

Circular No. 02/2019

22nd Mar. 2019

Dear Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

Greetings from Bishop's House, Balasore!

The sacred season of Lent is on. As seasons change in nature, affecting the entire creation around us, change of liturgical seasons should have effects on our lives too. However there is a difference. Seasons change regardless of the receptivity from the part of the earth. Rains, heat and cold can change and renew the face of the earth. Though the changes in the liturgical seasons are designed for renewal and purification of our lives, such renewals will not take place unless positively desired by us. The springtime of Easter Season in our lives can be ushered in only if we go through the winter of Lent Season.

I. DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF MSGR. JACOB

On the 13th of March, 12 representatives from our Diocese (2 bishops and 10 priests) were present in Kerala for the commemoration of the 25th death anniversary of Msgr. Jacob Vadakeveetil, C.M. The programme was jointly organized by our Diocese as well as by Vadakeveetil family from Alleppey, and Thundiyl family from Kainakary. The memorial Mass was celebrated in the parish where Msgr. Jacob is laid to rest, officiated by Most Rev. Mar Joseph Perumthottam, the Archbishop of Changanacherry. Most Rev. Stephen Athipozhiyil, the Bishop of Alleppey, also came over for the Office of Dead, before the Mass. Besides the family members, a large number of Priests and Sisters, some of whom were collaborators with Msgr. Jacob during the 'Prefecture days', were present on the occasion. The whole event was a fitting tribute to the 'Founding Father' of our Diocese.

On the 15th of March, which happens to be the death anniversary of Msgr. Jacob, we had a memorial Mass in our Cathedral Church, followed by the Office of the Dead in the cemetery. Fathers and Sisters from the neighbouring communities of Balasore were present on the occasion.

II. OROSA (Odisha Regional Organization for Social Action)

After many years of heading the Regional Organization, Fr. Ajay Singh is handing over the baton of leadership to Fr. John Kerketta of Sambalpur Diocese. The change of leadership will be made formally effective on the 1st of April. We thank Fr. Ajay for his service to the Region in the field of social work, and wish Fr. John Kerketta all the best in his new assignment for the Region.

III. OCBC DEPUTY SECRETARY

The Odisha Catholic Bishops' Council (OCBC) is pleased to have Fr. Prasana Singh of the Archdiocese of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar as its next Deputy Secretary. He will assume his assignment on the 1st of April. While we wish him all the best, we thank the outgoing Secretary, Fr. Purushottam Nayak, for his service.

IV. THE OCBC CENTRE

The newly constructed OCBC Centre is getting ready to be functional. After years of delays, hurdles and hiccups, two floors of the building have been made functional, leaving one more floor to be completed. It might be good to note here that it was Fr. Roy Kochupurackal, the then Deputy Secretary of the OCBC, who was instrumental in the purchase of the land as well as the starting of the construction of the Centre.

The Centre is in a place called Jamukoli, in the outskirts of the city of Bhubaneswar, about 12 kilometres from the airport. The Secretariat of the OCBC as well as OROSA offices are to occupy rooms in the Centre, while a few other regional secretariats would come in later.

V. EXCELLENT ACADEMY

The OCBC has given green signal to a regional level venture to train and coach the bright and promising youth of our Dioceses for higher posts in the administration of society. The idea is to facilitate our youth to have access to governance apparatus and policy making for growth and empowerment of the margins: Adivasi, Dalit and Minorities. Christened as 'Excellent Academy', the training centre hopes to coach our marginalized aspirants to join the government to create space and mechanism for the protection of minorities.

Initially the 'Excellent Academy' will start functioning from the newly constructed OCBC Centre, until it finds its own building in the city of Bhubaneswar. Bishop Sarat Chandra Nayak and Fr. Ajay Singh have been entrusted with the task of working out the details, which will be made known to the Region in the coming months.

VI. SR. TERESA NAYAK, DC

Sr. Teresa Nayak, DC, who is a member of the DC community at Kuruda, Balasore, has been ailing for some weeks now and is presently being cared for in Marillac Mercy Home, the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity, in Berhampur. We hope and pray that the Good Lord will lend her His healing touch and help her to be active again, as she always was.

VII. SILBERIUS HEMBROM

After a successful surgery and subsequent radiation therapy in Cuttack, Fr. Siberius Hembrom is convalescing in the presbytery in Balasore. We pray for his speedy recovery.

VIII. GENERAL ELECTIONS

India is already in the election mode. From April 11th to May 19th the country will be going through the gigantic process of electing the members of the Parliament, and in the case of Odisha, also the members of the Legislative Assembly. In the districts coming under our Diocese, the elections are on 23rd April (in Keonjhar District) and on 29th April (in Balasore, Bhadrak and Mayurbhanj Districts).

In view of the elections, Oswald Cardinal Gracias, the President of the CBCI, writes in his pastoral letter to the Bishops on the 13th of March:

“We remind ourselves first of all our duty to exercise our vote. Every citizen above 18 years has the right to vote, but voting also is a sacred obligation we owe to our country. All our Parish Priests are urged to impress on our people this obligation. Every single vote does count. Hence we owe to ourselves, to our children and to our country to fulfill this sacred duty and get involved in bettering the direction of our nation.

“I urge every community to pray and to discern in prayer what is best for our country. We have to vote judiciously. The Catholic Church hopes that the general elections will give us leaders who listen to the people, understand their anxieties and their needs, and respond effectively.

“We need leaders in India who understand that authority is service and therefore

- 1. work for an economy that seeks especially to help the poor and underprivileged, protecting their dignity, working for their uplift and enabling them to play a role in nation building*
- 2. ensure a totally safe environment for all people, especially women and children*
- 3. safeguard the rights of tribals over land, water and forests*
- 4. take particular care of the Dalits and ensure they are not discriminated against, granting equal rights to all Dalits*
- 5. promote communal harmony and spirit of national integration through inter-religious dialogue and understanding*
- 6. take steps to protect environment, preserving the riches of nature for future generations”.*

Cardinal Gracias also asks us to pray ardently for a good government.

IX. MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE

Fr. Anil Kullu, the Diocesan Secretary for Marriage and Family Commission, informs us that the next ‘Marriage Preparation Course’ will be held at our Pastoral Centre, Kuruda, from the 1st till the 6th of April.

X. CHRISM MASS 2019

This year our Chrism Mass will be celebrated in the Cathedral Church on the 11th of April (Thursday before the Holy Week) at 5 pm. The Mass will be preceded by a spiritual

recollection for priests, beginning at **9.30 am**, conducted by Fr. Jacob Arakkal CMF, the Provincial Superior of the Claretians of Bangalore Province.

As no separate invitation would be sent, men and women of Consecrated Life in the Diocese are requested to take this information as an invitation to participate in the Chrism Mass.

I would greatly appreciate if a few from our laity, especially from the nearby parishes, could be brought to participate in the Chrism Mass. It would be an occasion for them to be witnesses of the themes of 'Oneness of Priesthood' and the union of the Clergy with the Bishop, very beautifully brought about by the Church in the Liturgy of the day.

XI. MY PROGRAMME

March

18	Joda	Parish Pastoral Visit
19	Rangiam	Parish Feast
20	Keutinimari	Karunalaya Hostel Day
23	Kuruda	Seminary Shrine feast (evening)
24	Amarda	Sunday Mass
25	Kharagpur	Incarnation feast, DC Sisters
26	Balasore	School Meeting

April

01	Bhubaneswar	OROSA Programme
06	Kuruda	Marriage Preparation Mass
11	Balasore	Chrism Mass Day
14	Balasore	Palm Sunday
18	Balasore	Maundy Thursday
19	Balasore	Good Friday
20-21	Balasore	Easter Vigil & Sunday
23	Sanghabhanga	Convent programme
30-	Kerala and Bangalore	

With Regards & Blessings

+Simon Kaipuram, CM
Bishop of Balasore