



# Diocese of Kohima

**Most Rev. Dr. James Thoppil**  
**Bishop of Kohima**

**Bishop's House**  
**Post Box No. 519**  
**Kohima - 797001**  
**Nagaland**

16<sup>th</sup> February, 2026

**BPKOH/CIR/01/2026**

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

Greetings from Bishop's House, Kohima!!

We are in the New Year 2026 with much hope and expectations. Most of our schools have opened and classes have started. Simultaneously the NBSE is conducting the classes X and XII examination which will have a lasting bearing on the future of our students. Let us keep our students and children in our prayers and wish them all great success in these examinations.

As you know, of late there has been a lot of media attention on our educational ministry, even to the extent of denigrating the education we impart with much interest, struggle and persistence. I believe that it is done only by a small minority with vested interests and therefore we should not be disheartened. Instead we must rededicate ourselves with greater commitment in our ministry. The vast majority appreciates our efforts and looks to us for quality education, innovation and transformation. These occasions also provide us opportunity for us to improve, revamp and to rectify any shortcoming in our educational ministry, especially by strengthening the PTA, the management board and by fostering communication and dialogue with all stakeholders. At the same time, we should also be prudent and sensitive to the sentiments and needs of our students, parents and teachers in making changes and abrupt decisions that can hamper and negate the good we do. We should not hesitate to make known to the parents and others the support we provide by way of concessions and scholarships, the extra mile we go to make students succeed by way of arranging teachers and conducting extra classes, holding model examinations, accomodating students in the hostel, and so on. At the end of the day we make our own the attitude of Jesus "when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'we are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty'" (Luke: 17:10). Once again thank you for the great ministry of education we carry out in the diocese despite many odds and challenges.

**37<sup>th</sup> CBCI Plenary Assembly**

The 37<sup>th</sup> plenary assembly of CBCI was held from February 04-10, 2026 at St. John's Academy of Health Sciences, Bengaluru on the theme, "Faith and the Nation: The Church's Witness to India's

Constitutional Values". We are called to be proud Indians and authentic disciples. With joy and hope, we contribute to India's growth, harmony and unity; we cherish the freedom to practice our faith. However, alongside growth and aspiration, we witness rising inequality, ecological degradation, misinformation, polarization and anxiety about identity and belongingness. In this context, the Church is expected to offer a mature, hopeful and credible public witness as we are called by our Lord to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world". Therefore we are called to safeguard and live out the constitutional values, to develop youth leadership with a preferential option for the poor and to promote dialogue and reconciliation. Attached, is the find statement of the CBCI. .

### **Budget for 2026-2027**

As per the diocesan calendar for 2026, the last date for submitting the Budget for the year 2026-2027 is on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026. Budget is the best instrument for planning and prioritizing the development in the parish/centre and school. During the last Consulters' Meeting it was decided to raise the allowance of the priests and Sisters, regarding which a separate letter will be sent. While preparing the budget kindly incorporate these changes. If anyone has already submitted the budget, these changes will be included at the time of approval.

This year the Finance Office has introduced a new format in line with the IT requirements. Therefore I request all those responsible preparing the budget to do so with utmost care and seriousness, ensuring that it as accurate and realistic as possible. No developmental works will be permitted unless they are included in the budget and approved by the Finance Committee. Fr. George Punnolil has also given the option of submitting the budget by e-mail as well. Kindly take care of the following important points into consideration while preparing the budget.

All concessions and scholarship for students must be entered as expenses with the ledger head "Concessions". In the income column the full payment of fees by all the students must be shown. If some students pay the fees in kind, kindly convert it into cash value and show it as cash received. In this way we will be able to provide with the documentary evidence that we are a charitable organization and not a business establishment.

A separate salary register for Religious including priests must be maintained and the full salary according to the qualification and position must be entered. The total amount should be shown as contribution from the Religious to the Parish for which a receipt must be issued to the religious communities. From this amount the parish will pay the allowance to the Religious and Priests.

As mentioned earlier since most of our schools do not have a total turnover of 10,00,000.00 (ten lakhs) for uniforms, stationaries, note books, etc., excluding the text books. These schools do not fall under the purview of GST. Such schools may continue with the Stationary Account. The payment for text books must be recorded under the School Account, not as part of Stationary Account. Schools with a turnover exceeding ten lakhs must maintain a separate account, which must be presented for internal audit.

The payment for text books must go with the school account, not as part of stationary. Those schools with over ten lakh must keep a separate account and it must be presented for internal audit.

## **Lenten Season and Lenten campaign**

We are entering into the season of Lent, a very special time of grace. Pope Leo XIV, has given the Lenten message with the theme: *“Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion”*. In his message the Pope offers two important exhortations: abstain from harsh words and rash judgment so that we make space for words of hope and peace. He focuses on the importance of listening to God and to those around us, allowing ourselves to enter into authentic relationships. The full text of the message is sent along with this circular and I request that it be read and explained in all the Churches on the first Sunday of Lent (22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026). It had been the desire of late Bishop Abraham Alangimattathil SDB, the first bishop of our diocese that we should have a diocesan level way of the cross at least once during the season of lent. Therefor this year we are proposing on Friday, (March 27, 2026) before the Good Friday, to pray the way of the Cross as a diocese. The Parish Priest of the Cathedral will make known the details of the program

## **The Year of St. Francis of Assisi and the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) - 2026**

This year, the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) meeting will be held on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at Mt. Tabor Kohima, beginning at 9.30 am. Pope Leo XIV has declared the year 2026 as the year of St. Francis of Assisi to 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Saint’s death. The Apostolic Penitentiary has issued a Decree granting the plenary indulgence during the Year of Saint Francis. Indulgence makes it possible to free the heart from the burden of sin, since it is the remission by God of the temporal punishment for sins that have already been forgiven in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, so that one may carry out the due reparation in full freedom. Therefore, the Jubilee is an opportunity for the faithful to rekindle their faith, strengthen their relationship with God and with the community of the Church. To obtain the plenary indulgence certain specific conditions indicated by the Church must be fulfilled: sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, certain prayers according to the intentions of the Pope, interior detachment from sin, and the performance of certain works, such as a pious pilgrimage to Franciscan churches, participation in Jubilee celebrations, prayer and meditation in the Franciscan spirit, as well as daily acts of charity and humility that express the spirituality of Saint Francis.

The year dedicated to Saint Francis is an invitation to simplify prayer by deepening it, rather than multiplying it; to live the Gospel concretely rather than merely talking about it. We must not fear that the sacred times of Jubilees become “banal.” They are not meant to astonish us continuously, but to give proper orientation to the heart. The Year of Saint Francis must not become another chapter full of special spiritual effects, but a silent passage from enthusiasm to deep maturity, from spectacular celebration to imitation in daily life. The biography of Saint Francis shows that true imitation of Christ is not based on declarations or ideas, but on a concrete and real lifestyle rooted in the Gospel. He reminds us of the timeless value of poverty and simplicity. By renouncing wealth and social prestige, Francis showed that freedom of heart is born of detachment from material goods. For today’s person, living in a world of consumerism, this is an extremely timely invitation to moderation, responsible use of goods, and placing God and neighbor above material possessions: it is a matter of “being” more than “having.”

In consonance with the theme of the year we have taken **“Saint Francis of Assisi: model for**

**priestly and religious life**” as the theme for our DPC 2026. Rev. Fr. Manoj D’Souza Ofm Cap, the regional superior of the Capuchins has graciously agreed to give an animation session on the theme.

I request all the members of the DPC to be present for this important annual meeting. All the Parish Priests and Centre In-charges are ex-officio members of DPC. There will be no separate invitation for the participation. **Kindly consider this as both information and invitation** to all the members. I request all the Parish Priests and Centre in-charges to ensure that the lay representatives from their respective places are present for the meeting.

Those who require accommodation, are request to inform, the Sr. Superior at Mt. Tabor in advance. The contact mobile numbers are: 8879826939 (Sr. Diana, Superior) / 9436010138 (House).

There are three categories of members for the DPC as given below.

### **1. Ex-officio members**

The Bishop, Vicar General, Chancellor, Directors of different Commissions, Regional Animators, Presidents and General Secretaries of all diocesan level association (CAN, NCWA, NCYM), Rectors of Seminaries, Members of the College of Consulters, Priests’ Council (four Representatives), Commission for Education (Secretary and two office-bearers), Members of Finance Committee (Secretary and two representatives), All Parish Priests and Centre In-charges.

### **ii) Elected**

Two Priests from below the age of 39, Nine Sisters - four above the age of 35 and five Sisters below the age of 34, one Brother each from Regency, Philosophy and Theology; one from the Brothers’ Congregation, Lay representatives from each parish/centre proportionate to the Catholic families:

(1 to 100 – 1; 100 to 200 – 2; 200 to 400 – 3; 400 above 4; two representatives from touring Catechists. It is good that the lay representatives be the office bearer/members of the Parish Pastoral Council, for better co-ordination, information sharing and implementation of the decisions of the DPC in the respective places.

### **iii) Nominated**

- a. Bishop can nominate up to a maximum of ten percent of the total number.
- b. Bishop can nominate two teacher representatives (laity) and two students (College level)

### **Request to all the Parish Priests and Center In-charges**

**Kindly send the names of the DPC members from your parish/center on or before 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026 to Rev. Fr. Alex Tep, the Secretary. The information can be passed on in the contact numbers: 7627919878 / 9484210215**

### **Other Diocesan Meetings**

The schedule of other diocesan meetings is as follows:

**March 13, 2026** (Friday) Consulters meeting (Mt. Tabor, after the DPC)

**March 24, 2026** (Tuesday) Joint meeting of the Regional Animators, Chairman of the Diocesan Commissions and diocesan associations Presidents and Secretaries of CAN, NCWA and NCYM, (Mt Tabor at 2.30 pm)

**March 25, 2026** (Wednesday) Senate (10.30 am, BHK) Priests meeting (2.00 pm – 5.30 pm, Mt. Tabor),  
DF 6.30 pm

**March 26, 2026** (Thursday) Recollection for priests (9.00 am – 12.30 pm, Mt. Tabor)  
Chrism Mass (3.00 pm, Cathedral)

### **Come and See Program – 2026**

The annual **Come and See Program** for Class X and Class XII students who wish to join the Seminary too pursue their studies to priesthood will be held this year at St. Xavier's Minor Seminary Jalukie, from **13<sup>th</sup> (Arrival) 20<sup>th</sup> March (Departure) 2026**. Fr. Alex Tep, our Vocation Director will send further information and the detailed program at a later date. I request all the Parish Priests and Centre In-charges to encourage students becoming priests to attend this program. Since we are unable accommodate all those who come for the vocation camp in the seminary, it is another forum for students to join the studies to priesthood. Kindly inform Fr. Alex (Mobile: 9484210215, e-mail: sec.kohima@gmail.com) on or before 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026 so as to facilitate the necessary preparation.

### **Vocation Camps – 2026**

As a diocesan policy, we do not permit any religious groups to visit parishes and centers to recruit vocations in order to avoid unnecessary rivalry, competition, strained relationship, etc. The diocese instead organizes two vocation camps one in June (19-22, 2026 in Tuensang) in the eastern part of Nagaland and second one in October (16-19, 2026, Chümoukedima area). As per the policy of the Northeast Bishops any congregations that has a house in the region may come and interact with the children during the vocation camp with prior permission and according to the schedule arranged by the vocation Director. Therefore congregations interested in recruiting vocations from the diocese must contact the diocesan vocation Director and plan their visits accordingly.

### **Annual Collections**

Every year, there are certain mandatory collections to be taken in the Parishes / Centres (including the village churches) for the needs of the universal and particular Churches. These collections must be clearly distinguished from tithe and membership fees. No one may neglect to make these collections or exempt one's parish/centre from such collections. The list of collections for the year 2025-2026 indicate that some of the parishes and centers are not regular either in making the collection or handing over to the diocesan office to be forwarded to the respective Church agencies. Failures either to make the collection or to hand over the collection are serious neglect of the responsibility and stewardship as Parish Priest/Centre In-charge. Therefore I request all the Parish Priests and Centre In-charges to be diligent in carrying out their responsibilities. Many agencies ask

for the amount collected when we apply for projects. We have been the recipients and beneficiaries of the generosity and good will of others and let us show our generosity and good will through small ways. Enclosed please find the list of collections for the year 2026 with all the necessary details.

### **Annual Retreats**

As in the past, this year too, we will have two retreats organized by the diocese for Sisters and Priests respectively as per the schedule given below at Mt. Tabor, Kohima.

Jun 22-27: **Retreat for Sisters** (starts on 22nd Monday evening and ends on 26<sup>th</sup> Friday evening  
June 29-July 03: **Retreat for Priests** (starts on June 29<sup>th</sup> Monday evening and ends on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, Friday evening

July 28-31: **First Retreat for Catechists** (Mt. Tabor, Kohima)

August 11-14: **Second Retreat for Catechists** (Mt. Tabor, Kohima)

All the Catechists are expected to attend any one of the retreats according to their convenience.

### **MBBS Admissions at St. John's Medical College, Bangalore**

Some people come to me requesting for recommendation for admissions in St. John Medical College, Bangalore. In the light of the Supreme Court directive which makes National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) exams compulsory, St. John's also follows the directive. **There is no recommendation for admission at St. John's Medical College, Bangalore.** Bishop can only give a *bonafide* Roman Catholic certificate after one is called for the interview by Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA). There are ten reserved seats for Tribal Catholics.

All those seeking admission in St. John's medical College must first register and write the NEET examination and also register online with Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) After getting the NEET result they must upload the NEET marks to KEA portal and those eligible will be called for interview and Counseling after which final selection is done. Admission for MBBS in other states also follows the same procedure – NEET examination and registration and (at times examination) in the respective states.

Therefore I request all those intending to apply for MBBS follow this procedure.

### **Other Catholic Medical Colleges in India**

Given below are some information about other Catholic Medical Colleges in India, in case anyone wants to follow up on the matter.

1. **Amala Medical College, Trissur, Kerala** – Tel: 0487-2304000 / 2304116, [info@amalaims.org](mailto:info@amalaims.org)
2. **Jubilee Mission Medical College, Trissur, Kerala** – Tel: 04872464346, [jubileemission@jmmc.ac.in](mailto:jubileemission@jmmc.ac.in)

3. **Pushpagiri Medical College, Thiruvalla, Kerala** – Run by Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Tel: 04692700756
4. **Rajagiri Medical College, Aluva, Kerala** – Tel: 0484 6655000, [mail@rajagirihospital.com](mailto:mail@rajagirihospital.com)
5. **Father Muller Medical College, Mangalore:** Tel: 08242238000; 08242238330  
Email: [deanfmmc@fathermuller.in](mailto:deanfmmc@fathermuller.in)
6. **Kanyakumari Medical Mission Research Centre & Hospitals (KMMC, Mutton)**  
[www.sju.ac.in](http://www.sju.ac.in) Mobile: 8925938612 / 9444444731

**Congratulations and best wishes to New Leadership team of the following  
Congregations**

**Sister of Charity (SCCG)**

Rev. Sr. Esther Kaini Sapriinami - Provincial Superior

**Sister of Mary Immaculate (SMI)**

Rev. Sr. Jovita Malaikudil – Provincial Superior

**Appointments: Diocese**

Rev. Fr. Leo Chase	Assistant Priest, Mary Help of Christians Cathedral Parish, Kohima
Rev. Fr. Peter Pehiachanglu	Assistant Priest, SFS Parish, Kohima
Rev. Fr. Albert Shitio	Assistant Priest, St. Dominic Savio Parish, Chiephobozou
Rev. Fr. David Zholia	Assistant Priest, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Jalukie
Rev. Fr. James Chomithung Ezung	Assistant Priest, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Meluri
Rev. Fr. Dominic Keneisalie Rulho	Assistant Priest, St. Mary's Parish, Lakhuti
Rev. Fr. Thomas Megoriekho	Assistant Priest, Sacred Heart Parish, Bhandari
Rev. Fr. Savio Angoto	Assistant Priest, St. Andrew Parish, Thenyizumi
Rev. Fr. Richard Fernandes	Pastoral Ministry, Mt. Carmel Parish, 4 <sup>th</sup> Mile, Chekiye

**Franciscan Clarist Congregation (FCC): Nirmala Province**

	<b>Transferred</b>	<b>Appointed</b>
St. Mary's Convent, Kohima	<b>Sr. Salome</b>	<b>Sr. Mary Nouhoikim</b>
Alphonsa Convent, Seyochung	-	<b>Sr. Rita Areno</b>
Rani Maria Convent, Zhadima	-	<b>Sr. Lincy</b>
San Damiano Medziphema	<b>Sr. Seline</b>	<b>Sr. Romily Thomas</b>

	<b>Sr. Anslit</b>	<b>Sr. Amelia</b>
St. Mary's Convent, Lakhuti	<b>Sr.Lincy</b>	<b>Sr. Agnes Laothii</b>
St. Paul, Phesama	-	<b>Sr. Teresa, W. Yanthan</b>
Clare Bhavan, Kacharigaon	-	<b>Sr. Seline</b> <b>Sr. Anslit</b> <b>Sr. Juliana Clare</b> <b>Sr. Wormila Khansu</b>

**May their Souls rest in peace!!**

**2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2026: Mr. Niesapra Nelson D'Vadeo (80 Years)**, the beloved father of Rev. Sr. Nancy D'Vadeo UFS (Superior St. Xavier's Convent Meluri).

**19<sup>th</sup> January, 2026: Mr. Albert Kerketta (40 Years)**, the beloved younger brother of Mr. Arnes Kerketta (Bishop's Driver).

**26<sup>th</sup> January, 2026: Mr. Thruba Peter (58 Years)** the eldest brother of Rev. Sr. Regina Chawang FMA (Superior of Auxilium Dimapur).

**27<sup>th</sup> January, 2026: Mr. Rovikeze Vincent (56 years)** the beloved father of Rev. Sr. Rebecca Megotuno CMC (St. John the Evangelist Church, Khonoma).

**1<sup>st</sup> February, 2026: Mr. Mark Touthang** the beloved father of Rev. Sr. Angela Touthang and Rev. Sr. Esther Touthang (Sacred Heart Convent Jotsoma).

**8<sup>th</sup> February, 2026: Mr. Brutus (55 Years)**, the Nephew of Rev. Fr. John S Kavas (Parish Priest, St. Peter's Parish Tesophenyu).

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**Bishop's Program**

**February 2026**

<b>15</b>	<b>Sun</b>	Kohima – NCYM leaders meet; CAN meet
16	Mon	Kohima - Rousoma
17	Tue	Kohima - Kohima
18	Wed	Kohima – <b>Ash Wednesday</b>
19	Thu	Kohima
20	Fri	Kohima
21	Sat	Kohima
<b>22</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent</b> , Golden Jubilee Lotha community in Kohima
23	Mon	Kohima
24	Tue	Kohima – Zubza – Blessing and inauguration of Little Flower Convent
25	Wed	Kohima

26	Thu	Kohima
27	Fri	Peren - Pastoral visit
28	Sat	Peren – Pastoral visit

### March 2026

1	Sun	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent : Peren
2	Mon	To Shillong
3	Tue	To Tezpur: NEIRBC meeting
4	Wed	“ ”
5	Thu	“ ”
6	Fri	“ ”
7	Sat	“ ”
8	Sun	“ ”
9	Mon	To Shillong - OTC
10	Tue	Shillong – Inauguration of the Jesuit Province of Kohima
11	Wed	Guwahati – Strategic plan for 2033
12	Thu	Guwahati – Strategic plan for 2033
13	Fri	Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC – 9. 30 am, Mt. Tabor Kohima) Consulter meeting
14	Sat	Tening; Pastoral visit
15	Sun	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent: Tening; Pastoral visit
16	Mon	Tening: Pastoral visit
17	Tue	Tening: Pastoral visit
18	Wed	Tening: Pastoral visit
19	Thu	Kohima: Feast of St. Joseph
20	Fri	Chessore – Blessing of the new Convent
21	Sat	Kohima, FC meetings for the Budget
22	Sun	5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent -
23	Mon	Kohima
24	Tue	Kohima: 2.30 pm Meeting of the commission, regional animators and associations
25	Wed	Kohima; Senate (10.30, BH, Kohima), Priests meeting (Mt. Tabor), DF Meeting
26	Thu	Kohima, Recollection for Priests; Chrism Mass (3.00 pm Cathedral)
27	Fri	Kohima – Diocesan Level Way of the Cross.
28	Sat	Kohima
29	Sun	Palm Sunday
30	Mon	Kohima
31	Tue	Kohima

### April 2026

1	Wed	Kohima
2	Thu	Kohima – Holy Thursday
3	Fri	Kohima – Good Friday

4	Sat	Kohima – Dimapur – Easter Vigil
5	Sun	Kohima - Easter
6	Mon	Phesama – Golden Jubilee – Sr. Jessin FCC
7	Tue	Kohima
8	Wed	Kohima
9	Thu	Lasaphuyeqa – Blessing of the Holy Family Church
10	Fri	Kohima
11	Sat	Bhandari- Silver Jubilee of Bhandari Village Church
12 - 23		In Kerala for Fiat Mission
24	Fri	Jalandar
25	Sat	Jalandar
26	Sun	Jalandar
27	Mon	Return from Jalandar
28	Tue	Kohima
29	Wed	Kohima
30	Thu	Dimapur – UFC Profession (9.30 am) to New Delhi

**May 2026**

1-22		UK
23	Sat	Kohima
24	Sun	Pentecost, Feast of the Cathedral of May Help of Christians, Sisterhood day
25	Mon	Kohima
26	Tue	Kohima
27	Wed	Kohima
28	Thu	Pfutsero: Pastoral visit
29	Fri	Pfutsero: Pastoral visit
30	Sat	Pfutsero: Pastoral visit
31	Sun	Pfutsero: Pastoral visit

*James Thoppil*

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Bishop of Kohima

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