

Ubi Deus, Ibi Spes  
જ્યાં પ્રભુ, ત્યાં આશા  
Is 40:31; Rom 8:5



THE BARODA DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

For Private Circulation only



JAN-FEB 2025

Pilgrims of Hope  
2025



### POPE FRANCIS AT THE OPENING OF THE HOLY DOOR AT THE MIDNIGHT MASS

Let us learn a lesson from the shepherds. The hope born this night does not tolerate the **indifference** of the complacent or the lethargy of those content with their own comforts – and so many of us are in danger of becoming **too comfortable**; hope does not accept the faux prudence of those who **refuse to get involved for fear of making mistakes**, or of those who **think only of themselves**. Hope is incompatible with the detachment of those who **refuse to speak out against evil** and the injustices perpetrated at the expense of the poor. Christian hope, on the other hand, while inviting us to wait patiently for the Kingdom to grow and spread, also requires of us, even now, to **be bold, responsible, and not only that but also compassionate**, in our anticipation of the fulfilment of the Lord's promise. And here perhaps it will do us good to ask ourselves about compassion: **do I have compassion? Am I able to suffer-with?** Let us reflect on this. On reflecting on how often we accommodate ourselves to the world and conform to its way of thinking, a fine priest and writer prayed for a Blessed Christmas in these words: **"Lord, I ask you for a little annoyance, a touch of restlessness, a twinge of regret. At Christmas, I would like to find myself dissatisfied. Happy, but not satisfied. Happy because of what you do, dissatisfied by my lack of response. Please, take away our complacency and hide a few thorns beneath the hay of our all-too-full 'manger'. Fill us with the desire for something greater"** (a. pronzato, La novena di Natale). **The desire for something greater. Do not stand still. Let us not forget that still water is the first to become stagnant.**

### POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS

#### JANUARY

##### For the right to an education.

Let us pray for migrants, refugees and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, might always be respected.

#### FEBRUARY

##### For vocations to the priesthood and religious life

Let us pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life.

## JUBILEE YEAR MUSINGS

એમના માએ આ બધી વાતો પોતાના હૈયામાં સંઘરી રાખી.

+Seby Mascarenhas

It was too much of a coincidence for me to read that Mary, *"treasured all these things in her heart"* (Lk 2:51) on December 29, 2024 as we inaugurated the Holy year and then *"pondered them in her heart"* (Lk 2:19) just three days later on January 1, 2025. Somehow, the more I think of the Jubilee Year, the more I think of these two phrases that imply *listening, discerning, being humbly receptive*.



Blessing of Water at the Rosary Cathedral

It is actually the core spirituality that enables us to be synodal or even Christian. To me the main challenge of the Jubilee Year would be to enable ourselves and our faithful on this path of listening, discerning and humble reception as a community. How could we do it?

The Synod has given us a three fold path that is intricately connected to each other. They point out to *'pondering or treasuring in the heart'*

COMMUNION - I understand **communion** as the constant awareness of presence of the indwelling God at every moment of our lives. It is our basic sacramental spirituality. At Baptism we believe that we are possessed by the



Opening at the Pilgrimage Church, Bardipada



# JUBILEE YEAR MUSINGS

એમના માએ આ બધી વાતો પોતાના હૈયામાં સંઘરી રાખી.

Divine - The Holy Trinity. Every Sign of the Cross is an affirmation of God in us.

The Eucharist has always been the centre of this awareness. Jesus willed that he be one with us. I love the turn of phrase in Luke 2:19 and Luke 2:5 in Gujarati: હૈયામાં સંઘરી રાખી.

How could we create ambiances to bring our people to this awareness? . Could we have children and youth to interact in small groups where we can bring in silence and listening? How do we train our people to listen to the Word of God? We have so many children in our hostels. Do we have time to interact with them and give them this core awareness? How could our Eucharist be really the place for **humble receptivity**?

Prayer and Worship, Adorations etc are one way to get this awareness. However sometimes we can get carried away with the communitarian awareness that is created but the personal awareness might be lost. Small Christian communities, small adult groups, small groups of children and youth with our personal touch and presence could make a big difference. The number of our parishioners is not too big. **This could be our Core Ministry.**

I do not stop repeating St Teresa of Avilas inspiring hymn: *Christ has no body now but yours, no hands no feet on earth but yours, yours are the feet with which he walks, yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.*

**PARTICIPATION:** We always think of all people delegating or committees as participation. It is much deeper and is connected with Communion. The same Spirit dwells in us all. It implies genuine respect when discerning the Spirit together. It is not mere discussions and meetings that are merely functional and organisational. They are not discernment oriented. It is about allowing the Spirit to draw us together. that leads us to walk together. Even worse, it is sometimes understood that participation is sharing of power.



The Pope has insisted that we evolve the method of **Spiritual Conversations** at all levels. No amount of increased structures involving all will be functional unless we really allow the Spirit to lead us as a community.

Some may think that our poor people may not be able to understand it. Are we not patronising them? Do they not have the same Spirit? Or do we not have the skills or time to bring them to it? Our PPCs, DePCs or DFCs can be effective only if they are truly participative in this sense; or else they will be disruptive. It is a slow process but it will create an attitudinal change.

**MISSION:** He died for us. He gave his body for us. God sent his only Son. Mission necessarily follows from Communion and Participation. It is about reaching out and intra.

Ad intra, without excluding other groups, as indicated in our offertory procession for the opening of the Jubilee Year, Children and Youth are our first priority. It is not about events and competitions. It is about enabling them in Communion and Participation. It would have to be in small groups. It is not just for those who are always there. It is our concern to reach out to those who are not in the fold, on the periphery. That is mission.

The Poor and the Migrants are on the periphery. Genuine compassion comes from genuine Communion and Participation. Could each parish take up a project for the very poor.

True communion will allow true participation in the lives of the poor and the needy: it will be inclusive i.e it will reach out within the Church to those on the periphery and outside the church to those who need us.

Our commitment and enthusiasm will be the key to lead the people in the Holy Year. Our leadership is crucial; our witness is essential.



## JUBILEE YEAR INAUGURAL MASS ROSARY CATHEDRAL - WITH ALL PARISHES OF VADODARA DEANERY



As indicated in the Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year, the Diocese of Baroda had a solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist with the participation on Rosary Grounds with the participation of all parishes of the Vadodara Deanery.

Beginning with a solemn opening on the basketball grounds, the procession wound around the streets of Rosary Cathedral and solemnly entered the Rosary Grounds. The Bishop blessed the Waters and the people were reminded of their union with Christ in the sacrament of Baptism.

Bishop Seby explained the meaning of COMMUNION with God that happens especially in the Sacraments and concentrated on the Eucharistic celebration. He led the people to celebrate the Eucharist devoutly through his explanations at each part of the Eucharist. Explaining participation he noted that it implies discerning the Will of God together on the journey. This would lead us to genuine Mission – within our families, our parishes and specially to people in need. He stressed that each of us has the gift of the Spirit and therefore each of us is called to participate fully. We need everyone to be involved he said, more altar servers, more youth, more agewans... who genuinely commit themselves to discern God's will as a community and act according to it.

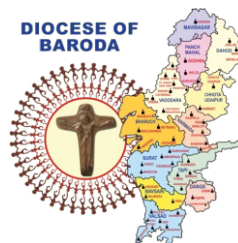
Symbolically at the offertory procession as signs of Communion, the Bible, the Catechism and the Rosary were offered; as signs of Participation the Monstrance, Canon Law, PPC statutes were offered; as signs of Mission Children and Youth, Migrants, the Poor and Ecological effects were offered. They effectively focus on the goals of the diocese for the Jubilee Year - Spiritual Renewal, Discernment of the Community and Reaching out within and outside.

Thanks to the Rosary Parish and all the PPs, it was a touching celebration.





# OFFICIAL - JANUARY 2025



## COMMITMENTS OF THE BISHOP JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2025

01	Amodar Celebration
03-4	In Daman
06	First Death Anniversary of Fr John Lobo at Deidapada
09	Deanery Wise Recollection for Diocesan Priests
10	Inauguration of Narmada Deanery Pastoral Council
12	Youth Leaders Meeting
14	Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting
17	Meeting with Provincial of St Ann, Bharuch
18	Inaugural of Panchmahal Deanery Council
19-20	Pastoral Visit and Confirmation, Vyara
24	Annual Day, Lourdes Convent, Surat
26	Morn: Confirmation in Dediapada Ev: Feast Mass at Our Lady of Forsaken Shrine
27 - Feb	4 CCBI Meeting in Bhubhaneshwar
11 Feb	Gai Savar, Sagbara
12 Feb	Korvidhamni Mata Maria
16 Feb	Visit to Kawant
23 Feb	Confirmations in Zankhvav
26 Feb	Pan Diocese MahaMela of Women at Jhagadia

## PLEASE PRAY

### BIRTHDAYS

04-01-1964	Fr. Machado Robert
05-01-1975	Fr. Ravi Kumar
05-01-1982	Fr. Ohariya Anand
09-02-1978	Fr. Bijendra James
14-02-1972	Fr. Lobo Vincent
19-02-1946	Fr. Fonseca Albert
20-02-1982	Fr. Baraik Jaychand

### DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

06-01-2024	Fr. Lobo John
15-01-2019	Fr. Uttam Dodi
19-01-1986	BISHOP IGNATIUS D' SOUZA
05-02-2012	Fr. Arasure Muthu
23-02-2008	Fr. Arthur Menezes

### ORDINATIONS

19-01-2021	Fr. Baraik Jaychand
27-01-2001	Fr. Fernandes Duarte
30-01-2016	Fr. Jesu Raj
31-01-1998	Fr. Patel Julius
06-02-2010	Fr. Devassy Joseph

#### CONTACT

**FINANCE ADMINISTRATOR: FR. VINCENT MACWAN**

**Off: 70163 48788      Pers: 98795 05766**

**Email: procuratorbaroda@gmail.com**

#### Sub: Your Pilgrimage places, a few hints

Dear Fathers, Jesu, Manu, Thomas, Rajesh, Aubrey, Francis R, Francis D'Sa, Rakesh,

It is a great privilege to have your Churches/Shrines as places of pilgrimages for the Jubilee Year. Your places indeed have the ambience for devotion and piety. Pilgrimages are a tradition in the Gujarat Church and they are loved by the people. In this context as the hosts, may I request the following?

1. Please facilitate people coming to your places with hospitality and your time.
2. Please be available for confessions and mass (on weekdays) if groups of lay people come by themselves.
3. Your own initiative to offer them confession (with good preparation) and mass might make it really spiritual for them. Explaining the Mass and celebrating it in a pious ambience would help people grow. It need not be long (winded).
4. Please explain to them about what an indulgence is and how it is obtained, especially by works of mercy. Please explain it in the context of the Jubilee Year, as a year for reconciliation.
5. It would be good if you have a special prayer of your place as well, especially in places of devotion (like prayer to Korvidhamni Mata Maria etc..) This would give it a special feeling. You may also make a small poster of the meaning of your place of devotion (or the Church) and its history for pilgrims to know. The cultural museum in Bardipada would be a good place for people to see.

Above all our personal presence, warmth and witness will help people grow in their holiness.

United in prayer, IN Christ,

+ Sebastião Mascarenhas sfx

Sebastião Mascarenhas, sfx  
Bishop of Baroda





# FROM THE MAGISTERIUM

## SELECT EXTRACTS FROM THE DECREE ON INDULGENCES

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/05/13/240513f.html>

### INDULGENCES IN THE JUBILEE YEAR

*(All texts from the Bull of Indiction and the Decree on Jubilee Indulgences are in italics)*

#### WHAT IS AN INDULGENCE

We are weak humans. We sin. We have mortal sins

*The sacrament of Penance assures us that God wipes away our sins. There, we allow the Lord to erase our sins, to heal our hearts, to raise us up, to embrace us and to reveal to us his tender and compassionate countenance.*

*However as we know from personal experience, every sin "leaves its mark". Sin has consequences, not only outwardly in the effects of the wrong we do, but also inwardly, inasmuch as "every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death, in the state called Purgatory". in our humanity, weak and attracted by evil, certain residual effects of sin remain. These are removed by the indulgence, always by the grace of Christ, who, as Saint Paul VI wrote, "is himself our indulgence".*

**SIMPLY SAID, WE MAKE GOOD THE HARM WE HAVE CAUSED WITHIN OURSELVES AND FOR OTHERS WHEN WE SIN.**

#### CONDITIONS TO OBTAIN AN INDULGENCE

All the faithful,

- i. who are truly repentant and free from any affection for sin (who are moved by a spirit of charity and who, during the Holy Year,
  - ii. purified through the sacrament of penance
  - iii. and refreshed by Holy Communion,
  - iv. pray for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff,
- will be able to obtain from the treasury of the Church a plenary indulgence, with remission and forgiveness of all their sins, which can be applied in suffrage to the souls in Purgatory in the following ways:

#### JUBILEE INDULGENCES IN THREE WAYS, once the conditions above are fulfilled

##### I PILGRIMAGES

*The faithful, pilgrims of hope, will be able to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence granted by the Holy Father if they undertake a pious pilgrimage: by visiting the Cathedral or other church or sacred place designated by the local Ordinary. Bishops will take into account the needs of the faithful as well as the opportunity to reinforce the concept of pilgrimage with all its symbolic significance, so as to manifest the great need for conversion and reconciliation; At these places,*

- i. You may participate at Holy Mass ( the Mass of the Jubilee might fruitfully be chosen, or one of the Votive Masses: for Reconciliation, for the Remission of Sins, for the Promotion of Charity or to Foster Harmony) OR
- ii. a celebration of the Word of God;
- iii. the Liturgy of the Hours (office of readings, lauds, vespers);
- iv. the Via Crucis; (Stations of the Cross)
- v. the Marian Rosary;
- vi. a penitential celebration, which ends with the individual confessions of the penitents, as in the Rite of Penance

**I declare the following Churches as Pilgrimage Churches for the Jubilee Year in the Diocese of Baroda**  
**ROSARY CATHEDRAL, VADODARA**  
**ST ANTHONY CHURCH, VALSAD**  
**CHRIST THE ROCK CHURCH, BARDIPADA**  
**ST JOSEPH CHURCH, DAHOD**

##### II PIOUS VISITS TO PLACES OF DEVOTION

*Likewise, the faithful can obtain the Jubilee Indulgence if, individually or in a group, they devoutly visit any Jubilee site and there, for a suitable period of time,*

*engage in Eucharistic adoration and meditation, concluding with the Our Father, the Profession of Faith in any legitimate form, and invocations to Mary, the Mother of God, so that in this Holy Year everyone "will come to know the closeness of Mary, the most affectionate of mothers, who never abandons her children" (Spes non confundit, 24).*



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<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/05/13/240513f.html>

*The places for the dioceses would be: any minor basilica, cathedral church, co-cathedral church, Marian sanctuary, any distinguished collegiate church or sanctuary designated by the diocesan bishop or Eparchy for the benefit of the faithful, and national or international sanctuaries, "sacred places of welcome and privileged spaces for the rebirth of hope" (Spes non confundit, 24),*

**I declare the following places for Pious Visits in the Diocese of Baroda**

**OUR LADY OF FORSAKEN, VADODARA**

**DIVINE MERCY, UMERGAON**

**KORVIDHAMNI MATA MARIA, DEDIAPADA**

**SRUSTI GYAN, UNAI**

### III - WORKS OF MERCY AND PENANCE

The Indulgence is also linked to certain works of mercy and penance, which bear witness to the conversion undertaken. The faithful, following the example and mandate of Christ, are encouraged to carry out works of charity or mercy more frequently, especially in the service of those brothers and sisters who are burdened by various needs. More especially, they should rediscover these "corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead" (Misericordiae vultus, 15) and rediscover also "the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead" (ibid.).

In this way, the faithful will be able to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence if they visit, for an appropriate amount of time, their brothers and sisters who are in need or in difficulty (the sick, prisoners, lonely elderly people, disabled people...), in a sense making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them (cf. Mt 25, 34-36) according to the usual spiritual, sacramental and prayer conditions. The faithful I can repeat these visits throughout the Holy Year, even daily, acquiring a plenary indulgence each time.

The Jubilee Plenary Indulgence can also be obtained through initiatives that put into practice, in a concrete and generous way, the spirit of penance which is, in a sense, the soul of the Jubilee. In particular

- I. the penitential nature of Friday can be rediscovered through abstaining, in a spirit of penance, at least for one day of the week from futile distractions (real but also virtual distractions, for example, the use of the media and/or social networks), from superfluous consumption (for example by fasting or practising abstinence according to the general norms of the Church and the indications of the Bishops), as well as by donating a proportionate sum of money to the poor;
- ii. by supporting works of a religious or social nature, especially in support of the defence and protection of life in all its phases,
- iii. but also by supporting the quality of life of abandoned children,
- iv. young people in difficulty,
- v. the needy or lonely elderly people,
- vi. or migrants from various countries "who leave their homelands behind in search of a better life for themselves and for their families" (Spes non confundit, 13);
- vii. it can also be obtained by dedicating a reasonable portion of one's free time to voluntary activities that are of service to the community or to other similar forms of personal commitment.

#### PLEASE NOTE

Indulgences (remission) free the sinner from his/her obligation to indemnify the harm sustained by others (obligation to making good for the harm). However, through remission, the indemnification (making good for the harm) does not happen. It can happen only when the harm is undone/ compensated/ made good, etc. In many cases, actual indemnification may not be even possible. Through indulgence, the sinner gets remission from his obligation to make good for the harm. The victim of his/ her sin, the one who bore the brunt of his/ her sin does not get any relief. In your example the boy who hit his friend, through indulgence may receive remission, but the one who got, does not get the harm he suffered made good (indemnified). Indulgences free the sinner from the obligation to indemnify.



# PICWORDS – INTER RELIGIOUS MEET

*Let the Children Speak*

23.12.2024 – Religious Leaders meet with School Children

The traditional meeting of Religious leaders and neighbours at Christmas had a different flavour this time! Instead of speeches from the leaders, we asked children of five different schools to present carols or skits and give a special Christmas message to each of the leaders. It was a delightful exchange which all the leaders appreciated and



applauded. In fact, the leader of the Ramkrishna mission told us the very next day that he has told his people that children should be given more chances in their functions and we should listen to them! In the spirit of Synodality and listening, all participants sat in circles and all activity took place in the centre. It was a challenge for all of us who are used to a different way. Children presented Carols and gave brief messages in simple child friendly language.

## WE REPRODUCE THEIR MESSAGES FOR

Y



"You should remember that the heart of the devotee is the abode of God". What a beautiful thought from Sri Ramkrishna. Christmas is Immanuel: God among us.

And Jesus said: "Unless I dwell in You, you can do nothing. And so Ramkrishna saw God in every person and did good to them for God is love.

You have so many institutions to do good to all peoples. Like Jesus said: "Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me.

Christmas is a good feeling. It is about doing good. May I wish you a Very Good Christmas, Sir.



I



Dear Sir, I looked into the dictionary and I saw that Islam means 'submitting to the Will of God'. I then saw 'Salam Alaikum' and it means Peace be with you. What a beautiful thought. We submit to the Will of God' and so we shall have Peace.

Christmas took place because Mary said: Let your will be done. And so the angels sang: Peace on earth, when Jesus was born. Jesus always said: Peace be to you.

No wonder you pray 5 times a day to submit to God and bring peace in the world. We wish you Peace at Christmas. Salam Alaikum.





# PICWORDS – INTER RELIGIOUS MEET

*Let the Children Speak*

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I read that Zarathushtra gave a simple creed: Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds. That is all we need. The Ahura Mazda, the all creator you believe in, is represented by Fire. Fire puts away darkness. Fire purifies and shows what is true. The Good triumphs over the Bad.

In fact the Bible also says: In Jesus was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Jesus also said, Blessed are the pure, for they shall see God. He said: I am the Truth and the Life.



Truth, Life, Purity. May we all stand for them as we celebrate Christmas. Happy Christmas



Jainism asks us to live in the right way with right speech, right thought and right action in our lives. What a beautiful world it would be.

What I find even more beautiful is the way you respect all life and try to protect all life. It is such a beautiful lesson for all of us in today's world.

Jesus himself said: Look at the birds of the air, look at the lilies of the field, they neither sow nor reap and yet your Heavenly Father takes care of them!" He said: Do unto others as you would want them to do unto you.

May we all speak to each other gracefully, think of each other without prejudices, act with one another in Love as we celebrate Christmas. Merry Christmas



Of the many thoughts you have on your website about how we can make the world a better place. I chose these for me: Only a powerful soul can offer love. Only a powerful soul can afford to be humble. If we are weak, then we become selfish. The moment we stop trying to change others and start changing ourselves, things around us

begin to change. Hence should cultivate Shubhbavna good feelings and Shubkamna good wishes for all irrespective of race, caste or religion or gender.

At Christmas these are beautiful thoughts for us. The angels sang: Peace to all people of Good will. The best sentence about Jesus in the bible is: He went about doing good. The Our Father tells us to forgive others so that this earth be as good as it is in heaven.

With Shubhbhavna and Shubhkamna, may I say Happy Christmas to all of you.



The program was beautifully anchored by Natasha of Rosary Parish. All the Principals, Parish priests and Superiors participated with the children. It was conducted under the Diocesan Commission for Dialogue by the Chairman Fr Vincent Lobo.



## WESTERN REGION MEETINGS WRBC, WRCC, LABOUR COMMISSIONS

### WESTERN REGION BISHOPS COUNCIL AND CATHOLIC COUNCIL MEET



Sr. Kokila Macwan, Shrey Macwan, Darren Lobo, Maya Rebeiro, together with Fr. Joel Pais (WR Secretary for Theology and Doctrine) and Fr. Vincent Lobo (WR Secretary for Ecumenism and Inter Religious Dialogue) participated in the Western Region Catholic Council Meeting in Sarvodaya Mumbai from December 14 to 15, 2024. The meet discussed the challenges of the Synodal Journey in the Jubilee Year. With a talk from Fr. Gilbert Lima, Spiritual Conversations led by Bp John Fernandes and coordination by Fr. Simon Almeida, it was very fruitful and enriching experience. The question of the Catholic Council for the Laity was discussed as it needed better functioning. Earlier the Bishops met with the CRI representatives.



### WESTERN REGION LABOUR COMMISSION TRAINING PROGRAM

Sr. Jeyasheela Pushparaj RMI

The Workers India Federation (The Official Organization of CBCI OFFICE for Labour ) organised "Formation & Strengthening Of Regional And Diocesan Structures" on 10th December 2024 at Animation and renewal centre , Santhom Nagar, Panvel - Navi Mumbai .

35 participants included laity, priests and nuns from Western Region level. Sr. Jeyasheela Pushparaj RMI and Mrs. Indira Ben represented the diocese of Baroda.

Miss. Feliza D' Souza the Regional General Secretary of the WIF delivered the report of the last year events.

Fr. George Thomas Nirappukalayil

Secretary, CBCI OFFICE for Labour & National Director Workers India Federation- NEW DELHI presented the Workers India Federation-Roles & Responsibilities and Empower the Unorganized Workers. Summit Lakra the General Secretary of WIF presented the involvement of the Government in each states for the socio and economical upliftment of the labourers. Sr. Jasmine Jose the coordinator of WIF presented the " Catholic Social Teaching" she emphasized on the Encyclical Rerum Novarum of Pope Leo XIII .

Following these sessions the group discussion was held for action plans. The dioceses from each state came together and discussed the possibilities of establishing the Federation Forum in their own states. The archdiocese of Goa and Maharastra presented their successful work with the migrants Demestic workers.

This programme brought all the 16 dioceses come together and learn to work in their respective states for the labourers and to actively participate at CBCI level.







St Anthon Prathmik Shala celebrated 100 years of its foundation with a grand function at the School grounds on December 21, 2022. Fr. Ravi, the Director of Education for over 465 Jesuit Schools in South Asia was the Chief Guest. Fr. Alpesh Macwan represented the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits.

This primary will remain the proverbial mustard seed that sprouted education in the Diocese of Baroda. Begun in challenging times it has become the catalyst for education in the diocese and having influence even further. In his brief speech, Bishop Seby highlighted how



the Pilar Fathers were eager to send their children to the boys and girls boardings in Bharuch and how these alumni form a very important part of the Church of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

In fact, Bharuch was the launching pad for the missions of South Gujarat. The Antonshala spirit spread to the whole of South Gujarat. Bharuch itself is perhaps the beginnings of Christianity in the Western areas. The late Fr. Juan Samada, SJ, the Founder of the Institution, along with Fr. Devasia Karakkal, SJ and other Jesuits were fondly remembered

Fr. Kamlesh Raval presented the report of the school. A vibrant presentation of the life of St Francis Xavier enthralled the audience besides other dances and songs.

In the presence of several dignitaries, staff and students, the Science Laboratory was blessed by Bishop Mascarenhas and inaugurated by Dr. Mitesh Nadiadwala, Scientist at ISRO.

We congratulate Fr. Micky Guedes, the PP, Fr Kamlesh and Fr Sanjay for the great celebration.







Led by Fr. Savio Silveira, the Provincial Superior of the St Francis Xavier Province of the Salesians with a large number of Salesian p[riests and nuns, and joined by the faithful, clergy and religious of Baroda, the Salesian community thanked God and celebrated 50 years of their service and commitment in the diocese of Baroda. The solemn Eucharist was presided over by the Bishop of Baroda. Seby Mascarenhas. Bishop Rethna Swamy was present on the occasion.

Fr. Silveira highlighted how the Salesian community discerned the missionary challenges, especially in the Panchmahal district.

Bishop Seby highlighted three characteristics of the Salesian communities that he has experienced over the years. Quoting Redemptoris Missio 90, he said that **the characteristic of every authentic missionary life is the inner joy that comes from faith**. He said that he found this joy among the Salesians. He further appreciated their dedication to the poor, being authentic to the charism of their founder. He lauded the Dosti project, the Disha project, the street children projects where there was a real outreach to the poor. He finally appreciated the simplicity of life of the Salesians which forms the spiritual base for their work with the poor.

On the occasion a book on the impact of Mahila Mandals by Fr Mayank Parmar was released.





PICS**WORDS** – JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS – 50 YEARS  
22.12.2024 FULWADI, DHARMAPUR



A huge congregation of people joined Fr. Durai Fernando, the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits and other priests and religious in celebrating the golden jubilee of the mission of Dharmapur. With small beginnings in a difficult terrain (both physically and socially) Msgr. George Chagan and Fr Cyprian Mendonca began the mission in 1974. Fr. Aubrey Fernandes put the firm foundations for the mission. The mission was assigned to the Jesuits in 1994.

The mission has the largest boys hostel and girls hostel (Canossa) in the whole diocese and perhaps in the whole of Gujarat.

Fr. Reji Madathikunnel, thanked God for the mission and for the opportunity to serve the people in His name and all those who have laboured over the years in the mission Diocesan priests, Jesuits, Canossian Sisters, Catechists and others. A memorable souvenir was released on that day. **Missions like Fulwadi are witness to the yeoman service of the Church.**







The diocese of Ahmedabad, created on May 5, 1949, celebrated 75 years of its existence at a in Salun on the 1st of December 2024. It was a joy to see thousands of faithful and hundreds of religious and clergy join in the celebration. Bishop Rethnaswamy presided over the Mass and Archbishop Thomas proclaimed the Word of God.

The Diocese is now a very stable portion of the people of God. We congratulate all the faithful and the pastors.





## GUJARAT'S RELIGIOUS SISTERS FORUM EMPOWER THEMSELVES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Sr. Renuka Macwan



A transformative three-day workshop was held at MANRESA, Sevasi, Gujarat, from November 28th to 30th, 2024. Organized jointly by the Gujarat Religious Sisters Forum, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, and the Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR), New York, the event brought together 28 dedicated Catholic sisters from 13 congregations.

Under the guidance of esteemed experts like Ms. Brinelle D'Souza from TISS and the dedicated efforts of Sr. Renuka Makwna FC, the workshop aimed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to champion human rights and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By deepening their understanding of international human rights frameworks and local realities, the sisters are now better prepared to address pressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation.

The workshop delved into various topics, including the 17 SDGs, majoritarian nationalism, minority rights, and effective advocacy strategies. Renowned experts from TISS and JCoR facilitated the sessions, sharing insights and practical tips. Rohit Prajapati, a renowned environmental activist, spoke of Gujarat's development model, highlighting issues like environmental degradation, human rights violations, and social inequality. He argued that the state's focus on superficial growth has neglected crucial areas like healthcare and education.

Ms. Azima emphasized a human rights-based approach to sustainable development. She criticized the government's tendency to treat citizens as beneficiaries of schemes rather than rights-holders. She called on participants to empower marginalized communities through advocacy and participation. Addressing concerns about the persecution of Christian institutions, she urged resilience and continued advocacy efforts. The day concluded with a powerful street play highlighting environmental issues in Gujarat, sparking further discussions on the state's current political and social landscape.

The day concluded with a powerful street play by the Bhuniyad group, highlighting environmental issues in a specific region of Gujarat. The performance left a profound impact on the audience, sparking discussions on the current political and social situation in the state.

## ADVENT RECOLLECTION OF DIOCESAN PRIESTS



Diocesan priests meet at Advent, Lent and at the beginning of the Year for a recollection together. It is a great joy for all the priests to meet together Fr. Isaac Arackaparambil was the animator for the recollection. A few priests could not make it as they had scheduled trips to Goa for the exposition. But all who could attended. It was an opportunity to make one's confession and prepare ourselves for the Great Feast so that we can prepare others.



**PICSWORDS**  
VARIOUS EVENTS



**CONFIRMATIONS IN SAGBARA PARISH**



**CHRISTMAS FOR THE WISE IN UNAI**



**JUBILEE  
YEAR  
OPENING  
IN  
CHOTE  
UDAIPUR**

**VISIT OF THE SVD GENERAL COUNCILLOR  
FEAST OF THE RMIS IN AKOTA**







Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Prefect for the Dicastery for Evangelisation was in Pilar Goa to address the Superiors of the Missionary Societies for Apostolic Life,. The biennial meet with 29 Superiors from all over the world was hosted by the Society of Pilar. He also presided at the Feast Mass of St Francis Xavier in Old Goa. Bp Seby moderated the session where His Eminence took questions from the audience. Fr. Simon Thomas sj conducted a session on Spiritual Conversations for the participants. Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao and the Apostolic Nuncio Leopoldo Girelli were also present.



On the evening of the 24th of December, the Ramakrishna Mission of Vadodara has a tradition of singing Christmas carols and reading the entire story of Christmas from the Bible.

Bp Seby Mascarenhas briefly addressed the gathering to convey to them the message of Christmas. It is a long tradition of the Mission on Christmas eve.