



SPARKLIGHT

THE BARODA DIOCESE NEWSLETTER



March 2026

For Private Circulation Only

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SAINT OF THE MONTH



ST JOSEPH

Patron of the Universal Church

PRAYER INTENTIONS OF THE POPE

MARCH

For disarmament and peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

APRIL

For priests in crisis

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

COLLECTIONS

MARCH 15: FOR CARITAS

APRIL 3: GOOD FRIDAY COLLECTION

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

LENLEN REFLECTION

NO ANSWERS, JUST HONEST TO GOD AND MY CALL

+Seby Mascarenhas

At the Introspective Interaction during the Fellowship of Diocesan Priests recently, Fr Isaac Arackaparambil SDB (who was one of the animators together with Bro Malcom SJ and Fr Harry Martis SJ) generated a life curve of a typical priest *through Chat GPT!* It was the catalyst for reflection in our groups. Perhaps this story might serve as a Lenten reflection for all of us, clergy and religious actually doing 'good work' in our mission places! Please reflect on it in the Holy Season of Lent

"FR. XYZ AND THE QUIET WEIGHT HE CARRIED"

Fr. XYZ sat alone in the presbytery verandah long after the parish meeting had ended. The church compound was silent now. Only the distant sound of a motorcycle and the occasional bark of a stray dog broke the night.

He leaned back in his chair and whispered to himself: * "I am busy all day... yet why do I feel I am doing so little for the real mission?"

Three years had passed since his transfer to St. Mary's Parish. At first, he had arrived with enthusiasm. The people were warm. The parish was large. The school and institutions were active. **There seemed so much to do for God.**

But slowly, something had changed. * **Not outside. * Inside.**

THE PERSONAL WEIGHT

Every morning, the alarm rang at 5:30 a.m. Every morning, he pressed "snooze" at least twice. It was not laziness. **It was tiredness.** Late-night calls for hospital visits... endless administrative paperwork... expectations to attend every family function... financial worries of the parish... and the constant effort to remain "available".

He still celebrated Mass faithfully. He still preached well. He still smiled. *But prayer had become shorter. Reading had become rare. Silence had become uncomfortable.* Some days he wondered quietly: * "Am I becoming just a manager... and not a shepherd?"



OFFICIAL - MARCH 2026

COMMITMENTS OF THE BISHOP FEBRUARY - MARCH 2026

March 1	Confirmation in Umarpada
March 1-5	Diocesan Procurator Team Visit to Diocesan Parishes
March 6	Meeting with Nuncio, Delhi
March 8	Confirmation in Nani Singloti
March 9-11	Diocesan Procurator Team visit to Diocesan Parishes
March 12	Recollection for Diocesan priests
March 14-19	Retreat
March 20	Chavdapura
March 26	CHRISM MASS – ALL PARTICIPATE
April 2	Maundy Thursday – Rosary Parish
April 3	Good Friday – Daman
APRIL 4	EASTER VIGIL – INFANT JESUS GORWA
APRIL 7-24	Conference
April 26	Priestly Ordination in Dudhni

PLEASE PRAY

BIRTHDAYS

01-03-1957	Fr. Lemos Saby
17-03-1989	Fr. Bhushan Bara
23-03-1948	Fr. Fernandes Joao M.
24-03-1982	Fr. Karketta Raymond
29-03-1940	Fr. Gonsalves Albert

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

04-03-2000	Fr. Cyprian Mendonca
29-03-2015	Fr. Kilian Lopes J.

ORIDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

28-03-1992	Fr. Vasava Dalsukh
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He never voiced this to anyone. A priest must be strong. A priest must not complain. At least, that is what he had always believed.

And yet, beneath the cassock was a fatigue he could not easily name.

THE PASTORAL PRESSURE

The parish itself was not easy. * **Young people were drifting away.** * **Families were busy and irregular.** * **A few influential parishioners expected special attention.** * **Catechists wanted more direction.** * **The school demanded constant involvement.**

Everyone wanted something. **Few seemed to want the deeper life of faith.** Whenever he tried introducing new initiatives - Bible sharing groups, youth adoration, outreach to the poor - **initial enthusiasm faded quickly.** After some time, he stopped trying too much.

"Maybe maintenance itself is mission," he told himself one evening, half-convinced. He noticed something else too. He had begun avoiding risks. * **No new ideas.** * **No new confrontations.** * **No new dreams.** **Just keep the parish running peacefully. The same routine.**

THE STRUCTURAL SILENCE

There were also diocesan meetings. * **He attended them faithfully.** * **Listened respectfully.** * Nodded often. **But he rarely spoke.**

Not because he had nothing to say -* **but because he was not sure if anyone really wanted to hear.** * **Sometimes decisions came from above with little explanation.** * **Sometimes expectations increased without resources.** * **Sometimes communication felt one-sided.**

He respected the Bishop deeply. He loved the diocese sincerely. But somewhere within, he felt like a small cog in a very large wheel. Once, after a long meeting, a brother priest had joked: * **"We are consulted... after everything is decided."** Everyone laughed. **But Fr. XYZ noticed that no one disagreed.**

THE TURNING POINT

One evening, while clearing old papers from his desk, Fr. XYZ found a small card from his ordination day. On it were the words he had chosen years ago: * **"HERE I AM, LORD. SEND ME."**

He sat still for a long time. * **"Send me where?"** he wondered quietly. * **"I am already sent... BUT AM I STILL OFFERING MYSELF?"**

That night he did not blame the parish. He did not blame the diocese. He did not blame anyone. He simply admitted to himself: * **"Something within me has grown tired... cautious... and quiet.** * **I am present... but am I fully available?"**

He did not have answers. Only a growing honesty. And perhaps, that was where mission could begin again.

GENTLE NAMING OF OBSTACLES

A. Personal Obstacles

1. In what ways did Fr XYZ experience fatigue or discouragement?
2. Which of his inner struggles resonate with us personally?
3. What silently drains our energy or zeal today?
4. What fears or hesitations hold us back from offering more?

B. Pastoral Obstacles

1. What pastoral realities in the story limit Fr. XYZ's initiative?
2. What changes in parish life today make mission more demanding?
3. Where do we feel we are maintaining rather than creatively serving?
4. What pastoral expectations feel overwhelming or unclear?

C. Structural Obstacles

1. What structural difficulties did Fr. XYZ quietly experience?
2. Where do communication or expectations sometimes feel unclear?
3. What structures help us serve better? Which ones hinder us?
4. How can we improve collaboration and trust within the diocese?

LISTENING AND FASTING: LENT AS A TIME OF CONVERSION

EXTRACTS FROM THE MESSAGE OF THE POPE FOR LENT

Lent is a time in which the Church, guided by a sense of maternal care, **invites us to place the mystery of God back in the center of our lives**, in order to find renewal in our faith and keep our hearts from being consumed by the anxieties and distractions of daily life.

LISTENING

This year, I would first like to consider the importance of making room for the Word through listening. The willingness to listen is the first way we demonstrate our desire to enter into relationship with someone.

Our God is one who seeks to involve us. Even today he shares with us what is in his heart. Because of this, **listening to the word in the liturgy** teaches us to listen to the truth of reality. In the midst of the many voices present in our personal lives and in society, Sacred Scripture helps us to recognize and respond to the cry of those who are anguished and suffering. In order to foster this inner openness to listening, **we must allow God to teach us how to listen as He does.** We must recognize that “the condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church.”

FASTING

If Lent is a time for listening, fasting is a concrete way to prepare ourselves to receive the word of God. Precisely because it involves the body, **fasting makes it easier to**

recognize what we “hunger” for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance. Moreover, it helps us to identify and order our “appetites,” keeping our hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency. Thus, it teaches us to pray and act responsibly towards our neighbor.

In this regard, I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and **cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities.** In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.

TOGETHER

Finally, Lent emphasizes the communal aspect of listening to the word and fasting... **In this context, conversion refers not only to one’s conscience, but also to the quality of our relationships and dialogue.** It means allowing ourselves to be challenged by reality and recognizing what truly guides our desires – both within our ecclesial communities and as regards humanity’s thirst for justice and reconciliation.

DIACONATE ORDINATION OF BRO. ANIL GAMIT 31ST JANUARY 2026 AT ST. CHARLES SEMINARY, NAGPUR



IMPLEMENTATION OF SYNOD DECISIONS



Conference of Catholic Bishops of India

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February 18, 2026

To
All the Member Bishops of the
Conference of Catholic Bishops of India

Your Eminence/Grace/Excellency/Dear Monsignor,

First and foremost, I would like to wish you and all your collaborators a truly grace-filled Lenten Season.

As we journey together in the implementation phase of the Synod on Synodality, the General Secretariat of the Synod in Rome has outlined a clear roadmap ahead, leading to the Ecclesial Assembly in October 2028 at the Vatican. This phase builds on the fruits of the synodal process, fostering a more synodal Church in India. The key milestones include:

1. June 2025 – December 2026: Implementation activities in local Churches.
2. May 2027: Evaluation Assemblies in Dioceses.
3. July 2027: Evaluation by Assemblies in Regional Councils.
4. Second Half 2028: Evaluation by the Episcopal Conference
5. April 2028: Continental Evaluation.
6. October 2028: Ecclesial Assembly in the Vatican.

We now focus on the Implementation Phase (June 2025 – December 2026), a vital period for our local Churches to embody synodality in daily life.

Attached herewith please find the letter Prot. N. 260014, dated 28th January 2026, sent by the three Heads of the Dicasteries of the Holy See and the Secretary General of the Synod Secretariat, namely, Card. Luis Antonio Tagle, Card. Claudio Gugerotti, Abp. Filippo Iannone, O.Carm. and Card. Mario Grech. All four of them highlight the crucial importance of the Year 2026 as “the final stage of this time of implementation and consolidation, in view of the subsequent **assemblies scheduled for 2027.**”

I. What is the Implementation Phase, and what are its Objectives? This phase is not an additional exercise or task. Every local Church and parish community will practise synodality by promoting new practices and structures within its ordinary pastoral ministry, to make Church life more participatory and missionary.

Its core objectives are: (1) to foster synodal conversion through formation pathways tailored to diverse ecclesial contexts; (2) to carry out the mission of evangelization more effectively, aligning with the Church's call to be a listening, discerning and outward-facing community (cf. Final Document [FD]).



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II. Who Participates and What is Expected? The Diocesan Bishop bears the primary responsibility: (a) to initiate the phase and define its duration, methods and objectives; (b) to accompany its progress and validate the results. The key participants include: (1) The Diocesan Participatory Bodies: The Diocesan Presbyteral Council, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Diocesan Finance Council; (2) The Diocesan Synodal Team tasked with animating the process (cf. FD 87-94).

III. The Synodal Team, in particular, must promote the following priorities:

- a) Synodal spirituality (FD 43-46)
- b) Access to leadership roles for qualified women, men, lay and consecrated persons (FD 60)
- c) New forms of service and ministry responsive to pastoral needs (FD 75-77)
- d) Ecclesial discernment practices (FD 81-86)
- e) Synodal decision-making processes (FD 93-94)
- f) Transparency, accountability, and evaluation mechanisms (FD 95-102)
- g) Renewal of participatory bodies in dioceses and parishes, as required by law (FD, 103-106)
- h) Regular local and regional ecclesial assemblies (FD 107)
- i) Promotion of Diocesan Synods (FD 108)
- j) Renewal of parishes in a synodal, missionary spirit (FD 117)
- k) Verification of synodal elements in Christian Initiation journeys and formation programmes (FD 142-151).

The CCBI has already constituted the National Synodal Team. Fr. Christopher Vimalraj, Associate Deputy Secretary General of our Conference, is its Coordinator. Each Diocese has also constituted its Diocesan Synodal Team. I kindly request you to send the names of the members of your Diocesan Synodal Team at the earliest to the email ID: synod@ccbi.in

The CCBI National Synodal Team will convene monthly online meetings to accompany and support the Diocesan Synodal Teams. Therefore, I request you to kindly ensure that the Coordinator of your Diocesan Synodal Team regularly participates in these meetings.

Let us seize this grace-filled opportunity to renew our Churches in India. I urge each Diocese to form or activate its Synodal Team promptly and to integrate the synodal process into its pastoral plans. Resources from the General Secretariat of the Synod and the CCBI Guidelines will support this work. Together, let us prepare ourselves for the 2027 evaluations and the 2028 Vatican Assembly.

May the Holy Spirit guide us toward being a truly synodal Church!



+Filipe Neri Card. Ferrão

Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrão

President, Conference of Catholic Bishops of India
Archbishop of Goa and Daman

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CBCI MEET AT BANGALORE 2ND TO 11TH FEB



**St. JOHN'S COLLEGE OF NURSING
AUDITORIUM**



Urging Catholics to live as “authentic Christians and responsible citizens of India,” the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI) has reaffirmed the Church’s commitment to the Gospel and the constitutional values of the nation, calling for a renewed public witness marked by faith, justice, and service to the common good.

The call came at the conclusion of the CBCI’s 37th General Body Meeting, held from February 4 to 10 at St. John’s Academy of Health Sciences, Bengaluru, which brought together 202 bishops from across the country

under the theme “Faith and the Nation: The Church’s Witness to India’s Constitutional Vision.”

In a comprehensive statement issued at the end of the meeting, the bishops reflected on the Church’s mission in India’s present socio-cultural and political context. Expressing gratitude for the country’s rich cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, they said the Christian community continues to contribute with hope and joy to national life while cherishing the freedom to practise its faith.



**THE MEETING OF ALL THE COMMISSION DIRECTORS OF BARODA DIOCESE
HELD ON 27TH FEBRUARY AT BISHOP’S HOUSE**

THE WESTERN REGION YOUTH CONFERENCE -2026



By Fr. Akash Nakre

The Western Region Youth Conference was held at Aatmashod Kendra, Sandor, Vasai from 15th to 18th January 2026. It brought together 85 youths from 13 dioceses to share their cultures and views. The Baroda Diocese was represented by Fr. Akash along with Darrel, Chrish, Rahul, Jitesh, Nayana, and Jigisha.

The conference was blessed by the presence of Most Rev. Thomas D'Souza, Bishop of Vasai, who highlighted the theme "Walking with the Lord and witnessing His love." The Conference featured various sessions and presentations. Fr. Nilesh Tuscano encouraged youths to grow in faith formation, while Fr. Alwin Tuscano explained Church teachings on marriage and its challenges.

Fr. Akash presented a report on youth activities of the Baroda Diocese, and reports from other dioceses in the Western Region were also shared, highlighting the diverse initiatives undertaken by the youth.

The Baroda youth showcased an Adivasi dance reflecting their cultural identity. A special moment for the Baroda Diocese was the election of Darrel as Cultural Head and Chris as Joint Liturgy Head at the Western Region level. The conference concluded with a solemn Eucharistic celebration offered by Bishop Thomas D'Souza. Venessa Rodrigues from Baroda Diocese bagged the first prize in the quiz competition held for the youth at the Western Region. She was awarded a trophy for her outstanding performance.

Spiritual insights, interactive sessions, faith, fun, fellowship, and heartfelt gratitude was expressed to Fr. Christopher Vaz and the youth of the Vasai Diocese for their warm hospitality.

We appreciate Fr. Kaushik Vasava the Youth Director of the Diocese, for encouraging our youth to participate in this great event.

WESTERN REGION ECUMENISM & DIALOGUE COMMISSION AND THEOLOGY & DOCTRINE COMMISSION MEETINGS 24 & 25 FEBRUARY 2026 AT ATMADARSHAN, MUMBAI



Ecumenism and Dialogue Commission

The DIOCESE of Baroda coordinates the Ecumenism & Dialogue Commission (EDC) and the Theology & Doctrine Commission (TDC) of the Western Region Bishops Council under the leadership of Bishop Seby Mascarenhas SFX with Fr Vincent Lobo as Secretary of the EDC and Fr Joel Pais as Secretary for the TDC.

Both meetings are similarly structured. After a brief welcome and know-each-other, the members reflect on their feelings about their service and works as DIOCESAN Secretaries for about half an hour before the Blessed Sacrament.

The first session begins with presentation of the latest pronouncements of the Church about Ecumenism or Dialogue or Theology

In this session the Bishop presented perspectives from the post synodal groups (Group 9 &10) constituted to reflect on these issues.

He pointed out the two common qualities of all Christians, highlighted by the working groups, that could be a basis for unity: 1) the *sensus fidei* that all have by the fact that they are baptised and 2) the ecumenism of

blood which is the common suffering and persecution of Christians. It was noted that the working to express the role of the Papacy in a way that is acceptable to all; it would also look for a solution towards acceptance to the sacraments in inter Church marriages.

The Synodal group for theology speaks of a “principle of pastorality” that combines faithfulness to tradition, reflecting on the context of today in all aspects combined with an approach filled with hospitality and responsibility towards the other.

The Director of the Commission for Theology of the CCBI, Fr. Gilbert D’Lima, presented the vision and mission of the commission. He shared about the annual colloquiums conducted by the commission with great success.

The DIOCESAN representatives shared their joys and fears about their apostolate and described their apostolate in the diocese. They also shared the limitations of lack of personnel and the workloads.

It was a joyous sharing in both groups. The next in-person meets are scheduled for January 27 and 28, 2027.



Theology and Doctrine Commission

VADODARA DEANERY PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2026



PURPOSE

The meeting reviewed pastoral programs of the past year, evaluated Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) functioning, and reflected on future priorities, with special emphasis on children's faith formation.

KEY EVALUATIONS

Yearly Programs:

- Spiritual initiatives (retreats, Eucharistic celebrations, prayer gatherings) were meaningful but require continuity.
- Family visits and ministry to the sick were appreciated; systematic follow-up is needed.
- Schools remain vital centres for evangelization, with teachers receptive to value-based programs.
- Youth engagement thrives through service, music, and interactive activities.

PPC Gathering in Jhagadia evaluation :

- Encouraged honest sharing and collaboration.
- Effectiveness varied across parishes.
- Clear agendas, defined roles, and structured follow-up are essential.

PPC Strengthening Needs:

- Training in pastoral roles, leadership, facilitation, planning, and evaluation.
- Formation of lay leaders for catechesis and family ministry.
- Rooting all activities in prayer and mission.

SPI Conversations:

- Personal interactions were valued but lacked continuity.
- Need for accompaniment teams, documentation, and pastoral follow-up.

FAITH FORMATION OF CHILDREN (MAIN CONCERN)

- Current methods: catechism, liturgical participation, activity-based learning.
- Challenges: irregular attendance, limited trained catechists, low parental involvement.
- Direction: shift from instruction to holistic formation through participation, prayer, and community life.

PARISH SURVEY UPDATES

- Migration trends highlight the need to welcome and integrate new families.
- Surveys should guide pastoral action.

YOUTH AND WOMEN'S GROUPS

- Youth: enthusiastic, require mentoring and leadership training.
- Women: active in prayer and service, with potential for stronger leadership roles.

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

- Prioritize children's faith formation with catechist training at deanery level.
- Standardize PPC functioning with annual plans and evaluations.
- Develop parish-based youth leadership.
- Strengthen family ministry and home visits.
- Integrate schools more intentionally into pastoral outreach.
- Build small faith communities for grassroots faith-sharing.

CONCLUSION

The review highlighted dedication and areas for growth. Moving forward, emphasis should be placed on sustained formation, accompaniment, and discipleship rather than isolated events, ensuring deeper integration of faith into parish life.

KORVI MATA GOLDEN JUBILEE AT DEDIAPADA

The Golden Jubilee of Korvi Mata in Dediapada was a remarkable milestone, celebrating fifty years of devotion and faith. Families from across the diocese gathered to honor traditions passed down through generations. The day began with a quiet 7 am Eucharist for early villagers, followed by a larger 9 am liturgy as buses arrived from distant parishes. The solemn main Mass was presided over by Bishop Sebastio Mascarnhas, who in his homily drew a powerful connection between Mary's "yes" at the Annunciation and the everyday trust of farmers

awaiting monsoon rains and parents praying for their children's health. His message invited us to strengthen our devotion with that same faith, reminding us that Korvi Mata is not only a shrine but a living network of hope and trust in the tribal belt. Though the crowd extended beyond the pandal, a calm spirit of prayer and unity prevailed. The Jubilee was more than a ceremony – it was a renewal of our shared journey of faith, leaving an enduring echo long after the final blessing.



BLESSING OF THE NEWLY BUILT VAANKI HALL AT ZANKHVAV



The faithful of Vaanki village joyfully celebrated the solemn blessing of the newly built Vaanki Chapel, marking an important and grace-filled moment for the local Catholic community. The ceremony was filled with sincere prayer, heartfelt thanksgiving, and deep gratitude to God for the successful completion of the chapel. Special thanks were given to the generous donors whose support made the construction possible, and to the hardworking residents of Vaanki village whose steady cooperation and dedicated effort turned this long-awaited dream into reality. The large gathering of the faithful clearly showed the unity and strong faith of the community.

The chapel was solemnly blessed by Bishop Sebastiao, who led the liturgical celebration and gave an inspiring message. He encouraged the faithful to renew the strength of their faith and to deepen their commitment to Jesus Christ. The Bishop reminded everyone that although the church building is helpful for prayer and worship, it is the community of believers that truly makes the Church alive and active. He also urged the faithful to be brave witnesses of Christ, especially in the many challenges and difficulties of today's world. The new Vaanki Chapel now stands not only as a place of worship but also as a strong call for the community to grow in faith, love, and active discipleship in daily life. - *Fr. John Paul Lobo SJ*

DIOCESAN PRIESTS ONE DAY PILGRIMAGE, INTROSPECTION AND GET-TOGETHER ON 16TH FEB 2026



DEANERY MEETINGS



PANCHMAHAL DEANERY - FEBRUARY 7



PANCHMAHAL DEANERY - FEBRUARY 7



PANCHMAHAL DEANERY - FEBRUARY 7



BARODA DEANERY



BARODA DEANERY



NARMADA DEANERY



Panchamahahal Deanery organized 'Faith Formation Day' for children at Don Bosco Chottaudaipur on 22nd of February 2026. The Theme of the day was: 'Faith and Identity'.

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF RAJPIPLA SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY (JESUITS)



Golden Jubilee of Rajpipla Social Service Society was celebrated with Grandeur at Rajpipla, on January 11, 2026. The celebration commemorating 50 years of dedicated service to the community of Baroda Diocese was held at the Society's premises and witnessed a gathering of over 1600 community members, leaders, and well-wishers.

The event was graced by Fr. Durai Fernand, Provincial of the Gujarat Jesuit Province, who delivered an inspiring keynote address highlighting the Society's enduring commitment to justice, empowerment, and social transformation. He praised RSSS for its pioneering role in uplifting marginalized communities and fostering participatory development.

Adding to the significance of the occasion, the present director Fr Isaac Rumao and former Director Fr Stany Pinto of RSSS shared heartfelt reflections on the organization's journey, recalling milestones of growth, resilience, and innovation. The former legal staff also spoke warmly, extolling the Society's steadfast adherence to governance, legal interventions, and ethical service.

The highlight of the event was the heart-rendering presence and address of Rt. Rev. Bishop Fr. Sebastiao Mascarenhas of the Vadodara Diocese, who praised the

Society's unwavering commitment to social justice, faith-inspired service and empowerment of marginalized communities of the Diocese of Baroda. His words deeply moved the audience, reminding them of the transformative impact RSSS has had over five decades in Adivasi community.

A highlight of the celebration was a series of skits presented by students of the WEST program, creatively depicting the key milestones of RSSS across five decades. These performances brought to life the struggles, achievements, and transformative initiatives that have shaped the Society's legacy. The Jubilee celebration also included cultural performances and reflections on the Society's journey, showcasing its milestones in education, health, women's empowerment, and community development. The event served not only as a moment of gratitude for past achievements but also as a renewed call to continue the mission of service with compassion and integrity. The Golden Jubilee was not only a moment of remembrance but also a reaffirmation of RSSS's vision for the future—continuing to empower communities with dignity, inclusivity, and faith-driven leadership.

By Fr Isaac Rumao

CULMINATION OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF DON BOSCO CHHOTADEPUR

Fr. Selvin D'Mello SDB

Don Bosco Chhotaudepur marked a historic milestone on 31 January 2026 with the grand culmination of its Golden Jubilee celebrations. The day was celebrated as a threefold event of faith and gratitude: the Feast of St. John Bosco, the Golden Jubilee of the Don Bosco institution at Chhotaudepur, and the Golden Jubilee of the First Religious Profession of Rev. Fr. George Carlos. It was a deeply meaningful occasion that brought together clergy, religious, collaborators, past pupils, and well-wishers to thank God for fifty years of fruitful service.

The celebrations commenced at 10:30 a.m. with a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Most Rev. Sebastião Mascarenhas, SFX, Bishop of the Diocese of Baroda. The Holy Eucharist set a prayerful and thanksgiving tone for the day, as the faithful gathered in large numbers to commemorate the journey of the institution and its mission among the people of Rathwa tribe.

In his homily, Bishop Mascarenhas expressed his deep appreciation to the Salesians of Don Bosco for their tireless dedication and committed service over the past five decades. He highlighted the significant role played by the Salesians in uplifting the Rathwa tribal community,

particularly through education and holistic development. The Bishop emphasized that celebrations such as these are not merely moments of remembrance but opportunities to renew missionary zeal, deepen commitment, and recommit oneself to the service of the young and the marginalized.

Following the Eucharistic celebration, a felicitation program was held to honour those who have contributed significantly to the growth and mission of Don Bosco Chhotaudepur. Veteran missionaries and the jubilarians were felicitated with tokens of appreciation in recognition of their years of selfless service. The Sarpanchs of the villages where we reach out were also honoured, acknowledging their cooperation and support in the outreach activities of the institution.

A fellowship meal was served to all the guests present, reflecting the Salesian spirit of family and communion. As a gesture of gratitude and remembrance, all priests and religious were presented with a souvenir kit, while all the participants received mementos to commemorate this Golden Jubilee celebration.

The day concluded with hearts filled with gratitude to God and renewed hope for the future, as Don Bosco Chhotaudepur looks forward to continuing its mission of education, evangelization, and service inspired by the spirit of St. John Bosco.



MARIA DOUG - ANNUAL FEAST AT NANA BHANDHARPADA (MANDAL PARISH)

Fr. Sobers D'Cunha S.J.

The Annual Feast of Our Lady at Maria Doug was held with much preparation, zest and devotion on 1 Feb 2026, the first Sunday of February. All arrangements were made by the people from neighbouring villages and others. They not only take the initiative every year but also ensure that all things are done meticulously. It is the community of people who take care of all preparations and the finance.

On the day of the feast, from early morning the crowd started pouring in. The people climb up the mountain to thank Our Lady for her intervention in their needs and seek her intercession for their various requirements. Some brought in their gift of three new-born baby received through her mediation and therefore, to place at the feet of Our Lady. Continuous line of people waded their way through the crowds to have a darshan of Our Lady.

After the procession, Fr. Raman Dalvi S.J. officiated at the Eucharist in impeccable Gamit and rendered the homily in a moving manner. There were 12 priests in all concelebrating. Fr. Ashok Macwan S.J. conducted the Aradhana. The people from various villages shared the participation in various parts of the Mass. It was a participatory, synodal church in action.

After the Eucharist, the usual festive mood prevailed where people from all walks of life from the whole of Tapi district and many other places revelled in a worthy manner besides the devotional, prayerful, sentimental darshan of Our Lady. A large crowd of over 3000 locals and others participated and the festive mood prevailed till late in the evening.





Capt Aquí Menezes, Indian Airforce, Baroda participates in a Mass at the Bishops House on the occasion of his retirement.



Fr. Ravi, Fr. Navsa, Fr. Anish, three Diocesan priests in Rome.



Superiors Day celebration at MC Sisters, Vadodara.



Bishop Seby visits the Capuchin Seminary in Mysore. Third from right in the front row (sitting) is Gagan Makram, a student of Baroda Diocese.



Felicitation of Sisters worked in Baroda Diocese



Felicitation of Fathers who worked in Baroda Diocese



Felicitation of Sisters who worked in Baroda Diocese