

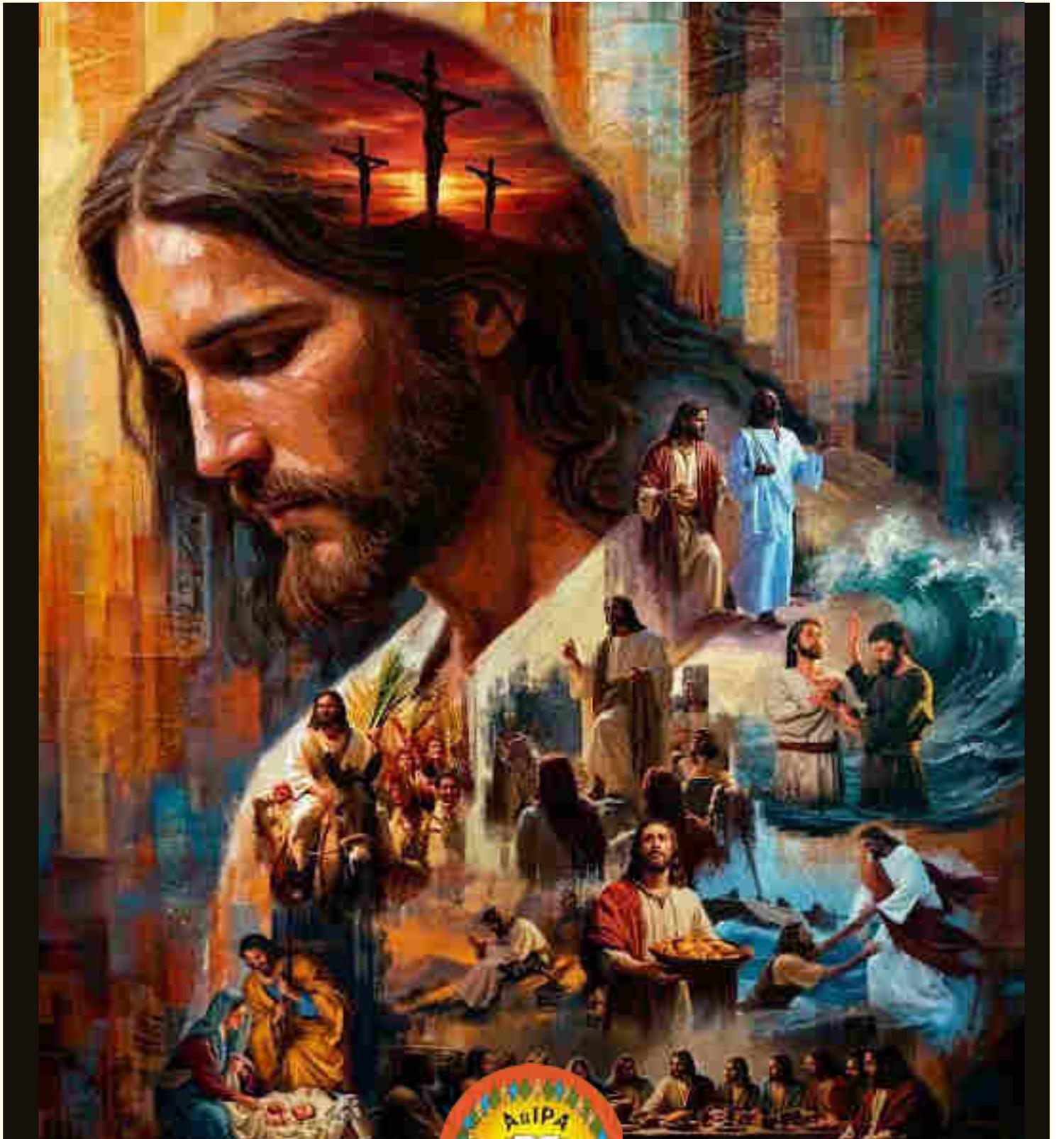


THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF GALLE

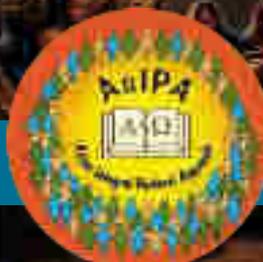


MARCH - APRIL 2026
VOL. 21 - NO. 02

News Letter



SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES



FOR A VIBRANT CHURCH



Bishop of the Diocese
Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe

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FOR CIRCULATION AMONG THE CLERGY
OF THE GALLE DIOCESE.

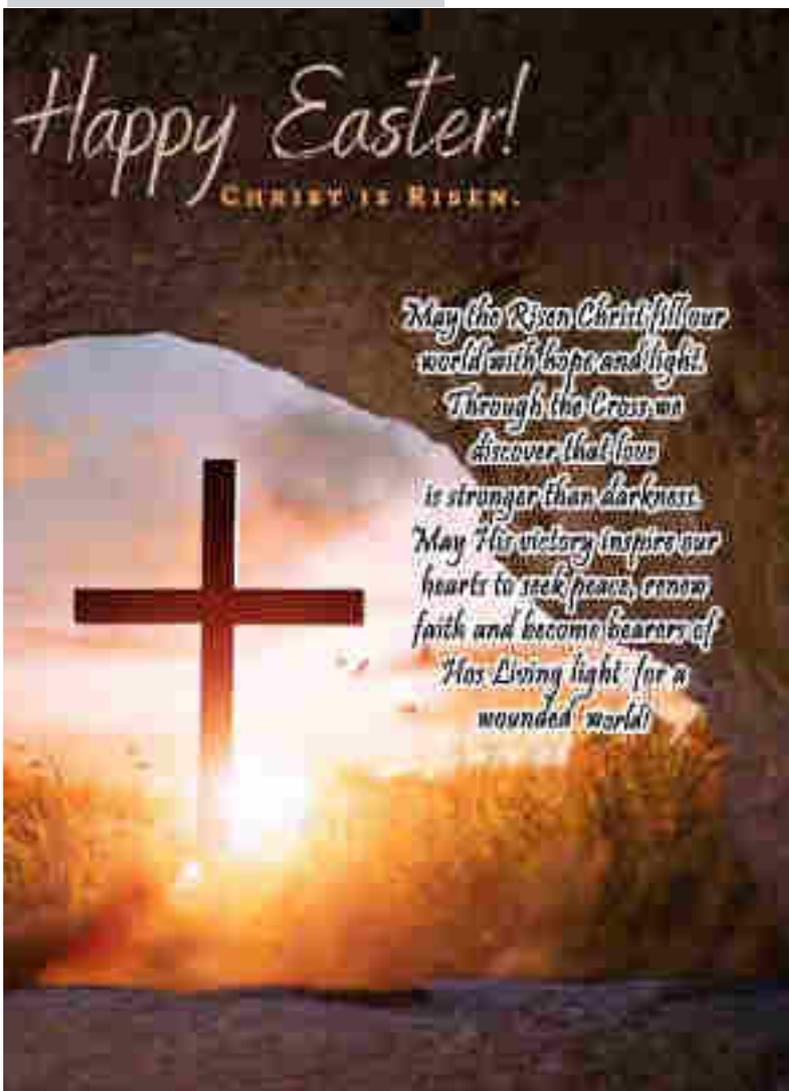
Dear Rev. Fathers & Sisters,
You are kindly requested to send your
information and news articles
to be published in the News Letter
before 20th of every month.

News Letter

MARCH / APRIL 2026 VOL. 21 NO. 02

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TOTALLY FOR CHRIST



My dear Rev. Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

Grace and peace to you in the Lord Jesus, who is our reconciliation and our hope. **As we journey through this Lenten season**, we cannot ignore the reality that we **live in a world overshadowed by war**. The cries of the innocent, the destruction of nature, and the anguish of displaced families weigh heavily upon our hearts. Yet, it is precisely in this atmosphere of suffering that we are called to enter in another few weeks' time, into the mystery of Holy Week. Holy Week is not a distant commemoration of past events; it is the living memory of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection. When we walk with Him from Palm Sunday to Good Friday, we carry with us the pain of our world. In His Cross, we see the suffering of victims of violence, the wounds of creation, and the brokenness of humanity. But in His Resurrection, we discover that suffering and death do not have the final word. Love is stronger than hatred, peace greater than war, and life victorious over death.

In the coming weeks, to enter Holy Week in this time of conflict is to stand at the foot of the Cross with Mary and the beloved disciple, refusing to turn away from the suffering of our brothers and sisters. It is to believe, with steadfast faith, that the tomb will not remain sealed, that the light of Easter will break forth even in the darkest night. The Resurrection is God's assurance that peace is possible, that reconciliation can be achieved, and that hope must never be abandoned. Therefore, I invite you to live this Holy Week with deep prayer and solidarity. Let every liturgy, every act of fasting, every gesture of charity be offered for peace. Let us unite our voices with the Risen Christ, who greets His disciples with the words: "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). May those

words echo across nations and touch the hearts of leaders and peoples alike.

With fraternal affection, I invite you to join me at the Chrism Mass, the solemn liturgy in which the Church manifests the unity of her priests with their Bishop. At this sacred celebration, you will renew the promises made on the day of your ordination—promises of fidelity, service, and pastoral charity—so that together we may continue to shepherd God's people with one heart and one mind in Christ. During the Mass, the Sacred Chrism will be consecrated and the oils of catechumens and of the sick will be blessed.

These holy oils, entrusted to your care, will be carried back to your parishes as signs of the Lord's healing and sanctifying presence. Through them, the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and the Anointing of the Sick will bring grace and strength to the faithful entrusted to you. I urge you, therefore, to come with joy and gratitude, so that together we may celebrate the mystery of our priesthood and renew our commitment to serve Christ and His Church. May this gathering be a source of encouragement and a reminder that we are never alone in our ministry, but always united in the one Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Dear friends, as I mentioned earlier, we now prepare to celebrate Easter, let us hold fast to the promise that the Resurrection is not only the victory of Christ but also the pledge of new life for our world. Even in the midst of war, we proclaim: **Christ is Risen, Alleluia!** And because He is Risen, peace will triumph.

May the joy of the Resurrection strengthen us, and may the Risen Lord grant peace to our troubled world. I entrust this appeal to the intercession of Mary, Queen of Peace. May she guide us to her son, who is our peace.

+ Raymond Wickramasinghe
Bishop of Galle

PHOTO GALLERY

| Priests Serving in the Diocese of Galle During the Presbyteral Meeting



| Catholic Bishops' Courtesy Call on the Very Rev. Mahanayaka Theros in Kandy



| Ash Wednesday Celebrations



| Women Religious Day of Prayer at the National Shrine of Christ the Healer, Weligama



Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting

Date - 14th Of March

Time - 9.00 a.m.

Venue - Caritas Sed Galle

NOTICE

HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTION

FOR THE MONTH OF

MARCH



APRIL

For disarmament and Peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

For Priests in crisis

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

National Calvary Shrine, Hiniduma

Lenten Program -2026

Theme: "Together towards God, with hope and repentance"

Thursdays

- 03.00 p.m. - Stations of the Cross followed by the Holy Mass at the 12th Station
- 06.00-07.00 p.m. - Sacrament of Reconciliation Confessions
- 07.00-08.00 p.m. - Eucharistic Exposition, Holy Hour followed by Benediction
- 09.00 p.m. - Night Prayers

Fridays & Saturdays

- 06.00 a.m. - Stations of the Cross in Tamil followed by the Holy Mass at the 12th Station
- 06.30 a.m. - Holy Mass in the Parish Church
- 07.30 a.m. - Stations of the Cross in Sinhala followed by the Holy Mass at the 12th Station
- 09.00 a.m. - Stations of the Cross in Sinhala followed by the Holy Mass at the 12th Station
- 10.30 a.m. - Stations of the Cross in Tamil followed by the Holy Mass at the 12th Station
- 12.00 Noon - Holy Mass in the Parish Church
- 03.00 p.m. - Stations of the Cross in Tamil/Sinhala followed by the Holy Mass at the 12th Station
- 06.00-07.00 p.m. - Sacrament of Reconciliation Confessions
- 07.00-08.00 p.m. - Eucharistic Exposition, Holy Hour followed by Benediction
- 09.00 p.m. - Night Prayers

Sundays

- 06.00 a.m. - Stations of the Cross in Tamil followed by the Holy Mass
- 06.30 a.m. - Sunday Mass in the Parish Church
- 07.30 a.m. - Stations of the Cross in Sinhala followed by the Holy Mass
- 08.30 a.m. - Sunday Mass in the Parish Church
- 09.00 a.m. - Stations of the Cross in Sinhala followed by the Holy Mass
- 12.00 noon - Sunday Mass in the Parish Church

REV. FR. SHANTHA PATRICK | ADMINISTRATOR - NATIONAL CALVARY SHRINE, HINIDUMA | 077 249 7107



Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion

Dear brothers and sisters,

Lent is a time in which the Church, guided by a sense of maternal care, invites us to place the mystery of God back in the center of our lives, in order

to find renewal in our faith and keep our hearts from being consumed by the anxieties and distractions of daily life.

Every path towards conversion begins by allowing the word of God to touch our hearts and welcoming it with a docile spirit. There is a relationship between the word, our acceptance of it and the transformation it brings about. For this reason, the Lenten journey is a welcome opportunity to heed the voice of the Lord and renew our commitment to following Christ, accompanying him on the road to Jerusalem, where the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection will be fulfilled.

Listening

This year, I would first like to consider the importance of making room for the word through *listening*. The willingness to listen is the first way we demonstrate our desire to enter into relationship with someone.

In revealing himself to Moses in the burning bush, God himself teaches us that listening is one of his defining characteristics: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry” (Ex 3:7). Hearing the cry of the oppressed is the beginning of a story of liberation in which the Lord calls Moses, sending him to open a path of salvation for his children who have been reduced to slavery.

Our God is one who seeks to involve us. Even today he shares with us what is in his heart. Because of this, listening to the word in the liturgy teaches us to listen to the truth of reality. In the midst of the many voices present in our personal lives and in society, Sacred Scripture helps us to recognize and respond to the cry of those who are anguished and suffering. In order to foster this inner openness to listening, we must allow God to teach us how to listen *as he does*. We must recognize that “the condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church.”

Fasting

If Lent is a time for listening, *fasting* is a concrete way to prepare ourselves to receive the word of God. Abstaining from food is an ancient ascetic practice that is essential on the path of conversion. Precisely because it involves the body, fasting makes it easier to recognize what we “hunger” for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance. Moreover, it helps us to identify and order our “appetites,” keeping our hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency. Thus, it teaches us to pray and act responsibly towards our neighbor.

With spiritual insight, Saint Augustine helps us to understand the tension between the present moment and the future fulfilment that characterizes this custody of the heart. He observes that: “In the course of earthly life, it is incumbent upon men and women to hunger and thirst for justice, but to be satisfied belongs to the next life. Angels are satisfied with this bread, this food. The human race, on the

other hand, hungers for it; we are all drawn to it in our desire. This reaching out in desire expands the soul and increases its capacity.”^[2] Understood in this way, fasting not only permits us to govern our desire, purifying it and making it freer, but also to expand it, so that it is directed towards God and doing good.

However, in order to practice fasting in accordance with its evangelical character and avoid the temptation that leads to pride, it must be lived in faith and humility. It must be grounded in communion with the Lord, because “those who are unable to nourish themselves with the word of God do not fast properly.”^[3] As a visible sign of our inner commitment to turn away from sin and evil with the help of grace, fasting must also include other forms of self-denial aimed at helping us to acquire a more sober lifestyle, since “austerity alone makes the Christian life strong and authentic.”^[4]

In this regard, I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.

Together

Finally, Lent emphasizes the communal aspect of listening to the word and fasting. The Bible itself underlines this dimension in multiple ways. For example, the Book of Nehemiah recounts how the people gathered to listen to the public reading of the Law, preparing to profess their faith and worship through fasting, so as to renew the covenant with God (cf. 9:1-3).

Likewise, our parishes, families, ecclesial groups and religious communities are called to undertake a shared journey during Lent, in which listening to the word of God, as well as to the cry of the poor and of the earth, becomes part of our community life, and fasting a foundation for sincere repentance. In this context, conversion refers not only to one's conscience, but also to the quality of our relationships and dialogue. It means allowing ourselves to be challenged by reality and recognizing what truly guides our desires — both within our ecclesial communities and as regards humanity's thirst for justice and reconciliation.

Dear friends, let us ask for the grace of a Lent that leads us to greater attentiveness to God and to the least among us. Let us ask for the strength that comes from the type of fasting that also extends to our use of language, so that hurtful words may diminish and give way to a greater space for the voice of others. Let us strive to make our communities places where the cry of those who suffer finds welcome, and listening opens paths towards liberation, making us ready and eager to contribute to building a civilization of love.

I impart my heartfelt blessing upon all of you and your Lenten journey.

From the Vatican, 5 February 2026, Memorial of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr

LEO PP. XIV



A Prayer Service Celebrating the Christian Unity held at "Buona Vista" Rumassala, Galle.



"Peace and Reconciliation" through Interreligious Dialogue and Sharing an initiative of Caritas SED Galle.



Special Programme for Small Christian Communities at Matara Parish





My Beloved Brothers and Sisters:
I invite you to join me in earnest prayer for peace in our troubled world, and most especially in the Middle East. Countless innocent men, women, and children continue to suffer the devastating consequences of conflict.

May the Lord, who is the Prince of Peace, touch the hearts of leaders, comfort those who mourn, protect the vulnerable, and bring about reconciliation and lasting peace!

+ Bishop Raymond Wickramasinghe
Diocese of Galle

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."
- Matthew 5:9

The Feast of Divine Mercy

Divine Mercy Convert Halpathota



Festive Eucharistic Celebration
13th Monday, April 2026
At 10.30 a.m.



CHRISM MASS

Date - 30th of March
Time - 10.30 a.m.
Venue - Queen of the Holy Rosary Cathedral, Galle

First Training Seminar for Holy childhood Animators held at DDN Halpathota



PHOTO GALLERY

Pastoral Exposure Programme of the National Seminary Brothers in the Diocese of Galle



Annual Feast - Holy Family Church, Barawakumbuka



Annual Feast - St. Lucia's Church, Ketapola (Elpitiya)



His Lordship's Pastoral Visit to Enselwatte Parish



DATES TO BE REMEMBERED

— BIRTHDAYS —

Rev. Fr. Sudath Fernando SSS
8th March

Rev Fr Shantha Patrick
28th March

Rev. Sr. Roshini Thalawatta DM
18th March

Rev.Sr. Calixta Mallikarchchi SCJM
22nd March

Rev. Sr. Marie Gertrude (Great Carmel)
24th March

Rev. Sr. Mary Lourdes (Great Carmel)
27th March

Rev. Sr. Angela HA
28th March

MARCH

Rev. Fr. Nihal Nanayakkara
04th April

Rev. Fr. Harold Leo Merrill
04th April

Rev. Fr. M. Gratian
07th April

Rev. Fr. Dilshan Fernando
10th April

Rev. Fr. Yesu Rajan OCD
14th April

Rev. Fr. Theodore Lambert
20th April

Rev. Fr. Johnson CMF
22nd April

Rev. Sr. Priyadharshani Silva SCJM
3rd April

Rev. Sr. Bertile Fernando HA
9th April

Rev. Sr. Melani Silveira SCJM
13th April

Rev. Sr. Ranjani Gregory FMM
13th April

Rev. Sr. M Subani AC
18th April

APRIL

— ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY —

Rev. Fr. Anthony Marcus SSS
19th March 2011

MARCH

Rev. Fr. S. Jesuthasan CMF
08th April 2015

Rev. Fr. Patrick Prashanth OMI
8th April 2015

Rev. Fr. Aloysius Ashok OCD
12th April 2023

Rev. Fr. Iresh Nimarshana CMF
15th April 2021

Rev. Fr. Andrews Shantha Kumar OCD
16th April 2005

Rev. Fr. X. Ravikanth CMF
18th April 2012

Rev. Fr. Prasad Ruwan
21st April 2016

Rev. Fr. Royestan Peiris CMF
28th April 2006

APRIL

— FEAST DAYS —

Rev. Sr. Virginia HA
25th March

MARCH

Rev. Sr. Jesudasan Vinopriya (Divine Mercy)
3rd April

Rv. Sr. Anne Shayamali (Divine Mercy)
3rd April

Rev. Sr. M. Subani AC
18th April

Rev. Sr. Canicius HA
27th April

APRIL

— DEAR DEPARTED —

Rev. Fr. Philip Cooray
05th March (1960)

Rev. Fr. Gilbert Wijeratne
10th March (1992)

MARCH

Most. Rev. Dr. Nicholas Maria Laudadio SJ
1st April 1969

Most. Rev. Dr. Elmo Joseph Perera
9th April 2015

APRIL

PHOTO GALLERY

Annual Feast - Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Halpathota



Annual Feast - St. Sebastian's Church, Uduagama



Annual Feast - St. Sebastian's Church, Hulandawa



Feast of St. John Bosco at 'Chinthanaloka' Institute of Philosophy and Humanities, Ahungalla



**Solemnity of St. Joseph
Spouse of the blessed Virgin Mary**

Patronal Feast of the Diocese of Galle



**Thanksgiving
Holy Eucharist**

Date - 19th of March
- Time - 7.00 a.m.
Venue - Queen of the Holy Rosary Cathedral, Galle

PHOTO GALLERY

Opening of 'Claret College' (Managed by Claretian Congregation) at Barawakumbuka marking a significant milestone in the history of the Diocese of Galle



Diocesan Lenten Pilgrimage to the National Calvary Shrine, Hiniduma

