

PASTORAL LETTER – 4

Faith Formation Year 2026–2027

Dear beloved priests, religious, catechists, and faithful,

As proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV, the period from January 2026 to January 2027 is being observed as a special year dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi. This year also marks the 800th anniversary of the saint's death. The observance aims to help the faithful deepen their understanding of St. Francis' spiritual life, humility, love for the poor, care for creation, and commitment to peace.

The Faith Formation Year 2026–2027 adopts the prayer of St. Francis as its theme: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace."

Faith Formation activities in the Archdiocese will begin on May 31, 2026. At a time when wars and insecurity affect many parts of the world, this theme of peace is especially relevant. The observance will also promote awareness of the Christian responsibility to protect creation and preserve the balance of nature.

The primary goal of faith formation is to help every believer recognize that he or she is a beloved child of God. Through our lives we are called to establish love, mercy, compassion, forgiveness and peace in the world.

The Holy Bible remains the foundation of faith formation. The faithful are encouraged to read, write, study and live the Word of God. In 2026, families are invited to handwrite the Gospel of Matthew and offer it in their parishes on Aug. 15.

The archdiocese will also conduct the Monsignor Immanuel Lopes Memorial Bible Quiz based on the Gospel of John. Prizes include a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a laptop and a tablet. The objective is to encourage deeper study and living of Sacred Scripture.

The goal of faith formation is to lead all children and believers to know God and the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Participation in Sunday Mass, catechetical instruction and works of charity is strongly encouraged.

The faithful are urged to avoid influences that distance them from God, including substance abuse, harmful friendships and excessive use of social media.

Special emphasis this year will be placed on learning basic prayers and putting faith into practice through charitable works. "Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:17).

The faithful are invited to support the Sneha Bhavan housing initiative through charitable activities conducted during August and September, helping families who do not have homes or land.

The archbishop expresses gratitude to priests, religious, seminarians, catechists, teachers, commission members, promoters, mentors and PTA members for their dedicated service. He concludes by invoking God's blessings upon all entering the new academic and catechetical year.

- Joseph Kalathiparambil Archbishop of Verapoly

The pastoral letter is to be read during Sunday Masses on May 31, 2026.