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Catholic Diocese of Kurunegala

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Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God at Meth Nivasa - Wellawa



His Lordship the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala celebrated the Holy Eucharist on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God at 'Meth Nivasa' Wellawa on 1st January 2024. Rev. Sisters and the inmates at Meth Nivasa had organized the feast meaningfully.

Monthly Recollection and the Presbyteral Meeting : January



The first meeting of the Presbyterium in the new year 2024 was held on Monday 8th January at the Bishop's House, Kurunegala. His Lordship the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala delivered the day's reflection based on duties and responsibilities of priesthood in view of a fruitful and faithful mission to the flock.

Blessing of the Newly Built Elders Care Home



His Lordship the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala blessed and declared open the newly built Elders Home at Salvatorian Convent Bamunawala. This has been constructed and monitored by the Salvatorian Congregation. Very Rev. Fr. Piyal Janaka Fernando, the Vicar General and Very Rev. Fr. Sagara Perera, the Procurator General, priests, Rev, Sr. Lilly Kurian, the General Vicaress and lay salvatorians also joined the opening.

Diocesan Pastoral Council



The first meeting of the DPC in the new year 2024 was held on 20th January at the Bishop's House, Kurungala. His Lordship the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala presided over the meeting. Very Rev. Fr. Piyal Janaka Fernando, the Vicar General, Very Rev. Fr. Nihal Obris, the Episcopal Vicar and Rev. Fr. Lionel Fernando, the Diocesan Director for SCCs representatives of Religious Congregations and the members of the DPC participated at the meeting.

Annual Feast of St. Joseph Vaz Maha Galgamuwa 2024



Annual Feast of the historic National Shrine of St. Joseph Vaz at Maha Galgamuwa was held on 15th January 2024. At the invitation of His Lordship the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala, His Lordship, the Most Rev. Dr. Jude Nishantha Silva, the Bishop of Badulla presided over the Festive High Mass. Very Rev. Fr. Piyal Janaka, the Vicar General, officiated at the Vespers on the previous day. Many priests, religious and the devotees took part at the feast, and Rev. Fr. Rufus Thalis, the Administrator, Rev. Fr. Johnson CMF, the Asst. Parish Priest of Galgamuwa, the Festival committee and St. Joseph Vaz Committee had made all the arrangements for a successful feast.

A warm welcome to the Association of Sisters of Divine Mercy as they begin the mission in the Catholic Diocese of Kurunegala.
Divine Mercy Convent - Nalawalana





My dear Fathers, Sisters & Brothers,

Every year, the month of February begins with a universal feast and two other celebrations directly related to our own motherland. While the Universal Church celebrates the feast of the presentation of the Lord in the temple on 02nd February, the Sri Lankans celebrate the Independence Day and the Catholic Church celebrates the solemnity of Our Lady of Lanka, the heavenly Patroness of our country on 4th February.

This year marks the 76th anniversary of the Independence. Still, we have not achieved the real independence. If you observe the trends and happenings over the recent past, there has been a stark departure of morality in the country. The decadence has not come about all of a sudden. The successive governments have failed to develop the country due to their own political agendas and personal interests. Therefore, it is essential to raise our minds and hearts to God unceasingly, through the intercession of Our Lady of Lanka.

Going through the corridors of the history, we see the intervention of our Blessed Mother in times of war and other trials. Let us pray for her intervention at this time of uncertainty, as we feel the unrest of different quarters of the society on various issues.

This month of February invites us to enter into the most important season of the liturgical life of every Christian. The Ash Wednesday falls on 14th February 2024. It is a time to call for repentance. Any celebration must be in conformity with the atmosphere of the season of Lent.

The Lenten Youth Retreat organized by the diocesan youth director will take place from 23-25 February at the Salesian center at Metiyagane. Kindly encourage the young girls and boys in your parishes to take part in this Lenten Retreat. Much involvement is needed to give them the right direction as they encounter a danger to the innocence of the youth. We fail in our mission, if we do not direct them in the teachings of Jesus Christ. There are also other Coordinators/ Directors/ Chaplains of different apostolates, who will organize Lenten days of prayer and recollection. Your goodwill is necessary to encourage the faithful to take part.

There will be a statement from the CBCSL soon on the LGBTQ+ issue. It is important to know the stand of the Church, so that you may be able to tackle any issue on this topic.

We warmly welcome the Sisters of Divine Mercy to the parish of Nalawalana. We thank Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe, the Bishop of Galle and the Council of Priests. We are also happy to welcome the Sisters of Holy Angels to the parish of Kattimahana. Altogether it is a new convent with a new community. The new convent will be blessed and declared open in this month of February. We thank Mother General, Sr. Raymond Wijesuriya and the Council for accepting our invitation to take part in our pastoral mission.

I wish to thank Very Rev. Fr. Rufus Thalis, the Administrator of St. Joseph Vas Shrine at Maha Galgamuwa and the diocesan office bearers for organizing the festive celebrations with great commitment. I also thank all those Fathers and the parishioners at Galgamuwa for their support. My appreciation to all the Fathers, Sisters and Brothers who made it a point to participate in this important diocesan event. May God bless you all!

The Episcopal Ordination of Msgr. Wimal Siri Jayasuriya, the Bishop-elect of the diocese of Chilaw will take place on Saturday, 02nd March 2024 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral, Chilaw. Let us pray that the Spirit of the Lord guide throughout his episcopal ministry.

The monthly recollection and the Presbyteral meeting will be on Monday, 12th February at Bishop's House and as usual we shall begin at 9.00 a.m. with the Eucharistic Adoration in the chapel.

Thank you & God bless you!

+ Harold Perera

+ Harold Anthony Perera

Catholic Bishop of Kurunegala

CATHOLIC BISHOP OF KURUNEGALA SRI LANKA

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS - ASH WEDNESDAY

Basilica of Santa Sabina, 22 February 2023



"Behold, now is the favourable time; behold, now is the day of salvation!" (*2 Cor* 6:2). With these words, the Apostle Paul helps us enter into the spirit of the Lenten season. Lent is indeed the "favourable time" to return to what is essential, to divest ourselves of all that weighs us down, to be reconciled with God, and to rekindle the fire of the Holy Spirit hidden beneath the ashes of our frail humanity. Return to what is essential. It is the season of grace when we put into practice what the Lord asks of us at the beginning of today's first reading: "Return to me with all your heart" (*Jl* 2:12). Return to what is essential: it is the Lord.

The rite of the imposition of ashes serves as the beginning of this return journey. It exhorts us to do two things: *to return to the truth about ourselves* and *to return to God and to our brothers and sisters.*

First, *to return to the truth about ourselves.* The ashes remind us who we are and whence we come. They bring us back to the essential truth of our lives: the Lord alone is God and we are the work of his hands. That is the truth of who we are. We *have* life, whereas God *is* life. He is the Creator, while we are the fragile clay fashioned by his hands. We come from the earth and we need heaven; we need him. With God, we will rise from our ashes, but without him, we are dust. As we humbly bow our heads to receive the ashes, we are reminded of this truth: we are the Lord's; we belong to him. For God "formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (*Gen* 2:7); we exist because he breathed into us the breath of life. As a tender and merciful Father, God too experiences Lent, since he is concerned for us; he waits for us; he awaits our return. And he constantly urges us not to despair, even when we lie fallen in the dust of our weakness and sin, for "he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust" (*Ps* 103:14). Let us listen to those words again: *He remembers that we are dust.* God knows this; yet we often forget it, and think that we are self-sufficient, strong and invincible without him. We put on *maquillage* and think we are better than we really are. We are dust.

Lent, then, is the time to remind ourselves who is the Creator and who is the creature. The time to proclaim that God alone is Lord, to drop the pretense of being self-sufficient and the need to put ourselves at the centre of things, to be the top of the class, to think that by our own abilities we can succeed in life and transform the world around us. Now is the favourable time to be converted, to stop looking at ourselves and to start looking into ourselves. How many distractions and trifles distract us from the things that really count! How often do we get caught up in our own wants and needs, lose sight of the heart of the matter, and fail to embrace the true meaning of our lives in this world! Lent is *a time of truth*, a time to drop the masks we put on each day to appear perfect in the eyes of the world. It is a time, as Jesus said in the Gospel, to reject lies and hypocrisy: not those of others, but of ourselves: We look them in the eye and resist them.

Yet there is a second step: the ashes invite us also to *return to God and to our brothers and sisters.* Once we return to the truth about ourselves and remind ourselves that we are not self-sufficient, we realize that we exist only

through relationships: our primordial relationship with the Lord and our vital relationships with others. The ashes we receive this evening tell us that every presumption of self-sufficiency is false and that self-idolatry is destructive, imprisoning us in isolation and loneliness: we look in the mirror and believe that we are perfect, the centre of the world. Life is instead a relationship: we receive it from God and from our parents, and we can always revive and renew it thanks to the Lord and to those he puts at our side. Lent, then, is a season of grace when we can rebuild our relationship with God and with others, opening our hearts in the silence of prayer and emerging from the fortress of our self-sufficiency. Lent is the favourable time when we can break the chains of our individualism and isolation, and rediscover, through encounter and listening, our companions along the journey of each day. And to learn once more to love them as brothers and sisters.

How can we do this? To make this journey, to return to the truth about ourselves and to return to God and to others, we are urged to take three great paths: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. These are the traditional ways, and there is no need for novelty. Jesus said it clearly: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. It is not about mere external rites, these must be actions expressing the renewal of our hearts. Almsgiving is not a hasty gesture performed to ease our conscience, to compensate for our interior imbalance; rather, it is a way of touching the sufferings of the poor with our own hands and heart. Prayer is not a ritual, but a truthful and loving dialogue with the Father. Fasting is not a quaint devotion, but a powerful gesture to remind ourselves what truly matters and what is merely ephemeral. Jesus gives "advice that still retains its salutary value for us: external gestures must always be matched by a sincere heart and consistent behaviour. Indeed, what use is it to tear our garments if our hearts remain distant from the Lord, that is, from goodness and justice?" (BENEDICT XVI, *Homily for Ash Wednesday*, 1 March 2006). All too often, our gestures and rites have no impact on our lives; they remain superficial. Perhaps we perform them only to gain the admiration or esteem of others. Let us remember this: in our personal life, as in the life of the Church, outward displays, human judgments and the world's approval count for nothing; the only thing that truly matters is the truth and love that God himself sees.

If we stand humbly before his gaze, then almsgiving, prayer and fasting will not simply remain outward displays, but will express what we truly are: children of God, brothers and sisters of one another. Almsgiving, charity, will be a sign of our compassion toward those in need, and help us to return to others. Prayer will give voice to our profound desire to encounter the Father, and will bring us back to him. Fasting will be the spiritual training ground where we joyfully renounce the superfluous things that weigh us down, grow in interior freedom and return to the truth about ourselves. Encounter with the Father, interior freedom, compassion.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us bow our heads, receive the ashes, and lighten our hearts. Let us set out on the path of charity. We have been given forty days, a "favourable time" to remind ourselves that the world is bigger than our narrow personal needs, and to rediscover the joy, not of accumulating material goods, but of caring for those who are poor and afflicted. Let us set out, then, on the path of prayer and use these forty days to restore God's primacy in our lives and to dialogue with him from the heart, and not only in spare moments. Let us set out on the path of fasting and use these forty days to take stock of ourselves, to free ourselves from the dictatorship of full schedules, crowded agendas and superficial needs, and choose the things that truly matter.

Brothers and sisters, let us not neglect the grace of this holy season, but fix our gaze on the cross and set out, responding generously to the powerful promptings of Lent. At the end of the journey, we will encounter with greater joy the Lord of life, we will meet him, who alone can raise us up from our ashes.

ANECDOTES & SCRIPTURE NOTES FOR ALL OCCASIONS

SEIZING THE MOMENT – *Repentance, regret*

A mother was recently asked, "If you had your life to live over, would you change anything?" At first, she thought not, but then reconsidered. Here are some of her comments: "I would have sat on the lawn with my children and not worried about grass stains. Instant of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment. I would have realized that the wonder growing inside me was my only chance in life to assist God in a miracle. When my child kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, 'Later; now go get washed for dinner.' There would have been more instances of saying 'I love you,' more I'm sorry." I would seize every minute, live it, and never give it back."

Reflection



How beneficial regret often is. When we realize the sins committed, the mistakes of the past, the opportunities missed, the people we might have hurt, we are motivated to be more watchful and sensitive in the future. But the past, of course, is past, and we must move on, not letting past errors and sins distract us from the loving work of the present.

Sent by—His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera

Bulletin Announcements….

February 04
Independence Day / Feast of Our Lady of Lanka

February 04
St. Sebastian's Church Feast – Alawwa

February 10
Lenten Education Programme

February 12
Monthly Recollection & Presbyteral Meeting

February 14
Ash Wednesday - Beginning of Mawathagama Calvary

February 23
Head Catechists' Meeting - Bulupitiya Center

February 24
Media Workshop - Kurunegala

February 24
Lenten Recollection Programme - Sacred Heart Confraternity "Sathpahana" - Kuliyapitiya

February 23, 24 & 25
Youth Retreat

Church Feasts in the month of February.

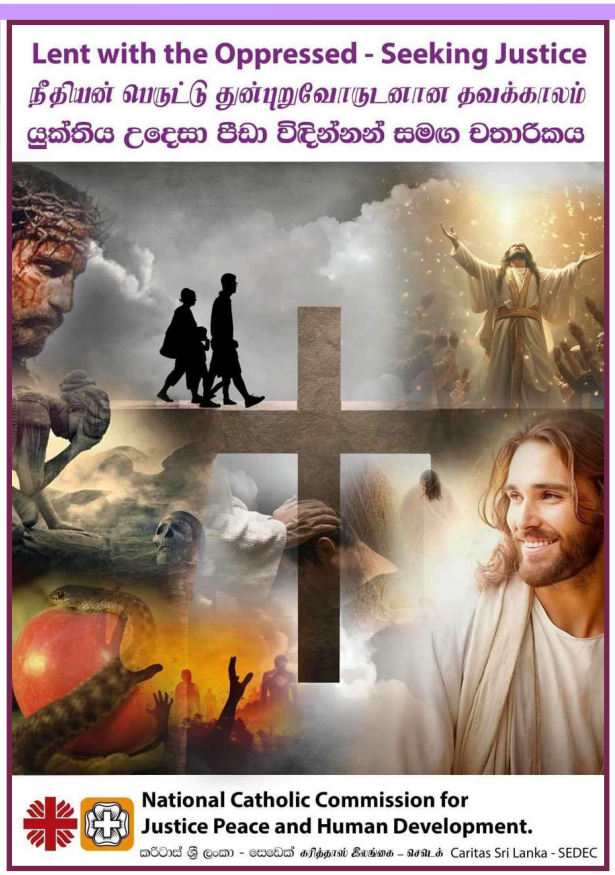
Kuliyapitiya Deanery

Parish	Church	Saint	Date
Mandakondana	Mandakondana	Holy Family	04.02.2024
Walpitagama	Nabiriththankadawara	St. Sebastian	04.02.2024
Hettipola	Koswatta	St. John Bosco	11.02.2024
Thisogama	Ottupallama	Our Lady of Lourdes	11.02.2024

Kurunegala Deanery

Parish	Church	Saint	Date
Polgahawela	Alawwa	St. Sebastian	04.02.2024
Bakmeegolla	Kubukwewa	St. Sebastian	11.02.2024
Millawa	Millawa	Holy Family	11.02.2024
Yakadapotha	Yakadapotha	Our Lady of Lourdes	11.02.2024
Malsiripura	Diddeniya	Our Lady of Lourdes	11.02.2024
Polgahawela	Polgahawela	Our Lady of Lourdes	25.02.2024


It is our effort to be with people and build them up.
Janasetha - Caritas Kurunegala
Some of the services we provide in Janasetha...
Programs for youth.
Programs on gardening.
Collective Farming Systems..
Programs on animal husbandry..
Environmental safety programs.
Programs for providing drinking water facilities..
Programs for school children.
Interreligious programs
Dry food and book distribution programmes..
Psychosocial wellbeing programs.
JANASETHA
CARITAS KURUNEGALA



Holy Childhood Sunday Celebration in the Diocese of Kurunegala









Birthdays Rev. Fathers

12th of February - Rev. Fr. Basil Rohan Fernando
22nd of February - Rev. Fr. Gayan Hirantha

Ordination Anniversaries

30th of January - Rev. Fr. Manura S.Premarathne
30th of January - Rev. Fr. Jude Lasantha Liyanage
30th of January - Rev. Fr. George Dixon
30th of January - Rev. Fr. Thusitha Priyanga
07th of February - Rev. Fr. Niroshan Jayakody
18th of February - Rev. Fr. Jude Shylan (CMF)
26th of February - Rev. Fr. Tharanga Dilekshika
27th of February - Rev. Fr. Alexi Callistus
27th of February - Rev. Fr. Sampath Sujeewa

Birthdays of Rev. Sister and Brothers

11th of February - Rev. Sr. Dominic Savio (Holy Angel's Sisters - Mawathagama)

Death Anniversary

28th of February - Rev. Fr. Roger Christopher

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