

THE SHEPHERD SPEAKS

Dear Friends,

A month of this New Year is already passed and we are entering into the second month. This month is very significant for all of us because, in this month, we celebrate: The World Day for Consecrated Life, The 25th Word Day of the Sick, The Holy Childhood Day, The 29th Plenary Assembly of the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) will be held, and also the students are getting ready for their prelims and the final examinations. I wish all these celebrations and events a great success.

The World Day for Consecrated Life

In 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for the consecrated men and women. This celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on 2nd February. This Feast is also known as Candlemas Day, the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples.

Those consecrated to God by the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience are expected to live their baptismal promises more intensely and to have the grace to persevere in their commitment to the Lord and serve with open hearts and willing spirits.

Please pray for all those who have made commitments in the consecrated life, and also do not forget to thank them for their generous service to all of us in our Archdiocese. May they continue to be inspired by Jesus Christ and respond generously to God's gift of their vocation.

The 29th Plenary Assembly of the CCBI

The 29th Plenary Assembly of the CCBI will be held in Bhopal from 31 January to 8 February 2017. The Conference will deliberate on the theme of Family with special focus on the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* given by Pope Francis on 19 March 2016. Let us keep all the participants in our prayers and pray for fruitful deliberations during this meeting so that the Church in India may benefit significantly in her apostolate towards family- the domestic Church.

The Holy Childhood Day

The Holy Childhood Association was founded in France in 1843 by Bishop Charles de Forbin Jansen. Its purpose is to encourage all children to be aware of the needs of children living in mission diocese through the world. Bishop de Forbin Jansen always had a keen interest in the missions. He was a great preacher and traveled throughout France preaching the Gospel. He received letters from missionaries in China requesting his financial help to save starving and abandoned babies there. He did not know how to begin to raise these funds so he met with Pauline Jaricot who had already began her work to raise funds for mission dioceses. She advised him that no one could understand the needs of children better than children. She gave him the idea to start a children's charity.

In 1843 he called upon the children of France to help save the children of China. He asked them to become Missionary Children, helping to spread the Good News. He asked them to say a Hail Mary every day and give a small coin every month to help feed the Chinese children.

Their motto was "*children helping children*". The French children took up this great work and from then on the work of missionary children has spread across the world. Today it is in 110 countries and helps make Jesus known to children all over the world. Under its banner "children

helping children”, monies raised through schools are directed towards self-help programmes involving the building of schools, the provision of health and nutrition programmes and medications, school fees, and teaching and learning resources.

Children in communities, orphanages, homes for the disabled, refuges, and those living on the streets are assisted by the generosity of children who wish to make the love of Jesus known everywhere. The Holy Childhood Day will be celebrated on *Sunday, 12th February, 2017*. I request all of you, especially children and youth in our parishes and institutions, to generously contribute to the Holy Childhood Society.

A Retreat Centre for the Archdiocese

In our modern life, noise and distractions wrap around us. Too many distractions keep us from serious thinking and making our prayer life more difficult. Hence, we need a place to meet the spiritual and faith education needs of all of us, the priests, religious and lay faithful of the Archdiocese, where one can ‘Be still, and know that God is there in quietness (Ps 46: 10)! Amidst our busy schedule, going on a retreat, pilgrimage or quiet day can be a helpful way to make time for God. Although a number of spiritual renewal programmes are being conducted by the BCCRS and other Retreat Centres in the Archdiocese, we do not have our own Retreat Centre that can cater to the spiritual needs of the Archdiocesan parishes and various Commissions and lay Associations as we do not have proper facilities. This need of the Archdiocese was discussed at our meetings and, as a matter of fact, one or two places were identified earlier. But due to some reasons it couldn’t be materialized.

Now the Archdiocesan Administration has identified the land at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Halasuru (Cambridge Layout) for this purpose.

This Retreat Centre will be animated by the BCCRS in collaboration with other Commissions and Pious Associations of the Archdiocese. It is proposed to lay the foundation stone for this Retreat Centre on 25th February, 2017.

Reflection: Here is a Real Life Story.....

Ezra and Thomas joined a company together a few months after their graduation from university. After a few years of work, their Manager promoted Ezra to a position of Senior Sales Manager, but Thomas remained in his entry level Junior Sales Officer position. Thomas developed a sense of jealousy and disgruntlement, but continued working anyway.

One day Thomas felt that he could not work with Ezra anymore. He wrote his resignation letter, but before he submitted it to the Manager, he complained that Management did not value hard working staff, but only promoted only the favoured!

The Manager knew that Ezra worked very hard for the years he had spent at the company; even harder than Thomas and therefore he deserved the promotion. So in order to help Thomas to realize this, the Manager gave Thomas a task.

“Go and find out if anyone is selling water melons in town?”

Thomas returned and said, “Yes there is someone!”

The Manager asked, “How much per kg?” Thomas drove back to town to ask and then returned to inform the Manager; “They are Rs.13.50 per kg!”

The Manager told Thomas, “I will give Ezra the same task that I gave you. Please pay close attention to his response!”

So the Manager said to Ezra, in the presence of Thomas; “Go and find out if anyone is selling water melons in town?”

Ezra went to find out and on his return he said:

"Manager, there is only one person selling water melons in the whole town. The cost is Rs.49.00 each water melon and Rs. 32.50p for a half melon. He sells them at Rs13.50p per kg when sliced. He has in his stock 93 melons, each one weighing about 7kg. He has a farm and can supply us with melons for the next 4 months at a rate of 102 melons per day at Rs.27.00 per melon; this includes delivery.

The melons appear fresh and red with good quality, and they taste better than the ones we sold last year.

He has his own slicing machine and is willing to slice for us free of charge.

We need to strike a deal with him before 10am tomorrow and we will be sure of beating last year's profits in melons by Rs. 223,000.00. This will contribute positively to our overall performance as it will add a minimum of 3.78% to our current overall sales target.

I have put this information down in writing and it is available on spreadsheet. Please let me know if you need it as I can send it to you in fifteen minutes."

Thomas was very impressed and realized the difference between himself and Ezra. He decided not to resign but to learn from Ezra.

Let this story help us keep in mind the importance of going an extra mile in all our endeavours.

We won't be rewarded for doing what we're meant to do; we only get a salary for that!

We will be rewarded for going an extra mile; performing beyond expectations.

To be successful in life we must be observant, proactive and willing to do more, think more, have a more holistic perspective and go beyond the call of duty.

With best wishes and God's blessings,

**+ Bernard Moras
Archbishop of Bangalore**