

Ubi Deus, Ibi Spes  
જ્યાં પ્રભુ, ત્યાં આશા  
Is 40:31; Rom 8:5



THE BARODA DIOCESE NEWSLETTER



December 25 - January 26

For Private Circulation Only

www.dioceseofbaroda.org

Pilgrims of Hope  
2025



SAINT OF THE MONTH

ST STEPHEN

December 26

In the martyrdom of Stephen is the same confrontation between good and evil, between hatred and forgiveness, between meekness and violence, which culminated in the Cross of Christ.



Thus, the remembrance of the first martyr immediately dispels a false image of Christmas: the fairytale, sugarcoated image, which is not in the Gospel! The liturgy brings us back to the authentic meaning of the Incarnation, by linking Bethlehem to Calvary and by reminding us that the divine salvation involved the battle against sin, it passes through the narrow door of the Cross. Following the Gospel is certainly a demanding but beautiful, very beautiful journey, and those who follow it with faithfulness and courage receive the reward promised by the Lord to men and women of good will. As the angels sang on Christmas Day: "Peace! Peace!" (Pope Francis)

ઉતારામાં તેમને માટે જગ્યા નહોતી (Lk2:7)

+Seby

This Christmas, the little turn of phrase in Luke 2:7, "there was no place for them in the inn" churns in my minds. And yet, it is perhaps the most mundane experience of our lives as individuals and as a collective - feeling spurned, feeling left out, feeling left in the lurch.

I was in the United States this year and this concept of "no place" became even more painful for me. The displacement of people (migrants) from their own lands and the brutal displacement from their places of refuge is a fact of life, that somehow has become so mundane that we now take it for granted. Each country has its own ways of making "No place in the Inn, SIR" is painful but it now extends to even picking them out of the inn.

Exegetes explain that the word 'kataluma' (Greek) does not really mean a hotel, but a guest room in the house. All the guest rooms were full. This brings the story even closer to life. One does not have to think of the migrants or street people. The experience becomes even more routine and poignant. Sometimes there is 'no place or space' perhaps even in families for each other. It even happens in our parish houses and in our religious houses.

Conversely Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also". Well that sounds like the parousia which we all await. But more consoling, we read in the Gospel of the day a few days ago: *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* (Mt 11:28)

God is magnanimous. There are no walls, no barriers, no passports. He breaks the walls of heaven and finds place among us, albeit in a stable, while there was no place in the inn!

More than that, he chooses to dwell in our hearts. He says: *Abide in Me, and I will abide in you.* And further, *Without me you can do nothing.*

By dwelling in us, the greatest gift he gives us to enable us to open our hearts, to make place for each other, for love stretches space and time. Christmas is when God shows us how. If there is no place in the inn or in the guest house, he makes himself comfortable with us in the stable. Even if we are unworthy, he dwells in a corner of our hearts to enable us to let others have a corner in our own hearts. Christmas is the special time to experience this.

It is not when we have time, that we give time to others but we make time for others even when we are tied up; it is not because we have abundance that we share space with others, but we share despite the little we have. Time and space is limited. You can only share it, or limit others from it. The Eternal came to share in our limitedness to show that even the limited can be shared.

I was in Rome but I did not have an opportunity to meet Pope Leo. But I did visit his modest house (image on pg. 6) in the poorer outskirts of Chicago. I was touched. It is a small modest house of perhaps a lower middle class person. I knew instinctively that this was a man who would know how to share space with others, especially the poor, having been brought up in an atmosphere that nurtured care and sharing.

In a world that is increasingly turning a blind eye to the poor and the abandoned, we have a Pope who reaches out with unassuming charm. May God make place in your Heart at Christmas.

**PRAYER INTENTIONS OF THE POPE**

**JANUARY**

**For Prayer With The Word Of God**

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

**FEBRUARY**

**For Children With Incurable Diseases**

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

# OFFICIAL DEC 2025- JAN 2026

## COMMITMENTS OF THE BISHOP DECEMBER 2025- JANUARY 2026

Dec 03	Inauguration of St. Francis Xavier Chapel, Relwa
Dec 05	Silver Jubilee Celebration, Convent of Jesus and Mary, Halol
Dec 06	Golden Jubilee, Deep Sharan High School Ahwa
Dec 08	Feast, Religious of Jesus and Mary, Akota
Dec 11-15	Western Region Bishop Meeting and Western Region Catholic Council Meeting, Mumbai
Dec 16-19	Conference in Goa
Dec 20	Silver Jubilee Celebration, Bardipada
Dec 20	Gathering with Other Religions at Christmas in City parishes of Baroda, Surat, Bharuch, Valsad, Vapi, Bilimora and Navsari
Dec 25	Christmas Celebration. Midnight Mass in Rosary Cathedral. Morning Masses in various churches of Baroda
Dec 27	Solemn closing of the jubilee in the diocese of Baroda at Zankhvav. Mass at 11.00 a.m. Representatives of all parishes are invited
Dec 28	Feast celebration in Unai
Dec 29	Ordination of Deacon Raman SJ at Shanggahan
Dec 31	Midnight Mass
Jan 3	Episcopal Ordination – Stephen Fernandes in Mumbai
Jan 4	Confirmation in Surat
Jan 5	Vadodara Deanery Christmas Gathering
Jan 11	Celebration of Health Collaborators in the Diocese of Baroda
Jan 14	PPC Convocation
Jan 16	Ecumenical Meets in City Parishes of Baroda, Surat, Bharuch, Valsad, Vapi, Bilimor and Navsari
Jan 17	Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Elect Simon Almeida, Pune
Jan 18	Confirmation in Zaroli
Jan 19	Ongoing formation for Priests
Jan 24	Jubilee of Fr. Duarte at Gothada
Jan 25	Confirmation in Umarpada
Jan 26	Our Lady of the Forsaken, Vadodara
Jan 27	Inauguration of Chapel in Dediapada
Jan 29	Deanery Meetings II in all Deaneries
Jan 31	Golden Jubilee, Don Bosco Chotaudepur.

### COLLECTION December 7, 2025

#### COMMUNIO INDIA

Please send your collections (Cheques) in favour  
"Dakshin Gujarat Seva Kendra",  
Bank: Indian Overseas Bank,  
A/C no: 019501000011894,  
IFSC: IOBA0000195, Branch: Alkapuri, Baroda.

### APPOINTMENTS

- Fr. Robert Raja Shekhar SJ Assistant to the parish priest at NANI SINGLOTI
- Fr. Xavier Arockiam SJ Assistant to the parish priest of CATHOLIC CHURCH, ZANKHVAV

## PLEASE PRAY

### BIRTHDAYS

21-12-1963	Fr. Randive Francis
04-01-1963	Fr. Machado Robert
05-01-1975	Fr. Ravi Kumar
05-01-1982	Fr. Ohariya Anand

### DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

21-12-2011	Bp. Francis Braganza
15-01-2019	Fr. Uttam Dodi
19-01-1986	Bp. Ignatius D'Souza


### ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES


20-12-1969	Fr. Gonsalves Albert
21-12-2013	Fr. Valerian Fargose
23-12-1995	Fr. Carvalho William
28-12-1997	Bp. Godfrey D'Rozario
19-01-2021	Fr. Baraik Jaychand
27-01-2001	Fr. Fernandes Duarte
30-01-2016	Fr. Jesu Raj
31-01-1998	Fr. Patel Julius


**JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE  
HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS  
OF THE BARODA DIOCESE**


**Save the Date**      **Date: January 11, 2026**  
**Time: 10.00 AM**  
**Venue: Bishop's House, Vadodara**


The Diocese of Baroda joyfully announces  
the Jubilee of Health Care Professionals, a  
special day of gratitude and blessing for  
all who serve in the healing ministry.


  
Patient Care


  
Surgery


  
Medicine

  
Medical Research

  
Diagnostics

  
Dentistry

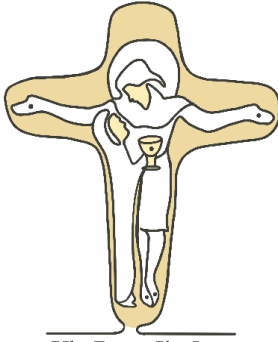
  
Pharmacy

  
Community Health

We warmly invite every health care  
professional from across the diocese –  
Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, Lab  
Technicians, Paramedics and all allied  
medical staff, both religious and lay – to  
come together and take part in this  
meaningful celebration.

👉 All are requested to participate actively  
👉 Kindly share this information within your parish  
and healthcare community

- Health Commission, Baroda Diocese -



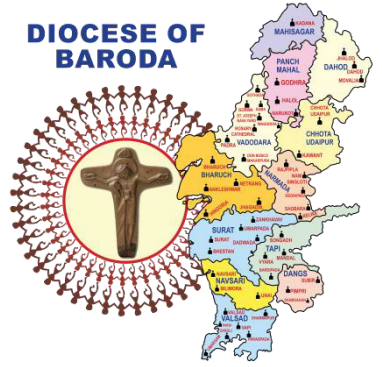
Ubi Deus, Ibi Spes  
જ્યાં પ્રભુ, ત્યાં આશા

## DIOCESE OF BARODA

Bishop's House, 71 Alkapuri Society  
VADODARA 390 007  
Gujarat, INDIA

Mob: 91041 70802 Email: [barodaapostolic@gmail.com](mailto:barodaapostolic@gmail.com)

Website: [dioceseofbaroda.org](http://dioceseofbaroda.org)



By Email only, No Hard Copy

No. 200/2025/2003

Date: 01.11.2025

### CONCLUSION OF THE JUBILEE YEAR 2025

*The programme was agreed upon at the meeting of Deans*

1. As Scheduled in our Annual Planner (after discussion in the Priest Council), we shall close the Jubilee Year on December 14 in each Parish of the Diocese. I request each parish to organise it in the best way possible.
2. As scheduled by the Holy See, Each Diocese closes the Jubilee Year in each Diocese on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> December. However we agreed to schedule it on December 27<sup>th</sup> for the convenience of the Diocese. (The Pope will close the Jubilee Year for the Universal Church in Rome on January 6.)

#### THE PROGRAMME FOR THE CLOSING OF THE JUBILEE IN OUR DIOCESE IS AS FOLLOWS.

**DATE** : Saturday, 27th December,

**PLACE** : Isunath Church, Zankhvav

#### **PARTICIPANTS :**

1. **COMPULSORY:** (1) Parish Priest, (2) Vice President of PPC, (3) Women Group President, (4) Youth President, (4) One Sister and (5) one child
2. As many parishioners of Zankhvav as possible.
3. As many sisters and fathers as possible from each parish. Let us all join.
- 4, 5 persons given above in No 1 are calculated. **PARISH PRIESTS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO CONVEY YOUR NUMBER OF FATHERS AND SISTERS TO FR. MALCOLM FERNANDES (WHATSAPP PHONE 94275 90854. PLEASE INFORM OR CLARIFY IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES).** We will convey to Fr Manoj, our host and organiser, the exact number.

#### **PREPARATION FROM PARISHES**

1. Each Parish brings its Jubilee cross. The PPC VP, Woman president, Youth President, A sister and a child will carry it at the Entrance procession.
2. The Child will come forward at the end to receive a symbolic plant from the Bishop.

#### **SCHEDULE**

9.30 a.m onwards . Arrival and Breakfast

10.30 a.m Entrance procession people are ready at their places as noted above.

11.00 am -- Mass begins

1.00 p.m. – Lunch for all

Let us all join in as one community to conclude this Jubilee Year which began under Pope Francis and ends under Pope Leo. *Spes non confundit.*

United in prayer, IN Christ,

+ Sebastião Mascarenhas sfx

✘ Sebastião Mascarenhas, sfx  
Bishop of Baroda



**CONVOCAÇÃO DE TODOS OS MEMBROS DO CONSELHO PAROQUIAL DE TODAS AS PARÓQUIAS/ESTÁGIOS DE MISSÃO DA DIOCESE DE BARODA.**

**DATE:** January 14, 2026 (Holiday – Makar Sakranti)

**TIME & PLACE:** 9 a.m to 5.30 p.m at JHAGADIA

**PARTICIPANTS:** All members of the PPC (lay, religious and clergy **as in the PPC statutes.**) We also request as many sisters, brothers and fathers to participate. **Please see that we get ALL.**

**PURPOSE & METHOD:**

1. To bring the leadership of the whole diocese together and feel the sense of unity as one communion.
2. To explore the meaning **ALL TOGETHER** of **Servant Leadership** and decision making in the Church: to reflect **TOGETHER** about (1) the meaning of **sensus fidei**, (2) discernment and deciding in the Church, (3) our self giving attitude based on the two main thrusts: **To Be Holy** and to **Witness**, (4) application in the Church of Baroda.
3. To interact with the various parts of our diocese who really do not know one another from Panchmahal to Dangs – a onetime experience, especially for the people of the remote areas. It would create a sense of Hope in being together. We make ourselves aware of our larger communion with the Diocese and the Universal Church.
4. We shall have two special presentations on the No 2 above; we shall discuss the matter in groups. Our Eucharist will be centred around the theme.

**TITLE AND THEME VERSE:** शून्यवत्

હું તો ઈશ્વરની દાસી છું. તારી વાણી મારી વિશે સાચી પડો "

Behold, I am the servant<sup>al</sup> of the Lord;

let it be to me according to your word." (Lk 1:38)

**LOGISTICS:**

1. **For better coordination we need the names of the PPC members from each Parish Priest by December 15, 2025 to the Respective Deans. Fr. William Carvalho will coordinate**
2. A detailed program will be drafted as we reflect further. However *tentatively* we keep in mind that we begin at 9 a.m and end at 5.30 p.m. for your planning

**SPECIAL FELICITATION:**

**APPRECIATING Lay Persons**

1. From Each Parish, we shall honour one lay man and one woman for their service towards faith formation and for service in the Church.
2. **Each Parish Priest, with a due process of discernment with the PPC, sends the names to their Deans with a photograph and a brief description of the work. Older people are given priority. Please send the names to your Deans by December 15<sup>th</sup>.**
3. We shall make this an annual feature in the diocese; others will also be honoured year by year.

**Appreciating Priests and Nuns**

We shall honour our senior priests and nuns also on this day. The best would be a basic age criteria for this purpose.

**Broad Program**

9.45 a.m.	Introductions
10.00 a.m	Welcome and explaining the Theme - Bp. Sebastiao Mascarenhas\
10.15 a.m	Key Theme 1 – Fr. Simon Thomas sj
11.00 a.m	Key Reflection 2 – Fr. Vinay Macwan sj
12.15 a.m	Eucharist (in Hindi) – Presided over by Cardinal Oswald Gracias
1.45. p.m.	Lunch
2.45. p.m	Group Discussions
4.00 p.m	Felicitation of Senior Missionaries and Senior Lay Persons
5.00 p.m	Farewell with Eucharistic Blessing

Fr. William Carvalho, Director, Laity Commission

# DIOCESE OF BARODA – THE BIBLE COMMISSION

## BIBLE QUIZ 2025- 2026

**Based on the Four Gospels** (*Participants are expected to study: Matthew chapter 1-3, Luke Chapter 1-3, John chapter 1*)

**Date:** 14th January 2026

**Venue:** Zagadiya

**Organized by:** The Bible Commission, Diocese of Baroda

---

### I. PARTICIPATION ELIGIBILITY

1. **Target Group:** Students of **Standard 8 and 9 only**.
  2. **Important Dates:** Quiz questions will be sent to each parish by November 30, 2025. The last date for submission of Names to the commission from each Parish December 1, 2025. **You may send the names on following Whats App No: 06355973933** or email on: [parmarm3@gmail.com](mailto:parmarm3@gmail.com)
  3. **Parish-Based Teams:** Each team must represent a **parish**, not a school or external institution.
    - o Exception: A student studying in a boarding school located in a parish can represent that parish.
  4. **Team Composition:**
    - o One team per parish.
    - o **4 members per team** (preferably **2 boys + 2 girls**, all Christians/Catholics).
- 

### II. DEANERY STRUCTURE AND PARTICIPATION

Total Deaneries: **6 groups**, as follows:

1. **Group 1:** Bharuch + Dangs (Clubbed)
  2. **Group 2:** Narmada
  3. **Group 3:** Panchmahal
  4. **Group 4:** Surat
  5. **Group 5:** Tapi
  6. **Group 6:** Vadodara
- 

### III. QUIZ STRUCTURE

#### Round 1: Deanery-Level Rounds

- **Time:** Morning Hours (2 Hours)
- **Venue:** To be held at selected Class rooms within each deanery group.
- **Quiz Rounds:**
  - a) **Simple General Round**
  - b) **Quit or Play Round**
  - c) **Rapid Fire Round** (10 questions per team)
  - d) **Bonus Round**
  - e) **Unknown Round** based on the Gospel texts given
- **Advancement Criteria:**
  - o **Top 3 parish teams** from each deanery will qualify for the Final Round.

---

## Round 2: Final Diocesan Round

- **Time:** Post Lunch on the same day
- **Venue:** Zagadiya
- **Participants:**
  - **18 parish teams** (Top 3 from each of the 6 deanery groups)
  - **Total Participants:** 18 teams × 4 = **72 students**
- **Quiz Rounds:**
  - a) **Simple General Round**
  - b) **Seen Round** (Based on pre-announced Gospel passages)
  - c) **Quit or Play Round**
  - d) **Rapid Fire Round** (10 questions per team)
  - e) **Bonus Round**
  - f) **Unknown Round based on the Gospel texts given**

---

## IV. RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. **Question Scope:** Only from the three **Gospels** – Matthew, Luke, and John. (as per the given chapters)
2. **One Team Per Parish:** No multiple teams from the same parish.
3. **Substitution Rule:** No substitutions allowed once the quiz begins unless in case of illness (to be judged by organizers).
4. **Conduct:** Christian behaviour and sportsmanship must be maintained. Any misconduct may result in disqualification.
5. **Disputes:** The decision of the Quiz Master and Bible Commission will be **final and binding**.
6. **Punctuality:** All teams must report **30 minutes before the scheduled time** of the quiz. Late arrivals may forfeit participation.
7. **Material:** Only the Bibles will be allowed and no notes, or mobile phones are allowed during the quiz.
8. **Attire:** Participants should come in **neat and modest attire**.
9. **Language:** The quiz will be conducted in **Gujarati**.
10. **Awards:** Certificates and prizes will be awarded to the **top 3 teams** in the Final Round and all the participants will receive the participation certificate.

For any clarifications or queries, plz feel free to contact Fr Mayank Parmar sdb on 06355973933 or Bishop Seby the Bishop of Baroda Diocese.

## BISHOP SEBY AT THE ANCESTRAL HOUSE OF THE POPE IN CHICAGO



# FAITH ENRICHING ENCOUNTER OF RELWA MISSION

As the part of the Jubilee year 70 Catholics faithful went for a Pilgrimage to Kerala. They visited St. Alphonse Church and St. Chavara pilgrim centre. Second group of people had a pilgrimage to Bardipada, the Christ Rock of Salvation Church.

The pilgrimage was a profound encounter with faith, where each step became a prayer and each moment a blessing. Through shared journeys and sacred sites, pilgrims discovered the beauty of community and the strength of spiritual renewal. Pilgrimage experiences opened hearts to gratitude, humility, and a renewed commitment to



walk in the light of Christ. Every encounter along the way became a testimony of faith, hope, and love lived in action.

## DOLCY SYLVESTER SIMON FROM OUR DIOCESE PARTICIPATED IN ASIAN CONFERENCE AS ONE OF THE DELEGATES FROM CCBI

It was a pleasure and a blessing to be selected for The Great Pilgrimage of Hope 2025 held from 27th to 30th November 2025 in Penang, Malaysia. The theme being "Journeying together as people of Asia ... and they went a different way" (Mt 2: 12). An initiative jointly organised and hosted by the Federation of Asian Bishop' conference (FABC) - OE and the Catholic Diocese of Penang, Malaysia. In this Jubilee Year of Hope 2025 the idea was to come together from the Asian Continent & journey together in Synodality as one Global Catholic Church of Asia.

The participants were 773 delegates from 29 countries, including Cardinals, Archbishops, 104 Bishops, 155 Priests, 9 Deacons, 74 Nuns, and 422 lay leaders. Time for spiritual renewal, prayers, participation, fraternity and mission with discernment and mutual listening inspired by the Holy Spirit.

It had a curated and an engaging agenda that provided excellent opportunities for mutual knowledge sharing and collaboration. The gathering was a sacred moment to unite in prayers, dialogues, and mission reflecting on the profound theme of hope that bonded us as a global Asian Catholic Community. The sessions were engulfed through prayers and shared aspirations while collectively requesting Gods presence and action in Asia's diverse, cultures and traditions. The conference was almost sowing the seeds of hope that would blossom for generation to come.

Throughout the day impact sessions explored different dimensions of church's mission in Asia



Topics such as Relevance of digital media and artificial intelligence in evangelization, How Christians can live their faith in pluralistic communities, Christians ideas of peace, reconciliation and resilience in Asia's Multi -religious context were an intellectual treat. The delegates were reminded that Jesus walks today with the migrants, the poor, the young, indigenous communities, and families struggling with daily challenges.

Participating in the conference & hearing the challenges faced by other nations was an eye opener, this has strengthen my commitment to work with more courage, renewed zeal and compassion while I serve the community. The Conference endorses that when people walk together hope & trust grows, and dialogues deepen and the gospel finds space to take roots.

# ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE 2025

## 4-DAY CONFERENCE HELD FOR RECENTLY 'CONFIRMED' STUDENTS OF 8 PARISHES

The newly confirmed youth from eight parishes, together with priests, 18 religious sisters, and Bishop Sebastiao Mascarenhas SFX, gathered at Dediapada Parish on 27 October for a four day conference.

A four-day residential conference was recently held for those who had received the Sacrament of Confirmation. The event aimed to deepen the faith of participants through intensive spiritual formation, communal prayer, and practical life skills sessions, all guided by the clergy and religious present as animators and Fr. Mayank SDB, Fr. Dalsukh, Fr. Joseph, Mr. Shantu, Mrs. Snehlata and Mr. Roman Bhatiya.

### DAILY STRUCTURE AND KEY ACTIVITIES

The structure of the conference provided a balanced approach to spiritual nourishment and personal development:

- Daily Holy Eucharist: Each of day began with the Holy Eucharist (Mass). A total of 17 priests celebrated the Masses in various groups along with His Lordship Bishop Sebastiao Mascarenhas SFX. Each Mass included a detailed explanation of the parts of the Eucharist, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Mass.
- Spiritual Conversation: Participants were instructed in the method of "spiritual conversation" by Fr. William. Themes for spiritual conversation included: Navigating Relationships, Faith and Social Media, Understanding the Bible, The Role of the Church in My Life.
- Practical Life Sessions: Recognizing the challenges faced by youth, sessions were included on stress management and career guidance.
- One-on-One Counselling: A highly impactful addition this year was dedicated one-to-one sessions with specific counselors; Fr. Issac, Fr. Jesu, Fr. Rakesh Sr. Sarika FDCC, Sr. Vasanta CM and Sr. Indira CM; which were collectively praised by participants as very impressive and beneficial for personal reflection.
- Evening Reflection & Adoration: Every evening concluded with reflective sessions followed by Eucharistic Adoration. This time allowed participants to recollect and internalize the reflections and lessons from throughout the day.
- Recreation: Each day ended with energetic recreation activities, building fellowship and a joyful community spirit.



# ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE 2025

The final day featured a significant spiritual activity: a walking pilgrimage to the shrine of Korvi. Participants walked in groups, praying the Rosary collectively as they journeyed, a fitting conclusion to the intensive four days of formation. Each participant was gifted a Holy Bible and a spiritual book written by His Grace Archbishop Thomas Macwan.

His Lordship Bishop Sebastiao Mascarenhas SFX addressed the participants, appealing to them to “grow in faith, faith in Jesus, and believe that he lives in us.” His message served as a powerful send-off for the newly confirmed as they return to their parishes.

The Core Committee earnestly requests all parish priests within the diocese to encourage eligible candidates who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation to register and send them for the next session of the Round Table Conference 2026.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND FUTURE APPEAL

The Core Committee extends heartfelt gratitude to all who made this enriching experience possible:

- Bishop Sebastiao Mascarenhas SFX: Special thanks to His Lordship for his constant presence, guidance, and assistance throughout the four days.
- Priests and Nuns: A sincere thank you to all the priests and religious sisters who served as dedicated animators, playing pivotal roles in guiding the youth.
- Host Parish: Immense gratitude is offered to the Parish Priest of Dediapada and his entire community for graciously hosting the event.
- Accommodations: We thank the Sisters from Dediapada for accommodating participants and tirelessly assisting in all activities.

Overall, the conference was an enriching experience for all attendees.



# AHWA VEDRUNA DEEP DARSHAN SCHOOL CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Five daring Vedruna sisters took up the challenging mission at Ahwa in the Dangas. 50 years later, The school has proved to be a prime catalyst for social transformation in this tribal area. After a Thanksgiving eucharist in the morning, a crowd of around 3000 parents and ex students participated joyfully in a really excellent cultural program in the presence of Sr Anamma, one of the pioneers of 1975, Sr Daisy the Provincial and Bp. Seby.



## BARDIPADA PASTORAL VISIT





Baroda Deanary Youth Meet



Baroda Deanary Youth Meet



Rosary Youth



PPC Training



Rosary Deanary PPC Election



Children Meet at Rosary



Women's Day

# THE DEANERY LEVEL YOUTH ORIENTATION PROGRAM

The Deanery Level Youth Orientation Program was held on Sunday, 31st August 2025, at the Netrang Animation Centre. The program was organized with the aim of animating and empowering the Catholic youth of Bharuch and Narmada Deaneries, and to guide them towards leadership, faith formation, and active participation in ICYM.

The first major session was animated by Fr. Edvin along with his team. The presentation covered the History, Vision, and Mission of ICYM at the national and regional levels. The young leaders shared inspiring insights about the various initiatives of the Ahmedabad Diocesan Youth Commission. Fr. Edvin further enriched the session by sharing his personal experience of accompanying youth in their journey. He cited inspiring examples of young people who, despite struggles, had achieved success through commitment, resilience, and faith. His message emphasized that ICYM provides a platform for youth to become proactive, faith-filled, and responsible leaders of the Church and society.

The second session was taken by Fr. Vijay D'Souza, who focused on the theme of Youth Leadership. He stressed the importance of developing leadership qualities not just for personal growth, but also as an integral responsibility of a Catholic youth. His talk highlighted qualities such as integrity, service-mindedness, courage, and teamwork, which are expected of young leaders in the Church today.

A key part of the orientation was the elections conducted deanery-wise, to elect new office bearers for the youth commissions. Under the guidance of the animation team, elections were held smoothly and transparently.

The Deanery Level Youth Orientation Program at Netrang was a milestone event in strengthening the youth apostolate in Bharuch and Narmada deaneries. The sessions inspired the participants to grow in leadership, faith, and responsibility. The elections provided new leadership to carry forward the mission of ICYM with renewed zeal.



Final Profession at Carmel Sr. Anjali Maria and Sr. Hemangini Maria at Carmel Ashram, Vadodara

## COLLOQUIUM OF BISHOPS AND MAJOR SUPERIORS IN GUJARAT



On 26th November 2025, Bishop's House, Baroda, became the venue for a significant Colloquium of Bishops and Major Superiors of religious congregations working across Gujarat. The gathering brought together approximately 75 participants, including Bishops and Provincials, for a day-long session of reflection, planning, and policy formulation.

The colloquium was marked by a spirit of fraternity and collaboration, as leaders of the Church deliberated on pressing pastoral and social concerns. Key topics addressed during the discussions included:

- Strengthening collaboration between Fathers and Sisters in mission
- Rites, Inter-religious Dialogue, and Ecumenism
- Education initiatives for holistic development
- Health care outreach in under served communities
- Migration challenges and pastoral responses
- Political and social realities shaping the Church's mission in Gujarat



The day concluded with a renewed commitment to unity and shared responsibility, ensuring that the Church in Gujarat continues to respond effectively to the needs of society while remaining rooted in faith and service.

## CONVENT OF JESUS AND MARY SCHOOL, HALOL CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

A large crowd participated in the Silver Jubilee celebration of the Convent of Jesus and Mary at Halol. On the occasion a new play garden for children was blessed by Bishop Seby and inaugurated by the MLA Mr. Parmar and Sr Nayna, the Provincial. Whereas the CJM nuns are known for their prestigious schools in the big metropolis, the Bishop commended the sisters for reaching out to the rural poor as well.



# JESUS YOUTH RETREAT IN THE DIOCESE OF BARODA, GUJARAT



Baroda Diocese Jesus youth held a retreat from October 24th to 26th, 2025. The peaceful surroundings of Jagruti Animation Centre, Netrang, witnessed an outpouring of grace as Eliora 2025 - an Initial Youth Retreat for the Baroda Diocese that brought together over 70 young participants and 20 volunteers for three transformative days of faith and renewal.

Organized by Jesus Youth Vadodara, the retreat was enriched by the pastoral presence of Fr. Vincent Lobo and Sr. Rosy Pallath, who accompanied the youth throughout the days in prayer and support. The resource persons, Yusuf Masih and Dominic Mathew, led the youth through enriching sessions that focused on discovering one's Identity in Christ, encountering God's Love, embracing the Word of God, and finding healing through Repentance and the Sacraments.

A deeply moving highlight was the Holy Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Sebastião Mascarenhas, who blessed each youth individually, making the day of confession a moment of divine encounter and joy.

Through adoration, inner healing, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, praise & worship, action songs, and creative group activities, young hearts were awakened to God's love and inspired to live boldly for Christ. Many shared heartfelt testimonies of transformation and healing, witnessing to the power of the Holy Spirit at work.

As the retreat concluded, participants were introduced to the Jesus Youth movement and its mission of evangelizing through personal witness and joyful service.

Eliora 2025 has truly lit a spark of revival, forming young flames of faith who now return to their parishes ready to ignite the Church across Baroda Diocese and inspire others to draw closer to Christ.



# MISSIONARY MEETING HELD AT BISHOP'S HOUSE ON 27TH AUGUST

## LITURGY IS THE SOUL OF THE CHURCH

Fr Tony Fernandes sfx, Professor of Liturgy, addressed around 160 missionaries of the Diocese of Baroda on Liturgy. He stressed that it is the common worship of the Church. It is where God encounters us. He stressed the need for good preparation by the priests, active and conscious participation by all and following the norms of the Church.

It is a joy to see so many missionaries making time to join together once a year.



## SPIRIT FILLED EXPERIENCE AT PARASPADA PARISH

After the blessings of Jubilee year of Satmali village, faithful have regular in their spiritual journey. There were two major events. One was way of the cross, which was acted out before the Holy week and recently from 5th, 6th and 7th Sep.2025 was a Retreat which was conducted by Jesus youth group of Unai. Alpesh Gamit, Ajay Gamit, Rupsing

Gamit (musician) and Shailesh Gamit (Vyara), were invited to preach retreat in Satmali village. All shared and witnessed their experiences, especially how they were converted and how now Jesus loves them and empowering them to spread good news through the Holy Spirit. The theme was love of God mainly on Creation, fall and reparation.



# PRIESTLY ORDINATION OF VIJU VARLI SJ



On 30 November, the parish community at Zaroli rejoiced in the priestly ordination of Viju Varli SJ, who was ordained by Bishop Sebastiao Mascarenhas SFX. Surrounded by family, friends, clergy, and faithful, the solemn celebration was marked by deep prayer, gratitude, and joy. The ordination liturgy highlighted the gift of priesthood as a service to God and His people, and the congregation joined in thanksgiving for this new shepherd in the Church.

The presence of the faithful and the spirit of unity made the occasion truly memorable. With hearts full of hope, the community prays that Fr. Viju Varli SJ may continue to serve with dedication, humility, and love, bearing witness to Christ in all his ministry.



## INAUGURATION OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHAPEL AT MULKAPADA



A beautiful new chapel, dedicated to St. Francis Xavier, Patron Saint of all missions was inaugurated solemnly on the 3rd of December 2025 at a village called Mulkapada, at St. Vianney Parish, Relva.

Right at the start the villagers welcomed, His Lordship Most Rev. Bp. Sebastian Mascarenhas at the entrance of the village. With the beat of the drums, the men & women of the village, decked with Tribal attire led the entrance procession. Ceremoniously, the statue of the Patron Saint was carried to the entrance of the chapel. The Bishop, officially inaugurated the event by cutting the ribbon and opening the new chapel doors to the public. Then Bishop, blessed the building, the cross, statues and anointed the new altar and walls. Then the solemn Eucharist was offered in this new chapel for the first time. Bishop, in his homily highlighted the themes, love, unity and forgiveness as the primary qualities to give witness as Christians.

The village leaders felicitated Fr. Pravin Vasava, the only local vocation, and all the Fathers & Sisters who attended the function. Finally, we are grateful to all the village leaders and the faithful who came together to organize the entire inauguration event.

## MOUNT CARMEL CRICKET LEAGUE AT SURAT

The Youths of Our Lady of Mt Carmel church, Surat was pleased to organise the first-ever Cricket tournament. Mount Carmel cricket league where the team was mixed of men and women both. This event marks a beautiful milestone in our journey as young members of the parish – a moment where faith, fellowship, and fun come together on one field. The cricket tournament was organized at a deanery level

which was participated around 10 teams of different parishes. The idea behind this tournament was not just to play a game, but to bring our community closer, to strengthen the bond among our youth, and to celebrate the spirit of teamwork, sportsmanship, and unity. Cricket has always been a game that unites hearts, and through this event, we hope to build bridges of friendship and understanding within our parish family.



## Annual Day Celebration at Don Bosco Snehalaya Shelter Home, Vadodara



# TRIBAL DAY AT DIVINE MERCY PARISH UMARGAM



Divine Mercy Shrine Parish celebrated Adivasi Day on August 17, Sunday with a Holy Mass in English and Hindi. The small Parish community has 15 Tribal families from Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Gujarat. This was the first time they came together. Fr Pravin Gavit SFX was the main celebrant. At the offertory they brought 3 gifts to be given to 3 poor children of the Parish.

## BLESSING OF UMARGAM SCHOOL FIRST FLOOR



## WOMEN LEADERS

### STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP AND MEDIA SKILLS OF WOMEN LEADER



The Women Commission of the Baroda Diocese organized a two-day training program for parish women leaders on 16th-17th August at the Bishop's House, Baroda. A total of 73 women and 12 women religious sisters participated.

The participants were divided into six groups, each led by women who had previously been trained in the 10 Women Mission Programme. With the same topics,

the women underwent five hours of training both in groups and in the general assembly. On the second day a highlight was the social media training by Mr. Hasmukh Christian, covering news writing, reporting, photography, short films, and the role of Christian media. The program concluded with a Thanksgiving Eucharistic celebration, leaving the women enriched and motivated for future leadership.

### RETREAT FOR WOMEN – BHARUCH DEANERY



The Women's Commission of the Diocese of Baroda organized a Spiritual Retreat for the women of Bharuch Deanery on 31st August 2025 at the Catholic Church, Ankleshwar. Nearly 150 women came together in joy and faith for this grace-filled gathering. The retreat began with registration and a warm welcome by Sr. Elsy, followed by enriching sessions led by Fr. Sudhir. Through prayer, reflection, and Scripture (Genesis 1:26), participants were invited to reconnect with their inner self, experience God's presence, and grow spiritually. Lively action songs and a shared meal fostered fellowship and unity among the women. The day concluded with a Thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration, leaving everyone renewed in faith, grateful in spirit, and strengthened to continue their mission with joy.

### WESTERN REGION WOMEN'S COMMISSION CONVENTION

The women of the Baroda Diocese attended the Western Region Women's Commission Convention held on 8th and 9th November in Pune on the theme "Pilgrims of Hope." The program included the inaugural Eucharistic celebration, visits to Carmel Church, Christ the King Church, and the Maher Institute. Sessions on "Women in the Bible" and "Women Commission" were also conducted. Representatives from Surat, Mandal, and Ankleshwar participated. It was a joyful and spiritually enriching experience.



# NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE AT VALANKANNI

A delegation of 15 women and three religious sisters from the Diocese of Baroda participated in the VII National Conference of the CCBI Commission for Women, held from 29 September to 1 October 2025 at the Shrine Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health, Velankanni. The conference gathered over 1,400 women leaders from 77 dioceses under the Jubilee theme, "I love you... you are precious in my eyes" (Isaiah 43:4-5).

The event was inaugurated by Most Rev. Kishor Kujur, with the opening Mass presided over by Oswald Cardinal Gracias. The sessions focused on Women in the Bible, missionary discipleship, and the power of human

words in building an inclusive and compassionate Church. Delegates also expressed solidarity by contributing to the Manipur Relief Fund.

The conference concluded with a Thanksgiving Mass and a renewed commitment to strengthening women cells, promoting synodal participation, encouraging the wise use of technology, and furthering the CCBI Pastoral Plan (2023-2033) for women's empowerment.

The Baroda delegates also made a pilgrimage to important St Thomas churches, including the Mini Velankanni Shrine in Chennai, making the entire experience spiritually enriching and inspiring.



## TRAINING PROGRAM FOR WOMEN OF PANCHMAHAL DEANERY: 'PRAYING WITH THE BIBLE'



The Women's Commission of the Diocese of Baroda organized a training program titled "Praying with the Bible" for the women of the Panchmahal Deanery on 24th August 2025 at Halol parish. The event was conducted with great enthusiasm and active participation.

A total of 86 women, 5 priests, and 10 religious sisters took part in the program. The participants were divided into six groups of 15-16 women each. Fr. Mayank initiated the session with themes: The

characteristics of the Bible, What is most important in the Bible, Why and how we need to read the Catholic Bible, The twelve methods of reading the Bible.

Later, the groups were given the opportunity to practice one of the methods of Bible reading, making the learning experience practical and engaging. Adding joy to the sessions, parish women led action songs, which brought liveliness and energy to the day's activities. The program proved to be a spiritually enriching and uplifting experience for all participants.

# TRAINING PROGRAM AT GOTHADA PARISH FOR WOMEN

A training program was organized by the Baroda Deanery Resource Team for the women of the Gothada Church on 19/11/2025. A total of 50 women participated in this training. Our sisters explained the sessions very well and in a simple manner. Many women who had never come forward to speak earlier overcame

their fear and encouraged other women to step forward with confidence. Under the leadership of Ms. Dolcy and her team, interactive games on the theme "Unity among women" were also conducted. Everyone participated joyfully and benefitted from the activities. The training concluded with great happiness and the hope of meeting again.



## FORMATION OF WOMEN'S COMMISSION GROUPS AT VYARA AND MANDAL

On 16 September at Vyara and 17 September at Mandal, more than 130 women came together in faith and joy to establish their Women's Commission groups. The gatherings witnessed the participation of 70 women at Vyara and 60 women at Mandal, each united by a shared commitment to serve the Church and community.

The programs began with heartfelt prayer and a warm welcome to Sr. Anita Parmar, who enlightened the participants on the life of the Church, the mission of the Women's Commission, and the beautiful responsibility entrusted to its members. Together, the women reflected on the meaning of service rooted in love and the call to

build the Church as one family in Christ.

With deep faith, office bearers were prayerfully chosen and stood before the community, committing themselves in the presence of Jesus, the Light, to carry out their duties with dedication and love.

The atmosphere of both gatherings was filled with enthusiasm, hope, and the Spirit of God. Truly, these meetings marked a significant step forward in empowering women to actively participate in the mission of the Church. The events concluded with a thanksgiving prayer, leaving everyone inspired to continue walking together in faith and service.

## PIMPRI VISIT

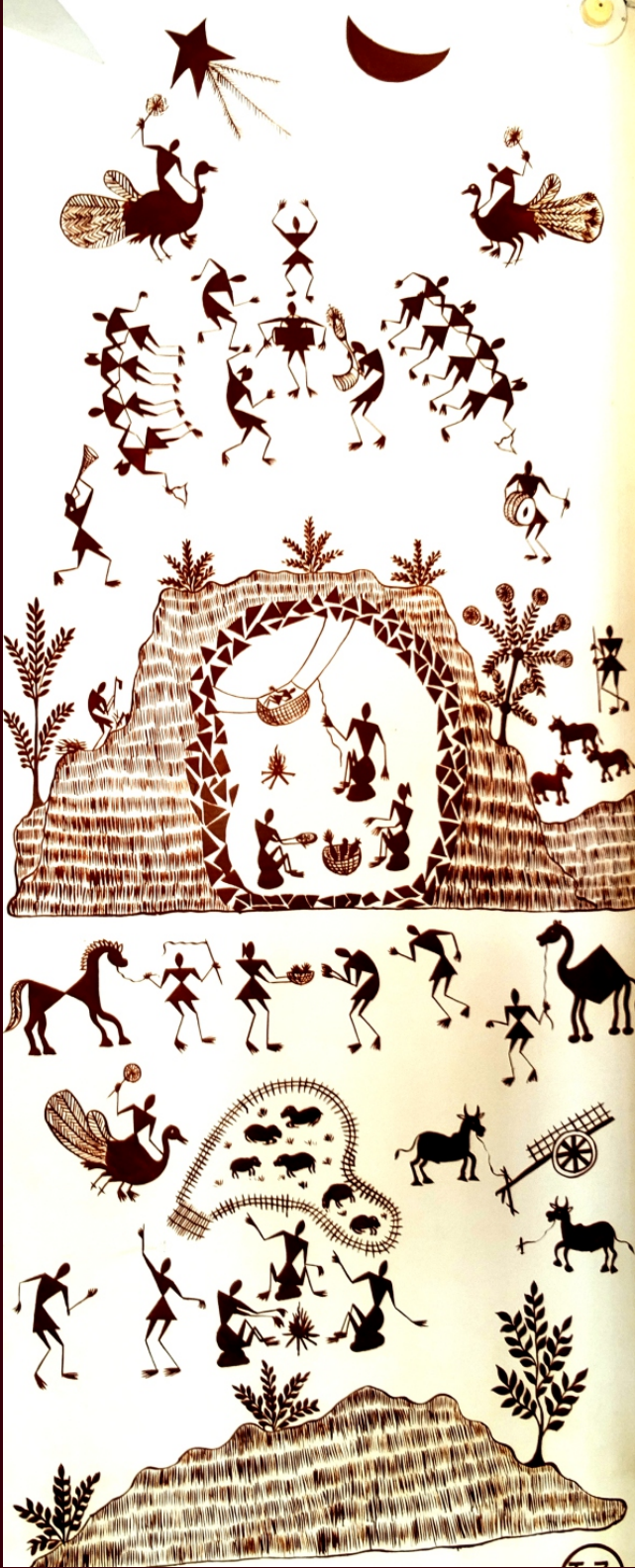


## JESUIT संभेदन



# પધારો, પ્રભુ ઈસુ

Rev 22:20



આશા નિરાશ કરતી નથી Rom 5:5

કારણ ઈશ્વરે પોતાના પુત્રને જગતમાં મોકલ્યો છે, એ જગતને સજાપાત્ર ઠરાવવા માટે નહીં, પણ તેની મારફતે જગતનો ઉદ્ધાર કરવા (યોહાન 3:17)

“To believe in him and to be his disciples means allowing ourselves to be changed and to take on his same feelings. It means learning to have a heart that is moved, eyes that see and do not look away, hands that help others and soothe their wounds, shoulders that bear the burden of those in need”

(Pope Leo XIV)

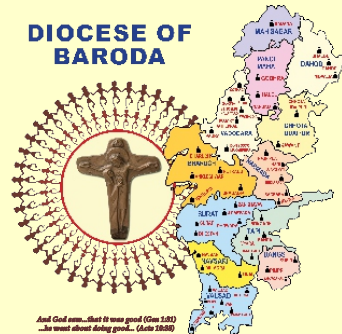
Mass at Castel Gandolfo)

May the Love that  
the Christ Child gifts  
at Christmas  
Bloom into Hope  
that lights up  
2026

May our Diocese  
be a beacon  
of Hope  
to all peoples

+ Sebastiao Afascarenhas sfs

Bishop of Baroda



Picture: Our Lady of Rosary Chapel,  
Amji, Mandal  
The Third Joyful Mystery,  
The Nativity

We apologise for delaying the Spotlight.

Henceforth, this issue of Spotlight has been edited by Fr. Vincent Lobo and Mr Joy Fernandes.