



# DIOCESE OF GULBARGA

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Circular No. 237

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BISHOP OF GULBARGA

March 2025

**Holy Father's Intention for the Month: For families in crisis:** Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

Dear Fathers, Sisters and Brethren, *Jai Christ!*

## 1. Clergy Recollection

As preparation for the Season of Lent monthly Recollection of the Clergy and Religious Priests (Superiors) will be held on 3-4 March 2025. All the Priests of the diocese, the Mission Directors and Superiors of men religious communities are expected to be present.

Rev. Fr (Dr) Rudolph Raj Pinto OCD, CCBI Secretary, Commission for Liturgy, has kindly consented to be the resource person of the day.

**2. Ash Wednesday and the Holy Season of Lent (March 05):** The sacred season of Lent begins on the 05<sup>th</sup> with Ash Wednesday. The imposition of ashes on this day serves as a symbolic reminder of our human frailty, our need for repentance, and conversion. It is an invitation to turn away from sin and embrace goodness, a grace given to us by God. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a time dedicated to prayer, penance, and a heightened awareness of the needs of others. This season mirrors the 40 days of Jesus' prayer and fasting before starting His public ministry—a journey that ultimately led to His sacrifice on the Cross and His triumph over death. Lent is a period of spiritual preparation for Easter, allowing believers to reflect on the mystery of salvation and renew their commitment to faith through prayer, fasting, and acts of charity. I encourage all Parish Priests and Mission Directors to organize Lenten devotions at both parish and zonal levels, fostering deeper meditation on the Passion of Christ and meaningful preparation for the Easter celebration. The message of His Holiness Pope Francis for Lent 2025 "Let us journey together" (enclosed) invites us to take up Lenten practices as a part of our journey together.

## **Repentance and Reconciliation: Essential Duties:**

According to divine law, every believer is called to repentance and reconciliation. Therefore, I urge everyone to adhere to the guidelines set by the Church:

- a) As per the *Code of Canon Law* (Can. 1250), all Fridays of the year, along with the season of Lent, are designated as days of penance.
- b) Abstinence from meat (or another food as determined by the Bishops' Conference) must be observed on all Fridays, except when a Solemnity falls on a Friday. In addition, both fasting and abstinence are required on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
  - ❖ The law of abstinence applies to all those who are 14 years and older.
  - ❖ The law of fasting applies to those between 18 and 60 years of age.

## **Lenten Observances as per the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI):**

- ❖ Attend the Holy Eucharist daily.
- ❖ Spend at least 15 minutes in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament each day.
- ❖ Read the Bible for at least 15 minutes daily.
- ❖ Meditate on the Passion of Christ for at least 15 minutes every day.
- ❖ Observe fasting as an act of penance.
- ❖ Reflect on the Way of the Cross.
- ❖ Follow a vegetarian diet, avoiding fish and eggs.
- ❖ Set aside at least 10% of your earnings for charity.

## **Lenten Practices in Our Diocese:**

- ❖ Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are designated as days of fasting and abstinence. On these days, the faithful are encouraged to consume only one meal and refrain from eating meat.
- ❖ All Fridays of the year are to be observed as days of abstinence from meat.
- ❖ In addition to fasting and abstinence, believers are encouraged to engage in acts of mercy and charitable works as guided by the Bishops' Conference.
- ❖ Many faithful in the diocese choose to fast for all 40 days of Lent, consuming only one meal daily. This practice is commendable, and we should continue to remind and encourage one another to embrace it.

## **Campaign Against Hunger and Disease:**

From Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday, the Church runs a special Campaign against Hunger and Disease in India. The savings from our Lenten sacrifices can be contributed toward this noble cause. Let us use this season as an opportunity to let go of bad habits and excessive lifestyles, embracing instead the humility and simplicity of Christ. May our sacrifices help provide food and care for the poor and the hungry.

I request all Parish Priests to guide their parishioners in these Lenten practices and provide each family with a mite box, which they will return on Palm Sunday as an offering of their sacrifices. Let us use this time of grace to draw closer to God, deepen our faith, and serve those in need.

**3. International Women's Day (March 8):** I extend my warmest greetings to all the women in our Diocese and pray that God's blessings be upon them in abundance. I deeply appreciate the invaluable contributions of women religious in the pastoral mission of our Diocese. May this day be a meaningful occasion to recognize and honor the vital role of women in the Church. I also extend my gratitude to ORBIT, Seva Sangama, and all the faith-based organizations (FBOs) dedicated to women's development across our Diocese. A special thanks to our religious Sisters, along with social workers, coordinators, and animators, for their dedicated efforts in empowering women. I kindly request that March 9, Sunday, be observed as Women's Day in all parishes. Additionally, ORBIT's programs will take place on March 11<sup>th</sup> in Gulbarga and on March 18 at ORBIT, Humnabad.

**4. Celebration of Jubilee Year 2025 by Catholic Women in the Diocese:** Thanks to Women Commission that has planned Women's Jubilee Programme with the theme, "Women, Pilgrims of Hope" at Bidar (St Joseph's) on 16<sup>th</sup> and at Cathedral Church on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please encourage and support all women in their Jubilee Celebration.

**5. Anniversary of the Election as Supreme Pontiff Pope Francis (March 13):** Cardinal George Mario Bergoglio was elected as the 266<sup>th</sup> Pope of the Church on March 13, 2013. Inspired by the great example of St. Francis of Assisi, he chose the name

"Francis." We thank God for his leadership in the Church and his influence around the world. As he now faces health challenges, let us earnestly pray for his well-being and ask God to bless him with strength, good health, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**6. Solemnity of St Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary (March 19):** St Joseph is revered as the patron saint of the Catholic Church, fathers, migrants, workers, and numerous parishes and institutions within our diocese. He is depicted as a just man and serves as a model of faith for all believers. As a worker, he embodies the dignity of labor and the fulfillment found in serving others, making his life an inspiring example for those engaged in various professions. I encourage the youth in every parish to take the lead in celebrating the Feast of St Joseph by honoring their fathers during this feast. Let us entrust our mission diocese to his loving care.

**7. CCBI Letter to the Priests, Sisters and Lay faithful in all dioceses:** Our 200 Bishops of Latin Rite came together at Bhubaneswar on 27<sup>th</sup> January -4<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to deliberate on the theme, "Discerning Synodal Paths for the Mission" focusing on 10 priorities: Formation and Synodal way of life; Children and Families, Youth, Digital Technology and Social Media, Laity and engagement in public life, Basic Ecclesial Communities, Poverty and equitable economy; Ecology, Climate and Justice; Migrants, refugees, indigenous people and Dalits; Women and gender justice, Ecumenism, Inter-Religious Dialogue and peace building. The CCBI assembly has addressed the church in India - all the dioceses- Bishops, Priests, Sisters and Lay faithful. I request all the Parish Priests to read this letter (enclosed) and explain the content of it to all people on one of these Sundays.

Diocesan Pastoral Plan: The CCBI has prepared a Pastoral Plan for India involving Bishops, Regional Secretaries of all Commissions, Priests, Sisters and Lay faithful almost around 5000 people across India. The CCBI Pastoral Plan for India: MISSION 2033 was released on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 is acclaimed as a model for all countries as well. Based on this (National) Pastoral Plan, all the 14 Regions in the country have prepared their Regional Pastoral Plans. The Karnataka Region, the KRCBC has come up with 'Renewing the Church – A Pastoral Plan for the Church in Karnataka (2024-2027)', was released on 05<sup>th</sup> January 2025, Jubilee Inauguration Day. Based on this Karnataka Pastoral Plan, already several dioceses (Udupi, Shimoga, Bellary, Karwar and Chikmagalur) have prepared their Diocesan Pastoral Plans (DPP).

You are aware, we are going to have a DPP Planning session on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> March. We expect all the Secretaries of various commissions, Parish Priests, Superiors of all the religious communities, Deans and CRI office bearers to attend this programme. Most Rev. Gerald Isaac Lobo, Bishop of Udupi and National Chairman of Pastoral Plan Implementation Committee and Fr Anil Prasad, Coordinator KRPP have kindly consented to facilitate the planning. Kindly cooperate. We are aware the dates are not suitable. But then, we can't get resource persons so easily according to our convenience. Please understand.

**8. MCA Jubilee 2025, Gulbarga Deanery:** was a grand success. Thanks to the Parish Priest, Assistant Parish Priest of Cathedral Parish all the Parish Priests of Gulbarga Deanery, Animators and Fr Abhishek Moses, Secretary of Evangelization Commission for their tireless efforts that made it a memorable event. We are indeed happy about children participating so well in the liturgy, talks, praying and various educative entertainments.

I appreciate and thank MCA children and Animators, Parish Priests for their mite box contribution of Rs 50,516.00 the children at Bidar and Gulbarga offered during the Jubilee programmes. I implore God's blessings on them all. Please take a moment to view the list of parish/mission and the corresponding amounts contributed by children on MCA Jubilee programmes. We appreciate their generosity towards the poor and needy children. Please convey my thanks to all the children and Lay Animators.

Sl. No	Name of the Parish & Place	Amount
01	St. Joseph's Church, Bidar & Jamgi	2200.00
02	St. Anthony Church, Hulsoor	2010.00
03	Holy Redeemer Church, Bhalki	1600.00
04.	Maria Ashram, Jalasangi	4250.00
05	Mary Pavada Mathe Church, Itga	2339.00
06	St. Lawrence Church, Talmadgi	1476.00
07	Holy Cross Church, Santhpur	1158.00
08	Christ the King Church, Ujini	7160.00
09	Sankalpa study home, Gulbarga	400.00
10	St. Thomas Church, Shahabad	1300.00
11	Queen of Heaven Church, Chittapur	1207.00
12	St. Francis of Assisi Church, Halbarga	1000.00
13	St. Joseph the Worker Church, Muchalama	380.00
14	Orbit, Humnabad	751.00
15	Sacred Heart Church, Bidar	8160.00
16	St. Paul's Church, Ekamba	200.00
17	St. Ann's Church Wadi	1444.00
18	St. Ann's Church , Sedam	347
19	Kamalnagar	494.00
20	Mother of Divine Grace Cathedral, Gulbarga	12640.00
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>50,516.00</b>

**9. Prathibha Trust (KRCBC Unit)** Office was inaugurated by Most Rev. Francis Serrao, Bishop of Shimoga at 'Prabhodana' premises (Regional Pastoral Centre Bangalore) on 16 January 2025. It is a KRCBC venture to promote our youth into government services offering partial or full financial support towards their yearlong intense coaching in one of the best institutes. The Trust will call for applications from eligible candidates desiring to appear for KAS, IAS and other competitive exams and after due process of selection offers scholarships to at least 5 candidates every year. An orientation and training will also be given to High School and PU students from June this year onwards. Please be in contact with Fr Assisi, Secretary of Regional Education Commission, mob: 9448780714. Let us promote Catholic children to participate in this programme.

**10. From the Procurator:** 1. The Final Audit of the Diocese of Gulbarga, CDSB and Pre-primary Schools will be held immediately after Easter i.e., on 22<sup>nd</sup> April onwards. Please keep ready the accounts and submit them by 10<sup>th</sup> April.

**2. Please submit all the pending Earmarked collections and Mission center collections on 3<sup>rd</sup> March when you come for the recollection.**

**Please mark in your diary:**

**FAITH FORMATION CAMP 2025:** 05-09 April for Gulbarga Deanery  
12-19 April (Holy Week) for Bidar Deanery  
**SANKALPA/PRERANA CAMP 2025:** 21<sup>st</sup> April to 10<sup>th</sup> May

## Commissions Speak:

**Commission for Family Life:** A Marriage Preparation Course will be held at ORBIT on the 29<sup>th</sup>& 30<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Kindly announce and send the eligible participants to attend this program.

-Fr Salvadore Fernandes, Secretary, Commission for Family Life

**Commission for Catechetics:** Faith Formation Camp for the children during summer vacation will be held from 5<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> April for Gulbarga Deanery and from April 12<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> for Bidar Deanery. Please keep these dates blocked. More information will follow.

-Fr Deepak Furtado, Secretary, Commission for Catechetics

**Commission for Youth:** Career Guidance Programme will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> April at ORBIT.

-Fr Sachin Christy, Secretary, Commission for Youth

**Commission for Women:** Women's Jubilee programme will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> March for Bidar Deanery at St Joseph High School Hall, Bidar and on 23<sup>rd</sup> March will be for Gulbarga Deanery at Cathedral Church, Gulbarga.

-Sr Maria Reeta AC, Secretary, Commission for Women

### BISHOP'S PROGRAMME: MARCH 2025

- 01 - Parish Feast, Itga
- 02 - Confirmation, Chittapur
- 03-04 - Clergy Recollection
- 05 - Ash Wednesday
- 06 - ORBIT/SevasangamGB Meeting
- 08 - Pastoral Planning/Consultors' Meeting
- 09 - Confirmation, Bidar
- Village Visit, Hunaji
- 12 - Finance Committee Meeting
- 13-17 - School Evaluation & Presenting of the Budgets
- 15 - Holy Communion Mass – Neo-catholics Church
- 16 - Women Cell Jubilee Programme, Bidar
- 19 - Blessing of Holy Family Parish House, Kamalnagar
- 23 - Women Cell Jubilee Programme, Gulbarga
- 25-28 - Bishop's Retreat, Bhadravati



† Robert Miranda

Kripalaya, Bishop's House  
01 March 2025

**Bishop of Gulbarga**

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR FATHERS AND SISTERS

<b>03</b>	Sr Daisy L. SCB, <i>Hulsoor</i>	<b>19</b>	Sr Roseline Paul SMMI, <i>Talmadige</i>
<b>03</b>	Fr Stany Lobo, <i>Vicar General</i>	<b>20</b>	Fr Bibin Jose SDB, <i>Chikpet</i>
<b>06</b>	Sr Anu Savariamamma SSA, <i>Wadi</i>	<b>21</b>	Sr Aloka DC, <i>Jalasangi</i>
<b>07</b>	Sr Lavisha D' Souza BS, <i>Humnabad</i>	<b>21</b>	Sr Benita Gonsalves SCCG, <i>Kankal</i>
<b>08</b>	Fr Deepak Thomas OCD, <i>Kadaganchi</i>	<b>22</b>	Sr Apoline UFS, <i>Vijayapura</i>
<b>08</b>	Sr Sulochana UFS, <i>Shorapur</i>	<b>27</b>	Fr Abhishek Moses, <i>Bidar</i>
<b>11</b>	Sr Anita Antony UFS, <i>Shorapur</i>	<b>28</b>	Sr Rishika Rose CSST, <i>Shahabad</i>
<b>11</b>	Sr Shwetha JMJ, <i>Kamalnagar</i>	<b>29</b>	Fr Ronald Serrao SJ, <i>Vijayapura</i>
<b>12</b>	Sr Grace Lima CSST, <i>Shahabad</i>	<b>29</b>	Fr Steevan Lawrence SDB, <i>Chikpet</i>
<b>12</b>	Sr Amala Rani SJT, <i>Vijayapura</i>	<b>30</b>	Sr Kamala A. SCCG, <i>Bhalki</i>
<b>19</b>	Fr Vincent Thoras, <i>Jalasangi</i>		



## News February 2025

**Holy Cross School Inaugurates Second Floor and Celebrates Annual Day (February 07, 2025):** The Holy Cross School marked a significant milestone with the blessing and inauguration of its newly constructed second floor, with its Annual Day celebrations. The event was graced by Bishop Robert Miranda, Former Provincial FrRoque, Present Provincial Superior Fr Lawrence D'Ameida, Council members, and several priests and religious from the deanery. The occasion was further enriched by a vibrant and well-executed performance by the children, showcasing their talents. Congratulations to Fr. Martin and his team for their dedicated efforts in making this project a reality.

**The Day of the Consecrated Life (February 08, 2025):** The Diocese of Gulbarga joyfully observed the Day of the Consecrated Life at the Mother of Divine Grace Cathedral, bringing together religious priests, sisters, and brothers from various congregations. The event served as a time for reflection on their vocation and commitment to the Church. Rev. Fr Lawrence D'Almeida, Provincial Superior of the Holy Cross Fathers, the resource person for the day spoke on the theme "Religious as Pilgrims of Hope," emphasizing faith, perseverance, and hope in fulfilling Christ's mission amid challenges. The gathering was a spiritually enriching experience, strengthening the commitment of consecrated persons in their dedicated service to the Church and society.

**Gulbarga Deanery Celebrates MCA Convention (February 15, 2025):** The Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) of Gulbarga Deanery held its Jubilee Day at the Mother of Divine Grace Cathedral, with around 95 children from various parishes of the Deanery. FrAbhishek Moses, Secretary of the Evangelization Commission, delivered an enlightening talk on the missionary nature of the diocese, followed by Confession and Adoration. The highlight of the event was the Holy Eucharistic Celebration, presided over by Most Rev. Dr. Robert Miranda, Bishop of Gulbarga, along with priests. Engaging competitions such as Bible Patana, Bible Skit, Bible Quiz, and Fancy Dress were organized to encourage learning and participation.

**Christ the King Church, Ujini, Celebrates Silver Jubilee (February 16, 2025):** The faithful of Ujini joyfully marked the Silver Jubilee of Christ the King Church, celebrating 25 years of faith and service. The event began with a grand procession of the Jubilee Cross, followed by a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by the Bishop of Gulbarga. A vibrant stage program featured Inter-religious dialogue, cultural performances and Bhajan competition. Fr Sunil Andrade, Parish Priest was honored for his dedicated service. A documentary on the mission's 25-year journey was presented by Fr Christopher. The celebration was a testament to the unity and deep faith of the community, making it a memorable and spiritually enriching occasion. Over 2000 people participated in the event.

**GDES Institutions Conduct Evaluation of Education Apostolate (February 26, 2025):** The Managers and Heads of Institutions under the Gulbarga Diocesan Education Society (GDES) spent a full day evaluating the Education Apostolate of the diocese. The session provided a valuable platform for analysis, leading to important decisions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the ministry. The event was well-organized by Regional Secretary Fr Francis Assissi and FrSteevanVeigas, GDES Secretary, ensuring a productive discussion. Participants engaged in meaningful deliberations, focusing on improving educational initiatives across institutions.