

ABOUT US

News Bulletin of the Diocese of Ratnapura

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CELEBRATING
25
Years





Convocation Ceremony of the Post O/L Batch 2018

The Convocation Ceremony of the Post O/L Batch was held under the patronage of His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera on the 16th of April 2018 at the Integral Education Academy, Buluthota.



The Feast of the Minor Seminary of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The Feast of the Minor Seminary of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of the Diocese of Ratnapura was celebrated under the patronage of His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera on the 27th of June 2018 at the Minor Seminary, Kegalle.



Bishop's Message



Per Crucem Ad Lucem Through the Cross to the light



Dear Rev Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

As priests and religious, we have a commitment to the progress of the spiritual, ethical and human growth of our children and youth. In this context, I am of the opinion that one of the biggest challenges we are facing today is to save our youth and children from the menace of drug-addiction, especially in our schools. The heartless drug- traffickers are making easy money by victimizing our innocent teenagers leading them into the intake of dangerous drugs.

This is an unavoidable challenge which we have to confront in our pastoral, ethical and educational fields as priests, religious and also as teachers. It is not only the director of the apostolate to youth and children who should be concerned about it, but it is incumbent on all of us, priests, religious and teachers who are responsible for the spiritual, ethical, educational and human growth of our teenagers in our parishes and schools.

Unfortunately, the State Authorities only proclaim their condemnation of the drug-trafficking, but do not seem to do much to eradicate it. Some seem to maintain absolute silence about it. The silence can be tantamount to support, given to it. We are informed by the media almost every day that large quantities of heroin, costing millions of rupees, are taken into custody by the police or customs officers, and the culprits are arrested. However, we hardly hear that the culprits are punished. We hardly hear what happens to the drugs that are taken into custody.

Very unfortunately, we observe that in this area of drug-trafficking and promotion, some of our politicians have taken the law into their hands, and protect themselves and their supporters from being brought before the law. Thus even the law-enforcers become helpless under the pressure of our powerful politicians. What a damage they are doing to our future generation and to our society at large.

We, the clergy, religious and teachers, should be vigilant about this deplorable situation which endangers the lives of our teenagers. We should be on the alert not to allow our innocent youth and children to fall victim to the diabolical net of the heartless drug-traffickers and promoters, who are up to ruining their future for earning easy money.

We need to pray hard that our teenagers may be protected from this menace and that those, responsible, regardless of their social or political status be severely punished by law. At the same time we have the moral obligation to do whatever we can, in action, to eliminate this menace from our society.



+ Cletus C. Perera OSB
Bishop of Ratnapura

Bishop's Diary



- August 1 :** 206th Year Celebration of the Ceylon Bible Society in Colombo.
- August 3 :** The Meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council at the Bishop's House.
- August 6 :** Meeting of the College of Consulters / Bishop's Council.
- August 7 to 9 :** Meeting of Bishops' Conference and Major Religious Superiors.
- August 10 :** Caritas Peace Walk and family Day.
- August 13 and 14:** Clinic Days in the General Hospital, Kandy.
- August 15 :** Annual Feast of the Shrine of Our Lady, Tanjantenna.
- August 18 and 19 :** Second Feast at St. Anthony's Shrine, Wahakotte
- August 22 :** Silver Jubilee Celebration of Rev. Fr. Piyal Fernando.
- August 24 :** Silver Jubilee Celebration of Rev. Fr. Bastian Pillai OSB at Kalpitiya
- August 25 :** Jubilee Celebration of five Charity Sisters at St. Mary's, Bambalapitiya
- August 26 :** Confirmation Service, Chilaw Diocese.
- August 27 and 28 :** Presbyteral Family Motivation Programme at Bulutota.



Bidding farewell to Rev. Frs. Anton Maurice and Gabriel SJ

Presbyterium of Ratnapura Diocese together with Bishop Cletus Perera bid farewell to Rev. Fr. Anton Maurice as he is leaving the country for his Higher studies in Rome and to Rev. Fr. Alfred Gabriel SJ as he will be taking over a new ministry in his congregation after serving our Diocese for 2 fruitful years as the Parish Priest of Doloswala. Dear Fathers we wish you all the best in your new ministries in the Vineyard of the Lord



In search of the spiritual



Man is constantly in search of the spiritual, because he is not completely satisfied with the material things of the world. In spite of all the consumeric goods at hand, all the electronic appliances, gadgets and other modern inventions such as the Computer, E-mail, Internet etc... feels a certain void in his life. As the man retires to bed despite all his brilliance, remarkable Achievements and accomplishments he feels so frustrated and empty and regrets that the happiness he is searching for has somehow eluded him.

That happiness – real and true happiness comes only from the spiritual, because the man is composed of body and soul. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus questioningly exclaimed “Is not life more than food and drink?” (Mat. 6:25) and further he added “Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness and Everything shall be added into you” (Matt: 6:33)

To have a well-balanced personality one must yearn for the spiritual. As the psalmist says, “Like the deer that yearns for the running streams, so my soul thirst for you my god” (Ps. 41: 1) we have enough cosmetics, salons, beauty parlours and where with all to beautify our bodies but for the soul what have we? No wonder, Socrates, the eminent Greek philosopher remarked more than 2000 years ago, “The fewer our wants the closer we resemble the gods”.

It is a meaningful sentence worth pondering, the more we detach ourselves from material things and desist from earthly and momentary pleasures the more God will show His countenance to us.

There were three monks in a monastery leading a life of prayer fasting, meditation and contemplation, always seeking the face of God. Two monks wanted to quit monastery. One monk said, “I am fed-up with all this spirituality. This is not what Jesus wanted, Jesus told his disciples to go into the world and preach the Good News and spread the message of love, Peace and salvation.” So he left the monastery to preach the word of God. The second monk said, “I am also fed up with prayer, fasting, meditation and contemplation. Jesus told the disciples that the last judgment would be based on corporal works of mercy, saying I was hungry, you gave me to eat and I was thirsty and you gave me to drink. Therefore I am going to do social work.” So he left the Monastery and went on his way.

Whereas the third monk was quite satisfied with his style of life, Prayer, fasting, meditation etc etc. Besides these spiritual activities he visited the sick, took Holy Communion to the aged and the infirm, comforted the sorrowful etc. He preached the word of God not by empty words by giving witness of Christ. He had a well-balanced personality and his spirituality went from strength to strength.

After a couple of years the first who went to preach began to be frustrated as his zeal began to wane. He was not able to deliver the goods. “No one was listening to me”. So quite crestfallen, he decided to go back to the monastery. The second monk went to do social work was also terribly frustrated. As long as money from funding agencies came his work was easy. He was very generous with other peoples’ money but when the funds were low he went into hiding and ultimately decided to go back to the monastery.

One day the two monks asked the third monk who was so happy and contented, who had a well-balanced personality, “Excuse us Father, what is the secret of your success, you seem to be so happy and serene, please help us and tell us your secret.” The third monk instead of replying to them directly, told them to bring a bucket of water and an empty basin.

As the water was poured into the basin, there was disturbance, water did not settle down. Then he said, “wait till it is calm and limpid.” When the water was still and calm the monks could see their faces in the water because the water was clear like a mirror. Then the third monk said, “well it is not in the hustle and bustle of the busy life you will find peace of mind and heart. It is not in the noisy topsy-turvy confusing situation, you will find calmness of the soul. It is only in prayer, fasting, meditation contemplation you will find peace of mind and contentment. It is there we experience God.”

Church Feast & the opening of renovated Church at Digala



"On the 1st May 2018, people of Digala celebrated the feast of their patron St. Joseph, the worker and began the month traditionally dedicated to our Lady. The preacher Fr Saveriyar, OCD, from Kegalle focused on these two figures, so important in the life of Jesus, the church and in the lives of plantation workers. People from other villages, neighboring parishes and people from other faiths took part in large number. After the car procession around the village, a common meal (Samabanthi) was served to all the villagers and the participants. Fr. James, the Parish Priest and the entire village community applauded the youth for their active participation and enthusiastic involvement to make the celebration successful and for their tireless effort of carrying out the year long renovation work of the Church. The feast was very fitting to be celebrated after completion of the renovation work."

Rev. Fr. James Suresh
The Parish Priest of Maliboda

Farewell

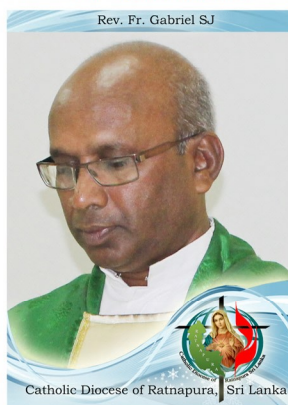
Rev. Fr. Priyantha Fernando



We bid farewell
to Rev. Fr. Priyantha CR
and wish him God's blessings
for his new appointment

Farewell

Rev. Fr. Gabriel SJ



We bid farewell
to Rev. Fr. Gabriel SJ
and wish him God's blessings
for his new appointment

Welcome

Rev. Fr. Bastian Pillai OSB



We welcome
Rev. Fr. Bastian Pillai OSB
to our Diocese and wish him
all success in his new mission

New Appointments and Transfers



Rev. Fr. Charles Degaulle:
Parish Priest,
St. Mary's Church, Belihuloya



Rev. Fr. Reginald Nonis:
Pro-tem Parish Priest,
St. Francis Xavier's Church, Gurugalla



Rev. Fr. Piyal Fernando:
Parish Priest,
St. Lazarus' Church, Uthuwankanda



Rev. Fr. Sampath Presad:
Assistant,
St. Mary's Church, Kegalle



Rev. Fr. Gratian Hapuarchchi:
Parish Priest,
St. Anthony's Church,
Keerapathdeniya



Rev. Fr. Maria Joy:
Assistant,
Sts. Peter and Paul's Cathedral, Ratnapurra



Rev. Fr. Bastian Pillai:
Parish Priest,
St. Anne's Church, Kahawatta



Rev. Fr. Shane Wickramasinghe:
Assistant,
St. Joseph's Church, Balangoda



Rev. Fr. Srilal Fernando:
Parish Priest,
Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine,
Kudagama



Rev. Fr. Noel Rowel:
On Sebatial Leave



Rev. Fr. Nishantha Rohan:
Resident Priest,
Minor Seminary, Kegalle



Rev. Fr. Anushka Fernando:
Pro-tem Director,
the Diocesan Pastoral Centre



Rev. Fr. Gabriel Nicholas:
Pro-tem Parish Priest,
Risen Christ Church, Doloswala



Rev. Fr. Anton Maurice:
On Higher Studies, overseas



Rev. Fr. P. Romesh:
Coordinator,
Plantation Sector Apostolate

+ Cletus Pura



Dear Fr. Maurice,
We, your brother Priests wish you all the
best and God's Blessings on your higher
studies

Anticipating the 2018 Synod of Bishops



In October 2018, bishops from around the world will gather at the Vatican to discuss the pastoral issues and pressing needs of young people, with a special eye toward how they are being prepared (or not) for the demanding task of “vocational discernment.” The upcoming synod assembly follows naturally from the previous one in 2015 that focused on marriage and the family, prompting Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. Although this next synod is unlikely to generate the same level of media buzz as the last one — as it almost certainly will lack the perception of controversial matters or rival factions (on which especially the secular media but at times even the Catholic media thrive) — it is not the case that the diminished attention means diminished importance. If anything, the topic of the 2018 synod is a prime opportunity to consider both the Church’s present and its future. If the Church is going to seize this opportunity, though, then the occasion cannot simply be left as a private conversation among the delegate bishops, but must capture the energy and fire the imagination of the whole Church so that we might together ask what the Lord calls our young people to become and how we must help them along the way.

To assist parents and pastoral leaders, educators and mentors, young people and the not-so-young to focus on “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment,” this article will do four things. First, it will offer an introduction to the Synod of Bishops and its assemblies. Second, it will provide an overview of the preparations for the synod assembly, drawing forth some of the key questions that have been asked of young people and of dioceses around the world. Third, it will identify several central themes that seem to be setting the agenda for the synodal process. And fourth, it will focus on the person of the Blessed Mother — Mary of Nazareth — to whom the pope has entrusted this entire process.

The meaning of a synod

The Synod of Bishops was established by Blessed Pope Paul VI near the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. The synod itself is an advisory body for the pope, comprised of bishops from across the world. The “ordinary” assembly of the synod represents every bishops’ conference to consider a topic that is “for the good of the universal Church.”

It has been reported that four delegates from among the U.S. bishops were selected at the 2017 fall meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in November: Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia and both Archbishop José H. Gomez and auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron of Los Angeles.

As representatives of the universal Church, these delegates will act with and for the Church, which is being called to “examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love, and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective way to announce the Good News today.” In identifying “young people,” the focus is primarily on 16- to 29-year-olds, since this is the period of life during which young people make some of the most important decisions and fundamental commitments for whom and what they love, whom and what they will serve and how they will live.

Preparations for the synod

In January 2017, a preparatory document was released from the Vatican at the instruction of Pope Francis to guide the process leading up to the synod assembly. Since the end toward which the Church hopes to guide young people is healthy and holy vocational discernment, it is helpful to know what exactly this compound term means. According to the preparatory document: “vocation” is most broadly a “vocation to love,” which “takes concrete form in everyday life through a series of choices, which find expression in the states of life (marriage, ordained ministry, consecrated life, etc.), professions, forms of social and civil commitment, lifestyle, the management of time and money, etc.” “Discernment,” then, is “the process by which a person makes [these] fundamental choices, in dialogue with the Lord and listening to the voice of the Spirit.” In sum, vocational discernment is concerned with the most fundamental choices in life and the dedication of oneself to what matters most, especially in life’s big decisions, in response to God’s call.

Pre-Synod Conference at Notre Dame

The preparatory document concludes with directions for bishops’ conferences and dioceses to gather relevant statistics by asking key questions relating to the life and environments of young people in their regions. Of particular note in this concluding section is the emphasis on cultures within and surrounding the Church. There is an explicit focus, for example, on the culture of the family, the parish culture and school cultures, as well as inquiries into the effects of “digital culture.” In broad terms, local churches are asked to consider how the places where routines and rituals are practiced, worldviews are inhabited, values are transmitted and memory is stored both form and express the lives of young people with reference to the possibilities for living in light of the Gospel. With the guidance of the preparatory document, each ecclesial body has submitted a brief report to the Vatican that provides statistics relating to young people, their current cultural situation in their particular settings and the specific challenges and opportunities presented in the respective regions. Beyond this report, individual bishops’ conferences, as well as each diocese, will further engage in their own preparations for the synod assembly as they see fit. Finally, in order to allow for even more direct participation of young people from across the globe in the synod process, a general survey was available online until Dec. 31, 2017, through which young people could speak to their own experiences, hopes and challenges. Some of the topics in this survey included young people’s views on:

- The trustworthiness of various institutions, like government, schools, parishes.
- People whose influence has been important in their lives, like parents, teachers, ministers.
- The importance and purpose of schooling, as well as their views on the meaning of work.
- Their religious identification and the frequency of their religious practice, along with their views on God in general and of Jesus in particular.
- What they consider as urgent tasks for the Church today.
- And how they engage on the internet, especially social media.

A second area receiving considerable attention concerns the role of technology. While a nearly impossibly broad and complicated subject, the synod is committed to asking “how the experience of technologically mediated relations might structure the conception of the world, reality and interpersonal relationships.” In focusing on such a critical and pervasive dimension of the modern world, the synod is seeking to commit the Church to addressing not just what content influences them, but how they engage with each other and the world, and the ways in which these forms of engagement promote or diminish the possibilities for faithful vocational discernment.

A third and final theme among others that is gaining attention pertains to how young people can and do generate new approaches and innovative possibilities for the Church, rather than simply being the recipients of the Church’s pastoral work. What young people propose may not fit the typical molds with which those older than them have become comfortable. Therefore, a priority is being placed on listening to young people, since, “as opposed to situations in the past, the Church needs to get accustomed to the fact that the ways of approaching the faith are less standardized, and therefore must become more attentive to the individuality of each person.” Whereas previous generations may have been able to rely on predictable stages in life to provide the opportunities for proclaiming the Gospel and offering formation to young people — like marriages and baptisms and moments of religious education — there must now be more flexibility in adapting the pastoral work of the Church to a diverse set of opportunities for encounter that may, “for example, [come] from a commitment to justice, or contacts outside the Church with someone who is a credible witness.”



Sacerdotal Ordination Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Piya Fernando

A journey of 25 years in Priestly life is not a simple task. It is indeed a great achievement which involves great passion, wholehearted dedication, strong Will power and utmost perseverance.

Rev. Fr. Piya Fernando who is celebrating his silver jubilee this year is one of those many devoted servants of God. Fr. Piya was born on the 7th September 1961 in the village of Pitipana, in Negombo.

He was among the 8 children whom his parents Mr. Bastian Joseph Fernando and Mrs. Mary Theresa Fernando were blessed with. Fr. Piya, entered the minor seminary as a young boy with a firm determination of saying "yes" to the Divine call. He received his diaconate in the year 1992 and was ordained priest on the 25th of August 1993 by Rt. Rev. Dr. Don Sylvester.

As a young priest, Fr. Piya assumed duties as the Assistant parish priest in the parish of Balangoda in the year 1993. Since then has been continuing his mission of serving in the vineyard of the Lord. His devoted service expanded into several parishes in the diocese of Ratnapura. He has served in the parish of Balangoda, Belihuloya, Ratnapura, Dehiowita, Gurugalla, Yatiyanthota, Dehigahapitiya, and Uthuwankanda where he is at God's service at present. He has also served in Rome and Verona in Italy.

Congratulating him wholeheartedly for his great achievement of 25 silver years, let us continue to keep him in our prayers so that he may be strengthened by the spirit of wisdom and courage in order to carry on his mission for many more years to come, leading the flock of Jesus to the green pastures.

Congratulations!

The Tamil Medium Senior Group of the Parish of Yatiyanthota, emerged winners, grabbing the 1st place at the All Island Level Bible Quiz Competition held recently



The Opening Ceremony of the newly Built Church at Kempitiya

The Newly built St. Anthony's Church at Kempitiya in the Parish of Rabukkana was blessed and opened by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perea on the 29th of July 2018. This church was built with the support of the youth and the lay faithful of the Diocese of Verona, Italy and the local benefactors. We really thank Rev. Fr. Roshan Tissera, the Parish Priest of Rabukkana for the dedicated service in building up the parish of Rabukkana spiritually and materially.



The Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul's Cathedral, Ratnapura

The Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul's Cathedral, Ratnapura was celebrated on the 24th of June 2018. The Festive Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera. Rev. Fr. Ensley Suranga, the Canon of the Cathedral and Rev. Fr. Sampath Presad, the Assistant Parish Priest together with the Parishioners organized this event.



Confirmation Service at Kegalle

The confirmation service was held on the 20th of May 2018 at St. Mary's Church, Kegalle. This special Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera.



Laying of the Foundation Stone for Parish Church of Ruwanwella.

The foundation stone for the new Parish Church of Ruwanwella was laid by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera on the 30th of July 2018 at St. Anne's Parish, Ruwanwella.



Seminar for Youth at Deraniyagala

A seminar was held for the youth of Deraniyagala in the Parish of Maliboda under the patronage of Rev. Fr. Gabriel Nicholas, the Diocesan Director for Youth Apostolate. This event was organized by Rev. Fr. James Suresh, the Parish Priest of Maliboda.



Birthdays in the Months of August - October

August 01: Fr. Jeewantha Peiris
August 07: Sr. Rupika (St. Joseph's convent, Kegalle)
August 10: Fr. Anushka Nisan Fernando
August 23: Sr. Theres (Elders' Home, Kegalle)

September 02: Sr. Benignus (Elders' Home, Kegalle)
September 06: Bishop Cletus C. Perera
September 07: Fr. Piyal Fernando
September 09: Fr. Devaraja
September 15: Sr. Hilary
September 25: Fr. Emil Fernando

October 01: Fr. Anscar SSS
October 09: Fr. Roland Rodrigo
October 22: Fr. Sriyan and Bro. Umesh
October 25: Bro. Kavinda
October 28: Sr. Mary Maureen Perera (Keerapathdeniya Convent)
October 29: Fr. Jude Amila



Ordination Anniversaries in the Months of August - October

August 02: Frs. Roland Rodrigo and Nevil Janze
August 04: Bishop Cletus C. Perera
August 09: Fr. Devaraja
August 13: Frs. Milton, Texi, Tensin and Lionel
August 18: Fr. Noel Rowel
August 19: Frs. Damian and Sriyan
August 25: Fr. Piyal Fernando

September 05: Fr. Paul Fernando
September 08: Fr. Sidath Wilegoda

October 03: Fr. Priyantha CR
October 13: Fr. Jude Fernando SSS



Feast Days

August 15: Sr. Leka (Rakwana Convent)
September 12: Sr. Marian (Balangoda Convent)
October 03: Sr. Anjelita (Balangoda Convent)
October 19: Sr. Paul (Balangoda Home)

Death Anniversaries

August 13: Late Rev. Fr. K.D. Joseph
August 23: Late Rev. Fr. Sisira Rienzi





73rd National Youth Assembly 2018.

The opening Session of 73rd National Youth Assembly was held on the 27th of July 2018 at St. John Mary Vianney's Clergy House in the Diocese of Ratnapura under the patronage of His Lordships Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera, the Bishop of Ratnapura and Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin, the Bishop of Jaffna.



Laying of the foundation stone for the Bishop's House Chapel.

The foundation stone was laid on the 20th of July 2018 by Rev. Fr. Sidath Wilegoda, the Procurator General of the Diocese of Ratnapura to construct the new Chapel building at the Bishop's House premises





Prof. Brien Holden
A LIFETIME
OF VISION
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Vision for Everyone... Everywhere

At Brien Holden Vision Institute,
we believe that sight is a fundamental right
for everyone, everywhere.

ඔබගේ ඇස් නොමිලේ පරීක්ෂා කරගන්න

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(Directing to Free Cataract Operations)
- ඇස් රෝග හඳුනා ගැනීම.
(Identification of Eye Diseases)
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(Diabetic Retinopathy)
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(Eye Pressure / Glaucoma)

OUR CHILDREN'S
VISION

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