"Courage"

"DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED, AND DO NOT LET THEM BE AFRAID"

John 14:27

In Loving Remembrance of

HIS LORDSHIP BISHOP CAMILLO BALLIN MCCJ

Birth: 24th June 1944— Death: 12th April 2020

APOSTOLIC VICAR OF NORTHERN ARABIA

Months Mind ☆ 12th May 2020

The Catechism Ministry of the Apostolic Vicariate Of Northern Arabia

A Tribute of Love

What you leave behind

is not what is engraved

in stone monuments

But what is woven into

the lives of others

Pericles

Sharing cherished memories of our
late Bishop Camillo Ballin on his Months Mind.

Contributed by Rev. Fr. Francisco Pereira sdb
Director of Catechesis
&
The Catechists
AVONA

Bishop Camillo Ballin:

The heart of a Good Shepherd.

2 Timothy 4:7 says; "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith"; and again to use the words in Acts 20:24: 'But I consider my life of no value to myself, if only I may finish my course and complete the ministry I have received from the Lord Jesus--the ministry of testifying to the good news of God's grace'. This is how I look at our dear beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin, as I come to terms of his death.

In the late evening of February 4, during his pastoral visit and in the midst of greeting and meeting the clergy and faithful our bishop had a mild attack and fell sick. He was rushed to the local hospital for first aid and treatment and then later with the help of diplomatic ties with our Nuncio, we were able to rush him to Italy. He was taken care of by the Comboni Generalate from then on and was looked after by them very well. Towards the end of February Rev Fr Peter P M OFM cap, our Vicar General along with Mr. Joseph (parishioner of Holy Family Cathedral) paid him a visit and were with him for a couple of days. He was in good spirits when he met them, despite undergoing medical tests. It was later confirmed that he had lung cancer and was given intense treatment for the same.

He did struggle with the treatment and having gone through the season of lent with penance and suffering along with our Lord, he was rewarded for all his good and hard work with a peaceful death on the day of Resurrection, Easter, 12 April 2020.

Death snatched Bishop Camillo's mother at his tender age of 3. He grew up under the loving mantle of Mother Mary. As a youngster his motive was to make others happy and aspired to either become a teacher or a doctor. Death in the neighborhood inclined him to become a priest, a profession which calls for companionship, compassion, and care. He unknowingly fulfilled his mother's desire when he was ordained a priest in 1969 after 22 years of his mother's death. On his ordination day March 30, 1969, the parish priest revealed to Bishop his mother's last wish for her children was to become nuns and priest. All his 3 sisters became nuns. Being denied of motherly love on earth, he sought recourse to our heavenly mother. The relationship with Mother Mary was so profound and fervent; he acknowledged her role in his life by establishing a feast in her honor on the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time in AVONA having its own liturgy. He was also instrumental in inserting the same in the Litany of our Blessed mother, at the end of the Holy Rosary. In the interview with EWTN, he so rightly put it across to 'all the Mary's, if they could give $10 each towards Our Lady of Arabia, for the construction of the cathedral in honor of her name, it would go a long way'. His faith in Jesus and Mary propelled his missionary zeal. With the plot assigned by the generosity of King Hamd Bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of Bahrain and construction underway and now in the company of Jesus Christ and beloved Mother Mary the day is not too far away when an edifice will rise at Awali in Bahrain in memory of the Patroness of Arabia bringing to fruition his long cherished dream.

Bishop Camillo had a passion for mission. In Bishop Camillo, I found a man who was a 'die hard' missionary. Interestingly, after his ordination in Italy, Bishop never exercised his priestly ministry in his own homeland. Being a true Comboni missionary went to evangelize in Africa and the Middle East. His love for the Arab culture and people was seen even before being appointed as Bishop. He studied and mastered Arabic in 2 years in Damascus and thereafter authored

few books in Arabic. He was a linguist, besides being fluent in Italian, he was fluent in many other languages to name a few Arabic, English, French etc. In becoming a priest, he also fulfilled his aspirations of becoming a teacher and doctor. He obtained his PhD in 2000 and taught Arabic to missionaries at "Dar Comboni" an institute which he established in Cairo - Egypt. Bishop Camillo has left behind his legacy in Khartoum as the Institute of Theology which he founded is now one of the faculties of Catholic University of Khartoum.

He was so fluent in Arabic, that any Arab listening to him would doubt his Italian nationality and origin. I recall an anecdote I witnessed when Bishop and I met in person an officer in the Bank. The lady officer remarked, "I have not seen anyone so far speaking such good and polished Arabic" and then went on to speak for a good 40 minutes even to the point of discussing the faith and wanting to see the Holy Father.

His desire to be with his geographically diverse flock prompted him to relocate to Bahrain for ease of accessibility. The Bahraini citizenship conferred by the kind King Hamd Bin Isa Al Khalifa facilitated his missionary trips within the Northern Vicariate seamlessly by virtue of being a citizen of Bahrain. He was indeed overjoyed, not so much as a personal accolade, but because now he could easily travel all over the GCC as a citizen, to meet the needs of his sheep. This enabled him to constantly travel a lot in the past few years.

Being closely associated with him from 2009, I found in him a man who never rested (worked late into the night) and was able to follow up and accomplish a lot of work all by himself. I stood in awe and often wondered the source of his strength to do the work he did with such passion and precision. I can vouch he spent many hours in personal prayer and reflection. Prayer was the reservoir he banked on for the grit and determination with which he dedicated himself to the vows he had undertaken.

We are grateful to him for the many initiatives that he started in Kuwait and later in AVONA. One example was that he wanted to always have unity among all Catholics, this was seen through the various unity congress meetings we had, however once the vicariate of AVONA was formed we could not have it for various reasons. He had a thumb on the pulse of the Parish. His love for every community in AVONA was seen in the number of priests that were there. He made sure that no community was without a priest to serve their pastoral and spiritual need. He invited several visiting priests for the advent and lent season in all our parishes for every rite and language with the limited visa's that we could have. He truly wanted to have one Catholic Church among the different (5) rites that co-existed in AVONA. He himself would visit them and meet them all on every occasion he could.

His pastoral visits were very intense and demanding on him. He along with the parish priest and the assistants would attend every meeting of the various groups, listen, discern, and address their concerns like the Good Shepherd with his own observation and recommendation. Besides being demanding, he encouraged his priests in all that they were doing.

Bishop Camillo was a minimalist and materially detached human. He lived a truly Comboni missionary life; simple, frugal, and transparent. When one entered his office or even his personal room, one could see the simplicity in them. He had just the bare necessities in life. His companion in all travels, like in his office and room, was his breviary and Holy Bible, which he always carried. He would never want to be a burden to anyone. Even the last time when he visited Kuwait, he was not keeping good health and was struggling to walk all the same, he with the true spirit of a missionary kept going on even climbing the stairs.

In all his dealings, he was very transparent and always communicated to others all the decisions he took. I can say this even in many financial matters. He was very careful with money and would keep a strict discipline on himself and in general. He was a storehouse of charity and compassion, to the poor and needy generosity knew no bounds. He dispensed freely. He was very particular of getting proper accounts and had a keen eye on the balances in our accounts. He always encouraged anything that was needed in every parish for the good of the faithful and the clergy.

He was very systematic and did things on his own. He had no personal secretary like many other bishops would have neither did he have a chauffeur. He himself would archive everything and document them in order. He was always prompt with his replies even until the last moments. You just had to write to him or communicate to him and you were assured his prompt reply. All his meetings were very precise and never strenuous nor wanting things to be done in a hurry.

Mention must be made about his pastoral letters that he would write yearly. The topics were practical and faith enriching; be it on Liturgy, Sacraments, or faith matters; they were simple and clear for even the ordinary person. A lot of study and reflection have gone in them with a systematic follow up from each pastoral letter. These are above all a good means for catechesis and personal formation too. Bishop Camillo would spare no effort and money to make sure that these pastoral letters would reach every home and to every individual in their own language too. A true catechist after the loving Shepherd.

Being very closely associated with him with matters of faith and finance, I have lots to testify and above all to imitate him. Bishop Camillo always encouraged faith formation for all. He

encouraged various groups and movements to have faith formation, which is important, rather than to be there for only administrative purposes. He took keen interest in the Vicariate Faith Formation. The encouragement and total support that I received in the various programs and initiatives of catechesis gave not just me, but all in the vicariate the grace to come closer to our faith. He never said a no for anything that was needed for catechist and children with regards to their formation. Bishop Camillo had such pastoral heart for the children of the blessed land, that, every year he would make sure he could confirm many of them with a smile and loving pat on their cheeks.

His love for the faithful of the blessed land of AVONA could be seen in his visits and the way the people longed for his next visit. He would often go to the remote areas and stay there to be with the flock. They would often speak of him till his next visit. I was privileged on my visit that I make once a year to these places, to hear of the many stories and live experiences they had with him, even among the clergy.

Being a religious himself, he loved community life. Loved to spend the evening with the community and the clergy, - sharing his experiences and his humor was unique. I remember the many times he would come to the Salesian community just to offer the Holy Eucharist and then would spend a lot of time at the supper table with the clergy. You had to just knock at his door, and he would immediately say, come in; leave everything and attend to you.

He gave his all for the missions that he was entrusted till the very end of his life. I am sure in all his priestly life, fifty-one [we were indeed privileged to celebrate it together] faithful years, Bishop Camillo did catch many people for the Lord. He along with the Risen Lord and casting the nets on the right side all through his religious life, did bring many with the Good News to experience eternal life. Bishop Camillo did all this only with the command from the Lord and ably guided by our Blessed Mother all through; thus was able to put into action his motto: IN VERBO TUO, "Master, on Your word I will throw the nets." (Luke 5:5). Yes, Bishop Camillo did throw his full life in the hands of Jesus his Master and we are very sure, did catch and harvested much for the Kingdom of God.

We pray that the good Lord grant our Dear Bishop Camillo Ballin the rest that only He assures with these words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." (Mt 25:23)

Rest in Peace dearest Bishop Camillo Ballin and continue to bless us from above.

Fr Francisco (Franco) Pereira sdb
Catechetical Director
AVONA
12 May 2020

An ode to Bishop Camillo Ballin

He heard a soft voice calling in his soul,
To follow God was now his goal.
A missionary priest he was to be
Travelling afar over land and sea.

Sudan felt the warmth of his friendship,
He started faith formation school with hardship.
He was a model of humility and simplicity,
God blessed him with richness of spiritual belief and purity.

Soon he was appointed as Apostolic Vicar of Northern Vicariate,
'IN VERBO TUO' - his motto meaning, "I will let down the net".
Encouraging the catechists to be fishers of men whenever they met,
To bring God's kingdom on earth was his prime project.

He set his vision to build the Cathedral,
And asked the architect to set the design on an easel.
He flew to neighboring countries seeking funds for the mission,
Working hard till his last breath to construct this vision.

Your memories will always remain with us dear Bishop,
Your presence around us brought joy and hope,
Your Kindness and words "Inshallah and courage",
A reminder to us to never be discouraged.

We pray that your dream project may be fulfilled soon,
And you see the Cathedral from heaven, in the light of the moon.
As Moses from mount Nebo saw the Promised Land,
We will see your vision completed through God's hand.

As you rest in God's everlasting arms,
Whisper a prayer for us from up above.
Your loving smile and gentle ways,
Sacred Heart Church, Manama,
Will fondly remember you always.

Catechist
SACRED HEART CHURCH
MANAMA, BAHRAIN

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Our Beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin, MCCJ

It took me almost three months to pronounce his name properly, he corrected me several times; until he was pleased.

Appointed as the bishop of Kuwait diocese and then assigned to Bahrain in the year 2011, Bishop Camillo Ballin, a Christ-centered apostle; who played a key role in the development of the Our Lady of Arabia Cathedral project on the land donated by His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa. His pleasing personality and fluent language skills won acquaintance with the King of Bahrain, the Royal family and the Ministers.

He was a great apostle with few words but filled with wisdom of King Solomon. He foresaw mass readings coincide with hymns; he was devoted to the Blessed Mary and made sure that mass ended with a Marian hymn; he ensured that utmost importance was given to the Eucharistic Celebration.He established the Neo Catechumenal Way and appointed a priest to lead the people in following the rituals of ancient time.

He inaugurated the new Sanctuary, the "Adoration Chapel", on 2 September 2013' which was also his Ordination Anniversary. Bishop Camillo was a dynamic missionary. Upon inquiring with him about his biggest project- Our Lady of Arabia Cathedral, he would say, "it will be ready in **HIS** time". I remember him saying distinctly, "It is not for me to take with me, it is for all the people". Our loving bishop was always busy travelling to raise funds needed for the cathedral and was enthusiastic to complete it here on earth.

Our beloved bishop was born in Italy on 24 June and my birthday is 20 June, so we always exchanged our good will. On 27 August 2011 he celebrated my 50 years wedding anniversary mass and surprised us with a present of a golden braided papal blessing portrait. I will always be grateful to our bishop for his loving and spiritual presence among us and will always remember him.

We are certain that he is in heaven and will intercede to God to fulfill his dream project and pray for us to be gracious donors for the Cathedral. May his soul rest in the kingdom of heaven.

Florine Mathais
Catechist, Choir member and Ex Liturgy Coordinator
SACRED HEART CHURCH
MANAMA, BAHRAIN

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Your journey with us dear Bishop Camillo Ballin

The catechists of the Sacred Heart Church, Manama, Bahrain always felt your presence a great joy and support to our ministry. Your calm and approachable character gave us the liberty of moving towards you and asking you a question or two.

Your burning desire to teach us about the Lord's love and how to transmit it to the children entrusted to our care; you always encouraged us to remain faithful to God in our ministry. Your intention of everyone knowing the love of God gave a particular approach to us as to not to hold on to leadership in too many ministries but to give others a chance to have an encounter with God too in their work for God.

All for the love of God were your suggestions and implementations. We miss you bishop and will always remember your peculiar way of the recession of holy mass. You will be fondly remembered for many years to come. Please pray for us from up there and also pray too that your dream project will be ready soon.
Till we meet again

Lorna D'Souza
Catechist,
SACRED HEART CHURCH
MANAMA, BAHRAIN

To Our Legendary Soul

Beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin was our strong spiritual guide for our gulf countries. I heartily sob on His grace absences as His Excellency was my pride follower and guide who escalated my devotional insights.

His Excellency was appointed to minister across the Middle East before being appointed as the first Apostolic Vicariate of northern Arabia. His grace valuable time was prioritized to be a divine power for the diverse community in the Gulf. His grace symbol of Christian faith was seen in His grace cassock and cross that His Excellency wore even being in parts of gulf.

His grace missionary in gulf has brought great credits to the catholic community in the Middle East. One major appraisal initiative of his Excellency was the erection of Bahrain's Our Lady of Arabia Cathedral, a huge 2500 seat structure with complete 16 multipurpose halls. His grace vivid prayers and determined negotiations with our generous King Hamad bin isa Al Khalifah granted Bahrain community 800 sq m of land. Its completion will serve 2.5 million faithful from countries across the vicariate. His grace vision of the cathedral construction will break through the church-state relations and a sign of the coming of age of a growing Christian community. Your vision has give parishioners and our spiritual heads to strive for par excellence. Today we have your ardent foundation still in successive progress.

In regard to an interview with Daily tribune in His grace residence gave me a privilege to be the part of His grace conversation. The iconic simplicity of the luxurious life, which bishop could have led, made him my personal spiritual guide. His grace shelter resembled to a Sanyasi that was an unembellished room occupied with a bed, few pictures and books. His Excellency drove an ordinary car without a driver. The modesty of His grace life made him my virtual model of courage and simplicity when His Excellency had entitlement to escorts and other benefits.

Our relationship started from Kuwait then further enhanced in Bahrain with constant talks on enlightening visions on many spiritual subjects of our church. His Excellency was always cool and patient in handling any of my problems I consulted.

His grace social interactions with other community were intact. As His grace sincere presence as the chief guest in YMCA Christmas function contacted in Bahrain showed His grace close acknowledgment in other societies. The magnificent captivating tone of speech ND HI humble gesture inspired the crowd to have a good start at the event.

His grace wide interest to visit the senior most Bishop Philipose Mar Chrysostom of Marthoma Church who is celebrating His grace 102 divine years today. They met at the Bahrain parsonage few years back which brought in awareness about the land near catholic premises which can help them expand their devotion. Our bishop's open mind without any self-centered thoughts gave eye openers to other communities without any hesitation.

I have some latest unforgettable incident with his Grace in this last six years. As mentioned I always intervene with him about our Bahrain church and few functioning. Latest was my objection about His grace comment which hurt a large community. Excellency immediately sends a message to see me and resolve it. But with all my humility I said thou heard my concern is sufficient but on next few days time His Excellency met me in the church on the procession His grace stopped near me between the procession of large no of priest and told to see him immediately at father Saji's room there we opened and I have been cleared with His grace views and blessed me with His grace strong word of courage and Insha'Allah.

Lastly I called him when His Excellency was in Italy to ask him about His grace whereabouts. His Excellency recognized me and asked me to pray for him that touched my poor humanity. Easter morning I had called Cardinal Cleemis for the wishes of the day and for His grace blessings. His Excellency told me to convey good health to Excellency on our next call but the same evening I have heard the inconsolable news which tilted my entire spiritual castle made with Bishop Camillo Ballin.

To conclude with all your memories and all your benedictions will not be easy to end in a page or two. Yet then have to conclude with a heartbreaking note that we have thou always in our hearts. Finally acquiring your moral side of meekness and splendid evangelic perceptions that will help us to lead a better apostolic life.

The only misery that we deplore is the courtesy of farewell that we couldn't offer you for our present covid hostage. Excellency, will always have thou in our hearts as your way of life has imprinted a secured mark that avail us to be an "Elite catholic".

Please pardon me for any flaw occurred in our deep-rooted spiritual bound journey. We promise our continued prayers. Seeking your soul to remember us and guide us in our lives. I and my family continuous weeps and tears follow thou with hearty prayers for your soul to be in peace.

Firstly a great gratitude to my Almighty and lastly a great tribute to your presentence in my life which would have been a loss if I haven't get to share my views with thou. The nurtured bonds we shared will be always have a space in my heart and wisely implement it with Lord gracious in my spirits.

Williams Mathai
Catechist
Bahrain

Forever in our hearts...

Rogy Joseph
Catechist Coordinator
Awali, Bahrain

Saint Francis of Assisi said
"Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received-only what you have given: a full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage."

We were truly blessed beyond measure, to have a man of such great integrity, amidst us. He was a loving and caring father to all. Every piece of counsel he gave, had the power, to stir up our hearts, inspire us all, and encourage us to work unitedly for a better tomorrow.

With a warm smile, he was always, ever ready to help us Catechists.
He was always there with us and children, actively planning and participating in all the events. Even though he was rather advanced in years, he was young at heart and tirelessly worked day and night, to turn all his dreams and visions into reality.

Lord called our Bishop back home on Easter Sunday.
O Loving And Merciful Father, Eternal Rest Grant Unto Him, We Pray And May Thy Perpetual Light Shine Upon Him.

May the Peace, Love and Joy of the Risen Christ reign in our hearts forever and set our hearts on fire to be the heroes of Faith. May God bless us all!

"Gratitude is the memory of the heart..."

Gina Cerrafon,
Catechist, Awali , Bahrain

My heart is welling up with gratitude for being blessed to know and have a personal encounter with our dearly beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin. His presence in my life brought profound joy, courage, and strength to live my life in the eyes of faith. Bishop Camillo is a friend, spiritual companion, a father, and a shepherd whose life has been a witness of a living gospel to me and to his flock of the Christian Catholic Community in the `Kingdom of Bahrain.

Indeed, it is grace-filled year 2012 for me to meet my spiritual father Bishop Camillo and since that encounter I started to know him more dearly, to follow him more closely, and to obey his advices justly. This encounter with him I have considered my PEG - Personal Experience of God. My love for him moved me to follow his teachings and his writings, and I would like to share some of his spiritual thoughts.

Bishop Camillo is a Man of Prayer…

"During celebration, the center has to be the altar, and in private prayer the center has to be the tabernacle…"- excerpt from his letter to the congregation during the inauguration of Our Lady of Northern Arabia Cathedral. His life of prayer is a living example for me and to the faithful to grow more in intimate relationship with God, which draws me and his faithful in communion with the Triune God and with the Church. His deep spirituality has shown me how to live a life in deep commitment to Jesus and His mission. Witnessing Bishop Camillo and his love for prayer nourished my spiritual life whenever seeing him spending much time in the Blessed Sacrament in Bishop's Residence.

Bishop Camillo is a Man of Hymn of Praise…

"Sing to the Lord a new song…" – excerpt from his letter in the New Hymnal Book. Bishop Camillo has the love for music. His heart resounds the hymn of praises to God with his voice, his heart, his lips, and his life. The life he lived, the words he expressed, the Gospel he witnessed is indeed a hymn of praise in the assembly of the Saints in heaven.

Bishop Camillo is Man of Great Knowledge…

"The truth that sets us free…" – an excerpt from his book Exploring Our Catholic Faith. Bishop Camillo's life is a book of knowledge and truth graced by God imprinted in my mind, heart and soul. His profound faith and immense knowledge of the Catechism of Catholic Church has lovingly shared and has been explored by so many faithful through his pastoral letters, books, and writings. My close encounter with him have witnessed how his book of life enrich the understanding and encourage the faithful to explore ways to live faith more fully.

Bishop Camillo is a Man with love and devotion to the Mother of God…

"As a Mother, she has been given the role of moulding us into the likeness of Jesus…" – excerpt from his pastoral letter 2016-2017. He has been a role model for me and to all the Catholic faithful in devotion to our Blessed Mother by being always dependent on her in all things. Bishop Camillo offers all his prayers and oblations to God through Mary, and to seek every gift from God through Mary. Thus, he dedicated the name of the Cathedral in the Gulf Peninsula to Our Lady of Northern Arabia.

The life of Bishop Camillo has come to pass but his memories will live forever in my heart and in the hearts of all people whom he shepherd. His fatherly love, thoughtfulness, kindness, encouragement, and generosity will forever be remembered. God has never outdone in His generosity by gifting me and all the faithful of the Catholic Community with the spirit-filled life and grace shared with our Lordship Bishop Camillo Ballin. His life is evident from his words: COURAGE INSHAALLAH and in his motto: VERBO TUO.

Our Inspiration:

Bishop Camillo Ballin MCJJ

Dr. Shaju George,
Catechist, Awali, Bahrain

All of us know Bishop Camillo Ballin as a remarkable spiritual leader, a theologian, a prolific writer and above all a great visionary. I have a few anecdotes to share.

Bishop Camillo Ballin had a wonderful sense of humour. Once during his sermon he said "We have all the money for the construction of the Cathedral." "But it is in your pocket". The entire congregation had a hearty laugh. At the same time, Bishop was able to reiterate his appeal for the resources required for the construction of the Cathedral. His style of making a point using a lighter note was truly unique. The Cathedral project was very close to his heart. The Catholic community of Bahrain will always remember him with gratitude for his contribution.

On another occasion, we catechists were attending a seminar in the Bishop's House and the resource person was continuing his lecture well beyond the time. It was late in the evening and we all were waiting for him to complete the session, but could not intervene, out of respect. Incidentally, the Bishop passed by the classroom and immediately asked the resource person to stop his lecture, as it was high time to end the session. Bishop Camillo Ballin was always pragmatic in his approach while he was deeply rooted in his faith and his commitment to the Church. He strongly believed in the true meaning of Christian actions & charity and understood very clearly that "*well done is better than well said*".

He lived his life to the fullest in service of God. It was a visual delight to see him enjoy the cultural programmes and delicious food during the family day. He mastered several languages and used it for the ultimate glory of God. His ceremonial robes, his knowledge, his tall stature made him stand out, yet he was one among us.

"*My father, do not rest. Do not allow us to rest. Keep us to our pledge. Give us strength to fulfill our promise, your heirs, your descendants, your stewards, the guardians of your dreams...*" These words of Sarojini Naidu after the death of Gandhi, encapsulates our feelings and emotions for our beloved Bishop.

Knowing for sure that, Bishop Camillo Ballin is in the company of saints and in the loving hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, let his Christian missionary life, his complete dedication to The Apostolic Vicariate of Northern

Arabia, his innocent smile, his enthusiasm and passion be an inspiration to all of us. Let us celebrate Bishop Camillo Ballin and his exemplary religious life!

A loving tribute to our beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin.

Laveena Martis
Catechist, Awali, Bahrain

"Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful Servants"
People say one person cannot make a difference in the world…but we know that isn't true, because we have seen the difference you made in our lives Bishop Camillo, to us in our small community in Awali Parish. Beloved Bishop, you were the champion of the Christian faith. I remember as I served in couple of church ministries and as a member of the Awali Catholic Community, we all looked up to our Bishop with great respect. Bishop served God with complete humility. His homilies always inspired me to understand the scriptures from a different perspective. He was a dedicated servant who served the people of God in different capabilities and responsibilities within Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia. He cared for the congregations at both the Parishes where he served and listened to everyone with care and much affection.

He was a true shepherd, he taught and disciplined many and won many souls to the knowledge of Christ as their Lord and personal Savior.

He was a man full of humility. Bishop loved engaging with people in conversations, he was a good listener and friendly to everybody regardless of age group. He was easily accessible, and always giving the right advice to all without any discrimination. He knew very well how to strike a balance in conversations. Bishop Camillo, was the true definition of a servant leader, he was a loving and a unifying figure. Even Bahraini's were fond of him and people from different walks of life around the world and churches in the Middle East region; let's remember that our Late Bishop, Father and Leader is sleeping in the Lord and that we will meet again if we keep the faith. Let's celebrate his life and ministry; Late Bishop Camillo was a special gift from God to our small yet dynamic Catholic Community of Awali Parish.

"You will always be remembered for your legacy will remain forever in our hearts, may your soul rest in eternal peace"

Our Bishop Camillo, a true Saint

Emilio and Keifran
Catechists, Awali, Bahrain

Simple words can never do justice to the life of a man, and this man in particular, Bishop Camillo – without a doubt, a man with tremendous human sensitivity; a man whose very presence inspired peace; a man whose soft voice and kind treatment clearly spoke of a person with a big heart. Words could never do him justice, but yet I will try, to share my remembrance and impressions of this truly holy man.

I first met Bishop Camillo in Kuwait, when we lived there 10 years ago. We met him on several occasions, as members of the Parish Council, to seek ideas that would allow us to find funds to build the new cathedral in Bahrain. He listened to everyone with attention, and in the end, always the great leader, he recognized our efforts and encouraged us to continue with this hard work to obtain funds. The Bishop knew that obstacles and challenges would arise to achieve the Cathedral, but he always inspired us to continue and encourage others.

I remember one night in the Cathedral in Kuwait in particular. It was a Holy Saturday and crowded with parishioners. Bishop Camillo was leading the Mass and had tears of emotion from seeing the fervor of our living and active community. All of us were very touched at that vigil, awaiting the resurrection of our Saviour. Bishop Camillo's guidance and support for his 'flock' was crucial to our well-being and spirituality in Kuwait, with many of us so far from our home countries. Being in front of our beloved Bishop was one of those life experiences that moves you.

On another occasion, as part of a public event, he surprised us all. In the presence of the Kuwaiti authorities, and all the representatives of the churches from all the Arab countries, from Africa, from India, from Europe, Bishop Camillo surprised all the audience by giving his speech, first in Arabic, and then in English. Years later, here in Bahrain, at the end of the mass in the Awali Church, the Bishop would always go out to greet the parishioners, in a gesture of deep humility, one by one, with a smile, and with a word of affection. When we were in front of him, he greeted us in Spanish, which made our hearts jump with joy.

While in Bahrain, my wife and I joined the Ministry of Catechesis, and together with the entire team of teachers, under the guidance of Fr. Roen, and with the teachings of Fr. Franco, we have lived an experience that has transformed our lives. Not only because the teaching of the Word is one of the most wonderful experiences, but also because the one who teaches learns more every day. Moreover, it has allowed us to interact with our brothers and sisters from Ministry of Catechesis, a work team that is like a great family. In addition, it is always a pleasure to share with our students the beautiful journey of learning about our religious beliefs and traditions and the value of our relationship with Jesus Christ as the Lord of our life.

Today, we want to thank God for allowing us to meet and work with a holy man, a true pastor, a great leader, and above all a visionary, who gave his life to serve the Church in these distant lands.

Thank you, Bishop Camillo, thank you very much for your guidance, your leadership, your humility and for your life of devotion to our church!

Memorable moments..

First Holy Communion Welcome Mass

Awali Family Day Celebrations…

Our Bishop with Catechism children, during the Christmas Party …

The Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Rosary

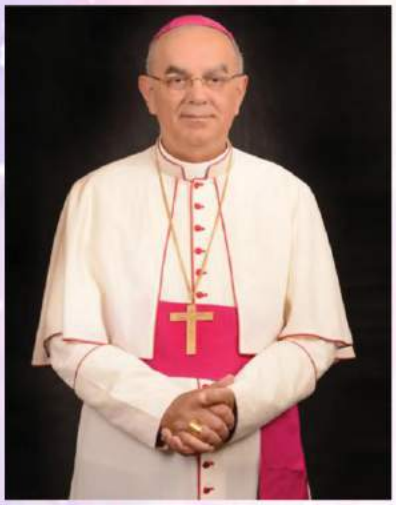
Doha - Qatar

THE EASTER OF APRIL 2020

Our beloved Bishop **HG Bishop Camilo Ballin mccj**, was called to his heavenly abode on Easter Sunday 12/04/2020, emphasis on the word "**Easter Sunday**". What a fitting tribute to a prolific Bishop who never shied away from enforcing the values of the Church. To be called to his heavenly abode the same day as the Lord rose to heaven, I find the impeccable timing of his death incredibly moving and powerful. To die in Holy Week or Eastertide is a blessing, and perhaps a consolation to those who are left.

As Bishop Fulton Sheen rightly said 'Death is meant to be our true birth, our beginning. The world celebrates a birthday on the day a person is born to physical life; the Church celebrates it when a person is born to eternal life.'

What I remember most about **HG Bishop Camilo Ballin mccj**, is his frank talks with the congregation, where we could ask him anything about the Catholic faith. During these conversations, **HG Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj** addressed parishioners simply, sometimes almost casually, often humorously. He never read from notes or a prompter. No questions were given to him for consideration beforehand. He was so sound in the liturgy and the Catholic faith; he was able to satisfy all our liturgical curiosities. He was serious, but he also had a terrific sense of humor, and managed to see the humor in things. One of the important messages that we can all take from his life is to be a witness.



People would stop him all the time. They'd want to shake his hand, kiss his ring. He'd always take an interest in whoever walked up, taking the time to greet them. He always welcomed them, and was never short with anyone.

He begins his first Pastoral letter '**Eucharistic Amazement**' with the greeting 'Peace be with you!' This is the greeting of Jesus Christ to his disciples after his resurrection (*Jn 20,19.21.26; Lk 24,36*). It is also the greeting that the Bishop, the representative par excellence of Jesus Christ in the Church, addresses to the community at the beginning of the Eucharist celebration.

Late **HG Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj** legacy will be remembered by his courage in helping the Catholic Community of the Middle East live out their faith away from their families back home.

With all of our heartfelt fortitude and wishes from Doha - Qatar and prayers in these unprecedented times, we remain forever inconsolable loss of a Leader - our beloved **HG Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj.**

In prayers,

Rev. Fr. Anand George Castelino OFM Cap
Catechism Spiritual Director - Doha, Qatar

Catechism Coordinators, Catechist, Support Staff and Students.

AN ODE TO HG. BISHOP CAMILLO BALLIN mccj

As the world celebrated a glorious Easter on **Sunday, 12 April 2020**, we received the news of the demise of our beloved **HG. Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj**.

During this unprecedented epidemic of nCOVID-19 the fight against it would need the wisdom and prayers of a leader as **HG Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj**, who had been a ray of light in guiding the entire Arabian Vicariate into the righteous path of divinity.

His legacy could be found and we draw inspirations from his yearly pastoral letter which teaches and guides us in these trying times, to persevere and remain **"Confirmed in our Faith"**.

His last pastoral letter issued for the year **2017-2018** titled **"Baptism Confirmation"**. In his special address which is written in page 4:
"The term "Sacraments" means that they are not simply human rites, but "sacred" rites founded by Jesus Christ himself and through which he himself works with his Holy Spirit. The sacraments are not works of the priest but of Jesus Christ himself, who is present and works personally in every sacrament."

This year our sacrament of Confirmation and Communion could not be held, but when the power of the Holy Spirit over-powers the dust of the enemy, we will confer these sacraments to the children of his flock with much prudence.

HG. Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj was instrumental in intensifying the catechetical services by his visit to Qatar in Year 2017 with a meeting with all the Catechetical groups of Qatar. Here we met him personally along with **Rev. Fr. Rally Gongaza OFM Cap - Parish Priest Qatar,** who felicitated **HG Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj** with bouquet of flowers and a received copy of the Pastoral Letter.

Furthermore, by far the most outreaching endeavor was his audience with **H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani - Amir of Qatar** on **11/10/2017**, who witnessed the credentials of the Vatican Ambassador to Qatar, **HG. Francisco Montecilo Padilla**.

This high level audience only further strengthened the resolve to provide the opportunity for the faithful to be in the fold of his flock in Arab Vicariate.

This year's Easter candle flickers a ray of hope for us Catechists as mentioned in the pastoral letter, page 12:
"The candle represents Christ, the light of the world, who shines in the conscience and in the life of the new children of God."

With all our heartfelt love and wishes of the Catechists in Doha, Qatar, we wish this journey will continue based on the legacy of our shepherd **HG. Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj**.

In prayers,

Rev. Fr. Anand George Castelino, OFM Cap

Catechism Spiritual Director, Doha - Qatar

Catechism Coordinators, Catechists, Support Staff and Students.

WHAT DOES BISHOP MEAN TO ME?

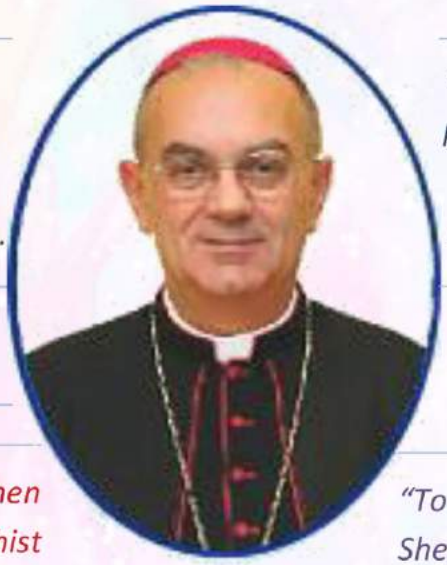
We asked randomly this question to our Parish Catechists, Students and received some remarkable responses:

"As a priest in charge of the catechism, I could contact him anytime on email and he could give the right clarification. He listens and answers the questions of my doubts with a very friendly nature. My experience with him in these eight years was that he is a loving Good Shepherd who cares for his flock."

Rev. Fr. Anand George Castelino OFM Cap
Catechism Spiritual Director – Doha, Qatar

"Bishop is a torch bearer of Christianity and it's so difficult for him to go to places where it's difficult to practice our faith.

Adria Lobo, Student L 6



"Bishop was so blessed because he got to meet both our beloved Pope's – Pope Benedict and Pope Francis during his service.

Anria Rose, Student L 4

"I saw the Bishop one time when my father was doing catechist training and he looked so Humble and peaceful"

Anwil Steve, Student L 7

"To me, Bishop means the Good Shepherd, who looks after his sheep (us) and making sure we are safe"

Dorothy Noronha, Catechist L 8

"When Bishop had come across to children's mass, he had explained to us (Catechists and children), ways of how we could get closer to the Holy Spirit"

Walter Dias, Catechist L 10

"Bishop would always encourage us Catechists to recite the HOLY Rosary and have Mother Mary intercede for us, as the most powerful tool"

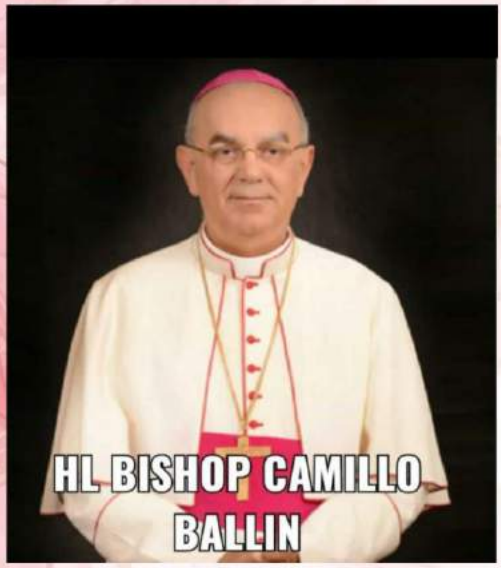
Seema Rodrigues, Catechist L 3

"To me, Bishop was a true leader and inspiration. He said to us when he had come to Doha, Qatar – "Reading the Bible and putting it to practice makes one closer to Jesus"

Anthony Peter D'Souza, Catechism Coordinator

Our Lady Of Arabia Church
Ahmadi - Kuwait

Shepherd of Our Lord



Aby Punnoose
Catechist Class 9A
OLA Parish, Ahmadi

Bishop Camillo Ballin, who was appointed as the Vicar Apostolic of the Vicariate of Kuwait on 2nd September 2005 and later became the Vicar Apostolic of Northern Arabia in the Middle East, was a true shepherd for the Catholic faithful in Kuwait. As per the motto of his missionary life, ("Master, on your word I will throw the nets" (Luke 5:5)), he had surrendered all his actions and decisions to the will and word of Jesus Christ. Through his ministry, as a unique shepherd, he had total dependence on the will of Jesus.

It is well known to all those who had approached beloved Bishop that he never wanted to keep a distance with his people, rather he always wanted to keep all his flock closer to him inside a safe sheepfold of love." I know my own and my own know me." (John 10:14). In his first Pastoral Letter (2007-2008) to the faithful of Kuwait, he wrote "I thank God for you and for what you are for me. I can say with St. Paul that you are my joy and my crown (Phil 4:1)."

Togetherness

One of the most important qualities of Bishop Camillo that make him quite special was that he could mingle with all communities of people irrespective of their culture and language. When he reaches a community, he will become one among them, he will get involved with their cultural activities, he will join with their food habits, he will learn their language and will try to speak to them in their language. He becomes a Filipino when he is with Filipinos, a Malayalee with Malayalees, an African with Africans....

In a vicariate where there are people of more than 13 different languages with even more cultures and traditions, Bishop Camillo was very particular in encouraging his people to maintain and grow in their culture and tradition of each community so that Church could grow in unity among diversity."

May they all be one, Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me (John 17:21). His knowledge in Arabic language is an example for this. In his missionary life, as he spent most of his time in Egypt and Sudan, he could become one among them with the spirit of true missionary through this charism.

Availability

One of the other specialities which separate him from others was his 'availability'. Normally we are seeing a Bishop of a diocese mostly once a year or once in two or three years, but here our Bishop in a very special way was available for all Catholics faithful at anytime, 2.5 million Catholics in Northern Vicariate could see him any time, which was reflected in the immediate responses for any message conveyed to him..."greatest among you be as the youngest and the leader like one who serve" (Luke 22:26).

He was keenly concerned with the activities of various ministries by immediately responding to all the e-mails or other letters he received. He used to take actions and follow up actions for all the e-mails he received. He conducted Parish visits at least once a year to interact with his flocks. During his parish visit he used to stay in the parish and was available for all the parishioners. He used to listen to all spiritual needs of the faithful , meeting all the ministries individually and was taking immediate actions for all concerns he received from the parishioners." I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He judged me faithful and appointed me to his service." (1 Timothy 1:12)

Our Lady Of Arabia Church
Ahmadi - Kuwait

Hardwork

The third aspect, which make him unique was his hard work. He was fully convinced about his missionary works and had clear vision on his activities. He worked all these years very hard, based on his conviction in Jesus' mission and his vision for the betterment of the Catholic faithful. To get the things done, he has not shown any hesitation to go upto the extreme end and he kept the zeal un-quenched till the positive result of his action. For our Parish, (Our Lady of Arabia Ahmadi) he negotiated tirelessly with KOC and other government officials to get permission to use Catechism Blocks and other facilities of the same. Even in his sickness and in hospital bed he wanted to come back and continue his mission work in this vicariate.

Braveness

The fourth quality which Bishop maintained was his braveness to deal with difficult situations. He faced all the struggles and obstructions bravely with the courage he received from his master, Lord Jesus. 'When He is in the boat, why should I fear'... (Matthew 8: 23-26), was his approach to all situation. He believed that he was doing everything for the greater glory of Master and was moving forward bravely.

The opening of Abbassiya Parish Mission, the efforts made to acquire land for Abbassiya Parish Church, the preparatory work for Bahrain Cathedral and the commencement of its construction works are some of the examples of his firmness in vision and dependence on Lord Jesus. " My God will fully supply whatever you need, in accord with his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father, glory forever and ever. Amen" (Phil 4:19-20).

Whenever faithful approach him with difficulties in their life and in other spiritual matters, he always advises them to face the troubles boldly. The word 'courage' was his supporting word for his faithful as well as for his priests to motivate them in difficult situations. This trust in the Lord Almighty must be the most important aspect that helped him to overcome all the obstacles in the path of his mission.

Our Lady of Arabia Cathedral (Bahrain)
(On-going construction)

Champion of Unity

Bishop Camillo was a champion of unity. There are migrant faithful from 5 liturgical rites (ie Latin rite, Maronite Rite, Coptic Rite, Syro Malabar Rite and SyroMalankara Rite) in our vicariate. During his missionary work in Lebanon and in Egypt he knew the essence of Maronite and Coptic rites besides the Latin rite. During his visits to Kerala (India) in the early days of his mission in Kuwait, Bishop stayed there and learnt the essence of Syro Malabar and Syro Malankara Rites. He visited Church centers, Bishops, Priests and Lay persons to understand the liturgy in deep and to explore the cultural specialities.

The Church in Northern Arabia where the faithful originating from different liturgical rites, different languages, different culture and traditions , when they come together they should know each other, their cultures and values should be exchanged and thus they should join together as one Body in Christ -this was his desire and he lead the church in that direction. To promote the unity in the Church, he conducted four Unity Congresses in Kuwait (from 2008 to 2011). The motto of these conferences is “that they may be one as we are one (John 17:22)”. In his Pastoral Letter (2008) after the first Unity Conference, he wrote “The aim of our 'Unity Congress' was exactly this: we noticed that our Vicariate is formed from many communities.

Very often we have in our Vicariate many Catholic Churches besides each other but we don't have ONE Catholic Church. ONE doesn't mean uniformity. I have never thought to depreciate or discourage the celebration of other Liturgies and to assimilate all to the Latin Rite. But it is my duty to help everyone, according to his origin, spirituality, traditions, culture and mentality, to be moulded to the pattern of His Son, Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29)".

In 2019, in accordance to Pope's call for unity among ecclesial movements, he conducted Gulf Unity Conference in Kuwait. It was organised by co operation of all ecclesial communities of Kuwait and there were participants from entire Gulf Region. The interest and support of Bishop Camillo was there in all programmes like this where the word of God by St. Paul was fulfilling in his leadership..."For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another." (Rom 12: 4 , 5) .

To maintain the unity, he was firmed on certain aspects and never compromised on certain teachings.

Our Lady Of Arabia Church
Ahmadi - Kuwait

Shepherd of Our Lord

Priority on Christ centered Liturgy

Another very important and noticeable aspect that has to be mentioned about our Lordship is the priority given by him for the liturgy. From the day he took charge in 2005, he was studying deeply the Holy Mass celebrations in all parishes of Kuwait and was keen to correct certain practices followed in various parishes, in accordance with the approved liturgy. In his first four Pastoral Letters from 2007 to 2011, he wrote only about liturgy. Bishop's intention was to bring deep understanding of Liturgy among the people. He wanted his flocks to know that the Holy Mass is the source and summit of their catholic life.

He wrote in his first Pastoral Letter (2007-2008), " In the Liturgical prayer we are invited to go out from ourselves, to meet others, to pray and to sing with them, to know them personally, to help them.

The purpose of the Liturgy is to call every one of us as individuals and make all of us as one, one body whose head is Christ (Eph. 1,22-23)". He loved the beauty of Christ centered Liturgy and also wished that each sheep of his flocks to understand this mystery and follow in his participation in the Liturgy.

With his heavenly departure, we are feeling a humanly emptiness. We are obliged to keep the high values and morality he kept in his life. " Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Pet 4:9-10). We should work together to fulfil his dreams on spiritual nourishment of our Vicariate. "I have competed well; I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearance. (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

Fifteen years ago I started to dream and searched for truths. Truth that may bring peace in my heart and soul. I started to believe in the existence of the Almighty God, the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic church. A desire has filled my heart to receive the Holy Sacraments instituted by Jesus and experience its benefits as the believers of Jesus Christ do.

The appointment of His Lordshop Bishop Camillo Ballin as Vicar of Kuwait on 2nd September 2005 was timely and relevant. Since this brought good news and a blessing to my family.

On 6th December 2005, a solemn ceremony has been administered by His Lordship that changed my entire life and my family.

The dream to receive our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who fills our hearts and soul was accomplished through the hands of Bishop Camillo Ballin, as he welcomed us to a new family of faith.

Entire Family: Chandrashekhar, Anjali, Deepika & Jaydeep Nair.

Anjali Nair
Catechist- Class 3A
OLA Parish, Ahmadi

A Tribute to Bishop Camillo Ballin

On Behalf of HFC - English Catechism Ministry
By Agnela Cynthia D'Souza

Luke 4:16- The spirit of the Lord has been given to me for He has anointed me.

We honour our beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin who by his life accepted the challenges of the vision he had seen with God to bring people the Good News, seek the lost lambs and lead them to heaven.
We have to express our gratitude for the broad vision he had for the Arab Vicariate of Northern Arabia. We seldom see Bishops around us especially in Asia where they are seen only on Confirmation events, news or religious gatherings in the media. We were blessed to see and meet our Bishop in the cathedral. It was unusual for the Holy Family Cathedral to witness a sight as solemn as the Ordination of its Bishop Camillo Ballin. We recollect as we filled every corner of the Cathedral and he went around everywhere sprinkling Holy Water on us and that was our first closest glimpse at him.

Gulf parishes are not easy to be lead with all its diverse culture and demands where each community seek their matters to be of prime importance. Bishop Camillo had a huge task in hand not forgetting he had to even govern some of these parishes behind a cover as religious practice is not allowed. A man of strong faith and wisdom he seemed to have that serenity, tranquility, courage, confidence in himself and his flock to face the challenges and crisis that came in his path. In this wake we saw a lot of Congresses and other events to unite His flock. In spite of all this he found time to write Pastoral Letters to educate his flock on matters of prime importance. We discovered that he lived a simple life and spent it mostly praying in solitude. He was strict about how catechesis has to be followed. Strong words were used that everyone can be a catechist but you have to allow God to qualify you to be one and take the trouble of being qualified. Even the disciples were taught by Jesus and they had to learn and learned and so must the catechists.

He taught us to obey hierarchy and try to solve our own problems. He had confidence that if we have the proper conviction, right intentions and courage we could do better than him to address a situation.

Thanks to Rev. Fr. Peter and the last few communication incidents with Bishop we know that He wished to be with His flock and most importantly He knew the call had come. It is very important that in these unprecedented times His last few words to Fr. Peter were Now the Church is in God's hands.

If our Bishop were to give us His final blessings, his favourite word would have been "COURAGE" and maybe the following
"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD." (Psalm 31:24)
May our Lord God give our beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin the fruits of his work well done for he has finished the race and fought his fight in the vineyard of the Lord.

Wall of Gratitude

I had an opportunity to serve you as an altar server. You were and are still an inspiration to all, with a heart that radiated love and warmth through all our lives. You will truly be missed and forever remembered.

May your soul rest in peace.

~ Shirley Coutinho - (Class 9)

I remember him to be very dedicated and interested in his flock especially towards the bachelors in Kuwait. During Mass I felt touched when he expressed compassion to those standing in the aisles.

Courage is the word that he has engraved in my heart and mind. I will remember him always. God bless his soul.

~ Lucy D'Souza (Catechist)

I was honored to serve late Bishop Camillo Ballin for the Christmas High Mass last year as an altar-server. His holy attitude of self-denial helped me grow closer to God.

~ Mercy(Y8)

A gentle, compassionate and down-to-earth personality. He was truly an example of a Good Shepherd.

At a prayer meeting during Lenten season at my uncles house, he prayed with us and for us. He joked with us too. He was such a good human being. We all will miss him very much.

~ Vernon (Y8)

Lived by his motto - In Verbo Tuo (at Your Word)
Just God and him, what a lovely duo!
Walked on the path of God for 50 years,
With hardships, suffering and joyful tears.
What an incredible journey …from a boy, to a Priest, to a Professor, to a Writer, a Vicar;
He now goes on to an eternal journey with his Maker.
Your Service, Your Love, Your Compassion, it's an endless list,
You have left us yearning for more and you will be dearly missed.
Rest in Peace, His Eminence Bishop Camillo!

~ Rozanne Lynn Machado (Y2)

Bishop Camillo Balin was a wonderful Bishop who made time for people. He took initiatives to form communities and make our parish one big family. For me, being an Altar Server, one of the biggest honours was serving His Lordship's mass, especially holding his mitre or staff. He always brought the humorous mood in me. I will always remember him smiling down on me.

~ Kevin Christraj Fernandez

Although I have not had a personal encounter with our Bishop Camillo Ballin, what I felt seeing him around is that, he was a very kind-hearted, friendly and a great leader who was dedicated to his flock.

May the Almighty Father grant our Loving Bishop eternal reward.
~ Darius Lobo (Y5)

Every year we were excited to see Bishop Camilo Ballin at Christmas, New Year and Easter vigil mass. Our family always made it a point to take his blessings and kiss his hand after mass. This year as a confirmand I was longing to receive Confirmation from our dear Bishop. Sadly this will not happen, but I know that he will intercede for all of us and his flock of Northern Vicariate. He was a true Shepherd. May perpetual light shine on our Bishop.
~ Juwela Ferreira (Y8)

An ever smiling face, nice to listen to his talks, always approachable. Heavenly blessings; he will always be remembered. May God grant his wishes in heaven.

~ D.Lasrado

Bishop Camillo Ballin was a man of few words, but he had an never-ending smile on his face. He would always advise us to trust in Our Lady, help the needy and to always obey our elders. He has set a true example for all of us, that not all will know but the few who knew him, will always remember.

~ AJDias

I will always admire Bishop Camillo. I felt proud and honored because as a altar-server, I was able to serve Holy Mass with you. I would reverently hold your blessed mitre and staff. I firmly believe that following your sudden demise on Easter Sunday, you have risen with Jesus and you intercede for all of us.
We love you so much.
~ Angel Sharon

To AVONA, he brought faith, humanity, energy, enthusiasm, encouragement, – all gifts of the Spirit. "He has sent me to bring good news" (Isa 61:1) that was his response in choosing to go to Arabia to commence his "Commission." On Easter, he was called: 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Come, share your master's joy.' (Mt 25:23)

~ Aleixo J. Noronha

I got many opportunities to serve at Holy Mass alongside Bishop Camillo. The most memorable one is when I served mass with him on my birthday. He also obliged me with a photograph with him, that I will always cherish. His words of wisdom always encourages me to serve at Holy Mass.
~ Dragila J. Araujo (Class-X)

Our cherished memory is Bishop making time for me on my birthday. Although he was busy, he took time to pose and take a picture with us.
He was a Great Shepherd. His flock will miss him and love him always. We pray that his dream of Bahrain Cathedral will come true very soon.
~ Joann and Jessica

A gentle, compassionate and down–to-earth personality. Bishop Camillo was truly an example of a Good Shepherd

~ Gael Dsouza

On Christmas evening (2019), Bishop Camillo was walking out of the church compound limping his leg, I went along with him. As we were walking he said you are my "bodyguard". As he was entering to the car (vehicle) he was struggling, so I helped him by lifting his legs, then he blessed me and said. "Thank you very much. God bless you."

I didn't know that was the last time for me to see our Lordship. I will always cherish that memory.

~ Sunil E. V. Vas (Facilitator)

The Pillar of My Spiritual Life, Our Beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin

A dynamic figure, a man of great strength, positivity and courage. He could see what was invisible, feel the intangible and achieve the impossible; the standing example of which is The Bahrain Cathedral Project - his dream project. I always felt a great sense of strength and confidence being around him and was fortunate for the experience of being under his guidance and love. He has been a great source of protection and light during my spiritual journey.

The Bishop was a straightforward disciplinarian and a perfectionist too. He would never hesitate on correcting anyone during a mass. There was no waiting, just like what a father would do with his children. My own father was a strict figure while growing up, so it was easy to relate to the love and concern of our Bishop. But at the same time, He always had his humorous side with which he would lighten up the mood. Tribute

On getting to know about his journey to the heavenly abode on 12th April, I felt completely lost and dejected as to why would he leave us during this critical time. But then it came into my mind, like a ray of light, that he is by our Lord's side and whispering all our petitions to him. He is still watching over us from Heaven above.

Though our Bishop is gone, I take comfort in all the spiritual gifts he has given me. He has left a permanent imprint on all our hearts. He will be greatly missed.

~ Sapna Coelho (Catechist

When one thinks of Bishop Camillo, it is impossible not to remember the sound of abrupt laughter that fills the cathedral at his clever humor, his distinct voice and his words of wisdom. He always spoke of the importance of family and togetherness. He interacted closely with the many communities of the vicariate and always made time for the people. I admire his openness and humility. I will always remember the Bishop's towering personality surrounded always by people, the contagious joy that radiated from him.

He will be remembered with great respect always.

~ Catherine Christraj Fernandez

Bishop Camillo was a passionate and committed missionary till his last breath. A true believer and follower of Christ's teachings. He constantly reminded us and himself set an example that we should love one another, irrespective of race, religion, color, caste and creed.
~ Rylynn Gonsalves (Y2)

Bishop Camillo Ballin was
Tall like a pillar of Avona.
White like a Dove and
Moved like a Angel on Earth
Always smiling & joking.

I will miss him always.

~ Orielle Faith Mascarenhas (Y2)

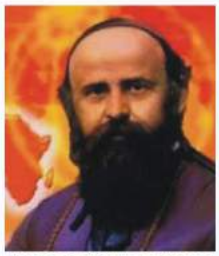
The first time I met Bishop Camillo was during my catechism class photo-shoot, as a part of the celebration of his Golden Jubilee of his Priestly Ordination. Though I have seen him a couple of times, I felt he was a very loving person, who reminded me of Christ's love. He was a humble person, who was in union with Christ. His friendliness, kindness and hospitality was an inspiration for us children.

~ Shaun George Menacherry (Y2)

The new dimension of love was what was unveiled with the coming Bishop Camillo. Memorable are his initiatives towards the unity of the different rites, nationalities and languages. Great was his concern to the neglected, the bachelors and deprived, in general. May his soul rest in peace.

~ Christraj Joseph Fernandez

Messages from the Catechism Ministry (Children, Catechists, Facilitators and Coordinators) at Holy Family Cathedral, Kuwait



St. Daniel Comboni Church
Jleeb Al Shuyoukh - Kuwait

BISHOP CAMILLO BALLIN - A TALENTED WRITER – GOD GIFTED

Filled with wisdom from God, his writings are very knowledgeable and comprehensible. He puts his thoughts across very distinctly, reflecting wisdom and humbleness.

In 2018 when Catechists had a symposium on the topic "I Believe", we were a little baffled, kept reading the CCC and other materials, but could not get clarity on what to present. One of our Catechist a Carmelite Sister at our parish suggested a few references and one of them was the Bishop's pastoral letter on "I believe (Credo)" -September 2012. Reading it actually put our thoughts in place, as the explanation he gave based on the CCC was very well written in simple words yet so powerful and grasping, that enabled us to present each of our part better, quoting some of his beautiful messages, like - "*For Christians, it is not enough to confess that God exists. This is known even by the Devil. A Christian is called to experience and to witness that God is Love*". Calls us to go beyond just practicing Christianity.

In his pastoral letter "In the Vineyard of the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia: A decade after" (September 2015) - reflection of his last 10 years after his Episcopal ordinations as Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate Kuwait", he explains the essential difference between the Liturgy and novenas or other private prayers. Liturgy and Word of God takes precedence over Novenas and all other prayers. A very strong pointer.

Most Writers are a great source of knowledge, but not all can capture the heart of a reader. Our beloved Bishop has sincerity, simplicity and love in his writings. Our personal experience with the Bishop was more through his writings, that will always be engraved in our hearts.

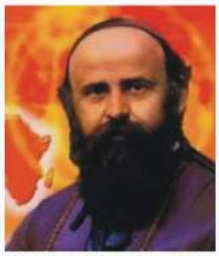
Catechetical Ministry works

In our Christian journey we all have people who encourage and lead us to follow JESUS and go deeper in our relationship with Him through their lives and actions. Our Bishop was one of them. He proved as a true shepherd to his diverse flock especially to the people of Abbasiya. He worked towards bring together all the communities as one flock growing in God's love. He says, "*Every community has to be open to other communities and not closed in itself*". We need to have a genuine concern for the poor, sick and troubled souls from every walk of life, irrespective of which community he or she belongs to.

Our gratitude to our Lordship Bishop Camillo Ballin for his vision and thoughtfulness in granting the people of Abbasiya a place of worship, bringing the lost souls back to the fold. The 3000 children attending the faith-formation classes is a proof by itself, and these children have brought their family back to the Lord. Today we have 3 basements set up, accommodating children from 3 rites. Close proximity to the church has made it possible for all the children to attend catechism classes regularly. This would not be possible without his zealous efforts and encouragement.

Our Lordship has run the race, leaving behind a legacy for us to carry on.

LOVE & PRAYERS
CATECHISM COORDINATORS AND CATECHISTS
ST. DANIEL COMBONI PARISH, JLEEB AL SHUYOUKH, KUWAIT



St. Daniel Comboni Church
Jleeb Al Shuyoukh - Kuwait

GONE AWAY FROM US YET REMAINS IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER.

We Catechism children of St Daniel Comboni Parish admired our beloved Bishop as a tall majestic man with a humble, kind and gentle heart and an ever-smiling face. His way of saying "Inshallah" with a smile sounded so sweet, and his strong word "Courage".

Our interactions with him though were momentary, yet he created a very special place in our hearts. He was a man who gave a lot of importance to the youth as well as small children. In spite of his busy schedule, he made time to talk to us even if it meant a brief message, shook hands that made us feel so special. During his visit to our parish, we would eagerly wait for an opportunity to meet him.

Inspirational Messages from our Bishop

"This is the Holy Year of Mercy, a precious time to become more aware that God our Father is always filled with compassion for us and wants us to consider everybody not only as his sons and daughters but also as our brothers and sisters."

We need to put in to practice the words we recite in the Lord's prayer "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against". If we expect mercy and compassion from God, then we too need to have mercy on our neighbours, since we are all sinners.

"We need to be enlightened on our Faith," "To have faith means to give priority, in our requests, to what should be first: to ask the gift of the Holy Spirit, knowing that all the rest will be given us freely because God is our Father and he knows well what we need."

Believe that our Creator loves us so much, that more than us, he knows our needs. We have to first seek for the gift of Holy Spirit who helps us to pray, and trust that we will be blessed with everything according to God's plan

CATECHISM CHILDREN
ST. DANIEL COMBONI PARISH, JLEEB AL SHUYOUKH, KUWAIT

Bishop Camillo Ballin
A True Missionary and a great Visionary

Nothing more impacted me in the recent past as much as the news of Bishop's demise. It took a while to realize that we are not going to see him anymore. Because, during his last few visits to Kuwait, I attended to some of the problems that he was facing in his office computer and in the process had the opportunity of seeing closely how small things in life made him tall not in stature alone, but also as a person bond by his priestly vows too.

My first association with Bishop was during the unity congress which was then organized by the Kuwait Pastoral Council, an advisory board formed by Bishop that was represented by members from various communities, languages and rites. Over the period, when I became the secretary of the Council, my interaction and association with him also grew. During those days, I used to admire his promptness in replying to emails and messages and wondered many times, how can he do it even if the email was sent at midnight.

During 2009, when we approached him to provide us with some personal collection of photos that we used for a small presentation to our community to mark the celebration of the ruby jubilee of his priesthood. Very excitingly, he shared a few photos and also recalled a few memories related to some of those photos.

Another character of Bishop that stood out was his sense of humor that he very easily related to faith aspects. There are few such things that I have taken to my catechism classes too. Humor and Bishop went well together, I guess and that made him even more a friendly person. Another of my favorite resource for catechism and for faith matters personally was the "Ask the Bishop" part of the Avona website where he addressed very interesting questions. During some long and continuous interactions with him, I also understood his trust in the person he entrusts something with and always had a word of appreciation to go with it.

"Courage" is the word, Bishop used most of time and lived to it. That's what we pray for, especially during these difficult moments we are going through.

In an interview for the Golden Jubilee publication, he shared a very striking detail of his priestly life that being an Italian, he never served in Italy throughout his life and always walked on the path of a true Missionary, his mother's last wish too. His contribution to the vicariate is beyond a Missionary's job and my association with him leads me to think that he was just not a Missionary, but also a great visionary. I am sure, he will intercede for us to realize his visions for the vicariate, as much as he did while he shepherded us during his life here.

Rest in peace Bishop

By Joseph Charles Gerard Sagayaraj
Catechist - Class 11

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord -

Let them rest from their labours for their good deeds go with them.

A JOURNEY OF HOLINESS: REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED BISHOP CAMILLO

This is indeed a sad time for us in the Vicariate. The untimely death of our beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin came as shock to us, but it is in a spirit of gratitude to God that we remain thankful for his many years of ministry and tireless service to the Church at large, and particularly to our Vicariate of Northern Arabia.

Bishop Camillo was born into a religious Italian family. He had a good Catholic upbringing. He grew up with three sisters and a brother in the town of Fontaniva (District of Padua) where he received his early sacraments, education and religious instruction. Unfortunately, he lost his mother when he was only 3 years old. He spoke sometimes about their simple life, which was poor in luxuries, but rich in blessings. His siblings and he would often sneak into the family barn in the afternoon to say the Rosary together. In fact, the seed of his vocation was sown in these moments of prayer and togetherness that he cherished, and which gave him much peace and consolation.

Around the same time that his three sisters entered religious life in a neighbouring convent, (Bishop) Camillo then a teenager, felt his own call to serve the Lord. He was greatly impressed with the life and work of missionary priests. He so wanted to be a missionary! After much prayer and discernment, at the age of nineteen, he entered the novitiate of the Religious Institute of Comboni Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MCCJ) founded by Saint Daniel Comboni. He was ordained a priest a few months before his 25th birthday! On the evening of his ordination day, he received a call from an old priest friend who phoned to say something extraordinary besides the usual congratulatory wishes. The priest was his mother's confessor at the time of her death. She had confided to him that it was her great desire that her son should be a priest. The priest friend had never disclosed this conversation to young Camillo; it was only on that evening that (Bishop) Camillo came to know that it was the realization of his mother's wish and her prayers from heaven that had accompanied him on his journey to priesthood.

Throughout his priestly life, Bishop Camillo had a strong devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and a zeal for the welfare of all the souls in his care. As a Bishop, he spent many hours before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He had a tender-hearted affection for Our Blessed Mother. He was known to start and end the day with a prayer to her. He was a great administrator, a wonderful teacher and an ardent supporter of family life. He did much in the vicariate to strengthen faith in the families by encouraging personal and family prayer.

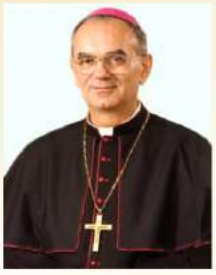
Bishop Camillo was a loving spiritual father to all in the vicariate and many of us knew him as a friend. He was a simple, unpretentious man who loved spicy food! He was happy to share a home meal whenever he was invited and he never allowed an opportunity to slip by without seeing the funny side of a situation. He was especially fond of little children and had a gentle way with them. He could also be fierce (in a good way), courageous and fearless to the point of death. He lived his life like a martyr, always embracing suffering and hardships that came his way. A man of few words, he would say with conviction, "Courage!" to those in need of comfort or encouragement. His life was truly lived as a testament of love for his people.

In faithful remembrance of Bishop Camillo, let us continue to work for, and pray for the completion of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Arabia in Bahrain, a project that was immensely close to his heart. Our Bishop has gone to his heavenly reward, but he has left behind his legacy of simplicity, joy, kindness and compassion to teach us that we should be the hands and feet of Jesus to every brother and sister we meet. *Beloved Bishop, we will always remember you with love. May your soul rest in peace! Amen.*

By Charles Dominic Machado

Catechist - Class 7

BISHOP CAMILLO BALLIN was ordained Priest of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus on March 30, 1969. He had known a Comboni priest and was attracted by his mission in Sudan and wanted to become a Comboni missionary. It was his mother's desire that her son become a Missionary Priest (which was not revealed to him until he became a Priest) and he chose March 30th as the day of his ordination, as this was the day his mother passed away. The Lordship hails from a Religious family that includes his three sisters who chose to become Nuns. Bishop lost his mother when he was hardly 3 years old and as revealed by himself, his childhood was of much suffering. Yes indeed, one can imagine the life of a child without a mother.



The Lordship had a great desire to work in the Arabic countries. In pursuit of his desire, he studied Arabic for two years, without any vacation. On completion, his first assignment was at Cairo where he spent 19 years as a Revolutionary Priest before being sent to Sudan. In the year 2005, he was appointed Bishop of Kuwait by Pope Benedict XVI.

Bishop, a teacher and professor himself from his early days greatly contributed towards the transformation of the Catechism Ministry in the vicariate. Appointment of Rev. Fr. Franco Pereira as the Catechetical Director of the Northern Vicariate of Arabia was one such initiative.

Catechists hugely benefitted from the directives of Bishop to attend the beginner's catechists' course and also the annual retreats that enriched the important aspects of faith and its formation.

As a Catechist myself, these retreats turned out to be special moments with a feeling of prayer and blessing – a total enlightening of our Faith and a feeling to continue to stay in the presence of our Lord, something I really look forward to. Bishop was also instrumental in bringing wonderful resource persons to enhance and strengthen our own faith formation skills and this year's visit by Rev. Fr. Gilbert Choondal, SDB was an example to it. Teaching Catechism to our youngsters is a "Call from Our Lord Almighty" to each of us. And the Lordship through Rev. Fr. Franco and the Catechism Core insisted on a lot of preparation in the form of Scripture Reading, Real Life Experiences.

Bishop Camillo Ballin was an excellent writer and I am greatly touched by his Pastoral Letters. The explanations in these Pastoral Letters being detailed, simple and very easy to understand. I greatly admired his art of writing and the amount of time involved in its preparation, in spite of his busy schedule.

Bishop had a great desire to unite different Rites practiced in the vicariate to form One Catholic family. In light of this, he initiated in organizing the Gulf Unity Conference, 2nd Gulf Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference, 3rd GCCR Conference in Oman and more. These initiatives not only involved efforts from various ministries of the church, but also paved way for unity among the faithful of the region that involved large gatherings.

A man of few words, Bishop Camillo lived a very simple life, with love for the community as a true shepherd. His life has indeed brought about a great impact in our lives as Catechists.

His ordination of March 30, 1969, a Palm Sunday coincided with his Heavenly abode on Easter Sunday, 12th April 2020, a beautiful day to be with the Resurrected Lord.

We will always remember him in our prayers and may our Heavenly Mother intercede to grant him Eternal Rest.

By Wilma Margaret D'Souza
Catechist - Class 7

The catechists of St. Therese Salmiya Parish will remember our beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin as a man of God, a good shepherd, and a missionary zealous for souls. His delightful sense of humor brought a light touch to his meetings with us catechists as he shared his vision for us.

He was passionate about all things pertaining to the faith and it was his lifes' endeavor to lead us to the truth through his pastoral visits, pastoral letters, books, and through his answers on, Ask the Bishop questions raised by the faithful on matters of faith, Catholic teaching and morality through the vicariate website. Through them he has deepened our spirituality and appreciation of the Catholic Church. Even when he moved to Bahrain in 2011 after several years of living in Kuwait, he continued to keep us close to his heart.

We catechists will be deeply indebted to him for the Catholic Unity Congress that he initiated in 2008 bringing together the faithful from all over the gulf states. He spared no effort in getting renowned preachers and priests from around the globe not only for the unity congress but also for the retreats that were held each year, so we could be nourished on the finest wheat and the sweetest honey from the honey-comb.

We thank God for the gift of our beloved Bishop Camillo Ballin, and we are certain that he will continue to intercede for us in heaven where he enjoys a just reward as God.'s good and faithful servant. He will surely live on in our hearts and will be a part of our most cherished memories. We will remember fondly his signature farewell at the close of every meeting, "Courage!" May we honor his memory by living our faith with courage.

By Myra D'Souza - Ex-Catechist / Core Member

Life is but a stopping place,
A pause in what's to be,
A resting place along the road,
To sweet eternity.

We all have different journeys,
Different paths along the way,
We all were meant to learn some things,
But never meant to stay…

Our destination is a place,
Far greater than we know.
For some the journey's quicker,
For some the journey's slow.

We lost our Dear Bishop Camillo Ballin
We loved him in so many ways
A Humble Friend, Philosopher & Guide
Cared for all; small or big

He has left us a precious mission; Bahrain Cathedral
Knowing he is always there
Watching from up above
Let us unite and fulfil his dream!

And when the journey finally ends,
We'll claim a great reward,
And find an everlasting peace,
Together with the Lord

By Antoinette Rozario Coutinho

Catechist -Class 3

A man of God, learned and talented in so many ways
Authored in Arabic "The Ways of the Spirit" and
"History of the Church"
His pastoral letters enlightened our minds
And brought clarity to questions from laity on Catholic faith,
Scripture, and morality

His message was love and harmony
We are still one, though different and many
He led the Catholic Unity Congress, to remain
United with the Lord our God, in one Holy Church

His motto was "IN VERBO TUO"
"Master, on your word", taken from Luke 5:5
The missionary in him worked tirelessly
To spread God's word and love relentlessly

God called his faithful one this beautiful Easter day
Come home to Me, to your final rest
With heavy hearts and teary eyes, we whisper goodbye
Bishop Camillo Ballin
God knows, YOU gave us your very best.

By Fabiola D'Mello

Catechist - Class 3

May The Departed Soul Of Our Dear Bishop Rest In Peace Amen

PASTORAL LETTERS

OF BISHOP CAMILLO BALLIN mccj

APOSTOLIC VICAR OF NORTHERN ARABIA.

"Zeal for your house will consume me." (John 2;17). Those lines from scripture came to the mind of the disciples of Jesus when they saw him clean the temple. Those same words come to my mind when I think of Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj, the zealous shepherd of the flock at the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia. Besides other fine qualities in him, I particularly saw in him an unswerving dedication to teaching the faith to all the faithful. He did this in many ways, his sermons, his talks, his pastoral letters, his web portal "ask the bishop" and any other opportunity he got.

For me especially as a catechist, Bishop Camillo Ballin's sermons at Holy Masses and his annual Pastoral letters have had a profound impact on my spiritual life, and my vocation as a catechist. The sacred deposit of faith which refers to the teachings of the Catholic Church that are believed to be handed down from the Apostles is transmitted to us through the Pope and the Bishops. His eminence Bishop Camillo has done an outstanding and exceptional work of handing on the faith and enriching our Catholic life especially through his Pastoral letters. He has aroused in me a great love for our Catholic faith and especially the Holy Eucharist, and a hunger for the word of God. Above all, his teachings have evoked a deep passion to share this faith and collaborate in the church's mission of handing on the faith. I have read his writings and observed that the bishop urges movements and groups in the church to read, discuss and share the pastoral letters at their meetings and gatherings. At mass whenever the bishop was celebrating, I strained my ears to catch every word and listen carefully to his sermons which were so enlightening. I began sharing his pastoral letters in prayer meetings at the God's love community. I shared quite a few and have plans to share more, which people found helpful and enriching. The Pastoral letters are listed below to give a brief glimpse into the booklets and urge everyone to read them if not read before, and read again, even if you have read before, in memory of our beloved bishop. May our faith be strengthened as we read the letters and may our bishop's work of transmitting the faith and his zeal for the house of God continue to live through us catechists and others too. May his soul rest in peace.

Francis Sam, Vicariate Catechism Coordinator – AVONA

1. Year 2007-2008 – EUCHARISTIC AMAZEMENT

The letter has 2 main parts.

First Part: Some important elements- This part includes some important elements of Holy Eucharist and explains the following: **The Biblical roots** of the Eucharist originating in the Passover in Egypt and crossing the red sea in the old testament to the institution of the Eucharist by Christ at the last supper in the new testament. We are **One body**. The Participation in the sacraments is not an individualistic one but is a sign of a community as one body, which is essential for the disciples of Jesus Christ. **The Altar** is the symbol of Christ. When the faithful come together, Christ is in their midst, and the altar becomes *the visible sign of His presence* (CCC 1383). **Music in The Eucharistic celebration** forms a necessary and integral part of the Liturgy. St. Augustine affirms that a Christian who sings well prays twice.

Second part: The Liturgy of the Word which includes the following: **The Greeting of the celebrant,** *"The Lord be with you!"* is the most important moment in the introductory rite of the Holy Mass. **The Penitential**

Rite helps us understand why the church invites us to be reconciled with our heavenly Father and with our brothers and sisters at the beginning of the Eucharist. The church in **The Readings** during Holy Mass, unfolds the great mysteries of Christ. This section also enlightens us on many other aspects of readings at mass. **The Homily.** Why is the homily so important? What is its purpose? Read on. Through **The Profession of Faith**, we give our assent to the Word of God which was heard in the readings. **The Prayer of the Faithful** should be regarded as an important moment of our Sunday Liturgy. Why?

2. Year -2008-2009 – ONE BODY IN CHRIST

Here the bishop explains why we need the Eucharist.

B: The Liturgy of the Eucharist:

I) The presentation of the gifts: "This is not to be viewed simply as a kind of interval between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. **II) "The Eucharistic prayer** is the center and summit of the entire celebration." (Missal,78). **III) The Holy Communion** includes the breaking of bread and reception of Holy Communion. Every part is well explained by Bishop. **IV) The Liturgical Dismissal.** So often people walk out before the final blessing, while the liturgical blessing is meant to obtain for the participants the help needed to live a true Christian Life.

C: Two notes: **I) The Eucharist and the prayer for the dead. II) The Eucharist, and the cult of the Holy Sacrament outside the Mass.** These two notes further dispel many of our misconceptions.

"I wanted to intentionally explain the Mass, as much as I can, in my pastoral letters of last year and of this year, and also of the next year, in order to avoid a magic or pagan understanding of the Eucharist."- Bishop Camillo Ballin, mccj

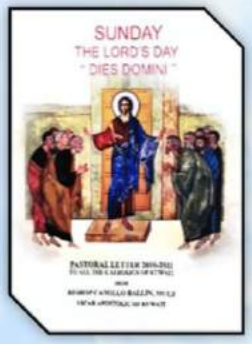
3. Year 2009 – 2010 – WE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT THE EUCHARIST

In this third letter Bishop Camillo writes, *"I now intend to present to you some important themes of the Eucharist, so that you may have a deeper understanding of this precious mystery."*

First Part: This part of the letter is in the format of an interview. Bishop answers twenty three questions of the people regarding the Eucharist ranging from "why we should know the Biblical roots of the Eucharist, to why we should sing during the celebration of the Eucharist?, enriching further our understanding of the mystery of the Eucharist.

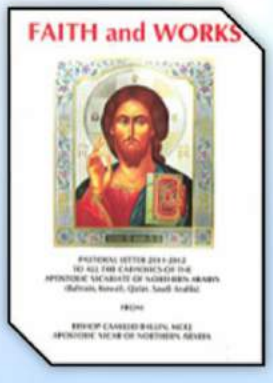
Second Part: The Sacrament of the Eucharist – In this second section the bishop attempts to explain the sacrament of the Eucharist instituted by Jesus, taken from the COMPENDIUM OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. (CCC Reference articles 3 paragraph 1322 to 1419)

In the Eucharist, we "break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death and the food that makes us live forever in Jesus Christ." – St. Ignatius of Antioch.



4. YEAR 2010-2011 – SUNDAY- THE LORD'S DAY (DIES DOMINI) –

The Bishop explains in depth the meaning of the Lord's day and what is meant by; the Lord's day is the First day, is the Third day, is the Eighth day or Saturday or Sunday. He quotes Pope John Paul who wrote: *"Sunday is a day which is at the very heart of the Christian Life... Today I would strongly urge everyone to rediscover Sunday: Do not be afraid to give your time to Christ."* (Dies Domini – DD -7).



The letter has an APPENDIX, which contains references taken from The Catechism of The Catholic Church on The Third Commandment: I. The Sabbath Day. II. The Lord's Day. When one reads through all these references, our understanding of The Lord's Day is further deepened.

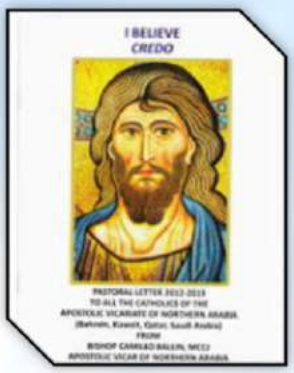
5. YEAR 2011-2012 – FAITH AND WORKS

We have heard many arguments that Faith alone justifies, and the Catholic stand that it is Faith and works. In this Pastoral letter the Bishop explains and clarifies the Catholic

teaching on faith and works which all Catholics must know. He quotes the teaching of Saint James "*Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead ... A body dies when it is separated from the spirit, and in the same way faith is dead if it is separated from good deeds." (Jm. 2:17, 26).*

Saint Paul presents the same teaching: *"what matters is faith that makes its power felt through love."* (Gal. 5:6). So, our religious practices should not be our efforts to obtain something from God, but an expression of our vital union with and faith in Jesus Christ.

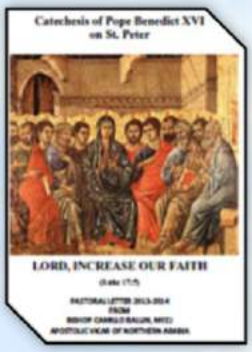
6. YEAR 2012 -2013 – I BELIEVE (CREDO)



Perhaps we have sometimes considered the Creed as a monotone list of truths to be accepted. Instead it is the most complete expression of our faith. The CCC tells us that faith is "first a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed" (CCC, 150). With our baptism we started "a journey that lasts a lifetime. . . ends to eternal life" (cf. *Porta Fidei,* 1). Thus, when we say the Creed we do not just enumerate a list of truths but we enter into a dialogue with God, we abandon ourselves into the hands of a love which has its origin in God (cf. *Porta Fidei,* 7). "We need to know it (the creed) more exactly, "reinvigorate it, purify it, confirm it and confess it" (cf. *Porta Fidei,* 4).

In this pastoral letter in the year of faith, the Bishop invites us to enter into a more detailed explanation of the *Apostles' Creed* and prays that this short presentation might help our faith and strengthen us in confessing it with courage before any person we meet in our daily life.

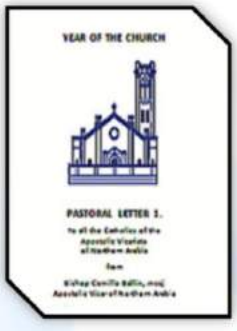
7. YEAR 2013-2014 – LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH – Luke 17"5



This pastoral letter of Bishop Camillo Ballin was sent to us while we were in the Year of Faith proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

"We need to be enlightened on our Faith," says Bishop Camillo in his letter. "To have faith means to give priority, in our requests, to what should be first: to ask the gift of the Holy Spirit, knowing that all the rest will be given us freely because God is our Father and he knows well what we need. However, we have to discern, through prayer what the plan of God is for us, what He wants us to do in our lives. This means to pray with faith and to live our life in faith."

As an ideal example of a true faith, Bishop Camillo presents the catechesis of Pope Benedict XVI on St. Peter in the second section of this Pastoral Letter.



8. YEAR 2013-2014 – YEAR OF THE CHURCH – PART I

In this letter the bishop calls the Catholic Church my mother. He writes: "***Yes, I love the Catholic Church, my mother,*** *who generated me to a new life and gave me hope and certainty of a life forever, the eternal life. I know that my mother, the Catholic Church, has limitations, wrinkles and even sins, exactly as our natural mother has, but I know also that she is always there to forgive me, to welcome me, to embrace me, to ensure me of her eternal love. She reminds me of the unbreakable love of God: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine... You are precious in my eyes and honoured, and I love you... with great tenderness I will take you back" (Is 43:1-4; 54:7). How not to love such a mother!? How and why to abandon her?!"*

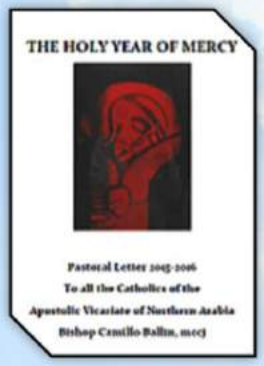
A very enlightening pastoral letter for our times when many people want to leave the Catholic church for the silliest and most often materialistic reasons. A must-read pastoral letter.

9. YEAR 2014-2015 – YEAR OF THE CHURCH – PART II

The Bishop introduces his second pastoral letter on the church by saying: *"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."*

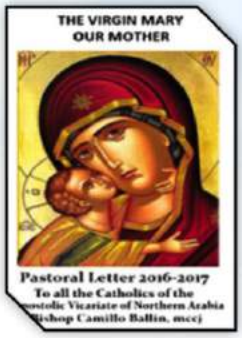
The subject is not presented through questions and answers. This will draw your attention more to the subject and will make the reading easier.

10. YEAR 2015-2016 – THE HOLY YEAR OF MERCY



The pastoral letter of the year 2015-2016 sheds light on the "Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee year of Mercy" or "Misericordiae Vultus" – the document that has emanated from His Holiness Pope Francis explaining the meaning and purpose of the Holy Year of Mercy. The purpose of this pastoral letter says bishop Camillo is to make the Bull of Indiction more known to the people.

The Bull of Indiction starts with this fundamental statement: "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy". The true reason of the Incarnation of the Son of God was to reveal to the world who God is. Through his deeds and words, Jesus proved that God is really "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6).Pope Francis wrote, in MV 10, especially important statements concerning the Church and of mercy: "Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life . . .. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love". Hence, we can truly bear the name, Christians, if we show mercy in our life.

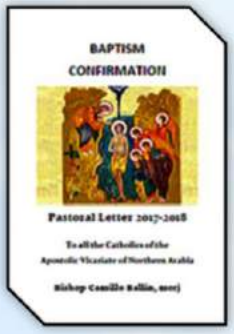


11. YEAR 2016-2017 – THE VIRGIN MARY OUR MOTHER

Bishop Camillo writes this pastoral letter on the Virgin Mary our mother and the mother of the church, as the church in 2017 celebrated the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of the virgin Mary to the three shepherd children of Fatima.

The letter has three important chapters: 1. The Doctrine of the Catholic Church on the Virgin Mary. 2. The Virgin Mary in Liturgy. 3 The Rosary.

This is a letter that helps us understand the place of the Virgin Mary in the Catholic church and why the church honours her.



12. YEAR 2017-2018 – BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

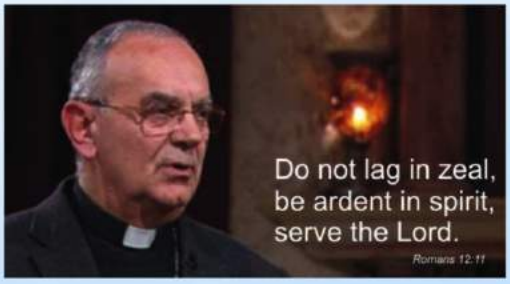
A Pastoral letter that explains in depth the meaning and the implications of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The purpose of this letter is to offer a guide for priest and lay people who must prepare families for Baptism and Confirmation, and a booklet to help us understand more the precious gifts of Baptism and Confirmation.

The bishop says: "This is the Sacrament, an action like many others of our life but, surprisingly, it gives us Jesus Christ and his Spirit. Therefore, we must look beyond the appearance of water, oil, bread, wine and other signs to which Jesus Christ grants his power." Let us read to understand the three basic sacraments of our Catholic life.

13. YEAR 2019-2020 – THE MASS – PART II, THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Now begins the second half of the Holy Mass: The Liturgy of the Eucharist. It is also known as the "Mass of the Faithful" because in ancient times only the baptized could stay at Mass for this portion, nor could any Christian stay who had arrived with unforgiven mortal sin. Now begins the sacrificial and central portion of the Holy Mass, which includes: **The Offertory, The Presentation of the Gifts, The Preface and Holy, Holy, Holy, The Eucharistic Prayer, and The Lord's Prayer.**

This is also bishop Camillo Ballin's last letter to the faithful. The Bishop in the introduction of his last letter 2019-2020 on the Eucharist writes to us all: *"We can find a very good explanation of the Eucharist in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC). I invite everyone of you, and every Movement, Group and Community, to read one point of the explanation given by the CCC every month."*

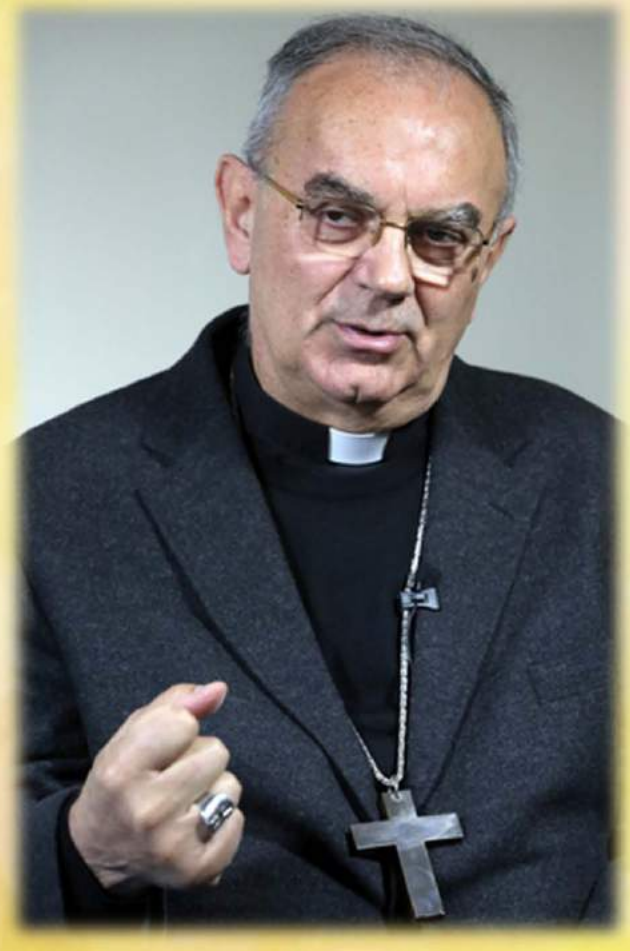


The best Tribute we can offer to honour the memory of our beloved bishop Camillo Ballin is to read his letters, understand, celebrate, and share our faith, which he strived so much to teach us.

We pray for your good soul Lordship and implore your prayers and blessings on us as we walk the path of unity and remain one body as you have shown us.

Eternal rest grant unto Bishop Camillo O Lord
and let perpetual light shine upon him.
May his soul through the mercy of God
rest in peace.

Until we meet again . . .



"We are missionaries. This also means that every community has to be open to other communities and not closed in itself. We cannot call God, Our Father if we are not brothers to all."

- Bishop Camillo Ballin mccj

Quote taken from the Pastoral letter "IN THE VINEYARD OF THE APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF NORTHERN ARABIA: A DECADE AFTER"
2005— 02 September—2015