

THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL FORMATION OF THE LAITY

The Lay faithful, as we know, have an unique and indispensable role to play in seeking the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. The documents of the Church speak of empowering the Lay faithful for this special mission. The recently concluded 31st Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) in its Final Statement has the following to say about formation of the Lay faithful: "We realize that formation of the lay faithful is the need of the hour. To this end, we commit ourselves, as a priority, to initiate programs for lay formation to equip them to play their role in the Church and society". Keeping this urgent need in mind (cf. Goa Diocesan Synod Documents 52-56), the Archdiocese of Goa and Daman will offer a two year Theological and Pastoral Formation Course at the Pastoral Institute, Old Goa, beginning from June 2014. We would kindly request the Parish Priests, Chaplains, Assistants and the Lay faithful to spread the message, at various levels, and to motivate people to join the Course.

The Objectives of the Program

- 1) The aim of the Theological and Pastoral Formation Course is to help Lay men and women to deepen their knowledge of faith and develop their pastoral abilities, so that they may answer with confidence the call of the Second Vatican Council to spread the Gospel in word and deed, acting as leaven in their parishes and in the Society.
- 2) To provide enrichment for those who seek adult on-going formation in their Catholic faith by providing a firm, systematic and practical foundation in Scripture, Christology, Ecclesiology, Liturgy, Sacraments, Ethics, Social teachings of the Church, etc.
- 3) To call forth, affirm and support the gifts and talents of Lay men and women and to foster a deeper appreciation of their Baptismal call.
- 4) To nurture spiritual growth and fidelity to the Church, as well as to help the Lay faithful to prayerfully and critically reflect on their own life experiences so as to deepen their encounter with Jesus Christ.
- 5) To develop an awareness, appreciation and respect for the diversity and complementarity of vocations and states of life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities in the Church.
- 6) To prepare lay leaders, with firm theological and spiritual training, in order to promote active collaboration at all levels so that the Church in Goa may become a Communion of Communities.

The Format

The course is divided into two phases extending over a period of two years. Each phase will comprise of eight Weekends. Sessions will be held at the Pastoral Institute, Old Goa, once a month. The Course will consist of Input sessions, Group discussions, common prayer, Group building activities, etc. The program will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday and will end at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.

The Language and qualifications needed

The course will be conducted in English. Some of the qualities which prospective candidates need to have are: desire to learn more about God, Faith, etc., dedication, ability to grasp basic theological concepts, ability to write assignments.

The fees

Each phase of the course will cost Rupees 3000/per person (\$50/per person for 1 year of formation). This includes Board and Lodge for eight weekends, handouts, etc. We suggest that if necessary and wherever possible, a part of the amount be borne by the Parish and a part by the candidate. The course will be partly funded by the Diocesan Centre for Lay Apostolate.

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PASTORAL INSTITUTE ST. PIUS X