FRATERNITY

Catholic Diocese of Kurunegala

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Ad Multos Annos Vivati!

22nd Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera the Bishop of Kurunegala 2025.03.18

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125th Jubilee Celebration of the Holy Family Church at Mandakondana



His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala, presided over the Eucharist of the Holy Family feast and the 125th Jubilee Celebration of the church community held on 02nd February 2025 at the Holy Family church, Mandakondana. Rev. Fr. Sampath Fernando, the Parish Priest, and the Parish Pastoral Council had made all the arrangements for a meaningful celebration. Rev. Fr. Himishka Roshan, Secretary to the Bishop also joined the celebration.

Rhythm of Youth - *Buon Natale 2024* Awarding Ceremony



His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala graced the Rhythm of Youth - *Buon Natale* 2024- awarding ceremony of carols and cribs competition 2024 held on 04th February 2025 at *Sathpahana*, Kuliyapitiya. Very Rev. Fr. Piyal Janaka Fernando, Vicar General, Very Rev. Fr. Sagara Prishantha Perera, Procurator General, Rev. Fr. Basil Rohan Fernando, National Director of PMS, Priests, Religious, and the youth participated in this event. Rev. Fr. Dimuthu Fonseka, the Diocesan Director of Youth, and the Diocesan Youth Committee organized the event colorfully.

Monthly Recollection and Presbyteral Meeting - February



The first monthly Recollection and Presbyteral meeting of the year 2025 was held on 10th February at the Bishop's House. His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala delivered the reflection to the Presbyterium based on "Pilgrims of Hope", the theme of the Jubilee year 2025.

Annual Feast of St. Sebastian's Church, Malpitiya



The festive Mass at the annual feast of St. Sebastian's church at Malpitiya was presided over by His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala on 16th February 2025. Rev. Fr. Himishka Roshan, Secretary to the Bishop also joined the feast. Rev. Fr. Manura Shiron, the new Parish Priest, and the Parish Pastoral Council had organized the feast meaningfully.

Inauguration Ceremony of Deva Darma Nikethanaya - Kuliyapitiya



The Inauguration Ceremony of the New Academic Year 2025 of St. Joseph Vaz Deva Darma Nikethanaya was held on 15th February 2025 at Kuliyapitiya. His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, the Bishop of Kurunegala was the chief guest at the Inauguration Ceremony. Very Rev. Fr. Placidus De Silva, Vicar Forane and the Parish Priest of Kuliyapitiya, Rev. Fr. Lionel Fernando, Staff Member, Rev. Fr. Himishka Roshan and Rev. Fr. Ramesh Lasantha took part in the event. Rev. Fr. Jude Dassanayake, Director of Deva Darma Nikethanaya, and the Staff organized the day's proceedings.







Visit of the students of Pope Benedict XVI Apostolic School








My dear Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

The season of Lent begins with the Ash Wednesday on 05 March. It runs up to the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, followed by Easter Triduum. It is our major season of penitential conversion. The season is marked by prayer, charity, abstinence and fasting. The readings focus our attention on key Lenten themes on the paschal mystery, passion, death and resurrection of Christ. Let us make this graceful season together with our faithful, giving prominence to the sacrament of reconciliation and receive indulgences in this Jubilee Year 2025.

You are requested to make pilgrimages to those places reserved to obtain indulgences, while we as a diocese make a pilgrimage to Mawathagama Calvary on Saturday, 12th April and as a presbyterium to the Church of Our Lady of Good Health at Polgahaagara in the parish of Dunakadeniya for the Chrism Mass on Monday, 14 April. Let us enter the church through the Holy Door on this great feast of the ministerial priesthood and journey together as people of God.

The solemnity of St. Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be celebrated on Wednesday, 19 March. Remind this feast to the faithful so that they may participate at the Eucharistic celebration.

The Diocese of Kurunegala greets with prayerful wishes to the new Bishop of Mannar, the Most Rev. Dr. Anthonipillai Gnanpragasam. The Episcopal Ordination was very well organized and it was held at the feet of our Lady of Madhu. The Bishop was installed and took possession of the diocese as the 4th Bishop of Mannar on Sunday, 23 February at St. Sebastian's Cathedral in Mannar. We also thank Bishop Emmanuel Fernando for shepherding his flock for the last several years. May God bless both of them!

The Lenten Education Program (LEP) was organized successfully by Caritas-Kurunegala (*Janasetha*). I thank Fr. Thusitha Priyanga, the director and his team for their commitment to make it a meaningful program. I thank those Fathers, Sisters and the representatives of the parishes for their participation at this important diocesan event. As decided, the Lenten fund will be for the Shepherd's Fund. Kindly encourage all the faithful to contribute generously.

In a special way, let us pray for our Holy Father Pope Francis for a speedy recovery. May the healing touch of Jesus be upon him!

The Lenten recollection for the priests and religious working in the diocese will be held on Monday, 17 March at Our Lady of Fatima Church, Malkaduwawa. It will start at 9.00 a.m. and kindly be on time.

May God bless you!

✠ Harold Anthony Perera
Catholic Bishop of Kurunegala

Pope's Lenten Message 2025

Let us journey together in hope

Dear brothers and sisters,



We begin our annual pilgrimage of Lent in faith and hope with the penitential rite of the imposition of ashes. The Church, our mother and teacher, invites us to open our hearts to God's grace, so that we can celebrate with great joy the paschal victory of Christ the Lord over sin and death, which led Saint Paul to exclaim: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Cor 15:54-55). Indeed, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is the heart of our faith and the pledge of our hope in the Father's great promise, already fulfilled in his beloved Son: life eternal (cf. Jn 10:28; 17:3). [1]

This Lent, as we share in the grace of the Jubilee Year, I would like to propose a few reflections on what it means to journey together in hope, and on the summons to conversion that God in his mercy addresses to all of us, as individuals and as a community.

First of all, *to journey*. The Jubilee motto, "Pilgrims of Hope", evokes the lengthy journey of the people of Israel to the Promised Land, as recounted in the Book of Exodus. This arduous path from slavery to freedom was willed and guided by the Lord, who loves his people and remains ever faithful to them. It is hard to think of the biblical exodus without also thinking of those of our brothers and sisters who in our own day are fleeing situations of misery and violence in search of a better life for themselves and their loved ones. A first call to conversion thus comes from the realization that all of us are pilgrims in this life; each of us is invited to stop and ask how our lives reflect this fact. Am I really on a journey, or am I standing still, not moving, either immobilized by fear and hopelessness or reluctant to move out of my comfort zone? Am I seeking ways to leave behind the occasions of sin and situations that degrade my dignity? It would be a good Lenten exercise for us to compare our daily life with that of some migrant or foreigner, to learn how to sympathize with their experiences and in this way discover what God is asking of us so that we can better advance on our journey to the house of the Father. This would be a good "examination of conscience" for all of us wayfarers.

Second, *to journey together*. The Church is called to walk together, to be synodal. [2] Christians are called to walk at the side of others, and never as lone travelers. The Holy Spirit impels us not to remain self-absorbed, but to leave ourselves behind and keep walking towards God and our brothers and sisters. [3] Journeying together means consolidating the unity grounded in our common dignity as children of God (cf. Gal 3:26-28). It means walking side-by-side, without shoving or stepping on others, without envy or hypocrisy, without letting anyone be left behind or excluded. Let us all walk in the same direction, tending towards the same goal, attentive to one another in love and patience.

This Lent, God is asking us to examine whether in our lives, in our families, in the places where we work and spend our time, we are capable of walking together with others, listening to them, resisting the temptation to become self-absorbed and to think only of our own needs. Let us ask ourselves in the presence of the Lord whether, as bishops, priests, consecrated persons and laity in the service of the Kingdom of God, we cooperate with others. Whether we show ourselves welcoming, with concrete gestures, to those both near and far. Whether we make others feel a part of the community or keep them at a distance. [4] This, then, is a second call to conversion: a summons to synodality.



Third, *let us journey together in hope*, for we have been given a promise. May the hope that does not disappoint (cf. Rom 5:5), the central message of the Jubilee, [5] be the focus of our Lenten journey towards the victory of Easter. As Pope Benedict XVI taught us in the Encyclical *Spe Salvi*, "the human being needs unconditional love. He needs the certainty which makes him say: 'neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, 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 in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom 8:38-39)". [6] Christ, my hope, has risen! [7] He lives and reigns in glory. Death has been transformed into triumph, and the faith and great hope of Christians rests in this: the resurrection of Christ!

This, then, is the third call to conversion: a call to hope, to trust in God and his great promise of eternal life. Let us ask ourselves: Am I convinced that the Lord forgives my sins? Or do I act as if I can save myself? Do I long for salvation and call upon God's help to attain it? Do I concretely experience the hope that enables me to interpret the events of history and inspires in me a commitment to justice and fraternity, to care for our common home and in such a way that no one feels excluded?

Sisters and brothers, thanks to God's love in Jesus Christ, we are sustained in the hope that does not disappoint (cf. Rom 5:5). Hope is the "sure and steadfast anchor of the soul". [8] It moves the Church to pray for "everyone to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4) and to look forward to her being united with Christ, her bridegroom, in the glory of heaven. This was the prayer of Saint Teresa of Avila: "Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, even though your impatience makes doubtful what is certain, and turns a very short time into a long one" (The Exclamations of the Soul to God, 15:3). [9]

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of Hope, intercede for us and accompany us on our Lenten journey.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 6 February 2025

Memorial of St Paul Miki and Companions, martyrs.

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[1] Cf. Encyclical Letter *Dilexit Nos* (24 October 2024), 220.
[2] Cf. Homily for the Mass and Canonization of Giovanni Battista Scalabrini and Artemide Zatti, 9 October 2022.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Cf. Bull *Spes Non Confundit*, 1.
[6] Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi* (30 November 2007), 26.
[7] Cf. Easter Sequence.
[8] Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1820.
[9] Ibid, 1821.

THE HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR 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.



ANECDOTES & SCRIPTURE NOTES FOR ALL OCCASIONS

A LESSON – *Forgiveness, Sacrament of Penance*

There is a story told of a rancher and a homesteader in the Old West. The homesteader had suffered several years of crop failure due to bad weather. Desperate, he decided to steal one of the cows from the neighboring ranch to provide food for his starving family. Unfortunately, he was caught in the act. The rancher said to his hired hands, "String him up; it will teach him a lesson." When the rancher died several years later he came before God to be judged. Remembering his treatment of the homesteader, the rancher feared the worst punishment. God said, "Forgive him; it will teach him a lesson."

REFLECTION



God loves us individually, as though there was no one else to love. As we hear so often, "God's love is unconditional." That's why God gives us the gift of the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation. To receive God's forgiveness through the Sacrament we should be sorry for this sin, repent, resolve not to repeat it, perform the penance, and receive absolution. Then we will be once again grace-filled to continue on our heavenly journey.

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

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March - 18

22nd Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination of His Lordship – (18. 03. 2003)

March - 01

Lenten Education Programme

March - 05

Ash Wednesday / Beginning of Mawathagam Calvary

March - 13

End of Residential English Course at PFIFC

March - 08

Bible Quiz Awarding Ceremony

March - 17

Priests and Religious Lenten Recollection

March - 14, 15 & 16

Annual Retreat - Holy Childhood Animators/ Youth Retreat

March - 15

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

March - 29

Retreat Media Apostolate

SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VERGIN MARY



In the West, the oldest reference to the cult of Saint Joseph (*Ioseph sponsus Mariae*) connected with 19 March appears around the year 800 in the north of France. Thereafter, reference to Joseph, the spouse of Mary, becomes more and more frequent from the 9th to the 14th centuries. In the 12th century, the crusaders built a church in his honor at Nazareth. It was in 1480, with Pope Sixtus IV's approval that the feast began to be celebrated on 19 March. It then became obligatory with Pope Gregory XV in 1621. In 1870, Pope Pius IX declared Saint Joseph the Patron of the Universal Church, and Pope Saint John XXIII inserted his name into the Roman Canon of Holy Mass in 1962. More recently, Pope Francis approved seven new invocations in the Litany to Saint Joseph: Guardian of the Redeemer, Servant of Christ, Minister of Salvation, Support in difficulties, Patron of exiles, Patron of the afflicted, and Patron of the poor.

Beloved father

Joseph placed himself at the service of God's plan of salvation. He cared for the Holy Family that God had entrusted to him. He became an attentive servant from the moment of the Annunciation, a provident servant in caring for Mary and the Child she carried in her womb. He defended the Family in the moment of danger.

Tender and loving father

Joseph taught Jesus how to walk, holding Him by the hand. Jesus saw the tenderness of God in Joseph, the Just Man. In Joseph, Jesus saw a man of faith who knew how to view life with hope because, in the midst of the storm, God remains steadfast at the helm of the course of life.

Obedient father

God's plan was revealed to Joseph through dreams. He always responded promptly: at the moment of the Annunciation of the Lord, when Herod wanted to kill the Child, when Herod died. Joseph was guided by God and he obeyed. Jesus absorbed this filial "submission" to God from Joseph. He learned obedience from His parents.

Working father

Work, understood as participating in God's own work, is what Joseph carried out in his own life and what he taught Jesus. Work is important to bring to birth a new "normal", in which no one is excluded. Saint Joseph's work recalls that Jesus, the Son of God-made-Man did not disdain manual labor. Work guarantees human dignity.

https://www.vaticannews.va/en/liturgical-holidays/solemnity-of-saint-joseph--the-spouse-of-the-blessed-virgin-mary.html

Rhythm of Youth -













Head Prefects Training Programme



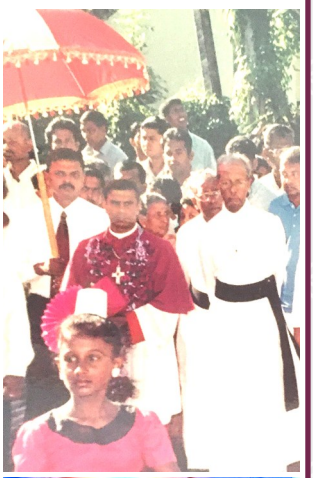





22 Years in the Service of the Lord





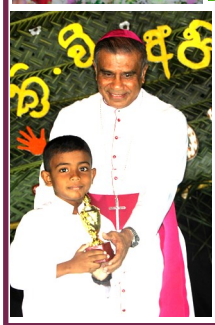
















The Catholic Diocese of Kurunegala extends prayerful best wishes to

Rt. Rev. Dr. Anthonipillai Gnanapragasam

Bishop of the Diocese of Mannar



22nd Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination

Most Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera

Catholic Bishop of Kurunegala



Your Lordship,

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for
your unwavering dedication and service.
Your years of devoted service and
compassionate guidance
have made a profound impact.
May God bless you and grant you continued strength and wisdom!

2003 - 03 - 18 **2025 - 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)
23rd of March - Rev. Bro. Janaka Sangeetha Silva (National Seminary - Ampitiya)
24th of March - Rev. Bro. Dinuka Sahan (National Seminary - Ampitiya)
26th of March - Rev. Br. Himesha Nilanga (National Seminary - Ampitiya)

Death Anniversary

24th of March - Rev. Fr. Sugath Jayamaha

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