



# Catholic Diocese of Gorakhpur

Bishop's House, Civil Lines, Gorakhpur  
Uttar Pradesh - 273 001, INDIA

Ref. No. D.G. Pas. 02/24

29<sup>th</sup> November, 2024

(To be read during the Community Mass on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Advent)

My dear Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, Seminarians, Lay faithful and children in Christ,

The season of Advent is a holy time provided by the church to her children to hope in the promise of God to His people, renew themselves in holiness and bear witnesses to the glory of God that will be revealed in the nativity of Jesus. This coming year, 2025 is all the more significant in this regard since the theme of the Jubilee Year 2025 is 'Pilgrims of Hope'. The Jubilee Year 2025 that will be inaugurated immediately after Christmas will prove to be a season of hope. During this advent season, our hearts are stirred with joyful expectation for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**A Time of hope:** *"And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us"* (**Romans 5:5**). The season of advent is a time of hope. It reminds us that Christ is our hope. Just as the prophets waited with unwavering trust for the Messiah, we too, wait in hope for the Lord to be born in our lives. This hope is fulfilled when Christ takes birth in our life and in our families. With this experience of hope fulfilled in our lives, we are also called to be signs of hope for the people around us who are in pain, in distress and depressing situations. We are also challenged with the call to extend this hope to those who have not yet known or experienced the love of Jesus. This hope strengthens us to face life's challenges with trust in God's faithfulness.

**A time of conversion:** *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God"* (**Romans 12:2**). The Church during the season of advent extends an invitation to all the faithful to have a spiritual awakening, a spiritual renewal. Spiritual awakening means to examine our hearts and to align our lives more closely to the values of Gospel. This examination of our Christian life and changing our lives according to the gospel is very significant in the light of the world that we are surrounded with. The attractions and temptations of the materialistic world are pouncing on us. We, very specially our children and youth, are being engulfed by this consumeristic culture day by day, and our values, the Christian values are getting deteriorated. Let our meaningful observance of this advent help us to have a spiritual renewal and awakening.

**A time of Spiritual Renewal:** *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what*

*God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* "(Romans 12:2) Season of Advent gives us an opportunity to renew our life and our family. This season is an opportunity to repair our relationship with the Lord and with one another. Let us seek forgiveness, reconcile with our dear and near ones as living disciples of Christ. The ill feelings that we keep in our heart for one another can be a stumbling block in our preparation to receive Christ. As we light the Advent candles in our homes and churches, let us pray that Christ the light of the world may dispel all darkness in our lives and in our families.

**A time of faithful witness:** "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*" (Acts 1:8) As Christians, baptized in Christ, the commemoration of the season of advent is a chance to witness to our faith in our families and in our living circumstances. The changing situations around us today demand a courageous witness from Christians. Through our acts of mercy and charity, let us testify to the faith that we have received. During this season, seek and make use of opportunities to witness to the faith that you live. Share the good news of the birth of Jesus, the Saviour to our neighbourhood. Become missionaries of Christ's love, peace and joy to the people around you.

**A time of Preparation:** The season of advent is for us to prepare ourselves, not only physically but also spiritually to welcome the Infant Jesus into our personal lives and to our homes. We will be decorating our homes, preparing mangers and welcoming friends and guests during this season. Similarly, more serious internal and spiritual preparations are demanded from us during this season of advent. We are invited to make room, a beautiful one in our hearts, for the Lord, the Prince of Peace, to be born. Let us spend quality time in spiritual exercises and thus prepare our hearts to receive the Lord.

May this sacred season of Advent, which invites all of us to pause, reflect, prepare and renew ourselves for the coming of Jesus Christ, make our Christian living meaningful. May our spiritual renewal guide us to become testimonies of our faith in these troubled times.

Wish you all a grace-filled Christmas and pray that the Infant born in the manger may become the center of your Christian living. May the New Year 2025 bring in wellbeing in your individual and family life.

Your servant in Christ,



✠ Bp Mathew Nellikunnel CST  
Diocese of Gorakhpur