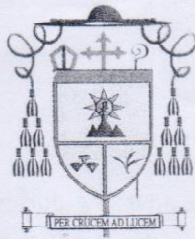


Bishop Cletus Chandrasiri Perera O.S.B.  
Bishop of Ratnapura



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THROUGH THE CROSS  
TO THE LIGHT

3r July 2017: CL/PRES/RN 99

TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF RATNAPURA

Dear Rev Fathers

God's Blessings and Fraternal Greetings

First of all, I take this opportunity to thank you all, the clergy, religious and lay faithful, with much gratitude, for sharing in my grief and that of my family members at the unexpected demise of my dear sister. Your visits and prayers at the funeral house and attendance at the funeral service, have been a great source of strength and consolation to me and y family members. Thank you for your graciousness.

1. We are happy to welcome Rev Fr Jude Gregory Fernando SSS to the parish of Mahena, Warakapola to serve in our Diocese. He too had a sad bereavement in his family in the demise of his dear mother. We offer our deepest condolences to Fr Jude and the members of his family, and assure him of our prayers.
2. **The next meeting of the Prebyterium will be held on Monday and Tuesday the 10th and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017**, beginning as usual at 4.30 p.m. on Monday. Those who will be coming for lunch on Monday are very kindly requested to inform Fr Sidath Wilegoda in advance. We shall spend the morning hours of Tuesday in recollection with confessions. You are very earnestly requested to participate in the programme of the two days without fail, unless you are excused for very compelling and unavoidable reasons, which have to be personally intimated to me. The continuous absence at the presbyteral gatherings can lead one **"to be isolated in one's own household"**, which is a sad experience which one can have in one's priestly life.
3. I have to leave for Midland, Canada, at the invitation of the Catholic Community over there, with the concurrence of the Diocesan Authorities, to officiate at their Annual Feast. I will be out of the country from July 14 to August 4, this year. Very Rev Fr Damian Fernando V.G. is also expected to go to the Diocese of Lake Charles, USA, on a mission appeal to raise some funds for our Diocese. He will be out from July 3 to 18. **Rev Fr Milton Wickramasinghe, Chancellor, will look after the Diocese as Administrator, during the period when both of us are out of the country.**
4. Rev Fr Vimal Thirimanne C.Ss.R has very kindly accepted to facilitate our Annual Retreat, which will be **from November 13 to 18, 2017. The Annual Retreat is a serious obligation of every priest.** I have



given you sufficient notice. Please do not fix anything during the week of the Retreat in your parish or personal agenda. I expect all of you to follow the full Retreat (just 4 days) without a break. Nobody is excused from following the Retreat. The Retreat is a time of grace and personal sanctification. It is a time, taken out of your busy schedule in order to be with the Lord in prayer and worship.

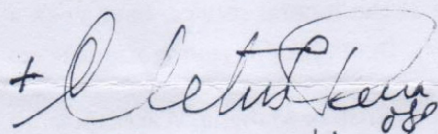
It is also a time when the devil surreptitiously plays his game, tempting you to avoid the Retreat by making more attractive and blissful suggestions which appear to be "legitimate". Please ensure that you do not get caught to him. "Be calm, but vigilant, because the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion for someone to eat. Stand up to him, strong in faith" (1 Peter 5, 8-9).

5. Rev Fr Noel Rowel is back in his parish, Utuwankande, after his by-pass surgery. He seems to be recuperating himself quite well.

May God Bless you all.

I accompany you with my prayers in your apostolate. With love and kind regards

Yours fraternally in the Priesthood

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Cletus C. Perera OSB', with a small cross symbol to the left.

+ Cletus C. Perera OSB

Bishop of Ratnapura

P.S. My diary for July and August 2017 is published in the Diocesan Bulletin