

DIOCESE OF VELLORE

Mercy and Hope



Bishop's Message

November 2026

Dear Rev. Fathers, Sisters, Brothers and beloved faithful,

Greetings of peace and hope in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The month of November invites us to contemplate the mystery of life, death, and eternal life. On 1 November, we celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints, honouring those who rejoice in God's presence. On 2 November, we commemorate All the Faithful Departed, remembering our deceased loved ones with gratitude and prayer. These celebrations remind us that life is a gift, death is a passage, and eternity is our destiny.

Life: A Gift to Be Cherished

Sacred Scripture teaches that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:27). Human life, therefore, possesses an inviolable dignity. Its value is not determined by wealth, health, age, achievements, or social position. Life is meaningful because it comes from God and returns to Him.

Jesus declares, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). This abundant life begins here through faith, love, forgiveness, and service, and reaches its fullness in eternity. Every day offers us an opportunity to grow in holiness, strengthen relationships, and serve those in need.

Death: A Passage to Eternal Life

Death brings separation, sorrow, and uncertainty. Yet Christian faith does not consider death the end of human existence. Jesus assures Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25). Through His death and resurrection, Christ has transformed the meaning of human death.

The Church proclaims in the funeral liturgy that life is changed, not ended. Our hope is founded on Christ's resurrection and His promise of eternal life. While we grieve the loss ofloved ones, we believe that death cannot destroy our communion in Christ.

The Second Vatican Council, in Lumen Gentium (49-51), reminds us that the faithful on earth, those undergoing purification, and the saints in heaven belong to the one communion of the Church.

Praying for the Departed: Love Beyond Death

Praying for the dead is an ancient and meaningful Christian practice, rooted in Sacred Scripture (2 Mac 12:38--45). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1032) encourages prayers, especially the Eucharistic sacrifice, for the faithful departed.

Pope Benedict XVI, in *Spe Salvi* (48), reminds us that love reaches beyond death. Our prayers express the enduring bonds of faith, gratitude, and affection.

During November, I encourage every family to offer Masses and prayers for deceased parents, relatives, friends, benefactors, priests, religious, and all who have contributed to our lives. Let us especially remember those who have nobody to pray for them.

Christian Funerals: Dignity, Equality and Hope

The *Code of Canon Law* emphasizes the sacred character of Christian funerals. Canon 1176 §2 teaches that funeral rites offer spiritual assistance to the deceased, honour their bodies, and console the living with Christian hope. Canon 1181 insists that funeral celebrations must avoid discrimination and that the poor must never be deprived of fitting funerals.

Therefore, funerals must express faith, simplicity, dignity, and compassion rather than social prestige or excessive expenditure. Our cemeteries must be maintained as sacred places of remembrance and prayer.

I invite our priests, religious, parish councils, and Anbiams to accompany families experiencing bereavement. Visiting the sick, comforting the dying, supporting grieving families, and offering the sacraments are essential expressions of pastoral charity.

Living Today in the Light of Eternity

Dear brothers and sisters, remembering death must teach us to value life. Let us not postpone forgiveness, reconciliation, charity, or kindness. What matters ultimately is not how much we possess, but how deeply we love.

May our parishes throughout the Diocese of Vellore become communities that protect the life, accompany the suffering, honour the departed and proclaim the hope of the Resurrection.

May our Mother, Mary Help of Christians, our diocesan patroness, console the grieving families and strengthen our faith in eternal life.

Eternal rest grant unto them, 0 Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace. Amen.

With my prayers and blessings,

+ Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
Bishop of Vellore

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