



Ubi Deus, Ibi Spes
 जहाँ भगवान्, वहाँ आशा
 Is 40:31; Rom 8:5

SPOTLIGHT

THE BARODA DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

For Private Circulation only

MAY-JUNE 2025



Pilgrims of Hope
 2025

POPE FRANCIS
 1936-2025

APOSTLE OF HOPE IN COMPASSION



“Having doubts and fears is not a sin... The sin is to allow these fears to determine our responses, to limit our choices, to compromise respect and generosity, to feed hostility and rejection... **The sin is to refuse to encounter the other, the different, the neighbor, when this is in fact a privileged opportunity to encounter the Lord... to overcome our fears so as to encounter the other, to welcome, to know and to acknowledge him or her.**”

Although the life of a person is in a land full of thorns and weeds, **there is always a space in which the good seed can grow. You have to trust God.**

"The faith we proclaim makes us see God present in all those situations where we think he is absent... **He is present in the unwelcomed visitor, often unrecognizable, who walks through our cities and our neighborhoods, who travels on our buses and knocks on our doors.**"

+Pope Francis

PRAYER INTENTIONS OF THE POPE

MAY

FOR WORKING CONDITIONS

Let us pray that through work, each person might find fulfilment, families might be sustained in dignity, and that society might be humanized.

JUNE

THAT THE WORLD MIGHT GROW IN COMPASSION

Let us pray that each one of us might find consolation in a personal relationship with Jesus, and from his Heart, learn to have compassion on the world.

HOLINESS MADE HUMAN, TANGIBLE, PERSONAL

Personal Encounters with Pope Francis

+Seby Mascarenhas sfx

We expect the Popes to lift us up to God. He kind of brought God down to us. This Pope not only lifted us up, But sort of brought God down to our own level

A woman quoted by Cardinal Dolan in CNN News
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qcc5M-uu8BM&t=4s>



Pope Francis was one of the most approachable popes. He was however also a person who 'attracted' people with his holiness (the Pope often said that the Church should attract people to Jesus, not proselytize), not just Catholics, but all peoples as illustrated by the long line of mourners at St Peters. And many associated with our Diocese! Fr. Ambrose sj (1) (with his General), Fr Savio Silveira (2), Salesian Provincial and Fr. Paul Raj SVD (3) Provincial were granted graced moments with the Pope. And some more overleaf!



PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH POPE FRANCIS



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- 1. SR. JAISHA, Provincial Leader SSpS, meets the Pope
- 2. MOTHER ANNA, then Prioress of Carmel Cloister, with the Pope
- 3. SR. NIRMALA RJM, during the General Chapter 2019
- 4. SR PUSHPA FC General and SR SYLVIE FC Provincial with other General Councillors.
- 5. SR MEENA FMA Provincial, Chapter of 2021
- 6. SUPERIOR GENERAL OF MC SISTERS with other sisters just two days before he was hospitalised

PURE JOY

Sr. Rosa Marta (Bardipada) went to Rome for the Baptism of her niece's son. Fr. Louis sj, the brother of Sr Rosa (working in Brazil) is a personal friend of Pope Francis. A personal audience with the Pope!



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PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH POPE FRANCIS

“When shall we have a new Francis?”

+Seby Mascarenhas sfx

On Easter Sunday I randomly tuned to the YouTube live coverage of the Easter service in Rome. Coincidence, Telepathy, Providence? The Pope was about to say his last words in public – the Urbi et Orbi Blessing. It was not announced earlier. I felt blessed to catch it live, *his last words in public*. It was then announced that he would drive among

We walked the dark alleys from the Jesuit Curia, where I had put up for the night, to *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, something like a scene in *Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown.

I was shocked at the absolutely relaxed security as we went in. I had a cloth bag with my alb, a Warli-art-painted bag and a magazine. No one checked what was in my bag. They only asked me for my name; they did not bother to ask

for any identification. I was thrilled and shocked. But that was perhaps ordered by Francis, the approachable Pope. He trusted us!

We were assigned the first row in the pews. There were two bishops (one from India, I do not remember from where) some priests, some nuns and about 40 faithful. As the Pope entered, my impression was that of an elderly man. But when he preached a three point homily, I was touched, even with my primitive Italian. Clear, precise and brief, true to what he tells us now!

He sat in prayer for about five minutes and then stood up to greet us all. We were made to stand in line, hierarchically. When my turn came he spontaneously came forward and put his hands on

my shoulders. I was stunned. I had rehearsed the words I would say to him. I forgot everything and just blurted out in German: *Would you want me to speak in German or English*. I forgot to say **Y O U R HOLINESS!** I knew he had studied in Germany and would prefer German. He gently said to me, in German: *Pray*

for me. Speak in German please, but slowly! I then spoke to him about India and my missionary congregation, the Society of Pilar. I told him that everyone loves what he was doing.

I then presented a bag, painted by minor girls (rescued from the red light milieu) who were being rehabilitated by the Vedruna sisters in Waliv, Vasai, just opposite the Pilar Provincialate. On my way to the airport, I had picked these bags from from Srs. Asha ccv and Ila ccv who were there at the time. He listened carefully and nodded with a smile. This was precisely his mission.



the people in his Popemobile. You could see he was struggling. This was the act of man of deep faith who knew he was going to his heavenly reward, not a man who would want to live another few days on earth in the hospital. He was a man who was saying with His Lord: *It is accomplished, into your hands I commend my Spirit. What a witness to the basic foundation of our faith - the resurrection with the Lord.*

I did not think that he would die so soon, but I did think that this was his final appearance. I was privileged to tune in live.

My personal encounter with the Pope goes back to October 22, 2013. I have never shared this, except personally to a few people. I share my seminal encounter with him on the day he will be buried, in detail! To those who might find this “bragging”, my apologies in advance!

Somehow, although I was studying in Europe at the time, I did not feel the urge to meet St John Paul II or Pope Benedict. However Pope Francis lit up the world. I told my brother, Bishop Theodore, who was serving for the Vatican at the time, to see if I could attend the daily mass of the Pope in Santa Marta. He managed to get me on the list for the Mass of October 22, 2013 through the kind grace of Cardinal Oswald Gracias.



PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH POPE FRANCIS

reaching out, patient listening, personal touch



towards me is the hallmark that makes his papacy so attractive.

Ten years later, I met Pope Francis again when I went to Rome in September 2023 for the training of baby Bishops. I had been appointed Bishop of Baroda by him.

It was a memorable occasion but in another way. As my turn came to meet the Pope and I knelt before him, incredibly, *the camera broke down*. I was exasperated. Being a true Social Media man, the photo was important above all. The photographer ran and brought another camera. But it was too late. My time was up! I got a rather blurred photo in black and white as I was preparing to hand over a memento of Ven. Agnelo to the Pope! It is always providence. Perhaps I *was* warned not to *brag!*

Francis proclaimed GOOD NEWS. He read the signs of the times and proclaimed **JOY** (*Evangelii Gaudium*) and **HOPE** (*Spes non confundit*) to a despondent, egoistic and indifferent atmosphere, not just in world politics, but also within the Church. He spoke about clericalism in the Church as often as as he spoke against capitalism and greed. This did not endear



I finally got my magazine out; before I could present it to him the priest behind him nodded gently to me. I guess I had taken my time. So I just left the magazine in the bag, handed it over and walked away.

The magazine is a story in itself. In February 2013, at the request of Fr. Romualdo sfx, I had written a play on St Francis of Assisi for our college going scholastics in Waliv, Vasai. It was entitled, "*When shall we have a new Francis!*". As the scholastics and I sat in front of the TV for about twenty minutes, after white smoke had fluttered in the Roman sky on March 13, 2013, to see who the new Pope would be, one of the scholastics joked: *I think he will be a Francis!* After all we had asked for a new Francis! We had goose bumps when it was FRANCIS indeed! My magazine had the play on Francis in it!

At the end, I kissed his ring and asked him to bless me. He said, pray for me.

When Bp. Theodore and Fr Agnelo Pinheiro sj met me at the Jesuit Curia, I did not relate much as I was overwhelmed. I did not even realise what had happened.

A few days later Bp. Theodore rang me up from the Vatican Press Office to say that I had beautiful photos, absolutely unique, one of a kind. I was stunned to see them. I then realised what had really happened. It was one of those experiences that determine your life. His reaching out, his patient listening and his personal touch

him to the establishment, within the Church or in the world around. He was an oasis of compassion in the desert of narcissism in the world today.

His antidote was simple: *Listen to the Spirit within you; Even more, listen to every person as the Spirit speaks to each person as well. Only then can we genuinely LIVE JESUS in humility and compassion. This will attract people to Jesus*

He did that. He lived the Gospel in all its radicality. He brought God down to us., as the woman said to Cardinal Dolan.

I wish it most for me, our clergy and our religious as the Pope trusted us to bring in a compassionate, listening, synodal leadership. May His example guide us.

RIP POPE FRANCIS. YOU WERE ONE OF A KIND.

OUR TRIBUTE TO POPE FRANCIS

REQUIEM FOR THE POPE - ROSARY CATHEDRAL- 26.04.2025



A large number of faithful gathered from Vadodara Parishes gathered at the Requiem for the Pope at Rosary Cathedral. We present a few glimpses of the celebration



OUR TRIBUTE TO POPE FRANCIS FROM THE PARISHES OF VADODARA

At the Requiem Mass representatives of each parish of Baroda (including the Syro Malabar and Syro Malankara) paid brief tributes (in the style of Francisco) to the legacy of Pope Francis. We present the talks in Spotlight.



**EMMANUEL ANTHONY
DON BOSCO, MAKARPURA**

Holy Father Pope Francis radiated a grace that words cannot hold. I saw him four times during World Youth Day in Portugal, each encounter a quiet miracle. His presence was peace itself, his smile a reflection of Christ's love. In Lisbon, he told us, "God loves you as you are." He reminded us, "Todos, todos, todos!" - all are welcome, no one left behind. I saw him once more in Vatican City, at The Angelus, his voice rising like prayer through the Roman air. He made the Gospel feel close, human, and warm. His humility shaped a Church that embraced. Though he has gone home to the Father, his spirit walks with us still in every act of mercy, in every open heart.

હું જ્યારે આપણા સ્વર્ગસ્થ વડા ધર્મ ગુરુ પોપ ફ્રાન્સિસનો વિચાર કરું છું ત્યારે તેઓ એક બાબતને પ્રોત્સાહન આપે છે

પોતાનું જીવન બીજાના ભલા માટે જીવીએ તોજ આપણને સાચું સુખ અને શાંતિ મળશે. એમણે કહ્યું હતું: નદી પોતાનું પાણી પીતી નથી; વૃક્ષ પોતાના ફળ ખાતું નથી; ફૂલ પોતાની સુગંધ લેતું નથી; સુરજ પોતાના પર પ્રકાશ પાડતો નથી. એ બધું બીજા માટે છે.

જો આપણે બીજાનો વિચાર કરી એમનું ભલું કરીએ તો આપણે બડભાગી અને સાચા અર્થમાં સુખી છીએ. મારે લીધે અન્ય સુખી થાય એ જ અગત્યનું છે.

ઈસુના શબ્દો છે: કોઈ માણસ બીજા ખાતર પોતાના પ્રાણ પાથરે એના કરતા વધારે મોટો કોઈ પ્રેમ નથી.

પોપ ફ્રાન્સિસના આત્માને પરમ પિતા શાશ્વત શાંતિ બક્ષે એ જ પ્રાર્થના.



**JIYA MACWAN
ST. JOSEPH CHURCH**



**SHIBU VARGHESE
SYRO MALANKARA CHURCH**

Pope Francis is renowned for his humility, emphasis on God's mercy, global advocacy for social justice, and commitment to inter-religious dialogue, including his preference for a simpler lifestyle as Pope.

- *Accordingly to Pope, managing personal health and energy is very important, even in busy schedule. Time for rest, recovery and reflection should be regular part of a healthy schedule. Even while traveling Pope Francis followed a fairly rigid scheduled to manage his energy.*
- *Pope has been a tireless advocate for migrants, the poor, and often spoke out against social injustices and inequalities.*
- *Pope fostered a sense of inclusivity within the church, seeking to build bridges between Catholics and those on other faiths.*
- *Pope has consistently emphasized God's mercy and the importance of dialogue as a way to resolve conflicts and build understanding and peace in the world.*

Eternal Father, we remember with gratitude Pope Francis, your faithful servant, now resting in your embrace. We thank you for his compassionate heart, his unwavering love for the poor, and his tireless pursuit of synodality, fostering unity within your Holy Church. His pastoral letters, filled with wisdom and grace, continue to guide us. We cherish his dedication to promoting mercy, advocacy for the environment and his call for a Church that embraces all. May his legacy inspire us to live with the same love and humility he exemplified. We pray for our Holy Church, that it may remain strong and true to Christ's teachings, a beacon of hope in a world longing for your light. May his spirit of gentle revolution continue to shape our hearts and actions, forever. Amen.



**JOMOL RAJ
SYRO MALABAR CHURCH**

OUR TRIBUTE TO POPE FRANCIS FROM THE PARISHES OF VADODARA

શ્રદ્ધાંજલિ પ્રાર્થના† ૧૯૩૬
વડા ધર્મગુરુશ્રી પોપ ફ્રાન્સીસ ૨૦૨૫ †

પ્રેમ, શાંતિ, એખલાસ, સહિષ્ણુતા, ત્યાગ, બલિદાન અને કરુણાના પ્રણેતા, પ્રભુ પરમેશ્વરમાં અપૂર્વ શ્રદ્ધાપૂર્ણ વિશ્વાસ અને સમગ્ર માતા ધર્મસભાના ભલા ગોવાળ તમને અમારા સૌના સત સત વંદન.... ધર્મસભા મંદિર હતું, સ્નેહ એક શક્તિ અને પરિશ્રમ કર્તવ્ય હતા. અંજલિ આપતાં શબ્દો ખૂટે ને હૈયું તૂટે છે. યુવાનો, આશ્રીતો સ્થળાંતરીતો, ગરીબો, વંચિતો, કેદીઓ, તિરસ્કૃત અને લાચારજનો આજે શ્રદ્ધાંજલિ આપતા આંસુ સારે છે. યુદ્ધો, હિંસા, વિશ્વશાંતિના સુવાહક સર્વ ધર્મ પ્રત્યેની અસીમ આસ્થા, પરોપકારી સ્વભાવ, તમારા શુભ સંદેશા, માતા મરિયમની મધ્યસ્થી પ્રાર્થનાઓ અમારા સર્વ માટે અનંત જીવનનાં દ્વારો ખોલ્યા છે તે માટે આપના આભારી છીએ. અમે ઘેટાં જેવા છીએ, જેમ ઘેટાં ભરવાડ ઉપર આધારિત હોય છે અને સ્વતંત્ર રીતે કંઈ કરી શકતા નથી, તેમ માનવી પણ વારંવાર રસ્તો ભટકી જાય છે, તેને પણ એક ભલા ભરવાડની જરૂર છે. તે ભલા ભરવાડ આપ હતા અને રહેશો. ઘેટાંઓનું પ્રભુ આપની પ્રાર્થનાથી પાલન પોપણ કરતા આવ્યા છો. જેના અમ સર્વ હાણી છીએ. સત્કાર્યો તમારી શોભા હતી, સજ્જનતા તમારી સુવાસ હતી, પ્રસન્નતા તમારું જીવન હતું, પરોપકાર તમારું રટણ હતું. તમારું જીવન અમારી પ્રેરણા હતું, તમારા આદર્શો અમારા માર્ગદર્શક હતા, અમે તમારા સરળ જીવન, દયાળુ અને ભાવનાશીલ સ્વભાવને ક્યારેય નહી ભૂલીએ.. પરમકૃપાળુ પરમાત્મા આપના દિવ્ય આત્માને પરમશાંતિ અર્પે એ જ અમ સર્વની હૃદયપૂર્વકની પ્રાર્થના.



DAYABHAI MAHAVANSI
SACRED HEART CHURCH



SR. NIRMALA MACWAN
ROSARY CATHEDRAL

The Chapel of the Papacy filtered the early morning light through the high stained-glass windows.

I step inside with the other General Chapter delegates of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary way back in 2019, the air thick with silence and incense. The walls seem to hum with centuries of prayer. As the group settled into quiet rows, the sound of soft footsteps echoes from a side corridor.

Pope Francis enters, not with ceremony, but with a gentle presence, wearing simple white. He greets the delegates with a warm smile, eyes full of understanding.

Pope Francis after the official welcome and greetings by our Mother General shares his views on the role of the religious women in the Church by saying.....

"The Church needs hearts that burn – not with noise, but with light. What do you bring today, my friends?"

We all took a breath. The moments felt bigger than words, but one of us spoke from centre. "Holy Father, I bring questions. Not answers. How do we remain rooted in truth while walking with a world that keeps shifting beneath us?"

He nodded slowly, like he's heard this same question whispered in prayer a thousand times.

Pope Francis then answered saying.... "We are not called to chase the world. We are called to love it. Roots in the Gospel, yes. But arms wide, like Christ on the Cross. That is how we walk – firm, and open."

Afterwards, he spoke to everyone: "You are the pulse of your communities. Bring them not only structure, but Spirit. The Gospel was never meant to stay behind stone walls." He then expressed His Joy in meeting each delegate personally and gifted each one of us The holy Rosary saying (softly): "Courage, my daughter. Christ and His mother walks with you."

As we bid farewell to Pope Francis, let us remember his call to serve the marginalized, his advocacy for peace, and his embodiment of Christ's love. May his example inspire us to live lives of compassion and humility.

May the soul of our Holy father Pope Francis Rest in Peace.....Amen.



OFFICIAL MAY 2025

COMMITMENTS OF THE BISHOP APRIL MAY 2025

- April 28 - May 6 Goa
May 11 Confirmation in Don Bosco Makarpura
May 24 Jubilee Celebrations – RMI Sisters
May 26-28 Bible Convention, Dabwali
May 31 Blessing of Chapel, Vadtal
June 1 Installation of PP, Don Bosco Makarpura
Conferral of Ministry of Acolyte
June 2-6 Interaction with Diocesan Seminarians
June 07 Death Anniversary, Fr. John Vales, Bilimora
June 08 Visit and Confirmation in Valsad
June 15 Installation of Parish Priest
June 19 Diocesan Recollection 1
June 22 Visitation in Narukott
June 23-25 National Consultation, Theology and Doctrine
June 26 Meeting of Commissions with Members
June 26 Meeting of Pps and Religious Superiors
June 29 Installation of Parish Priest

OUR TRIBUTE TO POPE FRANCIS



RUSHALI GOHIL
INFANT JESUS CHURCH

પવિત્ર જીવનની વાણી, પોપ ફ્રાન્સિસ ને શ્રદ્ધાંજલિ

૧. સાદગી હતી શોભા તારી, પ્રેમ પ્રભુનો પરાકાષ્ટાએ પહોંચાડી,
સેવા સંયમ અને સહિષ્ણુતાથી, ઈસુ છબી પ્રસરાવી
૨. દયાળુ હૃદય, અનહદ કરુણા અને નમ્રતાની મૂર્તિ,
ગરીબોના શોકમાં તમે પણ ગરીબડા બની ગયા .
અનાથ વૃદ્ધ તરછોડાયેલ અને કેદીઓને સારું,
પોતાનું ઘર પણ છોડી ગયા .
૩. શુભ સંદેશના મૂલ્યોને પૂરેપૂરા નિભાવી ગયા,
પ્રેમ શાંતિ અને ક્ષમા ભરપૂર આપી ગયા
પર્યાવરણને પરાજિત ન થવા દીધું,
ગામે ગામ સર્જનહાર ની છાપ છોડતા ગયા .
૪. ધર્મ છે એકતાનું પ્રતીક નહીં કે વિભાજન ,
માનવમાં ઈશ્વરને જોતા શીખવાડી ગયા .
ધર્મ સભાના મુખિયા નહીં પણ પાળક પિતા બની ગયા,
ઈસુને પગલે ચલાવનાર સાચા ગોવાળ બની ગયા
સાચે જ પવિત્ર જીવનની વાણી, પોપ ફ્રાન્સિસને શ્રદ્ધાંજલિ

PLEASE PRAY

BIRTHDAYS

- 03-05-1970 Fr. Macwan Rakesh
05-05-1984 Fr. Jesu Raj
11-05-1977 Fr. Borsa Navsa
27-05-1965 Fr. Carvalho William
01-06-1959 Fr. Vasava Kanti
01-06-1976 Fr. Balu Madhanu
06-06-1966 Fr. Macwan Vincent
07-06-1961 Fr. Vasava Dalsukh
10-06-1977 Fr. Savri Muthu Peter
10-06-1987 Fr. Nakre Akash
24-06-1962 Fr. Macwan Manu
29-06-1974 Fr. Paul D'Silva

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

- 17-04-2021 Fr. Paul Raj Napoleon
25-04-2021 Fr. Barreto Oscar
03-06-2014 FR. BRAZIL D' MELLO

ORDINATIONS

- 01-05-2008 Fr. D'Souza Mark
01-05-2014 Fr. Praveen Vasava
03-05-196 Fr. Fernandes Malcolm
04-05-2023 Fr. Bhushan Bara
05-05-1985 Fr. Fonseca Albert
05-05-2008 Fr. Savri Muthu Peter
07-05-1994 Fr. Randive Francis
08-05-2007 Fr. Xalxo Abhay
09-05-2008 Fr. Toppo John
11-05-2017 Fr. Antony Sushil Kumar

*Someone sent me a poem on Pope Francis.
I thought it was too good to be true.
Until I realised it was AI generated.*

*So here is an AI Generated poem on Pope Francis
and you can get many more
Gosh, even the net bows down to the great man!*

SONNET POEM: A SHEPHERD'S CALL
Generated by aifreebox.com

Upon the chair of Peter, grace bestowed,
A humble heart, with gentle hands to mend,
In Francis' gaze, the weary find their road,
A beacon bright where love and mercy blend.

With every step through streets of stone and dust,
He bends to cradle souls that sorrow bear;
In laughter shared or whispered words of trust,
His voice resounds with hope upon the air.

From lofty heights to slums where shadows creep,
He speaks for those whose cries are lost in night;
Each gesture soft – no burden too deep –
Reflects a faith that turns despair to light.

O Pope of Peace! Your spirit leads us still;
In every heart you stir a greater will.

CHRISM MASS 2025

REFLECTIONS FOR A MISSIONARY SYNODAL CHURCH

Jesus at the Periphery, Pastoral Approaches to the Periphery, Migrants as a Prime Group at the Periphery

REACHING OUT TO CATHOLICS ON THE PERIPHERY

Recollection Talk for Gathering of Priests and Religious on the occasion of Chrism Mass

Fr. Isaac Arackaparambil sdb

It was great joy to see over 100 clergy and over 100 religious participate in the Chrism Mass on April 11m 2025 in the Rosary Cathedral. Before the Mass, we gathered in the Auditorium of the Rosary School for a reflection on Reaching out to Catholics on the Periphery. Fr. Isaac sdb gave us Biblical perspectives and practical hints to reach out like Jesus to the peripheries. We are reproducing his talk in this issue. Fr. Ishwan Gamit sj presented how he concretely reaches out to the challenges in his remote parish. Sr. Maggie Allesu dhm, Director of the Migrant Commission of the Diocese took up the issue of migrants as a group on the periphery and gave practical hints to how we would reach out to them in the next pastoral year, especially with a detailed survey so that we could network among parishes. Silver and Golden Jubilarians were also felicitated at the Chrism Mass.

Jesus' ministry was marked by a radical inclusion of those marginalized by society – sinners, tax collectors, the sick, the poor, Gentiles, and women. He consistently reached beyond religious and social barriers to offer grace, healing, and dignity to those on the fringes.

Here are key biblical examples and their implications for the Church today:

1. JESUS WELCOMED SINNERS AND OUTCASTS

Biblical Example:

- Ø Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 9:10-13),
- Ø defended the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11),
- Ø and forgave the sinful woman who anointed His feet (Luke 7:36-50).

Practical Application:

The Church must move beyond judgment and create spaces where people burdened by guilt, addiction, or past mistakes can encounter Christ's mercy. Instead of shunning those with "unacceptable" pasts, we should follow Jesus' example of compassionate engagement.

2. JESUS HEALED THE SICK AND DISABLED

Biblical Example:

- Ø Jesus touched and healed lepers (Luke 5:12-13),
- Ø restored sight to blind beggars (Mark 10:46-52),
- Ø and healed the woman with the bleeding issue (Mark 5:25-34) – all of whom were socially and religiously ostracized.

Practical Application:

The Church should actively care for the sick, disabled, and mentally ill, ensuring they are not neglected or treated as burdens. Hospitals, counseling ministries, and disability-inclusive worship are modern ways to embody Christ's healing love.

3. JESUS ELEVATED WOMEN IN A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

Biblical Example:

- Ø Jesus spoke openly with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42),
- Ø defended Mary's right to learn at His feet (Luke 10:38-42),
- Ø and appeared first to women after His resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10) – countercultural acts in a society that marginalized women.

Practical Application:

The Church must challenge gender-based discrimination, empower women in leadership, and protect women from

abuse and exploitation, affirming their God-given dignity.

4. JESUS CROSSED ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS BARRIERS

Biblical Example:

- Ø Jesus praised the faith of a Roman centurion (Matthew 8:5-13)
- Ø and healed the daughter of a Syrophenician



woman (Mark 7:24-30), – showing that God's grace extends beyond Israel.

Practical Application:

The Church must actively oppose racism, welcome immigrants and refugees, and build bridges with people of different cultures, just as Jesus did.

5. JESUS CARED FOR THE POOR AND OPPRESSED

Biblical Example:

- Ø Jesus proclaimed good news to the poor (Luke 4:18),
- Ø blessed the meek (Matthew 5:5),
- Ø and warned the rich about neglecting Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

Practical Application:

The Church must advocate for economic justice, support food banks, job training, and affordable housing, and challenge systems that perpetuate poverty.

CONCLUSION: The Church's Call to the Margins Today

Jesus' ministry was not confined to the religious elite but intentionally extended to those pushed aside by society. Today, the Church must:

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Fr. Isaac Arackaparambil sdb

- v **Go out** - (like the Good Shepherd in Luke 15:4-6) rather than wait for the marginalized to come to us.
- v **Listen** - to the struggles of the oppressed rather than assume we have all the answers.
- v **Advocate** - for systemic change where injustice exists.
- v **Love unconditionally**- even when it disrupts our comfort.

As Pope Francis has emphasized, we must be a "Church that goes forth," especially to the "existential peripheries." Only then will we truly follow in the footsteps of Christ.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor... to set the oppressed free."* (Luke 4:18)*

3. **Personal Invitations:** Encourage active parishioners to invite friends/family back – many leave because no one noticed they were gone.
4. **Digital Outreach:** Use social media, podcasts, or YouTube homilies to engage those who won't step into a church yet.

Biblical Models:

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) – The father waits and welcomes without condemnation.

2. WELCOMING YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

Who They Are: Many young Catholics feel the Church is irrelevant or unwelcoming.

How to Reach Them:



PRACTICAL WAYS THE PARISH CAN REACH OUT TO CATHOLICS ON THE PERIPHERY

A vibrant parish must intentionally seek out those who feel disconnected – whether due to cultural shifts, personal struggles, or systemic neglect. Here are practical ways to minister to marginalized Catholics in a parish setting:

1. REACHING INACTIVE OR DISENGAGED CATHOLICS

Who They Are: Catholics who no longer attend Mass, feel disillusioned, or have drifted away due to life circumstances.

How to Reach Them:

1. **Home Visits & Listening Sessions:** Train parishioners to visit lapsed Catholics, not to scold but to listen and invite.
2. **"Come and See" Events:** Host informal gatherings (e.g., Alpha, testimony nights) where people can explore faith without pressure.

Youth & Young Adult Mentorship: Pair them with older, faith-filled mentors.

1. **Authentic Community:** Offer small groups, sports ministries, or service projects rather than just lectures.
2. **Address Their Struggles:** Host discussions on mental health, career discernment, and relationships from a Catholic perspective.
3. **Contemporary Worship Nights:** Incorporate praise music, adoration with testimonies, and open Q&A with priests.

Biblical Model: Jesus and the Rich Young Man (Mark 10:17-22) – He meets the young man where he is but challenges him to go deeper.

3. SUPPORTING MARRIAGES OF DISPARITY OF CULT (INTERFAITH COUPLES)

Who They Are: Couples where one spouse is Catholic and

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the other is not, often feeling isolated in the Church.

How to Reach Them:

1. Specialized Marriage Prep & Support Groups: Offer resources for interfaith couples to navigate faith differences.
2. Inclusive Parish Events: Ensure parish activities (e.g., family picnics, feast days) are welcoming to non-Catholic spouses.
3. Testimonies from Similar Couples: Share stories of how interfaith marriages can thrive while keeping the Catholic faith alive.
4. Priest Availability: Encourage priests to meet personally with such couples to address their concerns.

Biblical Model: St. Paul's advice on mixed marriages



(1 Corinthians 7:12-14) – The faith of one can sanctify the household.

4. MINISTERING TO MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Who They Are: Immigrants, migrant workers, and refugees who may feel like outsiders in the parish.

How to Reach Them:*

1. Multilingual Masses & Sacraments: Offer Masses in their language and provide translators for confessions.
2. Cultural Celebrations: Host feast days from their home countries (e.g., Our Lady of Guadalupe for Mexicans, Simbang Gabi for Filipinos).
3. Legal & Social Support: Partner with Catholic Charities to assist with housing, jobs, and immigration paperwork.
4. Intentional Hospitality: Train parishioners to welcome newcomers personally, not just with handshakes but with real friendship.

Biblical Model: Jesus as a refugee in Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15) – He identifies with the displaced.

5. ENGAGING DIVORCED & REMARRIED CATHOLICS

Who They Are: Many feel unwelcome or assume they can't receive sacraments.

How to Reach Them:

1. Clear Teaching with Mercy: Offer workshops on annulments, emphasizing that the Church wants to help, not exclude.
2. Support Groups: Create safe spaces for divorced/separated Catholics to share struggles and find healing.
3. Priest Availability: Ensure priests are approachable for pastoral guidance (many avoid Church out of shame).

Biblical Model: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-26) – He offers her living water despite her broken past.

6. CARING FOR THE ELDERLY & HOMEBOUND

Who They Are: Seniors who can no longer attend Mass, often feeling forgotten.

How to Reach Them:

1. Regular Home Visits & Communion Calls: Train Eucharistic ministers to visit the homebound weekly.
2. Parish "Adopt-a-Grandparent" Program: Connect youth with elderly parishioners for mutual enrichment.
3. Technology Assistance: Help them access live-streamed Masses or set up video calls with family.

Biblical Model: Jesus healing the sick and elderly (Luke 8:40-56, John 9:1-7) – He touches those society ignores.

7. SUPPORTING THOSE WITH SAME-SEX ATTRACTION & GENDER IDENTITY STRUGGLES

Who They Are: **Many LGBTQ+ Catholics feel rejected or unwelcome.**

How to Reach Them:

1. Ministries of Listening & Accompaniment: Follow the **"Courage"** or **"Eden Invitation"** model – pastoral care without compromising teaching.
2. Clear but Compassionate Preaching: Address topics with charity, avoiding both harshness and ambiguity.
3. Personal Friendship: Many just need a parish where they are treated with dignity, not as "issues."

Biblical Model: The Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41) - He is seen and loved in his suffering.

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Why This Passage Resonates:

1. He Is Seen and Loved in His Suffering

- The disciples ask, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2).

- Parallel Today: Many with SSA or gender dysphoria are wrongly assumed to be "sinful by nature" or products of a "broken home." Jesus rejects this false premise - "Neither

the man where he is and guides him deeper - without forcing instant orthodoxy.

Practical Parish Applications

1. Reject Reductive Labels

- Avoid framing SSA/gender struggles as only "disordered" or "inherently sinful." Like the blind man, the person is a



SILVER AND GOLDEN
JUBILARIANS FELICITATED

SR. ANNETTE FC GOLDEN SR. PUSHPA FC GOLDEN SR. ROSY RMI GOLDEN SR. ELSIE RMI GOLDEN FR. JOAQUIN SJ GOLDEN FR. SHAJI SJ SILVER FR. JOSEPH SJ SILVER
FR. ANISA FC GOLDEN SR. SANGEETA FHIC SR. SHINY CM SILVER SR. JAYSHEELA RMI SILVER FR. SUDHIR SJ SILVER FR. JAMES SJ SILVER

this man nor his parents sinned" (v. 3). Instead, He focuses on God's power to bring light through the struggle.

2. Jesus Touches Him Personally

- Jesus spits on the ground, makes mud, and anoints the man's eyes (v. 6).

- Parallel Today: People with SSA/gender struggles often feel like theological abstractions. Jesus engages personally and physically, showing that pastoral care requires dignity, presence, and tangible love - not just debates.

3. He Faces Rejection from Religious Leaders

- After healing, the man is interrogated, dismissed, and cast out by the Pharisees (vv. 24-34).

- Parallel Today: Many with SSA/gender conflicts feel ostracized by religious communities - judged as "unfit" for full participation. Jesus later finds the outcast man and affirms him (v. 35-38), modeling how the Church must seek those pushed to the margins.

4. Transformation, Not Immediate Perfection

- The man's understanding of Jesus grows gradually:
 - o First, he calls Jesus "a prophet" (v. 17).
 - o Then, "a man from God" (v. 33).
 - o Finally, he worships Him as "Lord" (v. 38).
- Parallel Today: Pastoral care requires patience. People may need time to reconcile faith and identity. Jesus meets

beloved child of God before any diagnosis.

2. Prioritize Accompaniment Over Debate

- Follow Jesus' method: act first (heal), explain later (theology). Serve before demanding conformity.

3. Create Safe Spaces for Questions

- Many, like the healed man, face hostile interrogation (John 9:24-34). The parish should be a place where doubts are heard without fear of expulsion.

4. Protect from Religious Trauma

- Jesus sought out the man after he was cast out (v. 35). The Church must actively reach out to those wounded by harsh religiosity.

5. Celebrate Progress, Not Just Perfection

- The man's faith develops in stages. Parish ministries should walk with people as they grow - not demand immediate, flawless adherence.

CONCLUSION

A PARISH THAT GOES TO THE MARGINS

Pope Francis reminds us: "The Church must be a field hospital." This means:

- Going out (not waiting for people to come).
- Listening first (not leading with demands).
- Meeting practical needs (not just spiritual ones).
- Building bridges, not walls.

A parish that does this will not just grow in numbers – it will radiate the love of Christ. "I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17)

SELECT DATES FOR PASTORAL YEAR 2025-26

PASTORAL APPROACHES

PASTORAL GOALS FOR 2025-26

PASTORAL GOAL : ENABLING ALL
To Listen to the Spirit within us
To Listen to the Spirit as Expressed by others

TARGET GROUPS : **All Priests, Religious Laity.** In every event, meeting initiate prayer and listening to the Spirit (informally but substantially, not exactly Spiritual Conversations)

METHOD : FORMATION OF TEAM of Fathers, Sisters Laity
 at Each Parish Level to enable others

SPECIFIC GROUPS FOR SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION TRAINING

- ALL MEMBERS OF THE PPCs (Laity Commission) perhaps in Combined Parishes
- ALL FINANCE COMMISSION MEMBERS (also combining parishes) (Laity Commission)
- CATECHISTS (Catechetical Team)
- WOMEN LEADERSHIP TEAM
- LAY GROUPS LEADERSHIP TEAMS (*Jesus Youth, MFC, SVP, Laygroups of Congregations etc*)
- RETREAT FOR DIOCESAN PRIESTS **this year will be specifically for Spiritual Conversations**

OTHER GROUP FORMATION TARGETS:

- ALTAR SERVER GROUPS formed of all Children who have received First Holy Communion
- YOUTH LEADERSHIP GROUP : P, VP, Sec, Male and Female Mentors in each parish

Special TARGET GROUP – Top Priority -- Migrants

SURVEY TO BE DONE. Migrants information to be shared with the Migrants Desk led by Sr. Maggie Allesu

SPECIAL/CORE PASTORAL ACTIVITIES AT PARISH LEVEL: - A MUST THIS YEAR

- ~~VISITING -personally/systematically/pastorally~~ by Fathers and Sisters- Parish Survey personally by Fathers and Sisters- being personal is important.
- Identifying and Forming Lay Spiritual Leaders in each village/sector, through MFC Jesus Youth or your own way.
- Conscientising our people of their Own Culture and Traditions.
- Formation of Diocesan Pastoral Council

DIOCESE \ DEANERY LEVEL ACTIVITIES OF COMMISSIONS

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| BIBLE | Quiz for Std 9, (14.01.26) |
| CATECHETICAL | Praying with the Bible with Women & Family Commission (<i>Dates to be fixed</i>) |
| ECUMENISM | Formation for Catechists- Surat Deanery and Vadodara Deanery specially |
| HEALTH \ | Unity Week meeting in Select Parishes (January 16, 2026) |
| FAMILY | Dialogue Meeting in Select Parishes (December 20, 2025) |
| LAITY | Meeting of Health Professionals |
| LITURGY | Training of Trainers for Marriage Courses (<i>Dates to be fixed</i>) |
| SC/ST: | Training of Trainers for Spiritual Conversations Parish wise (<i>Dates to be fixed</i>) |
| WOMEN | (PP, One Sister, VP of PPC, another lay person from each parish to participate (if VP is man, then a woman or vice versa) |
| YOUTH | Meeting of Catholic Teachers (in three places, <i>dates to be fixed</i>) |
| | <u>MAHASAMMELAN OF ALL PPC MEMBERS (January 14)</u> |
| | Formation of Lectors in Baroda and Surat (<i>Dates to be fixed</i>) |
| | Enabling Parishes to Conscientise Tribals of their customs and traditions & Constitutional Rights (In parishes, hostels <i>dates to be fixed</i>) |
| | Training for Bible reading sessions with Bible Commission |
| | Formation of Leadership at Deanery (<i>Date to be fixed</i>) |
| | and Diocesan Level (14.01.2026)– |
| | Round table for Confirmands (27-30.10.2026) |

SYNOD IMPLEMENTATION TEAM --

Rome has mandated to make a Synodal Implementation Team. It will be formed and names will be uploaded directly by Google Docs to Rome.

In May we shall be given instructions about implementation of the Synodal Document. So we might have to put some programs in here. We await instructions.

SELECT DATES FOR PASTORAL YEAR 2025-26

PASTORAL APPROACHES FOR THE YEAR

SELECT DATES FOR PASTORAL YEAR 2025-26

086/2025/2003

JUNE		
02-07.06.25		Diocesan Seminarians Interaction
07.06.25		First Death Anniversary of Fr John Vales – Bilimora
08.05.25	Sun	Visit and Confirmation at Valsad
15.06.25	Sun	Installation of Parish Priest (parish to be announced)
19.06.25	Thu	Diocesan Recollection 1
22.06.25	Sun	Visit in Narukott
23-25/06.25		National Convention of Theology and Doctrine
26.06.25	Thu	Meeting of Seven Commissions with their members
26.06.25	Thu	Meeting of Parish Priests and Religious Superiors
29.06.25	Sun	Installation of Parish Priest- Parish to be announced COLLECTION – PetersPence
JULY		
03.07.25	Thu	Priest Council I
04.07.25	Fri	Finance Council and College of Consultors Meet
05.07.25	Sat	GEBCI MEETING
06.07.25	Sun	Parish Priest Installation – parish to be announced
07-10/07.25		WRBC Meeting in Chanda
13.07.25	Sun	Formation of Deanery Pastoral Council, Surat Deanery
20.07.25	Sun	Formation of Deanery Pastoral Council, Tapi Deanery COLLECTION -- Society of St Peter for Seminaries
24.07.25	Sun	Deanery Meeting 1 - in all Deaneries
27.07.25	Sun	Meeting with Leaders of Jesus Youth and MFC and other Lay Groups World Day of Grandparents and Elderly
AUGUST		
03.08.25	Sun	Pastors Day Celebration in Each Parish Installation of Parish Priest
09.08.25	Sat	Day of Indigenous Peoples
10.08.25	Sun	Installation of Parish Priest- parish to be announced
15.08.2024	Fri	Jubilee of CM at Relva
16.08.2025	Sat	CRI AGM (Janmashtami)
17.08.25	Sun	Visitation – Rosary Parish Baroda JUSTICE SUNDAY
17- 23/ .08.25		Diocesan Retreat 1
24.08.2024	Sun	Pastoral Visit to Chote Udaipur
27.08.25	WED	ANNUAL MISSIONARY MEETING OF ALL CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS TOGETHER
31.08.25	SUN	
SEPTEMBER		
05.09.25	Fri	Teachers Day
08.09.25	MON	GIRL CHILD DAY
14.09.25	SUN	COLLECTION -- Society of St Peter for Seminaries
18.09.25	Thu	Deanery Pastoral Council 1 - Organised by Deans in 7 Deaneries
21-27.09.25		Diocesan Retreat 2
28.09.25	Sun	
OCTOBER		
05.10.25	Sun	Visit and Confirmation in Relva
12.10.25	Sun	Visitation in Vapi
19.10.25	Sun	Visit and Confirmations in Shamgahan MISSION SUNDAY
21.10.25	Tue	Conversations on Missionary and Pastoral Issues Baroda and Panchmahal
23.10.25	Thu	Conversations on Missionary and Pastoral Issues Other Deaneries
24-26.10.25		Jubilee of Synodal Bodies (Mandated by Rome)
26.10.25	Sun	Confirmation at Dadhwada
27-30.10.25		ROUNDTABLE FOR CONFIRMED YOUTH (date shiftable as per exam and holidayst)
31.10.25	Fri	Visit and Confirmation in Hingoria
NOVEMBER		
02.11.25	SUN	
05.11.25	WED	Jesuit Sammelan 2025 (Guru Nanak)
09.11.25	SUN	Visit and Confirmation Mandal
16.11.25	SUN	Visit and Confirmation in Pimpri
23.11.25	Sun	Visit and Confirmation in Bardipada
26.11.25	WED	COLLOQUIUM OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF RELIGIOUS WORKING IN GUJARAT WITH GUJARAT BISHOPS IN BISHOPS HOUSE BARODA

SELECT DATES FOR PASTORAL YEAR 2025-26

PASTORAL APPROACHES FOR THE YEAR

26.11.25	WED	MEETING OF GUJARAT FORMATORS AND GUJARAT BISHOPS AT BARODA
30.11.25	SUN	
DECEMBER		
01.12.25	Mon	Diocesan Advent Recollection 2
07.12.25	Sun	COLLECTION – Communio India
11-14/12.25		WRBC & WRCC Meeting in Mumbai
14.12.25	Sun	Special Jubilee Celebration in Each Parish before the Closure of the Jubilee Year
20.12.25	Sat	Dialogue Meeting in Parishes/Bishops House
21.12.25	Sun	
24.12.25	Wed	CHRISTMAS
27.12.25	Sat	Closing of the Jubilee Year with Participation of All Parishes at ZANKHVAV
28.12.25	Sun	
JANUARY		
04.01.26	SUN	
11.01.26	SUN	Meeting of Health Professionals,
14.01.26	Wed	MAHASAMMELAN FOR all PPC MEMBERS (every member to participate)
14.01.26	Wed	PAN BIBLE QUIZ FOR STUDENTS OF STD IX
14.01.26	Wed	Meeting of Youth Group Leadership of All Parishes
16.01.26		Ecumenical Unity Meeting 2026 in Parishes
18.01.26	Sun	Confirmation in Zaroli
19-21.01.26		Ongoing formation – Gujarat Diocesan Priests
25.01.25	Sun	Confirmation in
26.01.26	Mon	Our Lady of Forsaken Shrine
29.01.25	Thu	Deanery Meeting 2
FEBRUARY		
01.02.26	SUN	Korvi Mata
02.02.26	MON	Day of Consecrated Life
2-10/02.26		CCBI & CBCI MEETING
12.02.26	Thu	Priest Council II
13.02.2024	Fri	Finance Council and College of Consultors Meet
15.02.26	SUN	Confirmation in St Joseph COLLECTION – Holy Childhood
18.02.24	WED	Ash Wednesday
		Proposed Meeting with Lay Associations like MFC, Jesus Youth Etc
22.02.26	Sun	Visit and Confirmation at Nani Singloti
24.02.26	Tue	WRBC Ecumenical Diocesan Secretary Meeting – Mumbai
26.02.26	Thu	Deanery Pastoral Council 2
MARCH		
01.03.26	SUN	VISITATION IN UMARPADA
05.03.26		Meeting with PPs and Religious Superiors
		Meeting with Heads of Commissions
08.03.26	SUN	WOMEN DAY
12.03.25		Diocesan Lenten Recollection 3
15.03.25	SUN	
22.03.25	SUN	
27.03.26		Diocesan Pastoral Council (to be constituted this year)
27.03.26		Chrism Mass (propose to have Chrism Mass on Friday 27th March (Ram Navami). INAUGURATION OF DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL
29.03.25	Sun	Palm Sunday -- Navsari COLLECTION – CARITAS INDIA
APRIL		
02.04.26		MAUNDY THURSDAY -- VALSAD
03.04.26		GOOD FRIDAY – BHARUCH COLLECTION – HOLY LAND
05.04.26		EASTER SUNDAY - SURAT
MAY		
10.05.26		Visit and Confirmation at Don Bosco
17.05.26		Visit and Confirmation in Netrang

Some Sundays are free for those who have not confirmed their dates for confirmation



SURAT



THE PASCHAL MYSTERY IN THE DIOCESE OF BARODA

ROSARY CATHEDRAL

