

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ALLAHABAD

Bishop's House, 32 Thornhill Road, Allahabad - 211 002

January 25, 2014

Reference: 01/14

My dear Rev. Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

I. As I write my first circular to you, the dominant feeling of my heart is gratitude. I owe a debt of gratitude to each of you. I have much to thank you for.

1. From the time you heard the news of my appointment as the Bishop of Allahabad you have been praying for me. Many of you greeted me and assured me of your love and cooperation through letters and telephone calls. Then your representatives, Fathers Antony K.K. and Isidore D'Souza came to Varanasi to welcome me. And when I reached Allahabad on the 2nd of December, a day before my installation, Bishop Ignatius Menezes and all of you accorded me a warm welcome and overwhelmed me with your kindness. All these I remember with gratitude.
2. I would like to thank you in a special way for all that you did to make my installation ceremony a grand success and a memorable spiritual experience both for me and for all those who attended it. The event had the stamp of class all over it. Obviously behind this success lay meticulous planning, excellent team work, close coordination and generous sacrifices of numerous persons. The diocese of Allahabad can justly feel proud of hosting such a Mega Event in so faultless a manner. I wish I had the time and opportunity to meet you individually and thank you. However, please consider this circular as a personal letter written to you. Thank you, dear Fathers, Sisters and Brothers.

II. We as a diocese have much to be proud of and thank God for.

1. Established in 1876, ours is one of the oldest dioceses in North India. With an area covering 12 civil districts, it is quite extensive too.
2. We have a variety of ministries and a healthy blend of traditional apostolate and alternate ministries, institutionalized services and non-formal services. The latter needs to be strengthened.
3. Our diocese has pioneered on many fronts, particularly in the areas of inculturation and interreligious dialogue. We need to gain the lost ground in these spheres.
4. In the past our clergy and Religious have been pioneering missionaries, reaching out to remote corners and to the marginalized. We need to recapture their spirit and grow in it.
5. With so many trained and skilled personnel among Priests, Religious and Laity, our diocese is rich in human resources.
6. Our diocese has been a pioneer in media work. Think of *Catholicus*, one of the earliest religious newsletters of North India which carried a lot of history and addressed many important issues, and the recording studio that had been managed by Fr. Hugo. Since then others have stolen a march on us. There is much work to be done in these fields.

7. Allahabad being a centre of learning and law, it is a suitable place to interact with the intelligentsia and to solicit their cooperation towards building a better world and a just society.

These are but a few things that I picked up at random. You will have many more things to add to this list. We must thank God for all these things.

III. But we should not remain merely glorying in the past. We must think of carrying forward the legacy we have inherited. Because our predecessors worked hard in the past we have a reasonably good present. If we fulfil our present responsibilities conscientiously our diocese will have a bright future. For this I need your good will and cooperation, generosity and sacrifice.

1. I would like you to think deeply, individually and in groups, regarding how to take our diocese forward; what more could we do to hasten the coming of God's Kingdom in this part of Uttar Pradesh.
2. What can we do to spiritually nourish our people and to bring them up socially too?
3. Statistics say that a good percentage of the Catholic children of our diocese are not in Catholic schools. This is a shame. What more can we do to ensure that all the Catholic children study in our schools?
4. What more could we do to respond to Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel)?

I hope you will reflect over these points and share with me your insights.

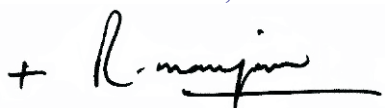
I exhort you to step into the future with hope. Christians are a people of hope. They say, 'Expectation is what, given the circumstances, is likely to happen, whereas hope is the knowledge that God can always bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, life out of death'.

A familiar hymn says, "In his time he makes all things beautiful". The parable of the sower assures us that some seeds do sprout and bear fruit. St. Paul tells us that our labour in the Lord will never be in vain. So let us step into the future full of hope and with redoubled enthusiasm.

Before I conclude this circular, I would like to thank all my predecessors, particularly Bishop Isidore Fernandes and Bishop Ignatius Menezes. I am reaping the fruit of their hard labour.

God be with you! May His blessings ever enrich you!

Yours in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Manjaly', preceded by a small cross symbol.

Most Rev. Raphy Manjaly
The Bishop of Allahabad

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31.01.2014

"We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up." (Rom. 15:1-2).

My dear Sisters, Brothers and Rev. Fathers,

Peace of Christ and loving greetings to you.

It is exactly after a year, 365 days, that I am writing this letter to you, as you will have my letter dated 31.01.2013 then as the Bishop of Allahabad, and are well acquainted with it. As most of you are aware, I have spent these 365 days in good health, with plenty of rest, plenty of time for prayer, a good daily walk of about an hour, good food and the other day-to-day chores of life here in Rosary Villa, Bhowali in the Nainital Dt of Uttarakhand. I deem this period of time as a golden opportunity bestowed on me by God, as I very much realize that **NOTHING WITH GOD CAN BE ACCIDENTAL** (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow). I do intend to spend at least some part of the evening of my life here in this 12 months cool, hilly region, about 4500' high above sea level.

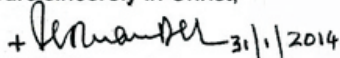
With great joy, I learn that the R. C. Diocese of Allahabad has now been blessed with a holy and learned shepherd, endowed with qualities of mind, body and spirit, in the person of Most Rev. Raphy Manjaly, who had served the Diocese of Varanasi for the last seven years and has been transferred and has been installed as the Bishop of the R. C. Diocese of Allahabad on 3rd December 2013. Most of you have known him even personally. He has succeeded Most Rev. Ignatius Menezes, Emeritus Bishop of Ajmer, who as the Apostolic Administrator of the R. C. Diocese of Allahabad for an interim period from 1st February 2013 to 3rd December, 2013 and has discharged his duties with great diligence and responsibility, as I have been fondly informed. Joining all of you, I thank him and also wish him well in the evening of his life, as he is residing in the Vianney Home, the home for the retired priests in Ajmer. I also join all of you in wishing Most Rev. Raphy Manjaly the present Bishop of Allahabad, all the best in discharging his episcopal duties well, with diligence and responsibility, with your generous and unstinted cooperation.

I take this occasion, once again, to thank you for your loving concern, prayerful support and above all for all that you had been to me during my 24 years and 6 months of episcopacy, 41 years and 3 months of priestly service of the Diocese of Allahabad and as a seminarian for the Diocese of Allahabad from July 1963 to March 1973 (in all about 50 years of my youthful, middle and advanced life span). A number of you have kept me in your contact by telephone, assuring me of your prayerful support and some of you have been kind enough to pay me even a short visit here in Rosary Villa, Bhowali.

I close this letter asking you to continue to pray for me and I assure - the R. C. Diocese of Allahabad - with the present Bishop, Members of the Clergy, the Religious women and men and the Faithful with all those whom I know in Allahabad Diocese and you, of my prayerful support.

I remain with every good wish, loving greetings and in union of prayers.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+  31/1/2014

(Isidore Fernandes)
Emeritus Bishop of Allahabad .

"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you." (Luke 6:37-38...).