



Simla Chandigarh Diocese

Bishop's House, P.O. Box No: 709, Sector 19-A Chandigarh - 160 019, INDIA.

† Ignatius L. Mascarenhas
Bishop of Simla-Chandigarh

TEL: 0172-2775777, 2773777
FAX: 0172-2781630
EMAIL: bpignatius@gmail.com

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ADVENT PASTORAL LETTER - 2024

To all the Priests, Religious and Laity in the Diocese of Simla-Chandigarh

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

As the **Advent** season dawns, we are invited to journey with the Prophet Jeremiah, who proclaimed, "Behold, the days are coming...I will fulfill the promise that I made to the house of Israel" (Jer 33:14). This promise, a testament to God's boundless love, finds its ultimate fulfillment in the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we concluded the liturgical year 2024 and embark on the **Ordinary Year of Jubilee 2025**, we give thanks to God for the countless blessings bestowed upon us. May the Lord continue to illuminate our lives and guide our steps.

As we approach **Christmas**, let us embrace this sacred season with renewed hope and joy. Despite the challenges and uncertainties of our world, we can find solace in the knowledge that our God walks with us. Let us pray for the coming of His Kingdom and eagerly await the redemption He promises.

The **Advent wreath**, with its symbolic candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, reminds us of our journey towards the Light of the world, Jesus Christ. Pope Francis often speaks of hope, urging us to place our trust in the Lord and he officially declared 2025 a Year of Jubilee with the theme, "**Pilgrims of Hope**." He said in his document titled "*Spes Non Confundit*," meaning, "**Hope Does Not Disappoint**" (Romans 5:5), that "Hope is a joyful witness of the Gospel". The Jubilee Year will begin with the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve 2024. As we prepare for the Jubilee Year, let us heed his call to "place all our hope in the Lord" (Ps 25:4-14) for Hope does not disappoint us."

We will officially inaugurate the **Jubilee Year 2025 on December 29, 2024**, the **Feast of the Holy Family**, with a Solemn Eucharistic celebration at the Christ the King Cathedral at 10:30 am. I encourage you to announce this in your respective parishes and celebrate the Sunday liturgy with renewed fervor. Let us conclude each Mass with the **Jubilee Prayer**. I also urge each deanery and diocesan commissions to organize various programs, events, and competitions to mark this special Jubilee Year 2025.

In light of the Synodal Consolidated Synthesis, published by the CCBI entitled "**Pastoral Plan: Journeying Towards a Synodal Mission 2033**", let us strive to build hope and transform lives. As we journey towards a Synodal Missionary Church, let us reflect on the meaning of discipleship and the call to serve our neighbors. As per the guidelines of the CCBI (Conference of



Catholic Bishops of India), we launched this Pastoral Plan on the Solemnity of Christ the King on 24th November 2024 at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist.

As you prepare for Christmas, may you be inspired also by the example of John the Baptist. Let us rekindle the flame of our baptism and extend compassion and care to those in need.

I thank you for your unwavering support and dedication. May this **Christmas** season bring you joy, peace, and the love of Christ. And may we be **Pilgrims of Hope in the New Year 2025!**

Given on November 26, 2024 on the Feast of Blessed James Alberione at Bishop's House, Chandigarh.

This Advent Pastoral Letter is to be read out or its content to be explained in Hindi or Punjabi in all the Churches on the First (01.12.2024) or Second Sunday (08.12.2024) of Advent.

With all my good wishes.

Yours sincerely in Christ

+Ignatius L. Mascarenhas
Bishop of Simla-Chandigarh



N.B:

1. Civic Christmas Get Together and the Inauguration of the Annual Exhibition at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Chandigarh will be on December 19 (Thursday), 2024 at 06:00 pm.
2. Deanery Christmas Get together to be organized in each Deanery after Christmas.