



**DIOCESE OF GALLE
SRI LANKA**

**JANUARY 2022
VOL. 17 - NO. 01**

News Letter



“

2022

**MARY Mother of GOD,
accompany us during the New Year...
that we may cling to
JESUS your SON !**



Bishop of the Diocese:
Most Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe

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Designed by:
Mr. C. J. Fernando

FOR CIRCULATION AMONG THE CLERGY
OF THE GALLE DIOCESE.

Dear Rev. Fathers & Sisters,
You are kindly requested to send your
information and news articles
to be published in the News Letter
before 20th of every month.

News Letter

JANUARY 2022 | VOL. 17 | NO. 01

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TOTALLY FOR CHRIST



My dear Rev. Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, **“CHRISTUS VIVIT”**, Holy Father Pope Francis opened the dialogue saying, ‘Christ is Alive!’. He is our hope... He is in you, He is with you and He never abandons you. However far you may wander, He is always there, the Risen One. He calls you and He waits for you to return to Him and start over again. (Ref. nos. 1&2). Each New Year brings the expectation of a better world, In this, I ask God, the Father of Humanity, to grant us concord and peace, so that the aspirations of all for a happy and prosperous life may be achieved.

Amidst the pandemic, which continue to haunt our normal life and liberty, it is alarming to witness hotbeds of tension and conflict caused by growing instances of inequality between rich and poor. **There is growing poverty and hunger** due to obvious and varied reasons. We as servants of the servants, go through the same, but courageously trying to help in whatever way we can to bring some solace and consolation to our entrusted flock. Yet, in the eyes of the world, those who trust in God and His promise often appear naïve or far from reality. Yet, Jesus tells all of us that not only in the next life, but already in this life, we will discover that we are children of God, and that God has always been, and ever will be completely on our side. Once we accept Jesus Christ, God and man, we have the joyful experience of an immense gift: the sharing of God’s own life, the life of grace, the pledge of a fully blessed existence. Jesus Christ, in particular, grants us true peace, which is born of the trusting encounter of man with God.

You would notice that most of the Priests who have faithfully and fruitfully served in Parishes/Institutions have been transferred. In addition to the Parish Ministry a few of them have been also assigned to various responsibilities as Directors, Chaplains or Priests’ in Charge. As I complete ten years of humble service as the chief shepherd of the diocese, I was happy to undertake to design the third transfers in the diocese, for the good of our flock. I trust that all will go well according to the plan of the Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Let us be renewed with the same spirit which accompanied St. Joseph Vaz, and take up the duties and responsibilities among/for our people. May we cherish St. Joseph Vaz, as our Model in the Service of our Master and His people

faithfully, in line with our Diocesan Pastoral Plan in the new term of service.

With gratitude and thankfulness, I wish to make a very special mention of the humble services rendered by Rev. Fr. Harshana Hemantha, SDB. He is presently the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Hambantota, and will leave the diocese towards the end of this month, to take up another responsibility, entrusted to him by the Provincial Superior of the Salesian Congregation. He also served as the Diocesan Director for Youth Apostolate and tried to achieve some goals, even amidst the pandemic. Together with my Presbyterium, I wish him well and a pleasing ministry in his new assignment.

Once again with gratitude let us bless His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, the Bishop of Kandy, who will retire from the active ministry after 38 years on the 17th January 2022. The Lord who called Him, will accompany His faithful servant and fill him with all the joys and peace that he deserves and in store for him. With much love and gratitude let us bless him in the Name of Jesus. **We also once again pray for His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis,** who will take up the responsibilities as the Bishop of Kandy, who have a dual task also to look after the Diocese of Chilaw, until a New Bishop is appointed. May the Lord Jesus, our Master, continue to hold his hands and guide him in all his evangelical undertakings.

Let me also be grateful to the many friends, donors and benefactors (also **Dioceses** and different agencies like **Church in Need and MISSIO, PMS, Propagation of the Faith and other Congregations**), who came forward to assist us during the passing year 2021. These men/women of goodwill have sacrificed their time, resources and energy to understand our struggles and reach out to us. Let us all bless them and continue to pray for their good health, happiness and joy.

I entrust each one of you dear Fathers, Sisters and Brothers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who will make your hearts and lives after His own Heart. May our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph Vaz intercede for you all. I also appreciate your blessings for me.

+ Raymond Wickramasinghe - Bishop of Galle

Advanced Training for Youths on Social Communications and Social Media

An Advanced Training Workshop on Social Communications and Social Media for selected 21 youths was held at Nawajeewana Community Centre, Tangalle for three days (from 15th to 17th November 2021). These youths were selected from Matara, Tangalle and Walasmulla Youth Societies.

This was an expansion of Religious Amity Project of Caritas Sri Lanka which involved “youths” related to religious harmony and peace building programme. The project goal is “Enhanced religious harmony prevails at village and Diocesan levels through understanding and accepting “Unity in Diversity” established through relations built among religious and faith communities”.

This Advanced Training Workshop on Social Communications and Media was conducted by Resource Person Mr Sampath Priyadarshana who is a qualified Professional Photographer/Cinematographer and a Member of SIGNIS Asia.

The topics covered were understanding media, its behavior, basic fundamentals of photography, exposure of Tri Angle, DSLR Settings, speed light techniques, outdoor photography, understanding artificial lights/modifiers including group activities.

A deep knowledge was provided to the youths on basics of cinematography, how videography works in social media, understanding Camera angles, concepts for short films, script writing, shooting scripts, DOP techniques, VFX, AFX and Audio Recording, Editing videos using professional software, use of mobile phones for social communications and media including group activities. After watching a movie, a group discussion followed relating to understanding its story, script, videography, VFX and AFX techniques. They were also trained on script writing, shooting and editing short films.

A short film was made by youths as a team building exercise as one team project to an international standard which was reviewed, problems and issues identified and solved. The purpose of making this short-film was to train them on how to make short films to be submitted for worldwide film festivals and use them for creating peace and harmony in the society. The participant youths were asked to make a short film and submit to the Resource Person before end of the month for review.

Following the training the youth participants are expected to make use of their learning innovatively for uploading positive messages in print and social media and continue on their own taking responsibility as youth leaders and use social media and social communication for creating peace and reconciliation in the society.



“

*Enhanced religious harmony
prevails at village and Diocesan levels
through understanding and accepting
“Unity in Diversity”
established through relations
built among religious and faith communities*

”



Mr. Austin - SED Galle

HOLY FATHER’S PRAYER INTENTION

FOR THE MONTH OF
JANUARY

Prayer intention for evangelisation : For true human fraternity

We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution;

may their own rights and dignity be recognize,

which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family.



St. Paul Pray for us!

A SAINT speaks

St. Paul the Apostle

Born: Tarsus, Turkey

Died: Rome, Italy

Patronage: Missionaries, Theologians, Evangelists, and Gentile Christians

Feast of the conversion of St. Paul - 25th January 2022

Let us pray for the conversion of those who still do not believe Christ

“ *Whatever you do,
work at it with all your heart.* ”

JOURNEYING TOGETHER



***It is precisely this path of synodality
which God expects of the Church
of the third millennium.***

- Pope Francis -



A path to helping your parish recover from the impact of COVID – 19

By Owen Phelps, Ph.D.

"source: The Priest"

"COVID shot holes through our parish's bottom line and the pastor just crawled into a hole." That's the way a lay friend of mine recently described the toll taken on his parish by the COVID-19 pandemic. He continued: "He just stopped communicating. Staff and volunteer leaders waited weeks for email responses to their questions." As spring dawned and restrictions eased, my friend was hopeful his pastor would crawl out of his bunker.

Another pastor, halfway across the country, handled things differently – with a different outcome. In the first several months after the COVID shutdown, his parish's revenues had risen compared to the prior year. I joked that his people would spare no expense to avoid listening to his homilies.

In truth, his parish was thriving because he is an exemplary innovator and a great communicator. Within days of his parish's mandatory shutdown, he was producing an online Mass seven days a week and a weekly kitchen sit-down show where he and his associate chatted with and took questions from parishioners. Think family around the dinner table.

Something else; This pastor was not shy about engaging his parishioners in the effort to keep their parish financially healthy. As he chatted casually with them on Zoom, the kitchen memo board on the wall above his head proclaimed in huge letters: GIVE! You can be frank with friends.

Disparities of impact

These two extremes are typical of what happens in a disaster. There are huge disparities of local effects. Some pay a terrible price. Others escape unscathed. No two situations are entirely alike. So it has been during the pandemic. Some business thrived, others shut down. Some people worked longer hours, others were laid

*In many cases, the question is,
How can we do more with less?
But a better question may be,
how can we do better with less?*

off. Some people died, others suffered terribly, and still others escaped unscathed. Some relationships thrived, others withered and disappeared.

The little mission parish in a vacation area where I've been chair of the pastoral council during the pandemic actually came out of the ordeal in financially good shape. Government payroll aid helped. But a portion of our parishioners really stepped up and provided their support. We're grateful. Now, we just have to get all our parish activities back up and running – and let people know where we are in that process.

Other parishes face more daunting challenges. A Villanova University study projects a 24% decline in parish collections for the 2021 financial year. That means parishes are asking themselves what organizations, what ministries – in some places, even what parishes – can or should

continue.

As if the challenge of rebuilding after the pandemic shutdown isn't enough, parishes across the country share another challenge. Nearly all are confronting declining member participation. While visionary pastors and advisers are strategizing about how to turn spectators into disciples, nearly every parish in the country is facing the challenge of fewer people in their pews.

The sense I get from everything I hear is that church life is rife with uncertainty. Will people come back? How many? When? Will they be more eager to don the yoke of discipleship, or less? Should we be preparing for success or failure? And to what extent do our expectations of the future become a self-fulfilling prophecy?

If we can't muster confidence that the Holy Spirit will guide us and "renew the face of the earth" (Ps 104:30), starting with our own parish, how can we expect to endure and serve the People of God? So, prayer is the first order of the day. In many cases, the question is, how can we do more with less? But a better question may be, how can we do better with less?

Whatever a parish's circumstances, there is a way to proceed to assure that it does its very best with the resources it has been given. There are many ways to proceed, especially if we drill down into the details. In the end, no two approaches will be exactly alike. But let me propose one approach to help you get started, or at least

better organize your efforts. Don't think of it as a solution, a silver bullet to resolve all your concerns. Think of it, instead, as a framework, something on which you can hang, organize and appraise your work. It's the PAPI approach. PAPI stands for Process, Assessing, Prioritizing and Implementing a plan for recovery from COVID and cultural challenges. Father, meet PAPI.

Who should be involved?

The first question to consider is who else should meet PAPI? It's axiomatic that responding effectively to major changes in a parish budget is not something a pastor can do alone. Yes, it's quicker to just develop a plan yourself and announce it. But then look forward to spending all your time and energy trying to sell your plan and fighting off active resistance.

Getting buy-in from staff, councils, commissions, volunteers and parish members is hard. But the more who own the process from the start, the fewer people you will have to convince later. It's not true that "more is always better". More people make the process more cumbersome. But they can also make the outcome more promising, Error on the side of inclusion.

Of course, don't just schedule a parish-wide meeting and expect consensus to emerge. Consultations need structure. Think about that. Consult about the issues. Develop a plan with a process for how to obtain sufficient input. If you're just dealing with a small crisis, you can probably design a process to include members of the pastoral council and finance commission, along with your staff. But as a general rule, the broader and more long-term your discernment process, the more people you should invite to participate.

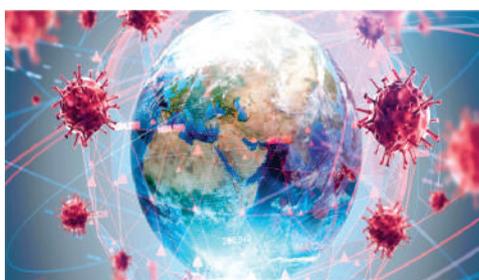
Assessing

In the first stage of assessing, two broad questions come to the fore: what are we doing? How well are we doing it?

The relevant answers to the first question are both qualitative and quantitative. Develop a list of all the ministries and activities in your parish. Look at how many people each of them is reaching and how much each cost. But also consider how important each activity is in terms of your parish's mission and the mission of the Church: To go and make disciples. Remember, building relationships matters, so commit some resources to do that. If you'd like to develop a long - range plan, consider reaching out to the center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to develop and analyze a parish-wide survey, which can help you assess which parish ministries matter most to people and how well the people think you are doing in providing them. Despite all the uncertainty afoot, there are things you know or can learn. Start with those.

Prioritizing

When you begin to consider the importance of each of your parish's activities, you have begun to prioritize. In this stage,



VILLANOVA STUDIES COVID-19 IMPACT ON PARISH COLLECTIONS

The Villanova Centre for Church Management study "COVID-19 Impact on Parish Collections" surveyed 169 parishes and examined giving during the pandemic. The study, posted at villanovachurchmanagement.com revealed that in 1 in 6 parishes collections increased.

The key insights of the study reveal:

- Collections can go up.
- Offer online Mass.
- Reach out to people.
- Share the financial reality.
- Be bold and courageous.

you are asking, what matters most? But you don't need a strict rank order. Worship, evangelization and religious education are all essential. They can share the pinnacle.

Still, this is a time to do a little digging. Yes, religious education is a huge priority. But what about the importance – and cost – of its various components? Within each broad ministry area, its components should undergo a prioritization process. And this process should involve the people being served, as well as the people doing the serving. The better our assessment process, the better and easier our prioritization process.

It should be no surprise that staff members will each give high priority to their own ministries. Council and commission members can be very helpful in providing a broader context in which to conduct your prioritization process.

Implementing

But the better job you have done assessing and prioritizing – and bringing people on board in consensus about the results – the easier this part of the process will be. Here are a few tips to help make it bearable and ultimately better:

Communicate constantly. Know what you intend to accomplish and state it over and over again. Build your chorus: Get as many people to sing the same tune as often as possible. For your efforts to work, invest in building consensus. This is not about you; rather, it's about a process. And remember, the most important part of communicating is listening. Pay great mind to the outliers. Are there programs and/or staff members who have to go? Focus first on the people affected – providers and recipients alike. Be present to them. This is when, as Pope Francis urged, you get "the smell of the sheep" on your hands. It may not be the most important part of the priesthood, but it is the most important part of pastoring. Let people vent. For some, it will

be therapeutic. For others (as you surely know), it will be habitual. Do everything you can to let love win. Don't let their anger define your relationships. Remember, anger nearly always masks pain. Try to provide a safe place where the pain can surface. Then try to help heal it. Feel their pain. Wear it. But don't let it become personal.

If cutbacks are happening, leave time and space for grief. And remember its stages: denial, anger, bargaining and depression all come before acceptance. The process takes time. There are relapses. Help people work their way through it. And recognize that, sadly not everyone will get there.

Moving Mountains

Some years ago, I was teaching Jesus-like leadership to a diocesan ministry formation class. I asked class members to talk about their very best leaders. One woman said the best leader she ever had was a person who had let her go. I listened for a trace of sarcasm but didn't detect any. Mystified, I asked her to elaborate.

The higher-ups in the big company she had worked for decided to shut down her department. Her boss shared the heartbreak. But he then got everyone on board with the goal to help one another find other jobs – and not just other jobs, but better ones. In the end, they achieved their goal. She was forever grateful – for the better job and for the model of effective and caring leadership her

boss had bequeathed to her. In Matthew 17:20, we hear Jesus tell his disciples that faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. Surely, our faith can handle more modest tasks, even when they are incredibly difficult. It's always good to remember we never proceed alone. TP.

*OWEN PHELPS, Ph.D.,
is executive director of
The Yeshua
Catholic International
Leadership Institute
and author of the book
"The Catholic Vision for
Leading Like Jesus:
Introducing S3 Leadership
–Servant, Steward, Shepherd"*



**Solemnity of St. Joseph Vaz
The Apostle of Sri Lanka
Sunday 16th January 2022**

CODESEP

Codesep - Deniyaya organised a Christmas program for 12 Children Societies of different Estate Plantation divisions to share the joy of Christmas. The celebration was held in Codesep Community Hall, Deniyaya, with the participation of 60 Children of different faiths singing Carols and performing Christmas dramas, together with the Codesep staff.

Director- Fr Sebastian N.



UDUGAMA

Vespers - 8th Saturday, January 2022

Festive Mass - 9th Sunday, January 2022

HULANDAWA

Vespers - 8th Saturday, January 2022

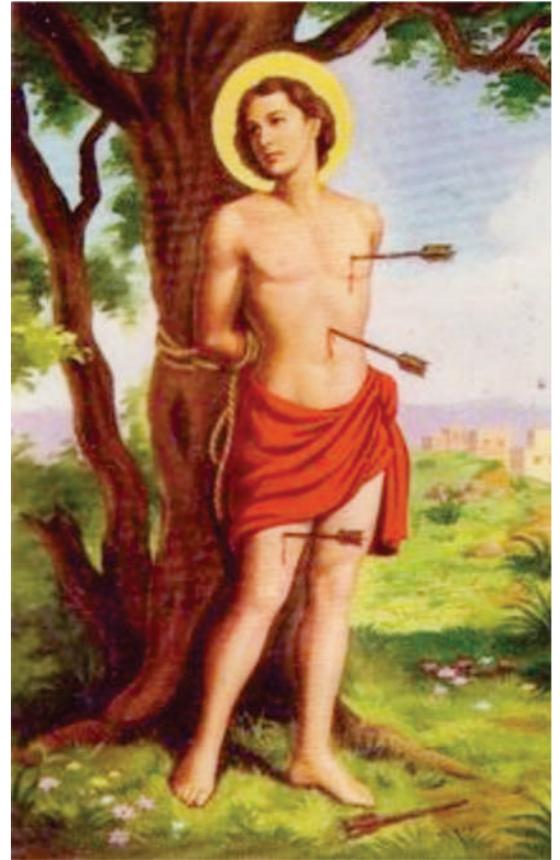
Festive Mass - 9th Sunday, January 2022

SELVAKNDA

Vespers - 22nd Saturday, January 2022

Festive Mass - 23rd Sunday, January 2022

St. Sebastian



Pray for us !

Commemoration of the **1000 days** since
Easter Sunday Terrorist Attack

“SPECIAL DAY OF PRAYER”

on

14th January 2022

at the

Basilica - Tewatte



*Let us join in person / prayer to plead at the feet of
Blessed Mother that Justice be done to the Victims.*

DATES TO BE REMEMBERED

BIRTHDAYS

Rev. Fr. Naveen Jude de Silva
10th January

Rev. Fr. Sandanam Daniel
11th January

Rev. Fr. Bernard Fernando
13th January

Rev. Fr. Bernard Jayasinghe SJ
14th January

Rev. Fr. Bernard Wijeratne
17th January

Rev. Sr. Nadeesha Aponsu DM (Halpathota Community)
1st January

Rev. Sr. Anne Marie HA (Elpitiya Community)
04th January

Rev. Sr. Hariet SCJM (Supem Uyana Community)
15th January

Rev. Sr. Sandamali Kurera SCJM (Matara Community)
25th January

Rev. Sr. Kumudu DOLSH (Ketapola Community)
08th January

Rev. Sr. Jayanthi Francis DM (Halpatota Community)
12th January

FEAST DAYS

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY

Rev. Fr Patrick
January 12

Rev. Fr Anselm
January 21

Rev. Fr Sheron / Rev. Fr Rangika
Rev. Fr Asiri / Rev. Fr Chrisan
January 25

Rev. Fr Viraj, TOR
January 27

Rev. Fr. Naveen Jude de Silva
January 29

We Thank & Appreciate
Rev. Fr. Hemantha SDB
for the service done as the
Diocesan Youth Director
&
as the Parish Priest
at Hambantota Parish.

May God bless you
as you take up a
new assignment
in your Congregation!



Welcome to our Diocese
all the Rev. Sisters & Religious Priests.
May you serve our flock with Joy.
The Lord is with you!

Farewell
to all the Rev. Sisters who served
in the Diocese over the past years and have now
taken up responsibilities in other Dioceses.
Prayerful wishes!

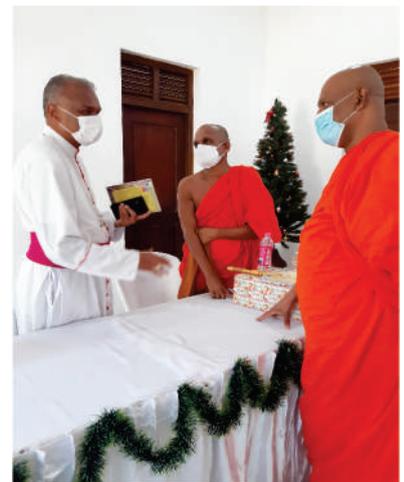
PHOTO GALLERY



**Celebrating & Valuing
the LIFE
at
Christmas**



**Christmas & New Year
with
Inter Religious leaders
at Weligama**



**Minor Seminary
Feast
2021**



**Renovations
of the
Chapel
at
Galle Prison
just begun**



Joy of Christmas

