



PILGRIMS OF HOPE



JUBILEE YEAR 2025

**YEARS OF DEDICATED
SERVICE TO THE LORD.**



ABOUT US

News Bulletin of the Diocese of Ratnapura





Shepherd Speaks.....

03rd September 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It gives me great joy to address you through our Diocesan Bulletin, which has been revived after some time. This publication is an important means of presenting the life and mission of our Diocese, and I am grateful to Rev. Fr. Dileepa Nuwan Ranaweera, our Diocesan Director of Social Communication, for his dedication in making this revival possible.

In this Jubilee Year, the Church reminds us that we are pilgrims of hope, a people who walk forward in faith, trusting in the providence of the Lord and bearing witness to His love even in the midst of hardships. Hope strengthens us to face challenges with confidence, knowing that Christ journeys with His Church.

At the same time, we are reminded of our call to be a synodal Church, a Church that walks together. This means journeying as one Body, listening to one another, and sharing in the mission entrusted to us by Christ.

I wish to thank our priests, religious, and lay faithful who continue to serve generously in parishes, mission stations, and apostolates. Their dedication is a blessing to our Diocese and a sign of God's presence among us.

May the Immaculate Heart of Mary watch over our Diocese and guide us always to her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

With prayerful affection and blessing,

+ Anton Wyman Croos
Bishop of Ratnapura



Journey Together Intercultural Harmony, A synodal path of life and witness.



Pope Francis has an opened new door for the people of God to walk together in harmony. He invites priest, religious, and laity to journey side by side, united on the same path. It is an inclusive call, where everyone is welcome to feel the breath of the spirit and the warmth of one another's presence. The meaning of journey together I feel that Pope Francis wants to emphasize that more than walking side by side. It means truly being present for one other, listening with our hearts, encouraging each other in times of doubt, discourage and pain, lifting one another up when we fall, and offering strength when someone feels weak.

It also means caring deeply, not just in words but through actions, and being willing to carry each other's burdens with love and compassion. To journey together is to grow together, to support one another with patience and kindness, and to move forward united in hope and faith. St. Paul says his letter to the Corinthians how the unity should be as people of God. "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."

(1 Corinthians 12:12.)

This says that there are many parts, but one body, some parts seem weaker or less honor. Synodality is about walking together as one Church, listening to the Holy Spirit, and respecting each person's voice clergy, religious, and laity.

APPRECIATION.....

We sincerely thank Fr. Anushka Nishan, former Editor of the Diocesan Bulletin – About Us, for his dedicated service, guidance, and commitment in shaping our diocesan publication. We are especially grateful for his generous sponsorship of the first issue, which made this important initiative possible. His contribution remains a lasting blessing for our diocesan family.

Synodality invites us to unity, listening, and shared mission. It brings harmony among different people, cultures, and vocations, just like the early Church learned to come together in the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12:2, St. Paul reminds us how we were once lost and followed empty paths.

Today, Pope Francis invites us to the same call to walk together in faith, guided by the Holy Spirit, and leave behind division. So we may live in unity, like one family in Christ. We, the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary, witness to the synodal path by living the spirit of interculturality and sharing our mission of service with the laity and the Church. We treat them with extra care and respect.

In our mission, we work with lay people and care for the most vulnerable by walking with them. We show a life of harmony by living together with people of different nationalities in our communities and congregation.

So, not only in Sri Lanka but all over the world in Asia, Africa, and Europe we proudly bear witness to intercultural living and service. As Sisters of Charity, we carry out our mission by walking the path of synodality.

Sr. Jemima Wijesundara (SCJM)
Child Jesus Convent,

Felicitation to His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, our first bishop, on his 50th anniversary of priestly ordination.





THE JUBILEE YEAR...

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor... to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

The idea of the Jubilee Year comes from the Bible, especially from the Book of Leviticus, chapter 25. God gave this law to Moses for the people of Israel. The Jubilee was to be celebrated every 50 years. It was a special year focused on freedom, fairness, and God's mercy. In that year, the land had to rest no farming was allowed. Land that had been sold because of poverty was to be returned to the original family. People who had become slaves due to debt were to be set free. All debts were also to be forgiven.

The goal of the Jubilee Year was to make sure that no one stayed poor or hopeless forever. It gave everyone a fresh start and reminded the people that everything - land, wealth, and even time belongs to God. We are not owners, but caretakers of what God has given us.

We do not know if the Israelites ever fully followed this law, but the message of the Jubilee remained important in their faith. In the Book of Deuteronomy, we find similar rules, like forgiving debts every seven years. Even between the Old and New Testaments, Jewish leaders continued to reflect on the meaning of the Jubilee.

In the New Testament, Jesus brings the Jubilee to life. At the start of His public mission, Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue. He said that He came to bring

good news to the poor, to free the captives, and to "proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). This clearly refers to the Jubilee. In fact, Jesus Himself becomes the true Jubilee. He offers us forgiveness, healing, and a new beginning - especially for those who feel lost, poor, or forgotten.

The Catholic Church has continued to live the spirit of the Jubilee. In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII began the tradition of Jubilee Years, now celebrated every 25 years. These are special times when the Church invites us to return to God through prayer, confession, and works of mercy. A powerful sign of the Jubilee is the opening of the Holy Door in Rome, which reminds us to open our hearts to God's mercy. The Pope also writes a letter, called a bull, explaining the meaning of the Jubilee. Around the world, the faithful are encouraged to join in pilgrimages, attend special Masses, and carry out acts of kindness.

The Jubilee Year teaches us many important lessons. It reminds us that God is the true owner of everything. We are His stewards. It also calls us to care for the poor and to build a fairer society. It is a time to forgive one another, to let go of anger and hurt, and to rebuild peace. Most of all, it is a time to experience God's mercy and to start again with hope and love.

In 2015, Pope Francis announced an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. He wanted to bring the whole Church back to the heart of the Gospel God's mercy. He asked us to reflect on how we have received mercy and to share it with others. He reminded us that our mission



is to reach out to those who are poor, hurting, or forgotten. He described the Church as a field hospital always ready to bring healing. He invited us to come back to confession and rediscover the joy of God's forgiveness.

As members of the Church in Sri Lanka - especially as priests, religious sisters, seminarians, and pastoral workers serving in the tea estates and other rural areas in the diocese of Ratnapura—we are already living out the Jubilee message. We work among people who are often poor, uneducated, and far from the attention of society. Many of the families we serve carry heavy burdens: poverty, addiction, debt, broken relationships, and social rejection. But this is exactly where the Jubilee message comes alive. Just like Jesus, we are called to proclaim freedom to the oppressed, healing to the wounded, and hope to the hopeless.

Even when our mission feels difficult, slow, or unnoticed, we must remember that every act of love we do - whether it is teaching a child, visiting a sick person, comforting the grieving, or listening to someone's pain is a sign of God's mercy

at work. We may not always see the fruits of our efforts, but God sees everything. He is with us, walking alongside us, blessing our hands and strengthening our hearts. In the end, the Jubilee Year is not just an old tradition or a special Church event. It is a way of life. It is about choosing mercy over judgment, hope over fear, and love over indifference. As we continue our journey of service in this diocese, we are invited to live the spirit of the Jubilee each day. Let us keep our hearts open to the Lord's favor and our hands ready to serve His people.

We are not alone. We walk together in this mission - with Christ, with the Church, and with one another. Let us encourage one another, pray for one another, and support one another in the work God has called us to do. May our lives and ministries continue to proclaim the good news: that the Lord is merciful, that He has not forgotten His people, and that now is the time of grace.

Bro Dhananjana Thiran

POPE'S INTENTIONS....

October

For collaboration between different religious traditions
Let us pray that believers in different religious traditions might work together to defend and promote peace, justice, and human fraternity.

November

For the prevention of suicide
Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care, and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

December

For Christians in areas of conflict
Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.



Shepherding in the Synodal Church: A Reflection for the Jubilee Year of Pilgrims of Hope



“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11)

The Jubilee Year 2025, under the theme “Pilgrims of Hope,” invites the universal Church to renew her faith and mission as a pilgrim people, walking together towards the Kingdom of God. In this sacred journey, the concept of synodality journeying together in communion, participation, and mission becomes the guiding light. Within this vision, the shepherding role of pastors, bishops, and priests stands at the heart of the Church’s mission.

To shepherd in a synodal Church is to imitate Christ, the Good Shepherd, who not only leads but also listens, heals, and walks among His flock. Shepherds today are called to be attentive to the joys and sorrows of their people, to discern the signs

of the times with them, and to inspire hope in a world often clouded by despair. In this Jubilee, shepherding is not confined to guarding the flock but extends to accompanying the People of God on their pilgrim journey—encouraging, guiding, and strengthening them in faith.

The synodal path emphasizes dialogue, listening, and shared responsibility. Shepherds, therefore, are not distant rulers but companions who walk at the side of their people, fostering communion and unity. They lead

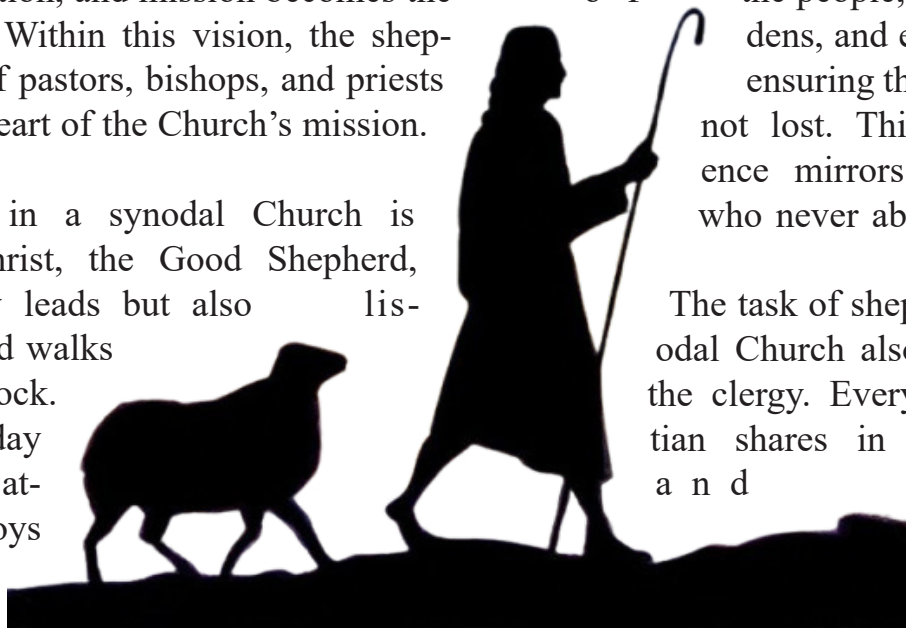
not by domination but by service, reflecting the humility and compassion of Christ. Their role is to ensure that no one is left behind on this pilgrimage of faith, especially the poor, the marginalized, and the forgotten.

In the Jubilee Year, the image of Pilgrims of Hope reminds us that the shepherd is not only at the front guiding but also in the midst of the people, sharing their burdens, and even behind them, ensuring that the weakest are not lost. This threefold presence mirrors Christ Himself, who never abandons His flock.

The task of shepherding in a synodal Church also extends beyond the clergy. Every baptized Christian shares in Christ’s mission and is called to a shepherding spirit caring for one another, supporting one another, and

walking together as brothers and sisters in faith. The Jubilee highlights this shared vocation: pastors and faithful together form one pilgrim community, sustained by the Spirit and moving forward with the light of hope.

As we celebrate the Jubilee Year 2025, let us pray for our shepherds, that they may always mirror Christ the Good Shepherd, and let us commit ourselves to journey together as Pilgrims of Hope a Church of listening, love, and mission, united in the service of the Gospel.



Your Lordship Bishop Wyman,

ON YOUR 25TH JUBILEE OF PRIESTLY ORDINATION, WE, THE PRIESTS OF THE DIOCESE, THANK GOD FOR YOUR FAITHFUL MINISTRY AND FATHERLY GUIDANCE. MAY THE LORD CONTINUE TO BLESS YOU WITH HEALTH, WISDOM, AND JOY IN SHEPHERDING HIS PEOPLE.

WITH PRAYERFUL GRATITUDE,
THE PRIESTS OF THE DIOCESE OF RATNAPURA.



What the Early Church teaches us on the Eucharistic Communion...



Receiving Jesus in the form of the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist during Holy Mass is what completes the participation in the Eucharist. Yet today there are Catholics who do not receive the Holy Eucharist for various reasons though they come for Mass. It is almost indispensable to receive the Lord's Body and Blood in the form of the Holy Eucharist according to Jesus' command. Therefore this article is an attempt to look back into the history of the early Church to examine how Holy Communion was practised in the early Church.

The Church's celebration of the Eucharist originated in obedience to Christ's mandate at the Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me." Under the memorial command Jesus particularly directed the apostles to the very eating of his body and to the very drinking of his blood. It is in this way that they could commemorate the passion, death and resurrection of Christ "until he comes." They could keep the memory of the risen Lord alive as long as they celebrated this breaking of the bread. At the same time we know that this celebration of the Eucharist may have not had a consistent form at different phases of the history and in geographically variant areas. It will be inappropriate to talk about the Holy Communion as we have it today, at that time period of the first few centuries since a definite ritual programme and a corresponding theological understanding of it had not been matured by

then. Tradition was in a formative state and still reflected considerable cultural, ritualistic and theological diversity during the first five centuries of Christianity. Let us now examine one liturgical document pertaining to this theme from the Church of Syria. *Didache*?

Didache

What we find in the Church Order, *Didache*, which is called the "Teachings of the twelve Apostles", makes allusions to the Eucharistic tradition of the day and was not a detailed report of their ritual practice. We can observe that the name for the liturgical celebration in memory of Jesus had already changed from "Breaking of the bread" to "Eucharist" in this liturgical document. Scholars consider that this precious liturgical source would have been composed between the middle of the first century and the middle of the second century. The meal in the two chapters 9 & 10 and its mention again in chapter 14 is designated by the Greek word *eucharistia*, translated as "thanksgiving". These three chapters offer the most fertile soil in which to find the roots of Christian Eucharistic practice and the roots of later Christian Eucharistic Prayers. Chapter 9 presents a sequence similar to Lucan institutional narrative with the blessing of the cup, the blessing of the bread and finally at the end of the meal a prayer resembling the Jewish blessing for concluding a meal. The rubrical directions specify three moments: "in connection with the cup", "in

connection with the bread broken" and "after it has been completed". These three moments corresponds to that of Luke, "He took a cup.... He took bread.... After supper...." Chapter 10 seems to appear as a primitive form of a Eucharistic prayer according to some scholars. It is worth going through the texts.

Chapter 9

1 In regard to the Eucharist (thanksgiving), you shall offer the Eucharist thus: 2 First, in connection with the cup, "We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David Your son, which You have made known to us through Jesus Your Son; to You be glory forever". 3 And connection with the breaking of bread: "We give You thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You have made known to us through Jesus Your Son; to You be glory forever. 4 As this broken bread was scattered over the mountain tops and after having been gathered together became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom, for Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever. 5 But let no one eat or drink of the Eucharist with you except for those baptized in the name of the Lord; for it was in reference to this that the Lord said: "Do not give that which is holy to the dogs."

Chapter 10

1 But, after it has been completed, give thanks in the following way: 2 "We thank You, holy Father, for Your holy name which You have caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which You have made known to us through Jesus Your Son; to You be glory forever. 3 You, Lord almighty, has created all things for Your name's

sake and has given food and drink to men for their refreshment, so that they might render

thanks to You; but upon us You have bestowed spiritual food and drink and life everlasting through Your Son. 4 For all things we render You thanks, because You are mighty; to You be glory forever. 5 Remember, O Lord, Your Church, deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Your love, and gather it from the four winds, sanctified for Your kingdom, which You have prepared for it; for Yours is the power and the glory forever. 6 Let grace come, and let this world pass away. "Hosanna to the God of David." If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen. 7 But allow 'prophets' to render thanks as they desire.

Chapter 14

1 And on the Lord's day, after you have come together, break bread, and offer the Eucharist, having first confessed your offences, so that your sacrifice may be pure. 2 But let no one who has a quarrel with his neighbour join you until he is reconciled, lest your sacrifice be defiled. 3 For it was said by the Lord: "In every place and time let there be offered to me a clean sacrifice; because I am the great King"; and also: "And my name is wonderful among the Gentiles."

As we can see in the texts, both in chapter 9 & 10, there were three units had been which comprised of: a thanksgiving over the cup, a thanksgiving over the bread and a petition for the Church. The prayers in chapter 9 are essentially thanksgiving for the revelation made known through Jesus Christ, and hence, an anamnesis of him, together with a petition for its fulfilment in the eschatological ingathering of the Church. Hence there is this



thirst among the scholars to find the earliest and unformatted form of a Eucharistic prayer in chapter 10 of the Didache' in spite of the absence of an institutional account. The Christian thanksgiving was seen as heir to the Jewish blessing. Therefore, in Christian circles, the Jewish prayers used for the meal have developed into something rather more substantial, both in length and content. Thus, we can observe in Didache', both in rite and practice, though still in a very elementary state, a harmonious unity between the prayer of thanksgiving and the reception of the Eucharistic bread. No one left the celebration of the Holy Eucharist without receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.

Preparation for the reception of Holy Communion was equally important in the early Church (1 Cor 11.27-32).

Let us continue this study in the next publication of the diocesan bulletin in the writings of St. Justin, the Martyr from the Church in Rome.

To be Continued...

Rev. Fr. B. Anton Sriyan
Procurator General



24 Italian youth with Fr. Matteo Malosto visited the Diocese of Ratnapura as pilgrims of Hope. They had a first hand experience of the daily life of our people since they lived among the families of St. Mary's parish, Kegalle for one week!



The Diocesan Media Committee was formed and held its first meeting at St. Therese's Church, Dehigahapitiya.



A Media workshop for the youth of Kegalle and Seethawaka was held at St. Mary's Church, Kegalle.



birthdays

OCTOBER

Rev. Fr. Roland Rodrigo
09th October

Rev. Fr. Umesh Malinda
21st October

Rev. Fr. Anton Sriyan
22nd October

Rev. Fr. Nirmal Fernando
25th October

Rev. Fr. Jude Amila
29th October

DECEMBER

Rev. Fr. Maria Udayan
09th December

Rev. Fr. Dudley Attanayake
10st December

Rev. Fr. Dileepa Nuwan
15nd December

Rev. Fr. Antreson Maria Joy
27th December



NOVEMBER

Rev. Fr. Romesh Palaniyandi
02nd November

Rev. Fr. Charles De Gaulle
04th November

Rev. Fr. Vincent CR
07th November

Rt. Rev. Dr. Anton Wyman
Croos
08th November

Rev. Fr. Noel Rowel
08th November

Rev. Fr. Bastian Koduthor
13th November

Rev. Fr. Anton Consalas
15th November

Rev. Fr. Tensin Perera
26th November

The first Animators' Training Program of the Holy Childhood was held at Buluthota under the guidance of Fr. Nirmal Fernando, Diocesan Director of PMS.



ආනිවර්ෂාරිඳි

DECEMBER

Rev. Fr. Gratian Hapuarachchi
15th December

Rev. Fr. Dudley Attanayake
21st December

Rev. Fr. Christopher Kurera
21st December



Rev. Fr. Emil Fernando
22nd December

Rev. Fr. Sibin
27th December

Rev. Fr. Dunstan Peter CR
30th December

Rev. Fr. Vincent CR
30th December



Dearly Departed.....

Rev. Fr. Ranjith Silva

10th December



**MAY THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED REST
IN PEACE !**

 **Holiday House**

Buluthota Vianney House

Surrounded by serene nature, a refreshing freezing climate, and bordering the lush Sinharaja plains

Our Facilities :

- 32 Bedrooms with attached Bathrooms
- Two Dormitories
- Spacious conference hall for meetings, seminars & retreats



0362232368 - Office
0777227959 - Fr Sriyan



KADAMUDUNA, BULUTHOTA

Edited & Published by

Fr. Dileepa Nuwan

Director, Social Communication Diocese of Ratnapura,
Bishop's House, Madola, Avissawella 10700.

Tel - +94 77 28 56 342 Email: www.mediaunit.ratnapuradiocese@gmail.com

