

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

1. ST JOSEPH THE WORKER AND INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

International Workers' Day is celebrated all over the world on May 1. Saint Joseph, the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus, was a carpenter who supported the holy family through his daily labour. The Church presents him as the protector and model to all who earn their own and their families' livelihood through manual labour. His example is used as an occasion to highlight the concept of work, and the fact that the holy family worked for a living is seen as a point of fellowship with most of the world's families. May St Joseph the Worker motivate us all to recognize the dignity of labour, however big or small, and accord due respect to all those who work in our parishes and institutions.

International Workers' Day is a day which upholds the dignity and labour rights of workers. Each year, the International Labour Organization (ILO) unveils a new theme to spotlight various aspects of workers' lives, rights, and aspirations. In 2024, the focus is on **“Social Justice and Decent Work for All,”** underscoring the fundamental principles of fairness, equality, and dignity in the workplace. Decent Work for all is an inevitable condition for the emergence of a just and humane society. Integral development of a country is directly related to the well-being of the workers living there. As per the International Labour Organization (ILO), fair wages, safe and healthy working conditions, job security, social protection, and opportunities for work and career development are the basic factors of Decent Work.

The day is an occasion to express solidarity and ensure dignity and labour rights of the working class who are the backbone of the economy. The theme for May Day 2024, given by the CBCI Commission for Labour is “**Decent Work for All: Synodal Church with Workers**” also invites us to show solidarity of the Church with the workers. The theme and the message has already been posted in the Chancery WhatsApp group. Let us celebrate the day meaningfully and support all the initiatives of the Commission for Labour in carrying out its objectives for our Diocese.

2. MAY DEVOTIONS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The May Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary refers to the special Marian Devotion practised in the Catholic Church during May honouring Mother Mary as the ‘Queen of May.’ The devotions include pilgrimages, visits to Marian shrines, small sacrifices in her honour, and devout recitation of the Rosary. Let us highlight the importance of Marian devotion in our messages, preaching, catechesis, etc., to the faithful in this month and also encourage the faithful to practice the Marian devotions in their families. Let us make it a point to teach this devotion to our children and the young in our parishes. I also encourage, wherever suitable, to organise community rosaries at parish or ward levels. It is appropriate that, as priests and religious, we too practise this devotion that nourishes our day-to-day spiritual life and provides spiritual strength in our pastoral ministry.

3. WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY – 12 May 2024

World Communications Day is celebrated each year on the Sunday before Pentecost; this year, it is on **12 May 2024**. The theme for this year is closely linked to the Pope’s message for the World Day of Peace, which was devoted to the development of systems of artificial intelligence (AI). AI is “radically affecting the world of information and communication, and through it, certain foundations of life in society,” says the Pope in his message, adding that “these changes affect

everyone.” So, the Pope asks, “how can we remain fully human and guide this cultural transformation to serve a good purpose?” In answering this question, the Holy Father notes that “at this time in history, which risks becoming rich in technology and poor in humanity, our reflections must begin with the human heart.” He recalls that, in the Bible, the heart is seen as the place of freedom and decision-making, “symbolising integrity and unity, while also engaging our emotions, desires, and dreams.” But, he continues, the heart is, above all, “the inward place of our encounter with God.” “Wisdom of the heart, then, is the virtue that enables us to integrate the whole and its parts, our decisions and their consequences, our nobility and our vulnerability, our past and our future, our individuality and our membership within a larger community,” says the Pope.

4. FAITH FORMATION CAMPS

It was heartening to note that a few parishes organized faith-formation camps for children in April on topics related to Faith, the Bible, etc. I wholeheartedly thank and congratulate the parish priests for these initiatives which certainly form a part of their pastoral ministry. I also request the other parish priests to take the initiative and organize faith-formation camps for children for 2-3 days in May with the help of Catechism teachers and the youth.

5. NEW DECLARATION *DIGNITAS INFINITA*

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith’s new declaration *‘Dignitas infinita’* builds on the papal magisterium of the last decade: from war to poverty, from violence against migrants to violence against women, from abortion to surrogate motherhood to euthanasia, from gender theory to digital violence. The declaration, released on 08 April 2024, has three chapters offering the foundations for the fourth, which is

dedicated to “some grave violations of human dignity”. The Declaration commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirms “the indispensable nature of the dignity of the human person in Christian anthropology.” The main novelty of the document, which is the fruit of five years’ work, is the inclusion of several key themes from the recent papal magisterium that accompany the bioethical ones. In the ‘non-exhaustive’ list that is offered, abortion, euthanasia and surrogate motherhood are listed as violations of human dignity alongside war, poverty and human trafficking. The new text thus contributes to overcoming the dichotomy that exists between those who focus exclusively on beginning-and-end-of-life issues, while forgetting so many other attacks against human dignity and, conversely, those who focus only on defending the poor and migrants while forgetting that life must be defended from conception to its natural conclusion. As individuals or in communities, let us read, study and familiarise with the contents of this declaration of the Dicastery of the Doctrine of Faith.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

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+ **Gerald Isaac Lobo**

PLATINUM BIRTHDAY

Rev. Fr John Barboza, Parish Priest
Infant Jesus Church, Pilar

06 May 2024

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

TO YOU DEAR FATHER

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