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MYSORE DIOCESAN BULLETIN

AUGUST - 2026

DIOCESE OF MYSORE

Shepherd's Voice

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

In a video message to the just concluded FABC General Assembly in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Holy Father Pope Leo XIV called on the Church in Asia, to be united in charity and build bridges throughout the continent, in order to be an ever greater sign of God's presence in their various countries. The Pope also reminded us that Jesus is the source of our communion not only with God but also with one another, and, as such he is the unique mediator between God and humanity (Jn 1:51). The Holy Father reminded the Assembly that in his Encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas, on safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence*, he wrote that "Christian solidarity finds its source in the mystery of Christ and emerges from our communion in the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist."

Therefore, the Pope calls us to be an ever greater sign of God's presence in our various countries, "to continue to promote a Eucharistic spirituality within your local Churches, that is, a spirituality of ecclesial unity grounded in the charity that flows from the gift of our Lord in the Eucharist. In this way, the bonds of communion within and between the local Churches will be strengthened and become an ever greater sign of God's presence in your various countries, which in turn will help you be bridge-builders together throughout Asia."

In a joyful and grateful response to the call of the universal Shepherd, the 12th Plenary Assembly of FABC concluded on July 26 with a solemn Eucharistic celebration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption in Jakarta, sending bishops and delegates back to their local Churches with a renewed commitment to synodality and bridge-building across Asia. The President of FABC, Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao of Goa, in his homily, called on the Church to build bridges between generations by bringing together the wisdom of the elderly and the creativity of young people. Every pastoral decision, he said, should be measured by whether it fosters communion, strengthens participation promotes mission, fosters peace, and serves the poor and the marginalized.

The Assembly's Message to the Peoples of Asia, calls the Church to deepen its synodal journey by becoming "bridges and bridge-builders" of dialogue, reconciliation, hope, and peace across the continent. The message underscored one of the Assembly's central themes: that the Church in Asia is called to foster dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual respect in societies marked by cultural and religious diversity, divergences and divisions.

Throughout the week, delegates repeatedly emphasized that synodality is not simply a method of governance but a way of being Church, rooted in listening, participation, and shared mission. As the Assembly came to a close, bishops and delegates departed Jakarta carrying a common commitment to strengthen communion among the Churches of Asia and to become

authentic bridge-builders of hope, peace, and reconciliation in their local communities. This is a shared vision for the future of the Church in Asia.

Across Asia, societies are struggling with war, political polarization, aggressive nationalism, religious extremism, crony capitalism, fake propaganda, fictitious facts, forced migration, environmental degradation, widening economic inequality, and the rapid transformation brought by artificial intelligence, digital communication, fractured families, declining trust in institutions, misinformation amplified through social media, and young people searching for meaning in an increasingly fragmented world.

These stark realities are invitations to renew the Church's missionary vocation. Migration, for example, is not only a humanitarian challenge but also a providential opportunity. Migrants, carry their faith across borders, becoming missionaries wherever they settle, while local Churches are invited to become places of welcome, accompaniment, and communion. Likewise, the rise of artificial intelligence and social media, despite their risks, is opening entirely new frontiers for evangelization, especially among younger generations.

Education is one of the Church's greatest gifts to Asia. Catholic schools, universities, healthcare institutions, charitable organizations, and development ministries are spaces where bridges are already being built every day—bringing together people of different cultures, religions, and social backgrounds through service rooted in the Gospel. In countries where Catholics remain a small minority, these ministries provide the Church's strongest and most credible witness.

However, if the Church is to build bridges in society, conversion must begin within the Church herself. We need a shift from clericalism to co-responsibility, from hierarchy-centered leadership to servant leadership, from exclusion to participation, and from speaking to listening. Greater involvement of lay faithful, women, young people, migrants, indigenous communities, and marginalized groups is an essential expression of synodality rather than merely an organizational reform. Seminaries and formation programmes must prepare future priests not only to administer institutions but also to accompany people, foster dialogue, and lead communities through discernment. Synodality cannot remain a theory discussed at assemblies; it must become the ordinary way of being Church, a Church in dialogue. Synodality is not simply a pastoral methodology. It is a spiritual conversion. The journey before the Church is a movement from maintenance to mission, from self-preservation to missionary outreach, from polarization to communion, and from individual leadership to shared responsibility among all the baptized.

Dialogue is of crucial importance in relations with governments, other Christian communities, followers of other religions, or people of goodwill. In a continent where Christians are minorities, bridge building requires humility, patient listening, intercultural friendship, and a willingness to collaborate for the common good. The Church needs to strengthen its prophetic voice in addressing issues such as peace building, environmental stewardship, migration, family life, mental health, digital ethics, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence. Rather than retreating from the world's complexities, the Church must accompany humanity with compassion while remaining firmly rooted in the Gospel. The future of the Church in Asia will not ultimately be shaped by strategies, structures, or even the richness of its discussions, but by its willingness to walk together in humble discernment, trusting that it is the Holy Spirit who continues to guide the Church's pilgrimage of communion, participation, and mission.

The Church in Asia must first recognize God's presence already at work among its peoples before seeking to proclaim the Gospel. The Church's synodal journey begins with the humility

to discover the “treasure” God has already planted in the diverse cultures and communities of Asia, by recognizing that the Kingdom of God already exists and that the Church’s mission is to discover and nurture God’s presence rather than presume to bring Him where He is absent. This perspective lies at the heart of synodality, calling the Church to listen attentively to the Holy Spirit, who speaks not only through Scripture and the sacraments but also through the cries of the poor, the wisdom of Indigenous peoples, the faith of families, the hopes of young people, the suffering of migrants, and the spiritual search of people of other religions. Asia is blessed with rich cultures, ancient spiritual traditions, and youthful populations while also confronting poverty, forced migration, armed conflict, political polarization, discrimination, and environmental degradation. These realities should not obscure God’s continuing presence but instead invite the Church to engage society with listening, dialogue, and humility.

We need to avoid attitudes that hinder the synodal journey, such as clericalism, excessive centralization, fear, rivalry, and the belief that one person or group possesses all the answers. This weakens communion and participation within the Church. Participation cannot flourish if decision-making remains closed, nor can communion grow if certain voices continue to be ignored.

I have dwelt at length on these topics, because everything found here applies to the socio-pastoral situation in our diocese. Therefore, we would greatly benefit if we would, both individually and in different groups, prayerfully reflect on these important themes and discern ways of being eloquent signs of God’s saving presence in this Diocese.

✠ **Francis Serrao, SJ**
Bishop of Mysore

EVENTS

ST JOHN MARY VIANNEY:

The feast of St John Vianney is celebrated on August 4th, the anniversary of his death. He is remembered as a model of holiness and dedication to the priesthood, with many priests looking to him for guidance and inspiration in their ministry. His legacy continues as he exemplifies true sanctity and devotion to God.

Saint John Vianney’s life serves as a reminder that with determination, faith, and trust in God, one can overcome any obstacle and fulfil one’s calling with great love and humility. A man with vision overcomes obstacles and performs deeds that seem impossible. He wanted to become a priest. But he had to overcome his meagre formal schooling, which inadequately prepared him for seminary studies. Due to his lack of education, he struggled with understanding theology and often faced difficulties preparing his homilies. Despite these challenges, John persevered and became a

priest who touched the hearts of many through his humble and authentic faith. May we all strive to follow in his footsteps and become holy instruments of God’s mercy and grace.

NATIONAL YOUTH DAY:

The Youth Commission of the Conference of Catholic Bishops’ of India (CCBI) is celebrating the second Sunday of August, as the National Youth Day. The day is celebrated by the youth in their parishes, dioceses and institutions and organize Eucharist, various charity, fundraising events and also pay visits to old age homes, orphanages and homes run by dedicated missionaries.

The celebration of the day contains ‘three great truths’: “God loves you; Christ is your Saviour; He is alive” (Christus Vivit, §130). In a world where young people experience persistent turbulence and isolation, these three truths will make them feel loved. The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI) 2026 youth-related focus was on the theme: “Faith and the Nation: The Church’s Witness to India’s Constitutional Vision”.

PRISON MINISTRY SUNDAY:

Prison Ministry Sunday is observed on 9 August 2026 by various Christian organizations, most notably Prison Ministry India (PMI). While dates can vary by denomination and region, the second Sunday of August is universally commemorated by PMI to align with the upcoming feast day of St. Maximilian Kolbe (August 14), the patron saint of prisoners and prison ministries. The theme and purpose of Prison Ministry Sunday is to humanize incarcerated individuals and mobilize local churches to serve. The foundational scripture for the day is Matthew 25:36:

“I was in prison and you visited me.” This commemoration of this day is to provide spiritual care, rehabilitation, and support for prisoners and their families. Prison ministry involves spending time, energy, and resources advocating for prisoners and ensuring a restorative experience through time served. Founded in 1976, Prison Fellowship has been working diligently with those affected by imprisonment in hopes of restoring their lives, families, and communities, “one transformed life at a time.”

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY:

International Youth Day 2026 is observed globally on August 12, under the official theme “Different Contexts, Common Aspirations”. The day highlights how young people face distinct local and national realities but share similar global goals regarding dignity, education, decent work, and a sustainable future. Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, this annual observance serves as a platform to amplify youth voices and address critical challenges such as unemployment, mental health, and civic engagement. It also aims to promote ways to engage them in becoming more actively involved in making positive contributions to their communities. The theme for International Youth Day is “Youth Advancing Multilateral Cooperation through Technology and Partnerships”.

INDEPENDENCE DAY:

The Independence Day of India, which is celebrated religiously throughout the Country on the 15th of August every year, holds tremendous ground in the list of national days, since it reminds us of the beginning of an era of deliverance from the clutches of British colonialism of more than 200 years. It was on 15th August 1947 that India was declared independent and the reins of control were handed over to the leaders of the Country. India's gaining of independence was a tryst with destiny, as the struggle for freedom witnessed the sacrifices of many freedom fighters, who laid down their lives on the line. It is a Day to remember the sacrifices made by our leaders to achieve it. Today India's Independence Day remains a powerful symbol of national pride, unity, and progress. It's a time to celebrate India's achievements, acknowledge challenges, and commit to building a brighter future for all its citizens. Let us celebrate this Independence Day with gratitude, pride, and renewed determination to build a stronger, more inclusive, and prosperous India for generations to come.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY:

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a foundational Christian doctrine stating that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was taken body and soul into heavenly glory at the end of her earthly life. Officially defined as a dogma of faith by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950, it is celebrated as a major solemnity across the globe. The Dogma tells us that Mary “having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.” The feast began to be celebrated in Rome in the middle of the 7th century.

Pope Pius was not declaring the belief in the Assumption as something new or novel. There is written evidence of the belief as early as the 4th century in text that covers several different languages and a fairly wide geographical dispersion. It was celebrated in the West under Pope Sergius I in the 8th century and Pope Leo IV then confirmed the feast as official.

WORLD SENIOR CITIZEN'S DAY:

World Senior Citizen's Day is celebrated on 21 August 2026. This global event honours the accomplishments, wisdom, and lifelong contributions of older adults while raising awareness about challenges like age-related health decline and elder abuse. The Core Purpose of this celebration is to appreciate the enrichment older generations bring to families and communities. This brings about global awareness to advocate for better elder healthcare, financial security, and social inclusion. It is a day to encourage people to show their respect and gratitude to the elderly, promoting their well-being and highlighting the importance of their role in society. The origins of World Senior Citizens Day can be traced back to 1988 when it was officially established by former US President Ronald Reagan with the objective to raise awareness about the issues affecting senior citizens, such as health care, elder abuse, and social isolation. Many organizations use this day to highlight the contributions of older adults and to provide resources and services that enhance their quality of life.

JUSTICE SUNDAY:

Social justice Sunday is observed every year on the last Sunday of August. Justice Sunday is an annual programme that connects participants with people on the frontlines of today's human rights movement. The day is heavily rooted in principles like the dignity of the human person, worker rights, and community solidarity. It traces its historical inspiration back to Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, which famously advocated for fair wages and labour rights. The celebration heightens awareness of the need for service and strengthening commitments to defend democracy and equality. We are aware that Justice, Love and Mercy are the essence of our Christian living. Our Social Principles call us to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as reconcilers of conflict. It is all encompassing theme of Justice that basically flows from the love of God for all humanity, and stems from our respect and love for ourselves – "Love your neighbour as yourself." (Mark 12:31)

NEW COUNCIL OF PRIESTS CONSTITUTED

The Diocese of Mysore has constituted a new Council of Priests on 18 July 2026.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the new team of the Council of Priests and pray that the Holy Spirit may guide and inspire them as they carry out this important responsibility. May their wisdom, commitment, and spirit of collaboration contribute to the pastoral growth, unity, and continued development of the Diocese of Mysore.

APPOINTMENTS

Rev. Msgr Anthappa M., has been appointed as the Public Relation Officer (PRO) of the Diocese of Mysore with effect from 01 August 2026.

Mr Gracian Rodrigues has been appointed as the Associate PRO of the Diocese of Mysore with effect from 01 August 2026.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. I am pleased to inform the clergy and the religious of the Diocese of Mysore that **Rev. Fr Christopher Xavier** has been incardinated into the Diocese of Mysore with effect from 25 July 2026, the Feast of St James the Apostle, in accordance with the norms of the Code of Canon Law.

Fr Christopher Xavier, formerly a priest of the Society of Jesus, has been received into the Diocese following the grant of the indult of departure from the Society of Jesus and the fulfilment of all the canonical requirements for incardination.

We warmly welcome Fr Christopher Xavier into the presbyterate of the Diocese of Mysore. May the Lord bless his priestly ministry abundantly, and may St James the Apostle obtain for him the grace to serve God's people with zeal, fidelity, and pastoral charity.

2. The CRI Mysore Unit is organizing the Feast of St John Mary Vianney on Tuesday, 04 August 2026 in the Indoor Stadium of St Philomena's College. The programme will begin with a talk on Magnifica Humanitas, the recent encyclical of Pope Leo, at 9.45 AM. This will be followed by the Holy Eucharist, felicitation of the Jubilarians, some recreational games and festive meals. Your presence is expected for the entire programme.

3. Commission for Youth

a) 1st Diocesan Youth Council Meeting: The 1st Diocesan Youth Council Meeting will be held on 1–2 August 2026 at the Catholic Centre, Mysuru, from Saturday 4:00 p.m. to Sunday 2:00 p.m. Parish Youth Representatives, Deanery Youth Teams and DEXCO Members will participate in this meeting. The programme is organized by the Mysore Diocese Youth Commission.

b) Indian National Youth Day – Kollegal Deanery: The Indian National Youth Day celebration for Kollegal Deanery will be held on 23 August 2026 at Our Lady of Good Health Church, Hanur, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Catholic youth of Kollegal Deanery will take part in the celebration. The programme is hosted by the Parish Priest, Religious and Parishioners.

4. Commission for Faith Formation (Catechism) & Commission for Vocation and Formation

a) UPAASANA (Sitting Next to the Divine): The UPAASANA programme will be held on 2 August 2026 at St. Anne's Convent, Siddapur, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Catholic students of Classes IX and X from North Kodagu and South Kodagu Deaneries will participate. The programme is hosted by the CSST Sisters.

b) The UPAASANA programme will be held on 9 August 2026 at St. Joseph's

School Hall, Hunsur, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Catholic students of Classes IX and X from Hunsur Deanery and St. Anthony's Basilica Deanery will participate. The programme is hosted by the UFS Sisters.

c) The UPAASANA programme will be held on 23 August 2026 at Carmel Convent, Mandya, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Catholic students of Classes IX and X from St. Joseph's Deanery, Mandya, will participate. The programme is hosted by the CSST Sisters.

d) Krupayana (A Journey of Grace) – Teachers' Catechetical Training Programme: The Krupayana Teachers' Catechetical Training Programme will be conducted by Rev. Fr Vijay Machado, National Director, CCBI Youth Commission.

On 17 August 2026, the programme will be held at St. Michael's School Hall, Madikeri, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Parish and School Catechism Teachers of St. Michael's (North Kodagu) and St. Anne's (South Kodagu) Deaneries will participate.

e) On 18 August 2026, the programme will be held at the H.D. Kote Church Open Hall, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Parish and School Catechism Teachers of Hunsur, St. Anthony's Basilica and St. Joseph's (Mandya) Deaneries will participate.

f) On 20 August 2026, the programme will be held at the Catholic Centre Hall, Mysuru, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Parish and School Catechism Teachers of St. Philomena's North, St. Theresa's South and St. Joseph's (Mandya) Deaneries will participate.

g) On 21 August 2026, the programme will be held at St. Francis Church Hall, Kollegal, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Parish and School Catechism Teachers of Assisi (Kollegal) and St. Paul's (Chamarajanagar) Deaneries will participate.

5. Commission for Prison Ministry

a) Prison Ministry Sunday: Prison Ministry Sunday will be observed on 9 August 2026 in all the parishes, religious houses and Catholic institutions of the Diocese of Mysore. Special prayers will be offered for prisoners, their families and those engaged in prison ministry. A second collection will be taken up to support this ministry. The Prison Ministry collection should be sent to the Bishop's House.

CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF THE DEVOTION TO ST. PHILOMENA AT ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL : A CENTURY OF FAITH, HERITAGE, AND DEVOTION



St. Philomena's Shrine is more than a magnificent church; it is an enduring symbol of Mysuru's rich spiritual and cultural heritage. Its story is intertwined with the legacy of the Wadiyar dynasty, the dedication of French missionaries, the vision of Catholic pioneers, and the unwavering faith of generations of believers. As the Cathedral commemorates the centenary of the devotion to St. Philomena in 2026, it celebrates one hundred years of faith, devotion, and hope.

Historical records reveal that the sacred relic of St. Philomena reached Mysore in 1926 through the efforts of Sir T. Thumboo Chetty, the Huzur Secretary to Maharaja Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV. The relic was obtained from Archbishop Peter Pisani, the

Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies, and entrusted to Fr. Cochet for enshrinement in the Cathedral. A beautifully crafted statue of St. Philomena, specially brought from France, was installed alongside the relic, while the crypt became the spiritual heart of the Cathedral—a sacred space where countless pilgrims have gathered in prayer and sought the saint's intercession.

For the past century, devotees from across Karnataka and beyond have visited the Cathedral/Shrine with prayers of thanksgiving, healing, and hope. The sacred relic has inspired generations of faithful, making St. Philomena's Shrine one of South India's most cherished pilgrimage centres. Beyond its striking Neo-Gothic architecture, soaring spires, and magnificent stained-glass windows, the Cathedral remains above all a living house of prayer where people of every background are welcomed with faith and compassion.

The centenary celebration is far more than the remembrance of a historical event. It is a thanksgiving for God's abundant blessings received through the intercession of St. Philomena and an opportunity to honour the contributions of the Wadiyar rulers, missionaries, bishops, priests, religious, and lay faithful who have shaped the Cathedral's remarkable legacy. Through solemn liturgical celebrations, pilgrimages, cultural programmes, and charitable initiatives, the faithful renew their commitment to the Gospel values of love, service, unity, and hope.

As St. Philomena's devotion enters its second century, it continues to stand as a beacon of faith for Mysuru and beyond. The sacred relic preserved within its crypt remains a source of spiritual strength, reminding every pilgrim that faith transcends time. The Cathedral's story is one of enduring devotion, living heritage, and unwavering hope—a legacy that continues to inspire all who enter its sacred doors. On this Occasion the Cathedral celebrates the centenary of the devotion to St. Philomena through solemn Eucharist Celebration

presided over by Most Rev. Dr Francis Serrao, Bishop of Mysore on 11 August 2026 at 6 pm. All the Priests and Religious of the Diocese are cordially invited by Fr. Alex Prashanth Sequeira, the Rector of St. Joseph's Cathedral and St. Philomena's Shrine.

BEYOND THE SHORES

Mr G. Mariyappa, the elder brother of Rev. Fr G. Joseph, passed away on 08 July 2026. His funeral was held on 09 July 2026 at Sacred Heart Church, Naganahalli.

Rev. Sr Pascaline Joseph, SCB, of St Charles Convent, Nanjangud, passed away on 21 July 2026. Her Funeral was held on 22.07.2026 at St Charles Convent Chapel Bengaluru.

Rev. Sr Canute, B.S., of Bethany Convent, Madikeri, passed away on 24 July 2026 in Bengaluru. Her funeral was held on 25 July 2026 at Jyothi Nilaya, Bengaluru.

The Diocese of Mysore expresses its heartfelt condolences to Rev. Fr G. Joseph and his bereaved family, and to the Superior and the members of Bethany Convent, Madikeri and St Charles Convent, Nanjangud, assuring them of our prayerful support during this time of grief and loss.

May the souls of the departed rest in eternal peace and enjoy the everlasting bliss of heaven.

BIRTHDAYS OF BISHOP & PRIESTS IN THE MONTH OF AUGUST

Rev. Fr. Arokia Raj Leonard	05-08-1988
Rev. Fr. George Martiz	06-08-1954
Rev. Fr. Vincent Madalai Muthu	10-08-1958
Rev. Fr. Xavier M.	10-08-1963
Rev. Fr. Belavendra Sagayaraj	10-08-1971
Rev. Fr. Raymond	14-08-1976
Most Rev. Dr Francis Serrao SJ	15-08-1959
Rev. Fr. Vincent Fernandes	19-08-1950
Rev. Fr. Richard Britto	20-08-1971
Rev. Fr. Bernard Prakash Barnis	20-08-1972
Rev. Fr. Michael Augustine Pro	21-08-1965
Rev. Fr. Arockia Justin MC	21-08-1974
Rev. Fr. Anthony Swamy R.	26-08-1960
Rev. Fr. Abhilash G.	26-08-1991
Rev. Fr. Joseph N.T.	28-08-1954
Rev. Fr. Marian Pinto	30-08-1946
Rev. Fr. John Sequeira	30-08-1972



SANMAARGI - Diocesan Bishop's House

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