FRATERNITY

Catholic Diocese of Kurunegala

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21st Anniversary of
The Episcopal Ordination
His Lordship Most Rev. Dr.
Harold Anthony Perera
the Bishop of Kurunegala
2003.03.18

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Annual Feast of St. Sebastian at Alawwa



Annual Feast of St. Sebastian at Alawwa was celebrated on 4th February 2024. His Lordship, the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala officiated at the Festive High Mass and concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Himishka Roshan, Secretary to the Bishop and Rev. Fr. Nalinda Lanka, Asst. Procurator, Rev. Fr. Gerald Fernando, the Parish Priest of Polgahawela and the community at Alawwa organized the feast meaningfully.

Lenten Education Programme



Lenten Education Programme 2024 was held on 10th February at "Sathpahana" Auditorium, Kuliyapitiya. Rev. Fr. Ajith Prasanna Fernando, the Director of St. John Paul II College, delivered the talk, based on philosophical and theological facets in relation to a wholistic preparation for a meaningful Lent. the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala graced the occasion. Also, a large number of priests, religious and lay faithful participated in the programme. Rev. Fr. Thusitha Priyanga, the Director of "Janasetha"-Caritas and his team had made all the arrangements for a successful event.

Presbyteral Meeting and the Day of Recollection - February



Monthly Recollection and the Presbyteral Meeting was held on 12th February at Bishop's House, Kurunegala. Rev. Fr. Austin Marcus Fernando, the Rector of the Minor Seminary delivered the reflection based on Spirituality of Priesthood.

Ash Wednesday



Holy Mass on Ash Wednesday was celebrated by the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala on 14th of February 2024 at St. Anne's Cathedral, Kurunegala. Rev. Fr. Placidus de Silva, the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Lakshan Perera, the Asst. Parish Priest of Kurunegala, Fr. Himishka Roshan Secretary to the Bishop concelebrated at the Holy Eucharist. Teachers and the students of the Holy Family Balika, Kurunegala organized the liturgy of the Mass.

Annual Feast of St. Sebastian at Kumbukwewa



Annual Feast of St. Sebastian's Church at Kumbukwewa was celebrated on 11th February 2024. The Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala presided over the Festive High Mass, Rev. Fr. Himishka Roshan, Secretary to the Bishop and Rev. Fr. Nalinda Lanka, the Asst. Procurator concelebrated at the Mass. Very. Rev. Fr. Prasantha Amarasekara, the Parish Priest of Bakmeegolla and the community of Kumbukwewa had organized the annual feast meaningfully.

Blessing of the Newly Built Convent at Kattimahana



The Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala declared open and blessed the newly built St. Anne's Convent at Kattimahana, on 27th February 2024. . The Sisters of Holy Angels launched their mission, occupying the new building. Rev. Fr. Lionel Fernando donated the land for the building which was constructed with the financial assistance of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of Faith - Rome, Archdiocese of Atlanta, local and foreign benefactors.



My dear Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

We are still in the season of Lent. It has been always considered from the beginning a time to renew one's life. Our attention is drawn during this period to prayer, fight evil and fast. Prayer is to seek the grace of God, the power to transform ourselves to believe in the Good News. The fight against evil is to keep our passions and selfishness under control. Fasting is not only to forego the meals, but the love for the others by way of acts of mercy. Lent also helps us to pass through the events of the salvation history.

As we organize different programs to guide the faithful during this holy season, it is also equally necessary that we too need such programs to live in this period of grace. Thus, the Lenten recollection for religious and priests working in the diocese of Kurunegala is very important. It will be held on Monday, 11th March 2024 at Our Lady of Fatima church, Malkaduwawa. The day begins at 9.00 a.m. with the spiritual talk and reflections followed by the sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharistic Celebration. I have already given the details of the day in my recent letter addressed to you individually.

I also would like to remind you about two other important diocesan programs. First is the diocesan pilgrimage to the Mawathagama Calvary on Friday, 22nd March. Kindly, make sure that active participation of the parish family is called upon, as we journey together in communion, participation and mission.

Secondly, the Chrism Mass to be held at Our Lady of Lourdes church, Yakadapotha on Monday, 25th March. This is an important sacred moment in which the holy oils are blessed and the Eucharistic concelebration manifests the communion of the priests with their Bishop.

I wish to inform you that the official inauguration of the Sinhala Theologate was on 03rd February at *Sathpahana*, Kuliyapitiya and the new students were also enrolled by the Director Fr. Jude Dassanayake on the same day. I am happy that several sisters also follow this course.

The Lenten Education Program (LEP) was conducted well by Fr. Thusitha Priyanga, the Diocesan Caritas Director and his staff. The guest speaker was Rev. Fr. Ajith Prasanna Fernando of the diocese of Chilaw. It was well attended by the representatives of the parishes and many diocesan priests and sisters.

The youth Lenten Retreat was held with 425 participants. It was organized well by Fr. Dimuthu Fonseka, the diocesan youth Director and the youth committee. The effort of the parish priests to send their youth is much appreciated.

I thank all these diocesan directors for their dedication and commitment and all the participants including the priests and the religious.

I am also happy to inform you that St. Anne's new convent at Kattimahana parish was blessed and declared open on Tuesday, 27th February. It was officially handed over to the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Angels in the presence of Mother General Sr. Raymond Wijesuriya and the sisters of the same congregation. Many Fathers and some parishioners were there to grace the occasion. We thank Mother General, the members of the Council and Sr. Christine, the Regional Superior for their benevolence.

I thank Fr. Sagara Perera, the Procurator General, Fr. Damitha Srilal, the Estates Assistant, Fr. Nalinda Lanka, the Assistant Procurator, Fr. Himishka Roshan, the Secretary to the Bishop for their direct committed involvement in the completion of this convent project.

The 02 Acre 30 perch land for the convent is an outright gift given to the diocese by Fr. Lionel Fernando, who also hails from Kattimahana. In a very special way, the diocese thanks him for this magnanimous gesture to support our mission of evangelization. The Lord loves the cheerful giver.

Thank you and may God bless you!

+ Harold Perera

CATHOLIC BISHOP OF KURUNEGALA SRI LANKA

+ Harold Anthony Perera

Catholic Bishop of Kurunegala (NWP)

Pope's Lenten Message 2024

Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom

Dear brothers and sisters!



When our God reveals himself, his message is always one of freedom: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex 20:2). These are the first words of the Decalogue given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Those who heard them were quite familiar with the exodus of which God spoke: the experience of their bondage still weighed heavily upon them. In the desert, they received the "Ten Words" as a thoroughfare to freedom. We call them "commandments", in order to emphasize the strength of the love by which God shapes his people. The call to freedom is a demanding one. It is not answered straightaway; it has to mature as part of a journey. Just as Israel in the desert still clung to Egypt – often longing for the past and grumbling against the Lord and Moses – today too, God's people can cling to an oppressive bondage that it is called to leave behind. We realize how true this is at those moments when we feel hopeless, wandering through life like a desert and lacking a promised land as our destination. Lent is the season of grace in which the desert can become once more – in the words of the prophet Hosea – the place of our first love (cf. Hos 2:16-17). God shapes his people, he enables us to leave our slavery behind and experience a Passover from death to life. Like a bridegroom, the Lord draws us once more to himself, whispering words of love to our hearts.

The exodus from slavery to freedom is no abstract journey. If our celebration of Lent is to be concrete, the first step is to desire to open our eyes to reality. When the Lord calls out to Moses from the burning bush, he immediately shows that he is a God who sees and, above all, hears: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:7-8). Today too, the cry of so many of our oppressed brothers and sisters rises to heaven. Let us ask ourselves: Do we hear that cry? Does it trouble us? Does it move us? All too many things keep us apart from each other, denying the fraternity that, from the beginning, binds us to one another.

During my visit to Lampedusa, as a way of countering the globalization of indifference, I asked two questions, which have become more and more pressing: "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9) and "Where is your brother?" (Gen 4:9). Our Lenten journey will be concrete if, by listening once more to those two questions, we realize that even today we remain under the rule of Pharaoh. A rule that makes us weary and indifferent. A model of growth that divides and robs us of a future. Earth, air and water are polluted, but so are our souls. True, Baptism has begun our process of liberation, yet there remains in us an inexplicable longing for slavery. A kind of attraction to the security of familiar things, to the detriment of our freedom.

In the Exodus account, there is a significant detail: it is God who sees, is moved and brings freedom; Israel does not ask for this. Pharaoh stifles dreams, blocks the view of heaven, makes it appear that this world, in which human dignity is trampled upon and authentic bonds are denied, can never change. He put everything in bondage to himself. Let us ask: Do I want a new world? Am I ready to leave behind my compromises with the old? The witness of many of my brother bishops and a great number of those who work for peace and justice has increasingly convinced me that we need to combat a deficit of hope that stifles dreams and the silent cry that reaches to heaven and moves the heart of God. This "deficit of hope" is not unlike the nostalgia for slavery that paralyzed Israel in the desert and prevented it from moving forward. An exodus can be interrupted: how else can we explain the fact that humanity has arrived at the threshold of universal fraternity and at levels of scientific, technical, cultural, and juridical development capable of guaranteeing dignity to all, yet gropes about in the darkness of inequality and conflict.



God has not grown weary of us. Let us welcome Lent as the great season in which he reminds us: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Ex 20:2). Lent is a season of conversion, a time of freedom. Jesus himself, as we recall each year on the first Sunday of Lent, was driven into the desert by the Spirit in order to be tempted in freedom. For forty days, he will stand before us and with us: the incarnate Son. Unlike Pharaoh, God does not want subjects, but sons and daughters. The desert is the place where our freedom can mature in a personal decision not to fall back into slavery. In Lent, we find new criteria of justice and a community with which we can press forward on a road not yet taken.

This, however, entails a struggle, as the book of Exodus and the temptations of Jesus in the desert make clear to us. The voice of God, who says, “You are my Son, the Beloved” (Mk 1:11), and “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex 20:3) is opposed by the enemy and his lies. Even more to be feared than Pharaoh are the idols that we set up for ourselves; we can consider them as his voice speaking within us. To be all-powerful, to be looked up to by all, to domineer over others: every human being is aware of how deeply seductive that lie can be. It is a road well- 2 travelled. We can become attached to money, to certain projects, ideas or goals, to our position, to a tradition, even to certain individuals. Instead of making us move forward, they paralyze us. Instead of encounter, they create conflict. Yet there is also a new humanity, a people of the little ones and of the humble who have not yielded to the allure of the lie. Whereas those who serve idols become like them, mute, blind, deaf and immobile (cf. Ps 114:4), the poor of spirit are open and ready: a silent force of good that heals and sustains the world.

It is time to act, and in Lent, to act also means to pause. To pause in prayer, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan in the presence of a wounded brother or sister. Love of God and love of neighbour are one love. Not to have other gods is to pause in the presence of God beside the flesh of our neighbour. For this reason, prayer, almsgiving and fasting are not three unrelated acts, but a single movement of openness and self-emptying, in which we cast out the idols that weigh us down, the attachments that imprison us. Then the atrophied and isolated heart will revive. Slow down, then, and pause! The contemplative dimension of life that Lent helps us to rediscover will release new energies. In the presence of God, we become brothers and sisters, more sensitive to one another: in place of threats and enemies, we discover companions and fellow travelers. This is God’s dream, the promised land to which we journey once we have left our slavery behind.

The Church’s synodal form, which in these years we are rediscovering and cultivating, suggests that Lent is also a time of communitarian decisions, of decisions, small and large, that are countercurrent. Decisions capable of altering the daily lives of individuals and entire neighbor hoods, such as the ways we acquire goods, care for creation, and strive to include those who go unseen or are looked down upon. I invite every Christian community to do just this: to offer its members moments set aside to rethink their lifestyles, times to examine their presence in society and the contribution they make to its betterment. Woe to us if our Christian penance were to resemble the kind of penance that so dismayed Jesus. To us too, he says: “Whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting” (Mt 6:16). Instead, let others see joyful faces, catch the scent of freedom and experience the love that makes all things new, beginning with the smallest and those nearest to us. This can happen in every one of our Christian communities.

To the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, a flash of new hope. Allow me to repeat what I told the young people whom I met in Lisbon last summer: “Keep seeking and be ready to take risks. At this moment in time, we face enormous risks; we hear the painful plea of so many people. Indeed, we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal. Yet let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need courage to think like this” (Address to University Students, 3 August 2023). Such is the courage of conversion, born of coming up from slavery. For faith and charity take hope, this small child, by the hand. They teach her to walk, and at the same time, she leads them forward. [1]

I bless all of you and your Lenten journey.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 3 December 2023, First Sunday of Advent.

FRANCIS

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ANECDOTES & SCRIPTURE NOTES FOR ALL OCCASIONS

THEY DON'T LISTEN – *Prayer, Faith*

There is a story told of a poor boy who had no shoes. A neighbour saw him praying and immediately made a fun of him, "You pray so much. If God really existed, he would tell someone to buy you a pair of shoes." "I'm sure God does," replied the boy, "but they don't listen."

REFLECTION



Of its very nature, prayer always "works," if by that word we mean that we are in touch with God, reaching out to God in some way, communing with God. Whether it works in a prayer of petition depends on several factors, especially our faith and persistence in praying – and God's idea of what is good for us. "Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you." (Matthew 7:7)

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

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March - 18

21st Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination of His Lordship – (18. 03. 2003)

March - 08/ 09/ 10

Annual Retreat – Holy Childhood Animators

March - 11

Priests and Religious Lenten Recollection

March - 16/ 17

Beginning of Sunday Schools for Year 2024

March - 16

Legion of Mary Acies ceremony - Way of the Cross

March - 16

SSVP Way of the Cross - Boys Home Mawathagama

March - 22

Mawathagama Calvary Day

March - 24

Palm Sunday

March - 25

Chrism Mass - Yakadapotha

March - 28

Holy Thursday

March - 29

Good Friday

March - 30

Holy Saturday

March - 31

Easter Sunday

Youth Retreat – 2024









Blessing of the Newly Built Convent at Kattimahana









Lenten Education Programme -2024











Official Inauguration of the Sinhala Theologate for the year 2024





Mission at Kattimahana by Rev. Fr. Sachitha Fernando (TOR) and a Group of Italian Friends








The Diocese of Kurunegala extends prayerful best wishes to

Rt. Rev. Dr. Wimal Siri Jayasuriya

Bishop of the Diocese of Chilaw



21st Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination

Your Lordship,
Your dedicated service as the Bishop
has been a source of comfort, inspiration and strength
for the people of God.
With prayers of gratitude and joy
for all your faithful work
we wish you God's blessings for your mission.

2003 - 03 - 18 **2024 - 03 - 18**



Birthdays - Rev. Fathers

01st of March	-	Very Rev. Fr. Nalin Fernando
12th of March	-	Rev. Fr. Chandana Hapuarachchi
13th of March	-	Rev. Fr. Neyomal Silva
14th of March	-	Rev. Fr. Monty Perera
19th of March	-	Rev. Fr. Sidney R. Liyanage
19th of March	-	Rev. Fr. Dimuthu Rohan Fonseka
21st of March	-	Rev. Fr. Jude Lasantha Liyanage
23rd of March	-	Rev. Fr. Patrick Jayakody

Birthdays - Rev. Sisters and Brothers

04th of March - Rev. Sr. Eymard (Holy Angels - Mawathagama)
07th of March - Rev. Sr. Nita Fernando (Sisters of the Cross - Bingiriya)
08th of March - Rev. Sr. Theresa Fernando (Dominican - Melsiripura)
11th of March - Rev. Bro. Sarathkumar Raja (SDB) (Don Bosco - Metiyagane)
14th of March - Rev. Sr. Jothini (Apostolic Carmel Sisters - Polgahawela)
21st of March - Rev. Sr. Sewwandi (Perpetual Help Sisters - Kadawalagedara)

Death Anniversary

24th of March - Rev. Fr. Sugath Jayamaha

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