



# DIOCESE OF VARANASI

F U L L N E S S I N T R U T H

CIR NO. 03/2017

April 30, 2017



*Lord, join me on the road, enter into my closed room; open my mind and heart to discover your entire presence in my life.*

My dear Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

Grace, Mercy and Peace of Christ Jesus our Risen Lord !

1. The Season of Easter fills us with joy, peace and hope. Apostle Paul in I Cor. 15 says, “Give thanks to God, (he) gives us the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord” (V.56). For the onward journey of the days ahead the way is peaceful, full of joy in the certitude that the Lord is living. We are called to walk ‘on a high plateau’, go far beyond the physical world into a spiritual intimacy with the risen Lord. After his resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and friends and revealed that he was no longer subject to the laws of ‘flesh’; ‘they knew it was the Lord” (Jn 21:12). They also know, they no longer can be with him as before. He said, “Do not cling to me” (Jn 20:17). The disciples kept looking at him and were full of joy.

The joy of risen Jesus flows from the love he shares with his heavenly Father. Joy always implies newness, renewal, change. It is a movement out of the place of death into the place of life which is ever new and delightful; it is a state of constant ecstasy in which we always experience the joy of being alive fully.

The joy of the disciples is enhanced by the promise of Jesus that the Holy Spirit will guide them “into all the truth” (Jn 16:13) and they were to be “witnesses to these things” (Lk 24:48).

Who is a witness? We must ask ourselves! Holy Father Pope Francis helps us to understand: “A witness is a person who has seen, who recalls, and [who] tells. **See, recall, and tell:** these are three words which describe the identity and mission. A witness is a person who has seen with an objective eye, has seen reality, but not with an indifferent eye; he has seen and has let himself become involved in the event.

For this reason, one recalls, not only because she knows how to reconstruct the events exactly, but also because those facts spoke to her, and she grasped their profound meaning. Then a witness tells, not in a cold and detached way, but as one who has allowed himself to be called into question and from that day changed the way of life. A witness is someone who has changed his or her life.

The content of Christian witness is not a theory; it's not an ideology or a complex system of precepts and prohibitions or a moralist theory-, but a message of salvation, a real event, rather, a Person: it is the risen Christ, the living and only Savior of all. He can be testified to by those who have personal experience of him, in prayer and in the Church, through a journey that has its foundation in baptism, its nourishment in the Eucharist, its seal in Confirmation, its continual conversion in penitence.

Thanks to this journey, ever guided by the word of God, every Christian can become a witness of the risen Jesus. And his or her witness is all the more credible, the more it shines through a life lived by the gospel: a joyful, courageous, gentle, peaceful, merciful life. Instead, if a Christian gives in to ease, vanity, selfishness, if he or she becomes deaf and blind to the question of "resurrection" of many brothers and sisters, how can he or she communicate the living Jesus; how can the Christian communicate the freeing power of the living Jesus and his infinite tenderness?

May Mary, our Mother, sustain us by her intercession, that we might become, with all our limitations but by the grace of faith, witnesses of the risen Lord, bringing the paschal gifts of joy and peace to the people we encounter.”

**2. Annual Retreats** – The dates for Clergy Annual Retreat are: **First** - August 28 to September 02 (Pacchmarhi); **Second** – September 25 to 30 (Nav Sadhana); **Third - Charismatic Retreat** - October 22 to 27 in Goa.

**3.** During **summer vacation**, please make sure that your parish / school / station is well attended to and is active with camps etc. It is a good time to clear up the common store and shelves and update the inventory. It would be edifying that all are back to station well in time before school commencing.

**4.** It is a good tradition that we have **May Devotion to Mother Mary** in the month of May. Make the ‘Marialaya’ the point of attraction during the month.

**5.** The message of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India on **Family** is attached herewith. It draws our attention to the importance and urgency of **Pastoral Care** required for the welfare of the Catholic families.

**6.** I sincerely thank every parish / school / community for contributing to various needs of the Church universal. Please find details attached herewith. We can always do better.

**7. Transfers and Appointments** coming into effect in the month of May are given below. Please complete formalities on a mutually agreeable date **before 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017.**

No.	Name	Designation & Place
1.	Fr. Maurice D'Souza	Parish Priest, Chandauli
2.	Fr. Mathew Jayrathan	Parish Priest, Rasulpur
3.	Fr. Sushil Kumar Tirkey	Parish Priest, Hartmannpur
4.	Fr. Antony Raj	Parish Priest, Parjipah
5.	Fr. John Masih	Incharge – Piyaria Mission Resident at Raghapur Centre
6.	Fr. S. Joseph	St. John (Book) Communication Centre
7.	Fr. Amal Dass	Assistant, Bhadohi
8.	Fr. Ajit Kumar	Assistant, Siddiqpur
9.	Fr. Sushil Prakash	Assistant, Sikanderpur
10.	Fr. Sahaya Arul	Assistant, Nav Vani
11.	Fr. Anand Ud gandla	Assistant, Marhauli
12.	Fr. Prem Chand	Assistant, Raghapur Centre
13.	Fr. Sengole D.	Assistant, St. Mary's Hospital Korauta
14.	Fr. Sanjay Bharati	Assistant, Azamgarh
15.	Fr. Andrew Masih	Assistant, Mariabad
16.	Fr. Balasamy	Assistant, Ghazipur Parish
17.	Fr. Brayn Barel	Assistant, Francispur
18.	Fr. Manoj Kispota	Assistant, Shanti Dham Ashram
19.	Fr. Shajan Maria Michael	Assistant, Yesu Dham Ashram
20.	Fr. Dileep Kumar	Staff, Agra Major Seminary
21.	Fr. Sanjay Kumar	Study, Special Education for the Blind
22.	Fr. Antony Vimalan	Study, Pharmaceutical
23.	Fr. Santosh Kumar	Study, Doctoral Studies in Theology
24.	Fr. Naveen Kumar	Study, Rome

Please note, when a priest is transferred he makes every effort to ensure that his successor should not have any inconvenience or difficulty. Any kind of last minute decision or action should be carefully avoided in the interest of the personal reputation.

Yours in the Lord,



+Eugene Joseph  
Bishop of Varanasi

Encl: 2 attachments as above

## Message of the 29<sup>th</sup> CCBI Plenary Assembly to the Church in India

### Promoting the Joy of Love In Our Families

We, two Cardinals, 136 Archbishops and Bishops, representing the 132 dioceses of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), gathered at the Pastoral Centre, Bhopal, for our Plenary Assembly from 31<sup>st</sup> January to 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017 to deliberate, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, on the theme “*Promoting the Joy of Love in our Families*”. The choice of this theme was prompted by the epoch-making Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*[1] (Joy of Love), which was the outcome of the 2014 and 2015 Synods on the Family. The Apostolic Exhortation reviews the current situation of families in the light of the Church’s perennial teaching on marriage and family especially, with regard to unity and indissolubility of marriage (cf. Mt. 19:3-6; Eph. 5: 22-31) with a view to building up stable, fruitful and joyful families and offering help to those who do not fully meet the Christian ideal of marriage and the family. Our Lord Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd always remains as a model of our ministry to the family. Indeed the family is God’s precious gift to human society and to the Church.

The theme of the family as the “Domestic Church” has been the subject of frequent reflection by the Bishops of India.[2] Aware that “the welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and of the Church” (*AL* 31), the 29<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly (2017) took up this theme for reflection anew.

At our current Plenary Assembly, we were fortunate to have His Eminence Lorenzo Cardinal Baldisseri, the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, Rome, who enlightened us on the historical background and the thrust of *Amoris Laetitia*. We were enriched by the frank and faith-filled sharing of some Catholic couples from various parts of our country – a couple who had been present at the 2015 Synod; a father of a mentally challenged child; a single-parent, and others who spoke with utter sincerity and openness about their marital journey with all its ups and downs, joys and sorrows. We were edified by their deep faith in God, their prayer life nourished by the word of God and participation in the Holy Eucharist, and their dedication to ministry in the Church as lay people. We realize that these couples who spoke to us are just a few of the many Catholic families which, despite many difficulties, remain faithful to the Church’s teaching on marriage and make possible for their children a truly Christian upbringing. Such families are nurseries of vocations for the priesthood and religious life. Seeing this, we are filled with joy in the Spirit and would like to thank our families for the service they render to the Church and to society.

At the same time, we are aware that there are some shadows. More than 300 million people in our country are subject to poverty and deprivation, especially in the rural areas, with little access to basic health services, educational facilities and employment opportunities. Many of them are afflicted by evils such as domestic violence and alcoholism. Among the poor, women and children are the ones who suffer the most. A large number of families have not been sufficiently catechized. Migration too has had a strong impact on marriage and family life. The media, with all its beneficial effects, have often exercised a deleterious influence on family life.

Part of the problem is that ordained ministers are not adequately equipped to help families cope with the complex problems they face (cf. *AL* 202). Priests also need to know how to harness, for the pastoral care of families, the many Family Movements and Associations with which the Church is blessed.

As pastors responsible for our faithful, we took into serious account the varied and diverse situations regarding marriage and family across various regions of our country. We have sketched out a **Plan of Action** which will be made specific and implemented in stages by each diocese, according to its needs and resources. As Bishops, primarily responsible for the family apostolate, we wish to state:

The content of our pastoral plan for families will always include the “culture of life” (cf. Gen.1:28, 3:20; *Evangelium Vitae* 87).

We will focus, in the first place, on adequate **Preparation for Marriage**, updating, wherever necessary, the present Marriage Preparation Courses. We want to emphasize especially Christian Family Education programmes in our schools and colleges with a view to helping young people discover the dignity and beauty of marriage (cf. *AL* 205-216), without minimizing the call to priestly and religious life.

Priests and religious will keep in touch with families through regular family visits and devise structures for **accompanying** couples, especially in the first years of marriage (cf. *AL* 217-238). We will enlist the help of experienced married couples, Parish Family Cells, SCC(BEC) networks and the Family Movements and Associations in our dioceses. Wherever needed and feasible, we will establish Family Service Centres with counselling facilities to help couples facing difficulties.

In particular, with a careful process of **discernment** we will reach out to those who for several reasons feel **estranged from the Church** (divorced, divorced and civilly remarried, cohabiting partners, etc.). We keep in mind the words of Pope Francis: “what is urgently needed today is a ministry to care for those whose marital relationship has broken down” (*AL* 238). We want all to feel the maternal love of the Church in such a way that they experience the merciful embrace of the Father from which no one is excluded.

We will ensure that our priests, religious, catechists and pastoral workers receive **better training** for family ministry. In particular we will insist that seminarians “receive a more extensive interdisciplinary and not merely doctrinal formation in the areas of engagement and marriage” (*AL* 203) and will have exposure to family situations under the guidance of their formators.

We realize that there are certain **families that need special care**: families living in dire poverty, families with spouses of two different religious traditions, single parent families, families with differently abled children, grieving and bereaved families, migrant families, families with sick and elderly members (cf. *AL* 247-253). We pledge to support and accompany these families in whatever way possible.

Responding to the call of Pope Francis, we will show a respectful attitude to those who have not been provided with adequate pastoral care such as transgenders, people with different orientations, etc.

Dear families in Christ, Pope Francis so well says: “The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church” (*AL* 1). We ourselves experienced this joy while deliberating on the family in the light of the Holy Spirit. You are God’s precious gift to the Church. We are grateful to Pope Francis for so courageously highlighting the need of a merciful approach to families especially to those living in difficult situations.

Along with other Christian families and those of other faiths, you are called to journey together to become witnesses of God’s tender love and mercy in this world, which has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

May Mary, the Queen of the Families and St. Joseph her chaste spouse intercede for our families to enable them to live in justice, peace, love and joy in the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 14:17).