

# INTER NOS

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No. 2

February 2026

## BISHOP'S PROGRAMME FOR FEBRUARY 2026

1	Pastoral Visit, Kokkada
2-11	CCBI and CBCI Meetings, Bangalore
12 05.00 p.m.	Governing Board Meeting, FMCI
19 09.00 a.m.	Governing Board Meeting, St Joseph Seminary, Jeppu
21 09.00 a.m.	Graduation Ceremony, SJEC
21-22	Pastoral Visit, Fajir
23 09.15 a.m.	Training on "My Diocese – ERP"
24-25	St Peter's Seminary Board Meeting/ KRCBC, Bangalore
25-26	NBCLC Board of Directors' Meeting, Trichur

### **Bishop Meets in the Forenoon:**

Religious Men and Women, 14; Diocesan Clergy, 20;

Lay faithful, 28



*"Unless there is a Good Friday in your life, there can be no Easter Sunday," reminds Ven. Fulton J. Sheen. Lent places us before this truth: new life is born only through surrender, sacrifice, and the cross. Without conversion and self-denial, the promise of resurrection remains unreal. St. Augustine teaches us how prayer rises toward God: it needs two wings—fasting and almsgiving. Fasting disciplines our desires; almsgiving opens our hearts to others. Together, they lift prayer beyond words and shape it into a life offered in love.*

## **BISHOP'S MESSAGE FOR FEBRUARY 2026**

**Papal Intention for February:** Pope Leo XIV invites the whole Church to pray for children with incurable diseases. When the little children suffer due to incurable diseases, parents too suffer deeply and their energy gets immensely drained. Such families need a great emotional and financial support, along with our prayers. Some terminal sicknesses tend to weaken our faith and hope. Our presence in the life of the sick could help to alleviate their pain to certain extent, and also may regenerate hope. Prayer and faith are great sources of strength. In this year of Children, let us make a special effort to identify such children and come to their help, so that our service becomes their consolation. February 11 is the World Day of the Sick, where we fondly remember the assistance of Mother Mary who appeared at Lourdes and indicated the stream with curative value. May our prayers rise to heaven on behalf of the sick so that the children with incurable diseases and all the sick may be able to fight with the sickness with courage and may the parents never lose hope but be strengthened in their faith.

**Year of the Children:** I remind the Parish Priests once again to plan activities and programmes for children taking the help of the Commissions at the Parish level. Some have already given serious thought to it and drawn up a plan. May the Children grow in stature and virtue in our presence as we accompany them with love and care.

**Day of the Consecrated Life:** On February 2, as celebrate the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, we are invited to give special attention to consecrated persons, both men and women. Their contribution is great in our diocese. We have 14 congregations of religious Priests, one of religious Brothers, two Public Associations of Christ's Faithful, two monasteries of cloistered nuns, and 45 congregations of women religious. Their presence is a great testimony of the presence of the heavenly Kingdom, for which they dedicate themselves with an undivided heart. Their service in our parishes, in our Institutions, brings in

enriching experience of faith. Their accompaniment of children in schools, in catechism classes, in the Basic Ecclesial Communities and their selfless service in the social centres contribute much for the strengthening of faith. Last year, the religious Priests and Sisters organized a day for the Diocesan Priests and we accepted their appreciation and hospitality. Let us take this opportunity to reciprocate our love and appreciation for their service, offering special prayers and organizing programmes for them.

**Ash Wednesday:** On February 18, we begin the Lenten season. The Liturgical Calendar (*Ordo*) gives sufficient instructions regarding the discipline to be practiced, keeping in mind the penitential nature of the season. Lent is also time for personal conversion. As we prepare ourselves to celebrate Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord, awareness of sin and the need for penance are emphasized through the practice of meditation on the Passion of the Lord, his suffering and his death. For some this conversion will be a turning from sin to grace; for others, it will be a gracious turning toward the mystery of God in Christ. Parish Priests are requested to use this time for arranging special renewal retreats and reconciliation with God and one another. Kindly give special attention to children towards faith formation and formation of conscience.

**Special Intensive Revision (SIR):** In the State of Karnataka the Special Intensive Revision of the Electoral Rolls may be held in the month of February. The SIR requires voters to trace their name or a parent's/grandparent's name to the old 2002 electoral roll ("legacy linkage"). Please contact the local Block Level Officer (BLO) to find out the parent's/grandparent's name in the Electoral Rolls of 2002 and report it to the officer who updates the Electoral Rolls. Kindly keep the documents ready, such as Any Identity Card/Pension Order issued to regular employee/pensioner of any Central Govt./State Govt./PSU; any Identity Card/ Certificate/ Document issued by Government/local authorities/Banks/Post Office/ LIC/PSUs prior to 01.07.1987; Birth Certificate issued by the competent authority; Passport; Matriculation/ Educational certificate issued by recognized Boards/Universities; Permanent Residence Certificate issued by competent State authority; OBC/

SC/ST or any caste Certificate issued by the competent authority; family Register prepared by State/Local authorities; any land/house allotment certificate by Government; for Aadhaar, Commission's directions issued vide letter No. 23/2025-ERS/ Vol. II dated 09.09.2025 shall apply. I request the Parish Priests to motivate the Associations and the Commissions to be actively involved to help the senior citizens and any other person who needs assistance.

Wish you a fruitful Lenten Season.

✠ Peter Paul Saldanha  
**Bishop of Mangalore**

## **PASTORAL CONSULTATION 2026**

**The Pastoral Consultation 2026** will be held on **Wednesday, 25 March, and Thursday, 26 March 2026**. This consultation is intended as a moment of prayerful listening and shared discernment, as we reflect together on the pastoral realities, challenges, and hopes of our Diocese. Through open dialogue and attentive reflection, we seek to identify practical and life-giving ways to support, strengthen, and renew our pastoral ministry at the diocesan, deanery, and parish levels, in fidelity to the mission entrusted to us by the Lord.

In this regard, I kindly invite you to gather and share, from within your deanery, any observations, concerns, experiences, suggestions, or questions that you believe would benefit from prayerful discussion and reflection. Your insights will be of great value in helping us listen attentively to the current pastoral needs of our people and plan future pastoral initiatives with greater wisdom, care, and effectiveness.

Please send your contributions **on or before 15th February 2026** by post, WhatsApp, or email to [josemartisfr@gmail.com](mailto:josemartisfr@gmail.com). You may also forward them to the **Vicar General's Office**.

**Rev. Joseph Martis**  
**Secretary, Council of Priests**

## TRAINING PROGRAMME ON MY DIOCESE ERP SOFTWARE

The training programme on the *My Diocese ERP Software* has been scheduled for **23 February 2026**, from **9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.**, at the **Pastoral Centre, Bajjodi**.

Parish Priests, Assistant Parish Priests, office staff, or any suitable person from the parish with basic computer knowledge who will be assisting in the use of this software may participate in the training, provided that the software has already been installed in the parish.

Participants who have a laptop are requested to bring it along. The training will be very useful for the effective use of the software in parish administration.

Kindly ensure that the participant is aware of the **User ID and password** provided by the company.

Please confirm your participation and indicate the number of participants from your parish **on or before 20 February 2026**, to help us make proper arrangements. A WhatsApp confirmation will be appreciated.

For confirmation, please contact:

Bro. Flexon Lobo – 9731280588

Ms. Reshma Lobo – 7259731630

Fr. Santhosh Rodrigues – 9845833648

Thank you for being so cooperative.

Rev. Walter D'Souza  
**Coordinator, *My Diocese ERP***



*St. John Chrysostom sharpens the call for Lent by reminding us that true fasting must touch our speech and relationships. If our mouths fast from food but not from harsh words and unjust criticism, our penance is empty.*

**TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF THE  
PASTORAL COUNCILS  
AT THE VICARIATE (DEANERY)  
AND DIOCESAN LEVELS**

With the formation of the Pastoral Councils at the parish level now completed in nearly all parishes, Parish Priests are kindly requested to forward the names of the representatives for the formation of the Vicariate (Deanery) Pastoral Council **by 10 February 2026** to the respective Vicars Forane.

Thereafter, the Vicars Forane are to convene the meetings of the new Vicariate (Deanery) Pastoral Councils **by the end of February** and send the names of the members for the Diocesan Pastoral Council **by 10 March 2026** to the Vicar General so that the meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council may be organized **by the end of March/beginning of April 2026**.

While the earlier schedule for the formation of the new Pastoral Councils at the Vicariate and Diocesan levels was mentioned in the *Inter Nos* of September 2025, I am providing here a **revised schedule of dates**. I encourage you to take note of these updated dates and to cooperate diligently in completing the list of members and in convening the Vicariate and Diocesan Pastoral Councils promptly and without delay.

Parish Priests are directed to provide the requested details of the members of the Vicariate Pastoral Council, and the Vicars Forane are to submit the list of members for the Diocesan Pastoral Council to the Vicar General, using the appropriate formats provided below, within the specified time frame.

**- Bishop of Mangalore**

**Members from the Parish to the Vicariate Pastoral Council  
(to be sent to the Vicar Forane)**

Now that the Parish Pastoral Council has been approved by the Bishop, Parish Priests of the Vicariate (Deanery) are requested to submit the following information to the respective Vicar Forane **by 10 February 2026**:

**List of Members for the  
Vicariate Pastoral Council 2026-2028**

**Name of the Parish:**

**Place:**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Const. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Postal Address &amp; email</b>	<b>Mobile No.</b>
1	Parish Priest	5:4.1.2			
2	Asst. Parish Priest	5:4.1.2			
3	Other Priests appointed by the Bishop for the Pastoral Work	5:4.1.2			
4	Priests Serving in the Schools under CBE	5:4.1.3			
5	Superior of the Religious House	5:4.1.4			
6	Deanery/Province/ Diocesan level Coordinators/Presidents/ Animators, if any	5:4.2			
7	Vice President of PPC	5:4.3.1			
8	Secretary of PPC	5:4.3.1			
9	Coordinator of Commissions in the Parish	5:4.3.2			
10	Deanery Representative from the Parish	5:4.4.1			
11	Honorary Members	5:4.7			

*\*Add rows as per your requirement*

Date:

Parish Priest

## **Members from the Vicariate to the Diocesan Pastoral Council**

(To be sent to the Vicar General)

The Vicars Forane are requested to convene meetings of the new Vicariate Pastoral Councils **by the end of February 2026** and to submit the following information **by 10 March 2026** for the formation of the new Diocesan Pastoral Council:

### **List of Members for the Diocesan Pastoral Council**

**Name of the Vicariate/Deanery:**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Const. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Postal Address &amp; email</b>	<b>Mobile No.</b>	<b>Whats App No.</b>
1	Vicar Forane	6:4.1.6				
2	Priest Representative	5:11.3				
3	Secretary of Vicariate Pastoral Council (5:11)	6:4.5				
4	Vicariate Lay Representative (5:11)	6:4.5				
5	Honorary Members, if any	6:4.7.1				

*\*Add rows as per requirement*

Date:

Vicar Forane

## ECCLESIASTICAL TRIBUNAL OF THE DIOCESE OF MANGALORE

### Statistical Summary of Cases for the year 2025

<b>A. First Instance Cases</b>	
1. Cases on process as on 01-01-2025	37
2. Petitions registered during 2025	85
Total number of petitions as on 31-12-2025	122
<b>Cases completed during 2025</b>	
1. Fr Naveen Pinto (2 abandoned; 2 reconciled) (45+4)	49
2. Fr Walter DMello	03
3. Fr Denzil Lobo (1 withdrawn) (40+1)	41
Total cases completed	93
Total number of petitions yet to be disposed of	03
Cases on process as on 31-12-2025	26
Cases awaiting completion with: Fr Naveen Pinto – 19    Fr Denzil Lobo - 07	
Defenders of the Bond: Fr Daniel Veigas OP: 88	
<b>B. Second Instance Cases</b>	
1. Cases pending as on 01-01-2025	00
2. Cases received during 2025	00
3. Cases completed during the year 2025	00
Total number of cases at hand as on 31-12-2025	00

Rev. Naveen Pinto  
**Judicial Vicar**

## ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2026-2027

Parish Priests are requested to prepare the budget for the financial year 2026–2027, taking into account the actual income and expenditure of the financial year 2024–2025 and of the nine

months of the present year, that is, from April 2025 to December 2025. The budget should be approved by the Parish Finance Council by the end of February 2026. It should then be sent to the Bishop before 10 March 2026, so that the Bishop may approve it by 31 March 2026.

The budget format and the specimen list of items of income and expenditure are given in the *Inter Nos* of **January 2025**, on pages 7–11.

- Vicar General

## MANGALA JYOTHI

### I. Programmes / Events:

#### February 2026

6 : Liturgical animation - Annual Feast at St John Paul II Shrine, Bajpe

### II. Information:

#### A. Commission for Faith Formation: Catechism Exams/ Day

1. **Sunday Catechism Classes:** You are requested to complete all catechism classes before 1 February 2026.
2. **Sunday Catechism Examination:** Sunday Catechism examinations must be conducted on 8 February. Syllabus for the examination is of the entire year. The syllabus for the examination covers the entire year. Since this is a faith-related examination and not a secular subject, due care must be taken in this regard.
3. **Parish Catechism Day:** You may organize Catechism Day in your parish either on 15 or 22 February, or on a date convenient to you. As the year is dedicated to Children in our Diocese, kindly organize Faith, Bible or Christian value-based programmes.
4. **Diocesan level Catechism Day:** The Diocesan-level Catechism Day will be celebrated on 1 March 2026 at the Pastoral Institute, Shanthi Kiran, Bajjodi from 9.00 a.m. to

2.00 p.m. On that day, we will be honouring the top scorers of the X Std. students (school-level catechism annual examinations). You are cordially invited to the programme. The official invitation will be sent to you soon.

### III. New Books available at our Stall:

- \* ದಿಲ್ಜೆ ತೆ, ಹಾಂವೆಂ ತುಮ್ಮೊ ಮೋಗ್ ಕೆಲಾ, ಆಪೊಸ್ತಲಿಕ್ ಶಿಕೊವ್ಣ್
- \* ಸಾಂ ಕಾರ್ಲೊ ಅಕುತಿಸ್, ಡಿಜಿಟಲ್ ಆಪೊಸ್ತಲ್
- \* ಸಾಂ ದೇವಸಹಾಯಮ್, ಲಾಯಿಕಾಂಚೊ ಪಾತ್ರ್ನೊ
- \* 'ಜೆಜು ಮೊಗಾಳಾ' - ಆರಾಧನಾಚೆಂ ಪುಸ್ತಕ್
- \* ಶೆಂಬರ್ ಕಂತಿಗೊ - ಮನರ್‌ಫಾಪೊ
- \* ಖುರ್ನಾವಾಟೆಚಿಂ ಪುಸ್ತಕಾಂ
- \* ಕಥೊಲಿಕ್ ಪಂಚಾಂಗ್ 2026
- \* ಖುರ್ನಾ ವಾಟೆಚ್ಯಾ 14 ಸ್ಪೆಸಾಂವಾಂಚಿಂ ಪಿಂತುರಾಂ
- \* Lectionary in Konkani, Kannada, English.

- Rev. Rohith D'Costa  
Director, Mangala Jyothi

## MEGA BIBLE CONVENTION 2026

The Mangalore Diocesan Service Communion (MDSC), in association with the Commission for Bible, Diocese of Mangalore, is organising a four-day Mega Bible Convention from **26-28 February and 1 March 2026** at the **Cordel Church Grounds**, on the theme "*The Word of Christ dwell in you richly*" (Col 3:16).

The Convention will include reflections on the Word of God, Eucharistic Celebrations, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Praise and Worship, and Prayers for Healing on all four days. Clergy, religious, and lay faithful are warmly invited to participate, that together we may be renewed by the transforming power of God's Word and grow as witnesses of the Gospel. May this Convention strengthen our diocesan communion and rekindle a deeper love for Sacred Scripture.

- Rev. Clifford Fernandes  
Spiritual Director, MDSC

## COMMISSION FOR BIBLE

1. **Mega Bible Convention** organised by Mangalore Diocesan Service Communion (MDSC) in association with Commission for Bible, Diocese of Mangalore at Holy Cross Church Ground, Cordel on 26, 27, 28 February & 01 March 2026 from 4:00 pm to 8:30 pm.
2. **The Monthly Bible Quiz for February 2026 (Online)** on the **Book of II Samuel** and **Ephesians** will be held on **28 February 2026, from 8:30 pm to 9:00 pm**. The online link will be circulated from 01 February 2026.
3. **Bible Classes:**
  - a. St John - Bantwal Vicariate-Level Bible Class, Bantwal  
*Topic:* Bible Classes on the Gospel of Mark – *ಮಾರ್ಕಾ ಪರ್ಮಾಣೆಂ ಸುವಾರ್ತಾ ವಿಕ್ ಕಳಾನ್‌ಕ್ Mark's Gospel as a Story*– will be held for the Priests, Religious and Laity of the deanery in Konkani.  
*Date:* 21, 28 February & 07, 14, 21 March 2026  
 Saturdays from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
*Venue:* Church Hall, Bantwal.
  - b. St Joseph Vaz - Mangalore South Vicariate-Level Bible Class, Permannur  
*Topic:* Bible Classes on the Gospel of John – “ತುಮಿ ಸತ್ಯಾನ್ವೆ ಜಾತಿಲ್” “*So that you may Believe*” – will be held for Priests, Religious and Laity of the deanery in Konkani.  
*Date:* 14, 22 February & 01, 08, 15, 22 March 2026  
 Sundays from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
*Venue:* Church Premises, Our Lady the Queen of the Universe, Ranipura.
  - c. Classes on the History of Israel for the Religious Sisters and Laity at St Joseph's Seminary, 09—13 February 2026, 6:00—7:00 pm.
  - d. A Study and Discussion session for priests will be organised on 05 March 2026, Thursday, exclusively for Priests on the topic: Isaiah in the Lenten Readings from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. at Pastoral Centre, Bajjodi.

## CODP PROGRAMMES

- 01.02.2026 : Visit to Ashram in Badyadka  
03.02.2026 : Awareness on Domestic Violence and Use of Media in Talapady,  
08.02.2026 : Training on Panchayath Raj in Moodbidri  
13.02.2026 : Field Staff evaluation CODP, Training on Gender equality and justice in Fajir  
20.02.2026 : Training on Constitutional Rights in Bajpe  
23.02.2026 : Training on Gender equality and justice in Sheni  
26.02.2026 : Field & Women Empowerment Programme reporting Meeting in CODP

### **I. Other Information: Bishop's Letter for CODP Lenten Campaign – 2026 for Diocesan charities through CODP.**

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*, Pope Leo XIV writes: “God’s heart has a special place for the poor. The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor” (n. 17).

On 18 February 2026, we begin the Lenten Season. With fasting and prayer, we also remember our poor brethren. In the year 2025, we received Rs 85,88,565/- for the cause of the “Diocesan Mission/ Charity activities”. We thank the Lay Faithful, the Diocesan Clergy and Religious men and women for their generous contribution. Like the previous years, we shall distribute Lenten Campaign 2026 envelopes with “My Lenten Sacrifice” written on them.

Your generous donation is being utilized for education, health, food, marriage of poor girls and medicine. A larger amount is set apart for housing purpose. We are pleased to inform you that in the year 2025, out of the 353 applications received for new house construction, 194 are completed and out of 227 applications for repairs, 126 are completed till date. Helping brothers and sisters to have a roof over their head, is indeed an act of mercy.

We have disbursed Rs 87,14,223/- in the year 2025 as indicated below.

<b>2025</b>		
Education	Rs	10,35,800
Housing	Rs	62,75,400
Medical	Rs	11,69,523
Family Maintenance	Rs	1,42,500
Marriage	Rs	91,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>Rs</b>	<b>87,14,223</b>

I request the Parish Priests to hand over the Lenten envelopes to the families and encourage them to contribute generously as per the blessings they received from the Lord. Kindly collect and deposit the amount in the Parish Account and issue a cheque for the amount collected to CODP Mangalore.

**Please Note:** *Religious priests and sisters are requested to remit your contribution directly to CODP, Mangalore.*

Thanking you for your goodwill and imploring God's blessings upon you.

**✠ Peter Paul Saldanha**  
**Bishop of Mangalore**

As in previous years, the Lenten Campaign 2026 will be directed towards 'Local Mission/Charity'. Kindly note the following points:

1. CODP is registered under 80G (IT exemption) of the Income Tax Act.
2. The Lenten contribution to CODP is to be credited to the respective Parish Bank Account. Thereafter, the collective amount is to be transferred to the below mentioned CODP Account through Cheque/Bank transfer/NEFT/RTGS.
3. In case donors want to send donations individually to CODP, they can do so to the below mentioned CODP Account through Cheque/Bank transfer/NEFT/RTGS.

4. Institutes and Convents shall remit their collection directly to CODP. We have posted the envelopes separately to them. Thanks for your kind response in all the past years.

Account Name	CODP (Regd)
Bank Name	INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK
Branch	PADAVU
Account Number	157201000000015
IFS Code	IOBA0001572

**NOTE:** Please remember to intimate CODP as soon as you send your contribution through any of the above modes of transfer.

## II. Diocesan CODP Golden Jubilee Housing Project:

<b>CODP Golden Jubilee Diocesan Housing Plan: Cost Wise Details: First Phase 2023-2025 as on 23.01.2026</b>					
Completed Houses	Total Estimation of the house (Total cost)	CODP Contribution	Mr Michael's Contribution	Contribution from Beneficiary+Parish+Donors+Associations	
New House	House repair				
200	126	15,02,00,000	30851000	51907000	67442000
<b>CODP Golden Jubilee Diocesan Housing Plan - Second Phase 2025 onwards</b>					
Received applications	Stages of the Construction Level				
	Almost complete	Half way done	Not yet started		
Application Received New House	353	43	48	20	
Application Received House repair	227	3	40	45	
<b>Special note to the Parish Priest:</b> CODP has stopped accepting further housing applications (under CODP Golden Jubilee Diocesan Housing Program) until the completion of the above mentioned houses. However Housing applications are accepted under CODP Charity. Total applications received 580 out of which 55 applications are rejected.					

- Rev. Vincent DSouza  
Secretary, CODP

## LENTEN PENANCE AND DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES

The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent (can. 1250). Abstinence from meat, or from some other food, as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday. Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (can. 1251).

**a) *Mandatory Days of Fast and Abstinence in Lent:*** Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Abstinence becomes mandatory from the age of 14, and the law of fasting and abstinence binds those who have attained their majority (18 years completed) until the beginning of their sixtieth year (can. 1252).

In the Christian spiritual tradition, fasting is not merely about renouncing food or bodily pleasure; it is, above all, an interior act of conversion. When we fast, we acknowledge our radical dependence on God rather than on material comforts or habitual satisfactions. The Lord himself reminds us: “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4). By freely limiting what we consume, we create space (hunger) within ourselves for God to speak and to act. Fasting sharpens spiritual awareness, deepens prayer, fosters humility, and draws us into solidarity with the poor and the suffering. Abstinence, in particular, trains the heart to say “no” to lesser goods so that it may learn to say a deeper, more authentic “yes” to God.

This deeper meaning of fasting is beautifully echoed in the Sanskrit term *upavāsa*. The word is formed from *upa*, meaning “near” or “close,” and *vāsa*, meaning “to dwell” or “to abide.” Thus, *upavāsa* literally means “dwelling near” or “living in closeness to the Divine.” Fasting, therefore, cannot be reduced to the mere act of “not eating.” Rather, it expresses a conscious decision to live in the nearness of God. Spiritual teachers across traditions

insist that *upavâsa* remains incomplete if limited to dietary restrictions alone. True *upavâsa* involves a holistic discipline: restraining harmful speech and negative thoughts, mastering anger, ego, and sensual excess, and actively engaging in prayer, the reading of sacred Scripture, and works of charity. In this way, fasting becomes a unified spiritual practice of body, mind, and soul.

Seen in this light, fasting calls us to something far deeper than external observance. More than merely “abstaining from meat,” we are invited to pray for a “clean heart” and a “new heart.” The Gospel is not a collection of rules to be mechanically observed, but an invitation to surrender our hearts to God in ongoing conversion. Each of us is therefore encouraged to discern other meaningful forms of “abstinence”—from comforts, habits, or attitudes that dull our spiritual sensitivity or weaken our love.

For this reason, our clergy, religious, and lay faithful are urged not to excuse themselves too easily from this sacred obligation. It is fitting that on the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence, we unite ourselves in a special way with the Passion and Death of our Saviour. Through a more intense and prayerful form of penance, we learn to share in Christ’s self-giving love, allowing our sacrifices—small though they may be—to become paths of grace, renewal, and deeper communion with God.

***b) Other Days and Ways of Penance in Lent:*** Fasting and abstinence are recommended throughout the season of Lent, particularly on Fridays. These practices should be deepened and enriched through the devotional life of our faith, which expresses and nurtures our deeper communion with the Lord. External discipline bears lasting fruit only when it is united with prayer, charity, and conversion of heart. Some meaningful ways of living this Lenten spirit include:

- i. Daily participation in the Holy Eucharist
- ii. Regular visits to the church and time spent before the Blessed Sacrament

- iii. Worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance (Confession)
- iv. Praying the Stations of the Cross on Fridays and, where possible, on other days
- v. Reading Sacred Scripture and sound spiritual literature
- vi. Family prayer in common, such as the Rosary, Bible reading, or the Way of the Cross
- vii. Seeking the intercession of the saints through personal and communal prayer
- viii. Abstaining from alcohol, smoking, television, cinema, and excessive socialising
- ix. Abstaining from beverages such as tea or coffee between meals
- x. Practising almsgiving and visiting the poor
- xi. Visiting the sick, the elderly, and the lonely, whether at home or in hospitals
- xii. Abstaining from meat or fish for those for whom these are part of the regular diet, and making sincere efforts at reconciliation with family members or neighbours
- xiii. Setting aside a portion (for example, ten percent) of one's daily earnings for charity
- xiv. Offering a meal to a poor family or sponsoring part of a child's school fees
- xv. Offering voluntary service in social or charitable works

***c) Pastoral Note to Priests and Religious:*** Devotional exercises traditionally associated with Lent should be strongly encouraged. In particular, the Stations of the Cross should be prayed communally, especially on each Friday of Lent, to help the faithful enter more deeply into the mystery of the Lord's Passion and prepare worthily for the celebration of Easter.

Priests are to make themselves readily available for confessions and spiritual direction. Adequate opportunities for the Sacrament of Penance should be arranged in every parish so that the faithful may experience the grace of reconciliation and renewal. This

Lenten season is a privileged time to reclaim opportunities for confession.

Parishes are encouraged to provide additional opportunities for personal and communal renewal, such as Lenten Holy Hours with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction, evenings of reflection, Lenten retreat for parishioners, as well as spiritual renewal days for Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, Parish associations, and other family- and parish-based Lenten activities.

Finally, our Lenten penance must never become superficial or self-centred. As St. John Chrysostom wisely reminds us: “No act of virtue can be great if it is not followed by advantage for others. So, no matter how much you fast, no matter how much you sleep on a hard floor and eat ashes and sigh continually, if you do no good to others, you do nothing great.” True fasting, therefore, always leads us beyond ourselves—to love, service, and mercy—so that our Lenten journey may bear fruit in lives renewed by grace.

## **BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES (BECs)**

### **Programmes in February 2026**

1. 01 Feb 2026 : BEC Training - Nainadu
2. 01 Feb 2026 : PPC Training - Belthangady (Evening)
3. 08 Feb 2026 : BEC Training - Thokur
4. 08 Feb 2026 : PPC Training - Bajal (Evening)
5. 15 Feb 2026 : BEC Training - Suratkal
6. 15 Feb 2026 : Community Day - Bajal (Evening)
7. 22 Feb 2026 : BEC Training - Angalore

Rev. Sunil George D’Souza  
**Director, Basic Ecclesial Communities**

## **R.I.P.**

- | Sr Juliana Agnes Machado, SCB, sister of Rev. Fr Victor Machado (Sr), St Zuze Vaz Home, Jeppu, passed away on 1 January 2026. Her Funeral Mass and Burial Rites took place on 3 January 2026 at St Charles Convent, Belgaum.
  - | Mr Lancy Fernandes (67 years), brother of Rev. Fr Clifford Fernandes, Parish Priest, Cordel, passed away on 11 January 2026. His Funeral Mass and Burial Rites took place on 13 January 2026 at St Anne Church, Kelarai.
  - | Mrs Stella Pinto, sister-in-law of Rev. Fr Paul Pinto, Parish Priest, Neermarga, passed away on 23 January 2026. Her Funeral Mass and Burial Rites took place on 24 January 2026 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Kuppepadavu.
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