

## Archbishop Greets people at Deepavali Festival

"Deepavali", the festival of lights, illuminates the darkness of the New Year's moon and strengthens our close friendships and knowledge, with a self-realization," said Archbishop Dr Bernard Moras in his Deepavali Message to the people of Karnataka and India at Bangalore. He invited everyone to celebrate an environmentally safe Deepavali by pointing out the major impacts the festival has on our environment. The Archbishop was the chief guest at



the Inter-Religious Deepavali celebrations held at Ashirvad, St Mark's Road, Bangalore on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> of November at 5 p.m. The programme was jointly organised by the Inter Religious Harmony Movement of Ashirvad (IRHM) and All Karnataka United Christian Forum for Human Rights (AKUCFHR).



In his message the Archbishop encouraged people to celebrate a glorious festival which is most popular to the people of India. At the same time he pointed to hazards that could be present with these celebrations. He invited all to be aware of the effects the traditional Deepavali celebrations have on Mother Nature. There are three major environmental impacts that this Festival has on our environment he said: Air



Pollution through Firecrackers; Excessive Consumerism and High Energy Consumption. The Archbishop then referred to the speech of Pope Francis at the United Nations a few weeks ago, where the Holy Father made his boldest claim yet about the environment, detailing the earth's God-given right to be dealt with responsibly. "It must be stated that a true 'right of the environment' does exist," he said.

In his key note address Dr Raj Kumar Dham, founder Director of ATAMA BODH Centre for Learning and Healing, Bangalore, brought the audience into a better understanding of how the mind and body can be programmed for health & wellness – “accessing the inner computer”. In an extremely simple way and relating cases from his practical experience over the years, using yoga, meditation, holistic methods of healing, for many diseases such as cancers, psychosomatic disorders, etc, he presented its application to Deepavali celebrations. Dr. Dham insisted on the necessity of eco friendly celebrations of the festival which will enrich the hearts and minds of the people around us.

Shri Dinesh Rao greeted the audience on behalf of the Bah'hi Council of Karnataka. Dr Nayeem Ullah Khan spoke on behalf of Muslims explaining the concept of Light in Koran. Venerable Ajit Prasad of Tubten Lekshey Ling, Buddhist Meditation Centre, presented the insights of



Deepavali festival. Bikku Buddhadatta represented the Mahabodhi Buddhist Society.



At the end of the programme a short video was presented on Late Fr Ronnie Prabhu founder of IRHM and AKUCFHR, prepared by Edward Shyam Prasad Director, Mytri Creations. Fr. Eugene Lobo SJ gave a brief introduction on life and achievements of Fr. Ronnie Prabhu SJ and how he is well remembered even today.

The prayer service was conducted by the IRHM group of Ashirvad. Fr Eugene Lobo S.J. PRO to the Karnataka Regional Commission of Bishops' Conference welcomed the audience. Ms Anjana gave the prayer dance programme, Ms Margaret Rebello was the Master of Ceremonies and Fr Lourdusamy T Secretary, AKUCFHR gave the vote of thanks. Mgr Jayanathan Vicar General of Bangalore Archdiocese was present.



**Rev. Fr. Eugene Lobo, SJ**

*PRO – Karnataka Region Catholic Bishops' Council (KRCBC)*