

The month of November reminds us of two important feast days in the liturgical year, namely All Saints' Feast and All Souls' Day. On the 1st November, we celebrate the feast of all saints. On this day the Church honours all the saints, known and unknown, and the day specially commemorates all those who have attained the beatific vision in heaven.

The next day, on 2nd November, the Church specifically remembers the departed faithful who have not yet been purified and reached Heaven. We celebrate All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day in the fundamental belief that there is a prayerful spiritual bond between those in heaven (the "Church triumphant"), in purgatory ("Church suffering") and the living (the "Church militant"). This is what we profess in the Creed by saying: I believe in the Communion of Saints. Let us follow the example of our brothers and sisters who have gone ahead of us and now are praying for all of us that we may also one day be like them in heaven after our death. At the same time, it is our Christian duty to pray for those who are also the members of the same Church and are presently in the purifying state to attain heaven. During the month of November, the Church wants us to offer special Masses and prayers for the Dead, and to visit the cemeteries.

On the 1st November, we also celebrate the Karnataka Rajyotsava, and I request all of you to pray for our State that it may flourish, grow and prosper. It is our duty to promote the local language, culture and tradition. Let us pray for the political and religious leaders and also the people of our State that we may work in collaboration for the welfare of everyone in our State.

It was proposed at the last Senate meeting to celebrate the Environment Sunday on the 22nd November, the Feast of Christ the King. Special prayers and reflections are incorporated into the Hosanna leaflet. The Parish Priests and the Heads of the Institutions are hereby requested to create sufficient awareness on the Pope's recent Encyclical: *Laudato Si'*.

The Holy Father Pope Francis announced the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy during the Lenten penitential service at St. Peter's Basilica, Rome on Friday 13th March 2015. This Jubilee will be celebrated from 8th December 2015, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception to 20th November 2016, the Feast of Christ the King. It is indeed a happy coincidence that Pope Francis will inaugurate the Holy Year of Mercy on the same day that the Church celebrates the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, indicating that this Jubilee year is part of the reception process. "Now we go a step further with this central theme of mercy", Pope Francis says, "and re-read the texts and documents of the Council under this aspect."

On 8th December, we will be having the official Inauguration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy in all our Archdiocesan parishes; and the Solemn Opening of the Jubilee Door of our Cathedral on 13th December. A special booklet has been printed to give details of these events and the guidelines to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy spiritually and meaningfully.

Reflection: After years of searching, the seeker was told to go to a cave, in which he would find a well. 'Ask the well what is truth', he was advised, 'and the well will reveal it to you'. Having found the well, the seeker asked that most fundamental question. And from the depths came the answer, 'Go to the village crossroad: there you shall find what you are seeking'.

Full of hope and anticipation the man ran to the crossroad to find only three rather uninteresting shops. One shop was selling pieces of metal, another sold wood, and thin wires were for sale in the third. Nothing and no one there seemed to have much to do with the revelation of truth.

Disappointed, the seeker returned to the well to demand an explanation, but he was told only, 'You will understand in the future.' When the man protested, all he got in return were the echoes of his own shouts. Indignant for having been made a fool of - or so he thought at the time - the seeker continued his wanderings in search of truth. As years went by, the memory of his experience at the well gradually faded until one night, while he was walking in the moonlight, the sound of sitar music caught his attention. It was wonderful music and it was played with great mastery and inspiration.

Profoundly moved, the truth seeker felt drawn towards the player. He looked at the fingers dancing over the strings. He became aware of the sitar itself. And then suddenly he exploded in a cry of joyous recognition: the sitar was made out of wires and pieces of metal and wood just like those he had once seen in the three stores and had thought it to be without any particular significance.

At last he understood the message of the well: we have already been given everything we need: our task is to assemble and use it in the appropriate way. Nothing is meaningful so long as we perceive only separate fragments. But as soon as the fragments come together into a synthesis, a new entity emerges, whose nature we could not have foreseen by considering the fragments alone. Each of us is a fragment, only when all fragments ensemble, the end result is incredibly marvelous. The spirit of unity, coordination and fellowship is the hallmark a true Christian Community.

With best wishes and God's blessings,

+ **Bernard Moras**

Archbishop of Bangalore