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News Bulletin Diocese of Sultanpet

Bishop's House, St. Sebastian's Cathedral, Matha Kovil Street, Sultanpet, Palakkad- 678001
Kerala, India. Phone: 0491-2803420 | Cell: 09645279101
Email: sultanpetdiocese@gmail.com / peterabir@gmail.com | Web : sultanpetdiocese.org

Bishop Speaks...

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



Passion? No!

The Christian meaning of the word 'passion' refers to the terrible suffering of Jesus Christ. Who would want to undergo such suffering/passion in life? People are unwilling to face life's painful truth. We do not want to confront our fears, even imaginative fears; so, we end up as great dreamers and talkers but weak doers. Consequently, when suffering and pain confront us we either complain about life or curse God. However, the passion of Christ very strongly underlines the necessity and nobility of suffering in our life. In fact, the passion of Christ helps

us not only to accept suffering but to face trials and tribulations with deep faith and fortitude.

The Fact of Jesus' Passion!

We cannot forget Mel Gibson's amazing movie: *The Passion of the Christ*, released in 2004. It is a vivid description of the last twelve hours of Christ's cruel passion. Some of my friends said they could not continue watching it. Jesus is depicted undergoing horrific torture, both physical and mental. No doubt, the Gospels describe the passion of Christ much more graphically and realistically than that of his infancy narratives. Indeed the passion of Christ begins at Incarnation when the divine Christ came down and took the form of a weak human being (Jn 1:14; Phil 2:6-8). This could be called the 'death' of God and birth of the saviour!

Suffering is very much associated with the figure of the Son of Man (cf. Isa 53 & Dan 7). This suffering motif is sealed by Jesus himself when he predicted thrice about the inevitability of his suffering and death (Cf. Mt 16:21-23; 17:22-23; 20:17-19) and is also indicated by the anointing at Bethany (Mt 26:6-13). Humanly speaking, we come to understand that the antagonism (Jn 11:48-50) and thereafter the conspiracy of the Jews (Mk 3:6; Lk 22:1-2), followed by the betrayal of Judas (Mk 14:10-11) lead to Jesus' passion and death. The cruel treatment of the Pharisees, Pilate, soldiers and bystanders all increased Jesus' suffering so much that no human being in world history would undergo such pain. Moreover, his first cry on the Cross: "My God, my God..." (Mk 15:34), exhibits the severity of his passion.

Mercy Overcomes Passion!

Herman Hendrickx (*The Passion Narratives of the Synoptic Gospels*, 140) would aptly note the insensitivity of this cruelty: "The Mark an narrative does not leave the slightest doubt that an enormous injustice is being committed. Jesus is not only innocent, a victim sacrificed to the hatred of the Jewish leaders, but it is the Messiah, God's Son, who suffers this injustice." Son of Man as Son of God suffered. Jesus' whole life-history is a way of the Cross. In fact he wondered (*thaumazo*) at the unbelief of people's faith (Mk 6:6); wept at the tomb of Lazarus (Jn 11:35); lamented over Jerusalem (Lk 13:34); prayed to the Father to take away the cup of suffering (Lk 22:42) and as noted above, even raised a cry (*Sagne*) of severe pain (Mk 15:34). But, as Raymond Brown would note, the cry of Jesus on the cross is not a reproach against God, but the explosion of suffering in love (cf. *The Death of the Messiah*, II, 1047).

Jesus was neither worried about physical suffering and death (Jn 10:18), nor did he shrink in walking the way of the cross. For him, cross means to fulfill God's will (cf. Mt 10:38; Lk 9:23). Through the trials,

temptations and tribulations of his life, he realized that the cross was inevitable part of fulfilling the will of God. Therefore, as fruit of doing God's will with joy and commitment, Jesus carried the cross willingly (Jn 12:24; 27-28). That's why he rebuked Peter when Peter was worried about Jesus' physical suffering (cf. Mt 16:28). Five out of seven words of Jesus on the cross, as reported by Luke and John, explain his gracefulness and mercy. This Jesus on the road to Calvary is a splendid light of hope and source of strength to us who are caught up in the web of worldly injustice and selfishness.

Pulpit of the Cross!



Some people believe they should undergo physical suffering in imitation of Jesus's suffering and death. **Crucifixion in the Philippines, for example,** is a devotional practice held every Good Friday, while related practices include carrying wooden crosses, crawling on rough pavement, and self-flagellation. Penitents consider these acts to be mortification of the flesh, and undertake them to ask forgiveness for sins and to express gratitude for favours granted. People often forget the spirit of the Cross of Christ and the mortification encouraged by the teaching Church in our fellowship with the Lenten Christ.

Fulton J. Sheen calls Jesus' passion and death as “the pulpit of the Cross” (Cf. *Life of Christ*, 453). Prior to approaching this pulpit Jesus has already climbed many pulpits, such as his encounters with the poor and needy, rural disciples, arrogant and hypocritical leaders and even evil forces. The Cross is the final stage of his various moments of obeying the will of God. Our Lenten observances should not lead to self-harm to our body; it should, as prophet Joel long ago proclaimed (2:13), inflict our mind and heart; it should pain my heart rather than my body in walking in the footsteps of Jesus' Cross.


Jesus proclaims on the pulpit of the Cross the gospel of total surrender to God and His way of life. Crosses showing our mercy, forgiveness, gentleness and solidarity with those suffering are the best ones to carry rather than carrying wooden crosses. Selfishness and injustice are the crosses of pain to family and society. Contextual critical look at the world today, and in particular India, generates the cross of anger rather than peaceful co-existence (cf. Thomas Menamparambil, *Stored Anger*, 8-10). Neglecting the 'win-win formula' of today's society let this Lenten journey form us to be prophets of Jesus' Cross of mercy and justice!

This journey will lead us to the Risen Lord for a renewed heart and life!
May the Risen Lord fill you with a grace of newness!
I wish you all a very Joyous Easter!

Bishops' Meet

The bishops of Palakkad and Trissur area along with the bishops of Hosur and Ramanathapuram had a Lenten Retreat here in the Bishop's House, Sultanpet on 12th and 13th of March 2019. Most Rev. Dr. Andrew Thazath, Archbishop of Trissur, Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Karikassery, Bishop of Kottapuram, Most Rev. Dr. NeelanKavil Tony, Auxiliary Bishop of Trissur, Most Rev. Dr. PaulyKannookadan, Bishop of Irinjalakuda, Most Rev. Dr. Paul Alappatt, Bishop of Ramanathapuram, Most Rev. Dr. Sebastian Pozholiparambil, Bishop of Hosur participated in this recollection. I was asked to animate them with some biblical reflections in the context of Lent. We had also useful discussions on the pastoral ministry. My sincere thanks go to all the bishops for their participation, and especially Most Rev. Dr. PaulyKannookadan, for organizing this meeting.



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+ **Antony**samy Peter Abir
Bishop of Sultanpet

Bishop's Appointments

Date	Time	Programme	Place
3-5		Madha TV	Chennai
6	05.00 pm	Mass for Lenten Retreat	Sultanpet
7	09.00 am	Lenten Way of the Cross	Attapady
15	11.00 am	Consultors' Meet	Bishop's House
	02.30 pm	Priests' Recollection & Chrism mass	Cathedral, Sultanpet
16	10.00 am	Seminarians' Meet	Bishop's House
18	05.30 pm	Maundy Thursday Mass	Cathedral, Sultanpet
19	09.00 am	Way of the Cross	Cathedral, Sultanpet
	04.00 pm	Good Friday service	Cathedral, Sultanpet
20	11.30 pm	Easter Vigil Mass	Cathedral, Sultanpet
21- May 1		Holy Land Pilgrimage	Egypt, Israel & Jordan
4 May	04.30 pm	Ordination to Priesthood	Kanakankalam
5 May	11.00 am	Feast Mass	P. Kovilpalayam
	05.00 pm	Ordination to Diaconate	Eruthenpathy
6-8 May		CCBI Executive Meeting	Bangalore

From Vicar General Desk



Bishop's Birthday

We the priests, religious and laity of the Diocese of Sultanpet, wish a long life with good health and cheerful heart to our beloved bishop Most Rev. Dr. Antonysamy Peter Abir on the auspicious day of his birthday on 7 April 2019. *Ad Multos Annos!*



Chrism mass

It is to be noted that there will be the Priests' consultors' meet at 11 am followed by the monthly Recollection and Chrism Mass on Monday 15 April 2019,

The Programme as follows:

- 2.30 pm Tea
- 3.00 pm Pastoral concerns
- 4.00 pm Recollection talk, Adoration and confession
- 5.30 pm Chrism mass followed by supper.

Diocesan Way of the Cross

The Diocesan Way of the Cross, from St. Joseph's Church, Thenkara to St. Jude Church, Mukkali is held on Sunday 7th April 2019. All are expected to gather at Thenkara at 9.00 am and the programme starts at 9.30 am with the initial prayer by our bishop. The distance is about 12 km in the hill towards Attapady-Mukkali. The Charismatic Commission has made elaborate arrangements. Kindly participate in this as a Lenten exercise of prayer.

Lenten Retreat

As planned earlier the Lenten Retreats are held as the following:

- i. Palakkad Vicariate at the Cathedral on 4-6 April 2019.
- ii. Sorappara Vicariate at Sorappara on 5-6 April 2019.
- iii. Mannarkad Vicariate at Mannarkad on 6th April 2019.

Parish priest are requested to encourage your people to participate in large number in this programme.

RIP

Our bishop lost his brother-priest, Rev. Fr. K. A. Daniel (+84), a priest of the Archdiocese of Pondicherry on Friday 8th March. He was a priest for 54 years. The funeral was held at the Cathedral Church in Pondicherry on Saturday 9th March. Rev. Fr. Prince Robert lost his dear mother Mrs. Celine Mary (+60) on 7th March. The funeral was held at Menonpara on 7th March. We shall remember both of them in our prayers. May the Good Lord grant them 'Rest in Peace.'

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

A group of 49, priests and lay persons, are taking up a pilgrimage to the Holy Land under the guidance and leadership of our bishop from 21 April to 1 May. I am also accompanying the group. We will visit all the holy places in Egypt, Israel, Palestine and Jordan. Another group of Tamil speaking people from Kula Lumpur (Malaysia) are joining us on the first day in Cairo. Please pray that our pilgrimage will be successful and that the participants will gain spiritual benefits from this programme.

Rev. Msgr. A. S. Madalaimuthu, VG

From the Procurator's Desk

a) I wish to remind all the parish priests to submit the account of the parish (2018-19) for auditing in the second week of April 2019. You are reminded to submit following details

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1) Tally Data | 2) All the bills-receipts and payment |
| 3) If you pay more than 5000/- signed with stamped voucher; | 4) Updated copy of Bank pass book |
| 5) Copy of Fixed Deposit Details | 6) Your parish name & contact number |

b) I remind you that following are the last months (2019) special collections

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|------------------------------------|--|
| 1) Opus Securitatis - January | 2) Holy Child Hood & Communio India - February |
| 3) Maintenance of Holy See - March | 4) Hunger and decess & Good Friday - April |

c) Again remind you that open a joint account (Procurator and Parish Priest). The necessary documents are ready in the procure office. Please come and collect it.

Medical Help

We distributed medical help of Rs.5000/- to the parishioner of Eruthenpathy in the month of March 2019.

Education Fund

Opening Balance 21,47,453.00 | Shornur 13,000.00 | Closing Balance 21,60,453.00

Rev. Fr. Lorange L.,
Financial Administrator

News of the various Activates

Blessing and Inauguration of the New School

A new primary school (ICSE syllabus) in Sorappara parish campus was blessed and opened by our bishop on Saturday 2nd March 2019. It was presided over by Sr. Shobhana SAB, Vice-Provincial of LFVP, Tamilnadu - the Congregation of St. Ann's of Bangalore, whose sisters are taking care of the school.



Rev. Fr. Chinnapparaj,
Secretary to the Bishop

Marriage Preparation Course

The marriage preparation course will be held only in the month of July.

Rev. Fr. Paul Vincent
Family commission

Catechetical Commission

It is to inform the Parish Priests that the completed certificate of the Catechism course is available for the +2 students. Kindly inform and collect the number of certificates you need.

The VFF (VBS) material is available in Malayalam with commission secretary. Those parishes that are going to conduct VFF in Malayalam kindly collect the material. If you need in Tamil kindly inform me before 10th April 2019.

Rev. Fr. Antony Xavier Pious
Secretary, Catechetical and Bible Commission

BIRTH DAY

8th Fr. L. Jabamalai Peter Lorange	17th Fr. Peter Saleth Nathan, OFM
16th Fr. M. Prince Robert	27th Fr. Rejimon Devasia

SNL wish you a Happy Birth Day

ORDINATION DAY

2nd Fr. A. Chinnappa Devaraj OCD	26th Fr. Francis Thottamkara OCD
10th Fr. Irudayaraj CPPS	27th Fr. Vijay Richard
21st Fr. Amal Charles, CPPS	29th Fr. Peter Saleth Nathan OFM
	30th Fr. Gnanamani MSFS

SNL wish you a Happy Ordination Day

FEAST DAY

23rd Fr. George Kadappurath OCD	23rd Fr. Rejimon Devasia
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SNL wish you a Happy Feast Day