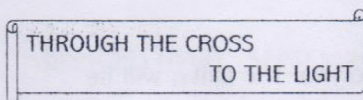


Bishop Cletus Chandrasiri Perera O.S.B.  
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29<sup>th</sup> August 2017: CL/PRES/RN 100

TO THE CLERGY AND THE RELIGIOUS OF THE DIOCESE OF RATNAPURA

Dear Rev Fathers and Sisters

God's Blessings and Fraternal Greetings.

Let me express my deep appreciation of the work you all are doing in the various fields of the Apostolate, of course, in varying degrees, for the growth of the Diocese, and thank you very much for same. I accompany you spiritually with my prayers, asking God to bless you and your ministry, and above all to keep you strong in your priestly and religious vocation.

1 (Relevant only to the priests). **The next meeting of the Presbyterium will be held on Monday and Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of September**, beginning as usual at 4.30 p.m. on Monday. All priests are earnestly requested to be present. The priests, who are coming for lunch on Monday, are kindly requested to inform Rev Fr Sidath about it in advance.

2. We shall have a symposium on Tuesday, beginning at 9.30 a.m. It will be facilitated by two senior and experienced Doctors who are also members of St Luke's Catholic Doctors' Guild, Colombo. They are Dr Maxie Fernandopulle, Pediatrician, Family Practitioner, Counselor and President of the Catholic Doctors' Guild, and Dr A.M. Sebastianpillai, M.D (Bologna), DFM and MCGP (Sri Lanka). The symposium will be on **"Sexual Deviation and related Issues"** such as Pedophilia, Homo Sexuality, Transgender and effects of Pornography etc. They will also deal with the issue of Abortion.

These are current issues which enter into our own spiritual life and pastoral ministry today. You all, the Clergy and the Religious, are kindly requested to participate in this important symposium without fail.

3. **St Joseph Vaz Rally**, as already decided, will be held on deanery level on Poya Day, October 5, beginning at 9.30 a.m. at Tanjantenna (Ratnapura Deanery), and on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9.30 a.m. at Kudagama (Kegalle Deanery). The two Deans are kindly requested to take the initiative to organize it successfully and fruitfully with the cooperation of the priests and religious of their respective deaneries. Please plan it out in such way that you spend only on the essential needs. Let us also maintain a certain degree of austerity, emulating the poverty of St Joseph Vaz in the two Rallis.

The priests of the two deaneries will have a discussion separately on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. after supper at the Bishop's House. **The Parish Priests are earnestly requested** to organize parish pilgrim groups to participate in the two Rallis. The details of the programme will be notified later.



4. The National Joseph Vaz Rally, organized by the Catholic National Commission for the Laity, will be held at St Anthony's Shrine, Wahakotte on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017, beginning at 11.00 a.m.

There will be an All- night Vigil Service of Prayer and Worship, ending up at 4.00 a.m. with Holy Mass on Sunday. Those who wish, may even visit Galgamuwa, the place of the National Shrine of St Joseph Vaz, where the Wooden Cross, used by the Saint, is enshrined. It is about a three-hour journey from Wahakotte to Galgamuwa.

4. With regard to the suitability of lay catholics to hold offices in the Diocesan and parish associations and administrative structures, the following policy decision was passed at the meeting of the Presbyteium, held on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 with immediate effect:

"Those catholics who are in irregular marital union and those who are leading publicly scandalous lives, are not entitled to be elected or appointed as office-bearers in parish and Diocesan associations and administrative structures. However, if such catholics are already holding such offices, they may continue to do so, until their stipulated period of service, namely three years, is over. Thereafter, they should not be appointed or elected to such offices. This policy decision is applied also to catechists".

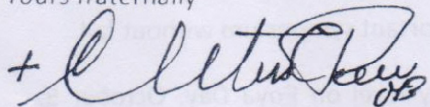
The Parish Priests and Assistants are kindly requested to announce this decision in Sinhala and Tamil on Sunday after receiving this letter, both in the main parish church and substations.

5. The Diocesan priests are informed that their monthly contribution of Rs 1000.00 to their pension scheme comes into effect from September 2017.

6. Our Lay Missionaries are completing 20 years of their apostolate in our Diocese this year. There are also priests who made their journey to the Sacred Priesthood from the Lay Missionary movement and priests who have been guiding them in our Diocese. We hope to have a Holy Mass of Thanksgiving with the participation of those priests. The date will be notified later.

With the assurance of prayers, love and kind regards

Yours fraternally



+ Cletus C. Perera OSB

Bishop of Ratnapura



BISHOP'S DIARY: SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2017

- September 1: Meeting with the Rogationist Superior General and Provincial
- September 2: Priestly Ordination of Two Jesuits in Negombo
- September 3: Jubilee Celebration, Balangoda Parish (Morning)
- September 3 – 6 : At Bulutota with the Seminarians.
- September 8: Meeting with the Lions (Morning)
- September 8: Children's Programme in Kegalle (Evening)
- September 9 and 10: Confirmation Services, Chilaw Diocese
- September 11 and 12: Presbyteral Meetings, Bishop's House.
- September 12: Building committee Meeting at Ruwanwella ( Evening)
- September 13: Outing with the Seminarians.
- September 16 : Meeting People of Dehigahapitiya on land issues (Morning)
- September 16 : Confirmation Service, Gurugalla.
- September 17: Church Feast at Eheliyagoda Estate
- September 24: Church Feast, Embilipitiya
- September 28: Clinique Day, General Hospital, Kandy
- October 1: Church Feast, Dehigahapitiya
- October 5: St Joseph Vaz Rally, at Tanjantenna, Ratnapura Deanery
- October 7: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass, Good Shepherd Convent, Keerapathdeniya
- October 12: Meeting of the Catholic National Commission for Liturgy and Culture in Colombo
- October 14: Badge investiture Ceremony, Holy Childhood Children at Gurugalla.
- October 22: Confirmation Service, Chilaw Diocese
- October 24: Meeting of the Commission for Interreligious and Ecumenical Dialogue, Colombo
- October 28: St Joseph Vaz Rally, Kudagama, Kegalle Deanery

+ *Chelva Ravi*