

DIOCESE OF ALLAHABAD

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

DIOCESAN CIRCULAR NO. 02/17

March 01, 2017



Most Rev. Raphy Manjaly

MY PROGRAMME

MARCH 2017

1	Ash Wednesday Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Ald
4	Presides over Symposium at St. Joseph's Regional Seminary, Allahabad
5	Mahila Diwas at St. Mary's Convent 21, Allahabad
6	Attends Bible Commission Meeting at Delhi
7	Regional Animation Programme ARPC at Sadhana Sadan, Allahabad
8	Journey to Duddhi
11	Visit to St. Patrick's Church, Kanpur
12	Visit to Chandari, Kanpur
18	Presides over Parish Feast at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Allahabad
25	Meeting at Jeevan Jyoti, Varanasi
27-28	Regional Bishop's Meeting at Agra

My Dear Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

Grace and peace from God Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

I. Lenten Thoughts

With Ash Wednesday we step into the liturgical season called Lent during which we focus on simple living, prayer and fasting in order to grow closer to God. It is a favourable time to return to our Merciful Father through a conversion of heart. For the Lord says, "Come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning. Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn, turn to the Lord your God again, for he is all tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, and ready to relent." (Joel 2: 12, 13)

In one of his sermon **Pope St. Leo the Great** exhorted his faithful to enter upon the holy days of Lent with devotion, and prepare themselves to win God's mercy by their own works of mercy. He says: "Quench your anger, wipe out enmities, cherish unity and vie with one another in the offices of true humility... Forgo vengeance, forgive offences: exchange severity for gentleness, indignation for meekness, discord for peace."

During these days of our interior pilgrimage, Jesus himself accompanies us through the desert of our poverty, sustaining us on our way towards the intense joy of Easter. Lent asks us to renounce our sinful ways and to live virtuously, to renounce mediocrity and to accept the demands of love. St. Augustine thought that to live virtuously was to live musically, to live in harmony. Sin brings disharmony into our lives and into the world. To love God and to love our neighbour is to keep the musical order.

According to St. Paul the Christian is called to obey no other law except the law of Christian love (Rom 13:8), for one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

The theme of Pope Francis' message for Lent 2017 is: **The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift.** The inspiration for the message has come from one of the parables of Jesus, **The Rich Man and Lazarus** (Lk 16: 19-31).

APRIL 2017

5	Visit to St. Joseph's School, Gauspur
6	Recollection, Chrism Mass, Allahabad
7-8	Triduum Retreat at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Ald
9	Palm Sunday Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Allahabad
13-15	Holy Triduum
17	IMS Diaconate Ordination at Theresapur
23	Priestly Ordination of George Medapalli and Chinnappa Marsakatla at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Allahabad
30	Presides over Parish Feast at St. Joseph's Church, Chakeri

The rich man, says the Holy Father, is a classical example of how the corruption of sin progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride. Love of money locks him up in a selfish and small world. Vanity condemns him to a superficial existence of inner emptiness. Greed for money blinds him to such an extent that he is not able to see Lazarus who is starving, hurting and lying at his door.

According to Pope Francis the fundamental cause of the rich man's spiritual malady was the failure to heed God's Word. If we close our heart to the gift of God's Word, eventually we will close our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

The Pope concludes his message inviting us to renew our encounter with Christ, living in his Word, in the sacraments and in our neighbour so that purified of the sin that blinds us, we may serve our brothers and sisters in need with whom Christ has identified himself.

II. Family Apostolate: Need of the Hour

In my last circular I requested you to pray for the fruitfulness of the CCBI Plenary Assembly which wanted to explore *Amoris Laetitia's* message for India. I would like to share with you an extract from the Plenary Assembly's message which is very important for us priests and religious:

"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:

1. The content of our pastoral plan for families will always include the "culture of life" (cf. Gen.1:28, 3:20; *Evangelium Vitae* 87).
2. 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 minimising the call to priestly and religious life.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

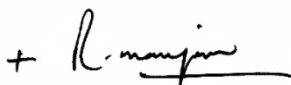
6. We realize that there are certain **families that need special care**: families living in dire poverty, families with spouses of two different religious traditions, single parent families, families with differently abled children, grieving and bereaved families, migrant families, families with sick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

7. 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."

Rev. Fr. Manoj, Director, Diocesan Family Apostolate, with the help of Fr. Sebastian Francis, Sr. Freda CJ, Fr. Leo Sequeira, et al, will customise this action plan for our diocese. But I would like you priests and religious to dedicate at least one hour per day or a certain number of hours per week for ministering to families. I appreciate and thank all those priests and religious who are already doing this ministry with generosity and faithfulness.

III. Thanksgiving

On my Birthday (February 7) some of you telephoned to me and others sent greetings through SMS and Whatsapp. Many of you wanted to speak to me but could not as I was attending the CCBI sessions. I thank you from the depth of my heart for your greetings, prayers, and best wishes.

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MOST REV. RAPHY MANJALY
Bishop of Allahabad

Enclosure: Lenten Regulations

LENTEN REGULATIONS FOR ALLAHABAD DIOCESE

The following are to be made known in Lent to the faithful, including Religious Communities, in all Parishes and Chapels. What concerns certain feasts etc. should be repeated during the year at the appropriate time.

1. Days of Obligation

Regarding Sundays and feast days of obligation, Canon 1246 prescribes **ten days of obligation**. In India, Christmas and the feast of Assumption of our Lady are days of obligation. Three feasts, the Epiphany of Our Lord, the Ascension of Christ and the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ have been transferred to Sundays.

The Other Five Solemnities: Mary Mother of God; the Immaculate Conception; St. Joseph; the Apostles SS Peter and Paul; and All Saints are omitted as feast days of obligation in India.

The obligation of assisting at Mass is satisfied whenever Mass is celebrated in any Catholic Rite, either on a Holy day itself or in the previous evening (after 4.00 P.M.) of the previous day on the eve of Christmas and the Assumption.

2. Easter Duties may be fulfilled from Ash Wednesday to Trinity Sunday.

3. Penitential Law

Canon 1251 and the following regulations, prescribe days of penance for the universal Church. By virtue of the powers given by the Decree of February 27, 1996, the CBCI has mitigated the norms.

4. Days of Penance: All the Fridays of the year and the days of Lent.

Since on these days, one is no more bound to abstain from meat, some other penitential work must substitute it. Substitution may be done by one of the following devotional practices and good works, or similar ones:

- i. Assisting at Mass
- ii. Visit to the Church
- iii. Reception of Holy Communion
- iv. Stations of the Cross
- v. Almsgiving
- vi. Visiting the poor
- vii. Visiting the sick either at home or in hospitals
- viii. Reading the Bible or a Spiritual Book
- ix. The family Rosary
- x. Bearing sickness or suffering patiently

The usual faculties for the Parish Priests or Confessors are still in force for dispensing or substituting, even in the case of above.

5. Fast and Abstinence

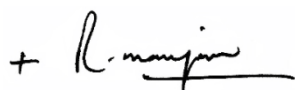
Days of Fast and Abstinence: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Abstinence become mandatory on completing the age of fourteen; fast is obligatory from the age of eighteen to the beginning of sixtieth year. (Can. 12 52). The age of majority in the Catholic Church is eighteen following the general consensus of Civil Law.

We should teach all to go beyond the law as regards, specially, penance during Lent.

Though the obligation of specific acts of Lenten penance has been removed since some years, the need for Lenten penance remains. On all penitential days, e.g. Lent, Friday on which fast or abstinence was prescribed in the past, the obligation **should be replaced** by other mortification, or works of charity or piety. Those who can keep fast are advised to do so. Those who cannot must substitute it by something else.

The law of penance is essential to Christian life. The changes are not a dispensation, but a 'permission to substitute something else, additional and voluntary, which one is not already obliged to do by one's duty or state of life. Those availing themselves of this general dispensation, all including Priests and Religious, are exhorted to make up by voluntary practices, especially during Lent: assisting at Mass; some additional time of prayer, specially meditation; visiting the sick; some voluntary mortification in eating, drinking, smoking, amusements, putting aside for the poor the money thus saved; giving alms more generously to the poor, to charitable works, specially to the "Campaign against Hunger", accepting more patiently, in the spirit of penance, the trials, sickness, sufferings, contradictions of life.

Let **the renewal of Baptismal vows on Holy Saturday** be a means of Christian renewal for us and for our people. It should be prepared with a catechesis.



✠ **RAPHY MANJALY**
Bishop of Allahabad

01-03-2017