FRATERNITY

Catholic Diocese of Kurunegala

Volume 25 Issue 02 February 2025

Annual Feast of St. Joseph Vaz National Shrine
Mahagalagamuwa










Consecration of the Newly Built Church at
Polgahaagara











News Highlights

- *Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God at the Cathedral*
- *Opening of the Holy Door and the Consecration of the Newly Built Church at Polgahaagara*
- *Annual Feast of St. Sebastian's Church, Hunuwila*
- *Annual Feast of St. Joseph Vaz at Maha-Galagamuwa*
- *Diocesan Pastoral Council*
- *Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Priesthood - Rev. Fr. Andrew Fonseka*

Insight

- *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis XXXIII WORLD DAY OF THE SICK*

Infocus

- *Bulletin Announcements*
- *Anecdotes & Scripture Notes for all occasions*
- *Church Feasts in the month of February.*

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God at the Cathedral



His Lordship, the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala presided over the Holy Eucharist on the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God at St. Anne's Cathedral, Kurunegala on 01st January 2025. His Lordship opened the Holy Door for the Jubilee Year 2025. Rev. Fr. Basil Rohan Fernando, the National Director of PMS, Rev. Fr. Placidus De Silva, the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Pushpamal Fernando, the Asst. Parish Priest of Kurunegala and Rev. Fr. Himishka Roshan, Secretary to the Bishop concelebrated at the Eucharist. Parish Priests and the Parish Pastoral Council had organized the proceeding meaningfully.

Opening of the Holy Door and the Consecration of the Newly Built Church at Polgahaagara



Inaugurating the Jubilee Year 2025 in the Diocese of Kurunegala, His Lordship, the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala opened the Holy Door at Our Lady of Good Health church, Polgahaagara on 01st January 2025. His Lordship presided over the festive Mass of the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God and blessed and consecrated the newly built church at Polgahaagara. Rev. Fr. Joseph Tissera, Rev. Fr. Tharanga Dilekshika, Rev. Fr. Himishka Roshan, and Rev. Fr. Nalinda Lanka Sri also joined the celebration. Rev. Fr. Ananda Weerakoon, the Parish Priest of Dunakadeniya, and the Parish Pastoral Council had made all the arrangements for a meaningful celebration.

Annual Feast of St. Sebastian's Church, Hunuwila



The festive Mass at the annual feast of St. Sebastian's church at Hunuwila was presided over by His Lordship, the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala on 12th January 2025. The 50th Jubilee Year for the community was also declared by His Lordship at the conclusion of the Mass. Rev. Fr. Laksiri Silva OMI, and Rev. Fr. Himishka Roshan also joined the feast. Rev. Fr. George Dixon Perera, the Parish Priest of Pannala, and the Parish Pastoral Council had organized the feast meaningfully.

Annual Feast of St. Joseph Vaz at Maha-Galagamuwa



The annual feast of the National Shrine of St. Joseph Vaz at Josevazpura - Maha Galgamuwa was held on 14th January 2025. On the invitation of His Lordship, the Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala, His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Anton Wyman Croos, the Bishop of Ratnapura presided over the festive High Mass. Very Rev. Fr. Piyal Jananka Fernando, the Vicar General, officiated at the Vespers on the previous day. Many Priests, Religious, and devotees took part in the feast. Rev. Fr. Rufus Thalis, the Administrator, Rev. Fr. Jonson CMF, the Asst. Parish Priest of Galgamuwa, the Festival Committee, and the St. Joseph Vaz Committee had made all the arrangements for a successful feast.

Diocesan Pastoral Council



The first meeting of the DPC in the year 2025 was held on 25th January at *Sathpahana*, Kuliyapitiya. 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, Rev. Fr. Nihal Obris, Coordinator for Apostolates, Rev. Fr. Lionel Fernando, the Diocesan Director for SCCs, representatives of Religious Congregations and the members of the DPC participated at the meeting.

Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Priesthood - Rev. Fr. Andrew Fonseka



Rev. Fr. Andrew Fonseka celebrated a thanksgiving Eucharist for his 25th Anniversary of the Priestly Ordination at St. Sebastian's church, Kirimetiyawa on 29th January 2025. His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala appreciated his priestly ministry and the services rendered throughout the past years. Parishioners from the parishes where Father has served, thanked and appreciated his services as a shepherd and a minister of the Eucharist and the Word of God.



My dear Fathers, Sisters & Brothers,

Pope's intention in the month of February is for vocations to the Priesthood and Religious life. Let us remind ourselves the words of the Lord: "The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest" (Mathew 9:37-38) People always ask for priests and religious in their parishes. Yet, they hardly pray to the Lord of the harvest. It is good to remind them regularly the words of Jesus.

The Catholics in our country are privileged to have dual celebrations on 04th February. As citizens we celebrate the Independence of the country and as Catholics the feast of Our Lady of Lanka, the heavenly patroness of our Island. It is necessary that we pray for our country, especially the leaders so that they may achieve their vision for a wealthy country with beautiful lives for the people through the mission CLEAN Sri Lanka.

Sunday, 09th February is the Holy Childhood Day. The theme is "Guide our children for a better world". Jesus loves the children as recoded clearly in the Bible. The lives of children are precious to the country and the Church. They are very much vulnerable today for various reasons, known and unknown to us. Hence, we must continue to promote Holy Childhood Societies in the diocese to have more and more little missionaries.

After many festivities and celebrations, soon the season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on 05 March 2025. The Lenten Education Program will be conducted by Caritas-Kurunegala on Saturday, 01 March at Sathpahana Pastoral Centre, Kuliyapitiya. As decided last year, the Lenten collection will be to the Shepherds Fund. Kindly encourage the faithful to contribute generously.

I believe that all those who have been transferred are now in the new places. Kindly begin your pastoral mission convening the Parish Pastoral Council and later to visit the families. If you start visiting the Small Christian Communities first in your parish, then you will be able to make acquaintances with them quickly. I have already started visiting the priests in their new places. I appreciate very much, if the record books are kept ready for me to go through.

The common Lenten Recollection for both the priests and religious working in the diocese will be on Monday, 17 March at the church of Our Lady of Fatima, Malkaduwawa.

Thank you & may God bless you!

+ Harold Perera

+ Harold Anthony Perera
Catholic Bishop of Kurunegala

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
XXXIII WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

11 February 2025

"Hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5), but strengthens us in times of trial

Dear brothers and sisters,



We are celebrating the 33rd World Day of the Sick in the Jubilee Year 2025, in which the Church invites us to become "pilgrims of hope". The word of God accompanies us and offers us, in the words of Saint Paul, an encouraging message: "Hope does not disappoint" (*Rom* 5:5); indeed, it strengthens us in times of trial.

These are comforting words, but they can also prove perplexing, especially for those who are suffering. How can we be strong, for example, when our bodies are prey to severe, debilitating illnesses that require costly treatment that we may not be able to afford? How can we show strength when, in addition to our own sufferings, we see those of our loved ones who support us yet feel powerless to help us? In these situations, we sense our need for a strength greater than our own. We realize that we need God's help, his grace, his Providence, and the strength that is the gift of his Spirit (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1808).

Let us stop for a moment to reflect on how God remains close to those who are suffering in three particular ways: through *encounter*, *gift* and *sharing*.

1. *Encounter.* When Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples out on mission (cf. *Lk* 10:1-9), he told them to proclaim to the sick: "The kingdom of God has come near to you" (v. 9). He asks them, in other words, to help the sick to see their infirmity, however painful and incomprehensible it may be, as an opportunity to encounter the Lord. In times of illness, we sense our human frailty on the physical, psychological and spiritual levels. Yet we also experience the closeness and compassion of God, who, in Jesus, shared in our human suffering. God does not abandon us and often amazes us by granting us a strength that we never expected, and would never have found on our own.

Sickness, then, becomes an occasion for a transformative encounter, the discovery of a solid rock to which we can hold fast amid the tempests of life, an experience that, even at great cost, makes us all the stronger because it teaches us that we are not alone. Suffering always brings with it a mysterious promise of salvation, for it makes us experience the closeness and reality of God's consoling presence. In this way, we come to know "the fullness of the Gospel with all its promise and life" (SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Address to Young People*, New Orleans, 12 September 1987).

2. This brings us to the second way that God is close to the suffering: as *gift*. More than anything else, suffering makes us aware that hope comes from the Lord. It is thus, first and foremost, a gift to be received and cultivated, by remaining "faithful to the faithfulness of God", in the fine expression of Madeleine Delbrêl (cf. *La speranza è una luce nella notte*, Vatican City 2024, Preface).

Indeed, only in Christ's resurrection does our own life and destiny find its place within the infinite horizon of eternity. In Jesus' paschal mystery alone do we attain the certainty that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God" (*Rom* 8:38-39). This "great hope" is the source of all those small glimmers of light that help us to see our way through the trials and obstacles of life (cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 27, 31). The risen Lord goes so far as to walk beside us as our companion on the way, even as he did with the disciples on the road to Emmaus (cf. *Lk* 24:13-53). Like them, we can share with him our

anxieties, concerns and disappointments, and listen to his word, which enlightens us and warms our hearts. Like them too, we can recognize him present in the breaking of the bread and thus, even in the present, sense that "greater reality" which, by drawing near to us, restores our courage and confidence.



3. We now come to God's third way of being close to us: through *sharing*. Places of suffering are frequently also places of sharing and mutual enrichment. How often, at the bedside of the sick, do we learn to hope! How often, by our closeness to those who suffer, do we learn to have faith! How often, when we care for those in need, do we discover love! We realize that we are "angels" of hope and messengers of God for one another, all of us together: whether patients, physicians, nurses, family members, friends, priests, men and women religious, no matter where we are, whether in the family or in clinics, nursing homes, hospitals or medical centres.

We need to learn how to appreciate the beauty and significance of these grace-filled encounters. We need to learn how to cherish the gentle smile of a nurse, the gratitude and trust of a patient, the caring face of a doctor or volunteer, or the anxious and expectant look of a spouse, a child, a grandchild or a dear friend. All these are rays of light to be treasured; even amid the dark night of adversity, they give us strength, while at the same time teaching us the deeper meaning of life, in love and closeness (cf. *Lk* 10:25-37).

Dear brothers and sisters who are ill or who care for the suffering, in this Jubilee you play an especially important part. Your journey together is a sign for everyone: "a hymn to human dignity, a song of hope" (*Spes Non Confundit*, 11). Its strains are heard far beyond the rooms and beds of health facilities, and serve to elicit in charity "the choral participation of society as a whole" (ibid.) in a harmony that is at times difficult to achieve, but for that very reason is so comforting and powerful, capable of bringing light and warmth wherever they are most needed.

The whole Church thanks you for this! I do as well, and I remember you always in my prayers. I entrust you to Our Lady, Health of the Sick, in the words that so many of our brothers and sisters have addressed to her in their hour of need:

We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

I bless you, along with your families and loved ones, and I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 14 January 2025

FRANCIS

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/sick/documents/20250114-giornata-malato.html

THE HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR FEBRUARY



For Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life

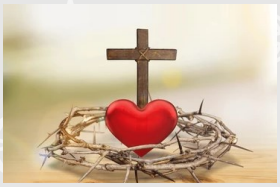
Let us pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the Priesthood and Religious life.

ANECDOTES & SCRIPTURE NOTES FOR ALL OCCASIONS

HONOUR YOUR MOTHER – *Love, Commitment*

There was a mother who was a very difficult person and, as she aged, her negative behavior became even more intense toward her children. Two of her three children broke off all contact. Their anger at her made it impossible for them even to visit her. Eventually, she became disabled and the task of caring for her fell on the daughter who had been able to come to some understanding of why her mother was the way she was. Still, until the day the mother died, she continued to lash out at this daughter for not doing enough for her. When the mother died, the two absent children experienced great guilt. The caretaker daughter, on the other hand, experienced a sense of peace she had not anticipated.

Reflection



Should we stop doing for others just because we are repaid with ingratitude? Our motivation should not be the thanks we might receive, but the opportunity to love another. Did Jesus, nailed to the cross, on hearing the many insults from the crowd, give up the work of redemption? He calls us to be instruments of his peace, even in difficult situations and even with those who are difficult to love. He challenges us to let the Holy Spirit take hold of our lives and to join him in bringing justice and peace to the world, even if our sacrifice is ignored or ridiculed. Jesus warned us that if we make a big show of doing something for a person in need, we have already received our reward (Matthew 6:2)

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

Bulletin Announcements….

February 01
Liturgical Music Training - Kurunegala Deanery

February 02
St. Sebastian's Church Feast - Alawwa

February 04
Independence Day / Feast of Our Lady of Lanka

February 08
Liturgical Music Training - Kuliyapitiya Deanery

February 09
Holy Childhood Sunday

February 10
Monthly Recollection & Presbyteral Meeting

February 12
Celebration of the sick and healthcare workers

February 15
Head Prefect's Training Programme - 02 Deaneries

February 22
Workshop of Drama & Performance Arts

Church Feasts in the month of February

Kuliyapitiya Deanery

Parish	*Church*	*Saint*	*Date*
Mandakondana	Mandakondana	Holy Family	02.02.2025
Kuliyapitiya	Delana	St. Joseph Vaz	02.02.2025
Walpitagama	Nabiriththankadawara	St. Sebastian	02.02.2025
Hettipola	Koswatte	St. John Bosco	09.02.2025
Thisogama	Ottupallama	Our Lady of Lourdes	23.02.2025

Kurunegala Deanery

Parish	*Church*	*Saint*	*Date*
Polgahawela	Alawwa	St. Sebastian	02.02.2025
Bakmeegolla	Kumbukwewa	St. Sebastian	09.02.2025
Millawa	Millawa	Holy Family	09.02.2025
Yakadapotha	Yakadapotha	Our Lady of Lourdes	09.02.2025
Melsiripura	Diddeniya	Our Lady of Lourdes	09.02.2025
Polgahawela	Polgahaweala	Our Lady of Lourdes	23.02.2025

Assuming Duties in New Appointments

Kurunegala






Minor Seminary - Millawa




Kuliyapitiya




Walpitagama



Pellandeinya



Bulupitiya



Irabadagama



Katupotha



Wellawa



Maho



Nikaweratiya



Pannala



Thambakanda



Mawathagama



Melsiripura



Celebration of the Silver Jubilee of Priesthood Rev. Fr. Andrew Fonseka









Year End Sunday School Examination






Head Catechists' Meeting






Opening of the Holy Door

Our Lady of Good Health Church
Polgahagara








St. Anne's Cathedral
Kurunegala








Birthdays Rev. Fathers

12th of February - Rev. Fr. Basil Rohan Fernando
18th of February - Rev. Fr. Jude Shylan (CMF)
22nd of February - Rev. Fr. Gayan Hirantha

Ordination Anniversaries

07th of February - Rev. Fr. Niroshan Jayakody
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

16th of February - Rev. Sr. Mary Antoinette (Holy Angel's Sisters - Karagahedara)

Death Anniversary

28th of February - Rev. Fr. Roger Christopher

Published By - Catholic Bishop's House - Kurunegala, Sri Lanka. Tel - + 9437 2222854
Editorial Board - Rev. Fr. Himishka Roshan, Rev. Fr. Navin Lakshan

Graphic Designing & Artwork by - Hiran Perera - JVI Catholic Bookshop 0716 144 443