



“A Diocese Formed by the Heart of Jesus”

**My dear Fathers, Religious, Brothers and Sisters
in Christ,**

Greetings and blessings in the Most Sacred Heart of
Jesus.

The month of June leads us to the beautiful Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, which we celebrate this year on 12 June 2026. This feast is not only a devotion of the Church; it is a doorway into the very mystery of Christ. The Heart of Jesus reveals the love of God made visible, tender, near, and saving. It is the Heart that welcomed sinners, healed the sick, blessed children, wept for friends, forgave enemies, and was pierced on the Cross for the life of the world.

In his encyclical *Dilexit Nos*, Pope Francis reminds us that the Heart of Christ speaks of both the human and divine love of Jesus. He says that in the Heart of Christ “we find the whole Gospel.” The Sacred Heart is therefore not an optional devotion, but a living summary of our faith: God has loved us first, God continues to love us and God sends us to love others with the same heart.

Today, many people carry wounded hearts. Families experience tension. Young people face anxiety about the future. The poor struggle for dignity. The elderly often feel lonely. Society is often marked by anger, division and indifference. In such a world, the Church must become a

sign of the Heart of Jesus. Our Diocese of Vellore is called to be a diocesan family with a heart: a heart that listens, welcomes, serves, forgives and heals.

Jesus tells us, “Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart” (Mt 11:29). These words must become the programme of our Christian life. Gentleness is not weakness. Humility is not fear. Mercy is not compromise. Love is not sentiment alone. In Jesus, gentleness becomes strength, humility becomes service, mercy becomes healing, and love becomes mission.

Dear Fathers, as you begin a new pastoral year, I offer you my prayerful wishes and paternal encouragement. May your ministry be renewed in the Heart of Christ. The people of God need priests who are shepherds after the Heart of Jesus: priests who are close to the people, rooted in prayer, faithful to the Gospel and generous in service. Pope Leo XIV has reminded priests that ministry begins with prayer and is carried out in union with the Lord. He has also invited priests to be builders of unity and peace and to renew their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This is a timely message for all of us. A priest is not merely a functionary of the Church. He is called to be a living sign of the Good Shepherd. Dear Fathers, may your words console, your presence strengthen, your pastoral care heal, and your priestly life lead people closer to Christ. May our parishes become homes of communion, participation, and mission. May our presbyterium grow in fraternity, mutual respect, and joyful collaboration.

I extend my affectionate greetings also to our men and women religious, especially those who are beginning a new mission or moving to a different place of ministry. Transfers are moments of

surrender. They ask us to leave, to trust and to begin again. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be your strength. Wherever you are sent, may you carry the tenderness of Christ. In schools, hospitals, formation houses, social centres, villages, parishes, and homes for the poor, may your consecrated life become a quiet but powerful witness of God's mercy.

To our school and college students, dear children, boys, girls, and young people, I wish you a joyful and fruitful academic year. Study well. Use your time wisely. Respect your parents and teachers. Grow not only in knowledge, but also in character. Education is not only preparation for employment; it is formation for life. May this year help you become truthful, disciplined, compassionate, responsible, and God-fearing persons.

To our teachers, heads of institutions and all staff members, I express my gratitude. You share in a sacred mission. You are not only teaching lessons; you are forming hearts. A school or college inspired by the Heart of Jesus must be a place of respect, encouragement, fairness, discipline, and care. Let our Catholic institutions continue to form young people who are competent in mind, compassionate in heart and committed to society.

Dear parents and families, the Heart of Jesus must have a place in every home. A family becomes strong not because it has no problems, but because it faces every problem with faith, patience, forgiveness, and love. Let prayer return to our homes. Let meals become moments of communion. Let words become gentle. Let children see in their parents the face of God's care.

As we celebrate the Sacred Heart, let us examine our own hearts. Are we gentle in our speech? Are we humble in our responsibilities? Are we merciful towards those who fail? Are we loving in our daily relationships? Devotion to the Sacred Heart is not complete unless it becomes visible in our behaviour.

Therefore, I invite every parish, institution, religious community, family, and association in our Diocese to dedicate itself anew to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let us place our joys, struggles, plans, wounds, and hopes in His Heart. Let us learn from Him gentleness, humility, mercy and love. Let us show these virtues in our day-to-day life and ministry.

May the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus bless the Diocese of Vellore. May He renew our priests, strengthen our religious, guide our students, bless our families and make our Diocese a living witness of His love.

With my blessings and prayers,

+Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
Bishop of Vellore