

YEAR OF THE CHURCH

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SECOND PASTORAL LETTER

**To all Catholics of the
Apostolic Vicariate
of Northern Arabia**

from

**Bishop Camillo Ballin, mccj
Apostolic Vicar of Northern Arabia**

Contents

A) INTRODUCTION

B) QUESTIONS

01. What is the Church?

02. Who has the authority of authentically interpreting the principles of our faith?

03. What role does the Sacred Scripture play in the life of the Church?

04. Why is faith both a personal and at the same time an ecclesial act?

05. In what way is the Church of one faith alone?

06. In his Kingdom, what authority did Jesus bestow upon his Apostles?

07. Why are the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit inseparable?

08. What does the Holy Spirit do in the Church?

09. Why is the Church the 'people of God'?

10. What are the characteristics of the people of God?
11. In what way does the people of God share in the three functions of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King?
12. In what way is the Church the body of Christ?
13. Who is the Head of this body?
14. Why is the Church referred to as the “Bride of Christ”?
15. Why is the Church referred to as the “Temple of the Holy Spirit”?
16. What are charismas?
17. Why is the Church *one*?
18. From where does the one Church of Christ subsist?
19. How are non-Catholic Christians to be considered?
20. How does one commit oneself to work for the unity of Christians?
21. In what way is the Church *holy*?
22. Why is the Church referred to as “*Catholic*”?

- 23. Is this particular Church catholic?**
- 24. Who belongs to the Catholic Church?**
- 25. What is the relationship of the Catholic Church with the Jewish people?**
- 26. What is the bond that exists between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religions?**
- 27. What is the meaning of the affirmation “Outside the Church there is no salvation”?**
- 28. Why must the Church proclaim the Gospel to the whole world?**
- 29. In what sense is the Church missionary?**
- 30. Why is the Church *apostolic*?**
- 31. What do “apostle” and “apostolic mission” mean?**
- 32. What is apostolic succession?**

C) CATHEDRAL OF OUR LADY OF ARABIA

**D) REGULATIONS ON FAST, ABSTINENCE,
AND FEASTS**

A. INTRODUCTION

Dear brothers and sisters,

Last year, 2013-2014, we meditated on the Church, during the year-long celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Sacred Heart Church in Bahrain, the first Catholic Church built in our Vicariate in 1939.

In my previous pastoral letter, I presented the Church as our Mother. Then, I explained the meaning of “I believe in the Church” and also gave the list of the Eastern and Western Churches which form the Catholic Church, together with the list of the priests who minister in our Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia as the concluding part of that pastoral letter.

This year, I want to present a deeper understanding of the Church by taking as guide *The Catechism of the Catholic Church – Compendium* (CCC-C) which has already been our book of meditation since last year. Taking that book again in our hands, and my quoting from it its teachings in this letter, will be a more efficacious way to assimilate what God invites us to believe in about the Church.

To facilitate the reading of this pastoral letter, I shall proceed with another method. The subject will not be presented through a general and doctrinal exposition

but through questions and answers. This way will draw your attention more to the subject, aside from making the reading easier. Questions and answers will be taken from the text of the CCC-C. Sometimes, I shall add some more to the quoted answers with short explanations.

This year, we shall start the building of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Arabia in Bahrain which is a historical event. I have included here some photos of the new Cathedral and an explanation of the design.

B. QUESTIONS

01. What is the Church?

In the fullness of time, God the Father sent his Son as the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, fallen into sin, thus calling all into his Church and, through the work of the Holy Spirit, making them adopted children and heirs of his eternal happiness (CCC-C, 1).

The word Church refers to the people whom God calls and gathers together from every part of the earth. They form the assembly of those who through faith and Baptism have become children of God, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit. (CCC-C, 147).

The mission of the Church is “to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God begun by Jesus Christ among all

peoples. The Church constitutes on earth the seed and beginning of this salvific Kingdom.” (CCC-C, 150).

02. Who has the authority of authentically interpreting the principles of our faith?

We are surrounded by denominations which sometimes have their own interpretation of the Bible, the Christian faith, and the Church, which is very far from the interpretation that we inherited from our family and our Catholic Church. As a result, we get confused, more so when we meet persons who are very good Christians but have a very different belief. Hence, we can't help but ask: Who then can tell us what the truth is?

The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the deposit of faith has been entrusted to the living teaching of the Church alone, that is, to the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, and to the bishops in communion with him. To this Magisterium, which in the service of the Word of God enjoys the certain charisma of truth, belongs also the task of defining dogmas which are formulations of the truths contained in divine Revelation (CCC-C, 16).

03. What role does Sacred Scripture play in the life of the Church?

In our Catholic Church, we have two main sources for our spiritual life: the Sacred Scripture (the Bible) and the

Sacraments. Other sources are personal prayers, spiritual readings, and popular devotions (Rosary, Way of the Cross, various novenas, etc.). In particular, the question to ask is: What is the role of the Bible in the Church?

Sacred Scripture gives support and vigour to the life of the Church. For the children of the Church, it is a confirmation of the faith, food for the soul and the fount of the spiritual life. Sacred Scripture is the soul of theology and of pastoral preaching. The Psalmist says that it is “a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). The Church, therefore, exhorts all to read Sacred Scripture frequently because “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (Saint Jerome). (CCC-C, 24).

04. Why is faith both a personal and at the same time an ecclesial act?

Some people affirm that faith is something personal and private, that what is important is to have good relations with others, or that their faith is their own affair and has very little or nothing to do with the Church.

Faith is a personal act insofar as it is the free response of the human person to God who reveals himself. But at the same time it is an ecclesial act which expresses itself in the proclamation, “We believe”. It is in fact the Church that believes: and thus by the grace of the Holy

Spirit precedes, engenders and nourishes the faith of each Christian. For this reason the Church is Mother and Teacher. "No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother." (Saint Cyprian). (CCC-C, 30).

05. In what way is the Church of one faith alone?

In our Vicariate, in particular, and in the Gulf, in general, we have many Rites (Latin, Syro-Malabar, Maronite, Syro-Malankara, Coptic, Greek Catholic, and others with fewer faithful), as well as many languages and nationalities. It has been always my dream to form one Catholic Church and not many Catholic Churches beside each other and sometimes ignoring each other.

What are the basic principles that may unite all these different Churches as one Church? The following points indicated by the *Compendium* should always be present in our minds and hearts so that we will be able to overcome our differences and in doing so form one Catholic Church through the respect of the Liturgy and the traditions of every Church.

The Church, although made up of persons who have diverse languages, cultures, and rites, nonetheless professes, with a united voice, the one faith that was received from the one Lord and that was passed on by the one Apostolic Tradition. She confesses one God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and points to one

way of salvation. Therefore, we believe, with one heart and one soul, all that is contained in the Word of God, handed down or written, and which is proposed by the Church as divinely revealed. (CCC-C, 32).

06. In his Kingdom, what authority did Jesus bestow upon his Apostles?

We know that Jesus Christ founded his Church upon the twelve Apostles, giving the first place to Peter, as the continuation of the ancient twelve tribes of Israel. As such, the Church is the new Israel. The question to ask then is: What kind of authority did Jesus give to the twelve Apostles?

Jesus chose the twelve, the future witnesses of his Resurrection, and made them sharers of his mission and of his authority to teach, to absolve from sins, and to build up and govern the Church. In this college, Peter received “the keys of the Kingdom” (Matthew 16:19) and assumed the first place with the mission to keep the faith in its integrity and to strengthen his brothers. (CCC-C,109).

07. Why are the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit inseparable?

In the indivisible Trinity, the Son and the Spirit are distinct but inseparable. From the very beginning until the end of time, when the Father sends his Son he also

sends his Spirit who unites us to Christ in faith so that as adopted sons we can call God "Father" (Romans 8:15). The Spirit is invisible but we know him through his actions, when he reveals the Word to us and when he acts in the Church. (CCC-C, 137).

Since Jesus *"was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight"* (Ac 1:9), how then is he present in the Church?

Jesus has always been present in the Church through his Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and by him. We know that all through the history of the Church, the Holy Spirit has really done marvellous things in her, as what had happened in the Franciscan movement, the missionary movement in the 19th century, etc.

We can also personally witness that in the last 60 years, He has done other marvellous works, such as the renewal brought by the Second Vatican Council from 1962-1965, the renewal in Liturgy, the pastoral approach to the world, the dialogue with non-Christians, the new and deep importance given to the Bible, the rise of new associations which brought a new breath to the Church such as the Charismatic Renewal, with its many branches, which, in turn, gave birth to other new movements, the Neo-Catechumenal Way, etc.).

And Jesus said: *“I will not leave you orphans”* (Jn 14:18). Indeed, for a look at the history of the Church, will be enough to make us confess that really Jesus never left us orphans, but through his Holy Spirit he gave us new life and new hope.

Jesus has always been present from the moment he bowed his head and *“gave up his spirit”* (Jn 19:30), and especially when he breathed on the Apostles after the resurrection and said to them: *“Receive the Holy Spirit”* (Jn 20:22), he has always accompanied the Church.

Jesus is continuously with us, he knows perfectly our sorrows and our joys. Never has he abandoned us, and he never will.

Let us then think of the following question:

08. What does the Holy Spirit do in the Church?

The Spirit builds, animates and sanctifies the Church. As the Spirit of Love, he restores to the baptized the divine likeness that was lost through sin, and causes them to live in Christ the very life of the Holy Trinity. He sends them forth to bear witness to the Truth of Christ, and he organizes them in their respective functions so that all might bear “the fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22). (CCC-C, 145).

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are: “*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control*” (Galatians 5:22). The work of the Holy Spirit in us is to change our hearts so that we can bear these good fruits.

09. Why is the Church the ‘people of God’?

The Church is the ‘people of God’ because it pleased God to sanctify and save men not in isolation but by making them into one people gathered together by the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
(CCC-C, 153).

Our call to become Christians is individual: everyone is called personally to become a disciple of Jesus. But God does not leave us as individuals, but wants us to form his family, the Church.

10. What are the characteristics of the people of God?

One becomes a member of this people through faith in Christ and Baptism. This people has for its origin God the Father; for its head, Jesus Christ; for its hallmark, the dignity and freedom of the sons of God; for its law, the new commandment of love; for its mission, to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world; and for its destiny, the Kingdom of God, already begun on earth.
(CCC-C, 154).

11. In what way does the people of God share in the three functions of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King?

The people of God participate in Christ's priestly office insofar as the baptized are consecrated by the Holy Spirit to offer spiritual sacrifices. They share in Christ's prophetic office when, with a supernatural sense of faith they adhere unfailingly to that faith and deepen their understanding and witness to it. The people of God share in his kingly office by means of service, imitating Jesus Christ who, as King of the universe, made himself the servant of all, especially the poor and the suffering. (CCC-C, 155).

The meaning of *spiritual sacrifices* is offering our daily life according to the will of God and as “*directed by the Spirit*” (Gal 5:25). *Prophetic office* means that we announce the love of God to all through our way of life and, when possible, with our words. *Kingly office* doesn't mean that we will dominate, but that we want to serve all, regardless of their respective nationality or religion, as Jesus Christ has done. He “*came not to be served but to serve*” (Mt 20:28).

12. In what way is the Church the body of Christ?

The risen Christ unites his faithful people to himself in an intimate way, by means of the Holy Spirit. In this way, those who believe in Christ, in as much as they are close to him especially in the Eucharist, are united among

themselves in charity. They form one body, the Church, whose unity is experienced in the diversity of its members and its functions. (CCC-C, 156).

13. Who is the Head of this body?

Christ “is the Head of the body, the Church” (Colossians 1:18). The Church lives from him, in him, and for him. Christ and the Church make up the “whole Christ” (Saint Augustine); “Head and members form, as it were, one and the same mystical person” (Saint Thomas Aquinas). (CCC-C, 157).

14. Why is the Church referred to as the “Bride of Christ”?

She is called the “Bride of Christ” because the Lord himself called himself her “Spouse” (Mark 2:19). The Lord has loved the Church and has joined her to himself in an everlasting covenant. He has given himself up for her in order to purify her with his blood, and to “sanctify her” (Ephesians 5:26), making her the fruitful mother of all the children of God. While the term “body” expresses the unity of the “head” with the members, the term “bride” emphasizes the distinction of the two in their personal relationship. (CCC-C, 158).

The Church as “Bride of Christ” does not mean only the hierarchy, but also every one of us. We all form the Church and we all are the “Bride of Christ”. Every one of

us can profess, with St. Paul: *“Faith in the Son of God who loved me and who sacrificed himself for my sake”* (Gal 2:20).

15. Why is the Church referred to as the “Temple of the Holy Spirit”?

She is so called because the Holy Spirit resides in the body which is the Church, in her Head and in her members. He also builds up the Church in charity by the Word of God, the sacraments, the virtues, and charismas. (CCC-C, 159).

“What the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the members of Christ, that is, the body of Christ, which is the Church.” (Saint Augustine).

16. What are charismas?

Charismas are special gifts of the Holy Spirit which are bestowed on individuals for the good of others, the needs of the world, and in particular for the building up of the Church. The discernment of charismas is the responsibility of the Magisterium. (CCC-C, 160).

17. Why is the Church one?

The Church is one because she has as her source and exemplar the unity of the Trinity of Persons in one God. As her Founder and Head, Jesus Christ re-established the

unity of all people in one body. As her soul, the Holy Spirit unites all the faithful in communion with Christ. The Church has but one faith, one sacramental life, one apostolic succession, one common hope, and one and the same charity. (CCC-C, 161).

18. From where does the one Church of Christ subsist?

The one Church of Christ, as a society constituted and organized in the world, subsists in (subsistit in) the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him. Only through this Church can one obtain the fullness of the means of salvation since the Lord has entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant to the apostolic college alone whose head is Peter. (CCC-C, 162).

This clarification of the *Compendium*, based especially on Mt 16:18-19 (“*You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church... I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...*”), is very important in our Vicariate. In my previous Pastoral Letter on the Church I wrote on those who leave their Mother, the Catholic Church.

19. How are non-Catholic Christians to be considered?

In the churches and ecclesial communities which are separated from full communion with the Catholic Church, many elements of sanctification and truth can be found. All of these blessings come from Christ and lead to Catholic unity. Members of these churches and communities are incorporated into Christ by Baptism and we so we recognize them as brothers. (CCC-C, 163).

20. How does one commit oneself to work for the unity of Christians?

The desire to restore the unity of all Christians is a gift from Christ and a call of the Spirit. This desire involves the entire Church and is pursued by conversion of heart, prayer, fraternal knowledge of each other and theological dialogue. (CCC-C, 164).

21. In what way is the Church holy?

The Church is holy insofar as the Most Holy God is her author. Christ has given himself for her to sanctify her and make her a source of sanctification. The Holy Spirit gives her life with charity. In the Church, one finds the fullness of the means of salvation. Holiness is the vocation of each of her members and the purpose of all her activities. The Church counts among her members the Virgin Mary and numerous Saints who are her models and intercessors. The holiness of the Church is the fountain of sanctification for her children who, here on earth, recognize themselves as sinners ever in need of conversion and purification. (CCC-C, 165).

The purpose of the Church is not to open schools or universities, even though the Church has done and is still doing so. These educational initiatives are only means to reach the purpose of the Church which is - holiness!

22. Why is the Church referred to as “Catholic”?

The Church is catholic, that is, universal, insofar as Christ is present in her: “Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch). The Church proclaims the fullness and the totality of the faith; she bears and administers the fullness of the means of salvation; she is sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race. (CCC-C, 166).

“The Church, Catholic or universal, gets her name from the fact that she is scattered through the whole world from the one end of earth to the other, and also because she teaches universally and without omission all the doctrines which are to be made known to mankind, whether concerned with visible or invisible things, with heavenly or earthly things. Then again because she teaches one way of worship to all men, nobles or commoners, learned or simple; finally because she universally cures and heals every sort of sin which is committed by soul and body. Moreover there is in her every kind of virtue in words and deeds and spiritual gifts of every sort” (Saint Cyril of Jerusalem).

The field of the Church is the whole world and all the peoples in it. She is for all.

23. Is this particular Church catholic?

Every particular Church (that is, a diocese or eparchy) is catholic. It is formed by a community of Christians who are in communion of faith and of the sacraments, both with their Bishop, who is ordained in apostolic succession, and with the Church of Rome which “presides in charity” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch). (CCC-C, 167).

Communion with the local Bishop, appointed by the Pope, is the sign of belonging to the Catholic Church.

24. Who belongs to the Catholic Church?

All human beings, in various ways, belong to or are ordered to the Catholic unity of the people of God. Fully incorporated into the Catholic Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, are joined to the Church by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government and communion. The baptized who do not enjoy full Catholic unity are in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church. (CCC-C, 168).

25. What is the relationship of the Catholic Church with the Jewish people?

The Catholic Church recognizes a particular link with the Jewish people in the fact that God chose them before all

others to receive his Word. To the Jewish people belong “the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises, and the patriarchs; and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ” (Romans 9:4,5). (CCC-C, 169).

26. What is the bond that exists between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religions?

There is a bond between all peoples which comes especially from the common origin and end of the entire human race. The Catholic Church recognizes that whatever is good or true in other religions comes from God and is a reflection of his truth. As such, it can prepare for the acceptance of the Gospel, and act as a stimulus toward the unity of humanity in the Church of Christ. (CCC-C, 170).

27. What is the meaning of the affirmation “Outside the Church there is no salvation”?

This means that all salvation comes from Christ, the Head, through the Church which is his body. Hence they cannot be saved who, knowing the Church as founded by Christ and necessary for salvation, would refuse to enter her or remain in her. At the same time, thanks to Christ and to his Church, those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ and his Church but sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, try

to do his will as it is known through the dictates of conscience can attain eternal salvation.
(CCC-C, 171).

28. Why must the Church proclaim the Gospel to the whole world?

The Church must do so because Christ has given the command: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). This missionary mandate of the Lord has its origin in the eternal love of God who has sent his Son and the Holy Spirit because “he desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).
(CCC-C, 172).

29. In what sense is the Church missionary?

The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, continues the mission of Christ himself in the course of history. Christians must, therefore, proclaim to everyone the Good News borne by Christ; and, following his path, they must be ready for self-sacrifice, even unto martyrdom.
(CCC-C, 173).

30. Why is the Church apostolic?

The Church is apostolic in her origin because she has been built on “the foundation of the Apostles” (Ephesians 2:20). She is apostolic in her teaching which

is the same as that of the Apostles. She is apostolic by reason of her structure insofar as she is taught, sanctified, and guided, until Christ returns, by the Apostles through their successors who are the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter.
(CCC-C, 174).

31. What do “apostle” and “apostolic mission” mean?

The Word “Apostle” means “one who is sent”. Jesus, the One sent by the Father, called to himself twelve of his disciples and appointed them as his Apostles, making them the chosen witnesses of his Resurrection and the foundation of his Church. He gave them the command to continue his own mission saying, “As the Father has sent me, so I also send you” (John 20:21); and he promised to remain with them until the end of the world.
(CCC-C, 175).

32. What is apostolic succession?

Apostolic succession is the transmission, by means of the sacrament of Holy Orders, of the mission and power of the Apostles to their successors, the bishops. Thanks to this transmission, the Church remains in communion of faith and life with her origin, while, through the centuries, she carries on her apostolate for the spread of the Kingdom of Christ on earth. (CCC-C, 176).

C. CATHEDRAL OF OUR LADY OF ARABIA

His Majesty the King, Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa, has offered to the Catholic Church, a triangular piece of land of 8,788 square meters for the building of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Arabia and its premises. The main parts of the project are the Parking Zone, Cathedral, Multipurpose Building, and Courtyard.

1. Parking Zone

To optimize usage of the land configuration, a two-story underground parking garage with a 500-car capacity is to be constructed.

2. Cathedral

The Cathedral is in the shape of the ark of the people of God in the desert where God met Moses and the people, and where God said to him, *“There I will meet you”* (Exodus 25:22) and *“I will set my tabernacle in your midst”* (Leviticus 26:11).

Furthermore, the Cathedral and its dome have an octagonal form. This form is highly symbolic, for in Judeo-Christian thought the number eight frequently represents beginnings, resurrection, salvation, superabundance, and eternity.

The Fathers of the Church (theologians and spiritual Fathers who lived until the fifth century) also called Sunday as the “Eighth Day,” for they counted Sunday as the first day of the week, then the six days, to which they added Sunday again, thus making it the eighth day. In counting Sunday twice, at the beginning and end of the week, the Fathers of the Church had wanted to say that Sunday, as the eighth day, is beyond the natural system of our universe and beyond our natural life. It was also meant as a reminder that we have been created to live forever and for eternity!

The octagonal form of the Cathedral and its dome signify that those who enter are, for a time, entering into eternity, for they do so to meet God. Likewise, the octagonal form is a reminder of the eight persons who were saved in Noah's Ark, which is another Old Testament parallel of baptism, *“God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. This prefigured baptism, which saves you now.”* (1 Peter 3:20-21)

The seating capacity of the Cathedral is for 2,300 people. In the four corners of the Cathedral, there are the following: the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament (for 160 people), the Chapel of Our Lady of Arabia (also for 160 people), and the Chapel of the Confessionals. The fourth corner is for the transport elevators to and from the Cathedral and the underground parking zone. The

access to the Chapels of the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady of Arabia is either from inside or directly outside of the Cathedral.

In the Cathedral, the **baptismal font** is placed in front of the altar, some steps underground. We read in the letter of St. Paul to the Romans, "*We were indeed buried with him (Jesus Christ) through baptism into death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life*" (6:4).

Baptism is a death to sin, a burial, and a resurrection to a new life. That is why the baptismal font is some steps under the ground of the Cathedral, to symbolize a burial. Then, as the newly baptized comes up to the ground level of the Cathedral, it symbolizes his resurrection with Jesus. The place of the baptismal font is glass-covered and can be walked over when not used for baptisms.

Likewise, it is over that baptismal font that the faithful receive Holy Communion during the celebration of the Eucharist, as the consequence of their belonging to the new people of God.

It is also there that couples are to be united in the Sacrament of Matrimony. That sacrament is linked with baptism as it requires a new death to the personal life in

order to belong to another and form together, a new life, a new family.

Finally, it is there that the coffin is placed for the funeral rites, for the transition from baptism to eternal life. For baptism, the base of all the sacraments is the entry door to the community of Jesus Christ.

There are **sixteen icons**, with the icon of Jesus Pantocrator (Lord of the world) in the middle that decorate the interior of the Cathedral and placed in front of the assembly, to help people meditate and pray. The icons show the main mysteries of the Catholic faith: the Holy Trinity, the Annunciation, the Nativity of Jesus Christ, His baptism, the Transfiguration, the entry to Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the entombment of Jesus, His descent to the *inferno*, the Resurrection, the apparition to the Apostles, the Ascension, the Pentecost, and the Assumption (“Dormitio” of the Virgin Mary).

Though our community is multi-lingual, the icons present in one unified visual language the history of salvation.

An auditorium which holds 1,000 people is located behind the church.

3. Multipurpose Building

The multipurpose building has five floors. The first two floors are for the activities of the Cathedral (halls for catechism, various group meetings, etc.) and the residence and offices of the priests in charge of the Cathedral, and that of the Bishop and his assistants.

There is a guest house for formation on the third and fourth floors of 60 rooms each with double beds and toilet. This is for people who come to our Vicariate with very little knowledge about where they are. Hence, there is a need to help them know the history, geography, as well as the laws and traditions of these countries, in order to facilitate their peaceful integration. For, if one does not have knowledge, one cannot love fully. The purpose of the guest house is for human, social, and interreligious formation.

The fifth floor is the Bishop's House. It comprises the residence of the Bishop and those of his closest assistants.

4. Courtyard

This is an open space that can hold around 6,000 people for the big celebrations observed throughout the year.

5. Phases of Activities

First phase:

Excavation, only in the church area, for the construction of a two-story underground parking garage, to be followed by the building of the church.

Second phase:

Excavation for the construction of a two-story underground parking garage in the rest of the area.

Third phase:

Construction of the Multipurpose Building.

**Bishop Camillo Ballin, mccj
Kingdom of Bahrain, 02 September 2014,
The Ninth Anniversary of my
Episcopal Ordination**

D. REGULATIONS ON FAST, ABSTINENCE, AND FEASTS

1. **Fast and Abstinence** are prescribed for Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, limited to the ages between 21 to 60.
2. **Abstinence** is prescribed as a general rule for every Friday in Lent, applicable to the age of 14 onwards. But for particular circumstances in the Vicariate of Kuwait, abstinence is to be observed on the Wednesdays of Lent. Out of devotion, abstinence may be observed every Wednesday during the year.
3. **Eucharistic Fast:** The faithful must abstain from solids and liquids for one hour before receiving Holy Communion. This regulation is applicable to Masses celebrated in the morning, afternoon, evening or at midnight. Water does not break the fast. Those who are sick, even though not confined to bed, may take any liquid or food as medicines at any time before Holy Communion without asking permission.
4. **Feasts of Obligation:**
 - a. Sundays or Fridays or Saturday evenings
 - b. Christmas (25th December)
 - c. Solemnity of Mary Mother of God (January 1st)
 - d. **Solemnity of Our Lady of Arabia, Patroness of both the Vicariates in the Gulf** (Second Sunday of the Ordinary Time)

- e. St. Thomas: 3rd July (obligation is only for the Syro-Malabar Rite)
- f. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15th August)
- g. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary: 8th September (obligation is only for the Syro-Malankara Rite)

5. Feasts of Devotion:

- a. St. Joseph (19th March)
- b. St. Mark the Evangelist: 25th April (for the Coptic Rite)
- c. SS Peter and Paul (29th June)
- d. All Saints (1st November)
- e. All Souls: Commemoration of all the faithful departed (2nd November)
- f. Immaculate Conception (8th December)

6. Feasts transferred to the following Friday / Sunday:

- a. Epiphany
- b. Corpus Christi
- c. Ascension
- d. St. Maroun (9th February)

7. Feasts of the Parishes

- a. Holy Family Cathedral, Kuwait: Sunday after Christmas
- b. Parish of Our Lady of Arabia, Ahmadi, Kuwait: Second Sunday of the Ordinary Time
- c. Parish of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Salmiya, Kuwait: 01 October
- d. Parish of Saint Daniel Comboni, Jleeb al-Shuyoukh, Kuwait: 10 October

- e.** Mission of Saint John Bosco Mission, Jahra, Kuwait: 31 January (Mission temporarily closed)
- f.** Parish of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Qatar: 07 October
- g.** Parish of Sacred Heart of Jesus, Bahrain: Friday following the Solemnity of Corpus Christi.
- h.** Mission of Our Lady of the Visitation, Awali, Bahrain: 31 May
- i.** Parish of Saint Arethas: 24 October
- j.** Parish of St. Joseph: 19 March
- k.** Parish of Our Lady of Fatima: 13 May
- l.** Parish of Our Lady of Arabia: Second Sunday of Ordinary Time.

Bishop CAMILLO BALLIN, MCCJ
Apostolic Vicar of Northern Arabia

Address:

Bishop's House

P. O. Box 25362

Road 4603, Block 946, House 137 / 125

AWALI

(BAHRAIN)

Mobile Bahrain: (+973) 3950-4488

Bishop's Land Line and Fax in Bahrain:

(+973) 1749-0929

Mobile Kuwait: (+965) 9711-9772

Bishop's Fax in Kuwait (+965) 2242-0297

Mobile Qatar: (+974) 5580-0907

Mobile Saudi Arabia: (+966) 5365-13330