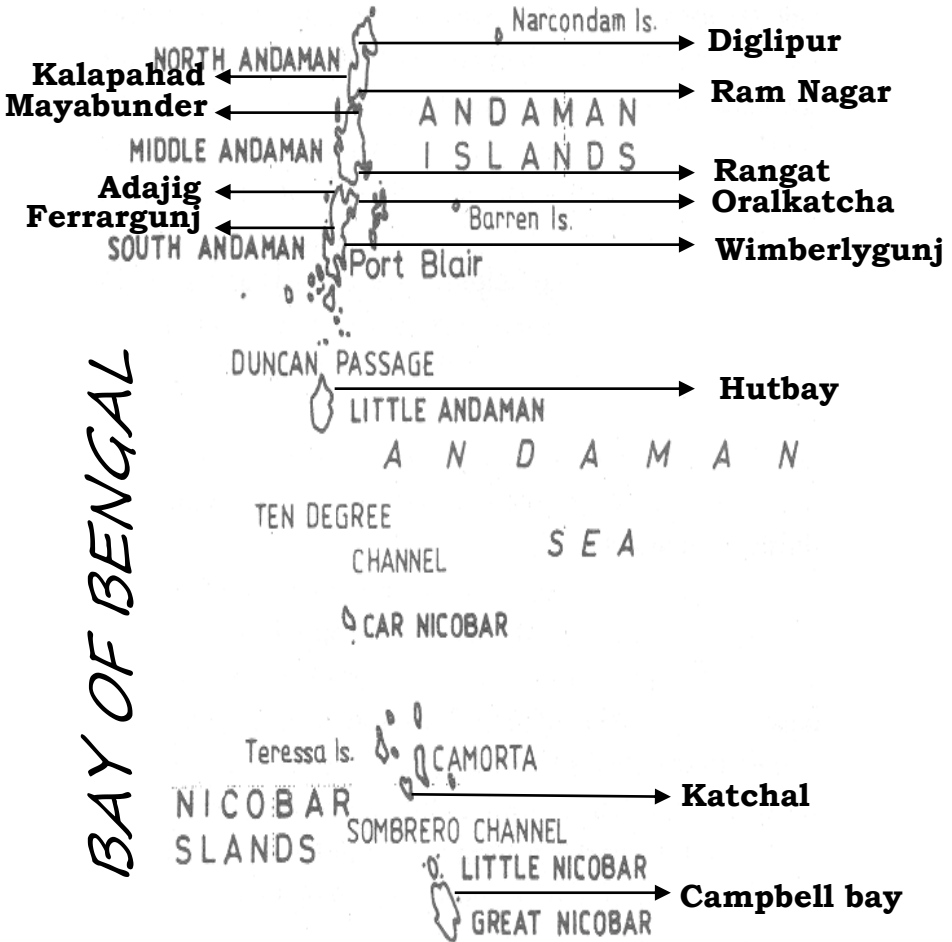


PORT BLAIR DIOCESE (ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS)



**“PUTS OUT INTO THE DEEP”
(Diocesan Pastoral Policy)**

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FOREWORD

It gives me a great pleasure to present the diocesan Policy of the Diocese of Port Blair to all the Baptized Catholics of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. I do it with a profound sense of gratitude to God Almighty who had it in His marvelous design to have his Church present and living in these remote Islands. It is my ardent hope and prayer that this Diocesan Policy will help us all to intensify our Christian faith and live according to the words of our Holy Father John Paul II, who urges us to “put out into the deep” cf “Novo Millennio Ineunte” No. 1 In fact, these are words of Jesus, who was telling his Apostle Simon Peter to “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch” cf LK. 5 : 4 In spite of the fact that Peter and his companions had “toiled all night and took nothing”, he did let down the nets “At Your Word”, he said to Jesus cf LK 5 : 5 And what a wonderful catch it was. LK : 5 : 6 tells us that “They enclosed a great shoal of fish.” I hope, similarly, that all of us, Catholics of this Diocese will “put out into the deep”, and do it “At Your Word” and intensify our efforts to be true and genuine Catholics, witnesses of our faith in these remote Islands.

OUR PROXIMATE PAST

This Diocesan Policy helps us to take a peep into the past, because it is the result of our common efforts made, in a systematic way, since the time the Belgian Jesuits of the Ranchi Mission and later, the diocesan priests of the Ranchi Archdiocese toiled hard for about 20 years to organize the group of Catholics, who lived scattered on these Islands. Even today we have people among us who, having been eyewitnesses to their work, pay glorious tribute to these gallant missionaries. Later, in the year 1965 the Pilar fathers took over the missionary work in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The sapling that was planted on these remote Islands was nurtured and trimmed by them and by the Sisters who were working with them. And it began to grow into a big tree, whose branches spread even over the Nicobar group of Islands. The Catholic Association, which had been formed earlier in 1955, grew stronger and better organized. It grew into different units like the tamil,

Malayali and Local Units. The Catholics Sabha, the Mahila Sangh and other Associations like the Youth Association, the Bal Sangh were established. And the Laity of the Diocese truly came alive in the Spirit of “Lumen Gentium”, which refers to them as “the faithful who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed in the people of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and to the best of their ability carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.” LG No. 31

The above Associations, working together with the Fathers and Sisters over these years have given birth to this Diocesan Policy. One name, which deserves to be mentioned here, is that of Fr. Tiburcio Ferrao who, being the Dean and Superior of the mission, is greatly responsible for the framing of this “Mission Policy”, which was later adopted by the Diocese as the DIOCESAN POLICY, and updated and amended to take this present form.

DIOCESAN EVALUATION

To add to the above Diocesan Policy, there were the findings of a survey and evaluation of the Diocese, which was undertaken in preparation for the Great Jubilee Year. While some dioceses celebrated the Diocesan Synods in preparation of the Great Jubilee – 2000, we had chosen to undertake a Diocesan Evaluation to see how faithfully we, the Church in Port Blair, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, had been living our call for holiness. It was our little effort made, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to evaluate as the local Church. We questioned ourselves about our own identity, we evaluated ourselves to see our strengths and our weaknesses, and we thought out steps that we should take in order to be more faithful to our Master. It was the same exercise done by the Universal Church during the Second Vatican Council, although done in a more modest way in our case. The findings of this evaluation have been integrated into this Common Diocesan Policy, hoping that they will also urge us on to see ourselves better, and to PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP. I record here my gratitude and the gratitude of the whole

diocese towards Rev. Fr. Sebastiraj SJ, who helped us to undertake this evaluation of our diocese.

In his Apostolic letter TERTIO MILLENNIO ADVENIENTE, the Holy Father John Paul II spoke of the need for the Church to be “more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children, recalling all those times in history when they departed from the Spirit of Christ and his Gospel and, instead of offering to the world the witness of a life inspired by the values of faith, indulged in ways of thinking and acting which were truly forms of counter – witness and scandal !” (TMA No. 33) The evaluation of the Diocese, therefore, was an examination of conscience. We now hope that this common Diocesan Policy will be for us a road-map to continue our journey towards our goal, which is the Heavenly Jerusalem.

OUR REMOTE PAST

On more occasions than one the Holy Father John Paul II has spoken about the usefulness of going back to the origins of one’s faith. The AD LIMINA visit, also called the Quinquennial visits, are precisely a pilgrimage the Bishops make to the origins of their Christian Faith to be strengthened in their own faith to be able to, in turn, strengthen those whom The Lord has entrusted to their care. The origins of our faith are always an experience, which fills us with awe, thereby contributing towards the deepening and strengthening of our faith. It has, therefore, been the common experience of the Bishops that the AD LIMINA visits are very enriching and inspiring.

While we try to look back to the origins of the Christian faith in these remote Islands, we cannot but be moved by the heroic efforts made by the various missionaries who had already ventured here in the 17th century. Recorded history of Christianity on these islands tells us that missionaries came to these remote islands, particularly, the Nicobar islands as early as 1690. They were, probably, also Portuguese

missionaries who landed on these Islands earlier in the 16th century and in the early 17th century. But no records are available. The first records are of Franciscan missionaries who landed here towards the end of the 17th century. They came from the Pegu mission in south Burmah. According to the existing documents, it was Fr. Angelo who came and settled down on “Nicobar”, which must have been Car Nicobar in 1690. Another priest, Fr. Manuel Gonsalves, joined him in 1694, but stayed only for a few months. Fr. Agnelo seems to have been murdered in 1695 in Car Nicobar.

Later, missionaries came from the Pondicherry mission. It is known that in 1709 Fr. Tessier de Queralay, of the Paris Foreign Missions, Pondicherry, had volunteered to go to the Islands, but was refused permission by his superiors in Paris.

In 1711 two French Jesuits of the Pondicherry-Carnatic mission settled in the Nicobars. The 2 priests who came to the Nicobar Islands were Fr. Pierre Bonnet and Fr. Pierre Faure. These settled down on Great Nicobar Island, and remained there for two and a half years. They also visited other Islands, specially Nicobar (probably Car Nicobar). After 10 months, as they wanted to return to Great Nicobar Island, the Nicobaries warned them not to go because “those people are cruel.” But they did return, and died within 2 weeks. According to some sources, they died of dysentery. But another version has it that they were poisoned. That was in 1714. The next missionary to go to the Nicobar was the French Jesuit Fr. Montalembert, who went there in 1741. He does not seem to have been there long, as he is known to have died in Pondicherry in 1743.

In the second half of the 18th century the Italian Barnabite Fathers are known to have worked in the Pegu mission of South Burmah. It is known that their jurisdiction extended to the Nicobar Islands. But they did not establish any mission stations there. However, Fr. Gerard Cortenovis, a Barnabite of the Pegu mission and a Vicar Apostolic, having jurisdiction over the Islands, is known to have died of illness on Nicobar Island in 1780.

Later in the 19th century, we know that Fr. Supries of the Paris Foreign Missions, who was working in Pondicherry in 1829, and who had heard

of the presence of Christianity on the Nicobars from a Danish Protestant Pastor who had gone to Nicobar and from an old missionary Fr. Mottet, because of the efforts of the Jesuits, more than a hundred years earlier, asked his Superior, the Vicar Apostolic, the permission to go to work there. But the Bishop refused him permission. However, later in 1834 Fr. Supries left the Pondicherry mission and joined the Siam mission, and once more volunteered to work in the Nicobars. His offer was accepted by his new Superior Monsignor Courvezy, the Vicar Apostolic of Siam, who gave him Fr. Galabert as a companion. They both went to Nicobar in June 1836. They stayed there only for 6 months, because they could not get any help from Siam. They suffered a lot, and seem to have even starved for lack of food. They left Nicobar and went to Penang.

Between 1842 and 1845 we find 4 French priests of the French Foreign Missions working in the Nicobar Islands. They are Fr. Charles Beaury, Fr. Joseph Plaisant, Jean Baptiste Lacrampe and Fr. Pierre Chopard. The greatest of these was, no doubt, Fr. Chopard, who came to Teresa Island together with Beaury in February 1842. They were actually headed for the Nicobars, but landed on Teresa because of the wind.

Initially the tribals received them well. However, later on a man from one of the neighbouring Islands told the tribals about how a plague had broken out after the departure from his Island, Car Nicobar, of 2 similar foreigners – Frs. Supries and Galabert – When the tribals heard this story, they were afraid that such a misfortune might happen again, and so they refused the missionaries the permission to stay. However, after a lot of discussions held with the tribals, Frs. Beaury and Chopard were given permission provisionally. But soon fever struck the missionaries, and both fell ill. It was Lent 1842, and Beaury was really experiencing the cross, as he lay sick. He was given the last sacraments by his companion Fr. Chopard, and he breathed his last during the night between the 1st and 2nd April. The natives helped Fr. Chopard to bury Fr. Beaury on the evening of the 2nd of April. But soon afterwards the natives came to Fr. Chopard complaining that there was no rain, and attributing the drought to the deceased missionary. And so they wanted

to exhume the body, give him food, and expose the corpse to be eaten by birds. Fr. Chopard

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refused them permission, and told them he would pray for rain. He prayed, and it rained. But now the tribals complained that it was too much.

Fr. Chopard continued on Teresa Island. He cared for the sick, celebrated the Holy Eucharist. "Why should I fear when the Good Lord has given me the inestimable favour to offer daily Mass, where I find peace and happiness" he used to say. He translated the prayers like the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Creed into the local language. "The language of the natives is so poor that often I am stopped in my work of translation because there are no proper and adequate words to express what I want to say. This language has no more than 2500 words," he wrote.

Fr. Chopard's superior sent 2 companions, namely Fr. Lacrampe and Plaisant to work with him. Lacrampe immediately got sick and had to leave. Yet another misfortune was to strike the missionaries. The people of Teresa killed some 15 to 18 sailors who had arrived on a ship, and plundered the ship and burnt it. The British sought revenge, and burnt a village, inspite of the fact that Fr. Chopard pleaded for mercy on their behalf. The natives then turned hostile, and Chopard and Plaisant had to leave Teresa, probably at the end of 1844. Another attempt to come back the following year ended in a failure. Both were struck with fever and the Islands remained hostile so, they left finally in 1845. Fr. Chopard died at Mergui on the 25th of June, 1845.

THE RANGOON - RANCHI JURISDICTIONS

Afterwards the archives of the Paris Foreign Missions report that a missionary was sent to the Islands by the Bishop of West Siam in 1850. Then Burmah was divided into three parts, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands being put under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of Rangoon (South Burmah mission, still entrusted to the Paris Foreign Missions). The Andamans were made a penal settlement at that time.

Freedom fighters came in 3 separate phases. There were the first rebels of the 1857 struggle, then batches of political prisoners from 1910 to 1921, and later again from 1932 to 1937.

We know that missionaries came more or less regularly from Rangoon to cater to the Catholic staff of the settlement at Port Blair and to the Catholic prisoners. The names of Fr. Renier and Bernard are mentioned as visitors to the Islands. The former is known to have died in 1871 and the latter in 1884. Other Priests kept visiting the Andamans from Rangoon, although their names are not recorded. In 1920 an agreement was made between the Archbishops of Rangoon and Ranchi. As catholic workers from the Chota Nagpur Mission came to work in the Andamans, they were in need of a priest, who could speak their language. And so priests were called from Ranchi, although the jurisdiction remained with Rangoon up to 1947. As the number

of forest labourers from Chota Nagpur increased in the Andamans, thanks to the recruitment done through the offices of the Ranchi Jesuits, under instructions from the Apostolic Delegate, jurisdiction was transferred from Rangoon to Ranchi in June 1947. Independence followed in August 1947.

I went through the origins of Christianity in our Andaman & Nicobar Islands and through the distant and more proximate history of the Church in our diocese precisely to undertake a pilgrimage to the roots of our faith here in these Islands, hoping that it will serve as a reminder to us that our faith is – and ought to be - a priceless treasure for us. To give it to us and to restore it to us. Jesus Himself suffered the torments of the cross. And to transmit this faith to us, and to sow the word of God on these remote Islands, many missionaries have shed their sweat, tears and even blood. Our examine of conscience should, therefore, lead us to ask ourselves the question as to how much we value this treasure, brought to us by the messengers of the Word of God. We should also ask ourselves what we ourselves are doing to transmit this gift of Faith to others. For we are all missionaries, made so by our Baptism and our Confirmation. The 2nd Vatican Council has made it clear to us that the Church, is

missionary by its very nature. (cf. AD GENTES NO.2) Just like the Father sent the Son, and the Son sent the Spirit, we are all sent to carry out and complete the mission, which was of Jesus.

And so the 2nd Vatican Council tells us : “Since this mission continues and , in the course of history, unfolds the mission of Christ, who was sent to evangelize the poor, the Church, urged on by the Spirit of Christ, must walk the road Christ himself walked, a way of poverty and obedience, of service and self – sacrifice even to death, a death from which he emerged victorious by his Resurrection. So it was that the apostles walked in hope and by much trouble and suffering filled up what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ for his body, which is the Church” cf AD GENTES NO. 5.

Today we are an established Church, having been erected into a full – fledged diocese since 1984. We have 13 Parishes, 14 Diocesan Priests, 4 Congregations of men religious and 11 Congregations of women religious. Our activities are on the increase, and the seed planted over 300 years ago, is growing according to the eternal design of God.

Each one of us, Baptised Catholics of the Diocese must be constantly aware of the marvelous treasure of our Faith, which has been given to us as a Gift by God so that we may live it and spread it. The natural beauty of the Islands and the sea that surrounds them is God’s special gift to us. Wonderful also is the composition of our Church, for we are a community consisting mostly of Ranchi Adhivasis, Tamilians, Malayalis and Locals. We are, indeed, like a beautiful garden with, basically, 4 kinds of flowers. As we walk the path towards our Eternal goal, we must make sure we do it together with love and unity, shunning all kinds of differences. Our walking together hand in hand must be a feature of our own characteristic spirituality. In our vision statement, which we have ourselves jointly formulated, we said!

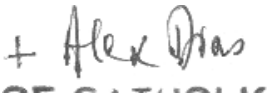
“Continuing the Mission of Christ, we the people of God in the Diocese of Port Blair – the Andaman and Nicobar Islands – baptized in one spirit into one body (I Cor. 12: 13), commit ourselves to build the Kingdom of God by a continued process of self evangelization specially through Small Christian Communities, to evangelize others with our social, cultural, educational, medical and other ministries, and by joining hands with other Christian Communities with the spirit of Ecumenism, thereby giving Christ to all the people of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.”

May this vision statement and the Diocesan Policy be truly a road map for us to follow as we pursue the way to sanctity here on earth, for we are “the Church to which we are all called in Christ Jesus, and in which we acquire sanctity through the grace of God”, and which “will attain her full perfection only in the glory of Heaven”. (cf LG, 48). On this way to sanctity, let us entrust ourselves to the Blessed Mother of Jesus, whom we honour with the name of Stella Maris, Star of the Sea, Sagri Tara. She stood by Jesus, her son, from the time she conceived Him with her “FIAT”, until she received His dead body on her lap, when it was brought down from the cross. She stood by the disciples of Jesus giving them courage and praying for them and with them, as the Book of the Acts of the Apostles tells us (cf. Acts 1:14). Therefore, we have every reason to believe that she will stand by us, for Jesus has given her to us. (cf John 19:26-27) to be our Mother. She had obtained the first miracle of Jesus at Cana through her prayer. Let us pray that she may obtain this new miracle of changing us from the hardened sinners that we are into Saints.

While I present this Diocesan Policy to the Church in Port Blair I owe a very special word of thanks to the committee which, at my request, worked very hard to prepare it for all of us. This committee was headed by Rev. Fr. Peter Soares, sfx and had as its members Rev. Fr. Patrick Kullu, sj, Fr. Visuvasam Selvaraj, Fr. Tarcious Kujur, Fr. Arul Raja, sdb, Fr. Cyprian Xalxo. To each one of them for applying themselves very diligently and for burning the midnight oil so many times I say a very heartfelt **THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU.**

I also thank Most Rev. Bishop Ferdinand Fonseca, the Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Bombay, Rev. Fr. Jose DeCuyper, sj, and Rev. Fr. Francis Mathijs, sj who took pains to go through this diocesan policy and offer us their valuable suggestions.

And finally my very special thanks to Fr. Visuvasam Selvaraj who, besides being on the committee, completed all the computer work single handedly. Thank you and God bless you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Alex Dias". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature, there are several horizontal lines, likely representing a scan artifact or a separator.

+ Alex Dias, S. F. X.

(BISHOP OF PORT BLAIR)

27.06.2004

Port Blair

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>LG</i>	Lumen Gentium
<i>SC</i>	Sacrosanctum Concilium
<i>GS</i>	Gaudium Et Spes
<i>PO</i>	Presbyterorum Ordinis
<i>CD</i>	Christus Dominus
<i>AG</i>	Ad Gentes
<i>IM</i>	Inter Mirifica
<i>CT</i>	Catechesi Tradendae
<i>CIC</i>	The Code of Canon Law 1983
<i>CCC</i>	Catechism of the Catholic Church
<i>SCC</i>	Small Christian Communities
<i>ER</i>	Evaluation Report – 2000

CHAPTER I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMON POLICY

VISION STATEMENT

“Continuing the Mission of Christ, we the people of God in the Diocese of Port Blair – the Andaman and Nicobar Islands – baptized in one spirit into one body (I Cor. 12: 13), commit ourselves to build the Kingdom of God by a continued process of self evangelization specially through Small Christian Communities, to evangelize others with our social, cultural, educational, medical and other ministries, and by joining hands with other Christian Communities with the spirit of Ecumenism, thereby giving Christ to all the people of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.”

Keeping this **VISION STATEMENT**, the following norms and regulations are formulated for the smooth running and for the growth of the diocese of Port Blair.

1.1 Diocese of Port Blair

The Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands comprises about 525 Islands situated in the Bay of Bengal. Its total area is 8249 Sq Kms with a population of 356, 265 (Census 2001). Port Blair is the Capital of the Union Territory. In the Diocese of Port Blair, we have people from all over India embracing different religions.

To serve the first Catholic Population of these islands consisting of a few convicts of the penal settlement of 1858 and some British officers, a Church was constructed on Ross Island, which was the then headquarters of the British Administration. After the First World War, when the Penal settlement was abolished, the Government felt a heavy shortage of man power to clear jungles, construct roads, buildings etc., and recruited labourers through the Catholic Mission Labour Bureau of Ranchi to work in the Forest Department of Andamans. Most of them were Catholics. To meet the spiritual needs of those people, a Catholic priest from the Archdiocese of Rangoon visited these islands twice a year since 1928. Since most of the Catholics were labourers from Chotta-Nagpur (Ranchi), on the recommendation of the Archbishop of Rangoon, the Holy See transferred the Church of Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the jurisdiction of the Ranchi Diocese in July 1947 and a new chapter was opened in the history of the Catholic Church here. Fr. J. De Cocq, SJ, a Belgian Missionary from Ranchi was posted as the first Parish Priest of these islands in 1947.

Since the Archbishop of Ranchi was finding it difficult to send priests, he requested the Society of the Missionaries of St. Francis Xavier, Pilar, Goa, INDIA, commonly known as PILAR FATHERS to lend him a helping hand. It was thus that the Pilar Fathers stepped onto the islands in 1965.

Seeing the progress of this mission, on 18th August 1984, His Holiness Pope JOHN PAUL II elevated this Mission to a diocese and entrusted it to **RT. REV. ALEX DIAS, SFX**, once a Pilar missionary in these Islands. From then on, the diocese has made a good progress.

At present the priests missionaries comprise of Pilar Fathers, Jesuits, Salesians of Don Bosco, Capuchins and Diocesan Priests. The Women Religious consist of Daughters of St. Anne, Apostolic Carmel, Sisters of Charity of St. Anne, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Ursuline Sisters, Missionaries of Charity, Handmaids of Christ, Daughters of Mary Immaculate and Sisters of St. Anne.

1.2 Bishop

The Bishop of Port Blair governs the diocese of Port Blair with legislative, executive and judicial power in accordance with the Code of Canon Law. The Bishop as the head of the diocese devotes himself to the ministry of teaching, sanctifying and ruling.

1.3. Scope

The Common Pastoral Policy is a great impetus to all Christ's faithful who are spread over all the major islands of Andaman and Nicobar, to grow in spiritual, moral and social spheres based on Gospel values.

1.4 Sources and Interpretation

This Common Pastoral Policy is in accordance with the Documents of Vatican Council II, The Code of Canon Law 1983, The Mission Policy evolved from 1965 onwards, the Yearly Recommendations of the Priests' Senate up to 2003, and the report of the evaluation of the Port Blair Diocese carried out by Fr. Sebastia L. Raj SJ on the occasion of the Great Jubilee Year 2000.

These policies are to be understood according to the proper meaning of the words considered in their text and context. If the meaning remains doubtful and obscure, there must be recourse to parallel texts found in the above mentioned source documents.

This policy is authentically interpreted by the Bishop.

CHAPTER II PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE

2.1 CHRIST'S FAITHFUL

2.1.1 Christians:

Christians are those, who, since they are incorporated into Christ through Baptism, are constituted the people of God. Hence, Christians participate in their own way in the Priestly, Prophetic and Kingly Office of Christ. They are called, each according to his or her particular condition, to exercise the mission, which God entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world. (See CIC 204)

2.1.2 Catholics:

Those baptized are in full communion with the Catholic Church here on earth who are joined with Christ in his visible body through the bonds of Profession of Faith, the Sacraments and Ecclesiastical Governance. (See CIC 205)

2.1.3 Clerics and the Laity:

By divine institution, among Christ's faithful there are in the Church sacred ministers, who in law are called clerics; the others are called lay faithful. (See CIC 207)

2.1.4 Religious:

Drawn from both groups are those of Christ's faithful who, professing the evangelical counsels through vows or other sacred bonds recognized and approved by the Church, are consecrated to God in their own special way and promote the salvific mission of the Church. (See CIC 207 §2)

2.1.5 All Christ's faithful:

2.1.5.1 All Christ's faithful are bound to preserve their communion with the Church at all times, even in their external actions, both towards the universal Church and the diocese they belong to.

They must make whole-hearted effort to lead a holy life and to promote the growth of the Church and to see that the divine message of salvation may, more and more, reach all people. (See CIC 209, 210 and 211)

2.1.5.2 All Christ's faithful, being conscious of their own responsibility, are bound to show Christian obedience to pastors who represent Christ, declare as teachers of the faith and prescribe as rulers of the Church. (See CIC 212)

2.1.5.3 Christ's faithful have the right to make known their needs; especially their spiritual needs and be assisted by their pastors from the spiritual riches of the Church, especially by the Word of God and the Sacraments. They have the right and at times the duty, in keeping with their knowledge, competence and position, to manifest to the Sacred Pastors their views on matters, which concern the good of the Church. (See CIC 212)

2.1.5.4 Christ's faithful may freely establish and direct associations which serve charitable or pious purpose or which foster the Christian vocation in the world, however, no initiative can lay claim to the title 'catholic' in the diocese, without the consent of the diocesan bishop. (See CIC 215)

2.1.5.5 Christ faithful have the obligation to provide for the needs of the Church, so that the Church has provisions that are necessary for divine worship, for apostolic and charitable work and for the worthy support of its ministers. (See CIC 212)

2.2 LAITY

2.2.1 Since lay members like all Christ's faithful are deputed to the apostolate by Baptism and Confirmation, they are bound by the general and particular obligation and they have the right, both as individuals and as associations, to strive for the promotion of divine message of salvation to all people. (See CIC 225)

- 2.2.2 There are several opportunities for the laity in the diocese to participate in the life of the diocese and the parish through associations, such as Diocesan Pastoral Council, Catholic Association, Catholic Mahasabha, Catholic Maha-Mahila Sangh, Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Youth, Catholic Sabha, Mahila Sangh, Yuvak Sangh, Tamil Community, Malayalee Community, Local Community, Small Christian Communities, Maria Sena, etc. These sanghs / associations are to be given impetus at the diocesan and parish level. (*ER 705.13*)
- 2.2.3 The idea that the Church belongs to the people should go deep into the people of the diocese. (*ER 113.18*) Hence, the pastors should be prepared to share responsibilities with the laity and give them specific roles. Lay members are to be given a say in decision-making process both at the diocese and at the parish level. They are to be made to feel that they are trusted. (*ER 113.3*). In dioceses such as ours, where the Catholic community is made up of various ethnic groups, efforts are to be made to bring about unity among people belonging to various cultures and languages. Discriminations, based on culture, language and sex are to be avoided. (*ER 104, 113.4, 9, 13*)
- 2.2.4 The latent talents of the youth should be identified, encouraged and utilized for the Church. (*ER 213.1*) The participation of the youth in the activities of the Church is to be appreciated and efforts should be made to promote their participation. They should get solid faith formation since they live in the midst of people belonging to other religions. Priests and sisters are to be trained to deal with the youth. (*ER 213*)
- 2.2.5 Those who are married are bound by the special obligation to strive for the building up of the Church through their marriage and family. Because they give life to their children, they have the most serious obligation and the right to educate them. (See CIC 226)

- 2.2.6 The situation in the Andamans is such that families have other people staying with them. (The word ‘muphlis’ is commonly used to refer to such people) These ‘third parties’ could be related like for example the brother of the husband or sister of the wife. Our experience taught us that these situations put the sacredness of the family in grave danger. The Parish Priests, Village Catechists, Panches and others must continue to play a prophetic role in implementing the ban on such people staying with families in order to preserve the sanctity of the family.
- 2.2.7 Since our Catholics are scattered in all places in small groups and it is impossible to have catholic schools everywhere, the problem of imparting catechism to children is a matter of great concern. The associations in parishes are to be motivated to make the parents realize the gravity of their duty. The Sunday school system is to be introduced in all centers and sub-stations. The report of the functioning of catechism is to be sent to the diocese / parish at regular intervals. Those who are teaching catechism are to be given training both at the parish as well as at the diocesan level.
- 2.2.8 Faith formation for the youth is to be given importance at the parish level. This is a must when we realize that our Youth are drifting away from the Church, and thus from God Himself. (*ER 213.1*)
- 2.2.9 Faith formation for the married couples is another area, which should be given impetus. Ways should be found to impart faith education to married couples.
- 2.2.10 Family visits by priests and religious is a must for building up personal relationship. (*ER 113. 1, 308.b.2*)
- 2.2.11 Tuition centers in the parish/dehats are to be started to give tuition to our school going children. Remuneration for teachers may be paid as fixed by the diocese.

- 2.2.12 To the laity of the diocese belongs the right to have involvement in secular affairs which is common to all citizens in India. In using this freedom, however, they are to ensure that their actions are permeated by the spirit of the gospel and the teachings of the Church when they deal in politics, social developmental activities and other activities. (*ER 705.18*)
- 2.2.13 The laity of the diocese have a special role to play when it comes to finding employment for our unemployed youth, offering professional training, help, guidance and advice. The pastors of the Church have also a special role to play in this regard. (*ER 212.8*)
- 2.2.14 Lay members who are suitable and capable may be admitted by the diocesan bishop to those ecclesiastical offices and functions in accordance with the law. They can be experts or advisors in councils in accordance with the law to provide assistance to the pastors of the Diocese. (*ER 213.8*)
- 2.2.15 Lay members have the right and the duty to acquire knowledge of Christian teaching so that they may be able to live according to this teaching, to proclaim it and to defend it. There is a need to popularize the Catholic magazines and periodicals. (*ER 113.8*)

2.3 PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS IN GENERAL

- 2.3.1 The diocese of Port Blair is blessed with religious hailing from several men religious institutes, and several women religious institutes besides a number of diocesan priests.
- 2.3.2 Apostolic Action is of the very nature of those who are dedicated to the Church as priests and religious. Members are, therefore, to be imbued with an apostolic spirit, and the whole of their apostolic action is to be animated by Holy Spirit.

- 2.3.3 A written agreement is to be made between the diocesan bishop and the competent superior of the institute while establishing the new institute in the diocese. This agreement must expressly and accurately define, among other things, the works to be done, the members to be assigned to it and the financial arrangement.
- 2.3.4 In matters concerning the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship and other works of the apostolate, Priests/religious are subject to the authority of the Bishop, whom they are bound to treat with sincere obedience and reverence. In this apostolate, there should be mutual trust, cooperation and collaboration between institutes and the secular clergy.
- 2.3.5 Priests/religious are to be specially trained and continued to be trained in prayer, asceticism, study of scripture, practice and celebration of liturgy and sacraments, etc.
- 2.3.6 Working knowledge of Hindi and good understanding of the culture of the people are a must for priests/sisters working in the diocese. In the case of religious priests and sisters this clause is to be added in the agreement between the institute and the diocese. (*ER 308.3*)
- 2.3.7 Frequent transfers especially of those involved in the pastoral field should normally be avoided. (*ER 310.5*)
- 2.3.8 Orientation program/on-going formation programs such as seminars/ talks are to be arranged by the Bishop for those working in the diocese. While the attendance is compulsory for priests, the sisters are strongly recommended to make use of these opportunities for their growth and for the growth of the diocese. When possible and when need arises, opportunities could be provided to attend courses in the mainland. (*ER 307.5*)

2.3.9 Priests and sisters should extend hospitality to the parishioners. They should be person-oriented and not task-oriented. They should be available to people, approachable, good listeners, not authoritarian, encourage co-responsibility, understanding, fair, impartial, broad minded and effective leaders. (*Evaluation Report n. 113.4,5, 305*)

2.4 PASTORAL SISTERS

2.4.1 The parish priest together with the sisters should make a monthly program for Parish Pastoral Sisters of his parish. The copy of the program must be sent to the Bishop.

2.4.2 The parish priest must involve the Parish Pastoral sisters while making major decisions for the parish along with the laity. (*ER 310.1*)

2.4.3 The parish priest must ensure that there is good understanding, relationship and proper communication between priests and sisters. (*ER 310.2*)

2.4.4 Personal needs and the privacy required for sisters are to be taken care while entrusting them with works. (*ER n. 307.3*)

2.4.5 While the sisters offer medical ministry at the center, they should also extend it to remote places and villages. Medical ministry should extend beyond dispensing medicines. It should include health education, hygiene, natural family planning, etc. (*ER 308.7, 310.7*)

2.4.6 The Pastoral / diocesan sisters shall be given a monthly honorarium which will be revised at regular intervals.

2.5 DIOCESAN PRIESTS

- 2.5.1. The diocesan priests are to show love, enthusiasm and commitment towards the diocese and its activities as the future of the diocese depends primarily on them. (*ER 303.2*)
- 2.5.2. The Bishop shall arrange orientation programs for diocesan priests for their spiritual and emotional growth.
- 2.5.3. Financial policy and other diocesan policies for the diocesan priests are to be complied with.

2.6 PRIESTS WORKING IN THE DIOCESE

- 2.6.1 Priests have a special obligation to seek holiness in their lives, because they are consecrated to God by a new title through the reception of orders, and are stewards of the mysteries of God in the service of God's people. In order to pursue this perfection, they will, in the first place, faithfully and untiringly fulfill the obligations of their pastoral ministry. They are to nourish their spiritual life at the twofold table of the Sacred Scripture and the Eucharist. Priests are therefore earnestly invited to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice daily, and deacons to participate daily in the offering. Priests and deacons are obliged to carry out the liturgy of hours daily. They are obliged to make monthly recollections as far as possible and make annual retreat of eight days organized by the diocese or elsewhere with the permission of the competent superior. They are obliged to engage regularly in mental prayer, to approach the sacrament of Reconciliation frequently, to honor the virgin Mother of God with particular veneration, and to use other general special means to holiness. They should be men of prayer. (*See CIC 276, ER 304.1, 305.1*)
- 2.6.2 Priests are to have due prudence in relation to persons whose company can be a danger to their obligation of preserving continence or can lead to scandal of the faithful. (*See CIC 277, 2*)

- 2.6.3 Priests are to continue their sacred studies even after ordination to the priesthood. They are to hold fast to the doctrines of the Church based on Scripture and Tradition. They are to avoid profane novelties and pseudo-science. (*ER 304.5*)
- 2.6.4 They are also to seek knowledge of other secular sciences; especially those linked with the sacred sciences, and be aware of current events particularly in so far as they benefit the exercise of the pastoral ministry. (*ER 304.5*)
- 2.6.5 Community life is necessary in the diocese. It is to be fostered by regular community prayers and meetings.
- 2.6.6 Priests are to follow a simple way of life and avoid anything, which shows signs of worldliness. They are to shun completely everything that is unbecoming to their state. They are to wear suitable ecclesiastical dress, during the liturgical/para-liturgical celebrations and in public meetings. (*See CIC 282, 285, ER 305.10*)
- 2.6.7 Without the permission of the competent superior priests are not to undertake the administration of goods belonging to lay people or take up other responsibilities.
- 2.6.8 Priests are forbidden to practice commerce, or trade, either personally or through others for their own or others' benefit, except with the permission of the competent superior. (*See CIC 286*)
- 2.6.9 The Parish priest has the obligation of ensuring that the Word of God is proclaimed in its entirety to those living in the parish. He is therefore to see to it that the lay members of Christ's faithful are instructed in the truths of the faith, especially by means of well-prepared homilies on Sundays, days of obligation and weekdays, and by catechetical formation.

- 2.6.10 The Parish priest is to ensure that the blessed Eucharist is the center of the parish assembly of the faithful. He is to see to it that the faithful are nourished by the devout celebration of the sacraments and in particular that they frequently approach the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation. In this connection, it is his responsibility to see that those who approach sacraments are well prepared by way of catechetical instructions (for baptism, confirmation, reconciliation and marriage).
- 2.6.11 To fulfill his office of pastor diligently, the Parish priest is to strive to know the faithful entrusted to his care. He is therefore to visit all families, entrusted to his care at least once in a year, sharing in their cares and anxieties and in a special way, their sorrows, comforting them in the Lord. If, in certain matters, they are found wanting, he is to correct them prudently. He is to help the sick and especially the dying in great charity, solicitously restoring them with the sacraments and commending their souls to God. He is to be diligent in seeking out the poor, the suffering, the lonely and those burdened with special difficulties. He is to ensure that families are sustained in the fulfillment of their proper duties and to foster the growth of Christian life in the family by daily prayers, bible reading, and by organizing seminars, meetings, etc.
- 2.6.12 The parish priest is to recognize and promote the specific role, which the lay members of the parish have, by fostering their associations.
- 2.6.13 He is to cooperate with his bishop and with the *presbyterium* of the diocese.
- 2.6.14 The parish priest / other priests are obliged to reside in the parochial house. They are not to be absent from their parish / residences, with the exception of their annual/biennial holidays and, on other occasions with the permission of the bishop and his superior.

- 2.6.15 The parish priest is bound on each Sunday and holydays of obligation to apply the mass for the people entrusted to him (*missa pro populo*).
- 2.6.16 In each parish, there are to be parochial registers and files, which are prescribed by the diocese. The parish priest is to ensure that entries are accurately made and that the registers are carefully preserved.

Conclusion:

Each priest, religious and the laity should entrust themselves to Mary, Mother most faithful whom we honour as our Patroness addressing as ‘Mary, Star of the Sea’ (Sagaritara). “In her life the Virgin has been a model of that Motherly love with which all who join in the Church’s Apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated” (*LG 65*). In her we will find constant protection and help for the renewal of our lives.

CHAPTER III SACRAMENTS

- 3.1 Meaning:** Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the grace proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.
- 3.1.1 The seven sacraments in the Church:** Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life: they give birth and growth, healing and mission to every Christian. The Christian life is nourished and sustained by these sacraments.
- 3.2 The sacraments of Christian Initiation**
Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist form the sacraments of Christian initiation, which lay the foundation of Christian life. through these sacraments the faithful attain the treasures of divine life and advance towards perfection.
- 3.2.1 The Sacrament of Baptism:** The sacrament of baptism is the basis of all Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door, which gives access to the other sacraments.
- 3.2.1.1** Baptism is normally administered during the Eucharistic celebration once a month in the parish. Before the administration of the sacrament, at least an hour of catechetical instruction must be imparted to parents and godparents of the baptized. For adult baptism, the Parish priest must see that the adult who receives Baptism, his/her parents, godparents are adequately prepared.
- 3.2.1.2 Formalities:** The baptism form is signed by the village Catechist, Sarpanch and President of the Mahila Sangh. The Locals, Malayalees and Tamilians will get their forms signed by the Village Catechist / President of the

community, (the form is also signed by their respective chaplain in Port Blair parish alone) and present the same to the parish priest at least one day prior to the day of Baptism. Mission Chanda and other contributions are to be cleared before administering Sacraments. Based on the above reports the sacrament of baptism is administered. However, it is to be noted that the Parish Priest is the final authority in deciding the conferring of Baptism.

3.2.1.3 Parents living in irregular union: When their children are brought for Baptism, Parish Priest must first rectify the parents' marriage before administering baptism to their children. When their marriage cannot be rectified, Baptism may be given to their children at a reasonable age with proper catechetical instructions if there is moral certitude of their Catholic upbringing (See C. 868).

3.2.1.4 Baptism Mass Stipend: When there is one or more Baptisms, the regular stipend is collected from each child.

3.2.1.5 In danger of death, the catechist and others should be instructed to administer the sacrament of Baptism. After administering the sacrament of Baptism the concerned party should notify the parish priest.

3.2.2 The Sacrament of Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace. It gives the faithful the Holy Spirit, to get rooted more deeply in the divine son-ship, to strengthen the bond with the Church as true witnesses

3.2.2.1. Catechetical Instruction: The duration of the catechism classes for the reception of confirmation will be of 15 days and the minimum age of the recipient should be 14 years completed.

The Syllabus:

- The Effects of Confirmation
- Subjects of the Sacrament
- The Minister of Confirmation
- IV** The Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- V** The Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- VI** How to live a mature Christian life?
 - i) Acts of the Apostles
 - St. Paul's Letters (1. Cor & Gal)
- VII** The sacrament of Reconciliation
- VIII** Bible
 - i) Introduction to Bible
 - ii) Bible History

3.2.2.3 Reference Books:

- i) Catechism for Growing and Grown Ups.
- ii) Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- iii) Vatican .II Documents
- iv) Rite of Confirmation
- v) Appropriate articles taken from Catholic Magazines.

3.2.3 The Sacrament of Eucharist

The Eucharist is the source and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates His Church and all her members with His sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to His Father. By this sacrifice He pours out the grace of salvation on His Body, which is the Church.

- 3.2.3.1 Children wanting to receive first Holy Communion should attend fifteen days of catechism class, and they should have completed eight years of age. Before they come for Catechism classes, parents and Sunday Catechism School should teach them the basic prayers so that they are better prepared to attend the course.

3.2.3.2 The following is the prescribed syllabus for the fifteen days of catechism class.

I Catechism:

- i) Revision of Ordinary prayers.
- ii) Ten commandments.
- iii) Church precepts

II Seven Sacraments in General

III The Sacrament of Eucharist

- i) The Eucharist – Source and Summit of Ecclesial Life
- ii) What is This Sacrament Called?
- iii) The Eucharist in the Economy of Salvation
- iv) The Liturgical Celebration of the Eucharist
- v) The sacramental Sacrifice: Thanksgiving, Memorial, Presence
- vi) The Paschal Banquet
- vii) The Eucharist – “Pledge of the Glory to Come”.

IV The Sacrament of Reconciliation

V Important Bible Texts

- i) Exodus, Manna, Passover
- ii) Mark 6: 32 – 44 Five Thousand are Fed
- iii) Mark 14: 12 – 16, 22 – 25 The Last supper.
- iv) John 6: 22 – 59 I am the Bread of Life

3.2.3.3 The priests and religious should exhort the faithful to offer Mass intentions and Mass offerings like *muttha sirini*..

3.2.3.4 Mass stipend is revised by the Bishop at regular intervals.

3.2.3.5 Collective Mass stipend is allowed only on the occasions of Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage and All Souls Day. During such masses each of the beneficiaries should contribute the normal Mass Stipend. Mass excess in these collective Masses should go to the parish.

3.3. The sacraments of Healing

The sacraments of healing are Penance and Anointing of the sick. Through these Christ continues, in the power of the Holy Spirit, His work of forgiving and healing for the salvation of all.

3.3.1 The sacrament of Reconciliation

Sin is before all else an offence against God, a rupture of communion with Him. At the same time it damages communion with the Church. For this reason conversion entails both God's forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church, which are expressed and accomplished liturgically by the sacrament of Reconciliation.

3.3.1.1 The preparation for the sacrament of reconciliation at the time of village tours – and on other occasions should be considered a must. Priests/Sisters/Head Catechist/catechists will prepare the people for confession with well-prepared examination of conscience.

3.3.1.2 The Parish priest must see that priests are made available for hearing confessions. (*ER 423.9*)

3.3.1.3 Well-prepared Community penitential services are to be held on special occasions.

3.3.2 Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

The Anointing of the Sick, by which the Church commends the faithful who are seriously ill to the suffering and glorified Lord so that He may support and save them, is conferred by anointing them with oil and pronouncing the words prescribed in the liturgical books. (see Can.998)

3.3.2.1 The faithful are to be instructed on the nature of the sacrament of the Anointing, which is primarily a sacrament of healing and comforting those who are seriously ill. Hence one should not wait to call the priest when the person is dying. The family

members / village people should inform the parish priest about the sick person in the family / village. When the priest is invited at home a small altar is to be prepared and the Christian faithful should be present.

- 3.3.2.2 Priests should visit the hospitals regularly and the spiritual needs of the sick are to be taken care of. Communion is to be given to the sick and the aged frequently.

3.4 The Sacraments at the service of Communion

The sacrament of Holy Orders and Matrimony are in the first place directed towards the salvation of others; they are also contributing to one's personal sanctification. They confer a particular mission to the Church and serve to build up the people of God.

3.4.1 The Sacrament of Holy Order

Holy Order is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry. The Holy Orders are the Episcopate, the Priesthood and the Deaconate.

- 3.4.1.1 **The life of Priest:** A priest is chosen by God and appointed for people in things pertaining to God (Heb.5:1) and offer Holy sacrifices for the sins of the world, to reflect the image of Christ and acts as a mediator between God and people. Priest is one who is interested in the salvation of souls, one who is abreast of the happenings of the world. Above all he should be a man of prayer.
- 3.4.1.2 A **strong** community life among the priests is to be promoted based on community prayer, common recreation, monthly recollection, Annual Retreat and concern for one another.

3.4.1.3 The **last** day of priests Annual Retreat be kept aside as ‘Priests Sanctification day’.

3.4.1.4 Priest’s Sanctification Day is to be celebrated at the parish level on the feast of St. John Marie Vianney

3.4.1.5 Vocation to Priestly and Religious life

3.4.1.5.1 Promoting Vocation to the priestly and religious life is a joint venture of Parents, Catechists, Vocation promoter, other Priests and Religious.

3.4.1.5.2 The Parish Priest should keep contact with the parents and village catechists regarding the possible candidates for priesthood and religious life.

3.4.1.5.3 Vocation Camp / Day be held every year at a convenient time, preferably before Summer at the parish level. The parish priests are to send the selected candidates for vocation camp at Prerit Niwas.

3.4.1.5.4 During summer vacation, Vocation camp is to be held at Prerit Niwas for those desiring to become priests and serve this diocese. The selection committee selects the suitable candidates for Prerit Niwas.

3.4.1.5.5 The recruitment of vocation to the Priestly and Religious life can be carried out only if that particular congregation has its presence in this Diocese.

3.4.1.5.6 Candidates for priests / religious will have to compulsorily live with priests / religious at least for 6 months before they are sent to the mainland. Parish priests and parents must guide the candidates wanting to join. The decision, as to which congregation they are going to join, should be a free decision of the candidate.

- 3.4.1.5.7 The parish priest should be informed about the candidate's decision. The respective Congregation scrutinizes the candidate and sends the candidate to mainland for further formation and studies. The parish Priest gives a conduct certificate to whomsoever concerned. In case the candidate is asked to discontinue, the information regarding dismissal is to be given to the Parish Priest.
- 3.4.1.5.8 The Altar Servers (Boys / Girls) Associations are to promote vocations to priesthood and religious life.
- 3.4.1.6 **Vocation Promoter**
- 3.4.1.6.1 The Diocesan Vocation Promoter is responsible for the promotion of vocations by visiting parishes/villages as far as possible.
- 3.4.1.6.2 The information regarding the vocation camp is to reach the parishes well in advance, preferably before the Lent so that priests could be advised to inform the faithful during Lenten touring.
- 3.4.1.6.3 There is to be a priest in charge of the formation of seminarians.
- 3.4.1.7 **Priestly Formation Committee**
- 3.4.1.7.1 The diocese is to have the formation committee under the guidance of the Vicar General. The members include the Vocation Promoter, the Rector of Prerit Niwas, the priest in charge of the seminarians and the diocesan procurator.
- 3.4.1.7.2 The formation committee shall meet at least once in six months.

3.4.1.7.3 The formation diary for students studying in the Prerit Niwas and for other seminarians are to be updated at regular intervals.

3.4.1.8 Seminarians:

3.4.1.8.1 The diocesan bishop shall admit candidates to Sacred Ministries whose human, moral, spiritual and intellectual gifts, as well as physical and psychological health and right intention show that they are capable of dedicating themselves to Christ's Mission.

3.4.1.8.2 During the years of formation, seminarians are to be trained towards the fruitful exercise of the pastoral ministry, and are to be inculcated with the *sense of mission*. They are to learn that a ministry, which is always exercised with lively faith and charity, contributes effectively to their *Personal sanctification*. They are to learn to cultivate those virtues which are highly valued in human relationships, in such a way that they can arrive at an appropriate harmony between human and supernatural values.

3.4.1.8.3 Seminarians are to be taught that filled with love for Christ's Church, they are linked to the Pope in humble and filial charity, to their Bishop as his faithful co-workers, and to their brethren in friendly cooperation. Through the common life in the seminary, and by developing relationships of friendship and of association with others, they are to be prepared for the fraternal unity of the diocesan *presbyterium*.

3.4.1.8.4 The Eucharist is to be the center of their whole life. They are to be formed in celebrating the liturgy of hours. They are to make frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament and have special devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary. The devotion to the Rosary, the practice of mental prayer and other exercises of piety are to be strongly recommended.

- 3.4.1.8.5 Seminarians are to become accustomed to approach the sacrament of reconciliation frequently. The Rector of Prerit Niwas is to make arrangements for the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once in a fortnight.
- 3.4.1.8.6 The Seminarians should have recourse to Spiritual direction at least once in two months. The names of the Spiritual Directors are to be made known to the Rector and the priest in charge of seminarians.
- 3.4.1.8.7 Every month the regents and seminarians are to make a monthly recollection. Once in a year the seminarians are to take part in an Annual Retreat of five days.
- 3.4.1.8.8 They are to be formed to observe celibacy and to learn to hold it in honor as a special gift of God.
- 3.4.1.8.9 They are to be given all the requisite knowledge concerning the responsibilities which are proper to the sacred ministers of the Church, concealing none of the difficulties of the priestly life.
- 3.4.1.8.10 Candidates for priesthood will have to study three years of philosophy and four years of theology in a place decided by the Bishop.
- 3.4.1.8.11 During their philosophical formation / regency, they are also expected to complete their secular graduation through the university prescribed in the Philosophate / diocese.
- 3.4.1.8.12 In between the philosophical and theological formation, seminarians are to have two years of regency in a place given by the Bishop. During this period the regent gets an opportunity to live in a community and to grow in his vocation in a fruitful manner.

3.4.2 The sacrament of Matrimony

Basing itself on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on family (GS 48), the Code of Canon law in n. 1055 marriage is defined as the covenant by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, and which of its own very nature is ordered to the well being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children.

Marriage between the baptized is raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.

Marriage is brought into being by the lawfully manifested consent of persons who are legally capable in the presence of a qualified witness and two other witnesses. This consent should be real and should be manifested freely by the parties. By this consent, a man and a woman by an irrevocable covenant mutually give and accept one another for the purpose of establishing marriage.

3.4.2.1 Marriage Procedure

3.4.2.1.1 Marriage preparation course shall be of 15 days. It is compulsory for all those who contract marriage in this diocese. The parish priest will judge any exceptions sought in this regard.

3.4.2.1.2 Here below is the suggested syllabus for the 15 days of marriage preparation Course.

- I. *Catechism.***
- i) Ordinary prayers
- ii) Family prayer and Rosary
- iii) Small Christian Community
- iv) Ten commandments
- v) Church precepts
- vi) Five models of the church

- vii) Family as a domestic church.
- II** The Seven Sacraments
- III** Marriage as a Sacrament
- IV Bible
 - i) Brief introduction to the Old and New Testament.
 - ii) Models from the Bible
 - Gen. 2:18-25 Adam and Eve
 - Gen.20: 1-18 Abraham and Sarah
 - Gen.29: 1-30 Jacob's Marriage
 - Hosea.6: 4 – 6 Willful Transgression of the Covenant.
 - Tobit.8: 4 – 8 Tobit and Sarah
 - Mt. 1: 18-25 Joseph and Mary.
- V Teachings of Christ and the Church on Marriage
 - i) Old Testament
 - Lev.15: 1-33, Lev.18: 1-30, Proverbs.31: 10-31
 - ii) St. Paul's letters - 1 Cor.7: 1-40, Eph.5:
 - iii) Vatican. II documents
 - Dei Verbum No.11, Gravissimum Educationis Nos. 2-9, Gaudium et Spes Nos. 47- 52
- VI** Education to Life
 - i) Husband and wife love relationship
 - ii) Dignity of human life.
 - iii) Communication and acceptance
 - iv) Natural family planning
 - v) Child a gift of God – Abortion – Culture of death
 - vi) Parent and Child relationship
 - vii) **Marriage, a social institution.**
 - a. Social problems
 - b. Marriage problems
 - c. Financial management
 - d. Education of Children

NB: Use Communication kits – Audio – Video, etc.

Reference Books

- i) Khristia Vivah
 - ii) Dono ek Tan, Matrimony
 - iii) Catechism for Growing and Grown Ups
 - iv) Catechism of the Catholic Church
 - v) Pastoral Guide, Vol.II
- 3.4.2.1.3 Doctors, Nurses, Couples, Bankers and suitable people from other walks of life should be invited to address those who attend the marriage preparation course so that the candidates are better prepared to live their married life and to face the different situations that come on their way.
- 3.4.2.1.4 The bachandat forms duly filled and signed by the village catechist, panches and the president of the Mahila Sangh should be produced along with the Baptism / confirmation Certificate and No Objection Certificate. After all formalities are completed, the date has to be fixed for Engagement (Bachandat).
- 3.4.2.1.5 Engagement (Bachandat) should take place in the presence of parish priest or his delegate, parents and two witnesses.
- 3.4.2.1.6 On the day of Engagement (Bachandat), the priest must question the Bridegroom and the Bride separately about their consent as per the questionnaire in use in the Diocese. The Priest taking the bachandat calls the parents and the two witnesses of the Bride and Bridegroom and in front of all asks the Bride and Bridegroom to express their wish to marry one another in their own words. By this the priest, parents and witnesses will know the free state of the Bride and the Bridegroom. However the engagement does not result in a strictly binding obligation to marry one another.
- 3.4.2.1.7 In the Engagement (*mangni*) ceremony the customs and traditions proper to various communities are to be respected and followed.

- 3.4.2.1.8 The following contributions are to be made at the time of engagement as per the diocesan policy.
- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| i) Engagement Fee (Bachandat) | Rs.25/- Per party |
| ii) Church Gift | Rs.50/- Per party |
| iii) Handia Deposit | Rs.100 Per party |
| <i>(For Adhivasi Community Only)</i> | |
| iv) Nuptial Mass | Rs.50/- Jointly |
| v) Picture of the Holy Family or Sacred Heart | Rs.75/- Jointly. |
- 3.4.2.1.9 The date and time of the marriage should be fixed in such a way that three banns are proclaimed and there is sufficient time after the banns, for the parties to produce the No Objection Certificate.
- 3.4.2.1.10 Only the Parish Priest has the right to give ‘No Objection Certificate’ to the marrying party.
- 3.4.2.1.11 All those wishing to get married in mainland should get a ‘No Objection Certificate’ from their respective Parish Priests before their departure. After their marriage at mainland they should bring their marriage certificate and present the same to their parish priest.
- 3.4.2.1.12 After the proclamation of three banns the no objection certificate from the catechist is not required except when there is a long gap of minimum six months between the proclamation of banns and the celebration of marriage and when the parish priest has reasonable doubts.
- 3.4.2.1.13 When the ‘No objection certificate’ is required it has to be in the form of a letter and not a telegram.
- 3.4.2.1.14 If either of the parties or both parties have not received confirmation yet, the parish priest should make sure that they receive confirmation after the wedding or the parish

priest applies in writing for faculty to administer the sacrament. (Administering the sacrament of Confirmation without this written faculty obtained from the bishop, the sacrament will be invalid unless it is the case of adult Baptism)

3.4.2.1.15 Banns cannot be dispensed with except for grave reasons. The Dispensation Fee for one bann is of Rs.50/-. For dispensation from more than one bann, an application in duplicate with adequate reasons has to be produced and permission obtained from the Bishop well in advance with a dispensation fee of Rs.50/- for each of the banns.

3.4.2.1.16 Nuptials are followed by the consecration of the new family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

3.4.2.1.17 After the Marriage, the Parish Priest should notify to the place of Baptism (of both parties) about the change in the state of parties, to enable the Parish priest to make necessary note in the Baptism register.

3.4.2.2. **Procedure in Rectification of Marriage**

3.4.2.2.1 As per the norm laid down by Catholic Maha Sabha, in case of the rectification of irregular marriages of an adhvasi family an amount of minimum Rs.200/- and maximum of Rs.500/- should be collected from each party. This amount will be divided into three parts, i.e. one for those who attend the meeting, the second for village church and the third for the parish church. If there is no village church the second share will go to the parish. When a girl is brought from mainland in view of marriage the girl should be admitted in the Grihini School.

3.4.2.2.2 In case the girl refuses to marry the boy who brought her, his demand for a moderate compensation is to be paid by the next boy who is going to marry her. However, this is to be settled in the Village Catholic Sabha. But if the boy who

brought the girl or anyone who kept the girl in his / her house and incurred expenses over her is found guilty of breaking any norms of the Catholic Sabha, has no right for such compensation. The Parish Priest should try to solve these and other complicated cases with the help of the Village Catholic Sabha.

- 3.4.2.2.3 As per the norm laid down by Catholic Maha Sabha, any adivasi girl who has not completed atleast the ninth standard in School, is to compulsorily undergo at least five months' course in Grihini School, either in Mayabunder or in Port Blair before her marriage.

3.5 Para-Liturgical Celebrations

3.5.1 Sacramentals

The Holy Mother Church has instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs, which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them Christians are disposed to receive the chief effects of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy. These sacramentals help all believers to lead the Christian life more fully and effectively. (See CCC 1667)

- 3.5.1.1 Among sacramentals, blessings (of persons, meals, objects, and places) occupy an important place. They include both praise of God for his works and gifts, and the church's intercession for people that they may be able to use God's gifts according to the spirit of the Gospel. (See CCC 1671)
- 3.5.1.2 The Christian life is nourished by various forms of popular piety, such as the veneration of relics, visits to shrines, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, scapulars, medals, etc.

3.5.2 Christian Funerals

In general all the sacraments have as their goal the last Passover of the child of God, which through death, leads him into the life of the Kingdom. (See CCC 1680)

- 3.4.2.1 The Christian meaning of death is revealed in the light of the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ in whom resides our only hope. In all Christian families it is good to cultivate the habit of praying for a good and holy death.
- 3.4.2.2 The Christian funeral is a Liturgical celebration. The faithful express an efficacious communion with the deceased by participating in that communion of the community gathered for the funeral and proclaim the eternal life promised to them by the risen Lord.
- 3.4.2.3 As far as possible, priest should be called for conducting burial rites. When the funeral rites are conducted by village catechist, the information regarding the death and the burial should be sent to the Parish and the Parish Priest should make necessary entry in the Death Register.
- 3.4.2.4 There should be a burial committee in each parish to take care of the burial ground and follow some by-laws to help the Christian faithful to have a meaningful burial.
- 3.4.2.5 The special Contribution (Murda Fund) made in the Parishes on the 2nd of November, is to be sent to the Diocesan procurator. This fund is used for the funerals of those who are helpless, poor, abandoned, and orphans who die either in the hospital or in the parish. After such funerals the Parish Priest should produce the details of the expenditure to the Diocesan Procurator and collect the same from him.

CHAPTER IV

PASTORAL MINISTRY

Introduction

Pastoral ministry is a reflection of the ministry of Jesus who proclaimed himself to be the Shepherd who came to give life and life in abundance to his sheep (Jn 10:10)

4.1 Promotion of Liturgical Life in the Diocese and in Parishes

4.1.1 **Eucharist:** “At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.” (SC 47)

4.1.2 **Active Participation:** “The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators. On the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God’s Word, and be nourished at the table of the Lord’s Body. They should give thanks to God. Offering the immaculate victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, they should learn to offer themselves. Through Christ, the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and each other, so that finally God may be all in all.” (SC 48)

4.1.3 **The Bishop as the High Priest:** The bishop is to be considered as the high priest of his flock, from whom the life in Christ of his faithful is in some way derived and dependent. Therefore all should hold in great esteem that the liturgical life of the diocese centered around the bishop, especially in his cathedral church; they must be convinced that the pre-eminent manifestation of the Church consists in the full active participation of all God's holy people in these liturgical celebrations, especially in the same Eucharist, in a single prayer, at one altar, at which there presides the bishop surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers

But because it is impossible for the bishop always and everywhere to preside over the whole flock in his Church, he cannot do other than establish lesser groupings of the faithful. Among these the parishes, set up locally under a pastor who takes the place of the bishop, are the most important: for in some manner they represent the visible Church constituted throughout the world.

And therefore the liturgical life of the parish and its relationship to the bishop must be fostered spiritually and practically among the faithful and clergy; efforts also must be made to encourage a sense of community within the parish, above all in the common celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. (SC, nn 41-42).

In view of fostering this relationship, the Bishop makes pastoral visits to parishes at least once in a year.

4.2.4 **Concrete norms** to be observed during the Holy Eucharist in the Diocese:

- As a mark of respect and reverence for the salvific action of Christ silence must be maintained in the Church.
- The celebrant and concelebrants should maintain reverential and devotional postures and gestures during liturgical and para-liturgical services.

- The Liturgical vestments, altar clothes, purificators, sacred vessels, Liturgical books are to be kept neat and tidy. Unnecessary things like books, registers are not to be kept on the altar. No transparent albs are to be used during common liturgical celebrations.
- The faithful should come for mass on time and leave the Church after the final hymn.
- Faithful should be encouraged to offer masses on various occasions, such as birthdays, feast days, wedding days, death anniversaries, when someone is sick, retirement day, thanksgiving for graces received, etc.
- Group masses for associations/sabhas, such as, Crus Vir, Yuvak Sangh, Mahila Sangh, Maria Sena, and linguistic groups such as Adhivasis, Tamilians, Malayalees, Locals, besides special masses for Small Christian Communities, should be encouraged. Similarly group masses are to be organized regularly in the institutions run by us, for example, schools, hostels. Grihini school, etc. (*ER 625.12*)
- During the Holy Mass, the singing should be congregational. Hence hymns are to be chosen in such a way that the whole congregation is able to participate and sing. The role of the choir is to lead and help the congregation to sing, not to take over from the congregation.
- The singing and music during liturgical celebrations should be appropriate, relevant and prayerful. Musical instruments that drown the congregational singing should be kept away.

- During Holy Mass, only priests and deacons read the Gospel.
- Homilies should be well prepared and well delivered. They should be relevant to the life of the faithful.
- Prayer of the Faithful is to be prepared on every Sunday, Holy days of Obligation and on special occasions.
- Offertory procession is to be held at every mass.
- Doxology is sung only by the celebrant and concelebrants
- The Sacred Body of Christ is broken only during *Agnus Dei*.
- The faithful receive Holy Communion in the hand in a reverent and uniform manner in the entire diocese. (i.e. between the index finger and the thumb of the right hand. The right hand should be resting on the palm of the left hand). If however, both sacred species are distributed, then the faithful will receive only on the tongue. The faithful retain the freedom of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue.
- In the convents/group masses, the Holy Communion is to be received from the priest. The ciborium/chalice is not to be passed around.
- Silence should be observed for a few minutes after the Holy Communion to thank the Lord. No hymn is to be sung after the Holy Communion is distributed.

- Every Parish should have Liturgical Committee, which will organize and over-see the Liturgical celebrations in the Parishes and villages.
- Every parish should have an Altar Servers' Association. The altar servers should be properly trained to serve at the altar. Monthly meeting is to be held for the Altar Servers.
- Lectors are to be chosen from among the laity and they should be given special training to proclaim the Word of God in a worthy manner.
- Village Catechist should be trained at the regular intervals to read the Word of God and to proclaim the Message.

4.2.5 **Liturgical Calendar for the diocese**

A Solemnities

1. Christmas is to be celebrated with much solemnity at the center, and in sub-stations wherever possible.
2. Holy Week, Holy Triduum and the Easter are to be celebrated with due solemnity and devotion. The faithful are to be instructed to participate in the Holy Triduum and to hold Easter as the greatest solemnity for every Christian.
3. The Feast of Stella Maris is solemnity for the diocese. It is to be celebrated with due solemnity in all parish churches.
4. The dedication of Stella Maris Cathedral is to be celebrated as a Solemnity on 20th January every year at the Cathedral Church as well as in other Parish churches.

5. The Feast of the Patron Saint of the Parish and sub-stations are to be celebrated in their respective churches/chapels with due solemnity, preceded by a novena or Triduum.
6. Feast of Christ the King is to be celebrated with solemn Eucharistic procession.
7. As far as possible all priests must try to concelebrate with the Bishop the Chrism Mass during Lent.

B Feasts/Devotions

1. The Feast of the religious congregations is to be celebrated in their respective parishes.
2. The following feasts are to be celebrated by different groups: (*ER 107.a.4*)
 - a. Catholic Association: Feast of Christ the King
 - b. Catholic Mahasabha/Catholic Sabha/Fathers' Day: St. Joseph, the worker
 - c. Maha Mahila Sangh/Mahila Sangh/Mothers' Day: Feast of St. Monica on or around 27th August.
 - d. ANCY/Yuvak Sangh: Feast of St. John Bosco on or around 31st January.
 - e. Crus Vir: Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross-on 14th September.
 - f. Altar Servers' Association: Feast of St. Stanislaus Kostka on 13th November.
 - g. Family Day: Feast of Holy Family.
 - h. Priests' Sanctification Day : Feast of St. John Vianney on 4th August.
 - i. Catechist Day: Feast of St. Francis Xavier on 3rd December.
 - j. Senior Citizen's day: Feast of St. Joaquin and St. Anne on 26th July.
 - k. Adivasi Community: Feast of Karam on the third Sunday of September.

- l. Tamil Community: Feast of Pongal on or around 14th January.
 - m. Malayalee Community: Feast of St. Thomas on or around 3rd July.
 - n. Local Community: Feast of St. John the Baptist on 24th June.
3. Procession in honor of Blessed Virgin Mary is to be organized and celebrated in every parish and sub-stations during the month of May.
 4. Pope's day is to be celebrated. Respect and loyalty to the Holy Father is to be instilled in the hearts of our people. A solemn program should be organized in all centers.
 5. The Feast of Naya-Khani is to be celebrated with enthusiasm.
 6. Feast of Sohrai (Feast of the blessing of cattle) is to be celebrated. If priests are not available, the village catechist should pray over the cattle and sprinkle with Holy water.
 7. All souls day is to be celebrated at the Cemetery on 2nd of November.
 8. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is to be promoted on the First Friday of the month.
 9. Devotion to Immaculate Heart of Mary is to be promoted on the first Saturday of the month.
 10. Unity Octave from 18th to 25th January is to be observed in all parishes. Ecumenical prayer meetings are to be arranged these days along with other Christian denominations.
 11. Mission Sunday, Holy Childhood, Vocation Day, Peter's Pence day, Campaign against Hunger and Disease, World

Communication Day, SC/ST Day, Siksha Fund day, Bible Sunday and Justice Sunday are to be celebrated.

C Blessings/other Liturgical Norms

1. Blessing of Paddy seeds before they are sown.
2. Family blessing during Easter season is to continue.
3. During Lent, way of the cross and retreats/ recollections should be organized for all groups.
4. Daily family prayer, inclusive of Holy Rosary should be insisted upon.
5. Putting up of Oratory (*ghar vedi*) in every home is to be insisted upon. Our slogan should be, “No Catholic house without a family altar”.
6. On the day of Marriage, the newly wedded couple is to be given a picture of Holy Family or Sacred Heart of Jesus and the new family should be consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
7. In all parish Churches Tabernacle and the Altar should be permanent and fixed. In other chapels/Churches, altar is to be a permanent and fixed as far as possible.

4.3 PASTORAL TOURING SYSTEM

Since parishes are vast in our diocese, they are divided into various villages. And most of these villages have their village chapels where the faithful gather together on Sundays and other days of obligation and pray together. However it is the responsibility of the Parish Priest to arrange tour program regularly in these villages, so that the faithful living in these areas may be enriched by the word of God and the Celebration of the Sacraments, specially the Holy Eucharist, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

- 4.3.1 Tour program should be organized in villages once in four months, once during advent, once during Lent and once in between the Lent and the Advent. Besides these **Tour** masses, priests should arrange monthly / weekly masses / daily masses as far as possible. (*ER 423.1*)

- 4.3.2 Before the priest sets out for the Tour Mass, he should make sure that all that is needed for the worthy celebration of the Holy Eucharist, such as Vestments, wine, host, etc are taken and they are neatly arranged in a suitcase and not in a bag where they will be creased.
- 4.3.3 During the tour program, the evening program could be as follows:
- When the people gather, Holy Rosary could be started to foster devotion and to create a sense of unity.
 - The meeting follows the rosary. These meetings are to be considered as the most important part of the touring day. The meeting should precede the confession and serve as a preparation for it. (*ER 423.6*) Wherever possible, after the meeting is over, practice of hymns, readings and prayers could take place.
 - Baptism may be administered during the Holy Eucharist in villages, which are divided by sea or backwaters.
 - The villagers are to put up a small residence for priests and sisters to rest with the toilet facility. As far as possible, the Chapels are not to be used as places of rest.
 - Attendance should be taken of all those who have come to Church. Efforts to be made to insist with Pracharakas to keep their registers in order regarding the following items. Etwar Hazri, mission chanda, mission dhan, catechism register, catholic sabha hazri and catholic sabha register, etc.
- 4.3.4 At least once a year, all houses are to be visited by priests working in the parish.

4.4 SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

- 4.4.1 Small Christian Communities, known in Hindi as *Lagu Christia Samudai* (as also known as Basic Christian Communities or Small Ecclesial Communities) are communities that help Christians to live like early Christian Communities, which were believing, praying, loving and sharing communities. They offer personal insight into the Word of God and its significance for daily living. “They are a solid starting point for a new society based on a civilization of love” (*Redemptoris Missio* 51).
- 4.4.2 A diocese is a *Communion of Communities*. The diocese is not amorphous whole. Nor is it an organization with a bureaucratic set-up amid a network of institutions. In accordance with the nature of the Church, a diocese should be a community of the people of God. At present, the traditional parish set-up is the main axis around which the ministry of the Church is organized. This traditional set-up has been immensely fruitful and does have its practical advantages and conveniences. Still, in the context of the new situation and challenges, keeping in mind the nature of the Church, another contemporary approach is necessary to build up the Church and to spread the kingdom of God. Thus to form the community of the people of God within the diocese, formation of Small Christian Communities is essential and it is proved to be pastorally effective in places where they have been established and has been functioning.
- 4.4.3 In the diocese of Port Blair, it is resolved to promote Small Christian Communities on a topmost priority basis in all the parishes. (*ER 705.15*)The priests/religious are expected to be active in this pastoral apostolate of the parishes and the diocese. (*ER 107.a.1, 303.10*)The indispensable role of the laity in the mission of the Church needs to be emphasized here. The laity are the most important missionaries of the Gospel to reach out to the people. Hence, once established, these SCC shall effectively provide a forum at the grass-root level to participate in the life of the Church.

4.4.4 Practical norms

4.4.4.1 The Small Christian Communities are characterized by the qualities of:

- Communitarian spirit
- Neighborhood spirit
- Sharing spirit
- Ecclesial openness

Therefore the formation of Small Christian Community would entail the following factors:

- a. Considerable awareness and conscientization has to be given at the parish and village level before introducing Small Christian Communities.
- b. The parish priest is the coordinator as well as the spiritual director of Small Christian Communities in his parish. The other priests and religious are to cooperate in this spiritual activity of the parish.
- c. The parish, which is constituted of a number of villages, is formed into one community of communities.
- d. Each community would be constituted approximately with 10 families. Care is to be taken that not a single family or individual is left out from the community.
- e. Each community would elect at least two lay animators who are immediately responsible for the functioning of these communities. The elected members are to be preferably married persons. These elected members shall form the village Core-SCC committee. From

every five Small Christian Communities one animator shall be elected to form the *Parish Core SCC Council*.

- f. Communities would meet once a week for prayer and other activities. The prayer should be centered on the Word of God.
- g. Village Core committee shall meet once in three months to share their experiences of the community. During this meeting, the Parish Priest or his assistant is to be present.
- h. *The Parish Core SCC Council* shall meet at least once in six months to share their experiences with each other.

4.4.4.2 **Membership:** All baptized Catholics are the members of the Small Christian Communities. Members of other pious associations, such as Legion of Mary, etc too are members of the SCC

4.4.4.3 **Proposed Mode of Prayers:** All these years Lumko method of prayer has been followed in these SCCs. Following prayer methods are proposed here to make these communities more effective: (*ER 107.a.1*)

- Lumko Prayer
- Other Bible Sharing Methods
- Biblical Rosary
- Eucharistic Celebration
- Traditional form of by-heart prayers
- Charismatic Prayers
- Look-Listen-Love method of prayer, etc.

4.4.4.4 The programs of SCCs., would cover various dimensions of human existence such as, physical, intellectual, economic, social, psychological, cultural, inter-religious, civic, political and spiritual. Their aim is to restore all things in Christ.

4.4.4.5 The activities of these small Christian Communities cannot be stratified or be limited to just a few stereo typed activities. In the spirit of the words of our Lord, “I have come to give life, life in its fullness”, (Jn: 10:10). Hence all their activities are to be inspired by the Gospel and pertinent to the present day life.

4.5 FAITH FORMATION (CATECHISM)

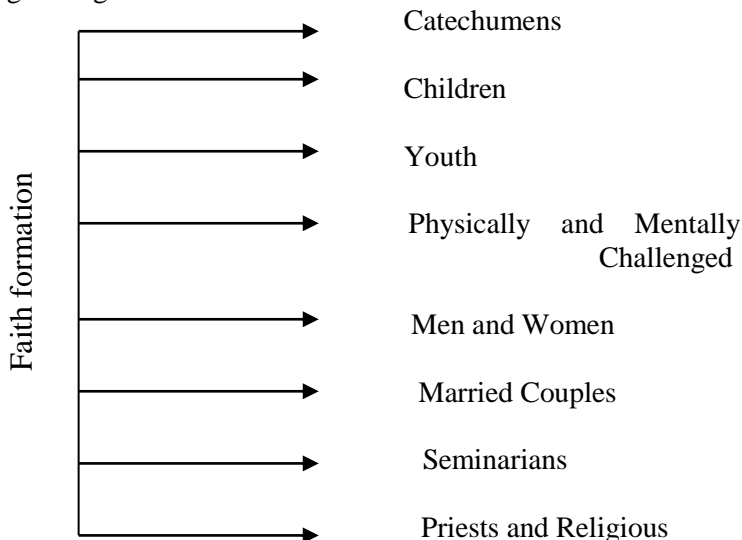
4.5.1 The Church has always considered catechesis as one of her primary tasks, for, Jesus gave the apostles a final command to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that He had commanded (Mt. 28: 19). He thus entrusted them with the mission and power to proclaim to humanity what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon and touched with their hands, concerning the Word of Life (1Jn 1). He also entrusted them with the mission and power to explain with authority what He had taught them, His words and actions, His signs and commandments. And He gave them the Spirit to fulfill this mission. (see *CT 1*)

4.5.2 Hence in fulfilling its evangelization role, the Church, eager to employ all suitable aids, is concerned especially about those, who are her very own. Foremost among these is catechetical instruction, which enlightens and strengthens the faith, nourishes life according to the spirit of Christ, leads to intelligent and active participation in the liturgical mystery and gives motivation for apostolic activity. (*SC 14*)

Catechesis, which is growth in faith and the maturing of Christian life towards its fullness, is consequently a work of the Holy Spirit, a work that He alone initiates and sustains in the Church. When carrying out her mission of giving catechesis, the Church and also every individual Christian devoting oneself to that mission within the Church and in her name must be very much aware of acting as a living, pliant instrument of the Holy Spirit. To invoke this Spirit constantly, to be in communion with Him, to endeavor to know His authentic inspirations must

be the attitude of the teaching Church and of every catechist.
(*Catechesi Tradendae* no 72)

- 4.5.2 Faith Formation is to permeate the life of all Christian Faithful. Hence no section of the Christian Faithful is to be left while organizing faith formation course.



- 4.5.3 **Program of Action:** After the situation has been carefully examined, it is necessary to proceed to the publishing of a program of action, especially by means of a catechetical directory. The goals to be attained and the means to be used should be considered the cardinal points of any program of action.

- 4.5.4 **Practical Norms** with regard to the catechetical formation of the Children and the Youth in the diocese:

- a. The Parish Priest is personally responsible for the faith-formation program in his parish. He is to be ably assisted by his assistants, other priests, religious sisters and the laity.
(*ER 423.10*)

b. Children/Youth may be divided class – wise if possible. And If not possible, then they are to be brought under three categories:

- Prior to First Holy Communion (I to III Std)
- Post Holy Communion but prior Confirmation (IV to VIII Std)
- Post Confirmation (IX to XII and Youth)

c. The following books are to be followed: (ER 423.5)

Class	Name of the Books
I	<i>Yesu ke dwara Ishwar ka Gyan</i> <i>Jai Yesu</i> <i>Katlik vishwas prashnauthari</i>
II	<i>Ish Parivar ke sadasia</i> <i>Jai Yesu</i> <i>Katlik vishwas prashnauthari</i>
III	<i>Ish parivar me hamara vikas.</i> <i>Jai Yesu</i> <i>Katlik vishwas prashnauthari</i>
IV	<i>Yesu ke sat chalna</i> <i>Catholic Vishvas...(Meerut)</i>
V	<i>Sabh deshonse ekatrikth</i> <i>Catholic Vishvas...(Meerut)</i>
VI	<i>Massih ke sat sakhshatkar</i> <i>Katlik dharm pustak Ithihas</i>
VII	<i>Yesuji ko maine</i> <i>Katlik dharm pustak Ithihas</i>
VIII	<i>Nijhi vishvas ke khoj</i> <i>Katlik dharm pustak Ithihas</i>
IX	<i>Ni-swarth seva hetu</i> <i>Katlik dharm pustak Ithihas</i>
X	<i>Soumya vyaktithva ke talash</i> <i>Katlik dharm pustak Ithihas</i>
XI	<i>Vayaskom aour Kishorom Ke Liye Dharam Siksha</i>
XII	<i>Vayaskom aour Kishorom Ke Liye Dharam Siksha</i>

- d. Parents, all associations and sabhas should be instructed to realize the gravity of their duty in organizing faith formation and on-going formation for every Christ faithful.
- e. Sunday school should be organized in every village without fail.
- f. All students should have with them a copy of their respective books.
- g. Catechism teachers may be given books from the parish fund.
- h. 2 lay men/women (preferably seniors) are to be appointed in each village to teach catechism. Names of catechism teachers are to be kept in the parish catechism file and a copy is to be sent to the Bishop's House.
- i. Classes should be of 45 minutes.
- j. Examination should be conducted at the end of the year, and merit certificates/prizes to be given to those who are successful in exams.
- k. The parish Priest should arrange catechism teachers meeting once in three months.
- l. One seminar is to be conducted at the parish level every year.
- m. Catechism day may be observed at the parish level every year.
- n. One seminar/camp is to be conducted at the diocesan level during summer holidays.

- 4.5.4 As part of on-going formation for the Catholic Sabha, Mahila Sangh, Cruz Vir, Youth, and other associations, should have at least one religious topic on the agenda during meetings. The speaker should consider this as an opportunity to catechize people and hence prepare himself well.
- 4.5.5 Hostel children are to be given 45 minutes of religious instruction once a week.
- 4.5.6 Catechism classes are part of the syllabus for Grihini Students.
- 4.5.7 In each parish, efforts should be made to make census of those who are physically and mentally challenged. A separate syllabus should be drafted keeping in mind their mental and physical capacity. They should not be left unattended.
- 4.5.8 In each parish, efforts should be made to bring married couples together at least once a year to renew their marital commitment. This occasion should be made use of to give faith instruction to the married couples.
- 4.5.9 Although seminarians are given faith formation in their respective seminaries, it is the responsibility of the formation committee to make some special programs for seminarians when they come to the diocese for their annual holidays. Regular programs are to be organized for students at Prerit Niwas and Regents.
- 4.5.10 Annual seminar is to be organized for priests/religious in the diocese as part of their on-going formation.
- 4.5.12 May the Virgin of Pentecost obtain the gift of transmitting faith to us through her intercession. By a unique vocation, she saw her Son Jesus "increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favor."(LK. 2:52) As He sat on her lap and later as He listened to her throughout the hidden life at Nazareth, this Son, who was "the only Son from the Father," "full of grace and truth," was

formed by her in human knowledge of the Scriptures and of the history of God's plan for His people, and in adoration of the Father.(Jn. 1:14; Heb. 10:5) She in turn was the first of His disciples. She was the first in time, because even when she found her adolescent Son in the temple she received from Him lessons that she kept in her heart.(Lk. 2:51) She was the first disciple above all else because no one has been "taught by God"(Jn. 6: 45) to such depth. She was "both mother and disciple," as St. Augustine said of her, venturing to add that her discipleship was more important for her than her motherhood. There are good grounds for the statement made in the Synod Hall that Mary is "a living catechism" and "the mother and model of catechists."

May the presence of the Holy Spirit, through the prayers of Mary, grant the Church unprecedented enthusiasm in the catechetical work that is essential for her. Thus will she effectively carry out, at this moment of grace, her inalienable and universal mission, the mission given her by her Teacher: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."(Lk. 28:19) (CT 73)

4.6 SOCIO-ECONOMIC-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTAL MINISTRY

- 4.6.1. The ministry of the Church does not limit itself to mere faith formation. In fact, the faith formation includes the participation of people in socio- Economic –cultural development field. From the beginning schemes, leadership camps, hostels for boys and girls, organizing sports and tournaments of the mission, there have been efforts to assist the people to grow in their social-developmental needs. Schools, dispensaries, Grihini Schools, Typing institutes, tuition to the children, Shiksha Fund, Savings, cultural and competitive programs during Christmas, Celebration of Pongal, Karam festivals, care of the unwed mothers, abandoned children and aged are some areas where the diocese has initiated its ministry.

4.6.2. Some concrete steps that are to be taken in this regard as follows:

a. Educational Ministry

- ❖ Tuition centers are to be started in every center and villages as far as possible. The teachers may be given an honorarium fixed by the diocese. (*ER 508.4*)
- ❖ Special coaching is to be given to those students who are in X and XII classes in every center. (*ER 508.4*)
- ❖ Special coaching centers may also be opened for X and XII failures. They should be encouraged to appear for the exams. (*ER 508.4*)
- ❖ The possibility of getting certain number of seats allotted in some Catholic Institutions in the mainland is to be explored (*ER 509.3*)
- ❖ Faithful should be encouraged to make use of Grihini School at Port Blair and at Mayabunder. It has proved to be very effective and meaningful to girls as a preparation for their marriage. (*ER 508.9*)
- ❖ To promote Grihini School, the diocese presents a sewing machine to each of the three toppers who has done residential course for 9 months at Port Blair.
- ❖ Technical and professional training school center should be started. (*ER 705.2*)
- ❖ Thrust should be given to collect more towards Shiksha Fund.

b. Employment / welfare Schemes

- ❖ Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association, Catholic Maha Sabha and Andaman Nicobar Catholic Youth should run an information cell that will provide the people with information on job availability in and around Port Blair and that would make them aware of the various government developmental schemes and assist them in obtaining them. (*ER 107.b.11, 509.1,2,7*)
- ❖ The diocese should have a hostel for working women at Port Blair. (*ER 509.4*)
- ❖ Various welfare schemes should be implemented in every parish. Parish Priests are to be given the responsibility of making proposals and implement such programs in this regard.
- ❖ Savings Schemes should be started in all parishes.

c. Social Welfare Ministry

- ❖ Programs and seminars are to be organized in such a way that people are made aware of their own cultural background, that they are made to appreciate their culture and that they are motivated. (*ER 107.b.3*)
- ❖ There is a need to promote self help groups in the diocese. (*ER 107.b.9*)
- ❖ The diocese should continue to play a prophetic role in anti-alcohol movement. (*ER 107.b.7, 509.10*)
- ❖ Efforts are to be taken to control and to eradicate marriage problems that are faced in our society.

d. Medical Ministry

- ❖ Dispensaries are to be opened in every parish and entrusted to women religious congregations. They are to be run with the approval of the government and by qualified staff.

Medical ministry is to be carried out in far-off and remote villages as far as possible. Medical ministry should extend beyond dispensing medicines. It should include health education, hygiene, natural family planning, etc. (ER 308.7)

- ❖ Visits to the sick and hospital are to be given priority.
 - ❖ In genuine cases, Bishop's relief fund may be utilized for the treatment of critically ill persons.
- e. **Prison Ministry:** The diocese will have to initiate steps to offer its services to those who are in prison. (ER 423.17)

4.7 ECUMENICAL MEETINGS AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

4.7.1 Ecumenical Meetings

- 4.7.1.1 "The ecumenical movement seeks to be a response to the gift of God's grace, which calls all Christians to faith in the mystery of the Church according to the design of God who wishes to bring humanity to salvation and unity in Christ through the Holy Spirit. This movement calls them to the hope that the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one" will be fully realized (Jn 17:21). It calls them to that charity which is the new commandment of Christ and the gift by which the Holy Spirit unites all believers. The Second Vatican Council clearly asked Catholics to reach out in love to all other Christians with a charity that desires and works actively to overcome in truth whatever divides them from one another. According to the Council, Catholics are to act in hope and in prayer to promote Christian unity. They will be prompted and instructed by their faith in the mystery of the Church, and their ecumenical activity will be inspired and guided by a true understanding of the Church as "a sacrament or instrumental sign of intimate union with God, and of unity of the whole human race." (see LG 1 and The Directory for the Application of ecumenism n. 9)

4.7.1.2 **Forms and Structures of Ecumenical Cooperation**

- “Ecumenical collaboration can take the form of participation by different Churches and Ecclesial Communities in programs already set up by one of their number. Or there may be a coordination of inter-dependent actions, with consequent avoidance of duplication and of the unnecessary multiplication of administrative structures. Or there may be joint initiatives and programs. Various kinds of councils or committees may be set up, in more or less permanent form, to facilitate relations between Churches and ecclesial Communities and to promote cooperation and common witness among them.” (The Directory for the Application of ecumenism n. 163)
- “However, Catholic participation in all forms of ecumenical meetings and cooperative projects should respect the norms established by the Bishop. Ultimately, it is for the diocesan bishop, taking account of what has been decided at the regional or national level, to judge the acceptability and appropriateness of all forms of local ecumenical action.” (The Directory for the Application of ecumenism n. 164).

4.7.1.3

- In the diocese of Port Blair, it is a practice To have an ecumenical Prakash Yatra (candle light procession) on the occasion of Christmas in every parish. This is to be kept up.
- Parish Priest is to form an Ecumenical committee, comprising of pastors/ministers from various Churches and Ecclesial communities.
- Meetings of authorized representatives of Churches and Ecclesial Communities that occur periodically or on special occasions can help greatly to promote

ecumenical cooperation. (The Directory for the Application of ecumenism n. 167).

- Unity Octave is to be celebrated with the collaboration of other pastors/ministers from 18th to 25th of January.
- Monthly joint prayer services are to be organized by the ecumenical committee to facilitate people to pray together. These meetings could be organized at various Churches/Chapels. Catholics are to be encouraged to participate in these prayer services/meetings.

4.7.2 Inter-Religious Dialogue

4.7.2.1 Efforts should be made to establish inter-religious dialogue committees in every parish to facilitate people from different religions to share their ideas.

4.7.2.2 Priests should participate when government officials and others invite them for inter-religious prayer meetings/services.

4.8 USE OF MEDIA

4.8.1 The Catholic Church, since it was founded by Christ our Lord to bear salvation to all and thus is obliged to preach the Gospel, considers it one of its primary duties to announce the Good News of salvation also with the help of the media of social communication and to instruct all in their proper use. (*IM 3*)

4.8.2 It is, therefore, an inherent right of the Church to have at its disposal and to employ any of these media insofar as they are necessary or useful for the instruction of Christians and all its efforts for the welfare of souls. It is the duty of Pastors to instruct and guide the faithful so that they, with the help of these same media, may further the salvation and perfection of themselves and of the entire human family. In addition, the laity

especially must strive to instill a human and Christian spirit into these media, so that they may fully measure up to the great expectations of mankind and to God's design. (*IM 3*)

4.8.3 For the proper use of these media it is most necessary that all who employ them be acquainted with the norms of morality and conscientiously put them into practice in this area. They must look, then, to the nature of what is communicated, given the special character of each of these media. At the same time they must take into consideration the entire situation or circumstances, namely, the persons, place, time and other conditions under which communication takes place and which can affect or totally change its propriety. Among these circumstances to be considered is the precise manner in which a given medium achieves its effect. For its influence can be so great that persons, especially if they are unprepared, can scarcely become aware of it, govern its impact, or, if necessary, reject it. (*IM 4*)

4.8.4 Some of the media that can be made use of in our diocese are as follows:

- a. Dweep Tarangini – the diocesan news bulletin
- b. Parish Bulletin
- c. The use of television, audio and video equipments while conducting seminars/meetings, etc.
- d. Dance drama
- e. Biblical Role plays
- f. Street Plays
- g. Puppet Shows
- h. All India Radio, Doordarshan, private TV channels and cable TV operators, especially during Christmas and Easter seasons.
- i. Visuals during homily.
- j. Proper use of musical instruments during liturgical and para-liturgical services.
- k. Use of bhajans/kirtans, etc.

- l. Conducting various competitions, such as dance, drama, essay etc.
- m. Conducting homiletics courses to priests/religious at regular intervals.

CHAPTER V COUNCILS, ASSOCIATIONS, (SABHAS AND SANGHS)

5.1 COUNCILS

Pastoral activity in a diocese and in a parish should be a common endeavor in which, the Bishop is assisted by his *presbyterium*, religious and the laity. The Code of Canon Law envisions seven such councils: five at the diocesan level and two at the parish level to assist the pastors in the pastoral activity. They are:

- Diocesan Synod
- College of Consultors
- The Council of Priests (Senate)
- The Diocesan Finance Council
- Diocesan Pastoral Council
- Parish Pastoral Council
- Parish Financial Council

5.1.1. DIOCESAN SYNOD

5.1.1.1 SCOPE

The Diocesan Synod is a assembly of selected priests and other members of the Christ's faithful of a particular Church (diocese) which for the good of the whole diocesan community, assists the diocesan bishop (See CIC 460)

5.1.1.2 COMPETENCE

- The diocesan Bishop is the sole legislator in the Diocesan Synod. Other members of the Synod have only consultative vote. The diocesan Bishop alone signs the synodal declarations and decrees, and only by his authority may these be published. (See CIC 466)

5.1.1.3 MEETINGS

- The Diocesan Synod is to be held in the diocese when the diocesan Bishop, after consulting the council of Priests, judges that the circumstances suggest it. (See CIC 461,1)

5.1.1.4 MEMBERSHIP

- CIC 463 is to be observed.

5.1.2. THE COLLEGE OF CONSULTORS

5.1.2.1 SCOPE

- The Diocesan College of Consultors is a stable body of priests constituted to be consulted by the Diocesan Bishop or his equivalent on matters of finance and administration of the diocese. The important character of a college is that its members must meet in a group and are consulted not just individually but collectively.

5.1.2.2 MEMBERSHIP

- The number of Consultors should be between six and twelve (See CIC 502,2). The diocesan Bishop or the diocesan administrator is not included in the membership.
- The Consultors are freely nominated by the diocesan bishop from among the members of the priests' Council. (See CIC 502,2)
- The Consultors serve as a body for a five year term and until a new college is constituted. (See CIC 502,2)
- If any consultor retires from the College before the completion of the five year term, the bishop shall appoint another in his place for the remaining period of the term of the College.
- The college continues to be in office *sede vacante* and until the new bishop constitutes a new college after the expiry of its five year term

5.1.2.3 PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

- The diocesan bishop is the *ex-officio* president of the College ((See CIC 502,2)
- If the diocese is an impeded see, the priest selected to govern *sede impedita* will be the president in the place of the Bishop. (See CIC 502,2)
- If the diocese becomes vacant and there is no auxiliary bishop, the bishop who is the oldest in ordination in the College will be the president until an administrator is elected, after which the administrator presides during the vacancy (See CIC 502,2)
- One of the Consultors is to be nominated by the bishop to be the secretary to the College. His duties include arranging for the Colleges' meetings, maintaining the relevant records and the minutes and communicating the approved deliberations and decisions

5.1.2.4 MEETINGS

- It is the prerogative of the President to convoke the College of Consultors and to preside over it.
- The quorum required for a valid conduct of the meeting is the absolute majority (half + one)
- For the election of the diocesan administrator, the norms prescribed in canons 110,1 and 164-179 should be followed.
- The president can invite to the Consultors' meetings participants without the right to vote, if their presence is considered useful
- When the president invites the members to decide a matter by voting, they vote normally by voice or raising the hands.

5.1.2.5 COMPETENCE

The college of Consultors has both consultative and deliberative voice.

A) To give Consent to the Bishop for validity

- For acts of extraordinary administration when the amount involved is more than 4 lakhs.

- For the alienation of ecclesiastical property if its value is between Rs. 1 lakh and 10 lakhs.
- For acceptance or refusal of donations and bequests which have long term obligations as determined by the Episcopal Conference (See CIC 1297)
- Prior to obtaining the permission of the Holy See for the alienation of property if its value exceeds Rs. 10 lakhs (see CIC 1292, 2)
- For any transaction through which the patrimonial condition of a juridical person may be disturbed (See CIC 1295)

B) To give Counsel to the Bishop for validity

- To formulate financial policies for the better administration of the ecclesiastical patrimony (See CIC 1276, 2)
- For alienation of immovable property of the diocese and of the diocesan institutions.
- For any act of administration when the amount involved is between 1 lakh and 4 lakhs.
- To appoint a diocesan financial administrator or to remove him during the term of office (See CIC 494)

C) During the Impeded See (*sede impedita*)

To elect a priest to govern the diocese, if there is no coadjutor bishop or if the bishop had not determined the interim administrator according to canon 413.1

D) During the Vacant See (*Sede vacante*)

- To inform the Holy of the death of the bishop if there is no auxiliary bishop (See CIC 422)
- To govern the diocese collegially until an administrator is elected, if there is no auxiliary bishop or if the Holy See does not specifically intervene (See CIC 419)
- To elect a diocesan administrator within eight days of receiving notification of the vacancy (See CIC 421,1)

E) To give consent to the diocesan administrator with regard to:

- The removal of the chancellor or other notaries (See CIC 485)

- Granting permission for excardination or incardination or migration of clerics after a year of vacancy (See CIC 272)
- To give dimmissorial letters (See CIC 1018, 1)

5.1.3. THE COUNCIL OF PRIESTS

5.1.3.1. SCOPE

- The Senate's role is to assist the bishop in the governance of the diocese according to the norm of law in order that the pastoral welfare of that portion of the people of god entrusted to him may be promoted as effectively as possible (CIC 495,81).
- It has to advise the bishop on matters specified by law and by these statutes.
- It has to advise the bishop on greater moment specified in these statutes (CIC 500 82).
- It has to give its consent to the diocesan bishop in the cases expressly determined in the law (CIC 500 82).
- The senate will also help the bishop formulate the policy of the diocese on important pastoral and administrative matters which are not covered under the scope of the other diocesan consultative bodies.

5.1.3.2. COMPETENCE

- The Senate of priests has only a consultative vote (CIC 500,82).
- To present to the diocesan bishop suggestions to enable all the Christian faithful in the diocese to participate according to one's charisma and state in the teaching, sanctifying and shepherding ministry of Christ.

- To propose the ways and means to promote the ministries of evangelization, catechesis and liturgy in the diocese.
- Adaptation and inculturation in liturgy;
- Meaningful celebration of novenas, feasts, etc., in parishes;
- Functioning of Small Christian Communities;
- Sunday Catechism in the Parish centers and sub – stations
- Spreading the Bible and evangelization programs
- Family and youth apostolate;
- Dialogues and partnership with other Christian Churches and denominations.
- Dialogues and partnership with Hindus, Sarnas, Muslims and others;
- Participation of the laity in the mission of the Church;
- Addressing national problems like fundamentalism, religious fanaticism etc;
- Pastoral care to the marginalized groups, orphans, the mentally challenged persons etc.

Specific Matters to be consulted:

- To celebrate a Diocesan Synod (CIC 461,81);
- To establish, modify, divide and suppress parishes (CIC 515,82);
- To determine the use of offerings of faithful on occasions of parish services to be placed in general parish fund (CIC 531);

- To decide whether or not to make parish pastoral councils mandatory and to formulate statutes for such councils (CIC 536):
- To authorize the building of a new church (CIC 1215,82):
- To convert an existing church to secular purposes (CIC 1222,82);
- To impose a tax on the faithful and on public juridical persons for the needs of the diocese (CIC 1742,82);
- To select the parish priests-consulters (CIC 1742,82);
- To select two priests from the senate to take part in the provincial councils of bishops (CIC 443,82);

5.1.3.3. COMPOSITION & TERM

- All priests serving in the diocese are members of the priests' senate'.
- Deacons and Regents serving in the diocese are also invited as observers.
- The term of office is not restricted to a particular period. Members continue to be members as long as they serve in the diocese.

5.1.3.4. MEETINGS

- It is the prerogative of the diocesan bishop to convene the senate, to preside over it, and to determine the matter to be discussed in it or to accept items proposed by the members (CIC 500,81).
- Another member other than the bishop can chair the meeting and conduct its proceedings.

- In the absence of the bishop and with his permission the vicar general can convene the Senate and preside over it.
- It is to be convened at least once a year.
- The agenda of the meeting is to be sent to the members at least 15 days in advance.
- The Vicar General is also the Secretary of the meeting. He may be assisted by two other members. The secretary shall prepare the reports of the meetings, maintain the records and documents of the Senate, and after getting the bishop's permission, publish the relevant documents and conclusions arrived at the meetings in official diocesan bulletin or news letter.

5.1.4. DIOCESAN FINANCE COUNCIL

5.1.4.1.NATURE

- The Finance Council of the diocese of Port Blair constituted according to canon 492,1 of the CIC, is an organ of participation and decision making of the Christian faithful with regard to the administration of the temporal goods of the diocese.
- The relevant norms on the Council's scope, competence, composition and functions are found in the CIC, in the pertinent deliberations approved by the CCBI and in these statutes.
- The finance Council has both Consultative and deliberative voice.

5.1.4.2. COMPOSITION

- Members who are experts in financial affairs and civil law, of outstanding integrity are appointed by the diocesan bishop. No one is appointed on the basis of ex- officio (CIC 492,81)
- The minimum number of members shall be three (CIC 492).
- Upon receiving the appointment, the members must take the oath of honesty and confidentiality (CIC 1283,1).

5.1.4.3. TERM OF OFFICE

- The Finance Council is constituted for a period of five years and it does not cease *sede vacante* (CIC 423,82)
- Membership will cease by voluntary resignation accepted by the diocesan bishop or for any other serious reason.
- Members cannot be dismissed by the diocesan bishop from the Council except for grave reasons.
- If a new member is to be appointed in the interim period before the expiry of the five year term of the Council, he/she shall hold office only for the remaining period of the council. However, he/she can be re-appointed for another term.

5.1.4.4.PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

- The President of the finance Council shall be the diocesan bishop. He convokes and presides at the meetings. He can however delegate another member to moderate the sessions. He makes the decisions after getting the required advice or consent. Publication of any deliberation or decision taken at the meetings must be done with his permissions.
- The Bishop appoints a secretary from among the members of the Council. The Secretary maintains the records and documents of the council, He prepares the necessary letters

and decrees after getting the approval of the diocesan bishop, dispatches them to the concerned persons.

5.1.4.5. Regular Duties of the Finance council:

- To prepare every year a budget of income and expenditure over the coming financial year for the governance of the whole diocese in accordance with the directions of the diocesan bishop (CIC 493);
- To plan and provide the modalities according to which the financial administrator should administer the goods of the diocese (CIC 494,83);
- To monitor the financial administrator's implementation of its provisions and policies (CIC 494,83);
- To help the financial administrator to prepare the annual statement of income and expenditure accounts, and balance sheets at the end of each financial year (CIC 493;494,84);
- To undertake what is called the `internal audit`. It includes scrutinizing, reviewing and evaluating the already audited annual statements of accounts of the diocese and all the diocesan institutions and submit its observations on the same to the diocesan bishop(1287,81).
- To elect a temporary diocesan financial administrator *sede vacante* if the incumbent has been appointed as the diocesan administrator (CIC 423,82);
- To help the bishop to prepare the annual report to be sent to the Congregation for the Evangelization of peoples.
- **To Give advice to the Bishop for validity:**
 - a. To frame guidelines and rules for the alienation of property (CIC 1295);
 - b. For any act of administration when the amount involves is between Rs. 1 lakh and 2 lakhs

- c. To invest the diocese's free capital carefully and profitably (CIC 1305);
 - d. To levy a tax for the needs of the diocese on public juridical persons subject to the bishop. To levy an extraordinary and moderate tax on other physical and juridical persons in grave necessity (CIC 1263);
 - e. To determine what acts go beyond ordinary administration in the case of juridical persons subject to the diocesan bishop (CIC 1281,82);
 - f. To examine the annual accounts submitted by the public juridical persons under the diocesan bishop (CIC 1287,81);
 - g. To diminish the obligations arising from the intentions of the faithful in pious causes (CIC 1310,82);
 - h. To appoint the diocesan financial administrator or to remove him during his term of office (CIC 494).
- **To Give Consent to the Diocesan bishop for validity;**
 - a. For acts of extraordinary administration when the amount involved is more than Rs.4 lakhs. (refer CCBI, Bombay, 1993).
 - b. For alienation of property that belongs to the diocese or to any other public juridical person under the management of the diocesan bishop the value of which is between Rs.1 lakh and Rs. 10 lakhs.(CIC 1292,81).
 - c. Prior to getting the permission from the Holy see to alienate property the value of which exceeds the maximum amount of Rs.10 lakhs (CIC 1292,81).

5.1.4.6. MEETINGS

- The Finance Council shall meet at least four times a year. Extraordinary meetings may be called whenever needed.
- The minutes of the previous meeting must be read by the Secretary and, after approval, must be duly signed by him and the president.

- Members must exercise due discretion in making public matters discussed in the meetings.

5.1.5. DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL:

5.1.5.1. NATURE

- Second Vatican Council in its documents especially in *CD 27*, *AG 30* and in *PO 7* spoke of the need of diocesan pastoral council in which clergy, religious and the laity would have part in the governing ministry of the bishop.
- Consistent with its Conciliar sources, the Code of Canon law n. 511 proposes the establishment of Diocesan Pastoral Council to the extent that pastoral circumstances of the diocese suggests to study and weigh those matters that concern the pastoral works in the diocese, and to propose practical conclusions concerning them.
- The diocesan Pastoral Council consists of Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church, clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life and especially lay persons, who are designated in a manner determined by the Diocesan Bishop.
- The Diocesan Pastoral Council is to have its statutes drawn up by the Bishop.

5.1.5.2. Membership: Members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council are

- Parish Priests of all parishes
- All diocesan and religious priests serving in the diocese
- Sister superior of each community (as per our existing practice in the diocese, all sisters are recommended to attend)
- All the executive committee members of Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association, Catholic Mahasabha, Catholic Mahila Sangh Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andaman Nicobar Catholic Youth, Tamil, Malayalee

and Local Communities, Legion of Mary, Nurses-Guild, Head catechists, five members from each parish and some nominated members by the Bishop. (as per our existing practice in the diocese, other lay members may attend)

- while the membership of Priests and religious depend on their appointment and transfer by their respective superiors, the membership of lay faithful depend on their continuance in the office as executive members in their respective associations and sanghs.
- The Diocesan Pastoral Council has only a consultative vote. It is for the diocesan Bishop alone to convene it, according to the needs of the apostolate, and to preside over it. He alone has the right to make public the matters dealt within the council
- It is to be convened at least once a year. When the See is vacant, the pastoral council lapses.

5.1.5.3. Competence

The following shall be the functions of the Pastoral Council:

- To build the Diocesan Community in faith, hope and love;
- To plan, organize and implement activities concerning preaching, sanctifying and charity in the diocese;
- To encourage and strengthen Small Christian Communities;
- To encourage and strengthen the pastoral activities of the different pious associations and groups in the Diocese;

- To plan and celebrate properly and meaningfully the Diocesan festivals, and diocesan common programs;
- To implement the pastoral programs and projects recommended by the Diocesan Commissions;

5.1.6. PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- The Parish established as a community of the Christian faithful and united in faith and fraternal communion is a *living cell* of the diocese (AA, 10)
- Each of the Christian faithful, according to his/her particular state in life and special charism, is called to participate in the sanctifying, preaching and shepherding ministry of Jesus Christ.
- The Parish Pastoral Council, on the one hand, represents and reflects the loving communion of the parishioners and, on the other, constitutes the pre-eminent organ of planning and implementing the triple pastoral ministries in the parish community.

5.1.6.1. NATURE

- In the Parish Pastoral Council, which is presided over by the Parish Priest, Christ's faithful together with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office, give their help in fostering pastoral action (CIC 536, §1).

5.1.6.2. COMPETENCE

- The Pastoral Council has only *Consultative* voice in the sense that the deliberations arrived at the meetings have only consultative value and it needs the approval of the Parish priest for valid promulgation (CIC 536, §2).

5.1.6.3. SCOPE

- The following shall be the functions of the Pastoral Council:
 - a. To build the Parish Community in faith, hope and love;

- b. To plan, organize and implement activities concerning preaching, sanctifying and charity in the parish;
 - c. To encourage and strengthen Small Christian Communities;
 - d. To encourage and strengthen the pastoral activities of the different pious associations and groups in the parish;
 - e. To plan and celebrate properly and meaningfully the parish festivals and holy days of obligation;
 - f. To implement the pastoral programs and projects recommended by the Diocesan Commissions and Diocesan Pastoral Council;
- The following shall not be the scope of the Pastoral Council:
 - g. The Parish Pastoral Council is not a *Substitute* or a duplicate for the existing voluntary and pious associations in the Parish;
 - h. It is not a *legislative body*;
 - i. It does *not touch or discuss matters of faith, orthodoxy, or moral principles* that are in force in the Church;
 - j. It is not to engage itself into the realm of the *financial administration* of the Parish.

5.1.6.4. **MEMBERSHIP**

- The Pastoral Council is constituted with the *ex-Officio* and nominated members. The total number of membership shall be between 25 and 35.
- **The ex-officio members shall be:**
 - a. The Parish Priest
 - b. Assistant parish priests
 - c. The Head Catechist
 - d. All Parish Pastoral Sisters and the superiors of the Communities
 - e. All Deacons/Regents

f. The President and the Secretary of Parish Catholic Association, Catholic Sabha, Mahila Sangh, Yuvak Sangh, Tamil Community, Malayalee Community and Local Community, Legion of Mary and SCC Parish Council.

- **The nominated members:** The parish priest freely nominates five members who are in good standing among parishioners by their individual talents and skills which are useful for the common good of the Parish.

5.1.6.5. CONSTITUTION AND TERM

- The Pastoral Council is juridically constituted by the decree of the diocesan bishop on presentation of the members by the Parish Priest.
- The Council is constituted for a period of two years. It does not cease to exist when the Parish becomes vacant or impeded.
- A member will forfeit his/her membership if he/she is absent without due reason and information for three consecutive meetings.
- when a member loses his/her reputation among the parishioners or when he/she acts contrary to the principles and values of the Gospel and of the Church, the Parish Priest, after consulting the Council, can remove him/her from the Council.
- For grave reasons, on the advice of the Parish priest, the diocesan bishop can dissolve the Council. However, it must be reconstituted within a year.

5.1.6.6. OFFICE BEARERS

- The Parish Priest is the President of the Pastoral Council *de iure* (CIC 536, §1). It is his right and duty to convoke the Council determine the agenda for the meetings, preside over them and give approval to the decisions and deliberations arrived at the meetings.

- The President, after consulting the Council, shall appoint a lay person as the Vice president. The Vice-President shall help the president in all his duties.
- The Parish priest, after consulting the Council, shall appoint from among the members a secretary whose duties are:
 - a. To arrange for the meetings with the permission of the Parish Priest;
 - b. To maintain the minutes book and all the other relevant records and documents concerning the Council;
 - c. To keep the parishioners periodically informed about the activities of the Council either through the Parish News Bulletin or other announcements on suitable occasions;
 - d. To prepare the annual report of the activities of the Council at the end of each calendar year to be presented to the parishioners and to be forwarded to the diocesan office.

5.1.6.7. **MEETINGS**

- The Pastoral Council must meet at least three times a year.
- The President may convoke extraordinary meetings when there is a need or when the majority of the members (half+one) request the president.
- At least 15 days before the meeting the secretary should send the members the agenda along with other relevant information to enable the members to come prepared for the meetings.
- It is desirable that every meeting begins with a prayer and a Bible reading. The Secretary will then present the minutes of the previous meeting and get it approved and duly signed by the

President. An attendance register of the members should also be maintained.

5.1.6.8. SUB-COMMITTEE

- The members of the Pastoral Council will be divided into sub-committees such as parish Catechism Committee, Parish SCC Council, Liturgical Committee, Altar Servers Committee, Volunteers Committee, etc.
- The scope of the Committees is to plan and organize the implementations of the decisions taken at the Council meetings.

5.1.6.9. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- The president, Vice-President, secretary and the conveners of the Sub-committees shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- It is the competence of the Executive Committee to determine the agenda for the meetings, the functioning of the Council and of the Sub-Committees.
- In case of urgency, when the Council cannot be convoked, the Executive Committee can meet and take decisions.

5.1.7. PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

- The Parish established as a community of the Christian faithful and united in faith and fraternal communion is a *living cell* of the diocese (AA, 10)
- Each of the Christian faithful, according to his/her particular state in life and special charism, is called to participate in the sanctifying, preaching and shepherding ministry of Jesus Christ.
- The Parish Finance Council, on the one hand, represents and reflects the loving communion of the parishioners and, on the other, constitutes as the pre-eminent organ assisting the Parish priest in the administration of the temporal goods that belong to the juridical person of the Parish.

5.1.7.1. COMPETENCE

- The Parish Finance Council is a *CONSULTATIVE BODY*. But there are instances where the Parish Priest cannot act without its consent.

5.1.7.2. MEMBERSHIP AND TERM OF OFFICE

❖ Qualification for the Members

- Anyone of the Christ's faithful (Clerics, religious and laity), who belongs to the parish having domicile at least for a year and who has completed 21 years of age.
- Must be trustworthy, honest and enjoy good reputation among the parishioners
- Must have practical knowledge and sound judgment in matters of finance and administration.
- Should not be related to the Parish priest up to the 4th degree of consanguinity

❖ Number of Members

- Depending upon the economic activity of the Parish, the minimum number must be three and the maximum number must be three and the maximum seven.
- There must be at least two lay faithful.

❖ Selection and Appointment of the Members

- The Parish priest, after proper enquiry and scrutiny freely selects the required number of the members from the names proposed by the Parish Pastoral Council, if there is one, or by the Parishioners and, after getting the approval of the diocesan bishop, constitutes the Parish Finance Council.
- Every time when there is change in the membership of the Council, it must be approved by the diocesan bishop.

❖ **Term of Membership**

- The term of membership is 2 years renewable only once. After a break of 2 years, one is eligible for re-appointment.
- The membership terminates on the death of the member or voluntary resignation of the member with the acceptance of the parish priest.
- For grave reasons, after consulting the diocesan bishop the Parish Priest can remove a member.
- A vacant place is filled for the remaining period of the Council according to the above mentioned procedure
- When the Parish becomes vacant, the Parish Finance Council does not cease to exist. When the new parish priest or an interim parochial administrator is nominated, the Council will resume its function and will be in office till the expiry of its term.

5.1.7.3. FUNCTIONS

- The Parish Priest may consult the Finance Council whenever he judges necessary and may benefit from its services and help in the ordinary administration of the Parish. Some of the functions can be;
 - A. collecting income from Church properties
 - B. raising funds for projects and pastoral programs within the parish
 - C. collecting yearly subscription
 - D. accounting Sunday collections, etc.
- The Parish Priest is obliged to consult the Finance Council in the following:
 - A. To prepare the budget of expected income and expenditure for the next financial year for the administration of the whole parish.

- B. For any non-recurring expenditure on any singly item costing between Rs. 500/- – Rs. 1000/-. (This amount will be periodically revised by the bishop after consulting the Diocesan Finance Council.
 - C. To prepare the annual financial report which should be submitted to the diocesan bishop.
- The Parish Priest is obliged to get the consent of the Finance Council in the following:
 - A. For non-recurring expenditure involving Rs. 1000/- and above like acquisition of new assets (e.g. furniture, equipments, etc), repairs or extension to a building, construction of new buildings such as grottos, chapels, etc. after obtaining the consent of the council, the Parish priest, together with other necessary details and plan and estimates, has to submit his petition to the diocesan bishop for his approval.
 - B. Prior to getting the approval of the bishop with regard to accepting any bequest or donation to which is attached any onerous obligations, as also before giving or accepting any loan.
 - C. To put for sale any valuable object that belongs to the parish.
- Stipends for Holy Mass, offerings for the administration of the sacraments and for rendering various services, fees for certificates, etc., shall be determined solely by the diocesan bishop in the manner laid down by universal and particular laws.
- The day to day administration of the Church and the presbytery (including the board and lodge of the priest, maintenance of the

Church, presbytery) shall be the responsibility of the parish priest according to the diocesan customs and regulations.

5.1.7.4. OFFICE BEARERS

- The Parish Priest is the President of the Parish Finance Council *de iure* (Canon 532). It is his right and duty to convoke the Council, determine the agenda for the meetings and preside over the sessions.
- The Parish Finance Council must select a secretary who will, under the authority of the President, be responsible for all the records, notices of meetings, minutes, etc.

5.1.7.5. MEETINGS

- Meetings shall be held as and when required. However, at least four meetings must be held every year.
- Meetings shall be called by the Parish Priest and presided over by him or his delegate. Notice for meetings with the agenda and related information on the topics to be discussed should be sent to the members 7 days before the meeting.
- The *quorum* for every meeting is half plus one of the total number of members of the Finance Council. If no *quorum* is available, the meeting stands dissolved and has to be called again.
- All *resolutions* shall be taken by majority vote of those present. When voting is taken, the Parish priest does not vote.
- *For* matters only of consultation, the Parish priest is not in any way bound to accept their vote. But, without what is, in his judgment, an overriding reason, he is not to act against their vote, especially if it is unanimous (Can. 127,2,2).
- For matters of getting the consent of the Finance Council, the parish priest is bound by the vote of the members.

- Joint meetings of the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council may be convened whenever it is necessary, especially for the presentation of the annual budget and statement of account.

5.1.7.6. RECOURSE

- In need of any clarification or additional provision for the above Statutes, the parish priest may refer the matter to the diocesan bishop who may himself, or in consultation with the Diocesan Finance Council, give a decision.

5.2. ASSOCIATIONS / SANGHS

Canon 215 gives the right to Christ's faithful to freely establish and direct associations. Canon 298 specifies that there can be associations that are distinct from Institutes of Consecrated life and societies of apostolic life. In these associations the Christian faithful, especially the laity, strive in common endeavor to foster a more perfect life; promoting public worship; promoting Christian doctrine; exercising other works of the apostolate such as initiatives of evangelization, works of piety, works of charity and animation of temporal order with the Christian spirit.. Canon 298 §2 invites the Christian faithful to join especially those associations which competent authority has erected, praised or commended.

In view of the above canons, the laity in the diocese of Port Blair have established, after getting the approval from the ecclesiastical authority, associations and sanghs that work towards the fulfillment of various pious works envisioned in the Code of Canon Law and in their statutes.

5.2.1 CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS AND ITS PARISH UNITS

With the motto *Accende Lumen* (Let your light shine), the Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association is a lay association of the Catholics in the Andaman and Nicobar

Islands. It has its units in every parish. Its headquarters are in Port Blair. It is an auxiliary association to Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association. Its aims and objectives are as stated below.

5.2.1.1 **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To Foster lay apostolate (service of God and country) under the guidance and direction of the Bishop of the place.
- To Safeguard the legitimate rights, liberties and interests of Catholics
- To Promote and defend the Catholic life, Catholic education, socio-economic welfare of Catholics.
- To foster Catholic Principles and ideals and sense the civic duties and responsibilities in the best interest of the nation with due regard for the Catholic cause.

5.2.1.2 **MEMBERSHIP/FEE**

- Membership shall be open to all practicing Catholics over 18 years of age.
- Membership fee is decided by the General Body meeting.

5.2.1.3 **SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**

- The Bishop is the spiritual director of this association at the diocesan level and the Parish Priest is the spiritual director at the parish level.
- The spiritual director has the power to veto any item of the agenda or resolutions that go against the interest of the Church.

5.2.1.4 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- The executive committee comprises the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, five members nominated by the Spiritual Director and ten members.

- The executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year.

5.2.1.5 **GENERAL BODY MEETING**

- General Body meeting of the association (Catholic Association Andaman and Nicobar) is to be held at Port Blair at the time fixed by the Executive Committee at least once a year and General Body meeting at the Parish level shall be held at the center at least once a year.
- The president of the Mother Body and its units presides over their respective General Body meetings.

5.2.1.6 **DECISIONS**

- While the Decisions of the General Body (Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association) as well as those of the Executive Committee of the same association shall be binding on all Catholics in this territory, the decisions of the General Body at the parish level binds only the parish concern.

5.2.1.7 **REPORTS**

- A copy of the Report of the Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association be sent to the Bishop and a copy of the report of the Parish Catholic Association be sent to the respective Parish Priest.

5.2.1.8 **THE PATRON AND THE FEAST**

- St. Joseph, the Worker shall be the Patron saint
- The Feast of “Christ the King” shall be the Principal feast of the Association.

5.2.2 **ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR CATHOLIC MAHA SABHA AND ITS PARISH UNITS**

Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Maha Sabha is a lay association of Catholic adhvavis in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands hailing from Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Santal Parganas

and Orissa and belonging to Kharia, Munda, Oraon, and Santal tribes, commonly known as 'Ranchis'. It has its units in every parish. Its headquarters are in Port Blair. It is an auxiliary association to Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association. Its aims and objectives are as stated below.

5.2.2.1 **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To Foster lay apostolate
- To Safeguard and foster socio-cultural religious field of the Adhivasi Catholics
- To promote and maintain the Adhivasi social background

5.2.2.2 **MEMBERSHIP/FEE**

- All the married Catholic Male Adhivasis are members of the Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Maha Sabha.
- Membership fee is decided by the General Body meeting.

5.2.2.3 **SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**

- The Bishop is the spiritual director of this association at the diocesan level and the Parish Priest is the spiritual director at the parish level.
- The spiritual director has the power to veto any item of the agenda or resolutions that go against the interest of the Church.

5.2.2.4 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- The executive committee comprises the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer and joint Treasurer.
- The executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year.

5.2.2.5 **GENERAL BODY MEETING**

- General Body meeting of the association (Maha Sabha) is to be held at a place and at a time fixed by the Executive Committee at least once in two years and General Body meeting at the Parish level shall be held at the center once in four months.
- The president of the Maha Sabha and Parish units presides over their respective General Body meetings.

5.2.2.6 **DECISIONS**

- While the decisions of the General Body (Maha Sabha) shall be binding on all adhvasi Catholics in this diocese, the decisions of the General Body (Catholic Sabha) at the parish level binds only the parish concerned.

5.2.2.7 **REPORTS**

- A copy of the Report of the General Body meeting of the Catholic Maha Sabha is sent to the Bishop and the copy of the report of the Parish Catholic Sabha is sent to the respective Parish Priest.

5.2.2.8 **THE PATRON AND THE FEAST**

- St. Joseph, the Worker shall be the Patron saint
- The Feast shall be celebrated on the 1st May.

5.2.3 **ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR CATHOLIC MAHA-MAHILA SANGH AND ITS PARISH UNITS.**

- Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Maha-Mahila Sangh is a lay association of Catholic women in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It has its units in every parish. Its headquarters are in Port Blair. It is an auxiliary association to Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association. Its aims and objectives are as stated below:

5.2.3.1 **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Sanctification of the family
- Living an exemplary Model Christian Life in the families, in the Church, in the Society and in the country
- Creation of awareness of social evils and taking necessary steps to solve them.
- Organizing Religious and social services
- Development of leadership qualities
- Organizing charity Programs.
- Co-operating with other organizations for any common cause with the approval of Ecclesiastical Authority
- To foster Catholic principles and ideals and a sense of civic duties and responsibilities in the best interest of the nation with due regard for catholic principles.

(N.B. In Port Blair parish where there is a presence of sizeable number of Catholic Women belonging to Tamil, Malayalee and Local communities, separate units shall be established for them, remaining however, under the umbrella of Maha Mahila Sangh and Port Blair Parish Mahila Sangh.)

5.2.3.2 **MEMBERSHIP/FEE**

- All married Catholic women are members of the Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Maha Mahila Sangh.
- Membership fee is decided by the General Body meeting.

5.2.3.3 **SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**

- A priest is appointed as the spiritual director of this association at the diocesan level and the Parish Priest is the spiritual director at the parish level.
- The spiritual director has the power to veto any item of the agenda or resolutions that go against the interest of the Church.

- A religious sister is appointed for guiding this association at the diocesan level and at the parish level

5.2.3.4 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- The executive committee comprises the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer and Joint Treasurer.
- The executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year.

5.2.3.5 **GENERAL BODY MEETING**

- The General Body meeting of the association (Maha Mahila Sabha) is to be held at a place and at a time fixed by the Executive Committee at least once a year and the General Body meeting at the Parish level (units) shall be held at the center every month.
- The president of the Maha Sabha and its parish units presides over their respective General Body meetings.

5.2.3.6 **DECISIONS**

- While the Decisions of the General Body (Maha Mahila Sangh) shall be binding on all Catholic women in this territory, the decisions of the General Body (Parish Mahila Sangh) at the parish level binds only the parish concerned.

5.2.3.7 **REPORTS**

- A copy of the Report of the General meeting of the Catholic Maha Mahila Sangh is sent to the Bishop and the copy of the report of the Parish Mahila Sangh is sent to the respective Parish Priests.

5.2.3.8 **THE PATRONESS AND THE FEAST**

- St. Monica shall be the Patroness saint
- Feast of St. Monica shall be celebrated solemnly on or around 27th of August.

5.2.4 ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR CATHOLIC YOUTH AND ITS PARISH UNITS.

- Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Youth (ANCY) is a lay association of Catholic Youth in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It has its units in every parish. Its headquarters are in Port Blair. It is an auxiliary association to Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association. Its aims and objectives are as stated below:

5.2.4.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Fostering lay apostolate (Service of God and Society) under the guidance and direction of the Youth Co-ordinator.
- Safeguarding the legitimate rights, liberties and interests of the Catholics
- Creation of awareness of social evils and taking necessary steps to solve them.
- Organizing Religious and social services
- Development of leadership quality
- Dealing with Youth problems and trying to solve them
- Organizing charity Programs.
- Organizing sports and cultural activities
- Co-operating with other organizations for any common cause with the approval of Ecclesiastical Authority
- To foster Catholic principles and ideals and a sense of civic duties and responsibilities in the best interest of the nation with due regard for catholic principles.

5.2.4.2 MEMBERSHIP/FEE

- All unmarried Catholic men and women who have completed 15 years of age are members of the Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Youth.
- Membership of ANCY shall be done at the parish level (only)

- Membership fee is fixed by the General Body. Fifty percent of this shall be sent to the Central Committee and fifty percent shall be kept at the Parish Youth Fund.

5.2.4.3 **SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**

- A priest is appointed as the spiritual director of this association at the diocesan level and a priest from each parish is appointed as the spiritual director at the parish level.
- The spiritual director has the power to veto any item of the agenda or resolutions that go against the interest of the Church.

5.2.4.4 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- The executive committee comprises the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer.
- The executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year.

5.2.4.5 **GENERAL BODY MEETING**

- The General Body meeting of the association (ANCY) is held at a place and at a time fixed by the Executive Committee at least once a year and the General Body meeting at the Parish level (units) is held at the center every month.
- The president of the ANCY and its parish units presides over their respective General Body meetings.

5.2.4.6 **DECISIONS**

- While the Decisions of the General Body (ANCY) shall be binding on all Catholic Youth in this territory, the decisions of the General Body (Parish Yuak Sangh) at the parish level binds only the parish concern.

5.2.4.7 **REPORTS**

- A copy of the Report of the General Body meeting of the ANCY is sent to the Bishop and the copy of the report of the Parish Yuak Sangh is sent to the respective Parish Priests.

5.2.4.8 **THE PATRON AND THE FEAST**

- St. John Bosco shall be the Patron saint
- Feast of St. John Bosco shall be celebrated solemnly on or around 31st of January.

5.2.5 **TAMIL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION**

- Tamil Catholic Association is a lay association of Tamil Catholics in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Its headquarters are in Port Blair. It is an auxiliary association to Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association. Its aims and objectives are as stated below:

5.2.5.1 **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Fostering lay apostolate (Service of God and Society) under the guidance and direction of the Tamil Chaplain.
- To Safeguard and foster socio-cultural religious field of Tamil Catholics
- To Promote and maintain the Tamil social background
- Safeguarding the legitimate rights, liberties and interests of the Catholics
- Creation of awareness of social evils and taking necessary steps to overcome them.
- Organizing Religious and social services
- Organizing charity Programs.
- Co-operating with other organizations for any common cause with the approval of Ecclesiastical Authority
- To foster Catholic principles and ideals and a sense of civic duties and responsibilities in the best interest of the nation with due regard for catholic principles.

- 5.2.5.2 **MEMBERSHIP/FEE**
- All Catholics whose origin is traced back to Tamil Nadu and who consider Tamil as their mother-tongue
 - Membership fee is decided by the General Body meeting.
- 5.2.5.3 **SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**
- A priest is appointed as the spiritual director (chaplain) of this association at the diocesan level.
 - The spiritual director has the power to veto any item of the agenda or resolutions that go against the interest of the Church.
- 5.2.5.4 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
- The executive committee comprises the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer.
- 5.2.5.5 **GENERAL BODY MEETING**
- The General Body meeting of the association is held at Port Blair once in four months.
 - The president of the Association presides over the General Body meetings.
- 5.2.5.6 **DECISIONS**
- The Decisions of the General Body shall be binding on all Tamil Catholics in this territory.
- 5.2.5.7 **REPORTS**
- A copy of the Report of the General Body meeting is sent to the Bishop and the Parish Priest of Port Blair.
- 5.2.5.8 **THE PATRONESS AND THE FEAST**
- Our Lady of Vailankanni shall be the Patroness.
 - Feast of Pongal shall be celebrated solemnly on or around 14th of January.

5.2.6 MALAYALEE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION.

- Catholic Malayalee Association is a lay association of Malayalee Catholics. Its headquarters are in Port Blair. It is an auxiliary association to Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association. Its aims and objectives are as stated below:

5.2.6.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To foster lay apostolate (Service of God and Society) under the guidance and direction of the Malayalee Chaplain.
- to safeguard and foster socio-cultural religious field of Malayalee Catholics
- to promote and maintain the Malayalee social background
- to safeguard the legitimate rights, liberties and interests of the Catholics
- to create an awareness of social evils and taking necessary steps to overcome them.
- to organize Religious and social services
- to organize charity programs.
- to co-operate with other organizations for any common cause with the approval of Ecclesiastical Authority
- to foster Catholic principles and ideals and a sense of civic duties and responsibilities in the best interest of the nation with due regard for catholic principles

5.2.6.2 MEMBERSHIP/FEE

- All Catholics whose origin is traced back to Kerala and who consider Malayalam as their mother-tongue
- Membership fee is decided by the General Body meeting.

5.2.6.3 SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

- A priest is appointed as the spiritual director (Chaplain) of this association at the diocesan level.

- The spiritual director has the power to veto any item of the agenda or resolutions that go against the interest of the Church.

5.2.6.4 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- The executive committee comprises the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer.

5.2.6.5 **GENERAL BODY MEETING**

- The General Body meeting of the association is held at Port Blair once in four months.
- The president of the Association presides over their respective General Body meetings.

5.2.6.6 **DECISIONS**

- The Decisions of the General Body shall be binding on all Malayalee Catholics living in this territory.

5.2.6.7 **REPORTS**

- A copy of the Report General meeting is sent to the Bishop and the Parish Priest of Port Blair.

5.2.6.8 **THE PATRON AND THE FEAST**

- St. Thomas, the Apostle, shall be the Patron saint
- Feast of St. Thomas shall be celebrated solemnly on or around 3rd of July.

LOCAL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION

- Local Catholic Association is a lay association of those who consider Andaman and Nicobar Islands as their place of origin and those who are not members of Adhivasi, Malayalee and Tamil Catholic Associations. Its headquarters are in Port Blair. It is an auxiliary

association to Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association. Its aims and objectives are as stated below:

5.2.6.9 **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Fostering lay apostolate (Service of God and Society) under the guidance and direction of the Local Chaplain.
- Safeguarding the legitimate rights, liberties and interests of the Catholics
- Creation of awareness of social evils and taking necessary steps to solve them.
- Organizing Religious and social services
- Organizing charity Programs.
- Co-operating with other organizations for any common cause with the approval of Ecclesiastical Authority
- To foster Catholic principles and ideals and a sense of civic duties and responsibilities in the best interest of the nation with due regard for catholic principles.

5.2.6.10 **MEMBERSHIP/FEE**

- All Catholics who consider Andaman and Nicobar Islands as their place of origin and who do not come under Adhivasi, Tamil or Malayalee community
- Membership fee is decided by the General Body meeting.

5.2.6.11 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- The executive committee comprises the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer.

5.2.6.12 **GENERAL BODY MEETING**

- The General Body meeting of the association is held at Port Blair once in four months.
- The president of the Association presides over their respective General Body meetings.

5.2.6.13 **DECISIONS**

- The Decisions of the General Body shall be binding on all Local Catholics in this territory.

5.2.6.14 **REPORTS**

- A copy of the Report General meeting is sent to the Bishop and the Parish Priest of Port Blair.

5.2.6.15 **THE PATRON AND THE FEAST**

- St. John the Baptist shall be the Patron saint
- Feast of St. John the Baptist shall be celebrated solemnly on or around the 24th of June.

5.2.7 CRUZ VIR AND BAL SANGH

- Crus Vir and Bal Sangh are lay associations of Catholic children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It has its units in every parish. It is an auxiliary association to Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association. Its aims and objectives are as stated below:

5.2.7.1 **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Fostering children apostolate (Service of God and Society) under the guidance and direction of the Spiritual Director.
- Creation of awareness of social evils that affect children and taking necessary steps to solve them.
- Organizing Religious and social services
- Organizing charity Programs.
- Organizing sports and Cultural Activities.
- To foster Catholic principles and ideals and a sense of civic duties and responsibilities in the best interest of the nation at the very tender age.

5.2.7.2 **MEMBERSHIP/FEE**

- All Catholic Children living in the territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, up to the age of 7 or upto the reception of the First Holy Communion are members of Bal Sangh and all children from the age of 7 and from the time they receive their first Holy Communion up to the age of 14 completed are members of Crus Vir.
- Membership fee is decided by the General Body meeting.

5.2.7.3 **SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS/PRESIDENT**

- A sister and a priest are appointed as spiritual directors of the association at the diocesan level and Parish Priest appoints a priest and a sister at the parish level.
- The spiritual director has the power to veto any item of the agenda or resolutions that go against the interest of the Church.

5.2.7.4 **GENERAL BODY MEETING**

- The General Body meeting of the association is to be held at Parishes once a month.

5.2.7.5 **REPORTS**

- A copy of the Report of General Body meeting is sent to the respective Parish Priest.

5.2.7.6 **THE PATRON AND THE FEAST**

- St. Dominic Savio shall be the Patron saint
- Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross shall be celebrated solemnly on 14th September.

5.3 **PIOUS ASSOCIATIONS**

- The Church from the beginning encouraged pious associations to enable people to voluntarily offer themselves through a particular devotion and through a

particular way of life so that they could involve themselves more actively in the mission of Christ.

5.3.1 MARIA SENA (LEGION OF MARY)

- Maria Sena is a pious association, which is at the service of the Church through filial devotion to Our Lady for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.
- In the Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Mission, Maria Sena was established in the year 1980 and it now consists of one *Commitium*, three *Curias* and number of *Presidia*.

5.3.1.1 MEMBERSHIP:

Membership is open to all:

- Who, through the inspiration of Maria Sena, want to commit themselves to the service of the Church and
- Who wish to fulfill the demands of Maria Sena

5.3.1.2 ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP

- At the lowest level of Maria Sena is *Presidium* that could be established at the village level
- *Curia* consists of several *Presidiums*. Depending upon the development of its activities, each Parish may have its own curia.
- Several *Curias* are under the guidance of *Commitium* in Port Blair.
- The *Commitium* at Port Blair is under the guidance of *Senatus* Chennai.
- The over all functioning of Maria Sena in the entire world is overseen by its *Concilium*, placed at Dublin.

5.3.1.3 **MEETING**

- Meetings are the most important part of the life of Maria Sena. While each *presidium* conducts its own meeting every week in a place and at a time fixed by the *Presidium*, the *Curia* and the *Commitium* conduct its meeting once a month at the center on a fixed day.

5.3.1.4 **SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**

- A priest is appointed as the spiritual director for *Commitium* and for every *Curia* and *Presidium*.
- The spiritual director has the power to veto any item of the agenda or resolutions that go against the interest of the Church.

5.3.1.5 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- The executive committee comprises the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer at *Presidium*, at *Curia* and at *Commitium* levels.

5.3.1.6 **GENERAL BODY MEETING**

- The General Body meeting of all Legionaries is to be held at Port Blair once a year.
- The president of the *Commitium/Curia/Presidia* presides over their respective General Body meetings.

5.3.1.7 **DECISIONS**

- The Decisions of *Commitium* shall be binding on all *Curias* and *Presidia* in this territory, while the decision of *Curia* and *Presidia* bind their respective groups.

5.3.1.8 **REPORTS**

- A copy of the Report of General body meeting is sent to the Bishop, to all Parish Priests and to every *Curia/Presidium* in this territory.

5.3.1.9 **THE PATRONESS AND THE FEAST**

- Our Lady, Star of the Sea (Stella Maris) shall be the Patroness.
- Nativity of our Blessed Mother shall be celebrated on the 8th of September

CONCLUSION

The diocese has well established lay structures for participation in the life of the Church. All these associations are to be encouraged and revitalized.

Councils and Associations are created to bring more participation in the life of the Church and to provide help to the pastors in their ministry. This life has to be encouraged in such a way that the Spirit of the law is respected. The laity are to be encouraged to participate more fully in the life of the Church, so that the Church of Christ may truly be in accordance with the vision of the Second Vatican council which calls it *The People of God*.

CHAPTER VI PARISH ADMINISTRATION

6.1 PARISH

- A Parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a diocese, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor (CIC 515 §1)

6.1.1 ESTABLISHING/SUPPRESSING/ALTERING PARISHES

- The Bishop after consulting the priests' Senate establishes or suppresses a parish.(CIC 515 §2)

6.2 FINANCE AND TEMPORAL GOODS

6.2.1 While affirming the inherent right of the Catholic Church independently of any secular power, to acquire, retain, administer and alienate temporal goods, in pursuit of its proper objectives, the Code of Canon Law 1983, affirms the same right to the dioceses.

6.2.2 In India, where a comprehensive freedom of religion is guaranteed by Art 25 of the Constitution, the Art. 26 guarantees subject to public order, morality and health the right;

- a. to establish and maintain religious and charitable institutions;
- b. to manage its own affairs in matters of religion;
- c. to own and acquire movable and immovable properties; and
- d. to administer such properties in accordance with law.

6.2.3 Canon 1254 §2 mentions four principal purposes for which the Church can acquire temporal goods:

- The regulation of divine worship
- The provision of fitting support for the clergy and other ministers
- The carrying out of works of the sacred apostolate
- Works of charity, especially for the needy

6.2.4 As all Christ's faithful have the obligation to provide for the needs of the Church, the C.C.B.I. General Body Meeting held in Kottayam (1988) decreed the following for Latin Catholics in India:

- Norms are to be drawn up at the regional or diocesan level specifying the minimum contribution to be made by each family for the support of the local Church e.g. at-least one percent of the annual income or for the very poor one day's wages per year;
- Besides, parishes, institutions, priests and religious are reminded of their obligation to contribute for the support of the Church at the diocesan and national level according to their means.
- The funds from the above, as also from Sunday collections, other offerings made by the faithful on the occasion of administering sacraments and sacramentals, as also extra-ordinary amounts collected as a result of special drives are to be so organized as to enable the Church in India to gradually become self-reliant.

6.2.5 In the diocese of Port Blair, at present mission contribution is Rs. 100/- per year. Settlers/farmers pay one mound dhan or its equivalent. This may be increased after consulting the Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association. It is also recommended to fix number of years after which this mission chanda shall be raised. The family card system is to be followed. The records kept in the families, with the pracharaks and in the parish must tally at any time. Other collections to be made in the parishes in the mission policy are as follows:

- Bachandats Fee – Rs. 25 from each party
- Gift on the occasion of marriage – Rs. 25 from each party
- For the Holy Family/Sacred Heart of Jesus picture – Rs.75
- Dispensation from each bann and each impediment – Rs. 50
- 1/3 share in the fines of marriage cases
- Mass Excess and Bination
- Offertory Collection (On Sundays, feast days and tour masses), dumb-box collection
- Naya Khani Dhan
- Any donation/gift/stole fee, etc., unless it was made *intuitu personae*.
- Extraordinary chandas for special projects (like Church repairs, painting, etc)
- Sale of religious stationery
- Boarding and Lodging collected from the employees.
- Income from agriculture, poultry, etc.
- Assistance from Diocesan funds

Apart from this local income, the diocese will also appeal to Propaganda and other donor agencies to collect money for ordinary/extraordinary projects expenses.

- 6.2.6 **Mixing of Funds:** Intention of the donor is to be respected. Hence the fund meant for a purpose is not to be used for another purpose. In case of need, an explicit permission of the Bishop is needed.
- 6.2.7 **Internal Auditing:** The Diocesan financial administrator, the procurator or their assistants shall visit the parish to help priests to keep the accounts and also to do the internal auditing.
- 6.2.8 **Book Keeping:** In all parishes, the assistant parish priests will handle the accounts and keep the money. However, the Parish Priest is ultimately responsible for the accounts and money.

- 6.2.9 **Auditing:** In accordance with the law of the land, the parish accounts are to be audited every year. For this reason, the government auditor appointed by the diocese visits Port Blair in April/May every year. The exact date of his arrival shall be intimated to parishes well in advance. During the auditing, the person who keeps the accounting is to be personally present. He is to come prepared with cash/ledger/petty cash books, bank pass books, fixed deposit receipts, payment/receipt vouchers and other documents and bills necessary for the auditing. He is to prepare the Receipt and payment account for the year ended well in advance and bring the same for the auditing.
- 6.2.10 It is recommended that each parish should be self-supporting at least regarding maintenance of ordinary expenses of its personnel and staff.
- 6.2.11 Boarding and Lodging of personnel in the parish is maintained from the parish income. Regarding other personal expenses, religious priests follow the diocesan agreement with regard to their congregation. The diocesan priests will follow the diocesan policy.
- 6.2.12 **Payment of our staff:** All domestic employees are classified under three headings such as, 1.Trained catechist/driver 2. untrained catechist/cooks 3. malis and helpers. The pay scale shall be revised by the diocesan finance committee, keeping in mind the minimum wage proposed by the government.
- 6.2.13 **Contribution to the Universal Church and the Diocese:** Keeping in mind the universal nature of the Church, every parish should contribute towards the upkeep of the Universal Church and Diocese. For this reason the following celebrations are held and the proceeds of this celebration are sent to its respective purpose:

6.2.13.1 **Towards Universal Church:**

- Mission Sunday – as prescribed in the Ordo
- Holy Childhood - 2nd Sunday of February
- Campaign against Hunger and Disease: Any one Sunday in Lent
- Peter Pence - on the vocation day.
- Towards the upkeep of Holy Land: Good Friday
- Towards World Communication Day
- Towards SC / ST fund
- Special drives on the occasion of natural calamities, etc., as requested by the Bishop.

6.2.13.2 **Towards Diocese:**

- Bishop's Relief Fund – Contribution made to bishop during his visit to parishes/ villages and during other special drive.
- Siksha Fund – second Sunday of the month of August
- Murda Fund – 2nd of November
- Diocesan Suraksha Fund – all Fridays during the Lent.

The above collections are to be transferred to the diocesan curia at the earliest.

6.2.14 **LAND/PROPERTY PAPERS:** The original papers of properties belonging to the parish are to be preserved at the Diocesan Curia. And the duplicates are to be preserved at the parish office.

6.2.15 **LIBRARY:** Parish Priests of all Parishes should see that their presbyteries are provided with sufficiently good and modest library. Reference books such as Bible, Vatican Council documents, Code of Canon law, Commentary on the Code of Canon Law, Pastoral Guide, Biblical Commentaries/homilies, etc are to be part of the library, besides encouraging individual priests to have their own personal copies. Some magazines such as Vidyajyoti, The Examiner, Clergy Review, Petrus, Living Word, The New Leader, Breaking the Word, Nishkalanka, Daily news papers, etc are to be subscribed.

6.2.16 **PARISH OFFICE:** The following files and registers are to be preserved and maintained at every parish:

A. Files:

1. Correspondence with Bishop
2. Correspondence with other Ecclesial authorities
3. Correspondence with Govt. Officials
4. Correspondence with convents
5. Correspondence General
6. Priests' senate reports/recommendations
7. DPC reports / recommendations
8. Sacred Returns
9. Handing over file (very important at the time of transfers and change of office)
10. Correspondence with villages (e.g.)
 - 10.1 *Dairy Farm*
 - 10.2 *Calicut*
 - 10.3 *Pattargudda*
 - 10.4 *Mile Tilak*
 - 10.5 *Hanspuri*
 - 10.6
 - 10.7
11. Parish notices
12. Monthly Programme
 - 12.1 Sisters' Monthly Programme
13. Files of individual association
 - 13.1 Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Association
 - 13.2 Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Maha Sabha
 - 13.3 Andaman and Nicobar Maha-Mahila Sangh
 - 13.4 Andaman and Nicobar Catholic Youth
 - 13.5 Parish Catholic Association
 - 13.6 Catholic Sabha
 - 13.7 Mahila Sangh
 - 13.8 Yuvak Sangh
 - 13.9 Crus Vir
 - 13.10 Bal Sangh

- 13.11 Tamil community
- 13.12 Malayalam Community
- 13.13 Local Community
- 13.14 Legion of Mary
- 14. Vocation camp
- 15. S.C.C.
- 16. Catechism Teacher's File
- 17. Catechism classes report
- 18. Unemployed youth
- 19. People's whereabouts
- 20. Pracharaks letter for baptism
- 21. Rectification of marriages report (Maramat Shadi reports)
- 22. Marriage letters sent (reg. Baptism/NOC certificates)
- 23. Marriage letters received (reg. Baptism/NOC certificates)
- 24. Bachandat correspondence (containing pracharaks's letter, filled in bachandat forms, baptism/ confirmation/ NOC Letters, dispensation applications, etc)
- 25. Mission chanda
- 26. Audited statement of accounts
- 27. Payment vouchers file (Expenses)
- 28. Receipt Vouchers files (Income)
- 29. Land tax/telephone bills/electricity bills
- 30. Vehicle insurance
- 31. Land papers

B. Registers

- 1. Baptism Register
- 2. Confirmation Register
- 3. First Holy Communion Register
- 4. Marriage Register
- 5. Death Register
- 6. Bishop's visitation Register
- 7. Procurator's visitation Register
- 8. Parish diary

9. Fathers and sisters meeting Register
10. Parish community meeting Register
11. Announcements Register
12. Sarna / Non Christians register
13. Parish census register
14. Tour diary
15. Mass book wherein all masses collected are recorded.
16. Mass book wherein all masses celebrated and signed by the celebrant are written.
17. Inventory Register – Church
18. Inventory Register – Presbytery
19. Mission Chanda Register (Village-wise)
20. Parab Chanda Register
21. Cash book
22. Ledger book
23. Petty Cash Book

The numbering given in Article no. 6.2.6 with regard to parish files and registers should be followed in every parish for uniformity.

CONCLUSION

May this Diocesan Policy be truly a road map for us to follow as we pursue the way to sanctity here on earth, for we are “the Church to which we are all called in Christ Jesus, and in which we acquire sanctity through the grace of God”, and which “will attain her full perfection only in the glory of Heaven”. (cf LG, 48).