

PROCLAIM

A Magazine for Missionary Animation

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*Journeying in Hope:
Embracing Christmas,
Living the Mission,
Towards Jubilee 2025*



Congratulations



Proclaim congratulates its beloved Editor
Msgr. Ambrose Pitchaimuthu, on his appointment
as the Bishop of Vellore.

Episcopal Ordination on 9 Dec '24, 4:30 pm.
Vellore

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A season of hope, renewal and mission



In the Universal Church, the Synod for a Synodal Church (2021–2024) has now concluded. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has clearly affirmed that the purpose of synodality is mission. We also stand on the threshold of another great celebration: the Holy Year of Jubilee in 2025, commemorating 2025 years since Christ's birth, with the motto *Pilgrims of Hope*. These two significant events invite us to reflect on our mission in light of *Ecclesia in Asia*, which celebrates its silver anniversary this month.

As we step into Advent, we enter a sacred season of hope and preparation, both a time to reflect and an opportunity to renew our commitment to the mission of Christ. Advent invites us to ready our hearts not only to commemorate Christ's first coming but also to anticipate His final return. This dual focus of the season — rooted in both humility and hope — calls us to a life of active proclamation, making Christ's love visible in the world around us. Here in India, with our cultural diversity and spiritual heritage, this mission holds immense meaning.

Christmas follows Advent with its wondrous celebration of God-with-us, a revelation of divine humility amidst humanity. In the poverty of the manger, we see God's choice to come close to the poor, the marginalized, and those who thirst for justice and peace. This humble incarnation is a model for our own approach to mission in India, where many still seek the light of Christ amid social, economic, and spiritual challenges. Each Christmas, we are called to bring the love of Christ into the lives of those around us, especially the vulnerable, by embodying compassion, mercy, and justice.

As we look toward 2025, the Ordinary Jubilee year on the theme *Pilgrims of Hope*, we find an

extraordinary call to renewal and restoration. The Jubilee, rooted in the biblical tradition, reminds us that God calls us to a life of reconciliation, liberty, and unity. In the context of mission in India, the Jubilee resonates as an invitation to break down the walls of division, to be catalysts for peace, and to renew our solidarity with the oppressed. It calls us to take a fresh look at our own hearts and to bring the Gospel's transformative love to our society and culture.

Our mission in India is unique: we stand as witnesses to the Gospel in a land rich with ancient wisdom, spirituality, and religious diversity. The Pontifical Mission Organizations invites us to embrace this mission by proclaiming the love of Christ with sensitivity, humility, and respect. In a country where faith is lived so vibrantly, our mission is a journey of encounter and accompaniment, where we walk with others, learn from them, and humbly share the Good News of Christ's salvation.

During this season, let us prepare our hearts to welcome Christ anew. At Christmas, may we reflect His love through acts of compassion and unity. And in the spirit of Jubilee 2025, let us commit to the mission of renewal, becoming beacons of hope and reconciliation. This Advent, Christmas, and Jubilee season, may we proclaim through our lives that God is indeed with us in India—inviting, healing, and transforming our world.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis, for appointing me as the Bishop of Vellore. I humbly ask for your prayers, both for myself and for the Diocese of Vellore, as we embark on this journey of faith together.

Msgr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu

Bishop-Elect of Vellore

Director – PMO (India)

The joy of the Incarnation

God's love made flesh

The Incarnation — God becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ — is at the heart of Christian faith and the wellspring of its mission. Through the Incarnation, God's profound love is revealed in a deeply personal way, offering humanity hope, healing, and a new relationship with the Divine. This mystery is central not only to salvation history but to the Church's ongoing mission in the world. Reflecting on the significance of the Incarnation today calls us to live and share the message of God's love made flesh, drawing from Scripture and the Magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church.



1. The Incarnation: God with us

The Gospel of John beautifully captures the mystery of the Incarnation: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This passage reveals that in Jesus, God chose to enter fully into human life and all its struggles. The Incarnation is not merely an abstract doctrine but an act of radical love — a profound sharing in our humanity. God becomes “Emmanuel” or “God with us” (Matthew 1:23), living our experiences, feeling our sorrows, and rejoicing in our joys.

St Paul reinforces this mystery in his letter to the Philippians, writing that Jesus “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7). This self-emptying, known as *kenosis* (self-emptying), is the ultimate expression of God's humility and love. God does not remain distant but steps into the very heart of human existence, transforming it from within. This

presence of God in our midst, through Christ, is the foundation of our Christian mission: to bring this same presence, love, and compassion to others.

2. The joy of salvation and the mission of love

The Incarnation is not simply about God becoming human; it is about God's desire to save humanity and unite us to himself. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, “The Word became flesh to make us ‘partakers of the divine nature’” (CCC 460). Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we are invited to enter a new relationship with God, to share in divine life

itself. This transformative invitation fills Christians with the joy of salvation, a joy that cannot be contained but must be shared with the world.

This joy is not passive; it calls for action. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, emphasizes that the joy of the Gospel “fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus” (EG 1). This joy is the fuel for our mission, propelling us outward to encounter others with the same love that



We at the PMO rejoice over the appointment of our Director, Fr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu, as the Bishop of Vellore Diocese, Tamil Nadu. We thank and praise God for this happy news and wish Fr Ambrose God's blessings for the success of his new ministry.
(See details on Page 24)

Christ showed to the world. The Incarnation reveals that God's love is personal, tender, and sacrificial, calling each Christian to reflect that love through acts of charity, mercy, and service. Our mission, then, is to make God's love tangible in the lives of others, helping them encounter the face of Christ in us.

3. The Incarnation and the Church's mission today

The Incarnation compels the Church to approach her mission as Jesus did: through humble service, solidarity, and a commitment to justice and peace. In today's world, where many feel isolated, marginalized, or alienated, the Church is called to embody the compassionate presence of God by reaching out to those in need. The Second Vatican Council, in *Gaudium et Spes*, emphasizes this mission, stating, "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age...are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ" (GS 1).

In living out this mission, the Church reflects the Incarnation by bringing hope to the world and meeting people where they are. The Church is called to be a "field hospital," as Pope Francis has often described, bringing healing and comfort to the wounded and suffering. Inspired by the love of God made flesh, every Christian is called to be a witness to this healing presence, reaching out to the poor, the forgotten, and the marginalized.

4. The Incarnation: A model of humility and service

Christ's humility in becoming man is a model for us, reminding us that the path to true



greatness lies in self-giving and service to others. Jesus' birth in a lowly manger teaches that God values humility, simplicity, and love above all else. This model of humility challenges us to reject pride, selfishness, and power and to embrace a life of compassionate service.



In *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI highlights that "Jesus' program is a heart which sees," one that is open to the sufferings and needs of others (DCE 31). As followers of Christ, we are

invited to imitate this heart of compassion, to see Christ in every person, especially in the vulnerable and marginalized. The Incarnation calls us to embody this love in concrete acts of kindness and justice, seeking to transform the world by living the Gospel in everyday life.

5. Living the Incarnation: An invitation for all Christians

The Incarnation is not a historical event to be remembered only at Christmas; it is a living reality that transforms us and calls us to a continuous journey of faith. St Teresa of Avila captures this in her words: "Christ has no body now but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours." As Christians, we are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus, embodying His love, compassion, and forgiveness in our own lives.

In embracing the mystery of the Incarnation, we are drawn into a deeper love for Christ and a more profound commitment to His mission. This mystery invites us to recognize that every person is made in the image of God and, as such, deserves respect, love, and dignity. It calls us to cultivate a spirit of gratitude and joy, celebrating the boundless love of God who became one of us.

Conclusion: The joy of God's love made flesh

The Incarnation is the ultimate revelation of God's love, a love that reaches out, sacrifices, and invites. It is a mystery that brings boundless joy and gives purpose to our Christian mission. As we reflect on the

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Good news of great joy

Christmas as a time of evangelization

Fr Dr S Joseph Lionel*



Be not afraid for behold I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord (Lk 2:10-11).

We hear these words every year during the Christmas liturgy. Though we are familiar with these words of the gospel, the Word of God gives new meaning when we ponder over it and meditate in our ever changing life context. I would like to draw your attention to three expressions conveyed by the angel of the Lord: good news, great joy, and all the people.

During the festive season in India whether it is Diwali, Christmas or New Year we hear the expression “good news” often in the advertisements. Different sales, offers and discounts for dress, electronic appliances, mobiles, televisions, and refrigerator may be good news for those who have money to buy. It is definitely not relevant for those who live in huts and do not have money to buy or place where to keep these gadgets. For the poor what some of the state governments give freely during the

festival such as 5 kilograms of rice, sweet box, and cash of 1000 rupees may be good news which is not all relevant for the rich. But the good news of great joy that the angel of the Lord announced is for all people, rich and poor alike, and those who long for the Lord.

As it is reported in the Scripture, the life of Israelites was full of ups and downs. They were constantly enslaved by so many political powers that surrounded them: Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, and during the time of Jesus Romans. Although they received freedom for a while, once again they were enslaved by other nations. Besides these political uncertainties they were under constant threat of natural calamities such as earthquakes, famine and drought. It was in this context that all the people rich and poor expected the





Messiah to come who would liberate them and give true freedom from slavery. It was foretold by Prophet Isaiah. "Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense

before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young" (Is 40:10-11). The word of God revealed through the prophet gave the message of hope. "He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth and the islands wait for his law" (Is 42:4). People expected that messiah would come only when all the people leave their evil inclinations and wicked ways of life. But we see novelty in the birth of the messiah, Jesus our Saviour. It is an unexpected creativity in God's initiative to send the Messiah even when we were sinners. St. Paul expresses this unique initiative of love by God in these words: "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:7-8). Similarly St. John expressed the good news of great joy in the following words: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:16-17).

The good news of great joy is not of a dream world but real. It is hope against hope as we read in Psalms: "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.' The LORD has done great things for us,

and we are filled with joy" (Ps 126:1-3). To we live in a world of instant activity and expect quick results in our work places, exams, financial dealings, relationships, spirituality, and every sphere of human life. Therefore when things do not happen the way we expect to them to happen, we easily get disappointed.

HOPE is the most needed and urgent medicine for the humanity at present. That is why our Holy Father Pope Francis has chosen the theme "Pilgrims of Hope" for this Jubilee Year 2025. If the good news of great joy has to reach all people, Hope is the engine that drives us forward together in a synodal way as the logo for the Jubilee year symbolizes. In the logo people of different continents in different colours hold together the anchor-shaped cross and surf on the rough waves of our life's journey together as a synodal church of hope. In the recent bull "Spes non confudit" (Hope never disappoints. Rom 5:5) the Pope once again instils hope for the Church in its work of evangelization to journey as pilgrims of hope, imitating the model of people in the history of salvation. What we read in the Sacred Scripture is reinforced and celebrated in the Sacred Liturgy.

Waiting in hope is woven into salvation history. People waited for forty years to enter



into the Promised Land; they waited for almost seventy years before they were freed from exile and again for five hundred years for the Messiah to come. This mood of waiting on the Lord in hope is expressed by the Psalmist, "Surely, I wait for the Lord; who bends down to me and hears my cry" (Ps 40:2). In a personal way

during the Christmas season we listen to the testimony of Elizabeth and Zachariah, the parents of John the Baptist, to wait for a child. Finally, as he ministered in the Temple, one day Zachariah heard an angel announce to him, “Your prayer has been heard” (Lk 1:13).

Often we hear people saying “I have prayed and prayed” expressing a tone of despair and frustration. Perhaps we have prayed and prayed, waited and waited for the Lord to answer our prayers. May be we have prayed for healing from sickness, prayed to overcome some personal weakness, prayed for relief from financial or relational entanglement, prayed for conversion of estranged person from the Church and many other such prayer intentions of ours or those who asked for our prayers. Even if it feels as if the Lord has not yet answered our prayer, we can still trust that he has heard us! Hope gives us conviction that God hears us every time we lift our heart to him as God heard the prayer of Elizabeth and Zachariah. God is close to us, closer than we know. And he is working out his good and perfect plans in his own wisdom and timing. It is formation during the year of learning and prayer as a preparation for the Jubilee envisioned by the Church under the synodal initiative by our Holy Father Pope Francis. It does not come all of a sudden. It is a formation, a year-long preparation. We cannot simply push it by saying I know everything and I know how to pray. We



need to constantly train ourselves to wait on the Lord in hope. As St. Paul himself acknowledges this spiritual training or cultivating the habit of prayer guided by the Holy Spirit: “We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans” (Rom 8:26).

I hope that all the priests and religious under the guidance of their respective archbishops/bishops, together with the Christian faithful have engaged in the spiritual formation of learning and praying as a preparation for the Jubilee. If not, at least now, during the short period before Christmas let us merge with this initiative of the Universal Church and motivate in our respective dioceses and parishes so that as a synodal Church we shall have the Jubilee celebration of our salvation. As we are all geared up to inaugurate the Jubilee Year 2025 during this Christmas season let us plunge into this intense spiritual training of prayer, learning to wait on the Lord in hope, because “Hope never disappoints” (Rom 5:5). Let us prepare ourselves to hear the words of angel, “Your prayer has been heard” (Lk 1:13) deep within ourselves so that the good news of great joy may be announced to all people through our mission in this world.

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Continued from Page 4: The joy of the Incarnation

Incarnation, we are reminded that God's love is not distant or detached but is intimately woven into the fabric of human life.

This joyous mystery challenges each of us to make God's love present in the world. By sharing in the mission of Jesus, we bring His healing, peace, and joy to others. The Incarnation calls us to a life of compassion, service, and solidarity, to be a visible sign of

JOY
is the
echo
of
God's life
in us.

God's love in a world that longs for hope and redemption. May the joy of the Incarnation inspire us to live as true witnesses of God's love made flesh.

** The author is the Archbishop of Hyderabad, the Chairman of the Telugu Catholic Bishops' Council (TCBC), and a Member of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. ♦*

A time of waiting, hope and mission

*Fr Dr Rudolph Raj Pinto, OCD**

The liturgical season of Advent marks the beginning of the Church's liturgical year, a period that invites Christians into a time of deep reflection, waiting, and active preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth. Rooted in ancient tradition, Advent is a season filled with



Gregory the Great in the 6th century as a four-week period, which became standard in the Western Church.

The liturgical colour for Advent is violet (purple), symbolizing repentance and anticipation, though rose is used on the third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete

Sunday, signalling joy as the celebration of Christ's birth draws near. Advent is not merely a time of waiting but an active preparation for the fulfilment of God's promises, both in history and in the future.

Advent as a season of waiting and hope

One of the most compelling spiritual dimensions of Advent is its invitation to enter a season of waiting. This waiting is not passive; it is a vigilant and hope-filled anticipation of God's promised redemption. The Advent liturgies and scriptural readings emphasize the prophecies of the Old Testament, especially those of Isaiah, who foresees the coming of a Saviour to bring peace and justice to a weary world. This period of waiting, then, is grounded in hope — a theological virtue that looks forward to the promises of God with confidence, trust, and a fervent longing for God's transformative presence.

This hope is not merely personal but communal. Advent invites the entire Church to a shared vision of renewal, a collective yearning for God's kingdom of justice, peace, and love. In this way, Advent directs our gaze not only toward the cradle in Bethlehem but toward the fulfilment of God's promises at the end of time, where Christ will come again in glory.

Advent as a time of preparation and mission

While Advent is often seen as a time of introspective preparation, it also has an essential outward dimension. Just as John the Baptist called the people of Israel to "prepare the

profound theological meaning, calling believers not only to anticipate the Nativity but also to prepare for Christ's second coming. With its themes of hope, anticipation, and mission, Advent offers a spiritual journey that renews our hearts and deepens our commitment to God's work in the world.

Historical and liturgical background of Advent

The word Advent is derived from the Latin *adventus*, meaning 'coming' or 'arrival.' Historically, it dates back to the fourth century,



when early Christians observed this period as a time of penance and preparation for the feast of the Nativity. Originally, Advent varied in length and observance across different regions, with some traditions extending the season to 40 days as a 'little Lent.' It was later formalized by Pope



way of the Lord” (Matthew 3:3), Advent calls Christians to examine their lives, repent, and actively work to bring Christ's light into a darkened world. This sense of mission is a vital component of the Advent season. It is a reminder that preparing for Christ's coming is not only about personal sanctification but about embodying God's love and mercy to those around us.

The Advent wreath, a tradition dating back to 16th-century Germany, is a beautiful symbol of this preparation. The evergreen wreath represents eternal life, and its four candles, lit sequentially each Sunday, symbolize the progressive light of Christ overcoming darkness. The weekly lighting of the candles serves as a call to action: as we grow closer to the Light of the World, we are also called to reflect His light by engaging in works of charity, justice, and mercy.

Theological themes of Advent

Three key theological themes define Advent: eschatology, incarnation, and mission.

The eschatological focus of Advent is reflected in the readings and prayers that anticipate Christ's second coming, reminding believers of their calling to live in readiness and holiness. The doctrine of the Incarnation, central to the Christmas mystery, underscores God's love for humanity, taking on human flesh in Jesus to redeem the world. Finally, the theme of mission compels Christians to be witnesses of this love, carrying forward the message of Christ's peace and hope.

Eschatology, the study of 'last things,' brings a powerful message during Advent. While

we remember Christ's birth, we are also called to be mindful of His eventual return, which will usher in a new heaven and earth. This awareness of Christ's future coming encourages a vigilant and hopeful Christian life, where every thought, word, and action reflects a life prepared to meet Christ at any moment.

The Incarnation, celebrated at Christmas, also finds special expression in Advent. In contemplating the mystery of God becoming man, Advent becomes a season of awe and wonder, calling believers to reflect on the humility and love of a God who enters fully into the human condition. This mystery of divine presence speaks to God's deep desire for relationship with humanity — a love so profound that it disrupts the cosmos and transforms our lives.

Finally, the theme of mission reminds us that Advent is not a time to retreat from the world but a call to engage with it actively. As we prepare our hearts for Christ, we are also called to extend His love to those around us, especially the poor, marginalized, and those in need of hope. Through acts of charity, justice, and evangelization, Christians participate in the ongoing mission of Christ, bearing witness to His presence in our world.

Advent today: A season of active faith

In our fast-paced, often troubled world, the themes of Advent resonate deeply. The call to slow down, reflect, and prepare can be challenging amidst the holiday rush and commercial distractions. Yet, the message of Advent remains essential: it is a time to re-centre our lives on Christ, to bring our concerns, fears, and hopes before Him, and to rekindle the light of faith that guides us. Pope Francis reminds us, “Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world.”

Today, Advent can be a time to cultivate practices that foster this spirit of waiting, hope, and mission. Through daily prayer, scripture reading, and acts of kindness, we can bring the meaning of Advent alive in our lives. Families

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Jubilee 2025

Reconciliation, renewal and evangelization

*Fr Dr Yesu Karunanidhi**



As we approach the Jubilee Year 2025, the Church invites us to embrace this sacred time as an opportunity for reconciliation, renewal, and evangelization. Inspired by the biblical roots of the Jubilee, outlined in Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61, and enriched by the teachings of Pope Francis, especially in *Spes Non Confundit*, this Jubilee can become a transformative period for individuals and for the Church as a whole.

1. Reconciliation: A call to heal and restore

The concept of Jubilee originates in Leviticus 25, where every fifty years, a sacred time was set apart for the people of Israel to reset their lives. The land would rest, debts would be forgiven, and those enslaved would be freed. “Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you” (Leviticus 25:10). This passage encapsulates the spirit of reconciliation and restoration, emphasizing that relationships should be healed, debts should be settled, and freedom should be restored.

In today's world, marked by division and brokenness, the call for reconciliation is urgent. This Jubilee Year challenges us to seek forgiveness, to heal relationships, and to reconcile with one another. It is a time to bridge divides within families, communities, and even

nations. Inspired by this ancient biblical principle, the Church can serve as a vessel of peace and healing, encouraging individuals to reconcile with God, themselves, and their neighbours. This reconciliation is not merely symbolic; it calls for concrete actions that demonstrate love, mercy, and forgiveness in our daily lives.

2. Renewal: Embracing new life in Christ

Isaiah 61 resonates deeply with the theme of renewal. It describes the Spirit of the Lord anointing the prophet to “bring good news to the poor...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners” (Isaiah 61:1). These verses evoke the promise of transformation and hope, pointing toward a new beginning filled with the joy and freedom of God's presence.

Renewal is central to the Christian life, calling each believer to be “made new” in Christ (Ephesians 4:24). During this Jubilee, individuals and communities are encouraged to seek spiritual renewal by deepening their relationship with God through prayer, Scripture, and the sacraments. It is a time to discern areas in our lives that need transformation and to recommit ourselves to a life that reflects the Gospel. Pope Francis, in



Spes Non Confundit, reminds us of “the hope that does not disappoint,” a hope rooted in Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit (cf. n. 1). This Jubilee Year invites us to embrace this hope fully, allowing it to renew our hearts, minds, and spirits.

3. Evangelization: Spreading the Good News with boldness

Evangelization lies at the heart of the Church's mission, and the Jubilee is an opportune time to reawaken our zeal for spreading the Gospel. The words of Isaiah 61 are once again relevant as we are called "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Isaiah 61:2). This proclamation is not merely for our own communities but is intended to reach all corners of the world. The Gospel is a message of hope, and our world needs this hope more than ever.

In *Spes Non Confundit*, Pope Francis reminds us that "the Church cannot sit still in complacency but must go forth, reaching out to those on the peripheries of society." Evangelization, then, is a call to move beyond our comfort zones, to encounter those who are marginalized, and to share the love of Christ with them. This Jubilee Year encourages the



faithful to engage in acts of service, outreach, and witness, showing by our lives that the Gospel is alive, active, and transformative. The Church, strengthened by the Spirit, is called to be a beacon of light, hope, and love, inviting all people to encounter the living Christ.

Transformative Opportunities for Individuals and the Church

The Jubilee of 2025 is a call to both personal and communal transformation. For individuals, it is a time to reassess one's relationship with God, to find healing and forgiveness, to renew their faith, and to commit themselves to the mission of Christ. For the Church, it is a time to recommit to her mission in the world, to serve as a bridge between God and humanity, and to be a true witness to the Gospel.

Pope Francis' exhortation in *Spes Non Confundit* challenges us to not merely celebrate this Jubilee as a symbolic

year but to embody its spirit in our actions, interactions, and intentions. As he so often reminds us, our faith is not one of passivity but of active love and hope.

Conclusion

As we approach Jubilee 2025, let us take to heart the scriptural foundations and the call from Pope Francis to make this time one of profound change. Leviticus reminds us of the freedom and reconciliation that the Jubilee brings; Isaiah speaks of renewal and joy; and *Spes Non Confundit* calls us to bring the hope of Christ to the world. This Jubilee is not only a celebration but a divine invitation to encounter God's mercy anew, to renew our commitment to Christ, and to share His love with a world in need.

May this Jubilee Year 2025 be a true time of reconciliation, renewal, and evangelization, transforming us and the Church to live ever more faithfully as the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

** Rev Prof Dr Yesu Karunanidhi, a priest of the Archdiocese of Madurai, currently serves as the Executive Secretary to the Commission for Bible, Conference of Catholic Bishops of India. He is also the National Coordinator for Synod and Jubilee 2025. He can be contacted at www.yesukarunanidhi.in ♦*

Holy Mass for the Dead

*Fr Dr Merlin Rengith Ambrose**

Introduction

November is traditionally a month dedicated to remembering our departed loved ones. Many visit their graves to offer prayers or request holy Masses for the dead. During this time, we continue to pray for those who have gone before us in faith, trusting they may be embraced by God. A significant day for commemorating the faithful departed is All Souls' Day. However, the practice of praying for the dead is unfortunately declining in contemporary society because they are unaware of the teachings of the Church in this regard.

Magisterium on Holy Mass/Prayers for the dead



Offering Mass for the faithful departed is closely linked to our belief in purgatory. We believe that if someone dies with

faith in God but still has venial sins, God's love and mercy will purify that soul. Once purified, the soul can attain the holiness necessary to share in the beatific vision in heaven. In the case of the deceased in purgatory any benefit is received passively, since the soul is no longer capable of performing new meritorious acts. While such a soul is already saved, it cannot increase in sanctity but only purify those imperfections which impede its definitive entrance into glory.

The practice of offering holy Mass for the deceased is not new. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) asserts, "From the beginning, the Church has honoured the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic

Sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God" (CCC 1032). This tradition has deep roots in the Old Testament. Judas Maccabees offered prayers and sacrifices for the Jewish soldiers who had died wearing pagan amulets, which were forbidden by the Law. II Maccabees reads, "they turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out" (12:42) and "Therefore, he (Judas Maccabees) made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin" (12:46).

Throughout the early history of the Church, we find compelling evidence that prayers were offered for the deceased, highlighting a profound belief in the importance of remembrance and intercession for those who have passed. Inscriptions uncovered in tombs in the Roman catacombs of the second century are evidence of this practice, e.g., in the epitaph on the tomb of St Abercius (d. 180), Bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia, requests prayers for the repose of his soul; St Tertullian in 211 attested to observing the anniversary of death with prayers; likewise, the Canons of Hippolytus (c. 235) clearly insists on the offering of prayers for the deceased during the holy Mass.

The testimony of the Church Fathers beautifully supports this belief. St Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386), in one of his many catechetical discourses, explained how at holy Mass both the living and dead are remembered, and how the Eucharistic Sacrifice of our Lord is of benefit to sinners, living and dead. St Ambrose (d. 397) preached, "We have loved them during life; let us not abandon them in death, until we have conducted them by our prayers into the house of the Lord." St Monica asked her son St Augustine to "remember her at the altar" after death. St John Chrysostom (d.

407) stated, "Let us help end commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation?" Pope St Gregory (d. 604) said, "Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers. for them."

In his Encyclical *Mirae Caritatis* (1902), Pope Leo XIII articulated a profound insight, firmly establishing the connection between the communion of saints and the Mass. Faith teaches that although the august Sacrifice can be offered to God alone, it can nevertheless be celebrated in honour of the saints now reigning in heaven with God, who has crowned them to obtain their intercession for us, and also, according to apostolic tradition, to wash away the stains of those brethren who died in the Lord but without yet being wholly purified."

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*) of the Vatican Council II affirmed, "This sacred council accepts loyally the venerable faith of our ancestors in the living communion which exists between us and our brothers who are in the glory of heaven or who are yet being purified after their death" (*Lumen gentium*, no. 51). The faithful can support departed souls in purification through prayers and sacrifices, with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass being the greatest offering. The Holy Mass transcends time and space, uniting the faithful in heaven, on earth and in purgatory into a Holy Communion, and the Holy Eucharist Itself augments our union with Christ, wipes away venial sins, and presences us from future mortal sins (*Catechism of Catholic Church*, nos. 1391-1396). Therefore, the offering of holy Mass and other prayers or sacrifices for the intentions of the faithful departed are good and holy acts. One might ask, "What if the person's soul has already been purified and gone to heaven?" Since we don't know God's judgment or divine



timing, it's meaningful to remember our departed loved ones through prayer and sacrifice. If they are in

heaven, our prayers can still benefit souls in purgatory through God's love and mercy.

What is Gregorian Mass?

The practice of offering holy masses for the departed souls is not limited only to requiem mass or the annual rituals of death anniversaries. They also offer Novena and Gregorian masses. A novena is a series of nine successive Holy Masses, while a Gregorian Mass is an ancient tradition of



offering thirty consecutive masses in 30 days as soon as possible after a person's death for the soul as a petition to God for an early exit from purgatory. Gregorian Masses take their name from St Gregory the Great, who was the Pope from 590 to 604. St Gregory the Great contributed to the spread of the pious practice of having these Gregorian Masses celebrated for the deliverance of the souls from purgatory. In his *Dialogues*, he tells us that he had Masses on thirty consecutive days offered for the repose of the soul of Justus, a monk who had died in the convent of St Andrew in Rome. At the end of the thirtieth Mass, the deceased appeared to one of his fellow monks and announced that he had been delivered from the flames of Purgatory.

Canon Law on the masses for the dead and offerings

Canon 945 recommends earnestly that the priests celebrate Mass for the intention of the Christian faithful, especially the needy, even if they have not received an offering. Canon 948 explains that separate holy Masses are to be offered for the intentions of those for whom a single offering, although small, has been given and accepted. This is the overarching rule; however, because of the infinite value of the Mass and the increasing need to satisfy the spiritual requests of the people with a dwindling number of priests, the Holy See issued a decree in 1991. This decree called *Mos iugiter* [AAS 83 (1991) 436-446] modified the strict rule of Canon 948 and allowed some use of so-called cumulative intentions under the following conditions:



I) The donors must be informed of and consent to the combining of their offerings before the Mass for the collective intention is celebrated;

ii) The place and time of each Mass must be announced with no more than two such collective Masses per week.

iii) The celebrant may only keep for himself one offering (stipend) and must send any excess intentions to the purposes assigned by the ordinary.

The famous prayer for the departed souls

A well-known prayer for those who have died is the Prayer of St Gertrude. St Gertrude was a Benedictine nun and mystic from the 13th century. It is said that Jesus promised her that for every time this prayer is said with devotion, one thousand souls will be released from purgatory: Eternal Father, I offer thee the most precious blood of thy divine son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen. Praying the prayer of St Gertrude together with family members, at least a decade on the rosary beads, is more experiential and comforting than just teaching or preaching, even if it takes time initially.

Conclusion

We, who are alive, can perform acts of charity for our deceased loved ones in purgatory, as they cannot do so for themselves. Our actions can aid in their atonement. The most perfect way to pray for this is through Christ's sacrifice, made present in the holy Mass. When the priest offers Mass for a specific

i



intention, it is Jesus' perfect prayer presented to God, rooted in our love for that person. While we can also pray and engage in acts of self-denial or give alms, nothing is more effective than Jesus' sacrifice. When a loved one passes away, having a holy Mass offered for their soul and praying for them brings more comfort than any sympathy card or flowers. We should offer holy Masses and our prayers to help them to find eternal rest.

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Continued from Page 9: A time of waiting, hope and mission



might consider lighting an Advent wreath together, praying over the week's themes, or engaging in acts of service to reflect Christ's

love in the world.

Conclusion

Advent is a rich and transformative season that calls us into a deeper relationship with Christ. Through its themes of waiting, hope, and mission, it prepares our hearts not only for the celebration of Christmas but for the day when

Christ will come again. In a world longing for light and peace, Advent reminds us that God's promises are sure, His love unfailing, and His mission our own.

As we journey through Advent, may we do so with joyful expectation, ready to welcome Christ into our hearts, our communities, and our world.

** The author currently serves as the Executive Secretary to the CCBI Commission for Liturgy. He can be contacted at rudypintoacd@gmail.com◆*

St Josaphat

1580 -1623

Feast Day : 12 November

St Josaphat was born John Kuncevic, about 1580 in Vladimir, a village of the Lithuanian Province of Volhynia (then a part of the Polish Kingdom begun under the Jagellonian Dynasty). His parents belonged to the Eastern Rite Church of Kyiv (Ukraine) which was then separated from Rome.

When John was just a child, his mother explained the icons in church. Years later he told a friend that he felt a spark of fire leave the wounded side of the Crucified and enter his own heart, which was filled with joy. This event influenced the rest of his life. He began to memorize the Church rituals and psalms. Within him grew the desire to suffer poverty and death for his Saviour.

John's father sent him to Vilno in Lithuania to learn more about the family business. Nevertheless, he spent much of his leisure in reading the lives of the Saints and observing the religious ferment in the local church. The Ruthenians (the ethnic origin of his family) had been evangelized from Constantinople - modern Istanbul - and generally followed the lead of the Byzantine Church there. But because of the absorption of the Ruthenians into the Polish Kingdom, always staunch Roman Catholics, the question of reunion with Rome was hotly debated.

Josaphat's spiritual direction was guided by John Rutsky, a convert from Calvinism and later Bishop of Kiev. Ordained a priest in 1609, Josaphat dedicated himself to preaching,

spiritual direction and caring for the needy. His influence drew over 60 men to the Basilian Order.

The bishops of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Churches who lived within the



Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth held a Ruthenian Synod in 1595 and voted to unite with Rome under Pope Clement VIII. John Kuncevic was fifteen years old. In 1598 seven bishops signed the Union of Brest, which allowed them to retain their Eastern Rites while in full communion with the Pope. Although most of Vilno refused union, John made his profession of faith, then entered the Basilian Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Vilno, and took the name of

Josaphat.

Unable to find adequate spiritual direction among the lax priests of his Order, Josaphat compensated by severe mortifications of reparation for them and for those who had refused communion with Rome. Finally spiritual guidance came in the person of John Rutsky, a convert from Calvinism and later Bishop of Kiev. In 1609 Josaphat was ordained a priest and began his career of preaching and spiritual direction and providing for the needy and homeless. Over sixty men entered the Basilian Order under his influence.

Josaphat was made the superior of a daughter monastery at Byten, where he revived devotion to the Mother of God at Zirovica. Returning to Vilno as archimandrite of the monastery, he began to reform the monks.

There he also compiled texts from the Eastern Fathers and Doctors under the title "A Defense of Church Unity." All these activities led to his being appointed Coadjutor Bishop to the elderly, ailing Bishop of Plock (Plotsk). Subsequently Josaphat became the Bishop of Plock with the title of Archeparch (Archbishop).

The new appointee at once called a synod to revitalize his diocese. He detached his priests from subservience to the unruly nobility and wrote "A Rule for Priests." Most of all he pursued the reunion of all with Rome. The major obstacle was the Orthodox Bishop Meletius Smotrytsky, who was aided by schismatic preachers sent from Constantinople to prevent reunion. The latter spread slanders against Josaphat and, during his absence in Warsaw to plead for reunion, agitated for Josaphat's removal from Plock. Hostility increased when he wrote to prove that St Vladimir, had actually preached the Catholic, not Orthodox faith.

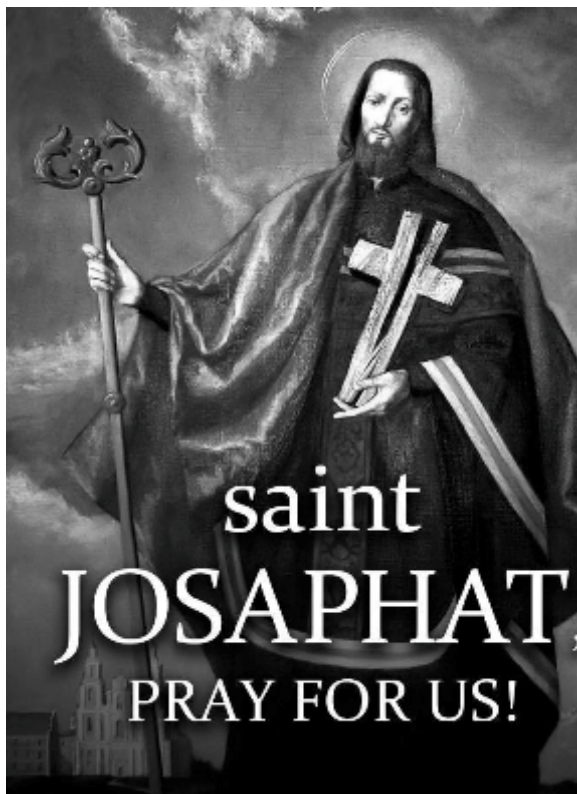
The mob hostile to reunion broke into the courtyard of the mansion where Archbishop Josaphat was staying. He came out of the house, a commanding figure in his black robes and crossed medallions over his breast. He addressed his enemies calmly, "Why are you attacking my servants? Take your anger out upon me!"

Momentarily the mob quieted. Then two schismatics, bolder than the rest, rushed forward and slit his head open with battle-axes. As if that were not enough, they shot him as well, stripped his body, and set wild dogs to tear him apart. Tiring of their terrible sport, the mob threw his body into the river with his penitential hairshirt tied around his neck and loaded with rocks to sink his body. His remains were subsequently recovered and hidden from further desecration.

It has been written that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of Church growth. Among the many miracles consequent to Josaphat's murder was the conversion of those assassins to the Roman union. Thousands of dissidents

returned to the Catholic faith. Most significant, even Bishop Smotrytsky became an ardent supporter of the Pope!

In May 1643, twenty years later, Pope Urban VIII declared him "Blessed." But it was not until June 29, 1867, that Pope Pius IX canonized him "Saint." On November 12, 1923, the tercentenary of Josaphat's martyrdom, Pope Pius XI declared him the heavenly Patron of Reunion between Orthodox and Catholics. During the Second Vatican Council, at the express wish of Pope John XXIII, who himself



was most interested in reunion, the body of St Josaphat was finally laid to rest at the magnificent altar of St Basil in St Peter's Basilica. This took place on November 25, 1963.

Source:

<https://thebasilica.org/josaphat;>

www.franciscanmedia.org;

<https://mycatholic.life/saints>

St Maria Giuseppe Rossello

1811 – 1880

Feast Day : December 07

Foundress of the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy, she was born at Albisola Marina, Liguria, Italy, in 1811, and was baptized Benedetta. She came from a poor family of nine children and was the fourth child. Her father Bartolomeo Rossello worked as a potter while her mother Maria Dedone took care of the children. Though she suffered from poor health as a child, she also helped her parents by taking care of her siblings.

Pious from an early age, Benedetta attempted to join a religious order, but she was denied admission because of her poor health and lack of dowry. However, the pious family she was working for, could have given her a dowry, but they did not because of fear of losing her as a member of the family. They were childless and had an intention of adopting her. Her devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and Christianity facilitated her to become a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis, at the tender age of sixteen.

Bishop De Mari of Savona yearned to find a generous person to take care of neglected children. He thought aloud as he approached a group of girls playing on the street. When Benedetta heard these thoughts, she immediately offered to assist the Bishop. Quickly, Bishop De Mari could see that the young woman had a generous and charitable

heart. He considered her a truly apostolic, God-sent woman destined for great work.

De Mari gave Benedetta and her three co-workers - Pauline Barla, Angela, and Domenica

Pessio - a small house in the city of Savona situated in a street called Vico del Vento. On 10 August 1837, the foundation of the Conservatory of the Sisters of Mercy and Saint John the Baptist was established. Working with the poor and uneducated, Benedetta became the Mistress of Novices. She also had a responsibility in the financial department of the institute, as a treasurer.

Bishop De Mari presented to each young woman a religious habit. He also changed their names to symbolize their commitment to serving God in all capacities. Benedetta was named

Sister Maria Giuseppa otherwise known as Sister Maria Joseph because Saint Joseph was going to be her protector, provider, and father throughout her life. The Sisters in their commitment to God took three vows which were poverty, chastity, and obedience. The institute was named officially; the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy, and the Sisters dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to the work of God.

The Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy experienced rapid growth all over Italy, and South America was not left out. In 1875, 15



...Continued on Page 23

Vatican publishes document on migrations of Eastern Catholics



A Document is sought that will facilitate understanding among Churches of different Rites, reflecting on important questions, such as: what are Latin Bishops requested to do regarding the Eastern faithful present in their dioceses' and without their own hierarchy? How to help an Eastern Pastor working to reach them?

A working group on relations between the Eastern Catholic Churches and the Latin Church was presented to the Synodal Assembly being held in Rome during October 2024. A text was announced there on the pastoral care of the faithful of Eastern Catholics in the diaspora.

The Report — presented to the Synodal Assembly in the Vatican by the group examining the relations between the Catholic Eastern Churches and the Latin Church —, observes the situation of numerous Catholic faithful of the Eastern Rite that have left their historical territories of origin, emigrating due to wars, and political and economic instability.

The study group, appointed by Pope Francis and made up of thirteen experts headed by Hungarian Canonist Péter Szabó, Professor of Canon Law at the Catholic University of Budapest, is working on a Document that the Pontiff will send to the Latin Bishops, on the pastoral care of Eastern Rite Catholics in their diaspora.

The theological questions in the Synthesis Report, elaborated by the Synod at the end of the first Session of October 2023, suggested listening to the “work plans “ of the ten study groups created in February by Pope Francis, which range from formation for the priesthood to listening to the cry of the poor, the exercise of a Bishop's ministry in a Synodal perspective, and women's participation in the life and leadership of the Church.

These small groups will present a Report to Pope Francis before June of 2025, in a work that “is not foreign to the Synodal Way and, above all,

...Continued on Page 23

Proclaim. Nov - Dec 2024

My sister's last Christmas gift

STORY

Judith Preston*



The night my sister died, I had the strangest dream ever. What did it mean?

The salesclerk removed the pair of chandelier earrings from the glass case and dropped them in my waiting hands. They felt real, but I still had trouble believing it. Thin, hand-forged hoops and dangling, delicate chains, all in shimmering gold. I was mesmerized. Time seemed to stop. The department-store clatter faded into the background. Enraptured, I held one up to my ear and looked in the mirror. “A terrific Christmas gift,” the clerk said, cheerily. “For your mother, maybe?”

The spell was broken. The crowd clustered by the shoes and handbags grew loud again. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw my mother walking over from the perfume counter.

“They’re...they’re not for anybody,” I murmured to the clerk. How could I explain to her when I couldn’t even explain it myself? I hadn’t told anybody about the dream, not even my mother.

It was the strangest dream I’d ever had, on the strangest, most terrible night. One month ago, close to midnight, I’d just returned home from a party when the phone rang. My mom was on the other end of the line, breathless, panicky. I held the receiver close to my ear, straining to make out her words.

“It’s your sister,” she said. “She had a brain aneurysm.”

“I’m on my way,” I said, reaching for my keys. It was snowing and the hospital was more than two hours away, but I had to see her. “There’s no point risking the drive at this hour,” my mother said. “The doctor says she’s not going to wake up. Come in the morning.”

I sat on the edge of my bed long

after we hung up, desperate for sleep but scared of waking to a world without Jan. She was only 43. Never again would I hear her voice. Or sit at her kitchen table, eating home-baked treats from her little cookie tin. I crawled under my comforter. I wanted to talk to my sister again, but I wouldn’t get the chance. Instead I spoke into the darkness: “Forgive me, Jan, if I’ve ever hurt you. I love you dearly.”

Sleep came in fits and starts, one odd image breaking into my consciousness. A human ear — shaking, vibrating almost violently. The ear was pierced, and dangling from it was a beautiful gold earring, smooth, perfectly round hoops and fine, tightly linked chains. Was this Jan’s way of letting me know she had heard me? The thought was as confusing as it was comforting.

Jan died five days later, never waking up. In those hard days that followed, it was the vision — strange as it was — that I held on to. I played the dream over and over in my head. The shaking ear and the dangly gold earring that adorned it.



Exactly like the pair of earrings the salesclerk had put in my hand. What did it mean?

“Find anything?” my mother said, joining me by the jewellery counter.

“These earrings,” I said. I lifted them up so she could get a better look. “I...I had a dream about them. The night that Jan...”

Mom gasped and covered her face with her hands. She was so upset, I put my arm around her. “I’m sorry...” I began to say.

“Judith, you don’t understand,” my mother said. “I have those earrings at home. Jan bought them to give you for Christmas.”

Source: <https://guideposts.org/angels-and-miracles> ♦



Take courage! I have overcome the world

The Vatican on Tuesday, Sept 24, unveiled the theme of the next international World Youth Day — which will be in Seoul, South Korea, in 2027 — and the theme of the local World Youth Day happening during the Jubilee Year 2025 in Rome.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell also announced that in Rome on Nov. 24, the solemnity of Christ the King, participants in World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal, will hand over the symbols of the international Catholic gathering — the youth cross and an icon of Mary Salus Populi Romani — to young people from Seoul during a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica.

“This is an evocative 'passing of the baton' that will mark the beginning of the Korean Church's spiritual preparation for World Youth Day,” the prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family, and Life said at a press conference at the Vatican on Sept. 24.

Take courage! I have overcome the world

The theme of World Youth Day 2027 in South Korea (and in 2026) will be: “Take Courage! I Have Overcome the World,” taken from the Gospel of John 16:33.

Next year, World Youth Day will take place as part of the Jubilee Year celebrations in Rome, during the Jubilee of Youth from July 28–Aug. 3, 2025. The theme for the mini World Youth Day 2025 will be “You Also Are My Witnesses, Because You Have Been With Me,” from John 15:27.

The Catholic Church has celebrated World Youth Day (WYD) since the event was first established by Pope John Paul II in 1985. WYD is observed annually in local dioceses, but every several years there is a weeklong international celebration, typically in July or August, drawing hundreds of thousands of people.

The themes for the next World Youth Days “are taken from the Gospel of John. They belong to what is known as Jesus' 'farewell discourse,' when he prepares his disciples to experience the mystery of his passion and death in the certainty of his resurrection,” Farrell said.

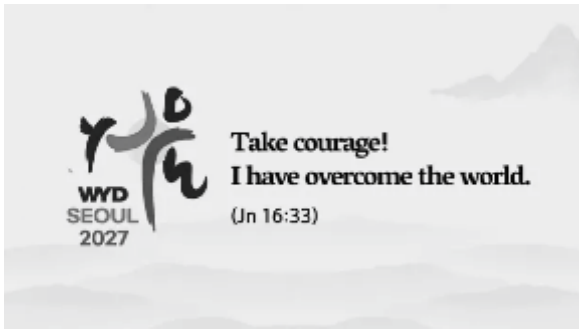
Thematic focus

The two themes, the cardinal said, focus “on witnessing and on the courage that stems from Jesus' paschal victory.” The theme was chosen because the world we live in has become so secularized and “there is a great possibility that young people could lose their hope, could lose their courage to live their faith,” Farrell said.

WYD is an opportunity to encourage young people to evangelize through their lives and example, he said: “Don't change people's ways of living by preaching, do it by actual practice. That's what young people are good at doing. It's not the amount of knowledge they have but the testimony that they give.” We can show young people, he continued, that “we can overcome the problems of the world today, but it takes courage to step forward.”

“Around 1,000 young Koreans are expected to travel to Rome in 2025 for the Jubilee of Youth,” Archbishop Peter Soon-Taick Chung, OCD, of Seoul said at the Sept. 24 press conference. The hope is “that through this pilgrimage, they will come to discern the empowering force of hope bestowed by faith and experience a profound personal encounter with Christ within the universal Church,” he said.





First WYD in predominantly non-Christian country

The archbishop of Seoul said WYD 2027 will be the first of these gatherings to take place in a predominantly non-Christian country. South Korea has nearly 6 million Catholics, just 11% of the total population, according to 2022 statistics from the country's Catholic bishops' conference.

A 2020 survey by a Korean research journal tracking recent religious demographic changes in the country found that now about 50% of South Koreans are nonreligious, while 32% are Protestant Christians and 16% are Buddhist. "We definitely have concrete plans to include people from different religious backgrounds — and those who have no religion — to come together during our preparatory process," the archbishop said.

Bishop Paul Kyung Sang Lee, an auxiliary bishop of Seoul and the general coordinator for WYD Seoul 2027, said Korea has a unique context from past WYD hosts, where the country was mainly Christian, because the Catholic Church in Korea is "characterized by the harmonious coexistence of diverse religious traditions." "Amid the persistent reality as a 'divided nation,' the Church has diligently worked to resolve the conflicts inherent in this division over the past seven decades, seeking peace and unity for the Korean people," he said.

Soon-Taick said young North Koreans will be invited to and welcome at World Youth Day in Seoul, though the current political situation is

unfortunately not favorable for their attendance. "Certainly we hope," he said.

Whether Pope Francis will attend the international youth gathering is unknown at this time, and whether a visit to the country would include a stop in North Korea is dependent on an invitation from North Korea's local leaders, Farrell explained. Pope Francis visited South Korea in 2014. During the five-day trip, he beatified 124 Korean martyrs and took part in the sixth Asian Youth Day.

Charism of the Catholic Church in Korea

"The Korean Catholic Church stands as a testament to the voluntary and dynamic faith of its first believers, who embraced the seeds of the Gospel without the assistance of missionaries, guided by the Holy Spirit," Soon-Taick said.

He added that "the pilgrimage of WYD Seoul 2027 will be more than just a large gathering. It will be a meaningful journey where young people, united with Jesus Christ, reflect on and discuss the modern challenges and injustices they face." "It will be a grand celebration, allowing everyone to experience the vibrant and energetic culture created by Korean youth," he continued. "It will also be an opportunity to immerse in and share the dynamic and passionate culture that Korea's youth have created."



While organizers declined to give a number for an expected attendance at the South Korea World Youth Day, Farrell noted that attendance at World Youth Day in Lisbon in

2023 exceeded expectations. He said they planned for approximately 750,000 participants but were unprepared for the estimated 1.5 million young people who ended up attending. "I believe that there will be a similar surge of visitors and young people to World Youth Day in Seoul," the cardinal said. ♦

Hannah Brockhaus

www.catholicnewsagency.com 25.09.2024

The Synod on synodality

In a significant departure from previous synods, Pope Francis adopted the final document of the Synod on synodality on Saturday, forgoing the traditional apostolic exhortation in favor of direct implementation of the assembly's conclusions.

The 52-page document, approved by 355 synod members in attendance, outlines substantial proposals for Church renewal.

Key developments

The document emerges from a two-year consultative process that began in 2021, incorporating 1,135 amendments from both collective and individual submissions.

Compared with its 2023 predecessor, the text presents more concrete recommendations and clearer structural guidelines.

Structural reforms

Among the most significant proposals is a call for strengthening pastoral councils at parish and diocesan levels. The document advocates for regular ecclesiastical assemblies across all Church levels — including continental — and heightened ecumenical dialogue.

The text introduces the concept of synodal authority while acknowledging that in “a synodal Church, the authority of the bishop, of the episcopal college, and of the bishop of Rome in regard to decision-taking is inviolable.” “Such an exercise of authority, however, is not without limits,” the document adds. On this view, the text calls for a revision in canon law, “clarifying the distinction and relation between consultation and deliberation and shedding light on the responsibilities of those who play different roles in the decision-making process.”

Women's leadership

In a notable development, the document explicitly states there is “no reason or impediment” to prevent women from assuming leadership roles in the Church. Furthermore, “the question of

women's access to diaconal ministry remains open,” and that discernment should continue.

The text advocates for increased female participation in clergy formation and broader involvement in Church decision-making processes.

Lay participation

The document significantly expands the role of lay faithful in Church governance. It calls for their increased presence in synodal assemblies and all phases of ecclesiastical decision-making.

New procedures for selecting and evaluating bishops and expanded lay participation in diocesan leadership and canonical processes are proposed.

Implementation phase

While Pope Francis has declared the synodal path “completed,” the document emphasizes that a crucial implementation phase lies ahead. This next stage will focus on integrating synodality as a “constitutive dimension of the Church.”

The text also addresses accountability measures, calling for enhanced financial transparency and protocols for abuse prevention, declaring: “The need within the Church for healing, reconciliation, and the rebuilding of trust has resounded at every stage of the synodal process.”

Background

The document represents the culmination of one of the most extensive consultative processes in Church history, building on both the 2023 assembly's work and the broader synodal journey initiated by Pope Francis in 2021.

The exercise aimed to balance traditional Church teaching with contemporary pastoral needs while promoting greater inclusivity and transparency in Church governance.

CNA, Rome Newsroom, Oct 26, 2024



Continued from Page 17: St Maria Giuseppe Rosello

Sisters were sent to the Argentine city of Buenos Aires where their influence spread to such an extent that foundations were established in Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Peru. In the present day, the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy is firmly established in 19 countries on five continents. These are Africa, Caribbean Islands, North and South America, Italy, India, Germany and Romania.



She died on 7 December 1880 due to heart complications posed by her strenuous work. She was 69 years old. She was buried in Savona at local cemetery. Her Feast Day celebrations are held on 7 December.

Pope Pius XII canonized St Maria Giuseppa on 12 June 1949 at Saint Peter's Square in Vatican City. St Maria Giuseppa is the patron saint of the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy institute. She is also a patron of Potter.

Source: www.catholic.org/saints;
<http://saintoftheday.com>;
<https://catholicsaints.day+>

Continued from Page 18: Vatican publishes document on migrations of Eastern Catholics

the synodal style that we are trying to assume as Church,” said Cardinal Mario Grech, the Synod's Secretary General, who reminded the participants that they are “called to be open to a broader participation of all the People of God.”

The invitation to listen to the contributions, observations and proposals of Pastors, ecclesial leaders and all believers shows the face of the migrant Church, called to preserve her diverse richness in traditions, including the Eastern Churches of origin with faithful outside their circumscriptions. The example of the Eastern Catholic groups, primarily in the United States, invites to seek ways to care for the faithful of these groups.

The Synthesis Report, presented on October 2 in the Synod, warns of problems such as the “Latinization” of Eastern Catholics, which deprives them of their Tradition just as does priests' substitution of the Eastern Rite in spaces of the Latin clergy, abandoning the ministry in their own Churches of origin.



A Document is sought that will facilitate understanding among Churches of different Rites, reflecting on important questions, such as: what are Latin Bishops requested to do regarding the Eastern faithful present in their dioceses' and without their own hierarchy? How to help an Eastern Pastor working to reach them? What ways

of collaboration are possible and appropriate in an area where there are several Rites? What mutual knowledge exists and how can it be improved? How can canonical norms be implemented to foment the pastoral care of Eastern Catholics in the diaspora? What is the Holy See's role in this matter?

The Document's final draft will be presented in the Plenary Assembly of the Dicastery for the Oriental Churches, which will examine and improve it before presenting it to the Holy Father. ♦

ZENIT News , Rome, 14.10.2024

Fr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu appointed Bishop of Vellore

Holy Father Pope Francis has appointed Fr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu (58), a priest of the diocese of Chingleput, currently the Executive Secretary to the CCBI Commission for Proclamation and the Director of Pontifical Mission Organisations, as the Bishop of Vellore, Tamil Nadu. This appointment was made public on November 9, 2024. His episcopal ordination has been fixed for 09 December 2024, at 04:45pm, at Vellore.

Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore formally announced the appointment at the CCBI General Secretariat in Bangalore. During the ceremony, he vested the bishop-designate Ambrose with the traditional symbols of episcopal office: a ring, chain, sash, and skullcap. The auxiliary bishops of Bangalore, Arokia Raj Satis Kumar and Joseph Susainathan, were in attendance, alongside Rev Dr Stephen Alathara, Deputy Secretary General of the CCBI; Rev Dr Yesu Karunanidhi, Secretary of the Commission for the Bible; Rev Dr Merlin Rengith Ambrose, Secretary of Commission for Canon Law, Rev Dr Cyril Victor, Coordinator, Media Apostolate, and Fr Gangula Vignan Das, Associate Director, Communio. Staff members of the CCBI General Secretariat and the PMO Secretariat were also present to witness the occasion.

Fr. Ambrose was born on May 3, 1966, in Cheyur, Tamil Nadu, and ordained a priest on March 25, 1993. He holds a Master's degree in

philosophy from the Catholic University of Leuven and a doctorate in philosophy from Angelicum, Rome. He served as the assistant parish priest at San Thome Cathedral, Chennai, and St Francis Xavier Church, Pallavaram.

He was the parish priest of St Joseph's Cathedral, Chingelput, Sacred Heart Church, Oragadam, and Sagaya Annai Alayam, Padappi. He was superintendent of R C Schools and director of the Jeevan Jothi Institute of Administrative Services (JIAS). He served as Vice-Rector, Registrar, Librarian, and Professor at Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee. He was the Vicar General of the diocese of Chingleput for seven years. From 2018 onwards, he has been the Director of Pontifical Mission Organizations. In 2022 he was appointed as the Executive Secretary to the CCBI Commission for Proclamation.

The diocese of Vellore became vacant by the death of Bishop Soundaraj Periyannayagam, SDB, on 21 March 2020. The diocese was created on November 13, 1952, bifurcating the Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore. In 1969, a few parishes from the Archdiocese of Pondicherry-Cuddalore were attached to this diocese. It comprises two civil districts, namely Vellore and Tiruvannamalai. There are 97 parishes having a Catholic population of 1, 95,000. It has 167 diocesan priests, 93 religious priests and 890 women religious. ♦

Dr Stephen Alathara, Catholic Connect

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions 2024

November: *For those who have lost a child*

The prayer intention for the month of November is for “all parents who mourn the loss of a son or daughter.”

December: *For pilgrims of hope*

In anticipation of the Church's next jubilee, the faithful are asked to pray during the month of December that “the coming Church Jubilee Year 2025 strengthens us in our faith, helping us to recognize the risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope.”

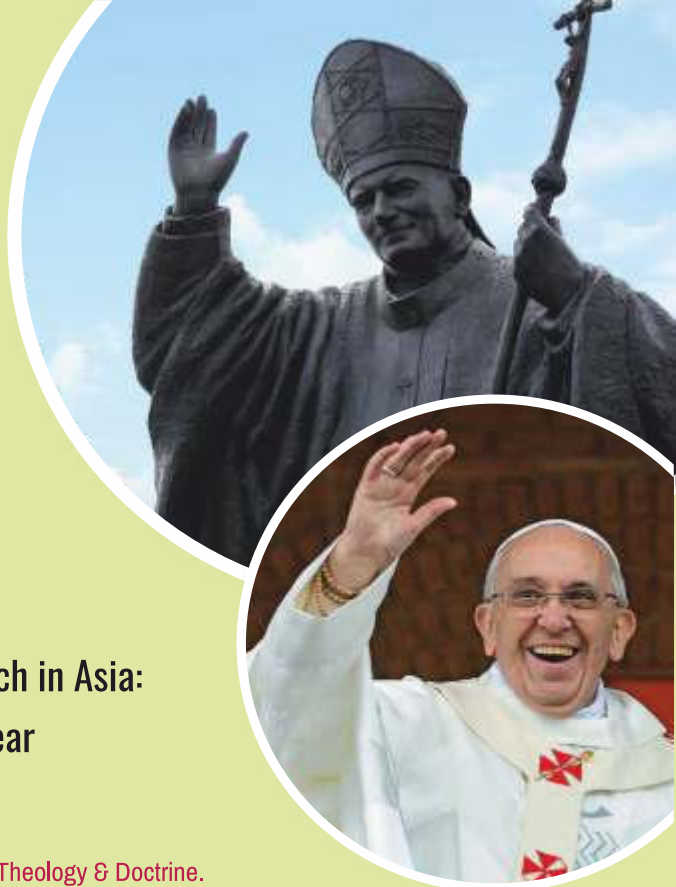


25 Years of
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13 Dec '24 (09:00 am - 06:00 pm)
14 Dec '24 (09:00 am - 01:00 pm)



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Msgr. Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
Director, PMO
Convenor



Rev. Dr. Yesu Karunanidhi
Facilitator, Jubilee 2025
Program Coordinator



Advent calls us to pause and reflect,
to wait with hope for the promise of light.
It is a time to prepare our hearts,
to welcome the One who brings peace.

Christmas comes with its gentle warmth,
the birth of love in the humblest of places.
It reminds us that God is with us,
walking our journey, sharing our lives.

Jubilee 2025 invites us forward,
to live our mission with renewed purpose.
Together, we build a world of justice,
anchored in faith, hope, and love.



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