



## TIME OF PRAYER



To have regular periods of time set apart for prayer is important if we want to cultivate the contemplative prayer. The CCC 2697 gets right to the point: “We cannot pray *at all times*, if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it. These are special times of Christian prayer, both in intensity and duration.”

1. Beginning the time of Prayer-recollection: How the time of prayer begins is crucial. All too often people start to speak interiorly. Or they allow their thoughts to follow whatever passes through their minds. Neither thing is conducive to the close personal relationship that is prayer’s whole purpose.

It is essential to start to “recollect oneself,” that is, to become aware of whom one is speaking with. St. Teresa of Avila offers this comparison: If we had an audience with the king, we would carefully consider what we were going to say to him (WP 22, 1). But we come before the King of Heaven, how little we consider in whose presence we find ourselves!

The catechism describes the beginning of the prayer like this: “We *gather up* the heart, recollect our whole being under the prompting of the Holy Spirit,

abide in the dwelling place of the Lord which we are, awaken our faith in order to enter into the presence of him who awaits us” (CCC 2711).

Much distraction comes to us because of the skipping of this first step, recollection, and speaking to God as if he were far away. Recollection means becoming conscious that God is present. I am now in his presence - the presence of the triune God, who loves me. I am not just “facing God” to ask for things and thank Him. I am invited, so to speak, to take my place in the Trinity, through Jesus Christ, through the Beloved Son of God, and in the Holy Spirit. Recollection means entering by an act of faith into the spiritual reality of divine sonship (divine filiation), which is granted to us through baptism. No matter how tired or distracted are we, it is always possible to enter through a conscious act of faith into inner companionship with God.

To fully become part of this relationship of love requires the help of the Holy Spirit. It is above all through him that the act of faith comes alive. The Spirit calls out within us, “Abba Father” (Rom 8, 15). Every time that we begin to pray to Jesus it is the Holy Spirit who draws

us on the way of prayer by his prevenient grace (CCC2670). Recollection is easier if we can pray before the Blessed Sacrament and consider the presence of the Lord there. But it is also possible to pray all by oneself in a silent, convenient place that is available within one's premises.

2. **Kinds of Prayer:** Prayer is love, and love can never be reduced to a system. The teachings of the fathers and saints on prayer cannot be brought under one single system, since the experiences they describe are too personally coloured. To be sure there are as many paths of prayer as there are persons who pray (CCC 2672). The Lord leads all persons by paths and in ways pleasing to him (CCC 2699). Thus the most important lesson in regard to the life of prayer is to let oneself be led by the Holy Spirit. However the common experiences of the saints, like certain developments, difficulties can help us to learn how to pray. The CCC speaks of "three major expressions of prayer": vocal, meditative and contemplative (CCC 2699).
  - a) **Vocal Prayer:** It refers to everything that can be formulated in words: spoken or silent requests, thanks, praise. We practice it both in personal and communal prayer. It is not to be misunderstood as a "beginner's method" that is later left behind in favour of meditative or contemplative prayer. The three major expressions of prayer work together. The spirit of vocal prayer is

"that the heart should be present to him to whom we are speaking" One of the desert Fathers said: "teach your mouth to speak what is in your heart." The vocal prayer requires one to struggle to grasp the meaning of what is being prayed or sung and to bring it before God as the prayer of one's heart. The intellect is one dimension but only one. Through intellect we understand. More than this, prayer is an act of the will. But in the biblical sense the heart refers to both: it is the deepest core of the human person, illumined by the intellect and moved by the will. It is useless to say something, or sing some catchy melody without confirming this act of self-giving with our will.

Vocal prayer suits our human nature made up as it is of body and of soul. We express our prayer in a bodily manner, in words and at times also in gestures. Spoken, the prayer fills our intellect, our feelings, our imagination and our body. If we never prayed out loud, prayer would be in some way weakened. There is an interaction between soul and body, and praying bodily strengthens the soul. For this reason, vocal prayer is especially important in difficult times—times of physical exhaustion, sickness, or spiritual dryness. In those moments only vocal prayer is all possible. Thérèse of Lisieux gives us the example that in moments of spiritual dryness she simply said with her whole heart the "Our Father." The monk Siloan advises: "When you want to pray with your heart, but cannot do this, say the prayer with

your lips and keep your spirit fastened to the words of the prayer. The Lord will in time give you the intimacy of prayer.” The Jesus prayer, or the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, “Lord make me an instrument of your peace” or the prayer of Charles de Foucauld, “Father I abandon myself into your hands” or that of our Father Montfort “Jesus living in Mary, come and live in me”, “I am all yours, and all that I have is yours.” We need vocal prayer. It nourishes and strengthens the spirit. But it needs to be fleshed out through meditation and inner prayer. Otherwise it remains external and without great effect on life. However, many people have made a great progress just being faithful to vocal prayer. Teresa of Avila treats this matter in the *Way of Perfection*. Vocal prayer can lead us to heights of contemplation, provided that we think about what we’re saying. She says that reciting vocal prayers without thinking is useless because it is, in a way, insulting to God. It is talking to God without thinking about what I am saying as if there were some magic in the words. But if we do it meaningfully, that is, if we think about what we’re saying, then vocal prayer can lead us all to the heights of contemplation.

- b) **Meditative Prayer:** Meditation is above all a quest. The human mind seeks to understand the why and how of Christian life in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain and so we use books: the Scripture, Icons, liturgical texts, writings of the fathers,

spiritual writers etc. One thinks of a verse from Scripture or a mystery in the life of Jesus or a particular aspect of faith. Sometimes it can be very dry, purely an effort of the mind. Other times it is experienced as a gift: one suddenly sees the passage of the Scripture in a new light, with previously unperceived depth. Or suddenly one grasps a sentence of the creed inwardly. If understood more deeply, a truth of faith moves us more interiorly. It stirs our feelings and our will and inflames our love for God. Meditation is thus not only a matter of growing in the understanding, but also of increasing in love. For example St. Ignatius of Loyola encouraged the retreatant to ponder and test what the Gospel tells us. Only thus the word of God reach not only the understanding but also the heart, and finally move the will. That is the goal of meditation: to have an effect on the decisions of the will, so that we may be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (cf. James 1, 22). Here the faculties of imagination, intellect and will are at work. To explain this Edith Stein uses the example of meditating on the mystery of the birth of Jesus: The imagination keeps a person in the cave of Bethlehem, shows him the child in the crib, his parents and shepherds, the Magi. The intellect considers the greatness of the divine mercy, the mind is taken by love and gratitude and the will makes resolutions to make itself more worthy of God’s love. In this way meditation requires all the powers of the soul, and, with real

persistence, it gradually changes the whole person (Edith Stein, *Das Kreuz wie eine Krone tragen*, Zürich, 1997, 105). For example the vocal prayer like Angelus attains its full depth only when it is done meditatively. It is not only the regular books we read but also the great book of creation, and that of history the page on which the ‘today’ of God is written (CCC 2705).

God speaks to me through creation, through people I live with, through the events I experience. It is not necessarily a distraction from meditation to look at my day—at situations that arise, or tasks that lie before me. Linger over these things is a danger of course. But when gazing at them, I refer them to the Lord, that is meditative prayer in the best sense. “Lord what did you want me to tell me from this? What is your will in this situation? What should I do? In prayer, especially, the prayer of someone living an active life, there will normally be times to look at one’s life along with our Lord in order to see it as he does and in relation to him. This is necessary so that the Holy Spirit can enlighten and guide us in the decisions of everyday life, both great and small. Meditation will help us to develop this desire for the Lord and love him deeply. Unless we meditate regularly, we come to resemble the three first kinds of soil in the parable of the sower (Mark 4, 1-12; CCC 2707): soil by the way side where birds at the seed, rocky soil where the seeds couldn’t put down roots, and soil filled with weeds that choked the seeds.

Meditation leads the prayer into the deep. In the depths we will discover the knowledge of the love of Jesus and finally to have union with him. In other words it is ‘interior prayer’.

- c) **Interior Prayer (*Contemplation*):** It is the high point of prayer as a whole (CCC 2709-2719). St. Teresa of Avila calls it Mental Prayer. It is nothing but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with him who, we know, loves us (*Life*, 8, 5). St. Francis de Sales speaks about this interior prayer in similar terms. It is a conversation in which the soul amorously entertains herself with God concerning his most amiable goodness, to unite and join herself thereto (*Treatise on the Love of God*, Bk. 6, Ch. 1, art. 6). This meeting is made up of many interior moments. It is a dialogue of silence. Eyes speak to eyes, heart to heart, none understands what passes except the sacred lovers who speak to one another. This kind of quiet and internal prayer is “contemplative prayer” in a narrower sense. In this inner prayer we can still meditate but its essence is simply “gazing upon Jesus.” Contemplation is a “gaze of faith” fixed on Jesus. I look at him, and he looks at me” (Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, VI.3.1). Vocal prayer also has also a role in interior prayer, but in a completely new, much deeper way: “Words in this kind of prayer are not speeches; they are like kindling that feeds the fire of love” (CCC 2717).

- Paths of Interior Prayer: According to St. Francis de Sales, meditation serves “to gather the love of God, but having gathered it we contemplate God, and are attentive to his goodness, by the reason of the sweetness which love makes us find in it. The desire we have to obtain divine love makes us meditate, but love obtained makes us contemplate (*Treatise on the Love of God*, VI.3.1). Meditation is, therefore, a path to contemplation.
- To attain unto contemplation we stand ordinarily in need of hearing the word of God, of having spiritual discourse and conference with others . . . of reading, praying, meditating, singing canticles, conceiving good thoughts; holy contemplation being the end and aim of all these exercises (*Treatise on the Love of God*, VI.6.5).
- Humanly speaking, meditation corresponds to the process by which two people get acquainted, contemplation to their simply being together in love. The more deeply people get to know each other, the sooner they will reach this stage of simple unity. It may also be described in the following way, as did Edith Stein.

The spirit (intellect and heart) become intimate through continuing engagement with God. He knows him and loves Him. This knowledge and love become part of his being. Their relationship is like an old friendship knowing one another thoroughly but with deep love and respect. Every time

they come together there is a new wakefulness and growth of love, even perhaps growth of knowledge of some detail. As soon as the person begins to pray, one is already with God and one rests in loving abandonment in his presence. One’s silence is more attractive to him than many words (*Kreuzeswissenschaft*, pp. 96-97).

- Usually, the stages are: through vocal prayer to meditation, then on to contemplative prayer. Through meditation a state of loving recognition is attained. The soul remains now in quiet, peaceful, loving self-surrender in the presence of God. As a fruit of meditation this kind of inner prayer is also called “acquired contemplation.” At this point God can give the interior prayer directly to a person. Or he can do deal with a soul in the way He wants: He can also grant a shadowy, loving awareness of himself even without any preliminary practice of meditation. He can even suddenly place (the soul) in a state of contemplation and of love, and pour contemplation into it. Then a person feels himself suddenly “seized by the tangible presence of God” (*Treatise on the Love of God*, VI.7.1).

**Contemplative Prayer as a gift:** Contemplative prayer cannot be produced by us. It is given as a gift. It is not in our power to have it when we please and it does not depend on our efforts but on God in his freedom, and it is a grace to the person who receives it. Vocal prayer and meditation supply the wood that will receive the flame

of the Holy Spirit. The spark that ignites the heart for interior prayer is a gift of God, a grace, which human prayer cannot force, but only request. When a person continues to meditate on the word of God, and speaks to him and listens to him with a loving reception and rests in the tangible presence of God's love, this is already a gift of God. In such attitude there will enter a new factor called deep interior silence both of words and of thoughts. This silence is a pure receptivity and thereby giving oneself to God. It is in this silence God begins to communicate himself to the soul without hindrance. We surrender ourselves to the action of the Holy Spirit who continues to pray within us (Rom 8, 26), the more we let him do that, the deeper our prayer becomes. St. Francis de Sales and St. Teresa of Avila calls it "the prayer of the quiet." Here the soul is inwardly recollected in God. In these moments the persons are advised to remain in filial confidence even if one does not quite understand the moment clearly. This is the presence of God in which our natural faculties do not bring us any satisfaction because the presence is given to us not through them but as a sheer gift of God.

**Interior prayer in the dynamism of love:**

Many people who pray and have reached this state describe the interior prayer not as "resting" or "being silent" but as moment of love, as jubilation, and dance. Just as we read in the Psalm: I keep the Lord always before me...Therefore my heart is glad...in your presence there is always the fullness of joy...in your right hand are the pleasures ever more" (Ps 16, 8-12).

Mystics like St. Francis de Sales, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila speak about these deep mystical experiences of union with Christ as "rapture", "ecstasy," "spiritual betrothal," or "spiritual marriage." These are not substantially different from what has been described so far. The difference resides in the strength and duration of the interior union with Christ.

**Mystical Experiences are not a must for holiness:**

God gives these experiences to whomever he wishes and *holiness does not depend upon them*. Holiness is not to be found in the loftiest feelings of love but in poor and humble submission and abandonment to the will of the Father (CCC2712). Perfect prayer therefore, is not the highest "states of prayer" but prayer that is complete self-surrender to God's will. That includes accepting one's own poverty and ineptitude in prayer.

It is normal to yearn for prayer in which we feel God's love. But while longing for it, we should *not want to force it*. We read in the Psalm: As the eyes of the servants look to the hands of their Master...so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he have mercy upon us" (Ps 123, 2). It is the Lord himself who will grant us this grace of prayer. Until then we wait in humility and total self-surrender and openness. This may never happen also in our life time to most people.



+ Thelagathoti J. Raja Rao, S.M.M.  
Bishop of Vijayawada

## BISHOP'S ENGAGEMENTS – OCTOBER 2017

Date	Day	Programme
01	Sunday	: Mass at Peddautapally, 10.00 a.m.
02	Monday	: I.C.M. Provincial and Council 4.00 p.m.
04	Wednesday	: Muchinthala, 5.30 p.m. Blessing of Presbytery followed by Mass
06	Friday	: Jami Dintakuru, Ventrapragada parish, Mass 6.00 p.m.
07	Saturday	: Out of station
08	Sunday	: Holy Mass, St. Paul's Cathedral, 6.30 a.m.
9-13		: Senior Clergy Retreat: Bishop's House
16	Monday	: Recollection for Clergy: Diocese of Guntur .
17	Tuesday	: Steering Committee, Meeting, Bharathamitram, Secunderabad
21	Saturday	: Leaving for Bangalore, 7.45 a.m.
22-27		: Retreat at St. Joseph Vaz Spiritual Renewal Centre, Old Goa
29	Sunday	: General Councillor, Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit; First Anniversary of the new Church, Gannavaram 6.00 p.m.
30	Monday	: 10.00 a.m. Vestition, FCC Sisters; 6.00 p.m. Gunadala Parish Feast.
31	Tuesday	: Feast of the Holy Rosary, 6.00 p.m., Chatrai.

### • Annual Retreats:

As has already been intimated, the Annual Retreats for the pastoral clergy of the diocese will be held in the months of October and November. Senior Clergy Retreat will be held 9-13 October animated by Fr. Amalanathan SJ, Director of Ananda Jyothi Retreat Centre, Nambur. The Junior Clergy Retreat will be held 13-17 November by Fr. P. R. John, SJ, Principal of Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi. Both the Retreats will begin at 9.30 a.m. on the respective Mondays and will conclude with lunch on Fridays. Participation in these Retreats is obligatory for all the pastoral clergy. Express permission of the bishop is required for exemption from attending the Retreats.

### • New ORDO-2018:

As the new Ordo is being prepared, all the priests and the religious are requested to make sure that their personal names, dates of ordinations and the feast days of the congregations are rightly indicated in the Ordo. If anything has to be rectified from the previous Ordos of the diocese or anything to be added newly, please contact: **Rev. Fr. N. David Raju, Coordinator, Diocesan Liturgy Commission, Parish Priest, Kankipadu. Cell no: 9849925526**

## Apostolic Letter in the form of a Motu Proprio “Summa familiae cura”

*Instituting the Pontifical John Paul II Theological Institute for Matrimonial and Family Science, 19.09.2017*

Inspired by his great care for the family, St. John Paul II, following up the Synod of Bishops of 1980 on the family and the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, of 1981, with the Apostolic Constitution *Magnum Matrimonii sacramentum*, conferred stable legal form to the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, working at the Pontifical Lateran University. Since then, it has carried out fruitful work in theological study and pastoral formation both in its central campus in Rome and in its extra-urban Sections, now present in all continents.

More recently, the Church has taken a further Synodal journey, again placing at the centre of attention the situation of marriage and the family, firstly the extraordinary Assembly in 2014 dedicated to “The pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization”, and then in the ordinary Assembly of 2015 on “The vocation and the mission of the family in the Church and in the world”. The climax of this intense journey was the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, published on 19 March 2016.

This Synodal season has led the Church towards a renewed awareness of the Gospel of the family and of the new pastoral

challenges to which the Christian community is called upon to answer. The centrality of the family in the paths of “pastoral conversion”[1] of our communities and of “missionary transformation of the Church”[2] demands that – also at the level of academic formation – in reflection on marriage and on the family the pastoral perspective and attention to the wounds of humanity must never be lacking. If a fruitful examination of pastoral theology cannot be conducted neglecting the special ecclesial profile of the family[3], likewise that same pastoral sensibility must be aware of the valuable contribution of thought and reflection that research, in the deepest and most rigorous way, the truth of the revelation and wisdom of the tradition of faith, in view of its better comprehension at the present time.

“The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church. ... We do well to focus on concrete realities, since ‘the calls and the demands of the Spirit resound in the events of history’, and through these the Church can also be guided to a more profound understanding of the inexhaustible mystery of marriage and the family”.[4]

Anthropological-cultural change, that today influences all aspects of life and requires an analytic and diversified approach, does not permit us to limit ourselves to practices in pastoral ministry and mission that reflect forms and models of the past. We must be

informed and impassioned interpreters of the wisdom of faith in a context in which individuals are less well supported than in the past by social structures, and in their emotional and family life. With the clear purpose of remaining faithful to the teaching of Christ, we must therefore look, with the intellect of love and with wise realism, at the reality of the family today in all its complexity, with its lights and its shadows.[5]

For these reasons I have considered it timely to give a new legal disposition to the John Paul II Institute, so that “the farsighted intuition of Saint John Paul II, who strongly wanted this academic institution, today [may] be better recognized and appreciated in its fruitfulness and timeliness”.[6] Therefore, I have arrived at the deliberation of instituting a Theological Institute for Matrimonial and Family Science, broadening its field of interest, both in relation to the new dimensions of the pastoral task and of the ecclesial mission, and with reference to developments in the human sciences and in anthropological culture in a field so fundamental for the culture of life.

#### **Art. 1**

With the present *Motu Proprio* I institute the Pontifical John Paul II Theological Institute for Matrimonial and Family Science which, linked to the Pontifical Lateran University, succeeds and substitutes the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on the Marriage and Family, established by the Apostolic Constitution

*Magnum Matrimonii sacramentum*, which thus comes to an end. It will therefore be essential that the original inspiration that gave life to the former Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family continue to bear fruit in the broader field of activity of the new Theological Institute, effectively contributing to making it correspond fully to the current demands of the pastoral mission of the Church.

#### **Art. 2**

The new Institute shall constitute, within the range of the Pontifical institutes, an academic centre of reference in the service of the mission of the universal Church, in the field of sciences regarding marriage and the family and with regard to themes connected to the fundamental covenant of the man and the woman for the care of generation and creation.

#### **Art. 3**

The special relationship of the new Theological Institute with the ministry and the teaching of the Holy See will be further enhanced by the privileged relation that it will establish, in forms to be mutually agreed, with the Congregation for Catholic Education, with the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life, and with the Pontifical Academy for Life.

#### **Art. 4**

§ 1. The Pontifical Theological Institute, thus renewed, will adapt its own structures and use the necessary tools – professorships, lecturers, programmes, administrative staff – to carry out the scientific and ecclesial

mission entrusted to it.

§ 2. The academic authorities of the Theological Institute are the Grand Chancellor, the Dean and the Board of the Institute.

§ 3. The Theological Institute has the faculty of conferring *iure proprio* to its students the following academic qualifications: the Doctorate in Matrimonial and Family Sciences; the Master's Degree in Matrimonial and Family Sciences; and the Diploma in Matrimonial and Family Sciences.

**Art. 5**

The provisions made herein shall be furthered and defined in the Statutes, approved by the Holy See. In a special way, the most suitable methods shall be sought to promote cooperation and collaboration, in the activities of teaching and research, between the authorities of the Theological Institute and those of the Pontifical Lateran University.

Pending the approval of the new Statues, the Theological Institute shall be temporarily governed by the statutory regulations currently in effect in the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family, including its structure in the form of Sections and the related norms, to the extent that they are not in conflict with the present *Motu Proprio*.

Everything that I have decreed in this Apostolic Letter issued *Motu Proprio* must be observed in all its parts, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, even if it be worthy of particular mention, and I hereby set forth and I dispose that it be promulgated by publication in the daily newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*, that it enter into force on the day of promulgation, and thereafter be published in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.

*Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, on 8 September, Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the year 2017, the fifth of my Pontifica*



**INTENTION OF THE HOLY FATHER OCTOBER, 2017**

**Workers and the Unemployed**

That all workers may receive respect and protection of their rights, and that the unemployed may receive the opportunity to contribute to the common good.



**POPE'S QUOTES**

“God’s consolation leads to peace”  
“Evangelization is about knowing the human heart”

## COMMUNICATIONS

### **Second Sunday Collections to the Diocese :**

The Senate of Priests of the diocese has resolved that the 2nd Sunday Collection of all the parishes be remitted to the diocese as the monthly contribution from the parishes. With effect from November, 2017, all parishes of the diocese without any exception are requested to send their 2nd Sunday Collections to the Bishop's House. The 2nd Sunday Collection will have to be submitted at the Bishop's House not later than 25th of each month. It is advised that the Parish Priests submit the collections in the Bishop's House in exactly the same cash denominations it is received in the parishes. It is also advised that Parish Priests maintain a Sunday Collection Register in the parishes and make entries of the Sunday Collections with cash denomination in which it is received.

### **Uniform Marriage Fees all over the Diocese :**

It is resolved in the recent Senate of Priests meeting that we have a uniform marriage fee in all the parishes of the diocese. With effect from October, 2017, the marriage fee all over the diocese is fixed as Rs.3,500/- (Rupees three thousand and five hundred only). Out of this amount, Rs.1,000/- (Rupees one thousand only) will go to the minister of the marriage, Rs.1,000/- (Rupees one thousand only) to the Catechist and Rs.1,500/- (Rupees fifteen hundred only) to the parish account. The Catechist shouldn't demand any more fees of any kind from the marriage parties either during publication of the Banns or on the day of the marriage. The Catechist also will not get any share in

the collection of the Mass of the Marriage. Parish Priests are advised to adhere strictly to this diocesan policy and exhort the Catechists to abide by the policy and avoid making undue demands on the people.

### **Sharing the Collections with the Catechists :**

The Parish Priests are hereby advised to observe the diocesan policy of sharing the collections with the Catechists:  $\frac{1}{4}$  (25%) of the Sunday Collections from the villages and  $\frac{1}{2}$  (50%) of the Christmas, New Year and Easter Collections will go to the respective Catechists. Even on those occasions when the priest goes for Mass to the villages, the Catechist will have to be paid  $\frac{1}{4}$  (25%) of the Collection of the Mass. The Catechists are very much underpaid and so adherence to this sharing will compensate their low remunerations.

### **Help to the Catechists from Bishop's House :**

As the number of Catechists approaching Bishop's House for financial assistance has catapulted in the recent months, it was resolved by the Senate of Priests that with effect from September, 2017, the Bishop's House will only extend some financial assistance to catechists for medical needs. Bishop's House will not offer assistance for other needs. The diocese is already offering through the Diocesan Educational Society assistance for the educational needs of the children of the Catechists. The parish priests hereby are requested not to send their Catechists to the Bishop's House with their letters for assistance in other needs. Assis-

## COMMUNICATIONS

tance given from Bishop's House will only be given through 'A/c Payee Cheque' and so those Catechists who are being sent for help should bring along their Bank Pass Book without fail. Parish Priests are also advised to mention in their recommendation letters the name of the Catechist as recorded in the Bank Pass Book.

### **Financial Aid to the Lay Faithful :**

It was also resolved in the recent meeting of the Senate of Priests, that no financial aid would normally be extended from Bishop's House to lay faithful of the diocese. The Parish Priests are hereby advised not to send any parishioners to the Bishop's House with their recommendation letters. The Parish Priests, on the other hand, are encouraged to extend such helps from the resources of the parish. Any extraordinary case will have to be discussed personally by the parish priest earlier with the bishop before sending the candidates themselves with the letter.

### **Marriage Registrations :**

In the light of civil authorities and offices not upholding the marriage certificates issued by the parish priests as valid, it is suggested that the marriage parties be encouraged to register their marriages in the Marriage Registrar's office before getting married in the church. They should be encouraged to have a civil marriage prior to the church marriage so that their marriage is properly and lawfully registered in the civil records. Parish Priests are requested to educate and encourage the parishioners in this direction.

### **Mission Sunday Collection :**

This year the Mission Sunday falls on 22 October, 2017. In all the parishes and the institutions the Mission Sunday is to be

celebrated with solemnity. All the Parish Priests should explain the role of the faithful in mission activity and invite them to pray for the missionaries all over the World. Parish Priests and heads of the institutions should send the Mission Sunday collections to the diocesan procure as soon as possible. Mission Sunday material is ready and available. Kindly collect your packet from the Bishop's House.

***The heads of the religious houses and institutions are requested to send their Mission Sunday Collection to the Procure's office directly independent of parish collections.***

### **Month of October, Pray the Rosary :**

As we all know, the month of October is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. I request all the parish priests to see that the rosary is recited daily in the parish headquarters and in the substations! In a special way encourage our catholic families to pray the rosary daily in the family and in person. Organize processions and prayer services to express special devotion and veneration to Our Blessed Mother. These occasions are good for the ongoing catechesis of our people.

### **Camp Sisters are available for the Pastoral Ministry :**

Responding to the letter written by his Excellency, Most Rev. Joseph Raja Rao, Nirmala and FCC Sisters have come forward to extend their generous services in the parishes. Sincere thanks to them for their willingness to work in the field of Evangelization. May I request the Parish Priests who are in need of Camp Sisters to make use of their ministry.

MONTH	PARISH	PARISH PRIEST	SISTERS
August, 2017	Kanchikacherla	Fr. Muvvala Solomon Raju	Nirmala Sisters
September, 2017	Koduru	Fr. Kama Christuraju	FCC Sisters
	Uppaluru	Fr. Buraga Vinod	Nirmala Sisters
October, 2017	Vennanapudi	Fr. Gudise Jayaraj	FCC Sisters
	Nagayalanka	Fr. John Rajesh	Nirmala Sisters
November, 2017	Mylavaram	Fr. Pathapati Vijay	Nirmala Sisters
December, 2017	Mylavaram	Fr. Pathapati Vijay	FCC Sisters
	Velagalagudem	Fr. Pulapaka Jacob Prasad	Nirmala Sisters
January, 2018			
February, 2018			
March, 2018			
April, 2018			

*Fr. Vijaya Kumar Damala, Director  
St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre, Carmelnagar, Vijayawada*

### **Training in Skill Development for Rural and Unemployed Youth :**

Andhra Loyola Institute of Engineering and Technology in affiliation with Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation is providing training in skill development to young people with the help of instruments and trainers from Siemens company. For the past one year, this training facility was confined to the students from Andhra Loyola College and other colleges and some rural youth. This year, the facility, which is free of cost, is extended to all the youth of the parishes of the diocese, in particular unemployed and drop-out youth. The parish priests are requested to encourage the youth to get trained in the following skills:

1. Office equipment lab
2. Home appliances lab
3. Welding lab
4. Computer-based training lab
5. Agro lab
6. Manufacturing and CNC lab
7. English and soft skills training.

*Fr. Francis Xavier SJ, Director,  
Andhra Loyola Institute of Engineering & Technology, Vijayawada*

**COMMUNICATIONS****CONTRIBUTIONS TO DIOCESE IN SEPTEMBER, 2017**

Second Sunday Collections of City Parishes

<b>S.no.</b>	<b>Name of the Parish</b>	<b>Amount</b>
01.	St. Paul's Cathedral	Rs. 20,090.00
02.	St. Peter's Co-Cathedral	Rs. 14,525.00
03.	Ajithsinghnagar	Rs. 2,015.00
04.	Carmelnagar	Rs. 752.00
05.	Christurajapuram	Rs. 2,455.00
06.	Gollapudi	Rs. 2,350.00
07.	Gunadala Matha Shrine	Rs. 30,525.00
08.	Jojinagar	Rs. 4,002.00
09.	Kankipadu	Rs. 3,000.00
10.	Kanuru	Rs. 3,300.00
11.	Labbipeta	Rs. 2,335.00
12.	Pezzonipeta	Rs. 8,010.00
13.	Ranigarithota	Rs. 960.00
14.	Satyanarayanapuram	Rs. 1,914.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>Rs. 96,233.00</b>

**MASSES**

13.09.2017	St.Peter's Co-Cathedral @ Rs.100	60	Rs. 6,000.00
23.09.2017	Satyanarayanapuram @ Rs. 100/-	62	Rs. 6,200.00
23.09.2017	St.Paul's Cathedral @ Rs.100	61	Rs. 6,100.00
03.10.2017	Gundalamatha Shrine @ Rs.100/-	671	Rs. 67,100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>854</b>	<b>Rs. 85,400.00</b>

**FAMILY CARDS**

13.09.2017	St.Peter's Co-Cathedral	Rs.5,500.00
23.09.2017	St.Paul's Cathedral	Rs.4,130.00
03.10.2017	Gunadalamatha Shrine	Rs. 8,375.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>Rs. 18,005.00</b>

**CATECHISTS' FUND**

18.09.2017	Fr. N. David Raju	Rs. 1,00,000.00
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## NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE

### Seminar on Socio- Pastoral Strategic Leadership

The principal aim of this seminar is to give a definitive plan to advance in the pastoral ministry with the leadership qualities of Universal Pastor, Jesus Christ. Ultimately,



it is the Spirit which guides and intercedes. That same Spirit guided the mission in Vijayawada diocese providentially for the past 80 years (1937-2017). The seminar began on the right note after the presentation of the brief history of the diocese by Fr. Valle Vijay Joji Babu, Chancellor and Procurator.

The College of Consultors, the Vicars Forane, Directors of the Centres and the Coordinators of different Commissions were the participants. This seminar was conducted from 4 September to 6 September, 2017 at Bishop's House, Vijayawada.

Most Rev. Eugene Joseph, Bishop of Varanasi and Mr. Ray Kancharla, Strategic

Planning Advisor, were the competent resource persons who guided the seminar. Bishop Eugene was very much edified after looking into the history of the diocese and appreciated the openness to the promptings of the Spirit of God. He urged that the pastoral work in the individual parishes and the diocese should be strategically planned as the times have changed drastically. He encouraged the priests to base their ministry on the values of Resurrected Christ.

Mr. Ray Kancharla, National Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Manager for Save the Children India, presented the topic in a very realistic way from the view-point that every strategy or plan should reach out to the most neglected person in the society. The objective of every ministry or the project should encompass the safety



of the unimportant entity too. That was of course the required quality of the leader of any society.



The workshops and debates in the seminar made the priests to reflect on the mission of Vijayawada diocese and have a conscious, spirit-filled and value-based strategy for the socio-pastoral development of the diocese.

Towards the end of the seminar, the participants came to the conclusion that the leaders of the diocese in any level should have **Commitment, Transparency /Accountability and Justice/Equality** as the primary values in governing and organizing the diocese. Fr. Thota Mariadas, sdb thanked the resource persons and the Bishop for organizing the seminar. His Excellency Bishop Joseph Raja Rao SMM felicitated Bishop Eugene and Mr. Ray for their wonderful animation.

*Bishop's House, Vijayawada*

### **Chapel Blessing at Sirichinthala, Gudlavalleru Parish**

September 7th is a memorable day for the faithful of Gudlavalleru Parish and especially Sirichintala village, one of the substations of Gudlavalleru. This is a village in which the community was completely al-

most dead for more than twenty years. God has renewed and revived this village by building a community and there by, building a new chapel. This new chapel dedicated to our dear St.Teresa of Kolkotta, perhaps the first in her in the diocese of Vijayawada. This village is blessed to have new chapel and people of all faiths come and find solace and peace when they are disturbed physically, mentally and spiritually.

This village is fortunate to have this new chapel blessed by Most. Rev. Thelagathoti



Joseph Raja Rao, SMM, our beloved Bishop and inaugurated by Fr. Amal Raj, SJ, Provincial of Jesuit Province of Andhra and Telangana in the presence of many priest, sisters, catechists and the faithful. I am grateful to God, Bishop, Provincial and priests for their presence to make it more memorable and meaningful for the people. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Dusi

Ravishekar, SJ, Rector, Andhra Loyola College, Fr. Ganta Praveen, Vicar Forane and all the Priest of the Vicariate. Special thanks to Fr. Gortu Merlo Suresh and Adoration Sisters of Mudinepalli for taking care of the singing and the decoration of the altar. A fellowship meal was shared by all at the end of the celebration. Gudlalleru YESJ youth entertained the faithful with their kolatam programme. Thanks to all the donors and benefactors.

*Fr. Mathew SJ, Parish Priest,  
Gudlalleru*

### **Golden Jubilee Celebrations and Annual Parish Festival in Nandigama Parish**

It's always joyful to thank the Lord for all His blessings and graces of the past. I along with the parishioners are grateful for His abundant blessings on Nandigama parish. Nandigama had a great opportunity to celebrate fifty years Golden Jubilee of its erection as a parish along with Velanganni Matha festival on 8th and 9th of September 2017.



Initially, Nandigama parish was under

Nawabupeta parish. Later in the year 1967 it was erected as a new parish. To mark this occasion of completion of 50 years of faith, we had a splendid celebration on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2017. The celebration was a great sign and witness of spiritual strength of the faithful Catholics of Nandigama parish. It was a great occasion to remember the awesome work and service rendered by the missionaries who toiled hard for the spread of the Kingdom of God.

The feast and Golden Jubilee celebrations began with a Novena on 31st of August 2017 with flag hoisting and Holy Eucharistic celebration by Fr. John Raju, Vicar Forane of Nandigama Vicariate and Parish Priest of Jaggayyapeta. All through the nine days of the novena, faithful participated with great devotion.

His Excellency, Most. Rev. Joseph Raja Rao Thelagathoti SMM along with many priests of the diocese presided over the Festival Eucharistic celebration on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September. His Excellency in his homily recalled the great service rendered by the PIME missionaries who worked in Nandigama parish. Many religious, catechists and faithful participated in the celebration. We had a great chance to felicitate the former parish priests who rendered their valuable services to Nandigama parish.

I along with our parishioners, extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to His Excellency Most. Rev. Joseph Raja Rao

Thelagathoti, SMM, for his presence and participation. We also thank all the priests, religious, Catechist Sisters of St. Ann - Nandigama, Catechists, Committee members and all the parishioners for their cooperation in making the celebrations a huge success. May the Lord continue to bless Nandigama parish with his graces.

*Fr. D.M. Rakesh Reddy, Parish Priest,  
Nandigama.*

### **Arogya Velangani Matha Feast at Satyanarayanapuram Parish**

The annual festival of Our Lady of Velangani was celebrated on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at Satyanarayanapuram parish. As part of the spiritual preparation for the feast, novena was held for nine days inviting priests from other parishes to give spiritual talks about Mother Mary and to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. On the feast day a religious procession was organized by the faithful with the statue of Our Lady of Velangani,



in the streets of Satyanarayanapuram and Muthyalampadu, giving witness to the surrounding Hindu brethren about our love and devotion to Mother Mary.

Most Rev. Joseph Raja Rao Thelagathoti, Bishop of Vijayawada, presided over the concelebrated Holy Eucharist during which he preached about the birth of Our Lady and her role in the salvific action of God in saving the whole human kind. On the occasion of this festival a facelift was given to the parish church with necessary repairs and painting. The parish priest Fr. P Jaya Raju thanked His Lordship and all the donors, and those who worked for this celebration of the feast.

*Fr. Polisetti Jaya Raju, Parish Priest,  
Satyanarayanapuram*

### **Re-dedication and Blessing of Our Lady of Health Church at Kankipadu**

It was a memorable day to the parishioners of Kankipadu when their Parish Church was blessed and re-dedicated on 10 September, 2017 by His Excellency Most Rev. Thelagathoti Joseph Raja Rao, SMM, Bishop of Vijayawada. The day's evening was filled with splendor not just with the illumination of the lights but with the pres-



ence of the joyful faithful filled with satis-

faction after working for the renovation of the Church with their own means. The faithful contributed for the renovation of the parish church and the parish priest contributed for giving a face-lift to the Church campus.

His Excellency before the Holy Mass blessed the Statue of PIETA, the newly put up statue along the roadside and then presided over the Eucharistic celebration concelebrated by the priests from Vijayawada, Eluru and Khammam dioceses.



During the Mass, His Excellency anointed the altar and re-dedicated the Church. His Excellency appreciated the work of the parish priest in completing the great venture in a short period. He praised the faith of the parishioners in completing the renovation of their parish church.

The parish priest was grateful to all the people who contributed and cooperated in this great work. He also thanked His Excellency, the priests and the religious for making the evening a great day to the faithful of Kankipadu.

*Fr. N. David Raju, Parish Priest,  
Kankipadu*

## Annual Church Feast of Machilipatnam

It was like the words of the psalmist came true 'how good and pleasant it is when God's people live and pray together in unity'. The Holy Cross Parish of Machilipatnam held its annual church feast with devotion and joy on 12th of September. It was prayer-filled and grace-filled days walked under the canopy of the shadow of the Cross.

Prior to the celebration, we had three days of spiritual preparatory prayer meetings from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of September. The parish priest, Fr. Lamu Jayaraj, arranged efficient and experienced preachers from different dioceses to preach the Word of God and to quench the spiritual thirst of the faithful. He



piloted the inner healing sessions and anointing of the Holy Spirit during these three days of prayer. It was like having a sumptuous heavenly meal. The faithful participated in large numbers and experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their personal life as well as in their families and

parish community at large.

The prayer services in preparation for the annual feast were commenced with ceremonial procession along with the decorated cross and festooned with the praying of Holy Rosary for three days. The faithful, both from the substations and around the town, gathered under the banner of the cross to adore the cross and to participate in the Holy Eucharist celebration and to be nourished by the eternal meal of the Word of God.

On the day of the celebrations Most Rev. Thelagathoti Joseph Raja Rao SMM, Bishop of Vijayawada, was the main celebrant concelebrated by many priests in and around the vicariate. The Bishop spoke during his homily on the importance of the cross and as a catholic how each one should carry our own given crosses with utmost love and devotion par excellence. He emphasized the need of accepting our own daily crosses with love and dedication. It was indeed heart-warming to have our beloved bishop with us in spite of his busy schedule. All the parishioners were very happy and indebted to him for making his precious time available for us and to have a pious celebration.

After the Holy Mass there was a grand felicitation for our beloved bishop Thelagathoti Raja Rao organized by Parish

Priest Fr. Lamu Jayaraju, Parish Council members, Sisters, Legion of Mary, Vincent De Paul Society, Catechists and different representatives from various villages.

*Fr. Lamu Jayaraju, Parish Priest,  
Machilipatnam*

### **Conclusion of Jubilee Celebrations of Kaikaluru Parish**

This year faithful of the parish of Kaikaluru ended the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the parish. It was bifurcated from Bhyravapatnam parish in 1992 and was dedicated to the Holy Cross on Sep 14<sup>th</sup>



1992 by late Bishop Joseph Thumma. The parish is thankful to Fr. Sebastian Kottoor, the first parish priest who tirelessly worked hard to deepen the faith of the people. He built with great efforts the present parish church and the chapels in 12 substations. He also brought the land to build the Holy Cross English Medium School which renders its service to impart the knowledge in and around the Kaikaluru region with help of Ursuline Sisters who came here 19 years ago. Fr. Guzzula Michael, the second par-

ish priest, built new block in the school and two chapels in Varahapatnam and Aachavaram. Fr. Thirividhi Daniel, the third parish priest, also worked to foster the faith of the people.

The celebration began with novena prayers with the hoisting of holy cross flag by Fr. Thota Sunil Raju, the Parish Priest of Kalidindi. On 16 September, a thanksgiving mass was presided over by Most Rev.



Thelagathoti Joseph Raja Rao, SMM, along with other priests. Around 1500 faithful of the parish and faithful from Bhyravapatnam, Korukollu and Kalidindi participated to thank the Lord for all his blessings during the past 25 years of the parish.

*Fr. Gunturu Don Bosco, Parish Priest,  
Kaikaluru*

### **Celebrations of the Sacraments at Thukkuluru Parish**

Infant Jesus Parish of Thukkuluru conducted children's camp from 25-27 September, 2017. 83 children from all the substation of Thukkuluru parish participated in this camp.

They were given thorough instruction in the catechism by the sisters of the Holy Cross and the catechists.



On 27 September, we had a solemn Eucharistic celebration in the evening presided over by Most Rev. Joseph Raja Rao SMM, Bishop of Vijayawada, concelebrated by priests of the vicariate. 53 children received the sacrament of confirmation and 30 children received the First Holy Communion on



that day. The parish priest felicitated His Excellency after the Holy Eucharist. He also thanked Sr. Jaya and Sr. Sridevi for their selfless work in preparing the children for the reception of the Holy Sacraments.

*Fr. Sankurla Santhi Raju, Parish Priest,  
Thukkuluru*

## NEWS FROM THE RELIGIOUS

### Holy Cross Celebration by Sisters of Holy Cross of Chavanod, Kambhampadu

The feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was celebrated by sisters of the Holy Cross



of Chavanod on 14<sup>th</sup> September at Kambhampadu. Most Rev. Thelagathoti Joseph Raja Rao SMM, Bishop of Vijayawada, presided over the Holy Mass concelebrated by seven priests from different parishes.

Sr. Audrey read about the congregation and activities of the convent that sisters are doing. Many people came from the parish and sub-stations. Bishop addressed the gathering and instructed that every human heart filled with sin should be cleansed by the vic-



tory of the cross. At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, Bishop was felicitated by the sisters. The Parish Priest, Fr. Sleeva Vijay Babu was also felicitated. He thanked Bishop and the gathering. Bishop thanked everybody and blessed the group at the end of the celebration.

*Sr. Shirley Frank, Superior, Holy Cross Convent, Kambhampadu*

## NEWS FROM THE CENTRES / COMMISSIONS

### Training Programme for the B.C.C. Animators

The Church is exhorted to be salt and light in the world (cf. *Matthew* 5:13-16), in other words, an agent for fostering God's goodness. The Basic Christian Communities (BCCs) are the most effective agents for bringing about this in concrete ways. The

Basic Christian Communities (BCCs) or the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) embody some fundamental features of the ecclesiology of Vatican II which encourages the dimension of community/communion and participation. Thus they are a significant new way of being church today and serve as a vehicle of parish and spiritual renewal. Through it, more lay faithful partici-

pate in the work of evangelization, since they are now familiar with the scriptures by weekly sharing and this brings a spirit of



hopefulness. As St. Jerome wrote, “ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Jesus Christ”. “Equally, to know and love the Scripture is to know and love Christ in a new way”

**The Intention of the Diocese and the Bishop :** As mentioned above the significance of BCCs, a new way of being the Church, His Lordship, Most Rev. Joseph Raja Rao, from the time he has been appointed as the bishop of the diocese, insisted upon the formation of BCCs in all the parishes with cooperation of the parish priests as the Jyothirmai programme is closed at the regional level. The intention of the bishop through the formation of BCCs is to



equip our faithful with Bible knowledge and make them self reliant.

**The Resource Personnel:** As commissioned by his Lordship, the diocesan pastoral centre carefully selected the resource personnel so as to create an awareness on BCCs throughout the diocese. The resource personnel were Fr. Vijaya Kumar Damala (Director, Pastoral Centre), Mr. Domathoti Abraham (Retired Director of Andhra Pradesh Social Service Society -APSSS), Sr. Fathima and Mr. Y. Joji Babu (Diocesan Jyothirmai Coordinator).



**Feedback from the Participants:** B.C.C. Training Programme was conducted from July-September, in 9 Vicariates of our diocese at 18 Parish Centres. The participation of the catechists was full and encouraging. They were thrilled at the experience they had during the Training. They found themselves more capable, more equipped, more resourceful at the end of the training. They expressed their willingness in forming BCCs and some have already started in few parishes.



**Our Sincere Thanks:** We sincerely acknowledge our thanks to his Lordship, Most Rev. Joseph Raja Rao, for his spiritual and material support, the resource personnel for their time and zeal for the local Church and to all the parish priests who extended their cooperation in informing and motivating their catechists and specially those priests who have sponsored delicious food to the participants wherever we conducted the BCC training Programmes.

*Fr. Vijaya Kumar Damala, Director,  
St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre*

### **Scholarships Distributed to Catechists' Children:**

On 25th September 2017, 80 children of Catechists studying either PG or Graduation received an amount of Rs. 5000/- each as scholarship. And another 50 students, studying intermediate or equivalent course were distributed scholarship of Rs. 3000/- each. This is done as recognition and appreciation of the yeomen services that the Catechists render in our diocese in far remote

villages of our diocese. Most Rev. Thelagathoti Joseph Raja Rao SMM, Bishop of Vijayawada disbursed the amount to each student in the presence of Vicars General, Fr. Mesapam Gabriel and Fr. Prasad Muvvala and Fr. Damala Vijaya Kumar, Director of Pastoral Centre.

Fr. Kondru Simharayalu, Director, Diocesan Educational Society, thanked His Lordship,



both Vicars General and the Director of Pastoral Centre for their valuable presence at the time of distribution of scholarships. This scholastic year 2600 children received cash directly from the diocesan educational society office and 1000 children are educated by the office in various hostels and boarding homes across the diocese. In addition 170 boys and 170 girls are educated in Angel Boarding Home and Little Flower English Medium Hostel, Pamarru.

*Fr. Kondru Simharayalu, Director, Diocesan Educational Society, Gunadala*

## Special Feature : An Interview with Smt. Dr. Miriyala Regina

### A Journey to Inner Self

Smt. Dr. Miriyala Regina, former Telugu Lecturer of Maris Stella College is known as a good orator both in English and Telugu. She served in Telugu faculty in the same college for more than three decades. She even rendered here voluntary services after the retirement. The government of India conferred on her the “Best Teacher” award in 1996, Madras Telugu Academy in 1997 and Delhi Telugu Academy in 1998 recognizing her excellent services in Telugu faculty. She keeps herself busy with socio-religious, literary and cultural activities with so much of zeal even now. She is passionate in serving the society and is the facilitator to the small world



around her, in the past and the present with undaunted vigour to contribute something to the society from what she has and what she can.

She is a person who gives utmost importance to the family and its values. Now that her two children are settled abroad and her husband in heavenly abode, she extended her family to a broader

reality of the society and giving herself for the good of the others with the inherent impetus of serving the needy.

#### • Madam, tell us about your family.

I was born in Nizampatnam, Guntur district. My education till Pre-university course was completed in St. Joseph’s Convent, Guntur. Soon after the 12<sup>th</sup> standard of that time, I was married. My husband’s name is Mr. Miriyala Daivanandam who worked as the assistant director of Agriculture in Guntur. I have two children, son and a daughter settled abroad.

To be specific about my childhood, we are six children to our parents. When we were still very young, we lost our father and the whole burden of the family fell on the shoulders of my mother. She brought us up quite well with the help of her brother. Though she was not highly educated, she insisted that we, her children, should be well educated.

Here again, I would like to emphasize the necessity of family and its real attachments. We were brought up in a joint family and the bond in that sort of family is so substantial that is lacking now a days. The relationships within the family cannot be sidelined under the cover of scientific development. It’s because at one moment or the other, the body, mind and soul will yearn for that.

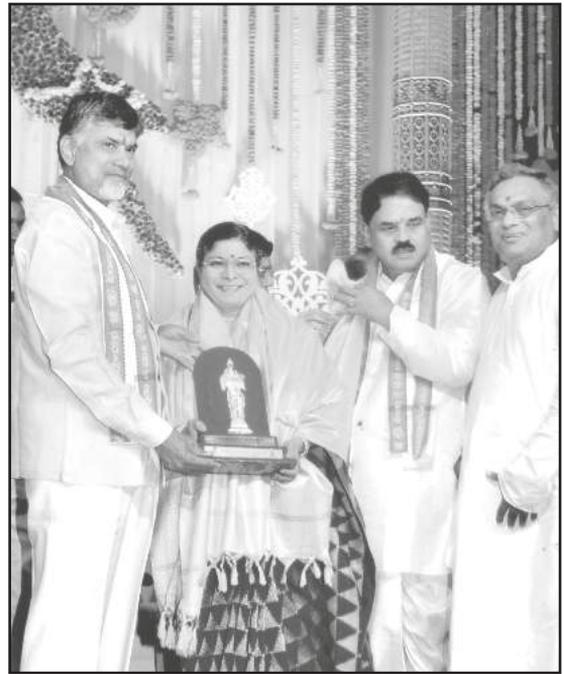
- **Madam, you were wedded off before your higher or professional studies. How did you plan your career ?**

As a teenager, I was interested in studies and I did it diligently. I never planned for it but it just happened. After the marriage, with the great support of my husband, I attended the college and completed degree, post gradation and also B. Ed. as a regular student. I did my Ph.D. too. Just keep in mind, I am speaking about the situation in late 1960's. The society at that time was not as liberal as it is now. It was a herculean task for me to fulfill my family responsibilities and at the same time do justice to my studies. Frankly, I never intended to enter a profession while studying. But unpredictably, I was offered Telugu faculty in the esteemed Maris Stella College, Vijayawada in 1972.

- **Madam, you worked as a Telugu Lecturer in Maris Stella College. How was your association with the management and the students ?**

I would like to reiterate the bond within the family which I mentioned in the beginning when I said about my family. That closeness and affection helped me a lot to extend to the bigger family in the professional field. It was simply easy for me to apply it effectively. The management, Sisters of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM), was so loving, yet stern in matters of discipline. I worked in the college for more than three decades, to be precise 40 years. Of course, I worked after the retirement too.

I also had a good affinity with the students of all times. I did not find it difficult to have good relationship in that big family of the institution.



I also used to take the students to different organizations and associations to make them participate in programs and competitions in literary, cultural, religious, social and art fields. It was good for the students to have a good exposure and varied opportunities.

- **Madam, you are known as a good orator; you gave talks on Radio and Doordarshan on different issues and also engaged yourself in many service-oriented associations and schemes. How did you develop this kind of inclination?**

Again, I say, it came naturally; I never laboured for it. At this juncture, I would love to quote St. Mother Teresa of Kolkatta, my great inspiration and strength. In 1979, soon after receiving the Bharata Ratna Award, Mother Teresa made a visit to Vijayawada. A public meeting was conducted at Nirmala High School, Patamata, wherein the officials and the dignitaries were present. In that meeting, I had the chance to

speak about the living saint. Providentially, I was opted by Rev. Fr. Marampudi Joji, the late Archbishop of Hyderabad, in the place of another person. It was a God-given opportunity but a nervous moment as it was the first time in my life to speak in a big public gathering. That public appearance and that too, the rare and valuable chance to speak about Mother Teresa gave me a big boost in my life and then on I never turned back. As you right put it in the question, I was actively involved and held offices in the service-oriented schemes and clubs like National Service Scheme, Population Education Club, Y's, Men Club and also engaged in the promotion of Telugu language as I am the Telugu lecturer by holding responsible posts in Telugu Bhasha Chaitanya Samithi and Rachayitala Sangham of Krishna district. Besides this, I also participated in books and social exhibitions and also in TANA and ATA in America.

- **Madam, you are actively involved in literary, socio-cultural activities. What about your aptitude for the religious activities?**

How can I leave out the important thing? Fulfilling my family responsibility, at the same time I never put aside my life of faith. Indeed, I was in women associations like Legion of Mary, member of Women Desk and the Commission for the Women. Sometime back, as a group, under the leadership of Sr. Maria Ann of the Sisters of St. Ann of Luzern, went around the parishes in the diocese to conduct social awareness and women empowerment programmes to ignite the minds of women. Even now, I am active in the socio-religious programmes conducted in the parish especially when it comes to charity and sponsorships, supporting the poor students.

I also have close association with the renowned

fine art institution, namely Kaladarshini, Vijayawada, from a long time. I am privileged to be one of the advisors helping out in the development of the institution.

- **Madam, the role of woman in the society is gradually taking shape, how do you view and visualize that?**

It is true that the young girls and women are moving forward in the modern society. But not many women are coming forward to work for the betterment of the society; only a handful, here and there, for a short period. It might be because of the fear and other personal reasons. Apart from this, there is no infrastructure from where the women can take off and be the outstanding persona in the given society or situation.

In the Catholic Church, many fantastic programmes promoting the welfare and well-being of the women are organized but there is no follow up and plan of action. Woman is part of nature and the God-given nature of woman can be utilized for the good of the Church.

- **How do you view and advise the young generation ?**

Personally, I feel that the youth are to be attended with utmost care. Their minds are occupied with many prejudices and doubts. When they are cleared of them, they can be mended. They are not really in the right disposition to listen but they can be fixed with understanding and love. The young have to organize their lives from the beginning because there is not time for them to think after they lose that stage. If they are able to work hard in their young age, the rest of the stages of life can be monitored by themselves. They too must be mindful of the poor, old and the disabled of the society.

## NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Franciscan nuns work for dignity of displaced Delhi slum people

Before the Franciscan nuns came to help, they were living without basic facilities in a vast field. Posted on September 17, 2017, 6:08 PM

Lalita Devi and her family were forced to pack up their slum-dwelling belongings and move to a new location 15 years ago. They had done nothing wrong in the slum of New Delhi, the nation's capital. But the residents were considered to be too close to an up-market residential complex housing influential people, including politicians and bureaucrats.

"We were around 3,000 people in the slum," Devi said. "But we were moved to a place on the outskirts of Delhi totally unknown to us." Devi had no choice but to start from scratch in Holambi Kalan in the northwest of the capital.

The area had no electricity, only a couple of street lights, bad drinking water, no health facilities and not even a school nearby. The problems of people there prompted nuns of the



Franciscan Missionaries of Mary to start a project in 2004 to help the displaced residents.

Devi recalled that when the nuns came, they were still living without basic facilities in a vast field. "It was scary, especially at night," she said. The area also houses people moved out from slums elsewhere in New Delhi because of development projects such as road widening and rail developments.

"We did not know them," Devi said. "Our neighbors changed and it was not easy to develop trust."

About 90 percent of slums in Delhi sit on public land mostly belonging to the railways and state government. In 2012 there was an estimated 1.2 million people living in Delhi slums. Now there are an estimated one million people in relocation areas. The majority of sites do not even have community toilets, forcing habitants to defecate in the open near drainage channels.

However, the nuns have introduced welfare programs including self-help groups, vocational training and informal education for children as well as adult literacy. Sister Rajni Minj, who coordinates the project, said it was important to empower women and young girls so that they can earn money to help support their families. The nun said when the project started they found many young girls sitting idly at home. The nuns then began vocational training courses on tailoring and how to run a beauty parlor as well as

the making of henna tattoos. The program over the years has helped women become financially independent.

Self-help groups also enabled them to save and take out loans to building better houses. Manju Jha, said in 2005 she and her family moved to the relocation area with practically nothing. Jha said she became a project administrator and her mother was assisted by one of some 35 self-help groups benefitting 652 women.

Sister Margaret (who goes by one name) said at least 30 women have started small tailoring shops with loans. “Some, who have gained confidence from our classes, are working in the nearby factories,” the nun added. The project was started by Sister Taurina Vaz, who was the then principal of the Mater Dei School in the national capital, as an outreach program run by the nuns. The congregation funded it in the initial four years. But now the school funds it. The staff and students continue to visit the area and donate clothes and other goods.

### **Freed Father Thomas Uzhunnalil arrives in India**

New Delhi: Indian Salesian Father Thomas Uzhunnalil—who was released over a fortnight ago after his 18-month-long captivity in Yemen—arrived in New Delhi Sept. 28 and met Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Father Uzhunnalil arrived in the Indian capital following two weeks in Rome where he was

taken after his release from suspected Islamic militants who abducted him on March 4, 2016.

The 59-year-old priest first went to the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India center where he met his elder brother and sister. He then attended a series of meetings with Prime Minister Modi



and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj before meeting papal nuncio in India, Archbishop Giambattista Diquattro.

Appearing fragile and fatigued, Father Uzhunnalil later spoke with the media and thanked people of all faiths who prayed for his safety and release.

He said family members had told him that Hindu brethren in his hometown in the southern state of Kerala held prayers in temples for his safety. The local Muslim community also prayed for him.

“I was sure that there would [have been] a lot of people in the world praying for me,” Father Uzhunnalil said. “I am not only the property of my family or the Salesians, but I understand now that I belong to the whole world,” he said.



## VATICAN NEWS

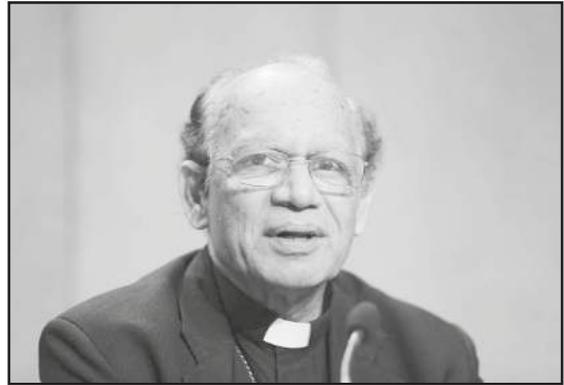
### Cardinal Gracias : curial reform is nearing the 'end of the tunnel'

Vatican City, Sep 18, 2017 / 01:57 pm (CNA/EWTN News).- Nearly four years after the Pope established his Council of Cardinal advisers to help him in the task of reforming the Roman Curia, one member of the group said their work is wrapping up, and that it could take only a few more meetings to finish what they set out to do.

The ongoing process of reform “is being done at various stages of development, and I hope we’ll come to an end in all of these matters soon,” Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Bombay told CNA Sept. 14. “It will take two or three more meetings more,” he said, adding that “by June perhaps we’ll be seeing the end of the tunnel.”

Cardinal Gracias is also President of the Asian Bishops Conference and in 2013 was chosen by the Pope along with eight other prelates from around the world to advise him in matters of Church governance and reform. He spoke to CNA in a lengthy, sit-down interview after the council – also called the “C9” – concluded their latest round of meetings last week.

As far as the reform goes, Cardinal Gracias said “there won’t be very major changes; it’s the governance of the Church, we can’t just turn everything upside down.” Rather, it will be “a gradual change, a change of mentality, a change of approach, restructuring a bit of the departments so that they are



more logically suited to the needs of today.”

He said a key goal of the C9 is to implement the vision of the Second Vatican Council, specifically when it comes to the importance of the role of the laity and women, and incorporating greater synodality and collegiality into the Church’s structures. From the beginning Pope Francis “had very clear what he wanted this group to do,” the cardinal said. “He had no hesitation, he’s a good leader. He had a clear vision.”

Cardinal Gracias admitted that in the beginning he had doubts as to whether or not they were going in the right direction, and had started to worry what people on the outside might say, since many fruits of the meetings weren’t and likely won’t be immediately visible. He said he also struggled with doubts about the pace at which they were moving, and believed that things were going “too slow.”

“I will confess that once at the beginning I was wondering, ‘are we going in the right direction?’ I asked myself. But now I can see it is,” he said, explaining that Pope Francis’ Christmas speech to the Roman

Curia last year was a “tipping point” for him.

More than anything, there is a change in mentality that’s needed, which will take longer than simply reforming the Vatican’s structures, he said, but said the group is “rather confident that it will happen because the Pope is giving very effective leadership.”

In addition to the ongoing curial reform, Cardinal Gracias also spoke about the recent release of Indian priest Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil 18 months after he was abducted in Yemen. He also spoke about the Pope’s upcoming trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh, and when a possible papal trip to India might take place.

### **Freed Indian Salesian meets Pope Francis**

By Junno Arocho Esteves Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — One day after his release from captivity, Salesian Father Tom Uzhunnalil met with Pope Francis. According to the Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, the pope welcomed Father Uzhunnalil at his residence, the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, Sept. 13.

Arriving before Pope Francis, the Salesian knelt before him and kissed his feet. Vis-



ibly moved by the gesture, the pope helped him up and kissed his hands, the Vatican newspaper said. Before blessing Father Uzhunnalil, the pope embraced him and said he would continue to pray for him as he had done during his imprisonment. Father Uzhunnalil was kidnapped March 4, 2016, from a home for the aged and disabled run by the Missionaries of Charity in Aden, Yemen. Four Missionaries of Charity and 12 others were murdered in the attack.

According to Oman’s state-run news agency ONA, Father Uzhunnalil was “rescued” Sept. 12 by Oman authorities “in coordination with the Yemeni parties.” Father Uzhunnalil thanked the pope, telling him that “he prayed every day for him, offering his suffering for his mission and the good of the church.”

Recalling his time in captivity, the Salesian told the pope that although he was unable



to celebrate Mass, “every day, I would repeat to myself, in my heart, all the words of the celebration.” Father Uzhunnalil said he continues to pray for all those who have been spiritually close to him, particularly for the four nuns and 12 people murdered when he was abducted. Also present at the meeting was Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Mumbai, India, who told *L’Osservatore Romano* that “after this terrible experience, the essential message Father Tom wants to convey is that ‘Jesus is great and he loves us.’” “Truly, every day, I felt Jesus close to me,” Father Uzhunnalil said. “I always knew and felt in my heart that I was never alone.”

### **Pope sets up new Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences**

*(Vatican Radio)* Pope Francis has set up a new Pontifical institute for the study of marriage and the family, replacing the organisation set up by his predecessor in 1981.

In a *Motu Proprio*, the Vatican announced that the John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences is being established to carry forward the work of the two recent Synods of Bishops and the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.



### **New pastoral challenges**

Noting the important work that has been carried out by the original institute, founded in the wake of the 1980 Synod on the Family, Pope Francis says the Synods of 2014 and 2015 have brought a renewed awareness of “the new pastoral challenges to which the Christian community is called to respond”. Contemporary anthropological and cultural changes, the pope says, require “a diversified and analytical approach” which cannot be “limited to pastoral and missionary practices” of the past.

Instead, he says, we must be able to interpret our faith in a context in which individuals are less supported than before as they deal with the complex realities of family life. Faithful to the teachings of Christ, the pope says, we must explore these “lights and shadows of family life” with realism, wisdom and love.

Like its predecessor, the new institute will continue to work as part of the Pontifical Lateran University. It will also be closely connected to the Holy See through the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Pontifical Academy for Life and the new Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. The institute, which comes into effect immediately, will offer students courses leading to a diploma, a license and a doctorate in marriage and family sciences.

## OBITUARY

### Fr. Bezwada Samuel John (1955-2017)

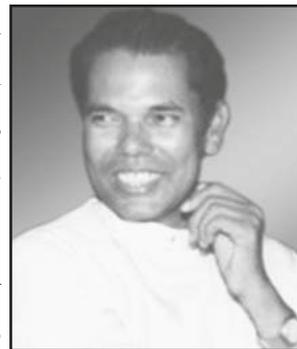
*“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not exist anymore or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the former things have ceased to exist.”*

*Revelation 21:4*

Rev. Fr. Samuel John was born on 8 May, 1955 at Vellaturu which was part of Kondapalli parish that time. His parents are late Mr. Elias and Mrs. Maria Ratnamma and both of them were teachers. He was the second child in the family of nine children. He has one elder sister, six younger sisters and a younger brother. He had to do primary and high school education in different schools due to the transfers of his parents from place to place: I-V in Chillukuru, VI Class in Khani Atmakur, VII class in ZPH School, Mulapadu, VIII & IX in Don Bosco High School, Nandigama and finally the X class in SPNRPH School, Gollapudi. He had also done a course in Drawing in Chennai.

He entered St. Ambrose Seminary, Nuzvid, aspiring to become a priest on 3 July, 1970. He left to carry on his priestly studies to Hyderabad on 20 June, 1972 and completed

his philosophical and Theological studies in St. John’s Regional Seminary, Hyderabad. He was ordained priest on 25 July, 1979.



Rev. Fr. Bezwada Samuel John was known for his cordiality and hospitality. In his formation period he was known for his artistic ability and music talent which he could effectively utilize in his pastoral ministry. He was always in the good books of the authorities as he was humble and always obliging. As a priest, he did possess a pleasant nature delightful to both the clergy and the faithful. His pleasant nature was festooned with his sense of humour. He was known as a good pastor. He had a good heart for the people whom he served and was pastorally generous in his ministry.

For 30 years (1979-2009), he was in active pastoral ministry serving nine parishes. Soon after the ordination he was sent to St. Peter’s Co-Cathedral as the assistant parish priest to Fr. Picascia PIME. In the year 1980, he was sent to Gudlavalleru as the acting parish priest. After one year, he was

made the parish priest of Pedana in 1981 and served the parish for three years. Then he rendered his pastoral service in the parish of Bhyravapatnam from 1984-1986 and in Challapalli parish from 1986-1989. After that he served for five years each in the parishes of Vuyyuru (1989-1994), Mudinepalli (1994-1999), Carmelnagar (1999-2004) and Satyanarayanapuram (2004-2009).

Since 2009, he retired from his active ministry due to ill health. During these eight years he underwent the suffering both in body and mind and one of his legs had to be amputated. After receiving the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and receiving Holy Communion, he breathed his last on 2 September, 2017 at 04.10 p.m. in Hyderabad. His funeral was held in Hyderabad on Sunday, 3 September, 2017 by His Excellency Most Rev. Thelagathoti Joseph Raja Rao, Bishop of Vijayawada accompanied by Vicars General, Chancellor and few priests of the diocese.

Fr. Samuel John was a priest for 38 long years and served the diocese with docility and love. It is our bounden duty to hail him for his dedication and service. It is a fitting time to acknowledge his service and thank the family members who are here. We ex-

tend our heartfelt condolences to his dear mother, to his dear sisters, brother and other family members and relatives. As a diocese, we extend our deepest sympathies to you on this great loss and we want to assure you that we are united with you in your sorrow. We pray that God bring comfort and healing to your sorrowful hearts. May the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, grant our dear Father Samuel John a share in His Eternal Kingdom! May the Lord grant him Eternal Rest!

*Bishop's House, Vijayawada*

### **Adieu to Sr. Marykutty, SAL (1955-2017)**

Rev. Sr. Marykutty was born on 7th March 1947 at Nettithozhu in Idukki (Dt) in the diocese of Kanjirapalli, Kerala as the eldest child



among 8 children of late Mr. Thomas Vellamattam and Mrs. Annamma who is still alive. Two of her Sisters, Sr. Annie Thomas and Sr. Prasanthi are members of our Congregation. She has her maternal aunt Sr. Alexia in our Congregation and few of her cousins too. She joined the Society of

St. Ann, Luzern in the year 1967. She made her First Commitment on 19th December 1971 and perpetual profession on 6th January 1978. She rendered her services in our communities at Avanigadda, Kurseong the Hill station, Madhavaram, Vijayawada, Pathapatnam, Kondapalli, Deepthi Bhavan, Ponnur and Mangalagiri. She was actively involved in Parish ministry visiting families and giving Good News to people. As a person Sr. Marykutty was loving and affectionate, compassionate and generous. She had a special concern for poor and needy and spared no efforts in helping them.

Sr. Marykutty was enjoying fairly good health until she was diagnosed to have ovarian cancer in both ovaries in the month of November 2016. She was taken to Manipal Hospital for further investigation and treatment. She was treated by an expert medical Oncologist Dr. Krishna Reddy MD DM, and was given a full course of chemotherapy. After the first course of chemotherapy she made remarkable improvement for few months. After a period of remission the immortal cancer cells again started playing the vicious role and the cancer spread mercilessly to the liver, intestines and other parts of abdomen. She was again taken to Manipal Hospital and a second course of chemo-

therapy started but this time the treatment was not effective and cancer took upper role. Chemotherapy was discontinued on the advice of the medical oncologist and she was brought back to St. Ann's hospital on 6th September. After a week she developed gross ascites and discomfort and she was taken for review to Manipal Hospital and after few days she was back in St. Ann's hospital on 16th September. Medical treatment and care continued meticulously, in spite of the above measures her condition deteriorated. Her maternal uncle Fr. Joe Kunnumpuram SJ and aunt Sr. Alexia and her own Sisters were constantly present during the time of her struggle. Sr. Dr. Marietta, Dr. Ch. Srinivas, Dr. Gopinath, our Sisters and staff rendered expert and committed medical treatment and care.

Sr. Marykutty was well aware of the nearing end of her earthly sojourn and she was spiritually preparing herself to meet her Creator. And she breathed her last at 4 am on 29<sup>th</sup> September on the feast of the Archangels in the praying company of her sisters. May she rest in peace!

*Sr. Moni Mathew, Provincial Secretary,  
Prashanth Bhavan, Carmelnagar*

## DAYS TO REMEMBER IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

### ORDINATION DAY : HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

31st Fr. Peter Anthony Kishore SJ



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY : MANY RETURNS OF THE DAY

1st Fr. Mocherla Balayesu  
2nd Fr. Bandi Maria Sagar Babu  
5th Fr. Maddala Vinay Kumar  
12<sup>th</sup> Fr. Polimetla Jacob  
13th Fr. Mannala Peter  
14th Fr. Arava Bruno Jesu Stephen  
15th Fr. Mathangi Suresh Babu  
17th Frs. Kondru Simharayalu, Darsi Jeeva Kumar, Kama Anil  
23rd Fr. Neeluri Mariadas  
24th Fr. Gone Joseph Thambi  
25th Fr. Teneti Yesupadam  
26th Fr. Amire Ajay Kumar  
27th Fr. Gunturu Don Bosco



### OBITUARY : MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

15th Fr. Rimondi PIME (1985)  
16th Fr. Giovanni B. Calderaro PIME (1985)  
23rd Fr. Kudilungal George

