

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KARWAR

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

GREETINGS FROM BISHOP DEREK

CONSECRATION OF THE NEW BISHOP OF KARWAR

Bishop-elect of Karwar, Msgr. Duming Dias, will be consecrated in Karwar on April 9, 2024. The invitation for the occasion as well as more information in this regard, such as time and venue, will be sent to all of you in due course of time.

At a meeting held in Puneeth Sadan on January 24, 2024, plans for the Episcopal Consecration were made and various committees were formed. I request all those who head these committees to send in the requested information within the stipulated time to Rev. Fr. Valerian Sequeira with a copy to me. It is sufficient if you send these through e-mail or WhatsApp. A new WhatsApp group – NBCC-KARWAR 2024 – has been created for the purpose.

CCBI AND CBCI PLENARY ASSEMBLIES

The one-day CCBI Plenary Assembly will be held in St. John's Medical College Campus, Bengaluru on January 30, 2024 and CBCI Plenary Assembly at the same venue will be held from January 31, 2024 to February 8, 2024. Varied topics such as the artificial intelligence and the Jubilee 2025 would be discussed at this meeting. I request all to pray for the success of these two meetings.

FEBRUARY 2, 2024 HAS TWO CELEBRATIONS:

- **FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD:** This Feast in which we remember the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple of Jerusalem, puts the image of our Lord Jesus Christ who takes possession of His Temple and fills it with His presence. In this context, the Gospel of Luke presents two elderly figures Simeon and Anna. Both were moved by the Spirit, were able to see the 'salvation' and the 'light for revelation to the Gentiles' in the small child they were holding in their hands and embracing him. This is what we need: to allow the Spirit to move us, to be able to recognize the Lord and His works in the small things of our lives and even in moments of failures and weaknesses and to embrace Jesus Christ with an unshakeable faith. "Even if at times we experience fatigue and weariness, - this too happens - let us do as Simeon and Anna did. They awaited with patience and fidelity of the Lord and did not allow

themselves to be robbed of the joy of the encounter with him. Let us advance to the joy of the encounter” (Pope Francis, *Homily on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord*, 2 February 2022).

- **WORLD DAY OF CONSECRATED LIFE:** We also celebrate the World Day of Consecrated Life on February 2. We can never overstate the importance of the service that the religious render in our parishes and institutions, schools, hospitals and social service centres. It is important that every parish priest, together with the lay faithful, organizes programmes in the parishes to felicitate the religious priests and sisters in their parishes. A Deanery level programme will also certainly be in order. Pope St. John Paul II, who began the observance of this day on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord beautifully compares Mary presenting Christ in the Temple to the religious: “The Virgin appears as a candlestick bearing Christ, the ‘Light of the world’. With Mary, thousands of men and women religious and consecrated lay people throughout the world gather to renew their consecration, holding lighted candles, the expression of their life, burning with faith and love” (*Message for the 7th World Day of Consecrated Life*, 1 February, 2003). I express my sincere appreciation and heartfelt greetings to each of the religious priest and sister, who are serving in our Diocese with zeal and dedication.

WE HAVE 3 CELEBRATIONS ON FEBRUARY 11, 2024

- **HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY 2024:** On 11th February, 2024, we will celebrate Holy Childhood Day in our parishes and institutions. The Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood was started in the year 1843 and is now present in over 130 countries. It inspires children “to pray, to evangelize and to help other children worldwide.” The founder of this society Bishop Charles de Forbin- Janson, used to say “pray one Hail Mary a day and contribute one small coin a month.” It is very important to inculcate in our children, such attitudes of helping others through prayer and personal contributions. In the recent past, the young clergy of the Diocese have done a very good job by organizing altar servers’ gatherings in different places, in which the theme was inspired by an old motto of the Holy Childhood Society: “*I am a friend of Jesus; and I make friends for Jesus.*” These events really have had a favourable impact on our children. I believe that now it is time to build on this at the parish level. I encourage each parish priest to creatively plan and celebrate this day, so that our children may be infused with the values of ‘prayer, witness, sacrifice’. Taking advantage of the Lenten season, special retreats could also be organized for the children. All these activities will instill in the children the fervour for the religious life.
- **WORLD DAY OF THE SICK – 11 FEBRUARY:** The 32nd World Day of the Sick will be observed on 11 February, the *Memoria* of Our Lady of Lourdes. The theme that Pope Francis has chosen for this ‘awareness day’ this year is: “It is not good that man should be alone. Healing the Sick by Healing Relationships.” Pope Francis says that, communion with others is so deeply rooted in human hearts and this is felt more incisively when a person is faced with some serious illness. Even in developed nations, people who are old are often abandoned, or live solitary lives in homes away from their own families. Pope Francis exhorts us all: “Brothers and sisters, the first form of care needed in any illness is compassionate and loving closeness. To care for the sick thus means above all to care for their relationships, all of them: with God,

with others – family members, friends, healthcare workers – with creation and with themselves. Can this be done? Yes, it can be done and all of us are called to ensure that it happens. Let us look to the icon of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:25-37), to his ability to slow down and draw near to another person, to the tender love with which he cares for the wounds of a suffering brother.” At this juncture, I also extend my warm greetings and wishes to all the sisters and staff who work in our Catholic Hospitals. The service they render to the poorest of the poor in the society is invaluable and certainly comparable to the model of the Good Samaritan, who is Christ Himself. May God bless them and assist them in their service.

- **WORLD MARRIAGE DAY – 11 FEBRUARY, 2024:** 11 February is also celebrated as the World Marriage Day, to proclaim the value of Marriage, as permanent, faithful and fruitful bond, not just to spouses and children, but all families, the Church, and the whole world. Pope Francis says - Marriage is a “Call to the Joy of Love... And Joy of the Church.”

I request all to celebrate this day in each of the parishes in a fitting way, by giving the married couple a prominent place during the liturgy and even renewing the promises of marriage. The liturgy prepared for the purpose will be sent to you in due course of time

SEASON OF LENT

This year, on the 14th of February, we begin the season of Lent, which will culminate with the Solemn Celebration of the Paschal Triduum from March 28 to 31. Lent is not the painful season of renouncing or fasting from everything that one holds dear, but rather, it is the season of joyful preparation for the celebration of the Paschal Mystery of the Lord. Closely connected to the Paschal Mystery is the Sacrament of Baptism. In Lent, the baptized are called to renew their baptismal commitment as the catechumens begin their final preparations to be baptized through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, a period of learning and discernment for individuals who have declared their desire to become Catholics. In the parishes, this is a season to organize good Lenten retreats for the people, so that the whole parish can begin the preparation as a single body.

Another pressing task is to rekindle the importance and the necessity of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation in the minds of the faithful. Each parish priest should make the best possible arrangements to ensure that all the parishioners approach the sacrament with a proper attitude during the Easter Season. A write up on the sacrament of reconciliation is printed in the February issue of *Christa Prakash* which may be useful for you.

ASH WEDNESDAY – 14 FEBRUARY

The season of Lent is inaugurated on the Ash Wednesday with the solemn reminder to “Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return” and, therefore, the absolute need to “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” (*Blessing and Distribution of Ashes*, Ash Wednesday). Through the Gospel reading of the day, the Church entrusts to all the people of God, the spiritual weapons of Fasting, Prayer and Almsgiving. St. Augustine himself said that “fasting and almsgiving are the two wings of prayer”. At the same time, it is important to remember that the real centre of these weapons is the ‘Love of God and the love of the neighbour.’ Fasting is to show that we are to love God more than our securities – food, job, studies, affections; prayer to show that we are to love God more than all ‘our ideas’ about our life; almsgiving is to show that we love God and our neighbour more than all our riches.

Only in this way love, the real secret, becomes perfect and “Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you” (Mt 6:18). Let us encourage our parishioners to grow deeper in the observance of these spiritual practices, so that they can really benefit from them.

VALENTINES DAY – 14 FEBRUARY

On the same day 14th February, the world goes mad with love – Valentines’ Day. In as much as it is a celebration of human love, it is indeed significant. However, in as much as love has been trivialized, commercialized and reduced sometimes to merely bodily dimensions, it is a call to us to protect our youngsters and children from over exposure to such notions. We must not underestimate the extent to which some toxic notions about the body and human love enter into the minds of our children through social media and internet. Certain western aberrations, which seemed far from Indian culture now seem to be very prevalent. All this certainly has an effect on marriages too. Many of our Catholic youngsters find it completely acceptable to fall in love and get married to people of other Christian denominations and even other faiths. Without making any blanket bans on any such thing and completely respecting each one’s freedom, it is necessary that we catechize our youth about human love and Marriage as the Sacrament of Christ’s love for His Church (cf. Eph 5:21-33), and to help them put the teachings of the Church about this Sacrament in their decision making. In the current atmosphere, where anti-Christian values are promoted aggressively in the name of liberal ideologies, failure to catechize and accompany our youth will have adverse effects on both marriage and the vocations to priestly and religious life.

Brother Xavier Braggs Celebrates 75th Birthday

Brother Xavier Braggs celebrates his 75th Birthday on February 12, 2024. At this juncture I would like to recall the unstinted service rendered by him to the diocese both in the pastoral field, especially in the Haliyal Deanery and then again as the farm in charge of both, at Tellikere and Chipagi. May God give him good health to carry on his life in *Sandhya Vandan*.

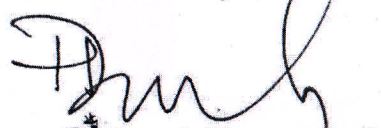
Ordination to Priesthood of Deacon Rohan Gonsalves 12 February, 2024

Dn. Rohan Gonsalves will be ordained priest on 12 February, 2024 in St. Sebastian Parish in Kasarkod. He hails from Kasarkod and did his diaconate ministry in St. Joseph’s Church, Sadashivgad.

I request all the priests of the diocese to attend the ordination and welcome him to the presbyterium of the diocese.

Wishing you all a fruitful season of Lent,

Yours fraternally in Christ,


(✠ Derek Fernandes)
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Karwar

Reminder:

Monthly recollection for the clergy will be held on 7th and 8th February, 2024 in Puneeth Sadan, Shirwad.