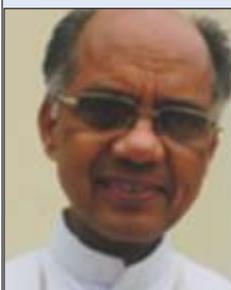




SHEPHERD'S VOICE

LENT: The Season of Renewal



The season of Lent is the time for us to deepen our relationship with God, with people and with ourselves; a spiritual renewal in the right sense. Right on the first day of Lent, on Ash Wednesday, we hear the call of the Church to renew ourselves through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, that too not for

promoting one's own religious popularity or pretense of any sort, but building up a person of depth and genuineness. Thus we are being well prepared to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Jesus our Saviour – His passion, death on the cross and resurrection.

In fact, lasting peace and happiness, i.e. Eternal Bliss is the life-goal of every individual. This is achieved by anyone, freeing oneself from vices. The first step to do this is to realize that one is the image of a loving God. In our original state, we are embodiments of purity, peace, love and truth. When we come to this awareness, we are connected to the Supreme God Himself and consequently empowered to free ourselves from the influence of vices.

Exercises for renewal:

1. Follow the example of Abraham: Abraham received a compelling order, a challenge, to leave everything and go to a new land – leave from one's own petty selfish ways of living in one's own land and hold on to a broad mind-set of being one of a communion of togetherness. This is effected by 'Ahimsa' and 'Satyagraha', in the words of Mahatma Gandhi. Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and everything else will be yours". So shun all those idols who do not act in order to support life (Ps. 115/4-7). Those who trust in the Lord are with hope and our Mother Mary is an example of that Christian hope. Christian hope is centered on Jesus and his redemption (1 Tim 1/1). Since Jesus has been raised from the dead, we too can hope to be raised like Christ (1 Cor. 15/12-20).

2. Total surrender of our woes: Bible says, "apna bojhu prabhu par Cchod do; vah tumhen thaam lega" (Leave your burdens unto the Lord and he will support you). We are people burdened with many pains in our everyday life. There is no human being who is free from all worries, anxieties, problems and pains in life. The usual tendency in us is that we carry these on our shoulders and remain joyless. What the Lord is asking us is to leave all the reasons for our unhappiness to him. The good Pope John XXIII used to say that he remained ever joyful and light hearted because he placed the burden of leading the entire Church on the shoulders of Jesus.

3. Lasting peace through total forgiveness: Lasting peace and happiness can be found only by freeing ourselves from vices and the first and the major one among them is the unforgiving attitude. Jesus taught us, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us". Let us learn the lessons of a joyful life from the Lord himself – learn to forgive our offenders easily; such a person is a true follower of Jesus.

Conclusion:

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ constitute one single action, which resumes in itself the entire life of Jesus. The stories of resurrection, in fact, acquire credibility and reliability only after the recognition of the truth of Christ's crucifixion, not before. Therefore the heart of Christian faith is in the incarnate and crucified Son of God, raised from the dead by the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8/11). So anyone, who wants to have a share in his resurrection, needs to go through the same process of dying to gain eternal life. This dying, for us, is a continuous surrendering of our self to God; freeing oneself from all egos of self-conceit and unforgiving nature. Let this Lent help us to follow the path of Jesus to eternal joy and peace in life. In fact, the glory of God is human beings fully alive and free. "Rejoice, rejoice in the Lord always; and again... and the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 4/4-9).

+Sebastian Kallupura
Bishop of Buxar

WEAVING

As we celebrated the dawn of the New Year, we were grounded to taste the reality of life in its sweetness and bitterness too. This issue attempts to report the ups and downs in the life of our diocese to rejoice and regain strength to change what we can and to accept what cannot be changed.

As we continued to mourn the death of our beloved Fr. Jose Perumalil with the memorial Mass, the remnant of American Jesuits in Patna mission, Fr. Jerome Durack SJ joined the saints in Heaven. Life goes on, despite death! We were yet again blessed with visits of our friends and benefactors. The second visit of a team, this time led by Veronique Vogel herself brought in cheer in the people and places they visited. The visit of the Major Superiors confirms our common commitment to the Lord's mission.

We joyfully join the Jubilarians in celebrating the 'Kairos' at this juncture of their life. Celebration of Don Bosco feast as well as the reports of school annual day celebrations and other activities, expansion of school buildings in Koches and Belaon, reconstruction of presbytery at Buxar are real expressions of God's plan and blessings. The seminarians as well as the catechists scattered all over our diocese must have enjoyed their 'koinonia' during their usual meeting cum recollection.

We now look forward to what the Lord has in store for us during the deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings and other events planned at various levels, not to mention the ones for candidates for marriage and the summer camp for the school going children. Lenten and Holy Week celebrations will contribute to our onward spiritual growth. Summer holidays are a convenient occasion to organize different programmes in the parishes and, if reported in time, this News Letter can carry details of the same. SG regularly mentions the B' Days of priests - a reminder to pray for them and also to look into the Buxar Diocesan Directory for the B' Days of others.

JA

I. MAJOR EVENTS!

CBCI Meeting-2018

The Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) had its General Body Meeting from 2nd to 9th of Feb. 2018 at St. John's Medical College, Bangalore. The theme of the meeting was "United in Diversity for a Mission of Mercy and Witness: "I am with you always, to the end of the ages" (Mt.28/20). Rooted in this vision offered to the Church by her Master, 184 bishops prayed and reflected on the theme. The bishops felt that the Church today should come out of her ghettos and openly take up the Mission of Jesus, that is, to unite and reconcile the whole humankind into one family of God. They were critical of the different anti-people vigilantes that are at work in the country. Bishops affirmed the need to live in unity in the midst of diversity, both within the Church and in the country. To achieve this goal, twenty concrete proposals were made at the meeting.

The salient Features:

<p>Proposals to live in unity amidst diversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a ceaselessly praying community • Communion to become a way of life • Promote & intensify SCCs • FAMILIES in their evangelizing mission to become focal point of Church's ministry • Empower the youth and the laity to play their role in the Church and nation • Ensure women representation in all Church bodies • Prepare Priests, religious and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the salient features of the Constitution of India: Freedom & Equality • Motivate the laity to be involved in the secular world for nation-building • Education ministry to be a mission of mercy, imparting Gospel values • Provide care, comfort and hope to the exploited communities • Increase awareness of the importance of ecology • Assist prisoners to rehabilitate, caring for their families
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seminarians to be authentic witnesses of mercy • Dialogue and ecumenism to be the normal way of our ministry	• Ensure transparency at all levels in Church administration • To tackle urgent matters of the diocese set up an effective “think-tank”
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CONCLUSION: The Church exists to evangelize. Despite challenges and setbacks, we are proud to be Indian. We love our country as we continue to pray constantly for it and its wellbeing. Our Christian faith gives us hope to move ahead to continue our work for unity in diversity so as to establish peace and harmony and make our country live up to its exalted calling.

MISSION MEET

BP. Sebastian was invited by the Pastoral Orientation Centre (POC), Cochin on the occasion of Silver Jubilee celebrations. He shared on the Mission Endeavors in Bihar to a group of about 300 people included a large number of laity, besides religious, priests and bishops from Kerala as well as from other states. Fr. James Amakatt too took part in the three-day Mission Meet from 26th to 28th of Jan.' 18.

Foundation Stone laid for Buxar Presbytery:

A much awaited and much needed house for the parish priests of Buxar is going to be actualized in the near future. On the auspicious first Friday of the Lenten Season, 23rd Feb. soon after the Way of the Cross, in the presence of some 50 odd people the foundation stone for the presbytery was laid by Bp. Sebastian Kallupura. The short ceremony concluded with the distribution of *Laddoos*. The Parish priest, Fr. Andrews Raja looked very happy and said that a very strong foundation had been laid and we could expect a very strong two-storey house serving various needs of the parish and the neighbouring Bishop's House.

Visit of Dignitaries:

The Aid to the Church in Need team visits Buxar diocese: A group of 7 people (Ms. Maria, Raquel, Anna, Magdalena, Julietta, Mr. Javier) under the

leadership of Veronique Vogel visited our diocese from 27th to 29th of Jan. The group visited many of our Mission Centres and interacted with the local people.

The diocese is extremely grateful to the Aid to the Church in Need, Germany for its help for our people and missions.

Sr. Regis, the Provincial of the SMI sisters of Belaon made her last visitation as the Provincial from 11th to 14th of Feb. There was a special Thanksgiving Mass for her at Belaon on 12th of Feb. in which Bp. Sebastian was the Main Celebrant. The priests and sisters from the neighbouring parishes too were present for the Mass and the fellowship meal that followed.

The SSpS. Provincial, Sr. Regina had her official visitation on 11th of Jan. Again she came with the General Councilor, Sr. Margaret, and was in Buxar from 22nd to 24th of Feb. The whole Congregation is being well integrated into the diocese of Buxar and the people of Nadaon village. Whoever sister visits the sisters at Nadaon makes it a point to visit the families too in the village.

2. MEETINGS/CELEBRATIONS !

Silver Jubilee of Sr. Saroj C.J. : The family members from Nadaon, Buxar along with many priests and religious gathered at Sikendra prish (Patna Archdiocese), where Sr. Saroj is serving now, on 10/2 to thank God for the 25 years of Sr. Saroj's religious life. Fr. James A. offered the Jubilee Mass joined by many priests besides Fr. Andrews Raja, PP of Buxar. Hearty congratulations, Sr. Saroj. Buxar diocese is proud of you.

Sr. Lourdes C.J. celebrated her Golden Jubilee of her religious life on 10th Feb. 2018 at Shahpur. Bp. Sebastian was the main celebrant of the meaningful Mass in the parish church. There were many people

from sister's family, including her siblings- priests, religious etc. for the wonderful celebration. Fr. Bhaskar, the Pastor of the place did extremely well as a good host.

School Annual Day:



St. Mary's School Amolia had its impressive Parents's Day celebration on 18th of Feb. The B.D.O. of Karagahar was the Chief Guest for the occasion while a former Health minister of Bihar Mr. Ramdhani Singh was the special guest. With Bp. Sebastian as the guest of honour many local dignitaries, priests and sisters from the neighbouring parishes were present. The children gave a spectacular performance with various shades of cultural items. The children showed that it was possible for them to be at par with any city-children. Congratulations to the parish priest Fr. Sebastian, H.M. Sr. Pushpika, HC teachers and collaborators!

Matric and Intermediate Exams:

Govt. of the State (Bihar) took the service of many of our Catholic High Schools to conduct its annual Matric and Intermediate exams in the month of February. In most of our schools our own principals successfully took care of the Centre Supervision and gained experiences in administration.

However, the schools had to suffer from the loss of teaching days for their own students and they also had to lose precious time of new admissions to their schools. At times we have no options but to abide by the regulations of the state.

Exhibition at St. Mary's (Eng. Med.) School, Buxar:



A month old preparation found its result on 28th Feb. 2018, world science day when class 6 students of the English Medium School presented their science working projects in an exhibition form. 26

working models of Newton's disk, mixer grinder, water heater by blade, door bell alarm etc by 26 students on Physics, chemistry and biology were prepared and presented under the guidance of science teacher, Miss. Anuradha. The first visitors and inaugurators were Fr. Andrews Raja and Fr. Sudeep. The visits and interaction of the other students along with their parents encouraged the 'budding scientists'. Neighbouring religious communities with students also visited us. The English speaking visitors were impressed by the fluent English of the boys and girls.

Fr. Binoy Thomas

Don Bosco Feast:

Salesian fathers at Itarhi Parish celebrated the feast day of their founder, Don Bosco with 3-day celebrations. The final day of the feast, 31st Jan., was preceded by many activities. The women group of the parish had a day of *Mahila Milan*, animated by Fr. Pius Prashant SJ and a special festive Eucharistic celebration with the parishioners on 28th. The school children (catechumens) had a 3-day of Bosco Camp and some of them presented Don Bosco of the modern day through a well performed play.

A fellowship meal with priests and religious of the diocese on 31st Jan. marked the finale of the colourful and joyful celebrations. Happy Feast Fathers and Sisters

A day of prayer and fasting observed:



Responding to the call of the season, “repent and return to the Lord”, Shahpur parish organized a special day of prayer and fasting on 18th Feb.

Fr. Robert Kumar, a priest from Patna Archdiocese with Bro. Francis (The Disciples) guided the people to experience the healing power of God through their preaching and healing prayer service. People of the parish thronged the Church in good number to avail the opportunity of the spiritual blessings. Many catechumens are regular to the Church services. The growing number of *Khrist Bhaktas* (*Devotees of Christ*) in the Church is a matter of great encouragement.

Besides the spiritual need, the physical need of the people was also taken care of, as at the end of the healing prayer service, people were served with bread and *Chai*. The young Parish Priest Fr. Bhaskar is definitely growing into a very caring pastor.

Memorial Mass: Fr. James A. celebrated Memorial Mass, organized by the family members, for Fr. Jose Perumalil in his home parish Kuninji on 30th day of Fr. Jose's death.

Buxar diocese organized a Memorial Mass, inviting all from the diocese, on 13th of February. Bishop Sebastian was the main celebrant, while many priests, religious and faithful participated. Prayer at the grave and lunch followed.

Bp. Sebastian directed the annual retreat in Ranchi for 19 OCD priests from different Provinces from 25th of Feb. to 2nd of March.

Bp. Sebastian Was the Chief Guest for the Minor Seminary Day celebrations at Varanasi on 21st of Jan. He offered Mass in the parish church in the morning and took part in the cultural event in the afternoon. Our minor seminarians are being well-formed there.

Prison Ministry: A Testimony

Listening to Sr. Inigo of St. Ann's Chennai during a seminar at Digha, I thought to myself, if Sr. Inigo can do prison ministry, why not me! Having obtained the needed permission from the jail authorities through Fr. Arogiaswamy Gotluri (SD), from the 2nd of Feb. I started visiting the women's section in Buxar jail along with Sr. Lucy SSH. As per the direction of the National Prison Ministry, a drawing competition was conducted for the women. Twenty five of them, even illiterate ones, participated. The result was amazing. Even the Asst. Superintendent was overwhelmed to realise how artistic and creative these marginalised people can be. The women also were very pleased to give expression to their inner energy and talents. Now we teach the illiterate women to read and write providing them with the needed study materials too. I am indeed encouraged by the response I get from the inmates and by the support I receive from my community.

Sr. Inigo's words have really come true. In love and compassion our vocation is an answer to someone else's cry to God.

Sr. Pooja CJ, Chirag

3. VARIA!

Catechists' Meet: This year the catechists' Christmas gathering could not take place, as on the scheduled day was the funeral of Fr. Jose P. However they met on 12-13 February and left after the Memorial Mass.

Revision of the Diocesan Directory:

All the priests and religious are requested to revise the data about each place and person, given in the present Diocesan Directory (2013) and Supplement (2015) and do the necessary updating. Please send to Fr. Anand Kumar the updated data by 15.04.2018.

News Makers!

- Hearty welcome to Fr. Peter Arockiasamy SJ, who has been appointed the Acting Principal of Ara Catholic High School, who comes with vast experience as an educator. The diocese is much indebted to Fr. Josey Mathias SJ, now gone for his renewal programmes, for his dedicated and efficient service as the Principal of the school.

(Fr. Peter's B/D: 29 June, mob. No. 9431023820 & E-mail: bapatna@gmail.com)

- CONGRATULATIONS to the new Major Superiors: Sr. Tessy SND and Sr. Kiran CJ. The diocese expresses its deep GRATITUDE to the outgoing Major Superiors, Sr. Beena SND and Vimala CJ for their generous service to the diocese as close partners in the same mission.
- Mr. Pyarelal with his team from Awari, Koath is available to conduct *Masihi Satsangh* in the villages. The team's performance in the villages of Koath parish was much appreciated, the objective being evangelization and catechesis through local cultural forms. He has special offers for Lent. One may contact Pyarelal directly. His ph. 9801783491
- Dn. Manoj Kumar, now serving at Kudra, is approved for priestly ordination.
- As the strength of the schools in Belaon and Koches is increasing, the school buildings are being expanded.

Those gone before us: R I P

- SG pays its homage to Fr. Jerome Durack SJ (1929-2018), who flew into his eternal heavenly abode, receiving the sacramental anointing of the sick on 12.02.2018. He was a real Guru to so many priests and religious and a true pastor in the parishes he had been, not to speak of his mastery in Hindi language. Some of us have been initiated into priestly formation by him at Mission Home and Xavier Hall. He is the last American Missionary rightly called "walking Saint", to leave the mission field of Patna Province. We salute the mighty spiritual 'Baba' and along with him all the American Missionaries, who laid their lives for this mission land.
- Jai Prakash Martin (68), F/O Fr. Anand Kumar, who passed away on 16 Jan. after a short period of illness at home. Bishop Sebastian officiated the funeral Mass at Fatuha (Patna) along with many priests, religious and laity. Fr. Anand, we are with you at this moment of mourning and pray for the departed soul.

- While Mr. Vincent (46), younger brother of Fr. John Bosco SJ (Ara) died on 11/01 in Patna, Fr. Bosco's elder brother Mr. Lourdu Raj (57) died on 02 March in TN. After the burial of one brother within a month Fr. Bosco had to rush for another brother's funeral. So hard a situation! We grieve with Fr. Bosco and pray for his family as well as the departed souls.
- We also grieve with Fr. Ranjan SJ (Chenari) at the death of his elder brother, who passed away at Mumbai on 05/01. Fr. Ranjan was able to be at the funeral in Mumbai.
- Mr. James (62), the younger brother of Sr. Suja SND was fighting a heart ailment for some time, expired on 06/03. Sister rushed home for the funeral and will return in the month of May. May God give special grace to the family members of Sr. Suja to face this hard situation.

B'day Celebrations!

- 5 March Archbishop William D'Souza
- 8 March Fr. Sudeep Chacko, SJ
- 27 March Sr. Suja, SND
- 29 March Fr. Milagres Pereira
- 25 April Fr. Dominic Amalan

Ordination Anniversary

- 10/04 Fr. Thomas Vettukattil
- 19/04 Fr. Anand Kumar

Upcoming Events:

- 25/3 creation of the new diocese of Buxar. We commend our diocese to the Lord. We also congratulate and pray for its 1st bishop, William D'Souza SJ.
- Deanery Meetings – Bhojpur on 10/3 and Rohtas on 11/3. This is in view of the forthcoming meeting of the diocesan Pastoral Council on 27/3
- Vocation camp: 3-5 May at SD
- The Disciples' Recollection March 11 (pm) -12, SD
- Priests' Recollection: March 13 (pm) – 14 noon
- Regents' recollection will take place at SD on 18 (pm) to 19 March
- Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting & Chrism Mass: 27 March
- Marriage Preparation Course(1st): March 20-25
- A few youth from different parishes are planning a pilgrimage to Bandel (WB) from 22 to 25 March.

- English Coaching-cum-Summer Camp'2018 at Sewa Kendra, Patna 30th April – 20th May
- Catechetical Camp at SD
 - a. Std.VII: May 18-27
 - b. Std. VIII: May 29 – June 05 (1st time!)
- Catechism Teachers' Seminar August 22-25
- Marriage Convention: October 14
- Marriage Preparation Course (2nd): October 14 -19
- Couples' Programme: October 21 – 23
- Charismatic Convention: November 22 – 25

Fr. Stegman Scholarship Fund was started in the undivided diocese of Patna in 1987 by a few individuals to honour late Fr. Robert Stegman SJ. Its purpose was to provide possible scholarship for poor catholic students doing career oriented studies. However, the then committee members in 2009 decided to limit the beneficiaries of the scholarship only to those belonging to the newly formed diocese of Buxar, bifurcated from the Archdiocese of Patna, the reason being the very limited scope of the Scholarship. After serving Catholic students, especially girls, in their career oriented studies by providing loans, for about 25 years, Fr. Stegman Scholarship Fund is winding up for various reasons.

First of all no fresh donations come and the original principal amount in the form of FD remains static, except for the interest that was made available to the beneficiaries, who have not been faithful to their pledge to support the fund at least by returning the amount they have been provided with. Hence, as per the decision of the Fr. Stegman Scholarship Fund Committee, the amount of the fund has been handed over to the diocese of Buxar so that its bank interest can be used for awarding the toppers of the annual school catechism examination in the diocese of Buxar. Those who pledged to support the fund, once they get a job, still can donate to Buxar diocese, but towards another valuable cause (faith formation).

Fr. James A.

VALIANT FAITH:

Geeta Devi w/o Sunil Kumar in an interview said the following:

“Though born and brought up in a Christian family, my parents married me off in 2003 to a Hindu. Being in a non-Christian family my in-laws wanted me to practice their religion, which, I said, can be

externally, not from within my heart, as my Lord is Christ alone. By the year 2012 I became the mother of three children. Though our house was close to the Church, till then I had not frequented the Church for Mass. Faced with totally new culture, hostile to mine, I daily prayed to Jesus for strength and survival. Faced with unbearable situation, once I did run away from the in-laws and, not knowing where to go, I landed up back at home with my parents, where I was welcomed. There I had sufficient time to spend with the Lord. This went on for three months. Being away from my children and at the same time unable to face the unbearable situation there, it was indeed a trying period for me. The constant refrain in my prayer was, “Lord, let thy will be done”. After three months my brother took me to my in-laws and children. Whereas my father-in-law and husband tolerated my faith, my mother-in-law was resistant. In those days it so happened, that, knowing my interest, my husband brought a Bible for me from Ranchi, where it was donated to him by a nun; and that was an added strength for me. It then became my habit to read the Bible in the morning and in the evening and also recite the rosary.

The three months of 'retreat' gave me strength to resume my practice of frequenting Holy Eucharist on Sundays. Being connected to the Christian community, I received spiritual strength, guidance and consolation. Unceasingly I prayed for my husband and the family. My husband also picked up interest in reading the Bible. In the mean time my mother-in-law passed away. Our business, in the form of a shop, started to pick up and my children were admitted in the parish school. In last October my husband became seriously sick and people in the parish started praying for him. Gradually he improved and he is much better now. Realizing that my God heals and gives peace, he started accompanying me to the Church. Finding consolation and further healing in a Christian atmosphere, he now, like me, daily reads Bible and does not miss any prayer in the parish. He is one of the few who participate in the Eucharistic adoration

in the parish church. Now all of those who knew about the struggle of my faith in Jesus are not only surprised to see both of us regularly in the church, but praise and thank God for the almost miracle like situation.

My struggle, anxiety and problems are far from being over. But I trust in my Lord, who knows the best. Bible, rosary and my prayers along with the fellowship of those who are with me are my support. I say, God is GREAT. He never lets you down. Trust in Him. Believe Him."

Special Feature

YOUTH: Pope Francis has dedicated the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to be held in October 2018, to the Youth, its theme being "Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment". It is consistent with the results of the recent Synod assemblies on the family and with the content of the Post-Synodal apostolic exhortation 'Amoris Laetitia'.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre said: "The upcoming Synod and the preparation for it provide a window for us to learn from young people to listen to them to be with them and to help them discover God's plan for them. Our presence will remind them that they matter; that they are part of the family; that they belong. Rejecting the throw away culture, we will give them reason to hope by assuring them that we are on the journey with them".

"You are the future of the world, you are the hope of the Church, and you are my hope" St. John Paul II.

One of India's biggest challenges today is managing its youth. Population experts tell us that there is a net addition of 18 million to the population each year, 460 million Indians today are between 13 and 35 years of age and 333 million of them are literate. Another commonly cited statistic is that 70% of India's population is below the age of 35 and that 80% of them are literate. They are a digital generation and we are migrants into it! They talk a language many of us do not understand. They are: a generation ever new, accustomed to diversity by

virtue of their socialization, qualified by the phenomenon of religious switching and multi-tasking.

What to do? Reach out to Unchurched Youth*
Have fun with them* Make our liturgy youth-friendly*
Introduce Bible as youth's companion*
Be faith models and icons* Make them agents of change*
Be an effective listener* Provide sufficient space for feedback.

Bishop's Program:

Feb. 25 – 3 March Retreat for OCD Fathers, Ranchi.

March.

11-14 Out of the diocese.

17 Belaon School Day.

19 Minor Orders, Ranchi seminary

25 Palm Sunday, Shahpur.

27 Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting/ChrisM Mass.

29-31 Holy Week.

April:

01 Easter Sunday, Buxar.

7-11 Out of the diocese.

18-19 Hindi Region Bishops' Meet, Delhi.

29 Fr. Muktal's Jubilee, Dalton Ganj.



HAPPY EASTER !

