India ranks 10th out of 11 countries in the Personalised Health Index among all Asia Pacific countries. The deteriorating health condition among the citizens of our country is a reason of worry for the nation. Increasing pollution in the cities causing respiratory illness and several natural calamities leading to new diseases, have now become major health concerns. The Catholic Church in India through her Social wings of Caritas India, Regional Fora and the Diocesan Social Service Societies have been actively involved in the annual Lenten campaign promotion against “Hunger and Disease”. It is an attempt to uplift the poor and the most marginalised by helping them to fight against their adversities. WHO defines “Health” as a state of mental, physical, and social well-being and not just absence of diseases and infirmities. COVID-19 pandemic plunged the entire world into a crisis, affecting almost all sectors of the society. The nationwide lockdown did not just affect the people financially alone but it had also posed serious physical, emotional and mental health of the individuals and families. In the history of humankind, no pandemic has created such devastating impact on humanity across the globe as that of COVID19.

Healthy Life, Healthy India – the Lenten Campaign theme for the year 2021 - is a clarion call to take up the mission of living healthy. Through this campaign let us conscientize the Church communities to look at the holistic health of individuals, families and communities and the larger society. Let us make mental and physical health our coffee table discussion point and take up concrete actions which would eventually help to realize a healthier India. At individual level, let us pledge to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Caritas India and her Regional Fora and Diocesan partners took up the mission of promoting healthy living during COVID 19 response. These efforts helped in reaching out to over 22.07 million people (22,076,176) in the country, with food, clothing, shelter, hygiene materials, protection equipment and other allied services. Over 100,000 volunteers from all walks of life came forward to render their support in the form of manpower and resources. Caritas India followed a 5 BE’s approach i.e. Be Informed, Be Trained, Be Compassionate, Be Cautioned and Be Connected. The psychosocial helpline initiated as part of the COVID 19 response also rendered the services in supporting the mental health of people reaching out through tele-calls.

“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul ”

-3 John 1:2
The forethought that the entire globe would be addressing in the current year is to develop and increase infrastructure towards health and well-being across the globe. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is what is proposed as the major way in our fight against the pandemic in our country. Though we have limited healthcare infrastructure in our country, it has been a blessing in disguise that the large segments of our population remained safe from COVID due to higher immunity levels. Hence, it is a lesson for us to re-strategize our approaches towards public health care systems on the one hand and a check on the lifestyle habits and lifestyle diseases of our people on the other hand.

A healthy lifestyle has a systemic approach of 5 'I's. Immune to stress, Improving confidence, Improved productivity, Improved sense of Physical Health and Improved sense of Mental Health. This leads to several other aspects that would enable us to cater to taking care of the environment we live in and other multilateral factors. Lenten Campaign 2021 is promoting “Healthy Life, Healthy India” and urging all to join hands in building a healthy India. Some of the proposed activities are enlisted for your ready reference:

- **Raph Miles** – Named after the patron saint for healing – St. Raphael. Every Catholic would ensure to walk 5000 steps a day and this could culminate as a one parish activity on a single day of walking 5 KMS as a marathon.

- **Share a meal** – A healthy diet to be cooked and shared as a community kitchen activity by all parishes on Sundays of the Lent across India to contribute to the nutritious diet of the needy.

- **“Ek” FOR ALL** – Encourage every Family member to contribute for the cause and enrich the campaign.

- **No Apple – No Doctor** - As an act of Lenten season, refrain the luxury of an apple and switch to healthy habit of living by shifting to regular exercising, eating clean and avoiding junk food. Health check camps can be placed by the dioceses in and around their locality.

- **Rakht Daan** – Promote blood donation drive in the diocese to give new life to someone else.

- **Samaritans Week** - A week-long activities could be done and recorded by Caritas Volunteers (Samaritans) in any orphanage, shelter homes, old age homes etc. and be a Samaritan to all.

- **Hike 4 Christ** - An activity can be taken up by the youth groups to take up official hike or trek to carry forward the essence Lenten Campaign and the theme of Health & Healthy Living.

- **Taare Zameen Par** - Organise workshops for Safe Motherhood, Workshops on Local nutritious food Diversity, WASH for Children, Know Your Body, Know your Rights, Health and Well Being Quiz and Yoga.

- **Charity Begins at Home** – Inculcate a healthy habit of sharing and caring in the families and society at large to support the needy and destitute. The homes are the first foundation ground for children to become sensitive towards the surrounding and take constructive actions to create a change.