



Diocese of Kohima

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BPKOH/CIR/02/2026/DPC special

Dear Rev. Fathers, Sisters, Brothers and Lay Faithful,

Greetings from Bishop's House, Kohima!! Today is Easter Sunday and I wish each and every one of you a grace-filled Easter day and Easter Season.

As you all know we had the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) on 13th March 2026 at Mt Tabor, Kohima. This year there was a record number of participants – over 160. I am grateful to every participants and thank the Parishes and Centers that facilitated their participation. Through this special circular, I would like to inform you about the some of the decision we had taken which are also normative in the diocese.

1. Theme for the year 2026 – St. Francis of Assisi, model for Priestly and Religious Life

Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed a special Franciscan Jubilee Year, running from January 10, 2026, to January 10, 2027, to mark the 800th anniversary of the death (Transitus) of St. Francis of Assisi. The year focuses on peace, fraternity, and ecological care, offering a plenary indulgence. In our diocese we had already chosen the theme of the year 2026 as “Priestly and religious Life”. Therefore we decided to combine these two themes with a single theme: **St. Francis of Assisi, model for Priestly and Religious Life**. During the animation session of the DPC Fr. Manoj D'Souza OFM CAP, gave an insightful reflection on St. Francis of Assisi – his life and legacy, emphasizing simplicity, humility, love for creation and missionary zeal as the key elements to be imitated in our life.

As a diocese we have declared two Churches: Mary Help of Christians Cathedral in Kohima and St. Francis of Assisi Church in Lazami as Churches of pilgrimage. Those visiting these Churches could gain plenary indulgences on fulfilment of the normal conditions: Confession, communion and prayer for the intention of the Holy Father. Those intending to make pilgrimage to any of these two Churches could contact the Parish Priests (Fr. Antony Dukru at the Cathedral – 9863190260; Fr, Paul Inashe at Lazami -8105941710) who will help you to make arrangement for confession, communion and prayers.

2. Diocesan Novena in Preparation for the Great Jubilee 2033

In the previous circulars, you have been informed about the decision of the North East Regional Bishops' Council (NEIRBC) to prepare the region for the great jubilee 2033 with a nine year novena preparation. The concluding celebration will be in Shillong in 2033. Since we have 15 dioceses in the region in some years two dioceses will celebrate the same. The novena preparation was inaugurated in the diocese of Itanagar in December 2023 with the theme: Eucharist, Mission & Evangelization ; in 2025, it was held in Bongaigaon with the theme: Children and in Aizwal with the theme, BEC. This year, 2026 it will be held in the diocese of Dibrugarh with the theme, Priests and Religious. In 2027, both the dioceses of Agartala and Kohima will hold the novena.

In our diocese the Novena preparation shall be combined with the Platinum celebration of the first Baptism in Kohima, to be celebrated on December 14, 2027. Prior to the celebration, there will be a day of animation program on the theme "Laity" for all the delegates from the dioceses of the region which will be held at the Cathedral campus. Therefore, I request you all to pray for this great event that would ignite the missionary enthusiasm of our laity. The Church in Kohima is a laity led and laity spread Church. A special prayer will also be circulated to be prayed in all our parishes, centers and institutions as a spiritual preparation and to obtain graces for the event.

3. Churches and Chapels

In our diocese we are faced with a unique situation, especially in the cities, where people from different tribes migrate and settle. This poses a great challenge to combine the universality of the Catholic Church and individuality of each community, especially in the context of multiple languages. Canonically the Parish is the center of unity of the people of God in a particular territory. In the same parish there are communities of different tribes and languages. We must give equal focus on both aspects – universality and particularity and this poses challenges. This is all the more serious since with the parish each group wants their own centre (Chapel) for worship and instruction in their own languages. After a long discussion on the matter during the DPC meeting it was decided that the Bishop sent some normative guidelines to be followed by all. Accordingly I am sending out these norms which are binding on all in the City Parishes, where there are multiple tribes and languages.

1. The Parish is the basic canonical structure and centre of unity and universality of the community.
2. Unit churches are called Chapels or community Centres
3. All Churches and Chapels will be named under the patronage of the Trinity, persons of the trinity or saints. No Parish Churches or Unit Churches must be named on the tribal basis
4. Twice a month (or at least once a month) there shall be masses in the parish Church only. On this Sunday no parallel services will be held in the unity Chapels.
5. When there is masses in the parish church only, all faithful from the unit Churches must try to attend the same.

6. Multiplication of chapels must be strictly avoided unless there is great need for the community, not because some people has some vested interest such a employment of the Catechist and others.
7. All the sacraments, except Holy Eucharist and Confession shall be held only in the parish Church
8. The children must try to attend the Sunday catechism in the parish Churches.
9. Vernacular catechism may be conducted in the Chapels in the evening or any other convenient time but not at the same times the catechism classes in the parish.
10. The diocese has its own regulations and norms regarding tithe. I am repeating them since I get complains from various quarters that some communities don't follow the diocesan norms. We give tithe in gratitude to God and not out of compulsion. All must try to support the Church by giving their time, talent and treasure.
11. From the tithe collected 1/3 must be given to the parish for the maintenance of the priests and religious who render their service. No exception must be made on this.
12. All tithe collected must be accounted for and made transparent. All collections must be audited and accounts presented to the community and the Parish Priest must sign the accounts every year.

4. Felicitation in the Church

It has been observed that for convenience and out of necessity felicitation functions after the jubilee celebration or professions is held in the Church itself. I want to give a note of caution. The Felicitation program as far as possible short and precise and items chosen must fit into the occasion and place. Most Churches has the Blessed Sacrament preserved in the Tabernacle. Therefore everyone must be conscious of the presence of Jesus in the Tabernacle and so items performed must fit to the occasion and place, avoiding all cinematic dances and movements, etc.

5. Suggestions from the commission of God's Creation

Fr. Chacko Karinthayil, the Chairman of the commission of God's Creation presented some suggestions to make the commission effective. The house agreed to the following proposals.

1. To adopt St. Joseph Parish, Chümoukedima, as a green campus model in Nagaland
2. To encourage parishes and Catholic institutions to promote activities which will enhance the Sacredness of Creation,
3. Parishes in the diocese observe the Sunday close to World Environment day (5th June) as Green Sunday and the Schools to observe World Environment day (5th June) with activities relevant to its celebration and to celebrate the 2nd Saturdays by tree plantation and cleaning the campus. The commission will try to get sapling from government departments
4. To include the commission for the care of God's creation as an agenda in the forthcoming Diocesan Pastoral Council.

The College of Consulters did not give approval for a special collection on Green Sunday as fund for the commission since there is already many collections for local, national and world needs. The house suggested that the commission make a specific activity oriented budget at the beginning of the year which can be presented to the Finance Committee of the diocese for consideration and approval of fund from the Diocese.

5. Diocesan Pastoral Plan (2026-2035)

Rev. Fr. Kokto Kurian gave a progress report of the committee for the revision of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan (DPP) and he said that the committee visited most of the diocesan regions and some of the commissions. He is confident that the committee will be able to complete the revision before the end of the current year.



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