

My visit to Rome: I will be away from Bangalore from 1st April to 5th April 2017 to attend the International Conference on “Perspective on Promoting Integral Human Development”. Please pray for the success of this Meeting. I will be praying for all of you and for the Archdiocese at the Shrines in Rome.

Holy Week and Paschal Triduum: Very soon we will be entering into the Holy Week and celebrating the Paschal Triduum. And, therefore, it is fitting that we have some basic knowledge about these great events.

The Palm Sunday invites us to “remember with devotion” Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, words that apply just as well to the entire week. In other words, Palm Sunday sets the stage for the events that would follow.

On Holy Thursday we gather with the Disciples around the Lord’s Table to celebrate the Last Supper and to thank God for the holy gifts He gave us on that occasion – the Eucharist, His own body and blood which would be sacrificed on Calvary the next day; and the Ministerial Priesthood, in which He chooses and consecrates men to be good and holy shepherds, to share in His sacrificial ministry of God’s People.

On Good Friday we enter into the Passion of the Christ who endured rejection, humiliation and intense physical pain for the forgiveness of our sins. We follow Jesus as He carries His cross and with Mary, the Mother of Sorrows, we stand at the foot of the cross to witness the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God. How can we not be moved if we recognize our responsibility for the death of Christ? “It was our infirmities that He bore, our sufferings that He endured,” the Prophet Isaiah pointedly reminds us.

During the Easter Vigil, in the darkness of the night, we await at the tomb of the Lord for His promised Resurrection. We immerse ourselves in the symbols of the liturgy – the new fire, the word, the water, the holy oils, and the bread and wine – all of which point us to Christ and help us to understand and share in the reality of His death and resurrection.

And on Easter Sunday we join with the Christian Church all over the world to proclaim and rejoice in the new life of Christ. It is the event that refreshes our spirits and gives new hope to a tattered, weary world. It is the event that speaks to us of living forever and thus makes our lives here and now more tolerable, even promising.

Let us prayerfully and meaningfully participate in these celebrations to receive the redemptive grace of Jesus Christ, our Divine Saviour. I exhort all of you to make good confession to celebrate the Paschal Feast.

The Chrism Mass: It will be celebrated on 6th April 2017 at 05.00 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier’s Cathedral Church. At this Mass, the Oils that will be used in the administration of the sacraments will be blessed by the Archbishop. On this day, we will also pray very specially for all our Priests who are rendering their priestly ministry for God and His People, especially in our Archdiocese. I request the Parish Priests to inform their parishioners about the importance of the Chrism Mass and also invite them to participate in it in large numbers. The blessed and consecrated Holy Oils will be distributed to all the parishes and Mass Centres in the Archdiocese.

Divine Mercy Sunday: The Church celebrates the Second Sunday of Easter as the Divine Mercy Sunday, which falls on 23rd April this year. It is based on the Catholic devotion to the Divine Mercy that Saint Faustina Kowalska reported as a part of her encounter with Jesus, and is associated with special promises from Jesus. We have a special reason to celebrate this day highlighting the significance of mercy in our Christian life, reflecting on the *Misericordiae*

Vultus (Merciful Face) of God who is “rich in mercy”(Eph. 2:4) towards sinners. The feast is preceded by a Divine Mercy Novena which would begin on Good Friday with Novena. I wish that all our parishes celebrate this day with the devotion associated with the day, such as Divine Mercy Chaplet (Rosary), Prayers to St Faustina, Litany of Divine Mercy, etc. and also promote the Divine Mercy Devotion in your parishes, communities and institutions.

Archdiocesan Clergy Retreat: The Annual Clergy Retreat for the Archdiocesan Clergy will be held in two batches: I Batch: 24th April to 28th April, 2017; and II Batch: 1st May to 5th May 2017. I request the Religious and the Faithful of the Archdiocese to pray for the Archdiocesan Clergy, especially during these days of their Retreat. They will also pray for all of us during this time.

The New Kannada Missal: I am happy to inform you that the New Missal will be introduced in our Archdiocese and throughout the Karnataka region on 16th April, Easter Sunday (Morning Mass). It will be made available from 06.04.2017 and the copies can be obtained from: Finance Office, Archbishop’s House. The cost of the Missal per copy is: Rs. 2000/-. Our Archdiocesan priests can collect the new Missal on Pastoral Consultation Day (6th April). Along with the Missal, a Booklet containing the Order of the Mass (priced at Rs. 10.00 per copy) is also made available to prepare and guide the faithful to follow this new Missal.

Admissions to the Minor Seminary: Applications are invited from those candidates who wish to discern a vocation to ministerial priesthood in the Archdiocese. The applicants are expected to obtain the requisite application forms, either from the Rector, Bhakti Bhavan, or from the Reception Desk at the Archbishop’s House. The application forms are to be duly filled by the candidate in his own handwriting. The filled in and signed application form, a passport size photograph, and a recommendation letter from the Parish Priest are to be personally handed over, or securely posted to: Rev. Fr. Christopher Vimalraj, Rector, Bhakti Bhavan on/before 10th May 2017. After careful scrutiny, the candidates will be invited to an interview at Archbishop’s House on Tuesday, 16th May 2017. Those selected will stay at Bhakthi Bhavan and pursue their pre-university studies. Those who completed graduation may also join the Seminary. You may submit/mail it to: Rector, Bhakthi Bhavan, Da Costa Square, St. Thomas Town Post, Bengaluru - 560 084. Tel: 080-2547 1356.

Reflection: Helping the less-fortunate is a blessing both for them and for us. Read this following story:

Mr. John was just getting ready to leave his office and he remembered that his wife had asked him to bring 1KG of Bananas. When He stepped out, he saw an ill-looking old lady across the road. She was selling fresh bananas on the street. Mr. John was usually buying bananas from a grocery shop few blocks away from his office but, that day as he was in a hurry, he thought of buying them from across the road only.

He went to the old lady and asked her the price. She quoted Rs.50 per 1KG. He told, “But the store where I usually buy from gives them for Rs.40 per 1KG, can you not give me for the same price?” The Old Lady told, “No Sir, I cannot afford to match that price. I can sell them to you at Rs. 45 per 1KG. That’s best I can afford to give you for.” Mr. John told her, “never mind”. He left in his car towards the usual grocery shop.

He went inside and picked up a good bunch of bananas, and went to the cashier to pay for them but he was surprised when the cashier told him that price per 1KG was Rs. 70. He told the cashier, “I have been buying bananas from here only for some years and this is a steep price

increase, can't you offer me a better deal for being a loyal customer?" The Manager overheard him and came there to tell Mr. Phillips, "Sorry Sir but our prices are fixed, we do not bargain." Mr. John felt little bad with that flat attitude. He thought for a second and put those bananas back. He went back to the old lady. She recognized him instantly and told him, "Sir, I can't match that price, I won't be able to earn any profit."

Mr. John told her, "Don't worry about the price; I will pay you Rs.70 Per KG! Now, give me 2KGs." The Old Lady was very happy, she packed 2KGs of Bananas and said, "I can't take Rs.70 but I will take Rs. 50 per KG. I appreciate your kindness." She also told him, "My Husband used to own a small fruit shop but he got very sick. We have no child or any relatives who could support us. We had to sell his shop to cover his medical bills but he could not survive." Tears were flowing from her eyes. She said, "But now to support myself I am trying to sell what I can afford to buy and sell, so I can survive for what's left of my life."

Mr. John told her, "Do not worry, you are doing alright and from tomorrow on, I will only buy bananas from you." He pulled out his wallet and gave her Rs.500 extra and said, "Take this, bring more different fruits to sell tomorrow, consider this an advance payment for fruits I will be buying from you. You can earn more if you have more choices of fruits to sell." The Old Lady thanked him. Later, he recommended many of his colleagues to buy fruits from the lady which they did. And with the support from Mr. John and many other buyers, she made a better living. Dear friends, often we choose to go shopping to big malls or big grocery shops. We always pay the fixed price without bargaining. That is fine as we all have choices and people who run their business have their liabilities too. However, we need to spare a moment and think that why we have no courage or reason to bargain while shopping at big shops and why we try to bargain heavily with small street vendors? Think wisely. Always be helpful and supportive to someone who works hard to earn and has a need for it. Think what Mr. John had thought for a second and why he decided to buy from the old lady...

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, I extend to all of you my best wishes for a Happy Easter. Please extend my Easter wishes to your dear parishioners and members of your religious communities. A Happy and Grace-filled Easter wishes to everyone!

With the blessings of the Risen Lord,

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moras
Archbishop of Bangalore