



SHEPHERD'S CALL

NEWSLETTER OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HYDERABAD

VOL: LI

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JANUARY 2024



MARY MOTHER OF GOD PRAY FOR US



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JANUARY

2024



Archbishop's Message



As we liturgically celebrate the solemnity of Mary the Mother of God with the universal Church on the first day of this New Year, the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and the Virgin Mother of the Church in the Holy Spirit, *wishes each one of us a very happy New Year* with all the sincerity, truth and charity of Her Immaculate Heart for the Blessed Trinity and for each one of us Her beloved children in the Holy Spirit in our Archdiocese. In doing so, She assures us that She will unfailingly obtain the Providence of the Blessed Trinity for our total well-being in our 'spirit, soul and body,' every time we honour Her as the Holy Mother of God and invoke Her intercession at any time of the day or night during this new year, with the words given to us by the Holy Spirit: "Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." And as I joyfully proclaim this truth of the Blessed Trinity and the Immaculate Heart of Mary to each one of you from my Episcopal office, I pray and invoke upon each one of you, all the holy joys and supernatural peace of our communion of life with the Immaculate Heart of Mary during our synodal pilgrimage of faith, hope and love to the Eternal Father this year, together with our Holy Father Pope Francis and all the Bishops of the Church and with all our brothers and sisters entrusted to their Episcopal care worldwide, in Christ Jesus our Lord and in the Holy Spirit.

Solemnities and Feasts

JANUARY 1st

Mary the Mother of God (Solemnity)

The Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God is a liturgical celebration observed on January 1st which falls exactly one week after Christmas, the end of the octave of Christmas. The Blessed Virgin Mary is honored as the Mother of God because she conceived and gave birth to Christ, who is the incarnation of God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. It is fitting to honor Mary as Mother of Jesus, following the birth of Christ. When Catholics celebrate the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God, we are not only honoring Mary, who was chosen among all women throughout history to bear God incarnate, but we are also honoring our Lord, who is fully God and fully human. Since the first centuries of Christianity, the Church customarily has regarded the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the Mother of God for a simple, logical reason; By the power of the Holy Spirit, she conceived Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Since the divine Person, God the Son, assumed, or took on, human nature, she is the Mother of God in the fullest since: "What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ" (CCC 487). The Church solemnly defined this belief at the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus AD 431. *Source: www.franciscanmedia.org*



JANUARY 7th

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (FEAST)

At the time of Jesus' birth, it was commonly believed that a new star would appear whenever a new ruler was born. The Father in Heaven used this belief to honor His Son Who was born as the new King. The three Magi from the East were astrologers. When they saw this "new star," they chose to follow it to discover the new King. Creation itself, in the form of a star, pointed the way, thus giving glory to the newborn King, manifesting Him to the whole world as symbolized by the Magi. The word "Epiphany" means "manifestation." Therefore, as we honor this moment in time when the Christ Child was made manifest to the world, we need to look into our own hearts. There, we discover Christ's ongoing manifestation to us so that we can worship Him Who has also chosen to be born within our hearts. We must diligently seek out that manifestation of God within us and respond to it in the same ways that the Magi responded.



The Magi brought the Christ Child gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. God was honored and glorified through His creation by the giving of these gifts. God created gold to manifest His beauty and dignity. It was a gift that symbolized kingship. When we ponder the natural gift of gold given to the Christ Child, we are inspired to give Him our own gift of symbolic gold by prayerfully acknowledging Him as our own King to whom we pledge our complete submission. Made from the sap of trees found in India, northeastern Africa, and the Arabian peninsula, frankincense and myrrh are also fruits of God's creation. Used in worship to symbolize prayers rising to heaven, frankincense symbolizes the Christ Child's divinity. We offer frankincense to Christ when we acknowledge His divine nature, since He is God in the flesh. Often used in burial, myrrh honors the Christ Child Who came to give His life as a sacrifice for many. We offer myrrh to profess our belief in the saving power of Christ's death on the Cross and our need for that gift of salvation. *Source: catholicagency.org*

FEBRUARY 8TH

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD (FEAST)

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is a liturgical bridge that connects the Christmas season to Ordinary Time. During the Christmas season we pondered the Incarnation, Nativity, Presentation in the Temple, and Epiphany. Today, we see Jesus manifesting Himself to the world as He began His three years of public ministry. Jesus begins His ministry through an act of deep solidarity with the fallen human race. John the Baptist had been preaching in the desert and offering a baptism of repentance. John's baptism was not the same as our baptism today. Instead, it was only a sign of one's willingness to turn away from sin and turn toward God. Jesus, of course, had nothing to repent of. He was sinless in every way. But that didn't stop Him from freely choosing to receive the baptism of repentance. Why would He do that? Simply put, Jesus chose to unite Himself with fallen humanity, taking upon Himself our own sins and suffering their consequences. He humbly allowed Himself to be identified as a sinner in need of repentance. This was done out of love for us and out of His longing to become one with us so that we could become one with Him. By bowing His sacred head to receive the baptism of repentance, Jesus united Himself and His divinity to everyone who had already chosen to repent. And He gave power to every forthcoming act of repentance others would make, even until today. When we repent today, we meet Jesus in that same water of repentance. It was not only the Eternal Son Who was present at that baptism of repentance, but the Father and the Holy Spirit as well. The Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove, and the Father's Voice spoke to acknowledge His oneness with His Son. Therefore, every time we make a humble act of repentance, such as when we combine the crucifixion, the Trinity, and holy water upon entering a church and blessing ourselves, we not only meet our Lord but also receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and share more fully in our adoption as sons and daughters of the Father in Heaven.



Source: mycatholic.life/saints

JANUARY 25TH

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL (FEAST)

Saint Paul's entire life can be explained in terms of one experience—his meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus. In an instant, he saw that all the zeal of his dynamic personality was being wasted, like the strength of a boxer swinging wildly. Perhaps he had never seen Jesus, who was only a few years older. But he had acquired a zealot's hatred of all Jesus stood for, as he began to harass the Church: "...entering house after house and dragging out men and women, he handed them over for imprisonment" (Acts 8:3b). Now he himself was "entered," possessed, all his energy harnessed to one goal—being a slave of Christ in the ministry of reconciliation, an instrument to help others experience the one Savior. One sentence determined his theology: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5b). Jesus was mysteriously identified with people—the loving group of people Saul had been running down like criminals. Jesus, he saw, was the mysterious fulfillment of all he had been blindly pursuing. From then on, his only work was to "present everyone perfect in Christ. For this I labor and struggle, in accord with the exercise of his power working within me" (Colossians 1:28b-29). "For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and [with] much conviction" (1 Thessalonians 1:5a). Paul's life became a tireless proclaiming and living out of the message of the cross: Christians die baptismally to sin and are buried with Christ; they are dead to all that is sinful and unredeemed in the world.



Source: www.franciscanmedia.org

Archbishop's Engagements

N.B.:"In office days", Please call the Secretary before coming. Ph No : 72079 40883

JANUARY 2024

01. Mon	:	In Office
02. Tue	:	Occupied
03-05. Wed-Fri	:	In Office
06. Sat	09:30 a.m. :	Festive Mass at Holy Rosary Church, Kethepally.
	05:00 p.m. :	First Holy Communion and Confirmations at St Anns Church, Mallapur.
07. Sun	8:30 a.m. :	First Holy Communion and Confirmations at St Anthony's Church, Gandhinagar.
	6:00 p.m. :	Mass at St Theresa's Church, Sanathnagar.
08. Mon	:	Occupied
09.-10 Tue-Wed	:	In Office
11. Thur	4:30 p.m. :	Platinum Jubilee and Annual Day celebrations at Holy Mary High School at Khairathabad
12. Fri	:	In Office
13. Sat	10:00 a.m. :	Thanksgiving Mass at St. Mary's Minor Basilica, Secunderabad, on the occasion of Golden & Diamond Jubilee of St. Ann's Sisters of Providence
	05:00 p.m. :	First Holy Communion and Confirmations at St Anthony's Shrine, Mettuguda
14. Sun	05:00 p.m. :	Festive Mass at St. Joseph Thambi (Servant of God) Shrine, Outpalli
15. Mon	10:00 a.m. :	Golden jubilee Celebration at Immaculate Conception Church, Chinnapuri.
16. Tue	10:00 a.m. :	Priestly Ordination of Dn. Bala Anthony (Somascans) at Infant Jesus Shrine, Emjala.
17. Wed	:	Occupied

18. Thur 9.30 am. - 1.00 pm: General body meeting.
19. Fri 06:00 p.m. : Golden Jubilee Celebration and Diaconate Ordinations at Holy Spirit Fathers, Ramanthapur
20. Sat 10:00 a.m. : Strategic planning workshop (CCBI) Diocessan level
- 05:00 p.m. : Sports day celebration Valerian Grammar High, Yaprul
21. Sun 09:00 a.m. : First holy Communion and Confirmations at St Joseph's Church, Bolarum.
- 05:00 p.m. : First holy Communion and Confirmations at St Anthony's Church, Mudfort
22. Mon : Occupied
23. Tue 05:30 p.m. : Annual Day celebrations at St Ignatius High School Gagilapuram.
24. Wed 05:30 p.m. : Annual day celebrations at St. Mary's High School, Secunderabad.
25. Thur 10:00 a.m. : Golden Jubilee Celebration Mass of Roch Memorial High School at Our lady of Good Health Shrine, Khairathabad
- 05:00 p.m. : Program at Roch Memorial High School, Khairathabad
26. Fri : Republic day,
- (Evening) : Morning Star School, Chapirevula.
27. Sat : Ruby Jubilee and Annual Day celebrations at Sacred Heart School, Lalaguda.
28. Sun 10:00 a.m. : Festive Mass at Don Bosco Shrine, Bandlaguda.
29. Mon 09:00-12:00 noon : In Office

(30th January to 7th February CCBI General Body meeting at St. John's Seminary Bangalore)

30th December, 2023
Archbishop's House

+ Cardinal Poola Anthony
Archbishop of Hyderabad

Communications

1. A VERY HAPPY, GRACE FILLED & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR- 2024:

Thank you for your wishes and prayers during Christmas. I wish all the Priests, Religious, the Faithful and all Brothers & Sisters, A VERY HAPPY, GRACE-FILLED and PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR-2023. May the blessings of God come upon all of you throughout the Year. May it bring us true Peace, Harmony, Joy, Good Health and Prosperity. May our Blessed Mother and St Joseph continue to help us in every way and bring us ever closer to Jesus Christ our Good Shepherd.

2. WORD OF GOD SUNDAY:

In his Apostolic Letter *Aperuit illis* issued September 30, 2019, Pope Francis instituted the celebration of Sunday of the Word of God, which is held every year on the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. In 2024, it will be celebrated on the **21st January**. All the Parish Priests are asked to observe Word of God Sunday in your respective parishes by organizing special programmes like, Enthronement of the Bible, Bible Quiz, Distribution of Bibles and Bible connected activities. We encourage you all to organize inter – parish and inter – Deanery competitions or programmes in this regard. The motto chosen is taken from the Gospel of St John: “Remain in my Word” (John 8,31).

3. ECUMENICAL SUNDAY:

The Parish Priests/Religious/ Heads of the Institutions are requested to observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from 18th to 25th January, 2024 and the Ecumenical Sunday on 21st January, 2024 (Same day as the Word of God Sunday). Kindly offer prayers for the unity of Christians as desired and prayed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself (cf. Jn.1:21). The chosen theme for 2024 is **‘You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbour as yourself’** (Lk 10:27). Rev. Fr. Michael Samala the Diocesan Director for Ecumenism and Dialogue will send further details.

4. ANNUAL RETURNS:

All Parish Priests and Heads of the Institutions are requested to start preparing Annual Returns for the year 2023, from January to December, which are to be sent to Rome in the First Quarter of 2024. Forms of Annual Returns were sent to you by post. If you have not received the forms by 1st January 2024, please contact Chancellor or Secretary. Please send the filled in forms by 15th January 2024 to the office at the Archbishop’s house, Sec’bad. You may post the form or scan the filled in form and forward to: **archdiohyd@gmail.com**

5. RECOLLECTION IN JANUARY - 2024

All the Deans are here-by requested to conduct the Recollection at Deanery level for the month of January, 2024. All the Clergy are requested to attend the

“Deanery Level Recollection” and if anyone is unable to attend the recollection, please inform the respective Deans. All the Deans are here-by requested to note down the minutes of the meetings with the list of the participants and send a copy of the same to Archbishop’s House, Secunderabad.

6. THE ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING:

The Annual General Body Meeting of the Archdiocese of Hyderabad Society (for all the Archdiocesan Priests) is arranged on the **18th January, 2024** at Vianney Hall, Archbishop’s House Campus, Secunderabad, from **09:30 a.m. to 01.00 p.m.** All the Archdiocesan Priests are cordially invited to participate in this Annual General Body Meeting.

(N. B.) Please send Agenda Points, if any, to reach us on or before 12th January, 2024, by 06:00 pm.

7. TRANSFER AND APPOINTMENTS

1. Msgr Y. Bala Showry, Vicar General, is appointed as a Director of Pastoral Centre (ad tempus) with effect from 21st December, 2023.
2. Rev Fr. Dion Issac is relieved from Director of pastoral Centre with effect from 21st December 2023.
3. Rev. Dn. Thathireddy Pranay appointed at St. Anthony’s Shrine, Mettuguda.
4. Rev. Dn. Christopher Joseph Micheal appointed at St. Joseph’s Cathedral, Gunfoundary.

8. WELCOME TO THE DEACONS

We welcome **1. Dn. Thathireddy Pranay** and **2. Dn. Christopher Joseph Micheal** to the Archdiocese of Hyderabad. After completing their seminary formation, they are back to the Archdiocese to prepare for their Priestly Ordination. We wish them all the best and God’s Blessings.

POPE’S INTENTION: JANUARY 2024

For educators: We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.



Cardinal’s Intention: JANUARY 2024

Let us pray for the marginalized in the society. May the Lord grant them justice.



7. 2ND SUNDAY COLLECTION FOR THE MONTH OF NOV 2023

Sl No.	Date	Place	Amount	Sl No.	Date	Place	Amount
1	22-11-2023	Aliabad	1150	51		Mahendra Hills	
2		Alirajpet		52		Mallapur	
3		Ammuguda		53		Manikonda Mission	
4		Arogya Nagar (Mission)		54	16-11-2023	Mariapuram- Adibatla	710
5		Arul Colony		55		Medchal	
6		Balaji Nagar		56		Medipalle	
7		Balaiah Nagar		57	23-11-2023	Mettuguda	13210
8	21-12-2023	Band Lines	6500	58		Miyapur	
9		Bandlaguda Jagir (Kismatpur)		59		Moula - Ali	
10	14-11-2023	Banjara Hills	10000	60	13-11-2023	Mudfort	7000
11		Basuregadi		61		Muthangi	
12	16-11-2023	Bayyaram	490	62		Nacharam	
13		Bazar Ghat		63		Nandrakal	
14	17-11-2023	Begumpet	6070	64		Narayankhed	
15	13-11-2023	BHEL - MIG	3000	65	06-11-2023	Nedunoor	200
16	14-11-2023	Bhoiguda	15000	66	13-11-2023	Neela Camp	300
17	14-12-2023	Bodhan	300	67	14-11-2023	Nizamabad	3000
18		Boduppall		68		Pargi	
19	16-11-2023	Bolarum	15500	69		Patancheru	
20		Borabanda		70		Ramachandrapuram	
21	23-11-2023	Bowenpally	10000	71	15-11-2023	Ramanthapur	3400
22	06-12-2023	Cherlapally	1500	72		Ramnagar	
23		Chintalacheruvu		73	30-11-2023	Sadasivpet	150
24		Church Colony		74		Sainikpuri	
25		Dammaiguda		75	20-11-2023	Sanathnagar	20100
26	13-12-2023	Dayanandnagar	5000	76		Sangareddy	
27	22-11-2023	Dharmaram	1500	77		Santhoshnagar	
28		Emjala		78	16-11-2023	Sappers Lines	1430
29		Gaddiannaram		79	18-11-2023	Secunderabad	72920
30		Gagillapur		80	27-11-2023	Seethaphalmandi	3000
31		Gajwel		81		Shabad	
32	21-11-2023	Gandhinagar	8200	82	14-11-2023	Shamshabad	3000
33	15-11-2023	Garrison (Trimulgherry)	1993	83	16-11-2023	Shantinagar	2850
34		Ghatkesar		84	15-11-2023	Shapurnagar	4306
35	09-12-2023	Golconda	17050	85		Siddipet	
36		Gunfoundry		86		Sultan Bazar	
37		Jadi Jamalpur		87	16-11-2023	Suraram	3000
38	11-11-2023	Jagadgirigutta	3500	88	14-11-2023	Tandur	700
39		Jahanuma		89		Toopran	
40		Jogipet		90	21-12-2023	Trimulgherry	34500
41		Joipet		91		Uminthal	
42	14-12-2023	Kalwakole	280	92	12-12-2023	Vanasthalipuram	3000
43		Kamareddy		93		Venkatapuram	
44	15-11-2023	Khairatabad	24000	94		Vikarabad	
45		Kissan Nagar(Armoor)		95	28-11-2023	Yapral	3500
46		Kukatpally		96	13-11-2023	Yeddumylaram	720
47		L. B. Nagar		97		Yellareddy	
48		Lallaguda		98	14-12-2023	Zaheerabad	250
49		Lillipur					
50		Madinaguda				Total	271279

Pastoral News

1. LAYING OF FOUNDATION STONE TO BUILD NEW CHURCH IN HONOUR OF ST. MOTHER THERESA, AT PRAGATHI NAGAR, HYDERABAD.



It was an auspicious and joyous occasion for the Parish community of Immaculate Conception Church, Kukatpally as the foundation stone was laid for the New Church at Pragathi Nagar, Hyderabad. After seeking approval by His Eminence Cardinal Poola Anthony for new Church in the Archdiocese of Hyderabad and necessary permissions for construction from the government, a decision was made by the parish advisory body and parish community to begin the construction. The foundation stone was laid by Rev. Fr. Mallavarapu Sundar, Parish Priest of Immaculate conception church, Kukatpally on 11th November 2023 at 09:00am in the presence of Parishioners, contractors and engineers. The church will be built in honour of St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta for worship and greater glory of the Blessed Trinity. This Church is planned to be built with Cellar and ground floor for parking and church in the first floor with balcony. The estimated budget will cost four crores' Rupees. Let us pray for the successful completion of this new Church in the Archdiocese of Hyderabad. **-Rev. Fr. Susai Vincent, Assistant Parish Priest**

2. THE SHRINE OF MARY MOTHER OF EVANGELISATION

On December 11th in the presence of 14 priests, sisters and 800 of the faithful the Archbishop, His Eminence Cardinal Poola Anthony blessed and opened the shrine of Mary Mother of Evangelisation. The Shrine is situated at Indira Nagar in Vikarabad. It is a centre where people of all faiths come to her in their needs. With her motherly care she comforts them and brings them to the Divine Physician. Already people are witnessing to spiritual and physical healing at the intercession of Mary Mother of Evangelisation.



We hope that this shrine will become a pilgrimage centre for the whole of the Archdiocese and beyond. **-Fr. Tim Greenway**

3. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATIONS AT ST. MARY'S BASILICA ON 03RD DECEMBER, 2023 SECUNDERABAD.



4. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATIONS AT ST. XAVIER'S CHURCH ON 16TH DECEMBER, 2023 BORABANDA.



5. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATIONS AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2023 KUKATPALLY.



6. MINI-CHRISTMAS AND ST. XAVIER'S BOARDING DAY ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2023 YAPRAL.



7. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATIONS AT MARIA ROSA MYSTICA CHURCH ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2023, LB NAGAR.



8. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATIONS AT CHRIST THE KING CHURCH, RAMANTHAPUR.



9. INAUGURATION OF THE NEW FLAG BEAM AT ST. ANTHONY'S SHRINE METTUGUDA

St. Anthony's Shrine Mettuguda is a unique place in twin cities that all the people from different faith come and pray for their intentions. In the past many devotees contributed their might for the new Church construction, Bell towers, Transformer, statues of Saints, Two lifts and education of the poor and marginalised. And now we witness another expression of gratitude to God and St. Anthony by Mr. K. Dharanidhar and his family who came forward to erect the New Flag Beam.



This flag beam holds a great significance to all the devotees and believers as a symbol of faith in God and unity among people. It points out the value of dedication and commitment to God and the needy neighbours. Flag beam is associated with a religious place of worship and reinforces that the humanity is always drawn to the creator. This Flag beam was blessed and inaugurated by His Eminence Cardinal Poola Anthony, on 15th December 2023.-*Rector & Parish Priest, Fr. Dr. VK. Swamy.*

10. 800TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST CRIB AT GRECCIO

This year marks the 800th Anniversary of the First Crib at Greccio, Italy, by the patron saint of Italy, St. Francis of Assisi. The historians narrate the first event in this way: Christmas was 15 days away. Saint Francis was staying at a hermitage at Fonte Columbo. How to celebrate Christmas? He remembered his visit to the Holy Land, to Bethlehem. Why not? A kind of replica of the manger there. There was a cave in Greccio. He had a good friend, Giovanni (John), a military man, lord of Greccio, just two miles away. He had renounced all worldly honors and was trying to live a life imitating that of Francis.

Francis, sent a word to John: **"If you want to celebrate the Feast of the Lord at Greccio, hurry and diligently prepare what I tell you. For I wish to recall to memory the little child who was born in Bethlehem. I want to set before our bodily eyes the hardships of his infant needs, how he lay in the manger, how with an ox and ass standing by he lay upon the hay."**

John began immediately. People prepared torches and candles to light up the night. The manger was prepared in the cave, and the ox and ass brought in. When Francis came to the friars' hermitage, he was delighted. The great evening arrived. People began to come in procession, carrying their torches and candles. The woods rang with their song. They were rediscovering the joy of childhood. As the villagers and friars crowded around, a priest began the Mass. Francis gave the sermon.



Thomas of Celano, writes: **“The saint of God stood before the manger, uttering sighs, overcome with love and filled with a wonderful happiness....He sang the Gospel in a sonorous voice, a clear and sonorous voice, inviting all to the highest rewards. Then he preached to the people standing about and spoke charming words concerning the birth of the poor King, and the little town of Bethlehem....When he spoke the name ‘Child of Bethlehem’ or ‘Jesus,’ his tongue licked his lips, relishing and savoring with pleased**

palate the sweetness of the words.”

Francis saw a truly human Jesus. The humility of the Incarnation and of the Cross was his constant preoccupation. He wanted to think of nothing else—Bethlehem and Calvary. His life centered, then, around poverty and humility, sister virtues. He told his friars not to be ashamed to beg, “since God himself became poor for our sakes....Poverty is the heritage which our Lord Jesus Christ has acquired for us.” Francis would often meditate on the desolation of Christ and his holy mother with tears, and he maintained that poverty was ‘the queen’ of the virtues, as she had become so radiantly manifest in the King and his mother.”

Pope Francis in his address to the friars on this centenary said: “the scene of the nativity shows God as he came into our world, but it also makes us reflect on how our life is part of God’s own life. It invites us to become his disciples if we want to attain ultimate meaning in life” (Admirabile Signum). Hence, for St. Francis, Christmas is the heart and mind of his entire life choice: the Most High makes himself the smallest, least and poorest, but also makes himself a seed, i.e., the beginning of a new life. Christmas is a “frame of mind” as some wise man says. It is to bear in mind the very mind of Jesus. It is to be awakened again in our hearts the person of Jesus, a Christ Consciousness. Hence it is not a day long celebration or a weeklong but a lifelong. It is our daily consciousness that Emmanuel, God with us, is what we carry within, around and all the time.

-Fr. Praveen Dsouza OFM, Parish priest, St. Francis of Assisi Church, Ramnagar, Hyd.

RECEIPT OF LOCAL MASS INTENTIONS		
Date	Parish/Individual	No. of Masses
14-12-2023	Khairathabad	550
21-12-2023	Band Lines	500
21-12-2023	Trimulgherry	545
28-12-2023	Mettuguda	2000
	Total	3595

Archdiocesan News

1. ECUMENICAL SUNDAY.

Dear Rev. Parish priests, Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

Greetings of Peace and Joy in the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

As per the direction of Most Rev. Thelagathoti Joseph Raja Rao, the Chairman of the TCBC Commission for Ecumenism, I am pleased to forward to you the resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity to be held from Jan. 18-25, 2024 (and **the Ecumenism Sunday that falls on Jan. 21, 2024**), jointly prepared by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The theme for the year 2024: **"You shall love the Lord your God ...and your neighbour as yourself (Luke 10:27).**

You may print copies of the English / Telugu versions of Order of Ecumenical Worship Service and Ecumenism Sunday Mass Liturgy, which are useful for praying for Christian unity throughout the year as per your requirement for use of parishes and institutions in your diocese.

During Unity Week, please arrange at least one **ecumenical prayer service for Christian unity in your parish**. **Kindly do** invite the pastors and leaders of the Christian Denominations present and the church **faithful** in the surrounding area.

I take this opportunity to wish you a Very Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year 2024. For more details kindly contact Mobile: at 9989692759 and email: <samala.michael@gmail.com>

- FR Michael Samala, Diocesan Director for Ecumenism and Dialogue

2. HYDERABAD ARCHDIOCESE EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY XIII HAES TALENT & PROFICIENCY COMPETITIONS 2023-24

"I would ask the many young people present to be generous with their God-given talents for the good of other, the Church and our God." - Pope Francis

The XIII HAES Talent and Proficiency competitions was inaugurated by Msgr.Y.Bala Showreddy ,Vice Chairman of HAES along with Rev. Fr.G.Anthony Secretary of HAES, on 18th November 2023 at 9:30 am at St. Mary's High school

Secunderabad. 17 schools under the banner of Hyderabad Archdiocese Educational society, had enthusiastically participated in the literary and cultural events held on 18th November and 1st December 2023.

Rev Fr.P.Innaiah, Convener of the XIII HAES Talent competition, along with the organizing committee members, Rev.Fr.T.Jaya Raj Reddy, Rev.Fr.Jaya Prathap, Rev.Fr.T. Udaya Bhasker, Rev.Fr.G.Praveen has meticulously planned with precision for the success of the event

The Valedictory Ceremony of the XIII HAES Talent Fest was presided by His Eminence Cardinal Poola Anthony, Archbishop of Hyderabad and Chairman of HAES accompanied by Msgr Y.Bala Showreddy Vice Chairman of HAES, and Rev.Fr.G.Anthony, Secretary of HAES and principals of the HAES institutions.

The participants of the various events were awarded with prizes, participation and merit certificates. Schools secured 100% results and 10GPA also were awarded. The Retiring staff for the Academic year and Staff celebrating the silver Jubilee were felicitated by His Eminence.

His Eminence appreciated the efforts of the HAES institutions for incorporating contemporary and conventional Education – *“Education with a difference”*. A festive ambience was experienced by the teaching and Non-teaching fraternity and participants at the XIII HAES fest

The prime objective of the HAES institutions is not only Academic Brilliance but holistic development. This was explicitly displayed through various literary(Essay writing, General knowledge, Bible Quiz, Elocution) and cultural events(Group singing , Group dance) which are organized annually to explore the inherent talents among the students and provide a healthy competitive spirit preparing them for the progressive tomorrow. Mathew chapter 25 verses 14-30 says “life is a talent entrusted to us to be transformed and multiplied by making it a gift to others”

3. ARCHDIOCESE OF HYDERABAD CCR VISIT TO FBA & 3-DAYS MISSION

Eighteen members of the Archdiocese of Hyderabad CCR had a day of Prayer with the Destitutes at the Friends of the Birds of the Air (FBA) Ashrams at Keesara and Nagaram on Saturday 9 December 2023. Fr. Prabhu Das our Spiritual Advisor led us in prayer and all of us participated in the Praise and Worship. And we sang some carols for the inmates. They were happy and we also enjoyed the day in their

company. It was indeed a day of great joy of Christmas. On the invitation of the Parish Priest the CCR also led a three-days Advent mission in Auxilium Church, Mahendra Hills from 14 to 16 December 2023.



4. MONTHLY RECOLLECTION AND CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER OF CCR

On Saturday 16 December 2023 twenty members of the Charismatic Renewal visited Saint Paul the Hermit Church, Nandrakal for their monthly recollection and Christmas get together. We were heartily welcomed by the Parish priest Father Prabhu Das, who is also the Spiritual Advisor to the Archdiocese of Hyderabad CCR as appointed by Cardinal Poola Anthony the Archbishop of Hyderabad.

The day began by reciting the Rosary and was followed by Praise and Worship, and Adoration of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. This went on for two hours during which many of the members also made their confessions.

After the spiritual part, we all partook of a sumptuous meal arranged by Father Prabhu Das and helped by some parishioners. After the lunch we had a Christmas get-together along with the children of the parish in which we had some activities, distribution of gifts for the children and parishioners, and exchange of gifts for the CCR members.

Over all it was a wonderful day spent in the presence of the Lord and in the company of the CCR members in the serene atmosphere of the Saint Paul the Hermit Parish. We thank Father Prabhu Das for making all the arrangements and for his availability for the various programmes of the CCR.



HASSS

1. CARDINAL POOLA ANTHONY CELEBRATES CHRISTMAS WITH TRANS COMMUNITY, ADVOCATES INCLUSIVITY ON 21ST DECEMBER, 2023

In the spirit of Joy and inclusivity celebration of Christmas, Cardinal Poola Anthony brought joy and inclusivity to the Trans community at Hyderabad Archdiocese Social Service Society (HASSS). The festive occasion saw the distribution of six jute bag making machines to six transgender individuals who completed a three-month training program at HASSS Training Center. Additionally, Cardinal Anthony distributed 65 dry ration kits, furthering the spirit of giving



during the holiday season. Adding to the festive cheer, Cardinal Anthony awarded Beautician Training certificates to 16 women who successfully completed a three-

month course. In a gesture to empower women further, he provided 14 sewing machines to 14 women who completed their training in Alirajpet village.



During his Christmas message, Cardinal Anthony emphasized the significance of Pope Francis' policies, highlighting the church's welcoming stance towards

transgender individuals in its sacramental life. Pope Francis has underscored that transgender individuals can participate in baptisms, become official godparents, and serve as witnesses for weddings in the Catholic faith.

Cardinal Poola Anthony passionately conveyed that the Trans community should be embraced inclusively, breaking away from exclusivity. He stressed that the essence of Christmas lies in the universal love of Jesus, who came into the world to embrace all of humanity.

The celebration, attended by 150 transgender individuals, became a vibrant expression of unity and acceptance. Tashi, a representative of the trans community, articulated that Jesus transcended human boundaries, exemplifying a message of boundless love and acceptance.

Few participants expressed that they feel very much accepted and thanked the Archdiocese of Hyderabad Social service society for their efforts in serving humanity irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Fr. Y. Bala, the vice-chairman, Fr. Anthony Madanu, the executive director, and other collaborators of HASSS joined the festive celebration, which concluded with a sumptuous meal. The event stands as a testament to the commitment of Hyderabad Archdiocese Social Service Society to fostering inclusivity, love, and compassion within the community.

National News

1. CCBI – STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP DIOCESE LEVEL

The Core Team has conducted training sessions for the selected Trainers in the Regions, and these are ready to come to the dioceses. This one - day workshop at the diocesan level is a spiritual exercise for a prayerful discernment and for understanding in What Way God wants the CCBI (Church in India) to be significantly different by 2028 or 2033 as synodal process.

This workshop is not intended primarily for the diocese or region, but for eliciting the expectations and dreams of the participants as stakeholders about 'how the Latin Church in India has to be significantly different by 2033 through its

commission. It is not a seminar. It is about creating a collective ownership. Once the national commissions have the goals, objectives, key performance indicators and short - and long plants, the fruits will be reflected in the regions and dioceses.



There shall be a maximum of 30 participants in the diocesan-level workshops, except the Archbishop, Bishop and two Trainers. They shall consist of the Vicar general, the coordinator of ministries, the Diocesan Directors of Commission (Maximum of 8), Deanery Heads and parish priests (maximum of 4), religious, both men and women (maximum of 6), Lay women and men (maximum of 6), Youth, both male and female (maximum of 4), and denominations or like minded people from other faiths who would understand the CCBI and way of working (maximum of 2). the selection of the participants shall be given priority, depending on their ability to participate and contribute to the planning process. Those who participated in the regional workshops need not be invited to attend the diocesan workshop.

Now the Regional Deputy Secretary (RDS) will schedule the diocesan-level workshops in consultation with each Diocesan Bishop; this exercise has to be completed by February 2024. These workshops will be cancelled in the dioceses which may not be able to hold one by February 2024. The Archdiocese of Hyderabad has scheduled its one-day Strategic Planning Workshop on 20th January 2024 and Fr. Victor Emmanuel the Procurator and Chancellor is the contact person for the Archdiocese.

- Fr. Raju Alex A.E, Deputy Secretary of TCBC



SECRETARIA GENERALIS
SYNODI

**GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE SYNOD
XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS**

Towards October 2024

Gathered below are the directions, developed and approved by the Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod, **on the steps to be taken in the months between now and the Second Session of the Synodal Assembly (October 2024)**, enabling us to continue the journey initiated by the Holy Father on 9 October 2021: For a Synodal Church. Communion, participation, mission.

The whole process of the Synod 2021-2024 constitutes the source of inspiration to continue the journey. Those who took part in the synodal meetings at the different levels during the listening and consultation phase, and especially the participants in the First Session, have had a concrete experience of a Church that is plural and able to live with differences as a richness in communion. This experience constitutes a prophetic word addressed to a world that finds it hard to believe that peace and concord are possible. We are called and sent by the Risen One to proclaim the Gospel to the world today. Growing as a synodal Church is a concrete way to respond to this call and this mission.

The testimony of those who participated in the Assembly is precious. Their account constitutes an inalienable part of the gift we have received, conveying the richness of an experience that no text can condense. The synodal encounter between brothers and sisters who recognise each other as disciples called and sent by the Lord, is a grace and a source of joy. Out of this experience comes the desire to share this gift, involving ever more people in this dynamism.

In addition to the accounts of the participants, the fruit of the First Session is gathered in the Synthesis Report, approved at the end of the work and available in many languages on the Synod 2021-2024 website (www.synod.va). This document constitutes the reference point for the journey of the People of God in the time between the two Sessions. In particular, the synodal process will continue along the lines presented below; they intertwine the three levels on which we have been working so far in succession: the level of each local Church, that of the groupings of Churches (national, regional and continental), and that of the Church as a whole. As the Holy Father recalled in approving these lines of work, “the Synod is about synodality and not about this or that theme.... The important thing is *how* the reflection is done, that is, in a synodal way.”

In this direction the process has been carried out so far, and it is also in this direction that we are called to develop the work of the First Session, during which **the Assembly addressed in a synodal way matters of great relevance**, noting convergences, indicating questions to be addressed and formulating proposals. These are matters of great importance, **some of which need to be considered at the level of the whole Church and in collaboration with the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia**. These matters include, for example, the preliminary study in view of the updating of the CIC and the CCEO (*Synthesis Report*, ch. 1 lett. r), of the *Ratio fundamentalis* on the formation of ordained ministers (chap. 11 lett. j), of the document *Mutuae relationes* (chap. 10 lett. g); or the deepening of theological and pastoral research on the diaconate and, more specifically, on women’s admission to the diaconate (chap. 9 lett. n), etc. **A list of these topics will be submitted to the Holy Father** as the fruit of the Synod Assembly. Groups of experts from all continents together with the relevant Dicasteries of the Roman Curia and coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Synod will be asked to work in a synodal way on the topics indicated by the Holy Father. A report on the progress of this work will be presented at the Second Session in October 2024.

1. A guiding question to deepen reflection

The local Churches and the groupings of Churches are firstly invited to contribute by deepening aspects of the Synthesis Report that are fundamental to the Synod's theme. These contributions are guided by the question:

“HOW can we be a synodal Church in mission?”

The objective of these new reflections is to identify **the paths we can follow and the tools we might adopt** in our different contexts and circumstances in order to enhance the unique contribution of each baptised person and of each Church in the one mission of proclaiming the Risen Lord and his Gospel to the world today. This is not, therefore, a request that limits you to a plan of technical or procedural improvements to make the Church's structures more efficient, but rather an invitation for reflection on the concrete forms of the missionary commitment to which we are called, that express the dynamism between unity and diversity proper to a synodal Church.

In this regard, it will be helpful to reread no. 27 of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*: “I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself. As John Paul II once said to the Bishops of Oceania: ‘All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion’”. The horizon towards which the in-depth work identified in the guiding question is oriented, is a reform animated by the dynamic of mission that Christ has entrusted to us. In this we are sustained by the pastoral conversion that the Spirit, who according to the Lord’s promise never leaves us alone, invites us to accomplish and makes possible.

1.1 The two levels of deepening

The guiding question needs to be addressed on two levels, always having as its reference point the Synthesis Report as a whole.

- a) At the level of each local Church: **HOW can we enhance the differentiated co-responsibility in the mission of all the members of the People of God?** What ways of relating, structures, processes of discernment and decision-making with regard to mission make it possible to recognise, shape, and promote co-responsibility? What ministries and participatory bodies can be renewed or introduced to better express this co-responsibility? Within the Synthesis Report, reference can be made more specifically to Chapters 8-12, 16 and 18.
- b) At the level of relations between Churches, between groupings of Churches at different levels and with the Bishop of Rome: **HOW can these relations be creatively articulated in order to find “a dynamic balance between the dimension of the Church as a whole and its local roots”** (Synthesis Report chap. 5, lett. g)? Here reference can be made above all to Chapters 13, 19 and 20 of the Synthesis Report.

1.2 Some suggestions for organising the work

Starting from the guiding question and the two levels indicated above, **each local Church is invited to carry out a further consultation**, determining for themselves what is possible in the time available and

the best approach to take. The first step will be to choose the perspective with which to approach the guiding question, reflecting on the relative chapters of the *Synthesis Report*. Realistically, it will not be possible to examine all the implications. Therefore, each local Church is invited to focus on those aspects that enable it to make a contribution in the light of its own situation, character and experience, sharing good practices that represent visible and concrete signs of synodality. On the basis of what has been decided, each Diocese or Eparchy will send the fruits of this further consultation to the Episcopal Conference or Oriental Hierarchical Structure to which it belongs, in the times and ways that each Conference or Oriental Hierarchical Structure will soon indicate.

To be clear, this work is not a question of starting the synodal process from scratch or repeating the process of listening and consultation undertaken during the first stage. In this stage, in addition to the participatory bodies at diocesan level and the synodal team already established, **it will be important to involve people and groups that express a variety of experiences, skills, charisms, ministries within the People of God** and whose point of view is of particular help in focusing on the 'how': e.g. ordained ministers (in particular parish priests); other pastoral leaders (e.g. catechists and leaders of grassroots communities and small Christian communities, particularly in some regions; leaders of pastoral offices); consecrated men and women; leaders of Lay Associations, ecclesial Movements and new Communities; people who hold positions of responsibility in Church-related institutions and organisations (schools, universities, hospitals, reception centres, cultural centres, etc.); theologians and canonists, etc.

The Episcopal Conferences and the Oriental Hierarchical Structures are the reference point for this part of the process and **are invited to coordinate the collection of contributions from dioceses and eparchies**, setting out its methods and timing. They are also invited to continue the in-depth study starting from the same guiding question at their level and at the continental level, according to what appears appropriate and feasible.

At the local level as well as at the level of the groupings of Churches, the prospect of an authentically synodal discernment also requires **the contribution of theological and canonical expertise, as well as of the human and social sciences**, involving experts in these disciplines and academic institutions in the area.

After collecting the contributions of the Dioceses or Eparchies, the Episcopal Conferences and the Oriental Hierarchical Structures, as well as the Dioceses that do not belong to any Episcopal Conference, **have the task of drawing up a summary of a maximum length of 8 pages**, to be sent to the General Secretariat of the Synod by 15 May 2024. On the basis of the material thus gathered, the *Instrumentum laboris* of the Second Session will be drafted.

2. Keeping the synodal dynamism alive

Preserving and reviving the synodal dynamic that has involved the entire People of God over the past two years is just as important as the work of in-depth study and consultation outlined above. The First Session indicated as a priority "the enlargement of the number of people involved in the synodal processes, overcoming the obstacles to participation that have emerged so far" (*Synthesis Report*, ch. 1, lett. m), also indicating different modalities and groups of people to which attention should be paid, including the digital environment.

To this end, the local churches are also invited to go through the entire *Synthesis Report* and collect the requests that are most consonant with their situation. On this basis, they will be able to **promote the most appropriate initiatives to involve the whole People of God** (formative activities, theological in-depth studies, celebrations in synodal style, grassroots consultations, listening to minority populations and groups living in conditions of poverty and social marginality, spaces in which to address controversial issues, etc.), using the methods already successfully adopted during the first phase, in particular Conversation in the Spirit. Religious Congregations, Institutes of Consecrated Life, Lay Associations, Ecclesial Movements and new Communities are also invited to do the same, contributing to the work of the Dioceses and Eparchies where they are present. The aim is to keep alive that dynamism of listening and

dialogue with everyone, especially with those who remain more on the margins of the life of the Church, which the first phase of the synodal process launched and which has produced significant fruits.

Each local Church that wishes to do so may **send** to the Episcopal Conference or to the Oriental Hierarchical Structure to which it belongs **a brief testimony of the work carried out and the experiences lived (maximum two pages), sharing any good practice** that it considers significant for the growth of a missionary synodal dynamism. Episcopal Conferences and Oriental Hierarchical Structures will be responsible for sending these to the General Secretariat by 15 May 2024.

These contributions will not directly constitute the subject of the Assembly's discernment during the Second Session, but will nevertheless be made available to its members. Their purpose is to help compose a framework in which to situate the work of the Assembly. The sharing of experiences and good practices may also **activate dynamics of encounter and collaboration** between the Churches that find themselves called to address the same points.

3. Those responsible and their tasks

The main subjects of the journey between the two Sessions of the Assembly are each and every local Church. In this phase, each Diocesan or Eparchial Bishop has an irreplaceable role in providing stimulus: it is his task to open and accompany this further consultation in his own Diocese or Eparchy, and then validate its outcomes.

In order to conduct and animate this process, it is suggested that the contribution of the members of the Synodal Assembly from each territory be sought, as well as that of the synodal teams set up in the previous phase at the different levels.

The Episcopal Conferences and the Oriental Hierarchical Structures are asked to directly engage in the in-depth work at their level, and to play a coordinating role for the local Churches.

In particular,

1) With respect to the work of deepening indicated in the guiding question, the Episcopal Conferences and the Oriental Hierarchical Structures are asked:

- to accompany this process, offering the local Churches indications on the methods and timing of the consultation;
- to also undertake the in-depth study of the guiding question at the level of the groupings of Churches, according to the methods the Conferences' and Oriental Hierarchical Structures deem appropriate;
- to prepare a summary of the contributions received or produced and send it to the General Secretariat of the Synod by 15 May.

2) With respect to the commitment to keep the synodal dynamism alive, the Episcopal Conferences and the Oriental Hierarchical Structures are requested:

- to continue to promote initiatives enabling growth as a synodal Church in mission, including groupings of Churches;
- to collect the testimonies and good practices prepared by the Dioceses and Eparchies and send them all, without summarising them, to the General Secretariat of the Synod, again by 15 May.

Vatican, 11 December 2023

2. SHORT REPORT OF THE MEETING OF NATIONAL UNITED CHRISTIAN FORUM (NUCF)

The meeting of the National United Christian Forum (NUCF), which is a Joint Working Committee of Catholic Bishops' Conference of (CBCI), National Christian Council of India (NCCI) of the Protestant and Orthodox Churches and the Evangelical



Fellowship of India (EFI) of the Pentecostal and Independent Churches, took place on December 14, 2023 at the CBCI Centre, New Delhi. It began with the Opening Prayer led by Bishop Geevarghese Yulios, President of NCCI, and the Welcome Address delivered by Archbishop Andrews Thazhath, President of CBCI. Introduction was given by Rev. Asir Ebinezer, General Secretary of NCCI, who also moderated the session.

Among the many matters discussed the focus was on the situation of the continuing conflict in Manipur. It was decided by the Forum to hold a consultation on it to explore ways of reaching out to the victims and to partner with them in rehabilitation and medical assistance, and to bring about reconciliation and peace among the ethnic / religious groups. It was also resolved to issue a public appeal to have an austere Christmas celebration in view of the Manipur crisis and to raise funds for the cause with money thus saved.

In the context of the continuing atrocities on the Christians which is now about two attacks per day, a discussion took place on the dissemination and implementation of the Joint Ecumenical Document: *“Christian Witness in the Multi-Religious World-Recommendations for Conduct”*. Rev. Fr Dr Anthoniraj



human, National Secretary of CBCI Office for Dialogue and Ecumenism, presented the document. It was decided to take it to the grassroot level by translating it to vernacular languages. In this regard, it was expressed to setup a national inter-religious forum to foster mutual relations, and to dispel the prejudices and misunderstandings.

Deliberations were held on the forth coming General Elections 2024 and Christian Response to it. It was felt that NUCF must urge the Christians to actively participate in the elections as responsible and committed citizens. It can facilitate the registration of voters and take out a drive for enlisting voters. It was proposed to hold a national consultation on having a dialogue meeting with the political parties with regard to the concerns, issues and demands of the Christian Community.

A proposal on the study on the state of education among Christians in India was also taken up for discussion and was accepted in principle to study its modalities. An update on the cases on the Equal Status of Dalit Christian was given and a plan for follow up action was made. Concluding remarks were given by Bishop Joshua

Mar Ignathios, Chairman of CBCI Office for Dialogue and Ecumenism, and Rev. Vijayesh Lal, General Secretary of EFI. The Meeting came to end with concluding prayer and benediction.

***Report by Rev. Fr Dr Anthoniraj Thumma,
National Secretary of CBCI Office
for Dialogue and Ecumenism CBCI Centre, New Delhi,
December 15, 2023.***



SECRETARIA GENERALIS
SYNODI

Vatican, 11 December 2023

Prot. No. 230468

Beatitudes, Eminences, Excellencies
Dear Brothers in Christ

the experience that we have lived and celebrated in the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops enables us to look ahead with confidence and a sense of responsibility to the months that lead us to the Second Session, continuing the journey initiated by the Holy Father on 9 October 2021: *For a Synodal Church. Communion, participation, mission*. During this time, we have recognised ourselves as a synodal Church: People of God on the way with Christ proclaiming the Kingdom, together with all humanity, listening to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. Those of you who participated in the Assembly are called to bear witness to the richness of the gift we have received.

Now is the time to resolutely recommence the journey. To this end, we are sending you this letter. In the first instance, we are asking you to continue to collaborate generously in the 2021-2024 Synod process, as you did during the listening and consultation phase. In this regard, you will find attached some indications, prepared and approved by the Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod, on the steps to be taken in the months between now and the Second Session of the Synodal Assembly.

We are aware that time is short, but we trust in your willingness and desire to contribute to the path of synodality, which is "the path that God expects of the Church in the third millennium" (Francis, *Address for the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015).

With heartfelt thanks, we wish you a fruitful Advent journey.

In Christo,

Jean-Claude Card. HOLLERICH, S.I.

*General Rapporteur of the 16th Ordinary
General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*

Mario Card. GRECH

General Secretary

To the Patriarchs and Major Archbishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches
To the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences
To all the Bishops and Eparchs of the Catholic Church

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International News

**POPE FRANCIS
GENERAL AUDIENCE**

1. CYCLE OF CATECHESIS. VICES AND VIRTUES. 1. INTRODUCTION: SAFEGUARDING THE HEART

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today I would like to introduce a cycle of catechesis – a new cycle – on the theme of vices and virtues. And we can start right from the beginning of the Bible, where the Book of Genesis, through the account of the progenitors, presents the dynamic of evil and temptation. Let's consider the earthly Paradise. In the idyllic picture represented by the garden of Eden, a character appears who will be the symbol of temptation: the serpent, this character who seduces. The snake is an insidious animal: it moves slowly, slithering along the ground, and sometimes you do not even notice its presence – it is silent – because it manages to camouflage itself well in its environment, and above all, this is dangerous. When it begins to converse with Adam and Eve, it shows that it is also a refined dialectician. It begins as one does with wicked gossip, with a malicious question. He says, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'" (Gen 3:1). The phrase is false: in reality, God offered man and woman all the fruits of the garden, apart from those of a specific tree: the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This prohibition is not intended to forbid man the use of reason, as is sometimes misinterpreted, but is a measure of wisdom. As if to say: recognize your limit, do not feel you are the master of everything, because pride is the beginning of all evil. And so, the story tells us that God establishes the progenitors as lords and guardians of creation, but wants to

preserve them from the presumption of omnipotence, of making themselves masters of good and evil, which is a temptation – a bad temptation, even now. This is the most dangerous pitfall for the human heart.

As we know, Adam and Eve do not manage to resist the temptation of the serpent. The idea of a God who is not so good, who wanted to keep them in subjection, who wanted to keep them in his submission, insinuated itself into their minds: hence the collapse of everything. With these accounts, the Bible explains to us that evil does not begin in man in a clamorous way, when an act is already manifest, but the evil begins much earlier, when one begins to fantasize about it, to nurse it in the imagination, thoughts, and ends up being ensnared by its enticements. The murder of Able did not begin with a thrown stone, but with the grudge that Cain wickedly held, turning it into a monster within him. In this case too, God's recommendations are worthless. One must never dialogue, brothers and sisters, with the devil. Never! You should never argue. Jesus never dialogued with the devil; He cast him out. And when in the wilderness, [with] the temptations, He did not respond with dialogue; He simply responded with the words of Holy Scripture, with the Word of God. Be careful: the devil is a seducer. Never dialogue with him, because he is smarter than all of us and he will make us pay for it. When temptation comes, never dialogue. Close the door, close the window, close your heart. And so, we defend ourselves against this seduction, because the devil is astute, intelligent. He tried to tempt Jesus with quotes from the Bible! He was a great theologian there. With the devil you do not dialogue. Do you understand this? Be careful. We must not converse with the devil, and we must not entertain ourselves with temptation. There is no dialogue. Temptation comes, we close the door. We guard our heart.

And that is why we do not converse with the devil. This is the recommendation – guard the heart – that we find in various fathers, saints: guard the heart. Guard the heart. And we must ask for this grace of learning to guard the heart. It is a form of wisdom, how to guard the heart. May the Lord help us [in] this work. But he who guards his heart, guards a treasure. Brothers and sisters, let us learn to guard the heart. Thank you.

2. CATECHESIS. THE GRECCIO NATIVITY, SCHOOL OF SIMPLICITY AND JOY

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Eight hundred years ago, at Christmas in 1223, Saint Francis organized the living Nativity scene in Greccio. While Nativity scenes are being prepared or completed in homes and other places, it is good for us to rediscover their origins. How did the crib come about? What was Saint Francis' intention? He said: "I want to depict the Child born in Bethlehem, and in some way see with the eyes of the body the hardships in which He found Himself for want of the things necessary for an infant, how He was laid in a manger and how He lay on the straw between the ox and the donkey" (cf. Tommaso da Celano, *Vita prima*, xxx, 84: FF 468). Francis does not want to create a beautiful work of art, but rather to arouse amazement through the Nativity scene, at the extreme humility of the Lord, at the hardships he suffered in the poor grotto of Bethlehem for love of us. In fact, the biographer of the Saint of Assisi notes, "In that moving scene, evangelical simplicity shines forth, poverty is praised, humility is related. And Greccio has become like a new Bethlehem" (ibid., 85). I've emphasized one word, "amazement". And this is important. If we Christians look at the crib as a beautiful thing, as something historical, even religious, and pray, this is not enough. Before the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, before the birth of Jesus, we need this religious attitude of amazement. If in the face of the mysteries, I do not come to this amazement, my faith is simply superficial, a "computational faith". Do not forget this.

And one characteristic of the Nativity scene [is that it] was conceived as a school of simplicity [Translator's note: "sobrietà", literally, "sobriety"]. And this has a great deal to say to us. In fact, the risk of losing sight of what counts in life is great today. Paradoxically, it increases precisely at Christmas — the mentality of Christmas changes: [we are] immersed in a consumerism that corrodes its meaning. The consumerism of Christmas. It is true that you want to give presents, that's fine. That is one way, but that frenzy of shopping that draws the attention elsewhere, and that sobriety of Christmas is lost. Let us look at the crib — that awe before the crib. Sometimes there is no inner space for astonishment, but only for organising

parties, for having parties. And the Nativity scene was created to bring us back to what matters: to God who comes to dwell among us. This is why it is important to look at the Nativity scene, because it helps us understand what matters and also the social relationships of Jesus at that time, the family, Joseph and Mary, and loved ones, the shepherds. People before things. And we often put things ahead of people. This doesn't work. In addition to sobriety, which makes us see, the Nativity scene of Greccio also speaks of joy because joy is different from having fun. But having fun is not a bad thing if it is done on the right path. It is not a bad thing; it is a human thing. But joy is deeper still. More human. And sometimes there is a temptation to have fun without joy; to have fun by making noise, but there is no joy. It is a bit like the figure of the clown, who laughs and laughs and makes people laugh, but the heart is sad. Joy is the root of good Christmas fun.

And about sobriety, the chronicle from back in the day says, "And the day of gladness comes, the time of rejoicing! [...] Francis [...] is radiant [...]. The people flocked and rejoiced with a joy they had never tasted before [...]. Everyone returned home full of ineffable joy" (*Vita prima*, XXX, 85-86: FF 469-470). Sobriety, amazement, leads you to joy, true joy, not artificial joy.

But where did this Christmas joy come from? Certainly not from having brought home presents or having experienced lavish celebrations. No, it was the joy that overflows from the heart when one tangibly touches the nearness of Jesus, the tenderness of God, who does not leave us alone, but consoles us [translator's note: stands with (con) those who are alone (soli)]. Closeness, tenderness, and compassion are the three attitudes of God. And looking at the Nativity scene, praying before the Nativity scene, we can experience these things of the Lord that help us in everyday life. Dear brothers and sisters, the Nativity scene is like a small well from which to draw the nearness of God, the source of hope and joy. The Nativity scene is like a living Gospel, a domestic Gospel. Like the well in the Bible, it is the place of encounter where we bring to Jesus the expectations and worries of life, just as the shepherds of Bethlehem and the people of Greccio did. Bringing to Jesus the expectations and the worries of life.

Dates & Events to Remember

01. Mary the Mother of God (S)
02. Sts. Basil the great and Gregory Nazianzen (M)
03. The Most Holy name of Jesus (Op. M)
07. The Epiphany of The Lord (F)
08. The Baptism of the Lord (F)
13. St Hilary, Bp and Dr (Op. M)
16. St Joseph Vaz (M)



17. St Anthony, Abbot (M)
22. St Vincent, Dn & Mrtr (Op. M)
24. St Francis de Sales (Op. M)
25. The Conversion of St Paul (F)
27. Sts. Timothy and Titus (M)
31. St John Bosco (M)

Happy Birthday Dear Fathers

01. Fr. Pasala Innaiah
01. Fr. Vemparla Vijaya Shekar
02. Fr. Reddimasu Anand Rao
06. Fr. Pamiseti Praveen Kumar
06. Fr. Vedamuthu Kulandai Swamy



15. Fr. Pidikirala Prabhudas
18. Fr. Madanu Ajith Kumar
26. Fr. Chinnabathini Jojappa
28. Fr. Vaddamalla Vinod Kumar

Happy Ordination day Dear Fathers

02. Fr. Kata Rajulu
02. Fr. Marneni Arogyam
13. Fr. M. H. Wilson Davis

Necrology



02. Fr. Christie Daniel
08. Msgr. Kambam Joseph
11. Fr. George Parathiparambil
12. Fr. Francis Perez
15. Fr. Marneni Maraiah
17. Fr. Allam Marreddy
27. Most Rev. Alfred Fernandez

MAY ALL THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD, REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

Local news items, which might be of interest to the Archdiocese may be addressed to :

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**CHRISTMAS VIGIL MASS AT ST. MARY'S BASILICA ON
24TH DECEMBER, 2023 @ SECUNDERABAD.**



FAMILY APOSTOLATE
-ARCHDIOCESE OF HYDERABAD-

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE 2024 SCHEDULE

JANUARY		13 - 14
FEBRUARY		17 WORLD MARRIAGE DAY
MARCH		09 - 10
APRIL		13 - 14
JUNE		08 - 09
JULY		13 - 14
AUGUST		10 - 11
OCTOBER		12 - 13
NOVEMBER		09 - 10
DECEMBER		14 - 15

Please note: There will be no MPC in the months of February, May & September

➤Candidates should register online by uploading their Parish Priest letter, 1 passport size photo and snap shot of registration payment of Rs. 1,000/- using QR code available in the online registration form. Online registration form will be provided every month that there is a MPC Session three weeks in advance.

➤For any further details contact: 9490941460 / 7207710473

**FOR TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST AND TO DIE IS GAIN
PHILIPPIANS 1:21**



ST. PAUL-CONVERSION