



Ubi Deus, Ibi Spes
જ્યાં યેસુ, ત્યાં આશા
Is 40:31; Rom 8:5



THE BARODA DIOCESE NEWSLETTER

For Private Circulation only

JAN-FEB 2025

Pilgrims of Hope
2025



PRESENTATION OF THE LORD DAY OF CONSECRATED LIFE NUNC DIMITTIS

The World Day for Consecrated Life will be celebrated on the feast which commemorates the presentation which Mary and Joseph made of Jesus in the temple "to present him to the Lord" (Lk 2:22).

This Gospel scene reveals the mystery of Jesus,



the One consecrated by the Father, come into the world to carry out his will faithfully (cf. Heb 10:5-7). Simeon points to Jesus as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" (Lk 2:32) and by a prophetic word foretells the supreme offering of Jesus to the Father and his final victory (Lk 2:32-35).

In this way the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is an eloquent icon of the total offering of one's life for all those who are called to show forth in the Church and in the world, by means of the evangelical counsels "the characteristic features of Jesus -- the chaste, poor and obedient one" (VC 1).

Mary is associated with the presentation of Christ. The Virgin Mother who carries Jesus to the temple so that he can be offered to the Father expresses very well the figure of the Church who continues to offer her sons and daughters to the heavenly Father, associating them with the one oblation of Christ, cause and model of all consecration in the Church. (Pope John Paul II, *Declaring Day of Consecrated Life in 1997*)
https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/consecrated_life/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_06011997_i-consecrated-life-day.html

PRAYER INTENTIONS OF THE POPE

FEBRUARY

For vocations to the priesthood and religious life
Let us pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life.

MARCH

For families in crisis
Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

JUBILEE YEAR MUSINGS

Giving Hope - We are the World.

+Seby Mascarenhas

I usually reflect on something scriptural. This time, I am reflecting on an event that touched me and still does today. It was a Christian moment.

Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, Bruce Springsteen, Cyndi Lauper, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross... For those who are not familiar, these were music icons of the 70/80s.

It was January 28, 1985, forty years ago. People were dying in Ethiopia and Africa. 46 American music industry gathered in Hollywood and recorded a song (*in one night*) to help the people suffering famine in Africa. It raised millions. But most important of all, the greatest competitors with each other, sometimes even jealous foes, spent the whole night from 7 pm to 8 am recording the song. As Diana Ross, my favourite singer, who went last at 8 a.m said, *I wish it were never over!* And Lionel Richie said, *I feel God wanted it to be so.* **It was their SYNODALITY - being together for a cause, despite their differences and jealous competition.**

"It's a choice we are making. We are saving our own lives' they sang. Jane Fonda i

WOMEN OF PARASPADA VISIT THE BISHOP'S HOUSE



Introducing the song, quoted the poet John Donne: "Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind". Bruce Springsteen said . *If we look away, we are gradually killing our conscience. And that might be the most terrible death of all*". Diana Ross, one of my favourite singers, summed it up best: ***We are creating a shift. in what is going in the world today. Its compassion at nd its real new.***

As a bright eyed young missionary. I felt the world would indeed be better. It was this optimism that made our Gujarat missions such a joy.

The rise of egotism and rabid nationalism today is depressing. Fundamentalism seems to be the mainstream religions of the day with the same things in common, whatever religion they be: **greed, power and arrogance.** Is the erosion of Christian communities on a larger world level mean also the rise of fundamentalism that is more functional greed than has nothing to do with the divine?

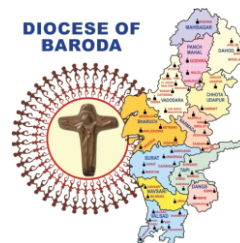
The Church aptly celebrates the **Jubilee of Hope**, forty Years after WE ARE THE WORLD. *Somehow the Pope has seen the signs of the times: Synodality and Hope are the counter culture to Power, Greed and Arrogance.*

Perhaps the solidarity (synodality?) of the 46 highly competitive artistes, which appears to be only a mirage today, could actually be an example for us, both, ***within the Church*** and ***ad extra to All Peoples.***

Nothing is impossible with God. (The fundamenalists unfortunately use this to justify their ends in the name of God)

OFFICIAL - FEBRUARY 2025

COMMITMENTS OF THE BISHOP FEBRUARY-MARCH 2025



PLEASE PRAY

27 - 4 Feb CCBI Meeting in Bhubhaneshwar
06 Feb Deanery Meeting III
08 Feb Vidhyadeep Community College Bharuch
11 Feb Gai Savar, Sagbara
12 Feb Korvidhamni Mata Maria
13 Feb Meeting of Seminary Formation, Nadiad
14 Feb Meeting of Deans, Ankleshwar
16 Feb Visit to Kawant
16-19 Feb Conference in Goa
20 Feb Diocesan Priest Council and Parish Priest Meet with Commission Heads

21 Feb Visit to Gothada
22 Feb Meeting with Legal Cell and Advisor
23 Feb Confirmations in Zankhvav

HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY - COLLECTION

26 Feb Pan Diocese MahaMela of Women at Jhagadia His Excellency, Apostolic Nuncio Leopoldo Girelli will be attending. Q & A session with the Nuncio

27 Feb Inauguration of Surat Deanery Pastoral Council

01-2 Mar Confirmation in Paraspada

3-7 Mar Visits in Zaroli, Umergam, Valsad, Surat, Jhagadia

09 Mar Confirmation in St Joseph

11 Mar WRBC Ecumenism Meeting

13 Mar Lenten Recollection, Diocese of Ahmedabad

16 Mar Visit to Muvaliya

COLLECTION FOR CARITAS INDIA

23 Mar Confirmation in Subir

30 Mar Vednamurthi Mata Katkuva

31 Mar Retreat in Zaroli

09-02-1978	Fr. Bijendra James
14-02-1972	Fr. Lobo Vincent
19-02-1946	Fr. Fonseca Albert
20-02-1982	Fr. Baraik Jaychand
01-03-1957	Fr. Lemos Saby
17-03-1989	Fr. Bhushan Bara
23-03-1948	Fr. Fernandes Joao M.
24-03-1982	Fr. Karketta Raymond
29-03-1940	Fr. Gonsalves Albert

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

05-02-2012	Fr. Arasure Muthu
23-02-2008	Fr. Arthur Menezes
04-03-2000	FR. CYPRIAN MENDOCA
29-03-2015	FR. KILIAN LOPES J.

ORDINATIONS

06-02-2010	Fr. Devassy Joseph
28-03-1992	Fr. Vasava Dalsukh

CONTACT

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Please send your collections (Cheques) in favour
"Dakshin Gujarat Seva Kendra",
Bank: Indian Overseas Bank,
A/C no: 019501000011894,
IFSC: IOBA0000195, Branch: Alkapuri, Baroda.

PAN DIOCESE EVENT

WOMEN OF BARODA DIOCESE

સુધન્ય

MAHA-SAMMELAN 2025

Theme	:	જીવંત ઝરાણું, પ્રભુ ઈસુ
Date	:	February 26, 2025 (Mahashivratri)
Time	:	From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Place	:	Jhagadia
Participants	:	Women of every parish of the Diocese of Baroda Priests and Sisters
Main Coordinator	:	Sr. Anita Parmar fc
Coordinating Team	:	Dolcy, Margaret, Sangeeta, Fr. William Carvalho

THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIO, ARCHBISHOP LEOPOLDO GIRELLI WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THIS MEGA ONE DAY CELEBRATION OF ENTHUSIASM AND HOPE.

We invite all Fathers and Sisters to be part of this event.

The Fathers and Sisers will have a 90 minute Q & A with the Nuncio on this occasion

UNITY WEEK 2025

PRAYING WITH THE BIBLE - ECUMENICAL MEETING WITH CHILDREN

16.01.2025 Rosary Cathedral



The Annual Ecumenical Gathering of the Churches in Vadodara brought together twenty different parishes of Baroda including eight Catholic parishes. Fr. Vincent Lobo, Director of the Commission for Ecumenism and Dialogue of the Diocese of Baroda, coordinated the entire program. His efforts realised in bring 21 pastors and priests together. Two preliminary meetings paved the way for this meeting. Ms. Natasha of Rosary parish compered the entire program.



The churches met in Rosary Cathedral with children being the central protagonists in the program. it was amazing to see over 350 people gathered for this unique program. Putting the Bible and prayer at the centre of the program, groups of Church children were allotted to read a passage from the Bible, to sing an appropriate response to the reading and jointly say a prayer. There were seven brief readings which cleverly covered the salvation history from creation to the descent of the Holy Spirit, the revelation of the Church.

The Rector of Rosary Cathedral, Fr. Jesu Raj facilitated the entire program, with the children of Rosary parish stepping in when some churches failed to step in. As a sign of unity the entire congregation joined hands and prayed the Our Father together as one. The words of Bind us Together resounded in the Church.

It was a fruitful evening. it was credit to the pastors who made all efforts to bring the children despite the pressure of the exams. The Catholic parish priests of Baroda went out of the way and carried the entire program through their excellent participation.



UNITY WEEK 2025

PRAYING WITH THE BIBLE - ECUMENICAL MEETING WITH CHILDREN

that they may be one...



COMMISSION FOR MIGRANTS

17.01.2025 Online Meeting of the Diocese of Baroda



The first meeting of the Migrant Commission was held online on 7th January 2025. The following members were present:

Rev. Bp. Sebastio Mascrehnas, the Bishop of Baroda; Magy Allesu, the Coordinator of the Migrant Commission; commission members from each deanery (Srs. Teresa Lobo from Chhota Udepur, Philomena Ekka from Jhagaida, Caroline from Surat, Bharati from Fulwadi, Chanda from Subir, Usha from Nani Sinlotti, Frs. Julius from Zaroli, Ashwin from Pimpri, Bhushan from Baroda); Fr. Rakesh Macwan, the Coordinator of the Social Work Commission; Fr. Stany Pinto, the Coordinator of the SC/ST/OBC Commission; Fr. Jimmy Dabi, the Coordinator of the Migrant and Displacement Commission of the Gujarat province of the Jesuits; Melwin D'Souza, the Coordinator of migrant works in Navsarjan, Surat; Fr. Issaac, Coordinator of the Don Bosco migrant works in Surat; Fr. Baptist, the Coordinator; and Br. Christopher, in charge of the migrant work in Don Bosco Makarpura.

The meeting started with a prayer for the migrants. After welcoming the participants, Bp. Seby gave a short orientation about the purpose of setting up the Migrant Commission in the diocese. He expressed that the issue of migration is a serious concern that needs to be addressed collectively. However, he emphasized the need to start with Catholic migrants in the diocese as it may not be possible to cover all migrants immediately.

The CBCI pastoral plan of the Migrant Commission was then presented to the group. (See the file attached)

Sharing of the existing initiatives in the diocese:

Fr. Jimmy shared the concerns that migrants and their families face, especially regarding various forms of exploitation, starting with wages. Women are typically paid lower wages than men and face many challenges. Education and health are major issues. He mentioned that they are requesting funds from the province to conduct research on migrants from the source in six districts, from Sabarkanta to Chota Udaipur, which are tribal districts. The key

questions they want to focus on include the reasons for migration, the journey they undertake, their work conditions, and ways to alleviate the distress of migration. He stated that while it may be difficult to stop migration, efforts can be made to address the stress migrants experience. He also mentioned sharing the report of a study that has already been conducted with the group.

Bishop Seby emphasized the importance of reaching out to parish priests and creating a network to connect with migrants. Tracking Catholic migrants in different cities and establishing a database will help identify and support our Catholic community.

Father Isaac shared his work with migrants in Surat, focusing on basic interventions to connect with migrants and inform them about government schemes. Building relationships and providing support to migrants, especially those from other states, is a key aspect of their grassroots approach. He said that the current focus is on registering migrants and ensuring they have the E-Shram Union Demand Card through channels like the migrant board. They are provided free medical facilities for 10 months and can access government schemes for pregnant women, children's education, and livelihood support once registered.

Sr. Maggie stressed the importance of networking with different congregations in the diocese for the migrant ministry.

Brother Christopher discussed their initiatives in Baroda, assisting migrants with documentation and benefits like

COMMISSION FOR MIGRANTS

17.01.2025 Online Meeting of the Diocese of Baroda

the eShram card through collaboration with the labor department and local BMC personnel.

Father Melwin mentioned the establishment of a migration desk in Surat to address cases of abuse, wages, and other issues faced by migrants working in industries like textiles and diamond cutting. Legal and counseling support is provided to resolve these cases, along with collaboration with a tribal association from South Gujarat. He also said that the hostel provides spiritual support for migrants. A local priest expressed interest in connecting with migrants, especially Catholics, in Surat. He mentioned his involvement in migration studies and preparation for his upcoming doctoral research in this field. Their focus is on supporting migrant communities in India, and they recently welcomed Father John Francis Bosco from Delhi to assess the slum areas in Surat.

Fr. Rakesh mentioned that seasonal migration is a major issue in Dediapada, with many individuals traveling to the Kosamba area. Unfortunately, their spiritual needs are not being addressed due to the lack of a nearby church.

Given that migration is a prevalent issue across our ministry areas, it is essential to collaborate with various commissions in the diocese, particularly the social work, SC/ST, Labour, and Women's Commissions.

Fr. Stany emphasized the importance of tracking migrants and collecting their data, especially from the source of migration. He suggested conducting surveys through parish priests and social workers. He felt that all the commissions could come together, including all the centers, especially social work centers, and conduct an in-depth survey.

Fr. Isaac mentioned that since the Catholic Church is highly organized, resources can be tapped by allocating members to coordinate with certain dioceses to gather information from the source, as migrants are coming from across states.

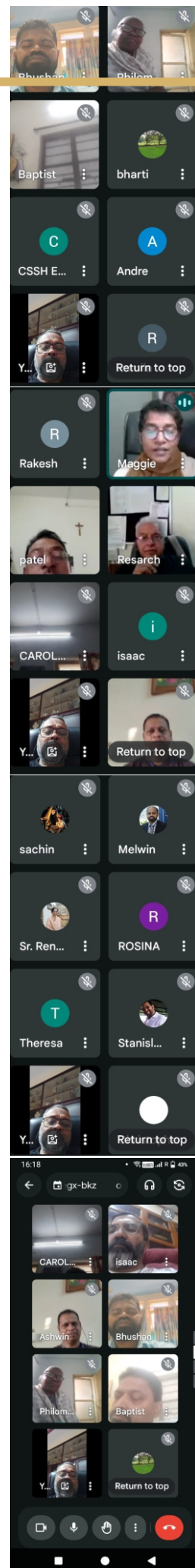
The Bishop mentioned that there are not too many Catholics in the rural parishes, and the priests are regularly going for mass to every village. People have mobile numbers, and there is a great need to be more pastoral now. He highlighted the importance of staying connected with youth and engaging them actively in an impersonal way. In rural parishes with around 2000 Catholics, conducting a survey to understand their needs is feasible and areas can be done through sharing between parish priest and sisters. It is crucial to track school location of children and prioritize their faith formation. Gathering data on urban migrants poses a challenge, but collaboration between the migrant commission and other groups is essential to address their needs effectively. Networking with parishes at the source will help in addressing migrant concerns comprehensively.

The Bishop emphasized that parish priests are key in conducting surveys of migrants and assured that he would contact them to facilitate the process. Migrant data collection should be ongoing, with leaders and parish priests staying informed about the changing data of migrants in their respective parishes.

Fr. Jimmy suggested involving catechists and leaders in the survey to make it more manageable. Sr. Maggie proposed organizing a seminar on migrants in the diocese to discuss the issue and explore networking opportunities with all the congregations and organizations. It was suggested to hold this session during the Chrism Mass to ensure the participation of the whole diocese.

It was suggested that a simple questionnaire could be prepared to collect data on the migrants. Fr. Jimmy promised to send a sample questionnaire that could be circulated to the group and finalized as early as possible.

The Bishop thanked all those who were present at the meeting for their valuable contributions, making it a very fruitful one. The meeting concluded with a blessing from the Bishop.



PICSWORDS – VARIA

CRI, VISTORS, BOOK RELEASE...



WESTERN REGION CRI MEETING IN PILAR GOA. CRI BARODA WAS REPRESENTED BY FR RAJA SVD AND SR ROJA FSAG



THE REGIONAL HOUSE OF THE MC OF THE MC SISTERS IN BARODA HAS A SERIES OF ONGOING FORMATION PROGRAMS FOR THE REGION.



HOLINESS UNPACKED

SAINTS FOR THE JOURNEY



Fr. Isaac F. Arackaparambil SDB



SALESIAN PROVINCIAL FR. SAVIO SILVEIRA PRESENTED A COPY OF THE NEW BOOK OF FR. ISAAC TO BP SEBY ON THE FIRST NOVENA AT JEEVAN DARSHAN. IT IS DEEPLY SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL REFLECTION ON 50 SAINTS.

MAHABHAJAN AT KAWANT

On December 29, 2024, Sahayak Mata Parish, Kawant, celebrated the Feast of the Holy Family and inaugurated the Jubilee Year 2025, declared by Pope Francis as the "Year of Hope," with a grand Mahabhajan. This event united Christians from various denominations across Chhota Udepur district, located at the Gujarat-Madhya Pradesh border.

BRIDGE PROGRAMME LAUNCHED AT KAWANT

On January 6, 2025, DISHA Don Bosco, Kawant, launched its first Skill Development batch under the BRIDGE Programme (Bosch's Response to India's Development & Growth through Employability Enhancement).

The two-month training, with 40 enrolled students, is fully supported by DISHA Don Bosco, Rotary Club of Baroda, and Muni Seva Ashram, ensuring free education and job placement. Certificates and deposit refunds will be given at the valedictory function.



PICSWORDS – DEANERY PASTORAL COUNCILS

10.01.2025 – NARMADA DEANERY 27.10.2025 – PANCHMAHAL DEANERY



Under the leadership of Fr Paul D'Silva, the Dean of the Narmada Deanery and Fr. Rajendra Toppo, Dean of the Panchmal Deanery the first ever Deanery Pastoral Councils of Narmada Deanery (photos above) and Panchmahal Deanery (below). All parish priests were present at both places with their representatives.

Bishop Seby Mascarenhas succinctly presented the basis of the synodal way of living in the Church, led by the Spirit. He insisted that the task of the DePC was not merely organising and administering. It was to allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit in order to discern what God wants from us today. It is a deeply spiritual task. He noted that the Deanery Pastoral Council would meet twice a year. He appealed to all to make time for this important body. Surat Deanery will erect its council in February. Bharuch and Vadodara deaneries have already constituted their councils.



PICSWORDS – CONFIRMATION

18-19.01.2025 VYARA PARISH - VADPADA AND VAJARDA



The parish of Vyara celebrated Confirmations in two of its largest villages. The parish has 22 villages. While the fathers visit all the villages, the Ursulines are assigned 9 villages and the MSCJ sisters cater to 13 villages.

At Vadpada 70 people were confirmed and at Vajarda 50 people were confirmed.

Fr Jayant, Fr | Freddy, Fr Agnel and Fr George are the pastors in this prime mission of the diocese. Led by three catechists and the Agewans, it was a vibrant celebration of the faith.



PICSWORDS – CONFIRMATIONS

26.01.2025 DEDIAPADA



Following up on a deep preparation which included a one day camp at Korvi, 108 faithful received the sacrament of confirmation at a beautiful ceremony at Param Kripa Mandir Dediapada.

Frs. Rakesh Mawan, the parish priest together with Frs. Praveen, John and Dalsukh, the sisters and the leaders organised the beautiful ceremony.

Dediapada is one of the larger parishes of the diocese. With Korvidham Mata Maria in the parish, it has become one of the pilgrim centres of the Diocese. Fr. Dalsukh Vasava now takes daily spiritual care of the faithful who visit there.





The sixth Deanery of the diocese, Panchmahal, completed its initial training for Parish Pastoral Council Members at Halol. Fr Rajendra Toppo, the Dean organised the sessions while the Director of the Laity Commission, Fr. William Carvalho together with Fr. Joel Pais and Fr. Paul D'Silva gave the intiation on Spirituality, Ecclesiology and the Statues of the PPCs respectively.



Immediatley after the Inauguration of the Jubilee Year, the CM sisters began the pilgrimage season with a visit to Valsad and Umergam. The Vapi parish also visited Umergam as part of the Jubilee pilgrimages. I am sure more will follow in Lent.





FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY MASS FOR FR. JOHN LOBO AT DEDIAPADA



ECOLOGY SEMINAR ORGANISED BY JESUITS AT NADIAD : FR. RAJA, FR. BHUSHAN AND 3 LAY PERSONS ATTENDED FROM BARODA



Lourdes Convent CBSE put up a stunning and classy display on its 2nd Annual Day. Started only two years ago, the play on AI and Humans was way above the standard of any school. Congratulations!



PICSWORDS

VISITORS AND VISITS



THE DEFINITOR GENERAL OF THE OCD FATHERS VISITS THE COMMUNITY IN BARODA



THE SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE MISSIONARIES OF CHRIST JESUS, SR ALPHONSINE VISITED BARODA TOGETHER WITH HER COUNCILLOR SR. DEBORAH. SR. ALPHONSINE HAILES FROM CONGO BUT HAS WORKED MOSTLY IN VENEZUELA. AS SUPERIOR GENERAL (SECOND TERM) SHE IS BASED IN NAVARA, SPAIN. THE MCJ SISTERS SERVE IN TANKHLA.



SFX EXPOSITION – SURAT



SFX EXPOSITION UMARPADA



SFX EXPOSITION DEDIAPADA



PARASPADA WOMEN AT BISHOPS HOUSE

PICSWORDS

JUBILEE CROSSES

The crosses of each parish are meaningful. Umarpada, Sagbara and Surat have put in a lot of thought. The parishes will take them to each village. Bardipada has already started like some others.

