoral Centre Director) Fr. B. Santhosh, Fr. M. Jesudas, S. Anthony, Fr. P. Mariadas (Administrator, Amruthavani) and considerable number of Religious Sisters joining the Pilgrims witnessing to the Master of the Universe - Jesus Christ. Many Lay Catholics stood as bulwarks providing for the material needs, all along the path ie.. Buchirajupalem- butter milk snacks, Pendurthy-Lunch, Mangalapalem-Boorelu.

On 25th Jan. 2019, Very Rev. Fr. O. Abraham, the Golden Jubilarian and Fr. Rayanna, the Rector of St. John's Regional Seminary hoisted the festal Flag beckoning the festivity, and celebrated Holy Eucharist on the first day of Novena. Priests and the Faithful from Gnanapuram, Maharanipeta, Butchirajupalem, Kailasapuram, Pendurthy, Mangalapalem, L. Kota, S. Kota, Vepada, and Madugula, Kothakota, Muralinagar, St. John's Regional Seminary and from other parishes joined on the Novena Days for Holy Mass and Novena Prayers. The arrangements made by the Parish committees were well appreciated by all.

Priests and the Seminarians of St. John's Regional Seminary, Sisters of St. Anne Bangalore, Sisters of St. Ann Providence, a couple of priests from the near proximity and a very good number of the Faithful (worked day in and day out) belonging to Kondadabalu Parish have played a pivotal role in the celebrations of the annual pilgrim feast for the Glory of God and for the honour of Great Mother of God. The live show through Divyavani Tv had given a great

impact. I thank wholeheartedly His Grace for being available and making this feast a success, and inaugurating the Dyanashramam. I thank all the donors for the who came forward to build dyanashramam. I thank the Frs.Y.Mariaratnam, Kona jayaraju, Dominic Savio, ch.Mariadas, P. Mariadas. Fr. Stephen. Fr. Olickal Abraham. St.John's seminary staff & brothers and Sisters, Committee members, youth, legion of Mary members and all the Parishioners and all those who have rendered their services.

Fr. Jeevanbabu. P, Director,
The shrine of our Lady of Sorrows, Kondadabalu

In Loving Memory
of
Sr. Veronique nee, SJA



Sr. Veronique nee, N. D.Veronica was born to late Mr. Doraiswamy Reddy and Mrs. Philomena on April 15th, 1954 in Bangalore.

Sr. Veronique grew up in a loving family, among four sisters and three brothers. Her elder sister who is present with us today is a religious belonging to the Congregation of Bon Secours. She made her First Profession on 10th December, 1983 and Final Commitment 16th January, 1988. In 1996, Sr. Veronique took up her mission as the Fourth Principal of St. Joseph's College after the very efficient Sr. Alice Marie. Sister completed her M. Phil and Ph.D. in Family Resource Management from Sri Avinashilingam University, Coimbatore in the year 2000. She was elected as Provincial Councillor for a two terms. On 8th February she had breathing difficulty and was diagnosed as having Bilateral Pneumonia. She was then admitted in St. Joseph's Hospital. As she had to be given Ventilator support she was shifted to the ICU. On the 11th February she had a Cardio-Respiratory Arrest and went into deep Coma from which she never recovered. All the best of treatment was of no avail to bring Sr. Veronique back to us. Slowly her lungs began to fail and on 5th March at around 4. 15 a.m. she suffered a Cardiac Arrest and was declared, "NO MORE". May her soul rest in peace.

In Loving Memory of **Sr. Vinitha, SAL**



Sr. Vinitha was born on 17th April 1954 , to Mrs.& Mr. Mr.Issac Chacko at Kanjiramattam in Kottayam district Kerala.She grew up in the loving company of four brothers and a sister.

The god fearing and devout parents offered their two daughters and one son for the Lords ministry. The family is very closely knit together and bonded. A very good upbringing in good Catholic faith, paved the way for religious vocation. Heeding to the call of the lord Sr. Vinitha after her secondary school education joined the Sisters of St.Ann Luzern in 1972 .had her first profession in 1976 and final in 1982. She rendered commendable services in various places like St.Anns Tuticorin, Punnakkayal, Madugula, Kaintha in Jhaarkahnd, Pratheeksha in Eluru,Karlyn home Mumbai and St.Ann's School Paderu .She was a warm hearted person, cheerful and prayerful. Disciplined, humble, loving, hard working, Enduring and modest in her talk. She was a beautiful person regular for all the community activities. The experience of her radiant smile, loving and affectionate deeds and words will ever live in our hearts.

She enjoyed good health all these years and never came to hospital for treatment with any complains. But during October 2018 she was admitted in St. Ann's Jubilee Memorial Hospital with sever cough and back ache and was diagnosed to be suffering with cancer causing shock and fear to all. She suffered silently and cheerfully. Her stay in the hospital for treatment was a period of greater solitude as she felt free to spend more time in prayer and meditation.

She was treated in St. Ann's hospital and had chemotherapy and other supportive treatment. Her condition began to deteriorate on 4th March. The medical team did their best to save this precious life while the sisters stormed the heavens with prayers and supplications. But God's plan was different. He put His arms around her and whispered, "Come with me home." She flew away with her beloved on March 5, 2019 at 10.30 am to be in her eternal home forever leaving us in deep sorrow.

Caritas India's Lenten Campaign against Hunger and Disease - 2nd March 2019

Caritas India's General Body (CBCI Standing Committee) in its May 2018 Meeting had approved the new Strategic Plan of Caritas India for the next 5 years. The Strategic Plan was also shared and discussed with the Directors of Regional Fora and the Directors of Diocesan Social Service Societies during Caritas India's National Assembly of Diocesan Directors of Social Apostolate in October 2018 in Bangalore. The Strategic Plan of Caritas India chiefly consist of 4 key strategic pillars -Empowering Animation, Dialogue, Promotion of Volunteerism, and Promotion of Sharing Communities. Of these, the 2 key pillars of Promotion of Volunteers for the social cause and Mobilizing enhanced local resources can be meaningfully achieved with the innovative ways of taking up Caritas India's Annual Lenten Campaign against Hunger and Disease by each Diocese in our country. The pattern and trend of Caritas India's Lenten Campaign collection in the Dioceses was also discussed a few times in Caritas India's Board Meetings and CBCI Standing Committee Meetings in the past. Accordingly, it was suggested that Caritas India and the Dioceses take the lead to strengthen the Campaign through different innovative ways. In this regard, it is heartening to note that several Bishops and the Directors of Social Works of our country make concerted efforts to promote Caritas India's Lenten Campaign in their Dioceses by sensitizing the laity by issuing Pastoral Letters by the Bishops at the start of the Lenten Season, encouraging the Religious Congregations and Lay Faithful within the Diocese to show their solidarity with the poor through Lenten almsgiving and sharing of their resources and sending the collected local donations to Caritas India. The funds received by Caritas India through the Annual Lenten Campaign is utilized in financing emergency and other programs which seek to address abject poverty in our country. It is also noted that some of the Dioceses do not make sufficient effort to promote the Annual Lenten Campaign of Caritas India but would send a token amount to Caritas India as annual donation. There are also a sizable number of Dioceses which do not contribute any donation to Caritas India by way of Lenten Campaign. While Caritas India's continued engagement and request for financing different charitable, welfare and development projects in our Dioceses are on the rise, the local donations raised through

the Annual Lenten Campaign in our country is not growing proportionately. This is a matter of real concern! It is also commonly agreed that only 50% of the total Annual Lenten Campaign amount collected in the Diocese needs to be sent to Caritas India. Of the remaining 50 percent, 5% of the collection for the CBCI Commission for SC/BC and 3% for CBCI Commission for Tribal Affairs both of which need to be sent directly to CBCI Centre, New Delhi. The remaining amount of the Lenten Campaign collection can be retained in the Diocese/Diocesan Social Service Society for local charitable needs of the Diocese.

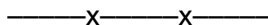
In order to make a concerted effort to meaningfully promote the Lenten Campaign with the active involvement of the Lay Faithful of the Diocese, from this year it is being proposed to have State level and Diocese level launches of the Lenten Campaign in the Cathedral Church/other prominent Parish Church on any of the Sundays of Lent. The Directors of Regional Fora and the Zonal/State Officers of Caritas India have been given the responsibility of organizing the State level launch of Lenten Campaign in consultation with the respective Archbishop/Bishop and the Diocesan Director of Social Works. So also, the Diocesan Director of Social Works has been requested to organize the Diocesan level launch of the Lenten Campaign in consultation with the Archbishop/Bishop of the Diocese. Caritas India has already sent the promotional materials of the Lenten Campaign to each Diocese/Diocesan Social Service Society. Hence may I request Your Eminence/Your Grace/Your Excellency to kindly extend your support and cooperation in promoting Caritas India's Annual Lenten Campaign in your Archdiocese/Diocese and organize a Diocesan level launch of the same on one of the Sundays of Lent this year by involving the Lay Faithful of your Archdiocese/Diocese. This will help in sensitizing the Lay Faithful about the plight of the poor of our country and encouraging them to make their voluntary solidarity contributions towards Caritas India's Lenten Campaign. As we commence the Holy Season of Lent, remembering the passion and death of our Blessed Lord, together with our reparation and penance, let us also remind ourselves and our communities of the needs of the poor and our call to reach out to them in Christian charity and solidarity.

Yours in the Good Shepherd,

Most Rev. Lumen Monteiro CSC Chairman, Caritas India

New Delhi: Bishops slam ‘cowardly’ Bombing of Indian troops

Public bays for blood, Catholics pray for peace as tension escalates on India-Pakistan border after worst attack in 30 years. Tension has again been ratcheted up in the border areas of India and Pakistan as their respective armies stand eyeball to eyeball while Indian Catholics pray for an end to the conflict. Diplomatic ties between the nuclear-armed neighbors hit a new low in February after a suicide bomber killed 40 Indian soldiers on Valentine's Day in Kashmir's southern Pulwama area by targeting a cavalcade. Delhi blamed Islamabad for sponsoring the attack, which left dozens more wounded. The Pakistan-based militant outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (Army of Prophet) subsequently claimed responsibility. Nineteen-year-old Kashmiri Adil Ahmad Dar has been identified as the bomber. India's political leaders say the worst militant attack on military personnel since secessionist violence erupted in the region three decades ago was supported by Pakistan, India's Muslim-majority archrival. Both countries have laid claim to the Muslim-majority region of Kashmir since India's partition in 1947, which has led to three major wars and triggered numerous lower-level skirmishes. Bishop Ivan Pereira of Jammu-Srinagar described the two attacks as "cowardly." He called on Catholics to "pray for the departed souls and also for the return of peace in the state." His diocese covers Kashmir. He also appealed for calm and religious tolerance amid reports that Kashmiri people in other parts of India may be at risk as the public seeks revenge. Christians responded by holding candlelight vigils in several cities including Bengaluru and Kolkata. (Source: UCAN)



Indian state passes resolution to help Dalit Christians

Andhra Pradesh joins four other states recommending benefits for Christians of Dalit origin. India's Andhra Pradesh state has passed a resolution which church leaders say will help socially poor Dalit Christians receive welfare benefits enjoyed by their counterparts in Hinduism. The legislative house of the southern state passed the resolution on Feb. 7 appealing to the federal government to make amendments to regulations to allow Christians from Dalit communities

to enjoy benefits meant for the advancement of socially disadvantaged people. The resolution proposed by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu said that if Dalit people convert to Christianity it does not change their social and economic status. "We appreciate the move. Naidu understood the plight of the poor Christians but that does not mean we achieved our target. There is still long way to go," Father Devasagaya Raj, secretary of the Indian bishops' office for Dalits, told ucanews.com. The Andhra Pradesh Federation of Churches (APFC), an ecumenical organization of heads of different churches, welcomed the resolution on behalf of the Christian community. The APFC said it appreciated Naidu's "consistent stand on this issue that Dalit Christians should be treated on a par with Dalits who had adopted Sikhism and Buddhism. The Christians' struggle began in 1950 when a presidential order said only Dalit people following Hinduism could enjoy constitution-guaranteed concessions and seat reservations meant for the socioeconomic advancement of Dalit people. The order effectively cut off benefits to Dalit people who converted to other religions. It was amended twice to include Dalits among Sikhs in 1956 and Buddhists in 1990. Christians of Dalit origin are estimated to be making up 33 percent of India's 28 million Christians. (Source: UCAN)

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India grieves for a seminarian who rose to be defence minister



India's prime minister and president were among a coterie of high-ranking officials who expressed their condolences this week at the death of George Fernandes, a former Catholic seminarian who rose to become India's defense minister. Fernandes, India's best-known trade union leader, died on Jan. 29 at the age of 88 at his New Delhi residence. He had not been actively involved in politics since 2012, after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. "He epitomized simple living and high thinking. And he was a champion of democracy.... We will all miss him," Indian President Ram Nath Kovind said in a recorded message. Prime Minister Narendra Modi described Fernandes as a "fiery trade union leader" and a "visionary

railway minister.” The strong-willed socialist led a simple life. He made India’s kurta pyjama, a top tunic and bottoms made from cotton, his trademark dress and would always wear it un-ironed. This was seen as a sign of his humility, and his choice of such a casual wardrobe brought him closer to the rural villagers he sought to represent. Even at the height of his political career, Fernandes insisted on washing his own clothes, recalls his longtime friend, the journalist Ram Bahadur Rai. Fernandes enjoyed good health until one day in 1995 when he had a fall in his bathroom and injured his head. He became ill shortly afterwards, underwent surgery, and was bed-ridden from 2012 after being diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. Archbishop Leo Cornelio of Bhopal said Fernandes was regularly invited to attend seminars and discussions organized by church institutions and seminaries. “I had the privilege of meeting him several times. And I attended his talks on numerous occasions. He was simply inspiring,” said the prelate, who is based in the capital city of the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. Both the archbishop and Fernandes are natives of Mangalore, a Catholic stronghold in western India. Fernandes was born on June 3, 1930, as the eldest of six children. He joined the seminary and looked set on carving out a promising future as a Catholic priest. However, after he graduated with a degree in philosophy from St. Peter’s Seminary in Bangalore, he opted to leave the seminary at 19. (Source: UCAN)

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Commission for Women

Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI)

"Blessed is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her". (Luke 1:45) 04th Feb. 2019

Your Eminence/Grace/Excellency/Fathers/Brothers/Sisters,

Sub.: Prayer and Reflection for the commemoration of the
International Women’s Day on 8th March 2019

Greetings from CCBI Commission for Women!

The National Commission for Women cordially invites you to celebrate the ‘International Women’s Day’ on March 08, 2019 (or 10th March, Sunday) not only to honour women but to seek God’s choicest blessings on all women through a meaningful and devotional celebration of the Holy Eucharist and other programmes to empower

women so that the divine plan may be realized in the life of every woman.

We know that God in his steadfast love chose Mary to be the Mother of His only begotten Son, Jesus. He always loved her and respected her freedom and thus He sent Archangel Gabriel for seeking her willingness to be the Mother. She gladly welcomed God's will and brought forth Jesus, the Saviour of the World. This love and respect towards Mother Mary and other women is always seen in Jesus' life and ministry. Moreover, the Church is our Mother. The Psalmist says, "God is within her, and she will not fall" (Ps 46:5). So as the followers of Jesus let us all imitate Jesus in loving and respecting women so that every woman may be empowered and thus become transformed women of integrity. Unless we encourage and motivate the faithful this divine plan of God will never be realized. May I request all of you to encourage and motivate the faithful to celebrate this day and show their respect towards women. I am glad to forward 'Prayer and Reflection' for a meaningful celebration of the Women's Day for your guidance.

With prayerful wishes,

+ Francis Kalist

Bishop of Meerut, Chairman, CCBI Commission for Women

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NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL SERVICE TEAM OF THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

Warm and Respectful greetings from the National Service Team of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. As you are aware, the year 2022 will be celebrated as the Golden Jubilee of the CCR in India (1972 – 2022). Several special events were organized at the national and regional level in preparation towards the Golden Jubilee of the CCR in India. We are happy to note that the theme adopted by the CCBI at the Synod of Bishops in Chennai in January 2019, for the year 2019 is same as the theme adopted by the CCR in India namely the "Year of Evangelization". To further this cause, the National Service Team of the CCR is organizing a National Evangelization Retreat at Divine Call Retreat Centre, Mulki, Mangalore from 16th – 19th May, 2019. The resource persons will be Most Rev. Francis Kalist, Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas, Fr. Anil Dev, IMS and Fr. Dheeraj Sabu,

IMS. All other details are mentioned in the registration form enclosed with this letter.

We request you to kindly announce about these initiatives in the Diocesan newsletter/ magazines and issue instructions to the Parish Priests to give wide publicity to this event in their respective parishes. We also request you to nominate a minimum of five persons (Priests, Religious Sisters, Laity) who will benefit from this programme and also be an asset to your diocese.

Seeking your support and cooperation.

Cyril John

Chairman

National Service Team

+Francis Kalist

Bishop of Meerut &

Episcopal Advisor to the CCR in India

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వివాహము : ఒక అవగాహన

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE

మ్యారేజ్ ప్రిపరేషన్ కోర్సు

విశాఖపట్నం అతిమేత్రాసనం ఎమ్.ఎస్.ఎఫ్.ఎస్. ధ్యానాశ్రమం, చిన్నవార్తేరునందు

మార్చి 09, 2019 (రెండవ శనివారం)

మ్యారేజ్ ప్రిపరేషన్ కోర్సు (ఒక్క రోజు) నిర్వహించబడును. ఈ కోర్సునందు మ్యారేజ్ - ఒక దివ్య సంస్కారం, కేనన్లా (శ్రీసభ చట్టం), సివిల్ లా బాధ్యతాయుతమైన భవిష్యత్తు. తల్లిదండ్రులుగా ఎలా ఉండగల గాలి. మరియు దీనికి సంబంధించిన అనేక విషయముల పట్ల అవగాహన కల్పించబడును, మరియు దాంపత్య జీవితం ఆదర్శవంతంగా జీవిస్తున్న అనుభవజ్ఞులైన దంపతులచే పెక్కు విషయములను తెలుసుకొను అవకాశము గలదు. కావున గౌరవనీయులైన విచారణ గురువులు మీ మీ విచారణలో ఉన్న వివాహ వయస్సుకు వచ్చిన యువతీ యువకులను ప్రోత్సహించి ఈ అవకాశమును సద్వినియోగపరచుకొనగలరని కోరుచున్నాము.

1. దీనికి మీరు చెల్లించవలసిన రుసుము రూ॥ 300/- (ఒక్కరికి మాత్రమే)
2. భోజన సదుపాయములు కల్పించబడును.
3. ఆకర్షణీయమైన సర్టిఫికేట్స్ను పొందగలరు.

మీరు సంప్రదించవలసిన
ఫోన్: 9848184841

ఫా॥ ఫ్రాన్సీస్ స్టీఫన్, MSFS

ధ్యానాశ్రమం, తమిళ్ స్ట్రీట్, కొటక్ స్కూల్ దగ్గరలో, చిన్నవార్తేరు, విశాఖపట్నం

OFFICE FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Catholic Bishops' Conference of India

Your Grace / Excellency / Dear Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, 28th Feb. 2019 Greetings from the CBCI Office for Education and Culture! Just a few urgent communications as we are into the month of March 2019:

1. About eight thousand schools / colleges have participated in sending the self study report regarding the evaluation of implementation of the "All India Catholic Education Policy" and have been evaluated and certified. If any of the institutions of your diocese / congregation are still to send their self study report towards evaluation and certification, kindly do so within a month or so as we will be winding up with this work soon. I am enclosing the two attachments that are to be used to do this work for your ready use.

2. Like in the past years, I would request you to kindly make a contribution towards the expenses of the CBCI Office as we do not have any funding agencies sponsoring the work of the CBCI Office for Education after March this year. In the past six years we had been funded by two agencies and their projects are being successfully completed by the end of March this year. So any contribution that you would send would be very valuable. I would gently remind the Bishops in charge of Education and the Education Secretaries of the various Regions to take the initiative and extend a helping hand. Kindly send your contribution by cheque in favour of "CBCI Office for Education and Culture". Your help will be most welcome as we have multiple challenges regarding the Education apostolate.

3. We have initiated the revision of the "All India Catholic Education Policy 2007", as there have been important Government legislations like RTE 2009, POCSO 2012 and Women's Safety at Work Place Bill 2013 etc. that need to be incorporated into our Education Policy of the Church. Apart from that, there are new trends in Education like App based learning, On line Tuitions, Assignment based grading, Examination less evaluations, Home schooling etc. that are becoming popular and in practice already. Consultation towards such revision of the policy was initiated with a National Conference held in November 2018 and suggestions and proposals are coming in from various Regions, Congregations, Associations and Individuals.

Please collaborate in this process by sending your suggestions and proposals from your Region / Congregation / Association etc before the end of March 2019, so that the compiling / drafting team can begin their work from April 2019.

With prayerful wishes

Most Rev. Thomas D'Souza, Chairperson,
CBCI Office for Education and Culture & Archbishop of Calcutta

International Women's Day: March 8, 2019

Theme: "Better balance better world".

INTRODUCTION

Greetings in the name of Jesus and a warm welcome to each and every one of you for this Eucharistic celebration. The first international Women's day was celebrated back in the 1909 on 28th of February, when a group of 15,000 women marched on the streets of New York, demanding their rights. Since then every year on 8th of March the world joins hands together to support, raise, inspire and motivate women across all fields of work. The purpose of this day is to focus on various themes such as innovation, the portrayal of women in the media, or the importance of education and career opportunities.

"Balance for a better world" is the theme of 2019 international women's day. Balance is not a women's issue, it's a business issue. The race is on for the gender-balanced boardroom, a gender-balanced government, gender-balanced media coverage, gender-balance of employees, more gender-balance in wealth, gender-balanced sports coverage. Etc. To us Christians Mother Mary and Jesus are the true models of justice and equality. The balanced atmosphere in which mother Mary nurtured her son Jesus was the clear sign that he strived to bring justice, equality, dignity to every woman.

In today's second reading we hear "no one who believes in him will be ashamed". We as Christians enjoy this assurance of love and protection from our Lord but forget to follow him and his message. In the name of Jesus, men and women are called to collaborate as equal partners in home and in society. As we observe International Women's Day today in our parish, may we commit to fostering a

culture, centred on love, mutual respect and justice. May the Jesus who celebrated the victory against devil in the desert be the champion of our life.

Let us all rise and welcome the celebrant as we sing the entrance hymn.

SCRIPTURE READINGS (1st Sunday of Lent)

1 R : Deut 26:4-10

Ps : 90:1-2, 10-15

2 R : Rom 10:8-13

Gos : Lk 4:1-13

OR

Rom: 8: 31-34

St. Luke: 1:46-56

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant: Sisters and brothers, let us ask God to grant our petitions which we make in faith and humility. Our response is: God of love, hear our prayer.

1. That Pope Francis, bishops, priests and religious, may use every resource to encourage and support a gender-just way of life for all peoples, we pray to the Lord...
2. That the leaders of our country may work towards creating an environment in which women and children can access all opportunities for their self-development without fear of oppression, we pray to the Lord...
3. That women who have been abused physically, sexually, emotionally and financially, may experience the strengthening light of Christ in their darkest moments, we pray to the Lord...
4. That men and women in our parish community may work together with a spirit of mutual respect and the willingness to encourage growth and well-being, we pray to the Lord...
5. That this season of Lent may teach us to recognise that every person is created in the image and likeness of the Creator, we pray to the Lord...
6. In the silence of our hearts, let us pray for our personal needs (pause), we pray to the Lord...

Celebrant: God of love and justice, we thank you for the generosity of your love and mercy as you listen to our prayers and touch our hearts to make us sensitive to the dignity of every individual, we make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Thanksgiving prayer after communion:

Thanks and praises to God both our Father and Mother, Who created the havens and the earth Who separated the waters from the land Who brought forth vegetables and fruit trees of every kind Who spoke light into existence, who created creatures of the land earth and sea, Who formed both men and women in your very own image Endowing both with gifts and wisdom, strength and beauty to be used for the perfecting of your kingdom. Our God we thank you We thank you for the skills and gifts That you have freely given to each of us While we pay particular attention to the varied and abundant gifts of women among us Whose work, talent, sacrifice, and wisdom often goes unnoticed and taken advantage of On this day, we not only take notice, but we affirm, lift up, and loudly proclaim the gifts of our women The strength of our teenaged daughters The inquisitiveness of our little girls The wisdom of our grandmothers and the necessity of each in order to live more fully into our humanity. Precious Lord I thank you for the desires of my heart that you have satisfied with good things, And the desires that I have not yet seen satisfied. O God sometimes life gets me down and find it hard to see things to be thankful for, Help me to be confident because of the grace you have given to me in so many other ways That even my unmet desires would be something I could be grateful for Amen

Thank you Jesus, Praise you Jesus,

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RELIGIOUS LEADERS FROM DIFFERENT FAITHS CALL FOR PEACE, BROTHERHOOD AND DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION

An Aman-Bhaichara Sammelan was organized on 23rd February in Delhi by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India in Association with Federation of Catholic Associations of Archdiocese of Delhi and ADF India. The program which was being held after the terrorist attacks in Kashmir started within opening song startled with an opening song Hum Honge Kamyab sung by all. In his Opening address, Most Rev. Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas, Secretary General, of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, welcoming all the Spiritual Leaders and the rest of the congregation, outlined

the objective of the meeting. He urged all present to confine themselves to making statements of communal harmony and solidarity and refrain from making any political statements. He then urged the gathering to observe a minute of silence in honor and memory of our jawans who had laid down their lives in Pulwama. Bishop Mascarenhas spoke of the choice that India made in the aftermath of the partitioning and independence of the nation. Our country made a conscious decision to be a multicultural, multireligious, pluralistic nation, unlike Pakistan, which became an Islamic Republic. This unique identity and idea of India must be preserved. He said that what makes a nation a superpower is not its firepower but rather the strength of its character, peace and harmony. This is the fire that enlightens and inspires, not one that destroys and burns down.

In the Keynote Address, Acharya Sushil Goswami Maharaj, National President, Parliament of all Religions underlined that our India is unique in its unity in diversity. He emphasized on the greater responsibility that rests on religious leaders due to the great influence that they have over people. He spoke of how the Constitution of India is common for all citizens and gives equal status for all persons before the law. He said that though we hold different beliefs, no one must be allowed to divide us. He then recited "The whole world is mine, and I respect people of all faiths. My Sanatan Dharam does not permit me to act otherwise." Dr. Imam Umar Ahmed Illyasi began by asking everyone to offer a prayer for the souls of the martyrs of Pulwama. We are all brothers; we are all humans, despite our diverse religious beliefs. He said that the violent mob is not human but satanic. He recalled the horrific 1984 riots and brutal murder of Rev. Graham Staines and his two children. He urged everyone to stand united against the small minority in their communities, who instigate hate and violence. Sardar Paramjeet Singh Chandok quoted the words of Guru Nanak ji and the Guru Grant Sahib on the message of Universal Brotherhood and serviced to all mankind. He urged all present that if only we stand together, this land will always be a land of peace. Dr. A.K. Merchant read out the resolution taken by followers of the Bahai Faith. He spoke of the need to overcome the challenge to national integration. The ethos of Vasudeva Kutumbakam could only have been given by India. He said the forces of disintegration and terrorism must be combated with tact and mature deliberation and a peaceful response. The power of unity must prevail. We should

have a deep commitment of solidarity with people of other faiths. Rev. Monsignor Susai Sebastian said that each of us needs to understand our own respective faiths. Religious leaders must instruct others in their own faith in order to preserve peace and harmony among people. Distinguishing faith and religion, he said that faith is personal, whereas religion is organized. He urged one and all to never stop their pursuit of the truth. He quoted the Holy Bible in saying that we must be children of a compassionate God who rains and shines on all people, good and bad.

Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar had just returned from Jerusalem and said that he had prayed for the Amman Bhaichara Sammelan while in the Holy Land. He said that he brings the blessing of Shalom Shabaat which instructs on the importance of prayer, repentance and charity. He said that acceptance is greater than tolerance and love is greater than non-violence. We must visit the holy places of all religions. We must focus on our commonalities and desist from making criticism. We must learn how to spread love. Follow one; respect all. He said intra-faith dialogue is as important as inter-faith dialogue. Rev. Sunil Ghazan said we talk about international borders, but we have borders within ourselves. We don't accept our own brethren. He quoted the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Love God, Love your neighbor as yourself". No one has seen God, but if we look for Him with a true heart, we will find him in our brethren. We must lead people to become religious, not communal. We must esteem others as better than ourselves, and not see them as threats. Swami Veer Singh Hitkari Ji Maharaj said that he was inspired by the life and teachings of Sant Guru Ravidas Maharaj. We are first human and should not go against any person or religion. We can only have Aman and Bhaichara when the lower strata of society and the higher strata of society are able to sit together. Let the seeds of hatred and violence make way for love.

Summing up the entire days programme he said that India is a unique country. He picked up the main points of each speaker and gave a summary of all the speakers. We should stand together with one resolve. As we sang in the beginning – "Hum Honge Kamyab" – we shall one resolve.

Vote of Thanks was given by Mr. M.S. Stanislaus, President, FCAAD. Mr. AC Michael compered the function. All religious leaders signed the Aman Bhaichara resolution and stood together in solidarity.

The programme ended with everyone singing the National Anthem. This was followed by a fellowship meal for one and all.



Report prepared by advocate Balakrishnan of ADF

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Over 250,000 Adivasis Gathered for 26th ‘Adivasi Sanskritik Ekta Mahasammelan’ Turi Phalya, Silvassa, Dadar Nagar Haveli.

The ‘Adivasi Sanskritik Ekta Mahasammelan’ was organized by Adivasi Ekta Parishad on 13, 14 & 15 January 2019 at Athola, Silvassa, Dadar Nagar Haveli. Adivasi Ekta Parishad is a National intellectual campaign for tribals. Tribals from twelve states – Rajasthan, Gujrat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Jammu & Kashmir, Assam and Jharkhand participated in this mega event. Over 250,000 (Two lakhs fifty thousand) Adivasis gathered with their traditional dresses high lighting their socio- cultural richness in the country. Fr. Nicholas Barla, SVD – Secretary, CBCI Office for Tribal Affairs, one of the organizers and member of Adivasi Ekta Parishad and Sr. Lalita Roshni Lakra, DSA from the same office participated in the three days program. It was joy to find some Priests and Nuns and many Tribal Christians in the Sambelan.





Feast of Presentation of the Lord 23rd
World Day for Consecrated Life
EUCCHARISTIC CONCELEBRATION
HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
Saturday, 2 February 2019

Today's Liturgy shows Jesus who goes out to meet his people. It is the feast day of encounter: the newness of the Child encounters the tradition of the temple; the promise finds fulfillment; young Mary and Joseph encounter the elderly Simeon and Anna. Everything, therefore, meets as Jesus arrives.

What does this mean for us? Above all, that we too are called to welcome Jesus who comes to meet us. To encounter him: the God of life is to be encountered every day of our lives; not now and then, but every day. To follow Jesus is not a decision taken once and for all, it is a daily choice. And

we do not meet the Lord virtually, but directly, we encounter him in our lives, in the concreteness of life. Otherwise, Jesus becomes only a nice memory of the past. When we welcome him as the Lord of life, however, as the centre and the beating heart of everything, then he is alive and lives anew in us. And what happened in the temple also happens to us: around him everything meets, and life becomes harmonious. With Jesus we find again the courage to carry on and the strength to remain firm. The encounter with the Lord is the source. It is important then to return to the source: to retrace in our mind the decisive moments of encounter with him, to renew our first love, perhaps writing down our love story with the Lord. This would be good for our consecrated life, so that it does not become a time that passes by, but rather a time of encounter.

If we call to mind our original meeting with the Lord, we become aware that it did not arise as something private between us and God. No, it blossomed in the context of a believing people, alongside many brothers and sisters, at precise times and places. The Gospel tells us this, showing how the encounter takes place within the people of God, in its concrete history, in its living traditions: in the temple, according to the law, in the context of prophecy, in young and old together (cf Lk 2:25-28, 34). It is like this too in the consecrated life: it blossoms and flourishes in the Church; if it is isolated, it withers. It matures when the young and elderly walk together, when

the young rediscover their roots and the elderly welcome those fruits. When we walk alone, however, when we remain fixated on the past or jump ahead in trying to survive, then the consecrated life stagnates. Today, on the feast day of encounter, we ask for the grace to rediscover the living Lord amid a believing people, and to allow the charism we have received to encounter today's graces.

The Gospel also tells us that God's encounter with his people has both a starting point and a destination point. It begins with the call in the temple and arrives at the vision in the temple. It is a call that is twofold. There is a first call "according to the law" (v. 22). It is the call of Joseph and Mary, who go to the temple to fulfil what the law prescribes. The text emphasizes this almost as a refrain, even four times (cf. vv. 22, 23, 24, 27). This is not something forced: Jesus' parents are not constrained to go or merely to perform an external duty. They go in response to God's call. Then there is a second call, according to the Spirit. It is the call of Simeon and Anna. This too is stressed with insistence: three times, in the case of Simeon, it refers to the Holy Spirit (cf. vv. 25, 26, 27) and it concludes with Anna the prophetess, who was inspired to give thanks to God (cf. v. 38). Two young people run to the temple, called by the law; two elderly people moved by the Spirit. What does this twofold call, by the law and by the Spirit, mean for our spiritual life and our consecrated life? It means that we are all called to a twofold obedience: to the law – in the sense of what gives order to our lives – and to the Spirit, who does new things in our lives. And so the encounter with the Lord is born: the Spirit reveals the Lord, but to welcome him we need to persevere every day. Even the greatest charisms, if lacking an ordered life, cannot bear fruit. On the other hand, even the best rules are not sufficient without the freshness of the Spirit: the law and the Spirit go together.

To better understand this call, seen today in the temple in the first days of Jesus' life, we should move to the first days of his public ministry, at Cana, where he transforms water into wine. There too there is a call to obedience, with Mary, who says: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). Do whatever. And Jesus asks for something particular; he does not suddenly do something new, does not produce the missing wine out of nothing – he could have done so – but he asks for something concrete and demanding. He asks them to fill six great stone water jars for the ritual purification, which recalls the law. That means pouring around six hundred litres of water

from the well: time and effort, which seemed pointless, because what was missing was not water but wine! And yet, precisely from those jars filled “up to the brim” (v. 7), Jesus draws forth new wine. And so it is for us: God calls us to encounter him through faithfulness to concrete things – God is always encountered in concrete things: daily prayer, Holy Mass, Confession, real charity, the daily word of God, closeness, especially to those most in need spiritually or physically. Concrete things, such as obedience to one’s superior and to the rule in the consecrated life. If we put this law into practice with love – with love! – then the Spirit will come and bring God’s surprise, just as in the temple and at Cana. Thus the water of daily life is transformed into the wine of newness, and our life, which seems to be more bound, in reality becomes more free. This reminds me now of a humble sister who really had the charism of being close to priests and seminarians. The other day the cause for her beatification was introduced here in the Diocese [of Rome]. She was a simple sister, not well known, but she had the virtue of obedience, of faithfulness and of not being afraid of new things. We ask the Lord, through the intercession of Sister Bernardetta, to give all of us the grace to walk on this path.

The encounter which is born of the call culminates in vision. Simeon says: “My eyes have seen your salvation” (Lk 2:30). He sees the Child and he sees salvation. He does not see the Messiah who works miracles, but a small child. He does not see something extraordinary, but Jesus with his parents, who bring a pair of turtledoves or two pigeons to the temple, which is the most humble offering (cf. v. 24). Simeon sees God’s simplicity and welcomes his presence. He is not looking for anything else, is not asking or wanting for something more; it is enough to see the Child and take him in his arms: “nunc dimittis, now let me depart” (cf. v. 29). God, as he, is enough for him. In God he finds the ultimate meaning of his life. This is the vision of consecrated life, a vision that is simple and prophetic in its simplicity, where we keep the Lord before our eyes and between our hands, and not to serve anything else. He is our life, he is our hope, he is our future. Consecrated life consists in this prophetic vision in the Church: it is a gaze that sees God present in the world, even if many do not notice him; it is a voice that says: “God is enough, the rest passes away”; it is praise that gushes forth in spite of everything, as the prophetess Anna shows. She was a woman of great age, who had lived for many years as a widow, but

was not gloomy, nostalgic or withdrawn into herself; on the contrary, she arises, she praises God and speaks only of him (cf. v. 38). I would like to think that this woman knew how to “talk in a good way”, and she could be a good patroness to call us to conversion from the evil of gossip, because she went from one place to another saying only: “That’s him! That’s the baby! Go and see him!” I imagine her like this, the woman next door.

This then is the consecrated life: praise which gives joy to God’s people, prophetic vision that reveals what counts. When it is like this, then it flowers and becomes a summons for all of us to counter mediocrity: to counter a devaluation of our spiritual life, to counter the temptation to reduce God’s importance, to counter an accommodation to a comfortable and worldly life, to counter complaints – complaints! – dissatisfaction and self-pity, to counter a mentality of resignation and “we have always done it this way”: this is not God’s way. Consecrated life is not about survival, it is not about preparing ourselves for *ars bene moriendi*: this is the temptation of our days, in the face of declining vocations. No, it is not about survival, but new life. “But... there are only a few of us...” – it’s about new life. It is a living encounter with the Lord in his people. It is a call to the faithful obedience of daily life and to the unexpected surprises from the Spirit. It is a vision of what we need to embrace in order to experience joy: Jesus.

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POPE FRANCIS
GENERAL AUDIENCE
Wednesday, 30 January 2019
Apostolic Journey to Panama

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today I will reflect with you on my recent Apostolic Journey to Panama. I invite you to give thanks with me to the Lord for this grace that he wished to give to the Church and to the people of that dear country. I thank the President of Panama and the other Authorities, the Bishops and I thank all the volunteers — there were so many — for their warm and informal welcome, the same as we witnessed in the people who hastened to greet me everywhere, with great faith and enthusiasm. One thing that struck me greatly: the people lifted the children up in their arms. As the

popemobile passed, all those with children held them up as if to say: "Here is my pride, here is my future!". And they showed off their children. But they were many! And the fathers and mothers were proud of those children. I thought: there is so much dignity in this gesture and how eloquent it is compared with the demographic winter we are experiencing in Europe! Children are the pride of that family. Children are the security for the future. The demographic winter, without children, is harsh!

The reason for this Journey was World Youth Day, although the encounters with young people were intertwined with others that were part of the country's situation: authorities, bishops, young detainees, consecrated people and a care home. Everything seemed 'contagious' and combined with the joyful presence of young people: a celebration for them and a celebration for Panama, as well as for all of Central America, marked by many tragedies and in need of hope, peace and justice too.

This World Youth Day was preceded by an encounter with Indigenous and African American peoples. A beautiful gesture: the young Indigenous people and the youth of African descent shared five days of encounters. There are many of them in that region. They opened the doors of World Day. And this is an important initiative which demonstrated even better the diversified face of the Church in Latin America: Latin America is of mixed race. Then, with the arrival of groups from all over the world, a great symphony of faces and languages was formed, as is typical of this event. Seeing all the flags displayed together, waving in the hands of young people who were happy to meet each other, is a prophetic sign, a sign that runs counter to today's sad tendency toward hostile nationalism that builds walls and is closed to universality, to the encounter of peoples. It is a sign that young Christians are the leaven of peace in the world.

This wyd had a weighty Marian imprint because its theme was expressed in the Virgin's words to the Angel: "I am the servant of the Lord: May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). It was great to hear these words uttered by representatives of young people from all five different continents, and above all, to see them shine on their faces. As long as there are new generations capable of saying, "here I am" to God, the world will have a future.

Among the wyd events there is always the Via Crucis. Walking with Mary behind Jesus who carries the cross is the Christian school of life: there we learn patient, silent, tangible love. Allow me to share something with you. I truly enjoy undertaking the Via Crucis because it is like

walking with Mary behind Jesus. And I always carry with me a pocket Via Crucis that was given to me by a very apostolic person in Buenos Aires, in order to observe it at any time. And when I have time, I go and follow the Via Crucis. You too should practice the Via Crucis because it is like following Jesus with Mary on the way of the Cross where he gave his life for us, for our redemption. In the Via Crucis, we learn patient, silent and concrete love. In Panama the young people, along with Jesus and Mary, bore the burden of the condition of many suffering brothers and sisters in Central America and in the entire world. Among them there are many young victims of various forms of slavery and poverty. In this sense there were highly significant moments: the Penitential Liturgy that I celebrated in a rehabilitation centre for minors and the visit to the 'Good Samaritan' care home, which accommodates people suffering from hiv/aids.

The culmination of wyd and of the journey were the Vigil and the Mass with young people. At the Vigil — in that field filled with young people who participated in the Vigil; they slept there and at 8:00 am they participated in Mass — at the Vigil, the lively dialogue was renewed with all the young men and young women, enthusiastic and also capable of silence and of listening. They went from enthusiastic listening to prayer, in silence. I proposed Mary to them as the one who, in her smallness, more than anyone else had 'influenced' the history of the world: we called her the 'influencer of God'. The beautiful and strong testimonies of several young people were reflected in her 'fiat'. On Sunday morning, in the great final Eucharistic celebration, the Risen Christ, with the power of the Holy Spirit, spoke anew to the young people of the world, calling them to live the Gospel today, because young people are not the 'tomorrow'; no they are the 'today' for 'tomorrow'. They are not the 'meantime', but are the 'today' of the Church and of the world. And I made an appeal to adults to ensure that the new generations may not lack instruction, work, community and family. And this is key at this time in the world, because these things are lacking. Instruction, that is, education. Work: how many young people are without it. Community: may they feel welcomed in the family and in society.

The meeting with all the Bishops of Central America was a special moment of solace for me. Together, we allowed ourselves to be taught by the witness of Saint Bishop Oscar Romero, in order to learn ever better how to 'listen with the Church' — it was his episcopal motto — in proximity to young people, to the poor, to priests, to the holy, faithful People of God.

And the consecration of the altar of the restored Cathedral of Santa Maria La Antigua in Panama held a strong symbolic value. It was closed for seven years for restoration work. A sign of rediscovered beauty, to the glory of God and for the faith and celebration of his people. The Chrism that consecrated the altar is the same that anoints the baptized, confirmands, priests and bishops. May the family of the Church, in Panama and in the entire world, draw from the Holy Spirit ever new fruitfulness, in order that the pilgrimage of young missionary disciples of Jesus Christ may continue and may spread on earth.

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those from the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the Lord's blessings of joy and peace. God bless you! I address a particular thought to young people, to the elderly, to the sick and to newlyweds.

Tomorrow we will celebrate the memorial of Saint John Bosco, father and teacher of young people: he was a good priest! Don Bosco knew how to make God's embrace felt by all the young people he met, offering them hope, a home, a future. May his witness help all of us to consider how important it is to educate the new generations in authentic human and spiritual values.

Wednesday, 6 February 2019

Apostolic Journey to the United Arab Emirates

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In recent days, I made a brief Apostolic Journey to the United Arab Emirates; a short but very important Journey which, drawing on the 2017 encounter in Al-Azhar, Egypt, has written a new page in the history of dialogue between Christianity and Islam and in the commitment to promote peace in the world on the basis of human fraternity. For the first time, a Pope visited the Arabian Peninsula. And Providence ordained that the visit be from a Pope named Francis, 800 years after Saint Francis of Assisi's visit to Sultan al-Malik al-Kâmil. I often thought of Saint Francis during this Journey. It helped me to keep the Gospel and the love of Jesus Christ in my heart, as I experienced the various moments of the visit. In my heart were the Gospel of Christ, the prayer to the Father for all his children, especially the poorest, for the victims of injustice, war, misery...; the prayer that the dialogue between Christianity and Islam may be a decisive factor for peace in the world today. I sincerely thank the Crown Prince, the President, the Vice President and all the Authorities of the United Arab Emirates who welcomed me with great kindness. That country has grown very much

in recent decades. It has become a crossroads between East and West, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious 'oasis' and thus, a suitable place in which to promote the culture of encounter. I express my heartfelt gratitude to Bishop Paul Hinder, Vicar Apostolic to Southern Arabia, who prepared and organized the event for the Catholic community, and I extend my affectionate 'thanks' to the priests, religious and lay people who keep the Christian presence alive in that land. I had the opportunity to greet the first priest — in his 90s — who had gone there to found many communities. He is in a wheelchair and blind but the smile never fades from his lips, the smile of having served the Lord and of having done so much good. I also greeted another priest in his 90s — but he could walk and continues to work. Well done! — and many priests who are there at the service of the Christian communities of Latin Rite, of the Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankar and Maronite Rites who come from Lebanon, India, the Philippines and other countries. Aside from the discourses, a further step was taken in Abu Dhabi: the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and I signed the Document on Human Fraternity, in which together we state the common vocation of all men and women to be brothers and sisters as we are the sons and daughters of God; we condemn all forms of violence, especially those cloaked in religious motivations; and we commit ourselves to spread authentic values and peace throughout the world. This Document will be studied in the schools and universities of many countries. But I also recommend that you read it, get to know it, because it offers many incentives for furthering the dialogue on human fraternity. In an epoch such as our own, in which there is a strong temptation to see an ongoing conflict between the Christian and Islamic civilizations, and also to consider religions as a source of conflict, we wished to give an ulterior, clear and decisive sign, that it is indeed possible to come together; it is possible to respect one another and to dialogue; and that, even in the diversity of cultures and traditions, the Christian and Islamic worlds appreciate and uphold common values: life, family, religious sense, honour for the elderly, the education of young people, and still others. A little over a million Christians live in the United Arab Emirates: workers who originally came from various countries in Asia. Yesterday morning I met representatives of the Catholic community in Saint Joseph's Cathedral in Abu Dhabi — a very simple temple — and then, after this meeting, I celebrated for everyone. There were so many! — They say that those who were inside the stadium, which has a capacity of 40 thousand, and those who were in front of the screens outside the stadium, reached 150 thousand! I celebrated the Eucharist in the city's stadium, proclaiming the Gospel of the Beatitudes. During the Mass,

concelebrated with the Patriarchs, the Major Archbishops and Bishops present, we prayed especially for peace and justice, with special intentions for the Middle East and for Yemen. Dear brothers and sisters, this Journey is part of God's 'surprises'. Therefore let us praise him and his providence, and let us pray that the seeds scattered may bear fruit according to his holy will.

Wednesday, 13 February 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Let us continue our journey to learn ever better to pray as Jesus taught us. We must pray as he taught us to pray. He said: when you pray, go quietly into your room, withdraw from the world, and turn to God by calling him 'Father!'. Jesus does not want his disciples to be like the hypocrites who pray while standing in the squares to be admired by the people (cf. Mt 6:5). Jesus does not want hypocrisy. True prayer is that done in the secret of the conscience, of the heart: inscrutable, visible only to God. God and I. It shuns falsehood: with God it is impossible to pretend. It is impossible; there are no tricks that have any power before God. God knows us like this, naked in one's conscience, and there can be no pretense. At the root of the dialogue with God, there is a silent dialogue. Like the glance between two people in love: man's gaze meets God's, and this is prayer. Looking at God and allowing yourself to be looked upon by God: this is prayer. "But, Father, I do not say any words...". Look at God and let yourself be looked upon by him: it is a prayer, a beautiful prayer!

Yet, although the disciple's prayer may be completely confidential, it is never lacking in intimacy. In the secret of the conscience, a Christian does not leave the world outside the door of his room, but carries people and situations, the problems, many things in his heart; I bring them all to prayer.

There is a striking absence in the text of the 'Lord's Prayer'. Were I to ask you what the striking absence in the text of the 'Lord's Prayer' is, it would not be easy to answer. A word is missing. Everyone thinks: what is missing from the 'Lord's Prayer'? Think, what is missing? One word. One word which in our times — perhaps always — everyone holds in great consideration. What is the missing word in the 'Lord's Prayer' that we pray every day? To save time, I will tell you: the word 'I' is missing. 'I' is never said. Jesus teaches us to pray with 'You' on our lips, because Christian prayer is a dialogue: 'blessed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done'. Not my name, my kingdom, my will. Not I, it is no good. And then it moves on to 'we'. The entire

second part of the 'Our Father' uses the first person plural: 'give us our daily bread, forgive us our sins, lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil'. Even the most basic of man's requests — such as that of having food to satisfy hunger — are all in the plural. In Christian prayer, no one asks for bread for themselves: give me bread today — no, give us, it is asked for all, for all the world's poor. We must not forget this. The word 'I' is missing. We pray by using 'you' and 'we'. It is a good lesson from Jesus. Do not forget this.

Why? Why is there no room for individualism in the dialogue with God. There is no display of our own problems as if we were the only ones suffering in the world. There is no prayer raised to God that is not the prayer of a community of brothers and sisters. 'We': we are a community; we are brothers and sisters; we are a people who pray: 'we'. Once, a prison chaplain asked me a question: "Tell me Father, what is the opposite of 'I'?" And naively, I said 'you'. "This is the start of war. The opposite of 'I' is 'us', where there is peace, all are together". I received a beautiful lesson from that priest.

In prayer, a Christian bears all the difficulties of the people who live beside him: when night falls, he tells God about the suffering he has come across that day; he sets before Him many faces, friends and even those who are hostile; he does not shoo them away as dangerous distractions. If you do not realize that there are many people suffering around you, if you are not moved by the tears of the poor, if you are accustomed to everything, then it means your heart ... what is it like? Withered? No, worse: it is made of stone. In this case it is good to implore the Lord to touch us with his Spirit and soften our heart: 'Soften my heart, Lord'. It is a beautiful prayer: 'Lord, soften my heart, so that I may understand and take on all the problems and all the suffering of others'. Christ did not pass unscathed beside the miseries of the world: each time he perceived loneliness, physical or spiritual pain, he felt a strong sense of compassion, like a mother's womb. This 'feeling compassion' — let us not forget this word that is so Christian: 'feeling compassion' — is one of the key words of the Gospel: it is what inspires the Good Samaritan to approach the wounded man by the roadside, unlike others who are hard of heart.

We can ask ourselves: when I pray, am I open to the cries of many people near and far? Or do I think of prayer as a type of anaesthesia, in order to be more at peace? I am just tossing the question out there, each of you can answer to yourself. In such case I would be the victim of a terrible misunderstanding. Of course mine would no longer be a Christian prayer. Because that 'we' that Jesus taught us prevents me

from being at peace by myself, and makes me feel responsible for my brothers and sisters.

There are people who seemingly do not seek God, but Jesus asks us to pray for them too, because God seeks these people more than anyone else. Jesus did not come for the healthy, but for the sick, for sinners (cf. Lk 5:31) — that is, for everyone, because whoever thinks he is healthy, in reality is not. If we work for justice, we do not feel we are better than others: the Father makes the sun rise on the good and on the evil (cf. Mt 5:45). The Father loves everyone! Let us learn from God who is always good to everyone, opposite to us, who are able to be good only to certain people, with someone I like.

Brothers and sisters, saints and sinners, we are all brothers and sisters loved by the same Father. And, in the evening of life, we will be judged on love, on how we have loved. Not merely sentimental love, but compassionate and tangible love, according to the Gospel rule — do not forget it! —: “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). So says the Lord. Thank you.

Wednesday, 20 February 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Today's Audience is taking place in two places. Earlier, I had a meeting with the faithful from Benevento who were in Saint Peter's, and now with you. And this is due to the kindness of the Prefecture of the Papal Household, who did not want you to catch cold: let us thank those who did this. Thank you. Let us continue with the catecheses on the 'Our Father'. The first step of every Christian prayer is the entry into a mystery, that of the fatherhood of God. One cannot pray like parrots. Either you enter into the mystery, in the awareness that God is your Father, or you do not pray. If I want to pray to God my Father, I begin with the mystery. To understand to what measure God is father to us, let us consider the figures of our parents, but in some measure we must always 'refine them', purify them. The Catechism of the Catholic Church also says so; it says: "The purification of our hearts has to do with paternal or maternal images, stemming from our personal and cultural history, and influencing our relationship with God" (n. 2779). None of us has had perfect parents, no one; as we, in turn, will never be perfect parents or pastors. We all have shortcomings, everyone. We always experience our loving relationships according to our limitations and also our egotism; thus they are often tarnished by desires to possess or to manipulate others. For this reason, at times declarations of love are transformed into feelings of anger and hostility. But look, last week these two loved each other so much; today they

hate each other to death: we see this every day! This is why we all have, within, bitter roots that are not good, and sometimes they come out and do harm. For this reason, when we speak of God as 'father', as we consider the image of our parents, especially if they loved us, at the same time we must go further. Because God's love is that of the Father 'who art in Heaven', according to the expression that Jesus invites us to use: he is the total love that we can savour only imperfectly in this life. Men and women are eternally begging for love, — we are beggars of love, we need love — seeking a place where they may finally be loved, but do not find it. How many disappointing friendships and how many disappointing loves there are in our world; many! In mythology, the Greek god of love is absolutely the most tragic: one does not understand whether it is an angelic being or a demon. Mythology says that he is the son of Poros and Penia, that is, of resourcefulness and poverty, destined to bear within himself some features of these parents. From here we can think about the ambivalent nature of human love: able to boldly flourish at one time of day, and immediately thereafter to wither and die; what he grasps always slips away (cf. Plato, Symposium, 203). There is an expression of the Prophet Hosea that mercilessly contextualizes the congenital weakness of our love: "Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away" (6:4). This is what our love often is: a promise we struggle to keep, an attempt which soon dries up and evaporates, a little like when the sun comes out in the morning and takes away the night's dew. How many times have we men and women loved in such a weak and intermittent way. We have all experienced this: we have loved but then that love fell apart or weakened. Wishing for love, we then collided with our limitations, the meagerness of our strengths: unable to keep a promise which, in days of grace, seemed easy to fulfil. Indeed, the Apostle Peter was afraid and had to run away. The Apostle Peter was not faithful to Jesus' love. There is always this weakness that makes us fall. We are beggars on a journey who run the risk of never entirely finding that treasure they seek from the first day of their life: love. However, another type of love exists, that of the Father "who art in Heaven". No one should doubt being the recipient of this love. He loves us. We can say: "He loves me". Even had our father and mother not loved us — an historical hypothesis — , there is a God in heaven who loves us like no one else in this world ever has or ever can. God's love is constant. The prophet Isaiah says: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands", (Is 49:15-16). Tattoos are in fashion

today: "I have graven you on the palms of my hands". I have tattooed you on my hands. Thus, I am in God's hands; it cannot be removed. God's love is like a mother's love that can never be forgotten. And if a mother forgets? "I will never forget", says the Lord. This is God's perfect love. This is how we are loved by him. Even if all our earthly loves were to crumble and we were left with nothing but dust in our hands; God's unique and faithful love is always burning for all of us. The hunger for love that we all feel is not a yearning for something nonexistent: it is instead an invitation to know God who is father. Saint Augustine's conversion, for example, passed over this ridge: the young and brilliant orator was simply seeking among the creatures something that no creature could give him, until one day he had the courage to lift his gaze. And on that day, he knew God. God who loves. The expression "in Heaven" is not intended to express a distance, but rather a radical difference of love, another dimension of love, a tireless love, a love that will always be there, that is always at hand. It is enough to say "Our Father who art in heaven", and that love comes. Therefore, have no fear. None of us is alone. If even by misfortune your earthly father were to forget you and you were resentful of him, you are not denied the fundamental experience of Christian faith: knowing that you are a most deeply beloved son or daughter of God, and that there is nothing in life that can extinguish his heartfelt love for you.

Wednesday, 27 February 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In our continuing catechesis on the "Our Father", we now turn to the first of the seven invocations, "hallowed by thy name". Here we see the pattern of all prayer, which is always made, on the one hand, in contemplation of God, and on the other, in a sincere supplication for our needs. When we speak to God, he already knows us better than we know ourselves, for even if God is a mystery to us, we are not an enigma in his eyes. He is like a mother for whom a simple glance enables her immediately to perceive the condition of her children. A first step in prayer, then, is to entrust ourselves to God and his providence. This leads us to pray: "Hallowed be thy name", where we not only express our trust in God's greatness, but also ask that his name be sanctified in us, in our families, our communities and the whole world. We can do this because it is God who sanctifies and transforms us by his love. Prayer casts out every fear, since the Father loves us, the Son lifts up his arms to support ours, and the Spirit works in a hidden way for the redemption of the world.

DAYS TO REMEMBER

M A R C H	Fr. Sudhakar Sivvam	5	Birthday
	Fr. Paramjyothi Duppalapudi	7	Birthday
	Fr. Vijaya Bhaskar Sivvam	11	Birthday
	Fr. Mariadas Chintada		
	Fr. Balashouri Jakkana	12	Ordination Day
	Fr. Varaprasad Degala		
	Fr. Joy Thomas Mamalasery	15	Ordination Day
	Fr. Jojibabu Karanam	17	Ordination Day
	Fr. Joseph Kochuchira		
	Fr. Joseph Anithottam		
	Fr. Joy Thomas Mamalasery		
	Fr. Varaprasad Degala		
	Fr. Prathap Sarisa		
	Fr. Joseph Prabhakar Pathivada		
	Fr. Joseph Bandanadam		
	Fr. Joseph Kochuchira	19	
	Fr. Lukose Kallakkat	21	
	Fr. Vijaya Prasad Vuddavolu	22	
	Fr. Peter Sebastian Palakunnel	23	
	Fr. Jacob Karachira	23	Birthday
	Fr. Francis Pasupuleti	27	Ordination Day
	Fr. Antony Puthussery	30	Birthday
	Fr. Maripi Pratap	31	Ordination Day

*Hearty Congratulations &
Many Happy Returns of the Day*

To you, Dear Fathers





NECROLOGY



- 02-03-1976 Fr. Raymond Saldhana, died at Vizag
02-03-1990 Fr. Camile Curzillat, 82 years, died at Lyons, France
03-03-1930 Fr. John Patrick Cowman, 42 years, died at Vizag
03-03-1937 Fr. Joseph Nilapana, 34 years, died at Salur
06-03-1900 Bro. Michael Allard, 23 years, died at Yanam
07-03-2004 Fr. Chacko Mulanjananickal, 66 years, died at Kuliinji, Kerala
11-03-1924 Bro. Nicholas Page, 77 years, died at Vizag
11-3-2013 Bro. Joseph Thekkumthottam msfs, 82 years, died at Vizag
12-03-1907 Bishop Etienne Bonaventure (Bishop of Nagpur 1904-1907),
55 years, died at Chavanod, France
13-03-1980 Bishop Joseph Baud (Bishop of Vizag 1947-1966), 90 years, died at Vizag
14-03-1932 Bro. Alexis Voisin, 72 years, died at Nagpur
15-03-1909 Bro. James Gatti, 61 years, died at Nagpur
16-03-1964 Fr. Joseph Monnard, 65 years, died at Proupeine, Annecy
16-03-1998 Fr. John Kurandiarkunnel, 70 years, died at Adoor
18-03-1902 Fr. Jean Prunier, 26 years, died at Surada, Orissa
18-03-2003 Archbishop Eugene D'Souza, 86 years, died at Bhopal
19-03-1949 Fr. Joseph Felix Bouchet, 71 years, died at Bhimili
22-03-1906 Bro. Clement Cottet, 18 years, died at Vizag
22-03-1910 Fr. Pierre Joseph Dunoyer, 66 years, died at Amaravathi
22-03-1947 Bishop Peter Rossillon (Bishop of Vizag 1926-47), 72 years, died at Vizag
24-03-1954 Fr. Maurice Chamonin, 48 years, died at Gnanapuram
26-03-2004 Fr. Mathew Pazhedam, 89 years, died at Visakhapatnam
28-03-1880 Fr. Jean Marie Debrones, 64 years, died at Viziangaram
28-03-2004 Fr. Mathew Kudakassery (Jr.), 76 years, died at Visakhapatnam
30-03-1886 Fr. Joseph Buttay, 55 years, died at Raipur.

*May their souls
rest in Peace!*





FEAST OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS

KONDADABALU, KOTHAVALASA

3RD, FEBRUARY 2019



Lenten
SEASON